

Dear,

I am writing to you to voice my opinions on the village plan for Hoath village and, in particular, development Policy R18. Under the current proposal, this area of land is set to be developed to include 17 new dwellings with the possibility of a local shop to be included. As a resident of the village, it appears to me that this proposed number of houses should be scaled down to a maximum of 10 dwellings. This allows for more space to be included around each house making it more in-keeping with the setup of other dwellings within the local area. It would also be better if new dwellings were built in a style that matched other buildings within the local area (possibly resembling barn conversions like the recent redeveloped homes within the area of Church Farm itself). Previously, the village has had shops and none of these have managed to remain sustainable for a prolonged period which could be a problem for any proposed shop development on this plot.

One major concern that features heavily in my objection to the proposed housing development is the issue of the traffic linked to these new homes. Within the last few years, the volume of vehicles around the village, and around the School Lane area in particular, has increased drastically. Within term time, the associated traffic for the school can make the area around school lane particularly difficult to negotiate when parents are dropping off and collecting children and this has already led to complaints from a number of local residents. The volume of agricultural vehicles (tractors and trailers) has also increased dramatically many of which use School Lane to access the fields around the school. From the images of the plan provided in the parish magazine, it has become clear that the main access route for the new development will be from School Lane and the farm access road for Church Farm itself. This will mean that any associated traffic from the new development (any construction vehicles during the initial construction and also the vehicles of the potential new residents) will also be required to use these routes. As with many of the roads around the village, School Lane is a particularly narrow road which, in places, is barely wide enough for two cars to pass easily which will make access for increased vehicle numbers more difficult. The proposed entrance to the development is also on a bend where the speed limit for this narrow, country lane changes from national speed limit to 30mph (although, with no monitoring of this speed, many road users appear to exceed this limit) making the use of this access point potentially hazardous especially when school parking causes visibility in this area to become greatly restricted. These lanes are used not only by vehicles but are also used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders with very limited areas for these other road users to get out of the way when vehicles are coming. This will only become more of a hazard with increased vehicle usage which is inevitable as the public transport links for the village have all been removed with the cancellation of the local bus route within the last couple of years.

With the current emphasis on food supply issues across Britain, it would appear that any decision to develop agricultural land into housing would not be sensible as this limits the amount of land available for food production for this nations growing population. Adding more houses to our rural location would eventually result in the merging of many local villages as has happened in other locations around Kent (Herne and Broomfield) which has resulted in the loss of a villages individual identity. The proposed development will also result in a loss of the local scenery with a loss of green space (proven to improve mental health) and a move to increased urbanization. Any resulting urbanization will detract from the existing conservation areas present in the village.

The area proposed for the Church Farm development has a record of very poor drainage due to the high water table. This will mean that any building on this site will impact on the roads and neighbouring properties. The existing drainage around the village is very old and poorly maintained and this will not be able to cope with any additional housing added onto the system. Currently, the

land of the proposed development supports a wide variety of wildlife. Many of the sightings from around the village have been reported to the KMBRC (Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre) website. Currently one of the proposed access points for the new development will result in the removal of a section of mature hedgerow. This particular hedgerow is a known roost for a number of different bird species including the House Sparrow, which is, itself, a species of conservation concern which the village is privileged to host a breeding colony of while other areas have experienced a drastic decline in their numbers. Farmland has also been listed as one of the habitats most of risk with many of our farmland birds featuring on the current Red List. Building on this particular area of farmland would therefore lessen the potential for the land to be used in a way to encourage greater biodiversity rather than decreasing it. The disturbance to the area linked to the initial construction phase is also likely to have an impact on the local wildlife with a great deal of disturbance from noise and the work in general which will likely result in the displacement of numerous animals. The development's impact will likely extend beyond the village boundaries as the drainage for the village and, therefore, the new, proposed development is linked to the Nethergong-Sarre Penn and the Stour river. With the current investigation into the state of Britain's waterways and the management of our waste water, it would be worth considering the current state of the water treatment works to which the drainage from Hoath village is directed. It is highly likely that this system, like the rest of the drains, has not been updated to cope with an increased quantity of waste water which will likely result in the water treatment works being inundated more regularly and, therefore, an increase in untreated waste water being released into our local waterways impacting on the wildlife that calls these areas home including a number of water birds and even beavers.

Renewable energy should be considered alongside any proposed housing development. With the current focus on the shift to greener energy production it would be good to consider how the village can play its part in a greener future. If the housing development is to go ahead, it would be better to include something like solar panels built into the houses rather than leaving them as a potential add on at extra cost to the residents. This would also be preferable to the proposal to construct dedicated solar farms as has been mentioned as part of the village plan. This would also be preferable to the production of the biofuels which currently take place in the digestate pit located to the south of the village which has raised a number of complaints from local residents.