

HELLINGLY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TOPIC PAPER NO. 4

INFRASTRUCTURE

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Infrastructure

Introduction

1. Hellingly Parish covers an essentially rural area immediately to the North of the urban town of Hailsham. It abuts the equally rural parishes of Arlington and Chiddingly to the West, Horam to the North and Herstmonceux to the East.

Roads

2. The Parish is crossed by three A class roads
 - a) the A22, (Uckfield to Eastbourne)
 - b) the A267 (Hailsham to Tunbridge Wells) and
 - c) the A271 (Hellingly to Bexhill)

And several minor roads and lanes.

3. Significant new housing developments at Roebuck Park and in Park Road has resulted in the creation of new access roads and alterations to the existing road network often it seems with little thought to the effects upon the wider road network. There is an increasing volume of traffic seeking to avoid the traffic congestion on the A class roads (A271) and instead using Station Road and Church Road and passing through the historic centre of the Village where the road is narrow and there are no footways on either side. Further developments accessed from Park Road and New Road should ensure that there is no greater traffic using Station Road and Church Road.

Recommendation 1

East Sussex Highways should be asked to provide a comprehensive road design for the area west of the Cuckoo Trail and North of the A271 to provide suitable access to and egress from the present and proposed developments utilizing Park Road and the A271, discouraging excessive use of Station Road and improving traffic calming through Hellingly Village.

4. Traffic speed and road safety are concerns for parishioners. The three A class roads are all subject to speed restrictions in part;
 - a) the A22 is restricted to 50mph from Golden Cross to Hackhurst Lane where it reduces to 40 mph until it reaches the Boship roundabout;
 - b) the A271 is in part restricted to 40mph reducing to 30 mph through Lower and Upper Horsebridge; and
 - c) the A267 is subject to the national restriction of 60mph going north but reduces to 40 mph just before Wellshurst golf club.

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Away from the A class roads speed restrictions apply

- d) along Church Road (40 mph) and Station Road (30mph) with a 20mph restriction through the Village,
- e) Along North Street (40mph) between the junction with the A271 and the junction with the A267
- f) Along Park Road (40mph) from Union Corner as far as Mill Lane.
- g) Along New Road (40mph) from the junction with Park Road to just past the built up area.
- h) Speed restrictions (30mph) have been incorporated in new estate roads that have been constructed as part of the new developments such as at Roebuck Park and Burfield Grange.

However that section of the A267 from the Boship roundabout to Wellshurst golf course and significant parts of the more rural lanes are subject only to the national limit of 60 mph. In particular Grove Hill from Mill Lane to North Corner is subject only to the national limits despite an increasing volume of traffic resulting from present and proposed developments. It seems illogical that Class A should be subject to speed restrictions when local minor roads are not.

Recommendation 2

Extend speed restrictions (40mph) along the entire length of the A267 from the Boship roundabout to Wellshurst Golf Club and on the entire, presently unrestricted length of the C207 (Grove Hill – North Corner – Horebeech Lane from Mill Lane to Horam (50mph).

- 5. Within the Parish there is a dedicated recreational thoroughfare, the Cuckoo Trail. The former railway line linking Tunbridge Wells to Eastbourne was decommissioned in the 1960's as part of the Beeching cuts. Subsequently the track bed has been resurfaced and opened up for use by walkers, riders and cyclists but not motorized bikes or vehicles. The trail runs north to south and links to Horam and beyond going north and Hailsham and Polegate going south.
- 6. With a view to encouraging healthy life styles many of the new developments in the District now include cycle ways and Roebuck Park is an example of this with a shared cycle and footway along Park Road linking the estate to the A271 and through the use of other roads and lanes to the Cuckoo trail.

Transport

- 7. There is no rail connection in either Hellingly or Hailsham. The nearest railway station is at Polegate but residents frequently choose to travel to Berwick or Etchingham to catch a train.

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8. In addition to school bus services there are 4 regular bus services linking Hellingly to Eastbourne through Hailsham, through Uckfield and Heathfield to Tunbridge Wells and through Herstmonceux to Hastings as set out below:
 - a) Stagecoach 51 – Eastbourne – Polegate – Hailsham – Hellingly (North Street) – Heathfield and 51X – Eastbourne – Hailsham – Heathfield
 - b) Stagecoach 1X Roebuck Park – Hellingly – Hailsham – Langney – Eastbourne
 - c) Stagecoach 54 Eastbourne – Hailsham – Lower Horsebridge – Golden Cross – Uckfield
 - d) Stagecoach 98 Eastbourne – Hailsham – Upper Horsebridge – Herstmonceux – Bexhill – Hastings

The frequency of the service, and start and stop times vary (normally one an hour) with the exception of the 51 and the service from Roebuck Park which run half hourly throughout the week day from early morning to late evening.

Settlement Pattern and Design

9. The Parish has no single centre but is rather a series of dispersed settlements and hamlets. The principal settlements being
 - a) The Village,
 - b) Lower Horsebridge,
 - c) Lower Dicker, and
 - d) Roebuck Park.
10. Hailsham has been identified as an area for future growth in successive Wealden Local Plans that have placed reliance upon urban expansions as a means of delivering the required new housing. The physical constraints around Hailsham has meant that hitherto, and probably for the foreseeable future, that part of the Parish that immediately abuts the northern edge of Hailsham will be required to take additional housing with the major concentration being on both sides of Park Road between the A271 and Roebuck Park. Beyond this there is the possibility of small scale development in the larger settlements with development boundaries, and through the use of permitted development rights, rural conversions, and exceptions policies, in the rural parts of the Parish where restrictive countryside policies apply.
11. The policy of reliance upon major urban expansions to deliver the required growth in the District although facilitating the delivery of services to the resultant properties inevitably places strain upon the retention of the character of a rural Parish such as Hellingly with the resultant blurring of the distinction between town and country and the propensity to create urban sprawl if not carefully designed. Hedgerows are replaced with walls and fences, open spaces become divided into small gardens with hard landscaped features – the patios, conservatories, garages, carports, hard

standings, greenhouses and garden sheds. Quiet lanes become main, built up, thoroughfares with new housing abutting directly onto the pavements.

12. If the distinctive rural character of the Parish is to be safeguarded careful consideration will be required as to the design and materials used in any developments, the density and layout of the developments and the retention of green space and soft landscaping with restrictions applied to permitted development rights involving hard standing and impermeable surfaces.
13. In the more rural parts of the Parish good design and the use of locally distinctive materials would help to ensure the integration of the new with the existing.

Services

14. The whole of the Parish is connected to mains water and electricity but only those parts of the Parish on the periphery of Hailsham or on a newly built estates benefit from mains gas.

Recommendation 3

Require WDC Planning to insist that all new developments in the Parish capable of being joined to mains drains are connected to the main sewers.

15. The majority of the Parish is capable of being connected to mains drainage with only the more remote rural parts of the parish reliant upon septic tanks or cesspools.
16. Although parts of the Parish receive mobile telephone coverage the cover is patchy and the reception intermittent. In addition with the existence of several providers the quality of the connection varies from one to another. There remain significant “notspots” within the more rural parts of the Parish meaning that a landline telephone connection remains the only reliable option and that the availability of such technology as smart meters and the ability to control equipment within the home from a remote mobile is still something not available to them.
17. Equally fast fibre optic connection is not widely available throughout the Parish. Although the government and BT boast of the service being available to 95% of the population the experience in Hellingly is somewhat different. With the significant investment provided by East Sussex County Council and the government BT is installing fibre optic cabling along the main roads but the speed of download remains dependent upon the last section of the wire connection which remains copper cabling and the distance from any fibre enabled cabinets will determine the download speed. The promised minimum speed of 10 mgs for everyone is certainly not being achieved in the Parish for all but the newest of the developments with download speeds of less than 2 mgs and often under 1 mgs being fairly common. Again given the drive by government for all communications to be on line this is not acceptable in the present day and is a positive disadvantage to businesses wishing to establish themselves other than in the centre of a town

Recommendation 4

Require BT to provide the government recommended minimum download speed of not less than 10 mgs to all properties within the Parish and to improve the mobile coverage so as to eliminate all “not spots” within the Parish.

Retail and Employment

18. The nearest Regional and sub regional shopping and employment centres are in Brighton, Tunbridge Wells, Eastbourne and Hastings. The nearest local service centre for shopping, education, health, and personal and professional services is Hailsham.
19. Given the proximity of Hailsham and the services available in the town there is little retail offer in the Parish which only supports one petrol station (with a small convenience offer), one garden centre, two public houses, a sub post office (under threat of closure), one hotel, one motel, a specialist bathroom shop, a pet food store, a conservatory showroom, and a domestic appliance repair shop. However the range and quality of the retail offer in Hailsham for other than convenience shopping is limited and residents shopping for clothing and a wider range of comparative goods tend to travel to one of the subregional centres. There are no professional offices and no healthcare (doctors or dentists) facilities although there is a veterinary practice in Lower Horsebridge.
20. The probability is that no major retail space in Hellingly would prove uneconomic. However the availability of local convenience shops near to substantial new housing development is something that may need to be addressed in any new developments.
21. Equally although it is unlikely that professional firms would consider it viable to establish offices in the Parish it may be prudent to consider provision for convenient healthcare facilities and personal services such as hairdressers to meet the needs of the growing population.

Recommendation 5

Require the Eastbourne Hailsham and Seaford CCG to provide a surgery or healthcare facility as part of the new housing being developed off Park Road.

22. There are several employment/business sites including a large industrial estate at Swallow Park/Hackhurst Lane and a small business complex at Broad Farm housing a variety of individual and specialist trades and occupations as well as a series of individual businesses located mainly along the A22. In addition the emerging new Wealden Local Plan proposes a new employment development area of 38,600 sq m on the north side of the A22 between the Boship roundabout and Hackhurst Lane.
23. The majority of businesses in Wealden are small enterprises employing fewer than five employees. Hellingly Parish is no different and with the advent of modern technology a significant number of new businesses start at home or in small units. It is important for the prosperity of the area that there should continue to be a sufficient supply of small business units well connected to the internet and mobile telephony and with good access and public transport.

Education

24. The Parish has a single form entry primary school, rated good to outstanding in the latest Ofsted inspection, catering for 240 children between the ages of rising 4 to 11 and two play groups, both privately owned, catering for children of a similar age. Older children however travel to secondary schools in Hailsham, Ringmer, Heathfield and Willingdon.

Recommendation 6

Require ESCC Education authority to relocate the existing primary school to the proposed new primary school site on land off Park Road and build this as a 3 form entry school with early years facilities.

25. The resultant growth in population arising out of the new developments both present and proposed means that the present one form entry primary school is now over subscribed. A new two-form entry primary school is proposed and a site in Park Road has been identified for this. The age of the buildings and portacabins in which the existing Hellingly Primary School is housed, the lack of adequate footways leading to the school and its location on the outskirts of the Village close to the fast flowing traffic on the A267 would all suggest that the logical solution to the under provision of primary school places in the Parish would be to relocate the existing school to the new site and to develop this as a three form entry school utilising the existing staff and nucleus of pupils to provide a fully operational school capable of admitting children of all ages from reception to year 6 from day one and avoiding the possibility of a new facility competing with the existing school thereby affecting the viability of both.
26. Although there is a shortage of secondary places in the Hailsham area it is inevitable that secondary provision should be concentrated on existing facilities in the larger nearby towns.

Religion

27. The religious needs of the Parish are met by the Church of England Church of St Peter and St Paul located in the centre of the Village and the non conformist Ebenezer Chapel on the A22 at Lower Dicker.
28. A further Church of England Church together with Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches and further non-conformists chapels are located in Hailsham.

Burial and Interment

29. The Churchyards associated with the Church and the chapel are both now closed facilities. However unlike most other small Parishes Hellingly is unusual in having a substantial cemetery that accepts new burials and interments. The nearest crematoria are at present in Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells although that is shortly to change with the building of a new crematorium at Horam.

Sport

30. There is a recreation ground at Lower Horsebridge, a cricket pitch at Roebuck Park, a golf course off the A267, and a specialist cycle track at Lower Dicker. There are also several open spaces with public access, including a significant area of ancient woodland at Park Wood to which members of the public have access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Hellingly Country Park at Roebuck Park and various smaller children's play spaces.

Recommendation 7

Encourage Wealden District Council to use developer contributions collected from developments taking place in Hellingly and North Hailsham to provide a multi use sports facility on land within the Parish of Hellingly.

31. The lower Horsebridge Recreation ground is home to a lively sports club that provides activities for rugby and cricket fielding several teams of all ages and abilities as well as facilities for other team sports. The facilities are well used by sports people from the wider Hellingly area and further grounds and improved facilities are now needed to meet the growing demand.
32. In addition the Lower Horsebridge Recreation Ground is also home to the Hellingly Bowls Club who have their bowling green on part of the ground.
33. The development at Roebuck Park has resulted in the provision of a new purpose built cricket pitch and pavilion with the ability for the grounds to be used for other sporting activities.
34. In due course the new community building at Roebuck Park will enable the Parish to provide for a range of other indoor sports and recreational activities.
35. As well as the organized team sports Hellingly is home to a number of runners and athletes and the Hellingly 10 km road race is now an annual event based upon the grounds of the former Hellingly Hospital and the surrounding lanes
36. In addition to the publicly owned recreational space there is a full sized golf course within the Parish available to members and non members at Wellshurst along the A267.
37. Along the Dicker is located the cycle speedway track. The Hellingly Lions Club is unique being the oldest cycle speedway club in the World. The facility, which is not replicated anywhere else in the vicinity, provides a new experience for riders of all ages.
38. For those interested in green sport within the Parish there is at present one allotment garden and a second garden is being provided as part of the development at Roebuck Park.
39. The nearest Leisure Centre providing a swimming pool and gymnasium is in Hailsham

Social Clubs and Activities

40. There is a village hall and a further more substantial community building is being provided at Roebuck Park.
41. In addition there is a dedicated scout hut that is home to several packs/troupes catering for children of all ages and both sexes.
42. Within the Parish there are many active clubs and associations offering a full range of activities and interests.
43. More could possibly be done to cater for the older and less able-bodied members of the Parish as the nearest Age Concern, and Senior Citizens facilities are located in Hailsham as is the nearest Citizens Advice Bureau