



## Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038 (Regulation 18) Consultation

Representations by Persimmon Homes (South Coast)

03 December 2021

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This response is submitted by Persimmon Homes South Coast in response to the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2038, Regulation 18 Consultation Document. The Draft Plan has been produced by Gosport Borough Council (the Council).
- 1.2 The Draft Plan contains strategic policies, allocations, area-based policies, and development management policies. The new planning strategy will help to identify development needs as well as areas that need improvement or protection. In due course, it will replace the current development plan for the Gosport Borough area which comprises the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted October 2015).

## 2 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 DUTY TO COOPERATE

2.1.1 As stated in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), local planning authorities (LPA) are required to cooperate with neighbouring authorities and other bodies when preparing, or supporting the preparation of policies which address strategic matters. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that authorities should produce, maintain, and update one or more statement(s) of common ground (SoCG), throughout the plan-making process (our emphasis).

2.1.2 Gosport is located in the South of Hampshire and is a full member of the Partnership for South Hampshire (PFSH). PFSH provides a platform for addressing strategic and cross-boundary issues through jointly commissioned evidence based documents and sub-regional planning. While it is recognised that PFSH could be regarded as a suitable 'other body', under the terms of the PPG, the guidance stipulates that this should be in addition to cooperation between neighbouring authorities - not instead of. Therefore, cooperation should be conducted directly with those the neighbouring LPAs of Fareham Borough Council).

2.1.3 The PFSH Statement of Common Ground Revisions and Update (published in the 25 October 2021 PFSH Joint Committee Papers) sets out within Table 4 housing need and supply across the sub-region, including for Gosport.

| Local Authority                 | Annual Housing Need using Standard Method (dpa) | Total housing need 2021 – 2036 | Supply = Commitments, local plan allocations + windfall estimate | Shortfall/ surplus |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| East Hants (part)               | 107   | 1,605                          | 1,177  | -428               |
| Eastleigh                       | 675   | 10,125                         | 7,469  | -2,656             |
| Fareham                         | 541   | 8,115                          | 9,922 <sup>26</sup>  | +1,807             |
| Gosport                         | 328   | 4,920                          | 2,481  | -2,439             |
| Havant                          | 507   | 7,605                          | 8,615  | +1,010             |
| New Forest                      | 993   | 14,895                         | 9,581  | -5,314             |
| Portsmouth                      | 872   | 13,080                         | 12,618   | -462               |
| Southampton                     | 1,389   | 20,835                         | 13,490   | -7,345             |
| Test Valley (part)              | 180   | 2,700                          | 3,211  | +511               |
| Winchester (part) <sup>27</sup> | 226   | 3,390                          | 5,810  | +2,420             |
| Total                           | 5,818   | 87,270                         | 74,374   | -12,896            |

2.1.4 As shown in Table 4 above, Gosport has identified sites to deliver 2,481 houses across the period 2021-2036. When housing supply is considered against housing need (4,920 dwellings), there is an evident shortfall of 2,439 dwellings in the Borough. Within the Local Plan consultation document, which considers a plan period from 2021-2038, the overall supply equates e 3,500 dwellings – resulting in an unmet need of only 2,076 dwellings. It is not possible, given the difference in Plan period between the two sets of data, to determine whether not PFSH are fully aware of the extent of Gosport's unmet need. What the data does indicate though is that the Council is intending on delivering over 1,000 dwellings during the last two years of the Local Plan (i.e. 2036/37 and 2037/38. This would

seem unlikely and unachievable particularly given that the Council is seeking a housing requirement that is lower than LHN due supply land supply issues in the Borough.

- 2.1.5 Notwithstanding the above concerns, based on our analysis of the Council's Plan, the unmet need emanating from Gosport Borough is likely to be significantly higher, c. 3,212 dwellings across the Local Plan period (a figure which is also considerably higher than that currently being considered in the PFSH SoCG).
- 2.1.7 Given this considerable unmet need, and in order for the Council to comply with its obligations under the Duty to Cooperate, a separate SoCG's should be produced with Fareham Borough Council (as an immediate LPA neighbour) to demonstrating how effective cooperation on key strategic matters has been undertaken, particularly in respect of housing. It is not acceptable for the Council to rely on the PFSH SoCG to address the unmet need, particularly given the discrepancy between figures being considered sub-regional level and those evident through our analysis of the Local Plan data. Given the importance of ensuring that supply is boosted in line with the NPPF, and the scale of the housing challenge in the sub-region (see PFSH SoCG Table above), candid discussions with neighbouring authorities (including representations towards the submitted Fareham Local Plan) regarding Gosport's extensive unmet housing needs must occur now and before neighbouring Local Plans become too advanced to address this issue.

### 3 LOCAL PLAN SOUNDNESS

#### 3.1 LOCAL PLAN VIABILITY

3.1.1 It is noted that there is no a viability assessment underpinning the draft Local Plan. This work is critical, particularly for the proposed Strategic Site allocations where delivery will be very complicated with likely high build costs. Our concerns regarding the viability of the Strategic Sites is discussed in greater detail in Section 4 of these representations. Alongside this, it is also incumbent upon the Council to test the cumulative costs of the various policy requirements proposed in the Plan (for example, affordable housing, ecology – including biodiversity net gain requirements - and building standards) on the viability of sites proposed for allocation.

#### 3.2 PLAN PERIOD

3.2.1 Paragraph 22 of the NPPF requires that local plans cover at least a fifteen-year period from the date of adoption. The Council's most recent Local Development Scheme (LDS) (September 2021) states that a Regulation 19 (Publication) draft Plan will be published for consultation in Autumn 2022, with adoption of the final Plan expected in two years' time in Autumn 2023. In this context, the Gosport Plan sets out a plan period of 2021-2038 (i.e. 17 years).

3.2.2 As set out in these representations, given the significant identified flaws in the draft Plan (particularly in relation to housing and the Council's approach to discharging its duty to cooperate), it is considered highly likely that the Local Plan timetable will be delayed. Should this be the case, an extension to the plan period in line with provisions set out in the NPPF will be required. The consequence of this will be that additional housing sites will need to be identified in the Plan (and potentially exported to neighbouring authorities) so that housing needs in Gosport and the wider Housing Market Area can be met.

#### 3.3 HOUSING TRAJECTORY

3.3.1 Paragraph 68 of the NPPF states that, '*Planning policies should identify a supply of: specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period and developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan*'. In order to demonstrate that sufficient sites have been identified to meet housing need, the NPPF also requires that, '*Strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period.*' (Paragraph 74)

3.3.2 Contrary to national planning guidance, we have not been able to find a detailed housing trajectory within the draft Plan nor within the Council's supporting evidence base. This lack of information means that it is has not been possible to analyse whether the Council has met its obligations under Paragraph 68 of the NPPF. As a result, as currently drafted, the Plan cannot be considered sound.

3.3.3 The production of a realistic housing trajectory, that can be properly interrogated, is particularly important given the likely complexity associated with redeveloping the Strategic Sites identified in the Plan. Taking, the Royal Haslar Hospital Strategic Site (Policy SS6) as an example, the outline planning application for this scheme was validated

in June 2013 and determined in September 2014<sup>1</sup>. Detailed approval has been secured for first three phases of development<sup>2</sup> comprising 128 C3 dwellings and 299 C2 units. The applicant is now in the process of discharging pre-commencement conditions associated with Phase 3, over eight years on from the original outline approval. Given that further phases of the re-development scheme still require approval (c. 158 C3 units) and taking into account the site's planning timescales to date, it would not be unreasonable to assume a circa 15 year time frame from consent to completion of the scheme. This site provides an indication of the length of time that it will take to deliver the Strategic Sites in the Plan. As such, the Council would be well advised to take a precautionary approach to delivery expectation in the Plan when it produces its housing trajectory.

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<sup>1</sup> 12/0059/OUT comprising 286 residential units (C3) and 304 units of care accommodation (C2) and supporting uses.

<sup>2</sup> Phase 1: Redevelopment of the Main Hospital to provide 136 C2 units; Redevelopment of the Canada Block and adjacent buildings to provide 93 C2 units and 8 C3 units; and Phase 3 Redevelopment of the Zymotic Building to provide 120 C3 units.

## 4 STRATEGIC SITES

4.1.1 The Council has identified three Urban Regeneration Areas in the Borough:

- R1 Harbour Regeneration Area (HBRA)
- R2 Rowner and HMS Sultan Regeneration Area (RSRA)
- R3 Daedalus Regeneration Area (DRA)

4.1.2 Development within these areas will deliver the majority of the growth proposed in the Borough. Each of the Regeneration Areas comprise a number of Strategic Sites, which each comprise a number of individual development sites. This section of these representations firstly considers how the key constraints that are common the Strategic Sites (notably flooding, heritage and ecology) will impact on the delivery of the Councils redevelopment proposals. With reference to the SHLAA, each individual development site is then considered against the suitability, availability and achievability tests set out in the NPPF to ascertain whether or not the sites can be considered deliverable<sup>3</sup> or developable<sup>4</sup> for housing.

### Flooding Constraints

4.1.3 As a coastal Borough, flooding is a considerable issue for the Plan area. The draft Plan highlights that the majority of the Strategic Sites, located within the Urban Regeneration Areas, are situated within Flood Zone 2 or 3.

4.1.4 In line with the Planning and Flood Risk section of the NPPF, it is incumbent upon the Council to ensure that: *'inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk'* (Paragraph 159). To achieve this, the Plan should applying the Sequential Test to sites and then, if necessary, the Exception Test in line with NPPF, Paragraph 159.

4.1.5 In support of the affected Strategic Sites, the Council has produced a Level 1 Interim Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (September 2021) (iSFRA). The iSFRA indicates that, of the 3,500 dwelling supply set out in the Plan, 211 dwellings and 1,342 dwellings fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3, respectively. As a result, these affected sites have been subject to the Sequential Test within the iSFRA. The Council has then made the assumption that, as there are no alternative sites in the Borough to deliver the quantum and mix of commercial and residential uses, the Sequential Test has been passed for those sites affected by flooding.

4.1.6 However, this approach is flawed as it fails to consider Paragraph: 020 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Reference ID: 7-020-20140306) regarding the application of the Sequential Test. This section of the PPG states that:

*'More than one local planning authority may jointly review development options over a wider area where this could potentially broaden the scope for opportunities to reduce flood risk and put the most vulnerable development in lower flood risk areas.'*

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<sup>3</sup> Deliverable: To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

<sup>4</sup> Developable: To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

- 4.1.7 In this regard, it is noted that Gosport is relying on joint flood risk evidence commissioned by PFSH, and work undertaken by the Coastal Partnership (which includes Fareham Borough, Havant Borough and Portsmouth). Gosport is also a full member of the PFSH, which provides a forum for considering the sub-regional distribution of housing needs across South Hampshire. In light of these well-established joint-working processes, the Council should be considering, as part of its Duty to Cooperate discussions, whether it would be more appropriate to export housing needs to other neighbouring LPA, instead of directing inappropriate development to areas that are at risk of flooding.

#### Heritage Constraints

- 4.1.8 The quality of Gosport's environment is reflected in its built heritage relating to its naval and maritime history. Gosport has many Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. The Urban Regeneration Areas identified in the Plan include a number of these important heritage assets such as: Fort Blockhouse, buildings associated with the Royal Navy (i.e. Priddy's Hard, Royal Clarence Yard and Daedalus) and the former military hospital on the Haslar peninsula. The Council is seeking to regenerate these areas by capitalising on its coastal location and their heritage assets.
- 4.1.9 Taking into account Paragraph 190 of the NPPF, particularly in relation to '*the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*', the Council's ambition to redevelop these areas is positive. However, the Council has not demonstrated that these site should be developed.
- 4.1.11 Historic England are a key statutory consultee for issues associated with the historic environment. It is not clear from the Plan whether the redevelopment proposals have the support of Historic England. As this stage, and in the absence of historic environment evidence and support by Historic England, it may not be possible to consider some of the Strategic Sites (or parts thereof) as being sound.
- 4.1.12 A number of the Strategic Sites policies also require re-development to be preceded by production of detailed design guidance (i.e. Masterplan, SPD or similar). This, alongside the requirements of emerging Policy D10: Heritage Assets, means that redevelopment proposals will need to be carefully and sensitively designed in recognition of the challenges often associated with development affecting historic assets. In the absence of this detailed design work, it is unclear how the Council has determined the expected capacities of the sites proposed for allocation in the Plan. A consequence of this is that the anticipated housing supply set out in the Plan could be overestimated.

#### Land Ownership Constraints

- 4.1.13 It is noted that many strategic sites proposed for allocation in the draft plan comprise a number of development plots/buildings that are subject to multiple ownerships and, in some cases, existing leases. Furthermore, as noted in the SHLAA, some of the strategic sites have been included within the Plan without knowing who owns the land, how many landowners there are, and/or whether owners are actually willing to bring forward the land. The SHLAA further notes that it is unknown whether there are any land/legal issues that would need to be resolved. These issues can create considerable complexity both
- 4.1.14 in terms of land assembly and achieving a co-ordinated approach to development. This

is turn can have significant impact upon the availability of sites for development, and the timing for when sites may come forward within the plan period.

- 4.1.15 As such, further work is need in respect of these issues before some of the strategic sites (or parts thereof) can be described as deliverable or developable under the terms of the NPPF.

#### Viability Constraints

- 4.1.16 The viability of the Plan as a whole is discussed in Section 2 above. However, as set out Paragraph 68 of the NPPF, when identifying land for new homes, the Council should also consider the specific circumstances of sites, including whether they are likely to be viable.

- 4.1.17 As shown within the SHLAA, the redevelopment of many of the Strategic Sites will be subject to considerable abnormal development costs, most notably in respect of: heritage conservation, the re-purposing/demolition of buildings (including listed buildings), de-contamination/land remediation, infrastructure costs (including for flood protection measures) and ecology mitigation measures. Allied to this, the SHLAA acknowledges that, in order for some sites to come forward, external funding may be required. However, neither the Local Plan, nor the SHLAA, sets out the extent of funding that will be needed, where/when funding will obtain from nor, ultimately, whether or not the site will be viable in the context of significant development costs.

- 4.1.18 In the absence of any viability evidence, it is not possible to confirm whether the development proposals envisaged in the plan are likely to be achievable / viable. As such, with reference to the deliverability/developability tests of the NPPF, it is evident that some of the Strategic Site should either not be allocated, or that it is premature to do so until the necessary viability work has been carried out.

#### **4.2 Policy SS2: Gosport Waterfront (Mixed-Use Development)**

- 4.2.1 Policy SS2 relates to the coastal area located between Priddy's Hard to the north and Blockhouse Marina on the Haslar Peninsula to the south. Policy SS2 indicates that 470 new dwellings will be delivered within the Gosport Waterfront area. The redevelopment area is divided into three individual sites within SS2, these being:

- Priddy's Hard Heritage Area (120 dwellings) SHLAA Ref: HD005<sup>5</sup>
- Land at Gosport Marina (300 dwellings) SHLAA Ref: WTSPD03; and
- Land at Mumby Lorry Park (50 dwellings) SHLAA Ref: WTSPD11

- 4.2.2 As set out Table 2 of the draft Plan, a further two sites are identified as falling with this area:

- West of Harbour Road (70 units) SHLAA Ref: WTSPD05
- Former Crewsaver site<sup>6</sup> (10 units) SHLAA Ref: WTSPD06

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to 29 dwellings already permitted at Priddy's Yard.

<sup>6</sup> In addition to 31 units permitted at the Crew Saver Site.

4.2.3 The SHLAA has assessed each of these sites, and concluded that they are capable of being allocated. However, in addition to the flooding, heritage, ownership and viability constraints discussed in the section above, there are other site specific issues that may prevent these sites being developed. These constraints are discussed below.

Land at Gosport Marina (SHLAA Ref: WTSPD03)

- 4.2.4
- Site is not suitable. The site is a part of a designated Protected Employment Land. The Employment Background Paper (September 2021) highlights the important role this site plays in providing deep water access to the harbour. The Joint Economic Development Needs Assessment and Economic Land Availability Assessment (November 2018) also recognises the important role this site plays in marine industry and that such sites should be retained and enhanced. The Council has not indicated how this loss of employment floorspace will be re-provided. The site should therefore be discounted from the supply.
  - Capacity: The SHLAA indicates that the capacity of the site is 190 dwellings, whereas the Draft Plan states within the Policy SS2 that the site has potential for approximately 300 dwellings. It is unclear why there is a discrepancy between the two figures. Notwithstanding our overriding concerns regarding the suitability of this site for development (see above), in light of the SHLAA conclusions, the site capacity set out in Policy SS2 should be reduced to 110 dwellings.

Land at Mumby Lorry Park (SHLAA Ref: WTSPD11)

- 4.2.5
- Site not available. The Council has not produced its car parking strategy to demonstrate that this site is available and therefore it can be developed. Furthermore, the SHLAA indicates that the site is owned by the MOD who have not confirmed that it is available for development. In light of these key constraints to development, this site should be discounted from the supply.

West of Harbour Road (SHLAA Ref: WTSPD05)

- 4.2.6
- Site is not suitable. The site is part of the Gosport Waterfront designated Protected Employment Site. The Joint Economic Development Needs Assessment and Economic Land Availability Assessment (November 2018) describes the site as *'as a being of sub-regional significance and to be protected through local plans'*. The report also highlights that: *'Such a collection of [marine related employment] assets is not located elsewhere in Gosport and would be very difficult to establish such a cluster in another Gosport location.'* As such, the site should be discounted from the Plan supply at this stage.

4.2.7 In light of the above review, the overall capacity of SS2 should be reduced to 120 dwellings as there is insufficient evidence to support the allocation of the following sites:

- Gosport Marina (minus 300 dwellings)
- Mumby Lorry Park (minus 50 dwellings)

4.2.8 In addition, a further 70 units should also be discounted from the overall supply as the site to the West of Harbour Road West is also unlikely to be suitable for development.

### 4.3 *Policy SS3: Gosport Town Centre*

4.3.1 Policy SS3 relating to Gosport Town Centre includes the High Street, South Street, Bus Station. The areas that are predominately residential are centred on Clarence Road and Trinity Green. The Draft Plan indicates that 870 to 960 new dwellings will be delivered in the Town Centre.

4.3.2 The Gosport Town Centre redevelopment area is divided into four individual sites within SS3, these being:

- High Street and South Street (550 dwellings)
- Land at Gosport Bus Station (150 to 240 dwellings)
- Land at Former Police Station (90 dwellings)
- Land at Barclay house & East of Barclay House (80 dwellings)

4.3.3 As set out Table 2 of the draft Plan, a further four sites are also identified as falling with this area:

- Gosport Precinct – 24 units; and
- 9-11 High Street – 7 units; and
- 17A High Street – 9 units; and
- Various sources of supply including surplus car parks, increasing heights of appropriate buildings and sites behind the High Street – 138 units

4.3.4 The SHLAA has assessed each of this sites, and concluded that they are capable of being allocated. However, in addition to the constraints identified above, there are site specific issues that may prevent some of these sites from being developed. These constraints are discussed below.

#### High Street and South Street

4.3.5

- Capacity: Policy SS2 states that area can deliver approximately 550 dwellings. However, based on the sites included in the SHLAA, this area will only provide 158 dwellings across the plan period. It is unclear how capacity for this part of the Strategic Site as set out in Policy SS3 has been arrived at. The Plan seems to indicate that the additional supply will be achieved thorough delivery of redevelopment of surplus car parks, increasing heights of appropriate buildings and sites. However, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that c. 400 dwellings will be delivered through these sources. As such, 392 dwellings should be deducted from this element of the Town Centre Strategic Site.

#### Land at Gosport Bus Station (SHLAA Ref WTSPD01a)

4.3.6

- Site Capacity: Policy SS3 sets out a range of 150 to 240 dwellings for this site. This range appears to arise due to uncertainties of whether or not a hotel will be delivered on the site. Table 2 of the Plan, which sets out the overall supply for the draft Plan, applies the upper end of this range. In so doing, the assumption is made that a hotel will not be delivered at the site. As a hotel is included as part of the SS3 policy, the Council should take a precautionary approach to its capacity estimates for this site and apply the lower end of the

range (i.e. 150 dwellings) in its over supply figures in Table 2. Alongside this, the capacity of this site should be expressed in Policy SS3 as ‘at least’ 150 dwellings.

Land at Barclay House (Extended Area) (SHLAA Ref WTSPD33)

- 4.3.7
- Part of the site is unsuitable. This site includes Land East of Barclay House (SHLAA Ref WTSPD34), the majority of which is designated as protected open space. The Council’s Open Space Monitoring Report (2021) states that this area of Open Space (T6) is of High Quality and High Value. The Council has not demonstrated that this open space is not required, or how any alternative provision will off-set such loss. In addition, the site mostly comprises woodland. The Council has not provided any evidence to show how these loss of trees will be compensation not how Biodiversity Net Gain will be achievable at the site.
  - Site not available: The SHLAA indicates that the site is only partly owned by the Council and an agreement has not yet been secured from all the other owners that the site can be redeveloped.
  - In light of these key constraints to development, this site should be discounted from the supply

4.3.8 In light of the above analysis, it is calculated that the capacity of Policy SS3 should be revised to 398 units due to discounting of the following sites from the supply:

- High Street and South Street (minus 392 units)
- Land at Gosport Bus Station (minus 90 units)
- Land at Barclay House (minus 80 units)

**4.4 Conclusions on Strategic Sites**

4.4.1 Whilst it is accepted that Local Plans should be aspirational, they must also be deliverable. With regards to housing, this is particularly important as underscored by the specific NPPF tests on site deliverability and developability.

4.4.2 Based on the above analysis of the Strategic Sites proposed in the Plan, and as illustrated in the Table below, it is considered likely that the Council has overestimated its supply position by some 982 units. This will leave a significant shortfall in housing that will need to be addressed elsewhere in Gosport or, as is more likely given the land supply constraints in the Borough, redistributed to the neighbouring local authority areas as part of the duty to co-operate.

|                         | LPA Assessment of Supply | Persimmon Assessment of Supply | Difference |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| SS2 Gosport Waterfront  | 470 <sup>7</sup>         | 120                            | -350       |
| West of Harbour Road    | 70                       | 0                              | -70        |
| SS3 Gosport Town Centre | 960*                     | 398                            | -562       |
| Total                   | 1,500                    | 518                            | - 982      |

\*Applies upper end of range as per Table 2 of the draft Plan

<sup>7</sup> Assumes that the capacity of Gosport Marina is 300 dwellings as per Policy SS2.

## 5 OTHER DRAFT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

### 5.1 **Policy D2: - Development Strategy**

5.1.1 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states that:

*'To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals...'*

5.1.2 As set out in Box 4 of the Local Plan, the Council has calculated its Local Housing Need (LHN) using the standard method as being 5,576 dwellings over the plan period, which is equivalent to 328 dpa (rounded).

5.1.3 As set out in Planning Guidance, LHN is the starting point for determining a housing requirement and should be regarded a minimum number. In line with Paragraph 010 (Reference ID: 2a-010-20201216) of the PPG, the Council should consider whether further housing growth may be needed to address the unmet needs of neighbouring LPAs, or in order to support the local economic growth strategies / aspirations<sup>8</sup> for the local area and the wider South Hampshire area (including work by PfSH and the LEP).

5.1.4 The Council's Plan does not considered whether there is scope to increase housing need in line with the PPG advice, instead the Council has focussed on seeking to justify a 'supply-led' housing requirement that is lower than the baseline LHN. The Council's justification for this approach is set out in Paragraph 3.65 of the Housing Background Paper, which is extracted below:

*'It is clear that given the sites available, the Borough's already built-up nature and various ecological and other environmental constraints as well as the need to provide a balanced community with sufficient employment opportunities that it will not be possible to provide a sufficient amount of land to accommodate 5,576 homes in the Borough. This would currently mean that the Borough has an unmet need of 2,076 dwellings (assuming a supply of 3,500 dwellings is achieved).'*

5.1.5 Given the nature of the Borough and its context, it may well be appropriate for the Council to take a 'supply-led' housing requirement approach. However, the Council will need to demonstrate that 'exceptional circumstances' exist in order to justify this approach.

5.1.6 Notwithstanding, should the Council proceed with a 'supply-led' approach, this does not mean that any unmet LHN disappears. Quite the opposite, it compounds the importance of: 1) demonstrating that Plan's estimated housing supply is robust and accurate and; 2) that the Council has engaged constructively and candidly with its neighbouring authorities (and through PfSH) to ensure that its unmet housing need are being appropriately addressed. However, as discussed in the preceding Sections of these representations, the Council has not adequately addressed these points.

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<sup>8</sup> Such as the Gosport Infrastructure Investment Plan (Feb 2019), the Gosport Economic Development Strategy (2021) and/or Heritage Action Zone

5.17 Firstly, the Council has failed to undertake a robust assessment of its supply. As set out in the Housing Background Paper, the Council acknowledges that the supply set out in the Plan equates to (3,344 dwellings), which is insufficient to meet the proposed housing requirement of 3,500 dwellings. The Background Paper further states that additional sites could come forward during this consultation that could be used to ‘top-up’ the supply. This is unacceptable approach to plan-making as it has effectively concealed 156 dwellings of unmet need that should have been discussed with Gosport’s neighbouring authorities as part of the Duty to Cooperate. Consequentially, Gosport’s unmet need is at least 2,232 dwellings (as opposed to 2,079 dwellings as set out in the Plan). Compounding this issue further is that a number of the sites identified in the Plan (and as discussed under Section 4 above), that are unlikely to come forward for development. In light of the above analysis of sites, Gosport’s overall housing supply should be reduced by a further 982 dwellings, resulting in **unmet need of at least 3,212 dwellings**. Further reductions to supply may be needed given the ‘strategic constraints’ discussed in Section 3.

5.1.8 Therefore, Policy D2 – Development Strategy, fails the NPPF soundness test as the policy is not justified as an appropriate strategy when considered against proportionate evidence, nor is it effective in terms of deliverability or consistent with national policy. Furthermore, with regards the Duty to Cooperate issues in relation to cooperation on housing matters, the Draft Plan fails the necessary legal tests.

## 5.2 Policy D3: - Urban Regeneration Area

5.2.1 Policy D3 sets out common considerations for all of the Urban Regeneration Areas (URA). The three URAs consist of the Harbour, Rowner and HMS Sultan and Daedulas. Housing in the URAs will be a key element of the new development proposals. However, allied to our comments the Strategic Sites, we are of the view that Criterion 1a of Policy D3 that indicates that the URAs will deliver at least 2,600 new homes, is not realistic with reference to the deliverability / developability tests of the NPPF. As such, it is contended that some of the sites within the URAs should either not be allocated or that it is premature to do so until further work carried out to address constraints.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 These representations demonstrate that the Council has failed the legal requirement with regards to the Duty to Co-operate, particularly with regards to the housing supply identified and unmet housing need in the Gosport draft Plan. Further engagement is urgently required with neighbouring authorities, particularly Fareham Borough (alongside on-going discussions through the PfSH), with regards to addressing the unmet housing needs of Gosport.
- 6.1.2 With regards to the delivery of the Strategic Sites identified in the Plan, the analysis of in this report indicates that the Council is likely to have significantly overestimated its supply from these site. In many cases the Council has not produced the necessary evidence to demonstrate that all the key sites in the Plan are either deliverable or developable, and therefore capable of being allocated for development.
- 6.1.3 The effect of this overestimation of supply, coupled with the Council proposal for a supply-led housing requirement in the Plan, underscores the importance of the Council revisiting the Duty-to-Cooperate discussions with its neighbouring LPAs over how the increasing unmet needs in the Borough can be addressed.