CROWBOROUGH
HOUSING AREA SD 10

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TRAFFIC CONSTRAINTS

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Housing Area SD10 – South East Crowborough

The proposed Core Strategy of the Wealden District Council Local Development Framework identities a Housing Area, SD10, as an urban extension to the south east of the town. The area SD10 is shown to cover both north west and south east of the railway line, in the vicinity of Western Road and Walshes Road.

Whilst the area SD10 is not closely defined on plan the significant traffic impact would be the same wherever the boundary of any development lay within that general area.

1.0 Traffic Generation onto the local highway network from Area SD10

Traffic generated in housing developments in the south east of Crowborough (such as SD10) generally has the following destinations as recognised by the facilities and employment centres identified in section 6.33 of the Wealden Local Development Framework (see page 46);

1.1 Local schools – Jarvis Brook, Whitehill, Herne Junior and Beacon Community College. Whilst all are within feasible walking distance any pupils driven to school would need to use Western Road, Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road or Walshes Road/Luxford Road (for Beacon), Walshes Road/Luxford Road, (for Whitehill), or Fermor Road/Whitehill Road (for Herne).

1.2 Railway Station – All vehicles with this destination are likely to use Western Road.

1.3 Crowborough Town Centre – Could be accessed via Crowborough Hill using Western Road, Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road or Walshes Road/Luxford Road. Alternatively a route could be taken using Walshes Road/Fermor RoadWhitehall Road /Croft Road.

1.4 Jarvis Brook and Millbrook Employment Areas – These areas are located close to the railway station and are likely to attract traffic from SD10 along Western Road.

1.5 Tunbridge Wells (and then possibly onward to A21 and M25) – Accessed by A26 north via Crowborough Hill or Whitehall Road/Croft Road. To reach Crowborough Hill vehicles from SD10 would need to use Western Road, Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road or Walshes Road/Luxford Road An alternative route to Tunbridge Wells being A264 via Western Road and then through Rotherfield.

1.6 Uckfield (and then possibly onward to the coast, Brighton/Eastbourne etc.) – Accessed by A26 south with vehicles likely to travel via Fermor Road/Hurtis Hill/Sheep Plain.

1.7 East Grinstead – Accessed by A26 (as for Uckfield) or through Crowborough Town Centre.

2.0 Road Network in Crowborough

The main route through and out of Crowborough is the A26 which runs to the north west of the town. To reach that route any traffic generated in area SD10 must cross the built up area of Crowborough. The most suitable routes for crossing the built up area are Crowborough Hill and Green Lane, although Green Lane only takes traffic toward and from the northerly direction.

From area SD10 traffic must use unsuitable restricted residential roads, as identified in sections 1.1 to 1.7 above, to reach local facilities, employment areas or other centres of population. In many locations along these routes the effective road width (either actual road width or remaining width when a vehicle is parked on street) is less than 5m, which means that two vehicles cannot pass each other without one pulling over.

The particular issues related to each route on the local highway network from area SD 10 are as follows;

2.1 Use of Western Road

This road has residential properties on both sides for most of its length. Many of the properties do not have off road parking facilities. Therefore extensive on street parking is present along the whole length of the road for most parts of the day. In some places the parking reducers the effective road width to less than 5m, so it is not possible for two vehicles to pass. Even in places where two cars can pass next to parked vehicles the width is insufficient for a car and a lorry or bus to pass. This lack of effective road width leads some vehicles to mount the footway to get past oncoming vehicles. Also, vehicles are seen parked along this road part on the footway which causes a hazard for pedestrians.

Any addition traffic along Western Road would only exacerbate a currently poor situation. To improve this situation it would be necessary to widen the road along most of its length or to provide a significant number of new off street parking spaces. Lack of land availability would preclude either of these solutions.

2.2 Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road

These residential roads are for the most part just wide enough, at around 5m, to allow two vehicles to pass but have no pedestrian footway. Approximately half way along Mount Pleasant there is a pinch point with a narrowing, to much less than 5m, and a bend in the road. At other specific points along its length the road is less than 5m. Tollwood Road meets Crowborough Hill immediately opposite Green Lane and on its approach to that junction the road rises steeply up to Crowborough Hill making it difficult for vehicles to pull away, out of Tollwood Road, across the junction. This problem is exacerbated by the poor sights lines to the right along Crowborough Hill.

We do not consider that these roads are suitable for carrying additional traffic due to the lack of footways, the pinch point on Mount Pleasant, other points where the width reduces below 5m and the poor junction with Crowborough Hill. We do not consider it feasible to deal with all these issues since they would require purchase of several parcels of land outside the current highway limits.

2.3 Walshes Road/Luxford Road

Walshes Road is relatively wide and unlikely to be a constraint on additional traffic movement. However, there are two constraints on Luxford Road. Firstly at its junction with Walshes Road the sight lines are very poor in both directions and the road slopes up to the junction making it difficult to exit quickly. Secondly Luxford Road narrows past its junction with Luxford Lane up to the junction with Blackness Road, in this section the road width reduces in parts to just 3m and is totally unsuitable for vehicles to pass in opposite directions. There are no footways along Luxford Road and the pedestrian flows are likely to be greatest where it narrows, since it is here that residential properties front the road and pedestrians would use Luxford Road to reach Luxford Drive.

For this route to be viable for carrying additional traffic it would be necessary to improve the sight lines when exiting from Luxford Road onto Walshes Road, widen Luxford Road toward the Blackness Road end, including the provision of a pedestrian footway. We do not consider that this work is feasible since none of it could be achieved within existing highway limits.

2.4 Fermor Road/Whitehill Road/Croft Road

Fermor Road is fronted by numerous residential properties which do not have off street parking. In those locations there is extensive on street parking and the road width is not always sufficient to allow two cars to pass a parked vehicle, and so traffic is disrupted. This is particularly the situation toward the roundabout with Whitehill Road/Alice Bright Lane/Hurtis Hill. More severe disruption occurs on the narrower Whitehall Road due to parked cars outside residential properties and shops reducing the effective width to below 5m for much of its length.

Some mitigation measures could be taken in Fermor Road by increasing road width and/or providing parking spaces by taking away grass verges (asumming that land was within highway limits). No such mitigation appears feasible in Whitehill Road.

2.5 Fermor Road/Hurtis Hill/Sheep Plain

On this route the main constraint is parking on Fermor Road which might be mitigated by road widening and/or provision of parking bays. However, this route takes vehicles out to the A26 on the south of the town and is very unlikely to be attractive as a route to Crowborough Town centre or north to Tunbridge Wells.

3.0 Effect of SD10 on road network in Crowborough

Additional vehicular traffic generated from housing area SD10 would, whichever route it takes, have to travel along unsuitable restricted residential roads in order to reach all likely destinations. The least bad option for vehicles is to use Fermor Road, Hurtis Hill and Sheep Plain but this route takes vehicles out to the A26 on the south of the town and is very unlikely to be attractive as a route to Crowborough Town centre or north to Tunbridge Wells.

3.1 Mitigation Measures

We have looked at mitigation measures on existing restricted routes and all improvements (with the exception perhaps of Fermor Road) require the use of land outside existing highway limits, the purchase of which cannot be guaranteed. Even if the land was to be available to purchase there must be severe doubts that the SD10 allocation of around 140 homes could fund the necessary improvements via developer contributions. Therefore we cannot see how any of these restricted routes can be brought up to a standard where two vehicles can comfortably pass at all points and that junctions are adequate in terms of approach gradient and sight lines.

3.2 Alternative Solutions

In order to access all main destinations any new traffic generated by proposed housing in Crowborough needs to travel along the A26 and Crowborough Hill. We therefore believe that, to avoid newly generated traffic using unsuitable restricted residential roads further consideration should be given to any land abutting those roads, such as the contingency urban extension north of the A26, being allocated for future housing development.

4.0 Plan showing traffic routes

See attached.

KEY

TRAFFIC ROUTES

DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC

POOR JUNCTIONS

NARROW ROAD WIDTH.

AREA SD 10