

We would make the following comments in relation to proposed allocation SA15: Land south of Southway, Burgess Hill:

The amendments to the NPPF as of 20 July 2021 are noted, particularly the increased emphasis on mitigating climate change including by making effective use of land in urban areas (Para 11 (a)). The proposed allocation SA15 proposes the use of an area of overgrown and inaccessible land within the urban area. The site has been identified as having little ecological or biodiversity value. The allocation and future development of the site would make effective use of undeveloped land within the urban area in line with the stated aims of the updated NPPF. Furthermore, the site is in a highly sustainable location surrounded by existing development including residential immediately to the south and west. The site is well located for future residents to make use of public transport and various facilities within walking distance thereby reducing reliance on the private car.

The amendments to the NPPF also include setting out aims of: protecting and enhancing the natural environment by improving biodiversity (para 8 (c)), improving the environment (para 11 (a)) and delivering wider benefits for nature (para 98). As set out in previous submissions in relation to this proposed allocation, the development of this site would include the provision of areas of informal open green space which would be publicly accessible offering an improvement over the current environment of an inaccessible, overgrown parcel of land which is subject to flytipping and vandalism. Improvements to the green infrastructure in the locality would be achieved by incorporating the informal paths adjacent to the north, west and eastern boundaries of the site into the design of the scheme providing much enhanced connectivity for residents travelling on foot and by bicycle through the vicinity including the green spaces to the north-west (Snake Wood and the recreation ground).

The proposals for the site also include the retention of the mature woodland on the eastern boundary together with the area of scrub between the PROW (that diagonally crosses the site) and the woodland. This would limit development to the areas currently occupied by scrub of lesser biodiversity value. Suitable supplementary planting would also be proposed to enhance the site's biodiversity along with additional measures such as bat and bird boxes. In addition, the proposals would include contributions towards off-site habitat enhancement projects (such as, for example, an extension to the existing Bedelands Local Nature Reserve).

Overall, there is scope for development of the site to achieve a net gain in biodiversity, significant improvements to the local environment and wider nature benefits as required by the amended NPPF.

Kind regards

Cathy

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