



COMMENTS ON THE PRESUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN PART 1 STRATEGIC POLICIES AND SITES (3rd October 2016)

In order to adequately appraise this document it is necessary to read and understand all the supporting evidence documents, many of which The Haslemere Society has not previously seen. Allocating only 6 weeks within the summer holiday period has not been a long enough period for us to adequately carry out this work.

However, The Haslemere Society wishes to make the following comments on the above document. These will of course reflect local Haslemere views on a document which is relevant to the whole of the borough. **The references to Haslemere (eg 2.40) and the other three separate towns in the Borough in the Local Plan demonstrate the necessity for Policies to be considered against each town as not all general policies are applicable to specific towns with their unique problems and requirements. Our comments support this requirement.**

It is appreciated that our comments are relevant to the contextual paragraphs , which are important in future interpretation of the policies. We have not been able to consider all necessary changes to policies which these comments may require in the time permitted for review of the plan.

2.23 Significant traffic delays also occur in Haslemere at peak (and other) times along the B2131 and A287 in Wey Hill and are increasing due to the significant increase in population in the town and its hinterland especially but not limited to the increasing station usage. **As other traffic congestion areas are referred to these should also be stated in the local plan alongside the other identified areas of congestion, otherwise they will go unrecognised.**



2.24 Projected housing developments in nearby West Sussex and East Hampshire will result in even greater use of Haslemere Station posing more questions as to the adequacy of the capacity of the trains and in particular, parking provision. **Again another significant and developing situation, which needs highlighting in the Plan.**

2.28 There is, we consider, a significant omission in the Local Plan and the SHMA which does not identify the need to encourage and make it possible for older couples to vacate family homes to release these for younger families. Currently there is a distinct lack of attractive smaller houses with modest gardens and reasonable room sizes to which older couples accustomed to spacious living are prepared to move to and release their larger family homes. The Council's emphasis on unattractive high density building and allowing maximum profit for developers are preventing downsizing and the release of larger family homes for younger families at an early date before these older residents pass on. **The SHMA needs to be revisited with respect to this requirement and the stated policy needs to address this. This is very relevant to the large ageing population and the Local Plan references to Spatial Vision, Spacial Strategy, Townscape Design and the statement 'high quality new designs making a positive contribution'.**

2.31 Employment growth – employment opportunities in Haslemere are declining. There has been a very large loss of 19 commercial/employment facilities in recent years to residential housing and this pressure for re-classification and change of use is continuing. Haslemere is in danger of becoming a complete dormitory town resulting in the loss of local services and business activity. This means a very large proportion of residents having to travel significant distances by car and public transport for work and for modern day services. A consequent deterioration in the amenity and character of the town will result. **The Local Plan does not address this and appropriate local policies need to be determined.**



2.26 Bus services – as Haslemere is a country town with a limited population the provision of comprehensive bus routes and time tables is impractical and uneconomic. This results in the need for a high car use by residents and multi car ownership per family with consequential effects on road congestion.

Approvals of housing development conditional on providing adequate off-street parking should be a stated policy.

The SCC promotion of cycling is not particularly appropriate for Haslemere due to the hilly terrain, unsafe narrow and heavily trafficked roads, distances to travel and its ageing population which need to be recognised. **Again this variation within the Borough needs recognising in the Local Plan.**

2.40 This paragraph does not mention the effect of Haslemere becoming a gateway to the new South Downs National Park and the resulting need to deal with demand for accommodation and visitors arriving by car and train. Other National Parks have had to address the provision of transport and accommodation and probably the SDNP are doing this but Haslemere is just outside their area. **The Local Plan policies should encourage cooperation with the SDNP to ensure the continued provision of hotel accommodation and to discourage the loss of exiting accommodation to housing.**

Spatial Vision, Spatial Strategy, Townscape & Design

All these sections refer to ‘high quality of new designs making a positive contribution’ with which The Haslemere Society agrees. This requires an obligation by the WBC to seriously address this. The past practice of accepting inadequately detailed planning applications and not requiring sufficient detail and materials information until **after** an application has been approved are definite obstructions to achieving ‘high quality new designs’.



Policy TD1 should incorporate an obligation by WBC to provide design briefs where appropriate, to require adequately comprehensive information to be submitted in planning applications and to agree important details and materials specifications BEFORE granting approval to achieve a high quality of design.

13.38 & 13.39 – The reference to a review of AONB boundaries is of interest to The Haslemere Society particularly following recent planning approvals for development on AONB land at Barfold Farm and Sturt Farm which The Society objected to. We wish to record our strong objection to any reductions to existing AONB land to satisfy development pressures and that **adequate safeguards of AONB land are unequivocally provided in the Plan Policies.**

13.49 We refer specifically to the Area of Strategic Visual Importance (ASVI) south of Holy Cross Hospital, Haslemere. The Haslemere Society was unaware of the proposal to remove the ASVI protection to this land. WBC have introduced the word **'only'** before 'limited contribution' which tends to reduce further the importance of this land which is effectively a 'green lung' within the developed area of the town and which contributes significantly to the character of the town. The removal of this protection will immediately subject the land to development pressure contrary to its stated present situation. Given the target for new house building and the assessment of adequate space for this, **there appears to be no case for house building on this site . Furthermore the Haslemere Design Statement which WBC has adopted as a material planning consideration, particularly refers to this site as a special green area which is an integral part of the character and intrinsic value of the town and should be retained.**

15.4 Conservation areas – the Haslemere Town Centre Conservation Area and its more recent extension **should be included in the list of conservation areas in the Borough.**

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