



Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan

Welcome to our Neighbourhood Plan exhibition which is your chance to learn more about what a Neighbourhood Plan can do for Hassocks and to give us your views on how the parish should develop over the next 20 years.

Results from our summer Neighbourhood Plan survey

The exhibition summarises the responses to our survey conducted from May-July 2014. There is overwhelming support for our proposed Vision, Objectives and Topics to cover in the Plan. Most respondents favoured a future housing number of between 150 - 300 houses over the next 15-20 years. Ideas about where future development should be were, inevitably, more split. Since then we have worked on our own formal housing needs assessment and details of the results under the various scenarios are include in the exhibition. Having your reaction to these and views on future housing needs remains key however.

Your views are vital to help us decide on the policies that should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan and will form part of the evidence base supporting our proposals. Please contribute, verbally, but especially in writing.

We have set out more information below on:

- What is a Neighbourhood Plan?
- What is Community right to challenge and Community right to bid?
- Frequently asked questions
- Appendices with more detailed background information

If you would like more information on the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, including if you would like to be included on our email list for further updates, then please contact the Parish Office at hassockspc@btinternet.com or by writing to the **NPWG, Parish Office, Adastra Park, Keymer Road, Hassocks, BN6 8QH.**

We hope you find this helpful and look forward to hearing your views.

Hassocks Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

September 2014

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?



Appendix 1 gives more information on Neighbourhood Planning. It is a short guide prepared by the Royal Town Planning Institute, an independent professional body.

What is Community right to challenge and Community right to bid?

The same act which allows for Neighbourhood Plans also included provisions for a community's right to submit an expression of interest to take over and run a local authority service.

It also means that voluntary and community organisations and parish councils can nominate an asset to be included in a 'list of assets of community value'. The local authority will then be required to maintain this list. If the owner of a listed asset then wants to sell the asset a moratorium period will be triggered during which the asset cannot be sold. This is intended to allow community groups time to develop a proposal and raise the required capital to bid for the property when it comes onto the open market at the end of that period.

Our intention is to consider listing 'assets of community value' in our Neighbourhood Plan. We need your suggestions for what to include.

Appendix 2 gives more information on these schemes.

Frequently asked questions

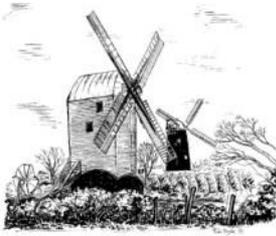
Listed below are some of the frequent questions that we are asked about the Neighbourhood Plan. We hope these answers help your understanding.

Will the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan mean the people of Hassocks are free to decide on future development and housing numbers by themselves?

Unfortunately not. Our Neighbourhood Plan has to be in conformity with central government policy - the National Planning Policy Framework - and the Mid Sussex District Council Plan. As you will all be aware, central government policy has a presumption in favour of development and each of the main political parties are committed to encouraging new housing. We will not be able to prevent all future housing development, even if we put forward arguments about local infrastructure problems.

Mid Sussex District Council also has an obligation to deliver a district housing number over the next 15 years and expects every town and village to contribute to this, notwithstanding that there are certain strategic areas within the district which will take a substantial number.

The Mid Sussex District Plan has not been approved, so surely we can do what we like?



No. Our Neighbourhood Plan has to be reviewed and approved by MSDC and even if their Plan is not in place, they will only pass our Neighbourhood Plan if its in line with what they are drafting and contributes to the housing numbers they must provide. They will expect the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan to include housing numbers that they think Hassocks should take.

Do we know when the Mid Sussex District Plan will be passed?

Not for certain, but we know they are completing their revised draft and expect to launch for consultation soon. We also know that they have a proposed district level housing number.

What housing numbers will Mid Sussex propose and what will they expect Hassocks to take?

We understand that Mid Sussex will propose 10,600 new homes over the course of 2014-2031. This is the same number they proposed in their original draft plan, but now over a shorter period. We expect that their starting presumption will be that Hassocks will take a proportion based on our population number, subject to a reduction where we can demonstrate there are legitimate and significant local constraints. We believe the starting number for Hassocks to be approximately 500 new homes over the course of the plan period to 2031.

We also know that some people do not think the 10,600 number is sufficient for the district plan to pass examination and that it may need to be increased.

Surely we have strong grounds to argue there are significant local constraints that make this number impossible?

We believe there are significant local infrastructure and environmental issues to examine and that achieving that kind of housing number may be difficult for Hassocks. At this stage we cannot and have not ruled anything out and need to examine both our own local housing needs and those constraints. The balance between the two will be our final proposed housing number.

If we do decide that local constraints exist and that we believe that, say, 500 new homes is unachievable, then it is important to remember that what you or a member of the Parish Council think is valid local constraint may not be interpreted as such by Mid Sussex or the Examiner of our Plan.

If you cast your minds back to the Mackie Ave development and the arguments that were made then (and how successful they were), you will recognise what may happen with some of the arguments that might be put forward around the Neighbourhood Plan. That does not mean we would not expect to make the arguments, but we must recognise that they would not stop all housing development and they would only partially reduce the expected numbers.



What numbers have we calculated we need?

Our Housing Needs Assessment suggests the Parish needs between 250-400 new homes (under the different scenarios used), including 126 which we and Mid Sussex had already identified under existing development frameworks.

What's the point of having a Neighbourhood Plan then?

Numbers are only part of the Neighbourhood Plan. Hassocks can, through the plan, have a significant say in location and the other aspects of what development may look like. There are also the other important aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan that will allow the community to help shape the future of the village, e.g. through having land use policies for business; leisure; young and the elderly; environment; energy, etc. Our exhibition boards give more details of all these areas.

If we do not have a Neighbourhood Plan then development will be decided as now by people submitting planning applications and Mid Sussex, as the planning authority, deciding the outcome. There would be no effective contribution and involvement in the decision-making from the people of Hassocks. As a Council, we believe it is better to have a Neighbourhood Plan and our policies, supplementing Mid Sussex's, to help determine development applications.

At least no one can develop in the South Downs National Park area?

This is not necessarily correct. We have heard an argument that because the SDNP authority has not yet developed local planning policies, then the current planning regime applies to development in its area, e.g. they would be determined by Mid Sussex. We believe that some landowners and developers are working on this basis.

Where could Hassocks put 300, 400 or 500 new houses in any case?

Discounting the areas already assigned for development within the built-up boundary, it is inevitable that we will have to consider development on the outer fringes of the village. The Neighbourhood Plan is going to have to factor in development. Which ones are chosen and the precise numbers for each site are going to be the real work of the NP and are why it is essential for us to have your views. Again, please remember, that if we proposed no new homes for Hassocks or a number considered way out of line with Mid Sussex's expectation, then our draft Neighbourhood Plan will not pass Examination.

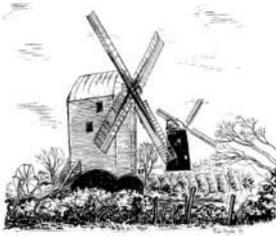
Should the parish be talking to landowners and developers?

Developers representing the landowners on some sites have approached the Parish Council to discuss their plans. Ultimately, they would no doubt like their proposals to be factored into the Neighbourhood Plan. Some have raised the possibility of making a contribution to the parish as part of their proposals, to help with the community's needs. By way of example, this



might be an offer of land as a wildlife area/park around a development or the offer of land for new allotments or recreational facilities.

So far the Parish Council has listened to developers, but we have not engaged any further in discussions and certainly not entered into any 'negotiations' (such as we are able to in any case) on behalf of the community. We would like your views on whether you believe we should take those discussions forward as part of our analysis of possible sites for development to ensure that the parish and people get the best outcome from any future development.



Appendix 1

Background to Neighbourhood Planning

From The *Handy Guide to Planning* by the Royal Town Planners Institute

Neighbourhood planning

The Localism Act 2011 introduces a new element to local plan-making called Neighbourhood Planning. The new law allows residents and businesses in a neighbourhood to do two things if they want to:

- Develop a plan for their neighbourhood.
- Propose that a particular development or sort of development should automatically get planning permission in their area.

Neighbourhood Plans

Some neighbourhoods already have plans, often called Parish Plans. What is different about Neighbourhood Plans from April 2012 is that they are part of the legal framework. This means that if they are agreed, planning decisions for that area have to be made in line with what they say, as well as the Local Plan for the whole area.

What does neighbourhood Planning look like?

Neighbourhood Plans can vary a great deal. They can set out a vision and a set of objectives for the future of the area, or they may be more detailed, setting out planning policies for the development and use of land in that neighbourhood. What geographical area the neighbourhood covers is largely up to the people applying to put together a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order. It could have the same boundaries as a ward, or be smaller than this, or contain parts of more than one ward. Both Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders must conform to the Local Plan. So, for example, a Neighbourhood Plan cannot promote less housing than envisaged in the Local Plan, but may be able to say what sort of housing, and where it should be built, or say that more housing is required.

Getting neighbourhood Planning agreed

The process for developing and agreeing a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order is as follows:

Local authorities need to agree the neighbourhood area, and will need to check that the boundaries proposed don't overlap with another. A neighbourhood area can cover more than one parish/town council, with one taking the lead with the agreement of the other. Where no parish/town council exists then a neighbourhood forum can take the lead. To become a neighbourhood forum the group must apply to the local authority who will check they meet



the requirements. Only one neighbourhood forum can exist in any designated neighbourhood area.

Then the parish/town council or neighbourhood forum will work up the details of the draft Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order. They need to publicise and make available for comments to all people within the neighbourhood (within the area of the plan) for at least six weeks. During this time they must also consult **Statutory Consultees**. The next step is to formally submit the plan to the Local Authority for their consideration. They will check that all the relevant information that needs to accompany the Draft Plan or Order has been submitted.

The Neighbourhood Plan and Development Orders are then submitted to an **independent qualified inspector** for Examination. The purpose of the Examination process is to check the Neighbourhood Plan and/or Neighbourhood Development Order is in line with local and national policy, that is has special regard for listed buildings and conservation areas, and is compatible with equalities, environmental and human rights legislation. It also takes written representations from **Statutory Consultees**.

Subject to the approval of the Examiner, the local authority then organises a community **referendum**. All people living in the neighbourhood covered by the Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order registered to vote in local elections will be entitled to vote. If it receives the majority of votes of those voting, the Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order is passed, and incorporated into the Local Plan.

Appendix 2

Background to Community right to challenge and Community right to bid

Please open separate document.