

Hassocks Neighbourhood Development Plan

Examiner's Clarification Note

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan provides a distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area.

The presentation of the Plan is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Aims are also distinct from the land use policies. The Plan makes good use of photographs.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now in a position to raise issues for clarification with the Parish Council. There are also specific questions for the District Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of my report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions.

I set out specific policy clarification points below in the order in which they appear in the submitted Plan.

Questions for the Parish Council

Policy 1

I have read the Landscape Character Assessment and the October 2018 and May 2019 documents on the Local Gaps matter.

I can see the updates that have been grafted onto the original work undertaken by MSDC as part of the now superseded 2004 Local Plan.

Does 'robust evidence' exist to demonstrate that 'national and local planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection in the proposed Local Gaps' as required by Policy DP13 of the Mid Sussex District Plan?

Policy 2

In the event that the Plan is made and includes any or all of the proposed Local Green Spaces (LGS) the policies map will need to be accompanied with more detailed maps showing each of the LGSs. This will particular be the case with LGS3 and 6 where the precise boundaries are not immediately clear from the submitted Proposals Map.

Is there any overlap between the proposed LGS 3 and Land at Clayton Mills in Policy 10c?

I have read the Proposed Local Green Spaces document and the October 2018 and May 2019 documents on this matter.

From my observations when I visited the neighbourhood area the proposed LGSs appear to fall into two distinct groups. The first are those which are primarily recreational in use and

character (LGS 3/5/6/7/8). The second are those which are primarily in agricultural use (LGS 1/2/4)

Does the Parish Council wish to add any publicly-available evidence to its commentary about the extent to which the second category of proposed LGSs are 'demonstrably special to the local community'?

What is the relationship between the proposed designation of LGSs 1/2/4 and Section ID:37-015-20140306 of Planning Practice Guidance?

What are the sizes of proposed LGSs 1/2/3/4/5?

Outside the South Downs National Park, the LGSs overlap with the relevant proposed Local Gap. Was this deliberate?

Which of the two policies would apply and/or take preference in the determination of any planning application in the affected proposed LGS where this overlap exists?

Policy 4

Is the first paragraph intended to apply primarily to specific proposals to reduce the risk of flooding (rather than to proposals which incorporated such measures as part of wider development)?

Policy 7

The policy approach is well-developed. I saw the different characters of the two conservation areas as part of my visit. I am proposing to recommend a modification so that the policy is simplified and that the two sets of special features are relocated into the supporting text.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 9

The policy approach is well-developed.

However, is the Townscape Appraisal in the policy the same document as the Village Design Statement referenced in paragraph 4.58?

Policy 12

Have the facilities to be protected by this policy been identified beyond the general approach in paragraph 5.12?

Policy 13

As submitted, this does not read as a land use policy. Its focus is on working on educational provision with other organisations. It is a more detailed version of Aim 2?

If so, it needed?

Alternatively, are any sites actively being considered/safeguarded for the provision anticipated?

Policy 14

Is criterion 7 necessary given the contents of Policy 1?

Policy 15

Does this policy relate to the housing development that has just commenced at the Hassocks Golf Course site?

If so, is it necessary?

Policy 16

The opening paragraphs of this policy are potentially confusing. The first paragraph supports proposals which would accord with the relevant Local Plan policy. The second paragraph comments about the type of development the Parish Council would support.

Has this policy been designed to add value to the Local Plan policy? If so, to what extent does it do so?

If this is not the case is Policy 16 necessary?

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Does the Parish Council (and/or its consultants) wish to respond to the comments on the SA received from Rydon Homes (Sigma Planning), Clayton with Keymer Parish Council (Evison & Company) and Globe Homes (Lewis and Company)?

In particular does the Council have any comments on whether the suggested additional spatial options are reasonable alternatives to the approach taken in the Plan and the accompanying SA?

Questions for the District Council

Does the District Council have any update from the Secretary of State on the holding direction with regard to planning application DM/19/1897 - Land to the rear of Friars Oak, London Road, Hassocks?

Are there any other current planning applications which may affect the Plan's proposed designation of Local Gaps (Policy 1) or LGSs (Policy 2)?

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

In particular, does it wish to comment on the various representations from the development industry on Policies 1 (Local Gaps) and 2 (Local Green Spaces)?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 25 October 2019. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

In the event that certain responses are available before others I am happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled please could it come to me directly from the District Council. In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy or the matter concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

Hassocks Neighbourhood Development Plan.

7 October 2019