WEALDEN DISTRICT (INCORPORATING PART OF THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK) CORE STRATEGY (CS) DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD)

LDF EXAMINATION

Matter 8 – Polegate / Willingdon and Stone Cross Area Strategy (WCS2, WCS3, WCS4)

STATEMENT PREPARED BY:

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Matter 8 – Polegate/Willingdon and Stone Cross Area Strategy (WCS2, WCS3, WCS4)

1.1. This submission has been prepared on behalf of our clients, Messrs Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd. They have a controlling interest in the site edged red on the attached plan located to the north of Dittons Road, Stone Cross and extending to approximately 5ha.

1.2. Our clients support the inclusion of the land within the strategic development area forming "SD7" to the north of Stone Cross.

1.3. The matters listed by the Inspector for consideration at the inquiry are dealt with below having regard to the tests of soundness.

a) Have reasonable alternatives to the strategy been considered?

1.4. SD7 offers a sustainable location for the proposed urban extension, tying in with the wider growth strategy for the Polegate & Willingdon area. We consider there to be a robust evidence base underpinning the specific allocation of SD7.

b) Is there a clear audit trail showing how and why the preferred strategy was arrived at?

1.5. We consider there to be a robust evidence base underpinning the specific allocation of SD7.

c) Have the infrastructure implications of the strategy clearly been identified and supported by the evidence base? Is it clear who is going to deliver the required infrastructure and by when?

1.6. The release of the site should not be unnecessarily constrained where there is an opportunity for land to come forward at an early stage which would neither prejudice nor predicate the overall masterplanning approach. Clearly BP11 (Infrastructure Delivery Plan) sets out a number of constraints regarding the potential delivery of SD7. However this does not provide for any overriding constraints that cannot be covered through the completion of the SWETS Study or dealt with by means of condition(s) and a section 106 obligation negotiated at the application stage.

d) Has the impact of the strategy on the Strategic Road Network been adequately assessed and is there a reasonable prospect that the transport infrastructure required is deliverable?

1.7. It is accepted that a lot of the development contained within the Polegate/Stone Cross area is contingent on the findings of the SWETS Study, however clearly the CS must be proactive in delivering a material number of homes to meet identified needs. Development in this location, at a higher level is supported within the South East Plan in the form of proposals for the Sussex Coast sub-region.

e) Is the strategy sufficiently flexible to respond to an unexpected change in circumstances?

1.8. BP2 (Managing the Delivery of Housing) finds that new housing is required in Westham/Stone Cross to meet an anticipated future annual need for 45 affordable homes per annum. This comprises 11% of people living in the Westham Parish and represents a significant housing need in this part of the District. It is therefore fundamental that housing development at SD7 is commenced as soon as possible, so to serve the apparent need for both market and affordable housing in this part of the District. Further it is of note that the site's location adjacent to the Stone Cross development boundary enables the site to be delivered in isolation, irrespective of the delivery of housing on sites in the surrounding SD.

i) Is SD7 justified and deliverable?

1.9. As set out above, our clients have interests in a site to the north of Dittons Road, Stone Cross, extending to an area comprising approximately 5ha and located adjacent to the northern Stone Cross development boundary. The site comprises a greenfield site and is Grade 3 agricultural land. Residential development is located adjacent to the site's eastern and southern boundaries, whilst to the north lies the A27.

1.10. SD7 offers a highly sustainable location to serve District housing needs. It is in close proximity to Stone Cross neighbourhood centre and a range of community facilities. It has strong public transport links to the neighbouring settlement of Polegate and the defined primary service centre of Eastbourne

(outside the District). Further the site benefits from a location adjacent to the employment allocation SD5 for 8,290 sqm of employment space. This offers the opportunity for future residents to live within walking/cycling distance of where they work.

1.11. As set out in our representations concerning question (c) above, the CS should build in greater flexibility to allow for early delivery of the SD dependent on infrastructure delivery.

1.12. The merits of the sites as housing allocations are summarised below:

- The site is in a sustainable location, outside any AONB or ecological/environmental designations and adjoins the settlement of Stone Cross (a defined service centre).
- A scheme could deliver a material number of dwellings, including much needed open market and affordable housing in this part of the District.
- Public Open Space could be provided as part of the masterplan proposals, to the benefit of the wider area generally.
- The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and development of the site for housing would be in accordance with the requirements at PPS25.
- Any scheme would provide developer contributions towards defined infrastructural requirements within the District.
- The site is deliverable in its own right, given its sustainable location adjacent to the Stone Cross development boundary.

1.13. In summary, we support the housing allocation adjoining the Stone Cross (SD7) and consider there to be no overriding constraints to SD7 delivering housing within 5 years.

Suggested changes to make CS Sound

1.14. There is a need for flexibility in accordance with PPS12 to allow for possible early release of land within SD7 to help meet identified needs earlier in the plan period.