

## Development in East Hoathly

Thank you for your email of 2 November 2016 to the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP , about the potential for over development in East Hoathly. We have been asked to reply on his behalf as our Team has responsibility for national planning policy on housing.

We hope you will appreciate that, because of the Secretary of State's role in the planning process, we are not able to comment on the merits of the development proposals which you have set out in your letter. However, the Government has been clear that it wants to see housing proceed in a properly planned, strategic way and not at any cost. The cumulative impact of development, and the need for infrastructure to support development, are material considerations in deciding whether development is appropriate.

The Framework asks councils to identify priority areas for viable infrastructure, and work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop plans for its provision, including roads and transport links, water resources and schools. Our planning guidance asks local councils to consider what infrastructure is needed to support development, and how it can be provided. It is, however, for local authorities to decide whether adequate infrastructure exists, or can be created, to support development.

The Framework also asks local councils to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is defined as land in grades 1,2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification. Where significant development of agricultural land is shown to be necessary, the Framework sets out that councils should seek to use poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

These and other policies in the National Planning Policy Framework constitute guidance for local authorities in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in deciding planning applications. However, they are designed to be interpreted and applied locally.

We understand that Wealden District Council is currently reviewing the Wealden Local Plan with a view to progressing to the representation stage in the first quarter of 2017. This should give you the opportunity to raise your specific concerns about development in your area with the local authority.

It is also worth noting that under the planning system, local residents have a statutory right to comment on, and object to, planning applications as they come forward for decision. In reaching its decision on a planning application, the local authority must consider any representations made within the specified period and take into account any material issues that they raise. You may wish to raise your concerns with your local authority as part of this process.

Thank you, once again, for writing.

Yours sincerely

**PLANNING POLICY AND REFORM DIVISION**