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To Arun Planning
cc Mr Nick Gibb MP

Letter of Objection to planning application number P/6/17/OUT

I think that the people in Arun Planning should bear in mind that the objections being voiced by so many of the residents affected by the recent spate of planning applications, while appearing to be "nimby" concern matters which will affect newcomers to the area just as much as older residents. While deficiencies in the local infrastructure do affect us at the present time, if they are not rectified then all of us – new and old residents – will have to suffer the consequences of unsustainable building projects. It is fundamental to development that the groundwork (or infrastructure) is upgraded to a suitable standard before construction of dwellings begins to enable the development to function to the satisfaction of all residents when complete. In the case of Pagham there are deficiencies in practically all aspects of the infrastructure which require urgent attention to provide an acceptable standard for the present population and certainly require substantial upgrading to provide for any influx of new residents. The deficiencies in the infrastructure apply to all the sites for which planning permission has been recently applied and while section 106 monies may go some way to resolving issues it would not be available until houses have been sold and that would be "putting the cart before the horse" and not solving the problem of rectifying infrastructure deficiencies before building commences.

At the present time Karl Roberts has indicated that there could be a maximum of 800 houses built on the combined Hook Lane and Sefter Road sites. Add to this the proposed building of 400 houses on the site South of Summer lane and the 130 already approved for North of Summer Lane and behind the Inglenook and it makes a total of 1330 houses, although I understand it could be a few less if certain community buildings are built. Assuming 2.4 people per house, that would mean 3,180 more people and assuming two cars per household that would mean an extra 2650 cars. An increase in population from 6,100 to 9,280 would mean Pagham becoming an urban neighbourhood of Bognor Regis, rather than a village and so losing some of its identity. Small wonder then that there has been in recent weeks a proliferation of "SAVE PAGHAM" posters and banners around the streets of Pagham and Aldwick! Nor is it surprising that a petition objecting to building developments on the Hook Lane and Sefter Road Sites has attracted approximately 1,220 signatures from mainly local residents. When you consider that Pagham has a larger percentage of older people than the average in Arun, many of whom may be unable to express their objections publicly, then perhaps you might gather that there is a huge groundswell of opinion opposing the developments.

In view of the large number of problems developing sites such as Hook Lane it seems that there is a good case for ADC to reconsider previously rejected plans to develop Ford Airfield and, closer to home the land to the North of Chalcraft Lane. These sites do not suffer problems of high water table/ runoff to the same extent, have better access to major roads and are closer to places where employment opportunities exist or are being created. A major part of the government's allocation of housing in Arun could be accommodated in these two areas without imposing unreasonably large demands for housing on those parts of Pagham which are presently under threat by the three developments currently under consideration. Indeed the whole of Pagham's allocation of housing could be accommodated on the Morells Farm site with extra capacity for future expansion. The large scale of the possible Ford and Chalcraft Lane sites would present the opportunity for building new shopping centres, community facilities and small commercial/industrial areas which would provide employment opportunities for local people.

The National Planning Policy Framework, section 9 deals with the Green Belts and how and why the government attaches great importance to them. It seems to me that Pagham is in the perfect position to be on the Eastern edge of a green belt which would fulfil the following purposes as noted in the NPPF;

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Even if the developments under consideration are rejected this time they developers will try again and again to get planning permission and the establishment of such a Green Belt will define the limits of the urban area of Bognor Regis. The land now being considered lies in the strategic gap between Bognor and Chichester and although it should never be considered for development as any development would diminish the gap significantly, the establishment of a Green Belt would reinforce that concept. The land to the West of Pagham is mainly farmland and nature reserve and further building will encroach on these valuable resources. Historically Pagham is mentioned in the Domesday Book and there are a number of buildings of an historic nature worthy of preservation in a village style setting which would be lost forever in a sea of new housing.

The high quality of the soil in this part of the flood plain and the fact that between Hayling Island and Worthing there are a greater number of hours of sunshine than any other part of the UK means that this is the best part of the country for growing salad crops. I believe that although rated as grade 2 at the moment, re-evaluation is being undertaken, which when the light factor is taken into account will raise the quality to grade 1. In any case, as recent crop failures in Spain have shown, we need to be more self-sufficient in food production and as we leave the EU we have the opportunity to establish markets world-wide for the food we can produce. Global warming will render many parts of the world infertile and so the demand for prime farm land will grow in time. Building houses on such land will be "killing the goose that laid the golden egg" as, once built upon it will never come about that these building sites will ever revert to farmland again.

In 1999 a previous application to build on the Hook lane site was first rejected by Arun District Council and on appeal by the developer was also rejected by the inspector. One of the reasons which was given weight by the inspector was that by building houses on the site the residents of Hook Lane would lose the views across the fields and as far away as Chichester Cathedral. The minister's foreword to the NPPF says that sustainability means "ensuring better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations" so the inspector's decision to have regard for future generations was just as correct then as it would be now.

The two major industries here are tourism and agriculture. People come to Church farm to relax by the sea and enjoy the quiet village life that Pagham offers. Being on the edge of a vast urban sprawl with busy roads, shops and pubs will do nothing to encourage them to return. Nor will raw sewage, pumped into the Lagoon as a measure of last resort when back pressure builds up in the sewer pipes. Church Farm generates about £2,000,000 annually for the local economy and nothing should be done to prejudice this. Agriculture generates the major part of the wealth of Pagham and would also be the main source of employment in the area. Diminishing the arable area of the parish by building houses on it must therefore, in the absence of any alternative source of revenue diminish the local economy by a significant amount. Point 7 of the NPPF indicates that one of the three dimensions of sustainable development is the economic role, whereby we should be "ensuring sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places... to support growth and innovation. This is only possible if the rich farming land on the South Coast in places such as Hook Lane continues to be farmed in accordance with the best industry practices which are continually evolving. To do otherwise is in direct conflict with the principles laid down in the National Planning Policy Framework, which, as I understand it is the "bible" of planning policy guidelines.

All of the sites under consideration lie within 5Km of the Pagham Harbour nature reserve and because of their proximity special consideration must be given to how these developments will affect the reserve. I fail to see how the reserve is being protected when all the developments will drain or pump excess runoff water into Pagham Rife along with all the silt and contaminants which will inevitably be produced by human activity. Also when the capacity of the Summer Lane sewage plant is overwhelmed in periods of heavy rainfall it becomes necessary to discharge raw sewage into the rife – which also adds to the contamination of Pagham Harbour.

Another important issue addressed by section 7 of the NPPF deals with another of the three dimensions of sustainable development – an environmental role, which includes the need to move to a low carbon economy. This development fails to contribute to this ideal in two ways; by no longer growing vegetation on much of this site the carbon which could have been absorbed by the plants will no longer do so. Because employment opportunities locally are limited most employed people will need to travel to places such as Chichester, Portsmouth, Worthing or perhaps even further afield, most of them by cars which produce large amounts of carbon emissions. The state of the roads and ever increasing congestion means that these journeys will become longer and longer over time producing even more carbon

compounds. Another consideration of this increase in carbon emissions must be pollution and the associated health risks which an unhealthy environment brings. For all of the above reasons the developer's application should be rejected as it does not contribute to a low carbon economy as required by the NPPE.

The Neighbourhood Plan for Pagham, which was agreed to by ADC, but suspended by an inspector because of the need for more robust protection of the nature reserve, ruled out both the North of Hook Lane and Sefton Road sites as possible housing sites. As I understand it the parts of the neighbourhood Plan which are not in dispute must be given weight when making planning decisions.

I could go on to bore you further with the arguments that seem to crop up in most letters of objection such as;

- flooding of surrounding properties by water coming off the fields
- local doctor's surgery not coping as it is now
- local schools already at capacity
- threat to wildlife such as bats, slow worms, lizards and newts
- minimal police presence due to budget cuts
- St Richard's Hospital's ability to cater for a huge population increase
- ambulance response times increasing due to congestion
- and many more.

I just hope that you can resist pressure from building companies and the government to approve plans to build on unsuitable and unsustainable sites such as North of Hook Lane, Pagham and make the only sensible decision – reject them!!!

Albert Homer 7/2/2017

HOOK LANE, PAGHAM 12TH JUNE 2012



RESIDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT BUILDING A
CHURCH FARM, PAGHAM 18/11/2016



PAGHAM ROAD - TRACTOR & TRAILER OVER
CENTRE-LINE - CAR FORCED TO EDGE OF ROAD



HOOK LANE, PAGHAM 12TH JUNE 2012