Wealden Core Strategy Examination – Matter 15 Statement

Folkington Estate

Matter 15: Infrastructure (WCS7, WCS13)

The Folkington Estate is crossed by the A27 Trunk road between Polegate and Wilmington, and could be affected by elements of highway infrastructure listed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Its response focuses on the Polegate area and the A27.

Main issue – Whether the infrastructure requirements for the Core Strategy are soundly based and deliverable?

a) Have the critical infrastructure requirements in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan been justified by the evidence base?

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan lists improvements of four junctions on the A22/A27 routes (p37-38 of IDP). These have been justified by the SWETS study, for the development proposed in the CS.

These junction improvements have been listed as required in previous plans, but none have been committed. The Highways Agency response to the Wealden Core Strategy (letters to Wealden DC of April and Sept 2011) states that any such improvements would need to be funded by developments. It is thus clear that the HA will not fund any infrastructure on the A27 trunk road; it will only carry it out at cost to others.

The IDP lists at Appendix A, it should be noted, are of all possible schemes rather than those that are 'critical and key'.

On p55 a scheme titled '*Folkington Link / Cophall Roundabout Junction Improvements (or equivalent*' is listed as being a Highways Agency responsibility and funding to be 'potentially DfT funding'. This is not a proposal in the Core Strategy and the strategy for Polegate area does not require it. The entry for this scheme states that growth could be accommodated without it and that it is not critical to growth in south Wealden.

It should be emphasised that the Highways Agency has no plans to pursue a Folkington Link. There is no funding and it is in no trunk road programme. There is no route alignment and no feasibility study has been commenced. The scheme would have severe landscape and heritage impacts because it would affect the setting of the National Park, would require land within it, and would pass through a Registered Park & Garden (Wootton Manor). Promotion of such a scheme would require:

- A Department for Transport funding commitment
- Extensive consultation on a range of options, including improvement to the existing road or its junctions, as well as a range of new alignments
- An application to the Infrastructure Planning Commission
- IPC investigation and hearings
- Decision by the Secretaries of State for Transport and for Communities & Local Government

The prospect of such a scheme being promoted or implemented during the period covered by the Core Strategy is low. The inclusion of this scheme in Appendix A as a possible project is unsound and the entry should be deleted. The alternative to the Folkington Link, indicated at p55, of signalising Cophall roundabout is included in any case as the next entry in Appendix A on the same page, so can be retained.

What would be the consequences for the strategy if any of the critical infrastructure was not delivered? Is there sufficient commitment at this stage from the relevant organisations responsible for delivery?

The critical infrastructure is listed at p37-38 of the IDP. It does not include the possible Folkington Link. If the junction improvements listed at p37-38 are not delivered the proposed housing could not be built and occupied without serious increases in congestion.

No comments on other Questions listed.

The Folkington Estate December 2011