

Introduction

- 43.1 This chapter contains planning policies relating to specific locations outside the built-up areas. It includes policies for business development in two locations within the rural area; Rowfant Business Centre and High Grove, Imberhorne Lane. It also includes policies for areas and sites within the rural area that due to their nature have a specific policy relating to them. These are Furnace Wood, Crabbett Park, Worth Abbey and Saint Hill Manor Estate. This chapter also includes a description of a number of very small settlements within the rural parts of Mid Sussex (these settlements are not indicated on the Proposals Map). All other general policies relating to the rural area, including those dealing with the strategic gaps and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, are included within the Countryside chapter of this Local Plan.

Furnace Wood

- 43.2 Furnace Wood is located midway between Copthorne and East Grinstead, to the south of the A264. It has an area of approximately 36ha. Originally an area of woodland and scrub, development began to take place between the wars. The majority of these early dwellings were used as weekend retreats or for recreational purposes although many were subsequently occupied permanently. In more recent years a number of the smaller dwellings have been replaced by larger houses, and a few additional dwellings have been erected on some of the largest plots. There are now around 80 dwellings in the area. The majority fall within Mid Sussex, but a few, to the north, lie within Tandridge District where they are in the Green Belt.
- 43.3 The houses have been developed at a very low density. They are set in large plots, frequently well set back from the road. The considerable amount of landscaping and remaining areas of woodland means that the dominant features in the scene are the many trees, shrubs and hedgerows rather than the dwellings themselves. The unadopted roads are narrow, unlit and have no footways.
- 43.4 Because of its character and the absence of any supporting services, such as shopping facilities, Furnace Wood cannot reasonably be regarded as a village. Rather, it is an area of informal, loosely knit, low density housing in a well wooded rural setting. As such it is part of the countryside and falls within the strategic gap between East Grinstead and Crawley. The Council has sought to protect this character and has generally resisted proposals for new housing since the 1970s. This approach was endorsed by the Inspector at the time the previous Local Plan was prepared and in the great majority of cases since then has been supported on appeal where it has generally been acknowledged that the area should be regarded as part of the countryside.
- 43.5 In order to maintain its rural character and appearance and to safeguard its contribution to the strategic gap, the Council will continue to resist proposals for additional residential development at Furnace Wood, including proposals for infilling. No built-up area boundary has been defined and the area is therefore subject to the normal countryside development restraint policies of this Local Plan. This is consistent with the approach already adopted by Tandridge District Council who administer the northern part of Furnace Wood. Here the area is within the Green Belt and is therefore subject to particularly restrictive policies. Proposals for the replacement of individual properties on a one-for-one basis will be considered on their merits, and in accordance with the Housing and Countryside chapters of this Local Plan.

RA1 In order to safeguard its countryside character and appearance and its contribution to the strategic gap, Furnace Wood is subject to the countryside development restraint policies of this Local Plan. Proposals for additional dwellings at Furnace Wood will not be permitted. Proposals for the replacement of existing dwellings on a one for one basis will only be permitted where there would be no adverse impact on the character, appearance or setting of the site or of the surrounding area.

Business Development

43.6 Whilst the Council recognises the need to retain a healthy rural economy it will normally seek to restrict new business development to the built-up areas other than in exceptional circumstances, as outlined in the Economy and Countryside Chapters of this Local Plan. However, there are two sites in the rural part of northern Mid Sussex which the Council considers may be suitable for small scale business development, and as such would be of benefit to the local economy without unduly affecting the environment. These sites are located at:

- Rowfant Business Centre, Wallage Lane, Rowfant; and
- High Grove, Imberhorne Lane, near East Grinstead.

Rowfant Business Centre

43.7 Land at the former brickworks site at Rowfant was allocated for a small businesses centre in the 1985 East Grinstead and Worth Local Plan. Parts of the allocated area were subsequently redeveloped in the late 1980s and early 1990s to provide approximately 1000m² of new floorspace. The site now comprises a mix of purpose built small business units together with some older buildings which have been in commercial use for many years but some of which are now in poor condition or even vacant, together with some more open uses. To the rear of the existing developed area is the remainder of the old claypit, bounded by a tree lined steep bank which encloses the site. The whole complex is served by a long access road leading south from Wallage Lane. The surrounding area is predominantly open countryside including extensive areas of woodland.

43.8 Since it was developed as a small businesses centre the site has, for the most part, operated with little impact on the surrounding area. It is well screened from outside by extensive tree cover, and is some distance from most dwellings in the area. The main impact has been from the effects of increased business traffic on the surrounding road network.

43.9 The Council considers that having regard to the generally successful development of the small business centre and the modest impact this has had on its surroundings, there is an opportunity to achieve a similar improvement to the remainder of the previously allocated site. Such development would enable some rationalisation of existing uses within the site and also improve the internal layout and vehicle circulation to the benefit of new and existing occupiers. This would also be an opportunity to bring under Council control those parts of the original site which currently operate in a manner unrestricted by the terms and conditions of the earlier planning permission. Therefore, subject to the scale and nature of the proposed development the Council will consider favourably the replacement of redundant or obsolete buildings and open uses within the previously allocated site by purpose built business units of a similar size and type to those recently

erected on the remainder of the small business centre.

- 43.10 The Council will seek to strictly control the nature of further development on the site in order to safeguard existing amenities and the character of the rural area. However, another important factor limiting the potential scale of new development at this site is the inability of the surrounding road network to accommodate any material increase in traffic. Therefore the Council, in consultation with the Highway Authority will resist any development or redevelopment which would result in a significant increase in the level of traffic movement to and from the site. It will also investigate ways of controlling the routing of traffic to and from the site. However, subject to such safeguards the Council considers that limited development here would help boost the local economy and would rationalise and control the use of the remainder of the original part of the site.

RA2 Proposals for the replacement of obsolete buildings and open uses within the boundaries of the existing Rowfant Business Centre by purpose built small business units will be permitted where there will be no significant adverse impact on the character and amenities of the area and no significant increase in traffic on the surrounding road network.

High Grove, Imberhorne Lane

- 43.11 High Grove is located southwest of East Grinstead, close to the junction of Imberhorne Lane and Turners Hill Road (B2110). It has an area of 2.3ha part of which is used as a small market garden. West Sussex County Council owns an adjacent area of land which is used as a civic amenity site and refuse transfer station, together with vehicle garaging and storage of road maintenance materials. The County Council's use of that site will continue over the Local Plan period, and it is identified as a potential waste recovery/transfer site in the Waste Local Plan Deposit Draft 2003. The Council recognises the need to ensure that there are sufficient waste management facilities to provide for the needs of the area and to help the Council to contribute to meeting mandatory Government waste recycling and recovery targets. Facilities for recovery / transfer uses need not be incompatible with other business and industrial development. An area within the allocated land will be set aside for waste uses of this type.
- 43.12 The District Council considers that there is an opportunity for assisting the local economy without unduly affecting the rural environment through the development of modest scale business uses on the allocated site. Potential uses include small scale industrial or commercial units which would assist the development of small businesses; or some forms of open storage, such as plant and machinery, for which there are few suitable sites available on more traditional industrial estates elsewhere in the District. Larger scale industrial, commercial or storage units would not be appropriate in this location.
- 43.13 This Local Plan considers only the principle of this form of development on this site. Other factors to be considered include the amount of floorspace in any new development; the extent of additional landscaping required to supplement the already appreciable screening of the site; access and visibility requirements; and, in particular, the effects of the previous use of areas on and around this site for waste disposal. The Council will require the provision of sufficient information and research on the effects of the previous waste disposal use to enable the implications on the nature and extent of the future development of this site to be fully assessed before the grant of any planning permission. It will also prepare a development brief setting out the detailed planning requirements for the development of this site, taking account of the issues raised above. Any subsequent

planning permission would also control closely future use of the land to ensure that inappropriate uses are excluded. Finally the Council will ensure that future use of this site does not conflict in any way with the County Council's use of the adjacent civic amenity site. The Council would welcome any moves by the County Council to improve facilities at the civic amenity site.

RA3 Land at High Grove, Imberhorne Lane is allocated for small scale industrial, commercial or storage uses. The nature and extent of the future development of this site will be subject to the reservation of part of the site for waste management uses, including improvements to and expansion of the existing civic amenity site and waste transfer facility and the outcome of investigations into the previous use of part of this and adjoining land for additional waste disposal.

Other Sites Within the Rural Area

Crabbet Park

- 43.14 The area known as Crabbet Park is located to the east of the M23 approximately midway between Wakehams Green in the north and Turners Hill Road to the south. Crabbet Park House and its former Orangery are Grade II Listed Buildings which were converted and extended for office use in the 1980s. To the south are two detached dwellings. At one of these, Burleys, permission for residential development was granted in 2000. The group of buildings also comprises Crabbet Park Equitation Centre where there is a range of stables, a dwelling and other buildings including a hotel, conference and leisure facilities.
- 43.15 Although adjacent to the M23 to the west, this area is otherwise surrounded by very attractive countryside. As such it comprises an enclave of development in a rural area. It also lies within the strategic gap between East Grinstead and Crawley. While new development has been permitted here, this has been in the light of special circumstances at the individual sites - e.g. to ensure the restoration and use of important historic buildings (Crabbet Park House and the Orangery); the replacement of existing development by similar uses (Gatwick Worth Hotel); and residential development (at Burleys).
- 43.16 The Council acknowledges the special circumstances which have resulted in these developments being permitted at Crabbet Park. Also, together the existing complex of buildings comprises a relatively compact group which is not readily visible from the surrounding area. However, because of its location in the countryside and in the strategic gap the Council considers that any further development or intensification of use at Crabbet Park would be likely to have a material impact on the amenity and character of this important rural area. Therefore, the Council will carefully control further development at Crabbet Park beyond that which has already been permitted. The area subject to this policy is defined on the Proposals Map.

RA4 New development, including the intensification of uses beyond that already permitted, will only be approved at the area of Crabbet Park where there would be no material adverse impact on the character and amenity of the countryside and the strategic

gap.

Worth Abbey

- 43.17 Worth Abbey is located about 1.5 miles west of Turners Hill. Set within beautiful countryside, the estate totals approximately 200ha, the majority of which is farmland or woodland. The main complex of buildings is located to the south of Paddockhurst Road. The principal uses comprise a boys' school with boarders and day pupils; a monastery, convent and Abbey Church; and a lay community and day centre, which includes provision for the elderly and disabled. There is a wide range of architectural styles, and some of the buildings are listed. The Abbey Church itself is a fine building and is a prominent feature in the surrounding landscape.
- 43.18 As the Abbey complex has grown a number of additional buildings and facilities have been provided, and it is anticipated that further proposals will be forthcoming in the future as the institution continues to evolve and develop. The Abbey is now well established and, although extensive, generally operates without any undue adverse impact on its surroundings. Nevertheless, the site does lie within a particularly beautiful part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Therefore, while the Council will seek to accommodate the Abbey's reasonable needs and aspirations, it will also seek to ensure that development will be limited to that which has no material adverse impact on the character or appearance of the site itself or on the amenity and landscape of the surrounding area.

RA5 Proposals for the erection of additional buildings or the provision of further facilities at Worth Abbey will only be permitted where there would be no detrimental impact on the character, appearance and setting of the site or on that of the surrounding area.

Saint Hill Manor Estate

- 43.19 The Saint Hill Manor Estate comprises about 22ha of countryside located approximately 1 mile south of East Grinstead. Originally comprising an 18th century country manor house set in landscaped grounds with a range of outbuildings, the estate has, since 1959, been the UK headquarters of the Church of Scientology. The Church has carried out a range of developments on the estate, most notably the construction of Saint Hill Castle, completed in 1989. Other works have included the restoration and refurbishment of a number of buildings, including the Manor House, and extensive landscaping of the grounds. The Church has indicated that it has an ongoing programme for the additional development of its facilities at Saint Hill, including further renovations, extensions to existing buildings, and landscaping.
- 43.20 The Church is a significant land use in this area and has generally operated without any undue impact on the surrounding area. However, the estate is located in a particularly beautiful part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Whilst it will seek to accommodate the reasonable needs and aspirations of the Church for additional facilities at Saint Hill, the Council will give particularly close scrutiny to future development proposals in order to ensure that there is no material adverse impact on the character and appearance of the estate or on the amenity and landscape of the surrounding area.

In view of the nature of the local road network the Council will also pay particular attention to the impact of any development proposals on traffic generation.

RA6 Proposals for the erection of additional buildings or the provision of further facilities at Saint Hill Manor Estate will only be permitted where there would be no detrimental impact on the character, appearance or setting of the site or on that of the surrounding area, and where such development would not give rise to excessive traffic generation.

Saint Hill Road

- 43.21 Land currently occupied by the East Grinstead Lawn Tennis and Squash Club at Ship Street East Grinstead is allocated for housing (see Policy EG5 in Chapter 12 of this Local Plan). Implementation of that allocation will require the relocation of the Club to an alternative site elsewhere. The Club has been considering relocation in any event as they regard the existing Ship Street site as inadequate for their current and future needs. It has not been able to find a suitable alternative site within the built-up area of East Grinstead. However, the Club have identified the existing sports club facilities in Saint Hill Road as appropriate sites in view of the breadth of the existing activities, and their role as centres of excellence and for community sport.
- 43.22 There are two significant sports sites in Saint Hill Road, one centred on the hockey club to the west and the other on the rugby club to the east. Both lie outside the built-up area boundary of East Grinstead, in the countryside, and also in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Structure and Local Plan policies seek to protect such areas from inappropriate development, and their overall priority is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Proposals will be rigorously examined and development only allowed in particular circumstances (see policy C4). However, both sites, and in particular the Hockey Club site, have been developed with more extensive facilities over recent years and to a degree provide centres of excellence in their respective fields. In the absence of suitable alternative sites elsewhere, the relocation of the East Grinstead Lawn Tennis and Squash Club to Saint Hill Road would add a further dimension to the provision of sports facilities to the East Grinstead community, thereby complying with one of the criteria of policy C4, that relating to local social/economic need. It would also free up a town centre site for housing, which itself would be of benefit to the town. Clearly redevelopment with extensive tennis club facilities, including substantial buildings, would have some impact on the area. Any relocation of the club to Saint Hill Road would need to be very carefully handled to ensure that this impact is minimised. It will also be necessary to address the issue of transport and access to the site. The tennis club has already referred to funds generated by the development of their existing site assisting with the provision of public transport to Saint Hill Road.
- 43.23 Subject to these considerations, the Council will permit additional sports development at these two sites in Saint Hill Road where there would be no significant impact on the area, and where issues of traffic generation and access are resolved satisfactorily.

RA7 Proposals for additional sports facilities at East Grinstead Sports Club and East Grinstead Rugby Club in Saint Hill Road will only be permitted where there will be no unreasonable detrimental

impact on the character, appearance or setting of the site, the surrounding area, or the AONB or where the development will not give rise to excessive traffic generation.

Small Rural Settlements

Brook Street

43.24 The small hamlet of Brook Street lies close to the northern edge of Cuckfield, within the AONB. It comprises a scattered collection of dwellings lying along the B2036. In view of its appearance and rural character, it is expressly excluded from the built-up area of Cuckfield. This means that Countryside Area of Development Restraint and AONB policies will be applied.

Newtimber

43.25 Newtimber is located within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the western side of the A23 between Albourne and Pyecombe.

43.26 Newtimber is very rural in character, with no clear centre, and consists of a handful of cottages together with Rectory Cottage, The Old Rectory, St John the Evangelist's Church and Newtimber Place. The church, which dates from the 13th century, is a Grade II* listed building. Newtimber Place, an impressive 17th Century moated house, has been Grade I listed. There are sites of archaeological interest at, and in the vicinity of, Newtimber including one Scheduled Ancient Monument which is of national importance.

43.27 Towards the southern end of the Parish near Saddlescombe Farm is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance comprising species-rich chalk grassland and scrub.

Twineham, Twineham Green and Hickstead

43.28 Twineham and Twineham Green are located along Bolney Chapel Road and Twineham Lane some two miles to the south of Bolney. Both are small secluded linear hamlets set in open countryside. Twineham Green consists of a number of properties scattered along the eastern side of Bolney Chapel Road between Hillmans Farm to the north and Hooker's Farm to the south. Twineham is further to the south and takes the form of a scattered low density settlement consisting of a few dwellings, St Peter's Church, The Old Rectory and primary school. Both the Church and the Old Rectory are listed buildings. There are also sites of archaeological interest in the area.

43.29 Hickstead is a small scattered hamlet which lies within Twineham Parish stretching along the western side of the B2116 (former A23) between Hickstead Lane and the All England Show Jumping Course. The settlement is set within an attractive area of countryside which has good views towards the High Weald and Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The main part of the hamlet lies on Hickstead Lane and centres on the Castle Public House, a listed building. To the south of Hickstead Lane lies Hickstead Place, a Grade II* listed building built originally in the 15th Century, though subsequently altered. There are also sites of archaeological interest at, and in the vicinity of, Hickstead. Adjacent to the Hickstead junction on the A23 a new development of roadside service facilities has been constructed comprising a petrol station, family restaurant and overnight accommodation.

- 43.30 Alongside the northbound sliproad of the A23 there exists a small area of industrial/commercial development. This is located within the Countryside Area of Development Restraint and it is therefore not considered that any intensification or expansion of activity would be appropriate.
- 43.31 Alongside the southbound sliproad of the A23 lies Northlands Farm which has previously been granted planning permission for use as a cattle market in exceptional circumstances. As the site lies within the Countryside Area of Development Restraint it is not considered to be suitable for any other form of development.