

Report to: Horsted Keynes Parish Council

Meeting Date: 12 November 2019

Subject: To consider the Parish Council's response to consultation on:

(a) Mid Sussex District Council: Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)

(b) Mid Sussex District Council: Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Report by: Lindsay Frost, Planning Consultant to HKPC

Background

1. **The Mid Sussex District Plan** provides a vision for the development of the district over the period 2014-2031 and a spatial planning strategy for its delivery. It seeks to promote sustainable development of the district and high quality in new development through a set of 42 strategic planning policies. The plan was formally adopted in March 2018. It provides a framework for the consideration of planning applications, and for the preparation of neighbourhood plans by town and parish councils in Mid Sussex.
2. In its policies DP4 and DP6, the District Plan identifies an overall amount of housing development in the district to 2031 (16,390 dwellings) and a settlement hierarchy which directs development to the most sustainable locations. Horsted Keynes is identified as a category 3 settlement (medium sized villages) with a minimum requirement of 69 dwellings to 2031 (of which 25 should be provided by 2023/4). The existing commitments and completions at 1 April 2017 mean that land for 53 dwellings remained to be identified.
3. The District Plan also sets out a commitment for the Council to prepare a **Site Allocations DPD**, which has four main aims, which are:
 - i) to allocate sufficient housing sites to address the residual development necessary to meet the identified housing requirement for the district up to 2031, in accordance with the Spatial Strategy set out in the District Plan;
 - ii) to allocate sufficient employment land to meet the residual need and in line with policy requirements set out in District Plan Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development;
 - iii) to allocate a site for a Science and Technology Park west of Burgess Hill in line with policy requirements set out in District Plan Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development, and
 - iv) to set out additional strategic policies necessary to deliver sustainable development.
4. The draft Site Allocations DPD recommends the allocation of:

- 22 housing sites (including two in Horsted Keynes)
- 7 employment sites
- A Science and Technology Park In Burgess Hill

It also includes 5 strategic policies required to deliver sustainable development.

5. The Site Allocations DPD has now been published for public consultation over the period from October 9 to 20 November 2019. Following the consultation, the comments will be considered by the District Council and will help to inform the next stage of preparing the plan, which is expected to be published in May 2020 for further consultation before being submitted to Government later in 2020.
6. The District Council have simultaneously published for consultation a **Design Guide SPD**. In bringing forward the housing site allocations, the Council will want to see high quality, sustainable developments that reflect the design principles set out on the Design Guide SPD. Once adopted, this document will be treated as a material consideration in the assessment of all future planning applications.
7. The purpose of this report is to consider any response which the Parish Council wishes to make to the current consultation. All the relevant documents can be seen online at :

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/development-plan-documents/>

Proposed allocations in Horsted Keynes

8. MSDC's work to identify and assess potential housing development sites used the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process, as required by national planning guidance. This systematically examined a large number of sites in and around Horsted Keynes put forward for consideration by landowners and developers in response to MSDC's "call for sites". A summary of this assessment process for sites in Horsted Keynes is set out in Appendix A.
9. The two proposed allocations of land for housing development in Horsted Keynes are :
 - **SA28 Land south of the Old Police House, Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes (25 dwellings)**
 - **SA29 land south of St. Stephen's Church , Hamsland, Horsted Keynes(30 dwellings)**

Detailed assessment of the two sites, along with MSDC's policy requirements to achieve sustainable development of them, are set out in Appendix B to this report.

10. These proposed allocations are in line with the recommendations to, and which were accepted by, the Parish Council at the extraordinary meeting in May 2019. However, MSDC's work does not - in addition- lead them to propose allocation of the farm buildings site at

Jeffrey's Farm, as recommended to the Parish Council in May, because of "difficulties in achieving safe access".

11. Following the meeting in May, and the particular concerns raised there concerning access and parking arrangements for the St Stephen's site and the Old Police House site, I have had further discussions with the promoters of these sites and with WSCC Highways. The site promoters have both carried out additional surveys and technical work. This has led to formal pre-application discussions with WSCC Highways. The outcome of this work is that there do not appear to be any issues which would present a technical barrier to their allocation on highway grounds. The work also provides guidance to assist in the preparation of any future planning applications on these sites.
12. The promoters of development at Jeffries Farm have raised concerns that the "difficulties in achieving safe access" using the existing farm track quoted in MSDC's analysis are based on incorrect information about site ownership and legal restraints and on the options for achieving adequate visibility for vehicles entering and leaving the site from Sugar Lane. In response, MSDC officers have indicated that these concerns will be considered, alongside all other views received, as part of the current DPD consultation process.
13. Additionally, the promoters of development at Jeffrey's Farm have challenged some aspects of the assessment of sites by the High Weald AONB Unit. This challenge was backed by a detailed written critique. I understand that the AONB Unit have now responded, stating that their site assessments are "a matter of informed judgement rather than a numerical exercise, and are based on a consistent methodology and data sources". As a result, they stand by the advice they have provided on the impact of potential development sites on the AONB.
14. I have reviewed the AONB Unit advice, and carried out extensive field work looking at all the sites over the spring and summer, and see no reason to dispute its conclusions on the impact of housing development on the various potential sites on the character and appearance of the AONB.
15. Additionally, it is important to note that the largest existing development commitment in the parish, identified in the DPD's baseline at 1 April 2019 (planning permission for conversion of the Ravenswood Hotel to 12 dwellings -Application DM/15/2013) lapsed in early June, and so further land may need to be identified for allocation, through either the DPD or the Neighbourhood Plan.

Relationship of the MSDC Site Allocations DPD and the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan

16. Work on the two plans has been proceeding in parallel, but – following withdrawal of the Neighbourhood Plan from examination in December 2018 and the commissioning of further work leading to preparation of a revised plan – the DPD has now advanced to the stage of consulting on development allocations.

17. The Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 043- Ref: ID- 41 043- 20140306) states :

If a local planning authority is also intending to allocate sites in the same neighbourhood are, the local planning authority should avoid duplicating planning processes that will apply to the neighbourhood area. It should work constructively with a qualifying body to enable a neighbourhood plan to make timely progress. A local planning authority should share evidence with those preparing the neighbourhood plan, in order for example, that every effort can be made to meet identified local need through the neighbourhood planning process

18. This need to avoid duplication leads to several options:

Option	Comments
1. Allocations made through Site Allocations DPD	<p>This option would leave MSDC to lead the process and take its proposed allocations forward through the statutory stages of the DPD process, sufficient to meet the strategic requirement identified in the District Plan.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan would cross-reference to the DPD allocations, but would rely on DPD work to justify them.</p> <p>However, the Neighbourhood Plan could still allocate additional land –above and beyond those sites in the DPD- if justified by site assessment and sustainability appraisal but, overall, its passage to formal adoption would probably be simpler with this option.</p>
2. Allocations made through Neighbourhood Plan	<p>This option would mean that allocations would be made through the Neighbourhood Plan sufficient to meet the strategic requirement in the District Plan and would need to be justified, promoted and endorsed by the NP process, including independent examination and referendum.</p> <p>This would make the NP process more complex and risks delay or failure, if proposals are rejected at the examination or referendum stage</p>
3. Do not make allocations in either plan	<p>This would fail to make the housing provision required by the District Plan and defeats the object of preparing development plans in order to positively plan for growth, ensure supporting infrastructure is in place, and safeguard important features of the local environment.</p>

	<p>It would leave the parish very vulnerable to unplanned, speculative planning applications and appeals. This option is not recommended.</p> <p>In any event , given their obligations under the Government's "Housing Delivery Test", MSDC will want to ensure that housing provision is made, with Option 1 as their default position</p>
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19. Discussions will continue with MSDC over the best way to co-ordinate work on the two plans, but the Parish Council will need to consider its position when it considers a revised Neighbourhood Plan and its publication for consultation in the near future.
20. A proposed timescale for the next stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process is as follows:

Timescale	Work
December 2019	Report to HKPC on revised draft HKNDP
January 2020	If revised draft endorsed by PC , MSDC would review and update previous Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment
February-March 2020	Regulation 14 consultation on revised HKNDP (at least six weeks)
Spring 2020	Consider views received during consultation and any necessary amendments to the HKNDP Update other supporting documents
Summer 2020	Re-submission of HKNDP to MSDC under Regulation 15

The Design Guide SPD

21. Mid Sussex District Council has also published the Draft Mid Sussex Design Guide for public consultation. This Design Guide is intended to inform and guide the quality of design for all development across Mid Sussex District. It sets out a number of design principles to deliver high quality, new development that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide elaborates on the principles set out in policy DP26 of the District Plan
22. The Design Guide covers the following types of development:
- Urban extensions (residential based developments)
 - Brownfield sites / urban infill / mixed-use developments
 - Rural developments
 - New dwelling design (houses and apartments)
 - Residential extensions
 - Building conversions
 - Commercial buildings / business parks / industrial estates
23. The sections on rural developments, new dwelling house design, residential extensions and building conversions will be of most relevance to Horsted Keynes. This guidance will assist applicants in producing better quality planning applications and give the Parish Council a

useful basis on which to consider planning applications and , if required, to develop its own locally- specific design policies for incorporation into the Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly , the MSDC Design Guide is broadly supported

24. Coincidentally, the Government published a “National Design Guide” for England early in October , which will have the status of national planning practice guidance. No doubt, MSDC will want to consider how their guidance lines up alongside the national guidance in giving a clear and co-ordinated package of advice for local users of the planning system

Recommendations

25. Accordingly , I recommend that the Parish Council respond to the current consultations on the MSDC’s Site Allocations DPD and the Design guide SPD as follows:

- 1. The Parish Council thanks MSDC for the opportunity to comment on the draft Site Allocations DPD and the draft Design Guide SPD**
- 2. The Parish Council supports proposed allocations SA28 (Land south of Old Police House, Birchgrove Road) and SA29 (Land at rear of St. Stephen’s Church, Hamsland) , subject to continuing discussions on the detailed planning policy criteria to be applied to the consideration of any future planning applications on these sites , and any additional issues raised during the current DPD consultation**
- 3. The Parish Council support further discussions with MSDC on the most appropriate way to take forward development allocations for housing , as between the Site Allocations DPD and the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Development Plan**
- 4. The Parish Council welcomes the Design Guide SPD as a means of promoting better quality planning applications and higher standards of design in new development**

Lindsay Frost

6 November 2019

APPENDIX A: SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD: ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

Source: MSDC Site Selection Paper 3, Pages 70-71

Settlement: Horsted Keynes

Settlement hierarchy tier: Category 3 (Medium sized village providing essential services)

Total number of SHELAA sites: 14

SHELAA sites not considered further following the **high level site assessment**

SHELAA ID	Site address	Units	Comment
67	Castle Field, Cinder Hill Lane, Horsted Keynes	25	Not compliant with the District Plan Strategy
663	Field 1, Ludwell Grange, Keysford Lane, Horsted Keynes	27	
664	Field 2, Ludwell Grange, Keysford Lane, Horsted Keynes	15	
837	Land at Little Oddyness Farm, Waterbury Hill, Horsted Keynes	45	

SHELAA sites not considered further following **detailed site assessment**

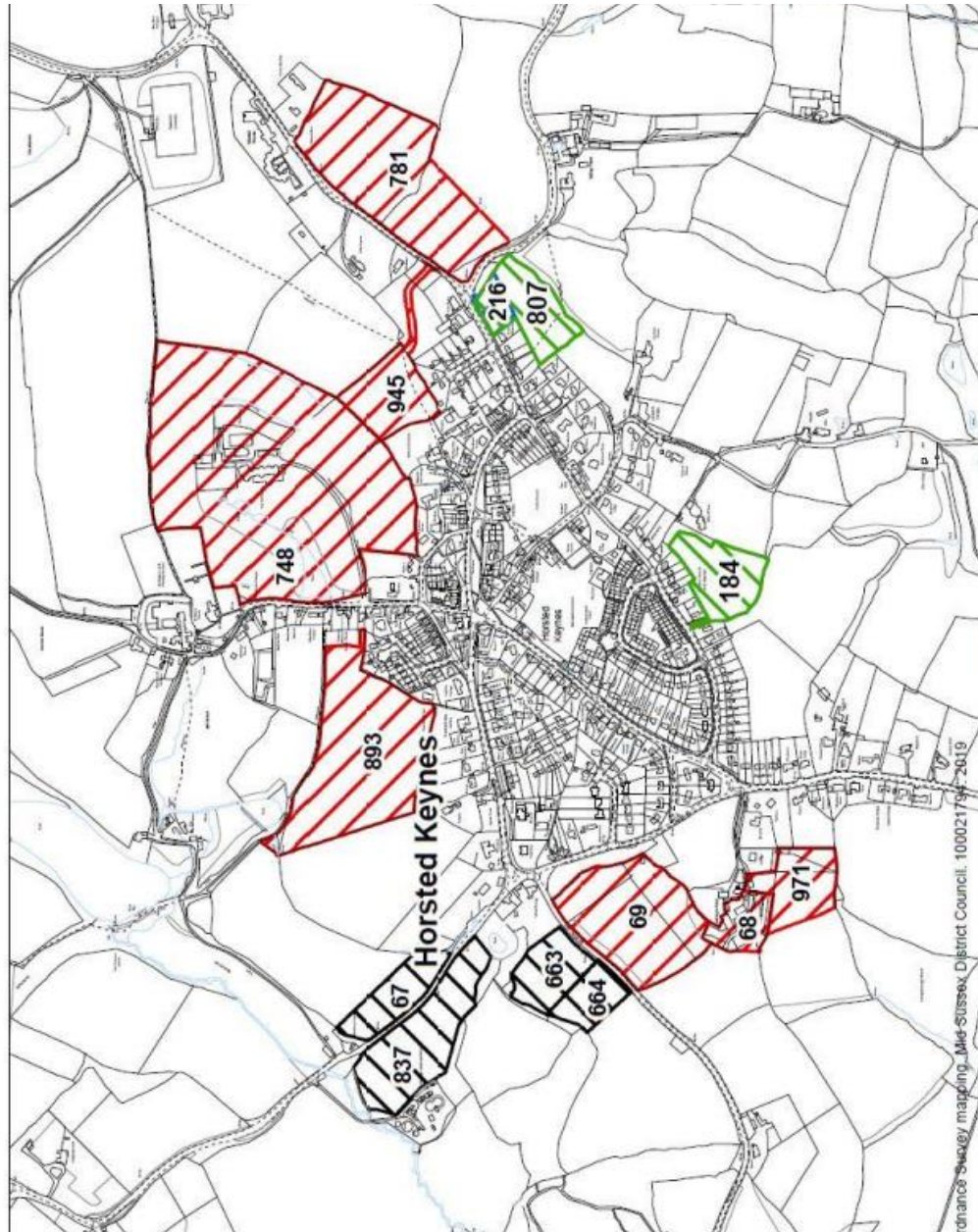
SHELAA ID	Site address	Units	Comment
68	Farm buildings, Jeffreys Farm, Horsted Keynes	6	Difficulties achieving safe access.
69	Jeffrey's Farm Northern Fields (Ludwell Field adj Keysford and Sugar Lane)	22	Development considered likely to have a high adverse impact on the AONB.
748	The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Horsted Keynes	30	Development considered likely to have a high adverse impact on the AONB.
781	Land to the south of Robyns Barn, Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes	45	Development considered likely to have a high adverse impact on the AONB.
893	Land west of Church Lane, Horsted Keynes	38	Development considered likely to have a high adverse impact on the AONB.
945	Lucas Farm, Birch Grove Road, Horsted Keynes	30	Development considered likely to have a high adverse impact on the AONB.
971	Jeffrey's Farm Southern Fields	20	Development considered likely to have a high adverse impact on the AONB.

SHELAA sites not considered further following the **further evidence testing**

SHELAA ID	Site address	Units	Comment
216	Land at Police House Field, Birch Grove Road/Danehill Lane, Horsted Keynes	0	Now forms part of a larger site (i.e. part of Site 807 - Land south of the Old Police House, Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes).

SHELAA sites taken forward as **proposed allocations in the DPD**

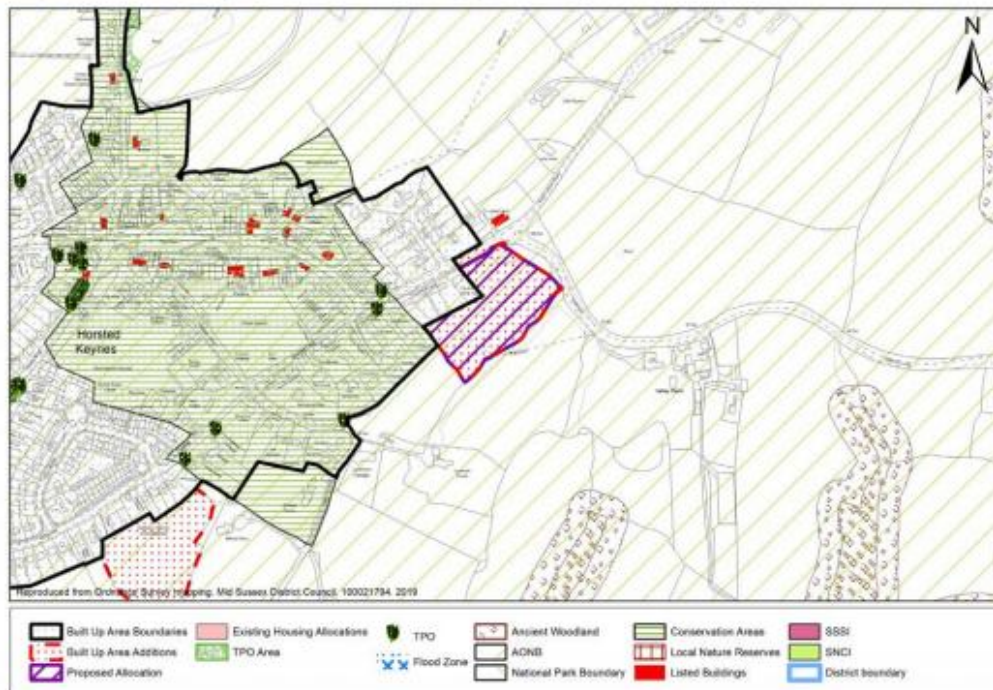
SHELAA ID	Site address	Units	Comment
184	Land south of St. Stephens Church, Hamsland, Horsted Keynes	30	See Appendix B for further site details
807	Land South of The Old Police House, Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes	25	



APPENDIX B: PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD

Source: MSDC Site Allocations DPD -pages 73-77 inclusive

SA 28			
Land South of The Old Police House, Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes			
SHELAA:	807	Settlement:	Horsted Keynes
Gross Site Area (ha):	1.23	Number of Units:	25 dwellings
Description:	Housing allocations		
Ownership:	Private landowner		
Current Use:	Greenfield/pasture	Indicative Phasing:	1 to 5
Delivery Mechanisms:	Private landowner in partnership with Developer		



Objectives

- To deliver a high quality, landscape led, sustainable extension to Horsted Keynes, which respects the character of the village and the High Weald AONB, and which is comprehensively integrated with the settlement so residents can access existing facilities.

Urban Design Principles

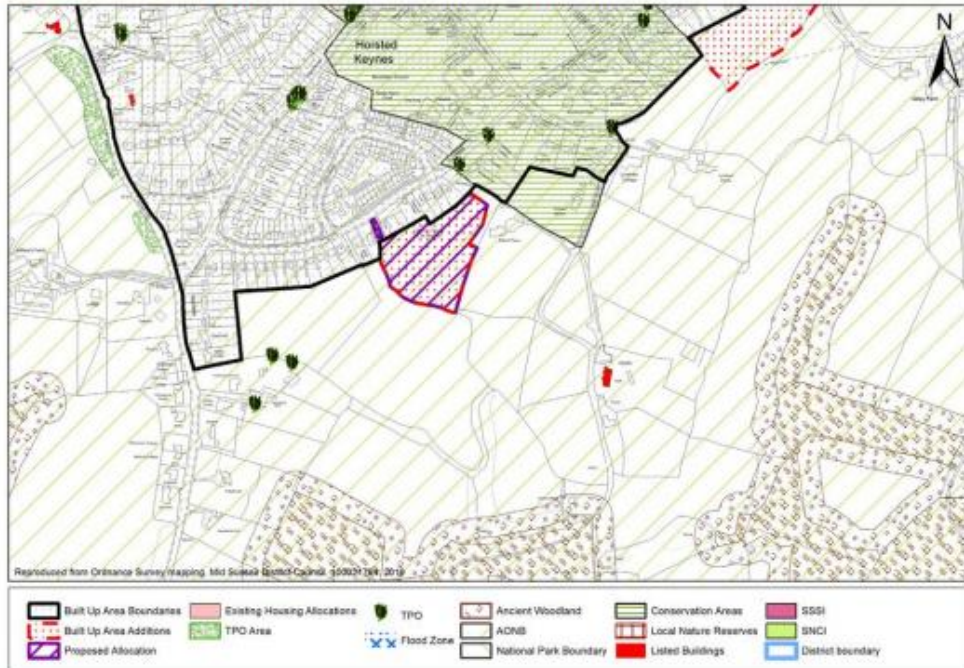
- Contribute towards local character and local needs of Horsted Keynes village by providing a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including a proportion of smaller terraces or flats, ensuring contextual architectural style and detailing in the design.
- Concentrate higher density development towards the northern part of the site to reflect the existing settlement pattern with a lower density around the edges to help create a suitable transition with the countryside.
- Seek to enhance the connectivity of the site with Horsted Keynes village by providing pedestrian and/or cycle links to adjacent networks.
- Orientate development to have a positive active frontage in relation to the existing settlement and to define open spaces and routeways

AONB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, in order conserve and enhance the landscape of the High Weald AONB, and minimise impacts on its special qualities, as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan. Identify and protect important views into and out of the site with proposals laid out so that views are retained and, where possible, enhanced to improve both legibility and the setting of development. Protect the rural character of Birchgrove Road and this edge of settlement by retaining, where possible, the Oak tree and hedgerow on the frontage of the site. Retain important mature trees and hedgerows along the eastern, southern and western boundaries of the site, and incorporate these into the landscape structure and Green Infrastructure proposals of the development to limit impacts on the wider countryside. Open space should be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure and should be prominent and accessible within the scheme. Protect the character and amenity of the existing public footpath that crosses the site and seek to integrate this with the Green Infrastructure proposals for the site.
Landscape Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See AONB requirements.
Social and Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard financial contributions apply.
Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide appropriate mitigation to protect the rural setting of the Grade II listed Lucas Farm to the north of the site by creating a sufficiently sized landscape buffer at the north eastern corner of the site and by retaining and enhancing the tree belt on the eastern boundary. The mitigation strategy should be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment. Conserve the setting of the Horsted Keynes Conservation Area by ensuring that development is not dominant in views through appropriate design and landscaping. The mitigation strategy should be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment. The site is located near the crest of a sandstone ridge in the High Weald, a favourable location for archaeological sites, requiring Archaeological Assessment and appropriate mitigation arising from the results.
Air Quality / Noise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No site specific sensitivities identified.
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an holistic approach to Green Infrastructure provision through biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the site that connect to the surrounding area. Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value to ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity. Avoid, mitigate and compensate for any loss to biodiversity through ecological protection, enhancement and mitigation measures.
Highways and Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access from Birchgrove Road, ensuring sufficient visibility splays are provided with the junction with Danehill Lane.
Flood Risk and Drainage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site lies within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1. Development proposals will need to demonstrate that there is no significant harm caused to groundwater resources. Manage surface water to minimise flood risk and flows to watercourses and incorporate SuDS in the southern part of the site as an integral part Green Infrastructure provision to improve biodiversity and water quality. The design and layout of the SuDS will need to be informed by ground investigation and permeability testing, and take into account the location of the site within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.

Contaminated Land
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific land contamination identified.
Minerals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is not in a Mineral Safeguarding Zone or Consultation Area.
Utilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard utility requirements apply.

SA 29**Land south of St. Stephens Church, Hamsland, Horsted Keynes**

SHELAA:	184	Settlement:	Horsted Keynes
Gross Site Area (ha):	1.13	Number of Units:	30 dwellings
Description:	Housing allocation		
Ownership:	Private landowner		
Current Use:	Greenfield/pasture	Indicative Phasing:	1 to 5
Delivery Mechanisms:	Private landowner in partnership with Developer		

**Objectives**

- To deliver high quality, landscape led, sustainable extension to Horsted Keynes, which respects the character of the village and the High Weald AONB, and which is comprehensively integrated with the settlement so residents can access existing facilities.

Urban Design Principles

- Contribute towards the local character and local needs of Horsted Keynes village and the High Weald AONB by providing a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including a proportion of smaller terraces or flats, ensuring contextual architectural style and detailing in the design of the development.
- Enhance the connectivity of the site with Horsted Keynes village by providing pedestrian and/or cycle links to Hamsland and adjacent networks.
- Orientate development to provide a positive active frontage in relation to the existing settlement, open space and attractive tree belts.
- Concentrate higher density development towards the northern part of the site, reflecting the existing settlement pattern, with a lower density around the edges to create a suitable transition with the countryside.

AONB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, in order to conserve and enhance the landscape of the High Weald AONB, and minimise impacts on its special qualities as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan. • Identify and protect important views into and out of the site with proposals laid out so that views are retained and, where possible enhanced to both improve legibility and the setting of development. • Retain and enhance important landscape features, mature trees and hedgerows and incorporate these into the landscape structure and Green Infrastructure proposals for the development to limit impacts on the wider countryside. Open space is to be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure and should be prominent and accessible within the scheme.
Landscape Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See AONB requirements.
Social and Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard financial contributions apply.
Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate mitigation to protect the rural setting of the Grade II listed Wyatts to the south of the site by enhancing the boundary tree belt at the south western corner, and ensuring that development is not dominant in views from the listed building. The mitigation strategy is to be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment. • The site is located near the crest of a sandstone ridge in the High Weald, a favourable location for archaeological sites, requiring Archaeological Assessment and appropriate mitigation arising from the results.
Air Quality / Noise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No site specific sensitivities identified.
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an holistic approach to Green Infrastructure provision through biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the site connecting to the surrounding area. • Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value to ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity. Avoid, mitigate and compensate for any loss to biodiversity through ecological protection, enhancement and mitigation measures. • Incorporate SuDs within the Green Infrastructure to improve biodiversity and water quality.
Highways and Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access is to be provided from Hamsland. Detailed access arrangements will need to be investigated further. • Improve local traffic conditions by setting back the existing on-street parking spaces in Hamsland Road into the verge opposite the site.
Flood Risk and Drainage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Surface Water Drainage to minimise run off, to incorporate SuDS and to ensure that Flood Risk is not increased. • Provide SuDs in the southern part of the site as an integral part of the Green Infrastructure proposals to improve biodiversity and water quality.
Contaminated Land
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The land may be contaminated due to present or historical on site or adjacent land uses. Provide a detailed investigation into possible sources of on-site contamination together with any remedial works that are required.
Minerals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is not in a Minerals Safeguarding or Consultation Zone.
Utilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard utility requirements apply.