

Hannah Chivers

From: Louise Chater <clerk@northmundham.org>
Sent: 06 February 2019 10:00
To: PlanningPolicy
Subject: Chichester Local Plan Review 2035 Preferred Approach Consultation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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North Mundham Parish Council has used the consultation portal to comment in detail on a number of points. This letter is intended to provide a more general overview.

Although the text of the plan contains many very worthy sentiments, it fails to address the significant conflicts in attempting to find space for the very large number of new dwellings that are ordained by central government policy. With this in mind, we find it extraordinary that the District has chosen to accommodate an unmet need from the South Downs National Park. Without the development of further housing, in particular affordable housing, in the National Park it will be in danger of degenerating from a working thriving community into a museum peopled only by those who can afford inflated housing prices. This protectionist planning approach to a major part of the district will inevitably exert more development pressures on the equally valuable natural assets of the remaining area.

The Plan offers many worthy sentiments about protecting the environment and the distinctive characteristics of the Manhood Peninsula. It also recognises the specific planning challenges of the area, but offers little to resolve how these challenges are to be met. We are offered wise words about the need to protect the natural environment, trees hedges and woodlands, and birds in Special Protection Areas, but then expected to provide space for substantial housing development which is bound to compromise these principles.

In particular, we see part of the Manhood in danger of spreading urbanisation, as significant housing developments are planned for Hunston and other parishes close to Chichester, bringing a danger of sacrificing the 'countryside gaps' that preserve the landscape and prevent coalescence of communities into one large urban sprawl.

These additional planned housing numbers will have a significant and unacceptable impact on the local infrastructure. Two aspects in particular are of concern, since they involve significant financial investment:

1. **Drainage.** The Manhood Peninsular is characterised by its flat, low-lying landscape and a high water table, which makes drainage difficult. The provision of further housing will place additional strain on a foul drainage network which is already proving over-burdened and inadequate, as our local residents find to their cost. It has been our practice to object to any additional housing development unless and until we receive assurances that the sewage system has adequate capacity. Sadly, the assurances of the local sewage utility have too often proved optimistic.

2. Transport. It is perfectly apparent that the existing road network is already under strain, with many junctions already at or close to capacity. We recognise that there is a duty to cooperate across district boundaries, but we do not see any adequate resolution of the problem that our parish is already facing in the volume of traffic on the B2166. In response the Plan has offered us mitigation measures which will involve restricted movement at local junctions that will have a deleterious effect on the quality of life for local residents. The whole set of proposals for the A27 junctions is merely a less-capable version of one of the options offered for the A27 upgrade, a proposal that was comprehensively rejected as inadequate by the local population not very long ago.

In terms of funding the necessary infrastructure developments we note that funding will be raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy. We are also pleased to see that a substantial proportion of the housing should be delivered as affordable housing. With this in mind, we are concerned that the two aspects will be difficult to reconcile, leading to many developments becoming unviable. It is therefore a matter of some concern that, although an independent viability study is planned (paragraph 4.86), so much of the Plan has already assumed that the necessary infrastructure will be in place.

We have commented in detail on a number of the policies, and these comments will not be repeated here. But one common theme stands out. Too often the words in the plan which summarise the problem are followed by a proposed Policy which fails to specify in sufficient detail what steps need to be taken to address conflicts and solve the problem. So, for example, the policy on biodiversity (DM 29) purports to recognise the need to protect wildlife habitats, but the policy for trees, woodlands and hedgerows offers only a 15 metre buffer zone between development and ancient woodland. This fails to recognise that some of the wildlife dependent on an ancient woodland for protection during the day will be emerging at night to forage in the surrounding countryside for foraging.

In summary, we find that the Plan makes a bold attempt to accommodate an overwhelming demand for housing, but fails to deliver a coherent solution that is demonstrated to be affordable and can be achieved without irreversible damage to the local environment. If this shortfall in the Plan is not corrected, the inevitable consequence is a much-diminished quality of life for residents of the District.

Kind regards,

Louise

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