

LNP Regulation 14 Consultation

Summary of Responses Received – General Overview

A final total of 94 responses were collated once the submissions were verified and where individuals sent in more than one response, the comments were amalgamated. These amendments were made after the responses were allocated a reference number, therefore the reference numbers 44 and 45 are blanks as their responses are included elsewhere.

This is an initial summary of all the consultation responses. It has been compiled by the members of the Steering Group and the formal response as to how they will be used for the next stage of the LNP will come next.

There responses were incredible varied and wide ranging. Some comments were not specifically related to the LNP and any reference to individuals home locations or personal comments about others have been redacted. The full set of the comments will be published on the website along with this summary sheet. Some of the submission will be uploaded separately, such as the Statutory Consultees, like the Utility Providers.

1. Vision and Objectives

38 of the 94 respondents made no comment on this section. 33 responses agreed with or supported the vision and objectives as set out in the plan and a further 9 provided a qualified support with suggestions as to how the plan could be improved. These suggestions were mostly about the traffic or roads, an issue which a neighbourhood can't really address but others included suggestions for housing mixes on the sites, infrastructure delivery and increasing housing densities within the village which could be considered.

14 responders did not support the neighbourhood plan in its current form, most of these were solely based on the objection to any building on the green belt.

2. Policies

2.1 Character and Heritage Policies

Only 50 of the 94 consultation respondents submitted any views about these policies. About half were fully in support of the intention of the policies, providing evidence that they had understood that they can only influence the development going forward. There was support from the same respondents to the intention of the policies to preserve the existing character

of the village and that any new development had to be in keeping with the best parts of the village not necessarily the less well-designed parts.

Whilst a slightly smaller number of respondents did not agree with or support these policies, they were clearly aligned to their opinion that Lingfield should not have any more housing, rather than objecting to the actual policies.

Several respondents suggested the housing densities should be increased inside the village boundaries with the development of more flats. The character policies are designed to maintain the "village" feel by not having higher buildings like only having town houses or flats but keep them in scale with their surroundings, but it does offer some scope for amendments in policies.

The use of Star Fields for housing was mentioned several times in this section but any NP would have to be in compliance with national policy and the protections for Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets is on planning balance often considered more valuable than green belt designations when that authority has a shortage of housing land supply. Many respondents may not be aware that the Star Fields site is also fully in the green belt.

2.2 Environment and Climate Change Policies

There were a total of 94 responses to the consultation. Of these, 25 were generally in support of the Environment & Climate Change policies set out in Section 5 of the consultation document, while 20 were concerned about one or more of them and five either had no opinion or did not make it clear whether they supported the policies as set out or not. The remaining 44 responses did not comment on these policies.

A number of the comments were very extensive, raising a number of points, some in great detail and relating to very specific issues. Rather than covering each of these individually, they have been summarised under the general headings given in the paragraphs below.

The two topics that raised the most concern were; flooding and water/flood risk management; and the environment and bio-diversity, each of which was mentioned in 10 of the responses. Several of the responses that mentioned flooding emphasised that the risk and extent will increase as the climate changes. They were also concerned that this will be exacerbated by any future development unless great care is taken to ensure that effective water storage and drainage arrangements are installed – a number of the responses were concerned that this would not happen. The responses concerned about the impact on the environment and on biodiversity raised various issues, including the loss of existing habitats and of both common and rare trees, plants and animals. There was also a suggestion that an

amendment showing how Lingfield intends to improve biodiversity and encourage re-wilding in the local area be added.

Seven of the responses mentioned concerns about climate change and sustainability, with some emphasising the need to ensure these are properly taken into account in new buildings and supporting the aim to improve energy efficiency in existing ones. Concerns about the impact on wildlife were also mentioned in seven of the responses, while concerns about the impact that development would have on traffic levels and road safety were mentioned in five of them. One response raised the issue of aircraft noise and the effect this would have on sites along the Newchapel Road, also mentioning the possible effect of the proposed second runway at Gatwick.

Eight of the responses raise concerns about the impact of the proposals on the Green Belt in relation to the LNP's Environment & Climate Change policies. They are not alone, however; a further 13 responses (making 21 altogether) also mention this but in relation to other sections of the LNP. Indeed, some of the response suggest very vehemently that no development on the Green Belt should be permitted at all. This raises the question as to whether the final version of the LNP should include a policy on development in the Green Belt, covering the reasons for doing this and the safeguards that will be put in place.

2.3 Infrastructure and Development Policies

Of the 94 completed submissions, 35 did not make any response to this section and 5 had no comment to make. One response was unconnected to these policies. However, 32 respondents made supportive comments either agreeing with, or strongly agreeing with the proposed policy. 21 respondents raised concerns that the infrastructure may not be put in place first or that it might be insufficient to cope with any increased demand. Some raised valid points about finding sufficient staff for the surgery or schools, for example. The linking of infrastructure projects to specific sites, like the right of way across the south of the village, were praised and suggestions for other projects, like sports facilities are noted.

2.4 Local Economy Policies

Of the 94 responses submitted to the consultation, there were 29 comments in support or strongly in support of these policies. Importantly, many of these emphasised the desirability of maintaining the shopper's car park in Gun Pit Road. 5 respondents expressed dissatisfaction about the existing mix and appearance of businesses currently in the village and only 3 objected specifically to the policies as being inappropriate. The remainder of the

responses were left blank or were complaints about the lack of parking enforcement or the street furniture.

3. Proposed Allocated Sites

3.1 Lingfield House

There were some 86 entries to assess. Some respondents expressed themselves simply as opposed or in favour of development of the site. Others offered commentary and explanation that allowed a conclusion to be drawn as to whether they were, on balance, in favour or opposed. In some cases, responses were conditional, usually relating to capacity at the surgery or to the focus on retirement homes.

Of these, 36 were judged to be overall opposed to development of the site and 30 judged to be overall in favour. There were 16 returns without comment, 2 that were ambivalent, 1 duplicate and 1 unclassifiable.

Those opposed to development focussed primarily on the increased pressure on the surgery and on traffic issues. There was also objection in principle to building on the Green Belt, the risk of further development adjacent to the site and the visual impact of development.

The concerns about the surgery reflected the existing capacity problems at the surgery and the prospect that a site providing for retirement homes would exacerbate them. They were common to both opponents of the proposed development and supporters. Respondents were aware of the consent for new retirement homes at the St Piers site and the additional pressure on the surgery that that would bring. Responses pointed to the existing and St Piers sites and questioned the need for further supply of retirement homes.

There was a lack of confidence that developers would deliver on commitments to support additional capacity at the surgery, especially in the long-term.

Several respondents pointed to the road access to the site and identified issues that would be created by increased traffic on a busy road.

In several cases, criticism of the proposed development of the site reflected the focus on retirement homes, rather than site itself. In other cases, support for the site was subject to concern about the impact of an increased retired population on the surgery.

Those who supported development of the site saw it as convenient for the centre of the village, physically unobtrusive and providing a response to the

need for retirement homes. In several cases, support was conditional upon increased capacity at the surgery. Some accepted the arguments that retirement homes would free up housing for others and would support village shops and facilities.

Overall, the balance of responses was opposed to the development of Lingfield House for retirement homes. In previous rounds of consultation, there was support for the site, although at earlier stages, the intention to provide exclusively retirement homes was absent. The current consultation has seen a campaign to oppose the site and this has no doubt impacted on the balance of the response.

3.2 Garth Farm

Of the 94 consultation responses, 23 made no comment at all about housing for Garth Farm in the section on sites. However, 44 of the responses expressed support for the site, mainly for the reason it is a “brownfield site” but some were supportive of the LNP proposing housing sites in very general terms to either deliver the housing and infrastructure needed but also to have the option of “selecting” where the housing should go.

There were 26 responses against the development of this site, citing reasons such as the difficult access for pedestrians into the village, additional congestion at an already difficult location on the road into the village and concerns as to the extra pressures on the surgery and school. The strongest objections were from those who were opposed very strongly to any additional housing for the village or building on the green belt in principle.

There was support expressed for the proposal to provide smaller family homes with gardens and the possibility of some being at prices which would be heavily discounted for people with local connections, including to purchase, was considered favourably.

The LNP should continue to support this site and to try to ensure that a mix of homes to meet local needs for discount rent or purchase be included in the provision. This will involve discussions with the developer to provide the right balance whilst covering the cost of clearing the site.

3.3 Land to the southwest of Newchapel Road (Barge Tiles)

There were 94 individual responses to assess. Some respondents expressed themselves simply as opposed or in favour of development of the site. Others offered commentary explanation that allowed a conclusion to be drawn as

to whether they were, on balance, in favour or opposed. In some cases, responses were conditional, usually relating to housing numbers.

Of the 94, 42 (45%) were judged to be overall opposed to development of the site, based mainly on traffic and environmental factors and 22 (23%) judged to be overall in favour. There were 25 returns without comment and 4 that were in favour if conditions are met, which are housing density restrictions, cycle path, pedestrian crossing, covenants for affordable housing. 2 responses contained comments about traffic, the surgery and greenbelt which, on balance, were probably against.

Those opposed to development focussed primarily on the traffic (10), wildlife (7), not building on greenbelt (7), flood risk (5), Infrastructure and pressure on the surgery (5) housing density (5) views (4). There was also objection based on the risk of further development adjacent to the site (2).

A few comments, for and against, wanted provision for social housing.

Most of the responses which supported the site did not make further comment although some were keen for the site to provide affordable housing. Some were very supportive feeling that the site would provide connectivity and green corridors. There was acceptance of needing to take our fair share of housing and that this site would provide a contribution to additional capacity at the school. One response in support felt that the site would be handy for people to walk into the village and one response against the site said it was too far to walk to the station.

3.4 Pitts Barn

The development at Pitts Barn would be different to the other four sites considered in that it is significantly further out from the centre of the village and would be for self-build houses only. Of the 94 responses assessed 39 were against the suggested development, with four of these being very strong in their rejection of it, while 27 were in support. 20 of the remainder expressed no opinion and there were eight who either didn't object or didn't make it clear whether or not they supported the proposal.

The most common reason for objecting to the development was the impact it would have on the traffic in Newchapel Road. There were 10 such objections, with several of them pointing out that the road has a number of sharp bends with poor sight lines. There was also concern that the pavements are narrow, potentially putting pedestrians at risk. The next most common reason was that part of the site would be subject to flooding, mentioned six times. This was followed by concerns about the distance of the site from the village and the suspicion that the scheme would not be affordable for local people, both of which were mentioned five times.

Four of the responses were worried about the impact development on this site would have on the local wildlife, while the fact that it is located in the Green Belt was also mentioned four times, as was the concern that it would not be possible to rely on solar panels alone, implying that a power supply would need to be provided. One response suggested that a mains drainage system would need to be installed, another was concerned about the effect the scheme would have on the character of the village, one more about its effect on local views and the last one about its impact on the local surgery.

There was quite strong support for the self-build concept, which was mentioned in seven of the responses, and for the scheme's environmental sustainability and its emphasis on eco-housing, together mentioned four times. The other reasons given for supporting the development were that it would have good access to the village and that it would include provision for key workers, both of which were mentioned twice, and that it would have limited visual impact, mentioned once.

3.5 Unallocated Site - Star Fields

A total of 94 responses were assessed, with 47 (exactly half) stating that they were against the development of Star Fields and of these 12 were very strong in their rejection of the site. Of the remainder, 39 made no comment either in support of or objecting to such development, one gave reasons for and against it but didn't express an opinion, while seven positively supported it.

The main reasons given for supporting the development were its proximity to the station (mentioned four times) and to the village (three times) and the resulting ease of access to them. Two respondents felt that the development would make the footpath from The Star to the station safer to walk along, either because the surface would be improved or because it wouldn't be so isolated, while two thought that the village boundary would not be extended and felt this would be an advantage.

Most of the supportive responses were relatively short, while several of those against were significantly longer. This is reflected in the number of reasons given for opposing the development. The main ones were the interference with the Conservation Area (mentioned 11 times) and the impact it would have on the overall character of the village (also mentioned 11 times). A similar but slightly different concern (mentioned 9 times) was the effect the development would have on the setting of nearby mediaeval or historic buildings.

The next most frequently mentioned concern was the impact the development would have on traffic in the neighbouring roads, both Station Road and Town Hill, which was raised five times. This was followed by the effect it would have on the view (mentioned four times), which would be

most significant went travelling from Dormansland past the racecourse, and by the fact that it would be on land in the Green Belt (also mentioned four times).

Two respondents pointed out that part of the site is subject to flooding and were concerned about the impact the development might have (noting that Station Road already suffers from serious surface water flooding), while two were worried about the impact it would have on the local infrastructure, notably the school and the surgery. Finally one person was anxious that the footpath from The Star to the station would be adversely affected and one was dismayed at the effect the development would have on the local wildlife.

3.6 General Comments about Sites

Some respondents made general comments about the proposed allocated housing sites, rather than specifically about each of them. This section picks up those comments if they hadn't commented on the specific sites. 16 of the comments raised strong objection to green belt sites being considered, although some of these stated that they felt that brownfield sites were acceptable. There were 28 comments in support of the proposed allocations, mostly on the principle they were the "least-worst" alternative to all the possible sites being developed and had the potential to deliver infrastructure or were not as intrusive on the landscape. There were some suggestions about alternative sites, like the apple store and Orchard Court (which was already included in the "review" section of the LNP). Nearly all comments included a caveat about infrastructure being essential for any new housing wherever it was located, including inside the village boundary.

4. General Comments about the LNP

There were 94 responses to assess. The response to the neighbourhood plan as a whole is more positive than the site I assessed. The 18 people who did not leave a comment on this part of the consultation are respondents who generally have made their views clear on certain sites, rather than the NP in general.

29 respondents were in favour of the neighbourhood plan, including the sites. There were messages of thanks for the time spent and many people agreed with the plan and the need for it. These people agreed with the strategies and the vision in the plan. Some comments expressed the need for affordable housing and contributions to infrastructure.

Even when there was some understandable reluctance to have more housing, the view was that we need it and a neighbourhood plan is the way to go.

10 other respondents are in favour of a neighbourhood plan and some took the opportunity to suggest other sites (Apple store-2), others wanted conditions on each site e.g. off street parking, pedestrian crossings, covenants to create affordable housing, infrastructure to be put in place first. One respondent was accepting of greenbelt development with only small development and supported infill, and another was in favour as long as the community is listened to. Two people were in favour of a neighbourhood plan but felt that Star Field was the obvious site. Another respondent was in favour of the neighbourhood plan but with sites within the village boundary which I took to be in the centre of the village i.e. Orchard Court and Gun pit Road. Another respondent favoured a neighbourhood plan but without specified sites.

The responses which were judged to be broadly against the plan number 28. Only one respondent said no neighbourhood plan is required. The others were against the proposals based on greenbelt, infrastructure and traffic, in that order. Many wanted the neighbourhood plan to identify brownfield sites and infill. A comment was made that the figures are out of date. Some mentioned the lack of very special circumstances to release green belt.

This is the part of the consultation which allowed peoples to express any concerns about any aspect of the plan. Eight respondents expressed political views about the parish council, identifying individuals at times and some stating concerns about information they have read on social media. One was concerned about leaflets posted by a former councillor. It is unclear whether these responses are against the neighbourhood plan or against the people who are involved with it and some of the views are not 100% factual. Some respondents were concerned about how the Neighbourhood plan has been consulted on.

In summary, there appears to be a general acceptance that Lingfield needs a neighbourhood plan. There is a majority that accepts development using some greenbelt, but it varies between all the sites identified (29) and just some. The responses that were judged to be against did not all say no to development but were opposed to greenbelt.

5. Comments about the Supporting Documents

12 comments were submitted for this section, 5 supported and accepted the usefulness of these documents. 4 comments related to opinions about the presentation and age of the reports, with suggestions for other reports that should have been included (note – these are required for planning

applications not for a NP). 2 comments submitted bore no relation to the content.

6. Comments about the evidence base

24 comments were submitted for this section, 16 of which acknowledged no comment was to be made or that no objection was raised. 5 of the comments included references to environmental or habitat concerns for the area generally or to specific sites, suggesting more detailed reports might be needed. For sites specifically, these would form part of the planning application submission. One comment related to the concern that the documents were difficult to navigate, especially for those with limited digital skills, and another that they were easy to navigate.