

Examination of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029)

MF17 : SS3.8 – Upper Cufaude Farm - environmental mitigation

Introduction

- 1.1 At the hearing session on 15 October, issues were raised regarding the need to provide further environmental mitigation in relation to two of the proposed housing allocations of the Submission Local Plan, namely SS3.8 – Upper Cufaude Farm and SS3.9 – East of Basingstoke. The Inspector recommended that relevant parties should forward suggested amended policy wording to the council which could potentially address the concerns they raised. As a result, the council has received suggested comments and policy amendments from Dawson Consulting, representing Mr John Lloyd; Ms Anne Budge, representing The Vyne Estate, National Trust; and Hampshire County Council in their landowning capacity. The comments are summarised below, along with the council's response to the suggestions made and resulting proposed modifications.

Issues Raised by Dawson Consulting (for Mr John Lloyd)

- 1.2 Dawson Consulting explains, in their submission, that Allocation SS3.8 – Upper Cufaude Farm could be supplemented with additional land within the ownership of Mr John Lloyd to achieve two significant gains, namely bringing more suitable land into the development equation, and also benefitting the local landscape and conservation. They consider that the plan is currently inadequate and the acceptability of the allocation is more than a simple matter of additional mitigation but rather requires a more fundamental vision that would respect the ancient landscapes of the Vyne setting by providing clear and defensible boundaries, to the north and west. The holdings of Mr Lloyd to the north and west of the proposed allocation, could form part of the allocation, and contribute to an improved layout and better mitigation. The additional site of 0.9 ha comprises three titles, and all the owners consider it would be better developed to provide a better rounding off of the settlement. This would also ensure a comprehensive scheme capable of providing the housing required within a more acceptable setting for the National Trust site of the Vyne.
- 1.3 The following revised wording has therefore been suggested:

d) delete remainder of sentence after 'in and around the site', and replace with: 'taking the line of development further north and west, to allow a comprehensive treatment and high quality environment, and a clear defensive boundary'.

An amendment to the inset map would be required to show the change.
- 1.4 The council has considered the suitability of allocating this additional land as part of the allocation. The site is included in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA, HO04, site reference BAS148) and was considered through the detailed Sites Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

process. These assessments concluded that the allocation of the additional parcel of land was not suitable or necessary and therefore it was not included in the Submission Local Plan as part of Allocation SS3.8. The site was not put forward as an omission site through the Local Plan process and is therefore not included within the Omission site list (PS/2/34b).

- 1.5 The council's landscape officers have revisited the site in light of the additional submission made following the hearings and concluded the following:

'The proposed site allocation SS3.8, is within a larger area (BAS 122) identified within the 2010 Landscape Capacity Study as having a 'medium' capacity for development... It is considered that the inclusion of the two additional fields into SS3.8, would result in an allocation area that would have a greater impact on the rural character of the wider countryside. The additional fields would form a relatively narrow finger of development extending into this countryside, potentially having a greater impact than the consolidated shape of SS3.8. It is also considered that with careful design along the western edge of SS3.8 (e.g appropriate height, orientation and density of dwellings, location of open space and additional planting), any impacts on the land under the ownership of The Vyne, could be minimised and mitigated to an acceptable degree'.

- 1.6 The council is therefore of the view that the inclusion of the additional land would lead to a greater landscape impact rather than helping to achieve the aim of enhanced mitigation as discussed at the relevant hearing. The National Trust, in their submission, have also considered the proposals and concluded the following:

The Trust has carefully considered the amended policy wording and suggested alteration to the Proposals Map put forward in this further submission but does not support the amendment put forward. The inclusion of this land would bring the development adjacent to the boundary with The Vyne Estate and we consider this would have an adverse impact on its setting.

Issues Raised by National Trust and Hampshire County Council

- 1.7 The Trust are of the view that the proposition put forward by Hampshire County Council for a continuous 30m wide buffer along the northern and western edges of the site would not be in keeping with the existing landscape character. Therefore a different approach should be taken which better reflects the landscape character of this area of countryside which is predominantly copses, hedgerows and large hedgerow trees. The Trust states that the existing trees and hedgerow trees should be retained around the site boundaries along with the creation of a new copse in the south west corner of the site, alongside new planting in the existing hedgerow. These measures would be a more appropriate way forward to mitigate the landscape and visual impact of the development. The Trust has also welcomed the landowner's offer of providing additional land within their ownership to the north of the allocation, up to Cufaude Lane, to be included within the allocation for additional landscape mitigation and informal open space provision.

1.8 The National Trust have discussed the proposed changes with Hampshire County Council who have confirmed, in writing to the council, that they do not object to either the proposed wording or the suggested alterations to the proposals map.

1.9 The following proposed modifications have been suggested by the Trust, to criteria d). The council has considered the proposals and supports the suggested changes.

d) Comprise a layout and design of development that retains respects the existing landscape and vegetation structure in and round the site, including enhancement and buffering of the hedgerow along the southern boundary and provision of a well-designed and robust ~~strong~~ buffer, which reflects the existing landscape character, on the western and northern sides of the site from the outset;

1.10 The Trust also proposes that additional land to the north be added to the allocation. This land is shown as a hatched area on the map submitted by the National Trust. They have suggested the following criteria to accompany this boundary change:

Include additional landscape and appropriate open space measures within the area hatched x on the proposals map.

1.11 The council supports the principle of the inclusion of the additional land but consider that the suggested wording needs to be strengthened in order to ensure that the land in question is used for landscape and open space measures only. As such the following amended additional criteria is proposed:

d i) Keep the area hatched x on the inset map free of development and roads, providing only additional landscape and appropriate open space measures to ensure sufficient mitigation of the development on the surrounding area;

1.12 The National Trust has confirmed to the council that they support the proposed amended wording. At the time of writing, Hampshire County Council have not expressed an official view on this change but any related updates will be submitted to the Inspector in due course.

