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Sent: 25 February 2026 16:08:46 UTC+00:00
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Subject: DC/25/1312 Homes England West of Ifield Hybrid Planning Application
Categories: Consultations

Dear Planning

Rusper Parish Council [RPC] note that Horsham District Council [HDC] seem to be processing the speculative planning application from Homes England [HE] for up to 3,000 residential homes, entirely within Rusper Parish, despite the current review of the Horsham Local Plan that is taking place.

The HDC Local Plan review process is based on the Planning Inspector's concerns about the key policies of the current Regulation 19 submission plan. The Inspector's concerns specifically relate to the major strategic site allocations and the spacial policies of the current plan. Those concerns will undoubtedly require changes to the strategic site allocations, either to include extra sites, or review the previous options for sites, to meet the revised government housing targets.

Proceeding with this application at such a critical phase of the Local Plan review, risks serious compromise to the possible options for the Local Plan. Whether the application is accepted or rejected, it will have implications for the review process and could throw the whole Horsham Local Plan into a confused state. It could be that the revised local plan either includes this site and this plan is rejected, or the plan adopts alternative sites to meet the need and this site has already been approved. In either event, this planning application would effectively pre-empt a number of options for the local plan if it proceeds.

Given that this site clearly fails the existing and proposed Spacial Policy of the HDC Local Plan, should it be approved, the emerging Local Plan would need to have the Spacial Policy modified to reflect that this site has been permitted, otherwise the policy clearly has little meaning.

Given all of the issues around the emerging Local Plan review and the conflict with existing policies, it is clear that both conditions of the NPPF Paragraph 50 are met to warrant deferring this application until the Local Plan review reaches a point where the strategic allocations are at least agreed in principle with the Planning Inspector.

For clarity, the exact wording of NPPF Para 50 are included below, with the reasons why conditions (a) and (b) are met to warrant deferral.

Please will you confirm that this application will be deferred until the Planning Inspector, who is reviewing the emerging Local Plan, confirms that it can proceed. Or, provide evidence that the Planning Inspector is happy for it to proceed, despite the possible alternative site options that could more than meet the revised housing targets.

Current NPPF (December 2024)

Determining applications

48. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

49. Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given);

and

c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)²³.

50. However, in the context of the Framework – and in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development – arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than in the limited circumstances where both:

a) the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging plan;

This site is the largest strategic site within the emerging Local Plan, but alternative sites have been identified, which could provide more housing than the revised housing figure requires. It also fails the current Spacial Policy of the existing and emerging plan as it is not close to, nor attached to any existing Horsham settlement and has been rejected as an option by Crawley, of which it is an effective extension.

and

b) the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area.

The emerging Local Plan is clearly at an advanced and critical stage where the Planning Inspector is considering the options for strategic allocations and policies of the plan. As such this application would seriously pre-empt those decisions. Additionally, this site is not part of any existing plan and has previously been rejected by all HDC SHLAA appraisals.

51. Refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft plan has yet to be submitted for examination; or – in the case of a neighbourhood plan – before the end of the local planning authority publicity period on the draft plan. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the local planning authority will need to indicate clearly how granting permission for the development concerned would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process.

Regards

Rusper Parish Council

Kind regards

Lisa Wilcock CiLCA

Clerk and RFO to Rusper Parish Council

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The Clerk works part time for 22 hours per week, including attendance at meetings.

Working hours are as follows:

- Monday: 9:00am – 3:00pm
- Tuesday: 3:00pm – 5:00pm
- Wednesday: 3:00pm – 5:00pm
- Thursday: 3:00pm – 5:00pm
- Friday: 9:00am – 3:00pm

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