

## **Development brief – Causeway Farm, Petersfield**

Please find our comments on the development brief for Causeway Farm, objecting to development. These are written on behalf of:

- Owners of key parts of the site
- Over 200 hundred objectors to development at Causeway Farm
- 108 objectors to the development brief

Further information about the history of proposed development at the site can be found at [www.causewayfarm.com](http://www.causewayfarm.com)

The accompanying letter to the brief from EHDC states that “we have an adequate supply of land for housing”, whilst the brief itself states in 4.3 that “The Council will only give favourable consideration to proposals for the site’s development if it is satisfied that the site is suitable, available and achievable” Specifically this response will seek to demonstrate that the site satisfies none of these criteria, and sets out legal, physical and environmental constraints to the land.

In addition to the adequate supply of land for development the impact of development at the Bordon-Whitehill site must also be taken into account. Whilst it could also be argued that the potential number of houses at that site should be taken into account, it is without doubt that that site will have impact on amenities and resources throughout the District. For example, Petersfield has no V1th Form College which already severely impacts travel in the District by causing substantial commuting from Petersfield to Alton, Liphook and elsewhere. This and many other similar situations will be severely impacted by the development at Bordon-Whitehill.

As referenced in the brief 4.2 account needs to be taken of guidelines in the Petersfield Town Design Statement (TDS), which is quoted in each of the categories below. Additionally the TDS sets out a number of major development opportunity sites, carefully researched. Recommendations are made about each and these sites should be looked at least in parallel, if not before this reserve site.

The TDS is a new document carefully produced “by the community, and for the benefit of the community”, which has undergone extensive public consultation and scrutiny – more than any other planning document or policy in Petersfield. It would be particularly depressing to the community of Petersfield if its concerns were not taken into account in the first development brief to reference it.

The Local Plan Inspector, in his Report on the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review, stated that he attached “a good deal of importance to the natural beauty of the countryside around Petersfield and to the attractive rural setting for this historic market town” (paragraph 5.3.285). He noted that “the way in which (.....) countryside of great beauty surrounds Petersfield and (.....) sweeps almost to its centre is a fundamental part of the character and appearance of this historic market town” (paragraph 5.8.8 Inspector’s Report: Local Second Review).

## **Suitability**

Critically there is an additional issue with this particular site. The rationale for the release of these briefs is based on another reserve site – Silent Garden in Liphook, having been granted recent planning permission. Silent Garden is not in AONB, and does not form part of the proposed SDNP.

Causeway Farm is a Greenfield site in both AONB, and a part of the SDNP. In putting Causeway Farm at the bottom of the list of reserve sites the Inspector into the Local Plan Review 2005 stated that he hoped that the Site “**will never be developed**”.

2.0 of the TDS addresses - What makes Petersfield special. A key part of this relates to the countryside’s impact on the town, and the importance of footpaths. This is supported by over 90% of respondents. This development would have an overriding negative impact on one of the largest green fingers sweeping into the town and one of the major footpaths – the Hangers Way.

## **Availability**

Another overriding factor with this site is that substantial key areas, at the heart of the site, are unavailable, being owned by objectors to the development, areas which as the brief acknowledges include a listed building.

The brief acknowledges that the site covers some 11.3 hectares of which 9.1 is allocated for housing, but over 10% of this, at the heart of the site is unavailable. This critically affects all of the objectives for layout, landscape, access and community safety, and is clearly demonstrated by the enclosed boundaries at the heart of the site, in the aerial photograph which forms part of the brief.

## **Achievability**

Many of the objectives of the brief and the TDS cannot be met on this site.

These include:

*Meet future objectives of SDNP –development brief 3.2, TDS 5.1*

It is agreed that this is a critical site. The site is so major that no development should be permitted before the new South Downs National Park Authority has had a chance to voice their comments, particularly at a point where there is no immediate demonstrable need.

TDS - Petersfield’s inclusion within the South Downs National Park, which was strongly supported by residents and their elected representatives alike, demands that future development should enhance the National Park. The design and location of any new development will therefore need to meet the future objectives of the National Park and in particular safeguard the special characteristics of the town and its surrounding countryside, as described in Section 2.0.

*Protect and retain views, and Housing on rural margins – development brief 11.2, TDS 7.74.*

The proposed development would severely impact the views into the Town from the Park to the South, and fail to meet the objectives for housing on rural margins as set out in the TDS.

TDS - Protect and retain the views into and out of the Causeway.

*Water and Flooding – development brief 9.2, TDS 7.74, 8.0.*

The Environment Agency shows the area being at a “High Probability” of flooding, with the last instance being shown in Dec 2003, this being without any potential development.

TDS - Design guidance in 7.74 of the TDS states “Respect the flooding risk of the Criddell Stream and protect the land at risk from development”

TDS - Criddell Stream passes through meadows between Borough Road, Grange Road, The Petersfield School and the Tesco store. Both have been subject to flooding in recent years.

*Hangers Way Footpath – development brief 7.17, TDS 9.2.*

The rural character of the Hangers Way, now so close to Petersfield, would be severely negatively affected by this development.

TDS - Ensure the retention and improvement of the Hangers Way, by protecting its alignment and route. Improve its signage so that it is recognised as the key footpath providing access to the South Downs and the Hangers