

Steyning Society Newsletter: Planning Issues

Design, scale and character in Elm Grove Lane, Steyning

We have objected to a planning application in Elm Grove Lane (DC/20/0789) to demolish the former B and W Building and erect a new residential building and an office adjacent. For details of the application, please see [Horsham District Council's website](#) and enter the reference number DC/20/0789.

Our comments and objections related to the the quality of its design, its scale, character and impact on the residents of Elm Grove Lane and Highland Croft. We also commented that it failed to take account of existing policies in the District Plan and emerging policies in the Plan's Review. We were particularly concerned at the failure to respect the character of the Conservation Area and to acknowledge the archaeological value of the site. We also believe that there has been no traffic assessment of the impact of the proposal on pedestrians, including children, using the lane to get to school from the High Street to Tanyard Lane and beyond.

Steyning Parish Council also objected to the proposal as *“over development of the site, the scale and massing of the proposed plan is too high and out of keeping with the other buildings in the area and it has a detrimental effect within the heart of the Conservation Area.”*

See [Steyning Parish Council Minutes](#) of the Planning Committee, 19th May 2020 -

At the time of writing, no decision had been taken on the application by Horsham District Council.

Proposals for Horsham Local Plan

The consultation on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan for Horsham took place between February and March 2020. To see the Plan, visit the website - <https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/local-plan> Our brief comments included:

- noting that sustainability and climate change are equally important as economic priorities
- the National Park encloses Steyning to the south and provides an important landscape context for the town which needs to be recognised
- any proposal to develop Glebe Farm needs to take account of access and landscape issues
- there should be better provision of cycling routes.
- the proposal for extensive development of around 7,000 homes on Land North East of Henfield (Mayfield) lacks justification and is in an unsustainable location.

Consultation on the final Submission Draft of the Local Plan (Regulation 19) is scheduled to take place in Autumn/Winter 2020. However, in view of the present

Covid 19 situation, the Leader of Horsham Council has asked the Secretary of State for more flexibility on the Local Plan timescale.

Sand extraction at Ham Farm

The draft soft sand review which is part of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan proposes extraction at Ham Farm, adjacent to the A283. This is an additional allocation in the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan. Details can be found in the Single Issue Soft Sand Review - Promised Submission Draft http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/ssr/ssr_csd_001.pdf

The plan notes:

“Located in Steyning, Horsham, the site is used for agricultural purposes, and is approximately 7.9 hectares in size. It would provide 725,000 tonnes of soft sand. Materials would be exported from the site by road. The after use for this site would be a return to agricultural use, and restoration would consider enhancement of the existing woodland within the site. (Para. 7.2.6)”

We supported the representations of the Visitor and Tourism Group of the Steyning and District Partnership. We consider that this would have a serious impact on the A283, that tourism would be affected and in particular, views from Chanctonbury Ring would be spoilt. Public examination hearings are anticipated in August 2020.

South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)

The National Park celebrated its 10th Anniversary on March 31, 2020. It has approved and published its Partnership Management Plan 2020 - 2025.

For more details, see - <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/partnership-management/>

The Partnership Management Plan *“brings together and coordinates the aspirations of many different partners who help contribute towards the purposes for which it was designated. The Plan is the single most important policy document for the National Park. It consists of a vision, three linked strategic themes and 10 outcomes which set where the SDNPA would like to get to by 2050. The themes and outcomes work together and have equal importance.”*The ten ambitions for the next five years cover:

1. Landscape and Natural Beauty
2. Increasing Resilience
3. Habitats and Species
4. Arts and Heritage
5. Outstanding Experiences
6. Lifelong Learning

7. Health and Wellbeing
8. Creating custodians
9. Great Places to live
10. Great Places to work

The Steyning Society recognises the importance of the National Park in conserving and enhancing the landscape around Steyning. We have agreed to join the South Downs Network which is made up over 40 independent groups and charities within and adjacent to the Park. The Network has regular discussions and meetings with officers and members of the SDNPA to share experiences and undertake joint projects. See - <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Memorandum-of-Understanding-South-Downs-Network.pdf>

Heritage Open Days cancelled in 2020

We had hoped to participate in this year's national Heritage Open Days in September. Unfortunately the current restrictions have meant that it has not been possible to undertake the advance planning and assessment needs of the proposed sites and properties. In addition, given the unknown situation in two months time, it is impossible to foresee what might be happening. Regrettably, we have decided to cancel this year's event.

The Future of planning

There have been suggestions in the press that planning reform may be on the Government's agenda. This could include a move to zonal planning – a system used in some other countries including the US whereby certain uses get automatic right to planning permission in certain areas – alongside a radical deregulation of use classes designed to allow high streets and town centres to adapt to changing uses. In addition, it was reported that there will be a new fast-track planning system for developers of high quality, well-designed buildings. The changes are seen as part of an economic stimulus package designed to reboot the economy in the wake of the covid-19 crisis. There are concerns that this is likely to encourage a piecemeal, short-term approach which risk poorly designed and inappropriately located housing and would make it more difficult for communities to have a say on development. See the Policy Exchange essays on reforming the planning system - <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/planning-anew/>

The Future of Steyning

We consider it important that the Steyning community has a say in its future which is why we are supporting the Greening Group's 2030 Vision Survey. See www.greeningsteyning.org Please ensure that you have completed the questionnaire by Friday 10th July.