



Rother District Council

Local Development Framework

Draft Rural Settlements Study



Part 2 - Village Appraisals

November 2008

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PART TWO

VILLAGE APPRAISALS

7. Introduction

The survey work in 'Part One: Main Report' examined the relative viability and sustainability of settlements. This helped to identify which settlements may benefit from growth in principle.

The service level indicators examined the role of the settlement in relation to population and wider hinterland. Government policy is that development should be directed to service centres and this stage of the process examines the function of each settlement in Rother District. This process has identified 2 settlements which act as 'Rural Service Centres' and 7 settlements that act as 'Local Service Villages'.

Against this background further assessments have been made on the demographic profile, economic circumstances of a settlement, levels of accessibility, levels of housing need and the environmental constraints.

In accordance with the preferred rural spatial distribution, the development need and potential of individual villages has been primarily been assessed in the light of their service role. However other factors such as local needs, accessibility, and environmental factors have also been taken into account. Collectively, these factors have indicated which areas may benefit from some growth and development to ensure the continuation of sustainable and vital settlements.

In Part 2 'Village Appraisals', villages are appraised on an individual basis. Examination at local level has highlighted further local environmental factors that need to be taken into account.

Part 2 has also highlighted any needs associated with a settlement that could be addressed through development or development contributions. Examples could be affordable housing need, community needs such as village halls or children's play areas, the needs for service or economic infrastructure or environmental improvements.

Brought together, these factors will lead directly into the strategy for the rural area and how development can not only be accommodated, but can lead directly to addressing the needs of a settlement,

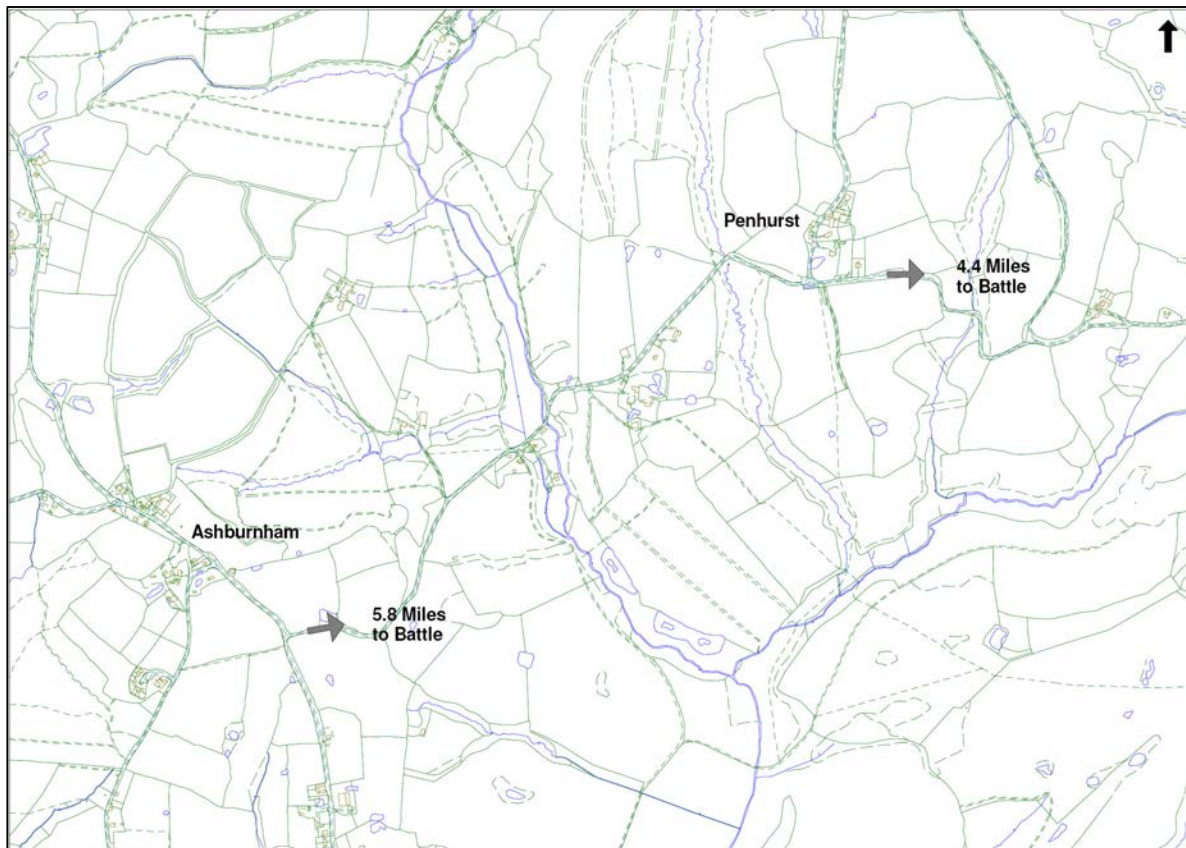
contributing to the overarching principles of sustainability. A judgement is made on the suitability of each settlement or linked settlements, on the basis of the assessed factors, and the level of potential or constraints. The judgement takes into account each factor in relation to the specific circumstances in each settlement/village.

The criteria for inclusion were outlined in Part 1, section 1. The following villages have been appraised: (Those in bold have development boundaries).

Ashburnham & Penshurst
Bachelor's Bump
Beckley
Bodiam
Brede
Brightling
Broad Oak
Burwash
Burwash Common
Burwash Weald
Cackle Street
Camber
Catsfield
Crowhurst
Dallington
Etchingham
Ewhurst
Fairlight
Fairlight Cove
Flimwell
Four Oaks
Guestling Green
Hurst Green
Icklesham
Iden
Johns Cross
Mountfield
Netherfield
Normans Bay
Northiam
Peasmarsh
Pett & Friars Hill
Pett Level
Robertsbridge
Sedlescombe
Staplecross
Stonegate
Three Oaks
Ticehurst
Udimore
Westfield
Westfield Lane
Winchelsea
Winchelsea Beach
Woods Corner
Other Villages and Hamlets

Although Battle and Rye (incorporating Rye Harbour and Playden villages) have been analysed in the Main Report in terms of their service provision and accessibility, they are not included within this section on village appraisals. This is because they are covered elsewhere in the respective Rye and Battle strategies. This village appraisal report focuses on the rural villages that lie beyond the District's three towns (Bexhill, Battle, Rye) and their immediate hinterland.

Ashburnham and Penhurst



Introduction

Ashburnham is a remote dispersed settlement, situated approximately 6 miles west of Battle, and includes the inhabited areas of Brownbread Street, Ashburnham Forge and Ponto Green. It was here, early in the nineteenth century that the last of the Sussex iron furnaces ceased functioning.

Ashburnham takes its name from Ashburnham Place, previously a manor house but now a Christian Conference and prayer centre, which in turn comes from the fact that the local stream is the Ashbourne. Ashburnham Place contains relics of Charles 1. The Parish Church of St Peter is situated adjacent to the Ashburnham Place Estate.

Situated approximately 2 kilometres to the north and east is Penhurst, a small cohesive hamlet comprising of a 14th Century Church, Elizabethan manor house, farm and farm cottages.

Although the Parishes of Ashburnham and Penhurst are discrete, they are dealt administratively as one, due to their individual small populations which together total approximately 300. Neither have a development boundary in the Local Plan.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Ashburnham and Penhurst have a very limited range of services. Neither have shops or a school, but as can be seen in Appendix 2: Service level indicators, there is a public house, sports pitch, community hall and church.

Accessibility

Appendix 3: Accessibility indicators, confirms that there is no peak time service. There is a bus from Ashburnham to Battle only once a week. There is no easy access on to an A or B classified road, and therefore Ashburnham and Penhurst have poor accessibility.

Need

Housing Needs

Appendix 7: Housing Need, indicates there are no households on the housing register seeking accommodation, 2.5% of household in housing need, compared to the average for the District of 6.8%, with 6.2% of social rented housing in the Parishes existing stock. There is low

absolute and relative demand in the settlements for new housing.

Economic Role and Needs

Appendix 5: Economic Need, reveals that both the villages have above a high economic activity rate (71%) and an average unemployment rate (2.2%) in comparison to other villages. The ratio of in: out commuting is 0.51 meaning that more people travel out of the parish that travel in to work, as would be expected in a small rural parish. There is a reliance on the private car. Together, these facts suggest a need for limited employment development if housing growth.

However, it is not anticipated that employment opportunities will change, due to the absence of any service industry and lack of potential for new build due to the isolated and rural character of the area.

Community Need for Other Services

Further to consultation carried out, the Parish Council have not requested any additional community facilities for the two settlements.

Ashburnham Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Only two facilities are cited, Ashburnham Cricket Ground and Ashburnham Village Hall both of which experience low levels of usage despite the cricket ground having very good accessibility and being of good quality. The village hall is of poor quality and with average accessibility; stimulating complaints from local residents regarding kitchen and toilet facilities. Suggestions of a new hall being built have been made.

Provision of public transport and cycleways is perceived as very poor with distances from the population to outdoor open spaces and indoor facilities being very poor via all forms of transport. Signage and promotion of open space facilities appears nonexistent.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Maps 1 and 2 set out the Environmental Designations and Flood Zone for the area. The settlements and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB, and there are a number of Ancient Woodlands and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance in the vicinity of the settlements.

There is a high proportion of arable farming in this area which is interspersed with large tracts

of woodland that spread out of the slopes of steep valleys.

This is a well treed landscape, where the hedges and shaws give important structure to the landscape.

Development Potential

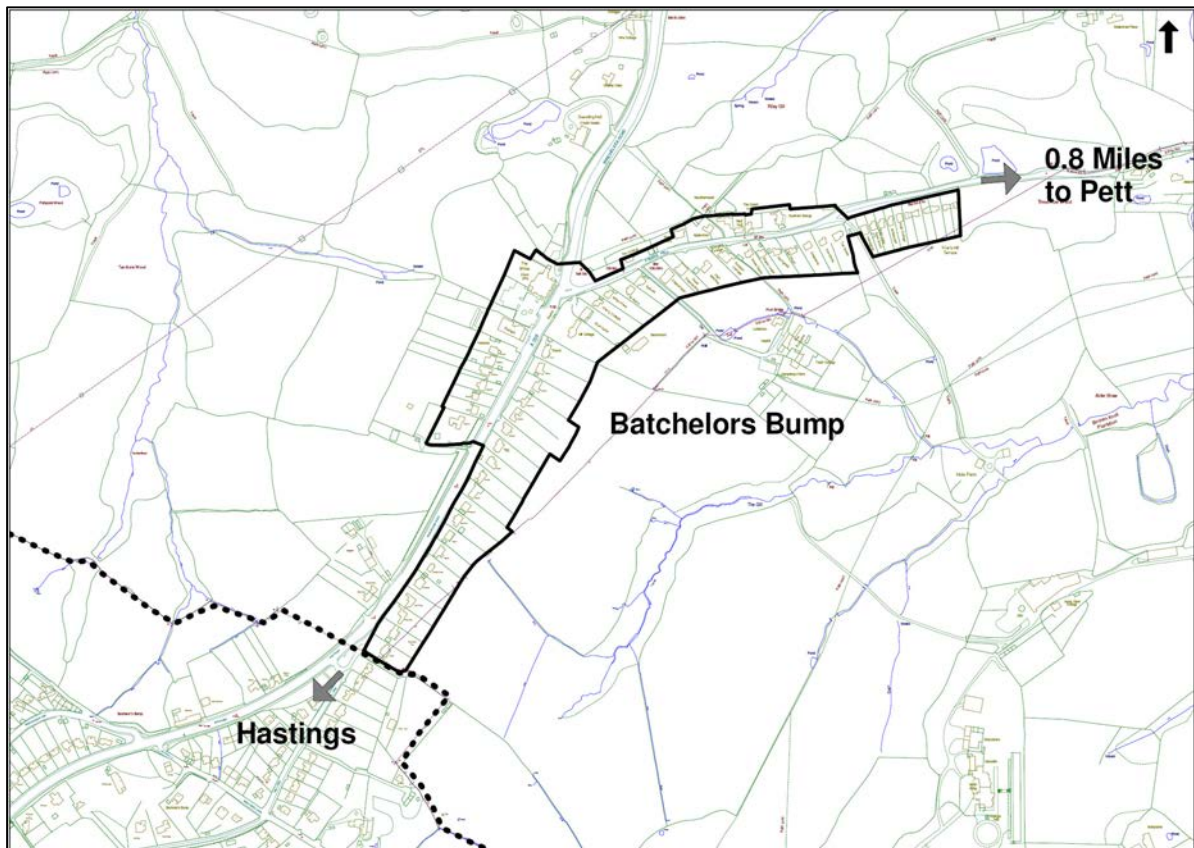
The relatively remote location of the settlements within the high quality landscape, allied with the lack of services, facilities and poor accessibility, do not provide the sustainable conditions in which to locate development.

Notwithstanding this, there may be a more pressing need in the future for development to take account of any Parish housing need. This however may be delivered through the mechanism of exception site policy, which makes provision for residential development outside any development boundaries, in order to meet a local need amongst those who are unable to compete in the normal housing market.

In the event of developer's contributions becoming available, local cycleways appear to be lacking.

In respect of employment there may be some employment opportunities within the confines of any existing redundant farm buildings subject to the appropriate criteria being met.

Bachelor's Bump



Introduction

Bachelor's Bump is a linear form of development of a relatively low density within the parish of Guestling. Whilst administratively it lies within the Rother District, it essentially constitutes an arm of ribbon development that is contiguous with the built form of north-eastern Hastings, and consequently reads as part of the urban fringe of this town.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

In view of the proximity of the area with Hastings, the settlement does not have any elements of self containment such as a school, shop, services and facilities although there is a public house and garage at its northern end.

Accessibility

Bachelor's Bump is relatively accessible, conveniently located for access onto the A271, A2100 and B2095. There are two peak time bus services and Three Oaks train station is just over a mile away.

The East Sussex Landscape Assessment recommended traffic management and calming measures on the lanes near Hastings.

Need

Housing Needs

Guestling Parish has identified 21 households in housing need with 11 households on the existing register seeking accommodation. Some 11.1% of total households in the parish are in housing need, which is a relatively high figure.

However these figures relate to all settlements in the parish, and therefore include Guestling and Three Oaks.

The three settlements are individual in their characteristics, and so applying the overall needs of the parish to any one settlement in this instance may not give a clear indication of specific needs.

In the case of Bachelor's Bump, the availability of a range of housing in Hastings would meet any local demands.

Economic Role and Needs

Like the housing needs above, applying the overall needs of Guestling Parish, to Bachelor's Bump specifically, only gives a limited indication of the economic needs of the settlement.

Guestling parish exhibits low unemployment, combined with an average rate of economic activity. There is a high reliance on the car for commuting. There is a high economic base, which doesn't suggest a real need for further employment uses.

There are many employment opportunities available in the town, and in the industrial estates at its edge, which can be accessed via the frequent bus service.

Community Need for Other Services

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' has not identified any shortfalls in the parish. The proximity of the existing services and facilities within Hastings Borough boundary provide local facilities for the residents of Bachelor's Bump. The Parish Council have not requested that any further facilities are provided.

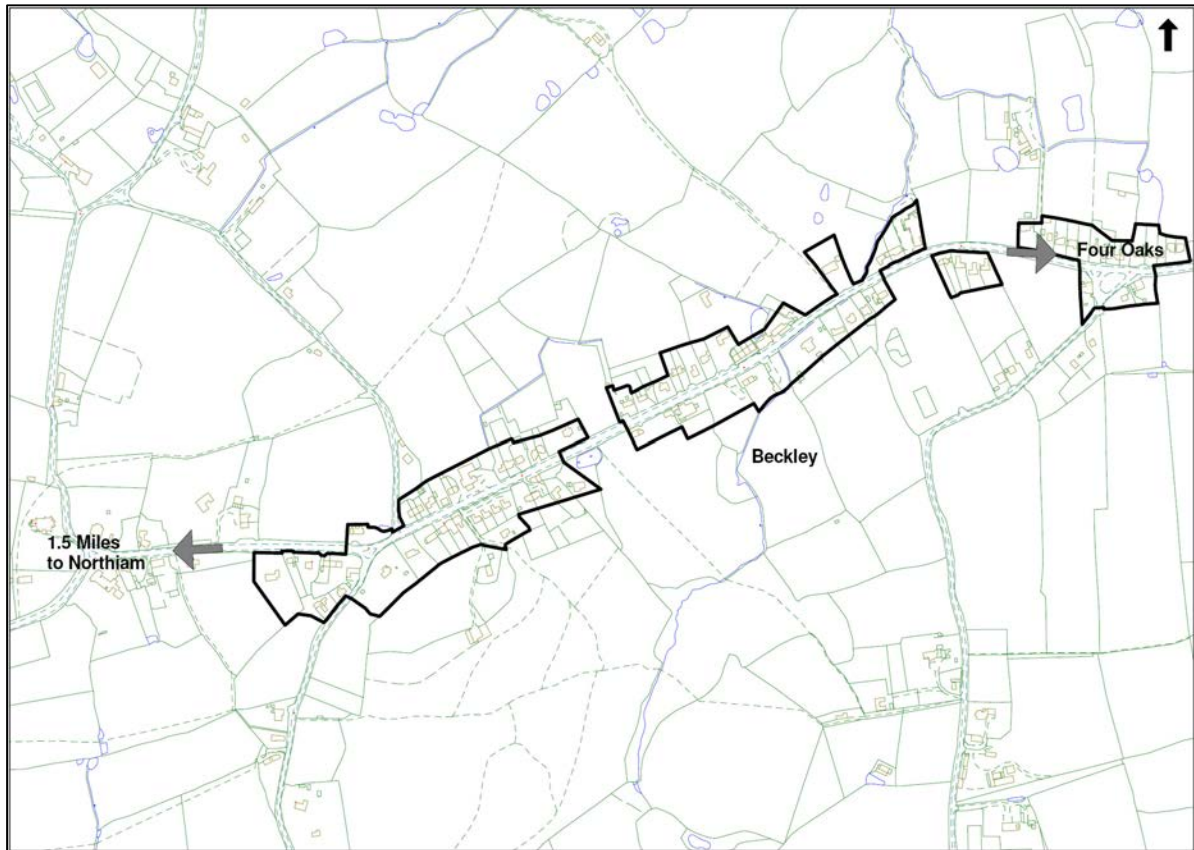
Environmental and Landscape Factors

Despite the proximity to Hastings, Bachelor's Bump's extended ribbon form is surrounded by undulating countryside that is within the designated High Weald A.O.N.B. Due to the elevation of the settlement, distant views to the west are a feature of the more southern end of the existing built form, as well as the more semi-rural character at its northern end, away from the A259.

Development Potential

Due to the elevated position of the settlement and outstanding landscape of the surrounding countryside, it is considered important to prevent the further extension of the existing linear development. There is no case therefore to intensify development at Bachelor's Bump, and the environmental constraints negate the potential to do so.

Beckley



Introduction

The settlement of Beckley is linear in form straddling the B2088 with a population of approximately 270. The village is situated some 1.5 miles east of Northiam and 3 kilometres west of Peasmarsh. Both of these larger neighbouring villages are defined as local service villages, as identified in Appendix 2.

Its long main street contains many fine Georgian houses listed for their historic and architectural interest. Characteristic of the village are the undeveloped gaps in the otherwise built up frontage, which have the effect of bringing the countryside into Beckley, giving a semi-rural feel to even the centre of the village.

The woodlands surrounding Beckley have been the site of iron workings since Roman times but the industry reached its peak in the 17th and 18th centuries when Beckley Furnace specialised in the manufacture of canons for use all over the world. The iron works closed in 1770.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

For its size, Beckley enjoys a reasonable range of services. Within the confines of the village is a dentist, primary school, hairdressers and a commercial garage (which also sells a small range of convenience goods). There is a public house and All Saints church which dates from the twelfth century, although these are located approximately 1 kilometre from the village to the west. It seems likely that Beckley also provides some day to day services for Four Oaks to the east, due to the lack of local services in the neighbouring village.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Beckley CE Primary School is projected to have surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

There is a regular but limited bus service to Northiam, Rye and Hastings, leading to dependence on the car.

Northiam, which is within a 5 minute drive, offers a range of goods and services as well as

a doctor's surgery, and Peasmarsh which is a similar distance away, has a supermarket which offers a wide range of convenience goods.

Need

Housing Needs

Evidence indicates that there are 16 households on the housing register seeking accommodation, with the same number of households in housing need which equates to 3.4% of all households in the parish. The proportion on the register is fairly high when measured against other villages, whilst the level of need is comparatively low. Currently 8.6% of the housing stock is made up of social rented housing. Beckley village lies within Beckley Parish which includes the village of Four Oaks and the hamlet of Clayhill.

Economic Role and Needs

An average unemployment and economic activity rate, combined with limited employment base and reliance on car suggests a need for limited employment development. However, it is important to note that the nearby larger villages offer opportunities for employment.

Community Need for Other Services

Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study states that a new play area should be a medium term (3 to 5 years) priority for Beckley.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Beckley residents felt that a community hall, doctor's surgery, shops, post office and school were all important in making a village a good place to live generally. In their own village Beckley residents rated their primary school highly but felt a number of services and qualities rated poorly, including access to convenience shopping, chemists, post office, cash point and public transport. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to provide more affordable housing in Rother.

In their response to the Parish Council Planning Seminar, Beckley Parish Council stated their support for the strategic objectives to support & encourage the well being of villagers, maintain and improve the quality of the natural and built environment in the parish, to support and increase the educational and skill levels of those young parishioners in the village, to protect and conserve the "natural beauty" of the AONB High Weald village of Beckley, to recognise and promote the unique character of

the parish and its continuing role as a living and working village. The Parish Council recognise a number of constraints to forward planning, including – the High Weald AONB washes over the entire parish, reducing population, ageing population, few services available in the parish despite strong sense of community, small economically active population and limited bus services leading to dependence on the private motor car. The Parish Council also commented that there is a strong sense of community in the village despite the fact that few services are available.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Beckley and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB. It is a landscape of gently undulating countryside with large blocks of mixed woodland particularly to the south of the village, some of which are designated as Ancient Woodland.

Adjacent to the settlement are a number of small fields which appear to be used for pasture. As commented in the introduction, a key feature of the settlement pattern, are the gaps in the ribbon development whereby the surrounding countryside is made visible, even though they occur centrally in the village.

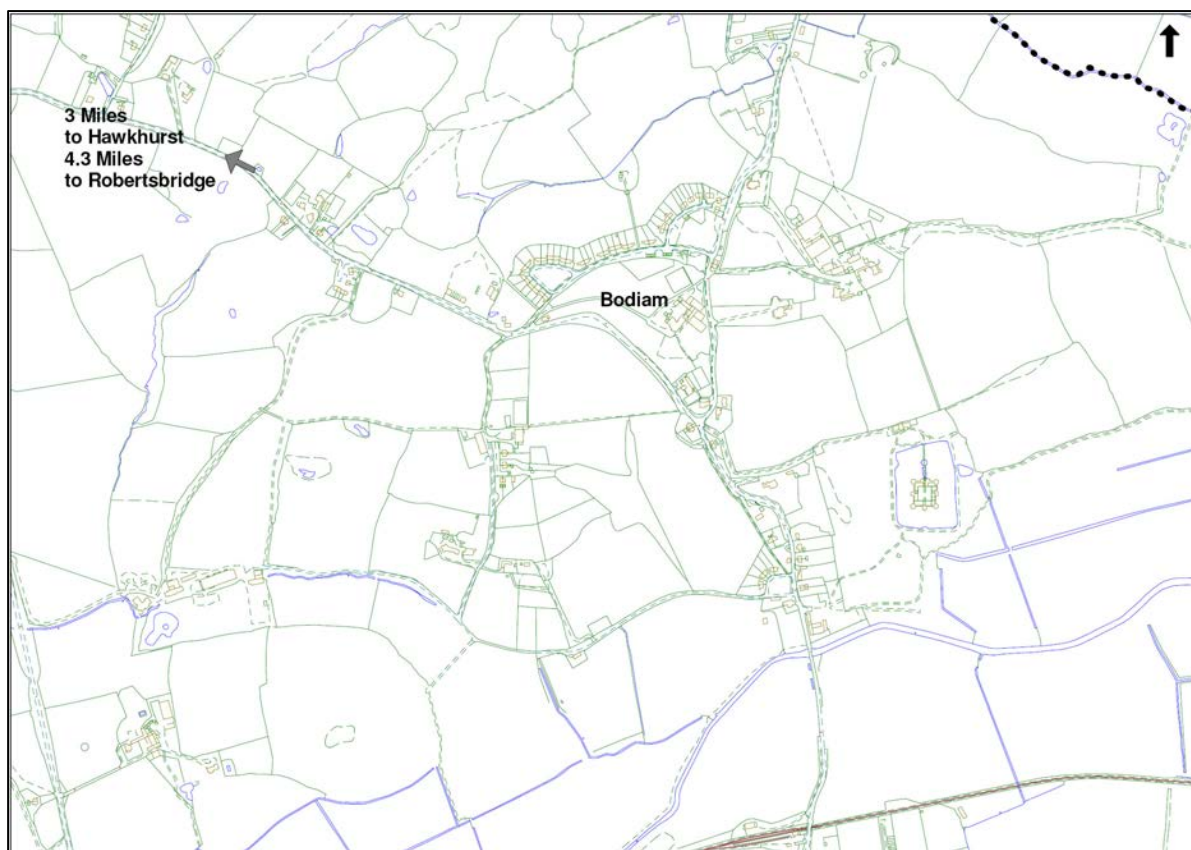
Four Oaks village lies within 1 kilometre of Beckley to the east, and sporadic development exists between the two settlements.

Development Potential

Ribbon development is a key feature in the current development pattern of Beckley, but its further extension in to the countryside to the west and east would have a detrimental impact on the rural setting of the village. In addition the extensive infilling of the existing gaps in the otherwise built up frontage would alter the inherent semi rural character of the main village.

Affordable housing and play area replacement have been identified as needs. The affordable housing requirement is restricted to housing developments of 5 or more dwellings so can only be met via an allocation of land or an exception site. Exception policy is in place for planning permission to be given for affordable housing to be built for local people, who are unable to compete in the normal housing market. Given the inherent difficulty in bringing forward exception sites, it may be appropriate to investigate a small scale allocation (up to 10 dwellings) in the Site Allocations DPD. If possible, developer's contributions should be used to facilitate a replacement play area.

Bodiam



Introduction

Bodiam is a small village of about 200 people located about 11 miles from Hastings and some 3 miles east of Robertsbridge. The village is made up in the main, of two component parts, the original part of the settlement adjacent to the castle, and the more recent development at Levetts Lane. A deep cut lane separates the two elements of the village.

Work started on Bodiam Castle in 1385. It was the last castle to be built on traditional lines because the advent of the cannon rendered such buildings almost incapable of defence. Today it sits on the southern side of the village, is owned by the National Trust and attracts many tourists each year. Another local tourist attraction is the Kent & East Sussex Railway steam railway which links to Tenterden and there are proposals for it to be extended to Robertsbridge in the south.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

There is a limited range of services and facilities within the village. A primary school lies at the northern end of the village, public

house with attached hall, a sports field with pavilion and a church. The castle has a tea shop within the grounds.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Bodiam CE Primary School is projected to have surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Bodiam is in a relatively isolated location, with poor road links running east to west. There is an occasional bus service from the village to Hastings and Hawkhurst. Etchingham and Robertsbridge railway station are some 5 miles distant.

Need

Housing Needs

The existing housing stock has a high proportion of social rented housing (20%), and a relatively low number of households in housing need or requiring accommodation, when compared to the average for the district.

Given these ratios, it is possible that accommodation needs may be largely met by the existing stock, as it becomes available, although there is likely to be a shortfall, particularly as Bodiam is a relatively sought after location from households on housing register.

The exception site policy could deliver any need.

Economic Role and Needs

The local economy benefits from the presence of the two local tourist attractions, the castle and the steam railway.

Bodiam also parish contains the employment areas 'Bodiam Business Park' and 'Dagg Lane', as well as opportunities at the School and Castle. Bodiam Business Park has over 3,000 sq.m of B1 use class (mixed industrial and offices). Buildings are generally 10 – 30 years old. The park is fully occupied consisting of a variety of single-occupied and multi-occupied units of varying quality.

A noteworthy local innovation is the proposed 'Bodiam Food Hub', the vision of which is to provide flexible and high quality commercial space tailored to the requirements of the local food sector at Ockham Farm. A feasibility study has been commissioned by SEEDA and supported by Rother District Council. It is expected to recommend a phased approach that will include the establishment of a distribution exercise co-operatively owned by local producers followed by the development of light industrial units and encouragement of food producers to occupy these units.

The parish unemployment rate stands at approximately 4.2%, which is above the rural Rother average of 2.2%. Relatively higher job need combined with higher activity rate (70%), low job provision and reliance on public transport suggests a need for more employment development in the area if there were to be housing growth.

Community Need for Other Services

Bodiam contains the Rother District Council managed play area 'Levetts Lane'.

The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study did not recommend any new community services and facilities for the settlement.

Bodiam Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.

The Parish Council identified open space facilities at Levetts Lane Play Area, Bodiam Recreation Ground, Levetts Lane AGS and the Village Green. All are substantially underused yet are of a high quality with good accessibility. A focus has been upon the well-equipped play area that has poor usage levels partially as it is liable to flooding. Plans are in progress to develop a village hall with possible recreation facilities following resident suggestions. The quality of all open spaces are average to good. Accessibility to open spaces is a concern amongst the residents.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The fragmented settlement lies on the northern side of the River Rother, with the southern aspect of the village and the castle positioned on the bank of the river, and the northern part of the village well screened by woodland and located on the south facing valley side.

The castle dominates this part of the valley, and marks the point where the valley begins to lose its wild, marshy appearance and is gradually enclosed by wooded ridges

The wide open space of the river and its flood plains too are a feature of the area, and the land bounded by the village to the north and the Kent and Sussex railway to the south is designated within the floodplain.

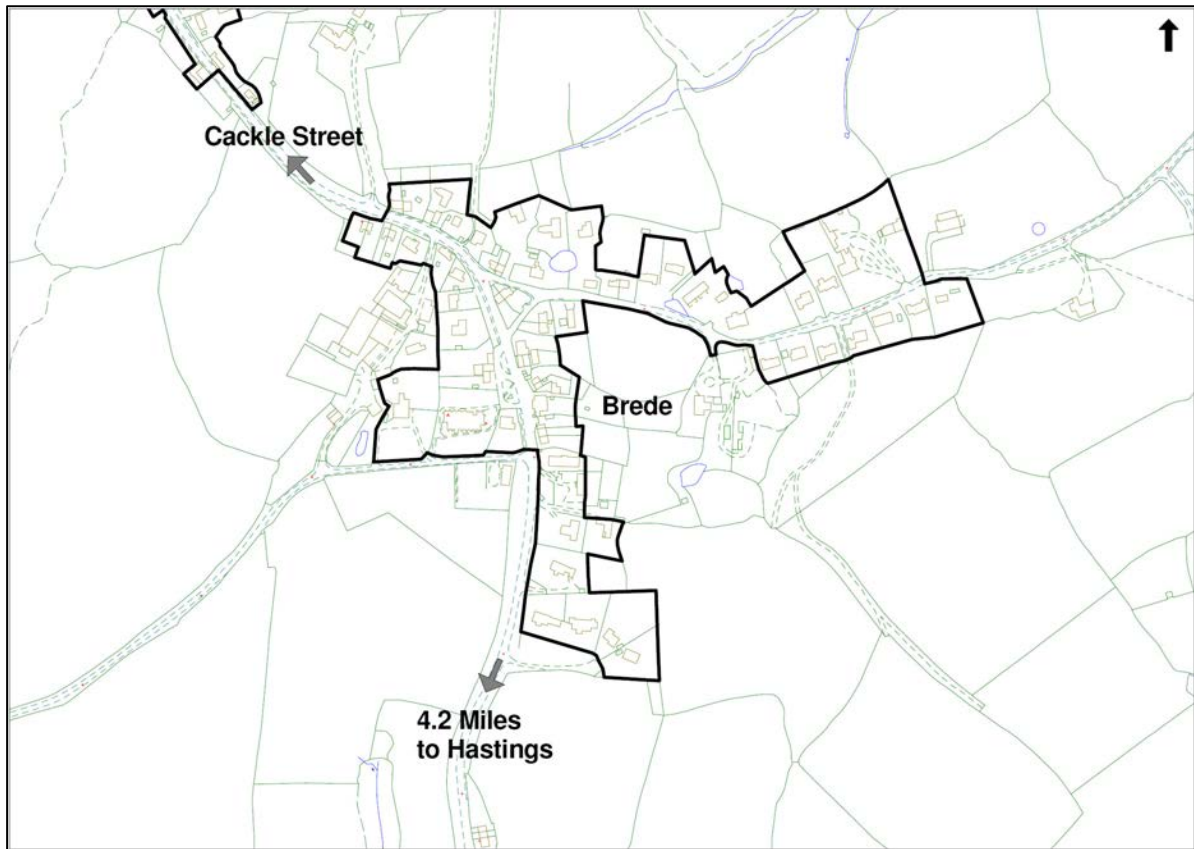
The village and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB.

The Parish Council have requested an Article 4 Direction be placed on the land south of Bodiam Bridge within the parish of Ewhurst, to protect the sensitive and special landscape of the valley.

Development Potential

The limited range of services and facilities means that Bodiam does not score highly in the table of Service Level Indicators at Appendix 1. In addition the small population allied with the relatively isolated location of the village, the dispersed pattern of its built form and the quality of the surrounding landscape all are factors which give evidence that development here should be resisted.

Brede



Introduction

Brede is a small village of approximately 160 people situated on the south facing slopes of the Brede valley. It has developed along the principal and a minor road.

Iron was worked at Brede at least since Roman times but ceased in the late 1700s. In 1030, King Canute gave the Manor of Brede to the Normans, so marking the beginning of infiltration from across the channel. Not surprisingly, the village has a number of historic dwellings within it, including the Tudor mansion and early English parish church of St George, in which may be seen Dean Swift's cradle.

Brede is strongly linked with the neighbouring villages of Broad Oak and Cackle Street which are both within 1 mile to the north. The three villages form a relatively compact cluster of settlements running north-south along the A28.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Brede has a church, small hall and public house.

The Community hall in nearby Cackle Street serves the wider area including Broad Oak and Brede.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Brede Primary School (which is located in Broad Oak) is projected to have surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

There is a regular bus service to Hastings, Northiam and Tenterden. The nearest train station is Doleham, 2 kilometres away, which has trains that run at Peak time only to Hastings, Rye and beyond.

Broad Oak which is approximately a mile away has a village school and shop selling convenience goods. Westfield with its doctors surgery is located 2 miles to the south, and Hastings is just over 4 miles in the same direction

Need

Housing Needs

The figures for Brede village are taken at Parish level and therefore include the villages of Broad Oak and Cackle Street.

There are some 2.5% households in housing need compared with the average for the district of 6.8%, and 2.1% of households on the housing register compared with a district figure of 2.6%. This suggests a lower than average need when compared to other villages. Some 6.1% of the existing stock is social rented housing.

A Housing Needs Survey has been produced for Brede Parish by Action in Rural Sussex. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. 29 households in the Parish fulfilled the two criteria. It is important to remember that Brede Parish also contains two other villages – Broad Oak and Cackle Street.

Brede Parish Council Action Plan 2003 suggested that 69% of local residents would not oppose development to meet the needs of local people. Most support was for low cost housing and/or housing restricted for sale to locals.

Economic Role and Needs

The economic activity rate is 60%, and 2.9% are unemployed, and both of these figures are typical for the district as a whole. Very low job provision and high reliance on car suggests need for employment development if housing growth in the parish. However, it is important to note that Broad Oak has the more significant service role in the Parish and may therefore be the preferable location for new employment.

Community Need for Other Services

Brede Parish Council Action Plan 2003 achieved a 48% response rate from the local electorate to its survey so it can be taken as an accurate reflection of the wishes of the Parish as a whole. Popular initiatives to enhance and preserve Brede environment were recycling, improved public transport, tree planting and preservation, hedge maintenance, pond maintenance, sowing of wildflowers and the creation of local nature reserves.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in Brede to be delivered as a high priority. It also recommends that a new allotment is needed as a matter of medium priority.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

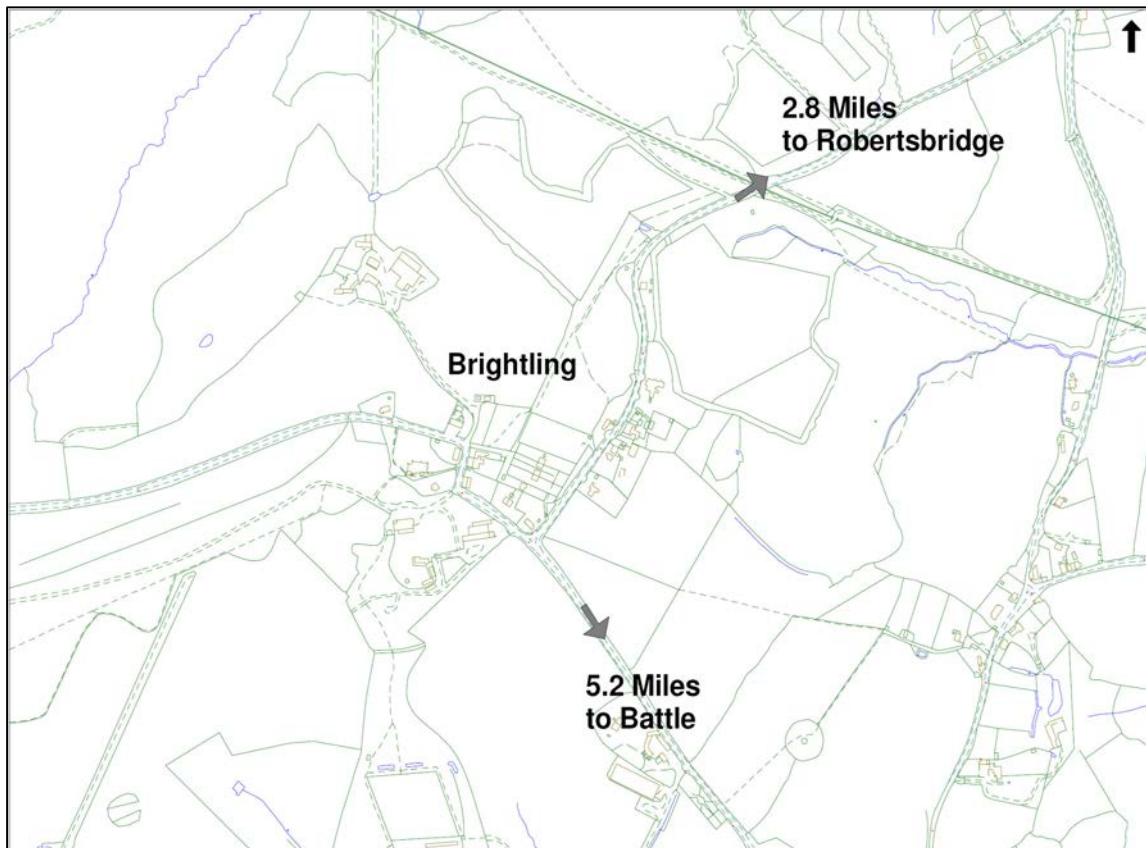
Brede and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB. The village lies on the valley side to the north of the River Brede, and there are fine views particularly to the south, over the river and its floodplain. The area to the south west of the village is protected as a groundwater source protection zone. The village however is outside of any area at risk from flooding.

The valley side in this location is well wooded, some of which is designated as Ancient Woodland. The dominant impression is that of a rural, agricultural landscape.

Development Potential

From the above evidence, the key identified needs are for a play area. Broad Oak, as a local service centre, would be a preferable location for any housing in the parish. Open land adjacent to the narrow Stubb Lane would seem the most suited to location of play facilities, as it is also centrally located within the village.

Brightling



Introduction

Brightling Parish constitutes the settlement of Brightling and a number of isolated farms and dwellings. Brightling village is in a relatively remote location located off the B2096 on the southern forest ridge. It is a small settlement of just under 100 population, located at one of the highest points in the district.

An obelisk on Brightling Down, the highest point in the area, is a notable local landmark. Brightling Needle, as it is known, is on the sight of a chain of beacons that was fired across Sussex when the Spanish armada was sighted in the English Channel. The obelisk is one of a number of strangely shaped structures built by a John Fuller in the early 1800s, known as 'Mad Jack Fuller's Follies'.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Brightling has limited services and although tiny in terms of population, the settlement warrants inclusion in this Rural Settlements Study, by virtue of having a community hall that serves the wider area. It also has the historic church of St Thomas a Becket, which dates from the thirteenth century.

Accessibility

The village is some way from an A road and just over a mile to a B road.

There is a 2 hourly bus service to Heathfield and Battle. The nearest train station is at Etchingham (about 4 miles) and Robertsbridge.

It is 2 and a half miles south of Burwash, under 3 miles from Robertsbridge and just over 5 miles to Battle.

Need

Housing Needs

According to the 2001 Housing Needs Survey, there were 1.3% of households in housing need and 0.6% of households on the housing register. Some 1.3% of the housing stock in the parish is social rented housing. This suggests a comparatively low need for affordable housing compared to other rural villages, although this is in the context of a pressing need across all of Rother. The figures on housing need to be put in context, based as they were on a 2001 Survey (the last date for which figures on all villages are available). Subsequent analysis done specifically for

Brightling Parish and detailed in the following paragraph, suggests a much greater need for affordable housing.

A Housing Needs Survey is being produced for Brightling Parish by Action in Rural Sussex, although at the time of writing in 2008 it is still in Draft format. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. 14 households fulfilled the two criteria.

Economic Role and Needs

A gypsum mine at Ashen Wood provides some local employment. Ore from the mine is now carried overland by conveyor to be processed at the Mountfield works into the plaster which is used to make plasterboard.

Brightling has a number of employment areas in close proximity. Perrymans Lane Industrial Estate, although in Burwash Parish, is situated equi-distant between Brightling, Burwash and Burwash Weald. It has almost 1,000 sq.m of B2 industrial floorspace although more than half of that is currently vacant. Smaller employment areas are at Brick House Lane (B1 use between Brightling & Burwash) and Coldharbour Farm (B2 use between Brightling & Dallington). More local to Brightling, 'Long Reach Farm' specialises in animal and pet foodstuffs.

The Employment Strategy Review 2008 highlighted Darwell ward (which includes Brightling, Burwash, Mountfield and Whatlington) as drawing in commuters. This is not surprising given the range of local business sites.

The parish exhibits moderate unemployment with a high economic activity rate. There is high job provision but reliance on the car for commuting. These figures do not suggest a particular need for new employment floorspace.

Community Need for Other Services

Other than the need for affordable housing discussed above, there are no known additional needs for the parish.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Due to its elevation, there are distant views over the surrounding countryside, and adjacent to the observatory there are views to the North and South Downs.

The settlement and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB,

and due to the elevation of the settlement there are fine views from various vantage points over the surrounding countryside. To the north of the village there are a number of large woodlands which have Ancient Woodland status. In addition, a significant part of these wooded areas, are designated as Sites of Nature Conservation importance.

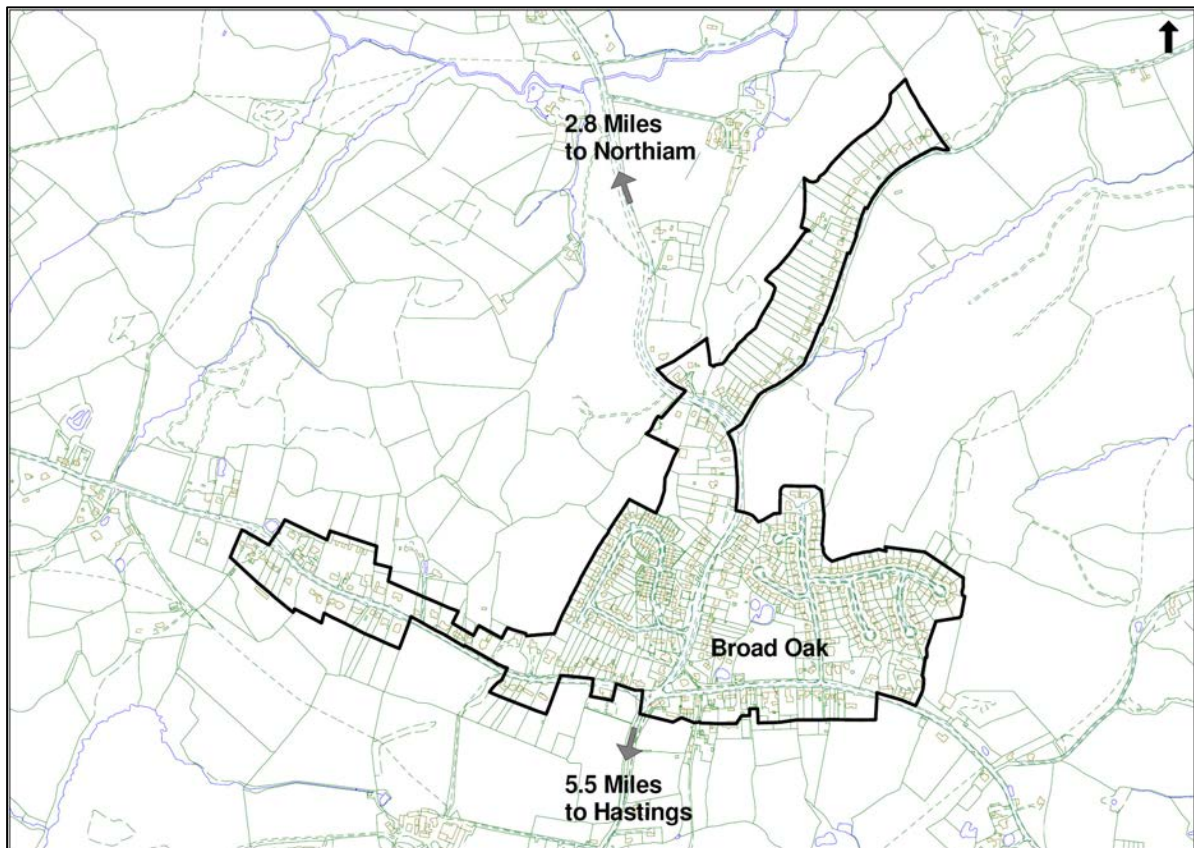
Development Potential

In view of the Parish Council aspiration to meet the needs of the local community for affordable housing, it may be appropriate to seek to identify a small site (up to 10 dwellings) that is predominantly for affordable housing. However the priority would be for an exception site to meet local needs, which would apply to anywhere in the village given that Brightling does not have a development boundary. If an exception site does not come forward for any reason the planning authority could seek to make an allocation to help meet the Parish Council's need.

A new housing site, be it exception site or otherwise, would need to be of a small scale that and well related to the existing built form.



Broad Oak



Introduction

Broad Oak has a population of approximately 1,000 people and is situated approximately 8 miles north of Hastings and 4 miles south of Northiam. An east to west running ridge rises up between the River Tillingham to the north and the River Brede to the south, and the village is positioned some 90 metres above sea level.

Much of the village has developed over the last 50 years. The majority of the village has grown up north of the B2089 Battle to Rye road, away from the more exposed character of the land south of this road. The original form of the settlement comprised of frontage development along the roads that radiate out from the centre of the village, but over time small estates with no through roads have been developed.

Broad Oak is closely linked to the neighbouring villages of Cackle Street and Brede and the three of them form a relatively compact cluster of settlements running north-south along the A28.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Broad Oak has a good range of local services to meet the basic needs of the community including a food store, farm shop, public house, Methodist church and primary school.

The settlement is in close proximity to Cackle Street and Brede to the south and as such the three nodes of development form a cluster. Certain facilities are shared, for example the community hall which serves the Parish, is located in nearby Cackle Street and when all three settlements are looked at collectively the range of facilities that they offer is similar to that of a Local Service Village.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Brede Primary School (which is located in Broad Oak) is projected to have surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

The A28 runs through the centre of the village, and provides access to Northiam to the North, and Hastings in the south, where there is a wide range of jobs, shopping and leisure facilities.

The nearest train station is at Doleham is approximately 3 miles away which has a peak

time train service to Hastings, Rye and beyond. There is a regular bus service to Hastings, Northiam and Tenterden.

Need

Housing Needs

The figures for Broad Oak are taken at Parish level and therefore include the two other significant villages in the Parish, Brede and Cackle Street.

With reference to Appendix 7, there are some 2.5% households in housing need compared with the average for the district of 6.8%, and 2.1% of households on the housing register compared with a district figure of 2.6%. A low to medium proportion of the existing stock (6.1%) is social rented housing.

A Housing Needs Survey has been produced by Action in Rural Sussex at the request of Brede Parish Council. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. The study identified 29 households in the parish as being in need by fulfilling the two criteria.

Brede Parish Council Action Plan 2003 suggested that 69% of local residents would not oppose development to meet the needs of local people. Most support was for low cost housing and/or housing restricted for sale to locals.

The findings of these various studies and consultations suggest a “grass roots” support for some housing to meet local needs.

Economic Role and Needs

The economic activity rate is 60%, and 2.9% are unemployed, and both of these figures are typical for the district as a whole. However, very low job provision (the ratio of in:out commuting is just 0.31) and high reliance on car suggests a need for more local employment development if there is housing growth in the parish.

It is also important to note that Broad Oak has the more significant service role in the Parish and may therefore be the preferable location for new employment when compared to either Brede or Cackle Street.

Community Need for Other Services

Brede Parish Council Action Plan 2003 achieved a 48% response rate from the local electorate to its survey so can be taken as an accurate reflection of the wishes of the Parish as a whole. Aside from affordable housing,

well-supported initiatives to enhance and preserve Brede were recycling, improved public transport, tree planting and preservation, hedge maintenance, pond maintenance, sowing of wildflowers and the creation of local nature reserves.

There is a Brede Parish Council-run play area at Broad Oak Recreation Play Area. The Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study identified that Broad Oak has an identified shortfall in amenity green space. This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas, and its function is to provide informal play space, and to enhance visually residential or other areas. It also recommends that a new allotment is needed as a matter of high priority.

In their responses to the Rother District Council's Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Broad Oak residents felt that a doctor's surgery was particularly important in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they rated the post office highly, but felt that access to a cash point was a problem, as was access to jobs and business sites. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to ensure that design is in keeping with the surrounding area and promote renewable energy in buildings

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Broad Oak and the surrounding countryside are situated within the High Weald AONB. The village is sited on a crest, and the land falls away most markedly to the southern open vistas of the Brede river valley. There are many outstanding views out of the village to the south and east. From the east west road there are significant views over the river valley and beyond. There are also fine views from elsewhere on the periphery of the village, for example from the footpath north of Fieldway, and east from Furnace Lane.

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, and part of which is also designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. The woodland here gives a sense of enclosure.

Development Potential

The evidence outlined above suggest a need for housing, employment, an allotment and amenity open space

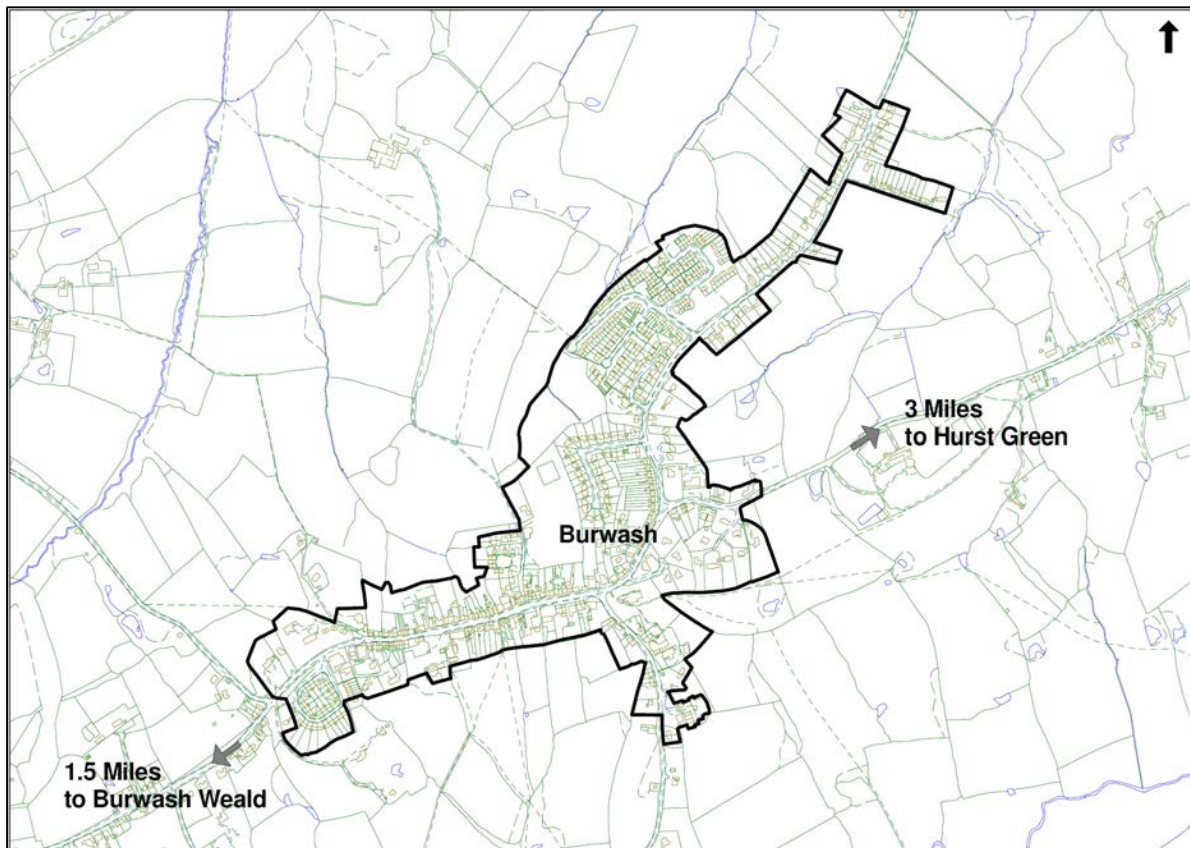
Development should aim to keep a compact form within a walkable distance. Generally,

Broad Oak does not appear to offer an abundance of in-fill or backland development opportunities within the development boundary.

Other than one or two potential opportunities for small-scale infill, extensive development would not be appropriate to the south of the village where there would be a negative impact on the open vistas of the Brede river valley.

However, there are potential opportunities to the west of the village for housing, amenity open space and possibly even allotments. This area may be related to the urban form and enclosed by surrounding woodland, although access issues will need addressing. These will require further investigation in the Site Allocations DPD. At this stage it seems reasonable to say that the village could accommodate in the region of 10-50 dwellings in the period to 2026. Given the local Parish Housing Needs Survey recognition of local housing need, it may be appropriate to allow either an exception site or a smaller allocation that is predominantly for affordable housing in the village.

Burwash



Introduction

The three villages of Burwash Common, Burwash Weald and Burwash are all situated on the A265 which runs along the 300ft high forest ridge separating the valleys of the Rother and the Dudwell. Burwash is the largest of the three. Indeed it is one of the largest villages within the District with a population of approximately 1,400 people. It is 7 miles north-west of Battle and eight miles east of Heathfield.

It is a picturesque and historic ridge top village, with a wide main street containing timber framed houses, some tile hung and some weather-boarded complemented by brick footpaths and lime trees.. Many buildings in the original core of the village date from the late 16th century and early 17th century, although a few buildings are earlier, and there are over 90 listed for their architectural or historic interest. Part of the village is designated a Conservation Area. More recent developments have taken place to the north and west of the village, both in linear and cul-de-sac form. The A265, a main east west route, runs through the centre of the village, and therefore there is a constant stream of traffic that uses the High Street.

Burwash is one of the most visited villages in Sussex due to its antiquity and its proximity to Batemans, Rudyard Kipling's home. Historically, Burwash was an inland smuggling town with practically every household involved. This was not unusual, for as the iron industry declined and unemployment grew, most Wealden towns were involved in illicit trade.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Burwash has a good range of services, and is classed as a **local service village** in the Appendix 2 list of Service Level Indicators. The facilities available include a doctor's surgery, primary school, church, village hall and ancillary building used for community purposes.

The village is well served with a variety of shops that provide a staple range of goods. Evidence from the District wide Retail Assessment in 2008 suggests the village draws significant numbers from the whole of north-west Rother to do their secondary 'top-up' shopping.

A smaller number of shops are aimed at the tourist market which the village attracts, due to the Kipling connection.

Rother's Primary Care Development Plan has indicated that Burwash surgery will need extension within next 7 years. The opportunity to co-locate a dental practice will be explored.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Burwash CE Primary School is projected to have surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Appendix 3: Accessibility Indicators, shows that a peak hour bus service runs from the village to Heathfield and Hawkhurst., and the main A265 runs through the centre of the village.

Etchingam station with trains to Hastings, Tunbridge Wells and London is approximately 2½ miles to the east, and has peak time trains. The smaller Stonegate station is three miles north but only operates a partial service.

Need

Housing Needs

Appendix 7: Housing Indicators, identifies that some 2% of the households in the village, are on the housing register and are seeking accommodation in Burwash Parish and that 1.6% of households are in housing need, compared to an average of 6.8% for the District. At present 6.8% of the housing stock is social rented, which is just under the average of 8% for the district.

This equates to a relatively low need for affordable housing with a moderate supply of housing stock.

Economic Role and Needs

Burwash has a number of employment areas in close proximity. Perrymans Lane Industrial Estate is situated equi-distant between Brightling, Burwash and Burwash Weald. It has almost 1,000 sq.m of B2 industrial floorspace although more than half of that is currently vacant. A smaller employment area is at Brick House Lane (B1 use between Brightling & Burwash). Burwash parish also contains the employment areas 'Socknersh Farm' and 'River Dell Farm', as well as employment opportunities from the many services and facilities within the main village.

The Employment Strategy Review 2008 highlighted Darwell ward (which includes Brightling, Burwash, Mountfield and Whatlington) as drawing in commuters. This is

not surprising given the range of local business sites.

Appendix 5: Economic Indicators, shows that approximately 1.8% of the parish are unemployed, which is slightly less than the average figure for the villages, and that there is a 67% economic activity rate which is 6% higher than the average. There is a fairly high economic base. These figures do not suggest a strong need for employment development.

Community Need for Other Services

Burwash Parish Council manages two children's play areas, 'Swan Meadow' and 'Burwash Common'.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' recommends that new allotments are needed in Burwash, as a matter of high priority.

The Parish Council have advised following consultation that at present there is no requirement for any additional community facilities, and that they are at the early stages of producing a Parish Plan.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Burwash residents felt that a post office and a doctor's surgery were most important to them in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to shops and doctors surgeries was good, but felt that access by bus and cycle could be improved. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to ensure that design is in keeping with the surrounding area, to promote renewable energy in buildings and to provide more affordable housing.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The village and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB. Scattered areas of woodland dot the surrounding area, most notably Park Wood to the North East which is also a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. Although not at risk of flooding itself, Burwash is sited above the floodplains of the River Dudwell to the south and the River Rother to the north.

The original village is principally linear in form, positioned on an east to west running ridge some 90 metres above sea level. Looking north and south from vantage points on the ridge within the village, the land slopes down towards the river valleys of the Rother and Dudwell. In both directions are spectacular views over the surrounding countryside. There are attractive views of the village from the

valley floors where the arrangement of buildings along the ridge, provides an attractive silhouette of the settlement.

Development Potential

There are one or two residential developments in the pipeline at Burwash, in addition to an incomplete permission at 'The Old Orchard', there is an unimplemented permission on 'Land South West of Strand Meadow, Burwash'.

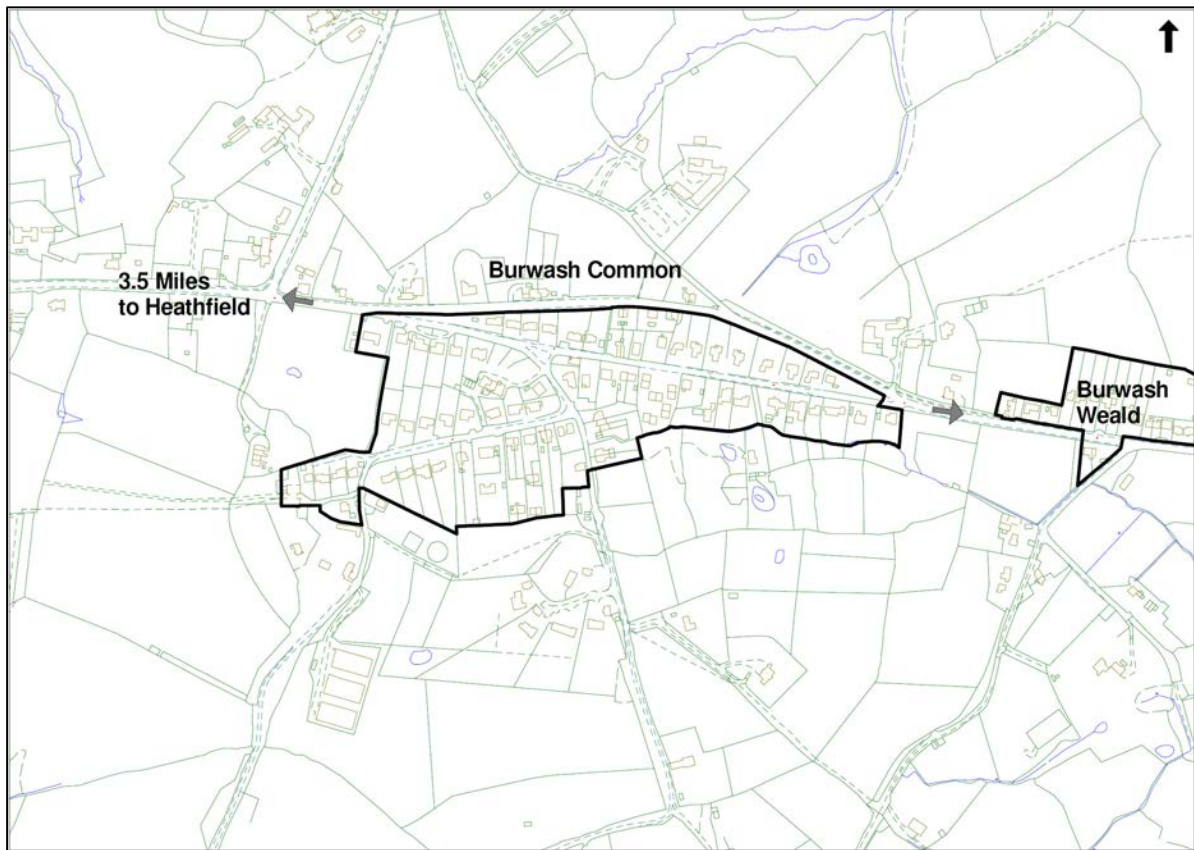
Despite the fact that Burwash is a large sustainable rural community with a wide range of services and facilities, limited opportunities additional exist for the alteration of the settlement boundary as it currently exists, due to the elevated position of the village and the outstanding landscape of the surrounding countryside. Like many of the ridge top settlements that are so characteristic of this part of the High Weald AONB, there are distant views out of the village to the north and south, which precludes in depth development to the rear of the existing linear form.



For these reasons Burwash is considered suitable for no more than 15-30 additional dwellings in the period up to 2026. This figure includes the unimplemented allocation south west of Strand Meadow, but is in addition to sites that already have permission. Whilst the majority of these will emanate from the existing housing allocation south west of Strand Meadow, the remainder may be found in brownfield opportunities within the existing development boundary.

There is also an identified need for allotment space. The current Local Plan allocation for development at Burwash identifies new amenity land to the north of the existing recreation ground. Given that the adjacent housing allocation is relatively small scale (less than 20 dwellings) it should not result in a large scale need for new amenity land. In any case, the allocation is already adjacent to an existing playing field. In these circumstances it seems reasonable to consider at least part of the amenity land allocation for allotment usage.

Burwash Common



Introduction

Burwash Common is in the main located on the south side of the A265, has a population of approximately 340 people and is located approximately 2½ miles west of the local service village of Burwash.

Apart from a few dwellings on the north side of the main road, most of the dwellings are situated in a number of narrow lanes located on rising ground. Collectively they have an intimate character.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Burwash Common has a Local Plan development boundary but a very limited range of services.

Accessibility

The settlement is directly accessible by the A265 and is within 5 minutes drive time of the local service village of Burwash and the lower order village (as identified in Appendix 4 of this report) of Burwash Weald.

There is a peak time bus service (318 to Heathfield), but no train station in close proximity.

Need

Housing Needs

Appendix 7: Housing Indicators, identifies that some 2% of the households in the village, are on the housing register and are seeking accommodation in Burwash Parish and that 1.6% of households are in housing need, compared to an average of 6.8% for the District. At present 6.8% of the housing stock is social rented, which is just under the average of 8% for the district.

This equates to a relatively low need for affordable housing with a moderate supply of housing stock.

However, Burwash village which is a local service village would be the most appropriate location to meet the parish need, rather than either Burwash Common or Burwash Weald.

Economic Role and Needs

The Employment Strategy Review 2008 highlighted Darwell ward (which includes Brightling, Burwash, Mountfield and Whatlington) as drawing in commuters. This is not surprising given the range of local business sites.

Appendix 5: Economic Indicators, shows that approximately 1.8% of the parish are unemployed, which is slightly less than the average figure for the villages, and that there is a 67% economic activity rate which is 6% higher than the average. There is a fairly high economic base. These figures do not suggest a strong need for employment development.

Community Need for Other Services

No specific community needs have been identified for the village.

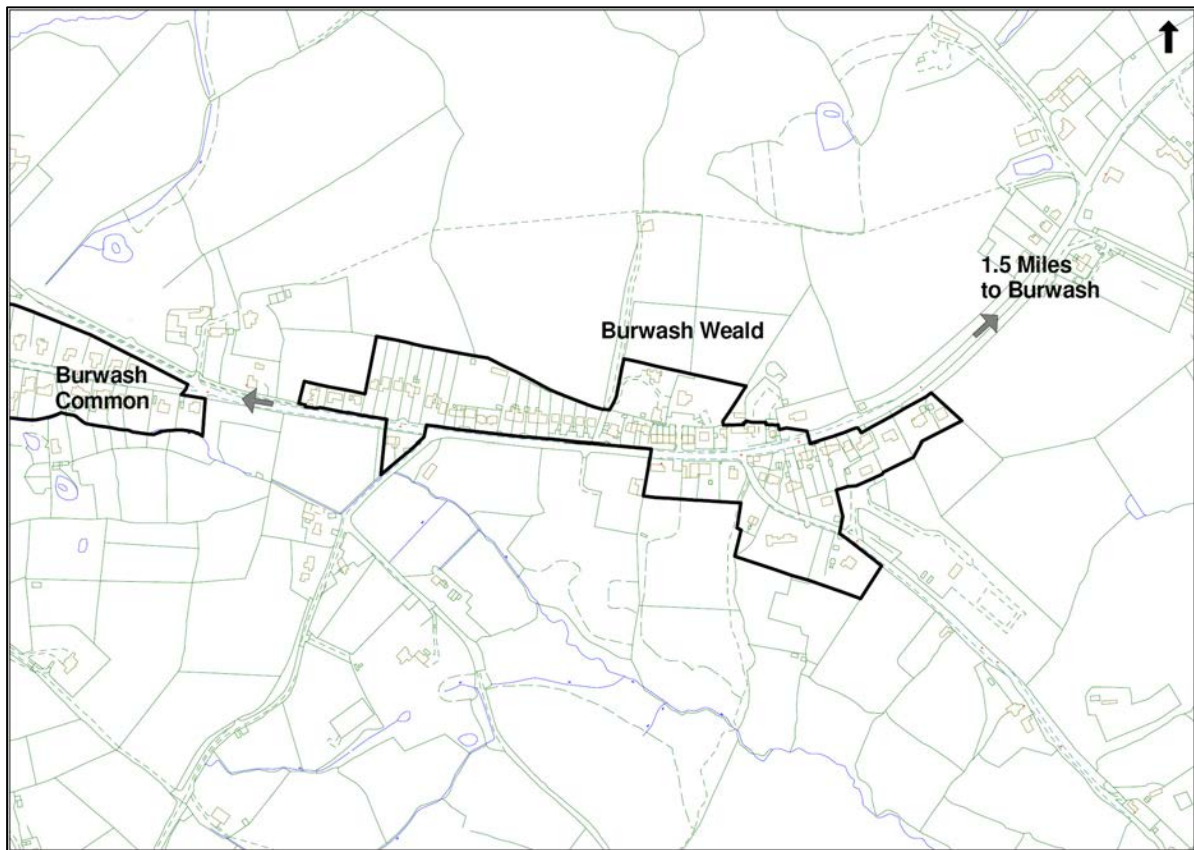
Environmental and Landscape Factors

The village is situated on a ridge with the river valleys of the Rother to the north and the river Dudwell to the south. Sites of Nature Conservation importance lie to the north and the south of the village, as do tracts of Ancient Woodland. To the north lie distant views over the undulating high quality landscape designated within the High Weald AONB.

Development Potential

Given the limited scale and service role of the village, combined with environmental constraints, it is not proposed to identify any specific development allocations in the period to 2026.

Burwash Weald



Introduction

Burwash Weald is almost contiguous with Burwash Common to the west and some 1.5 miles from Burwash to the east. It too lies on the A265, but development straddles the main road, and views over the river valley to the south can be glimpsed over hedgerows. It has a population of just under 200 people.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Burwash Weald has a Local Plan development boundary but a very limited range of services.

Accessibility

The settlement is directly accessible by the A265 and is within 5 minutes drive time of the local service village of Burwash and the lower order village of Burwash common.

There is a peak time bus service (318 to Heathfield), but no train station in close proximity.

Need

Housing Needs

Appendix 7: Housing Indicators, identifies that some 2% of the households in the village, are on the housing register and are seeking accommodation in Burwash Parish and that 1.6% of households are in housing need, compared to an average of 6.8% for the District. At present 6.8% of the housing stock is social rented, which is just under the average of 8% for the district.

This equates to a relatively low need for affordable housing with a moderate supply of housing stock.

However, Burwash village which is a local service village would be the most appropriate location to meet the parish need, rather than either Burwash Common or Burwash Weald.

Economic Role and Needs

Perrymans Lane Industrial Estate is situated equi-distant between Brightling, Burwash and Burwash Weald. It has almost 1,000 sq.m of B2 industrial floorspace although more than half of that is currently vacant.

The Employment Strategy Review 2008 highlighted Darwell ward (which includes Brightling, Burwash, Mountfield and

Whatlington) as drawing in commuters. This is not surprising given the range of local business sites.

Appendix 5: Economic Indicators, shows that approximately 1.8% of the parish are unemployed, which is slightly less than the average figure for the villages, and that there is a 67% economic activity rate which is 6% higher than the average. There is a fairly high economic base. These figures do not suggest a strong need for employment development.

Community Need for Other Services

No specific community needs have been identified for the village.

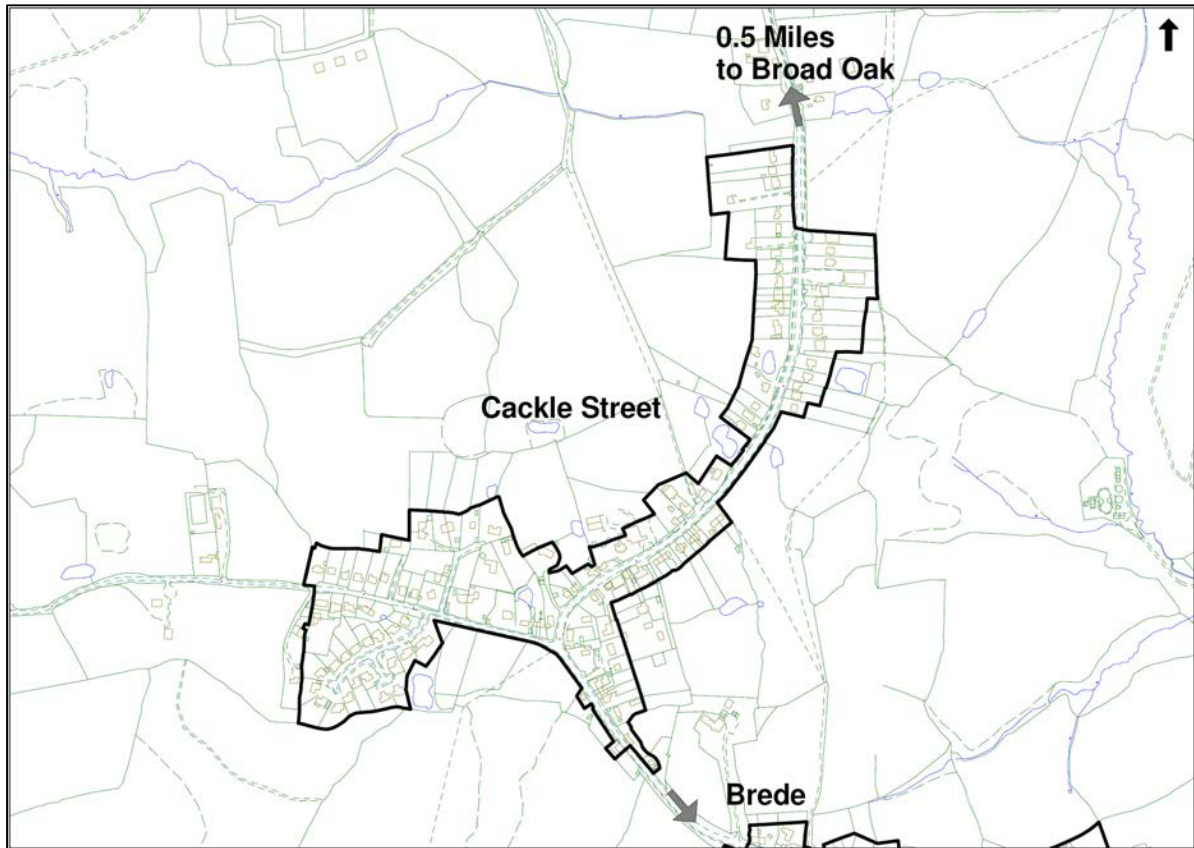
Environmental and Landscape Factors

Like Burwash Common the village is situated on high ground and the land slopes steeply down to the River Dudwell to the south. The large tracts of Ancient Woodland and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and located to the north and the south of the settlement

Development Potential

Given the limited scale and service role of the village, combined with environmental constraints, it is not proposed to identify any specific development allocations in the period to 2026.

Cackle Street



Introduction

Cackle Street is sandwiched between the neighbouring villages of Broad Oak to the north and Brede to the south and the three of them form a relatively compact cluster of settlements running north-south along the A28. The majority of the development has been carried out since the middle of the last century and the settlement has a population of approximately 350 people. Cackle Street is characterised by ribbon development straddling the main A28 complemented by a fair amount of housing (including some very recent developments on St Marys Close) that has extended down the minor road of Pottery Lane.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Cackle Street has a community village hall that also serves neighbouring Cackle Street and Brede. It has little in the way of services to speak of and the convenience store closed down and now lies vacant. The village does have a development boundary defined in the Local Plan.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Brede Primary School (which is located in Broad Oak) is projected to have surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

The village is on the busy A28 that links Hastings to Northiam and Tenterden and is served by the 343 bus route. It is approximately 4½ miles north of Hastings.

Need

Housing Needs

Brede Parish exhibits a relatively low level of housing need, but moderate demand for affordable housing. It has a low-medium percentage affordable housing in the stock.

A Housing Needs Survey has been produced for Brede Parish by Action in Rural Sussex. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. 29 households fulfilled the two criteria. It is important to remember that Brede

Parish also contains two other villages – Brede and Broad Oak.

Brede Parish Council Action Plan 2003 suggested that 69% of local residents would not oppose development to meet the needs of local people. Most support was for low cost housing and/or housing restricted for sale to locals.

Economic Role and Needs

The economic activity rate is 60%, and 2.9% are unemployed, and both of these figures are typical for the district as a whole. Very low job provision and high reliance on car suggests need for employment development if housing growth in the parish. However, it is important to note that Broad Oak has the more significant service role in the Parish and may therefore be the preferable location for new employment.

Community Need for Other Services

Brede Parish Council Action Plan 2003 achieved a 48% response rate from the local electorate to its survey so can be taken as an accurate reflection of the wishes of the Parish as a whole. Popular initiatives to enhance and preserve Brede environment were recycling, improved public transport, tree planting and preservation, hedge maintenance, pond maintenance, sowing of wildflowers and the creation of local nature reserves.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

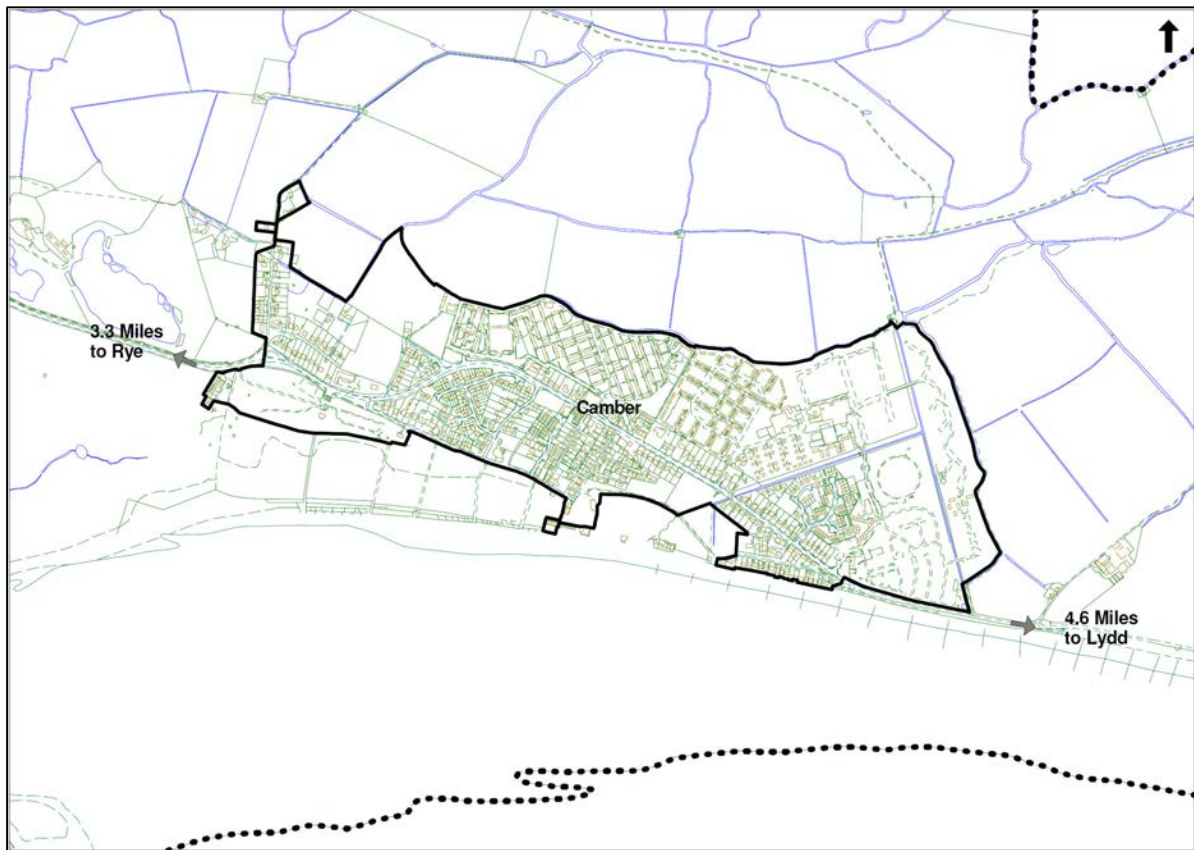
Cackle Street is situated on a south facing slope on the northern valley side of the River Brede. Consequently there are fine views both south over the river valley and to the north towards the ridge that separates the valleys of the Brede and Tillingham. The settlement and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB.

Beyond the confines of the village, the land is wholly rural with woods, fields and orchards.

Development Potential

Other than very small scale infill for local needs, it is difficult to justify any allocations for development in Cackle Street. The A28 acts as a severance barrier and combined with the absence of services, or an obvious centre, suggests development would be better directed elsewhere. Some traffic management measures may be appropriate to enhance the village. Although there are some local needs in the Parish, Broad Oak has the greater service role and is more suited to development as a result.

Camber



Introduction

Camber is famous for its sandy beach which is unique in East Sussex. Camber has grown in an ad hoc basis from a small coastal village to a tourism hotspot as a result of this feature.

Once a quiet place of scattered bungalows and coastguard cottages, it developed with the addition of large holiday camps and caravan sites. Most notably the Pontins holiday camp was built in the late sixties to cater for Camber's growing holiday trade.

The village has seen a lot of development since World War 2 with the building of bungalows on sand dunes, as well as infilling by modern, higher density housing.

Today Camber has a resident population of approximately 1,275 although it feels considerably more crowded during the summer months when thronged with tourists. The car park behind the dunes which serves the visitors is one of the largest in Sussex. In recent years Camber has seen a dramatic increase in new developments for which there has been popular demand in the form of the Whitesand development and Rye bay beach homes.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

The service industry has improved facilities in order to deal with the tourism trade. People visiting Camber have a variety of establishments where they can eat and drink and there are many things to see and do in the area.

It is classed as a **local service village** in Appendix 2 list of Service Level Indicators, however the most notable service that Camber lacks is a primary school.

Geographically speaking, the surrounding hinterland is relatively unpopulated and people in the eastern corner of the District would generally look to Rye for their service needs, where they were not available within Camber.

Accessibility

For a settlement of its size, Camber is poorly connected, with no train service, limited bus services and just a B Road to cope with the summer influx. Not surprisingly, the roads become congested in the summer.

Need

Housing Needs

Based upon the Housing Needs Survey, Camber exhibits relatively low levels of housing need. Compared with other Rother villages, there is an average proportion of social housing in the stock (8%), although it is a relatively sought after location from households on housing register.

Camber Parish Council has already made positive steps to try and address local housing need. A Housing Needs Survey is being produced for Camber Parish by Action in Rural Sussex, although at the time of writing it is still in Draft format. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. 22 households fulfilled the two criteria.

Economic Role and Needs

Camber exhibits high unemployment and comparatively high levels of deprivation. There is an economic activity rate and economic base that is typical for rural parishes. Overall, these facts suggest the area would benefit from some additional local employment, or if that is not possible, it would not be appropriate to encourage new housing.

Community Need for Other Services

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Camber residents felt that a post office, local shops, bus service and a doctor's surgery were most important to them in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the countryside was a good quality, but felt that access to jobs and business sites was a problem. Camber respondents felt that it was particularly important to ensure that design is in keeping with the surrounding area and promote renewable energy in buildings.

In responding to the Parish Council Planning Seminar, the Parish Council made a number of points. It was pointed out that for its size; Camber lacks many basic services including a primary school and a chemist. The Parish Council also feel it is important to plan for residents as well as tourists. Concern was also expressed about the parking problem, particularly in summer. The Parish Council would also like to see the Arnold Palmer putting course put to use as an amenity facility, instead of the current building site /car park that it is at the moment.

Camber has one children's play area at Jubilee Field. A multi-use games court with teen shelter and skate ramps was recently installed on Johnson's field.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' recommends that in the long term the Council should seek to negotiate public access to the leisure facilities at the holiday camps in the Camber area and that if this is not successful, new provision for children and young people should be considered as a low priority.

Camber Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Jubilee Green is underused but all outdoor open spaces are of good quality and generally have very good accessibility except for Romney Marshes. Indoor sites are all used often and are of a good quality but accessibility to Pontins and Park resort is very poor. The allotment is fully occupied but there is no waiting list. Indoor sites are used regularly yet there is demand to develop a youth club. Indoor provision for teenage recreation such as youth clubs is a priority for residents. Accessibility issues stem from poor provision of cycleways and lack of signage.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Camber is situated on a low lying area of coastal levels. 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. The village edge abuts onto these open levels with no shelter or screening other than some low grassy banks – remnants of old sea walls built during reclamation of the levels.

Central to the character of Camber are 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 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.

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 as identified by the Environment Agency (EA). The latest position of the EA¹ states that 'at present, the frontage is protected by 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. Providing the dunes are managed, the risk of flooding is very low here with less than a 0.5% (1 in 200) chance of flooding in any one year even with the current predictions for future sea level rise'.

Camber has special mention in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which states that where development is required to meet an identified local need, the least vulnerable flood risk location will, where possible be chosen and the necessary mitigation put in place.

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).

The East Sussex County Council Landscape Assessment describes the area as characterised by 'unsightly coastal development and clutter' and cites 'pressure for new industrial development' as a potential threat.

Development Potential

Based on the above evidence the main local need is for more local employment.

Other than small scale developments to meet local needs, Camber is not considered suitable for further large-scale residential development in the plan period. This is for a number of reasons, not least the considerable environmental constraints in the area. Housing growth may also impact upon the village's cohesiveness given the high level of housing development that has been very recently completed. The evidence does not suggest a particularly strong housing need in the area. Further housing may exacerbate the suggested shortage of employment uses, and given the absence of a local primary school, result in unsustainable travel patterns.

There are a number of infill opportunities within the village centre, particularly along the Old Lydd Road. It is suggested that the most appropriate use for these sites would be

employment generating tourist facilities and/or amenity facilities. Development that looked to enhance Camber's role as an all year round tourist destination would be most welcome, perhaps emphasising the local natural environment or building on the growing popularity of extreme sports in the area.

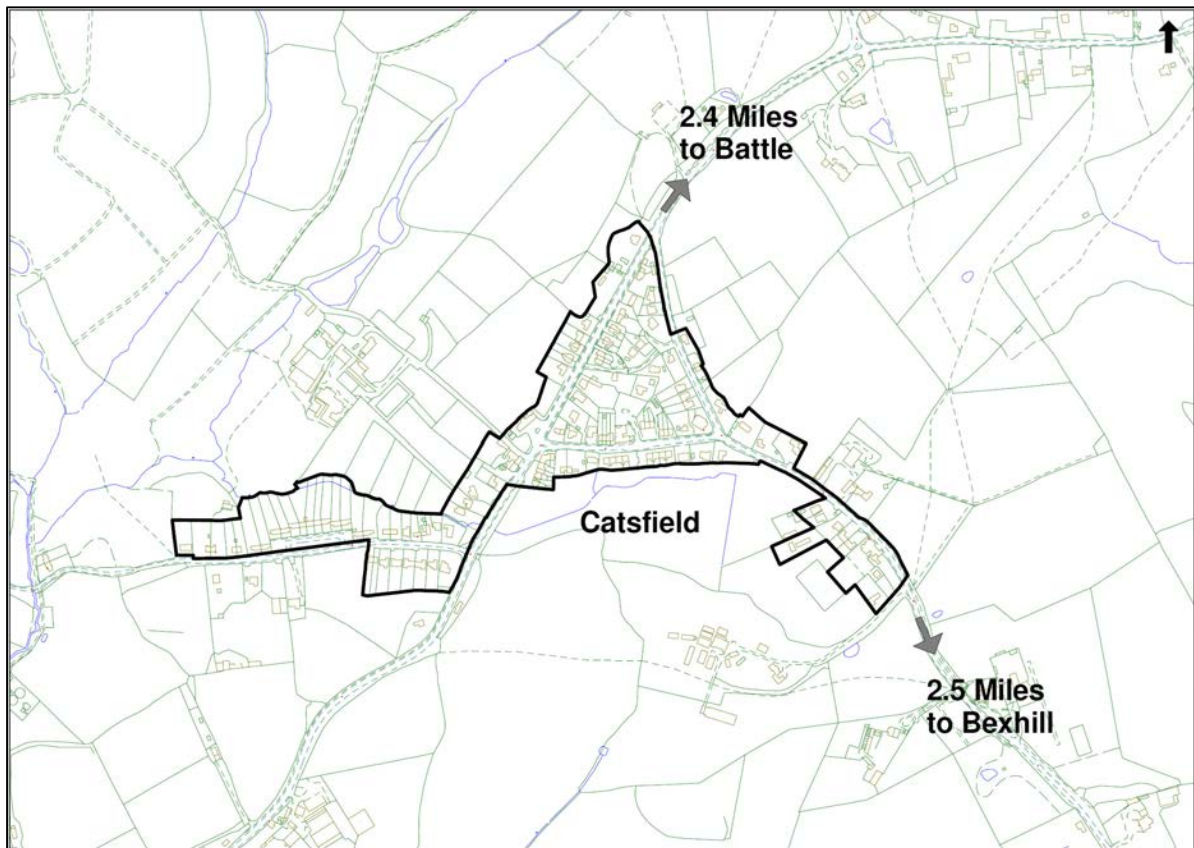
The Central Car Park has already been the subject of a regeneration-driven site evaluation for East Sussex Economic Partnership/Rother District Council in 2007. An earlier report by Arup's consulting 'The Camber Visitor Management Initiative' also identified the car park as the possible focal point for tourism. It is likely that any development may require some residential element, possibly as an enabler to other facilities.

In conclusion it is considered appropriate to suggest Camber as a whole may be allocated up to 20 new dwellings up to 2026.



¹ As outlined in the Technical Appendix to the Folkestone to Cliff End Flood and Erosion Management Strategy – Consultative Draft

Catsfield



Introduction

Catsfield is a relatively small village with a population of about 341. It is located on the A269, two and a half miles from the historic town of Battle and just over a mile from Ninfield.

The main part of the village is built around three roads that form a triangle. This configuration of development constituted the original form of development, and it is within this area that eight buildings are listed for their architectural and historic interest.

The most prominent building is the Methodist church (listed and now converted to a dwelling); due to the height of its tower and spire that dominates the village and the surrounding countryside. The church of St Lawrence dates in part from the beginning of the twelfth century, while nearby Catsfield Place is from the sixteenth century. Marie Antoinette sent her jewels to Catsfield Place which has a mythical tunnel that is reputed to reach Battle Abbey some 2 miles away.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Although it has a relatively small population, Catsfield has a good range of local services including a primary school, a general store/post office, butchers, public house, village hall, church and large recreation ground including a pavilion and an area of play equipment. As such it is defined as a **local service village** (see Appendix 2 for more detail), albeit the smallest example in the District.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Catsfield CE Primary School is projected to be full/have a deficit of places by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model). However, in common with other primary schools in the vicinity, the school serves a number of pupils from other areas.

Accessibility

Access to the village is principally served by the A269 Battle to Ninfield road, and is one of the main routes giving access to the coast from the north. Consequently the road can be busy and this in turn creates a severance effect through the village.

Trains to London and Hastings run at peak times run from Battle station and there are buses that link the village with Hastings, Battle and Bexhill.

Need

Housing Needs

As Appendix 7 indicates, at present there is a relatively low level of housing need compared to other Rother villages. There is an average proportion of social housing within the stock, although Catsfield is a relatively sought after location from households on housing register.

Economic Role and Needs

The parish exhibits low unemployment and an average economic activity rate. There is a low economic base and strong reliance on the private car which suggests a fair amount of out commuting. This is perhaps not surprising given the proximity of Hastings and Bexhill. Local Farm buildings provide a small amount of local employment, as does the employment unit in Church road.

Community Need for Other Services

The village hall has been extended and the recreational facilities off Powdermill Lane are of a high standard. The Parish Council have not indicated any additional needs for community facilities.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Catsfield residents felt that shops, post office, primary school, buses, parking, pedestrian access were all equally important to them in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the primary school, village hall, and the countryside were all good qualities, but felt that access to safe and convenient cycle facilities and the availability of a mixed type, size and price of housing was a problem. Local respondents felt that it was particularly important to ensure that design is in keeping with the surrounding area.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Catsfield is set amongst high quality attractive undulating countryside, although in policy terms it is the least environmentally constrained village in the District (see Appendix 8).

The boundary of the High Weald AONB is immediately to the north but does not include Catsfield village, or the land to the south of the village on the eastern side of Church road or south of Skinners Lane. Directly south of the village is an area of low lying land that becomes

very wet, as the surrounding more elevated countryside drains into this area, however the designated flood risk area lies away from the village to the south west at Catsfield stream. Land to the east of Church lane is dominated by steep fields which give a distinctive rural feel to the eastern part of the village. West of the A269, on the same side of the road as the recreation ground, are fields that are enclosed from the wider landscape by established tree belts and vegetation.

Large expanses of ancient woodland lie to the north-east (Brown's Wood and Heathybank Wood) and north-west (Eight-Acre Wood) of the village.

Development Potential

As referred to above, Catsfield has many elements of a sustainable community, as well as having public transport links to the larger towns of Battle, Hastings and Bexhill. Development may serve to buoy the range of services enjoyed by village residents.

Extension of the built form of the village, to the east and south will likely be constrained by landscape impact and character issues, notwithstanding the difficulties that would be encountered in developing the land that is predisposed to occasional flooding.

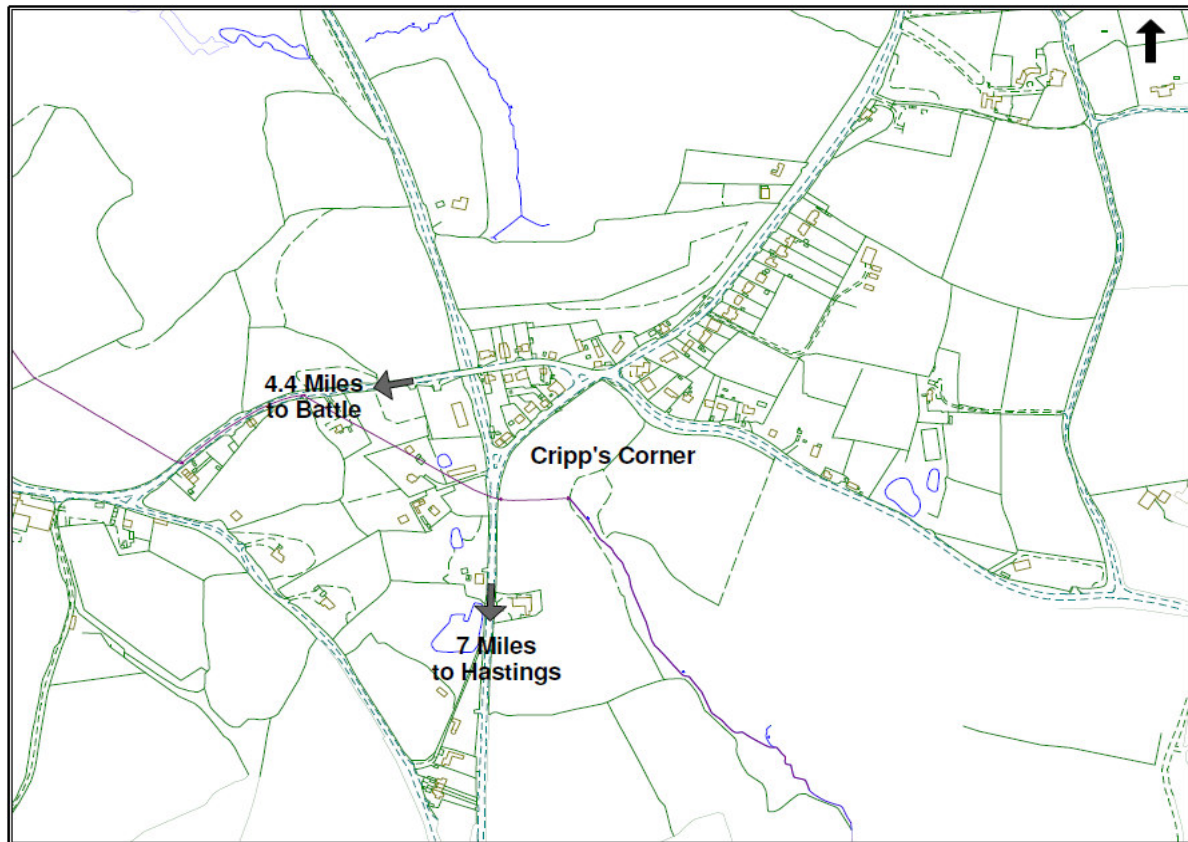
However there may be potential for the development of land to the west of the A269, which is relatively enclosed. This will be subject to further investigation.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the school is on the east side of the main road, which would necessitate children from any new homes crossing the busy road, this could be a supervised activity. Furthermore, it seems likely that traffic flow will reduce in future as a result of the proposed Bexhill to Hastings Link Road. The recreational facilities already lie on the west side of the main road.

The likelihood of the local primary school being full does not necessarily preclude further development since there may be potential for on-site expansion or for adjustments to catchment areas /travel patterns.

Overall it is considered that the village may be suitable for allocations of up to 40 new dwellings in the period to 2026, subject to further investigation of Education and Utilities requirements/capacity. Development in the latter half of the plan period would be appropriate, pending completion of the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road. More detailed viability and siting issues will fall within the remit of the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD.

Cripp's Corner



Introduction

Cripp's Corner is located in the parish of Ewhurst and the ward of Ewhurst and Sedlescombe. It has an estimated population of 109.

The village lies about 4 miles north east of Battle, on the site of an old Roman garrison, which was used to guard and control the road connecting Whatling Street (Rochester) to the ports at Bodiam, Sedlescombe and Westfield.

The area was used for iron production by the Romans, and nearby are many bloomeries (iron smelters), which sent the iron ingots (blooms) to the local ports for shipping to Londinium.

Cripps Corner was also the site of the Gallows of Whoorne, which was still in use for execution of smugglers and highwaymen until the 17th century.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

The only notable service is a pub and garage at the village centre.

The nearest shopping centre is in Battle about 4 miles south west. The major centre of Hastings lies about 7 miles south.

Accessibility

The village is located around the junctions of three B roads south of Staplecross.

The Hawkhurst to Hastings bus service travels through the village providing an infrequent service. The London to Hastings train service is available from Robertsbridge about 5 miles north west, and Battle 4 miles south west.

two Sites of Nature Conservation Importance in the vicinity – Cripp’s Corner Meadows to the north-west and the much larger Powdermill Reservoir, Brede High Woods & Hurst Wood Complex to the south east.

Need

Housing Needs

Based on the Housing Needs Assessments, the level of housing need is fairly low compared to other villages. There is very low demand from the housing register, despite the fact that there is an average proportion of social housing within the existing stock. However, representatives of the Parish Council have suggested there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish that they would like to see addressed.

Economic Role and Needs

The surrounding area has a small number of businesses, and there are a number of vineyards, in the vicinity.

As Appendix 5 indicates, there is reasonably low unemployment but an average economic activity rate. The low economic base and reliance on the private car for commuting suggests a possible need for some local employment uses, if there was to be new housing, or if an opportunity presented itself.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Staplecross Methodist Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Community Need for Other Services

Ewhurst Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council’s Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. They commented that Colliers Green is the only outdoor site with low usage levels. All outdoor open spaces are of a good quality with excellent accessibility. Cycleways are the main accessibility shortfall for both indoor and outdoor facility locations.

No other needs for community services have been identified.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

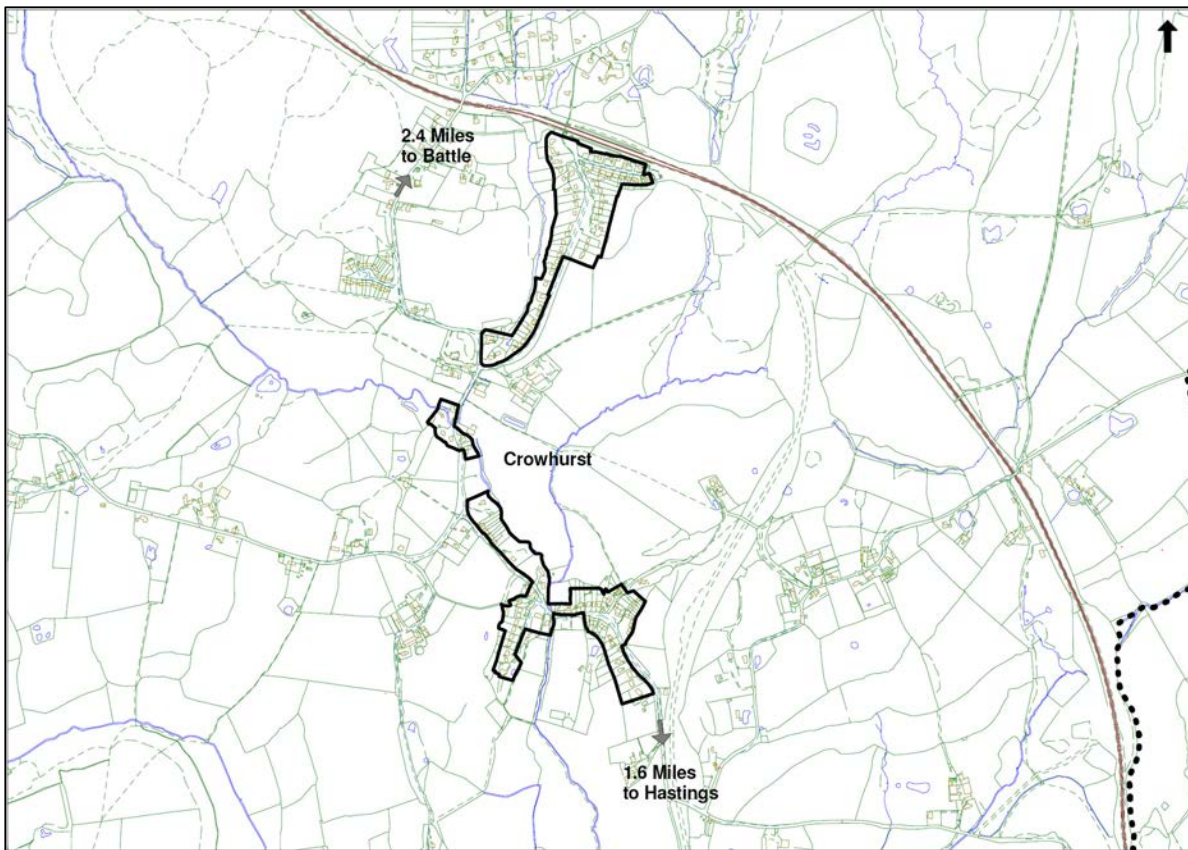
Cripps Corner is on the northern slopes of the Brede Valley and enjoys some pleasing South facing views, which can be seen from the vicinity of the Public House.

The surrounding countryside is very wooded, including areas of ancient woodland. There are

Development Potential

The village is not a particularly sustainable location and is therefore not considered suitable for development allocations.

Crowhurst



Introduction

Crowhurst village and is located between Bexhill, Hastings and Battle. A feature of the village is that the built form of the settlement is fragmented into three main parts, and this is reflected in the current development boundary for the village, as identified in the Local Plan as above. As a result there is no central focus to Crowhurst. The village is segmented, particularly on a north/south axis with the school and the train station to the North and the Pub and recreation area to the south.

In 1066, Saxon King Harold owned the manor and Crowhurst was one of the villages that William the Conqueror laid waste in order to draw Harold to the coast. Crowhurst church has an ancient yew tree that is at least 1,000 years ago

Today, it has a relatively small population of approximately 700 people.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

The facilities within the settlement are not centred around one location but distributed throughout the village and include a playgroup,

a primary school, village hall, public house and two churches. A Doctor holds a surgery once a week in the village hall.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Crowhurst CE Primary School is projected to have a small surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model). However, in common with other primary schools in the vicinity, the school serves a number of pupils from other areas.

The 2007 Crowhurst Village Action Plan comments that there are 21 organisations and clubs represented and the Parish Council comment that it is a lively, well integrated and active village, which has much support from the local residents. Crowhurst also has a monthly village market.

Although Crowhurst has a reasonable level of services, it falls just below the threshold required to be defined as a Local Service Village within Appendix 1, that gives details of the service level indicators of all of the villages.

Accessibility

Crowhurst Station is located at the northern most point of the village and provides a regular rail service to Bexhill, Battle and London.

However Crowhurst does not sit on any main roads and there is currently no bus service through the village. The Parish Council in their Action Plan state that they wish to improve the co-ordination of bus, rail and community transport facilities.

The limited services, facilities and employment opportunities in the village will inevitably require residents of Crowhurst to travel to the three larger towns, although according to AA travel times, only Hastings is within a 15 minute drive time.

Need

Housing Needs

The Parish Plan acknowledges that affordable housing is an issue. This is of course a problem across rural Rother and the figures in Appendix 7 do not suggest that the problem is more serious here than in other parts of the District. There are 18 households in housing need (5.4% of parish households and less than the average for the District), and 9 households on the housing register seeking accommodation which is slightly above average. Some 8% of the existing housing stock is social rented.

Economic Role and Needs

The parish has an average unemployment and economic activity rate. There is a lowish economic base with most people travelling out of the village to work, combined with a reliance on car for commuting.

Apart from the employment opportunities that exist as a result of local services and facilities, there are no areas of employment and the village is very much a dormitory satellite of Hastings. The Parish Council have not raised employment as a key issue or concern in their Parish Plan. Some limited employment development may be appropriate if sites can be found and alongside new housing.

Community Need for Other Services

The Crowhurst Village Action Plan suggests a number of local needs. These include affordable housing, educational facilities (such as additional school teaching space and improved indoor and outdoor PE facilities,

larger scale accommodation for playgroup, a new building for youth club, a new village hall on land adjacent to current undersized building (need funding for this), pathway round edge of recreation ground from car park to pavilion, reclaiming land at end of youth club and at edge of football pitch, refurbishment of children's play area and drainage of the recreation ground.

The existing village hall is inadequate and has a limited life, so the objective is to secure funding for its replacement. The Parish Council have recently reaffirmed this. The primary school has a number of accommodation issues including additional teaching and recreational space.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Crowhurst residents felt that a railway station, a village hall and a primary school were all equally important to them in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the village hall and the railway station were good qualities, but felt that access to local shops, particularly a chemist, were a problem. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings and to provide more affordable housing, ensure a supply of affordable housing and housing for the elderly and to ensure design is in keeping with the character of the area.

In their response to the Parish Council Planning Seminar, Crowhurst Parish Council stated that in the event of development being proposed in Crowhurst, the Parish Council would insist on affordable housing to enable those young people born in the village who wish to remain in the village to be able to buy property. They suggest Crowhurst needs 'enhanced local facilities' (village hall) from which to operate the doctor's surgery, parish office and an outreach post office. Protection of the train service is considered a priority.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in Crowhurst to be delivered as a low priority.

Crowhurst Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. All outdoor open spaces are perceived as having high usage figures, very good accessibility and being of excellent quality. The Youth Club and Crowhurst Village Hall have high usage levels but are of poor quality and the youth club is difficult to access. Supply of all facilities is adequate to meet demand and on the whole these sites are appreciated and well looked after by the local

community. Nevertheless there is a demand for refurbishing both the Village Hall and the Scout Hut with further consideration towards a multi-use facility.

The recreation ground is identified as an excellent site for community use with a recently upgraded play area. Provision of public transport, and unsafe, limited cycleways is the main accessibility problem.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The village is situated within a pleasant well-wooded countryside that is within the High Weald AONB. This area can be described more specifically as the Combe Haven Basin. The landscape in this area is a series of small winding High Wealden valleys which eventually reach the sea at Glyne Gap.

Parts of the village are within the floodplain of the Powdermill stream and at risk from flooding, particularly the recreation ground and play area and adjacent development on Sandrock Hill. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment makes special reference to Crowhurst and the flood risk area.

Areas of ancient woodland in the vicinity include Rackwell Wood to the east, Whitefield Wood to the south-east and the much larger Fore Wood RSPB nature reserve to the north-west, which is also an area of groundwater source protection.

The northern parts of the village ascend quite steeply to the railway station, and surrounding land beyond the development boundary affords pleasing views to the south. Strategic Gaps lie to the north (to Battle) and east (to Hastings).

Development Potential

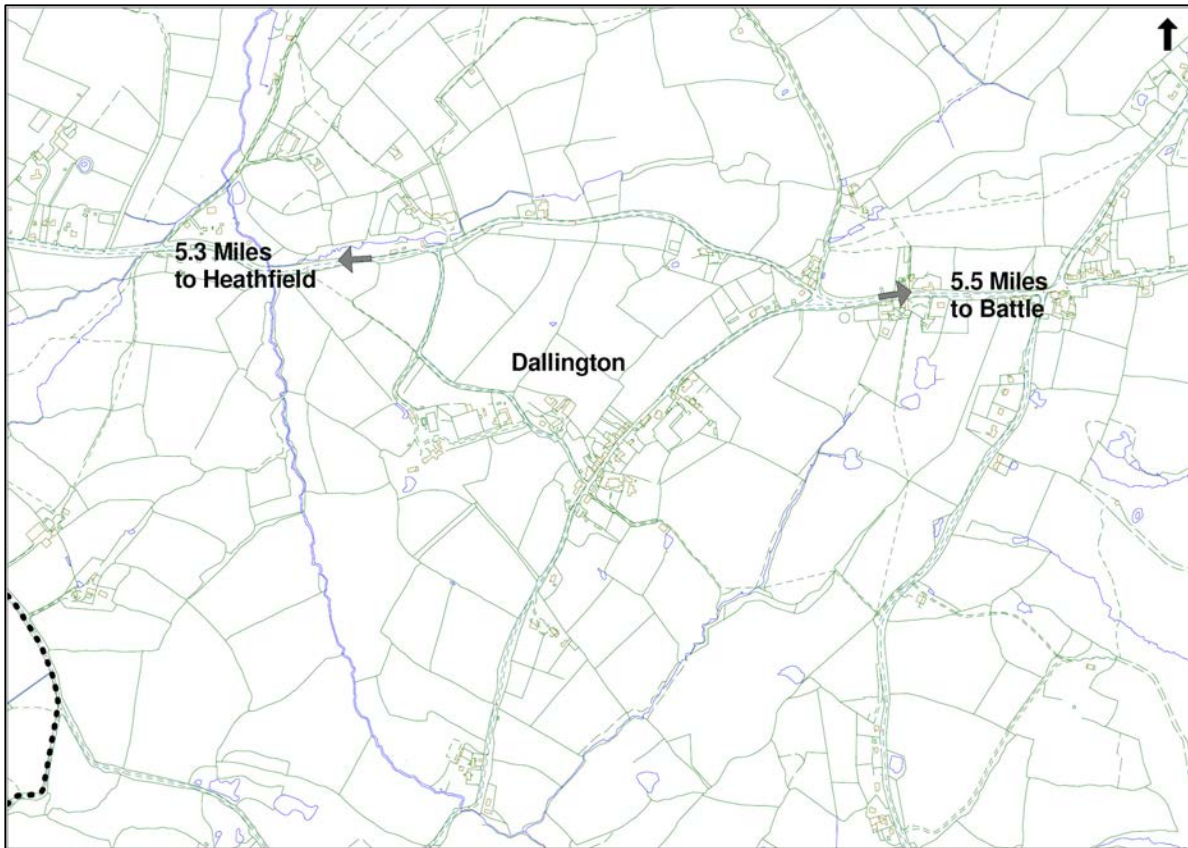
The Parish Council have expressed a wish to provide more affordable housing as well as a number of improvements to facilities that development may help to facilitate. Environmental constraints however abound and opportunities for large scale development are very limited. The overall strategy for Crowhurst is to maintain the character of the village.

Land south of the village off Chapel Hill is allocated in the Local Plan as part of the proposed Countryside Park. It is proposed to maintain this allocation, as well as the strategic gap around the village.

Areas in and around the southern part of the village appear to have some opportunities, since they are relatively enclosed within the village form and relatively free of environmental constraints. Opportunities that require further

investigation in the Site Allocations DPD include land off Chapel Hill (excluding the Countryside Park allocation). Alternatively the central area of the village may have some limited opportunities. It is proposed to investigate allocations for up to 15 dwellings in Crowhurst in the period up to 2026.

Dallington



Introduction

Dallington is a remote linear settlement situated with under 100 population, located six miles south west of Robertsbridge, south off the B2096. It has remained virtually untouched by development since the first half of the twentieth century.

Dallington has the Sugar Loaf, a peculiar conical folly said to have been built in order to win a bet by local eccentric Mad Jack Fuller.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Although it has a tiny population, Dallington supports a surprising number of services, particularly if considered along with neighbouring Woods Corner.

Dallington contains a CE Primary School which serves the rural catchment area of other small hamlets. However, based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, it is projected to be full/have a deficit of places by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

The old school, built of Ashburham brick is now the Village hall. It also contains a church which was rebuilt in 1864 with only its fifteenth century tower and stone siren escaping attention. Neighbouring Woods Corner supports a post office and the Swan public house. Dallington does not have a development boundary defined in the Local Plan.

Accessibility

The village is situated just off the B2096 which links Battle to Heathfield. As already referred to, it is relatively isolated and its neighbours are the small lower order villages of Brightling and Woods Corner.

However there is a peak hour bus service (355 to Heathfield or Battle). There is no nearby rail connection and representatives of the Parish Council have expressed the wish to see the bus services better linked to rail services at Battle and Etchingham.

Need

Housing Needs

The parish exhibits low housing need, a low percentage of social rented housing in stock, but an average number of households on

register seeking accommodation. Overall these figures do not suggest a strong need for new housing.

Economic Role and Needs

Dallington parish contains the employment area 'Coldharbour Farm' which is B2 industrial use and located equi-distant from Brightling. The parish has zero unemployment, an average EA rate and a reasonable economic base. This suggests no real need for new employment.

Community Need for Other Services

There is no gas or mains drainage to any part of the Parish. Installation is a matter for the relevant utilities bodies. No further specific community needs have been identified for the village.

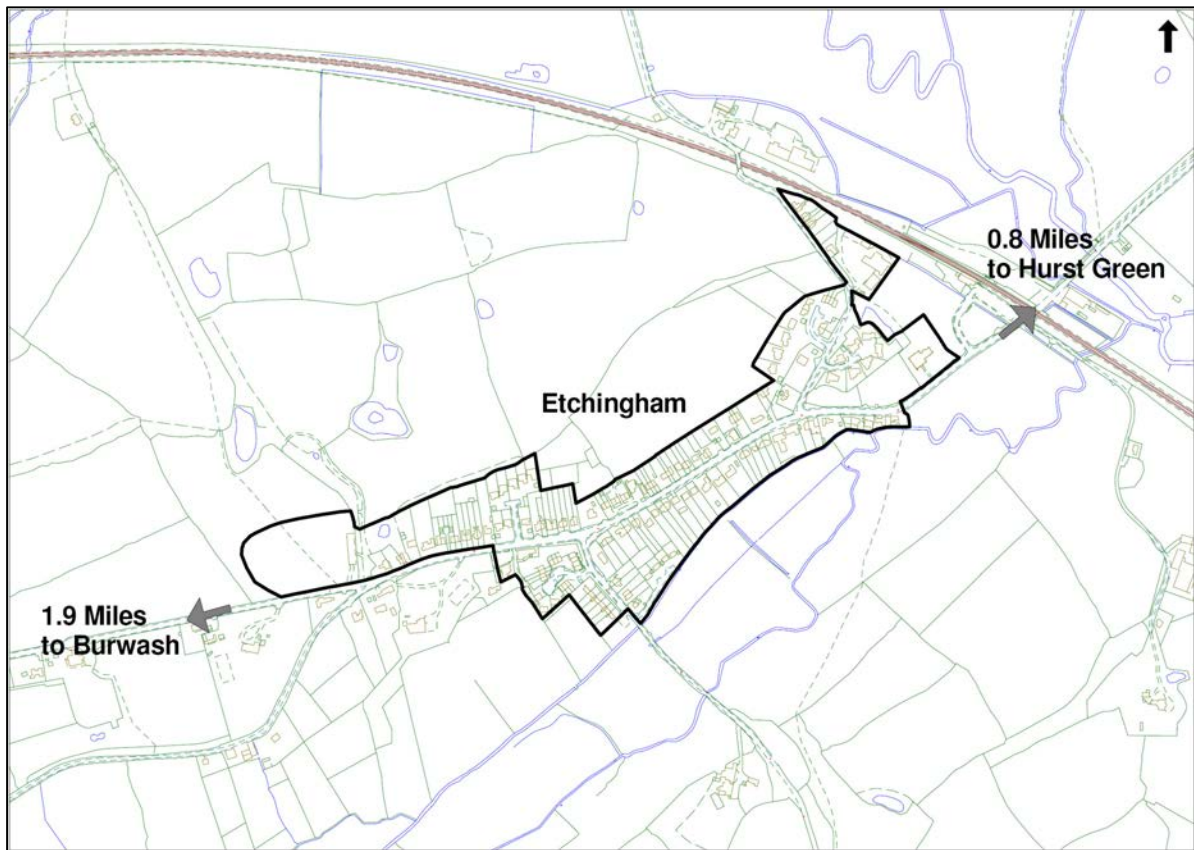
Environmental and Landscape Factors

The settlement lies wholly within the High Weald AONB and is surrounded by undulating farmland. It is located on an elevated position, part of the ridge that runs between Heathfield and Hastings, and offers remarkable views of the surrounding countryside. This is one of the most isolated areas of the District, and areas of commercial woodland lie to the north-west which intensifies the isolated and remote character.

Development Potential

The relatively remote location of the settlements within the high quality landscape, allied with the poor accessibility, do not provide the sustainable conditions in which to locate large-scale development. Therefore it is not proposed at this stage to investigate site specific allocations.

Etchingham



Introduction

Etchingham is a relatively small village, situated where the Dudwell joins the Rother. It is principally linear in form, with a population of just over 400 people. It straddles the A265, 2 miles west of Hurst Green. It was originally established around an old hamlet and the fourteenth century church of St Mary and St. Nicholas, which today is considered to be the finest fourteenth-century church in Sussex, being almost exactly as it was when built by Sir William de Etchingham in 1363. The railway arrived at the village in 1851 and brought with it a minor building boom. The impressive golden stone structure of the railway station is one of the principle attractions today.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Despite the relatively small size of the village it supports a small general store, butchers shop, post office, a village hall which needs replacement and a place of worship. With reference to Appendix 2, it scores a total of 8 out of a possible 18 service level indicators, and therefore does not qualify to be described as a 'Local Service village'.

Etchingham contains a CE Primary School. However, based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, it is projected to be full/have a deficit of places by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

The primary school lies outside of the village to the east; however there is an allocation in the current adopted Local Plan for a replacement primary school, replacement village hall sports field and housing located to the west of the village, abutting the existing built form.

A 'Crop for the Shop' initiative at Etchingham Village Shop, whereby villagers are encouraged to grow produce to sell in the shop, is a noteworthy scheme that has been highlighted as good practice by Action in Rural Sussex.

Accessibility

The A265 that runs through the village is a principal east/west route and consequently can be busy.

The railway station runs a full service and gives access to Hastings, Tunbridge Wells and London with trains running approximately hourly at peak times. Buses run infrequently although there is a peak time service to Hawkhurst,

Heathfield and Burwash and a school service to Mountfield School.

Hurst Green centre is approximately one mile away and offers a small variety of shops and services. The Etchingham Action Plan 2007 produced by the Parish Council, identifies that local residents use the facilities at Hurst Green.

Need

Housing Needs

As Appendix 7 indicates, there is a relatively high level of housing need. There is a low proportion of social housing in stock, combined with a low demand from the register.

The Etchingham Parish Action Plan comments that of the small number of people who commented in favour of further housing, the majority favoured the provision of affordable housing over other kinds.

These figures suggest some need for housing, possibly to include an exception site for local people. There is a Local Plan Policy VL2 that allocates land at the western edge of the village for housing (about 17 dwellings) that remains unimplemented.

Economic Role and Needs

The parish exhibits low unemployment, high economic activity, an average economic base and a strong reliance on non-car modes for commuting. There are no serious issues with deprivation.

There are a small number of local businesses located at the eastern end of the village. However, the Action Plan states that of those who responded to the Parish Council's questionnaire, 73% favoured more businesses being encouraged to come to the village.

It may be appropriate to encourage some new employment uses alongside any new housing.

Community Need for Other Services

The recreational needs identified for Etchingham, will partly be met by the allocation in the Rother District Local Plan 2006. Policy VL2 allocates land at the western edge of the village for community facilities and a school and land further to the north and east as open space. The Etchingham Trust for Sports and Recreation is overseeing the project, and continues to fundraise for this purpose.

The subsequent publication Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' recommends that a new allotment is

needed in Etchingham as a matter of medium priority. Therefore, some of the current allocation could be considered for an allotment.

The Parish Action plan also noted the desire for a public footpath linking Etchingham to Burwash. This would be a safer option for pedestrians who currently need to walk along the busy and narrow A265. This however is within the remit of the County Council.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Etchingham residents felt that local shops, a village hall and a primary school were all important to them in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the village hall, post office, primary school and countryside were good qualities, but felt that the village was poorly served by bus. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings and to provide more affordable housing, ensure a supply of affordable housing and housing for the elderly and to ensure design is in keeping with the character of the area.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Etchingham is positioned on a gentle south facing slope within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 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.

The River Rother runs north and east of the settlement and the River 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. In the year 2000 the village shop, church and a number of dwellings were flooded, and flooding is an annual problem in the lower part of the village. Apart from the railway and road corridor, the village is surrounded by higher ground.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment makes special reference to Etchingham and its area of flood risk.

Rother District Council has recently requested that Etchingham (and Robertsbridge) be given the same degree of flood protection as Rye in the Environment Agency's 'Rother and Romney Draft Catchment Flood Management Plan'.

Development Potential

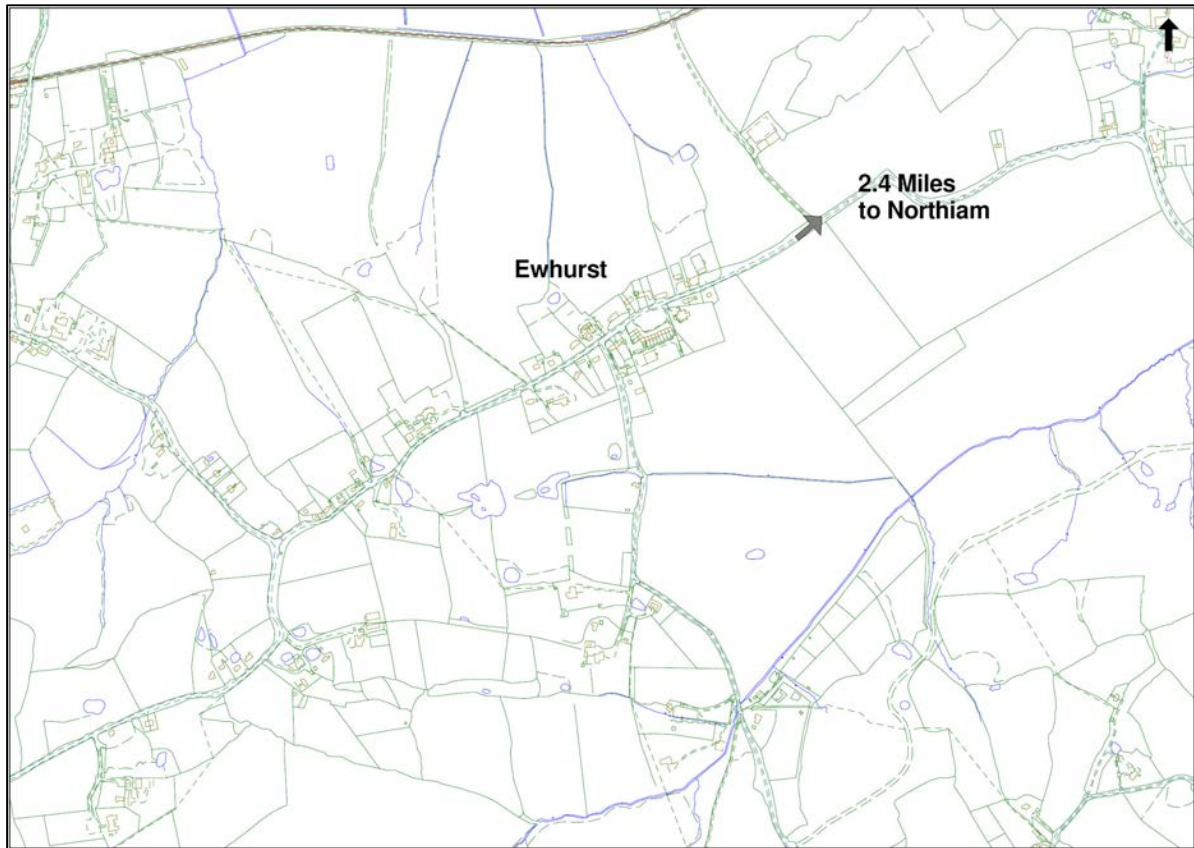
Etchingham benefits from both good accessibility, particularly with the railway station, and a good variety of shops. It is also demonstrates needs for housing and employment.

However, development is constrained by both environmental and landscape factors. Areas of flood risk include the land adjacent to the railway and station and these areas unsuitable for development as a result. Furthermore the surrounding countryside is exposed to the wider view in many places. In addition, it is considered that further linear development at either end of the village to the east and west would create an adverse impact into the attractive surrounding countryside of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Opportunities will therefore be investigated on relatively enclosed areas off the High Street to avoid further linear ribbon development. This will include the current hall site that may relocate when the current allocation is implemented. Including the outstanding allocation for 17 units, it seems reasonable to suggest that allocations of 15-40 dwellings may meet Etchingham's needs in the period up to 2026.



Ewhurst



Introduction

Ewhurst is a small settlement situated on a sandstone ridge overlooking the River Rother looking across to Bodiam castle. It has a number of attractive weather boarded cottages and fine examples of converted oasthouses. It also contains St. James CofE Church, parts of which date from Norman times.

It is principally linear in form and has a population of fewer than 100 people. Relatively new development has taken place adjacent to the village green, but this is confined to one area and so much of the original historic settlement pattern remains.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Ewhurst contains a limited range of services and does not have a Local Plan development boundary.

Accessibility

Ewhurst has the sense of being remote as it is on a narrow country lane; however the local service village of Northiam is just less than 3

miles away. The lower order villages of Bodiam and

Staplecross are within a 5 minute drive. The village though is not served by public transport.

Need

Housing Needs

Ewhurst exhibits lowish housing need, an average percentage of social housing in the existing stock and a very low demand from the housing register. However, representatives of the Parish Council have suggested there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish that they would like to see addressed.

Economic Role and Needs

Lowish unemployment, an average economic activity rate, low economic base and reliance on the private car for commuting suggests a possible need for some local employment uses, if there was to be new housing.

Community Need for Other Services

Ewhurst has one Parish Council run children's play area on the playing field. No specific

community needs have been identified for the village.

Ewhurst Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. They commented that Colliers Green is the only outdoor site with low usage levels. All outdoor open spaces are of a good quality with excellent accessibility. Cycleways are the main accessibility shortfall for both indoor and outdoor facility locations.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

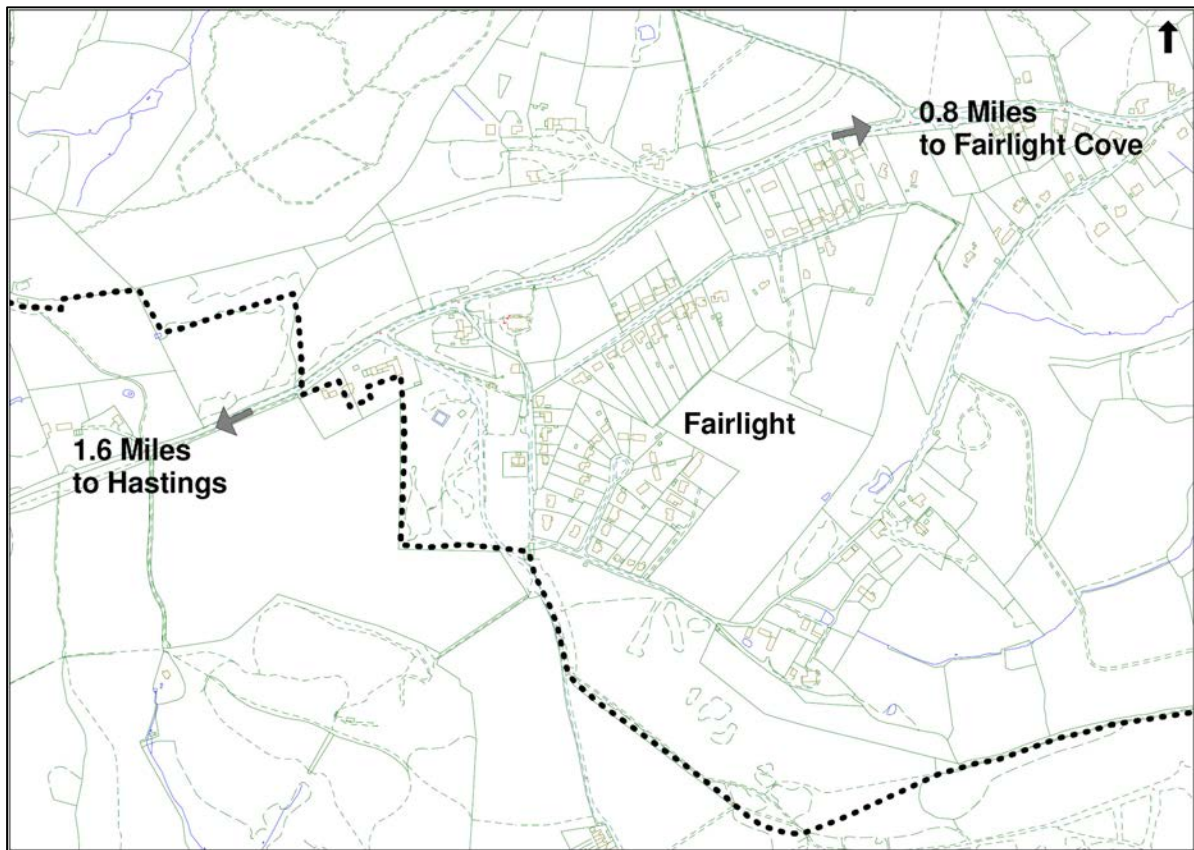
The village is situated on the southern valley ridge of the River Rother and consequently there are fine views northwards over the river valley towards Bodiam Castle.

Many of the buildings in this small village are listed for their historical interest and the whole of the village is within the High Weald AONB. The settlement is remote and rural in character.

Development Potential

Given the remoteness of the village, limited service role and limited housing needs it is not considered appropriate to allocate specific land for development at Ewhurst.

Fairlight



Introduction

Slightly inland and to the north of Fairlight Cove, the settlement consists mainly of old coastguard cottages. The 19th century grey stone parish church of St Andrews stands 563 feet above sea level and its 82 foot tower provides an important landmark for shipping.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Fairlight has no development boundary and has a much more limited range of services than its larger neighbour.

Accessibility

Fairlight is in close proximity to the country road (C3) that links Fairlight Cove with Hastings. The lower order villages of Bachelor's Bump, Friars Hill, Guestling Green, Pett and Fairlight Cove are all within close proximity. There is a peak time bus service to Rye and Hastings (Bus Number 322)

Need

Housing Needs

Fairlight Parish, which also includes Fairlight Cove and Friar's Hill, exhibits a level of housing need typical of rural Rother. It also has a typical level of social housing within the existing stock, but a relatively low level of demand from the housing register.

Economic Role and Needs

The parish exhibits low unemployment combined with a very low economic activity rate and high economic base. This is what might be expected given the proximity to neighbouring Hastings. Overall it does not suggest a real need for more local employment uses.

Community Need for Other Services

No specific community needs have been identified for the village. The equivalent section on Fairlight Cove village contains some further information of relevance to the whole of Fairlight Parish.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Fairlight, as distinct from Fairlight Cove, is some 300 ft above sea level and behind the village the ground slopes steeply to the Marsham Stream, below Pett and Friars Hill. Its elevation means that there are fine views over the surrounding countryside and over the sea.

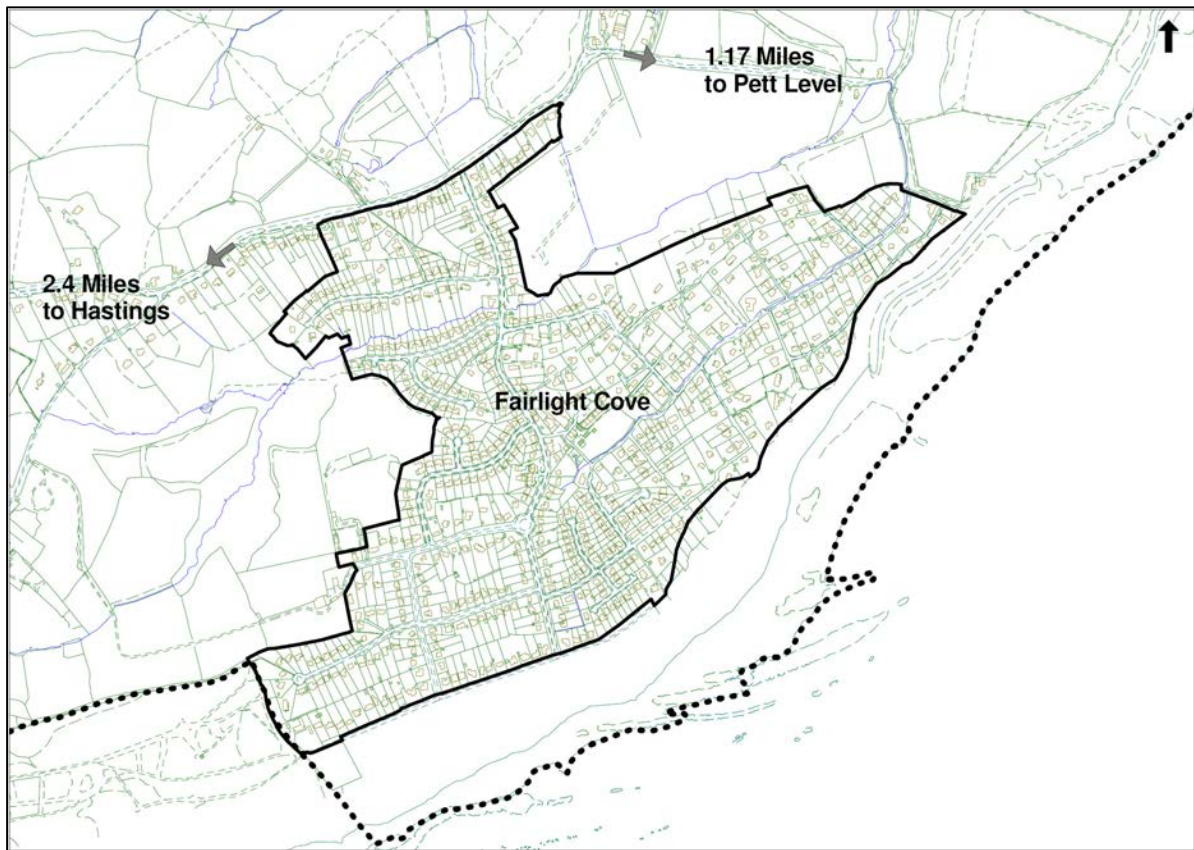
The location of some of the more modern dwellings is outside of the High Weald AONB boundary although it is curious why this is so, but otherwise the small village core and the surrounding countryside are located within the designation.

A small parcel of land to the west of the village and a large expanse of land some distance to the south is designated within the Hastings Cliffs to Pett Level SSSI, and to the east, again some distance away is an area designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Coastal erosion has been intense along the nearby cliffs.

Development Potential

The lack of services and facilities do not provide the sustainable conditions in which to locate development. Therefore it is not considered appropriate to allocate specific land for development at Fairlight.

Fairlight Cove



Introduction

Fairlight and Fairlight Cove are two linked villages at the eastern end of the Hastings Country Park.

Fairlight Cove is situated on the coast approximately 5 miles to the north east of Hastings. Historically it acted as a smuggler's haunt. Today, it is characterised by bungalow developments. The village has an estimated population of 1,000 people. The older properties are generally positioned further towards the cliff edge and are relatively low in density. In recent times, the settlement has extended inland around a labyrinth of roads, some of which remain unmetalled.

The village was the Category 2 and overall winner in East Sussex Village of the Year 2008. The entry was made by the Parish Council on behalf of the whole community. The judges were particularly impressed with "Project Endeavour", which is a youth club initiative to bring the young and the old together.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Fairlight Cove has a limited range of services, despite having a larger population than most other Rother villages. This may in part be explained by its proximity to Hastings.

Village services which are present include a post office, public house, village shop and garage. However, there is no primary school, meaning that school children must travel to Guestling Primary School. The village also has a village hall and a recreation area with a bowling green and a children's play area. The village falls below the level of service provision that would enable it to be described as a service village.

Accessibility

Fairlight Cove is located on a C class road which is relatively narrow with tight bends. The village has ready accessibility to Hastings which is less than 10 minutes drive time. The 344 bus service allows peak time journeys for commuting/education to and from Hastings and Rye. The nearest train stations are Three Oaks to the North-west and Ore in Hastings Borough – both are about 3 miles away. A number of

smaller or equivalent villages are within a 5 minute drive-time including Pett, Pett Level, Fairlight and Friars Hill.

Need

Housing Needs

Fairlight Parish, which also includes Fairlight and Friar's Hill, exhibits a level of housing need typical of rural Rother. It also has a typical level of social housing within the existing stock, but a relatively low level of demand from the housing register.

Economic Role and Needs

The parish exhibits low unemployment combined with a very low economic activity rate and high economic base. This is what might be expected given the proximity to neighbouring Hastings. Overall it does not suggest a real need for more local employment uses.

Community Need for Other Services

The village has a recreation area with a bowling green. Fairlight Parish Council is responsible for the village's sole play area at Wood Field on the western side of the village.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in Fairlight Cove to be delivered as a medium priority. It also recommends that a new allotment is needed in Fairlight Cove as a matter of high priority.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Fairlight Cove residents felt that local shops were most important in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to children's play facilities were good qualities, but felt that access to a railway station was poor. Respondents felt that it was most important to provide affordable housing and shops in centres.

Fairlight Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. This parish's indoor and outdoor facilities are all perceived as suitable to meet demand with the village hall experiencing high levels of usage but with no availability problems. Overall maintenance and cleanliness of open space is deemed as very good with the only inadequate aspect being parking. There appears to be no resident demand for improvements of sites with Woodfield and the village hall justified as being examples of good practice. The bowls clubs are currently building an extension and this will incorporate

improvements to the Woodfield paths, an element of enhanced accessibility that was desired by residents.

Accessibility to individual open space sites across the parish area is good but general provision and distance from public transport and cycleways is thought to be very poor with signage being a further issue of concern. Overall the accessibility to outdoor open spaces is considered to be good. Indoor facility accessibility is perceived as very good, including the promotion of sites; the only shortfall being that of cycleway provision.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The surrounding countryside is generally wooded and undulating, lying within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, although most of the developed areas of Fairlight and Fairlight Cove are excluded. The land to the north of Fairlight Cove is in part elevated, offering panoramic views. At the coast, wooded valleys and gorse-covered heath tumble down to sandstone cliffs.

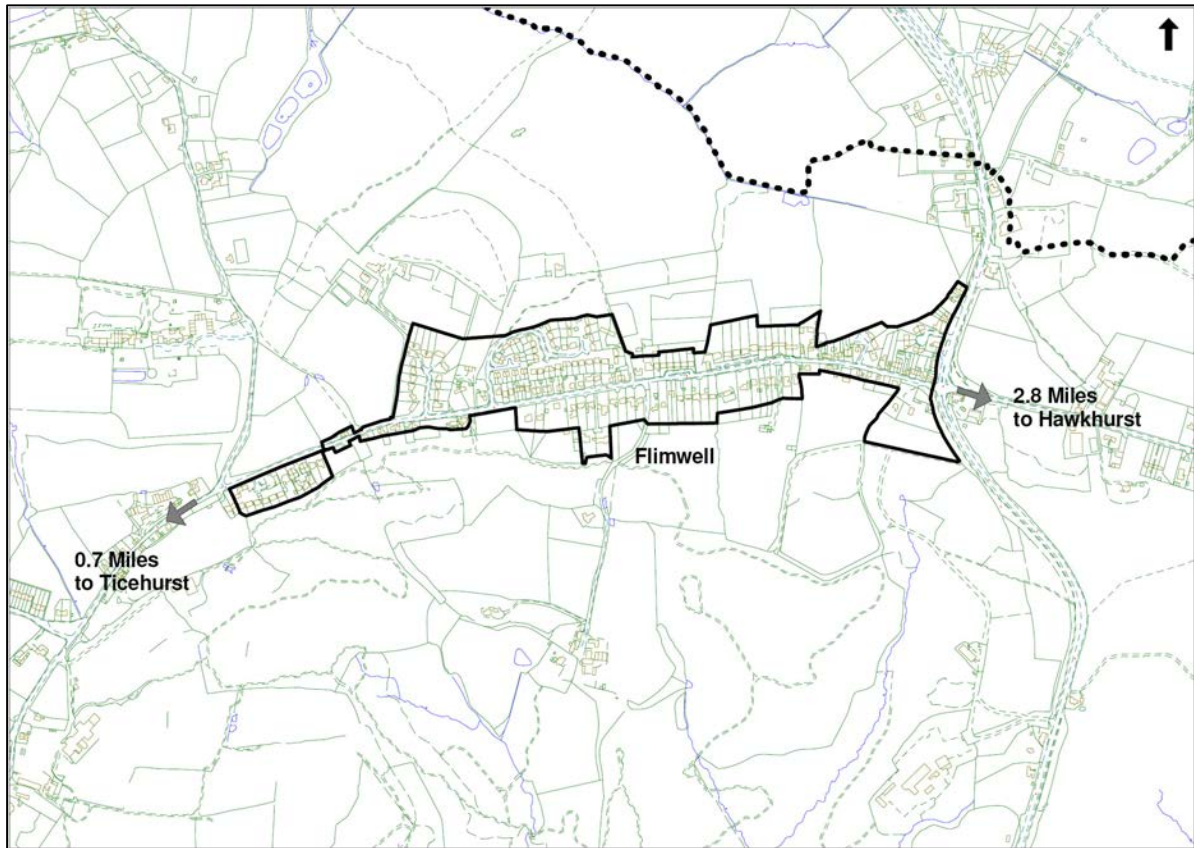
Development Potential

The current Local Plan development boundary follows the cliff edge and Site of Special Scientific Interest to the south and is also well contained to the north-west by Battery Hill. To the west, outward growth is constrained by undulating countryside incorporating important woodland and nature conservation sites, and the District boundary.

There are some infill opportunities within the village, including at the current housing allocation at Fairlight Gardens, which is expected to provide at least 17 dwellings. Land to the north-east may also offer development options, although areas in the vicinity have been the subject of previous appeals. Drainage and surface run-off would be a key issue, in relation to the extent that any new development may contribute to coastal erosion. In this regard it would be necessary to involve both Southern Water and the Environment Agency in discussions. Access may be another key issue. At this stage it seems reasonable to suggest that the village may accommodate housing allocations for 15-35 dwellings by 2026, including the current allocation which should provide at least half that number.

Any development should aim to facilitate the needs identified for children's play and allotments preferably by means of on-site provision. Allotments typically occupy about 0.5 hectare in Rother but in some cases are smaller.

Flimwell



Introduction

Flimwell is within the parish of Ticehurst and the ward of Salehurst. It has an estimated population of 626.

The village lies on an east to west running ridge some 130 metres above sea level, about a mile north east of Ticehurst, and about 10 miles south east of Tunbridge Wells. The main access to the village is from the A21 Trunk Road the main strategic north south route, which links London to Hastings.

On the slopes of the Flimwell ridge are large tracts of mixed woodland and despite their scale and proximity to the village, there are long distance views out of the village over the surrounding High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, especially to the north and south. From the public footpaths on the west side of the settlement are spectacular views to Bewl Water, the largest artificial area of water in the South East. Conversely, there are views towards the ridge from many points outside of the settlement, due to its elevated position.

The village lacks a defined centre. It is principally linear in form, straddling the B2087, which runs at right angles to the 21 Trunk Road. The A21 effectively cuts the village into

two parts and the road carries heavy traffic at all times. The main body of the village lies west of the junction, as this is where the village is most consolidated and where recent estates have developed. East of the crossroads is a further section of ribbon development known as Mount Pleasant. This form of development differs from that to the west in that the properties are more spaced out with significant 'green gaps', thereby creating a more rural character to this part of the village.

Whilst there are a few older houses in and around Flimwell, the major proportion dates from the 20th century. The Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate Village Action plan 2003-2012 expresses regret that ribbon development has been allowed to sprawl over a long period of time along the B2807 almost to Ticehurst.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Flimwell has a limited amount of local services, including a church, play area and sports pitch. There is also a farm shop and furniture shop. There is no primary school or village hall within the settlement, although the unimplemented Local Plan allocation (policy VL4) aims to address the latter need.

Accessibility

Flimwell does not have a rail line but Etchingam and Stonegate Stations are equidistant from Flimwell, approximately 5 miles away. It has one peak time bus service (254 Countryliner to Tunbridge Wells) as well as other services.

It is well served by roads, being on the A21, A2100 and B2905. The A21 is part of the trunk road network and as a consequence there is a heavy volume of traffic moving through the village at all times. Highways Agency figures suggest that the single carriageway carries 18,500 vehicles per day at Flimwell. As well as creating a severance effect within the village, the traffic also creates a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the locality through the generation of excess noise, vibration and pollution.

The Highways Agency has plans for the re-routing of the A21 to the east of the existing alignment of the road. The proposals involve a new section of road to the east of the existing A21, connecting with it to the north of the village and passing under the A268.

Need

Housing Needs

With reference to Appendix 7, it can be seen that Ticehurst parish has relatively high numbers in housing need and a relatively high % of social rented housing (10.4%) in the existing stock. There is an average level of demand from the housing register. These figures indicate a relatively high level of need for housing in the parish.

A Housing Needs Survey has been produced for Ticehurst Parish by Action in Rural Sussex. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. 43 households fulfilled the two criteria.

It is important to remember that Ticehurst Parish also contains two other villages that have been examined in this study, Ticehurst and Stonegate. Ticehurst is the preferable option to meet the bulk of parish need since it is a Rural Service Centre.

Economic Role and Needs

Flimwell contains the employment area 'Seacox Farm', although this is located on the Kent border and some distance from the main

village. Seacox Farm comprises 10 sites totalling 1,848 sq.m of mostly B1 use class.

A further 1,080sq.m of floorspace comprising 12 small workshops of B1/B2 use class is currently under construction at the Woodland Enterprise Centre on the Hastings Road. This development will have a key role supporting the woodland sector and developing local products.

Ticehurst parish has above average economic activity rate (67%) and an average unemployment rate of 2.1%. It has an average economic base and a fair degree of reliance on public transport and non-car modes. This suggests the need for some new employment if new housing were to be considered appropriate. As with housing needs, Ticehurst village is generally the preferable option to meet the larger share of local needs for employment uses since it is a Rural Service Centre with superior accessibility. However Flimwell does have some advantages in terms of its accessibility to the A21 over its larger neighbour. This is an issue that may warrant further consideration at Site Allocations DPD stages.

Community Need for Other Services

The recreation ground and pavilion are situated on the south side of the high street. Flimwell has a children's play area that is run by Ticehurst Parish Council.

Rother District Local Plan Policy VL4 allocates land at Corner Farm for a new village hall. In addition, Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' recommends that a new allotment is needed in Flimwell as a matter of medium priority.

Ticehurst Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Feedback suggests that all open space sites, Flimwell Recreation Ground have high usage, are of very good quality and easily accessible. The supply of parks and gardens, amenity greenspaces, play areas, and allotments (all plots occupied with a waiting list) is satisfactory. Demand exists for more outdoor sports facilities in the Parish.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The whole village lies within the AONB. Flimwell also has several ancient woodlands in close proximity. Notably Lodgefield wood to the South east on the west side of the A21 and Ringden wood (which is also an SNCI) on the east side of the A21. To the north lie Wardsdown and Birch Woods.

The exposed position of Flimwell on this high ridge within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a factor which limits the growth of the village. The undeveloped steep south and north facing slopes of the ridge are readily visible from outside of the settlement and their development is resisted to prevent the outward expansion of the built form into the high quality, countryside. The intensification and consolidation of the ribbon form of development on the western rural fringe locations will also be resisted to prevent encroachment into the open countryside.

Development Potential

There are two existing Local Plan allocations for housing in Flimwell, Land at Old Wardsdown and Land at Corner Farm, High Street. North of the Old Wardsdown site is a further 0.25 hectares currently part of the same curtilage, which is proposed as informal open space, to enhance the existing open space provision due east of the site, and to keep development away from ridge edge where the land falls away to the north.

As well as having an element of residential, Land at Corner Farm on the High Street is also allocated for a village hall and once developed this facility will be centrally placed within walking distance for the community. The Village Action Plan has also identified the site as being suitable for a tourist information facility and associated parking. It is seen as having potential to be the welcoming point for all the attractions of the High weald, both in Sussex and in Kent, incorporating an accommodation booking point.

The proposed re-routing of the A21 would have a significant impact on Flimwell, but does not prejudice any of the development potential of any of the sites allocated within the Local Plan. However it may free up congestion from the existing cross-roads and ease the current problem of severance caused by the current A21 route. In the process it may offer an opportunity to begin to establish the centre that the village currently lacks, and facilitate some development to the east of the crossroads. Implementation of the community hall allocation adjacent to the crossroads will assist in this respect.

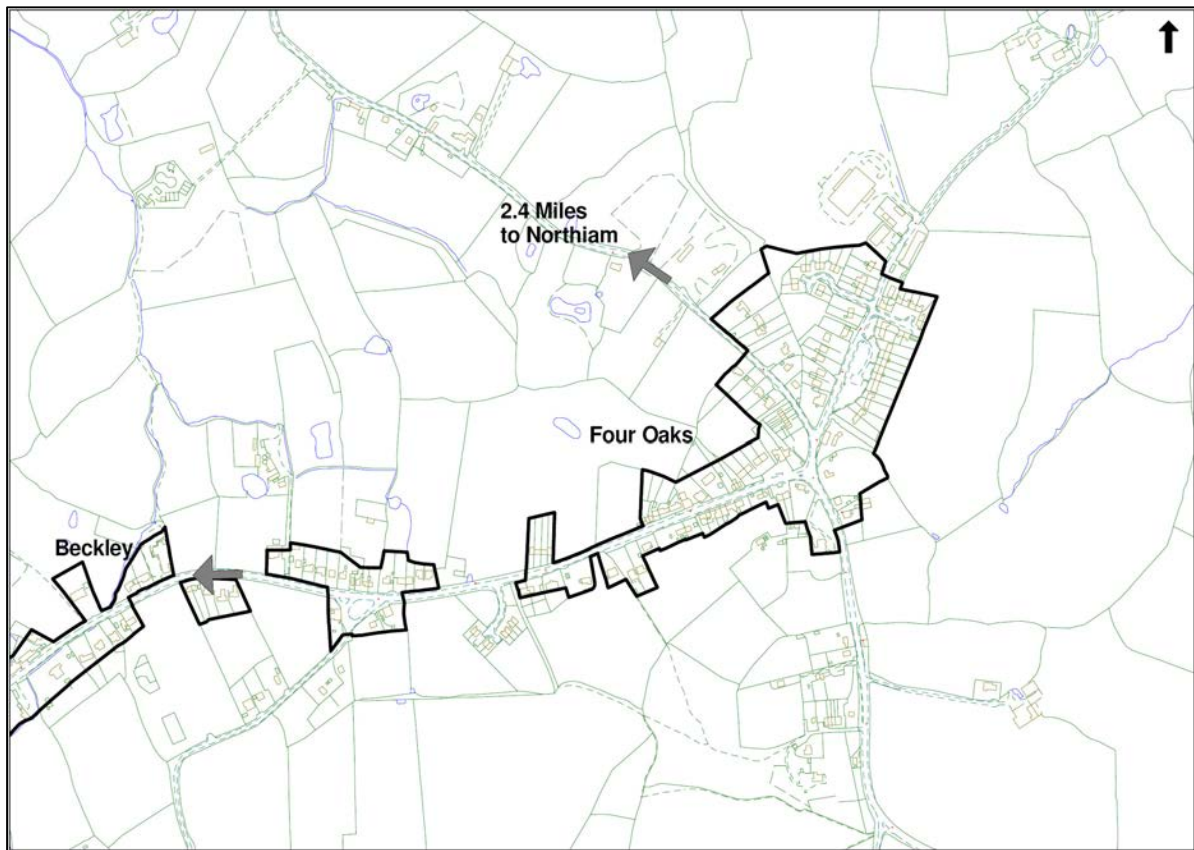
In total it seems reasonable to suggest that Flimwell may be suitable for allocations of 35 to 50 new dwellings (including at least 25 from the unimplemented Local Plan allocation) in the period up to 2026.

Regarding the identified need for allotments, as this is a use that is semi-agricultural, it may be

that an appropriate site outside the development boundary can be identified in the Site Allocations DPD process.



Four Oaks



Introduction

Four Oaks, in the Parish of Beckley, has a population of just over 300. It has grown up around the junction of the A268 and B0288.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Four Oaks has a Local Plan defined development boundary within which it has a very limited range of local services. To a large extent it relies upon neighbouring Beckley, which although is of similar size has a much greater provision of local services. The former Royal Oak public house on the western fringes of the village is now vacant and unused.

Accessibility

The A268 heads south-east out the village towards Peasmarsh and Rye and in the opposite direction heads north-west along Whitebread Lane to Northiam. The B0288 connects with neighbouring Beckley to the west. The 344 bus service, operated by Coastal Coaches, connects to Rye.

Need

Housing Needs

Relative to other Rother villages, there is a low proportion of housing need, but a fair demand for affordable housing. 8.6% of housing stock is social housing which is average for Rother villages. These figures suggest some degree of need for new housing, if other factors allow for it.

Economic Role and Needs

There is an average unemployment and economic activity rate. A limited employment base and reliance on the car suggests a fair amount of out-commuting, which is perhaps not surprising, given the proximity of larger settlements to the east, north and west.

Community Need for Other Services

There are no play areas or sports pitches in Four Oaks, although there are both in neighbouring Beckley half a mile away. These areas seem sufficient to serve the village. No other community needs have been identified.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

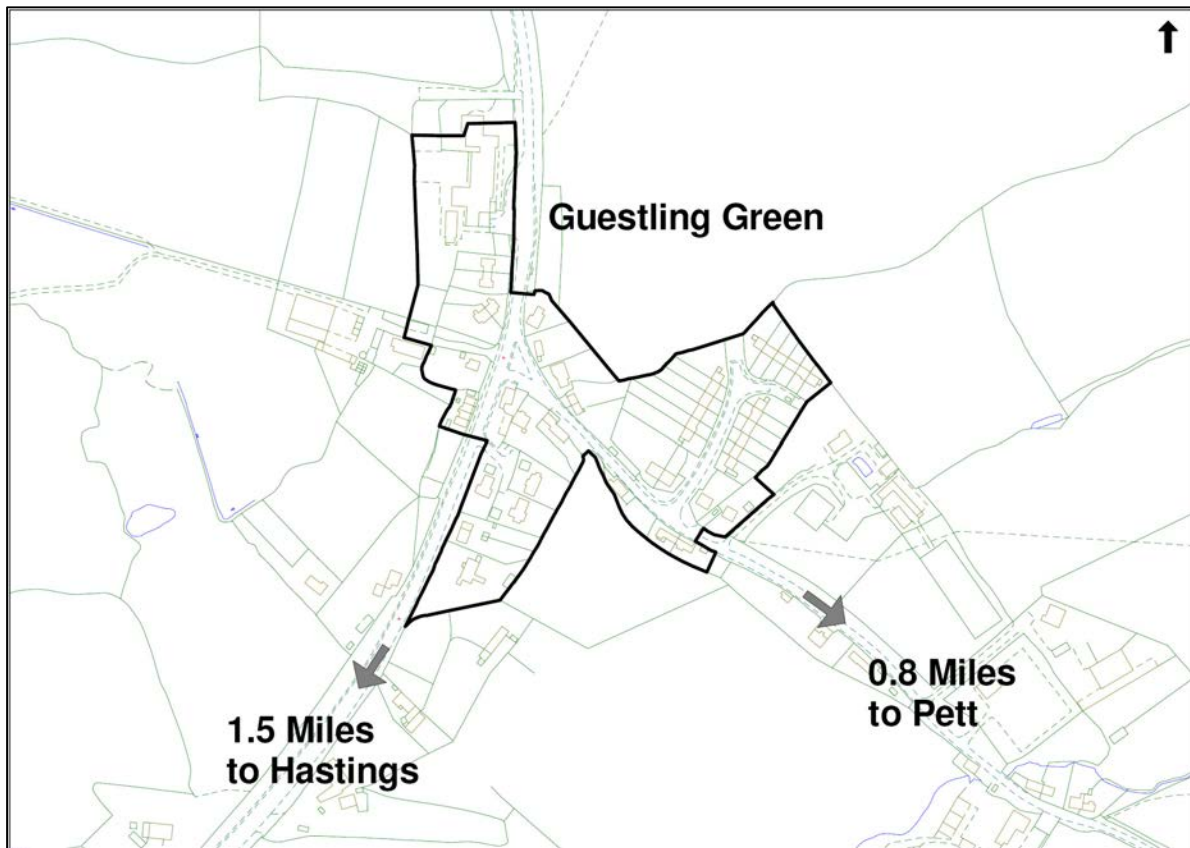
The village is situated in High Weald AONB and more specifically in the Lower Rother Valley. The area is one of the most remote and unspoiled in East Sussex. Ancient woodlands characterise the surrounding area, Dean Wood to the north, Spring Wood to the east and the larger Flatroper's Wood and Bixley Wood to the South. There is an unspoilt open aspect to the east towards Beckley across pasture interspersed by hedgerow trees.

Development Potential

With its almost non-existent level of service provision in combination with environmental constraints, Four Oaks is not a sustainable location for new development of any significant scale. Development should therefore be limited to small scale permissions for infill to meet local needs.



Guestling Green



Introduction

Guestling was the meeting place for the Sussex Cinque Ports and a Norman church suggests a former importance far beyond that indicated by the present scatter of houses.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Guestling Green does have a Local Plan development boundary, but has a limited range of local services, including a primary school and post office.

Guestling Bradshaw CE Primary School is located within the development boundary on Winchelsea Road. Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, it is projected to be full/have a deficit of places by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Guestling Green has direct access onto the A259, and is in close proximity to seven of the lower order villages.

Unusually for a small village, it has two local buses (347 and 711) which give access to Rye and Hastings as well as being 1.5 km from Three Oaks Station which runs a partial service to Hastings and Rye.

Need

Housing Needs

As seen in Appendix 7, the village exhibits high levels of housing need, but relatively low demand from the housing register. There is a relatively low proportion of social housing in the existing stock. These figures suggest the village may suit an exception site.

Economic Role and Needs

As Appendix 5 indicates, the Parish exhibits low unemployment, an average economic activity rate, a high economic base and a reliance on car for commuting. These figures do not suggest a strong need for employment.

Community Need for Other Services

No specific community needs have been identified for the village.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

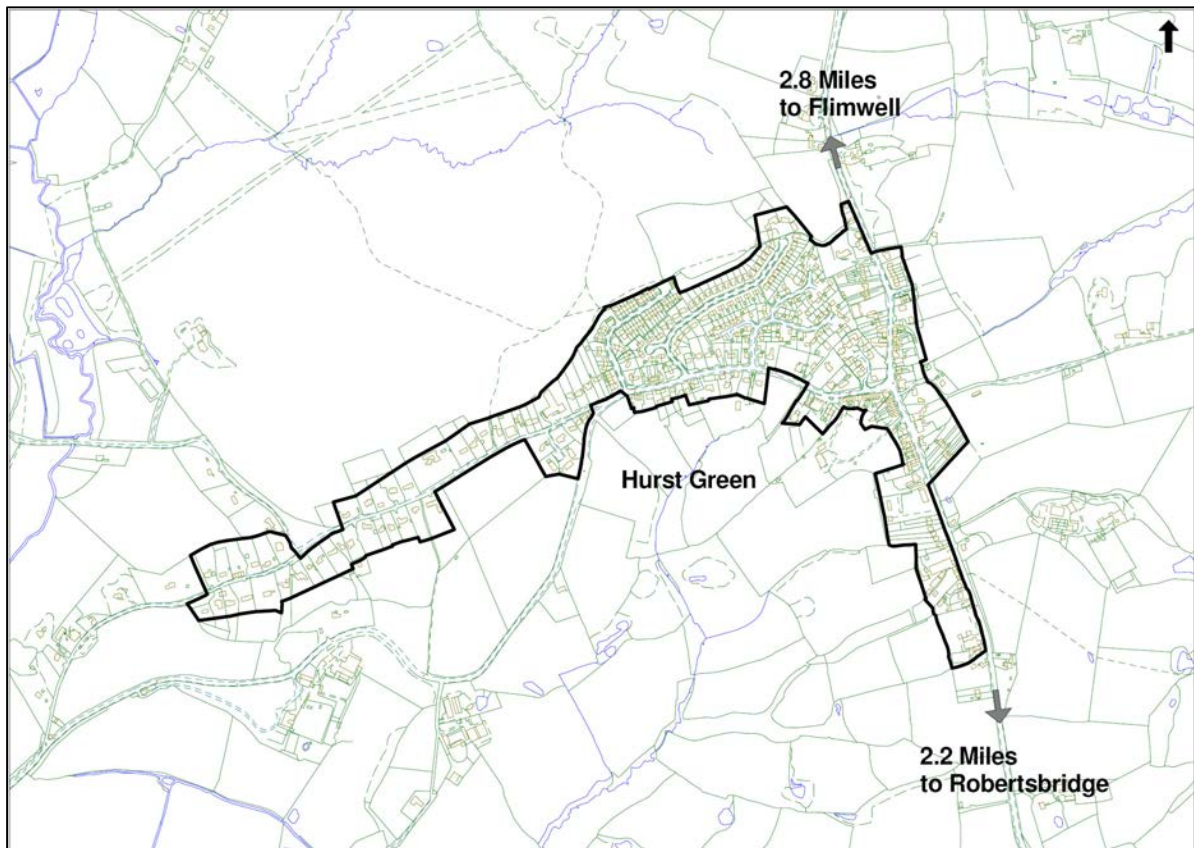
Guestling Green is rural in character despite the impact of the A259. The village and the surrounding countryside is designated in the High Weald AONB and is on elevated ground, so consequently from the main road there are glimpses of the wider countryside.

Many of the surrounding woods are designated as either ancient replanted or ancient semi-natural woodland. A number of the dwellings in the settlement are listed for their historical interest.

Development Potential

Given the limited range of services Guestling Green is not a particularly sustainable location for further allocations for development.

Hurst Green



Introduction

Hurst Green is one of the larger villages in Rother with a population of approximately 1,130 people. It is centred on the convergence of the A21 trunk road and the A265.

There are a number of buildings listed for their special architectural or historic interest within the village, but the majority are consolidated around the original core of the built form. More recent estates have developed on the northern side of the A265 and offer a mixture of house types. To the west of the village lies Burgh Hill, a ribbon form of development of mature dwellings which extends some way out of the village, which has been included within the development boundary. The area is characterised by low density development in well landscaped gardens of mature trees and shrubs. South of the village centre, a finger of ribbon development projects down the A21 and terminates adjacent to Hurst Green Church of England primary school. This frontage is the focus of retail and economic activity.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Hurst Green has a reasonable level of services and is classed as a **local service village**. The village has local convenience shops, namely, bakery, newsagents, hairdressers, as well as more specialist suppliers such as agricultural related goods, sports clothing, furniture makers and antiques. There is also a primary school, two churches, village hall, social club, recreation ground and public house.

Hurst Green CE Primary School will shortly be modernised with new buildings.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, the school is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Hurst Green can be said to be situated upon the broad transport corridor that connects London to the Sussex Coastal towns of

Hastings and Bexhill. In addition to the A21 to London, the A265 and A229 also connect to the village along an east/west axis, making Hurst Green one of the most accessible villages in the District.

The A21 is part of the trunk road network and as a consequence there is a heavy volume of traffic moving through the village at all times. Highways Agency figures suggest that the single carriageway carries 15,800 vehicles per day at Hurst Green. As well as creating a severance effect within the village, the traffic also creates a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the locality through the generation of excess noise, vibration and pollution. In 2005 the Minister for Transport announced the Preferred Route for an A21 bypass of Flimwell and Hurst Green. The 5.5 mile route will re-route the A21 some distance east of its current route, which will significantly ease congestion in the village. However at this stage it is unclear whether the bypass will definitely go ahead.

Tunbridge Wells is a major employment centre and lies some 15 miles to the north and can be accessed by train from Etchingham Station 2 miles to the east, which also provides a regular service to London. The village is also served by bus services to Maidstone, Hastings, Uckfield and Bexhill, which provide town centre shops, offices and main business areas. The timetable offers regular services to these destinations.

Need

Housing Needs

As Appendix 7 indicates, Hurst Green exhibits high levels of housing need. There is an average demand from the housing register, although social housing makes up a comparatively high proportion of the stock (10.6%).

Economic Role and Needs

As Appendix 5 indicates, an above average unemployment and economic activity combined with a low economic base suggests some need for more local employment uses.

Community Need for Other Services

Hurst Green has one children's play area. Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in Hurst Green to be delivered as a medium priority. It also recommends that a new allotment is needed as a matter of high priority.

Hurst Green Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Lodge Field playground is perceived as being a very good site with high usage and good accessibility. Drewetts cricket field again experiences high usage yet has poor accessibility, similarly Stage Field, owned by Rother District Council is perceived as having poor accessibility but also an insignificant level of usage and being of poor quality.

The village hall is used often with excellent quality and accessibility. The quantity of all open space is perceived as basic. The only indoor facility, the village hall is noted as adequate for the population. Overall quality is average to good.

Accessibility to Stage Field is the main issue combined with a serious lack of public transport provision. In terms of indoor facilities there is a slight lack of signage and promotion of the village hall.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Hurst Green is wholly within the High Weald AONB. The broad valley of the River Rother is situated south west of the village and there are long distance views out of the village, particularly to the south and west, over the surrounding undulating countryside.

The northern side of the village is bounded by areas of ancient woodland and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and to the east lies a small valley which extends into the undulating, well wooded landscape beyond.

Development Potential

Hurst Green has a good range of services, is highly accessible and has a demonstrable housing need. The evidence discussed in the preceding paragraphs also suggests a need for more employment uses, a play area and an allotment.

However, it is desirable to contain the village on most sides. To the west, much of Burgh Hill has been included within the development boundary, but as it represents a transitional area between the built up area of the village and the countryside, the significant green gaps have been excluded, to maintain the semi-rural character of this part of the village. Further development in this direction would inevitably be further ribbon development poorly related to the existing village form.

To the north the village is bounded by valued Ancient Woodland and Site of Nature Conservation Importance. The small areas that are not covered by official designations are in

effect areas where the valued mixed deciduous woodland habitat is regenerating and expanding. The only area that may have development potential without undue environmental harm lies adjacent to London Road, although the more rural setting may make this a preferable location for allotments.

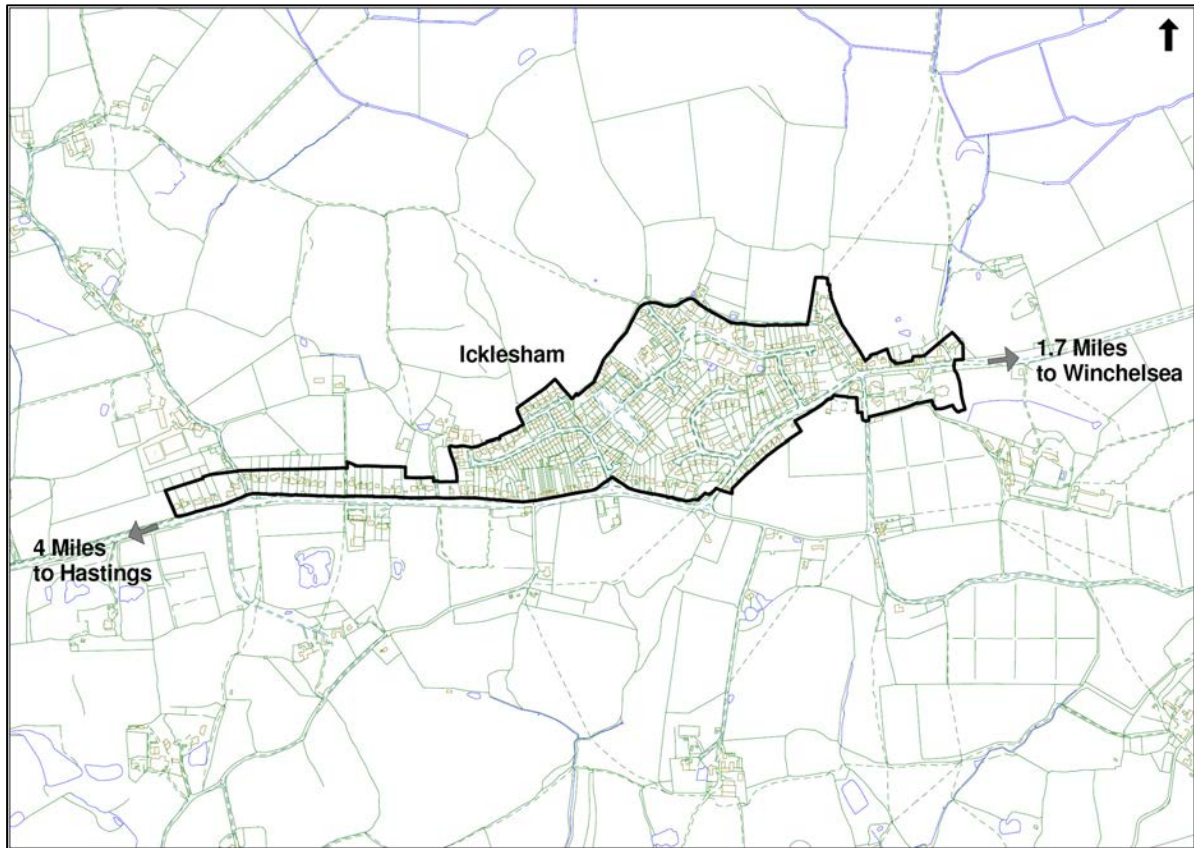
Development on Hurst Green's southern side would need to be carefully positioned so as not to encroach upon the elevated and exposed slopes, which if developed would have a detrimental impact on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However, there may be smaller relatively enclosed areas that could be developed without negative effect that could be investigated further.

The re-routing of the A21 offers a significant opportunity to re-enforce the village centre, albeit later in the plan period (post 2016) if and when the bypass is in place. There are areas of enclosed backland to the east of the A21 that could be redeveloped for a number of uses, particularly residential. This could in turn facilitate a new children's play area alongside development. The more southern area adjacent to the Royal George Pub and Cricket field may be sufficiently secluded from housing to allow employment development of some description. It would be necessary to phase these proposals until after the A21 re-routing since to develop prior to this date would exacerbate already severe problems of village severance.

In total it seems reasonable to suggest that Hurst Green could reasonably accommodate housing allocations for 10-40 dwellings in the period up to 2026.



Icklesham



Introduction

Icklesham is situated approximately 2 miles west of Winchelsea, 5 miles north-west of Hastings and has a population of just under 900 people. Much of the original settlement was located fronting the A259, but more recent development has taken place in depth, to the north of the main road. On the western side of the village, a finger of development extends away from the main core of the village, into the open countryside, which gives the impression that the village is fairly extensive when viewed from the main road.

Saxon references to the village go back as far as 772 and being of strategic importance it is thought that the village was one of the first to be seized by William the Conqueror upon landing. The parish church of All Saints has been a place of worship for over 800 years.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Icklesham has a reasonable range of local services but still falls just below the threshold required to be classed as a local service village.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Icklesham CE Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

The village is located on the A259 and is served by a peak time bus service to Rye and Hastings (Bus number 711). It is located within a five minute drive of six lower order villages, one of which sells convenience goods.

Need

Housing Needs

Icklesham Parish, which contains Winchelsea Beach and Winchelsea as well as Icklesham, exhibits a high proportion of households in need, but a low percentage of social housing in the stock and a low demand from the housing register.

Economic Role and Needs

Icklesham parish contains the employment area 'Little Sherwood'. As Appendix 5 indicates, the parish has a comparatively higher level of unemployment, an average economic activity

rate and economic base. There is high reliance on the car for commuting trips. This suggests the need for some further employment uses. This is an issue that may warrant further consideration at Site Allocations DPD stages.

Community Need for Other Services

Icklesham Parish Council runs a play area at Icklesham Recreation Ground. No specific community needs have been identified.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The village and its environs are designated within the High Weald AONB, and from the northern edge of the village are fine views over the Brede river valley and to the south over undulating countryside.

To the east of the village is an Archaeological Sensitive Area, and to the north out of the main confines of the settlement are areas of Ancient Woodland and Nature Conservation Importance.

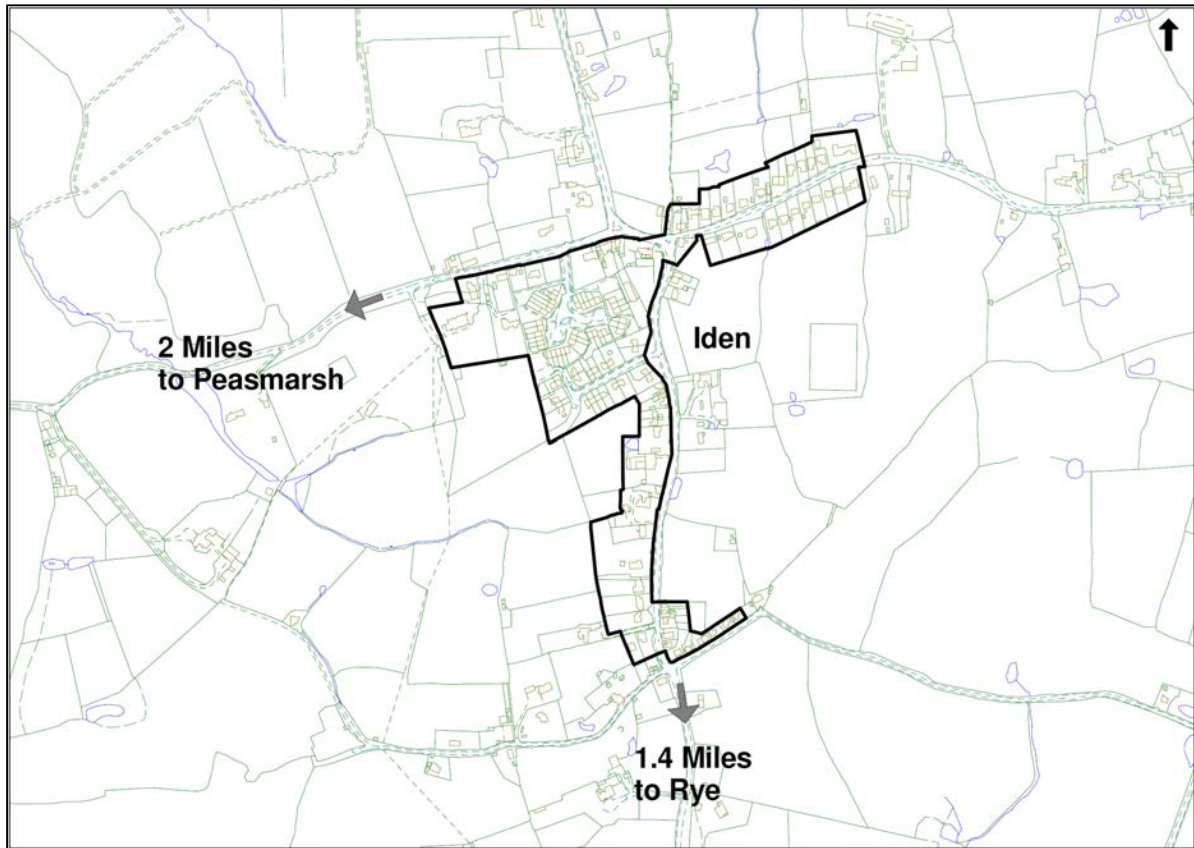
Development Potential

The level of housing need seems to suggest a small scale allocation or an exception site may be the appropriate for the village. Given the surrounding landscape, opportunities are limited, but there may be opportunities north of the A259 that warrant further investigation. The need for employment may also be met in this way or as a small extension to an existing employment area.

In total, it seems reasonable to suggest that the village may be suitable for allocations for 0-20 dwellings in the period up to 2026.



Iden



Introduction

Iden is a small settlement of just over 300 people situated 2 miles north of Rye. It overlooks the marshes and the Royal Military canal lies to the east. It has a history and heritage dating to the Domesday book. Today, the settlement is principally linear in form, although relatively recent developments have created some in-depth developments on the western side of the village. The village does not benefit from a gas supply and there is a large dependence on heating oil.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Iden has a development boundary and a reasonable range of services for its population. Services include a convenience shop, post office, community hall and play area.

The Bell pub in the centre of the village dates from 1107 and was originally a dwelling for the monks during the building of the nearby church. The parish church of All Saints with its castellated bell tower dates from the eleventh century but has been much restored.

Although there is no primary school in the village, it is served by St Michaels CE at nearby Houghton Green. Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, St Michaels Primary School is projected to be full/have a deficit of places by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

The village lies on the B2082 and is within a 5 minute drive time of Rye and the local service village of Peasmarsh so both comparison and convenience goods can be accessed relatively locally.

A peak time bus service runs to both Tenterden and Rye (bus number 312).

Need

Housing Needs

With reference to Appendix 7, Iden exhibits average need. It has a high proportion of social housing in the stock and a correspondingly high demand from the register.

The Parish Council have expressed the view that there is little in the way of choice for those

who want to downsize to smaller homes in the same village.

Economic Role and Needs

Just north of the village lies 'The Old Diary', a B1 use business area of 557sq.m. Farming is important in the general vicinity, including 'Top Fruit' where there is an influx of temporary labour at picking time.

A further area, 'Land at Readers Lane' has planning permission for employment uses.

Iden parish has average unemployment, economic activity rate and economic base. However there is comparatively high reliance on car for commuting and comparatively high levels of deprivation. This suggests a need for new employment which may be met by the current permission.

Community Need for Other Services

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Iden residents felt that shops for day to day purchases were most important to them in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the village hall, local shops, post office and the countryside were good qualities, but felt that access to housing and jobs was poor. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings and to provide more affordable housing, ensure a supply of affordable housing and housing for the elderly and to ensure design is in keeping with the character of the area.

In response to the Parish Council Planning Seminar, Iden Parish Council stated that any development in the village would have to be handled with great sensitivity.

Iden Recreation Ground is situated just to the west of the village and contains an Iden Parish Council runs play area.

Iden Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. All outdoor open spaces are of reasonable quality with average to good accessibility and only the new burial ground currently with low usage. Iden Park is frequented most significantly by residents and seen as the leading facility, used regularly by the cricket team.

The village hall is the only indoor facility and used often, is of a very good quality and has excellent accessibility. Quantity of all indoor and

outside open space and recreation facilities is satisfactory excluding the provision for children and young people where a perceived shortage exists.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The settlement is located on level ground and the character of the surrounding countryside is influenced by the wide, flat bottomed river valley of the Rother to the north. There is no steep decent therefore towards the river, and the landscape lacks the coherent structure of the High Weald, such as hedges and woodland.

The surrounding fields are noticeable from most of the vantage points around the village and the settlement and the surrounding countryside are designated within the AONB.

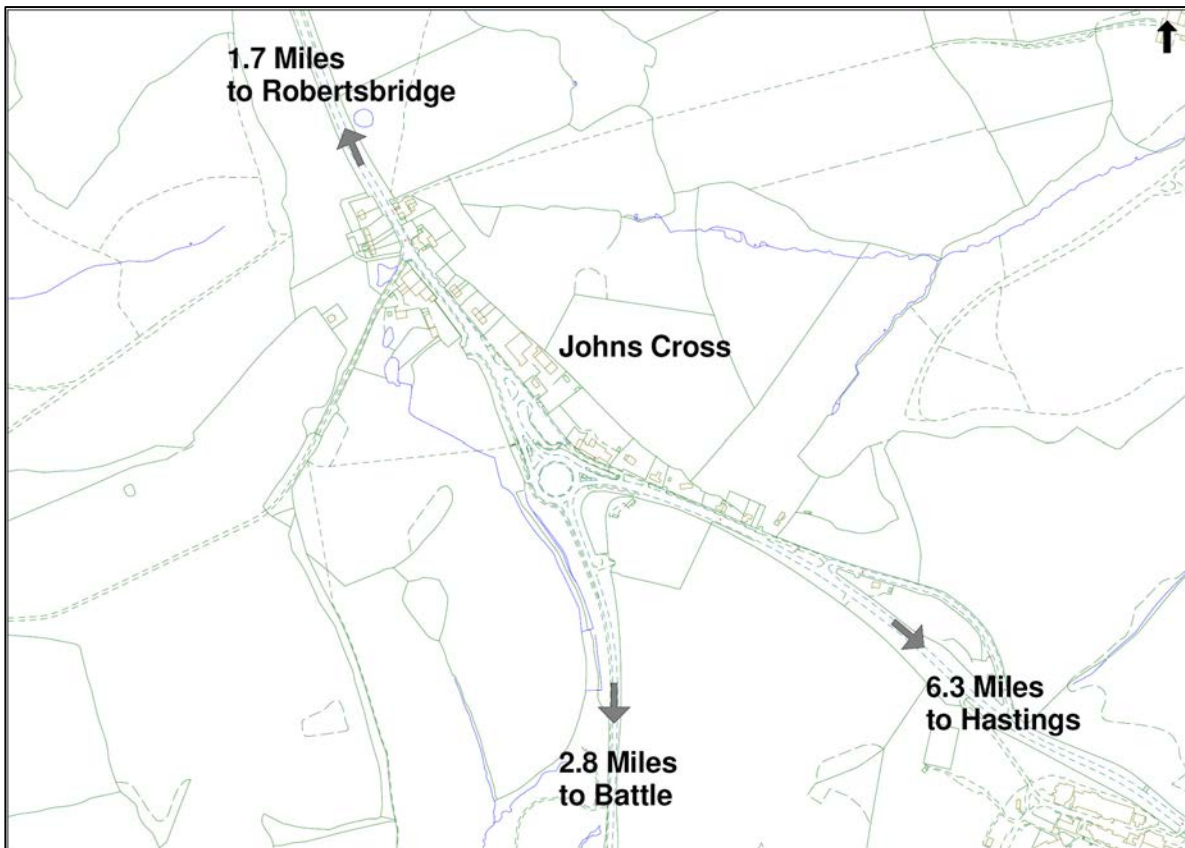
Development Potential

Given the suggested need for housing in combination with the fact that Iden is relatively well served by facilities, it is considered appropriate to consider small scale allocations of up to 15 dwellings in the period up to 2026. Mixed use applications that include an element of employment provision should also be given favourable consideration. Areas south of Church Lane that about the development boundary of Main Street appear to have some potential.

The likelihood of the local primary school being full does not necessarily preclude further development since there may be potential for on-site expansion or for adjustments to catchment areas /travel patterns.



Johns Cross



Introduction

Johns Cross is a small settlement of mixed uses that has developed along the A21 trunk road, just under 3 miles from Battle and 2 miles from Robertsbridge. It has a population of fewer than 50 people.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Although tiny in population terms and with no development boundary, Johns Cross is the smallest settlement in Rother to have a primary School. Other services are very limited, as outlined in Appendix 2.

Accessibility

John's Cross is located on the A21 Trunk Road just north of its junction with the A2100. Battle and Robertsbridge are located within a 5 minute drive time.

The local bus provides a peak time service to Hastings, Robertsbridge and Hawkhurst.

Need

Housing Needs

Mountfield Parish exhibits very high need, but a very low proportion of social housing in existing stock combined with a very low demand from the housing register. These figures suggest the village may suit an exception site.

Economic Role and Needs

Johns Cross contains some employment uses at 'Johns Cross Farm' including printers and storage units. As Appendix 5 indicates, the parish exhibits very low unemployment, a highish economic activity rate. There is a reasonable economic base, but reliance on the car for commuting. These figures do not suggest a strong need for more employment opportunities.

Community Need for Other Services

No specific community needs have been identified.



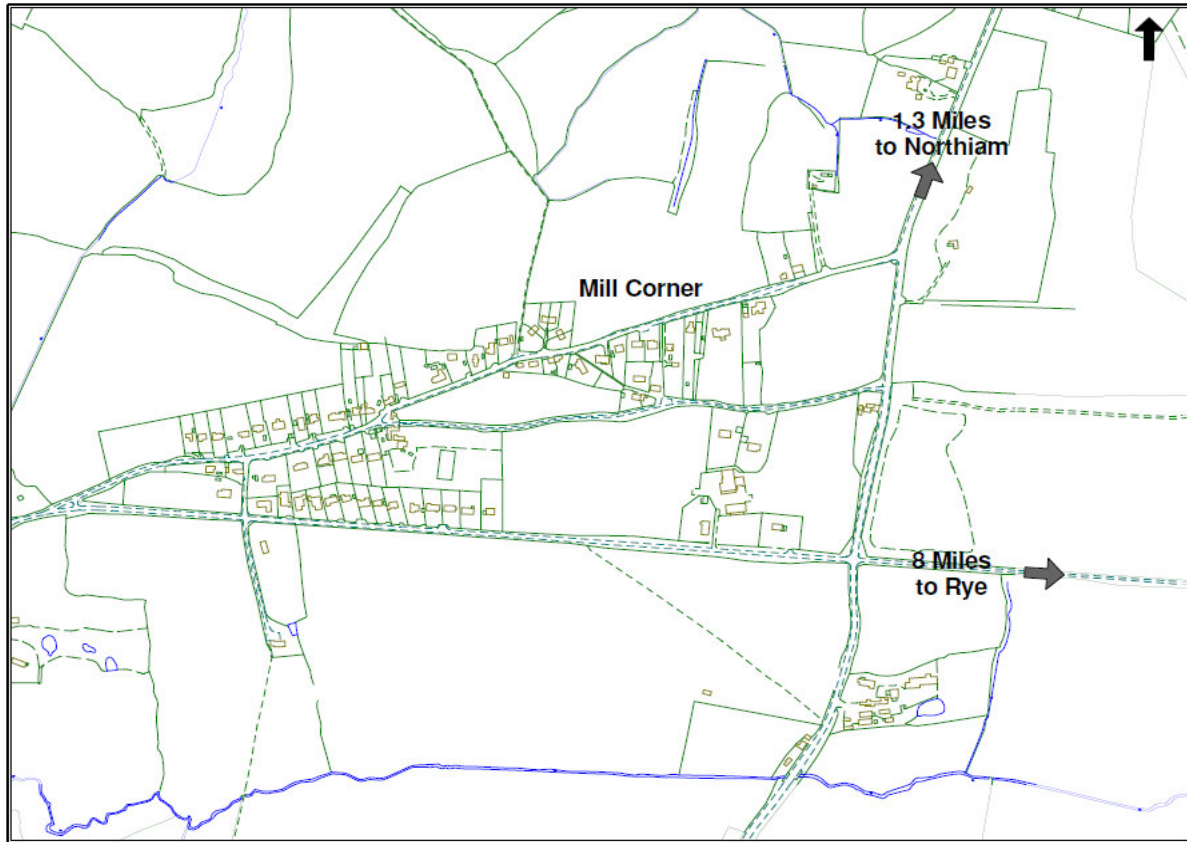
Environmental and Landscape Factors

Johns Cross and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB. It is located on elevated ground and therefore there are significant views over the surrounding countryside which is wholly rural. Much of the surrounding woodland is designated as Ancient Woodland.

Development Potential

As the housing needs section suggests, the village may suit an exception site. However, Johns Cross is not considered an appropriate location at which to investigate a specific allocation of land since services are very limited and there are considerable landscape and environmental constraints.

Mill Corner



Introduction

Mill Corner is south of Northiam, off the A28. Its population is estimated at 152 and it is within Northiam Parish and Rother Levels ward.

Brickwall Historic & Garden is located nearby on the other side of the A28, which is an impressive timber-framed house surrounded by a garden dating from 1680.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

There are no services to speak of and the settlement relies largely on Northiam.

Accessibility

The village is conveniently accessible to the A28 which runs from Tenterden and Northiam to the north and Hastings to the south.

There are no train services nearby but the Coastal Coaches bus service serves the village as it runs between Rye and Hastings.

Need

Housing Needs

Northiam Parish has a typical number of households in need for Rother villages and an average level of demand from the housing register. It has a relatively high proportion of social rented housing (12.9%) within the housing stock. These facts suggest a need for some housing development if other factors (service, accessibility, environmental, landscape) allow for it. However the much larger local service village of Northiam to the north is the more sustainable location for any new housing to meet the need.

Economic Role and Needs

As Appendix 5 indicates there is an average economic activity rate in the Parish combined with a fairly low level of unemployment. However, the low economic base and heavy reliance on the private car for commuting, suggests some need for further local job

opportunities. Northiam village would offer the more sustainable location for any development.

Community Need for Other Services

No particular needs for local services have been identified, although the section on Northiam contains information of relevance to the wider Parish.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

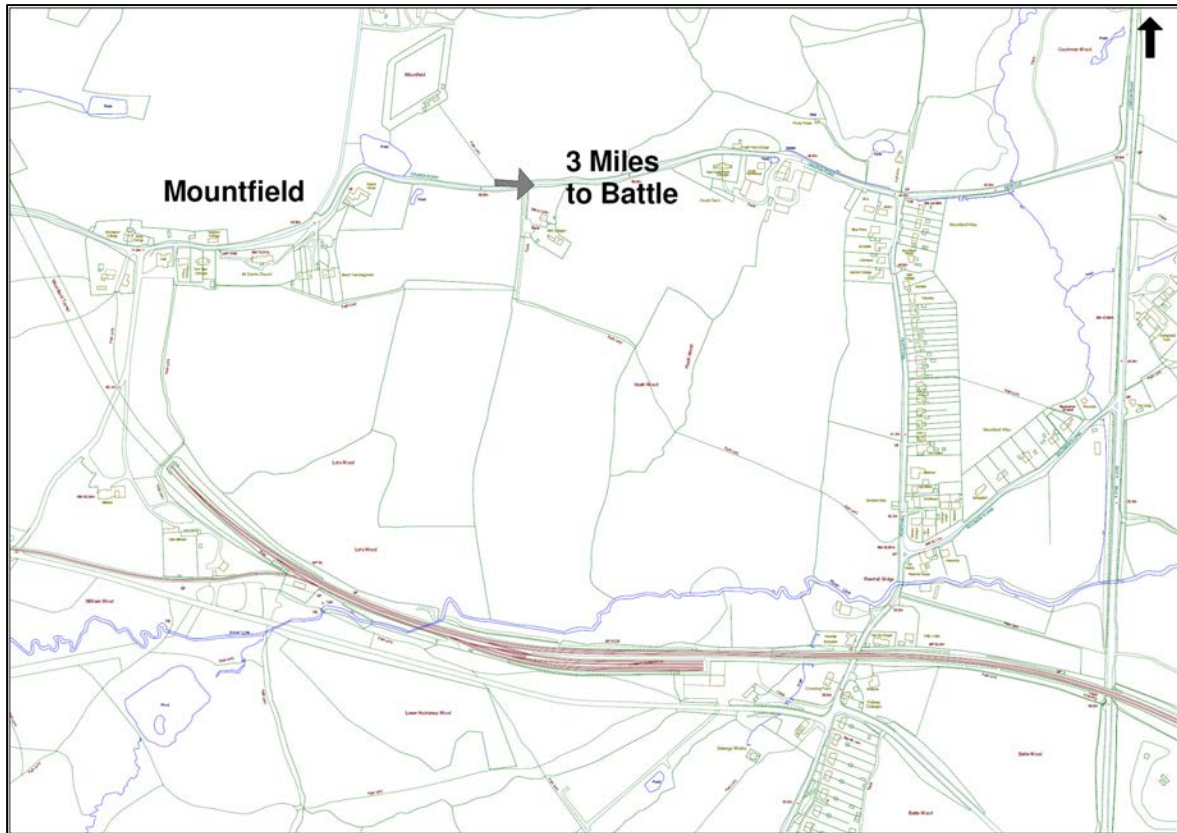
The surrounding landscape is within the High Weald AONB and typical of the Lower Rother Valley.

Just over the A28 is Hoath Coppice, an area of oak and sweet chestnut woodland located west of the village is subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

Development Potential

Mill Corner is not a sustainable location for new development given its scale and lack of services.

Mountfield



Introduction

Mountfield consists of two discrete parts, the original small settlement lies to the west of more recent development located at Hoath Hill both north and south of the railway and approximately 3 miles north of Battle.

The original settlement has a handful of dwellings, whereas the more recent settlement is linear in pattern and has a population of approximately 200 people. The settlement lacks a central core, although the dwellings are almost contiguous with one another. It is linked to the surrounding villages of Netherfield and Brightling by winding roads running through some of the most unspoilt countryside in Sussex.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Mountfield has no Local Plan defined development boundary and a very limited range of services. On the outskirts of the main built form is the Norman parish church of All Saints which has a magnificent porch and rare wall paintings.

Mountfield School is located at John's Cross a walkable distance away. Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Mountfield CE Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model). However, in common with other primary schools in the vicinity, the school serves a number of pupils from other areas.

Accessibility

The settlement is located within a 5 minute drive time of Robertsbridge where a range of convenience goods can be accessed.

There is no peak time bus service here although there is a peak time bus service at John's Cross which is within walking distance.

Need

Housing Needs

Mountfield Parish exhibits very high need, but a very low proportion of social housing in existing stock combined with a very low demand from the housing register. These figures suggest the village may suit an exception site.

Economic Role and Needs

It was once thought that the area around Mountfield had unexploited coal seams and in 1876 a 2000 foot deep exploratory bore hole was drilled. Although no coal was found, gypsum was and has provided the area with a thriving industry ever since. Gypsum is used today in the manufacture of plasterboards and cement and the British Gypsum mine at Mountfield is among the few still working in the country. The actual entrance is relatively hidden in Limekiln Woods, but the catacomb workings spread for miles under the countryside. The British Gypsum site is by far the largest industrial area in rural Rother.

Vine Hall Farm Industrial Park is also located in Mountfield and has almost 3,000 sq.m of mostly B1 use floorspace. It currently has a vacancy rate of some 20%. Mountfield parish also has employment uses at Hoath Farm on Solomans Lane and at the container site between Johns Cross/Robertsbridge.

The Employment Strategy Review 2008 highlighted Darwell ward (which includes Brightling, Burwash, Mountfield and Whatlington) as drawing in commuters. This is not surprising given the range of local business sites.

As Appendix 5 indicates, the parish exhibits very low unemployment, a highish economic activity rate. There is a reasonable economic base, but reliance on the car for commuting. These figures do not suggest a strong need for more employment opportunities.

Community Need for Other Services

Mountfield Children's play area is located at Soloman's Lane. No specific community needs have been identified.

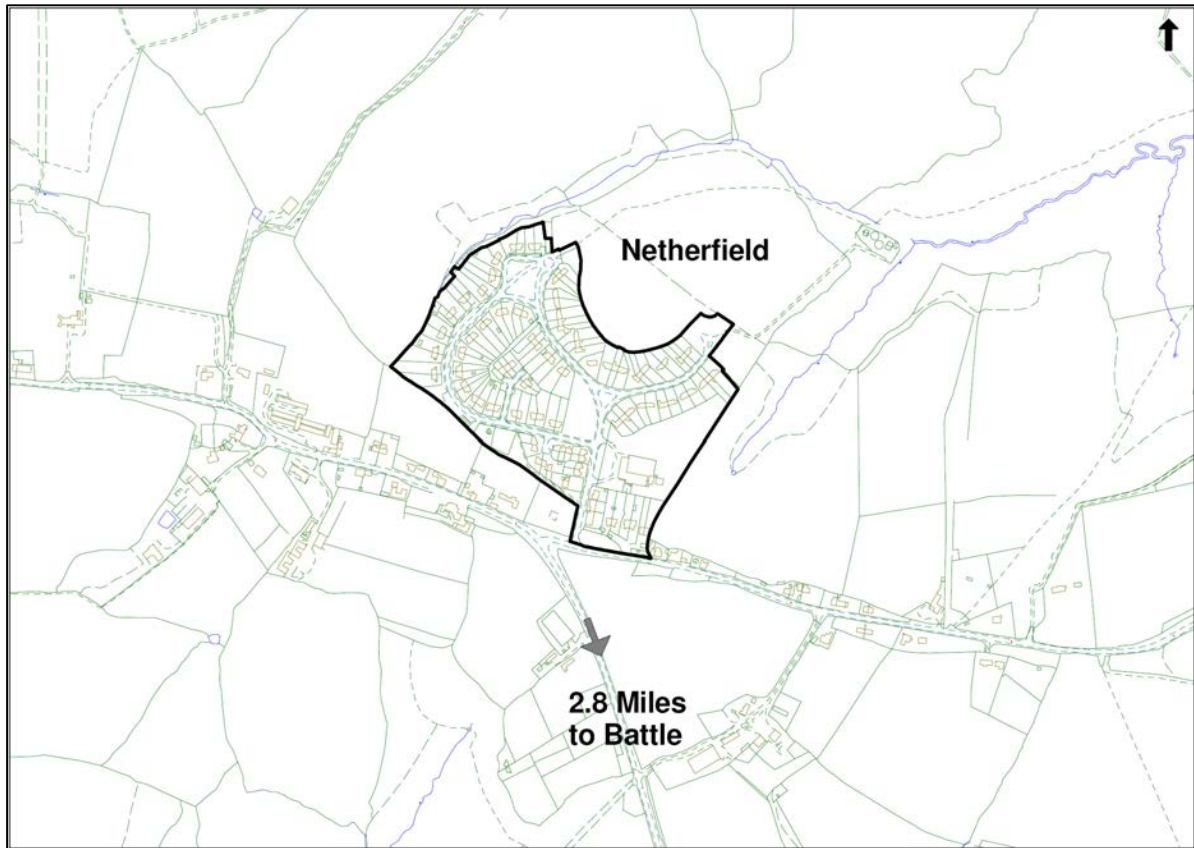
Environmental and Landscape Factors

A narrow strip of land on the northern side of the railway is identified within Flood zone 3 and the settlement and the surrounding countryside is designated within the High Weald AONB. The surrounding countryside is heavily wooded with much of the woodland on the south side of the settlement designated as Ancient Woodland.

Development Potential

As the housing needs section suggests, the village may suit an exception site. However, Mountfield not considered an appropriate location at which to investigate a specific allocation of land since services are very limited.

Netherfield



Introduction

Netherfield is situated between Battle and Brightling on a high point overlooking Forestry Commission land. Many of the dwellings around Netherfield were built to provide dwellings for people who work at the nearby Gypsum mines. Today, the majority of the settlement lies on Darvel Down away from the through road that links Heathfield to Battle. The village has a population of just under 350 people.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Netherfield has a development boundary and a reasonable range of services for its population, including a convenience shop/post office, primary school/nursery, village hall, 2 pubs and a children's play area.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Netherfield CE Primary School is projected to be full/have a deficit of spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model). However, in common with other primary schools in the vicinity, the school serves a number of pupils from other areas.

The church dates from the nineteenth century but includes a morbid painting of the beheaded John the Baptist by artist Giovanni Barbieri which dates from the seventeenth century.

Accessibility

Netherfield is situated on the B2096 and is served by the 355 peak time bus service to Battle. As the crow flies, the village is equidistant from Battle and Robertsbridge train stations, both of which are about 3 miles away. Battle is within a 5 minute drive-time and Netherfield residents look to the market town for some services, such as the secondary school. Smaller or equivalent villages that are within 5 minutes drive time include Brightling, Dallington and Mountfield.

Need

Housing Needs

It is difficult to draw conclusions regarding housing need that are specific to Netherfield, situated as it is within the much wider Battle parish. Battle parish exhibits a lower level of housing need than rural villages but a greater demand from the housing register. It seems

reasonable to suggest that there is a need for some affordable housing in Netherfield in common with the rural parts of the District overall.

Economic Role and Needs

The British Gypsum Mine, although generally referred to as being at Mountfield is actually a similar distance to Netherfield. The site is by far the largest industrial area in rural Rother.

Netherfield parish also contains the employment area 'White House Poultry Farm'.

As with housing, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding economic need that are specific to Netherfield, situated as it is within the much wider Battle parish. Battle parish has relatively low unemployment, an economic activity rate that is typical of rural Rother and a strong degree of economic self-containment. This does not suggest that there would be a need for new employment areas in the smaller settlement of Netherfield.

Community Need for Other Services

No community needs specific to Netherfield have been identified.

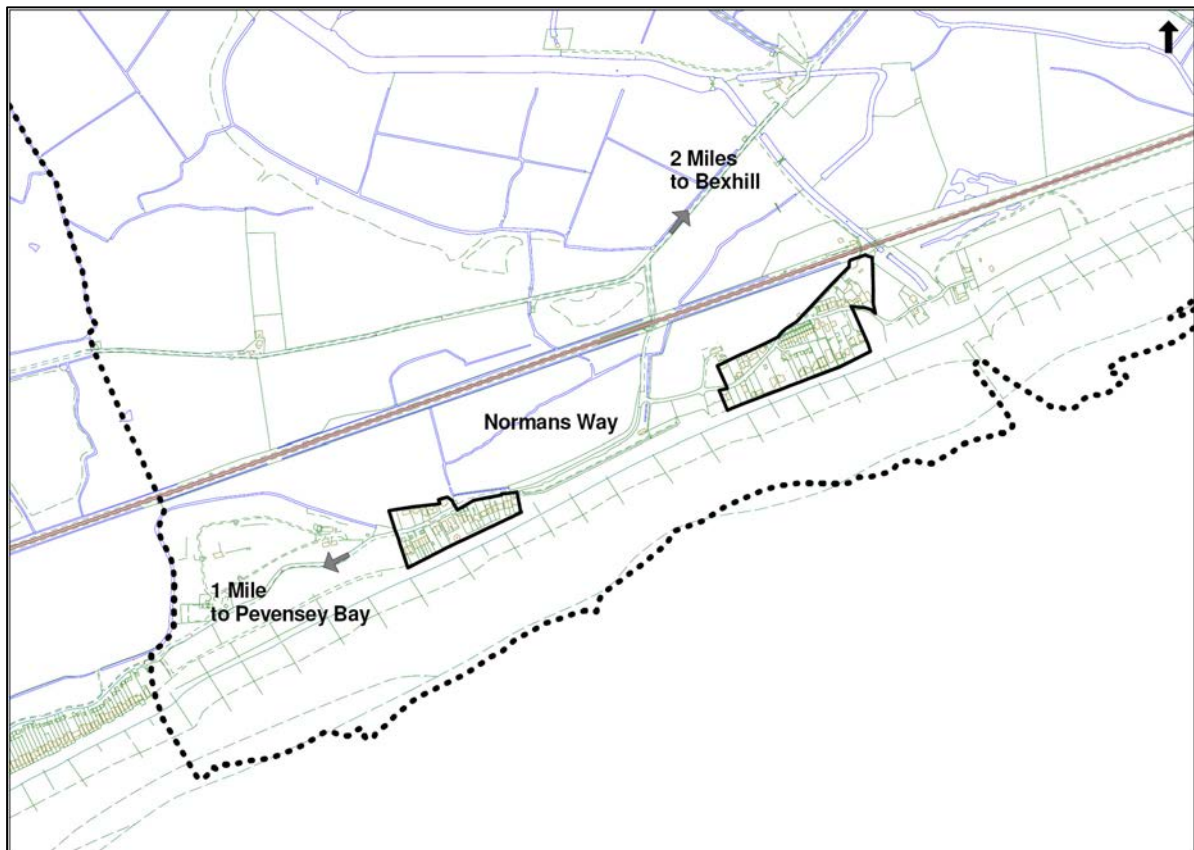
Environmental and Landscape Factors

Netherfield is situated in a very elevated location on the Heathfield to Battle Ridge. Notwithstanding this, many of the dwellings are located on the side of a slope which faces away from the main road and therefore they are not very prominent in the landscape. A Site of Nature Conservation Importance is located to the north-east, and nearby woodlands to both the north and the south are designated as Ancient Woodland.

Development Potential

It seems reasonable to allow for some small amount of housing growth to meet local needs in Netherfield. There are infill opportunities to accommodate an allocation of up to 15 dwellings in the plan period to 2026.

Normans Bay



Introduction

Normans Bay is quiet and isolated and lies on the coast, approximately 2 miles to the west of Cooden Beach and 2 miles east of the centre of Pevensy Bay. It consists of two disparate forms of development that have either direct access to the beach or are very close to it. The settlement also has caravan and camping sites which highlight the importance of the location for tourist and leisure purposes.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Other than a public house and mobile library, services are non-existent.

Accessibility

Despite the fact that Normans Bay has no peak time bus service, and is accessed via narrow country lanes, there is a railway station which runs a partial service to the nearest town of Eastbourne and Bexhill.

Need

Housing Needs

It is difficult to draw conclusions regarding housing need in Normans Bay village since figures are lost within the figures for the wider Bexhill parish.

Economic Role and Needs

It is difficult to draw conclusions regarding economic need in Normans Bay village since figures are lost within the figures for the wider Bexhill parish.

Community Need for other Services

No community needs specific to Normans Bay have been identified.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Normans Bay is contained to the north by the east to west running railway and to the south by the sea. Much of the settlement is built on the crest and the landward slope of the shingle beach immediately above the high tide mark. Most of the area is designated as Flood Zone 3 which includes fluvial as well as tidal flooding, bar a narrow strip of land at the top of the shingle beach. The Strategic Flood Risk

Assessment makes special reference to Normans Bay and the development constraints imposed not least by the area at risk from flooding.

The beach area is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

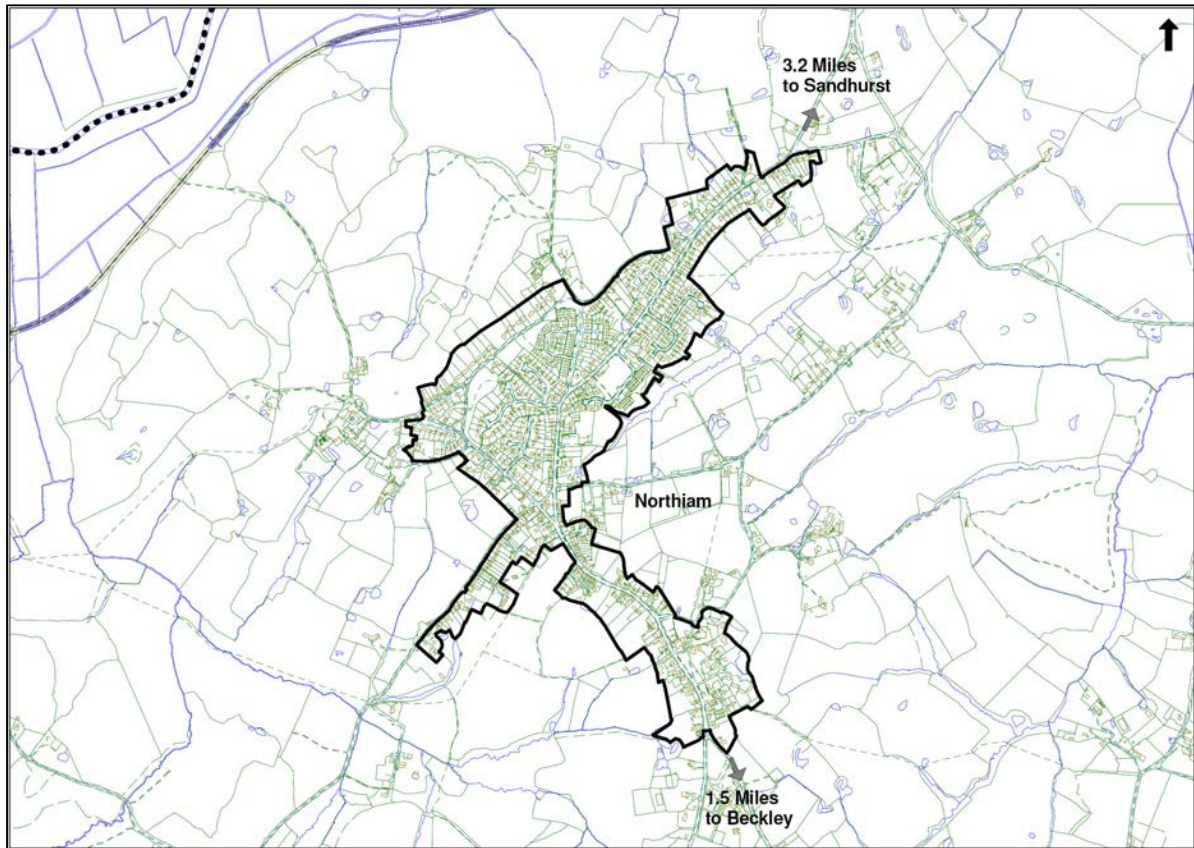
North of the railway and east of the settlement is the Pevensey Levels SSSI which comprises of low lying marshland which agriculturally is used for grazing.

There is a variety of building styles in the settlement, and as well as some relatively modern development, there is a Martello tower scheduled as an ancient monument and a Grade II listed building and the Coastguard and Railway Cottages, as well as the shacks and caravans.

Development Potential

Normans Bay is a small beach with very limited services and considerable environmental constraints. It is not considered an appropriate or sustainable location to promote development allocations.

Northiam



Introduction

With over 1,800 people, Northiam is one of the most populated villages in the District and supports a wide range of services and facilities. The village lies along a generally north to south running ridge, and is located 12 miles north of Hastings and about 8 miles south of Tenterden.

The original form of the village mainly consisted of ribbon development along the A28 and the minor roads that connect to it. More recently, a number of small residential estates have grown up to the rear of the established frontages. There are a substantial number of buildings listed for their architectural or historic interest in the southern half of the village and this more historic area has been designated a Conservation Area.

There are many notably old houses and buildings in the area, such as the 17th century Brickwall House and most famously the timber-framed Great Dixter dating from 1450. On the green stands an old thatched well-house and nearby is the remains of an oak tree under which Elizabeth 1 is said to have picnicked.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

The village has a range of services to meet the needs of the rural community, including shops, post office, doctor's surgery, village hall, primary school and recreation ground.

The parish church stands on one of the high points of the village and dates from the 12th century, although only a small part of the original building remains.

Pretious Sports hall opened at the end of 2007. Rother District Council contributed £300,000 which enabled the sports hall to win a lottery bid to reach the total cost of development. This was a joint project with Northiam School, the Pretious Project and East Sussex County Council.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Northiam CE Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Due to the presence of these services, Northiam can be described as a **local service village**.

Accessibility

Northiam is situated on the A28 which connects to Hastings in the South and Tenterden in the North, the A268 which connects to Rye in the South-East, and to the B2088. There is no train service, but there is a bus service with an approximately hourly service to Rye and Hastings.

Northiam is relatively remote. The only higher order settlement within a 15 minute drive is Tenterden in Kent. The smaller villages of Beckley and Four Oaks are both within a 5 minutes drive time.

Need

Housing Needs

Northiam has a typical number of households in need for Rother villages and an average level of demand from the housing register. It has a relatively high proportion of social rented housing (12.9%) within the housing stock. These facts suggest a need for some housing development if other factors (service, accessibility, environmental, landscape) allow for it.

Economic Role and Needs

The north east end of Northiam is a centre of employment uses around 'Coppards Lane'. There are a range of light industrial type businesses in the locality totalling 1,660 sq.m. There are further opportunities for employment within the village.

As Appendix 5 indicates there is an average economic activity rate combined with a fairly low level of unemployment. However, the low economic base and heavy reliance on the private car for commuting, suggests some need for further local job opportunities.

Community Need for Other Services

In their responses to the Rother District Council's Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Northiam residents felt that the presence of a local doctor's surgery was most important in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the village hall, post office, doctor's surgery and primary school were all good qualities, but felt that access to housing, jobs and a train station was poor. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings and to provide more affordable housing, ensure a supply of affordable housing and to ensure design is in keeping with the character of the area.

Northiam Parish Action Plan proposes an investigation in to the possibility of purchasing the Crown & Thistle Public House and its regeneration as a parish community centre. The Parish Plan also wishes to examine the potential for:

- adult education classes in the parish,
- extending library services
- live events, especially music
- more facilities for children
- local classes on cooking and nutrition
- a range of fitness activities

Northiam Parish Council runs a play area at Northiam Playing Fields Play Area. Rother District Council's 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in Northiam to be delivered as a high priority. An improved play area is actually in the process of being built, financed by a £50,000 grant secured by Rother District Council from the Big Lottery Fund. It is expected to be complete by summer 2008. The project was identified in Rother District Council's Play Strategy and initiated by Northiam Community Play Association who worked closely with the Parish Council and the community to ensure the project is a success.

Northiam Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. They suggested that there are low levels of use for Harlots Wood, Goddens Gill Green, Northiam Village Green, and The Meadow yet all have average to good accessibility and quality standards. Northiam Bowling green is highly used, of excellent quality yet has poor accessibility. Accessibility and quality of all indoor facilities is acceptable. The Village Hall is significantly used with excellent accessibility and is of a very high quality.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Undulating countryside surrounds Northiam village and there are a number of areas of ancient woodland. To the north lies the Lower Rother Valley that dominates the eastern end of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is a small Site of Special Scientific Interest between Harlot's Wood and Ghyll Side Road.

A large part of the village is designated as a Conservation Area, from Great Dixter House and Gardens to the West of the village stretching down Dixter Road and Main Street to the south and east. To the South West, the Conservation Area and settlement boundary abut the open arable landscape that is dissected by the Sussex border path, where

there are fine views into and out of the village. Northwest, there are also distant views out of the settlement in the proximity of Great Dixter. To the east, there are open fields and ghyll woodlands that are integral to the rural landscape.

Given the location of the village within the High Weald AONB, allied with the many outstanding views out of and into the settlement, any growth or development needs to be considered sensitively.

Development Potential

Northiam has all the characteristics of a viable and sustainable community and it follows therefore that it is one of the favoured villages considered for further growth, particularly given the evidence of need for housing and employment opportunities.

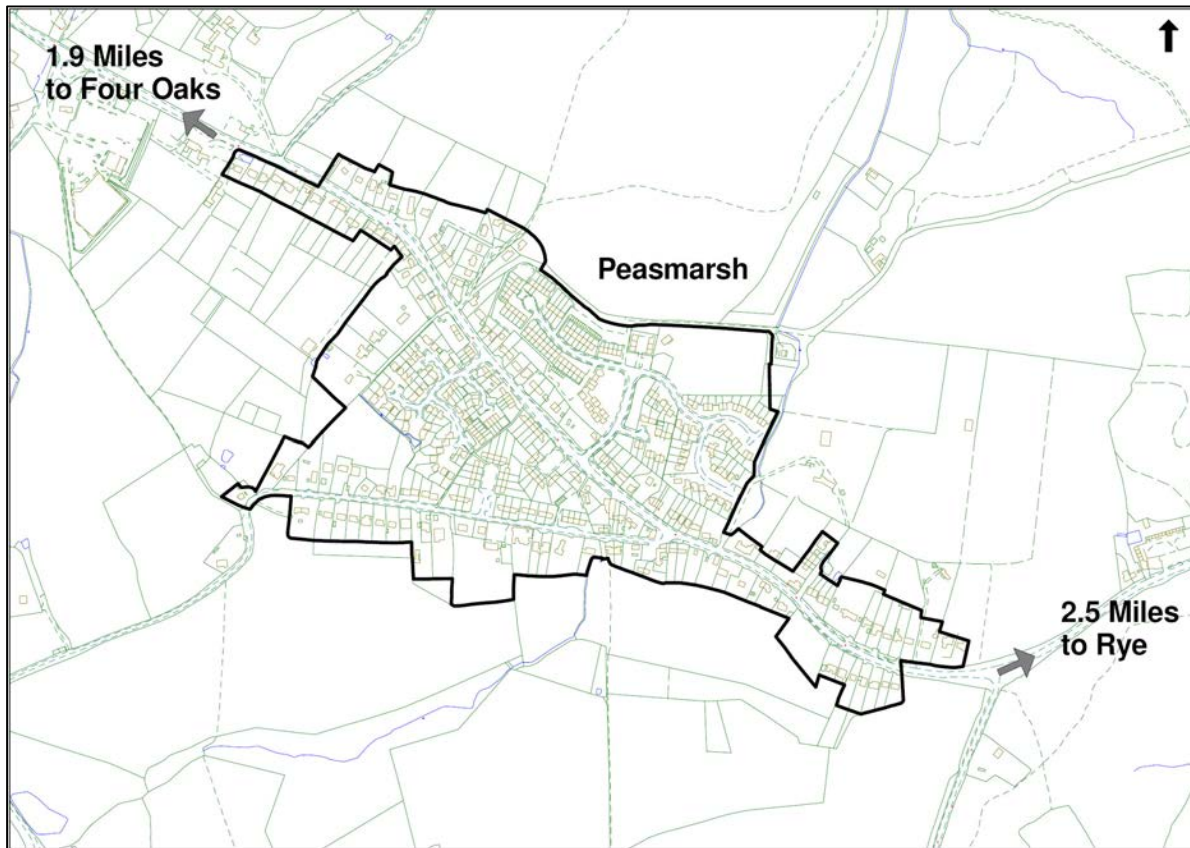
There is a current permission for 51 dwellings in the centre of the village at Goddens Gill, The Paddock, although building work has not started.

There are one or two further opportunities for infill and/or small scale extension to the village. Slightly larger extensions to the development boundary in order to accommodate new dwellings may be feasible to the east of the village off the Main Street. Sites closer to the village centre may include a mixed use element incorporating employment.

It will be necessary to investigate these potential opportunities in more detail in the Site Allocations DPD. However it seems reasonable to suggest at this stage that Northiam would benefit from additional housing growth of 10-50 dwellings in the period to 2026. This would be in addition to the outstanding permission at Goddens Hill. As discussed in the 'Community Need for Other Services' section above, new development may help facilitate improvements to local community facilities.



Peasmarsh



Introduction

In Roman times Peasmarsh was an iron-smelting centre, and developed around an Anglo Saxon Minster where the present church now stands. Today it has a population of just over one thousand, but compared to most villages of its scale, it has a less defined village centre. The Main Street / School Lane triangle does contain the primary school, pre-school and village shop, but other key focal services such as the superstore and post office are located beyond the village boundary to the north-west.

The Norman parish church is situated half a mile away in an isolated meadow down Church Lane to the south. It is said this points to the earlier settlement being wiped out by the Black Death.

The current village developed in a linear form, with dwellings abutting the A268 that runs through the centre and School Lane that branches from it. There are listed buildings interspersed along the frontage developments but they are not consolidated in any one part of the village. South of the village, Peasmarsh Place is the former home of the Liddell family of Alice in Wonderland fame. More recent estate

developments have grown up to the north and south of the main road.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Peasmarsh has a good range of local services and can be described as a **local service village**. It is well provided with shopping facilities particularly with Jempsons supermarket on the west side of the village. The village also has a primary school in School Lane, village hall, two pubs, recreation ground including play area and bowling green.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Peasmarsh CE Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Peasmarsh is situated on the A268 four miles north west of Rye and a regular bus service links the village with Rye and Hastings to meet wider employment shopping and employment needs. Rye is also the nearest train station. A number of other small villages and hamlets are

located within close proximity - Four Oaks, Beckley, Iden and Playden are all within 5 minutes drive.

Need

Housing Needs

Peasmarsh is the only village in the district that has both a high need, coupled with a high demand from the register. This suggests strong need for more housing, although there is also a high proportion of social housing within the stock.

Economic Role and Needs

There are a number of small light industrial units within the village that offer local employment, particularly at the Maltings Business Park which contains 6 sites totalling 290sq.m. These small standard light industrial units are 10 – 15 years old.

On the outskirts of the village, there is Jempsons stores, a Hotel (Flackley Ash) and a Motel (Rumples) which all offer employment opportunities.

As Appendix 5 indicates, low unemployment, low economic base, an average economic activity rate and a reliance on the car for commuting suggests a high level of out-commuting and some limited need for additional local job opportunities.

Community Need for Other Services

Peasmarsh Parish Council runs a play area at The Maltings Recreation Ground. The Peasmarsh Parish Plan suggests there is a need for a new community building to replace the Memorial Hall which is no longer able to satisfy local needs. This may partly address the local aspiration for new leisure facilities, including yoga, a youth club, tennis, cricket and badminton.

The Parish Plan shows tentative support for more affordable housing preferably with the development boundary. However local aspirations regarding employment are mixed. Although there are no strong views in favour of increased business, the majority were in favour of small accommodation for downsizing and micro businesses and a small majority would like to see more small businesses. Residents would also like to see an extension of the pavement to Beckley end of village.

A new skate-boarding facility is being built financed by a grant secured by Rother District Council from the Big Lottery Fund. It is expected to be complete by summer 2008. The

project was identified in Rother District Council's Play Strategy and initiated by Fusion Youth Club in Peasmarsh who worked closely with the Parish Council and the community to ensure the project is a success.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Peasmarsh residents felt that the presence of a primary school combined with safe convenient pedestrian access to facilities and access to a mix of housing were all important in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the countryside, community hall, local shops and cash point were all good qualities. Access to a chemist was a concern. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings and to provide more affordable housing.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in Peasmarsh to be delivered as a medium priority.

Peasmarsh Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Level of usage, quality and accessibility of all outdoor open spaces is perceived as reasonable with particular high use levels at the allotment (all plots occupied, no waiting list) and recreation ground. The one public indoor facility is the Memorial Hall, which is used often but is of poor quality. Quality of sites is seen as average to good with the only issue being dog fouling. Accessibility issues only arise through provision of cycleways, all other aspects are of a good standard and meet resident requirements.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Peasmarsh is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The setting of Peasmarsh 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. 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. More distantly, the open valleys of the River Rother lie to the north and River Tillingham to the south.

Development Potential

Although its ancient origins were centred upon the church to the south, the focus of the village today has partly shifted north and west. The area around the supermarket and post office is

in effect a service centre of the village, despite being outside the current Local Plan development boundary. It would seem sensible therefore that any new development should aim to facilitate access to, and usage of, these local facilities.

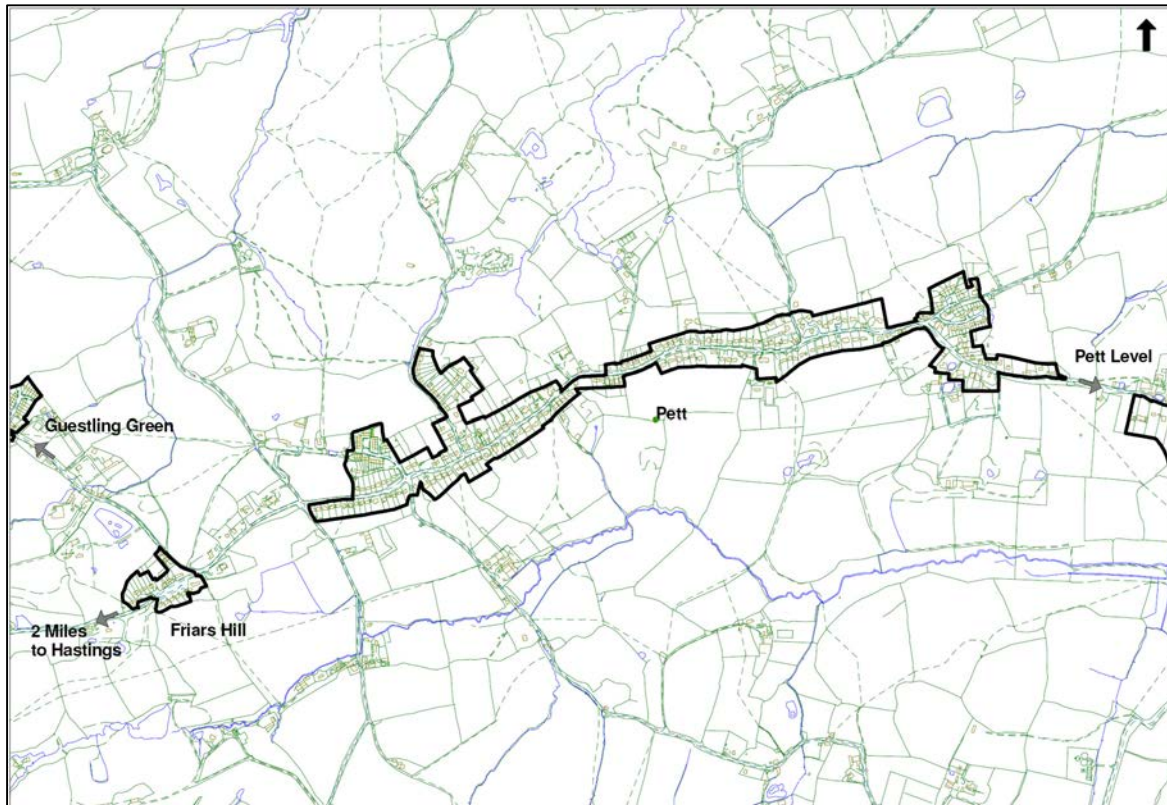
Evidence of local housing need is perhaps stronger in Peasmarsch than any other village in the District. New employment uses are also justified by the evidence.

There are opportunities to address this need on sites to the west of the village that are enclosed from view, either by the contour of the landform or by surrounding woodland.

The Parish Council has expressed the concern that housing growth in the last decades has led to pressure on the foul water disposal which the drains have not been able to cope with. The relevant utilities bodies will need to be satisfied that development is appropriate at Peasmarsch.

Developer's contributions from development may be used to help facilitate a number of local needs, including a new community hall, children's play area and improved pedestrian access to the west of the village. Detailed proposals will need to be investigated via the Site Allocations DPD, but at this stage it seems reasonable to suggest that Peasmarsch may be able to accommodate 10-40 dwellings in the period up to 2026.

Pett and Friar's Hill



Introduction

The village of Pett is situated approximately 4 miles north East of Hastings and is linear in form. For the purposes of this study it has been considered together with the neighbouring village of Friars Hill to the west. Friars Hill in part is contiguous with Pett although a small group of dwellings are detached from the main settlement. The population of these combined settlements is approximately 400. Situated on top of a hill, Pett overlooks the level to the south – a vast expanse of drained marshland that now consists of watercourses and meadows.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Pett has a development boundary and a reasonable range of services for its population, including a village hall, pub, play area, sports pitch and church. There is no real focal centre point within Pett and services are dotted across the extent of the village. Services that are notably lacking include convenience shopping and a primary school.

Friar's Hill also has a Local Plan development boundary, but has a very limited range of local services.

Accessibility

Pett is situated on a C-class road about a mile from the A259 trunk road. There is a peak hour local bus that runs between Pett and Hastings (bus number 346)

Pett is within a 15 minute drive-time to Hastings and within a 5 minute drive time of a whole host of smaller or equivalent villages, including Icklesham, Three Oaks, Friar's Hill, Guestling Green, Bachelor's Bump, Pett Level, Fairlight and Fairlight Cove.

Need

Housing Needs

The village crosses the parish boundary of Pett and Fairlight.

Pett Parish, which includes Pett Level, exhibits a high need, a fair demand from the register but a lowish percentage of social housing in the existing stock.

Fairlight Parish, which includes Friar's Hill (in addition to Fairlight/Fairlight Cove), exhibits a level of housing need typical of rural Rother. It also has a typical level of social housing within the existing stock, but a relatively low level of demand from the housing register.

Economic Role and Needs

As Appendix 5 indicates, Pett has low unemployment and a very high economic base. This suggests the parish already has sufficient local employment opportunities.

Community Need for Other Services

Pett Parish Council runs a play area at Pett Recreation Ground.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, residents felt that the presence of a doctors surgery combined with access to a mix of housing and good parking were all important in making a village a good place to live. In their own locality they felt that access to the community hall was a good quality, but were concerned about a lack of local jobs and businesses. Design of new development was seen as important to residents.

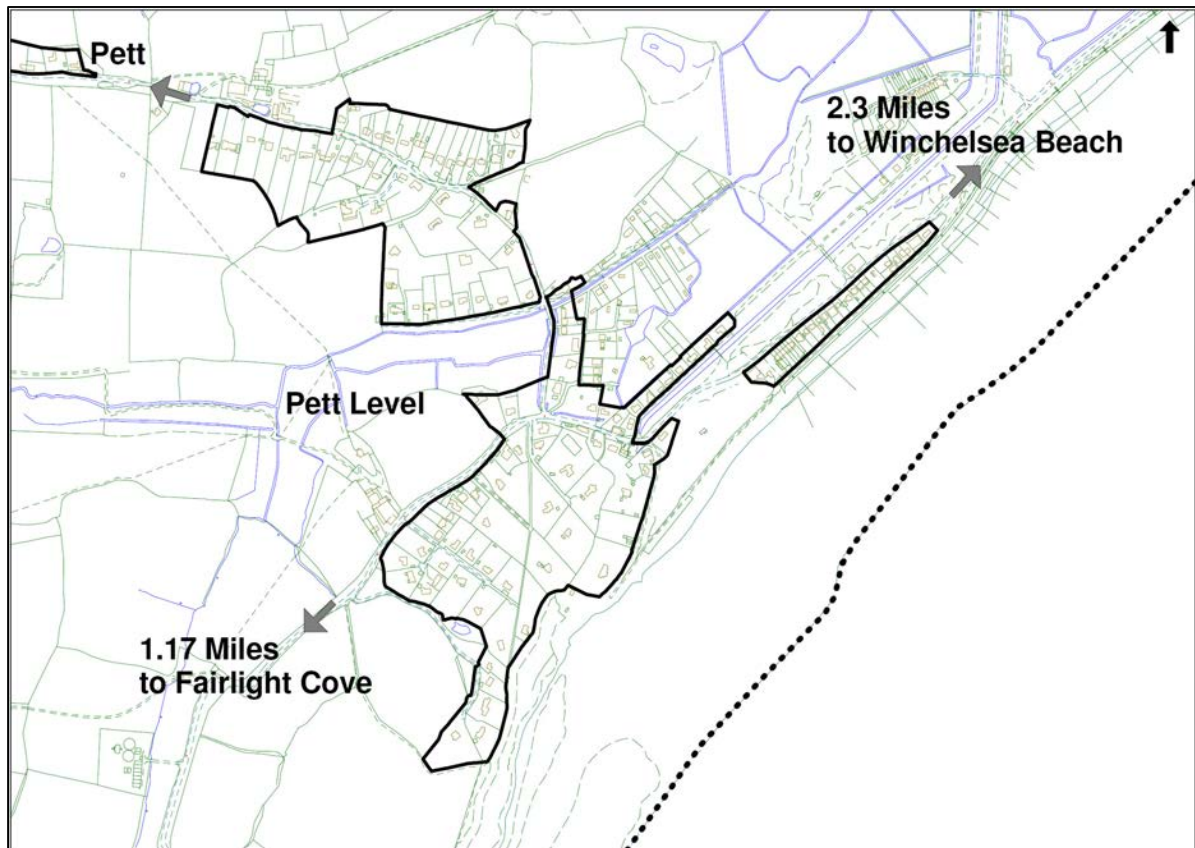
Environmental and Landscape Factors

Pett and Friar's Hill are situated on high ground and therefore at various vantage points there are spectacular views to the north and south. The area surrounding the settlements is a mixture of agricultural and woodland, much of it ancient. Guestling nature reserve lies to the north-west with the village being enclosed by ancient woodland to the southwest. The settlements and the surrounding countryside are within the High Weald AONB.

Development Potential

Although Pett Parish does seem to show some local housing needs, the service role of the villages is limited. Furthermore, the environmental and landscape constraints are such that there are limited development opportunities. For these reasons, at this stage it is not proposed to pursue any development allocations.

Pett Level (including Cliff End)



Introduction

Pett Level in this context includes Cliff End, although the latter is sometimes considered as a distinct settlement. It is situated on a stretch of marshland which leads to Winchelsea in the East. In summer months the village is popular with tourists. A distinctive local feature is the 30ft wide canal which was built in 1804 at great cost to protect against invasion from Napoleon.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Although it has a relatively small population and a limited range of services, Pett Level does have a development boundary defined in the Local Plan. Services comprise a mobile library service, a church and the popular Smuggles Inn which stands beside the beach.

Accessibility

Pett Level has limited accessibility located as it is on a minor C-class road about 3 miles from the A259 trunk road and about four miles from the nearest station at Three Oaks. The village is served by the 344 bus service that allows peak time travel to Hastings and to Rye.

Need

Housing Needs

Pett Parish, which also includes Pett, exhibits a high need, a fair demand from the register but a lowish percentage of social housing in the existing stock.

Economic Role and Needs

As Appendix 5 indicates, Pett Parish has low unemployment and a very high economic base. This suggests the parish already has sufficient local employment opportunities.

Community Need for Other Services

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in Cliff End to be delivered as a high priority.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Pett Level is within the High Weald AONB and parts of the village are at risk from tidal and fluvial flooding, notably in the east, but also cutting across Chick Hill.

The Strategic flood risk assessment comments that if development is required in response to

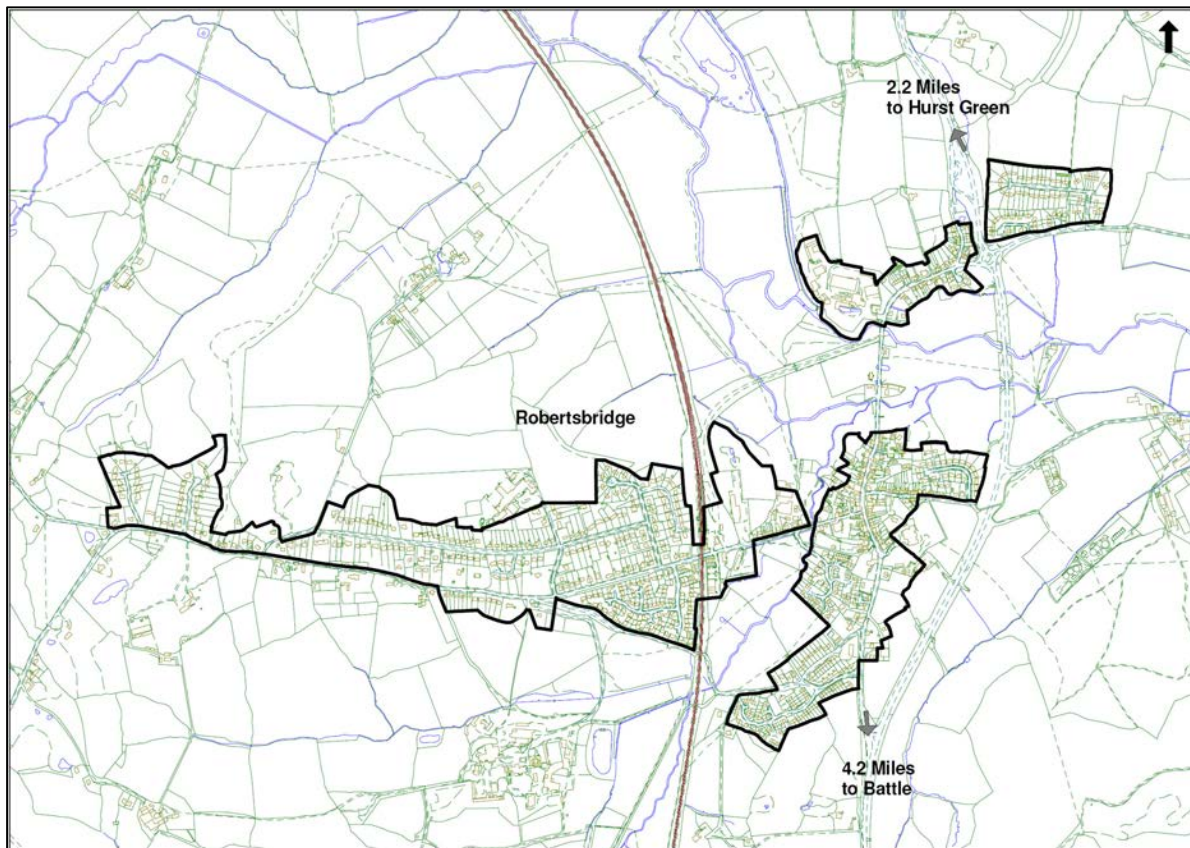
an identified local community need, the least vulnerable flood risk location will where possible, be chosen and the necessary mitigation measures be put in place.

The village is bounded to the East by the Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay SSSI and the Pett Levels Site of Nature Conservation Importance. There are also Archaeological Sensitive Areas (ASA) in Cliff End and along the Royal Military Canal.

Development Potential

Given that the service role of the village is very limited and there are considerable environmental and landscape constraints it is not proposed to pursue any development allocations.

Robertsbridge



Introduction

Robertsbridge is a large historic village lying in the parish of Robertsbridge and Salehurst. The village has a population of some 2,500 making it the most populated village (and fourth most populated settlement overall) in the District. In the context of this study, the 'village' is deemed to include the area of Northbridge Street to the north, but not Salehurst which is further to the east.

Robertsbridge is situated on the south bank of the River Rother, with Northbridge Street and Salehurst being situated on the north bank. The Glottenham Stream flows through Robertsbridge dividing the historic High Street area from the railway and twentieth century development to the west.

The early history of Robertsbridge is tied to the presence of the only Cistercian Abbey in Sussex, founded in 1176. Robertsbridge village was founded in the early 13th century. Much of the fabric of the Abbey has since been removed and used in subsequent buildings in the village and the remains now form part of a private home.

Robertsbridge experienced a period of wealth and growth in the late 14th century and early

15th century. Many houses were added in the 18th and 19th centuries. Early trades in the village were governed by the river. Until the mid 14th century it was navigable by barges. In 1541 a forge and furnace were erected on Abbey lands, while in the 18th century the area was a centre of the iron industry and locally made cannons were used by the Navy. The flour mill has been the town's most enduring employer. Robertsbridge is particularly renowned for its cricket bats with Gray Nicholls based here.

The historic part of Robertsbridge is situated on the eastern side of a spur above the Rother Valley. In the historic core nearly all the buildings are listed and in 1986 it was designated a Conservation Area. Much of the more recent twentieth century growth, including the Secondary School, has taken place on a spur and ridge to the west of the Glottenham Stream and main railway.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Despite its size, Robertsbridge is not a parish and has no church of its own, relying instead on St Marys in nearby Salehurst – a tiny village with a population of less than one hundred.

However, Robertsbridge has a good range of other services and is the only village with a secondary school. Therefore, along with Ticehurst, it is classed as a **rural service centre**.

8

Rother's Primary Care Development Plan has indicated that the Robertsbridge doctor's surgeries will need to re-locate in the next three years.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Salehurst CE Primary School (which is actually in Robertsbridge) is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Robertsbridge is on a main transport corridor, being on the route of both the Hastings-London (Charing Cross) railway and the Hastings-London A21 Trunk Road. In 1988, the Robertsbridge A21 Trunk Road bypass was opened, greatly improving the environment for those living, working or shopping in the High Street and Northbridge Street. There are current proposals by the Highways Agency for an overall upgrading of the A21 between Pembury and Hastings, with specific improvements proposed north of the village.

Robertsbridge station is conveniently central and trains to London and Hastings offer at least an hourly service. Peak time bus services allow commuting to and from Hastings and Battle.

Need

Housing Needs

As Appendix 7 demonstrates, Robertsbridge exhibits a fairly high housing need, although there is an average demand from the housing register. There is a relatively high proportion of social housing in the existing stock (12.3%).

A Housing Needs Survey has been produced for Salehurst and Robertsbridge Parish by Action in Rural Sussex in 2008. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. 36 households fulfilled the two criteria.

Economic Role and Needs

Robertsbridge parish contains an employment area at the Avimax Centre totalling 582 sq.m of currently vacant floorspace. Further information about employment development in the pipeline can be found in the section on 'Development Potential'.

Robertsbridge may benefit as a tourist destination if the proposed extension of the Kent & East Sussex Railway steam from Tenterden via Bodiam is realised.

As Appendix 5 indicates, Robertsbridge has an average unemployment and economic activity rate. It has a very low economic base. Robertsbridge NW has very low levels of deprivation, although other areas of the village are more deprived. Overall these facts suggest a need for new employment uses. This is supported by community responses to the Salehurst and Robertsbridge Local Action Plan 2007-08 which is discussed in the following section.

Community Need for Other Services

There are two Parish Council run play areas, 'Bishops Meadow' and 'The Clappers' Recreation Ground.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for new play areas to be delivered as a medium priority in west Robertsbridge. It also recommends the council consider new long term provision of amenity green space in West Robertsbridge.

However the Parish Council have reached a different conclusion regarding open space needs – their only suggestion for enhanced accessibility being a children's play area at Heathfield Gardens.

The Salehurst and Robertsbridge Local Action Plan 2007-08, identified a number of needs. The concept of "all year round footpath/cycle path/bridleway" had much support, particularly from Salehurst/Robertsbridge Abbey to Bodiam and from Bishops Lane to Mountfield Lane. The plan also suggests that an equipped gym would be popular. Parking was considered to be a need – suggestions included The Mill and other land adjoining the High Street and Station Road. The majority of respondents to the Action Plan wanted to retain existing commercial sites for commercial use and wanted a commercial element to future developments. Most respondents would like to see the Mill site used first and foremost for employment and then for affordable housing.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options

questionnaire, Robertsbridge residents felt that many factors were all equally important in making a village a good place to live, including local shops, chemist, post office, housing choice and opportunity, access to a railway station and primary school. In their own village they felt that access to the primary school, post office and doctors surgery were all good qualities, but were concerned about the lack of local jobs/businesses and cash point facilities. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings, to provide more housing whilst ensuring design in keeping with the surrounding area.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Robertsbridge lies wholly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and patches of ancient woodland fringe the village to the east and west sides. 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.

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 and falls within the Environment Agency's 'Flood Risk Area'. In autumn 2000, some 100 premises were flooded at Robertsbridge and Northbridge Street. Both modern and historic buildings were affected. Construction of new tidal walls and embankments has recently commenced which, when complete, is designed to ensure protection against the 1 in 100 year extreme event. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment makes special reference to Robertsbridge and the impacts of Flood Zones 2 and 3 in constraining development.

In addition, Rother District Council has recently requested that Robertsbridge (and Etchingam) be given the same degree of flood protection as Rye in the Environment Agency's 'Rother and Romney Draft Catchment Flood Management Plan'.

Development Potential

Robertsbridge has a local need for housing as well as relatively extensive local services and facilities combined with good accessibility. Together these factors suggest housing growth would be appropriate, particularly for affordable

housing. There are some key constraints, namely parts being low lying are at risk to flooding and it is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; also parts are prominent in the landscape, with good views both in and out of the settlement, which constrains the potential for growth.

Further development opportunities may exist on land to the south and east of the village off George Hill and John's Cross Road. The area is not within a flood risk area, although care must be taken to ensure that development does not increase risk in the catchment. Most of the land is used for grazing. Development in this general area would require some associated amenity land and an additional children's play area. Development could be contained by strengthening the existing tree planting alongside the Bypass. Because the bypass is in a cutting at this point and with the existing planting on the bank and additional planting within the site, any noise from the A21 is likely to be limited. There are also one or two residential infill opportunities within the village development boundary.

A part of Grove Farm, situated between the historic centre and the A21 Bypass, is a Local Plan reserve site. Vehicular access would be from George Hill. The reserve site abuts the Conservation Area and part lies within an area of archaeological interest and also appears in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) as a Medieval Village. As a consequence, field investigations will be required before development proceeds.

Overall it seems reasonable to suggest that Robertsbridge may be able to accommodate allocations for in the region of 55-100 new dwellings by 2026. At least 46 of these would be achieved from unimplemented Local Plan allocations (including the reserve site). Given the local need for affordable housing it may be appropriate to investigate higher proportions of affordable housing on any smaller allocations.

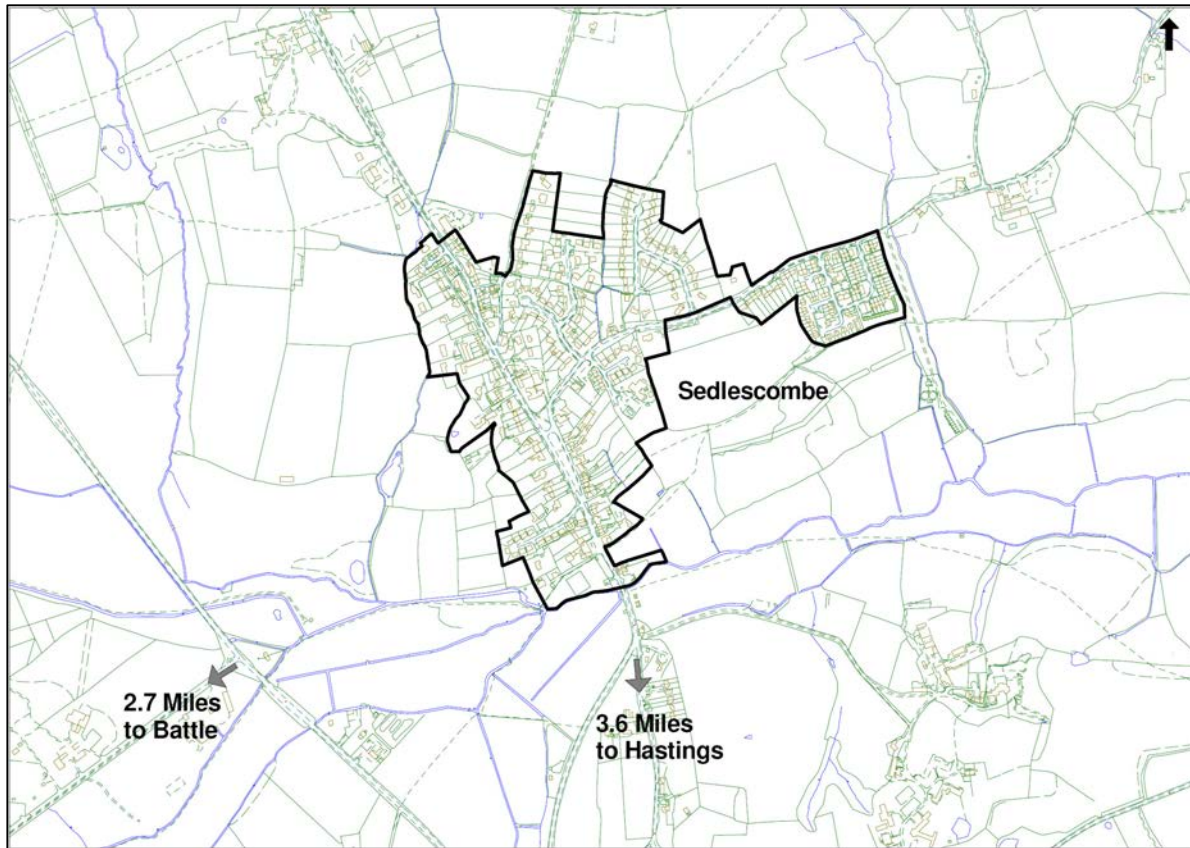
Two further areas of employment are in the pipeline to address needs. Firstly, land at the Mill is subject of a current planning application that includes employment and small-scale residential as an enabler, although an appeal is seeking to increase the proportion of residential vis-à-vis employment. Secondly, land at Culverwells is allocated in the Local Plan as being suitable for mixed use development which includes employment and some residential uses. Given Robertsbridge's Rural Service Centre function, proposals for new sufficient employment should be retained in line with existing policies that seek to do this. In relation to the Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identified need for new

play areas to be delivered in Robertsbridge, Developer's contributions received alongside housing development may help facilitate this need.

Should the doctor's surgery continue with the relocation suggested in the Primary 8 are 8 Development 8Plan, 8 t should preferably be centrally located within the village centre area.



Sedlescombe



Introduction

Sedlescombe village is centrally located within Rother District with a population of just under one thousand. It is on a gently sloping south-facing slope of the Brede Valley. The village, with its many timbered houses of the fifteenth century and its picturesque pump on the large village green has in the past been voted the 'Best Kept Village in East Sussex'.

The original form of the village grew up on a north to south orientation flanking either side of The Street and The Green. Many of the buildings in this part of the village are listed for their special architectural or historic interest and this part of the village is designated as a Conservation Area. The Green provides a central focus to this attractive village. More recent estate developments have taken place north and south of Brede Lane, to the east of the centre of the village for both private and public sector housing.

Sedlescombe parish is a former flourishing iron founding area that came into being for this reason in pre-Roman times. In the nineteenth century a hoard of coins was discovered in the village, believed to be Harold's war chest which

was never recovered after the Battle of Hastings.

The wider parish provides a haven for the children of the Pestalozzi Village, which is located just $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile south of the Sedlescombe development boundary. Founded in 1959 it follows the theories of the Swiss education reformer of the same name who believed that young people of all nationalities should learn together.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

The village is well served with facilities including a new village hall, Doctors surgery, school, shop/post office and recreation ground. It has a good range of services and can be defined as a **local service village**.

Rother's Primary Care Development Plan has indicated that Sedlescombe surgery will need re-development or relocation within the next 5 years.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Sedlescombe CE Primary School is projected

to be full/have a deficit of places by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Sedlescombe is situated approximately 7 miles north of Hastings on the B2244, approximately 1 mile north of its junction with the A21 trunk road. Battle lies approximately 3 miles to the west, while Hastings is readily accessible for a wide range of employment, leisure and shopping needs.

Frequent bus services provide access to the Secondary School at Robertsbridge, and to Hastings and Bexhill. The 349 stagecoach service to Hastings allows peak hour travel and the nearest train station is at Battle.

Need

Housing Needs

Compared with other Rother villages, Sedlescombe exhibits a comparatively low level of housing need. However there is a relatively high proportion of social housing in the stock and a corresponding high demand from the housing register.

Economic Role and Needs

Local businesses in and around Sedlescombe including Marley Lane provide retail and manual jobs. The Parish Council have identified more than 50 Sedlescombe businesses.

As Appendix 5 indicates, Sedlescombe has fairly high unemployment, combined with average local jobs and low public transport usage. This suggests a need for some economic development if there is any housing growth. This is an issue that may warrant further consideration at Site Allocations DPD stages.

Community Need for Other Services

Sedlescombe produced a very comprehensive Parish Plan in 2002 with five key aims:

- To achieve an Informed and Participating Sedlescombe community
- To achieve a Safe and Healthy Sedlescombe Community
- To help provide Amenities and Services in Sedlescombe
- To support Business & Rural Employment in Sedlescombe
- To protect and enhance Sedlescombe's Built and Natural Environment

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Sedlescombe residents felt that local shops, post office, doctor's surgery and

parking were all important in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the primary school, post office and doctor's surgery were all good qualities, but were concerned about the lack of local jobs/businesses. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings whilst ensuring design in keeping with the surrounding area.

In their response to the Parish Council Planning Seminar, Sedlescombe Parish Council does not feel affordable housing is an issue in the village. According to a recent Parish Council survey, the three things of most concern to residents are poor bus service, anti-social behaviour and parking problems, particularly at the school.

There are two Parish Council run play areas, East View Terrace and Sedlescombe Recreation Ground.

Sedlescombe Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. All outdoor open spaces in Sedlescombe have high usage levels except the allotment which is fairly derelict due to lack of publicity. The Village Hall (new in 2001) is used regularly. Accessibility is adequate with just a shortfall of cycleways sighted.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

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 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.

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).

Development Potential

Sedlescombe has a broad range of facilities and has all the qualities of a healthy vibrant community.

However as a village allocated within the High Weald AONB, there are considerable topographical constraints that limit the options for development. The open landscape of the Brede valley, allied to its propensity to flood, is a feature of the containment to the south of the village. To the east, the south facing slopes relate to the surrounding countryside, as do the lower lying fields to the west. The more elevated fields to the north are more exposed and development here would visually intrude into and therefore be detrimental to the character of the countryside. It is for these reasons that the East Sussex Landscape Assessment recommendation for villages in the Brede Valley is 'Strengthen the urban edge by means of tree planting and rigorous control of development on the slopes of the ridge'.



Other than infill within the development boundary, there are one or two areas that may have potential for some additional development to meet local needs. Notably areas tight to the east side of the village which is well related to the centre. Access may be an issue however and it may be beneficial to insist on tree planting alongside development to define an urban edge. Alternatively opportunities could be investigated west of the B2244.

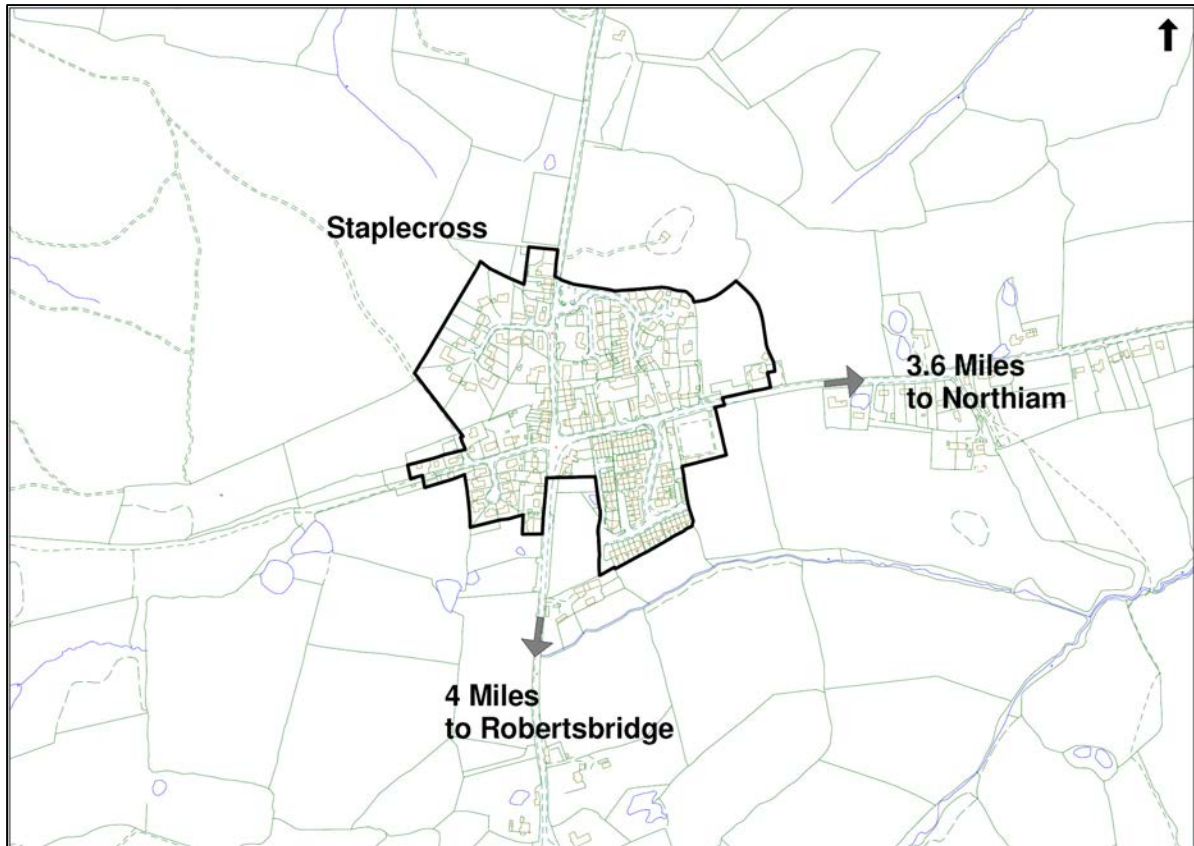
Options will be explored further in the Site Allocations DPD. However at this stage it seems reasonable to suggest that Sedlescombe may be able to accommodate allocations for up to 10 dwellings by 2026. This should if possible also incorporate some mixed use business development to meet the identified local need.

It is also recommended to re-draw the development boundary to the south to respect the Site of Nature Conservation Interest designation, where it would not be appropriate to encourage development.

Should it be necessary to relocate the surgery, the search for a new site should focus on areas within the village centre area in the first instance.

The likelihood of the local primary school being full does not necessarily preclude further development since there may be potential for on-site expansion or for adjustments to catchment areas /travel patterns.

Staplecross



Introduction

Located on a ridge above the Lower Rother Valley, Staplecross is situated between Northiam to the east, Robertsbridge to the west and Sedlescombe to the south. It is the largest settlement in the Parish of Ewhurst and has a population of 360. Staplecross is a reasonably compact village within its Local Plan defined development boundary centred upon a junction of the B2165. Forge Lane which leads out the village to the west is a rough unadopted highway, which is relied upon as an access road for a number of residents. More recent housing development has taken place on the northern edge of the village.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

The Cross Inn is a central feature of the village. It has a reasonable range of other services including a convenience shop/post office and a primary school.

Accessibility

The village lies on a bend of the B2165 and is served by the 349 stagecoach service, the timings of which allow for commuting to Hastings. The nearest train station is four miles away in Robertsbridge.

There are no larger villages or towns within a 15 minute drive time, so residents must rely on local services to a large extent.

Need

Housing Needs

Based on the Housing Needs Assessments, the level of housing need is fairly low compared to other villages. There is very low demand from the housing register, despite the fact that there is an average proportion of social housing within the existing stock. However, representatives of the Parish Council have suggested there is a need for affordable housing for local people in the parish that they would like to see addressed.

Economic Role and Needs

As Appendix 5 indicates, there is reasonably low unemployment but an average economic activity rate. The low economic base and reliance on the private car for commuting suggests a possible need for some local employment uses, if there was to be new housing, or if an opportunity presented itself.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Staplecross Methodist Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Community Need for Other Services

Staplecross has a cricket ground, bowling green and stool-ball pitch. It has one Parish Council run children's play area. No specific local needs for other services have been identified.

Ewhurst Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. They commented that Colliers Green is the only outdoor site with low usage levels. All outdoor open spaces are of a good quality with excellent accessibility. Cycleways are the main accessibility shortfall for both indoor and outdoor facility locations.

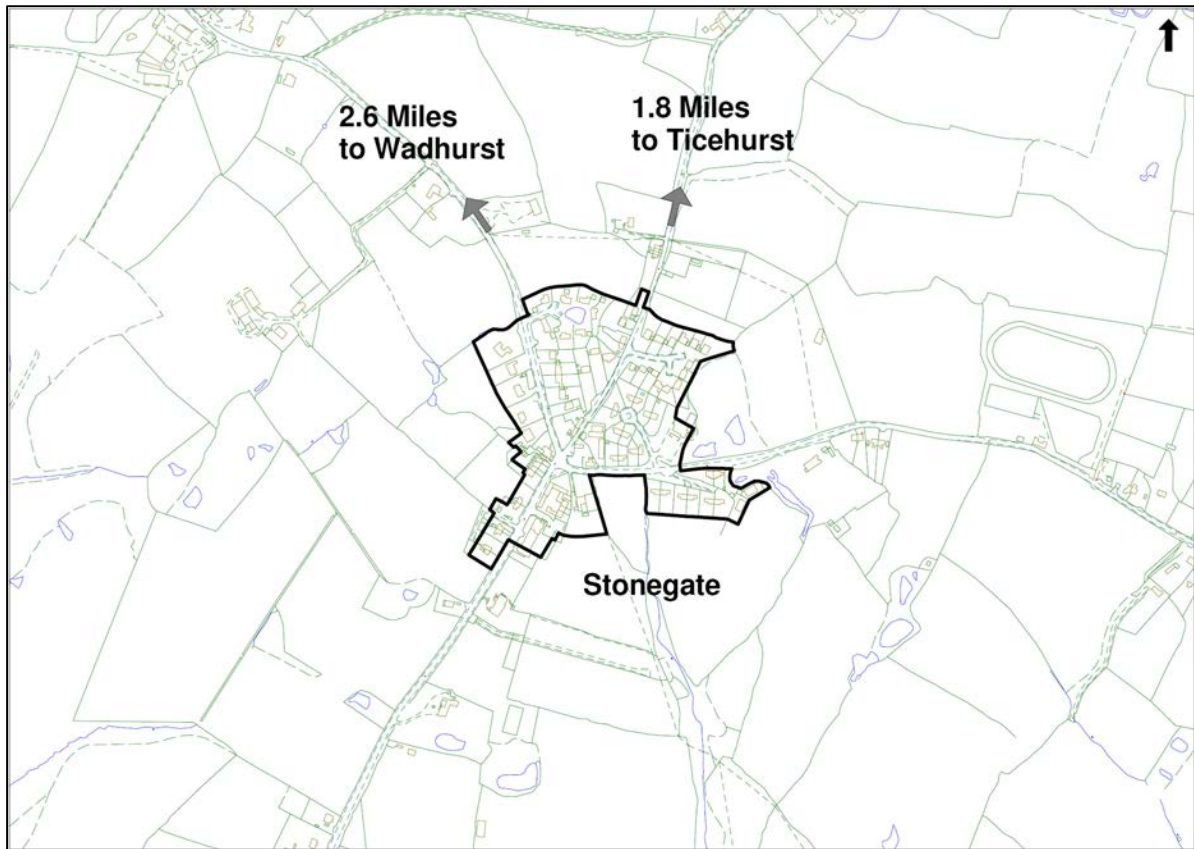
Environmental and Landscape Factors

Situated in the AONB, Staplecross also enjoys large expanses of ancient woodland to the west, and a smaller area to the north-east. There are spectacular views across the valley of the lower Rother from the northern outskirts of the village. Attractive landscape typical of the High Weald AONB lies to the south.

Development Potential

Given the locally expressed need it may be appropriate to investigate a small scale allocation of 0-10 dwellings that is predominantly for affordable housing with an emphasis on the needs of local residents.

Stonegate



Introduction

Located within the Upper Rother Valley, Stonegate is within Ticehurst parish and has a population of approx. 229. It is a compact, remote and unspoiled village on a secondary ridge of the Rother

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Despite a relatively small population, Stonegate has a reasonable range of services and a Local Plan defined development boundary.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Stonegate CE Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Stonegate is located on a minor c-class road in the north-west of the District, some distance off the A265 to the south and B2099 to the north, so road access requires some distance travelled on narrow country lanes.

It does have the advantage of its own railway station, although this is located 1.5 km away to the south, but there is no peak time bus service. The Rural Service Centre of Ticehurst is within 5 minutes drive time and provides many services for the village.

Need

Housing Needs

Ticehurst Parish exhibits high levels of housing need. It has a fairly high proportion of social housing in the existing stock (10.4%) and there is an average level of demand from the housing register. These facts suggest a need for some new housing and as the main village in the parish; Ticehurst should be the main location. Stonegate has a lesser service role than both Ticehurst and Flimwell so is not a particularly sustainable location for development as a result.

A Housing Needs Survey has been produced for Ticehurst Parish by Action in Rural Sussex. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. 43 households fulfilled the two criteria. It is important to remember that

Ticehurst Parish also contains two other villages – Flimwell and Ticehurst.

Economic Role and Needs

Ticehurst parish has above average economic activity rate (67%) and an average unemployment rate of 2.1%. It has an average economic base and a fair degree of reliance on public transport and non-car modes. This suggests the need for some new employment if new housing were to be considered appropriate.

Community Need for Other Services

There is a Parish Council run play area at Forge Field. Other than the identified need for affordable housing, no further needs for other community facilities or services have been identified.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

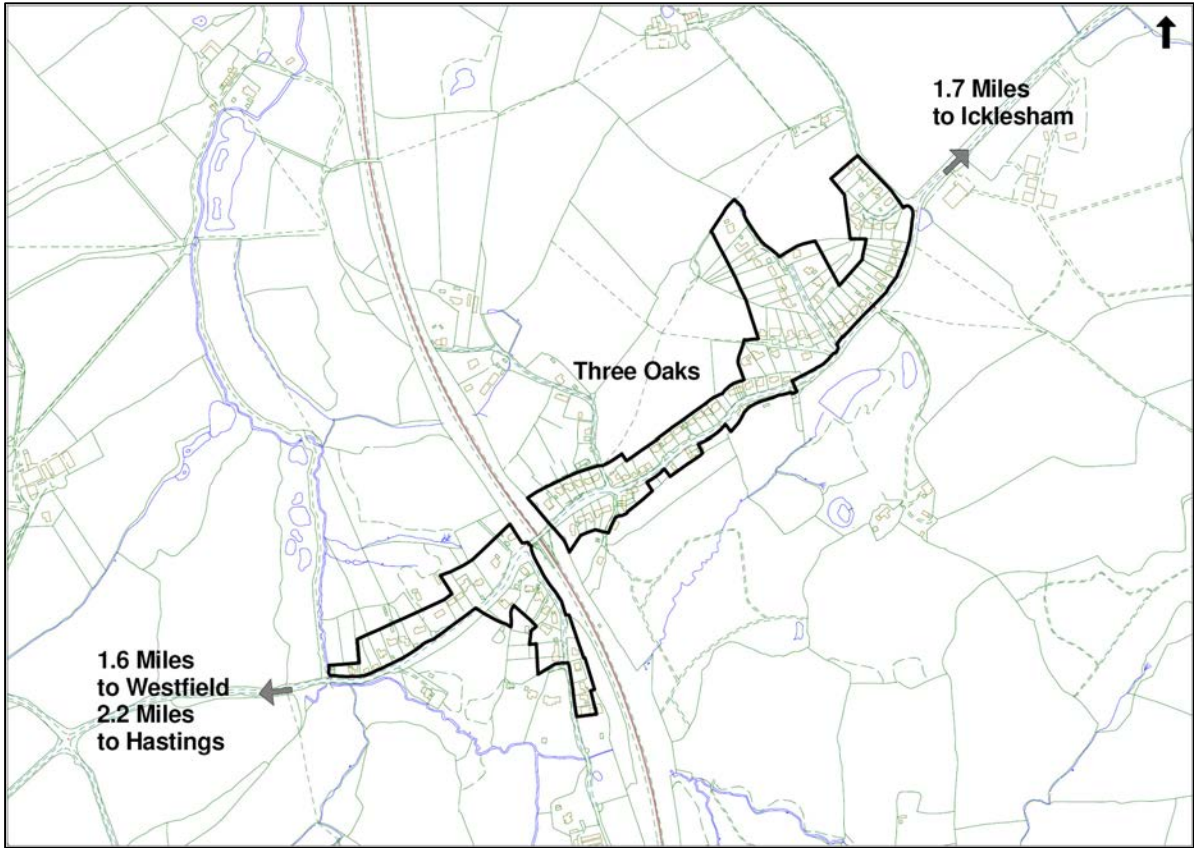
The landscape of the upper Rother valley is characterised by bold ridges and spurs with ghylls. The landscape features are dramatized by woodland cover. The area is within the High Weald AONB. The steep sided valley of the River Limden to the north is also a Groundwater Source Protection Zone. To the north of the village, the whole of the 'The Acorns' is covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

Development Potential

Given the identified need for affordable housing it is appropriate to seek locations that may be suitable to accommodate development. Areas north of the village offer the best potential as this area is relatively enclosed and would not overly impact on the surrounding landscape. It is proposed to seek to allocate up to 15 dwellings in Stonegate in the period up to 2026. Specific site opportunities will require further investigation in the Site Allocations DPD.



Three Oaks



Introduction

Three Oaks is a small settlement of just under 300 people and is dissected by the Hastings to Rye railway. It is principally linear in form with some of the buildings being of the same age as the railway. It is located approximately 2 miles from Hastings.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Three Oaks has a Local Plan development boundary but a very limited range of local services, including a pub, a church and a play area.

Accessibility

Three Oaks is located approximately 1.5 km off the A259 Trunk road, and the local service village of Westfield can be accessed through narrow lanes within 5 minutes.

There is no peak time bus service and a partial service from the train station which is situated within the built up part of the village.

Need

Housing Needs

As seen in Appendix 7, the parish exhibits high need but low demand from register. There is a relatively low proportion of social housing in the existing stock. These figures suggest the village may suit an exception site.

Economic Role and Needs

As Appendix 5 indicates, the Parish exhibits low unemployment, an average economic activity rate, a high economic base and a reliance on car for commuting. These figures suggest no need for employment.

Community Need for Other Services

No specific community needs for other services have been identified

Environmental and Landscape Factors

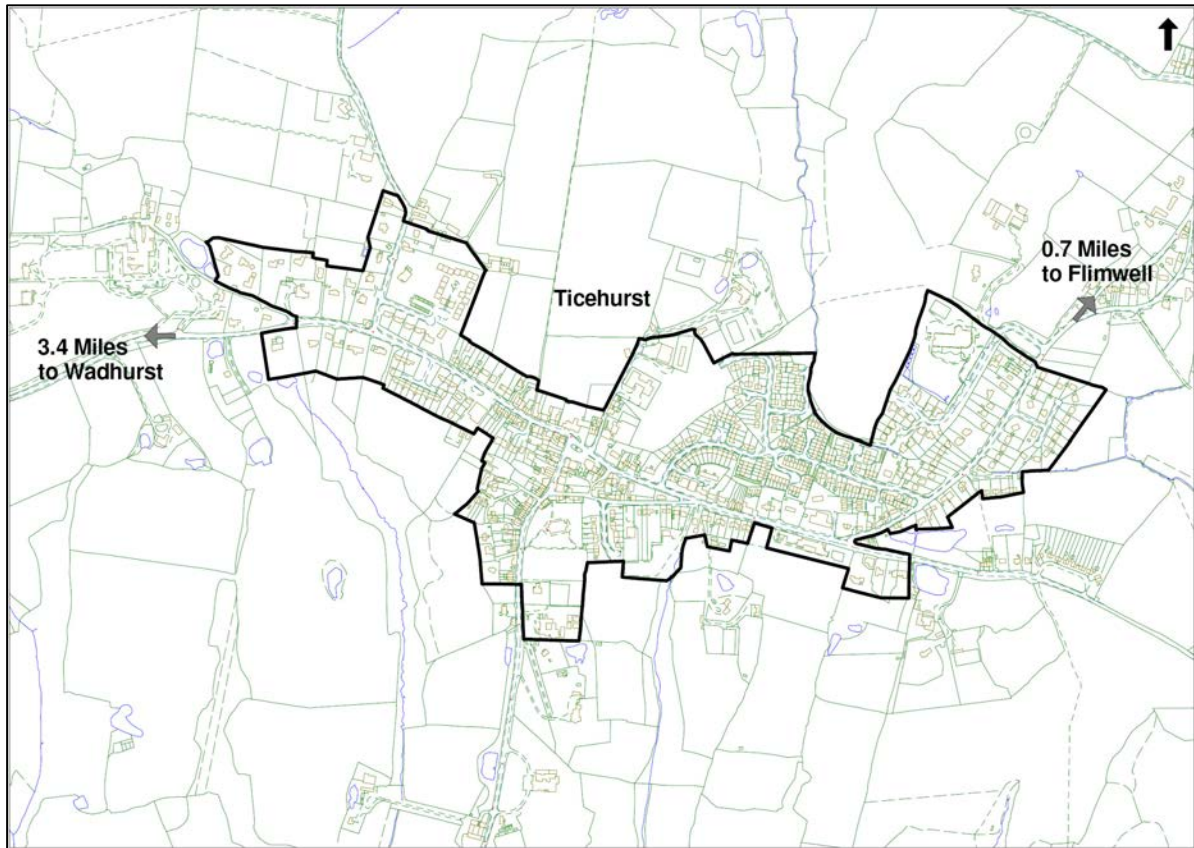
The village and the surrounding landscape are within the High Weald AONB. Flood Zone 3 lies to the west of the village and a Site of Nature Conservation Importance is located to the south. Ancient Woodland is also

designated to woodland that abuts the settlement. The surrounding landscape is quite 'closed' with narrow lanes, woods and hedges.

Development Potential

The lack of services does not suggest that Three Oaks is a particularly sustainable location for a housing allocation, although the local housing need may suit an exception site.

Ticehurst



Introduction

Ticehurst is a ridge top settlement in the far north of the District situated approximately 110 metres above sea level. Bewl Water lies 1 mile to the north.

With an estimated population of 1676, Ticehurst is the second most populated village in the district after Robertsbridge.

There was no significant human occupation in this area until the eleventh century, covered as it was by the great forest of Andredesweald. From 1600 expansion was rapid, thanks largely to hops and the Sussex iron industry. Ticehurst made history on May 17 1940 when the first bombs to fall on Britain in World War II hit Pickforde and Landscape Farm.

The original form of the village built up around the medieval church of St Mary's in Church Street and its junction with the high street. This area known as the square, is where most of the listed buildings are situated, some 76 in number, and is designated a Conservation Area. The village over the years has grown to the east and west of the historic core, in a linear form along the B2099 and B2087 and more recently estate developments have grown up to

the east of the church and on the north side of the village, away from the exposed south facing slopes of the ridge.

Ticehurst Hospital, a notable landmark to the west of the main village was established by Samuel Newton over 200 years ago and is now one of the country's foremost psychological institutions.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Ticehurst is well served with a variety of shops including a post office, chemist, public houses and café. There is a church, recreation ground and village hall that are readily accessible within the confines of the village. Because of its extensive range of services, the village is classed as a **rural service centre**.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Ticehurst CE Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Ticehurst is situated on the A21 trunk road and the B2099 and B2087 cross country roads. It is one mile south west of Flimwell and two and a half miles east of Wadhurst.

Wadhurst, which is in neighbouring Wealden district has a good range of services, including a secondary school and is just 9 minutes drive away to the west. Hawkhurst in Kent, which is a 10 minute drive in the opposite direction also has a reasonable range of services. Flimwell and Stonegate are both smaller Rother villages within a 5 minute drive-time which rely on Ticehurst for a number of day to day services.

A regular bus service provides access to the secondary school at Wadhurst and links the village with Tunbridge Wells and Hastings which provide shopping, employment and leisure opportunities. The nearest train station is about 3.5 miles away in Stonegate, which offers a partial service.

Need

Housing Needs

Ticehurst Parish exhibits high levels of housing need. It has a fairly high proportion of social housing in the existing stock (10.4%) and there is an average level of demand from the housing register. These facts suggest a need for some new housing and as the main village in the parish, Ticehurst should be the main location.

A Housing Needs Survey has been produced for Ticehurst Parish by Action in Rural Sussex. In order to prove their eligibility for a local needs housing scheme, respondents need to demonstrate that they have a local connection and that they are unable to meet their needs on the open market. 43 households fulfilled the two criteria across the parish. It is important to remember that Ticehurst Parish also contains two other villages – Flimwell and Stonegate.

Economic Role and Needs

Ticehurst parish contains the employment area 'Gibbs Reed Farm' which has 18 sites totalling 2,290 sq.m of mostly B1 use floorspace. A smaller employment area is at Parsonage Farm comprising 516 sq.m of B1 uses.

There are further opportunities for employment in the service industries within the village, and particularly at Ticehurst Hospital.

Ticehurst parish has above average economic activity rate (67%) and an average unemployment rate of 2.1%. It has an average

economic base and a fair degree of reliance on public transport and non-car modes. This suggests the need for some new employment if new housing were to be considered appropriate.

Community Need for Other Services

There is a Parish Council run play area at Ticehurst Institute Recreation Ground.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Ticehurst residents felt that local shops, chemist, post office and doctor's surgery were all important in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to the countryside, local shops, post office, and chemist were all good qualities, but were concerned about the lack of parking. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings, provide more housing whilst ensuring design in keeping with the surrounding area.

In their follow-up response to the Parish Council Planning Seminar, Ticehurst Parish Council commented that the parish is served by Wadhurst, Hawkhurst and Heathfield for many services, whilst within the parish Flimwell and Stonegate rely on Ticehurst for shopping. The Ticehurst local economy is viewed as thriving. The Parish Council is currently working with Rother District Council to identify further sites on the edge of the village for future affordable housing, both rented and shared ownership. Concern was expressed about parking in the village, the need to bring the Bell Hotel/Inn back into business and the need to secure Ticehurst Sports Field use as a sports field.

Ticehurst Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Feedback suggests that all open space sites, Ticehurst Allotments, and Ticehurst Recreation Ground have high usage, are of very good quality and easily accessible. Indoor facilities are of average to poor quality with Ticehurst Scout Hut also experiencing low usage. The supply of parks and gardens, amenity greenspaces, play areas, and allotments (all plots occupied with a waiting list) is satisfactory. Demand exists for more outdoor sports facilities in the Parish.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The position of the village in this elevated location affords long distance views out of the village over woods and pasture designated within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particularly to the south, where steep valley sides descend to the River Linden.

Corridors of ancient woodland fringe the south flowing tributary streams of the Linden. There are distant views out of the village from various vantage points on the south side and the countryside that abuts the existing development boundary is integral in character to the rural landscape.

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.

The central area around the Square and Church Street is designated as a Conservation Area, but is detrimentally affected by parking.

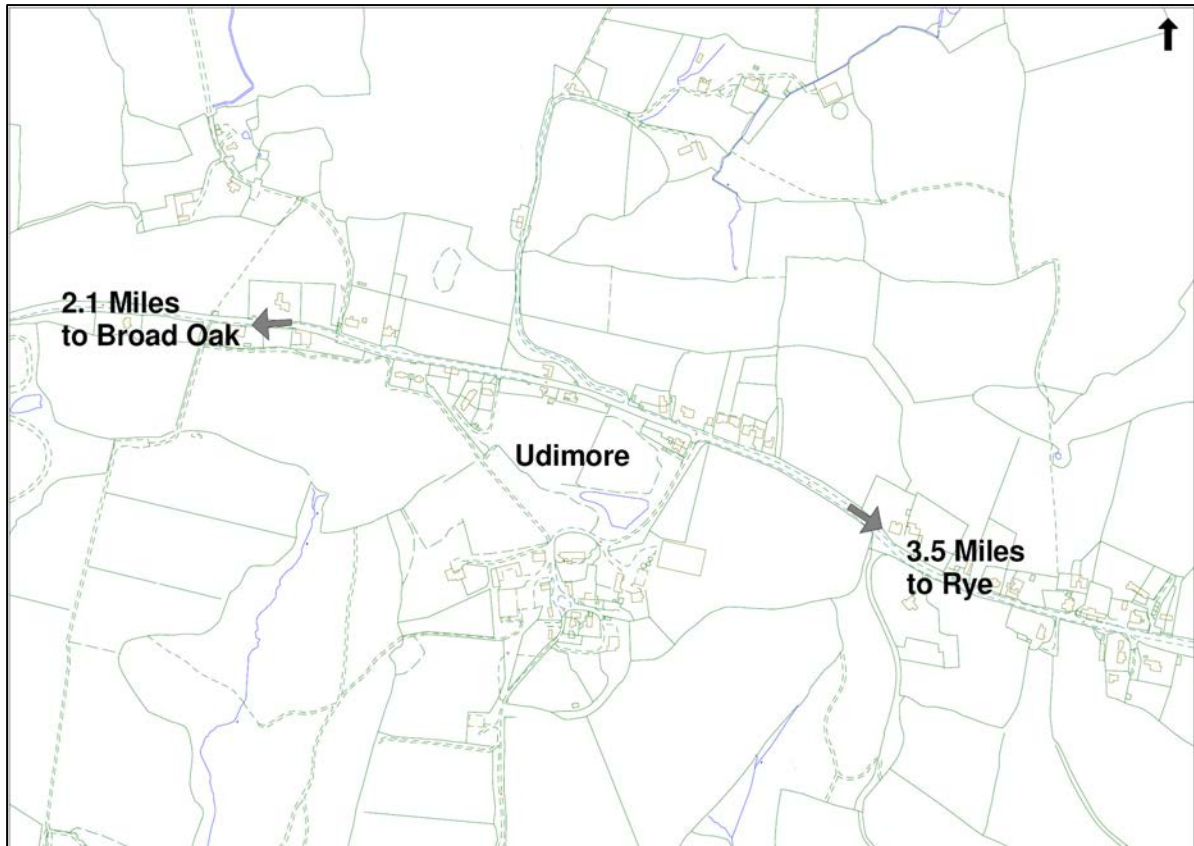
Development Potential

The community of Ticehurst is served by a good range of local services and facilities and, combined with the demonstrable need for housing and employment uses, it is one of the villages that has been given further consideration for development. However, like all the ridge settlements in this part of the Weald, there are considerable topographical constraints to extending the built form into the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There are various opportunities, predominantly to the north of the village that may be suitable for development pending further investigation in the Site Allocations DPD. Generally landscape constraints are less pronounced to the north, although there are also one or two sites that would have little adverse impact to the south of the High Street which could accommodate residential development. At this stage, it seems reasonable to suggest that the village could accommodate allocations for between 15 and 60 additional dwellings in the period up to 2026.



Udimore



Introduction

Udimore is formed of sporadic development which has no central core and is located on the road that links Broad Oak with Rye. It has a population of fewer than 200 people. It is an attractive setting with many charming properties and spectacular country views across the Brede Level to the coast and across the Tillingham Valley to the north.

It is said to have gained its name when the church was being built. The legend says that each night stones were mysteriously moved and the voice of Uda the Saxon whispered in the wind "O'er the mere, o'er the mere..." and when the hint was taken the interruptions ceased.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Udimore does not have a Local Plan defined development boundary. It has some services, including a pub, play area, sports pitch and a church and a village hall is under construction.

Accessibility

The local service village of Broad Oak is located within a 5 minute drive along the B2089 westwards, and Rye is a little further in time travelled, to the east.

There are two peak time buses that travel through the village also to these locations and beyond.

Need

Housing Needs

The village exhibits high need, but very low demand from register and a low proportion of social housing within the existing stock. The village may therefore be suited to an exception site.

Economic Role and Needs

Udimore parish contains a vacant employment area on Udimore Road of 129sq.m on 2 sites.

As Appendix 5 indicates, the parish contains high unemployment, reasonable economic activity rate, a very low economic base and a very high reliance on the private car. The

figures from Appendix 5 suggest a need for new employment, although the vacancies at the Udimore Road site seem to suggest otherwise. Either way, new employment provision at neighbouring Rye may serve to meet the need.

Community Need for Other Services

Udimore Parish Council runs a play area at Lower Cross Cottages Play Area. No further needs for community facilities have been identified.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

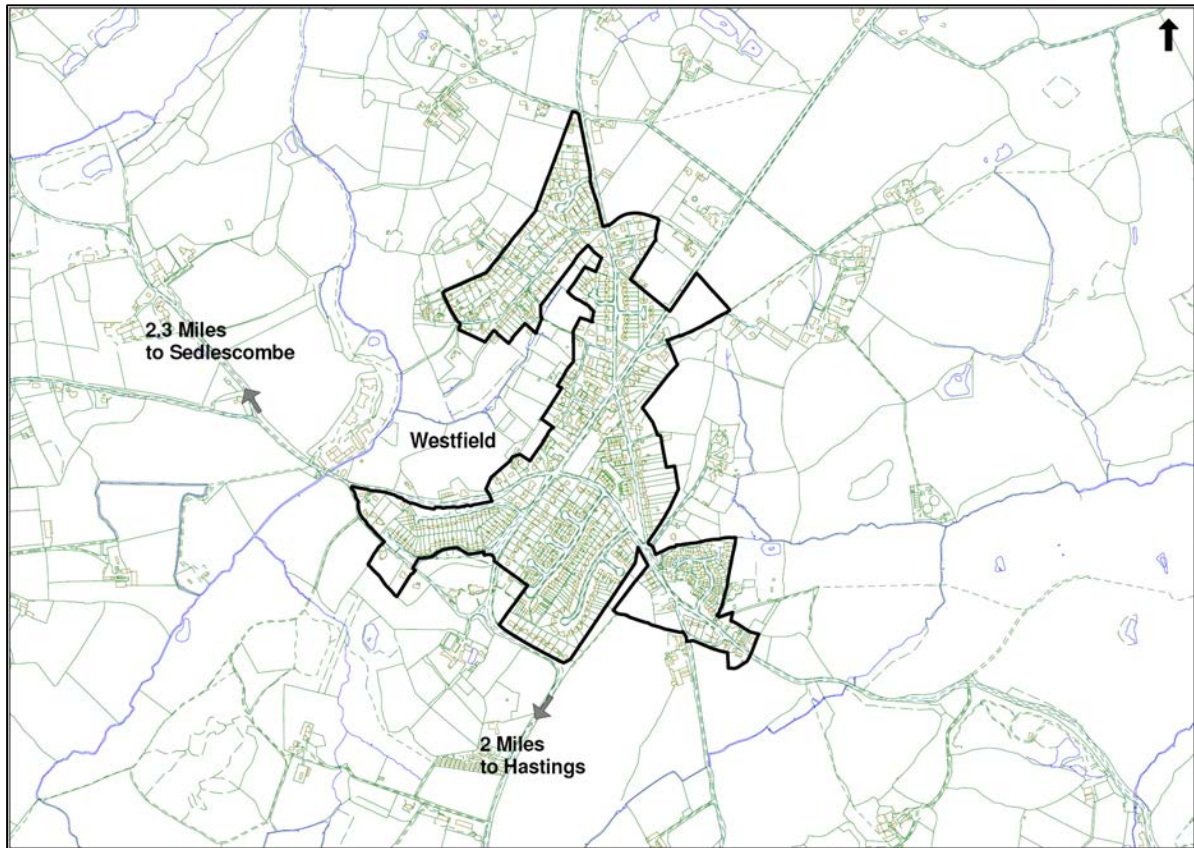
The dispersed settlement is historic and there are many listed buildings as well as an archaeologically sensitive area south of the cricket ground. Much of the surrounding woodland is designated as Ancient Woodland.

The road which dissects the village is on a ridge overlooking the Brede and Tillingham river valleys and consequently there are outstanding views from many vantage points.

Development Potential

Udimore does not appear to be a particularly sustainable location for new development, since it has limited services and accessibility. Therefore, it is not proposed to pursue an allocation, although the village may be better suited to an exception site.

Westfield



Introduction

The former iron-smelting village of Westfield straddles the A28 some 3 miles north of Hastings. Dating from Saxon times, the village grew up around the convergence of several small settlements and consequently there is no obvious centre, and a mixed range of dwelling types, ages and size.

Settlement began in Saxon times and there are several historic buildings in the village, including the former forge, Old School House and the fine Norman church of St John the Baptist. Generally though, Westfield has a more modern feel to it than many of the villages in Rother. Westfield has developed to some extent as a satellite village of Hastings with a relatively high level of post-war development. Today it has a population of just fewer than 1,500 and is one of the larger villages in the District. Westfield's major modern attraction is the local Vineyard, which produced its first vintage in 1976.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

The village has a reasonable range of local facilities and services, including a shop

providing staple goods, doctor's surgery, primary school, church, community hall and recreational facilities. It is classed as **local service village**.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Westfield Primary School is projected to be full/have a deficit of places by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

Westfield is highly accessible to Hastings via the A28. There is a roughly hourly bus service to Hastings and a more infrequent service to Rye. Peak time bus services include the 340 and 343.

Need

Housing Needs

The village exhibits relatively low levels of housing need, although there is a fair demand from the housing register. There is a relatively high proportion of social housing in the existing stock (12%).

Economic Role and Needs

There is some local employment such as the Wheel Farm Business Park where small companies have created 120 jobs. The park comprises 15 units totalling 3,782sq.m of B1 floorspace. It partly consists of converted agricultural buildings; plus 3 modern workshop buildings. Current occupancy is almost 100%.

Carr-Taylor Vineyards is another success story, competing with the French to produce champagne-style wine. It is a popular tourist attraction, with vineyard walks, tours and wine tasting.

A further 0.3ha of land adjoining Wheel Farm is allocated for business purposes in the Local plan.

As Appendix 5 indicates, the parish has above average unemployment, reasonable numbers economic active, low economic base and heavy reliance on the car for commuting purposes. This lends credence to the assumption that Westfield functions to some extent as a commuter satellite of Hastings.

Community Need for Other Services

The Westfield Parish Survey & Action plan 2006 identified a number of local needs, including

- Affordable Housing for Westfield families, in the 2007 update, Westfield Parish Council reported anxieties about new housing, and that the Action Group aims to ensure a percentage of new houses will be available for local people.
- Parking, more pedestrian pathways,
- Cycle routes (1 Beggars Corner to the Plough - through Fish Ponds Lane to the cricket ground down A28, Mill Lane to Cottage Lane and onto to Sedlescombe 2 to Marsh cycle routes via Doleham Halt). In 2007 update, Westfield Parish Council reported that ESCC had been supportive of these proposals.
- A youth club

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Westfield residents felt that a primary school and doctor's surgery were important in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to parking, primary school, doctor's surgery and a village hall were all good qualities, but were concerned about the lack of access to a cash point or cycling facilities. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings, whilst ensuring design in keeping with the surrounding area.

Westfield Parish Council runs three play areas at Churchfields Play Area, the Parish Field Play Area and Church Lane Play Area. Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' recommends that a new allotment site be sought in Westfield as a matter of high priority. It also recommends that the Council focus upon the Westfield area for a new facility for older children/teenagers.

Westfield Parish Council were also asked their views as part of the process of producing Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Open space facilities are perceived to have an adequate to high usage and accessibility with just the Parish Field perceived as being of poor quality. The Community and Church halls both have significant usage with good accessibility and are of a high standard. The Scout Hut is used fairly often but with average accessibility and is of a poor quality; plans are being made for a new hall.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

Westfield is wholly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is surrounded by undulating farmland, woods and streams with a network of public footpaths, including the 1066 Country Walk. There are fine views out of the village from many of these paths, and the position of the village on a north-south elevated plateau is evident when approaching the village from the west, along Parsonage Lane. In some parts of the village, the countryside injects right into the heart of the settlement. There are topographical landscape constraints on outward expansion. In particular, there are distant views from the elevated northern parts of the village across the High Weald AONB. The southern edge of the village is well defined and the land beyond existing limits is integral to the wider countryside setting.

The floodplain of the River Brede and its tributaries lie to the north-west, although the village itself is free from the threat of flooding. Two ancient woodlands are in close proximity to the western edges of the village, Horseman's Wood and the larger Whiteland Wood. Between the two and off Wheel Lane is an area of species rich unimproved grassland which includes ponds. It is known as Wheel Cottage Meadow and designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

Development Potential

There are two as yet undeveloped Local Plan allocations in Westfield. In addition to the land at Westfield Down, there is Land north of Moor Farm to the south of the village. Together these

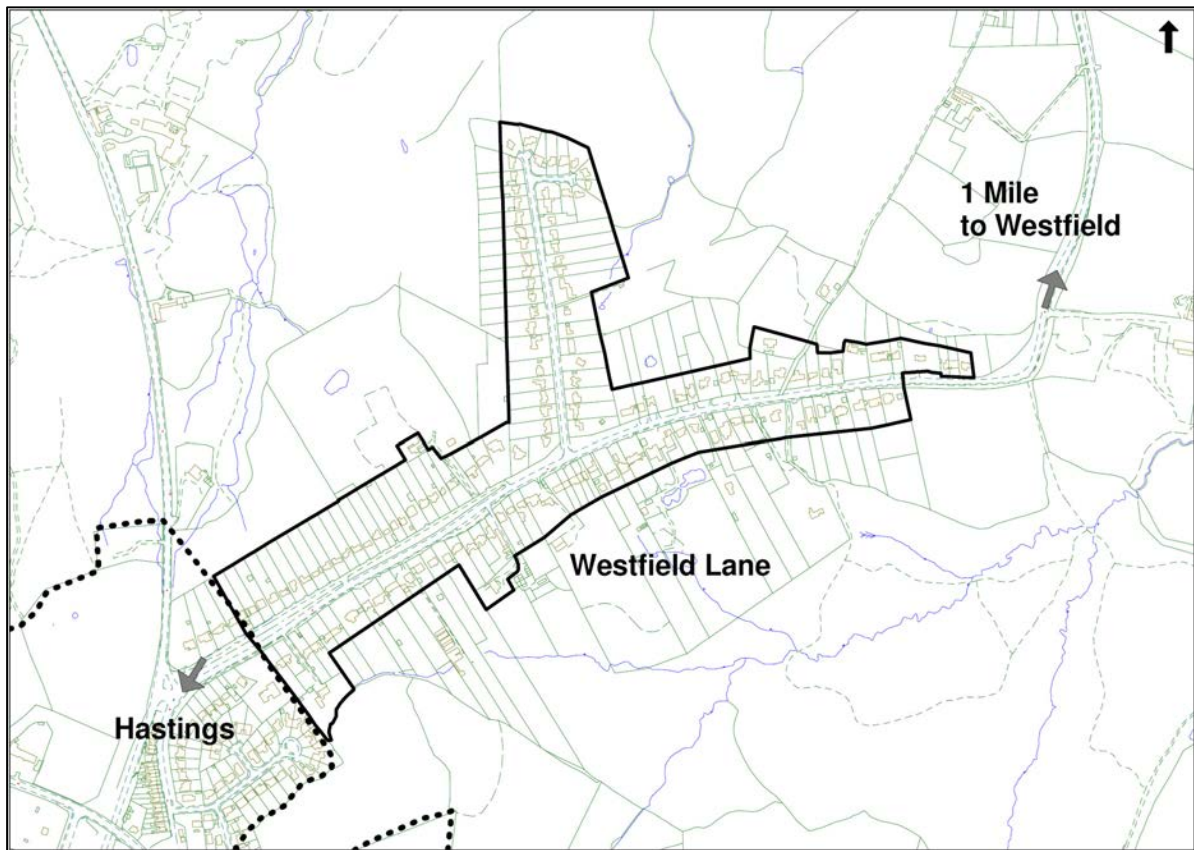
two parcels of land will accommodate at least 40 dwellings.

The Westfield Down allocation (Local Plan Policy VL11) is a major initiative in the parish which may help address the need for facilities for older children and teenagers. It combines new housing with new recreation facilities, including a new pitch and pavilion for the football club, new pavilion for the cricket club, a new base for scouts and cubs and an area for developing a children's playground. Facilities for older children and teenagers could include a cycle track, basket ball net and half sized football pitch and new play equipment for all ages.

Westfield may require further housing to meet identified local needs in the period up to 2026. The need could be met on any one of a number of sites on the eastern edge of the village without significant landscape impact. Including existing allocations for at least 40 dwellings it seems reasonable to suggest that Westfield may accommodate between 55 and 70 new dwellings in the period up to 2026. It may also be feasible to meet the need for an allotment on the eastern fringes of the village.

The likelihood of the local primary school being full does not necessarily preclude further development since there may be potential for on-site expansion or for adjustments to catchment areas /travel patterns.

Westfield Lane



Introduction

Westfield lane is located on the northern fringe of Hastings, contiguous with it and principally constitutes ribbon development along the A28, although additional development is located of a spur that is a cul- de- sac. It is identified with a development boundary as it is outside of the jurisdiction of Hastings Borough, but it is not a 'stand alone' settlement.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Despite a population of over 300, there are no local services in Westfield Lane. This may partly be explained by its proximity to Hastings and location on the A21.

Accessibility

Westfield Lane is located on the junction of the A21 and A28. It is accessible to services in Westfield village as well as Hastings Town

The East Sussex Landscape Assessment recommended traffic management and calming measures on the lanes near Hastings.

Need

Housing Needs

The village exhibits relatively low levels of housing need, although there is a fair demand from the housing register. There is a relatively high proportion of social housing in the existing stock (12%).

Economic Role and Needs

As Appendix 5 indicates, the parish has above average unemployment, reasonable numbers economic active, low economic base and heavy reliance on the car for commuting purposes. Overall these facts suggest a need for employment.

Community Need for Other Services

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' recommends that the Council focus upon the Westfield area for a new facility for older children/teenagers.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The AONB boundary is in the main does not include Westfield lane although there are two

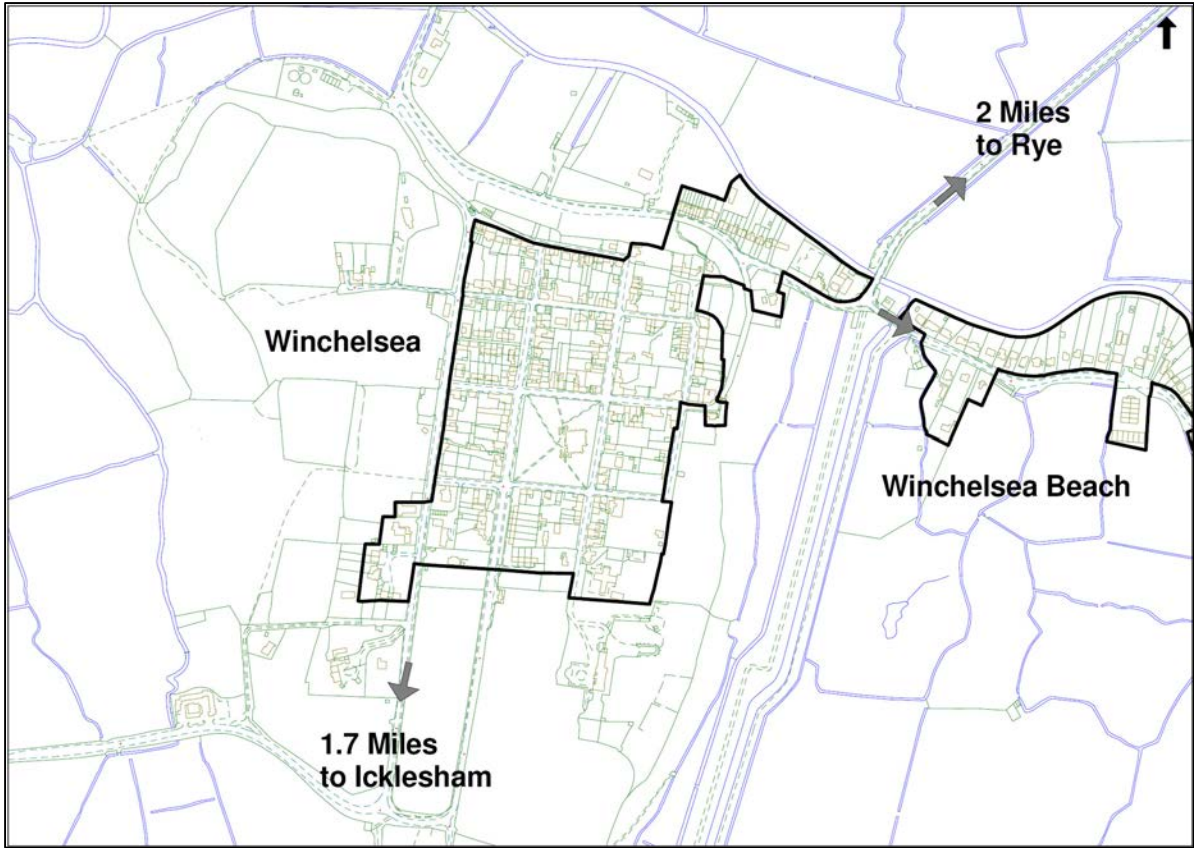
small points where it includes residential curtilages. There are woodlands to the north and south designated as Ancient Woodland, a large tract of land to the west is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest and to the south a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The land north of Westfield lane is wholly rural and provides views over the undulating countryside.

Development Potential

Notwithstanding it's proximity to the main urban area of Hastings, Westfield Lane is not a sustainable location for development allocations. This is due to its environmental constraints and lack of services in immediate proximity,

Winchelsea



Introduction

Winchelsea is officially a town, albeit the smallest in the country with a population of just fewer than 600. It is now about a fifth of its original size. It was once a major urban settlement and one of the principle naval ports of the country.

The town is of immense historic and archaeological interest and value, and is an outstanding and rare example of medieval town planning. The settlement was planned by Edward 1 in the 13th Century as a 'bastide' town, and the formal grid structure of the historic street pattern is still clearly visible today and is a crucial element in defining its character. The citadel dominates the surrounding landscape. The grid layout of weatherboard and tile cottages, stone church and windmill, stands above steep wooded bluffs on which medieval gates are conspicuous.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Winchelsea has a reasonable level of services including a primary school, however it does not qualify as a Local Service Village and it falls just

outside of the range identified in Appendix 2 – Service Level Indicators.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, St Thomas CE Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

Accessibility

The A259 acts as a by-pass to much of the town, and links Winchelsea with Rye, 2 miles to the north-east and Hastings 6 miles to the south-west. There are two bus services that allow peak hour travel to and from places of work/education. They are 344 (Coastal Coaches Rye) and 711 (Hastings). Winchelsea also has a train station, albeit offering a partial service and located quite a distance from the town.

Need

Housing Needs

Icklesham Parish, which contains Icklesham village and Winchelsea Beach as well as Winchelsea, exhibits a high proportion of households in need, but a low percentage of

social housing in the stock and a low demand from the housing register. This seems to suggest an exception site may be the way forward for the parish.

Economic Role and Needs

There is no business park or industrial estate in Winchelsea, although neighbouring Winchelsea Beach contains the employment area 'Suttons Industrial Park' in close proximity. Suttons has 15 units totalling just over 1000sq.m of mostly B2 floorspace, of which about 13% is vacant.

As Appendix 5 indicates, the parish has a comparatively higher level of unemployment, an average economic activity rate and economic base. There is high reliance on the car for commuting trips. This suggests the need for some further employment uses in the parish. This is an issue that may warrant further consideration at Site Allocations DPD stages.

Community Need for Other Services

Winchelsea Town Plan is being progressed with working groups on townscape & landscape, traffic & transport, business & tourism, and community.

Icklesham Parish Council runs two play areas in Winchelsea at Silver Jubilee Playground and Winchelsea Recreation Ground.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in North Winchelsea to be delivered as a medium priority. It also identifies the need for creation of a new area of natural or semi-natural greenspace as a lower priority.

In their responses to the Rother District Councils Core Strategy Issues and Options questionnaire, Winchelsea residents felt that local shops and a bus service were important in making a village a good place to live. In their own village they felt that access to local shops, post office, primary school, bus service and countryside were all good qualities, but were slightly concerned about poor access to jobs and houses and access to the railway station. Respondents felt that it was particularly important to promote renewable energy in buildings, whilst ensuring design in keeping with the surrounding area.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The historic core of the town is bound to the north and east by the steep cliff escarpment overlooking the low-lying Brede valley. The

remaining built core of gridded streets extends to the south, bounded by the A259. Beyond this road to the west lies rural pasture with sporadic buildings, though the legacy of once developed streets is still visible through earthworks and field boundaries. Further south the grid pattern disintegrates to become the parkland setting of Greyfriars, a large house adjacent to the remains of a friary.

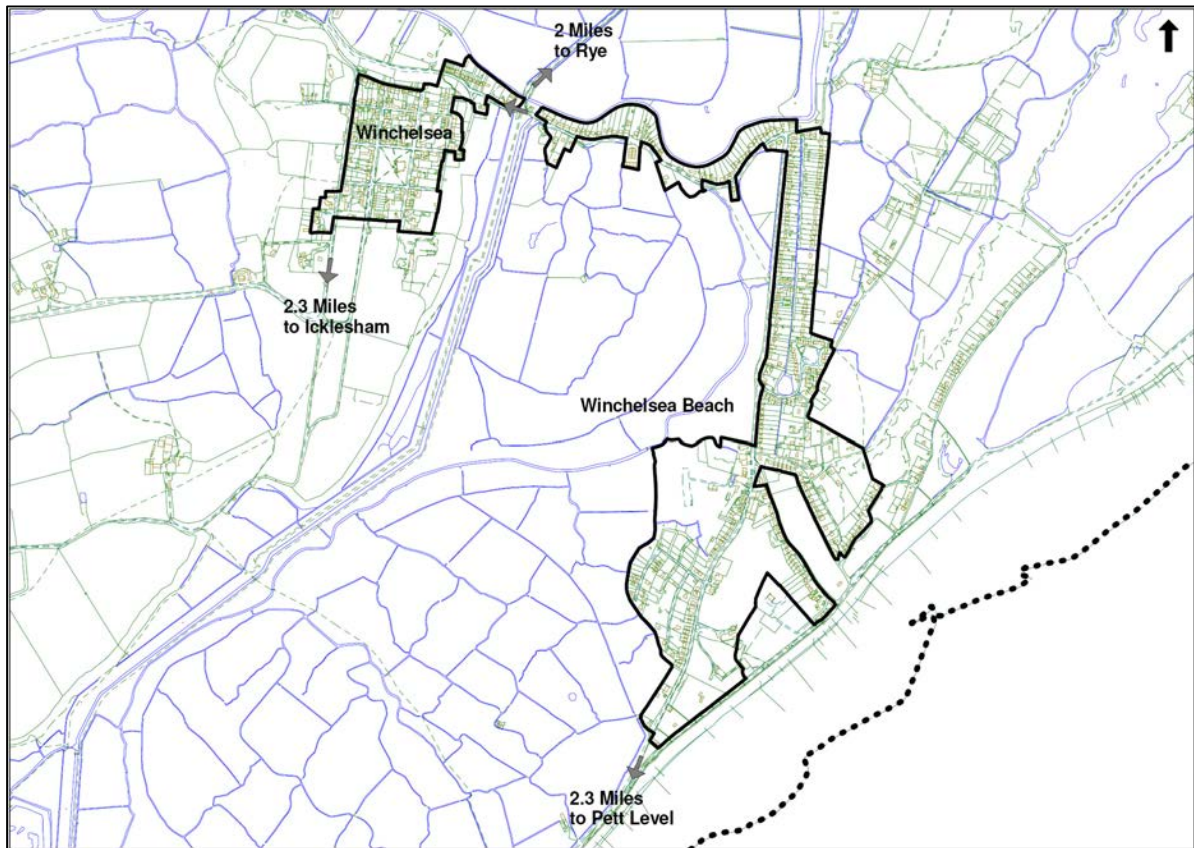
Winchelsea conservation area was designated in June 2004 and is being reviewed, but extends beyond the existing built form of the settlement on land that was formally built upon. Other designations on land within the built confines of the town and at its perimeter include Archaeological Sensitive Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, and Site of Nature Conservation Importance. The town and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB.

Development Potential

Although Winchelsea is a local service village, environmental and landscape constraints are significant and development may compromise these. It is not proposed to pursue a development allocation as a result.

Rother District Councils 'Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study' identifies the need for a new play area in North Winchelsea to be delivered as a medium priority. Areas at the top end of Roberts Hill may offer possibilities.

Winchelsea Beach



Introduction

Winchelsea Beach is low lying and is situated behind the sea wall between the mouth of the River Rother to the east and Fairlight Cliffs to the west.

Winchelsea Beach is essentially a linear settlement connecting Winchelsea to the coast, where a static caravan park and more in depth development is located. It has grown in an ad hoc fashion and much of the development dates from the pre-war. Today it has a population of just fewer than 600 which swells considerably in the summer months due to its holiday population.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Local services include a post office, convenience shop, pub and church. Although Winchelsea Beach has a comparable population to neighbouring Winchelsea, it has a more limited range of services. This may be explained by the more recent growth of Winchelsea Beach relative to the historically important Cinque Port of Winchelsea.

Accessibility

The top end of Winchelsea connects to the Royal Military Road stretch of the A259 trunk road which connects Hastings and Rye. The 344 Bus (Coastal Coaches Rye) serves the village whilst the nearest train station, Winchelsea, is one and a half miles away. The village is about 2½ miles south of Rye and 1 mile south-east of Winchelsea.

Need

Housing Needs

Icklesham Parish, which contains Icklesham village and Winchelsea as well as Winchelsea Beach, exhibits a high proportion of households in need, but a low percentage of social housing in the stock and a low demand from the housing register. This seems to suggest an exception site may be the way forward for the parish.

Economic Role and Needs

Winchelsea Beach contains the employment area 'Suttons Industrial Park' which is on the Sea Road towards neighbouring Winchelsea. Suttons has 15 small-medium standard light industrial units most of which are over 20 years

old. Suttons totals just over 1000sq.m of mostly B2 floorspace, of which about 13% is vacant. Lodestar Contracts Ltd is a notably large local employer.

As Appendix 5 indicates, the parish has a comparatively higher level of unemployment, an average economic activity rate and economic base. There is high reliance on the car for commuting trips. This suggests the need for some further employment uses in the parish. This is an issue that may warrant further consideration at Site Allocations DPD stages.

Community Need for Other Services

Icklesham Parish Council runs a play area at Harbour Field Recreation Ground where there is also a sports pitch. Two facilities that are notably lacking are a primary school and a village hall, although residents look to neighbouring Winchelsea for these services.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The village is situated entirely on flat drained marshland and shingle. The entire settlement lies within an area at risk of flooding.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment comments that development is constrained here due to the impact of Flood Zones 2 and 3, but where development is essential to meet an identified local community need then the least vulnerable flood location where possible be chosen, and the necessary mitigation measures be put in place.

The High Weald AONB abuts the village on its western side and much of the village is surrounded by the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Dungeness to Pett Level Special Area of Conservation is located on both sides of the village and an area noted as an Archaeological Sensitive Area extends from the shore line to the built form of the village.

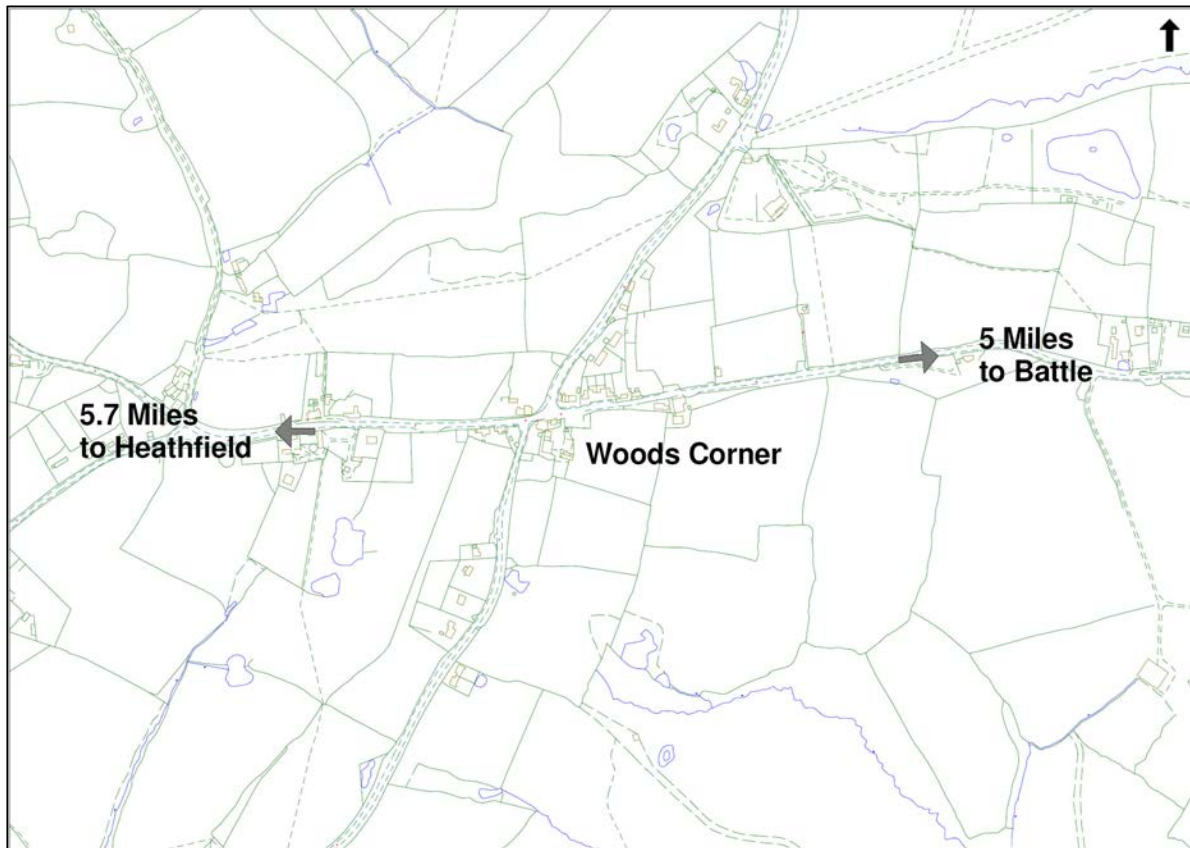
Development Potential

Policy VL12 of the Rother District Local Plan allows for residential development at two sites within the Winchelsea Beach development boundary – Victoria Way and land south of Harbour Farm, provided any scheme is comprehensive and offers environmental improvements to access and drainage. Although not a housing allocation as such, this policy would improve an unsightly and ad hoc development pattern dating from the inter-war years. Although there is no exact figure in the Local Plan, it is estimated that the implementation of this policy may result in a net

gain of up to 50 houses, subject to Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Other than small scale development to meet local needs, additional development in addition to that permissible under Policy VL12 is not considered appropriate, given the lack of services, limited accessibility and environmental factors.

Woods Corner



Introduction

Woods Corner is a remote settlement, that straddles the B2096 Heathfield to Battle road, and is situated on a ridge top position some 170 metres above sea level. The village does not have a central point and the buildings are spaced out irregularly along the B road and along the narrow lanes that run to the north and south.

Function

Local Facilities and Services

Although tiny in terms of population and with no development boundary, Woods Corner warrants inclusion in this Rural Settlements Study by virtue of having a post office that serves the wider area. However it is only open on a part time basis.

Accessibility

The settlement is in one of the more isolated parts of the District and road access is via the B2096 Heathfield to Battle road. Despite its category, it is a narrow and winding road where speeds need to be kept quite low due to the undulations and bends of the road.

The nearest villages are the lower order Dallington and Brightling and there is no peak time bus service out of the settlement.

Need

Housing Needs

The parish exhibits comparatively low housing need, a low proportion of social rented housing within the existing stock and an average number of households on the register seeking accommodation.

Economic Role and Needs

Dallington parish contains the employment area 'Coldharbour Farm'. The parish has zero unemployment, an average EA rate and a reasonable economic base. This suggests no real need for new employment.

Community Need for Other Services

There is no gas or mains drainage to any part of the Parish. Installation is a matter for the relevant utilities bodies. No further specific

community needs have been identified for the village.

Environmental and Landscape Factors

The dispersed character of this settlement means that there are many places from the public highway where the countryside is a feature, and this is an integral part of the character of the settlement. There are many fine views over the High Weald, particularly to the south where the land flattens in the distance and is backed by the silhouette of the distant South Downs.

A significant feature of the landscape particularly to the west, are the areas of conifer plantations which add to the sense of remoteness and endless forest. To the east and south are large tracts of woodland which are designated as Ancient Woodland

Development Potential

In view of the very limited service role of Wood's Corner, combined with its remoteness and lack of demonstrable need, it is not proposed to pursue any development allocations in Woods Corner.

Other Villages & Hamlets

As section 5.4 to 5.8 in Part One Main report clarified, the general threshold for inclusion of a village or hamlet in this Rural Settlements Study is a population of at least 100. However, there are a handful of villages with a population of less than 100 that have been included due to the presence of key service.

This section provides some information on those smaller villages and hamlets that have not been the subject of a full appraisal. However the list by no means identifies all the dispersed groups of dwellings and hamlets, which are extensive in number and are an inherent settlement pattern of the High Weald.

Policy Overview

The Strategy recognises the importance of communities.

Whilst these smaller settlements are not promoted as general locations for development, local needs may be met and LDF policies relating to villages may be relevant to small settlements. In particular, village policies regarding 'Services and Community Development' may apply to smaller villages as well as those which have a development boundary. Where a particular need is demonstrated, local needs may also comprise affordable housing, recreational space or the extension of existing uses.

In summary, village policies place an emphasis on:

- Development restraint
- The retention of services

Broadland Row (approx. pop. 50)

Broadland Row is situated on the B2089 east of Broad Oak in the Parish of Brede and Brede Valley ward.

It is within the High Weald AONB on the wooded north side of the Brede Valley, bounded to the north and south by ancient woodland.

There are a number of listed buildings in the hamlet and an Archaeological Sensitive Area south of the village.

Catsfield Stream (approx. pop. 65)

Catsfield Stream is a tiny 'sub-settlement' of Catsfield south west of its larger neighbour on the B2204. It is within Catsfield Parish and

Crowhurst Ward. There are no services to speak of.

Watermill stream runs through the village and it is bounded to the south by a large Ancient Replanted Woodland 'Hurst Wood'.

Clayhill (approx. pop. 50)

Clayhill is located west of Beckley on the B2165 in Rother Levels ward and Beckley parish. The Rose & Crown pub sits at its northern limits. The surrounding landscape forms part of southern wooded slopes of the lower Rother valley and the settlement is within the High Weald AONB. Hoath Coppice, an area of oak and sweet chestnut woodland located west of the village is subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Brickwall Historic & Garden is a notable local feature - an impressive timber-framed house is surrounded by a garden dating from 1680 situated west of the village.

Cock Marling (approx. pop. 35)

Cock Marling is within Udimore Parish and Brede Valley ward and on the B2089 between Udimore and Rye. In addition to a handful of dwellings it has the Plough pub. The settlement is situated within the AONB in the landscape of the Brede Valley with the River Tillingham to the north and Brede to south.

Dale Hill (approx. pop. 60)

Dale Hill is located on the B2087 just north of Ticehurst, centred upon the Dale Hill Hotel & Country Club. It is in Ticehurst Parish and Ticehurst and Etchingam Ward. Local services include the Cherry Tree pub and a small allotment garden.

In landscape terms it is on the northern fringes of the upper Rother Valley where the landscape meets the Bewl Water Area. Dale Hill is within the High Weald AONB and there are a handful of listed buildings in the settlement.

East Guldeford (approx. pop. 35)

East Guldeford is located in a Parish of the same name and in Eastern Rother ward. It is on the A259 and approximately 2 miles east of Rye. It is built on land that was reclaimed from the sea. The village forms part of Walland Marsh, an area of marshland within the greater Romney Marsh.

The village consists of the church and a few houses, but essential services and facilities are available from nearby Rye.

As would be expected the surrounding countryside is flat and provides particularly rich

farmland. Much of it is designated within the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI.

Flackley Ash (approx. pop. 55)

Flackley Ash is located on the A268 north west of Peasmarsh and it is essentially an area of dispersed low density dwellings adjacent to its larger neighbour. Flackley Ash hotel is the most notable feature. The area is within the High Weald AONB and the surrounding landscape is characteristic of the lower Rother valley. There are a number of listed buildings in the settlement and a large area of ancient woodland immediately to the west of the village. Politically it is within Peasmarsh Parish and Rother Levels Ward.

Henley's Down (approx. pop. 35)

Henley's Down is clustered around two farms and is located between Catsfield and Crowhurst, although there are no services to speak of. It is situated on the southern boundary of the High Weald AONB with a number of listed buildings present in the settlement. Politically it is within Catsfield Parish and Crowhurst Ward.

Horns Cross (approx. pop. 55)

Horns Cross is located on the junction of the A28 with B2165 between Northiam and Broad Oak. The village is within the High Weald AONB and there are several areas of ancient woodland in the surrounding vicinity. Politically it is within Northiam Parish and Rother Levels ward.

Houghton Green (approx. pop. 60)

Houghton Green is located approximately 2 Miles north-east of Rye within the Parish of Playden, and consists of a number of dispersed dwellings and unusually for its size, a primary school.

It lies just outside of the High Weald AONB, and the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI lies to the west.

Jury's Gap (approx. pop 55)

Jury's Gap is located on the eastern periphery of the District on the road that links Camber with Lydd in Kent. The settlement is in Camber Parish and Eastern Rother ward. Although there are now about 25 dwellings, the original settlement is based around 10 former coastguard cottages dating from the late 19th century. Subsequent piecemeal development took place in the 1930s.

The area is at risk from flooding and within the Environment Agencies flood zone 3. The Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay SSSI is immediately to the north.

Oxley's Green (approx. pop. 40)

Oxley's Green is a tiny settlement of north east of Brightling. It is in the High Weald AONB and there is much ancient woodland in the vicinity in the form of heavily wooded ridges and valleys. It is also within Brightling, Mountfield and Robertsbridge mineral site as notified by East Sussex County Council.

The area is notable for its particularly poor accessibility to the transport network. This creates a sense of remoteness both in the settlements and the wider Brightwell parish and Darwell wards.

Penhurst (approx. pop.15)

Tiny Penhurst warrants a mention since it centres the Parish of the same name, which is in Crowhurst ward. The settlement is centred upon the St Michael the Archangel Church and abuts Church Farm. The 1066 Country walk passes through the countryside south of the village.

The surrounding landscape is characteristic of the south slopes of the weald. Ten Acre Gill Site of Nature Conservation Importance is located south west of the village and the whole area is within the High weald AONB.

Ponts Green (approx. pop. 35)

Ponts Green is within Ashburnham Parish and Crowhurst Ward in a relatively inaccessible corner of the District.

There are a number of historic listed buildings in Ponts Green. The only service to speak of is Ashburnham Congregational Church, there are no other services although there was at one time a post office.

The landscape of the area is characterised as the south slopes of the weald. Reed Wood to the south is ancient woodland and a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

Rye Foreign (approx. pop. 65).

The settlement is principally linear in pattern with the majority of the dwellings located on the north side of the A268, approximately 3 miles north-west of Rye.

The name of the parish came about in 1247, when King Henry III resumed control over Rye and Winchelsea from the Abbey of **Fécamp**.

However part of the area was left under the jurisdiction of the Abbey, hence the name Rye Foreign.

There are currently two public houses and a doctor's surgery within the parish, but more facilities are available from adjacent Peasmarsch.

The village and the surrounding Countryside are within the High Weald AONB. Many of the nearby tracts of woodland are designated as Ancient Woodland.

Salehurst (approx. pop. 55)

Salehurst is a small historic village, located approximately 1½ Miles north east of Robertsbridge. Despite its size both the Ward and the Parish take its name. Salehurst contains the parish church of St Mary the Virgin which also serves its larger neighbour. It also contains a public house and Salehurst Hall for community use, although nearby Robertsbridge offers a wide range of services and facilities.

The village is positioned just above the flood plain on the northern side of the River Rother. To the north the ground rises and is interspersed with small woods and shaws. The village and the surrounding countryside are designated within the High Weald AONB.

Seacox Heath (approx. pop. 95)

Seacox Heath is within the Parish of Etchingam and the ward of Ticehurst and Etchingam.

It is a linear settlement straddling the A268 on the Kent border, east of Flimwell and on the road to Hawkhurst. It contains St Augustine's church and a number of historic listed buildings, but little in the way of services.

It is within the High Weald AONB and bounded to north and south by large expanses of ancient woodland. Ringden wood to the south is also a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

Silver Hill (approx. pop. 95)

Silver Hill is located adjacent to the A21 between Robertsbridge and Hurst Green. It contains the pub the Whitehorse Inn and a handful of dwellings and farms on the periphery. The lack of services is perhaps not surprising given the accessibility to larger service villages such as Robertsbridge and Hurst Green.

The whole area is within the High Weald AONB and the landscape setting is characteristic of the Rother Valley.

Swiftsden (approx. pop. 40)

Tiny Swiftsden straddles the A21 between Flimwell and Hurst Green. It contains a handful of dwellings and is abutted by surrounding farms. Ashdene petrol filling station is the most notable service, but Swiftsden residents look to the larger service village of Hurst Green for most services.

The river that marks the boundary of Kent and Sussex is just over 300 metres to the north east of the village. The surrounding countryside of the upper Rother valley is designated as AONB and characterised by patches of ancient woodland, two of which to the south are Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.

Three Leg Cross (approx. pop. 95)

Three Leg Cross is located between Ticehurst and Bewl Water reservoir in Ticehurst Parish and the ward of Ticehurst & Etchingam. There is a pub at the centre of the village 'The Bull', but little else in the way of services, with residents relying on Ticehurst rural service centre to a large extent.

The landscape is characteristic of the Bewl Water area and within the High Weald AONB.

Twelve Oaks (approx. pop. 30)

Twelve Oaks is located south west of Brightling in the heart of the Darwell Valley. Politically it is within Brightling Parish and Darwell ward. The majority of buildings are listed for their historic importance. There are no services to speak of and residents are obliged to rely on Netherfield, Battle or Robertsbridge for services.

The whole area is within the AONB and also within the 'Brightling, Mountfield and Robertsbridge' ESCC notified minerals site. Darwell Reservoir to the east is a notable landscape feature that is also a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

Vinehall Street (approx. pop. 35)

Tiny Vinehall Street straddles the A21 south-east of John's Cross. The Vinehall Business Centre contains a number of industrial units on the south side of the A21 just north of the main residential area. Vinehall farm and Vinehall Manor are situated further south of the main settlement.

At least half of the local dwellings are listed for their historic interest. Politically the settlement is within Mountfield Parish and Darwell Ward. The surrounding landscape is within the AONB on the slopes of the west side of the Brede valley.

Whatlington (approx. pop. 75).

Whatlington is located seven miles north west of Hastings and approximately 2 miles north east of Battle. It has no central point and the village church lies approximately 1 mile away from the public house, with many of the dwellings being spaced out along the 'C' classified road that links the A21 with Battle.

The surrounding countryside consists of gently undulating countryside interspersed with large tracts of ancient woodland and narrow little valleys. Part of the settlement is low lying with the River Line that feeds into the River Brede. This area is designated as an area at risk from flooding.

Based on natural change forecasts without pupils from any new housing added, Whatlington CE Primary School is projected to have a surplus spaces by 2012/13 (Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model).

However, in common with other primary schools in the vicinity, the school serves a number of pupils from other areas.