

Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031

Submission Version

Final Report of the Independent Examiner

Prepared by

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Introduction

1. I was formally appointed by Adur District Council in March 2017, with the agreement of Sompting Parish Council, to conduct the examination of the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan. My role is known as Independent Examiner. My selection has been facilitated by the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service which is administered by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
2. In order for me to be appointed to this role, I am required to be appropriately experienced and qualified. I have over 40 years' experience as a planning practitioner, primarily working in local government, which included 8 years as a Head of Planning at a large unitary authority on the south coast, but latterly as an independent planning consultant. I am a Chartered Town Planner and a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute. I am independent of both Adur District Council and Sompting Parish Council and I can confirm that I have no interest in any land that is affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Initial Findings

3. Following my initial consideration of the Plan, I decided that it would assist my examination of the Plan, to hold a Hearing rather than following the normal route of considering written representations. In particular, I wanted to receive representations on a limited number of issues, which I set out in a document entitled "Initial Comments of the Independent Examiner", issued on 6th June 2018. This was followed up with an invitation to the Hearing which set out the matters I wished to see discussed, issued on 28th June 2018.
4. The Hearing took place on 19th July 2018 at Worthing Town Hall and it quickly became clear that the neighbourhood plan that had been submitted was not the Plan that the present Parish Council supported or wished to promote. I set out the summary of the discussions, in my Post Hearing Note which I issued the day after the hearing on 20th July 2018 but the crux of the discussion was that the Parish Council wished to withdraw the Plan from examination.
5. I therefore agreed to adjourn the hearing to allow the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Parish Council to seek a formal decision to withdraw.

The Parish Council's Position

6. I have now been advised by Adur District Council, that Sompting Parish Council had considered the matter at its meeting held on 25th July 2018 and

had resolved to withdraw the current version of the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan and to resubmit a plan in due course.

The Legal Position

7. Under the terms of Schedule 10 of the Localism Act, my examiner's report must recommend that either the submitted plan goes to referendum, the plan goes to referendum, if modified or should not go forward to referendum.
8. However, following the decision of the Parish Council to withdraw the current Plan, then there is now no plan before me, upon which I need to make a final recommendation upon.

Concluding Remarks

9. I am pleased that the Parish Council remains committed to prepare a new neighbourhood plan. I hope my comments in my Post Hearing Note are helpful, but the plan needs to reflect the updated planning policy position with the adopted Local Plan and the emerging South Downs Local Plan. Importantly the new plan will need to go through its statutory processes anew including a new Regulation 14 consultation and will need to have regard to the Secretary of State's revised planning guidance in the recently published National Planning Policy Framework. I also hope that the continued discussions with Persimmon Homes Ltd will assist the plan's preparation and also to influence any planning application
10. Following the decision of the Parish Council to withdraw, the Plan I now formally draw the examination to a close.

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