

17/02317/OUT | Land at Owens Farm - Outline permission for the development of up to 700 dwellings, a 2ha site for a primary school, a 0.5ha site for a nursery, a 245m² retail facility, a 284m² community facility, together with associated vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access, open space and landscape works. All matters other than access are reserved for consideration at a later date. Full planning permission for the provision of 9.68ha Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and means of access.

Hook Parish Council objects to the application as presented on the following grounds:

MEANS OF ACCESS

1. Pedestrian Accessibility

There is an unrealistic reliance by the Developer on existing Public Footpaths and very narrow footways on Newnham Road to access the centre of Hook Village.

Public Right of Way (PRoW) 25b is currently a grass path across a field and a narrow timber footbridge so it is only suitable for leisure use by able bodied persons.

Design and Access Statement (para 6), states that “An existing Public Right of Way (Route 25b) will be improved by the provision of a hoggin based surface. Such a surface would be totally inappropriate for pedestrians with pushchairs, less able persons etc and the character of the walk currently being through open countryside will be totally lost.

The proposed new footway alongside Newnham Road between the Site and Seton Drive will only connect to an existing footway that is of the order of one metre wide and this footway is discontinuous as it passes along Newham Road towards the junction with the A30. This route would not be at all safe for small children or for disabled and those with pushchairs.

2. Cycle Provision

There is no provision for promoting and encouraging cycling. The TA (para 6.7), states that the local highway network is considered suitable for cycling and of a safe and suitable standard to encourage

cycle use. This is clearly an erroneous statement as the Newnham Road is only 4.26 metres between kerbs to the east of the site and the A30 is a very busy road through the centre of Hook. The suggestion that the removal of the existing traffic calming on Newnham Road would make that route suitable for cyclist is clearly wrong particularly in light of the over 100% increase in traffic that is forecast for this road.

3. Vehicle Access

The Developer informs that HCC has agreed the single point of access on Newnham Road, which measures on site 4.88 metres width of surfacing with grass verges at the location of the new roundabout, to cater for the 700 dwellings. This does not allow for any emergency access to the housing or the proposed school and nursery in the event of an incident at this access. The Developer also informs that it is considered there are no deficiencies in the existing local highway network to accommodate the forecast traffic from the proposed development.

HPC refute the claims within the TA that the proposed development will not cause any more safety problems on highway and no deficiencies within the local highway network that could be exacerbated by the proposed development.

There is obviously no acceptance of the very narrow nature of Newnham Road to the east of the new access. Existing traffic has difficulty passing, especially lorries and buses, and in negotiating other vehicles which are often parked on this residential Road. The Newnham Road between the Site and Hook is only between 4.26 and 4.72 metres wide in some sections, and there is a very poor junction layout between Newnham Road and the A30. This is clearly not a suitable access route for some 700 dwellings which could realistically present between 700 and 1000 vehicles leaving the Site in the morning peak period.

The modelling of the Newnham Road Junction with the A30 included in the TA is unsound as it does not take due account of the particular geometry at the approach to this priority junction and if properly

coded in the model then the capacity would be very much less than that claimed by the Developer. Currently, significant queues frequently form in the morning peak period in the Newnham Road approach to this junction, so this situation would be greatly exacerbated following the development.

The proposal to convert the junction between Newnham Road and Old School Road to a conventional 'T' Junction is welcomed but the capacity of the new layout will need to be re-assessed when a corrected and more realistic traffic forecast and assignment of flows for the Development has been derived.

The proposal for a significant reliance on Newnham Road west of the site and Old school Lane for strategic traffic associated with the Development is noted. However, this could only be considered at all reasonable in terms of road safety if the Developer agrees to fund a separate combined pedestrian and cycle bridge alongside the existing sub-standard narrow road bridge which currently does not have any footway.

4. Public Transport Accessibility

In the Transport Assessment (para 4.82), the Developer claims there are currently scheduled bus services to Camberley, Hartley Wintney and Yateley from Hook Centre, but these services have long been discontinued. The TA (para 4.103), also refers to the "Capital Cars Taxi Bus" (i.e. it is assumed this is a reference to the Hook Hoppa) service in Hook but that was also discontinued several months ago. The proposal to extend the No. 10 Bus Service from Old Basing through to Hook via the Site is interesting but if wholly reliant on Developer subsidy then it is not sustainable. Reference is made to the minutes of a meeting (23/5/17) with Stagecoach when they note that extending the No. 10 service may not be sustainable when the Developer contributions end.

It is also noted that there is a current proposal by South West Railways to reduce the peak time train service from Hook to London Waterloo and this would potentially have a significant adverse impact

on car use during the am peak period, i.e. it is likely that people would travel by car to other stations for a faster service to London.

5. Traffic Generation/ Forecasting of Development Related Trips.

The claim that all community related trips, i.e. primary school, nursery, shop and community centre, will be wholly internal and not involve any car trips is completely unrealistic. This is especially so in light of the fact that there is spare capacity at the existing Primary School in Hook Village. The claim that Hook is an employment centre and that many work-related trips will be made by walking or cycling is again unrealistic, as the offices in the Bartley Wood Business Park and Hook Village are rapidly being vacated (Virgin Media, HP and BMW) and converted to residential uses.

The suggested traffic generation by the Development of the order of a 2-way movement of 400 vehicles in the morning peak period is wholly unrealistic for 700 dwellings, where a large proportion of the residents will necessarily be commuters and the children will go to schools off site, both primary and secondary.

Both the Traffic Modelling Assumptions and Methodology in the TA are clearly unsound and an independent audit must be undertaken before any decisions are taken on suitability of the road network to accept the additional traffic from the proposed 700 dwelling development at this Site.

HPC note that the Movement and Access Plan shows 'a potential link to future development', so it could be assumed that there is a presumption in favour of additional development that would impose further impacts on the transport network.

6. Parking

In the Environmental Statement it is accepted that this Site is in Zone 3 of Hart DC Parking Guidance, which is correct. However, in the Design and Assess (page 16), the proposed car parking provision is stated to reflect HDC's maximum parking standards with 2 spaces being provided for a 1, 2 or 3 bed house/flat and 3 spaces per 4+ bed house. These figures are incorrect and do not reflect the parking

standards required for a development falling within Zone 3. Assurances need to be given that the proposed development will incorporate parking provision at the level required for Zone 3. From experience if the Hart DC provision is not made then there becomes a situation where there is excessive on-street parking and parking on footways and verges, which is completely unacceptable. In addition, there is no visitor parking specified for the proposed new community centre or public open space and it is assumed that the school and nursery will include an appropriate level of carparking, where staff parking will be required as a minimum.

7. Conclusion in regard to Access

The severe constraints of this site in terms of accessibility by all modes of transport have not been overcome or even properly recognised in this application.

The applicant has not acknowledged the lack of connectivity of this Site with the centre of Hook Village, so the Developer's claim that there are safe and convenient walking and cycling routes to Hook Centre are entirely erroneous. This may explain why there has been no effort made whatsoever to provide any new safe walking and cycling facilities between the Site and the amenities located in the rest of Hook Village. This lack of new facilities to promote and encourage travel by sustainable modes is in direct contravention of the saved policies of the current Local Plan in particular policies T4, and policy objective 12.

The Developer suggests the additional dwellings will increase spending in Hook Village and be of economic benefit to the community. This will only occur if the Developer provides safe, convenient and adequate new pedestrian and cycle facilities. If the residents rely on car mode then they are likely to spend time elsewhere as the easier access by such modes would be via Old School Road and from there it is easy to go on to Basingstoke or other major centres.

The Developer even mentions that Adams Hendry reported in regard to the SLA 173 at this site that "the infrastructure deficits and access

issues would need to be overcome if this site could be considered as developable”, also that “properly addressing the infrastructure gaps and poor accessibility could affect the development viability of this site.”

The Environmental Statement (Chapter 14, para 14.57) suggests that Newnham Road and Old School Road can be considered as type UAP3 roads. However, this reference is taken from the Urban Roads section of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and any comparison of that type of road with these rural lanes, which in highway terms are both unclassified roads, is totally inappropriate and of no relevance. This document should not be introducing such a generic statement that is clearly intended to mislead the lay reader. The purpose of this Chapter is to simply summarize what is included in the TA all as stated in the introduction in para 14.1.

In the face of such comments from independent consultants, the Developer has made an application for 700 dwellings with no realistic proposals for the significant transport mitigation measures that are clearly required to enable this site to function satisfactorily. Therefore, the Developer’s claim that there are no constraints that prevent the inclusion of this Site to be allocated for residential development is totally rejected and the strongest possible objection is provided to the Planning Application as presented.

SANG

1. Area

The area proposed for SANG is particularly large against the apparent agreement of Hart DC and Natural England that the Developer only has to provide SANG at the ratio of 2Ha per 1000 population for this site. This would leave sufficient area of SANG for some additional 330 dwellings at the normal rate of 8Ha per 1000. HPC note that the Movement and Access Plan shows ‘a potential link to future development’ so it could be assumed that there is a presumption in favour of development that would constitute an expansion of the existing proposal.

The area marked as SANG on the west boundary that incorporates the SUDS should not be considered to be part of the SANG unless it joins the larger circular footpath network.

2. Management and Maintenance

There is some confusion in the Planning Statement (para 3.8) where it states that it was agreed that a “reduced Strategic Access Management Monitoring Payment that covers only access monitoring... will be agreed with HDC”.

However, in the SANGS Management Plan it states “The ownership of the SANG is intended to be transferred to the Management Company via a legal agreement with the land owner and the management and maintenance as specified will fall to them”.

Therefore, it suggests that the Developer will not be liable for the management and maintenance of the proposed SANG as part of his compromise offer for being on the edge of the 5Km designated Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

3. Use of SANG Area

The area shown as SANG is excessive, as mentioned above, and some of this area would be better used for community uses such as Sports Facilities for public use. In this regard, Hook Parish Council had expressed to the Developer during early consultations that Hook Village was short of some basic facilities for local organisations, such as Hook Rugby Club.

4. Ecology

It is stated in the Ecological Assessment (Page 65 para 7.1) that “Rare species of bats, dormice, reptiles and important hedgerows have been confirmed within the Site. The Site falls within the zone of influence of several local wildlife sites, including ancient woodland.” Whether the damage to these receptors can be successfully mitigated by the inclusion of SANG in the proposed development should be a secondary consideration to the question of whether any development in this area is actually acceptable in principle.

OTHER ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

1. Any neighbourhood retail must be subject to a Condition that limits the size and type of goods, so as not to detract from the retail offer in Hook Village Centre.
2. There should be no ensuing road connections into the fields to the east side of the site, or to the other residential areas in Brown Croft or Hop Garden Road, as that would promote 'rat-running' through such established residential areas.
3. If the School or the Nursery does not proceed then the use of the resulting parcels of land should be converted to community uses or open space.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATION BY HOOK PARISH COUNCIL

This Council Objects to the Planning Application in the strongest possible terms on the following grounds:

1. **There are totally inadequate proposals for the provision of a safe and convenient new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure to enable the development to integrate with the existing community of Hook and connect to Hook Village Centre.**
2. **There are totally inadequate proposals for the provision of the necessary improvements in the road infrastructure to cater for a realistic forecast and assessment of the additional traffic flows that will arise as a result of the provision of a minimum of 700 new dwellings.**
3. **HPC do not accept the forecast of additional traffic movements as documented in the TA (See Appendix 1). It is apparent to any transport professional that 700 dwellings having up to 4 bedrooms would generate significantly more vehicle movements in the peak periods than that claimed by this Developer.**
4. **The proposals suggest the promotion of a self-contained development with internalisation of community, school, nursery and shops which will not promote a sustainable and well integrated addition to the existing community of Hook.**
5. **There are serious road safety concerns associated with the proposal to use Old School Road and the existing sub-standard carriageway over the**

narrow bridge over the railway (which has no footway) for all construction traffic and for a primary access route to the completed development.

6. It is of serious concern as to whether Hook will be able to successfully absorb an order of growth in the current plan period which will approximate to a doubling of the population without any consideration of a potential Murrell Green Settlement. This would push the population of Hook to the same order as Fleet but without anything like the amount of commercial and community infrastructure.
7. HPC acknowledge and accept that there is a need to build more dwellings to contribute towards the housing needs of residents in Hart (See Appendix 2). However, HPC also recognise that there is a need to protect the highly desirable elements of the locality which are precisely the reason people want to live here. In the present climate where Hook is rapidly growing and changing, there is a need to ensure there is a sustainable approach to where additional housing is placed. The use of brownfield sites and sites of less environmental importance are a priority rather than losing greenfield land or areas of landscape and amenity value.
8. This development would extend the residential area of Hook right up to the edge of the Hook Parish boundary with that of Newnham Parish. The much smaller development proposal for 48 dwellings on SLA 009 off Hop Garden Road was rejected by both Hart DC and the Planning Inspectorate, because of the need to maintain a gap for amenity, landscape and recreation purposes between Hook and Newnham. HPC would strongly support the maintenance of a 'gap' between the settlements of Hook and Newnham.
The footpath network in this area is currently within a pastoral setting with views enclosed by woodland on surrounding higher ground. The rights of way through this site should be safeguarded from the adverse impact of development and retained as a highly valued and widely used resource area.
9. Historic England have drawn attention to the presence of the Newnham Conservation Area being in close proximity to the proposed site. The area comprises a series of dispersed farms which derive some of their

significance from surrounding agricultural fields. The loss of the fields as a result of the proposed development at Owen's Farm would harm an appreciation of the conservation areas rural agricultural setting and its significance as well as the significance of any individual listed buildings within it (Naishes Farm, Tithe Barn, Tylney Hall and Garden). The outcome of the recent Grove Farm appeal should not be considered to set a precedence in the devaluing of local 'gaps'. Each development should be considered on its merits and in some cases, a local gap between localities are vitally important in preserving the separate character and essence of parishes. Hart DC mentions this asset in its vision statement in the emerging LP when it states, *"All new developments will have been built to a high level of environmental and design standards, respecting local character and distinctiveness and providing measures to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The coalescence of settlements will have been avoided through the protection of designated 'Gaps'."*

10. The Statement of Significance in chapter 16 of the ES contains incorrect conclusions, namely there will of course be adverse effects on the Newnham Group (community), and there will be significant adverse effects on the existing transport networks and the receiving environment. In both these areas, the Developer claims that the effects in each case would be negligible.

Appendix 1

Detailed Review of Transport Assessment (TA) which was prepared by Bellamy Roberts, Sept 2017

1.0 Overview

This is essentially a residential urban extension development and not mixed use in planning terms.

Some of the basic assumptions used in this assessment are no longer correct, or clearly misrepresents the current conditions, such that any confidence in the TA is undermined, e.g. the statement in the TA that there are no deficiencies within the local highway network which would be exacerbated by the proposed development (2.30) clearly demonstrates there is a lack of acceptance of the very constricted nature of Newnham Road between the site and the junction with the A 30; there is a statement in the TA that Hook has a large workplace capacity (4.108) but this is currently reducing significantly with the departure of Virgin, BMW and HP and resulting office conversions so any new population will have to commute to work; the TA claims there are currently bus services to Camberley, Hartley Wintney and Yateley from Hook Centre (4.82) but these are long discontinued; the Capital Cars Taxi Bus service to East Hook (4.103) was discontinued several months ago; the TA claims that Policeman's Walk is a safe and direct access to Hook Station (5.6), but it is secluded and narrow so not compliant with principles of safety by design standards; in the TA cycling is effectively dismissed by the statement that the local highway network is of a suitable standard to encourage cycle use (4.67), so the lack of designated cycle facilities in this part of Hook is inferred to be of no consequence; there is no reference in the TA to the very constricted nature of Newnham Road between the site and the junction with the A30 and the very sub-standard road layout at the approach to the junction with the A30 (7.31) so the capacity assessment of this junction is meaningless having not recognised the fundamental road layout parameters that are present; the statement in the TA that all trips to nursery, schools, shop and community activities will be internal to the site (6.2) is clearly unrealistic and leads to an under-estimate of the forecast of vehicle movements onto Newnham Road.

Therefore, the two generalised statements, viz- that this is a highly sustainable location with frequent bus services and safe and convenient walking and cycle routes are also available (Exec Summary para 7) that only need some relatively minor enhancement and that there are no highway infrastructure constraints to prevent the site being developed for up to 700 dwellings, are entirely erroneous.

2.0 Findings from Transport Assessment and Developers Proposals

2.1 There are several statements in the TA that HCC have agreed that a new roundabout as a single access to the site from Newnham Road is acceptable for the proposed 700 dwellings (1.10,2.12,5.2). There is no mention of the need for a

secondary emergency access requirement for this number of dwellings, including a school and nursery. Of course, a new roundabout can be designed in isolation to accommodate the forecast of traffic movements (7.19 & 7.20). However, HCC seem to have totally disregarded the inadequacy of Newnham Road to accommodate a robust forecast of traffic flows between the site and the junction with the A 30.

- 2.2 The traffic capacity assessment for the Newnham Road junction with the A30 is fundamentally flawed (7.31) as the approach geometry to this junction has not been correctly coded and that would impose a significant constraint on the capacity of this junction.
- 2.3 It is stated that HCC requested the Developer to assess the Old School Road junction with Newnham Road as a split priority T Junction (7.25), but there is no accepted capacity assessment model for this form of layout. This request, apart from the safety implications of increasing traffic flow at such a junction, suggests a lack of experience or competence on the part of the Highway Authority's representative.
- 2.4 Hook PC had stressed to the Developer the lack of safe and convenient pedestrian and dedicated cycle facilities between the site and Hook Centre, Hook's community facilities and the Railway Station. There is a general statement that cycle and pedestrian improvements will be provided within neighbouring residential development and in Hook Centre (8.2) but there are no specific proposals other than those in 4.78 which are plainly wholly inadequate in the context of a 700 dwelling development. In particular, it is certainly questionable whether removal of existing traffic calming on Newnham Road would improve safety for cyclists and promote use of this mode of travel.
- 2.5 The long term commercial viability of extending the No 10 Bus service from Old Basing to serve this development is very questionable, especially as the No 13 Service provides faster access to Basingstoke Centre, which would be the desired destination. Any public transport contributions would be better used in total towards a good local Community Bus service. The TA records discussions with the Hartley Wintney Community Bus provider but provides no proposals to promote any such new services to serve this development.
- 2.6 There is no assessment whatsoever of a realistic forecast of numbers of pedestrians, cyclists or public transport demand so this TA is incomplete and does not form a basis for consideration of the adequacy or otherwise of the facilities to be provided for these modes of travel.
- 2.7 The TA reports that Newnham Road is 5 m wide (measures 4.88m of surfacing with soft verges on site) but carefully qualifies that this is in the vicinity of the proposed site access (2.4). However, it does not report that the carriageway width reduces to between 4.72m and 4.26m (measured on site between kerbs) to the west of Sefton Drive (figure 21). Between the site access and the A30

the footway is less than 1m wide for long distances and discontinuous (figures 19, 20 and 21).

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 This Transport Statement is significantly deficient in some aspects that are fundamental to identifying what transport improvements are necessary to ensure that the proposed residential development of 700 dwellings would have both; a) adequate capacity to ensure that the realistic forecast of traffic movements could efficiently and safely gain access to the main road network (A 30) and b) provide for safe and convenient access by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport so that the development would effectively promote and encourage travel by sustainable modes.
- 3.2 The available width of Newnham Road between kerbs is only 4.26m in places (ignoring the traffic calming measures which the Developer proposes to remove) and the footway is less than 1.0m wide over considerable lengths but a roadway (carriageway and footway) needs to reflect the type and density of traffic and pedestrians. A carriageway width of 5.5m is required for a commercial vehicle to just pass a bus or another commercial vehicle and 6m is the desirable width. A footway should be at least 1.8 m wide to just enable two pushchairs to pass and 2m is the desirable width. This route is being promoted for buses, cyclists and a significant flow of pedestrians to serve the proposed development, but there is no land available within the existing highway to enable any widening of either the carriageway or the footway.
- 3.3 Where improvements are proposed by the Developer, they are lacking in any detail such that there is significant ability of the developer to minimise any expenditure on essential works.
- 3.4 The assessment of the more strategic junctions in the local network, and notably the A30 junction with Station Road, do raise concerns for the long term impact of traffic growth on Hook Centre.
- 3.5 An Audit of this TA by an experienced Transport Planner should be undertaken to ensure that the assessment of forecast trip rates by each mode is robust having regard to the prevailing circumstances at this site.

Appendix 2

Committed new housing in Hook in the current Local Plan period (2011-2032)

At this point in time new housing under construction and developments granted permission is as follows:

Built during the LP period: Cresley Drive (11 units)
 Perdue Close (9 units)
 Hook House Hotel (4 units)

Under construction:

Reading Road (Cala Homes 13/02585/MAJOR) – 70 units
Pembroke Manor (Taylor Wimpey 15/01603/FUL) – 78 units
Providence House (16/00883/PRIOR) – 107 units
North East Hook (Croudace, David Wilson Homes, Barrett Homes) – 550 units

Sites with extant planning permission:

Bartley House (Stonegate Homes 16/03378/FUL) – 102 units
Land at High Ridge Farm (13/02567/MAJOR) – 60 units
Gregory House, Elms Road (14/00926/MAJOR) – 28 units

TOTAL: 1,019

This figure does not include the quantum of additional PDR conversions of office blocks on the Bartley Wood Business park currently being applied for, which will over-supply the village with 1 and 2 bed apartments whilst losing the commercial/employment asset that provides a notable amount of employment to the local community.

As part of ES, much has been made of the Application Site being ‘one of the best performing options’ as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process. However, HDC state that strategic urban extensions will not form part of the new Local Plan and as such this application does not accord with HDC’s objectives. A new settlement at Winchfield or Murrell Green is the preferred approach visualised by HDC and naturally, there is much deliberation regarding the delivery and timescale of such sites.

It could be argued the Developer’s claimed ‘shortfall’ in delivery of dwellings over the early part of the new Plan has already been fulfilled within Hook by the developments completed/currently under way as listed above, therefore nullifying the applicant’s justification that the Owen’s farm site should be promoted to fill this perceived shortfall.