



7 Rook Farm Way
Hayling Island
Hampshire
PO11 9DF

2 February 2017

Planning Development
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant
Hampshire
PO9 2AX

[Copy to Hayling Islander and The News]

Re: Havant Borough Council Planning Application APP/17/00007

Stance: Objection

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write regarding the application for housing development on Rook Farm field on Hayling Island, for up to 210 houses. I am grateful to Havant Council for the recent planning proposal notice recently attached to our gate, and also to the developer for their leaflet recently pushed through our door.

It is not often I am driven to writing a letter of nature. But this time I feel I must. There have been so many developments on Hayling Island recently, and they show no sign of stopping. People keep objecting, given the limitations of Hayling Island (it's singular road to the mainland, the limited school and doctors places, loss of ecological habitats etc.) but the objections are ignored and the developments keep going ahead anyway. I have no reason to expect this development to be any different. My question is: When is it going to stop?

I fully appreciate the need for housing. People need somewhere to live. Local housing developments are part of a bigger picture of the requirements of a burgeoning population; as there are more people so we need more houses. It is a simple fact. But there must come a point where the continuous building of housing is no longer *sustainable*. There's that word. Much is made of the "sustainability" of the development in the developer's leaflet. I lost count of how many times the word was used. It even made it into the planning proposal notice. But what does it actually mean?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "sustainable" as: *to be able to be maintained at a certain rate or level; conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources*. I would argue that this development does not qualify as sustainable, insofar as it does not maintain the current housing level, and does not conserve the ecological balance. But, moreover, sustainability requires a balance between developments and growth, and the rate at which natural resources can be supplied and replenished without being depleted. So how *sustainable* is Hayling Island?

Does Hayling have its own cardboard or glass recycling factories? No, it is all shipped off Hayling for recycling. Does Hayling manufacture its own compost from collected garden waste? No... Do we grow all our own food? Stoke Fruit Farm does a sterling job but all our cucumbers come from Spain and our bananas from Costa Rica. Does Hayling generate its own carbon neutral energy? Well,

there's a handful of houses with solar panels, but by and large, no. In short, Hayling Island is not a very sustainable community.

But it is part of one that is. Or at least one that should be. How sustainable is the UK as a whole? This isn't an easy question to answer, but one way to put a figure on it is to calculate a sustainability limit based on population density.

The UK population is currently 65.1 million (June 2015), and growing. Is this sustainable? How long before we are overcrowded?

First of all, overcrowded needs to be defined. We can keep building houses until the cows come home but sooner or later there will be so many people in the country that there will be no more space to build. But long before that happens the amount of housing that has been built will have taken away so much land that there won't be enough land to grow enough food to feed everyone. A maximum population density can be defined based on how much land one person needs to survive. So, how much land does someone actually need?

According to <http://ask.metafilter.com/77287/How-much-land-does-a-person-need>, 0.07 hectares per person is enough for "sustainable food security". There's lots of assumptions in this - that the land is fertile, well-managed, does not suffer soil erosion, drought or disease etc. It is implicitly assumed that this is mass agriculture and distribution of food product is well organised. Equally however it doesn't take into account the land you use up in your share of services - schools, hospitals, roads, power distribution, light/heavy industry, government and military land etc. And it doesn't take into account the areas of the UK that are uninhabitable and unfarmable - mountains, rivers etc. Not to mention not accounting for any space reserved for recreation - football pitches, golf courses etc.; desirable but not actually required for sustainable food security. And perhaps those areas that any self-respecting democratically-elected government would never build on such as areas of outstanding beauty, areas of special scientific interest (or, then again, maybe not). So, 0.07 hectares, per person, is a good conservative starting point.

The UK covers 24.4 million hectares. Assume that half of this land, 12.2 million hectares is useful to civilised human existence. That's 0.18 hectares per person. So, how long before the number of people in the UK grows to the point that equates to 0.07 ha per person? That's $12.2 / 0.07 = 174$ million people. That's still a lot of people. The question, how long before we are overcrowded, now becomes how long before the population of the UK reaches 174 million people.

If you believe the BBC, then <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36605899> records that the population grew in the twelve months 2014-2015 by 513300 people. This figure includes immigration (although the actual figure could be even higher). Continuing at that rate:

513300 represents 0.0079%

$65.1\text{m} \times 1.0079^x$ (years until overcrowding) = 174m

1.0079^x (years until overcrowding) = 2.67

$\log(1.0079^x) = \log(2.67)$

$0.00342x = 0.427$

$x = 124$

The UK will be overcrowded in 124 years.

Of course, things will get nasty before we ever get to this point, the point at which there is simply not enough space for everyone to survive. Certain foods will run short before others, businesses will have nowhere to expand into, you won't be able to move on the roads for cars, and there won't be

any countryside left. Some issues will become critical before others on a local or regional basis. It is impossible to say how this will manifest itself first; fighting for petrol on the forecourts? Fisticuffs in the biscuit aisles? Road rage on the roundabouts off the island? Power cuts at peak time? Supermarkets refusing to deliver due to traffic chaos on the only road on and off the island*? Complete breakdown of law and order and descent into civil war? However you look at it, current rates of population growth and housing development are bringing forward an impending overcrowding crisis. And, however it manifests itself, it is fair to say that civilised society will slowly but surely become very uncivilised indeed.

* this has already happened – following roadworks at Langstone on 31 January 2017, causing delays of up to 3 hours to get off the island with traffic queueing back to the seafront, and with some parents unable to collect their children from school on time, Asda refused to deliver to any PO11 postcode for a week.

How does this calculation look for Hayling, if Hayling Island were to be completely self-sufficient and sustainable? Hayling Island covers 3,000 hectares. At 0.18 hectares per person, **Hayling Island allows for a sustainable population of 16,600 people. In 2001, Hayling was home to 16,887.** Draw your own conclusions. My conclusion is that Hayling Island is at capacity and no further developments on Hayling should take place. Of course, as I have said previously, our community is part of a wider one to which sustainability should apply. But local and regional factors still play their part – road infrastructure, power and telecommunications limitations, school and doctor's surgery capacity, water supply and sewage processing limits, etc. etc.; therefore, local or regional population density limits can be lower than the national one.

You can argue with the numbers; the maximum population density calculation is entirely subjective. But you cannot argue with the logic that underpins it. There must, eventually, come a point at which you have to say: no more. When will that be? And what do we do when it happens? It will happen. It must be planned for. The problem is that this point is not defined, nor what to do about it. The definition is lacking at all levels of authority – local, regional and national. Sadly, authorities seem to only want to plan for development, with no genuine concern for the big picture; building only to cater for the perceived housing shortage, rather than addressing its limits. No-one knows when to stop.

I would be in favour of supporting housing development when it is implemented as part of a genuinely intelligent and logical environmental and infrastructure capacity sustainability study, based on solid evidence and sound independent analysis, whose housing development limits and population density maxima are defined on a local, regional and national basis, and where a clear set of policies and actions can be committed to by all authorities when these limits are reached. At present, nothing of the sort is in place. Given Hayling Island's unique infrastructure limitations that are already exhibiting their frailty, I can only raise strong objections to this development and any others on Hayling until such boundaries are clearly defined, agreed and adhered to.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Timothy Cooke