

Report of Housing Focus Group for Steering committee meeting of 15 May 2013

1 Introduction

Aims

- 1) To understand the will of the community regarding future development.
- 2) To develop an overall approach to housing that respects this view and that is based on solid evidence of local need
- 3) To use the AirS housing needs analysis as the basis for considering housing numbers and sites.

Members

Stuart Kirbell (chair)	Kerry Jones
Ron Skinner	Nadine Jones
John Dumbledon	Gil Kennedy
Rob Cherry	Brian Godman
John Ely	Paul Thompson

Current situation of the community

The population of Lindfield village has been stable during the decade to 2011, while Lindfield rural's population fell slightly (source: Office of National Statistics, cited in AirS opening report, Feb 2013). Lindfield has recently been compelled to accept two large developments that increase the village's population by nearly 10%. Nothing has changed, however, to demonstrate a need for this sudden increase in the population or the resulting pressure on an infrastructure that is already challenged. Against this background, it is in our view essential that there is an objective analysis of the real need for any additional housing before sites can responsibly be nominated and assessed. We are relying on AirS' housing needs analysis to provide this basic information.

2 Evidence

We have studied residents' views as they have emerged from the AirS opinion survey and public exhibitions, as follows:-

- 98.3% agreed with the assertion that the Parishes should retain their heritage and identity to provide attractive places to live (page 23), and 97.0% of respondents agreed that any future housing developments should not compromise the character and heritage of Lindfield
- 89.4% of respondents agreed that any new housing developments within the Lindfield Conservation Area should be in conformity with the guidelines in the "Lindfield Village Design Statement" and 85.5% of respondents agreed that any new housing developments within Scaynes Hill should be in conformity with the guidelines in the "Scaynes Hill Village Plan"

- 92.0% of respondents agreed that designs should be kept in keeping with the overall styles of the Parishes and use the highest quality, locally sourced materials
- 86.9% of respondents agreed that future housing developments should preferably be of small scale, geographically spread around the parishes and delivered at a steady annual rate
- 61.2% of respondents agreed that future developments should incorporate sufficient “Social Housing” to address the need for this within the Parishes
- 94.5% said that the strategic gaps should be maintained

Comments made by residents at the Pop- in sessions in Lindfield and Scaynes Hill:-

a) *Scaynes Hill Pop-In*

- I would prefer plot 426 for housing
- New housing in Scaynes Hill needs to support sustainability of the village as a community, e.g. low cost housing that will attract both young families (whose children can boost the falling roll of the village school) and elder residents (who will be able to stay in the village in their retirement, and may well be able to support their families by helping with child care). Housing also needs to be low energy as this is vital for the environment
- The village should be kept as a village and not be built into a town!!
- Affordable housing is needed within the village of Scaynes Hill – young people are having to move away due to a lack of 1st time buyer properties
- Democratic process? Elected representatives? I am concerned about the use of terms in the housing section. You suggest that a needs assessment has/ will be done but show no evidence. You are also assuming that young/ older people would benefit from affordable housing in this area. Rural areas are not widely accepted as good areas for socially outlier (?) groups – see any modern social geography text. The process is not truly strategic. You are reliant upon owners approaching the council of developers being motivated
- Scaynes Hill, Clearwater Lane – is the Housing Group aware of the badger set on the proposed site? .. and Starling roost
- I definitely support the development of more appropriate housing in Scaynes Hill. This needs to focus on affordable housing, starter homes (1-bed) and housing suitable for elderly in order that those already living here and want to stay and downsize. This seems to be a key factor in maintaining the viability of existing village amenities (e.g. the school, pub, shop, bus service, etc.)
- Resist large scale housing that will have a detrimental impact on either village. Prefer small scale developments
- A limited number of new homes should be built and be exclusively affordable housing for younger people who have grown up in the village and for older people who are looking for suitable housing for their later years
- We need more housing – but not on A272 or in centre of the village
- As on the consultation board, prioritise affordable housing that will meet local demand (retirement flats if there is demand) – also highly energy-efficient. Let’s be in the forefront of mid-Sussex
- Check out: Community Land Trusts, Rural exemption sites. Then how about the piece of grotty woodland opposite Ham Lane, Scaynes Hill from the SKMUC car park to near the house opposite the cricket ground (one and a bit acres?)

b) *Lindfield Pop-In*

- Site reference 151 (LF10) – Land East of Portsmouth Wood Close, Lindfield – The current SHLAA for the above site is deeply flawed, containing serious factual error, as I know from living 31 years to the immediate south of this site. My household has a 110-yard boundary which I have maintained some of its most important preserved trees – there follows a large number of points (attached)
- The construction industry is not a sustainable industry on which we should base the economy of the UK
- No development on greenfield sites. Houses should be environmentally friendly and preferably zero carbon
- Affordable housing is important, as is sheltered housing and properties aimed at the elderly. The demographics and village should not be allowed to become ‘dormitory’ or restructured to high-wealth as can happen in attractive rural villages
- Need to ascertain the real need for housing – affordable, elderly, etc., as opposed to more 3 to 5 bedroom houses
- More smaller developments, if we really have to have more housing. First time buyers and retirement homes would be good
- Lindfield has taken many new houses in last couple of years. Any new houses should be small scale fitted in around area – not 230 in one location
- Enough houses have been built in Lindfield. They are having great difficulty selling the houses which have been built at the corner of Graveleye Lane and Lyoth Lane. They are being advertised in Graveleye Lane and Lewes Road. If you sell one, you will be paid £250!
- Small diversity development for local needs only
- ‘Affordable’ developments on a large scale tend to generate buyers who will most burden the community services, e.g. schools and surgeries. Local jobs are not plentiful, so many will commute within the county or to London. Parking is already at a premium around the HH station and the proposed ‘facelift’ apparently offers no solution. Roads at rush hours will immediately become more log jammed
- Are we measuring housing with job needs on any proposed, accountable level?
- The parish of Lindfield is already developed. Further developments should be tightly focused on social housing for existing local residents, especially young people and older people retiring
- Housing survey – must have locations/ postcode with other contact details optional.
- The only acceptable developments would consist of small housing schemes in suitable locations not affecting above items (Traffic and Transport, Community and Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity)
- Need for more smaller starter homes
- Self build. Small developments
- Why have we suggested 200 over the 20 years, other places have suggested much less. I hope Wates don’t jump on this and offer to build the 200 a lot sooner! The ideas look good generally and should be far more suitable to keep our village environment. If Wates plans get passed it will have a serious effect on our proposals

3 Housing Focus Group Objectives:

The Lindfield Housing Focus Group has agreed the following objectives upon which to base its Housing Assessments and Recommendations:

1. Housing should be delivered in small, sustainable developments (from 1 to 15 dwellings per development)
2. The need for Affordable Housing is supported in the communities
3. Affordable Housing should focus on starter homes and retirement properties
4. Support should be given for zero carbon homes
5. Housing should be in line with the needs of the community
6. Housing allocation should comply with the design documents for both Lindfield and Scaynes Hill
7. The strategic gaps between villages and towns in the Parishes should be protected and retained to avoid coalescence

The objectives are derived from the evidence collected from residents.

4 Housing Focus Group Recommendations:

The group has used the recently published Mid Sussex District Council Housing Supply Document to review sites in the Parishes. Based upon the objectives, the Housing Focus Group agrees with MSDC on the sites that have been deemed undeliverable.

Of the sites in the document that are deemed deliverable, the Housing Focus Group proposes that the following sites are also deemed Undeliverable based upon the Objectives. The sites fail on the following objectives:

Site 6 and 494 (Land East of Gravelye Lane): This site fails against objectives 1, 5 and 7. Further to this, evidence from the Parish Councils and local community supports the rejection of this site to be developed

Site 151 (Land East of Portsmouth Wood): This site fails objective 1. Furthermore, two previous attempts have been made to develop this site and both were rejected

484 (Land South of Woodcutters): This site fails objective 1.

The Housing Focus Group cannot at this time assess sites until the Housing Needs Survey is returned and results collated by AiRs. Based upon this feedback, the group will draw up assessment criteria for the remaining sites set out below.

Site 426 (Land East of Church Road)

Sites excluded from the Housing Supply Document for delivering less than 6 dwellings

Other sites brought into the public domain.

The Housing Focus Group also recommends that the area of land owned by Mid Sussex District Council at the South East corner of Lindfield Common (near the tennis court car park) is donated to the Parishes for the sole use of developing a small number of Affordable Housing units.

5 Conclusion

We in the housing focus group cannot finalise a report until the outcome of the housing needs survey is known. We understand the “Call for Land” has brought about some options but we are not privy to this information and this is frustrating our attempts to develop a strategy.

There is an overwhelming desire in Lindfield and Scaynes Hill to retain our rural character and we believe the villages should be allowed to grow “organically” with wind fall sites as they have succeeded to do for countless years. The local community do not want to see a repeat of large scale, green field developments. Strategic gaps are fundamentally important and coalescence must be avoided.

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References

Lindfield Village Design Statement 2011 -

http://www.lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk/Core/LindfieldPC/Pages/Village_Design_Statement_2.aspx

Rural community profile for Lindfield – ACRE Rural Evidence Project January 2012 -

<http://www.lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk/Core/LindfieldPC/UserFiles/Files/RuralPlaceProfileLindfieldRural.pdf>

Neighbourhood Plan Survey Report – Lindfield Parish and Lindfield Rural Parish November 2012 -

<http://www.lindfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk/Core/LindfieldPC/UserFiles/Files/NPSurveyReportNovember2012noappendix.pdf>

Urgent – Lindfield Under Threat. Lindfield Preservation Society -

<http://www.lindfieldsociety.org.uk/?p=524>

Mid Sussex Times articles about the Wates development 21st and 28th February 2013

Petition to Nicolas Soames about the Wates Development 22nd February 2013

Lindfield Rural and Urban Parish council's recommendations to refuse planning permission to Wates

Scaynes Hill Plan