

Statement from the Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group on the Outline Planning Application submitted by Homes England for the Pirbright Site, Compton.

The Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Committee has, for the last 30 months, been preparing a development plan for the village through to 2036.

Our endeavour is to represent a majority community view of future development, based on the widest possible consultation and evidence gathering, in the key areas of housing, facilities, business, infrastructure, education, environment, roads and transport whilst protecting Compton's rural setting.

The NDP evidence supports the development of the Pirbright site in line with WBDC's recommendation in its Supplementary Planning Document (September 2013) for a residentially led and mixed development of 140 dwellings to include work and recreational space. We reiterated this support in an Interim Policy Statement on Pirbright (September 2019).

Whilst 140 houses would be a substantial increase in housing in the village, expected to produce about a 20 per cent increase in population (340), the NDP considers it to be reasonable, balanced and importantly represents the community's majority view.

However, the recent HE outline planning application applies for up to 250 dwellings – about a 38 per cent increase in housing and an expected 600 increase in population. The NDP evidence's view is that this proposed number of houses is in excess of that appropriate for the village. This expansion will not be manageable, will have serious negative consequences in the key areas of future development mentioned above, and the loss of many of the aspects of Compton village life valued by its residents.

HE at an open village meeting earlier this year justified this 250 number, saying it was necessary to recoup the costs of the Pirbright site's decontamination and remediation. Such costs, yet to be quantified, would fall to a developer purchasing the land.

The NDP Steering Group does not believe that this is a justifiable approach – in effect passing these costs onto the village by HE's proposed increased number of houses. The site, under several guises, has been a government-owned facility since 1937 and the NDP's view is 'the polluter pays'.

Should the Parish Council object to the application, the NDP would support the Parish Council's position.

The planning application process invites individuals in the village to comment directly to WBDC by the **29th July 2020**.

Copies of the following documents can be found on our website, www.comptonndp.org.uk

- Pirbright Site Compton Supplementary Planning Document - West Berkshire Council Sept 2013
- Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan Interim Policy Statement – Sept 2019
- Draft Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan – July 2020