

BOROUGH GREEN 2014 SUPPLEMENTARY PARISH PLAN.

Borough Green is a large rural parish on the junction of the A25 and A227 in Kent. It is a hub village, serving the surrounding parishes of Wrotham, Platt , Ightham, Plaxtol and Shipbourne, and was designated a Rural Service Centre in Tonbridge & Malling's 2007 Local Development Framework. ⁽¹⁾

2011 Parish Plan

This current 2014 Supplementary Plan should be read in conjunction with the 2011 Adopted Parish Plan, which superseded the invalid 2005 Plan, although much relevant evidence has been carried forward

REPRESENTATION

Borough Green Parish Council has 11 elected councillors. It is served by 3 T&M Borough Councillors as part of Borough Green and Longmill Ward, and one County Councillor as part of Malling Rural West.

POPULATION.

Current population is 3672, and increase of 9.2% since 2010, and the completion of Isles Quarry West 171 houses will be a further 9%. This overall increase of some 18% exceeds all other T&M parish's expansion rates of 14%, and the current urban expansion rate of 7.87% ⁽²⁾.

At 216 hectares this is the smallest parish in Kent, and at 16.9 persons per hectare is the most densely populated parish in T&M, matching urban density in Tonbridge. ⁽²⁾

Borough Green, and its neighbour, Wrotham, are in the top ten of Kent Parishes for Social Housing units per capita, and this will increase again with the completion of Isles Quarry. ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

HOUSING

The requirements of the Strategic Market Housing Assessment ⁽¹¹⁾ for the developing Local Plan shows a requirement of 650 houses per annum, a 1.4% increase across the Borough. As Isles Quarry increases BG's housing by 10%, plus other windfall development, our local housing needs are satisfied for the Plan period.

RETAIL CENTRE

Borough Green has a vital, vibrant and clearly defined retail centre, but there have been proposals by large retail companies to introduce new retail outlets outside this defined centre. **Policy CP22 (1) & (2)** ⁽¹³⁾ must be used to prevent such development, both to maintain the vibrant centre, and to prevent unfair competition.

TRAFFIC

The most significant impact on quality of life in the village is traffic on the Strategic Routes through the village, the A25 and the A227. The junction of these two roads in the heart of the village is one of the few strategic junctions in Kent without any form of traffic management.

A 30 year campaign to bypass the village centre failed in 2007 when the enabling development failed to obtain Planning Permission.

The village has since joined a major campaign to complete the partial junction at Sevenoaks, which would allow the M26 to act as a bypass, not just for Borough Green, but for many other villages on the A20/A25 corridor.

This excessive traffic, and the Air Quality problems noted below demand a moratorium on development until the M26 East Facing Slips are built.

There are other ongoing campaigns with other parishes to achieve both engineering solutions ⁽⁶⁾ and to enlist local HGV Operators to slow through traffic ⁽⁷⁾

AIR QUALITY

Whilst the danger of fast through traffic has obvious road safety implications, effectively splitting our community into 3 separate pieces, it has also increased pollution, and in 2012 Borough Green was declared an Air Quality Management Area. In practice this means nothing, and the drive for development and increased traffic continues apace. ⁽⁸⁾

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sewage: the current system has shown significant failures in recent years, a matter that BGPC is discussing with Southern Water, even before the addition of 171 new houses at Isles Quarry. An upgrade must take place before any more development can be allowed. Several houses in the village suffered sewage flooding in December 2013.

Schools, Doctors and Dentists are all at capacity now, but there seems to be little effort to keep up with the demands of the growing community.

Social and Housing Services : Except for a limited Wednesday surgery, all access to TMBC's Housing and Citizens Advice , all Social needs such as Job Centres, Social Services, KCA, and emergency housing can only be provided by Tonbridge, which is virtually inaccessible by bus.

GREEN SPACES

The small land area of the Parish means that we do not have the normal rural wide-open spaces within the Parish . This has meant that our Sports Facility at Potters Mede, and our joint venture Skatepark and All Weather 3G pitch are all built in our neighbouring Parish of Wrotham.

This shortage of Green Space means that open spaces within the village envelope assume crucial importance, and their use for housing development is to be strongly discouraged. ⁽⁴⁾

QUARRY HILL AREA

This area is highlighted in the Character Area Appraisal ⁽⁵⁾ as being of historic significance, and we would like this to be reinforced by making a **Conservation Area** as in Map6 ⁽¹⁴⁾, to include the Listed Buildings Borough Green House Barns, the Applestore, and Knole Cottage, and the unlisted 19th Century Landway Cottages, Quarry Hill Cottages, Rock Rd Terrace, the Parish Church Hall and the Jubilee Oak.

EMPLOYMENT

Since the steady decline of local sandpits and quarries, and their ongoing use as landfill sites, the employment base in the village has been badly eroded over the past couple of decades. Planning Policies that promote conversion of employment land to housing have added to that decline. We now find ourselves in a position where local employment is scarce, which has a major impact on local employment opportunities, and aggravates our traffic problems. There is a glimmer of hope that we may have reached a tipping point that will prevent any further loss of employment land. **LDf CS Policy CP (2) & (3)** should safeguard existing employment sites

A-Z Site

Whilst the owners of the site, the A-Z Trust, have ideas to develop the site as housing, the Parish Council would resist the loss of this important modern employment site, and agree with Planning Department that the consultants figures demonstrating adequate employment land in the locality are badly flawed.

Cricketts Farm.

Whilst this site may be completed by the time of adoption of the Local Plan, we believe the Parish Council need to reinforce the support given during the planning application, to protect both the refurbished employment area, and the enhanced setting of the listed building.

LDF POLICIES

The 2007 Local Development Framework Core Strategy earmarks the 50's Landfill Site at Isles Quarry West as suitable for development to attain 200+ houses, that was subsequently reduced to 171 in a 2013 approval. The only Metropolitan Greenbelt boundary within the village was removed by the Core Strategy to enable the development, although some of the development falls outside the new MGB boundary.

TMBC Policy SQ4⁽¹²⁾ restricts development where it impacts on Air Quality, but T&MBC's Housing Needs Strategy is allowed to over-ride health of residents.

Because development in Borough Green impacts on the Kent Downs AONB we are deemed to be "A Village in the Kent Downs AONB".

Where an existing Core Policy has been quoted, it is important that these are carried forward into the New Local Plan

Annexes / citations:

1. T&MBC Local Development Framework 2007
2. T&M/KCC Census data 2011
3. Russet Homes Residents Handbook
4. Green Space Table
5. Character Area Appraisal
6. 9 Point Traffic Plan BG and Platt PCs
7. BG, Wrotham and Platt Traffic Initiative with Local Operators
8. AQMA Map
9. 2005 Borough Green Parish Plan
10. 2011 Borough Green Parish Plan
11. T&M SHMA March 2014
12. TMBC Core Strategy Policy SQ4
13. TMBC Core Policy CP22 (1) & (2)
14. Quarry Hill Map 6
15. Borough Green Maps North East
North West
South East
South West
South