

**From:** Village Concerns villageconcerns2016@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Update 90 Central Government news, District Council, East Hoathly and Halland updates  
**Date:** 6 July 2020 at 08:00  
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July 2020

In January 2020, we were informed by Wealden District Council that the Wealden Submission Local Plan had been rejected by the Planning Inspector after the Public Hearings held in the summer of 2019. The reasons given were failure to cooperate with neighbouring authorities and that the scientific evidence regarding the effect of emissions on the Ashdown Forest was flawed and not in agreement with Natural England. After consideration Wealden withdrew the Submission Local Plan in February 2020.

Wealden are now in the process of producing a new Submission Local Plan. The constraints on development required to protect the Ashdown Forest emissions have been effectively removed. More houses (1231 per year) will have to be built in the Plan Period than were proposed in the previous rejected plan.

Wealden have now initiated a “call for development sites” across the district. A great deal of evidence has to be produced and it is not expected that a new plan will be completed before 2023.

The lack of an up to date Local Plan accompanied by a lack of a 5 year land supply means a time of great uncertainty. It does become even more of a developers’ free for all. It is fair to say that in these circumstances that sites previously considered unsuitable could be approved.

Then Covid 19 and lockdown on March 23<sup>rd</sup> began. Wealden Planning Department have continued their work holding virtual Planning Committee Meetings from April onwards. This is a completely new scenario and Village Concerns have done a great deal of work monitoring these meetings for fairness and to see how best to represent the Parish in these circumstances. Many large applications have been approved in Hellingly and Hailsham. It is fair to say that far more development is still occurring in the South of the District.

On May 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 the Application for 55 houses behind South Street, East Hoathly came before Committee. Village Concerns submitted three videos prior to the meeting summarising the objections put forward by the Village, Thankfully, the District Councillors voted 7-4 against this Application. The virtual meetings do not allow the public to have a “live” presence in the meeting. Before lockdown, we could have physically been at the Wealden offices in Hailsham.

We do expect Bramblebank in Halland, and both the Hesmonds site and the Circle of Oak site on South Street in East Hoathly to be heard, possibly imminently, during this virtual time. There are Planning Committee Meetings on July 16<sup>th</sup> and August 13<sup>th</sup> when these applications could be heard. Village Concerns will continue to work to halt overdevelopment with the help of the

communities.

On June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020 two new documents regarding Environmental Impact were added to the Planning Application for the Hesmonds Application for 205 potential new homes. Village Concerns have challenged these documents.

Central government is currently reviewing Planning Policy and Practice. This may be an area of concern. In particular more centralisation of decision making.

Wealden District Councillor Ann Newton stated that there are discussions about development in or near Uckfield - which in turn would affect both Halland and East Hoathly in terms of traffic and pollution alone. There are in fact various sites in Uckfield which are expected to come forward. Ridgewood site for 1000 houses has already been approved. Building is well underway.

We need to remain on guard and are potentially under more threat than ever before: that nice little field that 'will never get planning permission' most likely now will. It could be next door to you.

Thank you to all of you who continue to write objection after objection after objection. This has helped tremendously.

If you would like to be informed re overdevelopment for East Hoathly and Halland, Village Concerns can keep you up to date. If you would like to be added to our email list, please email us on: [villageconcerns2016@gmail.com](mailto:villageconcerns2016@gmail.com)

Website: [www.villageconcerns.co.uk](http://www.villageconcerns.co.uk) Facebook: Village Concerns – East Hoathly and Halland

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