

Statement for Examination in Public Hearing – Issue 4

Councillor Diane Taylor (Oakley & North Waltham ward)

Policy EM2 – Strategic Gaps

Policy EM2, which specifies five villages close to either Basingstoke or Tadley, is in itself sound and, in expressing the aim of preventing coalescence of settlements and maintaining the separate identities of those settlements, is particularly welcome in relation to the village of Oakley. This historic village lies to the immediate west of Basingstoke and, despite rapid growth following the identification of Basingstoke as an Expanded Town, has maintained a strong village ethos.

However Map 7a/inset Map 2, which *defines* the proposed Strategic Gap area for Oakley (the northern area of which is the hamlet of Newfound) does not correspond with the stated aim of the policy.

There is a natural ridgeline across the B3400 to the west of Scrapps Hill Farm between Newfound and Basingstoke. However, the proposed strategic gap extends only as far as the minor road to Wootton St Lawrence and does not respect this ridgeline. The proposed extent of the Strategic Gap is a mere 200m from the last house in the village, the width of one small field. A larger field beyond the proposed boundary of the Strategic Gap and on the Newfound side of the ridgeline is in full view of the village and of traffic travelling eastwards along the B3400 towards Basingstoke. The proposal to include this field in the Manydown development site is discussed under Issue 5, Policy SS3.10.

The definition, therefore, of the Oakley Strategic Gap as defined in Map 7a/inset Map 2 is neither (i) justified, as it is inappropriate for the achievement of Policy EM2 nor (ii) effective, as it gives priority to extensive development of the west of Basingstoke over the maintenance of the separate village identity of Oakley/Newfound.

I would like to propose an extension of the strategic gap for Oakley/Newfound eastwards by approximately 400m in order to ensure that the separate identities of the village and the town are maintained.