

## **First draft of Plans for Whartons Lane released.**

The New Forest National Park Authority has put many documents relating to this project on to their planning applications website under reference 19/00728 or you can search by “Whartons Lane”.

One issue to emerge is a layout plan of the site showing 72 dwellings; 20% more than stated in the NFNPA local plan. It is currently stated that 36 will be affordable. Other documents include the usual background papers that support a planning application.

## **Is this a planning application and can we comment?**

No to both questions. The developer, Stratland Estates of Romsey, has submitted a request to avoid producing an Environmental impact Assessment (EIA). The rules dictate that this request goes through the planning system, hence publication of the documents. However it is not an actual planning application and therefore comments are not accepted.

## **What is an Environmental Impact Assessment?**

This is exactly “what it says on the tin”, an assessment of the wider environmental impact on the whole area affected by the scheme, traffic, drainage, damage to protected habitats etc. These are required by law for all large developments but are discretionary for smaller projects or projects in protected areas such as National Parks.

## **What happens next?**

The NFNPA are expected to make a decision around the 1<sup>st</sup> of November on the need for an EIA and this will presumably have some impact in how the developer plans to proceed.

The Parish Council will have a role in deciding whether to approve or object to any planning applications that are submitted to the NFNPA and we may speak at the NFNPA planning committee, who are the decision makers in the process.

**Councillor Mike Thomas**