

## **Northbrook Park Site SA21 draft Local Plan.**

Froyle Parish Council has considered the EHDC Draft Local Plan and in particular the proposed development of land at Northbrook Park, Site SA21, which has the greatest potential impact on the Parish of Froyle.

### **Process**

FPC do not believe that the inclusion of such a major development with so little detail within a 6 week consultation period meets the criteria that plans should be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan makers and communities.

EHDC will be aware of a much fuller engagement and community consultation process undertaken regarding the development of the Treloars School site in Upper Froyle.

The Parish council suggests that there needs to be a much fuller community consultation supported by more detailed evidence of the impact and timescales of the proposed Northbrook development and that it should be removed from the draft Local plan until this has taken place.

### **Duty to Cooperate**

The site is allocated for a minimum of 800 houses and the draft plan states that “the LPA is aware of opportunities for a larger new settlement by incorporating adjacent land” .

We understand that this land is located within the authority of Waverly Borough Council but the draft Local Plan contains no evidence of the views of Waverly Borough Council on the development. Regardless of whether or not the proposed development crosses into Waverly there is a clear reliance on this authority for the provision of enabling infrastructure. Currently the draft proposals for the development of SA21 do not demonstrate effective working together of authorities in addressing cross boundary matters. Nor do they evidence “common ground “ on supporting the development.

### **Effect on Froyle**

FPC note the proposal to build a new primary school as part of the Northbrook development however we are unclear when this would be

built. We assume that it will be towards the end of the development as full occupancy will be needed to provide pupils for the school. We are advised that 800 homes are unlikely to provide a number of children sufficient to support a school. Taking these two factors together we believe that Bentley School would be the “natural “ destination for primary school children from Northbrook resulting in the very real possibility of children from Froyle being unable to attend the school. This will result in a real loss of amenity for the village and many more car journeys.

We have concerns regarding the lack of clarity on the impact of the proposed development of the wedding venue at Northbrook Park. As development happens it is entirely possible that couples will find it more attractive to utilize the wedding venue in Upper Froyle ( Froyle Park ) which is owned by the Nicholas James Group. This venue already causes a great deal of disturbance to residents of Froyle and we would be very concerned to see its use increase still further.

Froyle residents rely on the availability of medical services provided by Bentley surgery. There needs to be much clearer detail on how the medical needs of residents in any new development would be met. It is our strong belief that the existing surgery in Bentley would be unable to cope.

### **Transport links**

The impact of the volume of additional traffic from a minimum of 800 houses would be profound. The car park at Bentley railway station is already completely full by 7am and remains full until late afternoon / early evening. The lack of parking severely reduces the stations usefulness to local residents who need to access it during the day.

Many commuters from Froyle already drive to Farnham instead where there is still parking available but a development of the size proposed will inevitably result in delays and parking stress.

Froyle already suffers as a “rat run “ in morning and evening rush hours with cars cutting through on journeys to and from Basingstoke and Reading. Any large scale development at Northbrook will make this far worse. As Froyle has narrow roads, no streetlights and no pavements in the majority of the village increasing traffic levels are a real safety concern. We are also conscious that we have not yet seen the effect of the

ongoing development in Borden that we suspect will also increase traffic levels.

## **Infrastructure**

We do not believe that the proposed development meets the needs of an integrated accessible transport system with walking, cycling and public transport. National averages suggest that 25% of households own dogs so with 800 houses and only half this ownership rate it is easy to imagine an additional 100 dogs needing walking everyday. The footpaths shown are mostly to the south of the development and land that is frequently flooded and also close to the proposed traveller site.

## **Landscape**

The EHDC Landscape Capacity Study 2018 makes it clear that the historic landscape between Alton and Farnham is highly sensitive and development should be restricted in order to maintain the tranquil and unspoiled character of the area. The quality of landscape differs little from the nearby SDNP. The North Wey Valley provides a gateway to the SDNP not to mention “Jane Austen Country” and should be protected. It has experienced little change since the 18<sup>th</sup> century traveler Arthur Young described the valley as the finest 10 miles in England.

The NPPF provides significant protection for the ancient woodland to the north of the Northbrook site. The proposed buffer is completely inadequate.

While the water meadows on the south side of the site do not have the same level of protection they are very visible and provide a significant wild life haven. It is difficult to see any justification for the intrusion of industrial buildings into this area for the small amount of employment that they might attract particularly when existing employment sites at Coxbridge are underused.

To quote from the LCS:

Conclusions and recommendations and potential capacity of local area  
4b.1

Local area 4b.1 has a medium/low capacity constrained by its strong rural character and its role as an integral part of the Wey Valley landscape and rural setting of Alton, Holybourne, the Froyles and Bentley and their conservation areas. There are important views from conservation areas and public footpaths including St Swithun's Way, and offers views across the Wey Valley to the SDNP and the downs to the North. The area has a clear sense of history and contains characteristics typical of the nearby SDNP. It is possible that a very small amount of development could be accommodated within or around existing settlements or clusters of built form or building conversions provided it is informed by further landscape or visual impact assessment and sensitively integrated into the landscape, respecting the historic settlement pattern and local distinctiveness, although great care would need to be taken to avoid any landscape or visual harm. The area should otherwise remain undeveloped.