

# HART LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## URBAN CHARACTERISATION AND DENSITY STUDY

### Contents

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Purpose of the Study
- 1.2 Policy background
- 1.3 Study area
- 1.4 Methodology
- 1.5 Mapping
- 1.6 Other initiatives and community engagement

#### **2 Landscape Character Assessment**

- 2.1 Setting of the Study Area
- 2.2 Landscape Character Assessment
- 2.3 Other designations

#### **3 Fleet (including Elvetham Heath) and Church Crookham**

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Elvetham Heath and Ancells Road
- 3.3 Fleet
  - 3.3.1 Fleet Town Centre
  - 3.3.2 Pondtail
  - 3.3.3 South Fleet
  - 3.3.4 West Fleet
- 3.4 Church Crookham
  - 3.4.1 Church Crookham Estates
  - 3.4.2 Gally Hill Road
  - 3.4.3 Queen Elizabeth Barracks
  - 3.4.4 Sandy Lane Triangle
  - 3.4.5 Zebon Copse

#### **4 Odiham**

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 East and South Odiham
- 4.3 West Odiham

## **5 Hook**

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 North Hook
- 5.3 East Hook
- 5.4 Hook – Historic Core
- 5.5 Griffon Road Estate
- 5.6 South Hook
- 5.7 West Hook

## **6 Hartley Wintney**

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Hartley Wintney North
- 6.3 Hartley Wintney South

## **7 Blackwater**

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Blackwater North (Darby Green, Frogmore and Blackwater)
- 7.3 Blackwater South (Hawley)

## **8 Yateley**

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 West Yateley
- 8.3 East Yateley
- 8.4 South Yateley

## **9 Planning policy**

- 9.1 National policy
- 9.2 Regional policy
- 9.3 Local policy

## **10 Summary**

## **11 Policy recommendations**

## **MAPPING**

**1 x Map of Hart DC area** showing the six principal settlements

**1 x Map for each of the six principal settlements** showing Settlement Boundary, Neighbourhood Areas, and designated Conservation Areas

**1 x Map of each Settlement Area (Legibility and Movement)** showing the following (not all headings will be relevant):

- Public transport links/accessibility
- Walking distance from station
- The hierarchy of streets – primary and secondary routes
- Pedestrian access/barriers to movement
- Local shopping centres
- Community focal point
- Focal points and focal buildings
- Key gateways
- Key views

**1 x Map of each Neighbourhood Area (Spatial and Architectural Analysis)** showing the following Character Areas (not all headings will be relevant):

- Open spaces (parks, school playing fields, cemeteries)
- Educational and community uses
- Commercial uses – retail
- Commercial uses – industrial/offices
- Victorian/Edwardian residential development
- Inter-War residential development
- Post-War residential development (will be additionally annotated to show individual estates where this is helpful)
- Mixed development (in terms of age and, or, uses)
- Opportunity sites (public realm improvements, new or redeveloped buildings, derelict sites)

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

This Urban Characterisation and Density Study (UCDS) for the six main settlements in Hart District has been prepared by The Conservation Studio on behalf of Hart District Council. It will be used to guide decisions about the future location, form, and type of development within the District, and will also be used to inform the Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF), which will replace the Adopted Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006.

The key objectives of the Study are:

- To identify, analyse and describe in a systematic way the form and character of each main settlement and the sub-areas within it;
- To provide a legible analysis of the streets and the spaces within each settlement;
- To note the mixes of uses and activities;
- To analysis the residential density ranges across each settlement;
- To analyse the residential form, character and layout, including representative plot characteristics;
- To map public transport accessibility and key pedestrian corridors.

The Study will assist the District Council in the determination of applications for change within the principal settlements, and will also provide an evidence base to support new development plan policies relating to density, local distinctiveness and urban character. Additionally, the Study will be used to identify areas where regeneration or access improvements are needed.

## **1.2 Policy background**

The Hart LDF Core Strategy will need to address issues related to design and be in generally conformity with national and regional planning guidance. The overarching national planning guidance PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) states that good design should ensure attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places. It is a key element in achieving sustainable development.

The South East Plan outlines five key 'pillars' which underpin the notion of urban renaissance in all settlements from large cities to small market towns. One of these pillars is 'achieving design excellence', where pursuing creative solutions to respect the character and charm of our unique and historic settlements, and by working to improve the existing urban fabric. In response to this, a design-led approach to new development is needed so that it complements and supports the area around it, and results in varied, attractive, safe and accessible towns, suburbs and villages where people and businesses want to be.

The South East Plan also states that there is a need for a positive and planned approach to intensification, with clear guidance set out in LDFs based upon neighbourhood assessments of character and capacity. This work should be carried out with the full involvement of the local community and key service providers. The

production of this study is therefore a vital part of how Hart will address this through the LDF.

### 1.3 Study area

The Study area encompasses the six major settlements of Hart District:

- Fleet, including Elvetham Heath, Ancells Road, and Church Crookham
- Odiham
- Hook
- Hartley Wintney
- Blackwater
- Yateley

The Study area for each of these settlements is defined by the settlement policy boundary as delineated in the Adopted Hart Local Plan, excluding any conservation areas which are covered by separate Conservation Area Character Appraisals.

### 1.4 Methodology

The Study methodology has been drawn up as set out in the Council's 'Consultants Brief', dated May 2009, and as additionally specified in the Council's 'Urban Characterisation and Density Study: Methodology', provided at the Inception Meeting in August 2009. To summarise, three stages of work were agreed:

- Data gathering, including survey work and mapping;
- Preparation of UCDS text and illustrations;
- Preparation of policy recommendations and design guidance.

Each of the six settlements has been divided into **Neighbourhood Areas** according to location and overall character. Within each of the Neighbourhood Areas, individual **Character Areas** have been identified and mapped according to historical development, activities, layout and architectural form. As far as possible, the development within each Character Area has been dated.

Each Character Area also has been given a **Sensitivity to Change** score (High, Medium or Low).

- **'High'** Character Areas include, for instance, the high quality townscape to the immediate south of Fleet Road in Fleet, and in the northern part of the Pondtail area of Fleet; in these areas, there will be a presumption against new development except of the highest possible quality;
- **'Medium'** Character Areas, such as the Aldershot Road area of Church Crookham, where the loss of existing buildings and replacement new development to an appropriate scale and detail might be acceptable;
- **'Low'** Character Areas, where redevelopment might be positively encouraged, subject to the usual planning constraints.

The density of residential development has been calculated by measuring a hectare and counting the number of buildings, where there is a typical urban form. This does not therefore differentiate between houses and flats, but these differences are identified in the text which accompanies the description of each Character Area. Typical urban form is recorded within the descriptions for each Sub-Area using graphical techniques.

In addition, outline Design Guidance for each Character Area has been provided. The overall aim of this Guidance is to provide protection to the features of importance within each Character Area and to ensure that new development, where it does take place, is in keeping with the area. The Guidance is by no means prescriptive and further, more detailed policies may emerge in the future.

## 1.5 Mapping

The following maps have been provided:

- A **Principal Settlements Map** of Hart District showing the six principal settlements
- A **Settlement Map (Existing Designations)** for each of the six principal settlements showing the Settlement Boundary, Neighbourhood Areas and designated Conservation Areas
- A **Settlement Legibility and Movement Map** for each of the six principal settlements, showing the following:
  - Public transport links/accessibility
  - The hierarchy of streets – primary and secondary routes
  - Pedestrian access/barriers to movement
  - Local shopping centres
  - Community focal point
  - Focal points and focal buildings
  - Key gateways
  - Key views
- **Neighbourhood Area Maps** showing the following Character Areas (not all headings will be relevant to every Neighbourhood):
  - Open spaces (parks, school playing fields, cemeteries)
  - Educational and community uses
  - Commercial uses – retail
  - Commercial uses – industrial/offices
  - Victorian/Edwardian residential development
  - Inter-War residential development
  - Post-War residential development (will be additionally annotated to show individual estates where this is helpful)
  - Mixed development (in terms of age and uses)

- Opportunity sites (public realm improvements, new or redeveloped buildings, vacant or derelict sites)
- In addition, for the more historic Town Centre Neighbourhood Areas (Fleet and Hook) which are not designated conservation areas, a more detailed **Town Centre Townscape Analysis Map** has been provided showing:
  - Listed buildings
  - Locally listed buildings
  - 'Positive' unlisted buildings
  - Opportunity sites

## 1.6 Other initiatives and community engagement

Running parallel to the UCDS was more detailed work on Fleet Town Centre which was being prepared by consultants for the 'Fleet Vision' initiative. Joint meetings and survey visits were held between officers and the respective consultants including presentations to the Fleet Town Centre Working Party in August 2009 and to District councillors in October 2009.

Engagement with the local community was achieved firstly, through the presentations detailed above, but also through three Stakeholders' Workshops which were held as follows:

- |                                    |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| ● Fleet and Church Crookham        | 30 September 2009 |
| ● Odiham, Hook and Hartley Wintney | 28 October 2009   |
| ● Blackwater and Yateley           | 19 November 2009  |

Finally, the draft UCDS will be subject to a full public consultation exercise for six weeks starting on 1 February 2010, after which any necessary amendments will be made to the documents.

## **2 THE LANDSCAPE SETTING**

### **2.1 Setting of the Study Area**

Hart District lies in north east Hampshire and contains a high proportion of attractive rural countryside. This landscape is defined by the sandy heaths and forests around Fleet, Hartley Wintney and Yateley, areas of more mixed landscapes of farmland, woodland and parkland, which lie mainly in the centre of the District around Hook, and the rolling chalk downland associated with Odiham and Crondall to the south.

Several meandering river valleys cut across the central part of Hart, including the Whitewater and Hart. The Blackwater River valley forms the historic county boundary between Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey. This provides a high quality setting to the six main settlements, which is reinforced by the additional protection afforded by the designations set out in paragraph 2.3 (Other Designations) below. Each of the six main settlements is enclosed by a Settlement Boundary which also defines the area of study for this document.

### **2.2 Landscape Character Assessment**

Hart District Council's *Landscape Character Assessment* was prepared by Scott Wilson Resource Consultants in 1997. As with Urban Characterisation, Landscape Characterisation makes a valuable contribution to the formulation of planning policies, to the allocation of land for development, and to development control procedures.

The Assessment describes fifteen Character Areas as follows:

- Areas of chalk landscape (Hart Downs);
- The main river valleys (Blackwater, Whitewater and Hart);
- The main areas of forest and heath (Bramshill, Hazeley, Bartley, Tweseldown and Minley);
- The more mixed landscapes of farmland, woodland and parkland (Dogmersfield, Wellington, Firgrove, Redlands, West Green, Winchfield and Tylney).

The Assessment excludes the more built-up urban areas of Fleet, Yateley, Blackwater, Hartley Wintney and Hook, although Odiham is included in the 'Hart Downs' Character Area.

The quality of each Character Area (Category A, B or C) is assessed according to a set of criteria drawn up by the then Countryside Commission and Hampshire County Council. Very little of the landscape falls within Category C, the poorest quality, although the Assessment points out that even in Category C, the landscape is generally of reasonable quality.

Later in this document, the landscape setting for each of the five main settlements is considered in more detail in the specific chapter which deals with each settlement.

### **2.3 Other designations**

In addition to the statutorily and locally listed buildings, Hart District retains a high number of other designations as set out in the Local Plan and shown on the Proposals Maps. These include 31 designated conservation areas; fifteen Sites of Special Scientific Interest; one National Nature Reserve; the proposed Thames Basin Special Protection Area; ten Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and eight Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. A further fifteen sites are noted as being of local significance. There are also over 210 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS) which are identified in the Local Plan but are not mapped – more information can be obtained from Hampshire County Council.