

Report from Cllr Michael Lunn – Wealden District Council – August 2023

The **Wealden District Council Planning Policy Team** are working towards the next draft of the **new Local Plan** which is due to be published for public consultation later this year (With or without the reduced housing numbers from Central Government). Through recent discussions officers have had with the Councils Cabinet, the Council have agreed that as part of the engagement process with Members prior to the Plan's publication the Council are proposing a series of Local Plan Cabinet Advisory Group for local Wealden Councillors to discuss various topics to be covered in the new Local Plan and to get ideas and thoughts from Wealden Councillors as to what could be included. The new Alliance has previously indicated that the public consultation on the draft of the Plan will be some time in Autumn this year.

The proposed programme which the Alliance is working to includes:

- July - Vision and objectives / Design and heritage
- August – Housing / development in the countryside
- August - Natural Environment / climate change
- September – Economy including town centres / Infrastructure (including transport and health and well being)
- September – Site allocations

Now it must be highlighted that there is risk here, if the new Alliance publish final housing numbers or site allocations in advance of any Government Announcements then in effect the Council would be locked into those higher housing numbers. This is something that the previous administration tried to avoid which is why the Local Plan had not been produced.

There has also been discussion by the Portfolio holder for planning Cllr Ian Tysh (Green Party) at Full Council that it's not unfeasible that a **new town** could be created within the Local Plan to take pressure off other areas but this has not been formally tabled.

A motion was also passed at Full Council to explore **distributed energy community centres** (solar farms, wind farms etc) to enable communities to be in charge of their own energy centres. My personal observations this is unlikely to proceed as UK Power networks will not allow connection, which is what has happened to the solar farm/car charging facility which was due to commence just outside Uckfield.

Uckfield Leisure Centre – it has been widely reported that the Alliance of Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council have agreed a 19 year lease where Wealden District Council will manage the leisure centre. Although this will be welcome news the building is becoming old, and significant investment in the coming years.

Outstanding question from last months meeting regarding definition of a caravan vs mobile home.

There is no difference in planning terms between the phrase 'caravan' and 'mobile home'. The definition of a caravan is in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, Section 29

'Caravan' means any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer) and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted, but does not include:

- a. any railway rolling stock which is for the time being on rails forming part of a railway system, or
- b. any tent.

Modified by: The Caravan Sites Act 1968, Section 13 (1) Twin-unit caravans A structure designed or adapted for human habitation which:

- a. is composed of not more than two sections separately constructed and designed to be assembled on a site by means of bolts, clamps or other devices, and
- b. is, when assembled, physically capable of being moved by road from one place to another (whether by being towed, or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer), shall not be treated as not being (or as not having been) a caravan within the meaning of Part I of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 by reason only that it cannot lawfully be so moved on a highway when assembled.

If any residents need any support please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cllr Michael Lunn

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