

## Policy Comments

### DM/25/0445 – Land At Colwell Farm, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

**Outline application with all matters reserved except for access, for up to 80 dwellings with associated landscaping, open space, infrastructure and vehicular and pedestrian accesses.**

#### Mid Sussex Development Plan

The Development Plan comprises of the adopted 2018 Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, currently under review, and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Site Allocations DPD) adopted June 2022. The site falls within the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (HHNP) area which was ‘made’ in 2016.

The review of the District Plan commenced in 2021. The Mid Sussex District Plan (2021-2039) Submission Draft was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The Stage 1 Examination Hearings took place in October 2024. At this stage, minimal weight can be given to the policies within the draft District Plan.

#### Principle of development

The application site is located to the southeast of Haywards Heath, south of Lewes Road (A272). The site lies to the rear of the existing properties that front Lewes Road. Access to the site is proposed to be between 90 Lewes Road and North Colwell Farmhouse, as indicated on the illustrative masterplan (02.38(01)02).

The site is located outside of the built-up area boundary as shown on the Policies Maps, Policies DP6: Settlement Hierarchy and Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside are relevant.

The site is also not allocated within the adopted or emerging development plan.

#### Housing Land Supply

Paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to “*identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.*”

The adopted District Plan is now more than five years old. Therefore, the housing land supply is measured against Government’s standard method. The standard method is currently 1,334 dwellings per annum (dpa), compared to the 1,090dpa if the adopted Plan figure were applied. Whilst the Council has performed excellently against other Government measures of delivery (Housing Delivery Test) the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

#### Other relevant matters

The site's western and part of its northern boundary is adjacent to the Lewes Road Conservation Area. North of the site are two listed buildings: Colwell House (Grade II) and Oldfield (Grade II). As such, policies DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets and DP35: Conservation Areas are relevant. Comments from other relevant consultees such as the Council's Conservation Officer should be sought in determining any potential harm on these heritage assets.

The site's southern boundary is adjacent to designated ancient woodland (Cains Wood). There is also a designated Tree Protection Order close to the site's northeast corner. Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows is therefore relevant. Comments from other relevant consultees such as the Council's Tree Officer should be sought in determining any potential harm on the protected trees.

#### Other Policies

Other key policies considered relevant to this application proposal include but not limited to: DP15: New Homes in the Countryside; DP30: Housing Mix; DP31: Affordable Housing and DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage.

#### Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan

The site is located within the local gap, as identified by the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (HHNP); Policy E5. The policy states that land outside the built-up area boundary is designated as a local gap between Haywards Heath and neighbouring towns/parishes in order to create a landscape buffer that will support and enhance ecological connectivity, maintain the landscape character of the area and individual settlements. New development outside the built-up area will only be permitted if it would not unduly erode the landscape character of the area or its ecology, would not harm the setting of the town and would retain and enhance the separate identity of the communities.

Other HHNP policies considered relevant are:

- Policy E6 – promoting Green Infrastructure within the site;
- Policy E7 – incorporation of sustainable drainage systems;
- Policy E8 – sustainable development;
- Policy E9 – protecting and reinforcing the local character;
- Policy E11 – Major development of the edge of Haywards Heath;
- Policy E13 – private outdoor amenity space;
- Policy T1 – provision of pedestrian and cycle connections;
- Policy T2 – cycle route contributions; and
- Policy T3 – car parking.