

- b) Currently planning is based on the community and the local authority judging the proposal. In future planning in growth and renewal areas will be automatic.
 - c) Eleanor saw nothing in the proposals that advanced local democracy. She saw it as the curtailing of local democracy.
- D) The division of England into Growth, Renewal and Protected areas, discussion led by Robert Banks.
- E) Land banking with local examples like the land near the Bexhill by-pass with reference to the Community and Markets Authority and the problem of oligopolies. Possible Council tax charges for land withheld from building, discussion led by John Barnes and Sean O'Hara.
- F) The absence of consideration of commercial regeneration in the planning upheaval, discussion led by John Barnes.
- G) Affordable home allocation/Social housing What villages need is social housing as affordable homes is not affordable for the local wage rates, discussion led by Bob Franklin.
- H) The extension of the Permitted Development Scheme (White Paper para 3.20 and 5.3). This means if a developer demolishes and replaces a building (White Paper para 3.21), builds an extra floor (White Paper para 5.3), converts an office block or restaurant, normal planning rules do not apply. Minimum space standards and some of the Design Code will not apply. Change of use applications will often not be necessary. (White Paper para 5.3) Discussion led by Robert Banks.
- I) The problem that a developer can refuse to allow someone who wants to comment on a planning application to visit the site.
- J) The problem that a developer can refuse to allow members of the community to attend a Planning Inspector's site meeting
- 5) Huw Merriman MP said he found the meeting very useful. He has already raised some of the matters with the Secretary of State when he met him to discuss the proposed legislation. He was acutely aware of the difficulties with the proposed formula for allocating houses and with granting planning permission in the Rother District when so much of area was in a protected area. The issue of delay and land banking were also concerns.
- 6) Last week, and following the meeting, Huw Merriman MP was one of five MPs from across England to meet with the Prime Minister's officials who advise on planning and development matters. Huw Merriman MP gave information about Rother District Council where:
- Planning applications remain granted but there was undeveloped at sites for 1,600 properties;
 - Infrastructure had being built to deliver new housing developments on the Link Road;
 - Building development continues unabated in parts of the District where it is not regarded as suitable or community supportive.

- 7) Huw Merriman MP asked the officials to change the proposed legislation to ensure that developers could not build out on 'non-growth' land until all of the land allocated as 'growth' had been built-out (predominantly in Rother District Council's case, the land adjoining the Link Road). In addition, and to ensure build-out occurred, he asked for developers to be penalised for failing to do so. He referenced two ideas which had been discussed at our meeting; levying council tax from 12 months from the date of planning consent being granted (and not on completion of the property) and allowing local authorities to compulsory purchase land, at a discount of 80% of value, to build out for housing if the developer has not done so within a set time from when planning consent had granted. Huw is hopeful, from this meeting, that the annual housing numbers allocated to Rother will be reduced. He is awaiting a meeting with officials at the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government to be given details as to how the proposed algorithm to allocate local authorities housing figures gave such high numbers to our District.
- 8) Huw Merriman MP wanted to see local people find homes in their communities and wished there were more exception sites, which would be affordable.
- 9) Huw Merriman was thanked by the group. He was particularly thanked for the frank way he had discussed the issues.

HM and RB