

1. To reduce the overall housing allocation for Hart District
2. Demand that the Council develops a vision and strategy for Hart that retains its role as a rural, green hinterland for NE Hampshire that respects the separate character and identity of Hart's settlements and landscapes and preserves the green spaces as amenity space for the urban settlements.
3. To require that the housing need is met by building on brownfield sites and increasing density in our existing urban areas
4. To request that future housing stock reflects the needs of the changing demographics of the district.
5. To demand the council and government do not plan for any new settlement in Hart that will act as a sink for the unmet housing need in neighbouring areas.

- I. The first aspect of this challenge relates to the objectively assessed housing need figure which is the start point when preparing a local plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires us to compile our Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN). And National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) states how this should be done. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has been prepared for Hart and our neighbours in the Housing Market Area (HMA) by reputable and qualified consultants who have prepared a number of such documents. The objectively assessed housing need identified in the SHMA has been reviewed by the Cambridge Centre for Population and Housing Research, who found the findings valid. It has been further considered by a planning appeal inspector who also considered it sufficient for the purpose of determining whether Hart has a five year land supply. We are therefore satisfied that the methodology used was robust. Nevertheless, there are aspects of the SHMA that need to be updated and a review of the SHMA is currently being planned. We intend for that next version to undergo a consultation so there will be the opportunity for challenge as part of that exercise. What we cannot do is seek to engineer an artificially low housing need figure. Given the scrutiny that the SHMA will attract at examination that would inevitably render the SHMA unsound and the whole plan would fail at the first hurdle. The SHMA will however be reviewed, and if there are opportunities for a robust and defensible reduction in numbers, we will deal with that.

The second aspect is whether Hart's housing allocation can be reduced by virtue of the character of the area and various constraints. The NPPF requires us to 'plan positively' to meet the needs for development and that must be our start point. A number of studies already planned or completed will inform judgements about Hart's capacity for development, including the site assessments that are currently underway. Once all the evidence is in the Council will need to make a decision on whether it should meet housing needs in full, or whether there is a case for reducing that figure. However, apart from the SPA, Hart lacks national designations like Green Belt and AONB across most of its area. I think it would be very risky to try and justify a housing target that fails to fully meet housing needs and I do not want a failure at the examination. Any evidence for environmental quality however will be welcome.

It is thus sadly not feasible to accept this part of the petition.

2. In the light of the NPPF and the consequent housing requirements, the vision from some years ago has inevitably become outdated. As part of the new local plan, a new vision will be considered. Indeed the forthcoming consultation paper on refined housing options will include consultation on a Vision for Hart. The aspiration of preserving what we can of green spaces, particularly to separate the different settlements and their unique characters, is likely to be a feature.

In so far as it is the Council's intention to devise a new vision in line with the aspiration above, the wishes of the petitioners accord with the Council's intention.

3. Increasing densities where appropriate and the use of brownfield sites will be feature of the new local plan; I am aware that the lead petitioner has seen the recent Cabinet paper on promoting brownfield sites which crossed with this petition. However, we will be deluding ourselves if we think that this alone can meet our OAHN. I am aware of a research project performed by an architectural student which suggested inter alia inner city densities, and the development of industrial sites in current economic use. Whilst academically interesting, this suggestion is not practical in the short, medium or long term.

As for practical brownfield supply, Guillemont Park I and Landata are already in the land supply numbers. Bramshill may not happen because of the issues around listed buildings and historic parks and gardens. Of the rest we are currently forecasting about 1800 dwellings in the current plan period.

Whilst the Council's intention is to maximise brownfield use as far as practicable, it will not be feasible to accept this part of the petition as submitted.

4. The NPPF already requires us to plan for a mix of housing that takes account of changing demographics and meets housing needs. In the event that a new settlement were to be proposed, there would be opportunities to include the balanced housing within that settlement.

The wishes of the petitioners thus accord with the Council's intention and H.M. Government's policy.

5. Any requirement to accommodate excess housing from elsewhere will result from the Duty to Co-operate entrenched in the Localism Act 2011 and will be unrelated to any development proposal. Whether a new settlement is ultimately decided upon is a matter for full council and will be determined in due course after review of the evidence base, consultation and public debate.

It thus cannot be resolved either at this stage or without further public discussion.