

Statement for Examination in Public Hearing – Issue 5

Councillor Diane Taylor (Oakley & North Waltham ward)

Policy SS3.10 – Manydown

I accept the principle of development at Manydown. However, I believe that the extent of the proposed development site to the west and south renders the policy unsound.

The various intentions for Manydown have altered over time, increasing the area at each stage. The original proposal was to build north of the railway lines and east of the north/south ridgeline which crosses the B3400.

1. The western edge of the Manydown Site.

Of particular concern is the extension of the proposed development site westwards as far as the Wootton Road. This would bring the housing site to within 200m of the last house in Newfound (the northern area of the village of Oakley). No evidence or explanation has been given for this alteration. **Without a clear rationale for this change it has been impossible for either councillors or the public to engage in a productive conversation and is therefore in contravention of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and is not justified. The virtual coalescence between Newfound and Basingstoke which would result if this boundary is established would be in contravention of Policy EM2 – Strategic Gaps.** The desirability of respecting the natural ridgeline in establishing a settlement at Manydown was emphasised in the Planning Inspector's Report in 2005.

I propose an amendment to the Local Plan to move the boundary of the Manydown development site (and the corresponding Strategic Gap for Oakley) eastwards by 400m. This would confine housing development to the east of the natural ridgeline, concealing the development from Newfound and from traffic approaching from the west.

2. Land to the South of the railway lines

The inclusion of the triangle of land south of the parallel railway lines and north of Pack Lane creates a development area for 300 houses which is unsound for the following reasons:

- (i) The road along the southern edge of this small site, Pack Lane, would be the access road westwards. Pack Lane is a narrow single carriageway. Its width is constrained by the double tunnel beneath the railway lines at the area called the Battledown Flyover on the western tip of the site. These tunnels can only be traversed by single vehicles, not two-way traffic. Furthermore, Pack Lane emerges in the village of Oakley at the crossroads with Fox Lane and Oakley Lane. This has long been a dangerous and inadequate junction.
- (ii) Traffic travelling east into Basingstoke from this site would have to cross the area known as Fiveways at which Pack Lane and Kempshott Lane/Buckskin Lane cross. HCC Highways have stated in their response to the Pre-Submission Local Plan that the improvement to this junction, which would be necessary if the development is to proceed, is not deliverable.

- (iii) The development created would be bounded on the north by two railway lines and south by a narrow single-carriageway road. There would be no connection with any development to the north of the railway and the resulting development would be claustrophobic and isolated.
- (iv) The need for a western bypass has been acknowledged, but not formally investigated. The development of this land around the parallel tracks, where a flyover would be most viable, would push any potential bypass further west, compromising the integrity of the village of Oakley and its strategic gap.

In summary, the inclusion of land to the south of the railway in the Manydown development site is unsound as the safety and adequacy of the roads infrastructure has not been established and the potential use of this land as a suitable site for a road-crossing of the railway has not been investigated.

I propose that the Plan is amended to exclude land to the south of the railway lines from the Manydown Policy.

It is my belief that the urgency to add more housing to Basingstoke's Local Plan annual figure in order to achieve the adoption of the Plan as early as possible has led to a hasty decision to increase the size and yield of the Manydown site to the detriment of nearby settlements and without the establishment of the necessary infrastructure to support either the building of the houses or the management of the increased traffic which will result.

Perhaps I could add that the site "East of Basingstoke" Policy SS3.9 has the capacity to support twice the number of houses proposed – 900 as opposed to 450 provided for in the Policy. The landowners, Hampshire County Council, have not been able to give any adequate explanation for this, despite enquiries.