

Report for Hadlow Down PC meeting 1st September 2020 by Cllr Phil Dixon, Wealden DC

The government have made some significant announcements on planning reform which are the subject of consultations. The first is about changes to the current system covering a revised standard method for calculating housing numbers, before consideration of constraints, first homes (discounted market housing), permission in principal and affordable housing threshold. The consultation finishes on 1st October.

The major proposal is for a complete overhaul of our current planning system as laid out the 'planning for the future' document. This proposes introducing a zonal system whereby we will have to categorise land into growth, renewal and protection zones. Development in the growth area will have automatic outline planning permission and development in the renewal area will have a presumption of approval. Development management policies will largely be contained in the NPPF and will therefore be national policy, with some scope for local policy such as local design codes.

There are also 'pillars' of the policy devoted to beauty and infrastructure. The whole aim is to simplify and speed up the planning process which the government hopes will help it deliver the goal of 300,000 houses a year, nationally.

We are at an early stage in preparing our new local plan so we will be subject to the new rules when we submit our plan.

If this goes through as proposed it will have a major impact on the work of our officers and will change the nature of community engagement, both in plan making and planning decisions. The consultation period ends on 29th October.