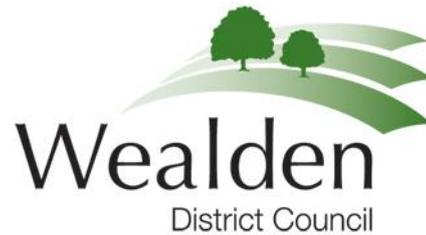


Wealden Local Plan Update – 19 October 2018



As previously reported the submission Wealden Local Plan was considered by Full Council on 18 July and subsequently published for representations between 13 August and 8 October.

Following the conclusion the Council are in the process of ensuring that all representations are loaded into the consultation portal and work is underway to analyse the responses received.

WDC have undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment as the “competent authority” for the Wealden district. This work has determined, based on Wealden’s specific set of circumstances and the evidence and advice it has available to it, that there is an adverse effect on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The Council is proposing a range of mitigation measures as defined in emerging policy AF2 and the recently published mitigation tariff, which will allow development to proceed up to the level of 950 dwellings per annum but not beyond this, within the period of the plan (2013 to 2028). These mitigation measures will also ensure that any adverse air quality impacts resulting from proposed development in the Wealden Local Plan will not worsen the current condition of Lewes Downs SAC and Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar.

As part of undertaking the necessary Appropriate Assessment for both the plan and individual planning applications the Council has consulted with Natural England. Their response is set out within the consultation portal. The regulations require WDC to consider the position of Natural England before completing the Appropriate Assessments and making final decisions on planning applications and the submission of the plan.

The work to consider the position of Natural England is underway and requires the Council to consult with our consultants and legal advisors. We will also be liaising with other relevant local authorities. This work is being prioritised in line with the Councils commitment to proceed with the plan this year and be able to determine applications as soon as possible. It is currently expected that this work will be completed around the end of November and so we will be seeking extensions of time from applicants until the 14th December. This will allow time to process applications following publication of our position and further applications to be heard at the planning committee meetings on 6th and 13th December respectively. Where possible the Council will look to shorten this timeline and if appropriate, provide updates during the course of our consideration to ensure that parties are well informed of our direction of travel.

Isabel Garden

Director Policy, Planning and Environmental Services
19 October 2018