

WEST CHILTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COUNCIL

SUMMARY OF MEETING WITH LAURA BOURKE AT HDC

Present:

Laura Bourke	Neighbourhood Planning Officer HDC
Emma *****	Planning Officer ? HDC
Tony Thomas	Clerk, West Chiltington Parish Council
Robert Thornton	West Chiltington Neighbourhood Plan Council
Norman Kirby	West Chiltington Neighbourhood Plan Council

Purpose of meeting

The meeting had originally been proposed to clarify a number of issues about the approach to the Neighbourhood Plan that stemmed from questions raised at the last NPC meeting. In the course of arranging the meeting it became clear that HDC had introduced a requirement for all NPs to be supported by a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Introduction

The WC team outlined the process for its NP and having sent LB a copy of the draft NP invited her to provide any informal guidance on any issues that might not be in line with HDCs expectations. This review is likely to take 2-3 weeks.

RT outlined the development constraints in WC because of:

- the existing built up areas and the need to maintain separation between the two settlements
- the southern boundary with a SSSI and Monkmead Woods, the SDNP and River Chilt flood plain
- the western boundary to which development already extended in many places and its agricultural land
- the northern boundary of the village and the extensive agricultural environment and limited access

This left the north eastern side of the village as the only area where some limited development might take place.

The WC team asked about the latest SHLAA. The report was too large to go on the website and was being segmented. Copies of the SHLAA maps for WC were obtained. The only significant changes from the maps we have been using to date were the Smock Alley site that HDC calls Haglands Lane and a small site in the NW of the parish marked as undevelopable Haglands Lane was marked as not developable as it would support only a very small development below the SHLAA threshold. Asked to explain the assessment and the fact that the developer was proposing a 21 house complex HDC was unable to add anything.

HDC confirmed that the NP process would be expected to have considered all possible potential sites and to lead to an allocation of specific sites where a defined number of homes that would contribute to the HDC 1500 target would in principle be proposed. The proposals would need to be compliant with HDC planning framework policies and LB confirmed that the key element of those policies for rural settlements like ours was housing, economic and social need. She confirmed that this policy together with the general policies on preserving the nature and character of rural settlements was the equivalent of the old Cat 2 settlement policy and applied to all developments even single back garden sites.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

HDC had decided that it would like all NPs to be supported by a SA/SEA in order to be certain that the requirements of UK and EU law were met. The process would begin with us submitting a screening application to which HDC would respond confirming that we needed to conduct the appraisal/assessment. We would then prepare a scoping report for HDC review and we would conduct a review of all potential development sites and make an assessment of them. The purpose was to provide evidence of the decision making to support the allocations that were eventually made. There were various templates for the assessment – one in the SA/SEA guidance LB had provided a link to – RT had an Adur DC version - HDC had its own SA/SEA available on the website. We were free to choose the categories we wanted to include but perhaps 6-8 would be sufficient. HDC would help with consulting on them with various statutory bodies.

We discussed whether there was a standard scoring system for the assessment but it seems that there is not and each settlement has to design its own appropriate benchmarks.

Timescales

HDCs planning framework was currently with the Planning Inspectorate. Public hearings were expected in November and finalization in the New Year. NPs in the HDC area were developing in a way that suggested that they would be ready for review in the New Year.