



Rowlands Castle Neighbourhood Plan

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Rowlands Castle Parish Council Meeting Monday 14th May 2018

Bi-monthly Report of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Following a request from EHDC in January that we stop work on our NP whilst they progress the new Local Plan, the SG has had a difficult few months deciding on the 'best' way forward. I am pleased to report that the decision was taken by the SG last month (April) to continue with the development process.

However, there are a few consequences and implications of that decision and the SG agreed that it would:

- a. Focus on those (NP) policies which are unlikely to be in conflict with the current (or the future) LP;
- b. Focus on developing, or at least outlining at an early stage, those policies / policy areas that are felt to be of greatest importance to Rowlands Castle, i.e. those previously identified relating to the Working Groups;
- c. Work alongside EHDC to help them to develop their LP policies whilst simultaneously developing our own NP policies i.e. on housing, strategic gaps and settlement boundaries etc. when such information becomes available.
NB in this regard, we are pleased that EHDC have indicated a willingness to work closely with all EHDC NP groups (plus Parish / District elected bodies) to seek and exchange views and proposals in a regular forum - the 1st meeting of which will be held on Wednesday 16th May.
- d. Defer a decision about timescale for finalising the RCNP until we are more fully aware of the likely development implications for Rowlands Castle to be embodied in the EHDC LP. NB It is probable that a decision on the timescale will not be made until late 2018 / early 2019.

Because of the time lost already this year (3-4 months) whilst the SG sought to explore and agree a way forward, the overall timescale for production of the NP had slipped and (particularly in the light of the above!) is unlikely to be before the LP is adopted, i.e. not before late 2020. This is 12-18 months later than previously anticipated and a detailed programme will be redrafted as soon as the way forward regarding LP policies is clearer. However, the option remains for the SG to press on with a quicker (and reduced) NP, if the need to do so becomes apparent.

A particular concern, following the "expiry" of the current LP in April 2019, was that the ability of the expired LP to protect the Parish from speculative development would be increasingly diminished, and a NP might provide additional protection in the interim period. However, advice from various sources (e.g. CPRE, HALC, SDNPA, etc.) is that the 'expired' policies would continue to carry weight and the National Policy Planning Framework would protect against any 'non-sustainable' development proposals.

So, after a difficult few months since my last report, some optimism is reappearing.

David Holt
Chairman RCNPSG