

Chichester District Council LDF

Tangmere Parish Plan

Horticultural Development Areas

1.0 Introduction

Tangmere Parish Council is producing a Parish Plan as part of the evidence to be submitted to CDC for its Local Development Framework. The local Development Scheme states that there will be a new policy on Horticultural Development in the Core Strategy. This paper sets out the Parish Council's views on the existing HDA and possible future developments.

2.0 Background

The existing Chichester District Local Plan contains a policy for Horticultural Development Areas (RE11A). This intended to encourage the development of commercial horticulture including glasshouses and packhouses. The Tangmere HDA now contains the very successful Tangmere Airfield Nurseries which grows peppers and produces cold salads. It also contains a growing 'green waste' business which is a key part of the current waste disposal policy of both the District and County Councils.

Approximately 50% of the original HDA remains undeveloped and this is understood to belong to the Church Commissioners. The northern extension of the HDA has been converted to a Business Park which is now partly occupied.

3.0 Existing Policy

The existing policy sets out a number of conditions for HDA's:

- acceptable noise levels
- acceptable water and air pollution
- acceptable impact of artificial lighting
- safe road access to the strategic network
- acceptable building height and appropriate screening
- adequate disposal of surface water

Tangmere Airfield Nurseries have satisfied most of these conditions now that the link road has been provided from the A27 via City Fields. The Parish Council is not aware of unacceptable noise levels and the movement of vehicles is much improved. There are some problems with light pollution in the winter and these could be reduced if adequate screening were provided.

Although the existing greenhouses cover a large area they are not visually intrusive from Tangmere due to their low height. Surface water disposal does not appear to be a problem and, although the Environment Agency's 'Flood Map' shows that part of the site is under threat of flooding.

4.0 Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance

Chichester District Council proposed a Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for the HDAs in December 2002. This would have allowed the businesses on HDAs to prepare ready to eat meals using produce from outside the HDA. There was strong local opposition to this proposal and the Government Office of the South East (GOSE) considered that it went beyond the remit of supplementary guidance.

Following a Local Plan Meeting on the 14th October 2003 Chichester District council decided to defer a decision until the production of the Local development Framework.

In a detailed response to the Draft Guidance Tangmere Parish Council supported the need to create jobs but rejected any proposals to allow the cooking of meat or vegetables on the airfield. This is still the position of the Parish Council who would like to avoid developments that create noise and smell. Tangmere is still a rural area and it would be spoilt by the addition of food processing factories rather than glasshouses and packhouses.

5.0 Possible Future Developments

Tangmere Airfield Nurseries stated at the Local Plan Meeting that they would like to expand further and that they had had discussions with the Church Land Agents. No further developments have taken place and it appears that the Church Commissioners are assuming that the land will eventually be sold at a higher price for housing.

The residents of Tangmere are opposed to any housing development on the green fields around the village, including the airfield. It would be more acceptable to see additional glasshouses especially if these were adequately screened by trees. This could produce an additional benefit of potential public access to woodland in an otherwise open landscape.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets the framework for the South East Plan and the LDF. It also sets out powers of compulsory purchase that allow Councils to assemble land for development. If the Church Commissioners are unwilling to sell land within the HDA, and there is demand for further glasshouses, it would seem reasonable for the Council to use its powers to secure development. This would create more local jobs, a higher economic return from the land and create a landscaped tree screen with environmental benefits. It would also send a clear message that none of the greenfield land on the airfield is available for housing.

6.0 Conclusion

Tangmere Parish Council hopes that the Local Development Framework will contain a policy to protect the Horticultural Development Area. This policy should exclude the preparation of cooked foods and factory type buildings.

If the HDA is reserved for glasshouses then there would be no objection to some further development of Tangmere Airfield on Church Commission land. This land could be provided and accessed by the use of the new compulsory purchase powers.

The Parish Council would look for a significant belt of woodland to screen the glasshouses. With Council help this woodland could have public access and environmental benefits. Public money may be available to assist in the development of woodland for these purposes.