

Official Objection: New Forest District Council Local Plan Review (Regulation 18)

To: Planning Policy Team, New Forest District Council

From: Hyde Parish Council

Date: 18th March 2026

Subject: Formal Objection to Site SDGOM (Strategic Development Growth Option SDGOM Stuckton site.

Hyde Parish Council (HPC) formally **objects** to the allocation of **Site SDGOM** for 600–800 dwellings. This proposal is fundamentally unsound, unsustainable, and represents an unacceptable **Conflict with Statutory Purposes** of the New Forest National Park (NFPN). The Parish contends that the site fails the **NPPF Safety Test** due to recurring infrastructure failure and flood risk.

Approximately 60 residents attended our parish council meeting 9.3.26 they are anxious about the possibility of development on this site, their main comments were: the land is not suitable for development, it was a rubbish tip years ago; flooding getting worse water gets very close to dwellings, climate change will worsen this ; access to site, the current road network not suitable, the A338 north is through Fordingbridge residential streets that cannot sustain more traffic; there is no walking/cycle route to Fd; policy states any development should lead to settlement coalescence; no to development to NP boundary; Fd infrastructure - doctors, schools, shops etc. will not support a big population increase; 800 houses in a 400 parish will change the nature of our rural parish.

Hyde Parish which includes Stuckton is a rural parish, the western area is made up of narrow lanes lined with field hedges and the garden hedges of well-spaced, older style properties. Any new modern estate of houses would be alien to its wider setting and suburbanize this gateway to the Park. It would have an immense visual impact on the National Park, Western Escarpment and Avon Valley all highly protected landscapes and despoil the current open vista across the site.

Hyde parish councillors support and share residents' serious concerns and trust NFDC will take full note of our response and the views of residents who attended our meeting.

Hyde Parish Council response as follows:

Statement from the Parish Council on Policies that are contravened.

Breach of Statutory Duty (Section 62, Environment Act 1995)

NFDC has a legal "Duty of Regard" to the purposes of the National Park. Site SDGOM is a rural national park hamlet that sits within the critical open vista of the **New Forest NP, Avon Valley and Western Escarpment - S245**. It is NOT Fordingbridge and is physically split from it by the A338 and is also NOT one of the defined villages.

Harm to the Setting of the National Park: Development on this scale would cause irreversible harm to the landscape character protected under **NFDC Policy STR2** and **NFNP Management Plan Policy SP7**.

Loss of Dark Skies: Light pollution from 800 homes will permanently degrade the nocturnal character of the Escarpment, violating **NFNP Policy SP15**.

2. Coalescence of Settlements & Loss of Distinctiveness

The proposal represents a high-density **Urban Sprawl**, merging the market town of Fordingbridge with the rural hamlets of the National Park.

Policy STR2 (Countryside Protection): SDGOM fails to maintain the distinct boundary between settlement and countryside. **'Green Buffer'**

And 30 x 30 principle.

The proposed site is of a very large scale creating a new urban style town adjacent to the National Park. Stuckton is not a defined village.

Policy ENV3 (Local Distinctiveness): The removal of ancient farmland and commoning "back-up" grazing land destroys the unique "Sense of Place" within the Avon Valley and undermines the **Commoning Economy (NFNP Priority 1)**.

NFDC (p 14) residential guide for rural areas states

'Development should maintain the character and scale of building and the rural character of approaches. It should avoid the use of urban, suburban, or otherwise inappropriate features which would be harmful to the area.

Back up grazing. The fields within SDGOM are agricultural and the site has commoners grazing rights. It is currently being used for both these purposes, our residents are tenant farmers and this is their livelihood along with commoners' ponies currently on the site.

We know grazing land is in very short supply for commoners and for this reason alone the site should not be considered, as it is a valuable resource for commoners which we understand is a high priority for the NP which NFDC should also acknowledge and it intending to do so.

Back up grazing is a vital part of the workings of the National Park and must be protected.

NFDC have indicated in the Local Plan Review that land being used or with the potential for being used as back up grazing, should not be considered for housing. The Stuckton site already has commoners' rights and is being used as back up grazing for commoners' ponies. The whole of this site should be protected from development and set aside for agricultural use and back up grazing. **NP Policy DP21** explicitly states there should be no loss of use of back up grazing for change of use applications.

Since 2023 NFDC are legally required to protect back up grazing and agricultural land when making planning decisions. Commoners need the land if they must take their ponies off the forest for various reasons, including any spread of disease as in the Foot and Mouth crisis, extra winter grazing, poorly ponies, old ponies that can no longer reside on the forest and many more.

There is a chronic shortage of grazing land as indicated in the latest Back Up Grazing Report 2025 and NFDC have a duty to regard this report. Stuckton is an area of **functionally linked land** adjacent to the National Park. Whilst NFDC does not directly own the site it can block planning for housing and reject the site through the Local Plan Consultation as not being suitable, which it clearly is not.

ECONOMY and HISTORY and EMPLOYMENT

The economy of the National Park relies heavily on visitors to the area. They do not visit to see an urban sprawl they visit to see open spaces, walk in tranquil areas, observe the wildlife, appreciate ancient villages, of which Stuckton is one. It has an interesting history with one of the highlighted WALKS recorded and promoted by National Park Tourism Stuckton Iron Works and Avon Valley Walk.

Another purpose of the National Park is to **promote** for sustainability

Visitors who stay in Fordingbridge want to visit the area for its green space.

3. Contravention of Spatial Strategy inc Policies STR3 & STR4

The scale of Option M fundamentally contradicts the Council's own settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy.

Policy STR3 (Strategy for Locating New Development): This policy directs growth to the most sustainable locations. Site SDGOM is an isolated encroachment into the rural buffer. Developing 800 houses here is not "proportionate growth" for a market town edge; it is a strategic overreach that ignores the environmental limits of the Fordingbridge/Stuckton boundary.

Policy STR4 (The Settlement Hierarchy): By proposing a "new town landscape" in this location, NFDC is effectively creating a new urban tier that does not exist in the hierarchy. This undermines the established principle of protecting the rural character of smaller settlements like Stuckton and Hyde from being overwhelmed by large-scale strategic allocations.

Unsustainable location Policy STR 4.8:

The proposed site does not comply with this policy - it is not on previously developed land nor on the edge of a settlement area of Fordingbridge it is isolated by the A338 and the River Avon. There is no safe cycle or walking route to Fordingbridge. An estimated 600 -800 dwellings mean 6-800 cars + some 2-car households. Cars will be used daily to reach shops, schools, health care, and leisure activities.

Many will be used daily to commute to work via the A338 and B3078 but others will travel through Hyde Parish and the Park (B3078) to Southampton and the M27, putting unacceptable pressure on these sensitive areas.

Traffic

There should not be a site entrance/ exit onto Stuckton Road to prevent a large increase in traffic going through Stuckton and up and down past the homes on Frogham Hill, to reach our local amenities, (the hall, pubs, café and garden centre) and, the Forest. Frogham Hill is a single lane road with tight bends - and as with Stuckton Road, the edges are crumbling into ditches, deep pot holes are usual; also, we do not want traffic using the 'scenic route' across the parish to Blissford then to the B3078, traffic must be routed via the A338 not through Hyde Parish and the Park.

Policy ENV3 (Design Quality and Local Distinctiveness): This policy requires development to "respond to local distinctiveness" and "conserve the New Forest's unique character." A development of 800 houses is inherently out of

character with the rural approach to the National Park. It creates a "hard urban edge" where there should be a soft, rural transition.

Harm to the Setting: The "new town landscape" of Site SDGOM would permanently degrade the tranquillity and visual amenity of the NFNP, contravening **NFNP Management Plan Policy SP7** and **NFDC Policy STR2**.

4. Severe Flood Risk & Severance of Access

Site SDGOM is hydraulically linked to the **Stuckton Floodplain (Flood Zone 3)**.

Evidence of Infrastructure Failure: During **Storm Chandra (Jan 2026)** and **Storm Éowyn (2025)**, primary access routes (Stuckton Lane and the A338) were rendered **impassable**.

Safety & Emergency Access: Directing 2,000+ residents to a site where emergency access is periodically severed is a failure of the Council’s duty of care (**Policy CS6**).

Surface Water Runoff: Converting 40+ hectares of permeable land to hard-standing will increase peak runoff, exacerbating downstream flood risks in Stuckton and Hyde.

Appendix A: Schedule of Infrastructure Failure (2025–2026)

Date / Event	Location	Duration	Operational Impact
Jan 2026 (Storm Chandra)	Stuckton Bridge / Lane	3 Days	Severance of Access. Road impassable. Hyde cut off from town services.
Jan 2026 (Storm Chandra)	A338 (near Site SDGOM)	48 Hours	Major Incident. Fatality and stranded vehicles due to river ingress.
Jan 2025 (Storm Éowyn)	Frogham Hill / Blissford	Intermittent	Gridlock. Displaced traffic from A338 overwhelmed narrow rural lanes.

Dec 2025 (Storm Bram)	Stuckton Road (The Ridge)	24 Hours	Access Severed. Groundwater flooding blocked primary southern exit.
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This above illustrates the extreme situation the Stuckton site would be part of regarding flooding.

Stuckton and the surrounding area is one that suffers heavily from flooding. The addition of up to 800 houses would be detrimental and cause serious harm to the flooding in the area.

Councillors understand and sympathize with residents' distress caused by the serious problem of flooding, their anxiety is currently much increased with the threat that site SDGO M, which lies within the flood Zone and flood prone land, could be developed.

Parts of Fordingbridge town and surrounding low land are vulnerable to flooding, raising justified concerns about the suitability of further development in the town or nearby. The western area of Hyde parish is within the Avon valley, the valley floods! Parts of Hyde parish, North and south Gorley and Ibsley are affected by flooding and fords quickly become full and fast running. All 3 roads into the parish from the A338 flood and have to be closed in very wet weather.

Stuckton area - Zone 3, Stuckton road is usually the first to become impassable; drains and ditches are quickly filled, the water table is so high water has nowhere to go, gardens get flooded and several homes are very vulnerable; It would be unsafe and irresponsible for NFDC to allow huge areas of concrete in the site area or any concrete for even a small development within or near this flood area.

NFDC Policy CS6 Flood Risk: we are reminding NFDC of this policy and stating it should be strictly adhered to, quote. "... avoid inappropriate development in areas of current or future risk from flooding" We all know the risk will increase in future with more extreme weather due to climate change.

5.Environment and conservation

Policy ENV1 (Mitigating the Impacts on International Nature Conservation Sites):

Every new home in the New Forest District is considered to have a "likely significant effect" on protected sites (the SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites).

A development of 800 houses in this specific location cannot be adequately mitigated without causing increased recreational pressure on this sensitive area. The sheer volume of residents would overwhelm the very nature conservation sites **Policy ENV1** is designed to protect.

Policy ENV4 (Landscape Character and Quality):

This policy mandates that development must "protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character."

Site SDGOM is a defining part of the "rural approach" to the National Park. Placing a high-density "new town" landscape here is a direct contravention of **Policy ENV4**, as it fails to respect the distinctive character area and topography of the area.

There should be a 'Green Gap' around the National Park.

6. Objection on Rural Road Conditions & Maintenance

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 115, development should only be prevented on highway grounds if the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be "**severe.**" The addition of such a sizeable number of houses and associated traffic would be severe.

Existing Deficit: Stuckton Lane, Stuckton Hill, Frogham Hill etc. are already in a state of disrepair and are physically unsuitable for increased heavy traffic. HCC have indicated that there is no money for major repairs currently.

Maintenance : Developers may pay a Community Infrastructure Levy (**CIL**) or **Section 106** contribution, these are for **new** infrastructure and cannot be used for the general repair and maintenance of the existing, failing road network.

The roads around Stuckton are rural lanes, they are quite simply not suitable for this additional amount of traffic and flood on a regular basis as explained earlier.

Conclusion

The imposition of new housing targets does not constitute the "Exceptional Circumstances" required to bypass the protections of a National Park setting.

Site SDGOM is an inherently unsuitable location that prioritises numerical targets over human safety and landscape integrity. Hyde Parish Council contends that Site SDGOM represents a Severance of Access during flood events, creating a significant risk to life. Furthermore, the unmitigated cumulative impact on the A338, B3078, the coalescence of settlements between Fordingbridge and the National Park boundary and environmental impact constitute a fundamental conflict with the Statutory Purposes of the New Forest National Park.

Hyde PC conclude that the site is unsound and would have a detrimental effect on the area and its residents. This site should not be considered as suitable for the Local Plan during this current review and we would request that it is not taken forward to the next Regulation 19 stage.

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