

Hawkhurst Parish Council

Meeting: **EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING ON TWBC ISSUES & OPTIONS PLANNING POLICY CONSULTATION**

Date: 1st June 2017

Ref: NG.

Copt Hall.

Typed: 2nd June 2017

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Mrs J Newman (Chairman), Mr M Appelbe, Mrs M Brinsley, Mr P Dartnell, Mr J Hunt, Dr M Robertson, Mr S Spanswick, Mrs B Weeden.

ADDITIONAL CIRCULATION

Mr. S Holden, Mr. G Bland, Mrs. B Palmer, Mr. N Gray,

- | | Action |
|---|--------|
| 1. <u>Adjournment for Public Questions and Comments</u>
JN read an email from a resident who was unable to attend expressing support form LBDs (Limits to Built Development) and AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) protection. | |
| 2. <u>Apologies for absence</u> | |
| 2.1 Miss M Cronin, Mr. B Fitzpatrick, Mrs A Hastie, Mr P Jones, Mr P Whittle, Cllr B Palmer, KCC Cllr S Holden | |
| 3. <u>Declaration of Interests</u> | |
| 3.1 MA declared that he had been lobbied on this consultation. | |
| 4. <u>Matters for Discussion</u> | |
| 4.1 Issues & Options Consultation Questions 1-9
Q1 – Members wished to add to the Vision and agreed on No.
Q2 – JN read the KALC Area Committee response and Members agreed unanimously to add “and having regard to the constraints presented by the AONB and the Metropolitan Green Belt.” to the Vision.
Q3 – Members did not wish to make a response.
Q4 – Members agreed on Yes, the objectives are the right ones.
Q4a – Not applicable.
Q5 - Members agreed on No, no amendments or other Objectives should be included.
Q6a- Members agreed on No, the main environmental issues have not been identified.
Q6b – 7 Members felt it was an omission that no mention was made of light pollution, which is an important issue for dark skies in rural areas, although it was highlighted in the Landscape Character Assessment 2017. JH voted against this.
Q6c - Members agreed on Yes, the main infrastructure issues have been identified.
Q6d - Not applicable.
Q6e - Members agreed on No, the main housing issues have not been identified. | |

Q6f - Members felt it was an omission that no mention was made of disabled adapted housing.

Q6g - Members agreed on Yes, the main economic issues have been identified.

Q6h - Not applicable.

Q6i - Members agreed on No, the main transport and parking issues have not been identified.

Q6j – all agreed to add:

- at the end of 4.35, after Colts Hill add: ‘and the intersection of the A268 and A229’
- particulate reduction from diesels is not addressed
- there should be a strategy for parking in rural areas as well as in central RTW, where it is also a problem.
- The rural problem of HGVs is not addressed as a strategy for the next 20 years (6 voted for, with 2 against that this be amended to ‘the rural problem of HGV routing’ and also that ‘It is especially severe in Hawkhurst’ be added).

Q6k - Members agreed on No, the main leisure and recreation issues have not been identified.

Q6l – Members wished to add that there is a lack of mention of provision for the arts in rural areas. JH did not support this, believing this not to be an issue for local government.

Q6m - Members agreed on No, the main sustainability issues have not been identified.

Q6n - Members wished to add that there should be adequate recycling facilities right across the borough including rural settlements and also that a policy should embrace greater and more effective monitoring of air pollution, particularly in areas of traffic congestion, even in rural settlements. MR, supported by MA proposed that TWBC should have a policy to become an electric car friendly borough and aim to support free charging points in every town and village as well as in RTW. MA, SS, MR and MB voted in favour, with JH, BW, PD and JN voting against. JN used her casting vote against the proposal and it was not supported.

Q7 - Members agreed on Yes, the main cross-boundary planning issues have been identified.

Q7a – At 5.1, Members wished to add ‘transport connections with Maidstone and Rother’.

Q8 - Members agreed on No, they did not agree with the suggested groupings of settlements.

Q8a - JN read the KALC Area Committee response and Members agreed unanimously to add : ‘This is an extremely flawed methodology. It is an illogical means of providing an indication (even a theoretical indication) of the level of sustainability and appropriateness of any settlement to accommodate further growth because the status of the range of services and facilities available is highly unstable.

The concept and logic is deeply flawed. Some small settlements could take proportionally more housing and probably be re-vitalised as a result.

An unsuitable method for allocating 13,000 houses across the Borough.’

Members also noted that 5.9 and 5.10 appear to contradict each other.

Q9 - Members agreed on Yes, the policy approach of LBDs should continue in principle.

Q9a - Members agreed that LBDs should be retained.

Q9b - JN read the KALC Area Committee response and Members agreed unanimously to add : ‘The previous Local Plan (2006) uses LBDs to control growth around all urban areas and villages aiming to prevent the unrestricted sprawl into the surrounding countryside and to maintain the separate identity and character of settlements and prevent their coalescence and the erosion of largely undeveloped gaps.

These stated aims still stand and this control mechanism which has been very effective is, if anything, needed now more than ever.

For all the reasons in the previous LP (ref: 3.5-3.10, 3.39 & 3.40) the LBDs should be retained in principle and in their current form to continue to protect and maintain the settlement patterns.

An LBD provides a defined boundary, carefully drawn in accordance with the criteria in the previous Local Plan (2006), and includes allocated sites showing where development is expected. It also shows where exceptional, justifiable development may be accommodated without a free-for-all approach which would devastate the Kent countryside. To quote section 3.39 “Once taken for built development, the countryside cannot be easily replaced or restored”.

The Sustainability Assessment of LP (2006) Policies H5, H8-11, H13 and T3 demonstrate the policies’ stature and effectiveness and they should be retained.

Any proposed changes to existing LBDs should be consulted with local communities.

LBDs should remain.’

4.2

Issues & Options Consultation, Options for Growth Questions 10 – 12a

Q10 – JH proposed supporting Option 4. BW proposed supporting Option 5. JN, supported by PD proposed ‘*Hawkhurst Parish Council supports Option 4 in parallel with Option 5*’. 6 voted for, JH was against and BW abstained. JN stated that the government plans to review the OAN (Objectively Assessed Need) methodology and standardize it. The OAN is therefore likely to change and so a garden village could end up smaller.

Q11 – Members agreed that any new settlement must have proper infrastructure from the start and needs clear limits. It must be near a railway line and good transport is a priority.

Q11a – Members agreed that a new settlement should ideally be outside the AONB, but must have good transport links.

Q12 - Members agreed on No, all reasonable options for accommodating future development growth in the borough have been considered and identified.

Q12a – Members wish to state that challenging the OAN has not yet been addressed.

4.3

Issues & Options Consultation Questions 13-18

Q13 – JN has read all the TWBC reserved policies and all agreed that these policies are suitable for continued use:

LBD1, EN4, EN5, EN8, EN10, EN11, EN15, EN20, EN21, EN22, CR3, CR12, H1, H5, H8, H9, H10, H11, H13, ED5, T3, R6, CS6, TP4, TP8.

Q14 – Members agreed that these policies may be out of date or no longer necessary:

H7, TP10, TP11, TP26 – all very out of date.

Q15 – Members agreed that these policies could be updated:

EN6 - add Hawkhurst Colonnade

EN13 - removed trees should be replaced by another (more than one?) and cut down only if an ALTERNATIVE SITE is not available

EN23 - Add Hawkhurst - it's green bordered approaches, particularly along the ridge, are part of its character

Replace EN2, EN14, EN26, EN27 and EN28 with updated policies.

Add new policies for:

Street lighting (EN) – to align with modern thinking on “dark skies”. Replace street lighting with sustainable path lighting because vehicles don't need lighting, people do. Outside urban areas (not including village centres or LBDs) no lighting should be required and instead it should be discouraged.

A21/M26 junction (TP) – joint strategy needed with adjoining boroughs to re-route HGVs at reduced diesel consumption (due to steady optimum speed) and less damage to settlements on cross country routes.

Technology (ED) – to facilitate local IT and communications based industries.

NOTE: Hawkhurst (referred to in TP & ED) is not a small rural town or a rural service centre as its road infrastructure is overloaded and communications consequently very poor. Bus services are poor and run severely restricted hours. There is no station, the nearest 6 miles away by car. Car parking is extremely limited to convenience stores (1.5 hrs) and Fowlers Park school parking only. Anything else is “on road” parking making the traffic issue worse.

Q16 – Members did not feel there were other topics that the new TWB Local Plan should include.

Q17 - Members did not wish to make a response.

Q18 – Members agreed that there should be a policy whereby the context and situation of a site should be considered **FIRST** and the detail within the site **SECOND**.

4.4 **Issues & Options Consultation Question 19**

Q19 – Members wished to state that the 2012 Parking study was highly inaccurate in identifying no parking problems in Hawkhurst. MB and NG will check this statement in the updated 2016 Parking Study.

Also, per JN's letter to Karen Fossett of 25.4.17, errors in the Settlement and Function Study had been identified. JN will condense her comments for NG to add to the consultation submission.

All agreed to add a suggestion of a policy supporting IT and tech industries.

5. Closure

5.1 The meeting closed at 15.55

Signed.....

Date.....

Hawkhurst Parish Council

Julia Newman, Chairman