

Fittleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018 - 2033

Initial Comments of the Independent Examiner

Prepared by

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Introduction

1. As you will be aware I have been appointed to carry out the examination of the Fittleworth Neighbourhood Plan. I have carried out my initial review of the Plan and the accompanying documents that I have been sent. I carried out my site visit to the village and the surrounding countryside on Sunday 30th April 2019.
2. My initial view is that I should be able to deal with the examination of this Plan by the consideration of the written material but I reserve the right to call for a public hearing, if I consider that it will assist my examination. Based on my preliminary consideration of the plan, there are a number of matters that I would wish to receive further representations or comments, from either or both the Parish Council and South Downs National Park Authority.

Reg 16 Comments

3. The Parish Council will not have had an opportunity to comment on any of the representations received as part of the Regulation 16 Consultation. If the Parish Council would wish to put forward suggestions, for amendments to the plan document, having considered any of the comments, then this is an opportunity to ask me to recommend them. I would be happy to consider any revisions etc., albeit that my remit is restricted to matters of the basic conditions.

Policy FITT 1

4. Should the requirements in a) relate to *all* applications, even for minor developments such as residential extensions or changes of use?
5. Criterion c) refers to “Safeguarding important local views such as those from Hesworth Common”. Can the views that are considered “important” be shown on a map, otherwise decision makers will not know which are the views that deserve protection from the policy?

Policy FITT 2

6. Is it really appropriate for this policy to require a surface water management plan in the case of *every* development or is it a case of the development to be adopting a Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme, where it is appropriate, or to make adequate provision for dealing with surface water disposal on a domestic property, for example to a soakaway?

Policy FITT 4

7. The maintenance and repair of listed buildings and other heritage assets does not require consent. Would the Parish Council wish the policy to include

alterations instead? Are there any non-designated heritage assets in the Parish?

Policy FITT 5

8. Is the Parish Council's expectation that the design principles, as set out in this policy, should only relate to new residential development?
9. Can you give more guidance as to what you would consider constitutes a "suburban" means of enclosure?
10. Some of the requirements regarding the technical standards for new buildings appear not to be compatible with Secretary of State policy as set out in a Written Statement to the House of Commons dated 25th March 2015.

Policy FITT 6

11. Now that the shop and café plus the playground are in place (I enjoyed a lovely cup of chocolate when I visited), is there now any value in retaining this allocation in the plan?

Policy FITT 8

12. Can the settlement boundary be shown at a larger scale so that its relationship to buildings and plot boundaries can be clearly defined?
13. Should the two allocation sites be included with a revised settlement boundary?
14. Is the reason for the last sentence of c) to ensure that affordable housing remains affordable in perpetuity?

Policy FITT 9

15. Can the two allocation sites be shown on an OS base so that it is possible to see the relationship with existing buildings on or adjacent to the two sites?
16. Are the provisions set out with reference to possible development in the Greatpin Croft area, in fact already covered by the presumption in favour of residential development with the settlement boundaries set out in Policy FITT 8. In which case, what is the justification for requiring all houses in that area to be subject to the 5 criteria and to only be social housing? If I were to be satisfied that that policy is justified having regard to national and local plan policy, the extent of where the policy applies needs to be shown on a plan.

SEA/ HRA Screening

17. Would the SDNPA confirm that it has screened the plan under both the SEA and HRA Regulations. I have seen the reports from the consultants but that does not constitute the decision of the LPA which is the Competent Authority.

Final Matters

18. In order, not to unnecessarily delay progress on this examination, I would welcome responses to these questions, **by 5pm on 14th May 2019**, if possible.
19. Please can both parties place a copy of this document and their responses on both the SDNPA's and the Parish Council's respective websites.