

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

### **Issue 5: Greenfield Site Allocations – Response from The National Trust in respect of Proposed Allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm (Policy SS3.8)**

The National Trust would like to thank the Inspector for this opportunity to comment further on question 11 of your Inspector's Key Issues and Discussion Note regarding the Greenfield site allocations.

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 (Land ownership plan attached as Appendix 1). 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The National Trust originally made representations to the Pre-Submission Local Plan in respect of both Razor's Farm (site ref: SS3.3) and Upper Cufaude Farm (site ref: SS3.8), however in light of the Section 78 Appeal decision in 2014 which granted outline planning permission for the development of Razor's Farm, The National Trust will not be pursuing this representation and therefore will only make reference to that at Upper Cufaude Farm.

As indicated above, The Vyne and its estate has been recognised as a heritage asset of National Importance. The National Trust considers that this Estate has strong historical links with the Beaurepaire Estate to the north and potentially with the Cufaude area to the east. The Estate had remained in the same family for over 300 years at the point that it was acquired by the National Trust and therefore the Trust's ownership reflects a significant historical family ownership of this part of Hampshire and creates a unique historic landscape of mansion, formal parkland and wider estate land that should all be recognised for its heritage importance. The National Trust considers that the setting of The Vyne Estate (as opposed to the mansion house or historic parkland as individual elements) has not been properly assessed or considered as part of the development of the allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm and therefore the significance of this historic asset has not been

quantified and the impact of such a significant level of development within its setting considered as to the level of harm arising. The Trust views this as clearly contrary to the advice contained within paragraphs 126, 129 and 137 of the NPPF. The Trust considers that the proposed allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm does form part of the setting of The Vyne Estate and that there are important aspects of the proposed development site that contribute to the setting. The National Trust does not unfortunately have a formal settings study relating to The Vyne Estate, however in considering whether the land proposed within the Upper Cufaude allocation forms part of the setting of the Estate and its impact upon its significance as a heritage asset, reference has been made to Historic England's "Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets" (2015). This document provides a 4-step approach to assessing the setting of a heritage asset and understanding the impact of a proposed development on its setting and significance. In going through this process The Trust considers that the following matters are relevant in understanding how the proposed allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm contribute to the setting of The Vyne Estate:

- History and degree of change over time – whilst this land is outside the ownership of The National Trust the character of the landscape does not change significantly and this has been recognised in the Landscape Capacity Study 2010 which states: "*the site is an integral part of the wider landscape to the west and north west.*" (land within the Trust's ownership) This clearly demonstrates the historic connection to The Vyne Estate.
- Tranquillity and Remoteness – The Vyne Estate is recognised for its sense of remoteness, despite its increasingly close proximity to Basingstoke. Walking around the estate also provides users with a sense of tranquillity and rural character with very little evidence of the urban development to the south and south east. Again the Landscape Capacity Study 2010 recognised the proposed allocation site as being a tranquil area with the site not being affected by the nearby urban area. This again provides a strong link to the Estate itself and demonstrates that this land is an integral part of its setting.
- Rarity of Comparable Survival of Setting – the Trust considers that part of the rarity about The Vyne Estate is that it was acquired with virtually all of the land that had been held by the family for over 300 years. The setting of this land is therefore important to retain this heritage asset within the Council's area and within the wider County, as the encroachment of development from the south has already resulted in adverse impacts on its tranquillity and conflict between users.

The Trust considers that the proposed allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm would harm the setting of The Vyne Estate for the following reasons:

- Location and siting – the proposed allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm would extend the northern boundary of Basingstoke in a way that it wholly unrelated to the existing settlement and out into open, undeveloped countryside that has been recognised by the Council’s own studies as “isolated”. The Housing Site Assessment (March 2014) states that: *“This extension would project northwards of the town of Basingstoke in a manner inconsistent with the existing compact shape of the town and offer limited opportunities to be defined by strong boundaries”* (p129). The Trust considers that such a form of development would have an adverse impact on the setting of The Vyne Estate and that the gradual encroachment of built form around the boundaries of the estate as a result of the continuing expansion of Basingstoke has been identified by The National Trust as one of the greatest threats to the Estate and its continued protection for the Nation.
- Changes to general character – the introduction of approx. 390 dwellings within the setting of the Estate will have a significant change in its character. As has already been identified this is a tranquil, rural area with only isolated rural development . The level of development proposed will not only result in a substantial amount of built form within the setting of the Estate, but also a suburbanising effect with the introduction of lighting effects, noise and increased use of the Estate itself.

The National Trust considers that the Council has not considered the importance of the setting of The Vyne Estate in its assessment of the allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm. The Trust consider that this is a significant omission in the assessment of this site and that this is contrary to advice contained in paragraph 129 of the NPPF. As this assessment has not been undertaken by the Council the Trust is unclear as to how the Council can have considered the harm arising to the setting of The Vyne Estate as a heritage asset and consequently would state that the plan is not justified as we consider that reasonable alternatives to the development at this location should have been further explored where there is no impact on the setting of heritage assets and that the harm arising is not consistent with National Policy.

The Trust would also question whether the allocation of this site for residential development is consistent with NPPF’s core principles at paragraph 17 which states that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be taken account of and that proposals should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. The assessment of the site in Housing Site Assessment clearly identifies that it is in an isolated location and that there is potential for coalescence with adjoining settlements. The Trust considers that this approach does not recognise the importance of the countryside for its own sake and that the proposal will not

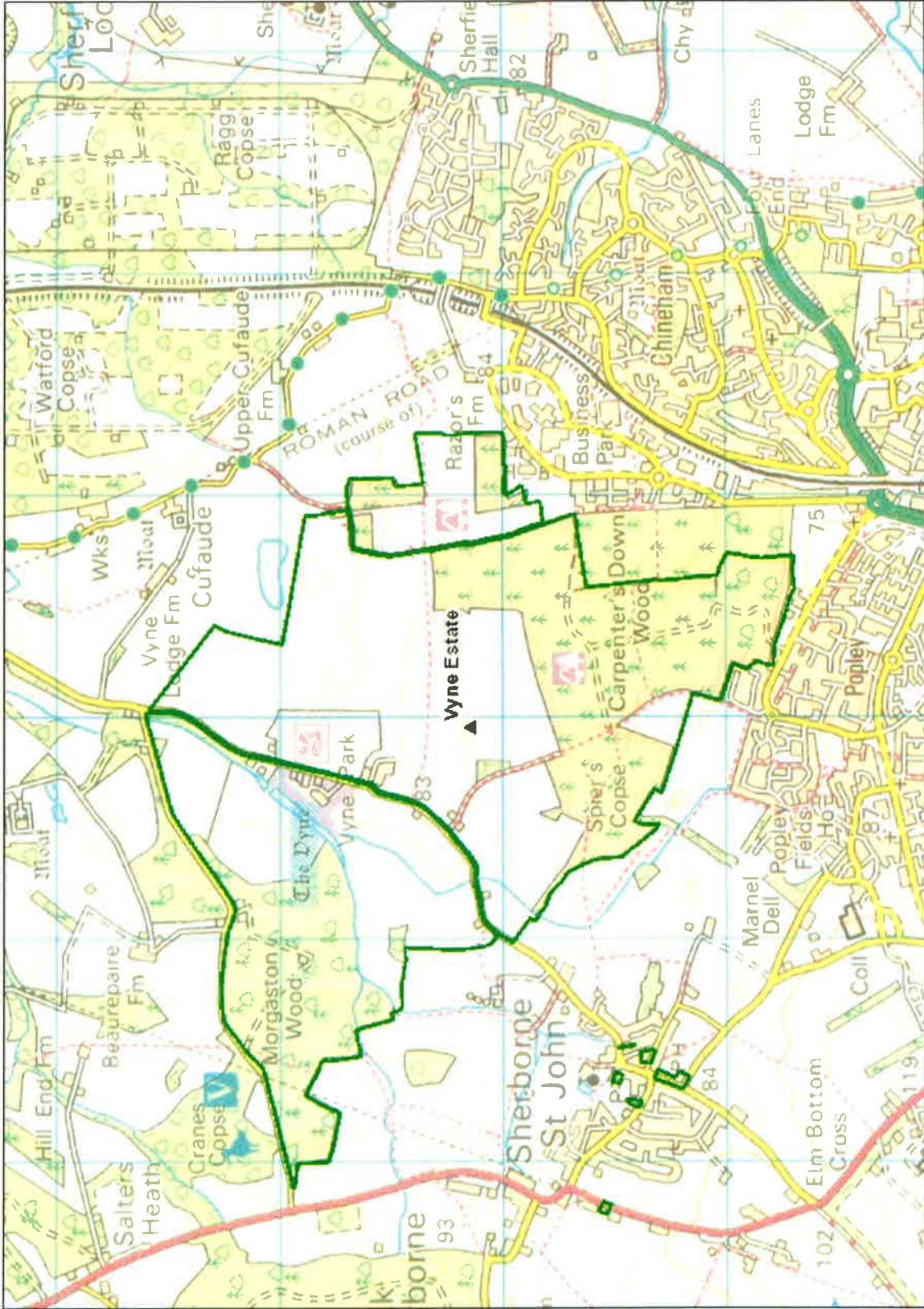
enhance the natural environment as it will result in the loss of open countryside. In addition, the site will be remote from public transport opportunities and therefore the Trust cannot see how such a development can achieve the core principle of reducing pollution when such a strategy is likely to be reliant on private cars.

The Trust would respectfully request that the allocation at Upper Cufaude Farm is removed from the Local Plan.

# **APPENDIX 1**



# Map Showing The National Trust's Vyne Estate, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke



## Legend

- ▲ Definitive Properties (GB)
- NT Ownership (GB)
- NT Leasehold (GB)

1: 25,000



## Notes

This map was automatically generated using the National Trust GIS Browser

This map is a user generated static output from an Intranet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

1.3 Kilometers



1.3

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