

DM/22/2416 – Land South of Henfield Road, Albourne, West Sussex

Thank you for consulting the planning policy team on the planning application for: *‘Outline planning permission for the erection of up to 120 residential dwellings including 30% affordable housing, public open space and community facilities. All matters are reserved except for access.’* The policy team would like to make the following comments which focus on the principle.

The first thing to note is that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations dictate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan 2031, which is currently under review and the Albourne Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan (Made September 2016); along with the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Sites DPD) (Adopted June 2022).

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Framework highlight the purpose of the planning system to contribute towards achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 11 goes on to state that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted in March 2018 and is under review, the process of which commenced in 2021; the draft Regulation 18 version of the plan (October 2022) demonstrates a direction of travel at this stage. The review process is a method to ensure that a Plan and the policies within it remain effective. At the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Plan (March 2023), the District Plan will not be out-of-date automatically, as policies age at different rates. It is important to note that, whilst the emerging draft District Plan contains updated policies – no decision has been made as to whether any existing adopted policy are currently considered “out-of-date”.

The Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Sites DPD), is the ‘daughter’ document to the District Plan; it identifies additional housing allocations to meet the residual housing requirement, as well as employment allocations and other strategic policies. The Sites DPD was adopted on 29 June and identifies sufficient housing sites to provide five year housing land supply to 2031.

The Applicant’s Planning Statement suggests that there is, *‘....some uncertainty in the ongoing land supply position’* (para 7.2). The Council however published a [5 Year Housing Land Supply Statement](#) (June 2021), as at 1 April 2021, and supporting [Housing Land Supply Trajectory](#) (June 2021), conclusions of which confirm the Council has a five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) of 5.59 (with a 5% buffer) which was confirmed in the Inspector’s Report for the recently adopted Sites DPD (May 2022). As such, the District Plan has full weight in the decision making process.

The Applicant’s Planning Statement also suggests on the basis the Sites DPD has no allocations in Albourne, a residual demand remains (para 5.55). However, it should be noted that the total minimum residual housing requirement (1,280 dwellings) is to be met, and exceeded, by the allocations within the DPD as shown in Policy SA10. Therefore, the contribution of 120 dwellings would only be adding to an already substantial buffer.

Relevant Development Plan Policies

Focusing on the policies which relate to the principle of development and key constraints of the site; the following policies are considered relevant – the list is not therefore exhaustive.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031:

- **DP6** – Settlement Hierarchy
- **DP12** – Protection and enhancement of the countryside
- **DP15** - New homes in the countryside
- **DP18** - Setting of the South Downs National Park
- **DP25** – Community Facilities and Local Services
- **DP26** – Character and Design
- **DP30** – Housing Mix
- **DP31** – Affordable Housing
- **DP34** – Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
- **DP35** – Conservation Areas

Albourne Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Made September 2016

- **Countryside - ALC1:** Conserving and enhancing character
- **Countryside – ALC2:** South Downs National Park
- **Aim:** Conservation Area
- **Aim:** Dark Skies Initiative
- **Aim:** Housing: New housing development
- **Housing – ALH1:** Housing Development
- **Aim: Transport:** Road Safety – Minor Roads;
- **Aim: Transport:** Congestion – The Street Albourne; and
- **Aim: Amenities:** Albourne Village School (scheme proposes to safeguard land for school).

District Plan Policies:

Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy

The site is outside the Built up Area Boundary (BUAB), it is not allocated in an adopted District or Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of policy DP6.

Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

The site lies outside of the BUAB, in open countryside and is not necessary for the purposes of agriculture nor is it supported by any other policy in the plan and is therefore contrary to policy DP12.

General comments

Consideration of the impact on setting of the South Downs National Park to the South of the site will also need to take account of the requirements of policy DP18. It's noted that the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officers have commented on the proposal regarding heritage impacts and design, including reference to the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

Albourne Neighbourhood Plan Policies:

The site is not allocated in the neighbourhood plan, is located outside the BUAB and the proposal is not related to agricultural purposes and is therefore contrary to policy ALC1. Account should be taken of the Council's Conservation Officer's comments in respect of meeting the requirements of Aim: Conservation Area. In respect of policy ALH1, the development would represent a significant expansion to Albourne Village in terms of its scale, is not on brownfield land and cannot be described as 'infill and surrounded by existing development' and is therefore contrary to the requirements of ALH1. It will be for Development Management to consider any merits of the scheme in the balancing of their decision making.

Summary

The proposed development does not comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan, and the Council is able to demonstrate a 5YHLS. There are not considered to be any compelling material considerations in this case to justify that the plan should not be followed.