Examination of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039

Hearing Statement Submitted by WILD

Matter 7: sites added by the draft Main Modifications

Sayers Common: MM92 - West House Farm, Henfield Road

Introduction

1.1 This site is not sustainable and therefore not sound, both on the grounds identified for the hearing and for other reasons. The points made in our introduction to MM82 & MM80 apply here and we do not repeat them: however, in addition we note that although listed as being in Sayers Common and proposed for inclusion in the masterplan for those sites, this site is in Albourne, and should be considered as an Albourne site, having an impact on Albourne village.

1.2 We have written to Mid Sussex to seek agreement on a Statement of Common Ground. A copy of our letter is attached to our statement on MM80 & MM82.

Access and Movement

2.1 The site is separated from the 'hamlet' component of DPSC3 by a bridlepath/public right of way and private road for vehicles serving a cluster of existing dwellings, which means that only limited access will be possible. It is also separated from the main DPSC3 site by the busy B2116. Vehicle access cannot be made safe: the northern border of the site fronts onto a narrow, twisty section of carriageway with a sloping gradient away from Albourne village, resulting in poor lines of sight which cannot be mitigated.

2.2 We described the current traffic movement problems at Hurst High Street and the Sayers Common A23 junction in our consultation response and will not repeat the arguments here. Inclusion of this site in the Plan would add to those problems, for which no satisfactory solution has been found.

Social and Community Facilities

3.1 The approach taken in the policy is to seek contributions for the facilities in DPSC3. With the exception of education where some more distant travel can be expected, these are too far away to meet the active travel requirement, and involve crossing the B2116. The site is much closer to Albourne village which is excluded from the masterplan and has no equivalent infrastructure provision.

Countryside

4.1 The inclusion of this site would effectively confirm the coalescence of Albourne and Sayers Common, and violate the provision in the draft plan that Albourne should be a stand alone settlement, suitable only for proportionate development.

4.2 The village of Albourne has an ‘L’ shape, formed by linear development around The Street, and housing along the road to the Old School House, St Bartholomew's Church and Rectory. The open landscape to the west of the village is the key to its setting as a traditional Low Weald settlement. Development of the site will erode this setting beyond repair.

4.3 The setting of the listed buildings at West House Farm is essential to an appreciation of their heritage value. This will be destroyed by the proximity of the proposed development.

Sustainability Appraisal

5.1 Using the methodology described in para 7.1 of our statement regarding MM82 and MM80, the SA for this site, listed as No.1124, gives a net score of +4. If it is adjusted according to that methodology, taking into account the points made here, the net score becomes -6. As previously described, the Council failed to apply proper scrutiny. Given the weight of the planning balance against the selection of the site it is unsound, and should not be included in the Plan.