

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	12 October 2017
By	Director of Planning
Local Authority	East Hampshire District Council
Application Number	SDNP/17/01744/FUL
Applicant	CALA Homes (Thames Ltd), Vortal Properties Ltd, Matthew Atkinson and Tina Louise Atkinson
Application	Erection of 26 dwellings and a Village Hall
Address	Land south of The Seven Stars Public House, Ramsdean Road, Stroud, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU32 3PJ

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

Executive Summary

The applicant seeks permission for a residential development of 26 dwellings and the provision of a village hall, within the village of Stroud which lies to the west of Petersfield.

The proposal is considered to be major development and fails to satisfy the requirement that major developments in a National Park should only take place in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that it is in the public interest.

The site in question is put forward as an allocation for residential development within the South Downs Local Plan pre-submission, however only limited weight should be placed on this fact at this juncture in line with Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The recently adopted East Hampshire Core Strategy (2014) should be afforded greater weight, particularly in light of its relatively recent adoption. In this respect, the land falls outside any settlement boundary and residential development would only be considered acceptable as an 'exception' housing scheme which would require at least 70% of the scheme to be allocated for affordable housing, under current policy. The proposals only include 30% (8 units) of the scheme to be provided for affordable housing, the scheme therefore does not accord with the adopted Joint Core Strategy, notwithstanding the provision of a village hall. Nor does the housing mix meet the housing needs locally.

In addition, there are specific concerns about the design, layout and landscaping for the scheme and potential harmful impacts on ecological interests caused by the removal of trees as part of the scheme. Refusal is therefore recommended.

This application is placed before Members given that the scheme is for major development and due to local interest.

I. Site Description

- I.1 The application site is located in the village of Stroud, just under a mile to the west of Petersfield. The site is located in countryside outside of the defined settlement policy boundary (SPB) for Stroud (in the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy

(2014)).

- 1.2 The site comprises a roughly rectangular parcel of agricultural land, which is currently used for the keeping of horses. The only built form at present are the existing brick built stables in the north-western corner of the site.
- 1.3 To the north of the application site is The Seven Stars Public House and the northern boundary of the site itself is defined by a small watercourse. The Seven Stars pub is located immediately to the south of the A272, which runs east to west as a main arterial road between Petersfield and Winchester and the A3 and M3. To the south of the site is a row of terraced houses with long rear gardens. The terraced houses front on to Ramsdean Road and the rear gardens extend significantly to the east. Further to the south of the terraced houses is Langrish Primary School. A playing field, associated with Langrish School, wraps around the south-eastern corner of the site. To the south of the School is a public right of way (PRoW) running in a west to east direction.
- 1.4 The site is bounded by Ramsdean Road to the west and a field boundary to the east. There are detached residential dwellings set behind large front gardens to the west of Ramsdean Road. To the north-east of the site (approximately 180 metres from the site) is a Roman Villa, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 1.5 The application site is generally flat but has a gradual slope up from north to south on the southern half of the site. There are two existing tree belts along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site comprising mature trees, the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), which are visible from wider views.
- 1.6 The South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2011 identifies the site as being within the Rother Valley Mixed Farmland and Woodland Vale Landscape Character Area. This is a gently undulating landform with irregular fields and a sense of enclosure due to thick hedgerows.

2. Relevant Planning History

- 2.1 SDNP/16/05076/PRE: Pre-application for a) the erection of 20 dwellings (8 affordable) or; b) the erection of 26 dwellings (8 affordable) and a village hall or; c) the erection of 30 dwellings (12 affordable) and a village hall at land to the south of The Seven Stars. Advice was given on 16 December 2016. An in principle concern was raised given that Officers considered it unlikely that the proposed development would comply with the second aspect of policy CPI0 of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) in relation to small-scale development. The proposed development was also considered to fail to comply with affordable housing policy CPI4 of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) in regard to rural exception schemes.
- 2.2 SDNP/14/00064/PRE: Pre-application for the development of open market housing to enable the provision of needed affordable housing and a village hall. Several schemes were suggested including a development of 30 dwellings or a development of 24 dwellings with a village hall, public open space and recreational space for the school. Advice was given on 30 May 2014, generally setting out policy position and any other constraints within the site.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The application proposes the provision of 26 residential dwellings and a village hall.
- 3.2 The mix of accommodation proposed is as follows:
 - 18 no. open market dwellings (70%) comprising 2 x two bed dwellings, 8 x three bed dwellings, 6 x four bed dwellings and 2 x five bed dwellings;
 - 8 no. affordable dwellings (30%) comprising 4 x one bed maisonettes, 1 x two bed dwellings and 3 x three bed dwellings.
- 3.3 All of the affordable dwellings would be sited at the northern end of the site in close proximity to the northern site boundary and to the east of the proposed village hall.
- 3.4 Each of the residential dwellings would be two-storeys in height and all of the open market dwellings would include single-storey garages.

- 3.5 The residential development has a cul-de-sac arrangement, which would be accessed from Ramsdean Road via a new private road into the development to be managed by a private management company. The access road forks to provide vehicular access to the residential dwellings on the southern half of the site and to the remaining residential dwellings on the northern part of the site. The private road would include 2no. turning heads towards the eastern part of the site..
- 3.6 The proposed dwellings would generally incorporate small front gardens and would predominantly include parking to the sides of the dwellings, with the exception of some of the affordable dwellings that would have parking to the front. All of the dwellings would incorporate private rear gardens. The building containing the one bed maisonettes would be surrounded by a communal area.
- 3.7 The materials used for the dwellings would comprise of a mixture of hanging tile, render, brick and red and grey plain roof tiles.
- 3.8 In order to keep light spill to a minimum no rooflights have been proposed in the main roofslopes of the dwellings and street lighting is proposed to be kept to a minimum. External lighting on the houses would be restricted to downlighters.
- 3.9 Proposed ecological enhancement measures to be incorporated within the built form would include the installation of bird boxes on the dwellings as well as the installation of bat bricks, bat access tiles and bat boxes.
- 3.10 The provision of a village hall for Stroud is a long-held aspiration of Stroud Parish Council and the local community, which would be positioned in the north-western corner of the site. The space within the building incorporates a lobby, main hall, office, kitchen store room and male, female and disabled toilets.
- 3.11 The village hall would be a single-storey building of a traditional design incorporating a red tiled roof with flint and brick along the elevations. The village hall would front on to Ramsdean Road and the open space adjacent to the village hall (to the south) would be bounded by a mixture of post and rail timber fencing and metal fencing.
- 3.12 A second vehicular access is proposed at the north-western corner of the site to provide vehicular access directly to the Village Hall. It is envisaged that the parking for the Village Hall would also provide overflow parking for the School to help reduce the level of traffic travelling down Ramsdean Road on school days. Within the amended scheme a lay-by has been provided along Ramsdean Road, which is also intended to improve traffic flow along Ramsdean Road.

New information received

- 3.13 Following receipt of the original consultee responses and third-party representations, a number of minor amendments as follows were made to the proposals:
 - Further variety added to the elevational treatments;
 - Sections of footpaths on the eastern part of the site removed to increase areas of soft landscaping and to facilitate visual integration into the wider landscape;
 - A private amenity area formed for the apartments on plots 5-8 through introduction of soft landscaping boundaries;
 - Review and amendment of boundary treatments;
 - Plot 1 moved away from village hall to minimise noise impact. Additional landscaping introduced;
 - Location of bin stores clarified on plans;
 - Minor amendments to reduce the amount of hardstanding within the curtilage of the dwellings;
 - A gated access and 2 additional parking spaces to the village hall introduced at request of Village Hall Charity.
 - Soft Landscaping Plan provided;
 - Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment updated.

4. Consultations

4.1 Archaeology: No objection subject to conditions.

4.2 Crime Prevention: Comments provided.

- Some plots should incorporate 1.8m fencing instead 1.2 m for security reasons.
- Plots 5 to 8 have no private space increasing the vulnerability of the ground floor plots to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Care should be taken to ensure that downpipes and other external features do not facilitate access to the roof of Village Hall.

4.3 Dark Night Skies: No objection subject to conditions.

- Although the proposal would be in an existing area of housing and the impact would be lessened by what is already there, the proposal size and scope would probably reduce the sky quality in the area.
- Glazing not excessive and no rooflights proposed.
- Bollards and low level lighting would be preferable to street lighting.

4.4 SDNP Design: Objection.

- The scheme has not moved on significantly since pre-application advice given, with many issues that have not been addressed.
- An authentic and defined vision should be outlined from the outset, after the analysis/opportunities and before setting out the proposals. This does not appear to have been done.
- Pre-application comments suggested addressing pedestrian links to the pub and making a feature of the existing watercourse. This has not been achieved.
- The architectural style of the houses are not particularly locally distinctive to Stroud.
- More thought needs to be given to the spaces around the Hall and how the external spaces would function well to support the internal uses.
- Location of the affordable housing should be broken up and not be sited in one particular area.
- Design concerns regarding some of the building elevations and the proportions, scale and form of the single garages.
- The tandem parking options for the plots is not supported.
- Functional design has not been considered.

4.5 Design Review Panel (DRP) comments held on 19 June 2017: Comments provided.

- Applicant has not managed to address all the points raised at the previous DRP session.
- Adding additional information to the plans such as contour lines, flood risk areas and the nearby Roman Villa would help clarify the plans and clear up some existing concerns.
- A larger proportion of smaller houses might be more appropriate;
- It was noted that terraces tend to work well, have local precedents and use space efficiently. The current scheme features no terraces and if terraces were incorporated, the scheme would be able to provide more space for effective landscaping.
- More consideration should be given to the village green area and its proposed use. The proposed water course at the northern boundary has not been considered in the development, which could be turned into a valuable feature.
- No pedestrian link to the pub, which could benefit the development. The adjacent pub is also a high quality building and it could benefit the development to see some elements from the pub being adopted into the proposed development.
- The Village Hall would need external space if it is going to be used as a nursery, which is likely to be one of the common uses. Additionally, the Hall is going to need a large amount of storage space in order to account for the variety of uses it is likely to encourage.
- The development should incorporate more diversity, especially around the affordable dwellings, introducing car ports for some of the car parking for instance.

- More information required regarding the choice of materials and why they are relevant. At present, the development feels like it could be anywhere and it should aim to incorporate some of the local character.
- 4.6 **Ecology:** Objection.
- Insufficient information on potential ecological impacts of tree removal at the site, particularly in relation to roosting bats, nesting birds and hazel dormice.
- 4.7 **Environment Agency:** No comments.
- 4.8 **Environmental Health Contamination & Pollution:** No objection subject to conditions.
- 4.9 **Flood and Water Management:** No objection.
- 4.10 **Highways:** No objection subject to a Section 106 Agreement to obtain financial contribution and conditions.
- 4.11 **Historic Buildings Officer:** No objection.
- 4.12 **Historic England:** No comments.
- 4.13 **Housing Officer:** Objection.
- The site is outside of but adjacent to the settlement policy boundary of Stroud. Therefore, policy CPI4 of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy applies, which seeks to maximise affordable housing for local people with the requirement of a minimum of 70% affordable housing.
 - The applicant references policy CPI3 of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy, which is appropriate for sites within defined settlements and is therefore not applicable in this instance.
 - There is a small affordable housing need in Stroud. Housing Associations will strive to find local people. However, if they are unable to find anyone eligible with a local connection, the housing will be sold to applicants with no local connection.
 - Whilst a small affordable housing scheme would be supported, the proposed development does not meet the very specific requirements of policy CPI4.
- 4.14 **SDNPA Landscape:** Objection.
- Number of areas remain unclear in relation to this application in terms of assessing the application from a landscape and visual point of view.
 - The LVIA does not demonstrate how the design has evolved and has been informed by local landscape characteristics. It is another standard layout to a typical cul-de-sac design with no local character or referencing.
 - The application evidence has not fully identified the landscape character of this site. Character is the combination of numerous elements including built form, roads and their shared histories which produce the character people experience. As a result there is no application of the landscape-led approach.
 - The overall scheme bears little relationship to Stroud.
 - It would be helpful to see key views accounted for in the LVIA overlaid on a plan of the scheme to see how these views have been addressed through the design of the scheme.
 - Information about how the scheme would deal with surface water should be provided ahead of a decision as this is directly linked to landscaping, and opportunities for enhancement. SuDS design should be influenced by landscape character.
 - The current scheme negatively affects the functioning of the watercourse by culverting the stream and including dwellings 5-8 within the area prone to flooding.
 - A suitable transition in form and fabric has not been achieved from the existing residential areas to the west and the open countryside to the east and south.
 - More consideration needs to be given to the connectivity through the site.
 - The entire scheme turns its back on the watercourse – this fails to address the opportunity to provide a characteristic focus.
 - The scheme does not respond to local ecosystem services.

4.15 **Natural England:** No objection.

4.16 **Public Rights of Way:** No objection subject to a Section 106 Agreement to provide a financial contribution.

- The proposal for 26 dwellings and a Village Hall would increase the recreational and utility pressure upon the surrounding rights of way network. In line with paragraph 75 of the NPPF development proposals should seek to enhance local rights of way.

4.17 **Children's Services Department:** No objection.

- The development sits in the catchment area of Langrish Primary School and will yield an anticipated 7 primary school age pupils. Although the School is full it does accept out of catchment applications. As there are a few surplus places available in the area in other schools, a contribution from this development towards educational facilities will not be sought.

4.18 **Stroud Parish Council:** No objection subject to conditions.

- Supportive in principle, subject to comments provided needing to be actioned through conditions.
- Traffic management is a concern. However, the Highways Authority may have other options not yet identified or discussed to alleviate this concern.
- The current pathway to access the rear of the cottages on the southern boundary of the proposed development on the eastern side of Ramsdean Road should remain.
- A full landscape proposal scheme must be provided for comment before any decision to grant permission is given. The Tree Preservation Order (TPO) only protects trees along the eastern boundary. It does not protect shrubs, small trees, saplings and seedlings that will become trees. The TPO is only temporary. The Parish Council would like to see this become permanent and should be re-scheduled to include large trees, small trees, shrubs, saplings and seedlings to ensure that the hedge continues as a hedged tree-line.
- The concerns raised with wildlife and ecology on the site should be addressed and incorporated into the scheme.
- Regarding the eastern drain, the current landscape proposals show it shaded out by dense planting. This will kill the drain as a landscape/wildlife feature. Within the ecological report it states that the wet ditch to the eastern hedgerow would be retained and enhanced. It is not clear how this enhancement will be undertaken. The Floor Risk Assessment (FRA) states that the drain would become a new open ditch. This information seems to conflict and should be clarified.
- There should be further clearing and maintenance of the water course beyond the confines of the proposed development as a condition. The potential displacement of water due to this development is likely to flood gardens on the western side of Ramsdean Road if this work is not carried out.
- The FRA refers to maintenance and repairs to porous surfaces within the development. It is not clear who is responsible for this maintenance and the costs.
- The FRA also states that the existing watercourses within the confines of the site will be cleared of debris and vegetation. Where necessary the watercourse corridor will be regraded and culverted for access. All work to the watercourses will require a Land Drainage Consent application. This is likely to cause conflict with ecological and landscape proposals.

4.19 **Trees:** No objection subject to conditions.

4.20 **Southern Water:** Comments no objection subject to conditions and informatives.

5. Representations

5.1 1 letter of objection:

- Overdevelopment. A lower number of houses should be provided, maybe in the form of a row of ten cottages following the existing pattern but parking would have to be provided off-road.

- Very few facilities within Stroud so future occupants would have to drive into Petersfield just for basics.
- Too much existing traffic along Ramsdean Road at present. The proposed development would exacerbate this and would also cause noise and disturbance for current residents.
- Provision of a Village Hall is not necessary.
- Loss of light and overlooking.
- A full Archaeological investigation should be undertaken on the site.

5.2 6 letters of support:

- A reasonable number of dwellings that would not impact on the village feel but enough to bring in some new occupants to the local area.
- Good for the village of Stroud as there is a shortage of affordable homes in the area.
- The Village Hall would be good for the village as it could host numerous events helping to bring the community together.
- Good design of the proposed development.
- House prices are very high and this will give an opportunity to people who grew up in the area to buy a home.

5.3 3 letters with neutral comments:

- Concern with traffic turning out of Ramsdean Road (left or right) on to the A272. The development would result in an increase of the number of vehicles turning out of Ramsdean Road on to the A272, which is a fast moving road. This would result in dangerous situations during certain times of the day.
- The proximity of the pub car park creates an additional hazard.
- Better traffic calming along the A272 is required to cope with the extra traffic that would result from the proposed development.

6. **Planning Policy Context**

- 6.1 Applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant statutory Development Plan is the saved policies of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review 2006 and the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2014. The relevant policies are set out in section 7 below.

National Park Purposes

- 6.2 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 wellbeing of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

National Planning Policy Framework and Circular 2010

Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection and the NPPF states at paragraph 115 that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the national parks and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations and should also be given great weight in National Parks. In addition Paragraph 116 confirms that planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

National and Local Policy context and how it relates to this particular application is explored in more detail in Section 8 of the report.

The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan

- 6.3 The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2013 is a material consideration in the determination of the application. The following policies are relevant: 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 25, 28, 34, 38, 39, 40, 49 and 50.

7. Planning Policy

- 7.1 The following saved policies of the **East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review 2006** are relevant:

- C6: Tree preservation, Forestry Operations, Management Plans
- C8: Flood Protection
- HI4: Other housing outside Settlement Policy Boundaries
- HC2: Provision of facilities and services with new development
- HC3: Public Services, Community, Cultural, Leisure and Sport Facilities, Community Facilities.
- HE17: Archaeology and Ancient Monuments
- HE19: Ancient Tracks and Lanes
- T2: Public Transport Provision and Improvement
- T3: Pedestrians and Cyclists
- T4: Pedestrians and Cyclists, Cycling, Walking/Horse-riding

- 7.2 The following policies of the **East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) 2014** are relevant:

- CPI: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- CP2: Spatial Strategy
- CP10: Spatial Strategy for Housing
- CPI1: Housing Tenure, Type and Mix
- CP14: Affordable Housing for Rural Communities
- CP16: Protection and provision of social infrastructure, open space, sport and recreation
- CP18: Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation and Built Facilities
- CP19: Development in the Countryside
- CP20: Landscape
- CP21: Biodiversity
- CP24: Sustainable Construction
- CP25: Flood Risk
- CP27: Pollution
- CP28: Green Infrastructure
- CP29: Design
- CP30: Historic Environment
- CP31: Transport
- CP32: Infrastructure

South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission

- 7.3 The South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission Local Plan was published under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for public consultation between 26 September to 21 November 2017. After this period, the next stage in the plan preparation will be the submission of the Local Plan for independent examination and thereafter adoption. Until this time, the Pre-Submission Local Plan is a material consideration in the assessment of this planning application in accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF, which confirms that weight may be given to policies in emerging plans following publication unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Based on the current stage of preparation, along with the fact that the policies are compliant with the NPPF, the policies within the Pre-Submission Local Plan referenced below are currently afforded some weight, albeit in the case of this application, the site in question has not been subject to a full local plan consultation process yet. Greater weight is afforded to the

adopted EHDC JCS (2014)). The context in relation to this application is explored in more detail in section 8 of the report.

7.4 The relevant planning policies of the emerging SDNP Local Plan are:

- SD1: Sustainable Development
- SD2: Ecosystem Services
- SD3: Major Development
- SD4: Landscape Character
- SD5: Design
- SD8: Dark Night Skies
- SD9: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- SD11: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- SD12: Historic Environment
- SD16: Archaeology
- SD17: Protection of the Water Environment
- SD19: Transport and Accessibility
- SD21: Public Realm, Highway Design and Public Art
- SD22: Parking Provision
- SD25: Development Strategy
- SD26: Supply of Homes
- SD27: Mix of homes
- SD28: Affordable Homes
- SD29: Rural Exception sites
- SD43: New and Existing Community Facilities
- SD46: Provision and Protection of Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities and Burial Grounds/Cemeteries
- SD48: Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources
- SD49: Flood Risk Management
- SD50: Sustainable Drainage Systems
- SD54: Pollution and Air Quality
- SD55: Contaminated Land
- SD94: Land at Ramsdean Road, Stroud (Allocation policy)

7.5 Other relevant documents/guidance

- South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2011)
- East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005)
- South Downs National Park Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2016)
- South Downs National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2015) –
- Assessment of Site Allocations against Major Development Considerations: Technical Report (draft version) (2017)
- Stroud Parish Plan (2013)
- Stroud Parish Council Housing Need Survey (2014)

8. Planning Assessment

8.1 The main issues for consideration with regard to this application are as follows:

- Principle of development with regard to Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (Major Application)
- Principle of development with regard to Local Policy
- Housing mix
- Affordable housing
- Impact on the National Park landscape
- Design
- Highways, access and parking
- Public right of way (PRoW)
- Archaeology and impact on the setting of the adjacent Scheduled Monument

- Ecology
- Trees
- Residential amenity
- Flood risk and drainage
- Environmental Health
- Financial contributions and CIL

Principle of Development with regard to National and Local Policy

National Policy

8.2 The application site is accorded special protection under national and local planning policies by virtue of being located in the National Park.

8.3 NPPF 115 and 116 set out:

“115. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty...”

“116. Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which it could be moderated.”*

8.4 Case law is clear in how NPPF Paragraph 116 should be addressed by the decision maker:-

Once the [Inspector] has investigated and assessed the matters identified in the three bullet points, as well as any other relevant considerations, [he] must then decide whether “exceptional circumstances” and the “public interest” mean that the presumption against major development in AONB is rebutted in the particular case. (Wealden Dc v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (2016) EWHC 247 at 119.)

8.5 Therefore, each of the three bullet points in 116 should be examined, along with any other considerations the decision maker considers relevant. This in turn should inform a decision on whether the two policy tests, ‘exceptional circumstances’ and ‘public interest’, are both addressed to the extent that the presumption against major development is removed.

i) The Need for the Development

8.6 National Parks are not obliged to meet objectively assessed housing needs in full where it would give rise to conflict with national planning policies and with their statutory purposes. The Circular recognises that ‘National Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing and that they should focus on delivering affordable housing responding to local needs’.

8.7 There is an expectation therefore that National Parks will focus on local affordable housing need, provided that the landscape and scenic beauty is protected, and not on providing housing for wider market demand.

8.8 In this instance, the only information submitted by the applicant in relation to housing need is within the 2014 Stroud Parish Council/Action Hampshire Housing Needs Survey, which aside from being over three years old, only relates to Stroud itself.

8.9 The SDNPA SHMA (2015) clearly sets out that there is a majority need for two and three bedroom homes in the market sector and one and two bedroom homes in the affordable sector. Paragraph 9.19 of the SHMA sets out that:

The analysis also suggests a limited need for additional 4 or more bedroom homes – reflecting the ageing population within the SDNP, with previous analysis indicating that older people tend to live in

smaller homes. The analysis does not mean that there will be no demand for 4 or more bedroom homes - but indicates that the existing stock of market housing should be broadly sufficient to satisfy this.

- 8.10 In addition, Table 47 (Estimated Size of Dwellings Needed 2013 to 2033 – Market Housing) of the SHMA sets out that the total need for 4+ bedroom market dwellings is 4.2%. Furthermore, Table 49 (Estimated Profile of Need for Market Housing by number of bedrooms, 2013 to 2033) sets out that the need for 4+ bedroom market dwellings (1.0%) is even less in the Central Hampshire part of the SDNP (which includes Stroud) than the rest of the SDNP.
- 8.11 However, in this application the proposed housing mix includes eight 4/5 bedroom which equates to at least 30% of the total units proposed.
- 8.12 Moreover, the same SHMA tables (47 and 49) also set out a clearly requirement for a significant proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom units – at least 55% of the total. This proposal only includes two 2 bedroom dwellings.
- 8.13 By virtue of the relative size of the proposed scheme (26 dwellings) and that the proposed supporting infrastructure (village hall) is intended for the local level, it is considered that, in terms of any national considerations, there are clearly no exceptional circumstances.
- 8.14 The local economy in East Hampshire is generally buoyant with low rates of unemployment. No evidence has been provided by the applicant which would suggest that the economy would be in jeopardy, for example in relation to inward investment, if the proposal was refused. Essentially, it is reasonable to conclude that there are no such notable economic benefits from the proposal that would outweigh the presumption against major development in the national park.
- 8.15 Therefore, in terms of need, the application has clearly failed. No national or local economic considerations have been identified which would rebut the presumption against major development in NPPF 116 criterion 1.
 - ii) The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- 8.16 The SHMA 2015 defines Housing Market Areas for the SDNP. Stroud is located within the Portsmouth HMA which includes the A3 corridor north and south of Petersfield. The HMA therefore extends beyond the SDNP including urban areas such as Waterlooville and Bordon.
- 8.17 The application is silent on whether there is scope, at this time, for developing elsewhere within the Portsmouth HMA but outside the SDNP.
- 8.18 The Havant Borough Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 4th Edition 2011 provides the details on all sites considered to offer potential for five or more dwellings. For Waterlooville alone, the SHLAA identifies capacity in excess of 1100 dwellings on potential housing sites. Some of these sites have identified constraints, which may suggest some additional costs, but some do not. There is no evidence in the SHLAA which would suggest that residential development in Waterlooville would likely be subject to any global abnormal costs arising from issues such as, for example, flood risk or land stability.
- 8.19 The East Hampshire SHLAA looks at the housing potential of sites across East Hampshire (not including the South Downs National Park) to cover the plan period up to 2028. The SHLAA identifies (pp.26) over 7,000 hectares of land with housing potential, which it concludes is sufficient to accommodate in excess of 2,200 dwellings.
- 8.20 As such, it is considered that there is clear scope to accommodate the proposed 26 dwellings elsewhere in the Portsmouth HMA (as defined in the 2015 HMA) outside the SDNP. No evidence which would demonstrate abnormal costs associated generally with residential development in these areas has been found.
 - iii) Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that could be moderated

- 8.21 As outlined in the 'Landscape' section of this report, Officers consider that the current scheme has not been landscape-led and by virtue of its poor design, it would have a significant detrimental impact on the local environment and the landscape of the SDNP. It is considered that the detrimental effect on the environment could not be moderated by way of conditions with the scheme currently being considered. The proposal should therefore also be refused for poor design and the impact on the designated landscape in line with NPPF paragraphs 64 and 115.
- 8.22 In summary, no robust evidence has been found by the Authority which would rebut the presumption in NPPF paragraph 116 against major development in nationally designated landscapes, such as the SDNP, by virtue of either exceptional circumstances or public interest.
- NPPF: Paragraph 216
- 8.23 NPPF 216 sets out that from the day of publication, decision-takers may also give weight (unless other material considerations indicate otherwise) to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
 - the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
 - the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)
- 8.24 The South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission Local Plan was published under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for public consultation between 26 September to 21 November 2017. After this period, the next stage in the plan preparation will be the submission of the Local Plan for independent examination and thereafter adoption.
- 8.25 Given that the Pre-Submission Local Plan still has to conclude its Regulation 19 consultation it is considered that only limited weight can be placed on its policies at this stage. This includes proposed Policy 94 which allocates the site which is the subject of this planning application for residential development.
- 8.26 This limited weight is reinforced when the second and third bullets of NPPF paragraph 216 are considered. The extent of unresolved objections will not be known until the Regulation 19 consultation concludes and degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF is, essentially, a question to be resolved at the Examination stage when the Inspector will evaluate the 'soundness' of the Submission Plan in line with NPPF paragraph 182.

Planning Policy Context: Principle of Development

East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy

- 8.27 The Development Plan for the area includes the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review 2006 the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2014 (EHJCS). Policies CP19 and CP20 of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014) outline general restraint against development in principle in the countryside.
- 8.28 The Development Plan sets out that the application site is immediately outside of the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) for Stroud. As such, the site is located in the countryside and therefore the relevant rural policies of the Development Plan apply.
- 8.29 Policy CP10 (Spatial Strategy) sets out that provision is made for a minimum of 10,060 dwellings in the period 2011 to 2028 by means of, inter alia, the allocation of sites at the most sustainable settlements to provide, inter alia, a minimum of 100 dwellings at other villages in the National Park. For reference, the application site has been identified in the Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) as a proposed allocation for residential development.

- 8.30 Notwithstanding this however, given the degree of weight placed on the Pre-Submission Local Plan (see policy comments on NPPF and Pre-Submission Local Plan), the fact that the application site is proposed as an allocation clearly does not outweigh the primacy of the current Development Plan where, as set out, the site is located in the countryside where there is a general presumption against development.
- 8.31 Policy CPI0 also sets out that:
- In addition to sites allocated to meet the housing numbers set out above, and development in accordance with Policies CPI4 and CPI9, housing and other small scale development outside settlement policy boundaries will only be permitted where it:*
- *meets a community need or realises local community aspirations;*
 - *reinforces a settlement's role and function;*
 - *cannot be accommodated within the built up area; and*
 - *has been identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan or has clear community support as demonstrated through a process which has been agreed by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Parish or Town Council.*
- 8.32 The provision of 26 dwellings with a new village hall is considered by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to comprise major development and as such this section of Policy CPI0 does not apply given that is applicable only to consideration of "small-scale" development.
- 8.33 The proposed development would also fail to comply with policy CPI4 'Affordable Housing for Rural Communities' of the JCS (2014), which is explained further within the Affordable housing section of this report.
- 8.34 As such, when assessed against the relevant Development Plan policies, the principle of development has not been established by virtue of the application site's location in the countryside, the 'major' scale of the proposed development in the national park and by clearly not satisfying housing exceptions. The provision of a new village hall as a minor component of the overall proposal, even with demonstrable local support, does not outweigh these considerations.
- 8.35 Therefore, the proposal, in principle, does not satisfy policies CPI0, CPI4 and CPI9 of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy (2014).
- Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)
- 8.36 The South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017) Policy SD94 allocates the application site for residential development. As such, this proposes the establishment of the principle of development at the time when the plan is not adopted and this must be given limited weight.
- 8.37 Notwithstanding this, it must be noted that the current scheme is not considered to meet all the criteria set out in the specific policy with regard to the site allocation (SD94). This will be considered later on in the report.
- Planning Balance
- 8.38 The proposal is considered to be major development and fails to satisfy the presumption against development set out in NPPF paragraph 116. Essentially, there are no exceptional circumstances and public interest has not been demonstrated.
- 8.39 The proposal is contrary to the relevant policies of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy by virtue of its scale, location in the countryside and the failure to demonstrate exceptional housing.
- 8.40 The application site is proposed for allocation (Policy SD94) for residential use in the Pre-Submission South Downs Local Plan (2017) but as set out only moderate weight should be placed on this fact at this juncture in line with NPPF paragraph 216, given the existing Policy background. In addition, the proposal does not satisfactorily address the supporting criteria of Policy SD94.
- 8.41 Therefore, on balance, given the primacy of national policy and the current development plan over any material considerations arising from the Pre-Submission South Downs Local

Plan, the proposal has clearly not established the principle of development and as such should be refused for this reason amongst other material considerations.

Housing mix:

- 8.42 As highlighted above, the proposed development has not satisfactorily demonstrated that the housing need within the local area has been met with this particular scheme.
- 8.43 Current policy CPI I of the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014) provides a number of relevant criteria applicable to new residential development, including the provision of a range of dwelling tenures, types and sizes to meet housing needs. Although policy CPI I is not specific about the required size of new dwellings, the SDNPA's SHMA (2015) would also be relevant in this instance, which concludes that the general pattern emerging within the National Park in terms of sizes of accommodation is that there is a majority need for two and three bedroom homes in the market sector and one and two bedroom homes in the affordable sector.
- 8.44 Similarly, policy SD27 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017) also requires a predominant mix of smaller units (mainly one and two bedroom units for affordable housing and two and three bed units for market housing) but again, only moderate weight is placed on the Local Plan at this stage.
- 8.45 As described in the proposals section of this report and further explained in the section concerning the major application tests, the mix proposed for the current scheme does not accord with these policies. On this basis, a reason for refusal is recommended.

Affordable housing:

- 8.46 The proposed development is an open market led scheme, providing 18no. open market dwellings (70%) and 8no. affordable dwellings (30%). Outside of SPB's, current policy CPI 4 of the JCS is applicable, which relates to rural exception schemes. This policy aims to maximise the level of affordable housing for local people with the requirement of a minimum of 70% affordable housing. The policy also stipulates that up to 30% of low cost market housing may be permitted for those settlements with a SPB, such as Stroud, to facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.
- 8.47 An Affordable Housing and Economic Viability Assessment was submitted with the application, which outlines that based upon the residual value, the scheme could not be brought forward if more than 30% affordable provision is sought. The submitted Planning and Affordable Housing Statement also sets out that the viable delivery of the Village Hall is dependent on the inclusion of a quantum of open market dwellings to provide cross subsidy. Additional financial information has been received however during the course of the application, which concludes that the scheme would be able to provide further affordable housing over and above the 30% suggested (10.4 units instead of 8) in addition to the Village Hall and CIL. Even if the scheme can provide additional affordable housing above the 30% offered, it does not meet the required affordable housing set out in the JCS. Nor does it meet the requirement in the South Downs Local Plan Pre-Submission.
- 8.48 Under the proposed scheme, the development would result in dwellings located outside of the settlement policy boundary of Stroud and it does not constitute a rural exception scheme for affordable housing which addresses a local need, nor does it provide a level of affordable housing required by the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014) or the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017).
- 8.49 In light of the above considerations, a reason for refusal relating to the provision of affordable housing is included in the recommendation, being contrary to Policy CPI 4 of the Joint Core Strategy and also Policy SD28 of the South Downs Local Plan Pre-submission

Impact on the National Park landscape:

- 8.50 The Planning and Affordable Housing Statement states that 'the layout of the proposal has been 'landscape led' within the context of the EHJCS 2014 allocation and the emerging SDNPA Local Plan allocation which sets a required and expected quantum of development'.

- 8.51 The document goes on to state that ‘the layout has been developed with regard to the wider landscape character as identified by the respective SDNPA (2011) and EHDC (2005) Integrated Landscape Character Assessments’.
- 8.52 A Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) has been submitted with the application, which concludes that ‘the site relates very well in both landscape and visual terms to the existing landscape, and the site represents a logical and easily assimilated development into this part of the countryside’.
- 8.53 As previously referred to within this report, the SDNP SHLAA (2016) indicates the site has potential for development, concluding that the site has a medium sensitivity in Landscape terms. However, the SHLAA does not review sites in detail, it merely indicates whether sites would be suitable for development based on their location and limited site constraint information. Detailed assessment is undertaken at planning application stage where site constraints and the wider impacts, as well as more immediate impacts, are properly assessed.
- 8.54 Current policy CP20 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014) provides a list of requirements that need to be met in order to comply with the policy, which include the need to ‘protect and enhance local distinctiveness sense of place and tranquillity by applying the principles set out in the district’s Landscape Character Assessments’, ‘to protect and enhance land at the urban edge’ and to ‘protect and enhance natural and historic features which contribute to the district’s landscape, such as trees and rivers’.
- 8.55 The SDNPA also supports a landscape-led approach in the emerging Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017) under emerging policy SD4, which seeks to avoid standard design solutions and features that can erode local distinctiveness in both urban and rural areas.
- 8.56 It is considered that the existing scheme would fail to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the National Park, particularly when the extent to which the proposed development can be moderated through the use of conditions for example, is very limited.
- 8.57 The main concern is in relation to the schemes lack of reference to landscape character in terms of a) it’s layout and the failure to use key elements which help to tell the story of the place or that inform the site – notably, but not limited to the watercourse and Roman Villa; b) the design of the development, which is considered to be of a very standard housing design which fails to speak of Stroud; c) landscaping, which does not serve to deliver any conservation or enhancement of features within the National Park and d) limited recognition of the importance of the delivery of ecosystem services, which requires schemes to have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services. The last point (d) is particularly relevant to the emerging South Downs Local Plan, albeit the weight to the emerging ecosystem policies can only be moderate at the moment..
- 8.58 To elaborate it is considered that the aforementioned landscape features/key elements and the overall historic evolution of Stroud, all provide significant clues to inform everything from roads and layout, to materials and detailed design. For example, settlement here has a strong historic relationship with water and water sources, yet the entire scheme turns its back on the existing watercourse at the northern end of the site. Regardless of whether the flow within the watercourse is temporary or not, it does still remain a key feature. The scheme fails to address the opportunity to provide a characteristic focus, sense of place/community and delivery of ecosystem services around this. The sites location within the historic Stroud Common, is also unaccounted for within the scheme itself.
- 8.59 The LVIA baseline makes a number of relevant observations, but it then uses these to justify the very standard, proposed scheme rather than applying this knowledge positively to take a landscape-led approach to inform a much better place-specific scheme. This is against best practice which requires an objective iterative approach, and contradictory to the First Purpose of a National Park, which is about the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, cultural heritage and wildlife.

- 8.60 Stroud is a marginal common-edge settlement with its historical development rooted in small-scale dispersed hamlets and farmsteads, with a focus upon natural resources. These should be the characteristics reflected in the scheme. However, none of these characteristics have been studied or understood as precedents. Instead, the scheme proposes a standard layout of a typical cul-de-sac design with no local character or referencing.
- 8.61 Allocation policy SD94 within the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017) provides a list of criteria to be complied with. Under criteria 1a of this allocation policy it requires development to provide a suitable transition in form and fabric from the existing residential areas to the west and the open countryside to the east and south. Officers do not consider that the 'suitable transition' has been satisfactorily addressed under the current scheme because the density of the development should both reflect the 'edge of settlement' site and its location within a common-edge settlement. As such, it is considered that the landscape harm comes from a poor understanding and interpretation of the landscape, lack of integration and response to sensitive landscape features as well as a lack of understanding of the settlement pattern to help inform the 'transition' and landscape enhancement.
- 8.62 In addition to the main concerns referred to above, other landscape concerns include:
- Surface water is likely to be an issue on this site as the soils are 'slowly permeable and seasonally wet'. Drainage details are directly linked to landscaping, and opportunities for enhancement and the SuDs design should, for example, be influenced by landscape character;
 - The village green is isolated on the site – it has the potential to achieve much more than just a public space. This also emphasises the schemes lack of connectivity with the wider landscape;
 - The LVIA states that the existing Local Character Assessment (LCA) is at too coarse a scale to be used to assess the site. Yet the assessment undertaken is based on a very broad receptor of 'landscape character' and not on specific key features. By identifying individual landscape receptors specific mitigation measures to address these impacts can then be identified;
 - The overall design is formal, but this site is fairly rural, right on the edge of Stroud. Significant areas of 'ornamental shrub planting' are proposed, some of which is non-native species planting, which is not demonstrating a landscape-led approach. It is not clear why certain species have been chosen.
- 8.63 To conclude, Officers consider that a landscape-led approach should be evidenced in the scheme layout, design, materials and landscaping. However, insufficient research and interpretation of evidence has been undertaken in order to assess and understand the landscape and its value. Consequently, it has not been possible to find convincing demonstration of how landscape character has been used to inform this scheme, which has therefore formed a reason for refusal.

Design:

- 8.64 The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment as a key part of sustainable development. Although planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes, they should seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Policy CP29 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014) and policy SD5 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017) both accord with the NPPF in requiring development to have high quality design and to be well related in size, scale and character to its surroundings. Emerging policy SD5 does however also strongly support the adoption of a landscape-led approach to ensure that all development is of the highest possible design quality which reflects and respects the quality of the natural, agricultural and built environment of the National Park.
- 8.65 Additionally, with regards to housing design the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) advises that 'well-designed housing should be functional, attractive and sustainable. It should also be adaptable to the changing needs of its occupants'.

- 8.66 The proposed development provides a village hall in the north-west corner of the site fronting Ramsdean Road, with a village green immediately to the south. In the south-west corner of the site the housing continues to front Ramsdean Road to reflect the building lines of the row of terraced properties to the south. The internal part of the site provides two separate cul-de-sacs with the housing arranged around them.
- 8.67 In particular, the key areas of concern are outlined below:
- The water course at the northern end of the site has not been considered and therefore the scheme continues to neglect something that could be a valuable feature;
 - The public house to the north (The Seven Stars) is a high quality building and it could benefit the development to see some elements from the pub being adopted in to the housing being developed;
 - The development is very suburban in nature;
 - Terraced housing has not been considered as part of the development, which would be in keeping with the area;
 - The affordable housing should be broken up and not positioned in one particular area;
 - As advised at pre-application stage, the provision of tandem parking is not supported as it is considered that juggling the order of movements will inevitably encourage one of the cars to park on the road;
 - Lack of consideration for functional design. For example, the bin and cycle stores for plots 2 and 3 are located in the rear gardens and can only be accessed by taking waste/bikes through the house;
 - The village green could be the heart of the village, but at present it fails to achieve this. It has been suggested that the proposed village green should incorporate more density around it, instead of it being surrounded by roads on either side (Ramsdean Road to the west and the internal road into the development to the east);
 - The village hall itself is going to need a large amount of storage space in order to account for the variety of uses it is likely to attract.
- 8.68 Officers consider that the overall design of the proposed development is formal in a relatively rural location, whereby the design around a cul-de-sac style arrangement with lots of visible car parking would appear very suburban in nature. Although some context analysis has been undertaken in relation to the buildings of Stroud, the architectural style of the houses is not considered to be particularly locally distinctive to Stroud. It is evident therefore that the scheme has responded to the regional context but not to the immediate context. At present, it is considered that the proposed houses could be anywhere in the country whereas placing greater emphasis on the use of materials for example, could help to incorporate some of the local character.
- 8.69 At the Design Review Panel session the Panel Members commented that terraced housing is common in the area and that no terraces had been included in the proposal. It was also suggested that the provision of terraced housing would have smaller footprints than semi-detached and detached housing, which would help to ensure that additional soft landscaping could be incorporated into the scheme. The Panel were concerned that the provision of semi-detached and detached dwellings on plots 24 to 26 in particular, fronting on to Ramsdean Road, would erode the use of terraced housing as a local feature and that in addition to this, cars being a part of the frontages on the aforementioned plots would change the character of the road, which is not currently characteristic of the immediate area. This advice has not been taken into account by the applicants.
- 8.70 Moving on to the affordable housing, which is located close to the northern site boundary, the Design Officer advised that the affordable housing should be broken up and should not be sited in one particular area of the development. This ties in with the housing design guidance provided within the NPPG, which states that 'in well-designed places, affordable housing is not distinguishable from private housing by its design, nor is it banished to the least attractive part of the site'. However, it should also be noted that Affordable Housing providers do prefer that affordable units be grouped together to help with their ongoing management. In terms of their design, this could be improved to help them appear more in keeping with the private market units.

8.71 The affordable housing (plots 1 to 8) is located adjacent to the existing watercourse in an area that is prone to surface water flooding and for this reason, the applicants were advised at pre-application stage to ensure that any residential development is sited away from the watercourse. The applicant has responded to this by submitting a Flood Risk Assessment for the site and HCC Lead Local Flood Authority are now satisfied with the proposed development from a flood risk perspective. This is covered in more detail in the 'Flood risk and drainage' section of this report.

8.72 On a further point, the private gardens of affordable units 1 to 4 have north facing gardens with large mature trees located along the northern boundary. This is likely to result in shading of these gardens rendering a large proportion of them as unusable.

Highways, access and parking:

8.73 Two vehicular access points are proposed to access the site, including pedestrian links from Ramsdean Road. The existing vehicular crossover in the north-west corner of the site would be utilised to provide vehicular access to the proposed Village Hall. A new access is also proposed at the southern end of the site to provide access to the residential dwellings. The applicant has confirmed that the internal highway network within the residential part of the scheme would not be adopted by HCC and instead would be managed by a private management company. Both access points would lead off Ramsdean Road, which is a C class road subject to a speed limit of 30mph.

8.74 HCC Highways Authority originally raised no objection to the proposed development subject to securing a financial contribution to mitigate the impact of the development, particularly from the generation of anticipated additional traffic and subject to conditions. A query was also raised regarding the red line boundary, which incorporated a highway verge.

8.75 In response to the comments received from Stroud Parish Council and the local community the plans were amended to include a lay-by on Ramsdean Road, adjacent to the Village Hall green. The applicants Transport Consultant has advised that the proposed lay-by would improve traffic flow on Ramsdean Road in the vicinity of the School.

8.76 HCC Highways were re-consulted on the amended plans and have confirmed that the red line boundary has now been amended to their satisfaction. Notice has also been served on the Highway Authority in regard to the proposed lay-by. HCC Highways have raised no objection to the amended scheme, including the provision of a lay-by to aid in reducing congestion along Ramsdean Road, subject to a legal agreement to secure a Transport contribution and recommended conditions.

8.77 Subject to conditions, it is considered that the amended scheme would comply with current policy CP31 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan JCS (2014) and Policy SD19 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017) as well as East Hampshire's adopted parking standards (2008). The proposed development would also comply with parts 1c, d and e of Allocation policy SD94 of the South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017).

8.78 The requested Transport contribution will be covered in more detail below under 'Financial Contributions and CIL'.

Public Right of Way (PRoW):

8.79 Government guidance considers that the effect of development on a public right of way (PRoW) is a material consideration and that rights of way and green infrastructure should be protected and enhanced, including by adding new rights of way to the network, which is in line with the aims of the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan (2015-2025).

8.80 Stroud footpath no. 703, which forms part of a key route to the countryside to the east and west, is located approximately 75 metres to the south of the site. Additionally, Stroud footpath no. 704, is located less than 100 metres to the north. Despite the proximity of the aforementioned PRoW's to the application site, given the screening that would be provided by the existing mature vegetation along both the northern and eastern site boundaries (although to a lesser extent during the winter months) in conjunction with intervening built

form such as the school to the south and the public house to the north, it is considered that the proposed development would be unlikely to negatively impact upon the nearby PRoV's.

- 8.81 The requested contribution towards the surrounding rights of way network will be covered in more detail below under 'Financial Contributions and CIL'.

Archaeology and impact on the setting of the adjacent Scheduled Monument:

- 8.82 On the advice of the Archaeologist and also the Historic Buildings Officer, it is not considered that the proposals would have an unacceptable impact on archaeological issues or historic assets in the locality subject to appropriate conditions.

Ecology

- 8.83 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF (2012) states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by '[...] minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible'.
- 8.84 The application is supported by an Ecological Assessment dated March 2017, which provides an assessment of the application site and its ecological features. The County Ecologist has advised that the grassland within the site itself is of minimal ecological value and therefore the key ecological features are the boundary hedgerows and trees, as well as the off-site stream.
- 8.85 The site has been shown to support a range of foraging/commuting bats, although there seems to be no indication of roosting activity. Notwithstanding this, given the generally unlit nature of the site it is expected that bats will be present. The boundary features do support small numbers of nesting birds and the stable building in the north-western corner of the site provides nesting habitat for barn swallows. It is considered that the boundary hedgerows could be suitable for hazel dormouse habitat. It is unlikely however that great crested newts would be present within the site.
- 8.86 The County Ecologist requested some additional information in relation to tree removal from the site and the provision of boundary buffers. Additional information was submitted with the amended scheme but this information has not managed to address all of the Ecologist's concerns. More specifically, the Ecological Assessment is based upon no trees being removed to facilitate development, whereas the amended Arboricultural report does identify the removal of trees. None of the trees to be removed have been assessed for their potential to support roosting bats or nesting birds. Additionally, the boundary hedgerows are considered to offer suitable habitat for supporting hazel dormice. The potential for impacts to dormouse habitat arising from tree removal has also not been assessed.
- 8.87 Having considered the additional information, the County Ecologist has advised that insufficient information has been presented on the potential ecological impacts of tree removal at the site, contrary to policy CP21 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014), policy SD9 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the First Purpose of a National Park.

Trees:

- 8.88 The site contains important mature trees along the northern and eastern boundaries, which are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) made in February 2017. There are also some additional trees, albeit fewer in number, along the southern site boundary. There are no trees located within the centre of the site.
- 8.89 A total of 16 trees would be removed, all of which are Category C or lower, which are indicated on the tree removal plan within the amended Arboricultural Report and Tree Condition Survey document. 24 new trees are proposed to be planted as part of the landscaping scheme.
- 8.90 The Tree Officer at EHDC is satisfied with the level of information provided at this stage and has recommended a condition to ensure that any works carried out on the site are undertaken in accordance with the submitted updated Arboricultural Report if planning permission is granted.

Residential amenity:

- 8.91 The closest residential properties to the site that are most likely to be impacted upon by the proposed development are the row of terraced dwellings immediately to the south of the site fronting onto Ramsdean Road.
- 8.92 No. 2 Ramsdean Road is an existing end of terrace two-storey dwelling. The northern side elevation of this dwelling runs parallel with the southern boundary of the application site. The closest proposed dwelling to no. 2 would be a two-storey semi-detached dwelling on plot 26 located immediately to the north within the south-western corner of the site.
- 8.93 The front and rear building lines of the proposed dwelling on plot 26 would broadly align with those of no. 2 Ramsdean Road. Both of these properties would have a side to side relationship with a separation distance of nine metres between both main flank walls. An integral garage attached to the dwelling on plot 26 would sit closer to no. 2 Ramsdean Road, resulting in a three metre separation between the side walls of the garages attached to each of these properties. No. 2 Ramsdean Road does have a second floor window in the side gable facing plot 26. However, given the satisfactory separation distance and the orientation of both dwellings, Officers consider that an acceptable relationship would be achieved between both dwellings in terms of loss of outlook, light and privacy.
- 8.94 The majority of the existing residential properties located on the western side of Ramsdean Road fronting the site are set well back on their individual plots. No. 1 Ramsdean Road however appears to be an anomaly in the street given that it is sited much further forward on its plot. No. 1 Ramsdean Road would directly face the new dwellings on plots 25 and 26 opposite. A separation distance of approximately 21 metres would normally be required between facing first floor windows. Although a separation distance of only 15 metres would be achieved between the front elevations of the existing and proposed dwellings, the relationship is considered to be acceptable in this instance given that Ramsdean Road is intervening.
- 8.95 The relationships between the dwellings within the development are also considered to be acceptable in terms of separation distances.

Flood risk and drainage:

- 8.96 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted with the application given that the site area would exceed 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1. The Assessment states that the run-off from the site is naturally drained, partially by infiltration, with the majority of the run-off drained by the network of existing watercourses adjacent to the northern and eastern site boundaries.
- 8.97 As is referred to in the SHLAA (2016) the northern end of the site adjacent to the existing watercourse is prone to surface water flooding. This was identified at pre-application stage and the applicant was advised that any proposed residential development should therefore be sited away from the watercourse.
- 8.98 Within the submitted FRA it is acknowledged that there will be an increase in the rate and volume of run-off generated by the site, which would be disposed of by Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuD's) techniques within the boundary of the site, ensuring that there would be no impact off-site. The submitted report advises that the flood risk both on and off site would remain unchanged following completion of the proposed development. It is stated within the report that the residual 'low risk' of surface water flooding would be mitigated by ensuring the proposed dwellings are located outside the risk area or finished floor levels would be 600mm above ground level and by using compensatory measures and flood resilient construction techniques. Suitable permeable paving would also be used to help manage surface water.
- 8.99 The HCC Lead Local Flood Authority requested additional information to ascertain whether the proposed development would increase surface water flood risk on the site. More specifically, the Lead Local Flood Authority raised concerns over the proposals to amend the existing ditch due to the lack of information provided. Additionally, further information/clarification was requested in regard to runoff rate proposals, the efficiency of

the proposed drainage systems, the number of treatment stages that would be required in the system, infiltration testing, information of the general maintenance regimes of the proposed SuD's features and evidence that run-off exceeding design criteria has been considered.

- 8.100 An updated FRA has been submitted to address the points raised, which has been reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority. The Lead Local Flood Authority are now satisfied that their previous concerns have been addressed and therefore no objection has been raised in relation to flood risk.

Environmental Health:

- 8.101 According to Environmental Health records the application site is not sited on or adjacent to historic contaminated land. As such, no objection has been raised subject to the attachment of conditions and informatives in the event that planning permission is granted.
- 8.102 In regard to noise, the EHDC Environmental Health Officer originally raised concerns about the noise that may arise from the use of the Village Hall or from the Primary School to the south of the site in the absence of a noise report. Environmental Health confirmed however that it is unlikely that the future occupants would be significantly impacted by noise from the pub to the north. Further amended plans were received following which Environmental Health removed their objection, subject to appropriate conditions.

Financial contributions and CIL:

- 8.103 As has already been referred to above, financial contributions of £40,000 and £3,984.75 have been requested by HCC towards transport and the local rights of way network respectively. However, Officers consider that the contributions sought would be seeking to support a wider piece of infrastructure that would not be site-specific infrastructure and would not be directly related to the proposed development. On this basis, this would be met by the developments CIL contribution and therefore the aforementioned financial contributions are not recommended to be pursued.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposed development is outside of the defined settlement policy boundary for Stroud and, in the absence of a rural exception scheme, an open market led housing scheme would not be acceptable because the development does not meet the requirements of the second aspect of current policy CPI0 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: JCS (2014). In addition and importantly regardless of the 'exception's' policy the proposed development would also be unacceptable in that the proposal is considered to be major development and fails to satisfy the requirement that major developments in a National Park should only take place in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that it is in the public interest. . In addition there are concerns over housing mix, the amount of affordable housing provision, impact on the landscape character, the overall design and ecology.
- 9.2 Although only afforded modest weight at this stage, the proposed development has also been assessed against the relevant policies within the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017). When assessed against the emerging policies, the proposed development would fail to meet the requirements in full referred to under the Allocation Policy for this particular site.
- 9.3 The application is therefore recommended for refusal based on both current and emerging policies, albeit much greater weight has been applied to the current policies within the East Hampshire District Local Plan: JCS (2014).

10. Reason for Recommendation and Conditions

- 10.1 The application is recommended for refusal for the following reasons:
1. The proposal is considered to be major development for the purposes of Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It has not been demonstrated that the need for the development, nor the cost of and scope for development outside the Park, or meeting it in some other way has been demonstrated. Nor has it been demonstrated that the detrimental effect of the scheme on the environment could be moderated. It is

considered that there are no exceptional circumstances to justify this major development. It is also considered that this major development is not in the public interest. The proposed dwellings would be outside of the defined settlement policy boundary of Stroud, resulting in an unjustified form of residential development in designated countryside. The proposed development would not constitute small-scale development, nor would it provide a rural exception scheme outside the settlement policy boundary. In regard to the Allocation policy within the emerging South Downs Local Plan, the proposed scheme would also fail to fully accord with the policy requirements (with specific regard to criteria 1a, 1b and 2a). The proposed development is therefore contrary to the policies CP10, CP14 and CP19 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014), policy SD94 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the South Downs Partnership Management Plan (2013) and the First Purpose of a National Park.

2. The proposed development, by reason of the failure to provide a suitable mix of units on site, would fail to satisfactorily meet local housing needs. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policy CP11 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014), policy SD27 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017), the SDNPA's SHMA (2015), the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the duty of a National Park.
3. The proposed development would result in dwellings located outside of the settlement policy boundary of Stroud and it does not constitute a rural exception scheme for affordable housing which addresses a local need. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policy CP14 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014), policy SD29 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and the statutory duty of a National Park.
4. The proposed development would result in an unacceptable impact upon the National Park landscape by virtue of the layout, form of development, landscaping and failure to respond to key landscape features, which has not been informed by the character of the landscape. The proposals are therefore contrary to policy CP20 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014), policies SD4 and SD94 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017), the National Planning Policy framework (2012), the South Downs Partnership Management Plan (2013) and the First Purpose of a National Park.
5. The proposed development, by reason of the siting, design, type and materials used for the proposed dwellings, in conjunction with the proposed parking layout and suburban nature of the scheme, the poorly designed village green, lack of connectivity to the countryside and failure to enhance the natural and historic landscape features, would result in a development that has failed to adopt a landscape-led approach that would be detrimental to the character of the surrounding area and the National Park generally. The development is therefore contrary to policy CP29 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014), policies SD5 and SD94 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the South Downs Partnership Management Plan (2013) and the First Purpose of a National Park.
6. Insufficient information has been provided to satisfactorily demonstrate that there would not be harmful ecological impacts caused from the removal of trees at the site and how this could be appropriately mitigated. In the absence of sufficient information, the proposal is contrary to saved policy CP21 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014), policy SD9 of the emerging South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the First Purpose of a National Park.

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. Equality Act 2010

13.1 Due regard has been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010.

14. Proactive Working

14.1 In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the NPPF.

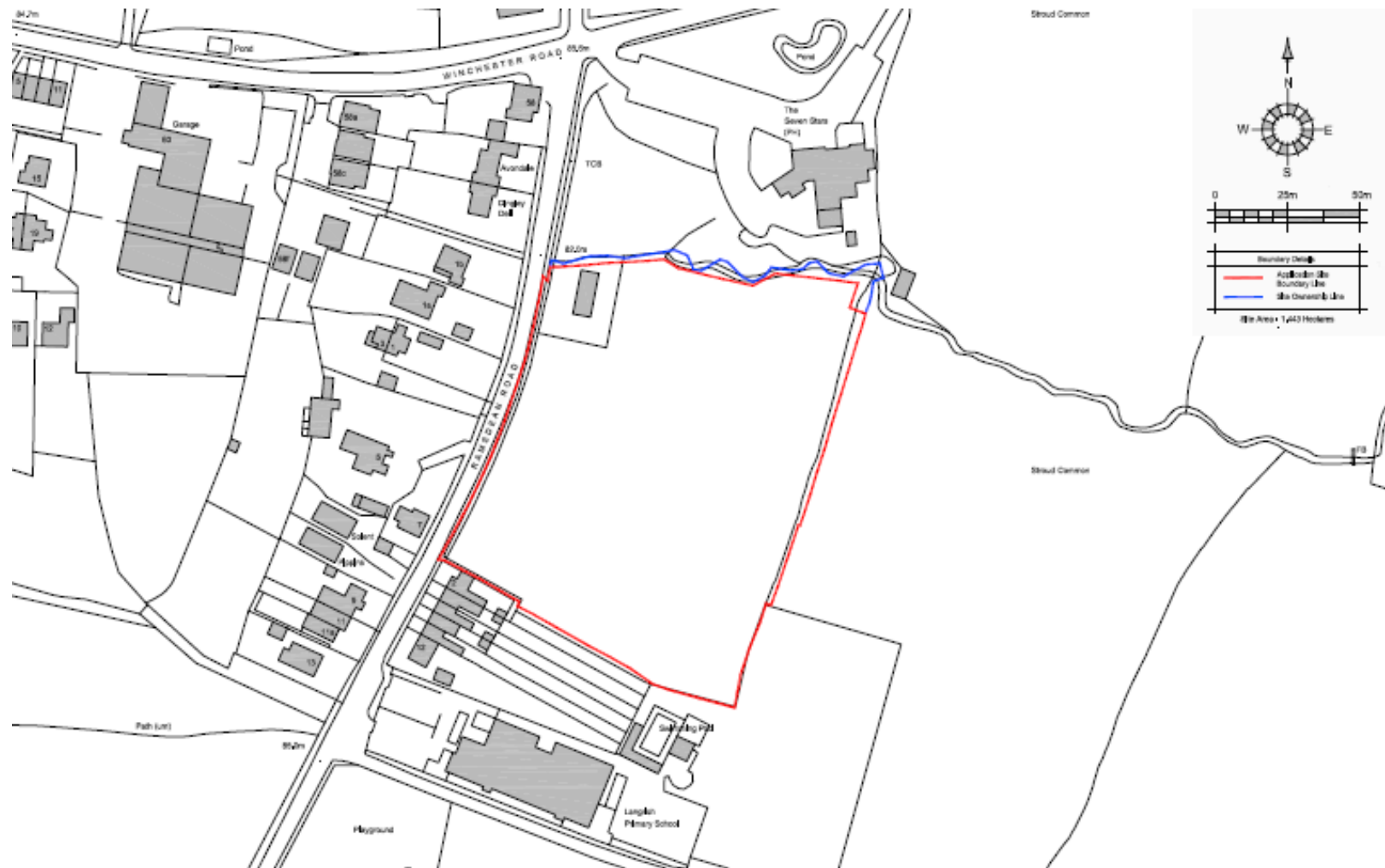
TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer: Victoria Corrigan
Tel: 01730 819261
email: Victoria.Corrigan@southdowns.gov.uk
Appendices 1. Site Location Map
SDNPA Legal Services, Development Manager.
Consultees
Background Documents All planning application plans, supporting documents, consultation and third party responses
<http://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=ONOSNTTUHSM00SDNP/16/05076/PRE> Pre-application response
<http://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OEW2M2TU02T00>
National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf
South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (2013)
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan/>
South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2005 and 2011)
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-advice/landscape/>
East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review (2006)
<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan>
East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2014)
<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/DP01EastHampshireDistrictLocalPlanJointCoreStrategy.pdf>
South Downs Local Plan: Pre-Submission (2017)
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/national-park-local-plan/>
South Downs National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015)
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SDNP-SHMA-2015.pdf>
South Downs National Park Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2016)
<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Appendix-D-Sites-with-potential.pdf>

Site Location Map



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