

Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Version

Urban Area Boundary Background Paper

June 2014



GOSPORT
Borough Council

Urban Area Boundary Background Paper

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Urban Area Boundary Background Paper

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper sets out the key planning policy, evidence and consultation responses received in relation to the Borough Council's proposed urban area boundary, as defined on the Policies Map and identified in Policy LP3 of the emerging Gosport Borough Local Plan. This paper provides a justification for the designation and the changes made to earlier versions.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 This section sets out the national and local policy considerations relevant to the spatial strategy elements considered in this background policy.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG March 2012)

- 2.2 The NPPF sets out a number of core planning principles including the following which are of relevance to planning for the urban and countryside areas:
- to take of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of the main urban areas whilst recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;
 - to contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in the NPPF;
 - encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed
 - promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage and food production).
- 2.3 Specifically in paragraph 157 the NPPF states that local plans should identify land where development be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historical significance.

Sub regional

South Hampshire Strategy (PUSH October 2012)

Strategic Gaps

- 2.4 Strategic Gaps form another important element of the Borough Council's spatial strategy. Policy 15 of the latest South Hampshire Strategy relates to gaps and recognises the need to designate a gap between Fareham/Gosport and Stubbington/Lee-on-the-Solent.
- 2.5 The Strategy identifies a number of functions for the gaps. These tracts of undeveloped land help maintain the individual character and identity of

settlements, keeping them separate from each other, They help retain open land adjacent to urban areas which can be used for new or enhanced recreation and other green infrastructure purposes. They aim to shape settlement patterns and to influence the location of planned development; not to stifle it. Consequently the boundaries of gaps need to be defined in tandem whilst enabling sufficient land to meet development needs.

- 2.6 In 2008, the PUSH Joint Committee adopted a Policy Framework which sets out criteria for the designation of Gaps in order to ensure consistency across South Hampshire. Gaps which cross authority boundaries need a coordinated approach to ensure that their designation and there is aligned across the boundary.

Local Policy

- 2.7 The adopted Gosport Borough Local Plan Review (2006) in Policy R/DP1 defines the urban area and this is shown on the Proposals Map.

3.0 EVIDENCE

Determining the Urban Area Boundary

- 3.1 The Urban Area Boundary has been a long-established planning tool which presumes in favour of development within the boundary and thereby helping to make the most efficient use of urban land, similarly there is a presumption against development outside of the urban area (with certain exceptions) and thereby helping to preserve open land on the urban/rural fringe and maintain important gaps within and between built-up areas. It is consequently an important element of the spatial strategy.
- 3.2 Maintaining this approach has been considered to be in accordance with NPPF by defining areas where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and clearly identifying those areas outside which require protection from most forms of development.
- 3.3 To help review the boundary of the 2006 Gosport Borough Local Plan Review a number of detailed criteria have been taken into account:
- Consideration of residential land and employment land supply in relation to the South Hampshire Strategy to consider whether there was a need to develop land in the area currently outside of the urban area boundary;
 - Consideration of specific assessment criteria
 - areas within the urban area boundary should have a distinct urban nature; and
 - areas outside of the urban area should have a more rural character or be part of the Borough's strategic open spaces such as the Alver Valley, Browdown, Stokes Bay and the Lee Clifflands.
 - Consideration of the PUSH Policy Framework on Strategic Gaps (PUSH 2008) which would help define certain parts of the urban area boundary in relation to the following objectives of the Framework;
 - the open nature/sense of separation between settlements cannot be retained by other policy designations;
 - the land to be included within the gap performs an important role in defining the settlement character of the area and separating settlements at risk of coalescence;

- in defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included having regard to maintaining their physical and visual separation.
- Meeting with Fareham Borough Council and their consultants to ensure a common approach across the boundary;
- Consideration of particular issues since the Gosport Borough Local Plan Review was adopted and other matters for officer consideration including:
 - proposals and future potential at the Solent Enterprise Zone at Daedalus and whether it is appropriate to amend the existing Urban Area Boundary and allow further development;
 - the boundaries of MoD and defence-related employment uses currently outside of the urban area boundary and whether such sites or parts of such sites should be within the urban area (particularly the Frater/Bedenham area);
 - whether to retain established narrow gaps between built-up areas which are currently outside of the Urban Area Boundary.

3.4 This assessment concluded that:

- The Urban Area Boundary remains an important and clear planning tool and is consistent with the NPPF;
- The process of defining the Fareham/Gosport and Stubbington/Lee-on-the-Solent Strategic Gap in accordance with the South Hampshire Strategy and in liaison with Fareham Borough Council has established that the edge of parts of the Strategic Gap are coincident with large sections of the proposed urban area boundary;
- It is proposed to include an area on the northern edge of the Daedalus site within Gosport between the mixed used allocation as shown on the 2006 proposals Map and the Borough boundary within the urban area boundary. This area south of the airfield both in term of function and visually forms part of the built-up area of Daedalus within Gosport Borough. The Borough Council has previously come to this conclusion when granting planning permission for buildings associated with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Driving test Centre within this area. This approach was also included in the Council's Daedalus Supplementary Planning Document which has now been adopted following public consultation which raised no significant concerns to this amendment. The change will provide greater certainty to developers wishing to proceed with planning applications in association with the Enterprise Zone.
- As part of this revision to the boundary at Daedalus it was also considered appropriate to also include the allotment land and other small areas of adjoining land within the urban area, particularly as the new main access road to Daedalus will provide a new urban edge to the Borough.
- It was also considered appropriate to amend the urban area boundary in relation to land at Frater/Bedenham taking into account that a number of employment buildings close to the A32 were more urban and contiguous with the rest of the urban area. However it was considered that the less intensive parts of the site should remain outside the urban area boundary.
- It was considered that urban area boundary should be redefined in the area around the vacant Qinetiq Alverstoke site on Fort Road. This area has a strong relationship with the wider Stokes Bay area (as identified in the Council's Townscape Assessment 2013) which is also outside of the urban area boundary. Fort Road provides a clear visual boundary at this location.
- Minor amendments were also made in association with the planning application for the Alver Village scheme which included a strip of land previously outside the urban area for housing

- It was concluded that generally the large 'established corridors/wedges of green areas and creeks which penetrate deep into the urban area should also remain outside the urban area as they perform a useful townscape function on a strategic scale. However some changes were considered appropriate such as:
 - Including an area immediately west of Gosport Town Centre within the urban area. This includes the north part of Walpole Park (north of South Street), St George Barracks South Playing Fields and a small area north of Mumby Road. This land is an important part of Gosport's heritage as it represents part of the Gosport Lines and consequently represents a critical element in the development of the town. However its character is considered to be part of the urban area. The integrity of this open area within the townscape can be maintained through open space designations.
 - Including a row of houses in Rowner village within the urban area which had been previously excluded. These properties are adjacent the built-up area and considered part of the urban area.

4.0 CONSULTATION

Main Consultations to date including:

- Consultation at each plan-making stage:
 - Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: Consultation Draft (Dec 2012- Feb 2013);
 - Core Strategy : Preferred Options (GBC December 2009);
 - Core Strategy: Issues and Option (GBC December 2006);
 - The Community Strategy and Local Development Framework: Make Your Mark December 2006 events (held in December 2006 Gosport Partnership); and
- On-going meetings with key stakeholders

Defining the urban area boundary

Preferred Options Core Strategy

- 4.1 Comments were made by two organisations (landowners) regarding the urban area boundary as part of the Core Strategy: Preferred Options consultation. The first comment states that the Plan should set out the basis including a set of criteria to review the boundary and that this should not simply be rolled forward from the current Local Plan Review (2006). The review of the boundary was considered in line with criteria set out in section 3.
- 4.2 The second comment considered that the allotments at Little Anglesey Road should be included within the urban area boundary. Following the review of the urban area boundary as outlined in section 3 it was considered that the Little Anglesey Road allotments site contributed the setting of the creek at Haslar Lake reinforcing the open and natural feel of the area and should remain outside of the urban area boundary.
- 4.3 The designation of a settlement gap also has a bearing on the urban area boundary. Four organisations supported the retention of a gap between

Gosport/Fareham and Lee-on-the-Solent/Stubbington (PUSH, two organisations with interests in Daedalus airfield and a local business).

Consultation Draft of Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029

- 4.4 The consultation on the draft local plan resulted in two main comments on the urban area boundary both made by Milln Gate Gosport LLP (Barton Willmore).
- 4.5 The first comment was an objection to the inclusion of the eastern part of the 'Brockhurst Gate' [Civil Service Sports Ground] Site outside the Urban Area Boundary (UAB) as this prevents the site from being developed unless it is proposed for appropriate recreational uses or development essential to the operational requirements of public and other essential services. To justifiably fall outside the UAB, land should therefore be (i): part of the countryside; (ii) required to maintain the open character; (iii) be of ecological value; and (iv) be of recreational value. The western part of the Site does not fulfil any of these functions. By including this site together with part of the DM land on the opposite side of Heritage Way within the UAB would then offer a more robust, defensible and regular shaped boundary to separate this suburban area from genuine rural landscape to the north-east on the opposite side of Heritage Way. This would then avoid the current arbitrary boundary which serves no particular function when assessed against the Local Plan objectives for including land outside the UAB.
- 4.6 The second comment related to including land within the DM Gosport site within the Urban Area Boundary. By including this site together with part of the DIO land on the opposite side of Heritage Way to the Brockhurst Gate site within the UAB it was argued that this offered a more robust, defensible and regular shaped boundary to separate this suburban area from genuine rural landscape to the north-east on the opposite side of Heritage Way. Similar to the point above this would then avoid the current arbitrary boundary which serves no particular function when assessed against the Local Plan objectives for including land outside the UAB.

5.0 KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE LOCAL PLAN

- 5.1 As a result of the available evidence, policy framework and comments received from consultation the Local Plan has been required to addresses a number of issues. These issues and an overview of how they have been addressed are set out below.
- 5.2 It was seen from the assessment undertaken as outlined in section 3 that the urban area boundary needed to be reviewed. The draft Local Plan (consultation December 2012) made a number of changes to the urban area boundary and these are outlined paragraph 3.4.
- 5.3 Following the consultation on the draft local plan further issues were raised surrounding the site at Brockhurst Gate. The issues were considered and as a result it is proposed to amend the Urban Area Boundary in two locations.

- 5.4 First to include an area south of Heritage Way within the urban area which includes the Civil Service Sports Ground and the open space to the north west of Fort Brockhurst. The amendment is justified on the grounds that it would appear that Heritage Way would be a more robust boundary to define the urban edge in this instance. The site now has a more 'urban' than 'rural' feel given the view to the east of the Heritage Way industrial area (completed since the current Plan was adopted in 2006). This together with the office buildings to the north of DM Gosport and proposed development site (Frater House) and Gosport Leisure Park to the west would confirm that this is an important opening within the urban area rather than an area outside of it. The sports field and the open space to the north-west of the Fort therefore represents a very important opening within the urban area which needs to be protected. It is important to the setting of the historic Fort and taken singularly and together provide a number of important recreational functions.
- 5.5 The second amendment is to include an additional area of land North of Heritage Way within the DM Gosport site. The area to be included in the Urban Area has a closer association both visually and function with the more managed area immediately adjacent the DM Office buildings than the more open pasture type land to the east.

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