Supporting Statement by

Grant Leslie, Highways & Traffic Consultant for Public Examination

In respect of

Housing Area SD10 – South East Crowborough

As identified in the Draft Core Strategy of the

Wealden District Council Local Development Framework

Issue A – 15th December 2011

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Housing Area SD10 – South East Crowborough

1.00 Introduction

1.01 This report has been prepared to consider the traffic constraints that exist in delivering the potential residential development which lies to the south east of Crowborough, East Sussex and is identified in the draft Core Strategy as Housing Area SD10.

1.02 The report does not go into great detail regarding the levels of trip generation or distribution onto the network at this stage but simply considers those elements of the network such as road widths, junctions etc. that could be seen as constraining the proposed level of development and identifies ways in which these can be overcome.

1.03 The draft Core Strategy of the Wealden District Council Local Development Framework identities a housing demand of 300 units and identifies three area where these could be provided; SD8, SD9 and SD10. Housing Area SD10 lies to the south-east of the town centre and is a large area shown on the strategy plan as lying both north-west and south-east of the railway line around Western Road and Walshes Road.

Although the boundaries of SD10 are not clearly defined on plan it is identified as providing 160 housing units and the area shown would be more than capable of taking this number of units.

2.00 Trip Generation

2.01 The draft Core Strategy identifies a provision of 160 units in area SD10 however in the absence of any further guidance on the type or mix of units; any detailed assessment of trip generation is not possible at this stage. What can be done however is to make a rough assessment based on the assumption that the development will be a mixture of private and public units, mostly houses but with a small proportion of flats (less than 25%). By making these assumptions we can use the TRICS database to produce a rough estimate. These are shown in Appendix B.

2.02 As the development involves a mix of private and social housing we have used the following classifications:-

Land Use Class	-	03 – Residential
Category	-	M – Mixed Private/Non-Private
Regions	-	England excluding Greater London
Locations taken	-	Edge of Town, Suburban Area & Neighbourhood Centre
Survey days	-	Monday to Friday only, manual count only
Assessed on	-	Dwellings in range 0 – 300 units

2.03 The assessment gave an additional 648 trips per day with the following during the traditional peak hours:-

	AM		PM	
In	5.7%	(18.5)	16.7%	(54)
Out	14.0%	(45.5)	8.4%	(27)
Total		64 trips		81 trips

2.04 Whilst this represents a reasonably significant level of traffic, area SD10 does benefit from having several roads/routes by which it can be accessed which will mitigate the effect on any individual road/route. The development of this area would also offer the opportunity to address a number of constraints that exist on the existing network.

3.00 The Local Highway Network

3.01 There are principally two main traffic routes through Crowborough. The first is the A26 which is a district distributor running between Maidstone in the north to Newhaven in the south. Locally it runs from Crowborough north to Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and south to Uckfield.

The second is the B2100 Crowborough Hill which is a local distributor running from the town centre south east to the villages of Rotherfield, Mark Cross and Mayfield.

3.02 Area SD 10 is remote from both these arteries and it will therefore be necessary for traffic to use local/residential roads to reach these routes and the wider highway network. Fortunately there are several roads/routes that can be used.

Local Roads

3.03 Western Road is a predominantly residential road running east/west to the B2100 and also serves a number of small cul-de-sacs. Many of the properties fronting the road do not have off-road parking facilities and extensive on-street parking takes place along much of its length. Due to its width this does require a degree of give and take to take place as there is generally insufficient width to accommodate two cars passing. It is also noted that the lack of width results in significant parking on the footway making it difficult for pedestrians.

3.04 Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road runs north/south to the B2100 and flanks the eastern boundary of the SD10 land to the north of the railway. For much of its length it is a country lane with some residential development fronting it. Over most of its length it is wide enough for two cars to pass but it has no pedestrian footways and limited street lighting. Approximately half way along Mount Pleasant there is a pinch point with a narrowing and a bend in the road. Tollwood Road meets the B2100 immediately opposite the Green Lane junction.

3.05 Luxford Road also runs north/south to the B2100, via Montagris Way and flanks the western boundary of the SD10 land to the north of the railway. The southern half, like Mount Pleasant resembles a country lane again with some residential development fronting it. It is generally wide enough for two cars but is narrow in places the use of passing places. However half way along the southern half is Luxford Drive, a residential development of around 20 bungalows.

From its Blackness Road junction it is residential in nature and of good width being over 5.5m wide, with footways on both sides and street lighting. Most properties have off-street parking but some on-street parking does occur.

3.06 Walshes Road runs east/west along the southern boundary of the SD 10 land to the north of the railway. It is over 5.5m wide with a footway on one side and street lighting. It is largely rural but with a number of properties scattered along the frontage. It primarily links traffic from the rail bridge/Mount Pleasant to Luxford Road and via Fermor Road, to the A26 and town centre.

3.07 Fermor Road also runs east/west from Walshes Road to the Whitehill Road mini-roundabout junction. It is predominantly residential in nature with many properties fronting it as well as serving a number of side roads. It is over 5.5m wide with footways on one or both sides with street lighting and whilst many properties have off-street parking a number don't and there are areas where on-street parking occurs.

3.08 From the western end of Fermor Road, the A26 is reached by means of Hurtis Hill/Sheep Plain. Hurtis Hill is similar in nature to Fermor Road although no on-street parking was observed. Sheep Plain however is a typical country road being over 5.5m wide and bounded by on both sides by Crowborough Beacon Golf Course and has no footways or street lighting.

3.09 Whitehill Rd/Croft Road runs north/south from the Fermor Road junction to the town centre. It ranges from 5.0m to 6.0m in width and has one or two footway with street lighting. Predominantly residential, many properties do not have off-street parking and on-street parking is plentiful. It is however controlled by yellow lines and marked bays to assist traffic flow but some give and take is necessary.

4.00 Destinations/Attractors for Traffic Generated

4.01 The traffic generated in housing developments in Crowborough are likely to have similar destinations, some within Crowborough but some further afield as recognised by the facilities and employment centres identified in section 6.33 of the Wealden Local Development Framework (see page 46), with significant out commuting to employment centres of Tunbridge Wells, East Grinstead and Uckfield.

The following have been identified together with the typical traffic routing that would occur.

Local schools

4.02 Jarvis Brook Primary is adjacent to the area whilst Whitehill Infant and Herne Junior schools are less than a mile from the area. Beacon Community College is a large secondary school and is around a mile from the site. All are within reasonable walking distance however access by car would involve the use of 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). Jarvis Brook is so close to the area that it is likely only parents driving on to other destinations would use cars particularly as the school lacks on site parking and staff are required to park on-street on Hadlow Down Road.

Railway Station

4.03 The area is located very close to the site and it is unlikely that residents would choose to drive to the station to park. As part of any development the identification of pedestrian/cycle links would be investigated in particular, whether a link from Mount Pleasant to Farningham Road could be created.

Crowborough Town Centre

4.04 This lies around 1.5miles to the north of the area and provides a wide range of shops, services and leisure facilities which includes three supermarkets as well as District Council offices. The area is linked to the town centre by local buses and is can be reached on foot on public footways with street lighting. Vehicle access will be by one of three rotes: via Crowborough Hill using Western Road, Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road; via Crowborough Hill using Walshes Road/Luxford Road; or Walshes Road/Fermor Road Whitehall Road /Croft Road. Sports facilities are located in the north of the town.

Jarvis Brook and Millbrook Employment Areas

4.05 These are key employment locations for the town and both are located close both to the area and the railway station. As for the station above its location offers excellent scope for residents to use no-car forms of travel to access them and as part of any development the identification of pedestrian/cycle links would be investigated in particular, whether a link from Mount Pleasant to Farningham Road could be created.

District destinations

4.06 Tunbridge Wells and beyond to the A21 and M25 can be reached by A26 running north from Crowborough. This can be accessed from the area by a number of means in particular via the B2100 Crowborough Hill or Whitehall Road/Croft Road which can be reached using Western Road, Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road or Walshes Road/Luxford Road. Tunbridge Wells can also be accessed using the B2100 east through Rotherfield to the A264.

4.07 Uckfield and beyond to the coast, Brighton/Eastbourne etc can again be reached by the A26 running south from Crowborough. This can be accessed from the area by Walshes Road/Fermor Road/Hurtis Hill/Sheep Plain

The same applies to East Grinstead although there is the possibility of using London Road to the north of the town centre.

5.00 Constraints of the Local Network and Possible Mitigation Measures

5.01 It is acknowledged in the "Supporting Statement by East Sussex County Council for Public Examination", para 3.5.2, that further work is required to determine the deliverability and consequent mitigation measures of any final proposed development. Without details of the exact nature and location of the development of SD10, it is obviously not possible to address all the issue that may arise however I have looked into the main constraints of the local network and considered mitigation measures that could be considered as part of the development.

Links

5.02 Western Road has significant levels of on-street parking which reduces the traffic flow to a give and take flow in many places particularly the western half. The lack of width also means that much of this parking is partly on the footways which causes inconvenience to pedestrians and can act as deterrent to walking as a mode of transport particularly for parents with pushchairs/toddlers. This parking is due to the fact that most properties fronting Western Road do not have off- street parking and level difference do not allow it to be provided at the front of properties.

Development of the land to the rear of the properties on the south of Western Road would offer an opportunity to overcome much of this problem by building into the development rear access parking for these houses thus taking much of the parking off the road. Together with parking restrictions on Western Road itself, this could have a positive affect on the ability of the road to operate two way flows. It would also remove the footway parking creating a more desirable option for pedestrians.

5.03 Access to the land to the south of Western Road could be by means of an access directly onto Hadlow Down Road close to the school. An access road could also be formed by joining the network at or close to the Western Road/Hadlow Down Road junction possibly by the creation of a new mini-roundabout. One further option identified is to link the site to Western Road by means of a current industrial property which could create a new junction about half way along Western Road. This later possibility would have the benefit of joining Western Road where it becomes wider and where the restriction of traffic flows is less of a problem. It would also mean a fairly short trip before joining the B2100 and the wider network.

5.04 Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road resembles a typical country lane being narrow with pinch points. It also has a difficult junction with the B2100 due to the approach gradient.

5.05 Luxford Road is similar in nature to Mount Pleasant/Tollwood Road over its southern half as far as Blackness Road. The lack of width and lack of footways can be overcome for some of the road in the design of the development. At its junction with Walshes Road the visibility splays are substandard and whilst the splay to the left can be improved, the right would require third party land for improvement. However, depending on the location of the accesses to this land there could be little or no need for new traffic to be emerging from Luxford Lane onto Walshes Road.

The development of the land bounded by Mount Pleasant and Luxor Road would offer some opportunity to improve the road widths and provide some pedestrian facilities however this would only be on the southern parts of each road. Together with Walshes Road they offer the possibility of several points of access to the area.

5.06 Fermor Road and Hurtis Hill are generally of a good width and although some on street parking exists it is not to the same level as Western Road nor does any footway parking occur. Whilst there may be some need for give and take, particularly at busy times, it is not envisaged that the use of either presents a significant constraint to the operation of the network. If necessary however, the construction of dedicated parking bays on existing grass verge could be considered to improve flows.

5.07 Whitehill Road/Croft Road have a mixture of on-street parking and parking restrictions aimed at achieving adequate traffic flow levels given the needs of residents for parking. Like Western Road, a degree of give and take will be necessary although there is no footway parking to restrict pedestrians.

5.08 Walshes Road and Sheep Plain are not seen to present any constraint to the networks operation.

Junctions

5.09 The key junctions on the local network are the Western Road junction with the B2100 Crowborough Hill and the Sheep Plain junction with the A26. Both are substantial junctions with excellent visibility in each direction. The A26 junction also has a right turn lane capable of taking several cars. I am not aware of any capacity issues with either at this stage but there are broad verges around the junctions which would allow for some redesign if, as a result of a modelling exercise, it was deemed necessary to increase their capacity.

5.10 A number of other junctions are considered to have degrees of constraint such as Tollwood Road/B2100 and Luxford Road/Walshes Road with third party land ownership being a key issue. As mentioned earlier, it is considered that with the various routes available, that any increase in traffic levels on one particular route will be insignificant and unlikely to affect their operation. That said each will be considered more closely when the exact nature of the development is known.

6.00 Summary Comments

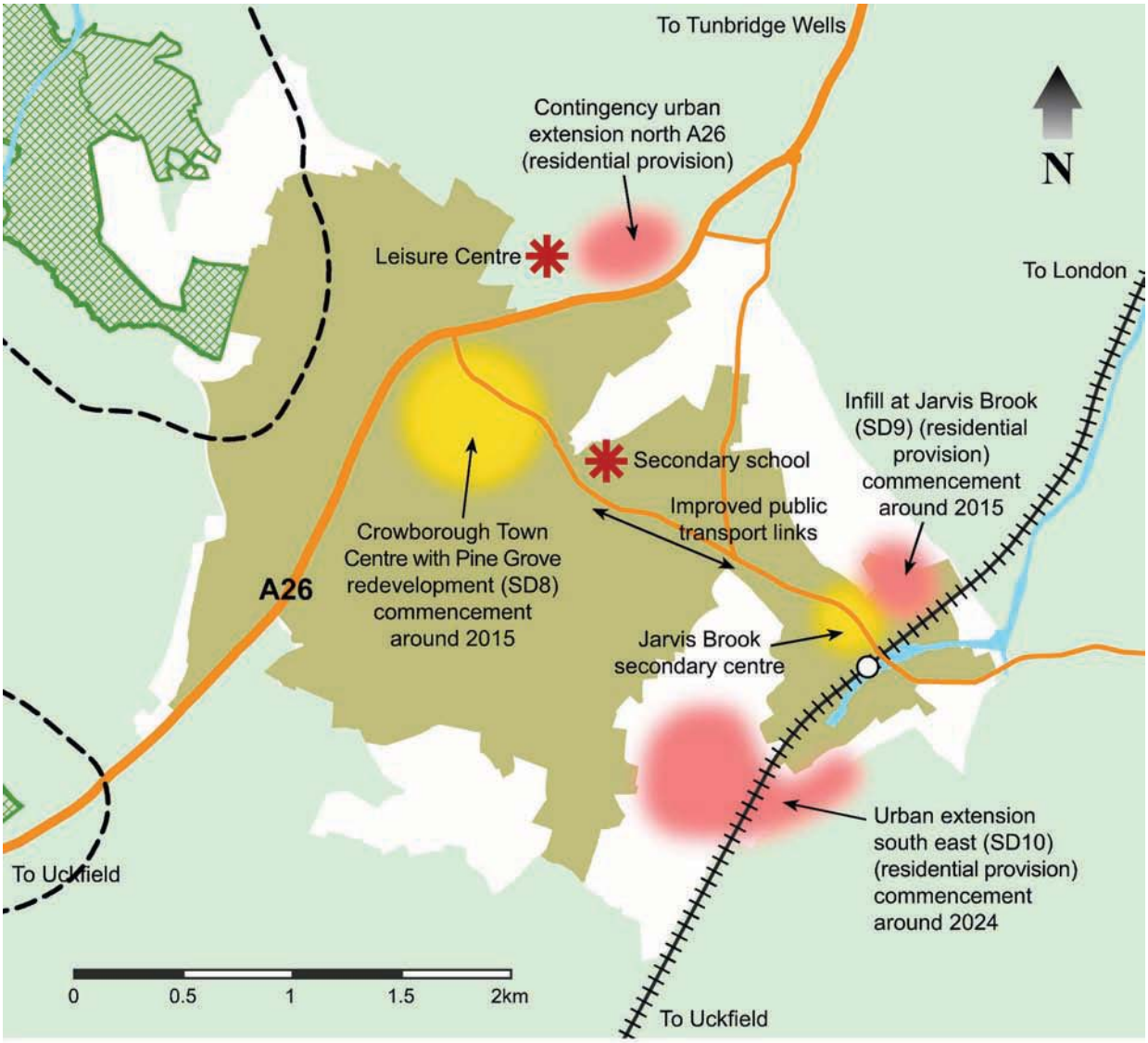
6.01 The traffic generated by this scale of development would normally be considered to present challenges to the local highway network and this has obviously been recognized in the Supporting Statement by ESCC. Although the exact location of the is not clearly defined in the draft strategy the area identified, although isolated from the main network, does benefit from having several possible routes onto which the trips generated could be distributed. This will have the effect of reducing any impact on the operation any particular route ideally to a level where mitigation measures are either not required or are deliverable within the scope of the development land or public highway.

6.02 The area SD10 is well located to make use of none car trips for access to schools, the station and the employment areas to the south of Crowborough, one of which also houses a supermarket. Walshes Road and Western Road are also on a bus route with several local services providing access to the town centre and beyond.

6.03 In particular, the land to the south of Western Road could provide an opportunity to significantly improve the traffic/parking situation in the vicinity by firstly removing the need for much of the on-street parking on Western Road itself which currently restricts two way flows over most of its length and by providing some off-street parking for the Jarvis Brook school on land opposite the school.

Appendix A – Location Plan

Figure 9 Crowborough Area Strategy



Heathfield area strategy

6.39 Heathfield is located on a series of ridges in a prominent position and is surrounded by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is a small town and acts as a

Appendix B – Trip Generation Assessment

Proposed Use: - 160 Mixed housing units = 160 Units

Trip number information from TRICS database 2011(b) taking the following parameters:-

Type	-	Housing Development
Land Use Class	-	02 – Residential
Category	-	M – Mixed Private/Non-Private
Regions	-	England excluding Greater London
Locations taken	-	Edge of Town, Suburban Area & Neighbourhood Centre
Survey days	-	Monday to Friday only, manual count only
Assessed on	-	Dwellings in range 0 – 300 units

This gives the following two way trip generation:-

4.050 trips/day/unit	x	160 units =	648 trips per day

From the TRICS output we can assess the peak hour movements as follows:-

	AM		PM	
In	5.7%	(18.5)	16.7%	(54)
Out	14.0%	(45.5)	8.4%	(27)
Total		64 trips		81 trips