

To

Chris Banks New Forest National Park Local Plan Programme Officer C/O Banks Solutions ,64 Lavinia Way, East Preston, West Sussex, BN16 1EF Tel 01903 783722 Mobile 07817 322750 Email: bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com

From

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Dear Mr Banks - and Inspectors.

Before I comment on the six key questions , I would like to add the following.

I have read and heard that NHS Property Services, via their Consultants have requested that the designated Village Boundary be extended to include the Ashurst Hospital site. This seem to be a key “ploy” or preamble to securing development across the whole site.

The NHS/Consultants document, berates the NPA (National Park Authority) for failing to meet the current new housing targets without qualification, states that development at Ashurst Hospital would help the figures by providing “ up to thirty new homes “ .

Unless the new homes are “affordable” and allocated by the NFDC , to reduce its waiting list then this is really a ploy to massage the “new home” targets sought by Government, but will do nothing to reduce the lack of “affordable” homes in the UK and in the New Forest . Yes – the owners of shiny new flats on the edge of the Forest . might sell off their home , but also may hold onto them, to rent them out as a personal pension scheme –so one really cannot be sure of “30 new homes” unless enforced sale of previous properties is in place, which could not happen. Worse still the proposed houses/flats could be “holiday homes”!

However I digress - The NPA’s primary purpose is the conservation of the New Forest .

I was and am a supporter of the NPA being created. And was often vilified by the “vested interests” mostly land owners who feared they might never be able to build on their land , around the Crown Lands.

I never thought that the NHS, which was gifted the land in the past, by way of it being donated by the Crown at the time, to build a workhouse, and also part of the “9 Acres for the ‘Poor Boys allotments” – would become so avaricious, that it would wish to, overdevelop a piece of gifted land , that protrudes right out like a peninsula, into the SPA area surrounding it. NHS Property services now are a “vested interest” in my view.

NHS Property services have “ruined” what was a reasonable buffer between the Hospital and the Forest by placing a Car Park – with motorway height illumination – without consultation and have effectively ruined green land, and have the the cheek to call the whole site “ brownfield” or “previously developed land” , **BUT** in their own document they state the reality :-

19. The site comprises a previously developed brownfield site and grounds, in a sustainable location with direct access to local services, immediately adjoining the existing built area of Ashurst.

The “**grounds**” are the important bit , and cover almost half the site , and are crucially a bit of a barrier between the Village built up area and the SPA , the whole submission by NHS states , brownfield site /previously developed , and hence wants the whole site as” windfall” - when in fact the whole site is not as described in most of the NHS submission.

Yes, some of the grounds use to be “ allotments “ for the workhouse, but now they are green fields. Similarly , some land in the middle of forest heaths was ploughed up during wartime for food, and airfields were built, - but no one is suggesting they should be “windfall sites” !!!!

The fact that the NHS have not decided, or have a clear need for what NHS services could be provided in any new build at the site is worrying . What they want is the village boundary moved so they have one less obstacle to overdeveloping in my view , or selling of the site to a developer.

The NPA Planning Committee I have no doubt would approve new hospital use construction on the existing footprint of the redundant and the probably uneconomic buildings .

I am supportive of more actual social housing in the village, and even suggested when on the Parish Council that we allow part of our park for a couple of social home, but that went down in flames.

I do live near the site and would welcome new development at the site if it were affordable housing – not private - for the elderly/disabled on the old building footprint , it any urbanising effects on the SPA could be controlled as any build would be well within the 400m boundary from an SPA.

I support the Ashurst Parish Council view that , any change of the village boundary , should it happen be limited to the area where buildings already exist , and I have suggested only the top triangle of the site is reasonable , leaving the car park which was “green field” outside the triangle. On the other hand , an outright rejection of the NHS property services submission that the Village Boundary should change to include their site would not fetter their ability to apply to demolish and build new facilities for NHS or social uses on the current buildings footprint.

Finally – the NPA have a duty to protect the New Forest and its wild life and this duty overrides the wishes of NHS property services to overdevelop or sell off the site.

In response to the six questions :- (to be read with above please, as this provides background as well as opinion)

- 1. No – because the NHS Property services proposal is not clear, what its own NHS use might be in the future - and the “extra new homes “ are not a reasonable prospect until it is clear that NHS do not need the old building footprint for a social or NHS use.**

2. Very little if any- as the proposed development was private flats - it is unlikely that those highest on the NFDC waiting list, would occupy the current proposal.
3. Class3 use seems appropriate for this “gifted to the NHS” site as long as it is on the old footprint – not car park and does not affect the SPA unduly – i.e. pets- and intrusion into to the quiet woodland behind , etc .
4. Mitigation is difficult - and the offer of “ funds to help mitigate “ means help to limit damage that will occur . So an offer of money to the NPA is a tried and tested developers ploy, but detail of how much approximately, on what is should be spent , and if only on the hospital site, - is not clear.
5. Yes. This site is NOT a windfall site (as it is not all brownfield) ,and it is not a rural exception . Any change to the defined village boundary which is up against the SPA , needs to be very carefully scrutinised and if no other sites exist in the village, only then should a change occur. As it is, there is land , available (St Josephs, the Park, fields, around Foxhills school , which could be developed if the owners wished to apply. Even the Totton and Ashurst allotments could be used.
6. **Q.** *In overall terms should the site be allocated for development? What are the benefits? Alternatively should it be included within the settlement boundary for Ashurst?*

The answers to this 3 part question are

A, No, because of the environmental sensitivity of the nearby SPA and also that it is a quieter/ less used area than other areas around Ashurst , that abut Crown land /SPA boundaries. Also as the NHS has not properly decided its own land use need- AND- other developable land exists inside the Village boundary – or next to it , so developable land is not scarce.

B None for the village – possible a short term gain for the NHS is the site is sold on. Social housing is likely to be “private” and will not dent the housing waiting list , but would of course massage the figures to show “new dwellings” to keep government happy on promises to force planning authorities to create more home by having new homes targets.

C No , and certainly not the whole site –(which is the proposal) (A possible compromise of the northern triangle only , and then only for affordable social housing with controls, sheltered/ class C or NHS need housing (i.e. nursing accommodation etc.- would be reasonable – and holiday homes or large private family homes excluded –should the site be sold off.)

If you have read all of this. Thank you !

[REDACTED]