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**Questions for Hart Council Regarding Local Plan**

I would like to ask the following questions at the council meeting on 26 February 2015

## Vision and Strategy

The earlier version of the Local Plan had a vision for Hart that was:

*The vision is for Hart to retain its role as a green, rural hinterland for North East Hampshire and the Blackwater Valley. Its essential characteristics will remain unchanged. Quality of life in Hart will be maintained or improved.*

*Where new development takes place it will*

* *respect the separate character and identity of Hart’s settlements and landscapes;*
* *be accompanied by improvements to local infrastructure; and*
* *contribute towards the social, economic and environmental well-being of Hart’s communities.*

The NPPF says *“planning should…be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with* ***succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area*”**

**Question**: What is the new positive vision for Hart that alternative scenarios are being tested against?

## Impact of additional congestion on Fleet and Church Crookham

The current preferred option for development in the Local Plan entails a new town of up to 5,000 houses at Winchfield which at its eastern most extent will be only a few hundred metres from the west end of Fleet. The SHMA appendices[[1]](#footnote-1) give an estimate of the travel to work patterns of Hart residents with many people going to work in Rushmoor, Surrey Heath, Basingstoke and Deane, Bracknell Forest, Reading and Waverley.

Many of the direct routes to these places from the proposed new town to these places will involve driving through Church Crookham, Crookham Village, Fleet, Hook and Hartley Wintney. Of course, there will be other journeys as the residents of the new town will wish to go shopping, play sports, visits friends and relatives and ferry their children around.

**Question:** What will be the additional traffic and congestion impact of the proposed new town on surrounding settlements of Church Crookham, Crookham Village, Fleet, Hook, Hartley Wintney and Odiham?

## Brownfield Sites

An analysis of the results of the FOI request (<http://wehearthart.co.uk/2015/02/hart-has-no-brownfield-strategy/> ) about brownfield sites shows that there isn’t a very robust approach to identifying and analysing brownfield sites in the district; indeed the spreadsheet supplied is internally inconsistent. Very few of the vacant office blocks (e.g. Ancells Farm, Sun Park, Bartley Wood estate in Hook) are included for consideration, despite some of them being up for sale.

Existing NPPF guidance (paras 109-111) states:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes….Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land)”

Under forthcoming Government guidance[[2]](#footnote-2), councils will be required to publish data about available brownfield land on their websites in a standardised form, enabling individuals and groups to “assess and, if necessary, challenge the inclusion or exclusion of particular sites as brownfield land suitable for housing”

**Question**: What is Hart DC’s strategy for identifying and analysing and maximising the development of brownfield sites to avoid concreting over our valuable green spaces?

## Legality of Process

In the run up to the council meeting of 27 November, the council received at least two letters from Parish Councils (Hartley Wintney and Winchfield) questioning the legality of moving from a non-site specific consultation to a definite conclusion of a new town at Winchfield.

**Question:** Has Hart DC taken independent legal advice to confirm the legality of the process taken so far and the proposed process to arrive at a draft local plan, and if so, what were the results of that advice?

1. <http://wehearthart.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/HRSH-Consultation-Draft-SHMA-Appendices-May-2014.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/general/news/stories/2015/Feb15/050215/050215_1> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)