

DM/22/2416 – Land south of the Henfield Road, Albourne

Albourne Parish Council strongly opposes this application for the following reasons-

Mid Sussex District Plan

- Mid Sussex District Council currently has an up to date District Plan (DP), and a 5 year housing supply. It has a recently approved Sites Allocation Document, which provides for sufficient housing over the Plan period (i.e. to 2031).
- As required by law, a review of the DP is currently ongoing, and a further sites allocation document is being proposed, which aims to provide sufficient housing to 2038. The review is not yet out for consultation, but it is noted that in terms of sustainability, this site was considered but rejected. It is therefore outside the aims of policy DP4.
- In view of point 2 above, the Parish Council takes the view that the application is premature. For a small, rural village (with just 600 inhabitants) the proposed development is by any definition, so substantial, or its cumulative effect will be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging plan. The Village is already having to absorb a consented retirement village of some 84 units.
- The proposal does not meet the definition of sustainable development as set out in the DP, nor the objectives of DP policy DP6. It meets none of the social, economic and environmental objectives contained within that policy. It does not protect or enhance the environment, particularly as regards the need to promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence. Albourne is a small, rural Mid Sussex village, nestling beneath the South Downs. There is no local housing, employment, or community need that justifies a development on anything like the scale proposed.
- The proposal does not meet the objectives of policy DP12, which requires the protection and enhancement of the countryside. This development is not necessary, or supported by any of the requirements of that policy.
- The proposal does not meet the requirements of policy DP15. There is no special justification that exists for such a development. The existing countryside around the rural setting of Albourne, should be preserved.

- The proposal does not meet the objectives of policy DP18. It is submitted that a development of this size will impact the setting of the South Downs National Park, particularly as to the views from the Downs across what is predominately a rural landscape. It is therefore also in breach of Neighbourhood Plan policy ALC2, which requires that any development should enhance and not detract from the National Park's visual qualities and essential characteristics.

Albourne Neighbourhood Plan

- The site is not identified in the made Albourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan, and the Parish has already contributed significantly to Mid Sussex's housing needs in accordance with the settlements hierarchy. It is therefore clear that Albourne has met the DP's requirement, which sets out that neighbourhoods should "*develop plans that support the strategic development set out in Local Plans... and plan positively to support local development.*" In any event, the proposal does not comply with policy ALC1, as none of the criteria for conserving or enhancing the character of the countryside are met. Similarly, it does not comply with policy ALH1. The development is evidently not appropriate to a village setting in terms of its size and scale. The proposed benefits for the School should not be at the expense of a large scale, inappropriate housing development in Albourne village.

The Parish Council notes that the applicant states that it has consulted with the Council. However, the Planning Statement acknowledges that this was in respect of a substantially different and considerably smaller development, with 40 units proposed. In conclusion, the Parish Council submits that this application promotes just the sort of speculative development, which the adopted 2018 Plan and subsequent work, was aimed to prevent. For all of the above reasons, the application should be refused.