

Sandhurst Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group's response to Beechcroft Developments Regulation 16 comments.

Policy NP/ H 1: - The selection of which particular housing was preferred within Sandhurst involved both responses from residents (via questionnaires, public exhibitions and consultations), data of housing already provided within Sandhurst, data of housing in nearby areas, data regarding nearby areas that included Local Plan allocations, breakdown of the Sandhurst age groups and Estate Agent surveys.

In respect of retirement homes data was summarised within NP Appendix 1 para 2.4.3. Additional retirement homes currently under construction in nearby areas (Yateley and the Wokingham Road) were also recorded within various subsequent NP documents.

An assessment of the current and under construction retirement homes within Sandhurst and very nearby areas concluded that there were more retirement homes per head of the population than generally within the UK. The general demographics of Sandhurst indicated that the population's age group was very similar to the average in England and being under 40.

The conclusion from the above was that there was more of a need for 'starter homes' than retirement homes. This was set against the knowledge that very few starter homes had recently been built in Sandhurst and its surrounding areas. Whereas, as noted above, there had been numerous recent inclusions of new built retirement homes.

Whilst the NP did not exclude retirement home planning applications (bearing in mind that housing developments within Sandhurst would be limited) there was a preference for the construction of starter homes such that it provided a chance for the younger generation to get their foot on the housing ladder.

The Steering Group do accept that there is no guarantee of provision for older people on the Derby Field site. This being down to future planning decisions made by BFC.

Development of sites outside of the Sandhurst Settlement boundary are classified as 'countryside' and therefore related policies would apply.

NP/H 1 c): - The policy notes compliance with BFLP policy LP 32. LP 32 includes the additional wording that Beechcroft have proposed. We do not see any need to duplicate all related wording from LP 32. We do not accept that there is a conflict between the NP policy wording and BFLP 32, particularly when H1 notes '*must comply with BFLP policy LP 32*'.

We would also note that the inclusion of reference to BFLP 32 within NP policy H1 was instigated following advice and recommendations from BFC.

NP/H 2: - Development of land outside the settlement areas are noted as being located within countryside and therefore all current applicable BFLP policies will apply. Policy NP/ D2 majors on residential developments on brownfield sites, infill sites and development of residential gardens **within the settlement of Sandhurst.**

In respect of the re-use or conversion of buildings within countryside we would remind Beechcroft of Bracknell Forest's Local Plan sections 9.117 to 9.121. These set out the parameters for the re-use of related buildings.

NP/D 2 j): - The inclusion was drafted to provide assistance in maintaining a pleasant street scene in areas that contained what could be described as possessing mediocre architectural appeal. The quality of the landscape value of the residential garden will be assessed by a planning officer using reasonable judgement. Clearly streets with tree lined features would be of high importance to retain, whereas a street with no significant greenery should be assessed by a planning officer as having a reduced architectural benefit.

Policy NP/ D 4: - The NP sees no need to duplicate matters associated with assessing tree grades as there are sufficient related papers within the BFLP and associated reference documents. As regards the species of replacement trees that could be planted this has been expanded to accord with BFC's regulation 16 comments. We would be happy to add a clarifying note associated with the planting of 'disease resistant trees'.

It should be noted that policy NP /D 4 item 7 was not introduced solely for biodiversity gain, although biodiversity gain could be achieved. Its primary reason for inclusion of item 7 was to ensure that the future appearance of the Town was provided with sufficient trees to benefit its background 'green' character. This taking cognisance of the Town's general architectural mediocre appearance. We would note that similar policies have been successfully used within other Local Plans. The importance of background trees (and their retention/replacement is also defined within NP Appendix 5 (Sandhurst Character Study).

The NP has policies that relate to brownfield sites that occur within the settlement of Sandhurst. Refer to comments above regarding replacement of buildings within the countryside.

NP/EN 1. General steps are being taken within the NP to reduce duplication of LP wording. However, there may be instances within the NP where similar LP wording may be appropriate in explaining the NP Policy.

NP/T 1. Severe in the context of traffic congestion related to the following matters: - highway safety, network capacity, the combined increase of traffic arising from a development site assessed alongside other developments that have planning permission (but have yet to be occupied) and development sites included within nearby Local Plan that are likely to be developed with the near future. Assessment of delays that could significantly delay emergency vehicles. Transport Assessments would, of course, take into account any traffic/transport mitigation measures that a planning application may include.

NP/T 2. Medium and large sites are defined within the Bracknell Forest Local Plan and associated documents. The NP is based on Bracknell's definitions.

On a general point regarding duplication of Local Plan Policies matters within a Neighbourhood Plan it could well be that some duplication may occur in respect of the wording of certain sub-clauses. However, the primary objective of the NP is not to duplicate wholesale elements of the Local Plan and not to duplicate policies.