

R1989

Supplementary Statement to Session 13A. Land at Wind Chimes, Chartway Street, Sutton Valence.

Issue (i) -Whether the alternative site would be suitable, sustainable and deliverable.

Qn13.1 Does the site have any relevant planning history ?

An outline planning application (ref: 15/507493) was submitted in September 2015. It was refused permission, against Officers' advice. The appeal Hearing, together with an application for costs, was held on 2nd November 2016.

Qn13.2 What is the site's policy status in the submitted Local Plan ?

The site lies outside the defined built up area of Sutton Valence, but is not subject to any policy constraints

Qn13.3 What is the site's policy status in any made or emerging neighbourhood plan

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan has just reached the stage at which consideration is being given to the responses to the questionnaire survey of local residents.

Qn13.4 Is the site greenfield or previously developed (brownfield) land according to the definition in the glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework ?

The site is greenfield.

Qn13.5 What previous consideration by the Council has been given to the site's development (eg inclusion in a Strategic Housing and Economic Development Land Availability Assessment (SHEDLAA) and does the representor have any comments on its conclusions ?

The Council refused permission, against its Officer's recommendation to grant permission, on the grounds that "The proposals would consolidate existing development and result in the urbanisation of the site, which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside, contrary to Policy ENV28 of the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000, the NPPF 2012 and the NPPG 2014. Any planning benefits would not outweigh the planning harm."

This was clearly a political decision by the Council, all councillors admitting that they had been lobbied. One leading councillor said that, as the Council would soon have a five year supply of housing land, they did not have to approve it and that another

adjacent appeal decision (for which residential development was approved even further away from Sutton Valence) was “a red herring”.

It is incredibly frustrating when councillors ignore their officers advice and, having decided to refuse permission, then spend time discussing the reasons that can be used to refuse it.

A response was submitted to the Council’s call for sites in 2014. It was given the reference HO3-196.

The SHEDLAA contains incorrect and biased information about the site. It acknowledges that it is 175m from Warmlake Business Estate -and then says that it is 2641m from employment sites -ignoring Warmlake and other employment sites on the southern outskirts of Sutton Valence.

The SHEDLAA asks whether the site is adjacent to the Maidstone Urban Area or to Rural Service Centre -but does not refer to proximity to Larger Villages .It also fails to acknowledge that the site in a sustainable location -and within 500m of a secondary school.

Qn13.6 What is the site area and has a site plan been submitted which identifies the site ?

The site has an area of 0.9ha.

An illustrative plan, showing nine dwellings, was submitted as part of the planning application and is attached.

Qn13.7 What type and amount of development could be expected and at what density.

The site could provide up to nine dwellings. However, the details of this will be considered once permission has been granted.

Qn13.8 When could development be delivered and at what rate ?

Development could begin reasonably soon after permission is granted.

Qn13.9 What evidence is there of the viability of the proposed development ?

The site is greenfield, in single ownership. No issue affecting the viability of the proposed development has been identified by the owners’ consultants.

Qn13.10 Has the site been the subject of sustainability appraisal and does the Representor have any comments on its conclusion ?

The village was included by the consultants URS in their Sustainability Appraisal of the draft Local Plan (March 2014.) It explained that the Council had identified Sutton Valence as a Larger Village and listed its facilities. These comprised what it described as good education facilities (a pre-school, a primary school and a boarding school) . The village also had pubs, a church, a village hall, mobile library services and good playing pitches.. The report added that there was a GP surgery but no dentist or pharmacy and that there the public transport services to Maidstone and Headcorn were good due to regular bus services.

The report omitted to mention the post office, farmshop, tea room, garage, estate agent, hairdressers and that there were two doctors' surgeries with pharmacies. It also failed to point out that the secondary school took day pupils as well as boarders and that the school provided facilities for various village and town organisations -the music society, the athletics club and the hockey club.)

The SA then explained that larger villages were categorised as being sustainable rural settlements that had a level of services and facilities to provide for day to day needs of local communities. As such, larger villages were capable of receiving a limited amount of housing development . The five rejected sites were all divorced from the village and were located in open countryside. Development at these locations was considered unacceptable and did not conform with the spatial strategy.

It then added -with a degree of surprise- (in para. 12.17.3 -that no dwellings were proposed despite six sites being submitted.

The Inspector needs to be aware that two of the sites have been granted permission on appeal, while the Council itself granted permission at Warmlake Business Park.

The subsequent Sustainability Appraisal by AECOM, of February 2016, re-iterated the previous description of the village.

The SA then listed sixteen sites that had been submitted for consideration, including Wind Chimes (HO3-196). It stated that seven of the sites (but not Wind Chimes) were divorced from the village centre and were at locations that were unacceptable.

No comment was made about Wind Chimes.

The SA then added that (in para. 12.17.3) that forty dwellings were proposed for allocation at one site -the site being H03-216 Brandy's Bay.

The fact of the matter is that this site had already been granted planning permission ,on 1st December 2015 and was not, therefore proposed for allocation. The Council presumably used this fact as an opportunity to show that it had actually

agreed for some residential development to occur in Sutton Valence -although it had never allocated any site for this.

For the Inspector's information, Brandy's Bay was on land designated Special Landscape Area in the Adopted Local Plan -unlike Wind Chimes, which was not subject to any restrictive landscape or policy designation.

All of this demonstrates, inter alia, the inconsistency of the Council.

Qn13.11 What constraints are there on the site's development and how could any adverse impacts be mitigated ?

There are no known constraints to the development of the site.