

Introduction

- 23.1 Copthorne is a large village, with a population of about 5000, located in the northwest corner of Mid Sussex. It lies approximately four miles west of East Grinstead and some three miles east of Crawley. The village is bounded to the west by areas of woodland and open countryside which extend to the District boundary alongside the M23. To the east is Upper Copthorne Common, an extensive area of countryside including woodland. Beyond the Common is an outlying area of development at the junction of the A264 and the B2028. Lower Copthorne Common is located to the south of the village and straddles the A264. Parts of the common on both sides of the road are currently used as a golf course. These areas provide a valuable rural setting for the village.
- 23.2 The village is served by an extensive range of local facilities. These include shops in Copthorne Bank, Brookhill Road and The Green; a church and church hall; infants' and junior schools, a Roman Catholic chapel and an independent school; social club, village and community halls and guide and scout facilities; playing fields, recreation grounds including equipped children's play areas; sporting facilities; areas of open space; and allotments. There is also a golf club, two important hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation.

Policies and Proposals

Built-up Area Boundary

- 23.3 A built-up area boundary is defined for Copthorne. This seeks to preserve the rural setting of the village and to protect the surrounding countryside from unnecessary development. The built-up area boundary excludes the area of lower density development to the east of the village beyond Upper Common, close to the junction of the A264 and the B2028. This area is subject to the Countryside Area of Development Restraint policies.

Strategic Gap

- 23.4 The areas to the west, south and east of the built-up boundary of the village fall within the Strategic Gap between East Grinstead and Crawley, the boundary of which is defined on the Proposals Map.

~~Green Belt~~

- ~~23.5 Following changes to the boundary between West Sussex and Surrey in 1993 small sections of the Metropolitan Green Belt were transferred to Mid Sussex District. Most of the Green Belt at Copthorne fell within the built up area of the village with two small areas in the adjacent countryside. The Council has considered whether these Green Belt designations should be retained in the new Local Plan, and has concluded that it would be unnecessary and inappropriate to do so. These areas (plus five more at East Grinstead transferred to Mid Sussex at the same time) would be the only areas of Green Belt in the whole of West Sussex. The Structure Plan contains no policies relating to the Green Belt and the County Council is opposed to the retention of this designation. The District Council therefore considers that to retain this designation here would be an anomaly in planning policy terms. It is also considered that other policies in this Local Plan provide equal protection for these areas and so retention of this designation is unnecessary. The Council therefore proposes to seek the deletion of the Green Belt designation at Copthorne from this Local Plan. The two areas outside the built up area of the village will then be included within the Countryside Area of Development Restraint.~~

~~**CO1** Areas of Metropolitan Green Belt at Copthorne as indicated on the Proposals Map shall be removed from the Green Belt. The two areas outside the built up area will subsequently be included in the Countryside Area of Development Restraint.~~

Area of Townscape Character

- 23.6 The Council has designated part of Copthorne as an Area of Townscape Character in accordance with policy B16 of the Built Environment chapter in this Local Plan. This extends between Copthorne Bank in the north to Copthorne Common Road in the south and contains an interesting and attractive mix of architectural styles interspersed with important areas of open space and tree belts. The Council will pay particular attention to any proposals for development or redevelopment in this extensive area, having regard to its special townscape character. It will seek to ensure that this character is protected and where possible enhanced by any new development proposals. This area is identified on the Proposals Map.

CO2 An Area of Townscape Character is designated between Copthorne Bank and Copthorne Common Road.

Employment

- 23.7 A number of firms of varying sizes and type are located at Borers Yard, a group of commercial buildings on the north side of Borers Arms Road. At present the limited scale and low key nature of activities at this site has meant that they have no significant adverse impact on the amenities of the area. As a result, and having regard to its contribution to the local economy and employment the Council supports the continuation of the current uses on the site. However, the yard does adjoin residential properties and the Council wishes to ensure that future development does not adversely affect the amenities of those dwellings. Consequently any proposals for the extension or intensification of activity at the site will be subject to close scrutiny. The Council will resist proposals where it considers that the development would have an adverse impact on amenity.

CO3 Proposals for the extension or intensification of activity at Borers Yard will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the development will have no detrimental impact on the amenities of the locality. Proposals to extend the site beyond its existing boundaries will not be permitted.

Recreation

- 23.8 Land at Westway is currently being developed for housing. To the south of the housing

site is an area of 0.8ha of land which is currently woodland. This area formed the majority of a site identified in the previous Local Plan as informal public open space and allotments. This has yet to be implemented. While there is unlikely to be sufficient demand in the foreseeable future for use of this land as allotments, the Council considers that it will provide a valuable addition to the informal public open space available within the village, and the allocation for this purpose is retained in this Local Plan.

CO4 Land southwest of Westway is allocated for informal public open space.

- 23.9 Copthorne is currently underprovided with equipped children's playspace, with large sections of the village that fall outside the catchment areas of existing playgrounds. The village is also not well provided with facilities for older children. The District Council will continue to investigate ways of improving the provision of facilities for children and young people within the village during the Plan period.
- 23.10 The Mid Sussex Playing Pitch Strategy has identified a need for additional playing pitches in the area. The Council will continue to investigate ways of meeting this local need.

Other Land Uses

Gatwick Copthorne Hotel

- 23.11 The Gatwick Copthorne Hotel is located to the south of the A264 Copthorne Common Road. The core of the hotel is an historic building which dates back to the 15th century. It has been the subject of considerable development in recent years and now comprises an extensive complex comprising a hotel with a range of related facilities including a squash club and areas of off-airport car parking.
- 23.12 The hotel is located outside the built-up area boundary of Copthorne and is within the Strategic Gap. It is therefore subject to a range of restrictive policies relating to new development proposals in the countryside and in Strategic Gaps. Nevertheless it is a significant land use within this area which contributes to the local economy and tourism and which generally operates without any undue impact on the surrounding area. In the event that proposals for further development at this site are made during the Local Plan period the Council will seek to meet the hotel's reasonable needs and aspirations. However, having regard to the hotel's countryside location, the Council will also seek to ensure that any future development will be limited to that which has no material adverse impact on the character or appearance of the site itself or on the amenity and landscape of the surrounding area.

CO5 Proposals for the erection of additional buildings or further facilities at the Gatwick Copthorne Hotel will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that there would be no detrimental impact on the character, appearance and setting of the site or on that of the surrounding area.

Aircraft Noise

- 23.13 Copthorne is the closest part of the District to Gatwick Airport. Improvements in aircraft engine technology means that the extent of the areas around the airport experiencing the worst effects of aircraft noise continues to diminish. Nevertheless, aircraft noise levels in the Copthorne area, particularly at night, will remain an important constraint on the amount and location of new development. Although the areas within relevant noise contours currently fall outside the built-up area boundary of Copthorne where restraint policies apply, the District Council will nevertheless have regard to current policy guidance (especially PPG24, Planning and Noise) and to Policy B23 in Chapter 4 of this Local Plan when considering proposals for new noise sensitive development in this area.