
Objections to Planning Application AL/11/24/OUT

1. Introduction

This note sets out my detailed objections to the application by Cala Homes for:

1) Outline permission for all matters reserved (except access) for up to 400 No dwellings and associated works and 2) Full planning permission for alterations to site access off Westergate Street and through Pine Close and east-west link road including a bridge over the Lidsey Rife. This application also lies within the parish of Barnham, falls within Strategic Site SD5, CIL Zone 1 (Zero Rated), affects the setting of listed buildings, affects the character and appearance of the Eastergate Church Lane Conservation Area, affects public rights of way. This application is the subject of an Environmental Statement.

Arun District Council recognises that the Arun Local Plan needs updating. The purpose of the plan is given as being to ensure that future development needs are met sustainably and to reflect the changing vision for the area, along with various legislative changes.

The production of the local plan update will require a process of engagement with stakeholders and infrastructure providers, the preparation of various appraisals, the commissioning of evidence and public consultation.

The planning application to which I am objecting must be dealt with in the context of this new plan and the process of consultation which has yet to take place around it. If this is not the case, then the claims by the Council on its website that views and suggestions are being sought and that at this stage the Council is not identifying any specific uses of land, potential development site or draft policies must be open to question and challenge.

2. Biodiversity

The Aldingbourne Neighbourhood Plan states:

Policy EH2 Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services - New development within, or immediately adjacent (within 50m) to the Biodiversity Corridors identified on Maps A1 and A2 will only be supported where it can be clearly demonstrated that development proposals will not give rise to any significant harm to the integrity or function of the Biodiversity Corridors.

The proposed development site consists in fields, hedgerows, areas of woodland and a network of public footpaths which are well used by the local community. The area supports a variety of wildlife including wild birds, bats and water voles.

The proposals circulated by Luken Beck in September of last year gave no indication of how the function and integrity of the biodiversity corridor would be enhanced to provide a net gain. The developers Environmental Statement recognises adverse impacts.

The proposed development represents a significant threat to the biodiversity of the area and to the recreational opportunities available to the local population. In this context, I wish also to register my objection to the changes to footpaths which the plan entails.

3. Flooding, sewage and surface water management

The Aldingbourne Neighbourhood Plan states:

Policy EH4 Protection of watercourses - Proposals that support and promote river catchment management, wildlife conservation and reduce flood risk will be supported.

The Lidsey Rife is a chalk stream which reaches the sea at Bognor Regis. There are regular and significant spills of untreated sewage into the stream representing a risk to both human health and wildlife as well as to the economies of the seaside towns of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton. The quantity and frequency with which Southern Water is discharging wastewater from the Lidsey Treatment Plant has been raised in the House of Commons. In 2023 there were 164 sewage dumps lasting 3,485 hours.¹

A superficial inspection of the area as it is now confirms that untreated sewage continues to spill from surcharged manholes alongside the stream. This is unacceptable and any development which would significantly exacerbate the problem should not be approved until the Lidsey Treatment Plant, which has no additional capacity, has been upgraded by Southern Water and the volume of water that can be treated is demonstrably commensurate with the scale of the developments being proposed. As I understand it, Southern Water has asked that a condition of phased occupation of the development be imposed which endorses the concerns raised in this note.

I note the following observation from Arun District Council's own website:

"Development within this catchment area will be required to take account and contribute to the improvement of the existing sewage and drainage network, in line with the actions identified in the Surface Water Management Plan."²

Problems are exacerbated by the ingress of ground water and surface water into the sewerage system. The Aldingbourne Neighbourhood Plan states:

¹ [Top of the Poops | Waterway | Lidsey Rife \(top-of-the-poops.org\)](https://top-of-the-poops.org/waterway/lidsey-rife)

² [Lidsey Waste Water Treatment Catchment Area | Arun District Council](#)

Policy EH5 Surface Water Management - New development, within areas at risk from flooding, will not be permitted unless it is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment which provides clear evidence to demonstrate that the proposal:

- a). Would not give rise to additional risk of flooding, either to the development site or to other land, arising from the carrying out or use of the development;
- b). Would make appropriate provision for accommodating the surface water and foul water arising from the development.

Approval of the application should not be granted in the absence of clear and specific proposals for accommodating the surface water from the proposed development on land which, because of its geology, is already subject to significant and enduring waterlogging.

4. Transport

The planning application makes reference to:

“Full planning permission for alterations to site access off Westergate Street and through Pine Close and east-west link road including a bridge over the Lidsey Rife.”

The roads around the proposed development are already congested and unfit for purpose. The West Sussex Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 identifies key transport issues in the district. The existing A29 exemplifies the problems. It is frequently flooded and has been repeatedly closed in recent months. The gates of the level crossing over which the road passes are closed for some 23 minutes in every hour leading to long queues which, on the southbound carriageway, often stretch back to Pine Close and beyond.

Car ownership in this area is significantly higher than the national average and on the basis of available data it would not be unreasonable to assume that the plan will result in at least an additional 700 cars on the local road network.

Vehicular access to the site via a new signalised junction at Westergate Street/Pine Close (or any other alternatives) in the absence of the completion of the A29 Realignment is not sustainable. The application should not be granted until the A29 Realignment has been completed and there are realistic proposals to address in full the transport issues to which the development will give rise and to mitigate its health and safety and environmental impacts.

Work on the realignment of the A29 is significantly delayed.

Site clearance works, subject to land dedication agreements, are not planned to start until winter 2024/25 and construction is not expected to complete until winter 2026.

5. Local infrastructure

Account must also be taken of the existing pressures on local infrastructure from medical facilities to schools. I would draw attention here to the following reference from the Aldingbourne Local Plan:

“The Parish is already experiencing the impact of large-scale developments to the north (Nyton Nurseries) and east (BEW) and two developments in Hook Lane. It is now overdeveloped in relation to infrastructure. The Parish needs time to assimilate this development and for local infrastructure to expand and adapt to meet the growing needs from new local residents (for example incoming Hook Lane residents from elsewhere cannot get places at the local primary school, which has been full for some years and Croft surgery requires expansion). In the light of the significant growth committed in the Parish and the adjacent Parish of Barnham / Eastergate, in the Arun Local Plan there is a lack of existing capacity in local infrastructure.”

The expansion of the Croft Surgery appears to have stalled.

The suggestion in the Planning Statement that a 10% affordable housing contribution has been agreed contradicts a requirement in the current Arun Local Plan for the provision of 30% affordable housing (unless it can be proven that such an affordable housing provision is not viable). By what yardstick has 30% been demonstrated not to be viable.

6. Conclusion

Luken Beck, on behalf of Cala Homes, state in its Planning Statement that it aims to demonstrate that the applicant has actively informed and involved the local community about the plans for Land East of Westergate in accordance with the NPPF (2023), and the Localism Act 2011.

The approach adopted to consultation has not encouraged me to believe that it is being undertaken in a way that is meaningful. A leaflet was left in our letter box on 8th September 2023 with a response deadline of 17th September. This was clearly unreasonable and was extended to 8th October at the request of the Parish Council, which at least afforded time to understand and digest what is being proposed.

A meeting was organised for the community, but publicised only on Facebook. We along with our neighbours became aware of the meeting only by accident.

It is to be hoped that any future consultation should demonstrate a real commitment to involving, seeking and acting on the views of those most affected by the proposed development.

As it stands the application the application by Cala Homes should be refused.

George Lepine

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27th March 2024

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To: Planning <Planning@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments on Planning Application AL/11/24/OUT

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Attached are my detailed objections to the following proposal from Cala Homes:

Hybrid application consisting of: 1) Outline permission for all matters reserved (except access) for up to 400 No dwellings and associated works and 2) Full planning permission for alterations to site access off Westergate Street and through Pine Close and east-west link road including a bridge over the Lidsey Rife. This application also lies within the parish of Barnham, falls within Strategic Site SD5, CIL Zone 1 (Zero Rated), affects the setting of listed buildings, affects the character and appearance of the Eastergate Church Lane Conservation Area, affects public rights of way. This application is the subject of an Environmental Statement.

Kind regards

George Lepine

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