

Titchfield Neighbourhood Forum's response to Foreman Homes's Statement of Case

In their appeal Foreman Homes claim that

- the site is sustainably located
- there is no material impact on the strategic gap
- there is no unacceptable environmental or highway related issues
- the site is not in a valued landscape
- there is low impact on adjacent listed buildings
- the loss of agricultural land, which is categorised as the best and most versatile, is acceptable in the 'planning balance'.

We refute all these claims.

However, the main thrust of Foreman Homes's appeal is based on a technical issue relating to the 'deliverable housing land over five years'. We consider this to be opportunistic.

Foreman Homes state that FBC has 4.39 years supply of housing land defined against the requirement of 5 years. This is a small difference and in any case we cannot see that there is any impediment to housing development as the Draft Local Plan 2036 identifies many more sites than the 5 year requirement. As we understand the position, FBC has always had a functioning Local Plan and it has reacted speedily to changes in National Planning requirements, but the processes take time. However there is a Draft Local Plan to 2036, which should be used to shape the future.

Furthermore one of FBC's Key Strategic Priorities, which is listed in the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment by Urban Edge Environmental Consulting of October 2017, page 20 number 11, is to "Provide for the provision of Neighbourhood Planning in accordance with the Localism Act, other relevant Acts and Regulations". Titchfield has a Neighbourhood Plan in draft and part of the process of development has involved consultations with residents and others on planning issues, including the provision of new housing. It should be noted that AECOM Housing Needs Assessment prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan shows that the proposed development would vastly exceed the annual need and indeed almost matches the need for the lifetime of the Plan, which is to 2036.

The Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment was produced for the Local Plan to 2036 and it examines various sites for development potential and makes recommendations which have formed the basis of the Local Plan. Appendix G provides the Rationale for Site Selection or Rejection. ID 3102 is this Posbrook Lane site and it is rejected due to high landscape sensitivities and impact to the integrity of the strategic gap. This is a direct contradiction of Foreman Homes's assertion in their appeal.

Foreman Homes argue that the encroachment into the Strategic Gap is only a small one and it is on the edge of an 'urban environment' because it extends the settlement area. We contend that the extension of the settlement area is a 'big deal'. Strategic gaps have been established to maintain the countryside from settlement areas. We see Foreman Homes's proposal as a first step of an incremental approach to extend the settlement area. On page 19 of Urban Edge's Sustainability Appraisal one of the Visions of FBC's Local Plan 2036 is stated " Fareham Borough will retain its identity of its individual settlements within the Borough through measures that seek to retain the valued open landscapes and settlement definition. This will preserve one of the many aspects that are good about Fareham."

On page 20 of the Sustainability Appraisal, Key Strategic Priorities are listed.

These include

- 2 Focus development within the urban areas and away from the valued landscapes and spaces that contribute to settlement definition

- 9 Protect and enhance the Borough's landscape features, valued landscape, biodiversity and the local, national and international nature designations
- 10 Appropriately manage and protect the Borough's historical buildings and assets including Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

The importance of the Posbrook Lane site as part of the Meon Valley is supported by the Fareham Landscape Assessment produced by LDA Design dated August 2017, which has also been used in the Local Plan 2036. It states on page 112 that area 6.1b, in which the Posbrook Lane site lies, "is characterised predominately by open, large scale farmland and horticultural uses that are typical of the coastal plain, with some minor variations within pockets of more enclosed pasture land bounded by strong vegetation, a couple of woodland blocks and small scale enclosed tributary valley. This area also notably contains the tree-lined Titchfield Canal running from Titchfield in the north to the Titchfield Haven in the south. The landscape is essentially rural and unspoilt with a sparse road and settlement pattern and no significant detracting influences". The Foreman Homes's proposal is completely out of character and would have an extremely adverse effect on a valued landscape.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment by Urban Edge dated September 2017, again used by FBC in the production of the Local Plan 2036, draws attention to sites of international, national and local importance and the impact that development would have. This includes reference on page 19 to the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA), which relates to birds including internationally important assemblage of wildfowl. This is on the border of the Posbrook Lane site which provides an important area for wildfowl in support of the SPA. The Posbrook Lane site is also an important habitat for the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy 2010 and the Birds Aware initiative. Page 22 of Urban Edge's report refers to the Solent and Southampton Water RAMSAR site, which is a wetlands site of international importance, this is near to the Posbrook Lane site and page 80 lists likely detrimental effects of development. The Posbrook Lane site falls within the parameters of page 80 but it is not listed because the site had been rejected in the development of the Local Plan 2036.

In addition the Posbrook Lane site is on the border of the Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve, which is a National Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (which also extends further up the Meon Valley towards Titchfield). Development on the Posbrook Lane site would have a serious detrimental effects on this key environmental jewel in Fareham's landscape. All of the Meon Valley which lies within the Fareham Borough is valued as a very important green space.

All this evidence shows that the Posbrook Lane site is not sustainably located, that housing development would have a significant impact on the strategic gap, that there would be an unacceptable environmental effect and that the site is part of a valued landscape.

Posbrook Lane is a narrow country lane, but it already takes a high volume of traffic. It is a commuting 'rat run' used by vehicles from and to Gosport, Lee-on-the-Solent and Hill Head. Although Posbrook Lane is subject to width restrictions for through traffic, it is used extensively by very large agriculture vehicles servicing the farmers and growers off and nearby to the Lane. There are usually several large agricultural vehicle movements a day, but often there is a relay of tractors and trailers or tankers for activities such as vegetable harvesting and muck spreading. Often it is necessary for traffic to stop after mounting the pavement or verge to allow very large tractors to pass, with the tractors often drawing trailers or other wide agriculture equipment. The addition of approximately 1,000 vehicle movements per day, which we understand one could expect from a development of the size proposed, would add significant additional pressure to an already overloaded road infrastructure. This would occur not only in Posbrook Lane but also in Titchfield village and

adjacent lanes, such as St. Margaret's Lane and Common Lane, as traffic makes its way to and from the A 27.

Therefore we contend that there are unacceptable highway issues relating to the development of the Posbrook Lane site.

There would also be an adverse impact on the two adjacent listed buildings.

In addition high quality agriculture land would be lost with a consequential loss in the community value provided by an open space and aspect which is crossed by two footpaths.