



Examination Inspector supports JB Planning Associate's view that new settlement proposal should be removed from Hart Local Plan

JB Planning Associates' argument that the proposed allocation of a new settlement at Winchfield, Hampshire would be unsound has been supported by the Hart Local Plan Examination Inspector.

Last week the Inspector advised the District Council about the further steps or main modifications necessary for the Plan to be made legally compliant and / or sound. His advice is set out in a letter dated 26 February 2019.

Policy SS3 of the Submission Draft Local Plan stated the Council's commitment to preparing a New Settlement Development Plan Document (DPD) after the adoption of the Plan, and identified an Area of Search at Murrell Green / Winchfield for the delivery of up to 5,000 dwellings.

The Inspector's Post Examination letter identified fundamental concerns with regard to the soundness of Policy SS3 and the Council's accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA), particularly:

- A failure to robustly consider reasonable alternatives to a new settlement as a long-term growth strategy in the Pre-Submission SA; and
- How the Area of Search had been considered and ranked against reasonable alternatives in the Post Submission Interim SA Report, particularly with regard to flood risk, as well as other constraints within the Area of Search, such as biodiversity features, areas of ancient woodland, heritage assets, landscape sensitivity, the M3 motorway, the railway line, gas pipes and electricity pylons.

JB Planning Associates produced an extensive range of technical evidence to demonstrate the unsuitability of the proposed allocation, especially drawing upon the expertise of our landscape consultant.

The Inspector agreed with JB Planning Associates that in terms of the overall housing requirement, Policy SS3 was not required for the Plan to be sound, and he recommended that it should be removed through Main Modifications.