

South Downs National Park Local Plan Examination

Position statement from Pro Vision on behalf of The Cowdray Estate (Representation Number 45)

Matters 10-11- Combining Sites and Settlements (Policies SD67, SD68, SD69 and SD81)

Introduction

- 1 The Cowdray Estate is a progressive and diversified rural business, a major landowner and a significant local employer. The Estate extends to 16,500 acres centred on Easebourne at the heart of the South Downs National Park. It is therefore an important stakeholder in the South Downs Local Plan.
- 2 The Estate strongly supports the site allocations in Policies SD67, SD68, SD69 and SD81, but would like to raise matters regarding their stated criteria, and the physical extent of the sites.

Allocation Policy SD67: Cowdray Works Yard, Easebourne

- 3 This site is wholly owned by the Estate. It is partially in use as a maintenance yard, but otherwise is underutilised or vacant. The Estate strongly supports the allocation of the site as a comprehensively planned mixed use development site.
- 4 The site is deliverable (as defined in the NPPF):
 - It is available – The Estate’s maintenance yard function will be relocated to alternative suitable premises on the Estate.
 - It is in a suitable location – this is a brownfield site (and therefore sequentially preferred to greenfield sites) in a highly sustainable location on the edge of one of the Park’s largest villages. The development of the site can secure significant environmental, social and economic benefits; including providing high quality pedestrian and cycle links to Cowdray Park.
 - It is achievable (subject to a Viability Assessment establishing the amount of affordable housing that can be provided).
- 5 Whilst the Estate has undertaken some initial master planning (which has been the subject of public consultation), the capacity of the site at this stage should be expressed as “approximately 20 dwellings and approximately 1,500sqm of commercial floorspace”.

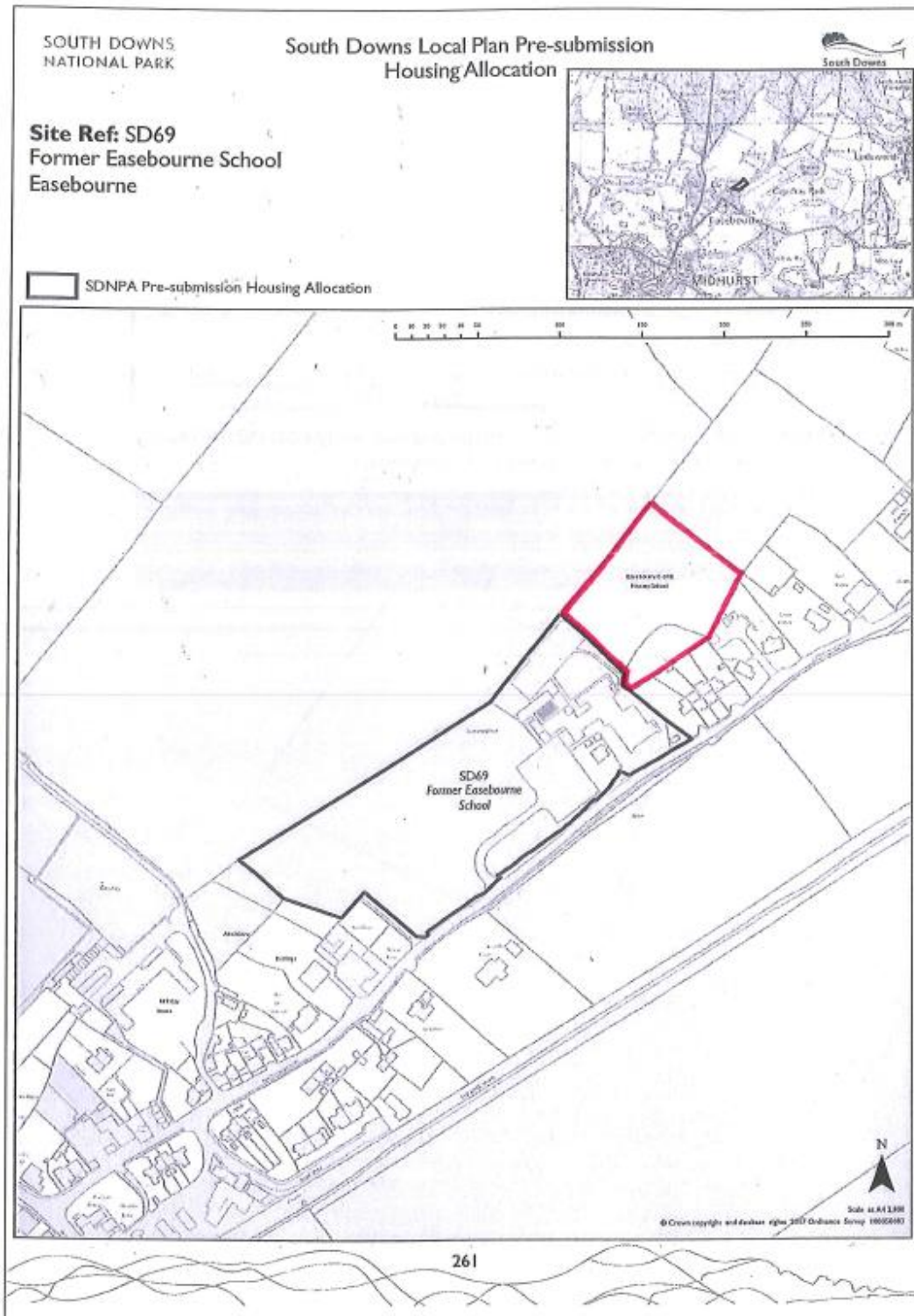
Allocation Policy SD68: Land at Egmont Road, Easebourne

- 6 This site is wholly owned by the Estate. Part of the site is in use as a car park for the Conifers Preparatory School and it is otherwise vacant (save for a garage block). The Estate strongly supports the allocation of the site as a residential development site.
- 7 The site is deliverable (as defined in the NPPF):
- It is available – The Estate’s intention is to retain the existing car parking area to serve the needs of the school (except where necessary to facilitate access to residential development) as SD68 provides. The remainder of the site is vacant and surplus to the Estate’s requirements.
 - It is in a suitable location – this is a visually and physically contained site, well related to the existing built-up area and in a highly sustainable location on the edge of one of the Park’s largest villages. The development of the site can secure significant environmental, social and economic benefits.
 - It is achievable (subject to a Viability Assessment establishing the amount of affordable housing that can be provided).
- 8 Whilst the Estate has undertaken some initial master planning (which has been the subject of public consultation), the capacity of the site at this stage should be expressed as “approximately 20 dwellings”.

Allocation Policy SD69: Former Easebourne School, Easebourne

- 9 This site is wholly owned by the Estate. It has been vacant (save for the School House which is currently let on an AST Agreement) since the school relocated to new premises in 2014. The Estate strongly supports the allocation of the site as a residential development site.
- 10 The site is deliverable (as defined in the NPPF):
- It is available – The site is vacant and surplus to the Estate’s requirements.
 - It is in a suitable location – this is a brownfield site (and therefore sequentially preferred to greenfield sites) in a highly sustainable location on the edge of one of the Park’s largest villages. The development of the site can secure significant environmental, social and economic benefits.
 - It is achievable (subject to a Viability Assessment establishing the amount of affordable housing that can be provided).
- 11 Whilst the Estate has undertaken some initial master planning (which has been the subject of public consultation), the capacity of the site at this stage should be expressed as “approximately 20 dwellings (including dwellings formed through the conversion of the original (listed) part of the school building)”.
- 12 Notwithstanding the Estate’s support for the allocation of this site, it objects to the exclusion from the allocated site area of the small part of the existing school site

to the north of the school buildings (shown edged red on the plan below). Inclusion of this land within the allocation does not infer an acceptance that it is suitable for building on (as the draft policy makes clear) but it would provide greater flexibility in the master planning process and would ensure that all land is put to an appropriate beneficial and effective use. Including all of the existing school curtilage land within the allocation will result in a more comprehensively planned and better-quality scheme to be designed.



Strategic Housing Allocation Policy SD81: West Sussex County Council Depot and former Brickworks site, Midhurst

- 13 The site is jointly owned by The Cowdray Estate and West Sussex County Council (WSCC). Metis Homes have an option on the site.
- 14 The Estate strongly support the allocation of the Council Depot and Former Brickworks as a comprehensively planned and primarily residential development site.
- 15 Site Allocation Policy SD81 is a strategically important site that will make a significant contribution to meeting local housing need.
- 16 The site is deliverable (as defined in the NPPF):
 - It is available – The two landowners have agreed to work collaboratively to deliver a comprehensive scheme, in accordance with the requirements of the draft policy (subject to the comments below).
 - It is in a suitable location – this is a brownfield site (and therefore sequentially preferred to greenfield sites) in a highly sustainable location on the edge of one of the Park’s five main settlements. The development of the site can secure significant benefits; including providing high quality pedestrian and cycle links to Midhurst Common.
 - It is achievable (subject to a Viability Assessment establishing the amount of affordable housing that can be provided – having regard to the site’s existing use value and abnormal infrastructure costs).
- 17 The Estate supports the deletion of the concept plan from the Plan.
- 18 The capacity of the site at this stage should be expressed as “90 or more dwellings”, as the site may well have capacity for more dwellings than indicated.

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