

Contact:

Councillor Jonathan Ash-Edwards 01444 477210
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Your Ref:

Our Ref: JAE/Corr/2022

Date:

17th May 2022

Amanda Green and Michelle Parlett
South of Folders Lane Action Group
soflag@soflag.co.uk

Dear Amanda and Michelle

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your open letter, which I understand was shared with the press before it was sent to me.

I appreciate that SOFLAG is opposed to the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and note that you have made representations to the Planning Inspector in this regard.

Councils have a legal obligation to plan for the new homes which our communities need in the years ahead. That process is always a challenge in Mid Sussex given the need to balance this with protecting our countryside and environment.

Brownfield sites are always given priority for development but the truth is that, in a rural area like Mid Sussex where around 90% of the district is undeveloped, there simply aren't enough brownfield sites to meet housing need.

The Site Allocations Development Plan Document was required by the Planning Inspector who considered the Mid Sussex District Plan in order to allocate the remaining housing sites required in the later years of the plan period up to 2031.

All the sites selected have been chosen because they score the highest in the Council's technical assessments, based upon the best available evidence. In the Council's view, Sites SA12 and SA13 are consistent with the requirements of the Mid Sussex District Plan and National Planning Policy Framework because they are sustainably located and within close proximity of infrastructure such as Burgess Hill railway station as well as schools and the town centre.

The Site Allocations DPD is now with the independent Planning Inspector who conducted hearings into the issues last year. The Planning Inspector has the final decision on which sites are included following which Councillors will have to decide whether or not to adopt it. The law does not allow Councillors to pick and choose sites following independent examination.

Failure to adopt a plan that has been approved by the Planning Inspector would put the five year housing land supply at immediate risk. This would result in developers pursuing speculative planning applications across the whole of Mid Sussex, with a high chance of them succeeding, which would not be in the interests of our community.

Working together for a better Mid Sussex

The Council awaits the Planning Inspector's final report and conclusions which will be in the public domain once communicated by the Inspector.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Jonathan Ash-Edwards
Leader of the Council