

Examination of the Chichester Local Plan 2021-2039

Further Statement in Respect of

Matter 3: The Spatial Strategy

Submitted on behalf of:

Beechcroft Developments Limited

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Document Management

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Matter 3: The Spatial Strategy

Issue: Is the spatial strategy positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy ?

Policy S1 Spatial Development Strategy

Q.13 What is the justification for the proposed distribution of development in the plan area?

1. The Spatial Strategy, as suggested to be modified by the District Council in SD10.02 (March 2024), provides clarification to the Spatial Strategy as set in the Proposed Submission Local Plan of January 2023.
2. The proposed distribution of development in the plan area seeks to direct most of the new development to Chichester City and its periphery, with other strategic development proposed along the A259 corridor to the west of Chichester and more moderate amounts of development at the settlement hubs of Selsey and East Wittering and at the larger settlements in the north of the District (to the north of the South Downs National Park).
3. Overall the proposed development strategy is consistent with the principles of sustainable development. It is noted in paragraph 3.20 of the explanatory text the amount of new development on the Manhood Peninsula, which covers the southernmost part of the plan area, is limited because the area faces a specific set of planning challenges including significant areas at risk from coastal erosion and flooding, environmental designations, poor accessibility and problems of traffic congestion from limited road connections to the north including issues with the A27 junction, a high reliance on Chichester city for employment and other key facilities. It also refers to the Preferred Approach version of the Local Plan and how this included moderate growth at the settlement hubs of Selsey (250 dwellings) and East Wittering (350) and the service village of Hunston (200). It then refers to several recent planning permissions that have contributed to moderate levels of growth on the Manhood Peninsula. These, combined with the ongoing constraints that the area faces, appear to be used as a justification for not including any new strategic allocations on the Manhood Peninsula (as per Policies S1 and H2), and only one non-strategic allocation on the Manhood Peninsula i.e. 50 dwellings at North Mundham (as per Policy H3).
4. On closer examination of the many constraints alluded to for the Manhood Peninsula very few actually apply to Hunston. The most significant constraint is the current capacity issues experienced at the A27 Whyke Roundabout junction. This, however, will be ameliorated by the proposed improvements to the A27 Chichester Bypass which form part of the Plan's infrastructure improvements and the wider National Highways improvements to the A27 that are included in the Strategic Road Network (SRN) Road Investment Strategy 4 (RIS4) five year plan 2030 to 2035. These are planned for midway through the Plan period. These would provide additional highway capacity which justifies a higher housing provision than is currently proposed by the Plan.

5. In addition to this, Hunston is sustainably located and benefits from a good public bus service and has direct cycleway and pedestrian links (along the Chichester Canal). These provide safe alternative transport options (other than by private car) to the centre of Chichester (located 2.7km to the north) and its varied employment, retail and community services. It is also located on a bus route that links the settlement to the city centre and the wider public transport network. As such there are good sustainable transport options for people living in the settlement reducing the need to travel by private car.
6. According to (BP11) Settlement Hierarchy Update Background Paper (May 2024), Hunston is one of 16 Service Villages. Paragraph 5.6 of this background document confirms that this type of settlement has at least one of either a primary school, GP or convenience store as well as a combination of other facilities including a community meeting place and outdoor community facilities. These act as a local centre for services providing for the villages and wider parish area. These settlements offer an opportunity to allow development to meet local needs and to help support existing facilities and facilities.
7. The sustainable nature of some of the Service Villages and the scope to provide additional development at them is recognised by the Submitted Plan (SD01) which proposes allocations of:
 - 265 dwellings at Maudlin Farm, Westhampnett
 - 245 dwellings at Highgrove Farm, Bosham
 - 220 homes at Loxwood
8. The Spatial Strategy, however, fails to recognise the sustainable nature of Hunston and its relative absence from the constraints that affect other settlements on the Manhood Peninsula. Hunston is locationally well placed by its proximity to Chichester and provides sustainable transport options. As such it is capable of providing some strategic scale development (as was acknowledged by Preferred Options document which proposed 200 dwellings at the settlement).
9. As set out in section 5 of the representations made by Beechcroft Developments Ltd to the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission, the Local Plan should make additional housing allocations at the Hunston Village Dairy site and adjoining land at Farmfield and Ridgeway Nurseries for about 200 homes. The merits of this site were recognised by the proposed site allocation in the Regulation 16 Hunston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2039.
10. The Neighbourhood Plan was later withdrawn following the recommendation of the Examiner as he felt that the Plan failed to meet a number of basic conditions, including its non-conformity with strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan and that the Neighbourhood Plan was too far in advance of the then emerging Local Plan of which the dwelling requirement and development strategy had yet to be confirmed.

Q.17 Is the proposed settlement hierarchy justified?

11. The proposed settlement hierarchy is basically a continuation of the existing settlement hierarchy set out in the adopted Chichester Local Plan Key Policies 2014-2019 (CD 01).
12. Paragraph 3.32 of the Submission Plan confirms that the overall objective of the settlement hierarchy is to deliver development that supports the needs of individual communities, enabling them to prosper in the long term. Paragraph 3.35 confirms that settlement hierarchy has been defined in relation to the presence of certain services and facilities.

13. Overall the proposed settlement hierarchy is a useful tool in identifying the most sustainable settlements used to inform the development strategy. As such it is justified.

Q.18 Are the proposed settlement boundaries justified and would they be effective?

14. Draft Policy H2 Strategic Allocations of the Submission Plan does not propose any strategic housing allocations at Hunston and draft Policy H3 Non-Strategic Parish Housing Requirements does not propose any additional new housing at Hunston through neighbourhood plans or a subsequent development plan.
15. As set out in Beechcroft Development Ltd response to Matters 2 and 4C there are strong justifications for extending the Plan Period, increasing the overall housing provision and allocating more land at Hunston to assist in meeting housing needs. As such the proposed settlement boundaries for Hunston are not justified or effective in meeting the housing needs of the district or the settlement of Hunston.
16. The text of Policy S2 Settlement Hierarchy under the sub-heading **“Settlement Boundaries”** confirms:
“There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the settlement boundaries which will be reviewed through the preparation of development plan documents and/or neighbourhood plans, reflecting the general approach:
1. Respecting the setting, form and character of the settlement;
2. Avoiding actual or perceived coalescence of settlements; and
3. Ensuring good accessibility to local services and facilities.”
17. Section 5 of Beechcroft Developments Ltd representations to the Regulation 19 consultation stage of the Local Plan sets out the merits of allocating 2.5 hectares of land the former Hunston Village Dairy and adjacent neighbouring residential/horticultural land at Farmfield and Ridgeway Nurseries for at least 200 dwellings (i.e. as per the proposed Policy H1 allocation in the withdrawn Hunston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2037).
18. In the context of the general approach to setting settlement boundaries as set in draft Policy S2 we comment as follows in respect of the land at the former Hunston Village Dairy site (which is outlined red in the plan below) and adjoining land to the south at Farmfield/Ridgeway Nurseries:



1. Respecting the setting, form and character of the settlement

19. The site is located on the southern edge of Hunston and abuts existing residential properties (collectively known as 'Oakview') located immediately to the east. Residential properties and associated nursery buildings at Farmfield and Ridgeway Nurseries are located to the south-east and south, respectively. The Hunston Business Park is located to the south of the aforementioned nurseries. As a consequence the setting of the site is predominately one of urban fringe and not isolated countryside. The eastern part of the site contains a group of redundant buildings that were previously used by the Village Dairy. As such this part of the site is previously developed land (PDL) where new development is encouraged.
20. According to the Landscape Capacity Study (March 2019) Section B - Sub Area Reports - East West Corridor (CC 01.02) the site falls within sub area 171. This sub area is defined as having a medium/low capacity. The south east part is more contained and smaller in scale. It confirms that the sub area is more contained by boundary vegetation. As a consequence it confirms that a small amount of development may be accommodated around the existing settlement clusters of built form provided it is informed by further landscape and visual impact assessment.
21. A high quality design that limits building heights to no more than two stories combined with an appropriate layout and an appropriate new landscape edge would successfully assimilate a new development into the existing landscape. A development of this type would respect the setting, form and character of the settlement.

2. Avoiding actual or perceived coalescence of settlement

22. Owing to the sites location on the south west edge the settlement and the distance it is away from the nearest settlements (Donnington and Chichester to the north) and intervening features such roads, field boundaries (often bordered by trees and hedgerows) and the Chichester Canal, it can be developed without actual or perceived coalescence.

3. Ensuring good accessibility to local services and facilities.

23. The site is accessed via an existing track that links into the B2145 Selsey Road to the east. The site is close to a number of key amenities and facilities located along Selsey Road and the south of the site in Hunston. The key amenities are shown in the table below including distances plus walking and cycling distances.
24. According to the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's (CIHT) 'Planning for Walking' (April 2015) the average length of pedestrian journeys is now 1.37km. Based on the table above a number of amenities and facilities are within 1.3km of the site. As a result a development on the site provides a good opportunity to promote journeys by waking and other sustainable modes of travel, thereby reducing reliance on motorised vehicles.

Local Amenities	Distance	Walking (80m per minute)	Cycling (250m per minute)
Oak View Bus Stop	220m	3 minutes	<less than 1 minute
Hunston Mill	400m	5 minutes	2 minutes
Hunston Recreational Ground	500m	6.5 minutes	2 minutes
Hunston Community Club	550m	7 minutes	2.5 minutes
Jungle Paradise Adventure Golf	950m	12 minutes	4 minutes
Londis and Post Office	950m	12 minutes	4 minutes
The Sun	950m	12 minutes	4 minutes
The Spotted Cow	1km	12.5 minutes	4 minutes
Hunston Canoe Club	1.2km	15 minutes	5 minutes
St Leodegar's Church, Hunston	1.4km	17.5 minutes	6 minutes
Hunston Lodge Riding Centre	1.4km	17.5 minutes	6 minutes
Chichester Golf Club	1.7km	21.5 minutes	7 minutes
Chichester Free School	2.6km	32.5 minutes	12 minutes
North Mundham Primary School	2.5km	31.5 minutes	10 minutes
Esso Petrol Garage	3km	38 minutes	9 minutes

25. In addition, the CIHT confirms that developments should be within 400m of a bus stop for them to be utilised by residents. The site is within 200m of two nearby bus stops. This provides residents of the development with the option to use public transport services. The table below shows the level of bus services from the nearest bus stops located about 120m north of the existing access track.

Bus Service	Route	Frequency
51	Selsey- Chichester	Monday to Friday 05:36- 23:10 (Every 15-30 minutes) Saturday 07:07-23:10 (Every 30 minutes) Sunday 08:17-20:17 (Every 30 minutes)
651*	Selsey- Chichester	08:25 (Northbound)/ 15:42 (Southbound)

26. The site is located close to a number of public footpaths including the Chichester Canal Route which provides a traffic free route from Selsey Road to Chichester along the canal. This route is a permissive cycleway (CHI/P13/1) and footpath (No.184). This route is connected to Lipchis Way, which is a long distance route through the centre of Chichester.

27. Other public footpaths in the vicinity include Footpath 181 about 125m to the north near the existing bus stop on the Selsey Road. This connects into the Westlands Road/Orchardside housing estate to the north and local amenities to the east of the settlement. Footpath 188 provides a route into North Mundham and route 185 provides a route to Donnington. The local PRoW footpaths provide a strong connection to other villages in the area, providing connections to local facilities.
28. In terms of rail services, Chichester train station is the closest station. This is accessible within a 20 minute bus ride (via bus route 51) or is a 13 minute cycle ride away. At Chichester rail station there are 180 cycle storage spaces and combined step free access to all platforms. This meets the requirements of paragraph 110 of the NPPF (promoting sustainable transport modes) and paragraph 112 (pedestrian and cycle movement options). Regular rail services run from Chichester station to Portsmouth & Southsea, London Victoria, Brighton, Littlehampton and Southampton. All of the rail services can be utilised for both commuter and leisure travel as part of a multi model journey.
29. Based on the above it evident that the site and Hunston overall has good accessibility to local services and facilities.

Other Considerations

30. In addition to the above considerations the site is not constrained by flooding as it falls within Flood Zone 1 and is not directly impacted by other potential constraints such as:
 - SPA, SAC or SSSI designations
 - Chichester Harbour AONB (National Landscape) or South Downs National Park
 - Ancient Woodland or Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
 - Priority Habitat, Local Wildlife Sites or Wildlife Corridors
 - Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens
 - Scheduled Monuments
 - Surface Water Flood Risk
31. Overall the site is relatively unconstrained. This is reflected by the Evidence Base (ref H09.03) Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) of March 2021. **Appendix 3 - Detailed site assessment forms** assesses the site under Ref No. HHN0015. This confirms that there are no known constraints that would make development unachievable in principle. The HELAA estimates the site (the former Hunston Village Dairy) capacity to be about 60 dwellings.
32. The potential of this land, plus the horticultural land to the south (Farmfield and Ridgeway Nurseries) was recognised by Policy H1 of the Regulation 15 Hunston Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2039. This policy proposed the allocation of these land parcels for a minimum of 200 homes. Although the emerging Neighbourhood Plan was eventually withdrawn in June 2022 the potential of this land for housing was clearly recognised and at that time supported by the Parish Council and the local community.

Overall Conclusion

33. As a result of the above, the proposed settlement boundaries for Hunston are not justified as they would not be effective in meeting the district or the settlements housing need. As a consequence the Settlement Boundary for Hunston should be amended to include land at Hunston Village Dairy, plus horticultural land to the south at Farmfield and Ridgeway Nurseries.