

OBJECTION TO AVDC PLANNING APPLICATION 17/03624/AOP – OUTLINE PLANNING
APPLICATION FOR 17 DWELLINGS ON LAND TO SOUTH OF HOGSHAW ROAD, GRANBOROUGH

- AVDC's 5 year housing land supply position statement dated August, 2017 confirms there is a 9.0 year supply from 01.04.2017 – 31.03.2022 and a 9.4 year supply from 01.04.2018 – 31.03.2023. NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) requires a minimum 5 year supply.
- RA.14 is a saved policy within the AVDLP and is therefore consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework. This policy can only be described as out of date because AVDLP was for the plan period up to 2011. If AVDLP is to be the document used to determine the application then RA.14 is the relevant policy and it states:-
- **On the edge of built up areas of settlements listed in Appendix 4 of the Plan, permission may be granted for residential or mixed-use development of up to 5 dwellings on a site not exceeding 0.2ha where:**
 - a. The site is substantially enclosed by existing development;**
 - b. The proposal would satisfactorily complete the settlement pattern without intruding into the open countryside; and**
 - c. The proposal does not comprise the partial development of a larger site.**
- **Proposals will not be granted for development that impairs the character or identity of the settlement or the adjoining rural area.**
- In relation to the above we would comment as follows:-
- Granborough is one of the villages listed in Appendix 4
- The policy clearly limits the potential for residential development on the edge of this type of settlement up to a maximum of 5 dwellings and on a site not exceeding 0.2ha. The application is for 17 dwellings on a site of 1.3ha.
- The site is by no means substantially enclosed by existing development; the proposals would not satisfactorily complete the settlement pattern without intruding into open countryside; and the proposal is clearly only a partial development of a larger site.
- The proposals would impair both the character and identity of Granborough and its adjoining rural area.
- Further, the preambles to Policy RA.14 state that it is appropriate to allow limited small scale development at settlements that have some community facilities like shops, pubs and post offices, are reasonably accessible and may provide some employment opportunities. Granborough has no shops or post office and only one pub. A two hourly bus service hardly makes the village accessible. The preambles also state that at the edge of Appendix 4 settlements there may be scope for small scale development between the built-up area and the countryside. These developments will be very limited – a typical example might be a farmyard – and they should avoid intrusion into the rural setting of the settlement and, where possible, strengthen the interface between the village and the countryside. Clearly the proposals are not the redevelopment of an existing farmyard and, should planning permission be granted, it would in fact weaken the interface between the village and the countryside because of the potential for further development beyond that already being proposed.
- Whatever Plan, policies or documents are to be used in determining the application, some weight should be given to the emerging Plan (VALP), as the thrust of the proposed

policies in this emerging plan are no different to those which have already been adopted in preceding plans.

- In the draft VALP, Granborough is classed as a “smaller village”. Housing allocations will be made on the basis of where there are suitable sites in sustainable locations, rather than applying a blanket housing percentage. Also, the Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) established that Granborough has more HELAA suitable sites than their residual housing requirement figure, and so not all of the suitable sites will be necessary to meet the requirement. (Note – sites included in HELAA were identified by the general public at the request of AVDC and do not have any recognised planning merit either for or against development.)
- The draft VALP in regard to “Delivering sites at smaller villages” states:-
- 4.169 Smaller villages have relatively poor access to services and facilities and are therefore only suited to accommodating small-scale development. As such, no specific allocations are made at smaller villages in this plan.
- 4.170 The housing requirement for smaller villages will be met through a combination of sites allocated in neighbourhood plans and sites coming forward as part of the development management process. At smaller villages particular emphasis is given to the role of the local communities in identifying how best to meet their own development needs through neighbourhood plans as set out in more detail in Policy D2.
- 4.171 The HELAA has identified some suitable sites at smaller villages which indicates that there is a realistic prospect of some if not all of these sites coming forward during the Plan period. Therefore a windfall allowance is assumed, which includes an allowance for the smaller villages.
- In relation to the above we would comment as follows:-
- Granborough’s facilities consist of a church, a village hall and a public house and it has very poor access to services, particularly the local bus service which only runs every 2 hours in each direction. The private car is therefore the most favoured form of transport.
- Policy D3 of the draft VALP states:- “Where there is no made neighbourhood plan in place, new housing development at smaller villages will be supported where it contributes to the sustainability of that village and is in accordance with all applicable policies in the Local Plan, provided that the proposed development fulfils the following criteria:-
 - a. is located within the existing developed footprint of the village * or is substantially enclosed by existing built development,
 - b. would not result in coalescence with any neighbouring settlement,
 - c. is of a small scale (normally five dwellings or fewer) (net) and in a location that is in keeping with the existing form of the settlement and would not affect its character and appearance,
 - d. respects and retains natural boundaries and features such as trees, hedgerows, embankments and drainage ditches,
 - e. would not have any significant adverse impact on environmental assets such as landscape, historic environment, biodiversity, waterways, open space and green infrastructure, and
 - f. can be served by existing infrastructure.

- **the existing developed footprint is defined as the continuous built form of the village, and excludes individual buildings and groups of buildings. This includes former agricultural barns that have been converted, agricultural buildings and associated land on the edge of the village and gardens, paddocks and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings on the edge of the settlement where the land relates more to the surrounding countryside than to the built up area of the village.**
- In relation to the above we would comment as follows:-
- The proposed development would not be contributing to the sustainability of the village because sustainability in town planning terms would not require the use of the car to access amenities, shops, schools, or any other services
- In regard to bullet point a. - the proposed development site is not located within the existing developed footprint of the village and the site is not substantially enclosed by existing built development.
- Bullet point b. is not relevant in this case.
- Bullet point c. – the proposed development is certainly not small scale and substantially exceeds the “normal” allowance of five dwellings.
- Bullet point d. – the proposals would appear to comply with this requirement.
- Bullet point e. – some technical studies have been submitted in support of the application, but, since they have been instigated and paid for by the applicant, one wonders how much material weight should be given to these studies.
- Bullet point f. – as bullet point e.
- A Combined Planning & Design Access Statement (the Statement) has been submitted in support of the application. This document seems to imply that since AVDC do not have an up to date adopted Plan, then the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advice should be used in determining the application. The Statement keeps repeating the thrust of the NPPF which states that at the heart of it is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Para 17 of the NPPF sets out a series of planning principles to be used in determining applications including:- “ ... whilst recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and at the same time supporting thriving rural communities;” “Support the transition to a low carbon future ... “; “Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution;”. Granborough could hardly be described as a thriving rural community and the fact that the private car is the preferred mode of transport does not support the transition to a low carbon future nor will it reduce pollution – quite the reverse.
- Paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 of the Statement seem to imply that AVDC does not have a 5 year supply of housing – the latest AVDC 5 Year Housing Land Supply Interim Position Statement dated August, 2017 confirms otherwise.
- Paragraph 3.12 of the statement argues that no weight can be given to the VALP as it is still too early in the planning process. However, this Plan could be adopted in less than a year’s time and the main thrust of the policy relevant to development in Granborough is no different to the policy contained in the AVDLP and policies contained within the NPPF.
- Paragraph 3.14 of the Statement in relation to smaller villages notes “Therefore, they are not seen as sufficiently sustainable to accommodate any significant levels of development. However, it is recognised that smaller levels of development can be accommodated without resulting in any significant environmental harm ... “. It is

considered that an additional 17 dwellings in Granborough would be significant development.

- In relation to Affordable Housing the Council's approach is to require this type of housing in developments of 25 dwellings or more or on sites of 1ha or more. The application site is 1.3ha and as a consequence there should be a 30% provision of Affordable Housing. However, paragraph 4.8 of the Statement refers to a development area below the 1ha threshold. Since the unbuilt areas of the site will be changed in appearance (landscaping and attenuation basin) the entire 1.3ha will be developed.
- Paragraph 4.7 of the Statement argues that the proposal is considered as making a positive and meaningful contribution to the supply of deliverable housing land with the proposed mix of housing types. Whilst layout is to be considered at this outline stage, it would not prevent a detailed application looking to put larger house types on the plots as shown on the indicative layout plan. The financial viability of the proposals has to be questioned particularly with the smaller house types as indicated and, more importantly, taking into account the financial burden of a Section 106 Planning Obligation Agreement that would be imposed on any planning permission to be granted, the Overage Provision that would legally become due to Buckinghamshire County Council should the land use change from agricultural to residential and finally the strip that exists to allow access from Sovereign Close across Open Spaces land owned by AVDC. Whilst these smaller house types could be regarded as types which the village would welcome, the developer is in business to make a profit and, if that cannot be made by the proposed housing mix indicated in the outline planning application, then the only recourse would be to propose larger house types at the detailed planning stage.
- Paragraph 4.12 states that "the site is sustainably located". However, you have to get into a car just to buy a newspaper. There is no footway along the road to Winslow (the nearest town with amenities) and not everybody would wish to or would be capable of cycling bearing in mind there is no dedicated cycleway to Winslow.
- Paragraph 4.13 states that the proposal would not extend any further west of the existing development to the north of the site. By inspection of the site location plan it can be seen that development to the north is sporadic, on the opposite side of Hogshaw Road and is not contained within the existing developed footprint of the village.
- Paragraphs 4.14 and 4.15 appear to be contradictory. Paragraph 4.14 states that the development would not have any adverse effect upon the rural character of the settlement whilst 4.15 concedes that the development will not have any overly adverse effect.
- A traffic report has been submitted in support of the application and contains an estimate of traffic movements. However, there is no indication as to precisely how these estimates of movements have been calculated. Further, the report states that the roads in Granborough are "lightly trafficked" – this appears to be a matter of opinion statement rather than a factual statement of actual vehicle movements. Finally the report states "There should be no transport reasons for objection to this development." The fact is that 17 more dwellings would significantly increase traffic movements to and from and within the village and this can hardly be described as sustainable.
- A "Draft Heads of Terms" has been submitted in regard to any Section 106 Planning Obligation Agreement that might be put in place should permission be granted. We note that the sum of £105,954 is being proposed to fund the expansion of the

catchment secondary school to enable the provision of additional secondary places arising from the proposed development. Which particular school is being considered and does it have the available space to accommodate expansion? What provision would be made for primary and pre-school age children? The Head Teacher of Granborough's catchment primary school (Mrs Catherine Gouldstone – North Marston C of E School) has recently confirmed that the school is always close to capacity, if not exceeding. In addition she also confirmed that there is no space on site to satisfactorily accommodate any further expansion. If primary school age children are to have to travel to Whitchurch or Winslow (if there is capacity there), the travel distances would increase along with further pollution and increase of the carbon footprint.

- A flood Risk Assessment & Development Drainage Strategy report has been submitted in support of the proposals. In regard to disposal of foul water the report states that Anglian Water will be consulted to establish if the existing drainage system has the capacity to cope with the additional dwellings being proposed. Should this consultation establish that the existing infrastructure could not cope with the increase in sewage, then a further contribution would be required from the developer to fund the necessary requirements to make the development feasible.
- An Agricultural Land Classification report has been submitted and this concludes that the site is classified as Class 3b land – moderate quality agricultural land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops or lower yields of a wider range of crops.
- A Statement of Community Involvement has been submitted and this summarises the responses to the invitation to comment on the proposals prior to submission of an application. However, the responses were minimal, but the majority were against the proposals.
- A detailed site survey has been submitted and finally a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application and this report concludes that the proposals would have a low visual impact and loss of existing landscaping features would be minimal.
- It must be borne in mind that all the supporting reports and assessments have been carried out by professionals. However, their fees have all been paid by the developer.
- **In summary** we would stress that all Local Planning Authorities have a duty to be consistent in their decision making process and a precedent has already been set by the decisions made in the following similar applications:-
 - 17/01907/AOP, 17/00393/AOP, 16/03625/AOP and 16/03614/AOP.
 - There was a further recent application reference 16/03612/APP in Granborough which was refused for the following reasons:-
 1. The proposed development would fail to comply with the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, to conserve and enhance the natural environment and to reuse land that has been previously developed. The development of this greenfield site with three dwellings outside the built-up limits of the village would represent an unacceptable intrusion into the countryside on a greenfield site which could cause harm to the rural setting and character of the settlement. Granborough is a smaller village which has only 3 of the key services, and therefore it is considered highly likely that there would be a

significant reliance on the private car thus not ensuring a locationally sustainable proposal. Furthermore the proposal would constitute the partial development of a larger site which if permitted would create an unfortunate precedent for further development which would be difficult to resist, further detracting from the character and appearance of the countryside. The failure to comply with the core planning policies of the NPPF and the harm caused significantly outweighs any benefits of the proposed development. The proposal would be contrary to Policy GP.35 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

We for I