

Notes on MBF discussion on Draft Wealden Local Plan, 3rd May 2017

We picked up the issues raised in the discussion led by Karenna Wilford in January 2017 and reviewed the likely impact of the recently published draft Wealden Local Plan.

Discussion focused on key points from the plan:

- The impact of high nitrogen levels found on the Ashdown Forest meant that Wealden had put a hold on any new planning applications that would increase traffic movements in the district. This means there are no approvals for new buildings or conversions that bring create more traffic
- This policy will be in place until Wealden can put in place a strategy to offset any extra traffic (e.g. developing new heathland) or find other mitigating factors. [NOTE: at the subsequent Mayfield & Five Ashes Annual Parish Meeting on 22nd May, one of the East Sussex councillors said they were waiting for updated traffic modelling that should be ready around August and that there was a full council meeting that could approve any recommendations in October. So any changes before late autumn are unlikely]
- Wealden have advised other districts around Ashdown Forest (e.g. Lewes, Mid Sussex) that they need to apply the same policy and there are court cases to resolve this
- The hold on planning approvals does not stop development on sites which have already received planning permission
- The Local Plan also reduces considerably the overall allocation of new dwellings planned up until 2028. Taking account of houses built since 2013 and planning applications already granted, the plan is for only 3748 new approvals in allocated areas during the period and 316 dwellings on other land
- Dwellings in allocated areas are heavily focused towards the south of the district, primarily in Hailsham (2360) and Stone Cross (833) with only about 400 in Horam and Heathfield, 51 in Wadhurst and 85 in Ninfield
- There is no allocation of housing for Mayfield while Five Ashes has been allocated 40 dwellings to be in small individual developments
- The main conservation area in Mayfield has been increased and a secondary area added towards the bottom of Coggins Mill Road
- The core area of Five Ashes has been defined
- Retail premises in Mayfield High Street are to be maintained wherever possible and a change of use only allowed where there is evidence that demand does not support a viable retail outlet
- The plan talks of infrastructure support and the promotion of walking and cycling without setting out a framework to makes these things happen
- It also talks about encouraging tourism without specifying how this fits in with the current concerns over traffic levels and pollution.