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From: Andrew Bailey [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 September 2021 13:00
To: Simon Davis <Simon.Davis@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: Application AL/113/21/OUT

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Dear Mr Davis

I am writing to **OBJECT** to planning application reference AL/113/21/OUT for the reasons set out below.

1. Principle of Development

The site is located outside the built up area boundary (BUAB) of both Eastergate and Aldingbourne.

Application documents refer to both villages and at times it appears that the applicants do not in fact know which village they are proposing to build in. However, notwithstanding the interchangeable references, the site is outside the BUAB – the mechanism through which the plan seeks to “strictly control development in the countryside” The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies SDSP2 and CSP1 of the adopted local plan.

The Aldingbourne Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) does however make provision for development outside the BUAB, subject to all the criteria set out in Policy EH1, being met. It is not considered that each of these can be met, for the reasons set out below. Therefore, the proposal is also contrary to Policy EH1 of the ANP.

2. Sustainable Development

In the event that the council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, it is understood that the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, as set out in the NPPF. The villages of Eastergate and Aldingbourne have seen significant residential development over recent years. However, this has not improved the sustainability of the general location. The footpath along Fontwell Avenue is narrow. Residents from the proposed development wanting to access the limited services at Fontwell would have to cross the A29 and walk alongside traffic travelling at 60mph - certainly not a safe or convenient prospect for many with young children or mobility issues. There is no cycle route along Fontwell Avenue, making cycling to services dangerous, unpleasant and realistically something which people would avoid in favour of the car. Although speed limits decrease towards Eastergate, there is still a lack of cycle provision, meaning that people will favour the car for even short journeys.

Planning application documents rely on the A29 realignment scheme as justification for the site’s sustainability; stating that pedestrian and cycle infrastructure will be provided as part of the scheme. However, the A29 realignment has not begun and will take considerable time to implement, meaning that the site cannot currently be considered a sustainable location.

Bus services have always been limited in this area and although they could become more frequent as the population increases, there is no guarantee that bus companies will choose to provide regular services. Barnham train station is 2 miles away, meaning that anyone wanting to walk would need to commit to a 4 mile round trip which again is unlikely to be an option for many people. The cycle route is fragmented with no provision along Fontwell Avenue.

Overall, residents would have limited options for sustainable travel. There are very few local services and facilities and those which do exist, are often oversubscribed. Vehicular travel to Chichester and Bognor would be inevitable, adding to the congestion already being experienced on the wider road network. The proposal does not meet criteria 5 of Policy EH1 of the ANP.

3. The Character of Level Mare Lane

The proposed frontage onto Level Mare Lane is entirely out of keeping with the rural character of the lane. The entrance to Level Mare Lane from Fontwell Avenue is narrow, with trees, hedges and fields on the left and the racecourse on the right. Beyond this the trees and hedges are interspersed allowing views through to open fields where horses graze and larger trees can be seen in the distance. This rural character is key in defining the special qualities of Level Mare Lane. As proposed, built development will encroach further into the lane having an urbanising effect and eroding the rural character which distinguishes it from Fontwell Avenue.

The indicative masterplan shows numerous, mature trees along the Level Mare Lane frontage. In reality, trees would take some time to establish and their size would be limited to allow the requisite visibility splays and light into the new dwellings. It is misleading to suggest the trees would provide significant screening and in reality, the frontage would be characterised by development rather than mature trees.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EH1 of the ANP which seeks to protect local landscape character (criteria 2 and 3).

4. Access, Highway Safety and Traffic Impacts

It is not appropriate to provide an access for 6 properties onto Level Mare Lane. The lane is extremely narrow and in most places, cars have to pull onto the verge to allow passing. There is no footpath or cycle route. Drivers already use the lane as a rat run to avoid delays on Fontwell Avenue. A new access for 6 houses would add to the difficulties already experienced and it is difficult to see how a safe access on such a narrow part of the lane where 60mph speed limit exists, can be achieved.

The transport assessment claims that reduced visibility splays can be provided due to lower speed limits. In addition, the vehicle tracking shows incredibly tight access and egress from the site, even for a standard car. Together with the inevitable loss of vegetation along the frontage, this part of the proposal represents a forced and contrived arrangement which conflicts with the characteristics of Level Mare Lane; namely a narrow, rural lane unsuitable for accommodating additional development.

In addition, residents of these 6 houses would be inclined to use their car due to the lack of footpath or cycle route along the lane. Residents from the wider development site would also contribute to the traffic along the lane and Denmans Lane, potentially adding to the number of drivers trying to seek a short cut. The proposal is therefore contrary to criteria 6 of Policy EH1 of the ANP. The overall lack of provision for improved pedestrian or cycle infrastructure does not meet the provisions of Policy GA2 of the ANP.

It is noted in the CMP that all construction traffic will be routed via Level Mare Lane. For the reasons set out above, the lane is entirely unsuitable for construction traffic given that it is too narrow for cars to pass comfortably, let alone large vehicles and lorries. Presumably the lane has been suggested as an alternative to Fontwell Avenue, to avoid disturbance to future residents in phase 1 who may occupy the properties before phase 2 begins. This in itself is not an appropriate reason for directing construction traffic along Level Mare Lane and in the event that the application is approved, an alternative route for construction traffic should be agreed.

5. Density

The proposed density of development is too high. Although it reflects that on the adjacent site, it does not reflect that of Level Mare Lane which is much lower and more appropriate to the rural character of the area. Again, this will have an urbanising effect detrimental to the rural qualities of the lane.

5. Ecology

Ecological assessments in support of the application note that the ecological value of the site itself is low and state that it can be improved with a variety of mitigation measures. This in itself is questionable. However, what the assessments fail to note is the importance of this area as part of a wider ecological network. The trees and hedgerows around the site, and the site itself, contribute to the network of green corridors which allow wildlife to move about. The cumulative impact of development along Fontwell Avenue and now proposed into Level Mare Lane, will have a detrimental effect on the local wildlife network. The proposal conflicts with the provisions of Policy EH6 of the ANP.

6. Precedent

There is a gradual encroachment into Level Mare Lane. The lane is characterised by single dwellings with good sized gardens; some larger than others. Should this application be permitted, there will undoubtedly be others which will become harder to resist. While it is disappointing to see the site at Northfields Cottages being developed, this site does relate more to Fontwell Avenue than Level Mare Lane. Although the main access is proposed off Fontwell Avenue, the site at Bayards has a strong relationship with Level Mare Lane and should be considered in this context. Should it be

permitted, it would set a dangerous precedence for further development along the lane, irreversibly changing the character of this rural location through development itself and the associated traffic impacts which cannot be accommodated on such a narrow lane.

I therefore strongly object to this application and request that it is refused for the reasons set out above.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Bailey

The Pottery

Level Mare Lane

Eastergate

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