

Fear as massive housing plan threatens town

Campaign group says 'brownfield solution' would see over 2,000 new homes built on green fields in Fleet and Hook

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FLEET and Hook will be swamped with nearly 5,500 houses if a new settlement is not built in Hart, campaigners have warned.

Pressure group FACE IT - Fleet and Crookham Environment Is Threatened - say people in Fleet, Church Crookham, Crookham Village and Hook are 'furious' that yet more houses will be built on adjacent green fields if further 'urban extension' is called for in Hart's Local Plan strategy.

The group says Hart's current Local Plan consultation has three strategic options.

"Not all the housing needed can be built on 'brownfield' land and that means building on green fields somewhere," said a spokesman.

"Much has been said about building on green fields at Winchfield, but the argument against building

on yet more of the green fields of Fleet and Hook needs to be heard."

FACE IT says Hart needs to provide around 7,000 homes in the planning period but points out that so far, Fleet and Hook have already taken 2,435 of those 7,000 on sites that already have planning permission, including the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Church Crookham (972 homes), Edenbrook in Fleet (407), Watery Lane in Crookham Village (300) and land to North West of Hook (550).

The group says in the current planning consultation the so-called urban extension option may sound like a 'brownfield' solution but would actually mean an extra 2,173 homes being built on green fields in Fleet and Hook.

It added the dispersal option may sound like sharing the housing around, but this could be yet another 891 houses on the green fields

around Fleet and Hook.

"These are areas that have already had their fair share of recent and planned development," states the group.

"Yet curiously, in both of these options none of the burden is taken by Winchfield, which is not even included in the 'dispersal' option.

"So in summary, for Fleet, Church Crookham, Crookham Village and Hook, 2,435 houses are already approved, and options 1 and 2 would give us another 891 and 2,173 houses, a total figure of 5,499."

FACE IT planning figures for school places suggest an extra 1,200 junior school places and 860 secondary school places would need to be found in the area's 'already overcrowded' schools.

"There is no prospect of a new secondary school being built local to these houses, due to lack of critical mass in any one development and lack of strategic locations for

a new secondary school," the group added.

"So is it now time to support a strategy which bites the bullet and provides a sensible strategy for the future to 2032 and beyond and have a long look at a new settlement?"

FACE IT spokesman Tony Gower-Jones said: "While we appreciate that difficult choices need to be made, FACE IT believes that the real and cumulative impact of recent multiple developments for the Fleet, Church Crookham and Hook areas has now brought them to breaking point.

"Things will continue to deteriorate as further housing already approved for the area gets built.

"It is time to look at a sensible strategic option for the district."

Hart's current consultation ends on March 18.

For more details visit www.hart.gov.uk/planning-policy.