

VILLAGE DEVELOPMENTS, REPRESENTOR 3139

From: Nigel Greenhalgh [mailto:Nigel@villagedevelopments.com]
Sent: 07 November 2016 16:39
To: Pauline Butcher, Programme Officer
Cc: timnorth.associates@btinternet.com
Subject: RE: Mid Sussex District Plan Representors

Dear Pauline,

As you will be aware I am represented by Savills in the Mid Sussex Developers Forum. A huge amount of work has gone into responding to the Inspector's questions and those of us in the group, although we have specific site interests, we are unanimous in that we do not wish to see the plan being made unsound, even though there serious reservations that the Council do not have a 5 year housing land supply.

It is therefore not productive, or helpful to have Tim North represent me when we as part of the forum have presented a wealth of technical evidence, addressing all the issues raised by the Inspector.

With reference to my specific interests the points that I would raise would be the following:

3.1. The SHLAA/6.1– One of our sites in Foxhole Farm Bolney was in an earlier version of a SHLAA for 180 units, but inexplicably has been deleted from consideration. We have had a positive pre-application, where we have proposed a new school, highways, improvements and facilities that could be used by the school and the local community. The site was not selected in the Neighbourhood Plan and despite objections that it was unfairly included with Hangerwood Farm, the Neighbourhood Plan has been made for a paltry number of units well below the OAN for Bolney that we provided to the Council and the Neighbourhood Plan. The Inspector is quite correct to say that there has been an over rigid use of constraints. I have three sites in Crawley Down, one in Copthorne, and one in Hurstpierpoint. I would like no more than an hour to present the case for these sites. Three of the sites are part brownfield and have been excluded largely because the Council have adopted the policy of allocating strategic sites above 500 units.

I am a front bench member of the Conservative party and have met Nick Boles twice and more recently Brandon Lewis twice. Obviously, Brandon Lewis has been replaced by Gavin Barwell who may well have a different agenda, but so far it doesn't appear to be the case. The issue of just allocating strategic sites above 500 units is one that the Inspector has not specifically addressed. When I met Brandon Lewis he quite correctly stated that large sites normally do not deliver more than 4 sales per month, or roughly 50 per year. The Council have unfortunately relied upon utilising the two large sites, both of which have significant issues. The site at Pease Pottage cannot be faulted for its aim to supply the housing, but it is wholly within the AONB. It is my view that the Council should have considered reasonable alternatives. For example, our site at Copthorne and surrounding area is just as close to Crawley, but has none of the constraints of being in the AONB. Similarly our site at Foxhole Farm, Bolney, is also capable of producing up to 500 units. Similarly, the three sites in Crawley Down are all brownfield.

The Government require sites to be allocated for smaller builders. Whilst supposedly the Neighbourhood Plans will provide some supply the biggest single flaw in the Council's plan is to allow all the Neighbourhood plans to be made with a ceiling of provision and then come to the conclusion they can provide no more than 800 units per year. We would urge the Inspector if he decides the plan is sound, to modify it to allocate smaller sites and those between 50 and below 500. We have further proposed two sites, one that provides 35 units of self build units and one that provides 15. Although it will be argued that the provision of self build units would be included within the OAN, this is of no help to obtaining planning permission for site specific self build units. We request the Inspector to require the Council to make a specific allocation for self-build.

The Communities Secretary Sajid Javed has announced a huge fund for smaller builders, but for it to be of use, we need to have the sites.

3 (The tipping point) – The Council do not have any evidence to support this theory and plainly there are sites amongst the consortium that can provide significant supply, such as those referred to above.

With reference to 6.1 the Council have a track record of being slow to deal with planning applications. I had one in Hurstpierpoint where it took six months and then it was still refused. Similarly, a Section 106 Agreement took 8 months. The Council if they are to deliver the plan, they need to significantly increase the resources in Development Control and their Legal Department, or better still outsource it.

I hope this is helpful. We will attach the site specific information in the morning.

Kind regards

Nigel Greenhalgh - Managing Director

Village Developments