

Sites in Emsworth

I speak on behalf of the Emsworth Residents' Association.

According to the National Planning Policy Framework, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.

We believe that the environmental aspect of the NPPF is largely dismissed in the Sustainability Appraisal of the sites proposed for Emsworth. By ignoring this issue the planners are in danger of throwing out the environment baby in favour of keeping the economic bath water.

Although Havant Borough Council and developers may wish that the space can be found for these additional homes, we believe that the reality is radically different-that the space does not exist for such a number. Individual land owners may well be happy to offer sites for consideration, but if they are not inherently suitable for sustainable development being proposed does not suddenly make them suitable.

Consider those sites north and south of Long Copse Lane (UE39, UE50, UE67).

Long Copse Lane is a narrow winding single lane with no footpath. There is no public transport servicing that road, so the only transport would be private cars, to access the nearest facilities of Westbourne and Emsworth. Planners may well say that their sites are planned to be sustainable, and encourage walking and cycling, but such a dramatic increase in private transport would effectively deter walkers and cyclists from these sites on such a narrow country lane. Few-if any-parents would risk sending their children to school, either on foot or bicycle, down an unlit road which would also be used by rush hour traffic. This situation would be made even more dangerous in winter.

The other access to these sites would be by Hollybank Lane. There again, the additional traffic generated by the proposed 225 homes would at least double the existing traffic as it is the only access road from the sites apart from Long Copse Lane. Once they get to the end of Hollybank Lane onto Southleigh Road, and turning right to the Horndean Road, the increased traffic can easily congest that junction – especially if the site opposite, UE13, on the corner of Horndean Road and Southleigh Road, is eventually developed. Horndean Road is the principal north-south out of Emsworth, and one of the main routes to the A3.

Furthermore, we would add that the development of these sites would be contrary to the Borough Council's Core Strategy CS9 :

Para 4. Achieve a suitable density of development for the location, taking into account accessibility to public transport and proximity to employment, shops and services in addition to respecting the surrounding landscape, character and built form;

When considering the Strategic Site 2 (land between Emsworth and Denvilles) and site UE02b (Selangor Avenue), the lack of environmental concern is even more compelling. These spaces act as

a vital green corridor, an essential link in open space running from the coast to the South Downs National Park.

What would bring additional families to Havant Borough? Employment? In this year, it has been announced that more than 1000 jobs will be lost. While various bodies, including the Borough Council, are talking positively about attracting other businesses to the area, the results have yet to be seen. It is worth considering that job losses are announced in the wake of, or calculated anticipation of, market changes. Job losses will take place. Job creation is often an aspiration for a better future, but mean nothing until those jobs are actually created and additional workers employed.

We believe that it would be better for the Council and the Borough in ensuring that the sites that they have already granted planning permission for (over 1700 in the Borough) are actually developed than just remaining as a statistic of outstanding permissions. People live in homes, not statistics. Getting these sites developed would go some way to providing some of the affordable homes that are desperately needed, rather than sourcing more sites that may not be developed for years.

Overall, this Local Planning Housing Statement is too ambitious in trying to find sites for an extra 4803 homes in the Borough. It is based on an overall figure of 11250 which was suggested – not demanded – by PUSH which aims to facilitate the ‘duty to cooperate’ amongst the membership. At the heart of the NPPF – and this is direct quote – “is a presumption in favour of **sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread** running through plan-making.”

When thinking of an ideal solution, the idea comes to mind of a whole new settlement to the north of Havant, with convenient access to the road network and railways. Such a new development could be planned from scratch with all the required infrastructure to be fully sustainable. However, it soon becomes clear that there is not the space for such a development in what is already a predominately urban borough.

What is lacking in space outside is also lacking within the Borough: there just is not the room for this number.

We fully understand that the Borough has to make a new Local Plan, but would urge you to look again at the figures and the sites. We are confident that a smaller number can be accommodated with a sound and realistic draft local plan that will reflect well on Havant Borough Council, a council that would have responsibly considered the needs of its constituents.