

Standard Response to Issues Raised in Consultation on the Revised Draft Adur Local Plan 2013

Sompting Village and Conservation Area

Issues raised through the Recent Consultation Exercise

Several respondents to the recent consultation referred to a recent planning application in Sompting village which was refused at appeal, and considered by some respondents to set a precedent against further development – querying why a larger number of dwellings was proposed, if a small number were considered inappropriate. Another issue raised specifically in relation to the West Sompting allocation was the impact of the proposed strategic development site on the Sompting Conservation Area. These issues are addressed below.

Refusal of planning application in Sompting village setting a precedent and impact on the countryside

Sompting village lies outside of the Built- Up Area Boundary and is within the countryside (as defined in the Adur Local Plan 1996, and the emerging Revised Draft Adur Local Plan 2013). It also lies within land designated as strategic gap within the Adur Local Plan 1996 and proposed as Local Green Gap within the Revised Draft Adur Local Plan (RDALP) 2013 separating the settlements of Sompting/Lancing and Worthing.

Sompting village is not considered as a focus for new development, in order to retain its historic character and identity, in particular the linear pattern of development. Policy RD 10 of the Revised Draft Adur Local Plan 2013 which is a 'place-based' policy specifically relating to Sompting, states:

'Sompting village will not be expanded or intensified due to its linear and historic character, and countryside location within the Local Green Gap.'

The planning application (ADC/0006/10) for 14 dwellings referred to in representations was dismissed on appeal in March 2010. This site (West Street Nursery, West Street) lies within the village of Sompting, which was designated as a conservation area in March 1976.

Similarly the Inspector in dismissing the appeal (referred to above) concluded that "the proposed development would detract from the character and appearance of the countryside and fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Sompting Conservation Area." The Inspector considered that the impact of the size of the development in relation to the very modest size of the village and the limited width of the strip of countryside remaining between Worthing and Lancing would have a considerable impact on the character of the village and amount to a substantial encroachment on the countryside, contrary to policies in the Adur Local Plan 1996.

In contrast, the allocation proposed within the Revised Draft Adur Local Plan 2013 is a planned extension adjacent to the existing Built Up Area Boundary of Sompting/Lancing (the BUAB would be amended to reflect this allocation). This part of Sompting has no particular historic character and is fairly homogeneous in nature. The addition of this urban extension will not detract from the character of the built up area, or Sompting village

The proposed West Sompting allocation does not lie within, or adjoin, the Sompting Conservation Area boundaries, and as such it is not considered that the allocation will have any adverse impact on the Conservation Area. (Certainly there is no 'loss' of conservation area, as referred to in many representations received as part of the consultation exercise). The West Sompting allocation is separated from the boundaries of the conservation area by the Gap. RD Policy 6: Land at West Sompting requires that a landscaped buffer is provided alongside the western boundary of that part of the proposed development which lies south of West Street, in order to reduce its impact on the landscape of the countryside. In addition, the western part of the proposed allocation which lies north of West Street is proposed as open space (possibly a community orchard) which will lie between the conservation area and new housing, acting as a buffer between the two areas (see Map 5 of the RDALP 2013). RD Policy 6 itself states that: 'Development must respect...the historic character of Sompting Conservation Area.'

In addition, Revised Draft Policy 10 of the RDALP 2013 specifically relates to Sompting. It states:

“Sompting village will not be expanded or intensified due to its linear and historic character, and countryside location within the Local Green Gap.”

The supporting text makes clear that Sompting village itself (that is, the area within the designated Conservation Area) is not seen as a focus for new development in order to retain the historic character and identity of the village, in particular the linear pattern of development.

Meeting the Need for Infrastructure

Clearly the dismissed appeal proposal, and the proposed allocation, differ greatly in scale. However, because of its greater size, the proposed allocation will be expected to meet the infrastructure needs it generates. This will include the need to make provision for education, highways improvements, open space, improved pedestrian and cycle links, and leisure. It will also provide additional infrastructure such as affordable housing, and will be expected to mitigate its impact on the A27 and local roads. In contrast, smaller developments (such as the application referred to) tend not to contribute to wider infrastructure needs and cumulatively can have an adverse impact on existing facilities and services. (More on infrastructure can be found in the standard response on Infrastructure).

Conclusion

In conclusion it is not considered that the appeal decision sets a precedent for not including the strategic allocation of 480 new homes proposed at West Sompting in the Revised Draft Adur Local Plan; the proposed allocation does not lie within or adjoining the designated area, and because of its scale will be required to provide infrastructure (onsite, and offsite if necessary) to meet the needs it creates. In addition the allocation will not lead to loss of the Sompting Conservation Area.

Please note that more discussion on the landscape impacts of the proposed West Sompting strategic allocation may be found in the standard response on landscape.