



Alton is now threatened with a 'garden village' of 1200 homes, primary school and community centre in a narrow scenic valley bounded by Ancient Woodlands and Sites of Interest to Nature Conservation.

The Alton Society has protested in the strongest possible terms to East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) against this development.

After guidance from Angela Glass, the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee (PPC) at EHDC, the committee voted in favour (one against) of taking **only this site** forward for further investigation out of the original 10 sites that were identified in 2019.

This decision will next come before Full Council, very soon, for ratification.

EHDC has given no reasonable time for public consideration of this decision and our view is that Alton has now taken more than its fair share of new developments.

We intend to mount a public protest in Alton before that – watch this space for news!

In the meantime, do email damian.hinds.mp@parliament.uk ; angela.glass@easthants.gov.uk and simon.jenkins@easthants.gov.uk (Head of Planning at EHDC & Director of Regeneration & Place)

Here are some points of concern to include in any emails:

Traffic & Highway Safety

- Chawton Park Road already hosts a Scout Hut, a surgery, the Community Hospital, two bowling clubs, a Guide's Headquarters and a Sports Centre! The new Treloars development will create a further 280 homes: i.e. CPR is already very busy with non-residential traffic.
- 1200 homes would generate 2-3000 cars. Chawton Park Road (CPR) is narrow, has parked cars along part of it, has an awkward right angled bend into Northfield Lane where traffic flow is hampered by a single lane Victorian railway bridge arch. The inevitable result would be endless bottle necks and queues making air quality and quality of life unbearable for residents.

Destruction of a Valued Landscape

- Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) considers the site to be a 'valued landscape' meeting the criteria of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 170(a).

- Impact on Ancient Woodland and Sites of Interest to Nature Conservation (SINCs) from close proximity of about 3000 people and the inevitable anti-social behaviour which we already experience around the Treloars Meadows.
- As far as we know a Habitats Regulation Assessment has not been carried out.
- Development here would not only obliterate the special character of this valley but also of Beech Village being separated from it by 400m of Bushy Leaze ancient woodland.

Not a Sustainable Site; doesn't have "availability of transport infrastructure"

- We reject EHDC's assertion that site is 'sustainable' – 1.5km from Alton – people will use cars. CPR is too narrow to include pathway.
- Impossible to understand the comment by EHDC that the site has "availability of transport infrastructure" given the constraints mentioned above.

Impact of Any Replacement & Widening of Railway Bridge

- Necessity to replace and widen railway bridge would close Northfield Lane for months (Butts Bridge closed for about 7 months during replacement). All traffic would have to enter and exit via CPR/A339 Whitedown Lane junction which is already a bottleneck. This would also affect the financial viability of the Watercress Line which was closed for a year during the Butts Bridge replacement.

Overriding all these points is the crucial issue of Housing Need Numbers, how they are calculated and how this affects our Area (only a few other similarly affected areas in the UK)

57% of our district is made up of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The effect of this is that although SDNP contribute to the housing need numbers *they are under no obligation* to build any of those numbers. They are building a few, say 100 per year, so 90% of the numbers are squeezed into 43% of the land area. Meanwhile, the numbers are affected by something called the 'Affordability Index'. This means that the higher the index for an area, the more houses need to be built. The average house price in the SDNP is higher than in Alton so the SDNP contributes to a higher housing need number but again, the SDNP *do not have to actually build* any of those numbers. And when the houses are built they are unaffordable as we all know. No first time buyer in the South can actually afford any of these houses.

Damian Hinds MP is pressing the government to look at this problem and believes separate housing needs assessments need to be made for the areas inside SDNP and those outside. Our local councillors are pressing EHDC Officers on this point too.

Thank you for any support you can give to this campaign via emails you may send or turning up to protest when this is arranged!