



BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

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Planning Policy Team
Planning and Development Unit
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Dear Sirs

Biddenden – Policies S27 and S43

Biddenden Parish Council has considered both of the above-mentioned policies and agreed its formal position on policies S27 and S43 of the Ashford Borough Council Local Plan to 2030.

These policies were discussed at the parish council meeting held on 12 July 2016. It was agreed that there should be no more than 20-25 houses on the proposed S27 site, not the 45 units proposed by the Draft ABC Local Plan. Any amount over 20-25 units will be opposed by Biddenden Parish council.

ABC would seem not to have taken account of the views of Biddenden's parishioners with 45 houses being included in one development within the village. The Biddenden Community Plan gives the views of parishioners up to 2022 who agreed with the need for additional houses but identified that the majority will come from ongoing infill, and potentially one or two small developments of up to 10 houses each. 20-25 houses by 2030 is in line with this plan; 45 is not.

We note that the draft ABC Plan encourages utilising existing infrastructure, facilities and services. The development proposed does not fit with this aim.

The acceptance of 20 - 25 houses on the one plot at North Street does come with some concerns which the parish council wishes to express on behalf of the village. In addition, we also request clarification on a number of points. Both are detailed below:

Policy S27 – Biddenden – North Street

- a) *Provide a community facility building:* On the plans this is being put forward as a Drs surgery.

The Parish Council's view is that a new community building may well be of benefit to the village to replace the current facilities, but a Doctor's surgery alone is not viable given the number of parishioners in total and the 50% who already go to Doctor's elsewhere.

We would be looking for a building that could serve a range of purposes and is used by as many different groups (including the school) as possible during the day and evening. It should be situated somewhere close to the heart of the village and the other existing facilities and car parking.

As a general comment we would need to canvas as many parishioners as possible to check that a community building is the number one priority for most groups; it did get raised in the Parish Plan along with several other possibilities but no absolute data was collected about a specific plan. There may be other requirements in addition or instead of including more open spaces, a cycleway and others. We plan to seek clarification from the village.

It should not therefore be assumed that a Doctors surgery of the size and type implied is a given.

The wording of point 4.291 of the Draft Local Plan is noted as follows: *“Careful consideration must be given to the overall site layout to ensure the community facility is accessible to all, without impacting on the residential amenity of the new homes in ways such as parking and overlooking. This can be achieved by locating the community building on the northern part of the site, close to the site entrance on North Street, and providing sufficient car parking for the facility to ensure that on-street parking of its users does not adversely affect residents. The design and layout of the development should reflect the local surroundings and must take into account design guidance in the adopted Biddenden Parish Design Statement.”*

However, the comments concerning the siting of a community building in paragraph a) 3 above should be noted.

- b) *Design and layout:* Whilst the parish council agrees that any development should follow its Design Statement in order to integrate into the existing settlement, concern

exists regarding the roads. These should be of appropriate width to allow passing traffic, not single track, and with sufficient parking spaces built into the area assuming 2 cars per household as a minimum. Please clarify.

It is noted from Policy SP1, Strategic Objectives that Ashford Borough Council wishes “to create the highest quality design which is sustainable, accessible, safe and promotes a positive sense of place through the design of the built form, the relationship of buildings with each other and the spaces around them, and which responds to the prevailing character of the area.” Any development in Biddenden should comply with this.

Biddenden parish council produced a Design Statement some years ago which is still in force and available from our website www.biddenden.gov.uk. A copy of the Design Statement is attached for ease of reference.

It is very specific about the design of self-contained estates (pages 6 and 7 of the Design Plan) and there is a set of design guidelines. Any prospective developer should conform to these guidelines detailed in this document. Ashford Borough Council is in receipt of this document and any planning application should reflect its content. It is noted that in the draft Local Plan that in point 4.289 of the document it is stated that “*the new development must be designed in a way that integrates it, visually and functionally, as much as possible to the existing settlement.*”

c) *Traffic Calming in North Street:* Please could you clarify the type of traffic calming envisaged in North Street and on the development. This claim did surprise the parish council as the issue has been put forward before to the Highways Agency and has been dismissed as it is an A road. Also it is KCC policy to ensure that:

i) The emergency services and residents must be consulted (Highways Act 1980 section 90C, Road Humps Regulations 1999 Fig 3 and Traffic Calming Regs. 1999 Reg. 4) and involved at the earliest opportunity (KCC Policy)

ii) Residents must be made aware of the advantages and disadvantages of these schemes. (KCC Policy).

There has also been discussion regarding the junction of the A262 and A274 in the village. It is a cause for concern and safety of both pedestrians and vehicles and serious thought needs to be given to rectifying this.

iii) At present the only pavement adjacent to the proposed site is on the opposite side of the road. As you proceed towards the village along this pavement there is one stretch which is barely wide enough for a push chair. Arrangements would need to be provided to create a safe passage across the road to the pavement and works to the narrow section should be addressed.

Please clarify the above and that the appropriate consultation as stated would take place prior to any scheme being implemented.

- d) Another issue which came to light at a Planning Committee meeting held on 28 June 2016. It is understood that the area of land, S27, consists of an area which is locally termed as "The Paddock". This has a restrictive covenant on it restricting it to one dwelling. It is understood that permission to build has been turned down due to this in the past. Please could this be looked into and clarified to the council.

There are other issues which the council feels must be addressed if this development is to go ahead:

- i) *Sewerage/drainage/water supply*: This issue has been ongoing for residents living in this area as the pumping station cannot cope with the water and sewage often appears on existing residential development. Any further development in the area **MUST** rectify this for existing houses or make sure the new development does not impact further, operating independently of the existing structures.
- ii) *Schooling*: The local school is currently full and local schooling must be addressed.

Policy S43 – Biddenden – Priory Wood

There was concern over the possibility that given the size of the plot of land further pitches may be requested. Therefore the parish council would like the wording changed in a) to "*The total capacity of the site **should** not exceed 3 traveller pitches*".

If any development goes ahead, Biddenden Parish Council wishes, and expects, to be fully involved with the developer and the design/planning issues affecting policy S27. The matters already outlined are of great importance to the Village and the Council would like Ashford Borough Council and the developer to clarify and address these issues.

The Council looks forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely



Alison Swannick
Parish Clerk

Enc: Biddenden Design Plan (attached to email)