

c/o 37 Stoatley Rise,

Haslemere,

Surrey,
GU271AG.

18 July 2017

Planning Department,

Waverley Borough Council,

The Burys,

GODALMING. BY EMAIL

Dear Sirs,

Local Plan Part 2 Policies & Sites Issues & Options

Consultation - Chapter 3 Housing.

The Haslemere Society has carefully considered the ‘Suitable in Principle’ (Green) Sites and the ‘New Sites’ (Blue) within Haslemere that you have numbered and listed and comment on each as requested.

**Suitable In Principle. (green)**

141 West Street - When WBC first listed this as a Key Site many years ago for housing The Society registered its strong concerns about this proposal which we repeat again. The central car parking area is a crucial element supporting the vitality of the town centre and currently its capacity is often inadequate. This inadequacy will increase. Consequently The Society considers that development which will reduce parking capacity should not be allowed. Any further development in this key area should be retail led, controlled and in keeping with the character of the town centre. The incorporation of residential development would only be appropriate conditional on there being no impediment to retail facilities, reduction in parking facilities or additional residential parking requirements being imposed on the public facilities.

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We refer you to your paragraph 3.27 –‘’ Existing Use of Site – where a site is currently in a different use to housing and there is evidence that there is a need for that site to remain in that use then the site has been considered not suitable for housing.’’ This assessment criteria applies to this site.

144 – Barons Site, Hindhead. This is a business site providing employment and useful services to the local population and the loss of this to residential development should be resisted as the town is suffering from the considerable reduction in such facilities. A small proportion of the site being used for residential development may be acceptable.

145 – Andrews Site, Hindhead. Again much of this site is currently in business use providing employment and useful services to the local population and a proportion of any development should be reserved for business/employment use.

245 – 5-21 Weyhill. Residential development is accepted but we are concerned at the current density proposals and the need to ensure it does not exacerbate current heavy congestion in Weyhill by providing a servicing lay by.

557 – Brownscombe, Hindhead Road. The principle of residential development is accepted but the sloping topography and traffic noise will need to be assessed.

674 – Sturt Road, SE of water treatment works. This is on a Green Corridor Entry point to Haslemere and from Haslemere it is a gateway to the South Downs National Park. The Haslemere Design Statement calls for these green corridors to be safeguarded. The site is designated AONB land and part of the area to the north has been designated unsuitable for residential development by yourselves.

We consider this area is unsuitable for residential development.

714 - Ditto –

682 – West Down, Portsmouth Road, Hindhead. Residential development would seem appropriate but also the site could appeal to a commercial user given its proximity to the A3 access.

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697 – Commercial and Recreational Facilities, Wey Hill. The Society would prefer this central area, easily accessible for families, to be retained for youth recreation and commercial purposes bearing in mind the serious loss of employment facilities in the town over more than two decades. Given the probable large residential development of 5 – 21 Weyhill close by, the residential development proposed at this site will exacerbate the serious congestion in Weyhill. Holistic planning is required instead of only specific site considerations.

**Proposed New Sites ( Blue)**

917 Grayshurst, Highercombe Road. – Although within the Green Belt it is surrounded by existing houses with large and modest areas of land we consider that residential development would be acceptable but the density/ number of houses should be kept low given the local environment and the restricted road access to the site. Peripheral screening should be kept in place.

919 Site Off Tilford Road – this is within the Green belt and an AONB and access is difficult. We do not consider this to be a suitable development site.

935 N W of Holdfast Cottage – given its location within Green Belt and AONB we do not feel this is a suitable site for new development.

947- 948. – Stronsay, Tilford Road. No comment

927 - 38-40 Petworth Road. a recent planning application for this site has resulted in a refusal for a residential scheme and we would not support this site for higher density development nor on a scale of the recent planning application scheme.

950 Clammer Hill Road. – This is an attractive landscape within an ANOB and Green Belt. We therefore do not support the development of this area.

**OTHER SITES NOT REFERRED TO**

Generally - The Haslemere Society is concerned that the emphasis on constructing significant amounts of housing within the town centre will have a seriously adverse effect on the unique character and the amenity of the town which The Society and others are keen to preserve.

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Also the main roads infrastructure is old and narrow, having been developed a long time ago and which it is not feasible to improve to cope with current traffic congestion, not to mention traffic increases 20-30 years hence which a greater town based population will exacerbate the congestion. The presence of the station Rail Hub increases this problem for the locals.

There are many large family houses in Haslemere occupied by people/couples keen to downsize but the lack of suitable smaller accommodation is precluding this and hence these family properties are not being made available for young families. New developments are often too small with inadequate gardens and unattractive to downsizers due to high density/high profit motivation. The high stamp duty on purchases is another disincentive to downsize. Consequently consideration should be given in the Local Plan to the provision of housing suitable to ‘Downsizers’ with more internal space and adequate gardens.

Also the need to consider uses alternative to housing for the scarce amount of town land available is strongly emphasised.

**Fairground Site, Wey Hill Centre.**

It is essential that a concept scheme is prepared for this site embracing public use (market square), non commuter parking, social/community/retail facilities and possibly a small amount of residential accommodation all reflecting its common land status. A reversion to a basic pay and display car park is not in the town’s or the community’s interest. WBC should not consider this common land/community asset site as a parking ‘cash cow’.

**The Heights School (now closed), Hill Road.**

The location of this site makes it appropriate for residential development (conversion or new build) but given the restricted access generally and the adjacent recreation land the density should be restricted. This site could be useful for development of properties suitable for ‘Downsizers’.

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**Land Between The Edge Sports Centre and the A3.**

This is one of the few areas with a level topography making development feasible and with easy access to the A3 and it should receive consideration as a town expansion area to meet increasing development demands within the new Local Plan period and beyond. The area is currently AONB land, some of which was used to accommodate widening of the A3 south of the tunnel. It is surrounded by existing developments and the A3 and its development would help to preserve the character and amenity of the Haslemere town central area whilst meeting future housing requirements.

Yours faithfully,

 John Greer (Vice Chairman, The Haslemere Society)