
From: Andrew Mair [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 November 2021 12:00
To: PlanningPolicyConsultation
Cc:
Subject: Local Plan 2038 Consultation Response

Good morning

Thank you for the opportunity to review and make comment on the Gosport Local Plan 2038.

Below are my current thoughts that I hope are of some interest. Please note that I am happy for all communication to be via email to save money and our resources.

Kind regards

Andrew Mair
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1.2

With regard to the previous Local Plan and any SPDs, how many things have been successfully achieved and what were the major things that were not achieved or plans subsequently changed? Knowing this will help readers make better informed assessment of the Council's ability to deliver against Plans of this nature that will directly impact our town for generations to come.

How many houses were delivered as part of the last Plan and was it on target? If not, how can we have confidence that this Plan is achievable?

Of note is that Gosport Borough represents 0.7% of the Hampshire land area (including Portsmouth and Southampton) but has 4.7% of the total population, so Gosport should receive much more support from HCC. Making positive changes to Gosport's future will require much more than another Plan of aspirations that is sadly likely to fail in delivery based on historical performance.

Much of the supporting analysis seems to be looking too far back, which can make things appear better and support a particular narrative. Try going back 10 years to see what has been happening? For example, since 2011 only 130 dwellings a year, what will actually change this trajectory, it has to be more than a Plan?

I am not a negative person, and am confident that with the right people and will the re-generation of Gosport is possible. I added some semi-random thoughts at the end of my email.

1.6

There was no mention in the document of the Gosport Ambassadors Scheme that was supposed to be helping shape Gosport's future and working directly with the people and organisations that can help realise the ambitions of Gosport. Why is this?

1.6

Is there an assessment of how many businesses have started and how many have closed since the last Local Plan and what are the forecasts for this churn?

1.7

Fareham is going to continue to choke Gosport, intentionally or not, as they develop more and more properties along the main routes into Gosport. And especially so on the new roads. Residents repeatedly voiced their concerns about the new Newgate Lane and that it was simply enabling the development of more houses, and ultimately worsen traffic into and out of Gosport, as well as impacting Gosport's infrastructure and local community services. The much heralded Stubbington By-Pass is going to do the same, and make more land far easier for developers to build on. No matter how hard the Councillors and MP might say they are against any plans, they are eventually overruled by the developers with their appeals, and Gosport residents suffer.

Where are the true visionary leaders of Gosport, people that will actually inspire a new generation and take bold action that changes lives and communities? This is by its nature a very "administrative plan" that will be approved. Probably never read or really understood by the overwhelming majority of Gosport Residents, and as such Gosport will likely continue on its decades long course of managed decline by Councillors and Planning Officers that are not leading while so often blaming others. Half-hearted attempts at effecting change and under-funded initiatives, with repeated failed consultations, create an ever-increasing distrust of politicians and not what is needed.

1.7

Perhaps Gosport could even become the first town to introduce autonomous vehicles and encourage people to give up their cars and live in a unique, interesting and environmentally friendly town that people will really want to come to.

1.7

Traffic congestion has been here for decades and the local and County Council has repeatedly failed to resolve it properly. It needs a bold and committed Council to take decisive action. One must put in the infrastructure to attract new business and allow the town to re-generate. With the very public impact of climate change there is now an opportunity to do this.

1.7

There is not enough focus on public transport. 3,500 new homes will bring in another 3,850 cars (1.1 per household) - causing even more traffic congestion in and out of Gosport. Gosport is higher than the national average in using a car/van to travel - up in 30 years from 49.2% to 59.5%.

The Eclipse Bus Route does not run on a disused and now built-on railway line from Fareham Railway all the way to Gosport Town & Ferry. If it did, things may be easier. Re-instate that route by re-purchasing houses and land and installing autonomous vehicles on the route. When the last study was done (and millions wasted) things were very different - legislation, environment, technology and the population. By stopping where it does it is not helping the

commuters much, and certainly not removing cars. Facilitating a move towards public transport requires a genuinely superb bus service that residents will be happy and proud to use.

The Eclipse, once very publicly hailed as being a wonderful service every 6-minutes is now less than every 24 minutes, and managed by a totally profit-oriented company that does not appear to understand how to build a new customer base and show how an excellent public transport could actually be good for everyone. With current fares it is far cheaper to drive. Why not have "annual bus passes" at a price that will actually get people out of their cars?

Another example is the removal of a very convenient bus stop at Brockhurst Gate now making it nearly a 1 km walk through an area that may be frightening for the elderly, disabled and vulnerable. Has anyone checked what it means to a frail, elderly or disabled person to be 800 or even 400 metres from a bus service? There seems to be a contradiction between the bus stop distances in 5.17.3 at 400m maximum for a normal person but 400m for disabled and elderly - surely for those less able it would be 200m, 100m or less?

The constantly reducing bus services are great for the bus company, but not so great for residents - a common theme. Many companies will be using the pandemic as an excuse for delivering worsening services. Gosport could actually use the opportunity instead to build better services that more people will use.

1.8

This Plan must look at a holistic future for Gosport. The Plan seems to be more like an administrative document rather than something that will actually effect change that matches the "vision" of what residents really want for their town.

1.8

Can we encourage working from one's home/town with community broadband and offer better "serviced hubs" in the High Street perhaps.

1.8

More houses will not generate jobs - and Gosport will continue to be a cheaper place to buy and then commute out of. Incentivise companies to set up and employ local labour.

1.8

How about a requirement that all new dwellings must have a full fibre broadband right into the property?

1.8

Harbour and Daedalus is unlikely to ever deliver 3,500 new homes alone based on previous experience. So unless Sultan is released the plan is unachievable based and must be rejected as it stands.

1.9

The words "should" are not good enough in such a key document - there needs to be many more "musts" if this is something that is to have any teeth when a developer elects to do something that is not in alignment, and subsequently makes appeals when plans are rejected.

1.9

· Do the impending changes due to Governments Planning for the Future put this plan in jeopardy:

- o A new standard method for determining housing figures for each local authority;
- o A streamlined local plan system with an emphasis on zoning and design codes which will be prepared in 30 months and sanctions on those local authorities that do not meet this timetable;
- o Removal of the Duty to Cooperate between local authorities in plan making (a real issue because of Fareham);
- o Stream lined development management processes.

1.9

It looks like the term "Harbour" now needs to change to "Harbourside & Town" following the Ward Boundary changes.

2.2

What plans or incentives are in place for solar, wind , tidal, geo-thermal power for the benefit of communities?

2.3

There should be a blanket immovable policy that no currently green area must never be lost to development, as that would focus the minds of developers and Councillors to properly use all the brownfield sites more effectively.

2.4

Gosport is more than twice as densely populated as Fareham and has a worse public transport system. Gosport Borough is the 2nd most deprived area in HCC area, and in the lowest 10% for the entire country. We seem to have many examples of "have" and "have-nots" in Gosport, and it is so often the "have's" that set the agenda and the unfortunate "have-nots" just have to accept what is decided, live with the consequence and get blamed when things are not perfect for the "have's". Now is the opportunity for some genuine "levelling up" and to "build back better" with these Plans that will clearly affect the future of generations. We need more substantial action to resolve this situation. For example, The Town has a high number of 16-29 year olds, but what facilities are going to be created for them?

· 7

The Plan states that Gilkicker development is being implemented - is this the case? The Plan seems to be out of date with regards Addenbrooke House and Anglesey Lodge. Will the next version accurately reflect the current status when published and approved?

2.8

The increasing Flood Risks over the coming years are going to be massive, and appear to impact Gosport considerably. There is a risk that profit-oriented absentee developers will manage this aspect as badly as they have the cladding and fire safety debacle. What protection will residents have that when GBC approves development(s) that residents they will not eventually be left holding the liability as with re-cladding?

Any affordable homes or shared ownership developments in current and future flood risk areas must not be allowed, as the residents will again be left with massive liabilities that may not be totally exposed at the time of sale, as they will be picking up the liability and not the freeholder.

The Plan seems to state that that there are apparently no alternative areas to put houses so the risks "must" simply be accepted. Is this really the only solution? Might one instead say - sorry it is just not possible to add these extra houses

in this over-populated and deprived area? Or perhaps wait until the MoD make a decision in HMS Sultan as then more than enough land will be available?

2.9

When deciding what types of homes to build and where - don't place drug dealers, their customers, criminals and young families in tower blocks that were never designed for them.

2.9

Was our life expectancy figures influenced by the War Memorial Deaths scandal at all, and does the lack of a local hospital and GPs make a difference? If so, might there need to be more emphasis on health care facilities before adding another 3,500 houses (~7,800 people).

3.1

If creating any new residential areas managed by Housing Associations, how will GBC ensure that they do not degenerate into no-go areas with terrible levels of ASB and the elderly and vulnerable too afraid to leave their homes while the HA's don't take responsibility or apply sufficient resources to help tackle the problems pro-actively?

3.1

Affordable homes are not Social Housing, and GBC is planning to build only minimal new Social Houses, relying on the private sector to "look after" residents with ever-increasing Service Charges and other costs. Building 34 council houses is not enough - why not build 500 just like the rich Housing Associations are wanting to doing, and provide a far better and more local service? Noting that HA's would not be developing more and more properties unless there was a profit (surplus as they prefer to call it) to be made?

3.4

Gosport Bus Station is scheduled to provide another 240 houses (P45) to meet the 3,500 required. The previously approved SPD states 95 (114 dph). Is this approved level now superseded and "sold to developers" before a new Local Plan has even been approved? Later the Plan states the quantity is 150 - 240 (P155) what is it? Noting that 240 dwellings on the 0.6 ha site would be a dph of 400, far high than other developments. Is this correct? Has anyone looked at what a block of 240 flats on top of retail, offices and a hotel will be doing to Gosport's character for the next Century? It is very easy for the Planning Officers & Councillors to say that as yet "no plans have been submitted" but the Council's auction ended on the 11th November 2021, and one must assume that someone in GBC has been actively talking to the potential developers of a very, very large building that will re-shape Gosport Town Centre and Harbourside.

I am not against the development, or having an iconic building. I welcome it. But Gosport Council does not have a very good record on actually delivering major projects in teh Town, with residents often not getting what was "promised", especially when everything is done behind closed doors (allegedly for commercial reasons). This development from design to maintenance must be managed professionally and transparently as it will be a critically important part of the "Gateway to Gosport". My suspicion is that GBC will be swayed by developers, who are experts at getting what is best for themselves, and GBC will be looking at short-term money, and not genuinely listening to their residents. There must be a very public debate and vote on the design of any iconic building - as it will define Gosport for a hundred years or more.

3.4

Why is the Visitors Centre simply an aspiration - it must be non-negotiable component of the Bus Station development right on the route from the ferry to the High Street if this really is to be the Gateway to Gosport.

3.4

The Bus Station indicative plans indicate a very limited number of parking spaces (noting that one element of the proposal is a potential hotel). Where are all the other cars for the 240 dwellings going to park, and where are the shoppers going to park. Gunwharf is successful because visitors know they can park. Is it to be underground in a major flood risk zone, or is GBC expecting them to walk from Walpole Park?

3.4

What new play areas, sport pitches, allotments and youth centres will be available to the 1,000+ new dwellings in the Town? Or will GBC simply look at how much short-term money they will get as compensation for not delivering these things? In 2001 there were 76,415 residents and by 2020 a projected 85,168 - an 11.5% increase. How many new GPs, Dentists, Schools, Care Homes Community Centres. Youth Centres are planned and likely to be conveniently forgotten by the developers when they could instead build more houses and give some one-off money to the Council's coffers?

Building new high quality and presumably expensive flats (which will entice developers to buy and build) does not provide homes for the circa 975 people on the Council waiting list. Affordable homes are not social houses. Why not learn from the two large towers built in 60's and make the next block on the bus station social housing for those that are above a certain age, in work or retired and on tenancies that show they can behave within, and support, their community?

It's great to create new things, but the on-going maintenance is absolutely critical. As three very simple examples, look at the Millennium Timespace, with a broken glass canopy for years and non-operational electric lights. The adult exercise equipment in Walpole Park that breaks and then the functional parts simply taken away with no repairs. The seats along the High Street with broken backs that are not repaired. This lack of maintenance quickly makes the town look as if "nobody really cares".

3.4

Landlords of empty shops must be forced to make them look presentable and not have old, tatty OSB panels left in place. It simply brings the tone of the town, and discourages future investment. The Council will simply say that it is up to the owners and there is nothing they can do. But imagine an owner applying for planning permission to actually board up a shop that will make the place look worse. Gosport should pro-actively tackle these landlords and at least create the image of a dynamic new place that is going somewhere. If the owner does not comply, then get the work done and charge them.

3.5

One assumes that the loss of the Mumby Road Lorry Park is not going to have an impact on lorry drivers, local businesses, and has an alternative been identified and already in place?

3.5

The Mumby Road Key Pedestrian Route is quite uninspiring and a deterrent to movement of visitors and residents between what should be key destinations and experiences. There needs to be much better links with bus, road train, autonomous vehicle, cycles and scooters.

5.10

The attainment of pupils in Gosport is below the National and Hampshire average. 19% with NVQ4+ compared to 39% across the whole of England. Why is this, and who really cares and is pro-actively doing something about it within the Local Plan? Crime in Gosport is worse than the National Average - why is this? Noting that the number of recorded crimes is not the number of reported crimes and certainly nothing like the number of crimes observed and committed. The Police choose what to "record" so the figures look as good as they can.

5.2

Where are the plans for Social Housing, and why does GBC not have a plan to replace the homes that have been sold over the years? How many are currently on the "waiting list" and when will they be accommodated within the Plan?

5.8

The employment numbers are not as up to date as they would need to be (2001 and 2011) in order to make informed decisions. Can the plan include 2021 ONS data? With such a low jobs density (0.5), unless the transport links are resolved we will never get the investment to effect real change on jobs.

Reading and understanding the implications of this 427-page document is practically impossible for most people. We have to trust our Public Officers and elected Councillors. But maybe the public could provide say twenty "Golden Rules" that the Council/Developer must not break that will actually shape the future of Gosport in ways that they want. I have not considered what these might be or how one might select them, but perhaps things like:

- o No currently green area will be lost to development.
- o Fix the transport issues in and out of the town, that include extra capacity, before building any more houses.
- o Ensure that there is an active bus stop with a bus at least every 20 minutes within 100 metres from any new dwelling.
- o Build Council (Social) Houses before starting any "Affordable Homes".
- o Replace any Council House that is sold under Right to Buy with two new Council Houses within two years.
- o All cycle lanes must connect together, be safe for children and the vulnerable, illuminated and have CCTV coverage.
- o Cycle theft will not be tolerated in the Town.
- o Ensure that there are adequate doctors, dentists, schools, youth & community facilities before any new houses are built.
- o Do not place unsuitable residents in high-rise tower blocks.
- o No leasehold properties to be sold by developers, no ground rents, and a cap on service charges.
- o Shared ownership properties are acceptable providing each party pays their share of any costs (including service charges), in proportion to their shared ownership percentage - so landlords are jointly liable and cannot increase charges at will.

I appreciate that many of my comments will appear negative, but I am commenting on a proposal that is not something that I can totally support as it stands. There are some great aspects in the Plan, but I thought that I might share some positive ideas:

- o Create a unified, bold and easily understood vision for Gosport that will get the majority of the population behind it. Something they can believe in, and will see change happening in months and years not decades (or never as is often the case). Check with residents to see if the message has actually been heard, understood and supported.
- o Make Gosport the first town to ambitiously introduce autonomous vehicles (such as EasyMile) as the preferred method of transport and actively encourage car-owners to give up their vehicles with financial incentives and

alternatives such as car clubs for occasional out of town trips. Make it a showcase for the country and link with Daedalus Airport that as one of the first Skyports.

- o In the interim set up a genuinely best-in-class Community Bus Company, add more bus routes and times, and make it far, far cheaper than driving a car including an over-50 Bus Pass for less than £100 a year (until the autonomous vehicle are ubiquitous). Make the buses Electric or Hydrogen powered for the climate.

- o Re-purchase the Five Towers in Gosport and restore them to more sheltered style accommodation. Maintain them with local tradespeople with the profits (surpluses) remaining in Gosport.

- o Treble the number of PCSO's and properly enforce all PSPOs so that those that don't respect our communities discover they would be better off somewhere else, or even better - actually help them to become active contributors to the re-generation of the Town. We have to invest to effect change.

- o Turn Browndown into a well-managed, properly resourced and safe stepping-stone for those that want to get off drugs, the streets or debt. Learning from other such schemes that are successful. Use local volunteers as a key additional labour force to help turn the site into a place to be proud of.

- o Make the Tue/Sat Market free for traders for at least two years, with free parking in Walpole Park Car Park on those days. Bring people back to the heart of the town, accepting that it will not be the "old town", but something better.

- o Create larger and easy to use cycle routes that actually link up all around the town that are safe to use and have a priority over cars. Encourage the use of e-bikes and e-scooters on these safe routes rather than making them illegal.

- o Follow Professor Whitty's advice and build a medical training facility in Gosport - good for the NHS, good for residents, good for employment and good for our grandchildren - use some of HMS Sultan.

- o Do not rely on absentee developers to shape our town for our grandchildren and great grandchildren. Buy up the stores from the many absentee landlords in the High Street and create a new-style of experience for residents combining all the good ideas in the Plan and residential properties. Look at other places that have worked.

- o Shout about all the superb charities and good causes in Gosport, what a wonderful place it is to live, with so many nice kind and generous people that want to help each other.

- o Get people talking across the country - "why on earth would I NOT want to live and work in Gosport?"

- o Create many more "Destinations" and "Experiences" in Gosport that are properly linked by public transport and a "Road Train" that operates all day every day, manned by volunteers and subsidised by advertising and donations.

- o Open up all Council Meetings to the public online so we can all actually witness what is being done on our behalf and by whom. Stop all "behind doors deals" and do not work with organisations that will not be totally open and transparent.

- o Make Gosport a climate friendly Town and encourage new businesses in the sector to set up here.

- o Use all the brownfield sites and build eco-friendly Social Houses to eradicate the homeless waiting lists, don't accept the trends of affordable and shared ownership as provided by Housing Associations and other property developers. They are very likely to be exposed for what they are (a developer's cash cow and national scandal) in the future.

- o Compulsory Purchase land & properties to create a "once in a century" transport route in and out of Gosport (that will be used by the autonomous vehicles eventually).

- o Invest in our grandchildren's future for the next 100 years! 2022 is a Major Milestone for Gosport - don't waste the opportunity and look boldly to the future.