

What sort of homes victory is this?

We Heart Hart campaign ridicules Tory claims they have helped protect area from over-development

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CONSERVATIVES have come under fire over claims they have helped protect the Fleet community from excessive development.

North East Hampshire Conservatives put out a statement saying a decision that the Hart District Council Local Plan will no longer include the 700-home Elvetham Chase development in Pale Lane was 'great news' for Fleet and Elvetham residents.

The group added that thanks to 'strong support' from Fleet Conservative councillors Steve Forster and Sharyn Wheale, Hart's cabinet also agreed to exclude other major urban extensions from the next phase of the council's Local Plan.

The preferred options, decided by Hart's all-powerful cabinet on Thursday February 9, will now be a 1,500 home minitown at Hartland Village (the former Pyestock site) and a new 1,800-home settlement at Murrell Green be-



Homes are where the Hart is: Tories Sharyn Wheale and Steve Forster believe they have got the best deal possible

tween Hartley Wintney and Hook.

"Hart's cabinet recognised Sharyn and Steve's concerns about transport, traffic, education, loss of green space, and the im-

pact of development on existing infrastructure together with the results of last year's consultation," the Conservative statement added.

It quoted Cllr Wheale as

saying Elvetham Chase is 'not an acceptable nor suitable site' for future housing.

"Allowing large urban extensions would not improve or cope with in-

creasing traffic, school places and medical needs," she added.

"Other sites considered in the Local Plan would also overload the infrastructure and thereby

providing little enhancement to our community."

Cllr Forster said: "Fleet West and Elvetham residents elected Conservatives to protect and enhance our community,

and this represents a major step forwards.

"The fight isn't over yet, but we now have a sound draft which will help defend and enhance the whole of Hart."

But the We Heart Hart campaign said: "North East Hampshire Conservatives have managed to claim victory, despite their abject failure to plan for a sensible amount of housing for Hart district.

"On Thursday, the Conservative-led Hart cabinet agreed to plan for more than 10,000 houses. This is many more than is required to meet the needs of Hart residents.

"Yet, because they have managed to avoid putting those houses near Fleet, they claim it as some sort of victory. They show no concern for Hart residents who live in the more rural areas."

The group warned that with no Local Plan, out of date policies and a 'questionable' five-year land supply, a planning inspector could well grant permission for homes at Grove Farm and Pale Lane.