

Hailsham

(Inset Map No. 22 - Mapsheet)

Introduction

14.1 Hailsham is the largest settlement in the southern half of the District, with a population of 19,100. It is located about six miles north of Eastbourne, between the middle reaches of the Cuckmere River to the west and the Pevensey Levels to the east, with the extensive Wilmington Wood reaching to the town's edge in the south.

14.2 Hailsham has been an established market town since 1252 and still retains its historic core around the market square and St Mary's Church. The town has experienced considerable growth during this century, with significant residential estate development occurring in the post-War years. More recently, housebuilding has taken place on the western and southern edges of the town, contributing towards a population increase of 3,000 people during the past decade.

14.3 Today Hailsham serves as a local employment centre, providing a range of jobs in manufacturing and services, and also as a shopping centre for the residents of both Hailsham itself and the surrounding rural area. Developments at The Quintins and St Mary's Walk have strengthened the retailing role of the town centre and the opening of the Lagoon Leisure Centre has increased recreational opportunities in this part of the District.

STRATEGY

14.4 In view of the rapid development that has taken place in recent years and the need for the town to assimilate, both physically and socially, this past development and the significant housing commitment still remaining, the Council believes that Hailsham would benefit from a period of consolidation up to 2004. In the context of County Structure Plan housing requirements there is no need to release further sites for residential development, and it is considered that existing industrial and business commitments in and around the town are sufficient to meet the likely employment needs of existing and future residents.

14.5 There are also major landscape and environmental constraints affecting further outward expansion of Hailsham. Development to the north or south would intrude into open countryside and conflict with the strategic policy of maintaining the existing countryside gaps between the town and Hellingly and Polegate, whilst the proximity of the Pevensey Levels SSSI constrains further expansion on the eastern side of the

town. Development on the western side of Hailsham, beyond existing commitments and allocations, would be likely to result in the loss of attractive areas of open countryside which are important to the rural setting of both the town itself and Lower Horsebridge.

14.6 For the above reasons, further outward expansion of Hailsham to permit major new growth is not favoured. The Plan carries forward sites allocated for housing and employment purposes in the earlier South Wealden Local Plan but makes no additional allocations for such uses beyond the existing built-up area. The aim is to allow for limited growth, with the rate of housing development linked to the availability of local services for existing and future residents.

14.7 Broadly, therefore, the Council's strategy for the town involves striking a balance between the demands for new housing, the need to improve local employment opportunities, and the protection of the environment. Its objectives are as follows:-

- (1) to conserve and enhance the landscape setting of the town;*
- (2) to maintain and enhance the function of the town as a local employment, shopping and service centre;*
- (3) to maintain and improve the range and choice of local employment opportunities;*
- (4) to maintain and further promote the economic viability and vitality of the town centre;*
- (5) to create a safe and attractive environment in the town centre for shoppers and pedestrians, whilst reducing traffic congestion and improving accessibility;*
- (6) to maintain and widen the range of community facilities and amenities.*

14.8 This strategy is consistent with the County Structure Plan, which states that the role of Hailsham as a housing, local employment, shopping and services centre will be maintained and developed.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

14.9 The population of Hailsham is estimated to be 19,100 persons. This figure is expected to rise to around 19,900 by the year 2004. Population and housing statistics for Hailsham are contained in Appendix 1.

Housing Policy

14.10 The amount of land in Hailsham committed for development through planning permission or allocated for housing, together with unidentified sites which may come forward for development through infilling, redevelopment and conversions within the built-up area, could result in the construction of around 350 new dwellings during the Plan period. Commitments are illustrated in Figure 9. The future incidence of unidentified sites within the development boundary will depend on the extent to which proposals satisfy normal planning criteria and conform with the policies in the Plan.

14.11 This overall level of housing provision represents a marked reduction in the previously high rate of development that has taken place over the past decade or so in line with planning policy. However, in view of the environmental constraints to outward expansion and the fact that there is no numerical requirement for additional housing development, the release of further land for housing is considered to be inappropriate and unnecessary.

HA1 Within the Hailsham development boundary, as defined on the Proposals Map, new housing development will be permitted on allocated land at Marshfoot Lane and Grovelands Road, on undeveloped land, by infilling, by redevelopment and by the conversion of a building to residential use, provided that the proposals conform with all other relevant policies in the Plan.

Land off Marshfoot Lane

14.12 Marshfoot Lane at its western end is narrow, winding and lacks a footpath. In order to achieve its improvement, 1.25 hectares of land north of Marshfoot Lane are allocated for housing purposes. Any scheme must meet the requirements of other policies in the Plan, in particular EN27 and its emphasis on respecting the character of the locality. Proposals will be subject to the requirement that Marshfoot Lane is re-aligned and improved to the satisfaction of the District Council. This will be achieved through a planning obligation.

14.13 It will be important to minimise the visual impact of the development as viewed from the countryside to the north. A substantial landscaped screen will therefore be required along the northern boundary of the site. A mix of dwelling types and sizes would be appropriate in any development, although building heights should not exceed two storeys. The existing public footpath crossing the western corner of the site should be retained.

HA2 Land off Marshfoot Lane, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for housing purposes. Proposals for new housing development will be permitted where the following criteria are met:-

- (1) vehicular access shall be taken from Marshfoot Lane which shall be re-aligned and improved to the satisfaction of the District Council;**
- (2) a landscaped screen shall be provided on the northern boundary of the site;**
- (3) the public footpath which crosses the site shall be retained;**
- (4) the scheme meets the requirements of all other relevant policies in the Plan.**

Grovelands School Area

14.14 In 1996 the County Council constructed a new primary school on land at the western end of Grovelands Road to replace a former school on land to the south of Grovelands Road. The latter site has been allocated for housing purposes and development has now commenced.

14.15 The new school, together with a family centre, was built on a former playing field site, some of which remains. The District Council wishes to see part of this land remain as a public playing pitch and for public open space. There should also be scope for additional housing together with an appropriate proportion of affordable housing.

HA3 Land off Grovelands Road, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for housing purposes.

Housing Commitments in Hailsham (April 1997)



KEY

-  Sites with planning permission
-  Allocated sites
-  Other available sites
- ② Ref. No. (see Appendix 1)

This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.



Figure 9

0 200 400 metres

Not to scale

EMPLOYMENT

14.16 The majority of Hailsham's business activity is contained on the two main business areas : Diplocks Way Business Area, which extends to 24 hectares and is one of the largest industrial estates in the District, and Station Road Business Area, some 7 hectares in extent. Other business areas in the town are much smaller and include a complex of light industrial units at Old Swan Lane and eleven starter units at Leap Cross Business Centre on London Road. Policies for uses appropriate within business areas are contained in Chapter 7.

Business Land

14.17 There is considerable potential for additional jobs in Hailsham through the development of allocated sites and land with planning permission. In 1997 some 6 hectares of land remain undeveloped at Diplocks Way Business Area, although this will be reduced if a planning permission for a non-food retail warehouse is implemented, and 0.6 hectares are available for development at Station Road Business Area. A further 2 hectares of land are allocated for business purposes at Old Swan Lane, as described below, together with 3.3 hectares at the Hackhurst Lane Business Area in Lower Dicker. This is considered a sufficient supply to meet the needs of workforce growth, reduced out-commuting, and business requirements over the Plan period. Further allocations for business uses are therefore not considered to be necessary or appropriate.

Land off Diplocks Way

14.18 A site of 1 hectare within the Diplocks Way Business Area does not yet have planning consent for development and is therefore allocated for business purposes. The proximity of existing housing areas makes this site suitable for Class B1 of the Use Classes Order 1987 only. Any proposals for development will be expected to have due regard for the amenities of nearby residential properties. In particular, the retention of the existing tree screen along the north-eastern boundary of the site will be required, together with additional planting where appropriate. A public footpath which runs across the site will also need to be retained and adequately defined within the development.

HA4 Land to the north of Diplocks Way, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for business purposes within Class B1 of the Use Classes Order 1987. Proposals for development will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

(1) existing trees along the north-eastern boundary of the site are retained and

additional planting carried out where appropriate;

(2) the public footpath which runs across the site is retained and enhanced.

Land off Station Road/Old Swan Lane

14.19 Two hectares of land off Station Road/Old Swan Lane are allocated for business purposes following the relocation of the former sewage works. The requirement for the provision of a substantial landscaped buffer/screen along the northern, eastern and western boundaries will, however, reduce the net business area to about 1.5 hectares.

14.20 The site lies outside the main built-up confines of the town and is bounded by open land on three sides. There may, therefore, be the opportunity to locate those types of industry which elsewhere could cause amenity problems to neighbouring occupiers through noise, smoke, fumes or vibration, although careful consideration will need to be given to traffic generation. These will include those industries falling within Classes B2-B7 of the Use Classes Order 1987, as well as some 'sui generis' uses (see Appendix 7).

14.21 Any further extension of this business allocation is not considered appropriate in view of the traffic implications on Station Road and the potential effect on the residential amenities of properties off Swan Lane and Howard Close.

HA5 Land off Station Road, Hailsham, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for business purposes. This will incorporate a substantial buffer/screening area with an average width of 12 metres within its western, northern and eastern boundaries, details of which shall be prepared and implemented prior to any development. Subject to individual assessment, proposals for uses falling within Classes B2-B7 of the Use Classes Order 1987 may be considered appropriate.

Retail Warehouse Development

14.22 As discussed in Chapter 8, the Council considers it appropriate to allow an element of non-food retail warehousing in the main towns. Within Hailsham, the preferred location is on the Diplocks Way Business Area, where there is currently extant planning permission for some 6,500 square metres of retail floorspace on land at the western end. If this planning permission is implemented, the allocation will be taken up and any other planning applications for non-food retail warehousing will be considered against Policy SH9 in Chapter 8.

DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY

14.23 The development boundary for Hailsham seeks to conserve the rural setting of the town and protect open countryside from intrusive development. The development boundary includes existing housing and industrial commitments and allocated sites, but excludes some peripheral areas in order to protect their low density, more rural character and prevent any extension of ribbon development along the approaches to the town.

14.24 Along the northern edge of the town, the development boundary follows Upper Horsebridge Road and the built-up area north of Hawkswood Road in order to prevent any encroachment of development into the open countryside gap between Hailsham and Hellingly. The development boundary excludes the scattered development which extends eastwards from Battle Road along the A271 in order to prevent any intensification of development in this sensitive fringe location.

14.25 On the eastern side of Hailsham, it is considered important to continue the longstanding policy of preventing new development in order to protect the character of the Pevensey Levels and the sensitive landscape setting of the town. The development boundary generally follows the clear physical boundary provided by Battle Road and residential development on the Town Farm Estate in order to prevent any encroachment of development towards the open marshlands of the Levels. It excludes scattered properties along the eastern side of Battle Road where any consolidation of development would be intrusive in views across the Pevensey Levels and detract from the setting of the town.

14.26 On the north side of Marshfoot Lane, the development boundary incorporates land allocated for housing adjacent to the town centre, and the well-consolidated ribbon of houses which extends beyond.

14.27 Along the southern fringe of the town, the development boundary incorporates the housing and business commitments, as described earlier in this chapter, but elsewhere closely follows the existing built-up area in order to preserve the rural character of the surrounding landscape and prevent any further encroachment of development into the open countryside gap between Hailsham and Polegate. The wooded ghyll which runs to the south of Ingrams Way and Southbanks Close is a particularly significant landscape feature which screens the south-western edge of the town and provides a clear physical boundary between the built-up area and the open countryside beyond.

14.28 The development boundary excludes peripheral, scattered development along the B2104 Hailsham Road, Coldthorn Lane, South Road and Arlington Road East, where any intensification of development would be detrimental to the semi-rural character of these areas and the setting of the town. Land south of Arlington Road East, between South Road and the A22, is also excluded in order to maintain its more open, rural character.

14.29 Along the western edge of Hailsham, the development boundary generally follows the extent of the existing built-up area, and current commitments. The area of open countryside north of Hempstead Lane is excluded since it is considered that development here would be intrusive in the landscape and detrimental to the rural setting of both Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge, particularly on the north-western approaches to the town.

TOWN CENTRE

14.30 The town centre is the commercial core of Hailsham, with a variety of shops, offices and other businesses uses providing shopping facilities and employment opportunities for the town and its surrounding area. It is also a focus for civic and community uses, as represented by the District and Town Council offices, the Lagoon Leisure Centre and Hailsham Health Centre.

14.31 The commercial centre has developed north and east from the Market Place, along the High Street and George Street. The Quintins development, located beside the longer-established Vicarage Field precinct, has created a more central focus for shopping in Hailsham, while the units at St Mary's Walk have made a significant contribution to the quality of retail facilities in the town.

14.32 It should be recognised, however, that competition from the much larger shopping developments at Eastbourne means that Hailsham will remain a shopping centre concentrating more on convenience goods and local services rather than on durable or comparison goods, such as clothes and furniture.

14.33 The Council is committed to working with Hailsham and District Chamber of Commerce, the Town Council and other bodies in seeking ways to improve the overall attractiveness of the town centre, both to create a more pleasant environment for shoppers and to increase the likelihood of investment in new retail facilities. It will promote traffic calming measures and other environmental improvements in the High Street and Market Square, as proposed later in this Chapter.

Main Shopping Area

14.34 In accordance with the aims of the Plan, it is intended that the role of Hailsham as a shopping centre will be maintained by the improvement of existing facilities and making provision for additional developments. A main shopping area has been defined within which new and improved facilities will be encouraged in order to provide an identifiable focus for retail activity in the town.

14.35 This area incorporates the principal shopping frontages along the High Street, the pedestrian precincts of Vicarage Field, The Quintins and St Mary's Walk but excludes the more peripheral commercial areas where intensification is not favoured. It also includes the area west of North Street which is identified for longer term retail development as discussed below. Policies for the main shopping area are contained in Chapter 8.

New Shopping Development

14.36 In 1996 a new supermarket opened in Vicarage Field, replacing a much smaller foodstore on the same site. It is envisaged that this new store, together with the supermarket in The Quintins, will help to retain a proportion of the convenience trade previously being lost from the town to competing stores elsewhere, principally in Eastbourne. The situation will be carefully monitored in accordance with Government advice in PPG6. Future proposals for this type of retail development in the town centre will be considered against Policy SH9 in Chapter 8.

14.37 It is also considered important to look ahead and highlight areas that would be suitable for retail redevelopment in the town centre in the longer term. The area between North Street and the former railway line, some 2.5 hectares, is large enough to accommodate a comprehensive redevelopment for retail and office purposes with associated car parking.

14.38 It is recognised that the site contains a number of existing uses, including small shop and office premises, flats, the White House Primary School and a public house. Redevelopment would involve considerable disruption and the relocation of these uses to appropriate sites and buildings. A successful scheme would require an alternative site and buildings to the satisfaction of White House Primary School and the Education Authority. However, it is believed the area represents the most appropriate location for longer term redevelopment, well located to the main shopping area and with good road access. This area is therefore included within the main shopping area.

14.39 Elsewhere within the main shopping area, the Council aims to improve the quality of shopping facilities by encouraging small-scale redevelopments and the refurbishment of existing premises.

Other Commercial Areas

14.40 The areas to the north and south of the main shopping area contain a mixture of both specialist and general shops, together with a range of local services, small office uses and dwellings. It is considered that any significant intensification of shopping uses in these areas should be resisted in view of the lack of off-street car parking and the policy to concentrate new shopping floorspace into the main shopping area. In these areas, on the edge of the main shopping area, new retail proposals will also be considered under Policy SH9. Other town centre uses such as offices, restaurants, etc, may be acceptable subject to access, parking and amenity considerations. Housing proposals elsewhere in the town centre, outside the main shopping area, will be considered in the context of the policies in Chapter 6.

HA6 Outside the main shopping area, but within the town centre area, as defined on the Proposals Map, new shopping facilities within Use Class A1 (Shops) of the Use Classes Order 1987 will not be permitted, although small-scale extensions to existing premises may be acceptable.

HA7 Outside the main shopping area, but within the town centre area, as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for new development within Use Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Food and Drink) and B1 (Business) of the Use Classes Order 1987 will be permitted.

Traffic Management

14.41 The Council is committed to traffic calming and pedestrian priority in the town centre in order to enhance its shopping environment, both in terms of pedestrian safety and amenity. The nature of these proposals will be carefully considered in consultation with the Town Council, Hailsham Chamber of Commerce and the Hailsham Revitalisation Partnership.

HA8 The Council will promote traffic calming and pedestrian priority measures, together with associated environmental improvements, in the High Street and Market Square, Hailsham.

14.42 The County Council proposes to improve access to the town centre by the demolition of the South Road railway bridge and the construction of an improved junction controlled by traffic signals. This will reduce the danger and congestion at this difficult junction and, in particular, provide safer crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The County Council also

wishes to preserve the long-term option of constructing a new road on the line of the Cuckoo Trail between London Road and South Road. The Council would wish to ensure the continuation of the Cuckoo Trail in any new such proposals.

HA9 It is proposed to demolish the South Road bridge and provide an improved junction connecting South Road, Station Road, George Street and Western Road and a small improvement at the Station Road/Bellbanks Road junction. In addition, revised access arrangements to Garfield Road and to Deer Paddock Road and the northern part of Station Road are proposed. The phasing and timing of this proposal will be subject to timing of other highways proposals and the availability of resources.

HA10 The route of the former railway between London Road and South Road will be protected from development in order to preserve the option of constructing a single carriageway road to relieve traffic pressure in the town centre. The Council will seek to ensure the maintenance of the Cuckoo Trail within any future highway proposal.

Car Parking

14.43 Better car parking is important in terms of improving the attraction of the town centre for shopping and business. In the period to 2004 further parking is likely to be required in order to meet the additional demand arising from the projected increase in Hailsham's population and rising car ownership levels. The following options will be considered to increase car parking provision:-

- (1) An existing car park could be decked, although this option would need very careful consideration in view of the potential impact on the architectural character and environmental quality of the town centre, some of which is designated as a Conservation Area.
- (2) If the land on the west side of North Street is brought forward for retail use, it could incorporate an increased number of public parking spaces, possibly through decking.
- (3) If Hailsham Cattle Market moves elsewhere, the site could be acquired and developed for long-stay parking, thereby releasing short-stay spaces nearer to the town centre.

Conservation

14.44 The historic centre of the town contains a significant number of buildings listed as being of architectural or historic interest, either for their individual merit or in recognition of their contribution to the quality of the street scene. These listed buildings are also included within Hailsham Conservation Area, the extent of which is shown on the Hailsham Inset Maps. The Council attaches particular importance to the control of development in Conservation Areas and development affecting listed buildings, and District-wide policies are put forward in Chapter 4.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Education

14.45 There are five primary schools serving the Hailsham area. Growth in the number of children will require more spaces in the medium term and the options would be to extend the White House Primary School or build a new school at Ingrams Farm. In the longer term a new school will be needed in addition to extensions at the White House School.

HA11 Land at Ingrams Farm, Hailsham, as defined on the Proposals Map, is reserved for a new primary school.

Recreation and Leisure

14.46 The Lagoon Leisure Centre offers a range of indoor recreational facilities. Outdoor playing space in the town is currently below the minimum standard recommended by the National Playing Fields Association, as discussed in Chapter 11. Furthermore, the vast majority of existing provision is in the form of playing pitches for youth and adult use. The level of provision of children's play space is well below the recommended level.

14.47 A belt of informal public open space forming a buffer/screen area is proposed along the western edge of Hailsham, between the proposed housing and business areas and the A22. This open space will be linked by landscaped footpaths and allow opportunities for both active and passive recreation. Its provision will be achieved in stages through appropriate Planning Agreements between the Council and developers of the adjoining sites.

HA12 Land adjacent to the A22 Hailsham Bypass, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for a landscaped buffer area.

14.48 A further area of public open space is proposed to serve the Housing Association development at Station Road. In view of the loss of the existing allotment site as a result of this housing development,

and the lack of allotment provision elsewhere on this side of the town, alternative provision for allotment use within the public open space allocation may be appropriate.

HA13 Land adjacent to Station Road, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for public open space and allotment purposes.

Implementation

14.49 The implementation of Policies HA1 to HA7, HA10, HA12 and HA13 will be the responsibility of the Council primarily through its development control policies.

14.50 Policy HA8 will be the responsibility of the Council in association with the County Council and other agencies.

14.51 Policies HA9 and HA11 will be the responsibility of the County Council.