

## **Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Examination**

### **Issue 4: Other Housing Matters – Response from The National Trust in Respect of Strategic Gaps (Policy EM2)**

The National Trust would like to thank the Inspector for this opportunity to comment further on question 7 of your Inspector's Key Issues and Discussion Note regarding the Landscape and other constraints on development.

The National Trust owns The Vyne and other land in the vicinity of this historic property which comprises a Grade I Listed Building of Architectural and Historic Interest, located within a Grade II Listed Historic Park and Garden. The former medieval buildings on the site were integrated to form a substantial moated courtyard mansion which was probably completed by 1515. This mansion probably had gardens. Much of the present parkland was also incorporated in to the estate during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century two thirds of the Tudor house was demolished and significant alterations made to the remainder. The Vyne was inherited in 1754 by John Chute, who redesigned and refurbished much of the interior of the house, removed most of the formal gardens, and may have been responsible for the enlargement of the lake to its present form. The National Trust acquired The Vyne in 1956.

The Trust indicated in its response to the Pre-Submission Local Plan that it considered that Policy EM2 relating to Strategic Gaps was both legally compliant and sound. At this time the Trust considered that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council ("the Council") should produce further evidence to support the proposed Basingstoke-Sherborne St John Strategic Gap. The Trust has reviewed the Strategic Gaps Topic Paper that the Council has now produced and has considered this alongside the latest guidance from Historic England regarding the Setting of Heritage Assets.

The Trust considers that Policy EM2, which proposes the Strategic Gap between Basingstoke and Sherborne St John, is sound. The Trust considers that the policy does allow for appropriate development within the designated gap area and that they should not be seen as a constraint to all new development.

The Trust considers that the creation of a strategic gap between Basingstoke and Sherborne St John is an important policy to ensure the long term protection of the setting of The Vyne and its estate. This is an important heritage asset within this part of Hampshire and due to it remaining in one family for over 300 years the wider estate has remained intact and forms part of the area proposed

within the Strategic Gap. Basingstoke has expanded towards Sherborne St John and The Vyne estate in recent years and the Trust considers that it is important to recognise the impact that development has had on both the setting to the Estate and village and the level of activity around it and the pressures that this can put on protecting heritage assets. The Trust has been increasingly concerned with the northern expansion of Basingstoke and considers that the Strategic Gap in this location will ensure that the separate identity of Sherborne St John, which is inextricably linked to The Vyne Estate through its historic development as the Estate village, is retained. The Council's Landscape Capacity Assessment (2008) identified the area as having low capacity to accommodate development and that development would further erode the rural character found in this area. The Trust considers that this reinforces the need to ensure that this area is protected from the further northward expansion of Basingstoke. The proposals map clearly identifies the extent of the proposed Strategic Gap in this location and the Trust considers that this is an appropriate and well recognised method for defining such designations.

The Trust would urge the Inspector to support the inclusion of a Strategic Gap between Basingstoke and Sherborne St John through the inclusion of Policy EM2 within the Local Plan and as defined on the proposals maps.