

Hawkhurst Parish Council

Hawkhurst Parish Council

Meeting: **Full Council**
Date: 29th June 2012
Ref: am.
Typed: 2nd July 2012

Copt Hall

PRESENT

Mr K Brown (Chairman), Mr M Appelbe, Mr J Billingham, Mrs M Brinsley, Mr P Dartnell, Mr G Davies, Mr B Fitzpatrick, Mr J Hunt, Mr P Jones, Mr T Lee, Mrs J Newman, Mrs B Weeden, Mr C Williamson.

ADDITIONAL CIRCULATION

Mr. R Weeden, Mrs. B Palmer, Mr. J Cunningham, Mr. R Manning
KM, K&SC

- 1 Adjournment for public speaking.
- 1.1 The Chairman explained the reason for this special meeting was for the Council to discuss an internal paper which shows how the TWBC Core Strategy and new National Planning Policy Framework may affect future development in Hawkhurst. It also sets out reasons why this Council believes the two Limits to Built Development at The Moor and Highgate should be amalgamated and the village treated as one area for development purposes. It further sets out the case for the Highgate area to be defined as a village or a small Rural Service Centre as shown in the Kent & Medway Structure Plan.
- 1.2 Following a question regarding the “town” status of Highgate from Mr Inwood, KB explained this was one of the key issues that tonight’s discussion was seeking to agree on so it can be taken forward with TWBC.
- 1.3 Ms Fletcher raised a point about the inclusion of windfall sites in the site allocations calculations. KB advised her that the inclusion of these sites is allowed to be taken into account by TWBC for the first few years of the Core Strategy. The inclusion of such sites, especially brown field sites as a priority, is supported by this council.
- 2 Apologies for absence:
- 2.1 All Members were in attendance.
3. Declaration of interests:
- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.
- 4 TWBC Core Strategy, NPPF and Hawkhurst
- 4.1 There followed a full discussion on the contents of the paper with all Members commenting on a range of issues highlighted in the document.
- 4.2 There was a unanimous view that TWBC is wrong in treating Highgate as if it was a separate settlement to The Moor. Members could see no reason or definition as to why the village has been separated in development terms. It was understood that were the two areas be “joined together” it would not change the proportion of new homes to be built according to the Core Strategy but would allow for the appropriate evolution of the village in a balanced manner. The spread of market housing with associated affordable housing would be more equitable and acceptable to the community. The proposed concentration of market housing at Highgate will be divisive and lead to continuing vociferous protests within the local community.
- 4.3 The other main issue discussed was the actual number of houses expected to be built between now and 2026. The figure for 2006 was 240 but this had been reduced to 192 as the result of granted planning applications by June 2010 when the Core Strategy was adopted. Since then this figure may have been reduced further but it was not known by how much as several figures had been quoted by representatives,

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- including Councillors, of the Borough Council. It is also unclear if the reduction in numbers includes those consents granted at The Moor area or is for those within the Highgate envelope only.
- 4.4 Members noted that information has just been received regarding a fast track procedure for minor amendments to the Core Strategy. It is uncertain at this point if any change in the planning status of Highgate could be considered for such a change.
- 4.5 From the overall discussions three key questions to be asked of TWBC arose:
1. What is current number of houses required between now and 2026 and list those approved applications since 2006 which have reduced this figure from the initial 240?
 2. What is the logic for separating The Moor and Highgate for planning purposes and concentrating future market development in just one of those areas, and why would it not be appropriate allow the coalescence of the area as it has been seen to be historically and at present by the community?
 3. Hawkhurst, be it a town or village, is seen to be a large settlement within a rural area. Why, if it were called a village (The Moor and Highgate combined) would that make a difference in the planning approach to the number of houses required to be built?
- 4.6 Members agreed that the Chairman and some Members should arrange to meet with TWBC Ward Members and planning officers with responsibility for policy to discuss these issues and press for clear responses to the questions raised in this paper.
- 4.7 Members had a brief discussion regarding the timing for undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan and noted that as TWBC already has an adopted Core Strategy in place it would not be beneficial to immediately begin a plan now. However, the Council will begin to put in place the required measures in preparation so that when TWBC revises its Core Strategy, a Neighbourhood Plan can then be put in place.
- 5 Closure
- 5.1 The meeting closed at 19:55
- 6 Future Meetings
- 6.1 The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at Copt Hall on 9th July commencing at 19:45.

Signed.....Date.....
Keith Brown, Chairman of the Parish Council.