

Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 2024-2041

**A report to Arun District Council on the Ford
Neighbourhood Development Plan 2**

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by Arun District Council in November 2024 to carry out the independent examination of the review of the Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood area on 15 November 2024.
- 3 The Plan is a good example of a neighbourhood plan review. It proposes to bring the Plan up-to-date. It includes a variety of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. All sections of the community have been engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report, I have concluded that the Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 meets all the necessary legal requirements and should be made by Arun District Council.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
16 January 2025

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 2024-2041 ('the Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan was submitted to Arun District Council (ADC) by Ford Parish Council (FPC) in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises because of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 Both a neighbourhood plan, and a review of a plan (in this case referred to as the Ford Plan 2), can be narrow or broad in scope and can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted Plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the existing development plan. It seeks to provide a context in which the neighbourhood area can maintain its character and setting in the wider landscape.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above, this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by ADC, with the consent of FPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both ADC and FPC. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have 42 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level and more recently as an independent examiner. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 The examination process for the review of a 'made' neighbourhood plan is set out in Section 3 of this report.
- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Section 8 of this report.

Other examination matters

- 2.6 In examining the Plan, I am required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
 - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report and am satisfied that they have been met.

3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Plan.
- the Basic Conditions Statement.
- the Consultation Statement.
- the ADC SEA/HRA screening letter.
- the Ford Neighbourhood Plan (2019).
- the representations made to the Plan.
- FPC's responses to the clarification note.
- the adopted Arun Local Plan (2018).
- the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023 and December 2024).
- Planning Practice Guidance.
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 15 November 2024. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I concluded that the Plan could be examined by way of written representations. I was assisted in this process by the comprehensive nature of the representations and the professional way in which the Plan has been developed.

The examination process for the review of a neighbourhood plan

3.4 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 identifies the circumstances that might arise as and when qualifying bodies seek to review 'made' neighbourhood plans and introduces a proportionate process to do so based on the changes proposed.

3.5 There are three types of modification which can be made to a neighbourhood plan or order. The process will depend on the degree of change which the modification involves and as follows:

- minor (non-material) modifications to a neighbourhood plan or order which would not materially affect the policies in the plan or permission granted by the order. These may include correcting errors, such as a reference to a supporting document, and would not require examination or a referendum; or
- material modifications which do not change the nature of the plan or order and which would require examination but not a referendum. This might, for example, entail the addition of a design code that builds on a pre-existing design policy, or the addition of a site or sites which, subject to the decision of the independent examiner, are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan; or

- material modifications which do change the nature of the plan or order would require examination and a referendum. This might, for example, involve allocating significant new sites for development.

3.6 FPC has considered this issue. It takes the view that the proposed changes to the 'made' Plan fall into the second category.

3.7 ADC has also undertaken a separate assessment of the issue. It takes the same view as FPC on the scale and nature of the modifications to the policies in the 'made' Plan.

3.8 I have considered these assessments very carefully. I have concluded that the review of the Plan includes material modifications which do not change the nature of the Plan and which require examination but not a referendum. I have reached this decision for the following reasons:

- the new policies largely update those in the 'made' Plan and respond to recent changes in national policy; and
- the modifications to the existing policies will bring the Plan up to date to reflect changes in national and local planning policy.

3.9 In these circumstances I will examine the Plan against Schedule A2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The regulations identify that this report must recommend one of three outcomes:

- that the local planning authority should make the draft plan; or
- that the local planning authority should make the draft plan with the modifications specified in the report; or
- that the local planning authority should not make the draft plan.

3.10 Section 7 of this report assesses each policy in turn and identifies any modifications required to ensure that the policy meets the basic conditions. My recommendation is then set out in Section 8.

The update of the NPPF

3.11 The NPPF was updated on 12 December 2024. Paragraph 239 of the NPPF 2024 sets out transitional arrangements for plan-making. It comments that the policies in the Framework will apply for the purpose of preparing neighbourhood plans from 12 March 2025 unless a neighbourhood plan proposal has been submitted to the local planning authority under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) on or before the 12 March 2025.

3.12 On this basis, the examination of the Plan against the basic condition that it should have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State is based on the 2023 version of the NPPF. Plainly the Plan was submitted in 2024 in that context. Where NPPF paragraph numbers are used in this report, they refer to those in the December 2023 version.

- 3.13 Paragraph 6.2 of this report sets out full extent of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is examined.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), FPC prepared a Consultation Statement. It is proportionate to the neighbourhood area and its policies. It also sets out the way in which FPC engaged with statutory organisations.
- 4.3 The Statement records the various activities that were held to engage the local community. This process reflects the nature of the review of the 'made' Plan. It highlights that the consultation exercises were focused mainly on the consultation process on the pre-submission Plan (July to September 2023)
- 4.4 During the examination FPC revised the Consultation Statement to describe the comments received on the pre-submission Plan and how it responded to those comments. This update has helped to identify the way in which the Plan has evolved. I am satisfied that no-one was disadvantaged by the omission of this information from the submitted Statement. In addition, it was clear that FPC had already carried out the necessary assessment of the comments received.
- 4.5 I am satisfied that consultation has been an important element of the Plan's production. Advice on the neighbourhood planning process has been made available to the community in a positive and direct way by those responsible for the Plan's preparation. From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I can see that the Plan has promoted an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. ADC has carried out its own assessment that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Consultation Responses

- 4.6 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by ADC. It ended on 31 October 2024. This exercise generated representations from the following organisations:
- National Highways
 - The Hunterford No.2 Trust
 - West Sussex County Council
 - Natural England
 - South Downs National Park Authority
 - Southern Water
 - Vail Williams
 - Historic England
 - Arun District Council

- 4.7 I have taken account of all the representations in preparing this report. Where it is appropriate to do so, this report refers to representations on a policy-by-policy basis.

5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

The Neighbourhood Area

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area is the parish of Ford. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 6 December 2013. In 2011 its population was 1933 persons. Ford is located approximately two miles to the south of Arundel.
- 5.2 As the Plan describes, the parish consists mainly of high-quality arable farmland and pasture. Most of the population is centred within The Peregrines, a housing estate built in the 1980's. The parish includes HM Prison Ford and a former airfield.
- 5.3 Whilst the former airfield is not immediately apparent from the surrounding roads, it dominates the overall character and the economic well-being of the parish. It is the home to several industrial areas and the car boot sale.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The Arun Local Plan was adopted in July 2018. It sets out the basis for future development in the District up to 2031.
- 5.5 The Basic Conditions Statement usefully highlights the key policies in the development plan and how they relate to policies in the submitted Plan. This is good practice. It provides confidence to all concerned that the submitted Plan sits within its local planning policy context.
- 5.6 Policy H SP1 of the Local Plan identifies that at least 20,000 homes will be delivered in the local plan period. It identifies three strategic housing allocations in the Greater Bognor Regis area and one strategic housing allocation in Greater Littlehampton. These allocations are underpinned by other allocations in Inland Arun. Policy H SP2C sets out the details about the package of allocation in Inland Arun. They include SD8 (the Ford Strategic allocation) which will provide at least 1500 dwellings over the Plan period.
- 5.7 ADC is now working again on a review of the Local Plan following an earlier pause in 2021 and 2022. It consulted on Issues and Options between March and May 2024, and published the responses received in September 2024. Plainly this will be an important document once it is adopted. However, given that it is in its early stages, I have not given it any weight in the examination of the examination of the submitted Plan.
- 5.8 The emerging neighbourhood plan has sought to respond positively to the adopted Local Plan. The submitted neighbourhood plan has been prepared within its wider development plan context. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned existing and emerging planning policy documents in the District. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

Visit to the neighbourhood area

- 5.9 I visited the neighbourhood area on 15 November 2024. I approached it from the A259 to the south. This helped me to understand its position in the wider landscape in general, and its accessibility to Bognor Regis to the west and to the strategic road network.
- 5.10 I looked at the parts of the neighbourhood area that are most affected by the policies in the Plan. I paid particular attention to the way in which the settlement boundary had been drawn and the opportunities that it allowed for on-going infill development.
- 5.11 I saw the importance of the various employment facilities in the parish. I also saw the significance of HMP Ford.
- 5.12 I saw the significance and scale of the former airfield by driving along Rollaston Park (to its west) and along Ford Lane (to its north). I left the neighbourhood area by driving to Yapton and then onto the A27 to the north.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

- 6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped in the preparation of this section of the report. It is an informative and well-presented document.
- 6.2 As part of this process, I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
 - not breach, and otherwise be compatible with, the assimilated obligations of EU legislation (as consolidated in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023; and
 - not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

I assess the Plan against the basic conditions under the following headings.

National Planning Policies and Guidance

- 6.3 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF).
- 6.4 The NPPF sets out a range of land-use planning principles to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are particularly relevant to the Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2:
- a plan-led system - in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the Arun Local Plan;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities;
 - taking account of the different roles and characters of different areas;
 - highlighting the importance of high-quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
 - conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 6.5 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic

needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.

- 6.6 In addition to the NPPF, I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and the recent ministerial statements.
- 6.7 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance subject to the recommended modifications in this report. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area. It updates the Plan to take account of changes in national policy and emerging local policies since it was made in 2019.
- 6.8 At a more practical level, the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This was reinforced with the publication of Planning Practice Guidance. Paragraph ID: 41-041-20140306 indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise, and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.9 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. Most of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.10 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. The submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes policies for the strategic Ford allocation (Policy SA1), and a series of policies on economic development (Policies EE1-5 and EE11). In the social dimension, it includes policies on independent living (Policy LC1), on assets of community value (Policy LC3), and on the mix of housing (Policy H2). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built, and historic environment. It has policies on design (Policy H1), and on a series of environmental issues (Policies EH1-5 and 7-9). This assessment overlaps with the details on this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.11 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in Arun District in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.

- 6.12 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context and supplements the detail already included in the adopted development plan. Subject to the recommended modifications in this report, I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.13 The Neighbourhood Plan General Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 6.14 In order to comply with this requirement, ADC undertook a screening exercise in January 2023 on the need or otherwise for a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be prepared for the Plan. It concludes that the Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 6.15 ADC also undertook a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan at the same time. It assesses the potential impact of the Plan's policies on a series of protected sites
- 6.16 The HRA concluded at that time that the neighbourhood plan will not give rise to likely significant effects on these protected sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and that Appropriate Assessment is not required.
- 6.17 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination, I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. None of the statutory consultees have raised any concerns about neighbourhood plan obligations. I am satisfied that the revised screening processes have been undertaken in a correct fashion. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of neighbourhood plan regulations.

Human Rights

- 6.18 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. On this basis, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Summary

- 6.19 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. It makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 The recommendations focus on the policies in the Plan given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the submitted Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the neighbourhood area. The wider community and FPC have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in the Ford Plan 2. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (ID:41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans should address the development and use of land.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted Plan.
- 7.6 For clarity, this section of the report comments on all the policies in the Plan. It highlights the policies which remain unchanged, those which are updated from the made Plan and those which are new.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial parts of the Plan (Sections 1-4)

- 7.8 The Plan is well-organised and presented. It makes an appropriate distinction between the policies and their supporting text. The initial elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are proportionate to the neighbourhood area and the subsequent policies.
- 7.9 The Introduction (Section 1) sets the scene for the Plan. The neighbourhood area is defined on the map in paragraph 1.11. This part of the Plan explains how the Plan is organised, and advises about the way in which the community was consulted.
- 7.10 Section 2 comments about the national and the local planning contexts within which the Plan has been prepared. It also includes a Modifications Statement within the table in paragraph 2.9.
- 7.11 Section 3 comments about the neighbourhood area. Its comprehensive details underpin several of the policies in the Plan.
- 7.12 Section 4 set out the vision and nine core objectives of the Plan. The vision is as follows:

'In 2031, Ford Parish will continue to be an attractive place to live, maintaining its intrinsic rural character whilst allowing for sustainable development and improving local services. Agricultural land production will continue to be the primary land use over the larger part of the parish. The different parts of the parish will be connected through a network of cycle ways and footpaths. Local businesses and those working from home will benefit from an enhanced broadband and internet service with the ability to expand to local small start-up business premises.'

- 7.13 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

General comments on the Plan and the format of its policies

- 7.14 The Plan is a good example of a review of a neighbourhood plan. It helpfully consolidates the structure of the 'made' Plan. This results in a series of new or modified policies and the retention of existing policies in the 'made' Plan.
- 7.15 For the purposes of this report, I do not comment in any detail on the saved policies other than where they may have been affected by updates in national planning policy. In some cases, I have recommended modifications to the wording of policies in the made Plan to reflect the approach and language now taken in neighbourhood plans (which has matured since the Plan was made). This approach also includes recommending the repositioning of elements of explanatory text in some of the policies into the supporting text. I do not repeat this explanation in any detail in each policy.
- 7.16 In different ways, the representations from ADC and the Hunterford No.2 Trust question the need for the made Plan to be reviewed. I have approached this matter within the overall context of the flexibility which the Planning Acts provide for clarifying bodies on neighbourhood plans in general, and on the appropriateness and timing of any review of a made Plan. I have also taken account of the contents of Planning practice guidance (ID: 41-009-20190509) which addresses the relationship between an emerging neighbourhood plan (here in Ford Plan 2), an emerging Local Plan (here the review of the Arun Local Plan) and the adopted development plan.
- 7.17 It is common ground that the modifications proposed by FPC to the made Plan are beyond minor (non-material) modifications to the Plan which would not materially affect the policies in the plan. In these circumstances my role is to examine the Plan against the basic conditions, rather than question FPC's decision to review and update its Plan. Nevertheless, based on the contents of PPG, I have recommended in paragraph 7.162 of this report that the Plan comments about the potential need for a further review once the emerging review of the Local Plan has been adopted.

SP1 Spatial Plan for the Parish

- 7.18 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.19 The policy advises that development proposals of a minimum of 1545 new dwellings and supporting infrastructure and village centre community facilities will be supported provided that they are sited within the settlement boundary of the built-up area as defined on the Proposals Map. It also comments that proposals for the Ford airfield

site must be part of a comprehensive Masterplan as required by Policy H SP2 of the Arun Local Plan.

7.20 ADC comments that:

'The Ford Airfield Site is already a strategic allocation within the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018, and it is unnecessary for this allocation to be repeated in the Ford Neighbourhood Plan 2. Furthermore, it should be noted that outline planning permission has already been granted for housing on this site under planning application F/4/20/OUT and the draft Policy, thereby serves no meaningful purpose and reference to the Ford Airfield site should be deleted.'

7.21 I have considered this commentary carefully. I have also related it to the comments on Policy SA1 (Ford Airfield) and to FPC's responses to the clarification note. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the retention of the policy will meet the basic conditions. It does not conflict with the approach taken in the Local Plan. In addition, it provides a wider spatial strategy for the parish.

7.22 However, within this context I recommend that the wording used in the policy is consistent with that used throughout the Plan. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace 'they are sited within the settlement boundary of the built up area as defined on the Proposals Map' with 'they are sited within the built up area boundary as defined on the Policies Map'

BUA1 Built Up Area (BUA) boundary

7.23 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

7.24 The Plan advises that the defined boundary sets the distinction between the built form of Ford and the surrounding countryside and will protect the countryside from harmful development. It also comments that preventing coalescence between Yapton and Ford is important to residents and will preserve the separate identities of the two communities. Finally, it comments that the Peregrines Estate is defined within the Yapton BUAB (and as specified in the Local Plan).

7.25 ADC comments that the built-up area boundary as shown in the policies map is drawn more tightly than the built-up area boundary for the settlement as defined in the Proposals Map within the adopted Arun Local Plan. In its response to the clarification note, FPC commented that:

'The Examiner for the (made Plan) agreed with FPC that the boundary as drawn in the Local Plan should be amended to exclude land in the parish of Yapton which FPC had previously contested. ADC produced a revised BUAB Plan. The Policies map in the (submitted Plan) is clumsily drawn in the south western edge of the plan area and should reflect the agreed boundary.'

7.26 On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that FPC has taken an appropriate approach to this matter and that it is addressed in the supporting text. The presentation

of the BUAB in the Plan acknowledges that a qualifying body (here FPC) can only address development within the relevant neighbourhood area. on a broader issue, I have made a separate modification in paragraph 7.160 of this report about the legibility of the relevant map.

- 7.27 I recommend a modification to the wording used in the policy to ensure that it is consistent with the wording used elsewhere in the Plan and reflects the maturing approach now taken in neighbourhood plans. I also recommend that the policy is shown in bold text. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace ‘acceptable’ with ‘supported’

Display the policy in bold text

SA1 Ford Airfield

- 7.28 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.29 The policy comments that the area shown on the Proposals Map as SA1 (Ford Airfield) shall be developed in a comprehensive and coherent manner in accordance with the policies set out in the Arun Local Plan and in particular Policy HSP2 and Policy SD8. It also sets out a series of additional requirements
- 7.30 I note that this policy is saved from the made Plan. However, now that planning permission has been granted for the development of the former Airfield the representations raise two different potential approaches. On the one hand, ADC suggests that the policy is no longer needed. Other the other hand, the Hunterford No 2 Trust supports its retention in the Plan so that (with the contents of the Local Plan), it provides a consistent context for the determination of future planning applications and the discharge of conditions.
- 7.31 I sought FPC’s comments on these different approaches. In the response to the clarification note, it advised that:

‘it supports the comments made by the Hunterford No 2 Trust and would add that the granting of a planning application does not preclude the further submission of planning applications which would need to be determined against the policies of the Plan. In this instance, construction has not started and whilst it is accepted that this a strategic allocation in the Local Plan it was a (neighbourhood plan) allocation for many years (before ADC adopted the Local Plan)The second reason to retain it is to provide the parish with protection against speculative development. Paragraph 14(b) of the NPPF applies in this instance as the LPA cannot meet the terms of paragraphs 76 or 77. If the (neighbourhood plan) contains policies to meet its housing requirement Paragraph 14(b) applies. If it is removed from the (Plan) it no longer applies.’

- 7.32 I have considered this matter carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the retention of the policy in the Plan meets the basic conditions. I have reached this conclusion for the following reasons:

- the approach taken complements the approach taken in the adopted Local Plan;
- the policy identifies specific matters to be addressed in the master plan; and
- the approach taken is actively supported by the developer of the strategic site (and reflects its ongoing discussions with FPC).

7.33 In this context I am satisfied that the policy will contribute to the delivery of each the three dimensions of sustainable development.

EH1 Protection of trees and hedgerows

7.34 The policy incorporates material modifications which FPC considers do not change its nature. It contends that the policy is strengthened by addition of guidance on the retention of trees.

7.35 The policy is comprehensive. The Plan advises that context is that trees and hedgerows contribute to the open and pleasant feel of the Parish, its play areas, and residential properties. It also comments that the removal of trees and hedgerows to make way for development can completely change the amenities of the area and must be resisted. Loss of areas of ground cover and habitat can have a significant effect on wildlife. The revised policy incorporates new elements on hedge planting and overall Tree Canopy Cover.

7.36 The Trust comments that the proposes revisions to the policy would not contribute to the delivery of sustainable development. It specifically comments that:

'the amendments to policy EH1 would impact on overall viability and the delivery of sustainable development by introducing added costs to development. The amended policy requires hedge planting on all boundaries, and main roads tree lined with the introduction of tree protection zones with future long-term management. Overall Tree Canopy Cover (TCC), within the bounds of any new development of three or more dwellings, or commercial development of more than 100 sqm is specified to be at least 30%. All these measures could impact on the density of development, add costs to the development and impact on overall viability. Since there are no comparable policies in the Arun Local Plan, the amended policy would run the risk of taking the Plan out of conformity with the Local Plan.'

7.37 ADC suggests a series of detailed modifications to the wording used in the policy

7.38 Whilst the supporting text comments about the policy in general terms, it does not comment about any changes in circumstances which have generated the need for the revisions to the policy. I sought FPC's comments on this matter. In addition, I sought advice on the extent to which it had assessed the implications of the eighth and ninth elements of the policy on the deliverability and commercial viability of development sites in general, and the development of Ford Airfield in particular. Finally, I sought advice on the extent to which the eighth part of the policy consistent with the outline planning permission for the Ford Airfield site.

7.39 In its response to the clarification note, FPC commented that:

‘Ford PC and Ford CLT are actively engaged with the developers of the site and have played a part in the production of the Design Code for the site. This Code recognises the need to incorporate native species and native standard trees to maximise mature canopy cover across the development and the provision of parklands. The PC also took into account Para 136 of the NPPF and the DEFRA England Tree Strategy and the Building Better, Building Beautiful Report which set an ambition to see all new streets tree lined and to increase the tree canopy cover. We do not believe there is any conflict with the outline planning permission for the site.’

7.40 I have considered these different views very carefully. On the one hand, FPC’s ambitions for the protection of trees and hedges across the parish in general, and specifically on the former Airfield site are commendable. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the strategic approach for the development of the Airfield site is already captured in both the Local Plan and in the made Plan, and outline planning permission has been granted. In addition, both plans require that the detailed development and layout is delivered through compliance with a master plan. Finally, the approach taken in the submitted Plan is prescriptive, and is not supported by a viability assessment addressing its potential effects on the delivery of the strategic sites.

7.41 In these circumstances I recommend the deletion of the eighth and ninth parts of the policy. I also recommend consequential modifications to the supporting text.

7.42 I recommend a modification to the wording used in the first part of the policy so that it is consistent with the wording used elsewhere in the Plan and recognises the role of a neighbourhood plan within the wider development management process.

7.43 The eleventh part of the policy draws attention to Appendix 1 of the Plan. This explains how the policy will be implemented rather than operating as a land use policy. As such I recommend that it is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text.

7.44 Otherwise the (now saved) policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘should be refused’ with ‘will not be supported’

Delete the eighth and ninth parts of the policy

Delete the eleventh part of the policy

Delete EH1.2

At the end of EH1.3 add the deleted eleventh part of the policy

EH2 Renewable Energy

7.45 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

- 7.46 The policy comments that proposals for energy generating infrastructure using renewable or low carbon energy sources to serve individual properties or groups of properties will be supported subject to a series of criteria.
- 7.47 I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Section 14 of the NPPF and the Written Ministerial Statement – Planning: Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update (December 2023). It meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

EH3 Conserving and Enhancing Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 7.48 The policy incorporates a material modification which FPC considers does not change the nature. The policy title is amended
- 7.49 The policy advises that development affecting non-designated heritage assets should be designed to preserve and enhance the assets and to reinforce the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the parish.
- 7.50 ADC suggests that text is added to the policy regarding the former Portsmouth to Arundel Canal that crosses the parish. I have considered this matter carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I am not satisfied that such an approach is required. As FPC comments, the issue is already addressed in a Local Plan policy. In addition, Policy EH9 of the submitted Plan comments about its restoration.
- 7.51 In the round I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Section 16 of the NPPF and meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

EH4 Surface water management

- 7.52 This policy is saved from the made Plan. It is comprehensive in its nature and remit.
- 7.53 I recommend that the opening element of the policy is recast so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF and can be implemented through the development management process. Its reference to the need for development proposals to aim to reduce the overall level of flooding in the parish is unclear. I recommend that the policy should recognise the practicability of its intentions. I also recommend that the wording used in the various principles are modified so that they flow more naturally from the modified opening element.
- 7.54 Within this context I recommend that supplementary text in the principles are repositioned into the supporting text. This acknowledges that they explain the way in which the policy will be applied rather than being land use policies.
- 7.55 Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Section 14 of the NPPF and meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Wherever practicable, development proposals should reduce the overall level of flood risk. This will be achieved through the application of the following principles:

- **where appropriate, surface water management measures should ensure that the risk of flooding both on-site and downstream is not increased;**
- **where it is appropriate to do, development proposals should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as alternative to conventional drainage;**
- **any site-specific Flood Risk Assessments associated with development proposals should demonstrate that the development will be safe, including access and egress and without increasing flood risk elsewhere and reduce flood risk overall; and**
- **the avoidance of the use of culverts and/or the constriction of watercourses and their immediate environs.**

At the end of paragraph EH4.2 add:

‘Policy EH4 sets out a series of principles to achieve appropriate water management. In relation to the first principle, no development shall commence until full details of the proposed surface water drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the District Council. No building shall be occupied until the complete surface water drainage system serving the property has been implemented in accordance with the agreed details. In relation to the second principle, sustainable drainage systems on private property, whether they are private or adopted, must be approved by the District Council (having consulted the relevant SUDS Lead Local Flood Authority) prior to the commencement of development. In relation to the third principle, any proposed mitigation measure proposed as part of the Flood Risk Assessment must be deliverable and sustainable, including details for the provision of long-term maintenance and management of any new feature for the lifetime of the development.’

EH5 Grade 1, 2 and 3a Agricultural Land

- 7.56 This policy is saved from the made Plan. It seeks to safeguard the best agricultural land from development.
- 7.57 ADC suggests that the policy is modified so that it would support new development where the benefits that would arise from the proposal concerned would outweigh the need to protect such land in the long term. ADC also comments that this approach would ensure that the policy is consistent with the approach taken in other policies in the Plan.
- 7.58 I concur with ADC’s comments. The policy is very matter of fact and does not provide the flexibility for development proposals as now captured in the NPPF. I recommend that the policy is recast so that it can accommodate a further exception to those already included in the policy. In doing so I recommend that the references to permitted development and the source of the agricultural land classification are relocated into

the supporting text. This acknowledges that it describes how the policy will be applied rather than being a land use policy.

- 7.59 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals will not be supported on Grade 1, 2 and 3a Agricultural Land other than:

- **where the land concerned is allocated for development in the development plan;**
- **where the development is required for the operational needs of agriculture; and**
- **where the benefits that would arise from the development proposed would outweigh the need to protect such land in the long term.’**

Replace EH5.1 with: ‘Policy EH5 sets out to safeguard future food production, and in turn, future employment in the locality, and to maintain the rural aspect of the parish. The references to the grade of agricultural land in the policy are to those on the Agricultural Land Classification Map produced by Natural England (available on the Open Gov data website). The policy does not affect permitted development rights relating to agricultural development. The policy also acknowledges that not all agricultural development is permitted development.’

EH7 Local Gap

- 7.60 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.61 The policy comments that Within the Local Gap development will not be permitted unless it does not prejudice the openness of the local gap. The supporting text advises that the Local Gap will prevent coalescence between Yapton and Ford and preserve their separate identities. It reinforces that this issue is important to residents who do not wish to see further development extending to the west of Ford.
- 7.62 I looked at the Local Gap as best I could during the visit. I saw its important role in providing a gap/separation between Ford and Yapton (to the west).
- 7.63 ADC and West Sussex County Council comment separately about the County Council’s preferred site for the provision of a new secondary school to meet the identified education needs in the County (known as Site F) and its relationship with the Local Gap. ADC advised that:

‘The policy should be deleted in its entirety, or, in the alternative, the wording should be amended to allow for the delivery of a new secondary school site of at least 10 hectares in size within the proposed Local Gap, as an exception to the draft policy. Alternatively, a specific allocation for a secondary school could be included within the NP on the basis that it would provide the necessary infrastructure to support allocations in the both the adopted Arun Local Plan and the Ford NP.’

7.64 In its response to the clarification note, FPC commented that:

'(it) has always contested this site as a location for the Secondary School due to the Local Gap allocation and to the unsuitability of the surrounding infrastructure to support such an allocation. The preferred site of both (Ford and Yapton Parish Councils) is land owned by WSCC at Choller Farm. (FPC) do not believe that the construction of a school could do anything other than undermine the function of the gap.'

7.65 I have considered these different approaches very carefully. I am not satisfied that ADC's suggestion that the policy is deleted would be in the best interests of planning in this part of the District. Plainly the Local Gap serves a broader purpose in separating the two communities. In addition, the proposed site for the School (known locally as Site F) is the County Council's preferred location, and discussions are taking place with the landowners. In these circumstances there is no clarity on the site on which the School will proceed. In addition, there is no specific information about the potential impact of the development of a school on the openness of the Local Gap.

7.66 In all the circumstances, I recommend that the supporting text is expanded to identify that part of the Local Gap is being considered as a potential site for a new school. The text should also advise that, that if Site F is selected, the planning application will need to consider the way in which its development would comply with the requirements of the policy and the wider development plan.

7.67 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

At the end of EH7.1 add:

'West Sussex County Council preferred site for the provision of a new secondary school to meet identified education needs (known as Site F) is within the Local Gap. The requirement for a new secondary school is set out in Policy INF SP2 of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 which requires a minimum of one 6 form entry Secondary School with expansion land for a 4-form entry expansion adjacent shall be provided on a site of at least 10 hectares to serve the new growth in Arun District. Should Site F be selected as the site for the School, the planning application will need to consider the way in which its development would comply with the requirements of Policy EH7 of the neighbourhood plan and the wider development plan.'

EH8 Light Pollution

7.68 This policy includes a material modification does not change its nature. The policy wording is strengthened.

7.69 The policy comments that development proposals which detract from the unlit environments of the Parish will not be supported. It also advises that development proposals should respect the unlit environment of the neighbourhood area and take all appropriate opportunities to reduce light pollution.

7.70 I recommend that the policy is recast for two reasons. The first is to rearrange the order of the various components so that it has a positive rather than a negative focus. The

second is to break down the parts of a long policy into its separate components. In both cases this will bring the clarity required by the NPPF. The overall effect of the policy remains unaffected.

- 7.71 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals should respect the unlit environment of the neighbourhood area and take all appropriate opportunities to reduce light pollution. New lighting should conform to the highest standard of light pollution restrictions in force at the time. Security and other outside lighting on private and public premises (including floodlighting at equine establishments and on sports fields or sports grounds) should respond positively to the location of any neighbouring residential properties and safeguard their amenities.

Wherever practicable, all new roads within development proposals should not feature street lighting.

Development proposals which detract from the unlit environments of the parish will not be supported.’

EH9 Route of the former Portsmouth to Arundel Canal

- 7.72 This is a proposed new policy which reflects the current ADC policy.
- 7.73 The policy advises that when designing the repurposed Ford section of the Canal, the original canal route should be designed to complement its historic past, preserve any remaining artefacts, and land features and its history clearly shown for future generations. The supporting text advises that the former historic Hunston to Ford canal (Part of the London to Portsmouth Canal) crosses the parish. In the Local Plan the canal is protected. In addition, ADC's Active Travel Plan looks to the Canal route not only being protected but further enhanced and repurposed into an Active Travel Greenway Route. FPC fully supports this vision and requires any development to be complementary to this vision.
- 7.74 I recommend that the policy is recast so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF and can be applied through the development management process. Otherwise, it meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with: ‘In designing the re-purposed Ford section of the Canal, the original canal route should be configured in a way which complements its history, and preserves any remaining artefacts and land features.’

EE1 Support for business

- 7.75 The policy includes a material modification which FPC considers does not change its nature. The policy wording strengthened.

- 7.76 The policy comments that development proposals for new buildings for employment use or to upgrade or extend existing employment sites and retail units will be supported provided that the impact on the amenities of surrounding properties is acceptable and subject to the other policies in this Plan. It also advises that development proposals for employment uses which have a significant adverse impact on residential or public amenity should provide appropriate mitigation.
- 7.77 I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Section 6 of the NPPF. It meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the economic dimension of sustainable development.
- EE2 Retention of employment land
- 7.77 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.78 The policy comments that opportunities for employment within the District, and Ford specifically, which help to prevent the large amount of out commuting each day should be encouraged.
- 7.79 In general terms, I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Section 6 of the NPPF. However, I recommend a modification to the wording used in the policy so that it more fully acknowledges the role played by a neighbourhood plan in the planning process. I also recommend that the final sentence of the policy is repositioned into the supporting text. This acknowledges that it identifies an exception to the policy rather than being a land use policy.
- 7.80 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the economic dimension of sustainable development.

Replace 'permitted' with 'supported'

Delete the final sentence.

At the end of paragraph EE2.1 add: 'The exception to the policy will be the land specified in Policy EE11 if that policy was to be implemented.'

EE3 Protection of existing businesses

- 7.81 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.82 It comments that new residential development should be located to ensure there is no significant adverse impact from existing commercial uses by way of noise, smell or traffic. This is considered important as too often new residential properties complain about established businesses causing them to relocate or limiting their business activities.
- 7.83 I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Sections 6 and 8 of the NPPF. It meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the economic dimension of sustainable development.

EE4 Support for new commercial uses

- 7.84 The policy incorporates a material modification which FPC considers does not change the nature of the Plan. It has been updated to reflect the changes to the Use Class Order.
- 7.85 The policy has two related parts. The first offers support for changes of use for light industrial uses (Class E). The supporting text advises that further general industrial use (B2) and distribution and storage (B8) are considered inappropriate for the Parish due to the increase in heavy goods traffic they can generate. The second part offers support for tourist related accommodation.
- 7.86 In general terms the updates to the policy have been carefully considered and have regard to Section 6 of the NPPF. Within this context I recommend modifications to two parts of the policy to allow ADC to be able to apply its contents with clarity in the development management process.
- 7.87 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the economic dimension of sustainable development.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘New commercial uses which seek to provide’ with ‘Proposals for’

Replace the final sentence of the first part of the policy with: Proposals for the change of use of buildings to Class B2 uses (general industry) or Class B8 (distribution and storage) will not be supported.

EE5 Tourism activities

- 7.88 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.89 The policy advises that sustainable tourism which is appropriate to the overall character of the village will benefit the local economy but must be balanced against the need to protect the existing character of the built environment, the rural landscape and biodiversity.
- 7.90 I recommend a specific modification to the wording used in the second part of the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to ensure consistency with the language used throughout the Plan. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the final sentence of the second part of the policy replace ‘development’ with ‘Development proposals’

EE6 Communications infrastructure.

- 7.91 The policy includes a material modification which FPC considers does not change the nature of the Plan. The policy wording is strengthened.

- 7.92 The policy advises that all new residential, employment and commercial development which provides new buildings/dwellings must be designed to connect to high quality communications infrastructure. It also comments that support will be given for proposals that help to provide improved/ additional connectivity for the Parish subject to the siting, design and impact on adjoining premises, wider views, and the landscape.
- 7.93 I recommend that the first sentence of the policy (on the connection of new development to high quality communications infrastructure) is deleted given that this matter is now addressed nationally in the Building Regulations. I recommend that the supporting text is expanded to highlight this changed legislative matter. I also recommend that the second part of the policy is recast so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF and has a similar format to that of the other policies in the Plan.
- 7.94 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with: ‘Proposals that will contribute to the provision of improved and/or additional connectivity for the overall parish be supported where they respond positively to the siting, design and impact on adjoining premises, wider views, and the landscape.’

At the end of EE6.1 add: ‘The connection of new development to the internet is now controlled nationally through the Building Regulations.’

EE7 Sustainable Commercial Buildings

- 7.95 The policy includes a material modification which FPC considers does not change the nature of the Plan. The policy wording is strengthened.
- 7.96 The policy comments that all new commercial and employment development, appropriate, shall be designed to provide secure parking and storage of bicycles for customers and employees consistent with the relevant standards produced by the County Council and ADC. It also advises that where viable and consistent with other policies within this Plan, energy generating infrastructure using renewable or low carbon energy sources which are incorporated into the design of new commercial development will be supported.
- 7.97 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to this matter. Nevertheless, I recommend that the first part of the policy is recast so that it more clearly sets out its requirements. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the first part of the policy with: ‘Where it would be practicable to do so, proposals for commercial and employment development should be designed to provide secure parking and storage of bicycles for customers and employees consistent with the most up to date standards produced by West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council.’

EE9 Rural Buildings

- 7.98 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 – Examiner’s Report

7.99 The Plan advises that there are several farms within the area with buildings which could be suitable for a variety of uses appropriate to a rural location.

7.100 I recommend the deletion of 'in principle' from the wording in the policy. It brings no added value to a criteria-based policy. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Delete 'in principle'

EE10 Quality of Design of commercial buildings

7.101 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

7.102 The policy comments that proposals for new or extension or alteration of existing commercial premises must be of high-quality design, be energy efficient and designed to be in harmony with the landscape setting and contribute positively to the environment.

7.103 I recommend that the word 'must' is replaced by 'should' to recognise the role of a neighbourhood plan in the planning process. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace 'must' with 'should'

EE11 Ford Industrial Estate

7.104 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

7.105 The policy comments that proposals to relocate Ford Industrial Estate to land within the Master Plan site and re-use the land for housing would be supported once the replacement employment space has been provided.

7.106 I recommend that the word 'would' is replaced by 'will' to recognise the role which will be played by such proposals. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace 'would' with 'will'

LC1 Support Independent Living

7.107 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

7.108 The policy comments that new, converted and extended independent living and care homes will be supported within the BUA provided that the design and scale of development are in keeping with the character of the location and that the impact on the amenity of surrounding residential properties is acceptable.

7.109 I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Sections 5 and 8 of the NPPF. It meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

LC2 Healthcare facilities

7.110 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

7.111 It comments that proposals for new D1 uses, including medical facilities will be supported within the BUA. The supporting text advises that there is no medical provision in Ford.

7.112 I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Section 8 of the NPPF. It meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

LC3 Protection of assets of community value

7.113 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

7.114 The policy comments that proposals that will enhance the viability and/or community value of any property that has been included in the register of Assets of Community Value will be supported. It also advises that proposals that result in the loss of such a property or in significant harm to its community value will be resisted, unless it can clearly be demonstrated the continuing operation of the property is no longer economically viable.

7.115 In general terms the policy continues to respond positively to Section 8 of the NPPF. However, within this context I recommend that the second sentence of the policy is recast so that it more clearly sets out its purpose. I also recommend that the third sentence is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text. This acknowledges that it comments about the way in which the policy will be implemented.

7.116 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the second sentence with: ‘Proposals that would result in the loss of such a property or in significant harm to its community value will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that the continued operation of the property as community asset is no longer economically viable.’

Delete the third sentence

At the end of paragraph LC3.1 add: ‘Policy LC3 addresses this important matter. It advises that proposals that would result in the loss of such a property or in significant harm to its community value will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that the continued operation of the property as community asset is no longer economically viable. In practical terms, this would mean the site has been marketed at a reasonable price for at least a year for that and any other suitable employment or service trade uses and no interest in acquisition has been expressed. This will be a matter for the District Council to apply through the development management process.’

LC5 Camping and Caravanning

- 7.117 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.118 It comments that land allocated on the Proposals Map at the Ship and Anchor PH will be retained as a camping and caravanning site.
- 7.119 I am satisfied that the policy has regard to Sections 6 and 8 of the NPPF. It meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

LC6 Local Open Space

- 7.120 This policy includes material modifications which FPC considers does not change the nature of the Plan. The policy is amended to comment about football pitches at Arun Sports Arena.
- 7.121 The policy advises that the areas listed in Schedule A are designated as Local Open Space. It also comments that proposals for development in these areas will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development outweigh any identified harm.
- 7.122 In general terms the policy continues to respond positively to Section 8 of the NPPF. However, within this context I recommend that the wording used is modified so that it properly reflects the role of a neighbourhood plan in the planning process. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace 'permitted' with 'supported'

LC7 Contributions to new infrastructure and facilities

- 7.123 This is a new policy
- 7.124 The policy sets out a schedule of community priorities in terms of additional local facilities to be provided because of the new strategic development on the former airfield site. The policy sets out a requirement for a community centre hub of not less than 600m² containing a minimum of the following:
- a main Hall (minimum of 200m²) with storage facilities;
 - a kitchen fitted to commercial standards with bar and server;
 - six meeting rooms one with a hand basin and all with storage space;
 - a pre-school room with storage facilities, stand-alone toilets, and kitchenette;
 - toilets with two shower units;
 - parking for a minimum of one hundred cars within the complex;
 - a library facility;
 - informal parkland/open green space adjacent to the Community Centre with public seating accessible to disabled users; and
 - two new sports pitches with changing facilities.

7.125 The Hunterford (No2) Trust comments that ‘the size requirements for the community hub in LC7 are also far too prescriptive and better dealt with by reference to the adopted masterplan for the allocation.’ ADC also comments about the prescriptive nature of the policy.

7.126 In its response to the clarification note, FPC commented that:

‘(it) was informed by a report produced by Action in Rural Sussex which set out the minimum requirements for a new community hub. The PC and CLT are actively engaged with the developers of the site to bring forward the community hub in a location which would maximise its profitability (i.e. adjacent to informal playing fields) but has not yet settled upon an exact location. The intention of the policy is to try to ensure that the new hub meets the specification set out by the AiRS report as well as enshrining the need for a suitable location.’

7.127 I have considered the policy and the comments received very carefully. In principle it would be appropriate for the Plan to supplement the approach taken in the Local Plan about the delivery of community facilities. In addition, the schedule of facilities is typical of what would normally be delivered within a strategic allocation. Nevertheless, the approach taken is prescriptive and has not been tested for its effect on the financial viability of the development of the strategic site. I note the comments about the approach being underpinned by the Action in Rural Sussex report. However, that report is dated.

7.128 In all the circumstances I recommend that the policy is deleted. I also recommend that the supporting text is deleted.

Delete the policy

Delete the supporting text

H1 Quality of Design

7.129 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

7.130 The policy comments that proposals for new housing or extension or alteration of existing housing must be of high quality, and designed to be sympathetic to the local design style and contribute positively to the environment. It also advises that proposals for major development must demonstrate how they meet the policies set out in this Plan and through their Design and Access Statement demonstrate how the character of the parish will be reinforced

7.131 In the round the policy continues to take a good approach towards design. It is a good local interpretation of Section 12 of the NPPF. In this context I recommend that the three uses of must in the policy are replaced with should. This will more properly reflect the role of a neighbourhood plan in the wider planning process.

7.132 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the three uses of ‘must’ with ‘should’

H2 Housing Mix

- 7.133 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.134 It comments that proposals for new housing must deliver a range of house types and tenures including bungalows, sheltered accommodation, self-build, and shared equity properties.
- 7.135 ADC suggest that the policy should refer to the appropriate Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment (SHMAA), and the need for development proposals to be consistent with its findings. It also comments that the draft policy does not provide sufficient justification. I agree with the comments on the SHMAA, and recommend accordingly. Plainly it is important that any development proposals respond positively to the most up to date information on housing needs. This will ensure that the policy has regard to Section 5 of the NPPF.
- 7.136 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with: ‘Proposals for new housing should deliver a range of house types and tenures including bungalows, sheltered accommodation, self-build, and shared equity properties as informed by the latest Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment.’

H3 Windfall Sites

- 7.137 The policy includes a material modification which FPC considers does not change the nature of the policy. Its wording is strengthened.
- 7.138 The Plan comments that the context to the policy is that small residential developments on infill and redevelopment sites will come forward during the Plan period, and that it is important to residents that the integrity and character of the built environment is maintained.
- 7.139 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to windfall sites and has regard to Section 5 of the NPPF. Nevertheless, to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow ADC to apply its provisions through the development management process, I recommend the following modifications:
- a recasting of the open element of the policy so that it clarifies that development proposals which meet the criteria in the policy will be supported;
 - revisions to the wording used in the opening element of the policy so that they relate to the language used more generally in the Plan on the BUAB and the Policies Map;
 - revisions to criterion v so that it is consistent with the approach taken in the adopted Local Plan;
 - a recasting of criterion vi so that it better relates to the modified opening element of the policy; and
 - a recasting of criterion viii to acknowledge that a land use planning policy cannot comment about a preference for land use (or in this case the nature of

the land concerned) for windfall development. The development management system assesses development proposals on their merits. It also acknowledges that developers will not usually control a range of sites which would allow a degree of choice to be applied.

- 7.140 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the opening element of the policy with: ‘Proposals for residential development on infill and redevelopment sites within the built-up area boundary (as shown on the Policies Map) will be supported where they meet all of the following criteria:’

In v) replace ‘over 11 units’ with ‘11 homes or more’

Replace the second sentence of vi) with: ‘Proposals which would involve the arbitrary subdivision of land, or which would result in piecemeal development, will not be supported.’

Replace viii) with: ‘Wherever practicable, development proposals should use previously-developed land.’

H4 Recreational Space

- 7.141 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.142 It comments that proposals for new housing development should include good quality outdoor amenity space – either private gardens or a shared amenity area and should contribute to providing tree cover and improved biodiversity.
- 7.143 In general the policy takes a positive approach to these issues. Nevertheless, I recommend that the first part of the policy is modified so that it acknowledges that its approach may not always be practicable. I also recommend modifications to the wording used in the second element of the policy so that it better expresses its intentions.
- 7.144 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Proposals for new housing development should include good quality outdoor amenity space (either private gardens or a shared amenity area) and, where practicable, should contribute to providing tree cover and improved biodiversity.’

The amount of land used for garden or amenity space should be commensurate with the size and type of dwelling and the character of the area, and should be of appropriate utility (for play and recreation) and quality having regard to topography, shadowing (from buildings and landscape features) and privacy.’

H6 Integration of New Housing

- 7.145 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.146 It comments that proposals for new housing must ensure that the new homes are well connected to the surrounding area and visually integrated with their surroundings.
- 7.147 In general the policy takes a positive approach to this matter. Nevertheless, I recommend a modification to the wording used so that the policy properly reflects the role of a neighbourhood plan in the wider planning process. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace ‘must’ with ‘should’

GA1 Footpath, bridlepath, and cycle path network

- 7.148 The policy includes a material modification which FPC considers does not change the nature of the policy. Its wording is strengthened.
- 7.149 The policy comments that development proposals that improve and extend the existing footpath, footway, bridlepath, and cycle path network, allowing better access to the local amenities and services, to green spaces, to any new housing and to the open countryside will be supported. It also advises that the loss of existing footpaths, footways, bridlepaths, and cycle paths will be resisted. It comments that alterations and enhancements to footpaths, footways, cycle paths and bridleways must ensure that they are adequately screened and fenced from existing properties.
- 7.150 The policy takes a positive approach to these matters and has regard to Sections 8 and 9 of the NPPF. Nevertheless, I recommend that the policy is broken down into its separate component parts, and that some of the wording is modified. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals that incorporate improvement and/or extensions to the existing footpath, footway, bridlepath, and cycle path network which allow better access to the local amenities and services, to green spaces, and to the open countryside will be supported.

Development proposals which propose alterations and enhancements to footpaths, footways, cycle paths and bridleways should ensure that the resulting routes are sensitively screened and/or fenced from existing properties.

Development proposals which would involve the loss of existing footpaths, footways, bridlepaths, and cycle paths will not be supported.

GA2 Parking and new development

- 7.151 This policy is saved from the made Plan.

- 7.152 The Plan advises that the context to the policy is that the way in which car parking is designed into new residential development will have a major effect on the quality of the development.
- 7.153 I recommend modifications to the two separate parts. The recommendation in relation to the first part results in a more general policy rather than one related to residential development (and which comments about garages). Plainly the provision of a garage would contribute to meeting local parking standards.
- 7.154 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

Development proposals should include off street parking consistent with the current local standards. Wherever practicable, vehicle parking should be accommodated within the development site concerned.

Development proposals that would reduce the amount of off-street parking currently available will only be supported if they make appropriate provision for equivalent off-street parking nearby. Parking spaces provided in connection with such proposals should be made available in perpetuity

GA3 Streets and Access Ways to serve new development

- 7.155 This policy is saved from the made Plan.
- 7.156 The Plan advises that the context to the policy is that the design of streets can help to make residents feel safe and in control of their environment. Improvements in safety for users can be achieved by reductions in speed.
- 7.157 I recommend modifications to the wording of the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF. I also recommend that the final element of the policy is relocated into the supporting text. Traffic speed is a highways matter rather than a land use issue. Furthermore, the design of residential streets is appropriately addressed by the three remaining elements of the policy. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace policy with:

'New residential streets and access ways should be designed with appropriate emphasis on pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles.

Quieter streets should be designed to be suitable for a range of social activities, such as children's play.

Wherever practicable, building frontages should overlook streets and other routes.'

Replace paragraph GA3.1 with: ‘The design of streets can help to make residents feel safe and in control of their environment. Improvements in safety for users can be achieved by reductions in speed. 20mph will generally be the maximum design speed that is considered appropriate for new streets within the residential development.’

Other Matters - General

- 7.158 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the supporting text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly because of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan because of the recommended modifications to the policies. Similarly, changes may be necessary to paragraph numbers in the Plan or to accommodate other administrative matters. It will be appropriate for ADC and FPC to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly.

Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies and to accommodate any administrative and technical changes.

Other Matters – Specific

- 7.159 ADC has made a series of helpful comments on the Plan. I have included them in the recommended modifications on a policy-by-policy basis where they are required to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 7.160 I also recommend other modifications to other elements of the Plan based on ADC’s comments insofar as they are necessary to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions. In the main they bring clarity to maps in the Plan.

The Policies Map should be provided at a more readable scale and the BUAB should be more clearly shown on the Map;

The Policies Map legend should be made clearer by using different colours; and

On Plan 8 the numbers should be shown more clearly. In addition, there is a number 10 that is not listed in the key.

Monitoring and Review

- 7.161 Section 1 of the Plan addresses the monitoring and review of the Plan in a very positive way. It acknowledges that the ongoing review of the development plan is now a fundamental element of the planning system.
- 7.162 Paragraph 1.13 anticipates a further review of the Plan. This would be best practice. In this overall context, I recommend that it comments that FPC will consider the need for the full or partial review of Plan 2 within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan. Plainly this will be a key stage in the update of the development plan. In addition, this approach will provide assurance to all concerned that the neighbourhood plan will remain up-to-date and relevant.

At the end of paragraph 1.13 add:

'In this broader context, the adoption of the Arun Local Plan Review will be a key stage in the update of the development plan. The Parish Council will consider the need or otherwise for the full or partial review of the Ford Plan 2 within six months of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan Review.'

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2041. It has been carefully prepared to refresh the Plan and to address changes in national and local planning policy which have arisen since the Plan was made. It is a good example of a local community refreshing its neighbourhood plan.
- 8.2 Following my independent examination of the Plan, I have concluded that the Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.
- 8.3 The recommended modifications refine the wording of certain policies. Nevertheless, the submitted review of the Plan remains fundamentally unchanged in its role and purpose.

Conclusion

- 8.4 I conclude that Arun District Council should make the submitted Ford Neighbourhood Development Plan 2 with the modifications specified in this report.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth manner.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
16 January 2025