

HDLP Inspector hearings Written Statement – Settlement coalescence

- **MIQ Matter 4 - Issue 2 - Q 3**

Hearing Tuesday 17 December (pm).

Submitted and to be presented on behalf of **Save Rural Southwater** and to be considered in conjunction with **SRS Consultation response 1186962 and attached Southwater Neighbourhood plan map**

Plan Strategic Policy 15 - Settlement coalescence

SRS contends that the plan is not sound because the proposed extension of the Southwater BUAB offends SP 15 (preventing settlement coalescence).

Strategic Policy 15.1 provides that a proposal for development between settlements will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal meets a number of criteria, most notably that any such development would not result in significant reduction in ***“the openness and ‘break’ between settlements.”***

The plan proposes, through the huge extension of the Southwater BUAB, to include approximately 300 acres of open farmland and countryside north and west of Southwater within this extended BUAB. Contrary to the clearly stated and unambiguous requirements of Strategic Policy 15.1, extending the village as proposed will result in the settlement impacting on and coalescing with existing settlements at Christ’s Hospital, Tower Hill, Two Mile Ash and Horsham. The land proposed in the plan to be included within the extended BUAB is all that provides the Policy requirement for openness and breaks between these settlements. If it is included for development as proposed that will be the end of any openness or breaks between Southwater and the surrounding settlements.

The proposal for extension of the BUAB is not sound. It flies in the face of the clearly articulated objective of SP15 in the plan and should be rejected in favour of the BUAB extension included, following due and democratic process, in the recently prepared and made Southwater Neighbourhood plan. As with many other aspects of the plan, one has to question why the planners, having sensibly identified and codified key Strategic policies in the Plan, then completely ignore these policies in identifying sites for development.