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## Deputation

Date – 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026  
For – Romsey Town Council Planning Committee  
Project – Land north of Sandy Lane, Romsey  
Application – At Consultation Stage

## Intro and Board 1

- Good evening Councillors.
- Thank you for the opportunity to present and speak before you tonight on behalf of my client Macra Ltd in relation to the development opportunity of Land north of Sandy Lane, Romsey.
- The site in question measures around 1.28ha in area; positioned opposite the existing ribbon of residential development which runs along the southern side of Sandy Lane, and the more modern residential developments at Magnolia Walk, and Chivers Road and adjacent to Cedar Nursery to the east.
- The site was not promoted for development at the time of the preparation of the latest version of the Test Valley Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Indeed, in this regard we were a little late to the party with reference to the initial review of development opportunities at Romsey which was undertaken by Test Valley Borough Council. Notwithstanding this, the site was subsequently promoted to the Council in September 2025 at the time of the more recent Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation, confirming it to be available for development now, and a deliverable option
- Housing needs for Test Valley Borough have increased significantly under the current Government and thus the Borough Council has become acutely aware that a new approach to its spatial strategy and housing delivery is required.
- Test Valley Borough Council have been clear that in order to meet the identified housing needs within the Plan Area they cannot look only to larger strategic options adjoining the existing major settlements or settlement boundaries, and instead a borough wide spatial strategy is needed that includes considering a broader array of opportunities at the major settlements and looking to village settlements and the rural area to bring forwards sites that deliver sustainable growth supported by infrastructure and services that helps to meet the needs of both existing and future residents.
- Romsey remains a highly sustainable location to deliver housing growth and where opportunities present themselves adjoining one of the principle service

centre settlements they should be brought forwards in preference to development in less sustainable locations.

- Notwithstanding this however, the emerging Local Plan is still in draft, and we will be actively promoting this site on land north of Sandy Lane moving forwards and as part of that exercise we are pleased to have the opportunity to come and speak with you about our vision for the land and what we consider could be achieved.
- Test Valley Borough Council acknowledge that differences in sustainability between sites is often marginal and in the context of significant housing need, this has firmly evidenced the need to consider other sites of varying scale outside of settlement boundaries, where there are no overriding constraints.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should mean that sites well-related to settlements, whether adjoining or just beyond the boundary, should be considered positively where they can meet housing needs without significant environmental or other harms arising.
- This land north of Sandy Lane fulfils those criteria.
- The meeting this evening follows on from a public consultation event that we recently held at Abbotswood Community Centre on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> February. The information before Councillors this evening reflects the presentation boards available to the public at that event.
- As was discussed at the event, it is important to note that what we are displaying for you this evening is by no means fixed. The ink is not dry, and we will be undertaking further work to develop the scheme and provide a well-considered and technically justified expansion to the settlement at the time of any formal application.
- You will be aware that Gleeson Homes are in the process of preparing their planning application to develop the land to the west of this site, comprising just over 11ha of land for around 300 dwellings. Our land at Sandy Lane sits alongside this and directly in the context of this site, filling the gap between it and Cedar Nursery to the east.
- Having regard for the level of housing need, we consider that development to the north of Sandy Lane is an inevitability, however given the development already seen to the north of the lane, housing introduced here would not be isolated or represent pushing out new fingers of development into open countryside. Instead, it would round off the edge of the settlement and provide

a new defensible northern edge to the settlement in the context of the other existing built forms and uses north of Sandy Lane.

- We have taken a considered approach to this potential site; we have sought to understand the context, and the character of the community at the northern end of Romsey, the local infrastructure that is pressured and the constraints and opportunities of this land parcel.
- Our site at Land north of Sandy Lane sits contiguous to the existing urban edge of the settlement and in the context of the existing built development. The site is well contained by its existing boundaries and would not give rise to a significant intervention in the landscape. It would not project development out into open fields or countryside that are valuable to the setting of the settlement and give rise to no landscape harm.

#### **Site Layout - Board 2**

- The development proposal before you on our presentation boards this evening shows how a scheme of 35 homes could be arranged on the site and how we believe the site could in its totality be brought forwards.
  - The development would come forwards in a single phase and includes all of the necessary drainage infrastructure, highway works and green open space to meet the needs of the development.
- Within the 35 home layout before you, the proposal provides a mix of property sizes:
  - 2 x 1-bed maisonettes - affordable
  - 2 x 2-bed mainsonettes - affordable
  - 8 x 2-bed dwellings - affordable
  - 4 x 1-bed + study dwellings – semi-detached – Type A - Market
  - 6 x 2-bed + study dwellings – semi-detached – Type B - Market
  - 7 x 3-bed + study dwellings – Detached – Types C, D and E - Market
  - 2 x 3-bed dwellings – Semi-detached - Affordable
  - And, 4 x 4-bed detached homes – Detached – Types G and H - Market
- Within the mix of 35 homes, 14 are proposed as Affordable Homes which is 40% of the development. This complies with the position set out within the Local Development Plan.
- These comprise a mix of Affordable Rented Units and Shared Ownership Units – generally a 70/30 split, so the development will deliver 10 rented and 4 shared ownership dwellings comprising

- 2 x 1-bed maisonettes
- 10 x 2 bed – 2 maisonettes and 8 dwellings
- 2 x 3-bed homes
- The Shared Ownership Units – are likely to be a mix of 2x2-bed and 2x3-bed homes
- All of the properties have private front and rear gardens, parking either on plot or directly neighbouring the homes in a slightly more communal arrangement in the case of the smaller units at the north-east and north-west corners of the site.
- The larger 3-bed and 4-bed homes also include garages. Visitor parking is also provided in sensible locations where this can be used by all both towards the front and within the middle of the development.
- Dwellings are generally arranged addressing the main estate road, with a small group forming a private cul-de-sac on the western side of the site to make efficient use of the land. Units 6 and 7 face towards the main entrance to the site to provide surveillance of it and the play area and open space and Units 1 and 35 will be dual aspect, again to provide clear surveillance for the purposes of public safety.
- Properties therefore generally face inwards, with rear gardens towards the boundaries, or running alongside them, to enable the existing field boundaries to be preserved and enhanced.

### **Street Scenes - Board 3**

- The street scene sections provide a feel for the typical housing types, comprising a mix of brick and rendered properties, set beneath tiled roofs with brick window headers and cill details and string courses providing articulation to the elevations.
- The characteristic hedgerow and existing trees at the front of the site are retained, importantly preserving this rural edge character. The Sandy Lane Street Scene section indicates how the soft verdant northern edge of the carriageway will be maintained; defined by these landscape features.
- We consider this will positively reflect local character and setting in this respect.
- Sandy Lane is well surveilled by existing properties on the southern side of the carriageway, and the preservation of local character in this edge of settlement location has taken precedence in this regard to offering further direct street frontage surveillance.

**Typical Elevations - Board 4**

- The site has been arranged with a central estate road which weaves between two areas of public greenspace. Traffic calming will be in place here to ensure safety for residents using these spaces and particularly acknowledging that Children are likely to be outside playing. This is likely to take the form of a raised surface treatment, speed calming measures and a change in surface colour or material.
- Larger detached dwellings are positioned towards the middle of the site, replicating the lower density detached properties on Sandy Lane, with the smaller units in a more communal arrangement at the northern end of the site. This will also ensure a low density feeling of openness on entering into the site, preserving the edge of settlement character.
- Dwellings address the highway ensuring this is well surveilled and units positioned in prominent corner positions will be dual aspect to address the street scene in both directions and avoid blank or unarticulated walls.
- The arrangement of the estate road, and public greenspace at the southern end of the site provide good for tree planting and public footways to both sides, providing a permeable and verdant character and softening the appearance of the development.
- There are good opportunities for new tree planting and biodiversity enhancements to be delivered through the development, having regard for the relative ecologically neutral nature of the site as it stands, comprising maintained grassland. Significant new hedge and tree planting is suggested as will be clear from the images presented.

**Drainage and Flooding - Board 5**

- As has been a common theme across large areas of the Country with the level of rain we have recently seen, surface water flooding has been an issue local to the site.
- We are aware of the localised drainage issues and we have, as part of our detailed technical work to support the development proposal fully assessed the hydrological context of the site.
- The site at present does not flood. There are no critical drainage issues upon it. Indeed this has been clear during the recent rainfall events where the land has remained dry.

- We have undertaken Ground Water Monitoring and Infiltration Testing to understand the ground conditions and enable us to evidence that the development of 35 houses, and its associated infrastructure, would not result in either flooding within or off of the site in all scenarios including a 1in100 year flood risk event and including a 40% allowance for climate change and any future changes in impermeable area on the site through urban creep.
- The proposal incorporates an attenuation basin, which is designed, in terms of its capacity, to allow surface water to be stored in the case of the worst case flood risk event. This will prevent surface water from being discharged within the broader development or indeed off-site. The attenuation basin will allow natural infiltration to the ground over time ensuring that there is no additional impact upon the network.
- We are aware that drainage and flooding are major concerns for local people, which is why we have taken a belt and braces approach to our technical work so that we can evidence there will be no impact or harm to either existing or future residents arising from this development.

#### **Highways - Board 6**

- The position of the new access has been carefully considered, sitting between two existing trees and a root bridge design is proposed to ensure no harm to these trees and to facilitate the delivery of an access to adoptable highway standards being delivered. This will take the form of a bell-mouth junction onto Sandy Lane.
- We have undertaken detailed highway visibility surveys and engaged with Hampshire County Council highways in relation to the design and arrangement of this access and they have been broadly content with the proposed approach.
- A separate pedestrian footway will also be formed onto Sandy Lane providing for safe public movement by foot without the need to walk on the carriageway and reducing the extent of engineering works between the trees that frame the vehicular access.

#### **Ecology – Board 7**

- We have undertaken detailed ecological survey work through both desk based assessment taking account fo the local Hampshire Environmental Records and through physical survey work on site.

- The site is identified as potentially being able to support badgers and nesting birds, albeit no evidence has been seen of badger species during the walkover surveys. Notwithstanding this, appropriate measures can be undertaken as part of the development to ensure no harm to badgers or breeding birds and appropriate working methods will be employed during construction to protect these species.
- The site has been assessed for reptiles, Great Crested Newts (GCN) and Hazel Dormice. Whilst there is no habitat suitability for reptiles or Dormice, the site shows some potential to support GCN and this will need to be the subject of further focussed survey work to determine whether there is any evidence of the site's use although accessible nearby ponds have been surveyed.
- Further survey work has also been undertaken in relation to foraging and commuting bats with transect surveys commenced in July which also completed at the end of the survey window in October last year.
- There is a moderate level of bat activity on site, and in view of this the layout has been arranged to set the houses back from the existing hedgerow at the northern end of the site to enable this to be preserved as a darker corridor, and indeed homes are also arranged away from the new hedgerows proposed around the site perimeter to again encourage bat movement along these new features. The development will be subject to a carefully considered lighting strategy to ensure that it continues to support the activities of all nocturnal wildlife.
- The homes will incorporate wildlife friendly features including bat bricks, swift bricks and hedgehog highways will be promoted through the garden boundary design to aid their free movement, along with native species planting to bolster the biodiversity enhancements delivered.

#### **Site Context and Infrastructure – Board 8**

- We are acutely aware that where additional development is proposed in any existing urban location this puts some additional pressure on the local infrastructure and that there are potentially multiple schemes that could come forward in the vicinity of the site that could cumulatively apply pressure to the existing services.
- We have therefore engaged with the local statutory undertakers to discuss service capacity in order to ensure that this would be available for the development.

- With respect to Electricity Supplies, we have entered into discussions with Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) who have confirmed there is adequate capacity within the network which will allow for all regular domestic services, including Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers, to be delivered to all properties
- The development will not be serviced by a Gas main supply. As per the stipulations of the 'Future Homes Standard' and 'Future Building Standard' set out within the latest Building Regulations, this is being phased out in preference of 'low carbon heating alternatives'. As a result, this will be an 'Electricity Only' development with Air or Ground Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) providing both radiant and water heating, coupled with Photovoltaics on roofs
- With regards to potable drinking water, following engagement with Southern Water, there are no known existing issues with potable water pressure. This development would however with the new infrastructure extended into the site, contribute towards the delivery of a local upgrade to the network and will not impact negatively upon existing capacity as a result.
- We are aware that over the recent past there have been issues with both Foul and Surface Water discharges – predominantly due to the development of Abbotswood and as a result we have ensured that the proposals do not add to these problems.
- Crucially, we have engaged early on in the process with Southern Water who have confirmed that there is sufficient capacity within the existing Foul Water network to accommodate the capacity required by the proposed development, without need for reinforcement or upgrading of existing infrastructure.
- With regard to surface water, we are required by National Policy to deal with surface water run-off in the most sustainable manner achievable having regard for the drainage hierarchy, which sets a preference for storage and grey water recycling and then sustainable drainage to the ground or an ordinary water course (OWC) by way of infiltration.
- In this case, as discussed previously, we are proposing that Surface Water will be dealt with by Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) on site which will take the form of soakaways functioning through infiltration, and alongside this an infiltration basin is proposed within the development, which will deliver the connected benefits of sustainable drainage and biodiversity enhancement.
- The site would be serviced by electricity only with no gas supply bearing in mind the expectations of current building regulations. We have also investigated

initially fibre provision with BT Open Reach, however to further discussions in this respect a permission for the site would need to be in place.

- We have taken a serious and considered approach to this site; we have sought to understand the history, the context, the character of ~~Braichfield~~<sup>Kensey</sup>, the local infrastructure that is pressured and the constraints and opportunities of this land parcel. We are serious about bringing this forwards and engaging with you constructively as part of this process and I hope that I have provided a useful overview into our thinking. I will now pass the baton back to you Chair and we welcome any thoughts or questions that you may have.

### **Economic Benefits and Next Steps – Board 9**

- The public benefits of a new housing development are not just limited to the 'housing' itself, whether it be market housing or affordable housing. The benefits of development to the provision of both new and upgrades to existing infrastructure, increase in local economic output through local spend and tax receipts or generating local jobs within the construction industry, are numerous.
- The House Builders Federation (HBF) are an industry body representing private sector house building from large national companies to small and medium enterprise builders and developers (SMEs). The HBF have undertaken detailed research into the outcomes from development projects and have been able to identify some of the key benefits of building new homes for the national and regional economy alongside delivering local community enhancements to infrastructure, wellbeing and sustainability.
- You can see on the screen what the effect of building 35 homes is upon local economic output. The development would deliver meaningful contributions towards local infrastructure in order of £218,750 and contribute positively towards the local economy.
- So, what comes next...
- Well, we will be collating the feedback from our public engagement, reviewing the responses and how we incorporate any necessary or appropriate changes into the development. We will also be having more structured Pre-Application Engagement with Test Valley Borough Council alongside our final technical evidence gathering, leading up to the submission of a formal Full Planning Application.

- Hopefully the presentation this evening has been helpful to you, to understand the scope and nature of what is being proposed, and we thank you again for the opportunity to present to you.
- Subject to the Chairman's direction, we will be happy to take questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Bennett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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