

Summary of comments – Fernhurst Neighbourhood Plan

Chichester District Council

Allocations at Hurstfold Industrial Estate and Fernhurst Business Park are not supported – Hurstfold is an unsustainable site, there would be a loss of employment with no assurance it can be reprovided elsewhere. Reference is made to the appeal decision relating to Fernhurst Business Park. An allocations map should be provided showing all sites in their wider context. References to CIL in policies should be removed – all projects should be put in an Infrastructure Development Plan as an appendix to the Plan. Syngenta site should not be described as ‘major’ development – this will depend on how proposal is judged against NPPF and PPG. There are some factual inaccuracies in the history section.

The requirement for 80% of homes to be 1/2/3 bed properties is not supported by evidence. The absolute supply and turnover of larger affordable properties is much less than smaller dwellings. In the absence of evidence, the suggested affordable housing mix should follow the need identified by the SHMA – 1 bed (10-15%); 2 bed (30-35%); 3 bed (35-40%) and 4 bed (15-20%).

Policy H1 should include a definition of infill. Market housing cannot be restricted to those “currently living or working in Fernhurst parish” – it can also be sold onto anyone. The immediate hinterland of smaller settlements and hamlets has a fairly significant unmet need – there are 40 members on the housing register with a local connection to Linchmere, Lurgashall and Lodsworth.

Policy H2 – no evidence for 60:40 split – local people unlikely to be able to raise the deposit required for shared ownership properties. There needs to be clarity regarding where Policy H3 will operate.

SA2 – the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation no longer applies. Employment – it is queried whether B2 is appropriate for the site.

SA3 – the requirement that “an existing occupier that wishes to relocate must be offered tenancies on the same terms as at present” is not a planning matter. The proposed affordable housing split conflicts with H2. The use of the term “up to” conflicts with minimums preferred by NPPF.

SA4 – an unsustainable location – unlikely to be a local demand for intermediate housing in this location. Same comments regarding split and “up to” as SA3.

There may be an opportunity for some development to occur on the edge of the settlement with a redrawn boundary – a more sustainable location than the proposed site allocations.

EE5 – A view cannot be protected if someone builds an extension under PD.

The relationship between Policy CF3 and Appendix 4 should be made clearer. Design policy DE3 (shrubs/walls) is too restrictive and DE4 (residential building heights) too restrictive and without sufficient evidence.

Waverley Borough Council

Identify cross-boundary impacts arising from the Syngenta proposal: capacity of Haslemere railway station car park, increased traffic along A286 and entering Haslemere, impact on infrastructure services and facilities within Haslemere (e.g. health services and fire and rescue).

West Sussex County Council

SA2 - Tourism: any uses should not generate large numbers of traffic movements. Access: suitable access to and from the public highway will need to be demonstrated – footways from the site to bus stops should be provided, a pedestrian crossing (with refuge) across A286 and a footway link to the pub considered. Travel planning: any development proposals should link to the King Edward VII Travel Plan. WSCC unable to comment on site specific principles for small sites – referred to West Sussex Development Management Guidance on road design and car and cycle parking standards.

CIL - no mechanism currently exists for prioritising infrastructure needs and projects across different public services.

The Coal Authority

No specific comments as the parish is outside of the defined coalfield.

Homes and Communities Agency

Supports the plan objectives and policies relating to the mix of housing.

Natural England

Has responded to earlier iterations of the plan and raised a number of issues. Pleas these have been addressed.

Environment Agency

Pleas that all the site allocations have been directed to areas with the lowest probability of flooding (all within Flood Zone 1).

English Heritage

The history of Fernhurst should mention that the North Park Furnace is a scheduled ancient monument and is on the Heritage at Risk Register. The Plan objectives should include reference to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (the plan would then be more closely aligned with para. 115 of NPPF).

Policies SA2 and SA4 should include reference to conserving and enhancing the significance of designated assets: there are no.2 Grade II listed buildings to the west of Syngenta and the Bridgelands site is within the setting of Grade II listed Verdley Place and Bridgelands Farmhouse.

It is a missed opportunity that the NP does not include a policy for the conservation areas or more broadly for the historic environment.

Any traffic calming measures should be sensitive to the character of the parish.

The Sustainability Appraisal should make reference to key legislation (the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Factual inaccuracies – there are 44 listed buildings in the parish, the North Park Furnace SAM is at risk. Reference needs to be made to role of the village green, the Kingsley Green Conservation Area and the status of non designated assets of local importance (is there a gap in the baseline?) The Landscape and the historic environment objective should preferably be split out into two.

Highways Agency

No comments.

Marine Management Organisation

No comment. The plan does not include coastline or any stretch of river under tidal influence.

Scotia Gas Networks

The gas infrastructure will not be significantly affected by the levels of development proposed. Firm extension or reinforcement proposals are not developed until developer requests have been received. Should alterations to existing assets be required to allow development to proceed, this will need to be funded by a developer.

Southern Water (sewerage undertaker)

SA2 – additional sewerage infrastructure would be required to support the development. A connection would need to be made to the nearest point of adequate capacity. SA2 must require the provision of the requisite sewerage infrastructure.

Policy SBI should acknowledge the need for new sewerage infrastructure to be provided outside the settlement policy area. This would be in the “public interest” and therefore capable of meeting the tests in para. 116 of the NPPF and applies where benefits outweigh the harm caused (NPPF para. 118). Sewerage infrastructure is location dependent (e.g. pumping stations) which means protected areas have to exceptionally be considered, if no reasonable alternative site is available.

Policy EE4 would create a barrier to the delivery of essential infrastructure – the delivery of essential infrastructure is a “special circumstance” envisaged by para. 88 of the NPPF.

The neighbourhood plan should include a policy to support the provision of utility infrastructure to serve new development.

South East Water (water undertaker)

Fernhurst lies within SEW resource zone 5. The draft Water Resources Management Plan indicates that with planned reductions in demand from the customer metering programme and enhanced water efficiency, the resource zone should remain in surplus for average demands. For peak demands a deficit is expected from 2020 onwards, after which time additional groundwater schemes and regional transfers will be required. Growth identified in the neighbourhood plan is in line with known projections of additional demand arising within Chichester district (part served by SEW).

The Plan should identify that water consumption in new homes must meet Level 4 in the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Savills on behalf of Thames Water

Thames Water do not cover the Fernhurst area and have no comments to make.

South Downs Society

Welcomes Plan Vision and role within the National Park.

Broadly supports the provision of employment and community uses on the Syngenta site as well as a significant number of dwellings to meet need both locally and within the National Park. A critical mass is required to develop links between the Syngenta and the village.

SA3 – recognises the desire within the community to achieve a much-needed environmental improvement but concerned that housing would be provided in an inappropriate location not well served by local services. It would mean the loss of existing and potential economic activity.

SA4 – supports the approach.

Sport England

Response refers to national policy and guidance – no comments made specifically about Fernhurst Neighbourhood Plan.

Sussex Wildlife Trust

With the exception of the site allocations, there is very little mention of nature conservation, ecological networks or biodiversity enhancements in the plan contrary to para.109 of the NPPF. None of the six objectives seek to improve the biodiversity of the parish – it is only loosely implied by the Objective 2 'Ensure the most sustainable use of brownfield in the parish'. The Vision contains generic statements about the environment and should include biodiversity safeguarding and enhancement as core content.

H1 – the Plan states extra development will be permitted subject to the other policies in the FDNP. However, there is no strategic environmental/nature conservation policy for the plan to protect natural assets from unsustainable development. The brownfield first approach could lead to 'extra' development pressure on brownfield sites of high environmental value.

SA2 is fully supported. Supportive of SA3 and SA4 particularly the requirement for green infrastructure strategies and phase I habitat surveys however could be strengthened through use of more of the wording from SA2, e.g. including objectives on net gains, buffers, creation of high quality habitats and use of SuDS.

The Diocese of Chichester (owner Glebe land, Church Road / Haslemere Road)

The Syngenta site is of more than local significance – its future should be determined through the SDNP Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans should address development which is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan (NPPF). The NP process has not undertaken either a robust housing market assessment or housing needs assessment.

Too much emphasis has been given to the community consultation work which had low response rates. The questionnaire contains leading and biased questions.

The SEA has not been conducted on an iterative basis. The sustainability merits of individual greenfield sites have not been tested. There is significant difference between each of the brownfield sites and each of the potential greenfield sites. Some of the assessment is simplistic and individual judgements bizarre. There is no assessment of a mix of brownfield and greenfield sites or the effects of a 'do nothing' option for two of the three brownfield sites. There is no consideration of the cumulative effects of major developments – a key element of SEA. A lack of analysis of alternatives means that the rural brownfield approach cannot be considered to be the 'best' option.

The allocations in the plan are unsustainable – virtually all rural brownfield and remote from the built-up area and services and facilities of the village.

Although outside the Settlement Policy Area, the Glebe site lies in the heart of the village, surrounded by development. The 2010 SHLAA provides evidence that there is no overarching planning reason to conclude that no development should ever take place on any part of the glebe.

Forsyth's Holdings (owner Hurstfold Industrial Estate)

Suspended the implementation of the consented industrial scheme because of the Parish Council's wish to explore a residential use. Notes this enjoys overwhelming local support. Questions the commercial logic of the re-provision arrangements for existing tenants – would put potential tenants from Hurstfold on discounted rents when existing occupiers are expected to pay market rents. A mixed use option has not been explored with both residential and industrial uses.

Frank Taylor – consultant town planner (representing Forsyth's Holdings)

The Chichester District Local Plan 1999 covers the period up to 2006 and should be considered to be out-of-date – weight should be given to other sources of more up-to-date planning policy. The emphasis in NPPF on sustainability weighs heavily against additional commercial floorspace in such a rural location (the permitted scheme is a 42,500 sq ft). The NP is correct in identifying the site for residential use but the option of retaining the business users at Hurstfold should not be removed – these could remain on site (except B8 uses) avoiding the costs of relocation and taking up employment land elsewhere. A residential or mixed use scheme will improve the appearance of the site within its countryside setting.

The policy should only provide for employment uses most likely to provide a local service, i.e. B1 and B2. B8 would serve a wider area and is better located elsewhere. Terms of tenure/tenancy are not a material consideration in planning policy and do not fall within s106 of TCPA 1990.

It is unduly onerous to restrict occupation of any residential floorspace until all commercial uses have been provided for.

National Trust (owner of Marley Common and land at Valewood Park and Kingsley Green)

The neighbourhood plan needs to provide justification for the housing level proposed and demonstrate that this has been agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

The plan does not include an evaluation of alternative potential site allocations. This means the relative effects haven't been assessed including infrastructure and mitigation measures required. The level of housing is based on brownfield land supply.

The Syngenta site is a strategic allocation and needs to be considered as part of the SDNP Local Plan. Supports SA2's desire to achieve a high quality design and enhance landscape and biodiversity value. However, the policy is in general unduly prescriptive. The development of a tourism/visitor centre should be tested alongside alternatives through the SDNP Local Plan.

SA3 – questions the need for the allocation of the site – it is in active employment use, fairly remote from services and facilities and not well related to an existing settlement. Site allocations should not be made conditional upon the development of other sites.

SA4 – questions the allocation of the site when there are alternatives potentially available. The site is fairly remote from services and facilities and not well related to an existing settlement.

All the maps should be presented on an O.S. base.

PNH Properties (owner Fernhurst Business Park)

Supports the NP in its current form, particularly the allocation of Fernhurst Business Park under Policy EMI, which is vital to the long term success of the business park and in line with national planning policy (e.g. para. 28 of NPPF). Will help the owners address the changing needs of occupiers and improve access to skilled employment and training opportunities.

Recognise the benefits of providing additional housing to maintain and improve the supply of local labour and provide a local market for businesses.

Savills on behalf of Comer Homes (owner of former Syngenta site)

Welcomes the allocation of the Syngenta site but has concerns about the scope and content of the policy.

A proposal of 150 dwellings with 40% affordable housing would not be viable. This needs to be compared with the scheme which can be implemented under PD – conversion of the Highfield building to 213 residential units.

The FNP viability assessment over-estimates the size of dwellings inflating the GDV: an average of 30% in area overall. There are significant omissions from the proposed costs: the estimated demolition, S106 costs and financing costs are too low and no allowance made for remediation, provision of additional employment space and refurbishment of existing (e.g. Pagoda), landscaping and biodiversity improvements and abnormals (e.g. installing a new water main). This would make many of the benefits identified in SA2 undeliverable.

The references to phasing should be removed – this will restrict the delivery of housing, threaten the viability of the scheme (as it will take longer to repay finance) and increase noise and disruption for people who have purchased homes on the site.

The number of dwellings proposed is arbitrary and unjustified. It has not been informed by masterplanning of the site. Substantial residential development has the potential to cross subsidise other uses on the site, e.g. additional employment floorspace.

Residential redevelopment of the site as part of a mixed use scheme with expanded employment facilities is considered to be the most appropriate and viable reuse of the site.

The site is too large in its entirety to be of interest to a care home operator, it is too remote from the village and would not attract the interest of operators.

The landscaping requirements have not been informed by a masterplanning exercise – not all trees are of value.

H1 – there is no justification for the requirement for 80% of homes to be suitable for occupation by older persons / to Lifetime Homes standards. The 80% requirement for 1/2/3 bed dwellings contradicts local demand.

Mark Ward (local resident)

Speeding through the village is a problem. More traffic calming measures should be introduced.

South Downs National Park Authority

Policy H1 should acknowledge that rural exception sites could still play a legitimate part of housing delivery in the parish.

A proposal for the Syngenta site would need to demonstrate the requirements of para. 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework have been met.

The Hurstfold proposal involves the redevelopment of an active employment site. It is doubted whether the reprovision of employment premises elsewhere in the Parish is achievable. The requirement that a relocated occupier “must be offered tenancies on the same terms as at present” is unlikely to

be workable. There are also concerns about the sustainability of housing in such an isolated location and the impact the proposal would have on local landscape character.

The Bridgelands proposal should refer to the long-term management of the “predominantly green areas” of the site.

The Fernhurst Business Park proposal is not supported – the site was subject to an appeal in 2008/09- a development on this site would be visually prominent. A new access would be intrusive and open up views into the Business Park and negatively impact on the amenity of local residents.

At the former Syngenta site, a masterplanning exercise is required to establish the balance between different uses on the site. SDNPA’s High Level Viability Review suggested that 150 dwellings (the quantum proposed by the neighbourhood plan) will be insufficient in ensuring some new commercial development can be delivered – a key requirement, although small-scale uses appropriate to the National Park setting are only likely to be appropriate in this location. The quantum would also make the provision of other community benefits, such as green infrastructure, unviable. Any new commercial buildings should be of a high design quality.

Policy EE5 – the commitment to protect views is welcomed however there is a danger that by singly out specific views for protection, there may be other views which need protecting but become devalued.

Policies relating to street furniture and traffic calming should refer to the need for a sympathetic design appropriate to the National Park setting.

There is a concern that alternative sites have not been rigorously analysed – such sites might be more capable of meeting Fernhurst’s needs than the ones put forward for allocation. The supporting landscape and visual impact assessment does not adequately consider how existing land uses relate to surrounding land uses or the landscape character of their setting.

Surrey County Council (late representation)

The potential for up to 250 residential units at the former Syngenta site must be assessed in accordance with the NPPF which seeks to "focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable".

If there are found to be significant impacts on Surrey’s infrastructure arising from the proposals in the Plan, funding from developer contributions would be required to mitigate the impact in Surrey. The Syngenta proposal would create additional movements and the need for car parking at Haslemere railway station.