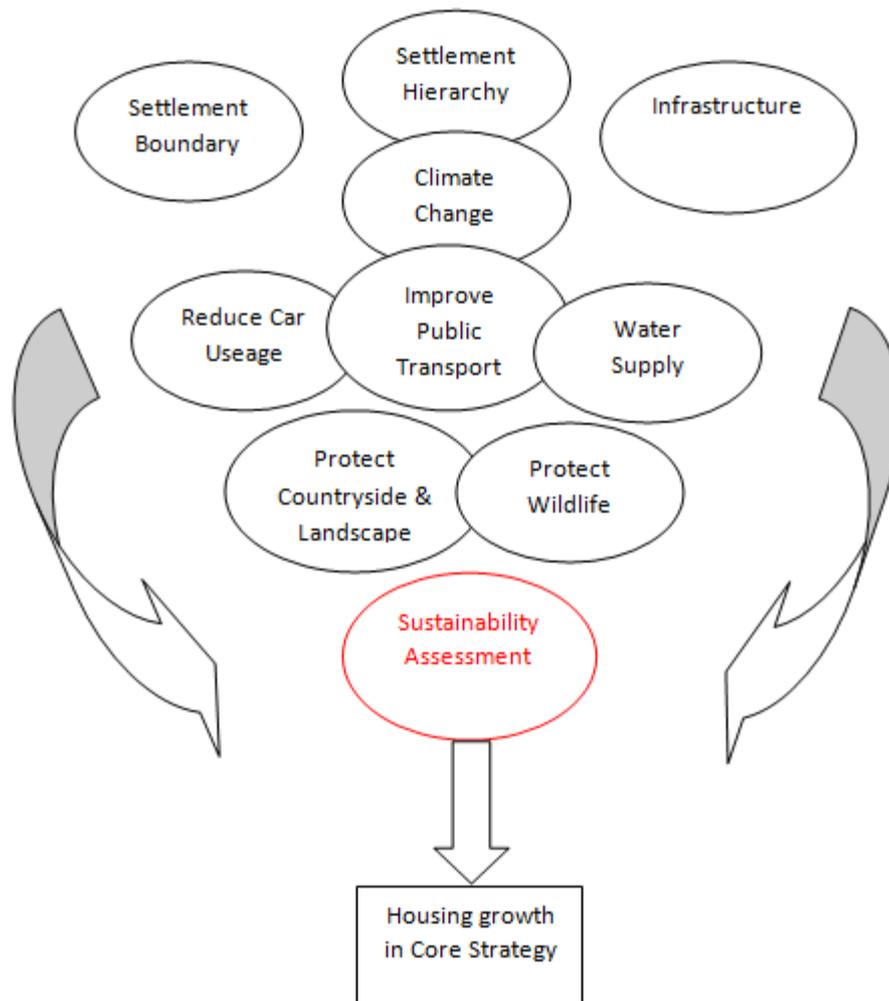


## Why we have to challenge the WDC Sustainability Assessment for East Hoathly

The National Planning Policy Framework endeavours to put sustainable development at the core of the planning system. Sadly, our local authority has shown itself to be manipulative and inconsistent.



### Settlement Boundary

Settlement boundaries define where open market housing will be allowed provided that the development is in keeping with the form and character of the area and can be appropriately accessed and serviced. By defining a settlement boundary, the areas outside of the boundary are recognised for the purposes of planning policy as countryside where new development will be strictly controlled.

In February 2013: the 'Adopted Proposals Map' from WDC removed the East Hoathly Settlement Boundary thereby removing the presumption in favour of development. As of now (Nov 2016) East Hoathly does not have a development boundary, however, work is now progressing to re-install it as part of the new Wealden Local Plan. **This is because WDC has done a flip and identified East Hoathly as a sustainable settlement.**

## **A Development Objective for a Sustainable Settlement**

Focusing new market housing development to locations with reasonable day-to-day facilities is seen as a key way in which the Planning System can help reduce contributions to climate change, protect the countryside and landscape and increase the proportion of homes which have access to services and facilities by means other than the private car

**So why has East Hoathly been identified as a sustainable settlement?**

### **The WDC Settlement Hierarchy Test for East Hoathly**

Nursery/Pre School	✓	Place of Worship	✓
Primary School	✓	Community Hall	✓
Secondary School	✗	Petrol Station	✗
Doctor	✓	Business Area	✓
Dentist	✗	Significant Employment Opps	?
Dispensary	✓	Children's Play Area	✓
Convenience Store	✓	Playing Pitches (All Types)	✓
Post Office	✓	Pavilion/Facilities	✓
Library	✓	Multi- Green Spaces	✓
Public House	✓		

WDC makes judgement using this very crude tickbox, the accessibility by public transport and whether there is a development boundary or not. Even if the library service is 1 hour in 3 weeks from a mobile vehicle; or the GP Surgery is overwhelmed and you have to travel by car to Buxted to get seen; or the bus service is infrequent and doesn't go to Lewes or Brighton; these facilities get a tick. The ticks are counted and East Hoathly gets put into the same 'Settlement Hierarchy' as: Crowborough, Hailsham and Uckfield. From this information and the [Sustainability Assessment](#) the housing growth is then allocated to the village.

### **Climate Change and the Concern about Water Supply**

Internationally the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change sees an unprecedented consensus from 185 countries around the globe on the need to take action on climate change. Our area relies heavily on groundwater. If winter rainfall is not sufficient to refill the aquifers and reservoirs, the water supply is at risk the following summer. The drought order imposed on the south-east of England during the summer of 2006 is a case in point. A rising population, more households and greater wealth have led to an ever greater demand for water, putting the limited supply in the south of England under stress.

This combination of increasing demand and limited supply will inevitably lead to water shortages. To avoid a crisis in the future requires action now: new policies, based on sound science, are needed for planning, regulating and managing the region's water resources. Don't be too optimistic: at position 16 in the Ofwat league of 19 water companies for quality of service delivery, our supplier is described by Ofwat as 'Significantly Below Industry Average'.

## Climate Change and the Concern about Car Usage

As in most rural areas, we need quality affordable housing, so that those who grow up in the area can stay if they wish to, helping our community to flourish. So often village housing development is seldom to meet genuine local need – rather, it panders to a fetish of property ownership where the supposed book value of the property becomes more important than the utility it affords to the resident (if there is one).

Rural areas are not just a smaller version of urban communities; they have different strengths and different challenges. The evidence on the sustainability of rural services indicates that they are dependent the creation of local jobs and affordable housing and effective public transport. Some of these factors are outside of the direct control of the planning system. Real localism should mean that local communities are part of the decision making and development process.

“The living tapestry of a mixed community is becoming harder and harder to achieve in villages across England, as planning is weakened and policy outcomes are left to the market. Housing policy should be ‘rural proofed’ to deliver what the countryside really needs: more high quality housing that is affordable – genuinely affordable - in perpetuity.”

*(Shaun Spiers - Chief Executive, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) )*

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## Infrastructure

Extracts from the Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan Policy WCS7 – Effective Provision of Infrastructure:

*‘The release of land for development will be conditional upon there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the requirements generated by the proposed development..... a programme of delivery must be agreed with the relevant infrastructure providers which will ensure that these improvements are provided at the time they are needed..... will be secured by planning agreement/obligation....., will include health, transport, utility services and education providers .....*

**Do we trust WDC to enforce this promise on infrastructure? When we know this is happening:**

“A determination to give volume house builders the whip-hand whatever the costs is a crude drive to deliver stalled house building numbers, a centralising disdain for the power of local communities to shape housing and infrastructure in their areas, and a complete disregard for the importance of affordable housing to the lifeblood and social mix of towns and villages.”

*(John Healey – Labour MP for Wentworth & Dearne; Shadow Secretary of State for Housing and Planning)*

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## What Can You Do?

You have recently been sent a form containing a table showing the Wealden District Council **Sustainability Assessment** for the North(1) sector of East Hoathly. This is the land for the proposed Hesmond Stud development of 211 homes. Please make an effort to comment on each sustainability point and return to Village Concerns as soon as possible. **This is urgent.**

THE END