

## **Opening Statement**

The examination of the Gosport Borough Local Plan provides a welcome opportunity to test the culmination of several years' work. The Local Plan sets out the spatial vision for the future development of the Borough, planning both to meet the needs of today and to contribute to a vibrant and sustainable future.

Gosport is an urban borough in a coastal location and as such planning for its future provides a number of challenges. The Borough is located on a peninsula with the Solent on one side and Portsmouth Harbour on the other. In addition to Gosport, the other main settlement within the Borough is Lee-on-the-Solent, which is separated from Gosport by the Alver Valley which is being established as a Country Park.

The urban nature of the peninsula means there is a very limited land supply for future development in the Borough, resulting in a heavy reliance on the delivery of brownfield sites, especially from the release of land by the Ministry of Defence. The release of MoD land for alternative forms of development such as housing has resulted in employment being lost from the Borough creating significant net out commuting and resultant transport issues. A key objective of the local plan is to make the Borough more sustainable through an employment led strategy.

The Borough, however, forms just one part of the wider urban area making up the South Hampshire sub region which includes the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton. The interconnected nature of linkages in terms of transport, housing and employment means that a single local authority should not plan for its future development in isolation.

Consequently, the Council has been meeting the duty to co-operate by working closely with neighbouring authorities through the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) in order to deliver a strategy for the future development of the sub region.

The work of PUSH, together with the views of the local community, has been important in informing and influencing the development of the Local Plan. The Local Plan has been prepared in consultation with the public and stakeholders throughout the process; most notably through the Sustainable Community Strategy, the draft Core Strategy and ultimately the Local Plan itself.

This approach to collaborative working has resulted in the development of the Local Plan which the Borough Council considers meets the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, and which is legally compliant.

The Local Plan has been positively prepared and is based upon a robust assessment of future development and infrastructure needs of the Borough. A thorough analysis of the evidence and issues within the Borough and potential alternative strategies to address them were considered in the formulation of the Local Plan. The Local Plan has been produced in compliance with the Local Development Scheme and the Statement of Community Involvement. It has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Accordingly, the Council considers that the submitted Gosport Borough Local Plan is sound and welcomes the opportunity to have it examined.