

Billinghurst Neighbourhood Development Plan

Independent Examiner's Clarification Note

Context

This note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan is exceptionally well-presented. The quality of the photographs and maps is very good. It results in a very interesting and attractive document. The distinction between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The use of colour adds to the overall attractiveness of the Plan. The various associated technical documents provide comprehensive details on their specific areas.

The Plan provides a clear and distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area. It is proportionate to the parish and has focused on a series of distinctive matters.

In combination the contents of the Plan and its wider presentation represent a very impressive achievement for the local community.

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now in a position to raise some initial issues for clarification. They are mainly for the Parish Council. There are separate questions for the District Council.

There is also a specific question for West Sussex County Council. I would be grateful if the District Council would send the question directly to the County Council.

The comments that are made on these points will be used to assist in the preparation of my report. They will also inform any potential modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions.

Questions/Comments for the Parish Council

Policy BILL 1

Does the Parish Council have any comments on the following representations:

Dunmoore (Armstrong Rigg) on the proposed definition of the built-up area boundary (in respect of Hilland Farm)?

McConnell Planning on the proposed definition of the built-up area boundary (in respect of Maringdean Acres)?

Policy BILL 2

This is a good policy which makes a positive local response to the national design agenda.

Policy BILL 7

I looked at the village centre as part of my visit. The purpose and intentions of the different elements of the policy were self-evident.

In slightly different ways the elements of the policy are now affected by the recent changes to the Use Classes Order. I am minded to recommend modifications to the policy to ensure that it has regard to national policy.

Does the Parish Council have any observations on this proposition?

In particular does it have any comments on the way in which the new Order impacts on the purpose of the different elements of the policy?

Policy BILL 12

I looked at the Key Movement Routes very carefully as part of my visit. The reasons for their selection are self-evident.

This element of the policy is an excellent example of a local response to specific features of the village through the development of a neighbourhood plan.

Policy BILL 15

I looked at the proposed local green spaces (LGSs) when I visited the neighbourhood area. I saw the different ways in which they contributed towards its character and the provision of open space.

I can see that the schedule of LGSs has been revised since the LGS Justification was produced. This is understandable and demonstrates the natural evolution of the Plan. Nevertheless, can I continue to rely on the details included in the Justification for the majority of the LGSs which remain in the Plan?

What is the size of the proposed Bypass path LGS (LGS1)?

Does the Parish Council have any comments on the representation made by West Sussex County Council on this proposed LGS?

In relation to the policy itself is the first sentence of the second part (B) actually a policy? As I read it is a repetition of a part of the NPPF.

In addition is it appropriate for this part of the policy to identify the 'very special circumstances' where development might be supported within a proposed designated LGS?

Would the proposed circumstances be better positioned within the supporting text?

Monitoring and Review

The Plan has addressed the issue of its eventual review in a professional way in Section 10 of the Plan. It is encouraging that the Parish Council has acknowledged the need for an 'early review' of the Plan once the emerging Horsham Local Plan has been adopted.

Has the Parish Council considered when it will be intending to review a 'made' neighbourhood plan (either in specific date terms or within a specified time period following the adoption of the emerging Horsham Local Plan)?

Non-Policy Actions

The proposed schedule is both comprehensive and compelling. It has a healthy overlap with several of the land use policies in the Plan.

Question for the District Council

Is the emerging Local Plan timetable still proceeding to that available on the District Council's website and within the Local Development Scheme?

Does the District Council have a view on an appropriate timetable for the review of a 'made' Billinghamurst neighbourhood plan?

Question for West Sussex County Council

I have read the representation on the Bypass path proposed local green space (LGS1).

Does the County Council have any programmed and costed proposals for alterations to the A29 to the west of Billinghamurst within the Plan period (up to 2031) which would affect the wider integrity of the proposed local green space?

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

In particular, and in addition to those representations already referenced in the policy-based questions, does the Parish Council wish to comment on the representations made by:

- Reside Developments;
- Dunmoore (Armstrong Rigg);
- Bellway Homes/Crest Strategic Projects;
- Vistry Homes;
- CPA Property;
- McConnell Planning;
- Hallam Land Management; and/or
- Horsham District Council?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to the various questions by 20 October 2020. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to meet. It reflects the factual basis of the questions raised.

In the event that certain responses are available before others I am happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled please can all responses be sent to me by Horsham District Council and make direct reference to the policy/issue concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

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29 September 2020