

BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE LOCAL PLAN

LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION HEARINGS 20 OCTOBER/ 21 OCTOBER

ISSUE 5 (Q 11) - POLICY SS3.10 MANYDOWN (ALSO POLICY SS3.11 BASINGSTOKE GOLF COURSE & SS3.12 HOUNSOME FIELDS)

FURTHER STATEMENT OF PETER WILSON (ID 786114)

INTRODUCTION

- 1 In my representations on the Pre-Submission Local Plan I objected to the inclusion of Manydown Parcel 6 (land between Pack Lane and the railway) on highways grounds and due to its isolation from the remainder of the Manydown allocation.
- 2 I have also objected to the proposed allocations at Kennel Farm (SS3.2), Basingstoke Golf Course (SS3.11) and Hounsme Fields (SS3.12). Because development at Kennel Farm now has planning permission, I make no further comment on it in this statement.
- 3 I maintained the objection to the Manydown Parcel 6 site in representations on the Revised Pre-Submission Plan whilst acknowledging that the Council had reduced the housing number for this part of the allocation from a number unspecified in the document, but believed to be in excess of 700 dwellings, to 300. The reduced number of 300 for this parcel was retained in the Plan when the Council was considering its Mid Examination Modifications, despite a suggestion in the officer's report that it might be possible to accommodate a higher number.
- 4 I share the views of Hampshire County Council Planning (Comment ID 958 - Mr Neil Massie) on the Revised Pre Submission Plan that (even) the reduced figure of 300 dwellings at Parcel 6 is unlikely to be deliverable due to highways problems. I also endorse the objections to the inclusion of Parcel 6 made by the Kempshott and District Residents Association (KDRA) – [ID 122977].
- 5 I agree with the representations submitted by SWAG, of which I am a member, in relation to the unsustainability of the proposed greenfield housing sites to the south west and west of Basingstoke, including the Parcel 6 part of SS.10. I fully endorse their view that there is a significant shortfall in the identified funding of the infrastructure necessary to support the proposed new developments. I also share SWAG's view that it would be crucial to the soundness of the Plan for all of the necessary infrastructure to be provided were, contrary to their concerns and mine, those housing allocations were to proceed. The necessary infrastructure elements include highways improvements within the A30 corridor in particular. **However, I further suggest that, were the housing allocations to proceed, highways improvements should not be confined to the A30 corridor.** The traffic impact of the proposed housing allocations to the southwest and west of the town will also impact on the road network within Kempshott. Highways improvements or traffic management measures or a combination of both are therefore also required to the highway network to the west of the Ringway in the area between the A30 and the B3400.

- 6 This statement largely focuses on my objection to Parcel 6 of the SS3.10 proposed allocation as in most respects SWAG's representations cover my objections to sites SS3.11 and SS3.12.
- 7 I set out in this statement why the allocations in Policies SS3.10, SS3.11 and SS3.12 are unsound having regard to national planning policy. In particular they will not deliver sustainable development having regard to section 4 of the NPPF (Promoting Sustainable Transport).

ANALYSIS

- 8 Vehicular movement within Kempshott Ward (an area with a population of approximately 6,800 in 2,700 dwellings¹) and connections to the principal roads rely largely on an inadequate pre-war road network. A 1.4km section of Kempshott Lane, a 1.5km section of Pack Lane (east of the Fiveways junction) and the southern 300m of Buckskin Lane are key elements of that network and they are lined by continuous frontage development with direct access to those roads. Altogether there are a total of approximately 400 dwellings with frontage access. Heather Way and the northern section of Buckskin Lane are the only purpose-built distributor roads within the area. Jasmine Road/ Homesteads Road, the latter of which also has continuous frontage development, provides a shorter, alternative route to Kempshott Lane. Like Kempshott Lane, Homesteads Road has a straight alignment throughout its 0.65km length but unlike Kempshott Lane there are no traffic calming measures. Drivers therefore widely ignore the 30mph speed restriction. Jasmine Road/ Homesteads Road forms part of a route that is subject to a traffic order prohibiting through traffic movement but, in the absence of enforcement measures, the Order is also widely ignored.
- 9 A traffic distribution network that relies upon roads with frontage access is unsuitable for accommodating further traffic flows and will not allow the 'safe and suitable access' to the proposed development sites required by para 32 of the NPPF. The road network in Kempshott compares unfavourably with much of the rest of the town, including Chineham, where purpose built roads were constructed to service new housing built from the 1960s onwards. The intrinsic unsuitability of Kempshott Lane to take additional traffic was recognised when its junction with the A30 at the Wallop Drive (Sainsbury's) roundabout was closed in the early 1990s in conjunction with housing development at Gabriel Park on the southwestern edge of Kempshott. At a similar time a traffic order prohibiting through movements was introduced on the Columbine Road /Jasmine Road/ Homesteads Road/ Coniston Road routes.
- 10 East bound traffic from Parcel 6 accessing the Ringway would have to negotiate a 1.5km section of Pack Lane that is subject to road hump traffic calming. Southerly traffic bound for M3 Junction 7 and intervening destinations would need to use a 1.4km section of Kempshott Lane with continuous frontage access. North bound traffic would be routed via a 300m section of Buckskin Lane with frontage access before meeting a purpose built section of distributor road. West bound traffic towards Oakley and beyond would need to negotiate a single track tunnel with a blind bend and restricted height under the railway, which is consequently limited to one-way traffic. The tunnel is also subject to flooding from surface water runoff.

¹ Source Census 2011 data for Kempshott Ward

- 11 Traffic flows on the road network in the area between A30 and B3400 will increase as a result of the proposed development of a total of approximately 2,000 dwellings on sites SS3.2 (Kennel Farm), SS3.11(Golf Course) and SS3.12 (Hounsom Fields). Traffic flows will be further increased by committed development within Beggarwood and the proposed development of a Critical Treatment Hospital/ Cancer Treatment Centre close to M3 Junction 7. Whilst much of the traffic movements associated with those proposed developments can be expected to be focused on the A30 corridor, Heather Way/ Kempshott Lane/ Buckskin Lane is a potentially more convenient route for traffic between those sites and destinations in the west and north west of the town (including the Leisure Park) particularly if improvements to the A30/ Ringway West corridor are unable to provide for or keep pace with the additional traffic that will be generated by those sites. Likewise the development of the Manydown land parcels north of the railway can be expected to result in the generation of some additional traffic on the Buckskin Lane/ Kempshott Lane/ Heather Way route. The latter is shorter for south and westbound M3 and A303 movements than the route via M3 Junction 6.
- 12 The signal controlled Fiveways Junction, where Kempshott Lane, Buckskin Lane and Pack Lane meet is a critical element of the local road network, where congestion and delays are already currently experienced at peak times. It is one of 22 key junctions in the town that are analysed in the Council's transport assessments.
- 13 The revised Transport Assessment (TA) undertaken by Parsons Brinkerhoff to support the Mid Examination Proposed Main Modifications addresses the Fiveways junction at pages 106 – 109. In summary, it indicates that mitigation requiring the acquisition of third party land will be needed to support the development proposals.
- 14 Firstly, I would comment that there can be no guarantee that the necessary additional land required will be made available. Without the necessary mitigation, Table 4-66 on page 107 of the Assessment indicates that average delays at the junction during the PM peak will be 941 seconds (i.e. over 15 minutes). This compares with the 2029 reference case scenario of 259 seconds (i.e. over 4 minutes). Even with the identified mitigation measures average delays at the junction during the PM peak will be 331 seconds (5.5 minutes), which is significantly worse than the 2029 reference case scenario. Faced with delays of this length, drivers will not use the junction but will divert to other roads, i.e. Jasmine Road/ Homesteads Road/ Coniston Road, notwithstanding the traffic order prohibiting such movements. I suggest that this is an example of the scenario anticipated by Parsons Brinkerhoff in the TA – see the following extract from the Executive Summary at page 12:

In reality some of the forecasted demand may not materialise in the modelled time periods due to travellers avoiding congestion by altering their route, travelling at a different time of day (peak-spreading) or choosing to travel to/from a different location.

- 15 The result will be gridlock on the local road network to the severe detriment of the living conditions of existing residents. This would be contrary to paras 30 and 32 of the NPPF, which encourage solutions to reduce congestion and to prevent development where its residual cumulative impacts are severe. Moreover, the forecast congestion delays at the Fiveways junction could be significantly worse

than the TA forecasts. This is because it assumes that mitigation measures to the junctions within the A30 corridor and elsewhere will be fully implemented. Given the cost of those highways improvements and the uncertainty as to whether they can be fully funded, there must be some considerable doubt as to their implementation.

- 16 To understand how the level of congestion forecast in the TA for the Fiveways junction compares with the other 21 key junctions in the town, I have looked at the relevant tables for each of those. Only three other junctions are forecast to have worse congestion delays than Fiveways in the 2029 reference case scenario (Brighton Hill, Hackwood Road and the B3400 Worting Road/ Roman Way junctions) and only one (the last of those three), under the 'Local Plan With Mitigation' scenario. Moreover, as I have already indicated, the availability of third party land required to improve the Fiveways junction is uncertain. Without the acquisition of that land the proposed housing developments would result in average delays at the junction during the PM peak of over 15 minutes. This is considerably in excess of the delays forecast to be experienced at any of the other key junctions in the town, including the B3400 Worting Road/ Roman Way junction where, in contrast to Fiveways, the TA indicates that all proposed improvements can be carried out within existing highway boundaries.
- 17 My other concern about the Parcel 6 part of the SS3.10 allocation is that it is separated from the remainder of the proposed Manydown development by the railway line. The Plan includes no indication as to how connections for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and public transport users can be made between Parcel 6 and the remainder of the allocation. In the absence of such connections, development at Parcel 6 would be a piecemeal extension to the town and would neither benefit from nor help to support the viability of the community facilities that are proposed as part of the wider Manydown development.
- 18 The scale of the Manydown allocation is such that it must be considered as an example of the 'larger scale residential development' to which para 38 of the NPPF refers. Para 38 sets out how such sites should be developed to incorporate a mix of uses and key facilities such as primary schools within walking distance of most properties. Without the connections I refer to above, Parcel 6 of the Manydown allocation fails the test of para 38. Moreover, for the reasons set out above, the full development potential of Parcel 6 is constrained by the difficulties in providing a satisfactory route to and from the site for vehicular movements. At the least, development of the site should therefore be delayed and its potential reviewed until such time as an adequate highway connection can be obtained from the west so that it can be properly related to the remainder of the Manydown allocation.

CONCLUSIONS

- 19 The inadequacy of the local road network within the Kempshott area provides an unsound basis for promoting development either within Manydown Parcel 6 or on the sites to the southwest of the town (Golf Course and Hounsme Fields). The Council has not shown how safe and suitable access can be gained to Parcel 6. Moreover, in the absence of effective mitigation, the proposed development sites will have a cumulative and severe impact on the Kempshott road network.

- 20 There is no specific reference in the Plan to any highways improvement or mitigation to the road network within Kempshott (outside of the A30 corridor), although the TA refers to the need for improvements to the Fiveways junction. An improvement to this junction requires the acquisition of third party land, but there can be no certainty of this. Moreover, even with the improvement indicated, average congestion delays at five and a half minutes in the afternoon peak will be worse than the 2029 reference case scenario.
- 21 In all of these respects the proposals are contrary to the guidance in Section 4 of the NPPF and they should therefore be removed from the Plan.
- 22 The congestion on the local road network within the Kempshott area will result in traffic diverting to other, even less suitable, roads within the area. The Jasmine Road/ Homesteads Road/ Coniston Road route is effectively the only means of avoiding the Fiveways junction for movements not routed via the A30. The existing Traffic Order prohibiting through movements on this route is ineffective. In the event that any of the allocations proceed the Plan should also therefore include a firm commitment to the introduction of traffic calming measures on this route.
- 23 It is essential that the highways improvements to the junctions within the A30 corridor are fully implemented in step with the proposed new development. Without those improvements congestion on the local road network within Kempshott will be even worse than the Transport Assessment indicates.
- 24 In the absence of any reference in the Plan as to how the Parcel 6 land will be connected to the remainder of the Manydown allocation, it fails the test in para 38 of the NPPF and should therefore be deleted from the Plan for that reason also.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 25 (1) Proposed allocations SS3.10 (Parcel 6 part), SS3.11 and SS3.12 be removed from the Plan.
- (2) Notwithstanding the above, in the event that development proceeds on any or all of the above sites, the Inspector firmly recommends that the infrastructure to support the allocations, including all of the highway mitigation measures identified in the Transport Assessment, be put in place in step with the development. Those measures must include an effective solution to reduce congestion at the Fiveways junction.
- (3) In the event that development proceeds, an additional criterion should be included as part of Policy SS3.10, to read:
- Include mitigation to the highway network within Kempshott, including more effective measures than currently apply to prevent the passage of through traffic on unsuitable roads.*
- (4) In the event that development proceeds, a similar criterion to that in (3) above should be introduced into Policies SS3.11 and SS3.12.

