

HDLP Inspector hearings Written Statement – Development Hierarchy

- MIQ Matter 2 - Issue 3

Hearing Wednesday 11 December.

Submitted and to be presented on behalf of **Save Rural Southwater** and to be considered in conjunction with **SRS Consultation response 1187169** and the plan attached to the response showing the growth of Southwater since the mid-1980s.

Plan Strategic Policy 2 - Development Hierarchy.

SRS contends the plan is not “sound” because Strategic Policy 2 in the plan provides that;

“future growth (should) take place in a manner that protects, retains and enhances the rural landscape character and that with this objective expansion of existing settlements must be carefully managed”.

Strategic Policy 2.1 requires development in secondary settlements (e.g. Southwater);

“to be limited in scale to reflect the existing scale and character of the settlement function and form”.

So having clearly set out the relevant policy and the applicable constraints, the plan then totally ignores and fails to apply these by very significantly extending the Southwater BUAB in the plan, and by allocating the productive farmland within this extended BUAB for very large scale housing and associated building/infrastructure development during the plan period and beyond.

The plan puts no defined upper limit on the scale of the expansion which will all take place on rural productive farmland. The plan originally stated “at least 1000” homes but this has now been amended to read “about 1000” homes but whatever the final number this will massively expand and elongate the footprint of Southwater village which is already one of the longest ribbon villages in the South East. It patently and fundamentally does not, as required by the clearly stated policy, ***protect, retain and enhance the rural landscape character”***, in fact it does the exact opposite, and it could not be further from ***“limited in scale to reflect the existing scale and character of the settlement function and form”***. And as for the ***“careful management”*** required to underpin the stated policy objectives, this is glaringly

absent from the very significant scale development proposed for Southwater in the plan.

On no rational basis can the huge expansion of Southwater put forward in the plan be considered "sound". The proposed extension of the Southwater BUAB should be rejected in favour of that included, following due and democratic process, in the recently prepared and made Southwater Neighbourhood plan which included very considered and generous provision for further controlled development which, in very stark contrast to the HDC plan proposal, properly reflects "***the existing scale and character of the settlement function and form***".