

Hurst Green Parish Council
The Parish Office, Hurst Green Village Hall
Station Road, Hurst Green
East Sussex, TN19 7PL

Rother District Council
FAO: David Marlow, Planning Policy Manager
Town Hall, Bexhill on Sea
East Sussex TN39 3JX

26th July 2018

Dear David,

Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan / Site Allocations

I am writing with regard to your email of the 13th July 2018 which you sent to Councillor Brown and also to myself via the Parish Clerk.

On behalf of the Parish Council I do wish to formally record that the Parish Council unanimously value our relationship with your officers and with the District Council.

With regards to our Neighbourhood Plan; it was shame that you were unable to attend the meeting in May at the town hall, where your officers discussed at length the situation in relation to Hurst Green and our designation as a neighbourhood plan area, no doubt under your briefing. At the meeting, I understand your officers made reference to a variety of options, although I note not all of these were recorded in the letter that was subsequently sent to us.

The Parish Council do acknowledge that RDC has a significant land supply problem and your desire to 'take account of local needs as much as we can'. Accordingly the Parish Council would like to understand what local needs were considered and what account of these needs has been made in light of the significant public comments received as a result of your consultation in relation to Hurst Green?

Summary of our position

As Councillor Brown stated in his response to Frank Rallings, we have indeed taken the matter that you do not wish to allow Hurst Green to undertake its own site allocation under advisement. In summary, our position is as follows:

- 1) the Parish Council do not recognise your statement that Hurst Green were told that we needed to complete allocation by Spring/Summer 2018 and reject in the strongest possible terms that any assertion or communication was ever made to us of this.
- 2) by including Hurst Green in the DaSA, despite Hurst Green being a designated neighbourhood plan area since June 2017, you have placed Hurst Green Parish Council and our residents in a difficult position that we find most regrettable.
- 3) we will continue to assert our rights to undertake our own site allocation process, and note that our Neighbourhood Plan call for sites process has already brought forward numerous new sites that were not included in the District's assessment and also that a number of landowners have expressed surprised that the DaSA exists as they were not contacted by RDC or afforded the opportunity to put forward sites previously.

4) In conjunction with statement 3, Hurst Green Parish Council are prepared to support a variant of policy HUR1 and HUR2 which would enable building to get underway in Hurst Green while the Neighbourhood Plan process is conducted,, but wish to see a considerable reduction on allocations to enable these unit plots to be considerably larger, proper highways to be constructed with raised pavements, and for the developer to allocate considerably more parking allocation and green space per unit than presently.

Conclusion

We remain committed to maintaining strong connections with your team and as part of our neighbourhood planning process, I understand that as in April 2018 that Councillor Brown and your Principal Planning Officer, Holly Harrison held a very productive working call earlier today where Councillor Brown provided details of all submitted and proposed sites that have been identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process. These sites contain significant development potential, which I'm sure you will agree, far from suppressing overall housing delivery, were they to be developed would easily meet the current and future development allocations.

In support of Hurst Green's commitment to plan positively to meet our housing needs we were pleased to see the Government confirm in their recent response to the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework consultation, that the Government will retain the protection for neighbourhood plans as introduced by the Written Ministerial Statement of 12th December 2016.

In summary given our active Neighbourhood Plan process, the Parish Council will not accept a suboptimal solution which places emphasis on addressing housing need at the expense of other aspects of sustainable development, or one which the Parish Council and local people feel may not have been conducted with regard to fairness, due-process, appropriate consultation or proper regard for our designation as a neighbourhood plan area.

I would therefore like to propose that you and your officers meet with either myself, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or indeed with a delegation from the Parish Council in Hurst Green, so that we may visit the proposed new sites and discuss possible amendments to the DaSA to find a mutually agreeable solution for RDC and Hurst Green.

Yours sincerely

Graham Browne

Chairman, Hurst Green Parish Council
RDC District Councillor

copy to:

Hurst Green Parish Councillors,
Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members / Housing task-group members,
Cllr Susan Prochak,
Dr. Anthony Leonard.