

Hellingly Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Notes of Public Meeting held on Friday 5 January 2018,
7.30pm at the Village Hall, Hellingly**

An exhibition of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was available for the Public to view. The exhibition detailed the main elements of the NDP and included all the policies and recommendations included within it. The Draft NDP together with Supporting Papers and Topic Papers were also available to view.

The Chairman of the NDP Steering Group chaired the meeting. She started by introducing the Project Team and key Steering Group members.

A short presentation on the NDP was given, followed by a question and answer session.

Question: If the Plan is approved what happens to it if a boundary review takes place and Wealden District Council (WDC) and/or Hellingly Parish disappear?

Answer: This is difficult as it is a hypothetical situation, however the Plan would remain in place until a new Plan is written by whichever authority might replace WDC or the Parish body that replaces Hellingly, and then any new Plan would supersede it.

Question: Would the NDP still be used?

Answer: It would have to be used for development purposes until a new one is in place.

Question: What is the latest position in respect of Ashdown Forest?

Answer: In December WDC published 3 reports on Air Quality. Ashdown Forest is an internationally recognised site of scientific interest and it would need to be shown that any development would not impact upon it. Reports to date have shown that Ashdown Forest is degenerating. Reports have been sent to Natural England for their views on whether the impact of development is so significant that it should not be allowed. The Plan is due to be published in March and we will then be able to see whether WDC have been able to hold their line. Much of the development plans are for the south of Wealden around Hailsham, Hellingly, Stone Cross and Polegate.

Question: You mention not insignificant growth in Hellingly. What would that be, what is the population at the moment and what will it grow to? What area does the Plan actually cover as you talk in one of your documents of Hellingly Parish and Hellingly Ward?

Answer: The Plan is for the Parish of Hellingly. At the start of the process the population was just under 2,000, the figures are constantly being updated as a result of the new development. Wealden's Issues Options and Recommendations document published in 2015 was proposing, 4,000 new homes this side of the A22 a significant proportion of which would be in Hellingly Parish, roughly 1,100 to 1,200 houses. All these proposals stalled and the figure of 4,000 has been reduced although 1,100 is still proposed for the Hellingly area.

However, demand for housing is in the North of Wealden rather than the South, we will not know how many houses are being proposed until the publication of the WDC Plan in March.

Question: You have a recommendation about providing 2.8 hectares of play space and about the school will this be superseded by the WDC Plan?

Answer: WDC's own evidence showed the area was significantly underprovided for and that our recommendation was therefore to require 2.8ha adjacent/adjoining the Hellingly Country Park – to meet this acknowledged shortfall (NPFA standards) as well as to provide a logical extension for future maintenance and management purposes.

We thought that it would be better to enlarge the proposed new school to a 3 form entry rather than having 2 schools competing.

Question: Are there realistic timescales for delivery of the school?

Answer: The developers are due to offer the site to the County Council. The question is who will build and run it? There was a bid by an Academy but this was turned down by the Department for Education on the grounds that there was not sufficient need for a school in Hellingly. The new school has always been identified as a 2 form entry school, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) will be making a decision about the future of the school by the end of the month, they have a number of options upon which to make a decision, including a 3 form entry school.

There is a known need for additional school places from September 2019.

One of the things about putting recommendations to other bodies in the NDP is that it brings them to the attention of the Inspector who may well if they think that it is important raise the issue with the appropriate bodies.

Question: I don't see much mention of trains in the NDP, is this because there is not enough mass to warrant it?

Answer: I would imagine that the WDC Plan might include something. The scale of growth in Hellingly would not be high enough to suggest reinstatement of rail links.

Question: I am talking about the bigger picture who is looking at that?

Answer: We can only look at Hellingly. WDC will probably be looking at that, their Plan will extend to 2028 which is also the period of the NDP. It may be that there is consideration of moving Polegate station and for the duelling of the A27 the Local Plan cannot address this. When WDC produce their Plan you will be able to comment on it.

Question: Why would you agree to the building of 5 houses in the village which would ruin it?

Answer: We considered and confirmed in our draft NDP that the WDC emerging Plan idea of proposing 30 units in Hellingly Village was contrary to all existing Development Plan Policies, National Guidance and to duties imposed on LPAs

regarding listed buildings and Conservation Areas. Our draft NDP therefore also makes no mention of possibly being able to accommodate even 5 units.

Close 8.40

Suzanne Collins
Project Support

8 January 2018