

Development and Site Allocations Local Plan



Green Infrastructure

Background Paper Addendum

Green Infrastructure Background Paper (Addendum) 2016

Contents

1. Introduction	5
Relationship to 2011 Green Infrastructure Study	5
Definition of Green Infrastructure	5
2. The Hierarchy of Sites	7
International Sites	7
Nationally Designated Sites	9
Local Sites	9
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats	10
Ancient Woodland	12
Rivers and Streams	13
<i>Environment Agency ‘South East River Basin Management Plans’</i>	13
<i>Environment Agency ‘River Rother Catchment Flood Management Plan’</i>	15
<i>Arun & Rother Connections</i>	
Other areas of importance to biodiversity	17
<i>High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (HW AONB)</i>	
<i>Rye Harbour Local Nature Reserve</i>	
<i>Combe Valley Countryside Park</i>	
<i>Biodiversity Opportunity Areas</i>	
Role of the Sussex Local Nature Partnership (LNP)	
Protection of Local Sites, Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitats through the planning system	20
3. Legally Protected Species	21
Birds	21
Where are protected species likely to occur?	22
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Species	23
Protected Species in National Guidance and Policy	24
4. Accessible Natural Green Space	25
5. Planning Decisions and Development	26
Reports and Information Informing Planning Decisions	26
Biodiversity within Developments Sites	27

1. INTRODUCTION

Relationship to 2011 Green Infrastructure Study

- 1.1. This document needs to be read in conjunction with original Green Infrastructure (GI) Study published in 2011 on the Council's website¹.
- 1.2. This 'Addendum' updates some of the information to the present day, provides more supporting information in relation to 'the Hierarchy of Sites', 'Legally Protected Species' and 'Planning Decisions and Development'.
- 1.3. The original 2011 Study included a section (4.2) on 'Spatial Green Infrastructure Opportunities' drawing out the key GI opportunities as they relate to individual geographic areas, namely Bexhill, Hastings Fringes, Battle Area, Rye Area, Rural Rother (West) and Rural Rother (East). This 2016 addendum elaborates further by examining opportunities in relation to individual villages.
- 1.4. Reference should also be made to Core Strategy Policy EN5 which provides the over-arching policy context and has been adopted subsequent to the 2011 Green Infrastructure Study. Policy EN5 contained several measures to protect and enhance biodiversity, geodiversity and greenspace. In particular, EN5 sought to link areas of greenspace via a network of GI; to support opportunities of management, restoration and creation of habitats; to improve accessibility to the countryside from urban areas, to ensure that development retains, protects and enhances habitats and required developers to integrate biodiversity into development. This 'GI Study Addendum' provides more detailed guidance on how these policy elements can be achieved.

Definition of Green Infrastructure

- 1.5. Green Infrastructure consists of the green areas in both urban and rural settings. It fulfils a variety of functions including provision for biodiversity alongside delivery of recreational and cultural objectives. Green Infrastructure can include nature reserves, designated sites, recreational grounds, parks and open spaces, public rights of way, canals, allotments, cemeteries and many other water bodies and green spaces. The Council has produced a Green Infrastructure background paper mapping many of these areas. In addition, East Sussex County Council has produced a Green Infrastructure Study, available on the Sussex Nature Partnership web-site.

¹ See <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/5005/Background-Evidence>

- 1.6. Green Infrastructure should provide a network of interconnected habitats to enable dispersal of species across the wider environment. Open spaces within developments should be linked to biodiversity in the wider countryside, including on designated sites, BAP habitats and BOAs. Green Infrastructure should also be planned to provide ecosystem services such as flood protection, microclimate control, filtration of air pollutants and enable our biodiversity to adapt to climate change.
- 1.7. New developments should be designed to maintain existing Green Infrastructure and enhance/expand provision. In delivering biodiversity enhancements, measures should be taken to contribute to the Green Infrastructure network to maintain existing habitats and to reduce habitat fragmentation.
- 1.8. Production of a Green Infrastructure master-plan should be considered for large scale developments. Where this is the case, consideration should be given to the need to have a funded management plan to ensure that the benefits generated through GI are delivered in perpetuity.

2. THE HIERARCHY OF SITES

International Sites

- 2.1. Internationally designated sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites, which are sometimes collectively referred to as 'Natura 2000' sites. Rother District contains all three designations; Pevensey Levels is a Ramsar and SAC, whilst the eastern side of the District (Rye Harbour, Winchelsea, Camber, Pett area) is extensively covered by SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites.
- 2.2. The NPPF confirms (in paragraph 119) that the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14) does not apply where developments requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitat Directives is being considered, planned or determined.
- 2.3. The Habitats Regulations require that the Council ensures that no significant harm comes to any protected international wildlife site. Therefore, when preparing development plans for the District, the Council (as the relevant competent authority) is required to undertake 'Habitat Regulations Assessments' (HRA). The HRA processes conducted in support of the Core Strategy notably resulted in the requirement for a 'Sustainable Access Strategy' to manage future access around the Dungeness complex to a greater degree than is currently the case and as a mechanism to ensure that no adverse effect on the Dungeness complex will occur. The Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (DaSA) has been subject to HRA screening (which also covers Neighbourhood Plans within the District). The 'Sustainable Access Strategy' required as a result of the HRA is currently being produced by the Council in partnership with Shepway District Council, Natural England and other environmental bodies. A further outcome of the HRA conducted for the Core Strategy was a need to control the quantity and rate of run-off within the hydrological catchment of the Pevensey Levels, which has been addressed by Core Strategy Policy SRM2 and is to be supplemented by a SuDS/Drainage policy within the emerging DaSA.

2.4. HRA also applies with regard to the development management process. If a development is proposed that may impact on a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, the applicant will need to submit an assessment of potential impacts and their significance with their planning application. This information is used by the local authority to make an 'Appropriate Assessment' of the implications for the internationally designated site. Impacts that will need to be considered include direct impacts, for example habitat loss through land take, and indirect impacts such as changes to water quality or quantity, air pollution or increased recreational pressure. In exceptional circumstances a proposal that would impact negatively on an internationally designated site may be permitted, but only where there are no alternative solutions and the proposal is necessary for imperative reasons of over-riding public interest. Where this is the case, compensatory measures will be necessary.

International Sites in Rother

2.5. As illustrated on Map 2, the District has two broad areas of international habitat designations focused around the Pevensey Levels in the south-west of the district and the Rye Bay, Camber and Pett Levels area in the south-east of the district.

2.6. Following expansions and new designations in March 2016, the District's international sites are as follows:

International Sites in Rother

Ramsar Sites (wetland habitats)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pevensey Levels • Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay
Special Protection Areas (protection of birds)	1	Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay (and a proposed marine extension –see Map 2a)
Special Areas of Conservation (protection of species and habitats)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dungeness. • Pevensey Levels

Nationally Designated Sites

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 2.7. SSSIs are designated for either their biological or geological interest and cover approximately 9% of the District. In Rother, all international sites are also designated as SSSIs. The Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report notes that approximately two thirds of Rother's SSSIs are in favourable condition, with the vast majority of the remainder 'recovering' from an unfavourable condition.
- 2.8. SSSIs are given a high level of protection through both the planning and legal systems – NPPF paragraph 118 confirms that proposed developments on land within or outside a SSSI likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI (either individually or combined with other developments) should not normally be permitted. There is not a requirement for the 'Appropriate Assessment' process for SSSIs, but for developments likely to impact on a SSSI an Environmental Impact Assessment will usually be necessary.

Local Sites

- 2.9. Local Sites are sites of substantive nature conservation value or geological interest, and are valuable sites for local wildlife. In Rother, Local Sites consist of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS).
- 2.10. Although Local Sites are a non-statutory designation they are recognised within the planning system. Defra have produced a useful guide 'Local Sites – Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management'. While there are no legal obligations attached to them their special characteristics mean they are sites of high priority within the county and their maintenance is important. Their importance is highlighted in NPPF paragraph 117.
- 2.11. If a planning proposal is likely to affect an SNCI a biodiversity survey and report will be necessary to establish any likely impacts.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats

- 2.12. Sometimes also referred to as ‘Priority Habitats’ or ‘Habitats of Principal Importance’, BAP habitats are defined nationally, whilst locally present BAP habitats are listed in the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan <https://www.biodiversitysussex.org.uk/habitats/>
- 2.13. BAP habitats are those identified under Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act as habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity in England and are, therefore, protected by planning policy. These habitats do not receive *statutory* protection, but are protected by NPPF paragraph 117. They will be found both within and outside designated sites, and may occur in areas outside of those in previous maps in this document.
- 2.14. The distribution of known BAP priority habitats in Rother is identified in the table below (and illustrated in Map 3).

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats in Rother

BAP Habitat	Locations in Rother
Arable Field Margins	Widespread across rural Rother.
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	Widespread in Rother, with concentrations in the Pevensy Levels and the wetlands around Rye, Camber and Winchelsea. Other areas include the valleys of the Rivers Rother and Brede, and at Filsham.
Coastal sand dunes	Characteristic of the Romney Marsh area with a notable concentration in Rother District at Camber.
Coastal salt marsh	Valued stretch along the west bank of Rye Harbour.
Coastal vegetated shingle	Extensive across Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, Denge Marsh and Lydd Ranges. More isolated patches exist at Broomhill Sands, Fairlight Cove, Pett Level, Pevensy Levels beach, Bulverhythe, Cooden Beach, Galley Hill and Glyne Gap.
Hedgerows	Widespread across Rother.
Lowland calcareous grassland	Rare in Rother. One small example between Battle and Hastings near Duke’s Wood.
Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	Present in sporadic patches within Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.
Lowland Fens	Present in three broad locations. (i) Combe Valley Countryside Park straddling the border with Hastings Borough, (ii) Pett Levels, (iii) South of Winchelsea at Pewls Marsh and west of the Royal Military Road. Also present in Pevensy Levels, but just beyond the District boundary in neighbouring Wealden.

Lowland Heathland	Scattered across the District, including the eastern fringes of Battle Great Wood, Bixley Wood between Beckley and Peasmarsh, fringes of Brede High Woods, land east and north of Flimwell, High Wood (Burwash), Darwell Wood, Brightling Down and Dallington Forest. However, the largest 'local' extent is in neighbouring Hastings Borough at Hastings Cliffs Country Park.
Lowland Meadow	The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership suggests this is a priority habitat in at least three BOAs in Rother – 'Romney Marsh Area', 'Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods' and 'Great Wood Area'. Examples of lowland meadow are scattered across the High Weald AONB. In Rother it is most commonly found in Darwell and the Brede and Dudwell Valleys.
Maritime Cliff and Slopes	Coastline of Fairlight Cliffs and to a lesser extent at Pevensey Levels,
Mudflats	Rye Harbour and lower reaches of River Rother.
Ponds	Extensive across Rother.
Reedbeds	Extensive in eastern areas of the District, including East Guldeford Levels, Denge Marsh, Lydd Ranges. Other reedbeds include Pennel Sewer (between Pett, Icklesham and Winchelsea), patches of both Pett and Pevensey Levels, Filsham reedbeds (within countryside park boundary) is accessible to the public via boardwalks.
Rivers and Streams	New priority habitat [including existing Chalk Rivers priority habitat] (scope clarified in 2010). Widespread across Rother,
Saline lagoons	Just a couple of examples in Rye Harbour.
Traditional Orchards	Scattered across the District, particularly the Lower Rother Valley and to a lesser extent, the Brede Valley.
Woodland - Wet	Extensive across the High Weald AONB, but not a characteristic of the coastal marshes.
Woodland - Deciduous	Extensive across the High Weald AONB, but not a characteristic of the coastal marshes.

2.15. In addition, the following 'Special to Sussex Habitats' have been identified in the table below (and mapped in the original Green Infrastructure Study).

Special to Sussex non-BAP Habitats

Special to Sussex Habitat	Locations in Rother
Woodland - Ghyll	Extensive across the High Weald AONB, but not a characteristic of the coastal marshes.
Sandstone outcrops	Scattered examples across district, notably at Fairlight Cliffs. It is a specific objective of the HW AONB Management Plan to protect them.
Roadside verges	Extensive.
Ancient woodland	Extensive across the High Weald. 2010 survey has identified many more small scale examples.

- 2.16. The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre clarifies that BAP and Special to Sussex habitats may exist in areas that are not currently mapped. This seems particularly true of roadside verges, hedgerows and streams where the sheer extent of smaller habitats makes fully comprehensive mapping extremely difficult. This is an important consideration in the application of planning policy that seeks to protect these areas.
- 2.17. In addition there are a number of marine BAP habitats that fall outside the scope of the planning system, as listed here: <https://www.biodiversitysussex.org.uk/habitats/>. This includes inter-tidal chalk.
- 2.18. The later section on ‘Biodiversity within Developments’ outlines measures by which the plan will seek to maintain and enhance BAP habitats alongside larger developments.

Ancient Woodland

- 2.19. Ancient woods are a nationally important and threatened habitat. They can be broadly defined as those woodlands that are known to have had continuous tree cover since at least 1600 AD. An Ancient Woodland Inventory has been under taken in the District.
- 2.20. Ancient woodlands and ancient or veteran trees are likely to have biodiversity interest, as well as cultural and historical significance. Ancient woodlands and ancient and veteran trees may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) but they are also protected by the NPPF (paragraph 118).
- 2.21. Ancient woodlands are likely to have greater biodiversity interest than more recently planted woodlands; some ancient woodland will also be Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats. Many woodland plants with limited dispersal abilities are associated with ancient woodlands — some of these are used to help identify the presence of ancient woodland and are known as ancient woodland indicators. In addition to ground flora interest, ancient woodlands are likely to support protected species such as bats and dormice, as well as woodland birds and butterflies. Veteran trees are also particularly important for the invertebrate communities they support, as well as providing good roosting habitat for bats, and nesting sites for birds and supporting a rich variety of lichens and mosses.
- 2.22. Natural England and the Forestry Commission publish standing advice for assessing impacts ancient woodland. Sussex Wildlife Trust have published

advice on 'Landscape Buffer Strips' for the protection of trees, woods and other wildlife habitats.

Rivers and Streams

- 2.23. In addition to their status as BAP Habitats, rivers are also the subject of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), European Legislation relating to the status of water in this country, and to the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003, reference below.
- 2.24. In the WFD Regulations, regulation 11 specifies that River Basin Management Plans must be prepared; other regulations require that these Plans must be approved and regulation 17 requires Local Authorities, as "public bodies", to have regard to the plans and supplementary plans prepared under regulation 16. The South East River Basin Management Plan is summed up in the following section.
- 2.25. In partnership with the Environment Agency and with others, it is a duty of the Local Authority to act to improve the status of waters in the District and rivers are part of the Authority's Green Infrastructure (GI).

Environment Agency 'South East River Basin Management Plan'

- 2.26. To meet the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive, Member States have established River Basin Districts and developed Plans and Programmes of Measures that detail the actions that need to be taken within each District. East Sussex lies within the South East River Basin District. The overall aim is for the 'water bodies' and 'protected areas' within each River Basin District to achieve 'good ecological status' by 2015.
- 2.27. The Environment Agency's South East River Basin Management Plan (SE RBMP) was produced in 2009² to meet the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive. The overall aim was for the 'water bodies' and 'protected areas' within each River Basin District to achieve 'good ecological status' by 2015. Though no actual figures have been published to date, it is estimated that 46% of water bodies failed to meet good status by the end of 2015 (source: www.freeths.co.uk). Figures 19 and 20 of the SE RBMP indicate that Rother watercourses are of either moderate or good water quality.

² It can be found here

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295841/geso0910bsta-e-e.pdf

- 2.28. Within the SE RBMP there were a number of key actions for both the Rother catchment and Pevensy Levels catchments. The South East River Basin Management Plan is due to be updated shortly since the Water Framework Directive introduced a formal series of 6 year cycles. The first cycle ended in 2015.
- 2.29. Action in the Cuckmere and Pevensy levels catchment was predicted to improve the ecological status of the Watermill Stream by 2015.
- 2.30. The Plan notes that the Rother catchment is characterised by the steep river valleys and woodland of the High Weald in the north and the marshes of the south east. Water level control is crucial in the low-lying areas, to provide for wildlife and prevent flooding. The Royal Military Canal is a scheduled ancient monument that enables the drainage and irrigation of valuable agricultural land, as well as being rich biodiversity.
- 2.31. Point source pollution from sewage works is a major challenge in the Rother catchment, which is currently limiting the number of rivers at good status. A high proportion of rivers and lakes in the catchment are heavily modified or artificial. The activities in these waters can hinder the movement of fish and increase the challenge for providing good ecology. The catchment's four groundwater bodies suffer from high nitrate concentrations caused by urban and agricultural activities. There is oil and chemical contamination beneath an industrial site near Rye Harbour, which impacts on the ecology of the adjacent wetland, lakes and streams.
- 2.32. 25 per cent of rivers in the catchment will improve for at least one element by 2015. For example, the Doleham Ditch will improve for fish. Phosphate class will improve in almost 47 kilometres of river waters, including the River Brede and the Marsham and Pannel Sewers (All in Rother District). Actions in the Rother will lead to improvement in the ecological status of three water bodies by 2015: Doleham Ditch, the Brede between Battle and Winchelsea and the Rother between Witherenden Hill and Etchingham. Those waters in the worst state will be prioritised. 17 per cent of these rivers and lakes (including 52 kilometres of river water body length) currently achieve good or better ecological status/potential. Such waters include the River Tillingham. 58 per cent of waters assessed for biology are at good or high biological status now.

2.33. Key actions for the Rother catchment include:

- Natural England and the Environment Agency will continue to tackle diffuse pollution through the England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative, with particular emphasis on the use of pesticides in the top of the catchment.
- Southern Water will improve sewage works at seven locations, including Battle, to reduce the input of nutrients such as phosphate, and organic pollutants dissolved oxygen and ammonia.
- The Environment Agency will investigate hydrocarbon and solvent contamination, targeting pollution prevention visits at industrial sites in Rye continuing to oversee the clean-up of the chemical contamination at Rye Harbour Road.
- The Environment Agency will aim to address barriers to fish passage at priority sites Tillingham, Udiam Gauging Station and Scots Float tilting weir (all in Rother District).
- A range of partners will work together through the 'better rivers' programme to enhance wildlife habitat on the River Brede between Battle and Winchelsea, and the Romney Marsh Countryside Project will enhance biodiversity in the Romney Marshes.
- The Environment Agency will work with Veolia Water South East to modify the abstraction regime within the Denge Gravel aquifer. This will ensure that the consented activity poses no risk to the internationally important biodiversity at Dungeness Special Area of Conservation that is vulnerable to a lowered groundwater table.
- The Environment Agency will work with others to remove invasive non-native species from the Glottenham Stream (Brightling to Robertsbridge) where they are at risk of spreading.

Environment Agency 'River Rother Catchment Flood Management Plan'

2.34. The River Rother Catchment Management Plan (CFMP) was published in 2009 by the Environment Agency³. The CFMP gives an overview of the flood risk in the Rother and Romney catchment and sets out the EA's preferred plan for sustainable flood risk management over the next 50 to 100 years.

³ It can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/293880/Rother_and_Romney_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf

- 2.35. For Robertsbridge and Etchingam this included the action 'Provide Development Control advice to ensure no increase in run-off from new developments and seek opportunities to reduce current run-off rates where appropriate. Limited development in the floodplain is planned in this policy unit.'
- 2.36. For Rye this included the action 'Provide Development Control advice to ensure no increase in run-off from new developments and seek opportunities to reduce current run-off rates where appropriate. Considerable land is required for development in this policy unit.'
- 2.37. For Rural Rother this included the action 'Investigate opportunities to work with landowners to create wetland habitat, The High Weald integrated catchment management and river restoration study should be updated with data review and ground trothing to prioritise sites for further investigation. (Link with the regional habitat creation programme, River Rother restoration strategy and Rother- the potential for the integrated management of rural floodplains project).'

Arun & Rother Connections

- 2.38. The ARC Project is a Partnership between Sussex Wildlife Trust, RSPB, South Downs National Park Authority, West Sussex County Council, Environment Agency, the Arun & Rother Rivers Trust and Natural England.
- 2.39. The ARC project covers the Arun & Western Rother river catchments, and an area of 77,000 hectares. The project is Heritage Lottery Funded until August 2016. ARC encourages local stewardship of the environment and delivers a vast range of local projects including :-
- Major works to help fish move up rivers
 - Community rain gardens to help people reduce local flooding
 - Over 16km of river and chalk stream restoration
 - Wildlife habitat restoration including; fen, reedbed, floodplain meadow, woodland and wet heath.
 - Surveys and removal of non-native invasive aquatic plants
 - Activities and events to help people to get to know their river, learning about water and water resources
 - A wetlands education programme (for the 64 primary schools in the project area) including a new resource pack
 - Access and visitor improvements at three nature reserves

- River clean ups, angling and canoe taster days, oral history workshops and photography workshops for teens
- The creation of a special new phone App to help local people monitor their wildlife <http://arcexplorer.org.uk/>
- Landowner advice and engagement
- A broad volunteering programme including Riversearch and PondNet training

2.40. The ARC project was born out of the desire to help local people to engage with big landscape issues such as pollution, flooding, invasive species, declining wildlife and the increasing detachment of people from nature. The idea of the project is to bring together all the big organisations in the area, to work together to support and empower people to deal with these issues. It brings together Government, charities and councils, and provides a means of delivering multiple community projects across the river landscape.

Other areas of importance to biodiversity

High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (HW AONB)

2.41. Rother District is has 83% High Weald AONB coverage. Whilst AONBs are landscape designations for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, it is notable that the term 'natural beauty' includes the conservation of flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of an area. Furthermore, AONBs support a large number of designated nature conservation sites and priority habitats. Indeed some of the key HW AONB character features are also priority habitats⁴ (Ghyll woodland, sandstone outcrops, ancient woodland, heathland, wildflower meadows and ponds).

Rye Harbour Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

2.42. Rye Harbour is defined as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which is a statutory designation. The Reserve was established in 1970 and is a partnership led by Sussex Wildlife Trust and includes the Environment Agency, the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and private landowners. The site management is undertaken by the Sussex Wildlife Trust staff and a dedicated team of volunteers from the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

⁴ Including both BAP habitats and 'Special to Sussex' habitats.

Combe Valley Countryside Park

- 2.43. The Combe Valley Countryside Park is the largest area of accessible green infrastructure in the District and also plays an important role in addressing the needs of Hastings. It was formerly known as the Pebsham Countryside Park and was referred to as such in the main body of the Green Infrastructure Study (2011).
- 2.44. This CVCP has already been addressed in an over-arching manner in Core Strategy Policy EN5 as follows '*(iii) Establish a major area of accessible open space at Combe Valley Countryside Park, between Bexhill and Hastings*', and also through Core Strategy Policy HF1. In the 2006 Local Plan it was allocated via Policy BX4.
- 2.45. The CVCP was highlighted as meeting a sub-regional deficiency of accessible natural greenspace in the East Sussex Strategic Open Space Study.
- 2.46. Rother District Council's Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening report (2016) also highlights the role of CVCP as providing SANGs (in the form of a sub-regional scale area of GI) for the Dungeness complex of international sites. Whilst the Dungeness complex demonstrably draws visitors from a very wide area (see 90% and 75% zone of influence working to demonstrate this is the case), the CVCP will provide a SANG for users from the Hastings and Rother area (particularly western and central Rother) thus contributing towards reducing impact of recreational pressure on the international sites. In addition, the CVCP area already contains some of the same Biodiversity Priority Habitats that exist within the Dungeness Natura 2000 complex of sites, namely:
- Reedbeds
 - Coastal Floodplain Grazing Marsh
 - Coastal Vegetated Shingle
 - Lowland Fens
- 2.47. The CVCP therefore provides an opportunity to preserve, enhance and create these and other habitats at a supporting alternative location. Highlighting and promoting this may assist in addressing Natural England concerns over recreational pressure on the Dungeness Natura 2000 Complex.

- 2.48. The CVCP also provides scope to achieve other plan targets related to increases in BAP habitats (i.e. CS EN5(i)) for which it has already received NE funding. These linkages could be identified from the from the current BAP map, e.g
- a) Connecting coastal vegetated shingle along coast
 - b) Extend coastal floodplain and grazing marsh along river valleys
 - c) Connecting woodlands & hedgerows
 - d) Connecting and extending areas pf reedbeds.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs)

- 2.49. BOAs identify areas where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit to wildlife. The main aim within BOAs is to restore biodiversity at a landscape scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of BAP priority habitats. The BOAs were identified by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership in consultation with local authorities, statutory agencies and conservation organisations in Sussex. They were identified by taking into account existing concentrations of BAP habitat and important areas for priority species. The potential for habitat restoration was assessed by taking into account geology, topography and hydrology.
- 2.50. There are nine separate BOAs within, or partially within, Rother District, as set out and mapped in the Green Infrastructure background paper, each supported by a statement identifying the features of biodiversity importance and targets for habitat maintenance, enhancement, restoration and creation. Within these areas, consideration should be given to:
- whether development will affect habitat connectivity and integrity, either positively or negatively; and;
 - opportunities to achieve the aims of the BOAs, including enhanced habitats and linkages to off-site habitats via green corridors.
- 2.51. Whilst BOAs are useful in directing conservation efforts, they are not the only locations where positive contributions towards biodiversity can be achieved. Developments in any location can incorporate biodiversity into its design and improving connectivity of habitats.

Role of the Sussex Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

- 2.52. In 2011 the Government released its Natural Environment White Paper outlining its vision for the natural environment along with 92 commitments aimed at achieving its ambitions. These ambitions include the creation of LNPs; partnerships working to improve the range of benefits and services provided by good land management. It is envisaged that these partnerships will build on existing arrangements and engage with new partners.
- 2.53. Established in 2012 the purpose of the Sussex LNP is to work across sectors and organisations to secure the healthiest ecological system possible thereby protecting and enhancing the natural environment and all that it gives us. The Sussex LNP vision is structured around ecosystems services. This has been developed to reinforce the value the Sussex LNP places on the natural environment and to influence its structure, membership and reporting mechanisms.

Protection of Local Sites, Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitats through the planning system

- 2.54. The following biodiversity features do not receive legal protection, but are recognised through the planning system:
- Local Wildlife Sites
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Priority Habitats
 - Priority Species
- 2.55. Development which would adversely affect these features is not normally acceptable. Only in special cases, where the importance of a development outweighs the impact on the feature, would an adverse effect be permitted. In such cases, planning conditions or obligations would be used to mitigate the impact.
- 2.56. Where a development has the potential to impact on a local site, or a priority habitat or species, a biodiversity survey and report will be required; in some circumstances an Environmental Impact Assessment may be needed.

3. LEGALLY PROTECTED SPECIES

- 3.1. The species receiving the strictest protection are generally referred to as 'European Protected Species (EPS)' since they are protected under European Directives. The most commonly occurring in relation to Rother development sites include great crested newt and bats. It is an offence to damage or destroy breeding or resting places of EPS. It is also an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill them. Examples of activities that could breach the legislation include: in-filling or earthworks near to a pond used by great crested newt, felling of trees or demolition of buildings used by bats, clearance of woodland or hedgerows supporting dormice or work on water course banks near to an otter holt.
- 3.2. Species can receive varying levels of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA). Sussex species receiving protection under this Act include water vole, common lizard, grass snake, slow worm and Roman snail. All these species are protected against killing and injury, sale and advertisement for sale.
- 3.3. The WCA makes it illegal to pick, uproot or destroy certain rare plants. Development will need to avoid impacts on protected species, and where this is not possible, mitigation or compensation will be necessary. If there is a possibility that a development proposal will impact on a protected species, surveys will need to be submitted with a planning application to determine the impacts. Surveys to determine the presence or absence of protected species need to be provided up front with a planning application and should not be made a condition of planning permission since their presence is a material consideration that will need to inform decisions (see Circular 06/05, page 98/99). All ecological surveys need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Birds

- 3.4. All bird nests, eggs and young are protected under the WCA. Therefore, removal of any bird nesting habitat such as trees or scrub (or buildings in the case of birds such as barn owls, swifts, swallows, house martins and house sparrows) should only take place outside of the bird breeding season. Some birds, listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA receive an extra level of protection which means that they cannot be disturbed during the breeding season.

Where are protected species likely to occur?

- 3.5. The Council holds information of the locations where protected species have been recorded and can use this information to help work out when protected species survey information needs to be provided to help determine a planning application. However, it is important to be aware that species may occur outside sites where they have been recorded and absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.
- 3.6. Essentially a Phase 1 Scoping Survey is required for key habitats, or where there is a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present on the site, or affected by the development. It is important to bear in mind that protected species surveys can usually only be undertaken at certain times of year. For example, surveys of ponds for great crested newts must be undertaken between mid-March and mid-June when newts return to ponds to breed. Table 4 provides a useful overview of when a species survey may typically be requested. More information on how to determine when a protected species survey is required has been produced by Natural England in the form of a Standing Advice Note.
- 3.7. Desk top surveys are not sufficient to determine the current species/habitat composition of a site and must be supported by a field survey. Any ecological work should be conducted in accordance with the standards set out in the British Standard for Biodiversity (BS 42020)⁵ and by a skilled and competent ecologist listed on the The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management professional directory of qualified practitioners, available free of charge⁶.

Further information on Protected Species

- [Badgers and Development](#) (Natural England)
- [Bat Mitigation Guidelines](#) (Natural England)
- [Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation—Statutory Obligations and Their Impacts Within the Planning System](#)
- [Dormouse Conservation Handbook](#) (Natural England)
- [Great Crested Newts Mitigation Guidelines](#) (Natural England)
- [Natural England Standing Advice on Protected Species](#)
- [Water Voles — the law in practice](#) (Natural England)

⁵ Available here <http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030258704>

⁶ Available here <http://www.cieem.net/members-directory>.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Species

- 3.8. In addition to listing priority habitats, the UK BAP also identifies species of priority for conservation in the UK. There are 1,150 BAP species, many of which are likely to be found both within and outside of designated sites. Many BAP species will also be associated with BAP habitats, but not exclusively so.
- 3.9. Sometimes referred to as 'Priority species' or 'Species of principal importance', BAP species include rare and declining species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, plants, mosses, lichens, liverworts and invertebrates. Inclusion on the list of BAP species does not imply legal protection although some BAP species are also protected under law. The BAP species list has informed the identification, under Section 41 of the NERC Act, of species of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, which are protected by the NPPF (paragraph 117).
- 3.10. Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) published a list of species that are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Sussex Local Nature Partnership lists the Section 41 of the NERC act and can be found in Sussex, the data used is from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre from February 2015.
- 3.11. Examples of BAP species that could be protected or enhanced through the planning system in Sussex include several species of farmland bird which have shown dramatic declines within the last 30 years. All individual birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, however, opportunities should be taken to maintain and enhance the populations of these farmland birds wherever possible. Development could impact on these species by direct loss of habitat, but also through increased recreational disturbance, especially associated with residential developments.
- 3.12. Wet grasslands along river valleys provide important remnant habitat for wetland birds. Development should avoid habitat fragmentation and impacts on the hydrology of these areas. Opportunities should be taken to improve and extend suitable habitat; this may be combined with areas needed to provide flood protection/alleviation.

Protected Species in National Guidance and Policy

- 3.13. Paragraph 117 of the NPPF promotes the *'recovery of priority species populations linked to national and local targets'*.
- 3.14. The issue of protected species is covered in national guidance, such as PPG paragraph 8 *'In considering how development can affect biodiversity, and how biodiversity benefits could be delivered through the planning system, it is useful to consider the potential effects of a development on the habitats or species on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 section 41 list (in Biodiversity 2020).'*

4. ACCESSIBLE NATURAL GREEN SPACE

- 4.1. People's access to natural spaces is known to improve quality of life, with benefits to health and well-being, as well as regeneration and social cohesion. The Council has already adopted recommended access standards through the 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study', as applied in Core Strategy Policy CO3. These include the standard of an accessible natural or semi-natural green-space within 15 minutes walking time, which applies in both urban and rural areas.
- 4.2. It is important to note that whilst access to natural green-space is beneficial to human health and well-being, there will be some areas where this will not be appropriate since allowing access would be detrimental to sensitive habitats and/or species. It is also noted that account may also be taken of access to the countryside via the public rights of way network.
- 4.3. Application of the standards within the RDC 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation' Study suggests there is generally a good quantitative supply of smaller scale and locally accessible natural greenspace. It is stated that there is a large quantity of natural and semi-natural sites in the District.
- 4.4. Larger strategic areas provide multi-functional uses drawing visitors from potentially further afield, and were an acknowledged shortfall highlighted in the original Green Infrastructure Study (drawing upon South East England ANGSt mapping and ESCC research). Provision of the proposed Combe Valley Countryside Park will address this access deficit, as well as providing 'Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) to relieve recreational pressure on the District's Natura 2000 sites, a particular concern highlighted in the Dungeness Complex Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) process.

5. PLANNING DECISIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

Reports and Information Informing Planning Decisions

- 5.1. The standard planning application form requires that applicants identify any protected or priority species, designated sites, important habitats, or other biodiversity features on, or near the application site.
- 5.2. Where it is likely that a proposal will impact upon any of the features, up-to-date biodiversity information should be provided with a planning application. The type of assessment needed will vary from a biodiversity survey and report to EIA and Appropriate Assessment if a European Site is involved. The 'Further information' box below provides links to national and regional guidance explaining how and when to undertake such assessments.

Further information:

- [Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development](#)
- [Ecological Impact Assessment Guidelines \(CIEEM\)](#)
- [Environmental Impact Assessment Advice Note](#)
- [Habitat Regulations Assessment Guidance for Major Projects](#)
- [Natural England Guidance on Protected Species Surveys](#)
- [Natural England Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland](#)
- [Natural England Standing Advice on Protected Species](#)
- [Protected Species Survey Calendar](#)

- 5.3. Table 4 sets out the circumstances when a Species Survey may be justified.
- 5.4. It is important to bear in mind that the survey work needed to inform such assessments will be seasonally restricted. Discussion of biodiversity survey needs at pre-application stage can help reduce the likelihood of delays resulting from requirements for survey being identified at a later stage.
- 5.5. All ecological reports should include the following:
- 1) The biodiversity present.
 - 2) How biodiversity impacts can be avoided.
 - 3) If it is not possible to avoid impacts, how they can be mitigated
 - 4) If there is no way of mitigating impacts, compensation measures should be identified.
 - 5) The report should demonstrate how the application can result in net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
 - 6) Avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures must be clearly stated to enable report recommendations to be conditioned and enforced.

Biodiversity within Developments Sites

- 5.6. The built environment provides opportunities to deliver enhancements for biodiversity.
- 5.7. The NPPF promotes of the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats and ecological networks; and the encouragement of opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments. Developments should aim to retain and enhance existing biodiversity features. The DaSA may also seek the enhanced provision of BAP habitats on site, and linkages to off-site habitats via green corridors, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate.
- 5.8. Provision of appropriate supporting habitats and landscaping within developments can help reduce fragmentation of habitats by allowing wildlife to live within and move through built areas to the wider countryside. Features for biodiversity should be designed to link up to the wider environment. For example, amongst other features, native hedgerows could link up open spaces, providing routes along which species such as hedgehogs, butterflies and bats can move. A series of ponds can link with wetland features in the wider countryside. Consideration should be given to the design of balancing ponds to provide wildlife habitat. Street trees can add to the wildlife linkages through developed areas. Gardens also contribute to habitat for wildlife within a built area and their layout should be designed to create a network linking with open spaces.
- 5.9. The provision of BAP habitats should be appropriate to local context and in accordance with the definition specified on the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan website <https://www.biodiversitysussex.org.uk/habitats/>. For smaller developments, this may entail provision of species-rich hedgerows (consisting predominantly of woody native species) or a pond amongst other features. Provision may be multi-functional and incorporated into landscaping schemes, amenity open space or sustainable drainage schemes.
- 5.10. Reference can be made to Tables 1 and 2 of this report; Table 1 for general opportunities and Table 2 for opportunities according to individual settlement. Neither table is exhaustive and should not be used as a substitute for site-specific ecological surveys. Table 2 has drawn on a number of sources, including (but not limited to) the following:
- RDC Green Infrastructure Study (Main document)
 - High Weald AONB Management Plan,

- Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report
- South East River Basin Management Plan
- ‘River Rother Catchment Flood Management Plan’
- Arun & Rother Connections
- Main Rivers, ordinary watercourses, coastal habitats
- Woodland Trust Standards (table 20 in RDC GI study)
- Natural England’s ANGS standard information
- RDC application of ANGST (see RDC GI study, incl. Map 7)
- Relevant Landscape Character Assessment
- RDC Rural Settlements Study Village Appraisals
- ESCC Market Towns and Villages Landscape Character Assessment
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Village Study work
- ESCC Strategic Open Space Study
- ESCC Green Infrastructure Study
- Weald Meadows Initiative
- Sussex Nature Partnership
- Rother Woods Project
- Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan, including
 - BAP Habitats (see Reports)
 - Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (see Reports)
 - Protected Species
 - Protected areas

- 5.11. Areas will be of most benefit to wildlife where native species are used as they are likely to support a wider range of native animals. Plant species originating from the local area will be even more beneficial.
- 5.12. Development proposals vary in both size and design, and individual circumstances determine the types of biodiversity action that is most applicable. Developers need to identify existing biodiversity assets through detailed, up-to-date ecological surveys, then look at integrating potential biodiversity enhancements as part of the development and management of each site.
- 5.13. Larger developments should consider a wider variety of habitats types appropriate to context and it is proposed that developments of more than 2ha or 50 dwellings will be expected to produce a Green Infrastructure master-plan. Where this is the case, consideration should be given to the need to have a funded management plan to ensure that the benefit generated through GI, continue to be delivered in the future.

- 5.14. Both new and existing biodiversity features within, or adjacent to, a development may be sensitive to human impacts such as recreational disturbance and vandalism. Buffering of biodiversity features from areas of high human activity, such as roads, residential development or play areas can help to reduce impacts. Interpretation materials can be provided in wildlife conservation areas, where suitable. Community involvement in managing local wildlife areas can help to engender a feeling of ownership and can help ensure the long term survival of such areas. A monitoring and management plan drawn up by the managing body for green spaces would ensure long term sustainability.
- 5.15. There are also opportunities for bats and birds to roost and nest within buildings. Provision of artificial nest sites is appropriate due to the lack of nesting opportunities in modern building design, which has been implicated in the decline of such species.
- 5.16. Nest boxes can be mounted on the outside of buildings, special bat or swift bricks can be incorporated into the structure, and entire roof spaces can be designed to provide opportunities for bats. Green roofs, provide foraging opportunities for birds, and support a range of invertebrates. The ability for the surrounding area to support species should be given careful consideration when making additions to buildings i.e. food and water for nesting birds. Thought should be given to the impact of lighting on wildlife, especially bats; areas of no or low level lighting along bat foraging routes should be considered.
- 5.17. Table 3 indicates some actions that developers should consider incorporating within built fabric to help conserve species that rely on buildings and ancillary developments for nesting. A reduction in available nesting sites in modern buildings is implicated in the decline of such species. Table 3 can apply universally but focuses on local Section 41 species that are found in Rother.

Table 1: Biodiversity Opportunities within Landscaping

The following are some of the actions that could be incorporated into the landscaping of a development scheme to enhance its biodiversity value and ensure net gains.

Biodiversity Feature	Actions	Additional Notes
Hedges	Plant hedges consisting of a variety of wildlife friendly species, so that food will be plentiful throughout the year. Provide enough space for hedges to grow at least two metres wide with long grasses at the base. Locate new hedges so they will contribute to a local wildlife habitat network. Plant native hedges, such as blackthorn and holly, along boundaries.	Hedges are key to provide shelter, breeding nesting and foraging sites for a wide variety of species. They also act as wildlife corridors when they are both dense and wide enough.
Trees and Shrubs	Provide wildlife friendly species, with variation in height and structure. Locate trees and shrubs that can provide continuity within existing habitat. Retain trees with holes and deadwood as well as retaining woody cuttings, stumps and fallen branches. Herbaceous plants and long grass around the tree or shrub benefits wildlife and helps maintain moisture. Retain some bare earth for invertebrates to bask and nest.	Trees and shrubs provide shelter, nesting sites and fruit for birds. Nectar from their flowers provides vital energy to bees and other insects. Maintaining dead and decaying wood is valuable to a range of invertebrates, which depend on it to complete stages of their life cycles.
Scrub	Consider trying to generate scrub habitat adjacent to existing wildlife-rich habitat.	Scrub provides good cover and food for birds, insects and reptiles but shouldn't be allowed to develop if it's at the expense of other wildlife rich habitats.
Climbing Plants	Locate climbing plants so they cover otherwise bare walls or fences. Locate climbing plants close to existing hedges, trees and flowering grassland. This should help it connect to the local wildlife habitat network.	Climbers such as ivy, clematis and honeysuckle provide nesting habitat, shelter and berries and nectar for insects
Wildflower Rich Grasses	Provide wildlife rich grassland on areas of poor soil or poor drainage. Embed spring flowering bulbs and plugs of nectar-rich flowers. Maintain patches of long grass for shelter, a food source and to enable plants to flower and seed. Remove cuttings and create a composting area.	This habitat provides cover for small mammals and invertebrates, and nectar for many invertebrates. Short grass can be greatly enhanced by adding flowering species tolerant of frequent mowing and trampling. Cutting and/or collecting will be required at appropriate intervals. Structure is crucial for invertebrates, so long grass and grassland cut on 2-3 year cycles benefit a wider range of species.
Watercourses and their Banks	Enhance and restore natural water courses by buffer planting, contouring steep sides and removing culverts. Avoid development of adjacent area.	
Reptiles	Provide long grass, interspersed with areas of bare ground and rocks for basking. Provide rockeries for hibernation. Locate and optimise continuity.	Reptiles likely to be encountered include the slow-worm common lizard, adder and grass snake.
Amphibians	Provide wildlife friendly ponds, channels and wetland areas, with nearby associated vegetation. Locate to provide continuity with existing habitat. For Great Crested Newt refer to 'Action Plan' in Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan.	Amphibians likely to be encountered include frogs, common toads, smooth newts and palmate newts. Most important factor is clean water. Ensure water features are created separately from Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, which may be contaminated.
Small Mammals	Provide long grass and habitats, which provide a variety of fruit and seeds for small mammals. For Water Vole refer to 'Action Plan' in Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan.	Small mammals include mice, voles, shrews and hedgehogs.
Invertebrates	Provide flower-rich grassland with areas of long or undisturbed grassland, hedges, native trees and shrubs, ponds with buffer zones and good quality water. Retain "Brownfield" open mosaic habitats. For Brown-banded Carder Bee, Fen Raft Spider, Field Cricket, Stag Beetle, Marsh Mallow Moth, Duke of Burgundy, Swollen Spire Snail refer to 'Action Plan' in Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan.	Invertebrates cover a wide range of species including bees, butterflies, moths, ants, flies, beetles, bugs, spiders and molluscs etc. Many are reliant on brownfield sites.
Bird Nesting Sites and Bat Roosts	Provide hedges, shrubs and trees for nesting. Install bird and bat boxes on existing suitable trees. For Barn Owl, Skylark and Song Thrush refer to 'Action Plan' in Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan.	Nest and roosting sites can be provided as part of a landscape planting design.

Table 2: Green Infrastructure, Habitats and Biodiversity Actions, Linkages and Opportunities – By Settlement

Settlement	Green Infrastructure, Habitats and Biodiversity Actions, Linkages and Opportunities
Battle	Cross-refer to Green Infrastructure Study (Main document) and Battle Town Study.
Beckley & Four Oaks	<p>Beckley and Four Oaks are situated within gently undulating High Weald AONB countryside, and more specifically within the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area. The latter includes landscape action priorities of conservation and restoration of coppices woodlands and traditional orchards, improvement of footpath access along the valleys, restoration of hedgerow and tree pattern in arable areas.</p> <p>Many of the pasture fields flanking the village edge are characterised by historic field boundaries interspersed by hedgerow trees. These form a part of the habitat mosaic of the essentially medieval landscape of the High Weald (HW) AONB and often comprise habitat rich ancient hedgerows. There are other notable HW AONB features present locally. All the roads in the area are historic routeways and the village is the site of three historic farmsteads that are within the settlement boundary, with another three just beyond it. Priority BAP habitats include the numerous ponds that are scattered across the landscape, particularly in the fields north of Beckley where tributary streams of the River Rother flow northwards. There are significant expanses of ancient woodland in the area, including at least Ghyll woodlands to the north, south, east and west. All of these are considered distinctive characteristics of the HW AONB as well as priority habitats.</p> <p>It is also an objective (W2) of the HW AONB Management Plan, to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change. Therefore, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats.</p> <p>The village is almost entirely flanked by the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) which identifies opportunities for wetland habitat management, restoration and creation; Meadow management, restoration and creation; Woodland management and restoration; Woodland butterfly interest and Access improvements. All of these can potentially be sought alongside development.</p> <p>Protected and priority species include Grass Snakes, Great Crested Newts as well as Pearl-bordered Fritillary and White Admiral Butterflies. Landscaping actions to provide habitats for grass snakes and other reptiles, as well as Great Crested Newts and other amphibians should be sought by means of the measures set out in Table 1. Advice regarding suitable habitats for butterfly species can be found via the Rother Woods Project, which particularly focuses on Beckley Woods.</p>
Bexhill East	Cross refer to Green Infrastructure Study (Main document)
Bexhill Central	Cross refer to Green Infrastructure Study (Main document)
Bexhill North	Cross refer to Green Infrastructure Study (Main document)
Bexhill West (Little Common & Cooden)	Cross refer to Green Infrastructure Study (Main document)
Broad Oak	Broad Oak is situated within the High Weald AONB, high up the north side of the Brede Valley. The surrounding rural landscape is characterised by large expanses of mixed woodland and small valleys. Immediately north of the village is extensive woodland, some of which is designated as Ancient Woodland, whilst some is classed as Ghyll woodland. Collectively, the woodland here gives a sense of enclosure to the village. Part of the woodland area is also designated as Kicker Wood Site of Nature Conservation Importance. This is small, private ancient woodland that is predominantly composed of Hornbeam coppice but is quite variable throughout. Some areas have been recently coppiced, others have been cleared, whilst some parts remain neglected and unmanaged for years. Where light is able to penetrate the canopy, a rich ground flora can be found. There is a further large Ghyll wood to the south-west of the village.

	<p>It is an objective (W2) of the HW AONB Management Plan, to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change. Therefore, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats. Relevant priorities across the whole landscape character area include replacement of conifers with broadleaves where possible. Fields at the village edge are characterised by historic field boundaries. These form a part of the habitat mosaic of the essentially medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB and often comprise habitat rich ancient hedgerows.</p> <p>There are two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas in the vicinity; the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods BOA surrounds much of the village to the north and west, with the Romney Marsh BOA to the SE. Woodlands in the former are considered priorities for biodiversity management and restoration, with notable woodland butterfly interest. There are also opportunities for Meadow management, restoration and creation.</p> <p>RDC Sport, Recreation & Open Space Study 2007 recommends a need for amenity open spaces and allotments in Broad Oak and opportunities should be sought alongside development.</p> <p>Any development would need to be supported by a strong landscape framework and there is scope to strengthen field boundaries and reinforce planting, including via green corridors, hedgerows and networks of connecting habitats. Any development alongside woodland will also require a landscape buffer, including species rich grasslands.</p> <p>There are many ponds in the area (a priority habitat) including within the heart of the village, and opportunities to create further ponds and wetland habitats in landscaping and SuDS schemes.</p> <p>There are records of numerous priority species in the area, particularly butterflies such as Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper and White Admiral. Other species include Brown-Eared Bat, Adder and Grass Snake.</p>
Burwash	<p>Burwash is situated in the High Weald AONB on the ridge dividing the Upper Rother Valley to the north from the Dudwell Valley to the south.</p> <p>The Landscape Character Assessment prioritises strengthening the edge of the Burwash village with tree planting as well as encouraging woodland management and restoration. It is also an objective (W2) of the HW AONB Management Plan, to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change. Therefore, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats. There are significant areas of woodland in the vicinity. To the north east, Park Wood SNCI is a large block of ancient woodland primarily consisting of overshot Hornbeam coppice and including areas of Ghyll woodland. Honeybrook wood is smaller Ghyll woodland to the north, Young's Wood is a linear ghyll woodland to the west whilst High Wood is a larger Ghyll wood further south. Perhaps most significantly in terms of public amenity is Shrub Wood abutting the village development boundary to the north, which although private appears to be accessed informally. Application of the RDC accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace standard (15 minutes walking or 1.2km) and the accessible woodland standard reveals a public access deficit in Burwash Village once Shrub wood is discounted.⁷ In light of these pieces of evidence there is a strong case for strengthening the edge of the village with accessible woodland provision. The County Ecologist has commented that planting should use mixed native species, of local provenance where possible as well as recommending that designers use the recommended species lists within the Dormouse Conservation Handbook.</p> <p>Numerous tributaries from both the Rother and Dudwell connect with the village although the village itself is raised above the floodplains and not at significant risk of flooding itself. There are also numerous ponds (a BAP Priority Habitat) scattered around the village fringes. For rural Rother, The River Rother Catchment Flood Management Plan for Rural Rother aims to</p>

⁷ Note: The 2007 study appears to have falsely identified an area of private woodland as accessible, meaning in reality Burwash village is an area of deficit.

	<p>investigate opportunities to work with landowners to create wetland habitat, which may be achievable on the fringes of Burwash. New ponds alongside development sites may benefit amphibians such as the locally present Great Crested Newt.</p> <p>The Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA), which is focused on the river valleys in this area abuts the village development boundary to the south and is about 250m from the north. It identifies opportunities which complement the findings of other evidence work, including Woodland management and restoration, Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation, woodland butterfly interest and access improvements.</p> <p>Burwash has been highlighted in evidence as needing an allotment, a need which would be achieved alongside the Strand Meadow development allocation should it come to fruition. Another access deficit identified in evidence is that of strategic scale open space (100ha+) across an area as far west as Heathfield.</p> <p>Records of protected and priority species include the Great Crested Newt, Grass Snake, Small Heath Butterfly, Brilliant Emerald Dragonfly, Dusky Thorn and White Ermine moths. Cross reference to Table1 can be made regarding suitable habitats. Advice regarding suitable habitats for butterfly species can be found via the Rother Woods Project, which particularly focuses on High Wood, south of Burwash.</p>
Camber	<p>Camber is situated on a low lying area of coastal levels within the Romney Marsh National Landscape Character Area, in an area rich with habitats and protected areas, including international designations. The settlement is bounded to the north and east by the extensive flat, open levels of Walland Marsh, stretching into Kent and forming part of the great Romney Marsh tract of levels.</p> <p>The village has considerable environmental constraints. It is surrounded on all sides by a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and flanked to the south-west by a Special Protection Area (SPA). Much of the existing SSSI, including wider areas both to the north, west and extending further south east along the shore are also proposed by Natural England for upgrading to Ramsar and extended SPA designation.</p> <p>Almost the entire area, save for a narrow belt along the Old Lydd Road, is at risk from flooding and falls within Flood Zones 2 or 3. The natural dune system which is stable and provides a natural flood defence to the frontage. The dunes are managed by Rother District Council and the EA to prevent erosion by walkers. The coastal sand dunes that have been formed by the prevailing south-west winds blowing the sand inland, which has created the only coastline of this type in Sussex. Most of the village including the whole area south and west of Lydd Road is underlain by sandy soils derived from the dunes, calcareous and free draining. However parts of the north and east of the village are built on the damper silts and clays of the levels. The <u>coastal sand dunes</u> are a priority BAP habitat and the subject of a specific Habitat Action Plan in the BAP.</p> <p>Other Priority habitats in the area include extensive <u>coastal floodplain and grazing marsh</u> and <u>reedbeds</u> north of the village. The severe exposure of the village allied with the soil types creates difficult conditions for trees and therefore there are significant areas without much tree cover.</p> <p>The whole area is, not surprisingly rich with protected and priority species and identified as a <u>Biodiversity Opportunity Area (the Romney Marsh BOA)</u>. Landscape action priorities include improvement of the coastal environment as well as conservation and restoration of pasture, wetland and associated wildlife. Access for walkers, rider and cyclists should be managed and improved where possible - for which work on the Sustainable Access Strategy for the Natura 2000 complex is on-going in partnership with Shepway Borough Council and Natural England.</p>
Catsfield	<p>Catsfield is located on the boundary of the High Weald AONB designation. The village is within the Combe Haven Valley Landscape character area, the vision for which envisages 'great potential for unique recreational opportunities, well managed and enhanced wildlife habitats and increased biodiversity'.</p> <p>Fields to both east and west of the village edge are characterised by historic field boundaries. These form a part of the habitat mosaic of the essentially medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB and often comprise habitat rich ancient hedgerows</p> <p>Significant areas of deciduous woodland flank the village, much of it identified as BAP habitat. Large expanses of ancient woodland lie to the north-east (Brown's Wood and Heathybank</p>

	<p>Wood) and north-west (Eight-Acre Wood) of the village. There is potential for hedge and field boundary restoration on village fringes and opportunities to improve connectivity of both woodland habitat and species rich hedgerows via ecological and landscaping corridors.</p> <p>Ecologically rich Ghyll Woodland (a High Weald AONB character feature) is situated to the west upon tributaries of the Watermill Stream. These tributaries also meander around the southern fringes of the villages through a pastoral landscape, an area of low lying land that becomes very wet, as the surrounding more elevated countryside drains into this area. The streams collectively drain down to Coombe Haven and the associated 'Coombe Haven and Marline' Biodiversity Opportunity Area, which identifies 'wetland habitat management, restoration and creation' as an opportunity. There may also be opportunities to increase flooding areas and wetland and ponds alongside SuDS provision. A number of ponds already fringe the village and Great Crest Newts, which are already present, may benefit from an extended network. Great Crested Newts are the subject of a 'Species Action Plan for Sussex'⁸ which has objectives to establish new populations by creating ponds and to restore the links between fragmented habitats and breeding sites</p> <p>Other key species to be supported in the area include the Small Heath butterfly (BAP species) and pink waxcap fungus (rare species). There are also a number of invasive alien species to be addressed, particularly located around the primary school, including cherry laurel, red valerian, NZ pigmyweed, and rhododendron.</p>
Crowhurst	<p>Crowhurst is a fragmented settlement which straddles the High Weald AONB's southern boundary. It is bisected centrally by the Darwell stream, a tributary of Combe Haven and the whole area is within the Combe Haven Valley landscape character area. It is characterised by small winding High Wealden valleys and much of the central and southern areas have drainage issues and are susceptible to flooding. SuDS will be an important consideration alongside any development that takes place. In addition there are possible land stability issues that will require further investigation.</p> <p>The surrounding area is well wooded, including the ecologically rich Ghyll woodland, which is also an important character feature of the High Weald AONB. Crowhurst hosts the District's sole RSPB reserve – Fore Wood, one of the largest deciduous Wealden woodlands which has been modified by a long history of coppicing, felling and associations with former iron industry: the latter dating from Roman times. Parts of it are designated SSSI and SNCI and the area is a groundwater source protection zone. Other areas of ancient woodland in the vicinity include Rackwell Wood to the east and Whitefield Wood to the south-east.</p> <p>The Darwell valley is interspersed by a series of historic field boundaries that serve to define the medieval pattern of small irregular fields that are interspersed with woodland, which is typical of the High Weald.</p> <p>There are numerous ponds scattered across the landscape and some large geologically significant sandstone outcrops (a 'special to Sussex' feature) abutting the village to the south-east.</p> <p>There are numerous species recorded as present in the area, including dormice (multiple records), grass-snakes, and butterflies (including Small Heath and White Admiral) Development may take the opportunity to provide dormice boxes and the appropriate sort of habitat opportunities set out in Table 1.</p> <p>The south of the village abuts the Combe Valley Countryside Park which stretches all the way to the sea, connects with Hastings and Bexhill, and is home to several BAP priority habitats. The northern section of the CVCP is a dedicated 'wildlife zone' and there are opportunities to enhance this role, including by means of connectivity to the rich network of habitats north in the wider Parish. The area is also a designated 'Biodiversity Opportunity Area' (Coombe Haven and Marline BOA) which identifies the following opportunities: wetland habitat management, restoration and creation; floodplain restoration and reconnection; access improvements and opportunities associated with development.</p>
Etchingham	<p>Etchingham is positioned on a gentle south facing slope within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty near to where the Rivers Rother meets the River Dudwell. The Rother runs north and east of the settlement whilst the Dudwell runs parallel to the main road south of the village. Consequently, the south and eastern side of the valley floor is susceptible to fluvial flooding which includes some properties on the south side of the High Street and the east side of Church Lane by the train station which is nearest the area of confluence.</p>

⁸ Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan <https://www.biodiversitysussex.org.uk/species/>

	<p>This attractive rolling countryside that surrounds the village consists predominately of pasture and small woods, which gives the sense of enclosure while the river valleys open up the landscape to a wider view. Most of the village is situated on the rising slopes of the Upper Rother Valley landscape character area, but the higher contours towards the western end of the village mark the boundary of the Dudwell Valley landscape character area.</p> <p>East of the village, where the terrain is characterised by the floodplain of the Rother Valley, is defined as 'Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh' – a BAP Priority habitat. BAP species present here include Water Vole and Grass Snake. The Rother Valley and west of Burgh Wood also form part of the 'Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area' which notes opportunities for wetland habitat management, restoration and creation in the River Rother floodplain); and meadow management, restoration and creation across the BOA.. For Rural Rother, the plan included the action '<i>Investigate opportunities to work with landowners to create wetland habitat</i>', which given Etchingham's proximity on the River Dudwell would be potentially achievable. The River Rother Catchment Flood Management Plan also aims to ensure no increase in run-off from new developments and seek opportunities to reduce current run-off rates where appropriate. Therefore developments in these areas should seek to replicate greenfield run-off rates or achieve betterment from pre-existing run-off rates.</p> <p>Despite the countryside setting there also appears to be a lack of 'accessible' general natural green-space against Natural England standards, particularly to the west of the village and other evidence suggests the village needs an allotment. More specifically the village has relatively poor public accessibility to local woodland (As highlighted in RDC GI Study), although this is balanced by achieving the more strategic woodland trust standards, due to proximity to Bedgebury Forest in Kent and Bugsell Wood to the south. Despite the area not achieving the more local standard, significant expanses of woodland do exist in the area, notably the 74 hectare Burgh Wood on the northern fringes of Hurst Green, Park Wood, Forge Wood to the north-west, with Sores Wood and Church Wood to the south. Objective (W2) of the HW AONB Management Plan, to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change. Therefore, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats.</p> <p>Significant parts of the area, notably the Dudwell Valley are part of the 'Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods' Biodiversity Opportunity Area, for which the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership has identified a number of opportunities including Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation, Meadow management, restoration and creation, Woodland management and restoration, Woodland butterfly interest and Access improvements.</p> <p>Any development proposals alongside the rivers will need to protect and enhance the river corridor, floodplain and surrounding area. Water voles are in the area. Ditches will need to be surveyed for protected species before development takes place. mitigation and enhancement opportunities would include riparian wetland habitat. It is also important that there is no deterioration in water quality in accordance with the South East River Basin Management Plan and would therefore be critical to prevent runoff from reducing the quality of the receiving body of water. Different SuDS will provide different types of treatment, and a 'treatment train' of SuDS should be introduced to ensure water is exposed to a variety of filtration mechanisms and attenuated to allow pollutants to settle out'. Reed bed filtration systems are a possible option and have added biodiversity value.</p>
Fairlight Cove	<p>Fairlight Cove is part of Wealden Coast' landscape character area, uniquely where the High Weald AONB meets the sea. The coastal village is situated on collapsed cliffs which are of outstanding significance geologically, being the best place to examine the geological evolution of the weald. However coastal erosion has been a significant problem for the village, coupled with widespread surface water and land stability issues.</p> <p>The Romney Marsh Biodiversity Opportunity Area straddles the coastal stretch of the village, while the Hastings Fringes BOA straddles the north and identifies opportunities for ecological networks. Abutting the village to the south-west lies the Hastings Cliffs Countryside Park, which is internationally protected 'Special Area of Conservation'</p> <p>Generally, the AONB landscape is more open here in this vicinity and the network of historic fields less intricate. The ESCC Landscape Character Assessment cites a landscape action priority to 'Increase tree cover within and on the edges of Fairlight Cove and other developed areas'.</p> <p>Knowle Wood is a small SNCI and ancient ghyll woodland abutting the western edge of Fairlight. It is owned by the Parish Council and is managed by a local 'Friends of' community</p>

	<p>group. It is well placed to enhance connectivity between the Hastings Cliffs SAC and the wider area. There are other areas of ancient woodland north of the village, although the A259 acts as a severance barrier.</p> <p>There are numerous records of key species, including within the village itself and in the vicinity of preferred development sites, including dormice and butterflies (Grayling, Small Heath). Adders, grass-snakes and common toads, are associated with the stream habitats.</p> <p>Two streams traverse across the village on an east/west axis, draining towards the Pett Level. SuDS will be particularly important in the village, and has the potential to be multi-functional and provide wetland habitats. Development may also provide opportunities to improve ecological network connectivity between the BOAs, ancient woodland pockets and Hastings Cliffs Countryside Park.</p>
Hastings Fringes - East	Cross refer to Green Infrastructure Study
Hastings Fringes - North	<p>Cross refer to Green Infrastructure Study</p> <p>Another area of potential is for greenspace enhancements to the north of Hastings either side of the railway as it approaches The Ridge, with Rock Lane to the east and Ivyhouse Lane to the west. This appears to be an area of deficit against both RDC and HBC accessible greenspace standards (as outlined in section 3.3.14). The area lies within the High Weald AONB, but its quality could be improved. Moreover, it could provide a valuable amenity for the surrounding areas, especially if access opportunities were increased. Potential development in this locality should be viewed in the context of an area-based initiative, and be mindful of the Hastings Fringes Biodiversity Opportunity Area, as well as AONB status.</p>
Hastings Fringes - West	Cross refer to Green Infrastructure Study
Hurst Green	<p>Hurst Green is located centrally within the Rother Valley, the largest valley system in the High Weald.</p> <p>Land north of the village is dominated by Burgh Wood SNCI to the north-west. It one of the largest expanses of ancient woodland in the Upper Rother Valley and is dominated by Sweet Chestnut coppice, with patches of ground flora which are rich in species indicative of ancient woodland (SNCI report). In addition to deciduous wet woodland, there are further BAP habitats within the Burgh Wood SNCI, including ponds, a ghyll woodland stream and an isolated patch of lowland heathland. The RDC GI Study highlighted that the village has relatively poor public accessibility to local woodland, despite the presence of the 74 hectare Burgh Wood. However, the more strategic Woodland Trust standards for accessible woodland are still achieved due to proximity to Bedgebury Forest in Kent and Bugsell Wood to the south.</p> <p>It is an objective (W2) of the HW AONB Management Plan, to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change. Therefore, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats.</p> <p>Land south of the village is dominated by Hurst Green Meadows & Woodlands, an SNCI consisting of a collection of gently sloping meadows and pastures, separated by woodland strips, large hedges and small streams. Species diversity is high throughout the fields and as a collection of relatively unimproved pastures and a mosaic of small woods, the site is of considerable value. Within the SNCI, there are tributary streams which flow down the Valley towards the Rover Rother, flanked by wildflower meadows. Some of these wildflower meadows have been identified by the 'Weald Meadows Initiative', a public private partnership between the High Weald AONB Unit, Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd, the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and landowners and managers. The Initiative aims to enable the traditional management of unimproved meadows and the successful establishment of new species-rich grasslands in the High and Low Weald. Recognising the need for wildflower management and creation to be financially viable, it pro-actively develops and markets added value grassland products. (source: GGP SNCI, & wildflower meadows layers).</p> <p>East of the village, a further tributary of the River Rother flows eastwards away from the village through Huntley wood (an ancient woodland) and forms a ghyll woodland that connects to</p>

	<p>a much wider network of similar habitat. There is scope to enhance connecting habitat between this area and the village edge (trees, hedgerows or ponds).</p> <p>West of the village, the terrain falls away steeply to the floodplain of the Rother Valley abutting Etchingam station. This area is defined as 'Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh' – a BAP habitat and BAP species present include Water Vole. The Rother Valley and west of Burgh Wood also form part of the 'Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA)' which notes several opportunities, including Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation (River Rother floodplain); Meadow management, restoration and creation; woodland management and restoration; as well as highlighting woodland butterfly interest.</p> <p>Records of key species in the vicinity of the wider Hurst Green village development boundary include Brown Long-Eared Bat (BAP species) and Common Dormouse. The former will benefit from the maintenance of linear features in the landscape such as tree-lines and hedgerows that the bats can use for cover and flight paths. Dormice can benefit from enhanced or new habitat, including planting new areas of hedgerow, scrub or woodland and/or the use of dormouse boxes.</p> <p>There are other key and protected species in the wider vicinity. Cuckoos, Reed Buntings and Turtle Doves have been recorded further west of the village. Grass snakes and Great Crested Newts have been recorded in the more open land south of the village.</p> <p>Across the wider vicinity of the village and its surrounds, there is scope to restore lost structure and replace lost hedges and hedgerow trees, using planting to strengthen the village edge (Source: Villages & Market Towns Landscape Character Assessment).</p>
Iden	<p>There are opportunities for restoration of lost field structure, coppice woodland, hedgerow and tree pattern in arable areas within the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character area. Generally, the landscape lacks the coherent structure of the High Weald, such as hedges and woodland, although fields to the south-east and south-west of the village edge are characterised by historic field boundaries. These form a part of the habitat mosaic of the essentially medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB and often comprise habitat rich ancient hedgerows. It is important that these are maintained in line with Objective FH2 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. There may be opportunities to improve connectivity of species rich hedgerows via ecological and landscaping corridors.</p> <p>There are numerous BAP habitat ponds in the vicinity (GGP) and there is scope to extend the network of this key High weald AONB character feature (and BAP Habitat) alongside the provision of sustainable drainage.</p> <p>There are records of House Sparrows (a protected species under the CRoW Act) in the village, a species that would benefit from the provision of artificial nest sites (Installation of internal boxes at soffits/eaves level, ideally east facing in groups of six or more).</p>
Northiam	<p>Undulating countryside surrounds Northiam village and half a mile to the north lies the River Rother, the valley of which dominates the eastern end of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Several tributary streams of the Rother extend southwards up the valley to the fringes of the village. The Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area includes several relevant landscape action priorities for the village, including conservation and restoration of coppices woodlands and traditional orchards, improvement of footpath access along the valleys, restoration of hedgerow and tree pattern in arable areas.</p> <p>There are a number of areas of ancient woodland in the vicinity, including an ash plantation Ghyll woodland (a priority habitat in its own right) that abuts the village development boundary to the north-east. The village achieves the woodland access standards set out in the Rother DC Green Infrastructure Study. The HW AONB Management Plan has an objective (W2) to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change. Therefore, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats.</p> <p>There is a small Site of Special Scientific Interest between Harlot's Wood and Ghyll Side Road. Fields at the village edge are characterised by historic field boundaries, particularly east</p>

	<p>of the centre around the Blue Cross. These form a part of the habitat mosaic of the essentially medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB and often comprise habitat rich ancient hedgerows.</p> <p>The area is rich in priority BAP habitats. In addition to the deciduous and ghyll woodlands, there are dozens of ponds in the area and a couple of traditional orchards. Verges to the north of the village are classed as wildflower meadows, which creates valued green corridors into the heart of the village – a model that could be replicated in other rural areas. Opportunities to create further ponds and wetland habitats in landscaping and SuDS schemes, as well as extensions of wildflower green corridors, should be sought.</p> <p>The village is flanked to the south, by the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) which identifies opportunities for wetland habitat management, restoration and creation. Tributaries of the River Rother surround the village. The River Rother Catchment Flood Management Plan suggested an action to ‘Investigate opportunities to work with landowners to create wetland habitat’ and there may be opportunities to achieve this in the village alongside development. The BOA also identifies opportunities for meadow management, restoration and creation; Woodland management and restoration; Woodland butterfly interest and Access improvements. Similarly, all of these can also potentially be sought alongside development. The Romney Marsh BOA extends down the River Rother north of the village and also has the aim of Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation.</p> <p>Other relevant aims of the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods BOA include Meadow management, restoration and creation, Woodland management and restoration and Woodland butterfly interest.</p>
Peasmarsh	<p>Peasmarsh is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The setting of the village is made distinctive by the character of the parkland landscape of Peasmarsh Park, south of the village. The immediate surrounding landscape is gently undulating with large swathes of woodland. More distantly, the open valleys of the River Rother lie to the north and the Tillingham Valley is to the south. The village is situated within the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area which includes landscape action priorities of conservation and restoration of coppices woodlands and traditional orchards, improvement of footpath access along the valleys, restoration of hedgerow and tree pattern in arable areas.</p> <p>Fields at the village edge are characterised by HW AONB historic field boundaries. These form a part of the habitat mosaic of the essentially medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB and often comprise habitat rich ancient hedgerows. A large area of ancient woodland, Malthouse Wood, flanks the village to the north, while Corner Wood and Morfey Wood mark the south eastern boundary of the village. It is an objective (W2) of the HW AONB Management Plan, to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species’ response to climate change. Therefore, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats.</p> <p>Peasmarsh is situated in the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area which includes landscape action priorities of conservation and restoration of coppices woodlands and traditional orchards, improvement of footpath access along the valleys, restoration of hedgerow and tree pattern in arable areas.</p> <p>Peasmarsh enjoys reasonable accessibility to natural and semi-natural greenspace and adheres to the standards established in Core Strategy Policy CO3 (as presented spatially on Map 7 of the supporting Green Infrastructure Study). However, the more demanding Natural England standard ANGSt suggests a need for more local accessible natural greenspace (as presented spatially on Map 8 of the supporting Green Infrastructure Study). The village appears to conform to the Woodland Trust accessible woodland standards (as presented spatially in Appendix A1 and Map 9 of the RDC Green Infrastructure Study).</p> <p>The village is flanked to both north and south, by the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) which identifies opportunities for wetland habitat management, restoration and creation. Tributaries of the River Rother, including Woodside stream, flow through and northwards away from the village and there are ponds scattered around the village fringes. The River Rother Catchment Flood Management Plan suggested an action to ‘<i>Investigate opportunities to work with landowners to create wetland habitat</i>’ and there may be opportunities to achieve this in the village alongside development. The BOA also identifies opportunities for meadow management, restoration and creation; Woodland management and restoration; Woodland butterfly interest and Access improvements. Similarly, all of these can also potentially be sought alongside development.</p> <p>In addition to rivers, ponds and deciduous woodland; other BAP priority habitats that are locally present include a number of traditional orchards in the vicinity, and a large sandstone</p>

	<p>outcrop south-west of the village by Tanhouse Lane (0.5km from the development boundary).</p> <p>There are numerous records of protected and priority species in the area. Some of the more notable include the Common Lizard, several species of butterfly (Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, White Admiral, Small Heath, Wall), and other insects (Arched Marble Moth, Woodland Grasshopper, Roesel's Bush-cricket, Coleoptera beetle, Black-headed Cardinal Beetle). Table 1 highlights some measures that may be used to encourage habitat for reptiles such as the Common Lizard, whilst advice regarding suitable habitats for butterfly species can be found via the Rother Woods Project.</p>
Robertsbridge	<p>Robertsbridge lies wholly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village lies at the divide of what is generally considered to be the Lower Rother Valley and the Upper Rother Valley. The surrounding landscape is dominated by the broad valley of the River Rother and its tributaries. It is at this point in the Valley that the predominantly wooded area of the upper valley gives way to a more open landscape dominated by pasture and arable land.</p> <p>Due to its location at the confluence of the River Rother and the Glottenham Stream and that the River Rother was once tidal as far as Robertsbridge, much of the land is highly susceptible to flooding. SuDS will be an important consideration alongside development and one that offers multi-functional green infrastructure and habitat opportunities.</p> <p>Areas of ancient woodland fringe the village to the east and west sides. Park Wood sits on the sat side of the A21 and is Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitat – deciduous and wet woodland. It is connected to the village via public footpaths. On the opposite west side of Robertsbridge, Pean’s Wood, Fair Ridge Wood, Bugsell Wood and Hack Wood all abut the development boundary are intermittent ancient and BAP Habitat (wet and deciduous) woodland. Public footpath access is more limited in these areas. In addition there are a handful of area ‘Tree Preservation Orders’ within or adjacent to the development boundary of west Robertsbridge.</p> <p>There are several ‘Historic Field Boundaries’ fringing the Robertsbridge and Northbridge Street, characteristic of the intricate medieval field patter of the HW AONB. As well as being a key landscape character feature these may be rich in biodiversity and provide a network of connectivity to larger habitats.</p> <p>The Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity (BOA) sub-divides the village across the valleys of the Rivers Rother and Darwell. The BOA identifies numerous relevant opportunities that could be considered alongside development, including wetland habitat management, restoration and creation; Meadow management, restoration and creation; Woodland management and restoration, Woodland butterfly interest and Access improvements.</p> <p>Protected species in the area appear to be primarily related to the river valleys, including water vole, grass-snake, great crested newt, all of which may benefit from wetland habitat management and restoration.</p>
Rye	Cross-refer to Green Infrastructure Study (Main document)
Sedlescombe	<p>Sedlescombe is within the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area of the HW AONB. The surrounding landscape designated within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is characterised by gently undulating countryside, with large tracts of mixed woodland interspersed with secretive little valleys. These valleys are readily visible from the many footpaths that radiate out from the built form of the settlement</p> <p>To the south of the village, running east to west, is the river level landscape of the Brede, offering open views over the wide valley floor. The river valley is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest and part of the designation overlaps with the development boundary to the south. The Brede Valley is of outstanding importance for wildlife. Its extensive ditch system supports a great diversity of submerged, floating and emergent aquatic plants, including uncommon species such as Flowering - rush (<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>) and Rootless Duckweed (<i>Wolffia arrhiza</i>). The varied invertebrate community includes 9 Red Data Book and 38 Nationally Scarce species. The site is also valuable for birds, particularly passerines such as Reed Warbler and Sedge Warbler. Brown Hare have also been reported as being recorded on the Levels.</p> <p>Land to the south west of the village, either side of the River Brede is protected as a Groundwater Source Protection Zone. A large part of the central and southern village is an Archaeological Sensitive Area (ASA).</p> <p>Two BOAs lie to the south of the village. The Romney Marsh area BOA extends up the Brede Valley as far as Sedlescombe, and the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods BOA</p>

	<p>continues to the south-west. Red Barn Nature Park has been created on land adjacent to the new village hall.</p>
Staplecross	<p>Staplecross is situated in the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area which includes landscape action priorities of conservation and restoration of coppices woodlands and traditional orchards, improvement of footpath access along the valleys, restoration of hedgerow and tree pattern in arable areas. The upper reaches of the River Tillingham and tributaries of the River Rother form streams in the surrounding countryside, but the village is not at significant risk of flooding.</p> <p>There are large expanses of ancient woodland to the west (Lordship Wood, Wellhead Wood and Upper Morgay Wood, and a smaller area to the north-east (Crabtree Wood). It is an objective (W2) of the HW AONB Management Plan, to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change. Therefore, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats. Fields at the village edge are characterised by historic field boundaries. These form a part of the habitat mosaic of the essentially medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB and often comprise habitat rich ancient.</p> <p>Application of the RDC accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace standard (15 minutes walking or 1.2km) and amenity open space standard both reveal public access deficit in Staplecross village.</p> <p>There are several ponds south and east of the village and water vole have been recorded here. Opportunities should be sought to address the 'Action Plan' for the species in the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan. The village is flanked to the west, by the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) which identifies opportunities for meadow management, restoration and creation, woodland management and restoration, woodland butterfly interest and wetland habitat management, restoration and creation.</p>
Ticehurst	<p>Wholly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Ticehurst is a ridge-top village and has a steeply-contoured landscape setting in parts. The position of the village in an elevated location affords long distance views out of the village from various vantage points on the south side across woods, pasture and steep valley sides descending to the River Linden.</p> <p>Land north of the village is exposed to the wider landscape due to the pattern of predominantly large fields, which in some areas have poorly defined field boundaries and little woodland, although a more substantial area of ancient woodland, Broomden Wood, is situated to the north west.</p> <p>Ticehurst lies within the High Weald National Character Area⁹. In the more detailed County Landscape Character Assessments, it sits on the boundary between the Bewl Water landscape character area¹⁰ to the north and the Upper Rother Valley landscape character area¹¹ to the south.</p> <p>There are no areas in the village currently defined as being with the Environment Agencies Flood Zones 2 or 3. However, there are many smaller areas defined as having surface water drainage issues.</p> <p>There are numerous ponds (a Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat) in close proximity to the village. Corridors of ancient woodland fringe the south flowing tributary streams of the Linden. Despite this, Ticehurst was identified in the Rother District Council 'Green Infrastructure' Study as having a shortage of accessible woodland, when measured against Woodland Trust standards.</p> <p>Records of protected species in the area include Great Crested Newt, Common Toad, Viviparous Lizard, Slow Worm and Grass Snake.</p>

⁹ As defined in [Natural England's National Character Areas](#)

¹⁰ As defined in the [East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment](#)

¹¹ As defined in the [East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment](#)

	<p>Like most of Rother District, Ticehurst is situated within the High Weald AONB. Notable AONB features include numerous ponds around the edge of the village, ghyll woodlands extending south from the village edge, the remnants of a historic farmstead at the Old Stables on the west side of the village, several historic field boundaries at the village fringes, and a wildflower meadow north of Upper Platts.</p>
Westfield	<p>Westfield is surrounded by undulating farmland, woods and streams with a network of public footpaths, including the 1066 Country Walk. The floodplain of the River Brede lies to the north and its tributary streams meander up past the village itself. The village is within the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area for which relevant landscape assessment priorities include replacement of conifers with broadleaves where possible.</p> <p>Two ancient woodlands are in close proximity to the western edges of the village, Horseman's Wood and the larger Whiteland Wood to the south-west which is just over 20ha in size. There are other areas of ancient woodland scattered further from the village, particularly to the east, notably Kiln Wood, Luckhurst Wood, Great Hides, Oak Woods and Eighteen Pounder Woods. Despite this, the village exhibits poor public accessibility against the Woodland Trust's local woodland (as highlighted in the RDC GI Study). Application of the RDC accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace standards (15 minutes walking or 1.2km) also reveals a notable area of public access deficit in Westfield village. In this context it seems likely that the best chances of achieving the Woodland Trust standard in the Westfield area is to increase public access to an existing wood via a management agreement. However there is also a case for providing accessible natural green-space alongside development.</p> <p>The village is wholly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and It is an objective (W2) of the HW AONB Management Plan, to enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. The rationale of the objective is to increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring planted ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change. Therefore, as well as seeking to improve public access to woodland, opportunities should be sought to connect green corridors to local woodlands and habitats.</p> <p>Fields around the village edge are characterised by HW AONB historic field boundaries. These form a part of the habitat mosaic of the essentially medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB and often comprise habitat rich ancient hedgerows</p> <p>Between the Horseman's Wood and Whiteland Wood, and off Wheel Lane, is an area of species rich unimproved grassland which includes ponds. It is known as Wheel Cottage Meadow and is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. The area has been identified by the Weald Meadows initiative which aims to enhance these declining habitats. There are two further wildflower meadows on the western fringes of the village, Ferndale Meadow and Westfield Vicarage. Collectively all three have been identified by the Weald Meadows Initiative, which aims to enable the traditional management of unimproved meadows and the successful establishment of new species-rich grasslands in the High and Low Weald as well as pro-actively developing the markets for added value grassland products. Green corridor connections to these areas would also be advantageous.</p> <p>There are two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas impacting upon the village, the Hastings Fringe BOA which takes is a large swathe of land south of the village (and actually overlaps with the village development boundary to the south) and the Romney Marsh BOA which extends down the tributaries of the River Brede both east and west of the village. The Hastings Fringe BOA also identifies opportunities for woodland management and restoration, ecological networks and access improvements. Although Westfield is far from the Romney Marsh, the BOA aim of Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation is relevant to the nearby tributaries of the River Brede, particularly since priority species (Common Toad and European Water Vole are also recorded as being present in this area). The surrounding countryside has scattered ponds (a priority habitat), and opportunities to create further ponds and wetland habitats in landscaping and SuDS schemes should also be sought.</p> <p>Other locally present protected species include the Small Heath butterfly, Grass Snake and the Common Dormouse. Advice for encouraging reptiles and small mammals within landscaping schemes can be found in Table 1.</p> <p>In summary, the following local opportunities should be sought improved woodland access via management agreements, increased provision of locally accessible natural greenspace, green corridor connections between local woodlands and meadows and wetland habitat management, restoration and creation.</p>

Table 3: Provision for Biodiversity in New Development: By Local Rother Species

<i>Species</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Actions in Detail</i>	<i>Status and Local Significance</i>
Common Swift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install internal (swift) boxes at soffits/eaves level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any suitable buildings, proximity of existing Colony reinforces need for new nest sites. • At least five metres above ground level with unimpeded access. • A northerly or well shaded aspect is essential, avoid southerly elevations and the immediate vicinity of windows. • Nest sites should be reasonably close as Swifts usually nest in colonies. • Broadcasting recorded calls throughout the breeding season will increase likelihood of occupation. See www.swift-conservation.org. • Suitable buildings within close foraging range of open spaces & green 	<p>Amber list</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe (SPEC = Species of European Conservation Concern) <p>Locally present in Rother District</p>
Swallow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Create purpose-built ledges inside buildings where they will feel secure from predators. •Install pre-formed nest cups to •encourage establishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Open-sided buildings within close proximity to green spaces and open spaces. •Access to nesting material, principally wet mud. •Avoid where droppings might become a nuisance. 	<p>Amber list</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe (SPEC = Species of European Conservation Concern) <p>Locally present in Rother District</p>
House Martin	Install pre-cast nest cups to encourage establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Buildings with wide soffits in close proximity to green and open spaces. •At least five metres above ground level, with shelter from sun and wind. •Breed in close groups. •Need access to wet mud. •Doors and windows best avoided. 	<p>Amber list</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe (SPEC = Species of European Conservation Concern). •BDMp Breeding Population Decline. (by more than 25% but less than 50%). <p>Locally present in Rother District.</p>
House Sparrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Install internal boxes at soffits/eaves level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable buildings within close foraging range of open spaces & green infrastructure. • At least two metres above ground level with somewhere to perch in the immediate vicinity. • Needs to be shaded. Easterly aspect is best, avoid southerly elevations. • Sparrows prefer nesting in loose groups (10-20 pairs) and boxes can be adjacent to each other, ideally in groups of six or more 	<p>Section 41 Species (NERC Act). <i>Red list</i></p> <p>BDp Breeding Population Decline. Severe decline in the UK breeding population size, of more than 50%, over 25 years (BDp1) or the entire period used for assessments since the first BoCC review, starting in 1969 (“longer-term”) (BDp2).</p> <p>SPEC European Conservation status. Categorised as a Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 1, 2 or 3). Locally present in Rother District.</p>
Starling	Install internal boxes at soffits/eaves level	<p>Suitable buildings in accommodating areas. Three metres above the ground with a perching site. Must have shade, easterly aspect works best. Install >1.5 metres apart. Be aware in choosing site that they can be noisy.</p>	<p><i>Red list</i></p> <p>BDp Breeding Population Decline. Severe decline in the UK breeding population size, of more than 50%, over 25 years (BDp1) or the entire period used for assessments since the first BoCC review, starting in 1969 (“longer-term”) (BDp2).</p> <p>SPEC European Conservation status. Categorised as a</p>

			Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 1, 2 or 3). Locally present in Rother District.
Barn Owls, Tawny Owls and Kestrels	Install appropriate nest boxes. Refer to Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan ' <u>Barn Owl Action Plan</u> '	At interface between town and country. Access to suitable habitat, at low risk of disturbance. May require expert advice to choose site.	Kestrel and Barn Owl = Amber List (SPEC European Conservation status. Categorised as a Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 1, 2 or 3). Both locally present in Rother District.
Crevice-dwelling bats* (such as Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Nathusius' Pipistrelle, Brandt's and Whiskered Bat) * These bats may not be visible in existing buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave or create spaces in the wall or behind the cladding • Install ready-made bat boxes into the walls or under the eaves • Create sandwich boards of at least 3 layers with a 1 inch gap to place inside the roof void, against the battens • Leave timber joists and/ Refer to Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan ' <u>Pipistrelle Action Plan</u> '	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crevice dwelling bats can crawl into the smallest spaces although areas of about 1sqm would be useful for summer nursery roosts. • The height of entry can be from 2-7m above ground level. • Generally the summer nursery roosts will have a southerly or westerly aspect for solar heating. Male roosts and winter hibernation roosts have a northerly aspect. • Materials for the roosts should be rough (for grip), non-toxic or corrosive, with no risk of entanglement. • The access should not be lit by artificial lighting. • Maintain or enhance linear features in the landscape such as treelines and hedgerows that the bats can use for cover and flight paths. 	Soprano Pipistrelle = Section 41 Species (NERC Act). Locally present in Rother District.
Roof-void dwelling bats* (such as Noctule, Serotine, Leisler's, Daubenton's, Greater Mouse-eared, Barbastelle and Bechstein's) * These bats may be visible on roof timbers in existing buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave timber joists and/or beams exposed • Install access points such as spaces under the eaves or specially-made holes in the roof tiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The height of entry should be from 2-7m above ground level. • Generally the summer nursery roosts will have a southerly or westerly aspect for solar heating. Male roosts and winter hibernation roosts have a northerly aspect. • Materials for the roosts should be rough (for grip), non-toxic or corrosive, with no risk of entanglement. • The access should not be lit by artificial lighting. • Maintain or enhance linear features in the landscape such as treelines and hedgerows that the bats can use for cover and flight paths. 	Noctule Bat, Bechstein's Bat, Western Barbastelle =Section 41 Species (NERC Act).
Bats that need Flight Space (e.g. Natterer's, Brown and Grey Long-Eared)	Keep roof space untrussed to allow flight	Entry should be over 2 metres above ground. Roosting of untrussed roof space should be 2–2.8 high by 5 metres wide by 5 metres long. Maintain and enhance linear features, such as hedgerows, to help preserve flight lines.	Brown Long Eared =Section 41 Species (NERC Act). Locally present in Rother District.

Table 4: Circumstances when a Species Survey may be requested

Applicants may be asked to carry out a survey if there is a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present on the site, or affected by the development.

Type of building or land	Species to survey for
Veteran (historical or important) trees, cellars, ice houses, old mines and caves	Bat, breeding bird
Buildings with features suitable for bats , or large gardens in suburban and rural areas	Bat, breeding bird, badger, reptile and great crested newt
Traditional timber-framed building (such as a barn or oast house)	Bat, barn owl and breeding bird
Lakes, rivers and streams (on the land or nearby)	Breeding bird, great crested newt, fish, otter, water vole and crayfish
Heathland on, nearby or linked to the site (by similar habitat)	Breeding bird, badger, dormouse, reptile, invertebrate, natterjack toad and protected plants
Meadows, grassland, parkland and pasture on the land or linked to the site (by similar habitat)	Bat, badger, breeding bird, great crested newt, invertebrate, reptile and protected plants
Ponds or slow-flowing water bodies (like ditches) on the site, or within 500m and linked by semi-natural habitat such as parks or heaths	Breeding bird, fish, great crested newt, water vole, invertebrate and crayfish
Rough grassland and previously developed land (brownfield sites), on or next to the site	Breeding bird, reptile, invertebrate and protected plants
Woodland, scrub and hedgerows on, next to or linked to the site	Bat, breeding bird, badger, dormouse, invertebrate, great crested newt, smooth snake and protected plants
Coastal habitats	Breeding bird, fish, natterjack toad and invertebrates

All surveys should be carried out at the right time of year, using methods that are right for the species and the area.

Species	Best time of year to survey (dependent on weather conditions)
Badgers	February to April and October to November
Bats (hibernation roosts)	November to mid-March
Bats (summer roosts)	May to mid-September
Bats (foraging/commuting)	May to September
Birds (breeding)	March to June
Birds (winter behaviour)	October to March
Dormice	May to September
Great crested newts (in water)	Mid-March to Mid-June
Invertebrates	April to September
Natterjack toads	April to May
Otters	Any time of year but better in summer as signs may get washed away in winter months
Reptiles	Mid-March to June and September
Water voles	March to September
White-clawed crayfish	July to September

Scoping surveys

Scoping surveys (often called an extended phase 1 surveys) are useful for assessing whether a full survey is needed.

Check the survey date

Ideally surveys should be from the most recent survey season but this varies by species.

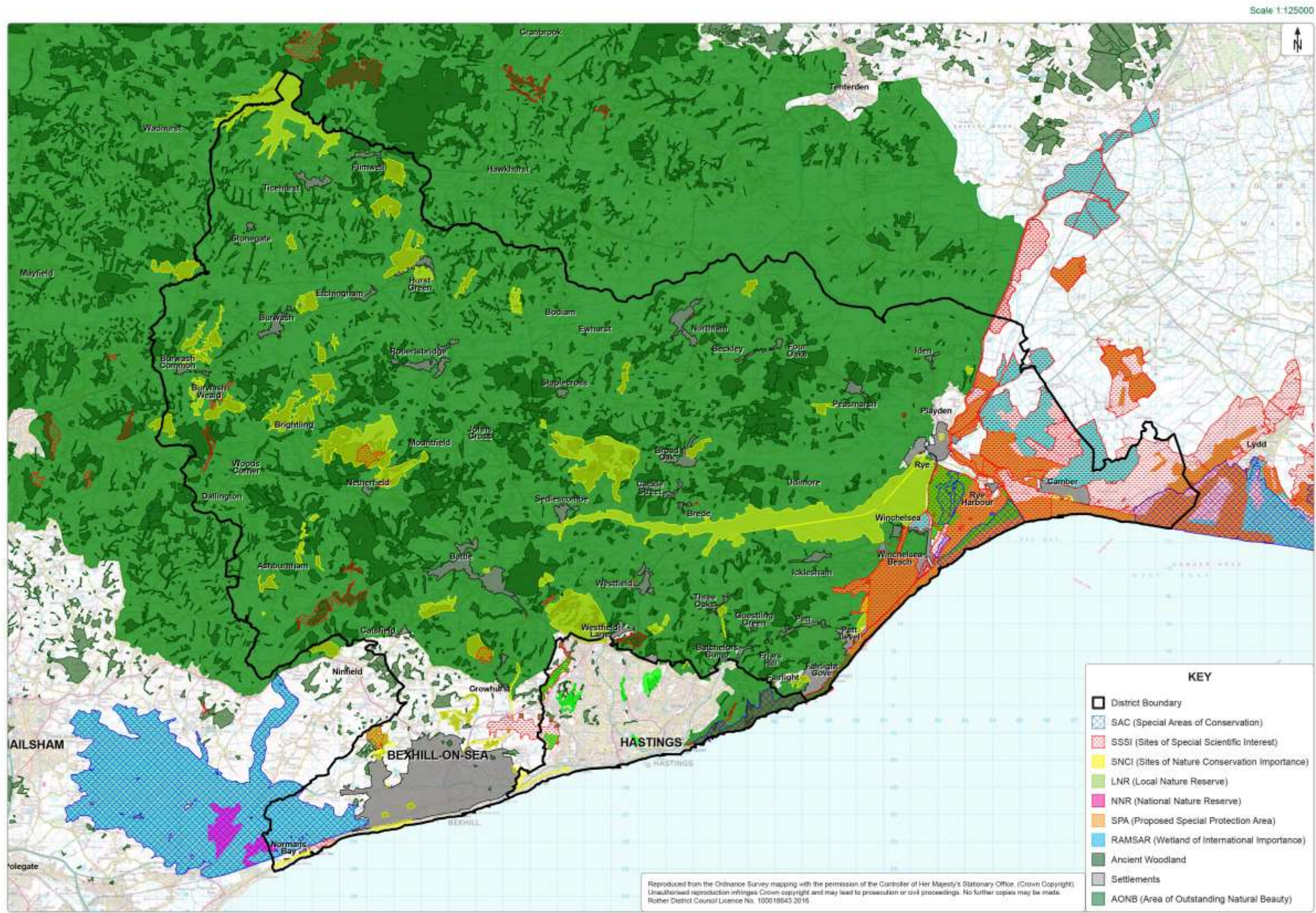
When applicants have to apply for a European protected species licence after receiving planning permission, Natural England expects them to carry out a walk-over check (and sometimes further full surveys) of the proposed development site within 3 months of submitting an application. This is to check that the habitats have not changed significantly since the initial survey.

Planning conditions requiring extra surveys

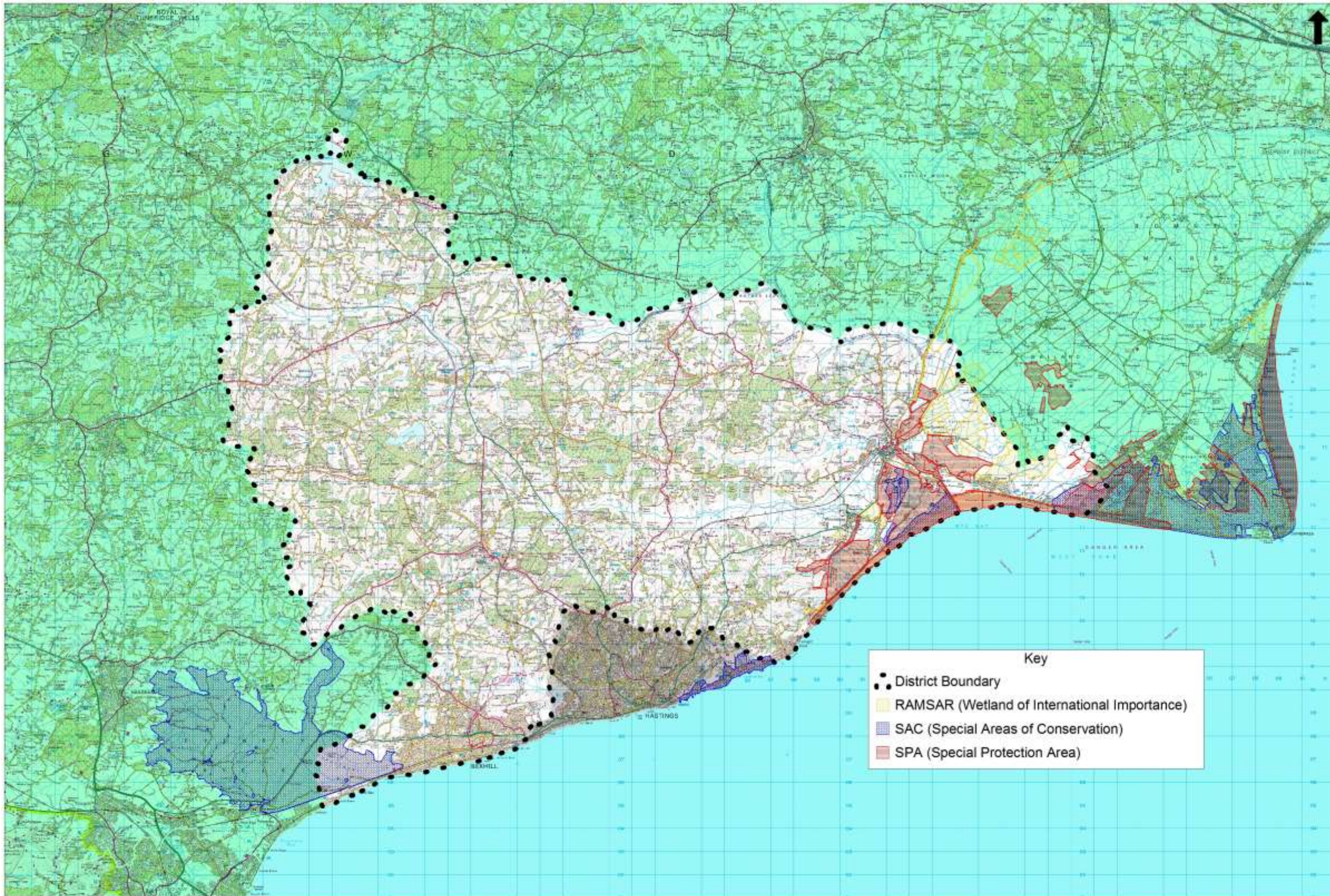
You should only attach [planning conditions](#) requesting surveys under exceptional circumstances.

Conditions requiring further surveys are sometimes used for outline or multi-phased developments. If it's necessary, you can add a condition to ensure that there are additional or updated ecological surveys to check that the mitigation is still appropriate for the current situation.

Map 1: Environmental Designations

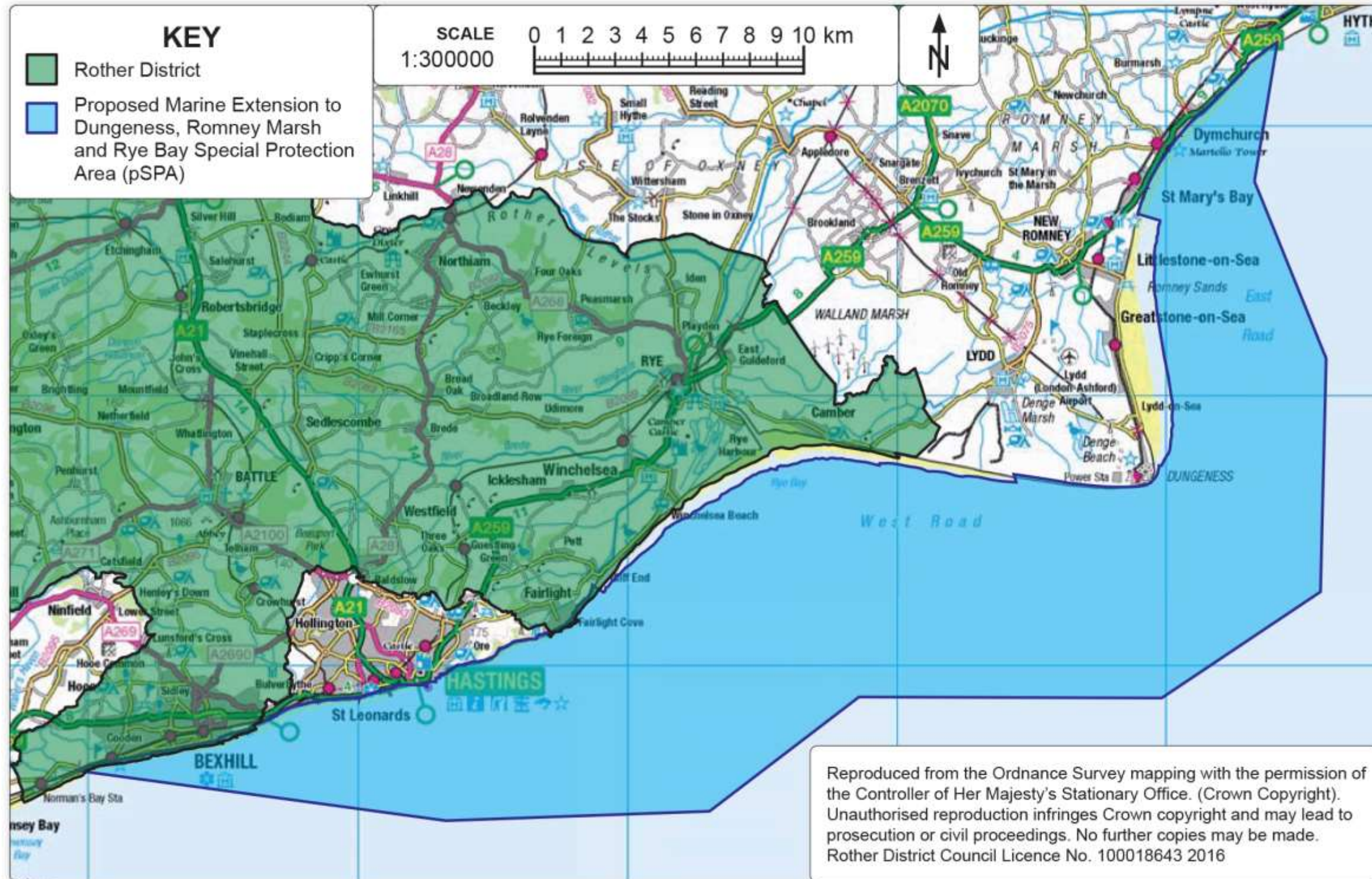


Map 2: International Sites

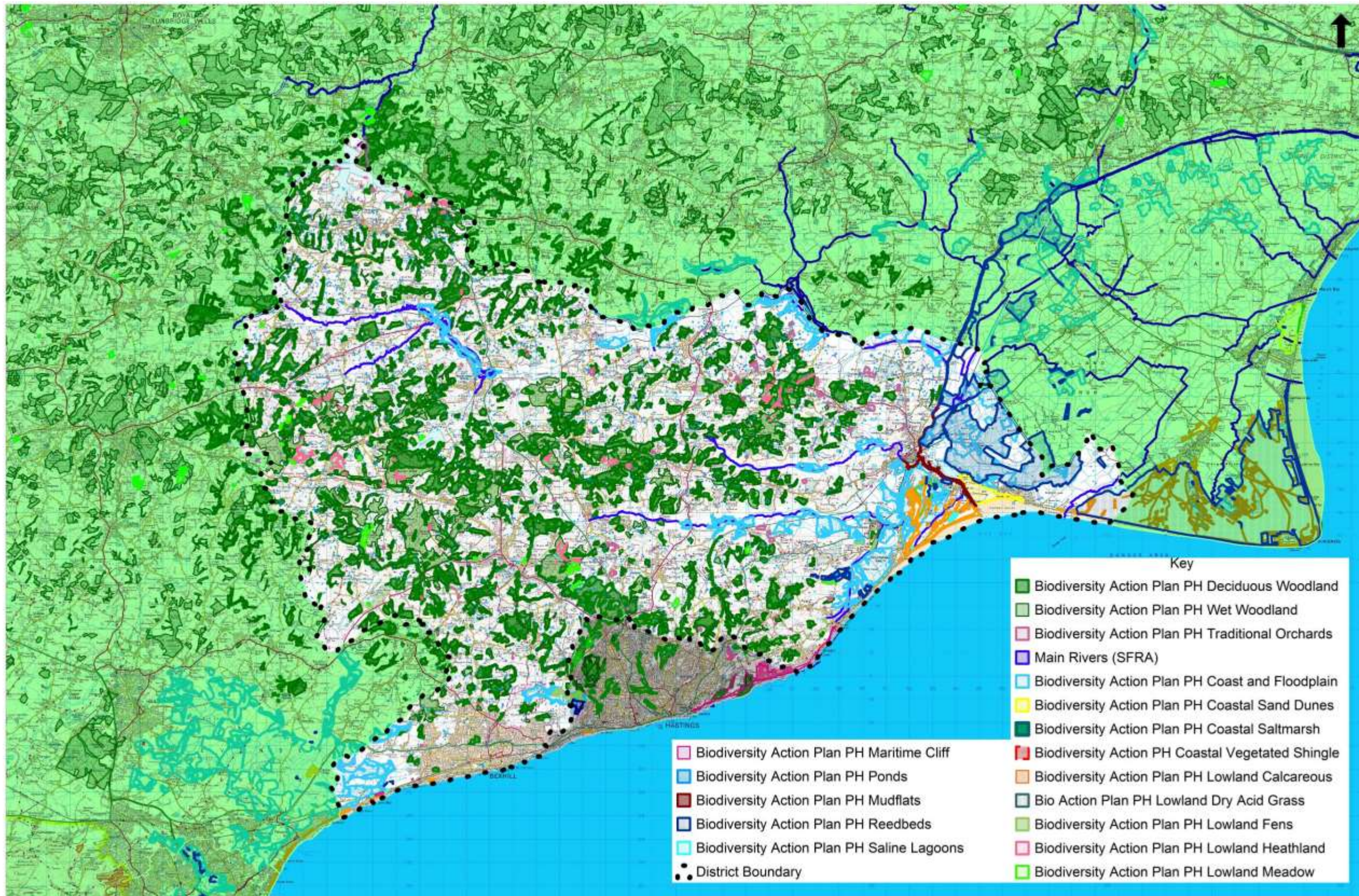


Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. (Crown Copyright). Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. No further copies may be made. Rother District Council Licence No 100018643 2016.

Map 2a: International Sites: Proposed Marine Extension to Special Protection Area (SPA)



Map 3: Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. (Crown Copyright). Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. No further copies may be made. Rother District Council Licence No 100018643 2014.

N.G. Ref: TQ8220