

Matter 30. Barkway and Site BK3.

I am NHDC District Councillor Gerald Morris representing Ermine Ward which includes Barkway.

Whilst I am delighted and appreciate that this site may well be removed from the Emerging Local Plan, subject to the Inspector's agreement. I do feel that I should still place on record the following **additional** comments.

Wanting to build a large housing estate adjacent to, by far the largest local employer, Newsells Park Stud, was always a problem. The **pandemic** must now be a new consideration, in that it has further exacerbated the potential threat. Newsells Park Stud is a difficult and sensitive business. The business model relies on the horse racing sport. As with most sporting activities, horse racing is now financially in a parlous state. This is inevitably having a, long term, negative effect on businesses that support it, like this Stud.

Furthermore, there has not been any NHDC impact assessment of the commercial and employment consequences, nor has any local plan officer visited the Stud.

NHDC have acknowledged that there is a real problem for the Stud, in suggesting some sort of mitigation measures.

The dictionary definition of mitigation is "the action of reducing the severity, seriousness or painfulness of something".

Mitigation clearly does not eliminate a threat; it just attempts to reduce it. Would any of us really take a chance of perhaps harming such a sensitive business?

What the word mitigation is saying, in the case of the stud.

That we hope to reduce the possibility of damage to racehorses and their foals.

This is clearly unacceptable

Also, should the site not be removed, then I would also point out that the proposed modification MM389 reads “Enlarge to housing allocation to include reserve school site”. This modification clearly reads as additional housing and not that the site should remain available for a school, in the future.

This proposed modification, contradicts the letter from Hertfordshire County Council, dated 9th February 2018 which was sent at the request of NHDC. This letter says that the site remains as a reserve school site. It does not mention the possibility of additional housing or any wording like “Enlarge to housing allocation”.

Since both HCC and NHDC have pointed out that there is no prospect of the need for this school, during the current plan period.

We are also aware that the NHDC planning officer has commented extensively in his report and recommendation refusal ref. application number 16/02759/1 Para. 6.0 onwards (attached), that the reserves school site is a hindrance to the development of BK3; in that BK3 would be geographically separate from the village and would be a satellite development.

The proposed modification MM389 attempts to circumvent this separation. Even if the reserve school site remains as that; as has been requested by Hertfordshire County Council and then was subsumed into BK3. This would only serve the purpose of giving the false visual appearance of BK3 being geographically connected to the village. I would also point out that Hertfordshire County Council have not requested that the reserves school site be subsumed into BK3.

In addition, during the original call for sites, several years ago. This reserved school site was not requested to be included by Hertfordshire County Council and therefore its possible inclusion at this late stage, would circumvent the public

consultations, which I would suggest is both undemocratic and not in the public interest. This late proposed modification only serves to compound the original mistake to include BK3 in the first place.

To conclude, it is clear to me that this attempt by NHDC to close one of the many loopholes in the problematic case for BK3 is unsound and flawed.

In removing BK3 as requested by NHDC and hopefully with the approval of the Inspector. Then keeping the reserve school site clearly separated, will help achieve a sound Local Plan.