

## Eastleigh Local Plan Schedule of Main Modifications – Response from Bishopstoke and Fair Oak Independent Group

Bishopstoke and Fair Oak Independent Group notes the policy below clearly spells out Eastleigh Borough Councils' strategic approach to housing provision, as it states at **MM5**:

*"The Local Plan will seek to deliver an increase in housing provision compared to previous plans in order to provide a more diverse mix of housing (including affordable and specialised housing) to meet the Boroughs objectively assessed housing need and contributing (where feasible) to meeting the needs of the wider Southampton housing market area"*

It is Bishopstoke and Fair Oak Independent Group's understanding that Eastleigh Borough Council is paving the way to accommodate housing numbers in addition to those required to meet the Borough needs, positioning itself to accommodate neighbouring Councils' housing requirements also.

The policy goes on to say at **MM5b**:

*"Development will be focused first on brownfield sites within the defined settlement boundaries of the Boroughs most sustainable settlements"*

And at **MM5d**: (you need a comma after "However")

*" However given the tightly drawn boundaries of those settlements and the scale of development likely to be required over the plan period the plan will need to make provision for a significant scale of new Greenfield development".*

The group suspects that the allocation of countryside sites is beneficial to the Borough Council as they are relatively straightforward to develop and presumably provides commercial opportunity to Eastleigh Borough Council's land acquisition and development functions.

The downside of the above will be an adverse environmental impact on residents, especially those in Bishopstoke and fair Oak, as a result of: poorer air quality; loss of countryside for recreation; health and well-being; increased

congestion and traffic; and, pressure on the remaining green spaces. In addition, much of the north is near a national park and would adversely impact upon the River Itchen SAC and ancient woodland (the historic forest of Bere).

The circular nature of Eastleigh's position on PFSH to put forward its own area for development and then infer it is not the council but the will of PFSH is disingenuous and misleading to the public.

These negative impacts are exacerbated by a lack of sustainability of the sites, for example not situated near public transport routes making them car dependent and isolated.

### **Strategic Policy S1 delivering sustainable development**

Despite declaring a "climate emergency" this policy does not provide confidence in Eastleigh Borough Councils commitment to a) reaching net-zero carbon, and b) mitigating the impacts of climate change. The wording is weak e.g., "have regard to the potential impacts of climate change" also there is no reference as to how environmental (should be biodiversity) net gain will be achieved. In addition, no cross-reference is made as to how car travel will be minimised, for example by referring to initiatives and projects in the pipeline (these could include: a strategic cycleway network; enhanced public transport provision; safe, secure and direct walking routes.)

**MM5 DM1** General criteria for new development change from a weak statement of 'avoiding' to ~ 'ensuring' no significant adverse impacts" and strengthen with 'achieving measurable biodiversity net gain, reduction in predator introduction and where appropriate increasing species-specific site allocations.'

**MM10 SP2** no case has been made for a 'minimum' number. The MHCLG at the recent briefing stated that there is an awareness that the calculation and projections were flawed. Until this has been resolved these figures should remain unchanged and the end of sentence 1. ', of a minimum of' be deleted

*1. The Council will promote the delivery, over the plan period 2016-2036, of a minimum of:*

### **MM11 Strategic Policy S3 Location of new housing**

Members of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak Independent Group objected strongly to the Strategic Growth Option in the north of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak and wholly support its deletion from the plan.

However, Bishopstoke and Fair Oak Independent Group would want to lodge concerns that the wording at 4.11, which states that any shortfall in housing delivery in the latter years of the plan period should be addressed by an early

review of the plan. The concern of our residents will be that the Borough Council is determined to bring back the SGO. This option should now be firmly off the table as the council could not despite numerous calls and both elected members and respondents highlighting lack of evidence, could not demonstrate its appropriateness and need. Any indication that it may once again be reconsidered give developers who have, it is assumed, purchased options on Stoke Park Farm and other land across the area, hope value and that the Borough Council will start the review of the plan within 1 year of the plan's adoption. If it was felt it was appropriate where is the evidence now?

**MM13 Strategic Policy S5 New Communities North of Bishopstoke and North East of Fair Oak – Policy deleted as is all associated text – this is fully supported by Bishopstoke & Fair Oak Independent Group of Councillors.**

**MM27 Strategic policy S8, Protection of settlement gaps** this policy is not applied consistently, there seems to be a need to maintain a gap between Southampton (despite arguing it needs to provide for Southampton) but not other neighbouring councils, such as Winchester Borough, Fareham Borough. In particular, settlement gaps should be protected between Bishopstoke and Colden Common, Fair Oak and Upham, Fair Oak & Colden Common, Owslebury– in fact a settlement gap should be established. Between Bishopstoke and Fair Oak as none exists currently!

**MM29 Historic Environment, Policy S8** should refer to a programme for reviewing Conservation Area Appraisals and a commitment to resourcing improvements to townscape and historic buildings and structures within these areas (including Bishopstoke and Fair Oak).

**PM1 Deletion of strategic policy s5** – supported. Land within former s5 should be notated as "countryside" as per the adopted 2001 -11 EBLPR and the urban edge drawn accordingly. Ancient woodland at Upper Barn Copse, Crowd Hill Copse (newly designated ancient woodland sites) and their hinterlands should be notated for nature conservation.

**PM2 strategic policy s6** deleted - supported.