



ALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL'S (APC) RESPONSE TO THE MAIN
MODIFICATIONS PROPOSED FOR MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL'S
DISTRICT PLAN.

Comments relate to the additional sites-

MM79 - Land north of Henfield Road, Albourne

MM80 - Grange View House, London Road, Albourne

MM81 - Phase 1 Swallows Yard, London Road, Albourne

MM82 - Land east of London Road, Albourne

MM 92 - West House Farm, Henfield Road, Albourne

1. APC maintains its fundamental objection to the size and scale of the proposed development in and around Albourne, and subsequent comments should be seen in that context.

2. It seems that MSDC has taken the recommendation to increase the housing numbers as an instruction rather than an objective, and there is a certain inevitability that most, if not all, sites selected for the in-combination testing, will have passed the testing in order to get to that figure.

3. APC notes with alarm, the intention to build a further 651 houses in and around the small village of Albourne, taking the total to over 3,000 units for the immediate area, and getting on for 6,000 units in the wider vicinity (Burgess Hill included). It is impossible to believe that even with the proposed mitigations this will not have a huge and significant impact on the lives of the existing residents and communities living in this part of Mid Sussex.

4. As an example of 3 above, APC believes that the sheer scale of the proposed development will breach the non-coalescence policy objective set out in DP13 of the draft District Plan. In effect, Albourne and Sayers Common will combine. Indeed, the Plan recognises that Sayers Common will step up in the village settlements hierarchy, and it is inevitable that Albourne will ultimately be subsumed into that

greater “Village”. The development at MM82 will particularly have this effect, and will double the size of the existing built up area boundary. It also seems to APC that the spatial strategy in the District Plan has been ignored in the headlong desire to squeeze even more housing into Albourne.

5. In our previous responses, we have set out major concerns around the ability of the existing infrastructure to cope with the population increase being imposed on this hitherto rural area, particularly in terms of water, sewerage, and transport. This will simply be exacerbated by the prospect of yet more houses in this location from the proposed additional sites. Much more work will need to be done, if not now, at the planning application stages in order to address and resolve these issues. This summer (2026) has already highlighted water shortage issues in the south east, and the focus should be on the delivery of supply, rather than the management of demand. It is far from clear that the utility companies will be able to cope with development on this scale without some very substantial investment. How and when is that to be delivered?

6. It still seems to APC that there is insufficient appreciation of the impacts of these developments particularly around traffic volumes and road capacity, and it is clear that the developers and the relevant Authorities, whilst recognising the problems, are far from coming up with workable and effective solutions. Albourne, Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common (HSCPC), and Twineham Parish Councils have carried out their own study in this regard, which highlights these concerns, and that report is attached to the response from HSCPC. As one example, the 017 Burgess Hill Parking Strategy is rather inconclusive, and recognises that the studies informing that document were based on lower housing numbers at Sayers Common and Albourne. It does at least predict an increase in parking demand in the Town, but looks at a best case scenario, rather than a worst case one. As another example, the S7 Sayers Common Holistic Movement Strategy is a highly optimistic document. It does offer some solutions, but then bases the strategy on simply hoping they will work. It seems to APC that there is reluctance on the part of all highway stakeholders to investigate properly, and then pay for proper road infrastructure. Cycle routes, improved bus services, and bus shelters, however welcome, will not really improve the road capacity and junction problems that have been consistently highlighted.

7. APC undertook a particular study of the local rural roads, Truslers Hill Lane (THL) and Shaves Wood Lane (SWL). This long road (one leading into the other) is a north south route, narrow in nature, and with no pavements. It is already used as a rat run to Brighton, and the loop data over a 14 day period shows for THL, a total of 4,491 vehicle movements northbound, and 4,693 southbound. For SWL, this is 7,803 northbound and 8,047 southbound. It is obvious that the use of these lanes will increase hugely with the proposed developments, particularly if as expected, the B2116 and B2118 become congested. It remains therefore entirely unclear as to how the roads will cope with such an inevitable increase in traffic. Cyclists and horse

riders are already beginning to avoid these roads, because of the extent and speed of current traffic flows, never mind future ones.

8. The above points speak to the Sustainability Appraisal. The table on page 7 of the report simply assumes that critical infrastructure can be provided by the relevant utility Companies, and the scoring is surprising. In current circumstances, all sites should score red on water. In terms of transport, Albourne and Sayers Common should score pink, and Hurstpierpoint should score red. Greenfield and open countryside sites, which are exclusively offered in the mix, should score pink as a minimum on biodiversity and on natural resources. The scores on economic regeneration are questionable as this criterion really applies only to town centres.

9. For the purposes of both the master-planning, and the DPSC GEN policy in the District Plan, APC notes the proposal to move MM 92 into the wider Sayers Common Development scheme. This looks to be largely based on its size, rather than location, but if the site is to be approved, it appears to be a reasonable approach in the circumstances. However, we have made the point, and repeat that even if the intention is for it to become part of the DPSC plan, we do think it is misleading to describe the land in the Site Policies document as being in Sayers Common. The land is clearly within Albourne. APC also takes the view that ALL the proposed additional sites, which will have over-lapping needs, should be taken into the master-planning process. This will ensure the holistic approach that all current stakeholders have recognised as being essential to the success of any development on such a scale.

10. APC asks that the final District Plan, along with the general and specific (Sayers Common) Infrastructure Delivery Plans, have provisions in them that ensure that the agreed infrastructure is actually delivered on site, rather than s.106 contributions simply accruing to a fund somewhere, and remaining unspent over a period of time. On that point, it will also be important to ensure that a significant proportion of s.106 funds coming forward from the additional sites in Albourne, are made available to APC to spend for the specific benefit of its existing residents, rather than being diverted away to the wider DPSC development to the north. For example, there will be a need to upgrade existing public footpaths, and create new public footpaths, so that residents can easily travel by foot, or cycle between Albourne and Sayers Common and the new developments, as part of the overall master-plan referred to above.

11. Accepting that this may be more a matter for the detailed planning stage (if that comes about), APC has some concerns around the proposed access arrangements for both MM81 and MM82, and much more work will need to be carried out in regard to those matters. There are already concerns about conflicting traffic from even much smaller developments on the B2118 London Road both entering and exiting this main road. Indeed, the large retirement Village development (currently being built) has highlighted a number of these safety issues.

12. In conclusion, APC takes the view that the scale of the proposed additional development, when added to the existing DPSC scheme, is not sustainable, leaves many questions unanswered, and many issues unresolved.

Albourne Parish Council

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