

OBJECTION TO WEST ACRE PARK APPLICATION

I wish at the onset at objection to West Acre Park that all large planning applications do need vigorous participation and involvement of the community and existing residents. By submitting this application whilst residents are still having to prevent catching Covid19 (the World's greatest pandemic and the UK's biggest crisis since World War Two) and submitting the application during the school holidays, has meant the majority of residents are excluded from being able to make their voices heard. This in my view infringes their Human Rights under the 1998 Human Rights Act and brings into question the whole validity of this application.

I am the elected member for Ryde East for the Isle of Wight Council and Ryde Town Council and after detailed consultation with residents I am writing to object to the West Acre Park Planning application and seek its refusal by IWC Planning Committee. My detailed material objections are listed below and my outline premise for refusal is as follows:

In 2017, 11 acres of Westridge Farm was set aside by the Landowner to build 80 new houses by Captiva Homes and with a variation order this is now 86 new homes. The Development in 2017 was approved and currently being built. This initial Westridge development was clearly on the settlement border and had a direct access route through Hope Road to Marlborough Road. The tenant farmer, whose family has been farming the land since 1966, lost 11 acres but although this damaged his business, he was able to adapt and now has sufficient land to still be a sustainable farm. . The farm known as Westridge Farm goes back at least 600 years and this historic pasture and countryside has been used for animal husbandry possibly for 1000 years. Westridge Farm was a triangulation of three principle farms which made up the historic settlement of Elmfield. Westridge is the only one remaining and the last remaining working farm in Ryde and one of only ten remaining dairy farms on the Isle of Wight. This application proposes to set the entire farm aside for housing and poses the choice between the community having a sustainable and working farm within its boundaries or 475 houses.

Summary - Reasons for Refusal

This application in my view as Ryde East Ward Councillor should be refused on the grounds that is not within the designated settlement boundary of Ryde as per the Island Plan Core Strategy, the location does not have adequate road access and in fact will cause and increase in highway safety issues on Appley, Bullen, and Marlborough Roads. It discriminates against older adults, children, those who do not drive and those with disabilities as it impedes their human rights and independence of not providing accessible public transport in reasonable walking distance on all homes built on the site. It is clearly in contravention of SP1 as the land identified is not on land within or immediately adjacent the defined Ryde settlement boundary. SP1 clearly states "*unless a specific local need is identified, a development proposal outside of, or not on immediately adjacent to the defined Ryde settlement boundary will not be supported*". The Ryde Position Statement (2018/19) produced by Ryde Town Council clearly states that housing provided by approved planning applications and outline planning permissions has provided or will provide sufficient housing need in Ryde and the only outstanding need was for one and two bedroomed units this is not provided by the West Acre Park application. It is also contrary to SP5, SP4, DM13 and DM7 of the Island Core Strategy 2012 and contrary to sections 12-15 of the National Policy Framework. The application does not prove housing need for Ryde and as there is existing land in the immediate Ryde East and South Area for housing with full and outline planning permission there is clearly an argument of overdevelopment. It creates clearly coalescence with Nettlestone and Seaview as the application erodes the historic and natural environment and countryside between the parishes of Ryde Town and Nettlestone and Seaview.

1. Not Within the Settlement Border

It has to be clearly pointed out that this application is not within the Settlement Border as outlined in the 2012 Island Plan Core Strategy and in fact the farm is a clear distance from the Settlement Border. In relation to Ryde and 2012 Core Strategy, the settlement boundary is clearly defined in the Island Plan Core Strategy 2012 as indicated by a red line in the Map on page 122. There has been no change to the settlement boundary since the adoption of the Core Strategy. It is clearly in contravention of SP1 as the land identified is not on land within or immediately adjacent the defined Ryde settlement boundary. SP1 clearly states *“unless a specific local need is identified, a development proposal outside of, or not on immediately adjacent to the defined Ryde settlement boundary will not be supported”*. The Ryde Position Statement (2018/19) produced by Ryde Town Council clearly states that housing provided by approved planning applications and outline planning permissions has provided or will provide sufficient housing need in Ryde and the only outstanding need was for one and two bedroomed units for rent and this is not provided by the West Acre Park application.

It is within the Ryde Area Action Plan Border. The AAP is not for housing but in fact economic development and it can be and I will argue that a sustainable and working farm is an essential contributor to the economic sustainability of Ryde and Isle of Wight. The three AAP (Ryde being one) within the Island Plan Core Strategy 2012 are policies that were ‘framing’ policies, intended to frame the content of the subsequent area action plans (AAPs) that were envisaged. Whilst the AAP policies may identify issues relevant to that area that the Council wanted to explore and evidence further, as framing policies there are not in the Core Strategy to have applications assessed against them. For the purpose of this objection, the focus is on the fact this application is well outside the Settlement Boundary. The proposed land in this application in fact borders on the Parish line (border with Nettlestone and Seaview Parish Council and Ryde Town Council and raises the issue that if houses are built on this land there will be coalescence between the two communities of Ryde and Nettlestone and Seaview. It will create a precedent of creeping urbanisation and destruction of the countryside and green belt between the two communities.

2. Contextualisation of the Land that makes up the Application

It has to be noted that within the application there are four specific areas of land and there is a need to understand these as follows:

2.1 Westridge Farm – This includes all land East of the existing area named 1st phase of West Acre Park with 86 houses (11 acres) with approved planning permission. It therefore, can be clearly identified the farm in itself is not within or adjacent to the Settlement Border. Giving planning permission as applied for in the total scheme will remove this historic farm for ever. The actual boundary of the farm since the approval of planning permission of the 80 (now 86 houses) is now beyond this approved housing development. A settlement boundary is still clearly the gardens of the houses on Circular Road and Hope Road. Therefore, what constitutes Westridge Farm is not within or adjacent the Settlement Border. This development specifically terminates an existing sustainable farming business which will simply be taking away the livelihood of a family and make the adults within that family (who have been working the farm since 1966) unemployed. This contravenes Article 23.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right 1948 which states Article 23 *“Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment”*. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 formed the basis of the European Convention on **Human Rights**, which in turn was incorporated in UK law by **the Human Rights Act 1998**. The specific

Articles of the ECHR relevant to planning include Article 6 (Right to a fair and public trial within a reasonable time), Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence), Article 14 (Prohibition of discrimination) and Article 1 of Protocol 1 (Right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property). I argue that granting planning permission on land that provides a home and livelihood and employment for a family knowingly denying said employment, home and income is in breach of their human rights as protected in the Human Rights Act 1998.

2.2 Appley Field – Behind Trucast Factory **Trucast** Ltd, located in **Ryde**, Isle of Wight, is part of the Doncasters **Turbocharger** Components Division and a leading international manufacturer of hot-end **turbocharger** wheels for the automotive and power generation industries. This field is technically on settlement boundary border and does raise issues on the suitability of housing next to this industrial complex. Building houses at the back of this industrial complex raises health and safety and environmental/public health issues. This field is/was owned by Abbeyfields and originally planned for a residential home. It is not part of Westridge Farm.

2.3 Fields off Bullen Road and separated by a wooded area to Westridge Farm –

These are used as extra grazing fields by Westridge Farm. This ancient woodland and Parkland is seen as having archaeological importance as confirmed by Defra. This was highlighted by the Archaeological Officer in his/her original report in 2017 in regard the 80 houses application although not highlighted by the Planning Officer at the time.

2.4 125, Marlborough Road – This is a residential private house that has been bought for to be used as access to West Acre Park. This is the only part of the scheme within the Settlement Border. Marlborough Road has a defined layout and design and having an access route to West Acre Park at this point put increased pressure on narrow pavements and existing residents.

In considering the application officers and planning committee members need to not just look at the whole development but in the context of these four components and that each land component has unique issues that cannot be marginalised or dismissed. The principle land is outside the settlement border and is an attempt to create a new “village” styled development which not only loses a working and sustainable farm but changes the character of the historic Ryde settlement of Elmfield Village which was built around Westridge and Appley Farms. It has to be strongly emphasised that in considering this application of a jigsaw and complex mix of land, there is any doubt one piece or pieces of the jigsaw do not fit then the whole application should be refused as it is submitted as a whole.

3. Radical Change to the Character of Elmfield

This choice between housing or a working and sustainable farm has to consider very seriously as the previous Westridge Farm application in 2017 did not destroy the whole farm. It was an application on the settlement border and it had road access. This application takes away forever Westridge Farm and relegates it to the archive. The untouched Isle of Wight unique natural countryside under the tender hands of a generational husbandry styled farmer will be changed forever. A farm that historically interrelated to a defined historic settlement and village, Elmfield will be socially engineered away from this farm/village relationship and rural heritage to one that is only an urban sprawl that has lost its historic character and identity. It will in fact be two opposing communities of Elmfield and West Acre Park (or as the name of the applicant company – Westridge Village).

This application is presented at a time when IW Council is at a turning point of reviewing the 2012 Island Plan Core Strategy after 8 years and replacing it with a new up to date Isle of Wight Planning Strategy.

All planning applications will need to be determined against the development plan. In this instance the development plan consists of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Island Plan Core Strategy. I would highlight that there is no policy in the Island Plan Core Strategy to prevent the loss of agricultural land for residential development. However, I do wish to argue the importance of this land being a sustainable farm in the context of the Social and Community Dimension and Character of Area, Habitat, Environment, Green Infrastructure, the Economy and Tourism as outlined in the Core Strategy. A working and sustainable farm that cares and protects the countryside is important to the whole uniqueness of the Isle of Wight and cannot be separated from its core economic driver Tourism and now in light of the pandemic Covid19 there is a real need on the Island for local food production.

The National Policy Framework Section 15 (170) outlines the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment. I argue that the West Acre by building 475 houses on historic countryside is altering the whole landscape (a rolling valley) that it in fact does not conserve and enhance the natural environment but in fact destroys this environment.

4. Overdevelopment and development that is out of character of the area

I would describe this application as a bridge (development) too far for the Ward of Ryde East (from 2021 – Ryde Appley and Elmfield) and Ryde as a whole. There is an over-concentration of housing development in the East/South of Ryde that has already changing the character of the area but pushing totally to breaking point the fragile community infrastructure. There is already 1300 within the current Ryde East and Ryde South Wards with outline planning permission and another 600 that have either had planning permission (full or outline) or been built since 2012. The figure of 2100 is mentioned in the Island Core Strategy 2012 states allocated to Ryde. The West Acre Park development totally pushes well over this figure. It is also outside the settlement boundary when within the settlement boundary there are plenty of brownfield sites still available and opportunity with new planning regulations shops in Ryde that could be converted into flats. The real need in Ryde is not for three or four bedroomed houses but one or two-bedroomed flats for rent. Purchasing affordable housing at the price already marketed by the developers on the current 86 house site at Westridge Farm, does not in any way meet the need in Ryde which is in fact social housing. The Ryde Town Council Position Statement clearly states that the current bank of planning permissions and houses that have built since 2012, that Ryde has met its allocation and no other housing development such as West Acre Park are needed. This is a clear case of overdevelopment.

5. Negative Impact and Adverse effects on the Existing Cohesive Community of Elmfield

The Island Plan's DM7 states "*The Council will support development proposals that improve cultural, educational, leisure and community facilities*".

I argue that West Acre Park is contrary to Development proposals that will be expected to:

1. *Consider the needs and requirements of all people in the community (both immediate and wider) it will serve.* This application makes no consideration of integration and cohesion with the existing well-established Elmfield village/settlement although the development is within this development. It is in fact “sold” as a village in its own right and not part of Elmfield.

2. *Create opportunities to provide multi-use facilities for greater community benefit.* The West Acre Park proposal includes the provision of a GP surgery which is misleading as it indicates that there have been discussions with the IW Clinical Commissioning Group (who commission GP surgeries). A GP surgery is also mentioned in the Pennyfeather development which already has outline planning permission and the IW Council’s current Nicolson Road Community Hub application. The latter GP proposal is the only one the IW CCG has discussed and this involves the proposal of an existing GP Surgery, Esplanade Surgery, moving to Nicolson Road. The inclusion of a GP surgery is wild speculation on the developer’s part and the developer provides no substantive evidence how this fits within the current IW CCG policy. The Elmfield area is part of the St. John’s Church parish area and this traditional community hub with the church hall acting as the main community hall for the area has not been involved in any discussions with the developer.

3. *Encourage appropriate intensification of existing facilities.* This application and the 2000 plus extra residents it will create will not only intensify existing facilities but will overwhelm them. The local primary schools have no capacity to take extra children and the nearest two primary schools to the site (Oakfield and St. Mary’s Primary School) would be accessed by Appley Lane from West Acre Road which is known does not provide and will not provide safe access for children from the proposed site due the impossibility of building footpaths on Appley Road. The main secondary school is Ryde Academy which is on the West of Ryde is at full capacity with Ryde children having to travel on bus to Sandown or Newport.

4. *Ensure that any provision of social and community infrastructure is accessible by cycling and walking and, wherever possible, public transport.* In section 7, I outline in detail the problem with the connecting road infrastructure to this development. Although, there are two bus routes with one on Appley Road and the other on Marlborough Road, residents on the new estate would have a substantial walk to them and access points onto Appley and Bullen Roads would be dangerous and do not provide and could not provide suitable cycling lanes or footpaths.

5. *Be located within defined settlement boundaries, unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative location would be more suitable to fulfil a local need.* As described in the summary above and Section 1, this site is outside the defined settlement boundary.

6. *Support the provision of sufficient and sustainable education facilities to meet the level of need outlined by the Council’s Schools Reorganisation Project.* This proposed development as stated above in (3) does not in any way go towards providing a solution to the lack of school infrastructure need in the area and in fact cause pressure on over capacity current provision.

The West Acre Park development will have a Negative / adverse **visual impact** on the landscape and the locality of the historic village and settlement of Elmfield Village. The advertising and presentation of West Acre Park is clearly as a new community and village at the detriment of the existing community of Elmfield. It is presented as being a

sustainable community removed from Elmfield and Appley and Ryde. It can be described as a proposed remote community that destroys the historic and cohesive community of Elmfield. Elmfield is an historic settlement now suburb of the town of Ryde on the Isle of Wight, in England. It is situated south-east of the town centre on a small hill. St John's Church is a notable landmark on the north side of Elmfield. Oakfield lies directly to the West, Appley to the North, Seaview and Nettlestone to the East and Westridge to the South. The community is mainly based on the A3055 Marlborough Road, with additional shopping facilities in nearby Somerset Road. Public transport is provided by Southern Vectis buses on route 3. The nearest railway station is Ryde St John's Road, situated in lower Oakfield.

The whole concept of West Acre Park and the name of the company proposing the application "*Westridge Village*" is trying to recreate a new village at the detriment of the historic village and community of Elmfield.

Section 2.33 (Page 11) of the Island Plan Core Strategy 2012 states "*There is a very strong local identity and associated community feeling which can be seen through the work undertaken on Parish and Town Plans and Village Design Statements. Communities have previously been concerned that some development in the past has been poorly designed and has failed to contribute positively to the quality of the built environment on the Island. This has had a negative impact and design has too often failed to reflect local distinctiveness*". I argue that the West Acre Park development application has completely failed to acknowledge the Historic Settlement of Elmfield and failed to recognise or reflect the distinctive local identity of this defined village identity and community. It is fact a development that is creating a new community with its own identity West Acre Park with its own community facilities and shop and has no defined plan to integrate with Elmfield. This alone threatens community cohesion and will have a strong negative impact. Westridge Farm and the farming family are an integral component of the Elmfield community. This relation between local farm and village goes back 100s of years and the loss of the farm will be detrimental to the community identity.

6. Coalescence

The Island Plan states "*Define and ensure that the areas which separate Ryde and the surrounding settlements are appropriately protected to prevent settlement coalescence*". The targeted land is on/close to the parish border between Ryde and Nettlestone & Seaview. The application is clearly building on the Parish Border and reduces the countryside between the communities of Ryde and Nettlestone and Seaview. Granting planning permission would be totally contrary to preventing coalescence and erode the uniqueness of Island historic settlements surrounded by natural untouched historic countryside and farmland.

7. Highway safety and Traffic generation

The development is highly geared to the car owner and does not have easy access for those with disabilities, those on foot and cyclists. I will specifically address the highway safety and traffic generation by pinpointing where the issues are and what are the issues. West Acre Park traffic will access the main area roads by Appley Road and Bullen Road. There is road access to Marlborough Road proposed through demolition of 125, Marlborough Road and Hope Road which is currently access to the 86 houses being built at the end of Hope Road.

7.1 Appley Road Access Point and Appley Road/Marlborough Road (Oakfield)

Roundabout – West Acre Park will access Appley Road opposite Appley Manor. Appley Road is the principal connection between Ryde and Nettlestone/Seaview. It is currently a busy road with speeding problems and issues. It is not possible to build a left turning pathway/footpath from the proposed West Acre site to connect to pathway/footpath to Marlborough Road as there is a historic brick wall after Grasmere and Derwent Road. Existing residents/pedestrians who live in Grasmere Road/Derwent Road have to cross the road to Seldon Avenue where the footpath has been invaded by the roots of trees and totally unfriendly to those with disabilities. This crossing is dangerous as cars come up the hill from the Wishing-Well pub at speed and vehicles coming from Ryde and the Marlborough/Appley Road roundabout speed up going to Seaview. Existing traffic from Marina Avenue comes out blindly at where the No8 bus-stop is position opposite Grasmere Avenue. This is a dangerous hotspot. West Acre Park traffic (all vehicles wishing to access Ryde will take this route as it avoids Westridge Junction) accessing Appley Road opposite Appley Manor is going to have major difficulty turning left and right. The increase of traffic of an estimated 2000 vehicles onto the minor road with existing problems will increase highway safety problems. All traffic going to Ryde will come to the Appley/Marlborough Road roundabout that is scored by Highways and Island Road as a major Highway safety hotspot. This roundabout is next to and is an access point to Oakfield School and at school times has real traffic and safety issues. The crossing point at this roundabout on the Marina Avenue side is a crossing to Appley Lane which is the main route to all residents living on the left side of Marlborough Road to the school and Appley Park and Beach. The increased traffic from West Acre Park will increase the danger to pedestrians. The Roundabout is part of the main through traffic route that connects Ryde Town via East Hill to the Bay area and Tescos (the largest supermarket in Ryde). It is also the directed through traffic from Fishbourne (Ferry) and Newport to Bay area. All articulated lorries and heavy goods vehicles come through Ryde via St. John's Hill and are directed through this route although some go increasingly down St. John's Hill. Ryde Town Council within its Position Statement has highlight that Ryde East and Ryde as a whole does not have the Road infrastructure to cope with the estimated increased traffic caused by the over concentration of housing development proposals in the Wards of Ryde East and Ryde South. There is currently no road infrastructure plan to manage the increase in housing in the area. It has to be noted Appley Road will already have to cope with new traffic created from Harcourt Sands that has planning permission for 140 houses and a hotel (estimated 1000 vehicle increase per day). It has to be concluded that Appley Road is over capacity at present and cannot sustain any more traffic and that the existing highway safety issues will be increased. The current limitations of design of the road (such as the historic brick wall and access to Grasmere Avenue, Marina Avenue, Appley Manor Hotel, and Appley Lane/Oakfield Road -for pedestrians, those with disabilities etc) make it impossible to make alterations to improve road safety that would be needed for the new residents of West Acre Park. The Planning Application has to be refused on this issue alone in regard access to Appley Road.

7.2 Bullen Road Access Point – The proposed access point will principally turn right to Westridge Junction and Ryde/Newport/Bay Area/Tescos and left to Seaview. This is more a minor road than Appley Road and again is totally unsuitable for any increased traffic. There is literally no footpaths or pedestrian ways. The drainage is poor on Bullen Road and frequently this road has flooding issues and becomes dangerous.

7.3 125, Marlborough Road – Marlborough Road is a major route for Ryde to Bay area and any access point at this point will be dangerous and simply should be removed from the scheme.

7.4 Hope Road – The Island Roads report for the 80 houses with approval off Hope Road clearly stated that the traffic created by these new houses meant that traffic accessing Marlborough Road from Hope Road was over capacity although within the % of flexibility. This means that Hope Road will not be able to have any further traffic than at present. This means that Appley and Bullen Roads have to be seen as the access points to the new proposed housing estate.

7.5 Issues for Cyclists, Pedestrians and those with disabilities – The remoteness of the proposed housing estate (West Acre Park) means that those on foot, disability vehicles/wheelchairs, and cyclists will have a substantial distance to go to access the main roads such as Marlborough, Brading, Great Preston, Appley, Bullen, and East Hill to access Ryde Town; when the access these roads where bus stops are they will have to cross busy roads. Again there is currently not safe pedestrian and cycle routes into Ryde. This is contrary to the Island Plan 2012 as it is explicit that new housing developments need to be encouraging non vehicle travel. The positioning of the estate outside the Settlement Boundary and on the border of the Seaview/Ryde Parish line is not conducive with current local and national policies regarding Cyclists and Pedestrianisation. This is also not in line with IWC Public Health policy in regard to planning where communities and new developments are meant to enhance healthier lifestyles. The provision of a footpath and cycle way at 125, Marlborough Road is inadequate and crossing Marlborough Road at this point without a designated crossing is dangerous. It also does not substitute the need for a proper pedestrian route on Bullen Road which due to this being a minor country road is impossible.

7.6 Discriminates against Older Adults and Those with Disabilities and Those who do not Drive, and Children – The location of West Acre Park will not have access directly to bus routes and residents will have a substantive walk to the No3 or 8 routes and access to main artery routes by foot. The site is within a natural valley and about 60% of residents will live on a slope and again at a distance of access to routes into Ryde. They would be very reliant on private car access. Older adults, those with disabilities and children would be reliant on either having access to a car and therefore totally dependent on a carer. This totally goes against equality rights and independent living.

8. SP5 Environment – Carbon Emission Increase and Over Reliance of Cars.

The Island Plan 2012 states “*To manage the distribution of development in the most sustainable locations, bearing in mind the highly valued natural and historic environment*”. I argue West Acre Farm is not a suitable location as it destroys natural and historic countryside and pasture that through free dairy (grass fed cows for a minimum of 6 months a year but on the Isle of Wight can be nearly 12 months) and environmental husbandry farming by the existing farming family since 1966 and over 100 years previously.

The development is contrary to SP5 sections 5.184 and 5185. The fields, hedges, stream, and trees provide a natural habitat for a variety of wildlife including migrating birds (the cows excrement provide a natural rich manure which provides food for bugs/insects that provides food for birds and the natural cycle of life). The decades of this natural and environment husbandry approach to farming has created a rich eco-system. The proposed site is a natural valley of rolling natural countryside and literally slopes down a natural stream which

is the parish boundary. Building housing on this site will literally destroy the 100s of years of established eco-system and will replace natural countryside and farmland with a newly created managed environment. This will increase carbon emissions hundredfold as you have to way up the near zero level of carbon emissions of 80 cows to the carbon emissions of 475 houses, the IW car ownership average of two cars per household units and the commercial and visitor traffic per household, at least a minimum of 1000 vehicles using the site per day.

The site positioning outside the settlement boundary and positioning on the Parish boundary means the site is a substantive distance from Ryde and facilities such as schools, shops and health agencies. This creates a near total **Reliance of the Car**. The majority of residents especially those proposed residents living near the Parish boundary will have a considerable up-hill walk to nearest bus-stop.

The Plan clearly states that *“Development that has a demonstrable adverse impact on the Island’s natural, historic and built environments should be avoided”*.

Westridge Farm has been naturally farmed since 1966. The farm takes responsible **farming seriously by maintaining the environment, the welfare of animals and the appearance of the countryside**. It is important to remember that dairy is a really nutritious and affordable food. Dairy production is not as harmful to the environment as compared with meat production, and attempts to farm dairy more sustainably have been quite successful in the UK.

The farm is positioned in a direct valley corridor that is close to the five levels of ecological protection in operation across the parish of Ryde. Four are essentially coterminous and cover the whole of the town’s seafront and Ryde Sands (Ramsar – an international wetland designation, Special Protection Area – a Natura2000 European designation, Potential Special Protection Area (a second layer of provisional designation, treated as if fully protected in policy and law), Site of Special Scientific Interest (a UK habitat and species protection in law). The fifth ecological protection is Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), designated by the Isle of Wight Council. A quarter of the Parish of Ryde is recognized, the majority at international level, for its ecological importance. The whole of Ryde is of course incorporated in the new IW Biosphere reserve designation. The themes of biological and cultural diversity at the core of Biosphere’s purpose, are particularly concentrated, and potentially exemplified, in built and natural environments of the town and its parish. I argue that the natural and untouched countryside of West Acre Farm does not provide in regard the protection of the environment any sustainable development land. The only land farmland that could be argued for sustainable development has already gained planning permission which was the 80(now 86) houses off Hope Road.

The Biosphere designation awarded to the Island on June 19th 2019, actively supports this strategy for sustainable development. Ryde has the potential to be exemplary in its positive and active engagement with the 3 principles of Biosphere. 1. Conserving and enhancing its biological and cultural diversity. 2. Putting its stock of natural and cultural capital to work for the livelihoods and wellbeing of the people who live and work within its bounds. 3. Sharing information freely between its partners, stakeholders and communities, building the strongest constituency it can for a sustainable future.

I argue that the problem with the West Acre Park attempting to incorporate the values and principles of the Biosphere and work within the specific environmental protections, is that it

cuts up and existing natural environment to recreate it around housing. It does not naturally evolve over decades but interferes with the landscape and natural environmental balances. The whole beauty of a place is that it is surrounded by a natural belt of green fields and countryside. The concept of urban areas naturally intertwine with the countryside so the population has a balance of moving visually and physically between the two is lost if urbanisation encroaches through expansion into the countryside surrounding it.

Westridge Farm as an important community asset now and in the Future

I wish to argue that a Farm is a community asset. I provide an example of Fordhall Farm in Shropshire and Ryde benefits from and will in the future of keeping its last remaining farm within its parish boundary. The planning application for housing if permission was given, will lose an important community asset to Ryde and take away from the community to benefit from its development as a farm. See references to Fordhall Farm. The farmer at Westridge Farm has ambitions to increase egg production (already sells eggs to local community) and purchase a pasteuriser to sell milk to the local population of Ryde. The farm is part of the national network of Free Dairy Farmers (<https://freerangedairy.org/>) who have grass-fed cows producing milk. This sustainable and husbandry way of farming ensures the historic pastures of Westridge Farm benefit the health and well-being of the community. The farm is adjacent within Elmfield to two of the most deprived Ward in Ryde and Isle of Wight and in the top 10% of most deprived wards in England. 50% of local children are on free school meals. Ryde Foodbank is positioned in Grace's Church on Circular Road and 2 minute walk from the farm. The farm already enables youth clubs and schools to access the farm and learn about where food comes from and the development of a community farm like Fordhall Farm will be of great benefit to the local community. Approval of this application will totally close this opportunity and have a detrimental affect on the community.

<https://www.fordhallfarm.com/>

<https://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk/>

<https://plunkett.co.uk/fordhall-farm-shropshire/>

<https://plunkett.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Community-Farm-Case-Study-Fordhall.pdf>

9. Flooding Risk

The Island Plan states the “*The Council will expect development proposals to reduce the overall and local risk of flooding on the Island*”. The stated land within this natural countryside valley made up of sloping fields, hedgerows, woodland and a natural stream currently acts as a natural prevention of flooding risk. This housing development will man artificial processes such as pumping stations would have to be used and increases the likelihood of flooding.

10. Natural Habitat of Wildlife Destroyed

Westridge Farm has been holistically farmed for hundreds of years and its strong fertility provides rich pasture and grazing land. It has woodlands and hedges that have been in place for 100s of years. This provides a natural habitat for 1000s of species of insects, 25 species of bat, the endangered species of Hazel Dormouse, Red Squirrels, birds, migrating birds, rabbits, hares, foxes amongst many others. Urbanisation and disturbance on the

1000s years eco-system will have damaging affect and is in contravention of the National Policy Framework.

11. SP3 Economy and SP4 Tourism (particularly – 5.158,5.159, and 5.171)

The Island Plan states “*To reflect the special tourism offer of the Isle of Wight, proposals for tourism related development should utilise the unique characteristics of the historic and natural environments, without compromising their integrity. The Council also wishes to see the Island become an all year round tourism destination, which develops green and new niche tourism products, and development proposals should reflect this*”. Sustainable and Environmental (Green) Tourism is on the increase on the Island and part of its unique selling point. The West and Central Isle of Wight have important farming based tourism that interlinks with local food production such as Bridesford Farm. The Westridge Farm farmers wish to develop their farm.

<https://www.visitisleofwight.co.uk/travel/sustainable-travel>

The Island Plan refers to Eco-Island which although does not exist as a defined project as listed in the plan, it has been superseded by Isle of Wight in 2019 achieving UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Status and IWC declaring a Climate Emergency with resulting Climate Emergency Strategy. This application clearly is not compatible with new thinking in regard the Biosphere and Climate Change and Emergency and contravenes the National Policy Framework sections 12-15.