

Highgrove 301 dwellings

<https://publicaccess.chichester.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QP1HZXERMHX00&activeTab=summary>

Construction of 301 dwellings (including 90 affordable dwellings -30%), community hall, public open space, associated works and 2 no. access from the A259 (one temporary for construction). Land North of Highgrove Farm, Main Road Bosham West Sussex.

NOTE: The Bosham Association with a membership of some 400 local residents has seen and considered. 119 documents lodged on the CDC website (24/03/2021). We also note that the date for the receipt of objections is listed as 08/04/2021 which we consider to be an inadequate period for local people to consider and properly respond to a proposal which threatens to change for ever the character of our village community.

Overall:

This proposal would increase the size of the Bosham settlement by 25% without any additional infrastructure being provided, thus breaching a fundamental commitment of the Conservative Party 2019 General Election Manifesto. The 2011 Census shows us to have a population of 2900. This housing estate adds about 1,000 to the population with no additional public infrastructure provision. This comes on top of other developments in the village and the construction and commissioning of St Wilfrid's Hospice since the last census, again without any expansion of infrastructure within the parish. The harmful impact of this proposed development to the life of the village and its natural setting will have irrevocable and long-lasting consequences.

Loss of Farm Land:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states clearly that a major consideration should be "the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land" (para 170.b). The NPPF glossary defines "best and most versatile agricultural land" as "Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification." The majority of the Highgrove site is grade 1, the remainder is grade 2. This methodology arose in the 1940s when the nation's food supplies were threatened by global developments. Taking this precious agricultural land out of production for ever is not a sustainable course of action in era threatened by lack of food security.

Sewerage:

The Harts Farm Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW) which is operated by Southern Water (SW) had a spare capacity of 400 in 2014. Since then 100 new connections with Bosham Hoe and Smugglers Lane coming on grid. Add to which the Hospice which equates about 30 new households. Other windfall developments have been 'two-for-one' replacement buildings and garden grabbing estimated at another 30 households. There have been other new connections further up the Wastewater Catchment area. Newer or replacement houses are equipped with more bathrooms and Covid/post-covid has meant there are far higher occupancy rates than hitherto. between 26th March and 20th October 2020, the Bosham Association (BA) received 88 notification emails from SW of discharges into Chichester or Langstone harbours. The BA believe that this is likely to be understated as SW have said the system wasn't working properly. On the 8th October Tom Gallaher from SW sent an email saying they were switching off the automatic notification system as it wasn't working well enough, so now one has to go online to check and we cannot easily summarise what has happened. These licensed discharges are no longer restricted to periods of prolonged and intensive rainfall, which had been their original justification. Connecting Highgrove to the Apuldram WwTW) instead would refocus the pollution problem further up the harbour and exacerbate an already high nitrate sensitivity that has caused Natural England to alert CDC to the deterioration of the SSSI in that location.

The Nitrates Budget:

That submitted in the application has clearly not been checked viz it shows a 2form entry primary school **and** asserts that it will not add people to the parish – the existing single form entry school already has many children from outside the parish. This is just lazy and shows a lack of seriousness to this challenge. The field has not been nutrient enriched for a number of years and the addition of a housing estate would send the budget hugely into surplus. During wet winters, nitrate levels are considerably higher at the tops of the channels and in the case of Fishbourne Channel 600% higher than samples taken near to the Harbour entrance. This points to significant inputs from storm discharging WWTW's, as well as inputs from the streams, which would include agricultural run-off. Excessive nitrates lead to the growth of macroalgal weed and because of this the Harbour is classed as eutrophic. Whichever WWTW SW decides to connect Highgrove to, the result is an exacerbation of the problems identified in the 2020 *Natural England Research Report, Number 090*.

The nitrates impact upon the SSSI has already been noted by Natural England. The NPPF states “development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;” (Para 175.b) The condition for granting consent in this case has not been met.

Sustainable Drainage System:

The application shows the inclusion of a number of landscaped swales. However, no mention is made in this application of the necessity for the system to be actively pumped to be effective. It is worth recalling that the developers had in their possession a report (Land at Highgrove Farm, Main Road, Bosham Flood Risk Assessment Aug 2014 for Barratt Homes by www.paulbashamassociates). Among its conclusion were the following:

“8.6 The Landmark Flood Data shows that there is the possibility of a very high water table. This was borne out by a site visit, where standing water was observed in the south-west corner. Considering this, infiltration is unlikely to be suitable for draining the site.

8.7 Given that infiltration is unlikely to be suitable, a drainage strategy has been prepared based on positively draining all hard-surfaced areas, restricting the outflow to greenfield run-off rates, and attenuating the excess water within oversized pipes, a cellular storage system with the central area of POS, and a balancing pond in the south-west corner. Due to the level nature of the site, surface water has to be pumped from the cellular storage system to the remainder of the system further south.

8.8 Outfalls into the ditch will be restricted via Hydrobrakes to existing greenfield run-off rates – 5.11l/s for a 1 in 1 year storm, 13.8l/s for a 1 in 30 year event, and 19.1l/s for a 1 in 100 year event. A complex Hydrobrake system will manage these outfalls.”

The consequences of previous episodes of prolonged intensive rainfall has been run-off to Brooks Lane to the west, resulting in an impassable situation for several hours for the road's residents and threats to their properties being inundated. CDC has received photographic evidence and reports on these incidents from the Parish Council.

Policies in Conflict:

The District cannot have both policies AL6 (new link road) and AL7 (Highgrove). AL6 requires an additional access point to the Fishbourne roundabout (already the second most accident-prone junction in the region). Adding the traffic-generating developments along the A259 will effectively mean the throttling of the historic connections between our market and cathedral city and all the harbour villages to the west. The current levels of congestion are already such that back roads like Clay Lane, Salthill Road, Moutheys Lane and the Old Broyle Road (B2178) have become rat runs.

The Planning Process:

There exists already a consent for 50 dwellings in the south-west quadrant of the site, granted in December 2019. That and the remainder of the site has been called ‘policy AL7’ in the merging, but as yet unadopted District-wide local plan. *Ergo* this application is premature until such time as policy AL7 is deemed sound following Examination in Public and an Inspector's Report. It should therefore not be being considered at this time.

The last comprehensive public consultation on development site selection was in the course of preparing the Bosham Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BPNP) in 2014. The site assessment for Highgrove arising from those consultations and Neighbourhood Plan Policy decisions is to be found in an annex to this deposition. In summary the 15.8-hectare site was found to be the least desired development of all those tested. The Neighbourhood Plan process saw more than 400 Bosham people come to the exhibitions in 2014-2015. The BPNP process identified sufficient abandoned and derelict sites in line with NPPF policy 11. (Making effective use of land, para 117-118) within the parish and all adjacent or with the existing established settlement area for nearly 40 new homes. These options were struck out by the Planning Inspector as they lay, like the majority of the village, within the AONB. Adding additional adjacent green field locations would have produced another 20 homes. This was also sadly rejected in the tick-box approach to planning. But these allocations were supported by the community and expressed through several exhibitions where detailed master plans were displayed. In summary the BPNP policies emphasised compactness over coalescence, retention of the best agricultural land and restricting development in the first instance to derelict and abandoned sites. Other parameters that we established were village integration versus urban sprawl; innovative and sustainable design vs unsustainable pattern book. Housing for the future vs houses rapidly requiring retrofit solutions. By contrast this planning proposal from Barratts would significantly coalesce the villages, rupture a wildlife corridor, place intolerable extra congestion on Fishbourne roundabout to which an extra junction is also proposed under a separate policy, exceed the sewage treatment capacities debouching to our harbour and degrade the harbour environment through nitrate emissions.

Recreational Impact upon the Harbour.

Chichester harbour attracts huge numbers of people including dog walkers, local and visiting, around its shores. There are well-established effects of the disturbance to our ecosystem and to the flora and fauna of the harbour shores and wetlands. Contributing to yet another warden to stick up more notices around the harbour is proving of limited effectiveness in combatting the effects of such disturbance. In terms of this development proposal, banishing 'informal recreational space' to a far-flung corner of the site contributes very little, if anything to alleviating the village's net deficit of recreational space.

Access to the Site:

The entrance is the same as that which was consented for 50 homes. Without adequate traffic calming on the A259 and pedestrian crossing shelters, it would be difficult to access the westbound bus stop on the south of the A259. With additional demand from the Hospice and should a consent bizarrely be given for 300 new homes; bus shelters should be considered as necessary conditions for any development. **Access to the site must be from the A259 with absolutely no vehicle access from Brooks Lane.** Brooks Lane is a residential road, it is narrow and has residential parking along it. It has a high volume of pedestrian use, including parents with young children attending the community hall and children socialising, bike riding and accessing the green.

Cycling:

The strategic Chemroute is not shown and opportunity to run a separate footway and cycle path through-route across the site has been missed. Highways England are only now consulting on a currently unpopular strategic cycle route design linking Emsworth and Chichester that, if adopted, would exacerbate conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.

Walking:

The connectivity to the old village has NOT been considered at all. Crossing the busy A259 has not been thought through in terms of the wider network of preferred walking routes and the perilous nature of Walton Lane for pedestrians, especially those with young families accessing the school, churches, cafes, pubs and harbour attractions of the medieval core: these have simply not been considered.

Parking:

What is the parking provision for the community hall? Will parking displacement occur in Brooks Lane as it did with the construction of the Hospice?

Public Building:

The hall duplicates an already existing hall – outside the site – what is to become of that? People who use St Nicholas Hall say that it could easily be refurbished.

The Landscape Setting

The landscape and visual impact appraisal provided by the applicant does not represent a fair or reasonable assessment of the levels of landscape and visual impacts arising from the proposed development on open agricultural farmland at Highgrove. The landscape and visual effects of the proposed development on Highgrove are consistently understated. This is taken forward into the Planning Statement in particular in the section on the Chichester IPS and sections 3, 4, 5 and 6. It paints an incorrect picture of the levels of adverse landscape and visual effects of the proposed development on open agricultural land, adjacent to the AONB, with views to the SDNP (including a Valued View identified in the Bosham Parish Neighbourhood Plan) and on the effect on the gap between Bosham and Fishbourne.

The site occupies sight lines between the AONB and Kingley Vale/Stoke Clump – notable natural landmarks that have guided navigators up Chichester channel since Roman times. It also all but obliterates views from the Broadbridge settlement area and our historic cathedral, this rupturing another historical connection forever. It is worth recalling what CDC's own consultants said only in 2019.

1 Landscape Capacity Study 2019 Prepared By Terra Firma Consultancy Ltd for CDC

1.1 The site falls within the landscape character sub area 91 in the Landscape Capacity Study undertaken in March 2019.

The conclusion of the study is that this character area has a **Medium / Low landscape capacity for new development**. The report states "*The Medium / Low capacity (orange) – A low amount of development may be accommodated only in limited situations, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. In some cases, no development would be acceptable and the reason for this is explained in the conclusion*".

It is possible that some built development may be accommodated within the existing cluster of buildings and potentially to the north of Broadbridge provided it is informed by further landscape and visual impact assessment and sensitively integrated into the landscape, respecting the historic settlement pattern and locally distinctiveness. Great care would need to be taken to avoid any landscape or visual harm ensuring the separate identities of the settlements are protected and considering valued views".

The results of this study are clear – there is little or no scope for development and certainly not over the extent of the Highgrove Farm area.

The site abuts the Chichester Harbour AONB, there are significant open long views from public roads, footpaths and residential properties across the sub-area to the hills within the SDNP including valued views identified in The Bosham Neighbourhood Plan.

2.0 Landscape Gap Assessment 2019 Prepared By Terra Firma Consultancy Ltd for CDC

2.1 The report includes an assessment and proposal for a gap between Bosham and Fishbourne (see figure below)

7. Bosham and Fishbourne

Potential location of gap map:

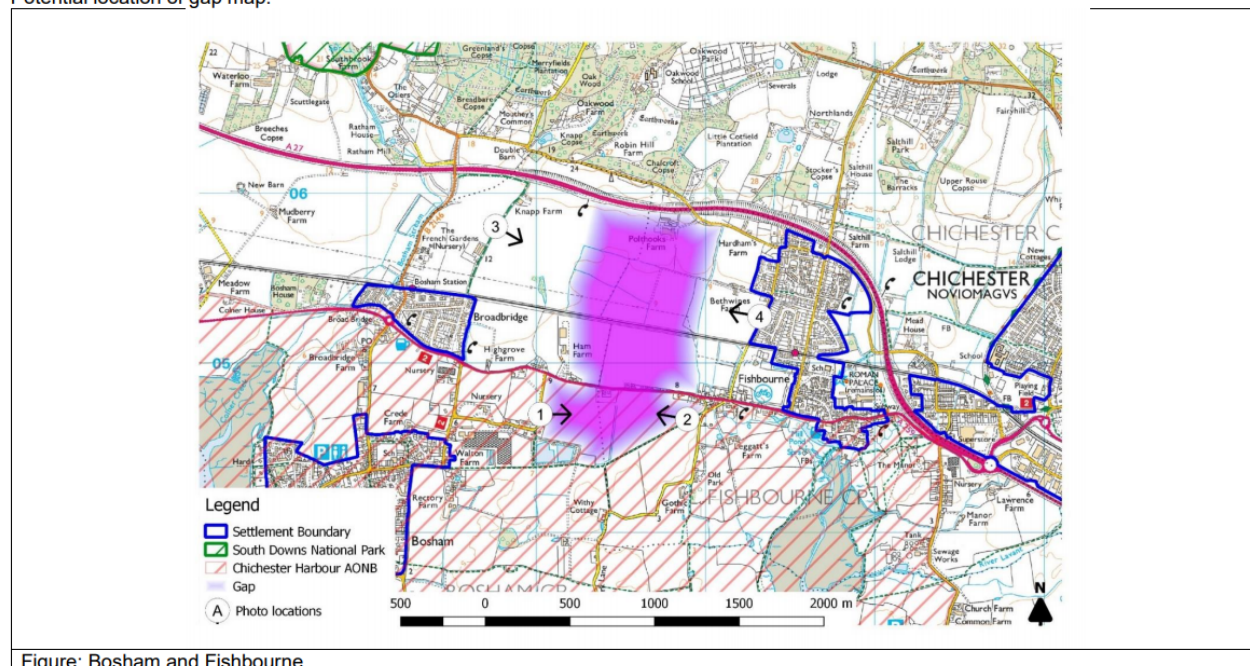


Figure: Bosham and Fishbourne

Photographs:

The terra firma Consultancy Ltd

MAY 2019

2.2 The area of the proposed gap in the report (above plan) would not provide the extent of land required to create a meaningful Gap between Fishbourne and Bosham. The proposed Gap would only be about 750m wide and yet it is supposed to provide “a key contribution to the perceived separation of the settlements particularly experienced by people travelling along the A259, the train line and Chequer Lane”. A gap of only 750m cannot achieve this objective. In a train or car travelling at 40mph it would take about 42 seconds to cover that distance! In order to a gap to be legible and apparent it needs to be at least double to distance i.e. the full distance between Fishbourne and Bosham.

2.3 For the gap to be effective there needs to be views beyond the road/rail to achieve the perception of a gap as set out below in the Landscape Gap Assessment. The area proposed in the Terra Firma report has built development/ hedges on the north side and a garden centre/hedge on the south side of the A259. It is only in the vicinity of the Highgrove site that there are any long distance views across fields to the SDNP and the land within the AONB.

2.4 The assessment report (extract below) confirms the points made above that the present extent of the proposed gap is totally inadequate. This applies particularly to where it is underlined.

7.2. The gap is rural in character with few urban influences. The landscape of the gap is open in character with some degraded hedgerows and treelines providing some visual containment. The adjacent settlement edges are reasonably well contained by vegetation limiting the intervisibility between the settlements which contributes to their perceived separation. This perceived separation is further enhanced in places by successive layers of vegetation. The gap forms part of a low lying flat coastal plain landscape continuing to the south, east and west. The open character of the gap provides open views across the arable landscape on either side of the A259 with visual links to the hills within the South Downs National Park and Chichester Harbour AONB which forms part of the gap to the south. The visual continuity of the gap is partly broken up in places by the scattered farms, houses, nurseries/garden centre, particularly perceived along the A259, however these do not undermine the overall integrity and openness of the gap.

7.3. The key places where the predominantly open and undeveloped land within the gap can be perceived is from the A259, the train line and Chequer Lane. The gap can also be perceived from Blackboy Lane to the east, Clay Lane to the north, Brooks Lane (and bridleway) and from a number of public rights of way crossing and close to the gap. The openness of the gap is potentially perceived in long views from the South Downs National Park to

the north. Hedgerows and settlement along A259 intermittently restrict views, with filtered views possible through the hedges in winter months. In places there are long open views to the hills within the South Downs National Park to the north. There are some open views from the A259 where there are breaks in the hedgerow to the open arable fields within the AONB, however tree belts and settlement restrict views to the Harbour. These open views contribute to the perceived separation of the settlement. The openness of the gap contributes to the open landscape setting of the AONB, Fishbourne conservation area and listed buildings. There also long views to the Chichester Cathedral landmark spire across the area. The open arable fields to the north of the railway line form part of the wider separation of the settlements also allowing long views to the hills within the South Downs National Park and from within the area to the Chichester Cathedral landmark spire. Recommendation

7.4. This gap forms part of the former strategic gap between Chichester and Emsworth.

7.5. It is important that the area between Broadbridge/Bosham and Fishbourne is retained as open countryside. The gap is essential in preventing the coalescence of the settlements and maintaining their separate identities.

7.6. Comments:

- 1. The gap provides an important area of predominantly undeveloped countryside between the built up area of Broadbridge/Bosham and Fishbourne, part of which falls within the AONB*
- 2. The gap provides a key contribution to the perceived separation of the settlements particularly experienced by people travelling along the A259, the train line and Chequer Lane*
- 3. The width of the gap means people travelling along the A259 perceive a reasonable stretch of open countryside between the settlements, contributing to their perceived separation and separate identities*
- 4. Currently the existing low density settlement within the gap does not undermine the overall integrity and openness of the gap. However, the partial fragmentation of the gap resulting from this settlement does mean the perceived and actual separation of the settlements is vulnerable to further erosion, particularly around the A259*
- 5. The perceived separation experienced along the A259 is particularly effective where open fields occur on both sides of the road increasing the feeling of openness with visual links to the AONB*
- 6. The gap is important in the wider part it plays as part of a succession of gaps along the East-West corridor that break up and help define the separate identities of the string of settlements between Chichester and Emsworth.*
- 7. The openness of the gap can also be perceived from a number of public rights of way crossing and close to the gap, including from sensitive viewers within the AONB*
- 8. Development in much of this area would be conspicuous and could block valued views. The open character of the landscape provides positive open views between the settlements across open countryside including across the AONB, to the South Downs National Park and to Chichester Cathedral spire. This contributes to the perceived separation of the settlements, their individual identities and rural settings.*
- 9. The openness of the gap contributes to the open landscape setting of the AONB, Fishbourne conservation area and listed buildings*

3 Chichester Local Plan Review Draft Policies

3.1 Any proposed development on Highgrove would appear to run counter to the draft policy S24: Countryside which states *Outside settlement boundaries as defined on the policies map, development will be permitted in the countryside provided that:*

- 1. It conserves and, where possible, enhances the key features and qualities of the rural and landscape character of the countryside setting; (development on Highgrove would not comply)*
- 2. It is of an appropriate scale, siting and design that is unlikely to cause unacceptable harm to the appearance of the countryside; and (development on Highgrove would not comply)*

3.2 Any proposed development on Highgrove would appear to run counter to draft Local Plan Policy S26: Natural Environment which states

The Council will continue to work with partner authorities and organisations to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Plan Area. In relation to development proposals this will include:

- Ensuring that distinctive local landscape character and sensitivity is protected in accordance with Policy DM28.*
- Ensuring there is no adverse impact on the openness of views in and around the coast, designated environmental areas and the setting of the South Downs National Park. See Policies DM19, DM20 and DM28. (development on Highgrove would not comply)*
- Protecting the biodiversity value of the site and its environment in accordance with Policy DM29 (development on Highgrove would not comply); and*

• *Considering the quality of the agricultural land, with the development of poorer quality agricultural land being preferred to the best and most versatile land. (development on Highgrove would not comply as it is Grade 1 and 2 ALC)*

3.3 Any proposed development on Highgrove would appear to run counter to draft Local Plan Policy DM19: Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which states

The impact of individual proposals and their cumulative effect on Chichester Harbour AONB and its setting will be carefully assessed. Planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that:

- 1. The natural beauty and locally distinctive features of the AONB are conserved and enhanced;*
- 2. Proposals reinforce and respond to, rather than detract from, the distinctive character and special qualities of the AONB as defined in the Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan; (development on Highgrove would not comply as any development on the site would have an adverse impact on the setting of the AONB)*
- 3. Either individually or cumulatively, development does not lead to actual or perceived coalescence of settlements or undermine the integrity or predominantly open and undeveloped, rural character of the AONB and its setting; (development on Highgrove would not comply)*

6 Any proposed development on Highgrove would appear to run counter to draft Local Plan Policy DM28: Natural Environment which states “*The impact of proposals will be carefully assessed to ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape of the Plan area. Planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that all the following criteria have been addressed:*

- 1. There is no adverse impact on:*
 - *The openness of the views in and around the coast, designated environmental areas and the setting of the South Downs National Park (development on Highgrove would not comply); and*
 - *The tranquil and rural character of the area (development on Highgrove would not comply).*
- 2. Development recognises distinctive local landscape character and sensitively contributes to its setting and quality*
- 3. Proposals respect and enhance the landscape character of the surrounding area and site, and public amenity through detailed design*
- 4. Development of poorer quality agricultural land has been fully considered in preference to best and most versatile land (development on Highgrove would not comply as it is Grade 1 and 2 ALC) ; and*
- 5. The individual identity of settlements, actual or perceived, is maintained and the integrity of predominantly open and undeveloped land between settlements is not undermined” (development on Highgrove would not comply)*

Biodiversity:

The current site hosts over 100 species as recorded by the Sussex Biodiversity Centre (SxBRC/16/260, dated 15th July 2016). This development would rupture the wildlife corridor between the invaluable hazel and chestnut coppices of Oakwood, connecting ancient hedgerows, ditches and pond to the north and the AONB on the site’s immediate southern boundary. Within the AONB, there are numerous wildlife corridors that splay down to the Harbour itself providing routes for insects, reptiles bats, birds and other mammals. A housing estate at Highgrove would further rupture the continuous countryside connecting Kingley Vale National Nature Reserve, the South Downs National Park to the north and the areas covered by protective designations within the Chichester Harbour AONB (SSSI, Ramsar, SPA, SNC etc).

The NPPF clearly states: para 175. “When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;” Such is clearly the case here.

Lighting on The Housing Estate

The scheme proposes 6m high lighting columns around the whole development thus compromising the Dark Skies policies of both CHAONB across the other side of the A259 and the SDNP which is only 1,000 metres to the north.

The Environmental Performance of The Houses:

These homes all seem to be being built to the minimum environmental standards and miss the opportunity to be using passive solar heating, far more photovoltaics, ground and air-source heating. Such developments face the

prospect of retrofitting such standards more expensively in the near future to meet that nations commitments to reduce the contribution to global warming.

Urban Design:

The myriad of documents gives the impression of a variety of house types through the site. In reality there are few variations of lay-out, materials, elevations. In summary it is pattern book housing that could be plonked anywhere in England, with no real attempt at maintaining local distinctiveness, that respects the gateway position to an historically significant parish. Calling it “Tapestry Walk” is just an insult to one’s intelligence. This is a monstrous carbuncle on the face on one of England’s most historic villages. It is never going to get any design awards, but if built will be a lasting testament to the sheer folly of the current planning system.

Submitted by Dick Pratt, co-chair and on behalf of the Bosham Association. 29/03/2020

Appendix: the BPNP Site Assessment for the Highgrove location for further information (2014)

SITE NAME	Highgrove Farm (Whole) – SHLAA Number BB8195
SITE LOCATION	Bounded by the main railway line to the north, housing on the east side of brooks lane to the west, the A259 to the south and Ham Farm to the east. Currently the access is off the A259 with another potential access across land owned by Hyde Martlet (the registered social landlord) through Barnside off Brooks Lane.
GROSS SITE AREA	whole 15.8ha
CURRENT USE	Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land in cultivation.
SUITABILITY	This site is against the emerging District-wide local plan policy for the East-West corridor, which seeks to avoid coalescence. It is also against the emerging NP policy, which states, “Any proposed future growth that would expand the existing east and west settlement boundaries, particularly to the north of the A259, should be avoided.” This is evidenced by comments made at Expos 1, 5 and 6 by local residents. The field is known to experience standing water in periods of prolonged rainfall and the whole field drains into Brooks Lane and the A259, which flood in such conditions. The flow then proceeds southwards into the East Ditch system, which experiences further flooding problems to the south at Walton Lane and Stumps Lane. The Chichester District Landscape Capacity Study (2009 extended in 2011) (CDLCS) concludes for this site in the Final Assessment Landscape Sensitivity is <u>Substantial</u> (para 3.7.9 TFC report).
AVAILABILITY AND ACHIEVABILITY	The developer/landowner has expressed throughout the neighbourhood planning process a desire and intention to see the site developed for between 100 and 200 houses and sought for the site a strategic allocation within the District-wide Local plan which has not been granted despite appeal.
ACCEPTABILITY	The site was ranked eleventh out of 11 of sites favoured by residents (Expo 6). This does not constitute a level of acceptability by local people.