



You may be aware of the revised planning application to convert the majority of the land at Cross Farm in Crookham Village into Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and produce Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). We are deeply grateful to the landowners for endeavouring to protect the landscape at Cross Farm and we are anxious that any outcome is based on a solution in the interests of all.

Please read the information below and comment if you can. We ask that you **make any comments** on the application **before the deadline of 10th October**.

What is SANG and what is BNG?

SANG is greenspace open to the public designed to mitigate the effects of increased local populations from housebuilding by attracting visitors (e.g. dog-walkers) away from areas with higher protection for sensitive species such as the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) in Hart. Existing local SANGs include Edenbrook Country Park, Bramshott Country Park and the recent Poulter's Meadow SANG at Hillyburrow/Albany Farm just across the canal. BNG is a requirement for developers in England since 2024. By contrast with SANG, it doesn't necessarily involve public access but improves the condition and area of habitats for nature, mainly to contribute towards offsetting the impacts of construction elsewhere across Hart District.

What is Being Proposed?

The proposal is very similar to the one in January, which was withdrawn in March after consultation. It does not appear to have taken on board most of the recommendations from consultees. It would provide free and open public access to the fields, a network of surfaced footpaths, landscaping and planting, a dog agility area and access via a new car park on Crondall Road near to the River Hart and the junction with Stroud Lane. Some BNG is also proposed alongside the SANG. A large area to the north-west between the long footpath across the field (FP1 on the diagram below) and the access point next to Cross Farm house is being retained for unspecified future use. Changes from the proposal in January include moving the proposed dog agility area and revised planting and hedges as well as some more detail on how the site would be managed.

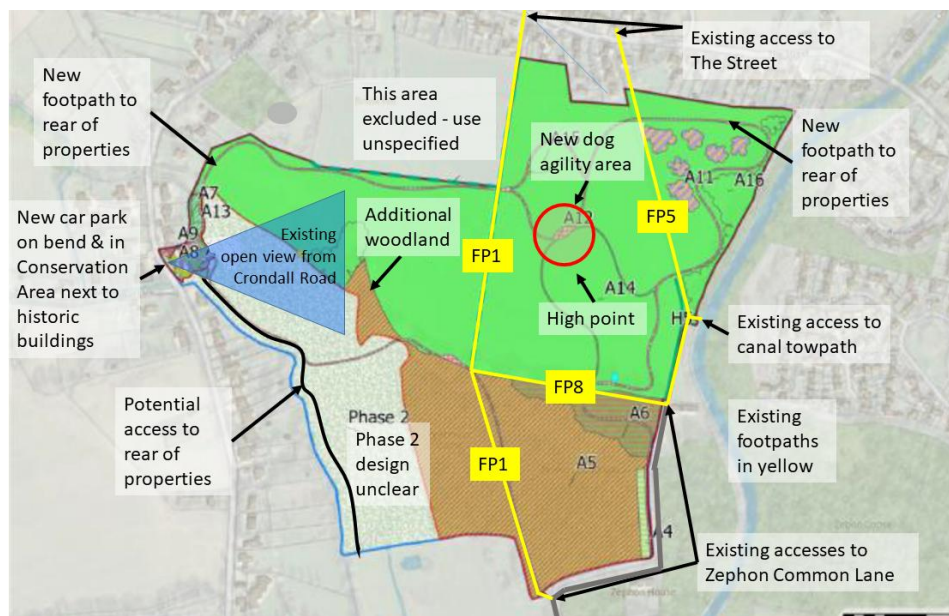


Diagram showing extent of the SANG south of The Street and east of Crondall Road (green area) with wooded or part-wooded below that (hatched). The square area at the top (grey) is excluded and its future use is unspecified. Existing footpaths (yellow) already traverse the land but are bounded by fences; the proposal for new paths around the field area is shown (green). The design of the floodplain (light grey area near the river) is left to later.

We show the existing open view from Crondall Road as a blue triangle (left).

Is it a Good Thing?

There is renewed pressure on Hart for additional housing so the proposed change of use for most of the fields at Cross Farm to a SANG does have major benefits to the village in protecting the land from future housing development. However the design has changed little from the previous proposal and there are some remaining issues with the proposed design.

We see the main **potential benefits** of this proposal as follows:

- Designation as SANG could **protect** (most of) the land **from housing & other development** for 80 years and its use for BNG would last for at least 30 (concurrent) years.
- The proposal could **preserve open space** in Crookham Village and remove the enclosure (fencing) of some public rights of way and **provide access to new areas and views** not currently accessible.
- The proposal could **support (some) biodiversity** around the SANG and potentially improve and connect wildlife corridors.



We see the main **issues and concerns** with this proposal as follows:

- It would directly affect many **neighbouring properties** especially those directly adjacent to the land.
- The **car park** is still proposed on the **blind bend** in Crondall Road and on the **flood plain**; it is in the **Crookham Village Conservation Area** adjacent to two **historic properties**; it would mean the loss of one of the few remaining unbuilt roadside areas (an important gap) and sacrifice one of the village's **key views** protected in the **Neighbourhood Plan**; it seems unnecessarily large with 24 spaces.
- The **unspecified future** of the large retained 'grey area' to the north of the site and excluded from the SANG, potentially for construction and accessible from Crossways, could further damage amenity and views.
- The proposal would increase public access and use and allow free-roaming dogs (a requirement of SANG), causing **intrusion, noise, loss of privacy and security concerns** for neighbouring properties.
- The current design provides no new connectivity as the existing footpath network already provides routes through the site.
- The car park, paving, surfaced paths, infrastructure, bins and signposts would 'urbanise' Cross Farm and its setting, changing the character of the Village with **loss of sense of place** and damage the setting of several **listed and historic buildings**.
- The proposed **dog agility area is unnecessary** (there is already one in Hitches Lane and one on Pilcot Farm) and, although moved, is still in a very visually intrusive location. The municipal feel would be inconsistent with the current rural setting.
- The lack of detail of 'Phase 2' and unsuitability of the wetland and often flooded fields particularly along Crondall Road leaves many unknowns, for example any requirement for a path would necessitate raised walkways, increasing the built and urbanised feel and change of character.
- The requirements for governance & monitoring, management & maintenance, and long-term financial provision have still not been satisfied. The financial viability based on housebuilding demand within the required 5km is in doubt.

What Do You Think?

As a 'full' planning application, this requires an explicit 'approve' or 'refuse' decision from the Hart planning department. There have been modest changes to the previous application but unfortunately no public discussion outside the consultation on the previous proposal. The Environment and Highways Agencies are not yet satisfied with the carpark. Most of the comments and recommendations have not been addressed.

How to comment on the application to Hart District Council:

There is not much time to respond. We urge you to make sure that the Hart planning team is aware of your views. You can submit your comments to Hart planning through their planning portal or directly via email **to be received by 10 October 2025**.

To view the application please go to <http://publicaccess.hart.gov.uk/online-applications> and search for this application using Reference 25/01661/FUL. To comment you can simply email to planningadmin@hart.gov.uk, provided you cite Reference 25/01661/FUL and state 'objects' or 'supports' in the subject line. Alternatively, to comment online you will need to register using the 'Register' button if you haven't done so before. Then log in using the 'Login' button and go to this application, as above, from where you can submit comments using the 'Make a Comment' button. Please do not copy published information but instead use your own words.

There is further guidance on responding on the FACE IT website at <https://faceit-group.org/action/respond-to-applications/>.

FACE IT needs your help!

In October 2024 the government announced new housing targets. Hart's target more than doubled from 297 per year to 734 per year. This has resulted in the policies relating to housing supply in Hart's Local Plan being 'out of date' and the Local Plan, which shows where development is planned, is vulnerable to challenge at appeal. See <https://faceit-group.org/news/hart-gets-hammered-with-increa/>.

Hart have started the process of developing a new Local Plan and have issued a 'call for sites'. After submissions close in October, Hart will publish the list of proposed sites and invite comments - there may be some locally that affect us. See <https://www.hart.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/call-sites>.

Once a site is adopted in the Local Plan it is extremely difficult to oppose planning permission on that site.

FACE IT needs help to review the sites, prepare guidance and provide information and advice to our community, to respond to planning applications based on your comments and represent community views. You can find out more about what we do on our website here: <https://faceit-group.org/about/>.

If you can help us please email chairman.faceit@gmail.com. Without your help we will not be able to guide comments.