

## HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP

Non Confidential Minutes of the Meeting of Hassocks  
Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March  
2017 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber.

Attendees: Working Group Members: Bill Hatton ( Chair); Ian Weir; Nick Owens; Frances Gaudencio; Sue Hatton; David Withycombe(Left the meeting at 9.05pm during item 10); Judith Foot (JAF). Parish Councillor Lesley Campbell.

Dowsett Mayhew Consultants: Dale Mayhew and Laura Bourke.

Administrator: Jane Bromley.

Four members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence: Virginia Pullan; David Withycombe (apologised he may need to leave early); Justine Fisher (JF); Adrian Batchelor.

Non-attendance: Victoria Standfast.

2. Declarations of interest: Frances Gaudencio site 8. David Withycombe site 12. Local Green Space Declarations of Interest: Frances Gaudencio LGS 5; Nick Owens LGS2.

Schools Interest: David Withycombe, Hassocks Infants; Frances Gaudencio Windmills Junior; Sue Hatton Downlands and Windmills Junior.

3. Minutes of NPWG held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017. The Working Group RESOLVED to agree the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017.

4. Update on Flood Risk Assessment.

LB advised the owner of the National Tyre Centre site had confirmed verbally to her that he would not be undertaking a Flood Risk Assessment he had a long term lease arrangement for the site and he was happy with this as was not therefore concerned that the lack of such an assessment would jeopardise the site remaining in the Neighbourhood Plan after Examination. LB had asked for him to confirm his position in writing although such written confirmation had not yet been received.

DM advised that should the Examiner require the Policy for this site to be removed from the Plan due to a lack of FRA, then it would be argued that the remaining site allocations, together with windfall would cumulatively exceed the housing number that is identified to be

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delivered in the Neighbourhood Plan. On this advice the Working Group via BH confirmed they were happy to proceed.

### **5. Update on Mid Sussex District Plan.**

The final decision of the Examination of the District Plan appears to be that MSDC will accept 876 units per annum for the first five years during which time they will need to prepare a further Development Plan document to make further site allocations to cater for a further 150 units per annum over the life of the Plan, to cater for Crawley's shortfall. Crawley due to geographical constraints being unable to meet its own need. The Examiner stated that it might be prudent for MSDC to allocate housing on a Parish by Parish basis.

DM advised there were a number of options on how MSDC may choose to proceed. They could require NP to deliver stated numbers now, or they could allow Neighbourhood Plans to go forward with current numbers and then identify additional sites at District level in due course.

SH pointed out that Neighbourhood Plans had been advised against phased building whereas this appeared to be what the Local Plan was doing. DM felt the phasing approach could be justified due to the exceptional circumstance of Crawley not being able to meet its own need from 2021 onwards.

JAF asked what would happen should sites receive planning permission but then not be built out. DM noted that there is anecdotal evidence that historically developers have sought to control housing delivery but The White Paper recently published is saying the Government will have a mechanism to control this.

IW queried whether the supply of 876 per annum would be seen to be MSDC meeting its five year housing supply given the extra they were expected to allocate from Crawley. DM advised that 876 would be the starting point to determine the requisite 5-year supply.

### **6. Update on the Ham Fields and Friars Oak planning applications.**

The Ham Field planning appeal had been allowed. IW expressed the Parish Council's disappointment. BH noted that all Parishes in Mid Sussex are in broadly the same position. The Parish Council's position on Friars Oak remained the same.

IW advised that Nick Herbert MP had a meeting with the Secretary of State concerning this outcome and would take with him statements from Hurst and Hassocks Parish Council which would strengthen his

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case. FG felt action should be taken by the Parish Council to reflect the disquiet of the Parish residents and this should be revisited following the meeting with MSDC on 6<sup>th</sup> April as an agenda item. In the meantime it was possible for individual residents to register their protest. NO felt that the Parish Council would have opportunity later to make its feelings known possibly by endorsing, or not The Plan at referendum.

7. To consider the response of Mid Sussex District Council to the Hassocks Parish Council request for Hassocks NP to be progressed to Examination.

MSDC had called a meeting of Parishes for 6<sup>th</sup> April and further information as to whether The Plan could progress to Examination would be known after that meeting.

8. To consider the Housing White paper and put forward to the Parish Council a response to the paper.

*FG suggested responses to questions 13, 18 and 31. BH suggested commenting on questions 1, 10 and 12.*

Question 13. Making efficient use of land and avoid building at low density. Higher density housing to be allocated in urban areas well served by public transport.

JAF felt that higher density in urban areas saved the open countryside. NO felt quality housing was required to give people dignity and this could be eroded at the expense of social cohesion.

BH felt it was not a matter for National Policy and should be decided at a local level.

IW felt more space could be given to properties if community space for developments was reduced.

Question 18. Views on introducing a fee for making a planning appeal.

BH was not in favour if the fee would apply to all not just those building large numbers of units.

IW felt a fee commiserate with the number of units applied for would be appropriate.

DW felt if an appeal was won would a District be liable for the cost of the appellant.

NO thought a fee should be non- refundable.

Question 31. Revising the definition of affordable housing.

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FG had the impression 'affordable housing' was no longer affordable and this question should be responded to. Building was all to do with profit and not providing what was needed.

DM felt there was a complex array of affordable housing types and the government's own 'Right to Buy' scheme had reduced the stock of affordable housing as the housing providers capital asset stock was being eroded. 'Right to Buy' has not been withdrawn.

IW historically council housing rent was at a good affordable level.

BH felt Local Authorities should be given the freedom to build and maintain their own community housing.

### Question 1 .Spatial Policy Strategy.

BH did not agree with proposed spatial strategy which he felt was confusing. He thought it would be far more sensible if the Government reverted to the former regional planning strategy along the lines of SERPLAN and County Structure Plans.

### Question 12. Allocation of numbers for Neighbourhood Planning.

FG. Localism suggests that such a decision should be through consultation and therefore numbers should be designated through negotiation with parishes.

DW Felt that in some cases allocation of numbers would be appropriate and other cases not.

NO felt in principal it was a good idea to have clarity but for Hassocks he felt that if they received an allocation the numbers involved would be detrimental.

Question 10. The Future of Green Belts. BH noted that there is no Greenbelt Designation in Mid Sussex and that the District has suffered severely because of this. He felt it was ridiculous that, nearly 70 years after the designation of the MGB attractive countryside in Mid Sussex should be regarded as suitable for development whereas unattractive land on the fringe of London should be seen as sacrosanct.

BH felt this was an unbalanced approach and the approach should be equalised.

DW felt the NPPF weakened Local designations for landscape.

JAF. CPRE were strenuously resisting the development of Green Belt but were doing nothing to save Local Gaps.

9. Date of next meeting Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm.

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**Exclusion of the Public and Press:**

*In view of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed members of the public or press present, if any, will be asked to withdraw from the meeting in the public interest.*

10. Update on new school provision for the Parish.

A meeting was to be arranged with WSCC in early May. 18<sup>th</sup> May 7.30pm was decided upon. **ACTION DM**

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed Chairman -----

Dated -----