



PARISH COUNCIL OF SANDHURST, KENT

Please reply to Catherine Catt, Parish Clerk, Old School, Back Road, Sandhurst, Kent TN18 5JS 01580-850295

Approved Minutes Planning Committee Meeting Tuesday, 23 July 2019

In Attendance:

Cllr D Leggett	Mrs C Catt : Clerk & Proper Officer
Cllr E Merritt	
Cllr K O'Brien	Members of Public
Cllr J Oliphant-Robertson : Chairman	
Cllr C Robinson	

23/07/19/01	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from Cllr Kerry.
23/07/19/02	Declarations of Interest
	There were no declarations of interest.
	The Chairman welcomed members of the public and opened the meeting explaining there would be an opportunity for members of the public to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes before the planning applications are discussed. Cllr asked for a show of hands for those who wanted to speak – 4 people.
	The Chairman reminded those present that a parish council is a statutory consultee in the planning process and has no statutory powers - only the right to comment.
23/07/19/03	Planning Application : 19/01493/OUT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To comment on Outline (Layout Not Reserved) Residential development of 31 no dwellings with associated parking, amenity and landscaping Sharps Hill Farm, Queen Street, Sandhurst, Kent TN18 5HR <p>Public Intervention Following an invitation from the Chairman to speak, 4 members of the public spoke against this planning application and gave the following reasons for their objections :</p>

All referred to the meeting held with Mr Stephen Baughen on 5.3.2019 when he indicated 25 dwellings had been identified on 2 sites in the Local Plan which is still in draft format and will be going out to consultation in September 2019. This statement was endorsed by Cllr Godfrey Bland when he attached the Parish Council Meeting on 9.4.2019. The members of public stressed when they were speaking that this planning application is not one of the identified sites and exceeds the number of dwellings identified and is not needed.

All referred to the village's AONB status saying this was an inappropriate application and the AONB status must be taken into very serious consideration. They urged TWBC to reject the planning application as it is a major development and can be rejected under current legislation as the exceptional circumstances do not apply in this case.

The planning application is outside current limits for development and the parish council has not identified the need for more housing. Mr Baughen had said local sites, low density housing spread across 2 sites with 10/12 dwellings in each were favoured. Sandhurst is a linear village and a development on this scale is not consistent with this. In addition, the proposal will not enhance the setting of an historical building, Bayford House.

Also raised was the increase in traffic, pressure on local amenities including doctors' surgeries, schools, etc. The access onto the A268 is very close to the Speedwatch site which is an area of concern for speeding traffic.

Two of the speakers had sent circular letters to the residents of Sandhurst and the TWBC Planning Department outlining their concerns and opposition to this application : attached Appendix A and Appendix B.

One of the speakers who will be affected by the development was very concerned about privacy and security as currently there are no fences defining peoples' properties adjacent to the site. He also expressed concern that the village had been told the increase would be 25 houses and this is an application for 30 - he just feels the numbers will keep increasing and this is a big concern because he has seen it happen before.

Cllr Leggett reminded the meeting of the Sandhurst Village Survey 2014, the 2011 census and TWBC's Housing Needs Study 2018 which concluded there was a need for small developments of mixed housing – Jim Boot 25.10.18 Appendix C. Cllr Leggett feels the application is for too many houses on too big a site and therefore, is not an appropriate development. He is concerned, however, that the application could come back in a different form and people will need good reasons for their opposition which should not be about views and house values.

Cllr Robinson explained a site visit had taken place that day and although currently the site is well screened by trees, this will not be the case during winter months.

	<p>Cllr Leggett urged people to consider 106 funding and made the following suggestions which could be contributed to by the developer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Hub • Superfast broadband • GP surgery • Carparking • Bus turning facility • Possibility of footpath in Back Road <p>Cllr Robinson agreed with the comments made by members of the public above and feels this is an inappropriate development.</p> <p>Cllr Merritt felt there was not a need for more houses and this had been identified with TWBC last year and confirmed by Stephen Baughen.</p> <p>Cllr Robinson proposed the application should be rejected for the reasons discussed above – AONB, proximity to listed building, effect on landscape and it has been identified there is no need for this number of houses.</p> <p>Cllr Merritt seconded the proposal. 3 Councillors voted for the proposal (KoB, LM, CR) and Cllr Leggett abstained.</p>
23/07/19/04	Planning Application : 19/01474/FULL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To comment on demolition of single garage, conservatory, single storey rear extension and outbuilding and erection of a two storey side extension including porch canopy to front and a single storey rear extension 5 Twysden Cottages, Bodiam Road, Sandhurst, Kent TN18 5LF <p>Cllr Oliphant-Robertson said there had been no objections to this application from the adjoining property and could see no reason to object to it. The meeting agreed.</p> <p>Cllr Merritt proposed; Cllr Robinson seconded the proposal and the vote was unanimous that there were no objections to this planning application.</p>

CATHERINE CATT
Clerk to Sandhurst Parish Council

CC: For Information
County Cllr Seán Holden
Borough Cllr Godfrey Bland

Signed :

Dated :

APPENDIX A : Letter from Sandhurst Resident

The Planning Committee
Sandhurst Parish Council
Old School, Back Road
Sandhurst, Kent TN18 5JS

18th July 2019

Dear Committee,

RE: Planning Application 19/01493/OUT | Outline (Layout Not Reserved) - Residential development of 31 no. dwellings with associated parking, amenity and landscaping | Sharps Hill Farm Queen Street Sandhurst Cranbrook Kent TN18 5HR

I wish to urge the parish councillors to reject the planning application for the following reasons

- 1 In the presentation to us by Stephen Baughen Head of Planning TWBC on 13th March, he outlined their new local plan and said and I quote from his slide.
 - C. 25 dwellings allocated across a couple of sites
 - Proposals for more housing will be balanced against **strong protection in national policy to AONB**

The sites in Sandhurst for these 25 dwellings have already been decided and are to be announced end of July 2019

This application is therefore surplus to both TWBC and SPC requirements and therefore a bad use of the AONB

2 The minutes of the SPC meeting 09th April 2019 inform us the following took place Cllr Bland had been invited to the meeting in his capacity of Borough Councillor.

▪ Cllr Bland reported TWBC were within 27 houses of meeting their 5-year housing supply target which was good news for Sandhurst. Cllr Bland explained this meant TWBC were back in control of what would be built and where it would be built and referred to TWBC's long range plan which will be published in May 2019.

▪ Cllr Bland noted the Government's local housing target for the next 5 years had already been satisfied due to the new method for calculating demand as the reserve had fallen from 20% to 5%. As a result of this, it had been agreed officers would update the supply figure every month to provide a more accurate picture.

This application is therefore surplus to TWBC needs and expectations and therefore a bad use of the AONB

3 In the Pre application advice to the applicant by James Moysey chief planning officer TWBC on 20th March. He stated:-

The proposed development would also be considered Major development in the AONB and would therefore be required to comply with Paragraph 172 of the NPPF. This paragraph states that planning permission for major development should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that that development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications includes the need for the development, the cost and scope for developing outside the designated area and any detrimental effect on the environment and landscape.

It is essential that the primary purpose of AONB designation remains paramount in the decision making process. It is not, for instance, considered appropriate that the AONB should be used as a location to site significant strategic housing allocations which go beyond the identified local housing needs. We have not identified a local need for this housing and this application is therefore surplus to both TWBC and SPC requirements and therefore a bad use of the AONB

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX B : Letter from Sandhurst Resident

The Planning Committee
Sandhurst Parish Council
Old School, Back Road
Sandhurst, Kent TN18 5JS

19th July 2019

Dear Committee,

RE: Planning Application 19/01493/OUT | Outline (Layout Not Reserved) - Residential development of 31 no. dwellings with associated parking, amenity and landscaping | Sharps Hill Farm Queen Street Sandhurst Cranbrook Kent TN18 5HR

We would ask the parish council to reject the above planning application for the following reasons:

Planning Issues

1. The proposed site is in an AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY.

The development would cause significant harm to the rural character of the area and would fail to conserve and enhance the special character of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The proposed development would also be considered major development in the AONB and would therefore be required to comply with Paragraph 172 of the NPPF. This paragraph states that planning permission for major development should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

We cannot see that this proposal meets either of these needs.

2. The proposed site is OUTSIDE THE CURRENT LIMITS TO BUILT DEVELOPMENT.
3. The Parish Council has NOT IDENTIFIED A NEED FOR MORE HOUSING in the village and therefore there is NO LOCAL NEED for a further 31 dwellings.

At the Parish Council meeting on 13th March, Stephen Baughen, Head of Planning at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, said that the TWBC local plan "is for small sites of low density". He stated that Sandhurst needed approximately 25 new houses and TWBC felt that these should be spread over a couple of sites, one of 10 – 12 dwellings and one of 10 -15 dwellings. These sites have already been assessed by TWBC and are due to be announced at the end of July.

4. This site is NOT WITHIN THE TWBC SHEELA analysis (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment).
5. Sandhurst is a linear village. Existing development context is single and clustered dwellings in a linear pattern, thus a major development of 31 dwellings WOULD NOT BE CONSISTENT with a linear pattern and would not fit in with the historic nature of the village.

6. The proposal would not preserve or enhance the setting of the Sandhurst Conservation Area and would harm the setting and historic integrity of a nearby listed building – Bayford House.

Community Issues

1. In addition to the above planning issues, the Parish Council will be aware that if such a development took place, this would lead to increased traffic within the village, more pressure on local Doctors' surgeries and local schools.
2. The entrance to the new development would be on a stretch of road where evidence from Sandhurst's Community Speedwatch shows a high incidence of vehicles significantly exceeding the 30 mph speed limit and where the accident record is poor.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX C

Memo from Jim Boot MSc, Community Planner Associate with Action for Communities in Rural Kent

To: Sandhurst Parish Council

Date: 25th October 2018

Subject: Housing types, tenures and potential requirements in Sandhurst Parish

Introduction

The aim of this quick study was to revisit the Village Questionnaire from 2014, Census 2011 information on housing type and tenure within the parish and TWBC's recent Housing Needs Study 2018, and to put key data and tables from these into a power point presentation in advance of a meeting between the Parish Council and TWBC planning officers on 31st October 2018.

Sandhurst Village Survey 2014

In October 2014 questionnaires were delivered to all the 583 households in Sandhurst asking residents about their issues and ideas for the future of the village. Nearly ¼ of households responded. This is a similar response rate to the recent TWBC Housing Needs Study 2018. Key findings included:

- Road safety was a top issue with 94% of respondents 'very concerned/concerned' about speeding vehicles and motorbikes with 89% 'very concerned/concerned' for children and adults walking or cycling along the main road, and 85% on the lanes.
- When thinking about new development in Sandhurst in the next 5-10 years, 67% said they would 'strongly agree/agree' to small units (houses or flats) being built for private sale, 66% to retirement homes to rent from a housing association and 63% to homes suitable for retirement for purchase or rent privately. But it was less clear where these homes should be built.

There was a strong indication that residents favoured small units of all tenures rather than larger homes.

Census 2011

Sandhurst has a smaller **population** of 25-44 year olds (19.7%) than for the borough (27%) with a larger older population of 45-64 years (31.2%) than the borough (26.2%).

Sandhurst is a small parish with just 603 dwellings (583 with residents) but with 86.1% living in detached, semi-detached houses or bungalows compared with 56.1% in the borough. Terraced houses, flats or maisonettes accounted for only 13% of the housing stock in Sandhurst compared to 43.6% for the borough. These figures were similar to the those in the TWBC HNS 2018.

Probably because of its remote (from employment and services) rural position, car ownership in Sandhurst is much higher in Sandhurst than in the borough as a whole. However, 35% of households only have access to one car which, if one vehicle is in use for work / travel to work, may mean that a large number of low-income households may be restricted ie to local employment.

Tunbridge Wells Housing Needs Study 2018

TWBC as part of its new Local Plan evidence base commissioned a Housing Needs Study of the whole borough in 2018. A survey form was sent to every household in Sandhurst with a 24.4% response rate, similar to Sandhurst's own Village Survey 2014, and higher than neighbouring settlements. This suggests a good level of engagement.

The net affordable housing imbalance or requirements for new affordable housing in Sandhurst was for 13 dwellings (2.9%) in the period 2017-22, higher than its neighbour Benenden (1.4%). It was the same percentage wise as Hawkhurst (2.9%).

The report tallied with the Census 2011 in showing that Sandhurst had a very low percentage (2%) of 1 bed properties compared to 14.7% in the borough although this gap narrowed for 2 bedrooms (slightly higher), had similar percentages for 3 bedrooms but had a higher percentage of 4 bedrooms (36.9%) compared to the borough (29.1%).

Also bearing out the Census 2011, Sandhurst was shown as having a similar percentage of affordable housing (15.6%) compared to the borough (16%). Despite this, Sandhurst was shown (Table 6.2) as having one of the highest levels of overall housing need with 60 households in need (10.3%) compared to for example Benenden at just 1.5%. This may be borne out in the paragraph on page 50 of the report – Relative affordability of housing tenure options which states:

*This analysis [Relative affordability of housing tenure option] indicates that for open market housing at Borough-level the minimum income required is £36,000 (for lower quartile or entry-level renting) or £64,286 (for lower quartile or entry-level house prices). These amounts do vary by area and income requirements for entry-level renting range between £28,512 in Broadwater and £71,952 in Speldhurst. **For entry-level home ownership, income requirements range between £51,429 in Culverden and £112,500 in Sandhurst.***

Conclusion

Ideally, to establish Sandhurst's future housing need a stand-alone Housing Needs Survey such as that undertaken by ACRK's Rural Housing Enabler would establish more precisely Sandhurst's requirements. However, the quantitative (Census and HNS 2018) data seems to bear out the views of residents expressed through the Village Survey 2014 the requirement for more smaller homes of which a reasonable proportion should be affordable including for older residents to down-size and remain in the parish. The HNS 2018 gives a definition of affordable housing as:

Affordable Housing: *Social Rented, Affordable Rented and Intermediate Housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.*

This is particularly borne out by the per household income requirement for entry-level home ownership in Sandhurst being the highest in the borough at £112,500 [per annum] and in an area where household incomes (at least from local employers) are for most families relatively modest. Anecdotally, my understanding is that Sandhurst has only had relatively modest, mainly 'infill' development in the last 20 years.

Sandhurst is a small spread-out village, remote from jobs, services and transport hubs. There is a lack of services locally (no GP surgery) and a small primary school. Sandhurst is on a prominent ridge within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and any new housing should be carefully sited and in keeping with the high heritage value and character of the village to avoid a detrimental visual impact.