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Response by the Enborne River Valley Preservation Society (ERVPS), to the Proposed Development at Common Farm by Bewley Homes ref 21/03394/OUT.

10 January 2022

## Summary

The ERVPS comprises a group of concerned local residents from the parishes of Highclere, East Woodhay and Enborne. As a group we object to this hybrid planning application.

This application is contrary to the Basingstoke Local Plan 2016 and its policies for the reasons set out in this document and summarised as:

This application will not deliver sustainable development.

This application risks undermining the local plan-making process, as a development of 350 dwellings would be in direct conflict with the emerging Local Plan of BDBC, and the Neighbourhood Plans of Highclere and East Woodhay Parish Councils.

This hybrid planning application is contrary to NPPF policies SD1, SS1, SS4, SS5, CN3, CN6, CN7, CN8, CN9, EM1, EM4, EM5, EM6, EM7, EM10, EM12 and conflicts with BDBC's own existing and draft local plans, and those of the affected parishes.

The Application's impact on existing residents and services is primarily focused on West Berkshire's residents, facilities and Services, and the potential impact on WBC's own local plans should be considered.

The proposed provision of housing and affordable housing does not contribute effectively to BDBC's housing needs nor its land supply within the planning 5-year horizon due to its location remote from housing needs, its housing mix and its realistic timeframe for development.

This application seeks to build within an area of significant flood risk identified in the BDBC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and without demonstrating the required Sequential Test to justify such proposals.

For neighbouring residents there is substantial concern regarding the impact on the control of local area flooding to existing properties particularly in Enborne Row. Those concerns are shared by the BDBC's own internal consultees, and they also note the absence of a Sequential Test approach by the Applicant which should be a mandatory requirement, and the complete absence of an assessment of groundwater flooding rather than river or surface water flooding.

The proposed infrastructure incentives to change residents' behaviour away from car journeys to walking, cycling, and using public transport are not plausible, rendering the proposed development unsustainable.

In the light of these policy breaches, inconsistencies, and inadequacies in the Application we believe that BDBC should not approve the application in any form.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this submission is to set out the response of ERVPS to the proposed development by Bewley Homes for 350 homes on land at Common Farm (planning application 21/03394/OUT). It sets out in detail the objections highlighted in its initial submission to BDBC of 9 December 2021. ERVPS may submit further representations in response to those of the consultees contacted by BDBC and further evidence provided by the applicant.
- 1.2. The application site is within Hampshire and this response assesses the proposals against the current and emerging planning policies of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) and the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan. The site adjoins the boundary with West Berkshire and is close to Newbury and the references by the applicant to the services and facilities within the town justifies reference to the planning policies of West Berkshire Council.
- 1.3. Whilst the merits of the proposal will be assessed against the planning policies of BDBC it is appropriate to have regard to the planning policies of WBC given the relationship of the development to Enborne Row and Wash Common and the reliance of the application on the proximity of the two settlements in terms services and facilities.
- 1.4. The impact on the planning policies which apply to Enborne Row and Wash Common are set out in section 10 of this submission.
- 1.5. This response sets out objections to the principle of development at Common Farm. Where appropriate specific comments have been made in respect of the two components of the application that is the outline application for 350 dwellings and the full application for 90 dwellings.

## 2. The Proposal

- 2.1. Bewley Homes have submitted proposals for development at Common Farm in the form of a hybrid application for a mixed-use community, comprising:
- 2.2. An outline planning application for up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3) including dwellings for older people; a 1,600 square metre community building (Use Class F2(b)); a 1,200 square metre Health and Wellbeing Centre (Use Class E(e)) and a 250 square metre convenience store (Use Class F2(a)); demolition of Common Farm and associated agricultural buildings; the provision of open space, allotments, community gardens, a riverside park/nature trail, drainage attenuation, landscaping and associated infrastructure; and
- 2.3. A full planning application for the first phase of residential development including 90 dwellings (Use Class C3), public open space, associated landscaping and infrastructure works. Full planning approval is also sought for access arrangements including a new vehicular access onto the Andover Road (A343) - Source RPS Planning Statement November 2021

## 3. Planning Context

- 3.1. The site is located south of the River Enborne which marks the county boundary between Hampshire and West Berkshire. The built development and access is located within Hampshire. The proposed off-road shared pedestrian/cycleway would be located almost entirely within the West Berkshire Council area.
- 3.2. The application is submitted having regard to the lack of a five-year supply of housing land within Basingstoke and Deane Borough, as at April 2021. It is proposed that the site could increase the supply of housing. At the same time, it is clear from the application that significant reliance is placed

on the site's relationship with the built-up area of Newbury and in particular access to services and facilities in seeking to justify it being sustainable development.

3.3. This submission will focus on the planning policies of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) but will also refer to the relevant policies of West Berkshire Council (WBC).

#### 4. The Development Plan

4.1. The starting point for a local planning authority (LPA) in considering proposals for development is the Development Plan for the area. Applications should be determined in accordance with the it unless material considerations indicate otherwise ref section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

4.2. The NPPF, in para 11, advises that for decision-making, development should be approved which accords with an up-to- date development plan. Where a plan does not include relevant policies, or it is out-of-date permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

4.3. The Development Plan for the area within which the application is located comprises the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 adopted in May 2016 and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013. Given the shortfall in the five-year supply of housing land for the borough, the adopted Local Plan (2016) may not be considered as up to date. However, this does not mean that the current local plan polices are not relevant.

#### The Local Plan Framework and Policies

#### 5. Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2016

The Plan includes several policies which are pertinent to the consideration of the merits of the land at Common farm for development:

##### 5.1. Policy SD 1 Sustainable Development

5.1.1. The policy echoes the advice in the NPPF. It supports sustainable development without setting out what is meant by that and what would constitute sustainable development. For the reasons set out in respect of the conflict with policies of the local plan set out below it is considered that the proposals do not deliver sustainable development.

5.1.2. The site is promoted based on addressing a shortfall in housing in BDBC yet is located some distance away from the principal settlements of the borough and the population which generated the need for housing. Residents of the borough for whom the housing is intended are most likely to have strong connections with the towns and villages some distance away from the site which would necessitate trips mostly by car given the lack of genuine alternatives. This would conflict with the purpose of planning to deliver sustainable development and the transition to a low carbon economy.

#### 5.1.2.1. The outline application

The transport assessment submitted by the applicant's consultants includes projected trips to a range of destinations. Table 6.16 shows that the majority of trips made by residents of the site will be to destinations some distance away reflecting the site's location as one which is attractive to those who are likely to work away from Newbury. These journeys are likely to be made by car which does not sit comfortably with the purpose of planning to deliver sustainable development.

#### 5.1.2.2. The full application

The proposal for 90 dwellings would result in a development without any community or social services and facilities. It is yet to be established, what if any, committed improvements to existing bus services would be provided or if the suggested pedestrian/cycle route north along the Andover Road would actually be delivered. The lack of any facilities would mean that none of the daily needs of residents would be met on site, thus necessitating journeys to locations off-site

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy SD1

### 5.2. Policy SS1 Scale and Distribution of New Housing

5.2.1. The policy sets the overall strategy for the provision of new housing in the borough.

5.2.2. The proposal site:

5.2.2.1. Ref criterion a) is outside of any defined settlement policy boundaries

5.2.2.2. Ref criterion d) is not an allocated site

5.2.2.3. Ref criterion f) is not an exception site

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy SS1

### 5.3. Policy SS4 Ensuring a supply of Deliverable Sites

5.3.1. The policy seeks to ensure a five-year supply of sites with priority given to brownfield sites. The approach is qualified by the need to ensure that new development does not diminish further the quality of the borough's water bodies. The policy sets out the process if there is an issue with the supply of land i.e., a review of the local plan which is currently underway.

5.3.2. The application site is not allocated under Policy SS3 and its location adjoining the River Enborne could have an impact on the water course. Cross ref to paragraph 5.16.3 of this submission.

5.3.3. The application is being proposed outside of a review of the local plan and therefore contrary to the policy SS4

5.3.4. Housing land supply

5.3.4.1. The current supply (as stated in April 2021) suggests that there is a shortfall of 569 dwellings over the five-year period. The annual requirement is 1020dpa ref BDBC AMR 2021.-The application claims to help address the current shortfall in housing land supply in BDBC as the addition to the current supply of housing is promoted as an important benefit. The application is contrary to the adopted local plan and several specific policies.

In undertaking the weighing of the adverse impacts of the proposal against the benefits there is merit in considering the scale of the benefit in terms of the increase in the supply of housing arising if permission was granted.

5.3.4.2. No information has been submitted with respect to the delivery of new homes on the site. To inform an assessment of the potential contribution to the supply of housing research undertaken by Lichfields has been used. Lichfields a well-established and respected planning and development consultancy has published two reports which shed some light on the issue of deliverability. In Start to Finish, February 2020 and Feeding the Pipeline November 2021 they looked at the timelines of a range of sites from the start of the process of submitting an application to the first completions. Some of the key points which can be drawn from the reports which are pertinent to the current applications are:

5.3.4.2.1. Regardless of size of site the average time from granting outline permission to the first completions was three years from validation of the application the average was five years.

5.3.4.2.2. The average rate of completions for a single outlet on large sites was 45dpa

5.3.4.2.3. Sites of 50-99 delivered an average of 27 completions

5.3.4.2.4. Larger sites 500+ delivered more quickly than sites of 1-99

5.3.4.2.5. The rate of completions increases as the number of outlets increases but completions per outlet reduce

5.3.4.2.6. The rate of completions will be affected by a number of factors outside of the planning process e.g., technical consents from other agencies, market forces

#### Outline application

5.3.4.3. The planning application was registered in November 2021. Based on Lichfields studies it is reasonable to assume that the earliest that the first completions would be delivered would be towards the end of 2026. On that basis the site would not make a contribution to the current 5-year plan land supply shortfall.

#### Full application

5.3.4.4. The full application for 90 dwellings, if permitted, could achieve an earlier start on site and deliver the first completions sooner. Assuming a planning permission was achieved by the end 2022 it is possible that the site could deliver its first completions within two years i.e., at the end of 2024/25. Applying the rate of 27dpa the site could potentially deliver that number as a contribution to the five-year land supply.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy SS4

#### 5.4. Policy SS5 Neighbourhood Planning

5.4.1. The site is located adjoining the parish of Enborne Row and is within the parishes of East Woodhay and Highclere in Hampshire. The settlements within those two parishes are not included within the list which have a specific housing allocation but form part of a large group who are expected to contribute to a figure of 150 dwellings by identifying opportunities for at least 10 homes.

5.4.2. BDBC as part of the review of the adopted local plan have published a report - see paragraph 6.4 below. It has established an initial position that East Woodhay does not need to provide any dwellings and Highclere to provide only 10 to meet the emerging local plan housing requirement.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy SS5

5.5. Policy SS6 New Housing in the Countryside

5.5.1. The policy seeks to restrict development outside of the settlement policy boundaries defined in the local plan. The proposal does not meet policy SS6:

5.5.1.1. criterion a) as it does not comprise development appropriate to the site' context,

5.5.1.2. criterion b) is not a rural exception site for affordable housing,

5.5.1.3. criterion c) does not lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting,

5.5.1.4. criterion e) is a small-scale development

5.5.1.5. criterion g) is not allocated for development in a neighbourhood plan.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy SS5

5.6. Policy CN1 Affordable Housing

5.6.1. The proposed development includes provision for affordable housing in accordance with the policy. However, the existing need for affordable housing in the two parishes within which the site is located is unlikely to justify the scale of provision being proposed. In that context, it is assumed that the affordable would be offered to those on BDBC's housing register who live elsewhere in the borough. Households offered a home would most likely be some distance away from established family and social ties and employment resulting in the need to travel to other parts of the borough. Given the limited availability of public transport those journeys would be by private car. Such an outcome would suggest that the location is not an appropriate one for affordable housing to help meet the needs of the borough and would not deliver sustainable development.

5.6.2. It is understood from information provided by BDBC ref the Section 106 Scoping Proforma that the housing need for East Woodhay and Highclere parishes is 23. The application for 90 includes provision for 36 affordable homes which, it is assumed, would be offered to those in housing need from outside of the two parishes. Providing affordable housing to meet the needs of households from elsewhere in the borough in this location, given the limited connectivity by modes other than the car, is unlikely to deliver sustainable development in terms of maintaining the social and support networks of families and relationship with employment, but will generate additional car journeys.

The Full and Outline Application are both contrary to Policy CN1

5.7. Policy CN3 Housing Mix for Market Housing

5.7.1. The policy seeks to deliver housing which:

5.7.1.1. a) addresses local requirements,

5.7.1.2. b) is appropriate to the size, location and characteristics of the site,

5.7.1.3. c) is appropriate to the established character and density of the neighbourhood and

5.7.1.4. d) provides 155 accessible homes.

5.7.2. Full application

The proposed mix of housing for the first phase is set out in the Planning Statement ref para 4.26. No justification is presented for the proposed mix and how it meets the requirements of the policy.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy CN3

#### 5.8. Policy CN4 Housing for Older People/Specialist Housing

- 5.8.1. The policy supports the provision of housing specifically designed to meet the needs of older people or specialist accommodation subject to criterion i) meeting a proven need ref criterion ii) that the location is appropriate in terms of access to facilities services and public transport.
- 5.8.2. The outline proposal includes provision for older persons, but no details are provided as to what that would comprise. The Design and Access Statement includes an illustration on page 3 which identifies a site for older people's housing (site 10)
- 5.8.3. The remote location and lack of easily accessible local services without the use of a car renders the site unsuitable for providing homes for older persons.
- 5.8.4. In the context of the comments made in respect of Policy CN7 and Policy CN9 below it is considered that the detailed and outline proposals are contrary to Policy CN4.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy CN4

#### 5.9. Policy CN6 Infrastructure

- 5.9.1. The policy requires new development to provide and contribute towards the provision of additional services facilities and infrastructure. The phasing of provision should be prior to occupation of the development or phased where appropriate.
- 5.9.2. It is assumed that in the event that permission was granted a section 106 agreement would be required to ensure the delivery of all of the infrastructure proposed by the applicant.
- 5.9.3. Until such times as that agreement is in place there is no certainty that it will be provided.
- 5.9.4. It is also unclear as to what infrastructure, if any, the full application for 90 dwellings would provide

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy CN6

#### 5.10. Policy CN7 Essential Facilities and Services

- 5.10.1. The policy supports proposals which provide or improve essential facilities and services and sustain the vitality and viability of communities within settlements. Proposals outside would be treated as an exception where they met an identified local need.
- 5.10.2. The development is poorly related to existing provision in East Woodhay and Highclere parishes as it would require a 1.5 to 2 mile drive from the site to either village centre or to the Penwood convenience store. There is no viable pedestrian route to or from any of those destinations owing to a complete lack of footpaths and no street lighting.
- 5.10.3. The proposed new facilities are not adjacent to, nor of any interest to, an existing settlement within the borough No evidence has been submitted to demonstrate there is a need for the facilities being provided.
- 5.10.4. Similarly, no evidence of need has been submitted in respect of Enborne Row and Wash Water communities (comprising approximately 100 houses) which make use of Wash Common facilities. These facilities local to Wash Water and Wash Common include two pubs, takeaways and a restaurant, shops, fuel, two churches, primary and secondary schools, a pharmacy and a doctor's surgery, all of which are sufficient for current local needs. Schools and medical facilities would require enhancement for any additional local demand.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy CN7

### 5.11. Policy CN8 Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities

- 5.11.1. The policy comprises a number of criteria which need to be satisfied;
- 5.11.1.1. a) retain and maintain existing facilities,
  - 5.11.1.2. b) improve the quality and capacity of facilities,
  - 5.11.1.3. c) provide new facilities where there is evidence of need which cannot be met by existing provision,
  - 5.11.1.4. d) are delivered to prescribed timetable criteria
  - 5.11.1.5. e)-f) focus on the potential loss of existing facilities.
- 5.11.2. The proposals include a number of community and leisure facilities. They are proposed in order to support the assertion that the sustainable development could be delivered. In respect of the policy no evidence has been presented to satisfy a)-c) in terms of the capacity of the existing facilities to support the proposed development or what the impact on those facilities would be as a consequence of the proposed provision on-site e.g., would the new community hall attract users of existing facilities such that there would be a negative impact on income resulting in their loss?
- 5.11.3. There is no indication at this stage at what point in the development of the larger scheme that the community facilities would be provided. Until such times as they were built and opened all the residents would need to travel to existing facilities elsewhere and those journeys would be by car given the distances and routes which would be unattractive to pedestrians and limited availability of public transport.
- 5.11.4. In respect of the Full Application there are no proposals to provide any facilities.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy CN8

### 5.12. Policy CN9 Transport

- 5.12.1. The aim of the policy is to deliver development which seeks to minimise the need to travel, support sustainable transport modes and support the transition to a low carbon economy.
- 5.12.2. The site is poorly related to the existing transport infrastructure which would promote alternative modes of transport to the car within the Borough.
- 5.12.3. Access to the nearest services and facilities at Woolton Hill comprising an infant and junior school are approximately 2 miles away.
- 5.12.4. Access to facilities at Highclere including the secondary school in whose catchment the site is located is approximately 3 miles away. The routes to both villages have no continuous footway links and no lighting making them unattractive for pedestrians and children.
- 5.12.5. There is a very limited bus service. Contrary to the suggestions in the Applicant's submitted documents, there is no documented commitment from the bus companies to extend and increase services which already pass, or could be extended to pass, the site. The question from the bus companies when approached was of course who will pay for it? It is therefore most likely that almost all journeys from the site to access local services would be by car.
- 5.12.6. Additional services and retail facilities are available at the Newbury Retail Park (Pinchington Lane) and in Newbury Town Centre, but this would require a drive, by car, of 2.5 to 3 miles and be dependent on parking availability. The current routes into Newbury are congested at peak times, and the availability of parking is limited in Newbury Town Centre and the Retail Park at peak times and will be further stretched by other very large housing developments around Newbury which are either already underway or proposed.

- 5.12.7. The measures proposed to support non-car trips is focussed on links to Wash Common. Existing bus services are limited to the Andover-Newbury Bus no 7 which passes the site four times daily in each direction. But the bus stop adjacent to the site on the A343 is operative only in the Newbury bound direction twice a day, whilst the other services, including all four services from Newbury, are routed along Wash Water, a 10-minute walk, requiring pedestrians to cross the A343 twice, from the proposed site.
- 5.12.8. A regular (roughly half hourly) daytime bus service operates alternately from Newbury Town Centre or Newbury Retail Park (ie hourly to each destination), to the junction Andover Road and Conifer Crest at the top of Sandpit Hill, but the last bus passes there at 18:46 with no services at all on Sundays.
- 5.12.9. Furthermore, to either access Wash Water bus services or to walk/cycle to Wash Common, residents of the proposed development would have to follow this regime:
- 5.12.9.1. First, they will cross the derestricted speed limit unlit A343 (Andover Road) using an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing with a central refuge. This will be problematic trying to negotiate this with children, toddlers, buggies etc.
  - 5.12.9.2. Second, they must walk or cycle for 250M to the bottom of Sandpit Hill, on the yet to be provided cycleway/footway alongside the unlit derestricted and 40MPH stretch of Andover Road.
  - 5.12.9.3. There they can choose to cross the A343 again to reach Wash Water, the bus services, and the Woodpecker Inn. But there is no footpath on the West side of the A343 nor in Wash Water and no street lighting.
  - 5.12.9.4. Or they can choose to walk or cycle up a 1 in 13 hill for 250M before reaching the level stretch for another, lit, 1.4km to reach Wash Common Falkland Memorial.
  - 5.12.9.5. The proposal for a cycle way and footway from the A343 uncontrolled crossing to Wash Common lies predominantly with WBC's area, and their only documented commitment is to consider the proposal.
- 5.12.10. The proposed pedestrian link to Enborne Row via the existing public right of way alongside the stream leads to an unlit narrow road (Wash Water) which does not have any continuous footpath in either direction and which would be unattractive to pedestrians and difficult for cyclists, especially when light is poor or at night.
- 5.12.11. The application includes a number of measures to encourage non-car modes of travel. However, there is a lack of detail and no certainty that an improved bus service such that it would provide a reasonable alternative to the car would be delivered or that the proposed off-road shared route on the east side of Andover Road would be provided.
- 5.12.12. In context of the above it is considered that most trips would be by car, notwithstanding the trip generation/destination data provided in the Transport Assessment are limited. In respect of seeking to deliver sustainable development within the Borough the proposals in transport terms will clearly not achieve that. In respect of trips out of the borough to wash Common and beyond it is considered also to be the case.
- 5.12.13. Section 1.1 of the Applicant's Transport Assessment states:
- 5.12.13.1. "Traffic Surveys – Use of May 2021 survey data accepted [by HCC] subject to checking against historic data." But what HCC actually said in Appendix C of the Applicant's Transport Document submitted is: "It is recommended that the 2021 baseline data is compared to historical survey data in order to determine the COVID-19 uplift factor which may need to be applied to the 2021 survey data".

- 5.12.13.2. Similarly, WBC traffic planners' response in the same Applicant submitted document said "I consider that more evidence needs to be provided on how different traffic levels are from pre COVID 19, and I consider that the Newbury VISSIM model should be used for the traffic assessment. I have some concerns on how sustainable this development really is. It is on the south west fringes of Newbury, and is some distance away from facilities, and any facilities are accessed uphill towards Newbury. It would be essential that adequate bus services are extended, and then I would need to be convinced that those services would not just be for a few years but would be permanent. WBDC, along with many other councils, and the UK government have declared a Climate Change Emergency, and I take this issue most seriously."
- 5.12.13.3. In other words, this survey data is inadequate to use for planning and decision making, being based on data from a survey in the middle of a UK wide Covid lockdown when traffic was at an extremely low level, resulting in a potentially massive underestimate of existing traffic levels. Therefore, impact of the development cannot be accurately estimated in the Application.
- 5.12.13.4. Similarly, the Acoustic survey, executed on behalf of, and used by the Applicant to justify sound levels on the whole site was carried out from 3 March 21 to 9 March 21 when the country was in full lockdown, including schools were closed, rendering the acoustic survey data unusable and unacceptable by virtue of underestimating the existing traffic background sound levels.
- 5.12.13.5. By way of comparison, it is useful to consider the current use of local facilities by residents of Wash Water which is situated between the proposed site and Wash Common. There is little locally generated traffic, vehicle, or pedestrian, in the direction of Woolton Hill, as that village has almost no community relationship such as shopping or social facilities, being used by the residents of Wash Water as it is too far away, and accessible safely only by car. The residents tend to rely more on Wash Common and Newbury for facilities within a reasonable drive time. It is also of note that, despite being closer to Wash Common than the proposed development, there is close to zero pedestrian traffic from Wash Water to Wash Common for functional purposes (shopping) but there is some pedestrian traffic for recreational walking. Usage of the existing bus service along Wash Water is close to zero.
- 5.12.13.6. Also note that although Vodafone has now ceased its free bus service in Newbury which also served Wash Water, its usage before its closure averaged less than 2 passengers carried per day along Wash Water each way. There is quite simply no use of existing public transport as a convenience, nor any walking trips other than for recreation, by residents of Wash Water and beyond to the destination of Wash Common. It cannot be expected that residents of the new development will behave any differently from the existing residents of Enborne Row, and to suggest this situation will change in the future is implausible.
- 5.12.13.7. Note also that there is no concrete commitment from Newbury Bus Company to provide any service extensions to the proposed development. In particular they note that would result in a cost at today's prices of £160k PA, and funding is uncertain at best. It is inconceivable that the development would result in ticket revenue of an extra £500 per day (7 days a week) to cover such public service costs.
- 5.12.14. There is no viable pedestrian route whatsoever (i.e., pedestrians segregated from traffic on a footpath) going from the proposed development to Woolton Hill, Penwood or Highclere. So any suggestion that the residents of the new development would walk to schools, doctors surgeries or shops in Woolton Hill or Highclere are completely implausible. In respect of the Full Application in the absence of the measures proposed by the Outline Application the potential

for trips, without a car, is even less resulting in a car-dependent development poorly related to the existing settlements within the borough.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy CN9

#### 5.13. Policy EM1 Landscape

- 5.13.1. The policy would only permit development where it is demonstrated that the proposal is sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area and is not detrimental to the character of the landscape. Development which do not maintain the integrity of existing settlements will not be considered acceptable. The setting of the AONB is also an issue to be addressed.
- 5.13.2. BDBC commissioned a new Landscape Character Assessment published in 2021. The application site lies within the Highclere and Burghclere Character Area. The key characteristics relevant to the application site include: " subtle but complex landform steep in places but generally undulating and falling towards the River Enborne in the north dissected by a network of minor tributary valleys. The settlement pattern includes numerous and scattered small villages and hamlets some of probable medieval origin eg East Woodhay and Highclere. There is also a proliferation of low density residential properties mainly located along an extensive network of narrow lanes' ref page 35
- 5.13.3. With regard to new development the LCA advised that it should be associated with existing settlements such as Burghclere, Woolton Hill and Highclere where appropriate. To support the retention of the rural character of the area, low density /ribbon development along the rural lanes should be avoided and that potential road lighting schemes should be assessed for their visual impact to encourage the conservation of the existing dark skies on the skyline.
- 5.13.4. The proposals for large scale development would introduce a scale and form of urban development not found within the character area. It would have no association with the existing settlements of Woolton Hill and Highclere in terms of scale or form or physical connection. The applicants LVIA recognises the impact on the landscape of the proposals. 'the introduction of dwellings across a series of pastoral fields will effectively wholly replace the existing character with domestic scale built form'

The Full and Outline Applications both are contrary to Policy EM1

#### 5.14. Policy EM4 Biodiversity, Geodiversity nature conservation

- 5.14.1. The policy seeks to avoid harm to the biodiversity of the borough and sets out a number of criteria which lists those species, sites and features which are important.
- 5.14.2. The site is of ecological value, in particular having regard to the policy is the network of hedgerows. The submitted Ecological Appraisal describes all the hedgerows within the site as likely to qualify as a Priority Habitat ref para 4.10.4 of the report. It is proposed that none of the hedgerows to be removed are likely to qualify as important under the Hedgerow Regulations ref para 4.10.6. However, until the status of those to be removed is established it cannot be assumed that there would be no loss of Priority Habitat. The long term future of the remaining hedgerows located in a large development is also uncertain.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy EM4

#### 5.15. Policy EM5 Green Infrastructure

- 5.15.1. The policy will only permit development which does not result in fragmentation of the green infrastructure network by severing important corridors/links.
- 5.15.2. The Ecological Appraisal submitted in support of the application describes the River Enborne as an important ecological feature at least of district importance due to its value as a wildlife corridor. The stream flowing through the site into the river is also considered important, ref para 4.8.4. of the report. The hedgerows within the site form part of a habitat network providing connectivity for movement of wildlife across the site ref para 4.10.5 of the report.
- 5.15.3. Development within the river corridor of the Enborne would not be consistent with the policy or the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013. Development close to the river would harm one of the Borough's key GI assets and would not protect the health and attractiveness of the natural environment of the Borough. It would comprise development of a scale which would harm the connectivity of the River Enborne corridor introducing new activity, an urban environment and domestic pets which could prey on wildlife.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy EM5

#### 5.16. Policy EM6 Water Quality

- 5.16.1. The policy seeks to protect, manage, and improve the water quality of the borough's water environment. Where monitoring indicates there is likely to be a deterioration in a water body Policy SS4 is relevant and would be applied to prevent further development which exacerbates deterioration within the catchment. Ref para 4.8 above. Policy EM6 also seeks to protect and improve water quality which is relevant in respect of sites within Source Protection Zones. Development proposal adjacent to a watercourse will need to incorporate measures to protect it.
- 5.16.2. The location of development close to the River Enborne will increase the risk of pollution of it.
- 5.16.3. Halliday et al, 2014<sup>1</sup>, note that water quality in the River Enborne is adversely influenced by anthropogenic sources. Concentrations of phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) in river water would normally be lowest in the summer, but in the River Enborne P and N concentrations are the reverse. Summer is a time of low natural flow and the proportion of water coming from Sewerage Treatment Works (STWs) can be as high as 28% of the River Enborne flow<sup>1</sup>, with the result that P and N from STW discharges are having a significant impact on the quality of the river water. High P and N concentrations can lead to eutrophication problems in the river. Halliday et al, 2014<sup>1</sup>, warn that "when considering future water quality the increasing pressures of urbanisation will further alter the balance between STW discharges and river flows". In 2014, there was equivalent to a population of 7000 being processed through the Wash Water STW. Increasing the throughput of the STW by 350 residences (circa 1050 people), some 15% will further deteriorate the water quality of the River Enborne.

<sup>1</sup> Halliday, S.J., et al, (2014) The water quality of the River Enborne, UK: observations from high frequency Monitoring in a rural, lowland river system. *Water*, 6 (1). Pp150-180.

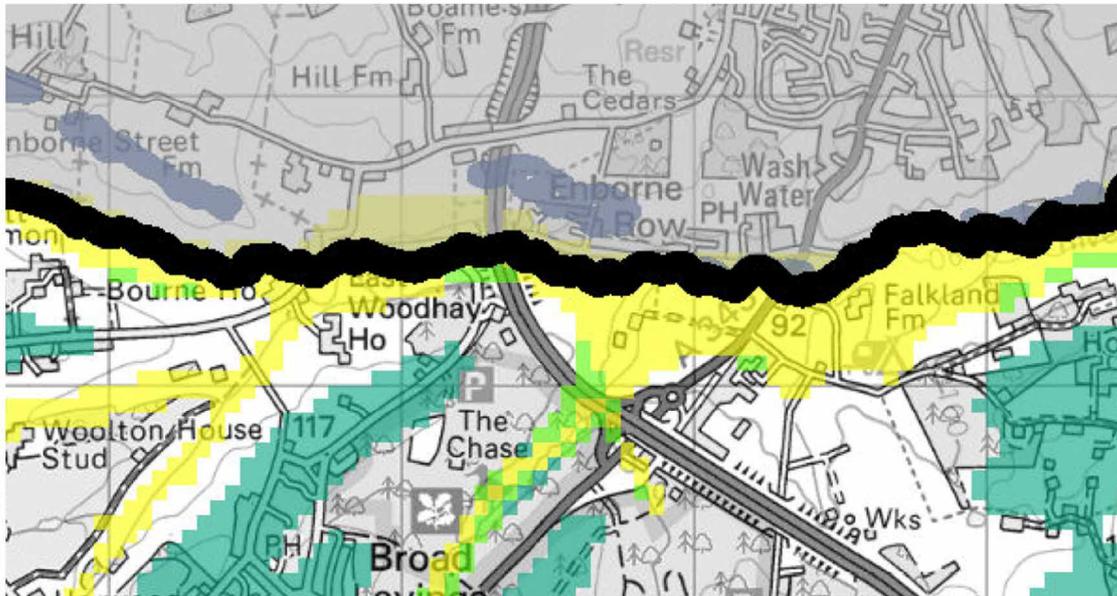
The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy EM6

#### 5.17. Policy EM7 Managing Flood Risk

- 5.17.1. The policy seeks to minimise the risk from flooding in terms of the location of development and all greenfield sites are required to manage surface water run-off to reduce the risk of flooding downstream. The policy follows the guidance in the NPPF in respect of the use of the sequential test and the need to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding.
- 5.17.2. A detailed report regarding the role of the land at Common Farm and its contribution to the catchment of the River Enborne has been submitted by a local resident with expert knowledge to BDBC ref letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 by Mr Garrett, published on BDBC web site the 14<sup>th</sup> December. The submission highlights the sensitivity of the functioning of the catchment to changes in the hydrology and the potential impact of the proposed development at Common Farm. It concludes that the works proposed including the foundations for buildings, pipework and attenuation ponds would have significant adverse impact on the way in which the hydrology of the land functions increasing the risk of flooding to adjoining residential properties and those proposed. The loss of the farmland vegetation to be replaced by hard surfaces in combination with the below ground changes will affect the flow of water both into the River Enborne and from the River Enborne into the aquifer which will have consequences for the height of flood events and for land downstream. The proposed development would also have a significant adverse impact on the water storage capacity of the catchment of the River Enborne.
- 5.17.3. In the context of the application site being in an area at risk of flooding the sequential test approach as set out in the NPPF should be applied. That does not appear to have been the case.
- 5.17.4. In the Consultee response submitted by B&D's own Planning Policy team, it was pointed out that the Applicant had failed to consider groundwater flooding risk, (as opposed to River Flooding and Surface Water flooding detailed on Environment Agency Flood maps) which was clearly evidenced in British Geological Society flood risk maps and BDBC's own draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in the map shown below which demonstrates that almost the whole site is in a flood risk Zone 3 for Groundwater flooding as opposed to the river flooding and surface water flooding referred to in the application, although those scenarios also have their own flood risks.
- 5.17.5. Residents of Enborne Row attest that this groundwater flooding is precisely the flooding behaviour witnessed regularly during the local flooding of their properties, (several times a year, as can be seen in photographs and videos on the ERVPS website), when the groundwater can be seen to rise up to the surface on both sides of the river, resulting in flooding above the 95M contour regularly.

**Appendix 1 – Flood Risk Areas pertaining to the site (taken from the council's draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, based on the BGS Susceptibility to Groundwater Flooding dataset).**

**Groundwater**



LEGEND	
	BDBC Borough Boundary
	Surrounding Authority Areas
Susceptibility to groundwater flooding	
	Limited potential for groundwater flooding to occur
	Potential for groundwater flooding of property situated below ground level
	Potential for groundwater flooding to occur at surface

The Full and Outline Applications are both be contrary to Policy EM7

5.18. EM 10 High Quality Development

5.18.1. The policy requires development to be of a high quality to:

- 5.18.1.1. 2) respect the local environment and amenities of neighbouring properties
- 5.18.1.2. 2a) positively contribute to local distinctiveness
- 5.18.1.3. 2c) have due regard to the density scale, layout appearance.... of the surrounding area.

5.18.2. The applicants LVIA describes Enborne Row as linear settlement of predominantly post World War 2 development with pockets of infill estate housing of relatively small cul-de-sac. The settlements evolution is illustrated in the LVIA ref page 19 and shows it has grown incrementally over a long period of time. Wash Water comprises two groupings of dwellings,

one around the Woodpecker PH and opposite the site on the Andover Road. The latter development comprises large houses in substantial plots set back from the Andover Road.

- 5.18.3. The proposed development, both the outline application and the full application are of a scale and form which is out of keeping with Enborne Row and Wash Water. It would adversely affect the setting of the village and of the River Enborne.
- 5.18.4. For the reasons set out in respect of Policy EM10 the proposed development would not positively contribute to the local distinctiveness sense of place and existing street scene. It would be at odds with the existing character of the settlement and its setting.
- 5.18.5. Enborne Row and Wash Water comprises a quiet community of above average size family homes enjoying access to green public footpath networks connecting the Newbury Civil War battlefield sites to the North, and the National Trust property (The Chase) to the South side of the River Enborne. Traffic is low, fortunately, as the roads are not wide, shrouded and overhung by trees and have no dedicated footpaths nor any street lighting, thus sustaining rural village characteristics.

The Full and Outline Application are both contrary to Policy EM10

#### 5.19. Policy EM12 Pollution

- 5.19.1. The policy permits development only on the basis that it does not result in pollution which is detrimental to quality of life. The supporting text highlights noise, air quality, contaminated land and light pollution add text if appropriate cross refers to Policy EM6
  - 5.19.1.1. There is an issue of air quality within Newbury, on the roads providing access to the town centre. The increase in vehicle traffic from the proposed development is likely to add to the existing problems.
  - 5.19.1.2. The applicants LVIA October 2021 describes the night-time character of the site and its surroundings as 'predominantly dark' with some light from a number of sources. On completion when the lighting proposed for the development is operational the LVIA the magnitude of change predicted to be medium with an overall moderate adverse impact.
  - 5.19.1.3. Given the lack of street lighting in Enborne Row and Wash Water the introduction of a large residential area which would be lit to current standards would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area and the quality of life of residents who value the dark sky environment, which is contiguous with the North Wessex Downs AONB dark skies area.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy EM12

## 6. Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Review

- 6.1. BDBC are at an early stage in reviewing the current local plan. Whilst the weight to be attached to the material published so far will be limited in the decision-making process, it is relevant in terms of BDBC's approach to delivering additional development which is sustainable and how Policy SS4 is applied.
- 6.2. BDBC has considered how its emerging housing requirement should be met, given the guidance in the NPPF. The emerging strategy for the provision of housing has Basingstoke as the focus of further development with some distributed across the larger settlements in the Borough. Ref September 2021 meeting of the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee.
- 6.3. In respect of the potential development in the rural parts of the borough a paper was published for the November meeting of the Committee which outlined an approach which reflected the emerging strategy of locating development in sustainable locations. The level of growth to be considered in the

rural settlements should respond to the local area retaining the individual identity and character of them.

- 6.4. A Settlement Study Part 1 draft October 2021 has been prepared which forms part of the evidence base to BDBC's approach to development outside of Basingstoke. A key principle of the study is to direct development to the most sustainable locations. The study seeks to direct the greatest number of homes to the most sustainable settlements, and to ensure that the most sustainable settlements grow most in proportional terms. Ref para 3.2 of the covering report to the November 2021 meeting.
- 6.5. Highclere and Woolton Hill (in the parish of East Woodhay) are included within the category of small villages which have a limited range of facilities and relatively small populations. The contribution that Highclere would make to the emerging housing requirement was 10 additional dwellings and at Woolton Hill no additional dwellings.
- 6.6. The application site was submitted for inclusion in BDBC's SHELAA site ref EW008 and consideration as a potential allocation in the new local plan. Following an assessment of its merits it has not been included in the list of sites to be taken forward for further consideration to meet the emerging housing requirement. ref September meeting of the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee.

## 7. East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan

- 7.1. The neighbourhood plan is at an early stage in the process. A Regulation 14 draft has been published and the public consultation period closed. A regulation 16 version is expected early in 2022.
- 7.2. In terms of the polices in the Regulation 14 version the proposed development is contrary to Policies:
  - 7.2.1. RC1 Rural Character and Design
  - 7.2.2. NE1 protecting the landscape
  - 7.2.3. HO2 Settlement Policy Boundary and Building in the Countryside.

## 8. Highclere Neighbourhood Plan

- 8.1. A neighbourhood plan is being prepared which would include the eastern part of the site. It is at an early stage in the process and detailed policies have yet to be drafted. The initial informal consultation with the residents of the parish has highlighted a number of issues which will inform the content of the document. Including placing sustainability at the heart of the plan, conserving the natural setting of the parish. protecting wildlife habitats and corridors.

## 9. Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013

- 9.1. The site is within a mineral safeguarding area for river terrace deposits as identified on the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan Policies Map. Policy. Policy 15 Safeguarding –mineral resources sets out to safeguard the Counties sand and gravel, silica sand and brick-making clay resources from needless sterilisation by min-minerals development, unless prior extraction takes place. Development may be permitted without prior extraction if a number of criteria are met: a) it can be demonstrated that the sterilisation of mineral resources will not occur; or b) it would be inappropriate to extract mineral resources at that location, with regards to the other policies in the Plan; or c) the development would not pose a serious hindrance to mineral development in the vicinity; or d) the merits of the development outweigh the safeguarding of the mineral.
- 9.2. With respect to this policy no evidence has been provided that would meet the 4 criteria stated.

The Full and Outline Applications are both contrary to Policy 15 of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan.

## 10.Planning Policies of West Berkshire Council (WBC)

- 10.1. The site is within BDBC and the application will be assessed against the Development Plan for the area. However, given the relationship of the site to the development immediately to the north and to Newbury and the applicants reliance on that relationship to promote the site as one where sustainable development can be delivered it is appropriate to have regard to the policies of WBC.
- 10.2. The Development Plan for West Berkshire comprises: Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2006-2026; Housing Sites Allocations Development Plan Document 2017; West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (saved policies). WBC are currently preparing the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037. A Regulation 18 consultation was published and consulted on December 2020-February 2021. In August 2021 WBC announced it was delaying progress on the next stage whilst it considered the impact of the NPPF 2021.
- 10.3. In respect of housing land supply WBC can demonstrate a five-year supply.
- 10.4. The overall planning strategy in respect of Enborne Row and Wash Common as set out in the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and the now withdrawn Local Plan Review is one of development following the existing settlement pattern with a focus on settlements defined in a hierarchy.
- 10.5. The smaller the settlement and the more limited the availability of services and facilities the more limited the scale of development. In the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2012 Enborne Row was not included within the settlement hierarchy. Development would be limited to infill and rural exception sites. Ref Area Delivery Plan Policy 1
- 10.6. A settlement boundary for Enborne Row was included in the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2017 with a presumption in favour of development and redevelopment within the settlement boundary. The presumption against new residential development outside of settlement boundaries was reaffirmed. Ref Policy C1
- 10.7. This approach was carried forward into the Local Plan Review 2020 regarding the overall strategy, ref SP1 the role of the settlement hierarchy in the distribution of development ref, Policy SP3
- 10.8. It is worth noting that in successive DPDs WBC when considering the merits of residential development to meet the future needs of the borough at it has concluded that there are better locations and sites within the borough which can deliver sustainable development than land to the south and west of Newbury.

In the context of the strategic planning policies of WBC, both the Full and Outline applications would clearly be in conflict with them.

- 10.9. The impact of development on the landscape and settlement character is a key issue addressed by the adopted and emerging planning policies which apply to Enborne Row and Wash Common. Ref Policy C19 of the Core Strategy and Policies SP7 and SP8 of the Local Plan Review. The impact on biodiversity, flood risk and Green Infrastructure is also to be addressed when considering proposals for development.
- 10.10. In assessing the merits of development for inclusion in its DPDs WBC's decision-making process would have been informed by the landscape character assessments it has commissioned. The most recent one is The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019. The application site is in essence within the Enborne Upper Valley Floor LCA UV4. See pages 58-62.

10.11. In terms of development the LCA describes the area as having a sparsely settled rural character with buildings limited to occasional farms and small stretches of linear development. The linear development has in some locations has created a localised suburban character which is detracting a feature.

10.12. Valued features and qualities include important semi-natural habitats along the river corridor; the role of the river valley as a well-established boundary between Berkshire and Hampshire, its sparsely settled rural character and sense of enclosure and tranquillity.

10.13. The LCA sets out a landscape strategy for the area which includes protecting and enhancing semi-natural habitats and maintain/create linkages between fragmented areas of semi-natural habitat to improve ecological resilience, conserve the rural character of the landscape and conserve the rural character of the landscape by avoiding urbanising features and retaining the overall unsettled character of the valley.

In the context of the landscape and design policies of WBC (informed by the most recent LCA) both the Full and Outline applications would clearly be in conflict with them.