

Questions for Chris Bending to comment on and address/discuss:

Meeting on 26th January 2021

Vision, etc:

1. It would be helpful and encouraging to see an overarching Wealden "Mission Statement" or vision/objective for the next 20-30 years which would bind all the 150 objectives together. Comment please?
2. Moving down to policy, the problem with this overarching approach is that the big questions that matter like what society/community will be created, cannot be assessed, and scored and the smaller questions like how many electric vehicle charging points will be installed in car parks, can be focused on and scored but don't appear to matter so much. Thoughts?

Focus on Rural Communities:

3. There also needs to be a focus on rural communities and their place in and relevance to Wealden. As a largely rural District, they are a key part of the area and need to be supported with sensible planning decisions and provision of transport and amenities, whilst retaining the character of small villages. Can you clarify how Wealden are proposing to ensure this, not least through their New Local Plan?
4. In this context, can you clarify why small villages with extremely limited facilities, and no or minimal/limited capacity at peak time public transport, are having significant/opportunistic/not plan led developments permitted, for example, East Hoathly, Blackboys, etc.

Environment/Climate Change;

5. Wealden has declared a climate emergency. Please reference source material for this decision and share the data demonstrating that the proposed increase in housing, traffic volumes etc are compatible with addressing this overriding concern.
6. 'Green' technology – Please give source material data for overall (lifetime) carbon saving for wind, solar and EVs along with specific locations planned for wind and solar facilities. How will this "Green" technology solve congestion on roads? How will this "Green" technology address your acknowledged historic under provision of infrastructure?
7. Please specify Base load supply and transmission. Re-charging of lithium-ion batteries. And end of life battery disposal provision

Housing/Development/Pressures:

8. Concreting over vast swathes of countryside and housing density v. food production/carbon capture/recreation/ pleasure. Comments, please.
9. Government requirements for housing units and estimates of population increases/ demographics .(cf. ESCoE report claiming 1.3m have recently left UK) will adjustment to Housing numbers be made? What are the causes of inward population migration to Wealden?

10. How do you think the change in national policy (ref Govt White paper) to housing formula is going to impact the New Draft WLP and stated ‘flexible approach’?

Infrastructure:

11. Is the technocracy of ‘saving’ on water and electricity through metering driving Wealden policy? Is it really saving water and electricity in absolute terms?

12. Roads and rail. Historically a pre-requisite for housing development though is sadly lacking in the proposals. How will these infrastructure deficits be addressed?

Adequate Planning Resources:

13. The adoption of all the objectives in the document will require a well-resourced Planning Department, an area that has suffered cuts in the past.

14. Enforcement in rural areas is also particularly important, and needs to be properly funded generally. Can Chris please comment on this?

Communication/Local Plan Consultations Process/ Clusters:

15. Communication with other Cluster Groups - will Wealden help with this?

16. When will the Direction of Travel results be published?

17. How will all the responses be fed into the Plan, where appropriate, and will the results be clear on the Report? What about where action by ESCC is identified as being required eg highways issues?

18. Relatively poor response to the consultation so far. (As confirmed by WDC Director Isabel Garden at WDALC Meeting of 13th January 2021). Will Wealden extend the period?

19. Why couldn't our Cluster's list of issues at least have been considered in the round, rather than having been rejected out of hand. (Individual Councils in the Cluster have of course responded using the format required, however).

Wealden Central-East Cluster – 14th January 2021