

A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR EGERTON

STEERING GROUP

17TH September 2021

Mr Derek Stebbing
Examiner
Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd

Dear Mr Stebbing,

EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Ref: 02/DAS/ENP

Thank you for your letter dated 15 September 2021 and for the copy of Mr Eustace's email to you sent via the Borough Council.

In addition to the comments already provided in my letter, also dated 15th September, I would add the following on the issue of access to the Orchard Nurseries site:

- I can confirm that a working group of Egerton Parish Council (EPC), the Older People's Housing Working Group (the Working Group), was in negotiation with Mr Eustace, as representative of the site owners – the Harmer family, over an extensive period in 2020-21 with the aim of achieving access to Orchard Nurseries through the New Road (s.30) site.
- The detail of the negotiations, at the request of the site owners, is confidential by mutual agreement between the parties, but I can confirm that negotiations reached the point, through solicitors, at which a substantial financial offer was made by the Working Group on behalf of EPC. This was accepted by Mr Eustace on 8 February 2021 on behalf of the site owners subject to six further conditions. After consideration and further exchange of correspondence, EPC confirmed that these conditions were accepted.
- On 14 May 2021 Mr Eustace on behalf of the site owners withdrew from negotiations, citing issues connected to the Stodmarsh SSSI as the reason. Before that time the Borough Council and Natural England had confirmed the NP Steering Group's findings that the Stodmarsh issue was not relevant to the Egerton waste water treatment works.
- More recently the promoter/developer of the New Road site suggested, at an EPC meeting on 3 August, that the site owners could revisit the provision of access to Orchard Nurseries on the terms discussed earlier if the EPC withdrew its objections to an application for development of another site owned by the same family as the New Road site which was not included in the draft Neighbourhood Plan or the 2030 Local Plan. The EPC was not willing to consider this on ethical grounds. Mr Eustace has subsequently stated his willingness to re-open negotiations but only subject to 'widening the remit' beyond the terms discussed earlier in the year. An explanation of the wider remit has not been provided to date.

Brief background

- The history of EPC's efforts to secure access to the Orchard Nurseries site is complex but you may wish to note that the Working Group had first proposed

to the Borough Council that the site should be included in the Local Plan 2030. The advice from the Borough Council was that this would not be necessary as the site would be considered as an exception site.

- The Working Group was also advised by the Borough Council that access could be achieved through the New Road site, advice which was subsequently withdrawn
- The Working Group first discussed access via the New Road site with the promoter of the site appointed by the site owners in January 2020. He was encouraging but made clear that agreement was not within his gift.
- Negotiations with the New Road site owners began in earnest in September 2020.

I hope this adds clarification, but am happy to provide further information if not specifically covered by the confidentiality agreement.

With kind regards,

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Carr'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and 'C'.

Jane Carr
Chair, Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

cc Claire Marchant, Ashford Borough Council
Steve Carnaby, Intelligent Plan & Examination (IPE) Ltd