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08/0423

15 August 2010

Ms Lynette Duncan
Programme Officer,
Havant Borough Council
Civic Offices
Havant
PO9 2AX

Dear Ms Duncan

Havant Borough Core Strategy Examination

I attach a further written statement concerning Issue 24 'Should there be a separate policy to protect the AONB?'.

I will supply 4 printed copies to the Reception Desk by 5pm Monday 16 August.

Yours sincerely

Anne de Potier

Miss AF de Potier

**Further written statement from Miss AF de Potier, reference number 08/0423
Havant Borough Core Strategy Examination
Issue 24: Should there be a separate policy to protect the AONB?**

Which particular part of the Core Strategy is unsound?

Policy CS10 - Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough (pages 71-2).

Which soundness test(s) does it fail?

It is inconsistent with national policy.

Why does it fail?

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on public bodies such that a relevant authority, such as Havant Borough Council, shall have regard to the purpose of **conserving** and **enhancing** the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty. Furthermore, PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development states that planning policies, such as the Core Strategy, "should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole. A high level of protection should be given to most valued landscapes. Those with national and international designations should receive the highest level of protection." PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas states that "nationally designated areas....comprising Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas". In addition, PPS 7 states that major development should not take place in these designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances.

The Pre-Submission Core Strategy does not comply with the above and hence does not afford sufficient protection to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Borough.

The Pre-Submission Core Strategy relies on the Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan alone, and fails to include a specific policy to protect the AONB. It is important to highlight the locally distinctive characteristics of Chichester Harbour AONB, particularly as the Management Plan does not form part of the Development Plan against which all planning applications have to be judged. Indeed, in paragraph 7.05 (page 73) it states that 'The Core Strategy provides the next level of detail, identifying what is special about the borough and how the council will protect and enhance the environmental assets of the borough', yet nothing such is provided.

How can the Core Strategy be made sound?

Insert an additional policy and supporting text as given below. Havant Borough Council has agreed to making this change, and I urge the Inspector to accept it. The wording is as proposed by Chichester Harbour Conservancy, and I support that.

What is the precise change/wording that is being sought?

Policy CS ...

Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Development will be permitted where it:

- Carefully assesses the impact of individual proposals, and their cumulative effect, on the Chichester Harbour AONB, and its setting;
- is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area or is desirable for the understanding and enjoyment of the area;
- Conserves and enhances the special qualities of the Chichester Harbour AONB (as defined in the Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan) ; and

- Meets the policy aims of the Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan. Opportunities for remediation and improvement of damaged landscapes will be taken as they arise. Development should not undermine the integrity of rural gaps, or the predominantly open and undeveloped character of the AONB. Proposals that have an adverse effect will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that they cannot be located on alternative sites that would cause less harm and there is a case for overriding public interest which outweighs the landscape value of the area as set out in national policy, coupled with deliverable, long-term mitigation of the impacts. Development proposals that would be significantly detrimental to the special qualities of the Chichester Harbour AONB or its setting will not be permitted.

Supporting text

Chichester Harbour AONB is a unique landscape comprising sheltered open water areas with contrasting narrow channels. The movement of the tide exposes bare mudflat and saltmarsh creating a wide, open and remote wilderness. The undeveloped character of the harbour is almost unique on the south coast and its status as a Ramsar wetland, a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation and a Site of Special Scientific Interest reflect its European importance to nature conservation. The largely flat hinterland includes highly productive farmland, as well as woodlands and hedgerows that contribute to the rural character of the area. The flatness of the landscape makes the AONB particularly vulnerable to visual intrusion from inappropriate development, both within or adjacent to the boundary, which can often be seen from significant distances across inlets, the main harbour channels, or open countryside. The Borough Council will have particular regard to these characteristics in determining development proposals affecting the AONB.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy has produced an AONB Management Plan, which is adopted by Havant Borough Council, Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council and Hampshire County Council. The Conservancy has also produced an AONB Landscape Character Assessment and Design Guidelines for New Dwellings and Extensions, both of which have been endorsed by the Borough Council. The AONB Management Plan and its supporting documents identify the distinctive features and characteristics of the landscape and provide the framework for the management and ongoing spatial planning of Chichester Harbour AONB. Proposed development affecting the AONB should be of the highest design quality and applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice from Chichester Harbour Conservancy.