

Owslebury

Parish Council

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By e-mail and hand to-

Planning & Policy Implementation

Eastleigh Borough Council

Eastleigh House

Upper Market Street

Eastleigh, SO50 9YN

Owslebury Parish Council assessment of Eastleigh Local Plan

Owslebury Parish Council (OPC) has assessed the Eastleigh Local Plan and is convinced it is **unsound** and **probably not legally compliant**. Our evaluation is based on the areas that directly impact Owslebury, other areas have not been considered.

Soundness and Legal Compliance (Section 2)

OPC is concerned primarily with the effects that additional traffic generated by the plan will impact the parish, in terms of volumes, noise and other impacts on our environment. The Parish Council has a duty to help protect its parishioners against developments of this nature, and firmly believes that the plan will have a very negative effect on the lives of parishioners if it is implemented.

In particular -

1. The plan requires that the link road on which the traffic plan is based can be delivered in its entirety. Yet no data is available to demonstrate it is feasible, and that it is properly funded. HCC has not yet confirmed that it is feasible.
2. The Strategic Growth options (B&C) on which the plan is based are not supported by concrete evidence to sustain its viability, or that it can be delivered to schedules planned. No proper evidence is presented that Options D&E are less attractive.
3. Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) delegated the final decision on the content of the plan to the Council Leader and Chief Executive thus removing the rest of the elected Council members of legal responsibility for the plan. This is surely at the very least unsound, if not illegal.
4. There is no evidence to show that any impact to South Downs National Park (SDNP) of which Owslebury is part has been properly considered, nor any mitigation measures agreed.

5. There does not appear to have been full and open discussion with Winchester City Council (WCC) required by 'Duty to Cooperate' on the strategic option, the potential environmental impacts or the management of traffic in Winchester District.

Traffic Policies S6, S12 and DM3

The narrow rural lanes of Owslebury Parish (including the Main Village Street) are already significantly impacted by traffic at key times on a weekday basis. More traffic will bring more hazards, both safety and environmental, to a National Park.

1. Northern Link Road. This is presented as a cornerstone of the whole plan, but there are no details as whether it is properly funded and what the timetable should be for its construction relative to the planned tranches of development. For example it has not been assessed against alternatives in Options D&E.
2. Allbrook Railway Bridge. This bridge is very narrow and cannot handle double decker buses or high lorries which get stuck there on a regular basis. The railway line carried by the bridge is the major (and almost only) freight and passenger link to Southampton and its docks. Any disruption to it would cause major economic damage to the whole area. Credible Proposals/mitigation measures to lower and widen the bridge have not been produced and would surely be unaffordable. Any plan that included rail disruption would be immediately vetoed by both Network Rail and the Southampton Port Authority.
3. The traffic model used to 'support' the plan only looks to A&B roads and some junctions. It does not reflect the current traffic through Owslebury or predict further impacts. There are so far no mitigation measures proposed either by EBC or HCC to what is already recognised as a major bottleneck at peak periods. EBC has never offered to consult or discuss this plan with OPC except at the general public meetings.

Alternative Options Policies S5 and S12

EBC reasons for choosing B&C rather than D&E are at the best flimsy and lack robust analysis. They seem dependent on a gap strategy finalised this year after the plan was published last year. No reasoned argument is available to support this, leading one to the uncomfortable feeling that other priorities are in play.

In the view of OPC D&E would have far less impact to the environment and would provide better traffic management and transport access to the region. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) section 9 states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This is to "reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health". By preferring Option B & C (no ready access to public transport) to option D & E (potential access to rail and motorway transport), the plan appears to be in breach of national guidelines.

Environmental Issues Policies S5, S6, DM1, DM6, DM8 and DM11

1. Impact to SDNP. There is no evidence in the plan that EBC has worked with SDNP to identify and mitigate impacts to the Park whose boundaries will be less than a mile from some of the planned housing development.
2. Itchen SSSI. The planned Northern Link Road would significantly damage the River Itchen itself and the Marshland around the area. No mitigation plans are existent, and no substantive discussions with key parties such as the Woodland Trust or the Angling Trust have occurred.
3. The plan has not yet been completely reviewed by the Environment Agency. The final Habitat Assessment was not put to the Agency in time to comment before the plan was published. The Flood Plain around the Itchen requires significant management to avoid water pollution from future development. No plans or mitigation measures have been put forward to answer this concern.

Summary

All the above clearly demonstrate that the Plan is unsound in a number of areas and in OPC' s view should be rejected. OPC would wish to present its views at any Planning Inspectorate inquiry.

Please confirm receipt of this representation as soon as possible.

Juanita Madgwick

Clerk to Owslebury Parish council