

Report to	<b>Planning Committee</b>
Date	<b>15 March 2012</b>
By	<b>Director of Planning</b>
Local Authority	<b>East Hants District Council</b>
Application Number	<b>SDNP/52418/002</b>
Application	<b>213 dwellings, 30 bed sheltered accommodation, primary school, community building with associated access, open space and landscaping.</b>
Address	<b>Land at Causeway Farm, The Causeway, Petersfield</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>The application is reported to Committee for a decision.</b>

---

**Recommendation: That planning permission be refused for the reasons set out in paragraph 10.1 of this report**

---

## **1. Site Description**

- 1.1 The site is to the south-east of Petersfield town centre on the east side of The Causeway, the main approach road into Petersfield from the southern exit off the A3. Between the site and The Causeway is a ribbon of housing fronting the road. The houses are mainly two storey and semi detached and built in the first half of the twentieth century. To the north of the site is Sussex Road, part of which is within the Petersfield Conservation Area which is fronted by mainly late 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century housing on both sides of the road up to Heath Pond, a large body of water surrounded by woods and heath with extensive public access. On the south side of Sussex Road, beyond the housing is the Petersfield 'pay and play' public golf course. Public footpaths, including the Hangers Way, pass through the site and link it to both Petersfield and the open countryside of the Western Weald to the east. To the south of the site is a furniture storage business and a mobile home park.
- 1.2 The South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment identifies the site as being within the Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland landscape character area. This is a gently undulating landform with irregular fields and a sense of enclosure due to thick hedgerows with spreading hedgerow oaks and strips of woodland.
- 1.3 The site is 12.6 hectares of which 9.6 ha is proposed to be developed. The site is mainly undeveloped and in use for rough grazing. There are 2 dwellings on the site – nos 106 and 106a The Causeway. Both are converted farm buildings with substantial curtilages. One (no.106a) is a grade II Listed Building. A stream runs south from Sussex Road through a partially wooded area and meanders eastwards beyond the development site area. The eastern edge of the site is screened from the surrounding countryside by woodland, shrubs and more recent planting.
- 1.4 Access is from The Causeway via a gravel track edged with trees and shrubs, including a protected oak tree (T7 of TPO 143) which leads to the two dwellings on the site and serves two other dwellings, one on either side of the track.

## **2. Relevant Planning History**

- 2.1 F37146/OUT - Outline - 275 dwellings with associated access, primary school, community centre and public open space with riverside footpath. Refused 5 June 2002.
- 2.2 52418 – Screening Opinion – EIA required 19 February 2010
- 2.3 SDNP/52418/001 Outline – 213 dwellings. 30 bed sheltered accommodation, primary school, community building with associated access, open space and landscaping. Refused 15 December 2010.

### **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 The application is in outline form, with the principle of development and means of access onto the site the only consideration. The application proposes 213 dwellings, 30 bed sheltered accommodation, together with an area of 1.2 ha set aside for the provision of a primary school and an area set aside for a community building. The scheme would also contribute an area of public open space, allotments and footpath links into and out of the site. The only part of the proposal specified in detail is access. A vehicular access is proposed from The Causeway in the existing gap between 104 and 108.
- 3.2 An illustrative master plan has been submitted with the application; however, siting and matters of design detail and landscaping would be subject to a separate reserved matters application, should outline consent be granted.
- 3.3 The residential units would be:
  - 15 one bedroom apartments;
  - 32 two bedroom apartments;
  - 53 two bed houses;
  - 98 three bed houses;
  - 15 four and five bed houses;
  - 30 bed sheltered accommodation

122 of these units would be affordable (50.2% of the total), comprising 72 social rented units (27 x 2bed, 24 x 3bed, 11 x 4+ bed) and 50 intermediate units (10 x 1 bed flats, 12 x 2 bed flats, 20 x 2 bed houses and 8 x 3 bed houses).
- 3.4 The proposal includes two children's play areas in a central area of public open space and three picnic areas within a community park and recreation area. The proposal does not include any sports pitch provision on-site. Four trees need to be removed to accommodate the development as shown on the illustrative master-plan. These are three non-native conifers on the access route and a field maple tree which has been considerably lopped in the past and is of no significant value. All other trees are to be retained. Measures are proposed to protect the exposed roots of two veteran trees including the building up of an air permeable mound of coarse sand and topsoil over a supporting structure and bound with biodegradable matting. As this is an outline application and the design indicative, no further details of tree protection and management methods have been provided. These details would be provided as part of a reserved matter application. However, It is proposed to protect the protected oak tree which is within the corridor of the proposed access into the site adjacent to no 104 The Causeway by a phased combination of protective barrier fencing, temporary load-bearing road surfaces (to an adoptable design by agreement with Hampshire County Council), control of trafficking and an approved no-dig construction method. This is to ensure that the ground surface within the root protection area of the tree remains non compacted and a suitable medium for continued root growth.
- 3.5 The application has been submitted with an Environmental Impact Assessment and:
  - Design And Access Statement
  - Archaeological Investigation
  - Landscape And Visual Impact Assessment
  - Ecological Impact Assessment
  - Flood Risk Assessment

- Planning Statement
- Statement Of Community Involvement
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Heritage Statement
- Planning Statement
- Addendum To Planning Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Addendum to Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Affordable Housing Statement, Traffic Assessment and EIA Non Technical Summary stating that any reference to access from Sussex Road other than from the existing footpath network should be ignored in any of the supporting documentation.

#### 4. Consultations

4.1 **Natural England:** object – it would have a negative impact on the landscape features and purposes of the SDNP and Rother Valley Landscape Character Area contrary to policies H2 and C5 of the EHLP; insufficient information – no suitable photomontages showing height of development in context; unlikely to have implications for the Wealden Edge Hangers and SSSI, Butser Hill SSSI/SAC or East Hampshire Hangers SAC; some documents refer to 225 not 213 dwellings.

4.2 **Environment Agency:** the proposed development will only be acceptable subject to planning conditions relating to Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme and habitat enhancement and informative relating to works to the watercourse (text provided).

4.3 **Highway Authority:** additional evidence required relating to drainage; additional details required for use of link to Sussex Road as there is potentially conflict between allotment parking and cyclists and area is at risk from flooding; at detailed stage the following are required as a minimum:

- stage ½ safety audit
- full tracking for all vehicles
- long section
- engineering layout.

And it is recommended that drainage details are submitted. Conditions required relating to:

- access construction details;
- access construction provision
- services area provision
- turning area details
- parking provision and retention
- gate set back

Junction proposals onto The Causeway acceptable; proposals to accommodate the TPO oak will act as traffic calming measure; all junctions in the vicinity of the site will operate within capacity in the post development future years scenario; in order to ensure the impact of new development is mitigated, in line with the above and reconciliation with other relevant National and Local policy, it will be necessary for the applicant to make a financial contribution in line with the County Council's Transport Contributions Policy of £887,689 and in the absence of such a contribution recommend refusal.

4.4 **HCC PROW officer:** diversion of foot path would require a formal separate consent; part of the land is subject to an application for registration as a Village Green; whilst this is not incompatible with the proposed use of this part of the site for open space this issue has to

be formally addressed.

- 4.5 **HCC ecologist:** concerns addressed by mitigation proposed or conditions at the reserved matters stage
- 4.6 **HCC archaeological officer:** potential for evidence of Mesolithic, bronze age and roman activity therefore condition required for investigation.
- 4.7 **HCC education officer:** in order to mitigate the impact on school places a contribution towards the provision of education infrastructure is required in addition to the provision of a new primary school site.
- 4.8 **EHDC:** object for the following reasons:
1. Having regard to the fact that the site is not needed to meet a 5 year land supply requirement, the conflict of the development of this site with other policy objectives, namely the designation of the South Downs National Park and its associated impact upon the broader landscape of the area, the requirements of PPG7 and the DEFRA Vision and Circular on English National Parks and the Broads to have exceptional circumstances to permit major developments in these areas. The development of this reserve housing site is inappropriate, pending a comprehensive review by the District Council, jointly with the National Park Authority and local community, of the best options for meeting Petersfield's housing needs and other community needs. The proposal would be contrary to the guidance contained in PPS3, PPS7, the DEFRA Vision and Circular on English National Parks and the Broads and Policy H2 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review.
  2. The proposal involves development that cannot be reconciled with national planning policy guidance in PPG13 in that it fails to make the best possible use of opportunities to reduce reliance on the private car and to encourage sustainable modes of transport, and does not propose suitable measures to mitigate the impact of the proposal on the surrounding network. The failure to utilise alternative means of transport to the private car would result in an unacceptable increase in the number and length of car journeys to the detriment of the environment and the locality contrary to policies T1 and GS4 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review
  3. In the absence of a completed legal agreement, no provision has been made to secure public open space provision and its maintenance, in perpetuity, within the proposal contrary to Policy R3 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review and the Council's 'Guide to Developers' Contributions and Other Planning Requirements'.
  4. In the absence of a completed legal agreement, no provision has been secured for a community facility or contributions towards environmental improvements, improvements to the Taro Centre and a community worker, contrary to Policy GS4 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review and the Council's 'Guide to Developers' Contributions and Other Planning Requirements'.
  5. In the absence of a completed legal agreement, no provision has been made to secure the 1.2ha site for a new school together with a financial contribution to be made towards education facilities within Petersfield where, as a consequence of the proposed development, there is a recognised shortage of school spaces contrary to Policy GS4 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review.
  6. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure the provision of affordable housing, including the mix of unit sizes and tenures, contrary to Policy H11 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review, adopted non-statutory planning guidance on Affordable Housing, the Council's 'Guide to Developers' Contributions and Other Planning Requirements' and the adopted Development Brief for the site.
- 4.9 **EHDC environmental health officer:** conditions required in relation contaminated land potential and air quality.

- 4.10 **EHDC conservation officer:** The proposed development has a very small boundary with the southern most part of the Petersfield Conservation Area (to the rear of 33-65 Sussex Road). Due to the arrangement of the development site, there is a significant 'green' buffer between the conservation area boundary and the proposed development site. Views into and out of the Conservation Area will not be affected and the character and appearance of the conservation area will not be affected. Therefore I conclude that there will be no negative impact on the Conservation Area and raise no objection to the proposed scheme as it currently stands in relation to the Conservation Area. From solely a desktop study, the scheme appears to have made reasonable provision to safeguard the setting of the listed barn and associated (unlisted) residential property.
- 4.11 **EHDC housing officer:** meets requirement of development brief and provides a range of sizes to address varying housing needs
- 4.12 **EHDC landscape officer:** As Petersfield lies within the SDNP, particular regard must be paid to the protection and enhancement of the very fine and nationally important landscapes which form the setting of the town. This major development proposal involves a large site with a generally open character which lies to the south east of the town. This open character is an important feature of the town's setting and policies over the years have sought to protect its intrinsic character. The area is especially important because a broad swathe of open countryside sweeps up to the very edge of the town centre and part of its conservation area and provides a very fine direct link between the town and its surrounding countryside. The Inspector in his 2005 report on the Second Review of the Local Plan specifically commented upon the fine qualities of this relationship and accepted that "The area is characterised by superb views in virtually all directions and in these views the setting of the town between the South Downs and The Hangers is clearly apparent". Ideally therefore; because of its very pleasing rural character, its fine distant views its contribution to the setting of the town and its proximity to the town centre the area should remain undeveloped. However, despite these qualities the Inspector in 2005 did reluctantly conclude that it should be allocated as a reserve housing site. In 2009 a Development Brief for the site was approved by East Hampshire District Council and so the principles for the new development on this site were laid down and these have now been used to guide the preparation of this application. The SDNP will now have to consider the provision of housing within the National Park. The Shadow SDNP Authority did object to this original proposal and thought that a wider consideration of all possible sites involving the local community would now be an appropriate way forward. Such a process would provide the opportunity to determine whether the Inspector's reluctant acceptance that development should be permitted on this site should be reconsidered. That is still the case.
- 4.13 **EHDC arboricultural officer:** no objection subject to details of mitigation measures at reserved matter stage.
- 4.14 **EHDC drainage officer:** no objection subject to a satisfactory drainage strategy. The attached Flood Risk Assessment is generally acceptable with run-off mitigated to greenfield rates. However, the proposed SUDS infiltration drainage is very dependent on the geotechnical site investigation, which needs to be carried out during the winter period. In addition flood flow routes within the proposed development need identifying and agreeing. Future management arrangements for maintenance of the SUDS features will need to be agreed. The Southern Stream is designated as main river and therefore falls under the control of the Environment Agency. In places, the stream banks are very steep and can become unstable during prolonged wet periods. Confirmation is required of who will become the future 'riparian owner' following completion of the development. Design of the proposed bridges will require agreement with, and formal consent from the Environment Agency. I note that the public foul system will need upgrading in order to accept flows from the proposed development. This will require a sewer requisition to be agreed with Southern Water.
- 4.15 **Petersfield Town Council:** object on the following grounds:-
- overdevelopment of the site.

- the access and egress is insufficient for the site which includes a school and community hall as well as housing and would be onto a very busy road especially at certain times of the day.
- the development would remove one of the greenfingers into the town which the local planning policy and the town design statement require to be retained.
- the allotments are located in an area that is known to flooding and are not sufficient for the size of the development.
- Members feel the development is premature in terms of the need of houses within Petersfield without the backup of infrastructure. i.e. doctors surgery, hospital facilities, sewerage and water waste.
- a detailed arboricultural survey of trees on the site is required.
- drainage of the site could have an adverse effect on the water levels of the surrounding area including Petersfield Heath pond.
- it is also premature regarding the neighbourhood plan to be undertaken by the town council following the completion of the Petersfield Plan.

## 5. Representations

- 5.1 **Councillor P Aiston (Ward Member):** object 1. NATIONAL PARK This application should be treated as with any other national park using the DEFRA document 'English National Parks and Broads'. This is NOT an exceptional circumstance with reference to section 4.1 paragraph 31. This is a Greenfield site. 2. LOCAL NEED ONLY .SDNPA 'local housing for local people'. Approx 50% of the development including 4 beds will bring people into the town. THIS WILL INVOLVE COMMUTING TO PLACES LIKE LONDON. 3. WRONG HOUSING FIGURES. Housing need figures in the Design and Access Statement are INCORRECT at 905 houses. The SDNPA have gone for option A of 330 to 420 houses. Why use Causeway Farm? 4. EXTENSIVE LOCAL OBJECTION. Refer to Localism Bill. Previous refusal by EHDC and to my knowledge PTC. This is the same application as before but with what looks like some landscaping and the developers need to demonstrate that they have adequately addressed all the previous reasons for refusal. 5. FOOD PLAIN. The northern parts of the area are a Zone 3 flood area (Stanbridge Stream) and other parts are wetland. Blocking flooding in this area will push it on to other areas in the town 6. EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING. There is already existing affordable housing off the Causeway. 7. ROAD ACCESS. The Causeway is a major route into Petersfield where we already have a large School and TESCO with the associated traffic, particularly at the point near Sussex Road. 8. SOLAR POSITIONING. For maximum efficiency houses should be south facing The layout of the proposed development does not seem to support this orientation.
- 5.2 **Petersfield Society:** object:
- Fails to take account of Joint Core Strategy which no longer refers to reserve sites and the policies within it (CP1, CP8, CP9, CP10, CP11, CP18)
  - No justification in terms of delivery of purposes and duty
  - Premature pending the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and identification of local housing needs and location
  - Intrusion into landscape
  - Conflict with Petersfield Design Statement
- 5.3 **CPRE:** object:
- No different to application previously refused so should be refused for same reasons
  - Cumulative impact
  - Govt is in the process of abolishing housing targets
  - NPPF carries little weight

- Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is a material consideration which carries considerable weight but this application fails to take it into account
- 5 year housing land supply exceeded
- JCS policy CP8 has superseded EHDCLP and new housing allocations will surely be focused away from sites with major landscape impacts like Causeway Farm
- Should be refused on basis of prematurity
- 'Silent garden' site where housing was allowed on appeal to provided a continuous supply of housing land and inspector there considered applications for other reserve sites if consent would undermine valid policy objectives. Valid EHDC policy objective is to focus housing within settlement boundary – this site is greenfield
- Petersfield Town Design Statement (TDS) adopted after extensive consultation therefore has considerable weight – this development would remove 'green finger and diminish views out to and in from countryside contrary to TDS
- No justification in terms of delivery of purposes and duty
- Major incursion into countryside contrary to South Downs Management Plan and CP18 of JCS underpinned by South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment – views into site from high ground to south contested
- No compelling justification in public interest contrary to PPS7
- Further strain on infrastructure
- Seriously affects setting of listed building
- Additional traffic on The Causeway and fails to reduce reliance on private car

5.4 **Campaign for National Parks:** object on grounds of prematurity as immediate housing needs can be met and longer term needs should be considered as part of the emerging Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan. No exceptional circumstances to demonstrate in the public interest to have major development here in SDNOP and could not be met on alternative sites outside the NP. The site would be visible from surrounding areas and mitigation measures would not outweigh damage to the landscape.

5.5 **Southdowns Society:** object

- No different to application previously refused so should be refused for same reasons
- Sufficient 5 year land supply – NPPF for 20% addition has no weight
- Premature in the context of the developing JCS
- Manor development with no compelling justification contrary to PPS7
- Precedent which would have a major and cumulative impact on the SDNP
- Whilst there is a need for affordable homes in the town there is no need shown by work on emerging JCS for market housing
- Conflict with Petersfield Design Statement which embodies community 'ownership' of planning solutions
- Strain on infrastructure and would add significant traffic to the Causeway
- Potential for flooding

5.6 179 representations have been received making the following points:

- The proposal represents an unacceptable visual intrusion of development beyond the edge of the settlement policy boundary of Petersfield, harmful to the character and quality of the South Downs National Park and open countryside;
- Reducing amount of undeveloped land in a National Park goes against National Park principles;
- No exceptional circumstance to warrant the release of this site,
- housing target met without need to release this reserve site plus a range of more appropriate brownfield sites and other reserve sites should be considered first;

- Cumulative impact of development of all four reserve sites in Petersfield, the town is already too built up and any further increase in its scale will be detrimental to its market town identity;
- The development would set an undesirable precedent for other similar large scale development which would adversely affect the character of the locality;
- Unacceptable access arrangements with inadequate visibility splays and will have a detrimental effect upon the safety and convenience of users of the adjoining highway;
- Additional vehicles entering or leaving The Causeway thereby interfering with the safety and free flow of traffic on this Class B traffic route;
- The roads leading to and from the site are of inadequate capacity/width/alignment to accommodate safely the additional traffic which the proposed development would generate;
- Traffic congestion during peak hour of 08:00 to 09:00 particularly at Jolly Sailor roundabout, then again at school leaving and evening rush hour;
- Adverse impact upon pedestrians using The Causeway;
- Adverse impact upon footpaths, loss of green space and tranquil walking area;
- The application is premature in so far as the Local Development Framework is concerned and the duly made Town Green application for a significant part of the site, currently being determined by HCC.
- No housing need to release this site for housing;
- The application shows, in its location plan, that this current application is for only 50% of the full site, and it should be judged on the full site size;
- There have been recently, and are now currently, numerous developments off The Causeway, with more applications being registered. This area already contains affordable housing;
- To grant consent would conflict with the expressed views of the community in the very recently adopted, and published, Petersfield Town Design Statement;
- Adverse impact upon local wildlife;
- Adverse impact on local archaeology;
- The site is liable to flood, to the detriment of future housing and the development will exacerbate flooding issues for existing adjacent properties;
- Undesirable precedent of building on other sites liable to flooding will be created;
- Emergency access poorly planned, Sussex Road too busy;
- Site no longer a brownfield site;
- Strain on local community facilities and town centre facilities including parking;
- Existing infrastructure (water, sewerage) unable to cope with an increase in population.
- New school not needed, it is unviable and would place additional burdens on secondary schools;
- Proposed community building in wrong location to be readily accessible by existing residents and uncertainty raised about how it will be used;
- Adverse impact upon existing neighbours, over looking and loss of privacy and additional noise and disturbance;
- Not enough local employment to support new housing and residents will be reliant on commuting, to the detriment of a sense of local community and the transport network;
- Poorly designed scheme in regard to layout, mix and design of properties, plot sizes, over development of the site and landscaping, which make it out of keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- The whole Causeway Farm site should be looked at comprehensively;
- the proposed access would encroach upon land privately owned;



- Support for new sheltered housing and new primary school.

## 6. Planning Policy Context

6.1 The following national policy documents are relevant to this application:

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development  
 PPS3 Housing  
 PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment  
 PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas  
 PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation  
 PPG13 Transport  
 PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.

6.2 Applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan in this area in the South East Plan and the East Hants District Local Plan Second review 2006.

6.3 The South East Plan was adopted by the Secretary of State on 6th May 2009. The Coalition Government's revocation of the Plan in July 2010 has been found to be unlawful so the Plan remains part of the development plan at this time but the intention to revoke it through the Localism Act could be a material consideration. The following policies are relevant to this application:

C2: The South Downs - states that the purposes of designation should be a material consideration in the making of any planning decision that would affect it.

CC1: Sustainable development – states that the physical and natural environment of the south east is conserved and enhanced

CC4 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC6: Sustainable Communities and Character of the environment – requires new development to respect the character and distinctiveness of landscapes and use innovative design to create a sense of place.

SP3: Urban Focus and Urban Renaissance – states that the prime focus for development in the South East should be in urban areas.

NRM5 Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

T4 Parking

W2 Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition

C4 Landscape and Countryside Management

BE6 Management of the Historic Environment

6.4 The South Downs National Park Authority is working jointly with East Hampshire District Council on a joint Core Strategy for East Hampshire District. This core strategy was published on 3 February, and will be out for representation until 16 March. It will subsequently be formally submitted in late May 2012 before being adopted in December 2012 by the National Park Authority and the district council, should it be found sound.

6.5 The relevant policies in the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review 2006 are:

GS1 - Sustainable Development  
 GS3 - Protecting the Countryside  
 GS4 - Making the Most of Existing Infrastructure, Services and Facilities  
 H2 - Reserve Site Allocations  
 H4 - Creating a Mix of Housing Types, Sizes, and Tenures  
 H5 - Higher Densities of Residential Development  
 C4 - Nature Conservation  
 C5 - Local Landscape Features  
 C6 - Tree Preservation  
 C8 - Flood Protection  
 H11 - Affordable Housing within Settlement Policy Boundaries  
 HE1 - Design  
 E1 - Conservation of Energy

E2 - Renewable Energy  
R3 - Public Open Space Requirements  
P5 - Light Pollution  
P6 - Privacy and Daylight  
P7 - Contaminated Land  
T1 - General Policy: Land Use and Transport  
T2 - Public Transport Provision and Improvement  
T3 - Pedestrians and Cyclists  
T4 - Protection of Public Footpaths  
T5 - New Recreational Footpaths  
T9 - Highway Issues - Access  
T10 - Highway Issues - Road Layout  
T12 - Parking Standards  
C9 - River Corridors

6.6 The site is outside the settlement policy boundary for Petersfield but is allocated within the Local Plan as a reserve housing site. Although the Council has not released the site for development, a development brief has been published by the Council as a precautionary measure to provide to guidance for any potential development at the site.

## **7. National Park Purposes**

7.1 The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas;
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social well being of the local community in pursuit of these purposes. Government policy relating to national parks set out in PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and Circular 20/10 is that they have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside must, therefore, be given great weight in development control decisions.

## **8. Planning Assessment**

### Principle of development

8.1 PPS7 advises that major development should not take place in National Parks unless there is clear and compelling justification of need. Moreover, the government recognises that National Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing and does not therefore provide general housing targets for them. The expectation is that new housing will be focused on meeting affordable housing requirements, supporting local employment opportunities and key services.

8.2 Whilst recognising that National Parks are not required to set out and meet a housing target, East Hampshire District Council has produced a position statement on five year housing land supply for the central Hampshire part of the district, as at 1 April 2011. The total housing requirement for central Hampshire part of East Hampshire District has been calculated by EHDC to be 4,400 between 2006 – 28. There is calculated to be a significant surplus in housing supply of 515 dwellings (April 2012 – March 2017) and there is no requirement to release additional sites on the basis of maintaining a 5 year housing land supply.

8.3 Although the site is allocated in Policy H2 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review as a reserve housing site for about 275 dwellings it was placed as the 11th of a list of 12 sites and there has been no decision to release this land for development. A development brief was prepared as a precautionary measure following an appeal decision at a reserve site in Liphook (Silent Garden, The Firs in 2009), where residential development was permitted although the Inspector emphasised that the site could be clearly distinguished

from the other reserve sites, which would need to be treated on their own merits and in the context of policy objectives for the District.

- 8.4 The published *East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy* has set out a housing target figure for Petersfield for 330 dwellings for the period up to 2028, beyond existing commitments. No sites are identified in the Core Strategy as it is considered that the responsibility for allocating development sites will fall to the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan which the National Park Authority is working with the Town Council on the early stages. In the event that the Neighbourhood Plan for Petersfield is not adopted then the allocation of development sites would fall to a *South Downs National Park Allocations Development Plan Document*. The development of this reserve housing site is therefore inappropriate, pending a comprehensive review by the District Council, the SDNPA and local community of the best options for meeting Petersfield's housing needs and other community needs and contrary to the provisions of PPS7 in that the need for this major development is not justified and premature pending the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Landscape and Visual Impact

- 8.5 This site has been recognised as an important element of the setting and character of Petersfield by the Local Plan Inspector who considered:

*"the proposed development of the site would represent a very large extension of the urban area into open countryside recognised nationally for its natural beauty... The area is characterised by superb views in virtually all directions and in these views the setting of the town between the South Downs and The Hangers is clearly apparent.....its character derives essentially from its rural, pastoral landscape, its relative tranquillity, the views to be obtained of and from it, the water course, its trees, hedgerows and prevailing openness"*

As such it is appropriate that the openness of the land should be protected unless there is clear and convincing justification of need. The need has not been justified and the proposal would result in the loss of one of the 'green fingers' identified as an important characteristic of the landscape character of Petersfield and the this part of the SDNP. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted with the application relies on the distance to the nearest viewpoints to the south and existing and proposed tree and shrub character to mitigate the impact. However, the enjoyment and appreciation of the public would be significantly compromised by development of this scale despite the proposals put forward to retain the recreational amenity of the land through the provision of the proposed area of open space on the eastern side of the site along the Southern Stream. The proximity of the development to the existing PROWs would alter the perception of this land considerably as part of the countryside and bring it within the settlement boundary both visually and physically whilst diminishing its role in contributing to the setting of Petersfield within the National Park. As such it is contrary to the purposes of national park designation and policies C2, CC1, CC6 and SP3 of the South East Plan and GS3 and C5 of the East Hants District Plan Second Review 2006.

#### Scale, Layout and Design

- 8.6 The applications is in outline with all matters reserved therefore detailed consideration of the design and layout is inappropriate as the submitted plan is indicative only. The scheme under consideration proposes 243 residential units compared to the 275 dwellings identified in the local plan allocation. The indicative plan shows that a development of this scale could be accommodated without appearing cramped or of a high density.
- 8.7 However the indicative layout lacks qualities of hierarchy or legibility and would be a confusing environment for the visitor to negotiate. It would be much improved if a hierarchy of public spaces were conceived that enhanced the site's natural features and helped give order and meaning to this part of the town. In having only one point of access, the proposed development is like a single large cul-de-sac with the consequential issues arising from entrance and egress. In addition, the road network includes an additional 6 cul-de-sacs. This results in a lack of permeability throughout the development. The design analysis needs to consider the characteristics of Petersfield which are relevant to this type of edge of town location. However these issues could be addressed at the reserved matters stage.

### Cultural heritage

- 8.8 The setting of the listed building towards the centre of the site could be respected and incorporated as an integral part of the development as demonstrated on the indicative layout. The former agricultural buildings have been separated from their original context setting through the establishments of the residential curtilages and consequential alteration to the character of their setting. The indicative layout also demonstrates that there is unlikely to be a detrimental impact on the setting of the conservation area.
- 8.9 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. To the north east of the site is the nationally significant Bronze Age barrow cemetery at Petersfield Heath. There has also been a number of finds of Mesolithic date in the vicinity. Roman pottery has been recovered previously. Whilst it is unlikely that archaeological would be an overriding concern, with such an extensive development in an area of archaeological potential, under the provisions of PPS5 and policy HE6 of the EHDC Local Plan it is important that archaeological assessment and mitigation is undertaken at an early stage. This could be secured by condition.

### Nature conservation and biodiversity

- 8.10 Whilst the application site is close to a number of sites of international importance for nature conservation the physical development will not have a direct impact. Although it is in close proximity to Heath Common, a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) the potential increase in recreational pressure would be mitigated by the proposed large area of new public open space that would act as a buffer. The majority of the habitats present on site and affected by the development proposals have generally limited ecological value. The main areas of ecological interest are the hedges and mature trees that form boundary features around and within the site. The vast majority of these are being retained and have been incorporated into the layout. Any gaps created in hedges to enable access would be compensated for by appropriate planting and enhancement elsewhere. One of the oak trees on site has been identified as supporting a bat roost, and a number of other mature or dead trees have been identified as providing bat roosting potential but these trees are proposed to be retained and protected during construction. A main badger sett has been identified on the site. However, this is some distance from the main areas of construction activity. Construction of the new cycle path may encroach within about 20m of the sett, although the level of activity associated with the cycle path construction is unlikely to result in any adverse impacts to the sett at this distance. The site supports a small population of grass snakes and a large population of slow worms. An outline method statement for mitigating impacts to reptiles is provided and this is appropriate to the level of impacts and appears to be a workable solution. A receptor site has been identified within the site boundary, and within an area of land to be managed for future nature conservation purposes. Detailed mitigation measures could be secured by condition to address any potential impact on wildlife and biodiversity and further enhancements.

### Affordable housing

- 8.11 The application exceeds the 40% provision of affordable housing required, proposing 122 affordable units which equates to 50.2% of the dwellings on the site with an appropriate mix of sizes with 60% affordable rent and 40% intermediate tenures.

### Highway and Access issues

- 8.12 The proposed development is likely to generate 212 and 151 two-way vehicle movements in the AM and PM peak periods respectively. Operational assessments have been carried out at the following junctions and they will all be within capacity with the additional traffic generated.

- Site access/The Causeway/Cranford Road
- The Causeway/Tesco access
- The Causeway/Hylton Road/Dragon Street/Sussex Road

4 accidents have occurred at the The Causeway/Hylton Road/Dragon Street/Sussex Road junction, 3 of which involved cars failing to give way and one involved a pedestrian. Whilst these accidents can be attributable to driver error, it is considered that safety improvements

may need investigating and this junction would benefit from safety improvements. The roundabout junction to the south at the junction of Kennet Road has not yet been modelled and as such it has not been demonstrated that this junction will operate effectively with the additional traffic impact of the development. In the absence of this assessment, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development will not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.

- 8.13 The right-turn lane proposed at the site access will require a re-alignment of The Causeway which in turn will effectively remove the area of verge alongside the footway to the east of The Causeway leading to the junction of Cranford Road. It is considered that this arrangement leaves pedestrians isolated between sections of carriageway on either side with no segregation or protection and as such presents an inconvenience and safety risk to pedestrians on an important pedestrian link. It has also not been demonstrated that the access can be designed to meet necessary technical standards. Local residents have raised concerns that the proposed access would encroach upon land privately owned. Whilst this is a civil matter, outside the remit of planning control, the Highway Authority has confirmed that the highway alterations, as proposed within the application to the western side of The Causeway fall within existing Highway. The extensive Root Protection Zone for the protected oak tree within the access requires a 'no-dig construction' method and a restriction that no more than 20% of this area can be constructed on. This would result in a pinch point and one way working arrangement to minimise the impact on the existing tree. The access would require a section 278 agreement to construct the works but these could be secured by condition. The site access is adjacent to an on-road cycle way on The Causeway which continues to the town centre. This would be retained in the proposed access arrangements as an advisory cycleway.
- 8.14 As the application is in Outline, the internal layout is only indicative at this stage and as such parking provision is not included. However, any reserved matters application would need to consider the location and integration of the Primary School and incorporate suitable arrangements to minimise disruption at drop-off and pick-up times.
- 8.15 Bus stops are located within 100m of the site access which serve 4 buses per hour and include the 94 town circular service which serves the school/Tesco stop twice in the AM and PM peaks. There are however inadequate evening and weekend services. The level of bus provision, including the adequacy of bus stop facilities, will be considered in the Town Access Plan. The site provides an opportunity to enhance the bus service to the town centre by providing peak and off peak journeys to the town centre and station. Petersfield train station is located within 1.2 kilometres of the site and links to London Waterloo, Portsmouth and Havant. Walking and cycling links to the station would benefit from improvement in terms of the quality and attractiveness of the route and route legibility. The Town Access Plan will consider potential improvements, which will be of benefit to the site. The site is located relatively close to the town's facilities and pedestrian/cycle links, especially via Sussex Road, which would further improve the accessibility. Financial contributions for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport facilities and towards implementation of proposals set out in the Petersfield Area Transport Strategy (PAT) or future Petersfield Town Access Plan would be required to mitigate the impact of the development on the transport network and to encourage sustainable modes of transport in accordance with PPG13 and the Local Plan. These contributions could be secured by way of a Section 106 agreement but there is currently no such agreement in place. A Travel Plan has been submitted with the application and implementation would also need to be secured by way of a Section 106 legal agreement.

#### Residential Amenity

- 8.16 The northern, southern and western boundaries of the site border onto existing residential developments with the site boundaries subject to comprehensive landscape buffers. As with other details, the landscaping would be subject to detailed submission secured through a condition or detail of a reserved matters application. From the indicative plans there would appear to be adequate distances between proposed and existing dwellings and it is anticipated that any siting would reflect these relationships and boundary treatment to

ensure that there would not be an adverse impact on the amenity of the adjoining dwellings. The main impact would arise from additional traffic movements to and from the development via the main access from The Causeway, and the potential impact upon existing dwellings within close proximity to the access. However there is an existing vehicular access between the dwellings fronting the Causeway serving 4 dwellings and pedestrian access via the PROW at the main access. The amount of traffic would increase significantly but due to the width of the verges and the fenestration arrangements on the side dwellings the impact is not so great to warrant refusal, particularly in the context of the allocation as a reserve site for residential development on this scale

#### Ground water and drainage

- 8.17 The District Council drainage consultant and the Environment Agency (EA) has considered the Flood Risk Assessment which has been submitted with the application and have raised no objections in principle, subject to conditions to secure a satisfactory drainage strategy.

#### Energy efficiency

- 8.18 Under the provisions of Policy E1 of the East Hants District Local Plan the highest practicable degree of energy efficiency is required through appropriate location, orientation, layout and design and at least 10% of the development's energy demand from renewable sources. The proposal is for all affordable housing to be built to Code for Sustainable Homes level 4. There are no specific details demonstrating specific energy efficiency measures, however these details could be secured through an appropriately worded condition, if planning permission were to be granted.

#### Infrastructure contributions

- 8.19 This development would result in additional school pupils. In addition there are pressures on primary school places in the area. As such there is a requirement for a school site and a contribution of £1,516,648.
- 8.20 Policy GS4 requires a financial contribution towards the provision of off-site environmental improvements.
- 8.21 The East Hampshire Developers Guide to Contributions requires a contribution towards a community project worker to ensure that affordable housing is fully integrated with the market housing and that larger developments are integrated with the wider community.
- 8.22 The development includes two children's play areas and an area of public informal recreation. There would be enhanced public access to the countryside through a new community park, picnic area and riverside walk which would maintain links between Petersfield town and the National Park to the east and south of the site. A site is proposed for a community orchard along with informal open space and an area for allotments. In addition, an area is allocated, next to the proposed school, for a new community building.
- 8.23 All of these facilities and contributions would need to be secured through a legal agreement, which would additionally secure maintenance of the Public Open Space in perpetuity and contributions towards improvements to the Taro centre and a NHS contribution. In the absence of a completed agreement, holding reasons for refusal are recommended, which could be withdrawn if an appropriate legal agreement was completed to the satisfaction of parties involved.

#### Air Quality and Contamination

- 8.24 The submitted information indicates that the land is not contaminated, although some measures would be needed to ensure that any contamination found unexpectedly could be dealt with, and there would be no significant impacts on air quality once the site is in use but measures would be required to reduce dust from the site during construction. These issues could be dealt with by condition.

#### Other issues

- 8.25 Whilst there is an application for Village Green status pending for a triangular area of land in the south east corner of the site, this does not prejudice the determination of this planning

application. If Village Green status is granted, this would have implications for the implementation of any development in the area of land affected by the village green under separate legislation. Similarly, the diversion of the footpath to accommodate the development would be dealt with under the Highways Act.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The site is identified in the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review as a reserve housing site. Reserve sites should not be developed in circumstances where there is an adequate 5 year housing land supply if granting permission would undermine achievement of policy objectives. The release of this reserve site would be premature to the consideration of other potential development sites through the Neighbourhood Plan process, and is not required from the housing land supply perspective.
- 9.2 In this case the planning objectives of the National Park, are a key material consideration, particularly having regard to the recent Circular on English National Parks and The Broads. This site has the most potential of all the Petersfield sites to impact upon the wider landscape of the SDNP, due to its size and position at the south east edge of the town.
- 9.3 The provision of affordable housing and infrastructure contributions including the new school and public open space, possible biodiversity gains and the intention for all dwellings to meet Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 do not outweigh the concerns regarding landscape impact, potential biodiversity impacts, and the prematurity of the proposals.

## **10 Recommendation**

- 10.1 It is recommended that planning permission be refused for the following reason/s:
- (i). Having regard to the following
- that the site is not needed to meet a 5 year land supply requirement;
  - the impact upon the broader landscape of the area;
  - the requirements of PPG7 and the DEFRA Vision and Circular on English National Parks and the Broads to have exceptional circumstances to permit major developments in these areas
- the development of this reserve housing site is inappropriate, pending a comprehensive review by the District Council, jointly with the National Park Authority and local community, of the best options for meeting Petersfield's housing needs and other community needs. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the guidance contained in PPS3, PPS7, the DEFRA Vision and Circular on English National Parks and the Broads and Policy H2 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review.
- (ii). In the absence of a completed legal agreement, no provision has been made to secure public open space provision and its maintenance, in perpetuity, within the proposal contrary to Policy R3 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review and the Council's 'Guide to Developers' Contributions and Other Planning Requirements'.
- (iii). In the absence of a completed legal agreement, no provision has been secured for a community facility or contributions towards environmental improvements, improvements to the Taro Centre and a community worker, contrary to Policy GS4 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review and the Council's 'Guide to Developers' Contributions and Other Planning Requirements'.
- (iv). In the absence of a completed legal agreement, no provision has been made to secure the 1.2ha site for a new school together with a financial contribution to be made towards education facilities within Petersfield where, as a consequence of the proposed development, there is a recognised shortage of school spaces contrary to Policy GS4 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review.
- (v). In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure the provision of affordable housing, including the mix of unit sizes and tenures, contrary to Policy H11 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review, adopted non-statutory planning guidance

on Affordable Housing, the Council's 'Guide to Developers' Contributions and Other Planning Requirements' and the adopted Development Brief for the site.

## **11 Crime and Disorder Implication**

11.1 It is considered that the proposal does not raise any crime and disorder implications.

## **12 Human Rights Implications**

12.1 This planning application has been considered in light of statute and case law and any interference with an individual's human rights is considered to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised.

## **13 Equalities Act 2010**

13.1 Due regard, where relevant, has been taken to the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equalities Act 2010.

### **TIM SLANEY Director of Planning**

Contact Officer:	Pat Aird
Tel:	01730 23 4110
email:	Pat.aird@southdowns.gov.uk
Appendices	1. Location Map
SDNPA Consultees	LDF Policy Lead, Monitoring Officer & Senior Solicitor.

#### Background Documents

Letters of representation from members of the public

Observations of Natural England, Environment Agency, Highway Authority, Petersfield Town Council, HCC and EHDC

Observations of Cllr P Aiston, Petersfield Society, CPRE, Campaign for National Parks, Southdowns Society,

PPS1, PPS3, PPS5, PPS7, PPS9, PPG13

Circular 20/010

East Hants District Local Plan: 2006

South East Plan 2009



# Agenda Item 5 Appendix 1 Location Map



Scale: 1:4000  
Date: 01/03/2012

This copy has been produced specifically for Planning and Building Control purposes only. No further copies may be made. Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.  
EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
LC100024238-2009



Land at Causeway Farm, The Causeway, Petersfield SDNP/52418/002

