



WEST HOATHLY PARISH COUNCIL

representing Highbrook, Selsfield, Sharpthorne, Tyes Cross and West Hoathly

Neighbourhood Plan Landowner Meeting Monday 3rd February 2014 West Hoathly Primary School

The meeting was attended by approximately 100 people.

Mr Downe (Chairman of the Parish Council) outlined the purpose of the meeting. A request for information had been sent to landowners who had expressed an interest in submitting land for consideration for the Neighbourhood Plan. All sites put forward need to be reviewed and evaluated for suitability against a range of requirements identified as important to the parish. Tonight landowners or their representatives have the opportunity to outline their ideas and there will be 3 exhibitions later in the week where information on each site will be available for residents to view and comment on via a standard checklist form. The feedback will then be made available to the task force who will put forward a recommendation to the Parish Council to accept prior to a revised draft Neighbourhood Plan being issued for public consultation.

Landowners, or their representatives, were given 10 minutes to cover the following topics with some having some site specific questions.

- What is the overall concept of your proposed development?
- What numbers and types of dwellings are you proposing for the site?
- What is the timescale/phasing of your proposed development?
- Highways issues are very important to local residents so what will be the access arrangements to your proposed site?
- What will the proposed development give back to the local community?

This was then followed by a 5 minute open Q&A session.

WHCS_01 Hangdown Mead

(Chris Turnbull, landowner)

He came to Hangdown Mead in 1990 when it was a farm. The first office was built by converting a barn and was used to run the farm and an agricultural machinery/plant hire company. Further units were created using at cost buildings and a brick built stable. In 1997 agriculture was difficult and Hangdown mead changed direction and developed the current business park with the remaining buildings being converted in 2000. However without significant investment the buildings can only be used for companies such as vehicle repairs, agriculture or general mechanics.

The proposal would be to retain the current brick built buildings at the top of the site which employs 16 people (of whom 1 part-time employee is local) and remove the buildings on the lower half of the site and replace these with 6 flats/small dwellings and 4 * 3/4 bedroomed dwellings.

There is existing access to the site which is a 2-3 minute walk to the local shop and bus stop.

Down a track at the bottom of the site there is access to another brownfield area which could be developed further to allow the redeployment of some of the vehicle repair unit tenants.

Happy to talk to the parish about what type of development the parish would like to see here.

The top section would stay as it is. Removing the at cost buildings to the south section a row of trees or fencing could be used to segregate the business and residential parts of the site.

How many dwellings would there be in total? 10 4* 3/4 bedroomed dwellings and 6 flats/affordable starter homes with a combination of social and low cost units.

WHCS_02 Bluebell Woodland

(Simon Ingram, Ibstock Properties Manger)

The brickworks started at Bluebell Woods with a factory and a quarry which migrated to the current site about 100 years ago.

Ibstock wish to promote a scheme to the Neighbourhood Plan for housing which will also benefit Ibstock as a major local employer. Bluebell Woodland has the potential for housing.

The development is broadly seen in 2 parts. The first, for the part of the site closest to the bridleway and would look to emulate the development on the other side with a mixture of detached 1/2/3 bedroomed detached and terraced rows. They do not envisage a blanket row of houses but to be able to see through to the woodland beyond and to be able to walk through to the area at the back which would be made into open access land.

Behind this street scene a second phase of development would take its design brief from Home Platt with a circular green with houses around it.

Ibstock are looking at up to 30 units, 15 in the street scene phase and 15 in the second phase. The number of affordable houses would follow the MSDC guidelines of 30%. The 2 bedroomed terraced dwellings would also be more affordable

The frontage area to the bridleway has grown up with fairly immature trees and development could be done 1-1.5 years post consent.

For highways access the development would need to rely on Station Road and Top Road but would not mean another junction on to Top Road. They would need to commission a traffic report to look at the number of people, how many would be using cars or walking etc.

3 acres of the site would be left as woodland and an area would be created for walking and enjoyment. Ownership of this land would need to be discussed further as to who it might be vested to or whether Ibstock retained it.

The current bridleway could be made up to an adoptable standard as part of the development which would benefit existing residents and users of the bridleway.

Is this the biggest site in the plans? Not in terms of houses.

Is it possible to widen the bottom of Station Road? This would need to be considered by a traffic study. If the site is of interest part of the review would be to consider access and how to manage this.

How many off road parking spaces will there be? These will be houses not flats. The current draft Neighbourhood Plan does have a policy on the number of off road parking spaces for developments.

The site is at the bottom of the surrounding land has there been any consideration of its potential to flooding? This would be part of the design. Don't currently see a large gathering of water at this site.

Have they spoken to the Forestry Commission about a new access into the woods? They are in touch with them about wood management but have not spoken to them specifically about any potential development. This will have to be done.

WHCS_03 West Hoathly Station / Goods Yard

A representative for Bluebell Railway was unable to attend due to a previous commitment. However Rail Estate had provided a written response which Mr Downe (Chairman of the Parish Council) read out.

In keeping with the precedent set by the planning permission already obtained for part of the site, it is envisaged that any residential development would be in keeping with, and evocative of, the historic, local, railway style architecture and would include further cottages and houses clustered in the southern half of the goods yard off Station Road and adjacent to the consented cottages off Hamsey Road.

There is potential for two semi-detached cottages off Hamsey Road and eight three/four bedroom detached, semi-detached and terraced houses in the former goods yard. The Hamsey Road houses would be developed within the village development envelope.

Subject to the land being declared surplus to the operational requirements of the Bluebell Railway, it is envisaged that plans for the two Hamsey Road units could be brought forward quickly. Plans for housing development in the former goods yard would be brought forward dependent upon the phased release of the land and the relocation of operational activities to other sites on the railway.

Access to the development sites would be directly from Hamsey Road, via a crossover, and from a continuation of Station Road. Both are publicly adopted roads.

Apart from the normal benefits associated with a high quality housing development, any scheme will make community provision as required under the adopted mid Sussex District Council Local Plan. This will be achieved either by planning conditions or by a Section 106 planning agreement and/or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Due to the nature of the site, extensive tree planting and landscaping is envisaged and an open area is to be reserved for access to, and the potential provision of, a station halt within the site. Depending upon the amount of residential units applied for, there may well be an element of affordable housing provided as part of the scheme, subject to discussions with the local planning authority.

It is premature to present a fully detailed proposal at this time. If the site is released for development by Bluebell Railway, then it is likely that a cluster of housing of up to eight units would be planned for the southernmost part of the goods yard with a mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses with gardens around an open landscaped area. Space would be left for access to a potential station halt including a platform and small car parking/servicing area. It is not intended to extend development into the northernmost part of the goods yard or into the area of ancient woodland to the west of the goods yard and wherever appropriate the development will retain any former features of the goods yard such as the loading dock etc.

The residential development off Hamsey Road and within the village envelope would consist of two semi-detached railway-style cottages adjacent to the already consented development. Access would be from a crossover at the foot of Hamsey Road into a common driveway.

As there was no representative available no questions were taken.

WHCS_04 Webbs Mead / Bakers Pit

(Lord Limerick, landowner)

The family has lived at Chiddinglye since 1934. This is a beautiful part of the country but there is a need for affordable housing for local working families and older people and what starts as affordable rental housing should stay as affordable rental housing.

A developer needs to provide a mix of affordable and normal residential housing to make it worthwhile. New developments can be attractive. The proposed site is made up of Bakers Pit which has the radio mast, a former clay pit, and some allotments and grazing as well as Webbs Mead which is a 3.5 acres grassy field screened on the south and east with tall trees and on the west and north by high hedges. It is overlooked by 2 houses (but only from the upstairs) and has attractive views over Gravetye Woods where one house is visible.

The vision is to create a social and residential development which looks attractive and people want to raise their families in. It will take influences from New England (clapboard houses) and Scandinavia (communal parking leaving space for children to move about safely).

Bakers Pit is not suitable for lots of houses and so use of this area will be guided by local opinion. Perhaps it can be made into an area of amenity value used for allotments/an all-weather pitch/community shop.

There is the possibility of providing up to 40 dwellings of which 50% would be social/affordable.

There is an issue with access. The obvious route is through Broadfield (between numbers 11 and 33) into Bakers Pit and then into Webbs Mead. This access route is believed to be owned by Affinity Sutton.

There are no plans to develop south of Webbs Mead and there could be a binding covenant set up on future landowners to stop any development.

Are there any other access options? There are 2 possible but these are less attractive. One would be to use the drive on the west of Webbs Mead but does not have good visibility. The other would be to use the main Chiddinglye drive but this is a further 200 yards west of the site and taking people away from, rather than towards, the village.

A small part of Bakers Pit is owned by a different landowner who has no intention of developing it. What is to be done about the great crested newts in Bakers Pit? This will be part of the considerations if this site is taken further.

What about availability of local services? These have been considered but further studies would be required.

WHCS_05 Land North of Top Road

(Chris Wojtulewski, Parker Dann developer)

The landowner and developer want to provide a high quality development working with the local people and the parish council. They wish for the development to be grounded in the local vernacular using local stock brick. Each dwelling would have its own garden, garage and off street driveway. They would retain the existing hedgerows and trees and work within the boundaries these formed on the North, West and East sides. They would also enhance these hedgerows with native species appropriate to the High Weald to help screen the site and integrate it into the landscape. The housing would be of traditional style, 2-storey with single/double ridges. They also wished to work with a local architect to produce something unique to this site.

The developer would look to provide a minimum of 23 houses and a maximum of 30. The dwelling mix would be 4*2 bedroomed, 10*3 bedroomed and 9*4 bedroomed houses of which 6 would be affordable in line with MSDC expectations (based on 23 houses). There would be starter homes for families and be fully lifetime appropriate (i.e. they would be suitable for elderly residents).

The land is all under the one ownership and has direct access to the highways. The development could be delivered in the shorter term.

They recognise the safety issues for both vehicles and pedestrians and would reposition the access further to the east where visibility is better than the existing access. Some of the hedgerow on the road would need to be removed but would be replanted behind the highways access visibility splays. They would envisage traffic calming measures as part of the scheme, perhaps by extending the current 30mph limit further east.

The site has strong defensible boundaries. To the north the current Ibstock clay extraction is likely to extend towards the site boundary but once complete will be restored. Discussions about this have taken place with Ibstock.

If the site is within the local Neighbourhood Plan then 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money will come directly to the parish and can be used for recreational, community hall purposes etc.)

Within the draft Neighbourhood Plan there is a policy that states that any CIL money will be used to fund work on the Highways to address the speed and safety issues.

Would the landowner enter into a covenant to protect future development? This is the only land under consideration. Other land may be in the ownership of other landowners.

Is this a greenfield site? Yes.

WHCS_06 Land adjacent to Cookhams

There was no representative to speak about proposals for this site

WHCS_07 Workhouse Platt

(Will Buckley, landowner)

The Buckley family own Hook Farm, Hook Lane of which this site is a part. A workhouse was built on this site in 1730 and knocked down in 1860. It originally had 3 dwellings. The land is adjacent to the tennis courts and cricket pitch. It is on an outcrop of sandstone rock and not in active agricultural use. It is surrounded by a circle of trees. The proposal is for a collection of 3-4 traditionally designed dwellings of 2/3/4 bedrooms. 1 could possibly be affordable but will mainly be market housing. There is access to the site via a track off Hook Lane so it can be approached via either West Hoathly along Hook Lane or via Cob Lane. 3-4 dwellings should not dramatically increase the number of traffic movements. It would be a small site in harmony with the landscape. It is not observed and has views across to the South Downs. If suitable and the parish wish to consider it as a site for the Neighbourhood Plan it can make a small contribution to the needs of the parish and bring CIL money to the parish.

Are you aware that there is a well in the corner of the field? Beware of building on top of it.
Will the access through the site be maintained? This is a permitted right of way not a public right of way but the track is also used to access a S.E water pumping station.
As a member of the cricket club any residents would need to be aware that cricket balls sometimes find their way here and would need to be returned.

WHCS_10 Land adjacent to Langridge Farm

(Simon McMenemy, landowner)

The field is of 13 acres and was bought when the family moved into Langridge Farm. There had previously been planning permission for a riding establishment. There are currently no specific plans but the corner of this field below Workhouse Platt is shielded from view and may be appropriate for 1-3 single storey dwellings. The family are happy to consider the site being included at some time in the future, but as a District Councillor not whilst Mr McMenemy is still in office. It would have the same access as Workhouse Platt.

Why has this land and Workhouse Platt been identified separately but Webbs Mead and Bakers Platt have been combined? The landowners of Webbs Mead and Bakers Mead submitted the land together. The landowners of Workhouse Platt and this land submitted them separately.

WHCS_11 Land adjacent to 9 Bayhams Field

(Brad Downer, landowner)

There is an area of about ½ acre which is currently tired, old woodland which looks rather tatty and would be ideal to develop. It is at the top of the garden of 9 Bayhams Field.

The proposal would be for 6-8 * 2 bedroomed properties which would be small and therefore affordable. There would need to be parking on site and the proposal would be for off street parking and a row of garages.

There is a row of mature trees at the bottom of the site which would screen the other houses in Bayhams Field.

What about access to the site? This is critical, the owners of 6,7,and 8 Bayhams Field would be happy to consider the use of the top of their gardens as part of the development to allow an access

with better visibility off Top Road and to then run parallel to it. The development would give the opportunity to widen the pavement along here.

What consideration has there been of the bank which has slipped previously? If built properly the bank should not be an issue.

Isn't there a covenant to block any development here? It would need to be looked at to see if this is still in place and what it says.

General questions

What is the proposed number of houses for the parish? MSDC are not dictating a number but asking parishes to assess their individual requirements. However, with the current regional pressure on housing it would probably be very difficult to promote a Neighbourhood Plan that had no housing need identified. The task force have looked at the responses to the housing needs survey carried out in 2012 and the current Housing Register held by MSDC to come up with a figure of about 50-60 within the timeframe of the plan.

Highway access is of high anxiety for everyone. Can there be a condition of development that the traffic issues are "seen to" at the same time? In any planning application any developer would have to do a lot of work on site access. In addition there is what happens to the CIL money from new development.

Won't new housing put pressure on the local school? The local school has currently got healthy pupil numbers but this has only occurred recently since the school is taking pupils from East Grinstead and Crawley where schools are currently full. With capacity in both these areas being increased by building programmes this is unlikely to be a long term sustainable situation.

All sites are outside the village boundary and the whole parish is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Judgement will need to be made as to which have least impact on the AONB.

Is there potential for in-fill within the built up area boundary? With what is known to date this is probably limited.

What is the development at WHCS_06 Land adjacent to Cookhams? What has been provided is on display.

Why is there no development at Highbrook? No site at Highbrook has been put forward.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

Affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels; this can include shared ownership (part buy /part rent units) and shared equity.

An agreement has been reached with MSDC that for any affordable housing built as part of a Neighbourhood Plan allocation that after the first let when 100% should be offered to people with local connections, 50% will continue to be offered to people with local connections.