

LINDFORD

NO INSET MAP

OUTSTANDING ALLOCATION (CHASE ROAD) AND OMISSION SITES

OUTSTANDING ALLOCATION

Objections

1375/11518	Lindford Parish Council
1375/15004	Lindford Parish Council

OMISSION SITES

Objections

First Deposit

88/6665	Thames Water Property
1912/8175	Kris Mitra Associates
1582/8993	Mrs S & Miss S Atkins
1876/10166	Charles Church Developments

Main Issues

- 1) Whether Lindford is sufficiently sustainable to take the amount of development that the Council intends for it;
- 2) Whether the outstanding housing allocation in the First Review of the Local Plan should be brought into the SDDP and, if so, whether the Council's estimate of 165 (155 net) dwellings on it is reasonable and a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dpha) should apply;
- 3) Whether any alternative sites in Lindford should be allocated in preference to, or in addition to, the land at Chase Road.

Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

5.5.5 Lindford is in some respects a satellite village of the larger settlement of Whitehill/Bordon. Its amenities include a small parade of shops, a public house, church and working men's club. There is a wider range of shops, including a superstore, in Whitehill/Bordon which is about 2 km away by foot/cycle and about 3.5 km by road.

The nearest primary and secondary schools are also at Whitehill/Bordon, being about 0.5 km distant by foot and cycle and about 1.5 km by road. There is a bus service from Lindford to Liphook and Farnham Rail Stations. The No 18 bus between Aldershot and Haslemere provides a weekday hourly service with a much reduced 2-hourly service on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The Parish Council says that it is to be withdrawn, but there is no written confirmation from Stagecoach to that effect. There is a dial-a-bus No 295 service to Petersfield on Wednesdays. This is not a good public transport service, and in overall terms Lindford is not one of the most sustainable settlements in the District. Nevertheless, in view of the number of facilities that it does have, is likely to have, their wider range in Whitehill/Bordon and the not excessive distance to it, I consider that it is sufficiently sustainable to take the scale of additional residential development that the Council envisages.

*

- 5.5.6 Secondly, the outstanding allocation is in the south-western part of the settlement. It is about 11.75 ha in area, of which about 5.5 ha is allocated for housing. It contains 10 dwellings including 2 mobile homes, and so the Council regards part of it (about 1.63 ha) as previously-developed land, an assessment with which I agree. Its allocation was not confirmed in the FDDP because its potential yield of 90 dwellings (net) had already been included in the housing supply figures. The Council adopted this stance in respect of those sites with planning permission and for those allocations in the adopted Local Plan yet to be developed. It regarded this Chase Road site as an existing and suitable commitment and in the strong belief that an application for planning permission would be submitted within the foreseeable future (Document PR29/1375 paragraph 3.1). That occurred in September 2003 with a proposal to erect 207 dwellings. At the time of writing the application has yet to be determined.
- 5.5.7 The **Lindford Parish Council** states that, because the site was not developed within the First Review plan period (1991-2001), it should not count as an allocation and it should be deleted from the 2nd Review. I do not agree. As part of its Urban Housing Capacity Study, the Council is obliged to review all existing allocations and reassess them against the criteria set out in PPG 3 paragraph 31. It decided that the site met those criteria, a conclusion with which I generally agree and which is reinforced by my above comments on the appreciable sustainability of the settlement.
- 5.5.8 The Development Brief for the site requires a new footpath/cycle way over the River Wey to Whitehill/Bordon, and the convenience of this access should enhance sustainability. The Council considers that the additional population would help to revitalise the local shops that are no more than about 0.5 km from the site. Although I do not accord this prospect much weight, it cannot be dismissed. Development would also assist in providing playing fields, informal open space, children's play space, allotments, changing room/community building and affordable housing. These are significant benefits to the local community that should be welcomed.
- 5.5.9 There is no evidence that local services could not accommodate the envisaged scale of development, subject to their being up-graded or improved as the Brief requires. The scheme would not wholly remove the acknowledged local deficiency in public open space, but it would go a good way towards doing so by reducing it from about 5.12 ha to about 1.32 ha. The Council says that one of the reasons why this site has not been developed is because of the demands made upon it to provide various community

facilities. I agree that to seek more benefits, in the form of yet more public open space, could put viability in doubt. As always, reasonableness must be the guiding light.

5.5.10 The Listed Building (Chase Farmhouse) on the site need not inhibit an allocation or the development of the land. Any scheme would have to respect it and its setting, a not unusual situation. Although the site lies close to the River Wey, I see no reason why a sensitively designed scheme should not fit well into this lovely valley landscape. The Highways Authority has no objection, in principle, to a residential scheme subject to the introduction of traffic calming measures on Chase Road and details for dealing with the additional traffic at its 5-way junction with Liphook Road. Indeed, the introduction of a traffic signal here should go some way to restricting the speed of vehicles that is all too evident along Liphook Road. The site adjoins the sewage treatment works. The operator raises no objection to the allocation.

5.5.11 Regarding the risk of flooding, the Environment Agency raises no objection to the allocation, provided development is kept 80 m from the riverbank. Any prospective developer would need to submit a Flood Risk Assessment Report and this would no doubt need to be agreed with the Agency. The Brief also requires the submission of an ecological survey and an archaeological statement as part of any planning application. The Council confirms that the prospective developers are aware of the colony of water voles and are required to take it into account in the preparation of any scheme. The 80 m will help. There is no need to revise the Brief, provided that any proposed scheme reflects up-to-date policies and guidance. Whether a proposal would have to be submitted to the Secretary of State under the Town & Country Planning (Residential Development on Greenfield Land) Direction 2000 is not a matter for the Local Plan.

5.5.12 Some 2/3rds of the site is greenfield, but that does not rule out its candidacy as an allocation. There is simply not enough previously-developed land in East Hampshire to meet Structure Plan housing requirements. Local planning authorities should seek the most efficient use of land, avoiding schemes of less than 30 dpha and encouraging those of 30-50 dpha. National guidance also discourages policies that place a ceiling on the number of dwellings to be accommodated on a site regardless of location and type of housing envisaged. In this case, taking account of the various constraints, requirements and opportunities, the Council's estimate of some 165 dwellings is reasonable. It equates with 30 dpha, in line with Government policy, although a little less if a net figure is used. Importantly, it does not rule out a higher density scheme if acceptable in the context of surroundings and any other material consideration. That is the thrust of the Objections made by **Mrs and Miss Atkins** and **Charles Church Developments Ltd** and that is what the planning application suggests. In view of the general need to promote higher densities than has previously been the case, I would regard 165 dwellings on this site as a minimum achievement.

5.5.13 I conclude on this issue that the SDDP should continue to treat this outstanding allocation as a commitment.

*

5.5.14 I turn now to the third issue concerning Omission Sites. **Thames Water Property** seeks an allocation of a strip of land along the eastern side of the Lindford Sewerage Treatment Works (SWT). This is a well-treed site varying in width between some 36-75m. It provides a valuable landscape buffer and screen between the SWT and houses in Chase

Road and the wider settlement. It is also part of the local gap that separates the main built-up areas of Lindford from Bordon. I see no basis for allocating this attractive, open site for housing.

5.5.15 **Kris Mitra Associates** promotes a site on the eastern side of Lindford Road (B3002). It is a triangular shaped field of about 0.6 ha at the northern edge of the village, abutting residential development at its southern boundary. It is well enclosed by mature vegetation, although open to view from Lindford Road. It lies close to where the road crosses the River Wey and near the local gap between Lindford and Bordon. Although not within that gap, it is an important part of the sweep of countryside to the north of the village and alongside a main entrance to the village. Its key position in the attractive rural setting of the village and on a principal entrance to it demands that it remains protected for the sake of its openness.

5.5.16 A residential scheme on this land would be served by a new access some 20 m from its southern boundary. The site is on a dangerous bend with a 30 mph speed restriction, although elsewhere a 40 mph speed restriction applies. Some considerable time was spent at the hearing discussing the safety issues of the proposed access. Briefly, I agree with the Council that a 4.5m “x” distance at the point of access to the proposed scheme of 18 dwellings would be the most appropriate. Nevertheless, such circumstances as road alignment, volume and speed of traffic and inclement weather conditions would all too often result in serious inconvenience and danger on the public highway. But development here and the consequent loss of openness of this attractive and visually prominent pasture-land is sufficient reason by itself to reject the Objector’s proposal.

5.5.17 Neither of these sites should be allocated instead of, or in addition to, the land at Chase Road.

Recommendation

5.5.18 I recommend that no modification be made to the SDDP.