

Louise St John Howe
Program Officer
PO Services
PO Box 10965
Sudbury
Suffolk
CCO10 3BF

26th October 2019

EX160 (Green Gap Assessment)

Dear Louise

Nyn Manor Farm

In conjunction with my comments regarding Nyn Manor Farm (site Cuf17) in the EX156 Landscape Sensitivity Analysis I would also like to register my objections and comments to the above EX160

EX160

I am referring here to the material starting from page 102 in the report EX160.

I am confused and anxious to note that Nyn Manor Farm (Cuf17) has been excluded from the Gap Policy. In fact it seems to have been excluded from the analysis entirely as there is no reference to the importance of this site in defining the gap between the western end of Ridgeway and Northaw.

Cuf17 is a key example of “sloping landform descending from the settlement edge” which on page 103 is highlighted as a key sensitivity. It is also of strong Rural Character and is key to providing a sense of openness. It is therefore perplexing as to why it is not included in the Gap Policy Area. In my submission, it should be.

It is the key piece of land that helps meet the aim of the recommendation on page 105 of “preserve the sense of separation between the two settlements and retain the area of open and rural character that defines the area, comprising undulating farmland, well maintained hedgerows and copses”. Cuf 17 is this exact type of farmland that meets all of these requirements and should be included. It benefits from farming subsidies as confirmed in the dismissed planning appeal regarding some agricultural buildings 6/2017/1524/FULL. This simply reinforces that it is important, active farmland in the Green Belt.

To be more specific the site is highly visible along the 0.5 miles of the site on its eastern boundary with Vineyards Road. The distance between the Ridgeway (acknowledged ribbon development) and Northaw is 0.75 miles with the only open space being Cuf17 as the remaining 0.25 miles are wooded. If there is any development here then the sense of openness between the two areas will completely disappear and the distance between existing (low density, ribbon development) will shrink to only 0.25 miles. This surely makes this site Highly Sensitive to development and some of these contributing factors surely should fall within the scope of the Green Gap Assessment? Again it is incomprehensible how this has not been mentioned at all in the Green Gap Assessment.

Also the north-west part of Cuf17 is a key part of maintaining the separation between the ribbon development on the Ridgeway and the eastern extensions of ribbon development from Brookmans Park. It is a very short drive between the two and any further development would have the effect of making them feel part of one larger system.

Overall Process – EX156, EX160 and the Call for Sites 2019 as a whole

I just wanted to note my concerns with the process as a whole that WHBC has undertaken with the Local Plan and specifically the Call for Sites. Disappointingly there has been very little information supplied to residents and are forced to hunt it out in corners of the Council's website. The decisions being made could have profound impacts on individuals and communities across the Borough but the Council's approach is one that appears slapdash at best and sinister at worst. The significant over-emphasis of greenfield sites (over less lucrative, from certain perspectives more complex but in the end often lower impact brownfield sites) leaves a lot to be questioned.

The lack of mention of Nyn Manor Farm in the entire LCA (EX156) is of grave concern when considering it has been rated lower than the surrounding land but with no justifications despite the multiple reasons for equal if not higher sensitivity rating.

I remain deeply concerned that the owner of Nyn Manor Farm has undertaken significant contracts for WHBC over several decades. When one sees things such as the lack of any mention of the site in the LCA and the site being excluded from the green gap policy area with little or no justification, it makes me deeply concerned about some pre-existing deal that aims to remove due process and make for an unsound process here.

On a final note, I would like to thank you for reading my above concerns and the concerns raised in my other letter of the same date. I know this is an arduous process but the site at Cuf 17 has some key features that need protecting and make it an absolutely vital part of the Green Belt and the overall setting and environment of the communities. It is the open landscape between Northaw and Cuffley on that western edge (with the rest being woodland) that performs a major part of settlement separation and because of the woodlands, it is the only land that gives a sense of openness on this western side. Any development there would be a new standalone development that would decimate the rural nature of this important piece of Green Belt.

I won't reiterate the points about the site I made in the Call for Sites Consultation but there are so many reasons why this site is completely inappropriate for removal from the Green Belt let alone for the development of housing. I have attached my original submission in the Call for Sites Consultation for reference. Again, I apologise if I have not been technically accurate in the terms used etc. but hopefully the points are clear enough. I would be more than happy to discuss any of the above in person or on the telephone.

Yours sincerely

Barry Knichel