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20/02888/OUT Outline Planning Application

Land Adjacent to Meadowside and Bidden Road, Upton Grey

Upton Grey Parish Council **objections** to the Promoted Site

1. Background

Upton Grey is a historic village. It lies on the line of the old Roman road, the Chichester to Silchester Way, and is listed in Domesday in 1086. It has been the Hampshire Village of the Year. It has featured in both a film and on television because of its special character.

The village in its current form is a draw for walkers and cyclists in the Borough. It is a village environment that is worth preserving for future generations.

There were 171 dwellings within the Settlement Policy Boundary (“SPB”) based on Hampshire County Council Environment Department SAPF data 2019. A further 20 houses including seven affordable houses are about to be completed. Those new homes more than satisfy the village’s needs for future dwellings.

20/02888OUT is for 16 houses. It is promoted Site Ref UG002 covered by the Basingstoke and Deane consultation process which has had multiple comments sent by Villagers.

2. Objections

The Parish Council has received multiple indications of opposition to UG002 and 20/02888/OUT from Villagers.

We understand from the Neighbourhood Planning Councillor Briefing Note (August 2020) that Basingstoke and Deane is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, with 4.86 years as at July 2020. **We have therefore considered guidance from the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”):**

- 2.1 NPPF section 8 requires sustainable development through three objectives. Taking each in turn:
- Economic: The site is not in the right place to support growth, innovation and improved productivity. Upton Grey is a rural village which is not in the right place to satisfy any economic objective. The correct locations for economic purposes would be those close to places of work with access by public transport, walking or cycle. 20/02888OUT would not meet the Economic benefit requirement;
 - Social: To ensure a sufficient number and range of homes to meet the needs of present and future generations -= with accessible services. There are 20 new houses including seven affordable dwellings which are being completed at this time. These are sufficient to meet the needs of the

village. Any requirement for more in future years can be achieved by windfall sites within the SPB. The Social objective would not be met by 20/02888OUT;

- Environmental: To contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. 20/02888OUT is a greenfield site, outside the SPB. A development on this site would be contrary to the guideline. It would create more traffic as residents would need to commute to work and to schools which would exacerbate environmental issues. It would also be on Grade 2 agricultural land within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone. 20/02888OUT would be contrary to the Environmental policy.
- 2.2 NPPF section 11 note 6 indicates that the Council should in preference not permit development in areas designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. 20/02888OUT is Grade 2 agricultural land within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone.
 - 2.3 NPPF section 77 states that in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. An additional 20 houses coming to market now means that there is no further local need for more housing. There is no linkage in the promoted site to agricultural or rural workers or anyone else who needs to live in Upton Grey to add to the community. The promoted site would be contrary to section 77.
 - 2.4 NPPF section 77 states that there should be affordable housing as part of a development to meet identified local needs. There is no local need formally identified for any more than the seven affordable dwellings now being completed. 20/02888OUT will be contrary to section 77 of the NPPF.
 - 2.5 NPPF section 102 states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. Upton Grey is a rural village with no public transport and the Borough Council will need to consider the environmental implications of more traffic daily commuting to work, school and shops, and the impact of more traffic on small road and single-track roads which are used by walkers and cyclists both inside and outside the village. The promoted site would add to existing transport issues and is therefore contrary to the intent of section 102.
 - 2.6 NPPF section 103 indicates that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. 20/02888OUT will add multiple car emissions as there are no other transport means. 20/02888OUT will be contrary to section 103.
 - 2.7 NPPF section 110 c) states that applications for development should create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Upton Grey is a magnet for walkers and cyclists across the Borough. The roads coming into the village are narrow and used by agricultural vehicles, there are no pavements in the village and further traffic of perhaps an additional 32 cars will exacerbate issues of conflict/danger with cyclists and pedestrians. 20/02888OUT will not satisfy 110 c).

- 2.8 NPPF section 189 states that ‘in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting’. This has not been addressed by the application and therefore is in conflict with the NPPF.
- 2.9 Whereas Basingstoke and Deane is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, with 4.86 years as at July 2020, we understand that this situation is expected to be temporary because:
- More sites have become available since the beginning of the year;
 - The Promoted Sites Document September 2020 states in the Introduction that the “total number of potential homes that could be delivered on the promoted sites is likely to far exceed the number of new homes required in the LPU”; and,
 - The new methodology proposed by HM Government will probably result in a reduced requirement for new dwellings for Basingstoke and Deane over the next three years.

We therefore believe that the guidelines in the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029) and Issues and Consultation Document should be considered and applied.

- 2.10 Local Plan Policy SS6(e) states “Development proposals for new housing in the countryside outside of Settlement Policy Boundaries will only be permitted where they are small scale (four dwellings or fewer) residential proposals of a scale and type that meet a locally agreed need. 20/02888OUT is outside the Settlement Policy Boundary. 20/02888OUT is for more than four dwellings. It does not meet a locally agreed need. It would be contrary to SS6(e).

Local Plan Policy SS6 (f) xiii) states that there should be no alternative suitable accommodation available in the locality. Clearly with the significant number of new homes and affordable dwellings in the village coming onto the market, there is more than enough suitable accommodation. 20/02888OUT is contrary to SS6 (f).

- 2.11 Section 4.66 refers to a plan target of at least 10 new dwellings for Upton Grey over the *entire* period of the Plan. It also says that there could be developments outside the SPB if there was a local need. The Local Plan’s objective in setting the target was we believe to preserve the special character of the village but take the benefit of windfall sites. 20/02888OUT is neither a windfall site nor does it represent a local need. It would be contrary to section 4.66.
- 2.12 Section 4.77 of the Local Plan relating to small-scale new residential development in the countryside should be *agreed in consultation with the parish/town council*. There has been no consultation and 20/02888OUT is contrary to this important part of section 4.77.
- 2.13 The Issues and Options Consultation document section 7.9.1 issued by Basingstoke and Deane states that new development is to be directed to take place preferentially within category 1 to 3 Settlements. Upton Grey is category

5, a Smaller Village, of 410 residents and 171 dwellings in the SPB. The size of the promoted development of 16 new dwellings would run counter to section 7.9.1..

- 2.14 The Settlement Study states that *Settlements which are considered as Small Villages (Category 5) only provide basic and limited Key Services and Facilities and are not considered to have an appropriate level of sustainability to be considered suitable for significant levels of growth.* 20/02888OUT could add 16 dwellings to the 171 existing village homes. This would be significant growth and contrary to the goals of the Settlement Study, and would place inappropriate residential development in the least sustainable category of settlement as assessed by BDBC
- 2.15 Minerals Safeguarding Area: We believe that 20/02888OUT is on a Minerals Safeguarding Area and that consideration should be given by Basingstoke and Deane to National Planning Policy that proven resources are not needlessly sterilised by non-mineral development, whilst not creating a presumption that resources defined will be worked, and where appropriate regeneration can be facilitated. See map https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/45142/40_UPTON%20GREY.pdf
- 2.16 Ecology: The land is agricultural and has only recently (in the last 2-3years) been deliberately divided off from a much larger open field used for rotational farming. The environmental loss and landscape impact of a residential change of use would be harmful to the local landscape and environment and therefore in conflict with the NPPF. The Ecology report states that potential for supporting reptiles is low due to the grazing of horses. It Should be noted that this is only a very recent activity and that previously it was used for crops of various types.
- Development of the land will be to the detriment of various ecological designations: Defra mapping shows the site to be of importance for: National Habitat Network Expansion Zone, and importance for bird species listed as Turtle Dove, Lapwing, Grey Partridge. The entirety of the land would be lost in particular for the latter two species which do not readily mix with residential use.
- 2.17 The site is also designated as 'High' vulnerability on the Groundwater Vulnerability Map for England, and a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (meaning the impact of residential development is adverse).
- 2.18 The promoted site and further development would not add to the character of the village nor to the *vitality of the rural community*, which are stated aims- in fact it would be damaging to these. Upton Grey has limited infrastructure and services to support any further development: no street lighting, no appropriate roads, and existing, well documented problems with drainage, sewage and flooding. The site would make no contribution to the vitality of the village and would detract from the integrity of its character by removing the rural look and feel of its surroundings, one of the very things that gives the village its character.
- 2.19 The proposed site is also adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary which it abuts to its southwest at 'Meadowside'. Development here would create more than substantial harm to the setting of the Conservation Area which is already damaged by other recent unplanned development, permitted outside of Policy.

2.20 With no public transport and no schools, those living in the new dwellings would need to become commuters, and their children driven to school. The village is serviced by narrow country lanes and roads and the increase in traffic volume resulting from the proposed developments would be considerable and would make them even busier, to an unacceptable level. Upton Grey is a rural community and the roads are much used by farm vehicles, dog walkers, children, horse riders and cyclists. There are no pavements and the lanes are not wide enough to accommodate them in the future. Any further increase in traffic volume would be dangerous for all who already live here, and would place a large number of additional residents in conflict with increased traffic

Scope of the Application and Documents:

- 2.21 In spite of the descriptions of site layouts, housing numbers and landscaping in the application documents, the application is for Outline Planning Permission, with ALL matter reserved, that is: Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout, and Scale. Therefore there is no merit in the descriptions or illustrations given in the planning statement of all of those matters. The proposal therefore seeks to establish a change of use to Residential, without ANY of the assessments that would normally scrutinise a development likely to have a major impact on a Conservation Area.
- 2.22 The 'Outline' nature of the development is a particular cause for concern as there are no assessments of the suitability of possible future designs, to the context of the adjoining Conservation Area, and its wider setting. Upton Grey is a special village and its character, through its Conservation Area and associated SPB, should be enhanced and conserved, not eroded by fringe developments such as this proposal.
- 2.23 The application documents assess the site in a crude and simplistic manner, and in assessing the potential site layouts merely seek to replicate the immediately adjoining features of development (much of which already developed by the applicant), with no assessment whatsoever of the form and character of the village, and what would constitute appropriate development, given the position of the site contrary to planning policy.
- 2.24 It is particularly concerning that the assessment of the character of the area, is limited to a 3-line description of adjoining houses and bungalows recently developed by the applicant, with no assessment at all of the setting of the Conservation Area and the downland landscape which surround the site. In doing so the application fails to demonstrate compliance with section 189 of the NPPF.
- 2.25 Significant harm has recently been done to the character of the village by recent unplanned development, delivered contrary to BDBC policies. This nature of THIS proposal is such that a repeat of that harm would become very likely, as there would be no established controls over its future content.

Flood Risk:

- 2.26 The Planning Statement cites the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning which shows that the site is not in an area of fluvial (rivers) or marine flooding, and makes the assertion that 'therefore development is acceptable'. This statement demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the requirements for assessing flood risk, and of the site itself. The EA Flood Map cannot be relied upon on its own.

The Bidden Road area of the village and beyond is regularly affected by surface water flooding which is much documented at Borough and County level. The joint BDBC/ HCC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update Map 2012 shows that a significant portion of the site is in an area subject to previous and future surface water flooding. In line with the NPPF's principle of sustainable development this application must be refused in the absence of a satisfactory Flood Risk Assessment and practicable mitigation solutions.

Prematurity:

- 2.27 The Council has already assessed Upton Grey as one of the least sustainable locations in the Borough for residential development, and whilst the proposal sites (of which this is one) are being considered for allocation, this application is therefore premature. Furthermore, the proposal of the site UG002 for allocation in the Local Plan, is for the development of 30 houses. This does not give any confidence that the developer will limit its ambitions to 16 dwellings.

3 Conclusion

The SHELAA conclusion on site UG002 was that "due to its location in the countryside, its development would not be in line with the borough's current planning framework".

The Parish Council recommends that the same conclusion should be applied to 20/02888OUT.

Development sites should be focused preferentially on brownfield land, land already within existing settlements, and where there is access to a transport network. Ideally the new homes should be built where one can cycle to work or take public transport. None of this applies to the open countryside site being promoted for Upton Grey in 20/02888OUT.

The Parish Council recommends that the local need for further housing should be managed through windfall opportunities in the SPB as they arise during the course of the next few years.

The Parish Council, in response to significant Parish objections, and in representing its Parishioners, for the reasons given above makes a **strong Objection** to 20/02888OUT.