

**Fareham Local Plan 2037
Revised**

**Examination Statement
Matter 3 – Housing Need
and Supply**

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Prepared on behalf of Raymond Brown Rookery Properties

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1.0 **Introduction**

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Southern Planning Practice Ltd on behalf of Raymond Brown Rookery Properties who own land at Rookery Farm, Botley Road, Swanwick which was allocated for residential development in in the Supplement to the Draft Local Plan in January 2020; however, it was subsequently removed as an allocated from the Regulation 19 Submission Version of the Local Plan.
- 1.2 It is pertinent to note that representations have been made on behalf of our client, Raymond Brown Rookery Properties throughout the preparation of the emerging Local Plan. Whilst this statement is not a duplication of the contents of representations previously submitted to the emerging Local Plan, this statement draws on previous responses where necessary.
- 1.3 This Statement is prepared in response to the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions – Matter 3 – Housing Need and Supply. In addition to this Statement, several other statements have been prepared in response to other matters being heard in the Local Plan Examination. Our statements to the other matters considered by the Local Plan Examination interlink with this statement, namely Matters 1, 4 and 7.
- 1.4 This Examination Statement focuses on the Housing Requirement of the Local Plan and therefore provides responses to the relevant questions of Matter 3.



2.0 Response to Inspector's Questions

Question 1. What is the justification for the conclusion in paragraph 4.3, that the Plan should not plan for a higher level of housing need than the standard method Local Housing Need suggests?

- 2.1 Paragraph 4.3 of the Local Plan seeks to justify using the minimum figure as calculated by the standard method as its housing requirement because it believes it is *'fully justified in its approach towards meeting affordable need.....and there is no further requirement for an adjustment of the need figures for the Borough'*.
- 2.2 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF sets out first that the figure should be regarded as a minimum number of homes and *"In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for."*
- 2.3 In addition, we would like to highlight that *"the standard method for calculating local housing need provides a **minimum** number of homes to be planned for. **Authorities should use the standard method as the starting point** when preparing the housing requirement in their plan, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach."* (our emphasis). (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 68-001-20190722 of the Planning Practice Guidance).
- 2.4 In this regard there are therefore two principal issues to address, one relating to affordable housing provision and the second to meeting unmet need from adjoining areas.

Affordable Housing

- 2.5 The concerns in respect of the affordable housing position are set out in some detail at paragraphs 2.37 – 2.40 of our reps to the Revised Fareham Local Plan in July 2021. It is not considered necessary to repeat those points, all of which remain of concern. We have not seen any further updates or additional information provided by the Council to address these concerns and provide confidence that the Council can indeed meet its affordable housing requirements.



- 2.6 Considering the above, we conclude that the justification for the conclusion in paragraph 4.3 is not justified and as such Fareham Borough Council should plan for a higher level of housing need that minimum figure calculated using the standard method.

Unmet Housing Needs of Neighbouring Authorities

- 2.7 The Local Plan's housing figure must incorporate the unmet needs of neighbouring authorities, where possible, in order to be meet the required tests of soundness. This has been addressed already under our responses to Matter 1 and in response to the further questions posed by the Inspector below.

Question 2. Has the Council been asked if it can accommodate any unmet housing needs from other local authorities within the Housing Market Area (HMA)?

- 2.8 Portsmouth City Council wrote to Fareham Borough Council in the preparation of the Local Plan to request a contribution of 1,000 homes to be made within the Borough to help meets Portsmouth unmet needs. It is understood that Portsmouth was the only neighbouring authority to directly approach Fareham to accommodate some unmet need in their Local Plan.
- 2.9 Whilst direct requests by neighbouring authorities to Fareham to provide housing to meet their unmet need have not been made, neighbouring authorities have looked to PfSH to help find a strategy to accommodate unmet need. Gosport Borough Council have acknowledged this in their SOCG with Fareham Borough Council. Paragraph 3.9 confirms "*GBC has highlighted these figures to PfSH as part of the ongoing study and has not requested any single local authority to meet its unmet need until such times as the PfSH evidence has been reported. GBC recognise that the distribution of housing need is broader than the GBC and FBC authority areas and will require consideration and co-operation at the sub regional scale.*"
- 2.10 Whilst other neighbouring authorities have not approached Fareham Borough Council directly, they have informed PfSH of their unmet need and have looked to PfSH's emerging strategy to allocate strategic developments to help meet the unmet need in the sub-region.
- 2.11 However, in the Revised Local Plan, Fareham have only included 900 dwellings in the total housing requirement to contribute to the unmet need of neighbouring authorities when in

reality the need is far greater. Therefore, the cooperation from Fareham Borough Council to meet neighbouring unmet needs has not been overly proactive, more reactive and the requested level of homes to help meet Portsmouth's unmet need have not been appropriately or positively planned for.

- 2.12 Fareham Borough Council and PfSH produced and published an updated SOCG in October 2021 which seeks to assist to address the unmet housing need in the sub region through providing a contribution to the neighbouring authorities unmet need in the Local Plan housing requirement. It should be noted that in the updated SOCG between PfSH and Fareham, based on standardised plan periods of 2021-2036, there is a predicted shortfall in the region of some 13,000 homes across the sub-region, compared to 10,750 homes in the 2020 SOCG. This predicted shortfall is likely to alter as plans emerge across the sub-region and changes are made to the standard method.
- 2.13 In response to the predicted shortfall in the region, PfSH are currently in the process of undertaking work to identify the level of unmet need within the PfSH authorities which will seek to identify Strategic Development Opportunity Areas (SDOA's). Whilst such further work from PfSH is still underway and will not be prepared in time to fully inform the Local Plan, given the increase in unmet need as identified by PfSH in the updated SOCG, Fareham must take a pragmatic view and look to further increase the housing provision to help address the unmet housing need in the sub-region based on the up-to-date figures rather than awaiting further figures which are likely to demonstrate a growing unmet need.
- 2.14 It is also noted that in the SOCG's between Fareham Borough Council and PfSH, both the earlier version (August 2021) and the updated version (October 2021), that the level of housing provision in the Local Plan includes a contingency of 11% of the overall housing supply however it is not clear in the Local Plan itself that this 11% contingency has been added. It is therefore believed that Fareham is not positively planning to meet neighbouring authorities unmet need despite the figures from, and engagement with PfSH.
- 2.15 In any event, as part of the Duty to Co-operate, Fareham Borough Council should be looking to accommodate unmet needs arising from neighbouring authorities whether or not they are directly asked. Further, whilst it is acknowledged that the Local Plan has come ahead of the PfSH work on Strategic Development Opportunity Areas, given the increase in unmet need in



the sub-region, Fareham's housing requirement should look to be flexible to seek to accommodate this. As such, Fareham must look to increase the housing requirement over the plan period to accommodate additional unmet housing need arising from neighbouring authorities.

Question 3. The Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with Portsmouth suggests their unmet need is now 800 dwellings, not 669 as identified in paragraph 4.5 of the Plan. What is the current position?

- 2.16 It has been acknowledged for some time that Portsmouth cannot meet its housing need given its constrained nature and a key role of PfSH has been to consider the capacity of other local authorities in the PfSH area which could contribute to accommodating the unmet need arising from Portsmouth. As acknowledged, Fareham Borough has relatively few constraints compared to its neighbouring authorities, therefore Fareham Borough has been identified as an area which can help to accommodate the unmet need arising from Portsmouth. Portsmouth City Council wrote to Fareham to request a contribution of 1,000 dwellings to their unmet need during the early stages of the Local Plan preparation. Fareham sought to test the unmet housing need from Portsmouth to ensure they were providing for the correct figure.
- 2.17 Paragraph 4.5 of the revised Local Plan sets out that based on the September 2020 figures the unmet need figure is estimated to be 669 dwellings, however it is understood that this is not an up-to-date figure and the unmet need housing figure is still being further considered by Portsmouth; this has been indicated by Portsmouth in its draft Regulation 18 Local Plan (considered by Cabinet on 27 July 2021) on 19 July:

At this time, a possible contribution of 1,000 units from other local authorities has been retained while Duty to Cooperate discussions continue and as Portsmouth's final unmet need housing figure is determined.

- 2.18 It should also be noted that at Portsmouth's Full Council meeting on 19 July 2021, a report was considered with a request to review the allocation of the 'Tipner West' site which is allocated for some 4,200 homes. This allocation is the largest proposed within Portsmouth and therefore a significant contribution to their housing need. As such, their housing requirement is reliant on this site coming forward. If this allocation were not to come forward



or be modified or delayed significantly, this could have major consequential effects on Portsmouth City Council's housing numbers. (A copy of these Committee reports have not been attached as they are publicly available but can be provided if requested.)

- 2.19 The SOCG between Fareham and Portsmouth in September 2021 confirmed that under the current methodology (updated by affordability ratio data in April 2021), the City Council now has a projected shortfall in housing delivery of around 800 dwellings over the next plan period.
- 2.20 Although it does not appear to have been made available by the Council, it is understood that a letter dated 24 January 2022 from Portsmouth City Council to Fareham Borough Council confirmed that the most recently published position for Portsmouth was set out in its own draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation (September 2021), which identified a need of 872 dwellings per annum (17,701 dwellings for the plan period) and an estimated supply of 16,993. In both the letter and the Local Plan, it is understood that it was emphasised that the level of unmet need is expected to change as the plan progresses, including the need to take account of strategic site options (and impacts on potential implementation rates during the plan period), notably the aforementioned Tipner site, any under delivery against the government's housing need targets, planning permissions and any secured housing supply through the Duty to Cooperate. Therefore, an estimated unmet need of 800 dwellings was used for the Statement of Common Ground between Fareham Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council (September 2021). However, it is understood that the letter from Portsmouth to Fareham makes it clear that given Portsmouth's constraints, is very unlikely that the city will be able to meet its full housing target. Portsmouth are currently undertaking a review of their available housing land and the results of this are expected in March 2022, during Fareham's Local Plan Examination.
- 2.21 Therefore, in light of the above, the Local Plan figure for Portsmouth's unmet need of 669 is considered to be out of date. The Local Plan should be based on up-to-date evidence and should include Portsmouth's current unmet housing need in order for it to be sound. At present, it is understood that Portsmouth's unmet housing need is at least 800 homes and therefore this is the figure the Local Plan should be providing in the housing provision as a minimum given the likelihood of Portsmouth's unmet housing need further increasing.



- 2.22 It is evident therefore that the plan is not appropriately planning for unmet need arising from neighbouring authorities within the PfSH east area, in particular the unmet need arising from Portsmouth, and has not been positively prepared in accordance with paragraph 35 a) of the NPPF. The Revised Local Plan therefore remains **unsound**.

Question 4. The above SoCG also suggests a contingency of 11% should be added to the 900 dwellings. Is this included in Table 4.1 of the Plan?

- 2.23 The level of housing provision in the Revised Publication Local Plan has been informed by the need to accommodate unmet need arising from neighbouring authorities. The housing provision includes a contribution of 900 homes towards unmet need from neighbouring authorities and to address any potential slippages in delivery. It is noted that in both the SOCG between Fareham and Portsmouth and Fareham and PfSH the following is stated: *The level of housing provision in the Revised Publication Local Plan includes a contingency of 11% to address any potential slippages in delivery, and a contribution of 900 homes (plus 11%) towards unmet need from neighbouring authorities. Therefore, the overall growth level for the Borough until 2037 is projected to be 9,556 new dwellings.*
- 2.24 However, it does not appear that this suggested contingency of 11% has been added to the Local Plan Housing Requirement in Table 4.1 of the Local Plan. In fact, the housing requirement has not changed since the most recent consultation ahead of submission and therefore we do not believe the Local Plan has taken the requirements of the SOCG's into account. Clarity must be sought on why the required 11% contingency has not been included in the Local Plan's housing requirement.
- 2.25 In light of the above, the Local Plan has not been positively prepared and therefore fails to meet the required tests of soundness as set out in Paragraph 35 of the NPPF.



Question 5. Are specific sites identified to meet Portsmouth’s need? If so, which sites and are they located within the Portsmouth HMA?

- 2.26 The Local Plan does not explicitly state that any of the proposed allocated sites are specific to meet the unmet need arising from Portsmouth. This question is primarily for the Council to address.

Question 6. Given the current suggested unmet need for the sub region of around 10,750 dwellings, should the plan make a greater contribution to meeting these needs?

- 2.27 Following the submission of the Local Plan, the SOCG between Fareham Borough Council and PfSH was updated in October 2021 to include an updated position on unmet need. It is pertinent to note that in the updated SOCG, based on standardised plan periods of 2021-2036, there is a predicted shortfall in the region of some 13,000 homes across the sub-region, compared to 10,750 homes in the 2020 SOCG. It is therefore considered that the Local Plan should be updated to include the most recent figure of unmet need in the sub region.
- 2.28 As such, Fareham Borough Council and its housing provision should be looking to make a much greater contribution to help to meet the increased unmet housing need. Particularly because it is one of the most unconstrained local authorities within the PfSH area which is capable of accommodating additional homes.
- 2.29 In addition, it is noted in the SOCG that the level of unmet need within the neighbouring authorities across the sub region is likely to alter as plans emerge and changes to the standard method are made. Given current changes such as the 35% uplift applied by the Government to England’s 20 largest cities, which includes Southampton, which reflect population growth and the countries demographic, it would appear that housing needs are only going to increase. As such, Fareham should be looking to make a greater contribution to meeting the currently identified unmet need to satisfy Paragraph 35 c) of the NPPF which states:

“Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground;”



Question 8. Is the proposal in Policy H1 to step the housing requirement justified. Does this suppress housing delivery and impact on the plans ability to meet housing needs in the early years of the plan?

- 2.30 It is understood from Paragraph 4.16 of the Local Plan that the stepped housing trajectory is proposed due to the expectation that the majority of housing site will start to deliver in the latter part of the plan period, with a significant number of homes coming from the Welborne site which will come forward in a few years' time.
- 2.31 Such circumstances do not present adequate justification for this approach. The Local Plan should provide a range of sites which can deliver in the short, medium and long term to ensure a consistent 5-year housing land supply throughout the plan period. Indeed, at a national level, there is an imperative on every authority to contribute towards a boosting of supply, particularly with historic rates of delivery consistently and markedly falling below the levels identified as being needed and the targets set by Government, hence the need in this instance to apply a 20% buffer to the housing provision.
- 2.32 The application of the 20% buffer to the housing provision has been necessary in light of the 2020 Housing Delivery Test results. Such a buffer is applied in accordance with Paragraph 74 of the NPPF when there has been significant under delivery of housing. The 20% buffer seeks to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply.
- 2.33 Given the consistent under delivery of housing, it is considered that rather than adopting a phased approach to housing delivery, the Council should seek to facilitate and promote delivery early in the plan period to boost and maintain a five-year housing land supply.
- 2.34 Relying on increased delivery rates in the latter years of the plan period fails to respond positively to the evidence of significant need pressures now both from Fareham itself and the neighbouring authorities. It runs the risk that the overall housing requirements will not be achieved should there be obstacles to delivery, particularly when reliance is placed on such large sites. Another potential issue is reliance on complex redevelopment sites or greenfield sites. This is another reason the Local Plan should be taking a more proactive approach to allocate suitable, achievable sites to positively plan for a consistent supply of homes.



- 2.35 It is not clear why the stepped approach to deliver the required housing is proposed. It is considered that this approach is unsound as it is not necessary, justified or consistent with the NPPF to restrict or limit housing delivery through a stepped trajectory.

Questions 9 -14: Affordable Housing Requirement

- 2.36 We consider that the questions raised by the Inspector are directly pertinent to the concerns we have expressed that the Council has not properly provided for its affordable housing needs in its Plan. These questions are absolutely fundamental to the soundness of the Plan and should not be having to be raised at this stage of Examination. This information should have been available at the outset and available to all for assessment. In the absence of such basic and fundamental information, we must necessarily reserve our position to respond further if such information is made available.
- 2.37 The Plan cannot be considered SOUND in terms of meeting the Council’s affordable housing requirement and the manner in which the affordable housing need has been reflected in the housing figures under H1.

Summary on Policy H1

- 2.38 Our earlier submitted representations to the draft Plan have raised a number of inter-related concerns with H1 all of which remain pertinent to the soundness of the Plan. However, this statement has sought to address directly the specific questions raised by the Inspector.
- 2.39 Paragraph 35 a) of the NPPF sets out that in order for a plan to be sound it must be:
- a) Positively Prepared - providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs (our emphasis); and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.*
- 2.40 The above highlighted issues render Policy H1 unsound. As Policy H1 forms the basis for the provision of much needed housing across the whole Borough, it follows that the whole Plan is rendered unsound. It should be noted that all of the highlighted issues interrelate and



cumulatively exacerbate the conclusions drawn that the Council is failing to provide properly for its housing need. As such, the emerging Local Plan **MUST** look to reconsider its housing numbers and allocate further sites accordingly.