

## ARLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Wealden Local Plan

#### A formal response to the Issues, Options and Recommendations Document December 2015.

#### **Wealden Local Plan**

Wealden Local Plan Issues Options and Recommendations September 2015

#### **Question 1 p22**

##### **Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

Do you agree or disagree with the inclusion of the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development within the Local Plan?

**Yes - agree**

#### **Question 2 p63**

##### **Strategic Housing Strategy**

Do you agree or disagree with the Settlement Hierarchy, and the preferred options for housing together with the associated plan period?

No - strongly disagree with the preferred options for housing.

We do not believe that the proposed new housing has been well located because the housing has not been more proportionately allocated throughout the district .

We understand that this preference for the South of the District is because of the pollution level in the Ashdown Forest, but think that wherever houses are located in the District, if they are car reliant, it will have an impact on the Ashdown Forest as residents will most probably travel by car on the A22 through the forest.

We strongly disagree with your approach for large scale urban expansion in the Hailsham area. We do not believe this is viable due to the problems with the existing infrastructure and the town's lack of appropriate rail service and heavy reliance on the car on the already congested roads. We do not believe this proposal addresses the aims in your core principles ie:

*support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate...*

*contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution...*

*actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.*

*Extract from para 4.2 the core principles which must be reflected in the final local plan;*

We believe the creation of a new settlement with appropriate infrastructure and sustainable transport links would be a more appropriate proposal in line with the core principles set out above.

We suggest that the proposed housing should be based around good public transport systems to promote sustainable developments. For example, your District Corporate Plan (p24) aims to re-open the Uckfield Lewes line. Some housing could be located in a new settlement on the line at Isfield, or in the Uckfield area, with a reliance on rail services which would have no adverse impact on the Ashdown Forest.

We also believe that the new housing is an opportunity to address some of our less vibrant towns and villages. It should be located in areas that would benefit from regeneration such as Polegate and Lower Dicker in the south and Mayfield in the north, but in proportion to size of the existing settlements and the capacity of the existing infrastructure.

### **Settlement Hierarchy**

para 8.37 The other three categories of Local Settlement, Neighbourhood Settlement and Residential Settlement are not considered sustainable for planning purposes and in particular in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is not to say that appropriate development may not be acceptable within these settlements, as an exception, but it is considered that there is not an automatic presumption for unconstrained growth, as presumption in favour of sustainable development, within these settlements

Arlington has been classified as a "Neighbourhood settlement".

### **Question 3 p71**

#### **Strategic Economic Strategy**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred Strategic Economic approach?

Disagree. Too much reliance is placed upon (a) the A22 corridor when there is no evidence to suggest that there is or will be a demand for growth in this area - previous incarnations for growth - "the Eastbourne Hailsham Economic Triangle" - proved a spectacular failure and there is no reason to suppose a different outcome for the "corridor", and (b) upon employment and retail growth in Hailsham. However insufficient space is being made available in the centre of Hailsham for either retail or employment uses.

The market will decide the ideal location for growth which is normally in locations with good transport infrastructure. If the A22 corridor and Hailsham was suitable it would have attracted growth in the past which it has not. There is no certainty of attracting major employment or "engineering clusters" and no evidence to support the belief that this will occur or that there exists the ability to develop skills within the local workforce.

There is no certainty of the major infrastructure improvements and investment of public monies required to make this happen.

Additional economic activity along the A22 will accentuate the present problems on the Ashdown Forest.

### **Question 4 p73**

#### **Business Areas**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for business areas?  
In part but it is important to protect business land allocations in order to provide local employment opportunities as part of new housing developments.

### **Question 5 p75**

#### **Strategic Culture and Leisure (Including a Sports Park)**

Do you agree or disagree with the Preferred Option for testing for culture and leisure (Including a Sports Park)?

Agree

### **Question 6 p80**

#### **Gypsy and Traveller Housing Provision**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Gypsy and Traveller housing provision?

### **Question 7 p81**

#### **Vision**

Do you agree or disagree with the vision?

We completely disagree with the vision.

We do not believe that the current proposals for huge expansion into the countryside in the South of the District, will retain the unique environment and landscape of the villages and hamlets of the Low Weald for generations to come - the landscape will be covered in the masonry and hard landscaping of new housing developments.

*The landscape context is important ... as it is the settlement pattern that is part of the landscape designation, and any radical changes may be incongruous within the landscape. This is of particular importance to the options on the foot of the South Downs, such as the Selmeston and West Polegate Option...*

*Extract from para 8.41 Settlement History*

Similarly we do not believe the suggested road and rail improvements are realistic visions as there is no viable plan in place to finance these proposals.

### **Question 8 p86**

#### **Brownfield Land**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for brownfield land?

**Yes** – agree with reservation. Priority should be given to retaining previously used employment land for employment uses so far as this is consistent with Government policy. Not all previously used employment land is suitable for residential development in view of its location, the uses of neighbouring property, its access to services and the quality of any resultant residential development. The option for testing should be extended to include the objectives in paragraph 3 of option 13.

### **Question 9 p91**

#### **Development Boundaries**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option approach for testing for development boundaries

Agree with statement 2, ie development boundaries should be kept regardless of sustainability. Upper Dicker used to have a development boundary. Where there is no Neighbourhood Plan, a criterion for determining where development occurs is needed.

### **Question 10 p96**

#### **Settlements Without Development Boundaries**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for settlements without development boundaries?

### **Question 11 p128**

#### **Town and Village Centre Hierarchy**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing regarding the Town and Village Centre Hierarchy?

### **Question 12 p137**

#### **Uckfield Town Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing in relation to UckfieldTown Centre.

### **Question 13 p140**

#### **Hailsham Town Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing in relation to Hailsham Town Centre?

We strongly disagree. Past performance shows that the additional pressure on infrastructure in an already congested area, particularly highways and transport infrastructure, would not be properly addressed.

A reduction in car park spaces would be an insurmountable problem in a car dependent location.

### **Question 14 p143**

#### **Crowborough Town Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing in relation to Crowborough Town Centre?

### **Question 15 p146**

#### **Heathfield Town Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing in relation to Heathfield Town Centre?

### **Question 16 p148**

#### **Polegate Town Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing in relation to Polegate Town Centre?

**Question 17 p151**

**Wadhurst Village Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing in relation to Wadhurst Village Centre.?

**Question 18 p155**

**Forest Row Village Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing in relation to Forest Row Village Centre?

**Question 19 p157**

**Restricting Change of Use within Town Centres**

Do you agree or disagree the preferred option for testing in relation to restricting changes of use within Town Centres?

**Question 20 p158**

**Increasing the range and size of units within Wealden's Town and Village centres.**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing in relation to increasing the range and size of units within Wealden's Town and Village Centres?

**Question 21 p164**

**Retail Allocation - Uckfield Town Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for the allocation of additional retail provision in Uckfield Town Centre?

### **Question 22 p171**

#### **Retail Allocation - Hailsham Town Centre**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for the allocation of additional retail provision in Hailsham Town Centre?

We disagree, We do not believe the town can be successfully expanded until adequate proposals to address the existing Infrastructure issues, particularly transport, have been implemented.

### **Question 23 p179**

#### **Hailsham, Hellingly, Polegate and Arlington**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Hailsham, Hellingly, Polegate and Arlington?

A - We strongly disagree with the proposals to extend Hailsham by 97% into existing greenfield land. We do not believe that the already constrained infrastructure will be able to accommodate the expansion. For example, there is no current capacity on the existing sewage treatment plant which currently causes regular problems in Upper Dicker.

We do not believe the expansion of a car based society is appropriate in a district where there are good rail links to London and the coast which, if correctly utilised, would offer a more sustainable approach to town planning.

Furthermore, we do not believe it is appropriate to build on greenfield land when the existing town centres are all low density and additional residential accommodation could be built above existing retail premises.

b - Re development, west of Hailsham. The only possible site, if the landowner agreed to sell would be Knockhatch Leisure Park. This extends to 80 acres (32 hectares). At a density of 35 houses per hectare, the site would accommodate only 1,120 houses. Other areas include Abbots Wood and neighbouring woods, Chichely Wood, Bramble Grove and Bushy Wood. Apart from a few fields, other areas are floodplain land. After what has happened in Carlisle, building on floodplain land does not make sense. It would also be unthinkable to lose any of our last remaining woodland as this sequesters CO2 and is a valuable resource for healthy exercise by local residents.

### **Question 24 p184**

#### **Polegate and Willingdon**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Polegate and Willingdon?

### **Question 25 p187**

#### **Heathfield**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Heathfield?

### **Question 26 p190**

#### **Crowborough**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Crowborough?

**Question 27 p193**

**Parish of Frant on the Edge of Tunbridge Wells**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Edge of Tunbridge Wells in the Parish of Frant?

**Question 28 p196**

**Stone Cross**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Stone Cross?

**Question 29 p199**

**Westham**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Westham?

**Question 30 p202**

**Herstmonceux**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Herstmonceux?

**Question 31 p206**

**Ninfield**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Ninfield?

**Question 32 p210**

**East Hoathly**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for East Hoathly?

**Question 33 p213**

**Horam**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Horam?

**Question 34 p216**

**Mayfield**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Mayfield?

**Question 35 p220**

**Wadhurst**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred option for testing for Wadhurst housing allocations?

**Question 35 p228**

**Landscape**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred options for testing for Landscape?  
a - Broadly agree but would wish to see option 37 extended to include consideration of a policy to protect, conserve, and enhance the attractive landscape of the Low Weald.

b- Re Landscape conservation - Agree. Would like to see the area west of Upper Dicker, extending to Laughton Levels to Ringmer, designated as a Landscape Conservation Area. Many of the fields were laid out on the Roman grid system and this is still evident.

**Question 36 p255**

**Development in the Countryside**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred options for testing for Development within the Countryside?

**Question 37 p269**

**Design and Location of Development**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred options for testing for design and location of development?

**Question 38 p293**

**Historic Environment**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred options for the Historic Environment?

**Question 39 p315**

**Natural Environment and Climate Change**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred options for testing for the Natural Environment and Climate Change?

**Question 40 p322**

**Affordable Housing**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred options for testing regarding affordable housing?

**Question 41 p328**

**Housing Policy**

Do you agree with the preferred options for testing for housing?

**Question 42 p334**

**Shopping Policies Outside Town and Village Boundaries**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred options for testing in relation to Shopping Policies Outside Town and Village Boundaries ?

**Question 43 p346**

**Infrastructure Provision**

Do you agree or disagree with the preferred options for testing for Infrastructure?

a - Broadly in agreement but would suggest that social infrastructure should be extended to include retail and employment uses both of which are essential for the wellbeing of residents of the District.



b - Re Climate Change. Essential that we keep all our woodland in order to mitigate CO2 emissions. Abbots Wood extends to 356 hectares and sequesters 1, 922.40 tonnes of CO2 per annum. (an average figure, source Forestry Commission).

### **c - Re infrastructure**

i) **Communications** - Hailsham is the only major town with no railway. There is no space on the roads for any more traffic, especially in the rush hours when traffic on the A22 crawls from East Hoathly southwards to the Boship roundabout. **Mitigation** - a major initiative would be needed from Central Govt. to reinstate the Cuckoo Trail as a railway line, extending it to Tunbridge Wells, with the existing footpath relocated by the restored railway .

ii) **Water shortage** - The Cuckmere catchment is relatively small, compared with other catchments. There is a shortage of treated mains drinking water. **Mitigation** - a Govt. initiative in terms of grants to encourage residents to install grey water tanks for washing machines and toilets. New houses should have grey water tanks installed.

iii) **Sewerage** - As other Councillors have already stated, sewerage capacity is inadequate in Upper Dicker and in Hailsham.

While some of the above is "pie in the sky", infrastructure needs to be seriously addressed before any further development in the area is considered.

New developments should be planned near railway lines, to reduce the need for commuting by car.

## **Question 44 p347**

### **Contents of the Plan**

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed scope of the Plan. Do you consider that the Plan should contain other subject areas or policies?

We do not believe the plan is sound, as insufficient consideration has been given to the creation of a new settlement.

## **Question 45 p347**

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

Do you agree or disagree with the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the document?

## **Arlington Conservation Area**

Arlington Parish Council make a response to

question 2: Arlington, Yes agree with the recommendations and the preferred options for testing.

question 3: Arlington, No do not agree that all alternatives for the boundary of the proposed conservation areas have been considered.

For example,

Option ARL4 . Although this area originally proposed by the APC is considered too large, some consideration should be given to the formation of a further new conservation area in the area of Caneheath, in recognition of the early settlement there. It would include the Grade II Listed Old Oak Inn and surrounding buildings and the important historic woodland setting of Abbots Wood.

Re the Consultation on Conservation areas, ARL4 is the choice as we believe that Abbots Wood and Michelham Deer Park should be included. They are linked to Arlington Village as important recreation areas for Arlington residents.

