

From: Simon Davis
Sent: 30 June 2020 15:14
To: Maddi Simpson [REDACTED]
Cc: Leona Hannify [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: BN/50/20/PL West of Fontwell Avenue - Agricultural Land

Hi Maddi,

Thanks for this.

Just as long as you are aware that we will have to report the proposal as being in conflict with Policy SO DM1 (as need cannot outweigh the loss in terms of the policy itself without the accompanying Sustainability & Options Appraisals) and will then, if recommending approval, overcome the conflict in the final balancing exercise of the report. Notwithstanding, we will need a Soil Resource Plan as per the policy to set out soil mitigation/protection measures prior to any decision.

"Development will not be permitted unless: g. The applicant has submitted a comprehensive soil resources plan for the development site which demonstrates that care will be taken to preserve the soil resource, such that it can be incorporated into a Productive Green Environment following development."

On a more general point, I have today instructed Legal to work on the S.106. Please see attached S.106 summary table. I am unable as yet to confirm our recommendation as I am currently reviewing some elements of the scheme and also, I see out Tree Officer is yet to respond (I will chase him). However, if we do approve, it will need to go to Committee and the likely Meeting date would be the 2nd September (we have no meeting in August and the July Meeting agenda closes on 07/07/20). If taking to this Committee, we would therefore need an Extension of Time until the 4th September.

Kind Regards

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Directorate of Place

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From: Maddi Simpson [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 June 2020 17:15
To: Simon Davis <Simon.Davis@arun.gov.uk>
Cc: Leona Hannify [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: BN/50/20/PL West of Fontwell Avenue - Agricultural Land

Hi Simon,

Hope you're well.

Since we spoke we have assessed Policy SO DM1 (Soils) in further detail. As you know, our position is that the need for housing coupled with the range of social, economic and environmental benefits of this proposal, outweighs any conflict with this policy. Therefore, while this policy can be taken into account in weighing up the overall planning balance, it is considered that only limited weight should be attributed to it.

As set out in the Planning Statement, the Council's housing land supply position was considered as part of a recent planning appeal (Ref: APP/C3810/W/19/3236911). The decision found that the supply position is approximately 2.9 years. Given this substantial shortfall and the limited brownfield sites available in the district, logic dictates that there will inevitably be a loss of agricultural land in Arun to accommodate much needed housing.

The equestrian use of the site is well established and the landowner, who has owned it for 43 years, has never used it for agricultural purposes. The site area that comprises agricultural land amounts to just 1.5 hectares which would not be able to support viable agricultural activities in isolation. Arun also benefits from having a high proportion of land that falls within the best and most versatile classification grades. Based on approximate estimates, Defra statistics show that c. 64% of agricultural land in Arun District is best and most versatile (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) compared to c. 42% nationally. The development of the site would represent an insignificant reduction in agricultural land area in overall terms, particularly where this site falls at the lowest end of BVM scale.

Further to this, there is no policy in the Barnham and Eastergate Neighbourhood Development Plan (2014) that protects against the loss of Agricultural Land.

Clays Farm, North End Road, Yapton (Appeal Allowed)

I trust you are familiar with the Yapton appeal decision dated 25 February 2020 (Ref: APP/C3810/W/19/3234972) in which this policy was considered. In addition, I note that the Yapton NP sought to protect BMV agricultural land.

A key consideration of the Inspector was that, as per the land west of Fontwell Avenue, the appeal scheme was used as horse paddocks. At Paragraph 11 of the appeal decision, the Inspector notes that given the use of the land as a paddock, this reduces the level of environmental and economic harm. In weighing up the balance, the Inspector gave moderate weight to the loss of agricultural land and Policy SO DM1, but this harm was outweighed by housing need and the scheme was approved.

The Yapton site was higher in agricultural land classification comprising Grade 2 land, whereas the land west of Fontwell Avenue is Grade 3a.

In view of the above, on balance, it is our view that limited weight should be given to the loss of agricultural land, which is clearly outweighed by the benefits of the scheme.

Thanks,
Maddi

Maddi Simpson
Planner, Planning

[REDACTED]



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