

O/26/101177 Land at Holly Tree Farm

Outline application for up to 280 dwellings, all matters reserved apart from access

Planning policy framework

The Council adopted the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 on 25th April 2022. This document now forms the planning policy framework for the borough to 2036.

The site is located on the borough's eastern boundary, close to new development at Boorley Park and includes Local Plan site allocation BO1. The remainder of the site is within countryside, as designated in the adopted Local Plan policy S5.

Policy S5 sets out the type of development appropriate in the countryside and detailed criteria for development in these uses. This does not include new residential development, apart from on allocated sites.

Planning Policy provided comments on the pre-application for this site. These are updated in this response, noting the increase in the proposed number of dwellings and change to the location of the access.

Local Plan Review

In late 2024, the Council consulted on a Local Plan Issues and Options paper. This was the first stage in the production of the Local Plan Review. It provided information on sites submitted by developers to be considered for residential-led development.

This site, Land at Holly Tree Farm, includes a number of different sites submitted in the Call for Sites for the Local Plan. These were published in the Interim Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) as sites BOT012-14 and BOT16. They were then combined in the Issues and Options consultation into small and medium site 21, which also included additional land adjacent to this site.

Since the consultation, the Government has introduced a new planning system and requires all councils to complete all the stages within the new system. The Council will therefore be publishing a Scoping Consultation later this year, as the first stage under the new system. This will cover the approach of the Local Plan Review and the issues it should address. It will also include the sites previously published in the Issues and Options consultation (and those submitted soon afterwards) which will continue to be considered. No decisions have been made on the location of development at this stage and these sites have no weight in decision making.

Housing Supply

In accordance with revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) the Council needs to demonstrate a five year supply. The latest five year housing supply report was prepared by Hampshire County Council in January 2026 and has a base date of 1 April 2025. This identifies a supply of 4.2 years, including a 5% buffer as required in the NPPF.

As the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year land supply, NPPF paragraph 11d applies. This introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development unless specific criteria are met. For proposals contrary to Local Plan policy, such as residential development in the countryside, the Council will consider these criteria and determine if there are areas or assets of particular importance to be protected (criterion 11d.i), or if any adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits (criterion 11d.ii).

Proposal

The site is in agricultural use with farm buildings and commercial uses associated with Holly Tree Farm. There are agricultural fields to the south and recent residential development to the west. Part of the site is within the urban edge due to the BO1 site allocation. Providing the area on the eastern edge at risk of flooding remains undeveloped, the proposal does not contain any areas or assets of particular importance to be protected from development under paragraph 11d.i of the NPPF.

When considering whether the adverse impact of a proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefit, NPPF paragraph 11d.ii emphasises policies relating to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well designed places and providing affordable housing. It is noted that 35% of the housing will be affordable, in accordance with policy DM28.

Sustainable location

The site adjoins the urban edge and includes some land within the urban area. It is within approximately 400-800m of a frequent bus service. With appropriate access and links into the existing settlement and high quality design, it can be a sustainable location and provide an acceptable extension to Boorley Park. Since the preapplication, the main access has been moved further east along Maddoxford Lane. It is noted that the pipeline at the north west of the site affects the access, however the access should be located as close as possible to the urban edge.

Density and design

Policy BO1 allocates the north west corner of the site for a minimum of 30 dwellings. The Council is seeking to optimise the density of new development across the borough and applications need to take opportunities to increase densities while delivering high quality, well designed developments. This is in order to make effective use of land.

Policy DM23 requires a net density of 40 dwellings per hectare in development in urban areas unless site constraints or local character justify a lower density. This density provides a starting point to consider the amount of development that can be delivered within the developable area of this site. The Design and Access Statement submitted shows indicative areas in medium density (up to 40 dph) and low density (up to 30 dph). This density is below what would now be expected to make effective use of land.

The site has a number of constraints which affect the developable area including pipelines adjacent to, and within, the site and flood zones. Planning Policy welcome

the increase in dwellings proposed from 260 dwellings in the preapplication to 280 dwellings. However, based on 40 dph and an estimated developable area of 70%, the site would deliver approximately 400 dwellings. This is likely to require a wider range of housing typologies and sizes with careful consideration of the public realm, parking provision, green infrastructure and open spaces. The revised Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document will be adopted by the Council in mid-June. This provides detailed design guidance on how to deliver high quality higher density development.

Conclusion

The proposal is for new residential development, mostly within the countryside and therefore contrary to adopted Local Plan policy. As the Council does not currently have a 5 year housing land supply, the benefits of the proposal need to be weighed up against adverse impacts.

Planning Policy consider that this site has the potential to form an acceptable extension to Boorley Park. However, more information is required to justify the proposed number of dwellings and density levels to demonstrate that development makes effective use of land.

The outline application has all matters reserved except access. Subject to the constraints of the pipeline, the access should be located as close as possible to the urban edge to minimise impact on its setting.