

Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Have you read and considered all the information in the Draft Plan?

Dear Parishioner

Work on our Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan is progressing and the consultation on the draft (Pre Submission) Plan runs until 24 January 2014. The Plan has been prepared with seventeen policies and proposals relating to the management of development in the parish in the period 2014 – 2027.

At the end of the consultation period, the comments from residents will be recorded, analysed and collated and you will have an opportunity to comment on any changes to the final version of the Plan before it is independently examined.

Our Key Proposals

- Up to 70 homes at Lime Cross on the edge of Herstmonceux village to be built in phases over the next decade or so, including affordable and self build homes for local people and providing for improvements to the Sports Field, for the relocation of the Bowls Club and investment in the village centre
- Up to 20 affordable homes at Strawberry Field in Windmill Hill, including provision of a new public open space and a car park for visitors to The Windmill
- Up to 10 affordable homes and a new village shop in Cowbeech if the existing commercial users relocate to alternative premises
- The creation of a new Herstmonceux Community Land Trust to be controlled by the local community for the purpose of overseeing affordable and self build homes and keeping them available for these uses in perpetuity
- The protection from housing development until at least 2027 of all other land outside the settlement boundary at Herstmonceux village other than for very small housing schemes that comply with Wealden's countryside planning policies
- The promotion of the Herstmonceux village centre by protecting the unnecessary loss of shops and other commercial units

How We Got Here and Why

The process of preparing our Plan began over a year ago with the Parish Council forming a Steering Group of local people, advised by Action in rural Sussex and officers of Wealden District Council. The Group has undertaken significant community engagement in the parish since then and the draft Plan is the result of that work.

This is the first project of its type for the Parish Council and it carries real significance for how the local community will shape its destiny over the next decade or so. When completed, our Plan will become a statutory planning document carrying significant weight in informing local planning decisions by the District Council.

Not surprisingly, the Plan has raised many challenging issues, not least how to plan for the target set by the District Council for us finding land for at least 70 new homes in or adjoining Herstmonceux village. Although local people said they preferred this to be done by choosing lots of small sites it has not been possible to meet the target in that way. We must choose from sites that are either inside or are on the edge of the village boundary – all the smaller sites suggested are beyond the village edge and/or are in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which has a higher level of protection from development.

Instead our draft Plan has chosen one site in each of Herstmonceux, Windmill Hill and Cowbeech with two crucial goals in mind. Firstly, so we can use the housing schemes to maximise important community benefits, e.g. affordable housing, self-build housing, improved community facilities. And secondly so we minimise the impact of development on the precious landscape character of the parish. The Steering Group believes that no other sites in the parish that would be acceptable to the District Council or to local people can achieve these same goals.

Of course, we don't expect everyone to agree with our proposals; some will be more affected than others. However, the risk in not having our own Plan is becoming greater as the demand increases for housing development in our area. We have taken our responsibility seriously in leading this project on behalf of the local communities of the parish and we hope in return that you will find the time to read through the document before sending us your comments.

The Plan and other evidence base documents (including the draft Site Assessment Report and Strategic Environmental Assessment) can be viewed at:

- www.herstmonceuxparish.org.uk
- www.wealden.gov.uk
- Hailsham Library
- Herstmonceux Village Information centre
- Herstmonceux Village Hall
- the Parish Clerk - 01323 833312 or clerk@herstmonceuxparish.org.uk

Please send questions and comments on the policies to:

Mrs J McInnes, Herstmonceux Parish Clerk, Herstmonceux Village Hall, Hailsham Road, Herstmonceux, East Sussex BN27 4JX or clerk@herstmonceuxparish.org.uk