

HAILSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14: CONSULTATION - FAQs

WHAT IS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

The Plan is a document which will help determine planning applications across Hailsham. It is the first document of its kind to have been prepared for Hailsham. It has been drawn up over the past three years by local people and is a result of extensive consultation and engagement. The Plan has not been prepared by Wealden District Council, but will be used by them to help determine future planning applications in the area.

WHY HAS A PLAN BEEN PREPARED?

Change is coming to Hailsham. Wealden District Council has set housing targets for new development in Hailsham. Developers are looking to bring forward sites. The neighbourhood plan has been prepared to make sure that this development is of a high quality and is right for Hailsham, improving quality of life for existing and new residents. Importantly, because this Plan has been produced with extensive input from the local community, it reflects local issues, concerns and aspiration. It has very real potential to influence change for the better – and more so than any other documents prepared before.

CAN'T THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN BE USED TO STOP DEVELOPMENT?

No. Government policy does not allow this, it has to plan for the amount of new development set by Wealden. But, the neighbourhood plan can be used to make sure that future development in Hailsham brings as many benefits as possible to Hailsham.

WHAT DOES THE PLAN DO?

It gives local residents a say in planning decisions and sets out policies which will be used by Wealden District Council to determine planning applications. It covers a large number of important local issues including housing, design, business, transport and green space. It also allows the local community to benefit from a larger percentage of payments via the Community Infrastructure Levy.

AREN'T THERE ALREADY POLICIES IN THE WEALDEN DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR HAILSHAM?

Wealden District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the entire district. Adoption of that is still some way off. In the meantime, current Local Plan policies either say very little about Hailsham, or are very old. There are no up-to-date policies to determine planning applications in Hailsham.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

The Plan has been drafted following consultation feedback on issues and emerging ideas. It is now being consulted upon by the Town Council before submitting to Wealden District Council to commence independent examination of the Plan.

Continued overleaf/



WHAT ARE THE POLICIES IN THE PLAN?

The policies respond to key concerns raised during previous consultation events. In summary, the policies in the Plan:

- Establish design criteria that promote the highest quality of development in and around Hailsham.
- Require infrastructure, including community facilities, open space and transport, to be provided as part of any new development.
- Seek to make it easier, more attractive and convenient for all people of all areas to be able to move around.
- Enhance the public realm in the town centre, supported by a wider mix of activities, including new shops, restaurants and community activities, making for a lively and welcoming place.
- Enhance and protect the quality of public open green space in Hailsham, and access to these, for the enjoyment of all.
- Set priorities for spending any funds received from new development.

These themes and policies were developed and tested through earlier consultation events to make sure the Plan reflects local opinion.

HOW WILL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS BE PAID FOR?

Developers of schemes over a certain size are required to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy to Wealden District Council. Currently, 15% of the monies received come back to Hailsham Town Council. If and when our neighbourhood plan is made this increases to 25%. This will help pay for improvements to things such as the important road junctions, green spaces and play facilities, walking and cycling routes, and improved community facilities. The neighbourhood plan includes a set of projects that we would like to be funded.

WHO HAS PREPARED THE PLAN

The Plan has been led by the Town Council and has involved significant consultation with local residents and businesses over the last three years.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

All comments received will be reviewed and any changes made to the Plan. It will then go to Wealden District Council who will formally consult on the Plan and appoint an independent examiner to review the Plan. If the examiner is happy that the Plan has followed due process, a referendum will take place.

WHAT IS THE REFERENDUM?

Everyone who is eligible to vote in Hailsham will have the chance to say whether they think the Plan should be used to begin shaping future change and determining planning applications. If more than 50% of the votes cast agree with the Plan then it will become part of formal planning policy for Hailsham.

