

Examination of the Tunbridge Wells
Borough Local Plan

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Hearing Statement

**Matter 7: Residential Site
Allocations**
**Issue 13: Horsmonden (Policy
PSTR/HO1)**

Document Reference: TWLP/048



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Matter 7 – Residential Site Allocations

Issue 13 – Horsmonden (Policy PSTR/HO1)

Horsmonden Neighbourhood Development Plan

1. The Horsmonden Neighbourhood Development Plan (HNDP) is expected to be submitted under Regulation 15 early summer 2022. A verbal update regarding this will be provided at the hearing session.

AL/HO1 – Land Adjacent to Furnace Lane and Gibbet Lane

Inspector’s Question 1: [re. update on delivery of approved scheme]

What is the latest position regarding the construction of dwellings already approved on the site?

TWBC response to Question 1

Introduction

2. Planning approval for the redevelopment of land to provide 49 dwellings including 35% affordable housing and involving creation of access and widening of highway on Gibbet Lane, associated landscaping, residents and visitor car parking and creation of natural area for play incorporating attenuation pond. was granted on 14 July 2020; planning application 18/01976/FULL.
3. A further planning application 22/00427/FULL is for ‘Alterations to perimeter of site’ was submitted in February 2022 and is yet to be determined.

Consideration

4. The planning application form for 22/00427/FULL indicated that development approved by 18/01976/F had started, with a date of commencement given as 19 September 2021.
5. A letter to Horsmonden Parish Council from the developer in April 2021 refers to construction to begin during August/September 2021 ([view April 2021 letter](#)).
6. The developers of the site, Thakeham Partnerships Ltd, have now confirmed (at April 2022) that development has commenced on the site.
7. Completion of dwellings is expected to be during 2022/23 and 2023/24 (44 and five units in each year respectively), subject to revisions following the monitoring to be undertaken April/May 2022. An updated five-year housing trajectory is due to be finalised late June/early July, and any available update will be provided verbally at the hearing session.

Inspector's Question 2: [re. deliverability of allocation]

Is the allocation developable within the plan period?

TWBC response to Question 2

Introduction

8. Details of the planning approval granted at this site, including the recent application that currently remains undetermined, are set out in the response to Question 2.

Consideration

9. The developers of the site, Thakeham Partnerships Ltd, have confirmed that development has now commenced on the site, the scheme as approved by 18/01976/F. Given that the site has commenced and that initial completions on the site are planned for during 2022/23, with expected completion of the entire site in 2023/24, it is therefore considered that the site is developable within the plan period.

AL/HO2 – Land South of Brenchley Road and West of Fromandez Drive

Current planning application

10. Planning application 22/00296/OUT, received on 27 January 2022, seeks Outline Planning Permission (Access not reserved) on the allocation site, to deliver a village hall and a residential development of up to 65 dwellings and associated infrastructure.
11. It is noted that the current planning application is for a lower quantum of development than that which is identified within the allocation policy. It has become apparent on review of that application that the site is unlikely to accommodate 80-100 dwellings along with the necessary 25m buffer to the Ancient Woodland at Sprivers (to the west of the site), open space, play areas, ecological mitigation, drainage swales and other necessary supporting infrastructure. As such it is considered that 50-70 dwellings is a more appropriate scale of development at the site based on the consideration of the other policy criteria.
12. As such, it is proposed that a modification be proposed for policy AL/HO2 as follows (deleted text is shown ~~struck through~~, additional text is shown underlined):
13. "...This site, as defined on the Horsmonden Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately ~~80—100 dwellings~~ 50 - 70 dwellings, replacement village hall, and associated parking..."
14. At the time of submitting this hearing statement, the current planning application had not been determined. An update will be provided at the hearing session as to the progress of the planning application.

Inspector’s Question 3: [re. replacement village hall and car parking]

What is the justification for requiring the provision of a replacement village hall and car parking? How and when will this be delivered?

TWBC response to Question 3

Introduction

15. Criterion (11) of Policy AL/HO2 requires that a suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of the replacement village hall and associated parking is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage.

Consideration

16. The requirement for development at this site to deliver a replacement village hall and associated parking reflects the aspirations of Horsmonden Parish Council and was discussed with officers from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council during the preparation of the Local Plan. Community engagement to inform the preparation of the Horsmonden Neighbourhood Development Plan (HNDP) has also identified similar aspirations.

17. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan [[CD 3.142](#)] identifies that there is an existing village hall to serve Horsmonden (ref Table 12 in the IDP), and in Appendix 1: Infrastructure Delivery Schedule, a new village hall is included under the heading ‘Horsmonden Parish Council identified items’. (the note to this schedule confirms that projects shown in italics (this includes those items under the heading of Horsmonden PC identified items) are those identified by the relevant Parish/Town Council through Neighbourhood Development Plan work or through Parish/Town Council liaison). It is anticipated that the replacement hall will provide improved and more modern community accommodation to meet the local community’s needs and aspirations, with more parking than is currently the case, and with reduced running costs.

18. The Regulation 14 version of the [Draft HNDP](#) Objective 4 states that “*New development should bring with it the opportunity to provide improved community, health and leisure facilities to existing and new residents of the parish. Development proposals for a new*

village hall will be supported provided it is a 400 metres (5 minute walk) from the village centre and has adequate safe pedestrian access”.

19. Policy 4.4 of the Regulation 14 draft HNDR New village hall requires that “*Development proposals for a new village hall will be supported provided it is within suitable walking distance from the village centre (ideally approximately 400 metres or a 5 minute walk) and has adequate safe pedestrian access”.*

20. As explained above, the requirements of criterion (11) will ensure that the provision of the replacement village hall and associated parking is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development. It is likely that the replacement village hall will be delivered through a S.106 legal agreement, with suitable triggers in the agreement to ensure it is delivered at an appropriate point in the delivery of the development.

Inspector's Question 4: [re. heritage assets]

What potential impacts will the proposed allocation have on the significance the Grade II listed Milestone Cottages opposite the site? How have heritage assets been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan?

TWBC response to Question 4

Introduction

21. In deciding whether to allocate site AL/HO2 in the Local Plan, the Council has given very careful consideration to the impact of allocation on designated heritage assets. In broad terms the Council's response to Matter 5, Issue 1 (Site Selection Methodology), Question 3 explains how the Council has taken account of heritage assets in the plan making process. That response sets the context to the more site-specific response that follows.

22. The site is located opposite a Grade II listed building known as Milestone Cottages, located on the north side of Brenchley Road. Further afield, to the east of the site, albeit separated by intervening built form, lies Horsmonden's Conservation Area. To the west and to the south of the site lies the non-designated heritage asset of Sprivers Historic Park and Garden, which is part of the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens (HPG), and which has restricted public access. To the south of the site lies an historic farmstead, Oasthanger. The map at Appendix 1 shows the location of Milestone Cottages, Oasthanger, and the HPG.

23. The location of these heritage assets within close proximity of the site were taken into account as part of the site's assessment through the SHELAA [[CD 3.77a](#)], including Milestone Cottages. This listed building was therefore considered when Policy AL/HO2 was being developed, including the drafting of the policy criteria. However, the Council considers that is an omission in policy criterion (9), that should also have referred to this Grade II listed building located opposite the site to the north. A proposed modification to rectify this omission is set out at paragraph 34 below.

How have heritage assets been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan?

24. The Council's response to the Matter 5, Issue 1 (Site Selection Methodology) Question 3 [[TWLP/021](#)], sets out how the Council has taken the effects of development into account on a range of matters to inform decisions made about whether to allocate sites. The introduction explains that, in assessing and determining which sites to allocate, the Council has sought to take the effects of development into account. This has included consideration of how any effects arising from development could be mitigated, informing decisions about whether to allocate sites and, where allocated, details of site-specific policy wording and the extent of developable areas.
25. The Council's response to Question 3 (of Matter 5, Issue 1) includes the effects of development on heritage assets.
26. In summary, the response explains that heritage assets have been considered in the site assessment (SHELAA) process and that there has been involvement of the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer where there are heritage assets to be considered, and with whom there has been continued discussion throughout the plan-making process. The evidence base relating to heritage is explained, along with engagement the Council has had with Historic England and Kent County Council (KCC) Heritage. The Council's response includes reference to The Duty to Cooperate Statement, November 2021 [[CD 3.132c\(v\)](#)] of the Submission Local Plan, which includes a comprehensive record of engagement and signed Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) with Historic England and KCC (which includes heritage matters).

What potential impacts will the proposed allocation have on the significance of designated heritage assets including Grade II Milestone Cottages?

27. This site has been assessed through the SHELAA process [[CD 3.77a](#)] main report and Horsmonden site assessment sheets [[CD 3.77i](#)], which found it to be available, suitable and achievable.
28. Assessment by the SHELAA has included consideration of heritage assets, including the Historic Farmstead and listed buildings, which are listed on the SHELAA site assessment sheet.
29. With reference to Policy AL/HO2, the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) [[CD 3.77a](#)] and site assessment sheets [[CD 3.77i](#)] (ref Site 162)

confirm that potential constraints to development, including proximity of the site to listed buildings and the Conservation Area, have been taken into account when assessing the suitability of the site for development and estimating its potential yield. The site assessment for this site carried out as part of the SHELAA identified heritage matters (setting of Conservation Area, adjacent to listed buildings) as issues to consider when assessing the site's suitability/capacity for development, and to inform the inclusion of any policy criteria to deliver mitigation. The Council were fully aware of the presence of Milestone Cottages as a listed building during the site assessment work.

30. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment [[CD 3.40a](#)] (main report) and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of additional settlements in Tunbridge Wells: Paddock Wood, Horsmonden, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook [[CD 3.40c](#)] provide an assessment of the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape around Horsmonden is, in principle, susceptible to change as a result of introducing particular types of development.
31. Paragraph 2.9 of [CD 3.40c](#) under the heading 'Assessment Criteria and Considerations' explains that landscape and visual character sensitivity is assessed for each defined sub-area with reference to six criteria, one of which is historic character. The assessment therefore includes consideration of historic character; that is, the extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' – a sense of it being a historic landscape – and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character.
32. This site is located in Sensitivity Area Ho6, and the outcome of the assessments are set out in Table 4.1 Assessment Ratings Summary. The detailed Sensitivity Conclusion for Area Ho6 is *"The historic parkland character of the southern part of the sub-area, the presence of nearby historic buildings around Oasthanger and the physical and visual separation of this area from the urban edge make it very sensitive to built development. The strongly-hedged field to the south of the urban edge provides separation between Oasthanger and the village, and the stream along the village edge also forms a consistent boundary to the east of Lamberhurst Road, so this area is also of high sensitivity. The lower slopes at the northern end of the sub-area have sufficient separation from Horsmonden to also be considered of high sensitivity to development, but the field immediately to the south of Brenchley Road, and the orchards to the north, are assessed as having moderate-high sensitivity to small-scale development. These areas form a rural setting to Horsmonden but are contained within the wider landscape*

and have a slightly stronger relationship with the village. Strong tree cover protects the more isolated character of the AONB parklands to the west” (text underlined to highlight where the outcome is referring specifically to the area within which site AL/HO2 is located).

33. Criterion (9) of Policy AL/HO2 will ensure that development is delivered that reflects the site’s location, at the edge of the settlement in proximity to listed buildings and other heritage assets, in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN 5: Heritage Assets, which seeks to ensure development proposals affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset, or its setting, will normally only be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance, amenity, and setting of the asset.

34. Criterion (9) of Policy AL/HO2 also requires that proposed development gives consideration to, and takes account of, the adjacent historic farmstead (Oasthanger) (located to the south of the site), the Conservation Area (located to the east of the site) and historic park and garden on the Kent County Council Compendium, a local heritage asset (Sprivers, located to the west, and south-west, of the site). The Council therefore proposes a modification to policy criterion (9) to add for consistency, an additional reference to Milestone Cottages to read (deleted text is shown ~~struck through~~, additional text is shown underlined):

“...The scheme to give consideration to, and be informed by a heritage assessment to take account of, the adjacent historic farmstead (Oasthanger), the conservation area and historic park and garden on the Kent County Council Compendium, a local heritage asset (Sprivers, located to the south of the site), and the Grade II listed building, Milestone Cottages (located opposite the site to the north).”

35. Consideration of any possible impact of development at this site on Milestone Cottages was included in the site assessments carried out to inform the detailed criteria included in the site allocation policy. It should be noted that Milestone Cottages are on the opposite side of Brenchley road to the proposed allocation HO2 and are associated with a historical milestone on the north side of the road. There is no apparent current or historical connection between the cottages and the allocation site and so any effects on setting are likely to be minimal and capable of being addressed through a planning application.

36. It is considered that the policy (including the amended criteria) will ensure that development of the site will be informed by a heritage assessment that will be able to

address any concerns identified from development of the site with regards to the surrounding heritage assets so that appropriate mitigation where required can be provided.

Inspector's Question 5: [re. Sprivers Wood]

What potential impacts will the proposed allocation have on Sprivers Wood?

TWBC response to Question 5

Introduction

37. The site is located to the east of a block of ancient woodland known as Sprivers Wood that forms the western boundary to the site. Sprivers Wood falls within the Shirrenden Woods Local Wildlife Site which is further to the west and north.

Consideration

38. The Site Layout Plan (SLP Map 61 page 260) for Policy AL/HO2 identifies areas within the site to be retained as an open space and landscape buffer. These areas are located along the entire northern, western, and southern boundaries (except that part of the northern boundary immediately adjacent to the area proposed for delivery of the village hall, within the eastern part of the site, adjacent to the built-up area of Horsmonden). The open space/landscape buffer to the west is wider than other areas so as to provide a minimum 25m set back from the ancient woodland in accordance with Policy EN13 Ancient Woodland

39. Criterion (7) of Policy AL/HO2 requires that the areas of open space and landscape buffer indicated on the site layout plan shall include a buffer to ancient woodland on the western part of the site, and reinforcement of the southern landscape boundary.

40. Policy EN 13: Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees seeks to ensure that the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, resulting from development proposals shall not be allowed unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, as defined by the NPPF, and in such circumstances appropriate compensatory measures are provided. Criterion (5) of Policy EN13 requires development proposals to provide adequate buffers between built development and areas of ancient woodland.

41. The Submission Local Plan at paragraph 6.171 (pre-amble to Policy EN 13: Ancient woodland and Veteran Trees,) explains that “. *In the absence of site surveys and*

detailed assessments, the Council will assume a buffer of 25m from the edge of the woodland, which allows for the presence of veteran trees and the fall height of mature trees. The Council expects developers, through assessment, to confirm that this or any other distance is appropriate and that the priority for such buffers will be ecological mitigation and enhancement for the woodland rather than the amenity of the proposed development”.

42. As part of the consideration of the current planning application 22/00206/O a 25 metre landscape buffer is being sought, in line with the Submission Local Plan Policy EN 13 Ancient woodland and Veteran Trees, as detailed above, to ensure there is no negative impact from the proposed development upon Sprivers Wood.

43. In conclusion, the policy criteria included within Policy AL/HO2, Policy EN12, and Policy EN13 will ensure the delivery of development through Policy AL/HO2 will have no adverse affects on important trees, woodlands, and hedgerows. There will be no loss or deterioration on ancient woodland (this includes Sprivers Wood) resulting from development proposals.

AL/HO3 – Land to the East of Horsmonden

Inspector’s Question 6: [re. area for residential development]

***How has the proposed area of residential development been established?
What is it based on and is it justified?***

TWBC response to Question 6

Introduction

44. This is an area of mixed land use located adjacent to the eastern edge of the village with a large part of the site planted to commercial orchard. There is some built development, including disused farm buildings (that have most recently been used for commercial uses), a car repair garage (that utilises former railway station buildings), a portion of the route of a disused (dismantled) railway line (part of the Hop Pickers Line, ref. Local Plan Policy T5: Safeguarding Railway Land), and an electricity sub-station.
45. The proposed area of residential development for the site has been established following consideration of site constraints, including those contained on the Council’s GIS layers, as well as consideration of relevant evidence base documents (referred to below), informed by officer site visits and discussions with the Council’s specialist Landscape and Biodiversity Officer and Conservation and Urban Design Officer. This work informed the proposed areas indicated for residential development set out at individual site allocation policies, first in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan [[CD 3.9](#)].
46. The site allocation area is made up of a number of sites (Sites 82, 108, 297 and 324) submitted through the Call for Sites process. The area covered by the disused farm buildings is subject to planning approval (reference: [15/505340/OUT](#)) for the demolition of existing buildings (with the exception of the building at the corner of the access road) and for the erection of up to 30 dwellings, this area is also subject to [19/03657/REM](#) for the erection of 20 dwellings, approved on 24 November 2021. The reserved matters application 19/03657 was in relation to the outline approval for up to 30 dwellings. The consented development includes detailed approval for a site access (simple junction arrangement) with Goudhurst Road.
47. There is now one site promoter promoting the whole of the area included within Policy AL/HO3, and this promoter has confirmed that the consented site (as detailed above)

and the remaining areas within the allocated site will be brought forward together and promoted as one complete site. This is confirmed by the representation made to the Regulation 19 consultation by the site promoters, Persimmon Homes South East, Rep PSLP 2014. The red line site area for Policy AL/HO3 includes the consented site area.

48. With reference to Policy AL/HO3, the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) [[CD 3.77a](#)] and site assessment sheets [[CD 3.77j](#)] (ref Sites 82, 108, 297, and 324) confirm that potential constraints to development, including proximity of the site to listed buildings and the Conservation Area, as well as the (disused) Hop Pickers Railway Line, have been taken into account when assessing the suitability of the site for development and establishing the developable area of the site and its potential yield.

Consideration

Landscape considerations

49. The area identified for residential development in the Indicative Site Layout Plan Map 62, together with other uses, reflects the outcome of the assessment of the site's opportunities and constraints, including landscape and topographical considerations, and the detailed discussions carried out with the Council's specialist Landscape and Biodiversity Officer and the local community. A particular concern identified when the site was suggested and at the first site visit by officers was the rising ground and the potential effect on views from the south and AONB. This is the principal reason that development on the high ground to the north was not proposed.

50. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) [[CD 3.77a](#)] and associated site assessment sheets [[CD 3.77j](#)] provide a detailed explanation about how sites were assessed for development potential.

51. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of additional settlements in Tunbridge Wells: Paddock Wood, Horsmonden, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook [[CD 3.40c](#)] provide an assessment of the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape around Horsmonden is, in principle, susceptible to change as a result of introducing particular types of development. The assessment found that all land around Horsmonden had a high sensitivity to all scales of development (Figures on pages 22 to 24).

52. The site allocation falls within 'sub area Ho2' of the Landscape Sensitivity Study. The sensitivity conclusions of the study being *"The former railway line, with associated tree cover and banks, serves to strengthen the rural character of the sub-area, by creating a clear distinction between the village and the countryside, and is a valued landscape element in its own right. Orchard land use contributes to local character, so sensitivity to built development across most of the sub-area is 'high'. The sub-area is relatively contained in the wider landscape, so where urban edge influence is stronger, in the vicinity of the recreation ground adjacent to Maidstone Road, sensitivity is slightly lower; but the former railway line nonetheless forms a significant boundary to urban development"*.
53. This work highlighted the importance of retaining the railway land and the associated vegetation and the positive contribution to landscape character made by the orchard both of which the Council has sought to respect through the allocation.
54. The site is outside of the High Weald AONB but within its setting and so it was included within the AONB Setting Analysis Report [[CD 3.95a](#)] which confirms at paragraph 4.3.8 that *"Horsmonden is surrounded on three sides by the High Weald AONB, however the AONB boundary is set back from the village edge"*, and at para 4.3.10 that *"the draft allocation site HO3 is located to the east of the village and is the furthest removed from the AONB boundary. It is located on rising ground, currently in use as orchard"*.
55. The AONB Setting Analysis Report concludes at paragraph 4.3.17 that *"site HO3 lies furthest from the AONB boundary and the predicted effects of the proposed development on the setting to the AONB would be limited to perceptual effects resulting from changes to views into or out of the AONB. The site is visible within distant views from the high ground within the AONB at Goudhurst. Within these views the development of the site would form a noticeable, if distant expansion to Horsmonden. The prescriptions for the proposed Open Space and Landscape Buffer within the draft local plan policy AL/HO3, would reduce the extent to which the development would (be) appear to expand beyond the existing settlement edge"*.
56. The proposed area identified for residential development reflects the constraints and opportunities for mitigation/enhancement identified as well as design measures suggested by the AONB Setting Analysis Report to reduce the predicted effects on the setting of the AONB. This includes the promotion of a landscape-led approach to

masterplanning that creates a structure to contain the allocation site area which is consistent with the character of the adjacent High Weald AONB (reference: criterion (6) of Policy AL/HO3), which should include testing of any impact of proposed development within site AL/HO3 from prominent viewpoint locations at Goudhurst. Any masterplan should adhere to relevant guidance, including the National Design Guide, and should take inspiration from the High Weald Design Guide and High Weald AONB Management Plan. Additionally, careful consideration is to be given to the setting of listed buildings and other heritage assets (reference: criteria (10) and (11) of Policy AL/HO3).

57. The area of open space/landscape buffer along the western boundary of the site reflects the location of the former railway line that has remained undeveloped, except for some buildings associated with previous railway uses that have more recently been used for commercial purposes. The former railway line part of the Hop Pickers Line, is safeguarded under Local Plan Policy T5: Safeguarding Railway Land and this is retained as green space.

Heritage considerations

58. The Council has given very careful consideration to the impact of allocation on designated heritage assets. In broad terms the Council's response to Matter 5, Issue 1 (Site Selection Methodology), Question 3 explains how the Council has taken account of heritage assets in the plan-making process. That response sets the context to the more site-specific response that follows.

59. For site AL/HO3 heritage assets of relevance include New Bassetts Cottages, Bassetts Villas, and Bassetts Cottages, each of which are considered in detail below. As detailed above, the sites that comprise AL/HO3 have been assessed through the SHELAA process, which found them to be available, suitable and achievable. The assessment by the SHELAA has included consideration of heritage assets, including non-designated heritage assets, and the disused former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst (Hop Pickers) line, ref SLP Policy TP 5 Safeguarding Railway Land. This consideration has included ongoing discussion with the Council's specialist Conservation and Urban Design Officer.

60. The assessment of possible locations and types of development to inform the proposed areas for development took account of the heritage assets adjacent, and within close proximity to, the site. The map set out at Appendix 1 indicates the location of New

Bassetts Cottages, Bassetts Villas, Old Bassetts Cottages, listed buildings located opposite the site, and the route of the Hop Pickers Line through the site. Each of these heritage assets is considered below.

61. New Bassetts Cottages: criterion (10) of Policy AL/HO3 requires “*The scheme to take account of, and respect, the setting of New Bassetts Cottages*”, a terrace of cottages that are located to the eastern part of the site, to the east of Public Right of Way (PRoW) WT340a (which runs north-south through the site); the cottages are not included within the site’s red line area. New Bassetts Cottages are not listed buildings but are considered to be non-designated heritage assets. The area immediately fronting these cottages (and within the site boundary) is allocated as open space.
62. Bassetts Villas, located to the west of New Bassetts Villas and to the west of PRoW WT340a, are Victorian properties originally used as the office for the surrounding apple farm and accommodation for the farm workers. They are not listed buildings, but as non-designated heritage assets would be protected by the requirements of Policy EN 5: Heritage Assets. They are not included within the site red line area.
63. Bassetts Cottages: paragraph 5.605 of the Submission Local Plan confirms that, to the south west of the site (not within the site red line area), is a pair of Grade II listed cottages, fronting onto Goudhurst Road (note: the Historic England register of listed buildings refers to these buildings as Old Bassetts Cottages).
64. Additionally, there are a number of listed buildings opposite the site on the southern side of Goudhurst Road. This is covered in more detail in the response to question 4 of this hearing statement. Assessment and consideration of these heritage assets was undertaken as part of the consented applications for this part of the site (the disused farm buildings) referred to in the answer to Question 6.
65. Criterion (11) of Policy AL/HO3 requires “*The scheme to take account of, and respect, the character and appearance of nearby listed buildings*”.
66. A portion of the disused former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst (Hop Pickers) line runs along the western boundary of the site. Paragraph 6.575 of the SLP, part of the reasoned justification for Policy TP 5 Safeguarding Railway Land, explains that “*with regard to the former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst line, the route, the cultural history, and the industrial archaeology associated with it are a recognised asset for the borough*”.

that offers potential to support tourism, cultural and physical activities, and green infrastructure across a large accessible area of the borough, connecting High and Low Weald settlements and communities”.

67. As part of the development of Site AL/HO3, Criterion (5) requires “No built development on the route of the Hop Pickers Line, as shown on the site layout plan, unless it can be demonstrated that the route can be maintained”, therefore ensuring that the area of the site along which the Hop Pickers Line runs will be improved to provide a walking and cycle route through the site that will provide a safe off-road route to serve the existing primary school site and the area safeguarded for expansion of the school.

Summary and Conclusion

68. The above response explains how the Council has established the areas proposed for residential use within site AL/HO3, taking account of site constraints, evidence base work including landscape and heritage assessments, discussion with specialist officers as well as giving consideration to Local Plan consultation responses. The Council is confident that effects on heritage assets can be dealt with adequately through a planning application and that the site specific policy and supporting map give added confidence that the effects, which are likely to be limited can be minimised to an acceptable level.

Inspector’s Question 7: [re. safeguarded land for school]

What is the justification for the proposed area of safeguarded land for the primary school? How does it relate to the existing school site?

TWBC response to Question 7

Introduction

69. Criterion (12) of Policy AL/HO3 requires that land to the north of the site is provided for future school expansion, to be safeguarded, with details provided as to how this land would be managed in any intervening period of time between development of other parts of the site and before being required for school expansion.

70. The Indicative Site Layout Plan Map 62 identifies this area, shaded pink. Horsmonden Primary School is located outside of the site’s red line, to the west and adjacent to the safeguarded area. The safeguarded area is located in very close proximity to the Primary School and it would be possible to provide direct pedestrian links between each site area that would not require the crossing of any road.

Consideration

71. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) [[CD 3.142](#)] under the heading ‘*Additional future requirements needed to deliver growth proposed in the Local Plan Primary Schools*’ identifies a requirement for the expansion of Horsmonden Primary School by up to one Form of Entry (FE) to provide for the Brenchley/Horsmonden/Lamberhurst planning area, and this has been agreed by KCC Education. This is summarised in paragraph 3.82 Table 6 of the IDP [[CD 3.142](#)] that summarises the education needs identified for each of the settlements within the borough in order to support the growth planned for in the Local Plan. Under the heading Summary of education needs for Horsmonden, the “*Expansion of Horsmonden CE Primary School by one FE*” is included.

Additionally, the Statement of Common Ground between TWBC and KCC [[PS 012](#)] confirms at paragraph 4.46 that “*Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, ongoing discussions have taken place between officers of TWBC and the County’s West Kent Area Education Officer to ensure that adequate school places (both Primary and Secondary) are provided for to meet the needs of the borough and the growth planned*”, and at paragraph 4.48 “*The provision reflects that which is identified within KCC’s most up*

to date Education Commissioning Plan which TWBC has taken account of to ensure that the growth proposed aligns with KCC's forecasting for education needs and KCC agrees that the provision set out within the Local Plan reflects the discussions that have taken place and appropriately provides for education within the Local Plan...".

72. The safeguarded land will, when required to do so, provide opportunities for additional education buildings, and/or alternatively allow for additional built development within the existing school site and the relocation/expansion of playground/open space into this safeguarded area as recognised at para 3.96, 2nd bullet on page 56 (electronic page 58) of the IDP.

Inspector's Question 8: [re. area proposed for 'community use']

What is the justification for the proposed 'community use' area? Is it necessary and how/when will it be delivered?

TWBC response to Question 8

Introduction

73. The supporting text for AL/HO3 at 5.609 states that:

74. The northern, higher parts of the site to be used for community uses and not built form, would reduce the impact of development upon the wider rural area, including views from the areas of higher land to the south of the site outside of the developed area of the village, including distant views from Goudhurst.

The opening text for the policy refers to "a community orchard and open space" and Criteria 13 of the policy requires the development to "*provide on-site amenity/natural green space and children's and youth play space, and a community orchard that will be managed and maintained for this use*".

The Indicative Site Layout Plan Map 62 in the Submission Local Plan, and the Inset Map for Horsmonden. [\[CD 3.129m\(i\)\]](#) identify an area, shaded purple, located across the northern boundary of the site for community use. Whilst elements of criteria 13 such as play and some amenity space can be provided within the development and/or on open space/landscape buffer areas indicated on the plan it is clear that the community use intended for the land to the north is a community orchard.

75. The justification for not including this area within the proposed developable area is explained in response to Question 6 and arises out of the site assessments and the acknowledged sensitivity of the site, and the topography. The land is currently put to a commercial orchard and this is recognised as an important local landscape characteristic.

76. As part of the site assessment work carried out by TWBC officers and the development of site allocation policies in the Regulation 19 Local Plan, representatives from Horsmonden Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were consulted to discuss how development of the wider site could best meet the needs of the local community. The aspiration for an area of community open space was voiced

at this stage, a use that could include a community orchard to reflect historic and existing uses of the site and the wider area, the parish still being an important fruit growing area. Subsequently the Parish Council has made a representation to the Regulation 19 consultation requesting that the phrase “*and a community orchard*” within criterion (13) be removed on the grounds that there are various other possibilities for uses in that space which Horsmonden Parish Council is currently exploring including allotments which may require parking provision and water supply.

77.. The AL/HO3 policy requirements for this area related to community use and open space can still be met under the scenario of utilising the area, or part of the area for allotments instead of a community orchard although there would still be a need to provide some orchard to meet the policy requirements and this would also be desirable to preserve landscape character. It is possible that the policy wording for criteria 13 (and text at 5.509) could be adjusted to accommodate the possible provision of an area of allotments within a wider community orchard as follows (deleted text is shown ~~struck through~~, additional text is shown underlined):

(13) Provide on-site amenity/natural green space and children’s and youth play space, and a community orchard with allotments that will be managed and maintained for this use;

78. The term Community Orchard is not prescribed anywhere in the Local plan and can accommodate a variety of spaces within what one might consider an orchard including space for play and education and can easily be combined with allotments. Government guidance on community orchards and the associated case studies shows how they can have a positive effect on community cohesion and provide opportunities for outdoor learning and activities whilst also making an important contribution to biodiversity. Including the area of ‘community use’ within the site allocation red line area ensures that the uses required by criterion (13) will be delivered as part of the wider development; the area will be protected from future built development, thereby ensuring there is no adverse impact in the future upon landscape character and upon the setting of the AONB, whilst also providing an easily accessible area of open space for the wider community.

Inspector's Question 9: [re. location of health centre/surgery]

Is the location of the proposed health centre/doctor's surgery appropriate and justified?

TWBC response to Question 9

Introduction

79. Criterion (14) of Policy AL/HO3 requires that a “*suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of the new health centre/doctors surgery is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage*”, to reflect anticipated development at Horsmonden and Brenchley & Matfield.

80. The Indicative Site Layout Plan Map 62 and Inset Map for Horsmonden [[CD 3.129m\(i\)](#)] does not specifically identify the location of the surgery.

Consideration

81. Paragraph 3.94 of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) [[CD 3.142](#)] identifies key areas that have been highlighted by the NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as areas that will need to be addressed in terms of future provision to support the level of growth proposed in the draft Local Plan.

82. Under the heading Horsmonden/Lamberhurst/Matfield/Goudhurst/Brenchley, the IDP at paragraph 3.96 confirms that:

- “*there are three existing practices in this area of the Weald; all three practices are small. The Howell Surgery branch surgery in Horsmonden is a converted domestic property and is not suitable for the medium or longer term, with no capacity to accommodate the level of growth proposed in Horsmonden, or for the growth in Brenchley and Matfield which it also serves through the surgery in Brenchley*”; and
- “*As the majority of the growth in the Local Plan within this cluster is in the Horsmonden area, the CCG has requested that land is safeguarded for a doctors surgery in this area. A strategic assessment, linked to the overall growth in the Local Plan, will need to be undertaken by the CCG, with local practices, to inform requirements*”.

83. Through representations to the Regulation 19 consultation, the CCG has clarified that the delivery of services from a single site for the practice population has not been considered at this time. The CCG has highlighted that an allocation or safeguarding of land for a doctors practice in Horsmonden may be required to ensure delivery of required infrastructure in the future. It is, however, important to emphasise that a more detailed discussion and assessment is required in this area to define any future requirements; specifically noting that the majority of housing growth proposed in Horsmonden is expected in the latter part of the plan period. The IDP at paragraph 3.96 confirms that the potential for delivering medical services from one single site, to replace the existing three sites that currently serve the Horsmonden/Lamberhurst/Matfield/Goudhurst/Brenchley areas, is something that the CCG will be considering in more detail.
84. The safeguarding of land for a new health centre in Policy AL/HO3 therefore provides an opportunity for ensuring that primary medical care services for the area will be able to meet future needs, taking into account the predicted growth allocated in the Local Plan. The Statement of Common Ground between TWBC and the CCG [[CD 3.132c\(v\)](#)] (Appendix H13) at paragraph 4.14 confirms that the CCG supports the opportunity this allocation provides to inform the planning for primary medical care services within the borough.
85. Through consideration of planning proposals and masterplans, there will be a need to liaise with the CCG and local community about the best location for the health facility within the area covered by Policy AL/HO3.
86. The size of the overall site would be informed by building design/planning requirements in the area and whether it works best as a single storey or two storey building. However, as the CCG has not yet carried out detailed assessments with the existing practice to inform specific requirements, the CCG is estimating that, based on the delivery of a single storey building, a site of approximately 0.20 to 0.25 hectares should be suitable for a medical centre (based on an estimate up to 650 sqm Gross External Area for the building), along with parking, ambulance bay, and areas of landscaping/for future expansion. The site promoter has confirmed that an area of approximately 0.25 hectares will be provided to accommodate these uses.

87. It is the case that the requirement of criterion (14) “*a suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of the new health centre/doctors surgery is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage*” does not necessarily require the site promoter to be responsible for delivering the facility above as well as providing an area of land in a suitable location. The precise size, design and location of the facility will be determined through a detailed planning application.

Inspector's Question 10: [re. justification for community orchard and area of lower density]

What is the justification for requiring a community orchard and built development to the east of the site to be at a lower density?

TWBC response to Question 10

Introduction

88. Criterion (13) of Policy AL/HO3 requires the provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's and youth play space, and a community orchard that will be managed and maintained for this use (our emphasis).
89. The Indicative Site Layout Plan Map 62, and Inset Map for Horsmonden [[CD 3.129m\(i\)](#)] identify this area, shaded purple, located across the northern boundary of the site.
90. Criterion (8) of Policy AL/HO3 requires that "*Built development on the eastern area of the site to be at a lower density and informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment*" (LVIA).

Consideration

Justification for requiring a community orchard

91. The response to this question should be read in conjunction with the Council's response to Questions 6 and 8 of this statement.
92. As explained above in the response to Question 6 under "Landscape considerations", the identification of areas for different uses as shown in the Indicative Site Layout Plan Map 62, reflects the outcome of the assessment of the site's opportunities and constraints, including landscape and topographical considerations, and the detailed discussions carried out with the local community.
93. In particular, the AONB Setting Analysis Report [[CD 3.95a](#) & [3.95d](#)] concludes at paragraph 4.3.17 that "site HO3 lies furthest from the AONB boundary and the predicted effects of the proposed development on the setting to the AONB would be limited to perceptual effects resulting from changes to views into or out of the AONB. The site is visible within distant views from the high ground within the AONB at Goudhurst. Within these views the development of the site would from a noticeable, if distant expansion,

to Horsmonden. The prescriptions for the proposed Open Space and Landscape Buffer within the draft local plan policy AL/HO3, would reduce the extent to which the development would (be) appear to expand beyond the existing settlement edge”.

94. The AONB Setting Analysis Report [[CD 3.95a](#)] under “*Design measures that would reduce the predicted effects on the setting to the AONB*” (para 4.3.19) advises for this site:

- “*Site HO3 – in addition to conforming to the Green Infrastructure provision set out within the draft policy, test the visibility of proposed development within site HO3 from prominent viewpoint locations at Goudhurst (e.g. photograph H6), using wireframes or photomontages in order to fully assess the potential effects on the setting to the AONB.*
- *Promote a landscape led approach to masterplanning that creates a structure to contain the allocation sites which is consistent with the character of the adjacent High Weald. Any masterplan should adhere to relevant guidance including the National Design Guide and should take inspiration from the High Weald Design Guide and Management Plan.*
- *Give careful consideration to the setting of listed buildings, which lie adjacent to the AONB and are protected in their own right”.*

95. Orchards are a feature of Horsmonden which sits within the Local Landscape Character Area 2 Horsmonden Fruit Belt. The Borough Landscape Character Assessment [[PS 019](#) page 43-49] identifies orchards as a key characteristic:

“5) An intensively cultivated landscape dominated by orchards but also occasional areas of hops and some soft fruit.

Soils are very variable, reflecting the drift deposits. A belt of Grade 2 agricultural land, which is relatively rare in the Borough, extends across the middle of the ridge top and in part accounts for the intensity of cultivation. Fruit cultivation appears to dominate, at least visually, with largescale regular orchards of mainly apples on dwarf root stock, surrounded by tall alder and poplar shelter hedges. Areas of soft fruit are also locally common, and also occasionally hop gardens. The areas of fruit cultivation are visually dominant to a backdrop of other agricultural land uses, including large arable fields in the north of the area and smaller enclaves of pasture”.

96. Under Valued Features and Qualities orchards are noted in item 3:

“Locally distinctive features so characteristic of the AONB are consistently represented throughout the area, including orchards, a few remaining hop gardens and ponds, pits and relics of the iron industry”.

97. Under the Landscape Strategy section item 3 there is specific to the enhancement of the orchard setting of Horsmonden::

“Seek to provide an appropriate sense of visual containment for Horsmonden through protection and enhancement of its orchard setting”.

98. Accordingly, the northern portion of the site is identified for non-built development, to ensure there is a minimum impact upon the setting of the AONB as advised by the AONB Setting Analysis Report. An orchard is the preferred land use as this helps address issues raised by the AONB Setting Report and is consistent with the local landscape character and the landscape strategy for the area. Placing it into community use/control ensures that the orchard use will continue for the lifetime of the development or for as long as the community require it.

99. The term ‘Community Orchard’ is not prescribed anywhere in the Local Plan and can accommodate a variety of spaces within what one might consider an orchard including space for play and education. Government guidance on community orchards ([Community Orchards How to guide](#)) and the associated case studies shows how they can have a positive effect on community cohesion and provide opportunities for outdoor learning and activities whilst also making an important contribution to biodiversity.

100. In response to question 7 above the Council has considered a suggestion that the term is too prescriptive and other uses such as allotments may be preferable. The Council has considered this and believes an element of allotment can be included within this area and has suggested some alternative wording.

Requirement for built development to be at a lower density

101. The eastern part of the site is immediately adjacent to open countryside, with some low-density housing running eastwards from the site along the north of Goudhurst Road, and a small number of dwellings running eastwards south of the site along the south of Goudhurst Road. The requirement for built development in the eastern part of the site to be at a lower density than within the other (western) areas of the site will

ensure that the impact upon the open rural character of built development within the area immediately adjacent to the east of the site is minimised.

102. However it is recognised that comments that have been made about density may be considered too prescriptive, in this instance, when development is also to be “*informed by a landscape assessment*” (SLP para 5.609 and Criteria 6 & 8). Consequently, the Council propose to amend the policy wording as follows (deleted text is shown ~~struck through~~, additional text is shown underlined):

“....The layout and design of the scheme to give full consideration to any impact upon the setting of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to provide a scheme that has been fully informed by a landscape and visual assessment ~~landscape appraisals~~ in order to provide development proposals that respond positively to views out of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;....

8. Built development on the eastern area of the site to be at a lower density and informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment;.....”

Appendices

Appendix 1: Map showing the allocation in relation to showing relevant heritage assets

