

# Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan

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## **Guidance Notes and Agenda for Public Hearing**

**Prepared by the Independent Examiner**

**JOHN SLATER BA(Hons), DMS, MRTPI**

**John Slater Planning Ltd**

1. Following my initial consideration of the Plan, I have decided that a public hearing is required to assist my examination of this Neighbourhood Plan. I propose to hold a single session which will commence at **10.00am on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018 in Committee Room 1 of Worthing Town Hall, Chapel Road, Worthing, BN11 1HA**. I anticipate that will be a half-day session during which I propose to deal with the issues I wish to hear further evidence which will concentrate on
2. This Note provides guidance as to how the hearing will be conducted, and includes an agenda.
3. According to the Localism Act, the general rule is that the examination of issues by the Examiner is to take the form of the consideration of written representations. However, the Act does allow the calling of a public hearing.
4. I have decided to hold the hearings so as to allow the further exploration of the issues arising from my initial consideration of the plan and some of the representations made at Regulation 16 Stage particularly related to the West Sompting housing allocation. The issues that I have asked to receive oral submissions on, were generally set out in the document "Initial Comments of the Independent Examiner" dated 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018.
5. However, to give greater guidance as to the matters that I will be looking to explore, I would offer the following additional guidance. I will be looking for an update on the likely timescales for the delivery of this allocation, including any discussions between the developer and the planning authority (and the Parish Council) and the anticipated timescale for any planning application. I wish to hear views as to whether the neighbourhood plan is placing more onerous requirements on the development than the local plan and in particular whether the need for a replacement community building should take precedence over the

proposed community facility, which I understand includes a “Community Farm”. I will want to discuss whether the requirements for “buffers” between the new and existing houses will allow the proper integration of the new homes with the existing community. I will want to hear views as to whether the requirement for a landscape 10 m buffer is over prescriptive or is it justified by evidence. The policy requires the development to deliver improved footpath and cycle links to the SDNP and I need to test whether these are actually deliverable in term of the barrier created by the A27. I will also wish to understand whether such matters are within the control of the landowner, as well as the required pedestrian and cycling links between Sompting and the employment areas in Worthing. I will also be questioning whether the design zones is the correct approach which is seeking to place larger houses, which are likely to have bigger gardens, in locations adjacent to open spaces, when the smaller units are located closer to the public transport and shops. I will be inviting a discussion whether it is best approach for the neighbourhood plan to separate the area into design zones. What are the merits of the neighbourhood plan having specific design policies compared to the developer’s proposal for a Character Area Design Guide. Is there scope for a collaborative approach?

6. I can assure all parties that I have considered, and will continue to consider, all the written representations submitted at Regulation 16 stage
  
7. The hearing is open to the public to attend; however, the conduct of a neighbourhood plan hearing is set out in Paragraph 9 of Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2012 and that specifies the parties who can participate. The legislation specifically provides for oral representations at the hearing to be made by the Qualifying Body, namely Sompting Parish Council and the Local Planning Authority, Adur District Council. In

addition, I have issued for invitations to be extended to Turleys on behalf of Persimmons, Sompting Estates, the landowner and Sustainable Sussex who are the body who are the party who are envisaged to deliver and be responsible for the Local Plan's community facility.

8. It is not my intention to invite representations from other parties at the hearing. I have no objections if any party wishes to film or record any part of the proceeding or to use social media.
  
9. It is for the Examiner to decide how the hearing is conducted. In particular, I shall decide the nature and extent of any questions, and the amount of time spent on each matter. The principle to be applied, is that questioning will be done by myself, except where I feel that questioning by other parties should be allowed to ensure either adequate examination of a particular issue, or to ensure that a party has a fair chance to put their case.

### **Agenda**

10. The Agenda for the Hearing will be as follows:

- (1) **Opening remarks-** by myself as Examiner
- (2) **Opening statement** by Sompting Parish Council – I would like to offer the opportunity to the Qualifying Body to set out its overall approach to the neighbourhood plan.
- (3) **Discussion to be led by the examiner**
- (4) **Examiners Closing Remarks**

## Site visits

11. I have already carried out a site visit to Sompting. I consider that it is possible that I will want to carry out a further visit to the area depending on the discussions at the Hearing. If I believe that an accompanied visit is required then I propose that it take place immediately upon the close of the hearing.
  
12. The purpose of the site visit is simply to identify matters which have already been presented in the representations. No further evidence will be given on site.

John Slater BA (Hons), DMS, MRTPI

Independent Examiner to The Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan

John Slater Planning Ltd

28<sup>th</sup> June 2018

