

COMMUNITY NEEDS

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COMMUNITY NEEDS

Access for All

- 7.60 People with disabilities account for 10% of the UK population. The incidence of disability increases in persons aged 60 and over, to 70% of persons within this age group. Because Hastings has a higher than average proportion of elderly people in its population, the incidence of disability within Hastings is substantially higher than the national average.
- 7.61 A disability can be permanent such as those with mobility difficulties, sensory impairments, or people with heart conditions, whilst temporary disabilities include those with broken limbs and parents with prams and pushchairs.
- 7.62 Buildings which are poorly designed or badly located can present difficulties for people with disabilities. Some provisions relating to the design of buildings to which the general public require access are included in the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act, which can require the removal or modification of physical features. Further specific requirements are set out in Part M of the Building Regulations, which applies to all new developments, including extensions to existing buildings. The regulations set out detailed requirements for access and facilities to standards which ensure that disabled people are able to visit and use all non-residential buildings including public buildings, shops and workplaces. Since 1998, the regulations have also been extended to residential development, requiring that all new dwellings are designed to allow disabled people to access and use the principal storey.
- 7.63 In addition to the requirements of the legislation and Building Regulations, Government advice set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 'General Policies and Principles' (February 1997) states that local authorities should take into account access issues

both in development plans and in determining planning applications. The PPG also states that developers and the local authority should consider the needs of people with disabilities at an early stage in the design process. More detailed advice is given in the good practice guide 'Planning and Access for Disabled People' (March 2003).

- 7.64 Following this advice, the Borough Council considers it important that access for disabled people is addressed as an aspect of development design, rather than relying solely on building regulations to achieve acceptable standards. This approach should apply to all buildings to which the public have access including shops, restaurants, community buildings, health and leisure facilities, and the communal areas of residential development such as flats. Failure to make acceptable provision for disabled access may justify refusal of planning permission or may result in the imposition of planning conditions.

7.65 The Borough Council, together with the other district councils in East Sussex, has produced a set of detailed design notes titled 'Access for All : Design Notes'. These notes complement planning guidance and building regulations and are intended for use by developers.

POLICY CN1

Access for People with Disabilities

Proposals for development, including changes of use and alterations to buildings, to which the public have access must include adequate facilities and suitable access for people with restricted mobility and/or other disabilities.

7.66 In addition to the design of buildings, the Council will seek to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are accommodated in the design of public spaces and in alterations or improvements to public areas including the town centre, district centres and local shopping centres. This will include provision of parking for disabled badge holders, the layout and construction of pedestrian areas, and the choice and position of street furniture, lighting and signing. In addition, the Council will ensure that all new and existing off-street and rural footpaths and amenities are accessible to people with disabilities.

7.67 The Council will work with transport operators to facilitate independent and easy access for the disabled to public transport vehicles wherever possible.

Parking Standards for People with Disabilities

7.68 Parking provision standards for disabled motorists applying to different categories of development are set out in the County Highway Authority publication 'Parking Standards at Development' (February 2002). These standards, which are based on the DETR/ODPM Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/95, 'Parking for Disabled People', have been adopted as policy by the Borough Council.

POLICY CN2

Parking for People with Disabilities

Proposals for new development will be required to provide adequate parking for people with disabilities and be in accordance with the Council's adopted parking standards.

Housing for Persons with Restricted Mobility

7.69 Following the introduction of Part M of the Building Regulations, all new housing is required to be built to a minimum mobility standard, which enables persons with restricted mobility to visit and use the principal storey. However, it does not necessarily facilitate housing that is fully adapted for occupation by all persons with restricted mobility.

7.70 Information from the Housing Needs Survey and the Housing Waiting List indicates that there is continuing demand for housing for wheelchair users. The Council therefore considers it appropriate to require larger residential schemes in suitable locations to make provision for an element of housing or other accommodation to meet such needs. The physical characteristics of the site and the nature and economic viability of development will be taken into account in implementing this requirement. The adapted housing will generally form an element of the affordable housing to be provided on the site (see Policy H6).

POLICY CN3

Housing for Persons with Restricted Mobility

In suitable and accessible locations, residential schemes of 50 or more dwellings must include at least 2% of them to be designed for use by persons with restricted mobility, including wheelchair users.

Education Facilities

7.71 The Borough currently has five secondary schools, eighteen primary schools and three special schools providing places for approximately 13,020 pupils. The Hastings College of Arts and Technology accommodates approximately 1,500 students.

7.72 At present there is no identified requirement for the development of additional schools in the Borough, although there is likely to be a continuing need to expand existing schools and improve facilities. East Sussex County Council as Education Authority will continue to keep these requirements under review during the Plan period. Where a specific need is identified for new or enhanced education facilities, appropriate financial contributions may be sought from new development (see also Policy DG25).

Hastings College of Arts and Technology

7.73 The existing College of Arts and Technology is located on a confined site in a Conservation Area. The Borough Council considers that in order to protect the character of the Conservation Area, further expansion of the College will not normally be allowed within the existing site or in the area surrounding the present College buildings.

POLICY CN4

Hastings College

Further development associated with the Hastings College of Arts and Technology within the existing site or surrounding area as shown on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.

7.74 The Borough Council is aware of the difficulties being experienced by the college in operating from the present constricted site and would support the principle of relocation to a larger campus which could allow scope for expansion.

POLICY CN5

Hastings College – Relocation

Planning permission will be granted for a relocated Hastings College provided that the development would be:-

- (a) Well located in terms of serving the local community;**
- (b) Well related to the public transport network and would be readily accessible by walking and cycling; and**
- (c) Of a design, scale and appearance that would not cause harm to the surroundings.**

The University Centre

7.75 The Hastings and Bexhill Task Force is promoting a University Centre in Hastings town centre to provide higher and further educational facilities. The Centre will be one of the first projects in the Task Force's Five Point Plan to be developed and its first phase opened in September 2003. The Centre is based on the concept of providing a new higher education establishment in the heart of Hastings. By refurbishing/redeveloping town centre sites and buildings, it will act as a means of kick starting a programme of urban renewal in the town. Three sites have initially been identified for the Centre :-

- (i) Hastings Station Yard (see Policy TC1).**

- (ii) The Observer Building, Cambridge Road (see Policy TC5).
- (iii) The BT Building, Havelock Road (see P(a 'Hastings Town Centre olicy TC6).

7.76 The Borough Council supports the setting up of the University Centre and considers it to be an important step in the regeneration of Hastings. Policies are included in Chapter 11a 'Hastings Town Centre' to facilitate the use of the three sites referred to in the previous paragraph for educational purposes.

POLICY CN6

The University Centre

The Council supports the creation of a University Centre in Hastings. Planning permission will be granted for the change of use of existing buildings or the redevelopment of individual sites to provide higher and further educational facilities, subject to any proposals satisfying the following criteria:-

- (a) They are well located in terms of serving the local community;
- (b) They are well related to the public transport network and would be readily accessible by walking and cycling; and
- (c) They are of a design, scale and appearance that would not cause harm to the surroundings.

Early Years Education

7.77 Hastings Borough Council supports early years education and recognises the importance of play within children's development, and the use of premises for early years education will be supported.

7.78 The Council already deals with a steady trickle of planning applications for nursery schools. Latest Government advice indicates that this is a matter for consideration in the Local Plan. When assessing applications for early years educational use, the Borough Council will liaise with the County Council Social Services Department or other legally appointed body concerning standards for registration, although planning control cannot stray into areas covered by other legislation.

7.79 Government strategies recognise that young children learn through play – with outdoor playtime being an essential aspect of nursery/playgroup sessions and a requirement under the registration standards. The Borough Council will recognise these children's needs alongside the suitability of particular premises insofar as the operation will affect the surrounding area, and will have regard to potential noise problems and parking

requirements. Both of these factors can sometimes be reduced by staggering arrival and departure times and outdoor play times. Assessment of parking requirements should recognise that hours of attendance are more flexible than at schools for older children and that parking provision may accordingly be reduced.

POLICY CN7

Premises for Early Years Education

Planning permission will be granted for the use of premises for early years education, provided that:-

- (a) The building and any garden or open land to be used is capable of use without detriment to the amenities of nearby neighbours by reason of undue noise and disturbance;
- (b) The property provides sufficient off-street parking or is located in a position where on-street parking (for the delivery and collection of children in particular) is unlikely to result in serious congestion or hazardous situations for pedestrians and vehicle road users;
- (c) The proposal would not result in an over-concentration of institutional or non-residential uses which would be detrimental to the amenities of a residential area; and
- (d) The premises are well related to the public transport network and readily accessible by walking and cycling.

Provision of Childcare Facilities

- 7.80 A significant proportion of jobs in Hastings are filled by women and a very high proportion of single parent households consist of single women, many of whom are economically inactive.
- 7.81 It appears that there is a large number of single parents prevented from entering the labour market by a lack of childcare provision in Hastings.
- 7.82 This is supported by a survey of childcare provision facilities in the town, undertaken by the Regeneration & Planning Directorate, which found only four established day nurseries with baby provision, 11 nurseries and 68 child-minders in the town (in addition to 14 playgroups and six out of school clubs).
- 7.83 It is recognised that the greatest need for childcare facilities exists close to the major centres of employment in the town such as the town centre and the existing industrial estates. Favourable consideration will therefore be given to the establishment of additional facilities in such areas, subject to the normal planning constraints.

Community Facilities

- 7.84 The majority of meeting places for community and voluntary organisations are provided in churches and church halls in the town. The Borough Council, as well as allowing the use of buildings in its ownership, also makes financial contributions by way of subsidised charges, grant aid and loans to community organisations.
- 7.85 The Borough Council will continue to encourage the maximum use of these facilities and will be generally supportive of planning applications for additional community facilities. The Council will require the provision of appropriate community facilities in areas of major new residential development and may use planning agreements to achieve this aim where appropriate (see also Policy DG25).

Community Facilities

Planning permission will be granted for the conversion or construction of premises for community use provided that:-

- (a) There is a demonstrated need for community use;
- (b) The premises are well located in terms of serving the community;
- (c) The premises are well related to the public transport network and readily accessible by walking and cycling;
- (d) The use would not result in noise or any other harm to the living conditions of occupiers of nearby property or lead to an over-concentration of institutional uses detrimental to their amenity; and
- (e) It would not result in inconvenience or danger on the public highway.

7.86 The community use of school accommodation is not currently widespread – due to the problems of the accommodation type, caretaking arrangements, the cost and availability. Community use helps extend the range of community facilities available to the public, and the Borough Council will encourage greater community use of these and other Borough Council premises.

Social Services

7.87 Hastings' geographical position, equable climate and the number of large houses make it an attractive location for residential accommodation for the elderly and disadvantaged. The growth of institutional accommodation of this form has placed a considerable burden on the local social services. Their resources are severely stretched, owing to the existing high proportion of people needing care in the town, plus current restrictions on public expenditure.

- 7.88 A predominance of such uses can have an adverse effect by changing the normal domestic character of an area to the detriment of residents. The Borough Council therefore wishes to ensure that over-concentration does not occur in any given location.
- 7.89 Equally, the Borough Council wishes to safeguard the amenities of immediate neighbours and will not therefore permit such a use where it is considered that it would cause undue noise and disturbance.
- 7.90 It is important that properties used for institutional use contain a reasonable amount of amenity space for residents and also provide appropriate car parking and servicing facilities.
- 7.91 The property should also comply with the standards of access for people with disabilities.

POLICY CN9

Nursing Homes, Rest Homes and Hostels

Planning applications for the erection or change of use, or extensions to residential institutions as defined in Class C2 of the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (excluding hospitals, residential schools, colleges or training centres) will only be permitted where:-

- (a) The proposal would not be detrimental to the amenities of a residential area and result in an over-concentration of institutional uses;
- (b) The proposal would not be detrimental to the amenities of immediate neighbours by causing undue noise and disturbance;
- (c) The curtilage of the property provides an adequate amenity area for the residents and for servicing and vehicle parking;
- (d) The property complies with the standards of access for people with disabilities; and

- (e) **The premises are well related to the public transport network and readily accessible by walking and cycling.**

Health Care Provision

7.92 The Borough Council supports improved health care provision in the town where such development would not conflict with other policies in the Local Plan. Where a specific need is identified for new or enhanced health facilities, financial contributions may be sought from new development (see also Policy DG25).

Library Facilities

7.93 Permanent library facilities within the Borough include the Hastings Central Library and Hastings Children's Library (which are in separate buildings) and branch libraries in Hollington and Ore. A mobile library serves other areas. A high priority of the County Council, as library authority, is to provide a combined Adult and Children's Library at a more central site in the town centre.

7.94 The Borough Council supports the provision of new and enhanced library facilities, and Policy DG25 and its supporting text provides for financial contributions from development where appropriate. Proposals for new or enhanced library facilities need to have regard to the guidance on the location of major public buildings set out in PPG6 'Town Centres and Retail Developments' and PPG13 'Transport'.

POLICY CN10

Library Facilities

Planning permission will be granted for the provision of new or enhanced library facilities provided that the proposal would:-

- (a) Be well located in terms of serving the local community and any identified areas of need;
- (b) Be well related to the public transport network and would be readily accessible by walking and cycling;
- (c) Be of a scale, design and appearance in harmony with its surroundings; and
- (d) Not result in inconvenience or danger on the public highway

Museums

7.95 The Borough Council recognises the need for additional accommodation for the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery. It is intended to bring forward proposals to alter and extend the existing building. Any such proposals will be required to respect its character.

POLICY CN11

Hastings Museum and Art Gallery

Planning permission will be granted for the alteration and extension of the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, provided that such development would be of a scale, design and appearance that would respect the character of the existing building and surrounding area.

Sites for Gypsies and Travelling People

7.96 In accordance with Circular 1/94 'Gypsy Sites and Planning', the Council has investigated the need to find appropriate sites for itinerant people. Biannually the Council has the responsibility for

carrying out an audit of the number of itinerant people in the Borough to establish the demand for sites.

7.97 Currently there are no official sites within the Borough and the nearest site at Pebsham has now been closed. However, there are three sites in Wealden District and another at Fair Lane, Robertsbridge.

7.98 Due to the landscape constraints of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the tightly drawn boundary of the built up area, it is not considered possible to identify any suitable sites (as defined in Circular 1/94) within the Borough. In addition, as at August 1999, there was no established demand for this type of facility on the urban fringe of Hastings and St Leonards. The Council will continue to monitor demand and the availability of appropriate sites.

7.101 However, Circulars 1/94 and 22/91 require the Council to consider the needs of gypsies and travelling show people respectively for permanent sites – and the Policy below provides general policy guidance on this issue.

POLICY CN12

Gypsies and Travelling Show People

Planning permission will be granted for sites for gypsies and travelling show people provided that:–

- (a) The use of the site would not have a significantly adverse effect upon the amenities or commercial well being of nearby occupiers or the area in general;**
- (b) The site contains substantial natural screening – particularly if it adjoins the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or designated nature conservation sites; and**
- (c) The site is served by public transport and well related to local services and facilities.**