Herstmonceux Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2027

Initial Comments of the Independent Examiner

Prepared by

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4th January 2018

1. As you will be aware I have been appointed to carry out the examination of the Herstmonceux Neighbourhood Plan. I have carried out my initial review of the Plan and most of the accompanying documents that I have been sent. I made my site visit to the village and the surrounding countryside and settlements on Thursday 21st December 2017. This has helped me to familiarise myself with the plan area and gives me a context for examining the plan.
2. My initial view is that I should be able to deal with the examination of this Plan by the consideration of the written material only, but I do reserve the right to call for a public hearing, if I consider that it will assist my examination. I think that is unlikely as the issues are relatively straight forward.
3. There are, however, two matters that I wish to raise, one action for the Qualifying Body and one question for the Local Planning Authority.
4. This is a request to the Parish Council. I note that Policy 3 relates to retaining the employment use of a number of commercial premises in the plan area. Their locations are shown on the maps, on pages 86 – 88 of the Plan. I think that it will be important, if the policy is capable of being used with confidence at the development management stage, if a plan could be prepared on an OS base showing the extent of each site which is to be covered by the policy, in the same way that the extent of Local Green Spaces is shown. It would help me if the plans were sent to me, electronically with references that I can refer to, as a recommendation in my report.
5. The second matter is a question for the Local Planning Authority. I read that many of the policies state - “any development relevant to this policy must be subject to a Habitat Regulation Assessment”. Does the LPA consider that this policy requirement is either necessary or reasonable, and if there is a reason for such a requirement, could you point me to the requirement that an HRA would be required for *any* development the subject to that policy?
6. In the interest of openness, I would ask that a copy of this note be placed on the respective websites, along with the respective responses.
7. In order for me to be able to prepare my report I would request, if possible, that the responses are sent to me by 19th January 2018.