|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contact:** Diane Talbot | **Your ref:**  |
| **E-mail:** Diane.Talbot@midsussex.gov.uk | **Our ref: PR2005/CT/MF**  |
| **Direct line:** 01444 477387 | **Date: 30 October 2015**  |
| **Out of hours:** 07702 034236 |  |

# PRESS RELEASE

**Council responds to District Plan Consultation**

**Mid Sussex District Council is proposing to increase the number of homes to be delivered by the District Plan.**

Over the summer the Council consulted on the District Plan and received constructive feedback as part of that process. After careful consideration the Council is proposing to make amendments to the Plan to ensure it meets the needs of Mid Sussex residents and businesses, while protecting the unique character and diversity of the towns and villages.

Since the General Election in May there has been a clear drive from Central Government to increase the number of homes built in the UK, led by the Prime Minister’s commitment to deliver one million new homes by 2020. This national context is important because it will directly affect the Independent Examination of the Mid Sussex District Plan by the Planning Inspector.

Over the past few months, Mid Sussex District Council has carefully followed the outcomes of Local Plan Examinations in other areas, particularly locally. The methodology used for establishing housing need has been scrutinised closely by Inspectors and strong emphasis has been placed on the requirement to support neighbouring authorities with any unmet housing need. This policy has been strongly enforced at other local Examinations.

As a result of all these requirements the Council is proposing to increase the number of homes provided by the plan to 800 per year. To accommodate the increased housing numbers, the Council is proposing to add a new strategic development site for 600 dwellings at Hardriding Farm, Pease Pottage to the District Plan. A Housing Density Policy will also be introduced to make best use of the land currently allocated for housing and reduce the need to use further Greenfield sites.

The Council will continue to look to Neighbourhood Plans to provide local policies and allocations and there will be no necessity for the current generation of neighbourhood plans to increase their housing numbers.

“When it comes to planning, the national picture is changing all the time and we must be ready to adapt to the current national situation,” said Councillor Garry Wall, Leader of Mid Sussex District Council.

“It is clear from studying the outcomes of recent Local Plan Examinations that Inspectors are pushing Councils hard to deliver an increased level of housing to meet the national shortage.

“We cannot ignore what is happening in other areas. We must take a responsible approach to our Plan making and make changes in order to give the Plan the best possible chance of success at Examination. Without these modifications we risk years of ‘planning by appeal’, allowing private developers to dictate how much housing there should be in Mid Sussex and where it should go. It’s vital that our District Plan supports sustainable growth and jobs whilst also protecting the unique character of Mid Sussex and these changes are essential if we are to make that happen.”

A report will now be presented the Scrutiny Committee for Planning and Economic Development on 10 November and a meeting of Council on 11 November. Members will be asked to agree modifications to the District Plan and a public consultation will run from 19 November until 31 December to give local people the chance to comment on the changes. The District Plan will then be submitted for Examination in early 2016.

#### ENDS

For more information please contact **Diane Talbot on 01444 477387 or** **Diane.Talbot@midsussex.gov.uk**

**Notes to Editors**

The role of the District Plan is to provide strategic planning guidance on what, where, when and how development will take place in Mid Sussex over the next 17 years. The Council’s draft District Plan has been prepared with the help of the Town and Parish Councils in Mid Sussex to make sure it reflects the views of local communities.