

MORCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

1, Mount Pleasant Road, Morcott, Oakham, Rutland. LE1 5 9DP

Tel: 01572 747 360

E-mail: clerk@morcottparishcouncil.org.uk Web: <http://morcott.leicestershireparishcouncils.org>

HIF Team

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

2 Marsham Street

London

W1P 4DP

(By E-mail: HIF@communities.gov.uk and michael.wilson@homesengland.gov.uk)

6th March 2019

RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL BID FOR HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING IN RESPECT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ST GEORGE'S BARRACKS, NORTH LUFFENHAM

Dear Sir,

I write as Chairman of Morcott Parish Council with a remit from the Parish Council and overwhelming support within the community represented by it.

The published "Housing Infrastructure Fund, Supporting Documentation for Forward Funding" states clearly that any bid for funding **must** fulfil four criteria. Our evaluation of the Rutland County Council bid for HIF funding suggests the following conclusions against these four "must have" criteria:

Criteria #1: The bid must require grant funding to deliver physical infrastructure and provide strong evidence that the infrastructure is necessary and cannot be provided by any other route.

Evaluation: The MOD paper for the St Georges Barracks Project Board defines the optimum number of houses as 2315 in order to meet the cost of site clearance (£16m), infrastructure and contribution to the MOD budget. It is unclear what account has been taken of the financial return from the mineral extraction on the site, which could, on its own, meet the cost of site clearance without a grant.

Conclusion: The RCC bid fails the first "must have" criteria as no grant is strictly necessary to unlock the site.

Criteria #2: The bid should support delivery of an up to date plan or speed up putting one in place.

Evaluation: The adopted Rutland Local Plan and the Edith Weston Neighbourhood Plan both affirm a Spatial Strategy and Core Strategies which **specifically restrict development on the St Georges site** and make no mention of the large “garden village” now proposed. The more recent 2017 Draft Consultation Local Plan reaffirms these restrictions. Any further proposed changes to the existing settlement hierarchy will be subject to legal representations and challenge. Thus the Plan is not “up to date” and the bid, if granted, will not speed up putting one in place

Conclusion: The RCC bid fails the second “must have” criteria.

Criteria #3: The bid must have support locally.

Evaluation: The recorded Rutland Council vote of 21st January 2019 to proceed with the bid was only carried by a margin of 12 votes to 11. County Councillors are therefore very divided on the issue.

There is strong opposition from the 8 Local Parish Councils most impacted by development of the SGB site.

There is considerable doubt as to the governance standards adopted by RCC in their relationship with the MoD. This is likely to lead to a legal challenge.

There has been an unprecedented level of written and vocal public opposition to the published SGB Evolving Masterplan.

The scale and density of housing within the SGB Evolving Masterplan is out of step with surrounding settlements and the Objectively Assessed Housing Need for Rutland does not require the SGB development to take place for its criteria to be met.

The business case section on local support will be seriously flawed, for example by its failure to properly discount the claimed benefits, resulting from scaling back planned development in other parts of the county.

Conclusion: The RCC bid demonstrably fails the third “must have” criteria.

Criteria #4. The funding should be capable of being spent by 2022-2023.

Evaluation: It is highly unlikely that Rutland County Council can spend the funds in the given timescale:

The process to consult on, amend and adopt a revised Rutland Local Plan to incorporate the St Georges Barracks Evolving Masterplan assumptions in order to facilitate the necessary planning consents cannot start until well after the May local council elections and installation of a new Rutland County Council. This will be beyond the published HIF decision timescale.

It is unclear exactly when the St Georges Barracks site will be vacated by the Army. The previously published date of 2020 has recently been put back to 2021 (ref DIO: February 28th 2019). Given the complexity of the move of the current occupying Working Dog Regiment and extensive/complex site pollution eradication, there must be a low level of confidence in this date being met for vacant & safe possession of the site for works to commence.

There will be time consuming legal representations and challenges to any proposed contentious changes to the settlement hierarchy in a revised Rutland Corporate Plan and Local Plan, and to any subsequent planning applications.

This will include probable challenges from the owners of an alternative nearby site for any significant development proven necessary by Rutland County Council.

The whole St Georges Barracks site is rich in limestone which is potentially commercially extractable via extension of the existing Hanson facility at Ketton. Paragraph 8.38 of the current local plan states: - "Minerals are an important finite natural resource and so should be protected to ensure that future generations, well beyond the current plan period, are able to access such resources".

Any other evaluation of alternative uses of this site to enable much needed and supported job creation (by Corporate Offices/Research Centres/Technical Industries/University Annexes/Hotel and Leisure) will take considerable time.

All these issues are likely to be complicated to resolve in a satisfactory way to allow the project to go ahead and the HIF monies to be spent in time by 2022-23.

Conclusion: The RCC bid fails the fourth “must have” criteria. Thus, in summary, the RCC bid fails all four “must have” criteria defined by Homes England.

In determining whether to award the HIF bid, there must be a reasonable expectation that all the key criteria have been met. Should the HIF bid be approved, without all the criteria being met, we are advised that we have a reasonable case for referring the decision for a judicial review.

In conjunction with other local councils with whom we are pooling resources we have numerous pieces of documentation including legal correspondence to support the points raised in our letter. We are happy to share these with you if required or would welcome the opportunity to meet with your team to discuss this matter in more detail.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Johnson

Chairman, Morcott Parish Council

Cc to:

- Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP
- Mr K Bool County Councillor Normanton Ward
- Miss G Waller County Councillor Normanton Ward
- Mr E Baines County Councillor Martinthorpe Ward
- Mr P Cumming North Luffenham Parish Council
- Mr N Milne Edith Weston Parish Council
- Mr R Camp Manton Parish Council
- Mr V Pheasant Empingham Parish Council
- Mr N Newton Empingham Parish Council
- Mr E Gilman Pilton Parish Meeting
- Mr C Renner Normanton Parish
- Ms S Seed South Luffenham Parish
- Mr C Bacon CPRE