

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held virtually on Monday 14 September 2020 at 7.30pm

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Jane Baker, Kristian Berggreen, Robert Brewer, Bill Hatton, Nick Owens (Chair) and Claire Tester.

In Attendance: Deputy Clerk: Tracy Forte

- P20/58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Leslie Campbell.
- P20/59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**
- P20/60 MINUTES.** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2020, be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
- P20/61 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.** There were no members of the Public present. However Members were invited to consider the following written representation submitted by Juliet Merrifield, on behalf of The Crescent's Resident's Association in opposition to application DM/20/2880 21A The Crescent, Hassocks BN6 8RB.

The Crescent Residents Association have asked the MSDC planning department for an extension of the comment period as the residents within 4m of the proposed development were not notified of the planning application, and no notice was posted at the site.

Meanwhile, we would like to make the Hassocks Parish Council planning committee aware of at least some of the objections we have to this application.

1. The plan does not meet several policies of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore we hope that HPC will recommend refusal.

Policy 14 says: *Development proposals for residential development on unidentified sites within the defined built-up area of Hassocks will be supported where proposals:*

Are of an appropriate nature and scale; and

Positively respond to the character and function of the area.

This planning application is not of an appropriate nature, and does not positively respond to the character and function of the area.

Policy 9: Character And Design says: *Development proposals will be supported where, they are in line with the Townscape Appraisal, and where the character and design:*

3. Respects the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;

4. Protects open spaces and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;

5. Protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of Hassocks, Keymer and Clayton;

6. Does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight and security;

8. Protects existing landscape features and contributes to the village's Green Infrastructure

network;

9. Incorporates the use of local materials which are appropriate to the defined Local Townscape Character Area; and

10. Positively responds to the local vernacular character of the defined Local Townscape Character Area.

This planning application does not respect the character and scale of surrounding buildings, and does not protect the views of trees and green space that are an important part of the Keymer conservation area.

Policy 5 Enabling Zero Carbon says: *Support will be offered for development proposals that incorporate sustainable design features, adverse local impacts can be made acceptable. All new residential development proposals should seek to maximise the opportunities for inclusion of renewable and low carbon energy generation.*

This planning application makes no mention of zero carbon provision, or of renewable energy generation. Indeed the large amount of concrete required for this subterranean design means a significant carbon footprint for the building itself.

Specific comments about the planning application are:

1. Conservation area - The remarks of the Planning Inspector in disallowing the appeal on the previous application for this site are still relevant to the new application (as listed below)

- Loss of character of the existing well-spaced housing development.
- Loss of wide gap between buildings - formation of tunnel between 21A and proposal.
- Loss of gap between 21A and boundary to 15.
- Loss of view from road across gap to rear trees.
- Loss of frontage hedge which forms the street scene and was subject to a Planning consent.
- NB the planning inspector noted the loss of the Laburnum tree which forms part of street scene, but the developers have already removed this tree, indicating their lack of interest or concern about maintaining the conservation area.
- Domination of car parking fronting the road

In relation to the new application, as well as all the above we feel that the brick finish of this application breaks up the appearance of The Crescent, as other houses fronting the road are all white render.

2. Parking - it appears there is provision for only one vehicle, when WSCC Highways Dept would expect 3 parking spaces. There is no provision for visitor parking, and The Crescent is narrow and has no space for additional vehicles.

3. Excavation required - because the design is partly underground, the building will require a very large amount of soil to be removed and transported away from the site (approx. 250 cubic meters of spoil – 400 tons – 40 number ten ton wagons). The Victorian homes and boundary walls around the site are vulnerable to subsidence. In addition all that spoil will have to be transported over an unmade private road.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

DM/20/2880 21A The Crescent Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8RB Erection of a 1 no. 3 bed dwelling with associated parking, cycle and refuse storage. **Response:** RECOMMEND REFUSAL:

- (a) This proposed new dwelling will neither enhance nor conserve the special character of this conservation area, nor does it protect the setting of the existing buildings and is therefore contrary to the Conservation Areas Policies DP35 of the District Plan and Policy 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- (b) The proposed dwelling is partially subterranean and given the high level of carbon emissions created in the production of concrete, and (by reason of earth removal) the loss of carbon sequestration in soil, the proposal is contrary to Policy 5, Enabling Zero Carbon, of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan unless mitigating measures of which no mention is made, were to be put in place. Specifically, this application has failed to consider energy efficiency at all. The proposal needs fully to address all six bullet points of DP39, Sustainable Design and Construction, of the District Plan, and the equivalent paragraphs in Policy 5, Enabling Zero Carbon, of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

Either one of these two grounds on its own is sufficient to justify refusal.

SDNP/20/03478/LDE Land West of The Drove Ditchling East Sussex Continued use of the land as horsiculture/equine. (LDC). **Response:** Hassocks Parish Council has no evidence that horses have been on this site for the stated period of time.

DM/20/2962 32 Farnham Avenue Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8NS Loft conversion. (LDC). **Response:** NOTED.

DM/20/2988 33 Church Mead Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8BW Part retrospective application for a rear hip to gable loft conversion with flat roof dormer to the side, to create an additional bedroom and en-suite bathroom. **Response:** RECOMMEND APPROVAL.

DM/20/3136 35 Woodsland Road Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8HG Single storey rear infill extension, rear extension to current ground floor with flat roofs and 2 x new rooflights. (LDC). **Response:** NOTED.

DM/20/2995 The Paddock London Road Hassocks West Sussex BN6 9NA Erection of ground and first floor extensions. **Response:** RECOMMEND REFUSAL. This application has failed to consider energy efficiency at all. The proposal needs to address all six bullet points of DP39, Sustainable Design and Construction, of the District Plan, and the equivalent paragraphs in Policy 5, Enabling Zero Carbon, of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

DM/20/3160 Land Rear Of 16 The Quadrant Hassocks West Sussex BN6 8BP Proposed change of use - conversion of existing double garage into a one-bedroom holiday let. **Response:** RECOMMEND REFUSAL. The absence of any plans detailing the proposed conversion is highly unsatisfactory and does not permit an accurate assessment of the application. However given the location and the plot size, and the history of previous applications for this site, Hassocks Parish Council maintains its objections to the conversion of a garage into a dwelling. Furthermore, The Council considers that the proposal to convert this garage into a Holiday Let is unneighbourly and does not respond positively to the character and function of the area. For these reasons it is therefore contrary to the following Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan policies; Policy 9, Character and Design, and Policy 14, Residential Development Within And

Adjoining The Built Up Area Boundary Of Hassocks. The proposal is also contrary to Policy 5, Enabling Zero Carbon, of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, and DP39, Sustainable Design and Construction, of the District Plan.

DM/20/3191 British Telecom Telephone Exchange Windmill Avenue Hassocks

Proposal to remove the glazing from one window on the ground floor north elevation. The window will be replaced with aluminium acoustic louvre. **Response:** RECOMMEND APPROVAL.

SDNP/20/03457/LIS Oldland Cottage Oldlands Lane Hassocks BN6 8ND

Installation of Air Source Heat Pump encased in timber latticed screen (Removal of existing oil tank). Re-use of underground route followed by oil pipe. **Response:** RECOMMEND APPROVAL. The substitution of oil-fired heating by air-sourced heat is to be encouraged. The Committee would have liked to have seen plans detailing the appearance of the heat pump and the proposed enclosure, and information about the coefficient of the performance of the heat pump.

SDNP/20/03456/HOUS Oldland Cottage Oldlands Lane Hassocks BN6 8ND

Installation of Air Source Heat Pump encased in timber latticed screen (Removal of existing oil tank). Re-use of underground route followed by oil pipe. **Response:** RECOMMEND APPROVAL. The substitution of oil-fired heating by air-sourced heat is to be encouraged. The Committee would have liked to have seen plans detailing the appearance of the heat pump and the proposed enclosure, and information about the coefficient of the performance of the heat pump.

P20/63

APPLICATIONS FOR DISCHARGE OF PLANNING CONDITIONS.

Discharge of planning condition No: 9 and No:18 relating to planning application

DM/18/2616/Ful. Site Of Hassocks Golf Club London Road Hassocks West Sussex.

Response: The Committee would like clarification from Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) of its requirements for a fast charging point prior to the discharge of these conditions by the District, as the level of provision that householders will receive, and its practical convenience and charging times, is unclear.

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RESOLVED that the observations on the planning issues as agreed above be submitted to the relevant Planning Authority for consideration.

P20/65

PLANNING AUTHORITY DECISION NOTICES

The following decisions were noted:

Application details	Hassocks PC recommendation to Planning Authority	Planning Authority Decision (MSDC/SDNP)
DM/20/2543 36 Ockenden Way, Hassocks BN6 8HS	Recommend Approval	Permission Granted
DM/20/2610 6 Newlands Close, Hassocks BN6 8BG	Recommend Refusal	Permission Refused
DM/20/2605 83 Grand Avenue, Hassocks BN6 8DG	Recommend Approval	Permission Granted
DM/20/2234 17 Hurst Road, Hassocks BN6 9NJ	Recommend Approval	Permission Granted
DM/20/0940 26 Priory Road, Hassocks BN6 8PS	Recommend Refusal	Permission Granted

The following notifications of Certificate of Lawful Use or Development and/or General Permitted Development were noted:

Application details	Hassocks PC recommendation to Planning Authority	Planning Authority Decision (MSDC/SDNP)
DM/20/2574 Elm Cottage, Ockley Lane, Hassocks	Noted.	Certificate of Lawful development Issued

P20/66 MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL (MSDC) SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN. Members were invited to consider and agree a response for submission on behalf of Hassocks Parish Council to the MSDC public consultation for the Site Allocations Development Plan. Members considered a proposed response which had been drafted by Cllr Claire Tester and circulated as a background paper, following some minor amendments a final consultation response was approved for submission to MSDC. It was also agreed a copy of the consultation response would be sent to Andrew Griffith MP for Arundel and the South Downs. (Appendix 1)

P20/67 GOVERNMENT REFORM TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM. Members were invited to consider and agree responses for submission on behalf of Hassocks Parish Council to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the following consultation documents (background papers previously circulated):

[Changes to the current planning system](#)

[Planning for the future](#) - the planning white paper

[Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control](#)

Members discussed a response paper drafted by Cllr Claire Tester for all three consultations. Following some amendments, responses to each consultation were agreed for submission. (Appendix 2). It was agreed that the responses would be submitted directly to the Government portal, but also to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) as part of a co-ordinated response for Local Councils. It was also agreed again that a copy of the responses should be sent to Andrew Griffith MP.

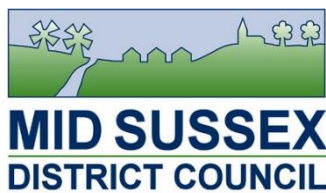
P20/68 South Downs National Park; Adoption of Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document. Members were invited to note on 25th August 2020 the South Downs National Park Authority Planning committee adopted the Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document. Noted

P20/69 URGENT MATTERS at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda. Cllr Brewer raised a query over an access road which has been developed at the entrance to the development site at Hassocks Golf Club on London Road. It was not clear whether this road had been part of the approved plans and therefore the Deputy Clerk was asked to clarify with MSDC the nature of the access and when approval had been granted. The Deputy Clerk was also requested to raise concerns over the loss of hedgerow at this site and to obtain clarification as to whether this is to be replaced.

P20/70 DATE OF NEXT MEETING. Monday 5 October 2020 at 7.30pm.

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.

Signed.....Date.....



Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Regulation 19

Submission Draft Consultation Form

The District Council is seeking representations on the Submission Draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document, which supports the strategic framework for development in Mid Sussex until 2031.

The Site Allocations DPD, has four main aims, which are:

- i) to allocate sufficient housing sites to address the residual necessary to meet the identified housing requirement for the district up to 2031 in accordance with the Spatial Strategy set out in the District Plan;
- ii) to allocate sufficient employment land to meet the residual need and in line with policy requirements set out in District Plan Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development;
- iii) to allocate a site for a Science and Technology Park west of Burgess Hill in line with policy requirements set out in District Plan Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development, and
- iv) to set out additional Strategic Policies necessary to deliver sustainable development.

All comments submitted will be considered by a Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State, at a public examination to determine whether the plan is sound.

The Site Allocations DPD is available to view at:

www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/

A number of documents have been prepared to provide evidence for the Site Allocations DPD and these can be viewed on the Council's website at the above address.

Paper copies will also be at the Council offices (see address below) and your local library and available to view if the buildings are able to open during the consultation period.

Please return to Mid Sussex District Council by midnight on 28th September 2020

How can I respond to this consultation?

Online: A secure e-form is available online at:

www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/

The online form has been prepared following the guidelines and standard model form provided by the Planning Inspectorate. To enable the consultation responses to be processed efficiently, it would be helpful to submit a response using the online form, however, it is not necessary to do so. Consultation responses can also be submitted by:

Post: Mid Sussex District Council **E-mail:** LDFconsultation@midsussex.gov.uk

Planning Policy
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

A guidance note accompanies this form and can be used to help fill this form in.

Part A – Your Details (You only need to complete this once)

1. Personal Details

Title

First Name

Last Name

Job Title
(where relevant)

Organisation
(where relevant)

Respondent Ref. No.
(if known)

On behalf of
(where relevant)

Address Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Line 4

Post Code

Telephone Number

E-mail Address



Information will only be used by Mid Sussex District Council and its employees in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Mid Sussex District Council will not supply information to any other organisation or individual except to the extent permitted by the Data Protection Act and which is required or permitted by law in carrying out any of its proper functions.

The information gathered from this form will only be used for the purposes described and any personal details given will not be used for any other purpose.

Part B – Your Comments

You can find an explanation of the terms used in the guidance note. Please fill this part of the form out for each representation you make.

Name or Organisation:

3a. Does your comment relate to:

Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Habitats Regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allocations		Appraisal		Assessment	
DPD					

Community
Involvement
Plan

☐

Equalities
Impact
Assessment

☐

Draft Policies
Maps

☐

3b. To which part does this representation relate?

Paragraph

Policy SA

Draft Policies Map

4. Do you consider the Site Allocations DPD is:

4a. In accordance with legal and procedural requirements; including the duty to cooperate.

Yes

☒

No

☐

4b. Sound

Yes

☐

No

☒

5. With regard to each test, do you consider the Plan to be sound or unsound:

	Sound	Unsound
(1) Positively prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) Justified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(3) Effective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) Consistent with national policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

6a. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Plan, please use this box to set out your comments. If you selected '**No**' to either part of question **4** please also complete question **6b**.

6b. Please give details of why you consider the Site Allocations DPD is not legally compliant or is unsound. Please be as precise as possible.

Hassocks Parish Council has significant concerns over SA13, Land South of Folders Lane and East of Keymer Road, Burgess Hill which proposes 300 dwellings all of which will be accessed via Ockley Lane. Based on extensive local knowledge of the area, it is considered that the traffic generated by a further 300 dwellings on Ockley Lane, in addition to the 500 dwellings already planned on the site North of Clayton Mills, will result in Ockley Lane, Lodge Lane, Brighton Road and the associated junctions being heavily overloaded. In particular Ockley Lane and Lodge Lane already have width restrictions in place and are semi-rural roads. Furthermore, the junctions between Lodge Lane/Brighton Road and Brighton Road/A273 are notoriously hazardous and a significant increase in traffic will only serve to exacerbate this. Increased traffic is not just a technical highways matter, but it significantly affects the quality of life of residents from noise, air pollution and the confidence and safety of pedestrians and cyclists to share the roads with vehicular traffic. Allocating this site is unjustified and contrary to paragraph 102 of the NPPF because the potential impacts of development on transport networks have not been addressed

7. Please set out what change(s) you consider necessary to make the Site Allocations DPD legally compliant or sound, having regard to the reason you have identified at question 5 above where this relates to soundness.

You will need to say why this change will make the Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

SA13 should be deleted from the DPD. This will not be detrimental to the effectiveness of the DPD because it will still meet the District Plan target for new homes, but it will make it more compliant with national policy and justified for the reasons set out above.

Please note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested change, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at publication stage.

After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for examination.

8. If your representation is seeking a change, do you consider it necessary to attend and give evidence at the hearing part of the examination? (tick below as appropriate)

☐

No, I do not wish to participate at the oral examination

☒

Yes, I wish to participate at the oral examination

9. If you wish to participate at the oral part of the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the oral part of the examination.

10. Please notify me when:

(i) The Plan has been submitted for Examination

☒

(ii) The publication of the recommendations from the Examination

☒

(iii) The Site Allocations DPD is adopted

☒

Signature:

Date:

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation

Hassocks Parish Council Responses to Government Planning Consultations

Changes to the current planning system

Email to TechnicalPlanningConsultation@communities.gov.uk

Questions 1-5 Standard method for assessing local housing need

The proposed new standard method means that there will be significant increase in pressure to build more houses in Hassocks parish, and it is likely that this would be on areas currently identified as local gaps or even within the National Park.

The formula used for the standard method generally results in significantly higher housing numbers in the South East and London. If the Government wishes to 'level up' the performance of the north and south of the country then it should not use an algorithm based on perpetuating past trends and increasing numbers where house prices are high due to the more buoyant economy of London and the South East compared to the rest of the country. There is also no evidence that increasing the supply of approved sites will significantly reduce house prices, not least because that is not in the commercial interest of housebuilders.

Recommend that HPC objects to the proposed changes to the standard method for calculating housing need and recommends that this is amended to reduce the numbers in the South East and London to achievable and sustainable levels that will support the Government's levelling up agenda.

Questions 8-11 and 14 First Homes

House prices and rents in Hassocks are high compared to average incomes and this means that young people in particular find it hard to leave home and afford a place of their own. Policy DP31 of the District Plan requires that housing sites of 11 units or more provide 30% as 'affordable' housing: normally approximately 75% social or affordable rented homes, with the remaining 25% for intermediate homes. Social rented homes are normally about 50% of market rent whereas 'affordable rented' homes are 80% of market rent. 'Intermediate' homes are normally shared ownership where the provider retains a percentage of the property (charging rent on this portion) and the householder starts by buying a small percentage of their home and can increase this percentage over time.

The proposal for First Homes would substitute these intermediate homes for a product which would be sold in its entirety to the purchaser, but for at least 30% less than its market price. On subsequent sales there would be no restriction on asking price. This would encourage people to buy these homes as a form of investment for a quick sale at a profit. They would also be unaffordable for most young couples since 30% off the open market price is still too much for most people starting out when a 1 bedroom flat in Hassocks sells for about £195,000 on the open market.

Recommend that HPC objects to the substitution of First Homes for any of the affordable housing currently required by planning policy. If First Homes are introduced they should be in addition to not instead of current affordable housing requirements.

Question 17 Affordable Housing Threshold

Hassocks Parish Council objects to this proposal and considers that the existing rules for providing affordable housing should be retained.

Question 24 Planning In Principle

The proposal to extend the Permission in Principle method of gaining planning permission to major development could mean that applications for large sites, including on land outside current development boundaries, could be determined with very minimal information provided at the first stage (a line around the site and the number of homes) and a very short timescale for comments. It should be noted that this procedure will apply in the National Park as well as within the Mid Sussex local planning authority area.

Recommend that HPC objects to the proposal to extend the Permission in Principle method of gaining planning permission to major development because:

- a) it would significantly reduce the ability of communities to input meaningfully to the decision and;
 - b) inadequate information will be submitted for the local planning authority to be able to properly assess the impact of the proposal on the area including any impacts on the purposes of the National Park designation;
 - c) The extension of Planning in Principle should not apply to National Parks.
-

Planning for the Future White Paper

Email to planningforthefuture@communities.gov.uk

Questions 5 and 12 Local Plans

The intention under the new system is that most opportunities for community involvement would be at the Local Plan stage, with reduced or no opportunities at the application stage. It is therefore very important that the involvement of Parish Councils and the public in the preparation of Local Plans starts early and genuinely influences the content of the submitted Plan especially the location of Growth and Renewal Zones. Whilst the consultation says that “best in class” ways of achieving public involvement should be used, these are not defined and the restriction on the timescales allowed for Local Plan preparation will limit how much people can get involved.

It should also be noted that one of the most contentious aspects of Local Plans – how many homes they must provide – is proposed to be removed from the Local Plan process entirely and decided centrally with no apparent input from any interested parties. If this is based on the algorithm proposed in the ‘Changes to the current planning system’ document, albeit with some adjustment for constraints, this could cause significant harm to the environment of the parish and the quality of life of Hassocks residents.

Recommend that HPC objects to the proposal to set housing numbers centrally with no input from interested parties such as Parish Councils or the public, and raises concern about whether Parish Councils and the public will be able to genuinely influence Local Plans given the tight timetable for their preparation: the timescale for Stage 1 should be 9 months.

Question 13 Neighbourhood Plans

Whilst Neighbourhood Plans are proposed to be retained, their scope would be reduced to take account of the reduced scope for Local Plans. They would be able to continue to include detailed design guidance and codes but they will not be able to allocate sites for development or include development management policies. It is unclear whether or how Neighbourhood Plans would be able to identify important local assets such as community buildings and local green spaces or infrastructure needs for the future.

Recommend that HPC request that a clear role is set out for Neighbourhood Plans which complements the role of Local Plans and enables communities to be clear about what makes their area special, what elements need to be protected and enhanced to ensure that their community is sustainable for future generations, and allows Neighbourhood Plans to set binding performance levels for homes' energy usage, water usage and access to off-road cycle routes where the local community considers that national provision is inadequate for meeting the sustainability levels necessary to deliver a zero carbon UK by 2050 (Note this is a long journey and the sooner this is done, the less onerous are the later steps and less the intermediate environmental and climate-driven damage).

Question 10 Development Management

The consultation sets out ways that the advertisement and processing of planning applications and other forms of consent can be made more digital and accessible to people on their smart phones. However, there is no provision proposed for people who do not have access to this technology. Many people do not have broadband or smart phones and still rely on newspaper advertisements, site notices and paper plans to interact with the planning system. Older people are more likely to fall into this category and over 1/3 of the population of Hassocks are over 60, compared to 1/4 in Mid Sussex as a whole.

The impact of Planning in Principle has been raised in the response to the Changes to the Current System, and it is proposed to grant this or outline planning permission automatically in areas identified in the Local Plan for Growth or Renewal. Combined with the proposal to delegate to officers all detailed applications where the principle has been determined, this significantly reduces the influence local people can have over decisions. It is often only once the details are proposed that people can see the difference a development will make to their areas or lives, but this will be too late for their voices to be heard.

Recommend that HPC objects to the proposal to remove all paper forms of communication about planning proposals as being discriminatory to people who do not have access to the internet or digital devices, particularly older people who form a larger than average proportion of the population of Hassocks. It also objects to the proposed removal of opportunities for local people to make representations at the detailed application stage and have their voices heard by a democratically elected Planning Committee as many issues will not become apparent until detailed plans and supporting information are submitted.

Question 25 Infrastructure Levy

It is proposed to remove s106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy and replace with a new Infrastructure Levy based on land value that would be set nationally but collected and spent locally. The Levy would include the provision of affordable housing, either on site as an 'in kind' payment of the Levy or as a financial contribution to be spent elsewhere. Currently, the Neighbourhood Share of the Community Infrastructure Levy ensures that up to 25 per cent of the Levy is transferred to parish councils in parished areas. It is proposed the Neighbourhood Share would be kept, but it doesn't say whether this would be linked to the adoption of Neighbourhood Plans as at present.

Recommend that HPC supports the retention of the Neighbourhood Share of the Infrastructure Levy, which would be beneficial to parishes like Hassocks which have a made Neighbourhood Plan but are currently unable to access infrastructure funds because the District Council has not adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control
Email to contractualcontrols@communities.gov.uk

This call for evidence relates to the Government's commitment to improve the transparency of contractual arrangements—rights of pre-emption, options and conditional contracts—used to control land. It seeks views and comments that will help refine these proposals to minimise the costs to business and maintain the integrity of the land register.

The Government considers that the lack of data on contractual controls is leading to a market failure resulting in two significant dis-benefits to the public:

- without comprehensive information on those controlling land, local communities cannot fully understand the likely path of development in their area; and
- if this information is not readily available it raises a barrier to entry for small builders and new market participants and could potentially offer opportunities to exploit market position, reducing competition and market efficiency.

Most of the questions asked in the consultation are technical queries about how interests in land should be registered, and it is unlikely that the Parish Council can add much value to this consideration. However, it may be useful to respond to Question 1: Public Interest which is “Do you think there is a public interest in collating and publishing additional data on contractual controls over land”? and Question 24: Trust in the planning system which is “(a) Do you think that a lack of accessible and understandable data on contractual controls makes it more difficult for local communities to understand the likely pattern of development? Please give reasons.

(b) If so, to what extent does it undermine trust and confidence in the planning system:

(i) not much; (ii) somewhat; (ii) a great deal? Please give reasons.

Recommend that

Qu1: HPC supports the collection and publication of data on contractual controls because this will allow Local Planning Authorities, Parish Councils and members of the public to discover which land parcels in the parish are controlled by land speculators or developers so they can consider in good time whether development on this land would be appropriate.

Q24a: HPC agrees that a lack of accessible and understandable data on contractual controls makes it more difficult for local communities to understand the likely pattern of development because conversations between developers and Local Planning Authorities are kept confidential and developers can promote sites late in a Local Plan process when there are limited opportunities for the Parish Council or public to make effective representations that genuinely influence the outcome.

An example of this would be a proposal for 500 homes to the north of Hassocks which was added in to the Mid Sussex District Plan during its examination with very little time for the community to prepare for it, absorb and understand the evidence submitted and influence the decision. If the Local Planning Authority was aware that this land was under option to the developer it could have considered it as a strategic option earlier in the Local Plan process which would have given the community time to prepare and consider the implications for their area and make effective representations.

Q24biii: such instances undermine trust and confidence in the planning system a great deal because they demonstrate that developers have a disproportionate amount of power over decisions about where development should be located compared to local communities.