

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on 31st October 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Adastra Hall, Adastra Park, Keymer Road, Hassocks.

ATTENDANCE: Parish Councillors: Ian Weir (Chair); Kate Bailey; Jane Baker; Leslie Campbell; Justine Fisher; Frances Gaudencio; Peter Gibbons; Sue Hatton; Bill Hatton; Christopher Hobbs; Nick Owens; Victoria Standfast.
Dale Mayhew, Dowsett Mayhew Consultancy.
Ian Cumberworth, Clerk to the Parish Council
Jane Bromley, Administration.

Approximately 225 members of the public in the main hall and in excess of 125 members of the public listening to the meeting outside the hall.

PC17/95 APOLOGIES:

95.1 To Accept Apologies for Absence.

Apologies received from Councillors: Georgia Cheshire; Rev. Daryl Sinclair; and Judith Foot.

PC 17/96 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

96.1 Disclosure by Councillors of personal interests in matters on the agenda, and whether the Councillor regards their interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.

No interests declared.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes at 7.35pm.

The adjournment was to allow the doors of the hall to be opened and time for the public to accumulate outside the open doors to listen to the meeting without entering the hall which was constrained in the numbers it could admit due to fire safety reasons.

The meeting was reopened at 7.40pm.

PC 17/97 MINUTES

97.1 To accept the minutes of the:

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Parish Council meeting 12 October 2017 (for noting).

Parish Councillors noted the minutes.

PC 17/98 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillor Weir spoke concerning the process for public speaking and the time constraints. Each individual was to be given a maximum of 3 minutes to speak and

the number of speakers allowed was at the discretion of the Chair although it was hoped that all who wanted to would be able to speak.

11 members of the public spoke.

The first resident (Ian Credland) He expressed that he did not believe the Parish Council went far enough in its published comments of objection.

MSDC had been happy with the calculation of proposed housing numbers for Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) throughout the process until the Submission Plan was with them for the Regulation 16 consultation. Since that point MSDC have done nothing but delay the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. The HNP was fundamentally undermined by the resolution taken by MSDC to grant planning permission for development on the Friars Oak site, at which point the resident had resigned as Chair of the HNP Working Group. Later planning permission was granted for 97 houses on the Ham Fields site and Barratt Homes are now applying for an uplift to 130 houses in this location. The Golf Course has planning permission for 140 houses and they are likely to apply for an uplift in numbers. There is uncertainty as to what will happen on the Friars Oak site.

The Parish Council through the services of an independent Consultant produced a Sustainability Appraisal for Hassocks and the conclusion was that around 300 additional homes were sustainable for the Parish, nothing near the 1000 homes plus now proposed.

In October 2016 District Councillor Gordon Marples wrote a robust criticism of the MSDC proposal for housing numbers across the District but less than a year later voted for the allocation of an additional strategic site. The only District Councillor opposed to this was Councillor Sue Hatton.

During Examination Inspector Bore felt the five year housing supply was weak and the allocation of the Hassocks' Strategic Site has increased the supply to 5.4 years which is above that which is required. The Parish Council need to bring the independently commissioned Sustainability Appraisal for Hassocks to the attention of Inspector Bore. The Parish Council should take a vote of no confidence in the District Councillors.

The second resident (P. Rayner, representative of 'Save Hassocks' campaign) put forward that MSDC have a legal duty to prepare a District Plan and have been doing so since 2014, we are now nearly at 2018. MSDC have not been able to achieve the numbers they are supposed to achieve and during this period and have turned away from making decisions and so we are now in the position we are in.

The proposed modifications to the District Plan are mainly tweaks from the original document produced; however, at the eleventh hour an additional strategic site has been added. The development for 500 to be allocated to Hassocks. He asked that all in attendance submit a response to Inspector Bore and to encourage neighbours and family to do likewise, concerning the imposition of MSDC of putting forward a site of such magnitude in the space of two months. They cannot possibly have followed due legal/procedural process in such a short space of time. They have dumped the shortfall they knew about for some time, on Hassocks.

The third resident (G Chambers, a resident of Ockley Lane) spoke concerning his worries for the infrastructure. He felt the Parish struggles with traffic, doctors and schooling today with the current traffic movements and population. He did not know how the population from an additional 500 homes could be accommodated.

Councillor Weir queried whether there was main drainage on Ockley Lane and the resident confirmed there was not.

The fourth resident (R. Jones) supported the previous resident and asked what were Gleeson (the developer for the Strategic site) going to give back to the community for

destroying the local residents' amenity? The adverse health and safety factors could not be mitigated.

The fifth resident (R. Burnham) queried the legality of the process of allocation of the strategic site in Hassocks and asked whether the Parish Council would vote to agree to commission a QC and Barrister to challenge this? The resident mentioned the background paper EP23a Strategic Site Selection Paper update and queried why out of 16 sites in that paper the Hassocks site came out as number 1. The burden for extra housing should be spread around. He queried:

Is Hassocks to gain a new primary school if the site goes ahead?

What is to happen regarding the railway crossing?

If Green Space is to be given to the Parish Council who will finance its management?

The sixth resident recommended that MP Nick Herbert be contacted as he seemed opposed to the site.

Councillor Weir confirmed that Nick Herbert MP had written to the Secretary of State expressing extreme concern at the allocation. This correspondence was publically available.

The seventh resident (P. George) spoke as an estate agent business owner in the Village. He queried where the demand for housing was coming from as his business did not indicate such demand in Hassocks.

The eighth resident asserted that the current wave of building is not about demand but a means to control the housing market and could well mean houses will be lying empty.

The ninth resident felt the need was not local but would come from Crawley or Brighton.

The tenth resident agreed there would be no benefit to local people.

The eleventh resident had moved to the village in 1998. He noted the lack of facilities for the young. Lack of school places and public transport. He thanked all attending tonight and for opposing the additional housing.

Councillor Weir thanked all the speakers and for the public attendance.

PC 17/99 District Plan – DP9b Strategic site North of Clayton Mills

Councillor Weir introduced the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Councillor Bill Hatton and invited him to speak.

Councillor Bill Hatton spoke concerning the Parish Councils involvement during the Examination of the District plan. The Parish Council had robustly opposed the additional housing for Mid Sussex. He confirmed that at the Examination there was no mention of the possibility of the strategic site allocation in Hassocks.

He advised that as part of the consultation on the modifications to the District Plan the transport report for the Hassocks strategic site had not been made available until 27th October more than halfway through the consultation.

Councillor Bill Hatton explained that the Parish Council were here tonight to formulate a response to the modifications and would take account of all that had been said by the residents.

He summarised that MSDC had already formulated their modified policies and representation had to be made to Inspector Bore who alone had the ability to alter the

modifications through his decision which would be made taking into account the comments he received.

Councillor Bill Hatton confirmed that at this time the Parish Council were only concerned with commenting on the modifications and a legal challenge would not form part of commenting. It was clear that due process had not been followed and the Parish Council would make a strong objection through its comments.

Dale Mayhew, Planning Consultant introduced himself and his role as Planning Consultant to the Parish Council with regard to the Neighbourhood Plan. He explained that the Parish Council had endeavoured greatly to deliver a Neighbourhood Plan for the community with sufficient housing but also protecting the village. Initially MSDC had proposed that parishes themselves calculate housing numbers for their communities based on relevant methodologies. However the Examiner of the District Plan, Inspector Bore, had not been happy with this approach and required MSDC to allocate numbers to parishes. Hassocks Parish Council had made representations to Inspector Bore at the public enquiry already on the uplifted numbers for Hassocks and all this before the allocation of the Strategic Site in Hassocks. Inspector Bore has already issued interim conclusions on numbers for Mid Sussex and the question is now where the numbers are to go across Mid Sussex. Is the allocation of the Strategic Site in Hassocks the correct way to strengthen the five year housing supply or is there a better way?

Councillor Weir asked members to consider the proposals submitted by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group contained within Appendix 1 with regard to informing the Council's consultation response to MSDC District Plan and in particular the proposed Strategic site North of Clayton Mills. Members are also invited to consider any other elements of the District Plan they wish to be addressed as part of the consultation process.

Councillor Weir read from Appendix 1.

Hassocks Parish Council (HPC) appreciates MSDC need to provide 16,390 dwellings in the Plan period to 2031, and wishes to provide a constructive response to the Main Modifications Consultation however it is considered that:-

Proposal

Policy DP9b which proposes a strategic allocation of approximately 500 dwellings at Clayton Mills would impose a disproportionate share of District Housing Need on Hassocks

All in favour

Councillor Weir read from Appendix 1.

Para 31 of Policy Document MSDC22 states that “overall there are a number of significant positives associated with this site which outweigh any negatives related to its landscape setting and potential highway impacts”. It further notes the development of a comprehensive masterplan with association landscaping and new infrastructure will reduce any negative impact that may arise from the site's development and will ensure that the highway network is capable of accommodating the additional traffic generated.

Councillor Bill Hatton spoke concerning the proposal. The strategic allocation in Hassocks together with all the other sites coming forward for development would increase the number of houses in the village by approximately 25% over 10 years. A huge unsustainable growth for the village.

Councillor Nick Owens spoke regarding the Landscape value of the proposed site East of Ockley Lane and its proximity to the South Downs National Park from which location the development would be clearly visible. The evidence supporting the allocation of the site from MSDC had downgraded the value of the Landscape but the Parish Council's own Landscape study gave it much intrinsic value. In addition the area contained a Grade II* listed property whose setting would be harmed by the strategic site and this would be contrary to National Planning Policy Framework Policy 12 (points 132 to 137).

Councillor Gaudencio confirmed that the NP Working Group had done a lot of work on Landscape Value and this proposal would create unacceptable harm to the Landscape.

Proposal

HPC disagree with this conclusion and consider that the imposition of a Strategic site of 500 dwellings would be unsustainable and would have an adverse effect on the village environment for the following reasons: set out in sections 1-7 below.

All in favour

Councillor Weir read from Appendix 1.

1. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) supporting the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) concluded that between 280-290 new homes would be appropriate to meet identified need in the Parish whilst minimising impact on the environmental strategic objectives and traffic.

The proposed strategic site plus existing commitments and HNP sites would produce in the region of 1000 dwellings.

The SA supporting the HNP includes 'a policy which sets out the housing need of the Parish at 280-290' is the preferred approach. The proposed housing allocations within the HNP would deliver this as a minimum with additional housing from windfall coming forward and determined against other policies

Councillor Bill Hatton pointed out that Strategic Objective 2 of the District Plan is compromised by the allocation of the Strategic Site in Hassocks.

Councillor Sue Hatton spoke of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee which as District Councillor she was present at when they looked at the modifications now put to Inspector Bore. It was explained at that meeting that the fundamental policy of MSDC was to allocate strategic sites and Option 1 was barely considered. At that meeting there were no papers available to support the allocation in Hassocks.

Proposal

The proposed allocation would be contrary to Strategic Objective 2 of the Mid Sussex District Plan which seeks to ensure development reflects the distinctive character of district towns and villages.

All in favour

Councillor Weir read out from Appendix 1.

2 & 6 As part of the Examination, the Inspector recommended MSDC should consider how to strengthen its 5 year housing land supply position. MSDC22 therefore sets out 2 options to strengthen the 5 year supply.

Option 1: Amend Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy, to increase the acceptability threshold for windfall development on the edge of settlements.

The Submission Mid Sussex District Plan, August 2016, supports growth of settlements where development is for fewer than 10 dwellings. The Paper considers this could be raised to 20-25 dwellings.

Option 2: Allocate a further strategic site that could deliver in the short-term and contribute directly to the five year supply.

MSDC have advised Option 1 has been developed in direct response to the Inspector's recommendation to raise the threshold of 10 dwellings in Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy.

In the Submission Version Mid Sussex District Plan, August 2016, policy DP6 sets out support for the expansion of settlements outside defined built-up area boundaries where the site is allocated in the District Plan, a Neighbourhood Plan or subsequent Development Plan Document or where the proposed development is for fewer than 10 dwellings; the site adjoins an existing settlement edge; and the development is demonstrated to be sustainable, including by reference to the settlement hierarchy.

Dale Mayhew Consultant spoke concerning the jargon surrounding this issue. MSDC have been given a housing numbers target to meet within the period of the District Plan from 2014 to 2031. Part of that target was to maintain a rolling five year housing land supply. At the public enquiry it was established the Plan as then drafted would have delivered 5.2 year supply. Inspector Bore felt this could be strengthened and it was up to MSDC to decide how to strengthen this. MSDC have looked at two options proposed by the Inspector, the first to increase the number of houses allowed on sites outside the built up development area from 10 to 25. The second option was a further strategic allocation. The question is whether MSDC gave enough consideration to option 1.

Proposals

- *HPC consider Option 1 which was suggested by Inspector Bore as a way to strengthen the 5 year housing supply by dispersing developments of up to 25 dwellings around settlement boundaries, was dismissed without adequate consideration by MSDC.*
- *Hassocks Parish Council therefore question why the potential increase to 25 units was dismissed*
- *HPC contend that the selection of Option 2 as opposed to Option 1, which would have enabled a more balanced and comprehensive approach to the release of housing land around other settlements in Mid Sussex, is not adequately justified in document MSDC 22.*

All in favour

Councillor Weir read from Appendix 1.

3 Supporting document MSDC 24 (Implications of the District Plan Main Modifications on the Ashdown Forest (traffic impact on Special Area of Conservation) and on the strategic and local transport network), provides a summarised update on the position of the District Plan (DP) with respect to the impact of the DP Main Modifications on the Ashdown Forest and on the strategic and local transport network.

Councillor Bill Hatton confirmed the Transport report for the Strategic Site in Hassocks had only been made available to the Parish Council on 27th October 2017. The report contended that there would be only 300 movements in and out of Ockley Lane at peak times. He considered there would be substantially more. The report concluded that the majority of traffic would, when travelling southbound, use Lodge Lane and New Road rather than travelling through Hassocks to Stonepound. Councillor Bill Hatton felt that the report had been a desk top exercise as they clearly had not appreciated the difficulty of the junction between Lodge Lane and New Road.

Councillor Owens proposed amendments to the proposal of comments as included in Appendix 1 such that “ traffic generated would also have an adverse effect on Stonepound” and a requirement for details of how the railway crossing is to be improved.

Councillor Hobbs wondered whether the influx of cars associated with the locating of a school in that area had been taken into account in the transport report.

Councillor Gibbons pointed out flaws in the report:

Both Ockley Lane and Lodge Lane had a 6’6” width restriction.

Keymer Road had a weight restriction of 7.5 tonnes.

The 14’3” height restriction near the railway arch should be taken into consideration.

There was no mention of the hazardous railway crossing adjacent to the site.

The proposal for a bus stop makes no mention of how to reach it without pavements.

There is no commitment from WSCC with regard to the land allocated for a school and what about secondary school places?

The poor bus service to Crawley is not elaborated on when it is stated there are opportunities to travel by bus to Crawley The 82 minute journey by bus to Crawley does not make it commuter friendly.

There are no direct trains to Crawley.

There is no indication of how traffic would reach the motorway network.
The Grand Avenue to Keymer Road junction is difficult.
There are no facilities within 800m of the site which is a requirement set out in the Manual of streets referenced in the Transport study. (Para 4.4.1)
Councillor Weir asked that a copy of Councillor Gibbons report be sent to the Clerk.

Councillor Jane Baker spoke of the dangers of the road in that area and the large emphasis that had been placed on cycling to work. To cope with the cyclists a proper road structure would be required. The junction with Underhill Lane would need to be improved.

Councillor Hatton read out the new proposals as set out below and Councillor Sue Hatton requested a further addition that the late delivery of the transport report be referred to and that this did not give the Parish Council sufficient time to consider it.

Proposal (Amended)

1. HPC considers the supporting documents are high level and provide no evidence to back up the assertions relating to highways issues. HPC considers the transport assessment does not address the following issues:-

- *The inadequacy of the local road network;*
- *The traffic to be generated in Ockley Lane and Lodge Lane/New road junction;*
- *The dangerous railway crossing adjacent to the site;*
- *The inadequacy of the bus service;*
- *The road issues have not been adequately analysed;*
- *The transport report evidence was received too late, on 27th October 2017, to be given sufficient consideration by the Parish Council.*

2. MSDC 24, assumes that southbound traffic will avoid the centre of Hassocks and the Stonepound Crossing by using Lodge Lane and New road. HPC considers that traffic generated by the development will have an adverse effect on Ockley Lane and Stone pound crossroads.

All in favour

Councillor Gaudencio asked whether the Parish Council had a view on the contention of MSDC that the reduction in the countryside gap was 20% rather than the 25% as in the Parish Council's view.

Councillor Bill Hatton advised that he had measured it at 25%.

Proposal (amended)

4. The proposed allocation would reduce the countryside gap between Hassocks and Burgess Hill by at least 20% and would destroy a valuable area of countryside which, in the opinion of HPC, has high landscape value and HPC are submitting a separate Landscape Assessment to support this. It should be pointed out that the site is adjacent to the South Downs National Park.

All in favour.

Councillor Weir read from Appendix 1.

5. MSDC proposes to allocate Land north of Clayton Mills, as a strategic site capable of delivering 500 dwellings. MSDC22 confirm approximately 150 of

these would be deliverable within the first five years of the plan period. It further confirms the remaining 350 dwellings will be delivered in the period immediately following the current 5 year period and will contribute towards the total District Plan housing provision.

MSDC22 details how the Council propose this is “the best and most effective mechanism to improve the five year supply in the short term”.

Proposal

- *HPC have been advised that the proposed strategic allocations as set out in Policy DP9b seeks to strengthen the 5 year housing supply for MSDC. However MSDC 22 confirms only 150 will come forward in the first five years of the plan period.*
- *The Submission HNP, Policy 15, proposes to allocate Land to the north of Clayton Mills and Mackie Avenue for up to 140 dwellings and therefore HPC question the necessity for the proposed strategic allocation.*

All in favour

Councillor Weir read from Appendix 1.

7. MSDC22, paragraph 22, details that the development of the larger site would provide the benefits of:

- **it enables a comprehensive scheme to be developed rather than in a piecemeal manner, which results in better planning of the infrastructure required to support the development**
- **a scheme that provides a much needed site for a new primary school, as deficiencies in primary provision have been identified within the village**
- **a scheme that provides a good relationship with the existing Clayton Mills/Mackie Avenue developments**
- **a scheme that can be designed to manage the relationship of the site and the listed building, to ensure that the impact on the listed building is maintained**

Proposal

HPC consider the benefits indicated above would come forward with the allocation of the site as proposed in the Submission Version HNP.

All in favour

Councillor Weir read from Appendix 1.

DP26 Accessibility

The supporting text of the policy states ‘the housing requirements of groups with particular needs will be monitored and the Plan will be reviewed in this respect if evidence clearly supports a change to this level of provision’

Councillor Gaudencio spoke concerning the monitoring of accessibility within this policy and concluded it was not clear enough, she advocated the following proposal.

Proposal

- *HPC consider this monitoring suggestion is meaningless unless deadlines and dates are set for monitoring and review.*

- *HPC objects to this Policy as it is not clear enough*
- *The Policy states developments of 5 or more dwellings will be expected make provision for 20% of dwellings to meet Category 2. The Policy also highlights exceptions which include “where the scheme for flatted residential buildings of fewer than 10 dwellings”*
- *HPC objects to this as this reduces further the dwellings which need to meet Category 2- accessible and adaptable dwellings under Building Regulations- Approved Document M Requirement M4(2).*
- *The Policy also seeks to reduce the proportion of wheelchair-user dwellings from 5% to 4%. HPC objects to this and would like to see the evidence to support this reduction.*

All in favour

Councillor Weir read from Appendix 1.

Proposal

DP28 Housing Mix

HPC to raise the question as to why there is not a defined proportion of allocation for the elderly. Whilst the text of the policy acknowledges that accommodation for the elderly is within the housing mix, phrases suggesting ‘a very high proportion’ are too vague and HPC would like some targets at least.

All in favour

Councillor Gaudencio proposed an additional comment on the deletion of Policy 24a.

Proposal

DP24a Housing Density

HPC objects to the deletion of policy DP24a. The bullet point to replace the policy in DP24 ‘optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development’ is insufficient.

All in favour

Councillors Baker and Weir expressed their gratitude to all who had been involved in the Neighbourhood Plan process many of which were volunteers and had had to engage in large pieces of work at short notice.

Members are requested to consider the proposals submitted by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (Appendix 1) together with the agreed amendments to inform the Council’s consultation response to the MSDC District Plan and in particular the proposed Strategic site North of Clayton Mills

RESOLVED *that the Clerk be authorised to submit the Parish Councils response in conjunction with the Council’s Planning Advisor taking into consideration the agreed proposals to Mid Sussex District Council and to Inspector Bore.*

All in favour

PC17/100 **Urgent Matters** at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.

None.

PC 17/101 To note that the date of the next Council meeting is **Tuesday 14th November 2017**

Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm