

Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2031



Housing strategy background document



Final revision November 2013

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1. Summary

This background document identifies a strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan to ascertain the number of new dwellings to be provided in Ardingly parish up to 2031. It outlines evidence relating to housing and demographics that has been collected in the course of preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, and places it within the context of the strategic context of the High Weald Area of Outstanding natural Beauty (AONB), Local Plan, proposed submission District Plan and national planning policy guidance.

The Housing Strategy is based upon the results of the Ardingly Housing Needs Survey 2012 with other supporting evidence, to identify the justification for the provision of 27 homes within the parish, of which 8 will be affordable. The Pre submission Neighbourhood Plan and draft Sustainability Appraisal were the subject of consultation from 13th August to 24th September 2013. In the light of an objection from Mid Sussex District Council Housing Manager, the Neighbourhood Plan Committee agreed on 6th November 2013 to amend the Plan so that 50% of affordable housing would be available for those with local connections in perpetuity; the remaining 50% would only be available to those with a local connection on first letting. This final version reflects that amendment.

2. Neighbourhood Plan Strategy

Ardingly parish is located within the High Weald AONB, where the overall priority is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. National policy for the AONB is that development should take place elsewhere unless justified to meet local needs. The Neighbourhood Plan's approach is that it should contribute to meeting local need rather than the wider needs of Mid Sussex.

The Neighbourhood Plan strategy is based around the following vision for the parish:

'Our vision is to put in place policies which help to conserve and improve Ardingly, encourage a greater sense of inclusion, safety and pride in the community, and promote sustainable and vibrant economic activity while protecting the outstanding landscape setting of the parish.'

Given the landscape constraints around the settlement, its location within the High Weald AONB and lack of sustainability in terms of some vital services and facilities, the strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to balance the identified local need for affordable housing, the needs of established local businesses and schools and the need to protect the outstanding landscape setting of the village, its local distinctiveness and natural assets for future generations.

The National Planning Policy Framework gives great weight to the need to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also identified as important considerations. DP13 of the proposed submission Mid Sussex District Plan states that development will only be permitted where it conserves and enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

National policy states that no development should take place in the AONB that could be provided elsewhere. However, there are tests for developing in an AONB and one of the tests is for local need. The 2009 High Weald AONB Management Plan states that account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. One particular aspect of local need is the need for housing.

3. Housing stock

Ardingly parish contains approximately 700 households, with a range of house types and sizes that broadly match the mix in Mid Sussex as a whole. There is a higher proportion of rented housing than the average for the district including a mix of social, affordable sheltered, tied housing and local social accommodation.

Office for National Statistics for rented housing numbers (April 2012): Affordable rented - Ardingly: 102 out of 697 households (15%), - Mid Sussex: 6,092 out of 57,409 households (10.1%)

Affordable housing stock

There are currently 102 affordable rented homes in Ardingly. These comprise :

- (i) 66 social dwellings controlled by Mid Sussex District Council as Housing Authority, where no preference is given to those with a local connection.
- (ii) 14 homes at Hett Close built in 2001 and one of the first 'rural exception sites' to be built in Mid Sussex. This comprises ten three- bedroomed houses and four one- bedroomed flats. These homes are reserved for people with local connections until 2080.
- (iii) 22 homes at Priceholme which give priority to elderly people in need with a local connection, with preference to those with a background in horticulture.

64 social homes were sold through the Right to Buy scheme that operated until 2002.

Dwellings built since 2000

73 dwellings have been built in the parish since 2000. This number includes 49 dwellings at Hapstead House / Turnpike Court and the rural exception site at Hett Close.

4. Housing Needs Survey

A housing needs survey was undertaken in spring 2012 by Action in Rural Sussex on behalf of Ardingly Parish Council and sent to all households in the parish. The survey included questions on a wide range of topics including older peoples housing and future local need. It identified 19 households in need of affordable housing. This comprised 8 single people, 6 couples and 5 families. Of these, 15 expressed a preference to live in Ardingly. These figures compare to the results of the 2006 Housing Needs Survey which identified 11 households in housing need who wished to stay in the village.

Preferred tenure

10 of the 19 nineteen households in need of affordable housing indicated a preference to rent from a Housing Association (52.63%), 5 preferred a shared-ownership property (26.32%) with two preferring to buy a property on the open market (10.53%). Two respondents not did not complete the question (10.53%).

Advice

As described above, the Housing Needs Survey identified 15 households in housing need who wished to live in the parish. Action in Rural Sussex advised that best practice is that Ardingly should seek to deliver up to 50% of that figure in the Neighbourhood Plan [see Appendix A].

It is therefore recommended that the Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan should make provision for 8 affordable dwellings to contribute to the local housing need.

5. Common Housing Register

The Mid Sussex Common Housing Register is a list of all the people who want affordable housing in Mid Sussex. It is a partnership between the Council and 20 housing associations that provide homes in the district. The Register is run for the Council by Affinity Sutton (previously known as Downland Housing Association).

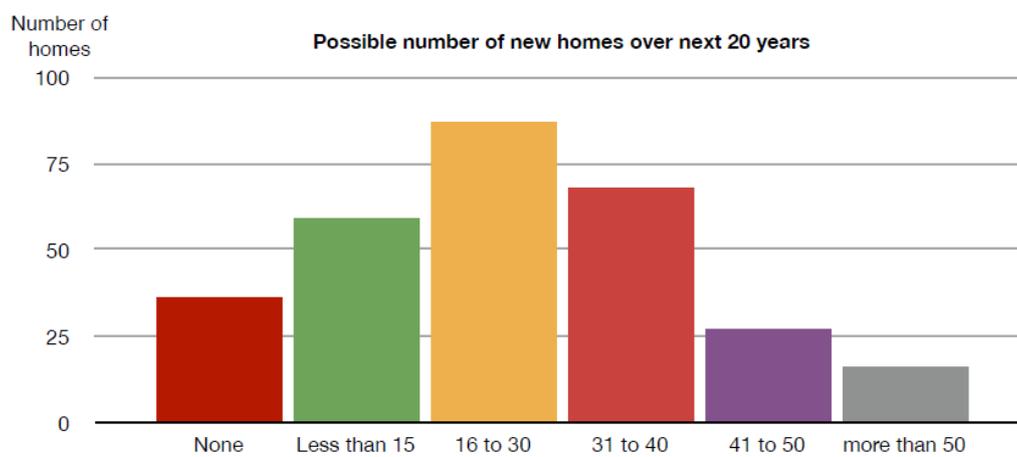
Affordable housing in Mid Sussex is owned by housing associations and provides both rented and low cost home ownership options. The Council has the right to nominate people for the

majority of housing association properties in the district and selects applicants from the Common Housing Register according to its Joint Housing Allocation Scheme with Affinity Sutton.

There are currently (as at January 2013) 19 households on the Common Housing Register in housing need (bands A, B and C) with local connections with Ardingly. There are an additional 59 households in band D who are adequately housed.

6. Village Survey, spring 2012

In the village survey of households undertaken in March 2012, respondents expressed a clear preference for a scale of growth of less than 30 dwellings over the Plan period up to 2031.



7. Strategic context

In the light of the revocation of the South East Regional Strategy, the Submission District Plan sets a district housing requirement of 10600 homes between 2011 and 2031. This will comprise the strategic housing allocation to the north and northwest of Burgess Hill, housing commitments and completions in 2011 /2012 and a further 2000 homes to be allocated through Neighbourhood Plans or other appropriate planning document (policy DP5 refers).

The District Plan aims to allow Neighbourhood Plans to reflect the individual characteristics, needs and requirements of their localities. It enables those making planning decisions to respond to changing circumstances, and take advantage of any unforeseen opportunities to promote the vision and strategic objectives of Mid Sussex. Parish Councils, in developing their Neighbourhood Plans are encouraged to enable their communities to become more self sufficient.

The District Council's preference is that the number, location and nature of housing development is identified through Neighbourhood Plans. This is essential for Mid Sussex to meet the needs of its community and Central Government targets. By identifying adequate developments, the District will be protected from development proposals outside those identified in the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plans. This reflects the Government's Localism agenda and its view that giving power and responsibility to local communities will give them the confidence to accept some appropriate development and the corresponding benefits that can come with it.

In respect of housing development in the Plan period, a further 2000 homes will need to be delivered in the District excluding the strategic development at Burgess Hill, existing commitments and recent completions. Based on the total population of the District, Ardingly's share of the District Plan's further homes would be around 27.

Appendix B sets out the Ardingly Parish Council's position in March 2012 in respect of the District Plan's housing numbers, based on the evidence available at that time from the 2006 Housing Needs Survey and Rural Issues Background Paper.

In order for affordable homes to be provided in the village, currently the terms of Mid Sussex Local Plan policy H4 will need to be met, ie in housing developments in rural settlements of 15 or more dwellings, the Local Planning Authority will negotiate to secure 30% affordable housing .

In respect of the Submission District Plan, policy DP29 states that the Council will require:

- a minimum of 30% affordable housing provision on all residential development of 4 dwellings and above,
- on developments of 1-3 dwellings, and in other circumstances where on site provision is not practicable, a commuted payment towards off site provision will be required equivalent to providing 30% on site affordable housing provision.

The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 54, states that 'local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing.'

It is considered that the approach identified here is in accordance with this guidance.

8. Village services

When considering the scale of housing growth that would be appropriate, local services also need to be taken into account. St Peter's primary school provides a key service at the heart of the community and its long term viability is a priority. It is important that Ardingly attracts young families to the village and the mix of any new housing should reflect and encourage this. At the present time some children at St Peter's primary school live outside the parish. Projected figures from West Sussex County Council show that over the next few years there will be some capacity at the school and it could accommodate children from a modest new development.

Other services available in the village include a Post Office, baker, hairdresser, Chinese takeaway, Church, pre- school, nursery school, recreation ground, playground, three pubs and a variety of community buildings including the village hall, church centre, Koorana centre and pavilion. However, there is no railway station, supermarket, health facility, doctor's surgery or secondary school, and the bus service is becoming increasingly restricted due to continuing cuts in rural subsidies, with no service in the evenings or on Sundays.

<p>No. 82 bus service: runs Monday - Saturday with six trips to Haywards Heath plus an extra bus on school days (last one leaving at 18:11) and seven trips to Crawley (last one leaving 18:54). There is no service on Sundays. Due to the timing of these buses they do not accommodate commuters.</p>

The parish has a number of major business organisations providing local employment, including Wakehurst Place, South of England Show ground and Ardingly College. These employers help to support village services such as shops and pubs. There are a significant number of employees in the village who live in housing provided with their jobs.

9. Local connection

Following discussions with MSDC Members and Officers in October 2012 and April 2013, MSDC offered to amend the Housing Allocations Scheme to restrict 50% of new affordable housing in parishes in the AONB and National Park to households with local connections in perpetuity. The remaining 50% will have the local connection restriction applied only at first letting. Subsequently the choice based letting scheme makes it likely that tenants will have a local connection to the parishes concerned.

The position agreed by Mid Sussex District Council is now close to the Neighbourhood Plan's objective:

“to contribute to meeting the identified housing need for those with local connections to the parish”

In the light of the objection from Mid Sussex District Council's Housing Manager, Policy 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan has been amended to accord with the District Council's position.

10. Rural Exception Sites

If in the future a rural exception site is proposed, this would also require a new Housing Needs Survey. If this is found to be the case, the results of the landscape appraisal and other studies will be taken into account. Policy DP30 of the proposed submission District Plan sets out criteria for the development of rural exception sites.

11. Conclusion

In the High Weald AONB, where great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty, it is important that new housing should be needs led. This means that a need for housing exists in the parish, rather than the availability of a particular site.

Taking into account the evidence from the Housing Needs Survey, limited village services, the data and the consultations outlined above, it is concluded that eight affordable homes, 50% being for local connection in perpetuity, is an appropriate figure for the Neighbourhood Plan in order to contribute to the identified local housing need. This could be provided as the affordable element of one or more market schemes providing a total of 27 dwellings. The affordable dwellings will help the village address its local housing need. In order for affordable homes to be provided within the parish, the terms of the Mid Sussex Local Plan and Submission Mid Sussex District Plan policies on the scale of sites will need to be met.

All the evidence has been carefully considered including the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to demonstrate general conformity with the statutorily adopted Mid Sussex Local Plan, proposed submission Mid Sussex District Plan and comply with national planning guidance.

References

- Ardingly Housing Needs Survey, July 2012
- MSDC Common Housing Register, January 2013
- Ardingly Rural Community Profile, 2012
- Village household Survey, Spring 2012
- Office for National Statistics 2011
- NW Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2012 Update
- High Weald AONB Management Plan, readopted 2009
- Mid Sussex Local Plan, 2004
- Submission Mid Sussex District Plan, May 2013

Appendix A

Advice regarding affordable housing

Carol Tomkins, Housing Officer MSDC, Dec 2012

“Providing 50% of known housing need on an exception site is a very rough approximation and MSDC have not rationalised or documented this anywhere. Obviously you don’t build new affordable housing for specific households, not least because it can take a long time to get planning, build out a scheme and peoples circumstances can change in this time. On rural exception sites the number of units built will often also depend on the size of site that has been secured. There is also the issue of what source of housing needs data you are looking at and whether this is a current snapshot of housing need or includes future housing need.”

Tom Warder, Housing Enabler, Action in rural Sussex, Jan 2013:

“To take up to 50% of identified housing need is the standard approach and best practice applied on these schemes. This depends on the scale of need identified and the size and nature of the site identified. Given the often long lead in times for rural projects building approximately half of the need identified offers all concerned (including the LPA) reassurance that there will be sufficient local people available to occupy the homes when they are ready.”

Deborah Dixon MRTPI, Planning Aid, Jan 2013

“It is standard practice for a rural exceptions housing scheme to aim to meet around 50% of the need that has been identified in the local Housing Needs Survey although there are no specific national housing or planning policies . This is to ensure that there is a 100% take up of the new dwellings by local people. The message to get across is that Plan making is an ongoing process and there is a requirement to monitor and reassess over a period of time.”

Appendix B

ARDINGLY PARISH COUNCIL

Mr G Marsh
District Councillor
Mid Sussex District Council
Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 1SS

Date: 7 March 2012

Dear Gary,

Input to the District Plan on Housing Numbers and Sites

Ardingly's Neighbourhood Plan is at an early development stage and the analysis of our initial consultation survey will not be available by the end of March. This response is therefore based on the Housing Needs Survey published in 2007, consultation with the village community on the Rural Issues Background Paper in 2009, and the household survey for the Village Plan [2009-10].

The Housing Needs Survey identified 11 households in housing need who wished to remain in the parish. The Common Housing Register has increased since then, and we therefore do not believe that a new Housing Needs Survey would come up with a lower figure.

We consulted widely in the village on the Rural Issues Background Paper in 2009 and it was accepted at that time that an expansion of the village envelope to accommodate up to 30 additional houses over the next twenty years was acceptable in order to meet local needs. We see no reason to change that assessment. If planning consent is granted for any site outside the built up area where proposals are pending, our view is that this should replace any other allocation for the Plan period.

The Village Plan published in 2011, identified a range of priorities and actions that are being implemented by the Parish Council. Protection of the village character was identified as one of the key priorities.

Ardingly is very restricted in possible sites for green field development by its location within the High Weald AONB, its hilltop setting, topography and land ownership. We would not wish to suggest specific sites until our Neighbourhood Plan consultation is completed.

Yours sincerely
Anne Rumble

Clerk to Ardingly Parish Council