

ADD-EASTLEIGH

Action Against Development

8 August 2024

Dear Bloor Homes

ADD objects to your proposals for 250 homes on green fields adjacent to Mortimers Lane

ADD is an umbrella organisation that has its roots in the engagement of local residents' groups who opposed proposals by Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) to develop large areas of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak as part of its last local plan. We played a lead role in campaigning against these proposals, which were rejected by the planning inspector at the examination-in-public in 2020.

ADD represents many local people, parish councils, resident associations, and amenity groups, and – during the period of the Eastleigh's last local plan – worked closely with CPRE Hampshire and a number of like-minded national organisations. We are not a NIMBY organisation. We recognise the need for EBC to provide the right homes in the right places to meet the needs of local residents. We also recognise the pressure it will be under to meet the new government's housing targets.

We objected to previous proposals on Mortimers Lane – and elsewhere in the so-called 'Options B and C' areas – because they were not backed by evidence that they were in the right place and because they were not brought forward by a properly conducted plan-making process. Instead, they were developer-led proposals, clearly driven by the self-interested desire for profit by the developers and landowners. Indeed, the evidence put forward to justify them was proven to be flimsy and flawed at the examination-in-public in 2020, not least because alternatives were not properly explored.

As you will be well aware, EBC has not yet prepared its 'issues and options' paper for consultation, which is an essential prelude to bringing forward its proposals for its revised local plan. We look forward to seeing its evidence-based proposals at the reg 18 stage of the process and believe the timing of your proposal now is a blatant attempt to jump the gun on the evolution of an evidence-led plan.

We also object to your consultation process. To have given people just three weeks to respond, especially during the summer holidays, and to have failed to provide any proforma guide for participants to comment on specific areas, makes a meaningful consultation extremely hard. But perhaps that was your plan.

Aside from failures to follow due process, the planning inspector rejected the plan for development in the Option C area in 2020 for many evidence-based reasons – and these remain as strong, if not stronger, than ever.

One of these was the traffic impacts of development on Mortimers Lane, which is – of course – highly relevant to your new proposal for 250 houses there. Even with a proposed 'link road' to the M3 (no longer on the table), she felt the impact of traffic on surrounding roads was unacceptable, including on the Bishopstoke Road, on the B3354 through Colden

Common and Twyford, which is now heavily overloaded with traffic, and on the rural lanes of the South Downs National Park. I am sure you are aware that previous work by EBC itself, going back to 2011, identified the Mortimers Lane area as *remote from local services and facilities* and

that *large-scale development would exacerbate existing traffic congestion in Fair Oak and Bishopstoke.*

For these and other reasons, development in this area was eliminated from consideration at the long-list stage in 2011. Since the planning inspector reached a similar conclusion in 2020, the problems have only worsened further. For example, local services, particularly the GP practice, are now overwhelmed and unable to cope with existing demand, let alone additional demand from an extra 250 homes. Moreover, the area remains remote from local facilities as well as any form of mass transport, bar a highly inadequate bus service.

In conclusion, we believe your proposed site remains the wrong place to put new development and, if pursued, is likely to force EBC into making the same mistakes that led to its previous plan being rejected. Despite the flaws in your consultation process, we are aware that you have now received a very large number of strongly argued objections, many of which have been copied to us. We hope you will respond to these comments by abandoning your ill-timed and ill-considered proposals.

Finally, a polite request: if you do decide to proceed, which we clearly believe would be a mistake for us all, can you please confirm that you will publicise the results of your consultation, suitably anonymised, at the next stage of your design development?

David Ashe
Chair, ADD