

## HDLP Inspector hearings Written Statement – HA3 Southwater Strategic Site

- MIQ Matter 9 - Issue 1 – Question 10

Hearing Thursday 16 January.

**Plan Strategic Policy HA3 - Land north and west of Southwater - (SRS Consultation response 1186961).**

Submitted and to be presented on behalf of **Save Rural Southwater** and to be considered in conjunction with **SRS Consultation response 11876961 and attached detailed comments.**

SRS contends that the **plan is not sound** because it conflicts with a number of the key **“Spatial Objectives”** set out in the plan.

Once again, HDC has identified Southwater as a convenient dumping ground for huge scale housing development. The once small rural village has been subjected to 40 plus years of continuous large scale housing development and remains a building site with almost 300 homes already approved but still to be built. The developer, Berkeley Homes which in recent years has slowed build rates and now stopped building, presumably and understandably to avoid oversupply and to protect its profit margins, thereby subjecting the village to even more years of building disruption.

The village footprint has trebled in size since the mid 1980s and with the proposed extension of the village BUAB in the draft plan will have more than quadrupled. The village population has grown correspondingly.

The houses which are being built do not address local housing needs – they are very largely unaffordable for those in the local area and are being marketed by the developers as far afield as mainland China.

The designation of Southwater as a Strategic Site conflicts with the following spatial objectives set out in the plan Page 19 Table1);

**Objective 1-** the plan fails this objective. The overdevelopment of Southwater will not as required **“deliver a thriving community with a strong sense of place”**. Quite the opposite. The proposed elongation or ribboning of the village will inevitably result in multiple centres and the inevitable further fracturing of the village.

**Objective 3** - the plan fails this objective. The overdevelopment of Southwater by transforming almost 300 acres of agricultural land into housing and related development will not as required “**..preserve the unique landscape character and the contribution this makes to the setting of rural villages**’ nor will it “**ensure that new development minimises the impact on the countryside**”. Quite the opposite.

**Objective 4** - the plan fails this objective. The overdevelopment of Southwater will not as required “**safeguard and enhance the environmental quality (of the village) nor will it maintain or enhance ecosystem services, or deliver biodiversity net gain**”. Quite the opposite. It will destroy almost 300 acres of productive farmland and in the process decimate biodiversity and wildlife habitat which will never be replaced.

**Objective 10** - the plan fails this objective. The overdevelopment of Southwater will not as required “**respect the scale**” of the existing village, nor will it “**deliver the requisite range of housing**”. Quite the opposite. It will massively increase the scale of the village, it will deliver homes which will be largely unaffordable and therefore unable to respond to local need/demand and instead will bring more people into the district – a district which is already the most water stressed in the country and has a desperate shortage, on current demand alone, of hospital and medical facilities.

Southwater should not be designated as a Strategic Site in the plan for the reasons set out above and in more detail in pages 17-24 of the SRS attachment filed with its consultation response.