

## **Objections to over-development in East Hoathly**

In 2009, 75 new homes were built in East Hoathly without any infrastructure improvements and the then WDC Local Plan said there should be no more housing in the village. In the new Core Strategy the village is targeted with an additional 190 new houses. The recent release of agricultural and stud land for housing development means the village could double in size with a further 400 homes (Hesmond and Bradford plans) over the next 5 years; and this could rise even further considering that even more stud land is now being offered up for development.

### ➤ **East Hoathly has infrastructure challenges that need solving now, before any new housing development is even considered.**

- **Education:** The primary schools in East Hoathly and neighbouring Chiddingly are full with waiting lists, there is no room for school building expansion in East Hoathly and there is currently no funding planned for a new school or new classrooms.
  - **Health:** Residents cannot get appointments in the local branch surgery or are referred to Buxted Main Surgery (no direct public transport) despite capacity for more resources in East Hoathly. The impact of the lack of GP funding does not support further housing development in the village.
  - **Electricity:** The frequent electricity black-outs and brown-outs occurring over recent years suggests that the electricity supply network is in no fit state to adequately support the scale of new homes proposed in this plan.
  - **Water Supply:** The frequent water cuts and low pressure supply occurring over recent years suggests that the water supply network is in no fit state to adequately support the scale of new homes proposed in this plan.
  - **Storm Water and Sewage:** Foul water does contaminate private homes and gardens because sewerage pipework becomes overwhelmed in heavy downpours. This plan will exacerbate the existing sewage disposal problem; furthermore, the Southern Water sewer located on the other side of the village is operating at full capacity now.
- ### ➤ **Impact on the Conservation Area and Historic Features of East Hoathly**
- **Traffic and Parking:** The 'U bend', at the historic centre of the village, is very busy with the meeting of agricultural vehicles, HGVs and the occasional bus. Protracted manoeuvres around parked cars and high pollution are endured now; and in the summer months the caravans arrive and chaos prevail. This plan will feed many more cars onto this junction and the back lanes since public transport is an infrequent bus service. This will be unsafe, polluting and create dangerous conditions
  - **Wildlife and Footpaths:** The site abuts the Long Pond, which is home to endangered species (Great Crested Newts, Water Voles) and it is also crossed by an historic footpath which features in the acclaimed diary of Thomas Turner, an 18th Century resident of East Hoathly. Habitats in hedgerows, veteran trees and green fields will be destroyed in this plan.

- **Ancient Woodland:** The plan threatens an ancient woodland water table (Frog Wood) and appears not to respect a minimum buffer of 15m. In the Wealden District Council Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment the Hesmonds Stud land is “Designated as being a remnant of Ancient Historic Landscape and it also abuts the Prominent Urban Edge and, at its north east end is a position where there are ‘significant views’ “.

It is in the preceding context that the following objections to the Hesmond and Bradford plans are made. They are guided by recent comments made by Sajid Javid on rejecting a planning application:

➤ **Contravention of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- **NPPF sec 1 para 17:** This plan is of a scale and nature on a green-field site in the open countryside, which would result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural and stud land. The development would cause harm by the significant adverse visual and landscape character impact on the area of the development site and the surrounding valued landscape.
- **NPPF sec 4:** It is not considered that the development could take place without having a severe impact on the existing highway network and it has not been proven that it will promote sustainable transport or conform with the strategic objectives to reduce congestion, inconvenience and hazards on the local highway network.
- **NPPF sec 4 para 37:** The development does not seek to provide any dedicated employment land and as such, makes little contribution to the job needs of the village population or the wider area exacerbating problems of out-commuting. The absence of any employment land in the mix of uses would not help to secure economic growth and weighs against the sustainability credentials of the scheme.
- **NPPF sec 4 para 38:** In the plan there is no provision for acceptable levels of education provision, community facilities, environmental standards (e.g. SANGS) and necessary infrastructure either through on or off site provision or financial contribution.

➤ **Our objections find support in the following recent quotes:**

The Wealden Local Plan level of housing proposed would cause “significant infrastructure difficulties”

*Nick Bennett ESCC . East Hoathly with Halland Parish Council Meeting Sept 26th 2016*

“where there are clear identified infrastructure shortfalls, certain developments may not be able to proceed”

*Kelvin Williams, Head of Planning and Environmental Services, Wealden District Council in a letter to Nus Ghani dated Oct 5th 2016*

“Of course there are sometimes valid reasons for opposing some local planning applications if they are in the wrong place, if there is not enough infrastructure or if they are just plain ugly.”

*Savid Javid at the Tory Party Conference 2016*

**Further endorsement of our objections is found In the Environmental Strategy for East Sussex dated June 2011 published by ESCC which outlines 3 key issues for East Sussex:**

➤ **Contravention of the Environmental Strategy for East Sussex published by ESCC**

- The deterioration, fragmentation and loss of the distinctive character of the East Sussex Landscape and the habitats it supports, through creeping suburbanization in rural areas, loss of significant landscape features, trees and hedgerows, decline in quality and fragmentation of woodlands, and heritage assets at risk
- The need to manage the impacts of new development and infrastructure on the local identity of our built environment, landscape and habitats.
- Conserve the landscape and built heritage of East Sussex in a manner appropriate to its significance and protect the distinctive character of towns, villages and wider landscape of the County.
- Reduce the environmental impact of new and existing developments and create well planned environmental and green infrastructure that supports the landscape, habitats and wildlife.

We are concerned that housing development in East Hoathly is being led by Developers rather than being considered within the context of a strategic plan that carefully evaluates local needs and the capacity of the infrastructure. This large development is unsustainable for East Hoathly. Local democracy depends on the views of the electorate being respected. Wealden District Council, as our elected representative, has a duty of care to protect our environment and stop our quality of life being affected adversely.