

Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2031

Initial Comments of the Independent Examiner

Prepared by

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6th June 2018

Introduction

1. As you will be aware I have been appointed to carry out the examination of this Neighbourhood Plan. I have carried out my initial assessment of the Plan and all the accompanying documents that I have been sent. I have also spent yesterday morning, visiting the neighbourhood area to familiarise myself with Sompting and the surrounding countryside.
2. Whilst it is normal practice for matters to be dealt with on the basis of the examination of the written material only, the legislation does allow for the holding of a public hearing if it would assist the examination.
3. I have concluded that a limited hearing would help me come to a conclusion as to the how the plan meets three of the basic conditions. These are:
 - Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan.
 - The making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - The making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority.

General Introductory Remarks

The Need to Update the Supporting Text

4. I appreciate that the Neighbourhood Plan Group has been preparing this plan over many years and the Pre-Submission Consultation was held back in 2015. I note that the Submission Version of the plan was published in June 2016, which is now 2 years ago and in that time, there has been a number of changes to the development plan, particularly the adoption of the Adur Local Plan. One of my likely recommendations will be that the text of the whole document needs to be carefully reviewed, and edited so that it reflects the current development plan position.
5. This does not necessary need to be done before the examination has been concluded, but the Parish Council may wish to conduct that “edit” sooner rather than later and if it wishes to send me any revisions, I will be happy to consider them, which could affect the form of my recommendation on this issue.

Local Green Space and other Open Space

6. Following on from my site visit, I believe that there are errors in the labelling of the Local Green and Open Spaces on Inset 1 Map, which do not in every case tally with their identification in Policy 5.
7. I would invite the Parish Council to send me a revised Inset 1 Map which correctly shows the correct identification code.

Policy 2 – West Sompting

8. It is the matter of the level of prescription set out in this policy, which I would wish to explore with the Parish Council, the Local Planning Authority and the developer / landowner of this site. **I will not be looking at the principle of the West Sompting residential allocation.** I am aware that as a result of discussions on this site in the intervening two years, that some matters may have moved on and I would therefore be inviting the 3 parties to what is likely to be no more than a half-day session to allow me to examine in detail the policy. In part, this will explore the representations made by both the LPA and by Turleys, on behalf of the developers, Persimmons and the landowner Sompting Estates. I am very conscious that Policy 6 of the Adur Local Plan is a strategic policy, for the purpose of the basic conditions and I need to be satisfied that the neighbourhood plan policy is in general conformity with it. If there are variations from its requirements I need to consider whether any deviations will undermine the policy.
9. Equally I do recognise the role a neighbourhood plan can play in seeking to shape the form of development. I need to be satisfied that the policies are evidence based and will deliver sustainable development.
10. It is my intention to lead a discussion on these issues at the hearing, which will allow me to come to my conclusions. I will therefore in respect of this hearing, not be issuing a list of questions or inviting statements of case to be submitted in advance of the hearing.
11. I will be looking to explore the status of the design and policy advice set out in the supporting paragraphs 4.14 to 4.37 and whether it constitutes development policy that could be used to determine a planning application.

Concluding Remarks

12. I hope that this note is useful in explaining to parties how I propose to conclude this examination. The first two matters I am happy to deal with by way of written submission but the West Sompting issue requires a public hearing. Once arrangements have been made, I will arrange for the issue of a further note setting out how the session will be conducted.

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Independent Examiner of the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan

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