

UPDATE ON PLANNING ISSUES JUNE/JULY 2022

SHELAA (sites that have been identified for development) will be delayed as Wealden District Council (WDC) don't want to issue it until the Government has come back to them with the hoped for revised housing numbers.

Essentially this means they are pausing the Local Plan although there is lots of work going on behind the scenes

So Draft Local Plan (WLP) now expected late 2022 but will try and concertina the stages so consultation is still allowed but the time frame is shorter. Parish councils will still be able to contest draft housing allocations. The draft WLP will include the SHELAA sites

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will receive Royal Assent 2024 and may undergo changes en route

There is also a revised NPPF to be published but this is not coming any time soon; instead they are putting forward policy documents

Includes 'Street votes' – this is talked about but unclear how it will actually work

WDC is lobbying very hard both through its officers and through its elected members to get the housing targets reduced, specifically to get rid of the Standard Method which is what the Government is using to determine housing allocations for each Local Planning Authority. So far there have been 6-8 meetings with Government ministers. The Standard Method and the planning system is currently stacked against Wealden

The Standard Method uses 2014 population data from the ONS (this is based on the 2011 census). In 2018 the figures and projections were updated to predict lower population in Wealden and therefore lower housing need. Despite this, the Government have decided to use the 2014 data to calculate Wealden's housing need. Wealden itself commissioned an external Objective Housing Needs assessment in 2021 and this showed that there has again been a population reduction since 2018. The aim of the increase in housing across the country is for houses to become more affordable but this simply isn't working in Wealden as developers choose to build 4 bed exec homes rather than small family/starter homes so they can make maximum profit. So the levelling up which the Government wants to achieve is not actually working in Wealden.

Awaiting

We are awaiting a series of evidence studies some of which we will be asked to comment upon; these will form the evidence trail of the yet to be published WLP:

1. Visitors to Ashdown Forest – to understand visitor impact
2. *Playing spaces/outdoor recreation spaces – what we've got and what we need
3. Allotments
4. Indoor recreation spaces
5. *Strategic flood risk assessment
6. Employment needs including office space requirements etc (shared with Eastbourne)
7. *Landscape study/Landscape character assessment – including solar farms, wind farms, pasture or grazing land
8. Gypsy/traveller accommodation needs assessment
9. **Sustainability of settlements

I have marked with an asterix which ones we should definitely be giving our opinion on

Any queries re the above don't hesitate to contact me

ADD July 2022

