

Tunbridge Wells Borough

Local Plan



**Local Plan Adopted December
2025**

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Foreword

The Local Plan is an important strategic document for our borough, critical to enabling its development to be planned and managed in an organised, structured way that benefits residents and reflects local ambitions. We think it is appropriate therefore to thank everyone who has engaged with the production of this vital piece of work for the borough of Tunbridge Wells, including the many residents, business and organisations who contributed comments and representations at the public consultations.

From the very early stages of the process, providing the necessary growth in housing, together with supporting infrastructure has been a key part of the Plan. The Council has faced substantial challenges finding suitable land to help meet the growth needs, and decisions about the location of housing developments and the delivery of improvements to infrastructure were the subject of significant debate. Hard choices have had to be made, including the release of suitable land from the Green Belt and allocation of some sites for major development in the High Weald National Landscape. Allocating sites for development has been a challenging task, balancing multiple and often contradictory requirements as well as important considerations such as our obligations to respond more positively to climate change and to protect our natural and historic environments.

A great deal of work has been done by Council staff with the relevant agencies to overcome these challenges and lay out a Local Plan which allows development in suitable locations and makes sure that the people who live in these new developments will have the local facilities and infrastructure that they need. An important part of the Local Plan's evolution was the scrutiny of the proposals at the Examination stage, overseen by an independent Planning Inspector. This public scrutiny, and the related work to examine options and to refine and improve the submissions, together with the subsequent examination hearings and further work on the proposals have all contributed to the creation of this Local Plan.

Our Local Plan sets out all the proposed site allocations for the borough, together with a set of important policies that guide their development. They include policies that will enable the Council to secure more affordable housing for our communities, policies to help to better meet the needs of an ageing population and policies that expect high design and environmental standards in new homes that are well integrated with our natural and historic environments. It also includes policies to maintain and encourage a vibrant economy in the borough so that residents and visitors can work and enjoy their free time here.

Importantly, this Plan has been developed over the course of multiple administrations of differing political colours, and consequently benefits from cross-party support. It is a vital document and will help shape the future of our borough in the coming years.

Thank you for your interest in the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan.

Ben Chapelard, Leader and Matthew Lowe Cabinet Member for Planning, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

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Section 1: Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

- 1.1 This Local Plan sets out the spatial vision, strategic objectives, and the overarching development strategy for the borough and establishes the planning policy framework necessary to deliver them. It covers the period between 2020 and 2038.
- 1.2 The main function of the Local Plan, alongside other key plans, is to provide the legal basis for making decisions on planning applications for development and the use of land. Together these plans are termed 'the Development Plan'.

The Development Plan

- 1.3 The Development Plan for Tunbridge Wells borough consists of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan, the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan, and 'made' Neighbourhood Development Plans, as elaborated upon below.

The Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan

- 1.4 This Local Plan will lead and guide the spatial vision and growth strategy for Tunbridge Wells borough, replacing the 'saved' policies of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006, the Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy 2010, and the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016. It consists of seven main sections:

Section 1: Introduction – sets out details of the purpose and production of the Local Plan.

Section 2: Setting the Scene – outlines the profile and context of the borough, as well as the issues, challenges, and opportunities which exist.

Section 3: Vision and Objectives – provides a Vision on the place the Council wants the borough to be and the Strategic Objectives by which it intends to achieve the Vision and address the key issues and challenges in Section 2 above.

Section 4: The Development Strategy and Strategic Policies – sets out the overarching development strategy for the borough and the strategic policies to support it, such as for climate change, infrastructure, transport, environment, and design.

Section 5: Place Shaping Policies – sets out the policies for each parish and settlement within the borough, as well as policies for specific allocated sites to deliver the Development Strategy in Section 4 above.

Section 6: Development Management Policies – these policies provide detail for decision making in relation to particular themes. These cover environment, housing, employment, transport and parking, and open space, sport, and recreation.

Section 7: Delivery and Monitoring – sets out how the Development Strategy will be delivered, particularly in terms of housing and infrastructure, as well as how monitoring and review will be undertaken to ensure that the policies in the Plan are effective for their intended purpose.

- 1.5** To help understand key technical references and other terminology in this Plan, a Glossary of terms and definitions is included at Appendix 5.

The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 1.6** The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) 2013-2030 was originally adopted by Kent County Council in July 2016 and was subject to an Early Partial Review of certain waste management capacity requirement and mineral and waste safeguarding policies. The Plan was adopted in its modified form in September 2020. A new KMWLP was adopted in 2025.
- 1.7** The KMWLP identifies Mineral Safeguarding Areas to avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of any mineral resources and makes provision for the safeguarding of existing waste management and mineral plant infrastructure from incompatible development. Development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas (such as the land at Moat Farm, Five Oak Green, and the extension to Stonecastle Farm Quarry at Hadlow (straddling the borough boundary)), and those within close proximity to waste management facilities (such as the North Farm Waste Recycling Facility) will therefore need to comply with the minerals and waste safeguarding policies in the KMWLP (Policies DM7 and DM8). The KMWLP and Minerals Sites Plan, Safeguarding Mineral Areas Map for Tunbridge Wells, and the KMWLP Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document (2017) can be found on the Kent County Council website (see [Minerals and waste planning policy \(Kent County Council\)](#)).

Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 1.8** A neighbourhood development plan (or neighbourhood plan as they are more commonly known) is a development plan document produced for a local area by the relevant town or parish council (in a parished area), or a constituted neighbourhood forum, to guide future development in that area. Such plans need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan, as well as consistent with national planning policy.
- 1.9** At present, following successful referendums, there are 10 'made' (i.e. approved) Neighbourhood Plans within Tunbridge Wells borough. Within these areas the respective Neighbourhood Plans form part of the Development Plan under which planning applications are assessed.
- 1.10** Details of these Neighbourhood Plans can be found on the Council's website under [Neighbourhood Plans](#).
- 1.11** Further information on the relationship between the Local Plan and neighbourhood plans is set out in Section 4 at Policy STR 10: Neighbourhood Plans.

The Local Plan Process

- 1.12** The Local Plan is the outcome of an extensive process, including public consultations and dialogue with key stakeholders, as well as the assimilation of substantial work undertaken to provide a robust evidence base that takes account of relevant national and local plans and strategies, as set out below.

Figure 1 Local Plan Timescale

- 1.13** This Plan period runs from 2020 to 2038. The Local Plan provides a housing supply for ten years following adoption, with any remaining needs to be planned for through an early review of the Local Plan, as set out in strategic policy STR 1 – The Development Strategy.
- 1.14** Preparation of this Local Plan follows from the production of, and public consultation on, two earlier documents, as set out below.

Issues and Options Consultation Document

- 1.15** The first stage was the publication of the Local Plan Issues and Options document in the summer of 2017. Public consultation on the Issues and Options document sought early views about the best way to approach the specific challenges, notably identified growth needs, for the borough. Most importantly, it proposed five possible spatial options for the location of new development across the borough.
- 1.16** Around 6,700 responses (from 551 organisations and individuals) were received to this consultation. All the responses and representations received were carefully considered and taken into account in the preparation and development of the Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan 2019 (see below). The Consultation Statement relating to the Issues and Options consultation provides an overview and evaluation of the Issues and Options consultation, including the Council's responses to the comments received.

Draft Local Plan

- 1.17** A full Draft Local Plan was published in autumn 2019. It built on the Issues and Options document and the feedback received during the public consultation at stage one, and presented a preferred draft development strategy and a full suite of draft policies and proposed site allocations. The Draft Local Plan was subject to an eight-week public consultation, which ran from 20 September to 15 November 2019.
- 1.18** Over 8,000 individual comments, from over 2,000 individuals and organisations, were received to the Draft Local Plan public consultation. A full list of the responses received can be found on the Council's website under [Previous Stages](#).
- 1.19** The main issues raised in the responses to the Regulation 18 public consultation included concerns about the following matters:

- implications of the development strategy in relation to individual settlements or sites;
- overall housing numbers (too high), affordable housing, and housing types (particularly housing for older people and first time buyers);
- the Plan's consistency with national policies in relation to the release of Green Belt land, as well as the number of major developments in the High Weald National Landscape, and its conservation;
- provision and timing of the range of infrastructure needed to support new development, such as highways, medical services, schools, drainage, and water supply;
- flooding;
- highway matters and transport provision on already congested roads;
- climate change and sustainability and that the Plan does not go far enough to address these issues.

1.20 The Consultation Statement relating to the Draft Local Plan provides an overview of the public consultation and identifies the main issues raised in responses received. All comments have been carefully considered and taken into account in preparing the current Local Plan, as has any updated national planning policy and guidance, as well as further evidence gathered and evaluated by the Council.

Pre-Submission Local Plan

1.21 The Pre-Submission Local Plan was published in Spring 2021 and subject to a 10-week consultation that ran from the 26 March 2021 to 4 June 2021. In total 2,084 representations on different parts of the Local Plan were received from 650 organisations and individuals. All representations received are available to view on the Council's website on the Council's [Representations and Next Steps webpage](#).

1.22 The main issues raised in response to the Pre-Submission Local Plan included concerns about the following matters:

- If there is capacity to assist with unmet housing need from neighbouring authorities;
- The impacts of the development strategy on the Green Belt and High Weald National Landscape, and consistency with national policy;
- The sustainability of the development strategy, specifically with regard to the allocation of strategic sites;
- The appropriateness of the strategic sites in terms of loss of Green Belt, infrastructure requirements and mitigations, and delivery programme;
- The suitability of the proposed site allocations, and of omission sites, for development;
- The consistency of the Development Management Policies with national policy and whether they reflect local circumstances, including matters relating to sustainable design/standards and wider climate change matters, heritage assets, biodiversity net gain, affordable housing, housing for older people, and traveller sites provision.

- 1.23** The Consultation Statement relating to the Pre-Submission Local Plan provides an overview of the public consultation and identifies the main issues raised. All representations were submitted to the Planning Inspector appointed to examine the Local Plan.
- 1.24** Following the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation, the Local Plan was submitted for Examination in November 2021. Stage 1 and 2 Hearing Sessions were held in the spring and summer of 2022, following which the Inspector issued his initial findings [[document ID-012](#)] in November of that year. The Council conducted a public consultation on its response to the initial findings which ran from the 15 January to 12 April 2024. More recently the Council has carried out a further public consultation on its updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment and other new, evidence base documents between the 11 September and the 23 October 2024.
- 1.25** It is noted that all public consultations have been (and will be) carried out in accordance with the protocols set out in the Council's [Statement of Community Involvement](#).

Policy context, guidance, and other strategies

National planning policy and guidance

- 1.26** Government planning policy is set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF), with supporting guidance in the [Planning Practice Guidance](#) (PPG).
- 1.27** The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for achieving sustainable development (with a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development').
- 1.28** A central aim of the NPPF is to achieve a significant boost in housing delivery and to meet housing and other development needs, such as economic needs, in full, unless it is demonstrably unsustainable to do so. There is a strong emphasis on the significant social and economic benefits of providing for the full development needs of an area, to be weighed in the balance with environmental and landscape considerations, to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 1.29** The NPPF provides the framework within which locally prepared plans, such as this Local Plan, must be produced.
- 1.30** In particular, the NPPF states that, for a local plan to be considered sound, it must comply with the legal and procedural requirements of plan making and demonstrate that it is:
- **"Positively prepared** – *providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;*
 - **Justified** – *an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;*

- **Effective** - deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant."

Relationship with other strategies

- 1.31** The Council has worked closely with a wide range of agencies and bodies in preparing the Local Plan. In particular, it has actively engaged with all of its neighbouring authorities within Kent: Sevenoaks District Council; Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council; Ashford Borough Council; and Maidstone Borough Council, and with neighbouring authorities that share a border in East Sussex: Rother District Council; and Wealden District Council (as shown on the map at Figure 2 in Section 2).
- 1.32** Furthermore, the Council has also been involved in extensive liaison with Kent County Council, notably in terms of its roles as the minerals and waste local planning authority, the local highway authority, local education authority and lead local flood authority; as well as other organisations, agencies, and infrastructure providers, including National Highways, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, and the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (NHS Kent and Medway ICB).
- 1.33** This cooperation (for which there is a legal duty) has related to strategic matters, such as housing, economy/employment, infrastructure, and the environment, having regard to the needs and strategies of others. Details of this are set out in the Council's Duty to Cooperate Statement and supporting 'statements of common ground'.
- 1.34** Regard is also had to other strategies and plans of key agencies, as well as of the Council itself. This includes those of the County Council in relation to transport, education, adult social care, and health, and those of the utility providers. The Borough Council's [Sports and Active Recreation Strategy](#) is particularly relevant in providing the context for the rationalisation of a number of recreation/playing pitches/sport sites in Royal Tunbridge Wells and the allocation of a new 'Sports Hub' at Hawkenbury, as well as ensuring the retention and provision of adequate facilities for other settlements across the borough, including rural areas.

Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.35** The Local Plan is required to be supported by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to determine whether it, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This relates to the Ashdown Forest to the south west of the borough.

- 1.36** Additionally, the Council has been actively involved with all affected authorities to develop a policy to ensure planned development can go ahead without causing harm to the Ashdown Forest designated site. These are reflected in statements of common ground between two formal partnerships; one to address visitor pressure, and the other to address vehicle emissions.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.37** To ensure the Local Plan is in line with the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ and to support the environmental requirements of the HRA, as mentioned above, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which also incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), is required to support the Local Plan. The SA evaluates the social, economic, and environmental impacts of policies and strategies and considers to what extent they are in agreement with sustainable development objectives. It also plays a key part throughout plan preparation in informing the assessment of alternative options for the growth strategy, site allocations, and policies.
- 1.38** SA recommendations have informed each stage in the production of this Local Plan:
- Stage 1:** to support the Issues and Options document 2017 - Scoping Report: and an Interim Sustainability Appraisal;
- Stage 2:** to support the Draft Local Plan 2019 - a full Sustainability Appraisal;
- Stage 3a:** to support the Pre-Submission Local Plan - a further updated Sustainability Appraisal;
- Stage 3b:** the Submission version of the Plan was accompanied by an updated Sustainability Appraisal incorporating minor modifications;
- Stage 4:** A further Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken to support the Council’s response to the Inspector’s Initial Findings, received in November 2022, which included a revised Development Strategy.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 1.39** The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) seeks to ensure that the Local Plan promotes equality and that discrimination of any form is addressed. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, planning policies across this Plan seek to provide inclusivity and access for all.

Evidence base

- 1.40** As set out in the NPPF, each local planning authority should ensure that its Local Plan is based on adequate, proportionate, up to date, and relevant evidence about the economic, social, and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. To meet NPPF requirements such as boosting housing supply and the local economy, whilst applying the underlying thread of the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’, the Council commissioned and completed a substantial and wide-ranging evidence base to inform the strategy and policies contained within this Local Plan.

- 1.41** The evidence base, comprising topic papers, studies, research reports, and other information, has informed the preparation of the Local Plan. This includes studies in relation to housing, employment, Green Belt, flood risk, landscape, transport, etc. All of the evidence base and other supporting documents can be viewed under [Supporting Documents](#) on the Council's Local Plan web page.

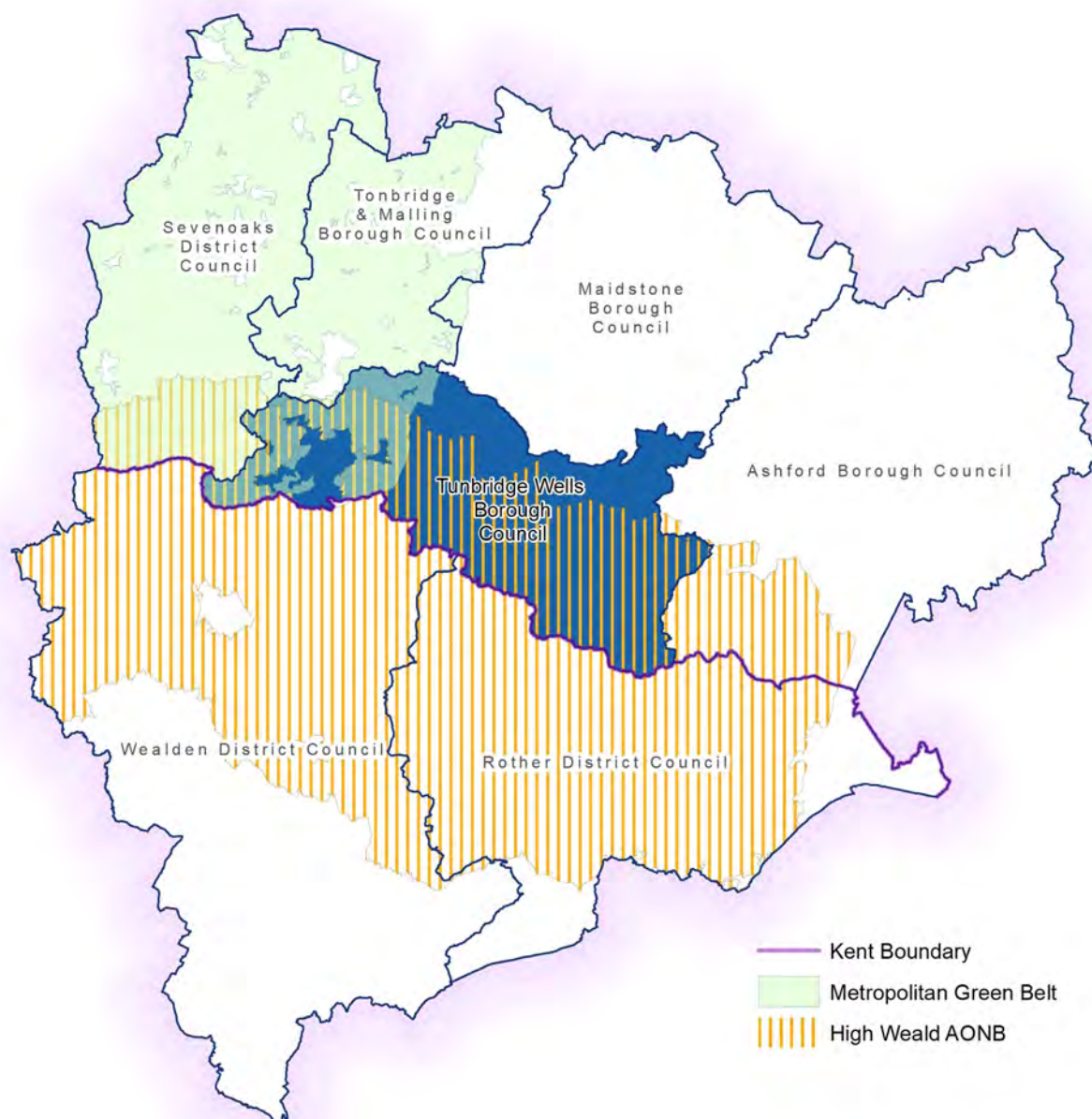
Section 2: Setting the Scene

- 2.1 All supporting documents referred to throughout this Section can be found under [Supporting Documents](#) on the Council's Local Plan web page.

Borough Profile and Context

- 2.2 The borough of Tunbridge Wells lies in the south west of Kent, bordering East Sussex. It covers an area of 126 square miles. The borough borders the authorities of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone, and Ashford in Kent; and Rother and Wealden in East Sussex.

Figure 2 Borough Location



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The settlements of the borough

2.3 Figure 3 below shows an overview map of the borough and its main settlements and their relationship with key designations such as the High Weald National Landscape, Metropolitan Green Belt (Green Belt), flood zone areas, and main transport routes.

2.4 The main settlements in the borough are:

Royal Tunbridge Wells, located in the western part of the borough, is the principal town and administrative centre. Together with Southborough, it forms the 'main urban area' of the borough. It provides a large proportion of the social, cultural, and economic opportunities available in the borough. In addition to being the principal retail, leisure, and cultural centre of the borough, the town provides a wide variety of services, including primary and secondary schools, sports and community facilities, and mainline train stations. Historical and architectural features of the town, such as the Pantiles, also provide a high-quality environment that attracts a significant amount of tourism to the borough. There are also a number of parks and commons that are integral to the character of the town. The redevelopment of the museum and library underline the aspiration for the town to become the cultural centre of the High Weald.

Southborough lies to the north of Royal Tunbridge Wells, with its own, albeit smaller, town centre. As well as providing its own independent shopping facilities, Southborough also has a number of local and community services, such as primary schools and specialist education facilities, and a good range of recreational facilities, including a new community hub.

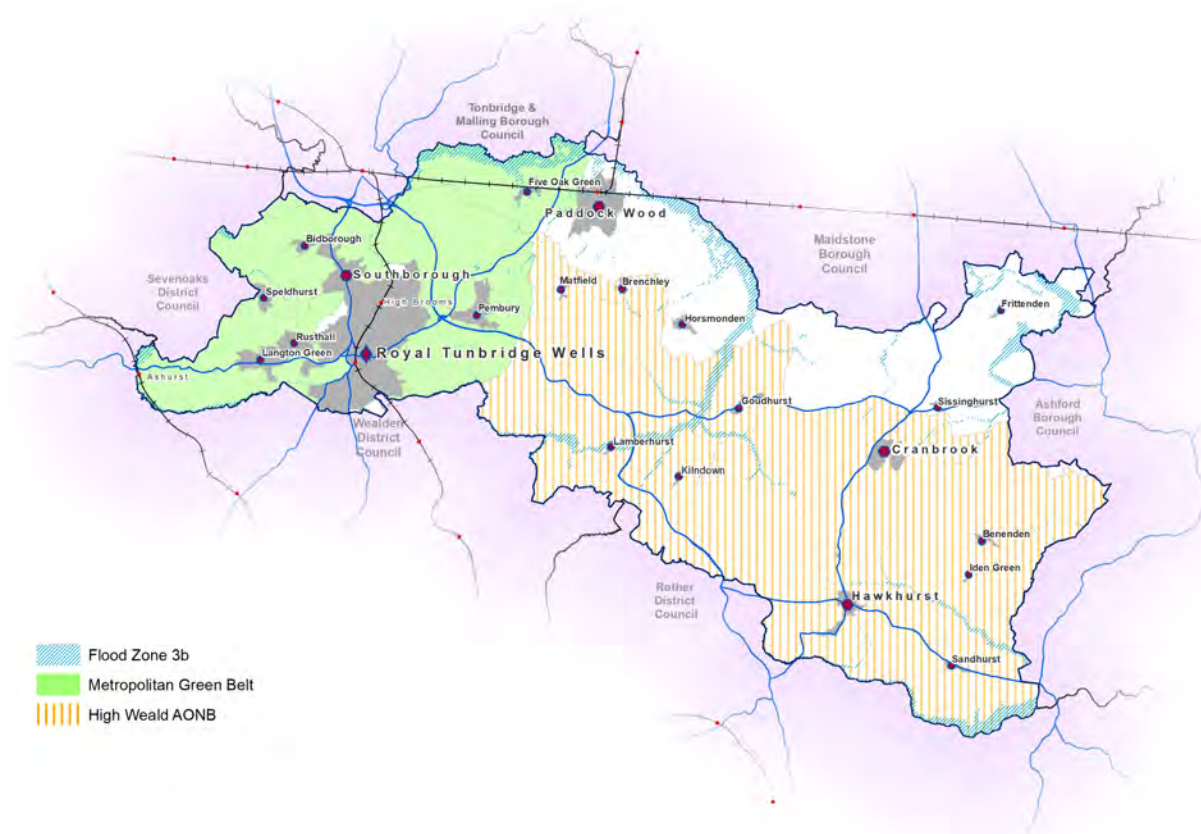
Paddock Wood, in the northern part of the borough, benefits from good transport links, including a mainline train station and wide range of facilities, including a secondary school and sports centre. There is a large employment area to the north of the railway line, which supports the town, the rural hinterland, and beyond. In addition to a supermarket, existing retailing is mainly devoted to the provision of local services. The western edge of the town abuts the Green Belt and, additionally, areas of the town and its surrounds fall within areas of flood risk.

Cranbrook is an attractive, vibrant rural town located within the High Weald National Landscape in the eastern part of the borough. The local architecture and features, such as the Cranbrook Windmill and nearby Sissinghurst Castle, give it a distinctive character. Cranbrook also benefits from a good range of independent shops, a supermarket, secondary schools, a sports centre, and other local services and facilities.

Hawkhurst is located within the High Weald National Landscape in the south eastern part of the borough and features local architecture, such as The Colonnade along its main shopping street, which is distinctive to the area. It functions as a rural service centre, supporting a wide rural hinterland and benefits from a primary school, small independent cinema, and two supermarkets, as well as a range of local services and facilities.

- 2.5** The borough is also home to several **villages**, each with its own distinctive character. Most of these villages are within the High Weald National Landscape, and some in the western part of the borough are also in the Green Belt. All provide some level of local services and facilities, such as a primary school, shops, community groups/buildings, public house, place of worship, and leisure and recreational facilities.
- 2.6** In addition, there are a number of hamlets and other, more remote, clusters of buildings and farmsteads dispersed across the borough, many of which are located within the High Weald National Landscape and/or Green Belt, and provide important features of the landscape.
- 2.7** The Council's Role and Function Study provides information on the relative levels of services and facilities in the borough's towns and villages.

Figure 3 Borough Overview



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Key Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities

Meeting development needs

Key issue/challenge: meeting development, especially housing needs, in an area with important environmental designations

- 2.8** A key challenge is meeting the housing needs of the borough. These are assessed, in line with national policy, as amounting to 678 per annum, equivalent to some 12,200 additional homes over the plan period to 2038.

- 2.9** There are, of course, other related needs to be considered, including for employment and retail provision, education and leisure facilities, transport infrastructure, etc.
- 2.10** The NPPF expects development needs to be met, unless there are good planning reasons why this is not possible, which may be due to key environmental designations, such as those set out in the section below under natural, built, and historic environment.

Climate change

Key issue/challenge: minimising the impact of climate change on communities, the economy, and environment and supporting the goal to make the borough carbon neutral by 2050

- 2.11** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), representing a large body of reputable, international scientists, has reported for several decades that the global climate is changing. The consequences of such changes for both the UK and the borough include dangerous flood events, increased deaths due to high summer temperatures, damage to buildings, disruption to transport, disruption to farming, biodiversity loss, and migration of native and invasive species (UK Climate Projections 2018).
- 2.12** Reducing greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) will be critical in limiting the impacts of climate change. To mitigate the impacts of climate change, carbon reduction and the transition to a low carbon future are needed. This could be through the delivery of energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy generation, and community heating systems.
- 2.13** As a result of climate change, there will also be a need for the borough to adapt to hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. These changing circumstances need to be reflected within the design of buildings and flood alleviation, including from surface water runoff. The borough is also within an area of 'water stress', which will intensify as a result of climate change, and so ways of reducing water consumption need to be considered.
- 2.14** The total CO₂ emissions for the borough in 2022 was 3.3 tonnes per capita, which is lower than the county and country figures of 4.2 and 4.5 tonnes per capita respectively. This is largely a result of the lack of motorways or big industry in the borough.
- 2.15** The largest contributors to CO₂ emissions in the borough are domestic gas (25%), A-roads (24%), minor roads (16%), industrial and commercial electricity (11%), and domestic electricity (11%) ([see UK local authority greenhouse gas emission statistics 2005 to 2022](#)). These five sectors have been the dominant emission sources since 2005 and this trend is likely to continue, albeit to varying degrees as the Government phases out gas heating and progresses with grid decarbonisation and the promotion of electric vehicles.

Demographics and housing

Key issue/challenge: meeting the different and varied housing needs of a growing and ageing population

Population projections

- 2.16** Looking at the demographic projections for the borough, using data produced by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), it is estimated that the population of the borough is likely to increase by 6,155 (just over 5%) over the plan period 2020-2038, based on demographic characteristics and past trends. The statistics also show that while the population would decrease steadily for persons under 65 years of age, the population for the age 65 plus category will steadily increase over the plan period by around 9,450 (around 40%), as shown in Table 1 below.

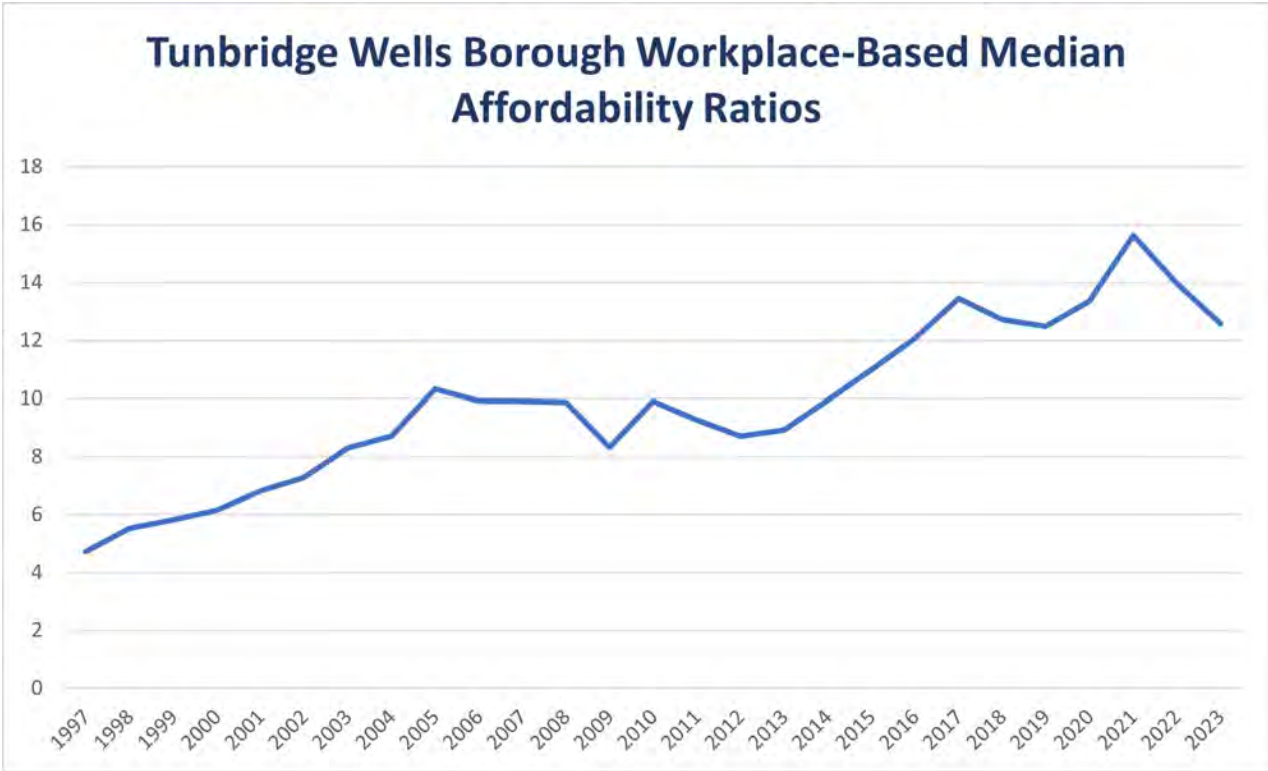
Table 1 Population forecasts for Tunbridge Wells borough (Source: ONS)

Age	2020	2024	2027	2030	2033	2036	2038
0-14	22,182	21,379	20,576	20,059	19,678	19,602	19,637
15-64	73,264	74,103	74,328	73,729	73,182	72,768	72,506
65+	23,403	25,065	26,552	28,506	30,354	31,872	32,859
All ages	118,848	120,547	121,456	122,294	123,214	124,242	125,003

Housing affordability

- 2.17** House prices in the Tunbridge Wells borough are higher than the rest of Kent except Sevenoaks and are above the Southeast regional average. The average cost of a property across the Tunbridge Wells Borough in 2023 was £558,072. This compares with £408,640 for the whole of Kent and £455,599 for the Southeast region. The average cost of a new build home in Tunbridge Wells in 2023 was £563,014. Whilst prices fell slightly in the borough between 2022 and 2023 in common with most parts of the UK, the average price of a property in Tunbridge Wells has increased by 133.5% or £319,089 over the 20-year period 2003 – 2023. This compares with a 133.9% increase across Kent and 127.9% for the Southeast region.
- 2.18** Figure 4 below shows that in 2023, entry level house prices were approximately 12 times the (workplace based) earnings of households in the borough, representing around a 38% increase since 2009, from around eight times the earnings.
- 2.19** Indeed, the relative affordability of homes in Kent as a whole has worsened in both absolute terms and relative to the rest of England, being approximately 10 times median earnings to house price ratio in 2023 when the national ratio was 8 times. The relative economic strength of London, and its housing market, is undoubtedly a key influence.

Figure 4 Median earnings to house prices ratio (source: ONS, 2023)



2.20 Kent County Council statistics (2019) show that it is also more expensive to rent properties in the borough, being on average 22% higher than in other parts of England.

Housing types

2.21 The rising household numbers and prices, coupled with an ageing population, means that as well as needing to address the affordability of housing, there will be an increasing need to ensure a range of housing types and sizes suitable to meet the needs of older people, including specialist forms of housing, within both the market and affordable sectors.

Infrastructure

Key issue/challenge: ensuring sufficient infrastructure is available to meet the needs of new development and support sustainable communities

2.22 Plans must take account of, and where necessary to meet the needs of new development, required improvements in infrastructure, such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, and green and digital infrastructure.

2.23 Table 2 below sets out the different types of infrastructure to be considered.

Table 2 Types of infrastructure to be delivered

Infrastructure Type	Detail
Transport	Highways (local and strategic road network) Public transport (the rail network and buses) Cycling and walking including Public Rights of Way

Infrastructure Type	Detail
Education	Primary and secondary schools, further and higher education, community learning and skills
Health	General practitioner services (GPs) and other health services, hospitals/social care
Water	Water supply, waste water, flood risk mitigation, and surface water management
Utilities and digital infrastructure	Energy supply: gas and electricity Digital communications: broadband and mobile phones
Community, public, and social services	Libraries, community centres, emergency services
Sport and recreation	Sports facilities (including indoor, outdoor, and built facilities)
Green infrastructure	Parks, open spaces, allotments, gardens, street trees, streams, rivers, ponds, ditches, green corridors
Waste and recycling	Facilities to support local waste collection, bulking, recycling and disposal
Public realm, art, and culture	Public art, public realm, and cultural provision

- 2.24** The Council, together with landowners and developers, has and will continue to work closely with infrastructure providers, Kent County Council, and neighbouring authorities to deliver adequate infrastructure and services in the most efficient ways.
- 2.25** It is recognised that there are different infrastructure needs for different settlements and parishes across the borough, such as flood mitigation, sport and recreation provision, and internet accessibility, especially in rural areas; these will need to be considered and addressed accordingly.
- 2.26** Further detail of what infrastructure is required and how and when it will be provided and funded is set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, as well as the place shaping policies for each settlement/parish in Section 5 of the Plan; and will also be considered through the neighbourhood planning process.

Natural, built, and historic environment

Key issue/challenge: Green Belt, conserving and enhancing the borough's recognised heritage and environmental assets, and achieving net gains for nature

- 2.27** Both the natural and built environment of the borough are of high quality, and nearly 70% of the borough designated as High Weald National Landscape is of national significance, and all areas of the borough have distinct landscape and environmental characteristics much valued by residents, with commons, village greens, and parks providing important spaces and links to the countryside.
- 2.28** Also, around 22% of the western part of the borough surrounding Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Pembury and other villages, and abutting the western edge of Paddock Wood, is Green Belt, which contributes significantly to the discrete identity and setting of settlements.
- 2.29** Together, the National Landscape and Green Belt cover 75% of the borough, with substantial overlaps.

- 2.30** The borough supports a wide network of biodiversity sites, including 10 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 60 Local Wildlife Sites, 16 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Value, 13 Roadside Nature Reserves, and four Local Nature Reserves. Protected and scarce species and habitats should not be adversely affected by development, and there should be net gains for nature.
- 2.31** The borough is also rich in historic features, and has a significant breadth of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, agricultural buildings and farmsteads, historic routeways, medieval field patterns, and ancient woodland. The features of the historic environment fall under themes that are particular to the borough, and are identified in the borough's Historic Environment Review.
- 2.32** It is recognised that pressure for new built development across the borough, including on greenfield land, could have direct impacts on landscape and environmental assets and their settings. Therefore, in facilitating development, full account needs to be taken of the landscape and environmental sensitivities of each site, as well as respecting local distinctiveness and providing for enhancements.

Flooding

Key issue/challenge: ensuring growth can be accommodated without further risk to areas vulnerable to flooding and, if possible, to provide betterment

- 2.33** Parts of the borough are located in flood risk areas. The Council's Tunbridge Wells Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides information and guidance on flood risk, as well as identifying the strategic parcels of land across the borough identified to be at risk of flooding. This includes areas to the north and west of Paddock Wood which are particularly prone to flooding. A key issue is therefore ensuring that the proposed growth strategy can be accommodated without further harm and risk to areas that are vulnerable to flooding, to provide betterment.

Transport

Key issue/challenge: promoting different transport options to accommodate future growth, ease congestion, and where possible, improve air quality

- 2.34** The borough faces significant transport challenges, particularly in terms of managing existing congestion and future growth, as well as needing to respond to the impacts of air quality and climate change.
- 2.35** The borough has an extensive highway network, with several A roads converging in the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells, including the A21, A26, A264 and A228, and A267. There have been recent improvements to the strategic road network at North Farm and dualling of the A21, but congestion on the A21 at Kippings Cross and the A228/A264 Pembury Road can still occur at peak times. There are also further congestion, capacity, and/or safety issues on the A26, A264 and A228, and the A229 in the centre of Hawkhurst.

- 2.36** There is also a need to meet nitrogen dioxide reduction targets along the A26 in Royal Tunbridge Wells; as well as along Cranbrook Road in close proximity to the main crossroads in the centre of Hawkhurst (A229), which has been designated as an AQMA. Further information in respect of these AQMAs and Air Quality is available on the Council's website; see [Air quality](#).
- 2.37** Car parking pressures can also be an issue in the borough and any new development will need to address this. While it is recognised that it may be appropriate to provide a lower amount of parking within new developments in the urban areas served by public transport and nearby local services, due to the nature of the borough, it is recognised that there is substantial private car ownership and use. It is also important to recognise that the provision of insufficient public parking spaces to serve commercial developments could deter people from visiting an area, with a resulting detrimental impact upon the local economy.
- 2.38** Transport issues in the wider rural area are different to those in the urban area. Public transport coverage is poorer in the rural towns and villages. With a much smaller range of services and fewer local employment opportunities, local residents must travel further, and often these journeys are undertaken by car.
- 2.39** The key challenge will therefore be to promote the use of non-motorised forms of travel, including walking and cycling, public transport, and exploring new technologies to support new development and address the issues above. These are often referred to as 'active travel'. The borough's Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network also provides linkages and opportunities for enhancement through new development. Similarly, it will be important to see how regional commuting patterns and times change over the plan period, following the acceleration of trends such as home working through the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic.

Economy

Key issue/challenge: supporting the needs of the local economy so that it can continue to be competitive, and creating a range of local job opportunities

- 2.40** Tunbridge Wells borough is an attractive business location for a range of business sectors and services, the tourist industry, and shopping alike. Royal Tunbridge Wells itself is a vibrant and viable town centre, which draws considerable trade from a wide surrounding area, as well as being a significant leisure and cultural centre, with theatres, a museum and art gallery, and a lively local music scene. High quality open space, historic assets, and the appealing landscapes of the rural areas attract a significant amount of investment in the form of tourism to the borough.
- 2.41** Current significant structural changes in retailing and town centres at the national level, as well as the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic, give rise to uncertainty across the retail, business, and tourism sectors of the local economy. This makes it difficult to plan with certainty; a flexible approach may be needed in respect of uses within the town and other designated centres, including more focus on leisure and culture, to ensure their long-term adaptability to changes in the economic climate, and retail and town centre trends over the plan period.

- 2.42** It is recognised that economic uncertainty may also put pressure on, and result in the loss of, rural shops and services in village and other local centres, which provide an important supporting role at the heart of communities.
- 2.43** One key issue is the lack of available land and premises, as well as an ageing stock of employment floorspace. There has also been a significant loss of office floorspace to residential and other uses in recent years, with little significant new development. Article 4 Directions have been placed on a number of office buildings in, and in close proximity to, Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre. Demand for, and use of, particular forms of office space (including more serviced or co-working forms of office) are also expected to change.
- 2.44** While the area remains an attractive business location with good prospects for growth, opportunities need to be provided in both the urban and rural areas across the borough to actively facilitate future business growth and expansion, which in turn will create local job opportunities.

Section 3: Vision and Objectives

Vision

- 3.1** Preparing a new Local Plan provides an opportunity to look afresh at what sort of place we want the borough to be in the future. Of course, the future has many uncertainties, but a Vision can identify a broad direction of travel, with economic, social, and environmental ambitions. It can also provide an overview of how this relates to different parts of the borough.
- 3.2** In planning for the next 15 years or so, the Vision needs to reflect the range of issues and opportunities that the Council must address and the key concerns of its residents. It also needs to take account of other Council strategies and those of key stakeholders.
- 3.3** Section 2 summarises the plan-making context in terms of demographic, economic, and environmental trends, and the challenges that exist. It particularly highlights:
- the substantially increased level of housing that the Local Plan should seek to accommodate;
 - the worsening affordability of housing;
 - the importance attached to the borough's natural, built, and historic environmental qualities;
 - the need to provide further opportunities to realise the borough's economic potential and to create local jobs to support an increased working population;
 - that mitigating and adapting to climate change is a corporate commitment that all Council strategies should play their part in;
 - issues with flood risk in particular parts of the borough;
 - general concerns about the infrastructure capacity (water supply, sewerage, schools, health, and leisure facilities, etc.) to support growth;
 - a number of specific concerns about congestion and air quality impacts of continuing development, as well as the potential to manage these better by encouraging more 'active travel';
 - the importance attached to varied design of new development in maintaining local character.
- 3.4** Setting out the broad approach to these matters is integral to the Vision.
- 3.5** In addition, the Vision has a strong spatial element; that is, it sets out the main guiding factors affecting conservation and change in different parts of the borough, notably its main settlements, as well as its other villages and the wider rural area.
- 3.6** Royal Tunbridge Wells is recognised as the main commercial centre in the borough, also serving a wider catchment. Hence, investing to further strengthen its employment, commercial, and cultural roles is important. Given its particular natural and built environmental qualities, as well as traffic capacity issues, careful attention needs to be paid to utilising land within the existing built-up area effectively.
- 3.7** Whilst dovetailing with Royal Tunbridge Wells in forming the borough's main urban area, Southborough retains a distinctive character, with its own services and facilities.

- 3.8** Paddock Wood has established residential, employment, and town centre areas. It has a distinct identity and the potential to enhance these and its supporting services and facilities through growth, subject to due care in relation to connectivity and flood risk matters.
- 3.9** Cranbrook and Hawkhurst both provide a range of services for their surrounding rural areas. They may grow in line with maintaining their roles, but this needs to be very sensitive to the high quality of their natural and built environments, as highlighted by their setting within the High Weald National Landscape and the conservation area designations of their historic cores.
- 3.10** Elsewhere, there is a broad span of settlements, with a number of villages offering varying degrees of local services and facilities. Again, some sensitive new development of a scale suited to their sustainability, in terms of both their services and environmental context, may contribute to meeting housing needs, especially for affordable housing.
- 3.11** The borough's settlements sit within a countryside setting that is both distinctive and formally recognised for its value. Indeed, where settlements fall within the High Weald National Landscape, which covers much of the borough, they contribute to its historic landscape character. At the same time, it is also a living and working countryside, supporting a strong rural economy, including agriculture, recreation, and tourism.
- 3.12** The countryside of the western parts of the borough also falls within the Green Belt, which plays a part in maintaining the individual identities of local towns and villages, as well as in managing the growth of Greater London.

Vision and Strategic Objectives 1

Vision

Growth in new homes, jobs, and supporting infrastructure will be achieved over the plan period in a manner that respects the distinctive qualities of the borough.

The Council will work with stakeholders* to maintain and improve overall living standards and access to employment, leisure, and cultural opportunities for all the borough's residents.

In particular, the Council will improve access to suitable, especially affordable, housing, including for local young people and older households, and will develop the borough's economic strengths and range of accessible job opportunities.

Important local services, infrastructure, and amenities will be retained and, where necessary, improved, in line with community needs.

Development should help achieve the Council's goal of carbon neutrality for the borough by 2050. It should also help to conserve and enhance the borough's recognised heritage and environmental assets. All development should be of high-quality design that respects local identity and character.

Local ambitions are:

- for Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, to maintain their role as the main urban area, with a mix of housing, employment, leisure, and cultural developments, including by making effective use of urban land, whilst protecting their respective distinctive natural and built environmental qualities;
- for Paddock Wood, to provide for comprehensive planned strategic growth (including on land in east Capel parish) that is fully aligned with timely infrastructure provision and which delivers significant improvements in local employment, town centre, leisure and other services/community facilities commensurate with its enhanced role, as well as ensuring that it is not vulnerable to flooding;
- for other settlements, to retain their essential local character, with high-quality sustainable development that reflects their environmental context, infrastructure, and site circumstances, having due regard to local needs;
- for the countryside, to retain its landscape, biodiversity, and historic character for its own sake, as well as a setting for settlements, whilst supporting sympathetic rural enterprise.

* stakeholders include town and parish councils, neighbouring authorities, statutory agencies, and service providers.

Strategic Objectives

- 3.13** The following Strategic Objectives, which stem from the Vision, provide a framework for assessing the overall coherence of the Local Plan and set out key principles to inform the development strategy and policy choices.
- 3.14** Of note, the Strategic Objectives are ordered to reflect natural groupings; it does not represent any ordering of importance.

Vision and Strategic Objectives 2

Strategic Objectives

1. To ensure sustainable development that contributes to both meeting housing, economic, and social needs and to conserving and enhancing the highly valued environmental qualities and amenities of the borough;
2. To significantly boost the supply of affordable housing and ensure suitable housing for all sections of the population;
3. To promote high-quality and well-designed development that contributes to the local identity and character and creates attractive environments;
4. To achieve the timely delivery of all forms of infrastructure that meets the needs of development and supports the vitality of communities;
5. To ensure good, safe access to jobs and services, with priority to active travel and public transport, as well as embracing new technology;
6. To ensure that the borough is vibrant, culturally rich, and economically buoyant;
7. To conserve and enhance the valued historic, built, and natural environments of the borough, including the High Weald National Landscape, and to achieve net gains for nature;

8. To ensure that the Green Belt continues to meet its purposes, only releasing land where strict tests are met;
 9. To support the goal to make the borough carbon neutral by 2050, and minimise the impact of climate change on communities, the economy, and the environment;
 10. To work with local communities to secure sustainable development to meet local needs, with due regard to neighbourhood plans where appropriate.
- 3.15** While the following strategic and other policies and site allocations will be at the heart of delivering the above Vision and Strategic Objectives, other actions of the Council, as well as those of local town and parish councils, neighbouring district and borough councils, Kent County Council, and many different organisations and individuals working in the interests of the borough as a whole will also be important for their achievement.

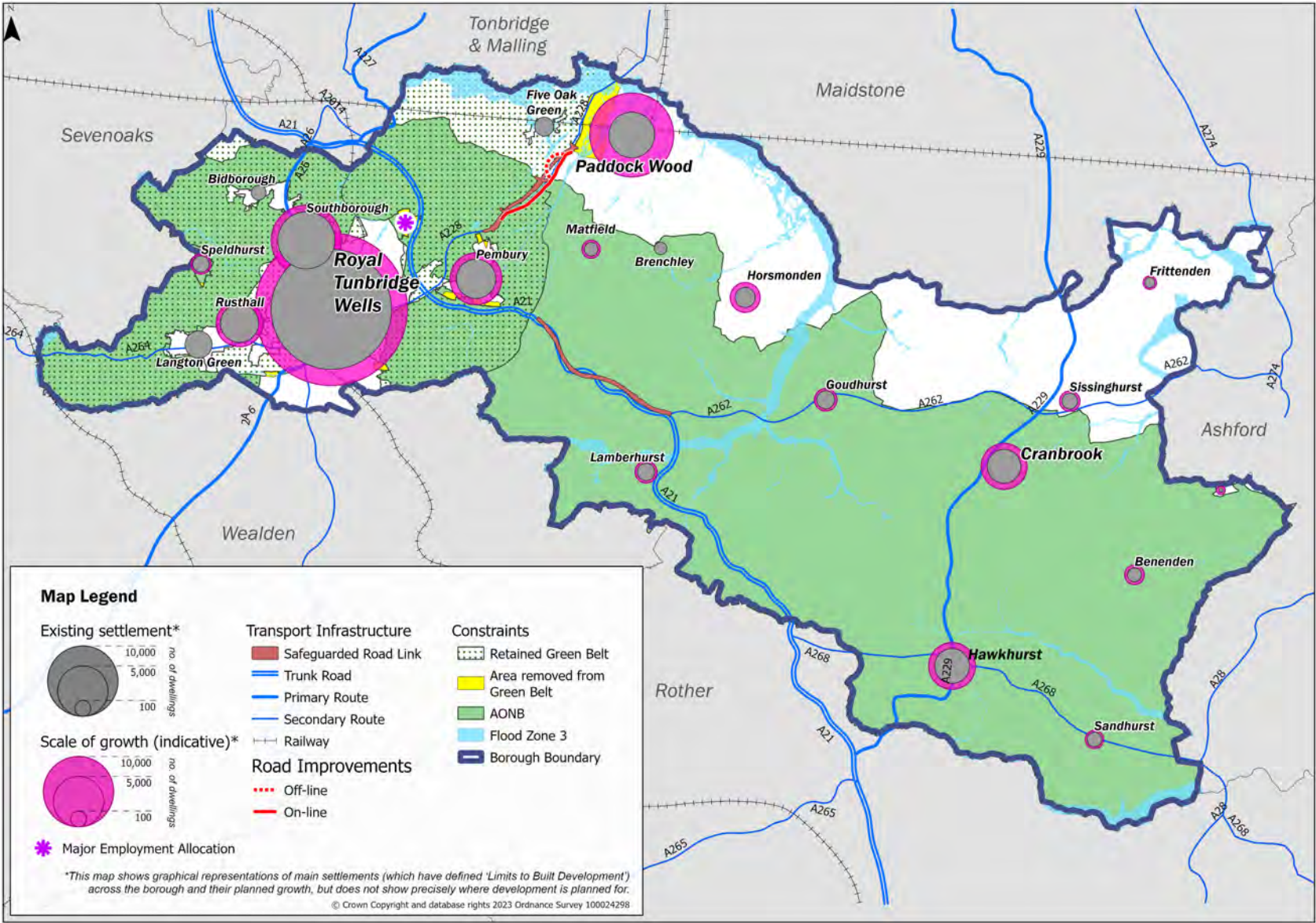
Section 4: The Development Strategy and Strategic Policies

- 4.1** All supporting documents referred to throughout this Section can be found under [Supporting Documents](#) on the Council's Local Plan web page.

Introduction

- 4.2** One of the principal functions of the Local Plan is to set out the amount of future development being planned for, where it is to be located, and its nature, following the Vision and Strategic Objectives.
- 4.3** This section presents both the overall development strategy, at Policy STR 1, which identifies the overall scale and broad distribution of development across the borough, together with other, complementary 'strategic policies', which set out the overall approach in relation to key themes.
- 4.4** These borough-wide strategic policies form the basis of this Local Plan's policy framework and are the starting point for the more detailed policies and proposals in subsequent sections. They are also key strategic policies, including levels of development that neighbourhood plans should generally conform with. The policies should be read alongside other specific place shaping policies and detailed development management policies contained within Sections 5 and 6 respectively, as well as any locally-specific policies set out within neighbourhood plans.
- 4.5** The strategic policies cover, in turn:
1. The development strategy, setting out the borough-wide requirements for housing and employment and the overall distribution of development;
 2. The fundamental principles for place shaping and design, to ensure high quality development appropriate to its context;
 3. The approach to making effective use of brownfield land;
 4. Ensuring comprehensive development, to support effective and timely delivery of development;
 5. Infrastructure delivery, setting out the requirement for new infrastructure to support proposed development, and how it will be delivered;
 6. Key transport infrastructure and the priorities for sustainable transport modes;
 7. The contribution that the Plan, and development, can make to meeting climate change challenges;
 8. Conserving and enhancing the natural, built, and historic environment;
 9. Maintaining an effective Green Belt, with provision for releases in exceptional circumstances;
 10. The relationship between the Local Plan and neighbourhood planning.

Figure 5 Key Diagram



The Development Strategy

- 4.6** In preparing this Local Plan, particular regard must be had to national planning policy, as set out in the NPPF, which expects local plans to meet the identified level of development needs for their areas in full, unless there are good planning reasons why this is not possible, which may include regard to protected areas and assets, such as National Landscapes and Green Belts.
- 4.7** Initial consideration is given to overall development needs below.

Housing needs

- 4.8** The NPPF expects local plans to use a 'standard method' set out in national planning policy guidance (PPG) for calculating housing needs, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach.
- 4.9** The standard method housing need figure for the borough is 678 dwellings per year; over the full plan period, 2020-2038, this equates to a need of some 12,200 dwellings. It is noted that national policy clarifies that this would be a minimum target.
- 4.10** The Council has considered alternative approaches but concluded that there are not exceptional circumstances to depart from this national default, standard method.
- 4.11** In addition to seeking to meet the borough's housing needs, the NPPF expects councils to also take into account any unmet housing needs from neighbouring areas. Adjoining councils are generally also seeking to meet their own housing needs. However, the position for Sevenoaks District Council is unclear. It was not proposing to wholly meet its housing need (with a shortfall of 1,900 dwellings), although this is likely to be further tested.
- 4.12** Given that there may still be a prospect of some unmet needs arising (and notwithstanding that the constraints applying to Sevenoaks district apply similarly to this borough), it is appropriate to assess the potential for also contributing towards unmet needs from elsewhere, as well as at providing for higher levels of housing need for the borough itself.

Sources of supply

- 4.13** In identifying the amount of further land to be allocated to meet the above housing need figure over the plan period, account can be taken of the number of dwellings that already have planning permission and do not need the support of Local Plan allocations. In addition, there are also a number of sites that are already identified within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016, but which have not yet been implemented.
- 4.14** Another reliable source of supply is 'windfall' (i.e. non-allocated) sites. These are generally, although not exclusively, small sites that are not identified in plans, but come forward in line with general, rather than site-specific, planning policies. The occurrence of these, as well as likely future trends, has been carefully reviewed and there is compelling evidence that such sites will continue to provide a reliable source of supply through the Local Plan period.

- 4.15** Further details of both already identified sites and windfall sites are set out in the Housing Supply and Trajectory Topic Paper (HS&T) and the Brownfield Land Topic Paper (BL TP). Based on this evidence, Table 3 below identifies the respective contributions to housing supply from these different sources and, hence, the minimum scale of additional allocations if the housing need is to be met. The figures are based on the latest data available as at 1 April 2023.

Table 3 Housing Need and Supply 2020-2038

1.	Housing need 2020-2038	12,204	18 years x 678 pa
1a.	Completions 2020 - 2023	1,842	See 5YHLS 2023
2.	Extant planning permissions at 1 April 2023	2,845*	See 5YHLS 2023
3.	Windfall allowance small sites at 1 April 2023 (to 2038)	1,464	See HS&T TP/BL TP
4.	Windfall allowance large urban sites at 1 April 2023 (to 2038)	360	See HS&T TP/BL TP
5.	Outstanding SALP/Local Plan site allocations	592	See 5YHLS 2023
6.	Outstanding Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan Site Allocations	68	See BNDP
7.	Minimum additional allocations to meet need (based on 678dpa to 2038)	5,033	= row 1 - rows (1a - 6)
8.	Minimum total allocations (based on 678dpa to 2038)	5,693	Rows 5+6+7

**Includes discounting for C2 permissions*

- 4.16** Hence, it would be necessary for further site allocations to be made for some 5,033 additional homes, assuming that all previous allocations are still suitable and developable. Given that earlier Local Plans would be superseded by this Local Plan, requiring sites to be reassessed for allocation, the total delivery required from allocations in the Local Plan (in addition to adopted allocations in the Benenden NDP) to meet the borough's housing needs would be at least 5,693 dwellings.
- 4.17** In practice, aside from the need also to consider the potential for unmet needs elsewhere to be accommodated, it should also be borne in mind that the total capacity of allocated sites would need to be somewhat greater than the above figures, to make allowance for the potential delay and/or non-delivery of a proportion of the sites. In essence, this is to ensure the robustness of the Plan's housing provisions in order to meet the housing need.

Economic needs

- 4.18** As seen in Section 2 (Setting the Scene), the borough is relatively buoyant economically, with a wide range of businesses locally, with the added potential of commuting, notably to London, from the borough. Unemployment is also relatively low.
- 4.19** There is the opportunity to support the growth of local businesses and increase employment in the borough. An Economic Needs Study, carried out for both Tunbridge Wells borough and Sevenoaks district in 2016, considered that the Council should plan positively to facilitate economic growth and increase the choice of sites to meet demand through new allocations, ensuring that the needs of different sectors can be met over the plan period.

- 4.20** The Study's recommendations for the future provision of employment land (falling within Use Classes B1 (which is now, since September 2020, within Use Class E), B2, and B8 of the Use Classes Order) across the borough considered the likely need arising from labour demand, labour supply, and past take up. It concluded that an appropriate target would be at least 14 hectares of new employment land (taking into account any residual capacity of existing employment allocations) in order to support the creation of new employment opportunities alongside the provision of new housing, helping to reduce out-commuting from the borough over the plan period.
- 4.21** While the study considered needs up to 2035, rather than 2038, this is regarded as being an appropriate minimum target for the Local Plan period, as both the base date and the end of the plan period have been rolled forward.
- 4.22** Also, while the housing need based on the standard method is a little higher, this means that labour supply would be more aligned with local employment needs, with less reliance on out-commuting.
- 4.23** Converting a land target into a floorspace target is difficult, due to a wide range of densities between, say, offices and warehouses. However, based on the Study's assessment of the mix of business uses, an approximate estimate of the floorspace associated with 14 hectares of land would be of the order of 80,000-120,000sqm. As the recommendation is a minimum, the higher level is preferred.
- 4.24** In terms of the nature of employment land to meet needs, a range of supply is envisaged; for offices, light manufacturing, general industry, and warehousing, as well as related use not in a specific use class. Commercial agents consider there to be potential for the expansion of a number of key employment areas, with particular significance given to the expansion of Longfield Road/North Farm, Royal Tunbridge Wells into adjacent land, given its proximity to both the Main Urban Area and the improved A21 in the area and to meet demand within this location.
- 4.25** It is also notable that the recommendations assume that existing well-located employment land and premises be retained in that use.

Commercial land and premises

- 4.26** Business space can be accommodated in town centres and Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre is recognised as an important source of office accommodation, with some modern office stock. A Town Centre Office Market Review (2018) was carried out to assess the position in relation to the office stock within Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre. This study identified that much of the older, outdated office stock had already been converted to residential and other uses or had permission to do so, and that it would be beneficial for the Council to implement a number of Article 4 Directions to protect existing valued office stock from change to residential through permitted development rights. This recommendation was taken forward in the serving of a number of Article 4 Directions on individual offices within the Town Centre in 2018.

- 4.27** In terms of the retail and leisure needs of the borough, a Retail and Leisure Study (2017) assessed the quantitative and qualitative needs over the plan period, taking account of planned housing growth, as well as the 'health' of the key centres within the borough.
- 4.28** While that Study identified needs for additional 'comparison goods' floorspace and 'convenience goods' floorspace, it is acknowledged that the retail market is in a current state of change. Therefore, this study has recently been updated in the form of a Tunbridge Wells Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study Update (RCLTCU Study 2021), looking more widely at the borough's centres in terms of future uses and recognising the structural changes to the retail economy and the importance of other complementary town centre uses, such as leisure, culture, offices, and residential. This study also has a particular focus on Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, recognising its greater role for the borough and the wider area, and also Paddock Wood in terms of the growth proposed in the area and the importance of enhancing the centre to support the growth.
- 4.29** This updated study does not identify any capacity (either quantitative or qualitative) for additional comparison floorspace over the plan period. Although it does identify a quantitative capacity for new convenience floorspace, it is not recommended that specific allocations should be made to meet this need, but rather this floorspace capacity should be achieved through the bolstering of existing or proposed stores within existing centres in the adopted retail hierarchy, given the substantial amount of vacant retail floorspace currently available, particularly in Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre.
- 4.30** The RCLTCU Study (2020) also considers the office market in Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre as an update to the previous work carried out (the Town Centre Office Market Review (2018)). This identifies a reduction in the total quantum of office space lost in Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, indicating the Article 4 Directions have been successful in protecting suitable office space from conversion and increasing the amount of floorspace available for new operators. Most demand is for space under 500sqm and the demand for flexible workspace in particular is expected to continue to grow over the plan period, which may require the re-purposing of larger available offices to meet demand rather than the provision of additional floorspace.
- 4.31** The study also recognises the significant potential for town centre living as a key opportunity to support vibrant and engaged town centres.
- 4.32** The study also sets out the leisure requirements for the borough in broad terms, and acknowledges the importance of cultural and leisure activities in supporting the mix of uses within town centres to ensure vibrant and resilient centres across the borough.
- 4.33** Royal Tunbridge Wells as a town is rooted in culture, leisure, and the arts, and the borough as a whole has strong cultural opportunities, with more people enjoying cultural and arts activities than the average across England. There is an increasing body of evidence as to how the cultural offer of an area can benefit wellbeing, and

as such the population of the borough has a cultural need. As above, the provision of cultural opportunities are also beneficial to the economy and attract visitors and residents to the borough.

Formulating the Development Strategy

- 4.34** While very important, a strategy to meet development needs is not automatic and account is also taken of a range of other considerations, including national policy, the Vision and Strategic Objectives, the findings of the various evidence base studies, and those of the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 4.35** A key evidence document is the Council's '[Settlement Role and Function Study](#)'. This groups settlements in terms of their characteristics, focusing on the range of services and facilities they currently provide. These groupings are shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 Settlement groupings in the Role and Function Study (2021)

Grouping	Settlement
A	Royal Tunbridge Wells (RTW) *
B	Southborough*, Cranbrook, Paddock Wood and Hawkhurst
C	Rusthall and Pembury
D	Goudhurst, Langton Green, Benenden, Brenchley and Horsmonden
E	Lamberhurst, Speldhurst, Sandhurst, Five Oak Green, Sissinghurst and Bidborough
F	Matfield and Frittenden
G	Kilndown and Iden Green

* RTW and Southborough are also jointly considered as the main urban area

- 4.36** While this gives an indication of the relative level of sustainability in terms of access to goods and services and the need to travel, it is only one of a number of factors to be considered in the selection of appropriate locations for new development; other factors to be taken into account include housing need, employment/economic factors, transport and infrastructure provision, landscape, historic and environmental considerations, and flooding issues. It is also important to note that the Study is a snapshot in time and that current services and facilities available in the settlements may be subject to change in the future.
- 4.37** Crucially, the overall strategy is also informed by the opportunities and constraints at the settlement and site-specific levels, including whether sites are suitable, available, and achievable. Possible development sites, including all those submitted through 'calls for sites' and during public consultations, have been assessed to identify opportunities for meeting the housing and economic needs. These are presented in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). All sites that were not 'sieved out' at an early stage, and capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings, were also subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, as discussed further below. Options and site suitability for development have been reviewed through the SHELAA as the Local Plan has been progressed.

N.B. It should be emphasised that the SHELAA itself is not a policy document; its role is to identify sites that are available and suitable for development. As such, it sits alongside other supporting evidence documents in informing the site allocations and policies in the Local Plan.

- 4.38** Also, the spatial strategy, site allocations, and policies have been informed by responses to the consultations on the Issues and Options and the Draft Local Plan. This includes the many comments concerning the scale of proposed growth across the borough, including in terms of the importance attached to the nationally important landscape of the High Weald National Landscape, as well as the Green Belt, which extends from the western part of the borough around Royal Tunbridge Wells and up to the western edge of Paddock Wood. The availability of infrastructure, including proposed infrastructure improvements, to support the growth is also a key concern to be addressed.
- 4.39** While strategy options that have significantly less development, whether to maintain existing Green Belt, or to not have any major development at all in the High Weald National Landscape have been assessed, not surprisingly, these have clear weaknesses not only in terms of meeting housing needs, but also in terms of improving affordability and providing more local economic opportunities. Conversely, those strategic options that have more development are showing significant harm in terms of landscape and land use objectives, but also notable harm in terms of energy, air quality, travel, and biodiversity objectives.
- 4.40** It is acknowledged that maintaining the integrity of the Green Belt and High Weald National Landscape are critical considerations in the distribution of development and the suitability of sites. In relation to the Green Belt, and more generally, it is found that a significant contribution from brownfield sites, including via windfall sites, can be made, as indicated in Table 3 above. The development strategy may properly highlight making effective use of brownfield and urban land across the borough, in support of the relevant site allocations and windfall sites' allowances, as well as in avoiding unacceptable impacts on protected areas.
- 4.41** Moderation of the scale of development in response to natural, built, and historic environmental constraints, especially in terms of the impact on National Landscape components/character, and on the effectiveness of the Green Belt, also shows overall sustainability benefits, which is supported by further assessments in relation to the degree of such impacts.
- 4.42** The Sustainability Appraisal highlights that, subject to local circumstances, looking at settlements with a broad range of services provides a better starting point for a sustainable development strategy. Of particular note is the need to limit the scale of development in the National Landscape.
- 4.43** The Draft Local Plan concluded that, having seized all reasonable opportunities for growth 'across the board', meeting the housing need can only be met if the development strategy includes the strategic growth of certain settlements. This position has been reviewed, but it is evident from site assessment work that there is very little scope for adding much in the way of further housing numbers to the rural settlements. Indeed, in some cases, the scale of major developments in the National

Landscape have been found to be unacceptably great. Also, further appraisal has highlighted some issues with the dispersal of larger amounts of development to some smaller settlements with few facilities, which was also a frequent criticism in the consultation responses to draft proposals.

- 4.44** Paddock Wood is a logical choice for strategic growth for a number of reasons; being an existing service and employment centre, having a central railway station and main road links, giving wider accessibility. It is also outside the National Landscape and, except for land to the west, beyond the Green Belt.
- 4.45** In contrast, while the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells, along with Southborough, would be a prime candidate, it is wholly surrounded by the High Weald National Landscape and, where the National Landscape does not come up to the urban edge, mainly to the west and north, those areas are designated Green Belt. They are also reliant on the A26 and A264 for access, which are both observably congested for extended periods at peak times, with no obvious scope for significant relief, to the detriment of local amenities and the town's historic character.
- 4.46** Cranbrook is similarly constrained by its National Landscape location which, together with its historic character and lesser accessibility, make it unsuitable for strategic growth. Of course, its role as a service centre still warrants its consideration as a focus for growth, but not of a 'transformational' scale. Similar National Landscape constraints apply to Hawkhurst, which also has issues of traffic congestion and associated air quality in the centre.
- 4.47** Hence the Local Plan retains, and refines, the strategic sites. However, as a consequence of the further work and consideration of comments received, the development strategy set out in Policy STR 1 below has been refined from that of the Draft Local Plan, notably in terms of:
- less allocations, especially 'major developments', in the High Weald National Landscape overall;
 - much less development at the larger settlements of Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, in the National Landscape;
 - reduced development at some smaller settlements (especially Sissinghurst, Matfield, and Hartley) where relatively high levels of growth were initially proposed;
 - a modest increase in the overall scale of development at Royal Tunbridge Wells;
 - more provision for urban intensification/brownfield site development.
- 4.48** The development strategy retains the use and definition of Limits to Built Development (LBDs) around settlements, as 'policy lines'. These do not define settlements as such, and there may be fringe areas as well as some smaller settlements and enclaves of development in the countryside, that are excluded in order to maintain the overall rural character of the locality and to focus growth in more sustainable locations. Proposed development within the LBD boundaries, such as for new housing and business, will be acceptable in principle, subject to other Plan policies. Outside of the LBDs, more restrictive countryside policies apply. However, some development, such as that for farming, tourism, recreation,

equestrianism, rural workers' dwellings, and affordable housing as provided for by specific policies in the Plan, may be appropriate. Incorporated into the Local Plan are Site Layout Plans for each site allocation policy. These are indicative maps that provide an indication of how a site may come forward in line with the associated policy box.

- 4.49** Following the deletion of Tudeley Village, the adopted Local Plan does not provide for the full housing needs up to 2038. As such the Council is committed to an early review of the Plan to seek ways of meeting unmet housing needs in the later part of the Plan period. All other policies included in the Plan remain applicable for the entire plan period 2020-2038.
- 4.50** As part of this early review the Council will identify and assess reasonable options for meeting unmet housing needs, and without prejudice to any decisions made about a future development strategy to meet this unmet need, will consider all reasonable sites put forward through a 'Call for Sites' and other land identified by the Council to be assessed as part of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process.

Policy STR 1

The Development Strategy

The broad development strategy for Tunbridge Wells borough over the period 2020-2038, as shown indicatively on the Key Diagram (Figure 5), is to ensure that a minimum of 12,204 dwellings and 14 hectares of employment (Use Classes B and E) land are developed, together with supporting infrastructure and services. The strategy of this plan provides for a housing supply for 10 years from the date of adoption including necessary supporting infrastructure, but with a requirement for an early review of the plan to include ways of meeting identified unmet needs.

To achieve this, the Local Plan:

1. Promotes the effective use of urban and previously developed (brownfield) land, having due regard to relevant Plan policies;
2. Looks to focus new development within the Limits to Built Development of settlements, as defined on the Policies Map, where proposals accord with other relevant policies of this Plan;
3. Provides for the growth of settlements, having regard to their role and function, constraints, and opportunities, together with the major, transformational expansion of Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel), following garden settlement principles and providing flood risk solutions;
4. Provides for a prestigious new business park to the north of North Farm/ Kingstanding Way, Royal Tunbridge Wells, well connected to the improved A21;
5. Provides a framework for the preparation of a holistic Area Plan for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre;
6. Provides for some reductions in the area of the Green Belt, notably for land in east Capel (adjacent to Paddock Wood) and around Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury, where exceptional circumstances warrant release of land from the Green Belt and where an effective long-term Green Belt is maintained;

7. Limits development within the High Weald National Landscape to that which can be accommodated whilst still conserving its key characteristics, this being mostly small-scale, only promoting larger proposals where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated;
8. Normally limits development in the countryside (being defined as that outside the Limits to Built Development) to that which accords with specific policies of this Plan and/or that for which a rural location is fully demonstrated to be necessary.

Early Review of the Local Plan

Following adoption of the Local Plan, the Council will publish an update to its Local Development Scheme (LDS). This shall set out a timetable for an early review of the Local Plan, which shall commence within six months of adoption of the Local Plan. The LDS shall provide an indicative timescale for submission of an updated Local Plan for Examination, to take place no later than 30 months from commencement of the early review of the Local Plan. The Council shall then undertake the early review which shall include ways of meeting identified unmet housing needs.

- 4.51** Details of the development strategies for the two strategic sites, as well as for Royal Tunbridge Wells and each 'parished' area of the borough, are set out in Section 5. The overall scale and distribution of housing allocations to meet the above housing target are set out for each parish/settlement in Table 4.
- 4.52** Section 6 provides detailed policies for the management of different types of development and for ensuring that particular local issues (environment, housing, economic development, transport, and parking) are properly addressed.
- 4.53** The overall allocations for each parish/settlement, which are elaborated upon in the respective chapters in Section 5, are collated in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Distribution of housing allocations

Parish/Settlement	Local Plan allocations	
	Lower	Upper
Royal Tunbridge Wells	1,278	1,421
Southborough	26	26
Paddock Wood	1,820	1,912
<i>Paddock Wood and land east of Capel strategic urban expansion (STR/SS 1)*</i>	2,374	2,532
<i>Paddock Wood Town centre</i>	30	30
Capel (as part of STR/SS 1)*	997	1,063
Cranbrook and Sissinghurst	453	467
<i>Cranbrook</i>	415	429
<i>Sissinghurst</i>	38	38
Hawkhurst	189	198
Benenden**	88	95
<i>Benenden**</i>	41	45
<i>East End**</i>	47	50
Bidborough	0	0
Brenchley and Matfield	11	15
Frittenden	25	30

Parish/Settlement	Local Plan allocations	
Goudhurst	25	25
Horsmonden	185	235
Lamberhurst	25	30
Pembury	371	399
Rusthall	15	15
Sandhurst	20	30
Speldhurst	10	12
Sub-total	5,538	5,973
Allocations with existing planning permission as at 1 April 2023 (to be discounted to avoid double counting)	1,444	1,444
Total (with existing planning permission discounted)	4,094	4,529

** The figure for Capel parish includes that part of the urban expansion extending from Paddock Wood into the eastern edge of the parish and is based on strategic sites and master planning development density ranges.*

*** As per the allocation capacities within the 'made' Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan*

- 4.54** It can be seen that the total capacity of all allocated sites, excluding those that already have planning permission at the base date, is 4,094 - 4,529 dwellings. This compares to the anticipated residual requirement, after sites with planning permission and windfall sites allowances are made, of 5,693 dwellings. In overall terms, the allocated sites, together with these other sources of supply yield 10,605 - 11,040 dwellings, relative to the Plan's overall target of 12,204 net additional dwellings.
- 4.55** Taking the mid-point of dwelling ranges, there is a shortfall of 1,382 dwellings, equivalent to some 24.3% of the need from allocated sites and 11.3% of overall need to the end of the plan period. There is a high level of confidence regarding the achievability and availability of identified sites, and very high for those that have already the benefit of planning permission, and the windfall allowances are robust, such that the Council is confident that a 10-year housing land supply can be achieved post-adoption. The Council will then aim to meet the needs beyond the 10-year supply period by way of an immediate Local Plan review.
- 4.56** Further information provided in the Housing Supply and Trajectory Topic Paper demonstrates in detail the contribution of housing allocations to overall supply.
- 4.57** With regard to employment land needs, the allocations identified in the Local Plan are:

Table 5 Employment land allocations and commitments identified in the Local Plan

Site	Settlement/Parish	Policy Number	Net developable area (ha)
Land adjacent to Longfield Road	Royal Tunbridge Wells	AL/RTW 17	13.4
Land east of Maidstone Road	Paddock Wood	STR/SS 1	4.27
Land east of Transfesa Road	Paddock Wood	STR/SS 1	4.25
Hawkhurst Station Business Park	Gill's Green	AL/HA 7	1.2

- 4.58** These allocations total some 23.1 hectares. The sites, which are all 'key employment areas' in the Local Plan, each provide for a mix of business (B and E class) uses. They tend to be developed at a lower density than purely office sites, with consequently lower floorspace coverage. Overall, it is still expected that these allocations are appropriate in relation to the minimum provision required. This takes account of the geographic spread of the sites and their relationship to major housing growth
- 4.59** It is also assumed that existing employment space will essentially be retained (with a small reduction at Paddock Wood, just to the north of the train station) and that there is scope for the intensification or extension of some of these to help meet more local needs.
- 4.60** The importance of essential infrastructure being provided to support the proposed growth is recognised. The strategic approach to delivering infrastructure is set out within Policy STR 5, and at Policy STR 6 in relation to transport. Details of particular infrastructure to be provided in association with development is set out within the place shaping policies and the individual site allocations in Section 5. Additionally, a detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan is produced in parallel with this Plan, and is published as a supporting document.
- 4.61** Further details of the place shaping policies for parishes and settlements and site allocations that flow from the above Development Strategy policy are contained in Section 5.

Place Shaping and Design

- 4.62** Tunbridge Wells borough is notable for its existing high quality and culturally rich environment. In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the creation of future high quality buildings and places is a fundamental aim of the Local Plan and the policies within it. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and well designed development can contribute significantly to establishing a strong sense of place through the creation of attractive and desirable places to live, work, and visit. They can bring significant benefits to the local environment and economy. A well designed environment can also make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of residents and visitors, and should create safe, accessible, legible, and adaptable environments in terms of their use by all people, now and in the future.
- 4.63** A strategic objective of the Local Plan is *"to promote high quality and well-designed development that contributes to the local identity and character and creates attractive environments"*. It is considered that using a comprehensive approach to new development at strategic and other specifically identified sites in the borough, utilising design codes and principles, should form part of the process alongside the development of housing, economic growth, and infrastructure to develop cohesive and integrated communities based on identified design principles.
- 4.64** Sustainable design principles make efficient use of resources through location, design, positioning, specification, and sourcing of materials, as well as improving the quality of developments and enhancing their environmental performance. The Council will encourage new development to incorporate current best practice in sustainable design and construction, incorporate mitigation and adaptation measures against the future impacts of climate change, and deliver high quality developments. Public art and active spaces will be encouraged as part of good design to help foster a sense of place and community coherence.
- 4.65** Detailed design policies are set out within the development management policies in Section 6 of this Local Plan. Additionally, specific design principles to be applied are set out in individual place shaping and allocation policies in Section 5, where relevant, including the use of design codes and masterplanning principles.

Policy STR 2

Place Shaping and Design

All new development must aim to meet high standards of urban and architectural design and have regard to national and local design guidance, including the National Design Guide 2019, the Kent Design Guide, or any subsequent version, and any design guidance adopted by the Council. Where appropriate to the scale of the development, the Council will expect applicants to engage in early and effective discussions with the community and other relevant stakeholders. The Council will require the use of masterplanning, including the use of design codes and sustainable design standards where appropriate, for strategic and larger-scale developments where identified in allocation policies in this Plan.

All new development must use the following principles relevant to its location, scale, and use:

1. Respond positively to local character and context to preserve and enhance the quality of existing communities and their environs, as well as taking the opportunity to create a new identity informed by local character and context, where appropriate;
2. Provide buildings that exhibit architectural quality within well-considered public and private realms;
3. Conserve and enhance assets of historic, landscape, or biodiversity value;
4. Enhance the public realm through additional landscaping, street furniture, public art, and other distinctive features that help to create a sense of place;
5. Seek to promote and encourage social interaction and active and healthy lifestyles;
6. Ensure all components of the proposal, such as buildings, car parking, and new connections, open space, and landscaping, are well integrated as part of the overall design, to be accessible, legible, adaptable, and inclusive to everyone, safe and well-related to one another;
7. Prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport services in line with the Vision defined for a site and in-line with associated agreed Monitor and Manage frameworks;
8. Be based on measures to promote environmental sustainability, including energy and water efficiency measures, sustainable design and construction techniques, and provision of appropriate wastewater and flood mitigation measures;
9. Protect the amenity of existing and future residents and users with regard to noise, vibration, smell, loss of light, privacy, and overbearing impact.

Further detailed policies in relation to place shaping and design are included within the development management policies in Section 6 and also in the individual site allocation policies within the place shaping policies in Section 5 of this Local Plan.

Brownfield Land

- 4.66** A presumption in favour of sustainable development lies at the heart of the NPPF (paragraph 10).
- 4.67** To achieve the overarching need for sustainable development, the NPPF (September 2023) identifies the requirement to make effective use of land. This is set out at paragraph 119, which states:
- “Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land” (except where this would conflict with other policies in this Framework, including causing harm to designated sites of importance for biodiversity).”*
- 4.68** The definition of ‘brownfield land’ is included in the Glossary at Appendix 5 of this Local Plan.
- 4.69** A key principle underpinning the overall strategy set out in the Local Plan for the pattern and scale of development is that it makes as much use as possible (optimal use) of suitable PDL (previously developed land)/brownfield sites and under-utilised land, including optimising the density of development, particularly in the borough’s town centres and other locations well served by public transport.
- 4.70** It is particularly important in a borough that has important heritage, landscape qualities and designations (National Landscape) and Green Belt, that effective and efficient use is made of urban land and suitable brownfield sites. It reduces pressure to develop greenfield land and, more broadly, ensures that best use is made of the higher levels of accessibility to supporting infrastructure, services, and facilities within established urban areas.
- 4.71** The Local Plan includes a number of site allocations on brownfield sites, making effective use of such sites, as required by the NPPF, helping to achieve the overarching need for sustainable development. Such sites tend to be located within established LBDs. This is reflected in Policy STR 1: The Development Strategy.
- 4.72** It is recognised, however, that over the plan period, other brownfield sites are likely to come forward for development as windfall sites (i.e. sites not specifically allocated in the Local Plan). Most of these are likely to be brownfield sites not previously known about inside established LBDs. Some, however, will be brownfield sites not located inside established LBDs, sites within proximity of existing settlements, or will be sites in more rural areas not well connected to settlements.
- 4.73** Policy STR 3 therefore seeks to aid the decision-making process when determining such proposals.

Policy STR 3

Brownfield Land

Proposals that provide for the effective use of redundant, disused, or under-utilised brownfield land and buildings in sustainable locations will be supported in principle.

In particular:

1. Such proposals within settlements, as defined by their Limits to Built Development, will be encouraged, having proper regard to their detailed impacts, notably design, in accordance with Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design;
2. Such proposals either within, or in short walking distance of, town and rural service centres, as defined in Policy ED 9: Defined Town, Rural and Other Service Centres, will be expected to make optimal use of land and buildings in accordance with Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design and, where relevant, Policy H 2: Housing Density;
3. Such proposals in the countryside (i.e. brownfield sites outside defined Limits to Built Development) will be supported where:
 - a. first consideration is given to the re-use of existing buildings, including any suitable extensions;
 - b. they are compatible with and, where possible, enhance, the landscape setting and local amenities;
 - c. for residential developments, the site is well related and accessible to a defined settlement and there is, or the development will provide, safe access by foot, cycling, or public transport for a high proportion of trips;
 - d. for all proposals relating to existing brownfield sites in employment use, the criteria in Policy ED 2: Retention of Existing Employment Sites and Buildings are met;
 - e. if relevant, they represent an appropriate use of a heritage asset or, in respect of enabling development, this is necessary to secure its future, in accordance with Policy EN4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets;
 - f. there is no unacceptable highway impact and the nature and volume of traffic is otherwise compatible with the local road network;
 - g. they are in accordance with other relevant development plan policies.

Ensuring Comprehensive Development

Comprehensive approaches to site planning

- 4.74** Securing the effective delivery of development sites is at the heart of plan making. Taking a comprehensive approach to sites, especially for mixed-use developments and/or where there are multiple land ownerships, and showing a willingness to use Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers if needed to achieve this, are regarded as strategically important.
- 4.75** Bringing forward piecemeal developments on a land ownership basis may well not constitute the good planning of an area. It may be possible for many smaller schemes, but for some, as well as many larger ones, there will be a need to bring sites forward in a comprehensive way. This is to ensure effective integration between proposals for the respective land ownership parcels, as well as with the wider locality. Without a mechanism for ensuring collaboration and a comprehensive approach to development areas, elements that help contribute to place shaping and a good quality environment, such as green space corridors, open spaces, pedestrian/cycle linkages, community and other non-commercial facilities, are unlikely to be properly planned for, or provided.
- 4.76** Such an approach should be underpinned by some form of overarching strategic framework. In such cases, the primary roles are to identify:
- the 'building blocks' of the proposed development taken as a whole, notably areas for housing, employment uses, retail, education, community facilities, open space, etc. as appropriate;
 - habitat retention, improvement, and creation to achieve net gains for biodiversity;
 - strategic movement routes/corridors;
 - shared infrastructure, including drainage;
 - cohesive design principles.
- 4.77** The scope and status/form of a 'masterplan' should, logically, reflect the circumstances of the site and its context. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which may take the form of a site-specific 'Planning Brief', is the most formal and inclusive approach. It would be led by the Council and would carry most weight in decision making. However, these would be only needed where there are substantial planning matters to resolve. A masterplan will be required for the urban expansion of Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel).
- 4.78** The key requirement should be to ensure that a coordinated approach to new developments which have a clear inter-relationship is taken to achieve the efficient use of land, providing for different land uses in most appropriate places, and overall good planning.

- 4.79** It is entirely reasonable and proper to expect a joint approach by respective promoters of a site, showing how any discrete components of a scheme will relate to each other and integrate to deliver the infrastructure and facilities appropriate for the overall development. They may also be expected to improve wider sustainability of the neighbourhood.
- 4.80** For any partial proposal to be favourably considered, an indicative plan for the whole site, including phasing, would be required. Furthermore, the Council would need to be satisfied not only that the development of the whole site would be facilitated, but, furthermore, that it can be confident, possibly through the use of legal agreements, that all the elements of the whole scheme will be delivered in a timely manner.
- 4.81** Different means of ensuring a comprehensive approach exist and will be case specific. Hence, the policy sets out the guiding principles to determine which would be most appropriate. These principles would also apply to any windfall sites that duly come forward.
- 4.82** Engagement in planning, especially of larger, more complex sites, is critical. The greater the engagement with the local community, as well as the Council and other key stakeholders, the more weight can be given to any masterplanning approach.
- 4.83** Regard should also be given to the strategic policies on place shaping and design, infrastructure, and transport (see Policies STR 2, STR 5, and STR 6), which also relate to integration with existing development.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers

- 4.84** The NPPF (September 2023) states, at paragraph 121, that:

"Local planning authorities, and other plan-making bodies, should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them. This should include identifying opportunities to facilitate land assembly, supported where necessary by compulsory purchase powers, where this can help to bring more land forward for meeting development needs and/or secure better development outcomes."

- 4.85** It follows that CPOs can be an important tool available to local authorities to acquire land for developments where this is in the public interest. This may be to enable land to be acquired for the wider benefit of the community, usually to enable regeneration and development schemes that involve complex or multiple land ownership, without which development would be unlikely to be delivered. It could also cover situations where development would otherwise only be undertaken in a piecemeal fashion, which would not secure important community infrastructure or other sound planning objectives. However, the use of CPO powers is only likely to be considered where respective developers or landowners do not agree to work together and with the Council collaboratively to bring sites forward for development.

Multi-developer delivery on strategic and large major sites

- 4.86** There has been evidence from parts of the UK, and in other countries, that the rate of delivery of residential units can be increased by several developers constructing on larger and strategic sites at the same time; essentially each delivering on different parcels of a larger site. Developers will be encouraged to follow this approach where appropriate to maximise the delivery rate for housing on such sites. The Council will work with developers to decide where this would be appropriate.
- 4.87** In accordance with the general principles of comprehensive site planning outlined above, where sites are in more than one ownership, developers will be expected to work together to bring an overall scheme forward or, as a minimum, consider and show how the development of their part integrates as part of the proper planning of the whole area.
- 4.88** However, it is necessary to ensure that this approach does not artificially sub-divide a site so that it falls below a particular size threshold; for example, in relation to the provision of affordable housing. Furthermore, it is also important to ensure that piecemeal development of larger sites does not prejudice the subsequent development of the remainder of a larger site.

Policy STR 4

Ensuring Comprehensive Development

A comprehensive approach to site development will be expected to ensure the good planning of the area and, in relation to allocated sites, to ensure that the policy provisions, read as a whole, are achieved.

Where sites have several land use elements or are in multiple ownerships, this will be secured by an appropriate means of masterplanning, the form of which will include consideration of:

- the strategic significance of the proposal;
- the extent of different land uses proposed across the overall site;
- whether there are multiple land ownerships forming the allocation.

To ensure holistic and fully integrated approaches to the strategic developments proposed in this Local Plan, masterplans for the urban expansion of Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel), will be required.

In all circumstances, proper consideration should be given to how the policy requirements (such as access and connectivity, open space, drainage and other infrastructure, as well as affordable housing) relating to the site as a whole, with a phasing plan where appropriate, will be achieved. Delivery will normally be secured through a legal agreement.

The Council strongly encourages, and will have regard to, the level of engagement of relevant stakeholders, including the local community, town or parish councils, service providers, environmental organisations, and other interested parties, in the preparation of masterplans or similar framework documents.

Where necessary to achieve the Local Plan's strategic objectives and development strategy, the Council will use its Compulsory Purchase Order powers (and/or work with other authorities to use their Compulsory Purchase Order powers) to bring forward development in a timely and comprehensive way.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

- 4.89** Infrastructure can be separated into three main categories: physical infrastructure (such as highways and public realm improvements); community infrastructure (such as schools, adult social services, and cultural facilities); and green, grey, and blue infrastructure (such as play spaces, natural and semi-natural open space, and sports pitches, as well as other essential infrastructure such as flood mitigation, utilities, and digital connectivity).

Green: network of natural and semi-natural features, including, for example, street trees, green roofs, parks, ponds, rivers, woodlands.

Grey: human engineered infrastructure, including the pipes, pumps, ditches, and detention ponds engineered by people to manage stormwater.

Blue: linked to water and includes pools, ponds and pond systems, and watercourses.

- 4.90** The Council has prepared a Green Infrastructure Framework (2019), which deals with the provision of these types of infrastructure in more detail to support the growth in the Local Plan.
- 4.91** As set out previously in Sections 2 and 3, protecting existing infrastructure and securing the timely investment in, and delivery of, new infrastructure is key.
- 4.92** The Local Plan Vision is clear; it is expected that future infrastructure to mitigate the impact of development, or in the case of the strategic sites at Paddock Wood to deliver 'betterment' in flooding terms to particular areas, should be largely funded by development to ensure that the development is acceptable in planning terms.
- 4.93** The Council has also undertaken a 'Whole Plan' Viability Assessment and an assessment of the viability of the strategic sites. The conclusion of this study is that the policies in the Local Plan are viable.
- 4.94** The Council recognises that, in certain instances, the provision of infrastructure, including that related to flood storage (both to mitigate the impact of new development and to provide 'betterment'), and new transport routes will negatively impact on land, residences, and businesses, which otherwise would not be directly affected by the Development Strategy of this Plan. This has been considered in the formation of the Development Strategy.
- 4.95** Alongside this Local Plan, the Council has developed an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which seeks to identify the key elements of infrastructure that will be required to support the level and distribution of development being proposed in the Local Plan and how it will be delivered and phased to serve new development. It also sets out what mechanisms will be used to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure. It is critical that the necessary infrastructure (whether physical or social) is delivered in a timely way, to ensure that the development programme is not delayed and that built development and infrastructure is brought forward in a comprehensive approach.

4.96 As referred to above, the IDP sets out the infrastructure that is required to support the growth proposed in the Local Plan, including the specific projects. A number of ‘Critical’ or ‘Essential’ projects are identified, particularly to support the delivery of the Strategic Sites at Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel), and it includes the following by theme as reflected within the IDP and the individual site allocations within the Local Plan:

- **Transport:**
 - a package of significant transport measures to support the growth at the Strategic Site at Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel), including new road junctions/links, bus links and services, and active travel provision (including towards Royal Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge);
 - a further package of measures for Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury, including improvements to road junctions/links, bus priority measures, and upgraded and new cycle routes and pedestrian links;
 - improved pedestrian and cycle links at Hawkhurst and Cranbrook.
- **Education:**
 - Expansion of existing secondary school at Paddock Wood (or if expansion is not feasible a new 4FE Secondary School on safeguarded land);
 - four forms of entry of new primary provision at Paddock Wood/Capel;
 - expansion of two existing primary schools in Royal Tunbridge Wells, as well as expansion at Cranbrook, Hawkhurst, and Horsmonden.
- **Health:** provision of new medical facilities at Paddock Wood, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst, and Horsmonden, as well as expansion of a number of existing premises, including at Pembury;
- **Water:** additional capacity at waste water treatment works and the sewerage network across the borough to accommodate growth. A range of significant flood mitigation measures at Paddock Wood/Capel;
- **Utilities:** improvements to be made across the whole borough to be able to access high quality and future-proofed broadband connectivity – ultra fast fibre to the premises;
- **Community, public, and social services:** a number of new community halls/hubs to serve the growing population, including at Cranbrook, and Hawkhurst, as well as community hubs/facilities at Southborough and Showfields and Sherwood within Royal Tunbridge Wells;
- **Sport and recreation:** a new stadium sports hub at Royal Tunbridge Wells, as well as a smaller local sports hubs around, or close to, the Main Urban Area and significant new provision to serve the strategic site at Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel);
- **Green, grey, and blue infrastructure:** a number of green infrastructure projects to be provided through new development across the borough;
- **Waste and recycling:** a new waste transfer station and expanded/redeveloped household waste recycling centre at Royal Tunbridge Wells to serve the whole borough.

- 4.97** The provision of infrastructure, particularly that which involves the movement of people, vehicles, or water across borough and county administrative boundaries, have been discussed in the duty to cooperate meetings held with neighbouring and county authorities. These discussions will actively continue to ensure that the impact of growth is appropriately mitigated.

Policy STR 5

Infrastructure and Connectivity

It is essential that all new development will be supported by the provision of the necessary infrastructure, services, and facilities that have been identified to serve the needs arising from new development in a timely way, and will be provided as follows:

1. Where development creates a requirement for new or improved infrastructure beyond existing provision, developers will be required to provide, and/or contribute significantly towards, the additional requirement being provided, to the agreement of the Council in collaboration with the relevant service provider;
2. Detailed specifications of the site-specific mitigation schemes/contributions required are included in the overarching place shaping policies and individual site allocation policies. Development proposals should seek to make provision for all the land required to accommodate any additional infrastructure arising from that development;
3. Dedicated planning agreements will be used to provide a range of site-specific mitigation in accordance with the Section 106 tests, which will normally be provided on-site but may, where appropriate, be provided in an off-site location or via an in lieu financial contribution. In some cases, separate agreements with utility providers may be required;
4. Infrastructure schemes that are brought forward by service providers will be encouraged and supported where they are in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan;
5. New residential and commercial development will be supported if sufficient infrastructure capacity is either available, or can be provided in time to serve the development;
6. For the identified strategic site where the provision of a range of significant infrastructure projects is required to mitigate the impact of development to particular areas, the delivery of this will be agreed through a masterplanning process;
7. Due to the complexity of monitoring contributions and the delivery of infrastructure, the Council will require the payment of a monitoring fee, which will be secured through Section 106 agreements and agreed between the Council and developers.

The following are the strategic priorities for infrastructure provision or improvements within the borough to deliver and support the growth set out in this Local Plan:

Education

Provision will be made for sufficient school places in the form of expanded or new primary and secondary schools, together with early years, childcare, and adult education facilities, with all relevant development contributing to these through land and/or contributions,

and strategic developments providing land and contributing to the cost of delivering new schools. Any new provision will be determined through consultation with Kent County Council.

Health

Ensure that essential healthcare infrastructure is provided as part of new development in the form of new or expanded healthcare facilities. This should include primary and acute care, and any other supporting healthcare facilities, such as social care, that the Council is made aware of through consultation with the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board or other relevant providers.

Water

Providing an adequate supply of fresh water and dealing with the removal of foul water is essential across the whole borough as part of any planned growth, and Southern Water and South East Water as the regulatory bodies have been fully consulted as part of the plan preparation process to ensure that the necessary provision is delivered in a timely way in accordance with Policy EN 24: Water Supply, Quality, and Conservation. Taking account of flood risk and the implications of proposed growth in areas that are at risk of flooding, and ensuring that any risk is not exacerbated but in fact improved, is a key priority of the Local Plan. Close liaison is required with Kent County Council as the lead local flood authority and the Environment Agency to ensure that adequate consideration is given to any development in flood prone areas and that appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures are put in place where necessary in accordance with Policies EN 25: Flood Risk and EN 26: Sustainable Drainage.

Utilities and digital infrastructure utilities

Ensure that the provision of digital infrastructure and other utilities is supported, including that provided strategically, and for developers to ensure that such infrastructure is provided within sites from their point of connection to the strategic network to individual buildings in accordance with Policy ED 3: Digital Communications and Fibre to the Premises (FTTP).

Community, public, and social services

A range of community, public, and social services will be provided to support the needs of a growing population, including library provision, community centres and hubs, youth and adult services, as well as any additional emergency services as identified by the relevant lead agencies.

Sport and recreation

Appropriate access to formal and informal sport and recreation provision will be provided as part of all new development to promote wellbeing and opportunities for sport and recreation to meet the needs of all communities across the borough. A borough-wide Sports Strategy has been developed in accordance with Policies OSSR 1: Retention of Open Space and OSSR 2: The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation, and a range of provision has been identified and provided for to support the growth over the plan period, and will include indoor and outdoor sports provision, playing pitches, parks and recreation grounds, children's and youth play space, as well as amenity and natural green space.

Green, grey, and blue Infrastructure

Multi-functional green, grey, and blue infrastructure will be provided in both the rural and urban areas through a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality formal and informal green spaces and landscape features, including parks, open spaces, playing fields, play spaces, woodlands, hedgerows, green routes, water features, allotments, street trees, and community orchards. The Council has prepared a Green Infrastructure Framework 2019 to guide the provision of green, grey, and blue infrastructure and further detail is provided by Policy EN 14: Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure.

Waste and recycling

Provision will be made for sufficient waste capacity in the form of expanded or new waste infrastructure, with all relevant developments contributing to these through land and/or contributions and strategic developments providing land and contributing to the cost of delivering new waste infrastructure. Any new provision will be determined through consultation with Kent County Council.

Public realm, art, and culture

Development across the borough should incorporate opportunities for the inclusion of increased art and cultural opportunities. Infrastructure will be provided to mitigate the impact on cultural need through the provision of buildings and spaces that allow for increased or improved cultural opportunities, and through the provision of public art and the recognition of heritage assets.

Transport

The strategic approach to transport provision is included within Policy STR 6: Transport and Parking.

The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan will support the growth in the Local Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been updated to reflect [DfT Circular 1/22](#) (Strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development, updated December 2022) to outline the required Vision and Validate/Monitor and Manage requirements. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the scope of transport/highways infrastructure to be provided, the phasing of such infrastructure linked to the planned development, and the mechanisms by which the Council considers that the infrastructure will be delivered, including the use of Section 106 agreements, S278 agreements, infrastructure levy, or equivalent policy as applicable.

- 4.98** In addition to the criteria in the above policy, a number of relevant Local Plan policies should also be referred to, including a number of development management policies within Section 6, in particular those relating to Environment, Transport and Parking, and Open Space, Sport and Recreation. Additionally, individual site-specific allocations and place shaping strategic policies within Section 5 of the Local Plan refer to individual sites and infrastructure projects.

Transport and Parking

- 4.99** The NPPF is clear that significant development should be focused on locations which are, or can be made, sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes, which has been factored into the development of the Council's Development Strategy, with growth principally at the strategic site at Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel), and at the Main Urban Area. This presents opportunities for the development of highly permeable and sustainable settlements, whilst giving access to employment, services, and public transport available.
- 4.100** In accordance with the NPPF, this Local Plan aims to facilitate all forms of sustainable transport, ranging from active travel (such as walking or cycling), public transport, car share, car club, ultra-low emission vehicles such as electric vehicles, and charging points, or any provisions that arise through new technology over the course of the plan period. This should be done in all instances to reduce private car dependence in the borough where it is both feasible in relation to local circumstances, and in support of the Council's Development Strategy.
- 4.101** This will also ensure that the Plan assists the delivery of the latest Air Quality Action Plan and supports emission reductions in designated Air Quality Management Areas and/or Air Quality Protection Zones and areas of poorer air quality, and contributes to the Council's ambition to make the entire borough carbon neutral by 2050. Where opportunities arise, the Council, as Local Planning Authority, will therefore prioritise all options of active travel to support an improvement in general public health in accordance with Public Health England's document '[Working Together to Promote Active Travel](#): A briefing for local authorities'.
- 4.102** Cycling, and the use of electric bicycles (or e-bikes), is considered to have a particularly important role in active travel, and it is recognised that the infrastructure for safe cycling needs to be in place first to bring about increased use of this mode of transport.
- 4.103** Alongside enabling opportunities for active travel, the Council, as Local Planning Authority, will also work with partners to facilitate sufficient public transport options, such as rail or bus, particularly in the Main Urban Area and other highly accessible areas within the borough. Indeed, the borough benefits from a good rail service to Tonbridge, Sevenoaks, and London, as well as a bus network that covers both the urban and rural areas. The Council has liaised with the bus and rail infrastructure providers and will continue to do so throughout the plan period.
- 4.104** The Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Economic Needs Study (2016) identifies that 50% of residents in Tunbridge Wells borough commute out of the borough to work (2011 census data). It will be important to assess how travel and commuting patterns change over the beginning of the plan period: the coronavirus pandemic in 2020/21 has accelerated changes in both. Nevertheless, due to the location of the borough there is always likely to be travelling to London and other settlements, and these strategic rail and bus networks and services will therefore need to be maintained and enhanced. Sustainable transport policy in this Local Plan must consequently encourage an efficient and improved strategic public transport network

and safeguard any routes that may be required in the future, in places that will cater to those who commute, and will encourage a reduction in the necessity for the private car.

- 4.105** Indeed, while opportunities for sustainable transport will be facilitated where possible, there is an understanding by the Council that there are high levels of car ownership and use within the borough. This is reflected in both the 2001 and 2011 censuses, with around 55-60% of all working residents in Tunbridge Wells borough shown to travel to work by car, although again it will be important to see how this changes. The Local Plan must consequently identify necessary improvements to the highway network to mitigate and address the impact of increased use through new development. Following transport assessment work as part of the Local Plan evidence base, relevant mitigation measures are set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 4.106** A sufficient level of car parking facilities will be provided for both residential and non-residential purposes at suitable standards within all settlements of the borough, and particularly where private car or van ownership and travel is especially high. There will also be a need to ensure that the level of car parking facilities maintains and improves the viability of commercial developments across the borough.
- 4.107** There is therefore a need to ensure a flexible approach to transport that can adapt to modern travel patterns, including innovative smart solutions such as Mobility as a Service (MaaS) (see the Glossary at Appendix 5), and changes in technology. The Council recognises that technology in transport is moving rapidly, including in relation to autonomous vehicles, and this is reflected in the policy wording below. Given the constrained nature of the highway network, particularly in the Main Urban Area, it is recognised that there may be scope for new and innovative technology to mitigate the impact of development and reduce existing problems, and the Council will work with partners to explore relevant opportunities with the potential for early implementation.
- 4.108** Given the expected changes to commuting and working from home patterns, together with potential changes in transport technology, this policy will be reviewed and may be updated as part of the five-year review of the Local Plan.
- 4.109** Whilst active travel and public transport are prioritised, in all instances, however, the predominant approach will be to maximise active and sustainable transport provision and opportunities, as well as to aim to reduce the number of single occupancy and short distance, car-based trips.

Policy STR 6

Transport and Parking

The transport and parking strategy is to:

1. Deliver future development in accessible locations, normally within, or in close proximity to, existing towns and villages across the borough, where it is of a scale

which supports the necessary infrastructure and services to allow the community to function self sufficiently on a day-to-day basis;

2. Provide an integrated and comprehensive approach to transport provision, which offers choice and prioritises (a) active travel and then (b) public transport (rail, bus, car club, car share, and taxi), as an alternative means of transport to the private car whilst ensuring that (c) there are necessary improvements to the existing highway network and infrastructure to mitigate and address the impact of development to an acceptable degree and ensure highway safety. This will include working with partners at both the strategic and local levels.
3. As required by the [DfT Circular 1/22](#) (Strategic Road Network and Local Highway Network, and the delivery of sustainable development, updated December 2022) the Local Plan will expect site promoters to outline their Vision for the site that manages down the impact of planned development and frame the transport requirements, for all modes of transport, in accordance with relevant Monitor and Manage Strategies.

As such the strategy will:

- i. through the location of new development and the provision of active travel infrastructure, maximise the internalisation of trips within settlements, both from new and existing development, thereby reducing the impact on the highway network through new development;
- ii. enable opportunities to be taken in relation to changing transport technology and usage, particularly in relation to personal electrical vehicles;
- iii. through providing alternatives to emission-producing private car use, support opportunities for improving air quality within the borough in accordance with Policy EN 21: Air Quality.

a) Active travel

Active travel (walking and cycling, and emerging electrical personal vehicles) will be prioritised through:

1. The creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the Main Urban Area (Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough) and surrounds (Bidborough, Langton Green, and Rusthall), with enhanced legible and safe cycling, pedestrian, and electrical personal vehicles routes delivered in line with the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Such routes will also be provided in other settlements, including through the use of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan in Hawkhurst;
2. The development and delivery of the strategic site (Paddock Wood and east Capel) proposed in this Local Plan will have integrated active travel as a fundamental element to their layout and design, so that settlements are easy to navigate on foot or by bike, both in new development and through existing areas of settlements to access their centres and services;
3. The provision of inter-settlement walking, cycling, electrical personal vehicle, and non-motorised user routes into the centres or key destinations within settlements, including through enhancing routes such as Public Rights of Way (including footpaths, bridleways, and byways) for users of non-motorised transport. This will include links to destinations outside the borough, including Tonbridge;
4. The provision of improved cycle parking and e-bike charging points and bike share opportunities.

b) Public transport

The Council will work with partners to maximise use of public transport (rail, bus, car club, car share, and taxi), as an alternative means of transport to the private car by:

1. Establishing rapid bus/transport links, including from Paddock Wood to Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood to Tonbridge, and Royal Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge, and ensuring that the design of the strategic site provides for attractive bus services with convenient access to the highway network;
2. Working with Network Rail and the train operating company to provide station infrastructure improvements where necessary, and working strategically to retain and improve the rail network by increasing the attractiveness of travelling by rail, including to multiple destinations;
3. Working with Kent County Council and bus operators to retain and enhance existing bus services and infrastructure, as well as exploring options for innovation vehicle types and in demand responsive services;
4. Requiring robust travel plans for relevant developments (see Policy TP 1: Transport Assessments/Statements and Travel Plans) to maximise opportunities for car sharing and mini-bus/shuttle bus use, opportunities for employers to stagger arrival and departure times to places of employment to avoid peak times, and residential developers to provide facilities for home or co-working;
5. Supporting the expansion of car clubs (which allow the booking/use of vehicles kept on publicly accessible land by individuals for a number of hours at a time) and opportunities for car sharing.

c) Highway network

The Council will work with Kent County Council and National Highways through the agreed Monitor and Manage strategies to oversee the delivery of strategic and local highway improvements, (including) by third parties to mitigate and address the impact on the highway network. These measures will be promoted and funded by development and delivered in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority, KCC Highways, National Highways and developers, although other funding opportunities will be investigated. A full list of the envisaged/potential mitigation measures are provided in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, but include:

- i. part off-line, part on-line Colts Hill Bypass and associated improvements at Badsell Road Roundabout, as shown on the Policies Map;
- ii. Somerhill Roundabout improvements;
- iii. traffic management improvements at Five Oak Green village;
- iv. Hop Farm Roundabout improvements;
- v. Junctions on the Pembury Road corridor including measures along the A228/A264, including junction capacity improvements at Woodsgate Corner and an appropriate junction at the Pembury Road/Halls Hole Road/Blackhurst Lane.

The routes for major and strategic road improvements, including a safeguarded route for an entirely off-line A228 strategic link (Colts Hill bypass) as part of the wider major roads network (to deliver wider economic benefits and links to north east Kent (and potentially the Lower Thames Crossing), and the dualling of the A21 from Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst will be safeguarded (see Policy TP 6: Safeguarding Roads).

New and emerging technology

The Council will realise opportunities for changing transport technology and usage through:

1. Incorporating electric car charging points (or any new technology requirements) into new developments, and where possible into existing public and private car parks and suitable street furniture;
2. Exploring the potential for incorporating innovative smart travel solutions resulting from emerging transport technology and initiatives, such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Mobility as a Service (MaaS), into transport planning and new developments.

Design

The Council will ensure that transport infrastructure development or improvement schemes (including public realm and other works to historic routes, surfaces, and street furniture) take every opportunity to improve or enhance the historic environment, green and blue infrastructure, and landscape connectivity in accordance with the guidance in Historic England's national and regional Streets for All: Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places guidance.

Car parking

Car parking policy is set out in Policy TP 3: Parking Standards. The Council, as Local Planning Authority, will be closely involved with the Council's forthcoming Parking Strategy, to ensure an integrated approach to parking, transport, and land use planning.

Climate Change

- 4.110** Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles of the NPPF and a statutory duty for local planning authorities under the Climate Change Act 2008 and Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It is also a central consideration within sustainable development.
- 4.111** In 2019, the Climate Change Act was amended to set a legally binding target for reducing UK CO₂ emissions to zero by 2050. This decision resulted from an updated report from the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#), which followed the 2015 [Paris Agreement](#), to which the UK is a signatory. The Paris Agreement is intended to keep increases in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels; and to limit the increase to 1.5°C.
- 4.112** Paragraph 152 of the NPPF (September 2023) states that places should be shaped in ways that contribute to “*radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.*”
- 4.113** In the context of climate change adaptation, the Town and Country Planning Association and Royal Town Planning Institute 2018 report [Rising to the Climate Crisis - a Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change](#) states that “*climate adaptation must be understood as the main priority for long-term planning to secure climate resilience, and must be accepted as equally as important as meeting housing need.*”
- 4.114** At the local level, the Council has declared its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies and its ambition to make the entire borough net zero by 2050 (see [Full Council 16 July 2025, Item FC27/25](#)). To this end, it has assisted in the preparation of the [Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy](#). However, the planning system still has a key role to play in meeting the new challenge of reducing CO₂ emissions to zero.
- 4.115** While it may seem difficult to balance the competing needs of development and climate change ambition, planning can have a strong influence on how electricity is produced, how buildings are designed and renovated, and how people travel within and outside of the borough boundaries. The Borough Council is also in a special position to be able to promote policies that can support the green economy by encouraging investment in low carbon innovation, local supply chains, and the necessary skills that accompany these.
- 4.116** Strategic measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change should complement each other, allowing for multiple benefits. For example, well planned green infrastructure can simultaneously reduce urban heat islands, manage flooding, and improve ecology, as well as contributing to pleasant surroundings that encourage walking and cycling.
- 4.117** This strategic policy will be kept under review to reflect the progress made towards the carbon neutrality target.

Policy STR 7

Climate Change

All development within the borough will recognise the Climate Emergency and be supportive of the Council's ultimate target to achieve net zero emissions across the borough by 2050. This will be achieved by:

1. Effective spatial planning

Land use planning for the distribution of people and activities that allows for radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, including:

- a. reducing the need to travel, especially by private car;
- b. securing the maximum possible journeys made by active and sustainable transport for both people and freight;
- c. delivering a step change in energy efficiency improvements.

2. Implementing proactive policy on climate change mitigation

A proactive policy for low carbon design and construction will be implemented that follows the energy hierarchy (see the Glossary at Appendix 5) and supports the delivery of appropriate renewable energy generation. The embodied energy of existing buildings will be considered by prioritising restoration over demolition, and decentralised heating and cooling networks will be given particular consideration in the largest strategic development locations.

3. Implementing proactive policy on climate change adaptation

Development will be supported that minimises vulnerability and allows for communities, infrastructure, buildings, and ecology to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including:

- a. protecting existing green spaces and creating new, appropriate green infrastructure whilst balancing the need for built development;
- b. not increasing, and wherever possible reducing, surface water runoff through the use of permeable surfaces and Sustainable Drainage Systems;
- c. avoiding overheating within buildings and the urban heat island effect;
- d. improving the efficiency of water use.

4. Partner engagement

The most effective and appropriate approaches, interim targets in actions plans, etc. will be determined by engagement with appropriate partners, including utility providers, communities, health authorities, regulators and emergency planners, statutory environmental bodies, local nature partnerships, local resilience forums, and climate change partnerships.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, Built, and Historic Environment

- 4.118** The natural and built environments of the borough are rich in designated and non-designated heritage assets, landscape value, and biodiversity, which combine to create a distinctive local character recognised by residents and visitors alike. The High Weald National Landscape covers approximately 70% of the borough and, in addition to this, there are a number of locally recognised assets, designated sites, and habitats, including ancient woodland, veteran trees, and Local Green Spaces, as well as Areas of Landscape Importance, Arcadian Areas, and Landscape Approaches. Together, they provide important visual amenity value and contribute to local character.
- 4.119** In terms of the built environment, the borough has some of the highest numbers of heritage assets in the South East, which together provide a resource that contributes to creating a sense of place that should be passed on to future generations. Conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, such as listed buildings, conservation areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and historic parks and gardens, will therefore be central to the Council's approach to the environment. The built environment and heritage assets can be enlivened and made more accessible through interpretation, including the provision of public art. Following public consultation, the Council has adopted Public Art Guidance (2019), which sets out the details for developer contributions, and the commissioning and delivery of public art.
- 4.120** There are four broad character areas in the borough, within which each settlement sits, and these have many common themes. The south and south east of the borough contain typical Wealden settlements, which are intimate, small-scale, and formed of dens and hursts, characteristic of the National Landscape's components of natural beauty. Cranbrook, historically the centre of the wool trade in the borough, is the central settlement in this area. The north and north east of the borough comprise mainly the Low Weald characteristics, although they do include High Weald characteristics at a larger scale, including industry and landscape. Frittenden is the characteristic Low Weald village. Paddock Wood is a distinct settlement, which is identifiable as a historic railway-focused town, located in the transition area between the Low and High Weald, at the foot of the scarp slope. Finally, Royal Tunbridge Wells is an anomaly within the borough and celebrated socially, economically, and culturally for its history of leisure as a purpose-designed 'new' spa town with intricate streets and a concentrated historic core. Royal Tunbridge Wells has, from its origins, been a commuter town, whether receiving visitors to the spa, or housing people working in London as a retreat outside of the city, in the Kent countryside.
- 4.121** Planning policies within this Local Plan should contribute to, and enhance, the natural, built, and historic environment of the borough in accordance with the guidance set out within the NPPF. Policy should seek to ensure that the delivery of new development is balanced against the need to conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the borough's natural and built environment, in terms of the intrinsic character and diversity of the landscape, its biodiversity, and heritage assets.

- 4.122** Furthermore, the historic environment is intertwined with the evolution of the landscape, in terms of the rural setting of both assets and settlements, and as a determinant of the historic pattern of economic and agricultural activities and uses. The features of the historic environment fall under themes that are particular to the borough and are identified in the Council's Historic Environment Review (Part One) (January 2018) as geographical themes influenced by social, economic, and cultural activities. The Historic Environment Review provides an evidence base for the Local Plan with regard to the historic environment and designated and non-designated heritage assets, and should be referred to in conjunction with the relevant policies, guidance, and other related documents referred to in this Plan.
- 4.123** An extensive suite of development management policies in Section 6 sets out the detailed policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of the existing natural and built environment, covering all elements of the rural and urban areas. Additionally, specific place shaping policies in Section 5 set out detailed criteria, where relevant, to individual sites and settlements across the borough.

Policy STR 8

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, Built, and Historic Environment

Development is expected to make a positive contribution to the natural, built, and historic environment of the borough.

This includes landscape assets, biodiversity, geodiversity, priority habitats and species, statutory and locally designated sites and areas, and archaeological assets.

This will be achieved by the following approach:

1. Development should contribute to, and enhance, the urban and rural landscapes of the borough, with particular regard to the designated High Weald National Landscape;
2. The landscape character of the borough will be protected through retention and enhancement of the key characteristics or valued landscape features and qualities, as well as through the restoration of landscape character, in accordance with the objectives of the Borough Landscape Character Assessment SPD;
3. Development proposals must be informed by a clear understanding of the landscape context (on- and off-site) and demonstrate how it has incorporated and enhanced site characteristics and landscape features, avoiding and minimising harm wherever possible. Landscape mitigation, where required, should be identified at the outset of the scheme design process to ensure that proposals are truly landscape-led and should be used to reinforce and restore landscape character. All new landscaping should make a positive contribution to landscape character;
4. Within the area designated as the High Weald National Landscape, and its setting, development will be managed in a way that seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, commensurate with the "*great weight*" afforded to National Landscapes within the NPPF. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate (through relevant documentation submitted as part of a planning application) how proposals have had regard to the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. Proposals for major¹ development in the High Weald National Landscape will

only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and where it is in the public interest. In such instances, effective mitigation should form an integral part of the development proposals;

5. A hierarchical approach to nature conservation and the protection of biodiversity will be applied across the sites and habitats of national, regional, and local importance within the borough. The objective is to achieve net gains for nature and protect and enhance sites of geological interest across the whole borough and where possible to secure the long-term management of sites, areas, and features important for biodiversity and geodiversity;
6. Opportunities and locations for biodiversity enhancements will be identified and pursued by the creation, protection, enhancement, extension, and long-term management of green corridors and through the development of green infrastructure networks in urban and rural areas to improve connectivity between habitats;
7. The designated and non-designated heritage assets of the borough, including historic field patterns, routeways, listed buildings, conservation areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, archaeological sites, and historic parks and gardens, will be conserved and enhanced, and special regard will be had to their settings;
8. Regard shall be given to the Historic England Conservation Principles and the Council's Historic Environment Review, which identifies historic environment themes particular to the borough; and
9. The positive management of heritage assets through partnership approaches and measures will be encouraged, including by the use of conservation area management plans.

¹ Major as defined in paragraph 177 (footnote 60) of the NPPF (September 2023).

The Borough's Green Belt

- 4.124** The eastern extent of the Green Belt in Kent extends to the east of Royal Tunbridge Wells and the west of Paddock Wood; and the southern extent, to the south of Royal Tunbridge Wells, follows the borough boundary; as such it extends around the built-up area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. A number of smaller settlements within the western part of the borough have had their LBDs defined by the Green Belt designation, including Bidborough, Rusthall, Five Oak Green, Langton Green, Pembury, and Speldhurst.
- 4.125** The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open to maintain the character of the Green Belt. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and should be fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of a Local Plan.
- 4.126** The Council recognises the local, regional, and national importance of the Green Belt and the important role it has, and will play, in shaping the borough. However, as set out in the place shaping policies in Section 5, the Council considers that there are the exceptional circumstances to alter the boundaries of the Green Belt to remove land from the designation for the proposed development at Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel), at a few sites around Royal Tunbridge Wells (particularly at North Farm/Kingstanding Way), and at Pembury, and also alterations at Speldhurst, as set out in the schedule at Table 6 below.
- 4.127** A small area south west of Paddock Wood has been added so that it now follows an identifiable feature on the ground in accordance with current guidance.
- 4.128** Overall, some 3.046% of the Green Belt within the borough has been de-designated.

Table 6 Green Belt Sites

Policy Number	Site Address	Status	Size (ha)	% of MGB
AL/RTW 5	Land to the south of Speldhurst Road and west of Reynolds Lane at Caenwood Farm, Speldhurst Road	Removed	-5.611	0.079
AL/RTW 14	Land at Wyevale Garden Centre, Eridge Road	Removed	-5.521	0.077
AL/RTW 16	Land to the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm	Removed	-5.972	0.084
AL/RTW 17	Land adjacent to Longfield Road	Removed	-20.235	0.284
AL/RTW 19	Land to the North of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground	Removed	-7.071	0.099
STR/SS 1	Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel)	Removed	-148.194	2.077

Policy Number	Site Address	Status	Size (ha)	% of MGB
AL/PE 1 and AL/PE 7	Land rear of High Street and west of Chalket Lane and Cornford Court, Cornford Lane	Removed	-7.603	0.107
AL/PE 2	Land at Hubbles Farm and south of Hastings Road	Removed	-4.653	0.065
AL/PE 3	Land north of the A21, south and west of Hastings Road	Removed	-5.463	0.077
AL/PE 4a and AL/PE 4b	Land at Downingbury Farm, Maidstone Road	Removed	AL/PE 4a -3.278 AL/PE 4b - 3.207	AL/PE 4a 0.046 AL/PE 4b 0.045
South West of Paddock Wood	Land west of Colts Hill close to Badsell Road	Added	1.084	-0.015
AL/SP 1	Land to the west of Langton Road, and south of Ferbies	Removed	-0.964	0.014
Total Green Belt removed (ha)			-217.272	
Existing Green Belt (ha)			7,133.602	
Net change %			-3.046	

- 4.129** The evidence and justification to release land from the Green Belt and the decision to not designate additional areas (other than a minor boundary adjustment) as Green Belt are explained in more detail in the Development Strategy Topic Paper which draws on the findings of the Council's Green Belt Studies. In particular, this addresses paragraphs 140-143 of the NPPF (September 2023) relating to Green Belt boundaries. In accordance with the NPPF, this Local Plan does not designate other land as 'replacement' Green Belt to replace that to be removed, but rather sets out how compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land can be made. It is also noted that some land within those areas removed from the Green Belt will be retained as important landscape and biodiversity features, green infrastructure, recreational provision, and local green spaces and will be protected under policies for those allocations.
- 4.130** The Council considers that the government policy set out in the NPPF is sufficiently detailed to protect the integrity and openness of the remaining Green Belt designation across the borough. With this in mind, the Council will continue to apply the relevant policy in the NPPF, or the relevant national planning policy at the time the planning application is being determined.
- 4.131** The Site Allocations Local Plan (2016) identified some areas as long-term land reserves (Site Allocations Policy AL/GB 4); these are referred to as Rural Fringe sites in the Site Allocations Local Plan. These are sites that were removed from the Green Belt in order to be able to provide a land reserve to meet the future development requirements of the borough. All of these areas are located outside of the LBD. However, all areas are used for educational or recreational purposes

(including allotments), have planning permission for residential development, or are allocations in this Local Plan, as shown in Table 7 below. Therefore, future proposals for development on the educational or recreational sites will be assessed against the relevant policies in this Local Plan, with regard being had to the need to ensure that there remains sufficient education and recreational infrastructure in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall.

Table 7 Land which was removed from Green Belt as part of 'Rural Fringe'

Site	Uses
Grange Road, Rusthall	Allotments
Bishop's Down Primary School	Education, including playing fields
Rose Hill School	Education, including playing fields
Bennett Memorial School	Education, including playing fields
Culverden Stadium	Allocated for residential use, under Policy AL/RTW 20
Land north of 56 Culverden Down	Planning permission for residential development, under 19/01801/OUT Planning permission (implemented) for residential development under 18/03165/FULL and 20/02309/FULL
St John's Recreation Ground, and Broomhill and Reynolds Lane Pastures	Recreation and Local Wildlife Site
St John's Leisure Centre	Recreation
Land at the North Farm landfill site, North Farm Lane	Allocated for renewable or sustainable energy, sport, or leisure uses under Policy AL/RTW 18

Policy STR 9

Green Belt

An effective Green Belt will be maintained through the application of national planning policy and relevant policies in this Local Plan, to meet the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping Green Belt land permanently open.

This Plan removes land from the Green Belt, which has been fully justified through the consideration of reasonable alternatives and it is supported by 'exceptional circumstances'. The areas of Green Belt released are set out in the relevant place shaping policies and include requirements to secure improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the surrounding Green Belt.

Inappropriate development¹ in the Green Belt, as defined in the NPPF, will have to demonstrate very special circumstances which will need to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm. The Council will seek improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the surrounding Green Belt from all relevant development² within the Green Belt, including if appropriate in the form of financial contributions. This may relate to opportunities to provide access and outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity, and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

¹ Development in the Green Belt is considered inappropriate unless it meets the exceptions set out in the NPPF (September 2023), paragraph 149.

² Major and minor development only.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.132** Neighbourhood plans allow communities the opportunity to take the lead in developing planning policies for their localities.
- 4.133** Neighbourhood plans (or, more formally, 'neighbourhood development plans') are discretionary and can provide policies for development and the uses of land that reflect local issues. This may include the provision or improvement of community facilities and other infrastructure, the placement and design of new development, and/or the conservation of locally important heritage and natural environmental assets.
- 4.134** In parished areas, neighbourhood plans are led by town or parish councils, and several within the borough have prepared, or are preparing, their own neighbourhood plans. For unparished areas, there is provision for a neighbourhood forum to be designated to lead the neighbourhood planning process. A group or organisation must apply to the local planning authority to be designated as a neighbourhood forum and show how they have sought to comply with the conditions for neighbourhood forum designation.
- 4.135** A 'made' neighbourhood plan (i.e. one approved following a local referendum) comprises part of the statutory development plan for the borough; as such, its policies sit alongside the non-strategic policies in the Local Plan. They should be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, including those for the broad scale and distribution of development.
- 4.136** Useful information and guidance about preparing neighbourhood plans, their legal requirements (referred to as 'basic conditions') and the regard to them is set out in the national [Planning Practice Guidance](#).
- 4.137** For up-to-date information about the progress of neighbourhood plans in the borough, including details of the 'made' Neighbourhood Plans, see the [Neighbourhood Planning](#) page on the Council's website.
- 4.138** The Council has been working collaboratively with those town and parish councils preparing neighbourhood plans to ensure that local aspirations are reflected within the Local Plan as far as possible and that there is a consistency of approach, where relevant.
- 4.139** The Council will continue to take an active role in advising and supporting the neighbourhood planning process by sharing evidence and information, and on any general conformity and consistency issues.
- 4.140** The weight given to neighbourhood plans, as local plans, increases as they progress through their stages and, once made, their policies will take precedence over earlier local plan policies if there are any overlaps or conflicts (if made after the local plan is adopted). Conversely, the NPPF is clear that, where policies in a made neighbourhood plan are in conflict with the policies in a subsequent local plan, these will be superseded by the local plan policies.

- 4.141** An assessment will be made of all policies in made neighbourhood plans at adoption of the Local Plan as to whether the policies within these would be superseded by the policies in the Local Plan. These will be discussed with the relevant town and parish councils.
- 4.142** The Council has maintained a dialogue on proposed allocations, as well as on other Local Plan policies relevant to specific localities, notably the designation of Local Green Spaces, with the respective town and parish councils.
- 4.143** The Development Strategy at Policy STR 1, as well as the place shaping policy for individual parishes or areas set out at the beginning of the respective sections of Section 5, provide the key contextual policy for neighbourhood plan policies, including housing numbers, for those designated areas, as well as for infrastructure requirements to support that growth.

Policy STR 10

Neighbourhood Plans

The preparation and production of neighbourhood plans will be supported by the Council, including in relation to providing environmental, economic, and social data and mapping, scoping, Strategic Environmental Assessment requirements, advice on plan production and drafting of policies to meet the 'basic conditions', as well as by providing the resources necessary to undertake the latter stages for which the Council is responsible in a timely manner.

For clarity, an up-to-date made neighbourhood plan forms part of the statutory development plan for the borough and, as such, planning applications will be determined in accordance with that plan where a proposal is in its area, including any identified infrastructure requirements set out in the Neighbourhood Development Plan, as well as the adopted Local Plan.

Neighbourhood plans will be given increasing weight as they progress through their formal stages. In the event of overlaps or conflicts with non-strategic Local Plan policies, particular regard will be given to the respective stages of plan making and to the locally-specific focus and evidence base of relevant neighbourhood plan policies. This provision increases significantly when there is a post-examination draft neighbourhood plan.

Section 5: Place Shaping Policies

Introduction

- 5.1** This section of the Local Plan sets out the spatial strategies and policies for different parts of the borough. The section is arranged by non-parished and parished areas, with a specific chapter covering the Strategic Site.
- 5.2** The format used is intended to help provide clarity on the planning policy approach at the local level, for each parish (in parished areas); elsewhere, the main towns and the proposed strategic site. This consists of an overview, having regard to area characteristics and local issues; followed by an overarching strategy, reflecting the contribution that each area can make to the overall development of the borough, including the total number of proposed dwellings, where applicable; then the proposed site allocation policies for each area/parish.
- 5.3** The following areas are considered in turn:
- Royal Tunbridge Wells
 - Southborough
 - Paddock Wood
 - Capel parish
 - Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish
 - Hawkhurst parish
 - Benenden parish
 - Bidborough parish
 - Brenchley and Matfield parish
 - Frittenden parish
 - Goudhurst parish
 - Horsmonden parish
 - Lamberhurst parish
 - Pembury parish
 - Rusthall parish
 - Sandhurst parish
 - Speldhurst parish
- 5.4** Policies are highlighted by being contained in a box, following the supporting text. Area policies have the prefix STR or PSTR, while site allocations have the prefix AL, followed in both cases by the initials for that parish and the policy number. The Index of Policies provides a list of all policies. STR policies are strategic policies for the Local Plan as a whole, while PSTR policies are those that provide a local, parish strategy.
- 5.5** It is important to note that the place shaping policies in this section need to be read in conjunction with other policies in this Local Plan, including the strategic policies in Section 4 and the development management policies in Section 6 of the Plan. Moreover, the Local Plan should be read as whole.
- 5.6** All supporting documents referred to throughout this Section can be found under [Supporting Documents](#) on the Council's Local Plan web page.

Royal Tunbridge Wells

The Strategy for Royal Tunbridge Wells

Overview

- 5.7** Royal Tunbridge Wells, and the smaller centre of Southborough to the north (covered in the next section), make up the Main Urban Area of the borough and share LBDs. Royal Tunbridge Wells itself is situated geographically to the north west of the borough, it has a population of approximately 48,300, and is considered to be a sustainable location, located close to major public highways, and well served by public transport networks, including the main line train stations within the town centre and at High Brooms.
- 5.8** Although the town is considered to be a sustainable settlement, it is subject to significant constraints, with 43% of the area falling within the Green Belt, making up a large area along the eastern edge of the Main Urban Area as well as to the north west and south west. The town is also surrounded by the High Weald National Landscape designation, often hard up against the existing LBD and in places washing over development, mainly in the south eastern part of the Main Urban Area against the county and Wealden district boundary to the south, and some in the north east along the eastern edge of the North Farm area. The landscape character is mainly urban, with areas of Forested Plateau in the north east and areas of Wooded Farmland in the north west and south west. There is also a large area of Open Farmland in the south east.
- 5.9** A large part of the town is also the subject of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area (split into individual character areas), as well as containing numerous listed buildings within the town centre and across the wider town. The town also benefits from a number of attractive green spaces, including the Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Common, as well as historic parks and gardens and local recreational grounds, playing pitches, and play areas. Parts of the town are also areas of flood risk, particularly in relation to surface water flooding to the south of the town centre.
- 5.10** In terms of transport provision, the town benefits from two mainline railway stations, regular bus services, and pedestrian and cycle routes within the town and beyond. In terms of the highway network, the A26 runs through the town, linking the north to Tonbridge and to the south to Crowborough. The A264 runs east to Pembury and west to Ashurst and East Grinstead, intersecting the A26 to the west and joining the A228 to the east, with access to the A21 to Tonbridge and Hastings, and then running onto Paddock Wood, East Peckham and beyond to Kings Hill and the M20. The A267 runs south from the town centre to Frant. The town does, however, suffer from congestion, particularly at peak times on the key routes through the town, and the importance of the role of active travel now and in the future is recognised within this Local Plan.

- 5.11** In terms of parking infrastructure, there are a number of existing public car parks that provide parking across the town, which should be protected for continuing public use over the plan period.
- 5.12** Royal Tunbridge Wells benefits from a range of services and facilities, including a number of primary and secondary schools, health facilities, mixed retail, leisure, and cultural facilities, services, and sports and recreational facilities. It also has extensive areas of green space in the form of the Tunbridge Wells Common and a number of other parks, including historic parks and gardens.
- 5.13** All of the above factors contribute to the town being an attractive and desirable place to live, visit, and work. There is a range of house types and styles, including enclaves of period properties alongside new modern developments. There are a range of employment opportunities within a number of strong sectors for both residents of the borough and those travelling to the town to work.
- 5.14** The scale and nature of proposed development at Royal Tunbridge Wells reflects its existing position as the largest settlement within the borough, and there are considerable opportunities to further enhance the range of services and facilities, housing choice, employment opportunities, and the leisure and cultural offer. New development proposed at the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells will be supported in principle, where proposals are in accordance with, and are designed to respect, the particular constraints of the town, as referred to above, and comply with all other strategic and development management policies of this Local Plan. Given the constrained nature of some transport routes into, out of, and through, the Main Urban Area, mitigating the impact of development on the local highway network is a key priority.
- 5.15** In terms of employment provision, it is recognised that the North Farm/Longfield Road area has developed and evolved over recent years to offer a broad range of uses, not just traditional employment (Class E Commercial, Business and Services, (previously B1)/B2 General Industry and /B8 Storage and Distribution Uses); it is therefore important for the Council to be clear on the future strategy and mix of uses that will be appropriate in this area over the course of the plan period, not only to support and protect the existing employment uses within this area, but also to protect the role and function of the town centre.
- 5.16** The Council is keen that this area continues to provide a location for a mix of employment-generating uses, to include the traditional business and commercial uses, as well as other leisure uses where appropriate, and policies within this Plan set the framework for this. A significant site is allocated to provide modern, purpose-built employment floorspace in a prestigious business park setting to deliver in the region of 80,000sqm of additional office E(g)(iii), B2, and B8 floorspace. This site, at Land adjacent to Longfield Road (Policy AL/RTW 17), already benefits from planning permission for a mix of B and E Class commercial uses and will help to further establish this area as a key business location, not only for Royal Tunbridge Wells, but the wider borough and west Kent.

- 5.17** In terms of sport and recreation, the town is already well provided for and has a range of both informal and formal sport and recreational facilities to serve the existing population, although some of the sports provision is fragmented and underused. The Council wishes to further this provision and has an ambitious corporate Sports Strategy to bring forward enhanced and expanded facilities for the existing and future population of the town and surrounds. This is based on the rationalisation of some formal sports pitches across the town which are either under-used or of sub-standard quality, and re-providing the provision at a new sports hub at Hawkenbury. This approach is also supported by the recognition of a number of smaller local sports hubs at locations across the town, as well as further local hubs at Southborough and Rusthall (within Speldhurst parish).
- 5.18** The IDP that supports this Local Plan sets out the infrastructure that will be required within the town not only to support the new development but also the existing resident population. A range of infrastructure is provided for within this Local Plan and relevant allocations are set out to bring forward the provision of infrastructure in a timely way, as well as the approach to collecting contributions as part of new development.

Policy STR/RTW 1

The Strategy for Royal Tunbridge Wells

The strategy for the unparished area at Royal Tunbridge Wells, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is to:

1. Deliver approximately 1,416-1,536* new dwellings, including affordable housing, on 18 sites allocated in this Local Plan in the plan period (Policies STR/RTW 2 and AL/RTW 1, AL/RTW 3-AL/RTW 7, AL/RTW 9-AL/RTW 16, and AL/RTW 20-AL/RTW 22. Of these sites, the following already have planning permission: AL/RTW 1 for 166 dwellings, AL/RTW 4 for 89 units, AL/RTW 9 for 69 units, AL/RTW 10 for nine dwellings and AL/RTW 11 for 40 units;
2. Provide additional housing which may be delivered through the redevelopment and intensification of allocated sites and other windfall development inside the defined Limits to Built Development;
3. Make the best use of previously developed land by the intensification of uses/sites whilst still protecting the town's important character and heritage;
4. Provide significant employment growth through the allocation of a new business park to be located at Land adjacent to Longfield Road (Policy AL/RTW 17) to deliver approximately 80,000sqm floorspace of new employment (Class E(g)(iii), B2 and B8);
5. Promote the retention, expansion, and intensification where relevant of existing employment premises and support leisure uses within the Key Employment Areas;
6. Develop a strategy for the Town Centre to provide the framework for the development of a future Town Centre Plan to ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the centre over the plan period;
7. Provide for a number of mixed-use developments to deliver a range of uses providing employment as well as private and public services and facilities across the town;

8. Support active travel by delivering improvements to the local pedestrian and cycling network as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and additional cycle parking in key locations. This will include through the provision of contributions;
9. Support improvements to the local bus network and infrastructure;
10. Deliver measures to reduce congestion on the radial routes into the town, including the A26 and A264, while prioritising active travel. This includes the provision of a new roundabout at the junction of Halls Hole Road, Pembury Road and Blackhurst Lane;
11. Plan for the expansion of electric vehicle charging points and car club;
12. Contributions to be used towards a Corridor Study and the associated improvements identified with a view to improving active travel infrastructure, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road
13. Plan for the expansion of a number of existing secondary schools across the town;
14. Plan for the extension of St Peter's Primary School at Hawkenbury by one form of entry and Skinners Kent Primary School at Knights Wood by one form of entry, to provide two forms of entry as and when needs require based on projections of pupil numbers and advice from Kent County Council over the course of the plan period;
15. Allocate land to provide for two new medical centres, at the TN2 Centre and at land at Showfields and Rowan Tree Road;
16. Allocate land to provide for a new sports hub at Hawkenbury Recreation Ground, to provide expanded and enhanced facilities to include standing/seating for supporters and other ancillary structures, as well as the identification of a number of local sports hubs to be recognised as areas of future enhancements/expansion to meet a variety of sporting provision at the Nevill Sports Ground, Bayham East, and St Mark's Recreation Ground;
17. Provide for allotments, amenity/natural green space, parks and recreation grounds, children's and youth play space as required to meet needs and mitigate the impact of future development;
18. Retain and protect the existing public car parks within Royal Tunbridge Wells, as defined on the Policies Map;
19. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential and/or commercial schemes to be used towards the provision of the above, or for any other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

*The capacity in the Strategic Policy STR/RTW 1 includes discounting for C2.

The Strategy for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Overview

- 5.19** Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, the boundary of which is defined on the Policies Map and within Policy ED 9, is the primary retail and leisure destination in the borough, and is a vibrant and viable town centre providing a range of services, facilities, and events to serve the surrounding areas, attracting visitors not only from the borough itself but from across the region, albeit one which has been affected by structural changes to the retail economy. As well as the diverse retail offer, it is also a significant leisure, cultural, and employment centre, with theatres, a museum and

art gallery, a number of live music venues, eating and drinking establishments, and office provision. The town benefits from a rich cultural heritage of both the natural and built environment, with significant heritage assets providing a distinct role and identity for the town, which has a large conservation area covering much of the town centre, as well as numerous listed buildings, and distinct areas such as the Pantiles and the Calverley Grounds, which is a designated historic park and garden. This distinctive environment attracts shoppers and visitors to the town and it is important that this is protected and enhanced as part of all new development.

- 5.20** The Tunbridge Wells Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study Update (RCLTCU 2021) which has updated the 2017 Retail and Leisure Study, recognises the importance of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre as a regional centre serving a wide catchment area, well beyond the borough boundary. Part of this offer includes the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre, as well as other areas of the town which offer specialist and often independent retailers such as at the Pantiles, the High Street, and Camden Road. The study recognises that enhancing the mix and range of uses within Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, as well as advocating a flexible approach to new uses within the centre, will be important going forward in terms of supporting the continuing vitality of the town centre.
- 5.21** However, as above, the retail economy has changed significantly over recent years and the trends which were emerging have accelerated exponentially as a result of the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic. It is also expected that the increased movement towards home working and different times of working, hastened as a result of the Covid-19 'lockdown' periods, will structurally change the need, make up, and use of office space (including shared and flexible accommodation), and through this the operation of those town centre uses which previously were linked to footfall associated with office employment.
- 5.22** The evidence suggests that the existing retail floorspace in the centre is sufficient to meet the demand over the plan period and that there is no identified need for additional comparison floorspace, particularly in view of the number of existing vacant units within the centre. In terms of convenience retail, although there is some need identified, it is not considered necessary to allocate sites to meet this need.
- 5.23** In terms of office provision, again, although there is no specific requirement for the town centre necessitating particular allocations, it will be essential that the Article 4 Directions on individual office buildings within the centre are retained in order to protect the current office stock. Additionally, in order to ensure that the current stock remains attractive to the market, it may be that existing office space will need to be re-purposed or re-configured to provide smaller and more flexible workspace.
- 5.24** It is widely accepted that the role of town centres needs to change and adapt to nationwide and local changes to shopping patterns and behaviours, in particular the impact of internet shopping. Therefore, the town will need to adapt and change focus accordingly. It will be important, therefore, to devise a strategy that will protect and enhance the existing uses within the centre, and consider the important contribution that new residential development within the centre could have on helping to increase footfall, contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of

the surrounding commercial uses. Town centre policies should therefore take a positive yet flexible approach towards town centre uses, growth, and adaptation. The Local Plan will need to provide a degree of flexibility within both site allocation and development management policies which will allow the town centre to adapt accordingly over the course of the plan period.

- 5.25** Despite the structural changes to the retail economy, the Council has ambitious plans to improve and enhance the role and offer of the town centre with both public and private sector investment, including the new Cultural and Learning Hub (The Amelia Scott) featuring a new art gallery, museum, and library. A number of other sites are considered key to the future of the town and to delivering comprehensive improvements to the town going forward.
- 5.26** It is intended that a Town Centre Plan will be prepared alongside inclusive public and stakeholder engagement to determine a vision and strategy for the town to ensure its long-term prosperity and success. It will be necessary to consider which areas of the town are performing well and which areas should be targeted for improvement, taking into account market trends and demand, and build on the work carried out as part of the RCLTCU Study 2021. The Town Centre Plan will also be able to consider and promote other initiatives (outside of the planning system) within the town centre such as the support for town centre events, commissioning of community-led public art and murals, and other parallel initiatives, such as extended and consistent opening times, etc.
- 5.27** There are a number of sites/areas identified for change within the town centre which are considered to be integral to this vision for the future of the town and offer scope for significant redevelopment and enhancement to both the uses and the public realm as part of a comprehensive vision for the town centre. The sites/areas identified include:
- **The Royal Victoria Place shopping centre, Calverley Road:** The key retail destination within the centre, offering significant retail floorspace within a covered shopping mall on three floors. Whilst accepting that the Royal Victoria Place will still form a key retail function, it is recognised that retailing has changed significantly over the last few years and more recently as a result of the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic, and therefore a flexible approach should be promoted for the centre and the future mix of uses. The Council purchased the site in 2023 and is exploring the opportunity for a greater mix and diversity of uses within the centre which could include leisure, cultural and residential.
 - **The existing civic complex (including the Town Hall, Assembly Hall Theatre, and Police Station):** Key public buildings and space within the heart of the town centre, including the listed civic complex and war memorial. The Town Hall is currently being re-modelled as a remote working hub and Council offices. There is scope for a further variety of uses to be provided within this area to be delivered in a sensitive form taking account of its listed status, as well as any impacts on the conservation area and other surrounding listed buildings.

- **The former cinema site, Mount Pleasant Road:** A prominent site which has been vacant for many years and is currently being redeveloped. This site is the subject of Policy AL/RTW 1, which reflects the planning permission for development for a mixed-use scheme comprising older persons housing and mixed Commercial Class E and leisure uses.
- **Mount Pleasant Avenue car park and the Great Hall car park:** This site consists of two public car parks that could be redeveloped for other town centre uses to include Commercial Class E uses and/or residential. Any redevelopment will need to respect the location in proximity to Calverley Grounds, a registered historic park and garden, but also recognising the opportunities in this location for additional town centre uses focused around the park and enhancements to the public realm and legibility.
- **Torrington and Vale Avenue:** This site forms a gateway location into the town centre via the approaches from the south of the town and the railway station, and is therefore an important and prominent site. A mix of Commercial Class E uses and residential development would be appropriate in this location, forming the possibility of a feature building of increased height, subject to heritage and townscape considerations, alongside high quality public realm and design features.

5.28 Due to the current uncertainty in relation to these sites, in terms of their future use and mix of uses, this Local Plan seeks to identify them within the Strategic Policy for change, but not specifically allocate them (with the exception of the former cinema site, which benefits from a relatively recent planning permission for redevelopment of the site, and therefore a site allocation policy reflects this position). The other sites are in varying stages of consideration by the landowners and promoters, and work in relation to the sites and their future uses is ongoing.

5.29 It is intended that the vision, strategic, and comprehensive masterplanning of the whole town as part of a Town Centre Plan will ensure the redevelopment and enhancement of these sites during the plan period and will set and deliver the framework for the future of the town centre to ensure its continued success. The strategy will need to set out the range and mix of uses that will be required and delivered within the town centre. This will accept that traditional retail uses will not be the key component of the future town centre, but that they should be part of a mix of uses that will sustain the centre alongside additional residential to ensure its viability and vibrancy and the potential positive impact that this will have through additional spend and use of services and facilities. It is intended that such schemes will also contribute to the wider public and cultural realm and include elements of public art, contributing to the cultural enrichment and sense of place for the centre as a whole.

Policy STR/RTW 2

Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre

Within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Policies Map (Inset Map 2), this Local Plan sets out the framework for the provision of a Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan setting out a strategic vision for the town centre over the plan period based on the following approach:

1. An overall vision for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre building on its current success, but setting out a flexible and adaptable approach to future uses and sites and ensuring the comprehensive and sustained development of the centre;
2. A mix of town centre uses to provide commercial, employment, cultural, and residential development to sustain the town's future vitality and viability. Schemes should provide a balanced mix towards meeting the requirements for town centre uses and housing delivery, whilst respecting and enhancing the town's distinct heritage and cultural assets;
3. The enhancement and creation of new public realm to be at the heart of any redevelopment or new development to improve the attractiveness of the centre and to facilitate events and cultural activities;
4. Improved connectivity and legibility between the core areas of the town centre and the wider town, alongside improved parking and active travel infrastructure, including:
 - a. pedestrian and cycle friendly environments, with associated environments and infrastructure, including developments being designed on the basis of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and to link with adjacent Low Traffic Neighbourhoods;
 - b. enhancement of the local bus network and associated infrastructure;
 - c. extension of the existing network of electric vehicle charging points and the car club;
 - d. sufficient parking to support the range of town centre uses;
5. The protection of the core retail areas alongside sensitive rationalisation of some peripheral areas to reflect changing needs and requirements. In particular, ground floor active retail and leisure frontages should be retained, whilst consideration is given to other uses, such as residential and offices, above;
6. The provision of enhanced leisure, tourism, and cultural facilities to enable a prosperous and thriving town centre, attractive to residents and visitors;
7. Retention of appropriate office space and reconfiguration/repurposing of new space to enable modern and sustainable ways of working throughout the plan period to ensure the economic prosperity of the town centre;
8. Increased residential development as part of the appropriate mix of uses within the town centre to ensure a vibrant and viable centre. In addition to those sites which already have planning permission, or are subject to detailed allocations below, at least 150-200 additional residential units will be provided in the town centre.

The above will be delivered through the prioritisation of the delivery of the Town Centre Plan, and the continued promotion and support of proposals and schemes which contribute positively towards the range of uses within the town centre, including for retail, leisure, service, and residential uses. Within the town centre the enhancement and/or redevelopment of a number of key sites is considered key to the realisation of this strategy, including:

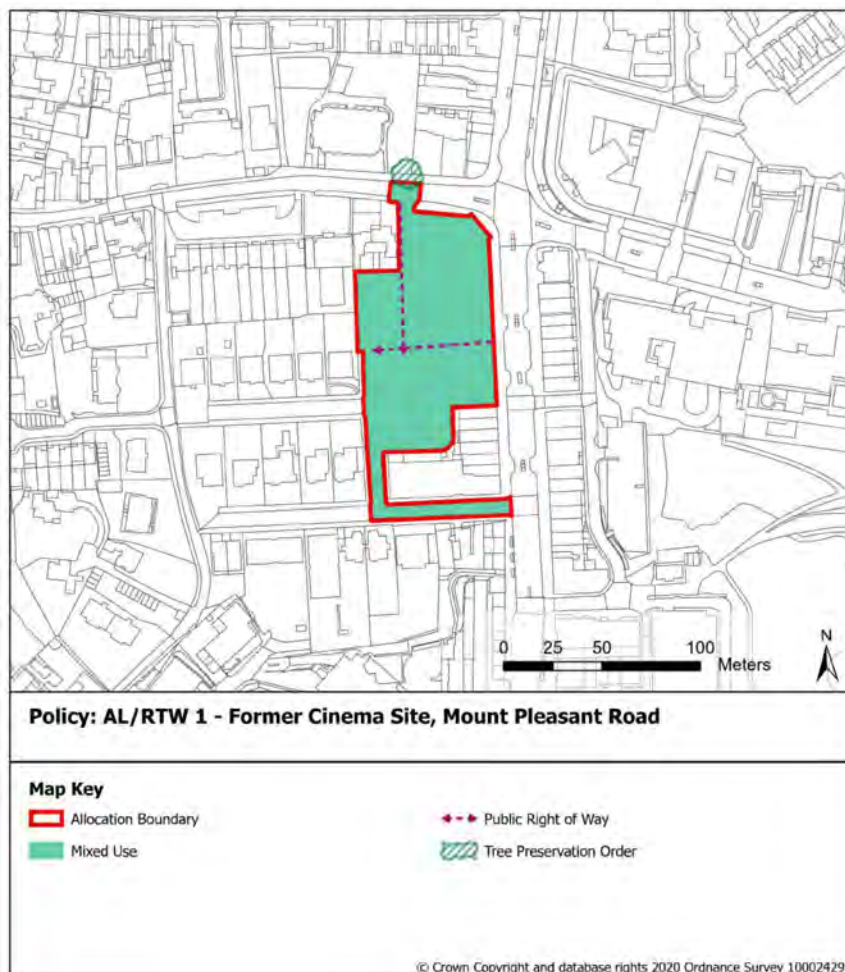
- the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre, Calverley Road;
- the existing civic complex (including the Town Hall, Assembly Hall Theatre, and Police Station);

- the former cinema site, Mount Pleasant Road;
- Mount Pleasant Avenue car park and the Great Hall car park and surrounds;
- Torrington and Vale Avenue.

Allocation policies for Royal Tunbridge Wells

5.30 Former Cinema Site, Mount Pleasant Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells

- 5.31** This is a prominent, previously developed town centre site, within the Main Urban Area, which has been vacant for a considerable length of time, the former cinema having been demolished in 2014 ready for redevelopment of the site subject to planning permission.
- 5.32** The site has a lengthy frontage along Mount Pleasant Road and wrapping around the corner into Church Road, occupying a prominent corner position in the centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells. It is well located for a range of town centre uses due to its central location and proximity to other retail and leisure uses, services, and facilities, as well as the train station.
- 5.33** The site falls within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area and is adjacent to, and in proximity to, a number of listed buildings, and any development will need to respect not only the historic context of its location and its potential impact/relationship with adjacent properties, but also its wider context and impact on the street scene and wider views.
- 5.34** Planning permission was granted for a comprehensive mixed use development comprising A1/A2/A3 retail and restaurant uses, D2 cinema use and C3 (99 residential dwellings) under 17/02262/FULL. A minor material amendment was approved in 2019 for a number of amendments, although still incorporating a mixed-use development but with a reduction of retail floorspace, removal of office accommodation, and external and internal alterations. This permission was implemented but not built out. A subsequent planning application (22/02304/FULL), for the redevelopment of the site comprising the demolition of 41 Mount Pleasant Road, 166 extra care units, commercial/retail floorspace and landscaping/public realm works was permitted in January 2023 and is currently under construction.
- 5.35** The policy therefore sets out the requirement for a mix of town centre uses which are considered appropriate for the site and the criteria which any future development should accord with, with particular attention to the design and heritage considerations of this prominent town centre site.

Map 1 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 1

Former Cinema Site, Mount Pleasant Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for mixed use development to include approximately 166 residential units (which may be in the form of extra-care accommodation), and any uses falling within Class E and sui generis town centre uses which may include a cinema and cafés and drinking establishments.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provision of shops, restaurants that fall within Use Class E(a), and sui generis uses, to include cafés or drinking establishments, along an active retail frontage to Mount Pleasant Road, and turning the corner at the junction with Church Road;
2. All servicing and delivery activity shall be contained within the site boundary. The development shall ensure suitable pedestrian and cycling permeability through the site and to the surrounding area; the location and design of the access to the site, and highways and transport mitigation measures, to be informed by a highway assessment;

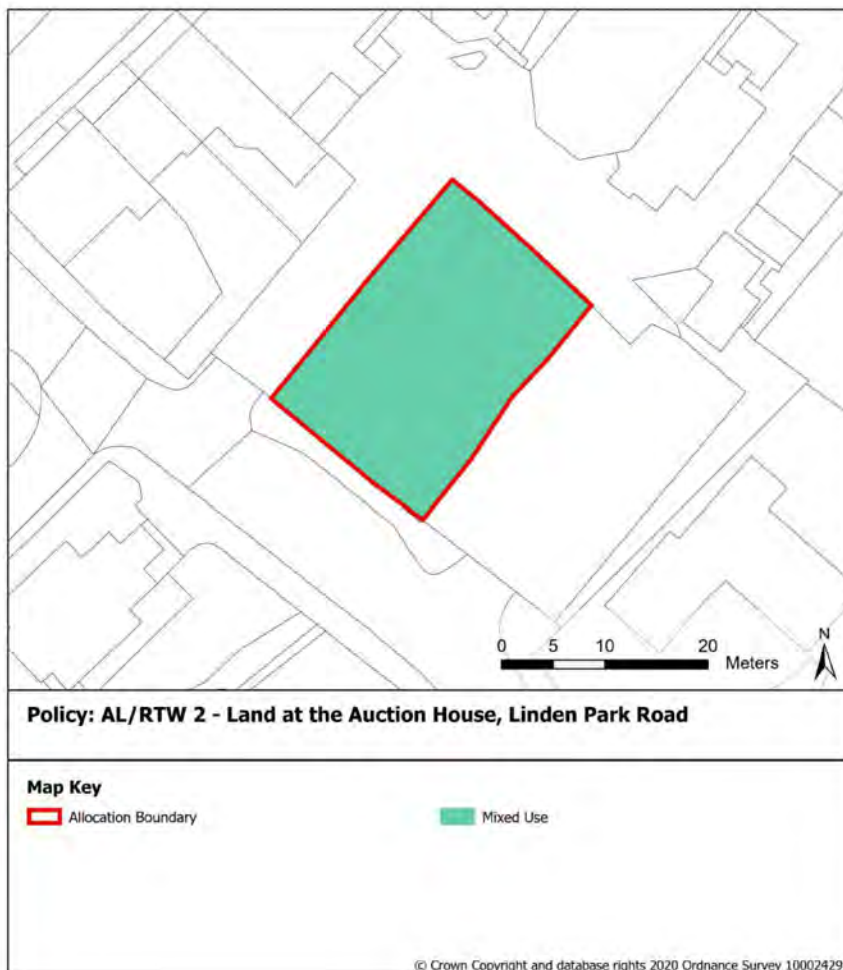
3. Development must be of a high quality design, informed by landscape and visual impact and heritage assessments, and shall demonstrate how it preserves or enhances the conservation area and protects the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. Particular regard shall be had to the relationship to the spire of Trinity Church, and in relationship to the tree-lined ridge when viewed from Mount Ephraim Road (i.e. adjacent to the Common);
4. Development shall promote the use of high quality, locally distinctive materials and features;
5. Provision of a strong architectural element to address the corner of Church Road and Mount Pleasant Road;
6. Provision of public realm improvements to complement and extend the new public realm features already delivered to the north of the site. This should include the provision of public art, which may include water features;
7. Proposals shall explore the potential to enhance the lighting of the area to promote public safety and improve the night time setting of historic buildings and the associated public realm;
8. Proposals must be accompanied by an air quality assessment and appropriate mitigation measures;
9. An archaeological desk-based assessment is required for the site;
10. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
11. The layout should be planned to ensure access to existing wastewater infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes;
12. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at the Auction House, Linden Park Road

- 5.36** This site lies to the southern end of the historic Pantiles, to the south of the town centre, within the Main Urban Area. The site includes an unusual hexagonal building that was the Tunbridge Wells Auction House, which is now vacant and is adjacent to a public car park.
- 5.37** The site falls within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area and lies adjacent to numerous listed buildings. Although the Auction House building itself is not considered to be of historic significance, any redevelopment (either conversion or demolition of the existing building) will need to respect its historic and sensitive location within the Pantiles. It is accepted that the building may not lend itself to conversion, depending on what the end use is, and therefore if the building were to be demolished, careful consideration will need to be had in terms of any redevelopment and the site's interrelationship with adjoining uses and impact on the conservation area. The height, scale, and bulk of any future development will need to be carefully considered.
- 5.38** The site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/RTW 24) for a mix of town centre uses. It has planning permission (21/01487/FULL) for change of use of the Auction House (sui generis) to flexible Class E (commercial, business and service) use (excluding uses falling within E c(iii) (any other service which is appropriate in a commercial, business and service locality) and f) (creche

and day nurseries). The permission has now been implemented in part and it is considered that the site could be suitable for further redevelopment for a range of town centre uses, and therefore it is proposed that the policy should allow for this and refer to a range of uses as being appropriate in this location.

Map 2 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 2

Land at the Auction House, Linden Park Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for a mix of town centre uses and could comprise a mix of Class E Uses: commercial (a), shops, (b) restaurants, (c, i, ii, iii), financial services, professional and other services, sui generis uses, and residential (as part of a mixed-use scheme).

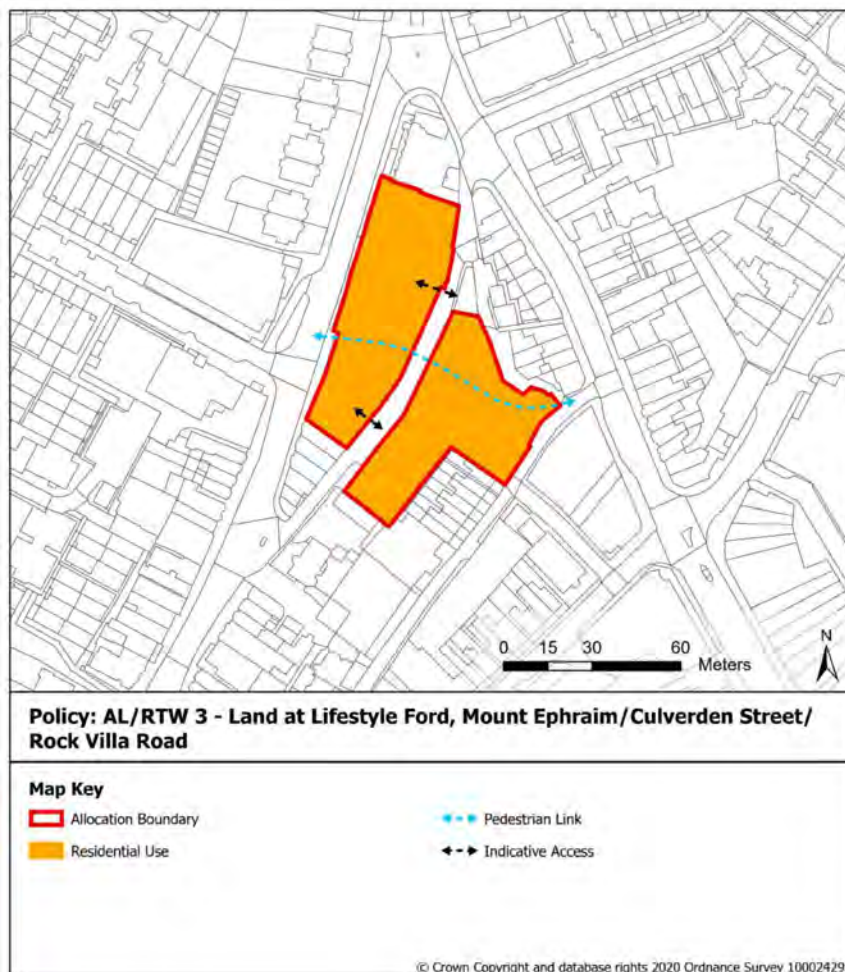
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Existing public car parking shall be re-provided as part of any redevelopment and all servicing and delivery activity to be contained within the site boundary;
2. Opportunities should be explored to improve pedestrian access between this site and the wider Pantiles;

3. Development should enhance the area as a gateway into the Pantiles and respect its historic setting within the Pantiles and adjacent listed buildings, with the design informed by a heritage assessment;
4. If it is considered not possible to retain the existing building, any redevelopment will need to consider carefully its height, scale, and bulk, and impacts on surrounding uses and properties;
5. Public realm improvements shall be delivered along the site's boundary with Linden Park Road;
6. Any proposals which include residential development will be assessed against adopted affordable housing policy, if relevant;
7. Proposals must be accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment;
8. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at Lifestyle Ford, Mount Ephraim/Culverden Street/Rock Villa Road

- 5.39** This site is currently in use as a car dealership and associated uses, and is located on the edge of the town centre within the Main Urban Area. The site has a lengthy frontage along Mount Ephraim and is adjoined to the rear by Culverden Street, which in turn backs onto Rock Villa Road.
- 5.40** The site falls within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area and there are listed buildings adjacent to the site, as well as being adjacent to St Andrew's United Reform Church, which is on a prominent corner location at a busy junction. Any development will need to consider the site's relationship with the surrounding area and any impact on the church, in particular with regard to the large stained glass window.
- 5.41** The policy sets out the requirement for a residential development of high-quality design yet maximising the density of this sustainable town centre site. The site was previously allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/RTW 22) and development is dependent on the re-location of the current car dealership to an alternative location.

Map 3 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 3

Land at Lifestyle Ford, Mount Ephraim/Culverden Street/Rock Villa Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for approximately 100 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

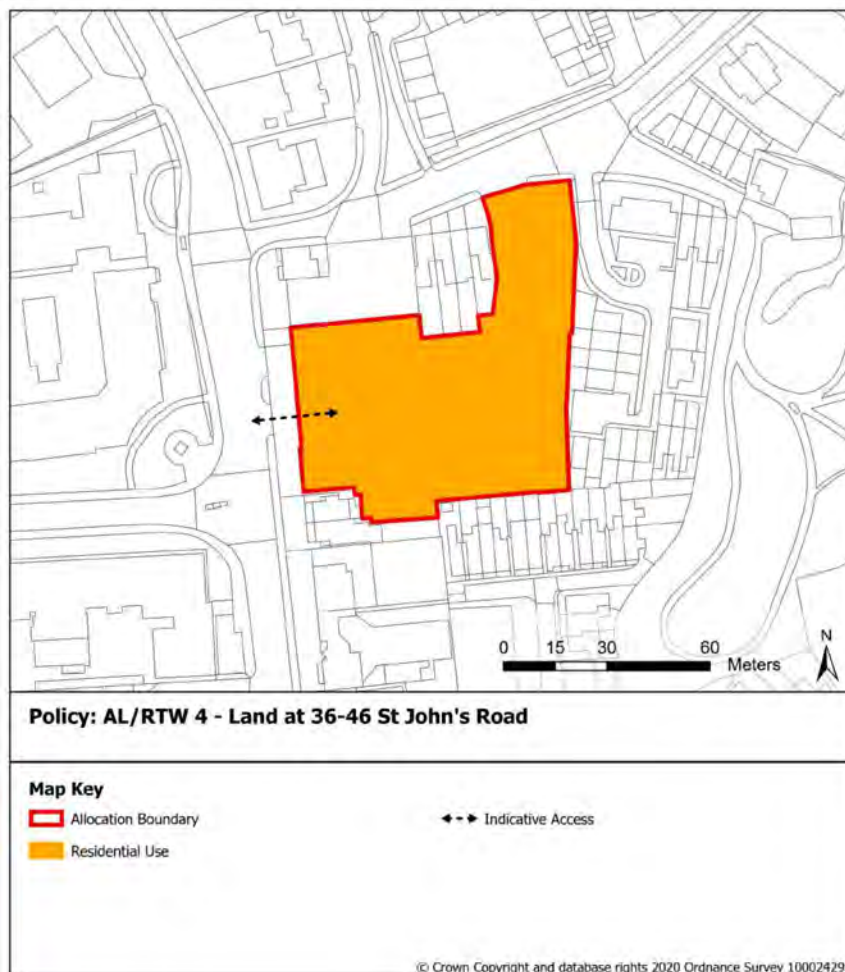
1. Vehicular access, delivery, and servicing should be provided from Culverden Street;
2. Pedestrian access shall be provided through the site from west to east, providing a pedestrian link from Royal Wells Park to Rock Villa Road, and from there to Grosvenor Road and the town centre, including improvements to the existing pedestrian network where required, as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
3. No.15 Mount Ephraim must be retained as part of any redevelopment, and with the extent of demolition elsewhere on the site sought to be minimised where possible;
4. Development must be of a high-quality design, informed by landscape and visual impact and heritage assessments, and shall demonstrate how it conserves and enhances the conservation area, and protects the setting of the adjacent

listed buildings. As such, the layout, mass, design approach, and height of any redevelopment scheme should accord with its context, have regard to the stepped and sloping topography of the site, and shall reflect the particular character of this part of Royal Tunbridge Wells;

5. Development on the site shall be designed so as not to obscure or prevent adequate light from reaching the large stained glass window in St Andrew's United Reform Church;
6. The enhancement of the lighting of the area to promote public safety and improve the night time setting of historic buildings and the associated public realm;
7. Proposals must be accompanied by an air quality assessment and appropriate mitigation measures;
8. Proposals must be accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment;
9. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
10. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at 36-46 St John's Road

- 5.42** This site comprises a former Arriva Bus Depot to the north of the town centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells, along the A26 St John's Road heading north of the town towards St John's and Southborough.
- 5.43** Existing vehicular access is via an access directly onto St John's Road, which should form the access point to any redevelopment of the site. Any proposals for the site will need to be accompanied by an air quality assessment and appropriate mitigation measures.
- 5.44** The site is inside the LBD and comprises previously developed land. Although it falls outside of the conservation area, there are a number of listed buildings adjacent to the southern extent of the site.
- 5.45** Pedestrian linkages should be explored and provided to enhance legibility and green infrastructure networks in the locality of the site.
- 5.46** The site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 under Policy AL/RTW 5 for residential development, and planning permission was granted in 2017 (17/00731/FULL) for the demolition of the existing buildings and structure and the construction of three new buildings comprising 89 units to provide accommodation for older people. Construction is underway on site.

Map 4 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 4

Land at 36-46 St John's Road

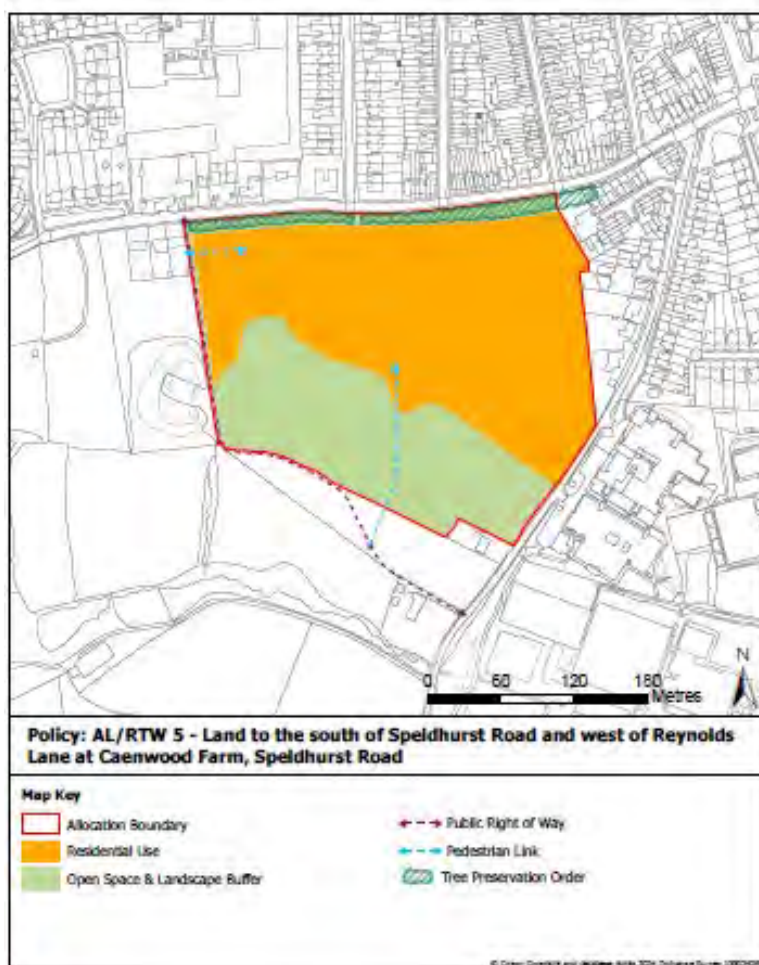
This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 65 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing, or, alternatively, for development delivering a higher density of housing for older people providing approximately 90 dwellings.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access to be provided from the A26 St John's Road;
2. Provide improvements to the links to the A26 cycle route;
3. Proposals must be accompanied by an air quality assessment and appropriate mitigation measures;
4. Opportunities for providing green infrastructure links from the site to Woodbury Park Cemetery shall be explored and incorporated into the proposal;
5. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land to the south of Speldhurst Road and west of Reynolds Lane at Caenwood Farm, Speldhurst Road

- 5.47** This greenfield site lies to the south of Speldhurst Road and the north west of Reynolds Lane on the edge of the built-up area between Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, and is adjacent to the existing LBD. The settlement of Southborough lies to the immediate north of the site with a mix of residential and commercial uses; residential development lies to the east and St Gregory's Secondary School is south-east of the site across the road from Reynolds Lane. Open agricultural land lies to the south and west of the site, with individual residential properties scattered to the west. The land is currently in agricultural use and there are no existing buildings within the site.
- 5.48** There is no existing vehicular access to the site, but new access can be provided from Speldhurst Road, which will need to be designed to take account of the existing boundary and any individual significant trees along the road frontage. There is a current pedestrian footway on the northern side of Speldhurst Road and there is an existing footpath running north to south from the western edge of the site through to the southern extent of the site to Reynolds Lane. Enhancement and creation of new footpaths through the site and linking with the surrounding area, and the opportunity to provide significant improvements to the cycle network within this location should be explored, and financial contributions will be sought to deliver this. An existing bus stop abuts the site to the north on Speldhurst Road.
- 5.49** The site was released from the Green Belt, and the Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.50** There are areas of ancient woodland in proximity to the site, and trees with Tree Preservation Orders within the site itself.
- 5.51** It is considered that any development of this site will need to be sensitively designed to take account of the topography, as the site slopes away to the south, and location of the site on the edge of the built-up area. However, it is well screened from surrounding roads and houses. The area to the south of the site, although included within the allocation area, should not be developed but rather retained and enhanced as open space buffer/ecological mitigation and should be secured as public open space benefiting the wider area. Additionally, due to the site's size and location, it is considered suitable to provide a minimum of 5% of housing on the site to be delivered as serviced self-build and custom housebuilding plots.

Map 5 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 5

Land to the south of Speldhurst Road and west of Reynolds Lane at Caenwood Farm, Speldhurst Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for approximately 100 residential dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, and a minimum of five percent to be delivered as serviced self-build and custom housebuilding plots.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. New vehicular access to be provided from Speldhurst Road, with the exact location to be determined by detailed transport assessment work;
2. Localised widening of the section of Speldhurst Road that runs adjacent to the site, to facilitate a safe means of access to and egress from the site and the provision of an appropriate level of parking for existing residents within the site itself;
3. Explore the possibility of alterations to Reynolds Lane with restricted access for non-residents as appropriate or necessary;
4. Enhanced footpath links to be provided from the existing route to the west of the site to connect to other footpaths and the surrounding area;

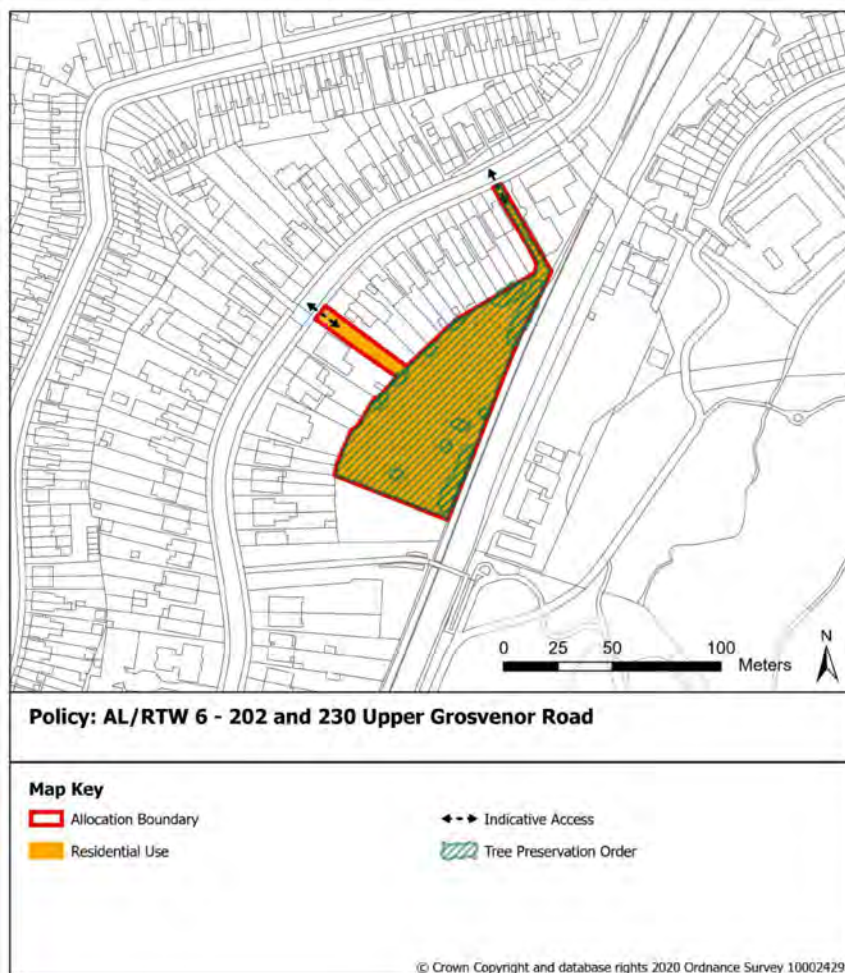
5. The design and layout to take the form of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood, with improved links to the local pedestrian and cycle network on the A26, as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, together with significant and comprehensive upgrades to the A26 cycle network;
6. Improved access to the wider area, which should be secured as public open space;
7. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
8. Extensive green infrastructure shall be provided, both on the areas shown indicatively in green on the site layout plan and through the non-green areas where relevant;
9. The future long-term management of the pasture and woodland retained for landscape and ecological mitigation to be secured by the development;
10. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
11. A suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of public open space is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage;
12. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's and youth play space;
13. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at 202 and 230 Upper Grosvenor Road

- 5.52** This site falls within the built-up area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and is located to the eastern side of Upper Grosvenor Road beyond the rear gardens of Nos. 188 to 228. The site is essentially open garden land comprising a detached dwelling (No. 230), with mature trees along the eastern and southern boundaries. Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Railway Line is adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. The site is surrounded by residential development and immediately to the east is an electrical sub-station. Grosvenor and Hilbert Park is located further to the east and south.
- 5.53** Access to No. 230 is through a single track off Upper Grosvenor Road adjacent (north-east) to No. 228. A new vehicular access should be provided from Upper Grosvenor Road, through the demolition of No. 202 and utilisation of existing secondary access as a pedestrian and cycle access. High Brooms Railway Station is located within less than 500m to the north east and bus stops on Upper Grosvenor Road are also within close proximity of the site.
- 5.54** There is a Tree Preservation Order covering approximately 40 trees, mostly on the site boundaries.
- 5.55** The layout of any development within the site will need to have regard to the amenities of the existing properties and to retain an appropriate level of screening. It will be important to cut and fill the site topography to meet existing levels at the boundaries to minimise earth removal from the site.

- 5.56** Permission was granted in July 2022 for a reserved matter (landscaping) (22/01189/REM) pursuant to outline approval (21/00460/OUT - redevelopment of site for 44 apartments). Subsequent approval was granted in December 2024 (24/01594/FULL) for the variation of condition 3 – relating to car parking and the removal of windows.

Map 6 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 6

Land at 202 and 230 Upper Grosvenor Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for 40-45 residential dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

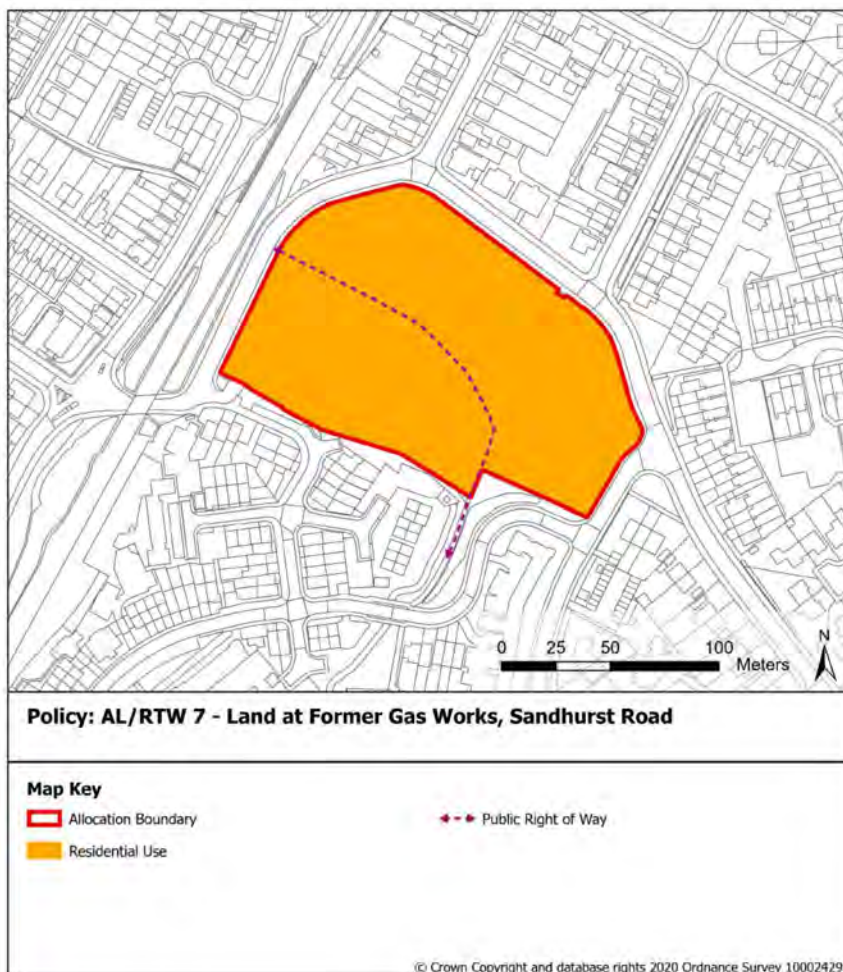
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provision of new main vehicular access from Upper Grosvenor Road through the demolition of No. 202 and utilisation of existing secondary access as a pedestrian and cycle route;
2. Provision of sustainable and active transport mitigation measures;
3. All servicing and delivery activity shall be contained within the site boundary and ensure suitable pedestrian permeability through the site and to the surrounding area;

4. Proposals to be informed by a detailed arboricultural survey, taking into consideration existing mature trees on-site and on the boundary of the site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value. Particular regard shall be had to the retention and reinforcement of the trees along the eastern and southern boundaries to retain an appropriate level of screening;
5. Development must be of a high-quality design with fenestration details that have full regard to the amenities of the existing properties along the western boundary of the site;
6. An archaeological desk-based assessment is required for the site;
7. Proposals must be accompanied by an acoustic assessment and appropriate mitigation measures associated with the adjoining railway line;
8. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space with associated landscaping;
9. Provision of details for proposed ground level changes throughout the site;
10. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at former Gas Works, Sandhurst Road

- 5.57** This site is located inside the LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells, to the north east of the town centre and comprises a former gas works which was decommissioned some years ago, and now lies largely vacant with the exception of a small compound area. The site lies within proximity of a mainline railway station at High Brooms and the railway line runs to the west of the site. The rest of the site is adjoined by residential development of varying types and sizes. It is also in close proximity to the Key Employment Areas at Southborough/High Brooms and North Farm/Longfield Road.
- 5.58** The site has a lengthy frontage with Sandhurst Road, from which there is existing vehicular access and from where future vehicular access should be provided as part of any redevelopment.
- 5.59** The site has been cleared of all supporting equipment associated with its previous use and has been remediated from any land contamination. However, this will need to be demonstrated as part of any development proposals for the site. There is the potential for archaeology associated with its post-medieval industrial heritage and so archaeological assessment should be carried out as part of any redevelopment of the site. There are a number of watercourses running through the site.
- 5.60** This site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/RTW 10) for residential development providing approximately 170 dwellings and it is considered that this site, located in a sustainable location, could potentially achieve a higher density subject to detailed design considerations.

Map 7 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 7

Land at former Gas Works, Sandhurst Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 170-200 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

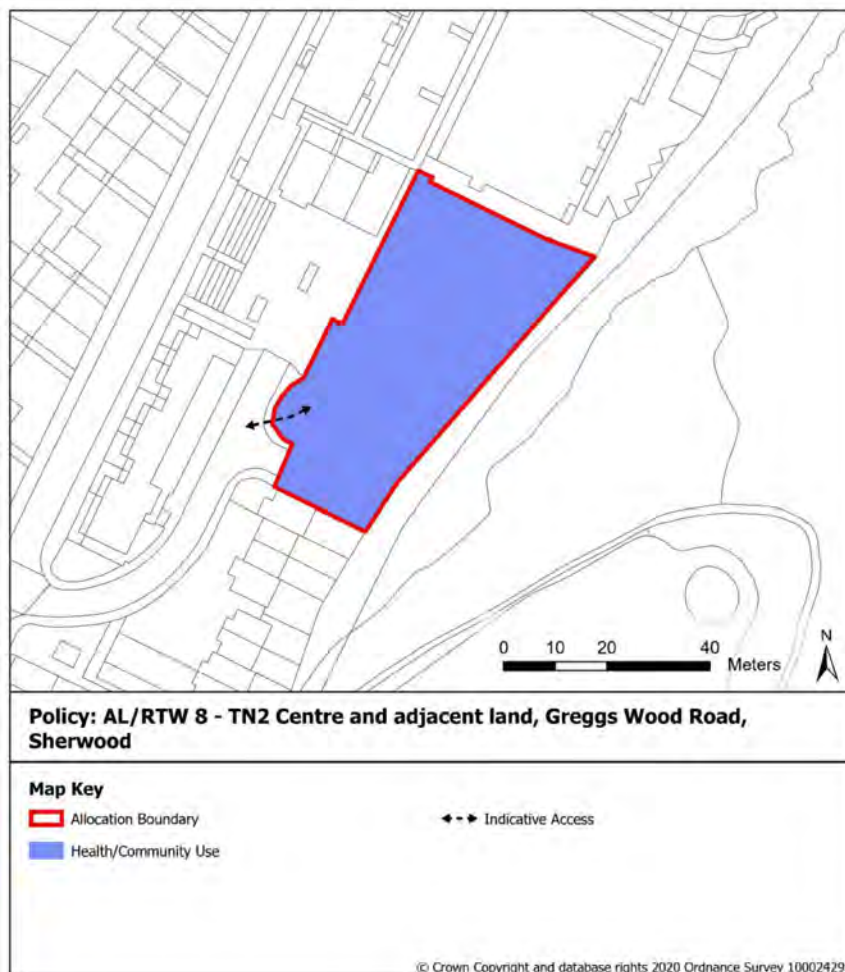
1. An appropriate scheme will outline access into, and through, the site, including vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian links and should incorporate:
 - a. improvements to vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian links under the railway line at Sandhurst Road/Upper Grosvenor Road junction;
 - b. improvements to pedestrian and cycle linkages into the wider adjoining network to address a gap in the 21st Century Way cycle route;
 - c. the maintenance of the Public Right of Way running through the site;
2. The layout of the site shall be informed by a thorough assessment of the topography and landscape/townscape impact taking account of the topography, with development being of a range of heights to take advantage of the topography,

with the possibility for taller buildings to be located on the northern and eastern perimeters of the site;

3. Provision of a land contamination survey as part of any new redevelopment to demonstrate that any contamination associated with the site's former use can be adequately mitigated against;
4. An appropriate scheme will ensure that landscape buffers are provided to minimise impact of the railway line and electricity installations;
5. Consideration of water courses/culverts through the site, with the potential to incorporate into green routeways and provide flood risk betterment for existing residents;
6. Provision of noise attenuation to minimise the impact of the adjacent railway line on any future residents;
7. The provision of an archaeological assessment as part of any planning application;
8. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
9. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

TN2 Centre and adjacent land, Greggs Wood Road, Sherwood

- 5.61** This site is inside the LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells to the north east of the town centre and comprises a community centre; the TN2 Centre, and associated uses and car parking. The community centre on the site constitutes the main building, and it is adjoined by residential and community and retail uses (a pharmacy, newsagent, and a convenience store).
- 5.62** There is existing vehicular access to the site from Lakeside Road, where there is a car park, and pedestrian access is provided via the existing adjacent pavements.
- 5.63** The site itself is flat, but the topography of the wider context is terraced in character down from Greggs Wood Road. Land to the east of the site falls from the site and it is clearly visible from Lakeside and the community square adjacent. Greggs Wood, an area of ancient woodland and a large lake, lies adjacent to the east of the site.
- 5.64** This site is considered to be a sustainable and appropriate location for a new medical centre, which is supported by the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, and this use, along with the retention and enhancement of associated community facilities, is provided for through this allocation.

Map 8 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 8

TN2 Centre and adjacent land, Greggs Wood Road, Sherwood

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for a new medical centre and community uses.

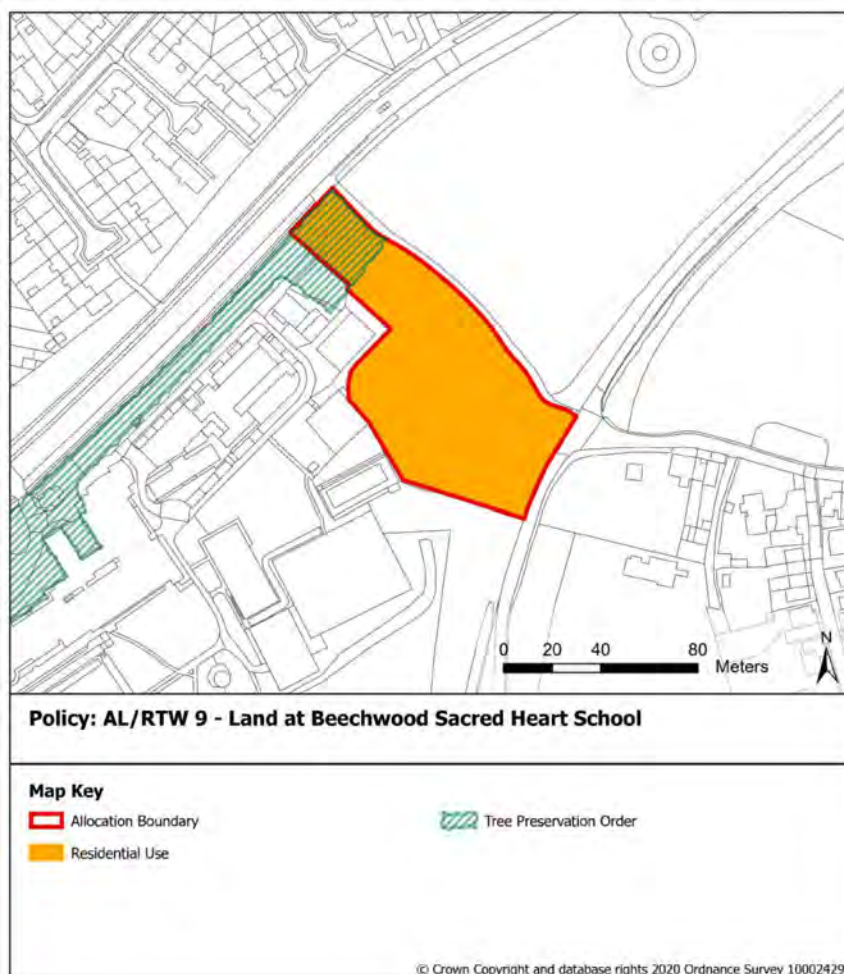
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular, cycle, and pedestrian access should be provided from the existing access at Lakeside Road;
2. The site should provide for a new health facility, as well as replacement of the existing community space as part of any redevelopment of the site;
3. Proposals should be informed by an ecological impact assessment which will need to consider the site's location adjacent to an area of existing ancient woodland;
4. Any redevelopment will need to consider views from the adjacent area into the site, and incorporate appropriate design and mitigation where necessary;
5. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at Beechwood Sacred Heart School

- 5.65** This site is a greenfield site inside the LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells and comprises a grassed area immediately adjacent to the north east of Beechwood Sacred Heart School. Part of the site falls within the Green Belt and is within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area.
- 5.66** The site lies adjacent to Pembury Road, a main distributor road into Royal Tunbridge Wells, although there is currently no vehicular access to serve the site and new access would need to be created from Pembury Road.
- 5.67** There is a Tree Preservation Order to the frontage of the site adjacent to Pembury Road.
- 5.68** There is a high pressure gas main which runs through the site.
- 5.69** The site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/RTW 16) for residential development (C3) providing approximately 27 dwellings or proposals for development to provide accommodation for retirement housing and/or a residential care home (C2) would also be considered.
- 5.70** For the housing supply and trajectory, the capacity of this allocation is to be counted as net 36 units to include discounting for C2.

Map 9 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 9

Land at Beechwood Sacred Heart School

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for retirement housing, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing and/or a residential care home (C2) providing approximately 69 units.

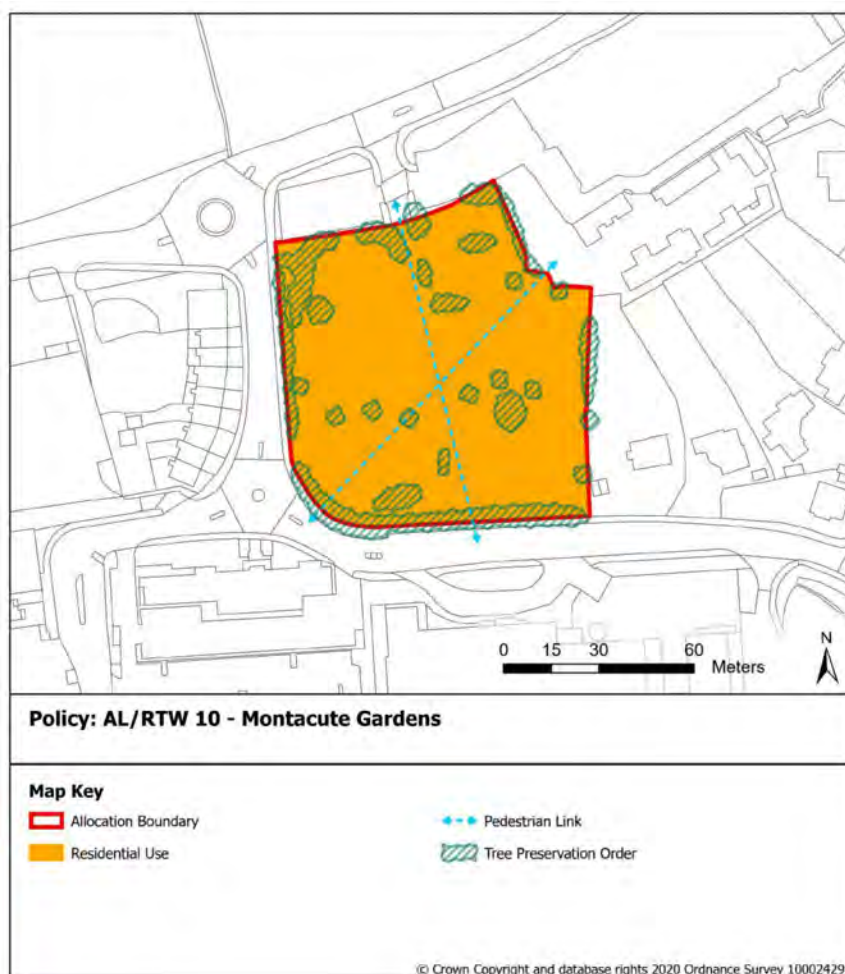
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provision of a vehicular access from Pembury Road into the site;
2. Improvements to the Pembury Road cycle route, as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
3. The layout, location, and design of the development shall take into account natural drainage, as well as the high pressure gas main which runs through the site, and consideration of noise and air quality mitigation measures given the potential use of the site by sensitive receptors;
4. Development should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment and arboricultural assessment;
5. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
6. The provision of an archaeological assessment as part of any planning application;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1, including contributions to be used towards a corridor study with a view to improving active travel infrastructure, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road. Once the corridor study is complete, contributions shall be used to fund improvements arising from the outcomes/findings of the study.

Montacute Gardens

- 5.71** This site is inside the LBD on the edge of the town centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells. It consists of several residential properties and includes an area of green space and parking for the existing properties. The site is adjoined by a car park, residential properties, and offices. Sainsbury's and the Smith and Western (a restaurant housed in the former rail station) are located to the south of the site.
- 5.72** Vehicular access to the site is from the existing access road to the properties via the car park from the A26, Eridge Road. Pedestrian access to the site is from the existing access road and pedestrian linkages between the site and the surrounding area and to the town centre should be explored.
- 5.73** The site falls within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area and is adjacent to a number of listed buildings and forms an important gateway area to the town. It is within close proximity to the Tunbridge Wells Common.
- 5.74** There are a number of trees and hedges along the site boundaries, some with Tree Preservation Orders. Parts of the site fall within the Environment Agency's Flood Zones 2 and 3.

- 5.75** Any development of the site will need to be sensitively designed to take account of the existing constraints, primarily in relation to the impact on the conservation area, adjacent listed buildings, and protected trees within the site.
- 5.76** The site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/RTW 4B) for mixed use development and planning permission has been granted for the development at Land to the Rear of 1-2 Montacute Gardens in 2023 (23/00518/FULL) for nine two-bedroom apartments, which are included within the site capacity of 30 dwellings as set out within the policy. It is considered that this previously developed site falls within a sustainable location, and therefore is suitable for sensitively designed residential development subject to the site constraints highlighted above.

Map 10 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 10

Montacute Gardens

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for 30 residential dwellings (including the nine already granted planning permission under reference 20/00191/FULL), of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

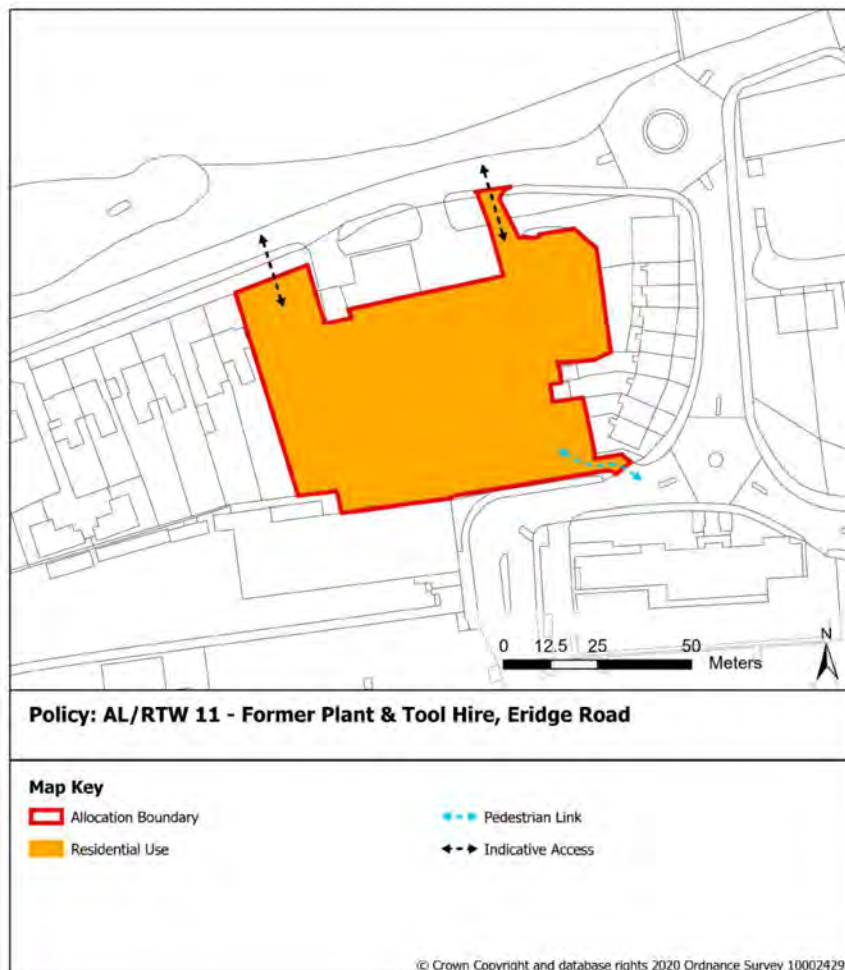
1. Pedestrian access should be provided to the site from Linden Park Road;
2. Proposals should demonstrate that they would not create an unacceptable impact on the setting of the conservation area/surrounding listed buildings and the adjacent Tunbridge Wells Common, and should be informed by a heritage assessment and aboriginal assessment;
3. Proposals should deliver public realm improvements that will enhance the pedestrian route between Linden Park Road and the Pantiles, through the site to the West Station/Sainsbury's and Homebase area and linking to Tunbridge Wells Common and its car park;
4. Proposals must be accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment;
5. Proposals must be accompanied by an air quality assessment and appropriate mitigation measures;
6. A site-specific flood risk assessment shall be carried out in support of any application, identifying whether the site is at risk of flooding from sources other than fluvial flooding, and any development shall include suitable flood mitigation measures and an overall reduction in flood risk;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Former Plant & Tool Hire, Eridge Road

- 5.77** This site forms a prominent location at the southern end of the town centre, within the Main Urban Area and consists of a largely cleared derelict site, as most previous buildings on the site have been demolished, apart from a pair of unoccupied semi-detached houses. The site forms an important gateway to the town, which will need to be sensitively considered as part of any redevelopment of the site.
- 5.78** The site has existing vehicular access from Eridge Road to the north, part of the A26 main distributor road into the centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells. To the east, the site borders Nevill Terrace, and to the south borders the vehicular access to the Spa Valley Railway Line and the Sainsbury's Supermarket and Homebase/Lidl.
- 5.79** The site falls within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area and is in close proximity to the Old West Railway Station, which now houses a public house/restaurant, which is also a listed building. The site lies within the setting of the Tunbridge Wells Common, a designated Local Wildlife Site to the north of the site. The site is also partly within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3.
- 5.80** The site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/RTW 6) for residential development and/or mixed use development, including retail and employment. There have been a number of planning permissions on the site over recent years for a range of uses.
- 5.81** Due to the site's location falling outside of the (revised) town centre boundary, the site is considered to be a suitable and sustainable location for residential development. Planning permission was granted in July 2022 (21/03298/FULL) for the construction of 40 retirement apartments and the refurbishment of Nos. 15 and

16 Eridge Road to create two unrestricted residential dwellings, repair of existing access into the site, parking, landscaping and associated works (including the demolition of single storey rear extensions attached to 15 and 16 Eridge Road). Development has commenced on site.

Map 11 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 11

Former Plant & Tool Hire, Eridge Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 45 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

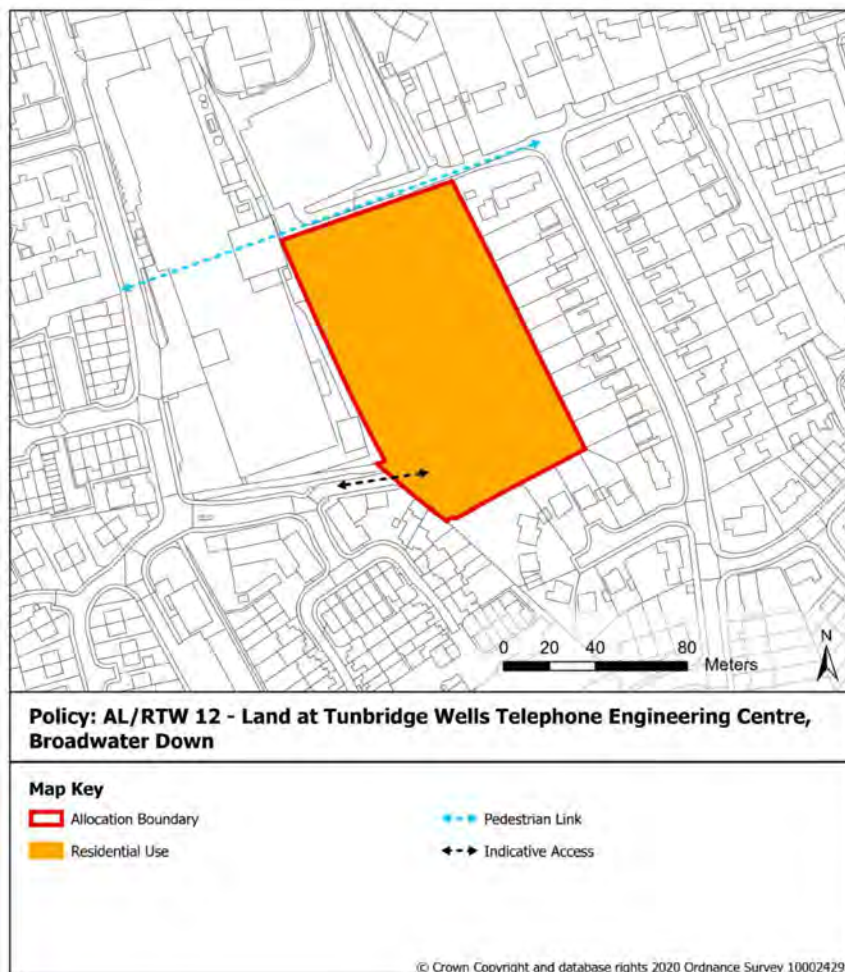
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access shall be provided onto Eridge Road, the location of which, together with transport mitigation measures, are to be informed by a transport assessment, with additional pedestrian access to the rear of the site adjacent to Nevill Terrace, and providing suitable pedestrian linkages to the south east corner of the site;
2. Development must be of a high-quality design, informed by landscape and visual impact and heritage assessments, and shall demonstrate how it conserves and enhances the conservation area, and addresses local heritage issues;

3. The design shall include appropriate measures to address the impact of the proposal on the rear gardens of the Eridge Road properties, and the rear windows to habitable rooms in Nevill Terrace;
4. A site-specific flood risk assessment shall be carried out in support of any application, identifying whether the site is at risk of flooding from sources other than fluvial flooding, and any development shall include suitable flood mitigation measures;
5. Proposals shall be accompanied by an air quality assessment and shall secure appropriate mitigation measures;
6. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at Tunbridge Wells Telephone Engineering Centre, Broadwater Down

- 5.82** This site is inside the LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells to the south of the town centre and comprises a disused BT telephone engineering centre and some small-scale commercial uses. The site is in a transitional area of the town with a mix of commercial uses; the large Sainsbury's store and parking area to the immediate north, the now disused Turners Pie Factory to the west (subject to Policy AL/RTW 13), the Spa Valley Railway Line, and a mix of residential development to the south and east.
- 5.83** The site has existing vehicular and pedestrian access from Underwood Rise towards the western edge of the site. There is direct pedestrian access to the site from Underwood Rise and there is a designated cycle route further to the north west. Any new development within this area should seek to provide improved linkages to the surrounding area, particularly between Broadwater Lane and Linden Gardens and should also ensure legibility between this site and any development on the adjacent Turners Pie Factory Site.
- 5.84** There are some trees along the boundaries of the site and there are level differences within the site, where the topography drops in a north west direction.
- 5.85** The site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan (2016) (Policy AL/RTW 13) as part of a wider allocation including the Turners Pie Factory Site for residential development providing approximately 170 dwellings. It is not intended to combine these two sites within the Local Plan, so as to ensure deliverability and recognition that the two sites are in different ownership and may come forward at different times. However, consideration of linkages between the two sites, particularly in terms of pedestrian linkages, should be considered as part of any scheme for the site.

Map 12 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 12

Land at Tunbridge Wells Telephone Engineering Centre, Broadwater Down

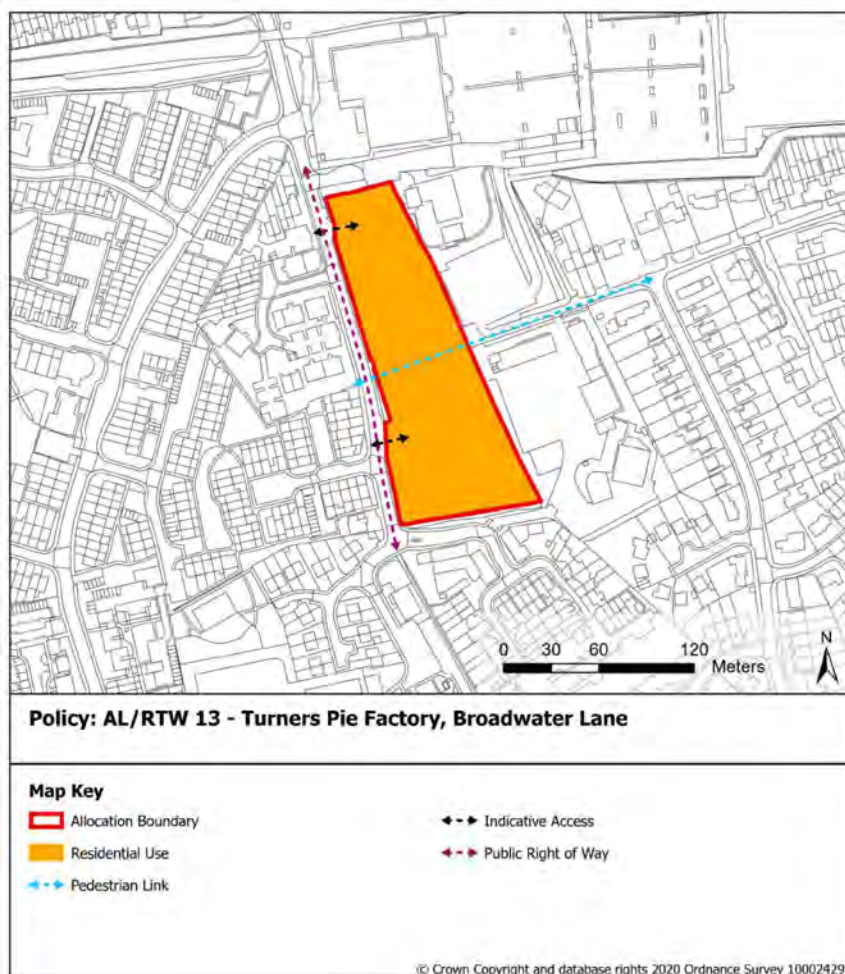
This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 50 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular and pedestrian access to be provided from Underwood Rise;
2. Provision of a pedestrian and cycle link between Broadwater Lane and Linden Gardens;
3. The site to be designed on the basis of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood, with the layout to provide linkages between this site and the adjacent site allocated under Policy AL/RTW 13 (Turners Pie Factory), which similarly is required to be designed on Low Traffic Neighbourhood principles;
4. A heritage assessment to determine potential for post-medieval and railway industrial heritage remains;
5. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
6. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Turners Pie Factory, Broadwater Lane

- 5.86** This site comprises a former pie factory which ceased operations early in 2020. There is one large factory building with a number of smaller buildings within the site, a car park at the southern extent, and another to the north of the site. It is inside the LBD to the south of the town centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells.
- 5.87** The site is adjoined by residential uses, a depot/disused telephone engineering site, which is the subject of Policy AL/RTW 12, and other commercial uses, including a Sainsbury's supermarket, petrol filling station, a Homebase, and a Lidl store (currently under construction). Broadwater Down Primary School is also in close proximity to the site to the south, as well as the Ark Children's Centre.
- 5.88** There are two vehicular access points into the site from Broadwater Lane. There is also a further access road to the north that is gated and leads to Homebase and Sainsbury's, and a car park on-site at the southern end with access.
- 5.89** There are existing trees along the southern boundary and adjacent to the engineering centre of which some have Tree Preservation Orders and which should be retained as part of any redevelopment scheme along with additional planting/landscaping.
- 5.90** The site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/RTW 13 WA Turner Factory) as a combined allocation with the BT Engineering Site as referred to above, for residential development. The Turners site was not allocated within the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan, as it was not clear if the site was available during the plan period. However, since the closure of operations in relation to the pie factory, it is now available for redevelopment and is considered suitable for residential development within this sustainable edge-of-centre location. As part of a scheme being drawn up for the site, the promoters are keen to include a remote working/community hub for the residents of the new development.
- 5.91** Planning permission (22/00238/FULL) was granted in December 2024 for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the construction of 94 dwellings (36 houses and 58 apartments) and a remote working/community hub.

Map 13 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 13

Turners Pie Factory, Broadwater Lane

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a and 1d and 2), is allocated for approximately 100 residential dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing, the provision of a remote working/community hub for use by residents of the new development, and open space.

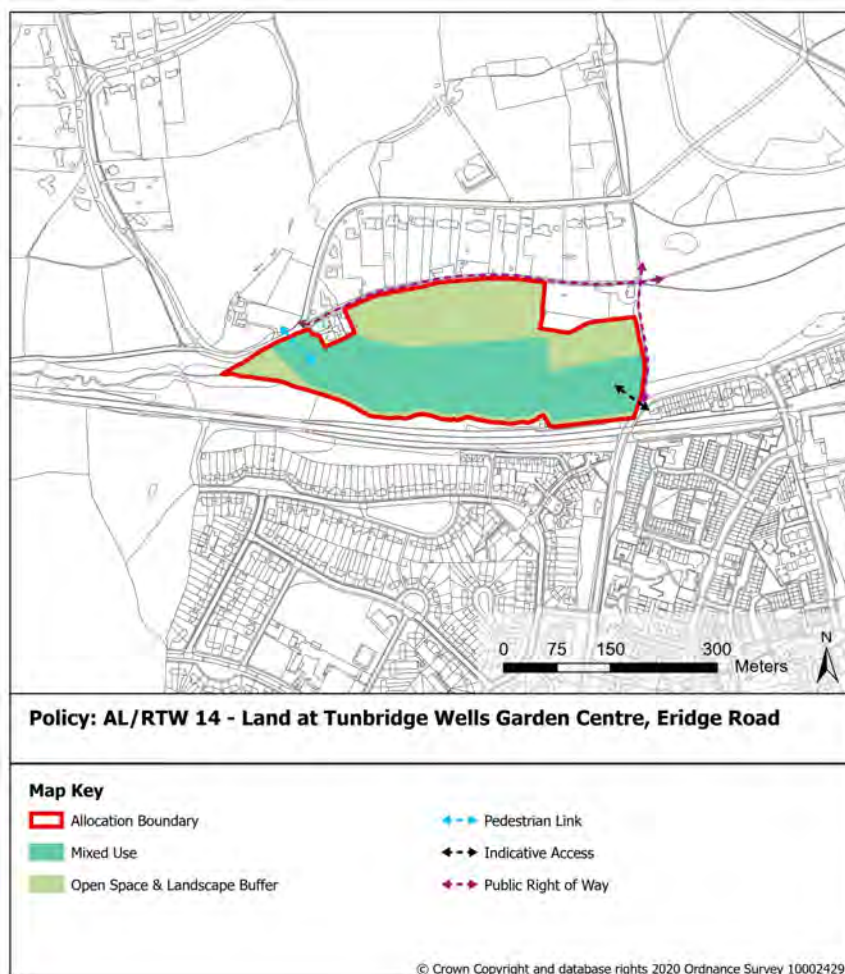
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. The site, and its access, is to be designed on the basis of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood, with the layout to provide linkages between this site and the adjacent site allocated under Policy AL/RTW 12 (Land at Tunbridge Wells Telephone Engineering Centre), which similarly is required to be designed on Low Traffic Neighbourhood principles. As such, access arrangements would need to be considered in conjunction with the adjoining site allocation (Land at Tunbridge Wells Telephone Engineering Centre). This shall include provision for pedestrian linkages between Broadwater Lane and Linden Gardens without prejudicing the development of the land at Tunbridge Wells Telephone Engineering Centre;
2. Vehicular access to be provided from the existing access from Broadwater Lane;

3. Provision of an active frontage to Broadwater Lane and Underwood Rise;
4. Layout of the site shall be informed by a townscape/landscape impact assessment of the site and be informed by the site's existing context and topography, and be focused around a new community hub and green space;
5. Any redevelopment should reinforce the north east boundary of the site, with measures to form a noise barrier between the site and the petrol filling station incorporated as part of the proposal;
6. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's and youth play space;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at Tunbridge Wells Garden Centre

- 5.92** This site is partly inside, but mostly adjacent to, the existing LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells towards the south of the town. The site comprises a garden centre and associated car park, as well as a wooded/scrub area, originally an area for growing nursery stock associated with the garden centre use. There is also an open car wash facility to the far east of the site.
- 5.93** Existing vehicular access to the site is directly from the A26 Eridge Road to the south east corner of the site, close to the bend in the Eridge Road. The Spa Valley Railway Line is located south of the site, including a bridge that crosses the Eridge Road just south of the site access.
- 5.94** The site was released from the Green Belt, and the Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.95** It lies adjacent to the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area and to Tunbridge Wells Common, which is a designated Local Wildlife Site. Part of the site is also covered by the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3.
- 5.96** The site is located within a 250-metre buffer of a minerals and waste safeguarding area (in relation to Superficial Sub-Alluvial River Terrace deposits) and therefore advice should be sought from KCC (Minerals and Waste) in advance of submitting any planning application, as a minerals assessment may be needed.
- 5.97** Development would need to be sensitively designed to respect the location in proximity to the Common, the conservation area, and the topography of the site. However, it constitutes a sustainable site on the edge of the town centre and could accommodate a mix of uses, to include the retention/expansion of the existing garden centre business and the introduction of some residential development within the site. However, Kent County Council, as the local highways authority, considers that the scale of development on the site may be limited due to the current access constraints.

Map 14 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 14

Land at Tunbridge Wells Garden Centre

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for the expansion of the existing Use Class E (a) commercial use (garden centre) with an element of residential of approximately 25-30 residential dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Means of access to be informed by a transport statement; it is likely that the scale of any development may be limited by the quality of access arrangements that can be achieved within the confines of the site;
2. The provision of pedestrian and cycle access to the north and improved pedestrian and cycle access into the town;
3. Adequate servicing and parking to serve the expanded commercial use on the site;
4. Provision of a green route through the site from east to west connecting to existing Public Rights of Way on Tunbridge Wells Common and Cabbage Stalk Lane;
5. Development shall be located on the areas identified for mixed use on the site layout plan;

6. Green infrastructure shall be provided on the areas shown indicatively in green on the site layout plan, and these shall be retained and enhanced. This shall include suitable buffering and enhancements to the River Grom corridor and to the setting of the adjacent Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Common;
7. Regard will be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and a landscape and visual impact assessment;
8. An archaeological assessment of the site, including field evaluations;
9. A site-specific flood risk assessment shall be carried out in support of any application, identifying whether the site is at risk of flooding from sources other than fluvial flooding, and any development shall include suitable flood mitigation measures and an overall reduction of flood risk;
10. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at Showfields Road and Rowan Tree Road

- 5.98** This site lies inside the LBD towards the southern end of Royal Tunbridge Wells, to the south west of the town centre. The site currently comprises of a mix of uses, including residential, a library, health facility (formerly a GP practice branch surgery but now housing a Kent County Council health clinic), a small convenience store, and other community facilities, including a children's play area and a car park.
- 5.99** The main vehicular access is from Showfields Road along the eastern boundary of the site to the car park. As part of any redevelopment of the site, pedestrian linkages should be provided within the site and to the surrounding area to ensure permeability through and beyond the site.
- 5.100** The site includes an area of open space, which has Village Green status and there are trees within the site which have Tree Preservation Orders.
- 5.101** The area is part of a defined Neighbourhood Centre, which occupies a prominent position on the corner of Showfields Road and Rowan Tree Road, and benefits from a range of existing community uses and facilities, which should be retained and enhanced and form an integral part of any redevelopment. It is an area that is considered suitable for regeneration to provide updated residential accommodation with a high level of affordable housing and associated community facilities and services, to act as a 'hub' for this part of the town. It is also considered that there is scope for the proposal to be reconfigured as a Low Traffic Neighbourhood.
- 5.102** Planning permission was granted in February 2024 (22/01576/FULL) for the demolition of 110 existing residential units and existing garages and construction of 146 new residential units (Use Class C3) with associated vehicular and pedestrian access, car parking, cycle parking, refuse storage and other associated works including servicing and landscaping, works to public highways, public realm improvements and a new sub-station.

Map 15 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 15

Land at Showfields Road and Rowan Tree Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 155 dwellings in total (net additional 35-40 dwellings) and health and community uses. As this development would comprise the redevelopment of an estate, affordable housing provision should be in accordance with Policy H 4: Estate Regeneration.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. A comprehensive redevelopment of the site to include the re-provision and enhancement of the existing residential dwellings alongside enhanced and improved community facilities, to include a new medical centre. The community and health facilities to be re-provided on site in line with an agreed phasing plan and implementation plan;
2. The design and layout to take the form of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood, ensuring pedestrian and cycle permeability through the site, both to retain existing routes and to provide new routes, including pedestrian and cycle linkages with the surrounding area;

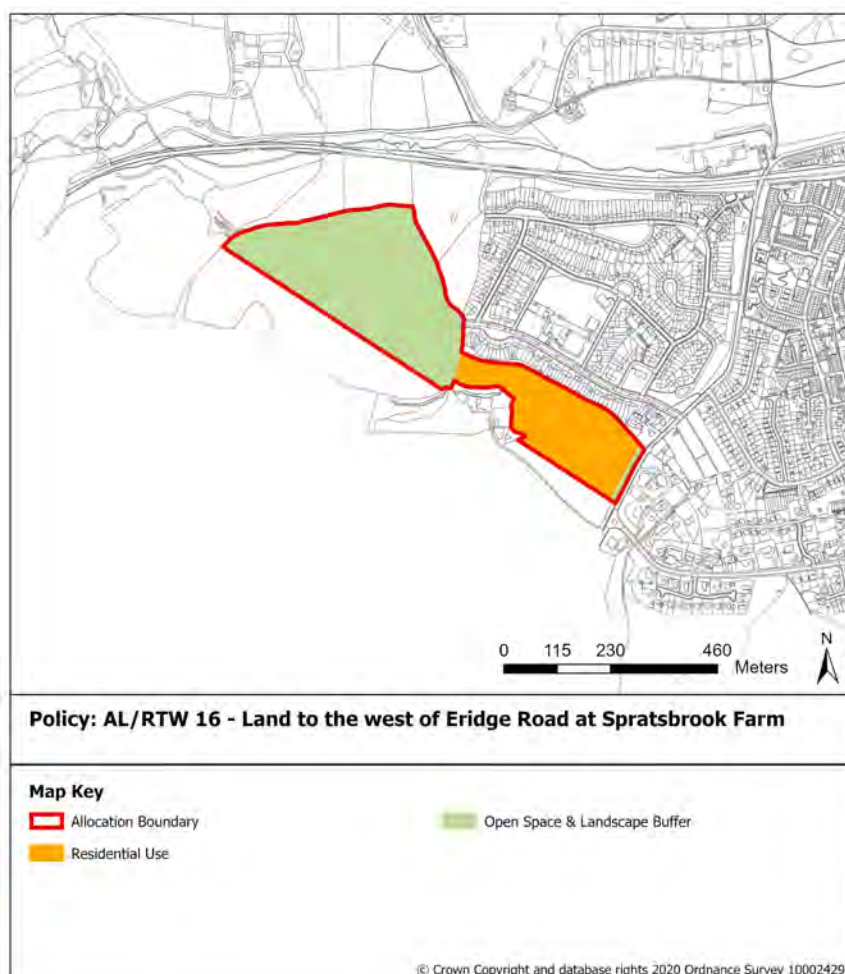
3. Any proposals should take account of the designated Village Green status of the open space within the site;
4. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's and youth play space;
5. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land to the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm

- 5.103** This site comprises an undeveloped greenfield site on the edge of the built area, adjacent to the existing LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells. It is currently in managed agricultural use. The site lies immediately adjacent to the borough and county boundaries with Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council to the south. The site lies to the south of existing residential development at Ramslye and St Mark's Church of England Primary School. There is further residential development to the east of the site, the other side of Eridge Road. To the south and north is open agricultural land and this area forms an important entrance to the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells via Eridge Road from Crowborough to the south.
- 5.104** Part of the site frontage immediately adjoins Eridge Road to the south east corner and there is an existing vehicular access to the site from Eridge Road (although this section lies outside of the borough boundary) and a new access should be provided directly from Eridge Road into the site. Due to the location of the site in close proximity with Wealden district, within East Sussex county, it is considered appropriate for any discussions in relation to infrastructure, in particular with regard to transport provision, to be conducted with both East Sussex County Council and Kent County Council.
- 5.105** The southern portion of the site was released from the Green Belt, with the rest of the site remaining within the Green Belt. The Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.106** The northern part of the site is within the High Weald National Landscape. There is a small area of ancient woodland on part of the site, as well as further areas of ancient woodland to the north. The site boundary overlaps with the High Rocks Hill Fort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument dating from the Iron Age which is also a SSSI. Historic England's [Historic Landscape Characterisation Study](#) identifies the site as assarts. Archaeological remains are likely to survive on this site. It is therefore considered that any development should include safeguarding measures to ensure that there is no impact on the Scheduled Ancient Monument. There are also two listed buildings adjacent to the site. There are views out of the site at some locations to the south and south west, and the northern field is open to views from the north east. The site is generally well contained by boundary vegetation and routeways, but there is currently no defined boundary to the south of the southern field which cuts across an arable field.

- 5.107** Despite the constraints to development identified above, this site is considered to be in a sustainable location on the edge of the town; hence the release of part of the site from the Green Belt in order to facilitate housing development on the south eastern part of the site. The remainder of the site will be for informal open space/recreation to protect the High Weald National Landscape, enhance linkages to the surrounding area to improve and increase accessibility, and buffer the impact of the development to the historically sensitive area to the north west of the site and ancient woodland. Additionally, due to the site's size and location, it is considered suitable to provide a minimum of five percent of housing on the site to be delivered as serviced self-build and custom housebuilding plots.

Map 16 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 16

Land to the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 120 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, and a minimum of five percent to be delivered as serviced self-build and custom housebuilding plots, together with enhanced informal open space and recreation areas as part of a landscape buffer.

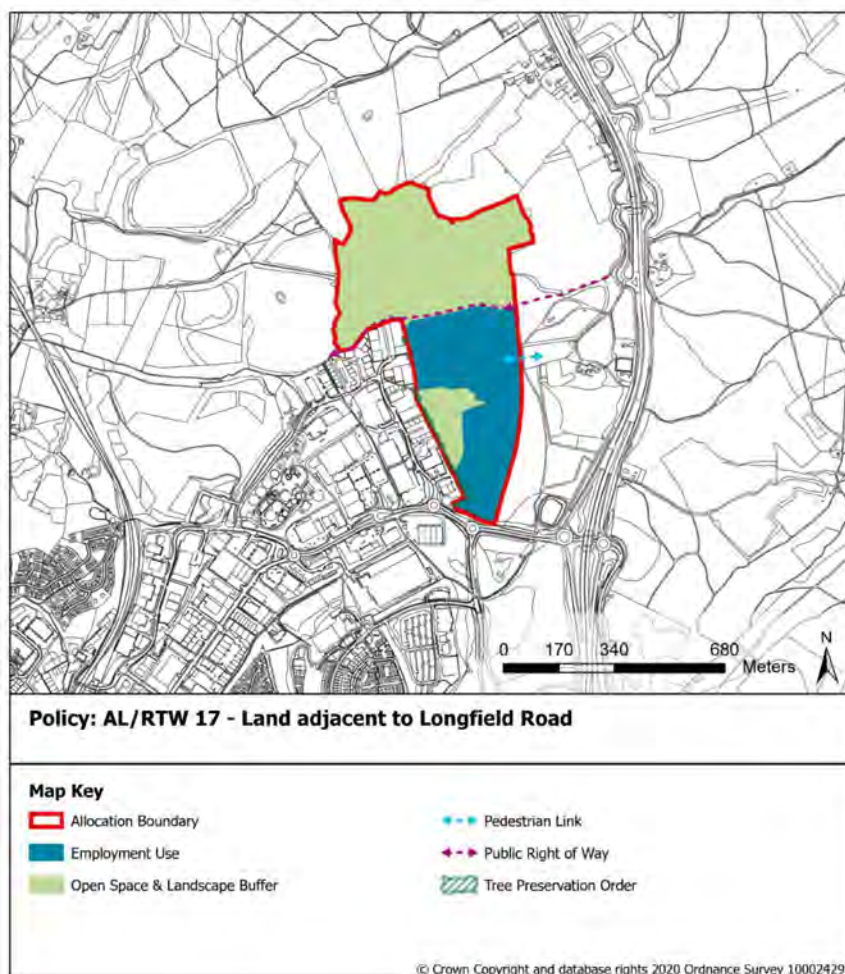
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access to be provided into the site from the A26 Eridge Road;
2. Pedestrian links from the site to be provided and improved to connect to the existing Public Rights of Way network in the vicinity of the site and to formally designate the informal footways as Public Rights of Way to increase and improve accessibility and informal recreation within and around this area;
3. The design and layout to take the form of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood, and shall ensure pedestrian and cycle permeability through the site, including the provision of cycle and pedestrian links into the adjacent Ramslye Estate and into the town centre and to the train station;
4. Improved public transport links are required to serve the development;
5. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan. The open space shown in green on the site layout plan shall remain in the Green Belt and shall be kept open and managed under an approved scheme of long term maintenance with public access (to be secured through conditions and s.106 obligations as appropriate). The new Green Belt Boundary shall be shown on Inset Map 1c (Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough);
6. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment. The retention and enhancement of the trees along the Eridge Road is a priority;
7. The layout, form, design, and mass of built development on-site to have regard to the topography, ancient woodland and buffers, and impact on the setting of the High Weald National Landscape and should have regard to the Council's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. It shall include a landscape buffer along the south western boundary, including to protect the amenity of the adjacent farmhouse;
8. Detailed historic landscape and archaeological assessment to be provided as part of any proposals coming forward to assess the impact on heritage assets, including on the High Rocks Hill Fort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument;
9. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and recreation ground, as well as children's and youth play space;
10. Any development coming forward will need to consider any impacts on the adjacent land within the Wealden District Council area, and in terms of infrastructure provision with East Sussex County Council as well as Kent County Council;
11. A suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of public open space is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage;
12. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land adjacent to Longfield Road

- 5.108** This site is currently an undeveloped greenfield site located adjacent to the existing LBD at Longfield Road. The site is located to the east of the commercial area at Kingstanding Way, and to the north of the retail area around Longfield Road. The northern part of the site falls within Capel parish; however, this part of the site is not proposed to be developed but retained as open space/buffer to the built development.
- 5.109** The existing access into the site is from Longfield Road at the southern end of the site and it is within close proximity to the A21.
- 5.110** A large part of the site was in the Green Belt and was released from it in order to facilitate the economic development in this sustainable location as an extension of the currently designated Key Employment Area at North Farm/Longfield Road. The northerly area within Capel parish was not released from the Green Belt. The Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.111** The site is within the High Weald National Landscape. There are also areas of ancient woodland within the site, as well as some trees with Tree Preservation Orders along the western boundary of the site.
- 5.112** It is considered that there are significant economic benefits created by this scheme to the borough and the wider local economy, including the impact of both direct and indirect job creation, and the identification of development in this location is evidenced and supported by the Economic Needs Study 2016.
- 5.113** This site has outline planning permission under 19/02267/OUT for the development of up to 74,000sqm GEA of floorspace within Use Classes B1 and B8 including creation of a new vehicular and pedestrian site access, cycle way, landscaping, ancillary café, and associated works. An application (24/00684/FULL) for the approval of Reserved Matters (Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout, Scale) including details for Condition 2; Condition 6; Condition 39; Condition 41 pursuant to 23/03103/FULL for Variation of Conditions 3 and 4 of 22/02789/FULL - to allow the redistribution of B1 and B8 uses was approved in November 2024.
- 5.114** In order to ensure that no one employment use dominates the site, it is proposed that a mix of employment uses would be appropriate. Any future/alternative proposals coming forward for the site, should demonstrate compliance with this requirement of providing a range of employment uses on the site in accordance with the overarching parameters set within Policy AL/RTW 17.

Map 17 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 17

Land adjacent to Longfield Road

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for Use Class E Commercial uses to provide approximately 80,000sqm (net) office (E(g)(iii)), General Industrial (B2), and Storage and Distribution (B8) to be provided in the form of a business park.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access to be taken from Longfield Road and to include the provision of a priority bus lane into, within, through, and out of, the site;
2. Links from the site to be provided to:
 - a. the existing cycle networks (including the 21st Century Way and the non-motorised route); and
 - b. the existing pedestrian networks, including the Public Rights of Way via non-motorised forms of transport;
3. Any application to include a transport assessment and travel plan(s);
4. Any development to be delivered in accordance with a phasing plan and programme to be agreed with the Council;

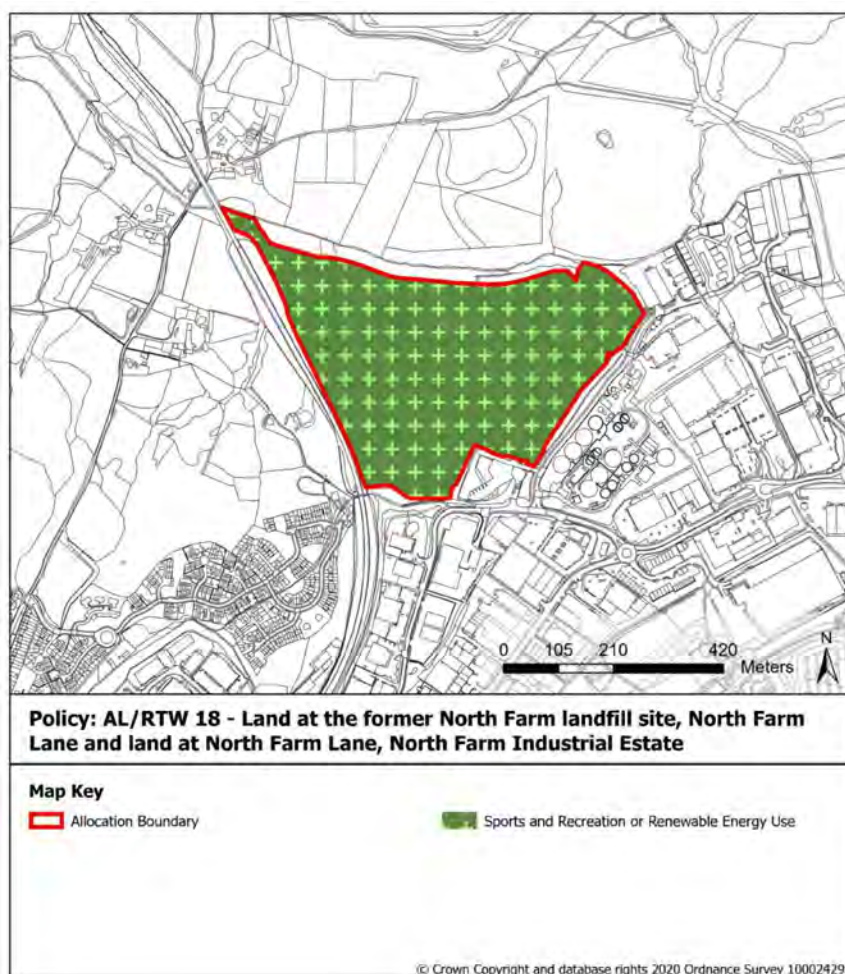
5. No built form to be located within the areas indicated on the site layout plan as open space and buffer, which are to be retained and managed for the lifetime of the development to provide mitigation for landscape and biodiversity effects;
6. The layout, form, and mass of built development on-site to have regard to the topography, existing hedgerows and mature trees, ancient woodland and buffers, need for appropriate surface water drainage, and landscape and visual impact of the development. The site layout should be informed by an arboricultural survey and a landscape and visual impact assessment that explores and tests the effects of the heights for any new buildings, to then be provided and set through a parameter plan or planning condition;
7. The site could accommodate up to 80,000sqm of employment use in total, although any proposals should include for a mix of uses within the specified mix as above and no one use should dominate;
8. The inclusion of a strategic landscaping scheme, to retain the mature trees along the existing footpath, provide a new east-west green corridor to link existing habitats, and to retain existing tree belts along the western boundary, which will be required to be implemented in accordance with the approved phasing plan and programme;
9. The provision of improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land within the site, and potentially that which is adjacent to, and remains within, the Green Belt, including through opportunities to provide increased accessibility and outdoor leisure activities within the open space and buffer area to the north of the site;
10. It must be demonstrated through any planning application that there will be no material adverse impact on the operation of safeguarded waste management facilities;
11. Contributions will be required towards sustainable and active transport measures, particularly to existing bus provision to extend bus routes into the site, and potential highway works within the immediate and wider vicinity of the site, including the provision of pedestrian crossings;
12. Further contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at the former North Farm landfill site, North Farm Lane and land at North Farm Lane, North Farm Industrial Estate

- 5.115** This site comprises the former landfill site which is adjacent to the Tunbridge Wells Household Refuse and Recycling Centre, as well as other mixed commercial uses. Part of the site includes a former gypsy and traveller site which is now abandoned and overgrown. It is partly inside the existing LBD (the area to the north east of the site) and the remaining areas are either adjacent to, or in close proximity to, the LBD.
- 5.116** Existing vehicular access to the site is from North Farm Lane, off Dowding Way, which should form the vehicular access of any proposed scheme for the site.

- 5.117** The northern boundary of the site lies adjacent to the High Weald National Landscape and there is a small area of archaeological potential to the north-west corner of the site. The site includes land that forms part of the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3 and there are a number of streams and drainage ditches running through the site.
- 5.118** The former landfill area was designated as Rural Fringe within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/GB 4) as a long-term land reserve. However, Kent County Council has confirmed that the site is still emitting methane gas and therefore would only be suitable for certain development such as that which it is allocated for; sport, recreation or outdoor leisure uses, and renewable or sustainable energy production.

Map 18 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 18

Land at the former North Farm landfill site, North Farm Lane and land at North Farm Lane, North Farm Industrial Estate

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for renewable or sustainable energy, sport, recreation, or outdoor leisure uses.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

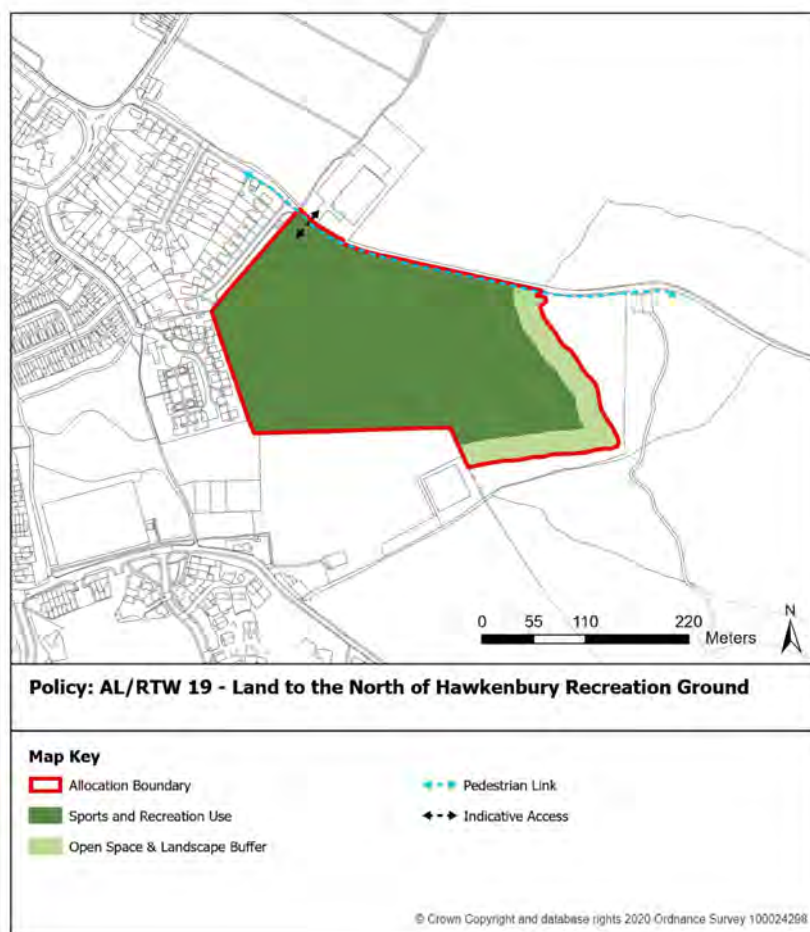
1. Vehicular access should be provided from North Farm Lane, informed by a highways assessment;
2. Public Rights of Way and pedestrian and cycle routes through the site linking with the wider area should be provided, in particular including links to the 21st Century Way cycle route;
3. Any development on the site is subject to satisfactory confirmation that any methane gas within the site can be appropriately and adequately vented;
4. That the development does not result in unacceptable landscape impacts as a result of renewable energy technology, such as glare from solar panels or from the height of rotary wind turbines. A landscape and visual impact assessment will be required as part of any proposed development for the site;
5. Ensure that there is no adverse impact on the operation of safeguarded waste management facilities;
6. Contributions towards the provision of sustainable and active transport mitigation measures, particularly contributions to existing bus routes into the site and/or potential highways works within the vicinity of the site, including the provision of pedestrian crossings;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1;
8. Any sports, recreation or leisure uses would be outdoor only.

Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground

- 5.119** The site is located adjacent to the existing LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells, to the south of the town centre. It is currently an undeveloped site.
- 5.120** The existing Hawkenbury Recreation Ground, which consists of formal and informal open space, playing pitches, a children's play area and astro-turf pitch with flood lighting, lies to the immediate south/south east of the site. There is an indoor bowling centre to the north of the site with parking, with residential development to the west and further south, including the new Hollyfields development currently under construction, and a new primary school.
- 5.121** Vehicular access into the site is currently through a field gate from High Woods Lane and any proposals coming forward for the site will need to widen and enhance the High Woods Lane access, as well as mitigate the impact and contribute to junction improvements within the local area to accommodate additional traffic in

relation to the proposed use. As part of any scheme, improved pedestrian, horse, and cycle links and routes from the site to the wider town and to Pembury should be explored in order to facilitate non-motorised trips to the new sporting facility.

- 5.122** The Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) prepared on behalf of the Council looks in detail at the existing provision of sports pitches, the quantity, quality and configuration for providing for the future population, taking into account housing and population growth and demographics. The 'Strategy' and 'Action Plan' set out within the PPS considers the rationalization of some of the existing underused or poor quality football pitches and the re-provision to create a new quality sports hub to serve the urban area. The strategy has been endorsed by Sport England and involves the re-provision of sports pitches from Culverden Stadium, Bayham West and Colebrook Sports Field, to be re-provided at a new 'sports hub' at Hawkenbury, offering two senior pitches (one of which to be 4G/Stadium quality), three youth pitches and one mini pitch. The strategy is reflected within the following site allocations, which detail the individual sites and proposed future uses.
- 5.123** The site was released from the Green Belt in order to facilitate the provision of a sports hub. The Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.124** The site is also within the High Weald National Landscape, it is an assart field, and lies adjacent to ancient woodland. Therefore, any proposals for the site will need to be informed by a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment, and historic landscape, archaeological, and arboricultural assessments, in order to minimise adverse effects on the site and the surrounding landscape.
- 5.125** The site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/RTW 30) and was previously allocated within the Adopted Local Plan 2006 for sports pitches and other outdoor recreation facilities.
- 5.126** This site allocation seeks to enhance the area's provision of sporting facilities in the form of a new stadium sports hub, with a maximum capacity for up to 3,000 spectators to serve the wider urban area, as set out within Policy STR/RTW 1. The hub will primarily be used by sports clubs and leagues for training and match play, but also to provide activities and sports programmes for general community use to increase physical activity and wellbeing. Policy AL/RTW 19 sets out the framework for this proposal and includes detailed criteria around access, parking and the need for a Management Plan to control the future development and any impact on the local road network.

Map 19 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 19

Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for new and enhanced sport and recreation provision as part of a new stadium sports hub, to include standing/seating for supporters up to a maximum capacity for 3,000 spectators, other ancillary structures, and increased parking provision.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Development is dependent on the football stadium relocating from the current Culverden Stadium subject to allocation Policy AL/RTW 20;
2. Access should be provided via a new safe and suitable access road into the site from High Woods Lane in the vicinity of an historical access opposite the indoor bowling club. Proposals should include localised widening of Halls Hole Road and High Woods Lane between the junction of Bayhall Road/Forest Road and the site access and other highway improvements as required and informed by a detailed transport assessment, to facilitate the additional traffic and enable access by bus/coach;

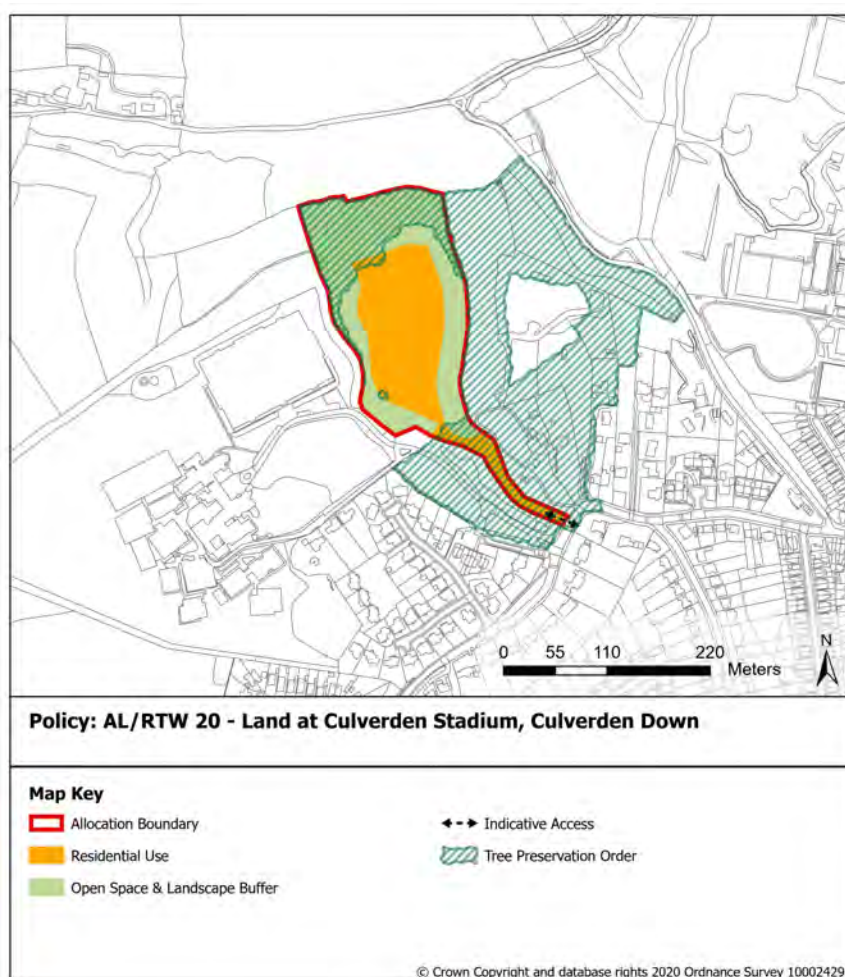
3. Improvements to the local road junctions and crossings within the immediate area, and to other traffic or sustainable transport measures; potentially to include the access junction with High Woods Lane, High Woods Lane/Halls Hole Road, Halls Hole Road/Forest Road, A264 Pembury Road/A264 Calverley Road/Bayhall Road/B2023 Prospect Road, Halls Hole Road/A264 Pembury Road (and/or contributions to junction improvement investigation/implementation on the A264 Pembury Road;
4. Provision of an overspill parking area as well as measures to facilitate and promote public transport and other sustainable transport journeys within a comprehensive traffic/event/car parking Management Plan. This should include consideration of match day green travel plans, match day marshalling and bus to railway provision should this be necessary. These details should be included within any proposals and demonstration that this can be achieved to the satisfaction of the Local Highway Authority;
5. The provision of improved cycle, pedestrian, and potential bridleway linkages within and beyond the site linking up with other Public Rights of Way, in particular with linkages to the wider town and via High Woods Lane to Pembury, as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
6. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows, mature trees on-site, and the adjacent ancient woodland with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
7. The layout and design of the scheme to give full consideration of any impact upon the High Weald National Landscape, locating any built development towards the western part of the site, retaining land to the south east as a landscape and ecological buffer as indicated on the site layout plan and should have regard to the Council's AONB Setting Report and the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
8. A scheme of lighting shall demonstrate that it would not cause an unacceptable impact on surrounding areas, including residential properties to the west of the site;
9. The provision of an archaeological assessment as part of any planning application;
10. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1, including contributions to be used towards a corridor study with a view to improving active travel infrastructure, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road. Once the corridor study is complete, contributions shall be used to fund improvements arising from the outcomes/findings of the study.

Land at Culverden Stadium, Culverden Down

- 5.127** This site is located inside the LBD, part adjacent to, and in proximity to, the existing LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells. It comprises a football stadium (currently the home of Tunbridge Wells Football Club) and associated development, including a car park. A stadium structure along with other ancillary buildings and storage containers are currently present on the site. The site is adjoined by the Bennett Memorial Diocesan School and residential properties to the west, south, and east and areas of woodland immediately surrounding the site, particularly to the north.

- 5.128** There is existing vehicular and pedestrian access from Culverden Down, which will need to be improved in order to facilitate any development on this site, taking into account the limited frontage of the site and enhancements to the access arrangements to ensure an adequate site entrance is achievable.
- 5.129** The site includes an area of ancient woodland and there are trees with Tree Preservation Orders within the site. It is a relatively flat site and is screened by the existing woodland from public view from Culverden Down and from adjacent sites.
- 5.130** This site is designated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/GB 4) for Rural Fringe as part of the wider Culverden Down area, as a long-term land reserve. The Sports Strategy advocates the rationalisation of some of the poor quality football pitches and the re-provision of a new quality sports hub to serve the urban area. The redevelopment of Culverden Stadium and re-provision of the pitches form part of the strategy. Whilst the site is in a sustainable location and considered suitable for redevelopment, any development of this site is dependent on the relocation of the football stadium to an alternative site, and Policy STR/RTW 1 in relation to the Sports Strategy for the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Policy AL/RTW 19 Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground.

Map 20 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 20

Land at Culverden Stadium, Culverden Down

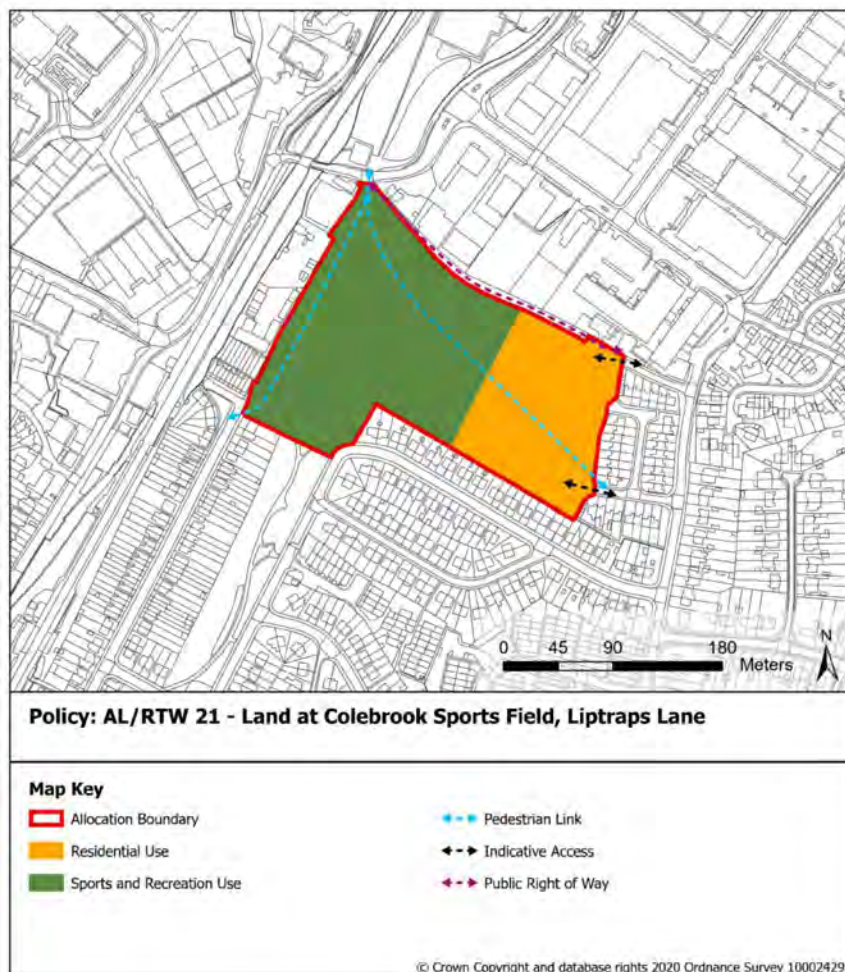
This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 30 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular and pedestrian access shall be provided to the site from Culverden Down;
2. Planning permission shall only be granted on this site subject to planning permission having been granted for a suitable alternative sporting facility as identified through Policy AL/RTW 19 – Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground;
3. Implementation of planning permission granted for the development of this site shall occur only once the provision of the alternative sporting facility is operational, or will be operational in time for the start of the following football season;
4. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
5. Green infrastructure shall be provided on the areas shown indicatively in green on the site layout plan, and these shall be retained and enhanced. This shall include protection of the ancient woodland buffer to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site;
6. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at Colebrook Sports Field, Liptraps Lane

- 5.131** This site is located inside the LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells, to the north east of the town centre. The site comprises a playing field and children's play area located south of Dowding Way and east of North Farm Road, adjacent to Clifton Road to the south west corner of the site. The site is adjoined by residential development to the south and east and commercial/industrial uses to the north and west.
- 5.132** There are a number of existing access points, with existing vehicular access being from Apple Tree Lane and pedestrian access to the site from Clifton Road, Apple Tree Lane, and Dowding Way. There is a Public Right of Way along the northern boundary of the site along Apple Tree Lane.
- 5.133** Part of the site is included within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3.
- 5.134** The informal sports and recreation provision on this site is planned to be re-provided and enhanced, through the redevelopment, as well as the provision, of a multi-use games area, or similar recreational use such as a pump track. The formal sports pitch element will be re-provided as part of the Sports Strategy.
- 5.135** The site is considered to be in a sustainable location in proximity to existing residential development, employment opportunities, and public transport links.

Map 21 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/RTW 21

Land at Colebrook Sports Field, Liptraps Lane

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 80 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, the re-provision and enhancement of informal open space, and sports and leisure provision, including a multi-use games area, or alternative recreational facility.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

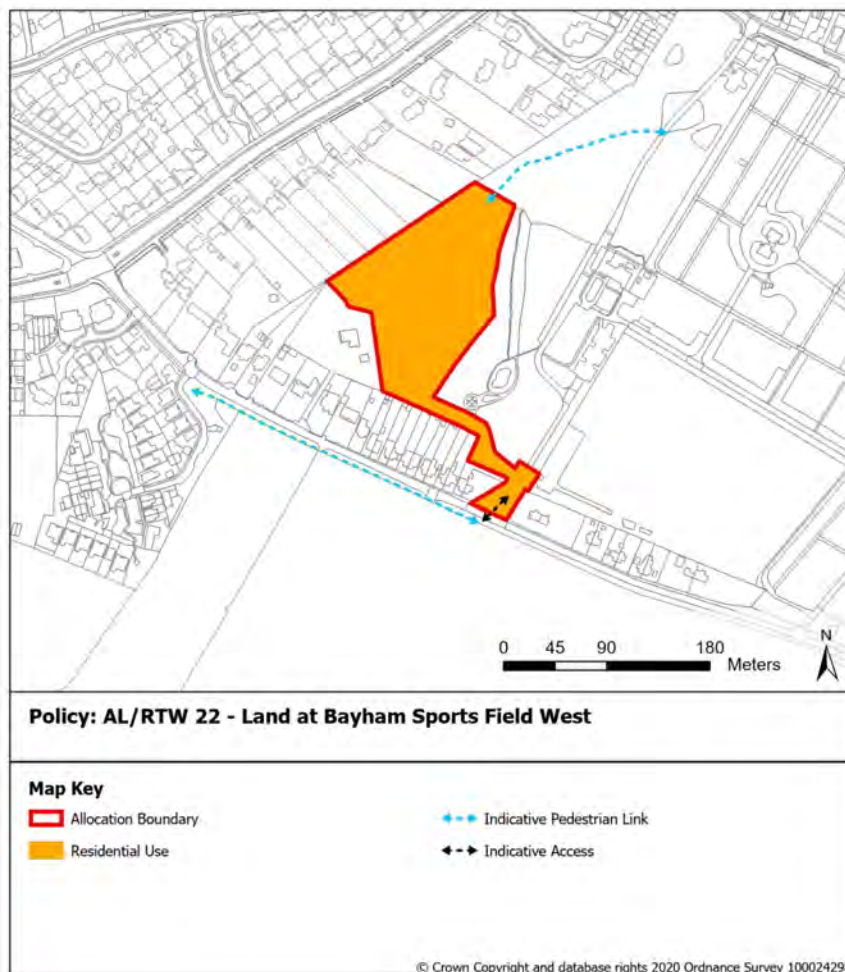
1. Vehicular access to be provided from Apple Tree Lane, off Liptraps Lane with secondary access from Longview Way;
2. Opportunities to be explored for improving pedestrian and cycle access onto the 21st Century Way cycle route at Dowding Way and retain and improve existing pedestrian and cycle routes through the site to link in with the wider footway and cycle network, as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;
3. Safeguard land to the west of the site for possible future pedestrian/cyclist/vehicular link between Dowding Way to Clifton Road;

4. Planning permission shall only be granted for development on the playing pitch area of this site subject to planning permission having been granted for a suitable alternative sporting facility as identified through Policy AL/RTW19 – Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground;
5. Implementation of planning permission granted for the development on the playing pitch area of this site shall occur only once the provision of the alternative sporting facility is operational, or will be operational in time for the start of the following football season;
6. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
7. Regard should be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and a landscape and visual impact assessment;
8. A site-specific flood risk assessment shall be carried out in support of any application, identifying whether the site is at risk of flooding from sources other than fluvial flooding and any development shall include suitable flood mitigation measures and an overall reduction in flood risk;
9. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Land at Bayham Sports Field West

- 5.136** This site is located within the built-up area of Royal Tunbridge Wells, towards the south of the town centre. It comprises a playing pitch sited to the rear of residential properties along Forest Road and Bayham Road and to the south west of the Tunbridge Wells Crematorium.
- 5.137** Vehicular and pedestrian access into the site is currently via a track leading from the crematorium entrance off Bayham Road. Vehicular access should be provided via the existing provision; however, adequate pedestrian access and linkages from the site to the surrounding area will need to be explored and demonstrated to the satisfaction of Kent County Council as the Local Highways Authority as part of any redevelopment of the site.
- 5.138** The existing playing pitch is considered to be of sub-standard quality and is rarely used for formal games and it is therefore proposed to be re-provided at the proposed Sports Hub under Policy AL/RTW 19 (Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground).

Map 22 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RTW 22

Land at Bayham Sports Field West

This site, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Policies Map (Inset Maps 1a - 1d and 2), is allocated for residential development providing approximately 20-25 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access to be provided from Bayham Road (the B2169);
2. Pedestrian and cycle access to be provided from the site to Bayham Road with an uncontrolled dropped kerb crossing point to be provided as part of any proposed scheme to connect with the new pedestrian link to the southern side of Bayham Road;
3. Planning permission shall only be granted on this site subject to planning permission having been granted for a suitable alternative sporting facility as identified through Policy AL/RTW 19 – Land to the North of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground;
4. Implementation of planning permission granted for the development of this site shall occur only once the provision of the alternative sporting facility is operational, or will be operational in time for the start of the following football season;

5. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
6. Regard should be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and a landscape and visual impact assessment;
7. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space;
8. Regard to be given to the Groundwater Source Protection Zone affecting the site, in consultation with the Environment Agency;
9. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy STR/RTW 1.

Southborough

Overview

- 5.139** Southborough is situated in the far north western part of the borough, to the north of Royal Tunbridge Wells and south of Tonbridge (which is beyond the borough boundary). Southborough has a population of approximately 12,459. The town of Southborough is mainly urban in character and forms what is referred to as the Main Urban Area of the borough alongside Royal Tunbridge Wells. Within the parished area is High Brooms, which is designated as a Neighbourhood Centre and offers a range of services and facilities. The LBD of Southborough merges with the parish of Bidborough to the north west, and with Royal Tunbridge Wells to the south and south east.
- 5.140** The A26 runs north (to the A21 and Tonbridge beyond) and south (to Royal Tunbridge Wells) through the centre of Southborough, which essentially bisects the town centre. Several other minor roads, away from the built area, are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998). The area around High Brooms Neighbourhood Centre is served and intersected by minor roads leading to the A26 to the west and North Farm to the north east.
- 5.141** The town of Southborough is well served by public transport and has a frequent bus service to a number of local destinations, including Royal Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, Maidstone, Edenbridge, and Bluewater. In terms of rail, High Brooms has its own mainline station (located just outside the parished area) which serves High Brooms, Southborough, and residents of the north east of Royal Tunbridge Wells.
- 5.142** There is a large conservation area located to the north of the parished area, which includes Southborough Common to the west of the A26. The areas outside of the LBD to the east and west, in terms of landscape character, are defined as Wooded Farmland with a small area of Forested Plateau also in the east.
- 5.143** 66% of Southborough is within the Green Belt and 64% is within the High Weald National Landscape and there are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 within the parished area.
- 5.144** Both Southborough and High Brooms benefit from a range of services and facilities. In particular, Southborough has a number of retail units offering a range of everyday and specialist goods, as well as a small supermarket. High Brooms has a parade of shops for everyday needs. The Southborough Hub development in the centre of the town, has now been completed which offers a new doctors surgery, a library and enhanced community and cultural facilities. In terms of education, there are two primary schools, nursery and pre-school provision, and easy access to a number of secondary schools. There is good recreation provision at Southborough, as the pitches to the east of the Southborough Hub and to the west of The Ridgeway are identified as a local sports hub as part of the Sports Strategy for the Main Urban Area (see Policy STR 5). This will ensure that enhanced sports provision is provided to serve the local area.

- 5.145** All of the above factors contribute to the town being considered a sustainable location for additional future development. However, it is constrained by its location within the Green Belt and High Weald National Landscape, as well as highway constraints in relation to the congested A26 which runs through the town of Southborough. There are, however, some limited development opportunities which are allocated within this Plan, and Policy PSTR/SO 1 sets out the strategic approach towards development within Southborough.
- 5.146** Southborough Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parished area of Southborough (which includes High Brooms), which will become an increasingly important consideration as it progresses through the different stages of plan-making.

The Strategy for Southborough

Policy PSTR/SO 1

The Strategy for Southborough

The development strategy for Southborough is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Southborough on the Policies Map (Inset Map 3) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Build approximately 26 new dwellings on one site (Policy AL/SO 3), including affordable housing, allocated in this Local Plan in the plan period;
3. Identify the Southborough Hub recreation area as a local sports hub as part of the Sports Strategy;
4. Protect and retain the public car park(s) within Southborough, as defined on the Southborough Policies Map;
5. Retain an appropriate mix of uses within the town centre, as defined on the Policies Map, and support proposals which would contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre;
6. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. one new health facility to replace an existing facility;
 - b. new play space provision to reduce gap in access to provision;
 - c. enhancements to natural green spaces at Barnetts Wood and Southborough Common;
 - d. additional natural green space and food growing areas/allotments;
 - e. recreation and sports provision at Hawkenbury (site allocation Policy AL/RTW 19) and/or at Land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, Southwood Road, Rusthall (site allocation Policy AL/SP 2);
 - f. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

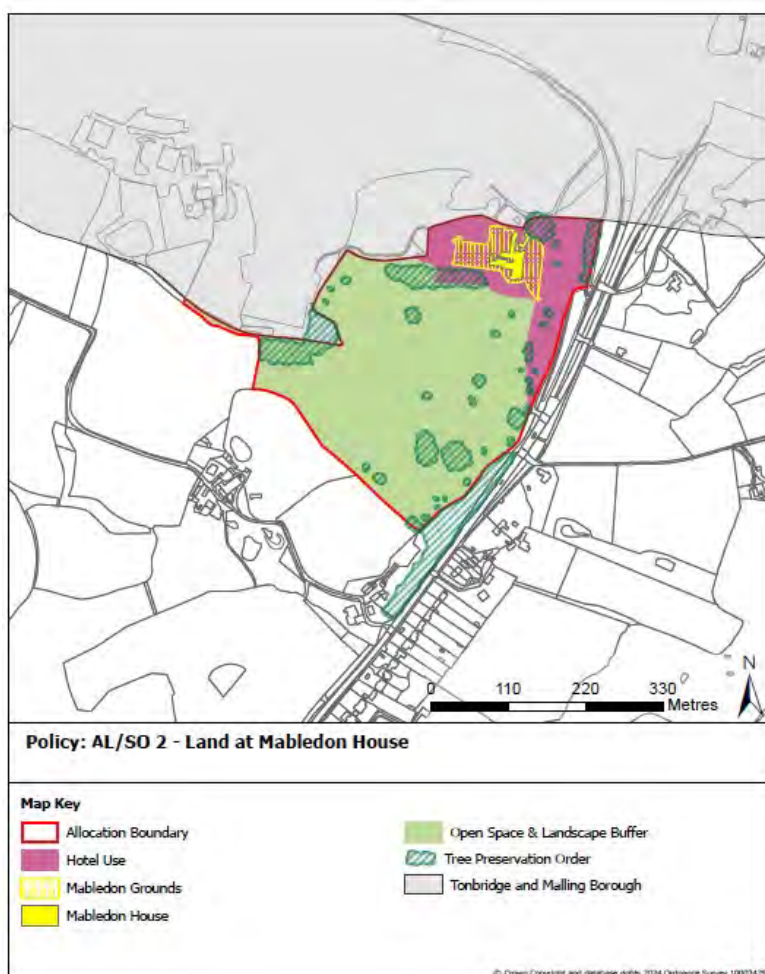
Allocation policies for Southborough

Land at Mabledon House

- 5.147** This site is located outside of the built-up area to the north of Southborough and straddles the borough boundary with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council. However, it is considered to be in a relatively sustainable location between Southborough and Tonbridge. The existing house on the site, Mabledon House, is a listed Grade II mansion associated with Decimus Burton, who was an important figure in the evolution of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The house (wholly within Tunbridge Wells borough), is set within a Grade II historic park and garden that includes pleasure grounds, a cottage garden, and a quarry. There are also a number of modern buildings in the grounds to the north of the main house, and within Tonbridge & Malling borough, some of which detract from the setting of the main house and park.
- 5.148** The site has direct access from the A26 from within the borough boundary and is close to the junction with the dualled A21.
- 5.149** There is currently no public access and the house, gardens and parkland are in need of investment for maintenance and restoration.
- 5.150** The site is within the High Weald National Landscape. Proposals will need to satisfy the relevant planning policy requirements associated with this designation to justify development within this sensitive location. The site also falls entirely within the Green Belt.
- 5.151** It is considered that Mabledon (including the house and gardens), would be appropriate for the development of hotel uses, which could include a spa and other ancillary facilities. A 'sequential test' has been carried out by the Council in accordance with national policy, which concludes that; there are no other more 'suitable' and 'available' sites within or on the edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre, Tonbridge town centre or Southborough town centre, that could accommodate the type of use proposed. There is a clear need within the borough for hotel use of this type and it is considered that the site at Mabledon provides a very specific locational justification for such a use. The change of use would also bring forward necessary investment to maintain and restore elements of the house, gardens and parkland.
- 5.152** The assessment carried out refers to the Council's Hotel Capacity Study (2017), which considers that there is a lack of luxury five star hotels within the borough offering accommodation at the higher end of the market, and also that there is the potential within the borough to provide new and/or improved amenities, including spa facilities and packages, which could attract those looking for a pampering/ weekend break. This allocation seeks to meet this need and the current gap in the hotel market within the borough, in a relatively sustainable location close to Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough and Tonbridge.

- 5.153** It is considered that there is considerable scope for development/redevelopment of the above proposals on the site which would be permissible in Green Belt terms under current Green Belt policy.

Map 23 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/SO 2

Land at Mabledon House

This site, as defined on the Southborough Policies Map, straddles the borough boundary with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and as such, while the policy encompasses a vision for the whole site, it is restricted to that land which lies within Tunbridge Wells borough. Successful implementation of this policy is dependent upon the support of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

The proposal for the whole site, which this policy supports, is for the development of hotel and leisure uses which could include a spa and other ancillary facilities, set within a restored historic park and garden and wider attractive landscape. Development should focus on the reuse of the existing house, with this and any scope for demolition and/or redevelopment and/or conversion of existing buildings to be determined through appropriate studies covering highways, heritage, landscape, visual amenity, climate change, ecology, and viability.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

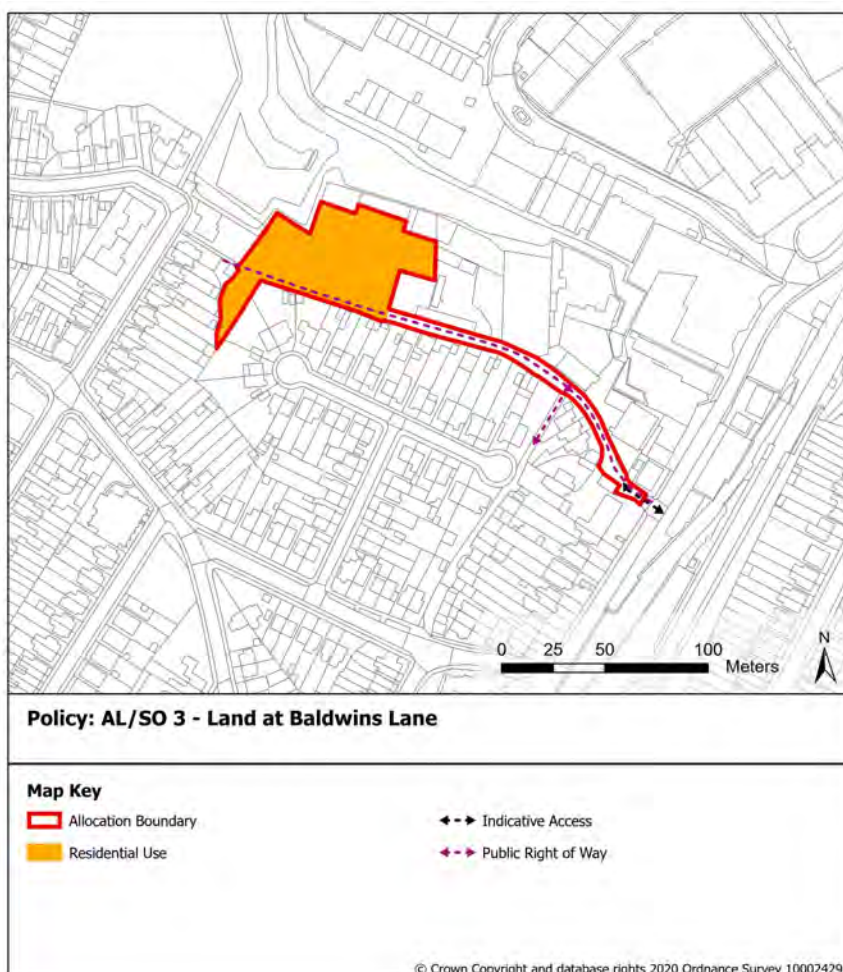
1. Provision of safe and acceptable access arrangements from the A26 for the proposed development, informed by a highways assessment;
2. Proposals should accord with Policy STR 9 and national Green Belt policy;
3. Any new development should be informed by a heritage assessment and a landscape and visual impact assessment. Development should:
 - a. be concentrated within those areas that already contain built form and not in the areas shown to be retained as parkland landscape on the site layout plan;
 - b. be subservient to the main house and respectful of its setting in terms of design, including height, scale, and massing;
 - c. retain and enhance key features and vistas of the parkland;
4. The provision of a detailed and fully funded conservation plan and scheme of restoration for the built heritage assets and the historic park and garden to be secured as part of any development;
5. The provision of a landscape and ecological management plan for ongoing protection and management of the identified landscape and ecological features of the site to be secured as part of any development;
6. Provision to be made for public access to heritage assets and the historic park and garden under an agreed scheme of site management, to include connections to, and improvements of, existing Public Rights of Way;
7. Opportunities to contribute to the provision of a cycle link to Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, and Tonbridge to be explored and, if feasible, to be provided;
8. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/SO 1.

Land at Baldwins Lane, North Farm Road

- 5.154** This previously developed site is inside the LBD of Southborough on the edge of the parished area bordering with Royal Tunbridge Wells. The site falls on the edge of the Southborough/High Brooms Industrial Estate, although it does not fall within the designated Key Employment Area. Specifically, the site is located at the western end of Baldwins Lane and to the north of Welbeck Avenue and the site consists of a single storey, flat roofed commercial building and an open, brick lined water tank (now empty). The single storey building is attached to a building on its north side which is used for motor repairs. Open areas to the rear of the adjacent commercial buildings to the east, which are used for parking, and the western area at the end of Baldwins Lane, are included in the site.
- 5.155** Baldwins Lane is an unadopted, private street which provides access directly from North Farm Road into the commercial properties in Baldwins Lane. The lane also provides rear access to a number of adjacent properties in Welbeck Avenue to the south of the site, as well as forming part of a Public Right of Way linking North Farm Road and Colebrook Road (via a flight of steps) to the west of the site. The site is approximately 250 metres to the north west of High Brooms Rail Station.

- 5.156** There is an area of geological value at Southborough pit which lies immediately to the north west of the site, which is wooded. Woodland continues to the immediate west of the site and to the north. The site levels fall towards the north of the site and drop dramatically beyond the site boundary through a belt of trees to the level of North Farm quarry. Baldwins Lane increasingly falls in level from the site down to North Farm Road. To the west, Colebrook Road is above the level of the site.
- 5.157** This site benefitted from planning permission under 20/00881/FULL for new residential development comprising 26 flats with associated vehicle parking. The policy as drafted reflects this lapsed permission which has not been implemented but is considered to be acceptable in planning terms, constituting an appropriate development on a previously developed site within a highly sustainable location.

Map 24 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/SO 3

Land at Baldwins Lane, North Farm Road

This site, as defined on the Southborough Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 26 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Adequate vehicular and pedestrian access from North Farm Road via the existing vehicular entrance to Baldwins Lane;
2. Improved linkage through the site and with the surrounding area, in particular from North Farm Road, through Baldwins Lane to Colebrook Road;
3. Layout of the site to be informed by a thorough assessment of the topography and landscape/townscape;
4. Provision of a land contamination survey as part of any redevelopment to demonstrate that any contamination associated with the former use of the site can be adequately mitigated;
5. Any proposals will need to be supported by noise and air quality impact assessments which should demonstrate how the scheme can minimise, and mitigate, the impact of the surrounding adjacent commercial uses;
6. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/SO 1.

Strategic Site: Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel

- 5.158** The Local Plan proposes the provision of the significant expansion of Paddock Wood including east Capel, as part of its strategy to deliver its housing need over the plan period. This settlement will be delivered on garden settlement principles, and will provide several thousand houses, employment provision, and the need for significant infrastructure delivery. The growth around Paddock Wood will provide a significant opportunity for investment into Paddock Wood town centre so it can respond to meeting the needs of the additional population it will serve.

Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel Overview

- 5.159** A strategic extension to Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel (hereafter referred to as Paddock Wood and east Capel), is proposed to deliver approximately 2,450 new dwellings, considerable employment use, and associated education, leisure, retail, and health facilities.
- 5.160** The expansion of this settlement will be delivered on garden settlement principles and will be fully integrated within the existing town, to provide for the needs of the borough's growing population.

Context

- 5.161** This strategic growth is planned on extensive land parcels to the north, east, and west of Paddock Wood, as shown on Site Layout Plan STR/SS1. The area covers approximately 418 hectares in total. Land to the west of the allocation is located within Capel parish; the remaining land falls within the parish of Paddock Wood.
- 5.162** The sites which form part of the proposed extension to Paddock Wood to the north west and south east are mostly undeveloped. They form a transition point between several local and valued landscape characters. To the north, the wide open flood plain of the Upper Medway valley is flat and drained, and relatively unwooded. To the south, the land rises with the slopes and valleys of the High Weald National Landscape, with significant woodland. To the east and west are the foothills of the High Weald, with farm fields, orchards, hedgerows, tree belts, and small hamlets present. All landscapes are marked by a strong human influence, primarily agricultural.
- 5.163** The High Weald National Landscape lies outside the site, around 0.7 miles to the south of the site boundary. The impact of development on the setting of the High Weald National Landscape, and on views from vantage points within the National Landscape area, will be major factors in delivering development in this location.
- 5.164** Land to the west of the proposed extension, the majority of which is within Capel parish, was released from the Green Belt. The exceptional circumstances for this release are outlined in the Development Strategy Topic Paper. The previous Green Belt designation had its edge defined to the south of the railway as the existing urban area, and to the north by built form and ditch/vegetation features.

- 5.165** Development on the western side of Paddock Wood will need to minimise perceived coalescence between settlements. Use of the strong tree belts and concentration of denser development to the east will be an important design principle.
- 5.166** Ancient woodland is present within the allocation on the western side of Paddock Wood, surrounding the railway line to north and south. The woodland is connected to tree belts north and south, and the Tudeley Brook watercourse.
- 5.167** Fluvial flood risk is a considerable factor affecting the western side of Paddock Wood, and within the town centre. The site includes large areas of Flood Zone 3 from the Tudeley Brook and runoff from the High Weald, as well as Flood Zone 2. Water from the Tudeley Brook flows under the railway line, but due to limited flow capacity, excessive flows move eastwards along the railway line embankment and into existing built-up areas and the town centre.
- 5.168** The area to the north is also covered by Flood Zones 2 and 3, from the Upper Medway flood plain. The land to the east is less affected by fluvial flooding, although some flood risk is present due to the brook running to the western boundary of this land.
- 5.169** Groundwater levels are high in the northern part of the western site due to the proximity of the Upper Medway flood plain. Surface water flooding risk is not considered particularly elevated, although the local network of urban surface water drains and foul water drains has flooded in recent rainfall events.
- 5.170** There are a small number of pumping stations within the existing town, which can raise amenity issues such as noise and vibration. It is typically recommended that residential uses are at least 15 metres from any pumping station and schemes within this strategic allocation should be considered accordingly against the requirements of Policies EN 1 and EN 27.
- 5.171** Planning applications for sensitive land uses (including residential, recreational, and educational development) within 500 metres of the Paddock Wood Wastewater Treatment works should consider the impact of odour disbursement through discussions with Southern Water. In some cases, an odour assessment may be required.
- 5.172** Whilst there are no listed buildings within the allocated sites, there are clusters of listed buildings adjacent to the site boundaries at Badsell Manor Farm, Whetsted, Mascalls Court, and south of Church Farm. The settings of these buildings form an important part of the heritage of the town. They are predominantly related to the agricultural and productive land history of the town, featuring some examples of oast houses (for drying of hops) and traditional farmsteads.
- 5.173** The eastern side has two areas of potential archaeological interest; one along the former Hop Pickers Railway Line, and one surrounding the woodland with the remains of a former moat within.
- 5.174** In highway terms, the land in Capel is bound to the west by the A228, a primary route between Royal Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone. To the south is Badsell Road, the B2017, which is constrained in various places with a more rural character. To

the east, the site is adjacent to the backs of houses and cul-de-sac ends which offer little opportunity for vehicular connections, but some pedestrian through-routes which are of varying quality and overlooking. In the north of the site, the eastern edge has more opportunity to connect to the B2160 Maidstone Road as it leaves the existing built-up area.

- 5.175** The railway line cuts through the land in Capel, forming a significant point of severance. An unprotected pedestrian level crossing is present to the east of Whetsted Wood, connecting a Public Right of Way.
- 5.176** The eastern site in Paddock Wood has good opportunities to connect into the town centre for cyclists and pedestrians, with an active travel link through the Church Farm site (which has planning permission for its residential development), and the presence of a former railway line (the Hop Pickers Line) that runs to a footpath into town. Vehicular access is more constrained as the majority of movements will be towards the west and south, which requires the use of smaller rural lanes to connect to the strategic network.
- 5.177** To the north of the railway line is an established employment area, with industrial units located along Transfesa Road and Eldon Way. Given its proximity to the railway line, beyond which the town centre lies immediately to the south, it is considered that some land could be better utilised for a mixed use/residential-led uses which will enhance the town centre's vibrancy and vitality. Additional, high quality employment provision is planned for land south of Lucks Lane and further east of Transfesa Road, which will allow for the relocation of existing employment operators looking for more modern premises better suited to their needs and provide for some additional employment provision.
- 5.178** Public Rights of Way (mostly footpaths) run through all sites, providing an existing grid of pedestrian connectivity to access the surrounding countryside. There are wider connections for walking to the north and south, with a particularly high density of footpaths towards the High Weald National Landscape. Connections to the Medway and river path are available to the north west.
- 5.179** All sites are within walking or cycling distance of Paddock Wood railway station.

Justification

- 5.180** The Development Strategy (Policy STR 1) set out in Section 4 of this Local Plan for distributing housing and employment development across the borough is based on the delivery of a significant extension to Paddock Wood and east Capel. It is considered that an extension to Paddock Wood, based on garden settlement principles, provides an appropriate, sustainable, and effective means of meeting housing needs across the borough during the plan period.
- 5.181** Such an approach is acknowledged in the NPPF (September 2023), which states that *"the supply of large number of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns"* (paragraph 73).

- 5.182** The site is well located to provide a substantial amount of housing close to, and well related to, Paddock Wood. The size of the proposed development means it will be able to contribute to the necessary infrastructure to ensure Paddock Wood can accommodate this growth, and provide and support various facilities, including retail, education, employment, health, and leisure. It will also deliver the necessary investment in infrastructure to ensure proper integration of the new growth areas with the existing settlement at Paddock Wood. The expansion was facilitated through the release of land from the Green Belt: the exceptional circumstances to justify this are set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper.
- 5.183** Masterplanning work to inform the proposed strategic growth in this location has been undertaken by David Lock Associates (Strategic Sites Masterplanning and Infrastructure Study February 2021, and the Follow-on Study October 2023). This has assessed the deliverability of the extension to Paddock Wood and east Capel, in terms of site constraints and flood and highways modelling. The viability of the scheme has been tested, and whilst further detail on phasing and mix of dwellings is required, the deliverability and viability of the growth here is justified.
- 5.184** Site promoters have indicated their support for the proposals, and so deliverability is anticipated to be achievable over the plan period, in line with the assumed phasing set out in the studies undertaken by DLA. At an early stage, the Council brought together key consultees, infrastructure providers, parish and town councils, and developers to discuss and input into the evolving work on this site, and the infrastructural requirements associated with this; this discussion and input has carried on throughout the development of this Plan. Please refer to the Strategic Sites Topic Paper for further information.

Vision

- 5.185** The expansion of Paddock Wood and east Capel offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to determine the direction and character of the town, equipping it for a future with new, sustainable infrastructure and excellent service provision.
- 5.186** Paddock Wood is a compact, bustling town that is popular with its residents and serves local needs. This is a strong basis upon which to grow, but deficiencies in service provision, mobility, and flooding infrastructure have been identified. Comprehensive strategic development offers an opportunity to address these deficiencies and inject the town centre with new vitality and viability.
- 5.187** Based around multi-functional green space of different types, the vision for Paddock Wood and east Capel sees its growth with homes of different sizes and tenures to the east and west of Paddock Wood, along with additional new homes in the town centre and north of the railway line. Paddock Wood is a compact town with a concentrated town centre, and it is feasible for the majority of the population to use active modes of transport to access the town centre for day-to-day services. There will be sustainable mobility, such as walking and cycling links, throughout the settlement; this is a core to the delivery of a successful new settlement. There will also be comprehensive improvements to flood management.

- 5.188** As well as active movement, other aspects of health and active lifestyles will be promoted. This includes a major new sport and leisure hub with the potential for a co-located health centre. Paddock Wood Parkland is proposed as a significant new area of natural open space, enhancing locally distinctive natural habitats.
- 5.189** The proposed extension provides an opportunity for betterment to the flooding and drainage issues which are present for residents of parts of Paddock Wood, and ecological and landscape enhancements as part of the exceptional circumstances case for the release of this Green Belt land.
- 5.190** An enhanced employment area within Paddock Wood will be provided, through the provision of additional high quality employment premises to the north of the established industrial area at Transfesa Way. A mix of employment types and sizes will be promoted to support the balanced economic and employment growth of Paddock Wood. This will help further establish this area as a key business location for the borough. It is expected that some of this additional employment provision will free up some existing employment units adjacent to the railway on the edge of the town centre from businesses that might relocate. This will provide an opportunity for key sites adjacent to the town centre to be delivered for a residential-led, mixed use scheme. Whilst it is not anticipated that the industrial units at Eldon Way, to the north west of the town centre, adjacent to the railway line, will become available over the plan period, if suitable alternative employment premises are identified, residential uses would be supported in principle in this location subject to other policies in the Plan.
- 5.191** A community hub to serve the existing and new residents of Paddock Wood has recently been delivered at Memorial Field.
- 5.192** In an era of significant uncertainty and lifestyle change following the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic, development at Paddock Wood and east Capel gives the town a chance to offer a sustainable lifestyle, located in attractive countryside but with access to the facilities of a bustling town. Growth could positively improve life and opportunities for those living in the town, or those wanting to remain but unable to find a house.
- 5.193** At the heart of the creation of a sustainable community is the delivery of the new settlement based on garden settlement principles. This includes the following qualities:
1. **Clear identity:** a distinctive local identity as a new garden community, including at its heart an attractive and functioning centre and public realm;
 2. **Sustainable scale:** built at a scale which supports the necessary infrastructure to allow the community to function self-sufficiently on a day-to-day basis, with the capacity for future growth to meet the evolving housing and economic needs of the local area;
 3. **Well designed places:** with vibrant mixed use communities that support a range of local employment types and premises, retail opportunities, recreational, and community facilities;

4. **Great homes:** offer a wide range of high quality, distinctive homes. This includes affordable housing and a mix of tenures for all stages of life;
5. **Strong local vision and engagement:** designed and executed with the engagement and involvement of the existing local community, and future residents and businesses. This should include consideration of how the natural and historic environment of the local area is reflected and respected;
6. **Transport:** integrated, forward looking, and accessible transport options that support economic prosperity and wellbeing for residents. This should include promotion of public transport, walking, and cycling so that settlements are easy to navigate, and facilitate simple and sustainable access to jobs, education, and services;
7. **Healthy places:** designed to provide the choices and chances for all to live a healthy life, through taking a whole systems approach to key local health and wellbeing priorities and strategies;
8. **Green space:** generous, accessible, and good quality green and blue infrastructure that promotes health, wellbeing, and quality of life, and considers opportunities to deliver environmental gains such as biodiversity net gain and enhancements to natural capital;
9. **Legacy and stewardship arrangements:** should be in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure, and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community;
10. **Future proofed:** designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth, and the impacts of climate change, including flood risk and water availability, with durable landscape and building design planned for generations to come. This should include anticipation of the opportunities presented by technological change such as driverless cars and renewable energy measures.

5.194 A low carbon vision will be incorporated into the design of the proposed extension such that the final development can be considered as an exemplar scheme. This is particularly pertinent for the heating and energy supplies of the new residential buildings which will need to incorporate renewable energy generation. The suitability of district heating schemes and modern waste collection measures will also be considered (see Policies EN 1, EN 2, and EN 3).

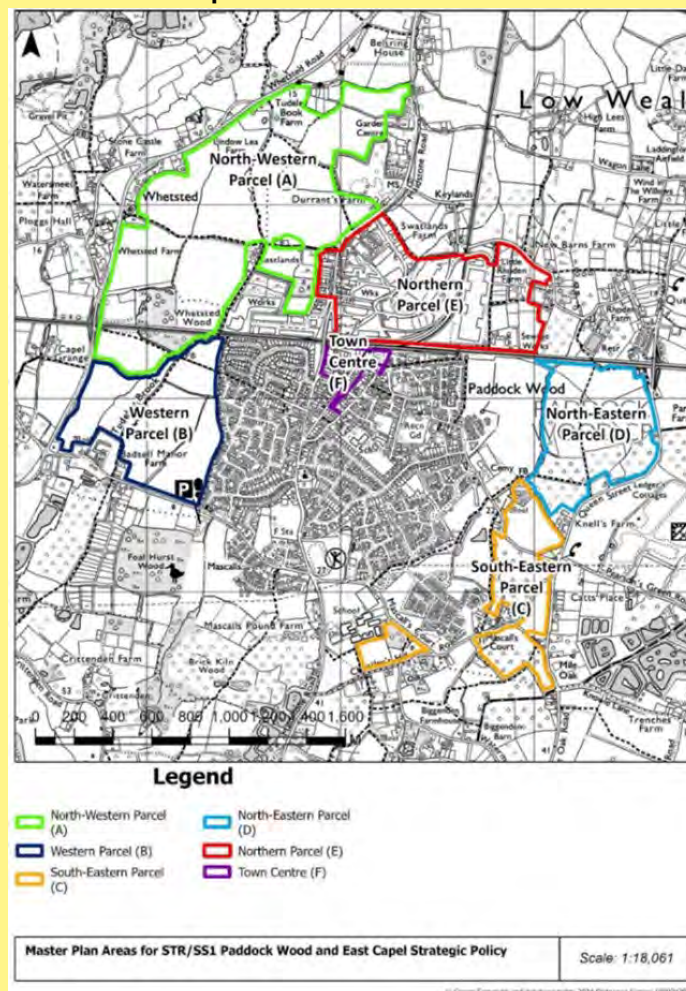
5.195 The infrastructure required to support an expanded settlement of this scale in the location proposed has been identified. This includes education provision, health facilities, and required drainage and utility services. This is detailed in the Strategic Sites Masterplanning and Infrastructure Study Follow-on Study prepared by DLA October 2023. In highway terms, it is proposed that works to the A228 will be required, including a new off-line bypass around Colts Hill to the north of Alders Road (smaller in scale to the longstanding Colts Hill bypass proposals promoted by Kent County Council), and off-line works to the A228 to the south of Alders Road. Land is identified on the Policies Map for these highway works. Other works, and junction improvements, will also be required.

- 5.196** The assignment of contributions will be further refined through the masterplans to be prepared for each Strategic Site or parcel. The delivery of this infrastructure should be through ongoing discussions with relevant stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to, Kent County Council, adjacent local planning authorities (Tonbridge & Malling and Maidstone Borough Councils) and other statutory consultees.
- 5.197** LBDs for Paddock Wood, including land in Capel parish, which form part of the extended settlement, are shown on the Policies Map. This has been informed through consideration of the Strategic Sites Masterplanning and Infrastructure Studies and follows the broad location of the allocation for this strategic settlement, but has allowed for some appropriate offsets from road and other boundaries to allow for landscape buffers.
- 5.198** Policy STR/SS1 - The Strategy for Paddock Wood including Land at east Capel sets out the Development Principles, Masterplanning requirements, strategic Infrastructure needs, and principle uses for the individual parcels (A – E).
- 5.199** It is important that the overall vision is clearly established to help develop the growth around Paddock Wood and east Capel strategically and holistically. To this end, the Council requires that all developments will require a masterplan relating to each parcel (or combination of parcels). The masterplans shall be prepared with relevant key stakeholders and submitted with planning applications. These masterplans will provide a framework to how the policy requirements of this Local Plan can be incorporated into the new settlement in order for it to attain the garden settlement objectives in relation to the development, and how these will relate to the made neighbourhood development plans of Paddock Wood Town Council and Capel Parish Council. Planning applications will generally need to accord with the broad objectives and principles set out in the masterplans.

Policy STR/SS 1

The Strategy for Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel

Map 25 Master Plan Areas



Development principles

1. The development strategy for Paddock Wood and east Capel in conjunction with Policies PSTR/PW 1 (the Strategy for Paddock Wood (parish) and PSTR/CA 1 (the Strategy for Capel parish), sets Limits to Built Development for Paddock Wood and east Capel on the Policies Map (Inset Map 4) as a framework for the provision of an extended settlement providing for approximately 2,450 dwellings and associated infrastructure. This is facilitated through the release of Green Belt land to the west of Paddock Wood, with development to be carried out on each of the development Parcels identified on Map 25 as follows;

- A. North - Western Parcel (edged in green) – approximately 770 dwellings.
- B. South - Western Parcel (edged in dark blue) – approximately 520 dwellings.
- C. South - Eastern Parcel (edged in yellow) – approximately 560 dwellings.
- D. North - Eastern Parcel (edged in light blue) – approximately 600 dwellings.
- E. Northern Parcel (edged in red) - approximately 4.25 hectares of Class E (g), B2 and B8 employment uses.

F. Town Centre (edged in purple on Map 25 (Master Plan Areas)) which is subject to Policy STR/SS2;

2. The development proposals for the whole of the allocated area shall embed garden settlement principles. Proposals for each Parcel should give effect to this requirement and be informed and guided by the Council's Strategic Sites Masterplanning and Infrastructure Study (Addendum) dated October 2023.

3. The development proposals as a whole shall:

(a) provide a mix of housing types, size, and tenure (in line with Policy H1) to ensure a balanced, inclusive, and accessible community, the exact mix to be agreed with and approved by the Local Planning Authority at the planning application stage in relation to each Parcel;

(b) deliver mixed communities, including accommodation for those with different accommodation needs, including the needs of older people with at least one sheltered and one extra care housing scheme (one on the east and one on the west of the allocated site);

(c) be landscape led and of a high standard of design with particular attention to be paid to structural and detailed landscaping (to promote and deliver a continuous and homogeneous landscape approach to the allocation as a whole). This should include the retention and enhancement of hedges and trees along the A228 with development set back from the A228 to reduce visual impact on the countryside, with use of internal hedging and tree belts along field boundaries to influence development layout;

(d) ensure that the development responds appropriately to local character and overall setting;

(e) provide a strategy for seeking to achieve low carbon design and construction in accordance with Policies STR 7, EN1 and EN3;

(f) meet the informal and formal recreational needs of the development and provide areas of green and open space (as shown schematically on Map 26);

(g) meet the biodiversity objectives of Policy EN9 in an integrated and comprehensive manner;

(h) ensure that surface water runoff from the development will not exacerbate and so far as possible and practicable improve flooding elsewhere;

(i) make provision for any viably workable minerals to be extracted prior to development commencing on the site where this is practical and environmentally feasible;

(j) where development is proposed within the setting of the High Weald National Landscape, it will be delivered having regard to the recommendations of the High Weald AONB Setting Study and the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and ensure that landscape and visual impact are avoided or fully mitigated;

(k) is developed with Vision and Validate/Monitor and Manage principles and provides walking and cycling linkages within and between each Parcel, together with links to Paddock Wood town centre, existing and new employment areas, and surrounding countryside in accordance with Policy TP2;

(l) where possible and practicable, connect to and enhance the existing bridleways network;

4. Proposals for the piecemeal development of individual sites in the Eastern and Western Parcels that do not conform to the above requirements will not be permitted.

5. Planning applications for development should be informed by appropriate landscape and visual impact assessments, biodiversity and heritage studies where necessary.

6. All development proposals shall be assessed by a Design Review Panel at the pre-application and application stages.

7. All residential development shall be within Flood Zone 1, and planning applications shall be supported with an up to date site specific Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with Policy EN 25.

Masterplanning

8. All development proposals in relation to the Eastern and Western parcels shall be in accordance with an approved masterplan relating to each parcel (or combination of parcels) that will respect the requirements of paragraphs 2 to 7 above. The masterplan shall be prepared with relevant key stakeholders, and submitted to the Council for its approval as part of the initial application for planning permission in relation to (any part of) the relevant Parcel.

9. Each Masterplan shall:

(a) show the intended overall design and layout of the development and the proposed distribution and location of uses across the Parcel including its functional links with neighbouring Parcels, the existing community of Paddock Wood and Paddock Wood Town Centre and surrounding land which shall accord with, be based upon and promote, garden community principles as required in paragraph 2 above;

(b) demonstrate how heritage assets and their settings will be sympathetically integrated into the development and their significance respected;

(c) show all structural landscaping and indicative treatments to be provided (including boundary treatments);

(d) incorporate a green and blue infrastructure (GBI) plan which is informed by a comprehensive wildlife and habitat survey and heritage and landscape character assessments;

(e) show how the development will incorporate the full range of sustainable transport measures, including the proposed access and highway and transport links, including links within the site and to the surrounding footpath and cycleway and bridleway network (including proposed and potential footpath and cycleway and bridleway links to the wider area wherever possible);

(f) demonstrate how the development will safeguard, maintain and, where possible, enhance key views in and across the allocated site;

(g) provide convenient and highly legible pedestrian and cycle links through the allocated site to connect the Parcels and integrate the new communities and provide good pedestrian access to Paddock Wood Town Centre and surrounding areas;

(h) identify the locations and forms of the district and local centres, including the community and healthcare facilities to be provided;

(i) incorporate a parking strategy in accordance with Policy TP3;

(j) where land has been removed from the Green Belt the masterplan shall demonstrate how compensatory improvements will be provided.

10. Proposals for employment development on the Northern Parcel shall comply with the requirements of paragraph 9 (a), to (g) above.

11. The masterplans shall include a phasing and implementation plan which shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The phasing and implementation plan shall include details to demonstrate how the provision of necessary infrastructure will be coordinated with the occupation of the development, including shared services with other phases or parcels. The plan shall have regard to the Council's latest Strategic Sites and Masterplanning Infrastructure Study and include a Monitor and Manage Framework.

Strategic Infrastructure

12. Infrastructure shall be secured by conditions and/or s.106 obligations to ensure that:

a) development across the whole of the allocated site shall be capable of being integrated and phased and its impacts satisfactorily mitigated;

b) there are supporting facilities (including access to green and blue infrastructure, leisure and sporting facilities, shops, health, community and educational facilities) that will allow the early establishment of a self-sufficient and cohesive community with an appropriate level of supporting infrastructure provision;

c) occupiers have a range of sustainable travel options at their disposal, including access to bus services and the cycle and pedestrian links;

d) transport links and associated transport and highway improvements and the provision of new transport and highway infrastructure is provided when it is needed to support the development and mitigate potential off-site highway and other transport impacts in accordance with the Vision and Validate/Monitor and Manage Framework. The timing and trigger points for highway mitigation measures are to be determined in accordance with the Monitor and Manage Framework to avoid potentially severe impacts on the highway. *NB: Capacity and/or safety issues may be identified at other junctions/links in the respective transport assessments at the planning application stage, and further mitigation may be required;*

13. The delivery of necessary infrastructure shall be informed by ongoing discussions with relevant stakeholders, including Kent County Council and adjacent local authorities (Tonbridge & Malling and Maidstone Borough Councils, Paddock Wood Town Council, and Capel Parish Council) and other relevant statutory consultees and be kept under review throughout the planning stages of the development.

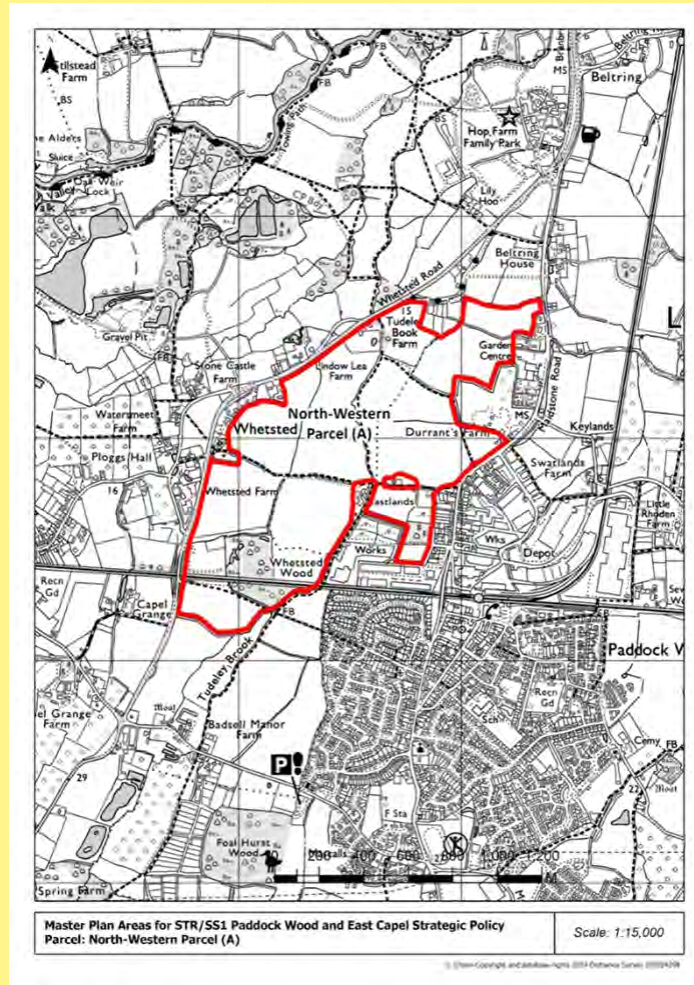
14. Save to the extent covered by CIL requirements (if any), development proposals in relation to all Parcels will be required to be supported by planning obligations that provide so far (as necessary and reasonable) for the timely provision of and/or the payment of proportionate contributions towards the carrying out and/or implementation of strategic

and other necessary highway mitigation works and improvements, education and health provision and other necessary infrastructure as identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and following consultation with relevant parties.

15. The infrastructure to be funded shall include but may not be limited to:

- (a) sports and leisure provision to include an upgrade to existing indoor and outdoor sports facilities (which shall include a 25m swimming pool if feasible);
- (b) health provision (to be provided and delivered in one or more of the local centres);
- (c) secondary school provision equivalent to 3 Forms of Entry (3FE) as an expansion of the existing secondary school at Mascalls Academy, or in the event that this scheme is not deliverable, a new secondary school shall be delivered within the North-Western development parcel,
- (d) cycle and pedestrian links to be delivered across the development parcels with links to the existing settlement including a north-south pedestrian and cycle bridge over the railway line linking the North-Western and South Western Parcels, and links to adjoining neighbourhoods and access to community facilities;
- (e) the improvement of the highway network including:
 - i) the Colts Hill Bypass and associated junction improvements at Badsell Roundabout
 - ii) Somerhill Roundabout improvements
 - iii) Hop Farm Roundabout improvements
 - iv) Junctions on the Pembury Road corridor
- (f) subject to monitoring evidence collected in accordance with an agreed Monitor and Manage Framework the further improvement of the highway network through a series of junction improvements (as set out in the council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan) may be required at:
 - i) A267/B2169 Birling Road
 - ii) B2017/Hartlake Road
 - iii) A228/Maidstone Road
- (g) the delivery of 4.54ha of sport provision (in one location straddling the south western and north western parcel boundaries) for sport and leisure provision including outdoor pitches, changing facilities, and car parking;

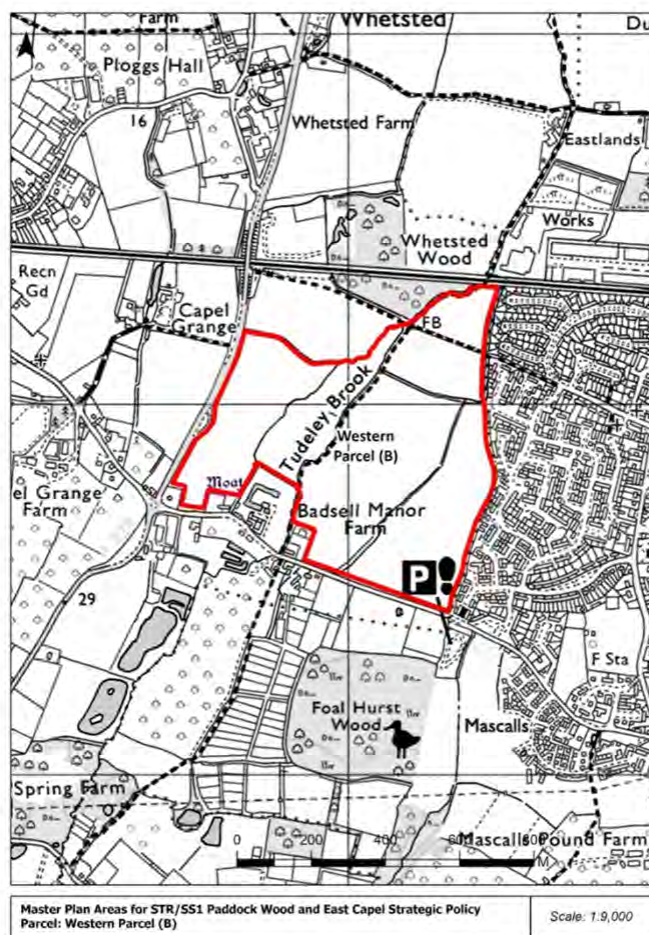
Development Parcel Principle Uses and Development



Policy STR/SS 1(A) – North Western Parcel Requirements

The North Western Parcel shall provide the following development/uses:

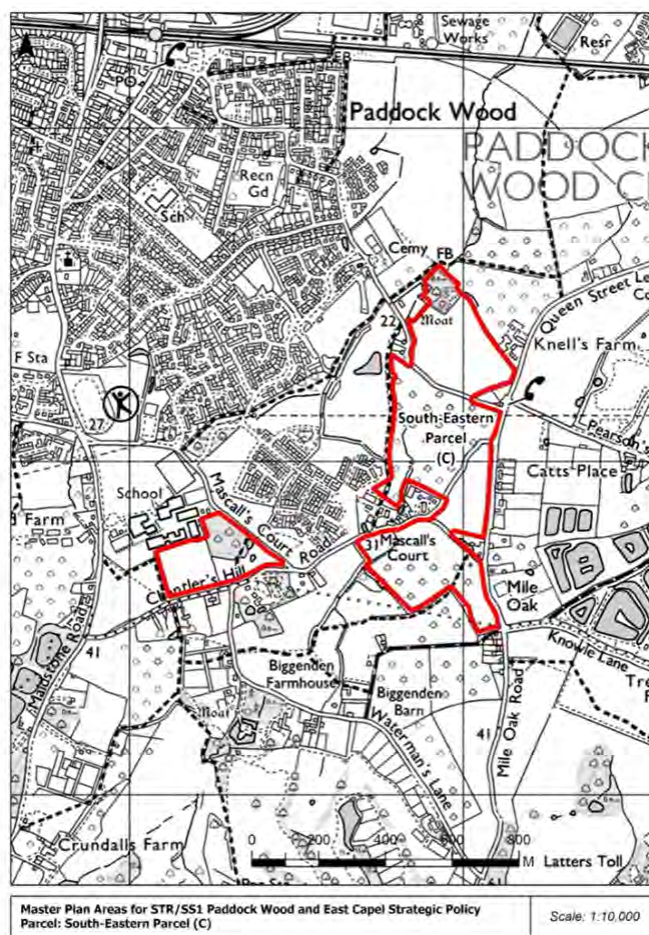
- (i) approximately 770 dwellings, 40% of which shall be Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy H3;
- (ii) land for a two-form entry primary school site, safeguarded to enable expansion to three form entry;
- (iii) a three-pitch gypsy/traveller site (to include space for one mobile home and one touring caravan per pitch) in accordance with Policy H9;
- (iv) a local centre providing up to 700sqm commercial floorspace (Class E(a) to (f)) in total;
- (v) the safeguarding of land for 4FE secondary school that has land available to expand to 6FE should it be required, unless it can be demonstrated that the school provision will be delivered through other ways as set out in this policy, whereby any alternative development of the safeguarded land will be subject to the consideration of policies in this plan, and the council's ambitions for comprehensive delivery of Policy STR/SS 1;
- (vi) Parkland within and to the north of the North-Western parcel to deliver new habitat, allowing for informal recreation via a network of footpaths and boardwalks, and flood attenuation measures where necessary;



Policy STR/SS 1(B) – South Western parcel Requirements

The South Western Parcel shall provide the following development/uses:

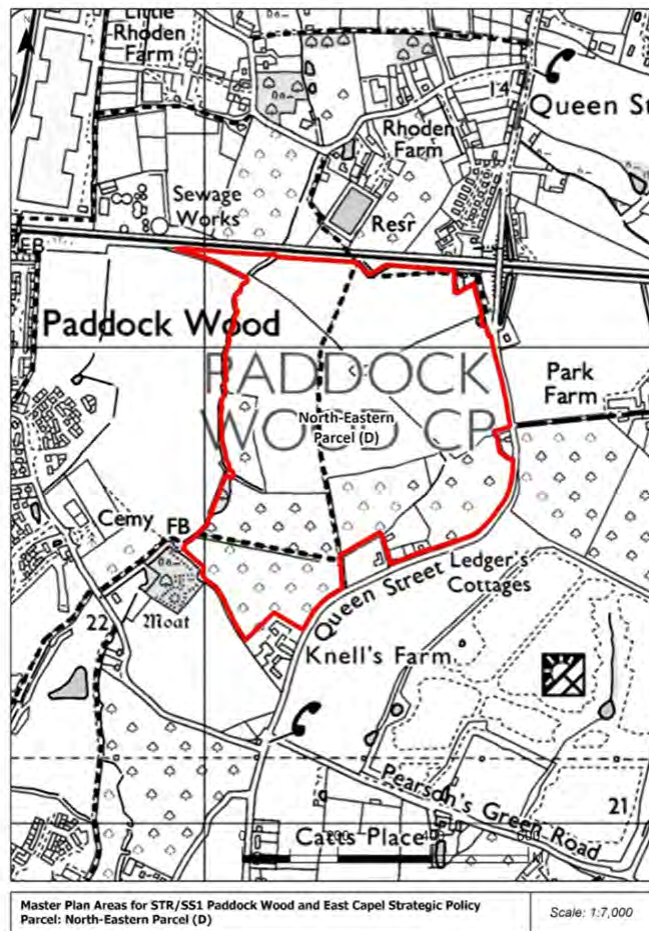
- (i) approximately 520 dwellings, 40% of which shall be Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy H3;
- (ii) a mix of housing to include sheltered accommodation provision in accordance with Policy H6;
- (iii) a local centre providing up to 700sqm commercial floorspace (Class E(a) to (f)) in total including a Healthcare facility;
- (iv) a flood water attenuation area allowing for informal recreation via footpaths and boardwalks;
- (v) provision of flood attenuation features to enable the delivery of flood betterment to the north western area of the existing settlement.



Policy STR/SS 1(C) – South Eastern Parcel Requirements

The South Eastern Parcel shall provide the following development/uses:

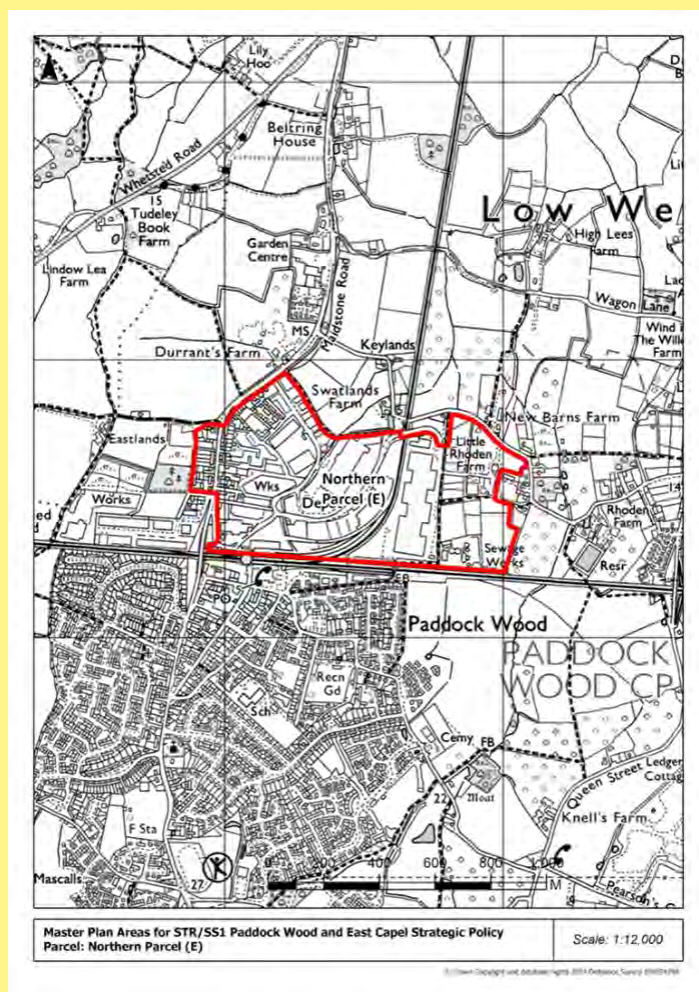
- (i) approximately 560 dwellings, 40% of which shall be Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy H3;
- (ii) a mix of housing to include specialist extra care accommodation for the elderly in accordance with Policy H6;
- (iii) safeguarding of land north of Chantler's Hill for the expansion of Mascalls Academy if required.
- (iv) a local centre providing up to 700sqm commercial floorspace (Use Class E(a) to (f)) in total.



Policy STR/SS 1(D) – North Eastern Parcel Requirements

The North Eastern Parcel shall provide the following development/uses:

- (i) approximately 600 dwellings, 40% of which shall be Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy H3;
- (ii) land for a two-form entry primary school;
- (iii) incorporation, use and enhancement of the Hop Pickers Trail.

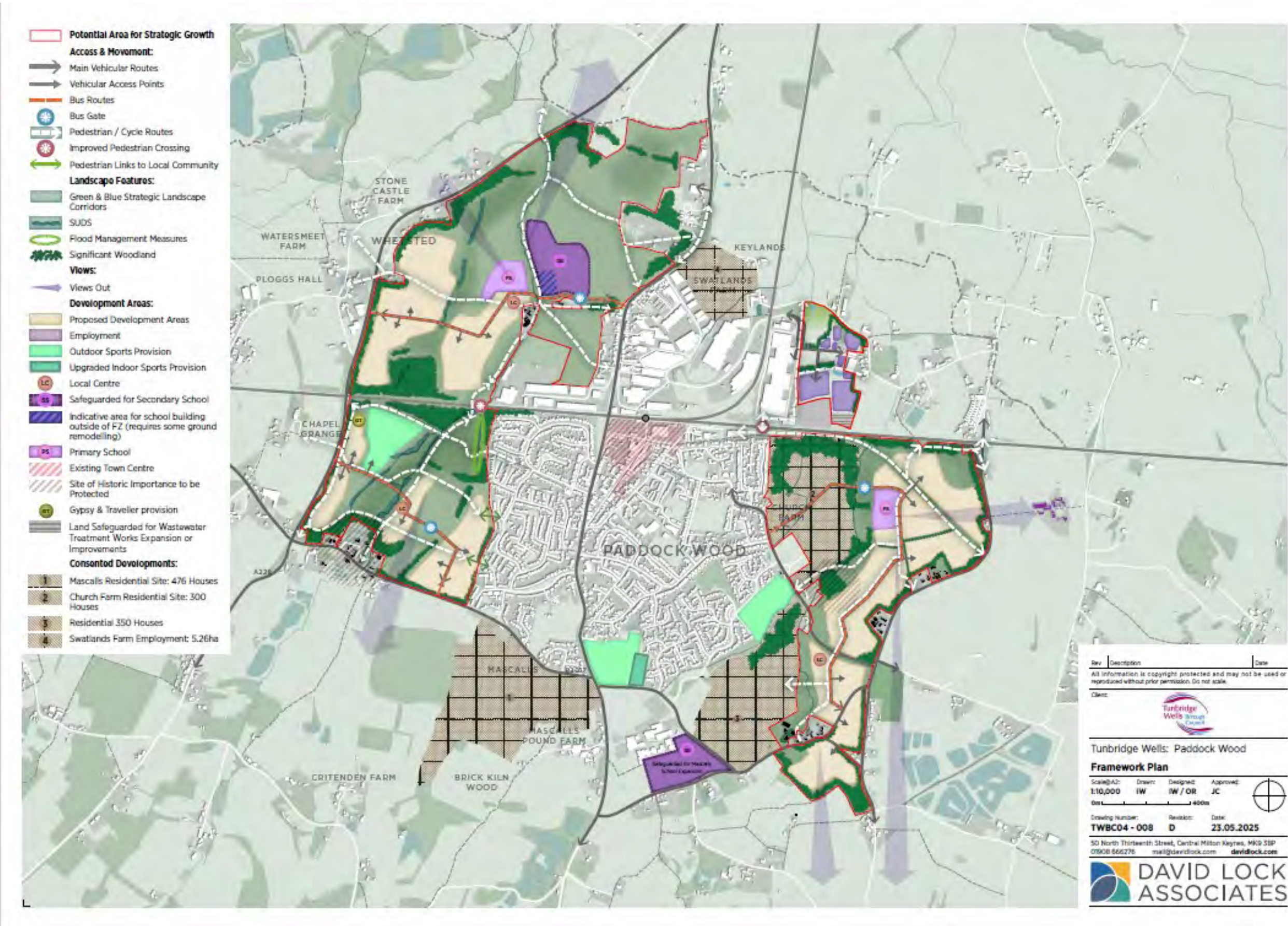


Policy STR/SS 1(E) – Northern Parcel Requirements

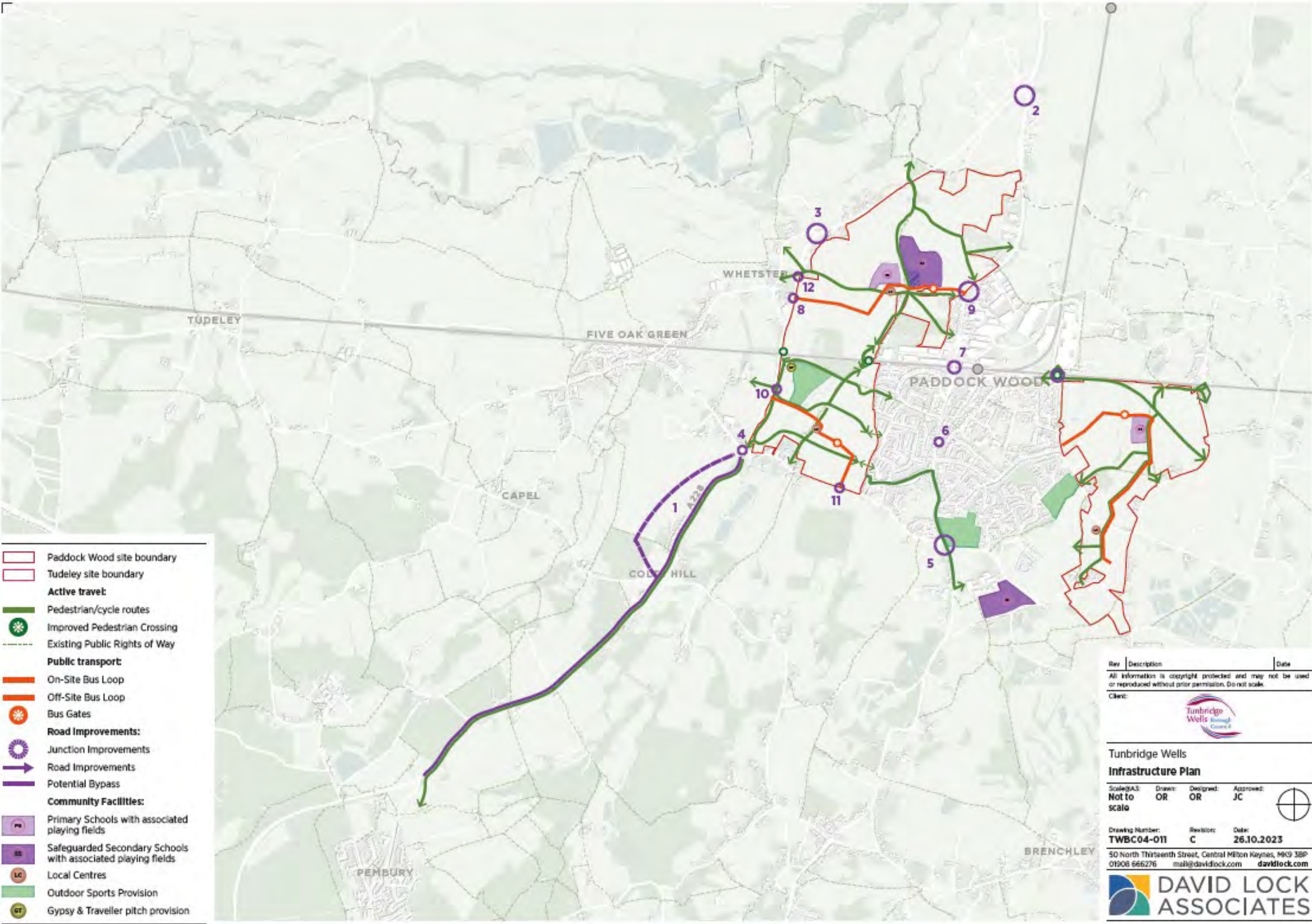
The Northern Parcel shall provide the following development:

- (i) a mix of employment uses on sites to the east of Transfesa Road to provide approximately 4.25 hectares of Class E (g), B2 and B8 employment uses.

Map 26 Paddock Wood and East Capel Structure Plan (published with the permission of David Lock Associates Ltd.)



Map 27 Transport Connections Paddock Wood and East Capel (published with the permission of David Lock Associates Ltd.)

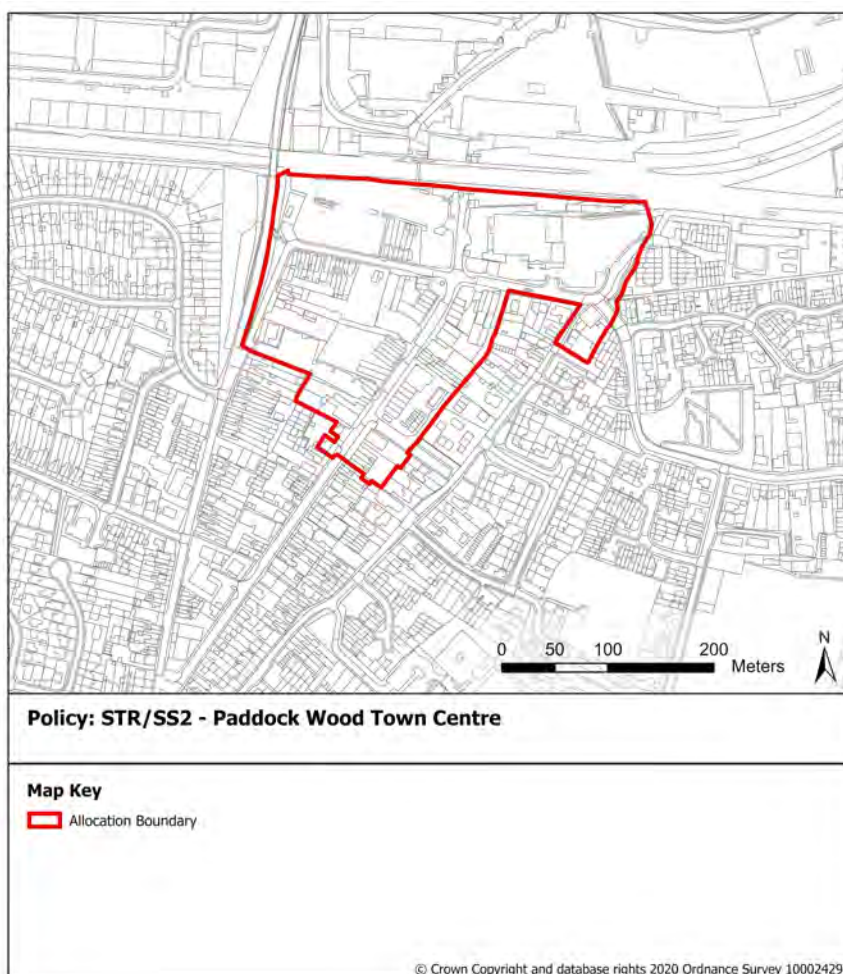


The Strategy for Paddock Wood Town Centre Overview

- 5.200** The town centre sits below Royal Tunbridge Wells in the retail hierarchy, performing a local retail and service role to residents to the north and east of the borough. The retail and service provision in the centre is primarily located along Commercial Road, with a large anchor Waitrose foodstore and Paddock Wood railway station to the north. Barsleys department store provides an important comparison retail draw to the centre, supported by a range of smaller retail and service uses providing for day-to-day shopping needs.
- 5.201** The town centre is surrounded by residential uses to the east, south, and west. The railway line runs to the north of the centre, and to the north of this is an established employment area at Eldon Way and Transfesa Way, providing a mix of light and general industrial, and storage and distribution uses. Significant growth is proposed around Paddock Wood. This includes the delivery of approximately 2,450 dwellings on land around the existing settlement. This planned growth provides an important opportunity for ambitious investment into the town centre so it can enhance its role in the borough as a local service centre, meet the demands of the additional residents the town centre will serve over the plan period, and ensure the new growth is assimilated fully into the existing town. Key to delivering this successfully will be enhanced pedestrian links throughout the town centre to the residential developments beyond, and enhanced permeability over the railway line. Introducing additional residential uses, along with other commercial uses and public realm improvements, will also be key in transforming Paddock Wood town centre over the plan period. It is anticipated around 30 residential dwellings can be delivered through redevelopment of town centre sites. This is not a limit. Additional residential units will be welcomed if it can be demonstrated that the key aspirations for the town centre will be achieved, with compliance with other policies in the Plan.
- 5.202** The 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in changes to working patterns, and evidence suggests that office-based sectors are highly likely to shift towards more flexible ways of working, with a far greater emphasis on home working in the future. The provision of a flexible workspace hub in Paddock Wood will respond to the structural economic shift towards more flexible homeworking, providing an alternative flexible working environment for Paddock Wood's existing, sizeable out-commuting population, which is set to increase significantly as a result of the planned growth. Flexible workspaces will generate demand for, and catalyse the introduction of, related supporting uses such as cafés, restaurants, drinking establishments, and leisure. Such a facility should be located in Paddock Wood town centre to promote the vitality of the town centre, drive footfall, and retain expenditure in the town centre to reinforce other uses accordingly.
- 5.203** There are a number of retail units located sporadically to the south of Commercial Road and their role is recognised as being important to the overall vibrancy of Paddock Wood town centre.

- 5.204** To ensure the growth of the town centre is planned and delivered holistically, a Town Centre Framework Masterplan SPD will be prepared with input from key town centre stakeholders, local communities, infrastructure and service providers. The SPD will identify key sites for redevelopment, to deliver a framework for the future of the town centre to ensure its revitalisation. The strategy will set out the range and mix of uses that will sustain the centre in terms of the planned expansion of Paddock Wood, alongside additional residential development in the town centre to ensure its viability.

Map 28 Paddock Wood Town Centre



Policy STR/SS 2

The Strategy for Paddock Wood Town Centre

Within Paddock Wood Town Centre, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 5), this Local Plan shall set out the framework for the provision of a Paddock Wood Town Centre Framework Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document, setting out the strategic vision for the town centre over the plan period based on the following approach:

1. The identification of a primary commercial area;

2. A mix of town centre uses to provide commercial, leisure, residential, and employment uses (to include a flexible workspace of around 150-200sqm) to sustain the town's future vitality and viability;
3. Increased residential development (at least 30 units) as part of the appropriate mix of uses within the town centre to ensure a vibrant and viable centre;
4. Provision of key pedestrian and cycle friendly environments, including linkages to the residential and employment areas beyond the town centre boundary;
5. Additional and improved linkages across the railway line for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists;
6. Identification of key development sites, to deliver the policy considerations above and ensure the strategically planned growth of the town centre and careful integration to the expanded settlement at Paddock Wood and east Capel;
7. Rationalisation of car parking, including the provision of new (potentially multi-storey) car parks, to replace the potential loss of existing surface car parking;
8. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the infrastructure having regard to the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Proposals for development within the town centre will be supported where they follow the principles set out within this policy, the Framework Masterplan, and other associated policies in the Local Plan.

Paddock Wood

The Strategy for Paddock Wood

Overview

- 5.205** Paddock Wood is located to the north of the borough, close to the boundary of Tonbridge & Malling and Maidstone boroughs. It is approximately eight miles to the north east of Royal Tunbridge Wells, 6.7 miles to the east of Tonbridge, and 11 miles south west of Maidstone. With a range of retail, community, and small- and large-scale businesses it serves a large rural hinterland, surrounded by small villages and hamlets, including Five Oak Green to the west, Matfield to the south, and East Peckham to the north.
- 5.206** Paddock Wood sits within the rural landscape of the Low Weald. The majority of the town is located on relatively flat, low lying land associated with the broad valley of the River Medway (located to the north west of the town) and its tributaries, including the River Teise (located to the north east of the town). The Low Weald Farmland Landscape Character Area is characterised by large, irregular arable fields to the west and north west of Paddock Wood, and to the east of the town between the railway line and Church Road. Fields to the north west and south of the town are smaller in scale and contain a mixture of agricultural land uses, including arable farmland, pasture, and orchards.
- 5.207** The Low Weald Farmland Landscape Character Area also includes the urban area, which has developed around the railway station. This area provides an important transition between the Fruit Belt and flat arable and pasture land of the Low Weald and Medway Valley. The Medway River Valley consists of a wide corridor of low lying land, which relates to the much larger linear character of the River Medway. The landscape contains a network of water features, particularly streams/brooks and drainage channels. Drainage ditches are notable to the north east of the town, where the fields are subject to flooding and waterlogging. Ponds are common to the south and north west of the town.
- 5.208** To the south, the land slopes up steeply towards the more undulating uplands of the High Weald. The east and south of the settlement in particular, and surrounding rural countryside, can be seen from the rising High Weald ground, such as from Castle Hill view point at Brenchley.
- 5.209** The landscape has severable notable blocks of woodland, including Foal Hurst Wood to the south west, Whetsted Wood to the west, and Gedges Wood to the south. Foal Hurst Wood is designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Copses are more frequently occurring to the south of the town. Fields are generally bound by hedgerows, tree belts, or watercourses.
- 5.210** Paddock Wood is located to the north of the High Weald National Landscape, approximately 0.7 miles from the boundary at its nearest point.
- 5.211** Whilst Paddock Wood town is relatively unconstrained in conservation terms (just one listed building in the settlement, within the town centre), historically the town evolved around the production of hops, which was a major land use within the

local area. The architecture, including the oast houses within and around the town, provides links back to this historic land use and contributes to the character of Paddock Wood.

- 5.212** The town is bisected by a railway line, which runs east-west through the settlement and there is a railway station at the town centre. The town centre, along with the majority of the existing housing, is located to the south of the railway line and a large employment area is located to the north. A second railway line branches north from the station, to the north east of the town.
- 5.213** The only 'A' road near the town is the A228, which lies approximately 660m to the west of the town, midway between Paddock Wood and Five Oak Green. The B2160 runs north-south through the town and the B2017 runs along the existing south-western edge of the settlement.
- 5.214** Paddock Wood lies within an area of flood risk, with the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3) covering the area to the north of the railway line and extending south, particularly around the area of Maidstone Road and land to the west of the settlement. Parts of the settlement are also in Flood Zone 2. Flood risk is an important consideration in planning policy terms.
- 5.215** Land to the west of the settlement has been released from the Green Belt. The exceptional circumstances justifying this release are set out in Policy STR/SS 1.
- 5.216** Over recent years, a number of housing developments have been granted planning permission on land to the south and east of the existing settlement, providing around 1,000 dwellings in total. This includes residential development at Mascalls Court Farm (375 units), Mascalls Farm (309 units and a further 115 units subject to an allocation in this Local Plan), and Church Farm (300 units).
- 5.217** Further significant growth is planned around Paddock Wood, including land in east Capel, as set out through Policy STR/SS 1. This will deliver approximately 2,450 dwellings (excluding the 300 units already permitted at Church Farm). In addition, the planned revitalisation of Paddock Wood town centre will deliver around a further 30 houses (Policy STR/SS 2). The delivery of this growth will be carried out in accordance with an overarching Structure Plan for the overall expansion, and Masterplans for each smaller area, to properly assimilate this planned growth with the existing settlement at Paddock Wood. The strategy for Paddock Wood as set out under Policy PSTR/PW 1 below does not include details on the strategy for the development within these two strategic growth sites.
- 5.218** It is envisaged that most of the development within Paddock Wood over the plan period will be within the strategic sites outlined above. New development elsewhere in Paddock Wood will be supported in principle, where proposals are designed to respect and relate well to the significant planned growth which is being strategically masterplanned, and comply with other relevant strategic and development management policies of this Local Plan. It is expected that any windfall development coming forward would need to contribute to the wider infrastructure requirements stemming from the expansion to Paddock Wood.

5.219 Local guidance on policies has been prepared through the Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Plan ('Made' in October 2023).

Policy PSTR/PW 1

The Strategy for Paddock Wood parish

This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy STR/SS 1: The Strategy for land at Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel and Policy STR/SS 2: Paddock Wood Town Centre.

At the parish of Paddock Wood, as defined on the Policies Map, proposals shall accord with the following requirements:

The development strategy for Paddock Wood parish is to:

1. With Policy STR/SS 1: The Strategy for Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel, set Limits to Built Development for Paddock Wood on the Policies Map (Inset Map 4) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Deliver approximately 2,450 dwellings and accompanying infrastructure through the planned extension to Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel (Policy STR/SS 1);
3. Deliver at least 30 dwellings, commercial, and leisure uses through the planned revitalisation of the town centre of Paddock Wood and east Capel (Policy STR/SS 2);
4. Deliver approximately 413 dwellings (of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing) at Land at Mascalls Farm (Policy AL/PW 1); this includes 313 which already have planning permission;
5. Deliver education provision in accordance with Policy STR/SS 1;
6. Provide a community hub at the Memorial Field;
7. Ensure all development contributes to the provision of flood storage/attenuation/mitigation measures and flood defence works to reduce the flood risk to particular areas of Paddock Wood and east Capel;
8. Consider the setting of the High Weald National Landscape for sites outside the National Landscape but within the High Weald National Character Area, or close to the boundary of the designated National landscape;
9. Avoid built development on slopes to the south of Paddock Wood;
10. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the infrastructure as set out in the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (including the Structure Plan for Paddock Wood) dated October 2023; strategic site allocation Policy STR/SS 1 Land at Paddock Wood including land in east Capel, strategic Policy STR/SS 2 The Strategy for Paddock Wood Town Centre and strategic Policy STR 5 Infrastructure and Connectivity or for other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

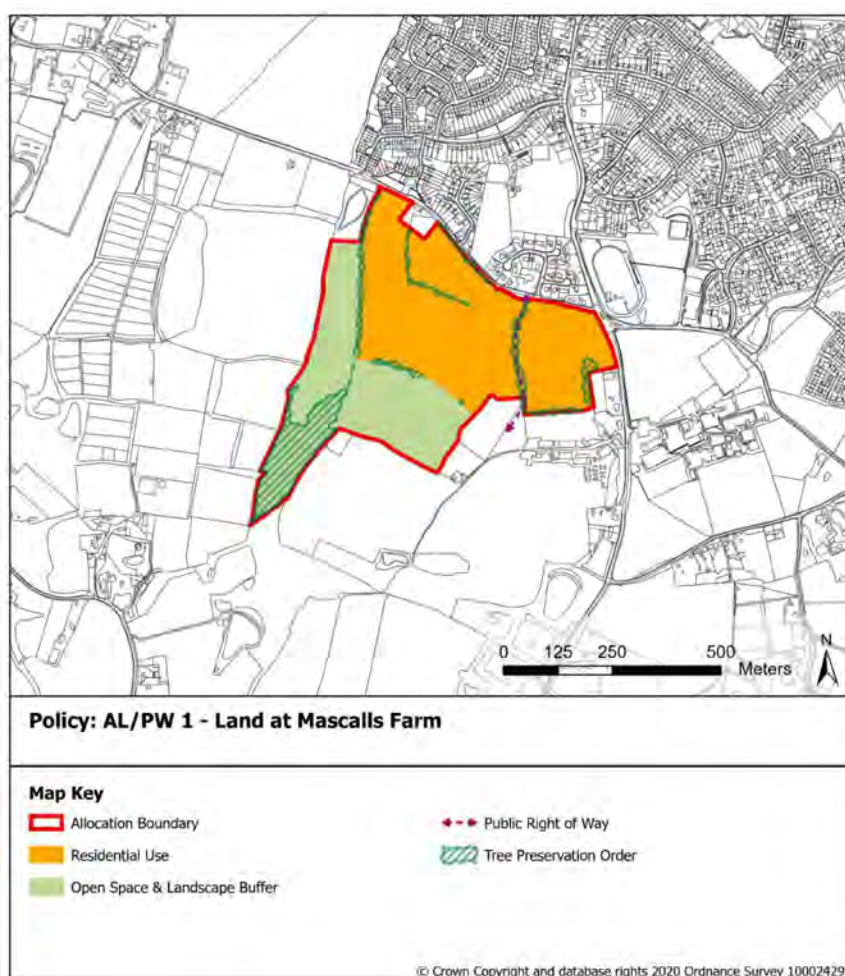
Allocation policies for Paddock Wood

Land at Mascalls Farm

- 5.220** The 28 hectare site is located to the south west of Paddock Wood. Badsell Road forms the site boundary to the north of the site, and Maidstone Road to the east. Foal Hurst Wood, a Local Nature Reserve, is to the west.
- 5.221** The site is approximately one mile to the south of Paddock Wood town centre. It forms an extension to the existing residential areas of Paddock Wood to the north, with Memorial Fields and Putlands Leisure Centre to the north and north west of the site.
- 5.222** Part of the site is under construction (relating to Phase 1 of the site's redevelopment outlined below), and the remaining land is greenfield. The site includes an area of woodland (Brick Kiln Woods) to the south (extending beyond the site boundary). It slopes up from north to south by approximately 25m, with the steepest slopes being in the south western part of the site. Part of the site to the east falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- 5.223** There are no buildings on the site apart from those being constructed in association with Phase 1.
- 5.224** There are five Grade II listed buildings within the vicinity of the site. These are: Mascalls Manor (previously Mascalls Farmhouse); Mascalls Manor gate piers and Sunnycot, which are on the north side of Badsell Road; and Mascalls Pound and the adjacent Mascalls Pound Oast, which are on Maidstone Road to the south east of the site. Mascalls Oast, which adjoins the application site, is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.225** Mascalls Farm and Mascalls Pound Farm are classified as historic farmsteads.
- 5.226** The trees along the eastern boundary, part of the southern boundary, and alongside the Public Right of Way, are protected by a group Tree Preservation Order. There is also a silver birch tree along the southern boundary, which is protected by TPO 005/2013.
- 5.227** The surrounding countryside to the south includes areas of ancient woodland (Brick Kiln Wood and Foal Hurst Wood), along with agricultural land and orchards. The High Weald National Landscape lies 0.4 miles to the south.
- 5.228** The primary new vehicular access to the site should be from Badsell Road, via a new priority T-junction. The site is well served by public transport in this area and connections should be made to the existing network. The existing public footpath (WT268) which passes through the site, north to south, should be retained and improved. Pedestrian links beyond the site across Badsell Road towards Memorial Fields and northwards to the town centre should be provided.
- 5.229** This site is allocated within the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 (Policy AL/PW 4) for residential development providing approximately 400 dwellings.

- 5.230** Planning permission was granted in October 2018 (17/03480/FULL) for the development of 309 dwellings, including 35% affordable housing, on the northern part of the site, with access from a new priority T-junction from Badsell Road (Phase 1). This permission was later amended (19/02533/FULL) to provide an additional four dwellings (313 in total). This permission has been implemented.
- 5.231** The Council has resolved to grant planning permission for Phase 2 for a further 100 dwellings, including 40% affordable housing (19/03349/FULL and as amended by planning reference 24/00528/FULL, which seeks to deliver the 40% affordable housing in a different format).
- 5.232** An allocation is still appropriate as the approved planning application proposals for Phase 2 have not yet been issued and will post-date the base date of the Local Plan implemented. The policy criteria will ensure that any other schemes meet important policy requirements, including higher levels of affordable housing provision.
- 5.233** Significant development is proposed around Paddock Wood, including land in Capel parish, which is set out under Policy STR/SS 1. This site does not form part of the extension dealt with under this policy.

Map 29 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/PW 1

Land at Mascalls Farm

This site, as defined on the Paddock Wood Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 413 dwellings, of which 40 percent of the 100 additional dwellings shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Primary vehicular access to be provided from Badsell Road;
2. Pedestrian linkages should be provided to the wider pedestrian network, and the existing public footway within the site to be retained and enhanced;
3. The site layout should take into account any potential impact on the High Weald National Landscape to the south of the site and should ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the setting of the National Landscape;
4. An area of open space to be provided as a landscape buffer between the development and both Foal Hurst Wood to the west and Brick Kiln Wood to the south;
5. A heritage impact assessment should accompany the application to consider the impact of the development on the setting of the listed buildings near to the site on Badsell Road and Maidstone Road, and below ground heritage assets;
6. Any proposal to be accompanied by detailed ecological studies;
7. An appropriate foul and surface water drainage strategy to be in place prior to development commencing;
8. A detailed management plan setting out how open spaces, children's play area and communal features such as community orchards, woodlands, or allotments within the site will be managed over the long term. A Woodland Management Plan is required for Brick Kiln Wood;
9. The overground electricity pylons on land to the south of Phase 1 must be grounded prior to built development in this location;
10. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PW 1. This will include a contribution towards the Foal Hurst Wood Nature Reserve to address the need for ecological mitigations. Contributions may be sought towards the associated infrastructure for the planned strategic growth at Land at Capel and Paddock Wood as set out in the Council's Strategic Sites Masterplanning and Infrastructure Study and the follow on Study October 2023.

Capel

Overview

- 5.234** The parish of Capel is situated to the north of the borough, to the west of Paddock Wood. It is predominantly rural in character, with three distinct character areas: River Valleys Landscape Character Area to the north, Low Weald Farmland across the central strip, and Forested Plateau to the south.
- 5.235** Five Oak Green is the principal settlement within the parish, along with Tudeley, a small hamlet. There is a primary school and nursery school located within the village of Five Oak Green, along with a combined post office and convenience store, and public house.
- 5.236** With the exclusion of land inside the LBD of Five Oak Green and land east of Capel, the parish lies within the Green Belt. The southern part of the parish is located within the High Weald National Landscape. There are significant areas of ancient woodland, areas of archaeological potential, historic parks and gardens (Somerhill School and the Postern), a Scheduled Monument (Castle Hill Iron Age Hill Fort), and ecological/wildlife designations (Tudeley Woods, Somerhill Park, parts of East Tonbridge Copses and Dykes and River Medway) across the parish.
- 5.237** There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 across the northern part of the parish, extending into areas in the eastern part, including areas of Five Oak Green.
- 5.238** The A228 runs north through the parish towards East Peckham, from Pembury and the A21 to the south. The B2017 runs east-west providing links to Tonbridge and Paddock Wood. All other roads leading from it are minor and form a network of designated Rural Lanes throughout the parish, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998). The closest railway station to Five Oak Green is Paddock Wood station, being approximately 2.3 miles to the east; Tonbridge railway station is 4.7 miles to the west. Hourly bus services serve Five Oak Green from Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood, and Tonbridge.
- 5.239** Significant growth has been identified within Capel parish over the plan period. This is land in the east of the parish, where land is allocated as part of the strategic site allocation STR/SS 1 (Land at Paddock Wood including land at east Capel), forming a significant extension to Paddock Wood, to deliver approximately 2,450 homes, of which approximately 997 - 1,063 homes are within Capel parish.
- 5.240** The Strategy for Capel parish, as set out under Policy PSTR/CA 1 below does not include details on the strategy for the development within the strategic growth site, and accordingly reference should be made to Policy STR/SS 1 (Land at Paddock Wood including land at east Capel).
- 5.241** Local guidance on policies has been prepared through the Capel Neighbourhood Plan ('Made' in October 2024).

The Strategy for Capel parish

Policy PSTR/CA 1

The Strategy for Capel parish

This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy STR/SS 1: The Strategy for Land at Paddock Wood, including land at east Capel.

The development strategy for Capel parish (excluding land which forms part of the Strategic Growth site at Land east of Capel and Paddock Wood) is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Five Oak Green village on the Policies Map (Inset Map 7) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Accommodate approximately 1,030 dwellings on land at east Capel as part of the extension to Paddock Wood, and a range of associated services and infrastructure (as set out in Policy STR/SS 1);
3. Provide compensatory improvements to the Green Belt;
4. Provide transport improvements, including on-line and off-line improvements to the A228 as part of a Colts Hill Bypass necessary for planned growth at Paddock Wood and land at east Capel identified in STR/SS 1, with the potential provision of the broader safeguarded A228 Colts Hill bypass and traffic management and/or speed reduction measures in Five Oak Green;
5. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. open space, sports, and recreations facilities;
 - b. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Cranbrook and Sissinghurst

Overview

- 5.242** The parish of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst is situated within the eastern part of the borough to the east of Goudhurst and north of Hawkhurst. Cranbrook is a small town, serving the surrounding rural area. The village of Sissinghurst lies to its north. The parish is rural in character, comprising mainly Wooded Farmland and some areas of Fruit Orchards. The southern part of the parish is located within the High Weald National Landscape (62% of the parish is designated as National Landscape). Cranbrook lies within the National Landscape and Sissinghurst lies outside the National Landscape, although its southern area is close to the National Landscape boundary.
- 5.243** The A262 runs eastwards from Goudhurst through Sissinghurst to Biddenden, and the A229 runs south from Staplehurst through Cranbrook and then onto Hawkhurst, intersecting the A262 at the roundabout at Wilsley Pound. Some roads are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998). The closest train station for both settlements is Staplehurst, being approximately 5.8 miles to the north of Cranbrook and four miles to the north of Sissinghurst. Headcorn station is 8.5 miles from Cranbrook and 6.3 miles from Sissinghurst. There are daily bus services serving both settlements, providing links to Royal Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Headcorn, Staplehurst, and Tenterden.
- 5.244** There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 that follow the Crane Brook. There are significant areas of ancient woodland, areas of archaeological potential, historic parks and gardens (Wilsley, Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Sissinghurst Court, Angley House, Glassenbury House) and ecological/wildlife designations (part of Bedgebury Forest, Angley Wood, Roundshill Park Wood, part of Hemstead Forest, Crane Valley Local Nature Reserve, and SSSIs at Robins Wood and Sissinghurst Park Wood) across the parish.
- 5.245** The Conservation Area in central Cranbrook mainly runs east-west along High Street and Stone Street. Sissinghurst Conservation Area runs east-west through the village along The Street (the A262). The separate Wilsley Green Conservation Area is located to the north east of the centre of Cranbrook, covering parts of Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound and the land between. There is a high concentration of buildings of historic or architectural interest. The central core of Cranbrook retains the historic street plan and dense form of development. There are numerous convenience and comparison retail outlets at the centre of Cranbrook, including a post office, supermarket, and food and drink outlets (including two public houses). Sissinghurst village has a post office, convenience store, and public house. There is a primary school, two secondary schools, and a pre-school at Cranbrook. There is a primary school and pre-school/nursery at Sissinghurst.
- 5.246** Employment provision includes retail, hospitality, and tourism outlets, businesses located across the parish, and at education establishments.
- 5.247** In terms of growth potential, five sites have been identified; three at Cranbrook and two at Sissinghurst:

AL/CRS 1 Land at Brick Kiln Farm, Cranbrook
AL/CRS 2 Land south of Corn Hall, Crane Valley, Cranbrook
AL/CRS 3 Turnden Farm, Hartley Road, Cranbrook
AL/CRS 6 Land south of The Street, Sissinghurst
AL/CRS 7 Land at the corner of Frittenden Road and Common Road, Sissinghurst

5.248 There are also two allocation policies relating to existing education, and heritage and tourist sites in the parish respectively:

AL/CRS 4 Cranbrook School, Cranbrook
AL/CRS 5 Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Sissinghurst

5.249 The full requirements for development of these sites are set out in the subsequent site allocation Policies AL/CRS 1 to AL/CRS 7.

5.250 Although the main settlement in the area, testing of large-scale growth through the plan-making process has shown this to be inappropriate, particularly in terms of the the impacts of development of individual sites, and cumulatively, upon the High Weald National Landscape. The sites set out below are considered to deliver growth compatible with the National Landscape designation.

5.251 Sissinghurst is identified as having some growth potential, which is regarded as commensurate with its services and constraints, also following testing of higher development levels.

5.252 The IDP identifies the following infrastructure requirements for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst: a new medical centre at Cranbrook (as an amalgamation of the existing three practices); a new community centre at Cranbrook; expansion of the primary school at Cranbrook by one form of entry; a new village hall at Sissinghurst; and improved and extended sport and recreation facilities across the parish.

5.253 A new community facility is to be delivered on Wilkes Field. There is a planning permission (reference 16/503953) relating to the use of both the former Cranbrook Engineering site and Wilkes Field for a mixed-use development that includes the delivery of a community centre. As development on the former Cranbrook Engineering site has been implemented it is not considered necessary to allocate the site in the Local Plan.

5.254 The project for delivering a new community hub at Wilkes Field is being led by Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council and includes the provision of a new library for the parish to replace the existing library. The project includes the provision of meeting spaces, new library provision, and parish council offices. A new medical centre will also be provided as part of this project.

5.255 Kent County Council has requested contributions towards the delivery of Cranbrook community hub to accommodate increased demand for libraries, adult learning, and social care generated by development.

- 5.256** It is also proposed that St George's Hall at Sissinghurst is re-provided as part of Policy AL/CRS 6 Land south of The Street, Sissinghurst (the site area includes St George's Hall), which requires a replacement community hall as part of the delivery of the site allocation. There is planning permission (21/03914/FULL) for a new village hall and 19 dwellings and these are currently under construction.
- 5.257** The GP practices at Cranbrook serve the Cranbrook/Benenden/Sissinghurst/Frittenden cluster. The NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board has identified a requirement for one new GP premises as an amalgamation of the existing three practices located at Cranbrook within this cluster and land should be allocated for this. A new medical centre will be provided as part of the scheme for delivering the new community hub.
- 5.258** The IDP identifies the following requirements relating to open space provision; sport and recreation grounds and facilities; extensions to existing provision across the parish, re-designation of junior pitches to adult pitches at King George Field at Sissinghurst and Ball Field at Cranbrook, improvements required to the King George Field at Sissinghurst and the Tomlin Ground at Cranbrook, and improvements to the changing rooms and new pavilion at Cranbrook Rugby Club at Cranbrook.
- 5.259** Kent County Council, as the local highways authority, has requested that development proposals be required to establish the impact of the proposed development upon the Hawkhurst crossroads junction (the A229/A268) and, if relevant, the Flimwell crossroads junction (the A21/A268).
- 5.260** The proposed LBDs provide for potential future windfall development. Any windfall sites that do come forward for residential development over the plan period should provide affordable housing in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policy in Section 6, having regard to information on local housing needs.
- 5.261** Local policies are also provided through the 'made' Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Plan (adopted October 2023) that forms part of the borough's development plan in relation to Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish. The Neighbourhood Plan also includes a number of specific goals and a reference to a list of projects that would potentially be provided through developer contributions.

The Strategy for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish

Policy PSTR/CRS 1

The Strategy for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish

The development strategy for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish is to:

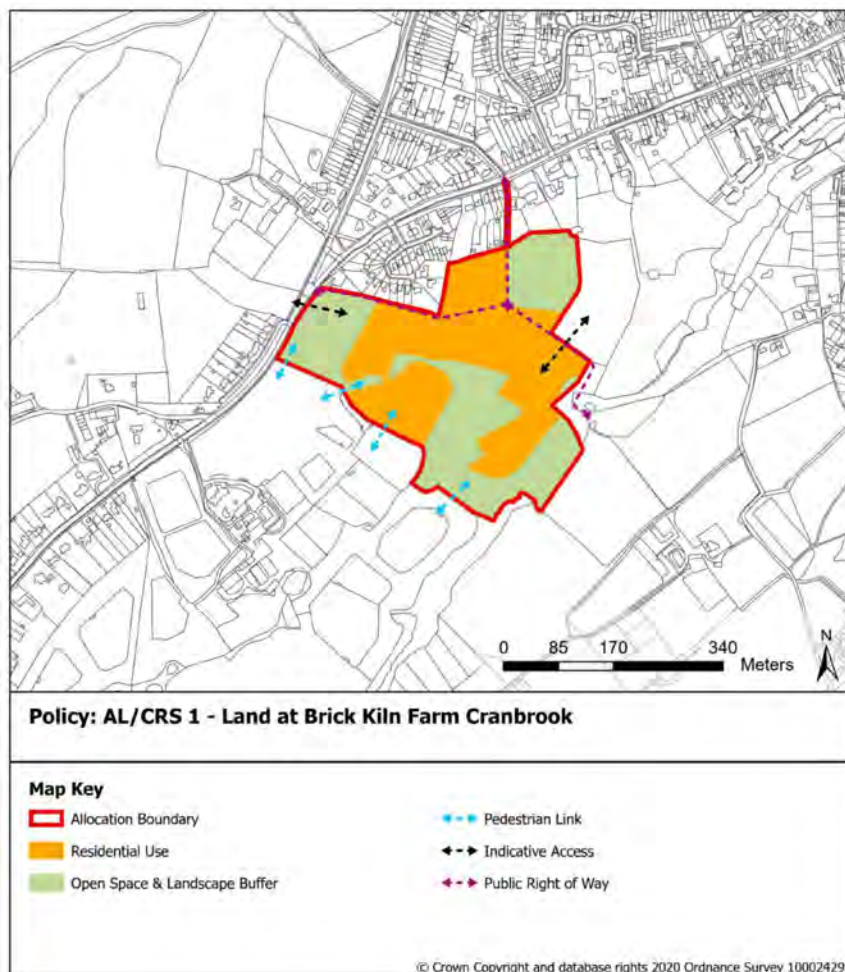
1. Set Limits to Built Development for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Maps 10 and 12) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Build approximately 415-429 new dwellings at Cranbrook (this includes 216 new dwellings that have outline planning approval at: Policy AL/CRS 1 (180 dwellings) and Policy AL/CRS 4 (36 dwellings); and 38 at Sissinghurst, including affordable housing, as allocated under the subsequent site allocation policies;

3. Ensure that all development proposals establish an acceptable impact upon the Hawkhurst crossroads junction (the A229/A268) and, if relevant, the Flimwell crossroads (the junction of the A21 and A268);
4. In relation to all development proposals for major development which would generate more than 100 light delivery vehicles (cars and vans of less than 3.5 tonnes gross weight) or 25 heavy duty vehicles (lorries, buses, etc over 3.5 tonnes gross weight) annual average daily traffic (AADT) movements through the northern arm of the crossroads in Hawkhurst (i.e. approximately 250m to the north of the crossroads along the Cranbrook Road)) per day, be accompanied by an air quality assessment, with the development providing appropriate mitigation measures;
5. Maintain and enhance linkages to Public Rights of Way or the local strategic cycle network, to include contributions towards the Bedgebury to Sissinghurst cycle path route;
6. Seek to retain land and buildings currently used for non-residential uses within the centres of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst for employment-generating and community uses, and support proposals for such uses in suitable locations within the Limits to Built Development;
7. Retain an appropriate mix of uses within the town centre, as defined on the Policies Map, and support proposals which would contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre;
8. Retain the public car parks in Cranbrook, as defined on the Policies Map, in accordance with Policy TP 4: Public Car Parks;
9. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. medical facilities that cover Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish (to be used towards improvements/reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
 - b. primary education facilities, namely the expansion of the existing primary schools that serve Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish;
 - c. secondary education provision;
 - d. provision of additional amenity/natural green space, allotments, and improvements to children's and youth play space; improvements to the changing rooms and new pavilion at Cranbrook Rugby Club at Cranbrook;
 - e. library provision, adult learning, and social care, to include those services to be provided at the new Cranbrook Community Hub;
 - f. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Allocation policies for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish

Land at Brick Kiln Farm, Cranbrook

- 5.262** This undeveloped greenfield site is located inside the existing Cranbrook LBD adjacent to existing development, and located wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. The Cranbrook Conservation Area bounds the site to the north and there are listed buildings beyond the site boundary.
- 5.263** The site area is 12.25 hectares, comprising the western and part of the central area of Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 Policy AL/CR 4 Land adjacent to the Crane Valley that was allocated for 200-250 dwellings.
- 5.264** To the northern boundary there is a mix of residential and commercial development, with Grade II listed residential properties to the north west corner of the site, and modern residential development at both Goddards Close to the north and Orchard Way to the west. To the north west boundary is the A229 Angley Road/Hartley Road, which is to provide the main access to this site to serve this allocation and the land to the east that is subject to a separate site allocation policy. Public footpaths cross the site providing links to Cranbrook centre from the A229 east-west across the site and north-south to the Crane Valley. Land levels drop down from north to south, towards the Crane Brook, where levels begin to rise once more. The land is undulating. There is a distinct field pattern, marked by the trees and hedgerows.
- 5.265** The site is within walking distance of key services and facilities provided at Cranbrook, including Cranbrook Primary school and both secondary schools.
- 5.266** The Crane Valley to the south east of the site is an area of ancient woodland. Appropriate buffer zones, informed by landscape and ecological assessment, should be retained to this ancient woodland.
- 5.267** The Cranbrook Conservation Area is located to the north and the north eastern boundaries of the site. There are no listed buildings within the site but there are a number located in the wider area. There is potentially contaminated land to the north and north east of this site.
- 5.268** The area which this site allocation refers to, Land at Brick Kiln Farm, has outline planning approval for up to 180 dwellings, approved under 16/502860/OUT. The Reserved Matters application 20/00814/REM was considered, and there was a resolution to grant planning permission. However, the planning application was subsequently withdrawn prior to the Decision Notice being issued following a change in land ownership. A further Reserved Matters application 21/03299/REM was approved in May 2022.

Map 30 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/CRS 1

Land at Brick Kiln Farm, Cranbrook Road

This site, as defined on the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 180 dwellings of which, given the planning history of the site, 35 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. The main vehicular access shall be taken from the A229 Hartley Road (as a priority junction), with provision of secondary/emergency access required;
2. Provision of pedestrian and cycle links to provide permeability through this site and adjacent sites (Policies AL/CRS 2 and AL/CRS 3), and to create an accessible, safe, non-vehicular route to the services provided at the centre of Cranbrook, Hartley, and surrounding residential areas and link into, and enhance, established Public Rights of Way;
3. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
4. The design, layout, and final number of dwellings to be informed by a comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment, ecological studies, and

- a heritage assessment (to include archaeology and landscape heritage), and consideration of cumulative effects of any other planned development in the vicinity;
5. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
 6. Extensive green infrastructure shall be provided, both on the areas shown indicatively in green on the site layout plan and through the non-green areas where relevant, in the form of:
 - a. a suitably designed green infrastructure link along the Crane Valley to link into the routes provided further south along the valley, providing an extended and improved green route into the centre of Cranbrook and Hartley, and creating links to the allocated sites to the south and east (Policies AL/CRS 2 and AL/CRS 3);
 - b. retained and improved meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, and water features;
 - c. landscape buffers to existing woodlands;
 - d. the reinstatement of historical field boundaries with hedgerows, shaws, and woodlands;
 - e. retained and enhanced water bodies and watercourses;
 7. An archaeological assessment of the site, including field evaluations;
 8. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
 9. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/CRS 1.

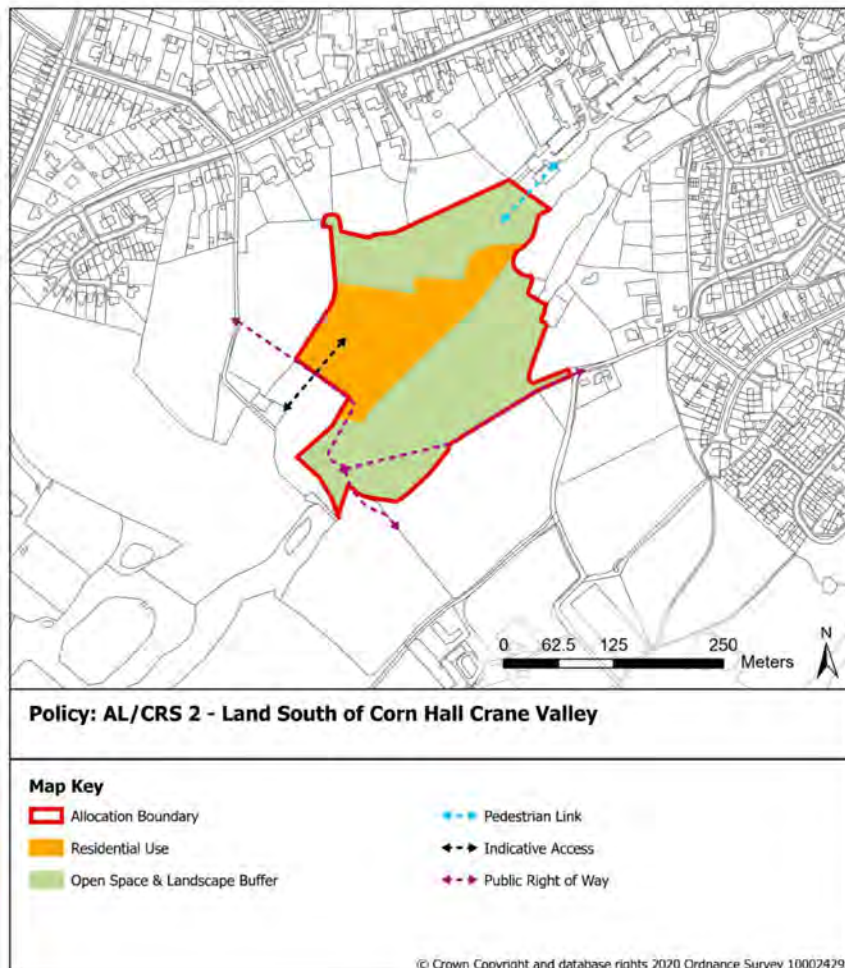
Land south of Corn Hall, Crane Valley, Cranbrook

- 5.269** This undeveloped greenfield site is located inside the existing Cranbrook LBD adjacent to existing development, and located within the High Weald National Landscape. The Cranbrook Conservation Area bounds the site to the north and there are listed buildings beyond the site boundary.
- 5.270** The site area is 6.78 hectares, comprising the eastern area of Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 Policy AL/CR 4 Land adjacent to the Crane Valley that was allocated for 200-250 dwellings.
- 5.271** To the north there is a mix of residential and commercial development, with Grade II listed residential properties to the north west corner of the site. To the north west of the wider Site Allocations Local Plan Policy AL/CR 4 site is the A229 Angley Road/Hartley Road, which is to provide the main access to this site to serve this allocation via the land to the west that is subject to a separate site allocation policy in this Plan. Land levels drop down from north to south, towards the Crane Brook, where levels begin to rise once more. The land is undulating. There is a distinct field pattern, marked by trees and hedgerows.
- 5.272** The site is within walking distance of key services and facilities provided at Cranbrook, including Cranbrook Primary School and both secondary schools.
- 5.273** Access for the development (as well as for the separate site allocated immediately to the east) is to be taken from Hartley Road.

5.274 The Crane Valley to the south east of the site is an area of ancient woodland. Appropriate buffer zones, informed by landscape and ecological assessment, should be retained to this ancient woodland.

5.275 There is potentially contaminated land to the north and north east of this site.

Map 31 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/CRS 2

Land south of Corn Hall, Crane Valley, Cranbrook

This site, as defined on the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 35-45 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provision of pedestrian and cycle links to provide permeability through this site and adjacent sites to the south and west (Policies AL/CRS 1 and AL/CRS 3), and to create an accessible, safe, non-vehicular route to the services provided at the centre of Cranbrook, Hartley, and surrounding residential areas and link into, and enhance, established Public Rights of Way;

2. Provision of a suitably designed green infrastructure link along the Crane Valley to link into the routes provided further south along the valley, providing an extended and improved green route into the centre of Cranbrook and Hartley;
3. The main vehicular access shall be taken from the A229 Hartley Road through land to the west, Land at Brick Kiln Farm (Policy AL/CRS 1);
4. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
5. The design, layout, and final number of dwellings to be informed by a comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment, ecological studies, and a heritage assessment (to include archaeology and landscape heritage), and consideration of cumulative effects of any other planned development in the vicinity;
6. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
7. Extensive green infrastructure shall be provided, both on the areas shown indicatively in green on the site layout plan and through the non-green areas where relevant, in the form of:
 - a. a suitably designed green infrastructure link along the Crane Valley to link into the routes provided further south along the valley, providing an extended and improved green route into the centre of Cranbrook and Hartley, and creating links to the allocated sites to the south and west (Policies AL/CRS 1 and AL/CRS 3);
 - b. retained and improved meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, and water features;
 - c. landscape buffers to existing woodlands;
 - d. the reinstatement of historical field boundaries with hedgerows, shaws, and woodlands;
 - e. retained and enhanced water bodies and watercourses;
8. The provision of, and adherence to, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to cover all public spaces, retained and restored habitats, and any retained agricultural land;
9. An archaeological assessment of the site, including field evaluations;
10. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
11. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/CRS 1.

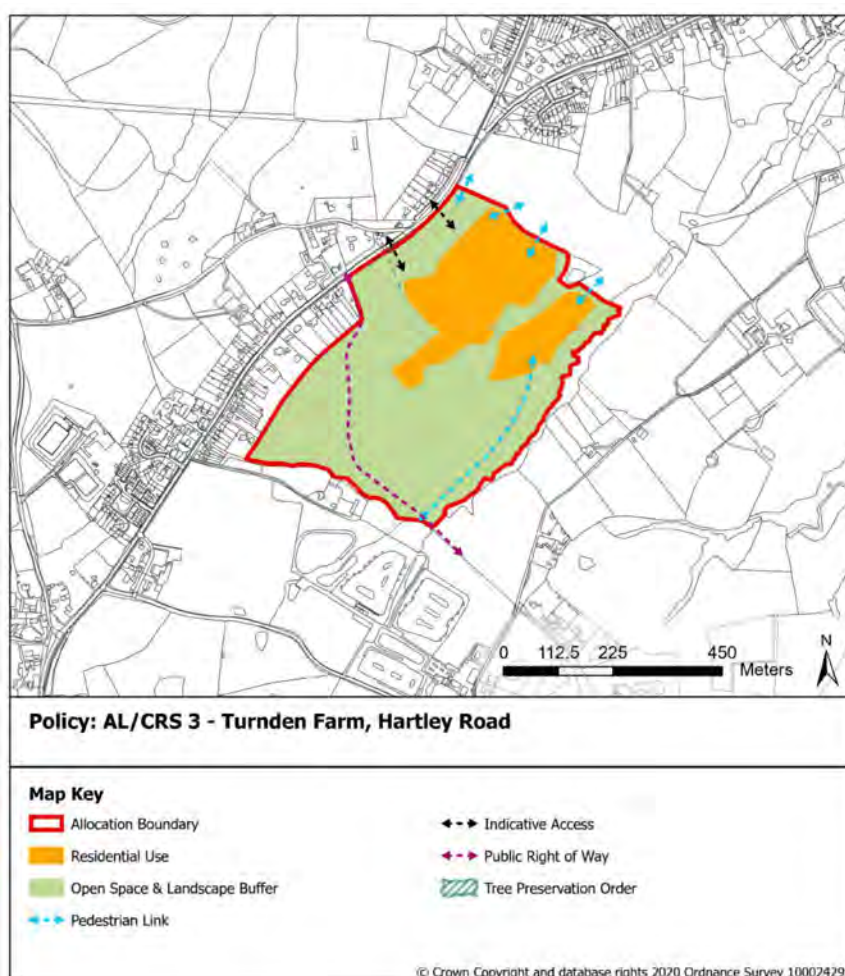
Turnden Farm, Hartley Road, Cranbrook

- 5.276** The site is located on the south eastern side of the A229 adjacent to the southern part of the built-up area of Cranbrook and to the south west of the town. There is open land immediately north east of the site subject to a larger allocation for development within the earlier Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 for between 200-250 dwellings (Policy AL/CR 4). Land at Brick Kiln Farm has outline planning permission for 180 dwellings. Hartley Road is adjacent to the site and is characterised by ribbon housing development together with some backland housing along both sides of the road to the east of the site. Similar ribbon development lines Orchard Way to the north west. Open fields and woodland are to the east and south, with fishing lakes and small clusters of development at Hartley Lands Farm and Mount Ephraim Farm.

- 5.277** Within the centre of the site formerly stood Turnden farmhouse, a Grade II listed building with significant 20th century additions (including two separate flats). This was almost completely destroyed by fire in September 2019. The remains were subsequently de-listed by Historic England.
- 5.278** Also in the centre of the site formerly stood several commercial buildings within two broad areas. One area was a group of modern buildings used for storage and ancillary facilities. The other area was a riding school comprising commercial stables, yard, and an outdoor arena. Both uses were restricted to being operated by the occupiers of Turnden owing to the proximity of the access road to the house. Most of these buildings were cleared from the site in 2019/20 as part of the implementation of planning permission 18/02571/FULL for 36 dwellings on this central part of the site, although little further work has taken place.
- 5.279** The wider site comprises open fields and two small pockets of woodland in the centre and to the southern end, which were formerly used in connection with the equestrian facility. There is further woodland along the Crane Valley which marks the south eastern boundary and several of the fields within the site are divided by stretches of hedgerow. Hedgerow and trees generally mark all the other boundaries apart from the common boundaries with the back gardens of dwellings fronting Hartley Road.
- 5.280** The site area is 6.82 hectares.
- 5.281** The nearest schools are Cranbrook Primary School (approximately 1.6km from the access point), plus two secondary schools; Cranbrook School (approximately 1.3km away) and the former High Weald Academy, currently used as a SEND school (1.1km away). There is a continuous pavement between the site and all three schools, albeit in places it is necessary to cross the road to reach those destinations, with variations as to the degree of street lighting. The distances involved equate to an approximate 15-20 minute walking time from the existing access point. There are a wide range of services and facilities within Cranbrook town centre.
- 5.282** Access into the site is via a hard-surfaced roadway leading from Hartley Road. The site falls wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. The Crane Valley to the south east is an area of ancient woodland. Public Footpath WC115 crosses through the southern end of the site; WC116 is beyond the south eastern boundary. The site access point is 0.6km from the entry to the Cranbrook Conservation Area. Three trees along the Hartley Road frontage and four along the access drive are protected by Tree Preservation Order 041/2003.
- 5.283** Between 350m north east and 525m north east of the access is a cluster of four listed buildings around the junction of the High Street, Angley Road, and Hartley Road (Crane Cottage, Cranbrook War Memorial, Goddards Green Farmhouse, and a 17th century barn at Goddard's Green Farm).
- 5.284** This site lies within, or very close to, the relevant impact risk zone for Robins Wood SSSI. The majority of the central part of the site is previously developed land. There is a pond towards the centre of the site.

- 5.285** The site levels rise initially upon entry to the site before gradually dropping away towards the south east. There is a 3.5m drop in levels between the entrance gate and the rear garden of the former house, with a further drop of 1-2m between there and the site of the equestrian facilities, with a steeper drop of 3-5m down to the site of the commercial buildings. The land then drops away sharply towards the woodlands to the south/south east. There is an overall 30m drop in levels between the western corner (at the point where WC115 meets Hartley Road) and the eastern corner.
- 5.286** There is a pumping station within close proximity to the development site, which can raise amenity issues such as noise and vibration. It is typically recommended that residential uses are at least 15 metres from any pumping station and the schemes should be considered accordingly against the requirements of Policies EN 1 and EN 27.
- 5.287** The site benefits from planning consent granted under reference 20/00815/FULL for the construction of 165 dwellings and associated development. It was granted by the Secretary of State on the 22 of November 2024. This followed a 'Call In' Public Inquiry held in October and November 2021.

Map 32 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/CRS 3

Turnden Farm, Hartley Road, Cranbrook

This site, as defined on the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 200-204 (164-168 new additional) dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, and significant green infrastructure.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. A suitable and safe access from the A229 Hartley Road, with a secondary emergency access if required;
2. Provision of accessible, safe, non-vehicular routes for pedestrian and cyclists through the site connecting to:
 - i. the footway on Hartley Road;
 - ii. the corresponding routes on the allocated sites to the north (Policies AL/CRS 1 and AL/CRS 2) (and on into Cranbrook);
 - iii. the existing Public Rights of Way network to the south;
3. Improvements to the Public Rights of Way within the site;
4. The design, layout, and final number of dwellings to be informed by a comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment, ecological studies, and a heritage assessment (to include archaeology and landscape heritage), and consideration of cumulative effects of any other planned development in the vicinity;
5. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
6. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
7. Extensive green infrastructure shall be provided, both on the areas shown indicatively in green on the site layout plan and through the non-green areas where relevant, in the form of:
 - a. a suitably designed green infrastructure link along the Crane Valley to link into the routes provided further north along the valley, providing an extended and improved green route into the centre of Cranbrook and Hartley, and creating links to the allocated sites to the north (Policies AL/CRS 1 and AL/CRS 2);
 - b. retained and improved meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, and water features;
 - c. landscape buffers to existing woodlands;
 - d. the reinstatement where appropriate of historical field boundaries with hedgerows, shaws, and woodlands;
 - e. retained and enhanced water bodies and watercourses;
8. The provision of, and adherence to, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to cover all public spaces, retained and restored habitats, and any retained agricultural land;
9. This site lies within, or very close to, the relevant impact risk zone for Robins Wood SSSI and so an assessment of potential adverse effects on the SSSI as a result of the development will be required as part of any application and, if required, the proposal shall include adequate mitigation measures, both during construction and

on completion, to the satisfaction of Natural England to ensure no adverse effects on the SSSI as a result of the proposed development;

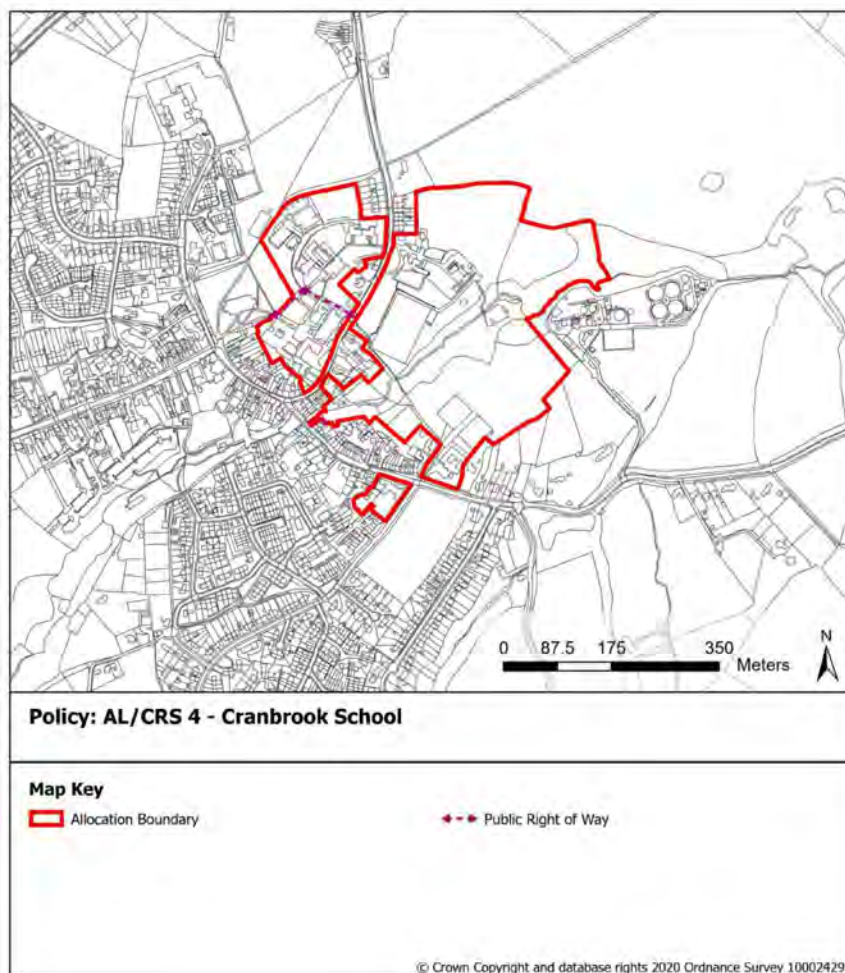
10. Provide on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
11. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/CRS 1.

Cranbrook School

- 5.288** The main school buildings for Cranbrook School are located within the centre of Cranbrook. The school also owns several land parcels close to, but outside of, the main school area, including sports fields and playing pitches.
- 5.289** Cranbrook School is recognised as a major employer in the town.
- 5.290** Given its importance to the town in economic and community terms, as well as the school's ambition to improve its existing education, sporting, and boarding facilities to make it more accessible to a broader cross section of the community, then appropriate policy support is warranted.
- 5.291** Related development may range from improvements to existing teaching, boarding, and sporting facilities, to more substantive changes involving new buildings or different uses of land.
- 5.292** More limited changes, including refurbishments and extensions, may be supported, subject to normal planning considerations, notably in relation to heritage, landscape, and other layout matters.
- 5.293** However, more fundamental changes require a more comprehensive and forward-looking approach to ensure that they not only accord with the school's longer-term aspirations, but also take account of both the planned growth and related changes within the town over the next 10-15 years and how it will operate as part of the wider community, especially in terms of potential shared use of school facilities, including playing pitches and other sports and leisure provision over the longer term.
- 5.294** Integral to the school's own plans and related development framework will be an assessment of how its playing pitch needs will be met in the future, also having regard to local needs.
- 5.295** Therefore, the policy approach set out below is to give general support for the continued provision of high quality teaching and boarding facilities, with more substantive proposals, including new buildings or different uses of land being expected to be supported by a broad medium- to long-term development plan that provides a context for their consideration.
- 5.296** For planning purposes, such a plan would indicate the broad aspirations for the school over a period of time (recognising necessary flexibility to respond to ongoing changes to educational approaches and demands). It should identify how it anticipates that improvements to facilities, including proposals for new built development and others that may affect future sports and open space provision, car parking provision, and community use, will interrelate.

- 5.297** Consideration has been given to site-specific allocations, but promoting any substantive development proposals in isolation is not regarded as good planning, ahead of a comprehensive framework for them or clarification of the value of particular land assets to the local community. This applies particularly to Rammell Field and the active playing fields at Big Side and Jaeger's Field.

Map 33 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/CRS 4

Cranbrook School

Proposals for the improvements of teaching, boarding, and associated facilities within the main site of Cranbrook School, as defined on the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Policies Map, including refurbishments and extensions, will be supported, subject to the consideration against other Plan policies notably in relation to design, heritage, landscape, and other layout matters.

Proposals for more substantive proposals, including new buildings or different uses of land, within the main site will be supported where they accord with the following:

1. They are supported by a medium- to long-term development plan that indicates how they relate to wider development and change in the locality and to local community

- needs, notably in terms of use of school facilities, including playing pitches and other sports and leisure provision, and the retention and enhancement of local amenities;
2. An assessment of heritage and landscape matters and an archaeological assessment (with particular reference to buried and upstanding remains, including buried structures and features), including any outside the school's area of ownership that could be potentially affected by development proposals. To include an assessment about how any listed/heritage buildings could be adapted to accommodate change, and an assessment of the impact of all proposals on the Cranbrook Conservation Area and on the Wilsley Green Conservation Area;
 3. Proposals for development should be informed by appropriate heritage assessments, including at any feasibility stage, to ensure that heritage constraints do not preclude the proposed development;
 4. Provision of a landscape management plan for public boundaries, public realm, and public footpaths that fall within/adjacent to the masterplan area;
 5. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/CRS 1.

Sissinghurst Castle Garden

- 5.298** Sissinghurst Castle Garden is located in close proximity to the east of Sissinghurst village. It is owned by the National Trust and is one of its most popular properties, with up to 200,000 visitors each year. This nationally important tourist attraction is also valued locally as a walking destination and as a source of employment. It is surrounded by, and connected to, the wooded farmland and orchards by a good network of footpaths.
- 5.299** Sissinghurst Castle tower is a local landmark and a distinctive feature in the landscape.
- 5.300** Development management policies in this Local Plan for tourism, rural development, heritage, and landscape will be applied to any proposed development that could have an adverse effect upon the site, its historic fabric, or its setting.
- 5.301** This site allocation policy recognises the importance of Sissinghurst Castle Garden to the local economy and also to the historic character of the wider Sissinghurst area.

Map 34 Site Allocation Plan

Policy AL/CRS 5

Sissinghurst Castle Garden

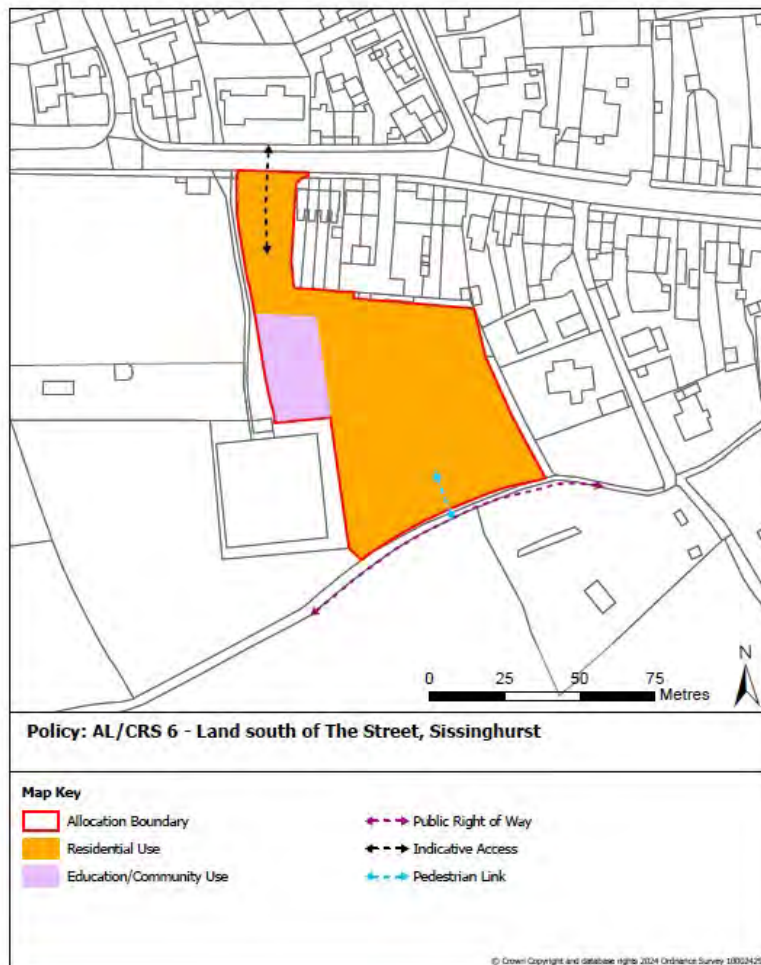
Sissinghurst Castle Garden is indicated by a star on the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Policies Map. It is not proposed for any development, but any development proposals that do come forward during the plan period and that fall within the setting or approach of the site are expected to have regard to the following, with a view to preserving its setting and draw as a tourist attraction and place within the local community:

1. Retention of views into, and out of, the site, and in particular views of the castle tower;
2. The preservation and enhancement of the rural character of the countryside that forms the setting and approach to the castle, with particular emphasis on the land between the castle and the village;

3. Improvements for access by non-motorised means and the improvement of local Public Rights of Way to encourage walking and cycling between the site and the village;
4. An assessment of archaeological potential; demonstration through the submission of relevant and proportionate archaeological investigations that any proposals will not have a materially harmful impact on the archaeological environment.

Land south of The Street, Sissinghurst

- 5.302** The site comprises a mix of uses located in close proximity to the built-up area of Sissinghurst on the southern side of the village and in close proximity to the village centre.
- 5.303** The site adjoins the High Weald National Landscape. The site area is approximately 0.58 hectares.
- 5.304** The uses on the site include Sissinghurst Village Hall (St George's Hall, with space for two vehicles to park in front), a double garage with access onto The Street, a paddock (that appears to be disused) and a stables building. The site is adjoined by residential properties, a recreation ground that includes a children's play area and playing field and, to the south, a tennis club.
- 5.305** The site has a frontage with The Street (the A262). The boundaries of the site comprise mostly mature hedging and trees. There is currently a lack of vehicular access into the site. There is a pavement along The Street and a footpath to the west of the site. There is a Public Right of Way adjacent to the south of the site (WC104).
- 5.306** The topography of the site is fairly flat. There is a public view of the site from the adjacent recreation ground and more private views from neighbouring residential properties.
- 5.307** The site lies partly within the Sissinghurst Conservation Area. There are listed buildings adjacent to the site.
- 5.308** This mixed use site, which includes built development and a greenfield area, is located close to the centre of Sissinghurst and to local schools, and its services, together with limited on-site constraints, suggest some development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.309** There is planning permission (21/03914/FULL) for a new village hall and 19 dwellings on this site and these are currently under construction.
- 5.310** Due to the need for, and public benefit of, the new village hall along with its associated cost, it may not be viable to deliver the full requirement for 30% affordable housing. The proportion achievable will be determined through the planning application process, having regard to the most recent viability assessment information.

Map 35 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/CRS 6

Land south of The Street, Sissinghurst

This site, as defined on the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Policies Map, is allocated for a mixed use scheme, including the provision of a replacement community hall and residential development providing approximately 20 dwellings, of which up to 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

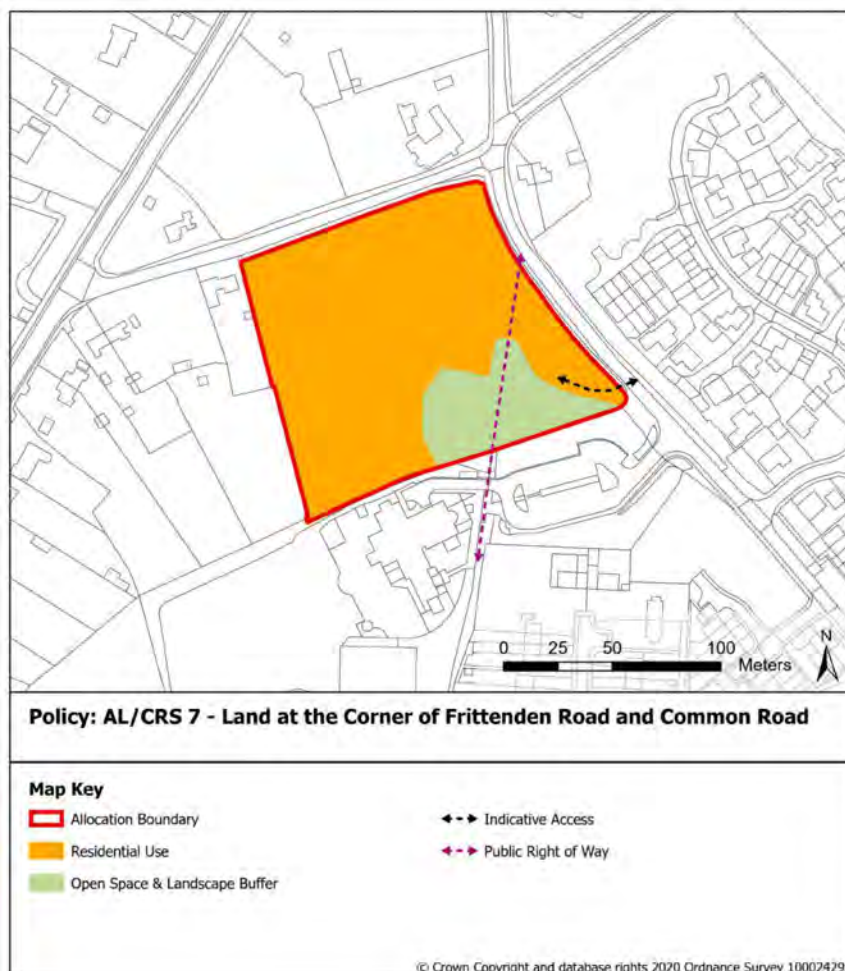
1. Vehicular access into the site to be informed by a highways assessment, to include provision of adequate visibility splays within the site and/or on highway land;
2. Provision of a pedestrian link to the Public Right of Way that runs to the south of the site (WC104);
3. Development to have regard to the setting of the Sissinghurst Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings;
4. Demonstration that the design of the scheme reflects the historic linear pattern of Sissinghurst village;

5. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
6. Provision of replacement village hall and associated parking;
7. Provide on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
8. A suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of the replacement village hall is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage;
9. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/CRS 1.

Land at the corner of Frittenden Road and Common Road, Sissinghurst

- 5.311** The site relates to a roughly square parcel of agricultural land located on the west side of Common Road and the south side of Frittenden Road, as shown on Inset Map 12.
- 5.312** The site is 1.61 hectares in size.
- 5.313** The site is largely grassed and is devoid of any built development. The boundaries are predominantly marked by established hedging and trees. It is largely open other than the south east corner, which comprises more dense planting, including trees. The land level is relatively flat in nature but gently slopes towards the southern boundary. The site presently has a vehicular access point/field gate in the north west corner from Frittenden Road.
- 5.314** The site is located at the northern edge of the built-up area of Sissinghurst and within the High Weald National Character Area. Both Frittenden Road and Common Road are designated Rural Lanes and approximately 370m to the south of the site lies the Sissinghurst Conservation Area. A Public Right of Way (WC75) runs across the site leading from the primary school to Sissinghurst Road. This footpath leads and connects the site to the centre of Sissinghurst. A designated Site of Potential Archaeological Importance covers parts of the eastern boundary of the site. A medium pressure gas main also runs within the site in close proximity to the site's north and east boundaries.
- 5.315** Immediately to the south of the site lies Sissinghurst Church of England Primary School. To the east and on the opposite side of Common Road lies a site currently being developed for 60 new homes (details approved under 17/00451/REM). To the north east lie the residential properties of Crossways and Carpenters Cottage and to the north west lies Mouse Hall, all of which are Grade II listed. To the immediate north lies an undeveloped parcel of land which sits between the properties of Mouse Hall and Crossways. To the west lies a row of approximately 11 detached and semi-detached properties along Frittenden Road.
- 5.316** Although largely a greenfield site, its situation relatively close to the core of the village and its services suggests some development potential to contribute to development needs.

- 5.317** A new access point will be required along Common Road in order to accommodate the significant increase in traffic movements to and from the site in the interest of highway safety. Any development at the site is likely to cause some level of harm to surrounding heritage assets, but is likely to be at a low level where the benefits are likely to outweigh the harm.
- 5.318** The site is subject to outline planning approval (19/03625 for the erection of up to 18 dwellings). A Reserved Matters application 21/03126 was approved in January 2022 and the site is currently under construction.

Map 36 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/CRS 7

Land at the corner of Frittenden Road and Common Road, Sissinghurst

This site, as defined on the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 18 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. The site shall be served from a single point of vehicular access serving the site from Common Road;

2. Provision of a pedestrian link to the Public Right of Way that runs to the south of the site (WC75);
3. Regard to be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
4. No built form shall take place within the open space and landscape buffer as shown indicatively on the site layout plan;
5. The layout and design of the scheme shall give full consideration to the site's edge-of-village location (providing a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement) and be sensitively designed in relation to heritage assets;
6. Demonstration through the submission of relevant and proportionate archaeological investigations that the proposal will not have a materially harmful impact on the archaeological environment;
7. Submission of an ecology assessment, which shall inform the scheme;
8. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space;
9. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/CRS 1.

Hawkhurst

Overview

- 5.319** The parish of Hawkhurst is situated within the eastern part of the borough to the south east of Goudhurst and south of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst parish. Hawkhurst is a rural service centre and is made up of three areas: Hawkhurst (Highgate); to the south, Hawkhurst (The Moor); and to the north, Gill's Green. The parish is rural in character, comprising mainly Wooded Farmland in the south-eastern area and Forested Plateau in the north west. All of the parish is located within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.320** The A229 runs north (to Cranbrook) and south (to Hurst Green) through the parish. This is intersected at the central crossroads in Hawkhurst (Highgate) by the A268 which runs east (to Sandhurst) and west (to Flimwell) across the parish. The remaining minor roads that radiate from these roads form a network of designated Rural Lanes across the parish, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998).
- 5.321** The closest train station for Hawkhurst (Highgate) and Hawkhurst (The Moor) is at Etchingham, located to the south west, being approximately five miles from Hawkhurst (Highgate) and 4.2 miles from Hawkhurst (The Moor). Staplehurst station is the closest station to Gill's Green, being 8.7 miles to the north. Stonegate Station is eight miles to the south west of Hawkhurst (Highgate) and 8.8 miles from Hawkhurst (The Moor). Paddock Wood station is 12 miles north west of Gill's Green. There are daily bus services serving all three areas, providing links to Royal Tunbridge Wells, Sandhurst, Maidstone, Hurst Green, and Hastings. There are less regular bus services to Benenden, Rye, and Tenterden.
- 5.322** There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 to the north of the built-up area of Hawkhurst (Highgate) and south of Hawkhurst (The Moor). There are significant areas of ancient woodland, including a large area of replanted ancient woodland (Bedgebury Forest) north west of the parish, areas of archaeological potential, historic parks and gardens (Lillesden), and ecological/wildlife designations (Wildlife Sites: Bedgebury Forest, Collingwood (The Moor), White Chimney Wood, St Laurence Churchyard, Bokes Farm, and SSSIs: part of Robins Wood on the northern parish boundary) across the parish.
- 5.323** There are two conservation areas for Hawkhurst (Highgate): Highgate and All Saints Church Conservation Area; and Iddenden Green/Sawyers Green Conservation Area (east of the centre). There is a large central conservation area at Hawkhurst (The Moor), that includes the village pond.
- 5.324** There are numerous convenience and comparison retail outlets at the centre of Hawkhurst (Highgate), including a post office, two supermarkets, and numerous food and drink outlets (including two public houses), as well as an independent cinema. Hawkhurst (The Moor) has a limited retail offer and a public house. Gill's Green has a garden nursery and close by is a public house. At Hawkhurst (Highgate) there is a primary school and a pre-school. There are two private schools nearby which also have pre-schools.

- 5.325** There is a doctors surgery, dentist, pharmacy, and a community hospital at Hawkhurst (Highgate), as well as some other medical facilities such as an osteopath. There is also a doctors surgery at Hawkhurst (The Moor), which is part of the Weald View Medical Practice also at Highgate. Planning permission has been granted for a new medical centre for the practice at Land North of Birchfield Grove, which will replace the two current surgeries.
- 5.326** Across the parish are a number of employment sources, including those provided by a number of business centres, the primary and secondary schools, and from opportunities provided by the retail and hospitality outlets. Gill's Green is an employment hub, including Hawkhurst Station Business Park and the smaller commercial and retail units provided at Gill's Green Oast.
- 5.327** In terms of development potential, six sites have been identified, four at Hawkhurst (Highgate), one at Hawkhurst (The Moor), and one at Gill's Green:
- Policy AL/HA 2 Brook House, Cranbrook Road, Hawkhurst (Highgate)
 Policy AL/HA 3 Former site of Springfield Nurseries, Cranbrook Road, Hawkhurst (Highgate)
 Policy AL/HA 4 Land at Copthall Avenue and Highgate Hill, Hawkhurst (Highgate)
 Policy AL/HA 5 Land to the north of Birchfield Grove
 Policy AL/HA 6 King George V Playing Fields, The Moor (community use)
 Policy AL/HA 7 Hawkhurst Station Business Park, Gill's Green (employment use only)
- 5.328** The full requirements for development of these sites are set out in the subsequent site allocation Policies AL/HA 2 to AL/HA 6.
- 5.329** The overall level of development to be delivered at Hawkhurst parish through these allocations amounts to some 189 - 198 dwellings in the settlement of Hawkhurst, together with provision for employment uses via an extension to the Hawkhurst Station Business Park at Gill's Green.
- 5.330** This is a substantial reduction on that put forward for consultation at an earlier stage. This reflects the outcome of additional evidence base studies and research, notably in relation to the likely impacts of sites' development, individually and cumulatively, on the High Weald National Landscape, as well as in relation to traffic congestion at the crossroads and associated air quality implications (now recognised by the recent declaration of an Air Quality Management Area), as raised by representations to the Draft Local Plan.
- 5.331** Further information on the Air Quality Management Area, which relates to the north of the crossroads, is available on the Council's [website](#). All site allocation policies, as well as relevant planning applications in Hawkhurst, will need to consider this.
- 5.332** The site allocations set out below are compatible with existing highway and related constraints, as well as being appropriate in National Landscape terms.
- 5.333** It is noted that consideration has been given to the potential to provide a relief road to the north west of the village, linking the A268 High Street and A229 Cranbrook Road and a new junction with the existing A229 Cranbrook Road. This would

also involve the closure of the northern arm of the crossroads, and the potential installation of a mini-roundabout in the centre of Highgate. However, the impact of this and associated major development, notably on the High Weald National Landscape setting of this part of the village, as well as in the context of national policy to limit development in National Landscapes, is not regarded as supportable.

- 5.334** Future planning applications will still need to consider their traffic impacts, including upon the junction (crossroads) of the A229 and A268 at the centre of Hawkhurst and demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in severe residual cumulative impacts. In relation to the allocated sites, implementation of the identified mitigation measures will be required.
- 5.335** As part of such mitigation measures, and in line with the mitigations recommended in the evidence base, it is recognised that there would be significant benefits through the introduction of a comprehensive approach to active travel within Hawkhurst (both Highgate and The Moor). This could potentially take the form of developing and implementing a settlement-wide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and potentially Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, to particularly seek to reduce the extent of shorter journeys made within the settlement; for example, to the primary school, supermarkets, etc. Kent County Council, as the local highway authority, has identified the desirability of providing a continuous footpath between Hawkhurst and Sissinghurst along the A229. This would enhance accessibility to proposed Local Plan sites, as well as improving access to existing bus stops that will improve viability of bus services (in particular route 5).
- 5.336** The IDP identifies the following infrastructure requirements for Hawkhurst: a new medical centre to provide a new GP practice to replace the existing two practice premises and a new community hall/centre: the Plan identifies the scope to locate a new medical centre at Land to the north of Birchfield Grove, and a new community centre at the King George V playing fields. The IDP also identifies the need for the expansion of the primary school at Hawkhurst by one form of entry on the existing school site.
- 5.337** Additional wastewater capacity may be required to serve Hawkhurst and Gill's Green.
- 5.338** A project for delivering a new community hub at Wilkes Field, Cranbrook includes the provision of a new library to replace the existing library there. For current planning applications within Hawkhurst parish, Kent County Council has requested contributions towards the delivery of Cranbrook Community Hub to accommodate increased demand for libraries, adult learning, and social care generated by development, including in Hawkhurst.
- 5.339** The IDP identifies requirements for the extension of existing areas for children's play space and parks and recreation grounds in the south of the parish; the provision of children's natural play at Hawkhurst nature pond and an increase in the quality and capacity of King George V playing field (at The Moor).

- 5.340** The proposed LBDs provide for potential future windfall development. Any windfall sites that do come forward for residential development over the plan period should provide affordable housing in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policy in Section 6, having regard to information on local housing needs.
- 5.341** Local policies are also provided through the made Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan that forms part of the borough's development plan in relation to Hawkhurst parish. The Council has determined which policies in the made Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan (March 2018 modified in April 2020) are outdated by the adoption of the Local Plan. Although many of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies are not superseded, those that relate to the pre-existing LBD and the scale of development sites, namely Policies HD1(a) and HD1(b) are. Additionally, Policy HD3 'encourages' rather than requires accessible and water efficient homes, which is a requirement under the Local Plan, so is also superseded. The Local Green Spaces identified under Policy LP3 are recognised by the Local Plan as being already designated and protected under the Neighbourhood Plan and have not been assessed further as part of the preparation of this Local Plan. The Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan includes a number of specific goals and reference to a list of projects that indicate how developer contributions could potentially be used.

The Strategy for Hawkhurst parish

Policy PSTR/HA 1

The Strategy for Hawkhurst parish

The development strategy for Hawkhurst parish is to:

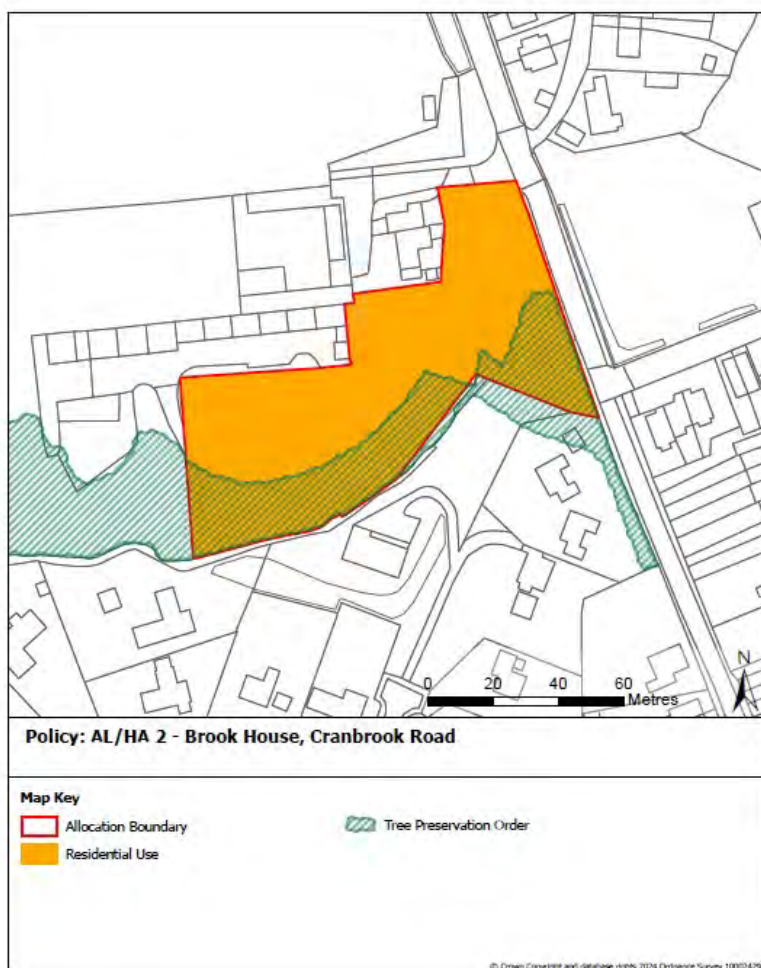
1. Set Limits to Built Development for Hawkhurst, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 15) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Build approximately 189 - 198 (net) new dwellings, including affordable housing, as allocated under the subsequent site allocation policies;
3. Ensure that all development proposals establish an acceptable impact upon the Hawkhurst crossroads junction (the A229/A268) and the Flimwell crossroads (the junction of the A21 and A268);
4. Provide a comprehensive active travel strategy for the settlement of Hawkhurst, including to maintain and enhance Public Rights of Way and the local strategic cycle network, and linkages to them, to include contributions towards the proposed Bedgebury to Sissinghurst cycle path route;
5. In relation to all development proposals for major development which would generate more than 100 light delivery vehicles (cars and vans of less than 3.5 tonnes gross weight) or 25 heavy duty vehicles (lorries, buses, etc. over 3.5 tonnes gross weight) annual average daily traffic (AADT) movements through the northern arm of the crossroads in Hawkhurst (i.e. approximately 250m to the north of the crossroads along the Cranbrook Road)) per day, to be accompanied by an air quality assessment, with the development providing appropriate mitigation measures;
6. Retain the public car parks in Hawkhurst, as defined on the Policies Map, in accordance with Policy TP 4: Public Car Parks, and to improve and increase provision of public parking to serve Hawkhurst, on sites near the settlement centre;

7. Safeguard the Hawkhurst Station Business Park (Gill's Green) Key Employment Area, including its extension (as provided for by Policy AL/HA 7) for future employment (E, B2, B8) use in accordance with Policy ED 1;
8. Retain an appropriate mix of uses within the Rural Service Centre, as defined on the Policies Map, and support proposals which would contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre;
9. Resist the loss of local shops, community facilities, and green spaces, in accordance with Policy ED 12, and support the new provision to meet local needs in accordance with other policies within the Plan;
10. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. transport measures, particularly those related to active travel, to mitigate the impact on the crossroads at the centre of Hawkhurst (Highgate);
 - b. medical facilities that cover Hawkhurst parish (to be used towards improvements/ reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
 - c. the expansion of the existing primary school that serves Hawkhurst and the surrounding area;
 - d. youth and children's play space;
 - e. improved/enhanced recreation/sports provision at King George V playing fields;
 - f. a new community centre at Hawkhurst at the King George V playing fields;
 - g. the proposed Cranbrook Community Hub, in relation to library, social care, and adult education;
 - h. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Allocation policies for Hawkhurst parish

Brook House, Cranbrook Road

- 5.342** The site is located on the north side of Hawkhurst close to residential development. Cranbrook Road (the A229) lies to the east of the site.
- 5.343** This site formed part of Policy AL/HA 1 in the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 and is located inside the LBD for Hawkhurst. It is within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.344** There are Tree Preservation Orders within the southern portion of the site.
- 5.345** The site benefits from a planning permission (17/03780/OUT) for the demolition of the existing building and the development of 25 apartments, but as this has not yet been implemented, an allocation is appropriate.

Map 37 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/HA 2

Brook House, Cranbrook Road

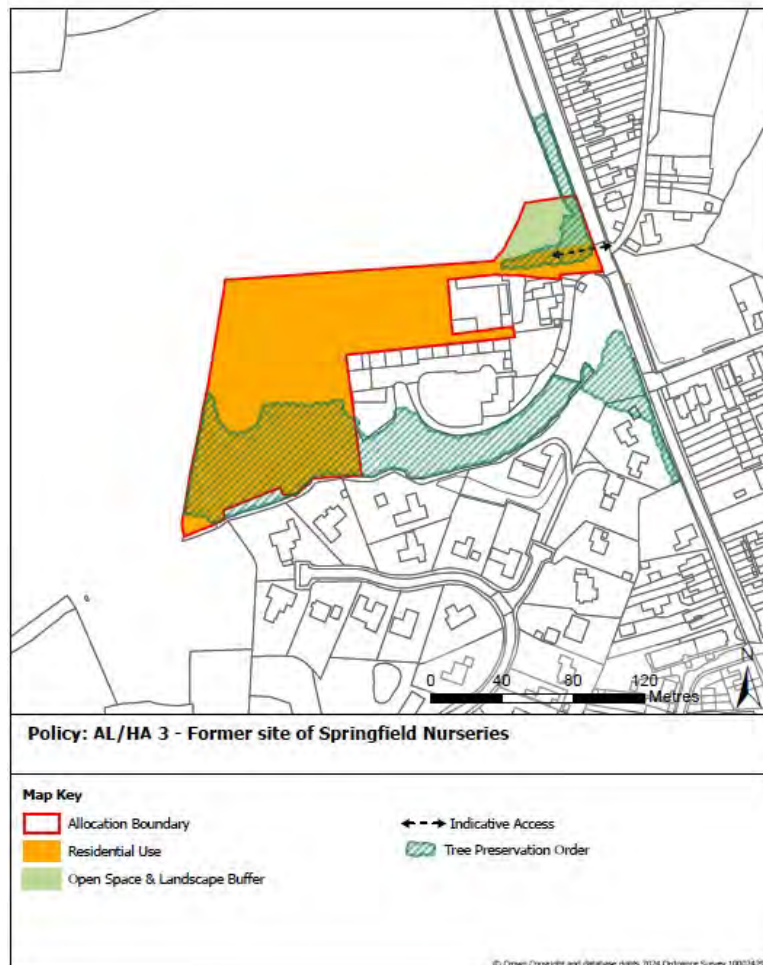
This site, as defined on the Hawkhurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 25 apartments, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provision of a highway assessment to inform vehicular access to the site and highway works needed;
2. There is no unacceptable impact on air quality, having regard to any mitigation measures provided;
3. Proposals to have regard to Tree Preservation Orders, with the layout and design of the development protecting those trees of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey;
4. Provide on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
5. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/HA 1.

Former site of Springfield Nurseries, Cranbrook Road, Hawkhurst

- 5.346** The site is located to the northern side of Hawkhurst. Cranbrook Road (the A229) is located to the east of the site. There are trees along the northern boundary and mature oaks to the western boundary, located within an area of protected trees.
- 5.347** Land levels rise to the north/north west and drop down significantly to the south of the site towards the residential dwellings at Oakfield. The Hawkhurst golf course is located to the north and west. To the south is an office building (Brook House, see Policy AL/HA 2) and to the east an electricity sub-station and a veterinary surgery.
- 5.348** There is an existing access into the site from Cranbrook Road that is currently shared with the veterinary surgery and Brook House.
- 5.349** The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape. The northern boundary of the site forms the edge of the LBD: the site is inside the LBD. To the south, and included within the site, is an Area of Landscape Importance that follows a similar line to the Tree Preservation Order to the south.
- 5.350** This site formed part of Policy AL/HA 1 in the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016.
- 5.351** The site benefits from a planning permission (17/02192/OUT) for the development of 24 dwellings, but as this has not yet been implemented, an allocation is appropriate.

Map 38 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/HA 3

Former site of Springfield Nurseries, Cranbrook Road, Hawkhurst

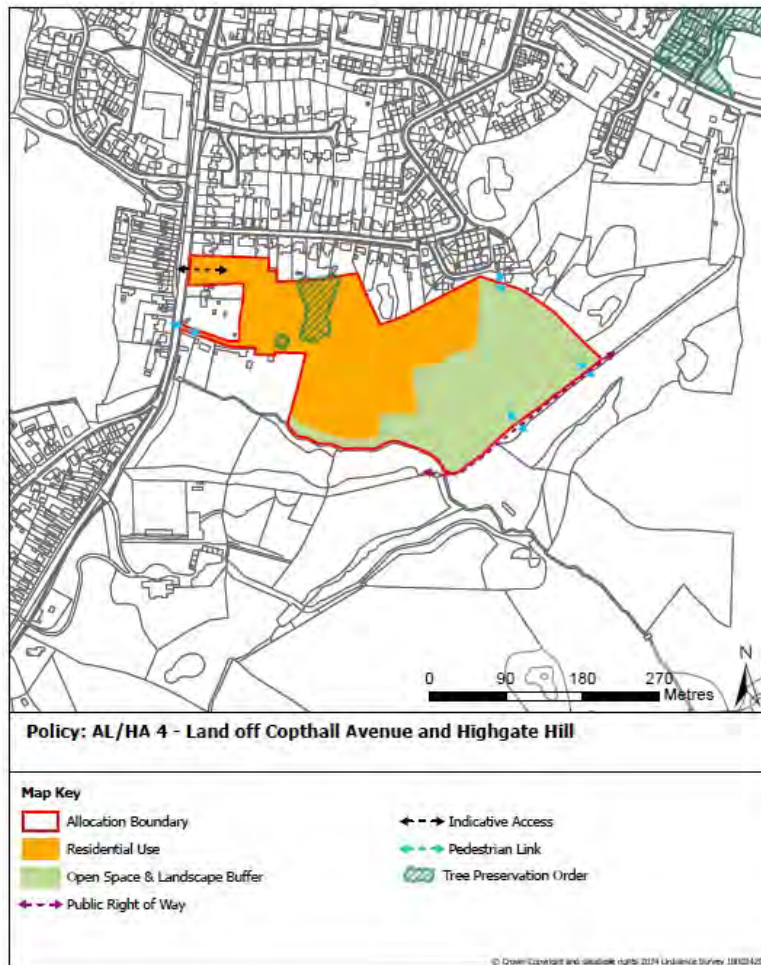
This site, as defined on the Hawkhurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing up to 24 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provision of a highway assessment to inform vehicular access to the site and highway works needed;
2. There is no unacceptable impact on air quality, having regard to any mitigation measures provided;
3. Proposals to have regard to Tree Preservation Orders, with the layout and design of the development protecting those trees of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey;
4. Provide on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
5. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/HA 1.

Land off Copthall Avenue and Highgate Hill

- 5.352** The site is located to the south of Hawkhurst adjacent to residential development. It comprises fields, paddocks, and wooded areas, with an undulating topography which generally slopes southwards. There is a clear public view across part of the site from the residential area of Fieldways adjacent to the north.
- 5.353** The sites area is 6.96 hectares. It is within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.354** The site also includes some barns towards the western end of the site, the curtilage of a dwelling which is located in Copthall Avenue, the curtilage of a dwelling located adjacent to Highgate Hill (A229) to the west of the site, and also a separate secondary access to Highgate Hill.
- 5.355** The site is adjoined by fields and residential properties, including a number of listed buildings. The site boundaries consist of a mix of trees and hedging. There are ponds and a stream running north to south through the site. There are trees and hedging within the site.
- 5.356** There is not a direct vehicular access to the site currently. There are pavements in neighbouring streets and along Highgate Hill. There is a Public Right of Way adjacent to the south east of the site.
- 5.357** The site's situation relatively close to the core of Hawkhurst and its services, with good pedestrian linkages, together with limited on-site constraints, suggest development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.358** The site has planning permission (20/02788/FULL) for the erection of 71 dwellings, but as this has not yet been implemented, an allocation is appropriate.

Map 39 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/HA 4

Land off Copthall Avenue and Highgate Hill

This site, as defined on the Hawkhurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing 70-79 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, and significant areas of publicly accessible open space, as indicated by the green hatching on the site layout plan.

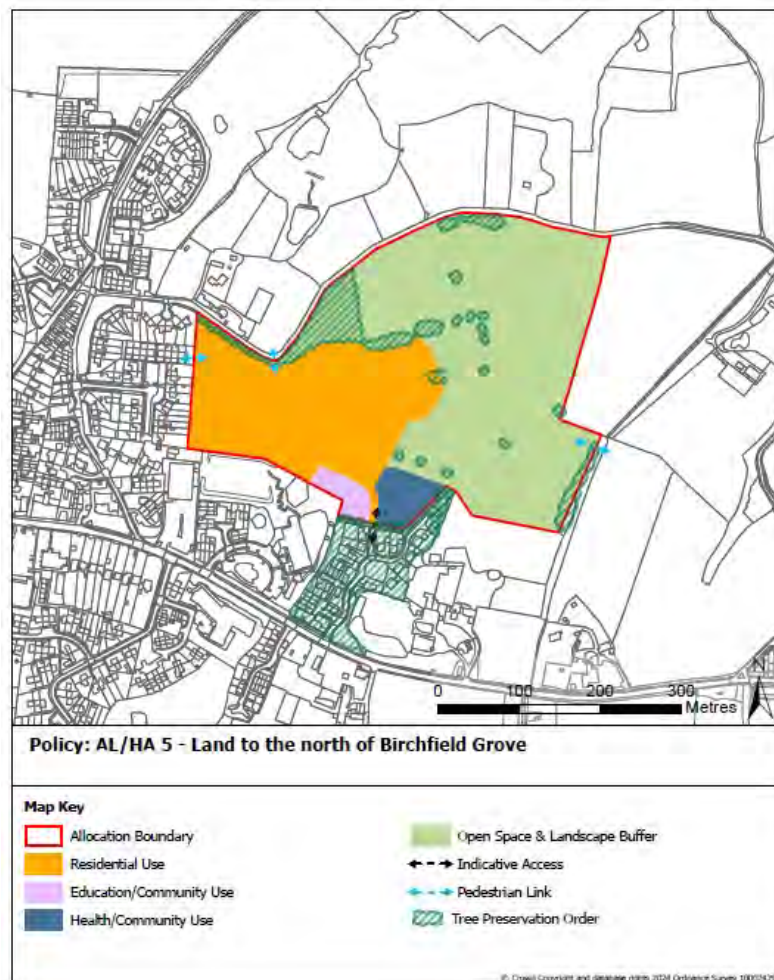
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Any proposals to be for the comprehensive development of the site. Proposals for piecemeal development will not be supported;
2. The provision of the main vehicular access into the site to be from Highgate Hill;
3. Pedestrian access to be provided to Fieldways to the north and to Highgate Hill via the main access and a second southerly point, with further pedestrian connections to the wider Public Right of Way network to the south-east, as shown on the Indicative Site Layout Plan;
4. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;

5. Regard will be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and a landscape and visual impact assessment;
6. The layout and design of the scheme to give full consideration to the location of the site in the High Weald National Landscape on the edge of the settlement and the setting of listed buildings, and to provide a scheme that is sensitively designed and takes account of the findings of the landscape and visual impact assessment providing a suitable edge to the settlement;
7. Proposals to take account of, and respond to, ancient woodland and Tree Preservation Orders on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting these as informed by an ecological survey (including protection and enhancement of the Site of Nature Conservation Value to the north and wildflower meadows to the south). If it is justified that any protected trees are to be removed, these must be replaced by specimens;
8. Provide on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
9. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/HA 1.

Land to the north of Birchfield Grove

- 5.359** The site comprises 14 hectares of undeveloped land, immediately adjacent to the existing Limits to Built Development, located immediately north of Birchfield Grove, to the east of the settlement centre and within the High Weald National Landscape. Hawkhurst Primary School is located to the south/west of the site, as well as residential development and the Tesco retail store.
- 5.360** Vehicular and pedestrian access into the site from Birchfield Grove is provided at the southern boundary of the site.
- 5.361** There are two areas of ancient woodland to the northern and northeastern boundary, that extend into the site as well as trees covered by Tree Protection orders within and on the boundaries of the site. There are a number of veteran trees located outside of the site, to the north.
- 5.362** There is an identified need for a new medical centre at Hawkhurst, which will replace the two existing GP premises within the settlement. There is also an identified need to provide land for the expansion of Hawkhurst Church of England Primary School located adjacent to the site, to enable the delivery of growth proposed by the Local Plan within Hawkhurst and the surrounding areas.
- 5.363** The site is allocated for a mixed-use development comprising housing, a medical centre, land for primary school expansion and open space.
- 5.364** An Outline Application (All matters reserved except access), (22/02664/HYBRID) for the development of the site of up to 70 homes with associated medical centre, parking and landscaping and full planning application for creation of new country park, has been approved.

Map 40 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/HA 5

Land to the north of Birchfield Grove

This site, as defined on the Hawkhurst Policies Map, is allocated for approximately 70 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, a medical centre and associated parking, an area of land to be safeguarded for future educational use, and open spaces and landscape buffers, as indicated on the site layout plan.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provision of vehicular access serving the site shall be from Birchfield Grove located to the south of the site, as supported by a Transport Assessment;
2. Proposals for the site shall include the provision of pedestrian links, linking the site to surrounding footways and Public Right of Way number WC187;
3. Proposals for the site shall include the provision of a pedestrian, cycle and emergency connection from the site into Whites Lane;
4. The design, layout and scale of development shall provide a suitable edge to the settlement, informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (taking account of the National Landscape location of the site), which shall include details of height

parameters and wireframe visualisations from a selected number of key viewpoints, ecological studies, and a heritage assessment (including archaeology and landscape heritage);

5. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;

6. Proposals to take account of, and respond to, ancient woodland, Tree Preservation Orders and existing ponds on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting these as informed by an ecological survey. If it is justified that any protected trees are to be removed, these must be replaced by semi-mature specimens;

7. Proposals for the site shall include provision of, and adherence to, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to cover public spaces, retained and restored habitats, and if applicable, any retained agricultural land;

8. The spatial distribution of the different uses for which this site is allocated, shall reflect that shown indicatively on the site layout plan, and include a serviced plot for the medical centre;

9. Development proposals shall be informed by a Transport Assessment and ensure that impact upon the Hawkhurst crossroads junction (the A229/A268) and the Flimwell crossroads (the junction of the A21 and A268) shall not be severe. The Transport Assessment shall identify any highway mitigation measures needed to support development of the site;

10. Proposals for development of the site shall include the provision of significant amenity/natural green space, parks and recreation grounds, children's play space and youth play space in accordance with the requirements of Policy OSSR 2: Provision of publicly accessible open space and recreation;

11. A suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of the medical centre and associated parking is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage;

12. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PST/HA 1.

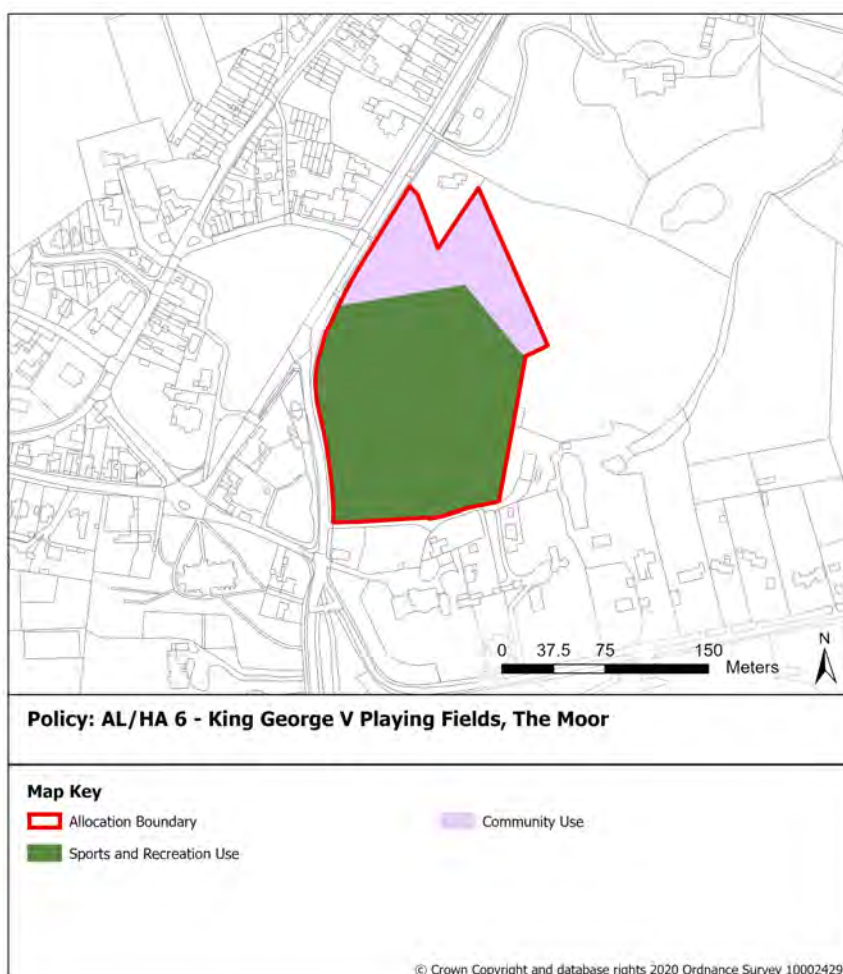
King George V Playing Fields, The Moor

5.365 The site comprises a sports pavilion, play area, recreation ground, and playing pitches and is located on the eastern side of The Moor.

5.366 The site area is 0.41 hectares. It is within the High Weald National Landscape, and partly within the Hawkhurst: The Moor Conservation Area.

5.367 There is an existing vehicular access from The Moor along the western boundary of the site.

5.368 The sports pavilion is allocated in the Site Allocations Local Plan, Policy AL/HA 5, for redevelopment for a community facility: there has been a long-standing need to replace the existing hall at Copthall.

Map 41 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/HA 6

King George V Playing Fields, The Moor

This site, as defined on the Hawkhurst Policies Map, is allocated for development of:

- a community facility, to include a range of services and facilities, including accommodation for changing rooms, meeting rooms, and a main hall, storage buildings, and potentially for health/wellbeing;
- car parking to accommodate the facilities;
- a new outdoor playground.

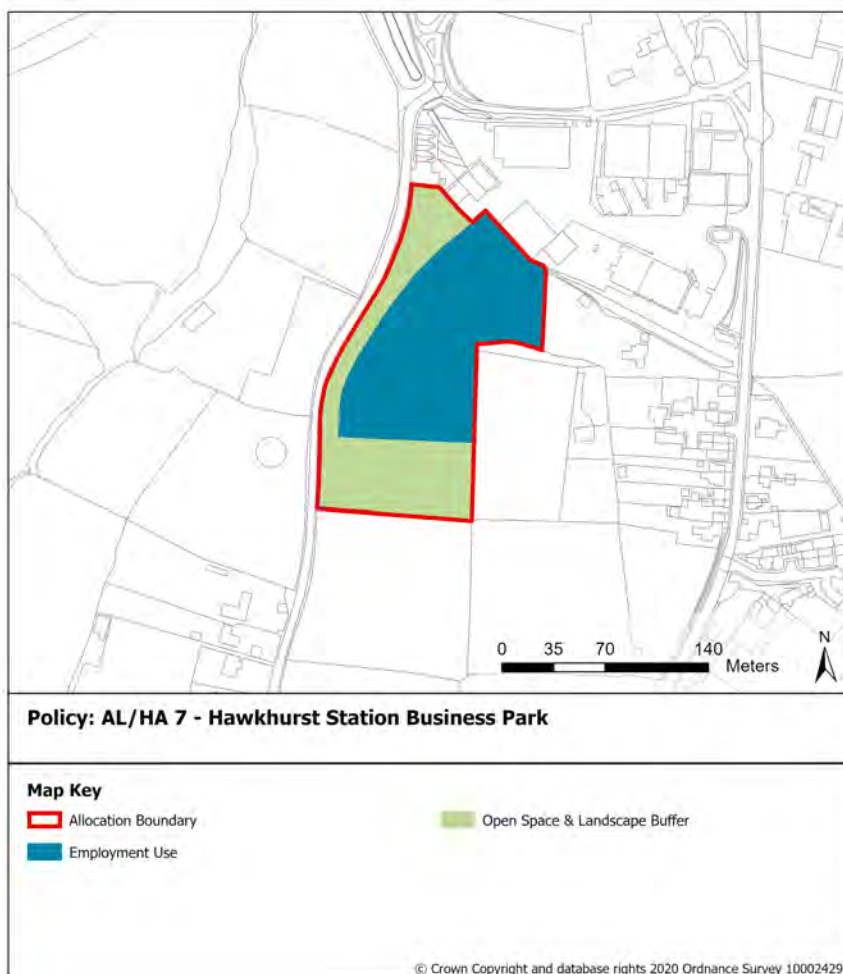
Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

- Proposals for the development of this site shall reflect its sensitive location within the Hawkhurst: The Moor Conservation Area and the role the open space currently provides to the setting of this area of The Moor;
- Development will enhance the boundaries of the site through an appropriate landscape and planting strategy, and the retention of significant trees within the site;
- Development must be informed by an ecological assessment to identify features of ecological interest and conserve and enhance biodiversity within the site;
- Avoidance of demolition wherever possible;

5. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that the area of playing field that would be lost as a result of the development is surplus to requirements; or the loss of playing fields resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location;
6. The remainder of the site is to be retained as playing fields, amenity/natural green space, parks and recreation grounds, and children's play space in accordance with the requirements of Policy OSSR 2: The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation.

Hawkhurst Station Business Park

- 5.369** The site is largely undeveloped land located immediately to the south of the existing business park at Gill's Green, which is an established Key Employment Area.
- 5.370** The site area is 2.14 hectares. It is within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.371** The site comprises unmanaged grassland containing a porta-cabin and area of hardstanding.
- 5.372** The site is located some distance from the centre of Hawkhurst to the south. To the west of the site is Slip Mill Lane, a rural road, and adjacent to the former Hop Pickers Railway Line.
- 5.373** There is a belt of trees adjacent to the boundary with Slip Mill Lane, and the remaining site boundaries comprise hedges and trees. The site is generally flat with an earth bund adjacent to the western boundary of the site. Beyond the site boundaries, the landscape falls away to the west. The site is largely screened from public views, with views of the site being occasional through surrounding boundaries.
- 5.374** There is currently a lack of a clear vehicular access into the site and a lack of pavements along Slip Mill Lane. There is a pavement along Cranbrook Road (the A229) to the east.

Map 42 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/HA 7

Hawkhurst Station Business Park

This site, as defined on the Gill's Green Policies Map, is allocated for employment uses (E/B2/B8).

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provision of vehicular access from existing employment area to north;
2. There is no unacceptable impact on air quality, having regard to any mitigation measures provided;
3. A landscape and visual impact assessment that informs the height, massing, and colour of development proposals (including roofs), and reflects the elevated rural location of the site that can be viewed from parts of the surrounding areas;
4. A landscape buffer to be provided within the southern area of the site; provision of a landscape management scheme to ensure any impact of development upon the surrounding rural area is minimised in perpetuity;

5. Demonstration through the submission of relevant and proportionate archaeological investigations (as part of any planning application) that the proposal will not have a materially harmful impact on the archaeological environment;
6. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/HA 1.

Benenden

Overview

- 5.375** The parish of Benenden is situated within the eastern part of the borough, to the south east of Cranbrook and north east of Hawkhurst. The village of Benenden is the principal village, with the smaller settlements of Iden Green and East End. The majority of the parish is rural in character, being mainly Wooded Farmland with the exception of areas of Fruit Belt to the north east and north west of the parish. Virtually all of the parish is located within the High Weald National Landscape, the exception being the northern area at East End.
- 5.376** The B2086 (to Cranbrook and Tenterden) is the main road running east-west through the parish. Some roads are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998). The closest train station for Benenden is Staplehurst, being located 8.1 miles away, with Etchingham 9.3 miles to the south west. The closest train station to Iden Green is Etchingham (eight miles to the south west). The closest station to East End is Headcorn (approximately seven miles away), with the station at Etchingham being located 11.8 miles away. There is a limited bus service serving the settlements.
- 5.377** There are small areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 around the Nine Acre Gill stream and associated with the River Rother to the south west of the parish. There are significant areas of ancient woodland, areas of archaeological potential (including along Roman roads), historic parks and gardens (The Grange, western area of Hole Park) and ecological designations (a SSSI at Parsonage Wood); Wildlife Sites (at White Chimney Wood, Benenden Wood, Benenden Churchyard, Benenden Hospital Grounds, Nine Acre Wood and Gill, western area of Beston Farm and Haldon Place, southern area of Hemsted Forest, south-western area of Sandpit Wood, Clapper Hill, Moor Wood) across the parish.
- 5.378** Most of the central part of Benenden village is located within the Benenden Conservation Area; the northern part of Iden Green village is within the Iden Green Conservation Area. Benenden village has a community shop that includes a post office and café. There is also a butchers and a public house. Iden Green has a public house located nearby, and there is a small shop at Benenden Hospital, East End. There is a primary school and nursery/pre-school at Benenden and close by is the private Benenden Secondary School. There are also nursery/pre-school facilities at Iden Green and East End.
- 5.379** The parish provides two relatively large sources of employment; at Benenden Hospital and at Benenden School, as well as at Benenden Primary School. Employment opportunities are also provided by local shops and services. There are a number of employment sites located in the rural area; for example, within the area to the east of Benenden village.

- 5.380** The LBD around Benenden village sets the extent of existing and planned development, and provides for any potential future windfall development. Any windfall sites that do come forward for residential development over the plan period should provide affordable housing in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policy in Section 6, having regard to information on local housing needs.
- 5.381** The IDP identifies a requirement for additional youth and children's play space and for the retention of the football and cricket pitches.
- 5.382** The IDP identifies that GP practices at Cranbrook and also at Hawkhurst serve the Benenden area (the Hawkhurst/Sandhurst/Benenden cluster area and the Cranbrook/Benenden/Sissinghurst/Frittenden cluster area). For both cluster areas the IDP identifies that one new GP premises as an amalgamation of the existing practices will be required to serve each area.
- 5.383** The IDP identifies that expansion will be required of the existing primary school at Hawkhurst by up to one form of entry to provide for Hawkhurst and the surrounding villages within the Hawkhurst/Sandhurst and Benenden education planning area.
- 5.384** The Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP), was 'made' by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council at Full Council on 23 February 2022. All policies included in the BNDP therefore form part of the development plan for the Borough in relation to development proposals within the area covered by Benenden parish.
- 5.385** The BNDP includes four site allocation policies, Policies SSP1 Land adjacent to Feoffee Cottages, Walkhurst Road, Benenden, SSP2 Uphill, New Pond Road, Benenden, SSP3 Land at Benenden Hospital, South of Goddards Green Road, East End: South-east quadrant, and SSP4 Land at Benenden Hospital, North of Goddards Green Road, East End: North-east quadrant.
- 5.386** Planning consent has been granted at Feoffee Cottages for 25 dwellings (planning reference 19/00822/HYBRID and 24/00722/REM), and at the two Benenden Hospital sites planning consent has been granted for net 81 units (planning reference 23/03274/FULL).
- 5.387** Full details of each site allocation policy, including the detailed criteria that each development proposal is required to meet is set out in the BNDP and these should be read in conjunction with policies of this Local Plan. These include the strategic policy for Benenden Parish, Policy PSTR/BE1 set out below.
- 5.388** The made BNDP includes a number of specific goals and sets out a list of projects that indicates how developer contributions could potentially be used.

The Strategy for Benenden parish

Policy PSTR/BE 1

The Strategy for Benenden parish

The development strategy for Benenden parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Benenden village (reflecting the relevant site allocations included in the made Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan), as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 17) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Build approximately 88-95 new dwellings, including affordable housing, as allocated by site specific policies SSP1, SSP2, SSP3 and SSP4 in the Benenden Neighbourhood Development Plan;
3. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. medical facilities that cover Benenden parish (to be used towards improvements/ reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
 - b. primary education facilities, namely the expansion of the existing primary school at Hawkhurst to serve Hawkhurst and the surrounding villages;
 - c. library provision, adult learning, and social care, to include those services to be provided at the new Cranbrook Community Hub (in neighbouring Cranbrook & Sissinghurst parish);
 - d. youth and children's play space;
 - e. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Bidborough

Overview

- 5.389** The parish of Bidborough is situated to the north west of the borough. It is predominantly rural in character, comprising both extensive field patterns and areas of woodland; part of the Speldhurst Wooded Farmland Character Area. Bidborough village is centred on a ridge top. Bidborough is the only significant settlement within the parish, with other scattered development, including historic farmsteads.
- 5.390** The A26 (London Road) is located on the eastern edge of Bidborough village, linking with the A21. The B2176 (Bidborough Ridge) runs along the northern edge of the settlement. This road runs east (to the A26)-west (to Penshurst within Sevenoaks district) through the middle of the parish. Some roads in the parish are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#)(1998).
- 5.391** With the exclusion of land inside the LBD of Bidborough, the parish lies within the Green Belt and the High Weald National Landscape. A small part of the parish sited to the west and south of Bidborough village is outside the National Landscape. There are areas of ancient woodland, areas of archaeological potential, and ecological designations (Ashour Wood and Leigh Wildlife Sites) across the parish.
- 5.392** Bidborough village has an historic core, designated as a conservation area, which runs north-south along the High Street. This includes a number of listed buildings. The village core is situated 1.5 miles from the larger settlements of (central) Southborough (part of the Main Urban Area) and two miles from Tonbridge to the north east in Tonbridge & Malling borough. Royal Tunbridge Wells is approximately 3.8 miles away to the south. The closest train stations are in Tonbridge (2.4 miles to the north east), Leigh (2.6 miles to the north west), and at High Brooms (2.9 miles), all of which are mainline stations. The mainline train station at Royal Tunbridge Wells is 4.1 miles to the south east of Bidborough. There is currently a less regular bus service linking Bidborough village with Royal Tunbridge Wells and Lingfield.
- 5.393** Bidborough has a local shop, primary school, and nursery. There is a public house on Bidborough Ridge.
- 5.394** In terms of growth potential, having regard to the significant environmental constraints outlined above, no sites have been identified for allocation during the Local Plan process. However, there may be opportunities for redevelopment of other appropriate windfall sites where they are brought forward, in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing.
- 5.395** For Bidborough parish, the IDP shows a deficiency in the provision of youth play provision and allotment provision. Where applicable, and in accordance with Local Plan Policy OSSR 2: The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation, future residential development in the parish during the plan period will be expected to contribute to these provisions to help mitigate impact from

future development, including towards new recreation/sports provision on land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, which is subject to site allocation Policy AL/SP 2.

- 5.396** In addition to the above, Bidborough Parish Council has identified the need for improvement and enhancement of facilities at the Bidborough play area for a range of ages, including youth provision and a need for a new, replacement sports pavilion, which will also cater for other community uses.

The Strategy for Bidborough parish

Policy PSTR/BI 1

The Strategy for Bidborough parish

The development strategy for Bidborough parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Bidborough village, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 19), as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Support active travel by delivering improvements to the local pedestrian and cycling network as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and additional cycle parking in key locations. This will include through the provision of contributions;
3. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. new recreation/sports provision on land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground (in Speldhurst parish; see site allocation Policy AL/SP 2) to mitigate the impact from such development and/or new sports provision/facilities in Bidborough, which will cater for a range of ages;
 - b. provision and enhancement of a range of play facilities at Bidborough play area, suitable for a range of ages, including youth provision;
 - c. provision of additional allotments;
 - d. secondary education provision;
 - e. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Brenchley and Matfield

Overview

- 5.397** The parish of Brenchley and Matfield is situated within the central part of the borough to the south of Paddock Wood. Brenchley and Matfield are the principal villages. The majority of the parish is rural in character and traditionally comprised fruit orchards, the majority of the parish being located within the Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area, as well as Wooded Farmland, there being a strip of Low Weald Farmland along the northern boundary. A little over three-quarters of the parish is located within the High Weald National Landscape, including the villages of both Brenchley and Matfield.
- 5.398** The parish is mainly served by minor rural roads, the majority of which are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#)(1998). The exception to this is the B2160, which runs north-south through the centre of Matfield, connecting to Paddock Wood to the north and south towards the A21 at Kippings Cross. The closest train station for both villages is Paddock Wood, being approximately three miles to the north of Brenchley and 2.8 miles to the north of Matfield. There is a daily bus service serving Brenchley, and also Matfield (although less regular).
- 5.399** There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 that follow a tributary of the River Teise to the south of the built-up area of Brenchley. There are significant areas of ancient woodland, areas of archaeological potential, historic parks and gardens (Brenchley Manor, Brattles Grange, Marle Place), and ecological designations (such as Brenchley Wood, eastern part of Shirrenden Wood, All Saints Churchyard at Brenchley, and Castle Hill Local Wildlife Sites) across the parish.
- 5.400** The conservation area for Brenchley village is located in the eastern part of the settlement and a significant proportion of this is located outside the LBD. The conservation area for Matfield embraces the central part of the settlement around the village green. Brenchley village has a post office, convenience store, and other small specialist shops, a primary school and several nurseries/pre-schools, as well as a doctors surgery and dentist. There is no public house inside the LBD, but there are several nearby. There are very limited retail facilities at Matfield village, with two public houses.
- 5.401** The parish contains no major centres of employment, but there are many businesses scattered across the rural area, including a number of farm building conversions. Local shops, public houses, and other services, including the primary school, also provide a range of jobs.
- 5.402** In terms of growth potential, one site has been identified, located at Matfield.
- 5.403** While Brenchley has more services, its form and landscape setting provide no suitable opportunities for outward growth. In contrast, Matfield has a site where development may be accommodated without real harm to its setting. This is the

site allocated under Policy AL/BM 2 Land at Maidstone Road, as shown on Inset Map 21. The full requirements for the development of this site are set out in the subsequent site allocation policy.

- 5.404** Although Matfield has a limited range of services, the level of growth takes account of its proximity to Brenchley, better travel connection to Paddock Wood, and local benefits.
- 5.405** The Howell Surgery provides main general medical service provision for the parish and has premises in Brenchley (main) and Horsmonden (branch). The existing premises do not have capacity to accommodate the estimated growth of registered patients within Brenchley and Matfield (and Horsmonden). To meet the increased demand identified, land has been identified for the provision of a new health centre/ doctors surgery as part of the wider development of the site Land to the east of Horsmonden (at Horsmonden village; site allocation Policy AL/HO 3). This will serve the wider area, including the parish of Brenchley and Matfield.
- 5.406** For Brenchley and Matfield parish, the IDP shows a deficiency in the provision of children's and youth play space, amenity green space, and allotment provision. Where applicable, and in accordance with Local Plan Policy OSSR 2: The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation, future residential development in the parish during the plan period will be expected to contribute to these provisions to help mitigate impact from future development.
- 5.407** Requirements for improvements to changing rooms at the Brenchley War Memorial Ground, and potentially to new recreation/sports provision at Paddock Wood, as referred to in Policy STR/SS 1, will be required.
- 5.408** The disused (dismantled) railway line that ran from Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst (known as the Hop Pickers Line) runs through part of the parish. The route of the line within the borough has been safeguarded through Policy TP 5: Safeguarding Railway Land and by refusing proposals that would compromise its use as a green infrastructure corridor. Projects are being developed to improve access and connectivity along the Line, to identify areas where access to the former railway line can be improved and used for this purpose.
- 5.409** The extent of the LBDs for both Brenchley and Matfield provide for potential future windfall development, where they are brought forward in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing.
- 5.410** Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council has produced a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, which was 'made' by the Borough Council on the 14 December 2022.

The Strategy for Brenchley and Matfield parish

Policy PSTR/BM 1

The Strategy for Brenchley and Matfield parish

The development strategy for Brenchley and Matfield parish is to:

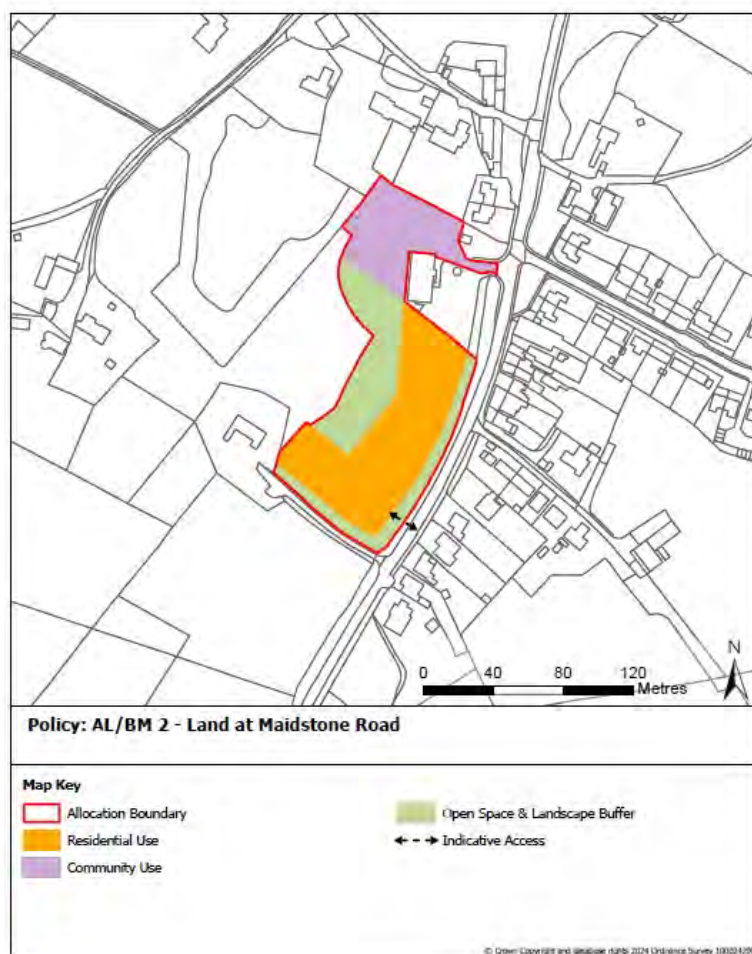
1. Set Limits to Built Development for Brenchley village and Matfield village, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Maps 20 and 21), as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Build approximately 11-15 new dwellings, including affordable housing, as allocated under the subsequent site allocation policies;
3. Retain the public car park in High Street, Brenchley, as defined on the Policies Map, in accordance with Policy TP 4: Public Car Parks;
4. Provide information boards (or similar) and installation of public art along the Hop Pickers Line. Other locally significant historical features, events, and personalities could be recognised as part of this approach;
5. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. medical facilities that cover Brenchley and Matfield parish (to be used towards improvements/reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
 - b. improvements to changing rooms at the Brenchley War Memorial Ground, and/or potentially to new recreation/sports provision at Paddock Wood, as referred to in Policy STR/SS 1;
 - c. provision of a range of play facilities, including at Policy AL/BM 2 Land at Maidstone Road, suitable for a range of ages including children's and youth provision;
 - d. provision of amenity green space and additional allotments;
 - e. secondary education provision;
 - f. library provision;
 - g. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Allocation policies for Brenchley and Matfield parish

Land at Maidstone Road

- 5.411** The site is undeveloped land, located towards the south west of Matfield centre, within the High Weald National Landscape. The site is adjacent to the Matfield Green Conservation Area. The site is approximately 1.22 hectares in area.
- 5.412** The site has a frontage with Maidstone Road (the B2160), which lies to the east of the site and adjoins the village hall (located to the north of the site), which has a car park and vehicular access from Maidstone Road. This access also leads to a gate that serves this allocation site.

- 5.413** The site is also adjoined by some residential properties and fields, and by public toilets. Boundaries to the site consist of part post and rail fence, part metal fence, and trees. The site is flat.
- 5.414** Pedestrian footways are provided in the village hall car park and outside the site along the opposite side of Maidstone Road.
- 5.415** The site includes a significant number of hedgerows and mature trees, together with more open areas. Whilst there are views of part of the site from the village hall car park, as it wraps around the village hall it thereby restricts further or longer distance public views.
- 5.416** Although a greenfield site, its situation relatively close to the core of the village and its services, together with areas within the site having limited constraints, suggest some development potential to contribute to development needs. This will include the provision of a fully equipped children's playground, open space, and associated parking spaces.
- 5.417** The trees and hedges along the frontage with Maidstone Road are to be retained, except for those that need to be removed to provide adequate visibility splays.
- 5.418** The IDP and Open Space Study identified for the parish that there may be potential for additional children's play space, and the Parish Council has supported the delivery of a new children's play space at the village of Matfield.

Map 43 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/BM 2

Land at Maidstone Road

This site, as defined on the Brenchley and Matfield Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 11-15 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, a fully equipped children's play space, and additional car parking provision adjacent to the village hall.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access to the site shall be provided from Maidstone Road, informed by a Transport Assessment;
2. Provision of pedestrian access to Maidstone Road, including assessment and provision of pedestrian crossing points;
3. The setting of the settlement character shall be maintained, and the impact on the adjacent Matfield Green Conservation Area minimised, including through the layout and design of the development being informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that shall take full account of the National Landscape designation and heritage assessment;

4. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey;
5. A fully equipped children's play space, open space, and a minimum of eight associated parking spaces shall be sited within the site on land indicated in purple as 'community use' on the site layout plan;
6. Proposals for development shall be accompanied by details of how and when the parking required by criterion 5 will be provided along with proposals for its future maintenance and management
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/BM 1.

Frittenden

Overview

- 5.419** The parish of Frittenden is situated within the north west of the borough. The village of Frittenden is the principal village of the parish and is centred on a loosely-knit settlement set within a flat to gently undulating landscape. The parish is predominantly rural in character comprising fields and hedgerows, being part of the Low Weald Farmland Character Area. Part of the parish (in the south west) is within the Sissinghurst Wooded Farmland Character Area. The parish lies outside of the designated High Weald National Landscape and the Green Belt.
- 5.420** Frittenden village is located approximately three miles from Sissinghurst to the south west, Headcorn to the north east, and Staplehurst to the north west.
- 5.421** The A229 (Rocks Hill) cuts through the parish at its western end. Some roads are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998). The closest train stations are at Headcorn and Staplehurst. There is currently a lack of bus services serving the settlement.
- 5.422** Frittenden village has an historic core, with parts of the village being designated as a conservation area, which includes a number of listed buildings. There are also a number of historic farmsteads. Frittenden village has limited retail facilities. Other facilities currently include a post office (based in the Memorial Hall two afternoons a week), public house, primary school and nursery/pre-school, as well as a church and village hall, and mobile library.
- 5.423** There is a high-pressure gas pipeline running to the north of Frittenden village, which (with associated buffers) is a significant constraint to development in this part of the parish.
- 5.424** While outside the Green Belt and the High Weald National Landscape, Frittenden village has little opportunity for much sustainable growth. As noted above, it has limited facilities and, furthermore, connections to other settlements comprise unclassified roads/lanes. Potential expansion is also limited, with most site options having an adverse effect on the settlement pattern, as well as site-specific constraints.
- 5.425** In terms of growth potential, therefore, one site has been identified. This site is allocated as Policy AL/FR 1: Land at Cranbrook Road. The site fronts Cranbrook Road, lying to the south west of the village and to the south of Parsonage Farm, a post-medieval historic farmstead as shown on the site layout plan. The site allocation is relatively well related to the settlement and will provide community benefits, namely the provision of affordable housing. The full requirements for development of this site are set out in the subsequent site allocation Policy AL/FR 1.
- 5.426** There may be opportunities for redevelopment of other appropriate windfall sites where they are brought forward in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing.

- 5.427** For Frittenden parish, the IDP shows a deficiency in the provision of youth play space and allotments. It follows that, in accordance with Local Plan Policy OSSR 2: The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation, future residential development in the parish during the plan period will be expected to contribute to these provisions to help mitigate impact from future development.
- 5.428** There are also deficiencies in both primary and secondary education provision serving the parish, and the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board has identified a specific need for contributions to mitigate the impact on health provision.
- 5.429** In addition, Frittenden Parish Council has identified a need for improvements to the Frittenden Memorial Hall. Community facilities are important to the sustainability of new development, given the village's relative self-containment. The Parish Council is also exploring potential traffic calming and improved parking measures to address identified issues; it may be appropriate to also seek contributions to these if and when proposals are developed. Finally, the Parish Council considers there is a need for smaller (2/3 bed) units in new residential development.

The Strategy for Frittenden parish

Policy PSTR/FR 1

The Strategy for Frittenden parish

The development strategy for Frittenden parish is to:

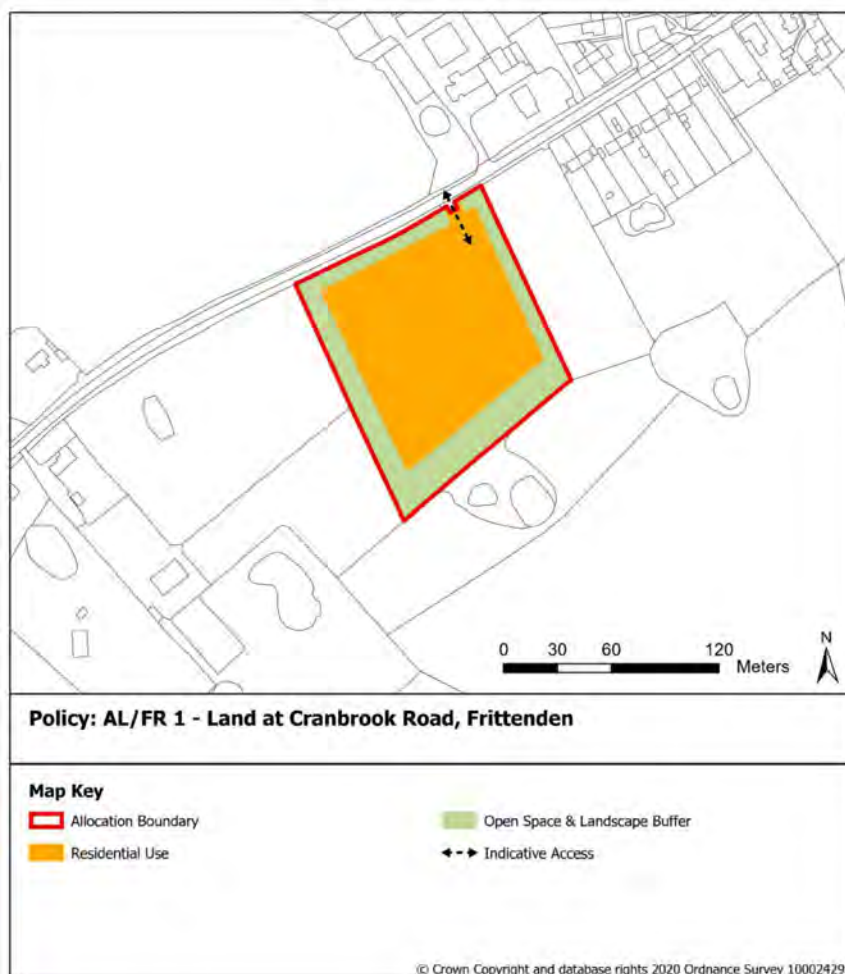
1. Set Limits to Built Development for Frittenden village, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 24) as a framework for new development over the plan period, incorporating the site allocation Policy AL/FR 1;
2. Deliver approximately 25-30 new dwellings (of which 40 percent are to be affordable dwellings) on the site allocated as Policy AL/FR 1) in this Local Plan in the plan period;
3. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. health and medical facilities that cover Frittenden parish (improvements/reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
 - b. primary and secondary education provision;
 - c. improvements/enhancements to Frittenden Village Hall;
 - d. library provision, adult learning, and social care, to include those services to be provided at the new Cranbrook Community Hub (in neighbouring Cranbrook & Sissinghurst parish);
 - e. youth play space;
 - f. provision of additional allotments;
 - g. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Allocation policies for Frittenden parish

Land at Cranbrook Road, Frittenden

- 5.430** The site fronts Cranbrook Road, lying to the south west of Frittenden village to the south of Parsonage Farm.
- 5.431** It is predominantly an undeveloped site, with a single building of agricultural appearance with associated hard surface located towards the north eastern corner of the site. It measures some 1.53 hectares and is in proximity to the centre of the village. It adjoins an area of woodland to the east, beyond which are existing residential properties. Parsonage Farm, a designated post-medieval historic farmstead, lies to the north east along with other residential development. The site also adjoins open agricultural land. Site boundaries comprise mature hedging and there is a culvert running along the frontage of the site adjacent to Cranbrook Road. It is expected that development of the site will seek to retain the mature boundaries, with minimal loss to facilitate any access improvement if identified necessary by a transport assessment. If appropriate, boundaries shall be enhanced. The scheme layout shall also include areas of open space to ensure a scheme that is sensitive to the site's edge-of-settlement location.
- 5.432** While there is a pedestrian footway in close proximity that provides access into the centre of the village, the site frontage currently lacks a footway connection to this. Hence, development of the site would need to provide a footway link to the existing network, which shall be considered as part of a transport assessment to be submitted in support of any future planning application.
- 5.433** The site is currently served by an existing vehicular access onto Cranbrook Road. There is currently a change in speed limit along the frontage of the site (being 30mph heading into the village and national speed limit away from it). Development will be required to provide for the extension of this along the frontage of the site, which shall also be considered as part of the transport assessment.
- 5.434** The site lies in an area of low archaeological potential, with some Palaeolithic potential, which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval. There is little other constraint to development of this site.
- 5.435** Development should ensure provision and delivery of the footway link and other reasonable improvements to local infrastructure, which would likely be impacted upon by the development, including youth play space and other community provisions as set out in Policy PSTR/FR 1.
- 5.436** The indicative point of access to the site is shown on the site layout plan. At a density appropriate to the location, it is anticipated that some 25-30 dwellings will be provided, of which some 40% (10-12 units) should be affordable dwellings to meet local needs.
- 5.437** The site benefits from an existing planning consent granted under planning reference 21/01638 for the construction of 23 dwellings.

Map 44 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/FR 1

Land at Cranbrook Road, Frittenden

This site, as defined on the Frittenden Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 25-30 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. The site shall be served from the existing single point of vehicular access serving the site from Cranbrook Road, as shown indicatively on the site layout plan;
2. Any improvements to the vehicular access shall minimise the loss of existing hedgerow, with proposals for the site to include satisfactory arrangements for the remaining hedgerow to be maintained and, if appropriate, enhanced;
3. A transport assessment shall be submitted with the planning application. This shall include details of a pedestrian footway link to the existing footway network. It is expected that the footway and any mitigation measures will be implemented by the developer prior to first occupation of the development. The transport assessment shall also consider and provide for speed reduction along the frontage of the site. A contribution may be taken if appropriate;

4. The layout and design of the scheme shall give full consideration to the site's edge-of-village location, providing a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including provision of landscape buffers and open space to ensure a soft approach to the village and be sensitively designed in relation to heritage assets;
5. The development shall be informed by liaison with Kent County Council, as lead local flood authority, regarding the development and implications for the culvert located along Cranbrook Road, and appropriate measures incorporated into the design of the development;
6. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/FR 1.

Goudhurst

Overview

- 5.438** The parish of Goudhurst is situated within the central part of the borough between Royal Tunbridge Wells and Cranbrook. The village of Goudhurst is the principal village, with the smaller settlements of Kilndown and Curtisden Green. The majority of the parish is rural in character, there being a large central strip of Fruit Belt around Goudhurst and Curtisden Green and up to the northern parish boundary, and Wooded Farmland in the southern section of the parish around Kilndown and in the north eastern section of the parish. The majority (80%) of the parish is located within the High Weald National Landscape, except for sections of the north east and north west.
- 5.439** The B2079 runs north-south through the parish and through Goudhurst village. It intersects with the east-west A262 in the centre of the village. The A21 runs through the southern section of the parish. A significant number of the roads linking the rural settlements and hamlets in the parish are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998).
- 5.440** The closest train station for Goudhurst is Marden (4.5 miles to the north), with the stations at Staplehurst, Frant, and Etchingham being located between 7.2 and 9.1 miles away. There is a limited bus service serving Goudhurst and Kilndown and only a school bus serving Curtisden Green.
- 5.441** There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the course of the River Teise to the north of the parish. There are significant areas of ancient woodland, areas of archaeological potential, historic parks and gardens (Bedgebury Park and Pinetum, Finchcocks, Ladham House, western area of Glassenbury Park) and ecological designations (SSSIs at Combwell Wood and the eastern area of Scotney Castle Estate; Local Wildlife Sites at Old Park Wood, Iden Green, Bedgebury Forest, Bedgebury Park School, Chingley Wood, Goudhurst Pasture) across the parish.
- 5.442** The large conservation area for Goudhurst village includes the historic village centre, village pond, and open amenity/recreation areas outside the main built-up confines of the village, as defined by its LBD. The conservation area for Kilndown is located at the northern area of the settlement and includes the listed church and public house.
- 5.443** Goudhurst village has a post office, convenience store, and several food/drink outlets, including several public houses. There are also several specialist shops. There are limited facilities at Kilndown, with one public house. There is a primary school and nursery/pre-school at Goudhurst, as well as a doctors surgery and pharmacy. There is a nursery/pre-school at Kilndown. Curtisden Green has a private day school and nursery school in close proximity.
- 5.444** In terms of growth potential, two sites have been identified in Goudhurst village as allocations: Land east of Balcombes Hill and adjacent to Tiddymotts Lane (as shown on Site Layout Plan 45 below) and Land at Triggs Farm, Cranbrook Road

(as shown on Site Layout Plan 46 below). The full requirements for development of these sites are set out in the subsequent site allocation Policies AL/GO 1 and AL/GO 2 respectively.

- 5.445** The LBD provides for potential future windfall development at Goudhurst where it is brought forward in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing.
- 5.446** The IDP highlights that the existing allotment provision within the parish should be improved/reinstated. The IDP also identifies that amenity green space could accommodate youth provision.
- 5.447** The IDP identifies that there is existing practice provision serving this area at Goudhurst. The NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board confirms that it is expected that contributions will be required towards the Old Parsonage Surgery at Goudhurst (improvements/reconfiguration, etc) or another practice within the area if appropriate, in order to mitigate the impact of development.
- 5.448** Furthermore, the existing (unimplemented) grants of planning permission in the parish have established the need for community learning and primary education facilities.
- 5.449** Local policies area also provided through the 'made' Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan (adopted February 2022) that forms part of the borough's development plan in relation to Goudhurst parish. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must be used in the assessment of planning applications in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan also includes a number of specific goals and a reference to a list of projects that would potentially be provided through developer contributions.

The Strategy for Goudhurst parish

Policy PSTR/GO 1

The Strategy for Goudhurst parish

The development strategy for Goudhurst parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Goudhurst village, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 25) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Deliver approximately 26 (25 net) new dwellings (40 percent as affordable housing) as allocated under the subsequent site allocation policies;
3. Retain the Balcombes Hill public car park within Goudhurst, as defined on the Policies Map, in accordance with Policy TP 4: Public Car Parks;
4. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. medical facilities that cover Goudhurst parish (to be used towards improvements/ reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
 - b. additional play space;
 - c. improvements to allotments;

- d. library provision, adult learning, and social care, to include those services to be provided at the new Cranbrook Community Hub (in neighbouring Cranbrook & Sissinghurst parish);
- e. community learning facilities;
- f. primary education facilities;
- g. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

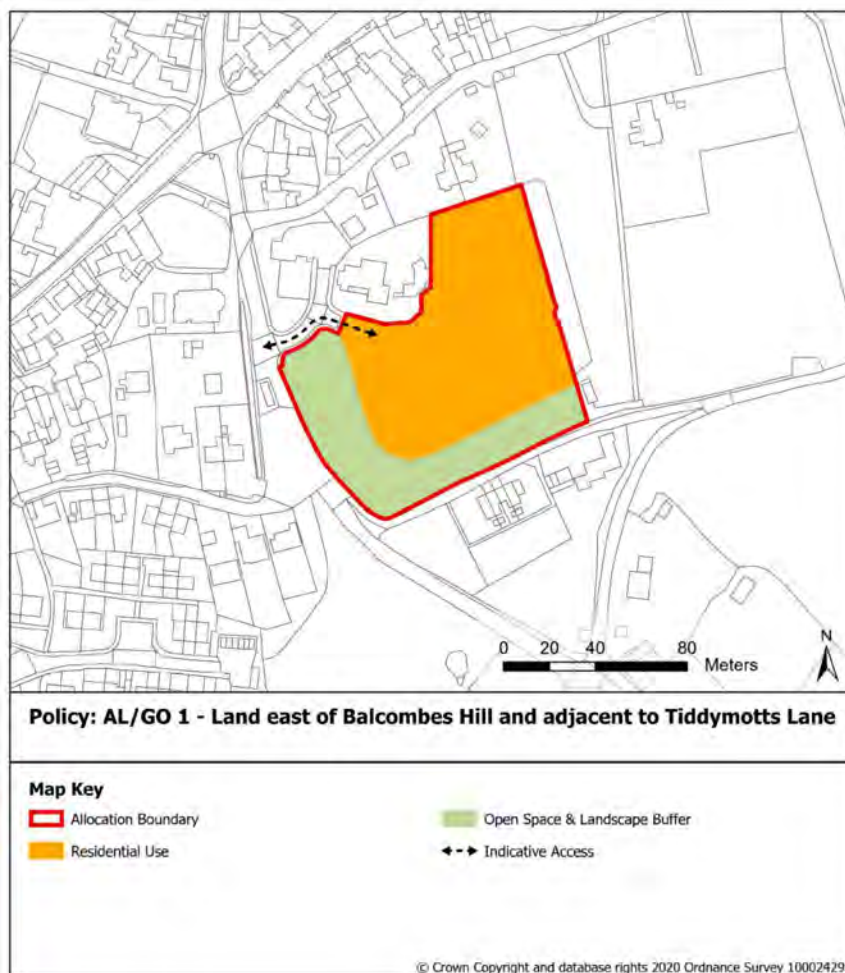
Allocation policies for Goudhurst parish

Land east of Balcombes Hill and adjacent to Tiddymotts Lane

- 5.450** This is an undeveloped site, located to the south of the centre of the village. It falls within the High Weald National Landscape and lies within the Goudhurst Conservation Area, while part of the site is identified as having archaeological potential. Balcombes Hill runs along the western boundary of the site, and Tiddymotts Lane to the south. The site is approximately 1.07 hectares in area.
- 5.451** The site is in relatively close proximity to the local services provided in the village centre, with a number of shops, public houses, and community facilities within walking distance, and the doctors surgery (Old Parsonage Surgery) adjacent to the site. Goudhurst Primary School to the east of the site can also be accessed on foot utilising a quiet lane (Back Lane) and a number of footpaths.
- 5.452** The site is adjoined by residential properties and fields. The site boundaries comprise mostly trees, with pockets of trees along the western boundary with Balcombes Hill. There is a low wall on a bank along Tiddymotts Lane and there is fencing along the north-east boundary of the site. There is a pond sited towards the northern end of the site. The pond and boundary vegetation are key features.
- 5.453** The site, which is elevated from the adjacent roads, slopes upwards to the north with a generally flat area across the middle of the site. There are long and short views of the site from the surrounding area.
- 5.454** Although a greenfield site, its situation relatively close to the core of the village and its services, together with limited on-site constraints, suggests some development potential to contribute to development needs. The relatively low density development set out in the allocation would respect the trees on the site and along the western boundary, a pond, and the site's topography.
- 5.455** The vehicular access into the south is relatively steep, reflecting the site's elevated position in relation to Balcombes Hill.
- 5.456** Landscape buffers along the western and southern boundaries of the site will reduce the impact of built development on the site upon the rural character of the surrounding area located within the Goudhurst Conservation Area, located at the edge of the built form of Goudhurst.

- 5.457** Planning approval for the erection of 14 dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping was first granted by planning application 19/00280/FULL (19 July 2019). Permission has since been granted under a renewal application (23/00372/FULL), approved in November 2024. However, an allocation is still appropriate, as that development has not yet been implemented.

Map 45 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/GO 1

Land east of Balcomb's Hill and adjacent to Tiddymotts Lane

This site, as defined on the Goudhurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 14 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provide a single point of access from Balcomb's Hill utilising the existing access point located to the north of the site, having regard to the significant level changes, with the provision of improved visibility splays at the junction with Balcomb's Hill;
2. The location and design of pedestrian access to reflect the significant level changes into the site, and improvements to footway links into the village to be provided, including an improved crossing point on Balcomb's Hill and an extended footway;

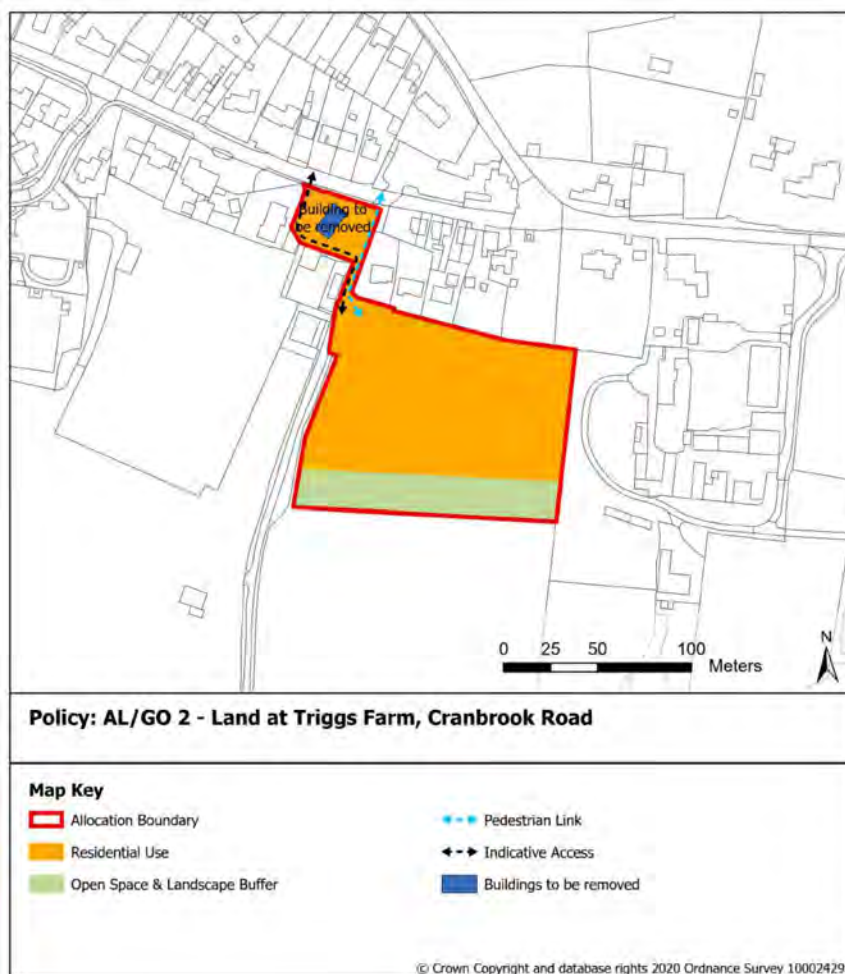
3. Development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
4. The proposal to be supported by an aboricultural assessment and a landscape and visual impact assessment which shall inform the layout and design of the scheme, with the layout taking account of significant trees, with the open space and landscape buffers as indicated in green on the site layout plan being retained and supplemented;
5. A heritage assessment shall be submitted, identifying the significance of heritage assets and how these will be preserved or enhanced through the design evolution of the scheme;
6. The layout and design of the scheme to take account of, and respect, the character and appearance of the Goudhurst Conservation Area and setting of nearby listed buildings;
7. An ecology assessment and completed identified surveys shall inform the scheme. The pond is to be protected and enhanced in accordance with the findings of the ecology assessment;
8. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/GO 1.

Land at Triggs Farm, Cranbrook Road

- 5.458** This is a mostly greenfield/part PDL site on the edge of the main developed area for Goudhurst, including a residential dwelling, 'Kestrel'. It is located within the High Weald National Landscape. There is a group of listed buildings directly to the north and to the north east of the site. Triggs Farm itself to the south (not within the site area) is a historic farmstead which includes a Grade II listed farmhouse in the centre.
- 5.459** Cranbrook Road (the A262) runs to the north of the site, although the site is not immediately adjacent to this road, access currently being provided by a narrow farm access track that runs along the western part of the site leading to Triggs Farm, with limited visibility at its junction with Cranbrook Road. There is no separate pedestrian access along this track; there is a pavement along Cranbrook Road (the A262).
- 5.460** The site is approximately 1.74 hectares in area.
- 5.461** The site is located reasonably close to the centre of the village, and well located to Goudhurst Primary School to the west of the site, which can be accessed utilising pedestrian footpaths. There is a public house opposite the site, north of the A262.
- 5.462** The site mostly comprises an agricultural field and also includes the dwelling, Kestrel, located on the Goudhurst Road and to the west of the farm access track. The site adjoins a field that is used for football. The site also adjoins residential properties to the north, on land between the site and Cranbrook Road. To the south and east are agricultural uses.
- 5.463** The site boundaries comprise a mix of fencing and trees/hedges. There is a sub-station immediately adjacent to the north west of the site.

- 5.464** The site is flat towards the northern end adjacent to the farm access track, the land dropping down towards the south. There is a view of the site from the farm access track.
- 5.465** Although a greenfield site, its situation relatively close to the core of the village and its services (it is close to the Goudhurst Primary School), together with limited on-site constraints, suggest some development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.466** The landscape buffer along the southern boundary of the site will reduce the impact of the proposed built development upon the High Weald National Landscape to the south.
- 5.467** Outline planning permission for the erection of 11 (net) dwellings and new access road was granted by planning application 17/02765/OUT (appeal decision 18 January 2019) and there is a subsequent reserved matters application 22/00159/REM (approved March 2022). The permission involved the demolition of the modern dwelling adjacent to Cranbrook Road known as 'Kestrel' to provide the new access road, replacing the existing farm track that is not suitable for serving the development, and facilitating adequate visibility splays. However, an allocation is still appropriate, as that approved development has not yet been implemented.

Map 46 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/GO 2

Land at Triggs Farm, Cranbrook Road

This site, as defined on the Goudhurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 12 (11 net) dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provide a new vehicular access onto Cranbrook Road, to include the demolition of the dwelling 'Kestrel';
2. Development to be focused towards the flatter northern part of the site, on the area identified for residential use on the site layout plan;
3. Regard to be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
4. The development shall take account of landscaping on-site and ensure provision of landscape buffers as indicated on the site layout plan;
5. An archaeological desk-based assessment is required for the site;
6. The development to be informed by an ecology assessment, to be submitted with the planning application;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/GO 1.

Horsmonden

Overview

- 5.468** The parish of Horsmonden is situated within the central part of the borough to the south of Paddock Wood, the village of Horsmonden being the principal village. The majority of the parish is rural in character, being located within the Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area, as well as Low Weald Farmland in the north west of the parish and an area of Wooded Farmland in the south. Part of the southern part of the parish (39%) is located within the High Weald National Landscape, with the village of Horsmonden being located outside the National Landscape: the western edge of the settlement is in close proximity to the National Landscape.
- 5.469** The parish is mainly served by minor rural roads, many of which are designated as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998). The B2162 runs north-south through the parish and main settlement of Horsmonden. All other roads leading from it are minor and form a network of designated Rural Lanes throughout the parish. The closest train station for Horsmonden is Paddock Wood, being approximately 4.5 miles to the north west. There is a fairly regular daily bus service linking Horsmonden with Royal Tunbridge Wells and Tenterden. A less regular service runs to Paddock Wood and also to Maidstone, although this service is not direct (there is a need to change at Matfield onto a different service).
- 5.470** There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the north and along the eastern edge of the parish, along the River Teise. There are significant areas of ancient woodland, areas of archaeological potential, historic parks and gardens (Rectory Park and Sprivers), and ecological designations (Wildlife Sites at Brenchley Woods, Shirrenden Woods, western edge of Bayham Woods, northern edge of Old Swan Farm, Horsmonden Churchyard) across the parish.
- 5.471** The conservation area for Horsmonden village embraces the central area of the settlement around the Heath. Horsmonden village has a post office, village store, and public house. There is a primary school and nursery/pre-school as well as a doctors surgery and pharmacy.
- 5.472** In terms of growth potential, two sites have been identified: sites allocated as AL/HO 2 Land south of Brenchley Road and west of Fromandez Drive; and AL/HO 3 Land to the east of Horsmonden, as shown on Inset Map 26. The full requirements for development of these sites are set out in the subsequent site allocation Policies AL/HO 2, and AL/HO 3.
- 5.473** The IDP identifies a requirement for the provision of amenity green space or improvements to the sports ground to accommodate children's play space and allotments, as well as the upgrading of existing youth facilities.
- 5.474** The Howell Surgery provides main general medical service provision for the parish and has premises in Brenchley (main) and Horsmonden (branch). The existing premises do not have capacity to accommodate the estimated growth of registered patients within Horsmonden and Brenchley and Matfield. To meet the increased

demand identified, land has been identified and safeguarded for the provision of a new health centre/doctors surgery has been identified as part of a wider development of Policy AL/HO 3: Land to the east of Horsmonden (at Horsmonden village). This will serve the wider area, including the parish of Brenchley and Matfield.

- 5.475** Kent County Council, as the local education authority, has identified a requirement for the expansion of Horsmonden Primary School by up to one form of entry to provide for the Brenchley/Horsmonden/ Lamberhurst planning area. To meet this requirement, the north western area of Policy AL/HO 3 has been safeguarded for future school expansion (which could include built and/or non-built development).
- 5.476** Horsmonden Parish Council has identified a requirement for a new village hall and there are opportunities for future residential developments in the parish to contribute to this, as set out in the overarching policy for the parish, Policy PSTR/HO 1.
- 5.477** The disused (dismantled) railway line that ran from Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst (known as the Hop Pickers Line) runs through the parish and north-south through the village of Horsmonden. The route of the line within the borough has been safeguarded through Policy TP 5: Safeguarding Railway Land and by refusing proposals that would compromise its use as a green infrastructure corridor. Projects are being developed to improve access and connectivity along the Line, to identify areas where access to the former railway line can be improved and used for this purpose.
- 5.478** The extent of the LBD also provides for potential future windfall development, where they are brought forward in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing.
- 5.479** Horsmonden Parish Council has produced a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, which was 'made' by the Borough Council on the 5 July 2023.

The Strategy for Horsmonden parish

Policy PSTR/HO 1

The Strategy for Horsmonden parish

The development strategy for Horsmonden parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Horsmonden village, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 26) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Deliver approximately 185-235 new dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, on two sites allocated in this Local Plan in the plan period (Policies AL/HO 2, and AL/HO 3);
3. Provide information boards (or similar) and installation of public art along the Hop Pickers Line. Other locally significant historical features, events, and personalities could be recognised as part of this approach;
4. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:

- a. medical facilities that cover Horsmonden parish (to be used towards improvements/reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
- b. primary education facilities, namely the expansion of the existing primary school that serves Horsmonden parish;
- c. secondary education provision;
- d. provision of additional allotments, amenity/natural green space, and improvements to children's and youth play space;
- e. library provision;
- f. new village hall at Horsmonden Village;
- g. other necessary mitigation measures, which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Allocation policies for Horsmonden parish

Land south of Brenchley Road and west of Fromandez Drive

5.480 This is an undeveloped site adjacent to the western boundary of the existing built-up area at Horsmonden, adjacent to and opposite some existing residential development. It is a grassed field with no existing buildings on the site.

5.481 The site area is 3.48 hectares.

5.482 The site is mostly adjoined by residential properties, fields, and woodland. The boundaries of the site consist of hedging, trees, and open chain link fencing. The boundary to the east is more open, adjacent to gardens and properties. There is a field gate in the north west corner of the site, adjacent to Brenchley Road.

5.483 There is a lack of pavement along the Brenchley Road to link into the centre of Horsmonden, which development proposals for the site are expected to address.

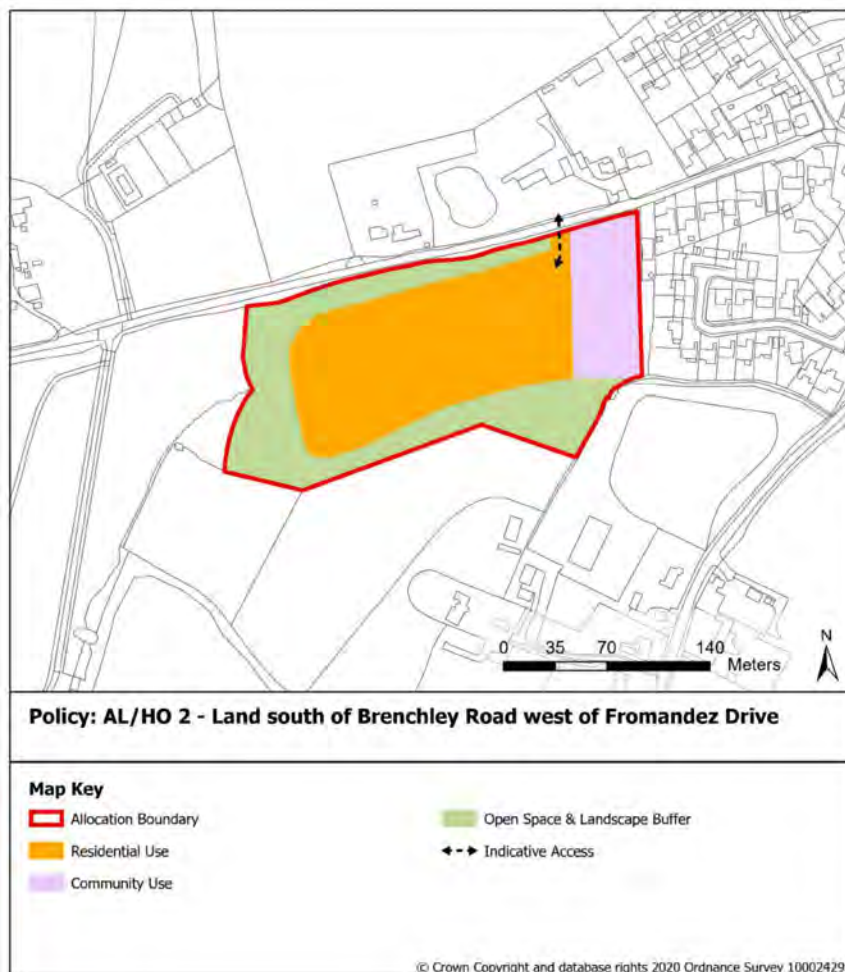
5.484 The site is adjacent to Shirrenden Woods, a Local Wildlife Site, and ancient woodland, and lies within a larger Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

5.485 There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity including Milestone Cottage immediately to the north. To the south west is Sprivers, a National Trust property and gardens (with restricted public access). Sprivers Wood, part of the National Trust estate and ancient woodland, forms the western boundary of the site. A north-south public right of way, WT346, passes through Sprivers Wood and connects with public rights of way to the north and south. Development proposals are expected to improve connections from the development site to WT346 either through the woodland, in discussion with the National Trust, or along Brenchley Road in discussion with Kent County Highways.

5.486 There is a dip towards the centre of the site. The site rises slightly to the south. Views into the site are mostly from adjacent residential properties to the east.

5.487 Part of the site has archaeological potential.

- 5.488** Although a greenfield site, its situation relatively close to the core of the village and its services, together with limited on-site constraints, suggest some development potential to contribute to development needs. Also, the site has a clear visual link to existing dwellings, while longer views are contained by trees beyond the site.
- 5.489** The landscape buffer required by the policy towards the west of the site provides a buffer to the ancient woodland and also to maintain a degree of open setting on this approach to the village, as well as not to extend new built form beyond the existing buildings on the edge of the village opposite. It also provides for a scale of development not out of keeping with its context.
- 5.490** In respect of the policy requirement for the provision of a pedestrian access and link from the site to connect to the wider footway network, it is necessary for the site promoter to deliver a scheme that provides a pedestrian access and link from the site to the satisfaction of Kent County Council, as the local highways authority, in order to provide infrastructure for active travel.
- 5.491** This site allocation will also deliver a new village hall and associated parking, reflecting the aspirations of Horsmonden Parish Council and discussed with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council during the preparation of the Local Plan. The proposed location of the hall, at the eastern end of the site, is considered to be the most suitable, being closest to the village centre and main areas of residential development. Proposals for the site are expected to provide land for the new village hall, which shall be transferred to Horsmonden Parish Council. A financial contribution may also be required, to be determined at the planning application stage.
- 5.492** Outline Planning Permission was recently approved for a new village hall and up to 68 dwellings (22/00296/OUT) on the site. This includes a Section 106 agreement for transfer of and financial contribution towards the village hall, in accordance with the above requirements.

Map 47 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/HO 2

Land south of Brenchley Road and west of Fromandez Drive

This site, as defined on the Horsmonden Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 70 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, a new village hall, and associated parking.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Provide a vehicular access from the site onto Brenchley Road;
2. The overall design of development, including vehicular access into the site (including the design of visibility splays), should reflect the location of this site within the rural approach into Horsmonden, details of which shall be informed by a highways assessment and landscape and visual impact assessment;
3. Development proposals shall include the provision of a pedestrian footway beyond the site eastwards to the junction with Furnace Lane. The proposals shall also include provision of safe crossing facilities on Brenchley Road;
4. Proposals shall include a site layout that includes a pedestrian link through the site which links with the western boundary adjacent to Sprivers Historic Park and Garden;

5. Residential development shall be located on the areas identified for residential use on the indicative site layout plan, with the provision of a village hall on the land indicated for community use on the indicative site layout plan;
6. The open space and landscape buffer indicated on the site layout plan shall include a buffer to ancient woodland on the western part of the site, and reinforcement of the southern landscape boundary;
7. Proposals shall, as far as possible, incorporate existing hedgerows on-site, with the layout and design of the development informed by an arboricultural survey;
8. Proposals for the site shall be informed by a heritage assessment including an assessment of the heritage significance of the grade II listed Milestone Cottages to the north of the site, the Horsmonden Conservation Area, the adjacent historic farmstead (Oasthanger), the historic park and garden of Sprivers (Kent County Council Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens), and Sprivers itself to the south, as a non-designated heritage asset. The assessment shall include the contribution of their settings towards that significance;
9. Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space;
10. A suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the land required for the provision of the new village hall and associated parking (shaded purple on Map 47) is transferred to the Parish Council prior to first occupation of the housing development, to be agreed at the planning application stage;
11. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/HO 1.

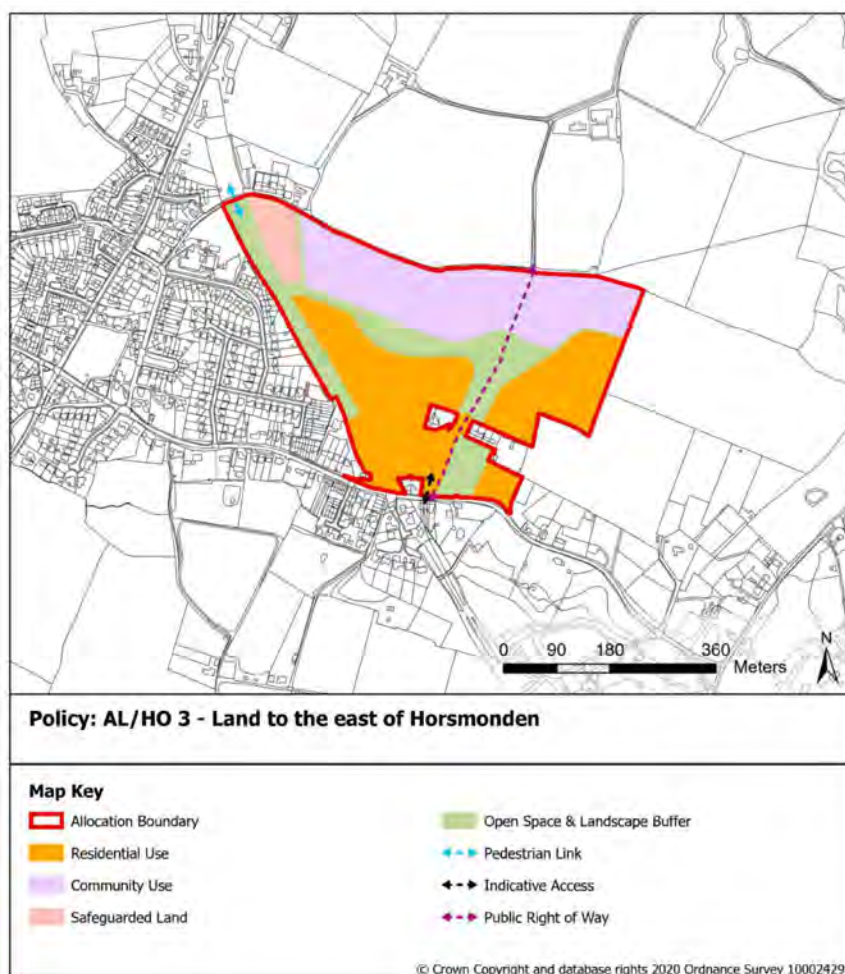
Land to the east of Horsmonden

- 5.493** This is a mainly undeveloped site adjacent to the eastern edge of the village. Part of the site is planted to orchard. There is some built development, including disused farm buildings (that have most recently been used for commercial uses), a car repair garage (that utilises former railway station buildings), a portion of the route of a disused (dismantled) railway line (part of the Hop Pickers Line), and an electricity sub-station.
- 5.494** The site area is 18.53 hectares.
- 5.495** The site is adjoined by residential properties, Horsmonden Primary School, fields, paddocks, and woodland. The site has boundaries with Goudhurst Road to the south and to the north with a track, Back Lane.
- 5.496** Site boundaries include trees and low fencing. There are trees in the northern part of the site that are protected by a TPO and this part of the site contains ancient woodland.
- 5.497** The topography of the site adjacent to Goudhurst Road is fairly flat, although it rises towards the north and west.
- 5.498** There are a number of existing access points into the site: into Old Station Garage (car repairs); into Bassetts Farm (an area adjacent to Goudhurst Road comprising disused farm buildings); and a farm track within the western part of the site serving

adjacent residential properties. Proposals for development will need to ensure that vehicular accesses into this part of the site accommodate any existing uses which continue to take access through the site.

- 5.499** To the south west of the site is a pair of Grade II listed cottages, known as Bassetts Cottages, which front onto Goudhurst Road. There are a number of listed buildings opposite the site on the southern side of Goudhurst Road. A terrace of cottages, New Bassetts Cottages (not listed, but non-designated heritage assets) are located 'in the middle' of the site but outside the site boundaries. It will be important that any development takes account of, and respects, the nearby listed buildings and the setting of New Bassetts Cottages; the area immediately fronting these cottages (within the site boundary) is allocated as open space.
- 5.500** Part of the site has archaeological potential.
- 5.501** The site's situation relatively close to the core of the village and its services, together with limited on-site constraints, suggest development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.502** There is an intermittent pedestrian footway from the site into the centre of Horsmonden and policy criterion (2) requires improvements to this footway link.
- 5.503** The northern, higher parts of the site to be used for community uses and not built form, would reduce the impact of development upon the wider rural area, including views from the areas of higher land to the south of the site outside of the developed area of the village, including distant views from Goudhurst.
- 5.504** Criterion (6) of Policy AL/HO 3 sets out the requirements that development proposals will need to meet with to ensure there is no adverse impact upon the setting of the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.505** The site area includes (within the central southern section) a collection of disused farm buildings known as Bassetts Farm, most recently used for commercial uses, adjacent to Goudhurst Road. Planning approval has been granted for redevelopment of this area for up to 30 dwellings (15/505340/OUT), with a subsequent approval, (19/03657/REM), for reserved matters for 20 dwellings. It is still appropriate to include this site in the wider allocation as these permissions have not been fully implemented.
- 5.506** As set out in Policy PSTR/HO 1, this site has been identified to be safeguarded for a future new health centre/doctors surgery to meet increased demand in the locality.
- 5.507** Kent County Council, as the local education authority, has identified a requirement for the expansion of Horsmonden Primary School by up to one form of entry, to provide for the Brenchley/Horsmonden/Lamberhurst area. To meet this requirement, the north western area of the site has been safeguarded for future school expansion (which could include built and/or non-built development). This area of land is considered to be well related to the existing school buildings.
- 5.508** Therefore, the site is regarded as having capacity for approximately 115-165 dwellings, as well as safeguarding land for future school expansion of Horsmonden Primary School and a new health centre/doctors surgery.

- 5.509** A Public Right of Way (PRoW 341) runs along the north-west boundary of the site; PRoW 340A runs north-south through the site. The policy requires links to be provided to these PRoWs and improvements to the existing routes within, and on, the boundary of the site.
- 5.510** The area of the site along which the Hop Pickers Line (disused railway line) runs will be improved to provide a walking and cycle route through the site that will provide a safe off-road route to serve the existing primary school site and the area safeguarded for expansion of the school. This would also provide a sustainable transport link through the village of Horsmonden and contribute towards the long-term aspiration to create a sustainable cycle route along the Hop Pickers Line (policy criterion 5).

Map 48 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/HO 3

Land to the east of Horsmonden

This site, as defined on the Horsmonden Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 115-165 dwellings, safeguarding of land for future expansion of Horsmonden Primary School, new health centre/doctors surgery, and a community orchard, allotments and open space.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. The number and location of vehicular accesses to be informed by a highways assessment;
2. Provision of pedestrian links into the village centre, including improvement of the footway located on the north side of Goudhurst Road;
3. Provision of link to, and preserve amenity of, Public Rights of Way WT340a and WT341, as shown on the site layout plan;
4. Built development shall be located on the areas identified for residential and which shall include the doctors surgery use on the site layout plan, with the exact location of the surgery to be determined having regard to accessibility to the main village and services, and landscape impact;
5. No built development on the route of the Hop Pickers Line, as shown on the site layout plan, unless it can be demonstrated that the route can be maintained;
6. The layout and design of the scheme to give full consideration to any impact upon the setting of the High Weald National Landscape and to provide a scheme that has been fully informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment in order to provide development proposals that respond positively to views out of the High Weald National Landscape;
7. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment, with the existing hedgerows to the Bassets Farm development (planning approvals 15/505340/OUT and 19/03657/REM) to be retained and buffered to protect a dormice habitat;
8. Built development to be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment;
9. The provision of an archaeological assessment as part of any planning application;
10. The scheme to take account of, and respect, the setting of New Bassetts cottages;
11. The scheme to take account of, and respect, the character and appearance of nearby listed buildings;
12. Land to the north of the site for future school expansion, as shown on the site layout plan, to be safeguarded, with details provided as to how this land would be managed in any intervening period of time between development of other parts of the site and before being required for school expansion;
13. Provide on-site amenity/natural green space and children's and youth play space, and a community orchard with allotments that will be managed and maintained for this use;
14. A suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of the new health centre/doctors surgery is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage;
15. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/HO 1.

Lamberhurst

Overview

- 5.511** The parish of Lamberhurst is situated within the central part of the borough between Royal Tunbridge Wells and Goudhurst, and the village of Lamberhurst is the only settlement of any size, although it is comprised of two separate built areas; Lamberhurst village and The Down. The majority of the parish is rural in character, comprising predominantly Wooded Farmland except for a strip of Fruit Belt along the northern boundary. The River Teise and its valley runs east-west through the parish, the river cutting through the built-up area of Lamberhurst village. All of the parish is located within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.512** The A21 runs north-west to south-east through the parish and bypasses the eastern edge of the main settlement of Lamberhurst. The B2162 runs north (to the A21) to south (to Wadhurst, East Sussex) through the parish and is intersected by the B2169, which runs east (to Bells Yew Green, East Sussex) to the west (to the A21). There are a number of other minor roads throughout the parish, which are designated as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998). The closest train station for Lamberhurst is Frant station located at Bells Yew Green (4.7 miles to the west), with Wadhurst station located five miles to the south west. There is a bus service serving Lamberhurst linking it to both Royal Tunbridge Wells and Wadhurst.
- 5.513** There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 running east-west along the course of the River Teise, including through the built-up area of Lamberhurst. There are significant areas of ancient woodland, areas of archaeological potential, historic parks and gardens (The Owl House, Scotney Castle estate), and ecological designations (SSSIs at Scotney Castle estate and Brookland Wood; Local Wildlife Sites at Chingley Wood, The Down, Lamberhurst, various Woods and Pasture near River Teise, Bayham Woods, Old Swan Farm) across the parish.
- 5.514** There is a large linear conservation area within Lamberhurst village, which also includes The Down at its southern edge. Lamberhurst village has one local shop incorporating a post office and several public houses. There is a primary school as well as a doctors surgery.
- 5.515** In terms of growth potential, one site has been identified. This is for Land to the west of Spray Hill, as shown on Inset Map 49. The full requirements for development of this site are set out in the subsequent site allocation Policy AL/LA 1.
- 5.516** The main built-up areas of both the core village and the existing development South East of the Down (The Slade) and East of the Down (Sand Road/B2169 and Down Avenue) are defined by the LBDs. These both provide for development, including potential windfall sites where they are brought forward in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing, as well as protecting the rural settings of both areas in accordance with Policy STR 1: The Development Strategy.

- 5.517** The NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board confirms that it is expected that contributions will be required towards Lamberhurst Surgery (improvements/reconfiguration, etc.) to mitigate the impact of the development.
- 5.518** The IDP identifies requirements for improvements to Chequers Field and recreation ground to provide youth provision and allotments, as well as improvements to amenity green space to provide natural play and allotments.
- 5.519** Local policies for landscape and the environment, community and wellbeing, housing, business and employment, design, and traffic and transport matters are included in the made Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan. The made Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan does not include any site allocation policies.
- 5.520** Local policies are also provided in the ‘made’ Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 6 October 2021) that forms part of the borough’s development plan in relation to Lamberhurst parish. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must be used in the assessment of planning applications in the area.. The Neighbourhood Plan also includes a number of specific goals and reference to a list of projects that would potentially be provided through developer contributions.

The Strategy for Lamberhurst parish

Policy PSTR/LA 1

The Strategy for Lamberhurst parish

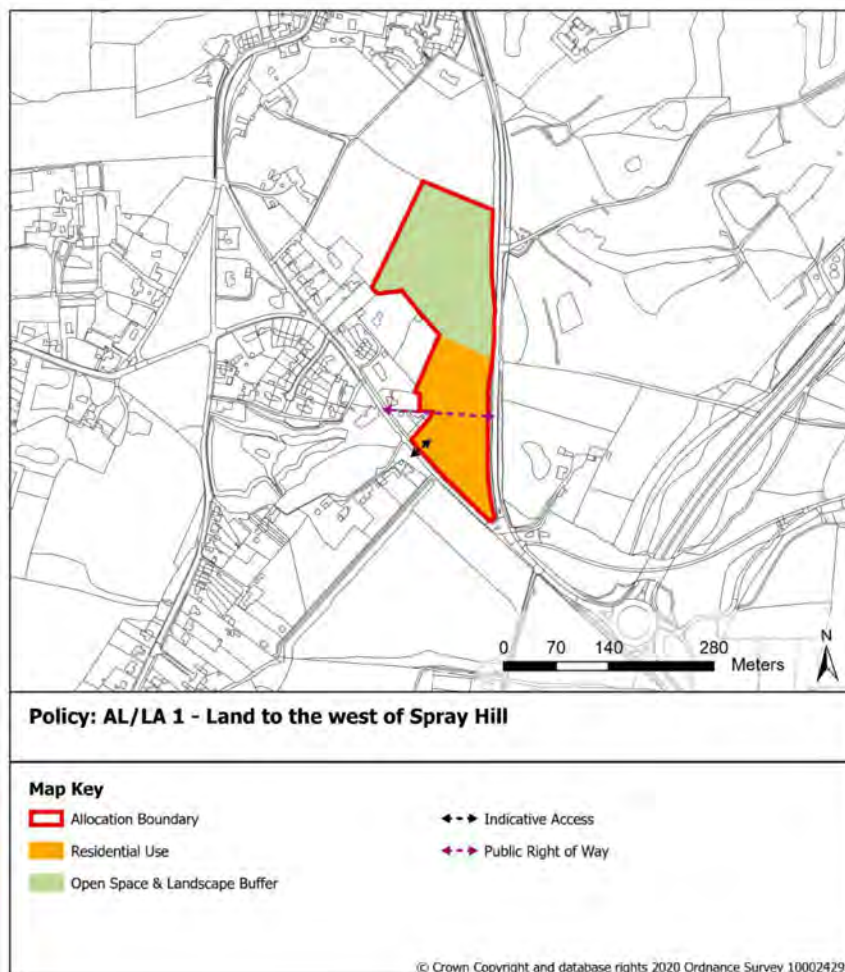
The development strategy for Lamberhurst parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Lamberhurst village, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 28) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Build approximately 25-30 new dwellings (of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing) on land at Spray Hill allocated under the subsequent site allocation policy;
3. Retain the public car park at The Broadway, Lamberhurst and land adjacent to the Brown Trout, Lamberhurst, as defined on the Policies Map;
4. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. medical facilities that cover Lamberhurst parish (to be used towards improvements/reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
 - b. provision of additional allotments, amenity/natural green space and youth play space;
 - c. improvements to sports provision in Lamberhurst;
 - d. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind including potentially those identified or referenced in the Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan.

Allocation policies for Lamberhurst parish

Land to the west of Spray Hill

- 5.521** The site comprises mostly undeveloped land, with a dwelling and buildings previously used as a commercial cattery at its southern end. This commercial use has now ceased. Although somewhat detached from Lamberhurst, it adjoins the existing built development at The Down. The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.522** The overall site area is approximately 4.1 hectares.
- 5.523** Adjoining uses are mostly residential and fields, with the Lamberhurst Primary School to the north west. Spray Hill (formerly the main A21 road running north-south through Lamberhurst, but now superseded by a bypass to the east) runs along the eastern boundary of the site, with embankments and tree cover. The boundary along the north-western edge of the site includes overgrown shrubbery. Sand Road (the B2169) runs along the southern boundary of the site.
- 5.524** There is an existing vehicular access into the south of the site from Sand Road (the B2169). A Public Right of Way crosses the site.
- 5.525** The site slopes upwards to the south. It is outside, but adjacent to, the Lamberhurst The Down Conservation Area and in close proximity to listed buildings.
- 5.526** As a mixed greenfield and brownfield site, its situation relatively close to the core of the village and its services, together with limited on-site constraints, suggest some development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.527** The boundary on the site layout plan that delineates between built development to the south and a landscape buffer to the north has been drawn to reflect a historical boundary and established hedgerow boundaries to the east and west of the site. Moreover, it retains the more treed area to the north of the site. This buffer and adjacent open land will ensure that the undeveloped gap between built development at the village of Lamberhurst and at existing development South East of the Down (The Slade) and East of the Down (Sand Road/B2169 and Down Avenue) is retained. Southern Water's underground infrastructure follows the eastern boundary of the site and therefore the layout and design of the scheme should take account of this infrastructure.
- 5.528** Scotney Castle, a National Trust property, is located to the east of the site. Any development should recognise the site's proximity to the relevant impact risk zone for Scotney Castle SSSI and ensure any necessary mitigation. Any development on this site should provide connections and improvements to the existing PROW and footway network, going north across the landscape buffer to PROW WT387, going south eastwards towards Spray Hill linking to WT380 and going west and south westwards to Sand Road linking to PROW WT352, WT390 and WT389.
- 5.529** The site has planning permission (22/01882/FULL) for the erection of 26 dwellings (one replacement and 25 new dwellings), but as this has not yet been implemented, an allocation is appropriate.

Map 49 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/LA 1

Land to the west of Spray Hill

This site, as defined on the Lamberhurst Policies Map, is allocated for approximately 25-30 residential dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing. The northern area is to be retained as a landscape buffer to help prevent coalescence between the main settlement of Lamberhurst and The Down and provide for landscape and ecological mitigation for built development on the other part of the allocation.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Residential development shall be located on the southern part of the site only, on land indicated as residential use, as shown indicatively on the site layout plan;
2. The development should have a single point of vehicular access onto Sand Road, to be informed by a transport assessment;
3. Provision of a pedestrian footway from the site westwards along Sand Road to link into the wider footway network (PROW WT352, WT390 and WT389) and provision of a pedestrian footway from the site eastwards along Sand Road to link with the existing pedestrian refuge on Spray Hill and link to PROW WT380 on the Scotney Castle Estate or such alternative link to be provided within the site to achieve the same objective;

4. Provide safe pedestrian (and cycle) linkages from Public Right of Way WT388 to the north of the site across the landscape buffer connecting with PROW WT387;
5. The development to be sensitively designed in relation to the site's location on the edge of the settlement, nearby heritage assets, and the location of the PROW that runs through the site and provides a suitable edge to the settlement, including through the layout and design of the scheme being informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment and heritage assessment;
6. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on the site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and landscape and visual impact assessment;
7. This site lies within, or very close to, the relevant impact risk zone for Scotney Castle SSSI, and so an assessment of potential adverse effects on the SSSI as a result of the development will be required as part of any application and, if required, the proposal shall include adequate mitigation measures to be integrated into the development, both during construction and on completion, to the satisfaction of Natural England to ensure no adverse effects on the SSSI as a result of the proposed development;
8. Regard to be given to the Groundwater Source Protection Zone affecting the site, in consultation with the Environment Agency;
9. Provision shall be made for on-site amenity/natural green space;
10. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/LA 1.

Pembury

Overview

- 5.530** The parish of Pembury is located towards the western side of the borough, to the east of Royal Tunbridge Wells, to the south west of Paddock Wood, and to the south west of the parish of Capel. The most southerly tip of the boundary of the parish abuts the neighbouring authority of Wealden District Council, in East Sussex.
- 5.531** Pembury is the principal settlement in the parish and includes the areas of Lower Green, Henwood Green, and Romford.
- 5.532** Pembury is located approximately 2.8 miles from Matfield to the east and approximately 3.4 miles from Royal Tunbridge Wells to the south west, although edge to edge is located much closer than this. It is also approximately five miles from Southborough to the north west. The nearest rail stations are at High Brooms and Royal Tunbridge Wells, both approximately 3.5 miles from Pembury. Paddock Wood railway station is approximately 4.7 miles from the village. All are mainline railway stations. There are regular bus services that currently run to destinations including Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood, and Maidstone. Pembury has access to a range of key services, including local shops, public houses/restaurants, places of worship, primary schools, and a doctors surgery. The parish includes the Hospice in the Weald located on the northern edge of the settlement, as well as the main Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury, located towards the western side of the parish, close to the strategic highway network and west of Pembury village.
- 5.533** The A21 major trunk road managed by National Highways runs through the parish, towards the south in a roughly east-west direction. The A228 bypasses Pembury village to the west. Some roads are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998).
- 5.534** There are extensive areas of ancient woodland in the parish, which is mostly located within the High Weald National Landscape. The National Landscape boundary mostly excludes land that forms the core of the settlement, with a small overlap in places.
- 5.535** Small parts of the parish, including land in the locality of the Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury, are outside both the defined settlement boundary and National Landscape.
- 5.536** With the exclusion of land at the settlement of Pembury, the parish is within the Green Belt. A small parcel of land (including a car park), part of a Tesco supermarket at Woodsgate Corner, is not part of the Green Belt, although this is in the National Landscape.
- 5.537** The parish mostly forms part of the Pembury/Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area, with areas to the south/south east of the parish being part of the Bayhall Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area and Bayham Open Farmland. Part of the parish, to the east, forms part of the Matfield and Brenchley Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area.

- 5.538** There are several Local Wildlife Sites in the parish, including Gregg's Wood and Marshley Harbour Wood, Tunbridge Wells, Pembury Walks, Snipe Wood, and Bayham Woods.
- 5.539** The parish has archaeological potential and a large area through the middle of the parish, including Pembury village, is a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.
- 5.540** The southern part of Pembury village is a designated conservation area, which includes a number of listed buildings. There is also a number of historic farmsteads across the parish.
- 5.541** There are several Public Rights of Way that run through the parish, including within and around Pembury village itself. National Cycle Route (Sustrans) 18 from Canterbury to Royal Tunbridge Wells (using existing highways) runs through the parish, north of the A21. There are also small pockets within the parish where high road noise is recorded, particularly around Kipping's Cross along the A21 to the east of Pembury village.
- 5.542** There are also areas of potential contaminated land (50 metre buffer) in the parish, which, where relevant, will be a consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.543** In terms of growth potential, seven sites have been identified as having residential development potential to contribute to meeting growth needs of the borough.
- 5.544** There are three identified sites suitable for residential allocation located immediately adjacent to the southern settlement edge and north of the A21 corridor. These are set out in subsequent site allocation Policies AL/PE 1, AL/PE 2, and AL/PE 3. Site allocation Policy AL/PE 1 also includes provision of an area of car parking to be available for use by the adjacent village hall and the wider public. Likewise, Policy AL/PE 2 includes land to facilitate the expansion of the adjacent cemetery, also a wider community benefit. There are opportunities on all three sites to provide a new east-west cycle link connecting with the existing cycle network, and opportunities for developer contributions to facilitate an improved cycle connection between Pembury and Hawkenbury, on the edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells, including an upgrade to bridleway along parts of the route (Public Rights of Way numbers WT240, which runs along Chalket Lane and WB43).
- 5.545** Policies AL/PE 4A and AL/PE 4B relate to sites adjacent to the Hospice in the Weald on the northern edge of Pembury village. AL/PE 4A is a residential allocation, with AL/PE 4B being land to enable expansion of the Hospice in the Weald, which will also be of benefit to the wider community and borough as a whole.
- 5.546** Policy AL/PE 6 is allocated for the provision of specialist housing for older people and others with care needs and/or a care home, reflecting a synergy with existing care homes in the area and proximity to the main Tunbridge Wells Hospital.
- 5.547** Policy AL/PE 7 allocates land for the provision of a 69-suite extra care assisted living unit (Use Class C2). This reflects a recent planning consent on the site (23/03419/FULL), for the erection of an assisted living unit (use C2 with extra care provision) comprising of 69 two-bedroom suites.

- 5.548** Finally, Policy AL/PE 8 is allocated for development of a 76-bedspace care home, reflecting an existing planning consent.
- 5.549** Full requirements for development of these sites is set out in the subsequent site allocation Policies AL/PE 1 to AL/PE 4A and AL/PE 4B inclusive, and policies AL/PE 6 - AL/PE 8 inclusive.
- 5.550** As identified above, the main Tunbridge Wells Hospital is located in the parish. The hospital is considered to be a key strategic element in delivering current and future health provision for West Kent. The Council will be supportive of development proposals either on land at the hospital, or in the vicinity of the hospital site, that have a direct functional link with the hospital or any emergency services associated with it. This could include, for example, uses that involve significant levels of hospital staff working at the site to provide, for example, rehabilitation or training, or a 'blue light emergency services hub'. This also includes key worker housing for hospital and/or emergency service staff; hospital expansion; clinical facilities; and medical research/education, including housing for students. Potential additional hospital parking and for public transport interchange facilities would also be considered. This includes land forming part of the Green Belt: development will need to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' as part of any planning application, which clearly outweigh potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal.
- 5.551** For Pembury parish, the IDP shows deficiencies in health provision and open space, sport and recreation provision. Highway mitigation measures are identified along with enhancement and improvements to cycle routes and cycle corridors. Contributions towards education provision and library provision are also identified by the IDP. Where applicable, future development in the parish during the plan period will be expected to contribute to these provisions to help mitigate impact from future development.
- 5.552** In addition, Pembury Parish Council has identified the need for highway improvements around Pembury village, namely speed reduction and improvements to the Woodsgate traffic lights. The Parish Council has also identified a wish to improve allotments along with recreation provision (play equipment and drainage to playing pitches). During the plan period there is also a need to extend the burial ground and aspirations to provide a remembrance garden in the church burial ground, and a quiet garden. Contributions towards the implementation of such measures will be considered when assessing relevant planning applications.
- 5.553** Pembury Parish Council has produced a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, which was 'made' by the Borough Council on the 4 October 2023.

The Strategy for Pembury parish

Policy PSTR/PE 1

The Strategy for Pembury parish

The development strategy for Pembury parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Pembury village as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 29) as a framework for new development over the plan period, incorporating the allocation of sites AL/PE 1-AL/PE 4A and AL/PE 4B inclusive, AL/PE 6 and AL/PE 7 into the Limits to Built Development;
2. Build approximately 371-399 new dwellings, of which 74 have existing planning permission*, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, on Policies AL/PE 1-AL/PE 4A inclusive and 30 percent shall be affordable housing on Policy AL/PE 6**) as allocated under the subsequent site allocation policies;
3. Seek proportionate developer contributions, either in kind (normally the provision of land) and/or financial, in respect of residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. necessary highway and junction improvements and mitigation measures, including improvements to Pembury Road:
 - i. speed reduction;
 - ii. improvements to the crossroads at Woodsgate Corner;
 - iii. improvement works to the access of the A21 roundabout, southbound exit;
 - iv. improved and enhanced pedestrian and cycle links in Pembury village;
 - v. contributions to be used towards improvements to active travel infrastructure and measures, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road;
 - b. improvements and enhancement to cycle routes and cycle corridors;
 - c. primary and secondary education provision;
 - d. health and medical provision;
 - e. improvements and enhancements to sports and recreation provision, including children's and youth play space;
 - f. recreation and sports provision at Hawkenbury (site allocation Policy AL/RTW 19);
 - g. allotments;
 - h. community learning facilities;
 - i. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

**The capacity in the Strategic Policy includes discounting for C2.*

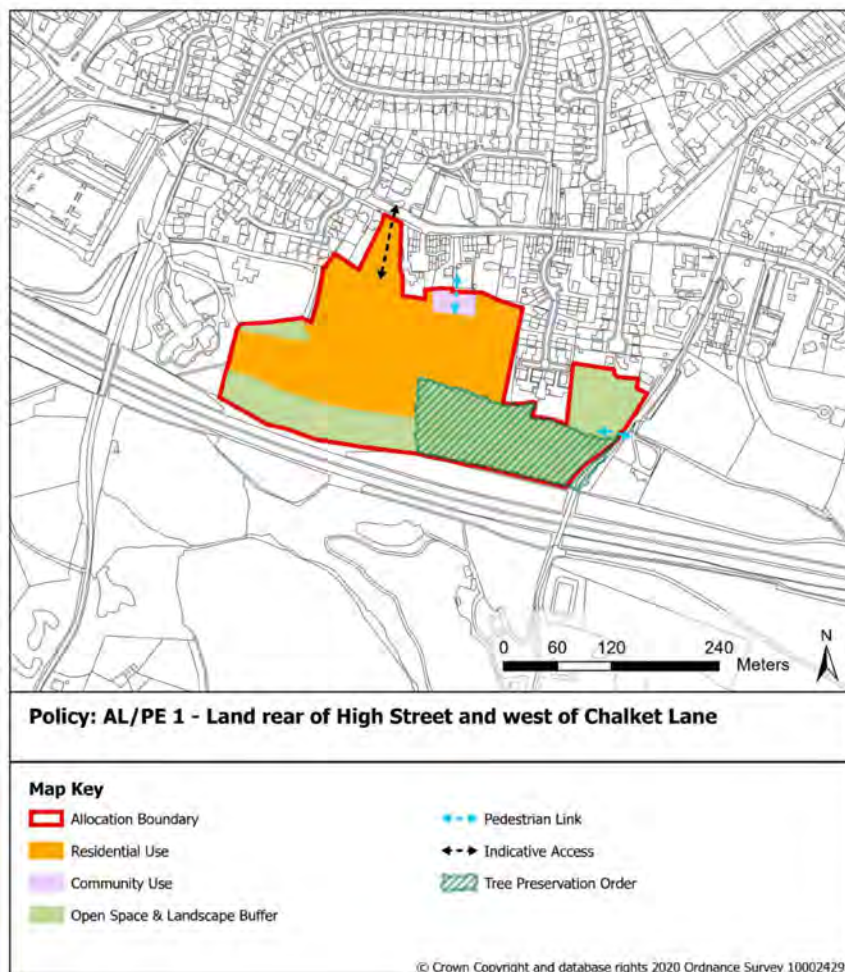
*** If the proposal on site allocation AL/PE 6 is deemed to be Use Class C3 residential.*

Allocation policies for Pembury parish

Land rear of High Street and west of Chalket Lane

- 5.554** The site is mostly an undeveloped greenfield site that measures some 6.67 hectares gross. It includes a single residential property (Dayspring Cottage, 55 High Street) and its curtilage, which fronts onto Pembury High Street. There are some minor structures located close to the northern boundary of the site. The site adjoins existing residential properties along its frontage with Pembury High Street as well as Pembury Village Hall, which lies immediately north of the site. Penns Yard and Camden Avenue, both residential, lie north of the site, while the eastern boundary of the site adjoins Chalket Lane, a private road.
- 5.555** Public Right of Way WT240 runs along Chalket Lane, with connections to a wider Public Rights of Way network, including bridleways which link Pembury with the eastern side of Royal Tunbridge Wells. National Cycle Route (Sustrans) 18 from Canterbury to Royal Tunbridge Wells (using existing highways) runs along Hastings Road on the northern-most edge of the site. There are likely to be opportunities for this site, along with Policies AL/PE 2 and AL/PE 3, to upgrade the existing footpath/cyclepath network, including the establishment of a bridleway link with PRow WB43 by upgrading WT240 which runs along Chalket Lane.
- 5.556** The site adjoins the settlement edge of Pembury, with Dayspring Cottage forming part of the settlement. Cornford House/Cornford Court, a nursing home, lies next to the south western boundary of the site. The A21 Pembury bypass, part of the trunk road network managed by National Highways, lies immediately south of the site, screened by an existing tree belt that runs along the southern boundary of the site.
- 5.557** The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.558** With the exclusion of Dayspring Cottage and its curtilage, the site was previously within the Green Belt. Most of the site has been released from the Green Belt, with part of the site, that along the east side, being retained as Green Belt. The Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.559** The site forms part of the Pembury/Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area and is located adjacent to site allocation Policy AL/PE 2 Land at Hubble's Farm and south of Hastings Road. The topography of the site has a gentle rise northwards, reflective of the topography of the wider landscape generally. There is a TPO relating to several trees forming the south east corner of the site. It is expected that these trees, along with the tree belt along the southern edge of the site, will be retained through development of the site, along with the minimal loss of other trees and hedgerow that currently form boundaries of the site.
- 5.560** The site lies part adjacent to the Pembury Conservation Area and regard to that shall be given in development of the site. Small areas of the site may be affected by nearby buffers of potentially contaminated land, regard to which shall also be given. Low level archaeology (Palaeolithic potential and general background archaeology) is anticipated, which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval.

- 5.561** There is currently a lack of a vehicular access to the site other than that which serves the existing property at Dayspring Cottage and a narrow access that runs along the western side of the adjacent village hall. Vehicular access to the site should be informed by a transport assessment. Pockets of high road noise have been recorded along the A21, south of the site. This will also be a consideration in future development proposals for the site.
- 5.562** The location of the site close to the core of the village and its services and adjacent to, and including, part of the existing village means that it would form a logical extension to the settlement of Pembury to contribute to meeting development needs.
- 5.563** At a density appropriate to the location, it is anticipated that some 50-60 dwellings will be provided, of which some 40% (20-24 units) should be affordable housing. The site is also expected to deliver a car parking area available for use by users of the adjacent village hall and the public generally, as indicated on the site layout plan, providing a significant tangible public benefit for the village, which has formed part of the exceptional circumstances for the Green Belt release.
- 5.564** Along with site allocation Policies AL/PE 2 and AL/PE 3, development of the site is expected to provide an east-west cycle link, linking with the existing, wider cycle network, and provide developer contributions towards delivery of an improved cycle link between Pembury and Hawkenbury, on the edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells, including an upgrade to bridleway along parts of the route (Public Rights of Way numbers WT240, which runs along Chalket Lane, and WB43).

Map 50 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/PE 1

Land rear of High Street and west of Chalket Lane

This site, as defined on the Pembury Policies Map, is allocated for a mixed use scheme. It shall provide residential development providing approximately 50-60 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, and additional parking for the adjacent village hall and the public.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access shall be taken from Pembury High Street, the precise location of which shall be informed by a transport assessment;
2. The layout and design of the development shall be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment (to include details of height parameters and wireframe visualisations from a selected number of key viewpoints) that takes full account of the National Landscape location, and heritage assessment;
3. There shall be additional parking provision of approximately 30 spaces within the design of the scheme, to serve the adjacent village hall and the wider public, the area for which is shown indicatively on the site layout plan. Vehicular access to this shall be from within the development site itself and proposals shall include a

- pedestrian link from the car parking provision to the north connecting with the village hall, as indicated on the site layout plan;
4. The design and layout of the scheme shall provide for a segregated east-west cycle route, connecting with the adjacent site allocation Policies AL/PE 2 and nearby AL/PE 3 and with the existing cycleway network, including the A264 Pembury Road cycle route into Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre;
 5. Proposals shall make financial contributions towards the delivery of a cycle route link from the southern edge of the settlement of Pembury, running south over the A21 to link with the east side of Royal Tunbridge Wells at Hawkenbury (to be delivered by Kent County Council). This shall include an upgrade along parts of the route to bridleway (Public Rights of Way numbers WT240, which runs along Chalket Lane, and WB43) as a way of ensuring active travel and enhancing access to the Green Belt;
 6. The layout of the scheme shall include a landscape buffer of approximately 40m deep adjacent to the A21 in addition to the existing vegetation along the A21, as shown indicatively on the site layout plan;
 7. Proposals shall include measures to mitigate the impact of noise from the adjacent A21 on occupants of the proposed development, which, as above, shall include a site layout that avoids built development along the southern edge of the site adjacent to the A21 and any necessary noise attenuation;
 8. Proposals shall as far as possible incorporate existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, and protect those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey;
 9. Any play space planned for within the scheme shall be sited towards the northern area of the site near the settlement edge and community facilities/village hall;
 10. A suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure that the provision of the additional parking for the adjacent village hall and the public is tied to the delivery and occupation of the housing. Proposals for development shall be accompanied by details of how and when the parking will be provided along with proposals for its future maintenance and management;
 11. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PE 1, including contributions to be used towards A264 (Pembury Road) corridor improvements with a view to improving sustainable and active travel infrastructure, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road.

Land at Hubbles Farm and south of Hastings Road

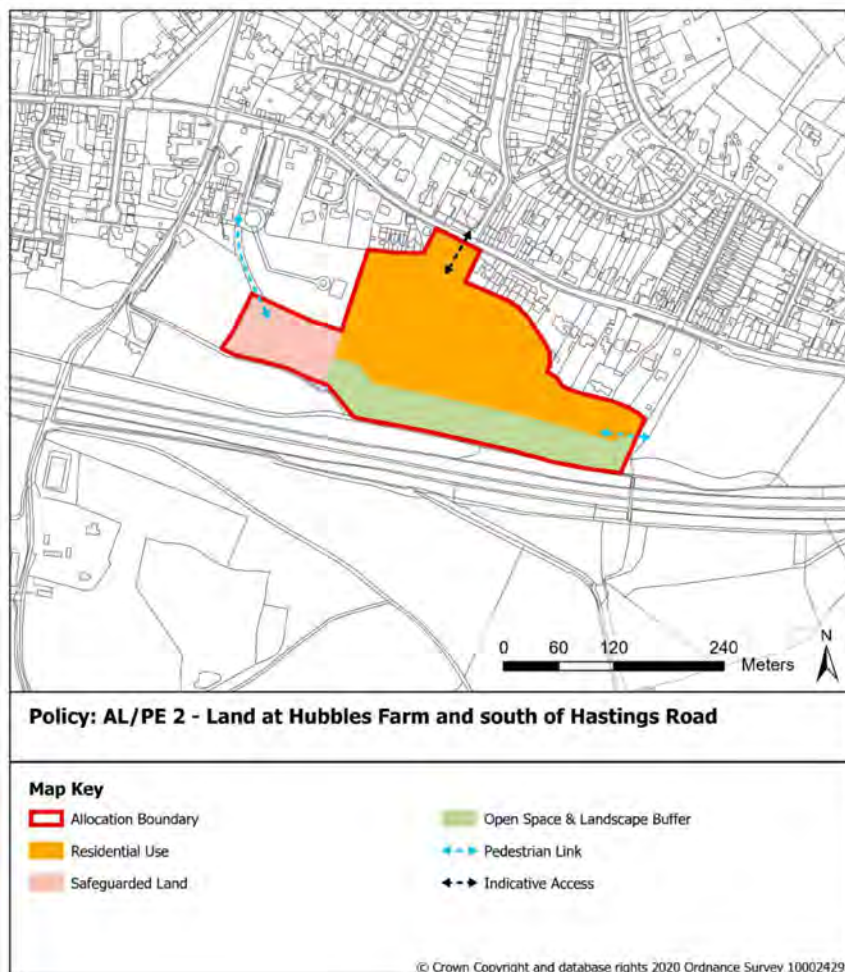
- 5.565** The site is mostly an undeveloped greenfield site that measures some 5.49 hectares gross. It includes three residential properties; 30, 30A, and 32 Hastings Road, and their curtilages and built development associated with Hubbles Farm Equestrian Centre. These front onto Hastings Road from where there is existing vehicular access. The existing vehicular access to Hubbles Farm is located opposite the junction with Belfield Road. A transport assessment will be needed to support proposals for the site, to inform the vehicular access to the site, including visibility splays and any mitigation that might be required. There is potential for this access

to be from the existing access to the site; however, this will need to be informed by the transport assessment. Due to site topography and extent of trees, a detailed topographical survey and tree survey should also be submitted.

- 5.566** The site adjoins existing residential properties located to the north of the site along Hastings Road, and to the west the site is adjoined by a cricket pitch and Pembury Cemetery, associated with the Upper Church of St Peter located adjacent to the cemetery to the north. There is the opportunity through allocation of this site to safeguard an area of the site to provide for future expansion of the cemetery during the plan period. Discussions with Pembury Parish Council indicate that there is less than 15 years left of burial plots at the existing cemetery site, based on historic burial rates. There is also an ageing population in the parish, arising in part from expansion of the number of beds at care homes within Pembury village, including at Cornford Court, and a new care home approved at Owlsnest, which both have yet to be built out. Cornford Court and Owlsnest are subject to site allocation Policies AL/PE 7 and AL/PE 8 respectively.
- 5.567** Public Right of Way WT239A runs along the southern boundary of the site and WT237 along the eastern boundary. Both connect to the wider Public Rights of Way network, including bridleways which link Pembury with the eastern side of Royal Tunbridge Wells. National Cycle Route (Sustrans) 18 from Canterbury to Royal Tunbridge Wells (using existing highways) runs along Hastings Road on the northern-most edge of the site. There are opportunities for this site, along with Policies AL/PE 1 and AL/PE 3, to upgrade the existing footpath/cyclepath network, including the establishment of a bridleway link, by upgrading parts of Public Rights of Way WT240, which runs along Chalket Lane, and WB43.
- 5.568** The site largely adjoins the settlement edge of Pembury. Numbers 30, 30A, and 32 Hastings Road, which form part of the site, lie mostly within the established settlement. To the east, the site is adjoined by what is currently a greenfield site separated by strong hedgerow/trees, subject to site allocation Policy AL/PE 3 (Land north of the A21, south and west of Hastings Road). The A21 Pembury bypass, part of the strategic road network, lies immediately south of the site, screened by an existing tree belt that runs along the southern boundary of the site. There is a small area of ancient woodland buffer (associated with a TPO located outside of the eastern boundary of the site) in the bottom south-east corner of the site. It is expected that these trees will be retained through development of the site, along with the minimal loss of other trees and hedgerow that currently form boundaries of the site.
- 5.569** The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape, with the exclusion of the rear curtilage of 32 Hastings Road, and cutting through the curtilages of the dwellings at 30 and 30A Hastings Road.
- 5.570** In respect of this site, the boundary of the Green Belt previously corresponded to that of the National Landscape as above. The site was released from the Green Belt, with the exclusion of the western side of the site, which is to be safeguarded

for cemetery expansion. The Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.

- 5.571** The site forms part of the Pembury/Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area and is located adjacent to site allocation Policies AL/PE 1 Land rear of High Street and west of Chalket Lane and AL/PE 3 Land north of the A21, south and west of Hastings Road. The topography of the site rises to the south, with the topography of the wider landscape reducing beyond the site. The site lies partly within, and adjacent to, the Pembury Conservation Area; number 30 Hastings Road, part of the allocation site, is located within the conservation area, the boundary of which abuts, and adjacent to number 30A Hastings Road. Number 30 Hastings Road is a non-designated heritage asset. Regard to these heritage assets shall be given in development of the site.
- 5.572** The location of the site adjacent to, and including part of, the existing village means that it would form a logical extension to the settlement. It is close to the core of the settlement and its services, which suggests some development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.573** At a density appropriate to the location, it is anticipated that approximately 80 dwellings will be provided, of which some 40% (approximately 32 units) should be affordable housing. The site is also expected to provide an extension to the existing Pembury Cemetery, as indicated on the site layout plan as safeguarded land, providing a significant tangible public benefit for the village, which has formed part of the exceptional circumstances for the Green Belt release.
- 5.574** Along with site allocations at Policies AL/PE 1 and AL/PE 3, development of the site is expected to provide an east-west cycle link, linking with the existing wider cycle network, and provide developer contributions towards delivery of an improved cycle link between Pembury and Hawkenbury, on the edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells, including an upgrade to bridleway along parts of the route (Public Rights of Way numbers WT240, which runs along Chalket Lane and WB43).
- 5.575** Pockets of high road noise have been recorded along the A21 south of the site. The northern edge of the site forms part of a Groundwater Protection Zone. These will be considerations in future development proposals for the site.
- 5.576** Low level archaeology (Paleolithic potential, general background archaeology, and an historic pathway running south from Pembury, along with the historic core of the conservation area) is anticipated, which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval.

Map 51 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/PE 2

Land at Hubbles Farm and south of Hastings Road

This site, as defined on the Pembury Policies Map, is allocated for a mixed use scheme. This shall provide residential development providing approximately 80 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing, and an extension of the Pembury Cemetery on land shown safeguarded on the site layout plan.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. A single point of vehicular access is to be provided onto Hastings Road, to be informed by a transport assessment and detailed topographical and tree survey;
2. The layout and design of the development shall be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment (to include details of heights parameters and wireframe visualisations from a selected number of key viewpoints) that takes full account of the National Landscape location, and heritage assessment;
3. The proposed development shall not include any built development on land located south of the existing Pembury Cemetery, as shown pink on Map 51. This land may be used for recreational purposes in the interim (but its availability shall not count

towards the open space that is required to serve the residential development on the allocated site);

4. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey, and retain and improve existing trees and hedgerows within the site;
5. The layout of the scheme shall include a landscape buffer of approximately 40m deep adjacent to the A21 in addition to the existing vegetation along the A21, as shown indicatively on the site layout plan;
6. The design and layout of the scheme shall provide for a segregated east-west cycle route, connecting with the adjacent site allocation Policies AL/PE 1 and AL/PE 3 and with the existing cycle way network, including the A264 Pembury Road cycle route into Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre;
7. Proposals shall make financial contributions towards the delivery of a cycle route link from the southern edge of Pembury village, running south over the A21 to link with the east side of Royal Tunbridge Wells at Hawkenbury (to be delivered by Kent County Council). This shall include an upgrade along parts of the route to bridleway (Public Rights of Way numbers WT240, which runs along Chalket Lane, and WB43) as a way of ensuring active travel and enhancing access to the Green Belt;
8. Proposals shall include measures to mitigate the impact of noise from the adjacent A21 on occupants of the proposed development, which, as above, shall include a site layout that avoids built development along the southern edge of the site adjacent to the A21 and any necessary noise attenuation;
9. Regard shall be given to the Groundwater Source Protection Zone affecting the site, in consultation with the Environment Agency;
10. Prior to the grant of planning permission, a suitable legal mechanism shall be put in place to ensure the transfer of the safeguarded land for expansion of Pembury Cemetery to Pembury Parish Council, and that this is tied to the delivery of the housing, at a suitable stage of the development, to be agreed at the planning application stage;
11. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PE 1, including contributions to be used towards improvements to active travel infrastructure and measures, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road.

Land north of the A21, south and west of Hastings Road

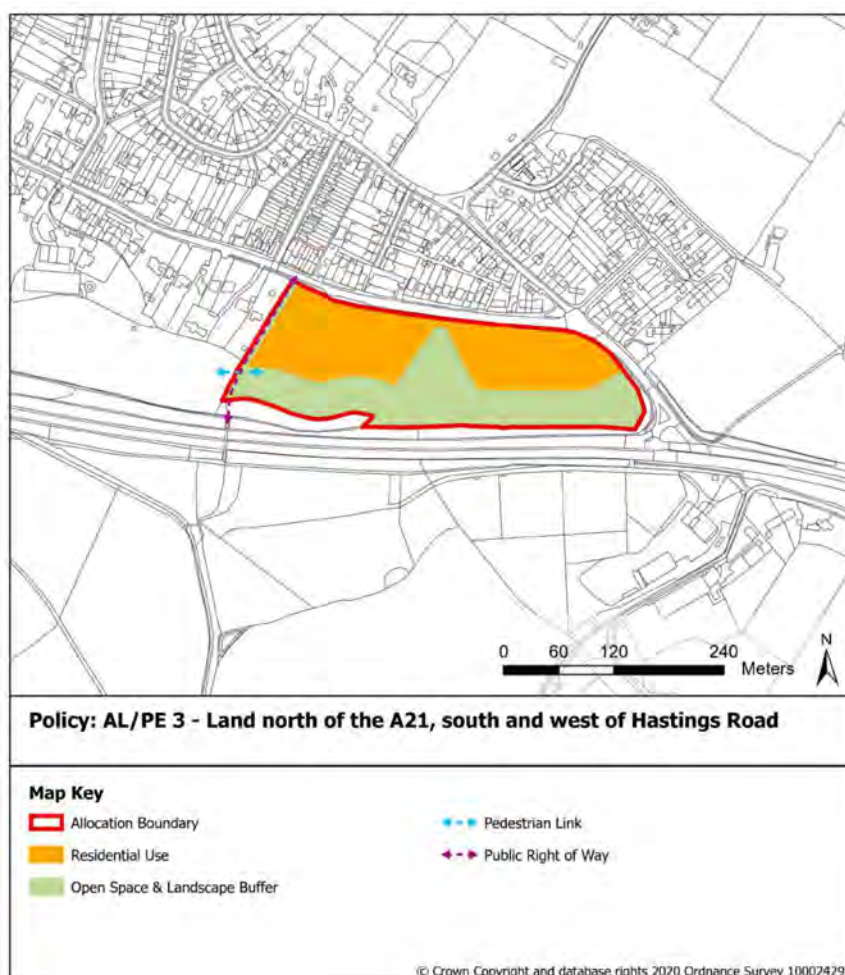
- 5.577** The site is an undeveloped greenfield site that measures some 4.78 hectares gross. There is an electricity sub-station towards the north east corner of the site. The site fronts onto Hastings Road to the north, which wraps around the site to the east where Hastings Road forms a junction onto the A21, part of the strategic road network. Henwood Green Road and Sandhurst Avenue are located in proximity of the north east corner of the site. The site adjoins existing residential properties located to the north and part west of the site. Public Right of Way WT237 runs along the western boundary of the site, which adjoins Public Right of Way WT239A. Public Right of Way WT234 is located east of the site. These connect to the wider Public Rights of Way network, including bridleways which link Pembury with the eastern side of Royal Tunbridge Wells. National Cycle Route (Sustrans) 18 from

Canterbury to Royal Tunbridge Wells (using existing highways) runs along Hastings Road on the northern-most edge of the site and then turns north onto Henwood Green Road. There are opportunities for this site, along with site allocation Policies AL/PE 1 and AL/PE 2, to upgrade the existing footpath/cyclepath network, including the establishment of a bridleway link along Public Rights of Way number WT20, which runs along Chalket Lane, and the WB43.

- 5.578** The site adjoins the settlement edge of Pembury. To the east, beyond the Hastings Road junction, is some residential development, fields, and playing field. The A21 Pembury bypass (which becomes known as Hastings Road at this Pembury junction eastwards), lies immediately south of the site, screened by an existing tree and hedge belt, more substantial to the west (where the trees are protected by a TPO) that runs along the southern boundary of the site. There is a significant area of ancient woodland buffer, associated with the tree belt, along the southern part of the site. It is expected that these trees will be retained through development of the site, along with the minimal loss of other trees and hedgerow that currently form boundaries of the site.
- 5.579** The site is located wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. The boundary of the National Landscape runs along the northern boundary of the site, with the Green Belt boundary previously extending beyond this slightly to the north incorporating the public highway that is Hastings Road. The site was released from the Green Belt in part, and the Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.580** The site forms part of the Pembury/Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area and is located adjacent to site allocation Policy AL/PE 2 Land at Hubble's Farm and south of Hastings Road. The topography of the site rises to the south, with the topography of the wider landscape reducing beyond the site.
- 5.581** There is currently a lack of vehicular access to the site and access to serve future development of the site should be informed by a transport assessment, which should also identify any highway related matters that would require mitigation through the development of the site. The feasibility of providing a pedestrian crossing along Hastings Road should be considered and, if feasible, provided through the development proposal. Due to site topography and extent of trees along the northern boundary in particular, a detailed topographical survey and tree survey should also be submitted.
- 5.582** The location of the site adjacent to the settlement means that it would form a logical extension to Pembury village, particularly in association with the allocation of the adjacent site, Policy AL/PE 2. It is close to the core of the settlement and its services, which suggests some development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.583** At a density appropriate to the location, it is anticipated that approximately 80 dwellings will be provided, of which some 40% (approximately 32 units) should be affordable housing.

- 5.584** Along with site allocation Policies AL/PE 1 and AL/PE 2, development of the site is expected to provide an east-west cycle link, linking with the existing wider cycle network, and provide developer contributions towards delivery of an improved cycle link between Pembury and Hawkenbury, including an upgrade to bridleway along parts of the route (Public Rights of Way numbers WT240, which runs along Chalket Lane, and WB43).
- 5.585** Pockets of high road noise have been recorded along the A21 south of the site. The northern edge of the site lies adjacent to a Groundwater Source Protection Zone. These will be considerations in future development proposals for the site.
- 5.586** Low level archaeology is anticipated (Palaeolithic potential and general background archaeology, as well as a collection of historic buildings visible on the First Edition Ordnance Survey; Bowpeep) which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval.

Map 52 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/PE 3

Land north of the A21, south and west of Hastings Road

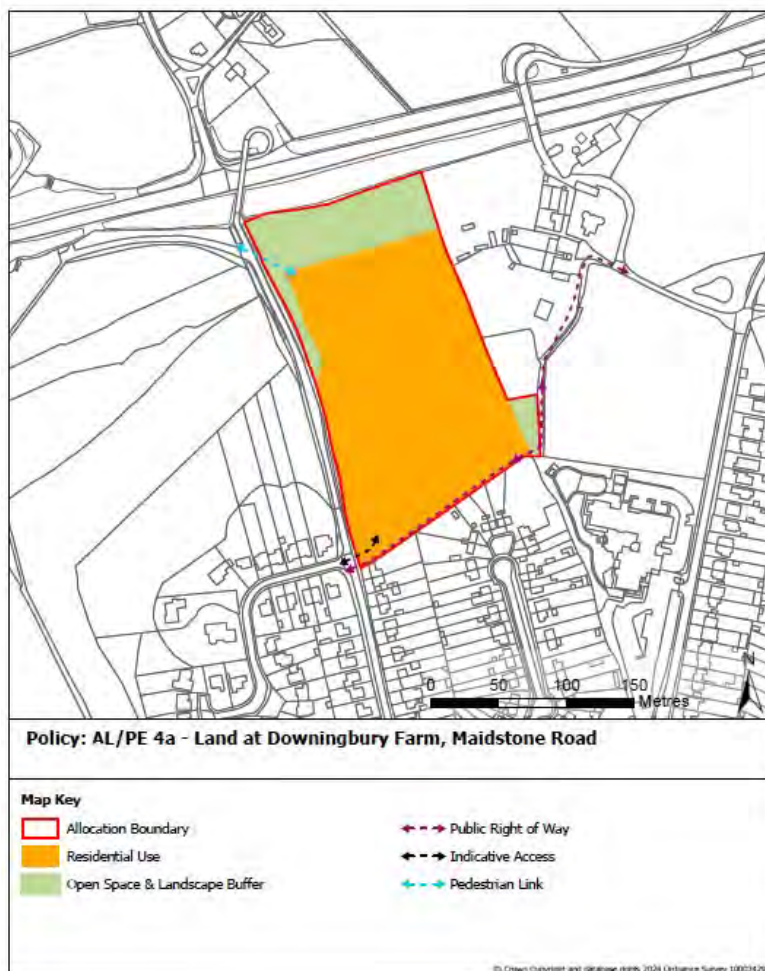
This site, as defined on the Pembury Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 80 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. A single point of vehicular access is to be provided onto Hastings Road, to be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment and transport assessment;
2. The transport assessment shall consider the feasibility of providing a pedestrian crossing point on Hastings Road and if feasible, this shall be provided as part of the development scheme;
3. The location of the site access should be informed by detailed topographical and tree survey information to be submitted as part of the planning application; any tree or hedgerow loss on the northern boundary should be replaced with new planting that is consistent with the existing boundary vegetation;
4. The layout and design of the development shall be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment (to include details of heights parameters and wireframe visualisations from a selected number of key viewpoints) that takes full account of the High Weald National Landscape location;
5. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey, and retain and improve existing trees and hedgerows within the site, particularly along the southern boundary;
6. The layout of the scheme shall include a landscape buffer of approximately 40m deep adjacent to the A21 in addition to the existing vegetation along the A21, as shown indicatively on the site layout plan;
7. The design and layout of the scheme shall provide for, a segregated east-west cycle route, connecting with the adjacent site allocation Policy AL/PE 2 and adjacent to that, site allocation Policy AL/PE 1, and with the existing cycleway network, including the A264 Pembury Road cycle route into Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre;
8. Proposals shall make financial contributions towards the delivery of a cycle route link from the southern edge of Pembury village, running south over the A21 to link with the east side of Royal Tunbridge Wells at Hawkenbury (to be delivered by Kent County Council). This shall include an upgrade along parts of the route to bridleway (Public Rights of Way numbers WT240, which runs along Chalket Lane, and WB43) as a way of ensuring active travel and enhancing access to the Green Belt;
9. Proposals shall include measures to mitigate the impact of noise from the adjacent A21 on occupants of the proposed development, which, as above, shall include a site layout that avoids built development along the southern edge of the site adjacent to the A21 and any necessary noise attenuation;
10. Regard shall be given to the Groundwater Source Protection Zone affecting the site, in consultation with the Environment Agency;
11. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PE 1, including contributions to be used towards improvements to active travel infrastructure and measures, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road.

Land at Downingbury Farm (West), Maidstone Road

- 5.587** The site is a greenfield site, mostly orchards, measuring approximately 3.28 hectares gross. The site forms part of Downingbury Farm, which has a farm shop on land adjacent to the site where there are also a small number of residential properties, conversions of former agricultural buildings. To the south east of the site is the Hospice in the Weald. There is existing residential development located to the south of the site. Residential properties are also located further to the south west and east.
- 5.588** The A228 Pembury northern bypass is located close by to the north. Church Road adjoins the south-western boundary of the site close to its junction with Gimble Way. Church Road comes to an end along this south-west boundary.
- 5.589** There is existing vehicular access to the site from Maidstone Road, running through Downingbury Farm. Public Right of Way WT217B runs along the southern boundary of the site and further Public Rights of Way are close by.
- 5.590** The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape. The site was formerly part of the Green Belt. The Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.591** The site lies adjacent to the settlement edge of Pembury, which suggests some development potential to contribute to development needs. An ancient woodland buffer lies along part of the western edge of the site, relating to ancient woodland north of Gimble Way, also protected by a TPO. The site forms part of the wider Pembury/Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area. There is low level archaeology (some Palaeolithic and general background archaeology) anticipated, which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval.
- 5.592** The site is generally flat. The cluster of buildings to the east form part of Downingbury Farm, a post-medieval historic farmstead. A number of these are listed buildings. Any development of the site should take account of the impact on the setting of these heritage assets, as well as the setting of the Hospice in the Weald.
- 5.593** It is considered important that any development of the site should retain and strengthen tree coverage and planting along the boundaries of the site to provide a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including provision of landscape buffers to ensure a soft approach to the village.
- 5.594** Sewer lines run through the south of the site and close by to the western boundary outside the site. A Southern Water underground easement crosses this site, which will need to be taken into account in future development of the site. The site is also part of a Groundwater Source Protection Zone, which will also be a consideration in future proposals for the site.
- 5.595** At a density appropriate to the location, it is anticipated that approximately 25 dwellings will be provided, of which 40% (10 dwellings) should be affordable housing.

Map 53 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/PE 4A

Land at Downingbury Farm (west), Maidstone Road

This site, as defined on the Pembury Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 25 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

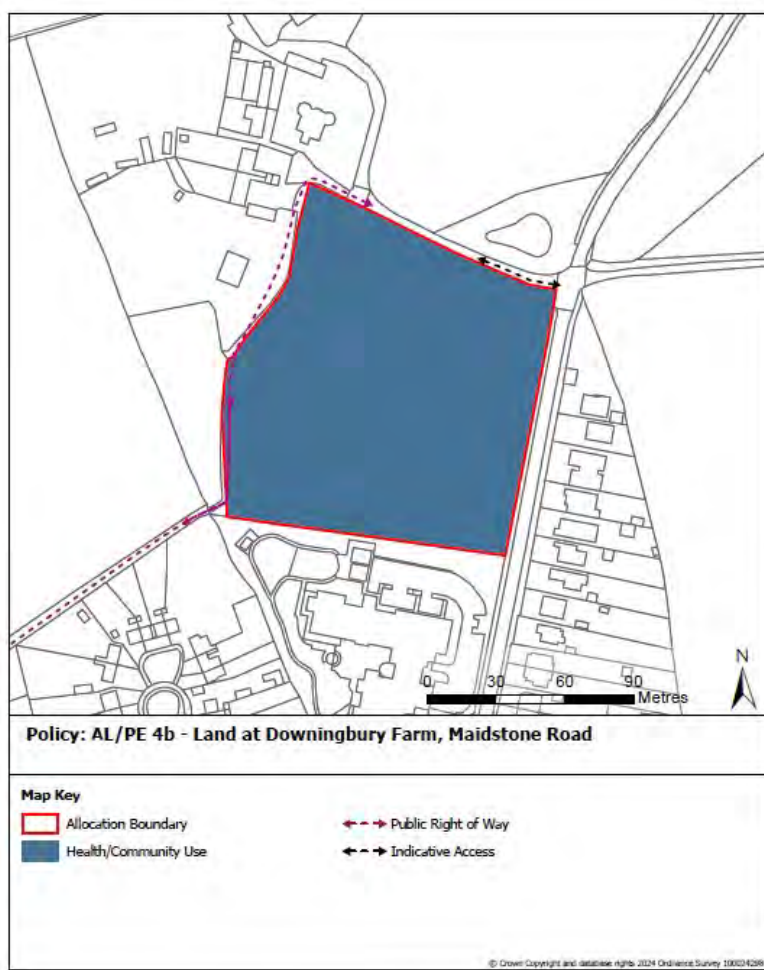
1. A single point of vehicular access is to be provided onto Church Road, to be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment and transport assessment;
2. The layout and design of the scheme shall give full consideration to the site's edge-of-village location, being informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that takes full account of the National Landscape location, and heritage assessment, providing a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including provision of landscape buffers, as indicated on the site layout plan, to ensure a soft approach to the village and retention of existing hedgerows and mature trees;
3. The layout and design of the scheme shall take account of the impact on the setting of heritage assets, including adjacent listed buildings and the Downingbury Farm historic farmstead;

4. The scheme shall provide suitable pedestrian links to the surrounding footpath network and residential areas so far as possible, including a link to the land to the east allocated for the expansion of the Hospice in the Weald (under Policy AL/PE4B). The scheme shall provide improvements, where necessary to the footpath network, including Public Right of Way numbers WT217B, WT218 and WT219;
5. The developer shall liaise with Southern Water regarding the development and implications for the easement that runs through the site and regarding capacity to serve the development, and provide details of its treatment of this as part of the application;
6. The developer shall liaise with the Environment Agency in respect of the Groundwater Source Protection Zone affecting the site, and shall demonstrate how this has been taken into account in the design of the proposals;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PE 1, including contributions to be used towards improvements to active travel infrastructure and measures, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road.

Land at Downingbury Farm (east), Maidstone Road

- 5.596** Like site AL/PE 4A, this site forms part of Downingbury Farm, a post-medieval historic farmstead. It is a greenfield site, measuring approximately 1.66 hectares.
- 5.597** The site lies immediately north of the Hospice in the Weald, to the south east of former agricultural buildings at Downingbury Farm, converted to residential use. A number of these are listed buildings. Any development of the site should take account of the impact on the setting of these heritage assets, as well as the setting of the Hospice in the Weald. Maidstone Road adjoins the eastern boundary of the site, from where there is existing vehicular access serving Downingbury Farm. There are residential properties along Maidstone Road and in the wider locality south of the site.
- 5.598** Public Rights of Way WT217B and WT218 run along the northern and western boundary of the site, and there are other Public Rights of Way close by.
- 5.599** The site is mostly located within the High Weald National Landscape, the boundary of which runs across the site (with an area in the south-east corner adjacent to the Hospice in the Weald being sited outside the National Landscape). The site was formerly part of the Green Belt, released following assessment of the impact of release on the Green Belt and having regard to the growth needs of the adjacent Hospice.
- 5.600** The site lies close to/part adjacent to the settlement edge of Pembury. The site forms part of the wider Pembury/Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area. There is low level archaeology (some Palaeolithic and general background archaeology) anticipated, which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval.

- 5.601** The site is generally flat. It is considered important that any development of the site should retain and strengthen tree coverage and planting along the boundaries of the site to provide a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including provision of landscape buffers to ensure a soft approach to the village.
- 5.602** A sewer line runs through the site and there are other sewer lines close by. A Southern Water underground easement crosses this site, which will need to be taken into account in future development of the site. The site is also part of a Groundwater Source Protection Zone, which will also be a consideration in future proposals for the site.

Map 54 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/PE 4B

Land at Dowingbury Farm (east), Maidstone Road

This site, as defined on the Pembury Policies Map, is allocated for expansion of the Hospice in the Weald, as indicated on the site layout plan.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access is to be provided from Maidstone Road, to be informed by a transport assessment;

2. The layout and design of the scheme shall give full consideration to the site's edge-of-village location, being informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that takes full account of the National Landscape location, and heritage assessment, providing a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including provision of landscape buffers, to ensure a soft approach to the village and retention of existing hedgerows and mature trees;
3. The layout and design of the scheme shall take account of the impact on the setting of heritage assets, including adjacent listed buildings and the Downingbury Farm historic farmstead, locating built development towards the south part of the site and retaining views across the northern part between Maidstone Road and Downingbury Farm;
4. The scheme shall provide suitable pedestrian links to the surrounding footpath network and residential areas so far as possible, including a link to the land to the west allocated for residential use (under Policy AL/PE4A). The scheme shall provide improvements, where necessary to the footpath network, including Public Right of Way numbers WT217B, WT218 and WT219;
5. The developer shall liaise with Southern Water regarding the development and implications for the easement that runs through the site and regarding capacity to serve the development, and provide details of its treatment of this as part of the application;
6. The developer shall liaise with the Environment Agency in respect of the Groundwater Source Protection Zone affecting the site, and shall demonstrate how this has been taken into account in the design of the proposals;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PE 1, including contributions to be used towards improvements to active travel infrastructure and measures, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road.

Woodsgate Corner, Pembury

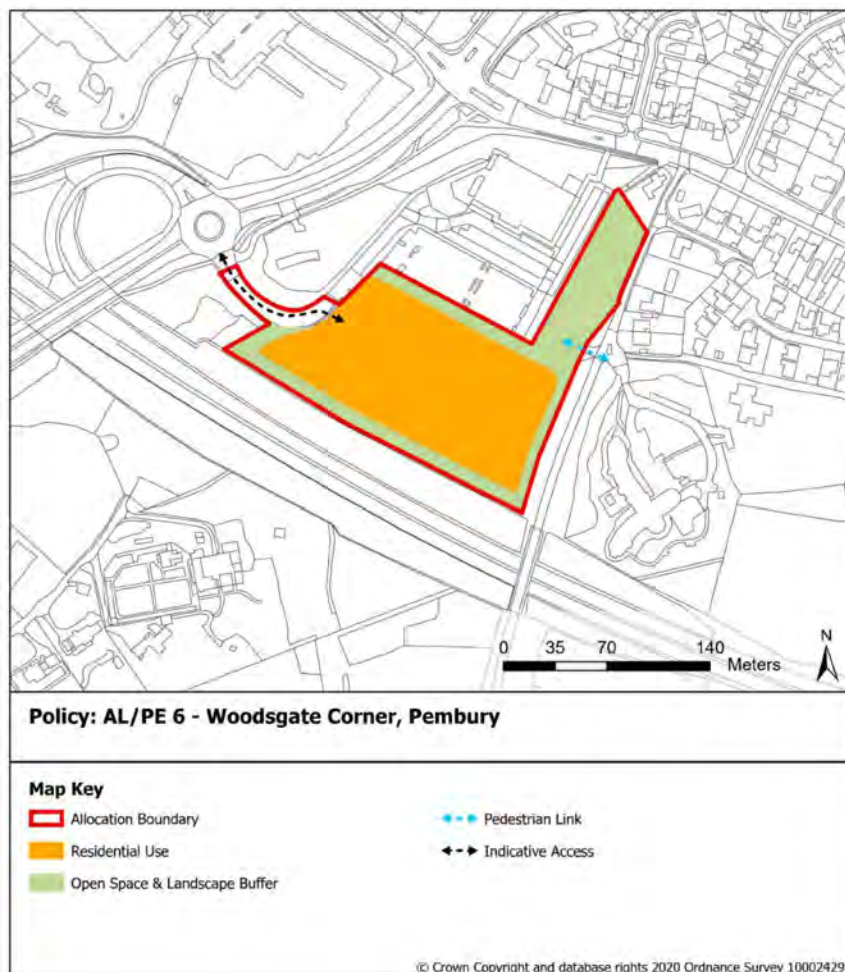
- 5.603** The site measures approximately 2.41 hectares gross and is sited predominantly to the south and east of the existing Tesco store in Pembury. The site encompasses part of the Tesco store car parking area, together with an area of unused land to the south, up to its southern boundary with the A21 Pembury bypass and associated embankment. The site boundary also extends to a strip of landscaping parallel to Cornford Lane to the east, although the site boundary only abuts Cornford Lane in a small area in its north-eastern corner. The site is served by an existing access from the A228 Pembury Road roundabout, which serves the site and the Tesco store.
- 5.604** The site lies mostly adjacent to the settlement edge of Pembury village, with a strip adjacent to the eastern boundary forming part of the settlement. The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape but lies outside of the Green Belt, which extends up to the perimeter of the site. The site forms part of the larger Pembury/ Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area.

- 5.605** There is an existing belt of trees along the western and northern boundaries of the site, forming a natural feature between the Tesco store, the allocation site, and the A228 Pembury Road. This area is covered by a TPO. There is also established hedging and trees along the southern boundary and along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 5.606** The site is an allocated site in the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016. It is the subject of Policy AL/VRA 2, which allocates the site for the provision of a Park and Ride facility.
- 5.607** As part of a larger site including the Tesco store, the site has an extant planning approval. This is for expansion of the Tesco store, approved in 2012 under planning reference 09/01265/FULMJ, including the principle of a Park and Ride facility. This expansion has been implemented through the completion of external works; however, the existing Tesco store remains as per its original construction and the Park and Ride facility part of the approval has not been delivered. This 2012 planning consent on the site established the principle of development on the site, reflected by allocation of the site in the Site Allocations Local Plan.
- 5.608** There have been a number of Park and Ride reviews over time, the most recent of which comprises the Tunbridge Wells Park and Ride Feasibility Study 2018. This sets out a full assessment of the potential for a Park and Ride facility at this site (as well as others on Eridge Road and London Road). This has indicated that as a result of the financial investment and ongoing subsidy required, it is extremely unlikely that such a service could, or would, be implemented. This has been further demonstrated by the fact that the site has been allocated as a park and ride site since 2006 and had planning permission for such a use for over eight and a half years, with no meaningful progress on delivery. This has therefore informed the decision to remove the park and ride allocation on this site from this Local Plan.
- 5.609** The site has more recently been promoted thorough a planning application under planning reference 19/00884 for development of a Motor Village Car dealership and minor alterations to the Tesco car park. The planning application was refused, which has informed the decision to allocate the site for a different use to that previously set out in the Draft Local Plan under site allocation Policy AL/PE 7.
- 5.610** The site lies in the proximity of an existing care home at Cornford House to the east, and to Owlsnest in Tonbridge Road further west, which has a resolution to grant planning consent for a C2 care home subject to completion of a Section 106 agreement. Cornford Court, within the curtilage of Cornford House, has planning consent for the provision of a 68-suite integrated community healthcare facility. Cornford Court and Owlsnest are allocated in the Local Plan under Policies AL/PE 7 and AL/PE 8 respectively.
- 5.611** The site is also in proximity of the main Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury and there is clearly a synergy between these uses and the proposed use of the site for provision of specialist housing for older people and others with care needs and/or a care home. Allocation of this site assists in meeting the need over the plan period for housing for older people and others with care needs, the background to which is set out in Policy H 6: Housing for Older People and

People with Disabilities. It is considered that a range of such housing, including extra care housing and/or assisted living housing, could be suitable for the site. The allocation therefore proposes use of the site for extra care accommodation (Use Class C3) or residential care home/nursing care (Use Class C2), which could include accommodation suitable for those affected by dementia or Alzheimers. A combination of these uses will also be considered. Proposals deemed by the Local Planning Authority as being for Use Class C3 residential use of the site would be expected to provide affordable housing provision in accordance with Local Plan Policy H 3: Affordable Housing.

- 5.612** It is noted that accommodation falling within Use Class C2 does not count as fully equivalent to dwellings for housing supply purposes. For the housing supply and trajectory, the capacity of this allocation is to be counted as net 62-80 units, to include discounting for C2 and, in terms of the housing supply work, that figures for housing supply purposes have been discounted accordingly.
- 5.613** Proposals for the site will be expected to take account of the edge-of-village location, and shall be supported by a robust and thorough assessment as to the impact of the proposal on transport and the highways network. Where necessary, development of the site will be expected to include mitigation measures to address any negative impact identified through a supporting transport assessment. Development should ensure provision and delivery of other reasonable improvements to local infrastructure, which would likely be impacted upon by the development, as set out in Policy PSTR/PE 1.

Map 55 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/PE 6

Woodgate Corner, Pembury

This site, as defined on the Pembury Policies Map, is allocated for provision of specialist housing for older people and others with care needs. The allocation provides for up to 80 units of extra care accommodation (Use Class C3) or up to 120 units of residential care home/nursing care (Use Class C2). A combination of these uses will also be considered. Uses deemed to fall within Use Class C3 will be expected to provide 30 percent of the total units provided as affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. A transport assessment shall be submitted with the planning application and proposals shall be supported by a robust and thorough assessment as to the impact of the proposal on transport and the highway network and the proposals shall deliver any mitigation measures identified through robust assessment as being required;
2. The layout and design of the scheme shall give full consideration to the site's edge-of-village location, providing a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that takes full account of the National Landscape location;

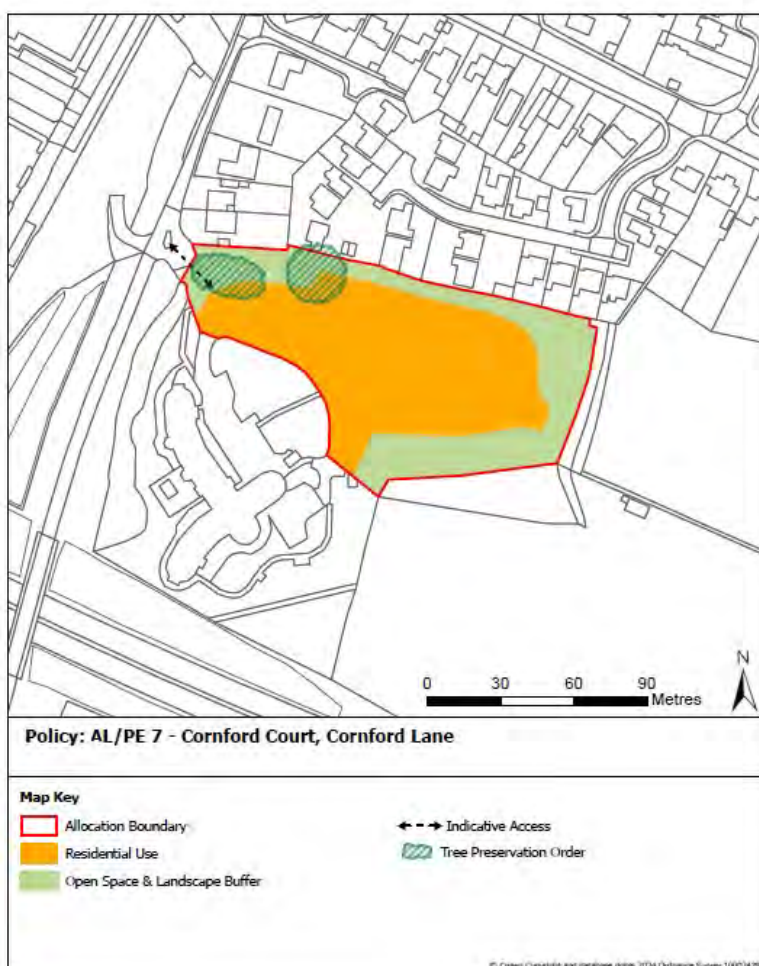
3. Proposals shall retain and protect trees along Cornford Lane and provide a minimum 10 metre planting strip at the top of the A21 embankment to allow for enhanced tree planting and the set back of development from the A21, as shown indicatively on the site layout plan;
4. The proposals shall retain and protect those trees of value, informed by an arboricultural survey to support the planning application, and explore opportunities to increase tree coverage on the site, particularly along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site;
5. The design and layout of the proposal shall show provision for large areas of open space/landscaping in order to ensure an appropriate setting for the built form and to provide an appropriate separation from the adjacent supermarket;
6. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PE 1, including contributions to be used towards improvements to active travel infrastructure and measures, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road.

Land at Cornford Court, Cornford Lane

- 5.614** The site measures 1.13 hectares gross and is located immediately south of the settlement edge of Pembury, within the High Weald National Landscape, and to the north of the A21, a trunk road managed by National Highways. The site forms part of the Pembury/Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area.
- 5.615** The site was released from the Green Belt, and the Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.616** Along the northern boundary of the site there is a rough access track that backs onto residential dwellings of Cornford Park located to the north. There is a TPO protecting trees in the north-west corner of the site. The site currently includes Cornford Court, which forms part of a larger site with Cornford House. Cornford House is a two/three storey existing care home and lies immediately south west of the site. The site is accessed from Cornford Lane, which serves both Cornford House and the existing Cornford Court.
- 5.617** To the north of the site there are residential properties. To the west, on the other side of Cornford Lane, is the rear of the Tesco site and associated land, part of which is the subject of Local Plan site allocation Policy AL/PE 6 Woodsgate Corner, Pembury.
- 5.618** This site benefits from an existing planning consent granted under reference 17/01151 in September 2018 for the demolition of the existing building and erection of a 68-suite integrated community health centre (C2 Use Class) and associated parking, which includes an integrated community daycare centre.

- 5.619** The integrated community daycare centre would be facilitated by a local support group such as the Alzheimers Society. The existing consent includes a financial contribution towards a corridor study along the Pembury Road corridor, with a view to relieving congestion.
- 5.620** In addition, the site also benefits from a recent planning consent (23/03419/FULL) for an assisted living unit (use C2 – with extra care provision) comprising of 69 two-bedroom suites.
- 5.621** It is noted that accommodation falling within Use Class C2 does not count as fully equivalent to dwellings for housing supply purposes. For the housing supply and trajectory, the capacity of this allocation is to be counted as net 36 units, to include discounting for C2.
- 5.622** This Local Plan allocation seeks to carry forward this existing consent, which has not commenced development.

Map 56 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/PE 7

Land at Cornford House, Cornford Lane

This site, as defined on the Pembury Policies Map, is allocated for a 69 suite extra care assisted living unit (Use Class C2).

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

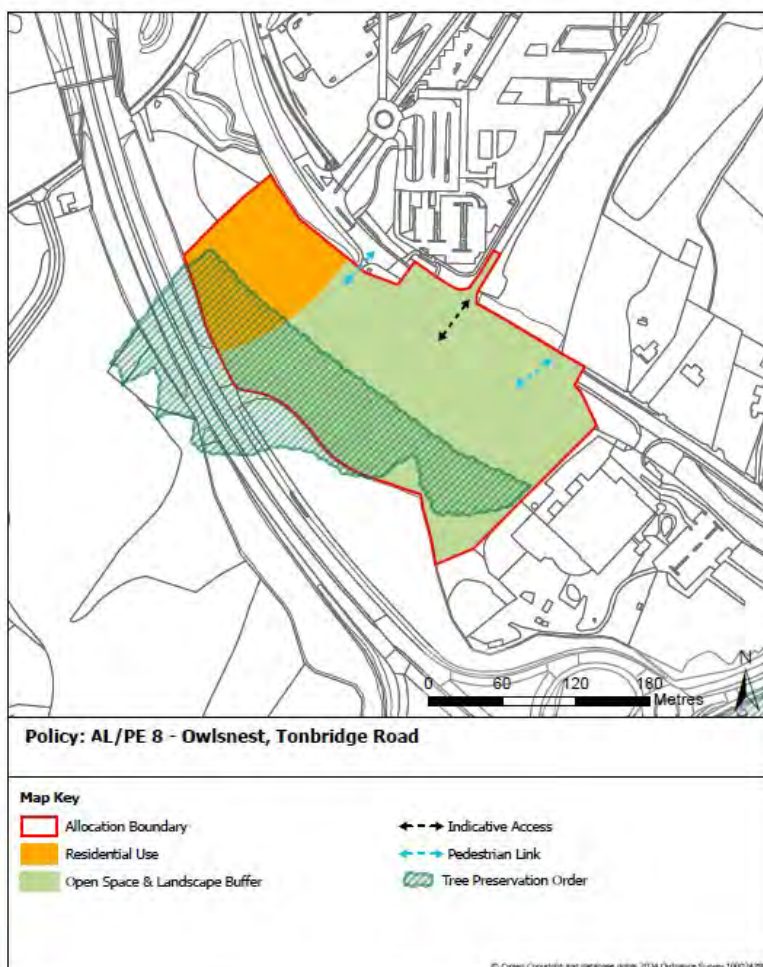
1. A transport assessment shall be submitted with the planning application and proposals shall be supported by a robust and thorough assessment as to the impact of the proposal on transport and the highway network, and the proposals shall deliver any mitigation measures identified through robust assessment as being required;
2. The layout and design of the scheme shall give full consideration to the site's edge-of-village location, providing a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that takes full account of the National Landscape location;
3. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PE 1, including contributions to be used towards improvements to active travel infrastructure and measures, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road.

Owlsnest, Tonbridge Road

- 5.623** This site measures 5.03 hectares gross and is located along the south side of Tonbridge Road, to the west of Pembury village.
- 5.624** The site lies outside of the defined settlement of Pembury village. The site forms part of the Green Belt. Development proposals for the site are expected to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' as part of any planning application, which clearly outweigh potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal.
- 5.625** The site lies outside of the High Weald National Landscape and forms part of the Pembury/Capel Forested Plateau Landscape Character Area.
- 5.626** To the north east of the site lies the Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury, a major developed site within the Green Belt. The northern boundary of the site is heavily treed. To the south and south east of Owlsnest is the A21 trunk road, managed by National Highways. Notcutts Garden Centre is adjacent to the east and north west is a belt of mature trees.
- 5.627** To the northern part of the site there is a large, single dwelling, with a large pool building, other outbuildings, and a bunker. There is a SSSI located immediately to the north of the site. There is ancient woodland on the site, to the south and south east. A TPO also affects the south/south-eastern part of the site. The TPO and ancient woodland designation affects not only trees on the site, but also continues on the other side of the A21, to the west.

- 5.628** The site is served by an existing vehicular access from Tonbridge Road, through a treed avenue, located on a steep incline.
- 5.629** Site levels drop down towards the south-eastern part of the site towards a lake. To the north east of the site the levels rise back up towards Tonbridge Road. Levels rise steeply back up towards Notcutts Garden Centre, away from the lake. The south/south-eastern boundary is treed, and levels rise back up towards the A21. At the centre of the site, the levels are more even, although there are changes to the levels to the north-east boundary, up to the Tonbridge Road.
- 5.630** A footpath runs along the north eastern boundary of the site, which extends as far as the traffic lights to the north west of the existing access, before coming to a halt.
- 5.631** The site received planning consent through a planning application submitted under reference 19/01600, granted on the 5 May 2022. This planning permission is for demolition of existing buildings on the site and construction of a 76-bed health and wellbeing facility to supply private nursing care and step-down care to the adjacent hospital. This includes associated car parking, a signalised entrance junction, landscaping and amenity space, along with proposed community access to the existing lake for recreational and leisure use.
- 5.632** The planning approval secures the provision of a minimum of 10 units of accommodation for a step-down care for patients who need a transition between hospital and home, having had surgery (non-orthopaedic) or after treatment of acute or chronic medical conditions, to assist the hospital in dealing with delayed transfer of care (DTC), on a contractual basis. The development also offers a training room for staff and there will be availability for use by the hospital to provide training for staff in areas such as manual handling or working with dementia. The proposal also secures wider public access to the lake and grounds for leisure and recreation, and developer contributions towards sustainable transport links towards the Pembury Road Corridor Study.
- 5.633** It is noted that accommodation falling within Use Class C2 does not count as fully equivalent to dwellings for housing supply purposes. For the housing supply and trajectory, the capacity of this allocation is to be counted as net 38 units, to include discounting for C2.

Map 57 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/PE 8

Owlsnest, Tonbridge Road

This site, as defined on the Pembury Policies Map, is allocated for development of a 76-bedspace care home.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Proposals shall be supported by a transport assessment, which shall include a robust and thorough assessment as to the impact of the proposal on transport and the highway network, and the proposals shall deliver any mitigation measures identified through the assessment as being required;
2. Proposals shall include provision of a new main vehicular access off Tonbridge Road, with the existing vehicular access becoming a pedestrian link to Tonbridge Road; the new vehicular access shall be a signal controlled access with the existing hospital service road and Tonbridge Road;
3. Proposals shall be supported by a tree survey and arboricultural report and a drainage strategy to assess and consider impact of the development on existing trees;
4. The design of the scheme shall preserve as far as possible the existing tree screen along the boundary of the site with Tonbridge Road;

5. Proposals shall be supported by a scheme of noise mitigation measures, separating the proposed care home from the A21;
6. Proposals shall include a management plan for the woodland and lake, with public access to these areas;
7. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/PE 1, including contributions to be used towards improvements to active travel infrastructure and measures, including bus journey times along the A264 Pembury Road.

Rusthall

Overview

- 5.634** The parish of Rusthall is situated in the west of the borough, adjacent to the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The village of Rusthall is the only settlement in the parish, and this occupies a significant area of it. Rusthall village is located approximately two miles west of Royal Tunbridge Wells and 1.7 miles south east of the settlement of Speldhurst. Langton Road (the A264) runs east (to Royal Tunbridge Wells) to west (to Ashurst) along the southern boundary of the parish. Some roads are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998).
- 5.635** Outside of the defined settlement of Rusthall, the parish is part of the Speldhurst Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area. The defined settlement of Rusthall, as indicated by its LBD, merges with that of Langton Green to the west.
- 5.636** The nearest mainline train stations to Rusthall village are Tunbridge Wells station approximately two miles away and High Brooms station approximately three miles away. There are frequent bus services to Royal Tunbridge Wells and High Brooms. Rusthall is served by a number of local shops and public houses/restaurants. There is a primary school and nursery schools, as well as a doctors surgery and dentists.
- 5.637** There is a designated conservation area, which includes the south-eastern parts of the village and Rusthall Common, which lies in the south of the parish close to Tunbridge Wells Common. There are two groups of listed buildings fronting Lower Green Road and around the junction of Lower Green Road and Ashley Gardens to the north of the village.
- 5.638** The area of the parish that lies outside of the established settlement is designated as Green Belt. The High Weald National Landscape is located adjacent to the western edge of the settlement, with an overlap of Green Belt and National Landscape in a few small areas.
- 5.639** There are also areas of archaeological potential and a number of ecological designations, including Rusthall Common SSSI, and Local Wildlife Sites (Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Common and part of Broomhill and Reynolds Lane Pastures). There are a number of Public Rights of Way that run through the parish, particularly across Rusthall Common.
- 5.640** Additional recreation/sports provision is planned for within the Local Plan, to be provided on site allocation Policy AL/SP 2 (Land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, Southwood Road, Rusthall), which includes an existing recreation ground and allows for an extension to this, in proximity to the established settlement of Rusthall and its defined LBD. The allocation, while having a close synergy with the settlement of Rusthall, lies within the adjacent Speldhurst parish.
- 5.641** In terms of growth potential, one site has been identified at Lifestyle Motor Europe, Langton Road. The site lies to the east of the parish on the north side of Langton Road (the A264). The site was previously allocated in the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 for residential development of approximately 15 dwellings under Policy

AL/RTW 9. The site lies adjacent to the Tunbridge Wells Golf Course to the east, which is also part of Rusthall parish. The golf club is currently closed, although being used for an alternative leisure use. Full requirements for the development of this site are set out in the subsequent site allocation Policy AL/RU 1.

- 5.642** There may be opportunities for redevelopment of other appropriate windfall sites where they are brought forward in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing.
- 5.643** For Rusthall parish, the IDP shows a deficiency in the provision of library facilities, amenity greenspace, and children's play space (which the IDP indicates could potentially be accommodated on an existing amenity green space at Allan Close).
- 5.644** Playing fields at Rusthall Recreation Ground are identified as a priority for improvements of non-playing pitch facilities as the site has ageing ancillary facilities. Support to Rusthall Juniors FC and the provision of a 3G pitch at Rusthall are also identified in the IDP, along with the need to replace or improve ancillary facilities at Rusthall Southwood Road Recreation Ground. The need for these facilities is captured by site allocation Policy AL/SP 2 within the Speldhurst parish section. Where applicable, future residential development in the parish during the plan period will be expected to contribute to these provisions to help mitigate impacts from future residential development.
- 5.645** In addition, Rusthall Parish Council has identified the need for highway improvements in the parish, including speed reductions and signage. The need for contributions towards the implementation of such measures will be considered when assessing planning applications and where appropriate, developments may be required to implement such highway improvements.

The Strategy for Rusthall parish

Policy PSTR/RU 1

The Strategy for Rusthall parish

The development strategy for Rusthall parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Rusthall village on the Policies Map (Inset Map 30) as a framework for new development over the plan period;
2. Build approximately 15 new dwellings, of which 30 percent is to be affordable housing, on one site, as allocated under Policy AL/RU 1;
3. Support active travel by delivering improvements to the local pedestrian and cycling network as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and additional cycle parking in key locations. This will include through the provision of contributions;
4. Seek developer contributions from residential schemes, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. additional recreation/sport provision on land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, as allocated under Policy AL/SP 2;
 - b. highway improvement works, including speed reduction measures and signage;

- c. secondary education provision;
- d. children's play provision, including youth play provision;
- e. non-playing pitch facilities;
- f. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Allocation policies for Rusthall parish

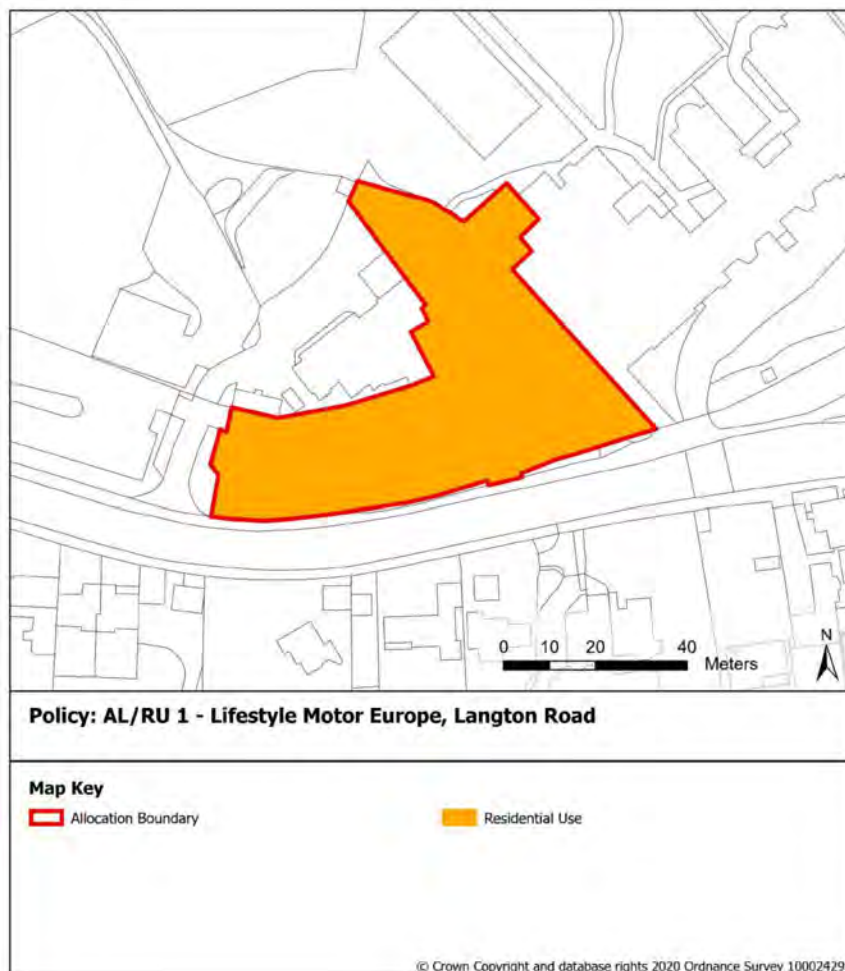
Lifestyle Motor Europe, Langton Road

- 5.646** The site fronts the north side of Langton Road (the A264) on the eastern edge of Rusthall parish. Despite being located within the parish of Rusthall, the site lies inside the LBD of Royal Tunbridge Wells and is within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area. There are several listed buildings to the south of the site.
- 5.647** The site is previously developed land measuring some 0.32 hectares and currently comprises a car showroom and associated uses (currently operated by the Hendy Group). The clubhouse for the adjacent Tunbridge Wells Golf Club lies immediately to the rear of the site and the Spa Hotel adjoins to the east, both of which are also located within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area. There are residential dwellings to the south on the opposite side of Langton Road. Tunbridge Wells Common is nearby to the south east and Rusthall Common is located close by to the west. There are several Public Rights of Way across these Commons. The site lies outside of, but adjacent to, the boundary of the Green Belt.
- 5.648** The A264 Langton Road is a main distributor road into Royal Tunbridge Wells and there is an existing vehicular and pedestrian access into the site from here. The site is generally flat with some trees along the boundaries.
- 5.649** The site is part of a larger area with archaeological potential (AAP surrounding Mesolithic flint implements/some Palaeolithic potential, historic high status residence, and landscaped gardens (Bishops Grove)). Any subsequent planning application should be accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment and if necessary suitable planning conditions may be imposed on a planning approval.
- 5.650** There is a TPO relating to trees mostly outside of, but including trees on, the site in the south western-most corner of the site, where there is also an electrical sub-station. The site lies between two Woodland Pasture and Parkland Priority Habitats (Tunbridge Wells Common and Rusthall Common).
- 5.651** Where the site fronts onto Langton Road to the south, the site boundary is largely open to public view with low level walls along the boundary. This will enhance the green link between the site and the two Commons (Rusthall Common and Tunbridge Wells Common).
- 5.652** It was previously allocated in the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 for residential development of approximately 15 dwellings under Policy AL/RTW 9. It is considered appropriate to carry this allocation forward, as it is a suitable brownfield site that is

likely to become available for redevelopment during the plan period. At a density appropriate to the location, it is still considered suitable for approximately 15 dwellings, of which some 30% (approximately five) should be affordable housing.

- 5.653** Whilst there is an existing vehicular access to the site, it is considered that any future planning application should be supported by a transport assessment to inform the location of the most appropriate means of access.

Map 58 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/RU 1

Lifestyle Motor Europe, Langton Road

This site, as defined on the Rusthall Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 15 dwellings, of which 30 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access shall be taken from Langton Road, the precise location of which shall be informed by a transport assessment;
2. Proposals shall be supported by a heritage statement and provide for a scheme that will conserve or enhance the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings opposite the site, specifically Bransby Cottage, 1 Langton Road, 3 Langton Road, and 5-11 Langton Road, and give full consideration to the setting and amenities of the adjacent Spa Hotel;
3. An archaeological desk-based assessment shall be submitted to support the planning application;
4. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/RU 1.

Sandhurst

Overview

- 5.654** The parish of Sandhurst is located to the far south-eastern side of the borough, adjacent to the parishes of Hawkhurst (to the west) and Benenden (to the north). To the south, Sandhurst parish is located adjacent to the neighbouring authority of Rother District Council in East Sussex.
- 5.655** The parish is located wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. The majority of the parish forms part of the Hawkhurst Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area, with the remaining area of the parish being part of the Rother Valley River Valley Landscape Character Area, sited in the southern part of the parish. There are several Public Rights of Way that run through the parish, including through/around Sandhurst village.
- 5.656** Sandhurst village is the principal settlement of the parish. This has an historic core designated as a conservation area, which includes a number of listed buildings. There are also a number of historic farmsteads scattered across the parish. Sandhurst village has a defined LBD; the conservation area overlaps part of this.
- 5.657** Sandhurst village is located approximately 2.9 miles from Hawkhurst to the north west and approximately 3.6 miles from Benenden to the north. Northiam, in the neighbouring district of Rother, is approximately 4.1 miles away to the south east. The nearest rail stations are at Etchingham, approximately eight miles away and Staplehurst, approximately 11 miles from Sandhurst. There are bus services that currently run to Hawkhurst, Maidstone, and Royal Tunbridge Wells, which all run more frequently on weekdays Monday-Friday. There are currently no bus services running at peak times.
- 5.658** Sandhurst is served by a number of village shops, a public house, and cafes/restaurants. There is also a primary school, nursery school, and churches.
- 5.659** The A268 (named Queen Street as it runs through Sandhurst village) runs approximately across the middle of the parish, in an east-west direction and through the centre of Sandhurst village. This links the parish with Northiam and Peasmarsh in Rother district to the south and with Hawkhurst to the north west. Some roads are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998).
- 5.660** At Hawkhurst, exceedances of the Annual Mean Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) have been identified in Cranbrook Road (the A229), to the north of the crossroads, close to the traffic lights and going down the hill for approximately 150m. The Council has declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to the north of Hawkhurst crossroads because of this. Proposals for 'Major' development (10 plus dwellings or new floorspace of more than 1,000sqm) within Sandhurst parish may exceed a threshold of additional vehicular movements through the Hawkhurst crossroads, which could affect air quality. This will therefore be a consideration in the determination of any future planning applications in Sandhurst parish.

- 5.661** Applicants are advised to review further information available about the AQMA on the Council's website at an early stage to establish, through the use of transport consultants, the expected impact on traffic movements through the Hawkhurst crossroads and to discuss such matters with the Council through the planning pre-application advice process.
- 5.662** There are areas in the parish included in the 50 metre buffer of contaminated land and the parish has archaeological potential. Where applicable, these will be a consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.663** In terms of future growth, two sites have been identified as being well related to the settlement and having residential development potential to contribute to meeting growth needs of the borough.
- 5.664** The site covered by Policy AL/SA 1 is sited immediately south of the existing settlement at its eastern end, adjacent to residential development in Ringle Green and Burnt House Close. The other site, the subject of Policy AL/SA 2, is located immediately adjacent to the western edge of the settlement. Full requirements for development of these sites is set out in the subsequent site allocation Policies AL/SA 1 and AL/SA 2.
- 5.665** There may be opportunities for redevelopment of other appropriate windfall sites where they are brought forward in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing.
- 5.666** For Sandhurst parish, the IDP shows a deficiency in primary education provision, health and medical provision, library provision, youth play space provision, and allotments. A need for improvements, including drainage improvements, to football pitches at Conghurst Lane Sports Ground in neighbouring Hawkhurst parish is also identified. Future residential development in the parish will be expected to contribute to these provisions to help mitigate impact from future development.
- 5.667** In addition, Sandhurst Parish Council considers that there is a need for highway improvements in the parish, including speed reductions. Proposals for relevant development in the parish will need to provide information on highway impacts, and highway improvements/speed reduction measures may be identified through these. It also considers there is a need for works to resurface the Pavilion car park and improvement works to the The Old School (village hall), improvements to the toilet block on the playing field, to renew playground equipment, and the provision of a bus turning facility in the village.
- 5.668** Sandhurst Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parish, which will become an increasingly important consideration as it progresses through the different stages of plan-making.

The Strategy for Sandhurst parish

Policy PSTR/SA 1

The Strategy for Sandhurst parish

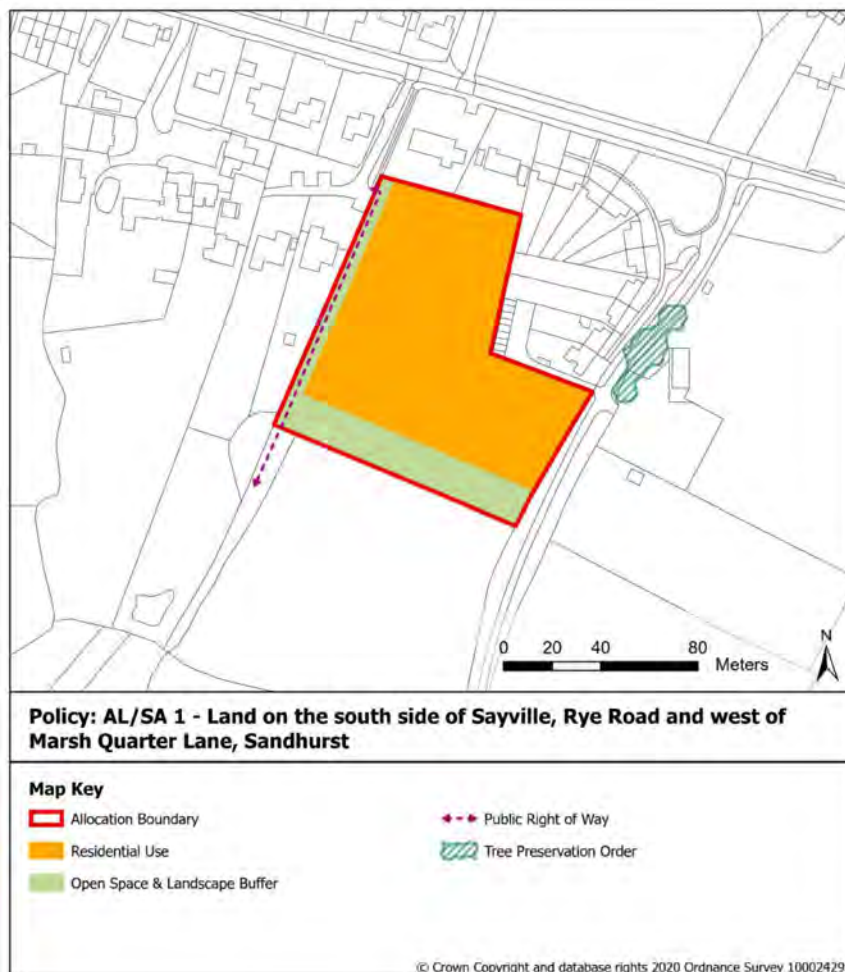
The development strategy for Sandhurst parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Sandhurst village, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 31) as a framework for new development over the plan period, incorporating the allocation Policies AL/SA 1 and AL/SA 2 into the Sandhurst Limits to Built Development;
2. Build approximately 20-30 new dwellings (including 40 percent affordable housing) on two sites at Sandhurst village, as allocated under Policies AL/SA 1 and AL/SA 2;
3. In relation to all development proposals for major development which would generate more than 100 light delivery vehicles (cars and vans of less than 3.5 tonnes gross weight) or 25 heavy duty vehicles (lorries, buses, etc. over 3.5 tonnes gross weight) annual average daily traffic (AADT) movements through the northern arm of the crossroads in Hawkhurst (i.e. approximately 250m to the north of the crossroads along the Cranbrook Road)) per day, to be accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment, with the development providing appropriate mitigation measures;
4. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. health and medical facilities as appropriate that cover Sandhurst parish (to be used towards improvements/reconfiguration of existing medical facilities or towards new premises providing medical facilities);
 - b. youth play space;
 - c. improvements to football pitches at Conghurst Lane Sports Ground (in neighbouring Hawkhurst parish), including improvements to drainage, and other recreation facilities;
 - d. library provision, adult learning, and social care, to include those services to be provided at the new Cranbrook Community Hub (in neighbouring Cranbrook & Sissinghurst parish);
 - e. allotments;
 - f. primary education provision, namely the expansion of the existing primary school at Hawkhurst to serve Hawkhurst and the surrounding villages;
 - g. improvements to bus services, including potential bus stops on the east side of the village;
 - h. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

Allocation policies for Sandhurst parish

Land on the south side of Sayville, Rye Road and west of Marsh Quarter Lane, Sandhurst

- 5.669** The site is a greenfield site in the National Landscape and has a gross area of some 1.03 hectares to the south of Rye Road (the A268), to the rear of the properties Sayville and Invicta House, and those on Ringle Green, at the eastern end of Sandhurst village. Marsh Quarter Lane runs north to south along the western boundary of the site. The site is predominantly grassland with a slope gently to the south. Public Right of Way WC295 runs down the western boundary of the site.
- 5.670** There is a TPO relating to three large veteran trees on the east side of Marsh Quarter Lane, which should be preserved as part of any future development of the site. There is low level archaeology (Palaeolithic and general background) anticipated, which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval. Although not part of the Sandhurst Conservation Area, the site sits just outside it to the south west. Burnt Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building to the west of the site and this forms part of a post-medieval historic farmstead.
- 5.671** A sewer line runs roughly through the middle part of the site. There is a ditch to the west of Marsh Quarter Lane which may need to be culverted as part of any development of the site.
- 5.672** The location of the site adjacent to the existing settlement means that it would form a logical extension to Sandhurst village. It is close to the core of the settlement and its services, which suggests some development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.673** Any development of the site should retain and strengthen tree coverage and planting along the boundaries of the site to provide a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including provision of landscape buffers and open space to ensure a soft approach to the village. It is expected that the boundary treatment between the Public Right of Way on the north west of the site and the site itself will be sensitively designed to create a green buffer along the western edge of the site, while retaining existing trees and hedgerows. Vehicular access to the site shall be informed by a transport assessment and include an assessment of the junction with Rye Road (the A268).
- 5.674** At a density appropriate to the location, it is anticipated that some 10-15 dwellings will be provided, of which some 40% (4-6 units) should be affordable housing.
- 5.675** It is noted that the site was part of a larger site and larger development, that was refused planning permission in November 2019. However, it is considered that development of the smaller site that forms this site allocation remains acceptable in principle. This is reflected through a planning consent granted for the site under planning reference 21/00825/OUT (and Reserved Matters 21/03676) for 15 dwellings.

Map 59 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/SA 1

Land on the south side of Sayville, Rye Road and west of Marsh Quarter Lane, Sandhurst

This site, as defined on the Sandhurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 10-15 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. A transport assessment, including assessment of the junction with Rye Road (the A268), shall be submitted with the planning application. This shall inform the vehicular access point;
2. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey: with the exception of the point of vehicular access to the site, proposals shall retain and strengthen tree coverage and planting along boundaries, including adjacent to the western boundary of the site by the Public Right of Way WC295;

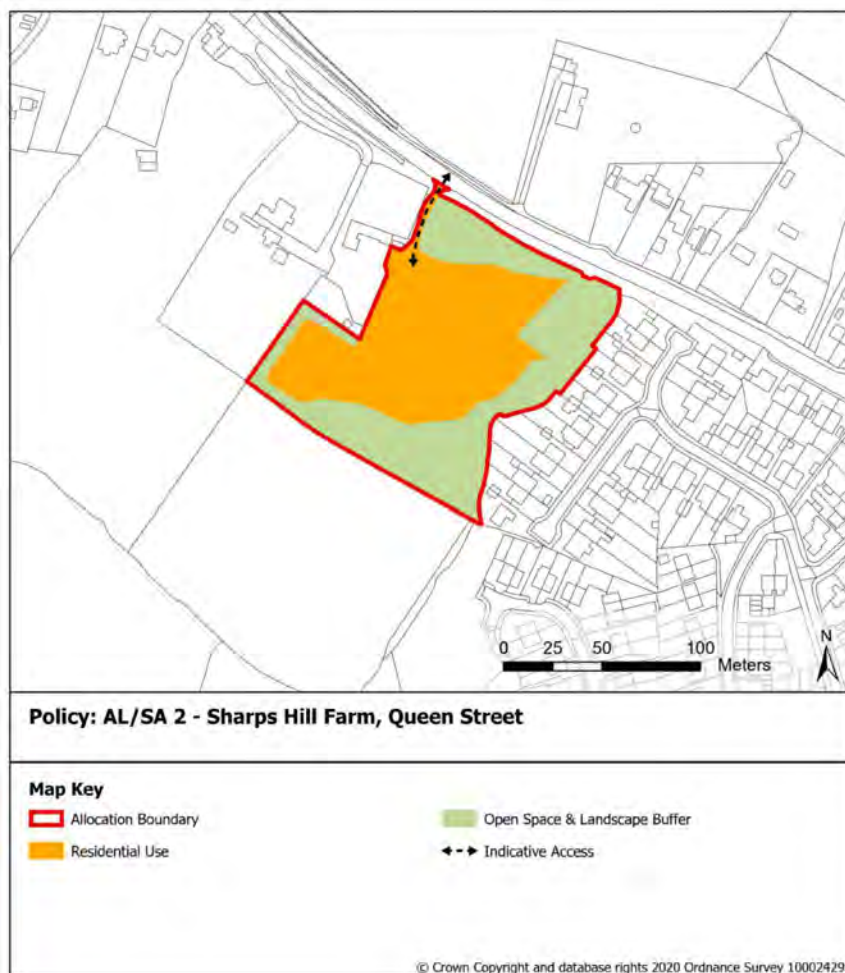
3. The setting of the settlement character shall be maintained, including through the layout and design of the development being informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that takes full account of the National Landscape location, and heritage assessment, giving full consideration to the site's edge-of-settlement location, providing a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including provision of landscape buffers and open space to ensure a soft approach to the village and be sensitively designed in relation to heritage assets;
4. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/SA1.

Sharps Hill Farm, Queen Street, Sandhurst

- 5.676** The site is some 1.54 hectares gross and lies to the south of Queen Street (the A268) and abuts the western end of Sandhurst village. The site is partly previously developed land, consisting of a residential property, Sharps Hill Farm and its associated curtilage, which includes a number of outbuildings. To the east and south of the residential curtilage the site is greenfield and includes a pond and stream in the north east corner. Existing residential properties in Stream Pit Lane adjoin the site immediately to the east.
- 5.677** The site lies within the National Landscape and the wider landscape to the north, south, and west is rural in character, with some loosely-spaced dwellings fronting Queen Street to the west of the site. The immediate neighbours to the west are Sharps Hill Oast, a non-designated heritage asset, and Bayford House, a Grade II listed building. Development should take account of any potential impacts on the setting of these buildings and the Sandhurst Conservation Area.
- 5.678** The site is served by an existing vehicular access onto Queen Street, which is currently used by Sharps Hill Farm and Sharps Oast.
- 5.679** There are mature trees along boundaries of the site, particularly on the frontage with Queen Street to the north and to the east. The site is part of a much larger area of archaeological potential with some Palaeolithic potential (Wadhurst Roman/ Prehistoric Ridgeway). It is anticipated that this could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval.
- 5.680** The development of the site should retain and protect tree coverage and planting along the boundaries of the site, and be supported by an arboricultural survey. In addition, the scheme shall enhance tree coverage in the south of the site. The eastern watercourse and pond shall also be retained. The proposed layout should respond positively to the existing settlement. A suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including landscape buffers along the southern boundary, should be provided to ensure a soft approach to the village and be sensitively designed. The setting of the designated heritage assets should be taken into account when considering the design and layout of development. To ensure appropriate pedestrian access, a pedestrian footway shall be provided to connect with the existing footway to the east of the site, leading to the settlement centre.

- 5.681** An area of contaminated land covers the north-west corner of the site and a preliminary risk assessment should be submitted with the application to fully assess this. At a density appropriate to the location, it is anticipated that some 10-15 dwellings will be provided, of which some 40% (4-6 units) should be affordable housing.

Map 60 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/SA 2

Sharps Hill Farm, Queen Street

This site, as defined on the Sandhurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 10-15 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. A single point of access should be provided to Queen Street, as shown indicatively on the site layout plan, and be supported by a transport assessment submitted with the planning application;
2. Proposals for the site shall be informed by a heritage assessment including an assessment of the heritage significance of Bayford House, Sharps Hill Oast, and

the Sandhurst Conservation Area and the contributions of their settings to that significance;

3. Regard shall be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey. Any trees removed as part of the vehicular access should be replaced along the northern site boundary;
4. The scale, layout and design of development should be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that takes full account of the National Landscape location, and should respond positively to the existing settlement pattern and the well treed character of the site. The scheme shall give full consideration to the site's edge-of-village location, providing a suitable and sensitive urban edge to the settlement, including provision of landscape buffers to ensure a soft approach to the village;
5. Proposals for the site shall provide a footway linking the site to the existing footway to the east of the site, with a general minimum width of 1.8 metres together with any accommodating works;
6. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/SA 1.

Speldhurst

Overview

- 5.682** The parish of Speldhurst is located on the western edge of the borough, adjacent to the borough boundary with the districts of Sevenoaks and Wealden. The villages of Speldhurst and Langton Green are the only sizeable settlements in the parish, which also includes the smaller settlements of Ashurst and Old Groombridge, which do not have defined LBDs. The parish otherwise largely comprises wooded farmland, with scattered development, including historic farmsteads. The parish forms part of the Speldhurst Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area.
- 5.683** The parish is mostly Green Belt, with the exclusion of land within the defined LBD of the settlements at Speldhurst and Langton Green villages. It also lies mostly within the High Weald National Landscape, which wraps around the edge of Langton Green, largely reflecting the LBD there, with overlap in some parts.
- 5.684** Speldhurst village and Langton Green both have historic cores, designated as conservation areas, which include listed buildings. That at Langton Green is located on the western side of the settlement and is focused on the area around The Green. Old Groombridge has a large conservation area, including numerous listed buildings and the village green. Groombridge Place is recognised as both a heritage and tourism asset.
- 5.685** The settlement of Langton Green merges with Rusthall village in the neighbouring Rusthall parish, to the east.
- 5.686** The settlement of Speldhurst is located approximately 1.5 miles from Langton Green to the south, approximately 2.2 miles from Southborough to the north east, and approximately 2.5 miles from Fordcombe to the south west. Langton Green is located approximately 2.7 miles from Ashurst to the west, two miles from Groombridge to the south west, and approximately 2.5 miles from Royal Tunbridge Wells to the east.
- 5.687** The parish includes part of the main distributor road, the A264, linking from the A21 through the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and on to East Grinstead. Some roads are identified as Rural Lanes, as referred to in the [Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (1998). The closest railway stations to Speldhurst village are located at High Brooms, near Southborough, approximately 2.9 miles away and Royal Tunbridge Wells, approximately 3.5 miles away. Langton Green is located approximately 2.5 miles away from railway stations at both Royal Tunbridge Wells and Ashurst and 4.3 miles from a train station at Eridge Green.
- 5.688** Langton Green is currently served by bus services linking the village with Royal Tunbridge Wells, Lingfield, Edenbridge, Speldhurst, Crawley, and High Brooms. These run regularly during weekdays, although not during peak hours and are less regular at weekends when not all services operate. Langton Green has a range of services and facilities, including a primary school, children's nursery, a private school, dentist, church, village hall and a separate pavilion, and a small number of shops, including a convenience store. There is also a public house.

- 5.689** Speldhurst village has fewer bus services; currently a service linking the village with Royal Tunbridge Wells on a fairly regular basis on weekdays and Saturdays. There is a lack of bus services at peak times and on Sundays. There is also a school bus service that runs to the Weald of Kent Grammar School in Tonbridge. In terms of services and facilities, Speldhurst village is served by a community shop that includes a post office and general store, a doctors surgery, a primary school and a children's nursery, village hall, and a church and a further chapel. The village has a public house, although this is currently closed.
- 5.690** In terms of growth potential, one site has been identified as having residential development potential to contribute to meeting the growth needs of the borough. A further site is identified as having potential to provide recreational/sports provision.
- 5.691** Local Plan Policy AL/SP 1 is sited immediately south of the settlement edge at Speldhurst, adjacent to residential development in Ferbies and in proximity to other built (and less dense) development on the eastern side of Speldhurst Road, including Went Farm Business Centre (a post-medieval historic farmstead). The site subject to Policy AL/SP 1 was formerly part of the Green Belt.
- 5.692** Policy AL/SP 1 will provide approximately 10-12 dwellings, including 40% (4-5 units) affordable housing provision in accordance with Policy H 3: Affordable Housing.
- 5.693** Policy AL/SP 2 relates to a site in Speldhurst parish that abuts the settlement of Rusthall in the neighbouring Rusthall parish. The site includes land at and adjacent to an existing recreation ground at Rusthall and will provide additional recreation/sports provision.
- 5.694** Full requirements for development of these sites is set out in the subsequent site allocation Policies AL/SP 1 and AL/ SP 2.
- 5.695** The site allocations are well related to the settlements and each will provide community benefits. There may be opportunities for redevelopment of other appropriate windfall sites where they are brought forward in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan, including that related to affordable housing.
- 5.696** For Speldhurst parish, the IDP shows a deficiency in the provision of youth play provision, allotments, and secondary education provision. The IDP identifies the provision of publicly accessible open space and recreation. Future residential development in the parish during the plan period will be expected to contribute to these provisions to help mitigate impact from future development, including new recreation/sports provision on land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, which is subject to site allocation Policy AL/SP 2. The IDP also identifies a need to re-configure playing pitches at Langton Green, for which funding is likely to be available.
- 5.697** In addition, Speldhurst Parish Council considers that there is a need for highway improvements in the parish, including speed reductions. Proposals for relevant development in the parish will need to provide information on highways impacts, and highway improvement/speed reduction measures may be identified through these.

The Strategy for Speldhurst parish

Policy PSTR/SP 1

The Strategy for Speldhurst parish

The development strategy for Speldhurst parish is to:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for the settlements of Speldhurst village and Langton Green, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Maps 32 and 33) as a framework for new development over the plan period, incorporating the site allocation Policy AL/SP 1 into the Speldhurst Limits to Built Development;
2. Build approximately 10-12 new dwellings, of which 40 percent is to be affordable housing, on one site at Speldhurst village, as allocated under Policy AL/SP 1;
3. Support active travel by delivering improvements to the local pedestrian and cycling network as set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and additional cycle parking in key locations. This will include through the provision of contributions;
4. Seek developer contributions from residential schemes, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, to be used towards the provision of:
 - a. new recreation/sports provision on land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground (in Speldhurst parish, allocated under Policy AL/SP 2);
 - b. secondary education provision;
 - c. youth play space;
 - d. allotments;
 - e. other necessary mitigation measures which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

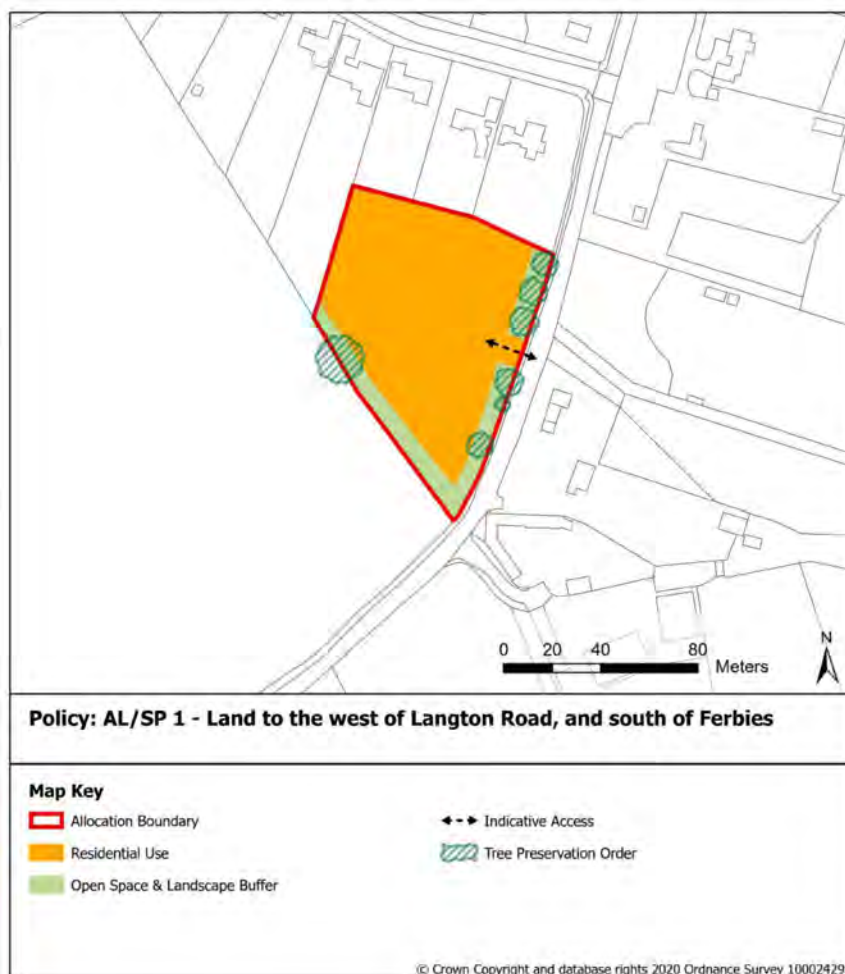
Allocation policies for Speldhurst parish

Land to the west of Langton Road and south of Ferbies

- 5.698** The site comprises a relatively small undeveloped field that fronts onto Langton Road along its eastern boundary and which adjoins existing residential gardens, in Ferbies, along its northern and western boundaries. To the south is an agricultural field. The site adjoins the settlement edge of Speldhurst village.
- 5.699** The gross site size is approximately 0.79 hectares and is located within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 5.700** The site was released from the Green Belt, and the Development Strategy Topic Paper and Green Belt studies set out the exceptional circumstances and compensatory improvements to the remaining Green Belt to justify the changes to the boundary in this location.
- 5.701** The topography of the site is generally flat, with the village of Speldhurst being at a higher level in the wider landscape. There is a TPO relating to six trees located along the eastern frontage of the site, and a further tree sited towards the south-

west corner. It is expected that these trees will be retained through development of the site, along with the minimal loss of other trees and hedgerow that currently form boundaries of the site, with the exception of the point of access to the site.

- 5.702** Langton Road becomes Speldhurst Road south of the site. There is a change of speed limit along this; 20 miles per hour entering into the village from 40 miles per hour. Speldhurst Parish Council has identified a need for highway improvements in the parish and there is particular concern regarding the need for speed reductions, including at Speldhurst village. The development of this site should give consideration to this accordingly.
- 5.703** There is currently no vehicular access into the site from Langton Road, which would need to be provided. There is an existing footway along the frontage of the site, linking the site to the village centre. This footway also runs south, where on the opposite side of the Langton Road is an existing Public Right of Way WT78 to the south-east corner of the site. This Public Right of Way runs through Went Farm Business Park, a post-medieval historic farmstead.
- 5.704** The location of the site adjacent to the existing village means that it would form a logical extension to Speldhurst village. It is close to the core of the village and its services, which suggests some development potential to contribute to development needs.
- 5.705** At a density appropriate to the location, it is anticipated that some 10-12 dwellings will be provided, of which some 40% (4-5 units) should be affordable housing. There is low level archaeology anticipated on the site, which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval.
- 5.706** Southern Water has undertaken a preliminary assessment of the capacity of its existing infrastructure and its ability to meet the forecast demand for development of this site. The assessment reveals that existing local sewerage infrastructure to the site has limited capacity to accommodate the proposed development. It would be expected that Southern Water will provide this, funded by Southern Water's new Infrastructure Charge. Proposals for the site will be assessed against Policy EN 24: Water Supply, Quality, and Conservation.
- 5.707** The indicative site layout plan indicates the potential location of vehicular access to the site (which would need to be informed by appropriate transport assessment) and the location of the TPOs on the site.

Map 61 Site Layout Plan

Policy AL/SP 1

Land to the west of Langton Road and south of Ferbies

This site, as defined on the Speldhurst Policies Map, is allocated for residential development providing approximately 10-12 dwellings, of which 40 percent shall be affordable housing.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Vehicular access shall be taken from Langton Road, the precise location of which shall be informed by a transport assessment. The Transport Assessment shall also identify any necessary mitigation measures, which may include traffic calming, to be implemented by the developer, or if appropriate through a developer financial contribution;
2. The scheme shall ensure the retention of hedges and trees along site boundaries with minimal loss for the creation of a vehicular and pedestrian access from Langton Road and shall contain significant areas of undeveloped green space, including appropriate landscape buffers to site boundaries to provide a soft approach to Speldhurst village, ensuring a scheme that is sensitively designed and provides a suitable edge to the settlement;

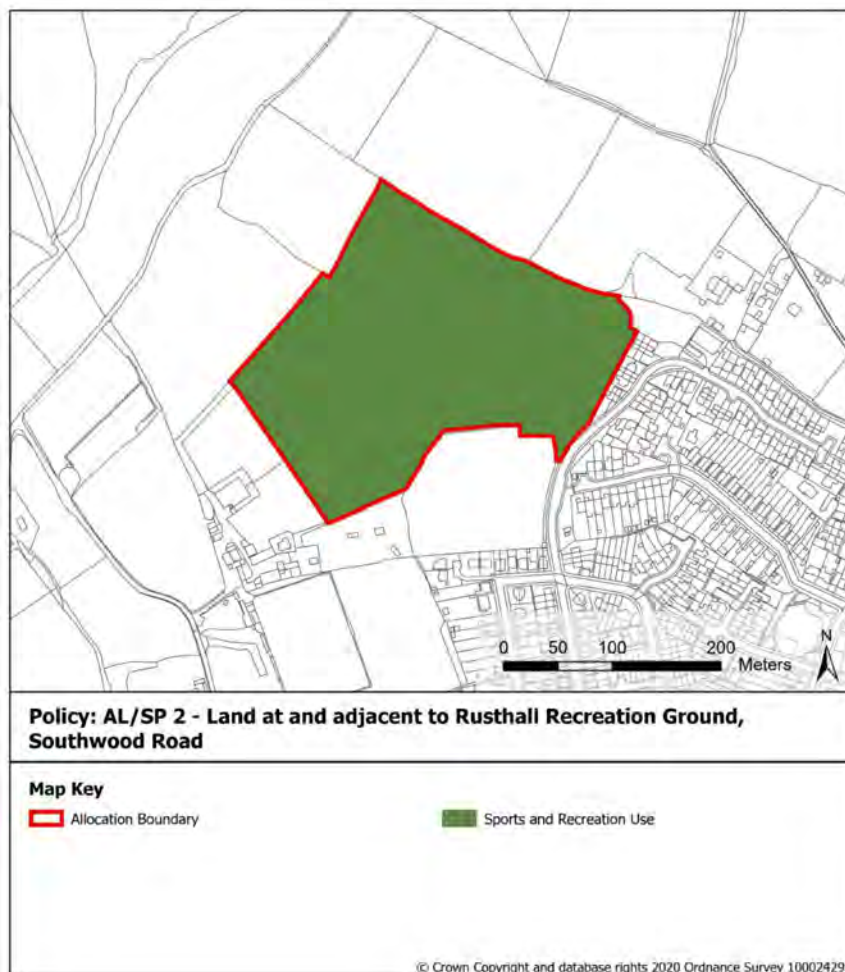
3. Proposals for the site shall be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that takes full account of the National Landscape location, and include an assessment of the impact of proposals on the Speldhurst Conservation Area and the Went Farm historic farmstead;
4. The applicant should liaise with Southern Water regarding capacity to serve the development and provide details of this as part of the application;
5. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/SP 1.

Land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, Southwood Road, Rusthall

- 5.708** The site consists of an existing recreation ground, including an associated car park and sports pavilion, sports court, and skate park in addition to a children's play area and playing pitches. In addition to this, the site includes a parcel of land, currently agricultural land, that lies adjacent to the existing recreation ground. This agricultural land currently forms part of Jockey Farm. The site measures 6.24 hectares. It lies within Speldhurst parish, sitting, however, adjacent to the settlement edge of Rusthall village, in Rusthall parish.
- 5.709** The site lies next to Southwood Road allotments, located immediately to the south, and a further small allotment parcel to the north east. Southwood Road adjoins the site along its eastern boundary, from where there is existing vehicular and pedestrian access into the site. There are residential properties to the east of Southwood Road, including abutting the site at its north-east corner. Peacock Farm lies close to the north east and there are open fields to the north west. Jockey Farm lies south west, which includes the stadium for Rusthall Football Club and its training pitches, accessed from Nellington Road.
- 5.710** The site is wholly located within the High Weald National Landscape and Green Belt. The site is to remain as Green Belt in this Plan, the recreation and sports provision planned through this site allocation being appropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with advice in the NPPF. The agricultural part of the site was previously allocated in the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 under Policy AL/RTW 30: Land adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground for sports pitches and other outdoor recreation facilities. Planning permission has been granted under reference 21/00068 for the change of use of this land to expand existing recreational facilities through provision of additional sports pitches, together with associated additional car parking provision, 'ball stop' fencing, and other works. This has not been implemented to date.
- 5.711** While there are no Public Rights of Way through the site itself, there are several in the wider vicinity of the site, including Public Rights of Way WT79 and WT80 located further north along with WT110, which is a public bridleway.

- 5.712** The topography of the site is generally flat, with the wider topography rising gently to the east. The green parcel has a gentle slope. Low level archaeology (Palaeolithic potential and general background archaeology) is anticipated, which could be dealt with through suitable conditions on a planning approval.
- 5.713** The Sports Strategy (Playing Pitch Strategy) identifies the corporate aim to provide sports hubs across the borough, which will include enhanced sports and recreation facilities serving a wider catchment area. The proposed provision at Rusthall will seek to meet the needs of those living in Rusthall, Speldhurst, Langton Green, and Bidborough and it is acknowledged that there would be other visitors to the site, including other sports clubs playing 'away'. Development contributions, where applicable, from residential schemes within the parishes of Rusthall, Speldhurst, and Bidborough will help fund delivery of this site allocation.
- 5.714** The IDP for Rusthall parish identifies that Rusthall playing fields are identified as a priority for improvements of non-playing pitch facilities as the site has ageing ancillary facilities. Support to Rusthall Juniors FC and also the provision of a 3G pitch at Rusthall are also identified by the IDP along with the need to replace or improve ancillary facilities at Rusthall Southwood Road Recreation Ground. The site allocation would cater for these improvements.
- 5.715** The site lies on the edge of the existing settlement of Rusthall village and a large part of the site provides existing recreation and sport provision. This suggests, therefore, that the site, including the agricultural land adjacent to the existing recreation ground, which already has planning consent for the change of use of land to expand the existing recreational facilities, has potential to meet growth needs in recreation/sports provision to serve the wider area as identified by the Sports Strategy.
- 5.716** The vast majority of the site allocation relates to land owned by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; however, the agricultural part of the site does not. It may be necessary to serve a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to ensure the site can come forward as expected. CPOs are used to enable land to be acquired for the wider benefit of the community, usually to enable regeneration and development schemes that involve complex or multiple land ownership, without which development would be unlikely to be delivered.

Map 62 Site Layout Plan



Policy AL/SP 2

Land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, Southwood Road

This site, as defined on the Speldhurst Policies Map, is allocated for recreation and sports provision, including additional provision for a range of sports and recreation uses, including grass and 3G sports pitches, and new and or enhanced built facilities such as male and female changing rooms.

Development on the site shall accord with the following requirements:

1. Proposals for the site shall be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment, that takes full account of the National Landscape location;
2. Proposals for development at the site shall, where necessary, include the provision of a travel plan and details of the provision of overspill car parking;
3. Any proposals to improve grass pitches shall include details to improve the drainage of the pitches to enable use over a longer period of the year;
4. Proposals for the site shall have regard to existing hedgerows and mature trees on-site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey;
5. The provision of details for proposals of external lighting;

6. The provision of details for any proposed ground level changes throughout the site;
7. The provision of a noise impact assessment of the proposed uses to inform design of, and management of, any noise mitigation measures that may be required to reduce noise to nearby residential areas;
8. Contributions are to be provided to mitigate the impact of the development, in accordance with Policy PSTR/SP 1.

Section 6: Development Management Policies

6.1 The Local Plan sets out of a number of strategic, place-based and allocation policies to guide future development in the borough. The development management policies contained in this section also form part of the policy framework, which aims to achieve the Vision for Tunbridge Wells borough and the Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan. They provide more detail for decision making in relation to particular issues and for assessing the acceptability of certain types of development.

6.2 Development management is not intended to hinder or prevent sustainable development. Rather, it is a positive and proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining, and delivering development proposals in support of the Local Plan strategy.

6.3 The policies set out in this section are regarded as addressing the main issues that occur in relation to the consideration of planning applications in the borough. Inevitably, they will not cover all policy areas and do not repeat national policies. In the absence of a directly relevant development management policy, proposals will be considered in the context of national policies and/or relevant Local Plan strategic and place-based policies.

6.4 The development management policies deal with a range of issues, such as:

Environment

- Environment and Design
- Natural Environment
- Air, Water, Noise, and Land

Housing

- Delivery of Housing
- Types of housing delivery

Economic Development

- Employment Provision
- Town, Rural Service and Neighbourhood Centres, and Village Settlements Hierarchy

Transport and Parking

Open Space, Sport, and Recreation

6.5 A number of policies relate to proposals for development in the countryside (i.e. outside the defined Limits to Built Development (LBD)) where a general policy of restraint applies. Further information and explanation of the LBDs is contained in Policy STR 1 and its supporting text (Section 4). The Inset Maps define the LBDs for each settlement.

- 6.6** Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are proposed in relation to certain matters where they are considered necessary to provide more details on the policies in the Local Plan. SPDs are not part of the statutory development plan and do not therefore have the same status; however, once adopted they are capable of being treated as material considerations in the determination of planning applications.
- 6.7** All supporting documents referred to throughout this Section can be found under [Supporting Documents](#) on the Council's Local Plan web page.

Environment

Environment and Design

Sustainable Design

Introduction: design and context

- 6.8** High quality, low carbon, and sustainable design can help respond to the challenges of climate change, improve the quality of the natural and built environment, attract business and investment, promote good health and wellbeing, and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place.
- 6.9** The borough contains an outstanding heritage of high-quality buildings, townscapes, and countryside, 70% of which is designated within the High Weald National Landscape, and it is essential that new development proposals respect the immediate context of a site, as well as its wider setting. Control of external appearance and layout is of great importance in this environmentally sensitive borough, and strong emphasis will be placed on high-quality design for all new development.
- 6.10** The key elements that make up good design relate to scale, height, external appearance, materials, detailing, layout and orientation, mass, bulk, roofscape, site coverage, sustainability, energy efficiency, tree planting, and landscaping. These elements should respect the context of the site in which they are seen. Local distinctiveness should be reinforced, and natural features worthy of retention sensitively incorporated.
- 6.11** In order to integrate well into the existing built, natural, and historic environment, new development should respect the existing urban grain and address the connections between people, places, and nature (including vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian movement and access to public facilities and amenity open space). It should also create safe, inclusive, and attractive environments that meet the needs of users, incorporate principles of sustainable development, including reuse and upgrading of existing buildings, and maintain and enhance landscape connectivity, and biodiversity and geodiversity features. New development must also be designed to promote healthy living opportunities, including both mental and physical wellbeing.

- 6.12** Landscaping (both soft and hard) and tree planting should be integral to the overall design of a scheme and should be considered at the beginning of the design process in establishing the use, layout, and site coverage of the development.
- 6.13** While, in general, development should be designed to complement the character of a particular place, it should be equally recognised that exceptional design (as defined by paragraph 80 (e) of the NPPF (September 2023)) does not simply replicate the form and appearance of existing development, but rather responds to it.

Sustainable design

- 6.14** Many sustainable design features have multiple benefits; for example, green roofs that enhance biodiversity, absorb rainfall, improve the thermal and acoustic performance of the building, reduce the urban heat island effect, and improve the appearance of a development. The use of appropriate construction materials is also key and, where practicable, those sourced locally and with low embodied energy should be prioritised.
- 6.15** Frequently, sustainable solutions will help support the ability of the natural environment to contribute vital goods and services to people and society. Such 'ecosystem services' include flood mitigation, crop pollination, freshwater filtration, and climate stability. Since the publication of the [National Ecosystem Assessment](#) (2011) and the [Enabling a natural capital approach \(ENCA\) Guidance](#) (2020 and updated in 2023), it has been clear that ecosystem services are often undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision making. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF (September 2023) seeks to address this by encouraging the planning system to recognise these critical services, and it is the intention of the policies in this Plan to implement the necessary design and construction measures to protect and enhance ecosystem services.
- 6.16** Where opportunities exist for positive improvements (for example, reduced energy demands and improvements to occupiers' wellbeing), they will be supported where feasible. Likewise, more modern methods of construction such as off-site manufacturing, modular construction, and prefabricated materials and components are an excellent way to reduce the carbon footprint of a development.
- 6.17** Sustainable design should also recognise that demolition and rebuild is not always appropriate, and that structurally sound buildings, including historic buildings, should be reused in preference to demolition.
- 6.18** With large proportions of a building's carbon footprint and environmental impact being created before occupation begins, sustainable construction methods are a key consideration. For this reason, it is important that the environmental assessment of a development includes not only the operational stage of a building's life when it is in use, but also considers construction activities such as the production and transportation of materials. This is commonly carried out via the preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, which reviews the impact of the construction phase and proposes measures to reduce these impacts; for example, reducing vehicle and plant emissions, or diverting waste from landfill. Indeed,

construction, demolition, and excavation activities contribute to over half of the total waste generated in the UK each year and thus must not be overlooked. The [Waste and Resources Action Programme](#) (WRAP) and the [Construction Industry Research and Information Association](#) (CIRIA) should be referred to for further details on reducing construction waste and implementing demolition protocols.

- 6.19** All development below the CEMP threshold of 20 units or 2000m² (see EN1 policy box), is encouraged to use sustainably sourced materials with low embodied carbon, such as recycled or secondary aggregates, and that can be easily reused or recycled at the end of their life.

Policy and guidance

- 6.20** The NPPF and National Design Guide seek to raise the quality of the built, natural, and historic environment, and quality of life in general, by securing high-quality design and ensuring all development contributes to making places better for all whilst achieving sustainable design and construction objectives.
- 6.21** [Building for a Healthy Life](#) (formerly known as Building for Life 12) is a nationally recognised industry standard for assessing whether development will be successful and well designed. The Council will use it to assess proposals for major developments, and applicants for larger housing schemes will be expected to set out in a supporting statement how these have been addressed. Likewise, the sustainable design standards described in Policy EN 2: Sustainable Design Standards will also be referred to.
- 6.22** Policy EN 1 aspires to achieve high quality and sustainable design throughout the borough and will be used to assess all development requiring planning permission. A design guide checklist is provided below the Policy to support the criteria of this policy.
- 6.23** The principles underlying high quality, sustainable design and construction reflect a number of policies in this Plan and it is therefore important to note that, depending on the type of development proposed and relevant constraints, Policy EN 1 will be considered alongside other, more detailed development management policies in this Plan. For example, there is a separate development management policy (Policy EN 19) which provides more detailed guidance on development within the High Weald National Landscape.
- 6.24** Proposals that fail to take opportunities to secure high quality and sustainable design that respects local distinctiveness will be resisted.
- 6.25** In assessing the appropriateness of design, as well as other policies in the Local Plan and any applicable neighbourhood development plans, the Council will have regard to the following guidance (or any successive guidance):
- Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area Appraisals
 - Tunbridge Wells Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document
 - Tunbridge Wells Historic Environment Review

- Royal Tunbridge Wells Urban Design Framework
- Tunbridge Wells Landscape and and Nature Conservation Guidance (Parts 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) publications
- Building for a Healthy Life (update of Building for Life 12)
- Sport England's Active Design Guide
- National Design Guide
- HCA Urban Design Compendium, volumes 1 and 2
- Kent Design Guide
- BREEAM
- CEEQUAL
- Home Quality Mark
- Manual for Streets
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)
- M42/M43 optional requirement in the Building Regulations
- High Weald Joint Advisory Committee Advice and Management Plan
- Design for Crime Prevention – A Kent Design Guide for Developers, Designers and Planners
- Historic England's Climate Change and the Historic Environment

Engagement

- 6.26** In line with the Council's [Statement of Community Involvement](#) , new development should be informed by effective engagement between applicants, communities, neighbours of sites, local planning authorities, infrastructure providers, and other interested parties throughout the planning process.

Policy EN 1

Sustainable Design

All proposals for development within the borough will be required to satisfy the following criteria, as applicable to the type of development proposed.

For development proposals of over 20 units or 2,000sqm floorspace new build or conversion, a Construction Environmental Management Plan that provides details on all applicable matters in sections 1 to 9 below will be required at pre-commencement stage. These will include targets for diversion of waste from landfill and responsible procurement.

The criteria below are relevant to the design, construction, and operation of the proposal and must be considered from the beginning of the design process. They should also not be read as an exhaustive list, but as an indicative guide to the main issues that need to be considered and addressed when submitting proposals for development.

Additionally, the Local list of validation requirements which is available on the Council's website*, provides information and guidance about the type of information that should be submitted to support planning application proposals.

1. Design, character, and site context

1. Proposals, where appropriate, should retain and enhance buildings that contribute positively to the locality and street scene, heritage assets, open spaces, trees/vegetation, features of biodiversity/geodiversity, or other features important to the built or landscape character of the area, especially in the High Weald National Landscape;
2. Proposals should make efficient use of land and buildings, including through the reuse of buildings where practicable;
3. Siting, layout, density, spacing, orientation, and landscaping must respect site characteristics; including its topography, natural features, relationship with immediate surroundings, historic setting, and views into and out of the site;
4. The scale, form, height, massing, proportions, external appearance, and materials should be compatible with existing buildings, building lines, landscape, treescape, roofscapes, and skylines;
5. The CEMP should demonstrate, where possible, that materials will be used that are sustainably sourced and with low embodied carbon such as recycled or secondary aggregates which can be easily reused or recycled at the end of their life;
6. The design and layout shall be accessible to all, and maintain and maximise opportunities for permeability and linkages to the surrounding area, existing Public Rights of Way, local services, and access to amenity open space, including through public transport and opportunities for active travel such as walking and cycling;
7. Buildings should be designed to be adaptable to the changing needs of occupiers over their lifetime, with residential development, where appropriate, making suitable provision for home working;
8. Proposals should be designed for significant carbon dioxide emissions reductions and more sustainable energy sources, through energy efficiency improvements and facilitating low and zero carbon technology to ensure development supports a path to net zero emissions by 2050;
9. Proposals should include infrastructure that meets modern communication and technology needs, and restricts the need for future retrofitting, including broadband, fibre to the premises (FTTP) where possible, high speed internet cabling/ducting, and provision of a power supply and infrastructure that would support green technology initiatives, such as electric vehicle charging points;
10. Proposals should incorporate measures for the adequate storage of waste, including recyclable waste and domestic paraphernalia;
11. Proposals should follow the waste hierarchy during construction, by first minimising the generation of waste and then maximising reuse or recycling of waste. For all development, sending waste to landfill must be a last resort.

(See also Policies EN 2: Sustainable Design Standards, EN 3: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets, EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain, EN 10: Protection of Designated Sites and Habitats, EN 11: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation, EN 12: Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development, EN 16-19: landscape policies, EN 24-26: water related policies, ED 3: Digital Communications and Fibre to the Premises (FTTP), and TP 2: Transport Design and Accessibility).

2. Highway safety and access

1. Vehicular access, parking provision, and pedestrian movement should be safely accommodated;
2. Traffic from new development should not result in severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network;
3. The proposal should include cycle storage/parking and infrastructure provision in accordance with Policy TP 3: Parking Standards;
4. Car parking and/or servicing should be appropriate to site context and designed and located so as not to cause material harm to the visual amenity and not dominate the street scene and/or public realm.

(See also Policies TP 2: Transport Design and Accessibility and TP 3: Parking Standards).

3. Water/flooding issues

1. Proposals should use water efficiently; in the case of new homes by meeting the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement, and incorporating facilities to recycle, harvest, and conserve water resources wherever practicable;
2. Proposals should ensure there is adequate drainage provision so that surface water is appropriately controlled within the development site by using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), flood risk is managed on-site and off-site, and any existing flood risk in the locality is not exacerbated;
3. Proposals should avoid inappropriate new development within areas at risk from flooding or mitigate any potential impacts of new development within such areas whereby mitigation measures are integral to the design of buildings.

(See also Policies EN 24: Water Supply, Quality and Conservation, EN 25: Flood Risk and EN 26: Sustainable Drainage).

4. Landscape, trees, and amenity

1. Proposals should be accompanied by an integral landscaping (both hard and soft) scheme, which contributes to, and enhances, the natural and local environment, including sympathetic boundary treatments and green infrastructure;
2. Any proposed new landscaping, and any existing landscape feature to be retained, shall include adequate provision for future tree and hedgerow growth, and management practices.

(See also Policies EN 12: Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development and EN 13: Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees).

5. Biodiversity and geodiversity

1. Proposals should maximise opportunities for increasing biodiversity potential, and retaining and enhancing blue/green infrastructure features, including SuDS;
2. Proposals that affect existing biodiversity, geodiversity, and blue/green infrastructure must be designed to avoid, mitigate, or compensate for any potential harm, resulting in a net gain;
3. Proposals should identify and not undermine the value of ecosystem services that the site provides.

(See also Policies EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain, EN 10: Protection of Designated Sites and Habitats, EN 11: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation, and EN 26: Sustainable Drainage).

6. Residential amenity

Proposals should not cause significant harm to the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses, and should provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development by ensuring:

1. That development does not result in, or is not exposed to, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity, vehicular movements, or overlooking;
2. That the built form must not have an overbearing impact nor create an unacceptable loss of privacy, outlook, or daylight and sunlight enjoyed by the occupiers of adjacent/nearby properties;
3. Provision of sufficient public and private outdoor and recreational space.

(See also Policies EN 27: Noise, H 11: Residential extensions, alterations, outbuildings, and annexes and OSSR 2: The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation).

7. Crime reduction

Proposals should create a safe and secure environment and incorporate adequate security measures and features to deter crime, fear of crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour.

8. Design and construction guidance

Regard should be had to the guidance documents (and any successive guidance) listed above in paragraph 6.25, where relevant, including Supplementary Planning Documents, the Kent Design Guide, Building for a Healthy Life, the National Design Guide, Conservation Area Appraisals, the High Weald AONB Management Plan, the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide, and related supporting guidance. Registration with the Considerate Constructors Scheme (or equivalent) is strongly encouraged.

9. Community engagement

New development should be informed by effective engagement between applicants, local communities, neighbours of sites, local planning authorities, infrastructure providers, and other interested parties throughout the planning process.

* view the [Local list of validation requirements](#)

Design checklist to support the design criteria in Policy EN 1

1. Design, character, and site context

- a. Does the proposal make best use of, and provide mitigation where required to, existing topography, site orientation, existing buildings, landscape features, trees and vegetation, and wildlife habitats?

- b. Are there any distinctive characteristics within the area, such as building form, styles, colours, and materials, or the character of streets and spaces, that the development should draw inspiration from or enhance?
- c. Does the scheme make efficient use of land, reinforce existing access and connections and create new ones, and integrate into its surroundings by respecting existing buildings and land uses close by, and avoiding demolition?
- d. Is the development easy to navigate and does it provide easy access for all without car dependency?
- e. Has consideration been given to material sourcing and disposal during construction so that landfill can be avoided?
- f. Does the development sufficiently mitigate and adapt to climate change?
- g. Is there appropriate EV charging and broadband infrastructure and would FTTP be possible?
- h. Is there adequate external storage, or easily accessible internal storage space, for waste so it is less likely to be left out on the street?
- i. Does the design, positioning, and screening of bin areas provide a safe and acceptable location for bin collections?

2. Highway safety and access

- a. Where should vehicles come in and out of the development?
- b. Is access to cycle and other vehicle storage convenient and secure?
- c. Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as shared social spaces?
- d. How do the proposals enable active travel?

3. Water/flooding features

- a. Is water being used efficiently?
- b. How has surface water runoff been considered in the scheme?
- c. Have areas at risk of flooding been avoided before mitigation measures have been considered?

4. Landscape, trees, and amenity

- a. Is a tree survey to BS:5837 required to be submitted with the application?
- b. Have appropriate protection measures and long term management been considered for existing individual trees/groups of trees to be retained, that contribute positively to the area?
- c. Has the use of hard and soft landscaping to define the difference between public and private areas been considered?
- d. In rural areas, has particular attention been paid to the retention and addition of native vegetation appropriate to the local landscape character to help assimilate development into its rural setting?

- e. In urban areas, have tree planting and soft landscaping, including green roofs and living walls, been used where appropriate to green the urban environment and as part of any surface water drainage system?
- f. Does the proposal respond to the Borough Landscape Character Assessment SPD and the High Weald AONB Management Plan?

5. Biodiversity and geodiversity

- a. Have the necessary and up-to-date surveys been undertaken?
- b. Does the scheme retain existing habitats and incorporate new ones?
- c. Does the scheme give consideration to ecosystem services?
- d. Is any mitigation or compensation required?
- e. Does the development proposal result in net gain of biodiversity?

6. Residential amenity

Is the spacing between buildings adequate, and would there be any overlooking between, or loss of daylight/sunlight to, habitable room windows, resulting in an overbearing impact to any neighbouring properties?

7. Access to public and private spaces and crime reduction

- a. Are public and private spaces clearly defined and designed with appropriate access, which is able to be well managed and safe to use?
- b. What types of amenity space would be provided within the development and how will they be looked after?

8. Design guidance

How has the relevant guidance been used to determine and assess the distinctive character and identity of the scheme and how it relates to the existing character of the borough?

9. Community engagement

- a. Can the applicant demonstrate early, proactive, and effective engagement with the community, stakeholders, planning and infrastructure authorities/ organisations, etc?
- b. How has the proposed design evolved to take account of views expressed through engagement, and to reconcile local and commercial interests?
- c. Did you engage with the occupiers of neighbouring properties before submitting a planning application for a household extension?

Sustainable Design Standards

- 6.27** The NPPF directs planning authorities to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme, and advocates the use of assessment frameworks (paragraph 133 of the NPPF (September 2023)) such as sustainability standards.

- 6.28** Many international and national standards are available for use, the best known of which is the [Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method](#) or BREEAM. The BREEAM family of standards includes standards for:
- the build, refurbishment, and operation of non-residential development;
 - the masterplanning of major development (BREEAM Communities);
 - public realm works (CEEQUAL);
 - the build, refurbishment, and operation of residential development (see the [Home Quality Mark](#)).
- 6.29** Further standards include Passivhaus and Building for Life ([see the Design Council's website](#) for detailed guidance).
- 6.30** All these standards allow some flexibility in how the sustainability policy requirements are met, which would be determined on a site-by-site basis. This may apply, for example, if a developer can demonstrate that the standards would restrict its ability to achieve a truly outstanding or innovative design (as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF (September 2023)).
- 6.31** Policy EN 2 details the circumstances under which sustainable design standards are expected to be met in the borough. The expectations are gradually increased throughout the timescale of the Local Plan in order to drive up standards. This progression is consistent with the Government's approach of producing more rigorous carbon budgets over time. Standards begin at a relatively achievable level in order to allow developers time to adjust. However, development proposals that exceed the expectations in the initial period from 2022 - 2025 will be strongly encouraged, subject to all other material considerations being acceptable.
- 6.32** The Council is aware that design standards are occasionally updated in order to drive up standards. If a developer's chosen design standard undergoes a nationwide uplift in expectations at a similar time to the Council's uplift described above, allowances will be made.

Policy EN 2

Sustainable Design Standards

The following minimum design standards must be achieved for all major non-residential developments in the timeframes shown. For residential developments, achieving the following minimum design standards will be strongly encouraged until national policy allows otherwise.

Table 8 Minimum Sustainable Design Standards

Residential or non-residential development	Size of Development	Year 2022-2025	Year 2026 onwards
Residential	10-150 dwellings	HQM* 3 Stars	HQM* 4 Stars
Residential	> 150 dwellings	HQM*	HQM*

		4 Stars	4 Stars
Non-residential	1,000-5,000m²	BREEAM* Very Good	BREEAM* Excellent
Non-residential	> 5,000m²	BREEAM* Excellent	BREEAM* Excellent

* Where HQM is the 'Home Quality Mark' and BREEAM is the 'Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method'.

Where applicable, work must begin to obtain the required design standard at an early stage in the design process so that benefits can be maximised, and this intention should be demonstrated in a Design and Access Statement.

Unless agreed otherwise, compliance with this policy should be demonstrated via the following certificates (or future equivalent):

1. 'Pre-assessment estimator' at application stage;
2. 'Interim design' (HQM) or 'design stage' certificates prior to construction;
3. Final certificates for all schemes six months post-completion.

Developers implementing an alternative standard should submit equivalent certificates for each of these stages.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate change mitigation

- 6.33** Climate change is now the greatest challenge facing our society. The scientific evidence is overwhelming, and the impacts will be severe. Predicted changes such as increased temperatures and more severe weather events will not only have a long-lasting impact on society and the natural environment, but they will also define future economic progress. Only places that can demonstrate climate resilience will be able to secure insurance and investment.
- 6.34** The largest contributors to carbon dioxide emissions in the borough are domestic gas (25%), A-roads (24%), industrial and commercial electricity (11%), minor roads (16%), and domestic electricity (11%). These five sectors have been the dominant emission sources since 2005 and this trend is likely to continue into the near future (albeit to varying degrees as the Government phases out gas heating and petrol/diesel vehicles and progresses with grid decarbonisation).
- 6.35** The objective of this policy is to address important climate change issues that are not dealt with in other parts of the Local Plan; namely, energy reduction in new buildings and climate change adaptation.
- 6.36** To reduce carbon emissions from the operation of new buildings, an approach that follows the energy hierarchy is expected, whereby the fabric and heating/cooling of the building is given priority over the installation of renewable technology. This is commonly known as the 'fabric first' approach. Following this method has multiple benefits: it is in accordance with the Government's 2017 [Clean Growth Strategy](#);

it ensures that inefficient buildings are not constructed with renewable energy technology bolted on; and it avoids the construction of homes that require retrofitting in the future.

- 6.37** The introduction of the 2021 Part L uplift to the Building Regulations set national minimum energy efficiency standards that are higher than those referenced in an earlier 2015 Written Ministerial Statement. A further change to energy efficiency building regulations is planned for 2025 meaning that homes built to that standard will be net zero ready and should need no significant work to ensure that they have zero carbon emissions as the grid continues to decarbonise. The improvement in standards already in force, alongside the ones which are due in 2025, demonstrates the Government's commitment to ensuring new properties have a much lower impact on the environment in the future.
- 6.38** These targets will be made more stringent as the 2050 borough-wide target for carbon neutrality is neared, and a five-year review of this policy will be critical.
- 6.39** When developers are seeking to discharge conditions, final calculations, with full consideration of amendments following permission and predicted in construction phase, must be provided prior to commencement. In the case of Passivhaus, BREEAM, or equivalent standards, a final certificate will be required.
- 6.40** The Energy Strategy Report, Energy Statements, and the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) will be used to assess planning applications and monitor the effectiveness of this policy. See the Energy Topic Paper for full details.
- 6.41** In the borough, approximately one third of carbon emissions comes from residential property and the majority of these residential properties have already been built. Indeed, this is a source of emissions where not only have reductions stalled, but emissions have been increasing in recent years ([Committee for Climate Change, 2019](#)). Therefore, retrofitting the existing building stock presents an opportunity to help meet the carbon reduction targets for the borough. The Local Plan supports sustainable retrofitting measures for existing buildings, subject to all other material considerations being acceptable. Such measures can range from low cost measures, such as loft and cavity wall insulation, to complete refurbishment of buildings and their systems. Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing stock in the borough will help reduce fuel bills and create a better environment for occupiers, which will be particularly important for the most vulnerable groups, including those living in fuel poverty.
- 6.42** The listed buildings and traditional buildings in the borough, including those in conservation areas, present a challenge as well as an opportunity when considering how on-site renewables can be incorporated and carbon emissions reduced. The Local Authority supports all measures to retrofit listed and other historical buildings in an appropriate manner in accordance with best practice advice from Historic England. Historic England has published an [Advice Note 18 \(HEAN 18\): Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency](#) (2024) to provide historic building owners with information on how to maximise the opportunities available for improving energy efficiency.

- 6.43** Where the energy required to heat buildings is being considered, the Council will undertake a proactive approach in accordance with the NPPF (September 2023) (paragraph 155). Heating for homes, businesses, and industrial processes accounts for approximately 50% of total UK energy demand and CO₂ emissions, and so, if the UK is to deliver on its climate change targets, a substantive change to the efficiency of heat consumption and associated production is needed. Currently, 70% of heating in the UK is produced from natural gas, a fossil fuel increasingly imported, and long-term trends are for the rising costs of heating, particularly off the gas grid. For this reason, the Government is formulating plans to move away from fossil fuel-sourced domestic heating. The Council supports this model and will also support district or community heating networks wherever possible. District heating in combination with heat pump technology can improve the efficiency of energy use (especially in combination with a combined heat and power engine) and has the flexibility to accommodate heat from a variety of sources, allowing for secure energy supply, low cost energy, and reduced CO₂ emissions.
- 6.44** Emerging new technologies will be considered when appropriate and it is expected that electric heat pumps and battery storage will become more prominent technologies in the future.
- 6.45** Renewable energy-generating technology includes photovoltaics, solar hot water, air/ground source heat pumps, wind turbines, hydropower, and biomass boilers. Low carbon technology presented as an alternative to renewable energy-generating technology, such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as will emerging new technology. The choice of technology to be installed will have consideration for site constraints such as shading, local air quality, and sensitive features such as the landscape and historic environment. Biomass boilers should have access to locally sourced fuel and be located outside urban areas (See Policy EN 23: Biomass Technology).
- 6.46** In general, stand-alone renewable and low carbon technology proposals (community-led or otherwise) will be supported wherever possible. Reference should be made to the Delta Energy and Environment Study Low Carbon Energy Delivery in Tunbridge Wells Borough (2009), which determines the capacity of different areas of the borough to accommodate renewable and low carbon energy solutions. As site filtering was undertaken for this Local Plan, one site (see Policy AL/RTW 18: Land at the former North Farm landfill site, North Farm Lane and land at North Farm Lane, North Farm Industrial Estate) was identified as having potential for a solar farm.
- 6.47** There may be exceptional circumstances where there are concerns over the viability of a proposal. In terms of viability, the Council expects that applicants will have factored in the following when determining the price paid (or to be paid) for land for development. This includes all the Council's policy requirements, including these and for affordable housing, and contributions required to mitigate the impact of development (for example, in relation to infrastructure).

- 6.48** All energy calculations should be made using recognised calculators such as the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) or Home Quality Mark method for residential buildings, or the Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) for non-residential buildings. The calculations should include all regulated emissions such as fixed heating, lighting, hot water, and ventilation. Unregulated emissions from appliances such as white goods should be considered wherever possible.
- 6.49** Compliance with this policy should be demonstrated with a design stage Energy Strategy Report (major development) or Energy Statement (minor development), which is revisited during the construction phase to confirm its predictions are still valid and thus help avoid a 'performance gap'. Both submissions should contain adequate information to demonstrate how the energy hierarchy has been followed and energy reduction targets will be achieved. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the size of the development.
- 6.50** There may be exceptional circumstances where compliance with this policy would make the development unviable. In each case, this would need to be fully and appropriately demonstrated by a robust viability assessment to warrant a departure from compliance with this policy.
- 6.51** Where the policy requirements may not be achieved, the onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate robustly the reasons for this, and to provide a full viability assessment to support their proposals. As part of this, it will need to be shown that the correct land value was paid, as exceptional and abnormal costs should, in the first instance, be paid for through a reduced land value. The viability assessment must be provided as part of the application when originally submitted, will be made publicly available, and will be subject to review by independent viability consultants. The applicant is expected to meet the costs of this review. Where applications are made on this basis, any permission granted will be for a maximum of two years.
- 6.52** Detailed advice on viability assessments is given in the National Planning Practice Guidance: [Viability](#).

Climate change adaptation

- 6.53** In addition to mitigation, climate change adaptation is an important consideration for local plans as, even if all emissions are immediately discontinued, the UK is still committed to a certain amount of climate change from a legacy of past emissions. Rising temperatures and overheating, for example, will have impacts on human health and wellbeing. Given these long-term implications, a proactive approach to minimising vulnerability and improving resilience to the effects of climate change must be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations in the Government's 2017 [Housing White Paper](#) (or equivalent) and the findings of the Committee for Climate Change's [Housing Fit for the Future](#) (2019). Policy EN 3 details how the Local Planning Authority will ensure this takes place and developers should refer to KCC's [Climate Risk and Impact Assessment](#) for local advice.

- 6.54** Developers should note that the requirements of both climate change mitigation and adaptation in Policy EN 3 will need to be considered in unison so that they do not contradict each other; for example, when designing insulation, cooling, and ventilation measures. Likewise, improved air tightness designed in response to Policy EN 3 must not present an indoor air quality risk.
- 6.55** For this reason, in addition to the energy hierarchy, it is expected that planning applicants also follow the cooling hierarchy below, presented in order of greatest preference:
- minimise internal heat generation through energy efficient design;
 - reduce the amount of heat entering a building in summer through orientation, shading, albedo, fenestration, insulation, and green roofs and walls;
 - manage the heat within the building through exposed internal thermal mass and high ceilings;
 - passive ventilation;
 - mechanical ventilation;
 - active cooling systems (ensuring they are the lowest greenhouse gas options available).

Policy EN 3

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Subject to all other material considerations, proposals for zero carbon and low emission development, as well as development that allows communities, infrastructure, businesses, and the natural environment to adapt to the impacts of climate change, will be strongly supported.

Energy reduction in new buildings

Proposals for the construction of new buildings are required to incorporate design features that help deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO₂ emissions, and thus help mitigate climate change impacts. This will be achieved using the 'fabric first' approach to reduce energy demands and thus CO₂ emissions from buildings.

*The 'fabric first' approach should be based upon a consideration of U-values, thermal bridging, air permeability, and thermal mass, and also features that affect lighting and solar gains, such as building orientation and layout.

Renewable energy-generating technology including photovoltaics, solar hot water, air/ground source heat pumps, wind turbines, hydropower, and biomass boilers will also be supported, as will low carbon technology, such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP). The choice of technology to be installed will have consideration for site constraints such as shading, local air quality, and sensitive features such as the landscape and historic environment.

Compliance with this policy should be demonstrated with a design stage Energy Strategy Report (major development) or Energy Statement (minor development), which is revisited during the construction phase to confirm its predictions are still valid and thus

help avoid a 'performance gap'. Both submissions should contain adequate information to demonstrate how the energy hierarchy has been applied. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the size of the development.

Climate change adaptation

Where relevant, development must incorporate measures that adapt to the impacts of climate change. These could include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

1. Protection, and provision, of well connected green infrastructure (especially trees) that facilitates native species' movements, facilitates sustainable drainage, provides natural shading, and is well adapted to summer drought and increased winter rainfall (refer to Policy EN 14: Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure);
2. Reduction in flood risk and provision of infrastructure to protect vulnerable communities and habitats, and minimisation of water consumption. Refer to Policies EN 24: Water Supply, Quality and Conservation, EN 25: Flood Risk, and EN 26: Sustainable Drainage;
3. Reduction in the urban heat island effect by consideration of road and building surface materials and the role of green infrastructure;
4. Support for proposals and associated infrastructure that allow for more resilient forestry and agricultural practices;
5. Buildings designed and built to avoid overheating, especially those for vulnerable users such as hospitals, schools, and elderly care homes, by following the cooling hierarchy.

Historic Environment and Heritage Assets

Historic Environment

6.56 The historic environment of the borough is an irreplaceable and valuable asset, which is a material planning consideration and contributes to wider strategic objectives, such as economic development, urban regeneration, high quality urban design and planning, tourism, leisure, education, sustainability, and health and wellbeing. The Council recognises that the built, natural, and landscape heritage of the borough is a valuable resource, which is important not only for its cultural and social value, but also its economic potential. The borough has a distinctive heritage, which can be easily identified through the diversity of its heritage assets, including:

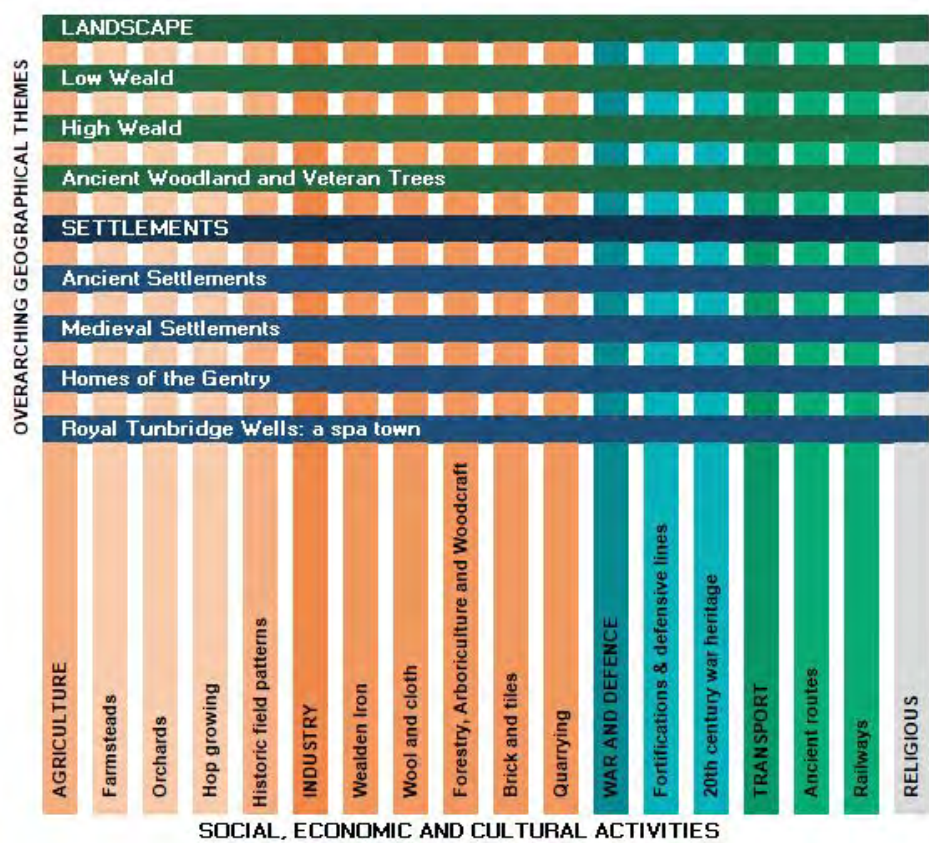
- isolated farmsteads;
- post-medieval villages, grown through trade and craft, surrounded by ancient farmsteads, and linked by ancient routeways;
- archaeological sites, including such diverse sites as iron age hill forts, medieval moated sites, Tudor furnaces, and post-medieval woodland management features;
- distinctive oast kilns and hoppers huts seen throughout the borough;
- the high number of ancient woodlands and veteran trees characterising the historic landscape;

- undulating ridgelines emphasising distinctive trees and spires on the skyline;
- the urban grain and architecture of the early spa town of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

The Council's Historic Environment Review

- 6.57** The Council's Historic Environment Review examines the historic environment of the borough to form the basis for heritage local planning, providing an accessible summary of the historic landscape character and heritage assets in the borough. A Historic Environment SPD based on the Review will be produced, and this will be taken into consideration in decision making when adopted. The SPD will form part of the evidence base for the Historic Environment Framework, which will contain a mission statement and suite of practical strategies for managing decision making that demonstrates a positive approach for the conservation, enjoyment, and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 6.58** The Historic Environment Review identifies a number of vulnerabilities and opportunities for heritage assets based on various factors, including significant pressure for new development. As well as focusing on specific assets, it is important to consider the main themes and characteristics that help to form the local distinctiveness of the borough, and which make a significant contribution to its heritage, as summarised in the Historic Environment Review and the heritage themes that it identifies in the following matrix:

Figure 7 Matrix of Heritage Themes



- 6.59** In order to ensure the effective integration of the heritage of the borough into policy and decision making, development management policies relating to the historic environment should be considered in conjunction with other policies in the Plan, such as those relating to design, heritage assets, landscape character, trees, biodiversity, transport, and sustainability, and any related Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). Also, where development is within, or close to, the High Weald National Landscape, regard will be had to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
- 6.60** It is important that planning decisions consider heritage assets in the borough in the round, alongside wider objectives as set out in this Plan. National planning policy (the NPPF) and legislation in relation to all aspects of planning, not just the management of the historic environment, recognises the role of our surroundings in contributing to our economy, social life, and environment, and therefore our wellbeing. This includes the many layers of history in all its forms that are evident in our surroundings. They are a shared resource, which should be managed well to ensure that the meaning is not lost to future generations.
- 6.61** Proposals for development will be required to reflect the local distinctiveness, condition (state of repair), and sensitivity to change of the historic environment, as defined in the following guidance (all documents are those of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, unless indicated otherwise):
- Historic Environment Review
 - Findings as set out in the Historic Landscape Characterisation 2014-2017
 - Conservation Area Appraisal SPDs
 - Local Heritage Assets SPD
 - List of Local Heritage Assets, including Historic Parks and Gardens
 - Borough Landscape Character Assessment SPD
 - Rural Lanes SPG
 - Farmsteads Assessment Guidance SPD
 - Landscape Sensitivity Assessments
 - Royal Tunbridge Wells Urban Design Framework
 - Review of the Kent Compendium's list of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells Borough
 - Kent Design SPD
 - High Weald AONB Management Plan

Heritage Assets

- 6.62** Heritage assets are buildings, monuments, structures, sites, places, areas, whole landscapes, or elements of landscapes, identified nationally and locally as valued components of the historic character of the borough. They can include designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets identified by the Council as being of local historic importance (including local heritage assets or those identified during the determination of planning applications).
- 6.63** Designated heritage assets are protected by national policy and legislation, and in the borough these include:

- listed buildings;
- conservation areas;
- scheduled monuments;
- archaeological sites;
- registered historic parks and gardens;
- ancient semi-natural woodland;
- veteran trees.

- 6.64** Tunbridge Wells borough has a rich and diverse built heritage, including a large number of heritage assets, all set within its historic towns and villages, a well-preserved medieval and pre-medieval landscape (dating back to Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic periods) of dispersed settlements, ancient routeways, ancient woodland, veteran trees, farmland, and farmsteads. A high percentage of the borough falls within the High Weald National Landscape, which is recognised as an important medieval landscape. Many of the heritage assets are identified as components of the natural beauty of the National Landscape.
- 6.65** As set out in the NPPF, heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved or enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance. Any harm or loss will require a clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to, or loss of, heritage assets of the highest significance, such as scheduled monuments, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, will be wholly exceptional. The Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan set out that the high quality natural, built, and historic environment will be conserved or enhanced.
- 6.66** Policy STR 8 relating to the natural, built, and historic environment sets out the aims of the Council for each type of heritage asset that features within the borough, and states that a positive approach will be taken for the management of heritage assets in the delivery of new development, ensuring that the distinctiveness of the natural, built, and historic environment of the borough is conserved or enhanced.
- 6.67** For any development proposal affecting a heritage asset, the submission of a heritage statement will be required with the planning application. This statement should describe the significance of the heritage asset based on historic research and the impact of the proposal on the significance. It should be proportional to its importance and clearly show the context of the proposal. The application should also include, where appropriate, accurate site surveys and drawings showing surrounding buildings and spaces. For some proposals, a heritage statement will be insufficient. Where proposals affect sites of archaeological interest, it is probable that a desk-based assessment and possibly fieldwork will be needed.

Other non-designated heritage assets

- 6.68** Local heritage assets (also known as non-designated assets) are those that appear on the local list of heritage assets. The Council will be producing such a list and may also identify non-designated assets through the development management process. Local heritage assets have also been identified in Neighbourhood Plans. In addition, local groups including the Tunbridge Wells Civic Society have produced their own lists of Local Heritage Assets. Non-designated heritage assets have no statutory

protection, but are protected by national policy and guidance. They can include many different types of assets, such as structures, pavements and road surfaces, ancient trees, and other landscape features, which are considered to have a degree of local heritage significance and merit consideration in planning decisions. The Council's [Historic Environment Review](#), based on the historic environment themes of the Borough, and [Local Heritage Assets SPD](#), both referred to above, also provide further information on local heritage assets, and include criteria for selection.

- 6.69** The complex history of the landscape also means that there are many sites and features that do not have a specific statutory designation, and in some cases are yet to be discovered. These include archaeological remains, sites of archaeological interest, and sites featured in the Kent Historic Environment Record. Nevertheless, these should also be conserved or enhanced because of their contribution to the wider landscape, and to the wider social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.

Listed buildings

- 6.70** The borough contains 2,248 buildings of architectural or historic interest, which make a significant contribution to the quality and distinctiveness of the local environment. Listed buildings are protected by national legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In exercising its planning functions there is a duty on the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 6.71** There is a presumption in favour of preserving listed buildings, and consent will only be given in very exceptional circumstances for their demolition. Poor condition is no justification for demolition, and where a building is redundant, every effort must be made to find an optimum viable new use, which should be consistent with the character, appearance, and fabric of the building.
- 6.72** Alterations, repair, renovation, and extensions to listed buildings and development affecting the setting of listed buildings should sustain or enhance their significance and preserve the special features for which they are designated. These features can also include curtilage buildings, structures, spaces, and the landscape setting that are integral to their character, and important views within, of, into, and out of, the area or site. Development that would have an adverse impact on their special historic or architectural interest, or their formal or natural landscape setting, will not normally be permitted.
- 6.73** The parts of the setting of historic buildings which contribute towards their significance can be seriously harmed by inappropriate neighbouring developments and/or uses. Therefore, for any proposals that would have an impact on the setting of a listed building, applicants will be required to submit technical and illustrative information about the proposed development and its relationship to its setting as part of a heritage statement and/or design and access statement.

Conservation areas

- 6.74** Conservation areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance ([see Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 section 69 \(1\)](#)). Conservation areas are protected by national legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which sets out a duty for local planning authorities to preserve the special historic or architectural character and appearance of the areas when making decisions on planning applications. The NPPF additionally requires local authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of a conservation area that may be affected by a proposal including by development affecting the setting of a conservation area.
- 6.75** The borough contains 26 conservation areas, within which the combination of the buildings, spaces, and landscape is of great importance in creating the distinctive character of the area. The strong pressures for redevelopment within, or adjoining, conservation areas could, if not controlled sensitively, lead to an erosion of that character. Conservation area boundaries are defined on the Policies Map.
- 6.76** In designating or reviewing conservation area boundaries, the Council must have regard to advice set out in the NPPF, or any subsequent guidance. The principal concern is whether the area is, or remains, of special architectural or historic interest worthy of preservation or enhancement. The definition of an area's special interest derives from an assessment of the elements that contribute to, and detract from, its character. Such elements include: historical development; the topography; the quality and relationship of buildings in the area; and also the trees, other vegetation, and open spaces; the character and hierarchy of spaces; the prevalent building materials; the mix of uses; and the quality of street furniture and hard and soft surfaces.
- 6.77** With the exception of the Warwick Park and Madeira Park Conservation Area Appraisal, which was adopted in June 2019, the Council is aware that many conservation area appraisals in the borough were prepared more than a decade ago, and review is therefore required. The review of appraisals and management plans will be prioritised to cover areas of vulnerability or development pressure and consideration.
- 6.78** New development in conservation areas should aim to preserve or enhance the character or appearance and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and respect its surroundings in terms of:
- design;
 - layout;
 - height;
 - massing;
 - volume;
 - scale;
 - form;
 - materials;

- external detailing/ornate features;
- roofscape;
- plot width;
- landscaping; and
- design of any new pedestrian, cycle or vehicular access.

6.79 In order to assess the impact of a proposal in a conservation area, an appropriate level of detail should be submitted, including drawings and other visual material, and a full application rather than an outline application submitted.

Scheduled monuments

6.80 The following is a list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments to be found in the borough:

Royal Tunbridge Wells - High Rocks: Earthworks, Iron Age Hill Fort

Royal Tunbridge Wells - Moat Farm: Medieval Moated Site

Benenden - Iden Green: Paved Ford crossing line of Roman Road

Brenchley - Castle Wood Castle: Iron Age Hill Fort

Capel - Castle Hill: Earthworks, Iron Age Hill Fort

Cranbrook - Little Farningham Wood: Roman Site

Goudhurst - Bedgebury Furnace: Tudor Iron Furnace

Cranbrook - Furnace Farm: Moated site to the west of it

Horsmonden - Share Farm: Moated Site

Lamberhurst - Scotney Castle: Medieval and later Castle

Lamberhurst - Bayham Abbey: scheduled area is outside the borough (in Wealden) but its setting is within

Speldhurst - Groombridge Place: Medieval Moated Site

6.81 These sites are, by definition, of national importance and are afforded a high level of protection from disturbance, as defined by the [Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979](#). There will be a presumption against development proposals that would be likely to cause damage to the sites themselves or their settings. Some archaeological sites or monuments within the borough are not currently scheduled, but may be of comparable significance and therefore such sites will be treated as though they are, in fact, scheduled.

6.82 The consent of the Secretary of State is required for any works affecting an Ancient Monument, but planning permission for any accompanying development is required from the Local Planning Authority.

Archaeological sites

6.83 The borough is mainly embraced by undulating high ground, which rises from the clays of the Low Weald. The area, certainly until the growth of Royal Tunbridge Wells as a spa town in the 17th century, was never densely settled, and in medieval times was still largely wooded, as is evidenced by the '-hurst' and '-den' place names, signifying woodland and woodland swine pasture respectively.

- 6.84** Prehistoric occupation is represented by a number of flint scatters and other finds of Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Age date, and the earthworks of probable Iron Age hill forts survive at High Rocks, Royal Tunbridge Wells; Castle Wood, Brenchley; and Castle Hill, Capel.
- 6.85** Apart from some evidence of Roman iron working, there is currently little archaeological evidence of activity in the Roman and Saxon periods.
- 6.86** In the later medieval period, Cranbrook developed as a medium-sized town based on the cloth industry, which also flourished in a number of surrounding villages. Several medieval moated sites have been identified, and various sites are known from earthworks and place name evidence to relate to the important Wealden iron industry that developed in the later Middle Ages and reached its peak in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- 6.87** The borough's more recent archaeological heritage includes industrial, civil, and military sites of the 19th to 21st centuries. Examples include hospitals, non-denominational churches, hop pickers huts, and second world war pill boxes.
- 6.88** While limited in quantity, the archaeological remains make an important contribution to the understanding of the history of the area.
- 6.89** Further targeted research into archaeology is recommended, including an assessment of the contribution of standing buildings to archaeological knowledge. The Council is working closely with Kent County Council to establish priority areas for further archaeological research. Areas of greatest sensitivity to change will be agreed with a view to undertaking a focused desktop review of assets by number and by type, with reference to the Kent Historic Environment Record.
- 6.90** In considering any development proposals that may affect an archaeological site, applicants should consult both the Local Planning Authority and the County Archaeologist at Kent County Council at an early stage, ideally prior to submitting a formal planning application, in order to establish the possible archaeological implications of any proposals. Developers will need to demonstrate that the archaeological implications of the development have been properly assessed, and an appropriately detailed written archaeological assessment may be required to be submitted with an application for development. Planning permission may be refused without adequate assessment of the archaeological implications.
- 6.91** Where permission is to be granted for development resulting in the damage or destruction of archaeological remains and the developer has not entered into a planning agreement, or made equivalent arrangements for the excavation and recording of the remains, the deposition of the site archive, and the publication of the results, conditions will be attached to the permission to ensure that no development takes place until this work has been carried out.

Historic parks and gardens

- 6.92** Historic parks and gardens are an important heritage asset as they make a significant contribution to the character, history, and landscape setting of the area in which they are located. They also play an important part in maintaining biodiversity

and environmental improvement. Proposals for new development must have careful regard to the important landscape architecture of the site, the setting of the historic buildings within the site and its visual amenity and wider setting. Sufficient information to enable the impact of development on a historic park or garden to be properly assessed, including impact on existing trees and landscaping, and detailed landscaping proposals, shall be submitted with all planning applications. The Local Planning Authority may also ensure the conservation of the historic park and garden by requesting the submission of a management plan for the designated site and its setting to promote good land management practice and encourage best use of resources, as part of the application. Improved access to local historic parks and gardens, such as through the National Gardens Scheme, is also encouraged.

- 6.93** Historic England maintains a Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest in England. There are 16 such sites situated wholly or partly within the borough, including sites of international reputation such as Sissinghurst Castle and Scotney Castle, and a Repton designed landscape at Bayham Abbey. There is also a local list referred to as the Kent Compendium List of Historic Parks and Gardens. This list was updated by the Council with the aid of the Kent Gardens Trust through a Historic England supported project developing a robust methodology and high quality publications. The resultant list of 27 sites, as set out in the project report, 'A Review of the Kent Compendium's List of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells Borough April 2010', was published by the Council in 2010, and are considered to be identified heritage assets. All historic parks and gardens in the borough are defined on the Policies Map and listed on the Council's [Historic Parks and Gardens web page](#).

Ancient semi-natural woodland and veteran trees

- 6.94** The borough is rich in ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and aged and veteran trees, which are classed as heritage assets. Tunbridge Wells has the largest area of ASNW in Kent, being 16.22% of the total land area. The Local Planning Authority will seek to prevent loss of, and enhance, woodland cover, working proactively with woodland owners and relevant organisations to bring woodland back into management where possible. Where developments are proposed in, or adjacent to, ASNW, or may affect veteran trees, regard will be given to Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice for Ancient Woodlands and the NPPF; seeking to ensure no loss occurs other than in wholly exceptional circumstances (such as nationally significant infrastructure projects or orders under the Transport and Works Act). Further details of specific requirements and reference guidance on these assets can be found in Policy EN 13: Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees.

Policy EN 4

The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets

The Local Planning Authority will have regard to the statutory duty to preserve the Borough's heritage assets and, so far as relevant for statutory purposes, their settings.

Proposals for new development that affect a designated* or non-designated heritage asset shall preserve and, where possible, enhance its significance, including its historic character, appearance, amenity and setting, and in the case of historic parks and gardens, provides, where possible, improvement of access to it.

Proposals that will assist in bringing a heritage asset at risk back into a use consistent with its conservation and with the relevant national policy guidance will be encouraged.

Applications will be assessed with reference to the following:

1. the historic and/or architectural significance of the asset;
2. its location and setting;
3. the historic and/or architectural significance of any elements to be lost or replaced;
4. any other relevant factors that bear on the significance of the asset and its setting.

Should permission be granted for the removal of part or all of a heritage asset, the Local Planning Authority will not permit the removal or demolition of the heritage asset until it is proven that the approved replacement development will proceed.

Proposals should have regard to national historic environment policy and guidance, including Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes and other Advice Notes, the Council's Historic Environment Review and the local guidance listed above in paragraph 6.61, as applicable.

[* Designated heritage assets are the subject of separate legislative planning requirements, as set out in the above supporting text for each heritage asset type, and proposals shall specifically have regard to these.]

Shop Fronts

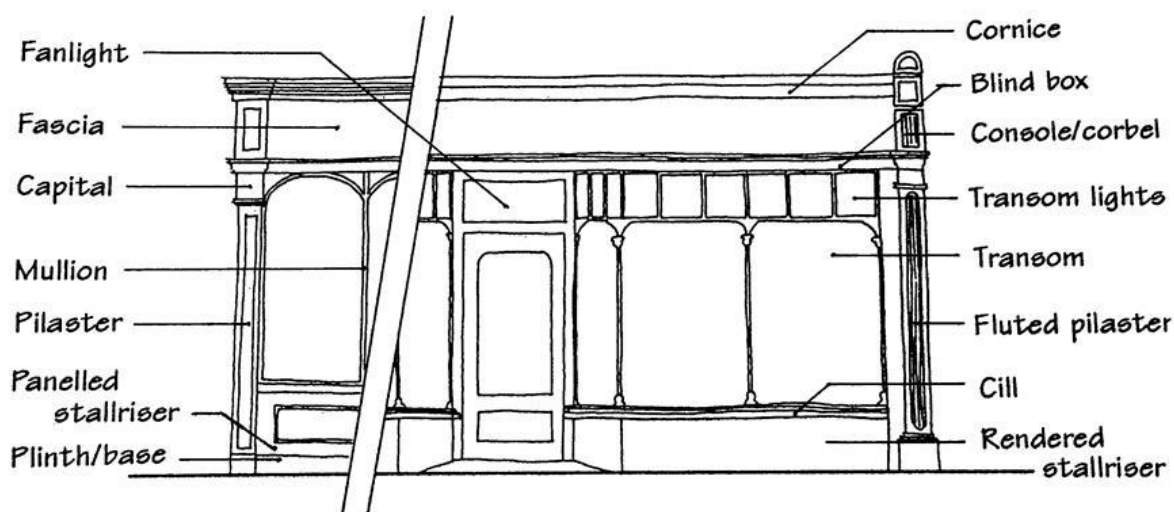
- 6.95** The design and layout of shop fronts has evolved slowly over hundreds of years, depending on measures to attract customers and display and store goods, the technologies available, and fashions in architecture. The basic elements, however, have remained the same, and there are good examples within the borough of surviving Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian, and early 20th century shop fronts.
- 6.96** Shop fronts form an important element in the street scene, both individually and in terms of the wider street setting. They can not only enhance the vitality of a place, but also contribute to the local distinctiveness and character of the townscape.
- 6.97** The NPPF and supporting guidance requires that new development integrates well into the built environment. Without careful design, the use of inappropriate materials, bulky signage, lighting, and other features (including poorly replicated historic

features), and where shop front proportions do not relate well to the proportions of the building, new shop fronts may be unsympathetic to the character of the individual building or the street scene.

Shop front elements and design

- 6.98** Elements of a traditional shop front are shown in the diagram below. They include a window display with an ornamental surround, a narrow fascia and deep cornice, side pilasters with corbelled brackets, a panelled, tiled, or rendered stall riser beneath the window, often a recessed door, and profiled glazing bars with a deep cill. All these elements form the frame of the window display.

Figure 8 A traditional shop front



- 6.99** All elements of the shop front are important, including the shop width and sub-divisions, the height of stall riser, materials, detailing of doors, depth of fascia, and any form of illumination, and the following advice should be considered for any proposals relating to alterations to, or replacement, shop fronts:

Shop width and sub-divisions: shop front window panes should be proportionate to the width of window openings on upper floors. Large glazed areas should be divided using mullions and/or transoms. For shop fronts of two or more plot widths, the identity of each individual elevation above should be respected by a change in the shop fronts below at ground floor level. Continuity of the same retailer could be achieved by the same use of colour, lettering type, and window displays.

Height of stall riser: the stall riser provides a solid visual base, as well as raising the window display to a more convenient level. As a general rule, they should not be less than 500mm high.

Materials: for traditional shop fronts, painted timber is preferred over stained hardwood, as well as the use of dark colours: dark green, navy, black, brown. Modern materials such as aluminium or plastic should only be used where appropriate to the style of the building and surrounding location, and should be moulded to a suitably high quality.

Doors: this is an important visual focus to the shop front. Recessed doors provide depth and relief to the shop front, as well as the effect of inviting customers into the premises. The door design should reflect the design of other elements of the shop front, in particular the windows and any stall riser.

Fascia: this should be appropriate to the character and period of the building and, as a general guide, the depth of the fascia should not exceed a fifth of the shop front height or encroach above first floor level.

Illumination: where illumination is required, it should be restrained and unobtrusively sited, within the context of the appearance of the building and its setting. For further guidance on the form and direction of external illumination, applicants are advised to refer to the advice set out in the [Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light](#) (or any successive guidance).

- 6.100** An important point to remember in shop front design is that the shop front is part of a building, and the building is part of a street, and all three should respectively complement each other.
- 6.101** Although priority should be given to the retention of traditional shop fronts, new shop fronts, when allowed, can be successfully integrated into their setting through the use of quality materials, and by respecting the proportions of the building and character of the street scene. Sympathetic contemporary designs can be as successful as more traditional designs.
- 6.102** Standard corporate images may need to be adapted to meet particular circumstances, and to respect the character and appearance of the surrounding shopping area. The use of bright colours, especially in conservation areas, should be avoided, and a minor variation to a retailer's corporate colour can help to protect the historic and/or traditional character of a location.
- 6.103** Proposals for solid external security shutters, which completely cover a shop front, will rarely be acceptable. When closed, they have a detrimental impact on the character and visual amenity of the street scene, giving the frontage a dead appearance, presenting a hostile environment, hiding intruders, and encouraging graffiti. In certain circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that repeated criminal damage has occurred, and there is no other reasonable and practicable alternative, laminated glass and internal open grille shutters or external roller blinds may be more appropriate alternatives, subject to the shutter housing being unobtrusive and unlikely to harm the character of the building or street frontage. Such proposals should be incorporated into the shop front design.

Conservation areas

- 6.104** The Council will give priority to the retention of architecturally or historically interesting traditional shop fronts within conservation areas. Adapting new shop fronts to modern needs can be brought about by sensitive design, and the reinstatement of any traditional features into a new shop front is also encouraged. Proposals for replacing existing shop fronts will only be allowed where the existing shop front has no particular architectural or historic quality in itself, or does not

contribute to the character of the conservation area. Where replacement is allowed, the design should not only respect the building, but also the overall character of the conservation area.

- 6.105** In many of the conservation areas there are many traditional shop fronts. For example, in Cranbrook there are shop fronts on the High Street and on Stone Street that have been unsympathetically altered in the past, including the introduction of 'Dutch style' canopies, which are not a historic canopy type, and which damage the significance of the conservation area as inappropriate additions to the shop front. These will be discouraged in this, and other, conservation areas.

Other traditional shop fronts

- 6.106** The Council has identified the following key groupings of traditional shop fronts outside of conservation areas, which positively contribute to the character, street scene, and visual amenities of the area. Where there is an existing shop front within the key grouping/designation, priority will be given to its retention or reinstatement rather than complete replacement and, in accordance with Policy EN 6, proposals will either seek to reinstate or not result in the loss of existing traditional features and/or details of architectural or historic interest. These groupings are defined on the Policies Map:

Camden Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells

- 6.107** Part of Camden Road to the north east of the junction with Garden Road and Victoria Road is located within the town centre boundary of Royal Tunbridge Wells. Much of the character of the street is derived from the large number of traditional shop front features that are still present.

St John's Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells

- 6.108** St John's Road contains a group of shops where almost all of the original shop fronts and features have been retained and in view of the architectural and historic integrity of this group, the Local Planning Authority considers that these traditional shop fronts should be retained.

Silverdale Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells

- 6.109** Silverdale Road contains a parade of shops and other uses that provide a variety of goods and services. Most of the original shop fronts have been retained, including a number of recessed doorways, and the parade contributes significantly to the local character of this part of the town.

London Road, Southborough

- 6.110** London Road is a principal route through the town and is defined in the Plan as the Southborough Primary Shopping Area, where there are a number of shop fronts which, either wholly or partly, retain features of architectural interest that are important to the character of the area.
- 6.111** The other parade of shops to the north (known as Southborough North Parade) is located in the conservation area and is afforded protection by Policy EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets.

- 6.112** All proposals will be assessed against the criteria of Policy EN 6: Shop Fronts and, where applicable, Policy EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets, as well as Policies EN 7: Advertisements and EN 8: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies.

Policy EN 6

Shop Fronts

Shop fronts that are of historic interest and architectural merit should be retained and those that have been lost should be reinstated. Proposals for new shop fronts, or alterations to existing shop fronts, will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The shop front is correctly proportioned in relation to the width of the property (or a logical vertical sub-division created by the upper storey), in sympathy with the architectural style, materials, and form of the building(s) of which it would form part, except in cases where the building itself is architecturally incompatible with the character of the area. Where a single unit of occupation has been formed by amalgamating shop units, shop front design should relate to the original unit widths;
2. The shop front is in sympathy with the predominant architectural style and materials of neighbouring properties and the surrounding area;
3. Any blinds and security measures (where demonstrated to be necessary) shall be designed and sited to be unobtrusive and shall not harm the character and appearance of the building nor the street frontage;
4. Where a fascia is to be applied, it will be of an appropriate height, in scale with the overall height of the shop front and other elements of the building, and not intrude over the first floor level;
5. Where illumination is required, it should be restrained and unobtrusively sited within the context of the appearance of the building and its setting, having regard to the advice set out in the Professional Institute of Lighting Engineers Guidance Note 1 relating to The Reduction of Obtrusive Light or any successive guidance;
6. In conservation areas and premises fronting Camden Road, St John's Road, and Silverdale Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, and London Road, Southborough, as defined on the Policies Map, the proposal will not result in the loss of a traditional shop front, or features and details of architectural or historic interest.

Advertisements

- 6.113** Advertisements and signs, by their very nature, need to be visible in order to attract attention and convey information. If insensitively designed or positioned, however, they can appear overly dominant or incongruous within the street scene or countryside, and therefore require careful control.
- 6.114** Advertisements can be in many forms, such as fascia and side hanging signs on commercial premises, freestanding A-board signs, digital signs, transit, and banner signs.

- 6.115** The display of advertisements is subject to a separate consent process within the planning system. This is principally set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). There are three categories of advertisement consent set out in the Regulations:
1. Those permitted without requiring either deemed or express consent from the local planning authority;
 2. Those that have deemed consent; and
 3. Those that require the express consent of the local planning authority.
- 6.116** Policy EN 7 will only apply to those advertisements which require express consent from the local planning authority (as at point 3 above).
- 6.117** Advertisements are controlled with reference to their effect on amenity and public safety only. These will be assessed within the context of the general characteristics of a particular area, such as any features of historic, architectural, cultural, or other special interest, including those on shop fronts.
- 6.118** In determining proposals for all illuminated advertisements, the Council will favour the use of restrained lighting from an indirect lighting source in order to ensure that the character of an area, and visual and residential amenities, are preserved. Lighting should be constant and should not involve the use of open tube discharge lights. Lighting sources will be expected to be unobtrusively sited, within the context of the appearance of the building and its setting. Proposals should be submitted in accordance with the advice set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light (or any successive guidance). Such advertisements should only be illuminated during operative business hours.
- 6.119** Excessive advertising defeats its own objective by creating a clutter of signs and destroying the common asset of an attractive urban, rural and/or historic environment.

Advertisements in conservation areas and on, or affecting, listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets

- 6.120** In conservation areas, and for proposals on, or affecting, listed buildings and other non-designated heritage assets, advertisements should be kept to a minimum in order to maintain the character and appearance of the conservation area and to avoid harm to the fabric, character, or setting of listed buildings. The size, design, construction, materials, colouring, and any form of illumination should not detract from the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.121** Proposals for large, dominant signs will, in most cases, be at variance with the character of a listed building and/or the conservation area. A box sign, especially when illuminated, will usually be out of character due to its shape, lack of intricacy and detail, and use of unsympathetic materials. Standard corporate designs may need to be adapted to meet particular circumstances, while the positioning of advertisements above ground floor level is unlikely to be acceptable.

- 6.122** Where illumination of a sign in a conservation area is necessary and considered to be acceptable, it should be achieved by halo or other illumination to individual letters.
- 6.123** In the case of listed buildings, new signage should be carefully positioned in relation to the elevation of the building; painted timber fascia advertisements used and/or traditional hanging signs (hung from traditional brackets), and any illumination should be external and/or unobtrusive. Listed building consent for such proposals would also be required.
- 6.124** In rural areas, factors that will be assessed include the position of the proposed advertisement relative to the land form and quality of the immediate surroundings, and whether its design respects natural contours, landscape character, and background features against which it will be seen.
- 6.125** For advertisements located along, or visible from the Strategic Road Network (motorways or some A roads), regard should be had to the Department for Transport's Circular 02/2013.
- 6.126** In addition to Policy EN 7, where express consent and/or listed building consent is required, advertisement proposals will also be assessed against Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design; EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets; EN 6: Shop Fronts; EN 8: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies; EN 16: Landscape within the built environment; EN 17: Arcadian Areas; EN 18: Rural Landscape; and EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape.

Policy EN 7

Advertisements

All advertisements will be required to satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. No advertisement should be obtrusive in appearance, appear dominant or overbearing in the street scene or landscape, cause visual clutter or result in a proliferation of signs, or cause significant harm to the appearance of any building or site on which it would be displayed because of its size, design, construction, or materials;
2. Where illumination is required, lighting sources should be unobtrusively sited, within the context of the appearance of the building and its setting, and the level of illumination should not cause significant harm to visual and residential amenity, having regard to the standards set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note GN01: the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (or any successive guidance);
3. Any illumination should only be in use during business opening hours;
4. No advertisement should be so distracting or confusing that it would endanger highway or public safety;
5. In conservation areas, on listed buildings, and non-designated heritage assets, the advertisement and any form of illumination should be designed, constructed, and

sited so as to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the building and/or conservation area;

6. The advertisement should be compatible with conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald National Landscape.

Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies

- 6.127** Lighting is an important part of good design. Appropriate types and levels of lighting can contribute positively towards a sense of place, such as increasing the safety of pedestrians and other road users and providing security for premises.
- 6.128** A poorly designed scheme may result in unnecessary obtrusive light or light pollution, which can present serious physiological and ecological problems.
- 6.129** Obtrusive light can result in sky glow, glare, and light spillage, which may harm the character of a built-up area or countryside, disrupt behaviour in flora and fauna, obscure views of the night sky, impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, or distract passing road users.
- 6.130** The impact of light pollution is particularly harmful in the open countryside where rural character is eroded and the distinction between town and country is blurred; likewise, light pollution can also compromise the architectural and historical character of conservation areas and listed buildings or their settings. The full effects of artificial lighting on biodiversity are not fully understood, but nocturnal animals and especially invertebrates can be seriously affected by artificial light at even very low levels, adversely affecting their ability to feed and reproduce.
- 6.131** The Local Planning Authority will therefore seek to reduce obtrusive light, requiring that lighting schemes provide only the minimum level of light required for the situation, in the location needed, and only for the times required, and, in accordance with the NPPF, will generally seek to limit the impact of light pollution on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and wildlife.
- 6.132** Applicants should have regard to the guidance on lighting provided in the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light (and any subsequent revisions). They should consider carefully, and provide details of, the light source and intensity being used, the luminaire design, height, and angle, adding baffles and cut-off shields where required, and details of control mechanisms to dim or switch off lighting schemes when not required. Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors so that they only come on when needed.
- 6.133** The whole of the borough, apart from the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, and Paddock Wood, should be treated as being in Zone E1 (as defined by the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note GN01: the Reduction of Obtrusive Light), where sky glow should where possible be zero.

Particular consideration should be given to the dark skies of the High Weald National Landscape as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan and the High Weald Dark Skies Planning Advice Note.

- 6.134** Many villages are unlit and wish to remain so. The Local Planning Authority (nor the Highways Authority) does not routinely require street lighting on new developments and will be guided by the existing context, the relevant policies and supporting text in neighbourhood plans, and the views of the local parish council. Any scheme approved will be expected to follow the principles set out in the ILP guidance and take an integrated approach to street and external lighting on dwellings employing different light sources, types, and values as appropriate, and to provide for a range of switching options, including passive infrared controls and timers for dimming and switch off.
- 6.135** Where lighting may affect wildlife, any necessary lighting scheme will need to mitigate possible adverse effects through careful scheme design and should have regard to the guidance set out in [Bats and Artificial Lighting Guidance](#) 08/18 (Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals 2018), which advises using LED lighting with a warm white spectrum (less than 3000 kelvin) with low UV content. For major applications and in these light-sensitive locations, a lighting impact assessment should be undertaken that clearly illustrates proposed lighting levels showing illuminance contour plots for 0.2, 0.5, 1.0, 5.0, and 10 Lux as a minimum as it would be on the day one installation. Lighting engineers should work with landscape architects and ecologists as necessary to ensure they understand the landscape and ecological sensitivities of a site.
- 6.136** Lighting schemes in rural areas for the purpose of a private amenity are unlikely to be acceptable.
- 6.137** While recognising the need to control and minimise lighting, the Local Planning Authority also recognises that floodlighting and illuminated signs permit use of sports and other facilities on those occasions when natural lighting is insufficient, is important to the activity and security of some businesses, and may contribute to local character and sense of place. Such lighting will need strong justification in rural areas and is more likely to require time restrictions and automated controls for switch off and dimming and will need to follow the ILP guidance above.

Policy EN 8

Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies

Lighting of outdoor areas will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are met:

1. The level of lighting is the minimum amount necessary to achieve the purpose for which it is provided or otherwise justified on safety or security grounds and, in respect of the provision of any new street lighting, is agreed where possible with the local parish or town council;
2. The design and specification of lighting would minimise obtrusive light, taking into account the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note GN01: the Reduction

of Obtrusive Light (or any subsequent guidance) treating all areas, apart from the main urban areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough and Paddock Wood as Zone E1;

3. There are effective controls to reduce the extent of light spillage, such as through use of low-level lighting, motion sensors, or other automated switching and dimming, and use of backscatter guards;
4. The means of lighting would not cause an unacceptable level of impact on wildlife, local heritage assets, or the wider landscape;
5. Low energy LED lighting would be used;
6. Where floodlighting of a landmark feature is proposed, the level and type of illumination would enhance the feature itself and be designed so as not to cause a nuisance.

Natural Environment

6.138 A healthy natural environment is of vital importance to people's health and wellbeing and makes a positive contribution to the quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors. Through international conventions and national policy, recent and current governments have made a commitment to improving the natural environment and halting the loss of biodiversity, and this direction of travel is reflected in these policies. The borough has a rich and diverse range of habitats and species, many of which are threatened or endangered, and there is a high density of woodland, much of which has been identified as ancient woodland. While the borough contains no international sites for conservation, there are numerous national, regional, and local sites representing a broad range of lowland habitats representative of the High and Low Weald landscapes.

6.139 Geodiversity is represented in the numerous small-scale and historical mineral sites; in particular for clay, iron ore, and sandstone, as well as exposed sandstone outcrops, but there are few designated geological sites

Biodiversity Net Gain

6.140 The objective will be for all development to contribute towards delivering measurable net gains for nature so that biodiversity across the borough as a whole is improved by the end of the plan period, and the existing network of sites and habitats is protected and strengthened with the retention and creation of robust, well managed green infrastructure. Protected species, protected sites and irreplaceable habitats will be dealt with in accordance with prevailing legislation and licensing regimes, but they must also be taken into account as part of wider biodiversity considerations and the Local Plan policies.

6.141 Almost all development, whether it is a single dwelling, industrial shed, or 250 houses, can, and will, be expected to provide enhancements for biodiversity. This may simply be the provision of bird and bat boxes on a building or, on larger schemes, the creation of significant areas of new habitats or nature reserves.

- 6.142** Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that seeks to ensure that habitats for wildlife are left in a better state than they were before the development as measured by using the Statutory Metric. A mandatory scheme of BNG for new development came into force in April 2024. Qualifying developments must provide a mandatory minimum 10% gain in biodiversity under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).
- 6.143** Both retrospective applications and self-build/custom build developments are currently exempt from Mandatory BNG. Policy EN9 will require such developments where no other exemption under the legislation exists to ensure no net loss in biodiversity through a scheme of avoidance, mitigation and gains for nature through enhancements for biodiversity in accordance with Policy EN 14. This may be demonstrated through reasoned arguments, Ecological Impact Assessments or use of the Statutory Metric.
- 6.144** Other development that is exempt from the Mandatory BNG may still contribute to net gain through, where appropriate, a proportionate scheme of ecological enhancements demonstrated through the application or secured via condition.
- 6.145** Applicants will be expected to provide sufficient information with an application to enable the Council to come to a view on the appropriateness of proposals for BNG, for any habitat enhancement and creation and any proposals for offsite biodiversity gains.
- 6.146** The Council will, provide further detailed guidance on BNG in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document and/or Guidance Notes which will set out any local requirements with regards to the metric inputs and for on-site and off-site habitat enhancement or creation as well as application of the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy and the use of Local Nature Recovery Strategies including:
- information required at validation;
 - local conservation objectives;
 - requirements for supporting evidence for habitat enhancement/creation;
 - long term management and monitoring options;
 - funding arrangements, legal agreements and costs for any local or strategic offsetting schemes.
- 6.147** In accordance with the Biodiversity Net Gain Hierarchy on-site, mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures will be the preferred option, but off-site gains will be considered where it is identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy or otherwise offers the best outcome for biodiversity, and follows the mitigation hierarchy. Only that which cannot be mitigated or compensated for on-site will be permitted off-site, so even where off-site is agreed, on-site measures will still be required.
- 6.148** Where off-site is proposed through a scheme of biodiversity credits and/or land banking, that scheme and the location for the off-site measures will need to be approved by the Council, and evidence submitted to the Council to demonstrate compliance with Policy EN 9.

- 6.149** All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate, through survey, assessment, and interpretation carried out by a suitably qualified professional, a comprehensive understanding of habitats and species associated with their site and adjacent land, and to provide an assessment of the likely effects. The assessment should be proportionate to the interests of the site and the likely effects of the proposal, and seek relevant information from the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (note: information from the NBN Atlas will not be accepted). It must be recognised that the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric is a proxy for biodiversity and where used does not cover all likely effects, and that professional judgment will be required to take account of issues outside the metric, including disturbance and connectivity. Specific consideration of the effect on soils and ecosystem services may also be required in accordance with other policies in this plan and development will be expected to follow the Defra Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites.
- 6.150** Proposals for biodiversity and landscaping should be informed by national and local guidance, and strategies including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy when published. Current relevant guidance and information includes the Kent Habitat Survey, Biodiversity Action Plans, Biodiversity Opportunity Area statements, pollinator action plans, the Kent Environment Strategy, and the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy, as well as the High Weald AONB Management Plan and its supporting documents. As part of net gains for nature, development will be expected to provide, protect, and reinforce green infrastructure in accordance with Policy EN 14: Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure and to provide enhancements for biodiversity, to include where possible, but not limited to:
- bird and bat boxes selected and located in accordance with the advice of an ecologist, integrated into new buildings, and focused on garden and urban species, including crevice dwelling bats, swifts, house sparrows, and starlings;
 - wildlife friendly sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) features;
 - ponds and scrapes specifically designed for wildlife;
 - holes in fences for hedgehogs;
 - amphibian friendly kerbs/drains;
 - culverts under paths and roads for small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians;
 - wildlife friendly show gardens;
 - a scheme of wildlife talks and events for new residents;
 - bug boxes and bug hotels;
 - on-site interpretation panels of ecological features and habitats.
- 6.151** All ecological surveys and reports submitted to the Council for planning purposes will be submitted to the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre.

Policy EN 9

Biodiversity Net Gain

Development will only be permitted where in so far as is practical it:

Minimises the loss and fragmentation of existing habitats on-site.

Protects and enhances the biodiversity of retained habitats and, maximises opportunities for habitat restoration, enhancement and habitat connectivity.

Development requiring mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain shall provide a minimum of 10% gain in biodiversity and proposals for any off-site provision must demonstrate conformity with the Biodiversity Net Gain Hierarchy.

Any retrospective or self-build/custom build applications that is not exempt for other reasons, will be expected to demonstrate no net loss in biodiversity and gains for nature through enhancements for biodiversity through a reasoned statement, Ecological Impact Assessment or application of the Statutory Metric.

Other development that is exempt from the Mandatory BNG should where appropriate contribute to net gain through a proportionate scheme of ecological enhancements.

Protection of Designated Sites and Habitats

- 6.152** The Council will apply a hierarchical approach to conservation of designated sites and habitats within the borough, and those outside the borough where it may be affected by development within the borough.

International sites

- 6.153** These include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and Ramsar Sites (collectively referred to as Natura 2000 sites) and form part of an international network of protected areas for nature conservation. There are no Natura 2000 sites within the borough, but possible pathways whereby development within the borough may affect these sites outside the borough have been identified for Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, which are in Wealden district and are the subject of a separate policy (see Policy EN 11).

- 6.154** National, county, and locally designated sites for biodiversity are as defined on the Policies Map and comprise:

National sites

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 6.155** These have statutory protection and are nationally recognised for their flora and fauna, geological, or physiographical (landform) features.

County sites

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

- 6.156** With the support of local planning authorities, these are identified and monitored on a county-wide basis by the Kent Wildlife Trust according to nationally set criteria for biodiversity and local distinctiveness. The process of site identification, review, and proposed changes is overseen by the Kent Nature Partnership. Sites and designated areas are updated annually.

Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)

- 6.157** These are geological sites of particular importance in Kent that are identified by GeoConservation Kent Group, a member of United Kingdom RIGS Groups (UKRIGS). Much of our geological knowledge has come from the study of exposed rock faces and the fossil remains found in the rock strata, making geological sites a vital part of our historical heritage. The list of sites will be updated periodically by GeoConservation Kent Group in consultation with the Council and may cover sandstone outcrops, quarry workings, and other excavations.

Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)

- 6.158** With the support of local planning authorities and Kent Highways, these are identified and monitored on a county-wide basis by a project led by the Kent Wildlife Trust for the purpose of protecting the botanical interest of species rich grasslands.

Local sites

- 6.159** Sites of Local Nature Conservation Value (SLNVC) are designated by the Council and are recognised as having a similar status to county sites, but are designated within, or adjacent to, built-up areas, with a greater emphasis on access to nature and where there is greatest pressure for development.
- 6.160** Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are specifically designated by the Council for public access to nature, under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, and amended by Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, with the purpose of increasing the public enjoyment and understanding of nature, as well as promoting nature conservation. They provide a significant and long-term contribution to nature conservation and are an important resource for the community, making a positive contribution to health and wellbeing.
- 6.161** There are other large-scale Council owned sites, and sites secured for public access through development, that perform a similar function to LNRs, and in policy terms will be treated in a similar manner. These are to be referred to as candidate LNRs (CLNR). Current Council-owned CLNRs include:
- Marshley Harbour Wood
 - Cinderhill Wood
 - Snipe and Bassets Wood
 - Greggs Wood Town Green
- 6.162** Current and consented CLNRs on development sites include:

Knights Wood, Tunbridge Wells
 Brick Kiln Farm, Cranbrook
 Church Farm, Paddock Wood
 Mascalls Court, Paddock Wood
 Mascalls Court Farm, Paddock Wood

- 6.163** In addition, there are significant sites in, and adjacent to, the borough owned and managed by organisations, including the Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission, Kent Wildlife Trust, and RSPB for the purpose of biodiversity and public access, as well as the Commons of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall, Southborough, and Lamberhurst. These sites, irrespective of other designations, will be treated in a similar manner to LNRs in terms of biodiversity value.

Biodiversity outside designated sites

- 6.164** The Council will encourage and promote the positive management of designated sites or habitats, as well as their conservation and enhancement. It must be recognised, however, that important habitats and protected or notable species are not confined to designated sites, but can be found on almost any site. A number of habitats and species are identified in the national and local Biodiversity Action Plans, including the Council's own [Biodiversity Action Plan](#). The Council will protect and enhance biodiversity across the borough through application of Policy EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain and through the management of its own sites and the work of the Kent High Weald Partnership.
- 6.165** Although not a designation, as part of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy, the Kent Nature Partnership has also identified three general Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) across the borough, covering the High Weald, Romney Marshes, and the Medway and Low Weald Grassland and Wetland that extend further beyond the borough boundaries. These BOAs indicate where the delivery of Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets should be focused in order to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits arising from habitat enhancement, restoration, and recreation.
- 6.166** Table 9 below summarises the biodiversity/geodiversity hierarchy and Appendix 2 lists the specific sites in the borough.

Table 9 The biodiversity/geodiversity hierarchy

Level	Type	Designation	Number of sites
International	Biodiversity	Natura 2000 sites (collectively including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites)	0
National	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	10
County	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	60 1 13
Local	Biodiversity	Sites of Local Nature Conservation Value (SLNCV) Local Nature Reserves (LNR) Candidate Local Nature Reserves (CLNR)	16 4 9

Policy EN 10

Protection of designated sites and habitats

The positive management of designated sites and habitats is encouraged and promoted, as is their conservation and enhancement in accordance with their hierarchical status. Development proposals that would have a direct or indirect adverse effect on the nature conservation or geological interest of a designated site of national, regional, or local importance will not normally be permitted. Exceptions to this will only be permitted if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The need for the development would clearly outweigh the affected nature conservation interest of the site;
2. There would be no reasonable, less damaging, alternative solutions, locations, or sites;
3. The design and layout of the scheme would minimise the potential impact on notable habitats, species, and any public enjoyment or access to the site;
4. That compensation, including management and monitoring, is provided in accordance with Policy EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain;
5. In the case of designated geological sites:
 - a. the geological interest of the site, and access to it, is not compromised;
 - b. where possible, access and/or interpretation is improved.

Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation

- 6.167** Ashdown Forest is an extensive area of common land lying between East Grinstead and Crowborough. It is one of the largest single, continuous blocks of heath, semi-natural woodland, and valley bog in south east England, and it supports several uncommon plants, a rich invertebrate fauna, and important populations of heath and woodland birds. It is both a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 6.168** The SPA is designated for its populations of breeding Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*) and Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*). The SAC is designated for its Annex I habitats, namely Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* and European dry heaths; as well as for its Annex II species, namely Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*). The nearest settlements (or parts of settlements) within Tunbridge Wells borough to Ashdown Forest are Ashurst and Groombridge, which are approximately 6km from the site. A 2016 visitors' survey found that less than 4% of visitors to the Forest originated from within the whole of Tunbridge Wells borough, and that most regular visitors originate from within Wealden district.
- 6.169** Although the SPA/SAC lies entirely within Wealden district, it is capable of being affected by development consented by the Local Planning Authority within Tunbridge Wells borough:

- the SPA can be affected by recreational pressure arising from population growth in that part of Tunbridge Wells borough closest to the SPA;
- the SAC can be affected by an increase in emissions from vehicles using roads (including the A26 and A275) that run through and adjacent to it.

- 6.170** The Local Planning Authority has considered these matters, undertaken detailed studies, as set out in the [Ashdown Forest Practice Note](#), and reviewed available evidence in partnership with other affected planning authorities, and in consultation with Natural England, to update its practice in relation to planning decisions and to inform the required Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and policies for this Local Plan.
- 6.171** In respect of emissions, the HRA has concluded that this Plan alone, or in combination with other plans, will have no adverse effect upon the integrity of Ashdown Forest SAC. The Local Planning Authority, however, will continue to work with the Ashdown Forest Working Group to improve understanding and to support strategic work on air quality issues for Ashdown Forest.
- 6.172** In respect of recreational pressure, the HRA has concluded that new development may give rise to likely significant effects and that the most effective way of dealing with this is through a combination of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) to provide alternative locations to Ashdown Forest that new residents may use for recreation (e.g. dog walking), and a scheme of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMs) to reduce and monitor adverse effects on Ashdown Forest and the effectiveness of mitigation.
- 6.173** Taking account of the available data on visitors, the Local Planning Authority has concluded, in consultation with Natural England and other partner authorities, that a strategic zone of influence that captures most visitors and most regular visitors within which SAMMs and SANGs contributions will be required, is the most effective and proportionate way to mitigate for any potential adverse effects of visitor pressure. The SAMMs work is coordinated and delivered through a partnership of local planning authorities working with the Ashdown Forest Conservators and Natural England.
- 6.174** Based on current data, the strategic zone has been set at 7km. For Tunbridge Wells borough, this covers a very small part of the borough that includes two historic villages that lie within both the High Weald National Landscape and Green Belt, where no development is specifically planned through allocations in this Local Plan. Any developments that do come forward within the 7km zone will be required to make contributions to SANGs and SAMMs in accordance with the prevailing tariff at that time.
- 6.175** Outside the 7km zone, proposals for major development on, or close to, the 7km zone will be considered on a case-by-case basis under the Habitat Regulations to determine what, if any, mitigation is required.

- 6.176** The Local Planning Authority will continue to work with the SAMMs partnership to monitor and support delivery of SAMMs and SANGs as necessary, responding to any changes in circumstances, monitoring results, guidance, or advice from Natural England.

Policy EN 11

Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation

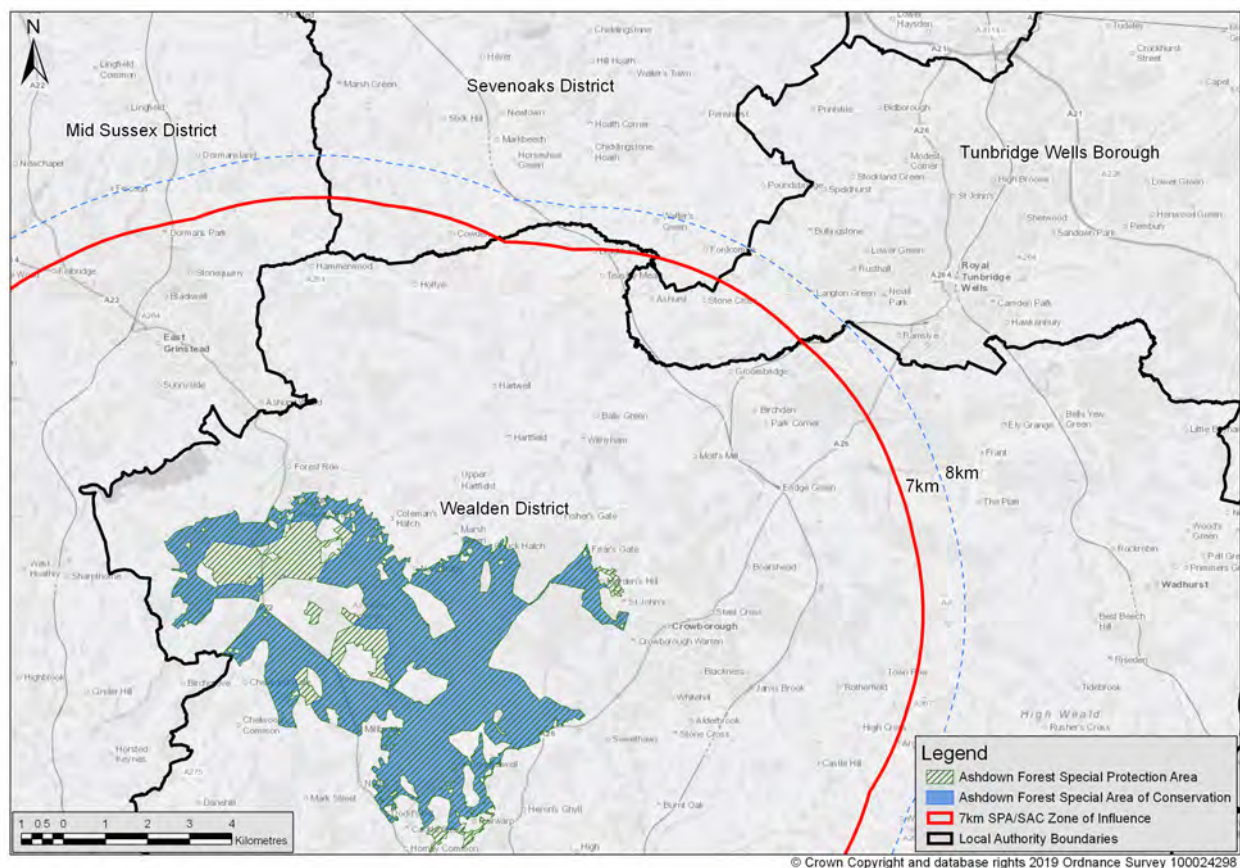
All development that results in a net increase in housing within the 7km defined zone of influence*, as set out in the Council's Ashdown Forest Practice Note, will provide a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMs) and a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) contribution to address the impact of visitors from new development on Ashdown Forest. Contributions will be sought in accordance with the prevailing SAMMs and SANGs Strategy adopted by the Local Planning Authority and in force at the time of the application.

Alternative provision(s) for mitigation to address the impact of visitors will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that it will be effective and deliverable over the lifetime of the development.

Proposals for major development within, or adjacent to, the zone of influence will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive to determine what, if any, mitigation is required, including SAMMs and SANGs.

For further guidance please refer to the Council's web site page [Protecting Ashdown Forest](#) that includes the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

* The zone may be subject to revision to take account of new evidence on visitor patterns or monitoring. Any changes will take place through a Supplementary Planning Document.

Figure 9 7km zone of influence around Ashdown Forest

Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development

- 6.177** The borough is largely characterised by an abundant amount of tree cover in both the rural (22% woodland cover) and urban areas (with nearly 34% tree cover in Royal Tunbridge Wells itself), including extensive areas of woodland (a large number of which are of ancient origin), together with numerous small woodlands, copses, hedgerows, individual trees, garden trees, and street trees. The trees form a unifying element that eases the visual transformation between land use types, as well as defining ridgelines, contributing to local character, forming structure for green space, providing wildlife corridors, creating reservoirs for biodiversity, intercepting rainfall, and helping to reduce flood risk.
- 6.178** Trees are also important in urban areas for providing shade, intercepting airborne pollutants, increasing a sense of wellbeing, providing a sense of place, and generally improving and softening the built environment, making it a more pleasant place in which to live, work, and do business.
- 6.179** The borough is rich in ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), aged and veteran trees, and trees in historic parks and gardens, all of which can be classed as heritage assets. Tunbridge Wells borough has the largest area of ASNW in Kent, being 16.22% of the total land area. The Council will seek to prevent loss of, and to enhance, woodland cover, working proactively with woodland owners and relevant organisations to bring woodland back into management where possible. In the

absence of site surveys and detailed assessments, the Council will assume a buffer of 25m from the edge of the woodland, which allows for the presence of veteran trees and the fall height of mature trees. The Council expects developers, through assessment, to confirm that this or any other distance is appropriate and that the priority for such buffers will be ecological mitigation and enhancement for the woodland rather than the amenity of the proposed development. Where developments are proposed in, or adjacent to, ASNW, the Council will have regard to Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice for Ancient Woodlands and the NPPF, and will seek to ensure no loss occurs other than in wholly exceptional circumstances (such as nationally significant infrastructure projects or orders under the Transport and Works Act). Remedial measures will also be sought to make good any existing damage to ASNW where possible, and to protect and enhance it where opportunities allow.

- 6.180** Additional assessment will be required of all ammonia-emitting developments, such as intensive livestock units, within 5km of an ancient woodland site, which shall include a detailed Ancient Woodland Nitrogen Impact Assessment of the ancient woodland(s) of concern. This will need to demonstrate that there will be no deterioration as a result of the contributions from this development on the full range of flora present, including lower order plants such as mosses, liverworts, and lichen.
- 6.181** The Council undertook a survey of ancient woodland across the borough resulting in the publication of [A Revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Tunbridge Wells borough](#) October 2007. The report states that "*whilst every effort has been made to make this revision as accurate as possible, the Inventory is still regarded as provisional*" so that where woodland occurs on-site and is not within the Inventory its status should be investigated through site-specific and desk-based assessments.
- 6.182** Where development does take place, there will be a presumption in favour of increasing tree cover, especially in urban areas, with planting specification, species selection, size, diversity, and connectivity being important considerations. Native species indigenous to the area should be used, unless justified by strong design reasons, using local provenance plants and seeds wherever possible. Consideration should be given to allowing natural regeneration wherever possible and practical. Any design and landscape scheme must ensure that both retained trees and new trees, including larger maturing species, have adequate spatial capacity for future growth, enabling a positive long-term contribution to the structural landscape of the borough. It should be noted that ancient woodland and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats and should not be included in biodiversity net gain calculations.
- 6.183** Development proposals will be assessed using the latest edition of BS 5837: Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction (or subsequent revision) to ensure that development does not result in unnecessary damage to, or loss of, trees. The latest version of this Standard also introduced a new requirement of on-site supervision during construction by a project arboriculturalist where appropriate.

- 6.184** Where increased tree planting is sought and encouraged for reasons such as visual enhancement, climate change mitigation, or flood alleviation, and these requirements cannot be met on-site, commuted payments will be requested by way of Section 106 agreements, through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), or the use of conditions in connection with the granting of planning permission.
- 6.185** There are various ways that trees may be protected, the most well known being Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Protection is also afforded to trees in conservation areas, and trees may be protected in the short term by planning conditions. TPOs are made to ensure retention of individual trees, groups of trees, or woodland considered to be of amenity value, and any person who cuts down or damages a tree protected by a TPO is guilty of an offence for which they may be prosecuted and fined. In more rural areas, the felling of trees in woodlands is controlled by Forestry Commission Felling Licences, while the removal of certain agricultural hedges is controlled by the Hedgerows Act.
- 6.186** In addition, proposals affecting trees and woodland will be considered against other policies in the Plan, including Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design, EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets; and landscape Policies EN 16 to EN 20.

Policy EN 12

Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development

Planning permission will not normally be permitted where the proposal adversely affects important trees, woodlands, and hedgerows, especially those that are:

1. Protected by a Tree Preservation Order; and/or
2. In a conservation area; and/or
3. Ancient woodlands or ancient and veteran trees; and/or
4. In historic parks and gardens; and/or
5. Within a recognised Nature Conservation Site; and/or
6. In a recognised Area of Landscape Importance; and/or
7. Important landscape or townscape trees; and/or
8. An important contribution to green infrastructure or other important ecological networks.

Developments will generally be expected to increase tree cover, especially in urban areas, and there will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of existing trees, woodland, and hedgerow cover on-site, unless:

- a. the removal of any trees would be in the interests of good arboricultural practice; or
- b. the need and/or public benefit of the proposed development outweighs the amenity value of any trees or hedges removed.

Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on-site, however, an appropriate number of suitable replacement trees (in terms of species and size) that replaces or exceeds that which is lost will be required to be planted on-site. In exceptional circumstances, for example where there is no appropriate space for planting on-site, or the site is a constrained site within an urban setting, planting of suitable replacements (in terms of species and size) off-site will be sought by way of appropriate funding mechanisms

that are capable of being secured by condition and/or legal agreement. This does not necessarily replace the requirements of other policies with regard to net gain for biodiversity or green infrastructure, but may contribute to those objectives.

Appropriate management measures will be required to be implemented to protect newly planted and existing trees, woodlands, and/or hedgerows.

Advice note:

Where trees on, or adjacent to, the site are likely to be affected by development, tree survey information in accordance with the current recommendations of BS 5837: Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction (or subsequent revision) should be submitted with planning applications as appropriate. The tree survey information should include protection, mitigation, and management measures, including arboricultural site supervision where required.

Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees

Policy EN 13

Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees

Loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, resulting from development proposals shall not be allowed unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, as defined by the NPPF, and in such circumstances appropriate compensatory measures are provided.

Where ancient wood pasture* and historic parkland are identified, they shall receive the same consideration as other forms of ancient woodland.

Where development proposals may affect ancient woodlands, including translocated woodlands (translocated ancient woodlands will be treated the same as if they are ancient woodland), veteran trees, and their immediate surroundings, the following principles shall be used to guide both site selection and the design of development:

1. Avoidance of harm;
2. Provision of unequivocal evidence of need and benefits of the proposed development, and for the design of development;
3. Establishment of the likelihood and type of any impacts;
4. Implementation of appropriate and adequate mitigation, compensation, and management measures that respect the features and characteristics of the veteran trees and/or ancient woodland;
5. Provision of evidence to support the adequacy of proposed buffers.

*Ancient wood pastures are areas of grazed pasture, heath, or open hill with a scattering of open-grown veteran trees.

Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure

- 6.187** In addition to the conservation of biodiversity, it is also important to explore opportunities for enhancement, particularly in light of how it is anticipated that climate change may impact on habitats and species, and as part of development to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure.
- 6.188** Green, grey, and blue infrastructure (see Glossary) is the network of green, grey, and blue multi-functional spaces (as well as features such as street trees and green roofs) that is planned, designed, and managed to:
- promote healthier living;
 - lessen the impacts of climate change;
 - improve air quality and water quality;
 - encourage walking and cycling;
 - store carbon;
 - improve biodiversity and ecological resilience.
- 6.189** In making decisions about the acceptability and location of new development, the Council will seek to avoid and reduce habitat fragmentation and to initiate the enhancement of biodiversity by identifying how networks of habitats can be created and linked to improve ecological connectivity, providing opportunities for increased species permeability, as well as creating valuable links for leisure and recreation.
- 6.190** Green/brown roofs can play an important role in urban areas through assisting with water storage, insulation, and improving biodiversity, but require careful design. Roofs with a shallow substrate that can only support sedums will be resisted in favour of those with a deeper substrate that can support locally relevant plant and invertebrates communities.
- 6.191** Green infrastructure consists of areas or features retained or created on development sites for ecological and/or landscape reasons and will need to be managed in the long term. The Council will expect developers to set out the arrangements for funding and management of these areas and features as part of their application within a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) in general conformity with BS 42020 or subsequent revision. The LEMP will be secured through condition and/or legal agreement for the lifetime of the development.

Policy EN 14

Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure

Development proposals will be expected to identify and protect existing green, grey, and blue infrastructure and maximise opportunities for new infrastructure that supports climate change adaptation and ecosystem services, and makes a positive contribution to strengthening and restoring a healthy and integrated network of habitats and green spaces for the benefit of nature, people, and the economy. Green, grey, and blue infrastructure may be a multi-functional feature, which includes the provision of improved connections for people, or stepping stones/corridors for wildlife. Proposals for new green, grey, and blue infrastructure should aim to improve connectivity including ecological and be informed by, and respond to:

1. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas statements;
2. County and borough green infrastructure plans and mapping;
3. Ecological surveys and identified priority habitats;
4. Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Action Plan;
5. Landscape character assessments;
6. River basin management plans.

Opportunities for green (and grey and blue) infrastructure should have regard to other relevant policies for landscape, heritage, biodiversity, and trees and include, but are not limited to:

- a. landscape buffers; and/or
- b. green routes for walking, cycling, and horse riding; and/or
- c. swales and attenuation ponds as part of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS); and/or
- d. woodland creation; and/or
- e. reinstatement of historic field patterns and hedgerows; and/or
- f. restoration of important habitats and landscape features, such as gill streams, ponds, meadows, and heaths; and/or
- g. creation of ponds and wetlands for wildlife.

Even in urban areas where there is little existing green and blue infrastructure, all developments are expected to maximise opportunities for green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements, with a particular emphasis on water management, atmospheric pollution, and urban wildlife, and can include, but are not limited to, the following measures:

- i. green/brown roofs and green walls; and/or
- ii. rain gardens; and/or
- iii. street tree and hedge planting; and/or
- iv. the addition of bird and bat boxes for urban species as indicated in Policy EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain.

Local Green Space

6.192 A Local Green Space is a designated area of green or open space that is demonstrably special to the local community that it serves. These areas are particularly important with regard to their benefits to mental health and wellbeing. As listed within the Planning Practice Guidance, Local Green Spaces “*could include land where sports pavilions, boating lakes, or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis*”. This designation was first introduced in 2012 through the NPPF and is designed to protect areas that are of particular value to local communities, at a level that is consistent with policy for Green Belts, from development. This means that development on a designated Local Green Space will only be permitted in very special circumstances. These very special circumstances may include works involving new electricity pylons, natural gas, water, or sewage pipes, as well as telegraph poles, telecommunication, or transportation infrastructure. The designation of Local Green Spaces will also be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and will complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs, and other essential services.

6.193 Almost 400 sites across the borough have been submitted for consideration as Local Green Space. All proposed sites have been assessed within the Council’s Local Green Space Assessment having applied the Council’s detailed methodology outlined within its Local Green Space Designation Methodology document. Both documents, in particular the methodology, have been reviewed and updated following the Regulation 18 consultation on the Draft Local Plan. Generally, this methodology requires that proposed Local Green Space areas must meet all five criteria in order to be designated as Local Green Space, unless the site is already sufficiently protected under other local and/or national designations and policies (although there may be site-specific exceptions). While the methodology document provides more detailed information, the five criteria are summarised as:

1. The site is not the subject of planning permission;
2. The site is not allocated or proposed for development other than for the inclusion of a Local Green Space;
3. The site is not an extensive tract of land (generally greater than 20 hectares);
4. The site is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
5. The site is demonstrably special to the local community (because of its beauty, local historic significance, recreational value, tranquility, or richness of wildlife).

6.194 A schedule of Local Green Space sites designated by this Local Plan within the Tunbridge Wells borough can be found in Appendix 3. These sites can also be found on the Policies Map. However, it is noted that Appendix 3 and the Policies Map do not include sites that are, or are proposed to be, designated in Neighbourhood Development Plans for parishes within the borough. These sites are not duplicated within the list below and can be found separately within the relevant Neighbourhood Development Plan for that parish. All Neighbourhood Development Plans can be found on the following Council’s webpage: <https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans>.

Policy EN 15

Local Green Space

A Local Green Space is a designated area of green or open space that is demonstrably special to the local community that it serves. Development on these areas will not be permitted unless one of the following criteria is met:

1. The proposed development constitutes very special circumstances (such as essential utility infrastructure) that justify the need for development and it can be demonstrated that the need cannot reasonably be met outside the designated area or in some other less harmful way. Where this is the case, the public benefits of the development must demonstrably outweigh the harm caused to the designated area of Local Green Space;
2. The proposed development would incorporate and preserve the main features, use, and purpose of the designated area of Local Green Space on the same development site, including, where already in existence, continued community access to the area. The proposals may involve plans to expand the existing Local Green Space and/or improve its existing use and purpose, such as new recreational facilities;
3. The proposed development does not materially reduce the community use, detract from the function, or affect the appreciation of the designated area of Local Green Space and, furthermore, where possible in such cases, there will be acceptable provision to offset any loss of, or detriment to, the area of Local Green Space on, or close to, the site.

For a full schedule of the designated Local Green Space sites in Tunbridge Wells borough, see Appendix 3. All sites are also defined on the Policies Map.

Landscape within the Built Environment

- 6.195** The high quality and dominance of the landscape is an essential part of the character of the built environment within the borough. The landscaped areas possess different characteristics, ranging from largely open areas, such as village greens, parks, recreational playing fields, school grounds, and allotments, to more enclosed tree belts and copses. The NPPF places emphasis on protecting and enhancing such valued landscape areas.
- 6.196** The green and open spaces between areas of development can be of great importance to the character and identity of a place, and can be of significant amenity value to the immediate locality. The undulating topography of the borough, and the ridgeline location of many of the settlements, further accentuate landscape features and permit views directly into, and from, the countryside, visually linking settlement and country. Intervening urban development is concealed by trees or other vegetation, or by the shape of the land. These spaces also form part of the green infrastructure of our settlements, providing stepping stones and corridors for wildlife, and make a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of residents, as well as contributing to ecosystem services through carbon capture, temperature

moderation, and water storage. If uncontrolled, changes to green and open spaces between areas of development can diminish the positive contributions these areas make to the towns and villages, and irrevocably change the special character of a place.

- 6.197** The Local Planning Authority has identified a number of particular areas that contribute to the character and appearance of the built-up areas. By definition, these are areas that are visible from public places. Although effort was concentrated on identifying the most significant sites for protection, this does not diminish the contribution that other, not yet identified sites of a similar nature, smaller, or more private, sites can make to the character of an area, the setting of a building, or the nature conservation interest of a locality. Appraisals of conservation areas have identified such spaces in relation to the contribution they make to the special character of the conservation area.
- 6.198** There are four types of landscape designations that have been identified within the built environment of the borough that exhibit different characteristics, although some exhibit a mixture. These are:
1. Areas of Important Open Space: these are essentially open in character;
 2. Areas of Landscape Importance: these contain a large degree of tree or vegetation cover;
 3. Important Landscape Approaches: these are access routes into settlements that are primarily lined with trees and hedges representing the first view of towns and villages;
 4. Arcadian Areas: landscaping (dense hedges and trees) is the dominant visual element and the built form is low density and low rise, with large landscaped gaps between buildings.
- 6.199** These landscape designations are defined on the Policies Map.
- 6.200** The Local Planning Authority recognises the fact that previous survey work undertaken in relation to the above landscape designations is now somewhat dated, and that some sites may be affected by proposals and policies within this Plan, including alterations to the LBD and site allocations, and that emerging neighbourhood plans may take their own view on these designations. Therefore, it is proposed that, in recognition of the importance of these areas, they are retained for the next plan period and reviewed as part of neighbourhood plan making or the first revision of the Local Plan, whichever is the earlier. Any material or policy changes to these areas can be addressed through development proposals, and this should be included in any landscape proposals and design and access statement submitted with a planning application, as required by Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design.
- 6.201** As part of the review, the Council will reappraise areas that as yet have no designations and will consider including railways lines within Important Landscape Approaches. The northern railway link into Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough will be the approach for many to the town and has its own particular character, offering vistas over the countryside setting of the town.

Areas of Important Open Space

- 6.202** An open space may be important visually for a number of sometimes overlapping reasons, which are outlined below:

Open Spaces of Historic Importance

- 6.203** The open spaces within conservation areas are frequently of historic importance. The built-up areas of all settlements within the borough are distinguished by the relationship of buildings to the greenery of the commons, parks, greens, the setting of principal landmark (listed and/or historic) buildings, and other open spaces. The layout, character, density, and massing of buildings in relation to the surrounding spaces are essential to creating their special character.

Open Space of Local Visual Amenity Value

- 6.204** A number of open spaces within the built-up area provide important visual amenity for the locality and can include village greens, parks, recreation grounds, and allotments, together with smaller pockets of locally important amenity spaces.

Open Spaces of Strategic Importance

- 6.205** Certain open spaces, because of their location and openness, allow longer distance views of the towns or villages. Similarly, because of a combination of location and topography, an open space may have a strategic importance in creating a perception of a town or village.

Areas of Landscape Importance

- 6.206** Where spaces within a built-up area have a large degree of tree or vegetation cover, they are particularly important for their visual amenity value and the contribution they make to local character, air quality, and flood mitigation.

- 6.207** Areas of Landscape Importance have value for a number of sometimes overlapping reasons:

Landscape of Historic Importance

- 6.208** All towns and villages within the borough contain important tree groups, which contribute to the character of conservation areas and arcadian areas.
- 6.209** Smaller groups, or individual trees, may contribute significantly to the character of conservation areas; for example, by providing enclosure to spaces, enhancing the setting of a building or group of buildings (including listed buildings and/or other heritage assets), or providing a landmark feature of individual value.
- 6.210** Dense tree and shrub cover in mature private gardens can also contribute to the character and setting of conservation areas and arcadian areas within the borough.

Neighbourhood Edges

- 6.211** The evolution of Royal Tunbridge Wells is characterised by the growth of a number of separate villages, which have gradually converged. However, it is a feature of both the historic and more recent developments of the town and other settlements, such as Brenchley, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst, Horsmonden, and Lamberhurst, where

individual areas are segregated from one another by mature tree and shrub belts. The dense vegetation and tree belts provide a strong visual barrier between areas. Such tree belts form neighbourhood edges, which are not only important in understanding the historic evolution of the town or village, but also add to the overall tree cover.

Landscaped Skylines

- 6.212** Almost all of the settlements and their approaches are situated on prominent ridgelines. Within Royal Tunbridge Wells, the undulating topography creates a series of minor ridges between principal ridgelines. Such ridges and other areas of high ground may appear visually prominent when viewed from outside and within settlements. Careful consideration needs to be given to proposals on, or close to, prominent ridgelines, where landscaping and tree cover should remain a predominant feature. The proposal should be accompanied by an integral landscape scheme (both hard and soft landscaping), which contributes to, and enhances, the natural and local environment, including sympathetic boundary treatments. Proposals that would break the treeline will only be acceptable in exceptional and justified circumstances and those which break skyline will not be acceptable.

Wider Landscape Significance

- 6.213** Even when not located on high ground or ridgelines, many vegetated areas have significance to the wider landscape setting and character of the town or village and may be viewed from a wide area. In addition, many provide natural habitats for a variety of flora and fauna, which can be of particular significance in terms of providing a network of various habitats.

Important Landscape Approaches

- 6.214** One of the attractive environmental features of the borough is the character and high visual quality of the approach routes outside, and within, the built-up areas.
- 6.215** Important Landscape Approaches are stretches of landscape areas that are along access routes leading to settlements that are principally lined with mature hedges and native trees that partly conceal built development. They give the impression of the countryside extending well into the built-up area. Such landscaped approaches have been identified in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Cranbrook, Benenden, Brenchley, Pembury, and Speldhurst, and are defined on the Policies Map.
- 6.216** The first view of any town or village is important in forming an impression, particularly for visitors and tourists. Consequently, development such as high, close-boarded fencing or solid walls, a new access and visibility splays, the introduction of a dominant new building, or through the loss of soft landscaping, are likely to detract from the approaches identified by, for example, obscuring views of the vegetation. The retention, protection, and enhancement of these landscape approaches will therefore be given priority by the Local Planning Authority in the assessment of any such development proposals, and landscaping should remain the prevalent feature.

- 6.217** Given the high value of landscape within the built environment in terms of the contribution it makes to visual amenity, historic townscape, and landscape setting, and its ecological benefits, as well as there being limited opportunities to create or replace these areas, development proposals will only be permitted in limited circumstances on, or close to, an Area of Important Open Space, an Area of Landscape Importance, an Important Landscape Approach, or Arcadian Area. Where it is found that a development proposal would not cause significant harm to the appearance or character of such a designation, the Local Planning Authority will require the developer to secure sufficient space for, and appropriate management of, the landscape, in order to secure the future and continued regeneration and enhancement of the landscape features of the site. This may be sought by way of a planning condition or legal obligation. In any event, proposals should be accompanied by an integral landscaping scheme (both hard and soft landscaping), which contributes to, and enhances, the natural and local environment, including sympathetic boundary treatments and consideration given to the particular landscape designation in the design and access statement submitted with any planning application.
- 6.218** Proposals affecting Areas of Important Open Space, Areas of Landscape Importance, Important Landscape Approaches, and Arcadian Areas will also be assessed against other policies in the Local Plan, including Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design, EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets, EN 9 to EN 11, EN 12: Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development, and landscape policies EN 16 to EN 18. The absence of a designation does not necessarily mean that an area is devoid of landscape value, but consideration of the contribution that such areas make to the locality will be dealt with under design and other related policies, in particular: Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design, EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain, EN 12 Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development, and EN 14: Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure.

Policy EN 16

Landscape within the Built Environment

Proposals for development affecting Areas of Important Open Space, areas of landscape importance, or the Important Landscape Approaches to settlements, as defined on the Policies Map, will only be permitted in circumstances where no significant harm would be caused to the appearance and character of the area or approach, and the development would not materially detract from the contribution that area or approach makes to the locality.

The effects of proposals on areas of landscape interest that are not covered by the above designations will be assessed in accordance with other relevant policies, including Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design, EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain, EN 12: Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development, and EN 14: Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure.

Arcadian Areas

- 6.219** Arcadian Areas are defined by the Local Planning Authority as areas of significance for their strong and dominant visual element of landscaping, in which buildings are low density, of a large domestic scale, generally two storeys in height, and set well apart, with substantial, normally landscaped, gaps between.
- 6.220** In such areas there are a large proportion of trees, often specimen trees and exotic species, and most boundaries, including road frontages, are formed by dense hedges and trees. Access openings to properties are normally narrow and do not expose views of the principal building. Car parking is generally low key and well screened.
- 6.221** Buildings are also frequently located some distance from front and rear boundaries, and many areas are also characterised by uniform front and rear building lines. Plot layout is often along a gently curved road that lacks formal kerbs.

Royal Tunbridge Wells

- 6.222** Royal Tunbridge Wells is characterised by a particular type of Arcadian development, which extends the landscaped areas of the Common into residential locations. These Arcadian Areas contribute to the overall views and character of the town, and contrast with the higher densities of other parts of the town.
- 6.223** In the 1830s, Decimus Burton laid out a heavily landscaped, low density development around the central part of Calverley Park, which set the pattern for much of the later development of Royal Tunbridge Wells. Subsequent park developments built from the late 19th century exhibit a different character; a relatively higher density development with narrow gaps between properties, shallower front gardens, and fenced or walled boundaries.
- 6.224** Four of the earlier so-called park developments in Royal Tunbridge Wells exhibit similar characteristics and possess a homogeneity of historic and architectural character, which should be protected. These areas are listed below and defined on the Policies Map:
- Calverley Park;
 - Camden Park;
 - Hungershall Park and Nevill Park;
 - Broadwater Down.

Villages

- 6.225** The areas surrounding parts of the village greens at Benenden and Matfield are characterised by a particular type of Arcadian development described above. They contribute strongly to the overall character of the villages, in contrast to the more densely developed parts, and are defined on the Policies Map.
- 6.226** The Arcadian Areas defined on the Policies Map will be retained for the next plan period and, as explained above, will be reviewed as part of neighbourhood plan making or the first review of the Local Plan, whichever is the earlier.

- 6.227** The Council will expect all development proposals to respect the general features and characteristics of a particular Arcadian Area. Low site coverage of built development should be retained as part of any proposal. Sub-division of plots, which would result in a significant increase above the existing density of the Arcadian Area, will be resisted. Landscaping should remain a prevalent feature and be enhanced by an integral landscaping scheme to be submitted as part of any planning application. Vehicular access to the site should be narrow, and buildings well screened and concealed from public view.
- 6.228** In addition to the considerable contribution Arcadian Areas make to visual amenity, they can also be valuable as habitats for many species of birds, animals, and plants. Larger gardens, belts of landscaping, and the canopies of trees provide green networks, allowing species to move through, and colonise, built-up areas. Consistent with Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design and EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain, the Local Planning Authority will take into account the potential ecological value of Arcadian Areas when assessing proposals for development.
- 6.229** In the submission of development proposals that might directly, or indirectly, affect the significance of an Arcadian Area, any supporting planning statement, design and access statement, and/or heritage statement should have regard to the themes in the Tunbridge Wells Historic Environment Review, as well as Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design; EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets; Policies EN 9 and EN 10; Policy EN 12: Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development; EN 13: Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees; and landscape policies EN 16 to EN 19.

Policy EN 17

Arcadian Areas

Proposals for development that would affect the character or appearance of an Arcadian Area, as defined on the Policies Map, will only be permitted if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The proposal would result in a low density of development where building heights, site coverage, distance from site boundaries, and front and rear building lines respect the predominant characteristics of the area;
2. Existing and proposed landscaping, including adequate capacity for future plant growth, would dominate within the site and along boundaries;
3. Access widths would be narrow;
4. Buildings and parking would be well concealed in views from public places.

Rural Landscape

Introduction

- 6.230** The rural landscape policy applies particularly to the whole borough outside the defined LBDs, but may also be of relevance to land inside, adjacent to, or in close proximity to, the boundary of LBDs where there is a strong relationship to the countryside. Policy EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape applies to the designated landscape, but may also be of relevance to land adjacent to, or close to, the designated area.
- 6.231** The whole landscape of the borough is a result of the traditional interactions of mankind with the natural environment over hundreds of years, resulting in a range of distinctive features, such as field, woodland, and settlement patterns that have arisen out of the ancient woodland of the Weald, and is generally of a high quality.
- 6.232** It includes attractive small towns and villages, many of which are covered by the High Weald National Landscape designation. The character and attractive appearance of the countryside is one of the principal assets of the borough, and its protection will be an important consideration during the assessment of all development proposals. Features such as routeways, wooded shaws, earth banks and hedges, marl pits, iron workings, and farmsteads have a vital role in defining the character of the countryside, providing highly visible evidence of the historical evolution of the landscape. Proposals should be capable of being easily assimilated without detracting from these features, which contribute to the character of the locality.

Landscape setting of the towns and villages

- 6.233** The landscape setting of the towns and villages is an important feature of the borough. Many of the settlements are situated on ridgelines and are particularly prominent when viewed from the countryside. Because of the topography, however, other settlements on lower land may also be viewed from higher areas across the attractive countryside. Typical of the High Weald, many parts of the built-up areas are swathed in woodland, which often forms a dense screen of vegetation between the settlement and the countryside. In other cases, private gardens abut the countryside, contributing to the setting of the town or village. Development proposals should have regard for the setting of all types of settlement, with particular regard for the underlying historic pattern of settlement, and should seek to avoid coalescence between settlements.

Rural lanes

- 6.234** There is a rich heritage of attractive lanes throughout the borough that contribute significantly to the distinctive character of the countryside, while also providing wildlife habitats. Reference should be made to the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance: Rural Lanes and the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee data set for historic routeways (and any subsequent revisions): it is recognised that the Rural Lanes SPG is now of considerable age, and will be reviewed in due course.

The landscape character of the borough

- 6.235** The borough has a diverse and distinctive landscape formed by a patchwork of agricultural land, woodland, heathland, meadows, and rural settlement, superimposed upon a landform of rolling plateaux incised by thin ghyll valleys and wide river valley floodplains. It is predominantly a rural, agricultural landscape of grazed pastures and arable fields, highlighted with broad belts of orchards, and now only occasional hop gardens, set within a framework of extensive woodlands. The landscape presents a peaceful and tranquil character, often with a sense of remoteness, which belies its location in the populous south east of England. The strong wooded framework is provided by the upland blankets of coniferous plantation, ghyll woodlands nestled in the valleys, and woodland shaw boundaries that knit the various agricultural landscapes together.
- 6.236** The area as a whole is underlain with historic routeways, with many originating from the medieval practice of the seasonal movement of livestock between the Downs and the Weald, and other routes associated with the iron working of the Weald from Roman times and earlier. The underlying settlement pattern of the Weald is that of small medieval farmsteads, with villages developing later. Settlement and built character provide a further layer of interest, with a locally distinct vernacular style, including brick, tiled, weather-boarded, half-timbered, and sandstone buildings. In the High Weald, these form traditional ridgetop settlements, with commanding views of the countryside. There are also farmsteads and isolated rural dwellings, including characteristic Wealden hall houses and visually distinctive clusters of oasts.
- 6.237** The borough is covered by two National Character Area profiles for landscape: 121 Low Weald and 122 High Weald, and its own [Borough Landscape Character Assessment](#) SPD. The following documents (and any subsequent replacements) will be used by the Local Planning Authority in assessing the likely effects of development on the landscape:
- National Character Area profiles 121 Low Weald
 - National Character Area profiles 122 High Weald
 - Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2017

Landscape Sensitivity Studies:

- Countryside around Royal Tunbridge Wells 2017
- Paddock Wood, Horsmonden, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst July 2018
- Historic Landscape Characterisation Tunbridge Wells Borough 2017

Landscape and Nature Conservation:

- Guidance Notes for Applicants 2002
- Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough 2016
- The High Weald AONB Management Plan
- The High Weald AONB Design Guide (High Weald Joint Advisory Committee)
- Other guidance notes and information provided by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee
- Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance 1998

- 6.238** In accordance with the European Landscape Convention, the Local Planning Authority will view the landscape as a resource that will be protected as a whole, and not just the designated sites or areas. This includes urban and rural, degraded or outstanding landscapes and the features that they support, such as wooded shaws, hedgerows, ponds, and ancient routeways.
- 6.239** The Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2017 covers the whole borough beyond the urban edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells and adjoining settlements, and identifies six landscape character types within the borough, divided into 19 separate character areas, each with key characteristics and valued features and qualities, as well as a recommended landscape strategy.
- 6.240** This SPD will be used as a key tool to guide decisions in the preparation of all plans and strategies, planning applications, and other decisions bearing on the management of land. While conserving and enhancing the key characteristics, it is important that developments should also have regard to the opportunities for enhancement identified within each character area and should support the landscape strategy for the character area.
- 6.241** While a dispersed settlement pattern, built upon the dispersed pattern of historical farmsteads and ancient routeways is a key characteristic of the landscape across the borough, it does not in itself justify further new dispersed settlement that replicates this, as it may undermine the historical integrity of the landscape and erode the historic character. Such characteristics, however, can inform new development where it is otherwise acceptable. This applies in particular to farmsteads that may in themselves have some capacity for new development through conversion, restoration, replacement buildings, and new buildings that fit with historical precedents. Any such proposals should be informed by, and take account of, the Council's [Farmsteads Assessment Guidance](#) SPD.
- 6.242** The Local Planning Authority will have particular regard to these components in determining development proposals affecting the High Weald National Landscape and, where relevant, areas of the High Weald National Landscape Character Area that adjoin the designated area.

Policy EN 18

Rural Landscape

Development will be required to:

1. Conserve and enhance the unique and diverse variety and juxtaposition of the borough's landscape and the special features that contribute positively to the local sense of place;
2. Include appropriate mitigation to ensure against significant harm to the landscape setting of settlements, including historic farmsteads and hamlets;
3. Not result in unsympathetic change to the character of a rural lane¹, which is of landscape, amenity, nature conservation, or historic or archaeological importance;

4. Restore landscape character where it has been eroded;
5. Preserve intrinsically dark landscapes in accordance with Policy EN 8: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies.

¹ Rural lanes are identified and listed in the Rural Lanes SPG.

The High Weald National Landscape

6.243 Please note that on 22 November 2023 all designated Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales were rebranded by the government as 'National Landscapes' (NLs). Thus, the High Weald AONB is now commonly referred to as the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) and the High Weald AONB Unit are now the High Weald National Landscape Partnership (HWNLP). However, the legal title and policy status remains AONB and hence it remains that the Management Plan is for the AONB and where this document refers to the AONB this may also be read as the National Landscape. The High Weald National Landscape covers approximately 70% of the borough and has the highest status of protection nationally in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, equal to that of National Parks. The Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty *"to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing"* the natural beauty of the High Weald National Landscape. The [High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024 - 2029](#) provides the following statement of significance:

"The High Weald is one of the best-preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe. Despite its large size (1,461 sq.km) and proximity to London, its landscape has remained relatively unchanged since the 14th century, surviving major historical events and accommodating significant social and technological changes. The natural beauty of the High Weald AONB is derived from the essentially rural and small-scale landscape character, rich in wildlife and cultural features."

6.244 The High Weald AONB Management Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions and is structured around the five defining components of character:

- geology, landform, and water systems;
- settlement;
- routeways;
- woodland;
- field and heath.

6.245 The Local Planning Authority will have particular regard to these components and their objectives in the Management Plan in determining development proposals affecting the High Weald National Landscape and, where relevant, areas of the High Weald National Landscape Character Area that adjoin the designated area. Consideration will also be given to design guidance that supports the Management Plan.

- 6.246** The Council has given detailed consideration as to whether a proposed allocation site in the National Landscape is major development or not in the context of paragraph 177 of the NPPF (September 2023) and the guidance in footnote 60. Proposed allocations within this Plan that are within the National Landscape and deemed to be major development have been the subject of detailed assessment against the requirements of paragraph 177 and have been the subject of site-specific landscape and visual impact assessments. The assessments for those sites and the approach the Council has taken to the consideration of major/not major development in the National Landscape are set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper.
- 6.247** All proposals for major or other development either in the National Landscape or its setting, where they are expected to significantly impact the National Landscape, should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment and an assessment of the proposal against all relevant AONB Management Plan objectives.

Policy EN 19

The High Weald National Landscape

All development within, or affecting the setting of, the High Weald National Landscape shall seek to conserve and enhance its landscape and scenic beauty, having particular regard to the impacts on its character components, as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

Development in the National Landscape should be limited in scale and extent, appropriate in terms of its nature and location, and should demonstrate a positive contribution to the objectives of the AONB Management Plan. It will need to:

1. Be sensitive to the topography and landscape features of the location;
2. Improve where possible connections between settlements and countryside through the provision of high quality green infrastructure (see Policy EN 14: Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure);
3. Where present, protect, enhance, and restore key characteristics of historic routeways;
4. Retain and support the distinctiveness of individual settlements and their key characteristics;
5. Help restore the natural functioning of watercourses;
6. Improve the management of associated agricultural land, woodland, and heaths;
7. Where possible and appropriate, improve public access to the countryside, providing way marking and interpretation material to assist in the public enjoyment, appreciation, and understanding of the National Landscape.

Planning permission will be refused for 'major' development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, in accordance with national policy.

Agricultural Land

- 6.248** The National Planning Policy Framework expects local planning authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land, which is land in Grades 1, 2, and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), Grade 1 being the highest. Agricultural land which falls into these categories is considered to be the most flexible, productive, and efficient in response to inputs. Grades 3b and 4 are not considered BMV. In addition, soils are considered a finite resource that provide other important 'ecosystem services'; for example, as a store for carbon and water, as a reservoir of biodiversity, and as a buffer against pollution.
- 6.249** Soils in the borough, derived from the underlying geology and strongly influenced by topography and drainage and generally considered to be poor, are mostly within Grade 3a or 3b, with few extensive areas of Grade 2 and above. In the High Weald, the topography makes working the land particularly difficult and has resulted in a landscape characterised by small, irregularly shaped fields, often bounded by hedgerows and small woodlands, along with ancient woods, gills, and shaws. The soils are often nutrient poor and with an acidic tendency.
- 6.250** In the Low Weald, comprised of mostly clay soils, the combination of topography and impeded drainage has helped restrict the spread of large-scale, more mechanised, farming. The soils are characterised by impeded drainage, causing seasonal surface wetness and are affected to varying degrees by fluctuating groundwater.
- 6.251** Borough-wide information on ALC comes from the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (1977) mapping, which does not differentiate between Grades 3a and 3b, and this indicates that Grade 3 land occupies 78% of the land in the borough, with only 4.4% indicated Grade 2 and above. Additional site-specific surveys carried out since 1988 across the borough (which does differentiate between Grade 3a BMV and Grade 3b not BMV) showed a lower finding in terms of all Grade 3 land (65%) but showed that individual sites had a range of grades that commonly included BMV and non-BMV and that overall 59% of sites surveyed were considered BMV. This indicates that the land in the borough is generally of a slightly higher grade than the provisional mapping indicates, but it remains constrained in terms of agricultural use by topography and other factors.
- 6.252** The High Weald AONB Management Plan has identified a number of other issues affecting farming and the use of agricultural land:
- there has been a steep decline in livestock numbers (down by one third since 2000);
 - the average farm size is less than half the national average;
 - there is a lack of grazing infrastructure;
 - fragmentation of farm holdings due to an increase in non-farming land ownership.

- 6.253** While it is important to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of higher quality, it can be seen that 'quality' may be determined by more than the ALC grade, and the 'economic and other benefits' such as infrastructure, fragmentation, and access, as well as the contribution land may make to wider ecosystem services and natural capital are important considerations in relation to the effects of development on agricultural land. Natural capital is "*that part of nature which directly or indirectly underpins value to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, soils, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural process and function*". Policy EN 20 takes account of these factors.

Policy EN 20

Agricultural Land

Planning applications that would result in the significant loss of best and most versatile agricultural land will need to justify why the loss of the agricultural land is acceptable and also assess the impact of the loss of the agricultural land on the wider farming resource, natural capital, and ecosystem services. Where site-specific ALC studies are not available, the Local Planning Authority will assume that the site is classified as best and most versatile.

Air, Water, Noise, and Land

Air Quality

- 6.254** Clean air is vital for human health and the environment. In humans, both long and short term exposure to air pollution is linked to higher rates of cancer, asthma, stroke, and heart disease, and associations have been found with both diabetes and obesity. Likewise, for the environment, air pollution can negatively affect natural habitats, ecosystems and processes, and plants and animals. Serious environmental impacts of air pollution occur as a result of nitrogen deposition, acid deposition, and the direct toxic effects of pollutants in the air (see Policy EN 11: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation for further information).
- 6.255** Therefore, in determining all planning applications for major and minor development (please see Glossary), and prior to an assessment of impacts, the Local Planning Authority will require all developments to implement basic mitigation measures that will help improve the air quality of the borough as a whole. In addition to this, and where appropriate, the Local Planning Authority will consider the impact of a development on air quality in terms of both the traffic generated by the development and the operational characteristics of the development.
- 6.256** When reviewing planning applications and determining whether a detailed assessment is required, the following five aspects of air quality will be considered:

1. Ensuring levels of air pollutants monitored in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) is not compromised by development proposed within, or nearby, the AQMA;
2. Ensuring levels of air pollutants outside of AQMA is maintained at or below current levels;
3. Ensuring proposed development does not introduce sensitive receptors, such as schools, into an area of poor air quality such as an AQMA;
4. Ensuring development design does not expose occupiers to poor indoor air quality;
5. Capturing opportunities to improve air quality.

6.257 Policies EN 21: Air Quality, EN 22: Air Quality Management Areas, and EN 23: Biomass Technology are designed to capture all of the above aspects.

6.258 The overall aim of Policy EN 21 is to secure safe levels of air pollutants through the development management process and to reduce exposure to poor air quality, thus supporting the Council's [Air Quality Action Plan](#) 2018-2023. It has been developed having regard to the latest European and national legislation, in addition to national policy and best practice guidance documents, alongside the requirements of assessment and mitigation.

6.259 For major development, early (pre-application) engagement with the Local Planning Authority is required: at this stage, sensitive receptors will be considered (including peak time emission impacts) and the Local Planning Authority will decide if the application needs to be accompanied by a full and detailed assessment of the likely impact of airborne emissions predicted to result from the development.

6.260 Where detailed assessments are required, developers should liaise with the Local Planning Authority to consider cumulative impacts.

Policy EN 21

Air Quality

Development will not be permitted when it is considered that the health, amenity, or natural environment of the surrounding area would be subject to unacceptable air quality effects (that are incapable of being overcome by a condition or planning obligation), taking into account the cumulative effects of other proposed or existing sources of air pollution in the locality. Sensitive receptors will be safeguarded at all times.

Where detailed assessments are required, developments are expected to be at least air quality neutral, with air quality positive proposals strongly encouraged.

In the interests of improving air quality borough-wide, all relevant development is required to install the following small-scale mitigation measures:

1. Low NO_x heating, i.e. emitting less than 40mg NO_x per kWh;
2. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure (points and cabling; or any new technology requirements);
3. Cycle storage that is sufficient and convenient (see Policy TP 3: Parking Standards).

In accordance with Policy TP 1: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans, transport assessments and travel plans are required for proposals above the limits set out in Kent County Council's latest guidance. Policies STR 6: Transport and Parking, TP 1: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans, and TP 2: Transport Design and Accessibility, also set out that contributions towards mitigation measures may be considered necessary. Applicants should have regard to the Council's guidance note on Electric Vehicle Charging Points for New Development*.

The use of sustainable transport measures, such as supporting sustainable public transport, shared transport initiatives, cycle/footways, the PROW network, improved connectivity, and green infrastructure (for example, green roofs, hedges, and street trees) to reduce pollution concentrations and exposure, are strongly encouraged (see Policies STR 5: Infrastructure and Connectivity; STR 6: Transport and Parking; EN 14: Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure; TP 2: Transport Design and Accessibility; TP 3: Parking Standards; OSSR 1: Retention of Open Space; and OSSR 2: The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation).

* [Electric Vehicle Charging Points for New Development Guidance Notes for Applicants](#)

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)

- 6.261** The aim of Policy EN 22 is to improve levels of air pollutants in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and surrounds.
- 6.262** Currently, there is one AQMA declared in the borough due to exceedances of the annual mean Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). The AQMA is located in Hawkhurst, on the northern arm of the crossroads on the A229. There was a previous AQMA in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, along the A26 between Park Road and Nevill Terrace, and also Grosvenor Road, which was first declared in 2005, based on an exceedance of the NO₂ annual mean objective of 40µgm³. The air quality has now improved in this area and the AQMA has been revoked, however air quality monitoring still takes place in order to monitor the conditions. The annual NO₂ objective applies primarily to residential receptors and other sensitive receptors, such as schools. Legislation requires local authorities to declare an AQMA when levels of certain pollutants exceed, or are expected to exceed, the relevant objective levels.
- 6.263** Nationally, annual average urban background NO₂ levels are in decline. If improvements in air quality give cause to revoke the AQMA in the future, the Local Planning Authority will retain measures to protect air quality, such as the creation of an 'Air Quality Protection Zone' (or equivalent) in place of the AQMA.
- 6.264** Where major development is proposed which could affect an AQMA, an emission mitigation assessment and cost calculation will be required. Smaller developments may, in certain situations warrant assessment. The purpose of this calculation is to determine the amount of emissions a development is likely to produce, and the consequent monetary value that is expected to be needed for funding measures to mitigate those impacts on- or off-site. Off-site mitigation measures that could be funded include local car clubs, on-street electric vehicle charging, low emission

buses, and bike/e-bike hire schemes or cycling infrastructure provision. In order for borough-wide improvements to be realised, the calculations will be based upon the proposed use without comparison to past use.

Policy EN 22

Air Quality Management Areas

Development within, or able to impact upon, an Air Quality Management Area must follow the approach outlined in Policy EN 21: Air Quality and will be required to undertake an emissions mitigation assessment and cost calculation.

These requirements also apply in the event that the Council designates an 'Air Quality Protection Zone' or equivalent.

Subject to the results of the assessment and calculation, a Section 106 agreement will be used to secure contributions to mitigate this impact.

Biomass Technology

- 6.265** The aim of Policy EN 23 is to improve and maintain good air quality in locations where biomass technology is installed that exceeds permitted development thresholds; for example, where the system capacity is in excess of 45 kilowatts thermal.
- 6.266** Burning biomass for heating buildings is a low carbon technology for generating energy promoted by the NPPF, but can result in emissions of harmful pollutants, such as particulate matter and nitrogen oxides. For this reason, a breach of air quality standards may occur if the technology is in, or near (and could potentially affect), an AQMA. In addition, if air quality in the area around the boiler is marginal, there is a risk that emissions from the technology could trigger designation of a new AQMA.
- 6.267** A guidance note entitled '[Biomass and Air Quality Information for Developers](#)' produced by Environmental Protection UK and updated in 2017, is a useful starting point for those considering the installation of biomass technology. It guides applicants through the assessment process and regulatory requirements in relation to biomass installations. Larger installations may require screening or dispersion modelling, and smaller systems may need stack height calculations. This guidance explains the process and identifies the process and tools to complete an appropriate assessment.
- 6.268** The European Environment Agency (EEA) has found that burning biomass for home heating increased by 56% within the EU between 1990 and 2011. If wood burning stoves are indicated on plans or documentation as part of new development, then an informative(s) will be attached to decision notices advising that:

1. Biomass technology, including wood burning stoves, can lead to the emissions of pollutants such as particulates, dioxins, and oxides of nitrogen;
2. There are simple steps that households can take to limit emissions, both indoors and out, such as using cleaner fuels, in a cleaner appliance that is installed by a competent person, knowing how to operate it efficiently, and ensuring that chimneys are regularly swept;
3. High quality, low emission plant installations are required (including 'Ecodesign' or Defra exempt stoves (or equivalent)), and new end users are encouraged to use good quality dry wood through advice within a 'New Home Information Pack';
4. Developers should refer to Defra's latest guidance developed for all local authorities to share with residents on the simple steps to take in improving air quality at the household level.

Policy EN 23

Biomass Technology

The Local Planning Authority will support the deployment of biomass technology in locations off the gas grid where coal and oil-fired plant are currently used and where no cleaner or greener feasible alternative is available. The developer will reduce potential air quality impacts from the expansion in biomass heat through the use of high quality, low emission plant.

Applications for biomass burners (i.e. for those that require planning permission and are not 'permitted development') will require a detailed air quality assessment that, as a minimum, will include the following information:

1. The thermal capacity of the proposed biomass technology, and, if possible, its make and model;
2. The type of fuel to be used;
3. Confirmation that it will be an approved appliance, compliant with Defra's latest guidance and the Clean Air Act;
4. The precise location of the proposed stack(s).

Applications for biomass technology that burn fuel at a rate of greater than 45.4kg/hr will be required to gain chimney height approval from the Local Planning Authority.

Water Supply, Quality, and Conservation

- 6.269** Maintaining and enhancing the water quality of above and below ground water bodies is not only important for water supply, but can also provide valuable habitats for species and a desirable amenity and recreational resource.
- 6.270** New development can impact on water quality through the creation of diffuse pollution from urban surface water runoff. Diffuse urban pollution is a significant factor in compromising the water quality standards that are required under the EU Water Framework Directive. The UK Government recognises that tackling diffuse pollution originating from urban runoff is a high priority. There is a large variability in the levels of pollutants in urban runoff. Levels of contamination rise

with traffic intensities and with contaminants from commercial or industrial activities. It is therefore important that consideration is given to the location of development. When sensitive receiving waters are in close proximity, drainage systems must be designed to protect both surface water and ground water. The potential risk posed by a site must be assessed and adequate measures put in place to reduce the risk to acceptable levels. Inclusion of sustainable drainage systems within new development is an important means of reducing urban runoff and improving the water quality of that runoff.

- 6.271** A further potential impact on water quality caused by development comes from the often significant additional wastewater load, which discharges into rivers in the region. Additional wastewater flow rates can be mitigated slightly by water efficiency measures, but the total biological load transferred to water treatment works will increase in proportion to the number of new dwellings. Constraints in existing available technology mean that it will not always be possible to carry out the improvements needed to ensure that the extra effluent discharged into the environment is sufficiently clean.
- 6.272** The Water Framework Directive establishes a statutory framework for the protection of ground water and inland surface water, estuaries, and coastal waters. Tunbridge Wells borough is covered by both the South East River Basin District in the north and west (including Royal Tunbridge Wells and Paddock Wood) and the Thames River Basin District in the south and east (including Hawkhurst and Sandhurst). The South East and Thames River Basin Management Plans 2016, prepared by the Environment Agency, provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment and highlight the areas of land and bodies of water that have specific uses that need special protection. These include waters used for drinking water, bathing, commercial shellfish harvesting, and those that sustain wildlife species and habitats. The plans ensure that these areas have legally binding objectives in place to enhance water quality and prevent deterioration of water bodies. The Local Planning Authority will seek to conserve and enhance the water environment to improve water quality, having regard to the South East and Thames River Basin Management Plans.
- 6.273** The protection of ground water resources is particularly important in Tunbridge Wells borough, since the majority of the public water supply is abstracted from water-bearing strata or aquifers. The quality of ground water is easily polluted, directly and indirectly, and can pose a serious risk to public health. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report 2016 identified that water bodies were under pressure from agriculture, water industry, and rural land management activities, and many were not achieving 'good' status for ecology. Furthermore, the ground water quality was defined as failing in Tunbridge Wells borough.
- 6.274** In the borough, Groundwater Protection Zones are located at Pembury, and in between Goudhurst and Lamberhurst. The Environment Agency's [Approach to Groundwater Protection](#) 2018 (Version 1.2) (or as superseded) provides useful information and guidance on the different risks to ground water quality, including listing the types of high risk activities and development. This document will be

of interest to developers, planners, environmental permit applicants and holders, abstractors, operators, and anyone whose current or proposed activities have an impact on, or are affected by, ground water.

- 6.275** Any site that may be contaminated to some degree by virtue of its previous usage forms a potential risk to water quality, especially if redevelopment takes place. The Environment Agency requests any potential developers of such a site to contact the Agency at their earliest opportunity to discuss the need for historical information and site investigations to determine the degree of contamination, if any, of both soil and ground water, and which will be in accordance with Policy EN 28: Land Contamination and the Council's [Contaminated Land](#) Supplementary Planning Document.
- 6.276** Development that would cause an unacceptable risk to surface or ground water resources will not be permitted. Where development is allowed, the Council will require developers to undertake measures to ensure that surface or ground water resources, including ponds, streams, and other watercourses, are not contaminated.

Conservation of Water Resources

- 6.277** As climate change continues to influence our water supplies via summer droughts and increased winter rainfall, and in the face of a large housing growth agenda, it is critical that local authorities implement water conservation measures through their local plans.
- 6.278** Water efficiency and conservation of existing supplies is essential for:
- sustainable management of fresh water;
 - protection of the water environment;
 - meeting the current and future human demand.
- 6.279** Population, household size, and growth and affluence all affect how much water is used, and these are all factors that a local authority's local plan can have a strong influence upon.
- 6.280** South East Water supplies water across the whole borough and developers should review the company's [Water Resources Management Plan](#) (2020 - 2075) for an overview of how water will be managed in the region into the future.
- 6.281** In 2021, the Environment Agency produced an updated determination of areas of water stress (updating a previous 2013 study) for areas of England and Wales. Areas of serious water stress are identified where both the current and future household demand for water is a high proportion of the effective rainfall available to meet that demand. Furthermore, in the 2016 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, a review of water consumption within Tunbridge Wells borough was carried out. This revealed that consumption rates within the borough are higher than both the national and regional averages.
- 6.282** For these reasons, the Council will be implementing an optional technical standard for water efficiency that enforces upon residential developers the more ambitious water conservation target described within Part G Building Regulations. The new target will be 110 litres per person per day instead of the current mandatory target of

125 litres per person per day. This measure is in accordance with options identified within Kent County Council's Water for Sustainable Growth Study (2017) for meeting demand from forecast growth within the borough within the next plan period. For more detail and justification for the implementation of this target, see the Water Efficiency Background Paper.

- 6.283** Development should be limited to locations where adequate water resources already exist, or where new provision of water resources can be made in time for the new development and without adversely affecting abstraction, river flows, water quality, agriculture, fisheries, amenity, or nature conservation.

Policy EN 24

Water Supply, Quality and Conservation

All development must ensure that there is, or will be, adequate water supply and wastewater treatment facilities in place to serve the whole development (including all phases where applicable). Improvements to supply and treatment facilities, the timing of their provision, and funding sources will be critical to the delivery of development and will be supported. The Borough Council will consult with the Environment Agency and/or the relevant utility provider to ensure adequate provision and impose appropriate conditions as necessary.

Where necessary, occupation of development is to be phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, in liaison with the service provider. Access to the existing sewerage system must be provided for future maintenance and upsizing purposes.

Development will be only permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would not result in:

1. Unacceptable risk to the quality or quantity of surface and ground water resources (including reservoirs);
2. Changes to ground water and surface water levels that result in adverse impacts on:
 - a. adjoining land; and/or
 - b. existing abstractions, amenity uses, natural habitats, or agricultural activities, including fisheries; and/or
 - c. the quality of ground water resources or potential ground water resources; and/or
 - d. river flows or the potential yield of ground water resources.

Development that requires an abstraction licence from local watercourses will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impact on the ecological functioning of the watercourse.

Work beneath the water table will not be permitted unless there is a comprehensive ground water management scheme agreed for the construction, operation, restoration, and ongoing management of the proposal.

In terms of water conservation, all development must be planned positively to minimise its impact on water resources. This includes:

- i. minimising use of mains water;
- ii. incorporating water saving measures, such as rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling systems (in both new development and by retrofitting existing buildings).

All new residential dwellings must be designed to achieve a maximum water consumption rate of 110 litres per person per day, as measured in accordance with an approved methodology.

New development that supports South East Water's Water Resources Management Plan will be supported.

Development and Flood Risk

- 6.284** In accordance with the NPPF, the Council is committed to managing flood risk from all sources, including wastewater, in the borough, taking account of advice from the Environment Agency, Kent County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority), and the Medway Internal Drainage Board. In accordance with the NPPF, the Council commissioned the Tunbridge Wells Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2019), which assesses the extent and nature of flood risk across the borough and the implications for land use planning, taking into account the anticipated impacts of climate change. The strategy and policies of the Local Plan have been informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 and Level 2 (2019) and discussions with the key stakeholders.
- 6.285** It is essential that new development across the borough does not increase flood risk either on site or elsewhere and provides adequate drainage provision so that flood risk is managed effectively. Any new development proposed in areas that are vulnerable to flood risk should 'build in' additional local capacity in terms of flood mitigation and provide 'betterment' where possible: see Policy STR/SS 1, The Strategy for Paddock Wood and east Capel, for the flood risk strategy proposed alongside development in this area.
- 6.286** The Council will also apply a sequential test to new development, supported by the [Flood Risk Assessment: The Sequential Test for Applicants](#) Planning Practice Guidance(65) (or subsequent revision), to direct development away from areas that are at the highest risk of flooding. These will include all proposed areas that are within Flood Zones 2 and 3, as well as sites in Flood Zone 1 that are larger than one hectare and/or have critical drainage problems, as identified by the Environment Agency and within the Council's latest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, such as in parts of Paddock Wood and Five Oak Green/Capel. The approach taken within Policy EN 25 is in accordance with the NPPF; however there may be instances where it may be appropriate to require a site specific Flood Risk Assessment for some minor development where land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems; land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment as being at increased flood risk in future; or land that may be subject to

other sources of flooding, where its development would introduce a more vulnerable use it would therefore be appropriate to consult with KCC as the lead local flood authority on a case-by-case basis.

- 6.287** The Council will therefore discourage inappropriate development in areas at known risk from flooding and, as the Local Planning Authority, will take account of flooding risks in all matters relating to development management/control, including within the Local Plan and individual planning applications, in accordance with the NPPF.
- 6.288** There may be circumstances where planning permission for development, including the raising of land, is granted in areas that may be at high risk from flooding; for example, in developed areas. To be detailed within an exception test as per the aforementioned Planning Practice Guidance, such development must take account of the potential flood risk in that location, ensuring that the threat of flooding is managed. Flood protection and mitigation measures must be designed to the appropriate standard as set out in the NPPF, and must ensure that the development remains safe throughout its lifetime (taking into account climate change impacts), without increasing flood risk on the site itself, and that there would be no increase to flood risk elsewhere.
- 6.289** If proposed development has undergone these tests and impacts are still unavoidable without mitigation, the Local Planning Authority will require any planning application to be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. Where necessary, the Local Planning Authority will attach conditions, or seek works through a planning agreement, to secure any necessary flood protection and/or mitigation measures that are needed for managing residual risk and/or implementing flood resilience measures in perpetuity. Such measures may include the provision of additional vegetation, such as trees and/or hedgerows, which may limit the risk of potential flooding through reducing runoff rates by absorption, as well as contributing to the Council's biodiversity net gain policy (see Policy EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain).

Policy EN 25

Flood Risk

Proposals for new development should contribute to an overall flood risk reduction, and development will only be permitted where it would not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding on the site itself, and there would be no increase to flood risk elsewhere.

The sequential test and exception tests established by the NPPF will be strictly adhered to across the borough. Where it is demonstrated that development is unable to take place in an area of lower flood risk, essential transport or utility infrastructure or other appropriate development may be allowed as per an exception test if the development is designed to be compatible with potential flood conditions, also taking into account wider sustainable development objectives, and:

1. Suitable flood protection and mitigation measures are incorporated into the development appropriate to the nature and scale of risk;

2. Comprehensive management and maintenance plans are in place for its effective operation during the lifetime of the development (taking account of climate change);
3. Adoption arrangements are secured (where applicable) with the relevant public authority or statutory undertaker;
4. It can be demonstrated that adequate resistance and resilience measures have been put in place to avoid any increase in flooding, either on-site or elsewhere.

Site-specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required for the following development proposals:

- a. Sites within Flood Zones 2 and 3; and/or
- b. Sites in Flood Zone 1 that:
 - i. are larger than one hectare; or
 - ii. have been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems; or
 - iii. have been identified in a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as being at increased flood risk in the future; or
 - iv. may be subject to other sources of flooding.

The site-specific Flood Risk Assessment shall be in accordance with guidance set out within the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, including the requirement for a contribution towards any necessary new flood defence or mitigation measures. It should also include the submission of a Flood Risk Emergency Plan. Where relevant, the assessment should also address the risk of flooding from surface water, ground water, and ordinary watercourses. Where there is evidence that water from these sources either ponds or flows over the proposed site, the assessment should state how this will be managed, and what the impact on neighbouring sites will be as part of a cumulative assessment.

Measures identified to mitigate effects shall be installed and maintained at the developers' own expense, or put into a management company (with associated evidence that the management company will operate in perpetuity) to ensure their long-term retention, maintenance, and management. Other flood resilient and/or resistant measures may also be required, and their provision will be informed by the findings of a submitted Flood Risk Assessment.

Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 6.290** Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), a collection of water management practices that aim to align modern drainage systems with natural water processes, can make a significant difference to flood risk by managing the quantity of surface water runoff from development, as well as moderating flow rates and preventing sudden water level rises after heavy rain. SuDS can significantly reduce harm to valuable water resources by retaining water within the local hydrological system, as well as protecting water resources from pollution by filtering runoff. SuDS can form an integral part of both soft or hard landscaping and can contribute to the quality of green space for the benefit of amenity, in terms of the visual features and attractiveness of a place, as well as recreation and wildlife.

- 6.291** SuDS may also allow new development in areas with critical drainage problems such as limited capacity, thereby enabling development within existing urban areas. Importantly, in areas such as in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Paddock Wood, where development would discharge to combined sewer systems, there should be a minimum of 50% betterment on pre-development discharge levels in order to mitigate against potential flooding issues, especially in summer storm events.
- 6.292** The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 introduced the concept of flood risk management into law and sets out the intention for SuDS in all new development. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to minimise vulnerability, provide resilience to the impacts of climate change, and requires all new developments in areas of flooding risk to give "*priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems*". The Government has recently made changes to the NPPF, making it clear that it expects SuDS to be provided in all new major development where it is appropriate. Developers should refer to '[non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems](#)' published by Defra, which provides guidance on minimum standards for design, maintenance, and operation of SuDS systems, and sits alongside the Planning Practice Guidance. Ciria's [SuDS Manual](#) 2015 also includes advice on suitable development design.
- 6.293** All major developments (see Glossary at Appendix 5) are expected to maximise environmental and/or amenity value where possible and appropriate, and provide net gain for biodiversity (see Policy EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain).
- 6.294** SuDS are designed to control surface water runoff close to where it falls, and mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. SuDS also provide opportunities (in accordance with the NPPF) to:
- reduce the causes and impacts of flooding;
 - remove pollutants from urban runoff at source;
 - combine water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation, and wildlife where appropriate and beneficial.
- 6.295** In April 2015, Kent County Council became a statutory consultee as per national requirements, following a parliamentary statement in December 2014. Kent County Council has adopted a [Drainage and Planning Policy Statement](#), which should inform development of drainage schemes. There are also situations where consultation with the Environment Agency will be necessary in relation to fluvial flood risk, water quality, biodiversity, and groundwater protection, which may impact measures proposed for surface water management.
- 6.296** Developers will normally be expected to make provision for SuDS on-site where it is practical to do so. Consideration should also be given to 'strategic SuDS', where a limited number of attenuation and treatment areas are needed downstream in areas of significant planned development.

- 6.297** The Council expects SuDS to form an integral part of the development design process. This is because successful SuDS require a range of discharge or infiltration techniques that need to be designed in a sequential order. While primarily used to attenuate runoff, early consideration of SuDS provides the opportunity to design in other benefits that will deliver more sustainable developments.
- 6.298** Developers are also advised to have regard to the Department for Transport's Circular 02/2013 (paragraph 50) (or any update to this) in relation to water run-off that may arise due to proposed development. The Circular advises that such water run-off will not be accepted into the highway drainage systems, and there should be no new connections into those systems from third party development or drainage systems.

Policy EN 26

Sustainable Drainage

All development applications should include adequate drainage provision. Drainage should be considered as an integral part of the development design process, with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) utilised unless where demonstrated to be inappropriate.

SuDS should be designed and implemented to be 'multi-functional', and deliver other Local Plan policy objectives where appropriate, such as the support for habitats and biodiversity, water efficiency, and quality improvements, reinforcing local landscape character, enhancing the design of development, and the provision of amenity, landscape, and recreational open space.

All developments should aim to deliver a net reduction in runoff, exceeding greenfield runoff rates (mimic natural flows and drainage pathways) and ensure that surface water runoff should be managed as close to its source as possible using the following hierarchy:

1. Discharge into the ground;
2. Discharge to a surface water body;
3. Discharge to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or other drainage system.

All drainage schemes must:

- i. manage all sources of surface water, including exceedance flows and surface flows from off-site;
- ii. provide for emergency ingress and egress;
- iii. ensure adequate drainage connectivity.

It will not be acceptable for surface water runoff to enter the foul water system.

SuDS or other appropriate measures should:

- a. maintain public safety;
- b. provide sufficient attenuation to surface water flows as appropriate;
- c. ensure that there is adequate treatment of surface water flows, such that there is no diminution in quality of any receiving watercourse;

- d. ensure protection of ground water;
- e. provide or enhance wetland habitat and biodiversity where possible;
- f. use surface water features first (underground storage crates should only be used in exceptional circumstances where other measures are not possible).

On sites considered to constitute major and strategic development, it should be shown how this infrastructure will be delivered over the different building phases to ensure that schemes are delivered as envisaged, and that ongoing and future flood risk is managed.

Approval of the design and long-term management and maintenance of SuDS will be required prior to the development commencing.

Noise

- 6.299** The planning system has a role in seeking to ensure that new noise-sensitive development, such as housing and schools, is not located close to existing sources of noise and vibration, including industrial uses, noise generated by vehicles and other forms of transport such as aircraft and railway noise, amplified music, or other forms of noise such as that created by ancillary operational equipment; for example, fume extraction and external ventilation units, which would lead to nuisance. It should also ensure that potentially noise-creating uses, such as some industrial processes or some recreational activities, are not located where they would be likely to cause nuisance.
- 6.300** Therefore, the aim of Policy EN 27 is to ensure that noise issues and appropriate mitigation and acoustic measures are addressed and incorporated into the design of development proposals at an early stage in the planning application and development process, so as not to give rise to harm to the amenity of future occupants in new buildings and/or the amenity of existing residents in the vicinity. For new residential accommodation, the planning objective is to provide good standards of acoustics, ventilation, and thermal comfort for future residents.
- 6.301** All development proposals that are likely to generate noise, or be affected by existing noise sources, must be supported by a Noise Impact Assessment prepared by a suitably qualified and competent person (as defined by the NPPF) having regard to the Local Planning Authority's latest adopted [Noise and Vibration Supplementary Planning Document](#).
- 6.302** This SPD seeks to ensure there is sufficient mitigation for noise to prevent substantial loss of amenity at the development stage. It provides guidance in relation to noise and vibration assessments, setting out design control measures (for example, orientation of sensitive rooms, noise barrier walls/fences, sound insulation of building envelope, anti-vibration foundations) and guidance on specific noise criteria (for example, industrial noise, delivery vehicles, transport noise).

- 6.303** The NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions, and the natural environment. This should be achieved by mitigating, and reducing to a minimum potential, adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development.
- 6.304** The NPPF is also clear that existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established, and where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.
- 6.305** In addition, the NPPF guidance encourages the identification and protection of areas of tranquility that have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason. Such areas are shown on a national mapping system produced by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) [Tranquility Map: England](#) and are also referred to in the Council's Noise and Vibration SPD. Where identified, these areas should generally be protected from noise-generating developments. CPRE is in the process of updating these maps and therefore there is insufficient information at present to allocate tranquil areas in the Local Plan. However, should this change in due course, this matter will be reviewed in the first revision of the Local Plan.
- 6.306** There is also further information and guidance contained in the National Planning Practice Guidance ([Noise](#)). This guidance provides noise and vibration criteria for developers where new proposals are being made that will generate noise or vibration, are in a noisy location, or are in a noise-sensitive area, in order to ensure that the potential or existing noise/vibration levels in the area are acceptable. As a starting point, it is expected that new development will not increase background noise levels.
- 6.307** Information is also available in Defra's latest [Explanatory Note to the Noise Policy Statement for England](#). Reference should be made to this guidance (or any subsequent guidance) prior to, and, where appropriate, in the submission of a planning application.
- 6.308** The Environmental Noise Directive requires that, every five years, Defra adopts noise maps, known as 'Important Areas for Road Noise Mapping', which show exposure to environmental noise; adopts action plans based on the results of noise mapping; aims to preserve environmental noise quality where it is good; and provides information to the public on environmental noise and its effects. Therefore, developers are advised to check with Defra whether any proposed development sites for noise-sensitive development (such as housing and schools) are located within, or close to, areas/roads which indicate a high noise level reading. Appropriate mitigation measures will need to be applied where this is found to be the case.

6.309 In assessing the appropriateness of development in relation to noise, as well as Policy EN 27, the Council's SPD and National Planning advice, the Local Planning Authority will also have regard to the following guidance (or any successive guidance):

- National and international noise standards:
 - BS 4142:2014 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound;
 - BS 8233:2014 Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings;
 - BS 228-1:2009 Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites;
 - ISO 9613-3 Acoustics – Attenuation of sound during propagation outdoors part 2: general method of calculation.
- Acoustic design measures to minimise adverse effects and achieve satisfactory amenity standards for existing and future occupants of land and buildings, including:

World Health Organisation – Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region 2018 (including WHO guidelines for Community Noise 1999 and WHO Night Noise Guidelines for Europe 2009);

 - Collaborative guidance between the Institute of Acoustics and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

6.310 There are other statutory provisions for noise beyond planning legislation, including the Control of Pollution Act 1974, which deals with site construction noise, and legislation such as the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which deals with statutory nuisance. Any matters in respect of noise generated by minerals and waste related activity should be referred to Kent County Council.

Policy EN 27

Noise

Development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated (having regard to the requirements of the Council's latest adopted Noise and Vibration Supplementary Planning Document) that:

1. For noise-generating development, nearby noise-sensitive uses (existing or planned, either through an extant planning permission or allocation in the Local Plan) will not be exposed to noise impact that will adversely affect the amenity of existing or future users; or
2. For residential and other noise-sensitive development, users and occupiers will not be exposed to unacceptable noise disturbance from existing or planned uses.

Where appropriate, proposals will be required to mitigate noise impacts through careful planning, layout, and design.

In assessing mitigation proposals, account will be taken of:

- a. the location, layout, and design of the proposed development;
- b. existing levels of background noise;
- c. measures to reduce or contain generated noise;
- d. hours of operation and servicing.

Where noise-generating development or noise-sensitive development is proposed and is likely to result in, or be exposed to, significant or unacceptable noise disturbance, applications should be supported by a Noise Impact Assessment undertaken by a competent person (as defined by the NPPF).

Planning conditions and/or other means, such as financial contributions via Section 106 agreements, will be used to ensure that mitigation measures are satisfactorily undertaken.

Land Contamination

- 6.311** Any land contaminated with hazardous or toxic materials is potentially a serious cause of pollution, as well as a threat to human health; it can also migrate into watercourses, impacting not only on water quality, but also biodiversity. Contamination can derive from previous uses, such as industrial processes involving chemicals, intensive agriculture, or closed waste disposal sites where landfill gas and leachate are still present.
- 6.312** Some sites are particularly difficult and high risk in terms of redevelopment such as closed landfill sites and former gas works. In such cases the developer should ensure that a full site investigation and risk assessment is completed and submitted with the application to demonstrate that it is both technically and economically viable for its intended use.
- 6.313** The Council holds a wide range of data on potential sources of contamination, such as historic land use, planning history, pollution incidents, details of closed landfill sites, and site-specific reports on investigation and remediation. Further information and guidance can be found on the Council's website ([see Environment issues](#)).
- 6.314** The NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should contribute to, and enhance, the natural and local environment through the remediation and mitigation of despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated, or unstable land. This guidance places onus on the developer and/or landowner for securing safe land/development free from pollution. It also requires that investigations and a risk assessment of land potentially affected by contamination be undertaken by a suitably qualified competent person (as defined by the NPPF) in accordance with established practices such as BS10175 (2017) 'Code of Practice for the Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites' (or any subsequent version).
- 6.315** The Local Planning Authority needs to ensure that the implications of contamination for new development not addressed by other legislation are properly considered through the planning system. Policy EN 28 provides the framework for considering planning applications where land contamination issues are involved.

All development proposals on land affected by contamination must be undertaken having regard to the Council's latest adopted [Contaminated Land Supplementary Planning Document](#).

- 6.316** There is also further information and guidance contained in the National Planning Practice Guidance ([Land affected by contamination](#)), which should also be referred to prior to submitting a planning application.
- 6.317** As guidance and policy on land contamination frequently changes, developers are also advised to consult the Environment Agency to obtain the most up-to-date information and position.

Policy EN 28

Land Contamination

Development proposals on a site that is known, or suspected, to be affected by contamination will only be permitted (having regard to the requirements of the Council's latest adopted Contaminated Land Supplementary Planning Document) where practicable and effective measures are taken to avoid:

1. Exposing the future occupiers and users of the development or people in the locality to unacceptable risk to health;
2. Threatening the structural integrity of any existing building or structure built on, or adjoining, the site;
3. Causing the contamination of any watercourse, water body, or aquifer;
4. Causing the contamination of adjoining land, its residents or users, or allowing such contamination to continue;
5. Damaging or putting at unacceptable risk the quality of the natural environment.

A Risk Assessment, undertaken by a competent person (as defined by the NPPF) which includes a desk study, site walkover report, and preliminary risk assessment, must be provided at the earliest stage (i.e. pre-application, or as part of the submitted application), detailing the methodology by which risks will be addressed and ensuring the treatment and/or removal of all contaminants prior to the commencement of development, or as agreed by the Local Planning Authority where phased development is proposed.

Planning conditions and/or other means, such as financial contributions via Section 106 agreements, will be used to ensure that such measures are undertaken.

Housing

Delivery of Housing

Housing Mix

- 6.318** Proposals for development should follow the Council's policy for housing mix and size set out below at Policy H 1. Proposals should be informed by the Housing Needs Study 2018, Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) or subsequent updates, any findings of parish-wide surveys and policies in 'made' neighbourhood plans if applicable, together with local planning evidence base documents, up-to-date statistics from the Council's Housing Register (for affordable units), and any other relevant and up-to-date information on local housing needs. The mix proposed, along with supporting evidence, should be provided in the design and access statement accompanying the planning application.
- 6.319** On major sites (see the Glossary at Appendix 5), an appropriate mix will usually include a range of sizes and forms of residence within the site. However, there will be locations where there is a dominance of particular housing types and sizes, and the provision of different housing types on that site will ensure that the overall mix for the area is more balanced. This policy is not prescriptive, but requires the development proposals to be informed by an analysis of the surrounding area, and for this to be evidenced in the design and access statement submitted as part of the proposals. Balanced communities include a range of housing that will meet the needs of different types of households, including older persons, people with disabilities, and families and single person households, as well as providing 'lifetime' homes (i.e. dwellings that will meet people's changing needs over their lifetime).
- 6.320** Policy H 1 should also be read in conjunction with Policy H 2: Housing Density. The provision of Affordable Housing is dealt with in Policy H 3. Housing for Older People and People with disabilities is addressed in Policy H6.

Policy H 1

Housing Mix

Proposals for residential development should support the creation and maintenance of balanced communities by providing an appropriate housing mix with a range of sizes, types, and tenures of dwellings.

The mix should reflect any requirements set out in relevant policies in the Local Plan or a 'made' neighbourhood plan for the area, and may be informed by intelligence on local housing needs and demand, including that contained in local planning evidence base documents, parish housing surveys, and other relevant analyses.

Housing Density

- 6.321** The density of residential development should have regard to the character of the area, including landscape, topography, surrounding built form, and access to infrastructure and services (see Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design).
- 6.322** Existing and proposed infrastructure will help inform appropriate densities, with more sustainable areas that provide, or will provide, good infrastructure and transport links able to support higher densities (see Policies STR 5: Infrastructure and Connectivity, STR 6: Transport and Parking, and TP 2: Transport Design and Accessibility). Where it is considered that a proposal would not make efficient use of land and that a higher density would be more appropriate, especially where the site is in a central or otherwise accessible location, it would be expected to be refused.

Policy H 2

Housing Density

Development should make efficient use of land, having full regard to the context of the site, including its character, landscape setting, topography, surrounding built form, and access to infrastructure and services.

In town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport, proposals should seek to optimise the use of land.

Affordable Housing

National policy and borough need context

- 6.323** The NPPF outlines, in Section 5: 'Delivering a sufficient supply of homes' that, where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required. Furthermore, affordable housing is expected to be provided on-site.
- 6.324** Paragraph 64 of the NPPF (September 2023) states that "*provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of five units or fewer)*". A designated rural area includes National Parks and National Landscapes.
- 6.325** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015) (SHMA) and its subsequent update (SHMA update 2017), as well as the Borough Housing Needs Study 2018 and the more recent Review of affordable housing needs in the context of 'First Homes' February 2021 were carried out by consultants on behalf of the Council to quantify the needs of the borough's residents and provide the evidence base for the new Local Plan affordable housing policy. Their findings in relation to the level of affordable housing need are taken into account in the Housing Needs Assessment Topic Paper (2021). Drawing on the most recent Review Report, the Topic Paper states that "*This suggests an annual need for around 323*

affordable homes, essentially for rented housing, with some need for affordable home ownership, but which is difficult to quantify, given the supply of private rented accommodation". It is recognised that the assessments represent a 'snap shot' in time. Housing Register statistics and local studies also represent important sources of information in relation to housing need and will also be considered by the Council in its decision making. Developers and applicants are advised to have regard to any such studies to inform proposals for development.

- 6.326** The Plan seeks 30% affordable housing on brownfield land and 40% on greenfield sites. The difference has been tested via a Viability Assessment and is reflective of the higher build costs associated with developing brownfield sites, including clearance of existing buildings. Similarly, for the off-site affordable housing contributions from smaller sites within the High Weald National Landscape (being those of six to nine dwellings) the reduced requirements also take account of the nature of the site, i.e. a 15% contribution from brownfield sites and 20% from greenfield sites.
- 6.327** When considering sites that include a mix of both greenfield and brownfield land, a site will be considered greenfield land when at least 50% of the site is greenfield.
- 6.328** Where relevant, the place shaping policies within the Local Plan contain site-specific guidance on affordable housing provision.

Affordable housing providers

- 6.329** Affordable housing will normally be provided by Registered Providers (see Glossary at Appendix 5). The Council will also encourage alternative provision of affordable housing through smaller local groups/alternative vehicles, such as Community Land Trusts, cooperative housing, etc.
- 6.330** Where the affordable housing is to be retained by a body that does not qualify as a Registered Provider, then the Council will seek appropriate guarantees to ensure that the homes are managed and maintained as affordable housing, and this will be secured as part of a Section 106 agreement.
- 6.331** As affordable housing is an intrinsic part of an application, which is crucial to its acceptance in planning terms, the applicant should seek early engagement with Registered Providers who operate in the borough.
- 6.332** By the time an applicant reaches the position of submission of a planning application (but ideally at the stage of a pre-application meeting), it is expected that details can be provided of the Registered Provider who will be buying and managing the affordable housing.
- 6.333** Affordable housing will be secured and monitored through a legal (Section 106) agreement.

Local Connection

- 6.334** The provision of affordable housing for local residents is an important issue for local communities. To support the provision of affordable homes for local people, a 'local connection cascade' is set out in relation to allocating affordable housing on sites.

Tenure

6.335 Affordable housing can include both housing to rent and various affordable routes to home ownership. Affordable housing to rent can essentially be either at 'social rent' or 'affordable rent', as described below. The routes to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market and which are also treated as affordable housing, are collectively referred to below as 'intermediate housing'.

Social Rent

6.336 The NPPF defines affordable housing to include affordable rented tenure where rents are up to 80% of the open market values. Social rents are determined through the national rent regime, and offers to applicants for the rented housing will reflect this. They are typically set between 50% and 60% of open market levels.

6.337 As the borough is defined as being a 'high affordability pressure area' (Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2018, as above), and combined with the findings of the Housing Needs Study 2018, which shows that 16% of households in the borough earn less than £13,000 per annum, affordable housing should be provided as social rent on the majority of sites.

Affordable Rent

6.338 In some circumstances, the Council may allow affordable rent. Affordable rents are set up to 80% of the open market value, including any service charges, or the Local Housing Allowance, whichever is the lower.

Intermediate housing

6.339 There are many different types of intermediate tenures also intended to meet the needs of households unable to afford local housing costs, and includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent).

6.340 The Council recognises that intermediate housing may include 'starter homes', 'discounted market sale', and would also include the emerging First Homes scheme; however, given the affordability pressures that the borough faces, the two types of intermediate housing defined below are currently considered the most appropriate:

- **rented intermediate housing:** rents are set at a discount to the open market value; normally a 20% discount applies;
- **shared ownership housing:** applicants buy a proportion of their home and pay rent on the remaining share. The shares purchased are usually between 25% and 75% of the full price, and a deposit of 5% of the share is normally required.

6.341 In **Build to Rent** schemes, 20% of the units will be provided as affordable private rent (made available at a minimum discount of 20% below the value of the local market rents).

- 6.342 First Homes** are identified in the NPPF as a specific type of affordable housing, being discounted market sale units, which must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value and sold to a person or persons meeting certain eligibility criteria. Also, the discount is passed on at each subsequent title transfer. The Government expects that First Homes should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. While transitional arrangements on their introduction means that this Local Plan is not required to make provision for First Homes, it is evident that the 25% target can be achieved within the 40% for intermediate tenures within Policy H 3 (which would leave the balance of 15% for other such tenures, or further First Homes).
- 6.343** It is clear from the respective studies that the greatest need is for rented housing; also, that the greatest need is for social rented housing, as they will be affordable to a greater number of local households than affordable rents. Hence, the expectation is that social rented housing shall be the norm. There may be circumstances, such as scheme viability or to provide access to funding, where affordable rents may be acceptable, but given affordability levels, the Borough Council will normally seek to maximise social rented units in preference.
- 6.344** The analysis, including regard to household preferences, also points towards a need to provide some housing as affordable home ownership (i.e. intermediate housing) which would normally be in the form of shared ownership. It could also include First Homes, where this is genuinely affordable in a local context. Overall, it is considered that affordable housing provision should normally involve 60% social rented and 40% intermediate tenures.

Viability

- 6.345** In terms of viability, the Council expects that applicants will have factored in the following when determining the price paid (or to be paid) for land for residential development:
- the Council's housing policies;
 - all other policy requirements set out elsewhere in the Local Plan, including those that have implications for on-site matters (such as drainage, land level changes, remediation of contaminated land, as well as provision for recreation space, contributions towards local services, etc);
 - contributions required to mitigate the impact of development (for example, in relation to infrastructure).
- 6.346** Where the policy requirements may not be achieved, the onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate robustly the reasons for this, and to provide a full viability assessment to support their proposals. As part of this, it will need to be shown that the correct land value was paid, as exceptional and abnormal costs should, in the first instance, be paid for through a reduced land value. The viability assessment must be provided as part of the application when originally submitted, will be made publicly available, and will be subject to review by independent viability consultants. Further reviews of viability may also be necessary in order to deliver

the most public benefit from the scheme. The applicant is expected to meet the costs of these reviews. Where applications are made on this basis, and viability may change, any permission granted may be for a maximum of two years.

- 6.347** The Council recognises that in exceptional circumstances levels of affordable housing (or other infrastructure) on more complex sites may be subject to more detailed viability work as part of the planning application process, and for those proposals which include a significant scale of development or complex abnormal costs, then re-testing of viability will be expected either pre-implementation, or part-way through the development of the site.
- 6.348** At the point of determining the planning application the viability review mechanism and trigger for when viability assessment will be re-run will be agreed between the Local Planning Authority and the developer or applicant.
- 6.349** Detailed advice on viability assessments is given in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#).

Design and building standards for affordable housing

- 6.350** Affordable housing should be well integrated into the development in terms of siting (which may involve clustering), design and materials. Affordable housing should progress in parallel with, if not in advance of, market housing. This will normally mean that at least 50% of the affordable housing should be completed and transferred to a Registered Provider prior to occupation of a maximum of 50% of the open market units. Variations to this may be considered where clear infrastructure or layout imperatives are established in an agreed phasing plan.
- 6.351** The homes built in the borough of Tunbridge Wells should be built to standards that are adaptable and flexible in the future (See Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design and EN 2: Sustainable Design Standards for more details).
- 6.352** In addition to the Home Quality Mark standard that must be achieved under Policy EN 2: Sustainable Design Standards, developers will need to meet Building Regulation Standard Part M4(2) (or any subsequent revision) on every affordable housing unit. Where the developer is specifically building a home for individuals with a disability, compliance with Building Regulation Standard Part M4(3), or any other subsequent updates, shall be achieved.

Policy H 3

Affordable Housing

Overall Approach

1. Sites comprising mostly greenfield land (i.e. non previously developed land) delivering a net increase of more than nine dwellings will be expected to include a minimum of 40 percent of the gross number of residential units as on-site affordable housing provision. Where this percentage is not a whole number, it will be rounded to the nearest whole number;

2. Sites comprising over half brownfield land (i.e. previously developed land) delivering a net increase of more than nine dwellings will be expected to include a minimum of 30 percent of the gross number of residential units as on-site affordable housing provision. Where this percentage is not a whole number, it will be rounded to the nearest whole number;
3. Timing of affordable on-site housing provision: a minimum of 50 percent of the affordable housing to be delivered on-site will be expected to be completed and transferred to a Registered Provider prior to occupation of a maximum of 50 percent of the open market units to be provided on-site, unless otherwise agreed via a 'phasing plan';
4. Sites within the High Weald National Landscape delivering six to nine dwellings will be expected to provide a financial contribution towards the provision of off-site affordable housing (land and build costs) based on 20 percent of the gross number of residential units to be provided on sites comprising mostly greenfield land, and 15 percent of the gross number of residential units to be provided on sites comprising over half brownfield land. Where a financial contribution for off-site provision of affordable housing is payable, this shall be payable upon commencement of development, or as otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Local Connection

All forms of affordable housing will be provided on the basis of a 'local connection cascade'.

The details of this cascade will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but will follow the general approach of prioritising households with an established local connection (and for social and affordable rent) in housing need to the parish or town through residence or place of work, then households from surrounding parishes in the borough, and then wider.

This will be secured by a Section 106 agreement.

Tenure

The general approach to tenure provision of on-site affordable housing should be that 60 percent is provided as social rent and 40 percent as intermediate tenures or other affordable routes to home ownership, subject to consideration of any subsequent local policy and/or evidence.

Exceptional Circumstances

There may be exceptional circumstances where the provision of on-site affordable housing is not viable. The Council considers that the following may represent exceptional circumstances, but in each case these circumstances would need to be fully demonstrated to warrant a departure from compliance with this policy:

1. The developer has provided written evidence that no Registered Provider will take the units and this has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council; and/or
2. It is demonstrated that there is no realistic prospect of providing affordable housing by another means, other than through a Registered Provider; and/or

3. In relation to the tenure mix, where it can be demonstrated that the values of shared ownership or intermediate rented units would be too high in that particular locality: and/or
4. It can be demonstrated that the provision of the policy-compliant level of affordable housing would make the development unviable.

Where the Council considers that full provision of on-site affordable housing cannot be delivered, alternative delivery will be considered in the following order:

- a. the full affordable housing provision to be provided by the applicant on an alternative site agreed with the Council in (sequentially) (i) the settlement and (ii) the parish of the application site; and/or
- b. a reduced level of affordable provision on the application site; and/or
- c. a variation in the tenure of the affordable housing; and/or
- d. the applicant to make land available elsewhere in (sequentially) (i) the settlement, (ii) the parish, and (iii) the borough to provide the affordable housing for a Registered Provider; and/or
- e. a financial contribution in lieu of on-site affordable housing.

Where full on-site provision of affordable housing cannot be provided and reliance is sought to be placed on criteria a to e above, applicants will be required to demonstrate this by reference to an independently reviewed viability study to be approved by the Council (including a requirement for further assessments at agreed stages of development as may be required by the Council).

Design and layout approach to affordable housing

Affordable housing must be well integrated into the development: integration, together with the application of high quality design, use of good quality materials, and landscaping, should mean that the affordable housing is not visually distinguishable from the market housing (see Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design). Affordable housing should be sited so that it has equitable access to existing and new amenities in the locality, including recreation, leisure, open spaces, and community facilities.

Homes may be 'clustered' to assist with management, but such clusters must be spread evenly across the development. In the case of developments that are flats and, where management and service charge arrangements are a practical consideration, the affordable units may be clustered together; for example, by block or staircase.

Building standards for affordable housing

All affordable housing should meet, as a minimum, the Building Regulation Standard Part M4(2).

Where affordable housing is designed for households with a disability, the homes should meet the higher M4(3) standards: see Policy H 6: Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities.

Estate Regeneration

- 6.353** There is an identified need for affordable housing within the borough, specifically for social rented accommodation. This Policy seeks to support the upgrading of estates and effective use of land.
- 6.354** Estate regeneration refers to the renewal and improvement of housing stock, and can ensure more efficient use of land, making a valuable contribution to the housing stock in the borough.
- 6.355** It is not appropriate to put a specific scale on what may constitute an estate, but generally it relates to areas redeveloped wholly or substantially for affordable housing.

Policy H 4

Estate Regeneration

Proposals for estate regeneration will be supported, subject to any net loss in affordable housing being justified only in exceptional circumstances by the delivery of significant improvements to the quality, design, mix, and form of dwellings, and other public benefits.

Rural Exception Sites

- 6.356** Rural Exception Sites are small housing sites that will only be developed for housing that will remain affordable in perpetuity. They are normally used to provide homes for local people, or people that have local connections through work, family, and employment.
- 6.357** The Council recognises that there is a need for affordable housing in the rural areas and therefore will work proactively with parish and town councils to support Registered Providers and Community Land Trust groups in bringing forward sites for rural exception housing where there is a proven housing need identified, either through a parish or ward survey, and/or through the most up-to-date Housing Needs Study.
- 6.358** Such housing should be well related to the LBD and village services, and its suitability in planning terms will be assessed on a case-by-case basis against other policies in the Local Plan, including Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design, EN 18: Rural Landscape; EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape; and Policy TP 2: Transport Design and Accessibility.
- 6.359** To bring this type of housing forward, in exceptional circumstances the Council may allow a small proportion of open market dwellings (compared with the total of rural exception dwellings being delivered) to be developed alongside the affordable units in order to cross-subsidise the rural exception housing.

Policy H 5

Rural Exception Sites

Where no alternative site is available to meet local housing needs inside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Policies Map, development for rural exception housing outside the Limits to Built Development will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The site would be well related in scale and location to the settlement and its services. If the site is located further away from the main settlement, the developer will need to provide evidence that this is the closest available site, and how pedestrian links will be provided to the settlement;
2. The development would be of a suitable size and character in terms of layout, materials, and landscaping in relation to the settlement (and accords with other criteria set out in Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design);
3. The need for a local needs housing development can be demonstrated either through a parish or ward survey, drawing on information from the Housing Register and/or other local evidence. Information that is based on a wider geographic area will not be accepted as supporting evidence;
4. The local needs for affordable housing would not otherwise be met;
5. The development would not normally contain any open market housing. In exceptional circumstances, and in accordance with the NPPF, the inclusion within the scheme of a small proportion of open market housing may be considered acceptable in order to cross-subsidise the delivery of the affordable housing. Such proposals would require the submission of a full viability assessment to demonstrate that the market housing would only be built for enabling purposes. Enabling purposes would be strictly defined as allowing the affordable units to be built, with no extra profit being generated.

Eligibility for rural exception housing will be determined through the Council's housing allocations policy and through strict local connection criteria through residence, close family connection, and/or permanent employment in the parish or town.

To ensure that the rural exception sites only provide housing for people with a local connection, eligible people will be those who live in accommodation that is unsuited to their circumstances through physical, medical, or social reasons and which is incapable of being improved or rendered suitable, including through repairs, adaptations, etc. at a reasonable cost, and satisfies one of the residential qualifications below:

- a. has lived in the parish or town continuously for the last three years; or
- b. has previously lived in the parish or town for a total of five years out of the last 10 years; or
- c. has immediate family who have lived continuously in the parish or town for the last three years; or for a total of five years out of the last 10 years; or
- d. be in, or about to take up, permanent employment in the parish or town; or
- e. provides an important service that requires residence in the parish or town.

Types of Housing Delivery

Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

6.360 The NPPF seeks to ensure that the housing needs of different groups, including older people and people with disabilities, are met by policies in local plans. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reinforces this. It identifies providing housing for older people as critical and looks for local plans (and decisions) to offer older people *"a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs"* and *"help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems."*

6.361 For the purposes of this Local Plan, and in line with the NPPF, 'older people' are defined as people over or approaching retirement age. However, this is not prescriptive. Regard is also had to the needs of all people, including younger people with disabilities.

Different types of older persons' housing

6.362 As well as providing appropriate support, in terms of planning functions, for people to continue to live in their own homes, the Local Plan includes this policy in relation to specialist housing for older people to include the following types of accommodation:

Age-restricted general market housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens but does not include support or care services.

Retirement living or sheltered accommodation is defined as self-contained accommodation, often designed as a block of apartments, and managed for older people who require very little support. These schemes would normally provide additional facilities, such as a shared communal lounge, a warden, or a personal alarm system.

Extra care accommodation or housing with care is self-contained, with associated facilities, providing 24-hour access to support services and staff, emergency support, as well as on-site facilities such as a residents' lounge, laundry room, and meal provision facilities. In some cases, larger developments may be termed retirement communities or villages. These would normally provide a range of services, with provision for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses. Extra care accommodation can also be known as assisted living, close care, or continuing care housing.

Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes provide non-self-contained residential accommodation. Rooms can be shared, or private, and an en-suite bathroom may be provided. Communal dining facilities and a communal lounge are provided, and meals and personal/nursing services are also provided to all residents as part of their tenancy. Residential nursing care accommodation includes end of life, hospice care, and dementia care home accommodation.

- 6.363** The PPG states that it is for the local planning authority to consider whether a particular development may fall within Use Class C2 (provision of accommodation and care to people in need of care) or C3 (dwelling houses). Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes, End of Life, Hospice Care, and Dementia Care Home Accommodation fall within Class C2. Whether Extra Care housing falls under Class C2 or C3 will be determined on a case-by-case basis having regard to the specific details of each proposal, including the type and level of care provision and the services to be provided to occupants of the proposed development.

Need and demand

- 6.364** To inform the consideration of future needs for specialist housing, regard has been given both to national guidance and more local guidance from Kent County Council. As there is no agreed single methodology, a number of different forecasting approaches have been used.
- 6.365** SHOP@ (Strategic Housing for Older People Analysis Tool) is a forecasting tool referred to in the PPG for estimating the demand for specialist housing for older people, including extra care housing, endorsed by the Department of Health. This advises that the number of units required per 1,000 of the population over 75 years old for extra care is 25 or 2.5%. This relates to people who need access to 24/7 support in line with the definition set out above.
- 6.366** Based on 2018 (ONS) population projections of the number of people over 75 years of age by the end of plan period, this would equate to a gross need of some 431 extra care units in the borough by 2038, an increase of some 248 units above the stock (of 183 units) in 2020, at the start of the plan period.
- 6.367** Forecasts from Kent County Council for extra care housing, based on its own more localised methodology, indicate a gross need for extra care housing of some 342 units in 2038. Deducting the stock of 183 existing units in 2020 generates a net increase of 159 units over the plan period (2020 – 38).
- 6.368** In addition to the above estimates, regard is given to a broader, market view of the scope of extra care housing, which can include “enhanced sheltered accommodation” which seeks to provide care to residents with a range of different care requirements. This adopts a prevalence rate in calculating needs of 45 per 1,000 people aged 75+. At this rate, the gross need for extra care accommodation in 2038 would be some 776 units based on the 2018 based ONS population projections. Deducting the current stock in 2020 generates a net need for 593 extra care units over the plan period.
- 6.369** The table below shows both the gross need for extra care (EC) housing during the plan period and the additional supply needed over the plan period taking account of the current (2020) provision 183 units.

Table 10 Extra care housing requirement over the plan period

Prevalence Rate	Gross EC need to 2038	Net EC need to 2038
KCC model	342	159
25/1000 (SHOP@)	431	248

Prevalence Rate	Gross EC need to 2038	Net EC need to 2038
45/1000	776	593

6.370 In terms of residential/nursing care home provision, Kent County Council advises that Tunbridge Wells borough is relatively well served, but that there will still be a demand for this type of housing throughout the plan period, specifically for places funded by the local authority and for places to support dementia care. The Council is also supportive of proposals for other types of retirement housing, such as retirement living or sheltered accommodation, which can help to broaden the choice of good quality homes for older people, provided proposals are consistent with other relevant policies in the Plan.

Future provision

- 6.371** It is evident that there needs to be a balance of accessible homes and a range of specialist housing to help meet the housing needs of older people and those with disabilities.
- 6.372** To support living at home as long as possible, Policy H 6 introduces a requirement for all homes to be built to be adaptable and accessible for the majority of people. This is the technical standard in the Building Regulations for M4(2) housing. In addition, given that there is a relatively low supply of bungalows in the borough even though there is an evident need, further provision of bungalows is sought on most medium/larger sites as part of an increased supply of smaller dwellings, as set out in Policy H6 below.
- 6.373** Furthermore, provision is made for some homes built as suitable for use by people with physical disabilities. These homes will be built, to the higher M4(3) standards and are sought as part of the affordable housing requirements for developments of 20 dwellings or more. The higher M4(3) standards are only required on the affordable housing elements of schemes, as it is considered appropriate to require dwellings to be accessible for people with disabilities where there is some control over occupation. Only in circumstances where it can be robustly demonstrated by the applicant that this is not practicable or financially viable to deliver the above provisions will the new development be exempt from either or both of these policy requirements.
- 6.374** These needs will be addressed through a combination of site allocation policies, as listed below, extant planning permissions on suitable sites and windfall development.
- 6.375** Sites with outstanding planning permission and specific site allocation policies with potential to deliver extra care housing are:

Table 11 Sites with potential to deliver extra care housing

Site	Status	Units
Arriva Bus Depot, RTW	Planning permission (Allocation AL/RTW 14)	89 units
St Michaels Burrswood, RTW	Planning permission (pp)	72 units
Former Cinema Site, RTW	Planning permission (Allocation AL/RTW 1)	166 units
Woodsgate Corner, Pembury	Allocation (AL/PE 6)	80 units

Site	Status	Units
Land at Cornford Court, Cornford Lane, Pembury	Allocation (AL/PE 7)	69 units
Paddock Wood Strategic allocation (including East Parcel)*	Allocation (STR/SS 1)	c125 units
Total		c601 units

* Paddock Wood East Parcel planning application [23/00086/HYBRID](#) – 60 - 70 units (form part of the above c125 units)

- 6.376** It can be seen that the identified supply would meet the estimated need for extra care units using both the KCC and SHOP@ forecasting approaches, and the higher need of 593 units using a higher 45/1,000 prevalence rate. The Policy approach also provides flexibility, with the potential for windfall sites to support delivery of specialist housing including extra care schemes.
- 6.377** Other allocations in Section 5 that provide opportunities for specialised housing for older people and care homes include:
- AL/RTW 9: Land at Beechwood Sacred Heart School, 12 Pembury Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells (69 bed care home);
 - AL/PE 8: Owlsnest, Tonbridge Road, Pembury (76-bed care home).
 - AL/RTW 11: Former Plant & Tool Hire Site, Eridge Road, Tunbridge Wells: consent for 42 retirement apartments.
- 6.378** Housing suitable for older people's needs, although not necessarily age-restricted, can make a valuable contribution to housing provision, particularly in areas close to town centres, with local facilities and/or well served by public transport. Indeed, a town centre “windfall” site at 24-38 Commercial Road, Paddock Wood has been granted planning permission (December 2020) for 34 retirement flats (net 23). Generally, suitable provision may also include schemes for one or two bed flats/houses/bungalows, with a small garden. Provision of homes for older people can also free up existing family sized homes for people looking to make the next step up on the property ladder. Additionally, a site at Hawkhurst (Land at The White House, Highgate Hill), previously proposed for allocation in the Submission Local Plan, has now been delivered, providing 43 retired living apartments.
- 6.379** Schemes for new sheltered, extra care, residential/nursing care homes will be generally suitable on sites allocated for residential development in the Plan, as well as other locations, including by the extension of existing sites, where they are in line with other Plan policies, particularly if in accessible locations.
- 6.380** The Council is aware that accommodation suitable for people with dementia will be increasingly required, and delivery of this type of accommodation will be supported in principle, subject to other relevant policies of the Local Plan being met.
- 6.381** Given the correlation between an ageing population and an increase in the number of people with disabilities, the provision made in the Local Plan for residential care housing will also meet some of the needs for people with disabilities. Provision of

accessible and adaptable housing built to the optional technical standards will also help address the needs of younger residents living with disabilities who may need a lower level of care.

Policy H 6

Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

Development proposals should have regard to meeting the housing needs of older people and people with disabilities in a manner proportionate to the scale of the proposal.

This includes:

1. Adaptations and alterations, including conversions and extensions, to enable people to live in their home, which will be supported where these meet the requirements of Policy H 11: Residential Extensions, Alterations, Outbuildings and Annexes;
2. All new build housing development will be expected to meet the optional technical standard M4(2) for accessible and adaptable dwellings, as set out in the Building Regulations, unless demonstrably unviable;
3. Housing developments of 20 or more homes should provide at least 10 percent of homes which are suitable for older people in that they are bungalows or one or two bed flats/houses as part of housing mix in accordance with Policy H 1;
4. On new build housing developments of 20 or more homes, at least five percent of the affordable housing element will be expected to meet the optional technical standard M4(3) for wheelchair user dwellings, unless impracticable or unviable due to site specific factors, where a need has been identified in the parish or ward (by the Housing Authority);
5. In addition to sites specifically allocated for specialist housing, such schemes will be supported on sites identified for residential development and other suitable sites, including extensions to existing schemes, particularly in accessible locations, subject to other policies of the Local Plan being satisfied.

Amenity space and parking provision

Housing for older people should incorporate amenity or garden space appropriate to the nature of the scheme. Housing schemes for older people will not be required to make contributions to provide for children's play space. Sheltered housing schemes (including Extra Care or equivalent) that make an appropriate contribution to communal amenity space are not required to make provision for open space for youth or adult use.

On-site parking will be required, for both residents and visitors, and should not diminish the character of the street scene. Where appropriate, pick up and drop off facilities for taxis (with suitable kerbs), minibuses, and ambulances will be required, as well as suitable on-site storage and charging facilities for mobility scooters.

Affordable housing

Affordable housing should be provided in accordance with the general affordable housing policy, Policy H3: Affordable Housing.

Rural Workers' Dwellings

- 6.382** The Council will, from time to time, be required to consider applications for dwellings in association with rural employment, which may include, for example, agriculture, forestry, and commercial equestrian, as well as other types of rural employment. By its very nature, the employment in question is normally located in the countryside, outside the built-up area of a settlement. However, one of the main objectives of both national and local planning policy continues to be to protect the countryside from sporadic and isolated development that is not sustainable. One exception to this, consistent with the need to sustain healthy rural enterprises, is the provision of accommodation for rural workers where it is essential that they should reside close to their place of work. In the case of agricultural workers' dwellings, the Local Planning Authority will seek expert advice on the holding's viability.
- 6.383** Most forms of rural employment do not require employees to live in close proximity to their work. It is not the intention to permit newly built dwellings in the countryside close to the place of work merely for the convenience of the occupant. The security of the site and/or animal welfare is not necessarily considered to be an essential reason for a new residential building. The use of CCTV and other technology can assist in reducing the need for staff to live on-site. However, in a limited number of instances, it may be considered essential for rural workers to live on the site. In all cases, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that an exceptional case is demonstrated before permission for a new dwelling outside the LBD is given.
- 6.384** The Local Planning Authority would wish to ensure that the practice of selling off dwellings separately from a rural holding and subsequently applying for permission for a new rural worker's dwelling is curtailed. The occupancy of the rural worker's dwelling will be restricted by way of a planning condition or legal agreement to ensure the accommodation is tied to the holding and cannot be occupied or sold on as a separate dwelling.
- 6.385** Where acceptable in principle, the new dwelling will also need to meet all other relevant policies within the Local Plan, including Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design, EN 18: Rural Landscape and, where relevant, Policy EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape.

Functional and financial soundness

- 6.386** A realistic approach to the level of profitability, taking account of the nature of the enterprise concerned, will be taken by the Council. It is accepted that some businesses have wider benefits, such as landscape management, and will create a fairly small amount of profit.
- 6.387** The labour to which the proposal for a rural worker's dwelling relates would need to be provided for the entirety of the year, and not be satisfactorily provided by seasonal or part time labour. Whether this is essential in any particular case will depend on the needs of the enterprise concerned and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of any of the individuals involved.

Policy H 7

Rural Workers' Dwellings

Outside the Limits to Built Development as defined on the Policies Map, proposals for the erection of a rural worker's dwelling will not be permitted unless all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. It is established to be essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for a full time worker, or one who is primarily employed in the business, to reside on the site to provide essential or emergency on-site care for agricultural, or business, or forestry purposes that could not be carried out satisfactorily by the worker living off-site, even with the use of up-to-date technology;
2. No existing accommodation on the site or in the immediate area is suitable (such as by conversion) to achieve the essential functioning of the enterprise;
3. A dwelling has not been sold off separately from the site or holding during the previous 10 years, nor has the site formed part of a larger unit previously served by such a dwelling at any time during this period;
4. The size and scale of the new dwelling would be appropriate for the purpose for which it would be required in relation to the income the unit can sustain and the needs of the business enterprise, and would provide reasonable family accommodation. An independent report will be required, showing the need for development and financial soundness of the business. This should cover existing and future requirements, and the number of workers that will be involved. It is expected that this report, and any assessment required to be undertaken by the Council, will be funded by the applicant;
5. That if the unit and business concerned have not been established for three years, the business has demonstrated it will be financially sound. If the unit and the business concerned has been established for at least three years, it should have been profitable for at least one of them, be currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so;
6. The location, scale, and design of the dwelling should not significantly harm the visual amenities of the landscape character when assessed against other relevant policies of the Plan;
7. In all cases, the granting of planning permission will be subject to conditions or legal agreement restricting the occupancy of the dwelling to rural workers, and permitted development rights will be removed.

Note: Temporary permission

If a new dwelling is required, it should be provided by a caravan in the first three years. There should be a firm intention and ability to continue with the business.

Temporary permission will not be granted in locations that would not permit a permanent dwelling. When temporary permission is granted, it should not be assumed that permanent permission will automatically follow, as establishing an essential need for, and the ability to sustain, the residence will need to be reapplied.

In all cases, the granting of planning permission will be subject to conditions or legal agreement restricting the occupancy of the dwelling to rural workers, and permitted development rights will be removed. Where the Local Planning Authority is concerned about misuse, the history of the holding will be investigated.

Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

- 6.388** As part of a sustainable and diverse mix of dwellings, the Council will encourage different types of housing across, and within, residential development schemes. This includes innovative new forms of delivery, such as self-build and custom housebuilding. Self-build can be defined as a form of building where a member of the public buys a plot and builds a bespoke house themselves, tailored towards their own needs and/or preferences. This does not mean that they necessarily have to physically build it themselves, but the individual would need to arrange for builders to construct the house, should they wish to do so.
- 6.389** Custom housebuilding is similar; however, the member of the public would generally work more closely with the promoter, or have a builder recommended, and the house built would generally be chosen from a list of templates provided by the promoter, rather than being fully bespoke.
- 6.390** Self-build/custom housebuilding is usually in the form of single dwelling schemes whereby the applicant usually wishes to reside in the dwelling themselves (such as barn conversions or replacement dwellings), although plots may also be provided on larger sites which can be purchased on the open market. These plots can be advertised and marketed through the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register, which means that anyone who wishes to build their own home within the borough can record their interest in doing so with the Council by signing up to the Register.
- 6.391** The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 place a duty on Councils to keep a Register of people and organisations interested in self-build or custom housebuilding projects in their area and to have regard to it in planning for such projects. Councils must also ensure that their planning policies will provide sufficient serviced plots or land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand will be identified by reference to the number of entries added to the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.
- 6.392** On 25 June 2020, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Cabinet approved the proposal to implement a local connection test to the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register. This resulted in the splitting of the Register into two parts. Part 1 lists all those people on the Register who meet the local connection test criteria, and Part 2 lists all those people on the Register who do not meet the local connection test criteria. The Council contacted all those people on the Register to update their details accordingly, and in accordance with the Regulations removed all those who did not respond or who requested to be removed from the Register.
- 6.393** As of the end of the last base period (31 October 2020), there are 134 registrations on the Register; 108 are placed on Part 1, and 26 are placed on Part 2. It is the need of those on Part 1 which the Local Plan will need to plan for.
- 6.394** The average number of monthly registrations since the Register was introduced on 01 April 2016 (based on the number of those people on Part 1 of the Register) equates to 1.96 per month. Including current need (108), if projected forward to

the end of the plan period (March 2038), this results in an indicative projected need of approximately 518 self/custom build dwellings. It is considered that most of this need will be met by small, mostly single, dwelling schemes, which based on the Council's windfall allowance could deliver approximately 401 dwellings (77% of need) over the plan period. This is because approximately 50% of units delivered on small windfall sites are on single dwelling schemes and approximately 50% of units delivered on single dwelling schemes are self/custom build. However, the remaining 115-120 dwellings will be provided on large, suitable major site allocations in Royal Tunbridge Wells (at Land to the south of Speldhurst Road and west of Reynolds Lane at Caenwood Farm, Speldhurst Road (AL/RTW 5), and Land to the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm (AL/RTW 16)). Self/custom build dwellings may also be delivered on larger than single dwelling windfall schemes.

- 6.395** Any such provision of self-build and custom housebuilding units will not be accepted as part of the affordable housing contribution and will need to be delivered in addition to all other planning and Section 106 requirements.
- 6.396** Areas that are developing neighbourhood plans will be encouraged to identify sites suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding. Community land trusts, cooperative housing, parish and town councils, and other local organisations will also be encouraged to participate in the planning and development of such schemes.
- 6.397** Plots should be serviced and advertised widely at the market value for the locality. If necessary, the Council will look to secure this through a Section 106 agreement.

Policy H 8

Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

The Council will encourage self-build and custom housebuilding schemes on non-allocated windfall developments (subject to compliance with other Policies in the Local Plan).

In addition, the Council will require approximately five percent (rounded to the nearest whole number) of dwellings (as serviced plots) of the total net number of dwellings to be provided for self-build and custom housebuilding at the following site allocations:

1. Land to the south of Speldhurst Road and west of Reynolds Lane at Caenwood Farm, Speldhurst Road (Policy AL/RTW 5);
2. Land to the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm (Policy AL/RTW 16).

The provision of self-build and custom housebuilding development will be in addition to the level of affordable housing required by Policy H 3: Affordable Housing.

Unless the proposal is for a small scheme for which the applicant(s) intends to reside in themselves, once planning permission has been granted, the self-build and custom housebuilding plots will need to be advertised and marketed to the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register and through any relevant trade organisations for at least six months. This marketing, including at what point it should begin in the site's

development and how, may be secured through a Section 106 agreement or condition. Evidence of this marketing will also be required as part of any Section 106 agreement or condition.

If a plot/s has been marketed for six months, and a buyer has not been found then the owner of the plot can build for sale on the open market.

Gypsies and Travellers

- 6.398** In terms of the scale of further pitch provision for Gypsies and Travellers, an assessment of need has been carried out (a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment) (GTAA 2024). This has identified a need for additional pitches over the Plan period of some 43 pitches under the December 2023 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2023 PPTS, which this Plan has been examined against) definition, and 52 pitches under the broader, cultural 'Ethnic' definition. This need is as at 1 April 2024.
- 6.399** The [PPTS 2023 \(see Annex 1\)](#) defines Gypsies and Travellers as the following: *"Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such."*
- 6.400** The 'Ethnic' definition assesses the accommodation needs of all those who are ethnically recognised Gypsies and Travellers (as in line with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010) regardless of whether they have temporarily or permanently ceased to travel on grounds of their own or their family's or dependents' education or health needs or old age.
- 6.401** In consideration of the identified need figures, the Council will seek to meet the 'ethnic' need in accordance with the recommendations of the GTAA 2024 to ensure that the needs of all households who ethnically identify as Gypsies and Travellers are accounted for, regardless of whether they have ceased to travel. The need of 52 pitches over the Plan period will be met through a combination of identified additional pitches at existing and new sites as well as through windfall development subject to a criteria-based windfall policy (that is, as per the criteria within Policy H9). Policy H9 therefore applies to both existing site allocations as well as future (windfall) sites.
- 6.402** As per Policy STR 1 The Development Strategy, the Council is committed to an early review of the Local Plan to seek ways to meet unmet housing need. This will include Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need if delivery of allocations and windfall schemes are such that there is an unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

- 6.403** The GTAA (2024) considers the most appropriate locations for additional pitches which identifies that the need essentially comes from existing local families, mainly living on small, family run sites. Hence, it recommends that planning policy is focused on providing a framework for the intensification, expansion, and/or regularisation of these sites.
- 6.404** Existing sites have been reviewed for their potential for additional pitches, either through intensification or extension and, in some cases, regularisation of currently unauthorised pitches. In addition, consideration has been given to the potential for any outstanding need to be met through proposed strategic allocations and any sites submitted for such use.
- 6.405** Table 12 below summarises the outcome of the GTAA 2024, as updated to the position as at 1 April 2024. This includes an assessment of anticipated supply over the Plan period against the need identified under the 'Ethnic' definition.
- 6.406** Table 13 lists the existing and new Gypsy and Traveller sites where site assessments have identified a potential for additional pitches. It can be seen that these could provide for 40-41 pitches, against an outstanding need for the Plan period of 52 pitches under the 'Ethnic' definition.
- 6.407** In terms of site suitability and layout, local planning authorities are advised, in setting policy, to have regard to the potential for noise and other disturbance from the movement of vehicles to and from the site, the stationing of vehicles on the site and on-site business activities. The proposal should not detract from the amenities or privacy of neighbouring uses.
- 6.408** Appropriate landscaping, including planting with trees and shrubs, will help sites blend into their surroundings, give structure and privacy, and maintain visual amenity.
- 6.409** The site should be planned to ensure provision of good quality living accommodation. The local environment, such as noise, vibration, dust, lighting, flooding, and air quality, should also be taken into account for the residents and for neighbouring uses.
- 6.410** Where cesspools or sewage tanks are planned on-site, the reason for not connecting to the main sewage system will need to be fully justified.
- 6.411** Further details are provided in the Housing Supply and Trajectory Topic Paper.

Table 12 Need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches 2017-2038 compared with potential supply

Row	Information	Number of pitches	Notes
1	GTAA (2024) Identified Ethnic Need to end of Plan Period (2038)	52	Given that the Plan period runs to 31 March 2038, a years' worth of need as identified in the GTAA (2024) (which runs to 31 March 2039) is deducted. The need anticipated within the years from 2034-2039 equate to a yearly average of 1.8

Row	Information	Number of pitches	Notes
			under the Ethnic definition. Therefore, 2 pitches have been deducted from the overall need figures as identified within the GTAA.
2	Extant Planning Permissions as at 1 April 2024	18	This includes all non-completed, extant planning permissions as at 1 April 2024. All 18 extant pitches are located on sites allocated in Table 13.
3	Potential For Additional Capacity at Existing Sites	12-13	Through expansion, intensification, and/or regularisation of sites. Details are provided in Table 13. This figure does not double-count with extant planning permissions (above).
4	Pitches Expected Through Vacancy	4	This includes the number of existing pitches expected to become vacant through mortality (2) or migration (2) within the period 2024-2029.
5	Existing Sites With Lawful Unoccupied Pitches	3	1 pitch at Willow Stables, Touchwood, and Land Adjacent to 1-3 Holly Cottages.
6	Site Allocation at STR/SS1	3	Small site (for three pitches) as an integral component of the strategic proposal for Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel)
7	Total Supply	40 - 41	This is the total supply from rows 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6
8	Outstanding Ethnic Need at End of Plan Period	11-12 pitches	The outstanding Ethnic need. These outstanding needs are expected to be met through windfalls.

Table 13 Existing and proposed new Gypsy and Traveller sites that may have potential for accommodating additional pitches

Site	Parish	Number of existing completed pitches	Outstanding permissions (as of 1 April 2024)	Potential additional pitches
STR/SS 1*	Paddock Wood	0	0	3
Bassetts Farm	Horsmonden	1	0	2
Broomhill Nurseries	Cranbrook & Sissinghurst	3	0	2
Cinderhill Wood	Brenchley and Matfield	7	2	0
Dean Wood	Paddock Wood	1	0	2
Funnel Piece	Paddock Wood	1	2	0
Greenfields Farm	Paddock Wood	0	3	0
Heartenoak (North)	Hawkhurst	10	0	0
1 Hartleylands	Cranbrook & Sissinghurst	2	0	2

Site	Parish	Number of existing completed pitches	Outstanding permissions (as of 1 April 2024)	Potential additional pitches
3 Hartleylands	Cranbrook & Sissinghurst	3	0	0
Lordship Stables	Brenchley and Matfield	3	1	0
Mile Oak Stables	Paddock Wood	2	3	0
Oak Tree Farm	Cranbrook & Sissinghurst	2	4	0
Touchwood	Paddock Wood	3**	3	0
Vines Farm	Paddock Wood	1	0	2
Willow Stables	Paddock Wood	3**	0	2-3
Total		42	18	15-16

* Three pitches are proposed as part of the strategic proposal (Policy STR/SS 1) for Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel).

** Of the existing completed pitches, one pitch was unoccupied as at 1 April 2024.

Policy H 9

Gypsies and Travellers

To meet the accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers over the plan period (52 pitches under the Ethnic definition), the following sites, as shown on the relevant Inset Maps of the Policies Map and on site layout plans in Appendix 6*, are allocated for additional pitches, as identified in Table 13:

- STR/SS 1 (Paddock Wood);
- Bassetts Farm, Maidstone Road (Horsmonden);
- Broomhill Nurseries (Cranbrook & Sissinghurst);
- Cinderhill Wood (Brenchley and Matfield);
- Dean Wood (Paddock Wood);
- Funnel Piece (Paddock Wood);
- Greenfields Farm (Paddock Wood);
- Hartenoak (North) (Hawkhurst);
- 1 Hartleylands (Cranbrook & Sissinghurst);
- 3 Hartleylands (Cranbrook & Sissinghurst);
- Lordship Stables (Brenchley and Matfield);
- Mile Oak Stables (Paddock Wood);
- Oak Tree Farm (Cranbrook & Sissinghurst);
- Touchwood (Paddock Wood);
- Vines Farm (Paddock Wood); and,
- Willow Stables (Paddock Wood).

[* A site is identified for three pitches as part of the strategic proposal at Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel) as set out in Policy STR/SS 1. There is not a separate plan showing this site. Rather, details will be contained in the future masterplanning for that strategic site.]

Additional pitches on these sites will be permitted subject to meeting the criteria below:

1. The density of pitch provision within the application site is optimised (subject to meeting the requirements of criteria 2-7 below), having regard to the minimum separation distances between mobile homes/caravans, etc, as required by any relevant legislation or guidance;
2. The proposal would not cause harm to character or appearance of the landscape, and must be well-screened by existing or additional native vegetation and physically contained by landscaping. This screening should be maintained permanently, and while additional planting could supplement existing landscaping, it should not be used as the only way the impact of new development is mitigated. High fences will not be acceptable for the purposes of screening;
3. Any accommodation provided on the site must be consistent with a nomadic lifestyle;
4. The scale of the proposed development, when considered together with existing Gypsy and Traveller pitches on the site and within the parish, must not be of an unduly large scale relative to the nearest settled community;
5. Foul drainage to a public sewer should be provided where possible. Where it is not, evidence will need to be provided showing that suitable alternative facilities can be provided;
6. Parking provision must be made in accordance with the parking standards as set out in Policy TP 3: Parking Standards; and,
7. There is adequate provision for storage and maintenance of equipment, where required.

Proposals that would result in a reduction of the number of pitches within the borough will be refused unless a suitable replacement is found, or the need no longer exists.

Other proposals for Gypsy and Traveller pitches will be permitted which comply with all of the above criteria and other relevant policies in the Plan.

Replacement Dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development

- 6.412** The Council seeks to minimise the impact of built development in rural areas to protect and conserve the intrinsic beauty, value, and locally distinctive character of the countryside, as advocated by NPPF advice and other landscape policies in this Plan. Therefore, only in appropriate circumstances will the Local Planning Authority allow the rebuilding of a residential dwelling outside the LBD.
- 6.413** As a starting point for assessing development proposals for replacement dwellings, the building in question must be a lawful residential dwelling; if abandoned, demolished, or fallen into such a bad state of disrepair that it is no longer

recognisable as a dwelling, then it is not by definition a dwelling. In addition, mobile homes, or other temporary structures, will not be classed as an existing residential dwelling for the purposes of Policy H 10 below.

- 6.414** Secondly, where the use is found to be lawful, in accordance with Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design, consideration should be given to the reuse of the existing structure, and demolition only considered in certain circumstances. For example where the existing building is inherently impractical to reuse, such as the building being of poor construction and/or built from poor quality materials, resulting in the building being of little merit in terms of architectural, landscape, and visual amenity, or the building is of unsound construction or subject to subsidence and it would not be viable to rectify these as part of a modernisation or refurbishment project.
- 6.415** Evidence would need to be submitted with an application to support and justify the removal of the existing building. This may include the justification that the replacement dwelling is of very high or outstanding design quality, or where a building is poorly sited, such as immediately adjacent to a highway, or is considered to be unduly obtrusive by virtue of its design and/or use of materials.
- 6.416** Where a replacement dwelling is to be considered, the size, form, height, design, external appearance, and massing of both the existing and proposed dwelling, and the impact each has on the landscape setting and visual amenities of the area, will be key factors taken into account when assessing the suitability of a replacement dwelling. The proposal should also not be detrimental to the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses in terms of loss of privacy, immediate outlook, daylight, and sunlight.
- 6.417** In both the Green Belt (where, in accordance with NPPF advice, a replacement dwelling may be considered to be an exception to inappropriate development) and other areas outside the LBD, the proposed new dwelling should not be materially larger than the one it replaces. In determining the appropriate scale of a replacement dwelling, regard may be had to the size, form and character of the original dwelling (the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or, in the case of a building constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was first built). All other existing detached buildings, including garages, if built after the original dwelling, will be excluded from the calculation of the volume of the original dwelling.
- 6.418** In order to protect the character of the dwelling, the openness of the Green Belt and the landscape of the borough particularly in sensitive locations such as the High Weald National Landscape, permitted development rights for any further extensions to the replacement dwelling and other structures may be removed. Proposals sited in the National Landscape will also be considered in relation to the High Weald AONB Management Plan which seeks to conserve the highly valued and intrinsic landscape character of the National Landscape, as well as Policy EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape.
- 6.419** Proposals for replacement dwellings will also be assessed against other policies in this Plan, including Policies STR2: Place Shaping and Design, STR9: Green Belt, EN 1: Sustainable Design; EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain; EN 18: Rural

Landscape; EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape; and H 12: Extensions to Residential Curtilages (Domestic Gardens) outside the Limits to Built Development, as well as other guidance, including the [Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment SPD](#) (2017).

Policy H 10

Replacement Dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development

Outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Policies Map, proposals for replacement dwellings in the same residential curtilage as an existing dwelling, will be required to satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. The existing dwelling must benefit from a lawful residential use and be lawfully constructed (this does not include any form of temporary planning permission, a residential use that has been abandoned, or has any planning conditions relating to occupancy restrictions). In addition, mobile homes and other forms of temporary accommodation will not be classed as an existing residential dwelling for the purposes of this policy;
2. Demolition of all or part of the existing dwelling must be justified on the basis that:
 - a. it is inherently constructed to a poor quality or substantially with poor materials and it would not be viable to rectify these as part of a modernisation or refurbishment project; or
 - b. where a building is poorly sited, such as immediately adjacent to a highway, or is considered to be unduly obtrusive by virtue of its design and/or use of materials; and
 - c. it is to be replaced by a dwelling which would be of a high-quality design and appearance (relative to its setting and context) and the requirements of this policy (H10).
3. Where the existing dwelling is a heritage asset, first consideration should be given to its retention, having regard to relevant NPPF policies.

Where a dwelling is to be replaced:

- a. The scale, form, external appearance, height, and massing of the replacement dwelling and any associated development and works, shall be no more visually obtrusive in the landscape and shall not be materially larger than the dwelling to be replaced (as lawfully constructed). It shall be compatible with its rural location in terms of architectural and visual amenity, landscape setting, and any existing surrounding development;
- b. The replacement dwelling shall be located on the footprint of, or as close as practically possible to, the existing dwelling, unless an alternative location would result in clear landscape, access, or local amenity benefits. In the event that the dwelling is relocated, the removal of the existing dwelling upon completion of the new dwelling will be secured by way of planning condition or legal agreement;
- c. The proposal shall not cause significant harm to the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses in terms of loss of privacy, immediate outlook, daylight, and sunlight.

In order to protect the character of the dwelling, the openness of the Green Belt, and the landscape of the borough, particularly in sensitive locations, such as the High Weald National Landscape, permitted development rights for any further extensions, alterations, outbuildings, hardstanding areas, and boundary treatments may be removed and external lighting strictly controlled.

Residential Extensions, Alterations, Outbuildings, and Annexes

Extensions and alterations to residential properties

- 6.420** It is possible to extend/make alterations to a residential property and build other outbuildings incidental to it, such as a detached garage, under what is known as ‘permitted development’ under the Town and Country General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended), without needing to obtain full planning permission. Further guidance on this can be found in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)) [Technical Guidance for Householders](#) (2019).
- 6.421** Where proposals fall outside these permitted development rights (or any subsequent changes to them) and require planning permission, the Local Planning Authority will apply the following approach to extensions/alterations and other ancillary outbuildings, such as garages and annexes.

General approach

- 6.422** Proposals for extensions/alterations and other outbuildings will be considered in terms of their impact on:
- the character and appearance of the main dwelling; and
 - the wider visual impact on the street scene and surrounding area; and
 - the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- 6.423** The Council’s [Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document](#) 2006 provides further written and illustrative guidance on this approach.

Design

- 6.424** In order to ensure that extensions/other detached domestic outbuildings complement the character and appearance of the main dwelling, the street scene, and visual amenities of the area, careful consideration needs to be given to the design of the proposal.
- 6.425** The scale, form, height, proportion, and external appearance of an extension/ ancillary structure are key elements of successful design. The development proposal should respect the common characteristics of the street scene and local distinctiveness of the area in which it is set in terms of these key elements.
- 6.426** With regard to side extensions, especially two storey extensions, a minimum gap of one metre to the boundary should be retained to prevent the infilling of gaps between buildings where these are an important characteristic of the street scene and locality, to avoid a ‘visual terracing effect’. Such a gap would also allow access

to the rear garden and refuse storage, etc. This gap may need to be wider, depending on the context of the site and its surroundings. In some cases, it may be appropriate to set the proposal back from the front building line of the main dwelling with a lower ridge height so it appears subordinate to the main dwelling.

- 6.427** With regard to dormer windows and other roof extensions, these should not project beyond the main ridgeline, should not fully cover the main plane of the roof and should normally be located on less visible rear elevations, depending on site context. Materials matching those of the existing roof should also be used. Some roofs may not be suitable for conversion if the pitch is too shallow and would not be able to accommodate sufficient headroom without raising the main ridgeline of the existing roof.
- 6.428** Materials and detailing are important elements of successful design. Generally, materials should match those of the main dwelling and reflect and reinforce the character of the area. Any distinctive architectural features that contribute to the character of the main dwelling should be retained and replicated where possible. This includes detailing such as doors, windows and window frames, rainwater goods/drain pipes, facing bricks, roof tiles, and other ornate/decorative features.

Sustainable design

- 6.429** In accordance with Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design, consideration should be given to the incorporation of sustainable design measures such as solar gain, improving energy and water efficiency, and using recycled materials in the design of development proposals.

Impact on neighbouring properties

- 6.430** Proposals for extensions/alterations and outbuildings, by reason of their design, height, massing, and siting, should not cause harm to the amenities of existing neighbouring properties, especially to the rear of a neighbouring property in relation to the use and enjoyment of private amenity areas/garden areas, in terms of:
- loss of privacy and overlooking between properties and private amenity/garden areas;
 - loss of daylight/sunlight to habitable rooms (a room for living, sleeping, eating, or cooking: bathrooms, closets, halls, storage, or utility rooms are not classed as habitable rooms) and overshadowing of private amenity/garden areas;
 - domination resulting in an overbearing impact on the immediate outlook of the neighbouring property owing to the height, massing, and close proximity of the proposal to the shared boundary.
- 6.431** To avoid direct overlooking between habitable room windows of the proposed development and a neighbouring property, especially in the case of two storey and first floor extensions, there should be considerable distance between them. It is recommended that there is a minimum distance of 21 metres where main rear windows directly face each other. This distance may need to be increased where there is a change in level between dwellings, which increases the impact and perception of overlooking, or may be reduced where windows are angled away from each other, reducing the impact of direct overlooking.

- 6.432** Balconies, first floor windows on the flank elevation, or fully glazed first floor extensions should be avoided where they would result in direct overlooking into the private amenity/garden areas of neighbouring properties. In exceptional circumstances, the use of high-level, non-opening (integral to the design) and/or obscure glazed windows, or the use of appropriately designed privacy screening on balconies may be used to address this issue. Regard will be given to the extent of 'mutual overlooking' between properties and private amenity/garden areas that exists.

Loss of daylight/sunlight

- 6.433** Careful consideration needs to be given to the scale, height, and siting of a proposed extension or other domestic outbuildings, so as not to cause loss of daylight or cutting out of sunlight for a significant part of the day, resulting in overshadowing of rooms and the private amenity area of a neighbouring property.
- 6.434** In the same way, the height, siting, and massing of a new extension or structure may also cause domination and/or have an overbearing impact on a neighbouring property, resulting in loss of immediate outlook and amenity. This is especially the case for two storey extensions.
- 6.435** In both cases, the height, depth, and overall bulk of the extension/outbuilding may need to be reduced and the distance from it to the shared boundary increased to address these issues.

Garages and other outbuildings

- 6.436** Garages and other outbuildings (such as sheds, summerhouses, and home offices) should be carefully sited and appear clearly ancillary in scale so as not to impinge on the space around the main dwelling, or appear unduly prominent when viewed in the street scene and locality. Where a garage is proposed, its size should be compatible with the size of the vehicle it is to accommodate in terms of floor space and height. There should be adequate distance between the garage and pavement to provide a driveway/hardstanding to the front of the garage without any protrusion onto the pavement/highway, while being acceptable in terms of visual amenity. The requirements and advice above in terms of design, scale, siting, materials, and impact on neighbouring dwellings also apply to proposals for garages and other outbuildings. Further advice on car parking requirements can be found in Policy TP 3: Parking Standards.

Annexes

- 6.437** A residential annex is separate ancillary accommodation to, and within, the same residential curtilage as the main dwelling. It often provides independent/semi-independent living space and facilities for a family member. It can be in the form of an extension to the main property, the conversion of an existing outbuilding, or in some cases a new detached building with shared facilities such as vehicular access and communal amenity and parking area.

- 6.438** Where such accommodation is needed, the general approach will be to determine how the proposed development fits in the most compatible way and relates to the main dwelling, the site, and its surroundings in terms of visual and residential amenity (in accordance with the above requirements for extensions and outbuildings), while also meeting the needs of the person it is to accommodate; for example, in terms of access and mobility. Such proposals will need to demonstrate that the size of the annex is necessary to meet such needs.
- 6.439** The occupancy of the annex will be restricted by way of planning condition or a legal agreement to ensure the accommodation is tied to the main dwelling and cannot be occupied or sold on as a separate dwelling.

External space: parking, garden, refuse storage

- 6.440** Proposals for extensions and outbuildings will normally result in the loss of external open space around dwellings. The retention of usable and reasonable external space to meet the continuing requirements of the dwelling for garden/amenity, refuse, recycling, and cycle storage, and adequate parking/turning would therefore be an important consideration in the assessment of proposals.

Heritage assets

- 6.441** Domestic development proposals that would affect designated and non-designated heritage assets, such as listed buildings and conservation areas, or other traditional rural buildings, will be carefully assessed in terms of the impact they would have on the special character (and fabric where applicable), appearance, amenity, and the setting of these heritage assets in accordance with Policy EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets.

Landscape, trees, and biodiversity

- 6.442** In a borough of high landscape and biodiversity value, domestic proposals should be designed and built to avoid loss or damage to important landscape (including trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders) and biodiversity features/habitats. They should not result in pressure for the future pruning or removal of existing trees and hedges. Where possible, proposals should seek to enhance landscaping and natural habitats. Where such features may be affected, the Local Planning Authority will also assess development proposals against Policies EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain, EN 12: Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development, EN 13: Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees, EN 16: Landscape Within the Built Environment, and EN 18: Rural Landscape,

National Landscapes

- 6.443** Proposals sited in the National Landscape will also be considered in relation to the High Weald AONB Management Plan which seeks to promote the conservation and enhancement of the highly valued and intrinsic landscape character of the National Landscape, in accordance with Policy EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape, as well as Policy EN 18: Rural Landscape.

Extensions outside the Limits to Built Development

- 6.444** In order to protect the intrinsic beauty and landscape character of the countryside and the openness of the Green Belt outside the LBD, the erection of extensions and other outbuildings will be strictly controlled.
- 6.445** In considering such proposals, the Local Planning Authority will have regard to the mass, scale, and prominence of the development proposal in terms of its impact on the character of the existing dwelling, the visual amenities of the rural area, and openness of the Green Belt, including any cumulative impact. Proposals must also be in keeping with the design and external appearance of the main dwelling.
- 6.446** The NPPF advises that the limited extension of existing dwellings is an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt, provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- 6.447** For the purposes of Policy H 11, the term 'original' is defined as the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or, in the case of a building constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was first built.
- 6.448** In terms of assessing whether proposals (in both the Green Belt and other areas outside the LBD) would be in accordance with the above advice, i.e. whether a proposal would be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling/building, the Local Planning Authority will apply the following approach:

The proposed extension, including any previous additions to the property, will not result in an increase of more than 50% of the gross volume of the original dwelling/building. The gross volume will be ascertained by external measurements taken above ground level and include the volume of the roof. All other existing detached outbuildings, including garages, will be excluded from the calculation of the volume of the original dwelling. If the dwelling has already been extended by 50% (or more) above the original, then no further increase in volume will be permitted; and permitted development rights for any further extensions/structures will normally be removed.

Policy H 11

Residential Extensions, Alterations, Outbuildings, and Annexes

Extensions, alterations, outbuildings, and annexes to existing dwellings both inside and outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Policies Map, will be permitted if in accordance with all of the following criteria:

1. They are compatible with the character and appearance of the main dwelling and its setting in terms of design, siting, layout, size, mass, height, form (including roof form), external finishing materials, and detailing;
2. They do not significantly harm the amenities of neighbouring properties in terms of direct overlooking to main habitable room windows and/or private amenity areas, resulting in loss of privacy;
3. They do not significantly harm the amenities of neighbouring properties in terms of loss of immediate outlook/dominance, resulting in an overbearing impact, loss of daylight/sunlight, and overshadowing of habitable (as defined above) room windows and private amenity areas;
4. They would retain usable and reasonable external space for garden/amenity, refuse, recycling, and cycle storage, and the parking and turning of vehicles to meet the continuing needs of the dwelling.

In all cases, the proposal will be ancillary to the main dwelling in terms of use and scale and shall not be used for separate occupation or be capable of being sold separately. Where appropriate, these restrictions will be secured by way of planning condition or legal agreement.

In addition to the above criteria, residential extensions outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Policies Map, shall only be permitted where:

- a. the scale, form, and massing of the proposal would not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling (the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or, in the case of a building constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was first built) and would not detract from its rural setting and the visual amenities of the surrounding countryside; and
- b. proposed extensions, including any previous additions to the property, would not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the gross volume to the dwelling (based on external measurements taken above ground level and including the volume of the roof) of the original dwelling. All other existing detached outbuildings, including garages, will be excluded from the calculation of the volume of the original dwelling. In the case of a dwelling already having been extended by 50 percent (or more) above the original, then no further increase in volume will be permitted and permitted development rights for further extensions/structures may be removed.

Extensions to Residential Curtilages (domestic gardens) outside the Limits to Built Development

- 6.449** In accordance with NPPF advice and other landscape policies in this Plan, the prime objective in rural areas is to conserve the intrinsic value and locally distinctive character of the countryside.
- 6.450** The Council is committed, through policy, to conserving and enhancing the borough's landscape, which is mostly of a high quality, and is highly valued by residents. Development can often bring forward localised improvements, but in some cases may result in detriment. Where harmful to the landscape, and that harm can be justified by other planning arguments, the Local Planning Authority will seek mitigation and compensation measures as appropriate.
- 6.451** The extension of residential curtilages (domestic gardens) outside the LBD is one such example where the incremental change of use of land from often agricultural use to garden areas can have a harmful suburbanising effect on the rural landscape. The extension of gardens also brings with it activity and domestic paraphernalia that undermines the historical and rural character of the landscape.
- 6.452** Consequently, in order to preserve and enhance the landscape of the borough, extensions to residential curtilages or land ancillary to a dwelling in the countryside will generally be strongly resisted. However, modest and proportionate extensions to domestic gardens may be granted in exceptional circumstances; for example, where additional land is required for safe access, or where sufficient outside space is needed for the service and maintenance of the property, or where they bring overall landscape improvements, rationalise problematic or dysfunctional boundaries (for example, where they create a logical new boundary to a natural feature, such as a hedgerow or watercourse), or result in the removal of significant landscape detractors, or an extension is otherwise considered reasonably necessary for functional rather than private amenity reasons.
- 6.453** Policy H 12 will safeguard against excessive and inappropriate extensions to domestic gardens in the countryside. Where any exceptional circumstances such as those listed above apply, the Local Planning Authority will seek to control the extension of garden areas by ensuring that the design, scale, and siting of new development in the rural area is sympathetic to the character of the landscape, and by giving consideration to the use of planning conditions or legal agreements to restrict permitted development rights and provide for the long term security and management of the new boundary.
- 6.454** The approach to such landscape protection will also be guided by the Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2017 (BLCA). The BLCA identifies, and seeks to deter, types of development out of character with local context in the countryside, such as coniferous hedge boundaries, tennis courts, close boarded fencing, encroachment into, or loss of, farmland to garden and other amenity uses, security lighting, and poorly designed/over-engineered stables and sand schools, all of which can have an incremental suburbanising effect, harmful to the character and integrity of rural landscapes.

- 6.455** Also, where development is within, or close to, the High Weald National Landscape, consideration will be given to the High Weald AONB Management Plan and supporting documents, which identify settlement pattern as a component of natural beauty. The overriding vision of the High Weald AONB Management Plan is for a landscape in which the distinctive pattern of settlement of the High Weald is protected. The erosion of the character of the National Landscape through suburbanisation, such as pressure for residential intensification and inappropriate boundary treatments, has been identified in the top five issues to be addressed for matters in relation to settlement pattern and development in the High Weald AONB Management Plan. Proposals will also be considered against Policy EN:19 The High Weald National Landscape.
- 6.456** As well as Policy H 12, proposals relating to the extension of residential curtilages will also be assessed against other policies in this Plan, including Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design; EN 8: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies; EN 18 Rural Landscape; and EN19 The High Weald National Landscape.

Policy H 12

Extensions to Residential Curtilages (domestic gardens) outside the Limits to Built Development

Outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Policies Map, extensions to residential curtilages will not be permitted unless it can be shown that all of the following criteria can be met:

1. It is reasonably necessary for the safe access and proper management of a dwelling, such as the provision of sufficient outside space for the servicing and maintenance of the property, and it is demonstrated in a design and access statement that all other alternative options to address a particular issue have been investigated, with the reasoning for discounting those set out;
2. The proposed means of enclosure and any gates would be sympathetic to the character of the adjoining countryside;
3. It would be an appropriate size in the context of the site and would not result in an unacceptable impact on the landscape character of the area;
4. It would not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of users of publicly accessible open spaces and Public Rights of Way in the surrounding landscape;
5. The proposal would not adversely affect the proper functioning or use of adjoining agricultural land.

In exceptional circumstances, extensions to residential curtilages may be permitted where, as a direct result, there would be clear landscape and/or biodiversity benefits through the realignment of the boundary, restoration of landscape features, or the removal of elements that detract from the landscape.

In order to protect landscape character, and particularly in sensitive locations, such as the High Weald National Landscape and Green Belt, permitted development rights for extensions to the dwelling, outbuildings, hardstandings, and boundary treatments may be removed and external lighting strictly controlled.

Economic Development

Employment Provision

- 6.457** Provision will be made for a minimum increase in employment land of at least 14 hectares over the period to 2038 to maintain a broad balance between homes and jobs and to maintain a diverse economic base. The findings of the Economic Needs Study (ENS) 2016, the Economic Development Topic Paper, as well as the Tunbridge Wells Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study Update (2021) have informed the approach to employment provision within this Local Plan. These studies have taken into account the existing and future sector base, commuting patterns, and modern ways of working, such as increased home working and the degree of economic uncertainty owing to the impacts of the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic, to inform the following policy approach.
- 6.458** The Economic Development Topic Paper also sets out further information on the range of employment and job opportunities across the borough for both urban and rural areas, including those in leisure and retail, office sector jobs, and jobs relating to infrastructure provision, such as medical, educational, and construction related employment.
- 6.459** The overall employment distribution strategy for the borough is set out in Policy STR 1: The Development Strategy (see Section 4) and in respect of allocated employment sites, in Table 5 accompanying it. Further details are set out within the place shaping and specific site allocation policies set out within Section 5 of this Plan.

The Key Employment Areas

- 6.460** The ENS 2016 considers that all of the existing Key Employment Areas, as previously defined in the [Core Strategy](#) 2010, are performing well and should therefore be retained as broad employment locations to provide future economic development opportunities over the plan period. It is recognised that there are other smaller employment 'hubs' across the whole borough, particularly in the rural areas, and these will be afforded protection through the retention of existing employment sites and buildings as set out in Policy ED 2.
- 6.461** It is considered that, if additional land was to be made available within the Key Employment Areas or as an extension to these areas, then strong demand would be expected from a range of sectors. Additionally, the majority of new employment floorspace to be created to meet identified needs are located as allocated sites forming logical extensions to the defined Key Employment Areas.
- 6.462** The Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order was amended in September 2020 to include the introduction of two new use classes; E - Commercial, Business and Service uses and F - Local Community and Learning uses, which will replace some of the uses in existing classes A, B, and D. The changes allow more flexibility in permitted changes of use, without requiring the submission of a planning application in some cases, such as new Class E, which is in 11 parts and more broadly covers uses previously defined in the revoked Classes

A1 (shops)/A2 (financial and professional services)/A3 (restaurants and cafes), B1 (offices, research, light industrial uses), D1(a-b) (non-residential institutions - schools, nurseries, clinics, etc.) and 'indoor sport' from D2(e). Given that Class E of the revised Use Class Order could enable retail uses to occupy non-retail Class E premises in out-of-centre locations, circumventing any relevant 'town centre first' policies (as set out in Policies ED 9: Defined Town, Rural and other Service Centres and ED 10: Sequential Test and Local Impact Test), and where there is a risk that an alternative use within Class E (such as retail) would impact on the health of surrounding centres, a condition may be attached to any approval of planning permission in out-of-centre locations to restrict the use to that applied for.

- 6.463** The Key Employment Areas are defined on the Policies Map, and the mix of uses appropriate within these areas is set out within Policy ED 1 below. This policy details which uses should be both directed to, and retained within, these areas. This includes a mix of the traditional Business Class E (g) (formerly Class B1), General Industry (Class B2), and Storage and Distribution (Class B8) type uses, but also considers other types of complementary uses which it may be appropriate to encourage or retain within these areas. However, as mentioned previously above, some changes of use may occur without requiring the submission of a planning application under the revised Use Classes Order.
- 6.464** Some changes of use/new development proposals may require the submission of a transport assessment to support a planning application, as set out in Policy TP 1: Transport Assessments, Travel Plans, and Mitigation, depending on their size and relationship to the local highway network. This may be particularly relevant where planning permission is required for parcel delivery companies which generate a high number of vehicular movements.

Policy ED 1

The Key Employment Areas

The Key Employment Areas, as defined on the Policies Map, are designated for the provision of employment uses to serve the borough over the plan period. The retention of existing, and proposals for new, employment provision, to include the following uses, will be acceptable within these defined areas.

Table 14 Mix of uses appropriate in the defined Key Employment Areas

Defined Key Employment Area	Appropriate Employment uses (as specifically defined by reference to the Use Classes Order 1987 as amended)
Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre	Class E (a) to (g) Class F (1) and (2) Class C (1) to (4) and other sui generis uses of an appropriate type and scale compatible with the town centre
Royal Tunbridge Wells North Farm/Longfield Road area	Classes B2 and B8 Class E (a) to (g)

	Class F (1) and (2) and other sui generis uses of an appropriate type and scale
Southborough High Brooms Industrial Area	Class E (c) and (g) Class F (1) and (2) Classes B2 and B8 and other sui generis uses of an appropriate type and scale compatible with the area
Paddock Wood Eldon Way and West of Maidstone Road	Class E (c) and (g) Class B2 Class B8
Paddock Wood Transfesa Road East and West	Class E (c) and (g) – Commercial, Business and service Class B2 Class B8
Hawkhurst Station Business Park (Gill's Green)	Class E (c) and (g) Class B2 Class B8
Capel Brook Farm	Class E (c) and (g) Class B2 Class B8

Proposals for the retention of existing floorspace and the encouragement of new floorspace in the Key Employment Areas on allocated and non-allocated and vacant sites, and through the intensification or redevelopment of existing sites, will be supported in principle.

Retention of Existing Employment Sites and Buildings

- 6.465** In addition to the provision of new sites and allocations to meet the employment needs of the borough, it is also important that the stock of existing employment sites is maintained across the whole borough (not just within the Key Employment Areas). The Council's Economic Needs Study 2016 (ENS), its Economic Development Topic Paper, as well as the Tunbridge Wells Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study Update (2021) provide strong economic justification for the retention and protection of the borough's supply of existing employment sites and buildings where they are well located, in order to continue to be available to meet the needs of existing and expanding/modernising businesses. This applies to a range of business uses and types of employment across the borough, including office use, light manufacturing, workshops, storage use, and smaller business enterprises in the rural areas.
- 6.466** The demand for office and other employment-generating uses can be expected to fluctuate over the plan period in accordance with changes in economic and market conditions. This is further emphasised by the impact of the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic giving rise to an increase in homeworking and resulting in uncertainty

across the business/employment sector of the local economy. It is important, therefore, that good quality existing sites and buildings are not permanently lost to alternative uses as a result of short term trends and changes in demand.

Permitted Development Rights and Article 4 Directions

- 6.467** Changes in recent years to the General Permitted Development Order (PD Rights) and, as mentioned under Policy ED 1, recent changes to the Use Classes Order, enable the conversion of Class E(g) uses (formerly Class B1) office space to residential use and other uses within Class E without the need for full planning permission. The most recent changes, introduced in March 2024, include the removal of a 1,500 square metres floorspace cap and the elimination of the requirement of a property to be vacant for three months before applying for Prior Approval. Removing these requirements has the potential to increase the number of buildings where permitted development rights can be used. This has, and will have, a significant impact on the supply of office stock, particularly in relation to Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, and other employment premises across the borough.
- 6.468** The Council has served a number of Article 4 Directions on existing office locations across Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre and the wider urban area where appropriate, in order to protect the existing office stock where there are not extant Prior Approvals through PD Rights. An Article 4 Direction does not prohibit the change of use of an office building to residential, but does require that a full planning application be submitted, which will then be subject to the relevant policies set out within the Local Plan at the time of the application.
- 6.469** Therefore, in response to the above, and given the greater flexibility allowed under revisions to the Use Classes Order, where planning permission is required, the retention and protection of existing employment sites and buildings is a key policy aim of the Local Plan.
- 6.470** Applicants submitting planning applications for the conversion/change of use of employment buildings, or sites to non-employment uses should demonstrate that consideration has been given to the criteria set out within Policy ED 2. Such applications should be supported by:
- a viability report, prepared by a relevant professional, including financial accounts and marketing information, illustrating that efforts to promote, improve, and market the facility/property, for sale or rent, at a reasonable value which reflects the existing use and condition of the building (a minimum of two independent valuations of the building will normally be required) have not been successful, and the use is no longer viable;
 - such information should also include: the history of previous uses and period/s of vacancy of the facility/property; details of agent/s used; copies of brochures, advertisements, and dates (showing that the property has been marketed at both local and regional level); records of the response and interest shown; and any offers received, with reasons for being rejected;

- the marketing of the property and the accompanying information should cover a sustained period of at least 18 months before any planning application is submitted;
- review of the submitted information may be required by an independent consultant and it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this.

Policy ED 2

Retention of Existing Employment Sites and Buildings

Development proposals that would have the effect of undermining or diminishing the role and function of the Key Employment Areas for employment purposes will not be permitted.

Unless they are demonstrably unsuitable for employment uses through re-use, refurbishment or redevelopment, all existing employment sites and buildings, including vacant sites and buildings last used for employment purposes, will be retained as such in accordance with the criteria of this policy to support the vibrant and balanced economy of the borough.

Proposals seeking to redevelop/convert existing employment buildings and sites to non-employment generating uses must:

- provide robust evidence to show that the site has been proactively and comprehensively and professionally marketed, at an appropriate price, having regard to its permitted or existing use or other suitable employment-generating uses within classes B2, B8, E(c) and (g) for a period of at least 18 months immediately prior to any application for planning permission;
- provide evidence that there is no prospect of the existing buildings, or the partial or comprehensive redevelopment of the existing buildings, continuing in its current use or another employment generating use within classes as may be appropriate for the building or the site's location;
- where it has been demonstrated, through an independent assessment, that the current use is no longer viable and that there is no reasonable prospect of continued use or take up of other employment-generating uses or redevelopment of the building or the site for purposes within use classes B2, B8, E(c) and (g) (as may, in every case, be appropriate to its location) during the plan period, proposals for redevelopment must consider alternative uses (where compatible with the site and its context and other relevant policies in this Plan) in the following order:
 - all other non-residential, and non-retail employment-generating uses;
 - residential employment-generating uses (C1, C2);
 - a mixture of residential and employment-generating uses, including 'live/work' units;
 - wholly residential schemes (C3).

Where the review of submitted information by an independent consultant is considered necessary by the Council, the applicant will cover the reasonable cost of the review.

Digital Communications and Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)

- 6.471** Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure plays a key role in sustainable economic growth, and digital technologies have been a major driving force in influencing and shaping commerce and society in recent years. The development of high-speed communication networks, including broadband, are also significant in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services. The NPPF strongly promotes the expansion of such electronic communication networks, including telecommunications, high speed broadband, and digital services.
- 6.472** Certain electronic communications developments do not require planning permission by virtue of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or subsequent revision). Local authorities, however, are able to exercise some control over the siting and appearance of these developments under applications for prior approval. In such cases, and where any form of such development is subject to full planning control, the Council will have regard to Government guidance in the NPPF (or any subsequent guidance) and other relevant policies of this Plan, including Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design; EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets; EN 16: Landscape within the Built Environment; EN 17: Arcadian Areas; EN 18: Rural Landscape; and EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape.
- 6.473** In considering electronic communications development, the Council will expect the operator to have regard to the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England 2016 (or any subsequent best practice guide). Priority should be given to sharing sites in order to reduce the need to build new masts on which to locate equipment and to minimise the number of base station sites; and development should be sited and designed/camouflaged to minimise visual impact.
- 6.474** Proposals should also adhere to current Government advice on the health effects of exposure to radio waves. Certificates of compliance with guidance laid out in the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection should be submitted with all applications, including applications for prior approval. The outcome of any pre-submission consultation where a mast is to be installed near a school or college should also be submitted with such applications.
- 6.475** Technological changes that are currently transforming our working, learning, leisure, and community environments will need to be integrated into future developments (residential, employment, and commercial) to meet both existing and future communication needs. In relation to mobile networks, the Council is keen to provide for future technology, including the use of the next generation of mobile wireless system cellular technology (currently 5G).
- 6.476** The Council considers that such changes include the requirement to provide fibre to the premises (FTTP) for all new developments, wherever practical. FTTP is recognised by the Government and European Commission as a Next Generation Access (NGA) technology, investment in which has been prioritised accordingly. Should the implementation of FTTP not be possible for the reasons set out below at paragraphs 6.477 and 6.478, then consideration should firstly be given to opportunities for connections that are ‘gigabit capable’ (gigabit internet delivers

download speeds of up to one gigabit per second). Other wireless solutions, which can vary considerably in speed, should only be considered where the implementation of either FTTP or gigabit capable technologies are not possible’.

- 6.477** The Council recognises, however, that the viability of such provision in rural areas, and sometimes the ability to connect to the network, is more difficult than that in urban areas. Policy ED 3 therefore includes provision for schemes proposing five residential units or more and proposals for 500sqm or more employment uses (including through conversion of existing buildings) in rural areas.
- 6.478** The Council also recognises that schemes may come forward that cannot fulfil the policy requirements below. In such cases, the applicant will need to submit evidence to justify any departure from this policy. Such evidence could include the inability to provide the appropriate physical trench, and proximity to the nearest breakout point on the fibre network.
- 6.479** Where a FTTP solution is not deemed possible, or for smaller developments, the provision of other technologies capable of providing speeds in excess of 24 mbps (megabits per second) or the minimum speed specified in Government guidance at the time of submitting an application proposal, should be delivered wherever practical.
- 6.480** The Council realises that technological change is rapid and that standards will evolve. Therefore, operators and developers should seek to adopt the best current open technology standards available. Applicants and developers are advised to refer to Government guidance in the [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) (2018), and are encouraged to discuss mobile coverage with network operators at an early stage, prior to submitting an application for development.
- 6.481** The importance of digital infrastructure is also addressed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan supporting this Local Plan.

Policy ED 3

Digital Communications and Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)

Proposals to improve the digital communications network in Tunbridge Wells borough, including through the provision of mobile data networks (such as 5G mobile data), will be supported, subject to compliance with relevant policies in this Plan, and with national policy.

All residential developments and employment proposals (including through conversion) will enable FTTP, or where this is not possible, other wireless solutions.

For sites where it can be demonstrated that FTTP is not practical due to special circumstances (such as issues of viability, the inability to provide the appropriate physical trench, and proximity to the nearest breakout point on the fibre network), then other non-Next Generation Access technologies, including wired and wireless infrastructure, providing all-inclusive internet access speeds in excess of 24 mbps, or the minimum speed specified in Government guidance at the time of submitting an application proposal, should be delivered wherever practical.

Rural Diversification

- 6.482** National planning policy promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. Diversification can be described as any proposal that seeks to supplement income on working farms, and is often vital to the continuing viability of many farm enterprises. This can include tourist related activities/income (for example, holiday lets), but does not include residential conversions in the rural area, as this is covered in separate policy (see Policy ED 5: Conversion of Rural Buildings outside the Limits to Built Development). This policy seeks to cover the wider remit of rural diversification rather than just agricultural diversification.
- 6.483** It is recognised that a range of business enterprises can prosper in the rural areas that may be within an agricultural holding but not be linked directly to the agricultural element of a farm, but can re-utilise existing buildings for economic purposes within the rural area. As referred to above, rural diversification schemes could include businesses directly related to the agricultural use, such as dairy and food production enterprises, or woodland related activities, or other non-related enterprises such as leisure and tourism related uses, niche businesses operating from redundant buildings, etc.
- 6.484** There are a number of such enterprises across the rural areas of the borough providing a diverse economic offer and offering a range of employment opportunities across a number of sectors. The Council is supportive of well-conceived and comprehensive farm diversification schemes and the Council's Economic Needs Study (2016) specifically stated in its conclusions that the Council should continue to support rural based employment development by responding positively to proposals that encourage the reuse of redundant agricultural buildings. It is considered that diversification schemes should contribute to sustainable development objectives and help to maintain the agricultural enterprise, provided that they are consistent in scale and design with their rural location. Such schemes may include agricultural enterprises directly related to the main farm operation, tourism, and leisure related activities, or other niche businesses.
- 6.485** The nature and extent of diversification should respect the landscape qualities of the countryside and accord with the protection of its distinct character and appearance, particularly within the High Weald National Landscape. Where proposals fall within the Green Belt, regard will be had to the NPPF and Policy STR 9: Green Belt (see Section 4). It should also take account of the Local Plan's spatial strategy, and aims of reducing reliance on the car for journeys to work, although it is accepted that, given the more dispersed pattern of growth (with some development directed to the rural settlements), there will be larger populations in those locations, and rural diversification schemes will add to the employment offer in the rural areas. Certain types of development, such as those that generate high volumes of traffic, or which would generate significant additional movements of heavy goods vehicles, particularly on unsuitable roads and rural lanes, may be inappropriate.

- 6.486** The Council encourages the submission of diversification/farm business plans to indicate clearly the implications of diversification proposals on the continued operation of the whole farm. Such plans should set out clearly the short and long term management plan for the business (agricultural or diversified business). Additionally, if existing agricultural buildings are to be reused, it should be made clear that these are surplus to current and future needs (or justification provided to demonstrate that they are no longer suitable for agricultural use) and the change of use of such buildings would not necessitate the need for any additional new buildings to continue farming operations.
- 6.487** Permitted Development (PD) rights allow for the erection of new agricultural buildings and the conversion of certain agricultural buildings to residential dwellings, or for business reuse, without the need for full planning permission. However, PD rights are more restricted in conservation areas, National Parks, and National Landscapes, and so certain buildings will still need planning permission, as well as different requirements if a property is listed. In order to protect against the unintended negative consequences of any future changes to PD rights, any new buildings for agricultural or farm diversification purposes within the rural area may have PD rights removed by condition where necessary, subject to compliance with the tests in national policy.
- 6.488** Any proposals for farm diversification schemes should also take account of the guidance set out in the [Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough](#) Supplementary Planning Document (2016) and the [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) (2019).

Policy ED 4

Rural Diversification

Development that forms part of a farm diversification scheme, or otherwise helps maintain the viability of rural businesses engaged in sustainable land management, will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

1. A diversification/farm business plan is submitted, which demonstrates that the proposed development does not cause severance or disruption to the agricultural holding and would not necessitate the need for additional buildings to continue farm operations as a result of the reuse of existing buildings for other uses;
2. The proposed development will need to demonstrate that the proposals will stimulate new economic activity with a use appropriate to its rural location;
3. The development reuses or replaces existing buildings where feasible. Where this is not feasible, the development should be related physically and functionally to existing buildings, be of an appropriate scale, and retain agricultural character;
4. Any new building should respond sensitively to its rural setting in terms of its scale, layout, design, and use of materials, and have regard to the Farmsteads

Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough Supplementary Planning Document (2016), where relevant;

5. The proposed development would not create an unacceptable impact on the local road network, or require highway improvements that would harm the landscape or ecological value of rural roads in the area.

Where the above requirements are satisfied, the Council will, where appropriate:

- a. remove permitted development rights for any new buildings; and/or
- b. use conditions attached to the planning permission, or require the applicant to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that any new building is tied in perpetuity to the existing agricultural holding; and/or
- c. enter into a land management agreement/plan where appropriate.

Conversion of Rural Buildings outside the Limits to Built Development

- 6.489** Some buildings in the countryside, including barns and oast houses, are now unsuited to, or no longer required for, the purpose for which they were originally built. Many of these existing buildings are of historic or architectural interest and in themselves add to the character of the rural landscape of the borough, and may be identified as non-designated heritage assets. Others are not of historic or architectural interest, but rather are of a more functional appearance: however, they are still reflective of the rural character and landscape.
- 6.490** It is possible to convert existing buildings from agricultural and other commercial uses to residential use under what is known as 'permitted development rights' under Part 3 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), without needing to obtain full planning permission. However, applicants and prospective developers still need to inform the Local Planning Authority of any proposed change of use via the Notification for Prior Approval process. This seeks to confirm whether approval from the Local Planning Authority is required before work can proceed on specified elements of the development, including highway and transport impacts of the proposed development, flood risk, contamination risk, and noise impacts. However, restrictions do apply; for example, where an application site is in the High Weald National Landscape, a conservation area, or the building in question is a listed building, a proposal for conversion would not normally benefit from permitted development rights and would therefore require full planning permission. Advice should be sought from the Local Planning Authority in the first instance.
- 6.491** Where proposals fall outside these permitted development rights (or any subsequent changes to them) and require planning permission, the Local Planning Authority will apply the following approach to proposals for the conversion of rural buildings.
- 6.492** Government advice in the NPPF promotes a prosperous rural economy, which can be aided by the conversion of existing rural buildings to business use, as well as the reuse of redundant buildings, which would result in the enhancement of their setting.

The NPPF also advises that the reuse of buildings, providing they are of permanent and substantial construction and would preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, are considered to be an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.

- 6.493** The Council's Economic Needs Study (2016) recommends that continuing support be provided to rural based employment development by positively supporting proposals for conversion of existing redundant agricultural/rural buildings to business use where appropriate. This approach is also supported further by the Council's Economic Development Topic Paper and in Policy ED 4: Rural Diversification.
- 6.494** Although the Government allows changes of use to existing rural buildings under the above permitted development rights, generally in areas outside of National Landscapes, the erection of new buildings/housing in the countryside and Green Belt are strictly controlled, and a restrictive approach is taken to the demolition and rebuilding of existing buildings. Given this, and as advocated in Policy H 10: Replacement Dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development, the Local Planning Authority will give priority to the retention and conversion of existing suitable rural buildings over their demolition and re-build. This is not only in accordance with Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design, where first consideration should always be given to the reuse of an existing structure given the energy, materials, and carbon that is already embodied in that building, but also the recommendations of the Council's Economic Needs Study 2016 and Policy ED 4: Rural Diversification, where rural buildings provide an existing resource for the provision of much needed small office and workshop space.

General approach

- 6.495** Proposals for the conversion of rural buildings will be considered using the following general approach:
- to support the objective of promoting a stronger rural economy, priority will be given to the change of use or conversion of rural buildings for business, recreation, and tourism uses;
 - only after it has been demonstrated that reasonable attempts (see below) have been made to secure an alternative use associated with rural businesses or land management, or other business type use suited to a rural location without success, will conversion to residential use be considered. Under these circumstances, proposals for live-work properties will be looked on favourably, especially where they are related to traditional rural trades and land management.
- 6.496** In order to conserve the intrinsic value and locally distinctive character of the countryside and having regard to the [Council's Landscape Character Assessment](#), the following issues will need to be considered, and information submitted (where applicable) as part of any planning application for rural conversion proposals:
1. The building should be of sound construction and capable of conversion to the proposed use without significant reconstruction, modification, or extension.

- Extensions will be strictly controlled and the need for any extension or modification would need to be demonstrated in the submission of any development proposal;
2. The building should have safe and serviceable provision for access for the use proposed, or it is capable of being achieved without harm to the local landscape character and landscape features;
 3. The building should be capable of conversion without requiring additional outbuildings (e.g. storage of garden equipment should be within the existing building(s)) or resulting in a material or significant change to the setting of the building;
 4. A full programme of works shall be submitted detailing exactly what the conversion entails, from initial structural survey and analysis work (a schedule of repairs), how the work will be carried out, including external detailing, through to completion. The programming of the work to be undertaken will be controlled by way of a planning condition attached to any permission granted. The Council may require the review of the survey and programme by an external independent consultant, and the applicant is expected to cover the costs of this;
 5. Applications should include a landscape masterplan including details of sensitive boundary treatments, types of planting and indicative species proposed, land use, access, and vehicle and pedestrian circulation to enhance both the immediate landscape setting of the building and the wider rural locality. The use of any external lighting will be strictly controlled;
 6. The curtilage around the building should be as tightly drawn as is reasonably possible, while allowing adequate space for parking/turning for the proposed use and the storage of business equipment where applicable, without detriment to the visual amenities of the countryside;
 7. In the case of conversions to residential use, a written statement will need to be submitted to clearly demonstrate that reasonable attempts have been made to secure an appropriate commercial use (such as business, recreation, or tourism) without success. The application should be supported by:
 - a. a viability report, prepared by a relevant professional, including financial accounts and marketing information, illustrating that efforts to promote, improve, and market the facility, for sale or rent, at a reasonable value which reflects the existing use and condition of the building (a minimum of two independent valuations of the building will normally be required) have not been successful and the use is no longer viable;
 - b. such information should also include: the history of previous uses and period/s of vacancy of the property; details of agent/s used; copies of brochures, advertisements, and dates (showing that the property has been marketed at both local and regional level); records of the response and interest shown; and any offers received with reasons for being rejected;

- c. the marketing of the property and the accompanying information should cover a sustained period of at least 18 months before any planning application is submitted;
 - d. review of the submitted information may be required by an independent consultant and it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this;
- 8. The proposal should not harm the amenity of future occupiers in relation to any existing surrounding use (for example, agricultural buildings) in terms of noise and activity;
- 9. Conversions to alternative uses should not compromise the existing or likely future operation or management of the land for farming or forestry, or result in the need for further buildings as a result of displacement.

Other Considerations

Heritage Assets

6.497 Development proposals that would affect designated and non-designated heritage assets, such as listed buildings and conservation areas, or other traditional rural buildings, including those forming part of an historic farmstead, will be carefully assessed in terms of the impact they would have on the special character (and fabric where applicable), appearance, amenity, and setting of these assets in accordance with Policy EN 4: The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets. The NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should avoid isolated homes in the countryside, unless it would represent the optimum viable use of a heritage asset, or would provide enabling development to secure the future of the asset.

Landscape, trees, and biodiversity

6.498 In a borough of high landscape and biodiversity value, proposals should be designed and built to avoid harm to the local landscape, notable landscape features (including trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders), and biodiversity features/habitats. Rural buildings may provide important breeding, roosting, and feeding habitats for protected species, such as owls and bats, and these should be catered for within the design of any proposal. Proposals should not result in pressure for the future pruning or removal of existing trees and hedges. Where possible, proposals should seek to enhance local landscape character and natural habitats. Where such landscape and biodiversity features may be affected, the Local Planning Authority will also have regard to Policies EN 12: Trees, Woodlands Hedges, and Development, EN 13: Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees, EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain, EN 18: Rural Landscape and EN19: The High Weald National Landscape, in the assessment of proposals.

High Weald National Landscape

6.499 Proposals sited in the High Weald National Landscape will also be considered in the context of the High Weald AONB Management Plan which seeks to conserve the highly valued and intrinsic landscape character of the National Landscape in accordance with Policy EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape, as well as Policies EN 8: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies and EN 18: Rural Landscape.

Farmsteads

- 6.500** Farmsteads are a key component of the underlying settlement character of the borough. Any proposal that affects a traditional or historic farmstead should include an assessment of the farmstead taking into account the Council's Farmsteads Assessment Guidance Supplementary Planning Document to inform the proposal.

Other restrictions

- 6.501** The Local Planning Authority will not normally support the conversion of buildings that are subject to a planning condition that requires the removal of the building or any cessation of agricultural use.
- 6.502** Where conversion is permitted for tourism accommodation, a holiday occupancy condition will be attached preventing the use as a sole or main residence.

Removal of permitted development rights

- 6.503** In order to protect the character, fabric, and/or rural setting of the existing building, permitted development rights may be removed from any permission granted, to enable the Local Planning Authority to control future development of the site. Future alterations or extensions, outbuildings, hardstanding, and boundary treatment may harm the rural character of the existing building and the landscape character of the locality, and shall be strictly controlled. Any proposed external lighting shall also be strictly controlled in accordance with Policy EN 8: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies.
- 6.504** Policy ED 5 should also be read in conjunction with Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design, which sets out other requirements relating to issues such as flood risk, landscaping details, renewable energy technologies, and appropriate broadband infrastructure.

Policy ED 5

Conversion of Rural Buildings outside the Limits to Built Development

Priority will be given to the retention and conversion of existing agricultural or other suitable buildings in the countryside for business, recreation, and tourism uses.

Proposals for the conversion of existing agricultural or other suitable buildings outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Policies Map, will be required to satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. Conversions to alternative uses shall not compromise the existing or likely future operation or management of the land for farming or forestry, or result in the need for further buildings as a result of displacement;
2. The building is of permanent, substantial, and sound construction and capable of conversion to the proposed use without significant reconstruction, modification, or additions. Any required extensions will be modest in size and the minimum necessary for the use proposed;
3. The proposed use will not be harmful to the character, amenity, and tranquility of the area;

4. Proposed alterations to the building and provision of, or changes to, access arrangements shall be in keeping with the character and appearance of the building and its wider landscape setting in terms of materials, design, and form, and shall not cause harm to the local landscape character or features;
5. A full programme of works detailing exactly what the conversion entails, from initial structural survey and analysis work through to completion, shall be submitted with any planning application. The programming of the work to be undertaken will be controlled by way of a planning condition attached to any permission granted;
6. The building should be capable of conversion without requiring additional outbuildings or a material or significant change to the setting of the building;
7. The curtilage of the building shall be drawn as tightly as possible, while allowing adequate space for parking/turning for the proposed use, and the storage of business equipment where applicable, without detriment to the visual amenities of the countryside or the local landscape character;
8. The new development shall not significantly increase traffic to cause material harm to the safety of the local highway network;
9. Landscaping proposals (hard and soft landscaping), including details of sensitive boundary treatments and any changes in levels, shall be designed to enhance both the immediate landscape setting of the building and the wider rural locality.

Additionally, for residential conversions:

- a. the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting, having regard to the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. In this regard, it should be clearly demonstrated that reasonable attempts have been made, without success, to secure an appropriate business, leisure or tourism use for the building. This should include details of active professional marketing for a minimum period of 18 months immediately prior to any application, at an appropriate value/rate that reflects its use for business, leisure or tourism purposes, and any interest received;
- b. the building shall be worthy of retention for its historic or architectural value, including where it forms part of a farmstead, and makes a positive contribution to the landscape character, or is required as part of a whole farm plan and no other appropriate use is viable;
- c. it shall be demonstrated that the living conditions of future occupiers will not be harmed by proximity in relation to existing neighbouring uses, including farm activity (such as the movement of farming equipment, livestock, crop spraying), noise, and odours.

Where a conversion is permitted for tourism accommodation, a holiday occupancy condition will be attached preventing the use as a sole or main residence.

In order to protect the character of the building and the landscape, such as the High Weald National Landscape and the openness of the Green Belt, permitted development rights for extensions, alterations, outbuildings, hardstandings, and boundary treatments may be removed and external lighting strictly controlled.

Rural Businesses and Recreational/Leisure (including equestrian) Uses in the Countryside

- 6.505** The Council will support appropriate types of rural business development, including those for recreational and leisure uses in the countryside, such as equestrian uses (riding schools, livery uses, horse training), fisheries, climbing activities, and off-road cycling activities, subject to certain criteria, including appropriate scale and location. The NPPF advises that recreational uses can not only make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities, but also to the rural economy.
- 6.506** In order to minimise the visual impact of any such development on the landscape setting of the area, priority should be given to the conversion of existing buildings where they exist, and, where this is not possible, careful consideration should be given to the design, scale, siting, external appearance, and landscaping of any new development.
- 6.507** Applicants seeking permission for developments in the High Weald National Landscape should also have regard to the advice given by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee in respect of land management, horse management, dark skies, and buildings in preparing development proposals, and the application should demonstrate how this advice has been followed.
- 6.508** Any proposed external lighting would need to be demonstrated to be necessary and designed to have minimal impact on both residential amenity and the visual amenity of the surrounding countryside. External lighting will not normally be permitted in dark sky areas (see Policy EN 8: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies).
- 6.509** Consideration will need to be given to site security. The Council will only grant permission where the manager or owner of any animals on-site makes adequate provision for the security of the site. Any new development that could give rise to the need for on-site security or animal/plant welfare shall be associated with an existing dwelling, which should be directly related to the business/recreational use and secured by way of a planning obligation. Where applicants consider that there is an essential need for new accommodation for a rural worker and their immediate family, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at, or near, their place of work in the countryside, this will be assessed against Policy H 7: Rural Workers' Dwellings and secured by way of a planning obligation.
- 6.510** In some cases, especially in the case of proposals located in the High Weald National Landscape, as well as the details required in Policy ED 6, it may be necessary to submit a management plan to support the proposal in terms of assessing the impact it would have on the landscape setting of the area, biodiversity, and other amenity issues.
- 6.511** In the case of equestrian-related developments, consideration should also be given to access to bridleways, as well as the safety and comfort of horses in terms of space for grazing and exercising. The cumulative visual impact of associated facilities, such as sand schools and jumps, should also be carefully considered and minimised.

- 6.512** For water-related activities, such as fishing lakes, as well as the details required in Policy ED 6 (including proposed spoil excavation works such as for the creation of bunds, lakes, or ponds, etc.), details of water supply and quality, as well as drainage, will need to be submitted with development proposals, in accordance with Policies EN 24: Water Supply, Quality and Conservation, EN 25: Flood Risk, and EN 26: Sustainable Drainage.
- 6.513** Proposals for rural business and recreational/leisure (including equestrian) uses will also be assessed against Policies EN 1: Sustainable Design, EN 9: Biodiversity Net Gain, EN 18: Rural Landscape, and EN 19: The High Weald National Landscape.

Policy ED 6

Rural Business and Recreational/Leisure (including equestrian) Uses in the Countryside

Proposals for the development of rural business or recreational/leisure uses in the countryside will be permitted where:

1. Priority is given to the conversion of existing buildings over newly built development; and in the case of a new facility, it is satisfactorily integrated with existing buildings where they are present;
2. All new development is appropriate and sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of design, scale, siting, external materials, and appearance to avoid an adverse impact on the wider landscape, and the application demonstrates how it has regard to the advice documents listed in the supporting text above;
3. Proposals are not sited in prominent or isolated locations;
4. The proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape setting of the area (including any existing trees and hedges), protected species and biodiversity, sites of nature conservation interest, archaeological, or heritage assets;
5. Proposals sited in the High Weald National Landscape conserve and enhance its special landscape character and setting;
6. There is no significant detrimental impact on residential amenity;
7. Consideration is given to the cumulative impact of such development and its associated facilities (for example, access and hardstanding, storage and utilities) on landscape character and features;
8. The proposal is accompanied by an integral landscaping scheme, including sympathetic boundary treatments that reflect the character of the adjoining countryside;
9. Access and parking provisions are acceptable and the use does not significantly increase traffic to the detriment of the rural area or highway safety;
10. Where appropriate, adequate provision is made for the security of the site in terms of the proposed development in relation to the manager/owner of any animals;
11. Adequate provision is made for foul and surface water drainage;
12. The proposal would not involve any changes in land levels by raising, excavation, or other engineering works which would be harmful to the character, appearance, and landscape setting of the area.

Proposals will only include external lighting where it is demonstrated to be necessary, and designed so as not to impact any neighbouring properties or the wider countryside, the details, design, siting, and intensity of which should be submitted with any development proposal. External lighting will not normally be permitted in rural areas in accordance with Policy EN 8: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies.

Retention of, and improvements to existing, and the promotion of new, tourist accommodation and attractions

- 6.514** The tourism industry is significant to the borough and is considered to be an important contributor to the local economy of Tunbridge Wells borough in both the urban and rural areas in terms of providing investment opportunities and generating employment. The Hotel Capacity Study (2016) produced to inform the Local Plan, considers that Tunbridge Wells as a borough has maintained a steady volume of trips and associated demand for visitor accommodation over recent years, and is likely to continue to grow steadily over the next decade. The study makes recommendations for the provision of new visitor accommodation, which is reflected within the individual site allocations and place shaping sections of the Plan. Opportunities for further tourist-related development will be supported in particular within the town centres, especially Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, as well as small-scale initiatives that support the rural economy.
- 6.515** It is equally important to protect and retain existing, well located, and suitable tourist accommodation across the borough to maintain an adequate supply of a range of accommodation throughout the plan period. Policy ED 7 sets out the criteria by which planning proposals will be considered against any loss of tourist accommodation, as well as the improvement of existing and provision of new accommodation and visitor attractions.
- 6.516** Where a development proposal would result in the loss of existing tourist accommodation, the application should be supported by:
- a viability report, prepared by a relevant professional, including financial accounts and marketing information, illustrating that efforts to promote, improve, and market the accommodation, for sale or rent, at a reasonable value which reflects the existing use and condition of the building (a minimum of two independent valuations of the building will normally be required) have not been successful, and the use is no longer viable;
 - such information should also include: the history of previous uses and period/s of vacancy of the property/accommodation; details of agent/s used; copies of brochures, advertisements, and dates (showing that the property has been marketed at both local and regional level); records of the response and interest shown; and any offers received with reasons for being rejected;

- the marketing of the accommodation and the accompanying information should cover a sustained period of at least 18 months before any planning application is submitted;
- review of the submitted information may be required by an independent consultant and it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this.

6.517 In relation to proposals for new tourist accommodation, examples of outdoor accommodation include caravan sites, camping, and glamping (such as yurts and log cabins).

Policy ED 7

Retention of, and improvements to existing, and the promotion of new, tourist accommodation and attractions

Retention of existing tourist accommodation

The retention of existing tourist accommodation (both serviced and non-serviced) will be supported. Where proposals are brought forward for the change of use of existing tourist accommodation, the following criteria considerations will be applied:

1. Sufficient evidence of marketing the building as an operational tourist facility over the last three years, or number of years trading if less. This should include brochures, advertisements, websites, entries in accommodation guides, etc;
2. Sufficient evidence that the property has been marketed for sale for at least 18 months at a market price, which reflects the existing use as tourist accommodation, and the condition of the building. Evidence of marketing the property should be submitted to the Council, to include: details of agent/s used; copies of brochures and advertisements and dates; records of response; interest shown; and offers received with reasons for being rejected, if appropriate;
3. Sufficient evidence of a comprehensive business plan, to include any upgrading or promotion of the premises by the present owner to increase its attractiveness to the market.

The Council may require the review of this submitted information by an independent consultant: it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this.

New, or improvements to, tourist accommodation and visitor attractions

New visitor accommodation and visitor attractions and the upgrading of any existing provision, will be supported where it increases the range and/or quality of tourist facilities.

Proposals to provide new sustainable tourist accommodation development, including hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast establishments, outdoor accommodation, self catering accommodation, and new visitor attractions will be supported subject to the following:

- a. the anticipated traffic generation will not harm highway safety and whether the location is readily accessible by a range of means of transport, including walking and cycling, and by public transport;

- b. acceptable impact on local and landscape character, particularly in relation to impact on the designated High Weald National Landscape and openness of the Green Belt;
- c. consideration of the relationship to existing tourist development and facilities, including whether the proposal will contribute to the diversification of tourist attractions in the borough;
- d. the impact on residential amenity in the locality.

The proposal will be assessed against all other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Town, Rural Service and Neighbourhood Centres, and Village Settlements

- 6.518** There is a wide range of retail, leisure, and cultural facilities in the borough, with each of the centres having a different role and function in terms of the services and facilities that they provide. This is also a time of change, with a significant restructuring of the retail market and societal changes in why and how people use town centres, together with increased recognition of the different roles that leisure and cultural facilities, office provision, and higher density town centre living plays in the vitality of places. The approach towards the future of the town centres across the borough is set out in the overarching policies within the place shaping section (Section 5) of the Local Plan: in particular, Policy STR/RTW 1, which provides the detailed policy direction for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, recognising that town centres benefit from a wider mix of uses than retail alone to ensure long-term vitality, and to respond to changing economic markets and shopping and leisure trends.
- 6.519** The Council's Retail and Leisure Study (2017) and its recent update, the Tunbridge Wells Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study Update (2021), considers the vitality and viability of the existing defined centres within the borough and assesses the requirements for new retail development and leisure facilities over the plan period. The studies make recommendations for the growth of retail and leisure opportunities to enhance and revitalise the existing centres in the borough in order to maintain their attractiveness to residents and visitors. It is recognised that the current national retail market is changing, as well as the policy direction, and therefore it may be appropriate to update the approach in the Local Plan, to be set out in a supporting document. In this Local Plan, the Council is promoting a flexible approach to the provision of retail and complementary uses and makes mixed use allocations within the defined centres to broadly meet the needs and provide a range of sites to meet future needs.
- 6.520** The Council is aiming to create the right conditions for growth in the town centres through a comprehensive approach, improving accessibility, enhancing the public realm, and encouraging a range of and flexible approach to, commercial uses, including retail, office, and leisure-related. The distribution and priority areas for the growth proposed through the Local Plan in terms of retail, leisure, office, and other

town centre uses, is set out in Table 5: Employment land allocations identified in the Local Plan (Section 4) and the individual place shaping policies for each of the key settlements of the borough (Section 5). The areas proposed to be allocated, to broadly meet the identified needs, are set out within the detailed site allocation policies within the Plan (Section 5).

Town, Rural Service and Neighbourhood Centres, and Village Settlements Hierarchy

- 6.521** Town, rural service and neighbourhood centres, and village settlements are an important focus for communities, as they offer an essential mix of services and facilities depending on their scale, role, and function. They are often accessible by a variety of transport means and should remain the focus for new development and should be resilient to future economic changes.
- 6.522** In terms of retail need, as referred to at paragraph 4.29, the Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study (2021) considered the need for new retail floorspace across the borough and concludes that although some need is identified over the Local Plan period (for convenience retail need), it does not recommend that specific allocations are necessary to meet the need.
- 6.523** Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre is considered to be a 'Primary Regional Town Centre', and therefore new retail, leisure, and cultural facilities should be focused in the town centre to enhance its role as a shopping, leisure, cultural, and tourism destination.
- 6.524** Cranbrook, Paddock Wood, and Southborough are defined as 'town centres' that serve the local population and ensure a sustainable focus and pattern of development. They typically consist of a number of small and often independent shops, with one or two small supermarkets and other complementary uses, such as pharmacy, post office, restaurants, cafés, and takeaways. Their position within the retail hierarchy will continue to ensure they have opportunities to enhance and strengthen this function. Paddock Wood in particular is to be the focus of improvements/enhancements to the existing role and offer of the centre to complement the future growth of the town and surrounding rural area, as set out within Policy PSTR/PW 1.
- 6.525** Hawkhurst is defined as a 'rural service centre', reflecting its role as a centre serving a wide rural catchment for day-to-day facilities, and includes many of the services and facilities that are typically found in the smaller town centres.
- 6.526** The villages and neighbourhood centres perform the role of local centres with day-to-day facilities. Many typically include a small convenience shop, newsagents, public house, or other A3 café/restaurant uses, and complementary facilities.
- 6.527** The distinctive characteristics of each centre will be promoted in the place shaping policies, and the centres hierarchy of the settlements of the borough is defined within Policy ED 8 below.

Policy ED 8

Town, Rural Service and Neighbourhood Centres, and Village Settlements Hierarchy

To ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the centres across the borough, the Council will apply a 'town centre and allocated site first' approach to proposals for retail, leisure, and other main town centre uses. Development should be appropriate to the size and function of the centre within which it is to be located. The defined centres hierarchy for the borough includes the defined primary regional, town, rural service, neighbourhood centres, and village settlements (as defined by the Limits to Built Development).

Table 15 Defined Centres Hierarchy

Type of Centre	Centre
Primary Regional Town Centre	Royal Tunbridge Wells
Town Centre	1. Cranbrook 2. Paddock Wood 3. Southborough
Rural Service Centre	Hawkhurst
Neighbourhood Centres 1. Hawkenbury 2. High Brooms 3. Knights Wood 4. North Southborough 5. Sherwood 6. Showfields 7. Silverdale 8. St Barnabas 9. St John's 10. St Peter's 11. Within Paddock Wood and east Capel*	Village Settlements 1. Benenden 2. Bidborough 3. Brenchley 4. Five Oak Green 5. Frittenden 6. Goudhurst 7. Horsmonden 8. Lamberhurst 9. Langton Green 10. Matfield 11. Pembury 12. Rusthall 13. Sandhurst 14. Sissinghurst 15. Speldhurst

*New neighbourhood centres will be designated as part of the extension of Paddock Wood and east Capel to be defined through the masterplanning process.

Defined Town, Rural and other Service Centres

- 6.528** Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, and Hawkhurst all have town and rural service centre areas, which are defined on the Policies Map. The extent of the defined area is based on the extent of the area that contains, and is suitable for, the main focus of town and rural centre uses (existing and future), the existing character and form of development, the visual, physical, and functional relationship between areas, and the potential for appropriate development opportunities.
- 6.529** Royal Tunbridge Wells is the primary retail and leisure destination in the borough, providing a range of services and amenities not widely available in the other smaller settlements in the borough and surrounding areas, attracting shoppers and visitors from across the region. The centre is broadly linear in nature, anchored by the Royal Victoria Place Shopping Centre and the pedestrianised Calverley Road to the north, and the Pantiles parade of retailers and facilities to the south. There are a wide range of retail units and retailers within the defined Primary Shopping Area, as well as a good mix of other complementary leisure, cultural, and other uses.
- 6.530** While it is recognised that the North Farm area of Royal Tunbridge Wells is not a town centre location, it has emerged as a key leisure and retail location in the borough and wider area, and there is increased demand for groupings of leisure facilities in locations such as the High Brooms Industrial estate, which have formerly been predominantly used in more traditional employment in light industrial Class E(g) (formerly Class B1) and B2 use. Policies STR/RTW 1 and ED 1 provide the detailed policy approach for this area to guide appropriate future development.
- 6.531** Southborough town centre offers both retail provision and a range of other complementary uses that serve the local community. The main shopping area is concentrated in a linear fashion along the western side of London Road, running from the junction with Speldhurst Road to the junction of Springfield Road. The character of the Primary Shopping Area is one of a small urban centre made up primarily of independent traders, many of them specialist, occupying fairly small units, and a limited number of ancillary uses serving the local community.
- 6.532** The town centre of Paddock Wood serves both the town and a rural hinterland with a range of retail provision, community, and small-scale business uses. The character of the Primary Shopping Area is one of a small rural centre made up of largely independent retail traders occupying small units, and with a large supermarket acting as an anchor, as well as a small local convenience store. As referred to previously, the expansion and revitalisation of the centre of Paddock Wood will be supported through the policies of this Local Plan in order to support the development proposed for this area.
- 6.533** Cranbrook is an attractive, traditional market town located within the High Weald National Landscape to the east of Royal Tunbridge Wells. Cranbrook is linear in nature, with the retail and service provision in the centre stretching up The Hill, along Stone Street, and around a corner onto the High Street, where a large supermarket serves as an anchor to the centre.

- 6.534** The centre of Hawkhurst is located within the High Weald National Landscape, based around the junction of the A268 (Cranbrook Road/Highgate Hill) and the A229 (High Street/Rye Road). A supermarket to the east of the centre acts as an anchor, and the centre is also served by another supermarket on Rye Road, located further to the east of the centre. There is a mix of uses within the centre, providing for everyday needs.
- 6.535** A strong centre policy not only enables and encourages a full range of town and rural service centre uses to be implemented within them, but also allows the Council to resist proposals that do not add to the vitality and viability of the centre, or which conflict with other policies and objectives. Such suitable town and rural service centre uses include retail, leisure, entertainment facilities, appropriate sport and recreation uses, offices, arts, culture, and tourism-related development.
- 6.536** The various categories of retail centres are illustrated spatially on the Key Diagram (see Figure 5 in Section 4) and defined within Policy ED 8. The extent of the defined centres are identified on the Policies Map. Each of the centres identified has a different role and capacity to accommodate new development of an appropriate scale and nature. Development outside of these defined centres will need to comply with the tests set out in the NPPF and demonstrate that the sequential approach to site selection has been followed in accordance with Policy ED 10.
- 6.537** The Local Plan will support the provision of a diverse range of uses that will appeal to a range of age and social groups, recognising the importance of such uses complementing and increasing the attractiveness of the offer. A diversity of uses adds to a centre, making it more attractive, but a proliferation of uses in the same locality, which it is considered do not add to the mix of the centre offer, will be unacceptable. It will also be important to consider if the development is in conflict with other policy objectives, including traffic, residential amenity, and environmental objectives (including issues such as noise).
- 6.538** A new 'permitted development' right was first introduced in 2014, which allows for the change of use from a small shop or provider of professional/financial services (Class E(a) (formerly Class A1) and Class E(c) (formerly A2) to residential use (C3). This involves a 'prior approval' process, and the Local Planning Authority can consider impacts of the proposed change. Up to 150sqm of retail space can change to residential use.

Policy ED 9

Defined Town, Rural and other Service Centres

Within the defined town centres, rural service centres, neighbourhood centres, and village settlements as defined on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for development of main town centre uses where they contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre and/or respond to changing needs/trends over the life of the Local Plan.

The Council will seek to enhance the established character and diversity of centre uses, and may resist the over-concentration of particular uses that would be detrimental to the character and function of an area, or to the vitality or viability of the centre.

Development proposals within the defined centres should be of an appropriate scale in accordance with its functional position in the retail hierarchy as set out in Policy ED 8.

The Sequential Test and Local Impact Thresholds

- 6.539** When considering proposals for new retail and leisure developments, the sequential test and the impact test will be applied in accordance with national policy, in order to promote the 'town centres first' approach and ensure the continuing vitality and viability of the key centres of the borough as defined in Policy ED 8.

The Sequential Test

- 6.540** The NPPF defines the main town centre uses as retail, leisure and entertainment, offices, arts, culture, and tourism, and the town centre as the first choice of location for these uses. Applicants will be expected to have demonstrably followed a sequential approach when selecting development sites for town centre uses, including fully exploring how the scheme could be adapted so that it could be accommodated on a more central site.

The Impact Test

- 6.541** The NPPF sets out that retail, office, and leisure developments (not all town centre uses) greater than 2,500sqm (gross) proposed in edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations that are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan and outside of existing town centres, will be subject to the assessment of the impact criteria as set out within the NPPF. However, where appropriate, local planning authorities can identify local thresholds in accordance with the considerations set out within Planning Practice Guidance in relation to scale of proposals, viability, and vitality of existing centres, etc. The Retail and Leisure Study 2017, and the Tunbridge Wells Retail, Commercial Leisure and Town Centre Uses Study Update (2021) prepared on behalf of the Council, recommend adopting a local impact threshold as set out within Policy ED 10.
- 6.542** Applicants are advised to consult Government [Planning Policy Guidance: Town Centres and Retail](#) which includes an Impact Test checklist for further guidance.

Policy ED 10

Sequential Test and Local Impact Test

Sequential Test

1. Proposals for main town centre uses should be located in an identified centre and in accordance with Policy ED 9, unless:
 - a. it is demonstrated that the proposal could not be accommodated: firstly, on a site within an existing centre; secondly, on a site located at the edge of an existing centre; then thirdly, it is demonstrated that where the proposal could not be accommodated on a site within or at the edge of an existing centre, it is located in a well-connected and accessible out-of-centre location (in accordance with criterion 2 below); and
 - b. it is demonstrated that the proposal would not result in a significant adverse impact, cumulative or otherwise, on the vitality and viability of an existing centre or undermine the delivery of a site allocated for the use proposed; or
 - c. the development is on a site allocated for that use in the Plan; or
 - d. the development is designed to only serve the needs of the neighbourhood;
2. Proposals located at the edge of an existing centre or out-of-centre location should ensure the provision of specific measures that will improve the quality and function of sustainable connections to the centre, in particular walking and cycling routes, and public transport links. The nature and extent of the measures will be directly related to the scale of the proposal;

Local Impact Test

3. Applications for retail and leisure development above the following thresholds outside of the town and rural service centres, as defined on the Policies Map, should be accompanied by an impact assessment:
 - a. where the proposal is within the catchment of Royal Tunbridge Wells: 1,000sqm (net);
 - b. where the proposal is within the catchment of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, and/or Hawkhurst: 280sqm (net);
4. The impact assessment should include:
 - a. the impact of the proposal on existing, committed, and planned (where this information is publicly available) public and private investment in the above centres in the catchment area of the proposal;
 - b. the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area, up to five years from the time the application is made. For major schemes where the full impact will not be realised in five years, the impact should also be assessed up to 10 years from the time the application is made;
 - c. the impact test should be undertaken in a proportionate and locally appropriate way, commensurate to the scale of development proposed;
5. Applicants should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, and will be expected to provide the Council with robust evidence of this;
6. Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test, or is likely to have an adverse impact, it will be refused.

Primary Shopping Areas and Retail Frontages

- 6.543** In accordance with the NPPF, the Local Plan designates Primary Shopping Areas and retail frontages, and makes clear the range of uses to be permitted in such locations as part of a positive and flexible strategy for the future of the key centres within the borough. The Local Plan designates Primary Shopping Areas and Primary Shopping Frontages in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, and Hawkhurst. These areas are intended primarily for Class E Commercial uses which support the function of the town centre and would have previously been covered by the A Class uses. Such uses now covered by Commercial Class E include to ensure a competitive and attractive town centre offer, which will underpin healthy and thriving town centres.
- 6.544** It is considered that a relatively flexible approach to uses within the town centres would be advantageous to allow the centres to adapt to new and emerging town centre trends, rather than applying an overly prescriptive approach that has been used historically in such centres, to take account of recent significant changes to the retail sector and likely longer term trends.
- 6.545** Given this structural change to the retail economy, it is considered that it may be pertinent to allow some poorly located retail premises to convert to dwellings. Policy ED 2 specifically precludes this. However, planning legislation sets out that whilst planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, decisions which conflict with Development Plan policy can be made if there are material considerations which indicate so. It would be the case for any applicant to demonstrate that there are material considerations to allow a decision to be made contrary to this policy requirement.

Policy ED 11

Primary Shopping Areas and Retail Frontages

Primary Shopping Areas and Primary Retail Frontages within the centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, and Hawkhurst are defined on the Policies Map.

1. To ensure that commercial uses defined by Use Class E Commercial, Business and Services remain the predominant uses within the defined Primary Shopping Area and defined Primary Retail Frontages, new development, including that with residential above ground floor, will be permitted where:
 - a. the proposal is for Commercial E Class use at ground floor (or ground floor plus higher storeys); or
 - b. the proposal is for other town centre uses falling outside of Class E that would support the overall vitality and viability of the centre and fall within sui generis uses, to include the following:
 - i. public houses, wine bars, or drinking establishments;

- ii. hot food takeaways;
 - iii. live music venues;
- 2. Change of use of ground floor premises in these areas will be permitted where the proposed use:
 - a. retains an active frontage and maintains or enhances the vitality, attractiveness, and viability of the primary shopping frontage and the wider commercial area;
 - b. is complementary to the shopping/commercial function of the area and provides a direct service to the public;
 - c. is for a temporary period to occupy temporarily vacant units such as for occupiers testing new business concepts, a pop-up store, or for use for events which would support the vitality and viability of the Town Centre;
 - d. does not result in an over-concentration of sui generis uses within one area, and contributes to an appropriate mix and diverse offer.

Changes of use of ground floor premises to residential or other non-commercial or sui generis type uses as listed above will not normally be permitted, although changes of use to residential at first floor in such locations generally will be supported and encouraged, subject to conformity with other policies in the Local Plan.

Retention of Local Services and Facilities

- 6.546** The local facilities, services, and shops provided in Neighbourhood Centres, Village Settlements, and other areas outside these designations perform an important role in meeting the day-to-day needs of local communities, while minimising the need to travel further to access such services. The NPPF emphasises the importance of creating healthy, inclusive, and safe places for people to live and work. It seeks to safeguard such services, in the interests of securing sustainable, well-functioning centres to be retained or enhanced for the benefit of the local community. In accordance with this approach, the Council will resist the loss of viable local facilities.
- 6.547** Local facilities encompass a whole range of services, including commercial, educational, cultural, and recreational facilities, such as local shops, public houses, schools, libraries, places of worship, meeting places, and cultural buildings, as well as medical facilities, such as GP surgeries and local hospitals. The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the key social infrastructure that will be needed to support the level of growth and development planned for the borough, including educational, recreational, and health facilities. The Council's Settlement Role and Function Study lists the existing key local facilities and services for the individual settlements across the borough.

Neighbourhood centres and village settlements

- 6.548** In accordance with the centres hierarchy as set out within Policy ED 8, and as defined on the Policies Map, the Local Plan designates Neighbourhood Centres and Village Settlements (as defined by the LBD boundaries) across the borough.

- 6.549** Neighbourhood centres comprise clusters of a minimum of five community facilities, which are all located within a distance of around 400 metres of each other. The neighbourhood centres are defined in Policy ED 8 as referred to above and are shown spatially on the Key Diagram (see Figure 5 in Section 4). A new neighbourhood centre is planned to be designated as part of the proposed development at Paddock Wood and east Capel.
- 6.550** Within the built-up area of smaller-scale villages (those settlements that have a LBD, as defined on the Policies Map), facilities are often within a reasonable walking distance of each other. However, some community facilities that lie a reasonable distance (approximately 400 metres) outside the LBD are also relatively accessible and play an important part in the local provision of services.

Local services and facilities

- 6.551** There are a number of small-scale uses that are important in serving the regular needs of local neighbourhood centres and village settlements, as well as other smaller settlements outside of these designations. Such uses include a post office, shop, restaurant or public house, medical surgery, places of worship, community hall, recreation and cultural facilities, primary school, and library.
- 6.552** It is important that such small-scale community facilities located close to the populations they serve are retained and, where feasible, enhanced. Policy ED 12 seeks to retain existing provision unless suitable and/or comparable alternative provision is available close by. For example, if a settlement/centre contains more than one public house, it may be acceptable to reduce the number of public houses, as this will enhance the vitality of the remaining, if it can be demonstrated that it is not viable to operate more than one.
- 6.553** Where a development proposal would result in the loss of a commercial use or facility such as a local convenience shop, the application should be supported by:
- a viability report, prepared by a relevant professional, including financial accounts and marketing information, illustrating that efforts to promote, improve, and market the facility/property, for sale or rent, at a reasonable value which reflects the existing use and condition of the building (a minimum of two independent valuations of the building will normally be required) have not been successful, and the use is no longer viable;
 - such information should also include: the history of previous uses and period/s of vacancy of the property; details of agent/s used; copies of brochures, advertisements, and dates (showing that the property has been marketed at both local and regional level); records of the response and interest shown; and any offers received with reasons for being rejected;
 - the marketing of the property and the accompanying information should cover a sustained period of at least 18 months before any planning application is submitted;
 - review of the submitted information may be required by an independent consultant and it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this.

- 6.554** In the case of public facilities, such as village halls, it should be demonstrated that demand within the locality no longer exists, or that there is clear evidence for operational reasons for closing or moving a facility, and that the wider importance of the facility to the local community has been taken into account.
- 6.555** Property or land that is recognised and defined as an Asset of Community Value already has greater protection from development under the Localism Act 2011. Voluntary and community organisations can nominate an asset to be included on their local authority's Register of Assets of Community Value and therefore it is not considered necessary to include reference to these assets within Policy ED 12 below.

Policy ED 12

Retention of Local Services and Facilities

Proposals that would result in the loss of a local facility or service which serves a local need will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:

1. Suitable and/or comparable alternative provision is available within the locality to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
2. In relation to a commercial use, it is:
 - a. not viable, or unlikely to become commercially viable, to operate the same number of existing services/facilities within the locality; and
 - b. the facility has been the subject of appropriate professional marketing for the same or similar or alternative commercial use for a period of at least 18 months at a reasonable open market value that reflects its existing and potential alternative commercial uses;
3. In the case of public facilities, demand within the locality no longer, or is unlikely in the foreseeable future, to exist, or there are clear and imperative operational reasons for closing or moving the facility, and the wider importance of the facility to the community has been taken into account.

The Council may require the review of any submitted information by an independent consultant; it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this.

Transport and Parking

- 6.556** The NPPF requires that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making, the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of the transport objectives in the NPPF, and it sets out transport requirements to be taken into account in the development of planning policies.
- 6.557** Significant new development will be focused on those locations in the borough which are sustainable and/or will be of such a scale that they provide access to employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities, and a choice of transport modes. An integrated and comprehensive approach to transport provision has been developed through discussion with highways authorities and other transport providers, which offers choice and prioritises active travel and then public transport, as an alternative means of transport to the private car, particularly for single occupancy and short journeys.
- 6.558** The focus on promoting walking, cycling, and public transport use will apply both within existing larger settlements; for example, through the creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the Main Urban Area, and within new development: the strategic sites represent significant opportunities in this respect. In turn, such a focus contributes to the management of levels of traffic generated by new development, creating safer road spaces, good air quality and physical activity.
- 6.559** At the same time, the Council understands that private cars are, and will remain, an important and necessary part of life in the borough, and this is reflected in car ownership levels. Significant traffic movements are generated by workers, either through commuting to their jobs or travelling as part of their jobs, although it is likely that patterns of commuting will change in the years after the coronavirus pandemic, and also by those visiting for retail and leisure purposes. It will therefore be a key objective within this Plan to reduce the use of the private car.
- 6.560** Moreover, the Council recognises that parts of the borough suffer from congestion at particular times, and that improved transport infrastructure is a requisite for growth. The potential impacts of development on transport networks have been assessed, and mitigation measures to address these impacts have been identified and included in the integrated approach to transport. Sites and routes which could be critical in developing future transport infrastructure have also been identified and protected.
- 6.561** There is also recognition that technology, and the most appropriate ways to take advantage of it through its implementation, is rapidly developing and is likely to start to impact on transport over the plan period (for example, driverless technology, etc.). The Council will therefore encourage technological development in transport and its implementation in the borough to meet the needs of effective transportation methods, and to improve the wellbeing of residents and businesses. This will include seeking to 'future proof' access networks, and using innovative smart solutions such as Mobility as a Service (see Appendix 5: Glossary).

- 6.562** Alongside the Council's aim to improve and enhance sustainable transport options, and including the acknowledgement that private car use will remain a predominant form of transport for many in the borough, it is important that all new developments provide a sufficient and suitable level of parking. Parking standards will therefore be determined as based on, and reflecting, local circumstances and issues. The provision of a car club car can also ease pressures on parking and will complement sustainable transport measures (see [Carplus Annual Survey of Car Clubs 2015/16 England and Wales excluding London](#)).

Transport Assessments/Statements, Travel Plans, and Mitigation

- 6.563** New developments have the potential to generate a considerable number of vehicular and pedestrian trips, which in turn can have both individual and cumulative (within the context of other programmed and/or proposed development) impacts on the transport network. As per the NPPF (September 2023) (paragraph 111), all development proposals must therefore ensure that development will not cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety or lead to severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network, and should be prevented or refused if the impacts cannot be mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 6.564** As advised in the Planning Practice Guidance, transport assessments are thorough assessments of the transport implications of development, and transport statements are a 'lighter-touch' evaluation to be used where this would be more proportionate to the potential impact of the development (i.e. in the case of developments with anticipated limited transport impacts). Transport assessments will therefore be expected to accompany all planning applications for new developments in accordance with Kent County Council's latest guidance, or otherwise as required by virtue of the locality having regard to where the location of the development has existing traffic issues or lack of transport infrastructure. Transport statements may be required for other development, or scales of development. If there are significant transport impacts that require mitigation as determined and proposed through the transport assessment, then a travel plan will also be required to take relevant proposed mitigation measures forward. As part of the transport assessments or statements and travel plans, there must include an assessment of the cumulative impact of both proposed and programmed development, and as necessary supported by WebTAG compliant modelling work.
- 6.565** Where appropriate, new development proposals will be expected to enter into legal agreements to secure the delivery of mitigation to address both their individual and cumulative impacts on the transport network. This includes impacts on the vehicular transport network and on non-motorised user networks (for example, along rural lanes and/or within close proximity to Public Rights of Way), and suitable mitigation measures will be determined in agreement with the Local Planning Authority, Local Highway Authority (Kent County Council), and National Highways. Such mitigation measures could include improvements to active travel opportunities, public transport, and highway infrastructure to ensure the increase in trips generated will not cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or lead to severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network. To be determined on

a site-by-site basis and subject to planning condition, the Local Planning Authority may also seek to secure construction and environment management plans (as requested and developed with Kent County Council) to minimise impacts from new major developments during construction.

- 6.566** It should also be noted that all new development will be required to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Policy EN 23: Air Quality and the 'emissions mitigation assessment and cost calculation'.

Policy TP 1

Transport Assessments/Statements, Travel Plans, and Mitigation

Development proposals must:

1. Provide a satisfactory transport assessment where required for proposals for new developments as required by virtue of the locality or, when necessary, a satisfactory transport statement, having regard to where the location of the development has existing traffic issues or lack of transport infrastructure. This must include an assessment of both individual and cumulative impacts on the transport network; and
2. Demonstrate through the transport assessment or statement and a travel plan (where required) that the impacts of trips generated to and from the development will be mitigated to avoid causing an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or leading to severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network, in accordance with the NPPF, including where necessary delivering mitigation measures ahead of the development being occupied.
3. The Transport Assessment should outline the Vision that is being promoted in relation to the requirements of [DfT Circular 1/22](#) (Strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development, updated December 2022). In addition, the Monitor and Manage strategy for the proposal should be outlined and described, and provided to the Highway Authorities (KCC Highways and National Highways) for their agreement. All modes of transport should be covered.

Where adequate transport infrastructure is not available to serve the development, the Local Planning Authority will seek the provision of, or contributions towards, appropriate measures that will address the identified inadequacy, and which will enable active travel and provide other highway improvements. Where a proposal necessitates highway improvements, the developer will be required to meet the cost of the improvements and deliver the identified scheme where these are fairly and reasonably related to the development.

Transport Design and Accessibility

- 6.567** The design of new development plays an important role in making it a sustainable place. Good design will ensure it is safe for all users and reduce the impact on the surrounding road network, as well as creating a high quality built environment that enhances the public realm and conserves the character of historic routes and the public realm, which greatly contribute to the attractive character of the borough. Equally, the design of our neighbourhoods can influence physical activity levels, travel patterns, social connectivity, mental and physical health, and wellbeing outcomes. The Council will refer to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods as well as latest national guidance on active travel/cycle infrastructure design, and will apply the appropriate highway guidance, including reference to the [Manual for Streets](#) guidance and [Kent Design Guide](#) and later guidance as appropriate, on an individual scheme basis that takes into account local context. Additionally, where applicable, regard will also be had to Historic England's national and regional [Streets for All: Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places](#) guidance.
- 6.568** All developments must also be designed in a way that accommodates and enables sustainable travel, including active travel and public transport as alternative modes of transport to the private car. Developments must therefore have safe and secure accessibility for all modes of transport, as well as ensuring permeability through the site, including, where possible, maintenance and enhancement of, and/or linkages to, the public footway network, Public Rights of Way, bridleways, or the local strategic cycle network. Opportunities for improvements to Public Rights of Way should be established through the site assessment work as part of a planning application, including the surrounding existing network, which takes account of any deficiencies identified by Kent County Council as the Highways Authority, parish and town councils, and/or local walking groups, and make reference to made neighbourhood plans, and borough and county walking and cycling strategies as part of these improvements. Improvements may include, for example, appropriate re-routing of the Public Rights of Way provided that there is overall enhancement or improved signage for any proximate Public Right(s) of Way. Furthermore, access into the development site must be located in the most highly accessible location that is suitable for the proposal.

Policy TP 2

Transport Design and Accessibility

Development proposals will only be permitted provided all of the following criteria are met:

1. There is safe pedestrian access to public transport services and infrastructure while also having regard to the frequency of such services;
2. The development is accessible by relevant modes of transport, with priority given to active forms of travel. This will include suitable arrangements for access by large vehicles. This will take account of public transport (buses), goods, emergency,

- and waste collection vehicles for delivery, servicing, and drop-off. The development must also be able to accommodate the swept path of vehicles on proposed new infrastructure. This should include the largest vehicles expected to access the area;
3. Development shall have regard to the Council's latest Transport and Cycling Strategies and, where relevant, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and where relevant shall maintain and enhance existing, or provide new (including segregated), pedestrian and cycle routes;
 4. The existing public footway, bridleways, and Public Rights of Way networks should be safeguarded. Development should secure positive outcomes for these networks, adhere to good design principles, and contribute towards the delivery of Kent County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan objectives. Opportunities should be taken through development to enhance these networks, including improvements to signage, surfacing, and the creation of new path links that improve connectivity. Where appropriate, financial contributions for off-site Public Rights of Way improvements will be sought;
 5. Roads and junctions within the development, and those to be altered or added as a result of the development, are designed and delivered in accordance with the appropriate highway guidance, with reference to Manual for Streets guidance and Kent Design Guide and later guidance as appropriate and, in historically sensitive areas, Historic England's national and regional Streets for All: Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places guidance;
 6. All facilities and services open or provided to the public within the development will be made available for use by people with disabilities in accordance with Article 9 (accessibility) and Article 19 (living independently and being included in the community) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
 7. The development incorporates self-enforcing measures into the design that encourage vehicle speed reduction (such as 20mph speed limits, road narrowings, speed tables, etc.), including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and if appropriate the developer will be required to investigate amending, and fund any necessary amendment to, external speed limits adjacent to, and in the vicinity of, the site's access;
 8. Suitable provision is made for car club facilities, car share, and/or cycle share as deemed appropriate;
 9. Suitable provision is made for electric vehicle charging points (or any new technology requirements). The developer must refer to the minimum standards set out in the Local Planning Authority's latest Electric Vehicle Charging Points for New Development Guidance Note for Applicants*.

Shared space schemes, where there is a level surface, will be permitted provided they apply only to new residential areas or existing residential streets with very low levels of traffic.

* [Electric Vehicle Charging Points for New Development Guidance Notes for Applicants](#)

Parking Standards

- 6.569** Tunbridge Wells is a large and diverse borough, with extensive rural areas and numerous settlements of various sizes in addition to Royal Tunbridge Wells town itself, which has seen significant expansion over the last few decades. A single approach to the provision of car parking is therefore not appropriate for all developments that will come forward across the borough during the plan period. Indeed, the NPPF allows local planning authorities to set their own parking standards, providing that local car ownership levels, accessibility, the nature and type of the development, and the desire to reduce carbon emissions are taken into account.
- 6.570** Consequently, for residential parking standards under Use Class C3 (dwellings) only, the Local Planning Authority has adopted the parking standard recommendations in accordance with the Council's Residential Parking Standards Topic Paper. These standards will require developers to provide parking standards that are reflective of local car ownership levels in Tunbridge Wells borough. It is recognised that this information is based on 2011 Census data, and car ownership and travel to work patterns are likely to change as a result of increased homeworking, following the coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, these standards will be reviewed at the five-year review of the Local Plan.
- 6.571** All parking provision will be expected to be delivered on-site in a suitable layout in accordance with Policy TP 3. It should also be noted that this policy applies exclusively to proposals that include the development of a new residential dwelling, or the extension to an existing dwelling that requires full planning permission.
- 6.572** As a result, in accordance with the recommendations of the Residential Parking Standards Topic Paper, three Zones (Zones A, B, and C) have been designated for different areas of the borough. These Zones are set out within the table in Policy TP 3 and Zone A is defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells Inset Map. The methodology for their production is outlined in the Topic Paper. Moreover, the detailed methodology underpinning the development of the Zone A boundaries in particular (for the Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre) can be found in Appendix 4 of the Topic Paper and replaces the Central Access Zone set out in the 2006 Local Plan.
- 6.573** Within Zone A, the 2011 Census data indicates considerable variation in car ownership levels across the Zone; in some parts it is as low as 0.4 cars or vans per household, and in others it is around one. Equally, it is recognised that the location, form, and type of residential development in the town centre will have different parking requirements. Therefore, the 'starting point' in the consideration of parking requirements are the mandatory parking standards as shown, although the policy allows for a lower provision to be made if this can be justified on the basis of the location, form of development, and particular ownership levels in that locality. This Zone will require the lowest level of parking provision within the borough due

to a high level of access to a good range of facilities, services, and employment opportunities, as well as a range of sustainable transport options (namely active travel and public transport options), thus reducing the need to travel by car.

- 6.574** Zones B and C will have minimum parking standards as also shown in Policy TP 3. Despite car ownership levels being slightly lower in Zone B settlements than in Zone C, the use of the private car is still predominantly high in comparison to the Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre/Zone A, and therefore car parking provision is required at a suitable level that takes this into account. It is consequently considered that these areas are, and are considered to continue to be, dependent upon private car use.
- 6.575** Additionally, as required in the policy, residents of proposals located within a Controlled Parking Zone, regardless of what parking standard Zone (A, B, or C), will not be eligible for parking permits. Consequently, all new residential developments will be excluded from the Controlled Parking Zone. The developer will be required to meet the cost of advertising and administering any change to the Traffic Regulation Order in association with this. This is due to the parking standards meaning that a suitable level of parking provision, in line with local car or van ownership levels, is already sufficiently provided and therefore reduces the need for on-street parking. Indeed, on-street parking is an increasingly prominent issue in the borough. In some Controlled Parking Zones, the 2014 Parking Strategy found that there are 50% more permit holders in some places than spaces, which further contributes to congestion issues. Consequently, it is important to ensure that new development does not significantly exacerbate this issue.
- 6.576** An appropriate contribution will also be required to the Local Planning Authority's Car Club programme, which will assist in the reduction of need for private car ownership and use, and will contribute to Policy STR 6: Transport and Parking. In rural communities, car clubs can help to reduce social exclusion and contribute towards rural resilience by ensuring that people have access to key services when public transport is not a viable option. Importantly, alongside this, all proposals should encourage residents to use highly accessible public transport already in existence as well as, where possible, prioritising active travel options. Similarly, it may be appropriate to contribute towards a cycle share/cycle hire scheme being developed as part of the Local Planning Authority's latest Air Quality Action Plan.
- 6.577** Visitor parking in all new residential developments will be expected to be delivered at 0.2 units per dwelling (mandatory in Zone A and minimum in Zone B and C). For clarification, in Zone A this standard will be rounded to the nearest whole unit. For example, in Zone A, a residential development of two units with one resident's car parking space each will not require visitor parking (0.4 spaces); however, visitor parking will be required at three units (with one parking space each) and above (0.6 spaces+). In Zones B and C, however, where there are minimum parking standards, all residential developments will require visitor parking.
- 6.578** It should be noted that, for developments under Use Class C2 (residential institutions), regard will be had to parking space provision in accordance with Kent County Council's latest guidance.

- 6.579** All proposed non-residential development will have regard to the standards in Kent County Council's latest guidance as appropriate. However, should specific problems with overspill commercial car parking into residential areas occur, the Local Planning Authority will support Controlled Parking Zones as an option to address these problems.
- 6.580** With all vehicle parking standards in both residential and non-residential proposals, it is important to allow for flexibility in their application in order to allow for site-specific issues to be taken into account. Policy TP 3 therefore provides clarification as to exceptional circumstances where departures from the proposed standards could be justified.
- 6.581** It is intended that the provision of cycle parking facilities will be included where possible into all new developments in order to encourage more active forms of travel over private car use. For all new residential and non-residential developments, safe and secure cycle parking will therefore be provided having regard to Kent County Council's latest standards.

Policy TP 3

Parking Standards

Size of parking spaces

Car parking spaces are expected to be provided in accordance with the following sizes:

1. If parking space does not have a wall on any side = 2.6m (width)/5m (length);
2. If parking space has a wall on one side = 2.7m (width)/5m (length);
3. If parking space has a wall on both sides = 2.9m (width)/5m (length).

In new residential development an appropriate provision of parking space must be made to accommodate light goods vehicles (3.5m (width)/7.5m (length)) as set out in Kent County Council's latest guidance, or justified through analysis of local information on light goods vehicle ownership/use and the form of residential development proposed.

Layout and landscaping of parking spaces/areas

All parking will be expected to be delivered on-site in a suitable layout. Tandem parking will not be considered acceptable unless it can be demonstrated that the design of the development does not allow for parking on the road/street. Car barns will also only be considered when they are open on three sides, and permitted development rights will be removed to prevent subsequent alteration.

Additionally, all communal parking facilities must have at least two entry/exit points for pedestrians (to encourage activity and pedestrian movement through these), and must be subject to passive surveillance.

It is also essential that new development is not dominated by parking. Proposals must therefore indicate how robust and appropriate soft landscaping will be incorporated into, and around, parking areas (See Policy EN 1: Sustainable Design).

Residential parking standards

The residential parking standards detailed within the table below will apply to proposals that are classed under Use Class C3 (dwellings) in accordance with the Council's Residential Parking Standards Topic Paper, unless there are exceptional circumstances, which are listed within the policy.

When considering whether a room is a 'bedroom', regard will be given to its position within the property, whether there is a window to the room, and whether it can accommodate a single adult bed, which can be accessed through an internally opening door with space for storage of domestic items/clothes, etc., within that room.

Table 16 Residential Parking Standards

	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C
Zone Definition	Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Parking Area	Inside the Limits to Built Development of: Royal Tunbridge Wells (excluding Zone A), Southborough Town, Rusthall, Pembury, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, and Hawkhurst	Everywhere in the borough excluding Zone A and Zone B
Parking Standard Definition	Mandatory, unless lower provision can be justified	Minimum	Minimum
1 Bed Flat	1	1	1
1 Bed House	1	1	1
2 Bed Flat	1	1	1.5
2 Bed House	1	1	1.5
3 Bed Flat	1	1.5	2
3 Bed House	1.5	1.5	2
4+ Bed Flat	1.5	1.5	2
4+ Bed House	2	2	2.5
Additional Visitor Parking	0.2 per unit	0.2 per unit	0.2 per unit

* Garages will not be counted within parking standards unless they are of a minimum 3.6m (width)/7m (length) in size. If a garage of this minimum size is to be incorporated into the proposal, a condition may be applied that removes permitted development rights for conversion of the garage. Car ports, car barns, and communal parking courts will also be counted towards the overall parking provision.

Within Zone A (Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Parking Area, as defined on the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Policies Map (Inset Map 2)), it is recognised that car ownership levels differ. The starting point when considering parking provision in Zone A should be as per the mandatory requirements, although a lower level of parking will be considered based on detailed analysis of car and van ownership levels in this part of the Parking Area for the form and type of residential development proposed.

Within Zones B and C, as defined in the table above, developers will be required to provide minimum parking standards per residential unit. It is expected that all provision of parking space should be delivered on-site.

Residents of new residential developments that are within a Controlled Parking Zone will not be eligible for parking permits. Traffic Regulation Orders will therefore be amended so that new residential developments are excluded from Controlled Parking Zones. It is expected that the cost of advertising and administering any change to the Traffic Regulation Order in association with this will be met by the developer. This will also apply to suitable areas deemed eligible for car club development, including new significant developments, within any Zone, that would benefit from a 'Community Car Club'. The developer of these proposals will also be expected to make an appropriate contribution to, or provide at least one parking space and support a car club car for a specified period of time for, the Local Planning Authority's Car Club programme. Developers are advised to refer to the Local Planning Authority's latest Guidance for Developers, Planners and Environmental Health on Car Club Set Up and Section 106 Agreements Planning Advice Note. Equally, the provision of a cycle share/hire scheme may be deemed appropriate and decided on a site-by-site basis.

For development involving residential Institutions (Use Class C2), regard will be given to the parking standards in Kent County Council's latest guidance.

Safe and secure cycle parking provision within all new residential development will be required at the minimum standards outlined within Kent County Council's latest guidance as appropriate.

Non-residential parking standards

All proposals for non-residential development within the borough shall have regard to the parking standards in Kent County Council's latest guidance.

The parking standards, parking space design and dimensions, and guideline walking distances to facilities for persons with impaired mobility for all non-residential development will have regard to Kent County Council's latest standards.

Safe and secure cycle parking provision within all new non-residential development will have regard to the standards outlined in Kent County Council's latest guidance.

Contributions/provision towards car club and/or cycle share/hire may be deemed appropriate and decided on a site-by-site basis.

Exceptional circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, the Local Planning Authority may allow proposals to depart from the vehicular and cycle parking standards of both residential and non-residential developments if any of the following apply:

1. A bespoke parking standard that takes into account specific local circumstances is included as part of a made neighbourhood plan or an approved masterplan (such as that envisaged for Paddock Wood and east Capel, as they have the potential to be designed with highly sustainable transport links/permeability/accessibility) and should be developed in line with the Vision developed under Vision and Validate/Monitor and Manage;

2. Where an operator or potential occupier requires either more or less parking spaces to cater for their specific operational needs, and such requirements can be clearly evidenced, and where their presence has wider planning benefits;
3. To ensure the successful restoration, refurbishment, and reuse of listed buildings, or buildings affecting the character of a conservation area;
4. To allow the appropriate reuse of the upper floors of existing buildings in town centres or above shop units, where it can be demonstrated that this reuse will have wider planning benefits;
5. Should independently verified viability evidence demonstrate that achieving the required parking standard would both render the scheme unviable, and that there are overriding planning benefits to justify that the development should proceed;
6. Where approval is obtained from both Kent County Council and the Local Planning Authority for the development of advanced technology vehicle systems (including those that are autonomous) that will provide for transport needs within the community being served, and which may link and contribute to existing or new similar systems servicing other nearby towns, town centres, and transport services. The promoter of such a system must show a compelling justification that the removal or substantial reduction or modification in the need for parking spaces in accordance with the requirements within this Policy can be sustained without detriment to the local road network or town centres.

Where appropriate, the Local Planning Authority will pursue the use of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) to support the wider strategy for the management of on-street parking in accordance with the approach outlined in this Policy.

Public Car Parks

- 6.582** Car ownership, travel to work patterns, and use of town centres are likely to change as a result of increased homeworking, following the coronavirus pandemic. However, it is expected that the demand for private car use, particularly in the rural areas of the borough, will still increase as a result of projected growth and development. Consequently, in consideration of future development and likely trends, there will still be a need for sufficient parking provision in public car parks. It is therefore crucial with regard to the vitality of many centres in the borough that public car parks are retained.
- 6.583** Only in very special circumstances will the Local Planning Authority permit development on public car parks. As part of a proposal where any new additional, or no net loss of, public car parking provision is to be provided, or where the car park is to be relocated in accordance with special circumstances 1 and 2 (see Policy TP 4), safe and secure communal cycle parking spaces and electric vehicle (EV) charging facilities (and their ongoing maintenance for a set period of time) should be incorporated where possible in order to support active travel (see also Policy TP 2: Transport Design and Accessibility). This will form part of a condition or agreement. Such provision of EV charging facilities should be made in accordance with the minimum EV standards set out in the Local Planning Authority's latest [Electric Vehicle Charging Points for New Development: Guidance Notes for Applicants](#).

- 6.584** All public car parks to be retained are defined on the Policies Map and listed within the relevant strategic place shaping policies in Section 5 of this Plan.
- 6.585** Given the changes as a result of the coronavirus pandemic outlined above, this policy will be reviewed at the five-year review of the Local Plan.

Policy TP 4

Public Car Parks

The Local Planning Authority will seek to retain public car parks in the borough, as defined on the Policies Map.

Subject to compliance with other policies in this Plan, development will only be permitted on these public car parks provided at least one of the following criteria is met:

1. The proposed development would result in net additional, or no net loss of, public car parking space on-site and will not reduce accessibility. This may be achieved by providing additional storeys and/or underground parking, or if the proposed developed area is exterior to the area of the site that is used for public car parking;
2. The car park could be relocated elsewhere within close proximity, which would both not result in net loss of car parking places, unless the car parking demand was considered less than that which was provided on the proposed development site, and which would not result in an increase in on-street car parking or have any significant negative impacts on the traffic within the area;
3. The demand for car parking places in the car park being proposed for development is evidenced to be, and with regard to likely future trends, easily accommodated within an existing nearby public car park, which would not result in an increase in on-street car parking or have any significant negative impact on the traffic within the area, or on accessibility to the alternative car park;
4. An assessment is made as part of the proposal that clearly identifies that the community benefits arising from development on the public car park outweigh the harm caused from the loss of public car parking spaces.

Railways Infrastructure

Safeguarding Railway Land

- 6.586** The projected increase in the level of growth and development, with the consequent impact on population growth over the plan period, has meant that reliable, suitable, and sufficient railway infrastructure is essential in order to maintain the economic viability and sustainability of the borough. This has therefore meant that all railway infrastructures in the borough will be protected and safeguarded by the Local Planning Authority to ensure that any additional future facilities or services can be accommodated and are not detrimentally impacted upon by other development needs. Consequently, all proposed development that is located adjacent to Network Rail's land, assets, and/or operational railways infrastructure will be in accordance with, and subject to, Network Rail's standards guidelines. For the avoidance of

doubt, this includes car parking facilities adjacent to main train stations such as the Network Rail car park south of Grove Hill Road in Royal Tunbridge Wells. It is intended that rail becomes an increasingly preferred public transport option to the private car for many commuters coming into and going out of the borough to work, in order to support the Local Planning Authority's strategic Policy STR 6: Transport and Parking.

- 6.587** Furthermore, within the borough there are two former railway lines (Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge and Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst) that are currently not in use, but which need to be protected from inappropriate development that could prevent their future use as transport corridors.

The Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge railway line

- 6.588** The existing Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge railway line is to be safeguarded in this Local Plan in order that the opportunity to link the London to Uckfield railway line with the London to Hastings railway line is not lost. Part of the line already forms part of the Spa Valley heritage railway. The reopening of this rail corridor for commercial services is not expected in the plan period, but would provide an opportunity to increase rail travel for commuting and shopping trips, reducing reliance on car-borne journeys.

- 6.589** The reinstatement of this railway line would clearly have major implications for the Sainsbury's site at Linden Park Road. It would need to be properly provided for in any redevelopment proposal. However, as the reopening of this rail corridor is not expected in the plan period, there is no allocation of this site. It is likely that the reopening of the rail corridor would present a significant opportunity for a mixed use scheme at this site.

The former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst (Hop Pickers) line

- 6.590** With regard to the former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst line, the route, the cultural history, and the industrial archaeology associated with it are a recognised asset for the borough that offers potential to support tourism, cultural and physical activities, and green infrastructure across a large accessible area of the borough, connecting High and Low Weald settlements and communities. Work to provide interpretation and improve access to the route of the former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst railway line, known locally as the Hop Pickers Line, is being led by the Hop Pickers Line Heritage Group (HPLHG), with support from the borough and parish councils. The route has been surveyed, archaeological studies have been carried out, and a scheme of potential Rights of Way improvements to improve access to the line is being drawn up by the HPLHG. A scheme of signage and way marking has been designed and adopted by the group, and the first examples of this have been installed at Paddock Wood, with further locations under development. While the potential for the former railway line to be developed for walking and cycling trails has been successfully realised, it is recognised that, in numerous locations, parts of the Hop Pickers Line have virtually disappeared. Some sections have also been developed, meaning that a whole route plan may at present seem unlikely. However, as work continues to assess and develop ideas for improving access and

connectivity along and across the route, the original alignment and adjacent land will continue to be safeguarded. This route to be safeguarded is defined on the Policies Map.

- 6.591** Where sections of the former route are no longer available to provide a trail for walking and cycling, suitable alternatives and new links may need to be found, and these will be provided through negotiation with individual landowners as necessary. The Local Planning Authority supports this proposal and will work with landowners, Kent County Council, the parish and town councils, and other stakeholders, including the HPLHG, to identify areas where access to the former railway line can be improved and used for this purpose. This will include identifying, where development proposals come forward adjacent to the safeguarded line, the potential to provide new connections or to deliver enhancements to this in accordance with the relevant parish strategic policy.

Policy TP 5

Safeguarding Railway Land

Land surrounding railway stations that are suitable for development for the purpose of commuter car and/or cycle parking, bus interchanges, or station facilities, will be safeguarded to make way for potential future provision, expansion, and/or proposals promoted by National Rail policies, by Network Rail, by train operators, or by the Local Planning Authority.

Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge railway line

The Local Planning Authority will safeguard the Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge railway line, as defined on the Policies Map, by refusing proposals that would compromise the re-opening of the rail line and/or its use as a green infrastructure corridor.

The former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst (Hop Pickers) line

The Local Planning Authority will also safeguard the Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst former railway line, as defined on the Policies Map, by refusing proposals that would compromise its use as a green infrastructure corridor. Proposals for development located adjacent to the safeguarded line may be required to contribute toward enhancing the route and/or provide new connections or access points.

Road Infrastructure

Safeguarding Roads

- 6.592** It is proposed that the following are safeguarded for future highways development. As set out in Policy STR 4: Ensuring Comprehensive Development, the Council will use its Compulsory Purchase Order powers if necessary to deliver strategic transport links, and/or will work in partnership with other organisations or authorities as necessary.

A228 Colts Hill

- 6.593** There have been longstanding plans for an entirely off-line route to the north of the A228, running from the dualled section of the A228 at the north of Pembury to a position in close proximity to the existing roundabout between Paddock Wood and Five Oak Green. This has been subject to considerable historic assessment and consideration, and has been 'safeguarded' in previous Development Plans, including the Local Plan (2006), Core Strategy (2010), and Site Allocations Local Plan (2016).
- 6.594** Work undertaken since the Draft Local Plan has indicated that this entirely off-line route is not necessary to mitigate the impacts of strategic growth at Paddock Wood and east Capel. Rather, as detailed in Policy STR 6: Transport and Parking, a part off-line new section of highway running to the north of a collection of houses along the A228 is proposed.
- 6.595** Nevertheless, the Kent County Council [Transport Plan 5 Striking the Balance 2024 - 2037](#) identifies the A228 Colts Hill relief scheme as a cross-district strategic aim.
- 6.596** It is therefore considered appropriate to continue to safeguard the route of the entirely off-line scheme throughout this plan period.
- 6.597** It should be noted that the entirely off-line route would link with the part-off-line route proposed to mitigate the impact of Paddock Wood and east Capel.
- 6.598** In relation to the entirely off-line route, regard must be given to the Groundwater Source Protection Zone on-site and the Environment Agency is to be consulted for advice. Regard must also be given to the site's location in the High Weald National Landscape, and Natural England and other bodies must also be consulted, and options for enhanced bus travel, including contributions, should be explored.

A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst

- 6.599** The works undertaken to ensure that the A21 is dualled from Tonbridge to Kippings Cross are now completed. Land is safeguarded to dual the remaining section from the Kippings Cross roundabout to the dualled section at the Lamberhurst roundabout, along National Highway's preferred route. The delivery of this infrastructure is not required to deliver growth proposed in the Local Plan, although it remains a long-term cross-district transport priority in the Kent County Council Transport Plan 5 Striking the Balance 2024 - 2037 and is accordingly safeguarded on that basis.
- 6.600** There is congestion at peak times on the A264 Pembury Road.

Policy TP 6

Safeguarding Roads

1. The two locations detailed below, as defined on the Policies Map, are safeguarded for the widening, alteration, improvement, or dualling of existing roads, or the provision of new roads;
2. The Local Planning Authority will refuse proposals for development that would compromise the implementation of either proposed schemes in these locations.

Land for 'entirely off-line' A228 strategic link (A228 Colts Hill bypass)

Land is safeguarded for the potential provision of an entirely off-line A228 strategic transport link and junctions from the north of Pembury to Alders Road, as indicated on the Policies Map. This would link, potentially, to the route proposed under Policies STR 6 and STR/SS 1 to mitigate the impact of strategic growth at Paddock Wood and east Capel.

A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst improvements

National Highways proposes to construct an upgrade of the A21 from Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst bypass, as defined on the Policies Map, and the Local Planning Authority will safeguard the preferred alignment by refusing proposals along this route.

Open Space, Sport, and Recreation

Retention of Open Space

- 6.601** Access to high quality open spaces, and opportunities for sport and recreation, can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities. Sports and recreation areas and facilities can contribute positively to the wellbeing and quality of communities, as well as having a positive impact upon the quality of the built environment, and can be of ecological value. The retention of open space will also support Policies STR 6: Transport and Parking and TP 2: Transport Design and Accessibility by enhancing opportunities to provide linkages between cycle and pedestrian routes to help improve public health and air quality in the borough. The NPPF encourages the provision and retention of high quality open spaces, and sports and recreation facilities.
- 6.602** An Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2018) has been undertaken to assess the current level of open space, sport, and recreation provision within the borough. The full assessment comprises of an Open Space Study, an Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment, and a Playing Pitch Strategy. The approach to this work has been endorsed by Sport England. The overall study has assessed the availability, quality, quantity, and accessibility of existing provision for identified sports facilities in the context of existing and future needs. The outcomes of the study have enabled the Council to adopt a strategic approach to the future provision, maintenance, and enhancement of sports facilities.
- 6.603** The Open Space Study assesses the provision of open spaces, including amenity and natural space, parks and recreation grounds, play space, and allotments. The Indoor/Built Sports Facilities Needs Assessment considers the provision of built (principally indoor) sports provision, such as sports halls and swimming pools, and other indoor active recreation facilities. The Playing Pitch Strategy assesses the quality and quantity of playing pitches across the borough and sets out priorities for improvement in terms of existing and new provision to meet future needs.
- 6.604** The overall study conclusions are that the existing open space, sport, and recreation provision within the borough should be retained (unless alternative suitable provision is re-provided), quality should be improved, and provision for new facilities should be sought and supported.
- 6.605** Additionally, appropriate allocations will be made for open space, sport, and recreation provision alongside built development to ensure adequate provision is made for existing and future populations, as identified within the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. The identified needs are set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan supporting the growth set out in the Local Plan and within the individual place shaping policies in Section 5.

Policy OSSR 1

Retention of Open Space

Existing open space, sports, and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, as defined on the Policies Map, unless allocated for another purpose/use/development in this Local Plan, should be retained and not be built on unless it can be demonstrated that:

1. An assessment has been undertaken that has clearly shown the open space, buildings, or land to be surplus to requirements in terms of quantity, contribution to local character, and setting, and that there is no need for an appropriate alternative community, sports, or recreational use; or
2. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
3. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use; or
4. The proposal is a mixed use scheme with demonstrable open space, sports, and recreational provision, and healthy living benefits that mitigate the loss; or
5. In relation to recreational buildings, it can be demonstrated that there is suitable alternative provision on the site, or in the vicinity of the site, or if operated on a commercial basis, the facility is no longer viable and has been marketed for 12 months by appropriate agents for the use, and has been advertised at an appropriate level.

The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation

- 6.606** The Council will seek to secure publicly accessible open space and recreation provision for new housing and mixed use development sites, in accordance with quantity and accessibility standards, as set out in Policy OSSR 2. The standards have been derived following the completion of an assessment of local needs and an audit of current provision, and are minimum guidance levels of provision. Recommended standards are expressed as hectares of open space per 1,000 people, and different standards are set for each open space typology.
- 6.607** The preference is for new major developments to meet their open space requirements on-site, or on adjacent sites that have been allocated in association with the housing development, including through a masterplanned approach to development. This recognises the demand and importance of publicly accessible open space to meet the needs of the existing and growing population, taking into account the findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.
- 6.608** Alternatively, if provision cannot be made on-site, off-site provision in a location that is conveniently and safely accessible from the site will be acceptable if provision on-site is demonstrated to be inappropriate for reasons of site constraints or location.
- 6.609** A financial contribution towards open space provision will be sought in lieu of new provision to improve existing sites and enhance the capacity of existing provision if:

1. Suitable opportunities for new open space cannot be identified within the specified accessibility standards due to site constraints; or
2. A development is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council to be too small to deliver new open space provision on-site.

6.610 In such cases, the Borough Council will seek to secure a high quality environment for new residents, such as attractive boundary treatments and structural landscaping, and any financial contributions will be used towards the provision, improvement, maintenance, and/or refurbishment of open space within the appropriate accessibility standards.

6.611 The Council will produce an Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide further detail to support the implementation of policy, including the technical detail on how the standards will be applied, taking account of existing provision within the relevant area. The SPD will include the methodology for calculating the amount of open space required on each development, when on-site open space should be provided on larger sites, and the amount of developer contributions that will be required in lieu of on-site provision; and will outline the priorities for provision, or improvements to existing provision, in qualitative terms, taking into account the qualitative assessment.

6.612 The Council will expect future management and maintenance of new open spaces to be appropriately secured to the satisfaction of the Council.

Policy OSSR 2

The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation

1. For new housing or mixed use development sites, the Local Planning Authority will seek to deliver the following categories of publicly accessible open space, sports, and recreation provision in accordance with the specified minimum standards as set out below, and further detailed within the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document:

Table 17 Eligible types of residential development

Category	Open market housing/flats	Affordable Housing	Housing for the active elderly	Permanent mobile homes
Play space	Y	Y	not applicable	Y
Outdoor sports space	Y	Y	Y	Y
Parks and gardens	Y	Y	Y	Y
Amenity open space	Y	Y	Y	Y
Natural green space	Y	Y	Y	Y
Allotments	Y	Y	Y	Y

Table 18 Requirement for open space, sport, and recreation facilities

Type of provision	1-19 dwellings	20-49 dwellings	50-99 dwellings	100+ dwellings
Allotments	N	N	N	Y
Amenity/natural green space*	N	Y	Y	Y
Parks and recreation grounds	N	N	N	Y
Play space (children)	N	N	Y	Y
Play space (youth)	N	N	N	Y

Key: Y - on-site provision normally sought, N - improvements to existing (off-site) provision normally required.

**the minimum size of amenity natural green space considered acceptable as part of new development is 0.15 ha , i.e. for developments that require on-site provision, but which would result in less than 1.15 ha of amenity/natural green space against the standard, the minimum size of amenity/natural green space is 0.15 ha.*

Table 19 Quantity and Access Standards per Open Space Type

Open Space Type	Quantity standard for new provision (HA/1,000)*	Access standard (radius from open space)**
Amenity Green Space (above 0.15ha in size) e.g. areas of informal open space and general recreational areas	0.8	600 metres or 12-13 minutes straight line walk time
Natural Green Space e.g. meadows, woodlands, river valleys, wetlands	0.8 to include natural and amenity green space for new provision	Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGST) At least one accessible 20ha site within 2km of home One accessible 100ha site within 5km of home One accessible 500ha site within 10km of home A minimum of 1ha statutory Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population
Park and Recreation Grounds e.g. general recreation grounds, which may also include other facilities, play space, outdoor sports space	1.1	600 metres or 12-13 minutes straight line walk time
Play Space (children) e.g. equipped play areas catering up to the age of around 12	0.04	480 metres or 10 minutes straight line walk time

Play Space (youth) e.g. skateboard parks, basketball courts, hangouts and shelters, and multi-use games areas catering for age 13-17	0.04	720 metres or 15 minutes straight line walk time
Allotments e.g. land used for growing of own produce – does not include private gardens	0.3	720 metres or 15 minutes straight line walk time

/ The Access Standards are set out within Section 6 of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study and will be explained fully within the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document.*

2. If open space, sports, and recreation provision cannot be provided in full on development sites due to site constraints or location, or other site-specific factors, then provision should be provided off-site where it is within the distance from the development site identified in the accessibility standard;
3. If other schemes and projects have been identified that would better meet the need for open space provision in the locality as part of new development, contributions may be sought in lieu of applying the access standards where relevant;
4. Exceptionally, a financial contribution in lieu of open space will be acceptable, provided:
 - a. the proposed development site would be of insufficient size in itself to make the appropriate new provision; or
 - b. the open space cannot be accommodated on-site due to site constraints or location, and alternative appropriate off-site provision cannot be identified;
5. Where it can be demonstrated that existing open space provision can either wholly or partially mitigate the impacts of development in accordance with the above standards, the Local Planning Authority may seek a reduced level of provision or financial contribution. Developers should take full account of open space requirements at an early stage of the development management process, and are encouraged to engage with the Local Planning Authority to determine the most appropriate quantum, type, and location of open space provision;
6. The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure the provision of the typologies of open space that are most needed in the relevant area, taking account of the above standards and the quality assessment set out in the relevant study, as well as the suitability of the site to accommodate the identified needs;
7. Proposals for, and including, new publicly accessible open space and recreation provision will, where feasible, seek to reinforce existing landscape character, as defined in the Borough Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document where appropriate;
8. Proposals for, and including, new publicly accessible open space and recreation provision shall respect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, by ensuring that development does not result in excessive levels of noise or light pollution;
9. Opportunities for formal community use agreements of existing and proposed facilities should be explored to increase existing provision to the general public.

The Open Space Supplementary Planning Document will contain further detail on how the policy will be applied and implemented, and quality standards that the Local Planning Authority will have regard to in all new developments and for the improvement of existing provision where relevant.

Section 7: Delivery and Monitoring

- 7.1 All supporting documents referred to throughout this Section can be found under [Supporting Documents](#) on the Council's Local Plan web page.

Delivery

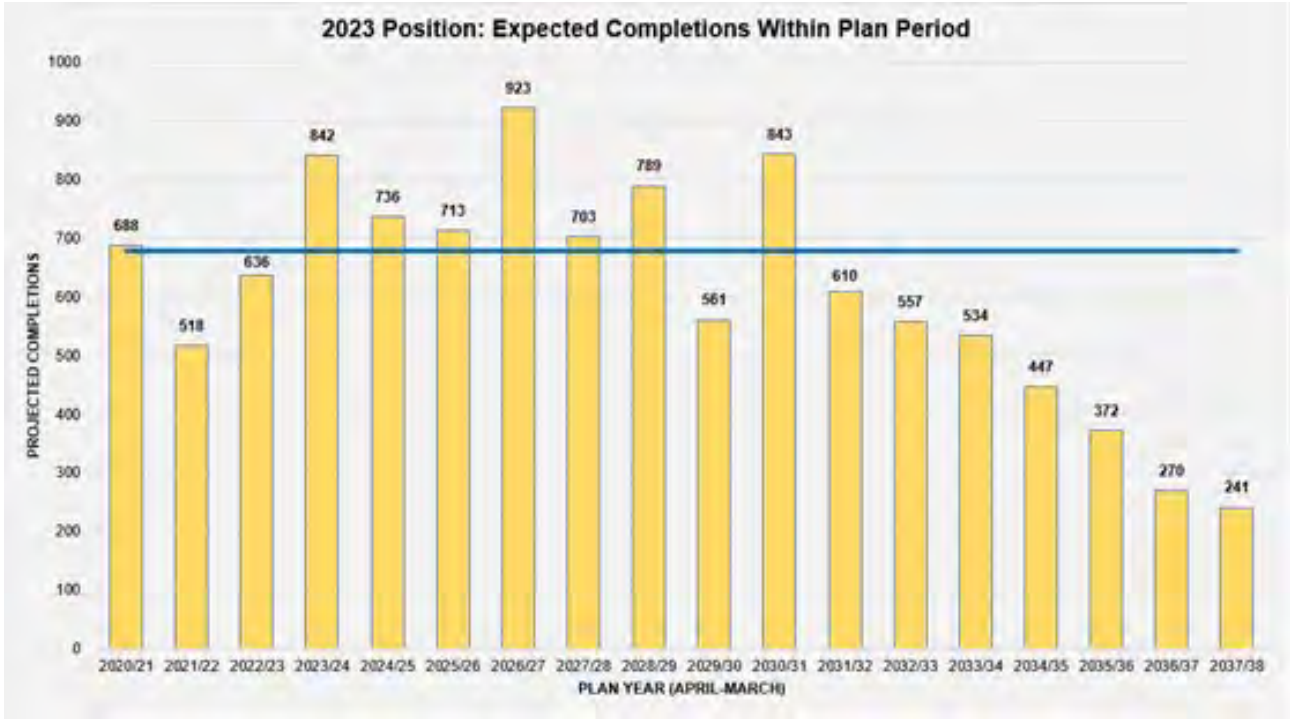
- 7.2 Preparation of the Local Plan provides a basis for ensuring that development proposals are determined and, if applicable, undertaken in a way that meets locally-agreed objectives and policies.
- 7.3 At the same time, the Plan's policies must not undermine delivery of the development requirements. To this end, a Viability Assessment has been carried out, which demonstrates that the types of development envisaged should be capable of being carried out in the manner set out in the Local Plan.
- 7.4 By setting the strategic framework for future development, the Local Plan also provides a clear basis for coordinated investment by a range of public, private, and voluntary sector organisations to secure efficient and effective delivery of sustainable development.
- 7.5 The policies in the Local Plan emphasise the importance of having adequate infrastructure, or the timely delivery of new infrastructure, to support planned growth. There has been close dialogue with infrastructure providers to ensure this. Planned infrastructure in the borough over the plan period is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which supports the Local Plan.

Housing delivery

- 7.6 A key function of the Local Plan is to deliver a substantial number of new homes in the borough up to 2038. The Council is committed to taking a proactive approach to housing delivery across the borough, working with the development industry and other development partners in bringing forward suitable sites.
- 7.7 Housing sites in the Local Plan have been assessed for their developability (and suitability), either through the earlier Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 or, in the main, by virtue of being promoted through the Call for Sites process. Additionally, sites with current planning activity (such as sites with unimplemented planning permissions) have also been assessed for potential allocation. The assessment of each individual site for their developability and suitability can be found in the Council's latest Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
- 7.8 Furthermore, in order to inform the assessment as to when housing in the borough can realistically be expected to be built, a methodology has been developed, drawing on advice from the housebuilding industry, which covers both housing delivery (i.e. the rate at which dwellings are expected to be constructed on any one site within a year) and phasing (i.e. the process through which the year that a dwelling is expected to be constructed is calculated. Depending on site-specific factors, as well as a consideration of the cumulative development proposed at a settlement as a whole, this can range from between one year to the end of the plan period, or further).

7.9 This assessment enables a projection of the likely timescales for the development of sites and an overall ‘housing trajectory’ for the borough. A summary of housing development within the Local Plan period can be seen in Table 4 in Section 4. The headline trajectory across the plan period is presented below.

Figure 10 Housing Trajectory



- 7.10** It can be seen that there is a fairly immediate increase in delivery early in the plan period, mainly due to the implementation of housing allocations in the earlier Site Allocations Local Plan (2016), together with other outstanding permitted schemes. Hence, although the strategic urban expansion at Paddock Wood, as well as the majority of new site allocations proposed in this Plan, are not expected to see first completions until about 2025/26, a continuity of housing supply should be maintained (including a rolling-five-year housing land supply with appropriate buffers). It is not proposed, therefore, to have a stepped increase in the housing requirement within the plan period.
- 7.11** The Council’s Phasing and Build-out Rate methodology provides commentary on housing sites based on site size and type, which shows how the Council will assess the delivery and phasing of new homes. Further details are set out in the Housing Supply and Trajectory Topic Paper.
- 7.12** To further support housing delivery, the Council has also prepared a ‘Housing Delivery Test Action Plan’ (2019/2020), in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and related Planning Practice Guidance (for the latest version, see [Monitoring Information](#)). This identifies the overall actions that the Council is taking to bring suitable development forward in a timely manner and, specifically, what it will be doing in situations where development has stalled.

Monitoring

- 7.13** Monitoring and review are key components of the plan-making process. This is both to ensure that policies are effective for their intended purpose, and that they remain appropriate in the light of changing circumstances nationally, regionally, and locally. A good monitoring framework will identify any risks to the Plan's success and delivery, as well as highlighting risks as they evolve, including if a policy is not being implemented and the reasons, so that corrective action may be implemented.
- 7.14** In fact, local authorities have a duty to monitor the effectiveness of their planning policies on at least an annual basis and to produce monitoring reports (as per Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). In relation to Local Plan implementation, this should specifically cover housing delivery (as per Regulation 34(3)), with data on the number of net additional dwellings, including affordable dwellings.
- 7.15** It is particularly important to monitor if the Plan is delivering the amount and type of development identified, and that it is being delivered in the right place at the right time.
- 7.16** In order to assess whether the Local Plan is meeting its strategic vision and objectives, and to ensure that new policies are performing as intended, a 'Monitoring Framework' has been developed.
- 7.17** The Monitoring Framework identifies targets and indicators for individual policies. The performance of policies will be monitored against these targets and the findings reported within the Authority Monitoring Report (for the latest version, see [Monitoring Information](#)). The overall performance of the Local Plan will also be monitored through the review of planning appeal decisions and the granting of applications that contradict policies contained within the Local Plan. The Monitoring Framework is set out at Appendix 4.
- 7.18** In monitoring policies, particular focus will be given to policies that are key to the development strategy. This includes those relating to ensuring:
- i. a continuity of supply of housing and business/employment land;
 - ii. that there is, or will be, adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of development;
 - iii. that the spatial distribution strategy is being implemented.
- 7.19** In addition, monitoring will also review whether there have been, or there is forecast to be, any material political, social, economic, technological, and environmental contextual changes.
- 7.20** The trajectory of housing completions to meet the Local Plan target is reviewed and updated yearly and set housing monitoring is regularly undertaken specifically in relation to whether there is a continuing supply of housing land to meet development requirements (for the latest Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement see [Monitoring Information](#)).

- 7.21** The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) has been introduced as a monitoring instrument to demonstrate whether local authorities are delivering sufficient homes to meet their housing need. The HDT, which was introduced in November 2018, compares the number of new homes delivered over the previous three years with the authority's housing requirement, and measures housing delivery rather than monitoring the supply of land available for housing. The results from the HDT will be used to determine the buffer that should be applied in local housing supply calculations and whether the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply (a 20% buffer is applied to the Council's Five-Year Housing Land Supply housing target if delivery falls below 85% of the HDT requirement) in addition to the requirement for an action plan.
- 7.22** In addition, if a local authority's housing delivery falls below 95% of its housing requirement, it will be required to produce an Action Plan setting out the steps the authority intends to take to improve levels of housing delivery. As a matter of good practice, it is recommended that local authorities produce Action Plans regardless of their HDT result in order to identify processes to exceed housing requirements and support future housing delivery within an area (for the latest version see [Monitoring Information](#)).
- 7.23** As well as ongoing monitoring (and any consequential partial review), the Council is obliged, every five years from the date of adoption of a strategic Local Plan, to complete a full review and decide either:
- i. that its policies do not need updating and publish its reasons for this decision; and/or
 - ii. that one or more policies do need updating, and update its Local Development Scheme to set out the timetable for this revision.
- 7.24** If necessary, the Council should then update its policies.
- 7.25** In this instance, the Development Strategy in this Local Plan provides sufficient sites to meet a 10-year rather than a 15-year housing land supply, and as such the Council is committed to undertaking an early review of the Local Plan. This is explained in more detail at Policy STR 1 The Development Strategy.

Appendix 1: Local Plan Policies to be superseded on adoption of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan

Local Plan Policies to be superseded on adoption of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan

Table 20

Policy Number	Policy Title
	Saved Local Plan Policies 2006
MGB1	Metropolitan Green Belt
LBD1	Development outside the Limits to Built Development (partially superseded by Site Allocations Local Plan)
EN1	Development Control Criteria
EN4	Demolition in Conservation Areas
EN5	Development within, or affecting the character of, a Conservation Area
EN6	Shop fronts
EN8	Outdoor Lighting
EN10	Archaeological Sites
EN11	Historic Parks & Gardens
EN13	Trees and Woodland Protection
EN15	Statutory Local Nature Reserves and other non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites
EN16	Protection of groundwater and other watercourses
EN18	Flood Risk
EN20	Telecommunications
EN21	Areas of Important Open Space
EN22	Areas of Landscape Importance
EN23	Important Landscape Approaches
EN24	Arcadian Areas
EN25	Development control criteria for all development proposals affecting the rural landscape
CR1	Location of large-scale (500 sq metres or greater gross floorspace) A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1 and D2 Uses within defined Primary Shopping Areas
CR2	Location of large-scale (500 sq metres or greater gross floorspace) A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1 and D2 Uses outside defined Primary Shopping Areas

CR3	Location of proposals for small-scale (less than 500 sq metres gross floorspace) A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1, D1 and D2 Uses within defined Primary Shopping Areas, Neighbourhood Centres and Village Centres
CR5	Royal Tunbridge Wells Primary Shopping Area
CR7	Southborough Primary Shopping Area
CR9	Paddock Wood Primary Shopping Area
CR11	Cranbrook Primary Shopping Centre
CR12	Hawkhurst Primary Shopping Centre
CR13	Retention of community facilities in neighbourhood centres or villages
H1	Retention of the existing stock
H2	Small and Intermediate Size Dwellings
H4	Gypsy Sites
H5	Residential development within Limits to Built Development
H8	Affordable housing outside the Limits to Built Development
H9	Key workers' dwellings in association with Rural Employment
H10	Replacement dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development
H11	Extensions to dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development
H13	Conversion of rural buildings to residential use outside the Limits to Built Development
ED1	Location of large-scale (500sq metres or greater gross floorspace) or greater proposals for B1 light industrial development within Economic Development Areas
ED2	Location of small-scale (less than 500sq metres gross floorspace) B1 development
ED3	Location of B2 and B8 Uses within Economic Development Areas
ED5	Conversion of rural buildings to Economic Development Use outside Limits to Built Development
T1	Location for small-scale new or extended tourism accommodation
T2	Retention of tourist accommodation
T3	Tourism accommodation outside the Limits to Built Development
R1	Retention of existing recreation open space
R2	Recreation open space in development of more than 15 bedspaces
R6	Retention of allotments
CS4	Development contributions to school provision for developments over 15 bedspaces
CS6	Retention of community buildings
TP1	Major development requiring Transport Assessments and a Travel Plan

TP2	Multi-modal access for smaller-scale non-residential development
TP3	Multi-modal access for large-scale residential developments
TP4	Access to the road network
TP5	Vehicle Parking Standards
TP6	Tunbridge Wells Central Access Zone (residential) Vehicle Parking Standards
TP7	Tunbridge Wells Central Parking Zone (commercial)
TP8	Vehicle parking for small-scale changes of use to non-residential and development affecting Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas
TP9	Cycle Parking
TP10	A21: Tonbridge to Pembury Bypass
TP11	A21: Other Improvements
TP12	A228: Colts Hill Bypass
TP18	Cycle route network in Royal Tunbridge Wells
TP19	Highway improvements, Main Transport Routes, Royal Tunbridge Wells
TP20	Retention of public car parks in Royal Tunbridge Wells
TP22	Retention of Yew Tree Road public car park, Southborough
TP23	Retention of the Pennington Road car park, Southborough
TP24	Retention of Commercial Road public car parks, Paddock Wood
TP25	Retention of public car parks in Cranbrook
TP26	Retention of public car parks in Hawkhurst
TP27	Retention of public car parks in villages
Core Strategy Policies 2010	
Policy Number	Policy Title
Core Policy 1	Delivery of Development
Core Policy 2	Green Belt
Core Policy 3	Transport Infrastructure
Core Policy 4	Environment
Core Policy 5	Sustainable Design and Construction
Core Policy 6	Housing Provision
Core Policy 7	Employment Provision
Core Policy 8	Retail, Leisure and Community Facilities Provision
Core Policy 9	Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells
Core Policy 10	Development in Southborough
Core Policy 11	Development in Paddock Wood

Core Policy 12	Development in Cranbrook
Core Policy 13	Development in Hawkhurst
Core Policy 14	Development in the Villages and Rural Areas
Site Allocations Local Plan Policies 2016	
Policy Number	Policy Title
AL/STR1	Limits to Built Development
AL/STR2	Environmental and Recreation Designations
AL/STR3	Safeguarding Former Railway Lines Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge Railway use and green infrastructure corridor Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst Green infrastructure corridor providing a walking/cycleway trail
AL/RTW1	Urban Design Framework
AL/RTW2	AL/RTW2A: Civic Complex/Crescent Road Area of Change AL/RTW2B: Former Cinema Site Area of Change Mixed use development
AL/RTW3	Vale Avenue Area of Change Mixed use development
AL/RTW4	AL/RTW 4A: Eridge Road AL/RTW4B: Land at Montacute Gardens Mixed use development
AL/RTW5	36-46 St Johns Road (Arriva Bus Depot) Residential development
AL/RTW6	Former Plant and Tool Hire, Eridge Road Mixed use development
AL/RTW7	Homeopathic Hospital, Church Road Residential development
AL/RTW8	Land at the Rifle Range, Warwick Park Residential development
AL/RTW9	Lifestyle Motor Europe, Langton Road Residential development
AL/RTW10	Former Gas Works, Sandhurst Road Residential development
AL/RTW11	Land at Goods Station Road Residential development
AL/RTW12	Land at Quarry Road. Residential development
AL/RTW13	Tunbridge Wells Telephone Engineering Centre, Broadwater Lane and WA Turner Factory, Broadwater Lane Residential development
AL/RTW14	Land at Medway Road. Residential development
AL/RTW15	123-129 Silverdale Road. Residential development
AL/RTW16	Land at Beechwood Sacred Heart School Residential development
AL/RTW17	Former Builders' Yard, Goods Station Road Residential development
AL/RTW18	Land at Unigate Dairy, St Johns Road Residential development
AL/RTW19	Land at Royal Victoria Place. Residential Development
AL/RTW20	77 Mount Ephraim (Sturge House, Brockbourne House) Employment development
AL/RTW21	Mount Pleasant Avenue Car Park Employment development

AL/RTW22	Site of Lifestyle Ford, Mount Ephraim/Culverden Street/Rock Villa Road Mixed use development
AL/RTW23	John Street Car Park Mixed use development
AL/RTW24	Auction House and Car Park, Linden Park Road Mixed use development
AL/RTW25	Kenwood House, Upper Grosvenor Road Mixed use development
AL/RTW26	Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Key Employment Area
AL/RTW27	North Farm/Longfield Road Key Employment Area
AL/RTW28	Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Boundary and Primary Shopping Area
AL/RTW29	Neighbourhood Centres
AL/RTW30	Recreation Open Space
AL/SO1	Land at Yew Tree Road (Southborough Library) Residential development
AL/SO2	Southborough Hub (Area 1) Mixed use development
AL/SO3	Recreation Open Space
AL/SO4	Southborough High Brooms Key Employment Area
AL/SO5	Southborough Town Centre Boundary and Primary Shopping Area
AL/SO6	Neighbourhood Centres
AL/PW1	Land off Station Road/Commercial Road and Commercial Road West Car Park Mixed use development
AL/PW2	Wesley Centre, Commercial Road Community facility
AL/PW3	AL/PW 3A: Land at Church Farm AL/PW3B: Land at Mascalls Court Road Residential development
AL/PW4	Land at Mascalls Farm Development
AL/PW5	Paddock Wood Key Employment Areas
AL/PW6	Paddock Wood Town Centre Boundary and Primary Shopping Area
AL/PW7	Informal Open Space Land off Nursery Road, Paddock Wood
AL/PW8	Area of Landscape Importance Land off Green Lane, Paddock Wood
AL/CR1	Police Station, Wheatfield Drive Residential development
AL/CR2	Cranbrook Library. Residential development
AL/CR3	The Vicarage, Waterloo Road Residential development
AL/CR4	Land adjacent to the Crane Valley Residential development
AL/CR5	Post Office Delivery Depot and Land at Stone Street/High Street/Crane Lane Mixed use development
AL/CR6	Wilkes Field Community facility
AL/CR7	Cranbrook Town Centre Boundary and Primary Shopping Area
AL/HA1	Former Springfield Garden Centre Residential development
AL/HA2	Land at Woodham Hall Residential development

AL/HA3	Hawkhurst Castle. Residential development
AL/HA4	Birchfield, Rye Road Residential development
AL/HA5	King George V Playing Fields, The Moor Community facility
AL/HA6	Gills Green Key Employment Area
AL/HA7	Hawkhurst Town Centre Boundary and Primary Shopping Area
AL/HA8	Recreation Open Space: Gunther Close
AL/VRA1	Former Sissinghurst Primary School, The Street, Sissinghurst Residential development
AL/VRA2	Park and Ride facilities Land at Woodsgate Corner, adjacent to Tesco, Pembury
AL/VRA3	Recreation Open Space
AL/VRA4	Brook Farm Key Employment Area

Appendix 2: Biodiversity/geodiversity sites within Tunbridge Wells borough

This appendix is associated with Policy EN 10: Protection of Designated Sites and Habitats, and lists those sites found in Table 9.

Table 21 Biodiversity/geodiversity sites within Tunbridge Wells borough

Designation	List of Sites
Natura 2000 sites (collectively including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites)	There are no Natura 2000 sites in Tunbridge Wells borough
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	• Southborough Pit • Pembury Cutting and Pit • Rusthall Common • Sissinghurst Park Wood • Brookland Wood • High Rocks • Scotney Castle • Combwell Wood • Parsonage Wood • Robins Wood
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	• AS01/TW01 Hemsted Forest • AS02/TW02 Sandpit Wood, Clapper Hill • TW03 Roundshill Park Wood, Sissinghurst • TW04 Angley Wood, Cranbrook • TW05 Old Park Wood, Iden Green • TW06 Goudhurst Pasture • TW07 Bedgebury Park School • TW08 Bedgebury Forest, Hawkhurst • TW10 Chingley Wood • TW11 Old Swan Farm, Lamberhurst Quarter • TW12 Woods and Pasture near River Teise above Lamberhurst • TW13 White Chimney Wood, Hawkhurst • TW14 Horsmonden Churchyard • TW15 Castle Hill Wood and Pasture • TW16 Brenchley Wood • TW17 Pembury Walks • TW18 Tudeley Woods • TW21 High Wood, Hawkenbury • TW22 Windmill Farm, Hawkenbury • TW23 Friezland Wood, Tunbridge Wells • TW25 Brokes Wood, Southborough • TW26 Bidborough Woods and Pastures • TW28 Southborough Cemetery

Designation	List of Sites
	• TW29 Benenden Church • TW30 Downgate Wood and Roughland Wood, near Four Throws • TW31 Moor Wood, Iden Green • TW33 Nine Acre Wood and Gill, Benenden • TW35 St Lawrence Churchyard, Hawkhurst • SE36/TW36 Avery's Wood, Buillingstone • SE37/TW37 Ashour Wood, Printstile • TW38 Benenden Wood • TW39 All Saints Churchyard, Brenchley • TW40 Brick Pit Wood, Frittenden • TW41 Beston Farm Pasture and Orchard • TW42 Collingwood, The Moor • TW43 St Lawrence's Churchyard, Bidborough • TW44 St Mary's Churchyard, Speldhurst • TW45 Gregg's Wood and Pastures, Tunbridge Wells • TW46 Broomhill and Reynolds Lane Pastures • TW48 Bayham Woods • TW49 St Nicholas' Church, Sandhurst • TW51 St Peter's Old Church, Pembury • TW53 Frittenden Cemetery • TW54 Bokes Farm, near Hawkhurst • TW55 Leggs Wood, Frittenden • TW56 Goudhurst Churchyard • TW57 Benenden Hospital Grounds • MA04 Ponds and Pasture, Waterman Quarter, near Headcorn • TW27 Southborough Common • TW32 Priest Wood, Langton Green • TW59 The Down, Lamberhurst • TW34 Shirrenden Woods, Park and Pond, Horsmonden • TW24 Rusthall Common and Tunbridge Wells Common • TM20/TW20 East Tonbridge Copses and Dykes and River Medway • TW19 Somerhill Park, Tonbridge • SE26/TM26 River Medway South of Leigh • TW58 Kent and Sussex Cemetery, Hawkenbury • TW50 Vauxhall Lane Woods, Southborough • TW60 Apple Orchard, Standen Street • TW61 Snipe Wood
Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)	• TW 1 RIGS Scotney Castle Quarry
Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	See Kent Wildlife Trust's Kent & Medway Biodiversity Areas Web Map for mapping of the following sites: • TW11 (Ashurst Road, Speldhurst Parish) • TW01 (Iden Green Road, Benenden Parish) • TW05 (Slip Mill Lane, Hawkhurst Parish) • TW04 (Rogers Rough Road, Goudhurst Parish) • TW08 (A228, Pembury Parish) • TW09 (Halls Hole Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells) • TW03 (A229, Hawkhurst Parish)

Designation	List of Sites
	• TW02 (London Lane and Frittenden Road, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish) • TW12 (Ruck Lane, Horsmonden Parish) • TW13 (High Rocks Lane, Royal Tunbridge Wells) • TW14 (Spelmonden Road, Horsmonden Parish) • TW07 (Clay Hill Road and Mount Pleasant, Lamberhurst Parish) • TW15 (High Street, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish)
Sites of Local Nature Conservation Value (SLNCV)	• ID:06 Frittenden Churchyard, Frittenden • ID:11 Nellington Wood, Rusthall • ID:03 Calverley Park, Tunbridge Wells • ID:09 Kilndown Churchyard, Kilndown • ID:01 All Saints Pond, Hawkhurst • ID:14 Sandhurst Pond, Sandhurst • ID:18 Woodbury Park Cemetery, Tunbridge Wells • ID:07 Great Culverden Park, Tunbridge Wells • ID:05 Crane Valley Recreation Ground, Cranbrook • ID:04 Church Road, Paddock Wood • ID:08 Hurst Wood, Tunbridge Wells • ID:10 Kilndown Pond and Surrounds, Kilndown • ID:12 Ram Wood, Tunbridge Wells • ID:13 Reynolds Lane Woodland, Tunbridge Wells • ID:16 The Down, Lamberhurst • ID:19 Barnett's Wood, High Brooms
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	• Barnett's Wood • Crane Valley • Foal Hurst Wood • Hilbert Wood
Candidate Local Nature Reserves (CLNR)	• Marshley Harbour Wood • Cinderhill Wood • Snipe and Bassetts Wood • Greggs Wood Town Green • Knights Wood, Tunbridge Wells • Brick Kiln Farm, Cranbrook • Church Farm, Paddock Wood • Mascalls Court, Paddock Wood • Mascalls Court Farm, Paddock Wood

Appendix 3: Schedule of designated Local Green Space sites within Tunbridge Wells borough

Local Green Space Designated Site List

Note: This Appendix supplements Policy EN 15: Local Green Space. For reference to the sites below and their detailed assessment against the Local Green Space designation criteria, please view the latest Local Green Space Assessment document. The criteria and designation methodology that informs the assessment of these sites can be found in the latest Local Green Space Designation Methodology document. All the sites below can also be found on the Policies Map.

In addition to the list below, please note that sites are, or are proposed to be, designated in Neighbourhood Development Plans for parishes within the borough. These sites are not duplicated within the list below and can be found separately within the relevant Neighbourhood Development Plan for that parish. All Neighbourhood Development Plans can be found on the Council's [Neighbourhood Plan](#) webpage.

Table 22 Local Green Space Designated List

Parish	Settlement	Site Number (see the Local Green Space Assessment for reference)	Site Name
Bidborough	<i>Bidborough</i>	7	Bidborough Recreation Ground (north)
		AS_69	Brookhurst Field
		AS_70	Bidborough Recreation Ground (south)
		AS_74	Alf's Corner
		AS_75	Green triangle on the High Street
Frittenden	<i>Frittenden</i>	93	Frittenden Playground
		94	Frittenden Recreation Ground
Hawkhurst	<i>Hawkhurst</i>	108	St. Laurence Church Green verge
		109	The Moor and verges
		112	Queens Road opposite Park Cottages
		113	Sawyers Green
		114	Philpotts Cross
		116	Stream Lane Nature Reserve and Pond
		122	Horns Corner
		123	Gill's Green including Green Bank and Steps
		124	Land at Four Wents (Potter Lane & Attwater Lane)
		125	Lightfoot Green
		128	Fowler's Wood
		133	Ockley Lane Allotments
Paddock Wood	<i>Paddock Wood</i>	AS_26	Talbot Road Allotments
		145	Green Space within Church Farm Development

Parish	Settlement	Site Number (see the Local Green Space Assessment for reference)	Site Name
		146	Green Space within Mascalls Court Development
		147	Paddock Wood Cemetery
		148	St. Andrews Recreation Ground
		150	Recreation Ground and Memorial Park, Maidstone Road
		151	Putlands Leisure Centre Field
		152	Playground, The Ridings
		153	Playground, Fuggles Close
		154	Green space in development south of Badsell Road
		155	Paddock Wood Allotments south of Badsell Road
		159	Paddock Wood Allotments north of Badsell Road
		161	Green space, south of Green Lane
		162	Green space, north of Green Lane
		165	Green space on Ringden Avenue
		167	Green space north of Tutsham Way
		168	Green space/rest area on Cogate Road
		169	Green space on Cobbs Close
		170	Green space/rest area on Commercial Road
		172	Green Space/rest area on Maidstone Road
		175	Paddock Wood Allotments, Courthope
		176	Green space at The Granary
		177	Church Road Cemetery
		178	Green Lane Recreation Ground
		179	Green space with ponds on Church Road
		181	Green space at Newton Gardens
		183	Green space adjacent to Railway Bridge
		AS_55	Clover Way Playground
		AS_66	Field north of Foal Hurst Wood
		AS_68	Green corridor adjacent to Poppy Meadow
Royal Tunbridge Wells	Royal Tunbridge Wells	194	Oak Road Green Space
		197	Great Culverden Parkland
		198	Summervale Road
		199	Playground and Green near St. Mark's Church of England Primary School

Parish	Settlement	Site Number (see the Local Green Space Assessment for reference)	Site Name
		202	Green Square on Boundary Road, Hawkenbury
		203	Camden Park
		204	Farmcombe Road Open Space
		205	Playing field next to Nevill Cricket Ground
		206	Hilbert Road Allotments
		207	Park/playground in Sherwood
		208	High Brooms Village Green
		210	Hawkenbury Recreation Ground
		211	Nevill Cricket and Athletic Ground
		212	Playground, Banner Farm
		215	Cadogan Playing Field
		216	St. John's Park
		217	Green space near Sandown Park
		221	Green Area, Knights Park, just south of Golding Road and The Avenue
		222	Ramslye Allotments
		223	Hawkenbury Allotments
		AS_25	Sandhurst Road Allotments
		AS_80	St John's Meadows
		AS_82	Wooded Area behind Summervale Road
		NS2	Reynolds Lane Allotments
Rusthall	<i>Rusthall</i>	224	Mary Caley Park
		226	Rusthall green space, Colbran Way
		227	Rusthall Woodland, north of Tunbridge Wells Golf Course
		229	Rusthall Allotments, Southwood Road
		230	Wickham Garden Allotments
		231	Tunbridge Wells Golf Course
Sandhurst	<i>Sandhurst</i>	234	Sandhurst Green Space
		235	Sandhurst Recreation Ground
Southborough	<i>Southborough</i>	236	Southfields Park, Skinners School
		237	Copse of trees, Yew Tree Road
		238	Playing Fields and Allotments, Ridgeway
		239	Southborough Allotments at the end of Oak End Close
		240	Playground at the end of Holden Corner
		241	Neighbourhood Green, Woolley Road
		242	Neighbourhood Green, Lady's Gift Road
		243	The Rest Garden

Parish	Settlement	Site Number (see the Local Green Space Assessment for reference)	Site Name
Speldhurst		244	Frank Weare Recreation Ground, Salisbury Road
		245	Pennington Grounds
		246	Southborough Cemetery, north of Victoria Road
		251	High Brooms Allotments
		AS_83	Green space on Powder Mill Lane
	<i>Speldhurst</i>	256	Pocket Park
		258	Speldhurst Recreation Ground
		259	Speldhurst Allotments
		265	Rusthall Playground
		266	Rusthall Extension Allotments
		AS_32	Farnham Lane Cemetery
	<i>Langton Green</i>	271	Langton Green Recreation Ground
		274	Land to south of Langton Road
		AS_61	Green space on The Boundary Road
		AS_62	Green space with pond on The Boundary Road
		AS_76	Allotments south of crossroads joining Ashurst Road, Langton Road, and the B2110
	<i>Groombridge</i>	(No sites designated)	
	<i>Ashurst</i>	AS_63	Ashurst Sports Ground

Appendix 4: The Monitoring Framework

Table 23 The Monitoring Framework

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
Strategic Policies				
STR 1	The Development Strategy	To maintain at least a Five-Year Housing Land Supply	Number of years housing land supply at 31 March of each year	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC)
		At least 85% of annual housing requirement built	Housing completions by a) parish and b) borough	TWBC
		An annual increase in Local Jobs	Employment/Unemployment Figures	Kent County Council (KCC)
		New development permitted inside Limits to Built Development (LBD)	Number of (and percentage of total borough wide) additional housing units permitted on non-allocated sites inside LBD	TWBC
STR 2	Place Shaping and Design	Support for policy at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy STR 2	TWBC/PINS
STR 3	Brownfield Land	To meet the Council's annualised windfall contribution	Number of dwellings completed on windfall sites (mostly brownfield) as of 31 March each year	TWBC
STR 4	Ensuring Comprehensive Development	Enabling policy with no specific target but progress to be regularly monitored	Enabling policy with no specific target but progress to be regularly monitored	N/A
STR 5	Infrastructure and Connectivity	Education; sufficient school places	Ratio of applicants per school place (borough-wide)	KCC
		Connectivity; increased broadband coverage across the borough	Broadband coverage (borough-wide)	KCC
STR 6	Transport and Parking	Improved transportation provision across the borough	Proportion of new houses permitted within 800m of a bus stop within year	TWBC

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
		Improved parking provision across the borough	Number of off street public car parking spaces within borough as of 31 March of each year	TWBC
STR 7	Climate Change	Support for policy at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy STR 7 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
STR 8	Conserving and enhancing the natural, built, and historic environment	Support for policy at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy STR 8 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
STR 9	Green Belt	Protect Green Belt from inappropriate development	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy STR 9 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
STR 10	Neighbourhood Plans	Neighbourhood Plans successful at examination	Number and percentage of Neighbourhood Plans progressed to referendum	TWBC
Place Shaping Policies (Strategic)				
STR/RTW 1	The Strategy for Royal Tunbridge Wells	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Employment floorspace development in line with policy target	Employment completions	TWBC
		Deliver of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
STR/RTW 2	The Strategy for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Employment floorspace development in line with policy target	Employment completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/SO 1	The Strategy for Southborough	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Employment floorspace development in line with policy target	Employment completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
STR/SS 1	The Strategy for Paddock Wood and East Capel	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Employment floorspace development in line with policy target	Employment completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
STR/SS 2	The Strategy for Paddock Wood Town Centre	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Employment floorspace development in line with policy target	Employment completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/PW 1	The Strategy for the parish of Paddock Wood	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Employment floorspace development in line with policy target	Employment completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/ CA 1	The Strategy for Capel parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Employment floorspace development in line with policy target	Employment completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/CRS 1	The Strategy for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/HA 1	The Strategy for Hawkhurst parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Employment floorspace development in line with policy target	Employment completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/BE 1	The Strategy for Benenden parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/BI 1	The Strategy for Bidborough parish	Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/BM 1	The Strategy for Brenchley and Matfield parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/FR 1	The Strategy for Frittenden parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/GO 1	The Strategy for Goudhurst parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/HO 1	The Strategy for Horsmonden parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/LA 1	The Strategy for Lamberhurst parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/PE 1	The Strategy for Pembury parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/RU 1	The Strategy for Rusthall parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/SA 1	The Strategy for Sandhurst parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC
PSTR/SP 1	The Strategy for Speldhurst parish	Residential development in line with policy target	Housing completions	TWBC
		Delivery of identified infrastructure	Key infrastructure provided	TWBC

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
Environment and Design				
EN 1	Sustainable Design	Rejection of unsustainable design in planning applications	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 1 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
EN 2	Sustainable Design Standards	Attainment of required score for relevant standard e.g. BREEAM	Grading of energy performance certificates	TWBC
EN 3	Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	Target Emission Rate 10% below Building Regulation requirement through 'fabric first' approach and a further 15% total energy reduction via renewable energy generating technology for major developments	Energy calculations	TWBC
		Adherence to Policy EN 3	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 3 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
EN 4	The Historic Environment, including Heritage Assets	Protect historic environment and heritage assets	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 4 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
			Number of listed buildings 'At Risk' as of 31 March each year	TWBC/Historic England
EN 6	Shop Fronts	High standard of shopfront design and support of Policy EN 6 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 6 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
EN 7	Advertisements	High standard of advertisement design and support of Policy EN 7 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 7 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
EN 8	Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies	Maintain current level of lighting in rural areas	No deterioration in dark skies mapping outside allocated areas	Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
Natural Environment				
EN 9	Biodiversity Net Gain	Net gains in biodiversity in developments	Number of biodiversity units lost or gained as part of major developments	TWBC/KMBRC/KNP

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
EN 10	Protection of Designated Sites and Habitats	No deterioration in condition of SSSIs	SSSI condition monitoring	Natural England
		Maintain percentage of land cover of designated sites	Monitoring of coverage of designated nature conservation sites	TWBC/KMBRC
EN 11	Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation	Achieve targets set out in the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategies (SAMMS) projects	Implementation and monitoring of SAMMS projects	SAMMS Partnership
EN 12	Trees, Woodland, Hedges, and Development	Strong protection of trees and hedges	65% or more appeals related to TPO works and protected and protected hedgerows dismissed	TWBC/PINS
EN 13	Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees	Retention of ancient woodland and support of Policy EN 13 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 13 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
EN 14	Green, Grey, and Blue Infrastructure	Increase in managed Green Infrastructure	Area of land controlled under Landscape and Ecology Management Plans (LEMPs)	TWBC
EN 15	Local Green Space	No loss of Local Green Space (LGS)	Quantity of LGS across the borough	TWBC
EN 16	Landscape within the built environment	Retention of character of defined area and support of Policy EN 16 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 16 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
EN 17	Arcadian Areas	Protect the distinctive character of Arcadian areas and support of Policy EN 17 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 17 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
EN 18	Rural Landscape	Protection of rural landscape	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 18 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
EN 19	The High Weald National Landscape	Retention of essential character of High Weald National Landscape and support of Policy EN 19 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 19 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
			Monitoring of the AONB Management Plan	High Weald National Landscape Unit

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
EN 20	Agricultural Land	Retention of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land	Hectares of 'best and most versatile' land which would be lost as a result of large-scale development on sites greater than 20 hectares	TWBC
Air, Water, Noise and Land				
EN 21	Air Quality	Continued reduction in air pollution	Pollutant levels at key locations	Kent Air
EN 22	Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)	Air quality below the level warranting an AQMA	Pollutant levels within AQMA	Kent Air
EN 23	Biomass Technology	N/A enabling policy	Number of biomass schemes permitted	TWBC
EN 24	Water Supply, Quality, and Conservation	Support Environment Agency advice on flood risk and drainage matters	Measures within state of water in Kent reports	Environment Agency
		Water use at 110lpppd	Water use calculations	TWBC
EN 25	Flood Risk	Support Environment Agency advice on flood risk and drainage matters	Measures within state of water in Kent reports	Environment Agency
EN 26	Sustainable Drainage	Support Environment Agency advice on flood risk and drainage matters	Measures within state of water in Kent reports	Environment Agency
EN 27	Noise	Retention of tranquil areas	Tranquillity/noise maps	CPRE/Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
EN 28	Land Contamination	Proper regard to land contamination	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy EN 28 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
Delivery of Housing				
H 1	Housing Mix	Periodic review of approved schemes in terms of proportion of dwellings of smaller 1-2 bed dwellings	To establish the proportion of smaller units	TWBC specific review TWBC Affordable Housing Government Returns

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
H 2	Housing Density	Effective use of available land having regard to local character	Net density of major residential developments	TWBC specific review
H 3	Affordable Housing	60% of affordable housing to be social rent	The tenure mix of individual sites	Planning records TWBC Affordable Housing Government Returns
H 4	Estate Regeneration	Housing to meet local needs through estate regeneration	Net change in affordable housing units	Planning records TWBC Affordable Housing Government Returns
H 5	Rural Exception Sites	At least one rural exception site to be approved every five years	Dwellings approved on rural exception sites	TWBC
Different Types of Housing Delivery				
H 6	Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities	To approve at least one specialised housing scheme every two years	Additional yearly provision of specialised housing	TWBC
H 7	Rural Workers' Dwellings	This is a permission policy. Target not applicable	The number of rural workers dwellings approved	TWBC
H 8	Self Build and Custom Housebuilding	To meet policy requirement on identified major site allocations	Proportion of dwellings on permitted schemes of identified major site allocations that are self/custom build	TWBC
H 9	Gypsies and Travellers	To meet the identified need of Gypsies and Travellers within the borough	The number of (net) additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches approved	TWBC
H 10	Replacement dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development	Policy support of Policy H 10 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy H 10 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
H 11	Residential extensions, alterations, outbuildings, and annexes	Policy support of Policy H 11 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy H 11 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
H 12	Extensions to residential curtilages (domestic gardens) outside the Limits to Built Development	Policy support of Policy H 12 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy H 12 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
Employment Provision				
ED 1	The Key Employment Areas	Provision of new business floorspace	Floorspace of new build developments through permissions	TWBC
ED 2	Retention of existing employment sites and buildings	No net loss of business floorspace	Number of planning permissions for reuse or redevelopment of business (B class) sites for housing	TWBC
ED 3	Digital Communications and Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)	Improved coverage of high-speed broadband across the borough	Broadband coverage (borough-wide)	KCC
ED 4	Rural Diversification	N/A - enabling policy	Number and type of changes of use of rural buildings	TWBC
ED 5	Conversion of Rural Buildings outside the Limits to Built Development	Net increase in business floorspace in converted rural buildings	Planning records	TWBC
ED 6	Rural Business and Recreational/Leisure (including equestrian) Uses in the Countryside	Policy compliant equestrian development and support of policy ED 6 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy ED 6 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
ED 7	Retention of, and improvements to existing, and the promotion of new tourist accommodation and attractions	No net loss of tourism of sites or floorspace	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy ED 7 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC
Town, Rural Service, Neighbourhood and Village Centres				
ED 8	Town, Rural Service, and Neighbourhood Centres, and Village Settlements	Hierarchy identified by policy but without specific targets so no indicators identified		
ED 9	Defined Town, Rural and other Service Centres	Retain retail function of Town and Rural Service Centres	Retail floorspace permitted (net)	TWBC

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
ED 10	Sequential Test and Local Impact Test	Retain retail function of Town and Rural Service Centres	Retail floorspace permitted (net) above the impact threshold outside of defined centres	TWBC
ED 11	Primary Shopping Areas and Retail Frontages	Retain retail function of Town and Rural Service Centres	Retail floorspace permitted (net) above the impact threshold outside of defined centres	TWBC
ED 12	Retention of local services and facilities	No net loss of village shops and services	Planning application/appeal records for retail and service uses (Class A and Class D)	TWBC
Transport and Parking				
TP 1	Transport Assessments, Travel Plans, and Mitigation	Major developments supported by a transport assessment and travel plan	Percentage of relevant applications where transport assessment and travel plan secured	TWBC
TP 2	Transport Design and Accessibility	Policy compliance and support of Policy TP 2 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy TP 2 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
TP 3	Parking Standards	Application of parking standards and 65% support of Policy TP 3 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy TP 3 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
TP 4	Public Car Parks	No net loss of public car parking spaces	Number of off-street public car parking spaces within borough as of 31 March each year	TWBC
TP 5	Safeguarding Railway Land	No development permitted to prejudice railway routes and support of Policy TP 5 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy TP 5 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
TP 6	Safeguarding Roads	No development permitted to prejudice safeguarded routes and support of Policy TP 6 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy TP 6 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Policies				
OSSR 1	Retention of Open Space	No net loss of identified open space areas or facilities and support of Policy OSSR 1 at appeal	65% or more appeal decisions support TWBC conclusion on Policy OSSR 1 (if relevant to appeal)	TWBC/PINS

Policy No.	Policy	Target	Indicator	Source
OSSR 2	The Provision of Publicly Accessible Open Space and Recreation	Residential development to provide Open space in line with standards	Developments above open space threshold (20 dwellings) permitted with on-site open space provision	TWBC

Appendix 5: Glossary

For the purpose of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

Table 24 Glossary and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
Active travel	A mode of transportation making journeys in a physically active way, like walking, wheeling (using a wheelchair or a mobility aid), cycling or scootering.
Adopted	There are a number of stages in the preparation of planning policy documents. 'Adoption' represents the final confirmation of a document's status by the local planning authority.
Affordable housing	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented, and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) now referred to as National Landscapes	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1947) and, along with National Parks, represent the finest examples of countryside in England and Wales. Their primary purpose is to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural landscape beauty, including the protection of flora, fauna, and geological interests. Development affecting such areas is restricted under the National Planning Policy Framework. AONBs nationally were rebranded in November 2023 and are now commonly referred to as National landscapes but the legal designation remains AONB.
Bedroom	When considering whether a room is a 'bedroom', regard will be given to its position within the property, whether there is a window to the room, and whether it can accommodate a single adult bed that can be accessed through an internally opening door, with space for storage of domestic items/clothes, etc., within that room.
Biodiversity	Biodiversity refers to the whole of life and its diversity of life forms, species, genetic variation, and ecosystems.
Brownfield land	See 'Previously Developed Land'.
Bulking	In relation to waste management. This is the consolidation of the contents of several containers of similar material into a single container (e.g. waste materials such as flammable liquids, oil/latex paint and used oil are typically bulked).
Call for sites	A general request by the local planning authority to developers, landowners, and the public to submit sites to be considered for development. These are then assessed by the local planning authority to see whether they should be included as allocations in a Local Plan.
Comparison retail	Retail items not bought on a frequent basis; for example, electrical goods and clothing (i.e. not food).
Conservation area	An area designated by the local planning authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character and interest of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Conservation areas are a type of heritage asset.
Convenience retail	Everyday essential shopping items, such as food.
Core Strategy	The Core Strategy is a long-term strategy document, which sets the overarching agenda for future planning and decision making in the borough

Term	Definition
	by defining how much development of each main type will take place and broadly where it will go. The Council's Core Strategy was adopted in 2010, setting growth between 2006 and 2026.
Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)	Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is a flexible mode of transportation that adapts to the demands and needs of its passengers.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	A policy-setting document that forms part of the statutory development plan. This local plan is a development plan document which forms part of the Borough's statutory development plan alongside the made neighbourhood plans and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
Energy hierarchy	The energy hierarchy is a system for reducing carbon emissions in the built environment, in which the most sustainable options are prioritised over the least sustainable options. The first step and most sustainable approach is to reduce energy demand ('be lean'), the second step is to supply energy efficiently ('be clean') and the third step is to use renewable energy ('be green').
Geodiversity	The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils, and landforms. These may be identified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Regionally Important Geological Sites, but geological interest also exists outside designated sites.
Green Belt	Green Belt is open, largely undeveloped land that has been specifically designated for long-term protection. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. It is not a designation influenced by landscape quality. Development on Green Belt land is restricted under the National Planning Policy Framework.
Green, grey, and blue infrastructure	Green - network of natural and semi-natural features, including, for example, street trees, green roofs, parks, ponds, rivers, woodlands. Grey - human engineered infrastructure, including the pipes, pumps, ditches, and detention ponds engineered by people to manage stormwater. Blue - linked to water and includes pools, ponds and pond systems, and watercourses.
Habitable room	A room for living, sleeping, eating, or cooking. Bathrooms, closets, halls, and storage or utility rooms are not classed as habitable rooms.
Heritage asset	A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Includes nationally designated assets, as well as local assets identified by the local community and confirmed by the local planning authority. See also 'conservation area', 'historic park and garden', and 'listed building'.
Historic parks and gardens	Designated by Historic England, historic parks and gardens reflect the landscaping fashions of their time and are a type of heritage asset.
Housing Delivery Test	The 'Housing Delivery Test' measurement is an annual measurement of housing delivery in the area of relevant plan-making authorities looking back over the previous 3 financial years.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	Outlines the need for, delivery and implementation of, infrastructure necessary to support the growth strategy in the Local Plan and of specific locations within the plan period. This document is constantly reviewed as needs over time will change.
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)	A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) helps to identify the impact of a planned development on views and the surrounding landscape. It is used to help design the proposed changes as well as assess its effects, so that negative landscape effects are avoided, reduced or offset.

Term	Definition
Limits to Built Development (LBD)	A line around settlements defining the area which is considered to be within the limits of the built area and that which is outside in order to restrict the encroachment of built form into the surrounding countryside.
Listed building	A building included on a list of buildings of architectural or historic interest, compiled by the Secretary of State, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Listed Buildings are a type of heritage asset.
Low Traffic Neighbourhood	A Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) is a scheme where motor vehicle traffic in residential streets is greatly reduced. This is done by implementing measures to support active travel and minimising the amount of traffic that comes from vehicles using the streets to get to another destination.
Made Neighbourhood Plan	A Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' following examination and successful local referendum. It is then part of the statutory development plan for the area as a basis for the determination of planning applications.
Major development	For housing, development is considered major where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development, it means additional floorspace of 1,000sqm or more, or a site of one hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and County Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. As per footnote 75 in the NPPF (September 2023), this definition does not apply for the purposes of NPPF paragraphs 176 and 177. This includes applications for development within National Landscapes, where footnote 60 states whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.
Minor development	For housing, development is considered minor where less than 10 homes will be provided and the site has an area of less than 0.5 hectares. For non-residential development, it means additional floorspace of less than 1,000sqm and the site has an area of less than one hectare, or as otherwise provided in the Town and County Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
Mobility as a Service	Mobility as a Service (also referred to as MaaS) is a term used to describe digital transport service platforms that enable users to access, pay for, and get, real-time information on a range of public and private transport options. These platforms may also be linked to the provision of new transport services.
Monitor and Manage	'Monitor and Manage' is the process by which the need for, and timing of, transport improvements necessary to support developments can be re-appraised during the implementation of the Local Plan. This is undertaken via the periodic collection of data from development sites as they are built-out ('Monitor') and using this data to check and review planned transport improvements in terms of their appropriateness and phasing ('Manage').
National Landscape	See 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)'
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in decisions on planning applications. It replaces Government planning policies previously set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The examination of the Plan was assessed for consistency in relation to the September 2023 version of the NPPF.

Term	Definition
	Further guidance on particular topics, entitled Planning Practice Guidance, is provided on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government website. This is intended to supplement the NPPF and be updated as necessary.
Off-line	Improvements to the road network requiring a new section of road such as a bypass.
On-line	Improvements to part of the existing road network such as junction improvements or road widening.
Permitted Development Rights	Permitted Development Rights are a national grant of planning permission that allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Permitted development rights are subject to conditions and limitations to control impact and to protect local amenity.
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.
Policies Map	A map showing all the site-specific and spatial policies and proposals set out in Development Plan Documents.
Registered provider	A registered provider of affordable housing under Registered Social Housing Provider part 2 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
Saved	Certain planning policy documents or individual policies may be 'saved' pending their replacement by future documents or policies. A saved policy or document can still be used in making decisions on planning applications.
Section 106 agreement	A legally binding agreement, made under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, between the Planning Authority and the applicant/developer and any other parties that may have an interest in the land. It is used to secure restrictions on the use of the land, operation of the development, or to make contributions towards the local infrastructure and facilities.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	The SHMA considers housing need within the borough; the overall housing need as well as the need for different types and sizes of homes, including provision for the elderly and Starter Homes.
Site Allocations Local Plan 2016	A development plan document prepared and adopted by the Council, which allocates land for development pursuant to the strategy set out in the adopted Core Strategy 2010.
Site-specific flood risk assessment	A detailed assessment of any flood risk arising from specific development proposals, prepared in support of applications for planning permission in areas subject to flood risk.
Spatial planning	A system of integrating land use planning policies with the policies of other plans, programmes and strategies, which also influence the nature of places and how they function.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	A document showing land at risk from flooding across the borough, prepared as part of the evidence base for Development Plan Documents such as this Local Plan.

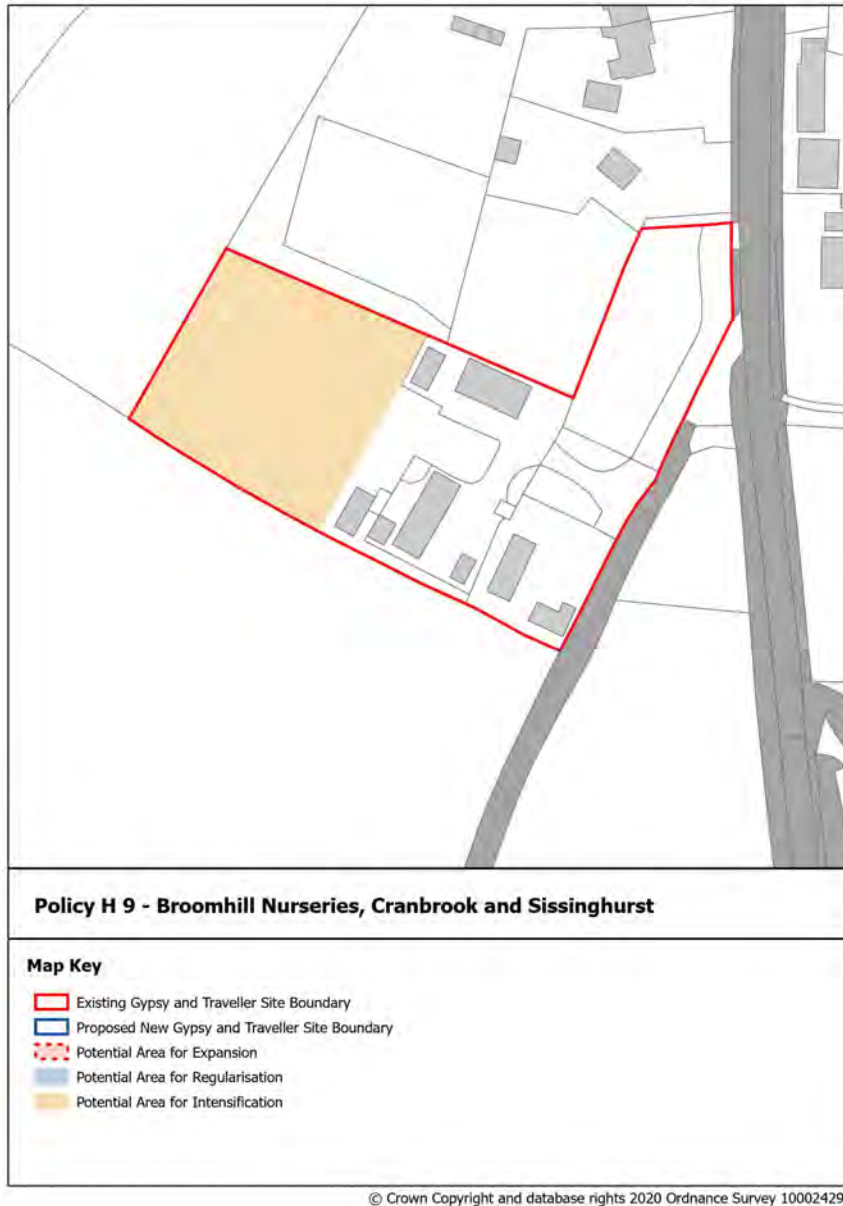
Term	Definition
Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)	The SHELAA identifies sites with potential for housing, employment and other uses and assesses both their potential for development and when they are likely to be developed. It is not an allocations document.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a document that adds further detail to a particular policy or policies in the Local Plan. SPDs can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. The document can be a material consideration in planning decisions but is not part of the development plan.
Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	Although replaced by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) as a result of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents perform the same function as SPDs and remain a material consideration in planning decisions.
Sustainability Appraisal	An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process, to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.
Sustainable development	International and national bodies have set out broad principles of sustainable development. Resolution 24/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future' sets out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: • living within the planet's environmental limits • ensuring a strong, healthy and just society • achieving a sustainable economy • promoting good governance • using sound science responsibly The NPPF describes the purpose of the planning system as to contribute to sustainable development.
Sustainable Transport	Sustainable transport refers to ways of transportation that are sustainable in terms of their social and environmental impacts. This might include low and zero-emission, energy-efficient, and affordable modes of transport, including public transport, electric and alternative-fuel vehicles.
Vision and Validate	'Vision and Validate' involves identifying a vision for transport movements, and proving through monitoring that this vision takes place. Vision and Validate enables measures to be appropriately focussed towards the delivery of sustainable development, at the appropriate intervention times.

Appendix 6: Policy H9 Gypsies and Travellers: Site Layout Plans

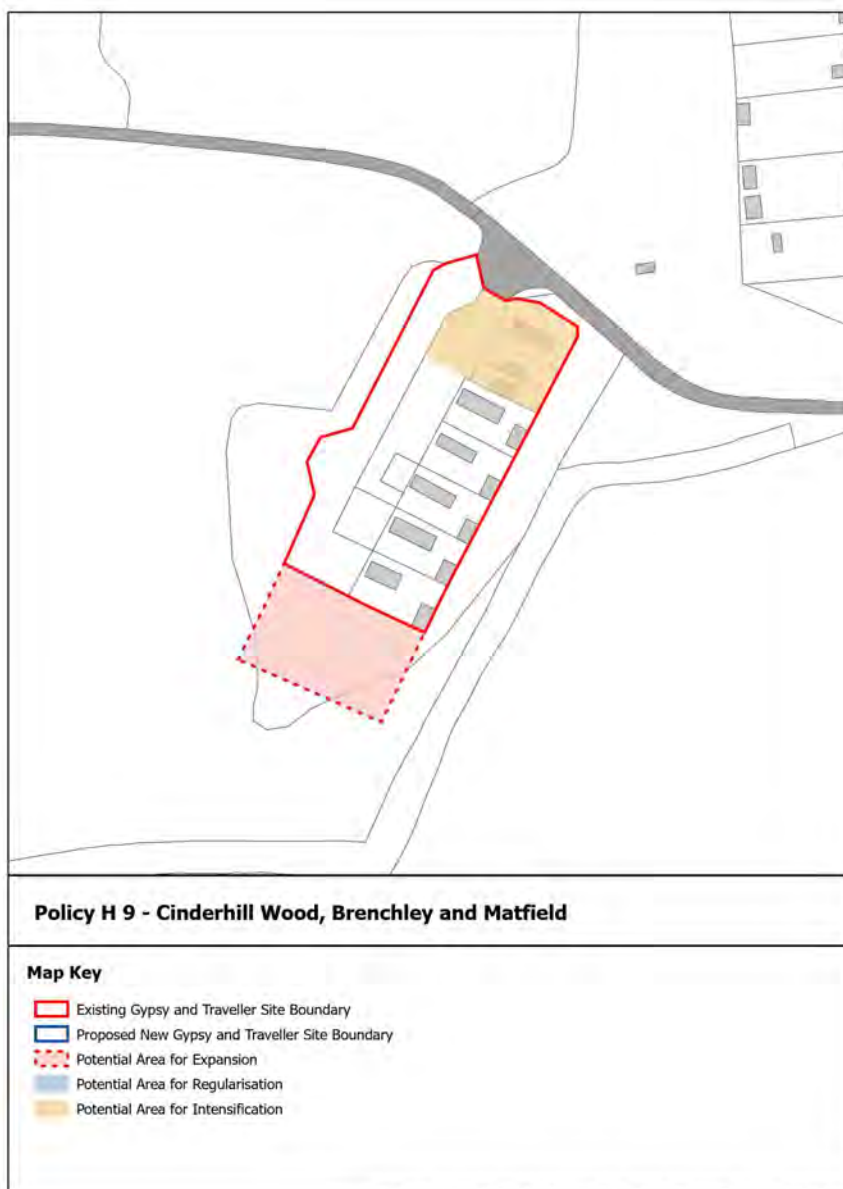
- 6.1** This Appendix is associated with Policy H 9: Gypsies and Travellers, and includes site plans for those sites found in Table 13 (existing and proposed new gypsy and traveller sites that may have potential for accommodating additional pitches), excluding the three pitches proposed as part of the strategic proposal for Paddock Wood (including land at east Capel) (Policy STR/SS 1). These site plans show proposed areas for intensification, expansion, and/or regularisation except for Lordship Stables which includes a retrospective permission granted after the base date of the Plan (01 April 2020) for the existing single pitch on site.

Map 63 Bassetts Farm, Horsmonden

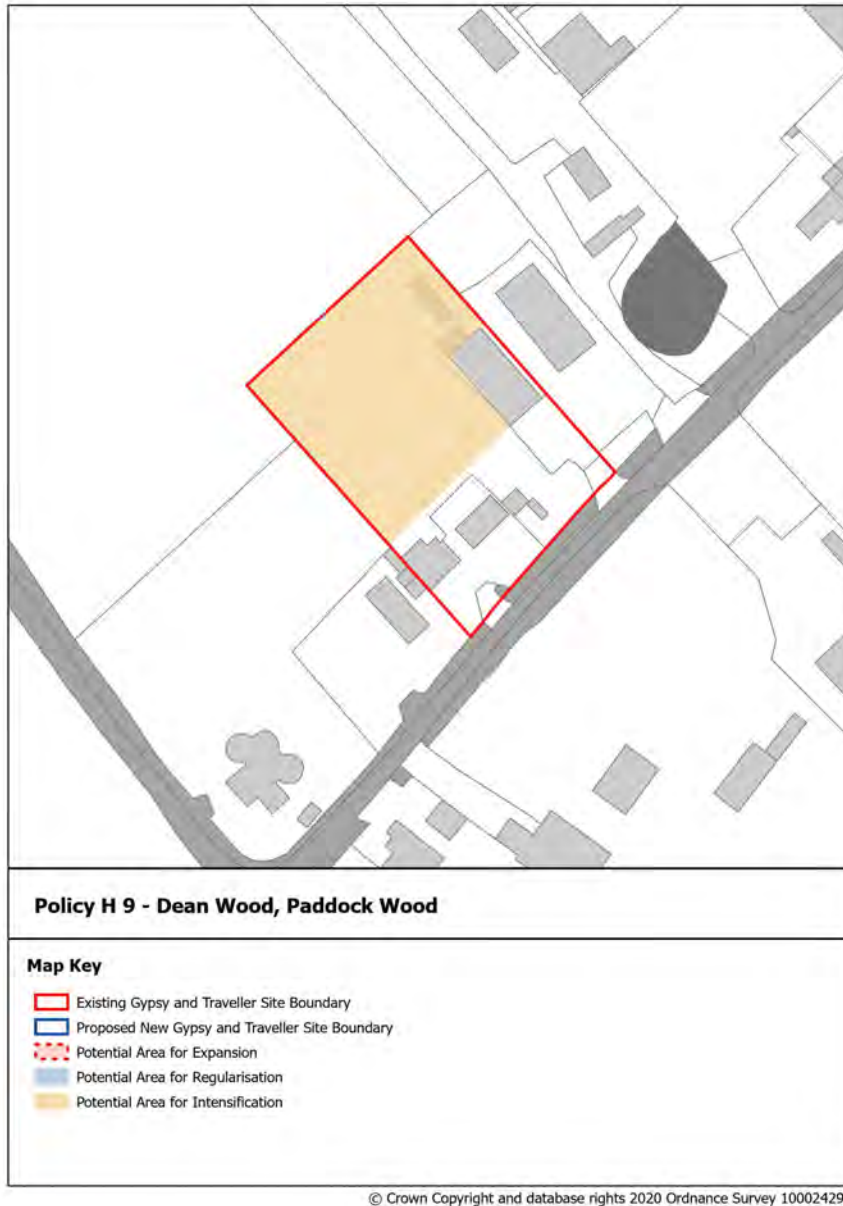


Map 64 Broomhill Nurseries, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst

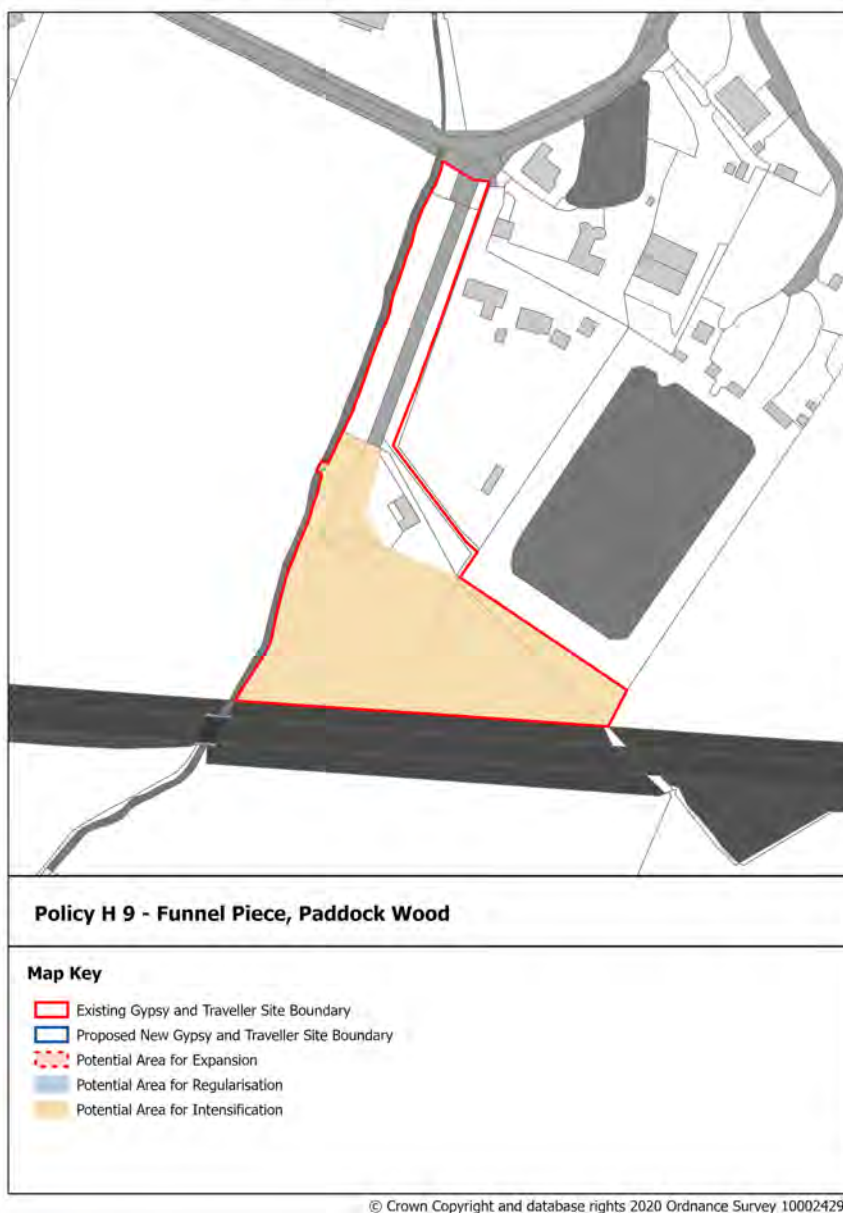
Map 65 Cinderhill Wood, Brenchley and Matfield

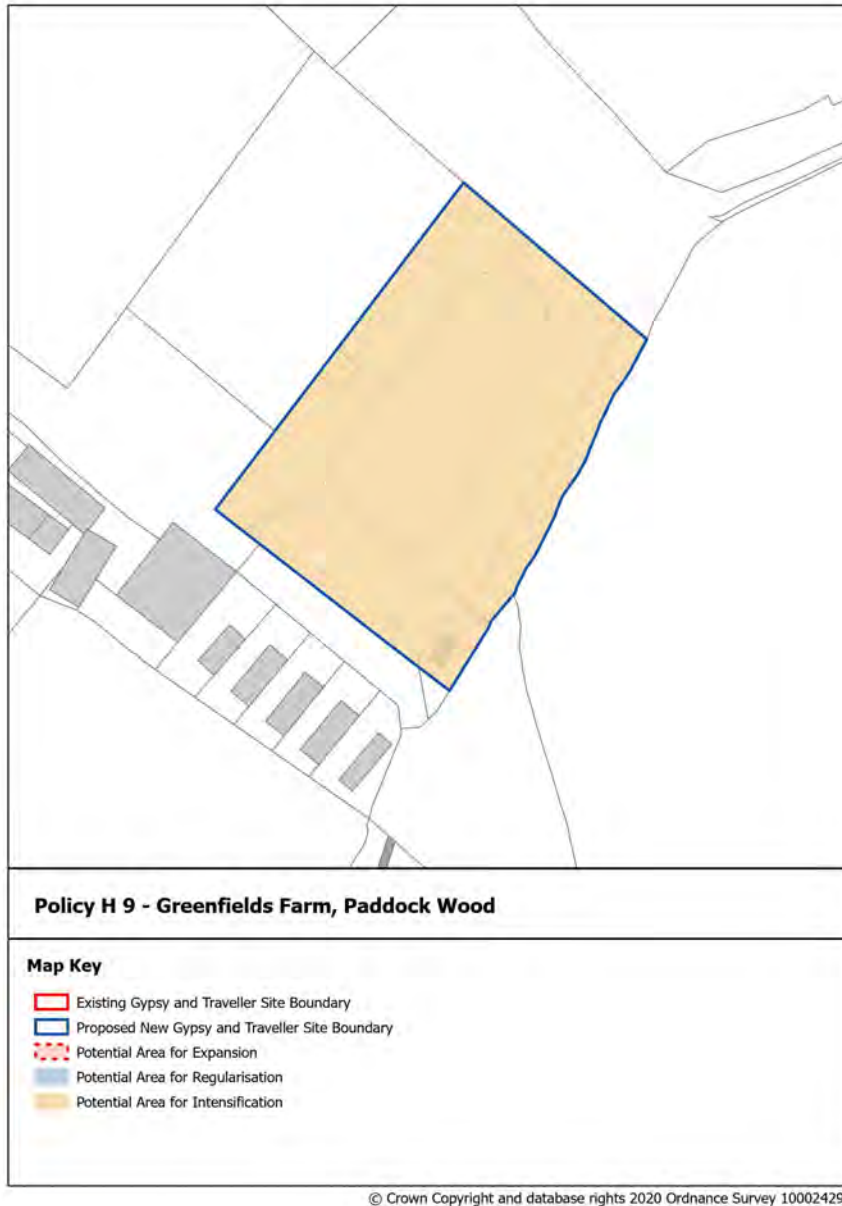


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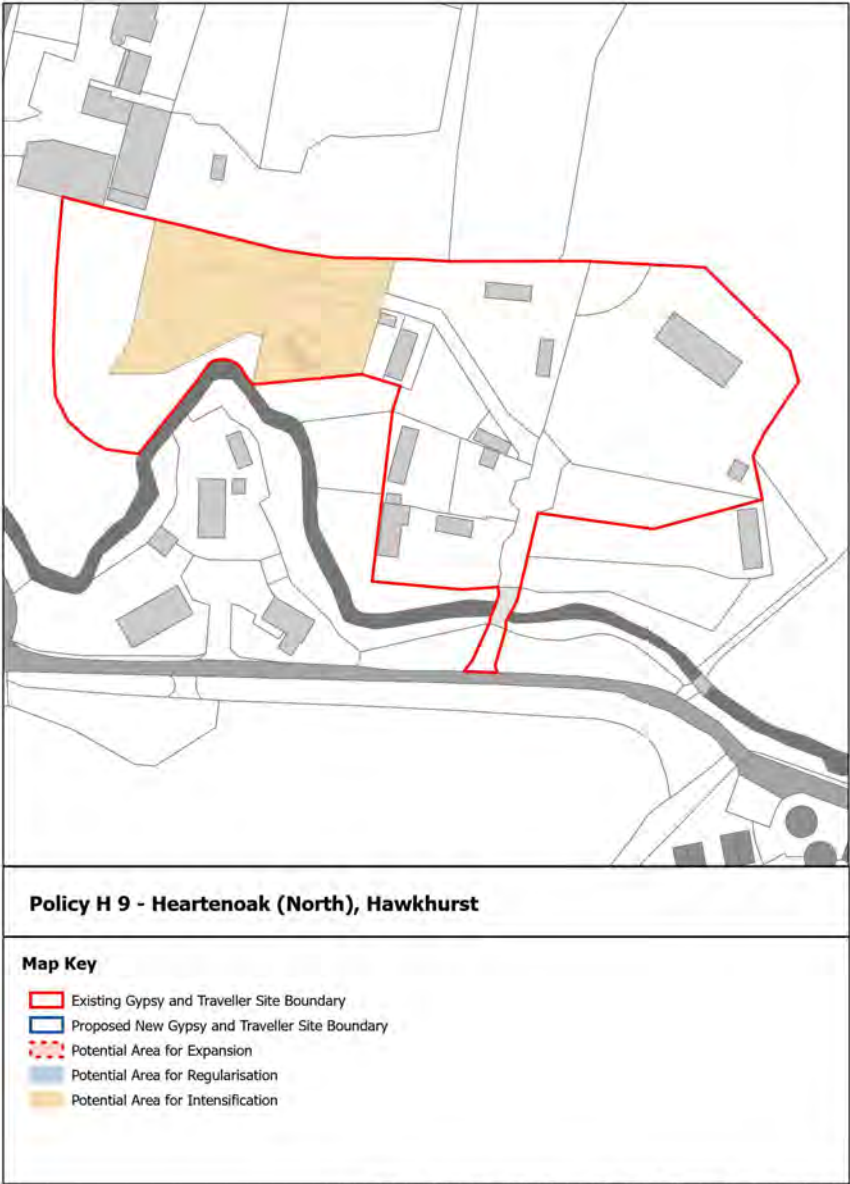
Map 66 Dean Wood, Paddock Wood

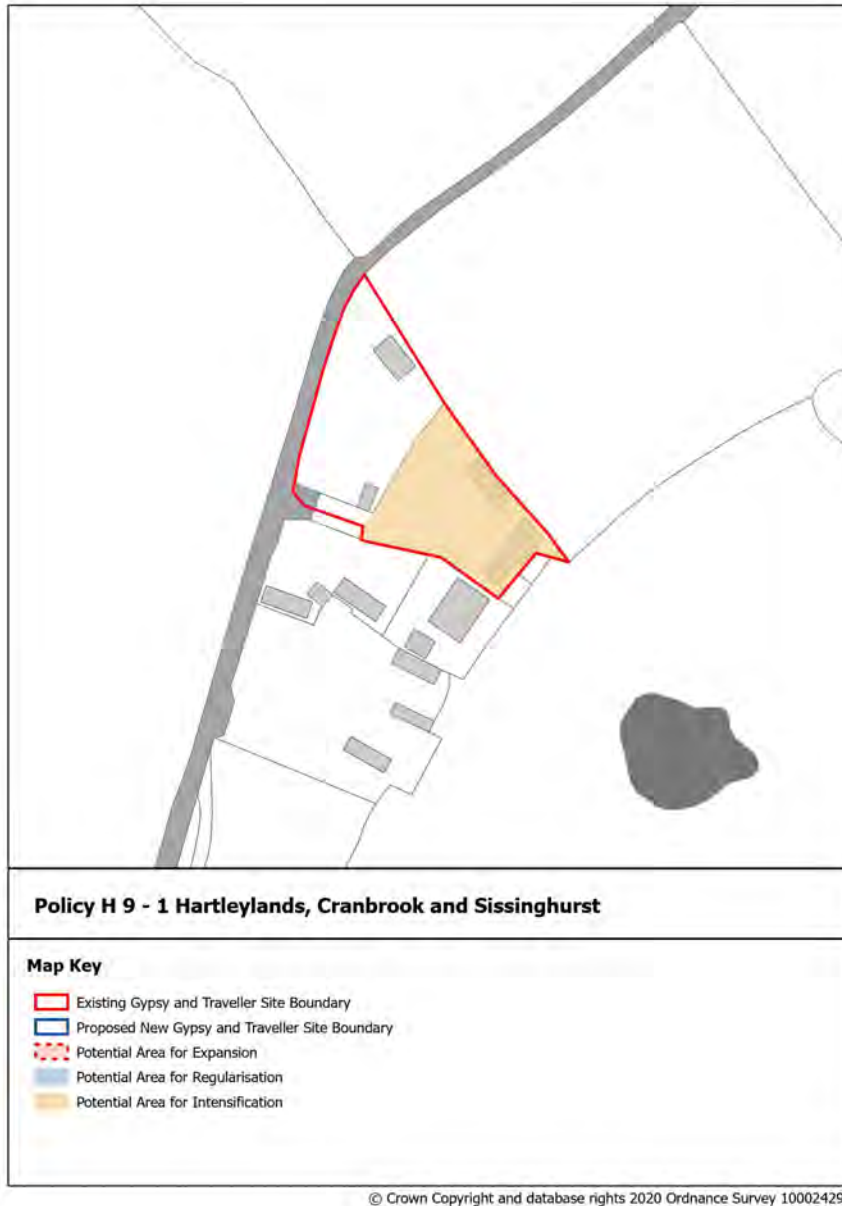
Map 67 Funnel Piece, Paddock Wood



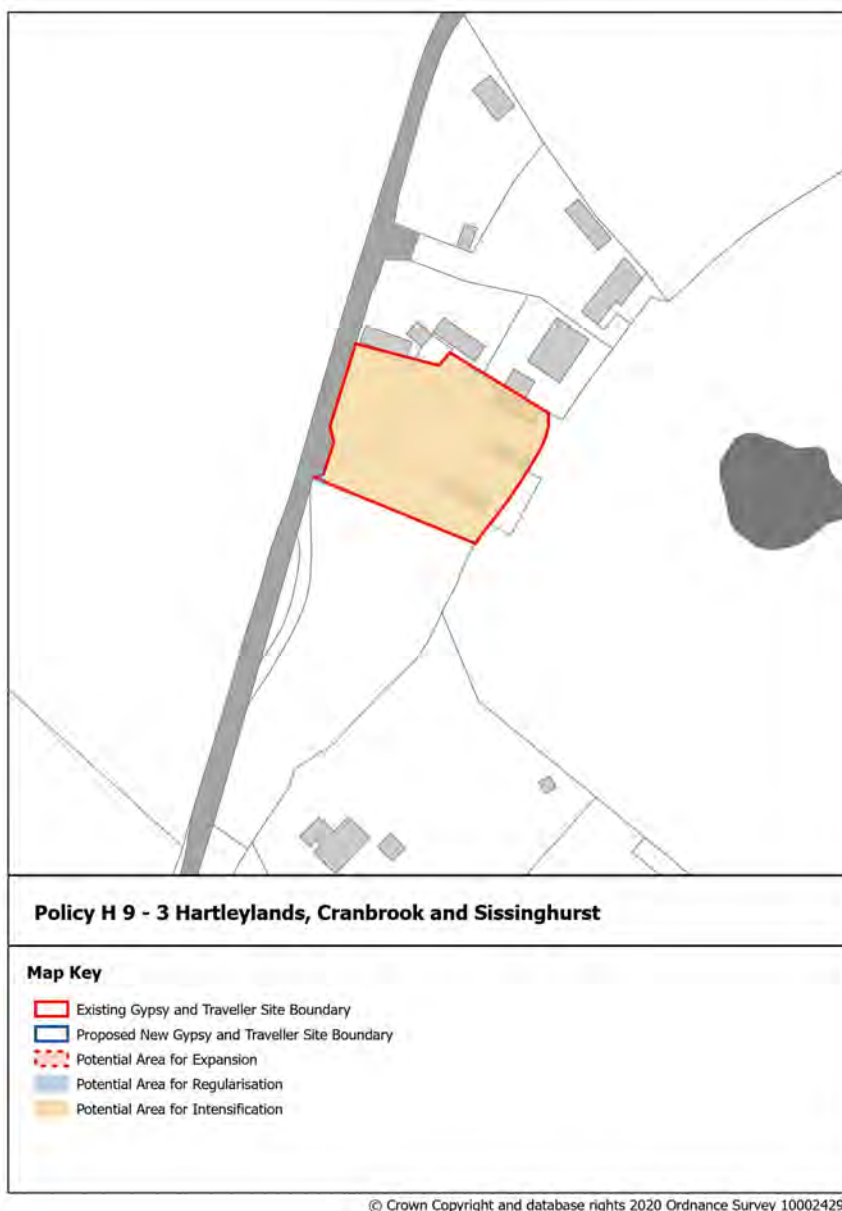
Map 68 Greenfields Farm, Paddock Wood

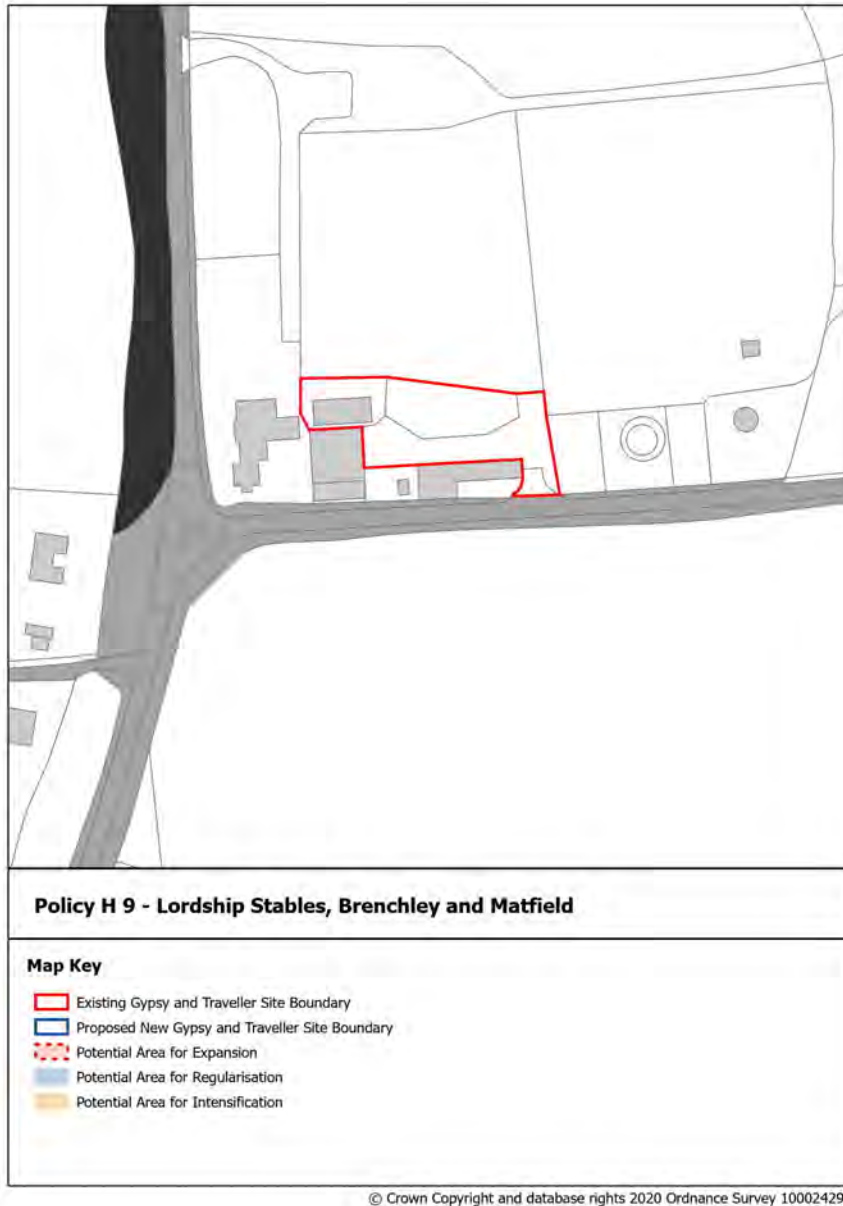
Map 69 Heartenoak (north), Hawkhurst



Map 70 1 Hartleylands, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst

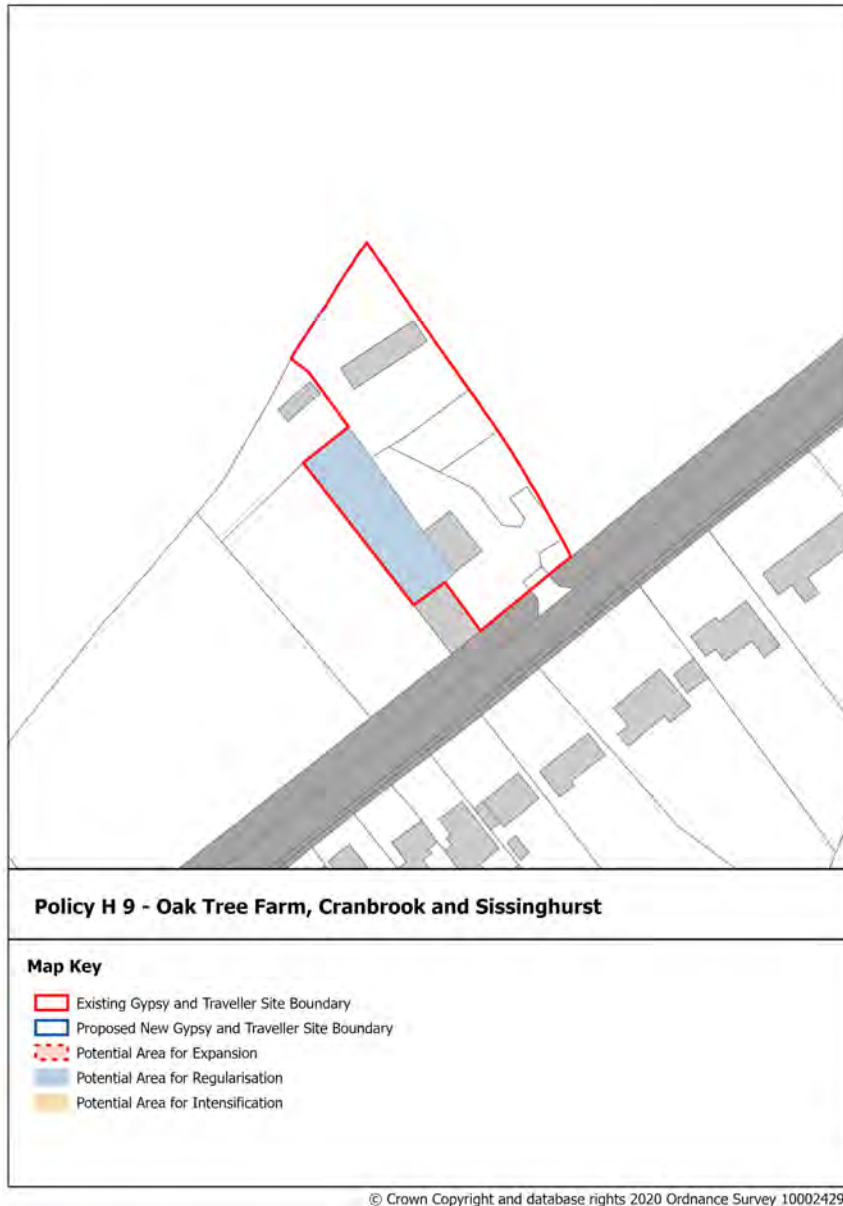
Map 71 3 Hartleylands, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst



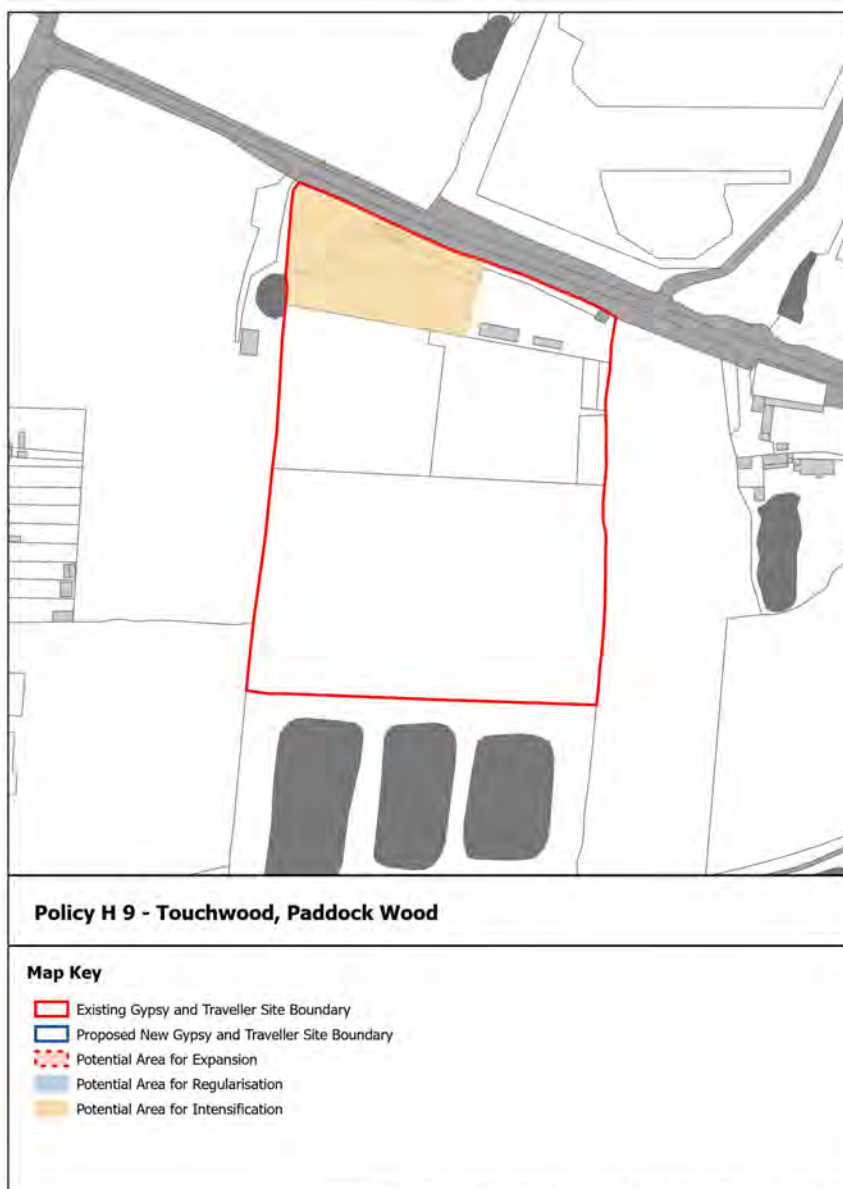
Map 72 Lordship Stables, Brenchley and Matfield

Map 73 Mile Oak Stables, Paddock Wood

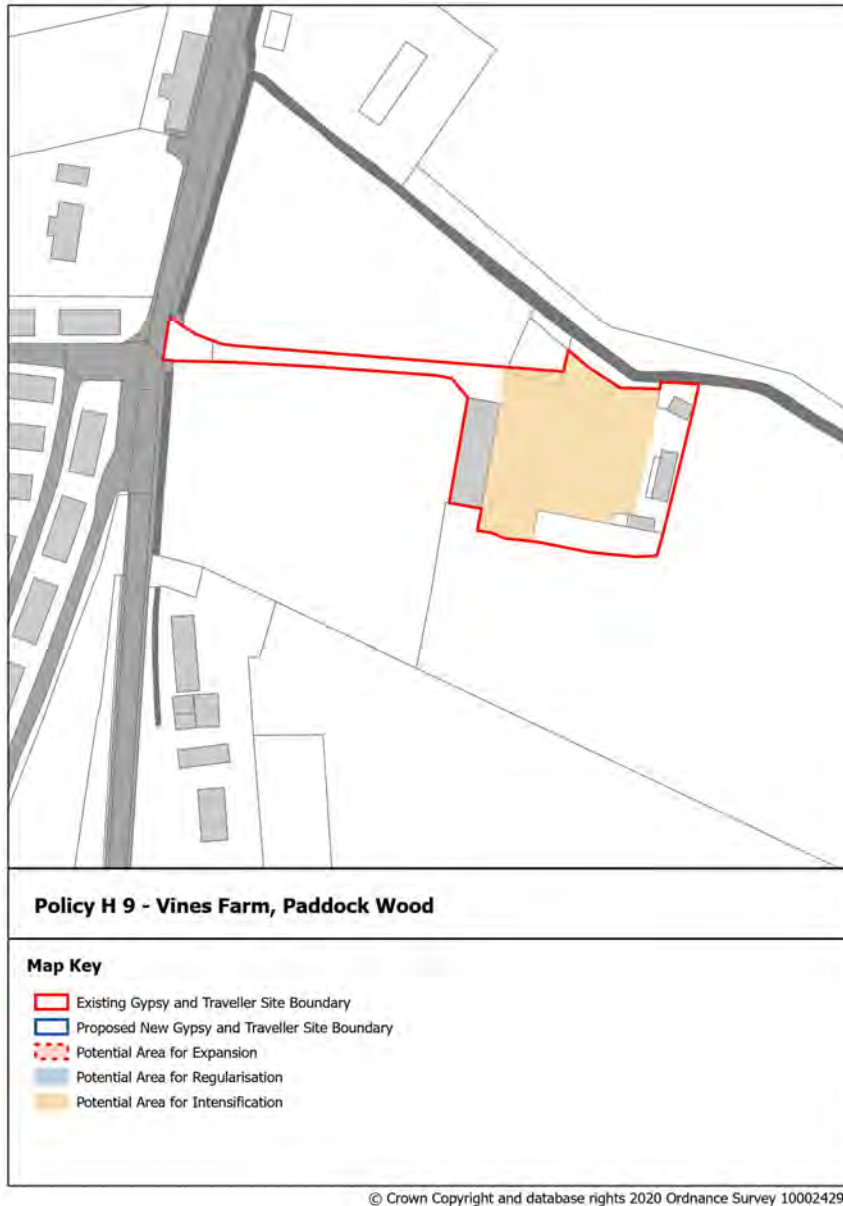


Map 74 Oak Tree Farm, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst

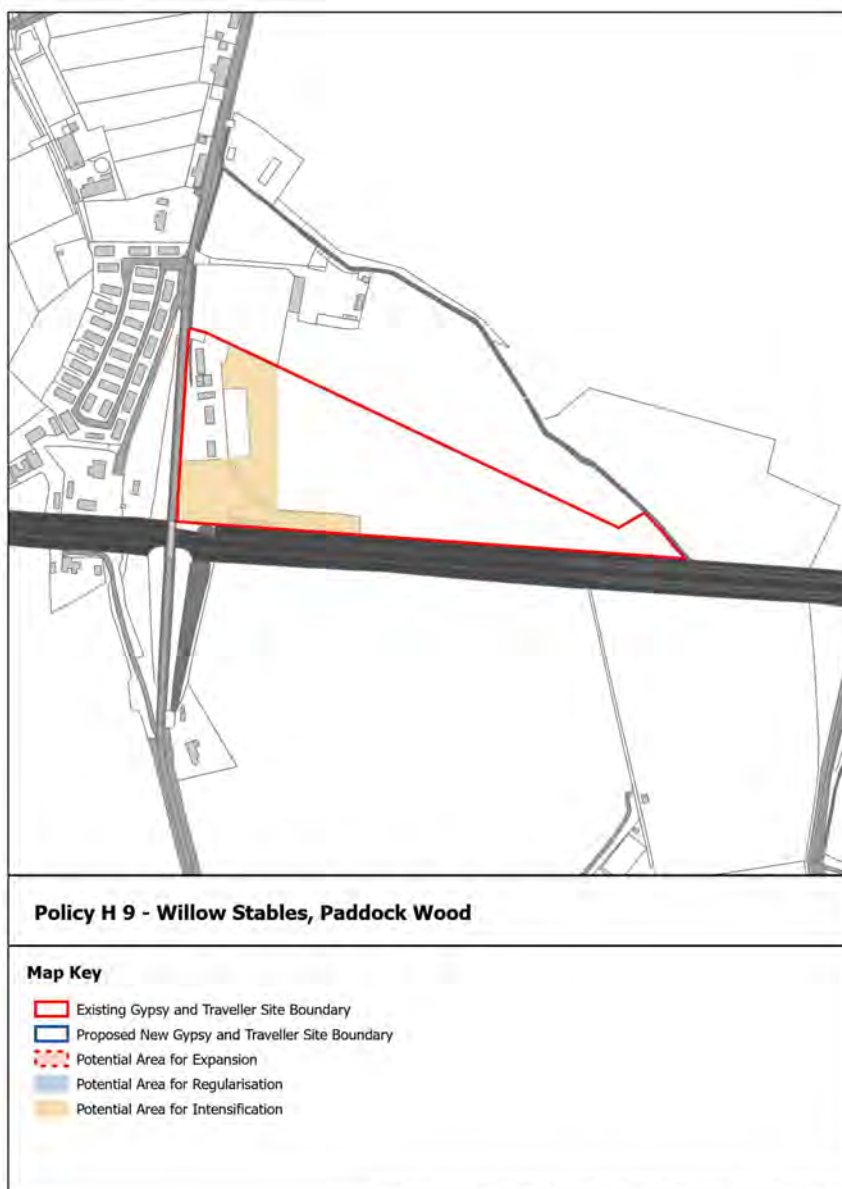
Map 75 Touchwood, Paddock Wood



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Map 76 Vines Farm, Paddock Wood

Map 77 Willow Stables, Paddock Wood



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Appendix 7: SHELAA and SALP Reference Numbers

Index of Section 5 Site Allocation Policies with SHELAA, Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) and other reference numbers where applicable

Site Allocation Policy Number	Site Address	SHELAA and/or SALP or other reference numbers
Royal Tunbridge Wells		
AL/RTW 1	Former Cinema Site, Mount Pleasant Road	SALP AL/RTW 2B
AL/RTW 2	Land at the Auction House, Linden Park Road	SALP AL/RTW 24 and SHELAA Site Number 260 (part)
AL/RTW 3	Land at Lifestyle Ford, Mount Ephraim/Culverden Street/Rock Villa Road	SALP AL/RTW 22
AL/RTW 4	Land at 36-46 St John's Road	Part of SALP AL/RTW 5
AL/RTW 5	Land to the south of Speldhurst Road and west of Reynolds Lane at Caenwood Farm, Speldhurst Road	SHELAA Site Numbers 30 and 100 (part)
AL/RTW 6	Land at 202 and 230 Upper Grosvenor Road	SHELAA Site Number 459
AL/RTW 7	Land at former Gas Works, Sandhurst Road	SALP AL/RTW 10
AL/RTW 8	TN2 Centre and adjacent land, Greggs Wood Road, Sherwood	SHELAA Site Number 258
AL/RTW 9	Land at Beechwood Sacred Heart School	SALP AL/RTW 16
AL/RTW 10	Montacute Gardens	SALP AL/RTW 4B and SHELAA Site Number 7
AL/RTW 11	Former Plant & Tool Hire, Eridge Road	SALP AL/RTW 6, SHELAA Site Number 176 (and additional land)
AL/RTW 12	Land at Tunbridge Wells Telephone Engineering Centre, Broadwater Down	SALP AL/RTW 13 and SHELAA Site Number 198
AL/RTW 13	Turners Pie Factory, Broadwater Lane	SALP AL/RTW 13 and SHELAA Site Number 145
AL/RTW 14	Land at Wyevale Garden Centre, Eridge Road	SHELAA Site Number 24
AL/RTW 15	Land at Showfields Road and Rowan Tree Road	SHELAA Site Number 267 and additional land
AL/RTW 16	Land to the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm	SHELAA Site Number 137
AL/RTW 17	Land adjacent to Longfield Road	SHELAA Site Numbers 57, late site 43 & DPC 7 (part)
AL/RTW 18	Land at the former North Farm landfill site, North Farm Lane and land at North Farm Lane, North Farm Industrial Estate	SHELAA Site Numbers 72 & 261
AL/RTW 19	Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground	SHELAA Site Number 53 (part) & 240
AL/RTW 20	Land at Culverden Stadium, Culverden Down	SHELAA Site Number 235
AL/RTW 21	Land at Colebrook Sports Field, Liptraps Lane	SHELAA Site Number 238
AL/RTW 22	Land at Bayham Sports Field West	SHELAA Site Number 236
Southborough		
AL/SO 2	Land at Mabledon House	SHELAA Site Number 90 & additional land)
AL/SO 3	Land at Baldwin's Lane, North Farm Road	SHELAA Site Number DPC13
Strategic Sites		

Site Allocation Policy Number	Site Address	SHELAA and/or SALP or other reference numbers
STR/SS 1	The Strategy for Paddock Wood and east Capel	SALP AL/PW 3A and AL/PW 3B and SHELAA Site Numbers 20, 47, 51, 79, 142, 212, 218, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 340, 342, 344, 347, 371, 374, 376, 402, late site 48, DPC1 & DPC19
STR/SS 2	The Strategy for Paddock Wood Town Centre	SALP AL/PW 1
Paddock Wood		
AL/PW 1	Land at Mascalls Farm	SALP AL/PW 4 and includes late site 52
Cranbrook and Sissinghurst		
AL/CRS 1	Land at Brick Kiln Farm, Cranbrook	Part of SALP AL/CR 4
AL/CRS 2	Land south of Corn Hall, Crane Valley, Cranbrook	Part of SALP AL/CR 4 and SHELAA Site Numbers 292 & 396 (part)
AL/CRS 3	Turnden Farm, Hartley Road	SHELAA Site Number 430
AL/CRS 4	Cranbrook School	SHELAA Site Numbers 128 & 130
AL/CRS 5	Sissinghurst Castle Garden	N/A
AL/CRS 6	Land south of The Street	SHELAA Site Numbers 159 and late site 51
AL/CRS 7	Land at corner of Frittenden Road and Common Road, Sissinghurst	SHELAA Site Number 68
Hawkhurst (including Gill's Green)		
AL/HA 2	Brook House, Cranbrook Road	Part of SALP AL/HA 1 and SHELAA Site Number 457
AL/HA 3	Former site of Springfield Nurseries	Part of SALP AL/HA1 and SHELAA Site Number 115 (part)
AL/HA 4	Land off Copthall Avenue and Highgate Hill	SHELAA Site Numbers 78 & 419
AL/HA 5	Land to the north of Birchfield Grove	SHELAA Site Number 413 (part)
AL/HA 6	King George V Playing Fields, The Moor	SALP AL/HA 5
AL/HA 7	Hawkhurst Station Business Park	SHELAA Site Number 102
Bidborough		
No site allocations		
Brenchley and Matfield		
AL/BM 2	Land at Maidstone Road	SHELAA Site Number 401
Frittenden		
AL/FR 1	Land at Cranbrook Road, Frittenden	SHELAA Site Number late site 28
Goudhurst		
AL/GO 1	Land east of Balcombes Hill and adjacent to Tiddymotts Lane	SHELAA Site Number 124
AL/GO 2	Land at Triggs Farm, Cranbrook Road	SHELAA Site Number 174
Horsmonden		
AL/HO 2	Land south of Brenchley Road and west of Fromandez Drive	SHELAA Site Number 162
AL/HO 3	Land to the east of Horsmonden	SHELAA Site Numbers 82, 108, 297, 324
Lamberhurst		
AL/LA 1	Land to the west of Spray Hill	SHELAA Site Number 279
Pembury		

Site Allocation Policy Number	Site Address	SHELAA and/or SALP or other reference numbers
AL/PE 1	Land rear of High Street and west of Chalket Lane	SHELAA Site Numbers 44, 67, 369 & late site 5
AL/PE 2	Land at Hubbles Farm and south of Hastings Road	SHELAA Site Numbers 50, 390
AL/PE 3	Land north of the A21, south and west of Hastings Road	SHELAA Site Number 189
AL/PE 4A	Land at Downingbury Farm (west), Maidstone Road	Part of SHELAA Site Number 375
AL/PE 4B	Land at Downingbury Farm (east), Maidstone Road	Part of SHELAA Site Number 375
AL/PE 6	Woodsgate Corner, Pembury	SALP AL/VRA 2 and SHELAA Site Number 395
AL/PE 7	Cornford Court, Cornford Lane	SHELAA Site Number 460
AL/PE 8	Owlsnest, Tonbridge Road	SHELAA Site Number late site 13
Rusthall		
AL/RU 1	Lifestyle Motor Europe, Langton Road	SALP AL/RTW 9
Sandhurst		
AL/SA 1	Land on the south side of Sayville, Rye Road and west of Marsh Quarter Lane	SHELAA Site Number 149 & 227
AL/SA 2	Sharps Hill Farm, Queen Street	SHELAA Site Number DPC12
Speldhurst (including Langton Green)		
AL/SP 1	Land to the west of Langton Road and south of Ferbies	SHELAA Site Number 231
AL/SP 2	Land at and adjacent to Rusthall Recreation Ground, Southwood Road	SHELAA Site Number 239

If you require this document in another format, please contact:

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