

# SEDLSCOMBE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2016-2028

**~~SUBMISSION VERSION~~**



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November 2017**



*A view of the 13C Parish Church, an older property, an agricultural building and Park Shaw, a 1960's estate of bungalows*

## The Vision

To make Sedlescombe a vibrant place that values its past but looks to the future, where people are proud to live and work and be part of a caring community.

To ensure the character and identity of the village is maintained and enhanced whilst allowing growth and encouraging a sense of community through well planned housing appropriate to the needs of the community.

To ensure the natural beauty and key characteristics of this part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are conserved and enhanced.

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## Foreword

The Localism Act 2012, supported by the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level.

The Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan led by a Committee made up of Parish Councillors, started back in February 2013. A resolution was passed that a Neighbourhood Plan should be prepared to identify sufficient housing development sites to meet the number allocated for Sedlescombe in the emerging Local Plan.

Sedlescombe is well-known in the District for taking a lead. The first Parish Council in Rother to complete its Parish Plan in 2002 and the first to be awarded Quality Status in 2004. We are proud to say that, In accordance with tradition, Sedlescombe was the first Parish Council in the Rother District to commit to doing a Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Sedlescombe Parish Councillors and Parish Clerks involved in the Plan's Preparation.**



The Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by the following documents:

- Basic Conditions Statement, September 2016
- Final Strategic Environmental Assessment Report, September 2016
- Final Site Assessments Report, September 2016
- Final Local Green Space Report, September 2016
- Consultation Statement, September 2016
- State of the Parish Report, September 2016

## Chairman's Introduction

1. It is a brave step for a small rural community to embrace the challenge of developing its own Neighbourhood Plan. To confront local planning policies, NPPF, SEA's, SHLAA's, Core Strategies and more, all seemingly designed to trip up the non-professional planner is a challenge in itself. Like many neighbourhood plans in a rural location, Sedlescombe's challenge was working out how to manage change by ensuring that future development will have minimum impact in a place that has been described as 'a quintessentially English village'. However the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan makes residents and stakeholders think considerably harder about what they want from new development. Also, how development can be embraced to allow a rural Parish to evolve in a way that is not discordant with what already exists and is held dear. In addition, it has allowed residents to address how new housing can be focused on creating employment rather than simply creating a dormitory village. This updated version of the plan, which is consistent with community aspirations, also enables and ensures that the housing required within or directly adjacent to the settlement boundary is located in a way that minimises any impact and diffuses development away from the already highly concentrated Brede Lane area.

2. It is reasonable to say that Sedlescombe has been galvanised by the neighbourhood planning process. Several thousand hours of volunteer time and equally the commitment of several hours of each resident and stakeholder who filled in an extensive survey, attended the major site exhibition and gave feedback at the consultation stages, has resulted in a Plan which delivers more than just numbers to meet a housing target, planning gains or Section 106 Agreements. The process has given our community a significantly better understanding of who we are, why we live here, and what we want our housing development to achieve.

3. It is not surprising that issues of traffic, parking, and size and location of housing developments are foremost in the thoughts of residents. This is true for all small rural communities. Generally people move to and live in small rural communities for the environment and tranquillity. Over time this has been compromised in Sedlescombe by some housing developments and a concentration of housing which has exacerbated traffic on the small country roads used by many for recreational walking, cycling and horse riding.

4. Our surveys, exhibitions and consultations sought to understand what was important to residents and stakeholders specifically in housing, but also covering broader issues: the current and future needs of the community and their travel, recreation and work patterns. The results were then sorted and assessed to create criteria that reflect our needs as a community and matched these with the sites on offer. Whilst the local planning authority's SHLAA report provided some sites, the ability of members of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee to speak personally to all potential landowners provided a much wider range of options than those included in the SHLAA report. Many landowners had not been aware of

the SHLAA and had as a result been excluded from that process. In addition, of the three sites identified in the SHLAA one is unavailable for development although the plan seeks to make the land available for development in the future, the second was unavailable at the first draft of the plan and has now become available and the third emerged as a valuable green space and has been included in the plan as such.

5. The result is a Plan which sees housing development as a means of encouraging investment to grow and sustain local employment, to support the development and long term security of our charities and stakeholders and to safeguard our community facilities and important green gaps and spaces. There is also an emphasis on supported policies reusing brownfield sites. The Plan policies are designed to encourage appropriate planning applications for these sites to come forward, knowing that they are expensive to prepare with no guarantee they will succeed.

6. Sedlescombe is entirely within the AONB. Residents have been concerned that there is no alternative within the Planning Authority's Core Strategy for locating new development except by extending the existing development boundary into the AONB, as only part of one small site is available for development within the existing boundary. To compensate for and mitigate against this loss the community has clearly articulated through the course of the plan development both the need and desire to designate two valued green spaces.

7. Our Neighbourhood Plan successfully fulfils all 12 objectives set for rural areas by the District Council in its Core Strategy. In addition, it will contribute to the target for increased rural employment space for the whole of Rother District without impacting on the AONB.

8. These are the outcomes and achievements of the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan.

***Cllr Jonathan Vine-Hall***

***Council Chair and Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee***

## Neighbourhood Planning

8. The Localism Act 2011<sup>1</sup> empowers local communities to take responsibility for the preparation of aspects of planning policy for their area through a neighbourhood development plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that “*neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need*”.<sup>2</sup>

9. The Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) is one of a number of Neighbourhood Plans to be produced in the Rother District. It has been prepared by Sedlescombe Parish Council, a qualifying body able to lead the preparation of a neighbourhood plan.<sup>3</sup> Work on the production of the Plan has been progressed through, initially, the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan Project Group (SNPPG) and, latterly, through an executive committee of the Parish Council, the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan Committee.

## The Plan Area

10. At a meeting of Sedlescombe Parish Council on 18/02/13, it was agreed that a Neighbourhood Plan should be undertaken for the whole of the parish of Sedlescombe to address housing need. The purpose of including the whole parish was to allow all parts of the parish to be involved in considering issues raised through the Plan process. Application was submitted to Rother District Council and, on 01/07/13, Rother’s Cabinet agreed that the parish boundary is a “*sensible and supportable Neighbourhood Plan Area*” and agreed that the whole of the parish should be designated as a Neighbourhood Area. Also, that, in due course, following adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, it would become a part of the adopted Development Plan for the area.

11. This is the second Submission Plan to be prepared and follows the Parish Council’s decision in November 2015 to withdraw the previous Plan after its examination. The examination report of January 2015 had recommended that the Plan proceed to referendum, but only with changes to the policies that the Parish Council considered unacceptable because they did not reflect the wishes of the community. Rather than leave the decision on how the village of Sedlescombe should grow in the next decade to the District Council, the Parish Council decided to prepare a new version with the local community.

12. This decision was made in January 2016 and ~~this the~~ Submission Plan is the final step in the process, for which the Parish Council is responsible. Hereafter, the examination of the Plan is arranged by the District Council, which will also organise the referendum ~~in due course~~.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 38A of The Localism Act 2011

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 183 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

<sup>3</sup> Section 61F(a) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as read with section 38C(2)(a) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004



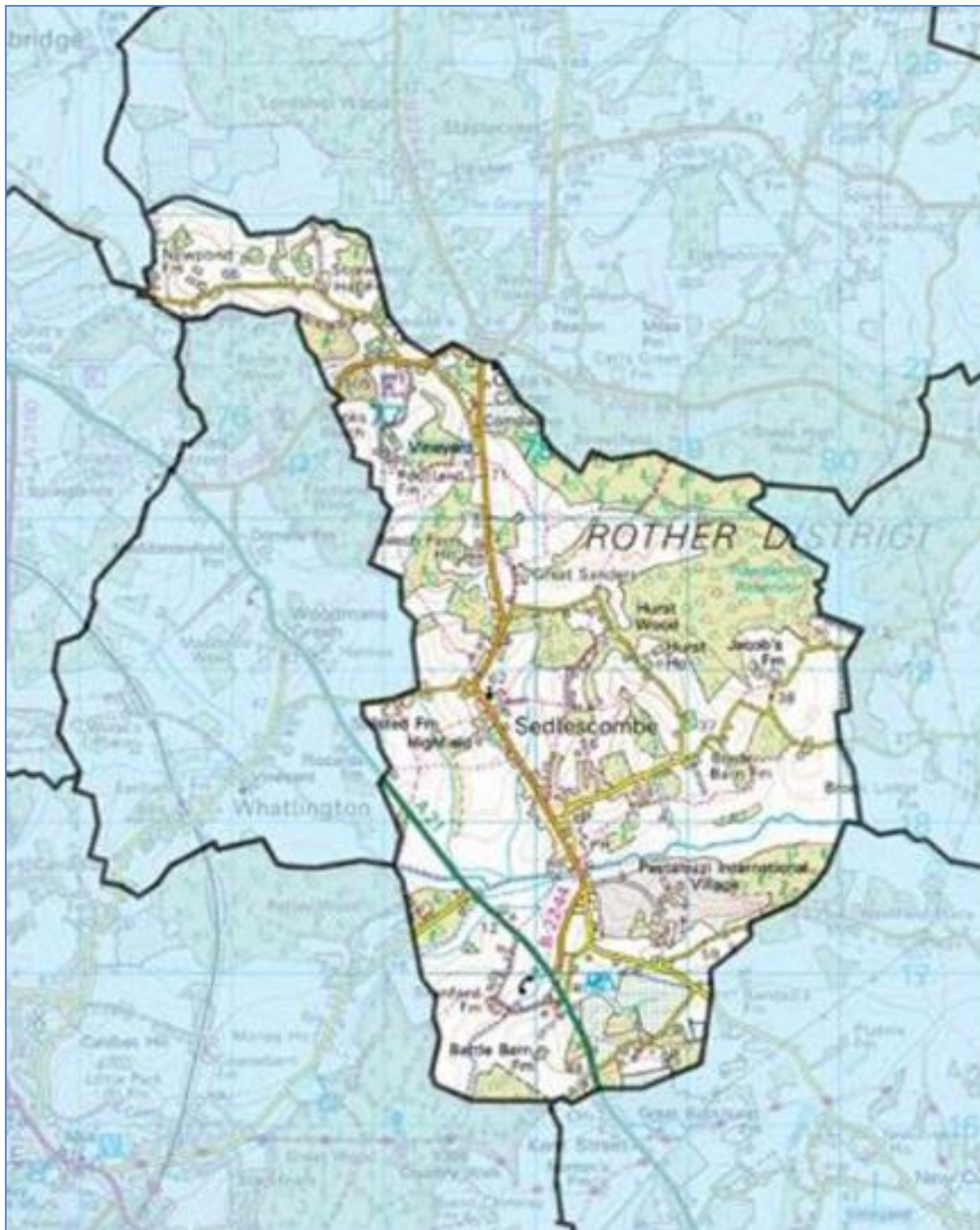


Figure 1 – Sedlescombe Parish Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area





Figure2 - Parishes in East Sussex showing the Parish of Sedlescombe in the centre of the Rother District

## Period of the Plan

13. The plan period of the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan is 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2028.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

14. On 28/11/13, Rother District Council wrote to the Parish Council advising of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.<sup>4</sup> Rother stated as follows: *“whilst it is acknowledged that neither the area of the Plan nor the scale of development envisaged are large scale, taking into account the context and the range of potential effects, and applying the precautionary principle, it is considered that an SEA of the SNP is required.”*

## The Plan Process

15. The process of preparing the SNP is in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012. The process has comprised the following main stages:

1. **Request for Sites** flyer sent to every home in the parish.
2. **State of the Parish Report** summarises the evidence on which the SNP is based.
3. **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** considers the potential environmental effects of the policies.
4. **Site Assessments Report** details how each Exhibition Site was assessed for its suitability for development.
5. **Pre-Submission SNP** comprised the vision, objectives, policies and Proposals Map subject to an 8-week public consultation period.
6. **Submission SNP** – this final document, taking into account the representations received on the draft plan during the public consultation period amended as necessary.

<sup>4</sup> S9 of the Regs (SI 2004 1633)

16. In the time since the first Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for its examination in July 2014, the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (RLPCS) has been adopted (in September 2014). The new Neighbourhood Plan takes account of the strategic policies of the RLPCS and of additional site assessment work that has been undertaken since the Neighbourhood Plan project was re-commenced in January 2016.

## How the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared

17. The Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Committee with support from Rother District Council and planning consultant, Neil Homer BA DipTP DipUD, MBA MRTPI, the Planning Director of RCOH Ltd.

## Public Consultation

18. The Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared using local knowledge and formal consultation procedures. It has been assessed against national and local policies as well as a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

19. The process has involved a number of key stages which are detailed in the Consultation Statement:

1. Request for Sites, March 2013
2. Residents' Survey, July 2013
3. Young Persons' Workshops, June/July 2013
4. Business & Employer Survey, August 2013
5. Estate Agents' Survey, August 2013
6. Police Survey, August 2013
7. Exhibition, 14 and 15 September 2013



Neighbourhood Planning Exhibition 14 September 2013

8. Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Period 20/03/14 to 06/05/14.
9. Neighbourhood Special Meeting with Residents of Gregory Walk and The Street.
10. Sedlescombe Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting 2014, 2015 and 2016.
11. Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan Consultation of the revised Plan 15/7/2016 to 12/9/2016 with a one day exhibition of sites on the 31/7/2016.



Neighbourhood Planning Exhibition 31 July 2016

12. The review by the Parish Council of representations made during the consultation period and decisions made on what minor modifications are necessary before completing the submission documents.

20. Throughout the process, residents have been kept informed via the Sedlescombe News, the Rye & Battle Observer, Sedlescombe Parish Council Bulletins delivered to every household 3 to 4 times per annum and the Sedlescombe Parish Council website. In addition, an e-mail database of over 300 residents has been used throughout the process to keep residents updated. Neighbourhood Plan Committee Meetings have been open to the public.

21. The statutory (Regulation 14) public consultation period was undertaken over a period of eight weeks in July – September 2016. A detailed analysis and summary of the representations made during that period is contained in the separate Consultation Statement that ~~accompanies~~ accompanied this Plan for examination.



## Our Objectives

22. **Overall:** To keep the integrity of this quintessential English Village.



trees, woodland, ponds, streams and wetlands;

11. preserves green gaps and hedgerows wherever possible;
12. does not exacerbate traffic and parking problems.



*Community event on Village Green*

### 23. To support development that:

1. helps to ensure the long-term security of key stakeholders in the Parish;
2. promotes new employment in the Parish;
3. either renews or expands commercial or light industrial space in the Parish;
4. re-uses existing brownfield sites in preference to greenfield sites;
5. provides new homes in sustainable and acceptable locations in and around the village;
6. enables the improvement of community facilities and enhances the existing sense of community with the Parish;
7. conserves designated areas of national and local landscape, archaeological, geological, ecological or historical importance, including the Sedlescombe Conservation Area;
8. conserves and enhances the landscape and scenic beauty of our part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including the Brede Valley;
9. avoids development on areas of land in elevated positions prominent in the landscape which can be viewed from the Brede valley;
10. protects the open countryside for the benefit of residents and visitors as well as all significant green infrastructure and associated landscape features including



*The Queens Head Pub Geese*



*The Pump House*





*Sedlescombe Village Green*



*Cricket Match, Sedlescombe Sports Pavilion*

## **Our Aims**

- To identify sufficient development land within the Parish of Sedlescombe at sites that meet the strategic needs of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.
- To propose sites that will be acceptable to the majority of Sedlescombe residents to ultimately be successful at referendum

## **Location and Population**

24. Sedlescombe is a medium-sized parish about 7 miles north of Hastings. Its Saxon name means “settlement in a valley”. The large, open fields on the valley floor provide a spacious setting for the village. In the valley bottom is the River Brede which, although once a quarter of a mile wide and navigable, is now much narrower and, for most of the time, is nothing more than a benign attractive stream. With heavy rainfall the river can rise dramatically but flooding of fields in the floodplain

takes most of the pressure off the built-up area and even properties close to the river edge are not usually flooded.

25. On either side of the valley, the ground rises to ridges at Cottage Lane and Hurst Lane. On the outskirts of the parish we see farms, converted barns, agricultural cottages, several large properties including one that has been converted into flats and ribbon development along lanes and main roads.

26. The current population of the parish (which is also the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan designated area) is about 1500 people (1200 over 18s) living in around 670 properties.<sup>5</sup> The population has doubled since 1950.

## The Growth of Sedlescombe

27. A settlement has been in Sedlescombe since pre-Roman times but our oldest remaining dwellings date from about 1420. Sedlescombe's pleasant Village Green is at the heart of the built-up area surrounded by listed buildings forming the main part of the Sedlescombe Conservation Area<sup>6</sup>. The B2244, known as The Street as it passes through Sedlescombe has its origins in the Roman occupation between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

28. Sedlescombe's increased population came with the new estates built mainly since the 1960s including Gregory Walk and Eaton Way off The Street. Most of the housing, however, is concentrated in Brede Lane at East View Terrace, Blacklands, Gorselands, Park Shaw, Orchard Way, Streetlands, Gammons Way and The Paddock along what used to be a country lane. These developments provide property of a variety of styles and sizes. About a quarter of properties in the parish are rented, some privately but 119 (18%) are rented from a social landlord<sup>7</sup>. This accounts for one of the highest percentages of affordable housing in Rural Rother Villages.

29. A Primary School for 210 children (2/3 from outside parish) in 7 classes, a busy Doctors' Surgery and an inadequately-sized car park and public conveniences complete the picture in Brede Lane where local residents are against any development that results in more traffic.

## Sustainable Development

30. Sedlescombe's Neighbourhood Plan has had regard to the first two sentences of the Ministerial foreword to the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>8</sup>:

- *The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development.*
- *Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations.*

31. Sedlescombe's Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges the overwhelming importance of ensuring that all proposed development is "sustainable".<sup>9</sup> Throughout the process, the **economic, social and environmental roles of development** have been taken into account.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Updated 2011 census figures

<sup>6</sup> Sedlescombe Conservation Area Appraisal 2004

<sup>7</sup> Updated 2011 census figures

<sup>8</sup> National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)

<sup>9</sup> NPPF paragraph 14

<sup>10</sup> NPPF paragraph 7

32. The other major consideration, of course, is Sedlescombe's position in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as the conservation of landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs is given "great weight" by the Government in their planning guidance.<sup>11</sup>

33. ~~Nine-Eight~~ sites are ~~now being recommended to local residents included~~ for development up to 2028. These are Sunningdale, Pestalozzi, Sawmills and the Parish Church (all proposed in the original Plan), together with ~~five-four~~ new sites: Land at Gate Cottage, Land North of Village Hall, Land at Church Hill Farm, ~~Land at Balcombe Green~~ and Land at Pump House Yard.

## The Economic Role

34. The Plan positively backs the local economy by identifying development sites that support an existing employer at Pestalozzi. This charity status educational organisation finds it difficult to recruit staff and volunteers because of poor public transport and the lack of local low cost housing. Mixed use housing/employment site will be a real advantage locally – the inclusion of a housing component will create sufficient financial value to secure these economic benefits. The industrial units on the Sedlescombe Sawmills site are no longer ideal for modern working practices and will benefit from redevelopment financially supported by housing. The Plan for this site also includes tourist accommodation. Together, the policies will make a significant contribution to delivering rural employment floor space in Rother, in ways that would be difficult to achieve without the support of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## The Social Role

35. Together, the sites will deliver a range of open market and affordable homes for sale and rent to meet a variety of housing needs. Importantly, many of the sites will also enable other social and/or economic benefits to be achieved. All the sites are on a bus route and are close to village amenities. Sedlescombe has a strong community (winning the National Community Village of the Year Award in 2009) and new residents will be warmly welcomed. The proposed development at the Parish Church will not only provide a vital parking area, but will support community cohesion by offering an alternative meeting place for the community. The Pestalozzi International Village already has a wonderful community feel and no doubt the residents of the new housing schemes proposed on the edge of the village will soon be absorbed into its social scene. The three new sites are directly adjacent to the Village Hall with its pre-school and high level of community activity and are in very close walking distance to the centre of the village and the Church.

## The Environmental Role

36. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)<sup>12</sup> report has been produced based on the appropriate policies of the Rother District Sustainability Appraisal<sup>13</sup> and has been used throughout in assessment of the sites. It contains details of Sedlescombe's environmental role. The Plan responds<sup>14</sup> positively to the requirement of the NPPF to demonstrate the special circumstances within which development in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is justified, hence the objective of securing social and/or economic benefits beyond conventional greenfield housing schemes.

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<sup>11</sup> NPPF paragraph 115

<sup>12</sup> Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment 2014

<sup>13</sup> Rother District Council Sustainability Appraisal July 2013

<sup>14</sup> NPPF paragraph 115

37. The environmental role is detailed in the NPPF<sup>15</sup> and covers not only the natural environment but also the built and historic environment and, as part of this, helps to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimises waste and pollution, and mitigates and adapts to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

## The Rother Local Plan

38. The Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (RLPCS) was adopted by the District Council in September 2014, shortly after the original SNP was submitted for examination. The document now provides the SNP with an up-to-date strategic policy framework against which to demonstrate its general conformity.

39. The RLPCS covers the plan period up to 2028. Among its key aims are the need to secure economic improvement, to deliver affordable housing, to support strong communities and to conserve environmental quality. Its vision of the rural areas of the District is for them to “meet local needs and support vibrant and viable mixed communities in the rural areas, whilst giving particular attention to the social, economic, ecological and intrinsic value of the countryside”.

40. The vision is translated into a series of spatial strategies of specific relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan, comprising:

- Policy OSS1 – which plans for at least 5,700 dwellings in the plan period 2011–2028 and allows for “small-scale infill and redevelopment, and otherwise enable local needs for housing and community facilities to be met, in other villages” (amounting to 1,670 dwellings and 10,000sq.m. of new employment floor space in the villages)
- Policy OSS2 – which establishes the principle of ‘development boundaries’ to “differentiate between areas where most forms of new development would be acceptable and where they would not” but allowing for boundaries to be reviewed if necessary to provide for new development based on a series of criteria
- Policy OSS3 – which defines key principles to govern the acceptable location of development
- Policy RA1 – which requires Sedlescombe village to deliver 35 new homes beyond current commitments in the plan period from sites that are “within or immediately abutting the development boundary”
- RA2 – which allows for economic and tourism development in the countryside that improves the rural character of the area
- RA3 – which defines in detail the criteria by which development proposals in the countryside will be judged

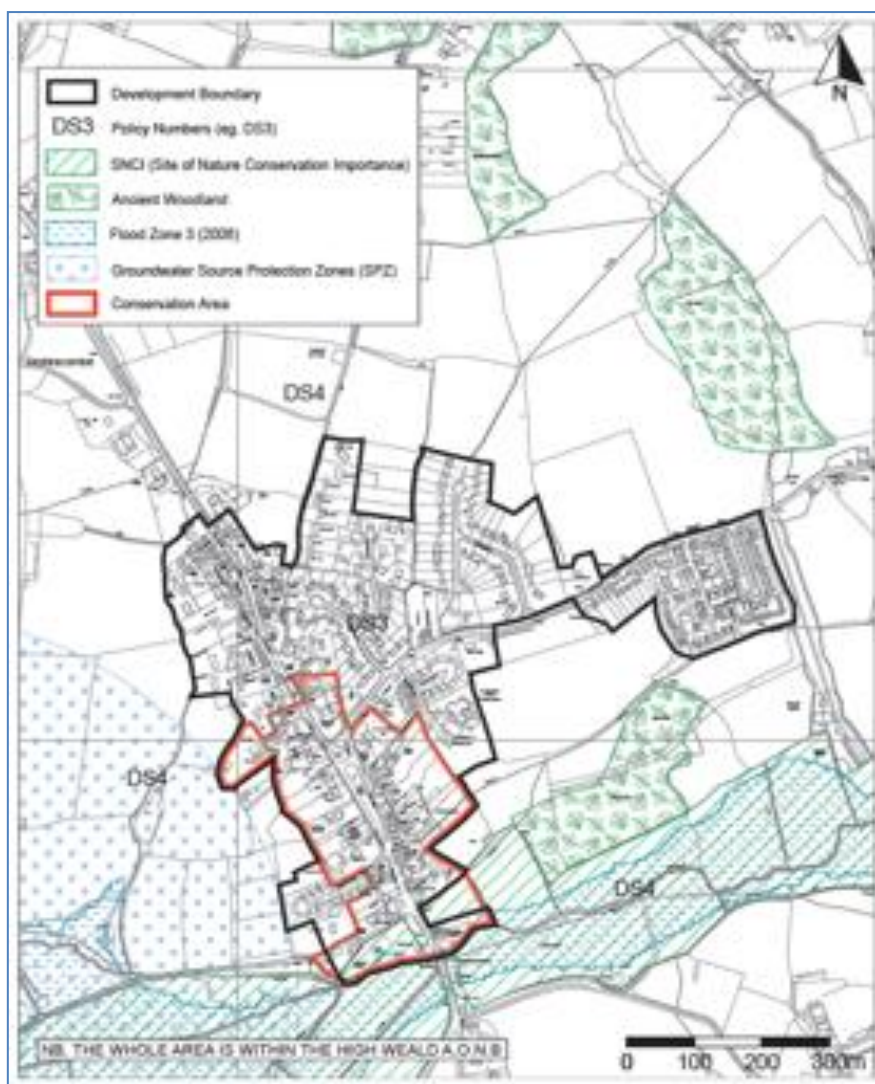
41. There are also a range of other ‘core policies’ aimed at refining the above strategic policies for development management purposes.

42. The Inset Map from the 2006 Rother District Local Plan covering the village is shown below. The Development Boundary of the village is shown on the Map. This will be updated by the Proposals Map of the Neighbourhood Plan in due course.

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<sup>15</sup> NPPF paragraph 7





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## The High Weald

### The Natural Environment

43. Sedlescombe lies both in National Character Area No.122 – the High Weald and in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.<sup>16</sup> From a distance the appearance of the High Weald is one of a *densely wooded landscape* although closer inspection reveals a patchwork of fields, hedges and woods forming both open and enclosed landscapes along the rolling ridges and within the valleys.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

<sup>17</sup> Extracted from England's Character Assessment – No.122 – The High Weald

44. The SNP aims to avoid, or result in the minimum of, harm to the AONB whilst meeting the housing expectations of RLPCS Policy RA1. This requires new development to be within or attached to the existing development boundary. As the village lies entirely within the AONB and with only two small sites being made available for development that lie entirely or partially within its development boundary, it is not possible to avoid some intrusion into the AONB. The SNP has sought to deliver sustainable development by establishing clear principles on each allocated site and by designating green spaces at Street Farm and Red Barn Field to help compensate for any residual harm. In addition, Sedlescombe residents have identified and supported, development at three specific sites just beyond the village, two of which are brownfield, that are not exposed in the landscape for important enabling development. It is expected that their successful development will deliver new homes that will contribute to meeting the objectively assessed housing needs of the District.

45. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1983. The legal framework of AONBs is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: *“to conserve and enhance natural beauty”*.

46. AONBs are recognised as Category V Protected Landscapes under International Union for Conservation of Nature global protected area framework.<sup>18</sup>

47. But what is *“natural beauty”*? *“Over the years, qualification and amendment to the legislation has made it clear that natural beauty includes considerations such as wildlife, geological features and cultural heritage but is not restricted by them.”*<sup>19</sup>

48. Natural beauty is important to residents who have commented as follows:

- *Any developer should be aware that we are fortunate to live in a beautiful village and that it should be preserved wherever possible. Views are stunning and should be taken into consideration. Our children need housing but our grandchildren will never forgive us if we spoil this lovely environment. Development should be small scale and infill rather than en masse!*
- *We should be.... minimising the amount of development inside the village boundary itself. We need to prioritise peace and quiet for the village. It's a village and we need to make sure that we don't turn it into a small town.*

49. These sentiments were echoed throughout the consultation process by residents:

- *96% support protection of the countryside for residents and visitors.*
- *94% support preservation of hedgerows and green areas.*
- *93% want housing to be low visibility and avoid spoiling views.*
- *78% want new housing to be located on brownfield sites first even if they are away from the village boundary.*<sup>20</sup>

## **The Built Environment**

50. With twenty centuries of development behind it<sup>21</sup>, Sedlescombe contains the whole palette of building materials locally known as the Sussex vernacular. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, original timber framed 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century buildings with daub infill panels and thatch covered roofs had been altered by adding brickwork (some with grey headers) on the ground floors and red handmade

<sup>18</sup> Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories. IUCN, 2008

<sup>19</sup> High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014

<sup>20</sup> 2013 Residents' Survey

<sup>21</sup> *Twenty Centuries of Sedlescombe* by Beryl Lucey

vertically-hung clay tiles above.<sup>22</sup> Listed buildings around the Village Green demonstrate this admirably.



*Swailes Green*



*Medieval Cottages in Stream Lane*



*Some of the older buildings which line  
the East side of the Village Green*

51. Twentieth century development varies in its style with several estates where bungalows are predominant. Towards the end of the century, most development consisted of houses rather than bungalows and most tried to blend with the older existing dwellings.

52. Sedlescombe residents now say they need smaller terraced, semi-detached and flat accommodation but that there is a negligible demand for bungalows.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the size of development is important. The Plan proposes no development larger than 12 properties.

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<sup>22</sup> Sedlescombe Conservation Area Appraisal 2004

<sup>23</sup> Sedlescombe Residents' Survey July 2013



*The Paddock off Brede Lane, built 2010-11*

## Climate Change and Flooding

53. The original SNP was being prepared at a time of extreme weather when so many parts of England and the local area were flooded. These recent events have not been forgotten by local people, and so the importance of ensuring the challenges of climate change and flooding are addressed has been vital.

54. Both NPPF and Local Plan Policies stress the need to take action and, therefore, all new dwellings will be required to incorporate ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to minimise vulnerability and to provide resilience to the impacts of climate change. Local residents will welcome these environmental requirements.<sup>24</sup> The provision of housing close to employment is essential when working towards a low carbon economy and Sedlescombe's Neighbourhood Plan makes good use of brownfield sites that can achieve this.

55. The Church proposal to install an innovative green energy heating system for the housing as well as the Parish Church will set an important standard. The presence of a flood plain in the Parish of Sedlescombe creates the need to be cautious with any development that could affect the flooding situation either from the river, streams, ditches or surface water drainage. With one of the proposed sites being close to the river, great care has been taken through the Plan process to investigate the risk that building on this site would bring. The owner has been working with the Environment Agency and is confident that development will be kept well away from the flood risk zones.

## LAND USE POLICIES

### Introduction

56. The SNP contains a series of land use policies that focus on achieving the successful delivery of the community's vision for the parish and village. The policies have been developed to manage the future development of Sedlescombe up to the year 2028. The majority are site specific and are therefore shown on the accompanying Proposals Map.

57. It is not the purpose of the SNP to contain all land use and development planning policy relating to the parish. The policies of the 2014 Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (RLPCS) and of the 2006 Rother District Local Plan will continue to be used by the local planning authority to consider and determine planning applications. In due course, the saved policies may be replaced by those of the

<sup>24</sup> Supports in Sedlescombe Residents' Survey



forthcoming Rother Development & Site Allocations Plan (RDSAP). In both cases, the SNP will sit alongside these other Local Plan documents as part of the development plan for the parish.

58. The Parish Council and District Council will monitor the successful implementation of the SNP policies over the plan period. To ensure the SNP remains in step with the strategic provisions of the RLPCS the first review of the SNP five years after the plan is made will provide the opportunity to review and plan for development in the parish later in the plan period.

59. Each policy is numbered and is accompanied by a reference to its conformity with the development plan and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There is also a short explanation of the policy intent and a justification, including a reference to the relevant key evidence (which is listed in Appendix A). The evidence documentation is available either directly or via a link on the Parish Council's website.

## **POLICY 1: SEDLESCOMBE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY**

**The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Development Boundary around the village of Sedlescombe, as shown on the Proposals Map, for the purpose of implementing development plan policies managing proposals within the village and its surrounding countryside.**

60. The policy has had regard to the provisions of policy RLPCS policy OSS2 by defining on the Proposals Map the Development Boundary around Sedlescombe village. This in turn allows for the consideration of development proposals in the Parish using a number of other relevant RLPCS policies.

61. The use of development boundaries and their definition on Proposals Maps has a long tradition in development planning in Sussex and this is continued by the RLPCS. They provide clarity on the distinction between urban and rural and thereby allow for a positive approach to infill and brownfield development within established settlements. Conversely, they confine development proposals beyond the boundary to those that are appropriate to a countryside location. This is especially important in areas, like here, that lie entirely within designated landscapes like the High Weald AONB.

62. The Neighbourhood Plan is one means by which a development boundary can be reviewed and modified if necessary. In choosing to modify the boundary from that defined on the 2006 Local Plan Proposals Map, account has therefore been taken of planning consents since that time and the need for the village, as a defined Local Service Centre, to grow in line with Policy RA1. In this latter respect, there was insufficient suitable and available land within the 2006 Development Boundary to meet that requirement. However, a review of the sites made available on the edge of the village as part of the Rother Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process, using the criteria of Policy OSS2 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has resulted in four sites being both technically suitable and acceptable to the local community.

63. Other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan therefore allocate or support the development of these sites – at Sunningdale, Gate Cottage, Land North of the Village Hall, ~~and~~ Church Hill Farm ~~and Balcombe Green~~ – and the boundary has been modified accordingly. Together, these sites will

deliver approximately ~~36-34~~ - 39<sup>25</sup> new homes in the village over the plan period, which meets the RA1 target of 35 new homes.

64. However, the Neighbourhood Plan also makes provision for another 20 – 24 new homes as part of proposals to secure long term economically and socially beneficial development at the Church, at Pestalozzi and at the Sawmills sites. These policies are consistent with this spatial policy in that each is able to demonstrate the special, site-specific circumstances whereby development in the countryside will be acceptable.

## **POLICY 2: LAND AT SUNNINGDALE**

**The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for approximately 9, and no fewer than 6, new dwellings on land off Gregory Walk, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will be supported, provided the scheme:**

- 1. makes provision for the retention of the existing dwelling, if practicable, and for 1, 2 and/or 3 bedroom dwellings located entirely within the development boundary of Sedlescombe;**
- 2. is accessed from Gregory Walk;**
- 3. comprises a layout and building orientation that does not harm the amenities of adjoining dwellings by way of overlooking;**
- 4. avoids damaging the habitat of the River Brede and the adjoining river bank and protects the river's wildlife corridors;**
- 5. retains the existing hedges on its boundaries; and**
- 6. implements appropriate restoration to the adjoining River Brede, to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency.**

65. This policy allocates land on the southern edge of the village for a small housing scheme which is entirely within the modified Sedlescombe Development Boundary and so is consistent with Policy 1 and with a number of relevant policies of the RLPCS.

66. The established settlement pattern of Sedlescombe will be maintained as the proposed site is close to, and a natural extension of, the existing small Gregory Walk development. Further work has been done since 2014 to show an indicative layout (see the Site Assessments Report), hence the policy now makes provision for approximately nine, and no fewer than six, new homes, which is slightly more than the provision made in the 2014 Plan. The site is close to public transport and within a short walking distance of village amenities. The policy makes provision for a range of housing types on the site in accordance to meet the needs of local people.

67. Despite being close to the River Brede, the Environment Agency has re-assessed the site and has agreed that the entire site within the development boundary is within Flood Risk Zone 1. The policy therefore complies with the sequential test to avoid developing areas at risk of flooding in accordance with policy EN6 of the RLPCS and with NPPF paragraph 100. The flood risk assessment of a future planning application will be expected to include a sustainable drainage strategy for the site.

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<sup>25</sup> These allocations exclude the planning permission at Land at Brede Lane for 16 dwellings - RR/2016/1837/P granted in 2017, therefore exceeding the target of 35 new homes.

68. The policy includes provision for ensuring that the important habitat of the River Brede and its wildlife corridors are safeguarded in accordance with Policy EN5 of the RLPCS and with NPPF paragraph 117. Security/amenity lighting must be kept to a low level and directed away from the river in order to conserve protected fish species, i.e. European eel, river lamprey, trout and bullhead. Any backscatter on to the river must be limited by shields. The Environment Agency has also requested that, where possible, river restoration work should be implemented at the time of the development in accordance with guidance i.e. the Waterbody Summary Sheet for the River Brede and RESTORE'S "Rivers by Design: Rethinking development river restoration". The policy will also ensure that a key landscape feature, i.e. the mature hedges on the boundary, is protected in accordance with policy EN1 of the RLPCS and with NPPF paragraphs 109 and 115.

### **POLICY 3: LAND AT PESTALOZZI**

**Proposals for housing development on land at Pestalozzi International Village, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be supported, provided the scheme:**

- 1. makes provision for 1 and 2 bed houses and flats, of no more than two storeys in height, a proportion of which will be made available as affordable homes giving first preference to eligible employees or volunteers in perpetuity;**
- 2. includes a viability appraisal that demonstrates the minimum number of open market dwellings required to cross-subsidise the refurbishment or replacement of the volunteers' accommodation;**
- 3. incorporates a landscape scheme that mitigates any visual impact on the surrounding countryside;**
- ~~3-4.~~ preserves the area of the site designated as Priority Habitat;**
- ~~4-5.~~ comprises appropriate works to improve Ladybird Lane provided they do not include any additional lighting;**
- ~~5-6.~~ identifies and agrees an alternative location for the estate management facility; and**
- ~~6-7.~~ demonstrates that any new access will have an acceptable impact on the character of the Brede Valley and demonstrated to be visually contained from public view points.**

69. This policy supports in principle the redevelopment of a brownfield site that is well-related to the existing Pestalozzi International Village development. In doing so, it accords with policy OSS3 of the RLPCS in respect of making effective use of previously-developed land and Policy EC3 in the effective use of employment sites. The site owner has indicated that a successful scheme will comprise between 6 – 8 dwellings.

70. Pestalozzi is an educational charity and major stakeholder that has been in the Parish for over fifty years. The charity brings young people from developing countries to continue their education in Sussex before they move to universities in England or abroad. They aim to take what they have learned back to their own countries. Pestalozzi is one of Sedlescombe's three largest employers and provides a wide range of different types of jobs. The initial indication from the work undertaken by the School (see the Site Assessments Report for further details) is that a scheme of approximately six to eight new dwellings will suit the constraints of the site and be sufficient to achieve the viability objectives.

71. The re-development is intended to facilitate the refurbishment/replacement of existing staff and volunteer accommodation as well as financially helping to secure Pestalozzi's future operations. It will also help Pestalozzi to retain and recruit staff and volunteers.

72. Although outside the Sedlescombe Development Boundary, the proposal is small-scale and will not adversely impact on the landscape character of the countryside. Low-level buildings and structural tree planting to the north east will ensure that the development fits into the landscape. The proposed mostly brownfield site is in close proximity to the existing cluster of buildings. The previous development comprised a building used in connection with the Pestalozzi Village and development will include the footprint of the demolished building. The site is situated along a quiet private lane within easy walking distance (approximately the same distance as recent developments at East View Terrace within the Development Boundary) of all the amenities of Sedlescombe Village as well as the public transport links to Hastings and Battle. The mixed housing and employment site will assist in reducing the need for travel.

#### **POLICY 4: LAND AT CHURCH HILL FARM, NORTH OF VILLAGE HALL**

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for approximately 10 to 12 dwellings on Land North of the Village Hall, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will be supported, provided:

1. the scheme comprises 2 and/or 3 bedroom dwellings;
2. the building orientation minimises the effect of the development on the scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
3. the layout and landscape scheme provide a buffer on the northern boundary to prevent the development being extended beyond the site boundary;
4. the landscape scheme retains the remainder of the land as natural greenspace and strengthens the hedgerow on the northern boundary of the site; and
5. the development is accessed from Church Hill:
  - a. such that the access arrangements for the development do not prejudice access to the sites allocated under Policies 7 and 8, and
  - b. in such a way so as to minimise the land required for the access road and the loss of the hedgerow to Church Hill;
- ~~5.6.~~ subject to a planning obligation being agreed to finance and deliver traffic calming measures to Church Hill prior to the occupation of the dwellings.

73. This policy allocates land on the northern edge of the village for a housing scheme which is entirely within the modified Sedlescombe Development Boundary and so is consistent with Policy 1 and with a number of relevant policies of the RLPCS.

74. The site comprises part of a sloping field on the east side of Church Hill, immediately to the north of the village hall. The land slopes upwards to the east from Church Hill. There is a public footpath that runs from south to north on the opposite side of the eastern boundary of the field that the housing allocation site is situated. Views of the proposed site from the footpath are limited because of the vegetation along the western boundary of the path. There is only one distant view of the site from the footpath at a field gate, just after the end of Balcombe Green. The site is not as visible from Church Hill as parts of the wider land area, owing to the levels and roadside vegetation.

75. A development of 12 houses would give rise to a density of 30 dwellings/hectare, assuming a net developable area of approximately 0.5 Ha (having made provision for the landscape buffer within the site). This compares very favourably with other recent developments in the area. The density



proposed reflects the fact that it is an edge of village location and is much lower than other recent developments.

76. The majority of the site lies within SHLAA Site SE15, which was positively assessed, subject to satisfactory access being resolved. The most suitable means of achieving the road access to the site would be via the existing village hall access. However, this would require the use of land that is not in the control of the land owner. Although that may still be the preferred solution for the respective land owners to negotiate, the policy cannot require such a 'ransom'. The highway authority has indicated that it would be feasible to provide a new access to the site from Church Hill, to the north of the existing access to the village hall, provided there was an appropriate separation between the village hall access and other access to new development. This access is off a stretch of road which is subject to a 50mph speed limit. A short distance to the south the limit is reduced to 30mph. Based on the speed limit, visibility splays of 2.4m x 150m would be required in either direction.

77. The highway authority has recommended that the 30mph be extended further to the north to a point beyond the proposed junction. The ESCC Road Safety team have indicated that they would be supportive of this subject to appropriate traffic calming measures. This would also give the opportunity for a gateway feature to the entrance to the village to be provided. It is considered that these issues could be financed from the proposed development with the appropriate legal agreements.

78. Given the importance of minimizing the effect of the development on the historic grassland and hedgerow of the site (which form part of SHLAA site SE14), the policy also requires that the developable area is confined to the area shown on the Proposals Map and the minimum land take of Site SE14 is used solely to achieve the road access. Further, the policy requires a landscape scheme that will retain the upper slopes of the site as a natural greenspace and will strengthen the buffer between the site and the AONB on its northern boundary. In addition, it requires that the road layout and landscape buffer are designed in such a way as to prevent any future extension of the development to the north.

## POLICY 5: LAND AT SEDLESCOMBE SAWMILLS

Proposals for a mixed-use development scheme at Sedlescombe Sawmills, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be supported, provided the scheme:

- 1. makes provision for an employment scheme, comprising the reuse and/or redevelopment of existing buildings for employment purposes increasing the square footage from 9,250 to approx. 12,000 sq. ft. provided the employment scheme is completed and available for occupation prior to the final occupation of the housing scheme;**
- ~~1-2.~~ preserves the area of the site designated as Priority Habitat; and**
- ~~2-3.~~ makes provision for a residential scheme, comprising only open market dwellings, provided:**
  - a. the number of dwellings is assessed to be the ~~maximum~~-minimum required to cross-subsidise the employment scheme, based on a submitted viability appraisal;**
  - b. the design of all the dwellings makes sufficient provision for dedicated office and/or workshop space for the benefit of the occupants;**
  - c. makes provision for a holiday accommodation scheme; and**

- d. includes the demolition of existing buildings and structures that detract from the scenic beauty of the adjoining landscape.**

79. This policy supports in principle the redevelopment of brownfield employment land and derelict premises for a mixed use development scheme comprising new employment, housing (6-8 properties) and tourism uses. It is intended to encourage the beneficial reuse of this site and is consistent with Policy EC3 of the RLPCS in this respect.

80. The Sawmills site has lain underused and in part derelict for many years. The landowner believes it is not economic to refurbish or redevelop the buildings for another sole employment purpose in this location, although firm evidence of local marketing efforts will be required to accompany a planning application in due course. The policy therefore encourages a mixed-use scheme to enable sufficient development value to be generated to cross-subsidise a viable employment scheme. It is expected that the employment scheme will comprise high quality, energy-efficient workshops designed to modern standards that will attract higher value-added businesses and/or self-employed people. At this scale, the site has the potential to contribute to the provision of rural employment floor space as set out in Policy EC2 of the RLPCS.

81. The initial indication of some feasibility work undertaken by the landowner (see the Site Assessment Report for details) is that a scheme of approximately six to eight new dwellings will suit the constraints of the site and be sufficient to achieve the viability objectives. It acknowledges that the site is remote from the village and therefore is not suited to a significant residential scheme. In which case, it requires that only the minimum number of only open market dwellings will be consented, based on the submission of a full viability appraisal, and that the employment scheme is open for occupation prior to the occupation of the dwellings.

82. The policy also recognises that providing for a new development scheme creates a scarce opportunity in the parish to realise tourism potential in the form of providing new holiday accommodation. It is on a bus route and is next to a footpath network and existing tourist attraction so is well suited to this purpose. However, the scale and type of this provision should also be justified in the viability appraisal.

83. Any proposal will be expected to demonstrate that the appearance of the scheme in the AONB landscape will lead to a significant enhancement and will include the clearance of all the old business units and sawmill structures.

84. The landowner has confirmed that the site will become available for a development scheme later in the plan period and that the provisions of this policy will be achievable, subject to a detailed scheme and viability appraisal.

85. In the assessment of its sustainability attributes, the site scored particularly well in respect of almost all the assessment criteria but especially in supporting the efficient use of brownfield land and enhancing the scenic beauty of the AONB landscape.

## **POLICY 6: LAND ADJACENT TO ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH**

**Proposals for housing development on Land Adjacent to St John the Baptist Parish Church, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be supported, provided the proposals:**

1. make provision on the northern part of the site for a residential scheme, comprising 1, 2 and/or 3 bedroom affordable and open market dwellings, provided the number of open market dwellings is assessed to be the ~~maximum-minimum~~ required to cross-subsidise the delivery of the affordable homes and of the community benefit scheme, based on a submitted viability appraisal;
2. make provision for a community benefit scheme, comprising:
  - a. a car park to serve the Church of at least 30 spaces, that can be used by cars and coaches for dropping off and collecting Church visitors;
  - b. the use of the Church facilities by the local community during the entire year and during evenings;
  - c. a renewable energy heating solution to service the new homes and the Church;
  - d. a restoration scheme of the Church, including interior alterations to make the space more usable for community activities;
3. make provision for both schemes to benefit from a single road access at a location off Sandrock Hill to the satisfaction of the local highway authority;
4. comprise a residential scheme layout and building orientation, and make provision for a significant landscape scheme, including the retention of the existing mature trees on its boundaries, that mitigate the impact of development on the scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
5. preserve the significance and setting of the Church, a Grade II\* ~~heritage-asset~~listed building.

86. This policy seeks to achieve two complementary outcomes: securing a number of long term community benefits – most especially the Parish Church which is the parish’s oldest building - and delivering affordable homes for local people. In doing so, the policy accords with Policy EN2 and Policy LHN2 of the RLPCS respectively. The site owner has indicated that a successful scheme will comprise approximately 8 dwellings.

87. The primary aim of the policy is to ensure a financially sustainable church and community services through a cross subsidy from the provision of homes. The initial indication from work prepared by the landowner (see the Site Assessments report for details) is that a scheme of approximately eight new dwellings will suit the constraints of the site and be sufficient to achieve the viability objectives. The subsidy will enable investment in providing a new visitor car park; in improving the repair and maintenance of a significant ~~heritage-asset~~listed building; and in enabling the church to accommodate a wider range of modern community facilities. The scheme will also make provision for a renewable heating system. The policy requires that only the minimum number of only open market dwellings will be consented to deliver affordable homes and the community benefit scheme, based on the submission of a full viability appraisal.

88. Future planning and listed building consent applications must give full consideration to preserving and enhancing the significance of the Grade II\* ~~heritage-asset~~listed building and its setting in the proposals for both the community and housing schemes. To that end, the policy requires the housing scheme to be on the northern part of the site, which is furthest away from the church. A future planning application must also demonstrate how the housing scheme will maintain the scenic beauty of the surrounding AONB landscape.

89. The Diocese has confirmed that the land is available for a development scheme and that the provisions of the policy will be achievable, subject to a detailed scheme and viability appraisal.

90. In the assessment of its sustainability attributes, the site scored particularly well in respect of most of the assessment criteria but especially in supporting the efficient use of land delivering significant social benefits.

## **POLICY 7: LAND AT GATE COTTAGE**

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for approximately 8 dwellings on Land at Gate Cottage, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will be supported, provided the scheme:

1. comprises 2 and/or 3 bedroom dwellings with a layout, building orientation and a landscape scheme that make provision for the retention of the existing mature trees on its boundaries and new structural planting to mitigate the impact of development on the scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that avoid harm to the amenities of adjoining dwellings by way of overlooking; and
2. is accessed from Church Hill, subject to a planning obligation being agreed to finance and deliver traffic calming measures to Church Hill prior to the occupation of the dwellings;  
and
- ~~2-3.~~ demonstrates that access arrangements will not prejudice access to the sites allocated under policies 4 and 8.

Although not essential to benefit from this allocation, favourable consideration will be given to proposals for the comprehensive development of the land with the adjoining Land at Church Hill Farm of Policy 8.

91. This policy allocates land on the northern edge of the village for a small housing scheme which is entirely within the modified Sedlescombe Development Boundary and so is consistent with Policy 1 and with a number of relevant policies of the RLPCS.

92. The site is situated on the west side of Church Hill, opposite the village hall some 0.5 kms to the north of the village centre. It is currently occupied by a semi-detached chalet bungalow which has been extended at its northern end. To the south of the property is an irregularly shaped area of land currently used by the owners of Gate Cottage as an extended garden for growing fruit and vegetables and keeping chickens. In total the land extends to 0.38 ha. This area of land is accessed to the rear of Gate Cottage and the adjoining property to the south before it opens out to a maximum width of 42 metres and maximum depth of 160 metres. The land is generally level. There are some trees on the eastern boundary. The southern and most of the eastern boundary is demarked by a stream that runs generally in a south west to north east direction. The trees along these boundaries are denser than on the western boundary and help screen the site from views from Church Hill. Immediately to the south is a small, irregularly shaped area of land. Immediately to the south of that there is a development site formerly occupied by a property known as Cartref, where there is a planning consent for a scheme of 7 dwellings.

93. A layout plan has been prepared showing the part demolition of the recent additions at the northern end of Gate Cottage (which would result in a 4 bedroom house) to provide an access road to serve between 8 and 10 additional dwellings. The net developable area is 0.34 hectares giving a density for 8 dwellings of 24 dwellings/hectare.



94. The site adjoins the proposed site allocation of Policy 8 on Land at Church Hill Farm. Ideally, both schemes would benefit from being planned and delivered together and to be served from one road access onto Church Hill. The highway authority has confirmed that such an arrangement is desirable but not essential. It has noted that the access to the site is off a stretch of road which is subject to a 50mph speed limit. A short distance to the south the limit is reduced to 30mph. Based on the speed limit, visibility splays of 2.4m x 150m would be required in either direction.

95. Whilst this could be provided to the south, due to alignment of the road, the neighbouring hedgerow and telegraph pole, the sight line to the north would fall below the standard. They have recommended that the 30mph be extended further to the north to a point beyond the proposed junction. The ESCC Road Safety team have indicated that they would be supportive of this subject to appropriate traffic calming measures. It is considered that these issues could be financed from the proposed development with the appropriate legal agreements.

## **POLICY 8: LAND AT CHURCH HILL FARM**

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for approximately 10 dwellings on Land at Church Hill Farm, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will be supported, provided the scheme:

1. comprises a residential scheme of 2 and/or 3 bedroom dwellings with a layout, building orientation and a landscape scheme that make provision for the retention of the existing mature trees on its boundaries and new structural planting to mitigate the impact of development on the scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that avoids harm to the amenities of adjoining dwellings by way of overlooking;
2. layout and landscape buffer on the western boundary prevent the development being extended beyond the site boundary; and
3. is accessed from Church Hill, subject to a planning obligation being agreed to finance and deliver traffic calming measures to Church Hill prior to the occupation of the dwellings; and
- 3.4. demonstrates that access arrangements will not prejudice access to the sites allocated under policies 4 and 7.

Although not essential to benefit from this allocation, favourable consideration will be given to proposals for the comprehensive development of the land with the adjoining Land at Gate Cottage of Policy 7.

96. This policy allocates land on the northern edge of the village for a small housing scheme which is entirely within the modified Sedlescombe Development Boundary and so is consistent with Policy 1 and with a number of relevant policies of the RLPCS.

97. The site adjoins the proposed site allocation of Policy 7 on Land at Gate Cottage. Ideally, both schemes would benefit from being planned and delivered together and to be served from one road access onto Church Hill. The highway authority has confirmed that such an arrangement is desirable but not essential. Discussions with the Highways Authority have indicated that it would be feasible to provide a new access to the site from Church Hill, and that an appropriate separation between Gate Cottage and the access to the new development is achievable.

98. It has noted that the access to the site is off a stretch of road which is subject to a 50mph speed limit. A short distance to the south the limit is reduced to 30mph. Based on the speed limit, visibility splays of 2.4m x 150m would be required in either direction. The Authority have recommended that the 30mph be extended further to the north to a point beyond the proposed junction. The ESCC Road Safety team have indicated that they would be supportive of this subject to appropriate traffic calming measures. It is considered that these issues could be financed from the proposed development with the appropriate legal agreements. The net developable area is approximately 0.33 Ha, giving a density for 10 dwellings of ~~30~~ 22 dwellings/hectare.

## **POLICY 9: LAND AT BALCOMBE GREEN**

**Development proposals for approximately 8 dwellings on Land at Balcombe Green, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be supported, provided the scheme:**

- 1. comprises a residential scheme of 2 and/or 3 bedroom dwellings with a layout, building orientation and a landscape scheme that make provision for the retention of the existing mature trees on its boundaries and new structural planting to mitigate the impact of development on the scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that avoid harm to the amenities of adjoining dwellings by way of overlooking;**
- 2. layout and landscape buffer on the northern boundary prevent the development being extended beyond the site boundary; and**
- 3. is accessed from Orchard Way only.**

99. This policy supports the principle of developing land on the northern edge of the village for a small housing scheme which is entirely within the modified Sedlescombe Development Boundary and so is consistent with Policy 1 and with a number of relevant policies of the RLPCS:

100. The site is currently covered by mature trees but an arboricultural survey indicates that it is possible to carve out a developable area within the site, thereby retaining trees on the edge of the site to screen it from the rear gardens of adjoining residential properties. The alignment of those plots is such that the scheme will not encroach into the countryside to the north. In which case, the policy is also consistent with Policy EN5 of the RLPCS in protecting biodiversity and green space. Access to the site can only be achieved via Orchards Way to its south. To ensure full regard is had to these matters, a planning application should be accompanied by a full tree survey and an assessment of how the loss of trees has been kept to a minimum.

101. However, it is known that this requires the use of third party land and that the site itself is in more than one ownership. As it is not possible for a scheme to come forward in the current circumstances, the policy only supports, rather than allocates the land for, development. In doing so, it sends the land interests a signal that the principle of development is supported. As the total housing site allocations of the Neighbourhood Plan are able to meet the target set for the village by Policy RA1 of the RLPCS, the development of this site, although desirable, is not required.

102. The net developable area is 0.7 hectares giving a density for 8 dwellings of 11.4 dwellings/hectare.

## **~~POLICY 10~~ POLICY 9: LAND AT PUMP HOUSE YARD**

**Proposals for housing development on Land at Pump House Yard, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be supported, provided the proposals:**

- 1. sustain and enhance the significance of the Sedlescombe Conservation Area;**
- 2. are accessed from Gammons Way;**
- 3. retain as many of the existing mature trees on the site as possible; and**
- 4. include a planning obligation to provide a new public car park of at least nine spaces and a footway from the car park to Gammons Way for the benefit of users of the adjoining primary school.**

103. This policy supports the change of use of an existing employment site within the modified Sedlescombe Development Boundary to a residential use and to deliver an important community benefit. It is consistent with Policy 1 and with a number of relevant policies of the RLPCS, and especially OSS3, in respect of its location and in reusing previously-developed land to deliver new homes. It will also help deliver improvements for the benefit of users of the adjoining primary school in line with Policy CO1 and has had regard to enhancing this part of the Conservation Area, in line with Policy EN2. In this respect, the existing trees on the site contribute to the character of the Conservation Area in this location and a scheme should seek to avoid or minimise any loss.

104. These benefits are considered sufficient to outweigh the loss of a very small area of employment land, as per RLPCS Policy EC3, as it is poorly located in terms of its close proximity to residential properties and access. A scheme has been prepared that replaces the existing buildings and structures on the site with two new dwellings and a new car park for school staff, together with a footpath between the existing village car park and Gammons Way giving parents dropping off and collecting children safer access to the school. It will therefore not only enhance the Conservation Area by replacing buildings that detract from its character but also deliver an important community benefit ensuring pupils can safely access the school directly from the car park rather than along the lane. The current availability of public car parking in the village is too limited to meet the demands of the popular school, where currently approximately two thirds of the pupils are from outside the Parish and who are dropped off and collected by car twice a day.

## **~~POLICY 11~~ POLICY 10: LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

***The Neighbourhood Plan designates land at Street Farm and land at Red Barn Field, as shown on the Proposals Map, as Local Green Spaces and will resist proposals for any development unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.***

105. This policy designates two locations in the Parish as Local Green Spaces in accordance with the criteria of paragraph 77 of the NPPF. In doing so, it seeks to protect both sites from development for the plan period and beyond. Further details are provided in the separate 'Local Green Space' report in the Evidence Base.

106. Both sites are in close proximity to the community of Sedlescombe village, and especially the Street Farm site, which is directly adjacent to approximately 40% of the dwellings in Sedlescombe. They are both local in character, not extensive tracts of land and are demonstrably special to the local community as important green spaces. Red Barn Field is owned and maintained by the Parish Council as a nature park and an important habitat under threat.

107. The consultations undertaken on the Neighbourhood Plan make it clear that Street Farm is demonstrably special to the local community and that its loss to development would be unacceptable. As acknowledged in the 'Landscape Assessment of the Brede Valley' (2010), this land which forms part of the Brede Valley, it is an attractive green area giving open views of the High Weald countryside and Valley and providing a welcome green gap in an otherwise built up frontage. The 'Local Green Space' report provides a detailed rationale for this designation including the known ecological value of this site.

108. A planning application in 2014 for housing development on a significant part of this open space generated many letters of objection. The application was refused and dismissed at appeal by the



Secretary of State. A subsequent planning application was submitted in 2016 for 16 new homes, together with land to be used as school playing fields and public open space. The site was granted planning permission in 2017. The Plan ~~In which case, the only effective, long term planning policy solution is to~~ designates the land to be used as school playing fields and public open space, as a Local Green Space to make it clear to the land owner and the local community that development on the land would always be considered inappropriate and would not be considered more favourably than other potential housing sites when planning the growth of the village for the foreseeable future. A separate 'Local Green Space' report in the evidence base to the Plan sets out this case. At the regulation 14 consultation 88% (419 responses) of those responding supported the designation of both green spaces with 61% specifically supporting Street Farm and 27% specifically supporting Red Barn Field. Only 5% objected to the designation of Street Farm's designation.

109. In essence, the Parish Council continues to consider the land meets all the necessary criteria for designation. It considers the NPPF explicitly allows for communities to designate Local Green Spaces to "rule out new development", which will often be instigated by what the community perceives to be a threat that a cherished open space will be lost to development. In addition, it considers the land is clearly demarcated by its developed<sup>26</sup>, highways and field boundaries on each side. It is distinct from the fields that go on to form the open countryside further to the south and east in the valley and therefore performs a crucial transition role from settlement into countryside. It cannot therefore be described as extensive and for that reason, the Parish Council has determined that the site continues to qualify as a Local Green Space.

110. The adjoining school has requested that the longer term possibility of extending its playing fields into the open space is considered to be consistent with the Local Green Space designation. The Parish Council considers that proposal to be an exceptional circumstance in principle, as may be any necessary utilities works.

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<sup>26</sup> Taking into account the area of built development for 16 new homes granted permission at Land at Brede Lane- RR/2016/1837/P.

## PLAN DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

111. The Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered and implemented over a long period and by different stakeholders and partners. Flexibility will be required as new challenges and opportunities arise over the Plan period up to 2028.

### ***Housing Growth***

112. The Parish Council will work with developers and the Local Planning Authority to deliver incremental growth over the Plan period.

### ***Local Character***

113. The Parish Council will work with landowners and stakeholders to bring the sites identified in the Plan to fruition whilst maintaining the character and local distinctiveness of the parish.

### ***Local Economy***

114. The Parish Council will encourage businesses to improve local employment opportunities and services for local people.

### ***Transport***

115. The Parish Council, through its Parking & Traffic Advisory Group, will work to find ways to improve road safety and address speed and parking issues.

### ***Review***

116. The Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan is a “living” document and as such will be reviewed every five years.

## SUMMARY

117. The Neighbourhood Plan process has given local residents the opportunity to consider what is important to them about living in the parish of Sedlescombe.

118. Throughout, local residents’ appreciation of living in a Village with good community spirit and beautiful surroundings has been uppermost and a wish that nothing is done to spoil it for future generations. Many fear that development will put far too much additional pressure on our already overstretched Primary School and Doctors’ Surgery and traffic and parking issues remain high on the agenda especially in Brede Lane and around The Green.

119. Not only has the Neighbourhood Plan allayed these fears, it has struck the right balance between being positive about development and protecting and enhancing the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of which we are all proud.

120. Sedlescombe’s Plan, whilst addressing the need for housing in the Plan period, both market and affordable, ensures that the historic core of the Village is protected as are the precious green spaces on the edges of the built up area. As well as development within the existing boundary, use of brownfield sites in the wider parish is a sensible and sustainable option. It will bring with it considerable community benefit for residents, businesses, charities and stakeholders creating new jobs and expanding and reviving employment space whilst reducing the need for travel.

## GLOSSARY

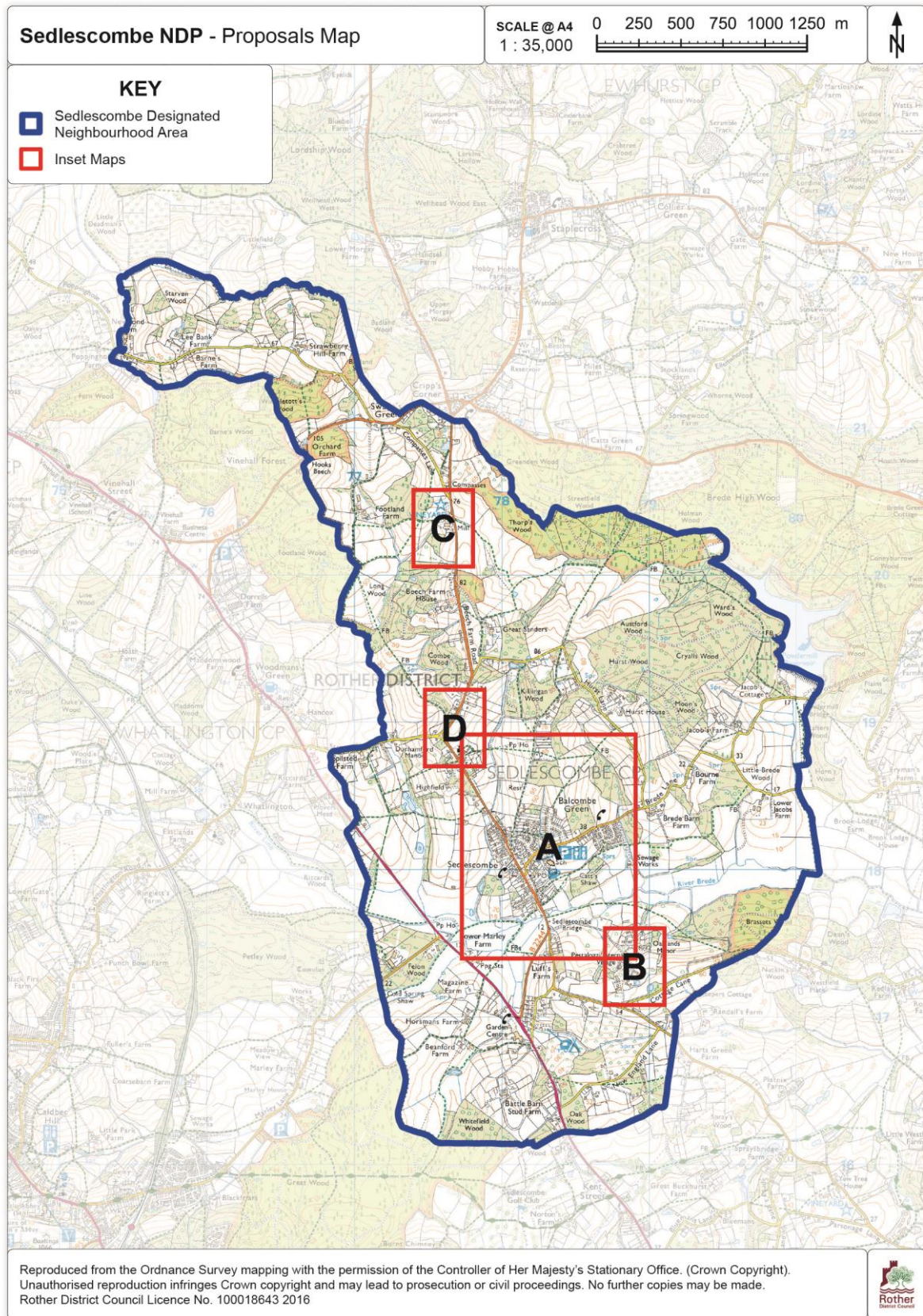
Acronym	Subject	Explanation
	Affordable Housing	Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. Affordable housing does not include low cost market housing.
	Affordable Rented Housing	Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).
	Conservation Area	An area designated by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are additional controls over demolition, minor developments and the felling of trees.
	Consultation Plan	A Consultation Plan accompanying the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan is required by the Localism Act. The Consultation Plan must set out what consultation was undertaken and how this informed the Neighbourhood Plan.
	Core Strategy	A Development Plan Document setting out long-term spatial vision and objectives, and containing both strategic policies and generic policies which will apply to all development proposals in the local authority area as a whole.
	Evidence Base	The researched, documented, analysed and verified basis for preparing the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan. It consists of many documents produced over a period of years, many of which have been produced by Rother District Council as part of the process of developing its Core Strategy.
	Examination	An independent review of the Neighbourhood Plan carried out in public by an Independent Examiner.
	Flood Plan/Flood Risk Zones	Areas identified by the Environment Agency, marking areas as high (zone 3), low to medium (zone 2), or little or no risk (zone 1)
	Habitats Regulations	The European Union Habitats Directive aims to protect the wild plants, animals and habitats that make up our diverse natural environment. The directive created a network of protected areas around the European Union of national and international importance. They are called Natura 2000 sites. If development is likely to affect a Natura 2000 site, an assessment under the Habitats Regulations is required.
	Independent Examiner	Anyone with appropriate qualifications and skills who meets certain requirements set out in the Localism Act. This could be a planning consultant or other planning professional, an employee of another local authority or a planning inspector.

Acronym	Subject	Explanation
	Infrastructure	All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, etc.
	Intermediate Affordable Housing	Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.
	Listed buildings	Buildings and structures which are listed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural and historic interest and whose protection and maintenance are the subject of special legislation. Listed building consent is required before any works are carried out on a listed building.
	Localism Act	An Act of Parliament that became law in April 2012. The Act introduces a new right for local people to draw up 'Neighbourhood Development Plans' for their local area.
	Market housing	Housing for sale or for rent where prices are set in the open market.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	The National Planning Policy Framework was published by the government in March 2012. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Neighbourhood Plans have to conform to the NPPF.
	Plan Period	The period for which the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan will set policy for Sedlescombe. This will be from adoption of the Plan until 2028.
	Public Open Space	Open space that is open to the public and is normally owned and managed by a public organisation such as Thame Town Council or South Oxfordshire District Council.
	Referendum	A general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision. In the case of the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan, the referendum will decide whether or not to adopt the Plan.
RSL	Registered Social Landlord	Independent housing organisations registered with the Tenant Services Authority under the Housing Act 1996.
RDC	Rother District Council	Rother District Council is the planning authority for Sedlescombe parish.
SPC	Sedlescombe Parish Council	Sedlescombe Parish Council is the parish authority for Sedlescombe. The Sedlescombe Parish Council is a service provider for the Sedlescombe community, an influencer and conduit for local views, working effectively and efficiently in partnership with other organisations.
SNPPG	Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan Project Group	An advisory committee of Sedlescombe Parish Council without executive powers (not entirely made up of parish councillors). In August 2013, the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan Project Group's work on creating the Neighbourhood Plan was transferred to an executive committee of Sedlescombe Parish Council made up entirely of parish councillors.
	Site Assessments	Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan Committee has assessed



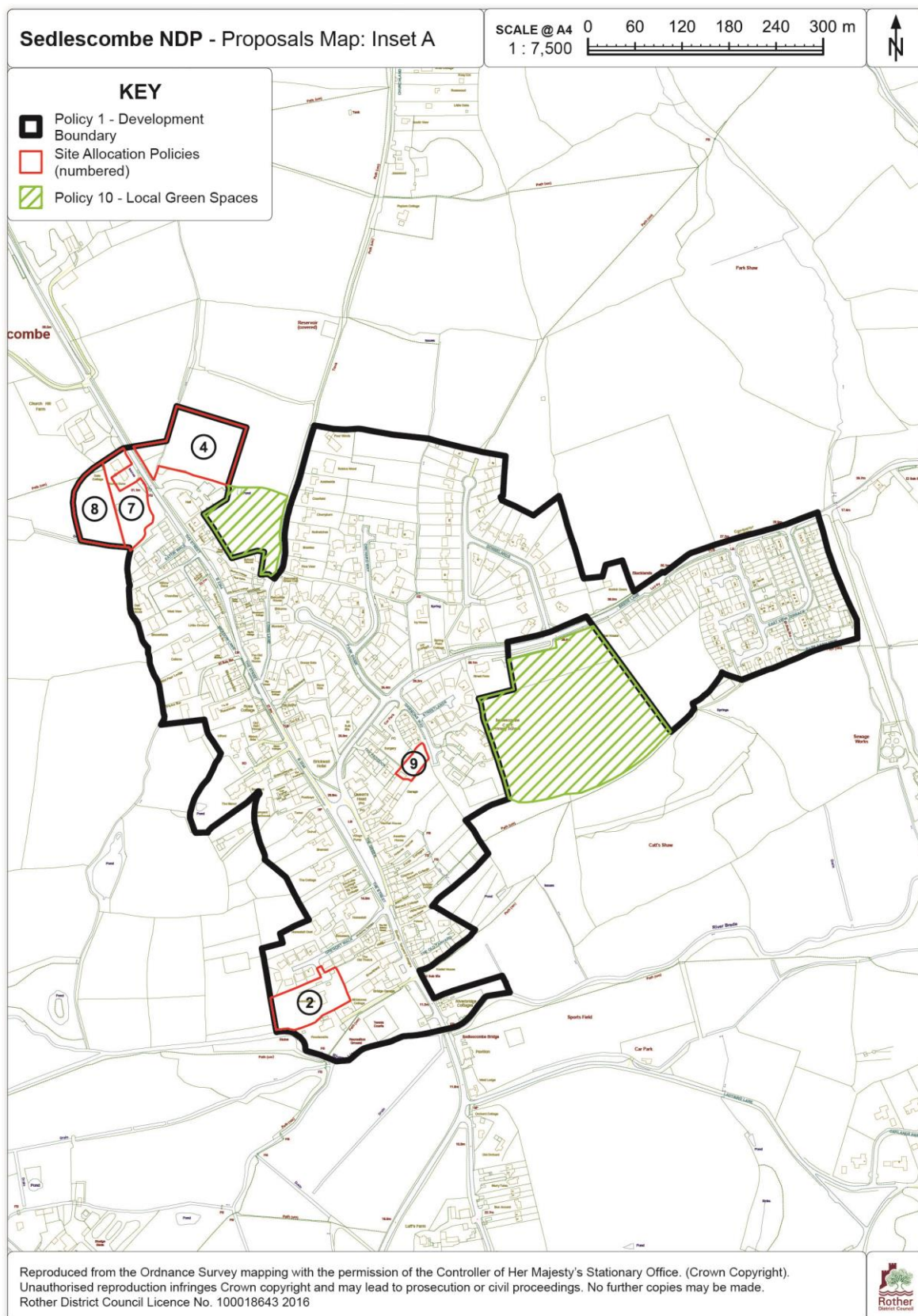
Acronym	Subject	Explanation
		each of the Exhibition Sites against AONB, economic, social and environmental principles and published the resulting document.
	Social Rented Housing	Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	Assessments made compulsory by a European Directive (the SEA Directive) for Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Plans where required. Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan Committee carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment on all Exhibition Development Sites.
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	A process of appraising policies for their social, economic and environmental effects, which must be applied to all Development Plan Documents.
SuDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems	A drainage system that controls the rate and quantity of run-off of surface water from developments. It replaces the conventional practice of routing run-off through a pipe to a watercourse, which can cause problems with flooding. SuDS minimises run-off by putting surface water back into the ground on site through measures such as permeable paving, underground infiltration blankets and drainage swales (similar to traditional ditches). Where surface water must still be taken off-site (because, for example, the site is underlain by clay that reduces the permeability of the ground), features to slow down the rate of run-off are used – these may include ponds or underground storage tanks to store water and over-sized pipes.
	Sustrans	A charity whose aim is to enable people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys made every day. Sustrans are responsible for the National Cycle Network.
	Windfall Sites	Sites not allocated for development in the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan that unexpectedly come forward for development.

# PROPOSALS MAP





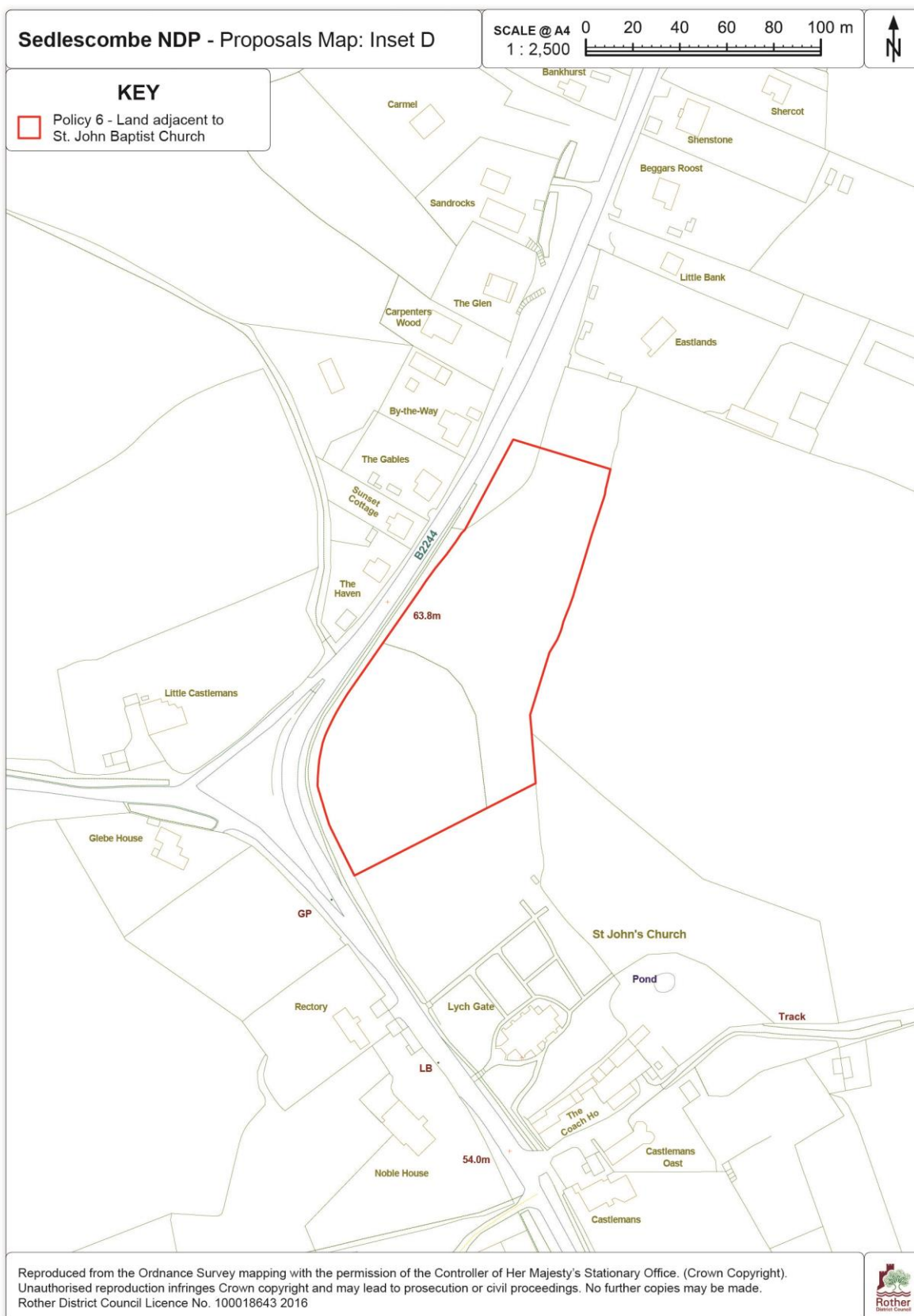
## INSET MAPS













~~Submission~~ Sedlescombe ~~Parish~~ Neighbourhood Plan ~~Report~~  
Produced by Sedlescombe Parish Council

~~September~~ December 2016-2017