

From: Richard Hedger
Sent: 28 November 2017 14:42
To: Cheryl Poole
Subject: Robertsbridge and Salehurst Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Cheryl,

Please pass this email on to the Examiner.

I would like to start by saying that the process followed by the committee has been robust with villagers being consulted at every opportunity.

I am pleased to see that the revised SEA document supports the original choices of site. The choices made by the people who are going to have to live with the outcome of this plan.

I had thought of the Neighbourhood Plan process as in the way of a Government bribe, I.e. you will have to have those number of new houses, but at least you can choose where they are built. This does not appear to be the case here where the wishes of the people may be ignored and unpopular sites included.

As a worker in the Agricultural industry who has seen the decline of that industry over the last 10 years or more, this plan was supporting the National and Local requirement of supporting this important industry. People want their food to be produced locally, what could be better than meat produced in the village being sold in the local farm shop and on the menu in the local pub? This, I understand, is now under threat with the possible inclusion of land currently in agricultural production ahead of sites that have not been used for years.

The SEA is a clinical document with such tight boundaries that it stifles what really needs to be said and the context can be easily lost.

I support the chosen sites and would like to add the following remarks.

The Mill

This has to be the first choice (as it was with the villagers) being a large brownfield site which is systematically being smashed to pieces by local and not so local teenagers, until it is now in a pitiful state and an eyesore. The once proud buildings are close to ruin. Flooding may be an issue as it is for much of the village, but being tidal, it does not last for days on end, normally hours until the tide goes out.

The introduction of hydro electric power would be a bonus to the village, Robertsbridge has a poor record regarding powercuts, and anything which would reduce the strain on our supply can only be a good thing.

Heathfield Gardens

Whilst not wanting to use any greenfield sites, at least this site has not been in Agricultural production for about the last 30 years, and as such has no negative impact on the agricultural industry.

It will be in close proximity to a similar estate which was one purely council housing, and now is mixed private and social.

Bishops Lane

If another greenfield site has to be used, then this should be used in preference. It has not been used seriously for agriculture for many years, and the last time it was, animals ended up being injured due to being chased.

Grove Farm

I do NOT support the use of this site for housing.

It is currently in agricultural production and its loss would have a negative impact on the industry, especially locally. Farm land, locally, is at a premium, with several large farming businesses vying for any land that become available, squeezing out the smaller farmers/small holders. The soil is of the best quality in the village, and there is a duty to protect that standard of soil. The farm cannot continue without buildings.

Exeter College, with their policy of 'no maintenance', even when they have legal duty to do so, are running the farm into the ground in order to achieve their aim. Their action is detrimental to our village.

The history connecting this site to the village has been written about many times, and the excavation proving that the remains are still in existence below ground should be something to be celebrated. Robertsbridge is called a historic village, and rightly so as it has 2 conservation areas etc. What historic village should be made to 'rip up' its own history dating back to the 12th Century (about the same time as Exeter College says it was founded) in order to make way for new housing which can be placed on other sites of lesser importance? The NPPF place great significance on protecting our built and historic environment.

There is also a healthy bat population which uses the barn and fields for feeding. The survey put the population 1 point away from county significance status. Bats are a protected species, and their feeding grounds should be protected if other sites without bats exist locally.

The water main with its 8m easement traversing the site means that there is much less developable space. The current application is only proposing 24 houses and requiring another 0.3 of a hectare to complete their supposed allocation of 30. Surely if there are other sites without this limitation which can produce the housing without the requirement for extra ground, then this must be preferable?

The water main restrictions and underground electricity cable must both add to the costs of development and affect viability and deliverability (both of which I do not believe have been proved) thus meaning we may not get any real benefits to the village from this site.

I hope that my views will be taken into account in your deliberations. As you can see, they could not be confined to the 'straight jacket' which confines the SEA document.

Richard Hedger

Additional email received within deadline:

From: Richard Hedger [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 November 2017 16:57
To: Cheryl Poole
Subject: Robertsbridge neighbourhood plan

Dear Cheryl

Having read your reply to Judith, I would like to qualify some of my answers, although the SEA is restrictive.

Comments re greenfield/ brownfield sites, use in agriculture, soil structure relate to effective use of land.

History of Grove Farm relates to Enhancing and protecting natural and built environment

I have no time to comment further due to deadline

Richard