

# Forest Row Parish Council

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(Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)



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Date: 20 April, 2011

Dear David

## **WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PROPOSED SUBMISSION CORE STRATEGY**

Forest Row Parish Council has had the opportunity to consider some of the many documents that form part of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy and would comment as follows, recognising the strategic nature of the document in that it applies to Wealden District:

### **1. VISION AND SPATIAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

We would support the overarching objectives that contribute to the Vision. They are laudable and, we believe, achievable in broad terms across the district. But we would have some concerns in their application to Forest Row, specifically in terms of SPO3 and SPO6.

### **2. WCS 2 & 3 DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT**

We would broadly support the distribution of housing growth around the edges of the towns in the district but will refer to the numbers allocated to rural villages further on. Similarly the distribution of employment as indicated seems a little skewed, ignoring the rural villages altogether. We feel that the growth in employment opportunities is the key to sustainability of rural communities. The growth in employment opportunities is directly correlated to the growth of housing.

### **3. WCS 6 RURAL AREAS STRATEGY**

**3.1** We note that a number of rural settlements are included in the list to take housing that makes up the allocated 455 dwellings. This draft policy states that:

*The rural areas comprise the following categories of settlement:*

*Service Centre  
Local Service Centre  
Neighbourhood Centre  
Unclassified settlements*

*Within Service Centres, Local Centres and Neighbourhood Centres .... provision will be made for at least 455 new dwellings*

The **Settlement Hierarchy Criteria** in the document **'Development of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy'** lists Forest Row as a Service Centre:

*A self sufficient settlement, with exception to secondary school provision, with a centre containing a good range of shops and very good access to East Grinstead*

**In view of the fact that by your own criteria Forest Row meets the requirement for additional housing, we would like to re-iterate our view that Forest Row could accommodate up to 100 dwellings – a conclusion drawn from our Masterplan Survey.**

This is also stated in Appendix 1 of the document referred to above. Please note that this level of housing would be in **addition** to the provision of sheltered accommodation to mitigate the loss of the units in Evelyn Clark House.

- 3.2** In the context of the Masterplan Survey carried out within tight timescales and at great effort, we are extremely disappointed to note that not only has our 'vision' not been included in the '**Summary of Town Masterplanning Documents Background Paper**', but that the spirit of the conclusions reached in the report on the Forest Row Masterplan have plainly been ignored.
- 3.3** Policy WCS6 also refers to the retention of the development boundary in Forest Row. Whilst we recognise that there are overarching strategic requirements across the District as a whole, we feel that the case made by Forest Row Parish Council during the SHLAA process to find sites that met the criteria and enabled limited housing growth should be re-examined when the consultation on development boundaries is being considered. We believe that the development boundary round Forrest Row should be re-drawn elastically to allow for the small pockets of land that meet the criteria to be considered in future without the rigidity of the current boundary limiting scope for future growth.

**In this context we would like Wealden District Council to reconsider the sites that were proposed during the SHLAA process that the Parish Council felt would enable such growth and that were NOT in the Flood Plain and were within reasonable access to the village centre.**

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

**We feel that Forest Row should be added to the list of villages that can take limited growth at this stage.**

#### **5. CONSULTATION PROCESS**

We feel that within the logistical constraints of the exercise, the consultation process has been good. However, it has to be recognised that on the whole, the wealth of information contained in the many volumes of documents is not conducive to easy participation in the process. It is requested that the Parish Council be advised as to why both their and the Community's well-considered views have been seemingly ignored as this may discourage participation in future consultations and would not bode well for the new Localism Bill.

Yours sincerely

Rodabe Rudin  
Clerk to Forest Row parish Council