

## Salehurst & Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Development Plan (SRNDP)

### Site Presentations

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## INTRODUCTION

The SRNDP Group in its desire to create a Neighbourhood Plan which passes all the necessary tests and therefore can be the planning blueprint for the future of the village to 2028 has to at this stage remains absolutely neutral in gathering evidence which it will then be able to put to the whole parish in a complex questionnaire planned for September 2015.

Housing allocation is a key component of the plan and the group started this process with a local call for sites.

The 'Call for Sites' is an early opportunity for individuals and organisations to suggest sites within Salehurst and Robertsbridge for development. The site suggestions received by us will be used to inform the preparation of the Allocations of Land and Site Development document. The call for sites exercise will not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development.

The next step was to invite those interested (potential owner or developer) to a present their proposals to the group and this was done over a series of evenings and facilitated by Moles Consultancy as an independent moderator. The outcomes section of this document gives the summary of this exercise.

A further engagement is scheduled, where the group has invited expressions of interest from all known developers or owners to be present at the exhibition on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2015. There will be opportunity for everyone to look at the proposals and for them to fill in a preliminary comment sheet. These comments will also form part of the evidence base we are creating along with the questionnaire referred to earlier, which we will use to formulate our initial draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. There will be various consultation events throughout the process.

## **BACKGROUND**

Rother District Council did a full SHLAA exercise in 2013 which identifies their selection and judgement of sites. The primary role of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is to identify sites with potential for housing development, assess their housing potential and estimate when they are likely to be developed.

The SHLAA is a useful evidence base document to use as a baseline but neighbourhood development plans will review these and also look at other sites which locally become available and build upon this prior to assessing all the reasonable alternatives as part of the site allocation.

Please note, that no decision has been taken to allocate any sites at this stage.

## **OUTCOME**

The findings of the presentation events and those representations emailed to us, are summarised in the table below.

This work has been independently and impartially facilitated by Moles Consultancy. The aim is to engage with owners and developers to understand their aspirations for particular sites. This exercise is a key part of assessing land availability which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. It is important to note that these discussions are not binding and any commercial sensitivity will be treated as agreed with the parties.

This does not represent the final outcome of consultation with developers/land owners and there will be further opportunities to ratify inconsistent information gathered through this exercise and ensure all potential sites that could come forward have been identified.

Site ID	Summary of site	Analysis overview
Country craft / market site	<p>Detailed planning application was sought in 2008 for 9 flats and ground floor office plus 17 parking spaces and 3 shared ownership dwellings.</p> <p>They had been given a grant by Rother to make it viable but never got to the point of being able to develop the scheme.</p> <p>After various delays they repaid the grant plus interest in March last year.</p> <p>The new proposal looks to provide 7 units.</p>	<p>The developer is probably not intending to wait for the SRNDP due to the proposals being further advanced. Site capacity and parking standards are key issues.</p>
Pound Platt (track that leads to but not the house - Part of SHLAA RB14)	<p>½ an acre of land being promoted to produce 6 starter home.</p>	<p>Right of way discussions with adjoining owner who is also interested in developing their site, needs to be undertaken.</p> <p>Flood risk mitigation is key for delivery. The site has access constraints which will need to be resolved as part of its viability assessment.</p>
Mill Site (SHLAA RB9a)	<p>The SHLAA focuses attention towards commercial uses, but allows limited residential development. The site has been vacant for many years. AONB location.</p>	<p>The developer has not spoken to neighbouring property owners regarding the proposal. Further discussion required regarding a footpath linking the development to the village.</p> <p>Little references made to the heritage assets.</p> <p>The indicative layout seems to seriously compromise the setting of the assets, especially the main mill building.</p> <p>Further thought required with regards to the layout and siting of the properties, the design/appearance of the properties and the way that they interact. The layout appears to pay little attention to the listed buildings, which should be the stars of the show. At the moment, the properties are located too close to the listed buildings.</p>

		<p>Further detail should be provided as to the materials proposed.</p> <p>Areas of flood zone 2 and 3 along southern and western sections of the site pose a constraint on the development. Environmental enhancement and mitigation measures to be investigated.</p>
<p>Grove Farm – Land adjacent to Grove Farm and South East of Salehurst C E Primary School (SHLAA RB2, RB5, RB4, RB7a, RB7r and RB3).</p>	<p>Large site which benefits from close proximity to the built up area.</p> <p>Phase 1: 35 units (site in the 2006 LP application this year)</p> <p>Phase 2: 67 units (through SRNDP)</p>	<p>There was uncertainty regarding the potential to accommodate a medical facility.</p> <p>Much more work is required regarding the listed barn. The only real reference was to the cost required to restore it (£500,000). Little or no interest has been taken in what could be a valuable asset for the development.</p> <p>The design of the properties presented has the potential to appear rather 'generic' so a design more fitting with the village will need to be developed. Heritage requires further thought. Not only in respect of how the barn will be developed and used, but also the impact of the development on the setting of the asset.</p> <p>Greater certainty is also required with regard to the potential GP surgery as well as the parking and design of the properties.</p> <p>Green space buffer to A21 is necessary to mitigate landscape impact. Landscaping is therefore a key element. Traffic management and surface water flooding and drainage needs to be mitigated.</p>
<p>Robertsbridge Working Man's Club</p>	<p>The club building is a 100 year old wooden structure and is home of the local football team and other clubs for the village.</p> <p>The site is larger than needed to continue its functions.</p> <p>These could continue in a new building at this site, or on an alternative site, close to the</p>	<p>The club is very early in the process of considering how to treat the site. However, the works are an attempt to improve the facilities offered to the village. It is hoped that the proposal will be part of a scheme to save the club. The club wants to provide a sustainable village asset.</p> <p>The short-term aim is to increase the membership of the club as well as bookings for the venue.</p> <p>The medium-term aim is to redevelop the site and/or find an alternative site from which to trade. However, a suitable alternative site would be tricky to find in such a good location.</p> <p>Access and parking issues are key to the development of such a site.</p>

	village centre.	
Bishops Lane site (Devine Homes)	<p>3.1 ha. Two sites divided by a hedgerow. 2 acres being promoted for developing with the additional land for landscaping/buffer owned by the owner.</p> <p>Approximately 40-50 units being proposed.</p>	<p>The site has a planning history – it was rejected in 2005 plan as sufficient land was identified.</p> <p>Detailed information was submitted to the council.</p> <p>The SHLAA rejected the site on landscape grounds. However, the developer questions this. As a consequence, has commissioned an independent assessment.</p> <p>The site is accessible/sustainable from the centre /train station .....</p> <p>Access from Bishops Lane. The principal of access has been established following correspondence with ESCC.</p> <p>Potential increased cycle and pedestrian access.</p> <p>The footpath diversion could be problematic as it was suggested that the local people would want it to stay where it currently is. The developer argued that the gift is to provide a more picturesque approach.</p> <p>A highways consultant is probably needed as part as the deliverability assessment of this site.</p>
Slides Farm	<p>Only part of the land in their ownership is promoted for development.</p> <p>1.3 ha for consideration.</p> <p>Additional 1.5 acres for additional housing or green areas. 45 houses based on 30 houses per hectare plus an additional 15% of which 40% is affordable.</p>	<p>Farming restriction lifted on the property in 2003.</p> <p>Can be affordable, although it is not know if this would be viable.</p> <p>The landowners would consider linking with other plots of land.</p> <p>Transport: open up North Bridge Street to enable traffic to travel through it.</p> <p>Potential north bound access</p> <p>Existing green trees and hedges would be retained.</p> <p>The development would only be visible from a few properties.</p> <p>The landowner stated that they would look at the contours of the land to identify the most suitable part of the site and this would be a good exercise to undertake as well as considering the site boundary.</p> <p>There have been no discussions with neighbouring landowners and this is needed especially to resolve potential access issues.</p>

<p>Mountfield (SHLAA RB13west)</p>	<p>2 acres are promoted for development. Additional and for landscaping.</p>	<p>SHLAA identified site. The promoted site adjoins a neighbouring SHLAA site, which is not considered as favorably.  Access issues were raised by the committee: the Heathfield Gardens access is from a cul-de-sac which is believed to be highways land.  The promoted believes that access would be easier from Georges Hill via RB13 east land. However, it is considered that highways would not like this approach. The landowner of RB13 east has indicated willingness to work with this promoter.  The promoter would be willing to appoint a highways consultant if the site is seen to be favourable.</p>
<p>Land West of Johns Cross Road  <b>(response emailed)</b></p>	<p>Land is situated West of John's Cross Road, from the houses to the south of Heathfield Gardens and extends south to Browns Farm and West to the land owned by the Mountfield Court Estate. The SHLAA has referenced 'RB13east' that sits on part of the land.</p>	<p>Response emailed from the land owner and quantum unknown at the moment.  Possible access issues to be resolved.  Landscape impact assessment will be a key issue.</p>
<p>Land at Northbridge Street  <b>(response emailed)</b></p>	<p>The site is identified in the SHLAA as part of a larger area, along with land to the north and north east, see RB14.</p>	<p>The access is narrow and as such additional land may need to be acquired in order to bring this up to standard. The site is not within the Flood zone, although part of the existing access is.  The site is slightly sloping with the land higher than some neighboring sites. Landscaping measures could however be introduced to mitigate impact on surrounding sites.  The boundaries are generally marked by mature trees and shrubs, creating a natural boundary and screening.  The site is small scale and as such there would be limited impact on local facilities however S106 contributions would be discussed at a later stage. At least some of the housing would be for starter homes, or small units for</p>

		independent elderly members of the population, providing a community benefit as this form of housing is currently in short supply.
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## CONCLUSION

All the initial site investigation work being done by the group aims to identify as many sites with housing potential in and around as many settlements as possible in the study area. As a minimum, the aim is to identify sufficient specific sites for at least the first 10 years of a plan, from the anticipated date of its adoption, and ideally for longer than the whole 15 year plan period.

Next steps will involve carrying out an assessment to identify land for housing and assess the deliverability and developability of the sites.

The Assessment is an important evidence source to inform plan-making, but does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for housing development. The Assessment findings will be particularly relevant at the issues and options stage of plan preparation.

An objective assessment of the sites suggested will be carried out. This could include site survey work and may lead to a further request for information. A range of sustainability criteria will be developed in order to filter or sieve out those sites that do not deliver the aims and objectives of the SRNDP and the Core Strategy, or that are inconsistent with the overall spatial strategy.

The most appropriate and deliverable sites will be taken forward in the Plan and comments on these sites will be invited when this information is available. We will consider how to carry out the assessment before publishing the assessment methodology and this may involve further consultation with stakeholders in the form of a consultation/workshop event.