

From: Amanda McIntyre (Sean)
Sent: 27 November 2017 13:06
To: Cheryl Poole
Cc:
Subject: Salehurst and Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan Consultation - comments

Dear Ms Poole

Please find attached our response to the latest consultation.

Regards
Sean O'Hara and Amanda McIntyre

Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan – Consultation response

Sean O'Hara & Amanda McIntyre (residents since 2009)

1. The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has been consulted upon thoroughly across Salehurst and Robertsbridge. This has included open days at the Youth Centre as well as written communication via the Parish Council (PC) newsletter and online at the PC website. Volunteers also canvassed their local areas to encourage residents to participate. This has resulted in a very high response rate when compared to most NPs across the UK.
2. The effective consultation process and high response rate clearly indicate strong public support for the principal elements of the NP.
3. Most importantly, the NP's focus on the redevelopment of the Mill site in preference to other rejected sites, particularly Grove Farm and Bishops Lane, clearly reflects the views of the overwhelming majority of residents who want to see the brownfield Mill site redeveloped in preference to alternative greenfield sites. Gavin Barwell, the then Housing and Planning Minister, stated in April this year "We need to build more homes in this country so making sure that we re-use brownfield land is crucial. We want to bring life back to abandoned sites, create thousands more homes and help protect our valued countryside."
4. It would be wholly disproportionate for the Examiner to conclude that the Mill site cannot be a preferred site (in the absence of an alternative access route for emergency vehicles) simply because of the risk of flooding once every 75 years; flooding that experience has shown subsides within 3 days. People who move to Robertsbridge do so in the knowledge that it lies on a flood plain, has experienced flooding and that, notwithstanding the existence of modern flood defences, such flooding may happen in the future at some time. In addition, such a conclusion takes no account of possible technological development to overcome any access issues or flood alleviation schemes.
5. The Mill building and attached oast house would, if restored, provide a new hub for the village, not just residential, while at the same time removing an eyesore and enabling the traditional entrances to the village to remain unspoilt. If the site is not redeveloped in the near future it is obvious that

eventually the Mill building will be beyond repair. The NP provides a fantastic opportunity to improve housing in the village while not adversely affecting the nature of the village.

6. There is a possibility that renovation of the Mill will facilitate the construction of a hydro electricity generation unit, a factor which should be taken into account in view of climate change. The potential for lower energy costs as well as the cachet of supporting a renewable energy scheme which could provide local employment opportunities, e.g. maintenance and repair, is likely to prove attractive to future house buyers.
7. If the Examiner rejects the Mill site and the NP is left with no option but to name Grove Farm and Bishops Lane as approved sites there will be a serious risk that, in a referendum, residents will register their dismay and disagreement with the outcome by abstaining or voting no, resulting in the NP failing. This would be a damning indictment of the Examination process and call into question what purpose there was for the NP consultation process and the associated financial cost to residents via the Parish Council budget and the significant amounts of time expended by the members of the NP Steering Group and contributions by other residents.
8. The NP is clearly focused on the need to comply with the legal requirement to build more dwellings while at the same time preserving the best features of this wonderful historic village. It does so while at the same time encouraging the use of environmentally sound building practices. If the NP fails these benefits will be lost and the credibility of the Government's NP policy will be seriously compromised.

From: Sean And Amanda

Sent: 28 November 2017 17:23

To: Cheryl Poole

Subject: Re: Salehurst and Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan Consultation - comments

Dear Ms Poole

Our comments were intended to confirm our view that the NP is robust and that the revised SEA only serves to reinforce that opinion.

We would be grateful if you could ensure that this point is noted by the Examiner.

Regards

Sean O'Hara and Amanda McIntyre