



ELSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

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Mr M Ellis
Waverley Borough Council
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cc. Cllrs J. and D. Else, Elstead Parish Council, The Elstead & Weyburn NHP Steering Committee.

LPP2 – ADJUSTMENTS TO GREEN BELT BOUNDARY

ELSTEAD AND WEYBURN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

Dear Mr Ellis,

1 At our meeting on 23 August, we agreed to write to you on behalf of the Elstead and Weyburn Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) setting out the NPSG's recommendations for adjustments to the Green Belt boundary surrounding the Elstead settlement area. These adjustments are necessary to enable the NP area to accommodate the minimum requirement for new dwellings as proposed in the latest draft of the LPP1.

2 These recommendations have been informed by the independent site assessment carried out by Aecom, whose report you already have (we have however since established that one of the sites assessed (Bargate House, no 6 in the report sent to you) is not currently available and should therefore be disregarded for the purposes of this exercise). We have also taken account of the views of parishioners as expressed in their responses to the questionnaire issued late in 2015 and at a well-attended public meeting in July 2017 when all of the sites put forward were displayed.

3 Aecom reviewed 8 submitted sites (not including the removed site mentioned above). It concluded that one of these (no 4, Bonfire Hill) was not acceptable. The NPSG fully endorses this conclusion, which also reflects the overwhelming opinion expressed by parishioners.

4 In relation to the other 7 sites, all were considered to be suitable for allocation but subject to significant constraints. The NPSG has seen its task as reviewing these constraints and identifying the most appropriate sites for housing in order to meet the target for new dwellings in the NP area. This target, as set out in the draft LPP1, is 160 over the period 2013-32. Of these, we understand 32 are already accounted for by dwellings completed or planning consents granted since 2013, and a further 61 will be contributed by the expected development at the former Weyburn Works site. This leaves a minimum of a further 67 still to be provided for.

5 In making its recommendations on priorities, the NPSG has had regard to the following principal considerations:

- ❖ New development should be associated as closely as possible with the existing settlement area
- ❖ Revised Green Belt boundaries should be clearly defined, eg by established hedgelines or other prominent physical features
- ❖ Priority for sites for new housing should be given to those which are closer to village services, eg schools; shops; doctors' surgery; churches; sports and recreational facilities; with a lower priority for sites more distant from such facilities
- ❖ In line with advice from Natural England, priority should also be given to sites furthest way from the Wealden Heaths Special Protection Area
- ❖ The choice of sites should take into account the need to avoid imposing excessive increases in traffic flow on minor roads, particularly those least able to cope with it (eg cul-de-sacs)
- ❖ The need to ensure balanced development across the NP area

6 With these considerations in mind, the NPSG has concluded that sites 5 and 3 as listed in the Aecom Report (Sunray Farm and Croft 2, in that order of priority) should be the preferred sites for removal from the Green Belt and for inclusion in the village settlement area, subject to adherence to the design guidance provided in the emerging NP and other relevant planning policies. These two sites were also those which received strong support (with few or no objections) at the public meeting on 6 July 2017. A map showing all sites is attached. Sites 3 and 5 are coloured yellow to make them stand out.

7 The rationale for the selection of these sites is set out below.

Sunray Farm (Site No 5)

- Sunray Farm is a partly developed site, currently used for equestrian purposes. It contains several equestrian buildings, along with some unsightly derelict (formerly agricultural) buildings. It adjoins the settlement area and is well screened from neighbouring properties and within the general landscape. It is close to many local services, in particular the primary school, and could benefit from a direct pedestrian

access to the school. Vehicle and pedestrian access via Westhill is good, with wide pavements on both sides of the road.

- Visually, development of the site would have little impact on the surrounding landscape as the site is low-lying and well screened. The eastern boundary (which would form the new Green Belt boundary) is identified by an established hedgeline. It is over 400m from the SPA. The removal of the derelict buildings would represent an enhancement of the amenity of the immediate area.

- The capacity of the site, assessed by the NP team's professional adviser, is put at between 45-55 dwellings.

Croft 2 (Site No 3)

- Croft 2 is directly adjacent to a recent housing development, Croft 1. It is well associated with the settlement area and is well screened within the landscape. It has a defined boundary to the east, identified by a hedge and scrub vegetation. This would form the new Green Belt boundary. It is more than 400m from the SPA. The site is reasonably close to several village services, but more distant than Sunray Farm

- Access to the site would be via Croft 1. This access is barely adequate and would need to be improved. The development of the site would increase traffic flow along Hookley Lane, the narrow cul-de-sac which provides the link with the busy Milford Road.

- The NPSG concludes that the development of Croft 2 would be acceptable, subject to the site access being improved and subject also to the proviso that no further site should be developed off Hookley Lane in order to avoid excessive traffic flow along this route.

- The capacity of the site, assessed in the 2016 LAA, is put at 35 dwellings. The NP team's professional adviser estimates that the appropriate yield would be nearer 28.

8 Together, Sunray Farm and Croft 2 would provide space for between 73 and 90 dwellings, well in excess of the minimum requirement of 67 to meet the number proposed for the NP area in the draft LPP1. If these recommendations are accepted, therefore, there is no need to consider further sites for removal from the Green Belt.

Sites Not Recommended

9 The other 5 available sites listed in the Aecom Report as suitable for development (but subject to significant constraints) have not been recommended for the following reasons:

Milford Road (Site No 1)

This is a small site (potential yield 2-5 dwellings). It is partly within 400m of the SPA. Access would be from the busy Milford Road, which to be safe would require the removal of a large section of high hedge. This would adversely affect the rural

character of this section of the Milford Road. The NPSG conclude that it should not be given priority for these reasons.

Four Trees, Hookley Lane (Site No 2)

This site (potential yield 20 dwellings) is close to the Croft 2 site. The NPSG considers it inappropriate to develop two major sites off Hookley Lane in view of the increased traffic flows which would result. It is therefore a question of deciding which of the two sites (Croft 2 and Four Trees) should be given priority. The NPSG considers that Four Trees is the less appropriate owing to the difficulties of access (the house at Four Trees would need to be demolished to allow adequate access) and the lack of a clearly defined Green Belt boundary should the site be developed. In this sense, the site is less well associated with the settlement area than is Croft 2.

Church Farm and Westbrook Cottages) (Site No 7)

This is also a relatively small site, with a yield of 5-10 dwellings. It is screened from neighbouring properties (other than Church Farm and Westbrook Cottages themselves, and St James' Church) and is well situated in relation to the existing settlement area. It is close to village services. Part of the site is however within a conservation area and is very close to two listed buildings, one of them a Grade 2* building. Aecom have concluded the site is unlikely to be suitable for allocation for this reason, although it accepts that sensitive design could result in an acceptable scheme. The NPSG has therefore concluded that the site should not be given priority over Sunray Farm and Croft 2.

Land East of Red House Lane (Site No 8)

This again is a small site, with a projected yield of 5 dwellings. It is within 400m of the SPA. It is considerably further away from the main village services than either of the preferred sites (other than from the Thursley Rd Recreation Ground). Its development would extend the settlement area to the south-east, closer to the SPA, and would also involve the development of a partly wooded area at the rear of existing dwellings in Red House Lane. This form of development is not characteristic of the neighbouring settlement pattern. The NSPG concluded that the site should not be given priority for these reasons.

Land at Red House Farm (Site No 9)

This is a larger site with a projected yield of 17 dwellings. It is a reasonably well screened site, but it adjoins the SPA and all of the site is therefore within the 400m 'zone of influence'. Its development would extend the settlement area well to the south east of the village. Of all the submitted sites, it is the one most distant from village services. The NPSG concluded that it should not be given priority for these reasons.

10 I trust that these comments are helpful and that WBC will give our recommendations appropriate consideration. Representatives of the NPSG and Elstead Parish Council are happy to discuss them further with WBC planning officials if this would be helpful.

Kind regards

Juliet Williams
Clerk - Elstead Parish Council

