

Liss Village Neighbourhood Development Plan. Examination Hearing 30th June 2017

RESPONSE BY THE LISS VILLAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP, ON BEHALF OF THE LISS VILLAGE PARISH COUNCIL, TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE EXAMINER

Responses are shown in red and should be read in conjunction with responses from the SDNPA.

Meeting the housing target

The Joint Core Strategy requires the Plan to provide for 150 dwellings on allocated sites. The Plan, in policy 8, provides an indicative number of 152 dwellings on allocated sites.

The NPPF states in paragraph 47 with respect to meeting housing targets that Plans should “identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements. There should be an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land and provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20%(moved forward from later in the plan period)

I have received representations that there is limited scope for further windfall development within the proposed settlement boundary. The Parish Council also state that there are no “significant sites” within the existing settlement boundary. In the case of windfall sites, however, I do not consider it is a requirement of this Plan to anticipate and provide for a potential shortfall in the supply of windfall sites. This is a strategic matter for consideration in the emerging South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Local Plan.

In order to satisfy “basic conditions’ the Plan, under examination, has to provide land for housing to meet the target of 150 dwellings specified in the East Hants. Joint Core Strategy. The Plan also has to take into account the NPPF guidance to provide a buffer.

I would like to examine how the plan can provide the requisite buffer and what that buffer should be. I note that the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has suggested a small increase in the indicative number of dwellings. This raises issues about whether all or some of the allocated sites can accept the increased densities. Some of the sites appear to have constraints with respect to access and design, which could influence the number of dwellings considered to be appropriate.

I would therefore wish to discuss at the hearing with the Parish Council and the SDNPA;

What the increase (buffer) should be ? I note that SDNPA have previously stated it should be 10%.

How is this to be provided?

If it is on existing allocated sites, which are considered appropriate for an increase in the indicative density figures ?

The Liss Parish Council accept the NPPF guidelines of a 5% buffer. Anything above this level would not seem appropriate given the nature of the village and its situation within the national park, and also that we have a high level of confidence that the proposed sites will be delivered. In preparing the plan it had been assumed that there was some flexibility on the number of units which could be provided on the two Andlers Ash Sites and Upper Green. It is considered that this is sufficient to provide a further 7-8 units (5% of the 152 identified within the plan). but will depend on the precise site layouts and design, The sites at Brows Farm and Inwood Road are more constrained and only a minimal increase in numbers appears possible.

Deliverability of sites

Upper Green and land formerly part of the Grange

There is concern that site 4 Eden Lodge (now called Upper Green) is 'landlocked' and has no clear highway access. It relies on access across land, which is part of the Grange and appears to require some demolition. There are also concerns about the impact on trees, some (or all) I understand are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), as a result of the formation of an access.

I need clarification, in writing or at the hearing, from the landowner of the Grange that access to Upper Green can be achieved across the Grange. I also need confirmation from the landowner that access can be achieved onto Hawkley Road for pedestrians and cyclists, if necessary.

It is understood that the current developers of the sites will respond to this question but it should be noted that at the time of preparing the neighbourhood plan Neame Sutton, acting for Peter Ernest Homes, made a detailed submission on the Upper Green site, which made it clear that they had secured access to Farnham Road, and Appendix 4 is traffic study based on that (see documents submitted separately). The access to Hawkley Road is an existing access to the Upper Green site, in the ownership of the landowner. The developer at that time had approached the highway authority about vehicular access to the Farnham Road.

Furthermore, I need clarification from SDNPA, in consultation with the Highway

Authority and arboricultural advisors, that vehicular access can be achieved and there are no constraints to development as a result of the need to protect trees, including any covered by a TPO.

It is understood that the current developer will respond to this question, but it should be noted that the strip of land for the proposed access road to the Upper Green site has to pass close to the line of trees along the western boundary of sites 4 and 4a only where it passes the existing buildings of The Grange. There are no TPOs at this point. There are TPOs at other points on the line of trees but the access road does not have to run so close to the trees at this point. It is considered that normal planning conditions can provide adequate protection for trees.

Protected Gaps policy Liss 2

Why is this policy required when there is general restraint on development outside of the settlement boundary ?

As set out in paragraph 1.1 of the plan Liss and more fully in chapter 1 of the Liss Village Design Statement, Liss is a village made up of different parts each with a distinctive character. The Vision of the plan in paragraph 2.2 and Objective 2.6 of the plan seek to maintain the character of different parts of the village and the gaps between them. Paragraph 1.9 of the plan sets out the importance of maintaining the identify of Liss and preventing new development climbing up the slope of the Hill Brow ridge. These concerns are also stated in the Vision of the plan, and Objectives 2.3 and 2.5 seek to maintain the character of the village within the landscape and its open character. These objectives were strongly supported throughout the various consultation stages on the plan.

These objectives reflect the approach of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy, policy CP23 on Gaps Between Settlements which is designed to prevent coalescence and to protect the identify of settlements. That policy specifically identifies gaps between Liss and Liss Forest and between Liss and Hill Brow. The precise extent of the gap on Hill Brow is difficult to define but it is intended to meet that objective of preventing new development climbing up the slope. The supporting text to the policy (paragraph 7.27) also points out that the principle of a gaps policy is well established in East Hampshire.

The Protected Gaps policy in the neighbourhood development plan is designed to help achieve the objectives set out above. . Paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 summarise the purpose of the policy and the detailed justification for the policy is set out in the Supporting Document on Protected Gaps (see Lissnp.org.uk/Supporting Documents), particularly in paragraphs 2 and 3. Protecting the character of Liss and the identity of parts of the village, by preventing infill and coalescence or the sprawl of the village up the sides of the valley is thus a different set of objectives from those that countryside and landscape policies seek to achieve by protecting the character of countryside and landscape.

The policy is applicable to all development proposals but is likely to be of most importance if there is a need consider further housing or employment provision outside the settlement boundary within the lifetime of the plan. Potential housing and employment sites would, of course, all be evaluated in any future review of the plan, but the gaps policy clearly highlights a major consideration in locating future development. It should give guidance to planners, developers and the community that will help determine the future shape of a sustainable Liss.

Local Housing Needs Policy 7

Point 3 of the policy refers to the need for market housing to make a “substantial contribution” to meeting the demand for older homeowners. This is not precise enough to enable effective implementation of the policy and there is no evidence quoted to support the requirement. I note that the report of the Parish Council’s Housing Working Group 2015 only produces anecdotal evidence regarding the demand for open market housing for older people.

Is there any supplemental evidence available to support the policy and help define what a “substantial contribution” should be ?

As set out in paragraph 1 of the Supporting Document on Housing Needs (Lissnp.org.uk/Supporting Documents) the work on housing needs in Liss has to be seen in context of the SHMA for East Hampshire. Please note, the text of paragraph as published has a line omitted. It should read:

"Work on housing needs has to be seen in the context of the large amount of work undertaken for the East Hants Joint Core Strategy, particularly the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in the form of the Housing Need Assessment Update 2012. That work clearly set out the housing market within which Liss functions. The work on housing need in Liss, therefore, did not attempt to duplicate that work but rather to consider whether, within that context, there was anything particular about housing needs within Liss."

The difficulty of quantifying "substantial" is recognised, partly because it is difficult to quantify demand in a market situation, but also because the amount appropriate will vary according to the characteristics of individual developments. Nevertheless, in our view it is a helpful prompt when weighing up the merits of particular proposals.

Highway’s response to allocated sites

Further to Mr. Paterson’s email of the 23/3/17 to myself, I wish to seek confirmation whether the SDNPA, following consultation with the Highway Authority, have any overriding objections to the principle of development on any of the allocated sites. This is on the basis that I am not aware that the access issues have been fully assessed. However, I only need to know that the principle of development is acceptable on these sites.

We have nothing to add to the SDNPA response to this question.

Site Selection

There is criticism that the scoring system for site selection was not applied consistently and has been too subjective, resulting in anomalous choices for allocated sites.

I have read the Residential Site Selection document in detail but I need further clarification on the manner in which the steering groups scored individual sites.

How were sites ascribed ticks or crosses and how did this lead to the ultimate choice of sites ? How did the weighting system apply ? I need confirmation regarding any technical consultations made during this process. Were part site developments considered in the assessments ? How was impact on dark skies assessed ?

I would appreciate the views of the Parish Council and SDNPA on the site selection process.

It is important to note the comments in paragraph 28 of the Residential Site Selection background paper. The scoring system did not attempt a precise numerical measurement of the degree to which any site met the criteria. It was considered that to do this would give a spurious sense of accuracy that could not be achieved, partly because in some cases information was not available, but also because judgements cannot be entirely objective, particularly over issues of character. Thus, the scoring system was designed to provide a structured way of ordering judgements and to provide a basis for ranking sites against criteria rather than to place sites in positions on a numerical scale.

Paragraphs 8 - 15 of the Residential Site Selection describe the process for devising the criteria, which was undertaken by a working group independent of the group which led the work on site selection, and which relied heavily on the criteria used in the SHLAA prepared for the South Downs National Park Authority, with the addition of criteria that were seen as important to Liss. As is pointed out, the criteria were shared with the community at Forums, and views were sought (details can be found in Appendices 7 and 14 of the Consultation Statement).

Before making any assessments careful preparation took place. All those present had visited the sites. Discussion also took place before making assessments on the nature of each criteria and what they did and did not cover. The weighting of criteria was used to describe which criteria should be treated as most important, particularly when comparing sites, Many of the criteria and also the weighting given to them were reliant on the approach in the SHLAA of the SDNPA and also assessments in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment and the Village Design Statement. Inevitably, within a national park, criteria related to landscape were given most weight.

Wherever possible advice was given on the technical inputs into the scores. For example, measurements of the distance of sites from the village centre, or of environmental designations covering sites. Assessments of the environmental and biodiversity qualities of the sites, and of viewpoints had previously been undertaken by members of the Environment working group.

Each site was scored against the criteria in turn and the final score was derived from a consensus of those present. After each of the workshops the scores were looked at to ensure some moderation of any unusual scores, but in the event only one or two obvious errors in recording scores were corrected. At the last workshop in June 2016 the steering group reviewed all the principal sites, and also reviewed the criteria. The selection of sites was also checked against the locational strategy of the plan, as set out in paragraph 1.9 of the submitted plan. It was also agreed at that meeting the criteria were valid but needed more explanation (which is provided in Appendix 1 of the Residential Site Selection background paper).

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has also looked at the criteria used for the site selection process and has assessed the sites against its own criteria (see Table 7 and the subsequent analysis of the selected sites in the SEA). This appears to support the general approach taken in preparing the plan.

The treatment of part sites can be seen by looking at the sites set out in Table 1 of the Residential Site Selection document:

Site 1 is a large site put forward in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) prepared by the SDNPA. In its own evaluation of the site the SDNPA only considered part of the site for development. An early decision of the neighbourhood development plan process was to avoid providing for residential development on large sites. This reflects views consistently put forward by the community from the very beginning of the consultation process. The process therefore considered those parts of the site put forward by the SDNPA and others which had been suggested as potentially suitable, all of which lie close to existing development. This resulted in an assessment of two overlapping sites (of different size), adjoining Stocks Oak, and two sites next to the road called Hawksmead (one of which is the unnumbered site at the end of the table). Each of these sites was evaluated independently, as set out in the site selection document.

Site 3 is another large site put forward in the SHLAA. The SDNPA had evaluated only that part of the site close to Andlers Ash Road as suitable for development, and this accorded with the analysis on the Liss Village Design Statement which sought to confine development to the lower part of the site. Rather than consider this area as one large area it was treated as three smaller sites. Site 3a was rejected at an early stage in the process and the two other sites were fully evaluated.

Site 4a is considered later.

Site 5 at Brows Farm is a site where a larger area was put forward than was eventually included in the neighbourhood development plan. This reflected the outcome of a detailed design process following concerns raised about the impact of the whole site on landscape and views. The development brief for Brows Farm sets out the factors which led to the decision on the final extent of development.

Dark sites as a criterion is derived from the dark skies policy of the National Park. A draft planning policy on Dark Night Skies is set out in Policy SD9 of the draft South Downs Local Plan preferred options. The draft policy suggests avoiding sites which are visible from surrounding areas, including habitats, and also conserving and enhancing areas of relative tranquility. At a local level this meant that sites in tranquil areas, such as Hatch Lane, scored poorly, while sites along Andlers Ash Road, which have been kept to low areas on the slope, and where the road is already less tranquil with street lighting and extensive housing on one side, score rather better. Also, while none of the potential residential sites considered are in or adjoin an area with a specific biodiversity designation, in the Biodiversity Action Plan for East Hampshire much of the slope on Hill Brow is described as a priority habitat and light pollution close to these areas is to be avoided.

Specific site Selection issues

There are some specific issues, which I would like to clarify, as follows ;

How was site 4a. "land formerly part of the Grange", assessed. I note it was brought forward in the later stages of the process but there is no assessment of it separate from site 4, Upper Green. Do the Parish Council and the SDNPA consider site 4a has the same or similar attributes as site 4 ?

Site 4a next the Grange was put forward after an initial assessment of the adjoining Site 4 at Upper Green. It was confirmed by both parties that discussions had taken place between the potential developers of the two sites and therefore the two sites were considered together. Most of the same considerations applied to the two sites but a significant difference is that Site 4a adjoins and is very visible from the Farnham Road and forms a gateway to the village. This particular characteristic was separately taken into account in assessing Site 4a and is reflected in the development brief covering Sites 4 and 4a. The other difference is that Site 4a until recently formed the grounds of the Grange with some of the characteristics of a large garden and is rather more urbanised than Site 4.

I note that in the SHLAA development on the Eden Lodge(Upper Grange) site was considered to have an adverse impact on the landscape character and yet in the LNDP site assessment in the criteria relating to "Landscape and Visual impact" it is considered favourably in terms of the number of "ticks". I would appreciate an explanation of this assessment from the Parish Council and the views of the SDNPA.

All sites considered in the SHLAA were looked at as part of the planmaking process, including those rejected or excluded. The Steering Group agreed with all the assessments of those rejected or excluded except in the case of the land adjoining Eden Lodge (now referred to as Upper Green). It was felt that with good design and in particular adequate protection for the tree boundary which separates it from open countryside concerns over the impact on landscape could be overcome, and therefore the site should be investigated further. This led to work which identified more clearly what was needed to meet those concerns. It was helped by work undertaken by Neame Sutton, acting for the then potential developer, which demonstrated how the landscape issues could be approached, particularly the retention and protection of the tree screen. It was with this work in front of it that a workshop assessed the site. This assessment of the landscape implications was validated in a meeting with SDNPA officers on 14th December 2015.

There are some specific site issues relating to the site selection process for which I seek clarity. I should point out that in relation to these issues I have read the comments from the SDNPA landscape officer and Mr. Hargreaves of the Parish Council, which were forwarded to me, by Mr. Paterson, during the examination following my request. Also I have not at the time of writing carried out a site visit but will have done so by the time of the hearing.

Hatch Development Ltd. has made a number of points about inconsistency in the scoring of their site. In particular I would appreciate further explanation of the following;

Why has the Hatch Lane site scored less well in terms of landscape impact than other sites, in particular Andlers Ash Road and Inwood Road ? I note both Hatch Lane and Inwood Road exceed the 75-metre contour.

The Hatch Lane site is situated on the slopes of the Hill Brow ridge. The ridge and the slopes make a significant contribution to the landscape quality of the national park, both through their topography and the extensive tree cover. The ridge is a very visible feature from across the valley of the River Rother. The importance of the ridge and the slopes are set out in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment, such as paragraph 7A33 which describes the importance of the tree cover on Hill Brow, and the importance of low density along Hatch Lane. The development issues are set out in paragraphs 7A45-7A48. This approach is reiterated in the Liss Village Design Statement in guidelines 11-1.3 and 2.5-2.6. The site itself is also relatively isolated from other developed areas except for one corner which is close to Highfield Gardens. Any development in this area is likely to have a significant impact on the landscape of the area. A contributing concern is that the Hill Brow ridge has development close to the top of the ridge and the slopes include scattered housing. At present, the visual impact of that development is low, mainly due to the extensive tree cover, but further development in this area will tend to lead to coalescence of development. Preventing that coalescence is set out as an objective in the Liss Village Design Statement and the gaps policy is intended to prevent coalescence in this area.

No other site considered is in such a sensitive location except perhaps Clarks Farm (land north of Hill Brow Road) which is also on the slopes of the Hill Brow Ridge, and which was also rejected as a suitable site for development and where many of the same concerns over landscape as at Hatch Lane are set out in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment.

The Inwood Road site is well above 75m and this is a factor against its selection as a site for residential development. To a large extent, however, it would have been difficult to exclude the site. The site was a reserve site in the East Hants Local Plan Second Review, Policy H2, and an inspector hearing an appeal against the refusal of a previous planning application for residential development refused the application for a number of reasons to do with design, layout, landscaping and access, but appeared to accept the principle of residential development on the site. Also, the site is closely related to the existing builtup parts of Liss. There are concerns about the visual impact of development, particularly from across the Rother valley, but the development brief seeks to minimise this impact.

Why was Hatch Lane awarded a favourable assessment (3 positive ticks) for low visual impact from key viewpoints into Liss and yet a very negative score of 3 “crosses” on “limited impact on local character and the special qualities of the Park” ?

The scoring of these two criteria was attempting to convey a distinction between the immediate visual impact of the site and its wider implications for the character of the national park. As it is as present the site is well screened by trees and is not very visible from key viewpoints (as described in the background paper on protected views and local green space). When considered from a wider point of view, however, the site is in a sensitive location, as described above, and described in detail in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment, both in landscape terms and because of the dangers of coalescence. There is a great danger of development undermining the character of the Hill Brow ridge, particularly as the tree cover which currently screens the site is almost entirely outside the site and outside the control of the developer.

Why was Hatch Lane awarded two negative “crosses” for walking and cycling distance to the village centre and Upper Green awarded two positive “ticks” when the sites are of a similar distance to the village centre ? I note there is reference to the steepness of routes from the Hatch Lane site but are there any further factors which influenced this scoring ?

Liss lies in the valley of the River Rother and in recent years has developed around the railway and close to the Hill Brow ridge. The side of the village where sites such as Hatch Lane and Clarks farm are located is on the slopes of the Hill Brow ridge where the land rises steeply. On the other side of the village, however, towards West Liss where the Upper Green site is located, the land rises far more gently. It is only beyond West Liss and on the far side of the A3 from Liss does the land begin to rise

sharply. Also, Hatch Lane itself has no pavements. The Hatch Lane site can only be safely accessed by pedestrians by a convoluted route through a number of different residential roads, including a length of road without pavements, whereas there is a very straightforward route from Upper Green into the centre of Liss. Thus, although there is little difference in distance, depending from which part of the centre this is measured, there is a significant difference in the ease of access.

Why has Hatch Lane been awarded three negative crosses in relation to “compatible with density and character of adjoining development and “potential to deliver small units” ?

The Hatch Lane site is almost entirely surrounded by countryside with extensive tree cover. Again, this is set out in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment as referenced previously. Only at one corner does the site come close to Highfield Gardens, and otherwise has isolated dwellings mainly to the northwest side of the site within the tree cover. Development of the site would be completely out of character with the areas immediately adjoining.

The site scored poorly for delivering small units and affordable housing because the proposal from the developer was to provide a small number of larger, up market dwellings on the site. A different proposal might have demonstrated that small units could be provided, but given the inherent unsuitability of development in that location this possibility was not pursued.

Why has Hatch Lane received two negative “crosses” for impact on “dark skies”, compared to most other sites, which have fared favourably in relation to this criterion ?

The general approach taken to Dark Skies has been described previously. A draft planning policy on Dark Night Skies is set out in Policy SD9 of the draft South Downs Local Plan preferred options. The draft policy suggests avoiding sites which are visible from surrounding areas, including habitats, and also conserving and enhancing areas of relative tranquility. At a local level this meant that sites in tranquil areas, such as Hatch Lane, scored poorly, while sites along Andlers Ash Road, which have been kept to low areas on the slope, and where the road is already less tranquil with street lighting and extensive housing on one side, score rather better. Also, in the Biodiversity Action Plan for East Hampshire much of the slope on Hill Brow is described as a priority habitat and light pollution close to these areas is to be avoided.

Regarding the site, land north of Hill Brow Road a number of similar questions are raised, as follows;

Why has the Brows Farm site been given one tick when assessed against whether the site would have a “low impact on conservation areas, listed buildings and PROW” yet “land north of Hill Brow Road was given two “crosses” in relation to the same question ?

The Brows Farm site has been specifically designed to minimise impact on St Marys Church, which is a grade II listed building by keeping a distance to the church and maintaining its setting. The development should also help to soften the view of the adjoining office buildings and their impact on the setting of St Marys. The Clarks Farm site (land north of Hill Brow Road) has a grade II listed building in one corner of the site, close to the area proposed for development, and it was considered that development would have a major impact on the setting of that building. The site is also bounded on three historic sunken lanes.

Also why was Brows Farm given three “ticks” in terms of ‘low visual impact from key viewpoints” despite the fact it is located within an identified view (G on policies map 1) ? Why was “land to the north of Hill Brow” given one tick in relation to the same question when it is not within an identified view ?

The general view of the area is currently affected by adjoining former farm buildings which are now mainly offices. For view G the view of interest is principally the church, although in the background is Hill Brow and the Hill Brow ridgeline. It is considered that a good village green development would improve the setting of the church by helping to obscure the adjoining ugly modern barns. Careful positioning of the proposed development, as set out in the development brief, and its reduction in size, are considered to sufficiently minimise the impact of the development itself. The overall visual impact of the development is therefore assessed as low.

Clarks Farm (land north of Hill Brow Road) is an open area on the slope of the Hill Brown ridge. Its development would not impact on the protected views identified in the submitted plan but its development would open up an entirely new area within a key gap, and significantly impact on views from Huntsbottom Lane which is a rural sunken lane, and from various points to the north, and this is reflected in the score.

Similarly why were the Andlers Ash sites given two “ticks’ when they are within two identified views ?

The slope to the south east of Andlers Ash Road is part of the slope leading up to the Hill Brow ridge. It is considered that the distant views from view A on the Hangers would not be significantly affected provided that the building line is maintained no further up the slope than Cumbers and the Hilliers barns. Photographic evidence (Protected View A) shows that only the roofs of the Hilliers barns are visible from the viewpoint. For view F the proposed development would be approximately 10m below this viewpoint and currently obscured by the tree nursery, and has a background of existing builtup development. Thus, given the limits on the development and the extent of existing development, the visual impact was assessed as moderately low.

65 metre and 75 metre contours

I require an explanation of how the criteria “below 65m along Andlers Ash” was applied to consideration of the site. It would be helpful if the 65 metre and the 75 metre contours were marked on a plan, which is available at the examination and able to be viewed by all present at the examination.

The origins of the 75m and 65m criteria are set out in paragraph 7A33 of the Liss Landscape Character Assessment. In practice, as paragraph 3.19 of the plan acknowledges, the 65m contour has been difficult to use on its own, as it is difficult to follow on Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 maps and reconcile that with GPS information. The principle behind the reference to the 65m contour, however, is that development along Andlers Ash Road would be acceptable provided that it was not allowed to climb too far up the slope and become prominent in the landscape. As set out above, Cumbers and the Hilliers barns help define the visible building line.

Policy Liss 11 Residential Development in the Countryside

In 3e) of the policy, there is reference to adequate parking and amenity space. Are there adopted or informal parking and amenity space guidelines to which the policy could refer?

Current guidelines are provided by Hampshire County Council as the highway authority. At the time of drafting the neighbourhood development plan it was understood that the SDNPA was developing its own guidelines for the park which would replace those guidelines. This no longer appears to be the case. East Hants District Council are producing guidelines but it appears only for the area outside the national park. There is some uncertainty about what guidelines might apply in the future within Liss and we will be pressing the national park authority to produce revised guidelines since we do not consider the guidelines from Hampshire County Council to be entirely appropriate to the park and to Liss in particular. So, the position of the policy remains that whichever set is in force at the time of an individual planning application will be applied.

Policy Liss 12 Retirement and Nursing homes

There are varying levels of care, which can be provided for the elderly. Most forms of care are institutionalized residential care and nursing homes, which fall within Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987. However other forms of limited care may be considered not in any particular “use class’ i.e. “sui generis” or even general residential development under Class C3. These developments could include development directed at the elderly but also that just circumscribed by a planning condition, limiting occupation to persons of retirement age.

Saved Policy H13 of the East Hants Local Plan is directed to refer to accommodation as that for persons of “statutory retirement age”.

It is important to define the exact type development covered by this policy and I would appreciate the views of the Parish Council and SDNPA on this matter.

The assumption of the policy is that it refers to groups included in the existing Policy H13 covering Class C2 developments. We are not sure there is a need to extend the policy to other forms of development which meet similar needs since these are likely to be small scale and have limited impact. For the sake of clarity it might be appropriate to add at the end of paragraph 3.52 within the submitted plan the words "for development within Use Class C2".

Point 2 of the policy refers to the scope for conversion to existing large detached buildings. I note the inclusion of the word "Also" in point 2 which implies that and development permissible under point 2 has "also" to comply with the criteria in point 1 a. to g. . I would appreciate clarification as to whether my interpretation is correct ?

Yes. That is the intention of the policy. New buildings should be confined to within the settlement policy boundary, and outside that area should be confined to change of use or conversion. This is consistent with other policies that restrict development outside the settlement boundary and the provision of residential care and nursing homes should not be an exception.

I consider there is a need to define more closely the type of "existing large detached buildings" in order to preclude conversion of buildings which may be derelict, of insubstantial construction or incapable of conversion without effectively a new build or where change of use could impact on landscape character. I would appreciate a response from the Parish Council and the SDNPA as to the definition of buildings suitable for conversion under this policy.

It is not considered that the neighbourhood development plan can adequately define the variety of situations which could arise and it is assumed that as part of the normal development management process a view would be taken in each case on whether or not a proposal was for "change or use and conversion of existing large detached buildings".

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