

Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2037

Response by Crookham Village Parish Council

The plan describes at great length how essential it is to retain all the present features of their lovely parish and makes it very clear that the last thing they want is to share the pain felt by other parishes over many decades when their green fields were, and are still being, covered in new housing developments. Some might think this selfish, especially since Winchfield has both a motorway and a railway station.

The repeated claim to be the 'green lung of Hart' seems less than plausible when its area of only 3.3% of Hart is taken into account.

The vision statement states, yet again, how attractive Winchfield is already, but makes no mention of the future.

The aspiration only to develop brownfield sites is not underpinned by identification of any such sites in the parish.

The policies, taken together, are attempting to erect a barrier against any noticeable contribution to the national housing shortage.

Housing development in Hart for the last few decades has largely resulted from opportunistic developer-driven applications that have succeeded only at appeal and have generated uncoordinated, creeping urban sprawl consisting of soulless dormitory estates with miserable facilities and poor transport options. Meanwhile, Winchfield, traversed by a motorway and with its own railway station, has been spared any serious development for the whole of this time.

Hart desperately needs a long-term strategic development plan to build a community-generating new settlement in a location with good transport links and room to expand in an orderly fashion over decades to come. Winchfield must surely be high on the list of possible locations and their neighbourhood plan should reflect that reality, not least because it seeks to cover a period well beyond that of the current Hart Local Plan.

The plan as proposed should not be made because its policies are mostly designed to thwart future housing development.