



Chevening Parish Council

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council
held on
SATURDAY 30TH DECEMBER 2023 at 11 a.m.
at the PARISH HALL HOMEDEAN ROAD CHIPSTEAD.**

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| Present: | Mr N Williams | Chairman |
| | Mr J Firmager | Vice Chairman |
| | Mr A de Turberville | Councillor |
| | Mr J Eastwood | Councillor |
| | Mr J London | Councillor |
| | Ms J Nielsen | Councillor |
| | Mrs L Weavers | Councillor |
| | Mrs V Woodruff | Councillor |
| | Mrs J Hayton | Clerk |
| | Members of the Public | 60 |

Apologies Mr J Jarrett Councillor

167 Apologies and Absences

Apologies were received from Cllr Jarrett and duly accepted by the Chairman

168 Declarations of interest or lobbying

The Council had all been lobbied by concerned Parishioners concerning item 171

169 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 6th November 2023 previously agreed by email were duly signed by the Chairman as a true record

170 Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public in attendance pertaining to anything other than the Local Plan

171 Local Plan To resolve the Council's response to the Local Plan

The Chairman began by introducing the background to the local plan (Appendix 1)

He then read the first draft of the Parish Council's response to SDC (Appendix 2) and invited questions/comments from Parishioners on the content

The following items for inclusion/issues were raised:-

Air Quality

Bessels Green has historically had poor air quality. This should potentially be included for both sites as the increased traffic will do nothing to help the situation

Noise Pollution

Both sites border major arterial roads H028 has the A21 on it's boundary and MX13 has the M25 and the sliproad to A25. The existing Parishioners suffer noise pollution from those roads and any new developments closer to the roads will suffer even more

Parking

A parishioner asked if parking was a planning concern. The Chairman confirmed it was.

The following comments were made about parking

With the inclusion of the car park at Morewood Close in the baseline sites the issues experienced with commuter parking up Worships Hill, Witches Lane, Larkfield Road, Bessels Way and Bessels

Green Road will only get worse, even before the generation of the proposed additional traffic from the option 1 sites.

The issue of parking around Riverhead Infants and Amherst at school times was also raised as this is a huge issue now and will only get worse with an increased number of houses

Wildlife

Residents have confirmed sightings (& have photographic evidence) of buzzards, kestrels and bats on the Back Lane site. There is also a pond (& stream) on the site which contains newts.

Lack of public transport.

The lack of any workable public transport outside of commuter time (4 buses a day) will mean that any residents of the new developments will be forced into their cars as there is no workable public transport and the roads are unsuitable for walking or cycling

The following comments/concerns were raised about the Plan (not for inclusion in PC Comments)

A question was raised concerning the 2023 NPPF and Mr Gove's comment that the Government were making it almost impossible to build on Green belt. How does the Local Plan 2040 fit with that? The Chairman confirmed the SDC Officers have advised that nothing has changed with regard to the rules governing the NPPF and Green Belt. The Chairman has a copy of the update which he will post on the PC Website

A Parishioner stated that the Council are not granting permission for the right type of dwellings.

56% of the population of Sevenoaks will be over 65 in a few years. The homes being built should allow those people to downsize but to stay local

The Chairman confirmed the plan took this into account and also had provision for social housing which is critical in ensuring young people from the area are able to live and work locally

A parishioner raised the issue the promises developers make are not met. He cited the example of Dunton Green where developers had promised a medical centre and nothing was forthcoming.

The Chairman confirmed that in that case he knew the developers had offered and built a medical facility but the NHS turned it down.

A parishioner raised the timings of the consultation meetings. Specifically the next one in Sevenoaks which is 2 days before the consultation closes, it gives very little time for people to consider their response. Another parishioner confirmed you can save your comments and therefore you can complete much of the input and finish off after you have asked questions of the Officers at the Consultation meeting.

The Chairman encouraged everyone to complete the Consultation, giving meaningful comment (not simply cutting and pasting from another submission, and to include reasons for Pedham Place as well as reasons not to go for the sites in Sevenoaks

He explained the timetable for the Plan – Section 19 (the draft final plan) will go to DCAC (Development & Conservation Advisory Committee) – which he chairs, then then to Cabinet and then to Full Council. He confirmed all meetings are open to the public and encouraged Parishioners to attend and to ensure they hold Councillors to account for the decisions made. He will post details of the meetings where the Local Plan is on the agenda on the PC website

The meeting closed at 11.50

Notes for CPC meeting 11:00 Saturday 30th of December 2023

Intro.

The housing needs requirements, in Sevenoaks's case 712 houses per year are calculated by the ONS (Office of National statistics) it is a baseline housing growth prediction which, after an adjustment for affordability arrives at the minimum units expected to be planned for.

A major piece of evidence supporting the Local Plan 2040 is the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Assessment (SHELAA). The assessment need is set out in the NPPG (National Planning Practice Guidance). The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) enshrines this.
(there are an awful lot of Acronyms in planning)!

It is a technical assessment which considers the availability, suitability and achievability, in the district ,for possible development.

It is important to note that the assessment does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development, but is a high-level assessment used as a starting point to decide whether a site could be developed for housing, development, or other uses in Plan 2040.

As our MP Laura Trott, noted in a reply to correspondence from an interested Party that sites within the plan **are not proposed by Sevenoaks District Council**, but by local landowners. The council is duty bound to look at and where appropriate consult upon these proposals by local landowners. Not doing so could lead to the local plan being challenged by developers when it is finally presented...and should it be rejected it could make speculative applications on any free piece of land harder to stop. Often what the developer **wants**, is **not** what our community needs. An upside to a local plan **that is acceptable to us** is that it gives us protection from this speculative type of development for 15 years.

The options (see document Page?)

Engagement.

Everybody in this room has, **hopefully**, engaged in the consultation process, it is **vital** that we collectively encourage those who have **not**, to get involved, there is no age limit to this. However, we must note that, and the Council emphasise, that this is **not** just a numbers game. Well thought out comments in the consultation process are hugely important. I met with the Head of Planning and Deputy Chief Executive of the SDC on Wednesday and he stressed that five individuals thoughtfully put comments carry far more weight in the assessment than ten identical cut and paste comments.

Conclusion.

My spirits are raised and I am so delighted that so many parishioners have turned up to this meeting. The Parish is the grass roots of democracy and we must engage in it as much as we can.

Appendix 2

Chevening Parish Council strongly endorses Option 2

The Pedham Place development will bring a prestigious arena to the District which will benefit many groups especially the disabled who don't have a sports venue for activities such as powerchair football and wheelchair rugby.

It will bring only positive benefits to the District and is situated on a key transport link (close to the M25 with no restrictions of historic single passing roads).

The area was previously a golf course and therefore no vital agricultural land will be lost to housing. The development will have all the supporting infrastructure in terms of roads, schools and other transport, rather than smaller developments which will put the existing local infrastructure under incredible strain especially in addition to the baseline position which is already proposed

Option One sites

Of the three sites identified in Sevenoaks 2 sit within Chevening parish. The whole purpose of the historic establishment of the green belt was to prevent more and more urban sprawl. These sites have been chosen specifically because they would extend the urban sprawl as they are on the edge of urban settlements and therefore completely fly in the face of the purpose of green belt designation

The third one (HO29 Brittain's Lane) although not in the parish itself will equally have a detrimental effect on parishioners as was recently seen when Brittain's Lane was closed and therefore all traffic accessing south Sevenoaks to and from the West came up Cold Arbor or Bessels Green Rd and turned onto Dibden Lane. Access to the A25 from Cold Arbor creates huge congestion at the best of times. This additional traffic meant queues to get to the A25 were back to Bessels Green Road. Bessels Green Road itself is essentially single file for much of its length (as is Park Place) adding an additional 330 houses there for minimum 660 cars to that scenario is ridiculous. Equally Brittain's Lane, as we will cover with the sites in Chevening shortly, is also currently used to grow crops and therefore has benefit to the community and country of that production of foodstuffs. It seems highly short sighted to remove good quality agricultural land which is also AONB and Greenbelt in order to fulfil a housing need which could be better met elsewhere.

The Parish Council is aware of crops having been grown on this land for at least 40 years and as recently as 2023

H028 Land between Back Lane and the A21 Bessels Green

Traffic

The proposal is to have both new access as well as a secondary access for emergency use (SHELAA). There is no sensible access into the site. Access via Back Lane is a single track road onto a blind bend of the already busy and hazardous Cold Arbor Road (B2042). The majority of the occupants of these proposed houses will travel into or towards Sevenoaks for Schools and to use the station or access public transport. They will travel down Cold Arbor Rd (B2042) which is a single carriageway road with no pavement on either side. The alternative is Bessels Green Rd which is a single lane road for much of its length, again with no pavement and therefore safe passage for pedestrians

Agricultural Land

The SHELAA states the land is "No existing use". This is untrue. The land concerned has been used for crops for at least 40 years. It is regularly sown with Oil Seed Rape and has been for 4 decades (as our Clerk lived there 40 years ago along with other residents can testify). It is green belt and AONB

Signed as a true record

8th January 2024

and the importance of both food production and the long term employment of those who work in agriculture will be lost

Schools

The primary schools in Sevenoaks are already oversubscribed, as are the available secondary schools. The School bus services for secondary schools run from A25, but as already stated there is no safe route from the site to the A25 to access any public transport

MX13 Land at Moat Farm off Homedean Road Chipstead.

Traffic

The proposed development sits on the incredibly dangerous A21/A25/Westerham Road junction and will add significantly to traffic using that junction. The alternative access to Sevenoaks for schools shops and station and to Riverhead or Dunton Green is through the Hig Street and Chipstead Lane which is single lane along much of it's length and is part of a restricted width zone. The roads in this area are not suitable for this considerable volume of traffic

Agricultural Land

The land is currently used for grazing (specifically rare breed sheep. Under the SHELAA it is stated that the use of the land will be reprovided. The Parish Council cannot see how agricultural grazing land can suddenly be made available if has not been used in the past. Surely that is a travesty of land use if anyone suggests there is valuable grazing land not being used.

Schools

The primary schools in Sevenoaks are already oversubscribed, as are the available secondary schools.

Flooding

We draw your attention to December 2013-January 2014 where the water run off from the fields caused the sewage tank in Moat Close to overflow. Turning porous fields in to tarmac street and buildings will increase that flooding potential and the risk also to those houses as they will also be below the level of the main sewer and therefore require a pump for their sewage

In conclusion

Chevening Parish Council strongly supports Option 2. It gives the opportunity of building homes and facilities in an area which has the major arterial route, but does not have single lane or single carriageway roads already congested by existing housing and traffic. The roads can be constructed with proper pavements to any transport links. There is no loss of valuable farm land. The houses can be properly provisioned with schools local to where the children are living, and a fantastic sports facility of which the whole District can be proud.