FREEMAN, B

WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
46097
23 MAY 2012
PLP
IGA
PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

21. May 2012.

B. Freeman

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: W.D.C. Core Strategy Plan
(Representation on Modification.)

I am writing in Favour, and Agree with Planning Inspector: Michael Moore: To Rule out development in Heathfield Area for 160 Homes. Heathfield is in an Important A.O.N.B. Area. The land that would have been designated is an important ecological U.K. habitat full of Bio diversity with the potential to have important species present or near by. There would also be extra traffic congestion on to the already Grid Locked A265 Road. This Road through Heathfield High Street Suffers Greatly from traffic Congestion through out the day with out having 160 (or extra) Homes in General. It is my opinion that Cllr Rupert Simmons and Cllr Dick Angel have the wrong opinion in wanting more Housing in this Important environmental Area.
Affordable Housing comes with 'set backs' (please see news paper cutting enclosed) Re: Cllr Dick Angels Remarks about a Recent Affordable Homes development in 'Blackboys' He describes as a 'Rigmarole', Already new development in Heathfield has provided alot of first time Buyer properties, By demolishing large Victorian Houses for smaller Houses and Flats. This has changed the face of Heathfield High street and Mutton Hall Hill. So it is my opinion the Balance is now correct with out Building more new Homes (160) in Heathfield.

Yours Sincerely

B. Freeman.

WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
23 MAY 2012
ACTION BY
PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Fight will go on for affordable housing

Leaders to seek other options after 'significant' blow

AN extract from a letter from councillor Rupert Simmons on behalf of the Heathfield Partnership to David Phillips, head of planning at Wealden District Council, in response to the planning inspector's recent interim findings to removing 160 homes from the core strategy plan:

"We think housing development to the north-west of Heathfield might be justified in the important provision of affordable housing in close proximity to the centre of the town but not to the point of breaking the basic principle of the protection of the surrounding landscape. To that end we believe that within the models for A and B development that there should not be a building beyond a line created by the Springwood Road development. There may be a compromise here with landscaping being to the furthest extent of the land acquired. The Springwood Road line would ensure some continuing credibility to the protection of the landscape.

"We do not believe that the dictation of 160 houses should be sacrosanct. We believe that which is possible within the restraints given above is feasible and the density could be raised from 30 to 35 dwellings per hectare or possibly to 40.

"There is a demonstratable need for affordable housing and smaller commercially priced one and two-bedroomed properties in the community. There is absolutely no proven need for four or five-bedroomed houses."

By **Samantha Payne**
samantha.payne@courier.co.uk

HEATHFIELD community leaders have pledged to continue their fight for affordable housing in the town.

The town was dealt a "significant" blow when plans for 160 homes in Heathfield were wiped from Wealden District Council's core strategy, a housing blueprint for the next 15 years.

Planning inspector Michael Moore recently ruled out the development because it was in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Significant

But district and parish councillors have agreed to meet to explore further options.

District councillor Dick Angel said: "The Heathfield district councillors met together in light of what we have learnt about the housing allocation being completely wiped from the core strategy, which was an enormous surprise to us.

"It was the most significant thing to come out of the inspector's letter.

"The town is struggling for survival. Our youngsters cannot afford the housing and gradually they are going to move away.



'TOWN IS STRUGGLING': Councillor Dick Angel in Heathfield

"The feedback we have learnt is people want us to do something."

Mr Angel is now arranging a meeting with Councillor Roy Galley, the district council's cabinet member for planning, and its head of planning policy and environment David Phillips.

He told the parish council's planning committee: "We would be happy for representations from the parish council. It gives us an opportunity to provide a united front. There are possible answers to the dilemma."

Mr Angel suggested one of the options available to Heathfield could be to go down an alternative route and apply for rural exception site status, which formally excludes a parcel of land from the rules which would otherwise restrict building so it can be used for affordable homes, so long as developments were fewer than ter houses. "There are 50 to 100 families in this parish, who are in housing need," he added.

Andy Wilford, senior planner for Barton Willmore, the developer behind the 160 homes plan, said: "We are particularly disappointed

Disappointed

"We all recognise there is a need for affordable housing in Heathfield and I still think there is a way forward for a strategic housing allocation. The land to the police station is still available and delivers the 35 per cent of housing need."

Parish council chairman Peter Newnham said: "We have to keep the High Street viable. It happens in villages. You only have to look at Hailsham. After all the hard work we have been doing, I just feel you have to keep the case viable. That particular site (near the station) is so sustainable as you do not need a car to get to the shops.

WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
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PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL

'Poisoned chalice' for homes decision-maker

by SUSAN KING
susan.king@sussexnewspapers.co.uk

UNCERTAINTY still reigns over just how many new homes will be built in Wealden.

Earlier this week councils in Kent and Sussex confirmed they have lopped 13,520 off the target of 645,000 set in the South East Plan (SEP) set by the last Labour government.

For example Mid Sussex District Council is cutting 6,000 from the 17,000 proposed in the Plan (SEP) The Coalition government cancelled the strategy saying councils should have the freedom to make their own decisions.

But it's believed they might face problems when actual figures are finalised and presented. Planning and development portfolio holder Cllr Roy Galley said Wealden is already ahead of the game with a Core Strategy for new housing figures which has already been submitted. Even here there is uncertainty about the actual numbers involved.

He went on: "I cannot comment on this until we have a final report from the Inspector. We were originally asked to build 9,600 new homes up to 2027 but the interim report we received seemed to indicate a figure of 8,400 up to 2027, so already the figures are different. We hope we will receive a full report in May by which time things will be a lot clearer.

"I feel as if my role is a 'poisoned chalice' and keeps nobody happy. People in Heathfield want new houses but have been told they can't have them while people in Uckfield have been told they must have 1,000 new homes they don't want. We are well ahead of other councils in that our strategy is well advanced [illegible] full report the actual figures are unclear."

Meanwhile members of [illegible] Ridings Action Group are still [illegible] trying hard to achieve [illegible] the Uckfield figures [illegible] issued on Tuesday they said: "[illegible] number of people who attended four strategic site exhibitions in Uckfield, Crowborough, Hailsham and Polegate was only 500 with some 3,000 responding directly to Wealden.

Considering the population of Wealden is in excess of 145,000 this is a very low response. Either a lot of residents are not interested or are happy that up to 9,500 houses plus industrial units and schools have, or are going to be, built in their towns and villages.

Or once again, as in the case of Uckfield, it was a failure of Wealden District Council to communi[illegible] with the people about the core [illegible] and the public meetings throughout Wealden."

[illegible] councillors hope the [illegible] site exhibitions might [illegible] their problem. It follows [illegible] the [illegible] affordable homes in areas where [illegible] apply.

[illegible] said the term [illegible] means homes for [illegible] less than the market cost or available on [illegible] ship.

But he pointed out this presents problems for buyers because banks and building societies are unwilling to lend to flats.

"The reason is they say, if they default the lender would be unable to recoup the entire value of the property.

He said: "We had this recently on a development in Blackboys where it was quite a rigmarole to [illegible]"