

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

1. List of Parties involved:

- Horsham District Council (HDC)
- Mole Valley District Council (MVDC)

2. Signatories:



Barbara Childs

Director of Place, Horsham District Council



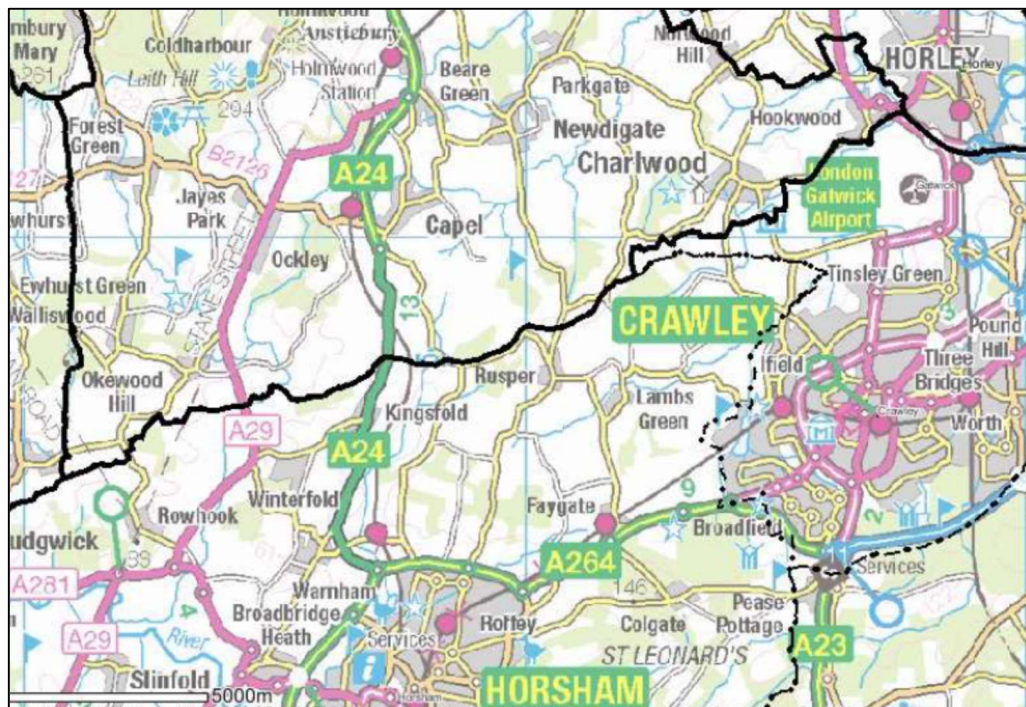
Piers Mason

Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Head of Service (Planning and Environment), Mole Valley District Council

3. Strategic Geography

1. The Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) is between the local authorities of Horsham District Council (HDC) and Mole Valley District Council (MVDC).
2. HDC and MVDC share a common boundary, which also forms part of the boundary between Surrey and West Sussex County Councils. HDC, which is to the south and within West Sussex County Council, includes Horsham town as its largest settlement, which is over four times bigger than the next largest settlement in the district. Like Mole Valley, Horsham District is influenced by Gatwick Airport and has close linkages to Crawley Borough Council, but it also has close linkages to Brighton and the south coast. Mole Valley has two principal settlements, Leatherhead and Dorking, and has two-thirds the population of Horsham district. The principal physical connections lie through transport with the local authorities linked by the A24 (the spine road for both authorities), the A29, and the Mole Valley rail line.
3. Although the two local authorities are within separate Housing Market Areas, it is beneficial to prepare a SOCG to deal with the strategic and locally specific cross boundary issues.
4. Both authorities also lie in separate Functional Economic Market Areas. However, both authorities are located within the Gatwick Diamond sub-region.

5. The map below shows the authorities in relation to each other (i.e. indicated with the black administrative boundaries).



4. Strategic Matters

6. Both parties have identified the following strategic matters as of importance:

Housing Need

Background

7. The whole of Horsham District falls within an area known as the Northern West Sussex Housing Market Area. This area includes the whole of Crawley Borough, and Mid Sussex District. A modest southern portion of the District also falls within the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Housing Market Area. The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40 is at Regulation 19 stage with submission to the Secretary of State expected in June 2024. The standard housing method applies in Horsham District which is currently 917 dwellings per annum.
8. In September 2021, HDC received a Position Statement from Natural England. This explained that it could not be concluded that water abstraction at Hardham, near Pulborough was not having an impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site, and that development must not add to this impact. To therefore be compliant with Habitat Regulations, all new development in Horsham District must at the current time be water neutral. This has resulted in a significant fall in planning permissions since late 2021, and an ongoing constraint on development coming forward in an HRA-compliant manner. Consequently, HDC's proposed Local Plan housing target of 777 dwellings per annum

(annualised average) reflects that that it is unable to meet its own full assessed housing need nor any additional housing needs from other areas including from within the Northern West Sussex HMA.

9. MVDC is in a housing market which includes Elmbridge Borough Council, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Kingston. MVDC is in the final stages of the examination of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-39 and has strived to meet its housing need figure in its Local Plan by (i) allocating town centre sites for housing-led redevelopment; (ii) adopting a policy of gentle densification on brownfield sites; (iii) allocating outmoded office complexes for housing-led regeneration; (iv) de-designating Green Belt for housing; (v) allocating Green Belt sites in and around Hookwood for housing; and (vi) amending village boundaries for housing development. MVDC will therefore meet approximately 75% of its own need, and has a local unmet need of c1,700 dwellings over its plan period 2020-2039.

The parties agree:

10. Each authority has assessed the ability of its area to accommodate housing development. They each consider that they are doing the maximum reasonable to meet the housing needs.
11. HDC considers it should firstly meet its own housing needs, and then the housing needs of its North West Sussex Housing Market Area (in particular Crawley Borough Council's unmet need and the Coastal Sussex HMA) of which the south of Horsham District is a part. Due to the effect of water neutrality on an HRA-compliant housing supply, the Horsham District position is that it is unable to meet its full assessed housing. Consequently, and due also to Horsham District and Mole Valley being in different HMAs, it is considered that it is unlikely for Horsham District to be able to accommodate unmet needs from Mole Valley.
12. Due to the fact that 77% of Mole Valley district is designated as either Green Belt or Surrey Hills National Landscape and both its principal towns are Conservation Areas, MVDC is unable to meet its own local housing need in full and so would not be able to meet any unmet housing need arising from Horsham district.

Gypsy and Traveller need

13. Due mainly to the recent definition of Gypsy or Traveller in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), Horsham District will have a shortfall of 58 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (it has no assessed need for Travelling Showpeople provision). Consequently, it is understood respectively by both signatories that it is unable to assist in meeting any neighbouring authority's Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs.
14. MVDC's draft Local Plan has an identified need of 52 Gypsy and Traveller pitches over its plan period (encompassing both planning and housing definitions of Gypsies and Travellers) which is to be met through allocations and intensification of existing sites, however the margin for manoeuvre is tight. MVDC's stage in the plan-making cycle precludes it from being able to take unmet need. Furthermore, even if MVDC were at an

earlier stage in the plan preparation cycle, it would be unable to accommodate unmet Gypsy and Traveller need from other authorities.

15. Consequently, it is understood respectively by both signatories that neither authority is in a position to assist in meeting the other's Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs.

Gatwick Airport

The parties agree:

16. Land should continue to be safeguarded for a potential future southern runway at Gatwick Airport for the purposes of the current round of plan-making.
17. Any necessary airport-related parking should ideally be located on-airport as the most sustainable location and should be justified by a demonstrable need therefore off-airport parking facilities will be discouraged.
18. Each authority will work collaboratively with Gatwick Airport, the other Gatwick local authorities:
 - understand and respond to the impacts of the current economic crisis; and
 - understand the implications of the proposed Northern Runway Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) on the environment, community and economy, and to respond to the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.
19. They will work with the Gatwick Officers Group and the Gatwick Joint Local Authorities, as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) supporting the Gatwick S106 Legal Agreement, to share expertise on airport related matters including noise, air quality and parking.

Transport

The parties agree:

20. Where development with strategic transport implications is proposed close to the authorities' common administrative boundary, the authorities will work together to ensure that all strategic cross-boundary impacts are fully explored and addressed as far as possible.
21. They will jointly explore opportunities for transport improvements through discussions with Surrey County Council, West Sussex County Council and Crawley Borough Council.
22. Transport modelling undertaken for HDC does not identify any significant adverse junction capacity issues on the A24 north of the Great Daux roundabout arising from the Horsham District Local Plan. The Great Daux junction requires an upgrade, which will form part of the Local Plan mitigation (together with other A24 junction improvements in Horsham District) and will be reflected in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

23. Both parties recognise and support the A24 Corridor Study (Dorking to Great Daux Roundabout) being undertaken by Surrey County Council and West Sussex County Council.

Land West of Ifield Development

Background:

24. The proposed allocation of Land West of Ifield for around 3,000 homes, as set out in policy HA2 of the emerging HDC Local Plan, would not affect Mole Valley district as the development would provide its own educational facilities and there are no identified critical cross-boundary health linkages between MVDC and HDC.

The parties agree:

25. Notwithstanding that the Horsham District Local Plan seeks to allocate c.3,000 homes and no more, any strategic scale development to the west of Crawley which is additional to the 3,000 is likely to require the construction of a full multi-modal transport corridor (for buses, active travel and general motor traffic) from the A264 to A23.

Other matters

26. It is agreed that there are no further strategic cross-boundary matters to be addressed between the parties. HDC notes MVDC observations on specific matters not relating to soundness. Such matters will be dealt with as appropriate through the examination.

5. Governance Arrangements

27. The authorities are committed to working positively together, sharing information and best practice and continuing to procure evidence jointly, where appropriate, throughout the plan preparation phase and beyond. This co-operation and collaboration takes place at senior member, chief executive and senior officer as well as at technical officer level.

28. Joint working will include the following existing governance arrangements:

- Gatwick Diamond Authorities Partnership;
- Gatwick Greenspace Partnership; and
- Gatwick Joint Local Authorities Group and Gatwick Officers Group.

In addition, both authorities will continue to exchange information on transport modelling for new developments, where appropriate.

29. This Statement of Common Ground is signed at senior officer level and will be if necessary updated. It will be updated to reflect progress made through effective cooperation.

In terms of governance, the authorities agree:

30. To continue to work with the other Gatwick Diamond authorities on housing, employment and other strategic issues affecting the Gatwick Diamond as a whole;

31. To work collaboratively on plan preparation and evidence, whilst acknowledging others' timetables and timescales;
32. To respect each other's right to develop their own plans that fit the specific circumstances of the local authority's communities;
33. To meet at member and officer level as required to review the situation and respond to new issues and changing circumstances; and
34. To update this SoCG, if appropriate, as progress continues through the preparation of the local plans and development plan documents for each of the authorities.