

Stoke Golding Neighbourhood Plan

Change of Reserve Site for Housing Development

Issued on behalf of Stoke Golding Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee (9th July 2020)

Summary

This to inform residents of a change to the proposed reserve site from that shown in the Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter called the Plan) presented in January 2020 at the open day in Baxter Hall. At that time, both the main and reserve sites proposed for housing development were at Mulberry Farm:

Main site: This is the current developed area with the farm buildings.

Reserve site: This comprised 2 fields to the north of the main site.

As a result of opposition by Hinckley & Bosworth Conservation to the reserve site, it is now proposed that land south of Hinckley Road (red area on map below) be used as the reserve site instead of the fields at Mulberry Farm.

Number of homes required

In early 2019, the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee (NPAC) considered whether there was a need to allow for any additional housing in the Plan given the level of development in recent years. It was agreed that provision should be made for some development between now and 2036 or the Plan would be unlikely to be approved by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC).

Based on the Stoke Golding Household Survey results (June 2017), a paper was submitted to HBBC proposing an allocation for a site for around 25 homes. HBBC replied that it was unable to provide an indicative number of homes required but advised the target for Stoke Golding is likely to be higher than 25. It was therefore decided to include a reserve site in the Plan to provide flexibility.

Site selection

15 sites had been put forward by owners, agents and developers for consideration for housing development. A comprehensive set of evaluation criteria was used by the NPAC to evaluate and rank the sites for suitability; this resulted in the top three ranked sites being:

1. White Swan site
2. Mulberry Farm
3. AS 540 (land south of Hinckley Road).

White Swan site

On further examination, the White Swan site was rejected. A planning application had been submitted and was subsequently withdrawn due to opposition from HBBC Planning. As a result of this opposition, the NPAC could no longer consider this a viable site. Therefore, the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Committee proposed the next in the ranking which was Mulberry Farm.

Mulberry Farm

The Plan divided the site into a main site (based around the developed area) and a reserve one (based on the 2 fields). In January 2020, this was discussed with residents at the open day in Baxter Hall. In March 2020, the NPAC held a meeting with HBBC Planning and Conservation Officers.

HBBC expressed no significant concern with the choice of main site (i.e. the farm buildings) but the Conservation Officer was strongly opposed to the reserve site, as it lies on designated battlefield land. It is therefore necessary to replace this reserve site with an alternative.

Way Forward

The Parish Council and NPAC have therefore considered the following options:

1. Continue with the Mulberry Farm fields as the reserve site
It is highly unlikely HBBC would approve the Plan on this basis due to heritage concerns.

2. Offer a main site only

It is considered likely that the Plan would not be approved or, if approved, would be overtaken in 2021 by HBBC's own housing proposals in the new Local Plan for the Borough.

3. Find an alternate reserve site

The next highest ranked site is land south of Hinckley road, designated AS540. The full size of this site is 2.75ha but the draft Plan proposes only using the front section of this to allow for around 25 homes. This is marked in red on the map below.

Conclusion

It is considered that the only viable option for the Plan is to provide a main site using the developed area at Mulberry Farm and to provide a reserve site on land south of Hinckley Road (for up to 25 homes).

At present, Leicestershire County Council and HBBC are unable to meet their housing targets, so will endorse planning applications for all viable sites. The 'Friends of the Community' action group did a fantastic job opposing the Wykin Lane application - but at HBBC's Planning Committee meeting held in June, it was a very close call to refuse the application i.e. 8 votes to 7 (with 2 abstentions).

In the earlier call for sites, 15 fields and other sites were put forward by owners or developers and covered all approaches into the village e.g. Station Road, Higham Lane, Wykin Lane, Hinckley Road, Roseway, High Street, etc. In total, these would double the size of the village.

Many may consider that in recent years Stoke Golding has had too much development, such that no sites should be offered, or a main site only. Although this would send a clear message to HBBC, it would not get approval for the Plan as sufficient development has to be offered in a Plan to make it viable. The village needs the approved Plan as it will help protect against unwanted development. And the sooner the Plan is approved the better

Formal village consultation

Later in the Summer, through a formal consultation process, the village will be given an opportunity to comment on the development proposals, and on the Plan more generally.

