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London
SE14 6RT

Your Ref: A/82/12

27 March 2014

The Planning Department,
Arun District Council,
Arun Civic Centre,
Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton
West Sussex
BN17 5LF

Dear Sir or Madam,

Revised Planning Application A/82/12 for 139 homes

Despite the changes made to the number of houses proposed, I object to the above planning application for 139 houses to the East of Roundstone Lane, Angmering for a number of reasons. These are set out below.

Arun District Council acknowledges this proposed development on Roundstone Lane is outside the scope of the Council's current development planning strategy. Further, it does not form part of the contiguous village envelope of Angmering and encroaches on a greenfield location when policy is to make use of brownfield sites. The development will be detrimental to Angmering and its residents as well as those that live and travel in the environs of Angmering. Overall, the proposed development is contrary to several policies of Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council.

Location

The proposed location East of Roundstone Lane is not close to shops, schools, health facilities or other amenities and infrastructure. Government and Council policy is to reduce car dependence, reduce carbon emissions, increase public transport use and promote developments on brown-field sites that better offer opportunities for local regeneration by maintaining vibrant town centres. The location of this development is unlikely to benefit businesses in the centre of Angmering as it is not practical to walk there. With no local facilities within walking distance, residents East of Roundstone Lane will be likely to drive for even small items such as milk meaning that supermarkets will benefit more than businesses in Angmering. The current proposals – both in location and street layout – have not made any apparent allowance for the provision of public transport to this proposed housing. To provide a bus service (assuming one would be) to the planned site would cause congestion as buses turn on and off Roundstone Lane and would also extend journey times for existing bus users.

Local Employment

Local employment growth in Arun District over the next five or so years is expected to be the lowest in Sussex. The 2010 Network Rail Sussex Route Utilisation Strategy (page 95) shows growth in local jobs from 2008-19 in the 12 districts in the study area which

includes all of Sussex. Arun is the only District expected to see local jobs grow by less than 8%. Chichester, Adur and Horsham Districts have local job growth of between 8% and 9%, just below the average of 9% predicted for the South-East region. All other Districts in Sussex are expected to see local jobs grow by over 10%. Local employment levels in Worthing and Lewes are expected to grow by 10% with jobs in Hastings and Eastbourne expected to rise by 11%. Brighton & Hove is the only authority area expected to see growth of over 12% in local jobs.

The strategy also shows that over 2% of the working population of Chichester District travels to work in London, by train. In Arun, Worthing and Adur Districts less than 1% of the working population do this, the lowest figure in West Sussex. Therefore, Arun is probably the District of West Sussex least able to afford houses that will be marketed at prices near those of Surrey or London.

Given that Arun is expected to experience the slowest local economic growth in Sussex strongly suggests that a more appropriate housing policy would be to concentrate new homes on brown field sites near where the most jobs are expected to be created – in towns. This will help reduce car dependence and the need for long distance commuting and the detriment to family life this brings. Providing homes close to centres of local employment will also reduce traffic congestion, pollution and carbon dioxide emissions. Providing homes on brown field sites near to urban centres will help encourage regeneration of town centres and reduce loss of green field sites. Developers may desire green field sites because it is where they make their greatest profit but it is to the detriment of society as people have to make longer, slower journeys on more congested roads to find jobs needed to pay expensive mortgages.

A number of housing developments in the vicinity of Angmering are under construction at Ferring, Goring and Durrington. The last of these is a particularly substantial development on the site of the former Sixth Form College. As well as being "brown field" sites, the Durrington development and the homes being built on the former goods yard at Goring offer better access to public transport, local amenities and job opportunities than does the Roundstone Lane site. Developments offering good access to amenities and public transport similar to these should be prioritised over any developments at more remote green field locations where access to amenities and jobs are less good.

Although these housing developments are not in Arun, they are so close to the Roundstone Lane site that they will reduce the need for the development of homes that so exceed the needs of Angmering village. Equally, developments being promoted in Feltham and Barnham offer almost identical new homes to provide for people who work in, say, Bognor and Chichester.

Schools

The proposed location is not practical for children to walk to school. Taking children from the far side of Roundstone Lane to the schools at the north of Angmering by car would cause further congestion in the village centre, the narrow hill at the west end of the High Street and on Arundel Road to the detriment of the whole village. Any current or future development of housing in Angmering needs to take account of where children are to go to school in the village and provide school places prior to planning permission being granted. A new school was promised as part of the development of Bramley Green but

this has yet to be delivered. A further increase in the village population will make the necessity for a new school even more urgent as the expansion of St Margaret's and St Wilfred's cannot go on indefinitely. Further loss of playing space at both schools would be against the policy of encouraging sport and exercise in children to promote lifelong health and reduce obesity in children and adults. Without a guarantee of funding from West Sussex County Council to build and run a new school, housing in Arun should be prioritised at locations from which children can safely walk to and from an existing school each day.

Water Supply and Climate

Thinking ahead for residents of Angmering village (rather than a house builder's short-term financial aims), planning decisions need to give careful consideration to water and energy usage, carbon emissions and waste disposal over future decades. Sussex is one of the drier counties of Great Britain and the coastal plain of Sussex has even lower rainfall than the Downs. The climate of South-East England is far drier than the popular perception; much of the region has under 750mm of rain per annum which is similar to much of the Mediterranean. London receives less annual rainfall than Sydney, Girona, or Rome. Over recent years, increased population has led to hose-pipe bans across Southern England during several summers. Further population growth in West Sussex will lead to further strain on the limited water resources without requiring compulsory reductions in individual water use for all. The increasing average temperatures over the past few decades means that more rain is – and will continue to be – lost to evaporation. As recent years have shown, extreme weather events such as flooding, downpours and snow are becoming more frequent. As the climate changes, winters are expected to see more precipitation and summers become drier. A reduction in the amount of greenfield land could lead to more frequent flooding as runoff to rivers becomes faster in the vicinity of Angmering. To develop existing brownfield sites would reduce this risk. With more population growth, the management of waste disposal will become more challenging and expensive as land-fill locations reach capacity and incineration becomes a less practical option.

The proposed development to the East of Roundstone Lane is contrary to the policy of minimising use of greenfield land and to West Sussex County Council's objectives of reducing energy use and carbon dioxide emissions, developing sustainable transport and infrastructure, maintaining and improving environmental quality and better managing use of water and natural resources. Increased carbon emissions from what will be a car dependent housing development East of Roundstone Lane will make it harder to meet the County Council's objective of reducing carbon emissions by 50% by 2025. Providing housing in Arun that is nearer to town centres and closer to schools and other amenities will better able to deliver this goal than the proposed development. Brown-field sites and town centre locations that have already been granted planning permission should be developed prior to granting planning permission for any greenfield locations in Arun.

A developer considering the future (rather than their shareholders' profit) would have designed homes on a brown field site with features that make housing more sustainable such as rain water harvesting, reuse of domestic grey water, solar panels and electric vehicle charging points. Instead, the proposed houses are copies of houses built elsewhere using generic designs. There has been no apparent consideration for these homes practical sustainability or long-term impact on the environment.

Traffic Congestion

Roads in and around Angmering are already busy at peak times with queues being common on Station Road and Roundstone Lane. Adding these proposed houses and around 150 cars with access only to and from Roundstone Lane will make congestion and journey times worse across Angmering. The hill at the West end of the High Street is already a bottleneck as it cannot take two-way traffic due to the lack of parking controls there. It is already difficult to see oncoming cars prior to driving down the hill.

Increased traffic (driving children to school for example) will make this more of a bottleneck as well as increasing the inherent risk. Additional traffic from the new development to Water Lane and the A27 would make the existing bottleneck on Weavers Hill even busier, increasing risk on the blind bend that is too narrow for vehicles to pass. With no access from the development to the A280, traffic from the A27 will all travel through Angmering village and the High Street conservation area. Most significantly this will increase the accident risk on the Weavers Hill bend. Traffic on Arundel Road and the frequency and duration of congestion at the Station Road roundabout and chicanes will increase. This will reduce air quality and increase traffic danger adjacent to the three schools in Angmering.

The proposed design of the junction onto Roundstone Lane suggests that drivers will have a limited view of oncoming traffic in either direction due to the trees. The single access point also means that traffic queues from within the development are very likely in the mornings leading to potential waiting drivers' frustration and risk taking when turning. Traffic on Roundstone Lane is likely to be delayed when larger vehicles such as dustcarts, buses or fire engines are attempting to make a tight turn from or onto Roundstone Lane. This will lead to a local degradation of air quality and increased journey times for motorists.

Given the traffic queues that are likely to result, it may be necessary to restrict on-street parking within the development to ensure safe access and egress for emergency vehicles. Access to Roundstone Lane is only poposed via one narrow junction, north of the Bramley Green roundabout where the road is least able to take additional traffic.

Increased car use that will result from this development will also make traffic congestion on the Roundstone by-pass worse. There is little to support earlier suggestions that a housing developer would pay towards the widening of the by-pass between Roundstone Lane and Station Road. There is no guarantee that to do so will be beneficial anyway. Permitting the Roundstone Lane development will mean residents of Angmering will find it more difficult to drive out of the village as queues increase in length and frequency on Roundstone Lane and Station Road.

Suitability and Affordability

The proposed development does not provide appropriate housing for current residents of Angmering or Arun. I have seen no evidence that there are large numbers of homeless people in Arun who have chosen Angmering as their only choice for social housing.

As the national population continues to age and more people live alone, homes need to better match their needs for one and two bedroom properties. Homes more suited to the

generally reducing size of individual households would be more appropriate than what is being proposed for this development.

Given the designs within the proposed development it is fair to expect house prices to be similar to other locations where David Wilson Homes or Barretts have been built. Local developments in Arun and Ashington advertise prices that are similar to (and indeed above) those in parts of South-East London. The developer suggests an income of over £50,000 would be required to purchase such properties. At the development in Ashington, two bedroom flats start at £200,000 and houses at over £300,000, above affordable levels for many, let alone local first time buyers.

There is no reason to believe properties East of Roundstone Lane will be within the reach of many local people. A large proportion of the proposed properties are four or five bedroom homes. Properties of such a size are clearly not aimed at families with local jobs. To afford the four and five bedroom homes would – according to the developer themselves – require an income of over £100,000. Clearly this is well beyond the means of most people.

The ONS stated that in November 2011 the median salary in Arundel and South Downs constituency was £20,426. The figure for Chichester is £19,890 and it was £17,175 in Littlehampton and Bognor constituency. The national median salary was above all these at £21,326 meaning around half of the population of Arun earn less than median national earnings; indeed less than the median in Rhondda and other areas of South Wales. Clearly these median salaries are nowhere near those that developers suggest buyers need to buy homes similar to those proposed for East of Roundstone Lane.

Even if people with salaries commensurate with purchasing these expensive proposed homes move to the new development at Roundstone Lane rather than to other cheaper homes available in Arun, the developer clearly expects them to drive to their workplace making congestion worse in Angmering and across Arun. The proposed Roundstone Lane development does not meet local needs for housing which should be prioritised in areas (such as town centres) where there is easier access to local jobs and children can walk or cycle to school. It has been acknowledged in recent years that developers already hold many plots that have planning permission on which they have chosen not to build. All these sites should be developed before further planning permission is granted.

Conclusion

Despite the amendments that have been made, the proposed development does not meet the appropriate Council planning policy criteria; indeed permitting it would be completely contrary to the County Council's environmental and sustainability objectives. The development is outside the village envelope and Angmering would suffer the detriment of worse traffic congestion, reduced air quality (including near all three schools) and residents would suffer longer journey times and increased risks at the narrow sections of the High Street and Weavers Hill where visibility is limited.

The development does not provide housing that local people can afford to buy near to employment centres. Indeed those living East of Roundstone Lane would have to commute to employment elsewhere. Given the likely house prices, their jobs may not be in West Sussex. Other current developments at Goring and Durrington are better located

for access to employment and amenities and other almost identical housing is already being provided elsehere in Arun, further reducing the need for a disproportionate 139 homes in Angmering. The Roundstone Lane development will be isolated so children cannot walk to school and there will be little benefit to shops in Angmering. West Sussex County Council would need to fund an overdue new school and Arun District Council provide other essential amenities prior to further large developments being permitted in Angmering. Affordable homes on brown-field sites with sustainable access to jobs, schools and amenities that are not detrimental to traffic levels or the environment should be prioritised over any developments on this scale at such an unsuitable location.

[redacted]

(former pupil of St Margaret's School)

Cc
Nick Herbert MP
West Sussex County Council
Angmering Parish Council
Save Angmering Village