

HORSTED KEYNES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

HOUSING JUSTIFICATION PAPER

OCTOBER 2017

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper considers the spatial strategy contained in the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan (HKNP), Submission Version October 2017, and the degree to which it addresses the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) as detailed in the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, 'BP1c: Schedule of Main Modifications' document (September 2017).
- 1.2 The OAHN for the District, combined with the requirement to contribute to the unmet need of neighbouring authorities, is 16,390 new homes in the period 2014 to 2031. The supporting text of emerging District Plan Policy DP6 provides guidance on the contribution that individual settlements could make to the overall housing requirement – the figure provided for Horsted Keynes parish from 2017 to 2031 is 53 new homes. The Parish Council has been advised by the District Council that this number is likely to change on an annual basis depending on the level of housing delivery across the District. The HKNP proposes the following housing allocations:
- Police House Field (Ref. HKNP002) for 10 dwellings.
 - Land at Jeffreys Farm (Ref. HKNP013) for 6 dwellings.
- In addition, it proposes a C2 Use Class allocation:
- Land at Westall House (Ref. HKNP028) for 8 dwellings (specifically extra care apartments).
- 1.3 The two housing allocations collectively would provide 16 dwellings. Based on the OAN, this is a shortfall of 37 dwellings.
- 1.4 It should be noted that Policy HK1 (Built up area boundary) permits small scale housing developments of up to 10 units on sites adjacent to the built up area boundary where the development meets certain criteria. As such, the HKNP does allow for higher levels of housing development than the three allocations and other small scale windfalls that may come forward (and which have averaged approximately two dwellings per year between 1984 and 2014).
- 1.5 This paper specifically considers the reasons why the HKNP does not consider that seeking to meet the OAHN in full for Horsted Keynes parish represents a sustainable approach.

2.0 Landscape

- 2.1 The whole of the village is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that:
- "Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty."*
- 2.2 In particular, the land to the west of the village does fall away and offer longer distance views across the AONB, both to and from Horsted Keynes village. Development in this area,

particularly larger scale development, is likely to have a detrimental impact on the AONB unless it can be very well screened. This would have relevance to developments off Sugar Lane.

- 2.3 To the north and east of the village, the impact of development on the AONB would be less, with the land generally less sensitive to development.

3.0 Conservation and heritage

- 3.1 The Conservation Area covers the eastern part of the village. The majority of the listed buildings within the village are also located here. In particular, the extension of the Conservation Area along Church Lane, encompassing the primary school and St Giles Church is particularly sensitive to development. Development around this area to the north of the main built up part of Horsted Keynes would impact on the setting of the church and the views of the countryside.

- 3.2 This does serve to limit the amount of development that could come forward to the north of the existing built up area.

- 3.3 One of the historic features of the High Weald AONB is its medieval field patterns, many of which are still intact. Some of these preserved fields are located adjacent to the built up area boundary so development could destroy these heritage features if the field patterns are lost.

4.0 Sustainability Hierarchy of Settlements

- 4.1 Horsted Keynes is a Category 3 settlement, as defined in the Mid Sussex District Plan, Submission Version 2016. This states that Category 3 settlements are:

“Medium sized villages providing essential services for the needs of their own residents and immediate surrounding communities. Whilst more limited, these can include key services such as primary schools, shops, recreation and community facilities, often shared with neighbouring settlements.”

- 4.2 Firstly, there are very few surrounding communities that Horsted Keynes serves. Most are nearer to larger centres such as Haywards Heath and Ardingly. Horsted Keynes has a primary school, three small community facilities, a shop, three pubs and a village green. There are concerns that the local shop will close and follow the Post Office which closed in 2014. As such, the village has very limited facilities to serve the needs of the community and one of the objectives of the HKNP is to ‘maintain and enhance existing and establish new local services and facilities.’

5.0 Availability/sustainability of sites

- 5.1 The HKNP Call for Sites process brought forward a large number of sites for development. This included all sites that had been put forward to the Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process. These sites were then subjected to a sustainability appraisal and this is contained within the HKNP Sustainability Appraisal document which is part of the suite of Submission Stage documents.

- 5.2 Whilst there were a large number of sites, a number were considered to be either unavailable or undeliverable or unsustainable because they were remote from Horsted Keynes village. One was also considered to be too small to merit allocation. This resulted in 13 sites being considered, as well as a site that represented an amalgamation of four of the 13 sites.
- 5.3 Of these 14 site options, eight were assessed as being unsustainable. This therefore only left the following sites:
- 001 - Land at end of Church Lane - approximately 5-7 dwellings
 - 002 - Police House Field - approximately 5-7 dwellings
 - 012 - The Old Rectory – approximately 10 dwellings
 - 013 - Jeffreys Farm Buildings - approximately 5-10 dwellings
 - 028 - Land at Westall House - approximately 15-20 dwellings
 - 029 – Sugar Lane amalgamated sites - approximately 40 dwellings
- 5.4 Further consultation with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Highways Authority raised concerns over safety in respect of Site 001 and access/safety in respect of Site 012, which was sufficient to dismiss them as alternatives.
- 5.5 Site 029 was considered to be sustainable as an individual site but the community had significant concerns about the scale of development and how this would materially change the character of the village. In particular, the significant breaching of the strong defensible boundary created by Sugar Lane that would occur through the development of the site was raised by many in the community. Specific concerns were also raised about the significant loss of mature trees and hedgerows on the eastern boundary in order to provide vehicular access and certain matters relating to traffic flows. The site was therefore not allocated for these reasons.
- 5.6 This therefore only left three sites – 002, 013 and 028 – which were all allocated in the HKNP.

6.0 Contribution of Westall House allocation to meeting needs

- 6.1 The Westall House allocation is for 8 net additional independent living apartments. Based on information from the owners and operators of Westall House, these would be classed as C2 units, which do not count towards overall housing numbers.
- 6.2 The Neighbourhood Plan process identified a number of people in the village who would like to stay in the village as they age but increasingly have needs which require an element of support to their lives. The provision at Westall House would be as close as it is possible to get to independent living in a supported setting. Therefore, the needs of some local residents would be met by this allocation which would serve to free up existing housing in the village. Whilst not adding to the numerical stock of housing, the Westall House allocation would help to create new housing opportunities which may not otherwise have been available.
- 6.3 In addition, the MSDC 'Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) Addendum (August 2016), identified that, "...ageing population is a national issue which poses a significant housing challenge and will influence future housing needs and requirements in

Mid Sussex” (paragraph 2.3). Paragraph 2.4 goes on to state that, “In terms of supporting independent living, NPPG underlines that the provision of suitable accommodation can help to reduce the costs to health and social services and can free up houses that are under occupied”. This is the expectation in Horsted Keynes. The report identifies district-wide shortfalls in enhanced sheltered housing and extra care provision, a position which it forecasts to worsen by 2031.

6.4 The HEDNA addendum concludes at paragraph 2.21 that, “...suggests the need for a policy intervention to protect existing stock and to facilitate the extra provision of specialist accommodation or care in Mid Sussex falling within Use Class C2 over the plan period to 2031. Development of such housing should therefore be enabled wherever it represents sustainable development.” This recognises the contribution that Class C2 units make to ‘housing need’, albeit that this doesn’t contribute towards the overall housing requirement.

7.0 Demographics

7.1 The analysis in Appendix A to the HKNP Submission Version shows the following:

- In 2011, the population of the parish was 1,586. Compared with Mid Sussex district, it has a low proportion of both young adults aged 16-24 and adults between 25 and 44 years of age.
- By contrast, the parish has a high proportion of adults aged 45 to 64, suggesting that a good number of people will be approaching retirement age over the plan period.
- Since 2001, the population has grown by 79 people, a 5.2% change compared to 9.8% growth in the district as a whole. This is reflective of Horsted Keynes’s role in the district as a small rural settlement.
- Most of the growth in population between 2001 and 2011 came from those aged 65 and over. By contrast, the number of young people between 16 and 44 fell considerably.
- Horsted Keynes has a comparatively high proportion of couples with no dependent children, which is largely made up of retirees.

7.2 One of the challenges recognised by the HKNP is that the ageing population has particular demands in terms of their accessibility to services and appropriate recreational facilities. The loss of facilities such as the Post Office, has a particularly significant impact on older people, many of whom find it difficult to adapt to the new ways of accessing such services on the internet.

7.3 One of the objectives of the HKNP was to ‘meet Horsted Keynes’s housing needs over the plan period with emphasis on housing that addresses the needs of younger people and families to help maintain the village age profile.’ So the HKNP has a dual role of seeking to address the needs of the older population by seeking to retain services, whilst trying to encourage younger people in by providing sufficient housing to meet their needs (which would predominantly be smaller housing). Discussion of the limited ability of the HKNP to support rural services, irrespective of whether it meets its OAHN in full or not, is presented in Section 4.

7.4 Allocating a larger amount of housing in the HKNP, and so getting closer to meeting the OAHN in full, would clearly provide more certainty that there would be the range of housing to meet the needs of the community and specifically help more younger people to live in Horsted

Keynes village. However, it is equally important that the housing that is provided is of the right type. In this regard, Policy HK2 (Dwelling size) ensures that at least 50% of the dwellings that are built will be smaller dwellings. Whilst such a policy would still be in place if more/larger sites were allocated, this does help to ensure that this objective is addressed. Also, the Westall House allocation, as discussed in Section 6, helps to make a direct contribution towards addressing specific housing needs for older people.

- 7.5 It is also important to reiterate that Policy HK1 (Built up area boundary) does permit small development adjacent to the built up area boundary on unallocated sites. Therefore, there is likely to be further development on sites that are not identified in the HKNP which goes further towards meeting OAHN and also helps to contribute a greater proportion of smaller housing units that are sought. This would be expected to provide new housing units more steadily over the plan period than if one or more large sites were allocated, meaning that local services are more able to adjust to the changes in demand.

8.0 Summary

- 8.1 Overall it is considered that the sites allocated in the HKNP (including the Westall House allocation for C2 uses), coupled with the flexible approach permitting smaller sites adjacent to the built up area boundary (subject to addressing certain criteria), will result in a sustainable strategy for growth in Horsted Keynes. This reflects the fact that the village sits in the High Weald AONB and has a significant character which is based largely on its scale. It also reflects the limited range of services, its role in the settlement hierarchy and the needs of its ageing population.