

## **Freedom of Information Request Relating to Proposed EDF development 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019**

1. Why a decision was made to ignore clauses (d) and (e) of Policy ASW1 to the AWNP of March 2016, namely that *a proposal for development will only be permitted where*
  - *(d) it would maintain the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the Built Up area, and*
  - *(e) it demonstrates good quality design, which respects the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area.*
  
2. Why a decision was made to ignore clauses (a), (b), and (c) of Policy ASW 14 of the AWNP of March 2016, namely that *All proposals will be expected to identify how they address the local surroundings and landscape context by*
  - *(a) Using design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings with reference to the Character Assessment, and*
  - *(b) Demonstrating that the design of the particular development has addressed and protected the positive features of the character of the local area and*
  - *(c) Using materials which are compatible with the materials of the host or surrounding buildings*
  
3. Why and how a decision was made that 50+ units was suitable for the EDF site, and that the figure should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan

In all three cases we would like to see minutes or any other records of meetings where these decisions were reached, including the names of all those present at those meetings.

## **Response 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

- 1 and 2. No decision has been made by Ashurst Wood Village Council to ignore the Neighbourhood Plan policies referred to with regard to the proposal to develop the former EDF site. The site is the subject of a current planning application to which the Village Council has responded as statutory consultee. The Village Council's response recommends refusal of the application on the grounds that it does not comply with a number of policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. The response can be viewed on MSDC's website: <http://194.165.12.101/AnitePublicDocs/00587082.pdf>  
The planning application will be determined by Mid Sussex District Council as local planning authority.
  
3. The Neighbourhood Plan, which included an allocation of approximately 50+ houses to the EDF site, was drafted by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and approved by the Village Council.

Decisions regarding the allocation of the site and its capacity were made following an extensive process which is outlined in the *Report on the Assessment of Potential Housing Sites* dated December 2014: <https://ashurstwoodpc.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/site-assessment-report-05-12-14.pdf>

The site was visited in December 2013 and February 2014.

The Steering group took account of feedback from a public consultation event in November 2012, and a sites consultation event on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2014 (which the landowner attended with draft site layouts showing potential developments of 70+ units). Material from the consultations is available on the Village Council's website.

An assessment of the site (which covers both the EDF site and the neighbouring Wealden House site) was carried out by MSDC in 2013. This was taken into account by the Steering Group when assessing the site. It can be seen on the Village Council's website: <https://ashurstwoodpc.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/msdc-hsd-assessments-2013.pdf>

The Steering group was advised throughout by an independent Planning Consultant, Ann Skippers.

The Steering Group met on the following dates to prepare site assessments: 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014, and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014. There are no Minutes as all the relevant information is contained in the published site assessments.

Members of the Steering Group who were involved in site assessments were Cllr Jenny Forbes, Cllr Margaret Bussell, Cllr Rob Bright, Cllr Jonathan Samways, Robert Lewin, Steve Coomber and Di Bright.

Members of the Steering Group met with Mark Bristow from MSDC on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014. They also met with Mark Bristow and Andrew Marsh as well as Ann Skippers on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014. The draft Plan (including the site allocations) was discussed at these meetings. No Minutes were taken.

The draft Plan together with supporting documents (including the *Report on the Assessment of Potential Housing Sites*) was published for consultation from the 28<sup>th</sup> January to the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015 (The Regulation 14 Consultation). A further public consultation took place from the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015 to the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (the Regulation 16 Consultation).

The Plan was examined by an independent Examiner who reported that it met all the legal tests and that its content was fit for purpose. The Examiner's report is on the Village Council's website: <http://www.ashurstwood-vc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NP-EXAMINERS-REPORT.compressed.pdf>

On the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016, The Village Council formally confirmed its support for the Neighbourhood Plan, following receipt of the Examiner's report and prior to the Referendum.

At a Referendum held on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016, residents voted to approve the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan and to confirm that it should become a formal planning document.