



Sedlescombe Parish Council

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer: Mrs P Raymond
Woodland Cottage, Chapel Hill, Sedlescombe, BATTLE,
East Sussex TN33 0QX
Telephone: 01424 870508.
e-mail: sedlescombe@freezone.co.uk
Website: www.sedlescombe.org.uk



29 May 2013

The Rt Hon Gregory Barker MP
6a Amherst Road
Bexhill on Sea
East Sussex
TN40 1QJ

Dear Mr Barker

ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN (2011-2028) CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

Sedlescombe Parish Council has just embarked on a Neighbourhood Plan for this parish and is restricting its considerations to identification of sites within the parish that could be suitable for housing development. It is, therefore, very aware of the difficulty of finding such sites and realises that a huge increase in housing numbers for the District up to 2028, which Rother District Council has been asked to consider by the Core Strategy Inspector, will inevitably affect the character of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty countryside. This difficulty is duplicated in every parish throughout the District of Rother where the majority of land has been set aside under this special AONB designation.

Sedlescombe Parish Council has been involved with consideration of housing numbers since the Local Development Plan Core Strategy was first started around 2005. This has involved hundreds and hundreds of hours of officer time both for Rother District Council and at parish council level before Rother reached the stage of being satisfied that they had produced robust reasons for the planned numbers. This has cost the Council Taxpayer large sums of money.

Additional work to find many more housing development sites than the previous meticulously planned numbers, as appears to be supported by Central Government, is unreasonable, unwanted and a waste of precious resources. The South East Plan properly promoted the majority of housing growth for areas that have the infrastructure and a good economy whereas Rother has neither of these.

The alternative idea that Rother should try to find neighbouring authorities that have the capacity to take additional development is an impossible task in the south east especially for areas bordering the sea that do not have other Districts all round.

As you will be very aware, the south east is already very overcrowded and especially in the Rother District has a poor road system. It is also subject, as this parish is, to many designations such as Flood Risk Zones, Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, Conservation Areas and Archaeological Sensitive Areas which restrict or prohibit housing development. Many areas in this parish have neither mains drainage nor mains gas.

Sedlescombe already has about twice the average number of affordable homes in this District but, despite objections from my Council, more are having to be planned for. Neither the introduction of

social housing to rent in the countryside, nor even in the villages, is a sensible option because of the lack of facilities, particularly public transport and entertainment suitable for young people. This has led in the past to incidents of anti-social behaviour by disgruntled youngsters.

For the reasons mentioned above, my Council considers that this part of the High Weald AONB cannot reasonably support a huge increase in the number of houses that are expected to be imposed on this fragile area in the Rother District in the next fifteen years. It is important to note that these numbers are in addition to extant permissions and to sites outside the immediate development areas and sites that arise from time to time (known as "windfall" sites).

My Council's request is, therefore, that the requirement on Rother District Council to allocate considerably more housing sites in order to get its Core Strategy adopted by the Inspector is dropped and the number of houses should be allowed to remain at the number recommended in the South East Plan as currently promoted by Rother District Council. Even this number will put an additional burden on our roads and lanes.

Please support my Council's request through whatever means you have available.

Yours sincerely

MRS PAULINE J RAYMOND
Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Rother District Council

Copy to David Marlow, Rother District Council Planning