

Planning Policy

From: chris.lyons <chris.lyons@wyg.com>
Sent: 13 September 2018 12:32
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Representation to Issues & Options consultation
Attachments: Issues & options submission - Sept '18 (final).pdf

Dear Sirs,

Please find a representation on the Issues & Options consultation attached on behalf of the Trustees of the Captain Busk Grandchildren Settlement. I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Chris Lyons
 Director - Planning

WYG

Tel: +44 (0)202 200 2000
Mob: +44 (0)779 120 9200

www.wyg.com

WYG Environment Planning Transport Limited. Registered in England number: 3050297.

Registered Office:

2UJ. VAT No: 431-0326-08.



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**ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION FOR THE NEXT
LOCAL PLAN**

Test Valley Borough Council

**Response on behalf of the Trustees of the Captain Busk
Grandchildren Settlement**

September 2018



Document Control

Project: Land at Houghton
Client: Trustees of the Captain Busk Grandchildren Settlement
Job Number: HP12007-A075180

Document Checking:

Prepared by: Dr Chris Lyons	Signed: CL
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Checked by: MA	Signed: MA
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Issue	Date	Status
1	04/09/2018	Draft
2	13/09/2018	FINAL



1. WYG has been instructed by the Trustees of the Captain Busk Grandchildren Settlement to respond to the Test Valley Borough Council 'Issue and Options Consultation for the next Local Plan', July 2018. The document is called 'Our Future – How do we Plan for it?'
2. This response should be read alongside the WYG detailed Representations on the Test Valley Borough Council Strategic Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) document from October 2017 that sets out why the sites at 'Land to the West of Rose Cottage' and 'Land to the North of Stevens Drove' are good sites for development. However, this response will focus on the higher-level questions raised in the consultation document about strategic issues and does not rehearse the site-specific arguments that have been set out to demonstrate the sites are suitable, sustainable, can be delivered, and are available.
3. We believe that the focus within the Northern Test Valley Housing Market Area to deliver 91% of the dwellings in the area around Andover with only 9% in the Rural area is the wrong approach and unbalanced. While Andover would be expected to take some housing as the main settlement in the north, it is wrong to leave the other settlements with little realistic ability to grow and become more sustainable. If the rural villages are left without an injection of new housing, then the populations will continue to grow older and the shops and facilities that they have will become unviable and shut. In turn, this will lead to families and younger people not wanting to move into areas that have no facilities and are only commuting villages and is a downward spiral.
4. The Rural Coalition (includes membership by Country Land and Business Association, National Farmers Union, National Housing Federation, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Royal Town Planning Institute, and Town and Country Planning Association, amongst others) has consistently highlighted this problem. Their four policy priorities are¹:

> A meaningful increase in the delivery of affordable housing in villages and small towns;

¹ <http://acre.org.uk/cms/resources/rural-coalition-evidence-base-2017-low-res.pdf>



- > Proper recognition of rural service delivery challenges and services designed to meet rural needs;
 - > Long-term support for social action, to help communities become more resilient; and
 - > Business support and infrastructure which reaches rural areas, so the rural economy can grow and create quality jobs.
5. They have highlighted that housing is a considerable problem with little progress being made to provide housing for older people in rural communities and not enough housing that is affordable being provided on small sites in rural villages. Rural areas tend to have even more expensive houses while the local population that work in rural areas tend to be paid relatively low wages, making the earnings to purchase price ratio even worse. There is a clear recognised need for more housing of all types and tenures to be provided in rural villages to address these concerns.
6. The adopted Local Plan 2011-2029 identified that Stockbridge is an important local centre for neighbouring rural communities and is identified as the third most important centre for the local economy (after Andover and Romsey). It is considered that Stockbridge needs a large increase in the numbers of dwellings to sustain it going forwards, and Houghton, as one of those smaller communities that rely on Stockbridge for many facilities, also needs more development (obviously on a smaller scale) to support its local community.
7. The current Houghton Parish profile states the population is only 435 (in 200 households) and is expected to fall with those aged over 65 expected to rise to 25% of residents by 2021. Only 27% of households have dependent children in them and house prices have risen almost 18% in the last five years to £788,594 (2016) with North Houghton average house prices now over £1,000,000. Only half (53%) of the properties are in the lower end of the property market (Bands A-E) compared to a Test Valley average of 83% falling into this category. This all illustrates that living in Houghton is practically impossible for anyone looking to stay in the area after moving out of the family home or move into the area, unless they are already at the upper end of the financial bracket. This does not make for an inclusive community and



local shops and facilities will suffer from the lack of new people as the population ages. Nearby facilities include the café at Houghton Lodge, the Boot Inn, the village hall, and the bus service to Andover and Stockbridge itself acts as a hub to the surrounding communities and so would also be affected if no new people are attracted to the area.

8. It is essential that new families and individuals are encouraged into the area and into the surrounding villages around Stockbridge, such as Houghton, to support the local shops and facilities, so they remain viable. There are a good variety of shops, pubs, services, and facilities in existence but as the Issues & Options document recognises, the pressure from on-line shopping is growing and new customers are needed to keep them open.
9. The Issues & Options document identifies these concerns and accepts that the inability for people to afford their own home is a major problem (para. 3.6) and it has been demonstrated above that this is an even bigger problem in the rural areas.
10. It is considered that the current approach as set out in para. 5.9 of the Issues & Options document to focus on large sites in Andover and Romsey does not meet the upcoming challenges as set out later in the same paragraph. This points out that national planning policy seeks to distribute development to reduce the need to travel, that development needs to promote and retain existing services, and support rural areas. It is not clear how focusing on Andover so much and not supporting a better distribution of housing throughout the area, including some development in the rural villages, will provide the support mentioned for rural areas or retaining their facilities. This point is expanded on in paras. 5.12 - 5.14 of the Issues & Options where it specifically accepts that those in rural villages and settlements rely on the market towns and they are becoming increasingly unaffordable for families and young people and that they lack downsizing opportunities through lack of supply. It points out how this leads to unbalanced communities and can affect services, facilities, employment and housing.
11. The current local plan strategy of relying on community led planning and rural exception sites to meet these needs in rural communities is clearly not addressing this issue in any significant way and a step change is necessary. It is understood that there are currently no 'made' Neighbourhood Plans in the Borough and so there will not be (m)any sites coming forward



from the community in the foreseeable future and only 9 dwellings have been delivered under the rural exception sites policy in the last 5 years. This scale of 'support' for rural communities clearly is not sufficient to address these challenges.

12. The NPPF recognises this point clearly and states:

"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby." (paragraph 78 of NPPF, 2018).

13. This perfectly encapsulates the argument for expanding the population at Houghton to support local services both within the settlement itself, but also in supporting Stockbridge, which relies on the neighbouring settlements to support it.

14. Therefore, for the reasons stated above, and even reflected in the Issues & Options documents itself, it is considered that a new approach is needed if the rural villages are going to obtain the support they need to grow and thrive.

15. For all the reasons set out above, we believe that the answer to **questions 7 & 8** are that there should be a new approach that supports significant new development in the rural villages rather than continuing the current approach of hoping that community led planning and rural exception sites will meet their needs, as there is no evidence that will happen. Larger sites need to be allocated in the villages and the settlement boundaries need to be increased to allow the villages to grow and remain sustainable.

16. In response to **question 9**, settlement boundaries need to be reconsidered and should be drawn wider around rural villages to ensure land is available for new housing. The process of how to do this is debatable but is probably best not just done by allocating pro-rata numbers as that is arbitrary. It seems more sensible and in line with the NPPF that the boundaries should be drawn around sites that are the best in planning terms and meet the most planning



aims and the local authority should do this as part of the new local plan process. This would allow public debate about the best location for the settlement boundary and ensure that only genuine sites come forwards. There should be particular focus given to ensuring sites are shown to be available for development and will actually deliver the necessary housing. The status quo of keeping settlements exactly as they are should not be an option.

17. For a rural village like Houghton, this process was done previously when the settlement boundary was redrawn for the revised local plan in 2013 and included additional land to the north of the village (and included Land to the West of Rose Cottage). It is not understood why this was not continued as it set a sensible way forward for more housing to be achieved. It is also considered that the field North of Stevens Drove would 'finish off' the settlement and give a more consistent boundary along the west of the village.

Planning Policy

From: chris.lyons
Sent: 14 September 2018 13:01
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Additional representation to Issues & Options consultation
Attachments: Issues & options further submission - Sept '18 (final).pdf

Dear Sirs,

Please find an additional representation to the Issues & Options consultation on behalf of the Trustees of the Captain Busk Grandchildren Settlement. I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt.

Yours faithfully,

Director - Planning

WYG

Tel:

Mob:

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Document Checking:

Prepared by: Dr Chris Lyons	Signed: CL
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Issue	Date	Status
1	14/09/2018	Final



1. WYG has been instructed by the Trustees of the Captain Busk Grandchildren Settlement to submit a further response to the Test Valley Borough Council 'Issue and Options Consultation for the next Local Plan', July 2018. The document is called 'Our Future – How do we Plan for it?' This is in addition to our original submission.
2. This response focuses on the Houghton Housing Needs Survey carried out in August 2018 by Action Hampshire - currently available on the Parish Council website for the 4th September 2018 meeting at this link: <http://www.houghtonparishcouncil.org/community/houghton-parish-council-13622/meeting-agendas-201718/>
3. The survey underpins the points that we have been making where 40% of respondents (or a family member) are planning to move away and the main reason given was the need for a smaller home. The second reason is also relevant as 36% listed 'poor access to shops and services' as a key reason for looking to move which supports our argument that more development is needed to ensure the shops and services are viable. Table 17 on p.12 of the survey then clarifies that the top 4 reasons for people struggling to move are:
 - i. Lack of suitable properties in the area (73%)
 - ii. Lack of properties available with the number of bedrooms required (42%)
 - iii. Affordability (38%)
 - iv. Unable to afford accommodation with sufficient bedrooms to meet needs (35%)
4. Section 3 of the survey identifies that those with family members wishing to move out are primarily children (95%) who want to move in the next 5 years (69%) and the main reason is to start their first home (84%). The majority want to stay in the area of Houghton or surrounding Parishes. All of those seeking to buy a house are looking at the price range below £350,000.
5. The survey backs up the points that we have been making that Houghton needs more housing to meet the existing demand for smaller homes which just are not available in the area. More houses are needed with 2-3 bedrooms to allow the larger houses that are over occupied to be freed up by those stating in the survey that they wish to downsize. In the survey, 60% of



respondents lived in a house with 4 or more bedrooms and the main desire was for a three-bedroom dwelling. There is a clear demand for more smaller dwellings to be provided to meet the needs of existing residents.

6. The second group of people looking for new homes are children who want to stay in the area but cannot find suitable properties to move to as they are too big and therefore too expensive. It is clear that the housing stock needs to be added to if any attempt is to be made to seek to address these issues as the current stock is too small and too expensive for meeting these needs.