

## ASTEN FIELDS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



Planning Officer  
Planning Department,  
Rother District Council,  
Town Hall,  
London Road,  
Bexhill-on-sea,  
TN39 9JX

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024

### **Draft Local Plan, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) consultation and potentially available land contained within - referenced BAT0014**

Dear Planning Officer,

I am writing to you as the chair of The Asten Fields Residents Association in direct response to the Draft Local Plan 2020 – 2040 and in reference to the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) document.

Residents of Asten Fields are deeply concerned with the proposals contained within and have immediate concerns about proposal **BAT0014** and the land that is marked as potentially available. Residents would like to strongly OBJECT against this as it will impact the quality of our lives and the quality of the environment that surrounds us in our street.

The land covers a wide area of prime farmland and contains ancient hedgerows. It is also within an area of outstanding natural beauty, is within proximity to ancient woodlands and sites of historical significance. The land is a natural habitat for trees, wildflowers and animals and is quite precious to us and those we share it with. Any development within this area would threaten this and be negative to the environment and to the feel of our neighbourhood. By its own assessment, the HELAA document recognises this, and further shows us that any plans should be rejected.

It is a fact that further development will put a heavy burden on our current infrastructure. The surrounding roads are often congested, and extra demands placed by large numbers of extra vehicles will place further strain on our already suffering roads. We have heavy school traffic and constant through traffic that already significantly impacts us. Residents are also hugely concerned about the additional pollution from vehicles this will bring along with the additional congestion and extra traffic. Residents report that pollution is already becoming a health concern.

Access to the development area is unclear from the proposals however, it is likely that access will impinge on resident's properties whose quality of life will be negatively affected

Battle is not served well with public transport. We have 2 main bus routes through Battle with infrequent services. We have a train station approximately 1.5 miles away and no local safe cycle routes, leaning on a demographic that will need cars within the household to function and gain access to the basics placing further demand.

Battle is a small town with services that are already under pressure to deliver a quality of life to residents. Residents are concerned about local services such as dentists, doctors and other health services being overburdened as there are no plans increase services within the town. We also have limited shops, supermarkets and local amenities in the town.

Our town has local service provisions that have been reduced and are under pressure, such as police, ambulance and Fire, so when considering the safety and wellbeing of our residents and the pressures of public services, residents are concerned, especially when considering crime or antisocial behaviour. We are also concerned about pressures placed on local schools, sports facilities, vital services and provisions.

When considering the site impact assessment within the document, residents also see that this proposal is a bad choice for development. The plan already recognises the risk of flooding and adverse effects of water runoff. The many references to the land's historical significance and its environmental significance puts a huge emphasis on rejecting any development on this site. It is disappointing that development is justified by a previous development that pushed the boundaries into an area of outstanding natural beauty.

This proposal also does not seem in keeping with RDC's emphasis on being "green to the core". Residents are unclear how the developers and planners guarantee this requirement will be met. Given that the land in question is Grade A farming land and never touched by development of any sort. How can any planning or development not only put back the same level of biodiversity let alone deliver 10% more than was there prior to building 100+ homes, bringing in 100 to 400 new residents, 100+ vehicles, and the additional infrastructure required including sewage, water, electricity and gas supplies, new roads and access points?

Residents are also unclear about supply of fresh water, foul water and sewage removal which are already under stress, or with the improvement of utilities to the area with extra capacity to deal with the demand.

If development were to go ahead, residents are also concerned about the noise and dust created by development that would affect health and wellbeing. A number of residents with health conditions are very anxious about this and are of great concern.

We wish to write to formally put forward our concerns and strong objections to any development of the area and would request for it to be removed from the local development plan.

Kindest regards,

Leo Cacciatore

Chair

Asten Fields Residents Association