

From: ALICE HOLT COMMUNITY FORUM (MR COLIN HALL)

Summary: Representation ID: 24258

Document: Draft Local Plan 2017-2036

Section: Site SA21 - Land at Northbrook Park

Support/Object: Object

Alice Holt Community Forum

The Alice Holt Community Forum consists of representatives from each of the parish councils, communities and villages that surround Alice Holt Forest (the “community members”), the Forestry Commission and the South Downs National Park Authority (the Forest being within the South Downs National Park). Its members have considerable cumulative knowledge of Alice Holt Forest and the surrounding area. The objective of the Forum is to provide an efficient means whereby the Forestry Commission and the local community can exchange views on matters relating to Alice Holt Forest, both through regular meetings and informally, thereby informing the management of the Forest.

The views expressed below are the collective views of the community members of the Forum. (“the Forum”).

Objection

The Forum objects to the allocation of land at Northbrook Park for a minimum of 800 dwellings as proposed in the draft Local Plan.

The Forum considers that the proposed development of the land will not conserve or enhance the setting of the National Park or of Alice Holt Forest; and that it would be damaging to the overall character, quality, tranquillity and appearance of the landscape and countryside between Farnham and Bentley and thus to the setting of the National Park and Alice Holt Forest. It would cause light and noise pollution to a dark and tranquil area.

The Forum supports the decision of Waverley Borough Council to rule out development proposed for the part of the site in Waverley Borough.

The Forum is particularly concerned with proposed allocation including the River Wey flood meadows to the south of the A31 right up to the edge of Holt Pound Inclosure in the Forest. Alice Holt Forest is ancient woodland and Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and it is well recognised that ancient woodland requires appropriate semi natural adjoining buffer zones.

The River Wey and its flood plains are also important for biodiversity and are the subject of biodiversity improvement plans. The flood meadows also play an important role in flood defence. The Northern Wey floodplain is Biodiversity Opportunity Area 17 and forms part of the Local Ecological Network for Hampshire, also part of the EHDC Green Infrastructure Strategy. The impact on biodiversity connectivity would be systemic affecting the ecological network and the delivery of eco-services as a whole. The area south of the A31 leading down to and across the River Wey should not be built on.

The traffic impact of such a development on the roads in the surrounding areas, especially the Farnham By-pass and Wrecclesham would be severe. There is also likely to be a serious impact on traffic around Bentley. It would certainly lead to increased traffic congestion to Farnham, as most of the additional traffic would be along the A31 towards Farnham, which is already overloaded at peak times and will be worse once the development at Bordon Whitehill is completed.

The Forum questions the sustainability of the proposed development, being located in open countryside with few nearby facilities or infrastructure, particularly having regard to the serious environmental damage likely to be caused.

Colin Hall
Chairman
ALICE HOLT COMMUNITY FORUM
18th March 2019

SUMMARY

The Forum objects: the proposed development will not conserve or enhance the setting of the National Park or of Alice Holt Forest; and would be damaging to the overall character, quality, tranquillity and appearance of the landscape and countryside between Farnham and Bentley and thus to the setting of the National Park and Alice Holt Forest.

The River Wey and its flood plains are important for biodiversity and flood prevention; the area to the south of the A31 should not be built on.

Waverley Council were right to reject the part of the site in Waverley.