

7 March 2024

Planning Policy Team
East Hampshire District Council

SLR Project No.: 433.000058.00001

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: Site Allocations RLC1 and RLC2 (Land at Deerleap North and South) - East Hampshire Local Plan: Regulation 18 Consultation

SLR Consulting has prepared this representation on behalf of Fastnet Properties Ltd, in respect of the draft site allocations RLC1 (Land at Deerleap North) and RLC2 (Land at Deerleap South) contained within the East Hampshire (Regulation 18) Draft Local Plan.

Fastnet Properties Ltd has a legal interest in both adjoining sites, and both welcome and wholly support both sites being allocated in the draft plan for a total of up to 13 dwellings. As such, we are writing to **support** the allocation of RLC1 (Land at Deerleap North) and RLC2 (Land at Deerleap South). We are of the view that the inclusion of these site for a combined total of up to 13 dwellings in the forthcoming Local Plan is vital in order to fully meet the housing needs identified within the district, and for the Local Plan to be found sound.

This representation seeks to provide further information to the Council regarding the deliverability of both sites to demonstrate that they are available, can be delivered, and that development is achievable within five years of the plan's future adoption in Autumn 2025. Our client is committed to bringing a high quality development to this site, and is currently at an advanced stage of preparing a full planning application for submission to the Council which is anticipated to be submitted within the next 6 months.

The representations are framed in the context of the tests of soundness as set out in Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that for a Plan to be sound it must be:

- **Positively Prepared** – the plan should provide a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable and based on joint working; and
- **Consistent with National Policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

In the absence of any specific draft policy wording for the proposed site allocations at Deerleap, this representation includes an appraisal of how each site accords with the opportunities identified within the draft Local Plan allocations; and considers other technical matters including design and layout, access, landscape and trees, ecology, and flooding; in order to help inform the suitability of each site as a proposed housing allocation.

Proposed Spatial Strategy

The primary spatial strategy for the district is described in draft Policies S1 and H1 of the Reg. 18 plan and seeks to achieve sustainable growth by ensuring development is distributed in line with the settlement hierarchy (draft Policy S2) with a greater proportion of development located in the larger and more sustainable settlements. Rowlands Castle is categorised in the draft settlement hierarchy as a 'Tier 3' settlement, owing to its function as a '*focal point for the surrounding villages and rural areas*'. Draft Policy H1 allocates a requirement for 600 homes to be provided across all 'Tier 3' settlements, with 145 new homes to be provided in Rowlands Castle. Given that sites RLC1 and RLC2 adjoin a 'Tier 3' settlement, these sites are judged by EHDC to be in a sustainable location (Reg. 18, para 3.38). We agree with the definition of Rowlands Castle as a 'Tier 3' settlement, as well as the capability of the settlement to accommodate around 145 new homes. We do not propose any changes to this approach within the hierarchy.

For the reasons set out below, sites RLC1 and RLC2 are both appropriate locations for modest levels of housing development that will help to meet the district's identified housing need and deliver a scheme of high-quality homes in a sustainable location. We support the allocation of these sites for residential development and support the continued inclusion of these sites in the Proposed Submission stage of the East Hampshire Local Plan.

RLC1 – Land at Deerleap (north)

Land at Deerleap (north) is located directly to the south of central Rowlands Castle and adjoins existing housing to the west, and the village green to the north which demarks the village's defined built-up area boundary which the site adjoins. The 0.6Ha site is located approximately 300m from Rowlands Castle Railway Station, and in close proximity to a range of other local amenities. The site is currently located outside the defined settlement boundary of Rowlands Castle, but the allocation of the site and associated proposed amendments to the settlement boundary as shown in the draft Policies Maps, reinforces the site's sustainable location with the village.





Figure 1: Deerleap (north) – Extract from draft Local Plan Chapter 12: Site Allocations

It should be noted that land further to the south of the Deerleap sites has recently been developed for housing, including land off Bailey Road by Bargate Homes (34 homes), and land at The Glade by Nicholas King Homes (43 homes) – Figure 2 below illustrates this, and demonstrates that these sites (which are located further away from the village services and amenities than the Deerleap sites) are judged to be sustainable and accessible locations for residential development. As a result of these recent development, the Deerleap sites are now surrounded by neighbouring residential development and are the only developable parcels of land in this location that remain unutilised.





Figure 2: Aerial image showing recent nearby developments by Bargate Homes and Nicholas King Homes.

The site at Deerleap (north) has historically been used as an orchard and kitchen garden associated with the neighbouring Deerleap House, and previously contained a number of sheds and structures associated with this use. The site therefore is not virgin greenfield land, but rather has been used in the past for other operations associated with the neighbouring residential property. The site is relatively flat and contains some mature trees and vegetation within its centre and around its boundaries. Owing to the minor and infrequent susceptibility of the northernmost parts of the site to surface water flooding, the developable area of the site will need to be determined, but initial feasibility work has shown that the site will comfortably be able to accommodate 5 dwellings as well as the necessary sustainable drainage systems needed to manage surface water and flood risk. An indicative plan of how a 5-unit scheme may be accommodated within the site is shown in Figure 3 below:





Figure 3: Indicative Plan for Deerleap (north) – 5no. units

The site is located within the Rowlands Castle Conservation Area, and lies to the west of the remnants of the motte and bailey of Rowlands Castle (registered Scheduled Monument, list entry 1001923). It is considered that with careful layout, siting, landscaping and design; a modest scheme of 5 dwellings can be accommodated within this site without causing any detrimental harm to the setting of nearby heritage assets.

Access to the site from the north is not possible, therefore vehicular access would be achieved via Deerleap Lane to the south. The draft allocation of the parcel of land to the south (RLC2) which is under the control of the same owner, can be used to ensure suitable access is achieved to both sites to the satisfaction of the Local Highways Authority.

The mature vegetation the site contains means the site is suited to supporting wildlife and habitats, including bats. Ecological surveys will be undertaken to assess the sites potential to support protected and priority species and their habitats, and any necessary mitigation will be included in the site design



and layout to ensure these species are protected. Opportunities for biodiversity net gain will also be explored to ensure a minimum 10% BNG is achieved in accordance with national legislation and draft Policy NBE2 (part c) of the Reg. 18 Local Plan. Nutrient neutrality would also be addressed as part of any future development proposal as the site is within the Solent catchment area.

Owing to its contained and enclosed nature, any landscape harm is likely to be very minimal and localised. Notwithstanding this, any future development will seek to retain as much existing vegetation as feasible, particularly around the site boundaries to maintain the sense of enclosure and to screen any built development from longer views.

RLC2 – Land at Deerleap (south)

Land at Deerleap (south) is located directly to the south / south-west of draft allocation RLC1 (Deerleap north) and adjoins the existing settlement boundary of Rowlands Castle to its west and south (see Figure 4). The site is around 1.0Ha in size, and as per site RLC1, it is currently located outside the defined settlement boundary, albeit the boundary is proposed to be amended to include this site as part of its draft allocation. Whilst RLC2 is slightly further from the main village centre and railway station, it lies next to RLC1 to its north and therefore is very similar in terms of its sustainability and relationship with the existing settlement. Recent development which has been accepted to the south of this site (including land off Bailey Road by Bargate Homes for 34 homes, and land at The Glade by Nicholas King Homes for 43 homes) demonstrates that the Deerleap (south) site is sustainably located and easily accessible to the services and facilities of Rowlands Castle (see Figure 2).





Figure 4: Deerleap (south) - Extract from draft Local Plan Chapter 12: Site Allocations

As per RLC1, the site is relatively flat and contains mature trees and vegetation within its centre and around its boundaries. The southern boundary has a mature tree belt which screens the site from the south. The very northern boundary of the site has some susceptibility to infrequent and minor surface water flooding, but the remainder of the site is free from any flood or surface water risk. As such, from a surface water/drainage perspective, the majority of the site would be suitable for development, and a scheme of 8 dwellings would be achievable. An indicative plan of how an 8-unit scheme may be accommodated within the site is shown in Figure 5 below:





Figure 5: Indicative Plan for Deerleap (south) – 8no. units

The site is located within the Rowlands Castle Conservation Area, and a small part of the site is within the remnants of the motte and bailey of Rowlands Castle (registered Scheduled Monument, list entry 1001923) which is located to the immediate east of the site. As per RLC1, it is considered that with careful layout, siting, landscaping and design; a modest scheme of 8 dwellings can be accommodated within this site without causing detrimental harm to the setting of nearby heritage assets. The easternmost part of the site is likely to be kept free of development to ensure the wider setting of the Scheduled Monument is respected.

Access to the site would be achieved via Deerleap Lane to the south, which would also provide access into the adjoining site to the north (RLC1). Liaison with the Local Highways Authority would be undertaken to confirm access to both sites from this existing road would not raise any technical concerns.

Opportunities for biodiversity net gain will also be explored to ensure a minimum 10% BNG is achieved in accordance with national legislation and draft Policy NBE2 (part c). Nutrient neutrality



would also be addressed as part of any future development proposal as the site is within the Solent catchment area.

As per RLC1, owing to the contained and enclosed nature of the site, any landscape harm is likely to be very minimal and localised in nature. Notwithstanding this, any future development will seek to retain as much existing vegetation as feasible, particularly around the site boundaries to maintain the sense of enclosure and to screen any built development from longer views. All protected trees would be retained.

Whilst the two sites at Deerleap have been allocated in the draft Local Plan as two separate land parcels (RLC1 and RLC2), our client has a legal interest in both parcels, and is committed to bringing the sites forward together as a single, comprehensive high-quality development. An indicative plan of how a scheme of 13 units might come forward within both site allocations RLC1 and RLC2 is shown in Figure 6 below:



Figure 6: Indicative Plan to show a comprehensive development at Deerleap sites RLC1 and RLC2



Summary

SLR Consulting has prepared this representation on behalf of Fastnet Properties Ltd, to support the selection of sites RLC1 (Land at Deerleap North) and RLC2 (Land at Deerleap South) as proposed housing allocations in the East Hampshire (Regulation 18) Draft Local Plan.

Fastnet Properties Ltd welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Regulation 18 consultation and agrees that Land at Deerleap North and South should be allocated for housing development in the East Hampshire Local Plan (2021 – 2040) to help deliver the housing needed to meet the identified needs of the district. Both sites are in a highly sustainable location for residential development, close to other recent development sites, and a range of existing services and facilities (including a mainline railway station), which accords with the Council's overarching spatial strategy to allow existing settlements to grow in a sustainable manner.

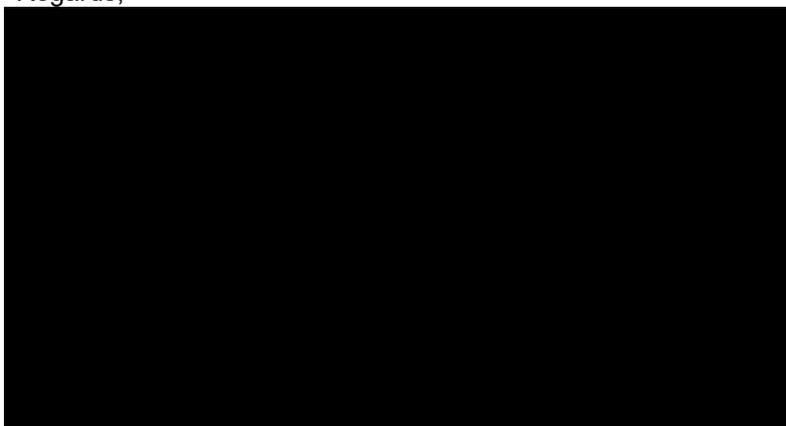
The proposed development of both sites will achieve a high standard of design that protects and enhances the local area's semi-rural setting and historic character and would provide much needed new housing in a sustainable location on the edge of an existing settlement, as per the Council's growth strategy. With the necessary mitigation (including the implementation of sustainable drainage measures), there are no technical or environmental constraints that would preclude the development of either site, and with an appropriate design and layout it is considered that the combined sites can deliver a total of 13 dwellings without any detrimental effect on the wider character of the area.

Our client is committed to delivering a high-quality development of this site, and is keen to engage with the Council in pre-application discussions to understand how best to bring the site forward, ahead of the submission of a full planning application for the development of these sites which is anticipated to be within the next 6 months.

In line with tests set out within the NPPF, it is considered that the allocation of both sites would form part of a sound spatial strategy for new development in the district up to 2040 that is positively prepared, justified and effective.

The allocation of sites RLC1 and RLC2 for 5 and 8 dwellings respectively, is therefore **supported**.

Regards,



7 March 2024

Planning Policy Team
East Hampshire District Council

SLR Project No.: 433.000080.00001

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: Catherington Lane – East Hampshire Local Plan: Regulation 18 Consultation

SLR Consulting has prepared this representation on behalf of Fastnet Properties Ltd, in respect of proposed amendments to the Settlement Policy Boundary shown in the draft Policies Maps, pertaining to the settlement of Catherington, which our client raises an **objection** to.

Background

Fastnet Properties Ltd has a legal interest in a 0.47Ha parcel of land to the east of Catherington Lane (henceforth known as ‘the site’) as shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Aerial image of the site outlined in red.

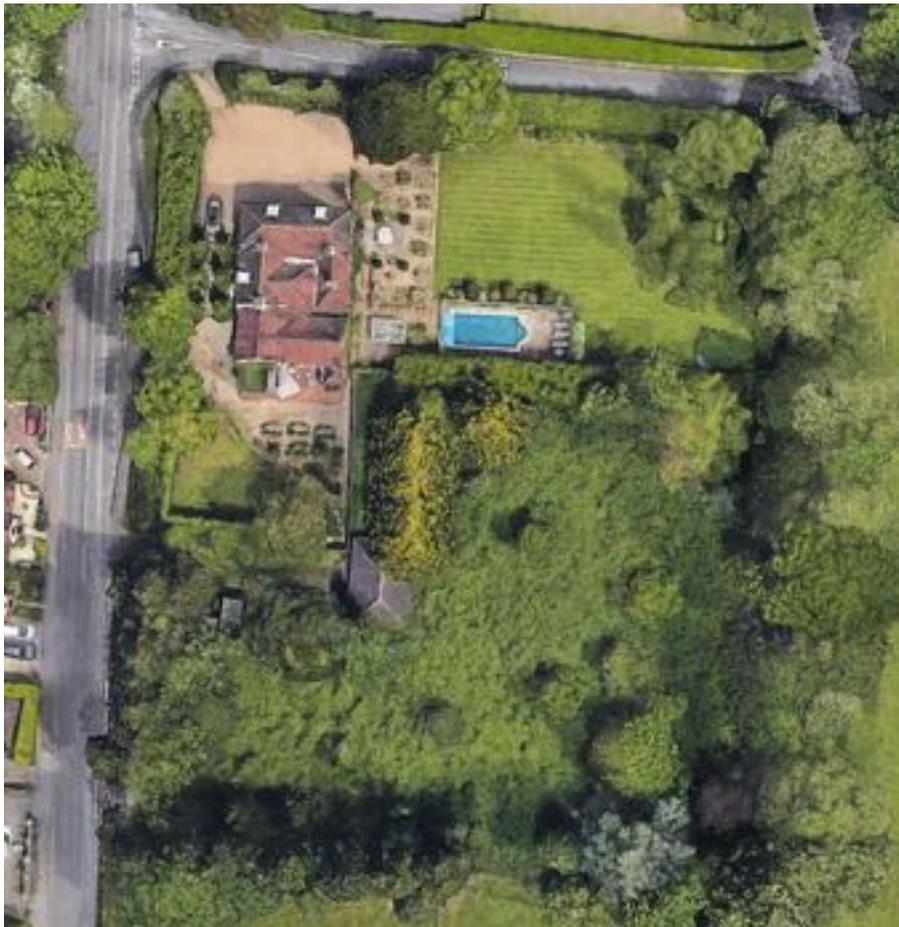


Figure 2: Aerial image (close up) showing built form within the site, and mature boundaries

The site is not formally allocated for development in the current Development Plan; but at present the site is largely contained within the existing settlement policy boundary as defined in Map 2 (Horndean) of the Council's adopted Policies Maps (April 2016) - see Figure 3 below with the approximate location of the site outlined in red.

Save for an anomaly which excludes the very eastern-most part of the site (which as can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, is well contained, and clearly delineated by mature trees); the majority of the site is located within the defined built-up area boundary, whereby in accordance with Policy CP10 of the adopted Core Strategy, the principle of development is acceptable. It should be noted that a substantial garage/workshop, a storage container, and remanence of a greenhouse are located within the site (see Figure 2, and images in Appendix 1) which are associated with the adjacent farmhouse and demonstrates that the site is not virgin greenfield land, but rather part of the wider curtilage of the farmhouse that experienced previous built form and domestic usage. The easternmost part of the site that oddly sits outside the defined settlement boundary, is clearly part of the same residential curtilage as evidenced by the line of mature trees that define the eastern edge of the site and which extend to the rear of the formal gardens of the farmhouse. When viewed from the aerial images (and more-so when viewed from the ground), it is obvious that the entire site up to and including the eastern tree-



lined boundary is strongly linked to the residential curtilage of the farmhouse and the built form of the settlement, and does not form part of the wider countryside beyond. As such, it is our view that the site as a whole relates strongly to the existing built character of Catherington, and in no way relates to the character of the wider countryside to the east.

It should also be noted that a planning application was previously submitted to the Council for housing on this site (reference F35461/003/FUL), and whilst this proposal was withdrawn, it demonstrates that the site has always been considered to be appropriate for development. See Appendix 2 for details of this proposal.



Figure 3: Extract from Adopted Core Strategy, Policies Maps (Map 2: Horndean).

More recent feasibility design work that has been undertaken by our client shows that the area of the site contained within the defined settlement boundary has the capacity to accommodate a scheme of at least 11 houses without any encroachment into the eastern edge. Access would be taken directly from Catherington Lane and the scheme as a whole will accord with all development management policy requirements contained within the adopted Development Plan (including requirements relating to affordable housing, energy saving, and biodiversity enhancement). As can be seen from aerial images as well as from the ground, the site is very well contained from views to the countryside to the east and beyond and is well related to existing built form to its north and west.

The residential development of the site would compliment existing development on the opposite side of Catherington Lane and would have no detrimental effect on the wider character of the village. The proximity of the site to two listed buildings including 'The Farmhouse' (Grade 2 listed) directly to the north, and 'The Granary' (Grade 2 listed) directly to the west is acknowledged, and the sensitivities of these features have been taken into account in the site design process. We are currently preparing to submit a pre-application enquiry to the Council with the view of confirming that there are no technical



constraints to development and to gain Officer support for a proposed scheme of 11 units which we consider will make an efficient use of the site in line with NPPF policy 129 (part a).

A planning application will follow in due course (within the next few months) proposing a fully policy compliant scheme which we anticipate being determined favourably by the Council against the existing Local Plan. An indicative plan showing how the site might come forward for 11 new homes is shown in Figure 4 below:



Figure 4: Indicative scheme showing 11 houses on the site.

Proposed Amendments to Settlement Boundary

It was with some surprise that we noticed in the Regulation 18 documentation that there is an intention to amend the settlement boundary as we have been assuming the site would remain developable within the existing settlement boundary, or, that the boundary would be amended to extend the settlement boundary to include the entire site. A background paper to the draft Local Plan entitled '*Interim Settlement Policy Boundary Review Background Paper*' (January 2024) reviews all settlement boundary lines and shows proposed amendments to the established settlement boundary in Catherington. The paper somewhat surprisingly recommends that the boundary of the site (labelled No. 9) is amended to exclude most of our client's site. See Figure 5 below which is taken from the Council's boundary review background paper.



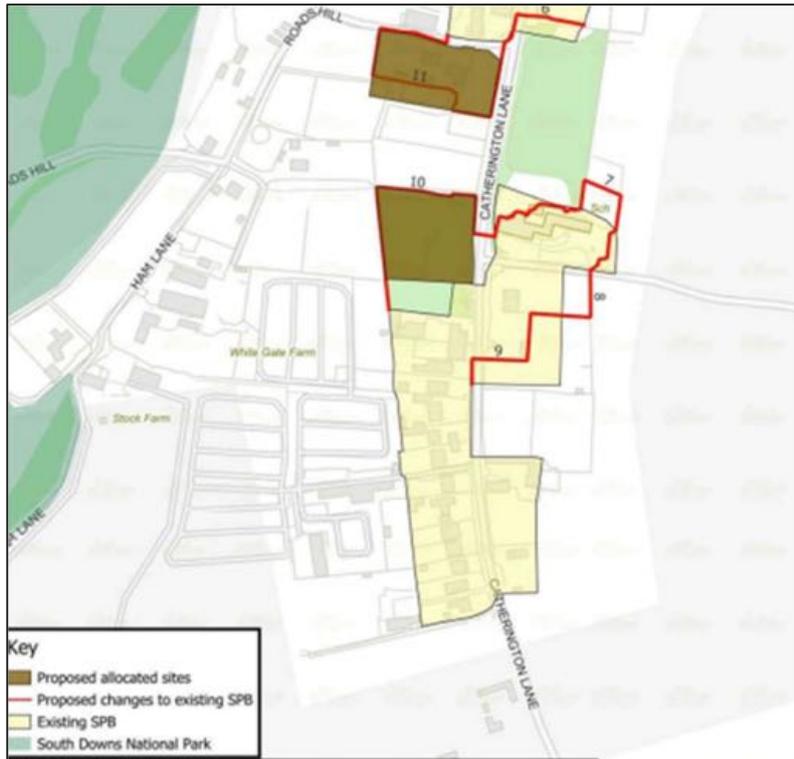


Figure 5: Extract from Settlement Policy Boundary Review Background Paper, Catherington Proposed Changes.

The Council's proposed amendment to the Settlement Policy Boundary for Catherington (labelled No. 9) has the effect of removing the majority of the site from the settlement boundary in favour of a new blanket 'Local Gap' allocation on a vast expanse of land to the east of Catherington Lane. The proposal to include the site as part of the Local Gap is not consistent with the aims of a Local Gap policy, owing to the physical attributes of the site including its existing built form, and its self-containment and mature screening. The draft Policies Maps show an amended built-up area boundary around the site, with the majority of the site covered by a new Local Gap policy (draft Policy NBE11). See Figure 6 below.



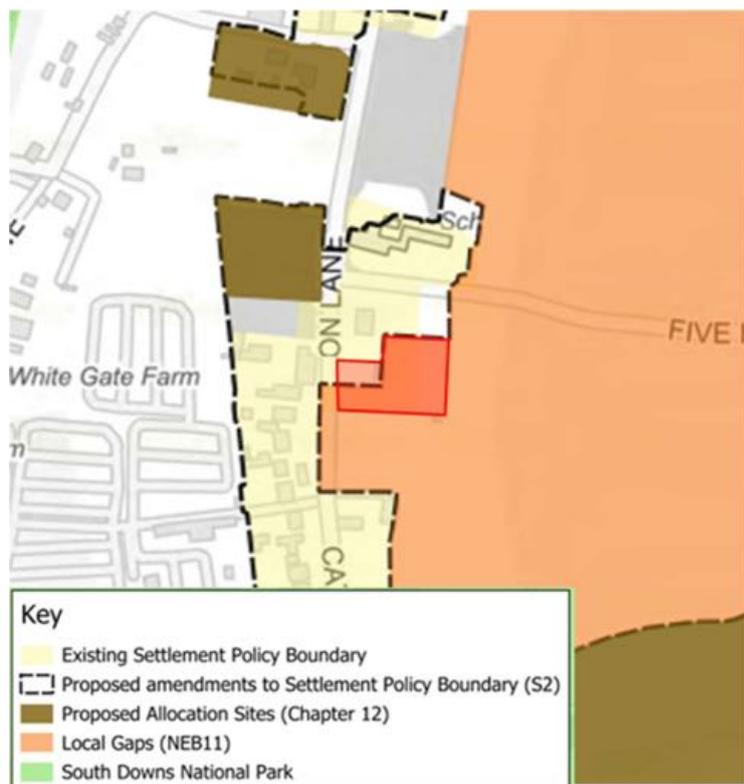


Figure 6: Extract from Draft Local Plan Review (Reg-18) Policies Maps – Catherington.

It is unclear why the Council's background paper considers it necessary to amend the settlement boundary in this location, and it appears that there is no clear justification for the site's effective removal. Paragraph 2.4 of the paper states that the purpose of settlement boundaries is to guide development to sustainable locations, and to seek to '*protect the countryside from the encroachment of land uses more characteristic of urban areas, conserve heritage assets, the natural environment and landscape value*'. We maintain that the enclosed nature of the site (surrounded by mature trees and hedgerows on its eastern and southern boundaries and built development to its north and west) means that its continued inclusion within the settlement boundary is appropriate and poses no risk to ensuring continued countryside protection, nor any harm to the natural environment or landscape character. A quick look on Google Earth (or similar) will show the substantial boundaries along the rear of the site which means the site is not read as part of the 'gap' and will be hidden from view. The settlement boundary amendment as proposed will unjustifiably prevent this site coming forward, which as described above is ready to be developed and is not constrained by any technical or environmental matters.

It is noted within the '*Interim Settlement Policy Boundary Review Background Paper*' (January 2024), that Principle 2 (part d) describes how settlement boundaries should include '*small scale development opportunities which would provide infill and rounding off opportunities that are physically, functionally and visually related to the existing urban area*'. We consider that our client's site accords with the aims of Principle 2 (d) and that the settlement boundary in this location should be reinstated to include the site as a whole (i.e. up to and including the eastern tree lined boundary). Page 79 of the '*Interim*



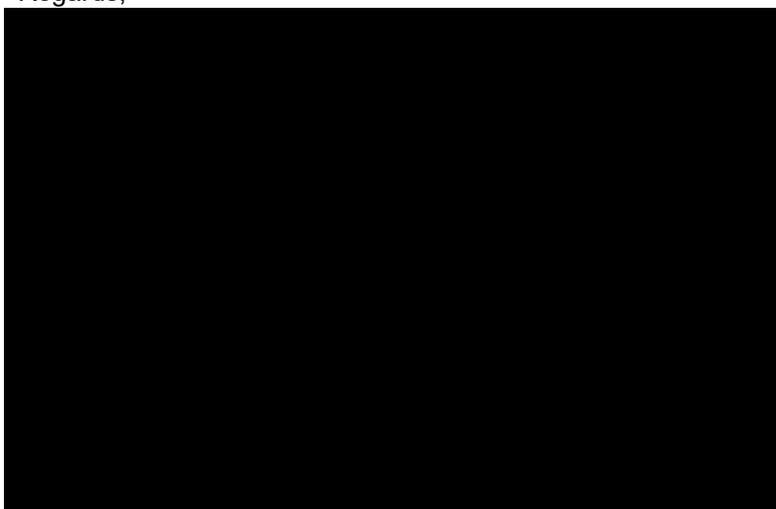
Settlement Policy Boundary Review Background Paper (January 2024) seeks to justify the proposed amendment to boundary No. 9 by considering it to be an *'area of open space on the edge of built form that should be excluded from the settlement'*. The Council believes this falls foul of Principle 3 (part a) which excludes areas of open space from settlement boundaries. We disagree with this justification on the basis that the site's contained nature means it is not 'open', and its future development would have no harmful effect on the openness of the wider countryside character beyond. We maintain that the site is more akin to a small-scale development opportunity as described in Principle 2(d) which is physically and functionally related to the existing urban form of the village rather than to the openness of the countryside to its east. We would urge you to look at the site again and trust that if you do, you will see it is well contained and can be developed without detrimental impact. The boundary would be best to be redrawn to the rear of the site.

Summary

SLR Consulting has prepared this representation on behalf of Fastnet Properties Ltd, in respect of proposed amendments to the Settlement Policy Boundary shown in the draft Policies Maps, pertaining to the settlement of Catherington.

For the reasons outlined in this representation, our client raises an **objection** to the proposed amendment to the settlement boundary at Catherington (labelled No. 9) owing to insufficient justification to replace a site which contains existing built form and relates strongly to the built character of the village, with a blanket Local Gap policy that is ineffective and unnecessary within this well-contained and sustainably located development site. As explained in this letter, the site is available now and there are no constraints to development, and we are anticipating a full planning application for housing on this site to be submitted in the coming months. It is our recommendation that the Settlement Boundary in this location is redrawn to include the entirety of our client's site (see Figure 1 above) and that the Local Gap policy allocation is reviewed to exclude the site to allow it to be developed to its full potential.

Regards,



APPENDIX 1: Site Photos



Image 1: Workshop



Image 2: Storage Container





Image 3: Remanence of Greenhouse



APPENDIX 2: Withdrawn Application (Submitted 2001)

