

WINCHESTER ROAD – OBJECT

The proposed site off Winchester Road is primarily within the Parish of Ropley and has failed on a number of aspects to meet the criteria within the Ropley Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) which was Made on 19 September 2019. Any proposed site within lying within the Ropley Neighbourhood Designation Area should be measured against the criteria within the RNP.

RNP1: Development proposals should ensure the retention of the open character between Ropley and Ropley Dean and between the two separate settlements and other groups of dwellings in the neighbourhood area. Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry-related development, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings in such parts of the neighbourhood area will be supported where they would preserve the separation between the two settlements and the settlements and the other groups of dwellings concerned and retain their individual character and appearance.

The proposed site creates a coalescence between Ropley and the neighbouring village of Four Marks and impact the open land between the two villages. This site should be refused on the basis that it fails to meet RNP1. Additionally, the proposed location for this site contravenes the current District level Settlement Gap

RNP3: Key Vistas and Areas of Significant Visual Prominence are shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals should conserve and where possible enhance the visibility of the South Downs National Park from the neighbourhood area. Where appropriate development proposals should take account of the identified Key Vistas and Areas of Significant Visual Prominence in terms of their location, design, massing and appearance. Development proposals that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the visual appearance or character of an identified Area of Significant Visual Prominence or on an identified Key Vista will not be supported.

The majority of the Proposed Development lies within the Key Vistas and Areas of Significant Visual Prominence as identified on the Proposals Map on page 27 of the RNP. Clearly the size of such a development will have impact on these views and should be refused on the basis that the Massing, Location and Design of this Development will be unacceptable. Despite its distance from the boundary, it's long distance visibility from the South Downs National Park combined with the inevitable difficulty to screen such a size of development also detracts from its suitability as a location.

RNP4: New development should retain existing mature trees, hedgerows, verges and banks which contribute to the amenity of the area. Any new landscaping associated with the new development should be of indigenous species.

Although the development has yet to go to detailed design, the proposed area takes in a considerable number of matures trees and hedgerows which will be impacted by this proposal. As such, we would request that the proposal be refused.

RNP5: Development proposals should respect the character and appearance of narrow lanes within the neighbourhood area. Development proposals which would detrimentally affect the character of a narrow lane or introduce an unacceptable amount of additional vehicular traffic will not be supported.

Parts of the proposed location for this development includes Narrow Lanes, most notably Gravel Lane. Any development of this size would undoubtedly introduce unacceptable levels of additional vehicular traffic that would impact the Rural Character of the lanes.

RNP8: The assets shown in Appendix 3 and on the Proposals Map are identified as important heritage assets. Development proposals should retain the significance of these assets including their contribution to local distinctiveness. Proposals for demolition or alterations to the asset or development within its setting will be assessed as to the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset.

The RNP developed a robust Site Assessment process which is available within the evidence base and supporting documents. The combined areas of the proposed site would fail this process on the basis of its prime Agricultural Value. The agricultural land on which most of the constituent sites lie in this proposal provide rainwater to the River Itchen and the impact of Nitrates on the viability of the River Itchen

The proposal has an impact on NDHA22, 23, 24 and the wider setting of the Watercress Line which lies largely on an elevated embankment along the Northern boundary of the site. The Watercress Line is a rural branch line that has unobscured views over Hampshire Countryside. The entire Development would be visible from trains between Ropley Station and Four Marks Station. Additionally, the TP & TSP proposed location lies beneath the line adjacent to Gravel Lane.

The Site offers no improvement to the current A31, which is a very limited length dual lane carriageway split by a wide grassed verge and is situated across both side of the road across four main parcels of land. The Land to the South of the A31 will make it difficult for those wishing to head North on the A31 and those situated North of the A31 will find it difficult to head South. Essentially, access to highways across all the sites is poor and appears to be dangerous. On these grounds, we consider the location of the site wholly impracticable and should be refused.

The proposal offers minimal Employment opportunities and ensures that the development will create unacceptable levels of new vehicle movements and creating a dormitory environment. Lack of any cohesive plans for additional public transport will encourage the reliance on personal transport. The closest Rail Stations are Alton and Winchester some 8.3 miles and 11.9 miles respectively. The location of this proposal should be considered unsustainable development in respect of travel and personal transportation.

The development plan offers no additional public facilities within the Parish of Ropley, despite the number of new units within Parish, but seeks to add a small amount to the existing facilities in Four Marks following other Winchester Road developments. This is a bare minimal investment from the development team and falls short of the requirements following the uncontrolled development in recent years and should be considered as unacceptable.

The Winchester Road development seeks to provide a replacement Primary School for the existing Four Marks C.E which is located at the corner of Hawthorn Road and Kitwood Road. Whilst not centrally located, Hampshire County Council have recently committed development funds to expand the school to ensure that it meets the needs of the historically uncontrolled development. Relocation of the school may make sense at a transport level but is a gross waste of public funds as delivery of the proposed school is at the end of the scheme, clearly following completion of HCC current proposals scheduled for post Summer 2020.