

Bromham Parish Council/Bromham Neighbourhood Plan Group

STATEMENT RELATING TO RAINIER DEVELOPMENT LTD FLYER

1. We have received a number of enquiries about the publicity 'flyer' received by residents in the week beginning 25 February about Site 43, one of the sites considered for inclusion in Bromham's draft neighbourhood plan. The flyer was distributed on behalf of Rainier Developments Limited, the potential developer of Site 43. The material circulated was not discussed with the Parish Council; however, we fully accept Rainier's right to pursue its own and its client's interests in this way.

2. That said, we do not accept that we have chosen the 'wrong' sites in the draft neighbourhood plan. As we make clear at paragraph B.1.4 of the draft plan, the assessment process we used identified more sites than are needed to accommodate the 500 dwellings required. We believe that our preferred sites are those that best meet the wishes of the majority of residents as expressed in the questionnaire responses.

3. The Rainier material states that Site 43 was the community's 'preferred housing site'. We clearly state at para B.5.4 of the draft neighbourhood plan that sites 43, 49, 51 and 52 all attracted substantial support in questionnaire responses. Site 43 attracted 265 supporting votes, Site 49 attracted 248, Site 51 attracted 234 and Site 52 attracted 236. However, one of the many other issues we needed to take into account in selecting preferred sites was Bedford Borough Council's Highway and Transport Access Surveys of 2016 and 2017. Those surveys suggested that Site 43 would generate 'Significant traffic impacts in the village, especially at Northampton Road/Grange Lane and Northampton Road/A428 junctions if [there were] no access to Stagsden Road'. There were no such traffic concerns in relation to Sites 49, 51 and 52. (See Appendix 7 of the draft neighbourhood plan)

4. It was clear from our consultation exercise that one of residents' major concerns was the impact that additional traffic associated with new development would have on village through-roads (See Draft plan paras A.5.1 and B.1.2). Taking this and the Highway and Traffic Access Survey comments together, we concluded that the combination of Sites 49, 51 and 52 offered the most logical solution in terms of accommodating the required housing allocation of 500 additional homes within the period of Bedford Borough's local plan in a sustainable location that is clearly defined by the southern and western boundaries of the A428. Including Site 43 as well would have provided much more capacity than is required for 500 homes. The preferred sites seem to us to meet the housing requirement by promoting the most sustainable location for new residents and bringing wider benefits for existing residents.

5. Rainier raised a number of other relevant points but none which make us believe that we have chosen the 'wrong' sites. Some of the points raised were –

5.1 Proposed new sports facilities being in the floodplain.

Although we do not view this matter lightly, flood mitigation measures taken in the past and flood and sustainable drainage measures required as part of the planning process suggest that actual flooding in the floodplain in any part of the village will be a very rare event. We also believe that using the floodplain for sports pitches makes best use of land which would not otherwise be developed. Using land outside of the floodplain would lose more good quality agricultural land to development.

5.2 The preferred sites Introduce additional traffic flows along Barker Drive and Peacock Road

Given the Borough Council Highway and Transport Access Surveys comments on Site 43 we do not believe Site 43 could go ahead successfully in traffic impact terms unless there were access from the site to Stagsden Road. That would only be economically sound if the development of Sites 49 and 51 went ahead: accordingly, the traffic impact on Barker's Lane and Peacock Road would be broadly the same.

The developers of Sites 49 and 51 discussed potential traffic limitation schemes in these areas at the public consultation event in March 2018 and while it will not be possible to eliminate additional traffic in the area, we believe everything will be done to make using other routes more effective.

5.3 New community facilities would be located on the edge of Bromham away from the village centre.

The Parish Council has listened to residents' concerns expressed during the consultation exercise and ensured that the Village Hall remains in the centre of the village. As to sporting facilities we believe it will be in everyone's interests to distribute facilities around the larger village. The current

proposal means there would be some facilities behind the Village Hall in the centre of the village, some at Chestnut Avenue and the new facilities in the southwest of the village.

We believe that the preferred sites are in close proximity of a range of village amenities, which should encourage residents to walk or cycle rather than drive to destinations in the village. The location of the proposed sports facilities would also be within easy reach of new and existing residents making walking or cycling to them a sustainable choice.

5.4 The adoption of Sites 49, 51 and 52 would require an additional roundabout in Stagsden Road.

For the reasons set out in para 3 above, our reading of the Borough Council's Highway and Transport Access Surveys of 2016 and 2017 reference to Site 43 i.e. 'Significant traffic impacts in the village, especially at Northampton Road/Grange Lane and Northampton Road/A428 junctions if [there were] no access to Stagsden Road' suggests that the traffic impacts would occur at those junctions if there were no access from Site 43 to Stagsden Road through sites 49 and 51. Accordingly, we believe a further roundabout would be needed in Stagsden Road in such circumstances.

We are still considering the precise siting of the roundabout with the developers, but we believe that a roundabout may also have a beneficial effect of further helping to reduce traffic speed in the area, which is an existing concern of local residents. This will be important in creating an environment in which both new and existing residents are encouraged to walk and cycle.

The Rainier material clearly does not express an independent view. Naturally, the company is representing its own interests. We urge residents to read the draft neighbourhood plan and form their own views.

Bromham Parish Council, 5 March 2019