

HMPC Ltd

Chichester Local Plan 2021 - 2039

The Goodwood Estates Company Ltd

Matter 3

The Spatial Strategy

The Goodwood Estate Limited – Respondent 7922

HMPC Ltd- Agent 112

Matter 3 The Spatial Strategy

Policy S1 Spatial Development Strategy Questions 13-16

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Estate has provided a concise and comprehensive response to the Council's proposed modifications.
- 1.2 The Goodwood Estates Ltd has agreed a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with Chichester District Council and this has been presented to the Examination.
- 1.3 This statement provides responses to the specific questions of the Inspectors, in respect of matters raised through our representations to the Local Plan, and in our responses to the Council's proposed modifications

2. Question Responses

Policy S1 Spatial Development Strategy

Q.13-16 The Estate supports the spatial strategy adopted by the Plan and believes it provides an appropriate balance between the future needs of District, in terms of housing, employment and services, and the physical, economic, environmental and social constraints which must be applied.

The District, for the greater part, is 'sandwiched' between sea and National Park and contains an important National (east-west) transport corridor. Development is attracted to sites alongside this vital artery, but uncontrolled spread of new development risks the loss of individual identity and with it much of the unique characteristics (such as heritage and landscape) which contribute positively to the area's economic vitality. There must be an acceptance that land supply in the area is finite and what we have must be treated with respect and deliver beneficial returns. Such returns should not be limited to the shallow objectives and promises of speculative developers, plying a generic argument that new housing solves all problems.

Environmental, social and economic arguments are complex and frequently in development decisions (frequently site centred) each element is not given its appropriate weighting. The spatial strategy applies an appropriate balance of those issues for the benefit of all, not on behalf of individual preference. This strategy has undergone a detailed assessment and must be supported.

It is vital that neighbouring authorities, including the National Park, should work with Chichester to provide for development need in the most sustainable manner. The Estate is concerned, and is raising with the National Park through its local plan review, that it is applying a falsely restrictive development policy in some parts of its plan area. Whilst the special characteristics of the National Park are appreciated, like Green Belt, not all land within the designated area fulfils its purposes, or contributes to its special character. We believe some additional development, albeit limited, could be accommodated, to assist the needs of Chichester.

We accept there is a national shortage of housing and that must be addressed, but not, as recently referenced by an Inspector at appeal; housing at any cost. We believe the Plan follows that principle, weighing up the true planning balance and providing a sustainable and deliverable spatial strategy.

Success of the spatial strategy is dependent upon delivery, but unfortunately, the authority is in the hands of the developer/landowner as to when supported development is brought forward. How often is the case of urgency for new housing trotted out at planning application and appeal, only to find delivery of a positive decision is delayed at the whim of the developer/landowner for their own reasons? Without a change at National level imposing changes to the implementation of planning permissions, it is correct the plan should provide some flexibility in the light of non-delivery, but that should always be in accord with the spatial strategy. It should not be a numerical, ad hoc development decision that compromises other important environmental or economic considerations. The Council's strategy should therefore go forward with confidence and sending a very clear message that strategic sites and the direction of growth has been identified following a full assessment of sites promoted, which have been declared deliverable and viable by their promoters, taking account of constraints and development prerequisites. Consequently there should be no surprises that delay their implementation within the plan period.

The justification for the spatial strategy is sound. The Estate supports the principles set out in paragraph 5.11 of the local plan.

We raised a number of minor points through our representations relating to sustainability and the location of new development. The council does not in response propose modifications to paragraphs 3.1- 3.18 and we believe this imposes a weakness to the plan, particularly in respect of sustainability. Too often developers promote a theoretical level of sustainability on their proposals, rather than apply a true and effective measure.

The Plan should explain precisely the sustainable credentials of the development strategy. Definitions of sustainability and good accessibility should be defined alongside minimum standards to achieve an acceptable standard of landscape provision, public realm enhancement, character protection, views etc. This will provide a measurement against which development proposals can be compared on a site by site basis. It should be a requirement of the plan that developers set out and acknowledge all constraints applicable to each site and demonstrate a positive response through submitted proposals; at outline stage in particular, as too many important detailed elements of a development, frequently those which impact the development principle (such as noise impacts) are left to reserved matters stage, when despite a permission being in existence, cannot be delivered and a less than satisfactory development is promoted. It is a frequent weakness of outline planning applications that responses to constraints are implied by wording rather than demonstrated by evidence.

The review proposes a significant change from the current local plan with the removal of the previous strategic allocation at Westhampnett/North East Chichester (cross-reference with Matter 6 and policies A9, A16 and A17). Not only does the plan reference the previous strategic requirement as having been satisfied, it responds to the very real constraints applicable to the area that is undeveloped.

Whilst the allocation was never intended to be a development site across its entire extent, this was poorly explained and as such, was purposefully mis-interpreted by a land promoter. The consequence was a development proposal which the authority rightly refused but was subsequently appealed. The result was an approval in principle for a housing development, but for a scheme that is so tightly constrained, that even the contrived housing layout promoted cannot be delivered to provide housing which offers future residents an appropriate level of private amenity, appropriate living conditions and an absence of noise and other disturbance. Evidence submitted indicates the constraints are unlikely to be mitigated, by any general market housing developer, despite claims to the contrary. Evidence suggests otherwise, and the response of the promoter is to manipulate the inspector's decision to contrive a situation that he might find an opportunity to address. A selfish approach which ignores the future adverse impacts on residents and the potential this has for adverse impact on Estate operations, and which underlines the importance of supporting the Council's proposed spatial strategy.

The very real and live, example is used to illustrate the plan must be more detailed in its explanation of the necessary change in spatial strategy between this and the preceding Local Plan. Removal of a former strategic allocation (its requirement having been met) must be more explicit if further attempts to deliver inappropriate housing development are to be resisted. Without this further explanation the plan cannot be considered sound as it raises uncertainty and a lack of clarity.

The Estate supports the Council's Modification CM036 relating to paragraph 3.19 of the plan and the setting of the National Park.

Q.14 (Cross-reference to Matter 4A and Q22-24)

The Estate has long commented on the District's failure to look objectively at development capacity south of the A27. Justification for limiting development on environmental and traffic grounds are acknowledged, but we believe that rather than approach the potential constraints objectively, undue political weight has been applied to the objective of limiting development in the south of the District.

There are significant environmental constraints applicable to the southern part of the District (between the A27 and the coast) but these do not affect all land in that area. There is no detailed assessment that demonstrates development potential to be as limited by environmental constraints as we are asked to accept. A more detailed assessment of environmental constraints and their influence on adjoining land or land in proximity is required.

There are many concerns voiced about the A27 and its available capacity. This is a frequent excuse used to restrict development to the south. It is true that the need to cross the A27 to access employment and services in the City centre is a consideration, but little has been done to alleviate the problem of all traffic movements interacting at grade, which interrupts flows, north-south and east-west. Suggestions to vertically separate some traffic flows for example, have been resisted, not only for reasons of cost, but also for visual impact concerns. These concerns are far from insurmountable with good design, but are not taken forward for reason of a political will to promote a northern by-pass.

Discussion about a by-pass is not a matter for the local plan. Not only will it be economically devastating to the Estate and consequently to the local economy as a whole; but by removing only through traffic, it is most unlikely to deliver the “benefits” supporters suggest. What is important to this local plan and its promotion of strategic sites and development, is the need to ensure that developments promoted adjacent to the A27 do not remove the opportunity for on-line improvements. Suitable commentary and safeguarding of land for on-line and localised improvements to A27 junctions is absent. As raised through our submissions, this is an omission which should be addressed.