

Dear Sir or Madam

Additional Evidence on Gaps for the Crookham Village Neighbourhood Plan

I write in regard to the consultation on the Crookham Village Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2032 Additional Evidence for the Policy on Gap Between Settlements.

I strongly support the need for the local gap around Crookham Village. I recognise the areas being described in the evidence and the evidence describes them clearly and accurately.

These areas clear of development between Crookham Village and Dogmersfield and Crookham Village and Fleet are vital to preserving the separate identity of Crookham Village and prevent its coalescence with Dogmersfield or being overwhelmed by additional development and in-filling which would lead to further coalescence with Fleet and Church Crookham.

The gaps between settlements are under severe and imminent threat from in-fill housing and major developments often approved on appeal. The development at Grove Farm (Land North of Netherhouse Copse) has already severely eroded the gap between Crookham Village and Fleet and irretrievably altered the character of the landscape. The approved development at Watery Lane (the development of Albany Farm) will encroach further on the village and change the use of the landscape. Whilst these developments have already been factored into the Neighbourhood Plan, they indicate the nature of the threat and the extent to which the gap has already been eroded. The unwelcome proposal for development at Cross Farm is further indication of the level of threat to the village.

Rather than being used as evidence that the gap is not immutable, these developments should be taken as a warning and they indicate that the separate identity of the village is under severe threat. This makes it even more important that what remains of the gap around Crookham Village is protected through Policy NE01 and its associated evidence base.

The historic and rural nature of the village, the listed buildings within it and the Dogmersfield and Crookham Village Conservation Areas are likely to be damaged should further encroachment into these gaps be allowed.

I see from the maps within the Neighbourhood Plan that the gap to Dogmersfield does not quite extend to the settlement boundary for Dogmersfield. Should an opportunity arise to review the area designated as the local gap to Dogmersfield, it might make sense to extend this part of the gap out to the settlement boundary for Dogmersfield. This would make this part of the gap consistent with the other parts of the gap that extends to the settlement boundary for Fleet and Church Crookham.