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16 Hamstreet

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Date: 26/03/2008

No. of Attendees: 19

No. of Breakout Groups: 2

General Themes Identified:

16.1 The village of Hamstreet can be identified as a settlement with good transport links and a number of village shops and services. The settlement has a mixed community, with many young families and good community spirit. Although, the village is not adverse to new appropriately scaled development, it was identified at the workshop that the village has seen a large amount of development in recent years. There is a concern that the village could continue to increase in size and, if that were to happen, this would also result in concerns about the capacity of existing infrastructure to cope with the increased number of people.

16.2 The village school is an important community hub for the villagers and particular problems were identified regarding the situation of the school in the village. The school is currently under supplied with playing fields, but over subscribed with children. A concern was raised regarding additional development in the village as this could potentially increase the number of children at the school.

Opportunities for Growth:

16.3 All new development should be located as close to the village centre as possible, with people having the ability to walk to the village facilities being preferred. It was felt that there are appropriate existing sites that could accommodate this limited growth near to the centre of the village, particularly the extension to Lancaster Close.

16.4 Growth on the periphery of the settlement is not wanted or needed in this development plan period. However, two small possible commercial plots were identified on the southern approach to the village (see HAM08 and HAM09)

16.5 A concern was raised regarding the number of large executive style homes that have been built, as smaller homes would be preferable. Many people felt that larger homes were not needed by many families and were financially out of reach for most residents, a larger number of smaller homes could be located on a site.

Views on Character:

16.6 Lancaster Close was seen as one of the better designed developments in Hamstreet in recent years. There was ample parking within the development and the houses were well designed and attractive. It was also felt that the development was well screened and fitted well into the existing village.

16.7 Orlestone View was seen as a poor development in the village, as the housing density was too great. There were too many large houses on a very small site. The parking on the site has not been well designed, as there are too few spaces for the type of dwellings. Parking is seen as a real contentious problem, and it was even cited that the Fire Service has difficulty getting around the development. There is also no green space in the development.

Types of Development:

16.8 Future developments should contain a mixture of dwelling sizes with smaller dwellings being the preference. Bungalows for the elderly were cited as a need in the village, as well as Local Needs housing.

16.9 A pavement from the main part of the village towards the garden centre to the south would be welcomed by the villagers. The grass verge was identified as being wide enough to accommodate this need.

16.10 A small number of workshop and office units would be welcomed in the village, although these should be located in the outskirts of the settlement, so as to not increase the traffic through the settlement.

16.11 There should be adequate parking in any development (minimum of 2 spaces in rural area) and green spaces. Detached garages should be large enough to fit a car in!

Other Issues/Concerns Raised at the Workshop:

16.12 Parking is also a problem outside of the school at peak times, along Warehorne Road, and close to Parker Farm. Parking for the school was identified as a specific need.

16.13 Traffic is a particular problem outside of the school and along Bourne Lane. Lorries using the village to get to Tenterden also accentuate the problem. Slip roads off of the by-pass onto the Warehorne Road were seen as a way of removing traffic from this part of the village. Traffic calming measures would be welcomed to the south of the village and outside of the school.

16.14 An additional concern was raised at the workshop regarding the sewerage works and pumping station. These facilities were believed to be working at capacity, and a concern was raised regarding additional development in the village and how this would exacerbate the problem.

16.15 Extension to the cemetery at the Parish Church in Orlestone was required, with new access and additional car parking.

General Views on Submitted Sites:

HAM01:

16.16 Potential conflicting ideas were aired regarding this site, although both groups agreed that the wooded area towards the north of the site should definitely not be developed as it would damage the entrance way into the village, and therefore both of the group discussions centred exclusively round the southern portion of the site.

16.17 One group cited the possibility of relocating the school to this site, so that the school had additional parking and the potential to increase its capacity in the future. However, in the end, a majority favoured providing the means for the school's expansion next to its current site on the western side of the Ashford Road if possible. This group was strongly opposed to any form of housing development on this site.

16.18 Conversely, the other group felt that the southwest corner of the site could be used to supply the school with a new playing field and parking. This could be done either directly or by relocating the road eastwards and inserting a roundabout, so that the school could grow on their own side of the road. The idea of building some housing in this area was also cited as a possibility (most thought only Local needs housing was acceptable), so as developer contributions could pay for the new school facilities and/or road improvements.

HAM02/03:

16.19 Differing views were expressed regarding the potential development of this site. Although both groups identified that this area was at considerable flood risk and the views across the Romney Marsh would need to be taken into consideration. One group felt that due to this increased risk, the site would be unsuitable for any housing development, but could potentially be utilised for a commercial uses if the demand was sufficient. Conversely, the other group identified this site for housing development, suggesting that the site would be an extension of Orlestone View. It was felt that developing here could actually improve the view for the current Orlestone View residents, as the vacant farm buildings currently on the site are particularly unattractive. However, it was identified that the access to the site should not be through Orlestone View, as this was already too narrow with considerable parking problems. An alternative access would be needed, potentially utilising the existing private road.

HAM05:

16.20 Both groups identified that this site did have some limited housing development potential, but the access difficulties of the site would need to be overcome to allow the site to come forward. Currently, the only two access points to the site were particularly

narrow and constrained and could therefore be detrimental for any potential development. However, the site itself was seen as a fairly good location, as the new housing would be well screened and the site is located near to the village centre. It was suggested that perhaps around 50% of the site should be the maximum released in any event and that this should not be seen as a signal for future land releases down towards the A2070.

HAM07:

16.21 This site was identified as having particularly poor access, but had been the location of a previous dwelling. However, instead of looking at this site as a single plot, both groups at the workshop felt that this site should be considered alongside the adjoining site HAM10 (the Lancaster Close extension) and therefore did have some development potential (see Additional sites identified at workshop).

Additional Sites Identified at Workshop:

(please note these sites were not discussed by the whole workshop, but were identified by individual breakout groups)

HAM08 and HAM09 (Identified by Group 2):

16.22 Two sites were identified to the south of the village which could potentially be used for commercial development (housing development was definitely not wanted in this location). The site adjoining the garden centre (HAM09) was particularly favoured for small workshop/office units as the site is currently brownfield, containing a number of derelict greenhouses.

HAM10 (Identified by Groups 1 and 2):

16.23 The land at the northern end of Lancaster Close, contained within the previous Local Plan allocation, was perceived by many of the workshop attendees as a site that would definitely come forward for housing development at some point in the future and was regarded by many as a natural extension to the new housing at Lancaster Close. It was felt to be relatively self-contained, screened and adequately accessed and was the preferred location for future growth by the majority of people attending the workshop. However, it was identified that any new development here would need to be in keeping with the adjacent Lancaster Close and the dwellings should have space between them (low density) and the site should contain green areas.

HAM11 (Identified by Group 2):

16.24 This site was initially put forward by the group for a small number of houses. However, after a lengthy discussion it was decided that this site should not be promoted for development, due to the previous planning application refusals, which centred round 'highways issues'.

HAM12 (Identified by Group 1):

16.25 This area was seen as a potential extension to the HAM10 site above as it was close to the railway line and station and therefore relatively self-contained. Doubts were expressed about its availability for development but if it were available, then it was a favoured location.

Favoured Development Sites Identified at Workshop:

(please note these sites are in no specific order)

Group 1:

HAM10

HAM12

HAM05 (part)

Group 2:

HAM10

HAM09 for commercial only

Conclusions:

16.26 The favoured site for any future development in the village of Hamstreet is HAM10, the Lancaster Close extension. This site received a significant majority of the votes at the workshop and was already perceived by many people as an area for future development.

16.27 If any new development is to take place, the potential increase of students to the village school and the increased number of cars would need to be taken into careful consideration.

16.28 The good design of any new development is paramount, especially the car parking facilities and green spaces. The Village Design Statement should be taken into account in all future developments.

16.29 The size of dwellings required also needs investigating further, as it was felt by many people that the village was becoming rather 'top-heavy' with executive dwellings.

16.30 A need for affordable Local Needs housing in Hamstreet was identified at the workshop.

Hamstreet Questions

Question 39

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Do you agree with the workshop that an extension to Lancaster Close is the best location for new residential development?

Question 40

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Should any land be released for new housing on the western side of the village, e.g behind the school, or, to the south, as an extension to the Orlestone View development?

Question 41

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Do you have any further comments to make on any of the outcomes of the Hamstreet workshop?