

Examination of the North Herts Local Plan 2011–2031 Schedule for Matters and Issues. Barkway 8th February 2018

Inspectors Comments in Blue

At the hearings, I will consider each site in reference number order

11.5 Are all of the proposed housing allocations deliverable? In particular, are they:

a) confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the use proposed?

b) supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?

c) deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

My Item A.

Within the NHDC document Housing Options Growth Levels and Locations. Consultation Paper February 2013: the proposed site BK3 was shown as two site 022 and 019.

However, within the later document.

My Item B.

Local Plan Proposed Submission October 2016: these sites became one site. This document also states on page 144. "Incorporation of footpath Barkway 017 as a north south green corridor through the site". This description is incorrect. Barkway 017 is not a footpath it is a **bridleway**.

Page 144 also says. "Explore opportunities for connecting road from Royston Road to Cambridge Road having regard to heritage considerations".

One cannot realistically have both.

It would hardly be acceptable to ride sensitive horses on a bridleway, crossing a road and passing through the middle of a housing development.

This bridleway is used by Newsells Park Stud, Barkway Racing Stables, Lovely View Stables in Barley and other riders. I would suggest that it would not be acceptable to build a road East West across the site. This would bisect the bridleway and would further harm Newsells Park Stud, the largest local employer and others.

Has HCC Rights of Way been consulted?

It was a mistake to consider the site BK3 as one, when in fact the previous Strategic Planning Officer in all earlier documents considered it as two because it is divided by a bridleway way which is not owned by the landowners.

Whilst I understand that the owner of the west site may have recently purchased or have an agreement in respect of the east site. This was not the case in October 2016.

Highways and the public were wrongly, asked to comment on one site and a foot path. Not two sites and a bridleway.

I also understand that the current Principal Strategic Planning Officer decided that BK3 was suitable based on a desk top study.

Since this proposed site is in a very sensitive location at the peak of the Chiltern Ridge also known as the East Anglian Heights.

A desk top study is somewhat like Internet dating. One really cannot reach a sound judgement just sitting at a desk.

Is it possible to establish if the Programme Officer did visit the proposed site BK3 and if he also walked both bridleways?

This would surely have avoided these errors.

Page 144 also states provision of local convenience shop. In all likelihood, the shop would be unviable based on previous submissions. It would be even less viable with the inability of easy access from the east of the site, without using a car.

11.6 Are all of the proposed housing allocations justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development?

My Item C.

NHDC background papers Preferred Options Consultation November 2014 Site Selection Matrix. Continues to exclude 022 & 019 and states “major upgrades to foul sewage network for development of this site, require further investigation”.

Has this been carried out?

It also states, “site specific issues may be able to be addressed, but would lead to level of growth above district average for this modest village, with no coherent plan for improving facilities on offer”.

Nothing has changed since then.

11.7 Are all of the proposed allocations the most appropriate option given the reasonable alternatives?

As stated by NHDC, BK3 is in a sensitive location at the peak of the East Anglian heights. There is also a large surplus of sites proposed throughout North Hertfordshire and therefore not allocating this site would not harm to the Local Plan.

11.8 Is the proposed settlement boundary:

a) consistent with the methodology for identifying the settlement boundaries?

b) appropriate and justified?

Hertfordshire County Council own the reserved school site. It is located between Barkway Village and BK3. Approximately 500 dwellings is the trigger for a one form entry school. The total proposed housing in the area does not come close to this. Hertfordshire County Council have confirmed they are not planning to build this school. Resulting in geographically separating the site from the village.

My Item B again Pages 143 & 145

13.34 says “The Village has a **limited** range of facilities”. However 13.41 Says “Barkway has a range of local facilities”. These are surely contradictory.

Had the correct information been used in October 2016, then I would suggest that BK3 would and should have been excluded.