



**SELF-CONTAINMENT OF MAYFIELDS – A DISCUSSION PAPER REGARDING
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED NEAR HENFIELD**

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Prepared on behalf of LAMBS

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Propernomics has been instructed by Locals Against Mayfield Building Sprawl (LAMBS) to consider the extent to which proposals for the development of a new community close to Henfield can be described as “self-contained” in terms of the amount of employment that is proposed to complement the number of homes.
- 1.2 The website for the development (<https://www.mayfieldtowns.co.uk/>) indicates an aspiration to provide one job per home with minimal commuting. This would represent a high degree of “self-containment” that, alongside other measures, would help to create a “sustainable” community. If deliverable, this approach might also be a means of reducing the impact of the development on existing settlements nearby. However, this relies on a number of assumptions/risks which we start to explore in this discussion paper.
- 1.3 At this stage we are not privy to any detailed masterplanning work or background studies that may or may not have been prepared by the promoters of the development, other than what we have seen on their website, including a vision document entitled "Making Mayfields"¹.

2.0 Employment

- 2.1 The “Making Mayfields” vision document proposes about 10,000 homes and jobs. However, we understand that alternative sites have been suggested at intervals and the scale of the project may vary. Other parts of the website suggest that 7,000 homes and space for 7,000 jobs is proposed. In any event, it is suggested in the material we have seen (possibly in response to policy) that a broadly equal number of homes and jobs is envisaged.
- 2.2 The vision document suggests a ratio of 25,000 people in 10,000 dwellings (a population ratio of 2.5 people per home). We would expect this to give rise to at least one person of working age per home, possibly more. Census data indicates that

¹ <https://www.mayfieldtowns.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/mayfields-vision.pdf>

households in Horsham district host circa 1.5 people of working age per household; this may suggest that additional jobs would be required in the proposed community if true self-containment is to be achieved.

2.3 The project website specifically promotes parity between the number of jobs and homes:

- “By providing new homes and employment space together, Mayfields will be a place where people can live and work in the same town, creating a real sense of community”.
- “We intend to deliver some £310 million worth of community infrastructure, new work opportunities for 7,000 people and, of course, new housing of around 7,000 homes.”
- “We want to create enough employment space to ensure that there is a job opportunity for every home within Mayfields. We are not creating a new commuter town for London; instead it is designed to encourage people to work in or near their home.”

2.4 A variety of types of employment are envisaged:

- “The proposals provide for a whole range of options, from shared workspaces and offices to a Makers’ Court for craft and small businesses, alongside a central area with shops, restaurants and cafes.”
- “Plans cover a wide range of commercial opportunities including a variety of retail and office spaces. These will encourage new enterprises and attract existing businesses that wish to expand to Mayfields.”
- “There will be a well-designed range of spaces for local shops, independent traders and craftspeople. Flexible offices, meeting places and studios will appeal to SMEs, start-ups, artists and creative industries. This physical infrastructure will be supported by a robust digital infrastructure, so residents can either work from home, local hubs, cafes or public buildings, as well as office environments.”

- 2.5 When contemplating the likely range of employment generating uses it may be instructive to consider the current make-up of the district's property market and how/why a new community might depart from the established position. The existing stock comprises mainly industrial property, as illustrated in the following table based on Business Rates data:

| Horsham district's stock of non-domestic rateable premises | | |
|--|--------------|------|
| Use | Stock (sq m) | % |
| Retail | 170,000 | 16% |
| Offices | 145,000 | 14% |
| Industrial | 546,000 | 53% |
| Other | 176,000 | 17% |
| Total | 1,037,000 | 100% |

- 2.6 Whilst it is perfectly possible that a new community could be designed in a different way, with more retail or office space for example, the delivery of that space would depend upon a shift in perceptions and demand within the West Sussex property market. Further research and market testing would be required to test that demand before it could be predicted with certainty.
- 2.7 It should also be noted that different types of space give rise to different "densities" of employment; office space is typically the most efficient at hosting jobs. If we were to assume that all the employment at Mayfields was hosted in offices (i.e. within the most efficient format), then 7,000 jobs at the benchmark employment density used by Forward Planners would require circa 84,000 sq m of employment space; 10,000 jobs would require 120,000 sq m.
- 2.8 Markedly more space would be required if other types of job (non-office) were part of the mix, as would undoubtedly need to be the case. If, for example, 7,000 jobs were to be distributed between the different uses in the table above (to match the district

benchmark but disregarding other forms of employment), then 180,370 sq m of floorspace would be required; 10,000 jobs would require 257,670 sq m.

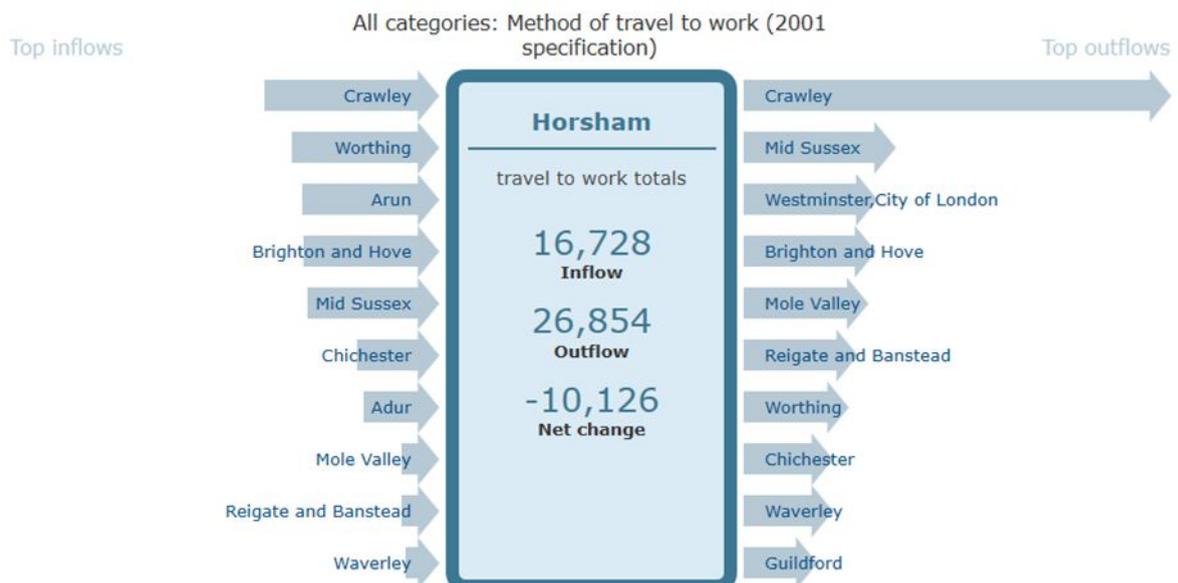
- 2.9 By contrast, the “Making Mayfields” document offers a fraction of this amount. Based on 10,000 houses and jobs, it suggests 10,350 sq m of space for retail, restaurants, PH and hotel space plus 60,400 sq m of unspecified “work space” (totalling 70,750 sq m). Community uses would also generate employment and it is likely that there would be some home based working. Altogether, by our calculations (albeit sensitive to assumptions about the proportion of office space and with reservations about adopting a different mix of uses to the remainder of the district) this would have capacity for about 5,910 jobs, well short of the 10,000 jobs required for self-containment based on one job per home.
- 2.10 Society also needs workshops, industrial units and warehousing which is markedly more land hungry than office space per employee. Competing supply of employment land, including new proposals at Burgess Hill, will also affect demand. Further research would be required into a realistic mix of employment-generating uses, land requirements and types/sources of employment at the proposed development to be at all confident in the jobs/homes balance being suggested.
- 2.11 Furthermore, the retail sector is undergoing considerable change and it is by no means certain that future developments will be able to support the amount of retail floorspace that has been assumed possible in recent years. If there are fewer than expected retail jobs this will create added pressure, a) to create space for other forms of employment to compensate; and b) to ensure that if any retail space is given up for housing that the workplaces and/or commuting patterns of the additional residents are considered. It would also be important to consider the additional vehicle movements of delivery drivers if residents of the proposed development increasingly shop online, as might reasonably be expected.

3.0 Commuting

3.1 It is evident that the project is being promoted on the basis of minimal commuting. For example, the project website states:

- “Striking a work/life balance can be difficult when you are commuting long distances. Part of our vision at Mayfields is to create a place that will support local jobs and attract new businesses, enabling people to work close to where they live.”
- “Local job opportunities. With its green technology, infrastructure, services and amenities, Mayfields will generate lots of new, innovative jobs locally. This will give people the opportunity to develop a career where they live, rather than commute to other towns and cities.”

3.2 To help put these aspirations into context it is helpful to look at existing commuting data as a barometer for how people already living in the area interact with the labour market. Government data shows that about 26,854 people travel out of Horsham district to work, mainly to job opportunities in Crawley, mid-Sussex and London; there is an inflow of about 16,728 people taking jobs in Horsham district. On balance, the net change indicates an overall tendency for local residents to out-commute.



Source: ONS

- 3.3 This analysis suggests that jobs need to come before homes if Horsham district is to reduce out-commuting and become more self-contained as a district. However, striking this balance is a constant challenge for Town Planners, partly because people commonly commute to better paid jobs away from home. Nonetheless, mixed-use development has an important role to play in helping to re-dress the balance and arguably all new housing should be accompanied by employment space. An uptake of new technology and home-based working also has a part to play in reducing out-commuting (but this has already been reflected in our earlier figures on the employment capacity suggested in the “Making Mayfields” document).
- 3.4 Interestingly the developer’s website acknowledges that some people will continue to commute (even if technology or local “work hubs” enable them to change their travel habits on some days):
- “Specially designed ‘work hubs’ will encourage those who work out of town to take a day off from their commute and work close to home instead.”
- 3.5 The commuting data also show that a significant number of people commute into the district from the south coast. This suggests that new employment opportunities at the proposed development could be taken by people from outside the district, in competition with residents. It is most unlikely that there would be a neat match between new homes and new jobs; in reality, it is hard to resist the ebb and flow of the commuting tide. Further research would be required to model the likelihood of this changing or settling down over time.
- 3.6 The developer’s website also notes that there is a regional dynamic within the economy (“Further economic potential also rests in Mayfields’ location at the centre of the growing Gatwick Diamond economic region.”) This implies, as one might expect, that there will be traffic generated to/from the proposed development in connection with regional business and employment opportunities outside the community. This seems inevitable and acts against the aspiration for self-containment.

- 3.7 Furthermore, it is highly likely that many new residents will be in employment elsewhere and will continue to commute to their jobs after they have moved to the new community. This also acts against the aspiration for self-containment.
- 3.8 Creating a new town will in itself create employment through construction activity, which is a positive spur for economic activity. However, the impact would be temporary. Furthermore, construction work is typically project based with labour moving from site to site. Hence a proportion of these jobs will entail commuting and it is likely that any construction workers that choose to live in the new homes will eventually need to search for new work and will become commuters to other sites.
- 3.9 The project website suggests there is an opportunity to encourage the creation of “innovative jobs locally”. It is also stated that “local young people will benefit from new apprenticeships and jobs created by the town”. This raises an important point that jobs are created by employers; apart from their own employees, developers create “capacity” for jobs in the space they create rather than actual jobs per se. This is a reminder that there is no certainty of market demand for employment space without market research and, more accurately, commitments from employers to take it. This introduces an element of risk for the delivery of employment space that may be greater than for homes.

4.0 Impacts

- 4.1 The scale of the proposed development means that its various impacts upon existing settlements nearby would need very careful consideration by different professional disciplines.
- 4.2 In economic terms there could be positive and negative impacts. Examples of positive impacts could include construction jobs (temporary), ongoing operational jobs and expenditure effects (from residents and businesses in the local economy). The developer’s website advocates a strong retail element (including workshops/studios for various crafts); depending on the detail this may have a limiting effect upon the overspill of expenditure to places such as Henfield. Indeed there is a risk, which

should be evaluated, of the proposed development drawing expenditure away from Henfield at a time when competition from online shopping is intensifying.

- 4.3 The “cumulative impact” of different residential and employment developments in the area should also be considered. For example, we note concern expressed in forward planning documents (including for Burgess Hill) regarding the amount of traffic congestion that new developments will create (potentially “severe” without mitigation measures for each cumulative impact).
- 4.4 We also note that Horsham District Council’s assessment of the proposed development in its Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (Dec 2018) describes the proposed site as “not currently developable”. The same report states that the site would need to create its own social, economic and other infrastructure, and echoes the need to take account of the retail viability of existing settlements.

5.0 Summary and conclusions

- 5.1 Having examined the development proposal set out in the "Making Mayfields" vision document we conclude that it cannot achieve “self-containment” based on one job per home with minimal commuting (whether as a policy requirement or as an aspiration).
- 5.2 At the proposed ratio of 2.5 people per home we would in any event expect the working age population to be greater than one per home, adding pressure to provide more employment than proposed or to accept more commuting.
- 5.3 Analysis of the mix of uses set out in “Making Mayfields” for 10,000 homes shows that it would have capacity for about 5,910 jobs, well short of the 10,000 jobs required for self-containment based on one job per home. If a smaller development of about 6,000 homes is proposed it would still need at least as much employment space as was

suggested for 10,000 homes. Demand would also need to be proven for the type of space proposed.

- 5.4 It would appear that the proposed mix of employment uses has a higher density of employment than the existing stock of premises around the district. This would require a departure from the current pattern of demand (which is more land hungry) and actual “delivery” of the proposed mix remains at risk until tested with occupiers and against competing employment locations.
- 5.5 Changes in the retail sector also create uncertainty about the creation of jobs as proposed, adding to the risk that employment generating space will be under-delivered or reallocated to residential use. The impact of online deliveries in place of conventional retail activity is another risk factor to consider.
- 5.6 The project is being promoted on the basis of minimal commuting but there is an established pattern of out-commuting from the district and around the region which is likely to persist (including to/from construction projects). There is also some in-commuting to the district (e.g. from the south coast) which may absorb employment opportunities at the proposed development.
- 5.7 The proposed development includes retail space which may draw expenditure away from existing settlements such as Henfield. This may be counterbalanced by the spending of new residents but further work would be required to test the net effect and risks, especially given new trends in retailing and growth in online orders and deliveries by van.
- 5.8 The “cumulative impact” of different residential and employment developments in the area (including across local authority boundaries) should also be considered due to the risks of competition and harm.



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