

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, 5TH JUNE 2024**

APPENDIX A

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Correspondence received:

1. Siobhan Doyle – resident:

To all town councillors and in particular those elected to serve Holybourne.

I note with concern item 6 on tonight's agenda to pre-approve the draft local plan in Alton. At a time when EDHC is taking legal advice to challenge numbers this is a shock to hear that ATC are pushing through on provisional sites allocation and the proposal that Holybourne be included for 223 homes. This is not viable as we well know, the Land Assessment itself indicates 101 houses and the site owner proposing 223 is greed. This in itself should indicate their intentions do not sit in good faith with the needs of village residents. The proposed development of this size would not be viable within the village, traffic in particular (and not the data the developers have collected from the quiet end!). The inclusion of this proposed volume in the plan gives carte blanche to the landowner in Holybourne to push through with their developer the disproportionate housing estate in the village (adding a third to the village current size and with no consideration whatsoever of the traffic and safety issues already experienced in the village).

ATC gathered significant feedback through your very effective consultation last year and this does not seem represented in the proposal draft local plan before the council tonight.

Would appreciate my views being shared with the councillors and meeting.

2. Kay Rowan – resident

I wish to make a formal plea that the Alton Town Council should not accept any form of proposal in relation to the Alton Neighbourhood Plan this evening or at any time until the result of the EHDC consultation with their legal advisors, regarding housing numbers for the area of EHDC outside the National Park, is made known.

It would be presumptive of Alton Town Council to accept a plan only to find that the quantity of housing is not legally required.

No amount of financial injection from developers and landowners with pecuniary interest can ever make up for the degradation of the environment of Alton which includes the village of Holybourne.

I regret I am unable to attend this evening due to caring commitments but trust that the Council will postpone any firm decision until all the evidence has been gathered and addressed by all the parties concerned.

3. Carol Outlaw – resident

Dear Clerk,

It has just been brought to the attention of the residents of Holybourne that the council proposes to approve the allocation of 200+ homes to Holybourne at the council meeting tonight.

As I am sure you are aware, there has already been very strong opposition to the proposed development, mainly on the grounds of traffic congestion, lack of local facilities in Alton for any large development in the area, drainage, the destruction of wildlife habitats and the rural nature of our community,

I am imploring you to pass this email on the council in time for tonight's meeting - drawing their attention to the previous opinions expressed via the ANP consultation and individual correspondence - objecting to a development of this size and nature at this location in Holybourne. Many volunteers spent hours in the cold and rain in February of this year doing a manual traffic count in Holybourne - the results of which were quite staggering and clearly illustrated how impractical and undesirable the traffic generated by a further 200 households at the far end of the village would be. Please pass the data attached, which is also available on the village website, to the council for tonight's meeting and share with them, our complete horror that this proposal is even being considered.

In addition, it seems non-sensical to us that this motion is being put forward for approval at this stage when the county itself is in the process of challenging the housing allocation for Hampshire, with the Government. There may not even be a need for this development but approving the allocation now would set a dangerous precedent for future proposals.

Once again, I know this is a late submission for this meeting but with the wonders of modern technology, I'm sure you are able to share it at the touch of a button and urge you to do so.

Thanking you in anticipation,

4. Elizabeth Carter – resident

Dear Town Clerk,

Unfortunately, due to a prior commitment, I cannot make tonight's meeting. I would, however, like to strongly object again to the proposal for in excess of 200 new houses in Holybourne.

It is completely unacceptable for it to be included as a proposal in the draft ANP. It feels as though no attention has been paid to the objections made at the consultation stages.

The village would be overwhelmed and its character destroyed. The traffic is already a major problem and we have areas that flood within the village.

For ATC to be considering this when EHDC are pausing and taking legal advice on challenging the housing quota set by government for the district seems unnecessary and premature.

Whilst I live in Holybourne I am also concerned about Alton and have made objections about unacceptable levels of development that include the whole town especially since Alton is now regarded as the only T1 settlement in East Hampshire.

I understand the ongoing need for some development in Alton and Holybourne but not on the scales proposed. We should be prioritising local need not subsidising the district and wider areas too.

Please ATC we need to work together for all residents and support EHDC in their challenge to government.

5. Vanessa Gist – resident

Dear Town Clerk

I understand that the Agenda for tonight's meeting includes a motion to approve the draft ANP prior to its being presented for consultation and comment by residents. I note that the draft ANP includes the allocation of 223 houses to a greenfield site in Holybourne.

I wish to object in the strongest possible terms to this motion and, in particular, to the allocation in the ANP of such a large housing development to Holybourne. I understand that EHDC is currently seeking Counsel's Opinion with regard to the allocation of housing given the significance of the South Downs National Park in the area. I also understand that EHDC is currently seeking information about possible brownfield sites (which should always be preferred over greenfield sites). In these circumstances, why does ATC even consider it necessary to approve the draft ANP at this stage? Surely, it would make sense to await the outcome of both of the above.

I ask that the motion be adjourned until the results of both of the above are known.

I am copying in both Councillors for the Holybourne Ward and request that they vote accordingly.

6. Jerone Hodges - resident

All (Pat Harris, Graham Hill, Don Hammond cc John Bound)

Can I confirm that the owners of Froyle estate - to be clear:

- JP Magnier - owns the land - an offset against tax liabilities
- 2 further Swiss tax exiles who have invested in the potential development upside

... are waiting on the deliberations of ATC and EHDC ... the stakes are incredibly high.

As a village we have already wasted / invested c£10k fighting this. And dependent on the deliberations of our "democratically elected" town council will replan. The decision made this evening will have a bearing on so many lives and there are 600 households in Holybourne who are expecting some form of accountability and backbone. Everyone will be amazed if the easy option to accept a draft ANP is voted through.

Rgds
Jeroen

Morning Graham / Don

Hope all is well. I preface this mail by noting that we all appreciate the effort and dedication you invest into Alton and EHDC. I can only imagine the personal effort and time ...

With reference to my mail below (much of the logic hasn't changed) I was amazed to see that ANP team have proposed for approval a "plan for Alton" that doesn't seem to factor in any feedback from the residents of Alton and Holybourne who ultimately elect our representatives.

The billionaire owners of land around Holybourne (and of course when we see the separate / parallel plans of EHDC for Neatham) must be rubbing their hands with glee! To confirm JP Magnier owns the estate and a couple of Swiss billionaire investors have got involved based on the upside that building on green belt can bring - all massively tax efficient.

Despite all of the feedback, the 223 houses in Holybourne "are a good idea to be embraced" appears to be the conclusion. Really?

It is very poor - I can only assume that the ANP team have had enough and just want rid of the plan. I work with large multi-nationals on a strategic approach to their business planning and would be happy to help explain why the submission now is so poorly timed.

Given so much of the logic that I have outlined below is up in the air why are the ANP team pushing ahead with a plan to concrete over much of South Alton (as they call it) ... I note, not equal distribution and some areas protected ... it's brutal to say this but I assume based on interests of members of the team. What of all of the brownfield sites? What of a brewery site that isn't selling well?

I assume that no right minded individual would believe that now is the right time to be proposing this ... and also that the voters of Alton won't vote this down. It's pathetic.

I'll try and join ATC this evening - but am guessing space will be exploded already

Happy to discuss the above and stand by everything I outline below

27th February 2024 e-mail (referred to above)

Afternoon Pat / Graham / Don (and Alton Town Councillors)

I am reaching out to express my concerns about the EHDC Local Plan and current status of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan. I write that as a resident of Holybourne and indeed more broadly Alton its surrounding areas (Address - 20, Church Lane, Holybourne, Alton). I appreciate the commitment and effort that you and the Town Council invest to make Alton and its surrounds an area to be proud of !

I am conscious that feedback is required on the broader Local Plan and the current status / decision-making around the Alton Neighbourhood Plan – feedback is on many levels and all inter-related. I shall also feedback on the EHDC Local Plan site.

My feedback is based on attendance at ANP and EHDC consultation events – I feel very well briefed and indeed consider myself particularly engaged – these plans frankly pose an existential threat to our lovely part of East Hampshire. Of particular note I wish to raise:

- Overall allocation of 1700 homes – whilst I respect the need to provide housing for the UK population, I find it amazing that this number, allocated a number of years ago, is so high. It is the root cause of all the challenges we face, driving community to fight against community and avoid mass over-development. Calculated as an input to the 2020 allocations process, so much has changed:
- o Covid - Working from Home - Movement from a Low Interest environment - Lack of demand for existing housing such as Brewery Fields (where take up has been low) ... indeed this figure actually includes 20+% contingency so we are actually aiming to over-deliver!
- o I have very little confidence that this starting point is now correct
 - Protection of specific “Tier 2” areas from development, thereby concentrating much development around Alton “Tier 1” area. Either formally or through ‘under the table deals’ it is clear that EHDC allocation is not being fairly shared across the area:
- o Bordon – has a political block who hold the balance of power – their prime objective is no more / limited further development of Bordon
- o Petersfield – a town similar to Alton but in the SDNP. However, Petersfield’s location in a natural bowl means sensible targeted development could be delivered without significant impact to the SDNP (atleast far less impact than the Neatham Downs site)
- o Alton – appears to have been singled out for what can only be described as harsh over-development. It feels Alton and it surrounds doesn’t have the same level of “political protection”. It is unfair to expect to allocate the vast majority of housing to Alton and its surrounds. I believe that Alton and it’s surrounds deserves a ‘movement’ ... have raised this with Alton Herald journalist – let’s create public profile and opportunity to feedback
- Process to identify large areas including belatedly Neatham Down. It seems a poorly designed process is being followed where multiple large sites (Chawton

Park Farm, Northbrook, ...) have been discounted and at the last minute the 3rd / 4th best option is being railroaded through. All options should have comparative SWOT analysis executed to ensure a fair / transparent process is followed. I will be feeding back on the Local Plan the issues with Neatham Down site – I wouldn't be surprised if similar to the other sites. Currently it feels as if like "musical chairs" the music has stopped and Neatham is left standing and now targeted for massive over-development with 1250 houses to solve the challenge of delivery of a large allocation

- *Provision of infrastructure. Clearly there are very plans / considerations of required infrastructure.*
- *Greenfield not brownfield. Government policy is clearly oriented towards brownfield over greenfield sites ... the consideration of sites like Neatham and Holybourne clearly contradict this – until atleast there is demonstrable consideration of brownfield sites, including the ex-army sites across Bordon. There are a range of other sites that warrant equal consideration*
- *I have heard that "South Alton" now includes Holybourne and Neatham. These villages in rural settings do not deserve to be urbanised as part of the spread of Alton. At the Local Plan consultation in the Maltings I heard several times reference to South Alton – treating these villages as suburbs of Alton. There should remain a buffer zone and delineation of these villages*
- *Approach and timing of plans misaligned. It is crucial that the EHDC and ANP plans are aligned – it feels that they are being created in isolation.*
- *Neatham Down feedback. Will provide this to the Local Plan consultation process*
- *Alton / ANP should NOT lose control of allocation process. I have noticed in the agenda of the 28th Feb meeting that ANP are proposing to pass back the allocation of sites around Alton to EHDC ... they have noted that it is too tough to decide allocations. I recognise the challenges faced by a volunteer group, however:*
 - o *If a more sensible allocation to be delivered was defined (not the 700) the task would be more manageable*
 - o *The ANP and communities would need to find a balanced approach to agree allocations*
 - o *... given the amount of effort and consultation invested, we should not pass this emotive issue to planners less connected to the Alton area*

To confirm, I appreciate the effort invested by a range of our local representatives (EHDC and Alton Town councillors) and the work of the ANP team. The objective of this communication is reinforce points that I believe are well known / understood. There are a number of people who are mobilising to support you in your considerations / voice of challenge to the emerging plans.

7. Dr. Helen Walters – resident

Dear Town Clerk,

I am emailing to express my surprise that ATC will tonight be considering the future of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan. I would be grateful if my points below can be passed on to council members ahead of the meeting.

EHDC are currently actively asking the public to identify brownfield sites across the district. EHDC has also instructed KC to challenge the total government allocation of housing in the district.

The outcome of both of these actions could have profound impact on the Draft Local Plan which, in turn, could have profound impact on the number of houses which Alton (through the ANP) are asked to find space for.

It feels premature for ATC to be making such an important decision at such a time. I understand that the next stage for the draft ANP, should it be voted through this evening, is for a period of further public consultation. But that will be non-sensical when the public know that the allocation numbers might be changing. It will be a waste of an important consultation opportunity for the people of Alton.

Thankyou