



21 July 2021

Our Ref: KC/21.197

Local Plan  
Eastleigh Borough Council  
Eastleigh House  
Upper Market Street  
Eastleigh  
SO50 9YN

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **Local Plan Review - Main Modifications Consultation**

I am writing on behalf of Hallam Land Management Limited and herewith submit representations in response to the consultation on the Main Modifications. These representations, prepared on behalf of Hallam Land Management Limited (HLM), concern MM27 and the proposed amendments to the boundary of the previous Countryside Gap, now referred to as Settlement Gaps; in particular the delineation of the extent of the Gap at Hamble (reference "i" in Policy S6).

The purpose of the Settlement Gap as defined in MM27 is to keep areas free of urbanising development in order to prevent further loss of local identity. Within the areas defined as Settlement Gap, only development that accords with the following criteria would be permitted:

- a. it would not diminish the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and
- b. it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to:
  - i. The character of the countryside; or
  - ii. The separate identity of the adjoining settlements.

This adds a layer of policy protection to such areas in addition to that which the general countryside policy applies in Policy S7. Criterion a. of Policy S7 serves to protect areas of countryside and avoid adverse impacts on the rural, woodland, riparian or coastal character, the intrinsic character of the landscape.

The objectives and intended outcomes of Policy S7 and S6 are indivisible, and we consider, as a matter of principle, Policy S6 is not necessary.

Turning now to the Eastleigh Borough Settlement Gap Study, Area A concerns Bursledon Southampton, Netley, and Hamble. It is evident that there are two gaps in this location, firstly that which contains the eastern expansion of Southampton that could cause coalescence with Netley and Bursledon (area "h" in Policy S7) and, secondly, that between Hamble-le-Rice and Netley and Bursledon (area "i"). In view of the function of the former, the latter should be considered as less strategic in its nature.

With reference to Figure 1 / Drawing 265-UW-P-005, one can see that the morphology of these settlements is heavily influenced and contained by the various area of woodland. Equally the landscape is particularly fragmented with small enclaves of existing residential development and community infrastructure, for example Hampshire Constabulary's premises, Hamble School and associated sports complex, and commercial development to the north of Hound Lane and housing fronting Hamble Lane.

As the Eastleigh Borough Settlement Gap Study acknowledges, much of the central area of the Gap is of poor landscape quality. It follows that the character of the countryside in this part of the gap is not of any particular intrinsic value and does not warrant protection for this reason.

The Study suggests, nevertheless, that the central gap delivers an overall sense of openness and separation between the identified settlement edges *"particularly when driving by car"*.

Whilst in plan form the central area does suggest separation between settlements, the actual experience is very different. It is an unavoidable fact that the presence of existing development diminishes that sense of separation, save for one important location.

South of Burlesdon and north of the Hamble Lane, Hound Road roundabout, the landscape is open with readily available views across it both west and east and of the existing urban area to the north. It is in this location where the greatest if not only genuine sense of openness occurs. This extends for some 750m along Hamble Road. Figure 1 / Drawing 265-UW-P-005 refers.

To the south of the Hamble Lane, Hound Road roundabout, the presence and extent of existing development materially changes the perception of a gap function and the sense of openness is dramatically reduced. The view south from the roundabout is open only to the extent of a single field looking south west. This view is foreshortened by intervening hedgerows that limit a wider appreciation across this landscape and which screen views towards the edge of Netley.

Residential uses continue on the eastern side of Hamble Road as far as the rail bridge whilst on its western side there are only occasional glimpsed views through the substantial hedgerow that screens the agricultural fields beyond. Unlike ones experience of travelling north along Hamble Lane, to the north of the roundabout, there are therefore no open views or panoramas to be experienced along this length of Hamble Road and consequently no real appreciation of a gap.

Save for a glimpsed view from the apex of the rail bridge looking north west there is little sense of the undeveloped landscape between Hamble Lane and Netley, and the presence of houses and the school playing fields to the west heavily dominate one's experience along this section of the road.

Given the low lying, flat nature of this landscape, boundary hedgerows and linear vegetated features such as the rail line contribute significantly to the filtering and screening of views and to one's sense and experience of a broader gap often being foreshortened. Indeed, new strategic planting within this landscape would further contribute to one's experience of gap by further enclosing views and by limiting ones perception of existing development in views across the area.

To the south of the railway line, the experience of separation along Hamble Road exists only for a short distance of 350m north of the residential properties that front Hamble Lane on its eastern side and the railway line. At this location, heavily vegetated roadside verges prevent any wider visual appreciation of a gap. The gap study acknowledges that vegetation along the rail line provides a strong landscape barrier to the parcels of land to the south.

Because of the layering of vegetation within the site, users of the public right of way have no sense that they are part of a notional wider area of separation. Certainly, PROW 121/5/1 is not part of any circular route through undeveloped countryside that would give a greater sense of openness.



For these reasons sensitive development could be accommodated on the land north of the railway line (Parcel 54) without leading to actual or perceived coalescence and the integrity of the gap between Hamble and Bursledon will be maintained.

Moreover, as indicated on Figure 1 /Drawing 265-UW-P-005 well planned development within Parcel 54 could significantly contribute to structural woodland cover and therefore the biodiversity of the area. Indeed, planting as indicated would provide habitat linkage between woodland to the north and to the south of the site thereby promoting wildlife connectivity. It would also screen housing on the edge of Netley reducing one's perception of a settlement edge.

Whilst development and associated woodland planting would inevitably physically reduce the extents of the undeveloped land between Hamble Lane and Netley it could readily be designed such that it would retain 'a gap,' and through strategic planting and open space provision it could both enhance the character of the countryside and reinforce the separate identity of adjoining settlements.

This coupled with the site's location close to existing local facilities, and its ability to enhance Hamble Rail Station, point to Parcel 54 enabling truly sustainable development as required by both local and national planning policy.

Accordingly, we object to Parcel 54 being included within this Settlement Gap.

Without prejudice to the above, the Settlement Gap policy should not be interpreted as an inviolable designation in the longer term and its boundaries should not be treated as immutable. It is important to regularly review the boundary of settlement gaps to ensure that they are as up to date as possible and do not restrict greenfield development that has been identified to be the most appropriate for development in future Local Plans.

Put simply, the identification of land presently defined within a settlement gap in this version of the Local Plan should not be prohibited from meeting future growth in the plan area and to support local communities; in the future the character of individual localities must be allowed to change over time and cannot be preserved in aspic.

Accordingly in the event Policy S6 is retained, the following wording should be included in the supporting text:

*"The Council will review the extent of each Settlement Gap when preparing a Local Plan to ensure that land otherwise suitable for development and which can be developed without significantly affecting the integrity of the gap can be allocated for development where necessary".*

Such text would ensure that the Local Plan is positively prepared and justified in accordance with paragraph 35 of the NPPF.

I look forward to hearing from you. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Coventry  
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Figure 1 - Drawing 265-UW-P-005







Aerial photograph based on Google Earth Imagery



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client  
Hallam Land Management Ltd  
project  
Hamble

drawing title  
Strategic Landscape Evaluation

drawing status  
FOR PLANNING

drawn by	checked by	date
NJE	NJE	21 Jul 21

scale	paper size
NTS	A3

job/dwg no.	rev
FIGURE 1 (295-UW-P-005)	-

- 1 Area characterised by woodland belts wrapping around the edge of settlements
- 2 Landscape is particularly fragmented with small enclaves of existing residential development and community infrastructure,
- 3 Circa 750m along Hamble Lane North along which views across the landscape north, east and west are possible- gap between settlements is visible and perceptible- i.e. experienced
- 4 Circa 350m along Hamble Lane South along which views across the landscape east and west are partially possible (filtered by existing vegetation)- limited perceptible gap between settlements- i.e. experienced

- 5 Current vie across parcel 54 possible due to slight elevation of rail crossing. Planting to the south eastern corner of parcel 54 would quickly provide screening.
- 6 Limited visibility from Hamble Lane west towards Netley due to robust existing roadside vegetation
- 7 Potential development within Parcel 54 could deliver strategic open space and woodland planting that would maintain a physical gap to Netley (to the west), and which would link up existing woodland to the north and to the south

— Notable urban edge/ development    - - - Potential development  
↔ Existing woodland belts    ↔ Potential strategic woodland