

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Hart Local Plan: Strategy and Sites

Interim SA Report

April 2017

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AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited
2 Leman Street, London E1 8FA
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7798 5000

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INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 AECOM is commissioned to lead on Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the emerging Hart Local Plan: Strategy and Sites. Once adopted, the plan will allocate land for development and set policies to guide decisions on development and changes in how land is used.
- 1.1.2 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA of Local Plans is a legal requirement.¹

2 SA EXPLAINED

- 2.1.1 It is a requirement that SA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which transposed into national law EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).²
- 2.1.2 In-line with the Regulations, a report, known as **the SA Report**, must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan that essentially ‘identifies, describes and evaluates’ the likely significant effects of implementing ‘the plan, and reasonable alternatives’.³ The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 2.1.3 More specifically, the SA Report must answer the following **three questions**:
1. What has Plan-making / SA involved **up to this point**?
 - Including in relation to ‘reasonable alternatives’.
 2. What are the SA findings **at this stage**?
 - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
 3. What happens **next**?
 - What steps will be taken to finalise (and monitor) the plan?

2.1 This Interim SA Report⁴

- 2.1.1 This Interim SA Report is published alongside an early draft of the plan, under Regulation 18 of the Local Planning Regulations. The legally required SA Report will be published subsequently, alongside the final draft (‘Proposed Submission’) version of the Local Plan, under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations (see discussion of ‘next steps’ below).
- 2.1.2 Despite being an interim report, this report seeks to provide the information required of the SA Report. As such, questions 1 - 3 are answered in turn. The aim is to present information to ensure an informed consultation, and inform subsequent plan-making.
- 2.1.3 Before answering Question 1, two initial questions are answered to further set the scene:
- i) What is the plan trying to achieve?
 - ii) What is the scope of the SA?

¹ Since provision was made through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it has been understood that local planning authorities must carry out a process of Sustainability Appraisal alongside plan-making. The centrality of SA to Local Plan-making is emphasised in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require that an SA Report is published for consultation alongside the ‘Proposed Submission’ plan document.

² Procedurally SA and SEA are one and the same, on the basis that there is no legislation or guidance to suggest that SA process should differ from the prescribed SEA process. SA and SEA differ only in terms of substantive focus. SA has an equal focus on all three ‘pillars’ of sustainable development (environment, social and economic), whilst SEA involves a degree of focus on the environmental pillar. SA can therefore be said to ‘incorporate’ SEA.

³ Regulation 12(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

⁴ See Appendix I for further explanation of the regulatory basis for answering certain questions within the SA Report, and a ‘checklist’ explaining more precisely the regulatory basis for presenting certain information.

3 WHAT IS THE PLAN SEEKING TO ACHIEVE?

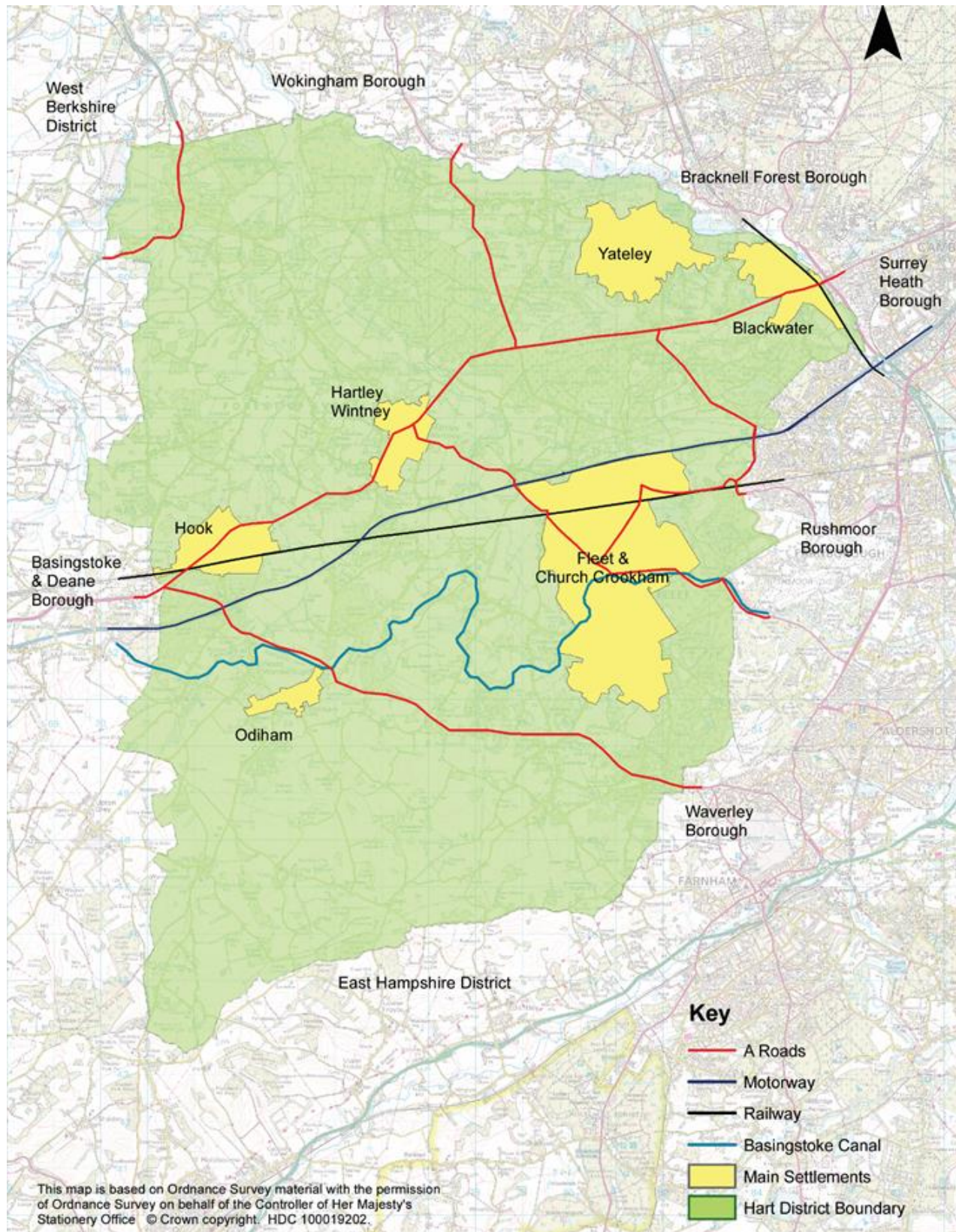
3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 Once adopted, the Local Plan: Strategy and Sites will set out the long term vision for how the district should develop over the next 15 years (from adoption to 2032) and the Council's strategy and policies for achieving that vision. It will allocate land for development to meet future needs and set policies to guide decisions on development and changes in the way land and buildings are used. Once adopted, the plan will be a statutory document and a material consideration in determining planning applications. **Figure 3.1** shows the Hart District Council area, to which the plan will apply, and also shows neighbouring local authority areas.
- 3.1.2 This plan is being prepared taking account of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Town and Country (Local Planning) Regulations 2012. It must reflect the aims and objectives of current government policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) and the Planning Practice Guidance. In particular, the NPPF requires local authorities to take a positive approach to development and for an up to date local plan to be produced which meets identified needs unless there are good policy reasons why this cannot be achieved.
- 3.1.3 Important context is also provided by the strategic growth aspirations of the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The LEP covers much of Hampshire and west Surrey, stretching from the edge of London, along the M3 motorway corridor to the New Forest.
- 3.1.4 Further context is provided by Hampshire County Council (HCC) policy, as the authority that delivers many of the services which support local people, and policies of neighbouring authorities within the sub-region, in particular Rushmoor and Surrey Heath, with whom Hart shares a Housing Market Area (HMA).

3.2 What is the Local Plan not seeking to achieve?

- 3.2.1 It is important to emphasise that the plan will be strategic in nature. Even the allocation of sites / establishment of site-specific policy through this plan should also be considered a strategic undertaking, i.e. a process that omits consideration of some detailed issues (in the knowledge that they can be addressed at the planning application stage).
- 3.2.2 A second part of the Hart Local Plan: Development Management, will be prepared from 2018. It will contain more detailed development management policies (a suite of further more detailed policies to be used in the determination of planning applications) and some more minor allocations and designations. It will also review settlement boundaries, and gaps.
- 3.2.3 The strategic nature of the Local Plan is reflected in the scope of the SA.

Figure 3.1: Hart District and neighbouring local authorities



N.B. This map shows only the five main settlements. Lower order settlements are shown in subsequent maps within this report.

4 WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THE SA?

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SA, i.e. the sustainability issues / objectives that should be a focus of (and provide a broad methodological framework for) SA.
- 4.1.2 Further information on the scope of the SA – i.e. a more detailed review of sustainability issues/objectives as highlighted through a review of the sustainability ‘context’ and ‘baseline’ - is presented in **Appendix II**.

Consultation on the scope

- 4.1.3 The Regulations require that *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the Environmental Report [i.e. the SA scope], the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.⁵ As such, these authorities were consulted on the SA scope in 2014. Since that time, the SA scope has evolved as new evidence has emerged - however, the scope remains fundamentally the same as that agreed through the dedicated scoping consultation.

N.B. Stakeholders are also welcome to comment on the SA scope at the current time. Any comments received will be taken into account in due course (see Part 3 ‘Next Steps’).

4.2 Key issues / objectives

- 4.2.1 Table 4.1 presents the 21 sustainability objectives agreed through scoping in 2014, and groups them under eleven ‘topic’ headings (with some objectives featuring under more than one topic). This grouping is appropriate at this stage, given an increased understanding of issues/options that will be a focus of appraisal work, and given the need for conciseness.
- 4.2.2 Taken together, the sustainability topics and objectives presented in Table 4.1 provide a methodological ‘framework’ for appraisal. N.B. additional detail is presented in Appendix II.

⁵ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes.’

Table 4.1: Sustainability topics and objectives (i.e. the SA framework)

Topic ⁶	Objectives
1 Biodiversity	SA8 Protect and enhance biodiversity .
2 Climate change mitigation	SA12 Reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change; SA14 Increase energy efficiency, security and diversity of supply and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources.
3 Communities	SA2 Protect and enhance the health and well-being of the population; SA3 Encourage increased engagement in cultural activity, leisure, and recreation across all sections of the community; SA4 Reduce inequality , poverty and social exclusion; SA5 Improve community safety by reducing crime and the fear of crime; SA6 Create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive settlements and communities ; SA17 Improve accessibility to all services and facilities; SA19 Maintain and improve opportunities for everyone to acquire the education and skills they need to find and remain in work; SA21 Stimulate regeneration where appropriate and encourage urban renaissance.
4 Employment and the economy	SA20 Maintain high and stable levels of employment and promote sustainable economic growth and competitiveness; SA21 Stimulate regeneration where appropriate and encourage urban renaissance.
5 Flood risk / climate change adaptation	SA12 Reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change ; SA13 Reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to the local community, environment and economy.
6 Housing	SA1 Provide all residents with the opportunity to live in a decent home which meets their needs.
7 Historic environment	SA7 Protect and enhance the District's historic environment .
8 Land and other resources	SA11 Maintain and improve soil quality; SA15 Promote the efficient use of land through the appropriate re-use of previously developed land; SA16 Improve the efficiency of resource use and achieve sustainable resource management.
9 Landscape	SA9 Protect and enhance the District's countryside and rural landscape.
10 Transport and accessibility	SA17 Improve accessibility to all services and facilities; SA18 Improve efficiency of transport networks by enhancing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.
11 Water	SA10 Maintain and improve the water quality of the District's rivers and groundwaters and other water bodies.

⁶ These topics align with the issues listed in the Regulations as *potentially* necessitating consideration through SA (see Schedule II(f)). 'Air' is a deliberate omission, as air quality is not a major issue locally, with no designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

PART 1: WHAT HAS PLAN-MAKING / SA INVOLVED UP TO THIS POINT?

5 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 1)

5.1.1 Local plan-making has been underway since 2013, with two informal consultations having been held prior to this current stage, and one Interim SA Report having been published.

5.1.2 The aim here is not to recount the entire plan-making ‘story’ date, but rather to explain how work was undertaken to develop and then appraise **reasonable alternatives** in early 2017, and how the Council then took into account appraisal findings when finalising the Draft Plan. Presenting this information is important given regulatory requirements.⁷

5.1.3 More specifically still, this part of the report presents information regarding the consideration of reasonable alternative approaches to housing growth, or ‘**spatial strategy alternatives**’. It is clear that allocating land for housing is at the heart of the plan objectives (see Chapter 3). Hence it is reasonable that alternatives appraisal should focus on this matter.⁸

What about other plan issues?

5.1.4 Whilst the plan will set policy to address a range of thematic issues through development management policies, these policy areas were not a focus of alternatives appraisal, and so are not a focus of Part 1 of the Report (but are a focus of the Draft Plan appraisal presented in Part 2, where they are appraised against the ‘baseline’ or ‘no plan option’).

What about site options?

5.1.5 Preparation of the draft plan involved giving consideration to a large number of site options, i.e. sites in contention for allocation. These sites were not ‘alternatives’, in that there was no mutually exclusive choice to be made between them.

5.1.6 Nonetheless, site options were subjected to appraisal through the SA process.⁹ This was a voluntary step, as opposed to a step undertaken in order to discharge the requirement to appraise reasonable alternatives.

5.1.7 Site options appraisal was undertaken as an interim step in order to inform development of reasonable spatial strategy alternatives, i.e. alternative combinations of site options. Site options are thus discussed in Chapter 6 “Establishing the reasonable alternatives”.

What about SA work from 2014?

5.1.8 An Interim SA Report was published alongside the ‘Housing Development Options’ consultation document in 2014. This report presented useful analysis, albeit analysis that has now been superseded to some degree. Analysis from 2014 is discussed in Chapter 6.

Structure of this part of the report

5.1.9 This part of the report is structured as follows:

Chapter 6 - explains the process of **establishing** the reasonable alternatives

Chapter 7 - presents the outcomes of **appraising** the reasonable alternatives

Chapter 8 - explains reasons for **establishing** the preferred option, in light of the appraisal.

⁷ There is a requirement for the SA Report to present an appraisal of ‘reasonable alternatives’ and ‘an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with’.

⁸ Recent case-law (most notably Friends of the Earth Vs. Welsh Ministers, 2015) has established that planning authorities may apply discretion and planning judgement when determining what should reasonably be the focus of alternatives appraisal.

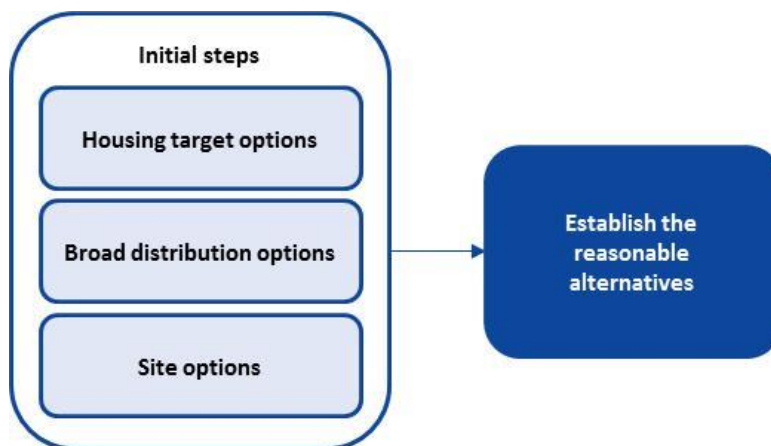
⁹ Appraisal of site options was the responsibility of the Council, working in collaboration with consultants Adams Hendry.

6 ESTABLISHING THE REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The aim here is to discuss the key steps taken in late 2016 / early 2017 that led to the development of 'reasonable' spatial strategy alternatives for appraisal and consultation.
- 6.1.2 Work completed involved: **1)** Examining housing target options; **2)** Reviewing lessons learned on broad distribution options from work completed in 2014 and early 2016; **3)** Assessing site options that might potentially contribute ('building blocks'); and then **4)** Drawing on this evidence-base to establish reasonable alternatives – see **Figure 6.1**.

Figure 6.1: Establishing the reasonable alternatives



6.2 Housing target options¹⁰

- 6.2.1 Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath share a Housing Market Area (HMA), and as such a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was completed in 2014 in order to establish the “full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area”, or simply Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN), in accordance with the NPPF. The SHMA was then fully updated and refreshed using more up-to-date information and a revised methodology for estimating affordable housing need in 2016. The 2016 SHMA provides the most up-to-date assessment of OAHN available to Hart District Council.
- 6.2.2 In the 2016 SHMA, the starting point for the assessment of OAHN was the 2012-based Government household projections, which indicates a demographic need (i.e. need purely resulting from births, deaths and migration) in the HMA for around 785 additional dwellings per annum (dpa) up to 2032. However, these projections required adjustment (uplift), through the SHMA, to take account of increasing problems with the affordability of housing; the housing needs of concealed households in the area; and the need to ensure a local labour supply. These uplifts to the demographic needs were made on the basis of the SHMA methodology prescribed by the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Interpreting and implementing this guidance resulted in an OAHN figure for the HMA of around 1,200 dpa.
- 6.2.3 The SHMA was also able to suggest an indicative split of OAHN between the three component authorities (based the Government household projections) - see **Table 6.1**. A decision on how to provide for OAHN within an HMA is a policy decision to be made through Local Plans, as opposed to something that can be objectively determined through a SHMA; however, the indicative split is a reasonable basis upon which to plan, in the absence of any other overriding strategic policy imperatives (i.e. clear variation in constraint / opportunity across the HMA).

¹⁰ It should be noted that limited requirements for additional employment and retail development have been identified by the Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Joint Employment Land Review (June 2015) and the Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study (February 2015) respectively. The task of developing alternative spatial strategies therefore focused on the issue of meeting housing needs only.

Table 6.1: Outcome of the Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath SHMA 2016

Area	Objectively Assessed Housing Need (dwellings per annum)
Hart	382
Rushmoor	436
Surrey Heath	382
HMA total	1,200

- 6.2.4 By late 2016, the position of the Council was that there was insufficient evidence to justify departing from the default split of OAHN within the Hart Rushmoor and Surrey Heath HMA. However, it is feasible that additional housing will be required in Hart in response to a shortfall in one or both of the other authorities (i.e. ‘unmet needs’) – see **Box 6.1**.

Box 6.1: The potential for unmet needs from Rushmoor and/or Surrey Heath

Following publication, in June 2015, of the ‘Rushmoor Local Plan – Preferred Approach’ (see <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/newlocalplan>) it was understood that Rushmoor, as a highly constrained urban authority, would be unlikely to provide for its OAHN over the plan period. This suggested that there would be an unmet housing need that should be provided for elsewhere within the HMA, and it was understood that it would likely fall to Hart to provide for unmet needs, given constraints in Surrey Heath, including Green Belt. However, in September 2016, Hart District Council received a letter from Rushmoor advising that they could meet their OAHN of 436 dpa.¹¹ As such, current understanding is that there will not be a need for the Hart Local Plan to provide for unmet needs arising from Rushmoor.

Surrey Heath has yet to confirm whether or not they can meet their OAHN; however, in January 2017, the authority wrote to Hart stating that: “Surrey Heath Borough Council will use best endeavours and a no stone unturned approach to aim to meet the OAHN... However as a borough Surrey Heath is severely constrained in terms of available land by the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and the avoidance measures necessary to ensure housing development meets Habitats Regulations Assessment. As well as having operational MOD land and Green Belt designation. As such, it may be that despite best endeavours the Council may be unable to meet its full OAHN. At this early stage, having regard to the Council’s Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) currently the shortfall is likely to be in the region of 1,700 dwellings.”

- 6.2.5 Finally, in light of the findings of the 2016 SHMA, there was a need to consider the option of delivering above the OAHN figure, in order to better provide for affordable housing. The SHMA is clear that districts should consider making a ‘policy-on’ decision to deliver additional housing for this reason. To inform a decision, different affordable housing delivery scenarios were considered by the SHMA (see the “Affordable Housing Policy Discussion” appendix), and options were considered in more detail through an Affordable Housing Background Paper prepared by the Council – see **Box 6.2**. The Paper advised that a positive approach is called for, in respect of providing for affordable housing, and hence advised an uplift of 103 dpa, over-and-above the OAHN figure.

¹¹ NB whilst Surrey Heath Borough is also subject to constraints that may affect its ability to meet the indicative OAHN for its area, it has not been possible to predict a shortfall over the period to 2032 in a reliable manner. This is because Surrey Heath is still in the process of gathering evidence to inform a future review of its adopted local plan and has not yet taken a view on the extent to which its indicative share of the OAHN can be met within its area.

Box 6.2: The Affordable Housing Background Paper

The Council has a positive strategy for the provision of new affordable housing and has a goal to deliver more than the long-term (15-year) historic average in the period 2015-2020, through its Housing Strategy. Specifically, broadly in accordance with the 2014 SHMA, the Housing Strategy establishes a target of delivering 90 affordable homes per year.

Comparison of Affordable Housing Needs in Hart - 2014 SHMA vs 2016 SHMA

	Subsidised Rent (dpa)	Subsidised Ownership (dpa)	Total Affordable Housing Need (dpa)
2014 SHMA	72	20*	92
2016 SHMA	126	180	306

However, as can be seen from the table above, the 2016 SHMA identified a significantly higher requirement for affordable housing in the district. There are a number of reasons for the changes in the estimate of affordable housing needs. Notably, since 2014, there has been: a decrease in the supply of, and an increase in the need for subsidised rented housing; and an increased emphasis nationally on exploring new affordable home ownership options (e.g. starter homes) leading to the 2016 SHMA identifying a far greater requirement for intermediate and low cost housing.

In light of this latest evidence, the Affordable Housing Background Paper developed and appraised a series of scenarios for addressing affordable housing need, some of which would involve delivering the OAHN figure, and others that would involve delivering a higher ('uplifted') quantum figure. The scenarios also varied in respect of the guideline target for the percentage of homes at each development site that should be affordable housing (35% or 40%) and the required tenure split of affordable housing (65% subsidised rented and 35% subsidised home ownership; or 50% subsidised rented and 50% subsidised home ownership).

The appraisal of affordable housing scenarios concludes:

"The recommendation of this background paper is that the draft Hart District Local Plan 2011-2032 should plan for the delivery of more new housing than Hart's overall OAHN (2014-2032), to provide for a greater proportion of the identified affordable housing need. The most appropriate scenario in terms of local and national policy drivers would involve the development 485 new homes each year (2014-2032), with 40% of those new homes being delivered as affordable housing at a 65/35 split between subsidised rented and subsidised home ownership housing... This recommendation... should be reviewed in light of consultation responses to the draft Local Plan and other evidence that emerges in due course."

- 6.2.6 The Affordable Housing Background Paper figure of **485 dpa** (10,185 homes over the 21 year plan period) was accepted as a basis for developing reasonable alternatives for the Hart Local Plan. This equates to an uplift of 103 dwellings per annum above the OAHN (382 dpa).
- 6.2.7 Lower growth cannot be ruled out; however, in light of the appraisal of alternative growth scenarios presented within the Affordable Housing Background Paper (Appendix D), there are sustainability arguments against options involving significantly below the 485 dpa figure.
- 6.2.8 Similarly, higher growth cannot be ruled-out; however, given that neither Rushmoor nor Surrey Heath has asked Hart to accommodate unmet needs, arguments for options involving significantly above the 485 dpa figure are not strong. Also, the 485 dpa housing target figure does 'build in some flexibility', in that some market housing over-and-above Hart's objectively assessed need will be delivered, as a means of enabling delivery of new affordable housing.¹² The NPPF is clear that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs *"with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change"*.

¹² Specifically, taking the 485 dpa figure as an example, and assuming that 40% of all new homes will be affordable housing, this means that 291 new market homes (60% of 485 dpa) would be built per annum. By comparison, a housing target of 382 dpa would deliver 229 new market homes (60% of 382), i.e. 62 fewer new market homes per annum (1,302 fewer over the plan period).

6.3 Broad distribution options

- 6.3.1 The 2014 'Housing Development Options' consultation set out spatial options within the context of meeting full OAHN, as understood from the 2014 SHMA. Five spatial options were consulted upon, albeit the options were not mutually exclusive alternatives:
- Option **(1)** – Settlement Focus
 - Option **(2)** – Dispersal Strategy
 - Option **(3)** – Strategic Urban Extensions
 - Option **(4)** – New Settlement;
 - Option **(5)** – Focus away from the Thames Basin Heaths SPA 5km Zone of Influence.
- 6.3.2 Consultation responses were varied; however, on the basis of consultation responses (and appraisal findings presented within the Interim SA Report published as part of the consultation),¹³ it was possible to identify a clear order of preference: **(1)** - Within settlements; **(4)** - New Settlement; **(3)** - Strategic sites; **(2)** - Dispersal; **(5)** - SPA avoidance. In other words, it was possible to establish a sequential approach that should be reflected in any spatial strategy option, as far as possible, subject to other evidence.
- 6.3.3 Having reviewed and analysed consultation responses, Elected Members (Full Council, 27th November 2014) were able to make a decision regarding a broad preferred approach for further testing. Specifically, it was determined that there is a need for the preferred strategy to reflect a combination of the five 2014 alternatives, including Option 4 - New Settlement. Given land availability and other planning considerations, the Council was able to identify the Winchfield area (which was interpreted to include areas east of Winchfield Station, Murrell Green and areas north and east of Odiham Common) as the new settlement area of search.
- 6.3.4 Also, at this time, the Council held two meetings with Keith Holland, on behalf of DCLG, with advice received on topics including the spatial strategy. Of particular note is the advice given in respect of the weight that should be placed on the avoidance of impacts to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, with the advice provided that: *“south west Hart [i.e. the part of the District least constrained by the SPA], not an obvious area for significant growth in sustainability terms. Need the balance between SPA protection and other factors.”*
- 6.3.5 In early 2016 the Council then held a consultation on 'Refined Options for Delivering New Homes'. The report presented the updated plan-making context, before going on to refine the broad alternative approaches that might be taken to housing growth. The alternatives all involved providing for OAHN, varying in respect of distribution, as follows:
- Option **(1)** - Dispersal and strategic urban extensions
 - Option **(2)** - Strategic urban extensions and a new settlement at Winchfield
 - Option **(3)** - Dispersal and a new settlement at Winchfield
 - Option **(4)** - Dispersal, strategic urban extensions and a new settlement at Winchfield.
- 6.3.6 Again, whilst consultation responses were varied, it was possible to identify a broad order of preference, which at this time was as follows: **(3)**, **(2)**, **(4)**, **(1)**.

¹³ See

http://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Policies_and_published_documents/Planning_policy/Local_Plan/HDC%20Development%20Options%20SA-SEA%20Report.pdf

6.4 Site options

6.4.1 As well as ‘top down’ consideration of housing target and broad distribution options, there was a need for ‘bottom-up’ consideration of site options (and settlement options).

6.4.2 Site options within Hart are numerous, and so there was a need for a staged approach to assessment, ahead of determining a short-list of site options, which could then be drawn upon as the ‘building blocks’ for spatial strategy alternatives. The staged approach involved -

- 1) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);
- 2) Appraisal of reasonable site options; and
- 3) Targeted discussion at workshops.
- 4) Final workshop to differentiate site options

6.4.3 This section reports on (1), (2), (3) and (4) in turn, and then concludes on site options.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)¹⁴

6.4.4 The Council gathered a long list of 268 sites from a variety of sources (see **Figure 6.1**). The SHLAA ‘excluded’ 56 sites with no realistic potential of being allocated for development. Sites were automatically excluded on the basis of the following criteria -

- Site lying wholly or mostly within a European Nature Conservation Site (i.e. the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, TBHSPA)
- Site lying wholly or mostly within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Site lying wholly or mostly within the 400m buffer zone of the TBHSPA, unless it has specifically been promoted by the land owner for a high dependency C2 Care Home
- Sites lying wholly or mostly within flood zone 2 or 3 – functional flood plain, or access to the site lying within Flood Zone 2 or 3 (dry island site)
- Site lying wholly within the Farnborough Airport Public Safety Zone

6.4.5 The remaining 212 ‘included’ SHLAA sites were then assessed further, in terms of ‘availability, achievability and potential suitability’.

Appraisal of reasonable site options

6.4.6 The Council worked with Adams Hendry consultants to complete a ‘high level assessment’ of the reasonable site options – i.e. the 212 SHLAA sites - in terms of planning issues and against the SA framework. Sites were appraised in isolation, plus combinations of sites that might be developed in coordination as part of a ‘strategic site’ were subjected to assessment.

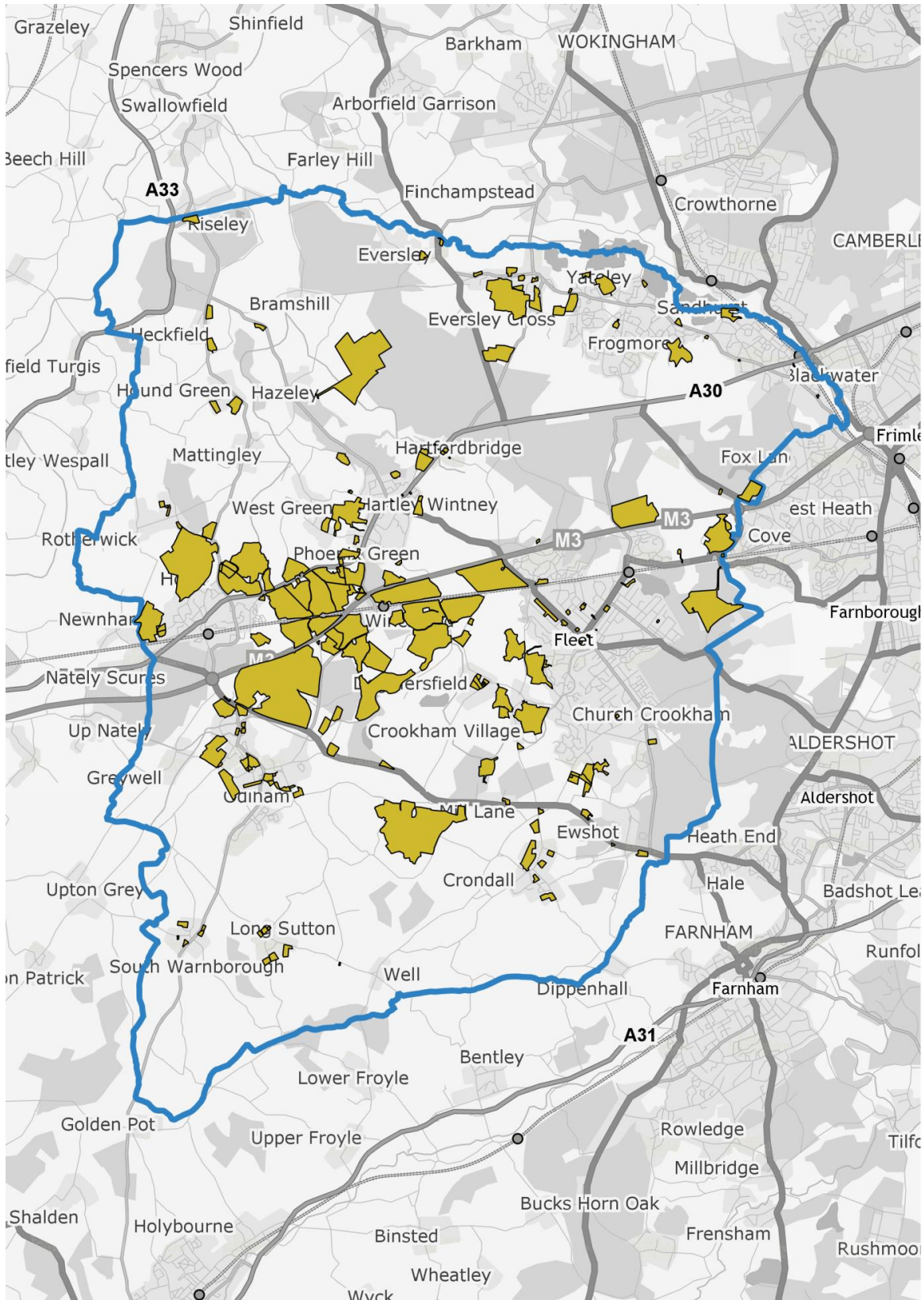
6.4.7 Methodological points to note are -

- Performance of sites against criteria was categorised on a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) scale;
- With a view to ensuring a level playing field, sites were assessed without giving consideration to what, if anything, had been proposed by the site promoter; and
- Although the cumulative and synergistic effects of developing some site options was considered when they formed part of a strategic combination, wider strategic benefits or disadvantages were not generally a focus of the assessment.

¹⁴ The SHLAA (November 2016) is available at: www.hart.gov.uk/Evidence-base. National Guidance is available at: planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/

6.4.8 Assessment findings are available on the Council's website (www.hart.gov.uk/Evidence-base).

Figure 6.1: Reasonable and unreasonable site options



Targeted discussion at workshops

- 6.4.9 Five workshops were held in May-June 2016 to further discuss site options in isolation, drawing upon and building on the Adams Hendry assessments. The workshops also involved examining strategic issues associated with: sites in combination, directions of growth and quantum at particular settlements; and the overall growth quantum.
- 6.4.10 Not all site options were discussed, but instead the discussions focused on those sites shown to be 'borderline' by the Adams Hendry RAG site appraisal work; and also new settlement options, which were the focus of an entire workshop session.
- 6.4.11 The workshops were attended by -
- Policy officers - i.e. the team of officers leading plan-making;
 - Development management officers - who have a particular understanding of sites with a 'planning history', i.e. sites that have been promoted for development in the past;
 - Specialist officers - covering biodiversity/green infrastructure, landscape, heritage, flood risk and housing (i.e. delivery of affordable housing and rural exception sites);
 - Adams Hendry; and
 - AECOM.
- 6.4.12 **Workshop 1** served as an opportunity to discuss strategic issues, and the housing target. A view was reached that there are no headline constraints locally that serve to rule out higher growth options – i.e. options involving a growth quantum significantly about the OAHN figure.
- 6.4.13 **Workshops 2 - 4** focused on each of the main settlements in turn. The following high-level (i.e. non-site-specific) conclusions emerged –
- Fleet/Church Crookham is the largest settlement in Hart, with services/facilities and employment that make it suitable for development, albeit recognising that there has already been significant housing development surrounding Fleet, most notably the creation of Elvetham Heath to the north (which has its own community facilities) and, more recently at Crookham Park to the south, and Edenbrook to the west. The Thames Basin Heaths (TBH) Special Protection Area (SPA) is a constraint, which gives rise to a need to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) alongside development, plus there are constraints relating to coalescence, flood risk and settlement character. Further significant development in the more peripheral areas of Crookham Village and Church Crookham, to the south, would also raise issues in transport terms (congestion and accessibility).
 - Yateley is the second largest settlement, however, development opportunities are limited given constraints including flood risk to the north and the TBHSPA to the south. Land to the west forms a gap between Yateley and Eversley; however, other constraints are more limited, and there is potentially some merit to growth in transport terms.
 - Blackwater is heavily constrained with flood risk areas to the north and the TBHSPA to the south. Beyond limited infilling it has little development potential.
 - Hook is a large village, having grown significantly in the past thirty years. It has also seen several planning permissions since the start of the plan period, including c.550 new homes at 'Land north east of Hook'.¹⁵ There are landscape (gap/coalescence) and heritage (conservation area) issues with developing to the west (in the direction of Newnham) and to the north (in the direction of Rotherwick). However, there are also some arguments for growth, given a railway station, a large employment area and relative distance from the TBHSPA (the western edge of Hook falling just outside of the 5km buffer). Furthermore, significant development at Hook could assist the business case for making improvements to

¹⁵ Other sites with planning permission are: Land north of Reading Road (70 units), High Ridge Farm (60), Landata House (78) and office to residential prior approvals (approx. 237 units).

junction 5 of the M3; however, on the other hand, significant development to the north of the M3 (e.g. Murrell Green combined with sites at Hook) could require investment in the local road network to overcome congestion at peak times (associated with accessing the M3).

- Hartley Wintney is a large village lying just north of the M3 motorway, with the valley of the River Hart creating a natural boundary to the north and the east of the village, and the TBHSPA also constraining potential development opportunities to the north. There are limited development opportunities, although growth arguably has merit in transport terms. The village is relatively distant from an M3 junction or railway station, but growth could potentially help to make bus routes through central Hart viable and attractive. Hartley Wintney is also a popular area for older persons looking to down-size.
- To the south of the M3, areas around Odiham and North Warnborough have relatively high landscape sensitivity and are sensitive in built heritage terms; whilst in transport terms, a larger scale of development would be important to successfully mitigate impacts on the existing road network. Sites in Odiham, North Warnborough, Long Sutton and South Warnborough are outside of the 5km zone of influence for the TBHSPAs and hence should be an area of consideration under Policy NRM6 (retained from the South East Plan).
- Sites adjoining smaller settlements, such as Heckfield, Crondall, Dogmersfield, Long Sutton and South Warnborough, have issues in public transport and accessibility terms – and often with respect to built heritage or settlement character. However, there are some small-scale opportunities at the least constrained sites.

6.4.14 Also, as part of workshops 2 - 4, the opportunity was taken to discuss a number of broad areas on the edge of settlements that might conceivably be suited to development, despite the land not having been promoted to the Council (or only small parts having been promoted). This led to the identification one broad area for further investigation : Land south east of Hook. Subsequently, the land's availability was confirmed and it was subjected to appraisal by Adams Hendry, as per other sites.

6.4.15 **Workshop 5** focused on six new settlement options. Specifically, discussion focused on –

- Central Hart - three separate sites at Murrell Green, Winchfield East and Winchfield West;
- Lodge Farm - an area a short distance to the south west;
- Rye Common - an area in the south of the district; and
- Hartland Park - a large brownfield site between Fleet and Farnborough.

Final workshop to differentiate site options

6.4.16 Officers held a final workshop in July to differentiate site options, drawing on the SHLAA, Adams Hendry High Level Assessments and the findings of workshops 1-5 (May/June 2016).

6.4.17 Sites with low development potential were identified where the High Level Assessment recorded one 'red' (major constraint) score, or four 'ambers' (constraint requiring more detailed assessment), against the following criteria: flood risk, nature conservation, heritage, landscape, access. The results of this exercise were then cross-checked with the outcomes of the workshops, and the list of sites adjusted accordingly.

6.4.18 Sites that passed this sift were then differentiated further, drawing upon the findings of workshops 1-5 (May/June 2016). This step was necessary in order to refine the number of small urban extension options in contention. It was recognised that for the ultimate purpose of defining spatial strategy alternatives, there was probably a need for a range of sites from different sources, as opposed to relying on a long list of small urban extension sites.

Conclusions on site options

- 6.4.19 On the basis of the steps discussed above, it was possible to identify a shortlist of better performing site options, which should form the building blocks for spatial strategy alternatives.
- 6.4.20 The shortlisted sites are listed in **Table 6.2**, along with a discussion of why they stand-out as performing relatively well, when considered in isolation. A number of other sites are also listed in the table because they have ‘some potential’. Sites not listed in the table are those identified as performing relatively poorly, with low potential.
- 6.4.21 In summary, the shortlist comprises: two of the four reasonable new settlement options; three of five reasonable strategic urban extension options; nine of the numerous reasonable small urban extension options; all of the reasonable brownfield site options; and Odiham NDP sites.

Table 6.2: Site options taken forward as ‘building blocks’ for spatial strategy alternatives

Site	# homes	Discussion
Murrell Green ¹⁶	1,800	These are the better performing new settlement options. Both sites are subject to constraints (inc. flood risk, biodiversity and roads), but there are also opportunities, particularly in terms of access to a Winchfield Train Station and strategic SANG delivery. ¹⁷
Winchfield (East) ¹⁸	3,000	Other options perform notably less well: Winchfield West is a more peripheral location relative to the train station, does not offer a central focus and is in close proximity to Odiham SSSI; Lodge Farm is notably constrained by flood risk and biodiversity, although new roads infrastructure could potentially complement growth in central Hart; Rye common is a more remote location, in the south of the district. N.B. Hartland Park is discussed below, as a brownfield site.
Grove Farm, Fleet [SHL040]	423	These are the best performing strategic urban extension options. Whilst none of the three would deliver employment, or strategic community infrastructure, all would provide SANG, and concentrated growth could enable upgrades to transport infrastructure. The two other strategic urban extension options perform notably less well. Land at Searles Farm [SHL003] would extend Hook further to the north east, beyond a recently permitted site; whilst Land North-West of Hook [SHL005] would extend into a sensitive landscape.
Pale Lane, Fleet [SHL052]	650	
Owen's Farm, Hook [SHL173]	540	
Cross Farm, Crookham Village, Fleet [SHL116]	100	This is the best performing small urban extension option in Fleet/Church Crookham . It would deliver a retirement village, with a care home and sheltered accommodation. The following sites were also identified as having some potential: Land at Church Lane [SHL055]; Land at Willow Croft, C. Crookham [SHL235]; Land east of Redfields Lane, C. Crookham [SHL234]; Redfields Court, Church C. [SHL354]; Land at Great Bramshot Farm, Farnborough [SHL338]. Other sites perform relatively poorly.

¹⁶ Comprises SHL123, SHL004 (inc 169), SHL084, SHL167, SHL186, SHL204, SHL136, SHL184 (N.B. several for SANG only)

¹⁷ SANG could be ‘strategic’, in that it could also serve to mitigate effects of other residential developments.

¹⁸ Comprises SHL124 and SHL183

Site	# homes	Discussion
Land b/w Eversley Rd and Firgrove Rd, Yateley [SHL273]	88	<p>This is the best performing small urban extension site option at Yateley, given its location on the less constrained western side of the village, well related to the existing village edge and in proximity to the village centre.</p> <p>The following sites were also identified as having some potential: North of Reading Rd [SHL020]; Land adj. Crosby Gdns [SHL103]. Other sites perform relatively poorly.</p>
No site options at Blackwater were taken forward. One site was identified as having some potential: Frogmore Community College [SHL303]. Other sites perform relatively poorly.		
Hop Garden and W of Varndell Rd, Hook [SHL009 & 130]	87	<p>This is the best performing small urban extension site option at Hook. It is well related to the existing village edge and in proximity to the village centre.</p> <p>The following sites were also identified as having some potential: Hook Garden Centre [SHL111]; Land to the rear of Hook Garden Centre [SHL294]. Other sites perform relatively poorly.</p> <p>N.B. The Hook Neighbourhood Plan is emerging, and will allocate housing sites, thereby negating the need for the Local Plan to allocate SHL009 & 130.</p>
No site options at Hartley Wintney taken forward. The following sites were identified as having some potential: Land adj. to Causeway Green [SHL089]; Land adj. to James Fm Cottages [SHL216]; Land S. of Thackhams Ln [SHL035]. Other sites perform relatively poorly.		
At Odiham and North Warnborough , the decision was taken to support the seven sites that have been identified through the Odiham Neighbourhood Plan process. ¹⁹ Other sites perform relatively poorly.		
CEMEX A and B, Eversley [124 homes; SHL112a & 112b]; Land NW of Crondall [66 homes; SHL074]; Land S of Riseley, Heckfield [83 homes; SHL092]; Granary Field, Long Sutton [10 homes; SHL062]; Granary Court, South Warnborough [16 homes; SHL172]; Plough Meadow, South Warnborough [18 homes; SHL033]	317 homes at 7 sites	<p>These are the best performing small urban extension site options at smaller villages.</p> <p>The following sites were also identified as having some potential: Area B, Land at Eversley Cross, Eversley [SHL246]; Land at Paul's Field, Eversley [SHL127]; Land North of Hollybush Lane, Eversley [SHL247]; Land North of Reading Road, Eversley [SHL026]; Land adj. to Nash Meadow [SHL071]. Other sites perform relatively poorly.</p> <p>N.B. The Crondall Neighbourhood Plan is emerging, and might identify and allocate an alternative site (or sites), thereby negating the need for the Local Plan to allocate.</p>
Hartland Park, Fleet / Farnborough [SHL197]	1,500	<p>All reasonable site options that are brownfield should be taken forward, i.e. considered further through the spatial strategy alternatives, the Council's support for encouraging the effective use of previously developed land.</p> <p>This includes Hartland Park²⁰ and Sun Park²¹.</p>
Sun Park, Farnborough [SHL100]	320	
Brownfield sites at Fleet [SHL041, 104, 113, 195, 208, 036, 320 (part)]	201	
Brownfield sites at Hook [two small office to residential]	9	

¹⁹ Odiham Neighbourhood Plan is not yet 'made', and so its site allocations cannot yet be taken as commitments. There remains the possibility that the Neighbourhood Plan could be delayed, leading to the Local Plan having to allocate sites.

²⁰ Hartland Park, Fleet / Farnborough (1,500 homes) offers an opportunity to create a new community linked to Fleet and Farnborough. There are constraints, and the scale of growth will be subject to further discussion and masterplanning, but redevelopment will need to be on a significant scale in order to achieve economies of scale and fund infrastructure upgrades / mitigation measures etc.

²¹ Sun Park, Guillemont, Farnborough (320 homes) - whilst within Hart District, Sun Park is located on the edge of Farnborough, which falls within neighbouring Rushmoor District. Its redevelopment is supported in principle by both councils.

6.5 The reasonable alternatives

- 6.5.1 Informed by the 'top down' and 'bottom-up' considerations discussed above, the Council was able to define 'reasonable' spatial strategy alternatives – i.e. alternative combinations of sites - for appraisal and consultation.
- 6.5.2 The Council established that for any spatial strategy option to be reasonable it must deliver 'in the region of' the housing target discussed in Section 6.2 (485 dpa, or c.10,185 in total). This means a need to identify land through the plan for approximately 2,300 additional new homes, given –
- completions and outstanding planning permissions amounting to 5,304 homes;
 - a windfall sites assumption of 290 homes; and²²
 - a rural exceptions sites assumption of 50 homes.²³
- 6.5.3 The Council also determined that development of a number of the sites listed in Table 6.2 could be taken to be a 'given', for the purposes of developing reasonable alternatives.²⁴ The following sites were identified as a 'given' -
- Cross Farm, Crookham Village, Fleet (100 homes)
 - The only greenfield site option identified as a 'given'. This is the only site able to deliver larger amounts of older person's accommodation.
 - Hartland Park, Fleet / Farnborough (1,500 homes)
 - Sun Park, Guillemont, Farnborough (320 homes)
 - Small urban brownfield sites – 210 homes at nine sites.
 - Odiham Neighbourhood Plan' sites - 119 homes at seven sites
- 6.5.4 Having established these 'givens', the following variables / options were defined –
- 1) Small urban extension sites – 492 homes at eight sites (i.e. those listed in Table 6.2, minus Cross Farm, Fleet); or nil homes.
 - 2) Grove Farm – 423 homes; or nil homes
 - 3) Owens Farm - 540 homes; or nil homes
 - 4) Pale Lane - 650 homes; or nil homes
 - 5) Murrell Green – 1,800 homes; or nil homes
 - 6) Winchfield – 3,000 homes; or nil homes.
- 6.5.5 This in turn led to the alternatives presented in **Table 6.3**. These alternatives were (and still are) deemed to be the 'reasonable' alternatives in that their appraisal should enable and facilitate discussion of numerous important issues/opportunities. Whilst it was recognised that there are other options that could potentially feature, there is a need to limit the number under consideration, with a view to facilitating engagement. **Box 6.3** considers other ('unreasonable') spatial strategy options. N.B. stakeholders are welcome to comment on the reasonable alternatives through this current consultation.

²² Windfall sites are those that will come forward through the development management process, despite not being allocated within the plan, on the basis that they are in accordance with Local Plan policy. They will tend to be infill developments.

²³ Rural exception sites are those that will come forward through the development management process, despite not being allocated within the plan, in order to address the housing needs of specific rural communities, in accordance with the 'rural exception sites' policy.

²⁴ In other words, the council identified factors that could reasonably be a constant across the alternatives, given the need to minimise the number of variables, and thereby minimise the number of alternatives ultimately arrived at.

Table 6.3: The reasonable alternatives

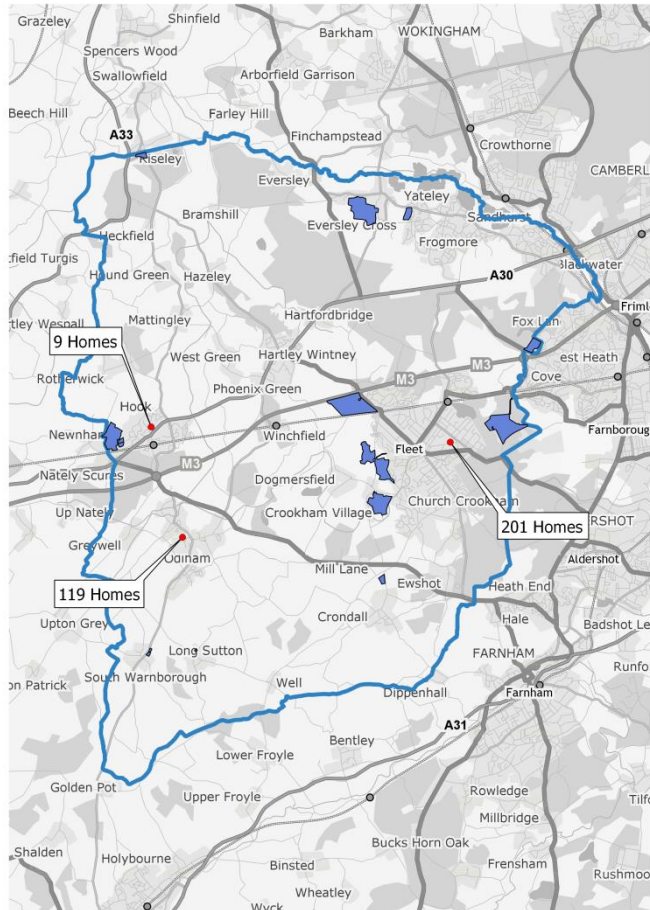
Opt	Comps / commits	Windfall	Rural except'n	'Givens'	Small sites	Grove Farm	Owens Farm	Pale Lane	Murrell Green	Winchf'd	Total	Total (dpa)
1	5304	290	50	2,589	492	423	540	650	0	0	9,998	476
2					492	0	0	0	1,818	0	10,203	486
3					0	423	0	0	1,818	0	10,134	483
4					0	0	540	0	1,818	0	10,251	488
5					0	0	0	650	1,818	0	10,361	493
6					0	0	0	0	0	3000	10,893	519

Box 6.3 Unreasonable spatial strategy options

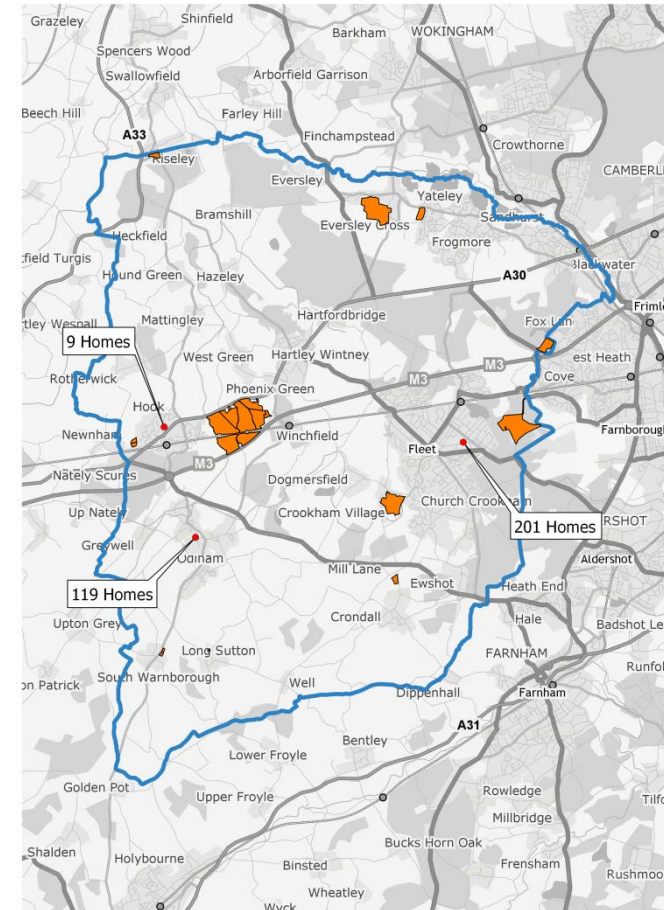
In order to gain an understanding of the rationale / reasoning behind the reasonable alternatives **there is a need to read the chapter above as a whole**. Taken as a whole, this chapter presents 'an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with'. However, it is also worthwhile giving explicit consideration here to some options considered, but ultimately discounted (as 'unreasonable'):

- Any option involving providing for a level of growth **below the OAHN** figure of 382 dpa. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to meet the full objectively assessed needs in the housing market area, as far as this is consistent with the NPPF's other policies. In connection with this, the SA workshops in May/June 2016 concluded that in strategic terms, no overriding constraints have been identified that would prevent the Council from meeting OAHN. This conclusion is supported by Hart's SHLAA (November 2016) which identifies developable sites (i.e. sites in a suitable location, with a reasonable prospect of being available and viable for development by 2032) with an estimated capacity of 22,000 homes. By contrast, OAHN for Hart is 8,022 new homes from 2011 to 2032.
- Any option that would deliver **significantly below the "policy on" housing target figure** of 485 dpa. Such an option would be inconsistent with the advised approach for delivering more of the objectively assessed need for affordable housing (see Section 6.2), to ensure a consistent, positive approach across Hart's housing and planning policies. Option 1 is a 'reasonable' lower growth option, in that it would involve delivering c.2% below the target.
- Any option involving **high growth** through delivery of **two or more strategic urban extensions**. Option 6 is a 'reasonable' high growth option, as there is strategic support for the concept of concentrating growth at a new settlement, in order to avoid the need for development at existing settlements. There is not the same support for strategic urban extensions (see Section 6.3).
- Any option involving **very high growth** through delivering **both new settlement options** – i.e. Murrell Green and Winchfield – within the plan period as a large, polycentric new settlement in central Hart. There is little strategic argument for 'very high growth'. Furthermore, given the lead-in time (e.g. because of up-front infrastructure costs and a need to ensure mitigation for strategic constraints), it would not be possible to provide for a five year supply of housing land in the earlier part of the plan period. The NPPF (paragraph 47) is clear that local planning authorities should maintain a five year supply of housing land.

Option 1 - Small sites, Grove Farm, Owens Farm, Pale Lane

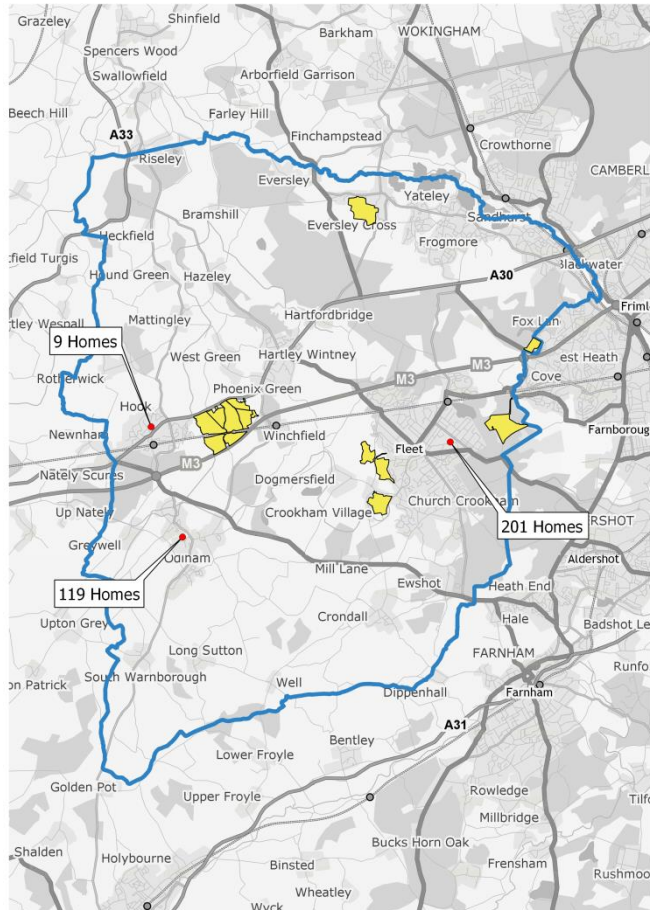


Option 2 - Small sites, Murrell Green

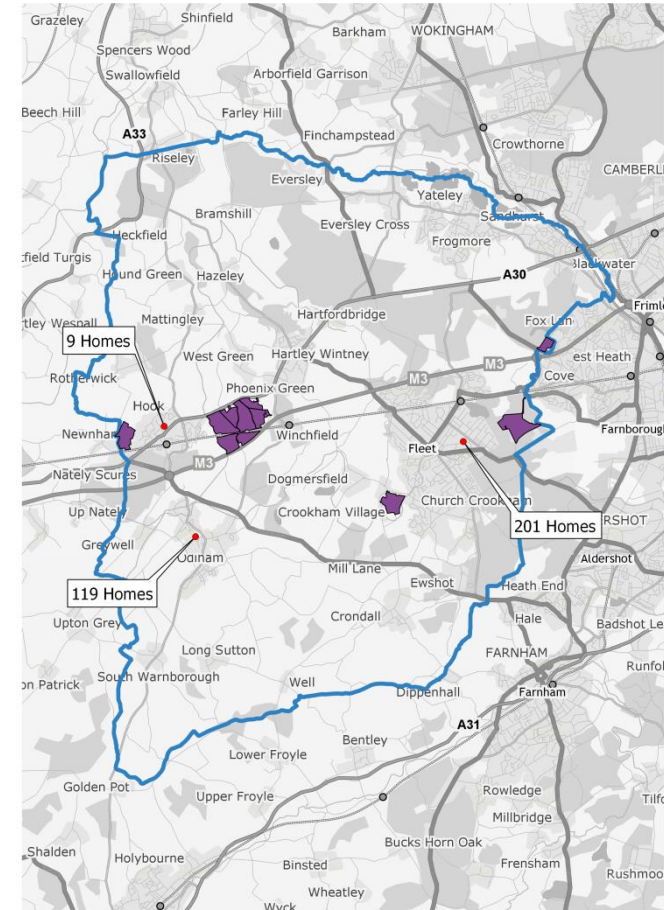


N.B. these maps show the locations of sites that would be allocated under each option (albeit recognising that the need to allocate at Hook and Crondall could be negated by the emerging Neighbourhood Plan), with the call out boxes identifying the number of homes to be delivered at brownfield sites at Fleet/Hook and through the Odiham Neighbourhood Plan. Completions and commitments are not shown on the maps.

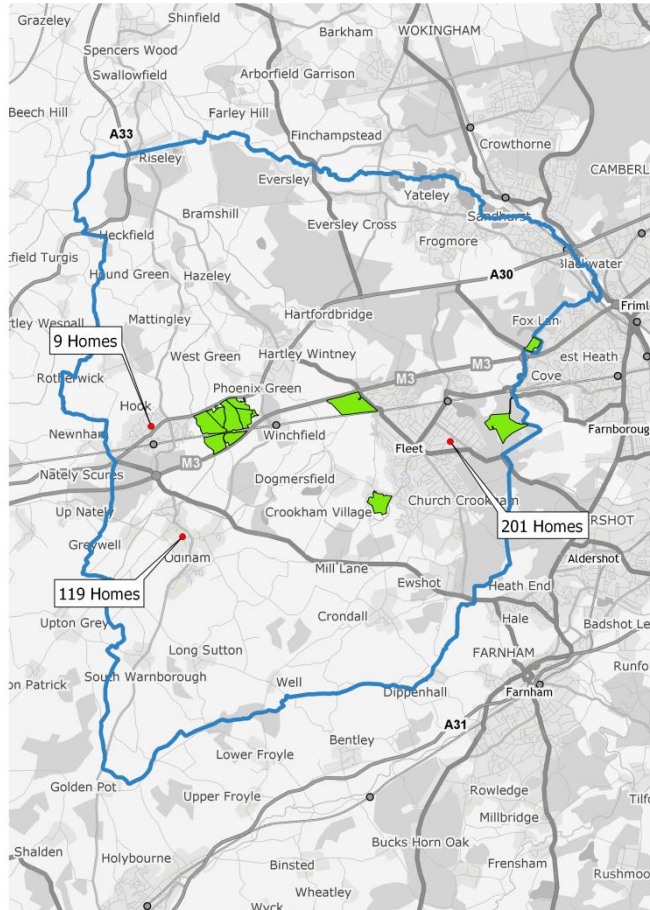
Option 3 - Grove Farm, Murrell Green



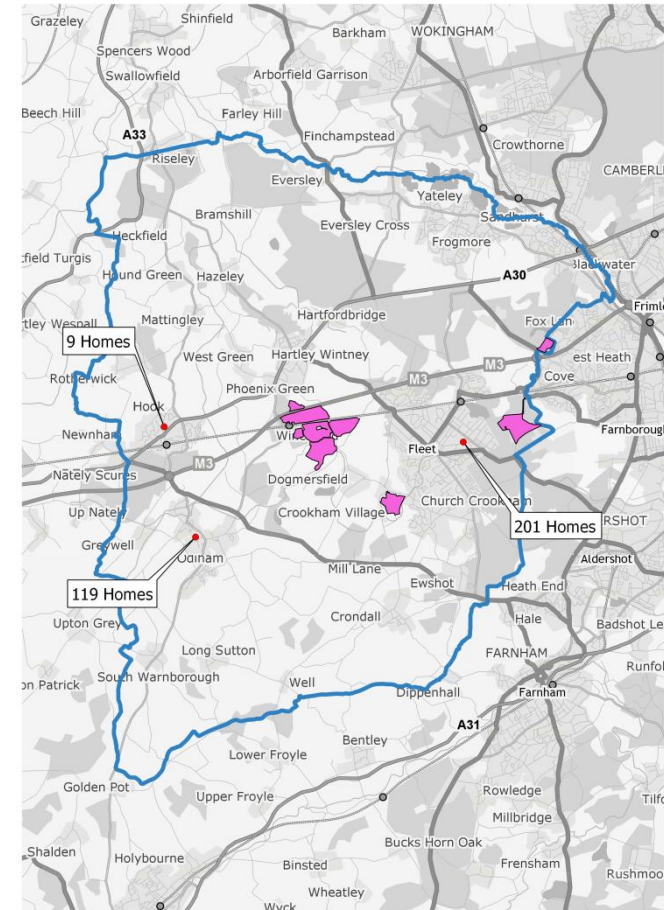
Option 4 - Owens Farm, Murrell Green



Option 5 - Pale Lane, Murrell Green



Option 6 – Winchfield



7 APPRAISING REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The aim of this chapter is to present summary appraisal findings in relation to the reasonable alternatives introduced above. Detailed appraisal findings are presented in **Appendix III**.

7.2 Summary alternatives appraisal findings

- 7.2.1 **Table 7.1** presents summary appraisal findings in relation to the six alternatives introduced above. Detailed appraisal methodology is explained in Appendix III, but in summary:

Within each row (i.e. for each of the topics that comprise the SA framework) the columns to the right hand side seek to both categorise the performance of each option in terms of 'significant effects' (using **red** / **green**) and also rank the alternatives in relative order of performance. Also, ' = ' is used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par (i.e. it not possible to differentiate between them).

Table 7.1: Summary spatial strategy alternatives appraisal findings

Summary findings and conclusions						
Topic	Categorisation and rank					
	Option 1 Small sites Grove Farm Owens Farm Pale Lane	Option 2 Small sites M' Green	Option 3 Grove Farm M' Green	Option 4 Owens Farm M' Green	Option 5 Pale Lane M' Green	Option 6 Winchfield
Biodiversity	6	5	2	1	3	4
Climate change mitigation	6	5	2	2	2	1
Communities	3	3	1	2	1	2
Employment and the economy	3	1	1	1	1	2
Flood risk / climate change adaptation	1	1	1	1	1	2
Historic environment	6	1	3	5	2	4
Housing	4	1	3	2	2	4
Land and other resources	2	2	2	2	2	1
Landscape	2	1	1	2	1	2
Transport and accessibility	5	1	2	4	6	3
Water	3	2	1	1	2	1

Summary findings and conclusions

Topic	Categorisation and rank					
	Option 1 Small sites Grove Farm Owens Farm Pale Lane	Option 2 Small sites M' Green	Option 3 Grove Farm M' Green	Option 4 Owens Farm M' Green	Option 5 Pale Lane M' Green	Option 6 Winchfield

Summary and conclusions

Whilst it is not the aim of this appraisal to conclude on the *overall* performance / sustainability of each option, the appraisal does serve to indicate that Option 1 (no new settlement) performs least well, on the basis that it does not stand-out as performing well in terms of any topic, and stands-out as performing poorly in terms of several. Differentiating the remaining five alternatives is more difficult. Taking notable topics in turn –

- Biodiversity – a strategy relying on small sites performs less well given limited potential to deliver new SANG to as a means of avoiding recreational impacts to the TBHSPA, whilst Owens Farm and Murrell Green stand-out as the better performing strategic sites, i.e. the sites that are less constrained and/or offer some opportunity for biodiversity gains.
- Climate change mitigation – maximum reliance on strategic scale development is supported, as economies of scale can make low carbon infrastructure more viable.
- Communities – focusing growth at Fleet (i.e. the district's main settlement) is supported, whilst small urban extensions are not, given limited or no potential for development to deliver community infrastructure.
- Employment and the economy – options involving a Murrell Green new settlement are supported, as it is expected that the scheme would involve delivery of 3.7ha of new employment land.
- Flood risk / climate change adaptation – there is a likelihood that flood risk can be addressed at all locations; however, Winchfield new settlement stands out as more constrained.
- Historic environment – Murrell Green and Pale Lane stand-out as less constrained, and smaller sites are perhaps less likely to have significant impacts on the setting of heritage assets. Even the better performing options would lead to significant negative effects, recognising that Cross Farm - a larger site that is a constant across the alternatives - lies adjacent to Crookham Village Conservation Area.
- Housing – All options perform well, as the OAHN figure assigned to the district by the SHMA would be met. A package of smaller sites is supported, as smaller sites are likely to be inherently 'deliverable' and dispersing development between settlements can help to ensure that settlement specific needs are met.
- Land and other resources – the quality of agricultural land lost to development is the primary consideration, and in this respect it is noted that land quality in the Winchfield area may tend to be relatively low (albeit there may still be some land classed as 'best and most versatile').
- Landscape - Options 2, 3 and 5 perform relatively well as development at the two worst performing sites - Owen's Farm and Winchfield – would be avoided.
- Transport and accessibility – sites are associated with a range of issues, which makes it a particular challenge to differentiate the alternatives. On balance, Option 2 is judged to perform best as it would not involve a strategic urban extension at Grove Farm, Owen's Farm or Pale Lane, all of which are associated with notable issues. However, it is recognised that the package of smaller urban extensions under Option 2 involves some sites at smaller settlements, with high car dependency.
- Water - there are few constraints to growth that would affect one option more than another, but two potential issues relate to capacity of Eversley WWTW, in the north of the district where two or three of the smaller urban extension sites would be located, and capacity of the sewer network at Pale Lane.

8 DEVELOPING THE PREFERRED APPROACH

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 The aim of this Chapter is to present the Council's response to the alternatives appraisal / the Council's reasons for developing the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal.

8.2 The Council's outline reasons

"The Council recognises that there's no single "stand out" option for the local plan, in that all of the reasonable alternatives have potential benefits and drawbacks when they are considered in terms of the different sustainability topics. However, Option 2 is the Council's preferred option for its Draft Local Plan for a number of different reasons.

Firstly, this option provides a good range of opportunities for new housing across the district, thereby offering people across Hart the chance to live in a place that meets their needs. Option 2 could deliver the housing target in full and therefore meet the estimated need for subsidised rented housing (identified in the Council's SHMA). Option 2 would also spread the risk of unforeseen delays occurring to housing delivery compared to other options that focus on the development of strategic urban extensions (Options 3-5), or a larger new settlement at Winchfield (Option 6). Delays in housing delivery could lead to a situation in which housing development is granted on other sites across Hart that are less desirable in strategic terms, through the planning appeal process. The Council considers it important to maintain a robust 'housing trajectory', to minimise the risk of unplanned development.

Secondly, this option performs well in economic terms, reflecting the potential for expansion of the existing business park at Murrell Green, which could provide new small-scale modern business premises in a strategically supported location. The initial assessment of transport-related impacts is also favourable, which is an important consideration for the local economy.

Thirdly, Option 2 performs relatively well in terms of a range of other important topics, such as flooding, the historic environment and landscape, which further strengthens the case for this option over others. In common with Options 3-6, Option 2 could provide land for a new secondary school to address emerging secondary school capacity issues over the plan period.

However, the Council recognises that Option 2 has not performed well in terms of the potential impacts on biodiversity and efforts to mitigate climate change. In particular, the impacts on biodiversity relate to the potential for recreational disturbance affecting the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. The Council takes this matter seriously, however there is clear potential for suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) to be provided at strategic development locations (e.g. Murrell Green and Cross Farm), and also at some non-strategic sites, which will avoid or mitigate the impacts of those developments on the SPA. There is also potential for strategic SANG to be delivered to facilitate the delivery of smaller sites that cannot provide their own SANG. The Council continues to work on the delivery of strategic SANG and is confident that sufficient SANG can be provided over the plan period, as part of a suitable mitigation strategy.

Option 2 also performs relatively poorly in terms of its support for the district's larger communities (Fleet, Yateley, Blackwater/Hawley and Hook); however, the Council's view is that once account is taken of completions since 2011, current commitments, future brownfield development within settlements and windfalls, the main settlements will actually make a significant contribution to growth over the plan period as a whole. Notably, there is a need to account for housing development at the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks (Church Crookham), Edenbrook (West Fleet), and St Mary's Park (Hartley Wintney); and new permissions at land north-east of Hook, Watery Lane (Church Crookham), Hawley Park Farm (Hawley) and Moulsham Lane (Yateley).

Finally, the selection of Option 2 as the preferred option takes account of the results to the earlier public consultation exercise in 2016. Although consultation responses were varied, an option involving a new settlement in the Winchfield area, and small sites dispersed across the district, was the most preferred option. Option 2 would deliver new housing development in accordance with that preference."

PART 2: WHAT ARE SA FINDINGS AT THIS CURRENT STAGE?

9 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 2)

- 9.1.1 The aim of this part of the report is to present an appraisal of the Draft Plan, as currently published under Regulation 18 of the Local Planning Regulations.
- 9.1.2 The aim of this introductory chapter is to: A) provide an ‘at a glance’ overview of the Draft Plan; and B) introduce the Draft Plan appraisal methodology.

9.2 Overview of the Draft Plan

- 9.2.1 The Draft Plan presents policies under six chapter headings –
- Spatial strategy –one ‘SS’ policy (SS1: Spatial Strategy)
 - Managing growth – six ‘MG’ policies
 - Sustainable economic development – eight ‘ED’ policies
 - Natural and built environment – nine ‘NE’ and ‘BE’ policies
 - Infrastructure – nine ‘I’ policies.
- 9.2.2 The spatial strategy (Policy SS1) makes provision for 10,185 new homes (net) over the Plan period 2011-2032 at an annual average rate of 485 dwellings per year distributed as follows:

	Net homes
a. Completions	2,160
b. Commitments	3,144
c. Fleet (previously developed land)	200
d. Hook (previously developed land)	10
e. Sun Park (previously developed land)	320
f. Hartland Village - New settlement (previously developed land)	1,500
g. Murrell Green - New settlement	1,800
h. Smaller extensions to existing settlements:	
	Crandall 66
	Crookham Village (C3 element of a retirement village) 100
	Eversley 124
	Hook 87
	Riseley 83
	Long Sutton 10
	Odiham 119
	South Warnborough 34
	Yateley 88
i. Rural Exception sites	50
j. Windfall allowance	290
	TOTAL 10,185

N.B. allocations at Odiham, Hook and Crandall are set to be made through a Neighbourhood Plan (NP), rather than the Local Plan. The Local Plan would only allocate sites should it be the case that the NPs are delayed significantly. Sites have been identified; however, the NPs could potentially choose alternative sites. For the purposes of this appraisal –

- Sites at Odiham are taken to be a ‘given’, and hence are not a focus of the appraisal. This is on the basis that the Odiham NP is at a very advanced stage of preparation.
- Sites at Crandall and Hook are appraised as proposed allocations, in the same manner of sites proposed elsewhere (i.e. at settlements other than Odiham).

9.2.3 Policy SS1 also makes provision for –

- Approximately 1,200 bed spaces (C2 Use Class).
- new employment development within existing Strategic and Locally Important Employment Sites; at the Murrell Green Strategic Allocation (3.5 ha) and Eversley Storage (1.8ha).
- 3,964m² additional comparison retail floorspace and 5,940m² convenience floorspace, within existing centres and at the Murrell Green and Hartland Park new settlements.

9.2.4 The plan vision is presented below (**Box 9.1**) as is the key diagram (**Figure 9.1**) and policies map (**Figure 9.2**)

Box 9.1: The vision

In 2032 the District will have remained an attractive, largely rural area with thriving towns and villages and a variety of landscapes. Our residents will be enjoying an excellent quality of life in a high quality environment.

We will have played our role in meeting future housing, social and economic needs. This includes meeting the need for affordable housing, accommodation for the elderly, and other forms of specialist housing.

The priority will have been given to the effective use of previously developed land so that ‘greenfield’ development will have been limited, albeit that the scale of new housing planned will undoubtedly have had an impact on the size and nature of our present communities. Some villages will have grown substantially. Others will have seen little or no development. However, no place will have been excluded from appropriate and sustainable development simply because it lacked certain services or accessible infrastructure.

Additional affordable homes in rural villages and hamlets will have improved opportunities for local people to continue to live in them and will have improved the sustainability of smaller communities. Alongside this, a positive approach to the rural economy will have enhanced opportunities for rural businesses and employment.

New communities will have been created at Murrell Green and Hartland Village. They will be genuinely attractive new neighbourhoods and community focused developments which enhances the quality of life within the District.

All new developments will have been built to a high level of environmental and design standards, respecting local character and distinctiveness and providing measures to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The coalescence of settlements will have been avoided through the protection of designated ‘Gaps’.

Fleet will have maintained and developed its role and function as the main service centre, providing employment and a range of accessible services and facilities to the surrounding villages. Historic villages such as Odiham and Hartley Wintney will be vibrant centres providing facilities for residents and visitors. Other key local centres in Yateley, Blackwater and Hook, will support shops and services for their respective local communities.

Additional employment sites will be developed at Murrell Green and at the site of Eversley Storage. The rural economy will have continued to diversify and will support a range of micro-businesses, in turn supported by improved broadband infrastructure.

Our social, physical and green infrastructure will have been enhanced to support the changing population. New primary schools will have been built and land provided for a future secondary school. The quality and value of community and leisure facilities will also be maintained and enhanced. In particular the District leisure centre at Fleet opened in 2017, which, coupled with an improved leisure centre at Frogmore will provide an outstanding leisure offer.

Targeted improvements to our transport infrastructure will have taken place to widen transport choices and to help improve accessibility and connectivity both within and beyond the District, although it must be recognised, that in many areas the only choice for travel will still be by car. The focus will have been on opportunities to develop sustainable and accessible transport networks including measures aimed at managing road congestion, improving public transport where viable, and opportunities for walking and cycling, and improving access to town centres and other shops and services.

The character, quality and diversity of our natural, built and heritage assets will have been protected, and where possible enhanced. These assets include the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other protected habitats, such as the Basingstoke Canal, the chalk downland in the south west of the District, riverine environments, the Forest of Eversley, Historic Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Figure 9.1: The Key Diagram

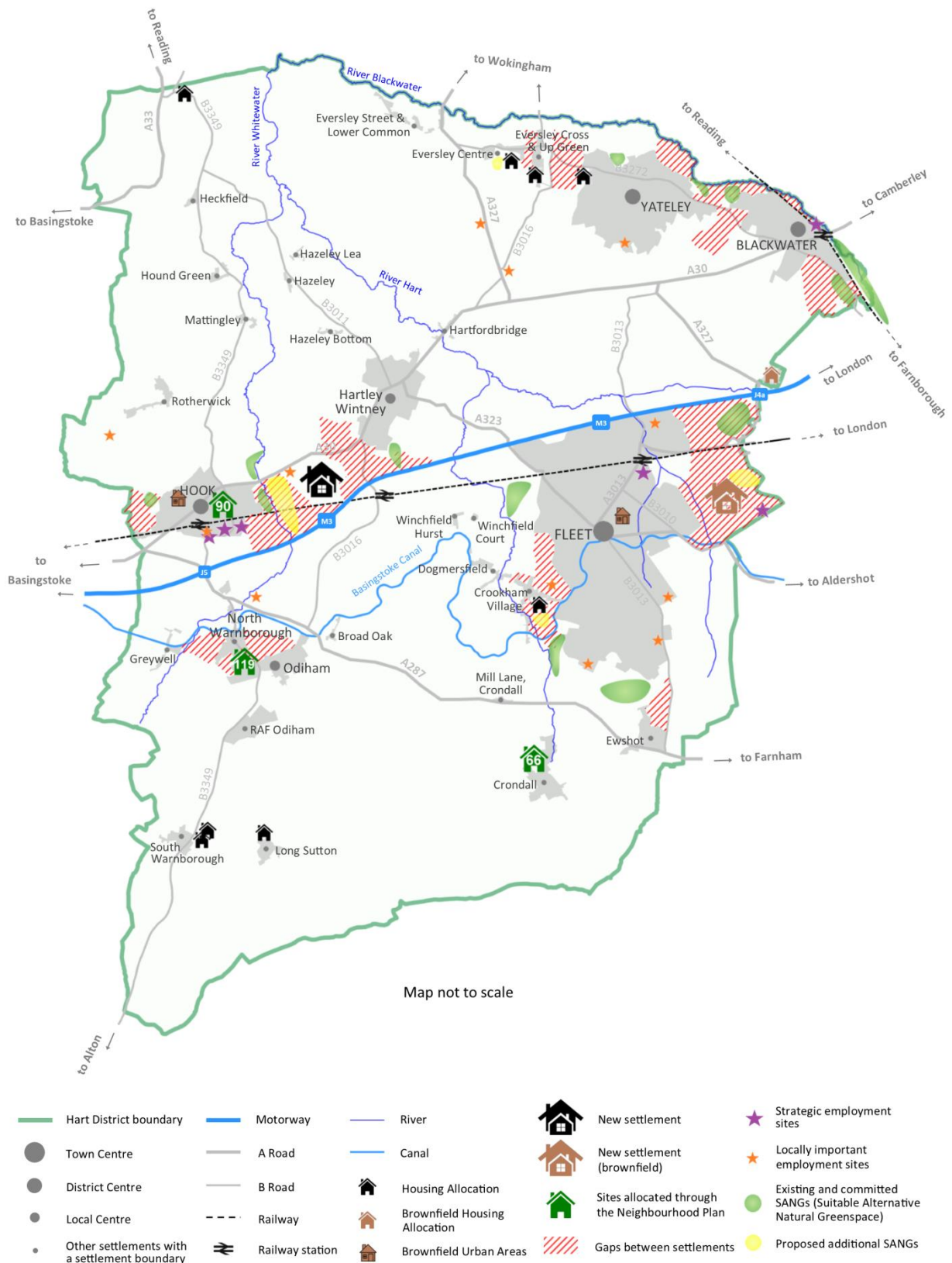
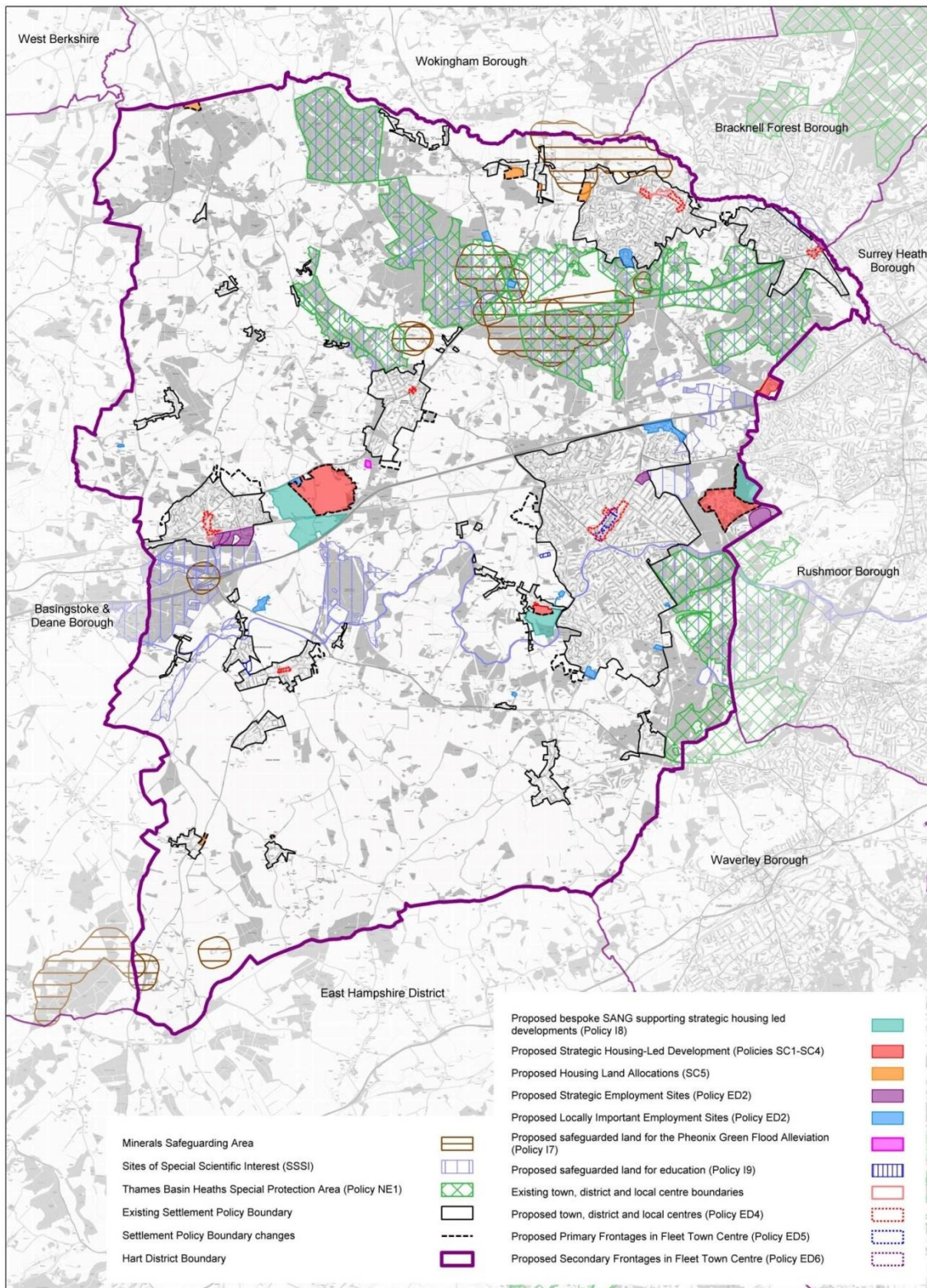


Figure 9.2: The Policies Map



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10 APPRAISAL OF THE DRAFT PLAN

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 The aim of this chapter is to present an appraisal of the Draft Plan in terms of the ten SA topic headings, drawing on the issues/objectives established through scoping. This chapter ends with a brief 'conclusions' section.

10.2 Biodiversity

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.2.1 A key consideration is the need to avoid significant adverse effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA), which in practice involves: A) directing housing growth to less sensitive locations, i.e. locations beyond the 5km and 7km buffers that have been defined; and B) ensuring that there is potential to deliver sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate increased recreational pressure.²⁵
- 10.2.2 Policy SS1 makes provision for four 'strategic sites' and nine smaller urban extensions (of which four are notably larger than the other three). Key points to note are as follows -
- Two of the strategic sites – **Hartland Park** and **Sun Park** – are located to the east of Fleet, in close proximity to the TBHSPA; however, both are brownfield sites (i.e. sites that are supported in terms of other policy objectives – see discussion below) and in both cases there is good potential to deliver effective SANG and other mitigation (see below). Hartland Park is in close proximity to Fleet Pond Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and has some on-site biodiversity value, including land designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The western boundary of Sun Park forms the edge of the Hawley Common SINC, and the Hawley Lake Stream lies just beyond the northern boundary of the site, which may be associated with notable riparian habitat.
 - The proposed **Murrell Green** new settlement is located in central Hart, and hence is more distant from the TBHSPA, although it is still inside the 5km buffer (the nearest component of the SPA being Hazeley Heath, to the north of Hartley Wintney). There is an opportunity to deliver effective SANG, in the form of a 'riverside parkland', given that the site intersects the River Whitewater Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA); and the SANG will be 'strategic' in that it should attract existing and new residents of Hook, in addition to residents of the new settlement. Furthermore there is potentially scope to connect with other existing SANG at Bassett's Mead west of the Whitewater, and with the new SANG coming forward with the permitted development at North East Hook. However, it is understood that the function of the parkland SANG could be constrained by flooding, and it is **recommended** that work is completed to provide clarity on this matter. Aside from the TBHSPA, the site is constrained by the proximity of Odiham Common Site SSSI to the south, the northern-most part of which is in 'part destroyed' condition (albeit the vast majority is in favourable condition). The SSSI will be easily accessible from development, and increased traffic through the SSSI can be anticipated (the B3016 intersects the SSSI); however, the SANG will buffer the SSSI.

²⁵ This has been agreed through the Hart Interim Avoidance Strategy for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA - see http://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Policies_and_published_documents/Planning_policy/Interim_Avoidance_Strategy_for_TBHSPA%20-%20November_2010.pdf. The avoidance strategy also involves applying a 400m buffer, within which development can generally not occur, and securing funding for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

- **Cross Farm** is the smallest of the strategic sites. It is located to the west of Fleet, such that access to the TBHSPA would involve first travelling through the town; furthermore, concerns regarding increased recreational pressure on the SPA are potentially reduced by the fact that development will be in the form of a retirement village. A strategic SANG will be delivered on-site that will be attractive to both existing and new residents within the locality, thereby serving to minimise recreational pressure on the TBHSPA. However, some users of the SANG would also make use of the adjacent SINC and then continue their journey south to the Basingstoke Canal SSSI, potentially leading to recreational pressure concerns.
- With regards to the proposed **non-strategic allocations** -
 - Land between Eversley Road and Firgrove Road, Yateley – close proximity to the SPA (c.1km), and it is noted that the nearest part of the SPA is in unfavourable condition (albeit this is primarily due to poor management, rather than pressure). An adjacent bridleway (Love Lane) has some biodiversity value. A SANG would be provided on-site with this development.
 - CEMEX A and B, Eversley – close proximity to the SPA (c.1.5km), although a bespoke SANG would be provided with this development. Also, a woodland SINC is within the site boundary, and in practice would be adjacent, or close to, new homes.
 - Land south of Riseley, Heckfield – close proximity to the SPA (c.2km), although it is noted that a large country park sits between the site and the SPA. There is a high density of woodland in the vicinity, and whilst not all is ancient woodland, or designated as SINC, the patch of woodland almost adjacent, to the west, is a SINC. Again a bespoke SANG would be provided to mitigate this development.
 - Land NW of Crondall – falls within the 5km SPA buffer, and would not provide SANG. An ancient woodland SINC is adjacent.²⁶
 - Hop Garden and W of Varndell Rd, Hook – lies just outside the 5km SPA buffer, but within the 7km buffer. This site also has onsite biodiversity constraints, with SINC designation under review on part of the site, due to species-rich grassland.²⁷
 - Other sites (one at Long Sutton and two at South Warnborough) are located in the south west of the district, outside the 7km SPA buffer, and are not known to be associated with strategic biodiversity constraint.

Commentary on other policies

- 10.2.3 **Policy MG2** (Previously Developed Land) is supportive of development on brownfield land, but recognises that some brownfield sites have biodiversity value, stating: *“The Council will encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.”*
- 10.2.4 **Policy MG3** (Housing-led Strategic Sites) lists a number of key issues to be addressed at strategic sites, including: *“Measures to mitigate any potential adverse effects on the [TBHSPA].”* The text adds that: *“The provision of public open space and other green infrastructure. A holistic approach to green infrastructure is encouraged whereby public open space, sports and recreational facilities, SANGs, green networks, landscaping, biodiversity, flood risk and sustainable drainage systems are all considered in the round, exploiting synergies between these different elements.”*

²⁶ To reiterate, the emerging Crondall Neighbourhood Plan may select an alternative site or sites, thereby negating the need to allocate this site – or any other site - through the Local Plan.

²⁷ To reiterate, the emerging Hook Neighbourhood Plan may select an alternative site or sites, thereby negating the need to allocate this site – or any other site - through the Local Plan.

10.2.5 With regards to site specific policy -

- **Policy SC1** (Hartland Park), in addition to covering SPA issues, references the importance of avoiding adverse effects on the Fleet Pond SSSI, and ‘avoiding, mitigating or compensating for’ adverse effects on the SINC within or adjoining the site. The supporting text explains that: *“as a last resort compensation measures (e.g. biodiversity off-setting or translocation of SINC) will be secured to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and where possible provide a net gain...”* The supporting text also states that *“it may be possible to include some areas of ‘natural planting’ by allowing heathland species such as heather to develop in peripheral parts of the site”*. It is **recommended** that detailed work is undertaken to explore the realistic potential for a ‘net gain’, recognising the need to measure biodiversity at the landscape scale, and not just at the site scale. Existing habitats onsite may be unique or of low abundance at the landscape scale, and may be irreplaceable, in which case their loss will inevitably reduce biodiversity at the landscape scale, even if replaced by new habitats such that biodiversity at the site scale is increased. It is also recommended that the term ‘natural planting’ is clarified, to distinguish between A) creating new habitats through planting; and B) maintaining or enhancing existing areas of habitat.
- **Policy SC2** (Murrell Green), in addition to covering SPA issues, requires that ‘direct and indirect’ biodiversity impacts ‘across the site’ are ‘avoided, mitigated or offset’ including in respect of three SINC (Shapley Heath Copse, Shapley Heath, Beggars Corner & Totters Copse), the River Whitewater and its floodplain. The supporting text references the potential to achieve biodiversity enhancements through positive management of SINC and floodplain grassland; and, in respect of the Whitewater Valley, the supporting text states that ‘a net gain in biodiversity’ should be achieved ‘in this part of the site’. Again, it is **recommended** that work is undertaken to ensure that the focus is on landscape-scale biodiversity, as opposed to biodiversity at the site or ‘part site’ scale.
- **Policy SC3** (Land at Cross Farm), in addition to covering SPA issues, requires *“biodiversity enhancements by improving existing habitats onsite, such as Peatmoor Copse and the existing pond in the northern part of the site”*. The supporting text explains that there are opportunities for enhancing biodiversity onsite and in the River Hart corridor, and that *“landscaping and boundary treatments should support the creation of new habitats and enhance what is already present.”*
- **Policy SC4** (Sun Park) includes a particular focus on the avoidance of impacts to the TBHSPA, in that there is a requirement for no residential development within the 400m exclusion zone of the TBHSPA. There is a requirement to: *“Protect areas of established woodland and enhance the ecology of the site”*; and also a requirement to: *“Avoid, mitigate or offset adverse impacts on biodiversity across the site, including on [Hawley Common SINC] and on the quality and ecological value of the Hawley Lake Stream”*.

10.2.6 **Policy NE1** (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) clarifies the approaches to avoidance and mitigation that have been agreed by all authorities in the sub-region. As part of this, supporting text explains that: *“Proposals for new SANGs must be approved by the Council following advice from Natural England and will be expected to follow Natural England’s SANG guidelines. Applicants may propose bespoke SANGs that provide mitigation for their own developments, either within the development site or off-site in an appropriate location. The requirements of the SANG guidelines often mean that SANGs cannot not be delivered on smaller sites. Where we have capacity we may make Council administered SANG available to developers of smaller sites subject to the payment of a tariff.”*

10.2.7 **Policy NE2** (Landscape) requires that: *“Development proposals must respect and wherever possible enhance the special characteristics, value or visual amenity of the District’s landscape.”* There is reference to *“natural and historic features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, water features such as rivers and other landscape features and their function as ecological networks.”*

- 10.2.8 **Policy NE3** (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) describes a hierarchical approach to conservation. The supporting text then goes on to explain that: *“All development proposals will be expected to avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity and geodiversity and all developments should seek to provide a net gain to biodiversity. This might be through measures including landscaping opportunities, tree planting or habitat management.”* The text goes on to helpfully explain that biodiversity enhancements should be achieved through *“a focus on identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Biodiversity Priority Areas as identified in the council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy...”* This approach of targeting efforts in accordance with landscape-scale objectives is supported.
- 10.2.9 **Policy NE5** (Water Quality) states that: *“Development will be required to protect the quality of the District’s water environment, and where possible contribute towards improvements that are necessary to meet statutory requirements for water quality.”* The supporting text explains that: *“Some water bodies within the District are also of particular ecological significance. For example, the Basingstoke Canal...”*
- 10.2.10 **Policy I2** (Green Infrastructure) aims to protect and enhance the District’s green infrastructure network, and to ensure that where new green infrastructure is provided with new development that it is properly managed. The supporting text explains that: *“The provision of green infrastructure on site is more easily achieved within large developments but applicants for smaller schemes are also encouraged to consider how green infrastructure can be incorporated into their developments (for example green roofs, landscaping, gardens and amenity space).”*

Appraisal of the Draft Plan as a whole

- 10.2.11 The majority of proposed housing growth is directed to locations within 5km of the TBHSPA, leading to a risk of impacts due to increased recreational pressure, and potentially other ‘impact pathways’. However, there is good potential for the Council to identify sufficient SANG to mitigate increased recreational impacts, either as bespoke provision on strategic sites (Murrell Green, Cross Farm) or in other locations. A relatively high reliance on smaller site allocations that are not able to deliver new SANG to ‘consume their own smoke’ means that some reliance is placed on offsite strategic SANG with capacity, which places the onus on the Council to deliver strategic SANG solutions. There is a need to clarify SANG provision for Hartland Park (SC1) and Sun Park (SC4). Matters relating to SPA impact avoidance and mitigation are being considered through a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), and an HRA Report will be published alongside the next version of the Plan (Regulation 19 stage).
- 10.2.12 The majority of proposed allocations are also constrained by their proximity to sites designated as being of national or local importance for biodiversity and/or by undesignated on-site habitats of note. However, robust site specific and district-wide development management policies have been drafted, which should serve to ensure that impacts are avoided (through careful layout/masterplanning), and in certain instances it appears that development may serve to bring about an enhancement to biodiversity, i.e. contribute to targeted enhancements of habitats in accordance with landscape-scale conservation objectives. There is potentially a need for more detailed work to clarify site specific issues/opportunities, and a number of recommendations are made to this effect.
- 10.2.13 In conclusion, taking a precautionary approach - i.e. one that takes account of the risk of SANG / green infrastructure non-delivery - it is appropriate to ‘flag’ the potential for **significant negative effects**, given the potential for impacts to the TBHSPA, SSSIs and locally important habitats. It may prove that negative effects are unavoidable (see the appraisal of alternative spatial strategies in Chapter 7); however, detailed work subsequent to the current consultation can and should seek to ensure that impacts are minimised as far as possible.

10.3 Climate change mitigation

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.3.1 A key climate change mitigation consideration relates to the potential to affect average per capita transport-related CO₂ emissions, which are relatively high in Hart, reflecting the district's rural character; however, this is considered under 'Transport and accessibility' below. Instead, the discussion here focuses on the potential to support renewable or low carbon energy infrastructure, and hence minimise per capita CO₂ emissions from the built environment. In practice, this means supporting larger scale developments, of several hundred homes (or clusters of smaller developments that can be developed in a coordinated way), as development at scale enables delivery of the necessary infrastructure.
- 10.3.2 Policy SS1 (Spatial Strategy: Scale and Distribution of Growth) makes provision for two new settlements. The effect could be to enable delivery of low carbon infrastructure and also standards of sustainable design and construction over-and-above national requirements. Whilst there can be no certainty, in the absence of detailed proposals, it is fair to assume that a schemes of this scale will enable combined heat and power generation, with a network of piping to provide 'district heating'. The Murrell Green new settlement would likely include a new secondary school, new employment land and a small local centre, which could be supportive of district heating, on the basis of there being demand for heat across the day. Similarly, there may be some potential to link a district heating network at Hartland Park to nearby employment land (albeit this is highly uncertain, given barriers to retrofitting).

Commentary on other policies

- 10.3.3 **Policy MG3** sets out what is expected of the four strategic sites, listing a number of key issues to be addressed, including: *"Measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, for example energy and water-efficient buildings, low carbon and renewable energy generation, and sustainable drainage systems."*
- 10.3.4 **Policy BE2** (Design) states that development will be supported where *"it reduces energy consumption through sustainable approaches to building design and layout...; and it incorporates renewable or low carbon energy technologies, where appropriate."* The supporting text goes on to explain that: *"The inclusion of renewable and low carbon technologies should be considered by applicants, though this should not be at the expense of meeting the other requirements of good design."*
- 10.3.5 **Policy BE4** (Renewable and low carbon energy) states that: *"Renewable and Low-Carbon energy generation applications will be approved if any adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily including cumulative landscape and visual impacts."* The policy then goes on to list the main issues that are likely to be relevant when balancing the merits of any proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation against any adverse impacts. The supporting text also explains that: *"When assessing the adverse impacts of a scheme it is important to consider the cumulative landscape and visual impacts of the development..."*

Appraisal of the draft plan as a whole

- 10.3.6 The proposed spatial strategy performs well on the basis that there is provision for two new settlements, and therefore provision for a fairly high proportion of new homes to be delivered as part of a strategic scale scheme (where there should be opportunities to deliver low carbon energy infrastructure etc.). The Draft Plan proposes development management policy to ensure that opportunities are realised; however, it is noted that site specific policy is not proposed. Also, it is noted that support for low carbon measures is caveated, i.e. numerous other competing factors are highlighted as potentially overriding.
- 10.3.7 Whilst the plan performs reasonably well, **significant effects are not predicted**, recognising that climate change mitigation is a global issue.

10.4 Communities

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.4.1 Policy SS1 makes provision for four ‘strategic sites’, each of which should be able to provide a level of development that achieves the necessary critical mass to bring along supporting services, facilities and infrastructure. This is important, recognising that some infrastructure and services are at or nearly at capacity. Site specific considerations are as follows –
- Murrell Green – residents would need to travel to access many community services / facilities in Hart; but the new settlement would include a local centre, primary education and potentially a new secondary school. Existing public rights of way could be used to secure good access to Hook, Winchfield train station and the Whitewater valley. Parts of the site could suffer from air/noise pollution associated with the M3.
 - Hartland Park – residents would also need to travel to access the facilities and services in Fleet, but there is potential to divert existing bus routes to serve the new development. The site itself could deliver a local centre, open space, a primary school and early years educational provision. There is potential to link the site to Fleet Pond and to Fleet train station by sustainable transport modes.
 - Sun Park - air and noise pollution associated with the M3 would be an issue, but residents would benefit from good access to facilities and services in the northern part of Rushmoor.
 - Cross Farm - would help to meet the requirement for older persons accommodation, including for those with specialist care needs. It could be integrated with the existing road and footpath network in Crookham Village and could provide additional services and facilities to complement those already present in the village.
- 10.4.2 With regards to the package of smaller sites, there is little to say about specific sites. None would deliver strategic community infrastructure, and hence by definition would increase pressure on that which exists – e.g. the local primary school – however, no particular community infrastructure capacity constraints have been highlighted to date. Two of the eight sites are at a larger settlement – i.e. a ‘primary local service centre’ (Yateley and Hook) - and both of these sites are located such that there should be relatively good walking access to the local centre (the site at Hook is beyond 800m distant, but benefits from an existing footpath). The remaining six sites are located at a ‘main village’.
- 10.4.3 There are two more strategic factors to consider –
- Maximising growth at Fleet is appropriate in the sense that this is the district’s main town, and hence new residents would have relatively good access to services and facilities, assuming capacity (or potential to expand capacity) at the services and facilities that exist. Policy SS1 proposes a low growth strategy for Fleet, although it is recognised that new residents at Hartland Park, Murrell Green and elsewhere will look to Fleet, to some extent.
 - A concentration of new development in any one area can create risks in terms of the capacity of community infrastructure. The main risk that has been highlighted to date relates to secondary school capacity, as Calthorpe Park school at Fleet could reach capacity within the plan period (given that children from the 1,500 Hartlands Park scheme would be within the catchment of this school). However, the strategy proposed by Policy SS1 performs well, in that development is fairly dispersed, without a concentration at Fleet, and given that the Murrell Green new settlement should deliver a new secondary school.
- 10.4.4 **Policy MG3** (Housing-led Strategic Sites) requires that: *“Development proposals should enable a comprehensive scheme to be delivered cross the developable area within each strategic site. Developers must ensure that the site provides an appropriate scale and mix of uses, in suitable locations, to create sustainable development.”*

Commentary on other policies

- 10.4.5 **Policy MG5** (Development in the Countryside) lists criteria that must be met in order for development in the open countryside – i.e. development outside of settlements or within settlements listed in Tier 5 of the Hart Settlement Hierarchy 2010 – to be deemed acceptable. The policy reflects an understanding that some development can take place which is beneficial to the countryside and the people that live and work there. The emphasis is therefore to allow development in the countryside where it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is necessary, with inappropriate types and scales of development not permitted.
- 10.4.6 With regards to site specific policy -
- **Policy SC1** (Hartland Park) requires “*educational uses comprising a primary school and early years provision; a local centre comprising community uses and small scale local retail, service and food and drink facilities; and on-site public open space comprising play areas, parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and green corridors*”. The local centre should provide focal point for the scheme, and there should also be “*a focal point for play and recreation (including a NEAP) coupled with smaller areas including LEAPS and LAPs...*” The supporting text refers to: “*measures to connect the site with Fleet, Fleet Station and Farnborough by sustainable transport modes*”; a community facility that is “*designed to be multi-functional and adaptable over time*”; and “*appropriate mitigation... for secondary education and health care needs arising from the development*”.
 - **Policy SC2** (Murrell Green) requires educational uses comprising the minimum of a three-form entry primary school and 9.5ha of developable and functionally useable land for a seven-form entry secondary school with ancillary facilities; a local centre comprising community uses and small-scale convenience retail, service and/or food and drink uses; and on-site public open space comprising play areas (NEAPs, LEAPs, LAPs), parks and gardens, amenity greenspace, allotments and green corridors with appropriate long term maintenance and management arrangements.” The policy also refers to the need for: safe and convenient access to the schools from within the site and from surrounding areas, by a range of transport modes, including pedestrian and cycle linkages within the site; and measures to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on amenity for future residents, workers and visitors due to noise associated with the M3 and the railway line; and due to visual blight from the electricity pylons that are located on-site. The supporting text explains that:

“The new settlement must also be well-connected to bus and rail transport networks, to help encourage the use of these sustainable modes of transport. A green corridor that improves existing footpath connections to the Winchfield station should be incorporated within of the layout of development. New pedestrian and cycle links within the settlement must also ensure that all areas are well-connected to the proposed new school and the local centre facilities and services. New vehicular accesses from the A30 and B3016 will be provided to increase permeability within the site. The new road layout should however discourage ‘rat-running’ to the Winchfield station...”
 - **Policy SC3** (Land at Cross Farm) requires a new care village for older persons’ accommodation, comprising a mix of uses to include a 64-bed care home; and on-site public open space, amenity greenspace and green corridors along with an associated long term management and maintenance plan.
 - **Policy SC4** (Sun Park) requires on site amenity space; safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle linkages to the adjoining residential development (Sun Park Phase 1); Sandy Lane and Pinewood Park to maximise the accessibility of local facilities by sustainable transport modes; and a good standard of amenity for future residents and visitors within the site, especially in relation to noise and air pollution from the A327 and M3 Motorway.
- 10.4.7 **Policy SC6** (Housing Mix for Market Housing) seeks to ensure a mixed and balanced community, through requiring the provision of homes for one-person households, couples, families and older persons. The ageing population is also likely to create a need for additional specialist housing, to meet the healthcare requirements of older people. A range of accommodation will be required, from independent living units through to extra care units and care homes.

- 10.4.8 **Policy SC14** (Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) states that, for an application for a new or extended site to be acceptable, there should be: services and facilities readily accessible, including schools, medical services and other community facilities; no unacceptable adverse impact upon local amenity; and safe and convenient access to the highway network. Schemes should also be of sufficient size to provide for accommodation; parking; turning and, where relevant, the servicing and storage of vehicles and equipment.
- 10.4.9 **Policies ED4 – ED8** deal with town, district and local centres, setting out to reinforce the existing retail hierarchy, ensuring that centres complement each other. Within the defined centres, developments for retail and community uses will be encouraged where they are appropriate to the scale, function and character of the centre. Measures are proposed to restrict proposals for retail and community uses that are not in the centres defined, and to restrict proposals for non-retail / community uses (e.g. residential uses) within the defined centres. The effect should be to support the ongoing viability and vitality of centres. This is important, as the centres form part of the focal point for services and facilities that serve the immediate communities and the surrounding population.
- 10.4.10 **Policy BE2** (Design) states that development will be permitted where it would provide or positively contribute to public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe and inclusive for all users, including families, disabled people and the elderly. Also, external spaces (such as highways, parking areas, gardens and areas of open space) should be designed to facilitate safe use by future residents, service providers or visitors, according to their intended function. The supporting text explains that: *“Proposals will need to take account of the health and well-being of future residents, workers and visitors, and will need to take an inclusive approach to design that will allow everyone to benefit.”*
- 10.4.11 **Policy I3** (Transport) supports development proposals that provide ‘safe, suitable and convenient access for all potential users’ and provide an on-site movement layout compatible for all potential users. The supporting text explains that: *“New development must... demonstrate that it will not have a severe residual impact on the operation, safety or accessibility to either the local or strategic highway networks. It should also provide a safe and secure on-site movement layout that minimises conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, whilst taking into account the needs of people with disabilities...”*
- 10.4.12 **Policy I4** (Open Space, Sport and Recreation) states that development proposals will be permitted where they: *“protect the existing open space network, sports and recreation facilities (including built facilities); and enhance and improve the quality, capacity, accessibility and management of sports and recreation facilities (including built facilities) and the open space network within the District.”* Implementation of Policy I4 will be through the Council’s Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study and Playing Pitch Strategy 2011 – 2032. The Study sets out the open space standards specific to the District and recommends future provision.
- 10.4.13 **Policy I5** (Community Facilities) states that: *“Development proposals for the provision of new community facilities or the improvement of existing facilities, will be supported where they enhance the sustainability of communities.”* The supporting text explains that:
- “Our aim is to promote sustainable, cohesive, integrated communities and to support better local services and facilities that reflect community needs and support well-being. We therefore encourage new facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship), and the modernisation and enhancement of existing facilities. We also aim to protect the unnecessary loss of existing facilities, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet day to day needs. New community facilities, or improvements to existing community facilities, may need to be phased and delivered in a timely manner alongside new development in accordance with Policy I1 Infrastructure. Development for community facilities may be acceptable in the countryside in accordance with Policy MG5: Development in the Countryside. However, it is important that the provision of new facilities should not be at the expense or in competition with existing facilities within the local area.”*

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- 10.4.14 The proposed spatial strategy performs well, in that two new communities will involve delivery of new community infrastructure, with the Murrell Green new settlement expected to deliver a new secondary school; however, relatively few allocations are directed to Fleet (the district's main settlement) and there is a fairly high reliance on small urban extensions, which will not support delivery of new community infrastructure. The proposed development management policy framework is robust and helps to alleviate concerns, with Policies SC6 (Housing Mix for Market Housing) and SC13 (Specialist Housing) of particular note, given the need to secure provision of specialist housing to accommodate an ageing population. Policies I1 and I5 are also of particular importance to ensure that the requirements for new infrastructure, which will help to build sustainable communities, are met.
- 10.4.15 Whilst the plan performs well, **significant effects are not predicted**, recognising that there are no existing strategic problems/issues would necessarily be addressed as a result of the plan. Whilst delivery of a new secondary school is potentially of strategic importance, understanding of needs and capacity at existing schools is continuing to evolve.

10.5 Employment and the economy

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.5.1 Policy SS1 makes provision for a new settlement at Murrell Green, which should deliver significant new employment land (c.3.7 ha). The new employment land would involve an extension to the existing Murrell Green Business Park, which is performing well. As stated by the Employment Land Review (ELR, 2017): *"There appears to be strong demand from small flexible businesses / light industrial premises to support rural enterprises and SMEs. The types of premises vary significantly from basic converted agricultural barns providing storage/workshop space, to purpose-built light industrial / storage units, such as those at Murrell Green Business Park located on the A30 between Hook and Hartley Witney. Occupancy rates at such accommodation are high demonstrating that there is demand for such accommodation."*
- 10.5.2 More generally, the spatial strategy should serve to ensure that there is a skilled workforce in proximity to employment growth areas of regional importance, and the fact that the proposed strategy performs well from a transport perspective (see discussion below) also translates into positive effects from an 'employment and economy' perspective.

Commentary on other policies

- 10.5.3 **Policy MG4** (Employment-land) deals with the allocation of two sites for employment development, in order to support local enterprise. In addition to the extension to Murrell Green Business Park, the policy supports a 1.8ha expansion to Eversley Storage. Allocation of new employment land, whilst not shown by the Employment Land Review (ELR, 2016) to be strictly necessary, will support the establishment of new business and provide existing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the District with a greater choice of accommodation to meet their business needs.
- 10.5.4 **Policy MG5** (Development in the Countryside) lists criteria that must be met in order for development in the open countryside – i.e. development outside of settlements or within settlements listed in Tier 5 of the Hart Settlement Hierarchy 2010 – to be deemed acceptable. The policy reflects an understanding that it is possible to strengthen the rural economy by encouraging uses related to the land, including appropriate forms of agriculture and other land based business, forestry and sustainable rural tourism. The policy also reflects an understanding that there are a number of facilities in the countryside such as educational and training institutions, Ministry of Defence facilities, and Blackbushe Airport, where there could be a need for new development for operational reasons.

10.5.5 **Chapter 7** (Sustainable Economic Development) includes policies against which planning applications for economic development will be considered, setting out a clear framework for delivering the appropriate scale and type of economic development, in appropriate locations. Policies are as follows -

- Policy ED1 directs new employment provision to the appropriate locations including the strategic and locally important employment sites as defined on the Policies Map, and along with Policy ED2 seeks to support the regeneration / redevelopment of established employment sites. This is necessary, in order to enable the provision of modern employment stock to replace properties that are reaching the end of their functional life.
- Policy ED3 enables proposals for farm diversification and the establishment of new business which support economic development in the rural area.
- Policies ED4-ED8 help to protect and enhance the role, vitality and vibrancy of the district's town and village centres;

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10.5.6 The proposed strategy performs well given the potential to deliver employment land with good access to the A30, as an extension to the popular Murrell Green Business Park, in proximity to the existing employment cluster at Hook. This will add to the employment land offer in qualitative terms. However, **significant positive effects are not predicted**, as the ELR does not conclude strongly on the need for new employment land within the District in quantitative terms, with the overall supply of employment land being approximately in balance with demand.

10.6 Flood risk and other climate change adaptation issues

[Commentary on the spatial strategy](#)

10.6.1 The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) identifies a range of flood risk related issues / constraints across the district. Fluvial flood risk is the main issue with a bearing on site selection / spatial strategy, although there is also a need to consider surface water flood risk and groundwater flood risk (a particular issue in parts of Hart, given the local geology).

10.6.2 The following flood risk issues are associated with the sites proposed for allocation through Policy SS1 –

- Sun Park - identified in the SFRA as having potential for groundwater flooding to occur at the surface.
- Hartland Park – small areas fall within Flood Zone 3 (high risk) associated with the Gelvert Stream, although it appears that adverse impacts could be mitigated through SuDS, appropriate building design and avoiding the development of areas at risk.
- Murrell Green new settlement - intersects a significant area of fluvial flood risk, associated with the River Whitewater; however, the intention is to leave areas at risk largely undeveloped, and indeed use this land for SANG;
- Land between Eversley Road & Firgrove Road, Yateley - includes areas in Flood Zone 3; however, these areas can be left undeveloped. The eastern boundary of the site is also at some risk of surface water flooding (1 in 100 year).
- Cross Farm, Church Crookham – includes some areas in Flood Zone 3, but these areas are likely to remain undeveloped

Commentary on other policies

10.6.3 With regards to site specific policy -

- The supporting text to **Policy SC1** (Hartland Park) states that *“a Flood Risk Assessment will be required to support any planning application. Surface and groundwater flood risk will require investigation and mitigation. Surface water run-off from the site contributes to flooding in Rushmoor Borough, so it is important that this is reduced through the use of sustainable drainage systems. Opportunities to reduce the amount of hardstanding on site below existing levels will also be encouraged; a holistic approach to flood risk and site drainage is required, whereby surface water overland flow routes are identified and integrated with the site’s green infrastructure and amenity provisions wherever feasible. A wide variety of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be employed across the site within SuDS treatment trains; maximising water quality, wildlife and amenity benefits. The drainage strategy must consider the on-going maintenance requirements of the drainage system proposed.”*
- Policy SC2 (Murrell Green) states a need to avoid areas that are prone to flooding (from any recognised source) including in the vicinity of the River Whitewater and Potbridge Brook; and manage wastewater in accordance with a detailed drainage strategy that has been prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency and Thames Water (as the provider of wastewater infrastructure in the area). The supporting text explains that:
“Areas of the site are subject to flood risks associated with the River Whitewater and with surface water run-off. The masterplan must therefore be informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment that considers the areas at risk of flooding. Proposals must avoid locating development in areas at risk of flooding and must include appropriate flood mitigation measures such as sustainable drainage systems”
- Policy SC4 (Sun Park) states a need to avoid areas with the highest probability of flooding, with the supporting text explaining that: *“A small section of the site is located within Flood Risk Zone 2 and there are some small areas within the site (less than 5% of the site area) that are at risk from surface water flooding. The majority of the northern half of the site (approximately 40%) is at risk from reservoir flooding and approximately 70% of the site has the potential for groundwater flooding at the surface.”*

- 10.6.4 Policy NE4 (Managing Flood Risk) establishes the tests that must be met in order for development in areas at risk from all sources of flooding, now and in the future, is to be permitted. The policy also set out that all development will be required to ensure that, as a minimum, there is no net increase in surface water run-off, and establishes that sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) are supported as a method to achieve this. The policy also establishes that: *“Development should be avoided in areas at risk from, susceptible to, or have a history of groundwater flooding. If this is not possible then the development should be designed to incorporate flood resistance and resilience measures.”* It is **recommended** that additional detail might be added, to establish the type of measures that may be appropriate.

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- 10.6.5 A number of sites intersect a flood risk zone; however, it appears likely that measures can be taken at the planning application stage, when determining site layout and design measures, to ensure that flood risk is avoided. There is potentially the greatest concern in respect of the Sun Park site, given the extent of groundwater flood risk. **Significant negative effects are not predicted** at this stage as there is good potential to avoid or mitigate flood risk. The Council will need to work closely with the Environment Agency when finalising the plan, ensuring that the ‘sequential test’ is applied fully.

10.7 Historic environment

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.7.1 Policy SS1 makes provision for four ‘strategic sites’ and nine smaller urban extensions (of which four are notably larger than the other three). Key points to note are as follows -
- Murrell Green is constrained by a number of listed buildings; however, the extent of the site should ensure good potential to avoid impacts through layout / masterplanning.
 - Cross Farm is significantly constrained by listed buildings on Crondall Road and The Street; and the setting of both the Crookham Village and Basingstoke Canal Conservation Areas.
 - CEMEX A and B, Eversley is adjacent to the Conservation Area at Up Green; however, the part of the site in question (CEMEX B) will involve relatively few homes (19).
 - Granary Field, Long Sutton adjoins a Conservation Area (Long Sutton) and a Grade II* listed building (Long Sutton Manor); however, this is a small site (10 homes).

Commentary on other policies

- 10.7.2 With regards to site specific policy -
- Policy SC2 (Murrell Green) states that development should respect the setting and significance of listed buildings within and adjoining the site.
 - Policy SC3 (Land at Cross Farm) states that development should respect and protect the setting of listed buildings on Crondall Road and The Street; and respect the setting of both the Crookham Village and Basingstoke Canal Conservation Areas. The supporting text states that: *“The linear character of Crookham Village will inevitably be altered by development at Cross Farm. It is therefore, important that the scale, height, massing, layout and materials of new buildings are in-keeping and appropriate for the setting, adjacent to the Conservation Area.”*
- 10.7.3 Policy BE1 (Historic Environment) sets out criteria to be met by development proposals, in order to *“protect, conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets and their settings, taking account of their significance, as well as the distinctive character of the District’s townscapes and landscapes.”* The supporting text explains that:
- “...the overarching principle is that, where possible, harm to the significance of heritage assets should be avoided. If that is not possible, then the harm should be minimised or mitigated and requires clear and convincing justification in the form of public benefits before a harmful proposal should be allowed. This policy applies to both designated and to a lesser extent non-designated heritage assets...”*

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- 10.7.4 A number of proposed allocations are in proximity to nationally important heritage assets, and hence could impact upon setting; however, there will be good potential for mitigation through appropriate layout, design and landscaping. A robust development management policy framework is proposed which should help to ensure that this is the case. Given the proposed development management policy, **significant negative effects are not predicted.**

10.8 Housing

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.8.1 A key consideration is the need to deliver the housing target over the plan period, and maintain a robust 'housing trajectory', i.e. maintain a situation whereby there is a five year supply of deliverable sites at all times over the plan period. This is important, as in the absence of a five year land supply the housing policies of the Local Plan would be considered 'out of date' leading to a situation whereby there is a likelihood of planning applicants winning planning permission at appeal, in accordance with the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', as defined by the NPPF. The result would be a distribution of development that is not 'plan led', which could mean that certain areas of the district do not receive sufficient new housing (and that other areas receive more than can be sustainably accommodated).
- 10.8.2 Policy SS1 (Spatial Strategy: Scale and Distribution of Growth) makes provision for at least 10,185 new homes (net) to be built over the Plan period 2011-2032 at an annual average rate of 485 dwellings per year distributed. The strategy of providing for a level of growth above that necessary to meet objectively assessed housing needs, in order to meet more of the need for affordable housing, is supported from a 'Housing' perspective.
- 10.8.3 The proposed strategy involves two new settlements, one of which is a brownfield site, and development of another large brownfield site (Sun Park). This strategy potentially gives rise to a degree of risk in respect of delivering the required trajectory. This is on the basis that new settlements and brownfield developments can be subject to a considerable lead-in time, as infrastructure upgrades are completed, and measures are put in place to mitigate strategic constraints / address issues (e.g. contaminated land). However, the proposed strategy also involves an array of smaller sites, leading to overall confidence regarding the trajectory. Sites are also spread geographically, which should mean that 'very local' housing needs (i.e. needs associated with settlements, which whilst not quantified are likely to exist) are met.

Commentary on other policies

- 10.8.4 **Policy MG5** (Development in the Countryside) lists criteria that must be met in order for development in the open countryside – i.e. development outside of settlements or within settlements listed in Tier 5 of the Hart Settlement Hierarchy 2010 – to be deemed acceptable. The policy reflects an understanding that some development can take place which is beneficial to the countryside and the people that live and work there. It is important to deliver a wide choice of homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community including planning for affordable homes in rural areas. The emphasis is therefore to allow development in the countryside where it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is necessary, with inappropriate types and scales of development not permitted.
- 10.8.5 With regards to site specific policy -
- **Policy SC1** (Hartland Park) requires affordable housing distributed throughout the site with each phase making an appropriate contribution towards the overall provision.
 - **Policy SC2** (Murrell Green) requires a mix of housing in accordance with relevant policies in the Local Plan, including affordable housing.
 - **Policy SC3** (Land at Cross Farm) requires new care village for older persons' accommodation, comprising a mix of uses to include a 64-bed care home; up to 100 new homes for the elderly of which 40% should be affordable homes

- 10.8.6 **Policy SC6** (Housing Mix for Market Housing) seeks to ensure a mixed and balanced community, through requiring the provision of homes for one-person households, couples, families and older persons. Policy SC6 enables the Council to adopt a flexible approach when assessing development proposals, as an appropriate housing mix for an individual development site will depend on site-specific factors, such as its location and the local density and character of housing in the neighbourhood. The supporting text explains that: *“Applicants should review the SHMA [Strategic Housing Market Assessment]), but also any other sources of evidence including that which may have been prepared to support a relevant neighbourhood plan.”* The supporting text also states that:
- “Local evidence suggests that there is a need for bungalows and smaller homes, which would enable people to down-size where they are under-occupying their current homes. In sustainable locations, such as in the centre of towns and larger villages, applicants should investigate opportunities to provide new homes that are suitable for people of retirement age and older, looking to down-size.”*
- 10.8.7 **Policy SC7** (Self and custom built housing) recognises that some people wish to build their own homes; and that self-build and custom housebuilding is a key element of the government’s agenda to increase housing supply . It is seen as a more affordable route to home ownership. Most residential developments of 100 dwellings or more should include 5% of the residential plots to be serviced and made available for sale to self or custom builders.
- 10.8.8 **Policy SC8** (Affordable Housing) requires developments resulting in 11 or more dwellings (gross), or of greater than 1,000 square metres gross residential floorspace, should provide a minimum of 40% affordable housing,²⁸ unless robust evidence is provided demonstrating 40% is unviable. Only in exceptional circumstances, where it is clearly demonstrated that it is not possible to deliver all the affordable housing on site, will the Council accept off-site provision, or a financial contribution of equivalent value in lieu of on-site provision. This approach is in accordance with the evidence provided by the Council’s Housing Register and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which serves to demonstrate a high level of need for affordable housing within the district and across the Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath housing market area. In particular, the 2016 SHMA identifies a large requirement for subsidised rented and subsidised home ownership housing. The proposed approach is also in accordance with a Whole Plan and CIL Viability Report (2016), which finds that the requirement will not make development unviable. Importantly, the supporting text states that:
- “The artificial restriction of site areas or inefficient use of land to avoid the affordable housing thresholds is not acceptable, as proper planning of an area requires a comprehensive approach. Sites in the same ownership (or with an ownership relationship) will be treated as a single planning unit. Sites which have a clear relationship in physical terms will be treated as one site – such as adjacent underused sites, even if they are in different ownerships.”*
- 10.8.9 **Policy SC9** (Rural Exception Sites) supports rural exception sites in the villages and other small settlements where there is a proven local need for affordable housing. Evidence of need should be up-to-date and could be drawn from the Council’s local housing register or from surveys of local residents within the parish. A proportion (not more than 30%) of market housing may come forward on rural exception sites, but only where it is proven as being necessary to bring forward the affordable housing. A viability assessment, which must be prepared by the applicant, will be necessary to confirm whether or not the suggested proportion of market housing is indeed necessary. Also, applicants will be required to enter into a planning obligation to ensure that all affordable housing remains available for those with a local connection in perpetuity.

²⁸ In applying this policy the Council will use the latest government definition of affordable housing. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Council at an early stage for advice on affordable housing mix requirements.

- 10.8.10 **Policy SC13** (Specialist Housing) supports specialist housing proposals, whether these fall into Use Class C2 (residential institutions) or C3 (dwelling house), or provide a mixture of both types of residential use. New specialist housing is likely to be required to accommodate the ageing population, and increasing numbers of residents with dementia or mobility problems. Although many of these residents will be older persons (i.e. above retirement age), there will also be adults with disabilities of working age who require specialist housing to meet their care needs.
- 10.8.11 **Policy SC14** (Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) supports planning applications for new sites where certain criteria are met. Criteria are not overly restrictive, recognising that there is a need to maintain a five year supply of deliverable land for the travelling community, in the same way as there is for general housing. Having said this, the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has served to establish that there is currently a surplus of pitches / plots, and hence no need for a land supply.

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- 10.8.12 The Draft Plan would lead to **significant positive effects**. It allocates sites to deliver an 'uplifted' OAHN figure (i.e. the housing target recommended by the Affordable Housing Background Paper – see Box 6.2) on a range of sites across the district (in/adjoining both large and small settlements) with policies to ensure that the range of house types, tenures and sizes meets the identified needs. The development of land at Cross Farm will help to meet the housing needs for older persons, as identified through the Council's SHMA.

10.9 Land and other resources

[Commentary on the spatial strategy](#)

- 10.9.1 There is a need to avoid loss of higher quality ('best and most versatile') agricultural land. In this respect, all undeveloped land in Hart is either Grade 2 (very good quality), Grade 3 (good to moderate quality) or Grade 4 (moderate quality) in the Agricultural Land Classification, according to the nationally available 'Provisional Agricultural Land Quality' dataset. The dataset shows there to be three patches of Grade 2 agricultural land, in the south of the district.
- 10.9.2 The national data-set is of very low resolution, which means that it is difficult to apply it to the appraisal of individual sites, and in turn difficult to apply it to the appraisal of the spatial strategy alternatives. However, it is noted that the smaller urban extension sites in the south of the district are in the vicinity of the patches of Grade 2 land indicated by the dataset; however, they do not appear to intersect.
- 10.9.3 The other available dataset is known as the 'Post 1988' dataset. This dataset is an accurate reflection of agricultural land quality, on the basis that the methodology involves field surveys. However, the data-set is very patchy, with data only being available for a small proportion of the district. Data is available for land to the east of Hook, which intersects the western part of the proposed Murrell Green new settlement site. The data shows this land to be grade 2, i.e. highest quality in the Hart context, and second highest quality in the national context. This may indicate a likelihood of the site as a whole comprising higher quality agricultural land. It is **recommended** that the Council work with site promoters to build a better picture of agricultural land quality at the sites in contention for allocation, so that information is available to inform a decision on a preferred spatial strategy.

[Commentary on other policies](#)

- 10.9.4 **Policy MG2** (Previously Developed Land) is supportive of development on brownfield land, but recognises that some brownfield sites have environmental value, stating: *"The redevelopment of suitable previously developed land will be encouraged provided that the site is not of high environmental value..."*

- 10.9.5 Policy BE2 (Design) states that development will be permitted where it “*promotes, reflects and incorporates the distinctive qualities of its surroundings in terms of the proposed scale, density, mass and height of development, and choice of building materials. Innovative building designs will be supported provided that they are sensitive to their surroundings and help to improve the quality of the townscape or landscape.*”

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- 10.9.6 The proposed spatial strategy performs well in that a relatively high proportion of allocations are set to be directed to brownfield locations; however, the proposed Murrell Green new settlement may involve loss of a significant area of best and most versatile agricultural land, and other sites may also impact in this sense. **Significant negative effects are not predicted**, although there is some uncertainty in the absence of detailed evidence.

10.10 Landscape

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.10.1 As discussed above, Policy SS1 directs a relatively high proportion of housing growth to brownfield locations; however, there will be numerous greenfield allocations and each will be associated with landscape impacts to some extent. Furthermore, one of the two strategic brownfield allocations is associated with some landscape sensitivity.
- 10.10.2 The following are notable site specific issues -
- Murrell Green new settlement - topography is a potential issue, given that this site includes raised land visible from Hook, across the River Whitewater valley; and there is also some visibility from the A30, given hedgerow gaps. However, Hart’s landscape capacity study identifies this area as having a medium capacity for new development, which in the Hart context indicates that there is relatively ‘high’ capacity (the majority of the district having been identified by the study as having ‘low’ or ‘low-medium’ capacity).
 - Hartland Park – is a brownfield site within the ‘gap’ between Fleet and Farnham. The site does not currently contribute to openness, given mature vegetation and some existing built form; however, it is the case that development of the site has the potential to reduce the sense of a landscape gap.
 - Cross Farm, Crookham Village – development will significantly alter the historic ‘frontage development only’ built form of the village and could be highly visible from the Basingstoke Canal. It will encroach into the countryside gap between Crookham Village and Fleet.
 - CEMEX A & B, Eversley – will extend the current linear built form, and also introduce some development in depth, and will be visible from a long distance footpath (the Three Castles Path) to the south (as well as Chequers Lane / Hollybush Lane to the east).
 - Land West of Varndell Road & Land off Hop Garden Road, Hook – is associated with similar issues to the Owen’s Farm site, albeit on a much smaller scale. Development would have an urbanising effect on the gap that currently exists between Hook and Newnham.²⁹
 - Land between Eversley Road and Firgrove Road, Yateley – is located within the Yateley/Eversley Cross local gap, but is relatively contained in the landscape / would integrate relatively well with the existing built form.
 - Land NW of Crondall would extend the linear form of the village north to a considerable extent; however, the site is screened from the road by a tree belt.³⁰

²⁹ To reiterate, the emerging Crondall Neighbourhood Plan may select an alternative site or sites, thereby negating the need to allocate this site – or any other site - through the Local Plan.

³⁰ To reiterate, the emerging Hook Neighbourhood Plan may select an alternative site or sites, thereby negating the need to allocate this site – or any other site - through the Local Plan.

Commentary on other policies

- 10.10.3 **Policy MG3** (Housing-led Strategic Sites) requires that: *“All proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive masterplan for the entire strategic site. This should demonstrate how new development will integrate with and complement it’s surroundings in an appropriate manner.”*
- 10.10.4 **Policy MG5** (Development in the Countryside) lists criteria that must be met in order for development in the open countryside – i.e. development outside of settlements or within settlements listed in Tier 5 of the Hart Settlement Hierarchy 2010 – to be deemed acceptable. The policy reflects an understanding that some development can take place which is beneficial to the countryside and the people that live and work there. The emphasis is therefore to allow development in the countryside where it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is both necessary and justified. Inappropriate types and scales of development will not be permitted.
- 10.10.5 **Policy MG6** (Gaps between Settlements) seeks to ensure the protection of 13 key gaps between settlements, stating that development will only be permitted where *“it would not diminish the physical and/or visual separation of settlements; and it would not compromise the integrity of the Gap either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development.”* The gaps should serve to maintain the separate identity of settlements, and it is also noted that they help to provide certainty in respect of planning for green infrastructure.
- 10.10.6 With regards to site specific policy -
- **Policy SC1** (Hartland Park) states that development: *“In response to its location within the Fleet to Farnborough Gap, be designed and landscaped to minimise the visual impact of development from surrounding areas. A landscape strategy will be required to ensure the development is permanently well screened, with additional planting provided within the site where necessary along with appropriate long term maintenance and management arrangements.”* The supporting text then adds further detail.
 - **Policy SC2** (Murrell Green) states a need to: promote and where possible incorporate the distinctive landscape features of the site (including mature trees and hedgerows, areas of woodland, and watercourses) within its overall layout, to create glimpsed views to/from Hook and attractive views from the A30; avoid adverse visual impacts on the skyline; be physically and visually integrated with existing and proposed areas of greenspace, including areas of new SANG to the northeast of Hook; and respect areas of undeveloped land between the new neighbourhood, Phoenix Green and Hook, to maintain significant physical and visual gaps and thereby preserve the separate identity of these places.
 - **Policy SC6** (Land at Cross Farm) states that any scheme should include an area of natural greenspace to maintain significant physical and visual gaps between Crookham Village and Church Crookham. The supporting text explains that: *“Particular attention needs to be paid to the overall design of new development, given the site’s relationship with the Crookham Village and Basingstoke Canal Conservation Areas. New buildings should respect views into and from Crookham Village, and along the western boundary, be sympathetic to the larger properties on larger plots along Crondall Road. The linear character of Crookham Village will inevitably be altered by development at Cross Farm. It is therefore, important that the scale, height, massing, layout and materials of new buildings are in-keeping and appropriate for the setting, adjacent to the Conservation Area.”*
- 10.10.7 **Policy NE2** (Landscape) seeks to conserve and, where possible, enhance the various landscape character areas within the District, thus to perpetuate the District’s attractiveness to residents, visitors and investors alike. Any new development should be in keeping with the character of the local landscape in terms of its location, siting and design. The supporting text helpfully explains that: *“Smaller, individual features can combine to establish character and identity. These elements, such as trees, hedgerows and watercourses often provide recognisable boundaries to settlements which help to establish an identity of an area. These features should be protected as their loss, either individually or cumulatively, could have a potential impact on both the immediate and wider character of the landscape.”*

- 10.10.8 **Policy BE1** (Historic Environment) states the need to account of *“the distinctive character of the District’s townscapes and landscapes.”*
- 10.10.9 **Policy BE2** (Design) states that: *“All developments should seek to achieve a high quality design and positively contribute to the overall appearance of the local area. Development will be permitted where it... promotes, reflects and incorporates the distinctive qualities of its surroundings in terms of the proposed scale, density, mass and height of development, and choice of building materials. Innovative building designs will be supported provided that they are sensitive to their surroundings and help to improve the quality of the townscape or landscape”.*
- 10.10.10 **Policy BE4** (Renewable and low carbon energy) states that: *“Renewable and Low-Carbon energy generation applications will be approved if any adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily including cumulative landscape and visual impacts.”* The policy then goes on to list the main issues that are likely to be relevant when balancing the merits of any proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation against any adverse impacts. The supporting text also explains that: *“When assessing the adverse impacts of a scheme it is important to consider the cumulative landscape and visual impacts of the development...”*

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- 10.10.11 Whilst there will be impacts to locally valued landscapes, and some impacts to designated settlement gaps at Fleet/Farnborough and Fleet/Crookham village, **it is not possible to conclude significant negative effects**, as there would be no impacts to designated landscapes. Furthermore, concerns are allayed by the development management policy framework that is proposed. Site specific policy is notably detailed for Hartland Park, Murrell Green and Cross Farm, with a view to ensuring that landscape impacts are avoided or mitigated.

10.11 Transport and accessibility

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.11.1 Policy SS1 proposes a new settlement at Murrell Green, which gives rise to a range of transport and accessibility implications. Residents would need to travel to access many community services and facilities, although new community infrastructure (schools, local shops, open space and meeting places) will be accessible by walking and cycling. Also, there will be some potential to support ‘modal shift’, given the potential to secure good walking/cycling access to Hook and Winchfield train station. Also, a ‘park and bus’ facility could be delivered, encouraging residents of the new settlement and the surrounding area to make use of existing bus services along the A30. Traffic generated will have implications for a number of junctions (including potentially M3 junction 5), and impacts will need careful consideration, alongside consideration of the upgrades that are possible, given available funding.
- 10.11.2 Other proposed sites also give rise to a range of issues. Notably –
- Hartland Park – development could have impacts on junction 4a of the M3, but there is potential for improving transport links by sustainable modes (walking, cycling, bus) at Hartland Park, especially to adjoining areas in Hart and Rushmoor.
 - Sun Park - impacts on the local and strategic road network (e.g. junction 4a of the M3) should be mitigated, by (e.g.) providing safe and convenient access to local facilities by sustainable transport modes.
 - Cross Farm - vehicular and pedestrian access should be integrated with the local road network in Crookham Village and with existing rights of way linking the site to the Basingstoke Canal, to help integrate the development with the local community and provide opportunities for recreation.

- Murrell Green - the existing road network could and should be used to ensure multiple points of access to the new community, from the A30, Totters Lane and the B3016.
- Land between Eversley Road and Firgrove Road, Yateley – pedestrian and cycle access would need to be improved, but development at this site could potentially facilitate a new cycle link between Eversley and Yateley.
- CEMEX A and B, Eversley – Hollybush Lane would need to be widened. Development could assist in the provision of a new cycle link between Eversley and Yateley, particularly in combination with development at Eversley (see above).
- Land north-west of Crondall – although the Adams Hendry detailed site assessment suggests that there's a lack of sustainable transport options, this was not the view of Hart officers through the SA workshops. In particular, there is good potential for safe cycling north to Fleet, given the potential access the Crondall Road via an existing track.³¹

Commentary on other policies

- 10.11.3 **Policy MG3** sets out what is expected of the four strategic sites, listing a number of key issues to be addressed, including:

“The provision of a comprehensive package of on and off-site transport measures to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes and mitigate impacts on the local road network.”

“The provision of an on-site movement layout that is safe and suitable for all potential users, providing permeability and ease of movement, with links into surrounding networks including public rights of way. Safe routes to school should be provided where applicable, and wherever appropriate, the development should be laid out such that it is capable of being served by bus.”

“The provision of adequate, well designed parking for residential and other uses on the site. The provision of facilities for charging electric vehicles, in both public and private parking is encouraged.”

- 10.11.4 With regards to site specific policy -

- **Policy SC1** (Hartland Park) requires mitigation for impacts on the local highway network, footpaths and cycleways (including the Basingstoke Canal), and states a need for “measures to connect the site with Fleet, Fleet Station and Farnborough by sustainable transport modes”
- **Policy SC2** (Murrell Green) states a need to provide new vehicular access into the site from the A30, the B3016 and Totters Lane; and facilitate safe and convenient access to the schools from within the site and from surrounding areas, by a range of transport modes, including pedestrian and cycle linkages within the site. The supporting text states that:

“The new settlement must also be well-connected to bus and rail transport networks, to help encourage the use of these sustainable modes of transport. A green corridor that improves existing footpath connections to the Winchfield station should be incorporated within of the layout of development. New pedestrian and cycle links within the settlement must also ensure that all areas are well-connected to the proposed new school and the local centre facilities and services. New vehicular accesses from the A30 and B3016 will be provided to increase permeability within the site. The new road layout should however discourage ‘rat-running’ to the Winchfield station. The masterplan must be supported by a transport assessment which sets out the transport issues and mitigation measures related to the development.”

³¹ To reiterate, the emerging Crondall Neighbourhood Plan may select an alternative site or sites, thereby negating the need to allocate this site – or any other site - through the Local Plan.

- 10.11.5 **Policy BE2** (Design) states that development will be permitted where it *“provides or positively contributes to public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe and inclusive for all users... “ and “enhances permeability by facilitating access by walking or cycling modes”*. Also, developments should include *“sufficient well-designed facilities/areas for parking (including bicycle storage) taking account of the need for good access for all users.”*
- 10.11.6 **Policy I1** (Infrastructure) states that: “All development that requires planning permission must make appropriate provision for infrastructure, on and off-site, or through financial contributions to off-site provision.” Planning obligations secured through Section 106 agreements will be used to provide necessary site related infrastructure requirements such as new access arrangements, provision of open space and other community infrastructure, local highway/transportation mitigation and environmental enhancements. Necessary off-site infrastructure will continue to be secured through Planning Obligations and, once adopted, according to the Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule to ensure that all such development makes an appropriate and reasonable contribution to the costs of provision.
- 10.11.7 **Policy I3** (Transport) states that: “Development should seek wherever possible to offer maximum flexibility in the choice of travel modes, including walking and cycling, improve accessibility to services and support the transition to a low carbon future.” The policy establishes a number of criteria that must be met, for development to be permitted, and the supporting text explains: *“Development proposals that generate significant amounts of movement must be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment and will normally be required to provide a robust Travel Plan.”*

Appraisal of the draft plan as a whole

- 10.11.8 The proposed strategic sites are all associated with transport network issues, but the Draft Plan includes general and site-specific policies to avoid or mitigate negative impacts arising. Also, it is the case that a proportion of housing is distributed to smaller settlements, with higher car dependency.
- 10.11.9 **It is not possible to conclude significant negative effects** at the current time, as there is no robust evidence to show that ‘severe’ congestion will result from proposed housing growth. Transport modelling work is ongoing, alongside work to establish the transport infrastructure upgrades that are needed and viable.

10.12 Water

Commentary on the spatial strategy

- 10.12.1 The emerging Water Cycle Study (WCS) has highlighted capacity issues at Eversley Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) and at Camberley WWTW, in neighbouring Surrey Heath District. Upgrades could well be feasible in time (therefore leading to implications for the phasing of development), although it is noted that the capacity issue at Camberley WWTW is more significant, as the WWTW already requires upgrades just to accommodate committed growth in Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Districts. Sun Park and Hartland Park are located in the catchment of the Camberley WWTW, whilst CEMEX A & B (Eversley) and Land between Eversley Road and Firgrove Road (Yateley) are located in the catchment of the Eversley WWTW.
- 10.12.2 A new settlement at Murrell Green would either need to provide its own WWTW, or transfer waste water to Fleet via new/improved infrastructure. The former may prove to be a preferable option for the developer, although there will be cost / viability implications from either option; and there is also a need to explore the potential environmental impacts carefully (working with the Environment Agency), given that the River Whitewater in this area has relatively low flow, i.e. a level of flow that may not be suited to receiving discharges from a WWTW.

Commentary on other policies

- 10.12.3 **Policy MG3** (Housing-led Strategic Sites) requires that: *“Proposals must ensure that infrastructure is provided. Developers must engage with relevant infrastructure providers to insure the implantation of the infrastructure delivery plan.”* Supporting text to Policy MG3 sets out what is expected of the four strategic sites, listing a number of key issues to be addressed, including: *“The management of wastewater in accordance with a detailed drainage strategy that has been prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency and Thames Water.”*
- 10.12.4 With regards to site specific policy -
- **Policy SC2** (Murrell Green) establishes the need to *“manage wastewater in accordance with a detailed drainage strategy that has been prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency and Thames Water (as the provider of wastewater infrastructure in the area)”*. The supporting text goes on to state that: *“An integrated water management strategy, including a detailed drainage strategy, should be prepared for the new settlement. This should identify the options for wastewater treatment... which sets out the requirements for maintaining and enhancing the water quality of local water bodies.”*
 - The supporting text to **Policy SC4** (Sun Park) explains that: *“Thames Water has expressed concern with regards to the wastewater network in the area, and consider that upgrades to the drainage infrastructure will be required to support the redevelopment of the site. Therefore, any development proposal must be supported by a detailed drainage strategy informing what infrastructure is required, where, when and how it will be delivered.”*
- 10.12.5 **Policy NE4** (Managing Flood Risk) states that: *“SUDS should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity and arrangements should be put in place for their whole life management and maintenance.”*
- 10.12.6 **Policy NE5** (Water Quality) states: *“Development will be required to protect the quality of the District’s water environment, and where possible contribute towards improvements that are necessary to meet statutory requirements for water quality.”* The policy establishes a number of criteria that must be met, for development to be permitted, and the supporting text explains:
- “Contributions may be sought to upgrade existing water supply and drainage infrastructure, where this would be necessary to ensure that local water quality is not compromised and that statutory requirements are met. Sustainable drainage systems should be used where they would help to manage the discharge of water into the environment and prevent existing infrastructure from becoming overloaded.”*
- 10.12.7 **Policy BE3** (Sustainable Water Use) states that: *“All new homes must meet the water efficiency standard of 110 litres/person/day, to be achieved by compliance with the Building Regulations.”* Water efficiency is important, particularly given climate change. All new homes already have to meet the mandatory national standard set out in the Building Regulations of 125 litres/person/day. However, in Hart there is justification to apply the tighter Building Regulations optional water efficiency requirement of 110 litres/person/day.
- 10.12.8 **Policy I1** (Infrastructure) states that: *“All development that requires planning permission must make appropriate provision for infrastructure, on and off-site, or through financial contributions to off-site provision.”* Planning obligations secured through Section 106 agreements will be used to provide necessary site related infrastructure requirements such as new access arrangements, provision of open space and other community infrastructure, local highway/transportation mitigation and environmental enhancements. Necessary off-site infrastructure will continue to be secured through Planning Obligations and, once adopted, according to the Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule to ensure that all such development makes an appropriate and reasonable contribution to the costs of provision.

Appraisal of the draft plan as a whole

- 10.12.9 The, Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Water Cycle Study suggests that there are unlikely to be capacity issues at the wastewater treatment facilities associated with the sites in the draft plan except potentially at Eversley WWTW and Camberley WWTW. Whilst capacity issues at Eversley could be resolved by improvements to the WWTW, it remains unclear whether the required improvements at Camberley could be made using conventional treatment technologies, in order to meet river quality targets. Further investigation is required with Thames Water and the EA. The timing of upgrades could affect the phasing of development at Sun Park and Hartland Park, but alternatives may include connecting to Fleet WWTW which has capacity for further growth above that included in the draft plan.
- 10.12.10 In terms of water supply, South East Water and Affinity Water have suggested that there will be a surplus relative to the envisaged level of development across the housing market area. The draft plan does not therefore raise concerns in terms of water supply, but the Water Cycle Study implies that water efficiency measures should be considered, in order to safeguard future water resources against the potential impacts of climate change. The draft plan responds to the WCS through Policy BE3, which aims to ensure that a high standard of water efficiency is met by new development.
- 10.12.11 In conclusion, there appears to water quality in the absence of improvements to wastewater treatment works in the north and east of the district. However, the draft plan confirms that the Council and developers will work with the Environment Agency and Thames Water to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided at the right time to facilitate new development (see Policy MG3). **Significant negative effects are not predicted** at this early stage in the plan-making process, because it is possible that all of the potential impacts could be overcome through appropriate investment in waste water and drainage infrastructure.

10.13 Conclusions of the Draft Plan appraisal

- 10.13.1 The appraisal shows the Draft Plan to perform well in terms of a range of issues and specific objectives, with significant positive effects predicted in terms of the broad topic 'Housing'; however, there are inevitably draw-backs, and significant negative effects are predicted in terms of 'Biodiversity' (pending further work on avoidance and mitigation measures).
- 10.13.2 There will be the potential to improve the performance of the plan, following the current consultation / prior to publishing the proposed submission version of the plan (see discussion of 'next steps', below). Improvements may be made by altering the spatial strategy, although there is the potential for any alteration to have pros and cons (see discussion of spatial strategy alternatives, above). Improvements may, and indeed will, also be made to the framework of development management policies, and to this effect a number of recommendations are made within the appraisal text, above.

PART 3: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

11 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 3)

- 11.1.1 The aim of this chapter is to explain next steps in the plan-making / SA process.

12 PLAN FINALISATION

- 12.1.1 Subsequent to the current consultation, the Council's intention is to prepare the Proposed Submission version of the Plan for publication. This will be the version of the plan that the Council believes to be 'sound' and intends to submit to the Government for Examination in Public. The SA Report will be published alongside the Proposed Submission Plan, with a view to informing representations.
- 12.1.2 Subsequent to publication stage, the main issues raised will be identified and summarised by the Council, who will then consider whether the plan can still be deemed to be 'sound'. Assuming that this is the case, the plan (and the summary of representations received) will be submitted for Examination. At Examination a government appointed Planning Inspector will consider representations (in addition to the SA Report and other submitted evidence) before determining whether the plan is sound (or requires further modifications).
- 12.1.3 If found to be 'sound' the plan will be formally adopted by the Council. At the time of Adoption an 'SA Statement' will be published that sets out (amongst other things) *'the measures decided concerning monitoring'*.

13 MONITORING

- 13.1.1 At the current time, it is appropriate (in-line with Regulations) to present 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring'.
- 13.1.2 The Draft Plan states the following, in respect of monitoring:
- "We will continue to work with our HMA partners to support and plan for any potential unmet housing needs and other strategic matters, recognising the different stages of plan making which have been reached. The appropriate level of new housing and employment will be monitored and a review undertaken five years following the adoption of the Local Plan and periodically thereafter, taking into account the most up-to-date evidence available at that time.*
- This will be done through Annual Monitoring Reports and ongoing liaison under the Duty to Co-operate with our neighbours. If we need to meet any additional need for more homes, we will carry out a partial review of the local plan. A review of the plan would take the form of the preparation of a separate Development Plan Document for that part of the unmet need to be accommodated within the District.*
- 13.1.3 This focus on monitoring of housing delivery, in light of changing understanding of housing needs, is appropriate. However, it is recommended that the achievement of other plan objectives may also be worthy of dedicated monitoring. In light of the Draft Plan appraisal presented above, monitoring efforts might potentially focus on biodiversity, water and potentially also heritage impacts."

APPENDIX I - REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

As discussed in Chapter 2 above, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 explains the information that must be contained in the SA Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. Table A links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements, whilst Table B explains this interpretation.

N.B. This report is not the SA Report, but aims to present the required information nonetheless.

Table A: Questions answered by this SA Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

Questions answered		As per regulations... the SA Report must include...
Introduction	What's the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	What's the SA scope?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan • The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
Part 1	What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) • The likely significant effects associated with alternatives • Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan
Part 2	What are the SA findings at this current stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan • The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
Part 3	What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the monitoring measures envisaged

Table B: Questions answered by this SA Report, in-line with regulatory requirements

Schedule 2

The report must include...

(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

Interpretation of Schedule 2

The report must include...

An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>	
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>	i.e. answer – <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i>
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan' The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>	
Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i>	
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach') The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]	
The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]	
A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]	

Whilst Tables A and B signpost broadly how/where this report meets regulatory requirements. As a supplement, it is also helpful to present a discussion of more precisely how/where regulatory requirements are met - see Table C. **N.B.** To reiterate, this report is not the SA Report, but aims to present the required information nonetheless.

Table C: 'Checklist' of how and where (within this report) regulatory requirements are being met.

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA Report	
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapter 3 ('What's the plan seeking to achieve') presents this information.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	These matters were considered in detail at the scoping stage, which included consultation on a Scoping Report. The Scoping Report was updated post consultation, and is available on the website.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The outcome of scoping was an 'SA framework', and this is presented within Chapter 4 ('What's the scope of the SA'), in a slightly updated form.
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance...;	Also, more detailed messages from the Scoping Report (context and baseline review) are presented (in an updated form) within Appendix II.
e) The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	<p>The Scoping Report presents a detailed context review, and explains how key messages from the context review (and baseline review) were then refined in order to establish an 'SA framework'.</p> <p>The SA framework is presented within Chapter 4 ('What's the scope of the SA'). Also, messages from the context review are presented within appendix II.</p> <p>With regards to explaining "how... considerations have been taken into account" -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 6 explains how reasonable alternatives were established in 2016 in-light of earlier consultation and SA. • Chapter 8 explains the Council's 'reasons for supporting the preferred approach', i.e. explains how/why the preferred approach is justified in-light of alternatives appraisal (and other factors).
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 presents alternatives appraisal findings (in relation to the spatial strategy, which is the 'stand-out' plan issue and hence that which should be the focus of alternatives appraisal/ consultation). • Chapters 10 presents the Draft Plan appraisal. <p>As explained within the various methodology sections, as part of appraisal work, consideration has been given to the SA scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/dimensions.</p>

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how requirement is met
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	At the current time, the appraisal of the Draft Plan (Chapter 10) identifies how the plan might potentially 'go further' in certain respects, and makes a number of specific recommendations.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Chapters 5 and 6 deal with 'Reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', with an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues and options. Also, Chapter 8 explains the Council's 'reasons for selecting the preferred option' (in-light of appraisal). Methodology is discussed at various places, ahead of presenting appraisal findings, and limitations are also discussed as part of appraisal narratives.
i) description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Chapter 13 presents measures envisaged concerning monitoring.
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	The NTS is a separate document.
The SA Report must be published alongside the draft plan, in-line with the following regulations	
authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2)	An Interim SA Report, essentially presenting information on alternative spatial strategies ('scenarios'), was published as part of the Housing Options consultation in 2014. At the current time, this Interim SA Report is published alongside the Draft Plan, under Regulation 18, in order to ensure informed consultation responses.
The SA Report must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.	
The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7 shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	The 2014 Interim SA Report was taken into account, when establishing reasonable alternatives and preparing the Draft Plan in 2017. Consultation responses made in relation to the Draft Plan, informed by this Interim SA Report, will be taken into account when preparing the Proposed Submission Plan and SA Report for publication and submission. Appraisal findings presented within the SA Report will inform a decision on whether or not to submit the plan, and then (on the assumption that the plan is submitted) will be taken into account when finalising the plan at Examination (i.e. taken into account by the Inspector, when considering the plan's soundness, and the need for any modifications).

APPENDIX II - CONTEXT AND BASELINE REVIEW

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 4 ('What's the scope of the SA?') the SA scope is primarily reflected in a list of objectives ('the SA framework'), which was established subsequent to a review of the sustainability 'context' / 'baseline', analysis of key issues, and consultation. The aim of this appendix is to present a summary key issues emerging from context / baseline review.

Overview

Hart District, which has approximately 94,000 residents,³² is a predominantly rural district located in north-east Hampshire, bordering the counties of Surrey and Berkshire. The district has a complex geography comprising a collection of diverse and distinct settlements that straddle several employment and housing markets with no single focus.

There are around 35 settlements, although some are just isolated groups of houses with no community facilities – see **Figure A**. The main town is Fleet (including Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath) in the central-eastern part of the District, situated along the M3 motorway and main train line that both intersect the middle of the District from east-west. Approximately 40.4% of Hart's population (38,000) live in the Fleet area. Other primary local service centres in Hart include Yateley in the north, Blackwater (including Hawley, Frogmore and Darby Green) in the north-east and Hook in the central-western part of the District, which account for 35.1% of the District's total population.

The District has a varied and highly valued landscape embracing heathland, historic parkland, forestry, woodlands, pastoral farmland, open downland and river valleys. Several meandering river valleys cut across the central part of Hart, notably the River Whitewater and River Hart. The Blackwater Valley forms the county boundary between Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey. Furthermore, Hart has a rich historic built environment that includes Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, locally-listed buildings and locally-listed parks and gardens. Built and natural heritage features are an important part of the character of the District.

The District is bisected by the M3 motorway and the mainline railway which by are key parts of the strategic infrastructure for travel/commuting within the District and for outside destinations, such as London and Southampton. Movement patterns are complex and vary with the purpose of the journey. Key services such as main hospitals and larger shopping centres are provided outside of Hart, particularly in Basingstoke, Guildford, Reading, and Camberley.

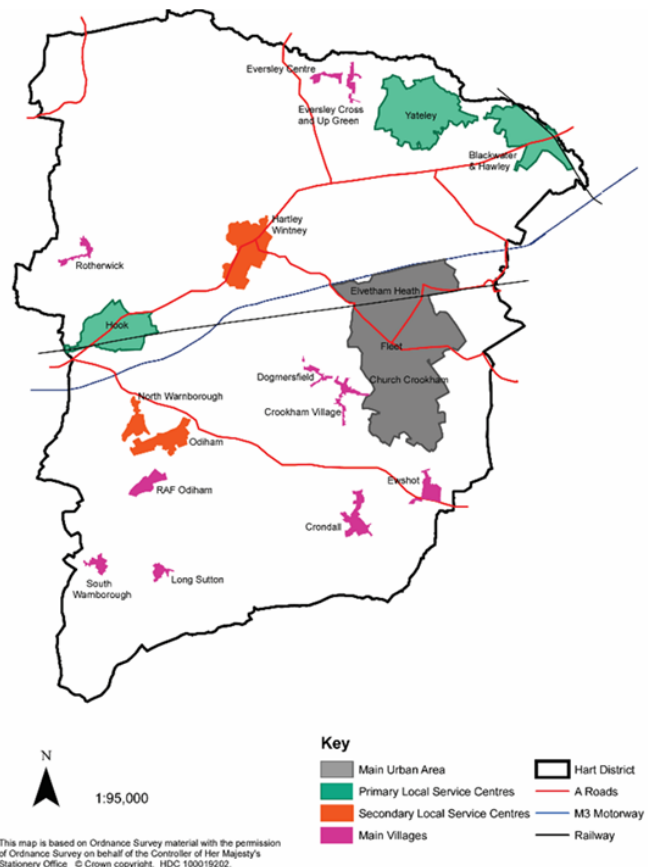


Figure A: Main settlements in Hart

³² Office for National Statistics (2016): 'Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, dataset' – Mid-2015 population estimate.

Biodiversity

The Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) initially identified 455 priority species and 21 habitat types in the county worthy of conservation action. Hart subsequently released the Hart BAP in 2012, in order to focus conservation actions over the period of 2012 – 2017. Four Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (as defined by the UK BAP) are located within the District: Blackwater Valley, the Thames Basin Heaths, the Loddon and Whitewater and the Herriard Wooded Downland Plateau. These areas have high opportunities for habitat restoration and associated biodiversity enhancement.

The Thames Basin Heaths are a designated Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive, which is primarily designated for its breeding populations of a number of lowland heathland birds (e.g. woodlark, Dartford warbler and nightjar). These ground nesting birds are particularly vulnerable to predation and disturbance. There are a number of individual SPA sites that make up the Thames Basin Heath SPA group (such as Bramshill, Castle Bottom to Yateley & Hawley Commons, Bourley & Long Valley), which are primarily distributed in the north, north-east and eastern parts of the District. No Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) have been designated in the District to date.

Hart has 16 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that fall entirely or partially within the District, totalling 2,696ha (12.5% of total District). These SSSIs are predominantly located in the north part of the District and along the Basingstoke Canal, which itself is a SSSI. These sites are designated to cover a variety of habitat types including a range of heathland types, meadows, woodland, river valleys, lakes and the Basingstoke Canal.

There are 254 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) located throughout the District, covering a total of 1,935ha³³. These sites comprise a wide range of habitat types such as heathland, meadows, woodland, river valleys, lakes and the Basingstoke Canal.

The Basingstoke Canal is notably important for its aquatic plant species and invertebrate assemblage. The diversity of species is related to the unique water chemistry of the canal which progresses from calcareous spring water to slightly acidic conditions, and is botanically the most species-rich aquatic system in Britain.

A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the District has been prepared. It identifies existing green spaces which collectively form a multi-functional system. The Strategy sets out under various themes a number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the green infrastructure and lists a number of priority projects for future improvements to the network. Where appropriate, new developments should help to deliver the priorities set out in the Strategy. Once adopted, the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule may provide an additional source of funding that could be used to help implement the Strategy.

Climate change mitigation

The Government has set a target under the Climate Change Act 2008 to reduce CO₂ emissions by 80% by 2050, with an interim target of 34% by 2020, both against a 1990 baseline. The Government requires local planning authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change and reduce the consumption of natural resources. For example, the impact of new development on climate change can be reduced by locating it where possible in places where it is not entirely necessary to rely on having access to a car; and by the design of carbon neutral homes which seek to achieve energy efficiency through sustainable construction, and increased use of renewable energy.

An Energy Opportunities Plan (EOP), incorporated within the North Hampshire Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development Study (2011), demonstrates opportunities for low carbon energy generation potential, including wind, photovoltaic solar, biomass for direct combustion and anaerobic digestion, and district heating with combined heat and power (CHP). The District has significant local renewable resource potential, and the EOP indicates favoured locations where opportunities might be viable.

CO₂ emissions have decreased between 2005 – 2011 in Hart from 6.5 to 5.1 tonnes per capita (Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), 2011). These levels are less than the county and south-east regional levels.

³³ Hart District Council (2012): Hart Biodiversity Action Plan 2012 – 2017.

Communities

The Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper³⁴ groups the various settlements into a 5-tier hierarchy based on current population size and level of service provision.

Fleet (including Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath) is the only Tier 1 (“Main Urban Area”) settlement in Hart. It is the largest administrative, retail and commercial centre (population of 38,000). Fleet provides various services and facilities to surrounding villages. The Basingstoke Canal cuts across the town from east to west creating a separation between Fleet and Church Crookham. There has been significant housing development surrounding Fleet, most notably Edenbrook to the west, Crookham Park to the south, and Elvetham Heath to the north which has its own school, community hall, church and supermarket. The TBHSPA tightly hugs part of the Fleet settlement boundary constraining development to the east.

Yateley, Blackwater (including Hawley, Frogmore and Darby Green) and Hook are the Tier 2 (“Primary Local Service Centre”) settlements.

- Yateley is the second largest settlement in Hart with a population of 15,000. It is situated in the north of the district, south of the River Blackwater and benefits from having several schools, a library and a few scattered retail centres. Yateley has been built up surrounding a series of open greens, of which Yateley Green is the largest. Access is heavily car dependent although Blackwater train station is nearby giving further access to Reading and Guildford. The settlement is heavily constrained to the north due to flood risk and to the south due to the TBHSPA.
- Blackwater has a population of 10,000 and is primarily a residential settlement with some retail and office units. The River Blackwater runs along its eastern boundary, and the A30 road bisects the settlement. Blackwater train station links the town with Reading and Guildford. The town is heavily constrained with flood risk areas to the north and the TBHSPA to the south. Beyond limited infilling it has little development potential.
- Hook is a large village in the west of Hart with a population of 8,000 and one of the newer areas of urban development within the District, having grown significantly in the past thirty years. The village is primarily residential to the north of the railway line, and to the south is an area of employment land. Hook station gives direct access to London and Basingstoke, the M3 junction 5 is just south of the settlement.

Hartley Witney and North Warnborough are the Tier 3 (“Secondary Local Service Centre”) settlements.

- Hartley Wintney is a large village of 5,000 inhabitants located in the centre of Hart District. It is bisected by the A30 and lies just north of the M3 motorway with the valley of the River Hart creating a natural boundary to the north and the east of the village. There is no train station, however Winchfield station is nearby. The village reflects characteristics of an 18th century coaching town with a number of wooded and open greens. The TBHSPA lies to the north, constraining potential development opportunities. Odiham village has a distinctive character and historically was a coaching town, The High Street is lined on both sides with a largely continuous group of listed buildings and commercial premises. The town developed from the 12th century onwards and a few buildings from the 14th – 16th century are still there. The Deer Park lies to the north of Odiham adjacent to the settlement boundary.
- North Warnborough is a linear village arranged around the River Whitewater, north of Odiham. The village is primarily residential, relying on schools and shops elsewhere, particularly Odiham.

RAF Odiham, Crondall, Crookham Village, Dogersfield, Ewshot, Eversley Centre, Eversley Cross and Up Green, Long Sutton, Rotherwick and South Warnborough are Tier 4 – *Main Villages*; all the remaining villages in Hart make up the Tier 5 – *Smaller Villages* settlements.

Hart has good schools and high levels of education attainment, with 37% of the adult population holding a degree and 48% hold a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 4 or higher. There are 28 infant/junior/primary schools and 5 secondary schools in Hart. Yateley School is the only school with a sixth form; therefore many students travel outside the District for post-16 education (e.g. to Farnborough’s Sixth Form College and College of Technology). Pre-school (nursery) education is provided through both private

³⁴ Hart District Council (2010): Local Development Framework (LDF) Background Paper: A Settlement Hierarchy for Hart District.

and public organisations, registered with Hampshire County Council. Several schools in Hart have, or are being, expanded particularly in the Fleet/Church Crookham, Hook and Odiham areas, and further additional places will be needed to support Hart's growing population. However, not all school sites in Hart can easily be expanded to accommodate future growth.

Access to health and social care services is a more challenging issue for Hart particularly given the ageing population, the rural nature of the District and poor public transport in many areas. Ten GP surgeries are located in its largest towns and villages, and eleven dental practices. There is also the Fleet Community Hospital and the Odiham Cottage Hospital which provide a range of services including out-patient clinics, community nursing and social day care services. However, Hart does not have any large hospitals. Instead residents rely on Frimley Park Hospital to the west and Basingstoke Hospital to the east, both out of district. Spire Clare Park Hospital located near Crondall offers private healthcare services.

The District is a popular place to live due to its connectivity to other key employment areas (e.g. Southampton and London), low unemployment, low crime rates, good schools and a healthy, active population. In 2015 it was identified as the 'least deprived' local authority in the country.

There are currently no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the District as nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀) levels are not high enough in Hart to warrant AQMA designation.

Employment and the economy

Hart falls within a sub-regional sub-regional Functional Economic Area (FEA) that also includes Rushmoor and Surrey Heath districts. The FEA has a successful economy that has generated over 10,000 additional jobs between 2009 and 2015. However, self-containment within the FEA is low, at 53%, which is not surprising given surrounding economic centres and opportunities for residents in the three local authority areas to commute into London and other economic centres.

The FEA has a relatively balanced mix of employment floorspace that can support a range of sectors, although it has a significantly higher proportion of office floorspace when compared to other competing economic centres. There is a good supply of office floorspace available for occupation, with over 117,000 sqm of office space being marketed in November 2016. In contrast, only 14,175 sqm of industrial floorspace was being marketed in November 2016 and available for immediate occupation.

There is a reasonable pipeline supply of employment land, consisting of Local Plan allocations that have not been built out (in full or part) and planning permissions that have yet to be implemented. The maximum available land supply as of April 2016 that could be delivered to meet the needs of the FEA's economy is around 54.4 ha of land, comprising a combination of allocations and extant planning permissions.

The FEA forms part of the Blackwater Valley, which is widely perceived to be a relatively self-contained commercial property market despite its proximity to a number of other large centres. A significant quantity of large-footprint office accommodation has been developed across the Blackwater Valley over the past two decades, although it is widely acknowledged that occupier demand has never kept pace with this supply and the post 2007 economic downturn exacerbated this. However, the office market has started to recover with the amount of floorspace let in the FEA increasing by 42% between 2013 and 2015.

Hart has three town centres in Fleet, Yateley and Blackwater. Fleet town centre is the largest retail centre providing a good comparison retail offer. It is categorised as a secondary regional centre in Hampshire. The District also has a strong rural economy that is highly reliant on local and regional markets, whilst businesses benefit from the space and environment, mobile phone signal coverage and broadband speeds are identified as constraints to businesses.

Approximately 48,000 residents are in employment, equivalent to 81% of the working age (16-64) population, of which 8% of the employed residents (4,500) are self-employment – lower than national and regional averages.

Flood risk and other climate change adaptation issues

National planning policy and guidance seeks to ensure that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding are avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, by making it safe without increasing flood risk. There is also a need to take into account the likely impacts of climate change and in considering the approach to development apply a sequential test to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2016) (SFRA) has been undertaken to provide robust evidence of areas of flood risk from various sources in the district. This should be used alongside the Environment Agency's flood risk maps and recently updated Climate Change Allowances.

The District has a large number of watercourses (over 30, including three main rivers) and a large proportion of the District lies within 'Flood Zone 3' (areas identified as being subject to a high probability of flooding). Also, certain areas within Hart are at risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater and/or sewers. The District is also at risk from flooding from artificial sources such as the Fleet Pond Reservoir.

The top four urban areas at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding are Fleet, Yateley, Blackwater/Hawley and Crondall. These areas along with Hook, Eversley and North Warnborough make up the majority of the area at risk of groundwater flooding. External sewer flooding is concentrated in the northern half of Hart, with northern Fleet being the worst affected.

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (2017) endorses more action across the UK on water, heat, flooding, biodiversity and pests and diseases.

Housing

The average price of houses in Hart (£405,600)³⁵ is over 40% higher than the national average (£232,885).

The nature of existing housing in the District tends to be largely detached properties (44.8%) followed by semi-detached properties (25.4%) according to 2011 Census data.

Approximately 10.5% of households contain just one person who is over the age of 65, and only 4.1% are lone parent households with dependent children. Nearly a fifth of the population of Hart is aged 65 or above and this figure has been steadily rising since 2011.

Historic environment

The District contains over 1,000 Listed Buildings, 10 Scheduled Monuments, 8 registered Historic Parks and Gardens, 32 Conservation Areas, 329 locally-listed buildings and 16 locally-listed parks and gardens. Together, these features provide an attractive environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

Some of Hart's main settlements have more historical constraints than others. For example, Hartley Wintney, Odiham and North Warnborough, and some of Hart's smaller settlements have a high density of historic features, with large areas designated as Conservation Areas, and many listed buildings.

The historic landscape character has been mapped as part of the Hampshire's Historic Landscape Assessment. The historic landscape of Eversley is of particular interest. Eversley lies on the northern edge of Hampshire and is situated within what once was the Royal Forest of Eversley. It contains a wide variety of Historic Landscape Types. Features include the detailed patchwork of small irregular fields and thick hedges amongst dense woodland and copses and, the former deer park marked by its sinuous wooded boundary forming a large ring, and the scattered pattern of settlement with numerous greens.

³⁵ Office of National Statistics (2016): UK House Price Index, May 2016.

Landscape

Hart District is characterised by its wide variety of largely rural landscape, which has been defined by 15 distinct character areas (Hart Landscape Assessment, 1997) which includes heathland, historic parkland, forestry and woodlands, enclosed pastoral farmland, open downland and river valleys. Hampshire County Council has prepared an Integrated Character Assessment (2012)³⁶ which indicates that three landscape character areas cover the District: North East Hampshire Plantations and Heath (covering the north and east of the District); Loddon Valley and Forest of Eversley West (covering the middle section of the District); and North East Hampshire Open Downs (covering the south of the District).

The North East Hampshire Plantations and Heath character area has a gently undulating landscape of plateau areas dissected by river valleys. It has predominantly well-drained sandy soils over clays and sands giving rise to acidic conditions and some areas of local waterlogging. The area includes internationally-important habitats such as dry and wet heaths, bogs, scrub and woodland. Land uses in this character area consist of a mosaic of woodland, blocks of remnant open heathland and medium-scaled pasture fields. The character area includes large urban areas such as Fleet and numerous transport corridors as well as a high density of dispersed settlements and smallholdings.

The Loddon Valley and Western Forest of Eversley character area tends to be low-lying with a gently undulating landscape, divided on a north-south axis by the shallow, broad valley of the River Loddon. The soil tends to have poor drainage and is dissected by a network of often wooded streams and minor tributaries. There are distant views of continuous plantation woodland on elevated sand and gravel plateaux in adjoining character areas to the east and west. There is a high density of public rights of way in this character area and has a secluded feel, and a sense the landscape has had a long history of small settlements and farms by the presence of timber-framed and old brick small farm buildings.

The North East Hampshire Downs character area has a rolling chalk landform with broad sweeping hills and ridges and dry valleys. The northern areas slope northwards towards the lower lying heaths while southern areas form a gently undulating plateau. There are extensive tracts of intensive arable cultivation defined by well-trimmed hedgerows. It has scattered blocks of woodland habitats and a stronger hedgerow structure in southern parts of the area. Springs occur along the northern fringe of the landscape where the chalk meets the clay. The landscape is remote and quite lightly populated with dispersed nucleated villages and occasional farmsteads. There is a sense of openness, space and expansiveness.

There are no sites in the District designated for their landscape importance, e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or Green Belt.

Transport and accessibility

Hart benefits from good strategic road and rail links to London, the Midlands and the south coast. The M3 motorway runs through the centre of the District from west-east, providing good connectivity to London/M25 and the south coast (e.g. Southampton and Portsmouth). The close proximity of the district to the M4, M25, A34 and A303 means that the area is well connected to the strategic road network in all directions. It is estimated that 65% of Hart workers use a car/van as their main method of travel to work³⁷.

An area analysis³⁸ of Hart concluded that 17,7000 workers commute into Hart from outside the District, with 62% of Hart's working population commuting out of the District for work. Additionally, 38% of Hart's working population live and work within the District, which emphasises the importance of the District's road network.

The District is well connected by rail with four train stations: Fleet and Hook stations both provide high frequency services to London Waterloo (arrival time within 1 hour); Winchfield station provides less frequent stopping services to London Waterloo; and Blackwater station provides regular services to Guildford, Gatwick Airport and Reading. There is good access to Gatwick Airport by rail, and by road to Heathrow and Southampton Airports (arrival within 45 minutes).

³⁶ Hampshire County Council (2012): Integrated Character Assessment.

³⁷ Hampshire County Council (2011): Hart Commuter Flows, 2011.

³⁸ Hart District Council / Wessex Economics Ltd (2014): Hart Functional Economic Area Analysis, 2014.

The nature of the District means that residents within the main towns and settlements are better able to access a range of facilities by walking, cycling and public transport. There is relatively limited public transport availability in the more remote rural areas.

The Hampshire Local Transport Plan (2011-2031) produced by Hampshire County Council provides the long term framework for transport policies within the District. The Plan seeks to improve accessibility through the three initiatives to reduce, manage and invest.

Hampshire County Council has also published a Transport Statement to set out the transport objectives and delivery priorities for the District. The Hart District Transport Statement builds upon the Local Transport Plan to:

- Promote economic growth by providing a well-maintained, safe and efficient highway network
- Improve access to jobs, facilities and services by all types of transport
- Facilitate and enable new developments to come forward
- Reduce carbon emissions and minimise the impacts of transport on the environment.

Water

The, Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Water Cycle Study suggests that there are unlikely to be capacity issues at the wastewater treatment facilities associated with the sites in the draft plan except potentially at Eversley WWTW and Camberley WWTW. Whilst capacity issues at Eversley could be resolved by improvements to the WWTW, it remains unclear whether the required improvements at Camberley could be made using conventional treatment technologies, in order to meet river quality targets. Further investigation is required with Thames Water and the EA.

In terms of water supply, South East Water and Affinity Water have suggested that there will be a surplus relative to the envisaged level of development across the housing market area; however, the Water Cycle Study implies that water efficiency measures should be considered, in order to safeguard future water resources against the potential impacts of climate change.

The Environment Agency report 'Water Stressed Areas: Final Classification' (2013) identifies that the area is characterised by serious water stress. This is based on current and future water usage and climate change scenarios.

APPENDIX III - REASONABLE SPATIAL STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

As explained within 'Part 1' above, a focus of work has been on the development and appraisal of 'reasonable' spatial strategy alternatives, with a view to informing determination of the preferred strategy.

The reasonable alternatives are as follows –

- Option 1 – lower growth through: Small sites; Grove Farm; Owens Farm; and Pale Lane
- Option 2 – housing target through: Small sites; and Murrell Green
- Option 3 – housing target through: Grove Farm; and Murrell Green
- Option 4 – housing target through: Owens Farm; and Murrell Green
- Option 5 – housing target through: Pale Lane; and Murrell Green
- Option 6 – higher growth through: Winchfield

Appraisal methodology

For each of the options, the assessment examines **likely significant effects** on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives identified through scoping (see Table 4.1) as a methodological framework. **Green** is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst **red** is used to indicate significant negative effects. Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the policy approaches under consideration. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how scenarios will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors would be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.³⁹

Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects on the basis of reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a **rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'.

Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations.⁴⁰ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the plan in combination with the effects of other planned or on-going activity that is outside the control of the Hart Local Plan).

Appraisal findings

Appraisal findings are presented below within 11 separate tables (each table dealing with a specific sustainability objective) with a final table drawing conclusions.

The appraisal methodology is explained above, but to reiterate: For each sustainability topic the performance of each scenario is categorised in terms of 'significant effects (using **red** / **green**) and also ranked in order of preference. Also, ' = ' is used to denote instances of all alternatives performing on a par.

³⁹ Conclusions reached on significant effects in relation to Option 4 - the Council's preferred option - are supplemented within Chapter 10 of this report, which presents an appraisal of the draft plan - i.e. the preferred spatial strategy plus supporting policies.

⁴⁰ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Sustainability Topic: <u>Biodiversity</u>						
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	6	5	2	1	3	4
Significant effects?	Yes					
Discussion	<p>A key consideration is the need to avoid significant adverse effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA), which in practice involves: A) directing growth to less sensitive locations, i.e. locations beyond the 5km and 7km buffers that have been defined; and B) ensuring that there is potential to deliver sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate increased recreational pressure.⁴¹</p> <p>All Options would involve development that could adversely affect the TBHSPA through increased recreation, but options involving strategic urban extensions and/or new settlements are capable of delivering SANG to mitigate these impacts. On this basis, there is an argument to suggest that Options 1 and 2 perform relatively poorly, as these options would involve allocation of smaller sites, which will not (in the most part) deliver SANG.</p> <p>Taking the smaller sites in turn –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land between Eversley Road and Firgrove Road, Yateley – close proximity to the SPA (c.1km), and it is noted that the nearest part of the SPA is in unfavourable condition (albeit this is primarily due to poor management, rather than pressure). An adjacent bridleway (Love Lane) has some biodiversity value. • CEMEX A and B, Eversley – close proximity to the SPA (c.1.5km), although there is the possibility of small scale on-site SANG provision. Also, a woodland SINC is within the site boundary, and in practice would be adjacent, or close to, new homes. • Land south of Riseley, Heckfield – close proximity to the SPA (c.2km), although it is noted that a large country park sits between the site and the SPA. There is a high density of woodland in the vicinity, and whilst not all is ancient woodland, or designated as SINC, the patch of woodland almost adjacent, to the west, is a SINC. • Land NW of Crondall – falls within the 5km SPA buffer, and would not provide SANG. An ancient woodland SINC is adjacent. • Hop Garden and W of Varndell Rd, Hook – lies just outside the 5km SPA buffer, but within the 7km buffer. This site also has onsite biodiversity constraints, with SINC designation under review on part of the site, due to species rich grassland. • Other sites (one at Long Sutton and two at South Warnborough) are located in the south west of the district, outside the 7km SPA buffer, and are not known to be associated with strategic biodiversity constraint. <p>All of the strategic urban extension options, and both new settlement options, could deliver enough SANG to mitigate impacts on the TBHSPA; however, some sites are also in sensitive locations in respect of nationally and locally protected habitats. Taking sites in turn –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owens Farm (to the west of Hook) lies outside the 5km buffer zone, but within the 7km buffer. As such, Natural England may determine that it must deliver or contribute to SANG. There is the potential to provide strategic SANG, i.e. SANG that will have ‘spare capacity’, and any SANG could ‘tie in’ with planned provision at an adjacent smaller permitted site. Owen’s Farm also benefits from limited onsite biodiversity constraints, although locally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are adjacent and nearby. 					

⁴¹ This has been agreed through the Interim Avoidance Strategy for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA - see http://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Policies_and_published_documents/Planning_policy/Interim_Avoidance_Strategy_for_TBHSPA%20-%20November_2010.pdf. The avoidance strategy also involves applying a 400m buffer, within which development can generally not occur, and securing funding for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

- Grove Farm (west of Fleet) - has limited constraints (a SINC is adjacent), and would involve a strategic SANG to the north west that would extend Edenbrook Country Park.
- Pale Lane (north west of Fleet) is more constrained - with two SINC's onsite - and the SANG would not link with the Country Park (or at least not link well). However, there is good potential to deliver on-site green infrastructure, in the form of a 'green spine' through the site.
- Both new settlement options are associated with considerable SANG delivery opportunities; however, there is potentially a greater opportunity at Murrell Green, as SANG would involve enhancements to the River Whitewater Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). Impact to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) is another consideration. Odiham Common SSSI is closer to Murrell Green, but the larger new settlement at Winchfield is more likely to generate significant traffic along the Odiham Road, which runs through the SSSI, as residents travel to J5 of the M3. Basingstoke Canal SSSI is adjacent to Winchfield; however, land adjacent to the canal could be delivered as SANG. On balance, having considered SANG and SSSI issues/opportunities, the larger new settlement option at Winchfield performs less well.

In **conclusion**, Option 4 is best performing as it would involve minimal growth at small urban extensions; the least sensitive strategic urban extension (Owen's Farm); and the better performing new settlement option (Murrell Green). It is difficult to differentiate between the remaining options, but on balance the following ranking can be identified: Option 3 > Option 6 > Option 5 > Option 2 > Option 1. Options 3 and 5 are similar to Option 4, although the strategic urban extension in each instance would be at a more sensitive location (both Grove Farm and Pale Lane are in proximity to the SPA, and Pale Lane has constraints). Option 6 would involve the worse performing new settlement option (Winchfield), but low growth at Fleet (as per Option 1), and therefore a focus of growth away from the SPA. Options 1 and 2 perform poorly because of their reliance on smaller sites, for which SANG could not necessarily be provided, to mitigate impacts on the internationally-designated TBHSPA. Option 2 is slightly better than Option 1 because Option 2 involves less development in Fleet.

N.B. the overall growth quantum (Option 1 is lower growth, and Option 6 higher growth) does not have a bearing on the order of performance, given the differences in quantum involved.

Taking a precautionary approach - i.e. one that takes account of the risk of SANG / green infrastructure non-delivery - it is appropriate to conclude that all alternatives would lead to significant negative effects, given the potential for impacts to the TBHSPA, the SSSIs and locally important habitats.

Sustainability Topic: Climate change mitigation

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	6	5	2	2	2	1
Significant effects?	No					
Discussion	<p>A key climate change mitigation consideration relates to the potential to affect average per capita transport-related CO₂ emissions, which are relatively high in Hart, reflecting the district's rural character; however, this is considered under 'Transport and accessibility' below.</p> <p>Instead, the discussion here focuses on the potential to support renewable or low carbon energy infrastructure, and hence minimise per capita CO₂ emissions from the built environment. In practice, this means supporting larger scale developments, of several hundred homes (or clusters of smaller developments that can be developed in a coordinated way), as development at scale enables delivery of the necessary infrastructure.</p> <p>Option 6 is judged to perform best, on the basis that it would involve the greatest concentration of growth at a new settlement in central Hart. The effect could be to enable delivery of low carbon infrastructure and also standards of sustainable design and construction over-and-above national requirements. Whilst there can be no certainty, in the absence of detailed</p>					

proposals, it is fair to assume that a scheme of this scale (c.3,000 homes) could enable combined heat and power generation (potentially even fuelled by biomass, which might even be locally sourced), with a network of piping to provide 'district heating'. The new settlement would likely include a new secondary school and a local centre, which could be supportive of district heating, on the basis of there being demand for heat across the day.

However, Option 2 -5 would also involve a new settlement. The scheme would be smaller, but there should still be good potential to achieve economies of scale/efficiencies, and thereby support lower emissions. There would also be a new secondary school, and whilst the local centre would be smaller, there would be new employment land delivered on the western edge of the development. Also, Options 3 - 5 would involve a strategic scale scheme in the region of 500 homes, which could potentially give rise to some (limited) opportunity to design-in low carbon infrastructure and/or achieve higher standards of sustainable design and construction.

In **conclusion**, Option 6 (large new settlement) performs best, followed by Options 3 – 5 (smaller new settlement, plus one strategic urban extension), followed by Option 2 (smaller new settlement, plus dispersed smaller sites); followed by Option 1 (no new settlement).

With regard to effect significance, no significant effects are predicted. Climate change mitigation is a global issue, and hence it is not possible to conclude on the significance of local actions. This prediction is made recognising that all options would also involve development of a c.1,500 home new settlement at Hartland Park, which could give rise to opportunities (including on the basis that there is extensive employment land nearby).

Sustainability Topic: Communities

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	3	3	1	2	1	2
Significant effects?	No					
Discussion	<p>It is worthwhile giving stand-alone consideration to the large sites in contention, in terms of accessibility, health, education, leisure and community cohesion, before then going on to consider issues associated with smaller sites, and then issues with the combinations of sites that comprise the reasonable alternatives. Taking each large site in alphabetical order –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grove Farm (Options 1 and 3) – close to the new leisure centre and Calthorpe Park secondary school, with the town centre approximately 1.5km by road. There is scope to integrate new development with existing built-up areas in Fleet, and Edenbrook Country Park is nearby. Murrell Green (Options 2-5) - residents would need to travel to access many of the existing community services / facilities in Hart; but the new settlement would include a local centre, primary education and potentially a new secondary school. Existing public rights of way could be used to secure good access to Hook, Winchfield train station and the Whitewater valley. Parts of the site could suffer from air/noise pollution associated with the M3. Owen's Farm (Options 1 and 4) - there are some issues with the quality of pedestrian connections between the site and the centre of Hook, with the most direct road (Newnham Lane) lacking a footpath; however there is potential to establish new routes. The site is somewhat distant from the town centre (approximately 1.9km by road), but the proposed community facility and primary school helps to reduce concerns in this respect. Residents would also have relatively good access to higher order services and facilities in Basingstoke. Pale Lane (Options 1 and 5) - is distant from Fleet town centre (approximately 2.8km); however, the proposals include improved pedestrian links to services and facilities (including a supermarket) at nearby Elvetham Heath and a new community hub and primary school on-site. The site lends itself to green infrastructure (in the form of a green 'spine'), but new housing might be located close to the M3, giving rise to air and noise pollution concerns. 					

- Winchfield (Option 6) - residents would need to travel to access many of the existing community services and facilities in Hart; but the new settlement would include a mixed use local centre adjacent to the train station 'transport hub', primary education and potentially a new secondary school. A new secondary school would be accessible from the train station; however, depending on its location there could be some issues, namely air/noise pollution if located to the north of the railway (close to the M3), or safe/easy road access if located to the south of the railway line. If located to the north of the railway, then the secondary school would also have the benefit of being highly accessible from Hartley Wintney. There would also be good access to high quality countryside, with the Basingstoke Canal nearby.

With regards to the package of smaller site options (Options 1 and 2), there is little to say about specific sites. None would deliver strategic community infrastructure, and hence by definition would increase pressure on that which exists – e.g. the local primary school – however, no particular community infrastructure capacity constraints have been highlighted to date. Two of the eight sites are at a larger settlement – i.e. a 'primary local service centre' (Yateley and Hook) - and both of these sites are located such that there should be relatively good walking access to the local centre (the site at Hook is beyond 800m distant, but benefits from an existing footpath). The remaining six sites are located at a 'main village'.

There are two more strategic factors to consider –

- Maximising growth at Fleet is appropriate in the sense that this is the district's main town, and hence new residents would have relatively good access to services and facilities, assuming capacity (or potential to expand capacity) at the services and facilities that exist.
- A concentration of new development in any one area creates risks in terms of the capacity of community infrastructure: one notable risk with higher growth at Fleet relates to secondary school capacity, as Calthorpe Park school at Fleet could reach capacity within the plan period (given that children from the 1,500 Hartlands Park scheme would be within the catchment of this school). The result could be a situation whereby children from Grove Farm and/or Pale Lane would travel west to a new secondary in central Hart, despite Calthorpe Park school being much closer (and indeed adjacent to Grove Farm).

In **conclusion**, it is difficult to differentiate the alternatives. All are associated with 'pros and cons'. For example, Option 1 performs well in that there would be a concentration of growth at Fleet; however, there would also be a focus of growth at smaller settlements. Growth at Fleet could also lead to secondary school capacity issues; however, this is less clear.

On balance, Options 3 and 5 stand out as performing slightly better than others, on the basis that: 1) a new community at Murrell Green would include community infrastructure; 2) growth would be appropriately weighted towards the district's main settlement; and 3) growth at smaller settlements with limited services/facilities would be restricted. Options 3 and 5 are both associated with two of these three benefits, whilst Options 1 and 2 are associated with only one.

There is no clear reason to suggest the likelihood of significant negative effects under any option.⁴² With regard to positive effects, there is limited potential for 'regeneration' at any location, or help to address any other existing problems; however targeted support for existing community services and facilities (e.g. schools, shops, libraries, leisure facilities) through increased patronage and potential developer contributions (in some instances), could lead to some positive localised effects.

⁴² This prediction is made recognising that all options would also involve development at a number of other sites (i.e. sites that are a 'given' across the alternatives), including a site at Fleet ("Cross Farm") that would deliver a care home and sheltered accommodation. Also, the prediction is made recognising that new allocations will impact in-combination with sites that are already committed.

Sustainability Topic: <u>Employment and the economy</u>						
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	3	1	1	1	1	2
Significant effects?	No					
Discussion	<p>There is an opportunity to deliver significant new employment land (c.3.7 ha) as part of a new settlement at Murrell Green (Options 2 - 5). The new employment land would involve an extension to the existing Murrell Green Business Park, which is performing well, and in close proximity to the existing employment cluster at Hook. As stated by the Employment Land Review (ELR, 2017) –</p> <p><i>“There appears to be strong demand from small flexible businesses / light industrial premises to support rural enterprises and SMEs. The types of premises vary significantly from basic converted agricultural barns providing storage/workshop space, to purpose-built light industrial / storage units, such as those at Murrell Green Business Park located on the A30 between Hook and Hartley Witney. Occupancy rates at such accommodation are high demonstrating that there is demand for such accommodation.”</i></p> <p>More generally, the ELR states a need to: <i>“Consider the identification of additional employment land, particularly for industrial and warehousing uses, given the relatively tight supply of such land, and the need to provide opportunities for choice.”</i> As such, Options 2 - 5 perform well.</p> <p>In comparison, Option 6 – which would involve an alternative new settlement, to the east of Winchfield Station - would deliver more limited employment land, as part of a mixed-use local centre, i.e. a location where industrial and warehousing uses are not likely. There might, however, be good potential for employment space suited to certain types of small business, and in this respect there is support from the ELR, which states: <i>“It is also important that the FEA provides a range of affordable floorspace for small high growth start-up businesses, by... [s]eeking to resist the loss of premises that provide suitable accommodation for SMEs... [and seeking] to provide smaller units within larger employment sites, residential or mixed-use schemes that come forward.”</i> Also, residents of the Winchfield new settlement under Option 6 would be able to commute by train to Fleet, Hook and employment centres further afield, such as Farnborough and Basingstoke.</p> <p>In conclusion, Options 2 - 5 are preferable to Option 6, given the potential to deliver significant employment land with good access to the A30, as an extension to the popular Murrell Green Business Park. Option 1 performs poorly, as it would not deliver a new settlement and thus would represent a missed opportunity, in respect of delivering additional new employment land. It is difficult to differentiate Options 2 - 5, although it is noted that Owen’s Farm at Hook stands out as better connected to the strategic road network than Grove Farm and Pale Lane at Fleet. Dispersal of housing under Option 2 could potentially support small rural businesses to some extent; however, this is not clear.</p> <p>The findings of the ELR suggest a potential to conclude significant positive effects; however, on balance significant positive effects are not predicted. The ELR does not conclude strongly on the need for new employment land within the District (or, more specifically, the Functional Economic Area, which comprises Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Districts), with the overall supply of employment land being approximately in balance with demand.</p>					

Sustainability Topic: <u>Flood risk and other climate change adaptation issues</u>						
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	★1	★1	★1	★1	★1	2
Significant effects?	No					
Discussion	<p>The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) identifies a range of flood risk related issues / constraints across the district. There is some potential to differentiate the alternatives in respect of fluvial and surface water flood risk. Areas of Hart are also susceptible to others forms of flooding, notably groundwater flooding because of the local geology.</p> <p>In respect of fluvial flood risk –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both new settlement site options (Winchfield and Murrell Green), and the western part of the Grove Farm strategic urban extension option, are subject to significant flood risk; however, in all instances the intention is to leave areas at risk largely undeveloped, and indeed use this land for SANG; The flood risk zone also skirts the edge of the Pale Lane site option, and encroaches to within a short distance of the railway underpass that would provide important access; however, there is no reason to conclude that safe access will be at risk as a result of fluvial flooding. Many of the smaller sites included in Options 1 and 2 are located in Flood Zone 1 and are therefore at low risk of flooding from fluvial sources; however land between Eversley Road & Firgrove Road, Yateley [SHL273] adjoins a tributary for the River Blackwater and includes areas in Flood Zone 3. These areas can be excluded from the developable area. <p>In respect of surface water flood risk –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grove Farm stands out as performing well, in that the land proposed for built development sits in raised ground and hence there is little or no surface water flood risk. Pale Lane is notably constrained, as an important access point (the railway underpass) is at high risk of surface water flooding (1 in 30 year). Owen's Farm is notable for having a relatively high area affected by surface water flood risk, however, much of this is within the lower risk zone (1 in 1000 year). The potential new settlement at Winchfield is affected to a slightly greater extent than Murrell Green, in that more areas which have been proposed for residential development, would be susceptible to surface water flooding according to the Hart SFRA. Small areas within CEMEX A and B, Eversley, and along the eastern boundary of Land between Eversley Road and Firgrove Road, Yately, are at some risk of surface water flooding (1 in 100 year). <p>In respect of groundwater flood risk, areas east of Winchfield train station are classed as being susceptible to groundwater flooding to the basements of properties (as opposed to groundwater flooding at the surface). Significantly, this area is also highlighted as being susceptible to surface water flooding, which leads to the potential an "in combination" effect, in that surface water may infiltrate only as far as the groundwater (which might be at basement level), and therefore be 'pushed' to the surface. The SFRA (Figure 8.1) is clear that reports of groundwater flooding in Hart have often been associated with surface water flooding.</p> <p>Finally, there is a need to note the 'causal areas' that have been identified, through the SFRA, as areas where there is an identified need to avoid / mitigate increased flood risk elsewhere. A causal area covers Fleet and Yateley, and includes Grove Farm.</p> <p>In conclusion, it is difficult to differentiate between the alternatives, but there is some evidence to suggest that land east of Winchfield train station stands-out as more constrained, due to the potential for flooding from surface and groundwater sources. As such, Option 6 performs relatively poorly.</p>					

Significant negative effects are not predicted at this stage, as fluvial flood risk zones can be avoided, and at all sites there will be good potential to design-in high quality SuDS, informed by the findings of Level 2 SFRA and site specific flood risk assessments.

However, there is some uncertainty, particularly given some of the sites that feature in all options as “givens”. Development at Sun Park [SHL100] is identified in the SFRA as having potential for groundwater flooding to occur at the surface, whilst small areas of the potential new settlement at Hartland Park fall within Flood Zone 3 (high risk) associated with the Gelvert Stream. As with the variables considered above, it appears that adverse impacts could be mitigated through SuDS, appropriate building design and avoiding the development of areas at the greatest risk of flooding.

Sustainability Topic: Historic environment

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	6	1	3	5	2	4
Significant effects?	Yes					
Discussion	<p>Firstly, giving consideration to the three strategic urban extension options reflected across the alternatives (Owen’s Farm, Grove Farm, Pale Lane), it is Pale Lane that stands out as less constrained, on the basis that there is little potential for impacts on a designated Conservation Area (CA). The main constraint at the site is Pale Lane Farmhouse, a listed building that could be surrounded by development; however, there would be the potential for mitigation, through sensitive masterplanning. In contrast, both Grove Farm and Owen’s Farm are in proximity to a CA. Grove Farm lies to the north of Crookham Village CA, and lies on rising ground; however, there is an expectation that impacts to the setting of the CA could be mitigated through careful masterplanning and design at the southern edge of the site, working with the existing vegetation (Netherhouse Copse). Owen’s Farm is potentially more constrained, on the basis that it will erode the landscape gap that currently separates the Newnham CA from the western edge of Hook. Also, the Rotherwick CA is a fairly short distance to the north, with Grade II* listed Tynney Hall at its southern extent (also classified as a historic park and garden); however there are intervening landscape features (woodland, mature trees and hedgerows).</p> <p>With regards to the two new settlement options: the Murrell Green site (Options 2-5) is constrained by a number of listed buildings; whilst the site to the east of Winchfield station is constrained by the Grade 1 listed St. Mary’s Church, which is currently associated with an open landscape setting, and is also adjacent to the Basingstoke Canal CA (although there is an intention to use this area as SANG). Also, the site gives rise to some concerns relating to impacts on the established historic field pattern and network of country lanes.</p> <p>With regards to the package of smaller urban extension sites (Options 1 and 2), there are no CAs that would be directly affected by small sites at Riseley, Yateley, Crondall and South Warnborough. The easternmost part of the proposed site at Eversley/Eversley Cross is adjacent to the CA at Up Green; whilst the site at Long Sutton adjoins a CA (Long Sutton) and a Grade II* listed building (Long Sutton Manor). However, development on these sites would be small in scale and there is potential for avoiding impacts through careful layout and design.</p> <p>In conclusion, it is possible to place the strategic urban extension options in an order of preference (Pale Lane > Grove Farm > Owen’s Farm), and it is possible to place the new settlement options in an order of preference (Murrell Green > East of Winchfield Train Station), whilst the package of smaller sites (Options 1 and 2) gives rise to relatively few concerns.</p> <p>On this basis, Option 2 is the best performing option, followed by Option 5, and then Option 3. There is a greater risk of negative effects on heritage assets for development at Owens Farm than at Winchfield, because more land can be kept of built development for the new settlement option. Therefore, Option 6 performs better than Options 1 and 4. Option 4 out-performs</p>					

Option 1 given greater potential for adverse impacts at Grove Farm relative to Murrell Green.

With regards to effect significance, it is difficult to draw conclusions. Under all options there will be good potential for mitigation through appropriate design, layout and landscaping. At this stage it is appropriate to 'flag' the potential for all options to result in significant negative effects; however, much will depend on the detailed design and layout of new development.⁴³

Sustainability Topic: Housing

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	4	1	3	2	2	4
Significant effects?	Yes					
Discussion	<p>A key consideration is the need to deliver the housing target over the plan period, and maintain a robust 'housing trajectory', i.e. maintain a situation whereby there is a five year supply of deliverable sites at all times over the plan period.</p> <p>This is important, as in the absence of a five year land supply the housing policies of the Local Plan would be considered 'out of date' leading to a situation whereby there is a likelihood of planning applicants winning planning permission at appeal, in accordance with the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', as defined by the NPPF. The result would be a distribution of development that is not 'plan led', which could mean that certain areas of the district do not receive sufficient new housing (and that other areas receive more than can be sustainably accommodated).</p> <p>There would be a risk of Option 6 failing to deliver the required trajectory, given the greater concentration of growth under this option (i.e. a new settlement will have a considerable lead-in time, as major infrastructure upgrades are completed, and measures are put in place to mitigate strategic constraints). Conversely, Option 1 would involve a diverse array of sites, leading to high confidence regarding the housing trajectory. Sites would also be spread geographically, which should mean that 'very local' housing needs are met.⁴⁴</p> <p>On the other hand, Option 6 performs better than Option 1 in the sense that there is the potential to deliver higher growth within the plan period, i.e. deliver a quantum of growth above the housing target, which could mean that there is flexibility to meet any unmet needs that might arise from elsewhere in the HMA.⁴⁵ Whilst Option 1 would provide for objectively assessed housing needs (OAHN), it would not provide for the preferred 'uplift' for affordable housing (see Section 6.2), and there would be limited flexibility to accommodate unmet needs.</p> <p>Options 2, 4 and 5 would deliver the advised housing target, but in comparison with Option 6 they would include less flexibility. Option 3 performs marginally worse than Options 2, 4 and 5 insofar as it is less likely to deliver the advised affordable housing uplift (10,185 dwellings over the plan period), which means that not all of the estimated need for subsidised rented housing in the district would be addressed.</p> <p>In conclusion, Option 2 performs well as the housing target would be provided for and dispersal of housing across smaller urban extension sites is supported. Option 1 performs poorly as the housing target would not be provided for; whilst Option 6 performs poorly as a concentration of growth could lead to delivery risks, and unmet 'very local' housing needs.</p> <p>All options would lead to significant positive effects, as all would involve delivering Hart District's OAHN figure (382 dpa; 8,022 dwellings over the plan period) plus a significant uplift for affordable housing. It should also be the case that OAHN would be met within the Housing</p>					


⁴³ This prediction is made recognising that all options would also involve development at a number of other sites (i.e. sites that are a 'given' across the alternatives), including a site at Fleet ("Cross Farm") that would be adjacent to the Church Crookham CA.

⁴⁴ For example, under Option 1 (and under Option 2) a small site would be allocated at Long Sutton, where anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a need for housing to support employees of Lord Wandsworth College.

⁴⁵ It should however be noted that at this stage there is no firm evidence to suggest that there will be unmet needs.

Market Area (HMA), on the assumption that the other two authorities within the HMA – Surrey Heath and Rushmoor – will not ‘undersupply’; however, in practice it is recognised that there is some risk. It is also the case that there will be a distribution of homes between settlements across all alternatives, recognising that all alternatives include a range of givens/constants (including one site at Fleet – “Cross Farm” – that would deliver specialist housing).

Sustainability Topic: Land and other resources

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	2	2	2	2	2	
Significant effects?	No					
Discussion	<p>There is a need to avoid loss of higher quality (‘best and most versatile’) agricultural land. In this respect, all undeveloped land in Hart is either Grade 2 (very good quality), Grade 3 (good to moderate quality) or Grade 4 (moderate quality) in the Agricultural Land Classification, according to the nationally available ‘Provisional Agricultural Land Quality’ dataset. The data-set shows there to be three patches of Grade 2 agricultural land, in the south of the district.</p> <p>The national data-set is of very low resolution, which means that it is difficult to apply it to the appraisal of individual sites, and in turn difficult to apply it to the appraisal of the spatial strategy alternatives. However, it is noted that the dataset shows there to be a concentration of Grade 4 land in Winchfield area, i.e. in the area that would receive a new settlement under Option 6. Also, it is noted that the smaller urban extension options (Options 1 and 2) in the south of the district are in the vicinity of the patches of Grade 2 land indicated by the dataset; however, they do not appear to intersect.</p> <p>The other available dataset is known as the ‘Post 1988’ dataset. This dataset is an accurate reflection of agricultural land quality, on the basis that the methodology involves field surveys. However, the data-set is very patchy, with data only being available for a small proportion of the district. Of the sites that are a variable across the alternatives, data is available for just three: Murrell Green is largely grade 2 land, or grade 3a;⁴⁶ Grove Farm is largely grade 2 land; and Owen’s Farm is grade 3b.</p> <p>In conclusion, it is fair to ‘flag’ the possibility of Option 6 performing well. This option would involve a focus at land east of Winchfield Station, which the national data-set suggests might comprise agricultural land that is grade 3b or 4. However, there is a need for more detailed survey work (using the ‘Post 1988’ methodology) to confirm this.</p> <p>It is difficult to conclude in respect of effect significance, given that the baseline (no plan) situation would in all likelihood involve a situation whereby there is greenfield development, albeit at a slower rate than under any of the options. The “givens” under all options would involve significant development on brownfield sites at Hartland Park, Sun Park and in the urban areas of Hook and Fleet, with more limited development on greenfield sites close to Crookham Village and Odiham. On balance, significant negative effects are not predicted, but there is some uncertainty given the lack of robust data.</p> <p>N.B. Another consideration relates to the sterilisation of known mineral resources. In this respect, it is important to note that Grove Farm falls within a sharp sand and gravel safeguarding area, as defined by the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan 2013. However, it is difficult to conclude that this is a significant constraint to growth at this location, given that there will be alternative locations within the safeguarding area that can be quarried, and also given the potential to extract the mineral resource prior to developing the site for housing.</p>					

⁴⁶ ‘Best and most versatile’ agricultural land is defined as that which is grade 1, 2 or 3a. The nationally available ‘Provisional Dataset’ does not differentiate between grades 3a and 3b.

Sustainability Topic: <u>Landscape</u>						
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	2	1	1	2	1	2
Significant effects?	No					
Discussion	<p>All of the strategic site options are associated with some landscape sensitivity, although there is notable variability. In summary, taking the sites in alphabetical order -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grove Farm (Options 1 and 3) – built development would be on raised land, and would significantly reduce the landscape gap that currently exists between Fleet and Crookham Village. However, Netherhouse Copse could help to mitigate the impact of development from Crookham Village. Owens Farm (Options 1 and 4) – development would significantly reduce the landscape gap that currently exists between Hook and Newnham. Also there are public rights of way running through the site and in close proximity, which are likely to be well used given their proximity to residential areas in Hook/Newnham, and which have an established 'rural feel' that could be negatively affected by new development. Murrell Green (Options 2-5) – topography is a potential issue, given that this site includes raised land visible from Hook, across the River Whitewater valley. There is also some visibility from the A30, given hedgerow gaps. However, Hart's landscape capacity study identifies this area as having a medium capacity for new development. Pale Lane (Options 1 and 5) – this site is relatively unconstrained, although it may be visible from the M3 and railway line. Existing wide tree belts may provide useful screening. Winchfield (Option 6) – much of this area has a strongly rural character, particularly the eastern part. There would also be a need for significant re-modelling of the rural road network, with attendant landscape / character implications. However, the topography of the site is suited to development, insofar as it may prevent long views into developed areas. <p>With regards to the smaller urban extension site options (Options 1 and 2), four of the eight sites stand out as more constrained –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEMEX A & B, Eversley – will extend the current linear built form, and also introduce some development in depth, and will be visible from a long distance footpath (the Three Castles Path) to the south (as well as Chequers Lane / Hollybush Lane to the east). Land West of Varndell Road & Land off Hop Garden Road, Hook – is associated with similar issues to the Owen's Farm site, albeit on a much smaller scale. Development would have an urbanising effect on the gap that currently exists between Hook and Newnham. Land between Eversley Road and Firgrove Road, Yateley – is located within the Yateley/Eversley Cross local gap, but is relatively contained in the landscape / would integrate relatively well with the existing built form. Land NW of Crondall would extend the linear form of the village north to a considerable extent; however, the site is screened from the road by a tree belt. <p>In conclusion, Options 2, 3 and 5 perform relatively well as development at the two worst performing sites - Owen's Farm and Winchfield – would be avoided. It is not possible to confidently differentiate further between the alternatives.</p> <p>It is not possible to conclude the likelihood of significant negative effects, as there would be no impacts to designated landscapes.⁴⁷</p>					

⁴⁷ This prediction is made recognising that all options would also involve development at a number of other sites, including Hartland Park and Cross Farm, both of which are constrained, from a landscape perspective.

Sustainability Topic: <u>Transport and accessibility</u>						
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	5	1	2	4	6	3
Significant effects?	No					
Discussion	<p>Taking each large site in alphabetical order –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grove Farm (Options 1 and 3) – good potential to integrate with Fleet, with the town centre approximately 1.5km by road. The site stands out as somewhat distant from the strategic road network, and there could well be rat-running in the westward direction, through Dogmersfield, potentially leading to congestion at junctions. Murrell Green (Options 2-6) - residents would need to travel to access many community services and facilities, although new community infrastructure (schools, local shops, open space and meeting places) will be accessible by walking and cycling. Also, existing public rights of way could be used to secure good walking/cycling access to Hook and Winchfield. The impacts of development on the M3 junction 5 will need careful consideration. A 'park and bus' facility has been proposed, which could support existing bus services on the A30. Owen's Farm (Options 1 and 4) - somewhat distant from the town centre (approximately 1.9km by road) and the most direct route is along Newnham Road, which has no pedestrian footways or streetlights. Well linked to the strategic road network; however, Hampshire CC has highlighted the potential for traffic congestion at the London Road / Old School Road junction, due to travel in the direction of M3 Junction 5, and on the motorway junction itself. Pale Lane (Options 1 and 5) - distant from Fleet town centre (approximately 2.8km), but the local services and facilities at Elvetham Heath are nearby. The site is fairly well linked to the strategic road network; however, there are concerns regarding the cumulative effects of growth at locations along the A323 / A30 corridor, should Pale Lane come forward alongside a new settlement in central Hart. Furthermore, there is a concern that development at Pale Lane could hinder the ability to bring forward strategic road improvements that would better enable large scale growth – i.e. linked new settlements – in Central Hart in the long term. Winchfield (Option 6) - As discussed above, residents would need to travel to access many community services and facilities, although new community infrastructure (schools, local shops, open space and meeting places) will be accessible by walking and cycling, including potentially to existing residents of Hartley Wintney. The scale of the new settlement (3,000 homes) potentially has implications for rail capacity, at least in the short to medium term, before additional capacity is created by investment elsewhere on the rail network. Also, development on land south of the railway line would encroach into a very rural area, and hence would require significant local road upgrades and a new road layout. The potential to phase upgrades in line with housing growth is at present unclear. <p>Regarding the package of smaller sites (Options 1 & 2) -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land between Eversley Road and Firgrove Road, Yateley – pedestrian and cycle access would need to be improved, but development at this site could potentially facilitate a new cycle link between Eversley and Yateley. CEMEX A and B, Eversley – Hollybush Lane would need to be widened. Development could assist in the provision of a new cycle link between Eversley and Yateley, particularly in combination with development at Eversley (see above). Land north-west of Crondall – although the Adams Hendry detailed site assessment suggests that there's a lack of sustainable transport options, this was not the view of Hart officers through the SA workshops. In particular, there is good potential for safe cycling north to Fleet, given the potential access the Crondall Road via an existing track. <p>In conclusion, taking the above site-specific factors into account, and looking more broadly at the reasonable alternatives, Option 5 is likely to perform worse than the other options, due to</p>					

the potential 'in-combination' effects on congestion and junction performance from development at Pale Lane and Murrell Green. Option 1 similarly performs poorly due to inclusion of Pale Lane, as the effect could be to hinder delivery of a new settlement in the longer term, i.e. the next plan period. Option 1 would also involve a concentration of growth on the western edge of Fleet, potentially leading to an 'in combination' effect on certain junctions, or stretches of road, including the A287 as residents travel south/south-east.

Other factors are -

- Under Options 3, 4 and 6 the scale of growth in proximity to M3 Junction 5 gives some cause for concern, although impacts are uncertain ahead of detailed modelling work.
- Good access to the train station could help to minimise car journeys, particularly under Option 6 (Winchfield); however, the additional road infrastructure requirements for Option 6 and the phasing of its delivery relative to new housing is a concern (albeit uncertain).
- Relative to Option 6, Options 2 and 3 have benefits in terms of locating development closer to Hook and Fleet, with the potential for better walking and cycling connections.
- The smaller sites raise few, if any, strategic concerns regarding transport, but there is the potential to support improvements to the cycle network between Eversley and Yateley.

The following order of preference emerges: Option 2 > Option 3 > Option 6 > Option 4 > Option 1 > Option 5

It is not possible to conclude 'significant' negative effects as there is no robust evidence to show that 'severe' congestion will result for the reasonable options taken as a whole (this is the key policy test established by the NPPF). Modelling work is being undertaken, which will inform future plan-making and SA.⁴⁸

Sustainability Topic: Water

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Rank	3	2	1	1	2	1
Significant effects?	No					
Discussion	<p>The emerging Water Cycle Study (WCS) has highlighted that capacity of Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) in the north of the district (Eversley WWTW) is a potential issue for housing growth, which serves to indicate an issue for Options 1 and 2. However, upgrades to the works at Eversley could potentially be phased in line with housing growth and to the standard required to avoid deterioration in the status of the River Blackwater.</p> <p>The Study also identifies "very high" sewer network constraints for Pale Lane (Options 1 & 5), which could have ecological impacts and result in sewer flooding to properties. However, it is usually feasible and viable to upgrade the sewer network through development.</p> <p>The emerging WCS also notes the risk of impacts to sensitive groundwater in the south of the district; however, in practice this is unlikely to be a constraint given that polluting development (e.g. industry) is unlikely. For proposed residential development in these areas (which is at a relatively small level for all options) SuDS would need to be designed to avoid polluting the groundwater sources, within identified protection zones.</p> <p>A new settlement at Murrell Green or Winchfield (Options 2-6) would either need to provide its own WWTW, or transfer waste water to Fleet via new/improved infrastructure. For developers, the former may prove to be a preferable option, although there will be cost / viability implications from either option; and there is also a need to explore the potential environmental impacts carefully (working with the Environment Agency), given that the rivers Whitewater and</p>					

⁴⁸ This prediction is made recognising that all options would also involve development at a number of other sites, including Hartland Park, which could have impacts on junction 4a of the M3.

Hart in this area have relatively low flow, i.e. a level of flow that may not be suited to receiving discharges from a WWTW. The emerging Water Cycle Study only considers growth options associated with a new settlement at Murrell Green, but the quantum of development in the catchment area for Fleet WWTW is likely to be very similar under an alternative scenario involving a new settlement at Winchfield.

In **conclusion**, there are few constraints to growth that would affect one option more than another, but the two issues discussed above (Eversley WWTW and Pale Lane sewer network) enable some differentiation between the alternatives.

Significant effects are not predicted for any of the options at this early stage in the plan-making process, because it is possible that all of the potential impacts could be overcome through appropriate investment in waste water and drainage infrastructure.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ This prediction is made recognising that all options would also involve development at a number of other sites (i.e. sites that are a 'given' across the alternatives), including Sun Park and Hartland Park, which are located in the catchment of the Camberley WWTW, which currently has capacity constraints. The potential for making suitable upgrades to this WWTW needs to be investigated further, but if these cannot be made in time to facilitate new development, the WCS identifies the potential to connect to Fleet WWTW.

Summary findings and conclusions						
Topic	Categorisation and rank					
	Option 1 Small sites Grove Farm Owens Farm Pale Lane	Option 2 Small sites M' Green	Option 3 Grove Farm M' Green	Option 4 Owens Farm M' Green	Option 5 Pale Lane M' Green	Option 6 Winchfield
Biodiversity	6	5	2	1	3	4
Climate change mitigation	6	5	2	2	2	1
Communities	3	3	1	2	1	2
Employment and the economy	3	1	1	1	1	2
Flood risk / climate change adaptation	1	1	1	1	1	2
Historic environment	6	1	3	5	2	4
Housing	4	1	3	2	2	4
Land and other resources	2	2	2	2	2	1
Landscape	2	1	1	2	1	2
Transport and accessibility	5	1	2	4	6	3
Water	3	2	1	1	2	1

Summary findings and conclusions

Topic	Categorisation and rank					
	Option 1 Small sites Grove Farm Owens Farm Pale Lane	Option 2 Small sites M' Green	Option 3 Grove Farm M' Green	Option 4 Owens Farm M' Green	Option 5 Pale Lane M' Green	Option 6 Winchfield

Summary and conclusions

Whilst it is not the aim of this appraisal to conclude on the *overall* performance / sustainability of each option, the appraisal does serve to indicate that Option 1 (no new settlement) performs least well, on the basis that it does not stand-out as performing well in terms of any topic, and stands-out as performing poorly in terms of several. Differentiating the remaining five alternatives is more difficult. Taking notable topics in turn –

- Biodiversity – a strategy relying on small sites performs less well given limited potential to deliver new SANG to as a means of avoiding recreational impacts to the TBHSPA, whilst Owens Farm and Murrell Green stand-out as the better performing strategic sites, i.e. the sites that are less constrained and/or offer some opportunity for biodiversity gains.
- Climate change mitigation – maximum reliance on strategic scale development is supported, as economies of scale can make low carbon infrastructure more viable.
- Communities – focusing growth at Fleet (i.e. the district's main settlement) is supported, whilst small urban extensions are not, given limited or no potential for development to deliver community infrastructure.
- Employment and the economy – options involving a Murrell Green new settlement are supported, as it is expected that the scheme would involve delivery of 3.7ha of new employment land.
- Flood risk / climate change adaptation – there is a likelihood that flood risk can be addressed at all locations; however, Winchfield new settlement stands out as more constrained.
- Historic environment – Murrell Green and Pale Lane stand-out as less constrained, and smaller sites are perhaps less likely to have significant impacts on the setting of heritage assets. Even the better performing options would lead to significant negative effects, recognising that Cross Farm - a larger site that is a constant across the alternatives - lies adjacent to Crookham Village Conservation Area.
- Housing – All options perform well, as the OAHN figure assigned to the district by the SHMA would be met. A package of smaller sites is supported, as smaller sites are likely to be inherently 'deliverable' and dispersing development between settlements can help to ensure that settlement specific needs are met.
- Land and other resources – the quality of agricultural land lost to development is the primary consideration, and in this respect it is noted that land quality in the Winchfield area may tend to be relatively low (albeit there may still be some land classed as 'best and most versatile').
- Landscape - Options 2, 3 and 5 perform relatively well as development at the two worst performing sites - Owen's Farm and Winchfield – would be avoided.
- Transport and accessibility – sites are associated with a range of issues, which makes it a particular challenge to differentiate the alternatives. On balance, Option 2 is judged to perform best as it would not involve a strategic urban extension at Grove Farm, Owen's Farm or Pale Lane, all of which are associated with notable issues. However, it is recognised that the package of smaller urban extensions under Option 2 involves some sites at smaller settlements, with high car dependency.
- Water - there are few constraints to growth that would affect one option more than another, but two potential issues relate to capacity of Eversley WWTW, in the north of the district where two or three of the smaller urban extension sites would be located, and capacity of the sewer network at Pale Lane.