

Havant Appraisal Sites Report

On Behalf of Havant Borough Council

December 2024



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Appendices

1. Appraisals

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1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Gillings Planning for and on behalf of Havant Borough Council.
- 1.2 Havant Borough Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan “Building a Better Future”. The plan will follow the Council’s Corporate Strategy and its Regeneration Strategy which sets out to allocate as much land for housing development as possible using brownfield land and regeneration sites.
- 1.3 The Council had previously submitted a Local Plan to the Secretary of State in 2021, which proposed substantial development in town centre locations. However, this Local Plan was withdrawn from the examination process due to the Inspectors’ Interim Findings which concluded that 2,230 dwellings should be removed from the identified housing land supply on the grounds that these sites were not ‘deliverable’ as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.4 Therefore, in preparing the Building a Better Future Plan, the Council requires a robust evidence base to support all of the proposed development and regeneration sites which are to be allocated in the local plan, in order to demonstrate that those sites meet the tests of soundness and can be considered part of a deliverable development strategy. For clarity – for the purposes of allocation, sites must be considered developable. For the purposes of consideration within the identified land supply, sites must be considered deliverable.
- 1.5 On behalf of the Council, Gillings Planning have undertaken detailed site visits at all of the locations listed below; these were carried out on 20th June 2024. A full, robust appraisal has been undertaken of each site and a conclusion reached on their developability and deliverability based on our experience and we have reached conclusions on the likely number of dwellings that we consider each site could accommodate. A summary of the site appraisals is included within this report, the full appraisals are appended to this report at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.6 The schemes set out in the appendix and demonstrated below have been prepared by the Council to inform bids and proposals at various points in time. All represent a scheme which could be taken forward in principle and one approach to addressing the constraints on the sites assessed, however they do not necessarily represent the precise design or scope of scheme that will eventually be pursued.

- 1.7 It is important to highlight that this is a study produced at a particular point in time to assess development areas under consideration at this particular stage. However, the Council continues and seeks to explore further opportunities, investigate other sites and review different arrangements of sites moving forwards which could generate further development opportunities.

2.0 Policy Setting

Adopted Development Plan

2.1 The adopted Development Plan is currently comprised of the following documents:

- Core Strategy (adopted 2011);
- Site Allocations Plan (adopted 2014);
- Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013); and
- Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan.

2.2 Policy CS6 of the adopted Core Strategy (2011) states in part *‘planning permission will be granted for development which positively contributes by type of use and design and by its comprehensive approach to the social, economic and/or physical regeneration of the whole borough; particularly when it is focused in the following places as shown on the Proposals Map:*

1. *Havant Town Centre, with particular focus on:*

- a. Market Parade.*
- b. Havant Railway Station.*
- c. Connectivity with the Public Service Village.*
- d. Connectivity between Solent Road and West Street.*

All development proposals made under this policy must ensure that they benefit the borough socially, environmentally and economically.’

2.3 The Housing Delivery Position was adopted in 2022 and a number of other Supplementary Planning Documents are also relevant:

- Borough Design Guide SPD (adopted 2011);
- Housing SPD (adopted 2011);
- Parking SPD (adopted 2016, updated 2019); and
- Havant Public Service Village SPD (2010).

Emerging Plan

2.4 The Building a Better Future Plan is at an early stage. It is currently being drafted, as per the updated Local Development Scheme (September 2024). Public Consultation is due

across Q2 and Q3 2025 (Regulation 18) followed by the pre-submission plan consultation in Q3 2026 (Regulation 19), with the pre-submission plan due in Q4 2026 (Regulation 22).

- 2.5 The Waterlooville Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan is also coming forward. Community consultation has been undertaken and next steps being prepared.

Regional Context

- 2.6 A Spatial Position Statement was published by the Partnership for South Hampshire (PFSH) in 2023.
- 2.7 Technical matters are also important to the appraisal of these schemes. PFSH are also making steps in providing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and nitrate and phosphate neutrality schemes – at the time of this report, BNG schemes in Havant are an emerging market however strategic mitigation schemes for neutrality are available.

National Context

- 2.8 Since our instruction and as part of the new Government's proposed planning reforms, in December 2024, a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published and under the new local housing need standard methodology Havant Borough Council has an increased need to provide 892dpa, hence the need to maximise brownfield locations.

NPPF Definitions

- 2.9 Important for the purposes of this report are the following definitions:
- 2.10 *Developable*: To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.
- 2.11 *Deliverable*: To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:

- a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).

- b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

3.0 Summary of Site Appraisals

- 3.1 The sites appraised by the team at Gillings Planning for the purposes of preparing this report are spread across three sub-areas – Havant Plaza, Havant Town Centre and Leigh Park.
- 3.2 Site visits were undertaken on 20th June 2024 to each site. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the sites on their own individual merit, their context in relation to their respective surrounding areas and their relationship with other appraisal sites where relevant. Visits also assisted in highlighting sites with potential environmental, sustainability and viability impacts, where these were experienced in practice ‘on the ground’ such as background noise, particularly from adjacent roads and odour, particularly from neighbouring town centre uses.
- 3.3 Mapping and a summary of the results from **Appendix 1** is available below:



Aerial photograph showing the Havant Plaza sites outlined in red



Aerial photograph of the Havant Town Centre sites outlined in red



Aerial photograph showing the Leigh Park sites outlined in red

3.4 The table below is a summary of the overall result for each site (A – M) from the site visits and desktop appraisals undertaken. The full appraisals for each site are included in **Appendix 1.**

| Site | Prospects | Deliverable and/or developable | Summary comments |
|---|-----------|-----------------------------------|---|
| A – Southern Car Park (Havant Plaza) | Very Poor | Unlikely | Constraints relating to trees and underground services and utilities – could come forward for expanded parking provision as part of a comprehensive development scheme. |
| B – Northern Car Park (Havant Plaza) | Poor | Unlikely | Constraints relating to levels and pollution – could come forward for expanded parking provision as part of a comprehensive development scheme. |
| C – Health Centre (Havant Plaza) | Modest | Unlikely | Loss of community facility which is an actively ongoing use – recommended to retain as existing unless re-provision can be confirmed during the local plan period. |
| D – Leisure Centre (Havant Plaza) | Modest | Potentially developable in future | Loss of community facility which is an actively ongoing use – recommended to retain as existing unless re-provision can be confirmed during the local plan period. |
| E – Central Car Park North (Havant Plaza) | Good | Developable | Allocation for housing is recommended – emphasised to come forward as part of a comprehensive scheme and rationalisation of car parking. |
| F – Central Car Park South (Havant Plaza) | Good | Developable | Allocation for housing is recommended – emphasised to come forward as part of a comprehensive scheme and rationalisation of car parking. |
| G – Police Station (Havant Plaza) | Modest | Potentially developable in future | Loss of community facility which is an actively ongoing use – recommended to retain as existing unless re-provided. |

| | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|---|
| H – Job Centre (Havant Plaza) | Modest | Developable | As an individual site, allocation for housing is recommended – consideration towards relocation of job centre required. |
| I – Bulbeck Car Park (Havant Town Centre) | Very Good | Deliverable | Allocation for housing is recommended – albeit, the site is already starting to come forward. |
| J – Market Parade and Car Park (Havant Town Centre) | Modest | Developable | Allocation for housing is recommended – however, ownership will be a constraint given extensive title splits, in tandem with existing commercial and residential occupiers. |
| K – Market Parade Car Park (Havant Town Centre) | Good | Developable | Allocation for housing is recommended – however, ownership will be a barrier with existing commercial and residential occupiers understood to have a variety of lease lengths. |
| L – Leigh Park Facilities Hub (Leigh Park) | Poor | Unlikely | Given the extensive existing community facilities and their need to be relocated on site, an architectural appraisal is recommended to demonstrate that these can be delivered alongside housing. |
| M – Tidworth Road Car Park (Leigh Park) | Good | Developable | Allocation for housing is recommended – viability should be explored, as well as options to retain TPO’d trees in light of BNG and compliance with existing policy requirements. |

3.5 The subsequent sections of this report discuss these outcomes in greater detail.

4.0 Tissue Analysis

A Common Theme

- 4.1 In order to more accurately predict an appropriate density ratio to be applied across the sites, two instances of tissue analysis have been undertaken.
- 4.2 Site H (Job Centre) has been tested because it appears to be a good example of a highly sustainable site, but a site with height constraints due to its setting, it is therefore fairly representative of the majority of sites assessed by this report, as set out in Section 5.
- 4.3 Site K (Market Parade Car Park) differs in that there has been a demonstrably higher density applied to sites in this location in the past (as per the site history) therefore we considered that this site requires separate analysis to be applied.
- 4.4 Our reason for carrying out some basic tissue analysis of Site K relates to the fact that a developer (Hampshire and Regional) who are well known, and who have carried out many developments across the south coast, obtained planning permission (which established the principle of high density) but have not implemented the scheme (now lapsed). This suggests to us that there are issues of viability.
- 4.5 When we explored the approved scheme, we noticed that it has a significant amount of retail provided at ground floor, a basement car park and only one lift core. This is potentially problematic in terms of development viability; the retail market is contracting and rental yields are poor at present for commercial floorspace of all types. The basement car park would be very expensive to construct due to the spoil needing to be removed and the basement car park delivers too few spaces for the cost because of the constrained design which includes the ramps which take up a large proportion of the floor plate. The lack of a second lift core combined with the compartmentalisation of the design is unlikely to meet the new Building Safety Act standards.

Appraisal Site H – Job Centre

- 4.6 Based on our experience of similar projects in comparable locations, a development scheme on this site could contain the quantum of development shown below.



- Residential units towards the front of the site, where the existing built form of existing employment (Job Centre) is located.
 - 23 car parking spaces at grade, no expensive basement.
 - Vehicle access remains the same as existing leading to car parking.
 - Cycle store located at the back of the site with pedestrian footpath from car park and building.
 - External bin store placed on south-east road side with separate access.
 - Two stair cores, two lift cores
 - Space for landscaping and trees.
-
- 4 x two-bedroom apartments per floor
 - 4 x one-bedroom apartments per floor
 - 8 dwellings per floor
 - 4 residential floors envisaged
 - 32 dwellings in total
 - Site area = 0.22 hectares
 - Density = 145 dwellings per hectare

Appraisal Site K – Market Parade Car Park

- 4.7 Based on our experience of similar projects in comparable locations, we have reviewed the consented scheme and using it as a framework, we have shown some amendments that could help to deliver a more viable scheme.
- 4.8 Principally, we have removed the expensive basement car park and now show at grade surface level car parking to the eastern side of the site, that is partially undercroft towards the west of the site.
- 4.9 The amount of commercial floorspace has been reduced, but still includes two corner commercial units to provide key focal points on the two most prominent corners. Generous sized entrances to the residential floors would provide more interest at street level and would better suit the need for more concierge style facilities – Local Plan policies would seek an active ground floor frontage.
- 4.10 A large cycle store is proposed to front the pedestrian street, and this could be an attractive ‘transport hub’ styled façade, it need not be a series of gates.

- 4.11 Although some adjustment needs to be made to suit accessible parking, our crude tissue analysis does demonstrate that circa 50 cars could be accommodated; which is appropriate for this highly sustainable location.
- 4.12 Amending the upper residential floors by allowing residents to access all three stair cores, and providing lifts to two cores should help address the Building Safety Act requirements.
- 4.13 Reducing the size of the landscaped deck seems appropriate given the proximity of the site to the park and amenities.
- 4.14 The surface car park allows for the provision of four street trees, which have the potential to contribute towards the provision of on-site BNG



- Small retail unit on corner nearest train station
- Larger retail unit on south-west corner
- Larger access points to dwellings above
- 50 car parking spaces at grade, no expensive basement
- Separate 'in' and 'out' access to undercroft car park
- Cycle store exiting onto pedestrian area
- Bin store placed on south-east road side
- Separate 'in' and 'out' access to undercroft car park
- Decked amenity space over part of car park
- Three stair cores, two of which are lift cores
- Space for four trees (one to four)



- 8 x two-bedroom apartments per floor
- 5 x one-bedroom apartments per floor
- 13 dwellings per floor
- Balconies and decked amenity space
- 7 residential floors envisaged
- 91 dwellings in total
- Site area = 0.22 hectares
- Density = 410 dwellings per hectare

5.0 Outcomes

- 5.1 Of the sites with modest or above prospects, and on the basis of applying the tissue analysis from Section 4, we find that 971 dwellings could be provided across the appraisal sites that are genuinely deliverable across the plan period specifically (as per table below).
- 5.2 Having undertaken a tissue analysis for the two identified sites (H and K) in the previous section, and based on our experience of similar projects in comparable locations and on the outcomes of this analysis, the densities of the sites located within the same area, context and character are proposed at the same density which has been used to calculate the housing numbers.
- 5.3 In regards to deliverability, the NPPF definition relates to a 5-year period – it is considered that only Bulbeck Road is progressing towards meeting the requirements of this definition. Therefore only 91 units can be considered developable and deliverable.
- 5.4 It is clear that the Havant Town Centre sites have the most potential to deliver units, with all sites being viable for housing based upon our appraisals. This is helped by the Bulbeck Road site already coming forward and provision of numbers – as evidenced based upon the demolition approval and commencement, and Council-owned regeneration webpages and consultations respectively.
- 5.5 With both sites at Havant Plaza and Leigh Park, there is a need to balance provision (or re-provision) of community facilities (where funding would be required) against the need for housing. As Section 4 discusses, these sites cannot afford to come forward on their own merit – collaboration is what will enable delivery of effective housing schemes, made possible upon information gained regarding ownership details. This does impact upon the number of houses that can be delivered.
- 5.6 The key, and fundamental, consideration towards almost all appraisal sites will be viability and financial contributions. Where the funding will come from to unlock these sites, allow for re-provision of community facilities at (for example) Leigh Park and the Leisure Centre and provide for small businesses that would be impacted at Market Parade – this is an unknown. Based upon the emerging Employment Land Review, proposals are needed to explore elements of office provision that could be provided as part of the overall development mix.

| Site | Site Area (ha) | Applied density | Unit outcome (approximately rounded) |
|------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| A | 0.78 | - | 0 (Very Poor prospects) |
| B | 0.25 | - | 0 (Poor prospects) |
| C | 0.64 | - | 0 (Modest) |
| D | 1.04 | - | 0 (Modest) |
| E | 0.49 | 145dph | 71 |
| F | 0.46 | 145dph | 67 |
| G | 0.83 | - | 0 (Modest) |
| H | 0.22 | 145dph | 32 |
| I | 0.33 | - | 91 (in progress) * |
| J | 1.4 | 410dph | 574 |
| K | 0.22 | 410dph | 91 |
| L | 0.86 | - | 0 (Poor prospects) |
| M | 0.31 | 145dph | 45 |

* At the time of writing, the Council's Cabinet Report (dated 6th November 2024) confirms the preferred developer proposes 54 units for older people, equivalent to 30 dwellings (using Housing Delivery Test calculation which applies a 1.8 ratio). The figure in the table reflects the potential developable figure, demonstrable via the community engagement undertaken so far.

5.7 In summary, our findings demonstrate that Site I is deliverable, whilst Sites E, F, H, J, K and M are all demonstrated to be developable. All of these referenced Sites would contribute towards the delivery of the 971 dwellings.

6.0 Sites with potential for collaboration

- 6.1 As highlighted in Section 5, we consider that some of the sites cannot or are highly unlikely to come forward in their own right for housing. It is important to note however, that they still have potential to be utilised in a comprehensive manner to help deliver housing across potential combined sites.
- 6.2 For example, appropriate levels of vehicle parking, space for BNG, re-provision of facilities and other technical elements are necessary to deliver a higher quality of development as much as quantum of development. This in turn only assists to create a better sense of place. It is notable that the main Plaza building will remain in use – therefore, an appropriate level of car parking provision will be required to be retained in serving this site.
- 6.3 It is helpful, therefore, that the sites appraised are physically connected in a lot of instances, especially around the Havant Plaza sites. Considering many of these sites have poor / modest prospects, the below are considered to require a comprehensive approach should they come forward. Significantly, however, Sites E and F individually have good prospects and have the best potential to deliver comprehensive development.
- 6.4 It is important to acknowledge that the appraisals themselves have not been scoped to take into account the nearby other sites – this is the purpose of this section of the report and why it is necessary.

Appraisal Sites E (Good) and F (Good)

- 6.5 Bringing both Central Car Park North and Central Car Park South, which have been assessed individually to have good prospects, forward at the same time would enable a balance of residential units and car parking provision (potentially decked).
- 6.6 For example, one of the sites could provide residential units and the other provide a decked car park – or an appropriate mixture of the two – whilst making adequate space for landscaping and BNG features.
- 6.7 A balance between locating both public and private parking will be required. Central Car Park North is actively utilised by users of the leisure centre. Whilst Central Car Park South, based upon site visits, does not appear to be as well-utilised, it is used to a degree by users of the adjacent police station. It is also used in conjunction with the main Plaza

building, therefore any parking would need to serve both the needs of the development and any rationalisation of car parking.



Aerial photograph showing the Havant Plaza sites E & F outlined in red

Appraisal Sites D (Modest), E (Good) and F (Good)

- 6.8 Expanding on the above, the combination of sites E and F could host a redeveloped leisure centre – certainly, there is more significant space that appears relatively free from constraints compared to site A.
- 6.9 In turn, site D could then be utilised for high-density housing. Demolition of existing and development of housing could at least partly fund the leisure centre development, which it would be key to provide up front prior to any housing being delivered.
- 6.10 Parking would also remain a necessity, but this could be split around sites E and F more effectively. The private parking for housing at site D would then remain entirely separate to this. Collaboration of these sites would require initial viability testing outside of this report.



Aerial photograph showing the Havant Plaza sites D, E & F outlined in red

Appraisal Sites A (Very Poor) and D (Modest)

- 6.11 The potential relocation of the leisure centre from site D to A was suggested by Havant Borough Council through previous work. Our appraisal of Site A (attached in appendix 1) does discuss this collaboration, but only in the context of the move of the leisure centre from site D to site A.
- 6.12 In summary, we consider site A to have poor prospects to deliver the relocation of the leisure centre. This is due to the site being within close proximity to the Havant Plaza which would be retained and still need its own light and space to 'breathe', the topography of the site and the existing utilities (substations), trees and their large root protection areas and landscaped verges reducing the developable area. Furthermore, the size of the trees and the shade they cast would require substantial stand-offs to ensure a comfortable environment within any building adjacent to them.
- 6.13 The provision of biodiversity net gain is now a requirement and at the time of this report, there are no Council led schemes to provide suitable biodiversity mitigation and therefore, with the existing environmental constraints on the site, this would be a

potential barrier to bringing this site forward. Therefore, we do not recommend this as a viable option for the relocation of the leisure centre site.

- 6.14 If this site were to come forward regardless, site D would open up as a greater opportunity site rather than having very poor prospects in isolation.



Aerial photograph showing the Havant Plaza sites A & D outlined in red

Appraisal Sites G (Modest) and H (Modest)

- 6.15 The job centre site is already assessed to have modest prospects on its own. The barrier to these sites coming forward together (and the police station on its own) is the ownership of the police station and its ongoing active use, either needing to be provided elsewhere or demonstrated to not be required.
- 6.16 Were these sites to come forward together, land could be comprehensively utilised to allow for landscaping, BNG and car parking provision across a greater area to allow for greater efficiency. Site G does not lack existing green space, however neither does it lack existing parking spaces that could be repurposed or expanded upon for the use of potential residents as private.

6.17 A stronger sense of place could also be created by having frontages and a layout that work in tandem across both sites G and H.



Aerial photograph showing the Havant Plaza sites G & H outlined in red

Other Sites

6.18 It is arguable that other sites can also interact and collaborate. However, barriers to this include physical barriers such as roads that would result in inefficiencies.

6.19 Sites A to H in their entirety have also not be discussed above. Whilst these sites could come forward at the same time, this is something that requires a greater masterplanning exercise not within the scope of this report.

6.20 Sites J and K have been excluded from this section, given the nature of K being included within the red line of J already.

6.21 Sites L and M are not considered here due to their physical divide – bringing forward Site M is not dependent on any community facility matters Site L may need to overcome.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, there are appraisal sites that are able to deliver housing and are developable, the assessment undertaken indicating 971 units. Whilst this is a significant source of housing supply, our assessment does however show that the anticipated provision is not at the scale or quantum envisaged by the Council's previous local plan.
- 7.2 Together with the scale of development envisaged at Waterlooville Town Centre, the Council is clear that town centre locations are a source of new dwellings, delivering a significant proportion of the Council's identified housing need.
- 7.3 It is also important to distinguish which developments are developable and which are deliverable. All developments with modest or above ratings are considered to be developable – however, not all will be deliverable in a 5-year period. Only Bulbeck Road has existing Government funding and demonstrable progress to allow for it to be deliverable.
- 7.4 The remaining sites considered developable – sites E, F, H, J, K and M – are unlikely to come forward quickly enough to contribute towards a 5-year housing land supply. It would be more accurate to suggest these sites would come forward later in the plan period, when land assembly has been achieved.
- 7.5 As a result, in a 5-year period, only 91 units are likely to come forward from the appraisal sites, a modest contribution to 5YHLS – at this stage it is difficult to comprehend how a higher number of units can be delivered without intervention. Across the coming plan period, a total of 971 units are likely to come forward, potentially more if viability and funding associated with replacing facilities becomes more defined.
- 7.6 There is scope for sites to increase their prospects dependent on these factors and if they were to collaboratively be brought forward alongside other sites, being phased appropriately. This may change over the plan period and none of the sites should be discounted for future development in their entirety.

