

Responder no.:**REDACTED COMMENTS*****Disclaimer:***

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Some editorial amendments or deletions have been made and in some case this includes whole sections of submitted documents including sections of prefaces, context and/or background information, (particularly provided by consultants) has been removed. This has been done purely in an attempt to make the document more readable, but no actual feedback on the NDP has been removed.

Please note that spellings and/or typos and irregular spacings are likely to be a result of the compiling (copy and paste or typing).

If you would like to check your own feedback or have any queries with regards to this document, please email clerk@kingsomborne-pc.gov.uk.

FEEDBACK STARTS BELOW:

We recognise that the preparation of the NDP represents an enormous input by various individuals and Steering Groups; we thank them for their dedication and effort to this process.

The NDP already casts doubt on the ability of the drainage authorities to support additional development without further investment. Concern about the ingress of surface water into the drainage systems in times of high groundwater and rainfall remains a fear.

King's Somborne is an attractive settlement with a high quality environmental setting. The heritage features of its past 'life' remain evident in the number and quality of its listed buildings, its historic road layout and the way the agricultural landscape 'slips' into the village. It has a reasonable base level of local facilities; but is significantly deficient in public transport connections; the medical facilities are some distance away (and not accessible to all because of the limited bus services). Children have to travel some distance to secondary schools and tertiary education. The area is subject to increasing frequency of flooding, which significantly constrains the opportunities for new housing along the valley bottom.

'To preserve the field between Horsebridge and Romsey Road...' This site was never submitted for assessment as a potential development opportunity because of the Parish Council's predetermined ideology to preserve the gap between King's Somborne and Horsebridge. However, the Romsey road frontage demonstrates a continually developed line of dwellings from the village centre all the way to Horsebridge Road. This site should have been analysed as part of the plan process as it has less significance for flooding, and could have less visual impact on the landscape, if only to demonstrate that a full and fair selection of sites had been considered. There is potential opportunity to provide safe access into the site from Horsebridge Road (rather than the Romsey Road) to serve a modest development scheme.

Clarity: The plan is very difficult to navigate, with incidences of repetition between the main text and Appendices. There is a great volume of supporting information which needs to be consolidated and presented into a simpler document. Ultimately users of the documents are primarily interested in reviewing how the site allocations were arrived at and assessed and their relative priority. This is not easy in the way the document is currently presented. We consider that the document requires considerable redrafting to clarify and condense the information to a more easily assimilated form.

This policy is unclear as to whether this policy applies to all development or just residential proposals? Such a requirement is not normally asked for, except in the cases of very large or prominent developments. A specific landscape study for every development application regardless of scale or impact is a heavy handed requirement, in addition to the Design and Access Statement which is already required on all planning applications.

KS5 - This site is not a realistic contender for development because it would require access off Muss Lane. In the late 1990's Berkeley Homes proposed a development of 8 houses affecting backland between Muss Lane and Riverside Green showing Muss Lane as its access. This was unacceptable to the Highway Authority due to the narrow width of the lane, especially at the 'pinch point' at the bottom of Muss lane adjacent to Martins stores, where there is restricted visibility. Martins Stores and the opposing cottage are significant listed features in the conservation area, any increase in traffic generation at this point would compromise the continued satisfactory preservation of those buildings. As a result the development was split with only 2 houses being served by Muss Lane, 2 off Winchester Road via an existing access, and the remaining 4 from Riverside Green. Highway circumstances have not changed since that date, indeed local traffic generation continues to increase irrespective of new development. Occupiers of new houses now tend to have more cars per dwelling than 18 years ago, making the likely impact of this development site even more problematic. Alternative access from New Lane would be overlong and costly, New Lane is similarly unsuitable to accommodate additional traffic. The junction with A3057 is not suitable for additional use without improvement. Visibility at its junction with Winchester Road is constrained. The change in levels between KS5 and properties in Riverside Green to the south would mean that any new housing in this location would be overbearing on adjacent dwellings without the creation of a deep landscape buffer. Being on the north side of existing housing with small gardens it is also likely to have a significant environmental effect on their outlook.

This policy is rather clumsily drafted, but it requires all development sites to be located 'generally below the 40m contour line'. As a result of this constraint, most of the recommended site allocations fall within the areas within a high risk flood zone, and which have previously been significantly affected by flooding.

Overall we believe that additional research is required into the Facilities and Infrastructure elements of the NDP. More information is required about educational forecasts and expectations, further liaison with the utility providers to establish whether additional development can be accommodated within the existing framework of services. Is perhaps additional population required to support existing facilities?

The Parish Plan needs to examine the services which are provided to the village, in the way of education, medical facilities, community services and shopping viability to see whether we need additional housing to support the continuation of a vibrant village life and identify where additional development would enhance the social, economic and environmental functions of the community. No evaluation of education services have been made, nor assessment of the needs for the elderly. We are fortunate to have voluntary organisations which plug the gaps in such services, but they may not be able to support much increase in demand.

This should not to apply to small scale extensions and minor developments etc. The Policy needs to define precisely which developments are affected, and where exceptions might be made.

Does this need to be cited as a policy, No free standing development is likely to be permitted outside the settlement boundary in the context of existing TVBC Local Plan policies.' Built up landscape' is an inappropriate expression in planning terms.

The Test Valley Borough Local Plan intends that most of the wider housing growth for this area should be directed to Andover in the north and Romsey in the south. There are detailed allocations to accommodate this growth. This document indicates a provision for 36 homes per year to be built in the rural areas over the plan period. There are many villages within Test Valley, which mean that this figure could easily be accommodated by infill development shared amongst all the northern Rural Villages of the Borough.

The Action Hampshire Housing Needs Survey does not support the need for additional affordable housing.

Whilst it is recognised that nationally more provision needs to be made for affordable housing throughout the nation to accommodate young people and families, King's Somborne may not be an ideal location to expand supply.

The LPA may consider using planning powers to impose Article 4 Directions to remove Permitted Development Rights (PDR) to build extensions, erect fences and small buildings etc. Current Government Policy does not however favour such restrictions on a blanket area neither by restricting PD Rights on individual dwellings through conditions attached to the planning approval.

SHELLA 81 - This plot has no development potential whatsoever. Currently grazed by horses the land is significantly above the road level, is very wet and subject to springs which run into the road, draining across into the ford. This part of Winchester Road is very prone to flooding in wet weather from run-off from the field, when Tanners Pond and the Borne Stream are in spate. It marks the start of the area which floods through towards the heart of the village. The site is very narrow at its north east corner; it could only accommodate a ribbon of development. Its highway frontage is bordered by a high rural hedgerow, demarcating a blind bend where traffic approaches the village at speed. Visibility at the existing gate is very limited, To improve sight lines at any point would necessitate the wholesale removal of the boundary hedge, with incumbent disbenefits to the rural approach to the village, contrary to the environmental policies set out in the opening part of the plan. Significant level differences between the road and the site would make built development very prominent and obtrusive to the outlook and setting of Manor Farmhouse and Manor Barn opposite; both Listed Buildings.

It would be unwise to promote development along the river floor without certainty about these issues and flood risk data.

The Landscape and Environment Policies highlight the 'nucleated settlement' of King's Somborne, where 'The roads and spaces between built forms contribute significantly to its character.' This character evaluation also talks about the views to ridgelines being significant features, yet several of the allocated sites, KS3, KS6 and SHELLA 81 immediately breach these objectives and are probably the last few 'important open gaps' along the valley bottom where this now occurs

The issue is not how many houses we need, but how many the village can sustainably accommodate without adversely affecting its character, overloading existing services and exacerbating the high level of traffic through the village; particularly through pinch points at the entry and exit to the village on Romsey Road. Because of the transport limitations of the area and the lack of employment opportunities, our village is not a sustainable location for expansion.

Publicity: At the date of publication of the draft NDP no information about public consultation meetings had been put forward. It would have been helpful to galvanise public interest awareness and debate if there had been more publicity at the initial release of the draft NDP. This could have been more effectively by leafleting, as well as using social media to announce the opening of the public consultation period; opening with an explanatory session, then indicating opportunities for further discussion. The earlier meetings were not greatly attended, probably due to the short notice period. Finally the last two meetings are too close to the deadline for clarification prior to submission of comments.

We do not believe that phasing of the development sites is practicable within the existing planning legal framework. It is normally only effective where there is an infrastructure deficiency constraining development. Once an acceptable scheme for any of the various selected sites is put forward, it will be impossible to resist development on phasing grounds. Clearly market demand in a desirable location would 'devour' all the proposed development options set out in the plan at the earliest opportunity, irrespective of the consequences for sustainability or phasing.

KS7 SHELLA 80 (A & B) - This site has adverse implications for the setting of the listed buildings which front Winchester Road. There is no obvious acceptable access from Winchester Road, apart from via the paddock adjacent to Spencers Farmhouse and Cottage. This area lies alongside the river where the width is very narrow. It is normally amongst the first areas to flood. The paddock tends to act as a holding area for surface water when groundwater is high. It is noted that in many villages along the Test Valley there is a tendency not to find old buildings sited in the areas which flood. When water levels are high it is interesting to see historic timber framed buildings sitting unaffected when nearby modern properties are surrounded by water. We would suggest that the reason why this paddock has historically remained undeveloped is because of its recurrent tendency to flood. To propose development of this site and the land behind would seriously increase flood risk for existing houses along Winchester Road which have experienced a number of significant floods in recent years, most recently in 2014. The promotion of sites along this part of Winchester Road close to the stream is irresponsible, (and where there is no capacity to widen the river to increase the flow) especially in the context of global warming with its projected increase in extreme weather patterns. Ground water levels continue to rise, indeed this year the stream is flowing significantly later than normal.

There should be an early reference in the NDP to the time period it is designed to cover. We are uncertain as to the status of the NDP within the Planning Policy statutory framework.

KS6 - This site has been consistently excluded from the settlement boundary but included within the Conservation area in the TVBC Planning policy framework. It is designated as an important open gap in all the existing adopted Borough Plan policies. The importance of such characteristics is acknowledged in the preface to the NDP Environment Policies i.e. 'The roads and spaces between built forms contribute significantly to the character' together with the references to the importance of 'Trees typical at the break in slope between the valley bottom and sides' and 'Views towards ridgelines'. This site is probably the only open site within the village where these three characteristics still apply. This land contributes to the 'special character' because it extends into the countryside, up to a line of very significant mature trees, which the site assessment analysis fails to acknowledge. This seems to be as relevant today as when its designation was first defined. In addition, this land serves an important role to define and enhance the setting of the two adjacent historic listed buildings, Cruck Cottage and Prospect House, together with Butchers End which is opposite the site. (Please also note that Butchers End is not identified as a Listed Building on the NDP Map. There are a number of inaccuracies in the background analysis to this site, known as Land South of Riverside Green, which have already been passed on to the Parish Clerk, but we reiterate here.

The problem in this area is not caused just by floodwater from the stream, but from generally high groundwater levels; also from springs which emerge from the hillside along the south side of Winchester Road and indeed spurt up from within Winchester Road itself. To concentrate the lion's share of new development within this area as the plan suggests, will subject many more people to a higher risk of flooding.

We have serious reservations about the way housing needs have been assessed for the village. The Housing Needs survey is not a statistically sound way of achieving a justifiable estimate of the need for new development; more a subjective or anecdotal 'wish list'. For example the report maintains that many people are looking for smaller accommodation to 'downsize'. Over the past two years in particular, several smaller house types in the centre of the community have remained vacant and for sale; yet only one has now been sold.

At the public meeting strong emphasis was placed on installing sustainable drainage systems, incorporating holding tanks to retain water in times of high rainfall, to address the issue. However the frequency of significant flooding in this village is increasing. If we 'fill these open areas' up with foundations for new buildings, hard road surfaces and underground storage tanks, we will be removing the very areas for the groundwater to be naturally absorbed, thereby increasing and expanding the risks for existing properties in the vicinity. It will also increase the surface water run-off from roofs and hard surfaces. Moreover underground storage tanks cannot deal with the springs which cause so much of the problem.

In particular, Winchester Road, Old Vicarage Lane and Muss Lane seem to be the focus for the majority of the possible land releases, i.e. KS5, KS6, SHELLA 81, KS7. The Parish Council will recall that the road was badly flooded for a considerable period in 2014 and many houses alongside were affected by groundwater, many more were sandbagged and afflicted by the dreaded prospect of fast approaching floodwater, saved only by installing pumps to keep the water at bay. The road was closed for several weeks and many elderly and frail people could not get out of the village. Residents of this part of the village had to park our cars out of the village away from our homes. It is a situation that none of us wish to countenance again.

We believe this policy should be comprehensively reviewed by flood risk consultants because, the implementation of such a policy in the area of Winchester Road and its side streets and lanes, will afford serious concern to neighbouring residents, increased costs of insurance and possibly difficulties in obtaining mortgages.

This policy also seeks to use restrictive covenants to maintain local character and to prevent new development 'promoting an urban feel'. When developing at the densities proposed in the NDP of above 30 dwellings per hectare, there will inevitably be an urban character about those schemes. Some of the land releases proposed are capable of accommodating more than 11-14 units and will inevitably be developed to the maximum to secure a realistic capital return on the initial land costs. The only effective way the character of this settlement can be secured is by releasing only very small parcels of land.

KS3 - This area was included in the Conservation Area Review because of the contribution it makes as open land to the character of this part of the village. It incorporates a well used public footpath, to create a circular path from Froghole up to How Park and down via Cow Drove Hill. This a delightful rural walk revealing views down into the village and along the valley which would be lost should development be put forward. The conditions which required its inclusion into the Conservation Area in 1987 are even more significant today. Vehicular access to this site is poor. There is no possibility of access from Winchester Road, where the existing private drive and shared public footpath are very narrow. Opportunity to enhance visibility at the junction is seriously compromised by the adjacent development, especially the presence of a listed building adjacent to the entrance. Access from Cow Drove Hill is unlikely to be acceptable to the Highway Authority because of its difficult junction with the A3057. We would support the concerns of nearby people about the enhanced flooding risks associated such a proposal.

This refers to the requirement for public open spaces to be provided in developments above 5 units. Does this provision conform with statutory requirements? Who will manage these areas? It is noted that in some of the most recent housing schemes within the village, such areas are not actively used as childrens' playspace or for visual amenity, particularly in the public rented sector. Without predetermined management schemes, the so-called amenity areas become overgrown and left as dumping grounds. Such a policy must incorporate proposals for taking over and managing open spaces before the development is approved.

1. There has never been any previous planning permission granted for development of this site.
2. There has never been an existing house on the site, said to have been demolished as part of that alleged consent.

Whilst sometimes a desirable objective, this type of policy restriction is not permissible. Planning controls cannot require a developer to impose restrictive covenants of this nature. They may only be legally binding if the landowner retains adjacent land which would benefit from the covenant.

The reference to the allotments as a protected LAG; we now hear that the Diocese intends to sell the allotment land. Although designated as a LAG, this land has considerable potential for development, it is arguably the most appropriate location for new housing within the centre of the village. It has no adverse flooding implications and good access. Naturally the long heritage of using this land for allotments, makes this is a very unpopular suggestion, but we believe the site should be fully evaluated as part of the plan process. Any future development would have to provide adequate replacement land for allotment holders nearby. Such alternative land should be properly prepared for their use.

3. There has never been an archaeological investigation of the site.

Surely some reference should be made in this policy to the legal obligation in planning statute not only to 'conserve' but also 'to enhance' the appearance of the conservation area.

It is noted that Kings Somborne Parish has an above-average level of affordable social housing and public rented housing compared with other villages in Test Valley, and in the county as a whole. It is not uncommon for village houses to be offered to people without a village connection, to maintain occupancy. This can subsequently present problems for new tenants on modest incomes, who are unable to find work locally. This suggests that it is not appropriate to maintain or expand the current ratio of public sector housing for the immediate future. It should however incorporate provision for regular review, to identify when a specific need can be supported; because this area is not well serviced for employment opportunities or transport facilities to work elsewhere.

All those issues relate to land to the North of Winchester Road, which was eventually developed by Berkeley homes at the end of the 1990s and where an archaeological investigation did take place prior to development. This information has been verified by Borough Council and their online application records confirm that there is no planning history on the site. We also have serious reservations about the highway investigations in relation to this site. Any access to serve development in this location would have to be sited away from Cruck Cottage to secure sight lines, in so doing it would create a virtual crossroad junction with Riverside Green. Historically, the Highway has not been keen to permit junctions within 40 metres of an existing access. We are therefore uncertain as to whether the Highway Authority has been consulted on this and several of the other sites. We suspect the site has been selected because it has remained undeveloped and untidy for some years. This is not a justifiable reason for conceding to landowners' desire for development. Planning Case Law is strong on resisting pressure due to poor land management, because it could be seen to encourage dereliction. This is not a meaningful policy, It is uncertain as to whether this objective can be achieved through the planning application process. It is unlikely that the introduction of smart technology will reduce travel need to any great degree. Perhaps not an issue which the NDP can realistically affect.