

# Overton Mill Development

This paper is designed to set out a series of arguments to be used in response to the Outline Planning Application submitted for Overton Mill. It is intended that people can pick and mix ideas and interpret into their own words as they write to Basingstoke & Deane Council.

Below are set out some arguments around the overall scheme and then delves into more detail about the access to the site

The deadline for comments is: 30 April 2025

## Summary

- The outline Planning Application is for an additional 400 homes – which represents a 20% increase in the size of Overton. This is too many for Overton to cope with.
- Most residents would support building on a Brown Field site if the developers were prepared to offer a reasonable balance of affordable housing, access that would work for the village, integration with the rest of the village, some additional services for the village (eg educational services) and improvement to the overall infrastructure in the village. These points have been made to CEG and Portals throughout this process and all of them appear to have been ignored.
- Given that this development is proposed on a site that offered large scale employment, there is no evidence that the applicant has made any effort to consider alternative uses for the site.
- The argument to provide access solely through existing roads does not stand up to any scrutiny. The very fact that developers require access via the Kingsclere Road is evidence that they recognise that the existing road network cannot cope and that concessions will have to be granted to access the site from the National Park on the North side of the railway line.

## Context

1. The village cannot cope with an additional 400 homes being built. The infrastructure is not there and development on this scale will destroy the village. The original concept for redevelopment of the Mill site would see c250 new homes together with educational, medical and light industrial facilities that would add value to the village. All of these suggestions have been ignored in favour of maximising the number of homes;

2. If 400 homes are to be imposed by third parties on the village without any facility for the constituents to object, then building on the Mill site represents the only site that protects green fields and as such is the least worst option. However, the residents have the right to expect that such an imposition should not be allowed to destroy the community of Overton;
3. The Community would prefer to see the Mill developed and for it to happen soon to:
  - a. Solve the local housing need;
  - b. Deal with an industrial eyesore on the landscape;
  - c. Act as a bulwark against other less desirable outcomes (such as building on North Field or Sapley etc):
4. Any new development must be fully integrated into the village and this needs more than is currently provided;
5. The Village infrastructure needs upgrading to cope with additional demands (eg the provision of Doctor's surgery, School (both primary and secondary), water, sewage etc cannot cope with current demand);
6. Increased traffic will be a major issue with an additional 900 people. [Note when Portals was operating at full capacity there were buses to bring workers in at 0600 each day (ie few cars) and the trucks used to park overnight to enter the Mill site from 0700]. This will effect all roads around Overton and the East, where the existing road network consists of single track country lanes with multiple blind corners. Failure to address this as part of the application will lead to chaos in the surrounding rural roads and the likelihood of very serious accidents on the Kingsclere Road to immediate South of the railway line.

## Affordable Housing

The Outline Planning Application is seeking to deliver 0.01% Affordable Housing as part of a target of some 400 homes. It is Affordable Housing where Overton is most deficient and any acceptance of less than the standard of 40% that Basingstoke and Deane have signed up to should be grounds for refusal of the application.

## Development of additional infrastructure

Existing services cannot cope with the size of the village as stands and the application seems to run roughshod about any concerns raised herein. The Doctor's surgery currently seems to have a 3-4 week waiting list for a telephone consultation and the car park is always full. This will need expanding to cope with an additional 20% population. Equally schools, parking, road network, water and sewage will all need upgrading.

## Access

A new access road to the site onto the Kingsclere Road (B3051) to the North of the Railway line will be required and this is acknowledged by the Developer. The entrance will even more important once the construction traffic has finished as, when occupied, the new estate will generate considerable extra traffic – way in excess of the construction needs.

### Rationale for new entrance to site directly onto Kingsclere Rd:

1. Enables a holistic solution to the inherently dangerous crossing of the railway bridge on the Kingsclere Rd (B3051). This would require 3-way traffic lights to allow traffic to emerge from Hill Top Road;
2. Would provide a safe pedestrian and cycle access between the site and the village and school thereby enhancing integration;
3. Would use the proposed Construction traffic entrance onto the site and so would have no additional impact on the National Park. Because it would be using the same facility as is required for construction there would be no new negotiations with Wessex National Parks or Hampshire County Council; and
4. Would divert northbound traffic away from the centre of the village. This means that anyone working at, say, Aldermaston would be able to avoid the village centre.

### Rationale for not using Station Rd/ Papermakers Lane:

1. The proposal claims that this route is a minimum of 5.5m wide. This is not correct. The existing route is not wide enough for two lanes of traffic:
  - a. Under the railway bridge at the entrance to the site;
  - b. Over the River Test at Quidhampton Mill;
  - c. Past houses on the southern side of Station Rd between Quidhampton Mill and the Fire station;
  - d. At the restriction by the Old House at Home;
2. Access to London Road is difficult already – particularly so on a Tuesday morning when the bin lorries are working. An additional 900 residents will make it impassable and traffic will use minor roads to avoid this jam. All the minor roads (Straight Lane, Nutley Bottom) are single track country lanes used extensively by pedestrians and walkers and none of them have any provision for pavements. They all have multiple blind corners;

3. When Overton Hill was developed (c100 houses), the main access was made onto a new junction with London Road because access via Station Road would not be able to cope with the additional traffic. The same argument applies to development of the Mill site – the only difference being that the Mill site would support four times as many homes;
4. The proposal suggests widening the road at Quidhampton. Whilst this could possibly alleviate one of the blind corners, it would not address the chokepoints. Furthermore the land is privately owned;
5. Arguments that Station Rd coped when the factory was operational are totally spurious. Firstly many of the workforce lived in Overton and so walked to work. Secondly when staff came from further afield, Portals used buses to get workers on site, thereby reducing reliance on private cars. Thirdly, Portals operated a three shifts, starting at 0600, 1400 and 2200 and, as a consequence, any cars going up to and back from the Mill did so at quiet times of the day for other road users. They were always outside busy times of the day (eg for daily commutes or school runs). They also did not have the added burden of multiple deliveries throughout the day (for example Amazon/ Tesco/ Sainsbury deliveries). Fourthly, the HGV traffic used to arrive overnight and park outside the Mill gates so they could enter at 0700 – again avoiding “normal” busy hours;
6. Any traffic heading north from the site would go via Hill Top Road and turn right onto the Kingsclere Road (B3051) immediately south of the railway bridge. This is a completely blind turning and is a fatal accident waiting to happen. As Aldermaston is one of the largest single employers in the neighbourhood and many more would work in, say, Newbury the volume of traffic using this junction would grow exponentially and would lead to the inevitability of serious accidents.