

# HEATH COMMON DESIGN STATEMENT



**Supplementary Planning Document**

**Adopted 19 July 2018**

## **What is a Supplementary Planning Document?**

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) add further detail to the policies in the Development Plan (which includes Local plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans). They provide further guidance for development on specific sites or areas, and/or on particular issues, such as design. SPDs do not form planning policy but are a material consideration that can be taken into account when determining a planning application. All SPDs are subject to a period of formal consultation and approval. This SPD was adopted by the Horsham District Council's Cabinet on 19 July 2018.

# HEATH COMMON DESIGN STATEMENT

**Prepared by Residents of Heath Common with the support of  
Washington Parish Council and the guidance of Horsham  
District Council**

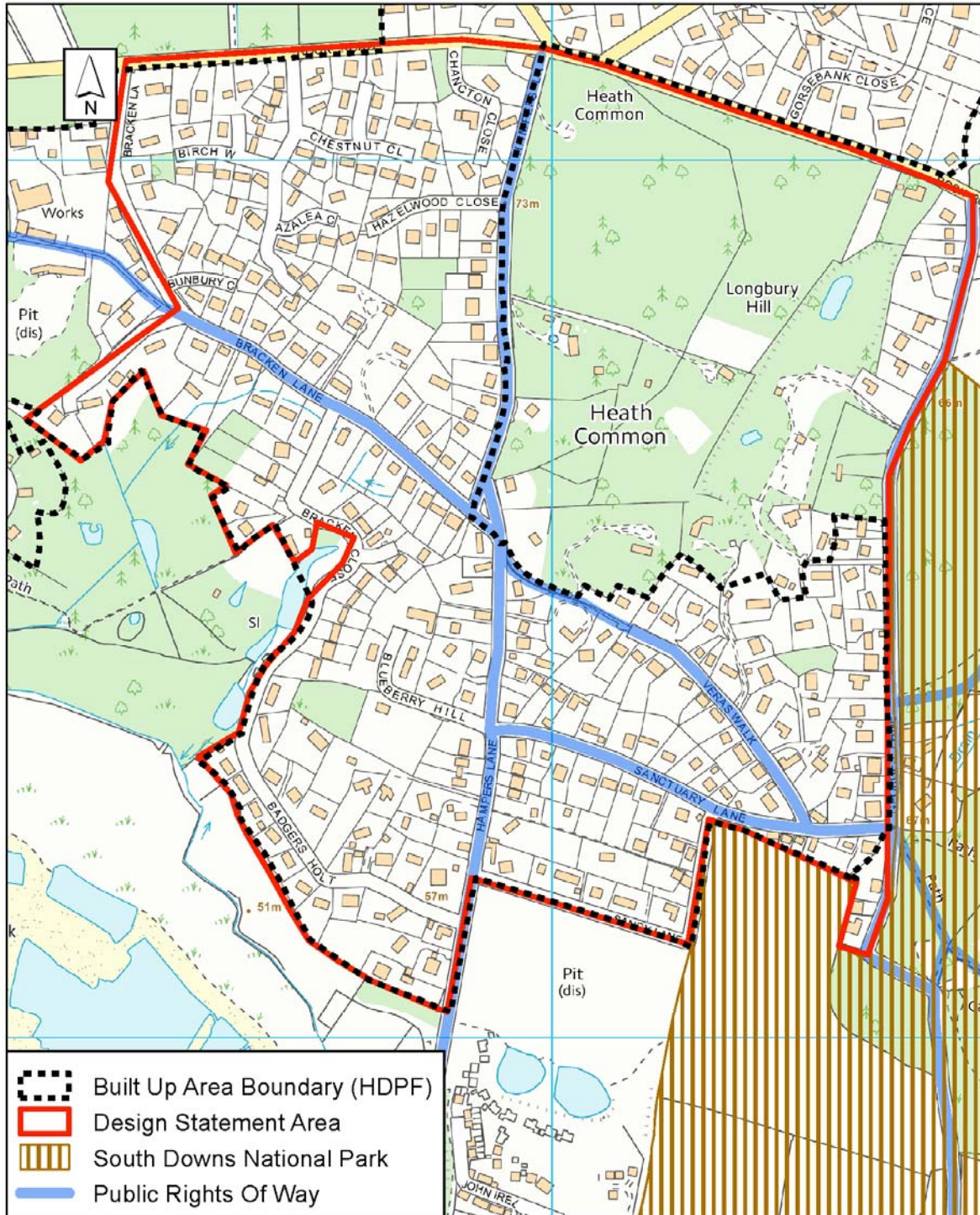
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# Heath Common Design Statement Area



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# 1) INTRODUCTION



- 1.1 Sitting on the edge of the South Downs National Park, Heath Common lies in the Parish of Washington at the junction with the Parishes of Sullington, Thakeham, and Ashington in the county of West Sussex. At the core of this area are a number of narrow interlinked lanes referred to locally as “the Lanes” the majority of which are private and many are either a public bridleway or public footpath. Haphazardly set along the Lanes lie low density characterful, generally secluded, detached houses with large open-wooded and relatively natural gardens which respect the wooded and heathland landscape and biodiversity. The pattern of development in the area is an informal one and spacious in character, the degree of space between individual properties and their boundaries is noticeable. Whilst the buildings in the area are of varied designs, for the most part they are of a traditional vernacular.
- 1.2 The character of the area reflects its historical roots. The development of Heath Common began in the early 1920’s when a young woman, Vera Pragnell, bought about 19 acres of common and 8 acres of arable land and attracted a commune of free spirits. In the 1930’s, as the commune broke up, the early temporary shelters of caravans, old buses and shacks began to give way to more permanent small haphazard dwellings. A few of Vera’s original properties survive today whilst many have been updated over time. In the 1990’s the residents recognised the area had a strong sense of place and a unique local distinctiveness worthy of reinforcing and with the efforts of the Heath Common Residents Association and others created the first ever Village Design Statement within Horsham District Council. The plan was first adopted by Horsham District Council in 1999 and was a key document in guiding planning policy for almost twenty years, protecting the unique value of the area and preserving its rural calm.
- 1.3 With the passage of time the area has come under increasing pressure both from a number of substantial infill planning applications and the growth of traffic using the lanes, both motorised and non-motorised traffic generated by residents and recreational users of the rights of way, which has on occasion caused gridlock. The area’s spacious sylvan semi-rural character and appearance and its range of individual eclectic dwellings have come increasingly under threat from suburbanization. The biggest challenge to the character of Heath Common going forward is the impact of future infill dwellings, the general ongoing

wish to increase the size of dwellings, as well as the consequent increase in traffic particularly on the through Lanes which, as public rights of way, are used for informal recreation.

- 1.4 It became clear that action was needed to help reinforce the local distinctiveness and to avoid damage to the spacious low density character and integrity of the private lanes including their ability to function as safe public rights of way. A working party of residents (at the request of Horsham District Council) set about completing a comprehensive update to this important document. The updated design statement seeks to ensure its continued relevance to the special characteristics which define Heath Common whilst recognising the need to align these virtues with current planning policy in Horsham District and the more recent sustainability issues introduced in more recent planning laws and not addressed in the original guide. Adoption by Horsham District Council as a Supplementary Planning Document will ensure it remains an integral part of the planning process working alongside the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).
- 1.5 The updated Design Statement applies to the Lanes area within the Parish of Washington in the built-up area boundary, as defined in the Development Plan (eg HDPF and/or a made Neighbourhood Plan). However the Lanes do not sit in isolation and the surrounding countryside is as important to the character of the area and should therefore be taken into account when assessing development proposals. Regard should therefore also be given to this design statement where development outside the Lanes will have an impact upon them. Further information on the Lanes, its unique character and the wider area is set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.6 The Lanes are private except for Thakeham Copse, off Rock Road, and the cul-de-sacs it serves (Birchway, Pine Close, Chestnut Close, Oak Avenue and Azalea Close). The private through lanes are either a public bridleway or public footpath which provide valuable opportunities for informal recreation (Hampers Lane, Georges Lane, Sanctuary Lane, Veras Walk and Bracken Lane). The privately maintained lanes are single track with occasional passing spaces and no pavements, they are often no wider than 3 metres. The lanes are narrow and unlit, in line with Washington Parish's status as an "unlit parish", and there is little possibility of widening or improving the existing network of lanes. The lane structure is part and parcel of the character of the area. These factors are therefore important when assessing the impact of development on the area's distinctive semi-rural sylvan character and appearance.
- 1.7 This Design Statement provides additional planning guidance on the policies contained in the HDPF and the Neighbourhood Plan (once made) with regard to the Heath Common 'Lanes'. In particular, the policies that relate to the following:
  - a) Development principles
  - b) The quality of new development
  - c) Character and environment
  - d) Environmental protection
  - e) Biodiversity and green infrastructure
  - f) The setting of the South Downs National Park
  - g) Infrastructure provision
  - h) Parking and sustainable travel
  - i) Recreation, leisure and inclusive communities
  - j) Equestrian development
  - k) Visitor attractions



## **2) DETAILED PLANNING GUIDANCE CRITERIA**

### **SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT**

#### **New buildings:**

1. Proposals should reflect the area's low density (5 dwellings per hectare) and recognise that capacity for further plot sub-division is limited due to the harmful impact upon the area's unique spacious sylvan character and landscape. Proposals for a new dwelling should seek to position it centrally on the plot with adequate provision for soft landscaping (trees, bushes, hedges etc.) to effectively screen between neighbouring properties. Terraced and semi-detached dwellings should be avoided as they are generally out of character with the area and unlikely to protect or enhance the areas local distinctiveness.
2. The scale and layout of any new development should recognise and reflect the area's character, including the irregularity in building lines, and should maintain a balance between small, medium and large dwellings and their respective plot sizes within the area. All plans for any proposed development should identify the distance between dwellings, ancillary buildings and the dimensions of appropriate planned areas of soft screening.
3. New buildings should reflect the existing styles of the Heath Common area and the uniqueness of each individual property, together with sympathetic choice of materials. Design features should reflect those of the parent dwelling or, in respect of new dwellings, the context of the overall area and should be used in moderation.
4. Any new building should seek to reflect the topography of the site and to nestle within the contours of the immediate vicinity and blend sympathetically with the surrounding environment. Where possible proposals should use the topography of the site to reduce the impact of ridgelines

#### **Extensions and Alterations:**

5. Extensions, conversions and garages should be modest and in sympathy with the character of the main building and incorporate pitched roofs wherever possible.
6. Extensions that would result in the size of the final building not being in keeping with the surrounding area should be avoided.
7. Extensions and conversions to existing properties should also seek to accord with criteria 2-4 detailed above for new buildings.

## **IMPACT ON THE LAND AND BIODIVERSITY**

8. Development should avoid harm to the flora and fauna and its attendant habitat and should retain and safeguard important trees, not only from felling or unskilled trimming but also from interference with their extended root systems. Enhancements to biodiversity should be incorporated wherever possible.
9. Existing hedgerows and banks should be retained and if necessary additional or replacement hedges should be planted for the purpose not only of visual screening but also for habitat protection. There should be a minimum verge width of 1.5 metres between lane edge and fencing where practicable.
10. Proposed hedge screening should seek to avoid using species which may exceed a maximum height of 4 to 5 metres. Where hedges are in close vicinity to residential buildings, the recommended height may need to be lower, in order to ensure no loss of light. Proposals should encourage boundary enclosures which are compatible with the rural character of the area, by providing varieties of rustic fencing supplemented by hedge planting thus avoiding the suburban feeling given by brick walls etc.
11. Site clearance for any new development or extension should be limited in order not to create visibility splays, since this will harm the character of the area and the nature of The Lanes, unless required for highway safety and harm is minimised.
12. In order to avoid damage to the environment or ancillary features effective consideration should be given towards the infrastructure such as water, electricity, foul sewers and Lanes access.
13. Development should not prejudice Longbury Hill Woods, Heath Common or the surrounding countryside including Warren Hill and Sandgate Park, which lie adjacent to the 'Lanes' area. Where appropriate, development should seek to enhance these areas for informal recreation without detriment from private motor vehicles. Proposals within the setting of the South Downs National Park should have regard to the impact on the National Park and should not prejudice its natural beauty and special qualities.

## **IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING AMENITY**

14. Any new building or extension should avoid adversely affecting neighbouring properties including the avoidance of overlooking, loss of light and privacy.
15. Ridgelines of any new building or extension should be at a height that will not dominate nearby dwellings, thereby leading to a loss of amenity for neighbours.
16. Dual or shared driveways should avoid having an adverse impact on the visual or general amenity of neighbouring properties or The Lanes.
17. In order to demonstrate how any planning application, or outline application for a new building or extension meets these criteria, proposals should clearly show "street scene" elevations with detailed proposed dimensions and should show how the buildings sit relative to adjacent properties in order to fully assess the impact on those properties and the area in general.

## **ACCESS, THE LANES AND LIGHTING**

18. The cumulative impact of development upon the area's character and appearance including the narrow private lanes network and public rights of way should be taken into account. The creation of additional access points onto the Lanes network should be avoided. Any new single dwelling unit should seek to use existing access points or new improved 'replacement' access points rather than create additional access onto the Lanes network.
19. Proposals should not prejudice the effectiveness of the Lanes as an area for informal



recreation offered by their public rights of way status nor undermine the opportunities offered for people to enjoy the countryside. Proposals, as far as practicable, should improve the public rights of way for informal recreation, enhance sustainable travel and should not reduce safe access to Storrington Village by means other than private motor vehicle.

20. Development should seek to improve access for emergency vehicles within the area.
21. The Lanes of Heath Common sit within Washington Parish, which has Unlit Parish status. They also lie near the South Downs National Park which is a designated “International Dark Sky Reserve”. Development should therefore respect the principles and objectives of the Dark Sky Reserve and the unlit character of the Lanes. Inappropriate external lighting including floodlighting, bright external lights on properties and in gardens, or any lighting positioned at street level should be avoided.
22. Adequate off-road provision should be made within the curtilage of any new development for parking of all vehicles either owned or visiting the property.

## GENERAL

23. Developers should provide a clear and detailed statement on how they plan to meet all of the above Guidance Criteria
24. Where appropriate planning conditions to restrict and control the disruption to neighbours and the Lanes during the period of the site development should be considered.



## 3) CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Horsham District Council recognises, as do Heath Common Residents, that the area is special and unique. It has been shaped by its history and the fact that the narrow pavementless lanes are privately owned and maintained. Notwithstanding this all the through lanes are also either a public footpath or public bridleway. The low-density character remains, despite adapting since 1920 to modern building standards, and is still set in a verdant semi-rural background.
- 3.2 It is an eclectic mix of properties, which retain a local vernacular as the area evolved from the plotland vision of a fortunate heiress.
- 3.3 This character was recognised historically by Horsham District Council with the use of a specific policy which covered a similar area in West Chiltington as well as Heath Common. Whilst there is a recognised need for additional house building, government guidance makes clear development should protect local distinctiveness, improve the character and quality of

an area and the way it functions. The protection of the unique character of the Heath Common area is therefore a key consideration when assessing proposals which may lead to a minimal contribution to housing targets.

- 3.4 The area makes a valuable contribution to informal recreation characterised by the public bridleways and footpaths. This has always been respected and encouraged by the local community.
- 3.5 For the safety and well-being of all users of the ‘lanes’, both resident and PROW<sup>1</sup> users, careful consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of plot sub-division. The cumulative impact of development since the early 1990’s should also be recognised. The private lane network and total absence of public land means there is little prospect of infrastructure improvements. Appendix 2 sets out additional information on what Heath Common Residents would like to occur in future.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Rights of Way

# **APPENDICES**

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## APPENDIX 1

### History and Context – Written by the Residents of Heath Common

#### VERA'S VISION

- i. In the early 1920's, attracted by the isolation and the cheapness of the land, a young woman with a small inheritance and a Christian vision, bought, in her own words "a beautiful tract of about 19 acres of common, 8 acres of arable land, a lovely heather-covered, sentinel-like hill and two semi-detached derelict cottages" in the very centre of Heath Common. Vera Pragnell attracted a commune of free spirits living in caravans, old buses and shacks on Vera's land which she shared out freely. The community finally boasted a school, guests' hostel and community centre-cum-theatre.



- ii. The community of free spirits who lived in the area in the 1920s adapted over time to a more conventional community.
- iii. The early temporary shelters began to give way to more permanent, albeit still small, houses and in the 1930's, as the commune broke up, there began a haphazard housing development in such corners as Sleepy Hollow, but maintaining the early spirit of small, generally single-storey houses, scattered off the Lanes, in large wooded and heathland plots. Very few of Vera's original properties survive to this day. Most have been updated, to reflect modern living standards and expectations.

#### SETTLEMENT

- iv. Since Vera's day, Heath Common has continued to be settled in a desultory and unplanned way but the pattern she set is still reflected in the characterful houses set haphazardly along the Lanes, with large open-wooded and natural gardens. A few modern estates have appeared around the periphery, but the essential characteristics remain throughout the core area.
- v. Despite the number of additional infill dwellings (around 20 since the early 90's), the area still maintains a character that is unique. However, the amount of developable land, within and outside the built up area boundary (BUAB), which can be offered without damaging the character and setting of the area is now dramatically reduced. The BUAB must be

rigorously enforced to maintain the spacious, low density character and integrity of the lanes. Any further development will make minimal contribution to Horsham District Council's (HDC's) challenge on housing provision but will likely cause irreversible future damage to the character and biodiversity of the area.

## THE LANES



- vi. The Lanes, the affectionate alternative name for the area, represent the core of Heath Common.
- vii. All are private. Hampers Lane, Sanctuary Lane, Bracken Lane, Georges Lane, and Vera's Walk are the original bridle-ways and/or footpaths, with Sandy Lane, Bracken Close, Hazelwood Close, Blueberry Hill and Badgers Holt acting as tributary private lanes.
- viii. These lanes are single track with occasional passing spaces and no pavements and are often no wider than 3 metres
- ix. Their irregular surface (due to little or no foundations) their winding bends and corners, their tall hedges and banks forming a narrow green tunnel, the chance of seeing a fox, a squirrel or a deer – all these explain the attraction of living in The Lanes.
- x. However, it should be noted that there is no public land. All soft landscaping is privately owned and managed. Private driveways are being regularly used as passing places and often provide the only means for vehicles to pass. The dramatic increase in volume arises from an increased number of properties, a noticeable increase in the size of most properties, internet and commercial deliveries and rising living standards with houses having 2 or 3 cars.
- xi. As everywhere in life today there is more traffic, however, due to private ownership, and community affection for the lanes, there is no realistic prospect of infrastructure improvement. There has never been and there is no likelihood of any public help to improve the quality of the infrastructure. The "lanes" are also used without permission by

vehicles of non-residents to access Warren Hill car park.

- xii. Whilst each new planning application appears insignificant the cumulative effect of applications received exacerbates the overall effect.

### **THE SUSSEX WEALD**

- xiii. This area of West Sussex presents a typical south Wealden geology and profile – chalk, clay and sandstone beds, closely spaced and parallel, running east-west and each responsible for an individual topography and ecology. Heath Common sits squarely on the Lower Greensand (essentially Folkestone) beds which rise to about 80 to 90 metres to a clear ridge, about 1.5 miles wide. Beyond the design statement area to the east and west lie National Trust properties. Sullington Warren on the west has an international reputation as an example of typical, but fast disappearing, open Sussex heathland. Warren Hill, which closely borders Heath Common on the east, is a more wooded area. To the south of the design statement area lies a narrow clay vale of agricultural land, mainly pasture, beyond which rise the South Downs, now part of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). To the north, the sandstone ridge drops gradually to the level, agricultural, clay land of the central Weald.



### **THE HEATH**

- xiv. The sandy, well drained and acidic soils of the Lower Greensand give rise to coarse heath and woodland mix which for centuries provided little to attract settlement. Useful only for timber, turf and heather gathering, pig and rabbit raising (hence such local names as Pigland, Warren Hill, and Sullington Warren) only a few cottages and barns are recorded right up to the end of the nineteenth century.

### **THE SANDGATE PARK ESTATE**

- xv. In the eighteenth century, this 4000-acre estate developed around Sandgate House, taking in all of Heath Common, and much beyond, but by the end of the nineteenth century, the estate began to break up. The House itself suffered such diverse transitions as a Christian Guest House and a wartime billet for Canadian soldiers, before finally disappearing in 1948 into the large Hall & Co – now Cemex -sandpit, still operating under its Sandgate

Park name. The areas now known as Sandgate Park and Sandgate woods lie adjacent to the design statement area.

- xvi. Thanks to a local rescue operation Sandgate Woods survive, now owned by Horsham District Council and since 1992 nominated a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI - now titled Local Wildlife Site (LWS)). They reveal their origins as part of the Park estate, with many older planted trees, especially oaks, rhododendrons and several small shallow lakes. Most of the rest of the estate slowly broke up into smallholdings and individual plots.
- xvii. Horsham District Council's document 'Sandgate Park Refresher Study 2011' is discussed further under the heading 'Sandgate Woods'



## THE WILDLIFE

- xviii. Heathers proliferate not only on the open heathlands, but also in the wild gardens as do a wide variety of wild flowers including many orchids. Bluebells, wild daffodils and primroses enrich the woods and lane banks in spring. The trees range from some magnificent ancient oaks and examples of most large broad-leafed and coniferous trees to lower canopy examples of hazel (in some places, coppiced), holly, willow and rowan as well as many planted ornamental varieties in gardens. A special feature of the area are the banks of rhododendrons, which decorate the lane edges and proliferate everywhere.



- xix. This variety in turn attracts a populous and varied bird population. Over 70 species have been recorded. Apart from the full range of woodland birds, including birds of prey and

owls, a number of classified and listed birds are resident. Added to this is a flow of spring and autumn migrants, such as redwings and fieldfares and occasional visitors such as hoopoe, peregrine and red kite.

- xx. The open woods and heathlands also offer an ideal haven for a wide variety of insects of all descriptions – probably the most notable being the glow-worm – as well as butterflies, moths and dragonflies. Indeed, nearby Sullington Warren harbours a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) protecting, since 1954, a unique species of Crane Fly (*Nephrotoma sullingtonensis*). Similarly, adders and grass snakes are common to the area as are newts.



- xxi. Foxes, badgers and deer roam freely between woodland and garden, rabbits and pheasants frequent the open spaces, while the dormouse and the wood mouse find a perfect habitat in the hazel coppices. At dusk, Pipistrelle and Natterer's bats hunt between the trees.

### Longbury Hill Wood

- xxii. This is an area of dense pine, mature woodland and Rhododendron, extending to approximately 10 hectares. It sits outside the Built Up Area Boundary, bordered by the large wooded gardens of residential properties to the east, Hampers Lane bridleway to the west, a long access track to Rosebay Cottage to the south and Rock Road to the north.
- xxiii. The Anglo-Saxon Washington charters of 947 and 963 both name Longbury Hill as 'Benna's Hill' or 'Tumulus' and remains of what is believed to be the ancient boundary-bank is partly visible in the woodland just south of the access track to Rosebay Cottage and which is a uniquely surviving feature. Longbury Hill remains a prominent landmark, on which philanthropist Vera Pragnell installed a Calvary in the 1920s.
- xxiv. The woodland is regarded as an integral feature of the surrounding 'Heath Common Lanes', being close to the community it benefits. It is not currently accessible to the public, but its boundary with the public bridleway of Hampers Lane provides attractive conditions and recreational value to residents, walkers, horse riders and hikers. It also forms part of an attractive habitat for a wide range of birds and wildlife, closely situated between Warren Hill, owned by the National Trust, and Sullington Warren, itself a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. Data from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre record sightings of 150 protected and designated species within 0.5km of the area. Three ponds exist within 500m of the woodland, and are well connected to the site, indicating that the protected Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*, could potentially be using it as a terrestrial habitat. A juvenile female of the species was sighted in nearby Georges Lane, and reported to the Records Centre in December 2017.
- xxv. Whilst privately owned, and subject to periodic management under licence from the Forestry Commission, the area is allocated as a protected green space in the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan.



## APPENDIX 2

### THE FUTURE – as sought by Heath Common Residents

#### SETTLEMENT

- I. The Design Statement includes areas which the District Council, the Local Planning Authority has defined as within the built up area boundary.
- II. The nature, location and scale of the existing settlement are crucial to all aspects of ecology, the environment and the amenity of its residents.
- III. Within the core of Heath Common (generally defined as covering Bracken Lane, Hampers Lane, Sanctuary Lane and Georges Lane and all the tributary lanes such as Sandy Lane, Blueberry Hill, Hazelwood Close, Bracken Lane, Badgers Holt and Vera's Walk) the developed area is of a relatively low density with a generous plot size and a random pattern of siting of dwellings.
- IV. Infill appeals have been dismissed, the inspector having noted the spacious feel of the area. (For example, Little Thatch [planning reference DC/16/1252] and Highcroft [planning reference DC/16/1930])
- V. Other areas such as Rock Road, Tudor Village, Gorse Bank Close and Melrose Place also have a low development density, spacious plot sizes and an informal layout.
- VI. Within the core of Heath Common there remain a few areas of significant acreage where no development has taken place. These are located outside the built-up area and are governed by Countryside Planning Policies within the adopted Local Plan, the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). They should continue to be preserved to maintain the balance between development and nature.
- VII. The majority of the land surrounding the Design Statement area is covered by the Countryside Planning Policies, which also apply to the area covered by the existing sandpits which form part of the site for a proposed Country Park, as well as to other parts with special Designations such as South Downs National Park, SSSI<sup>2</sup>, LWS<sup>3</sup> (formerly SNCI<sup>4</sup>) or the National Trust.
- VIII. The present relationship between the developed areas and the surrounding countryside is a crucial part of the character of the area. The present balance needs to be maintained to protect that character and to ensure that no further harm is done to the general ecology and environment. Population density is not necessarily related to the number of plots but also to the size of each dwelling. Each increase results cumulatively in an increase in traffic and people that has a far-reaching effect. There should be a limit to the number of properties that the area can now sustain. HDPF continues to support biodiversity. Due to the individual plot land pattern of development in Heath Common it is difficult to promote biodiversity on an individual plot basis, unless the application and

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<sup>2</sup> SSSI is an abbreviation for Site of Special Scientific Interest

<sup>3</sup> LWS is an abbreviation for Local Wildlife Site

<sup>4</sup> SNCI is an abbreviation for Site of Nature Conservation Importance

effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed. It is however considered essential by the community that policy 31 of the HDPF<sup>5</sup> is considered alongside policies 32 and 33 (Development Principles and Design) of the HDPF.

- IX. For all the above reasons it is considered that any further development may well damage the area and can only be done at the expense of the Heath Common character and all it stands for, the antithesis of its nature, with cramped housing on smaller plots, consequent loss of trees and natural spaces and its inevitable impact on the wildlife, ecology, environment and general amenity of its residents. There is a great deal of concern over the potential damage to the environment by any further development and therefore in the light of this any proposal should adhere to the GUIDANCE CRITERIA defined in Section 2 of this document otherwise it will be resisted by the local community. For reasons of amenity and safety bonfires are discouraged.

## THE LANES

- X. These vital arteries have also experienced an increase in traffic, compounded by the recreational use. Any new housing only generates more traffic and increases the pressure on the circulation in The Lanes. For many years worries about the ability of The Lanes to support even current densities have been the subject of copious discussions and studies, including a major Traffic Survey. One aspect of the Survey was to quantify the worrying amount of through traffic by non-residents. The residents like The Lanes the way they are – winding, without footpaths, with natural passing bays – and walk and drive accordingly. They are anxious to maintain the peaceful safe and rural nature of their Lanes. Accordingly:
- The lanes should remain unlit in line with the nearby South Downs National Park’s “International Dark Sky Reserve” status. Residents must take care that any lighting outside their property does not compromise this.
  - The residents’ representatives will continue as a matter of urgency to examine and pursue all appropriate methods to resolve the traffic problems with the support and guidance of Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council.
  - The character of the lanes must be maintained – any proposal to upgrade, widen or add passing bays or remove or alter hedges, banks, fences or verges that would destroy their nature, will not be acceptable.
- XI. It has proved very difficult over the years to secure statutory protection from County Highways, County PROW<sup>6</sup>, as well as effective application of HDPF policies
- XII. Discussions are ongoing with West Sussex County Council to provide an improved consultation process which actively address the special nature of “the lanes”.
- XIII. The restrictive nature of the lanes should naturally discourage residents from introducing business undertakings, which would generate significant additional or unsuitable traffic. Therefore, Home Working that does not encourage such traffic is generally compatible with the residential character of the area subject to the dwelling house remaining the primary lawful use, as well as aligning with government policy in relation to this concept.

<sup>5</sup> HDPF is an abbreviation for Horsham District Planning Framework

<sup>6</sup> PROW is an abbreviation for Public Rights of Way



## **The Surrounding Area:**

### **SANDGATE COUNTRY PARK PROPOSAL**

- XIV. This area lies outside but adjoining the design statement area. Of the three sandpits bordering Heath Common, one has ceased working. Although considered to be relatively unsustainable by the appeal inspector the RMC pit to the east of Hampers Lane has been developed into a 78-house estate known as Millford Grange with a landscaped area to the north of the site while the ARC pit on the west of Hampers Lane remains with some sand winning and some restoration work using inert waste and subject to a Restoration Proposal agreed in 1994. The largest, the RMC Sandgate Park sandpit (now Cemex) is currently being operated and may continue to do so for the foreseeable future.
- XV. The opportunity to integrate these sandpits, together with neighbouring areas, into a conservation development, such as a Country or Nature Park, has been envisaged by Horsham District Council, and is set out in the Site Specific Allocations of Land document, which was adopted in 2007. The Policy in 2007 clearly stated that “Development proposals not directly associated with mineral extraction that could prejudice the formation of the Country Park will not be permitted.” This proposal would clearly preclude any consideration of these pits for landfill sites of whatever nature. Such a usage would be obviously detrimental to the environment as to make it unsustainable.
- XVI. As part of the agreed condition in building Millford Grange an area of country park has been opened up between the housing and the borders of Heath Common in Sandy Lane. Furthermore, the National Trust has created a public pathway over the adjacent field which it owns, linking eastwards to Warren Hill. Both these additions constitute an important start to the long-held desire to create a “green walkway” all the way from Washington Village to the outskirts of Storrington, passing through Warren Hill, Sandgate Woods and Sullington Warren.

- XVII. The Millford Grange development has proved valuable in the delivery of community land, east and west of Hampers Lane.
- XVIII. The District Council's Site Specific Allocations of Land Development Plan Document 2007 also recommended the preparation of a planning brief setting out the Council's aims for the future Country Park. The residents welcome the principle of a Country or Nature Park and in view of the significant impact these proposals would have on the Design Statement area, they clearly need to be fully involved in all aspects of future discussions and decisions at the earliest possible stage. This was met by the Horsham District Council Sandgate Refresher Study in 2011:
- The briefing paper for the areas included in the Country Park proposals should be agreed as soon as possible.
  - Any proposals should be comprehensive and incorporate the neighbouring areas of Sandgate Woods (LWS<sup>7</sup> formerly SNCI<sup>8</sup>), National Trust properties of Sullington Warren (SSSI<sup>9</sup>), Warren Hill and Clayton Farm.
  - There will be full consultation with all interested parties including County, District and all neighbouring Parish Councils, Heath Common Residents Association, Sandgate Conservation Society, National Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust etc.
  - Access will be a key consideration. Any plan must ensure that there is no increase in traffic through The Lanes.
  - Any plan should aim to develop the full ecological opportunities of the site including as it does aquatic and wet land habitats, heath and mature woodland, in a single area.

### **THAKEHAM TILE WORKS**

- XIX. This site directly abuts properties in Bracken Lane, although it is recognised that the site is outside the design statement boundary. Washington Parish Council does however wish to be consulted on any development proposals which may come forward from this site, and would wish any potential impacts on the Heath Common Area be considered if appropriate.

### **SANDGATE WOODS**



- XX. The Woods adjoin the design statement area and are already subject to a comprehensive Summary Management Plan, elaborated in 1995 and since updated periodically.

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<sup>7</sup> LWS is an abbreviation for Local Wildlife Site

<sup>8</sup> SNCI is an abbreviation for Site of Nature Conservation Importance

<sup>9</sup> SSSI is an abbreviation for Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Implementation of the plan is supervised by Horsham District Council. HDC Leisure continue to support this work. The work – which may include the replanting of native trees, encouraging the bluebell and wild daffodil glades, hazel coppicing, sympathetic control of rhododendron and bracken, or tending the lakes and streams – is largely carried out by Sandgate Conservation volunteers.

- XXI. Horsham District Council updated the Sandgate Park Study' the Refresher Study' around 2011. At that time support was still forthcoming for a continuation of the plan and the land was subject to Horsham District Council policy in the 2007 definitive maps (updated in 2015).
- XXII. The Millford Grange development provided an area of land west of Hampers Lane, sold by RMC, to allow continued support for the Sandgate plan.
- XXIII. The land east of Hampers Lane and north of the development is community land, delivered by the development, which is generously maintained by the Millford Grange Estate. There will be significant ongoing maintenance costs to the private residents of Millford Grange.
- XXIV. Consideration will continue to be given to including Sandgate Woods in the wider context of the possible Country or Nature Park mentioned above, with the active support of Sandgate Conservation Society which continues as an active body.

#### **THE NATIONAL TRUST PROPERTIES**

- XXV. Sullington Warren to the west, and the Warren Hill Estate (an extensive property which includes Washington Common, East Clayton Farm and Warren Hill House) are held inalienably by the National Trust for permanent preservation. They are excellently maintained, and many local residents involve themselves in the Trust's activities. It is essential to the Design Statement area that their good stewardship continue.
- XXVI. The National Trust has leased the East Clayton farm to the Lorica Trust, a trust that provides support to disadvantaged youngsters. The Lorica Trust, generously agreed to give the National Trust access across a section of their large field to provide a link between National Trust land in Georges Lane, and the community land north of Millford Grange.

#### **THE SOUTH DOWNS**

- XXVII. The heights of the South Downs dominate our southern skyline. Designated a National Park, they are currently protected and conserved. Their future management will have a great impact on the entire locality and will be dependent on the future planning and management of this landscape.

**This revised document contains significant elements of the original Design Statement as it remains as relevant today as it was then. Our grateful thanks go to the original team and especially to Mike Gould and the late Neil Goodman for their invaluable contribution and continued support.**

**This Village Design Statement was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Horsham District Council in January 1999 and, after amendment, readopted in July 2018**