

## Opinion

# Planning Update

with Margaret Howell  
Battle Town Councillor

**Battle Neighbourhood Plan**  
*Your monthly update*

## Battle Neighbourhood Plan

**T**his is the ninth report I have written on the above Plan and I hope that you are following our progress.

The ultimate purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan, which commenced in 2015, is to assist in seeking potential development areas whilst at the same time protecting our open spaces, historic element, character appraisal and strategic gaps.

We were told we were obliged to find some 475 houses. This was a Government edict, not Battle Town Council, Rother District Council nor East Sussex County Council. A Steering Group was formed, and in April 2017, a Public Consultation was held. There was a 34.5% response to this, a very good percentage according to our Consultant.

Rother District Council has confirmed that development boundaries are out of date, and are being reviewed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

However, there appears to be a misunderstanding by some in the community concerning the number of



houses that the Blackfriars development in Marley Lane may ultimately generate. This site will account for approximately 50% of our housing allocation and is therefore not the final answer to all of our housing requirements. Through the Neighbourhood Plan call for sites, and some of the potential allocations made by Rother, several potential development sites have been put forward

for consideration. These have now been inspected and rated by an independent consultancy, AECOM, and we are awaiting their final report. Some 20 sites were visited including some that were not easily identifiable following filtering by AECOM, using the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment), national and local planning policies.

A final selection of sites is being made

by application of criteria developed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. These criteria were confirmed by the consultation survey and feedback from public meetings.

Whilst some sites have been seen as acceptable with development possibilities, several have been rejected. This does not however, prevent independent development companies submitting outline planning applications. The consensus of opinion among Battle residents was that smaller sites, up to a maximum of 20/25 houses would be preferable, although smaller plots (infilling) would also be acceptable.

The timeline as a consequence of various professional inputs has fallen back yet again. However, the Strategic Environmental Assessment will now be started in December. This is a requirement prior to submitting the draft Regulation 14 document to Rother.

Further information can be found on our website: [battleneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://battleneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) or you can email enquiries@[battleneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://battleneighbourhoodplan.co.uk)