



Rother District Local Plan 2020 – 2040

Settlement Study – Part 2

Draft (Regulation 18) Version - April 2024

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Please telephone **01424 787668** or email
DraftLocalPlan@rother.gov.uk

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Introduction

The work undertaken in Part 1: Main Report and Methodology of the Settlement Study has examined and explained the important considerations in assessing the overall sustainability of settlements. By following the stated methodology, it is possible to identify settlements, in principle, that are potential sustainable locations for growth, as well as those locations which could be made more sustainable through additional development. This is supported by providing a strength and weakness assessment for each settlement, which provides the gap analysis to indicate how overall sustainability can be improved.

The sustainability modelling considers several factors, including the presence of specific 'essential' services, the general level/number of services and facilities and employment opportunities available, public transport accessibility and broadband access.

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.

The development potential of individual settlements has primarily been assessed in light of their sustainability. However other factors such as local needs, accessibility, and environmental factors/constraints have also been considered. Collectively, these factors have indicated which areas may benefit from some growth and development to ensure the vitality, and sustainability of settlements.

In this part of the study, settlements have been appraised on an individual basis. This has highlighted any needs associated with a settlement that could be addressed through potential development, and therefore development contributions. Examples could be improvements to help meet community needs such as the lack of essential services and sustainable transport options.

Brought together, these factors will provide an important evidence base to support the development strategy for the district, indicating 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 sustainability modelling and constraints

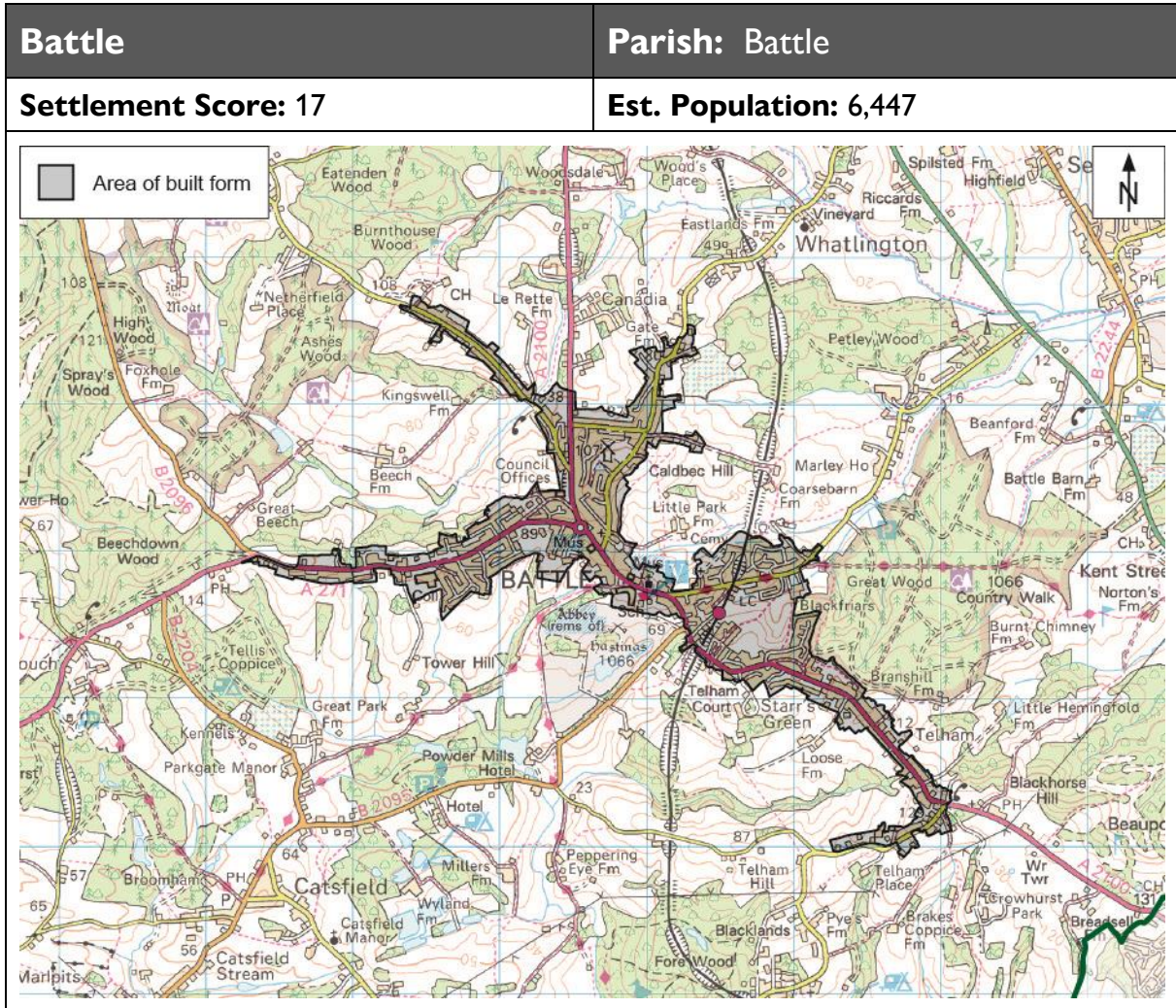
work undertaken in Part 1. The judgement considers each factor in relation to the specific circumstances in each settlement.

The criteria for inclusion of areas of built form/settlements were outlined in Part 1, under the Methodology. To recap, the criteria outline an estimated population of at least 100 people and for the area of built form to have access to at least one of the four essential services and facilities.

In total, there have been 101 areas of built form identified within the district, including the Bexhill subdivisions of Central Bexhill, Sidley and Little Common, and these have all been assessed in the Settlement Study.

Of the 101 areas of built form which have been identified, 72 have been determined to be relevant settlements for the purposes of this Review and are summarised in full. These 72 areas will be categorised as 'settlements' for the basis of the new Rother Local Plan (2019-2039).

The 29 remaining areas of built form which do not meet the criteria are listed at the back of this document under 'Other Rural Settlements'.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Battle is a small market town of considerable character and historical significance, located astride one of the principal High Weald east-west ridges, it has a population of approximately 6,447. Battle sits around 6.5km from coastal town of Hastings and 8km from the town of Bexhill-On-Sea. Nearby villages include Catsfield to the southwest; Crowhurst to the South and Netherfield to the northwest.

Battle is a ridge-top town with a central focal space and High Street which hosts many events, the town has strong links to countryside and Wealden views. It is of generally linear shape, meaning that peripheral areas along Telham Road and North Trade Road are over a 2km walk to the High Street. Development of this area has extended over time along the ridge and the pattern of development means that movement around and across the town is channelled through the central high street. Access to Battle is via the A2100 from the north and south, the A271 from the east and the A21 from the northwest.

Housing and Population

The population of Battle is an estimated 6,447, which is based on the number of dwellings, 2,803, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Battle is the world-renowned site of the 1066 Battle of Hastings which gave the town its namesake. The town has developed around the now popular tourist attraction of the Abbey of St Martin. The Abbey was built by William the Conqueror in 1071 on the northern ridge of the battlefield to atone for the bloodshed of the battle, with the altar marking the spot where Harold was killed.

The high street of Battle has many Georgian buildings and the cottages and houses adjacent to the Abbey date back to the 1700's. The parish church of St Mary's dates to the 12th century and at the Northern end of the high street the Almonry, built in 1090, now houses the Town Council offices and the Battle Museum of Local History,

Battle is host to 176 listed buildings, which in addition to the Abbey of St Martin, also include the Pilgrims Rest, the Kings Head Inn and Battle Station. The High Street itself features a number of burgage plots to the rear. There is a large Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) covering the central and southwestern areas of the town, which defines the location of a medieval and post-medieval town and 11th century battle site. A similar area, also including the Battlefield, is a Conservation Area.

Battle is well known for its bonfire society the 'Battle Bonfire Boys' and has hosted an annual bonfire and fireworks display for many years. Another popular event is the annual Battle of Hastings re-enactment.

Landscape Character

Battle is wholly within the High Weald National Landscape (NL), a designated AONB, at the eastern end of the southern sandstone ridge. Battle has a compact layout, due to its restrictive position in the High Weald NL and other environmental and heritage designations. The town also sits atop a heavily wooded landscape.

The wider landscape surrounding Battle consists of Combe Haven Valley to the south and Brede Valley to the north, and the South Slopes of the High Weald to the west.

Combe Haven Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Combe Haven Valley is bound by the Battle Ridge to the north and is characterised by a series of small winding High Wealden stream valleys, rolling wooded countryside, historic field patterns and open, flat winding valley floor and wetland in the Combe Haven Basin. There are also extensive areas of ancient woodland and scattered historic farmsteads typical of the High Weald, while the intricate terrain of small, winding valleys are abundant with wooded ghylls. Adjacent to Battle is the Registered 1066 battlefield and parkland, while the Hastings to London Railway Line cuts across the eastern part of the area.

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Brede Valley is characterised as the broad valley of the River Brede with a flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, wide vistas from the enclosing ridges and well wooded side slopes with scattered farmsteads and orchards. However, Battle is in the west of the landscape area, and is more associated with the head of the Brede valley, which has extensive areas of Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland, many of which are ghyll woodlands, which are a key characteristic of the High Weald. The historic designed landscape and important archaeological site of Beauport Park is located to the southeast of Battle, to the north of Hastings.

South Slopes of the High Weald – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

This area falls gently southwards from the Heathfield Battle ridge to the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels, and features wide views to the South Downs from many areas. The landscape area is deeply dissected into innumerable north-south ridges, valleys and ghylls, while being an intricate small-scale landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows. It also features many scattered small farm ponds and hammer ponds as relics of the iron industry which thrived in this area. It the source of the River Cuckmere into which most streams in the western part of the area drain and the Ashbourne stream catchment in the east.

For more focused assessments on smaller landscape areas around and including the settlement, please see the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#).

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

Of the areas identified within the Assessment, the southern section of the field to the north of houses along Virgins Lane and adjacent to the A2100 is considered to have scope for development, allowing for a soft transition between developed areas and the wider AONB. Development should not extend any further than this however, as what is beyond forms part of the landscape. It is confirmed that larger areas of adjoining countryside to the north of Battle High Street, to the west of Netherfield Road, are highly sensitive, and have no capacity for development. Land to the east of the new development at Fieldway is also sensitive, although it may be possible that some development close to the urban edge is acceptable although generally problematic. It is also considered that the adjoining landscape to the south of Hastings Road to the eastern side of the Railway is generally sensitive and unsuitable for development, although some areas close to the built-up edge may accept some more sensitive development, including potential infill opportunities. Finally, an enclosed northern extension to the Beech Farm Estate employment area is considered acceptable in landscape terms.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The central area of Battle contains the majority of the town, including the High Street, battlefield, Blackfriars and North Trade Road.

There are areas of scattered deciduous woodland directly adjacent to the north and south of the main area of the settlement, including several adjacent parcels of ancient woodland. Battle Cemetery to the northeast of the High Street is a Local Wildlife Site, while the broader area adjacent to the north east is within the Great Wood Area Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

There are no significant flood related issues other than sporadic minor areas that are the subject of surface water flooding, including a number of watercourses that flow away from the built-up area atop the ridge.

The southern parts of Battle consist of the ribbon development extending along the A2100/Hastings Road to the southeast of the train station.

There are significant areas of ancient and deciduous woodland, including Great Wood, which bounds much development to the north of Hastings Road. There is a small SSSI accessed from Telham Lane called Blackhorse Quarry.

There are no significant flood related issues other than sporadic minor areas that are the subject of surface water flooding, including a number of watercourses that flow away from the built-up area atop the ridge.

Any development to the east of Telham Lane is currently restricted by the designated Battle/Bexhill/Crowhurst and Hastings Strategic Gap.

To the east of Claverham Community College sits an area of somewhat nucleated residential development, while to the west of here the settlement takes the predominant form of ribbon development either side of North Trade Road.

There are large areas of ancient woodland, to the north and south of the settlement here, some parcels of which bound the settlement boundary. These areas of ancient woodland form part of the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

Western areas fall into the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area, and there are numerous areas that are subject to surface water flooding which descends from the ridgetop. There is also a Source Protection Zone to the south west of Claverham College.

North Battle includes residential ribbon development along Caldbec Hill, Whatlington Road and the A2100 north of the High Street.

There are scattered areas of ancient woodland to the north of Battle.

Many of the roads within the north of Battle are susceptible to surface water flooding, with some areas of development including the Lillybank development are also subject to surface water flooding. There is a large Source Protection Zone between North Trade Road and the A2100.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

The essential services in Battle consist of a secondary and primary school (as well as independent school Battle Abbey), two doctors' surgeries, dentists and pharmacies, respectively. Jempsons supermarket is located in the market square and also contains a post office. It is notable that Jempsons does not open on Sundays, and generally has a limited range compared to larger supermarkets in nearby Hastings and Bexhill. There is also a small Co-op store on the high street and a Tesco Express convenience store located at the petrol station. With one each essential service, Battle scores 4 in this sustainability category.

Service Level

In addition to the essential services listed above, Battle has the highest range of other facilities and services in the District after Bexhill and Rye. The notable services in Battle include restaurants, pubs, two convenience stores (over 200sqm). Battle also has a good range of community facilities including sports and recreation facilities and two community halls. Battle scores 3 in this sustainability category.

See Figure 2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The Battle employment area provides a good amount of employment. There is some employment in the retail and hospitality industries, given the number of shops, pubs and restaurants within the town. There are two employment estates within 2km of Battle. The nearest is Rutherfords Business Park off of Marley Lane, which has a range of uses including industrial, warehouses, offices, and educational uses (currently vacant). There is also the Beech Farm estate to the northwest of North Trade Road, which hosts an eclectic mixture of local businesses, including a brewery, mechanics, beauty, stained glass and plumbing. Battle scores 4 in this sustainability category.

Public Transport

Public transport in Battle is considered good, with a train station which has direct services to London and Hastings. There are a range of bus services, including daily services to nearby towns and the Conquest Hospital in Hastings. While there is no single good bus service with more than 10 buses per day, the 304 and the 305 run effectively the same route, while adding up to more than 10 buses per day. As a consequence, they combine to form one good bus service. There are also several community bus services, although these are less frequent. . With a good bus service and a train station, Battle scores 4 in this sustainability category.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds up to 300Mbps, is available in Battle and it scores 2 in this category.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	3
Employment Opportunities (5)	4
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	17

Current development commitments

The existing Battle Neighbourhood Plan (adopted in 2022), through Policy HD2 allocates a total of three sites within Battle that together would provide approximately 240 dwellings. These allocations are set out below:

- BA31a Glengorse: approximately 15 dwellings
- BA36a Land at Caldbec House, Caldbec Hill: approximately 5 dwellings

- BA11 Blackfriars: approximately 220 dwellings. This allocation is subject to planning permission RR/2020/2307/P for 200 dwellings, although development has not yet commenced.

In addition to the above allocations, there are four permissions that are currently under development for a total of 158 dwellings. These permissions are set out below:

- Lillybank Farm: subject to the development of 50 dwellings as per RR/2017/1136/P
- North Trade Road (South): subject to the development of 25 dwellings as per RR/2017/2390/P
- North Trade Road (North): subject to the development of 25 dwellings as per RR/2018/2666/P
- Tollgates: subject to the development of 63 dwellings as per RR/2020/165/P

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd highest population in District, at 6,447 • Full range of essential services, including secondary school • Higher level of services and facilities – third behind Bexhill and Rye • Train station with connections to Hastings and London • High Street has a clear concentration of services and facilities, which provides good walkability for more central areas • Relatively good level of employment
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant environmental and landscape constraints to further development, including areas of ancient woodland and exposed ridgetop position • Limited supermarket options • Lack of 'good' frequency bus services • No college for higher education • Linear development form means that peripheral areas can have a lengthy walk to access services and facilities

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Battle is a market town within the rural west of the district. Its sustainability score indicates that the town's community is able to carry out most of its daily activities locally. It also functions as an important hub in respect of its services and facilities within the surrounding rural areas, while its train station serves the surrounding rural areas and includes connections to Hastings and London. It is considered to be a sustainable settlement, along with Rye and Sidley & Little Common catchment areas.

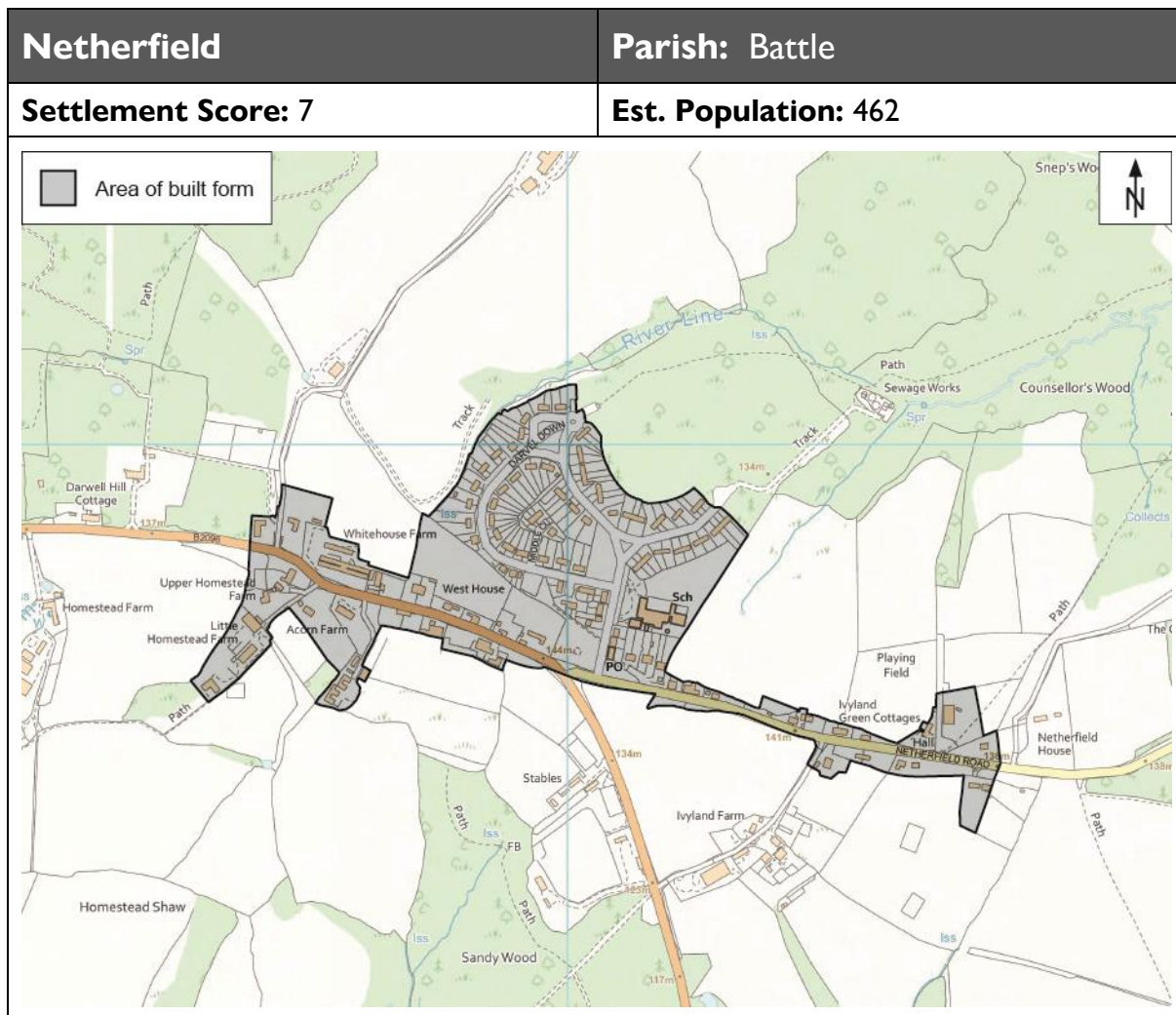
In addition to warranting further development within the town itself, Battle's high sustainability score may also serve to predicate further development in a network of nearby otherwise remote rural settlements where these have potential for good public transport connections with Battle.

Opportunities for Improving Sustainability

The existing Battle Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for a total of approximately 240 dwellings, as well as there being permissions (not including Blackfriars) for the development of a further 158 dwellings. While the majority of allocated dwellings are now subject to planning permissions as part of the Blackfriars development, any consideration of future opportunities for growth needs to consider carrying forward the extant Neighbourhood Plan allocations. Beyond these extant allocations, further development options should be considered in less sensitive areas of the settlement. Where Battle currently lacks a 'good' frequency bus service, the potential to be the focus of a network of interconnected rural settlements may provide an opportunity to increase the frequency and range of bus services accessible within Battle.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

An increase in Battle's population would have the potential to support the existing services within Battle, while also fostering new demand that could support additional services and perhaps facilitate the attractiveness of Battle for the development of an additional supermarket (subject to site availability and demand).



Settlement Overview

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.

Netherfield is some 4.3km to the northwest of Battle but is otherwise in a fairly remote section of the District having only very small neighbouring settlements. The centres of Hastings and Bexhill are 14km and 11.5km to the southeast respectively.

Housing and Population

The population of Netherfield is estimated at 462, which is based on the number of dwellings, 201, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Netherfield is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it was reported to have had an annual value to the lord Robert Count of Eu of 10 shillings.

The majority of Mountfield consists of modern development, which as noted above is generally situated at Darvel Down. There are only 3 listed buildings within the settlement, although there are further isolated listed buildings scattered within the surrounding countryside.

Landscape Character

Given its prominent ridgetop location, Netherfield sits astride three landscape character areas, with the South Slopes of the High Weald to the south, the Darwell Valley to the north and the westernmost tip of the Brede Valley to the east.

South Slopes of the High Weald – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The South Slopes of the High Weald falls gently southwards from the Heathfield Battle ridge to the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels, and is an intricate small-scale landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows. The area is deeply dissected into innumerable north-south ridges, valleys and ghylls. Netherfield in particular features wide views to the South Downs.

Darwell Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Darwell Valley LCA is bounded by the Brightling ridge to the north and the Netherfield ridge to the south. It is a landscape of bold heavily wooded ridges and secluded valleys and is

one the most densely wooded areas of the high Weald giving a sense of endless forest and a character of exceptional remoteness.

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Brede Valley generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes. However, the landscape surrounding Netherfield is more associated with the head of the Brede valley, which is characterised by undulating countryside and wide vistas across the landscape, with extensive areas of Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Netherfield as part of area 'N1', which is described below:

N1 – Playing Fields

This is the countryside surrounding the ridge top village. It is open agricultural landscape to the west, south and east. There are areas of woodland to the north enclosing large fields with some hedges and tree belts. The settlement is a ridge top village centred on a cul-de-sac with mainly post-war houses. There are some older buildings in scattered farmsteads and along main roads.

This landscape is described as being of good quality and a high value AONB area. It has a moderate-high character sensitivity to change and a high visual sensitivity. The capacity for housing and business development is identified to be low. It is considered that capacity would be limited to infill within the existing developed areas.

There may be some scope in larger enclosed plots and brownfield land. The potential for mitigation is identified as moderate, with some scope to strengthen landscape structure replace lost field boundaries and link up existing woodlands.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

The Assessment considered an area to the north of the existing Neighbourhood Plan allocation. While there may be some potential capacity for development, it would need to

be close to the village edge. At the same time, the area is sensitive given its ridgetop location, while concern is expressed as to the cumulative impact that further development would have on the scale and character of the settlement.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

In terms of designations, Netherfield is wholly within the High Weald NL, and wholly within the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Small areas of ancient and deciduous woodland are adjacent to areas in the north of the settlement, while significant areas of ancient woodland are local to the settlement, including Darwell Wood to the north west, and Sandy Wood to the south. The River Line SSSI and the Limekiln Wood Complex Local Wildlife Site are some 230m to the north east of the settlement.

Given its elevated topography, Netherfield is generally free from flood risk, although areas to the north are susceptible to surface water flooding due to the presence of watercourse tributaries relating to the River Line.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Netherfield, being a small and rural settlement, has a decent range of essential services, these being a convenience store, a post office and a primary school. The nearest doctor's surgery is in Battle. Netherfield scores 3 for this area of sustainability.

Service Level

There are some additional services and facilities in Netherfield, which include a Recreation Ground, a Nursery Pre-School, two restaurant/pubs, a café and a village hall. Netherfield scores a 1 for this area of sustainability.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment in Netherfield is limited due to the smaller level of services and therefore resulting limited job opportunities. There are 2 restaurants and a convenience store which offer a small level of local employment. Netherfield is located close to the Beech Farm Estate (which is within the settlement of Battle) which is host to a number of commercial buildings which are used for a variety of industries including, beauty, stained class produced, mechanics, plumbing and a brewery. Overall Netherfield scores a 1 for its employment opportunities, which is comparable to other settlements of equivalent size.

Public Transport

Netherfield has a very limited amount of public transport. There are 4 community bus services, that collectively make up either one or two services between Monday and Friday, with routes to Battle, Heathfield, Mountfield, Sedlescombe and the Sainsbury’s supermarket located in Hastings. In addition, there is a school time Monday to Friday service to Claverham College. With only limited bus services, Netherfield scores a 0 for its public transport services.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, which is defined as having download speeds of between 30mps and 300mps, is available within the settlement. This gives Netherfield a score of 2.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	0
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	7

Current development commitments

The existing Battle Neighbourhood Plan in Policy HD2 allocates two sites within Netherfield that together would provide approximately 33 dwellings. These allocations are set out below:

- White House Poultry Farm: approximately 23 dwellings
- Swallow Barn off B2096: approximately 10 dwellings

In addition to the above allocations, a site at Darvel Down is subject to planning permission RR/2017/2308/P for 25 dwellings.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Three essential services, including primary school, convenience store and post office
- Comparable range of services for size of settlement
- Relative proximity to Battle – some 4.3km – which has a good range of services and facilities

Settlement Weaknesses

- Poor public transport connectivity with only limited bus services
- Remote within the District, with only very small neighbouring settlements
- Landscape constraints due to topographically prominent location within the AONB adversely impact on development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

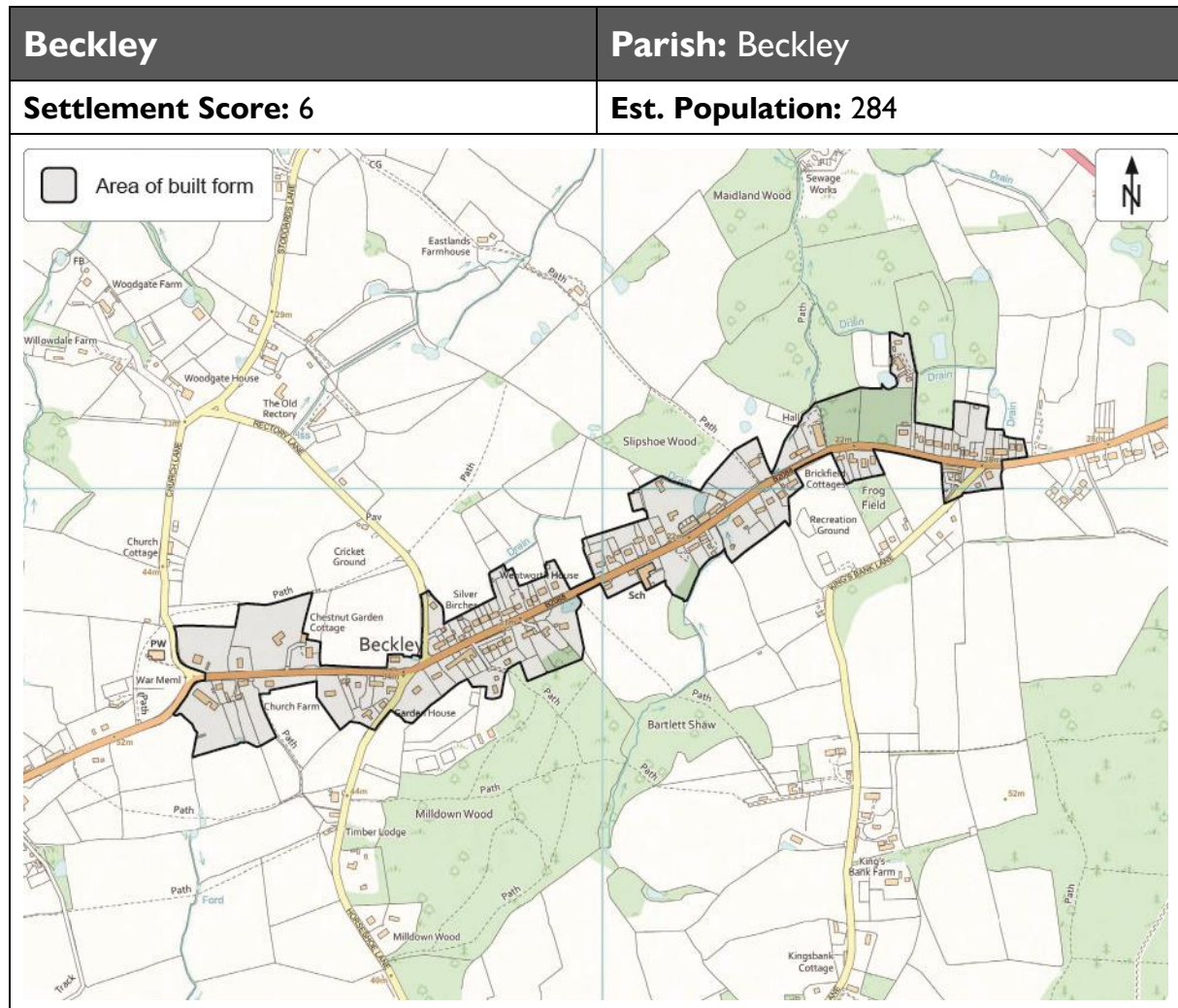
Netherfield is a remote rural settlement. Its relationship with Battle and having three essential services means that some development could help its community to live better locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connected to Battle. In spite of its three essential services, overall Netherfield is considered to have a low overall degree of sustainability, alongside other smaller villages within the district.

Opportunities for Growth

If not yet developed, the three Neighbourhood Plan allocations should be carried forward. There may be further opportunities for development in the less landscape sensitive parts of the village. Overall sustainability can be improved through improving the range of local services and public transport accessibility through a cluster/network of rural settlements that are connected to Battle. Given the limited capacity for development within the village, an increase in the frequency and range of bus services is likely to be the most significant means of improving sustainability.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The development of the existing allocations could support the development of a very small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area. However, there is otherwise little capacity for further development.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Beckley is a historic village with ribbon development straddling an ancient east-west route, which is characteristic of many villages in the High Weald NL. The undeveloped gaps in the otherwise built-up frontage along the main road have the effect of bringing the countryside into Beckley, giving the village a semi-rural feel. The countryside surrounding the village is remote and tranquil.

The village is located some 7.5km northwest of Rye. Immediately to the east is the village of Four Oaks, with the settlements of Clayhill very slightly to the west and King's Bank slightly to the south. Beckley is connected to both Four Oaks and Clayhill via footway along the B2088. The neighbouring villages include Northiam (3km to the west) and Peasmersh (3km to the east).

Housing and Population

The population of Beckley is estimated to be 384, which is based on the number of dwellings, 129, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.4 persons per dwelling. If considered with the populations of Four Oaks (304) and Clayhill (57), the wider Beckley settlement area has a combined population of 645, although this wider settlement area is particularly diffuse, spanning some 2.5km in length.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Beckley's origins can be traced back to the Saxon settlement of Beccanlea in AD880. The settlement continued into the medieval and post-medieval periods, with the Church of All Saints built in the 11th century.

The woodlands surrounding Beckley and Four Oaks 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.

There are 26 listed buildings in the village mostly dotted along its long main street. Fine Georgian houses are typical, many of which have been listed for their historic and architectural interest. Most of the village is covered by an Archaeological Notification Area, relating to the location of the abovementioned Saxon settlement.

The village, along with the adjacent settlements of Clayhill and Four Oaks, feature a relatively concentrated number of listed buildings, lending the settlement a historic

character. Any development would have to be considered for its potential to adversely impact on this character. Moreover, the open gaps between the village's built form are an integral part of its rural character, warranting further consideration in respect of any new development.

Landscape Character

Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Beckley sits somewhat centrally within the wider Lower Rother Valley landscape character area which is characterised by the broad valleys of the lower reaches of the River Rother and the secondary reaches of the Tillingham River. The valleys are surrounded by rolling well-wooded countryside affording long views to Kent. The central area is heavily wooded, particularly to the south of Beckley; with much of this being ancient woodland, although there are also extensive areas of conifer plantations. The area features Typical High Weald scattered development of farmsteads, hamlets and large country house estates. Larger settlements within the area are on the ridge tops with typical ribbon development extending along the main roads.

The [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) identifies one main character area for the village, B1 - Yew Tree Cottages. This is described below:

B1 – Yew Tree Cottages

This area includes most of the village, except for its most western extent, as well as the landscape to the north and south of the village and some areas surrounding the neighbouring village of Four Oaks. The farmed landscape on either side of the long linear village is generally enclosed and of varying quality. Key features of the area include weather board houses and mature oak trees in woods and field boundaries.

It has been defined as a good-high quality, high value AONB area with low to moderate character and visual sensitivities. It has a moderate capacity to accept housing development and a low capacity to accept business development. There is potential for development in some of the enclosed fields, but on a small scale only and in character with the ribbon

development. It is desirable to retain the existing gaps between settlements and retain the Green Infrastructure and landscape buffer to the countryside.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

The Assessment reinforces the importance of open gaps within Beckley's linear settlement pattern, as they afford views out into the countryside and are integral to the village's rural character. While in some of these gaps a limited amount of development in a way that retains their openness, there are often other constraints such as historic field boundaries and adjacent listed buildings that provide additional constraints to development. In addition, given its linear settlement pattern, roadside development is preferable in order that this existing pattern is maintained, and the settlement does not extend into the countryside.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Overall, the village is relatively unconstrained, however the constraints that are present are important, namely that it is within the High Weald NL, and is effectively bounded north and south by the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The area surrounding the village is flat and even, with an area of Ancient Woodland to the south and parcels of deciduous woodland along the northeast edge of the village. Many of these woodland parcels have been identified as priority habitats in the Priority Habitats Inventory.

Small areas of the village may be at risk of some occasional surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

In terms of essential services, Beckley has only a primary school, and therefore scores 1. The nearest location for convenience shopping and a Post Office is Jempsons supermarket in Peasmarsch, some 3km to the east. The nearest doctor's surgeries are in Northiam and Peasmarsch. The nearest secondary schools are found in Rye and Tenterden to the north.

Service Level

Beckley's services are shared with the adjacent settlements of Four Oaks and Clayhill. In addition to the primary school, Beckley has access to a nursery pre-school and a village hall, as well as the Jubilee Field sports pitch, a play area and All Saints Church. The Rose and Crown pub is a short walk away in the neighbouring settlement of Clayhill. The nearest dentists are in Northiam, while the Jempsons supermarket in Peasmarsch has a pharmacy. Overall, Beckley's service level is very limited, and it scores 1 for its range of facilities and services.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Beckley itself has minimal employment opportunities, and it scores a 0. Nearby Four Oaks contains a small industrial area along Hobbs Lane, which includes frozen food manufacturer Ebrofrost UK Ltd.

Public Transport

Beckley is served by the 313 Bus which has 7-8 services a day, and has stops in Northiam, Peasmarsch and Rye. With an average frequency bus service, and no train station, Beckley scores 2 for public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Beckley, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1

Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are no DaSA allocations within Beckley itself, although there are two allocations in neighbouring Four Oaks for a total of 20 dwellings. There are otherwise no significant development commitments within Beckley.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school • Closely related to Four Oaks and Clayhill, which creates a larger settlement area and opportunities for shared services • Relative proximity to services within Northiam and Peasmarsh
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly linear and dispersed development form reduces walkability • Access to very limited services and facilities • Only an average frequency bus service • Minimal local employment provision • Relatively isolated from larger settlements within the District • Open AONB landscape, including intermittent open structure of the village limits development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

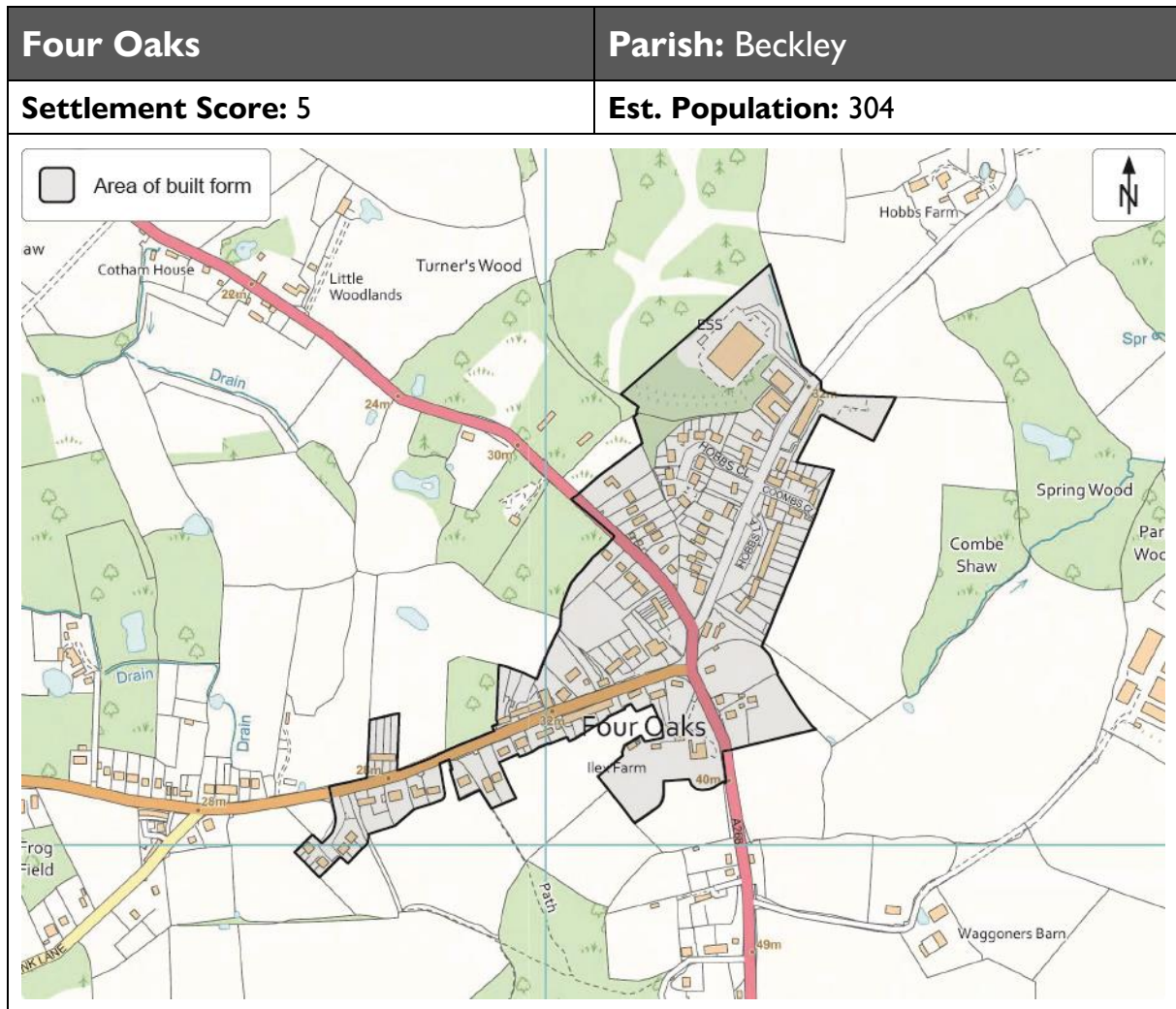
Beckley is ultimately a small and remote rural settlement, and it is considered to have a low degree of sustainability. It has a very limited service level, and it is expected that residents would need to travel to larger neighbouring settlements, including Northiam, Peasmarsh and Rye, in order to meet their day to day requirements.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Its relationship to Northiam, Peasmarsch and Rye further afield, means that access to local services could be most significantly improved through a higher frequency of bus services as part of Beckley's inclusion within a network of rural eastern settlements focused on the market town of Rye. There may be some limited scope to improve local services through a small amount of development in more enclosed areas around the village, as well as carrying forward any undeveloped DaSA allocations in adjacent Four Oaks.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The landscape assessment indicated that there may be some capacity for small scale development within more enclosed fields within the village, although its scale may not be sufficient for the support of new services and facilities.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Four Oaks, in the parish of Beckley, is a historic village that has grown up at the junction of the A268 and B2088, immediately to the west of the village of Beckley. Four Oaks is located some 7km northwest of Rye and the neighbouring villages of Northiam (3.5km to the west) and Peasmarsch (2.5km to the east)

Housing and Population

There are some 138 dwellings within the village of Four Oaks, as defined by the area of built form shown on the map above. The average household size for the parish of Beckley is 2.2, which gives the village an estimated population of 304. If considered with the population of Beckley (284) the wider settlement area has a combined population of 588.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The historic core of the village can be traced back to 1320, when it was known as Bromenesmythe. The settlement continued into the medieval and post-medieval periods and was recorded as Brownsmiths Oaks in 1724. The first instance of being known as Four Oaks was recorded in 1795. Ribbon and infill development in the 19th and 20th centuries, along with a small amount of more modern development has defined the settlement's current boundaries.

The woodlands surrounding Beckley and Four Oaks 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.

There are 12 listed buildings in the village, mostly within the historic core of the settlement, which date from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Four Oaks is a Historic Settlement within the High Weald NL and as such the historic settlement pattern should be protected. Informal fieldscapes that match, or closely match, historic field boundaries surround the village on all sides and the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields, bounded by hedgerows and woodlands, should be maintained.

Landscape Character

Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The village is situated in High Weald NL 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 Flatropers Wood and Bixley Wood to the South. There is an unspoilt open aspect to the east towards Beckley across pasture interspersed by hedgerow trees. Four Oaks sits somewhat centrally within the wider Lower Rother Valley landscape character area which is characterised by the broad valleys of the lower reaches of the River Rother and the secondary reaches of the Tillingham River. The valleys are surrounded by rolling well-wooded countryside affording long views to Kent. The central area is heavily wooded, particularly to the south of Beckley; with much of this being ancient woodland, although there are also extensive areas of conifer plantations. The area features Typical High Weald scattered development of farmsteads, hamlets and large country house estates. Larger settlements within the area are on the ridge tops with typical ribbon development extending along the main roads.

The [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) identifies one main character area for the village, 'B1' and 'B2', which are described below:

B1 – Yew Tree Cottages

This area includes most of the village, except for its most western extent, as well as the landscape to the north and south of the village and some areas surrounding the neighbouring village of Four Oaks. The farmed landscape on either side of the long linear village is generally enclosed and of varying quality. Key features of the area include weather board houses and mature oak trees in woods and field boundaries.

It has been defined as a good-high quality, high value AONB area with low to moderate character and visual sensitivities. It has a moderate capacity to accept housing development and a low capacity to accept business development. There is potential for development in some of the enclosed fields, but on a small scale only and in character with the ribbon development. It is desirable to retain the existing gaps between settlements and retain the Green Infrastructure and landscape buffer to the countryside.

B2 - Coombs

This landscape area covers the landscape to the east of the village. This is an area of large open fields and is more open than most of B1, but similar in character. The area is typically ribbon development along an ancient route way which straddles a road junction at Four Oaks.

It is a good-high quality, high value AONB area with moderate character and visual sensitivities. It has a low capacity to accept change for housing and a low capacity to accept change for business. The open landscape is sensitive to change, however there may be potential for some infill development close to the existing roads and built up area.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The village is wholly within the High Weald NL, and is almost entirely surrounded by the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area, which is encroached by the northern end of the settlement. The area surrounding the village is flat and even, with areas of deciduous woodland on all sides a short distance away from the edge of the settlement. There is a large parcel of deciduous woodland on the north west edge of the village. The open field to the east is backed by ancient woodland.

Small areas of the village may be at risk of some occasional surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Beckley Primary School is counted as being accessible to residents of Four Oaks, and therefore Four Oaks scores 1 in terms of essential services. As with Beckley, the closest convenience shopping is most locally available by way of the Jempsons supermarket in Peasmarsch 2.5 km away, while secondary school options most likely include Rye and Tenterden (which is located in Kent).

Service Level

In general, there are no services and facilities within the village to speak of though the neighbouring village of Beckley has a limited number of services, with some of these within easy walking distance. In addition to the primary school, these include a nursery pre-school, play area and sports pitch. Overall, there are minimal services in Four Oaks, and it scores 0. A wider array of services and facilities are available in the larger villages of Northiam or Peasmarsch.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Four Oaks has minimal employment opportunities, and it scores a 0.

Public Transport

Four Oaks is served by the 313 Bus which has 7-8 services a day, and has stops in Northiam, Peasmarsch and Rye. With an average bus service, and no train station, Four Oaks scores 2 for public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Four Oaks, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2

Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5
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Current development commitments

There are two DaSA allocations within Four Oaks, which combined total 20 dwellings. These are set out below.

- BEC1: Land east of Hobbs Lane, is allocated for 14 dwellings
- BEC2: Land south of Buddens Green, is allocated for 6 dwellings

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Closely related to Beckley, which provides access to some facilities and services, including a primary school
- Relative proximity to services within Northiam and Peasmarsh

Settlement Weaknesses

- No facilities and services of its own (the very few that are accessible are found in Beckley)
- Only an average frequency bus service
- Minimal employment
- Relatively isolated from larger settlements
- Open AONB landscape, including intermittent open structure of the village limits development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Four Oaks is a small and remote rural settlement and has a low potential for sustainability. Ultimately it has a minimal service level and low sustainability score, and it is expected that residents would need to travel to larger neighbouring settlements, including Northiam, Peasmarsh and Rye, in order to meet their day-to-day requirements.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

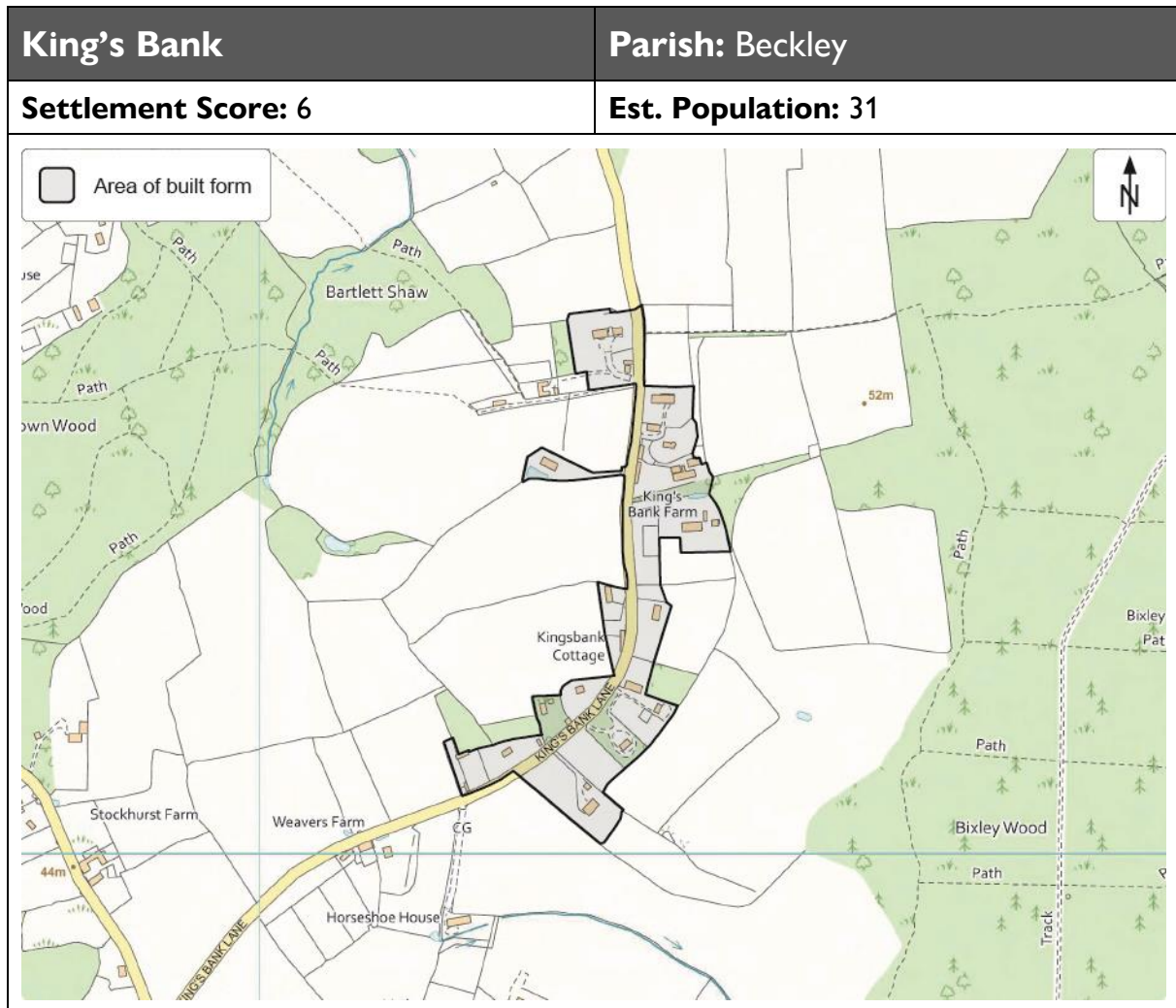
Its relationship to Northiam, Peasmarsh and Rye further afield, means that access to local services could be most significantly improved through a higher frequency of bus services as

part of Four Oaks' inclusion within a network of rural eastern settlements focused on the market town of Rye.

There may be some limited scope to improve local services through a small amount of development in more enclosed areas around the village, as well as carrying forward any undeveloped DaSA allocations, although the greatest potential to improve sustainability for existing residents is through improved frequency of buses.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The landscape assessment indicated that there may be some capacity for small scale development within more enclosed fields within the village, although its scale may not be sufficient for the support of new services and facilities, which are minimal as they stand.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

King's Bank is a small collection of scattered dwellings in the parish of Beckley, along a narrow winding country road called King's Bank Lane. It is located just to the south of Beckley village and some 7km northwest of Rye. The nearest larger villages are Northiam, 3.5km to the northwest, and Peasmarsch, 3km to the east.

Housing and Population

The population of King's Bank is an estimated 31, which is based on the number of dwellings, 14, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Historic Landscape Characterisation data suggests that King's Bank can trace its origins back to the medieval period, when a John King settled at what is now known as King's Bank Farmhouse in 1296. In the 20th century a number of small farmsteads and cottages were established, along with some small-scale ribbon development.

A medieval assart fieldscape lies to the west of the settlement, with more modern fieldscapes to south and east. The surrounding pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows, match or closely match, historic field boundaries.

There are two Grade II listed buildings in the hamlet which date back to the 17th and 18th centuries.

Landscape Character

Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Kings Bank sits somewhat centrally within the wider Lower Rother Valley landscape character area which is characterised by the broad valleys of the lower reaches of the River Rother and the secondary reaches of the Tillingham River. The valleys are surrounded by rolling well-wooded countryside affording long views to Kent. The central area is heavily wooded, particularly to the south of Beckley; with much of this being ancient woodland, although there are also extensive areas of conifer plantations. The area features Typical High Weald scattered development of farmsteads, hamlets and large country house estates. Larger settlements within the area are on the ridge tops with typical ribbon development extending along the main roads.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The hamlet and surrounding land are wholly within the High Weald NL and the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. It is surrounded by open fields bounded by hedgerows and there are large areas of Ancient Woodland further out.

King's Bank has almost no areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding except along King's Bank Lane to the north of the settlement.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Beckley Primary School is less than 1km from the population weighted centre of King's Bank, and therefore it scores 1 for having access to one essential service. That said, in spite of Beckley's close proximity, there is no adjacent footway alongside the narrow and winding King's Bank Way to connect King's Bank to Beckley - with the consequence that services within Beckley cannot be considered safely accessible by means of walking.

Service Level

There are no services and facilities within the settlement to speak of, however the neighbouring village of Beckley has a limited number of services that, in addition to the primary school, also include a pre-school, village hall, sports pitch, play area and church. These facilities and services provide King's Bank with a service level score of 1. Again however, the accessibility of Beckley's services is questionable, given that there is no acceptable means of walking to Beckley from the settlement. A wider array of services and facilities are available in the larger village of Northiam and Peasmarsh.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The settlement itself has minimal employment opportunities, and it scores a 0. Nearby Four Oaks contains a small industrial area along Hobbs Lane, which includes frozen food manufacturer Ebrofrost UK Ltd.

Public Transport

There is no public transport available within King’s Bank. Beckley is serviced by the 313 Bus which has 7-8 services a day, and has stops in Northiam, Peasmarsch and Rye. With an average bus service within 1km of the settlement, King’s Bank scores 2 for public transport, although as mentioned previously, Beckley is not considered walkable.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in King’s Bank, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are no significant development commitments within King’s Bank.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of the very small number of services within Beckley, including its primary school, are within 1km. • Relative proximity to services within Northiam and Peasmarsch
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small settlement – population under 50 • No services or facilities within the settlement itself • No walking access to Beckley, or any footways within settlement • Accessible only by narrow, winding country lane • Minimal employment • Relatively isolated from larger settlements • Open AONB landscape and rural nature of the settlement, significantly limits development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

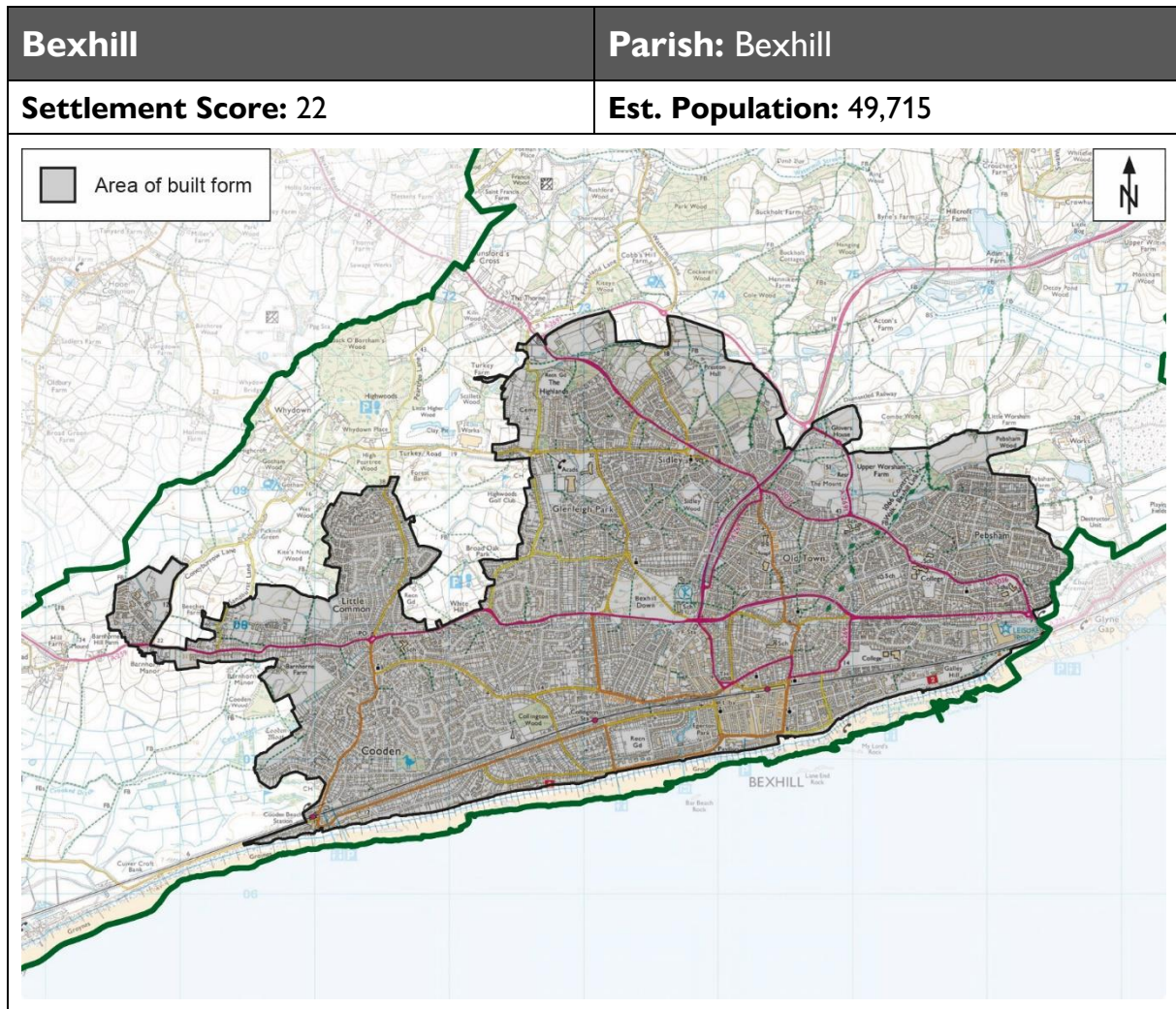
Kings Bank is a very small and remote rural settlement with no services of its own, and no acceptable means of walking to those in Beckley. It is wholly expected that residents would need to travel to larger neighbouring settlements, including Northiam, Peasmarsch and Rye, in order to meet their day-to-day requirements. It has a low potential for sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

There are practically no opportunities to improve its sustainability. Given its size and entirely rural situation, there is no capacity for development that could have the potential to improve services within the settlement. In addition to its tiny population size, its remote position and narrow access road means that there is also limited scope for extending regular bus routes into King's Bank itself.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There is no scope for any significant development given the settlement's size and wholly rural situation.



Settlement Overview

Introduction and built form

Bexhill is a seaside town in East Sussex on the south coast of England between Hastings and Eastbourne, sitting on the western edge of the district. It is by far the largest town in Rother, consisting of roughly 50% of the district's total population. The town has close economic ties with Hastings but has its own distinct character. It was a fashionable seaside resort in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century but like similar coastal towns it has struggled to regenerate and reinvent itself. However, the town is regarded as an attractive place to live, and it has become one of several towns in the South East to which retirees are attracted.

The majority of the town centre and the seafront of Bexhill are located south of the east – west railway, while other civic functions such as the Town Hall and the town centre’s major supermarket are located just to its north. The mainly terraced buildings of the town centre lie on flat land and the beach, with a grid pattern of streets which mainly lie at right angles or parallel to the shore. The main commercial streets are Sackville Road and Devonshire Road, which run north-south and Western Road and St. Leonard’s Road, which run east-west. Devonshire Road is particularly wide, with trees in places and was clearly laid out as the principal shopping street for the town.

Beyond the Town Centre, Bexhill is comprised of several merged former villages and other areas, most notably Sidley and Little Common District Centres. Bounding the northeast of the town centre is the historic Bexhill Old Town which sits on a hill to the immediate north east of the town centre. Other notable residential areas include Pebsham to the east and Collington and Cooden to the west.

To the east, Bexhill has grown around the A259, before terminating at Combe Haven. In this area there is a small, but important, strategic gap between the urban areas of Bexhill and the Bulverhythe western edge of Hastings, as set out currently by DaSA Policy DEN3. The strategic gap includes the Combe Haven Valley and its tributary valleys, which form the Combe Haven Country Park. Residential development extends along the edge of the Combe Valley in an area known as Pebsham, while north east Bexhill has been planned as a sustainable urban extension, with, following the grant of outline planning permissions over 1,000 homes and an associated primary school, commercial space, a new public park and playing fields being developed to the north of Wrestwood Road, as well as the Bexhill Enterprise Park adjacent to the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road (Combe Valley Way), which was opened in 2015.

North Bexhill focuses on the area surrounding the District Centre of Sidley and is bounded to the north by the recently built A2681 North Bexhill Access Road (NBAR). Sidley is considered separately in greater detail as it forms a district centre and neighbourhood within Bexhill. On the edge of this area is the Bexhill cemetery, along with the quarry along Turkey Road. To the south of this is the Highwoods Golf Course and Broad Oak Park which form a green buffer between the Glenleigh Park built up area and Little Common to the west. Beyond the north Bexhill area to the northwest is the boundary with Wealden District and

the small settlement of Lunsford Cross (within Wealden), and directly north of NBAR is open land with a series of wooded areas, farms and isolated properties.

To the west of the town centre is the area of Collington, before extending to Cooden in the southwest, and the Little Common District Centre around the A259. Further ribbon development stretches along the A259 Barnhorn Road, terminating at the former Northeye Prison, with small scattered isolated dwellings after this point. There is emerging residential and commercial development to the north of Barnhorn Road, as well as recent residential permissions south of Barnhorn Road and to the west of Cooden adjacent to Cooden Golf Club. To the far west, the Northeye site is currently allocated for residential development and sports pitches in the Local Plan. The Pevensey Levels to the immediate southwest of Barnhorn Road forms a natural boundary and constraint to Bexhill's expansion to the southwest.

Bexhill lacks prime accessibility by road and rail to other major towns and locations across the southeast. It is connected via trunk road access from the A21 and A22 to the north and the A27/A259 coast road, with further road connections between Bexhill and Hastings being provided by the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road. The A259 which passes east-west through the centre of Bexhill is often at capacity and is also required to deal with wider traffic as well as local Bexhill traffic. The rail line provides direct routes to Eastbourne, Hastings and Ashford, but connections to London are via these stations.

Beyond the western edge of Bexhill, is a series of narrow country lanes with a rural character. Coneyburrow Lane which joins Sandhurst Lane both stretch north to the Whydown area, which then meets Turkey Road/Whydown Road which stretches east/west and Peartree Lane with stretches north/south. High Woods SSSI forms an important environmental constraint in this area.

Housing and Population

The population of Bexhill is estimated to be 49,715. This is based on the number of dwellings, 23,674, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The earliest reference to Bexhill is of a settlement called Bexelei, when it was granted charter by King Offa of Mercia in 772AD. Bexhill was subsequently mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it was recorded as having a population of 80 households, putting it in the largest 20% of settlements recorded. What is now known as Bexhill Old Town was the location of the original manor house built probably in 1250, whose ruins are found in Manor Gardens.

During the 1880s the 7th Earl De La Warr began to reshape the modern seaside town of Bexhill as we know it today. He promoted it as a health resort. Most of the buildings in the town centre were built between 1895 and 1905 under the patronage Viscount Cantelupe. The iconic De La Warr Pavilion is a landmark on the seafront. The building was opened in 1935 by King George VI and cost £80,000. The De La Warr Pavilion is now Grade I listed by English Heritage.

Bexhill's town centre has a strong urban grain made up of late Victorian/early Edwardian architecture. The north south running Devonshire Road was originally laid out as Bexhill's principal shopping street and, along with the parallel Sackville Road and interconnecting Western Road, forms the main commercial area within Bexhill. The town centre still has a wide range of shops, retail outlets and services but has struggled to retain its competitive edge with strong competition from Hastings and Eastbourne. In recent years, the purpose-built out of centre Ravenside Retail Park has also attracted larger multiples to relocate there. As a consequence, the town centre has struggled to compete. The impact of e-commerce on Bexhill's town centre is an issue that will be explored through a Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Assessment study which is being prepared in support of the emerging Local Plan.

There are two Conservation Areas within Bexhill, these being the Old Town Conservation Area, and the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area. Bexhill Old Town is also within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) - which defines among other things the site of a medieval & post-medieval market town and contains 37 of the 69 listed buildings within Bexhill. The Conservation Area covering the town centre recognises its Victorian and

Edwardian origin and homogenous architecture, including its elaborate ornamentation and detailing. Being more modern in comparison, the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area contains 6 listed buildings, as buildings from after the 1830s are rarely added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest. The remaining listed buildings within Bexhill are generally scattered throughout the settlement and are not concentrated in any particular area of the town.

Landscape Character (as identified in the East Sussex Landscape Character Areas)

Bexhill Urban Area

Bexhill is a quiet, residential seaside town with imposing but decorative early Victorian and Edwardian seafront facades, facing spacious seafront lawns. The Grade I listed De La Warr Pavilion that was built in the 1930s is particularly distinctive. Special features of the town include a number of seafront properties having ornate 'Colonial' wooden verandas and Mogul influences, the Georgian architecture of Bexhill Old Town, and 'The Down' - which is a unique and well treed open space in the centre of the urban area. Key issues identified for the town include the existence of extensive suburban areas that lack features and focal points, and the absence of any strong pedestrian and cycle linkage between the seafront/town centre and Old Town. It is also noted that a tree strategy would strengthen the landscape character of the town and create local/neighbourhood distinctiveness, including suburban areas.

Combe Haven Valley

The Combe Haven Valley Landscape Character Area forms the largest border with Bexhill, starting from north Bexhill to the east of Ninfield Road and extending north and east of Pebsham, before moving south to meet the sea at Glyne Gap.

The Combe Haven Valley is a series of small winding High Wealden stream valleys which converge on a tract of levels to join the Combe Haven basin. Travelling north to south, wooded countryside in the north gives way to a well farmed landscape, before reaching the focal open, flat, winding valley floor and wetland to the south. The Filsham reed beds at the eastern end of the Combe Haven Valley are one of the largest areas of reedbeds in East Sussex, with wetland birds being a feature in the landscape. The Hastings to London railway

line cuts across the eastern part of the area, while the Bexhill-Hastings link road crosses east to west along the north of the Combe Haven Basin. There are urban fringe intrusions around the edges of Bexhill and Hastings. To support the rural nature of this area and provide greater access to green space,, the Combe Valley Countryside Park was established. It forms a green buffer between the built-up urban areas of Bexhill and St Leonards.

South Slopes of the High Weald

While Bexhill is several kilometres south of the High Weald NL boundary, the town is bound by the South Slopes of the High Weald Landscape Character Area along its north western boundary between Ninfield Road and the immediate north of Barnhorn Road.

The South Slopes of the High Weald represents the landscape that falls gently southwards from the Heathfield Battle ridge to the Low Weald and Pevensy Levels. It is an intricate small-scale landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows, and contains frequent scattered small woods and shaws, many of which are semi-natural ancient deciduous woodland. There are many scattered small farm ponds and hammer ponds as relics of the iron industry which thrived in this area. The area features a close network of winding lanes with scattered settlements and farmsteads. To the north, this landscape area becomes deeply dissected into innumerable north-south ridges, valleys and ghylls, which enjoy wide views to the South Downs.

Pevensy Levels

The southwest of Bexhill is bound by the Pevensy Levels Landscape Character Area, which incorporates the development to the south of Barnhorn Road, and also includes Northeye, and the landscape to the west of Bexhill generally.

The Pevensy Levels are an extensive flat open grazing marsh, that constitute one of the largest continuous wet grazing systems (3500ha) in southeast England. The Levels are crossed by reed fringed winding river channels in open wetland pasture and an intricate pattern of manmade ditches as historic field enclosures and drainage systems. There are few trees and hedges but scattered willow and thorn scrub, typically wind sculpted nearer the coast. This landscape gives a sense of remoteness and tranquillity in the heart of the area with big skies and cries of wetland birds. The Levels feature a number of Islands or 'eyes' of

slightly higher ground e.g., Northeye and Horse Eye, which often feature scattered farms and cottages, which also found on gentle spurs of higher ground which extend into the levels. Where they meet the sea, an extensive shingle beach and coastline vulnerable to erosion is a component of the Levels. At present this landscape character area has an unspoilt and distinctive rural character with no large urban intrusions.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Environmental and Landscape Constraints

In general, the landscape to the east and northeast of Bexhill is designated within the Local Plan as part of the Combe Valley Countryside Park as set out in DaSA Policy HAS1, while large areas are within the Coombe Haven and Marline BOA. Beyond this is the Combe Valley SSSI which consists of a number of priority habitats, including reedbed, lowland fens, purple moor grass and rush pastures, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. There are also areas of ancient woodland adjacent or near to the edge of northeast Bexhill. The whole of the area to the east and northeast of Bexhill is within the Battle/Bexhill/Crowhurst and Hastings Strategic Gap, as designated in the current Local Plan. As an area of valley and marshland, the landscape is generally exposed, and its openness serves an important function in maintaining the separate identity of Bexhill and Hastings/St Leonards.

The area to the north of Sidley, at least east of Ninfield Road is comparatively less constrained, although there are areas of ancient deciduous woodland, and it is wholly within the Bexhill Fringe BOA. Significant areas of the undeveloped land to the south of the A2681 are allocated within the DaSA for development, as part of Policies BEX1 and BEX3.

The built edge of Bexhill between High Woods SSSI and Ninfield Road is bound by the Ashdown Brickworks, which is a Safeguarded Waste and Minerals Site within the Waste and Minerals Local Plan. The area is generally enclosed due to tree boundaries and sloping topography. It is also covered by the Bexhill Fringe BOA.

The Pevensey Levels form a significant constraint to development to the west and southwest of Bexhill. The Levels are subject to numerous biodiversity designations, including being designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Ramsar site, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), while effectively forming an area of Coastal and floodplain grazing

marsh Priority Habitat. At their closest, the Levels effectively bound Cooden to the west, whilst lying several hundred meters to the south of Barnhorn Road. Runoff from development is a potential risk to the Levels in areas that are within the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area and new development must demonstrate through an Appropriate Assessment under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 that any adverse impact is avoided.

The Levels are also within the Pevensey Levels Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA), which also extends to the north together with Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh in area that further bounds the northwesternmost extremities of Bexhill. To the northeast of here, a further boundary to urban expansion is formed by High Woods and Gotham Woods, which are a large area of ancient and deciduous woodland that are also mostly covered by a SSSI. The Pevensey Levels and the surrounding landscape are generally open sections of countryside, without natural features that would function as screening to new development. The western end of Barnhorn Road is raised topographically above the levels and is exposed to long views from the southwest. The area to the north of Barnhorn Road, southwest of High Woods, is generally more treed and enclosed.

Flooding Constraints

The area covered by the Pevensey Levels, including the area to the north of Barnhorn Road is within Flood Zone 3, and is often subjected to surface water flooding. In addition, there are limitations to Bexhill's wastewater drainage capacity in general, with this issue being of particular concern in areas nearer to the Pevensey Levels due their sensitive ecology. As a consequence, the use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is a requirement for development that falls within the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area, in order to control associated drainage and manage water flow into the watercourses.

The majority of the area to the west of Ninfield Road is within the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area, which is an environmentally sensitive area, while both sides of the road have areas that are subject to surface water flooding. However, areas to the northeast of Bexhill are generally free from surface water flooding, although further into the Combe Valley are large areas within Flood Zone 3.

Other Constraints

A further constraint for west Bexhill, particularly to the west of the Little Common roundabout, is the existing capacity of the A259 - which can become overloaded in times of peak traffic. This ongoing situation serves to exacerbate the relative remoteness of western areas of Bexhill from the facilities and services of Bexhill Town Centre. Where development south of Barnhorn Road is problematic due to the environmental and landscape sensitivities of the Pevensey Levels, any significant development north of Barnhorn Road in addition to present commitments may require substantial improvements to the road network.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Being by far the largest settlement in the district, with roughly half of Rother's total population, Bexhill has several of each essential service, including 10 supermarkets (defined as a convenience store with at least 200sqm of retail floor space), 32 convenience stores, 9 primary schools, 6 doctor's surgeries, and 4 Post Offices. At the same time, the 2018 Bexhill Retail Capacity Study found that while there is a good overall level of convenience goods floorspace in Bexhill, that issues related to the spatial distribution and the quality of floorspace indicate a deficiency of convenience retail in the town centre. As a consequence, the Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan allocates a site in Beeching Road for 2,000 set sqm of convenience floorspace. Bexhill scores 5 for its provision of essential services. The Combe Valley Way also provides a fairly direct road connection to the Conquest Hospital in St Leonards.

Service Level

Bexhill has a wide array of services and facilities, with the town centre maintaining a shopping and service centre role for the wider town while competing with competition from other centres, including Hastings and Eastbourne. Retail investment in recent years has also been limited by the increase in online shopping, as well as competition from Ravenside Retail Park. It is worth noting however that Bexhill Town Centre has lower than average vacancy

rates for retail and service outlets compared with national averages. Sidley and Little Common serve as District Centres within Bexhill, with each providing a range of town centre uses for their surrounding neighbourhoods. Ultimately, Bexhill has a population large enough to achieve a critical mass that enables it to achieve a high service level that is outside the scope of other settlements within the district. Bexhill as a whole scores 5 for its service level. In addition, Bexhill's proximity with Hastings increases the pool of services and facilities that are potentially available to Bexhill's residents.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Bexhill is the only major employment centre within the district, which together with Hastings, serves the surrounding rural areas. Relative to its size however, the amount of business accommodation is generally low, with only Beeching Road and, to a lesser extent, Brett Drive and Elva Way forming recognised industrial estates.

At the same time, the construction of Combe Valley Way and NBAR have enabled the development of further business accommodation in northeast Bexhill, including the "Bexhill Enterprise Park", as well as the development of 33,500sqm of business floorspace as of RR/2017/2181/P adjacent to Buckholt Lane and as allocated in the DaSA under Policy BEX1. Bexhill also scores a 5 for its employment provision. Bexhill's proximity to Hastings means that its residents may have access to employment opportunities within Hastings also.

Public Transport

Bexhill is served by three train stations; with these being located in the town centre, in Collington and on the western edge of Bexhill in Cooden. These stations are connected by the East Coastway rail line which connects Ashford with Brighton. The Charing Cross line from Hastings to London is also a main connection route up to London. Unfortunately, rail links are not particularly effective. The indirect service and lengthy journey times may have the potential to constrain economic development and is part of a wider issue of connectivity in the district. Future infrastructure investment is likely to be limited. Between Bexhill and Ashford, the line is restricted to diesel trains which are noisy, inefficient and slower than

modern electric trains. The rail network and standard of train services in the county are severely restricted by shortcomings in the infrastructure; for example, sections of single track and inadequate signalling. Services are also limited by capacity constraints on the approaches to the London termini.

Bexhill has a range of good bus services, connecting areas within the town and connecting Bexhill to other towns such as Hastings and Eastbourne.

Bexhill scores 5 for its public transport provision, due to its three train stations, and a high quantity and variety of bus services.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available to Bexhill, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	5
Service Level (5)	5
Employment Opportunities (5)	5
Public Transport (5)	5
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	22

Current development commitments

The northeast of Bexhill has long been considered as an area suitable for an urban extension. The 2006 Local Plan allocated Land to the north of Pebsham in Policy BX2, with further land north of Sidley being allocated as part of Policy BX3. The form of these allocations was elaborated on in the 2009 North East Masterplan SPD. The completion of the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road in 2015 opened up site allocation BX2, and it is currently in development

through permission RR/2015/1760/P at Worsham Farm for 1,050 dwellings as well as a primary school and other associated development.

The link road also opened up the development of the Bexhill Enterprise Centre to the northeast of Sidley. The completion of the North Bexhill Access Road (NBAR), which connects to the Link Road, enabled the allocation under Policy BEX3 for 530 dwellings to the south of NBAR.

The western edge of Bexhill is a further area of potential expansion. At present the land to the immediate north of Barnhorn Road is being developed for 275 dwellings and some 3,500sqm of employment floorspace as part of permission RR/2015/3125/P. In addition, the DaSA allocates land at Spindlewood Drive and the former Northeye Prison for 160 and 140 dwellings respectively, with the former having gained planning permission as per RR/2017/1705/P. As stated previously, any substantial further expansion of west Bexhill would require significant infrastructural improvements.

Site/Details	Status
Land at Levetts Wood and Oaktree Farm, Sidley 33,500sqm of business floorspace	DaSA Policy BEX1, RR/2017/2181/P & RR/2018/2790/P Approved Conditional
Land at Preston Hall Farm, Sidley 139 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX2, RR/2017/2441/P Complete
Land at Kiteye Farm 250 dwellings (including 2.64ha provision of outdoor sports facilities)	DaSA Policy BEX3a
Land west of Watermill Lane 130 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX3b
Land east of Watermill Lane 150 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX3c
Land at Former High School Site and Drill Hall, Down Road Wet and dry sports and leisure facility of up to 6,500sqm, either 35 houses or a mixture of flats and houses, & complementary commercial development	DaSA Policy BEX4, RR/2019/430/P Approved subject to S106 for 52 units
Land at Gullivers Bowls Club, Knole Road 39 sheltered dwellings and an improved bowls facility	DaSA Policy BEX5, RR/2021/1455/P Complete
Land adjacent to 276 Turkey Road 30 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX6
Land at Moleynes Mead, Fryatts Way	DaSA Policy BEX7, RR/2020/565/P

Site/Details	Status
24 dwellings	Approved subject to S106 for 26 units
Land south of Terminus Road 10 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX8, RR/2018/2453/P Approved Conditional
Land off Spindlewood Drive 160 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX9, RR/2017/1705/P Appeal allowed
Land at Northeye 140 dwellings and a full sized sports pitch	DaSA Policy BEX10
Land at Sidley Sport and Social Club 3G sports pitch	DaSA Policy BEX11
Land southeast of Beeching Road 2,000sqm of convenience floorspace, & provision for the development of office units	DaSA Policy BEX14
Land at Worsham Farm Phase 1: 200 dwellings Whole scheme: 1,050 dwellings	RR/2016/3245/P, RR/2015/1760/P Phase 1 under construction
Land at Barnhorn Green 358 dwellings and 3,500sqm of employment floorspace	RR/2015/3125/P Under construction
Land at Clavering Walk 70 dwellings	RR/2020/2260/P, RR/2018/3127/P Appeal allowed
28-34 Western Road, Indoor Market 12 dwellings	RR/2019/2302/P Approved Conditional

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest settlement with around half of the district's population • High range of services and facilities, consisting of two supporting district centres • Centre for employment (along with Hastings) • Proximity with Hastings means a shared employment and housing market area and potential access to a wider pool of facilities and services • Three train stations and good bus services for some connectivity across the district and wider region • Wholly outside of the AONB
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant physical & environmental constraints, specifically the sea, the Pevensey Levels and the Combe Valley Basin • Distance of certain areas of Bexhill are remote from the town centre, particularly areas adjacent to Barnhorn Road

- The confluence of local and national traffic along the A259, part of the Strategic Road Network
- Lack of prime accessibility within the wider region due to road and rail limitations

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Bexhill is by far the largest and most sustainable settlement within the district, while being well connected to the adjacent town of Hastings. It is also one of the few areas within the district that is outside of the designated AONB, and consequently it has less formal landscape constraints in terms of future development and growth. Improved corridors for sustainable transport (including active transport) would improve connectivity within the town while also reducing car dependency. Bexhill is considered to be highly sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

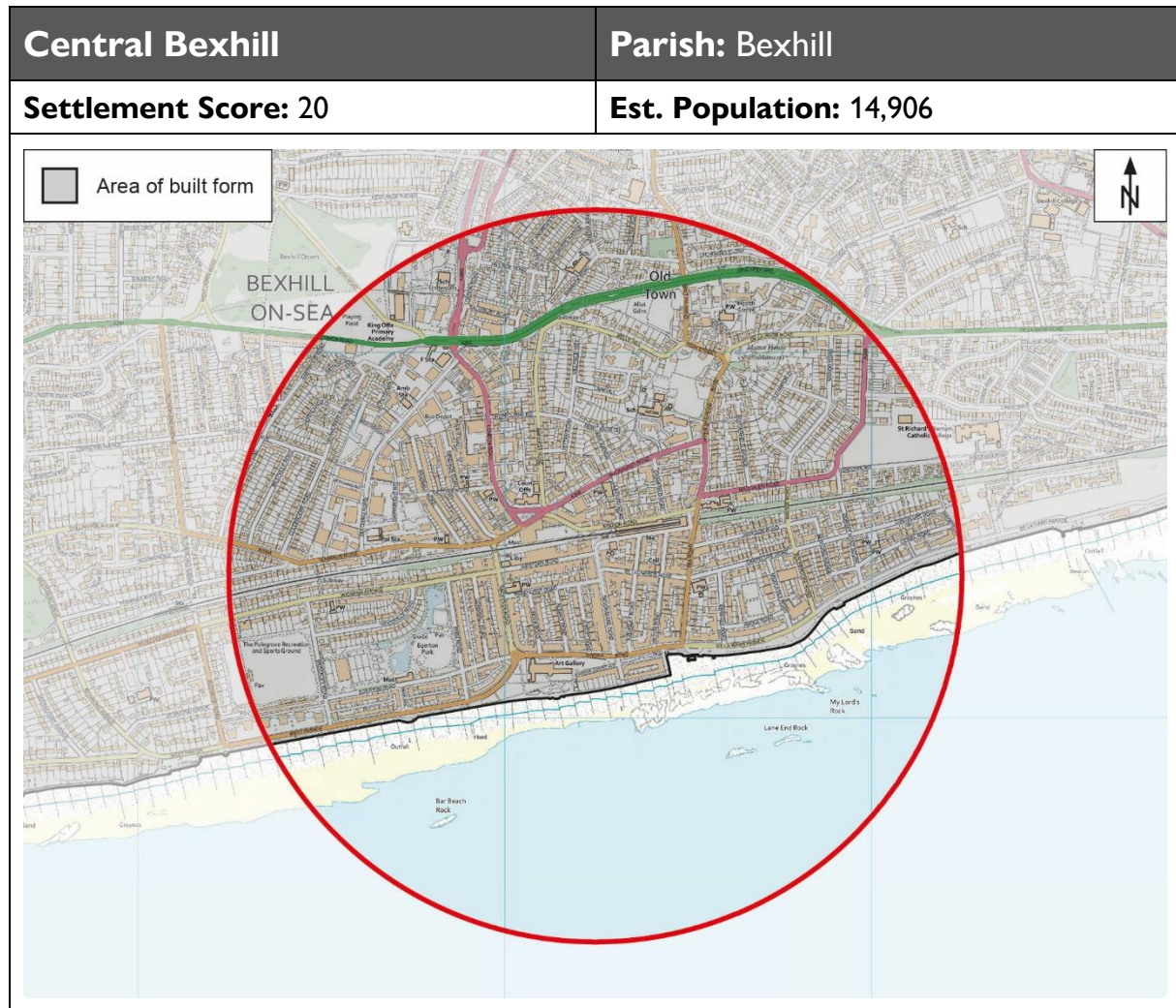
Limited transport options and capacity are the largest single factors that limit the sustainability of Bexhill. The town is remote, both in terms of its location within the road network, as well as the nature of the train services that connect the town. The capacity to significantly develop western Bexhill would require significant improvements to the A259 or a new road connecting to NBAR.

Rother District Council, together with Hastings Borough Council and East Sussex County Council, has consistently sought electrification and further dualling of the East Coastway railway track beyond Hastings to Ashford, as well as service improvements. This could include an extension of the High Speed (HS1) rail service into Bexhill via Hastings and Rye in order to form a quicker service to London, however this remains aspirational as there are currently no plans in place for this to go ahead in the near future.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There is opportunity for urban intensification and extensions in less sensitive areas, to allow for new development across and around Bexhill. The amount of development in combination, could allow for the development of supporting services and facilities within local neighbourhoods, especially if they are located further away from the town centre or District centres. Better connections through sustainable transport modes would support connectivity across Bexhill and support services and facilities across the whole town.

The Rother Retail and Town Centre Study identifies that Bexhill town centre has a lower than national average count of hotels and guest houses. This indicates that there may be an opportunity to support Bexhill's tourism sector through Local Plan policies that look to increase the amount of visitor accommodation within the town.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Being part of a coastal town, Central Bexhill catchment does not straightforwardly occupy the geographical centre of Bexhill, but rather forms a 1km radius around Bexhill town centre – which is located within the central south of the town. While a significant proportion of this catchment area falls within the sea, it is nonetheless the most populous area of both Bexhill and the wider District. As well as the absolute town centre of the town, Central Bexhill also incorporates Bexhill Old Town and the majority of Bexhill seafront, while extending to St Richards School to the east and Sidley Catchment to the north.

Housing and Population

The population of Central Bexhill has an estimated population of 14,906, which is based on the number of dwellings, 7,098, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Central Bexhill contains the significant majority of Bexhill's heritage assets. 52 of central Bexhill's listed buildings are concentrated within two Conservation Areas (CA) – these being the Bexhill Town Centre CA, which covers a large part of the town centre to the south of the east west railway, and Bexhill Old Town CA. The Old Town CA also contains forms part of the Bexhill Old Town Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) – denoting the medieval origin of the town. There are two additional smaller ANA's to the north of Central Bexhill, these being an ANA denoting the 19th Century Down Road Drill Hall, and to its east the Barrack Road Memorial Gardens Cemetery – also from the 19th Century.

Bexhill Old Town is the most constrained area in terms of the acceptability of new development, however with much of the town centre also being covered by a Conservation Area designation means that it is particularly constrained for future densification and redevelopment.

Landscape Character

Landscape Character Areas are described under the Bexhill section.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

There are few opportunities for new development given that the area is already developed. Development to the south is impossible due to the location of the sea.

As previously noted, parts of Bexhill Town Centre may be resistant to redevelopment due to Conservation Area designation and consistent Victorian/Edwardian architecture.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Central Bexhill has more than one of each essential service. There are six supermarkets (categorised as convenience stores of over 200sqm of retail space), with Sainsburys and Aldi being the most notable of these. Central Bexhill also has three primary schools, three doctors' surgeries, and two Post Offices. St Richards secondary school sits to the immediate east of the 1km catchment area. With a number of each essential service, the catchment area scores 5 – which is unique within the district apart from the whole of Bexhill combined. At the same time, as was noted in the Bexhill section, there is an identified deficiency of convenience retail in Bexhill Town Centre.

Service Level

The Central Bexhill catchment area incorporates the town centre, and it has the highest concentration of services and facilities within the district. Notable services within the catchment area, in addition to the essential services listed above, include eight dentists, six pharmacies, six banks, five nursery pre-schools, Bexhill Leisure centre, and a library. As Bexhill's main shopping and leisure area, the catchment area has a high number of shops, and a wide range of pubs, bars and restaurants. In terms of facilities, the catchment area includes access to two parks, and three sports pitches. Central Bexhill has a high service level, and it scores a 4. However, given the heritage nature of the town centre and a lack of larger buildings, there is limited potential for both larger shops and certain leisure facilities – which are more likely to be pushed to edge of town centre or out-of-town locations.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Central Bexhill also offers the highest concentration of business in the district, with potential access to employment throughout Bexhill and Hastings given its public transport provision. The 2016 Employment Sites Review, identifies three areas within the 2km employment catchment for Central Bexhill. Located on the edge of the town centre, is the Beeching Road Industrial Estate, which covers an area of 12.3 ha with over 50 businesses located there according to the 2016 Review. It should be noted that part of the Beeching Road estate adjacent to Terminus Road is allocated for 2,000sqm of convenience floor space in Policy BEX1 of the DaSA. The Brett Drive Industrial Estate, while outside of the Central Bexhill area, is within the 2km catchment area for employment sites. According to the Review it covers 2.71ha and located 16 businesses at the time. Also identified is the 2010 Elva Business Centre and Sidley Goods Yard, which constitutes some 2,000sqm of light industrial and office space, with 31 occupiers at the time. Some 1km west of the Town Centre is Hastings Direct's Bexhill office, which employs around 1,300 on this site. Further employment opportunity potentially found among the many shops and services found within the town centre.

Public Transport

Bexhill town centre functions as the transport hub for Bexhill, and is well served by buses, with connections within Bexhill and to notable locations outside of Bexhill such as the Hastings and Eastbourne. There is provision for important service routes including Conquest Hospital and Hastings/Bexhill Colleges. Services to Hastings and Eastbourne are good, with more than 10 buses each day. There are 3 further average bus services with over 5 buses per day, and an additional 7 more infrequent bus services. The catchment area is served by two train stations; with these being located in the town centre and in Collington. These stations are connected by the East Coastway rail line which connects Ashford with Brighton. The Charing Cross line from Hastings to London is also a main connection route up to London. As with essential services, Central Bexhill scores a full 5 for its public transport provision, which is the highest in the District except for Bexhill as a whole.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available within Central Bexhill, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	5
Service Level (5)	4
Employment Opportunities (5)	4
Public Transport (5)	5
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	20

Current development commitments

There are four allocations and one major permission within Central Bexhill.

Site/Details	Status
Land at Former High School Site and Drill Hall, Down Road Wet and dry sports and leisure facility of up to 6,500sqm, either 35 houses or a mixture of flats and houses, & complementary commercial development	DaSA Policy BEX4, RR/2019/430/P Approved subject to S106 for 52 units
Land at Gullivers Bowls Club, Knole Road 39 sheltered dwellings and an improved bowls facility	DaSA Policy BEX5, RR/2021/1455/P Constructed.
Land south of Terminus Road 10 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX8, RR/2018/2453/P Approved Conditional
Land south-east of Beeching Road 2,000sqm of convenience floorspace, & provision for the development of office units	DaSA Policy BEX14
28-34 Western Road, Indoor Market 12 dwellings	RR/2019/2302/P Approved Conditional

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

<p>Settlement Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest concentration of facilities and services in Bexhill and the District • Centre of the largest population area in the district • High level of walkability within the town centre and along the seafront promenade • Highest concentration of employment within the District Two train stations and good bus services • Potential for re-development of edge of town centre sites north of the railway line, including industrial area of Beeching Road • Areas of greenspace including Edgerton Park and Bexhill Down
<p>Settlement Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant physical & environmental constraints, specifically the sea and Conservation Areas • Limited opportunity for further development, with the exception of north of the railway • Lack of prime accessibility within the wider region due to road and rail limitations • Identified deficiency of convenience shopping options within the town centre • A degree of severance between the town centre and the area to the north, particularly pedestrian connections, due to the presence of the east-west railway line

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Central Bexhill functions as the town centre of a major settlement. It is the most sustainable area within Bexhill and the District, with the fullest range of services, facilities and public transport availability within a 1km radius. Central Bexhill also has the best access to employment in the district. It is considered to be highly sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

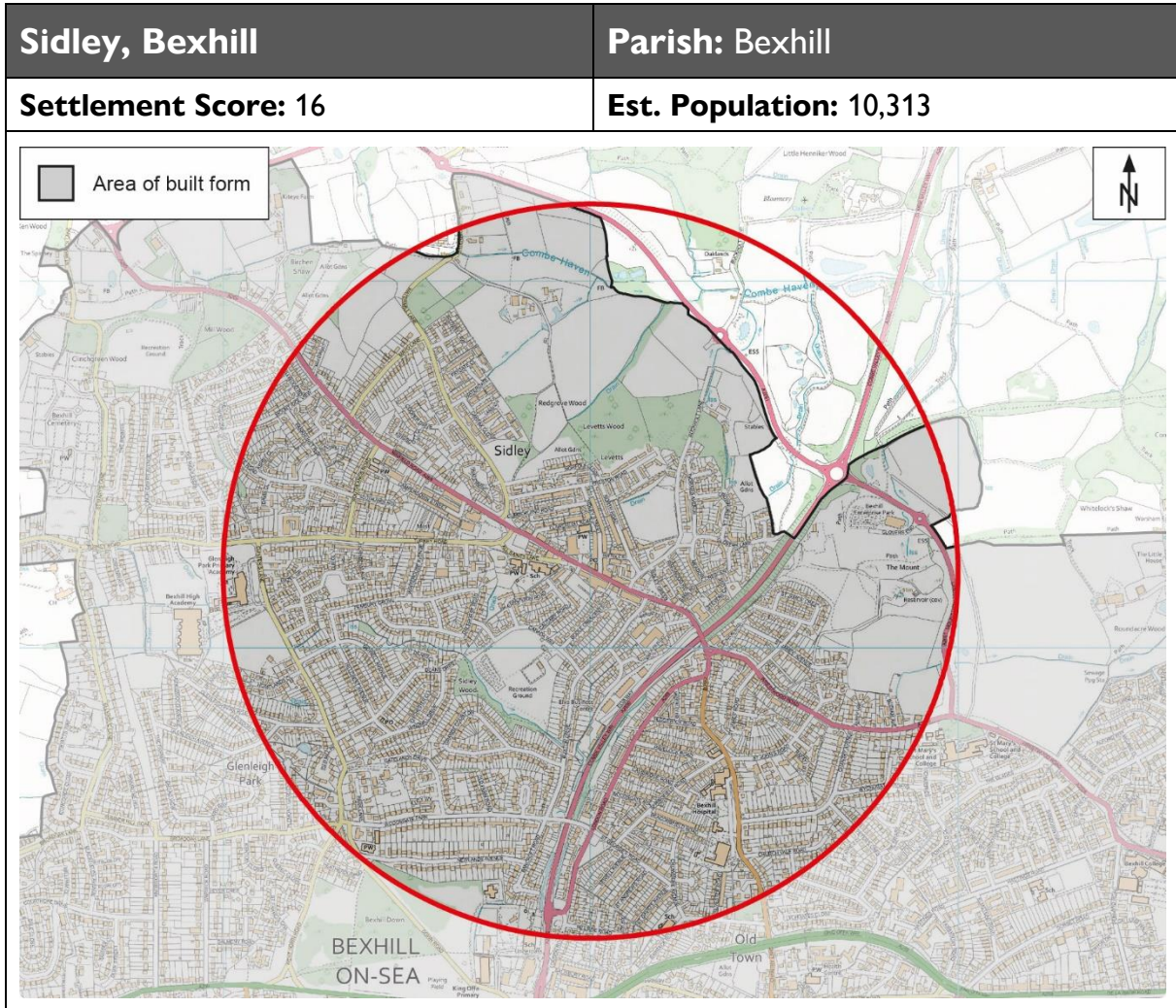
Land to the south-east of Beeching Road has been allocated in the DaSA for the development of 2,000sqm of convenience floorspace, which should go some way towards remedying the identified deficiency of convenience shopping within the town centre.

The allocation at Beeching Road also has a requirement to improve visual linkage and pedestrian access between its location and the town centre to the southeast. It is noted that the east-west railway line creates a degree of severance between the town centre and areas to the north, particularly pedestrian connections. The improvement of pedestrian connections to and from the town centre to the south of the railway line should be considered as part of development schemes in this area.

As with other areas of Bexhill, wider connectivity is generally limited, with relatively slow train times both to London and the region generally, while being generally remote in terms of the road network. Extension of the High-speed rail network from Ashford would be significant in serving to improve journey times, although there is no commitment for this to happen so far.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The NPPF has identified the role of residential development in town centres can have in promoting their long-term vitality and viability, by supporting services and facilities. It is noted that there are limited opportunities for further development within the town centre, however there be some potential within Council owned sites north of the railway line for redevelopment and intensification of residential use. Given the lack of available land, there are relatively few current residential Local Plan allocations in Central Bexhill compared to peripheral areas of Bexhill. BEX10 allocates 10 flats south of Terminus Road, on the edge of the town centre, while BEX 5 allocates some 39 sheltered dwellings as part of a redevelopment of Gullivers Bowls Club. Further residential development was allocated to the north of Central Bexhill as part of BEX4, including up to some 35 houses. However, the recent Use Class E and PD Class MA may facilitate the conversion of certain uses within the town centre to residential use.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Sidley is an area located in the northeast of Bexhill. At its heart lies Sidley District Centre, which is focused around Ninfield Road. Sidley District Centre is identified in the Local Plan as a concentration of retail uses, and its designation ensures that such uses continue to be prioritised, while ultimately sitting below Town Centre designations in the district’s retail hierarchy. The NPPF requires Local Plans to identify such centres in order that their function at the heart of local communities can be promoted as well as protected from non-town centre uses.

For the purposes of this study, the settlement area is a 1km catchment around the centre point of Sidley District Centre, which is considered to be the area within which residents

have access to Sidley's services and facilities. At the same time, Sidley is one of the most deprived areas within the district, and it was identified in the most recent 2019 Indices of Deprivation as being within the bottom 11% of local areas within England.

Housing and Population

The population of Sidley has an estimated population of 10,313, which is based on the number of dwellings, 4,911, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Sidley Green as it was originally called was a separate settlement, before being incorporated within Bexhill during the latter's expansion during the 20th Century. Sidley Green was connected to smuggling activities connected to nearby Bexhill and was the location of the infamous 'Battle of Sidley Green' in 1828.

There are 5 listed buildings within the Sidley area, with one listed building, The New Inn, on Sidley High Street. The Church of All Saints is not listed, having been built in 1885. There is no concentration of historic assets within the area, and therefore there are limited heritage constraints.

Landscape Character

Landscape Character Areas are described under the Bexhill section.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

There are few opportunities for new development within Sidley, given that Sidley is an urban area with the majority of land already having been developed. There is a higher potential in undeveloped areas to the immediate north of the town and outside of the 1km catchment area.

Significant areas of the undeveloped land to the north of Sidley are within the Bexhill Fringe Biodiversity Opportunity Area and to the northeast the Combe Valley Countryside Park. Much of the immediate land to the north of Sidley is allocated within DaSA Policies BEX1 and BEX 3.

There are numerous parcels of ancient deciduous woodland; most notably the areas of woodland to the north of NBAR, which form a boundary to any potential northern expansion of Bexhill.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

All four essential services are available within the Sidley area. There is a Lidl supermarket and a convenience store, there are three primary schools, a doctor's surgery and two post offices. This gives the area a score of 4.

Service Level

Being focused on a designated District Centre, Sidley has access to a reasonable range of services and facilities, in addition to the essential services identified above. Notable services include three nursery pre-schools, a pharmacy, a dentist, Bexhill Hospital, a community hall and a petrol station. There is also a pub and three cafes. The current Local Plan identifies Sidley as having a very high proportion of takeaway uses. Given levels of deprivation within Sidley, it is considered the high proportion of takeaway uses could negatively impact on the health and well-being of the local population, and DaSA Policy BEX17 seeks to resist the further concentration of such uses. It is also notable that while there is a good occupancy rate for business within Sidley, the turnover rate is high indicating challenging economic times. At present however, the Sidley catchment area has a service level that achieves a score of 3, which is a score comparable with Battle and Bexhill's Little Common area and is comparably higher than any of the larger villages within the district.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The Sidley area has a reasonable level of employment opportunities, with numerous businesses located in the area. The 2016 Employment Sites Review, identified the 2010 Elva Business Centre and Sidley Goods Yard constitutes some 2,260sqm of light industrial and office space, with 31 occupiers at the time. The construction of the Combe Valley Way in 2015, has enabled the development of the Bexhill Enterprise Park, while permission has been granted for 33,500sqm of business floorspace to the north of Sidley District Centre adjacent to Buckholt Lane, as of RR/2017/2181/P and as allocated in the DaSA under Policy BEX1. At the same time, it should be noted that unemployment is a significant issue within Sidley, which is in the highest 7% of local areas in England for unemployment according to the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. Overall, the Sidley area scores 3 for its level of employment opportunity, although this scoring may be improved upon the completion and occupation of the aforementioned 33,500sqm of employment space.

Public Transport

The centre of Sidley is well serviced by buses: – the 98 - with more than 10 services a day, and – the 95 – which has 7 buses a day. Bus connections include, Bexhill town centre, Hastings, the Conquest Hospital and Eastbourne. Train services are also accessible for residents within the Sidley catchment area, with Bexhill Train Station being within 2km of the centre of Sidley. With a good bus service and an accessible train station, Sidley scores 4 for its public transport provision.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available within Sidley, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	3
Employment Opportunities (5)	3
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	16

Current development commitments

As noted in the section on Bexhill, the completion of the North Bexhill Access Road (NBAR) has facilitated the allocation of 530 dwellings to the north of Sidley under DaSA Policy BEX3.

Site/Details	Status
Land at Levetts Wood and Oaktree Farm, Sidley 33,500sqm of business floorspace	DaSA Policy BEX1, RR/2017/2181/P & RR/2018/2790/P Approved Conditional
Land at Preston Hall Farm, Sidley 139 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX2, RR/2017/2441/P Under construction
Land at Kiteye Farm 250 dwellings (including 2.64ha provision of outdoor sports facilities)	DaSA Policy BEX3a
Land west of Watermill Lane 130 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX3b
Land east of Watermill Lane 150 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX3c

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- District centre within a major town
- The area provides a full range of essential services, as well as numerous town centre uses.
- Commitments for 33,500sqm of employment floorspace at Buckholt Lane
- Access to a good range of bus services and good proximity to Bexhill Train Station
- Land to the north of Sidley has few landscape or environmental constraints

Settlement Weaknesses

- Lower range of services than other areas of Bexhill
- Limited opportunity for further development, except to the north of Sidley
- Sidley Ward has high levels of unemployment, as a determining factor in Sidley's scoring in the 2019 Indices of Deprivation
-

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Sidley forms the area around the retail designation of Sidley District Centre and is consequently one of the more sustainable parts of Bexhill; while it also contains a good range of essential services. Being within the major town of Bexhill, Sidley has access to good bus services, as well as Bexhill Train Station, making Sidley one of the better connected locations within the district. Employment opportunities are relatively good compared with the majority of the district, including commitments to deliver 33,500sqm of employment floorspace at Buckholt Lane, however, it should be noted that Sidley suffers from particularly high levels of unemployment compared to averages within Bexhill and the District as a whole. It is considered to be a sustainable area for development, and sits alongside Little Common, as well as Rye and Battle, in this regard.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

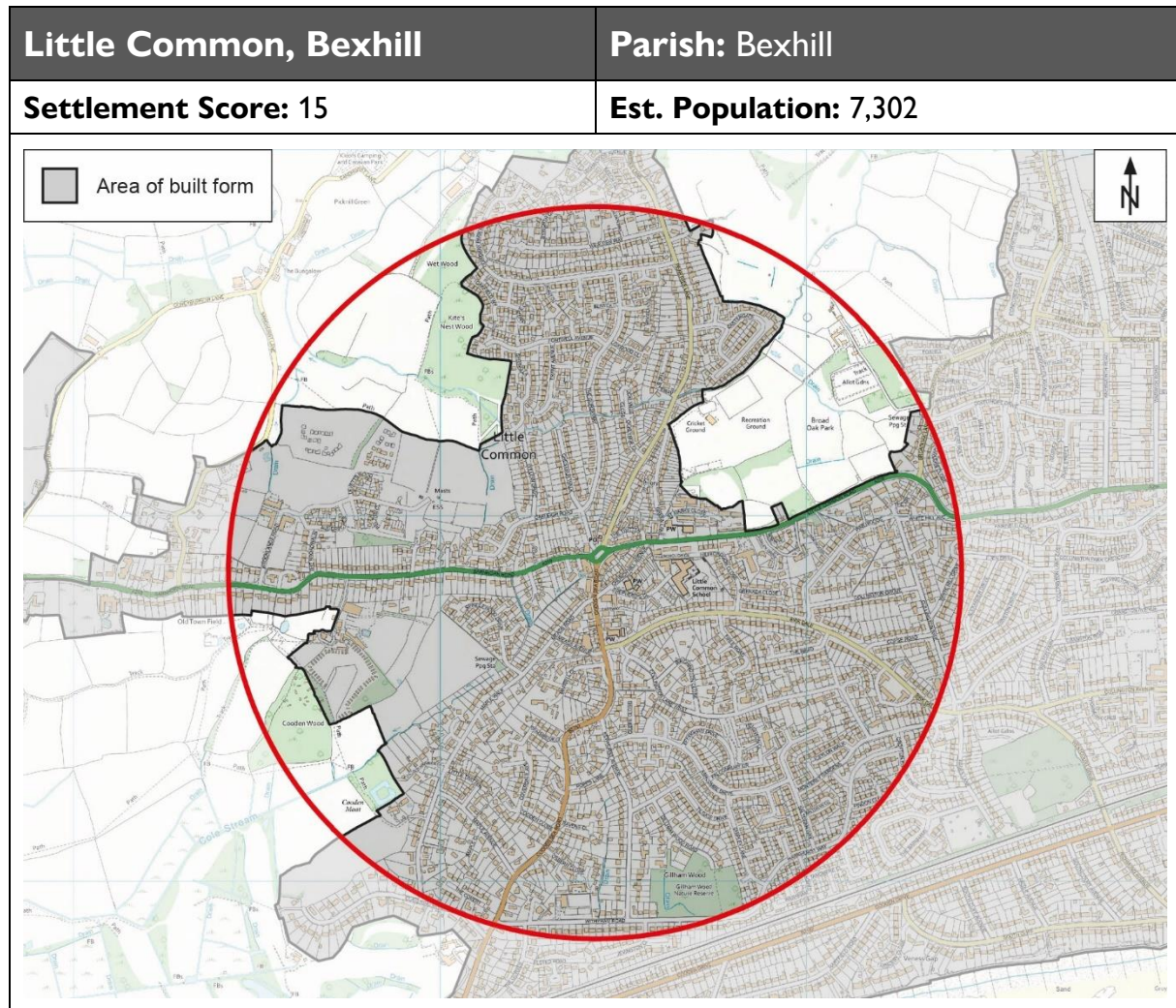
In terms of Sidley itself, commitments to deliver some 33,500sqm of employment floorspace at Buckholt Lane, would constitute a significant increase in local employment floorspace – potentially increasing employment opportunities within the Sidley area which is important given the high level of unemployment within the immediate area.

Housing allocations to the south of NBAR will enable opportunities to provide sustainable transport connections along Watermill Lane, with further potential to promote active transport corridors between Sidley and Bexhill Town Centre, increasing accessibility to a wider range of facilities and services outside of Sidley itself.

Bexhill itself, while the most sustainable settlement within the district, is remote within the wider region, due to its location within the road and rail network. Improvements to wider transport options for Bexhill, both to rail and bus services, would be significant for increasing Sidley's overall sustainability.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The allocation of some 669 dwellings to the north of Sidley as part of DaSA Policies BEX2 and BEX3 connecting to Sidley via Watermill Lane when developed will increase footfall and demand within the Sidley District Centre, to support its shops and other services. Further allocations to the north of NBAR could further increase this potential. Ultimately, significant opportunities for further development are limited to edge of town locations, although some urban intensification could be supported.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Little Common is an area located to the west of Bexhill and is centred around the A259 and its roundabout with Peartree Lane and Cooden Sea Road, with Bexhill Town Centre being some 2.5km to the east. It was historically its own village, before eventually being subsumed within the modern western expansion of Bexhill. The area is coalescent with the residential area of Cooden to the south, while the predominantly ribbon development along Barnhorn Road extends to the west for some 2km.

At its centre is Little Common District Centre, which is identified in the Local Plan as a concentration of retail uses, and its designation ensures that such uses continue to be prioritised, while ultimately sitting below Town Centre designations in the district's retail

hierarchy. The NPPF requires Local Plans to identify such centres in order that their function at the heart of local communities can be promoted as well as protected from non-town centre uses. For the purposes of this study, the settlement area is a 1km catchment around the centre point of Little Common District Centre, which is considered to be the area within which residents have access to Little Common's services and facilities.

There are a number of development commitments within the 1km Little Common catchment, with permission for some 600 dwellings (a number of these have already been delivered north of Barnhorn Road), with a further 3,500sqm of employment floorspace having also been permitted north of Barnhorn Road.

It should be noted that the A259 in its capacity as a trunk road also serves out of town traffic, and therefore becomes particularly busy at times. The extent of the traffic serves to sever Little Common into north and south, while decreasing accessibility to central areas of Bexhill due to increased journey times.

Housing and Population

The population of Little Common has an estimated population of 7,302, which is based on the number of dwellings, 3,477, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The village of Little Common originally developed around crossroads (now a roundabout) on the main road between Pevensey and Hastings. It seems that smuggling once played a significant role in the village, with the Little Common Gang being run by the Gilham Family who were carpenters in the village between 1803 and 1860.

In its current form, development within Little Common is generally modern, with only four listed buildings within the 1km catchment area: with one of these being Barnhorn Manor to the south of Barnhorn Road.

To the southwest of the Little Common roundabout and within the 1km catchment area is the Medieval moated site of Cooden. Records indicate that the moated site was the manor of the de Codynging family, of local prominence in the 13th and 14th centuries, while the site likely dates back to the period either side of 1300AD. The site and the immediately surrounding area are also within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA). The Scheduled Monument and the ANA are both adjacent southwest of DaSA allocation BEX9 - Land off Spindlewood Drive for 160 dwellings. Any potential impacts of the allocation on these heritage assets have already been taken into consideration as part of the adoption of the DaSA.

Landscape Character

Landscape Character Areas are described under the Bexhill section.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Little Common bounds the Pevensey Levels to the southwest of the roundabout, which are wholly covered by SAC, RAMSAR and SSSI designations, and the Pevensey Levels Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The majority of Little Common is also with the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area. Immediately adjacent to the southwest are also areas of Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland priority habitats, as well as an area of ancient woodland known as Cooden Wood. Undeveloped areas within the northwest of the catchment area include Kites Nest Wood which forms a parcel of ancient deciduous woodland.

Some areas immediately adjacent to development to the southwest of the roundabout are within Flood Zone 3 corresponding to the presence of the Pevensey Levels, while there are channels within Little Common leading to the Levels that are susceptible to surface water flooding up to a risk of 3.3%.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Little Common has one of each essential service, with a Little Common Primary School, doctor's surgery and a post office. It has a Tesco Express convenience store, which having over 200sqm of retail space is categorised for the purposes of this study as being a supermarket. The lack of a nearby full-sized supermarket is notable however, as is the absence of a secondary school within the west of Bexhill. Consequently, Little Common scores 4.

Service Level

Being centred around Little Common District Centre means that the catchment area has a relatively good array of local services and facilities, in addition to the essential services identified above. Notable services within the catchment area include a dentist, a pharmacy, and a Nationwide bank branch, although there is currently no nursery pre-school, however. Facilities include Little Common Community Centre and Little Common Recreation Ground which includes a sports pitch and children's play area. There are also a large number of shops, restaurants and other businesses that fall within Class E use. While Little Common has a good range of services compared to other settlement areas within the district, it is worth bearing in mind that Little Common is relatively remote from the centre of Bexhill, being beyond easy walking distance from the town centre. Little Common scores 3 for its range and number of facilities and services.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Again, while relatively competitive compared to other areas within the district, Sidley Common scores less for its employment provision than other areas of Bexhill – its scores a 2, whereas Central Bexhill and Sidley catchment areas score 4 and 3 respectively. That said, the major employer Hastings Direct is within the 2km employment catchment area for Little

Common, while there may be further employment opportunities within the local businesses that are focused on the District Centre.

Going forward there is currently 3,500sqm of employment floorspace permitted as of RR/2015/3125/P north of Barnhorn Road. The availability of buses and train services enable connections for employment to Bexhill Town Centre, as well as Hastings and Eastbourne which are further afield.

Public Transport

Little Common has good bus connectivity with 6 services which pass through Little Common on a daily basis, including a good service (10+ buses per day) with connections to Bexhill, Hastings and Eastbourne. There is some accessibility to Collington and Cooden Beach train stations, which are within 2km of the District Centre, with connections including the town centre, Hastings, and more distant locations such as Ashford and London Victoria. Little Common therefore has generally good public transport options and scores a 4.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available within Little Common, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	3
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	15

Current development commitments

There is one allocation and two significant permissions within Little Common, Bexhill.

Site/Details	Status
Land off Spindlewood Drive 160 dwellings	DaSA Policy BEX9, RR/2017/1705/P Appeal allowed
Land at Barnhorn Green 358 dwellings and 3,500sqm of employment floorspace	RR/2015/3125/P Under construction
Land at Clavering Walk 70 dwellings	RR/2020/2260/P, RR/2018/3127/P Appeal allowed

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Centre within a major town • The area provides a full range of essential services, as well as numerous town centre uses • Current commitments for some 600 dwellings within or adjacent to the 1km catchment area, including 3,500sqm of employment floorspace. • Access to a good range of bus services and with 2km proximity to two train stations. • Little Common Recreation Ground provides a significant area of accessible greenspace.
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Common is generally remote from more central areas of Bexhill, with the town centre beyond reasonable walking distance. • No significant supermarket within the west of Bexhill, implying a deficiency in convenience shopping. • Highway capacity limitations and the presence of significant out of town traffic associated with the A259.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Little Common forms the area around the retail designation of Little Common District Centre , and is therefore one of the more sustainable parts of Bexhill; and like Sidley it has a good range of essential services. However, its sustainability is limited by its remote location to the west of Bexhill, which serves to limit accessibility to the town centre.

Being within the major town of Bexhill, Little Common has access to good bus services, as well as reasonable access to Collington and Cooden train stations, making Little Common one of the better-connected locations within the district.

Little Common has perhaps less local employment opportunities than more central areas of Bexhill, although opportunities are generally good compared with much of the district.

Overall however, Little Common is considered to be a sustainable area for development, and sits alongside Sidley, as well as Rye and Battle, in this regard.

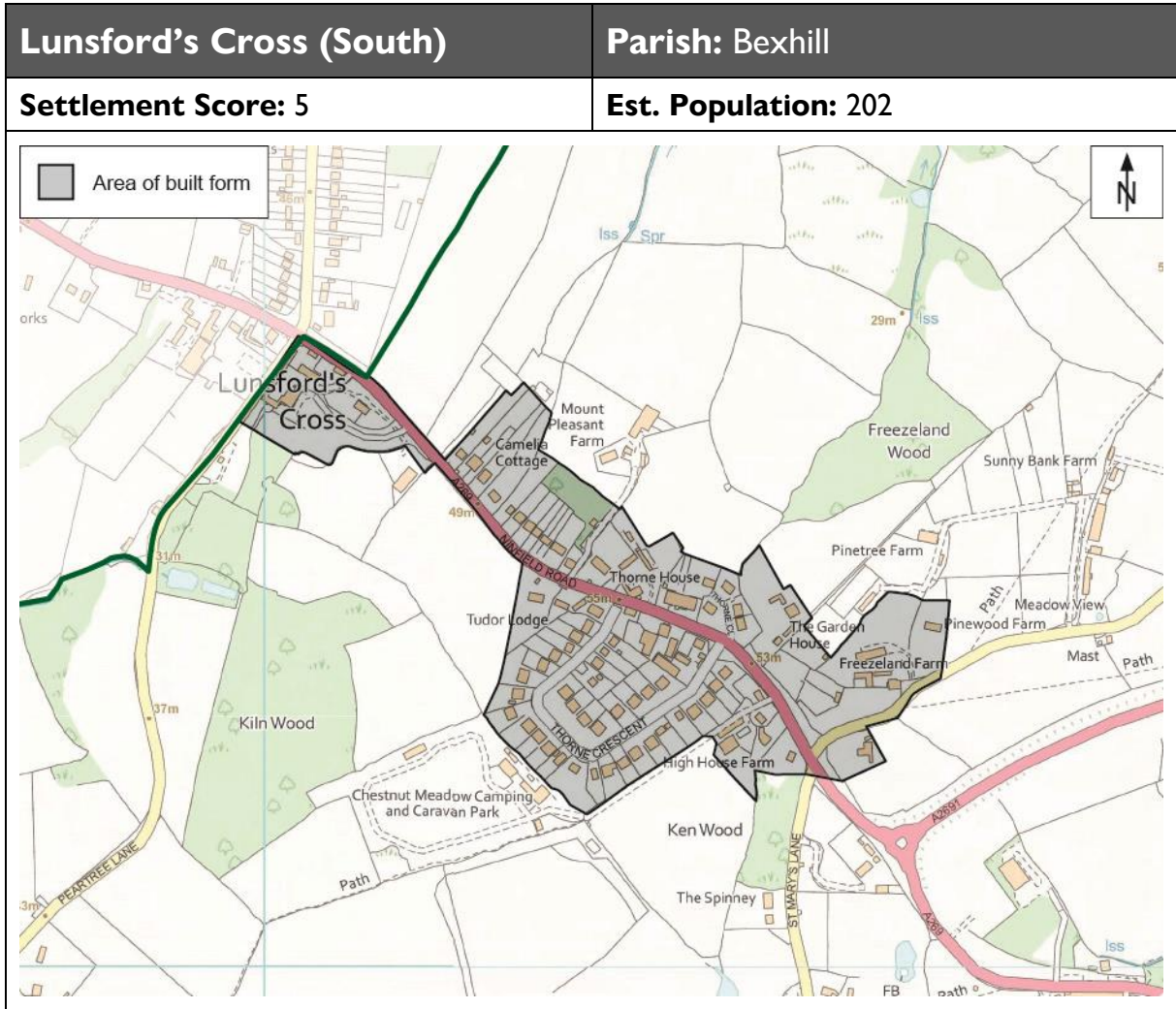
Opportunities to improve sustainability

Perhaps the most significant challenge to the sustainability of Little Common is its remoteness from central areas of Bexhill - due to its location and the extent of traffic along the A259. As a District Centre however Little Common has the potential to function as the centre for a Live Well Locally community for areas in the west of Bexhill. With an existing basis as a District Centre, Little Common could be considered as a focus of increased services and facilities, as well as employment space.

Bexhill itself, while the most sustainable settlement within the district, is remote within the wider region, due to its location within the road and rail network. Improvements to wider transport options for Bexhill, both to rail and bus services, would be significant to increasing Little Common's overall sustainability.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Commitments for some 600 dwellings within and to the periphery of Little Common may serve to increase the population in a way that further facilities and services may be supported. The significant environmental constraints of the Pevensey Levels ultimately limited the extent of new development potential within Little Common, particularly to the southwest; however, further development north of Barnhorn Road may perhaps support further facilities and services, including additional services and along Barnhorn Road which may extend the Little Common District Centre further westward.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Lunsford Cross is a settlement 1.8 miles to the north of the coastal town of Bexhill. The settlement is of small scale and the A269 road runs through, connecting it to Bexhill to the south and Ninfield and Battle to the north. Lunsford Cross is only partially within Rother District, while the northern half is within Wealden District. At the same time, the settlement is located very near to the edge of Bexhill including housing allocations adjacent to the A2691 (North Bexhill Access Road) which is located immediately to the southeast.

The settlement itself has no village centre and is linear in development, which increases the distance between services and facilities within Bexhill. The busy road which runs through the

settlement also decreases the walkability of the settlement and some areas are lacking consistent footpaths, making it difficult or unsafe to walk to the town of Bexhill.

The settlement has no services or facilities, aside from a MOT testing garage. The settlement is essentially comprised entirely of residential dwellings along the A269.

Housing and Population

Lunsford Cross South has an estimated population of 202, which is based on the number of dwellings, 96, multiplied by the household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling. This figure does not include the area of the settlement within Wealden District.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There is only one listed building in Lunsford's Cross South which is the grade II listed 'The High House' which is located on Ninfield Road, to the southwest of the settlement.

Landscape Character

Bexhill – East Sussex Urban Landscape Character Area

Lunsford's Cross is situated almost immediately to the north of the urban coastal town of Bexhill and is therefore found within the Bexhill Urban Landscape Character Area. Bexhill is described as a quiet, residential seaside town with imposing but decorative early Victorian and Edwardian seafront facades, facing spacious seafront lawns. Key issues identified for the town include the existence of extensive suburban areas that lack features and focal points, while it is also noted that a tree strategy for the whole town would strengthen the landscape character of the town and create local/neighbourhood distinctiveness, including suburban areas.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes Lunsford's Cross through the identification of three areas '2.A, 2.B and 2.C', which are summarised below.

2.A - Peartree Lane

This is an area of two grazing fields in remote countryside on the north side of a ridge which is defined by a good tread hedgerow. There are long open views to the north west which makes it very exposed to open countryside. There are some good boundary hedges but the screening effect of them is negated by the north facing slope.

The landscape area is of good quality and high value. It has a high visual sensitivity and character sensitivity. It is noted that there are opportunities to improve the tree cover but the lay of the land would reduce its visual impact unless a 'blanket cover' was achieved. The area has poor potential for mitigation as the lay of the land minimises the potential screening effect of any new trees and woodland on the area. Overall, there is no capacity to accept residential or business development.

2.B – St John's Ambulance Camp

This area is an open camping field on the top of the ridge and associated adjacent field, well contained by woodland to the north and some containment to the south and west. Adjacent to houses to the east. This is a rather sterile and degraded landscape that is out of character with its surroundings, compounded by some intrusive buildings.

The landscape area is of ordinary quality and low value. The area is described as having low character sensitivity and moderate visual sensitivity. The area has moderate potential for mitigation with hedgerow thickening and creation of a strong tree structure within any development to give an overall skyline feature dominated by trees rather than buildings. It is concluded that this area has a moderate capacity to accept residential development and no capacity to accept business development.

2.C – Turkey Farm

This area is an of undulating south facing slope backed by a good ridge top tree belt to the north. It is related to the town, brickworks and cemetery to the south, even though it is just within areas of remote landscape on the county scale. The western end becomes more visually exposed as it slopes a little more above the brickworks.

The area is described as being of good quality and medium value. The area has low character sensitivity to change and moderate visual sensitivity. The area has potential for mitigation with significant opportunities to increase tree cover even within development areas, which could enhance landscape character but would also reduce housing density. The ridgeline skyline would benefit from more planting and could enhance the access corridor to countryside. The area has moderate capacity to accept residential development and low capacity to accept business development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The whole of Lunsford Cross (South), except for the northwest corner, is sited within the Bexhill Biodiversity Opportunity Area. There is a small parcel of ancient deciduous woodland bounding the settlement to the south, while there are two larger parcels closely neighbouring the east and west of the settlement. Several areas bounding the road within the north and the south of the settlement are subject to collective Tree Preservations Orders.

The settlement area is generally free from flooding related constraints, although some of the roads are subject to a minor risk of surface water flooding. Western and southwestern edge areas of the settlement are within the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment Area as designated by through DaSA as part of Policy DEN5(vi).

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Lunsford's Cross, being a small settlement, which consists essentially of residential dwellings and has no essential services, including the area within Wealden District. It therefore it scores a 0 for its essential services.

Service Level

It also has no other services and facilities, and in order to carry out day to day activities residents would likely travel into Sidley District Centre or Bexhill Town Centre, which are located some 1.6k and 3km to the southeast respectively. Lunsford's Cross scores a 0 for its service level, including the area within Wealden District.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The employment opportunities in Lunsford's Cross are extremely limited, having no services or facilities, there is no employment centres within the settlement. Employment opportunities would be found outside of the settlement in the larger towns and villages locally, most likely Bexhill or Hastings. Lunsford's Cross scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

The public transport service in Lunsford's Cross consists of a good bus service with more than 10 buses a day, with connections to Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne, and an average bus service with 6 buses per day with connections to Bexhill, the Conquest Hospital and Little Common. Lunsford's Cross scores a 3 for its access to public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds of up to 300Mbps is available in Lunsford's Cross. The settlement scores a 2 in this category.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

Lunsford Cross neighbours the new A2691 North Bexhill Access Road (NBAR). The completion of NBAR has facilitated the allocation of 530 dwellings to the north of Sidley under DaSA Policy BEX3, and a further 139 dwellings as part of Policy BEX2 at Preston Hall Farm - which is currently in development subject to RR/2017/2441/P.

At the same time, the construction of NBAR has enabled the allocation of 33,500sqm of employment floorspace at Buckholt Lane, which is subject to permissions RR/2017/2181/P & RR/2018/2790/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Bexhill • Frequent bus connections into Bexhill, Hastings and Eastbourne • Commitments for 33,500sqm of employment floorspace at Buckholt Lane, which are within 2km of the settlement.
Settlement Weaknesses

- No services or facilities, including essential services
- Small settlement population
- Currently minimal local employment opportunities
- Limited walkability into Bexhill due to busy traffic along the Ninfield Road and incomplete footpaths

Recommendations for the Local Plan

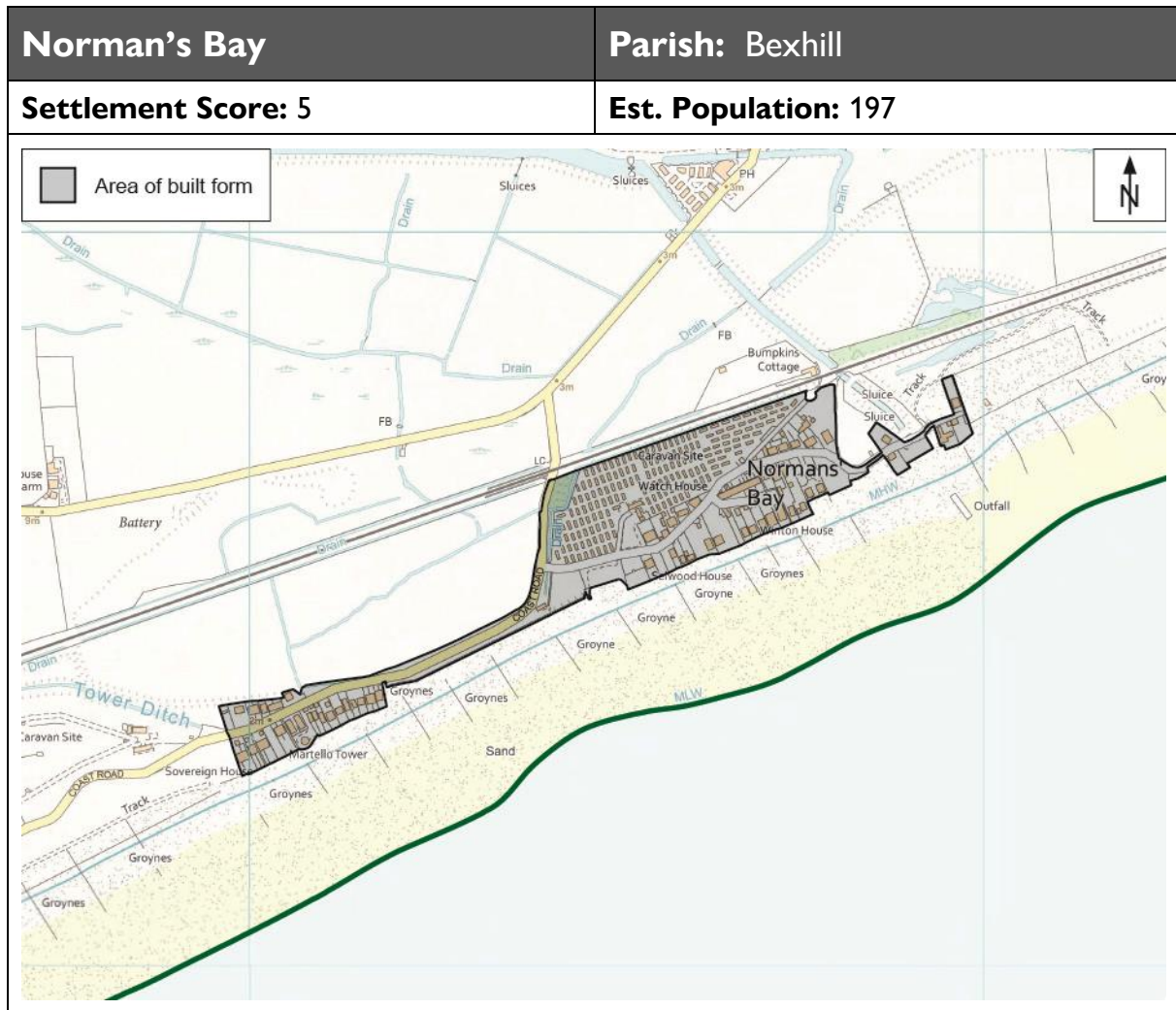
Lunsford Cross is a very small settlement consisting almost wholly of residential development. Its residents are very much reliant on services and facilities within Bexhill, which is to the immediate southeast of the settlement, and with which there are good bus connections. Only the southern part of Lunsford Cross is within Rother District, while the remainder of the settlement is within Wealden District. Taken by itself, Lunsford Cross is of low sustainability. However, given both the fact that Lunsford Cross South is not a full settlement, as well as its proximity to Bexhill, it is considered to be a Bexhill Fringe area for the purposes of this Settlement Study.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

With no services and facilities within the settlement itself, its sustainability can only be meaningfully improved connections into Bexhill. This could be achieved by an increase in the frequency of buses into Bexhill and Hastings (which are already good), while the large-scale development to the south of NBAR could open opportunities to provide better footway and cycle way connections into Sidley and Bexhill town centre.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Lunsford Cross is outside of the AONB, and some of the surrounding landscape has some capacity for development, with areas surrounding north Bexhill and Sidley having already been identified as growth areas for Bexhill. There is therefore some potential for development in the area to support nearby to support new services and facilities.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Norman's Bay is quiet and isolated and lies on the coast, approximately 2.3km to the west of Cooden Beach and 2.2km east of the centre of Pevensey Bay, while it is located some 5.5km and 9.5km from Bexhill and Eastbourne town centres respectively. 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.

Norman's 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.

Housing and Population

The population of Normans Bay is an estimated 197, which is based on the number of dwellings, 94, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Norman's Bay is named after the landing place of the Norman Invasion in 1066, although its exact location is disputed, with Pevensey Bay being the more likely landing site.

Norman's Bay consists overwhelmingly of modern development. There are two Archaeological Notification Areas within the settlement, which denote the location of two Martello Towers, one of which still standing and is the only listed building and scheduled monument within the settlement area.

Landscape Character

Pevensey Levels – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Normans Bay sits on the coastal boundary of the Pevensey Levels, which is an extensive flat open grazing marsh that is one of the largest continuous wet grazing systems (3,500ha) in southeast England, and features an intricate pattern of manmade ditches as historic field enclosures and drainage systems. Where it meets the sea, this is an extensive shingle beach and coastline vulnerable to erosion and subject to intervention such as redistribution of the shingle and sea defence groynes. There is a seaside settlement of variable quality, but with distinctive character, which has developed from holiday homes and caravans along the coast from Pevensey to Normans Bay.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Normans Bay in area NB1.

N1 – Playing Fields

This is a windswept area of flat coastal landscape with ribbon development along the coast road. It is characterised by self-build and chalet type developments. There are pockets of static caravans. The area is characterised by grazed fenced pastures leading down to extensive shingle beaches. It has a strong sense of place.

The landscape area is described as being of good-ordinary quality and a moderate-high value, while the area has a high character sensitivity and a high visual sensitivity. The capacity for housing and business development is identified to be low and none respectively, and it is commented that development would be limited to areas of infill and brown field land associated with existing development. The capacity for mitigation is low, as extensive planting would be out of character.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Areas within the settlement boundary are generally free from constraints, although the settlement is wholly within the Pevensey Levels Biodiversity Opportunity Area and there are some small parcels of Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. Areas adjacent to Normans Bay however, have considerable environmental constraints, with a Local Wildlife Site immediately to the south, the Pevensey Levels SSSI to the immediate east. To the north of the settlement boundary beyond the trainline the entire area is subject to the SSSI, the Pevensey Levels RAMSAR, and the Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation. In addition, the settlement is bound further habitats of Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and Maritime cliff and slope.

Almost the entire settlement is subject to Flood Zone 3, with areas next to the beach shingle also being within Flood Zone 3b in respect of tidal flooding. There are some slight patches within the west of the settlement that are not subject to flooding. The whole settlement is within the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Normans Bay, being a small and relatively isolated settlement has no essential services or wider services and facilities. Consequently, its residents are wholly dependent on travelling to nearby larger settlements for their day-to-day requirements. The settlement scores a 0 for its range of essential services.

Service Level

There are no other services or facilities within the settlement and therefore it scores a 0 for its service level.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities are extremely limited in Normans Bay. There is a local campsite which may provide some tourism-based employment but ultimately employment will be sought outside of the settlement. The train station mentioned below will provide essential transportation for employment opportunities to Bexhill, Hastings and Eastbourne. Normans Bay scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Normans Bay has no bus service; however, the settlement does benefit from a train station. This station has services towards Bexhill, Eastbourne, Lewes and towards London. The train station is essential to the settlement and provides access to larger settlements and towns for shopping and other services. Normans Bay scores a 3 for its public transport level.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, which is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300 Mbps, is available in Normans Bay. Normans Bay scores a 2 for its internet access.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no commitments for significant development within Normans Bay.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just over 2km to the west of Bexhill, which is a major town with a wide range of services and facilities • Train station, with good connections into Bexhill, Hastings and Eastbourne
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No facilities or services within settlement • Minimal employment options • No bus services • Significant environmental constraints pertinent to Pevensey Levels • Majority of settlement is subject to Flood Zone 3 • Very small population – under 200 (approx.) • Narrow access roads may present a physical barrier to bus access

Recommendations for the Local Plan

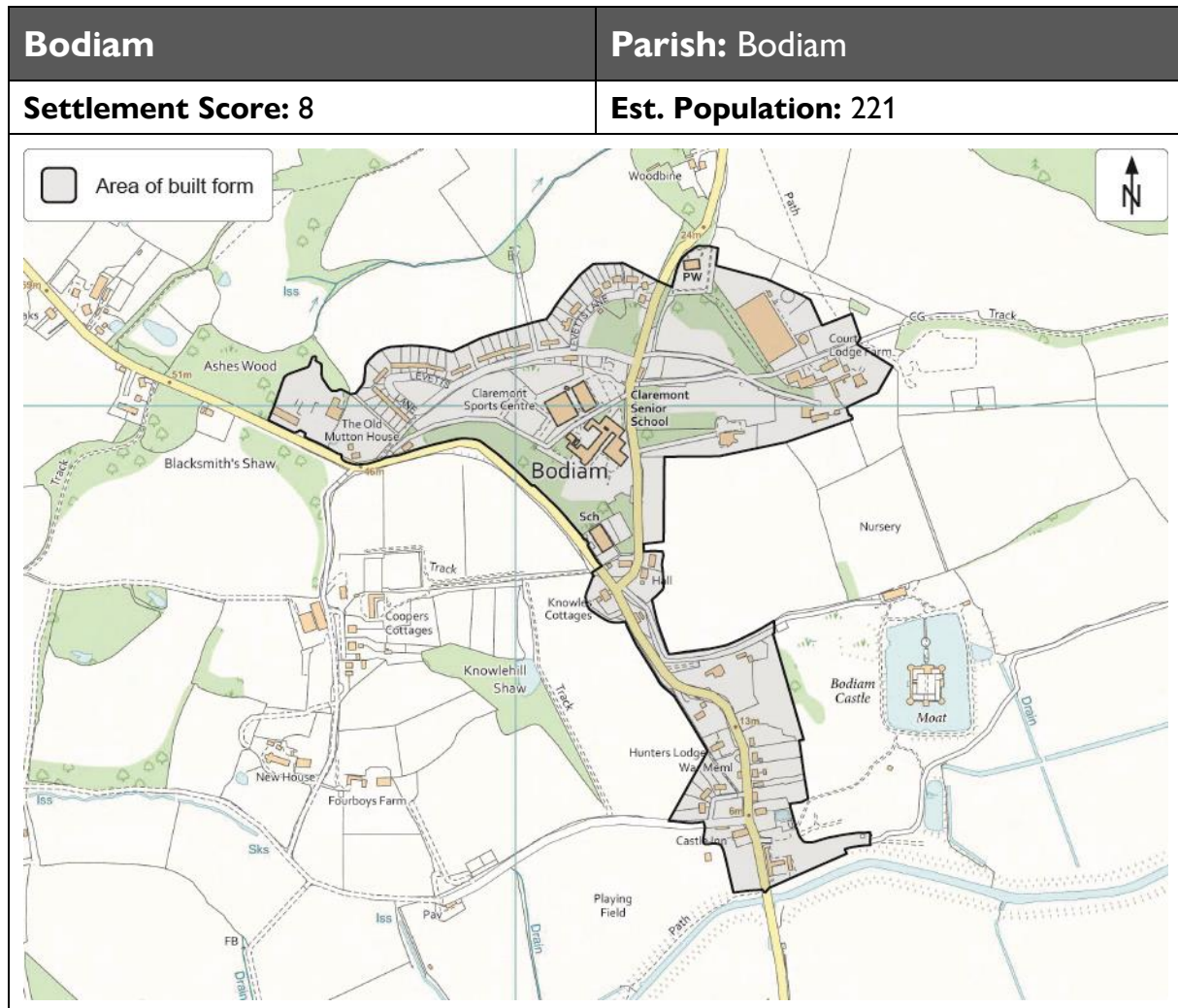
This is a very small coastal settlement with no facilities and services, making its residents wholly dependent on travelling to nearby larger settlements for their day-to-day requirements. It is considered to have a low potential for sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given the constraints presented by the Pevensey Levels and the adjacent sea, the potential for development is likely to be minimal. Opportunities to improve sustainability for residents would be delivered through improved public transport, particularly the provision of a bus service – however, the narrowness of incoming roads may limit the potential for a regular bus service.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Significant environmental constraints make it unlikely that any development of a scale that could support additional services and facilities would be considered acceptable.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Bodiam is a small remote village made up of two main areas, 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.

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 is located some 10km northeast of Battle, while Robertsbridge is some 5km to the west. Further afield, Hastings town centre is around 16km to the south.

Housing and Population

There are some 85 dwellings within the village, as defined by the area of built form shown on the map above. The average household size for the parish is 2.6, which gives the village an estimated population of 221.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

While famous for its castle, Bodiam's origins seem to go back to the Roman's, potentially as far back as the first century AD. An Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) which bounds the settlement to the south indicates the site of a large Roman settlement associated with the River located around a bridge crossing the River Rother. Remains of the settlement, including the site of a villa, are also a Scheduled Monument. A further ANA to the north, covering much of the village, identifies the site of the Hastings to Ashford Roman road, as well as the area of the medieval and post-medieval Bodiam village. Bodiam is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, in the Hundred of Staple and the county of Sussex but has no recorded population.

More recently, Bodiam has been an important area for hop growing in the 20th Century, including growing hops for Guinness. The neighbouring Kent and Sussex Railway was used up until 40 years ago to transport hop pickers to and from the hop gardens.

While the present-day village of Bodiam is predominantly modern, including 20th Century housing, it contains five listed buildings including the Grade II* listed Parish Church of St Giles, the majority of which dates back to the 13th Century.

Immediately adjacent to the southeast of the village is the famous Bodiam Castle, which is a Grade I listed building and Scheduled Monument. The Castle was built by Sir Edward Dalingridge in the years following 1385 and is an example of the latest period of military architecture of the Middle Ages. It was partly disassembled during the English Civil War.

Landscape Character

Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Bodiam forms part of the wider Lower Rother Valley landscape character area which is characterised by the broad valleys of the lower reaches of the River Rother and the secondary reaches of the Tillingham River. The valleys are surrounded by rolling well-wooded countryside affording long views to Kent. Bodiam Castle dominates the Rother valley floor.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village as part of area BO1 – Dokes Field, which includes all of the village, except for a few properties at its most north-western extent, as well as Bodiam Castle and the fields immediately to the east and west of the central main road

Character area BO1: Dokes Field - Apart from the castle, church, rectory and scattered farms the settlement is mainly post war development, however the area has a very strong sense of place. The character of the settlement has been retained despite some small pockets of more modern development.

The landscape as a high quality, and high value AONB area with high character and visual sensitivities. It has low to no capacity to accept change for housing or business development. Any significant new development would detract from the local character. There is a strong historic landscape structure which would make most mitigation inappropriate.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The entire area is within the High Weald NL. There are parcels of deciduous woodland dotted in and around the village along with some areas of ancient woodland. Many of these woodland parcels have been identified as priority habitats in the Priority Habitats Inventory, while there is a section of deciduous woodland that is covered by a Tree Protection Order to the northwest of the village. The southern tip of the village is within the Romney Marsh area Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

The majority of the village is free from flooding related issues, except for the southern tip of the village is within flood zone 3 so may be at risk of flooding, due to its proximity to the River Rother.

The village itself is somewhat inclined, going from around 10m above sea level in the south to around 40m in the northern part of the village.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

In terms of essential services, Bodiam has both a pre-school and primary school. It also hosts the Claremont Senior School which caters to private senior and Sixth Form students and is located to the north of the village. Other than the schools there are no other essential services, therefore it scores 1.

Service Level

Services and facilities within the village are generally limited. The historic Castle Inn is located on the main road across from the Castle. Just opposite is the National Trust Tea Room and Bodiam Castle gift shop, however these are connected with the castle for tourism purposes and have limited function within the settlement itself. There are no other shops within the village and residents must rely on the larger villages of Hawkhurst in Kent and Robertsbridge for convenience goods and access to other services such as dentists and

doctors. Bodiam scores 1 for its range of essential services and a score of 1 for its service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Bodiam has higher access to employment opportunities than the majority of smaller villages, which is due in part to the proximity of Bodiam Business Park, which is located within 1km to the west of the village. Bodiam Business Park forms a total of 3ha, and as of the Council's Employment Sites Review, November 2016 is occupied by approximately 14 businesses. Employment opportunities otherwise are limited, and it should be noted that walking to the business park from the village would be challenging as it is accessed by narrow country lanes, along which there are no footways. Overall, Bodiam scores 2 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Public transport availability in the village is limited. There is a bus service which runs between Hastings and Hawkhurst in Kent, with six busses running in each direction, Monday to Saturday, and five on Sundays. The lack of better public transport services means that residents will be dependent on the car for travel further afield. Bodiam scores a 2 for its level of public transport. In 2017, the East Sussex and Kent Railway gained planning permission to reconnect the railway between Bodiam and Robertsbridge, that would theoretically enable railway connections from Bodiam; however, the nature of the steam railway as a tourist attraction may not lend itself to functioning as a potential commuter service.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available across the breadth of the settlement. Bodiam scores 2 for its internet service.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	8

Current development commitments

There are no significant development commitments within Bodiam.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a primary school • Better than average employment opportunities for the size of the settlement, although this is difficult to walk to from the village
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few services and facilities • Limited bus service • Isolated from larger towns, with Hawkhurst being the most substantial nearby settlement • The openness of the AONB landscape, and the significant heritage constraints particularly to the south of the village, limit development potential.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

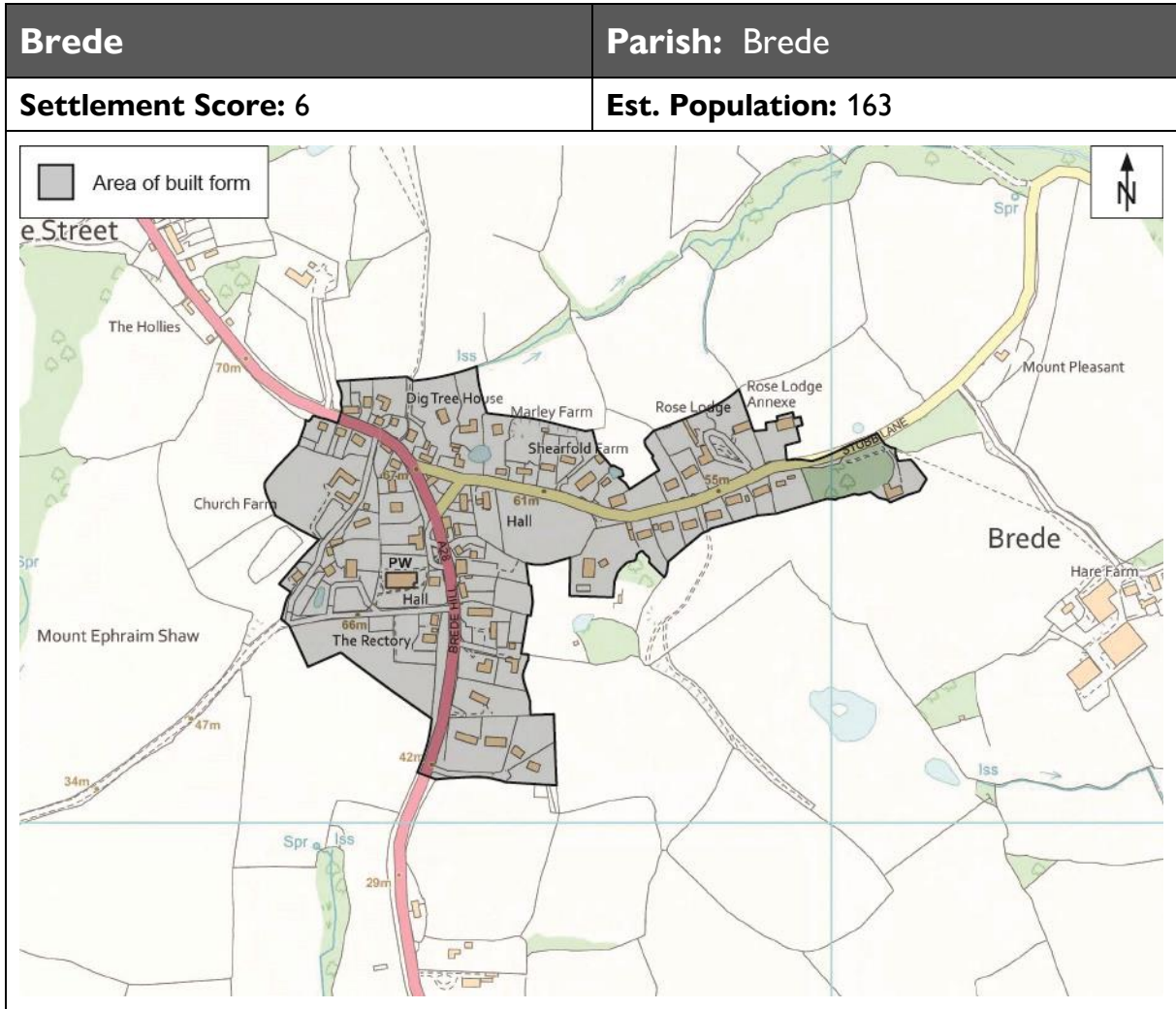
This is a small remote rural settlement. It has a limited effective range of services, and its relative isolation within the district, coupled with only 6 buses per day, means that accessing larger settlements for their wider range of services is problematic. It considered to have low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given the significant landscape constraints to further development and the small number of existing services, the biggest factor to improving the village's overall sustainability would be a more frequent bus service to Hawkhurst, for its range of services and facilities, and Robertsbridge as the nearest train station on the national rail network.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It is possible that a very small amount of new development could support existing services, however the village's landscape has no capacity for any significant development and therefore it is unlikely that additional services and facilities would be able to be developed.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

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

Brede is to the immediate south of Cackle Street, which is separated by a narrow undeveloped green gap that is potentially vulnerable to coalescence. Brede is strongly linked with the neighbouring villages of Cackle Street and Broad Oak which are some 100m and 1.2km to the north respectively. The three villages form a relatively compact cluster of settlements running north-south along the A28, all of which are connected via footways running along the road. Brede and Cackle Street are connected by a footway, and share the

same facilities and services given their proximity. Brede is some 2.5km northeast of Westfield, and 8km north of Hastings town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Brede is an estimated 163, which is based on the number of dwellings, 74, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

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 high concentration of historic dwellings within it, with 16 in total, including the Tudor mansion and early English Grade I parish church of St George, in which may be seen Dean Swift's cradle. Almost the entire village is within an Archaeological Notification Area defining a medieval & post-medieval village.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Brede is within the High Weald NL and sits within the broad valley of the River Brede with its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes. 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 towards Fairlight Church and the Hastings-Battle Ridge towards the head of the valley near Battle. The river levels and marshes are often criss-crossed by reed fringed ditches or 'sewers'. The landscape area consists of well managed farmland, historic structures and wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley and floodplain. There are villages and churches on the slopes overlooking the valley, including Brede, Udimore and Icklesham.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Brede as part of three main character areas for the village, these being the areas East of the Village (BC1), South of Cackle Street (BC3) and Stubbs Lane (BC4). BC1 and BC3 are also shared with Cackle Street which is immediately to the north.

BC1 – East of the Village

This is an area of pleasant green countryside surrounding the village. This part of the village has high-quality built development with vernacular character. Historic field patterns are in evidence with strong hedgerows and mature trees. The village has a strong sense of place. The village is a small hamlet strung along the lanes which form a triangular cross of lanes. The area has strong local vernacular. The village is perched above the river valley

The landscape is high quality and high value AONB area. The area has a high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is commented this area has a strong character, and that the existing settlement pattern would be eroded with any significant scale of new development. The potential for mitigation is low, as extensive woodland planting would detract from the existing character. Overall, the capacity to accept change in respect of development is low.

BC3 – South of Cackle Street

This is an area of gentle valley slopes overlooking Brede Valley. It is characterised by open meadows with good field structure. A feature of the area is that it is the setting for the church. The area supports hedges and mature trees / woodland. There is a strong sense of place. The settlement has grown on the edge of the valley and away from the flood plain.

The landscape area is of high quality and a high value AONB area. The area has a high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. BC3 has no capacity for new development. The assessment ultimately notes that the character of this area would be very sensitive to change. Further development would detract from character and create sprawl. The potential for mitigation is considered to be low, as any significant planting would be out of character.

BC4 – Stubbs Lane

This is an area of enclosed meadows close to village edge. There is a strong historic field structure with tree belts and mature hedges. The area has a strong sense of place with the feature church and vernacular buildings. This is a nuclear hamlet surrounding the church with much local vernacular architecture.

BC4 is a high quality and high value AONB landscape. It has a moderate-high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The area has a low capacity to accept development. Any new development would need to be sensitively located and in keeping with local vernacular. The potential for mitigation is low to moderate and any mitigation would need to be in character with strong sense of place and local distinctiveness.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

In terms of designations Brede is wholly within the High Weald NL and is immediately adjacent to the Brede Pit and Cutting Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the east. This SSSI is also partially within a parcel of ancient and deciduous woodland. There is an additional area of deciduous woodland within the village adjacent to Stubbs Lane, while larger areas of ancient woodland neighbour the village to the northeast and to the west. While the village is well treed - featuring a surrounding historic field structure with boundaries that hold numerous veteran trees.

There are some patches within Brede that are potentially vulnerable to surface water flooding, particularly along the A28 and Cackle Street, but issues that are particularly significant.

The village has a high proportion of listed buildings, and the requirement to protect this setting of Brede's listed heritage assets is a significant consideration. The settlement's distinctive historic and rural character, as well as its small size, make it sensitive to impacts from development.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

In terms of essential services, Brede has access to a doctor's surgery, which takes place each Thursday at the Village Hall. With only one essential service, the settlement scores 1.

Service Level

Except for the abovementioned doctor's surgery, Brede also has access to the Village Hall, and a hairdresser, with the Red Lion pub and St Georges Church. Ultimately, Brede has a minimal service level and scores 0.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Brede has access to limited employment opportunities, and it scores a 1. The majority of Broad Oak falls within the 2km radius for employment from the centre of Brede, meaning that employment within Broad Oak is considered accessible to residents of Brede¹. There is a small number of light industrial units on an estate at Old Broad Oak Farm. There may also be some employment within the various services and facilities within the settlement and those in neighbouring Cackle Street and Broad Oak.

Public Transport

Brede is served by several bus services. The most frequent, with up to nine buses per day is the number 2 bus between Hastings and Tenterden. Other bus services provide connections to other locations including Rye, Battle and Northiam, however these are infrequent – ranging from one service per week to two daily services. Without a bus service with at least ten buses per day, Brede scores 2 for its public transport provision.

¹ In this document the settlement centre is defined as the population weighted centre, and it is from this point that catchment areas are drawn for services and facilities, employment, and public transport access.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Brede, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Brede.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Relationship to Broad Oak and Cackle Street for shared services • Range of bus services to locations across the district
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small village • Minimal service level • Low employment opportunities • Landscape and heritage constraints relating to its AONB and ridgetop location significantly impact on development potential • Has a relatively infrequent bus service that could be improved

Recommendations for the Local Plan

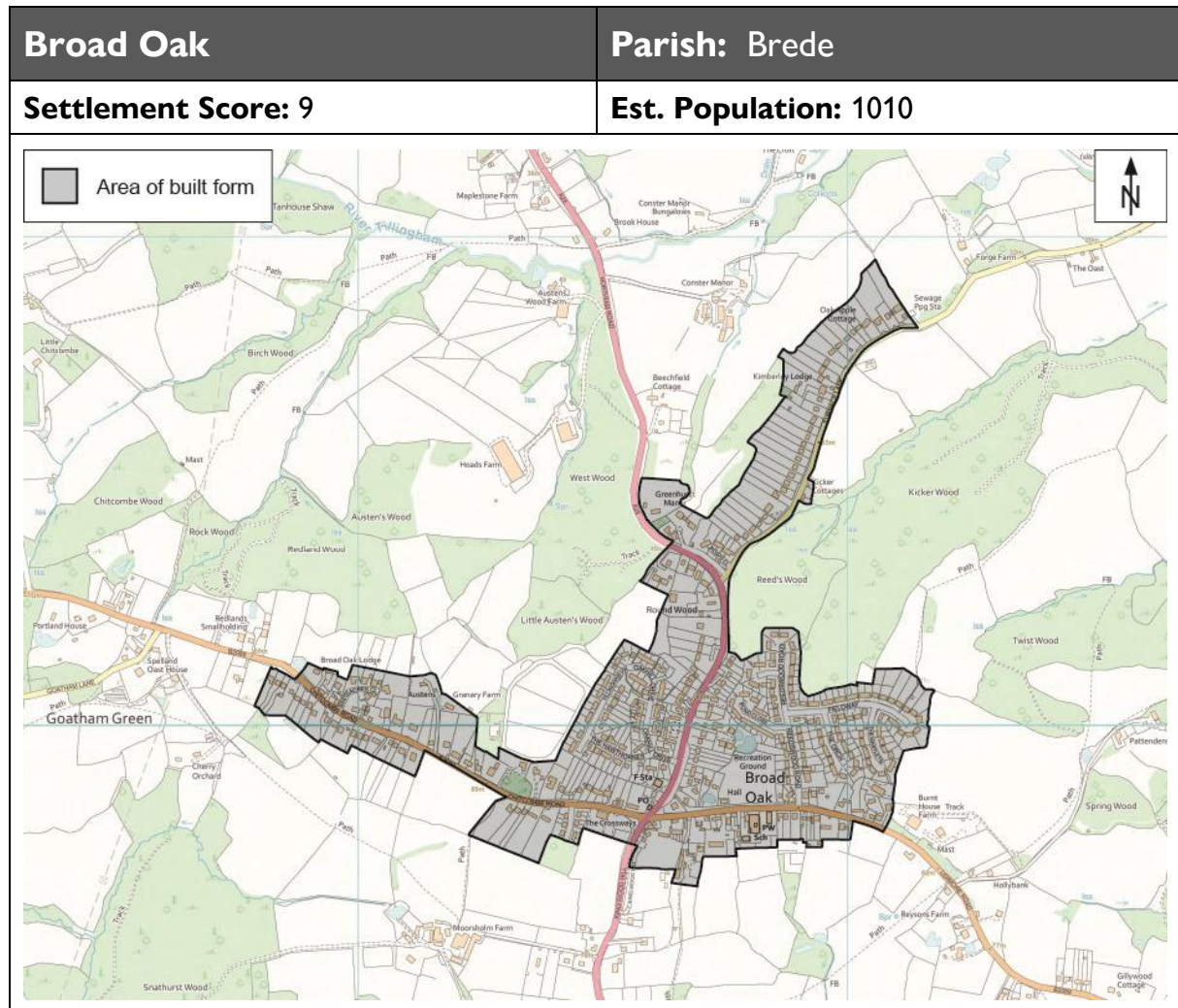
This is a small remote rural settlement and is considered to have low sustainability. While it benefits from its proximity to neighbouring settlements Cackle Street and Broad Oak, Brede's low sustainability score and its remoteness from larger settlements, make it unsuitable as a location for significant development.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Considerable landscape and heritage constraints, coupled with the village's small size, make it unsuitable for any significant development. The village could be made more sustainable for existing residents by improving its transport accessibility through a network of rural settlements connected surrounding villages and towns.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Any new development either within Brede or Cackle Street could potentially support existing services, however the potential for new development is highly constrained.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Broad Oak is situated approximately 9km west of the town of Rye and 6.5km south of Northiam. Slightly further afield, Hastings is some 12km to the south. It has a population of approximately 1010. An east to west running ridge rises between the River Tillingham to the north and the River Brede to the south. The village is positioned around 90 metres above sea level.

The village has developed within the previous 50 years, with much of the village having grown in the north of the B2089 Battle to Rye road.

The original formation of the settlement comprised of frontage development along the roads which run out from the centre of the village, but over time small estates with no through roads have been developed. Two arms of ribbon development extend along the B2089 to the west and along Furnace Lane to the north.

The settlement is near Cackle Street and Brede to the south and these developments form somewhat of a cluster. This cluster of development allows for certain facilities to be shared, for example the community hall which is in the nearby Cackle Street.

Housing and Population

The population of Broad Oak is an estimated 1010, which is based on the number of dwellings, 459, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Broad Oak mostly consists of modern development. There are a total of 8 listed buildings within the village, with the majority of these being adjacent to Udimore Road to the east of the crossroads.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Broad Oak and the surrounding countryside are situated within the High Weald NL, Brede Valley Landscape Character Area. The area is characterised by the broad valley of the River Brede with a flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, wide vistas from the enclosing ridges and well wooded side slopes with scattered farmsteads and orchards. The village is sited on a crest, and the land falls away most markedly to the southern open vistas of the Brede river valley. Given the village's elevated position, 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.

There are extensive areas of semi-natural ancient deciduous woodland around the valley head to the west of the area and to the north where woodland effectively conceals Powdermill Reservoir. There are also light industrial developments in the countryside including materials and metal recycling sites in rural areas at Westfield and Three Oaks.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around Broad Oak to include the landscape assessment areas B01 to B03.

B01 – South of the Village

This area forms the crest of the north slopes of the Brede Valley. The area is characterised by open pastures and gardens falling away from the built-up ridge. The settlement pattern is of ribbon development along the ridge.

The landscape is described as being both a high quality and value AONB area, with both high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The capacity to accept new development is none-low, and there is low potential for mitigation due to the open character of the ridge. It states that any development should be limited to infill within the development boundary.

B02 - North and East

The land to the north and east of the village is typically open rolling countryside with open pastures interrupted by woodland. There are public footpaths giving access to the wider countryside and long views to the north. The north extension to the village is in Cul-de-sacs of modern development extending north from the ridge. There are large houses and gardens as ribbon development along Forge Lane.

The landscape is described as being a high quality and value AONB area, with a high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. This area has a capacity to accept new development of none-low. There is low potential for mitigation. It would not be desirable to plant large areas of woodland and block the open views of the area.

B03 – Granary Farm

This area of flatter land forms a ridge top plateau. The village of development extends as ribbon development along the road. Fields to the north are enclosed by woodland and some are bounded by tall hedges and hedgerow trees.

The landscape is of good quality and a high value AONB area, with both moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The area has moderate-low capacity to accept new development. The area has moderate potential for mitigation with some scope to strengthen field boundaries and the built-up edge with planting. Development would need to be supported by a strong landscape framework.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

There is some potential for limited development at specific points along the Chitcombe Road. Both north and south of the road, any development would need to fit within the existing structure and form of ribbon development, while a significant concern is the erosion of open areas and hedgerows, which are integral to the road's rural character. Any development to the south of Chitcombe Road would need to be screened from wider landscape views. Sites to the south of the village, along the A28, even where they are screened from the wider landscape are problematic insofar as they would adversely impact on the development pattern of the village. Though it is not part of the wider landscape, the field to the rear of The Hawthornes if developed would be a considerable extension to the village, and would impact on the existing development pattern. Some limited and sensitive development could be possible if kept close to the settlement edge in the southern section of the field.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Broad Oak is wholly within the High Weald NL, and it is bound in some areas to the north by ancient deciduous woodland – most significantly to the northeast. The woodland here gives a sense of enclosure. To the west and north of the settlement is the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area, while a little further to the west is Brede High Woods.

There are some areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding along roads within the northern half of the village. These areas connect to watercourses that slope down to the north of the village.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Broad Oak has a convenience store, a primary school, and two doctor's surgeries (one doctors surgery is an outreach service from Rye Medical Centre). The nearest post office is likely to be in Westfield to the south. Ultimately Broad Oak's convenience store is a small village shop, and therefore residents would be required to travel further afield to access supermarkets. With a range of 3 essential services, Broad Oak scores 3.

Service Level

Notable facilities and services other than those listed as essential services include two pubs, a community hall, a pre-school nursery, a recreation ground and a bakery. Broad Oak scores only 1 for its service level, however this score and range of services and facilities matches those of comparably sized settlements.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There is a small number of light industrial units on an estate at Old Broad Oak Farm, to the immediate east of the village. Overall, however, Broad Oak has a low level of employment opportunities, and its scores 1.

Public Transport

Broad Oak is served by several bus services. The most frequent, with up to 9 buses per day is the 2 bus between Hastings and Tenterden. Other bus services provide connections to other locations including Rye, Battle and Northiam, however these are infrequent – ranging from one service per week to two daily services. Without a single good bus service with at least 10 buses per day Broad oak scores 2 for its public transport provision.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Broad Oak, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	9

Current development commitments

The DaSA allocated two sites within Broad Oak.

Policy BRO1: Land west of the A28, Northiam Road is allocated for some 40 dwellings, including the provision of allotments. There are currently no permissions or applications relevant to this allocation.

Policy BRO2: Land at the Rainbow Trout public house is allocated for some 20 dwellings (together with retention of public house). Part of this allocation (8 dwellings) has now been delivered as of permission RR/2018/1813/P.

There are no other significant development commitments within Broad Oak.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good range of essential services, including primary school, doctor's surgery and village shop • Population of over 1,000 residents may provide the potential to support a higher level of local services and facilities
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited wider service level • Relatively remote from larger settlements within the district • Low employment opportunities

- Landscape constraints relating to AONB and ridgetop location impact on the potential for further development
- Relatively poor and infrequent bus service

Recommendations for the Local Plan

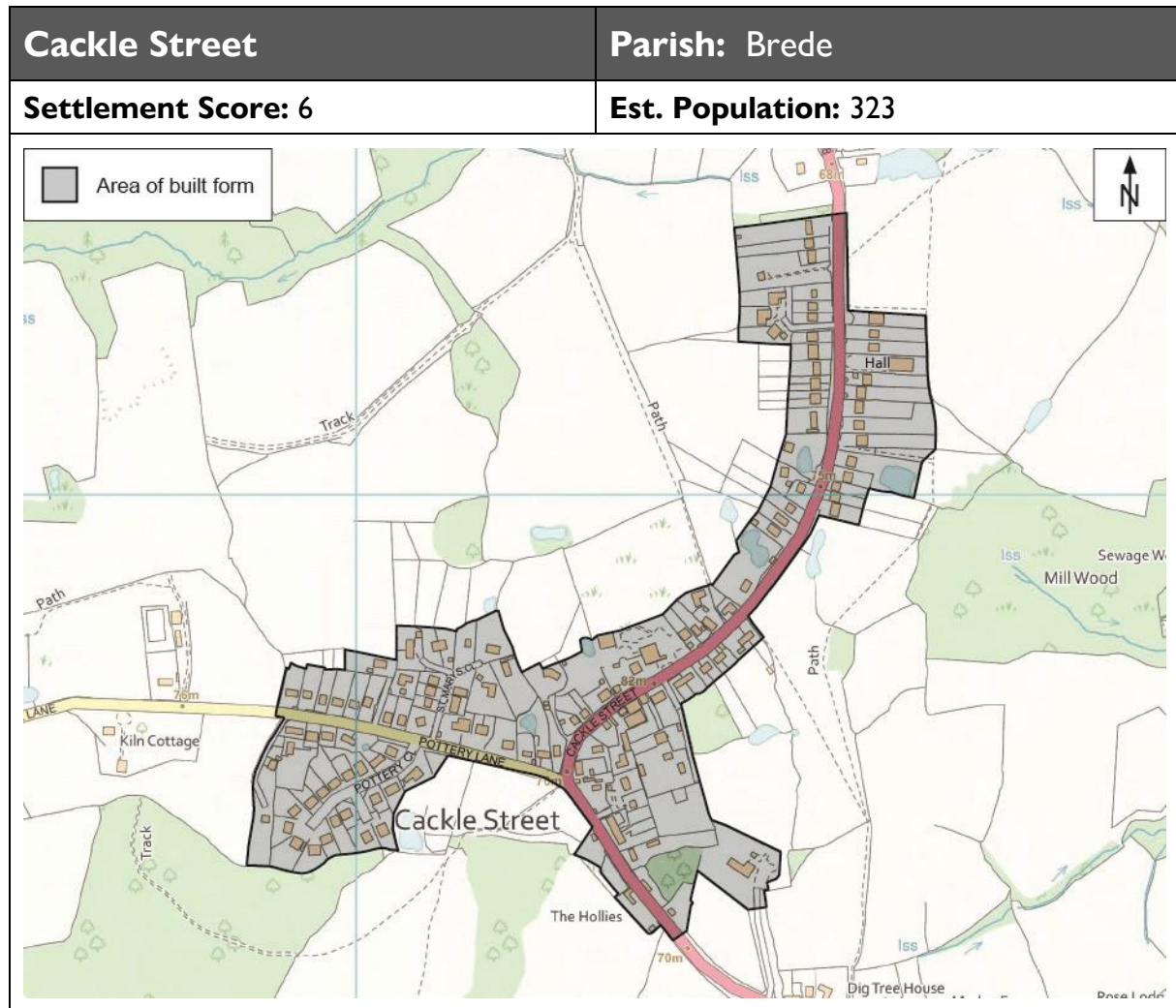
Broad Oak is a remote rural village. It has a population of over 1,000, although it has a below average sustainability score for a village of this size. Some development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of a cluster of rural settlements connected to a larger town such as Rye. Broad Oak is generally remote from both Rye and Hastings and as such connectivity would need to be improved. It is considered to be potentially sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

There are currently extant allocations for some 52 dwellings across two sites; the major proportion of these being in the area to the north of Chitcombe Road and west of Northiam Road, which is identified as the least sensitive area of the village and could provide some opportunity for further development. Improving the provision of local services and an improved bus services via inclusion within a network of rural settlements connected to larger settlement would improve Broad Oak's sustainability.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing new development between Chitcombe Road and Northiam Road along with other less sensitive locations, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Cackle Street sits between the neighbouring villages of Broad Oak to the north and Brede to the south. The three villages form a relatively compact cluster of settlements running north-south along to the A28. The majority of the development at Cackle Street has been carried out since the middle of the last century. Cackle Street has an approximate population of 323.

The settlement is characterised by ribbon development straddling the main A28 complemented by recent residential developments that has extended down the minor road of Pottery Lane.

Cackle Street is to the immediate north of Brede, which is separated by a narrow undeveloped green gap that is potentially vulnerable to coalescence. Cackle Street and Brede effectively share the same facilities and services, and they are connected by a footway along the A28. Broad Oak is also close to the north of Cackle Street, with Broad Oak being under 500m from the northernmost extent of Cackle Street. They are also connected by a footway along the A28.

Housing and Population

The population of Cackle Street is an estimated 323, which is based on the number of dwellings, 147, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Given their proximity, Cackle Street shares a similar history to the adjacent Brede. Although the majority of its development is modern, Cackle Street has a relatively high number of listed buildings – 8 in total, which are predominantly centred around the junction between the A28 and Pottery Lane.

There is a significant presence of listed and heritage buildings in road fronting positions within the settlement. Their rural setting is sensitive to modern residential development with all its related paraphernalia.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Cackle Street sits within the High Weald NL. The Brede Valley is characterised as the broad valley of the River Brede with a flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, wide vistas from the enclosing ridges and well wooded side slopes with scattered farmsteads and orchards. There are also light industrial developments in the countryside including materials and metal recycling sites in some rural areas. The surrounding rural landscape is

characterised by large expanses of mixed woodland and small valleys. Cackle Street is situated on a south facing slope on the northern valley side of the River Brede, to the immediate north of 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. Outside of the village, the land is rural with woodland, fields and orchards.

In terms of the immediate landscape, the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around Cackle Street within the landscape assessment areas BC1 to BC4.

BC1 – East of the Village

This is an area of pleasant green countryside surrounding the village. This part of the village has high-quality built development with vernacular character. Historic field patterns are in evidence with strong hedgerows and mature trees. The village has a strong sense of place. The village is a small hamlet strung along the lanes which form a triangular cross of lanes. The area has strong local vernacular. The village is perched above the river valley

The landscape is described as being of high quality and high value AONB area. The area has a high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is commented this area has a strong character, and that the existing settlement pattern would be eroded with any significant scale of new development. The potential for mitigation is low, as extensive woodland planting would detract from the existing character. Overall, the capacity to accept change in respect of development is low.

BC2 – Cackle Street West

This is an area of mature trees and enclosing tree belts. There are more enclosed fields on the village fringe and some scrubby areas with urban edge influences. The area is enclosed by mature tree belts. The area is a buffer to the AONB countryside. The settlement pattern is ribbon development with long fields behind and a small holding type settlement.

The landscape is described as being of good to high quality and a high value AONB area. The area has moderate character sensitivity and moderate visual sensitivity. The area has moderate capacity to accept residential development and low-moderate capacity to accept business development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Cackle Street is wholly within the High Weald NL, and there are several areas of ancient deciduous woodland that bound the parts of the settlement to the southwest and to the east. There are some large areas of ancient woodland located further to the west.

There are some patches in the settlement that are potentially susceptible to surface water flooding, but there are no significant issues in this regard.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Cackle Street has access only to a doctor's surgery, which takes place each Thursday at the Village Hall. This gives the settlement 1 point for essential services.

Service Level

Except for the abovementioned doctor's surgery, Cackle Street also has access to the Village Hall, and a hairdresser, with the Red Lion pub and St Georges Church in adjacent Brede. Ultimately, Cackle Street has a minimal service level, and scores 0.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Cackle Street has access to limited employment opportunities, and its scores a 1. Broad Oak falls within the 2km radius for employment from the centre of Cackle Street, meaning that employment within Broad Oaks is considered accessible to residents of Cackle Street. There is a small number of light industrial units on an estate at Old Broad Oak Farm. There may also be some employment within the various services and facilities within the settlement and those in neighbouring Brede and Broad Oak.

Public Transport

Cackle Street is served by several bus services. The most frequent, with up to nine buses per day is the number 2 bus between Hastings and Tenterden. Other bus services provide connections to other locations including Rye, Battle and Northiam, however these are infrequent – ranging from one service per week to two daily services. Without a bus service with at least ten buses per day, Cackle Street scores 2 for its public transport provision.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Broad Oak, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Brede.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close proximity to Broad Oak and Brede • Good range of bus services
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal service level • Low employment opportunities • Landscape and heritage constraints relating to AONB and ridgetop location significantly impact on development potential • Does not have a frequent bus service

Recommendations for the Local Plan

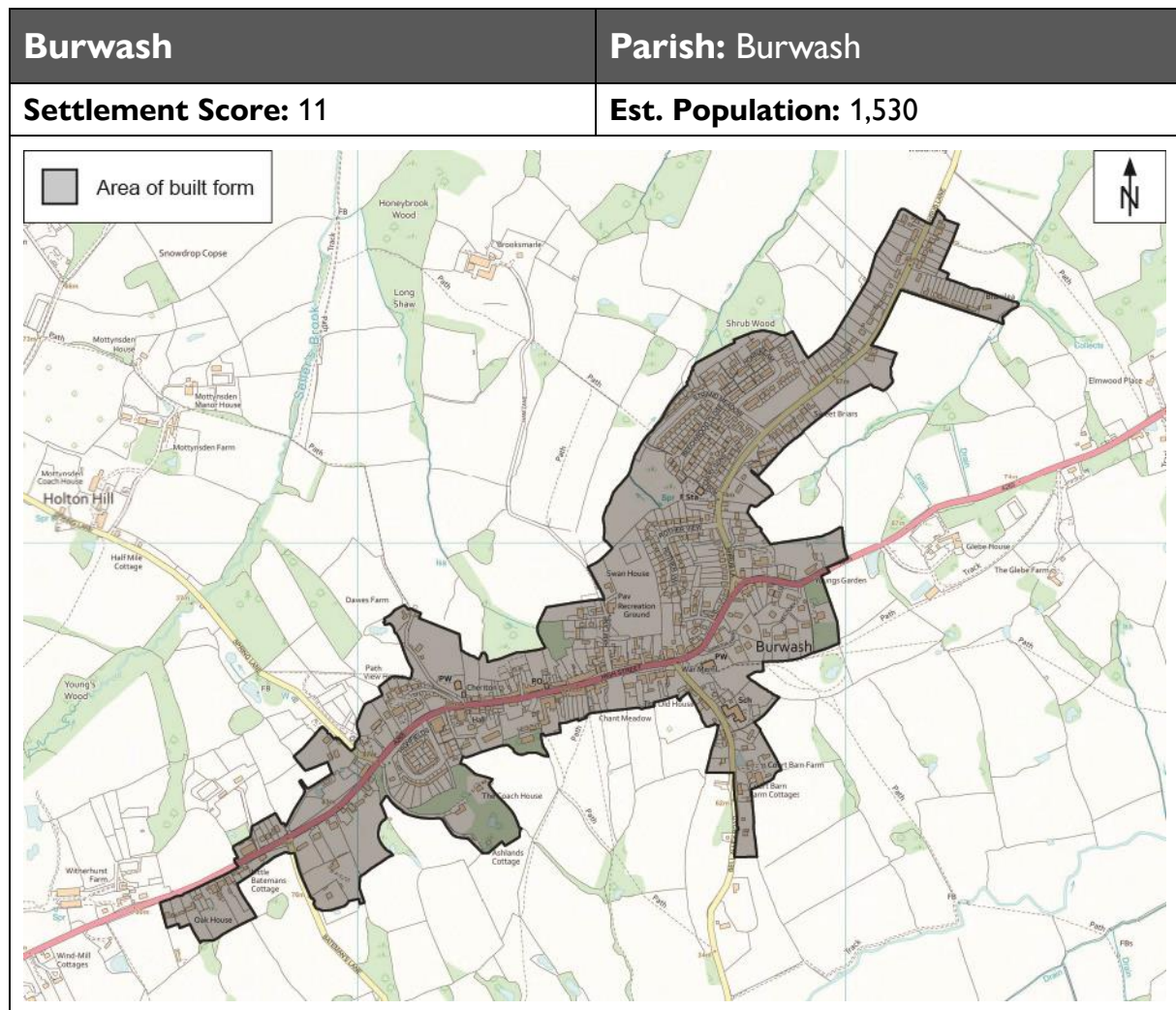
Cackle Street is a small remote rural settlement and is considered to have a low sustainability. While it benefits from its close proximity to neighbouring settlements Brede and Broad Oak, its low sustainability score and its remoteness from larger settlements, make it unsuitable as a location for significant development.

Opportunities for Growth

Considerable landscape and heritage constraints, coupled with the village’s small size, make it unsuitable for any significant development. The village could be made more sustainable for existing residents by improving its transport accessibility through a network of rural settlements connected to Rye or another larger town/village.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Any new development within Cackle Street could potentially support existing services, however the potential for new development is highly constrained.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Burwash is the largest of three locally connected villages, which includes Burwash Common and Burwash Weald, and all run along the A265. Burwash sits atop the 90m high forest ridge which separates the valleys of the Rother and the Dudwell. Burwash is one of a group of larger villages within the district, with a population of over 1,500.

Burwash is a picturesque and historic ridge top village, with a wide historic main street containing timber framed houses, some tile hung and some weather-boarded complemented by brick footpaths and lime trees. 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 situated around 19km northwest of Battle and around 7km east of Heathfield. Connections to the A21 at Hurst Green lie some 6km to the east.

Housing and Population

The population of Burwash is an estimated 1,530, which is based on the number of dwellings, 665, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

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. Burwash was historically a well-known 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. In present times Burwash is one of the most visited villages in Sussex due to its antiquity and its proximity to Batemans, Rudyard Kipling's home, now a National Trust property.

There are 67 historic listings in Burwash, with a very high concentration of these in the designated Conservation Area in which almost every building is listed. This historic core is also the subject of an Archaeological Notification Area, which identifies the existence of an earlier medieval village.

Landscape Character

Burwash is principally linear in form and positioned on an east to west running ridge some 90 metres above sea level. It is wholly within the AONB. The river valleys of the Rother are to the north and the river Dudwell to the south. Consequently, Burwash's wider landscape

relates to two landscape character areas, with the Dudwell Valley Landscape Area to the south and the Upper Rother Valley Landscape Area to the north.

Dudwell Valley - East Sussex Landscape Area

The Dudwell Valley is a narrow winding and tree lined stream valley with a network of streams arising from springs on higher ground on both sides of the valley and flowing into the Dudwell River. This area is known for being one of the more picturesque valleys in upper Rother and is overlooked by ridges and spurs with fine views across the valley. There are many farms, cottages and scattered historic farmsteads.

Upper Rother - East Sussex Landscape Area

The landscape has stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges and a relatively open valley floor with small, winding, partly tree lined rivers. The area also features a strong pattern of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods on the valley slopes. This area contains larger settlements on the high ground including Mayfield to the west, Wadhurst and Ticehurst to the north, Hurst Green to the east and Burwash to the south. The landscape hosts the Hastings to Tunbridge Wells railway, which follows the valley from Robertsbridge to Wadhurst.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around Burwash as part of landscape assessment areas BUR1 to BUR4, which are summarised below:

BUR 1 – Burwash School

This area is the sloping countryside which falls away from Burwash Ridge. It has a very strong sense of place. There are steep green fields which are enclosed by historic hedged boundaries. The characteristic features include significant mature oak trees and an oast house. This area is also the setting for the historic church and is a Village Conservation Area.

The landscape is described as being of high quality and a high value AONB area, with both high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The area has no capacity to accept residential or business development. There would be little scope in terms of potential for mitigation, as

the strong landscape character and historic field pattern could be compromised by extensive new planting.

BUR 2 – Greenfield Road

This area is gently rolling pasture with a strong field structure. Mature hedges enclose most of the pastures and open fields fall to the narrow stream valley. The area has a distinctive sense of place.

The landscape is a high quality and a high value AONB area. The area has high character sensitivity and a moderate visual sensitivity. There is low to moderate capacity to accept residential development and low to no capacity to accept business development. The open fields in the area are part of the character and large-scale woodland planting would detract from this, and therefore the capacity for mitigation is low in this area.

BUR 3 – Strand Meadow

This area is a mixture of enclosed fields and open pasture. The area is publicly accessible on footpaths. The area has some sense of place with few features or detractors. The historic field pattern is obscured by encroaching scrub. The build development is a modern housing extension to an old settlement.

The landscape is described as of ordinary to good quality and a high value AONB area. There is moderate character sensitivity and low visual sensitivity. There is moderate capacity to accept housing development and low capacity to accept business development. There would be some scope to strengthen the boundary between the built-up edge and the countryside and therefore there is moderate potential for mitigation.

BUR 4 – Burwash West

This area is of open slopes which fall away from the village to the north, west and south. The large gardens are enclosed by trees and hedges and back on to open farmland. The area is under mixed arable land and pasture with a very strong sense of place. The historic core of the village runs along the High Street conservation area.

The landscape is a high quality and high value AONB area, with both high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. There is low capacity to accept residential development and no capacity to accept business development. Large scale planting or enclosure would be out of character for the area, and consequently there is low potential for mitigation.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Sites to the east of Shrub Lane, south of Greenfield Road were identified as potentially developable, although there are a number of issues here; namely, development would need to be linear in form to conform to the existing development pattern and should not impact the setting of the former agricultural cottages along Greenfield Road. At the same time, houses along Shrub Lane would need individual driveways, which would cut through the ancient hedges bounding the field. To the east of Shrub Lane to the north of Greenfield Road was found to be more sensitive than to the south, as it forms a landscape buffer between the village edge and a historic farmstead to the north.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

In terms of designations, Burwash is wholly within the High Weald NL, and is bound and interjected by occasional parcels of ancient and deciduous woodland, as well as other priority habitats including good quality semi-improved grassland. The Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area abounds the village to the southeast.

The village is not generally vulnerable to flooding. On the ridge there are very light areas susceptible to surface water flooding, consistent with drainage down to the valleys below. Some residential roads in the north of the settlement centred around Shrub Lane and Strand Meadow are vulnerable to surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Burwash's essential services consist of a convenience store, a primary school, a doctor's surgery and a post office. Burwash is ultimately limited in its offer of shopping facilities having only a convenience store, with its nearest supermarkets being located in the town of Heathfield in Wealden District or Hawkhurst in Kent to the northeast. However, with one of each essential service, Burwash scores 4 in this sustainability category.

Service Level

Burwash has a reasonable range of services and facilities and is comparable in this regard with the other larger villages within the district. In addition to the essential services listed above, notable services in Burwash include its village hall, sports pitch, a pharmacy, a nursery pre-school and two pubs. Burwash scores 2 for its service level based on its variety of offer.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Burwash has limited local access to employment, with opportunities generally being limited to a small number of pubs, restaurants and tea rooms in the village and surrounding area. Burwash scores a 1 in respect of its opportunities for employment, which is consistent with other similarly sized settlements in the district – which typically score either a 2 or 1.

Public Transport

Burwash has an average bus service, with five services towards, Etchingham, Battle, and Uckfield and Heathfield, which are both in Wealden District. Burwash is served by 7 bus stops. There are also several community buses and a school time service to Wadhurst in Wealden. Etchingham train station is a 5-minute drive from Burwash and is also accessible by daily bus services. Public transport in Burwash is ultimately limited considering the size of the settlement and scores a 2.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available to Burwash, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	11

Current development commitments

The Burwash Neighbourhood Plan was Made by the Council in July 2022, however it does not contain any site allocations. Consequently, the allocated site from the 2006 Local Plan remains extant through Policy VL1 which allocates land south of Strand Meadow for 17 dwellings, including green areas of community space. By way of an appeal decision, this site is currently subject to permissions RR/2017/582/P and RR/2020/1822/P for 30 dwellings.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger village – population over 1,500, therefore opportunity to support services and facilities • Relatively good range of facilities and services for the size of settlement, including all four essential services • Relatively compact High Street improves walkability between services
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less frequent bus service • Limited employment options

- Relatively remote from larger settlements, with Heathfield (in Wealden) being the nearest town
- Areas of open AONB countryside, and historic constraints within the village core, limit the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

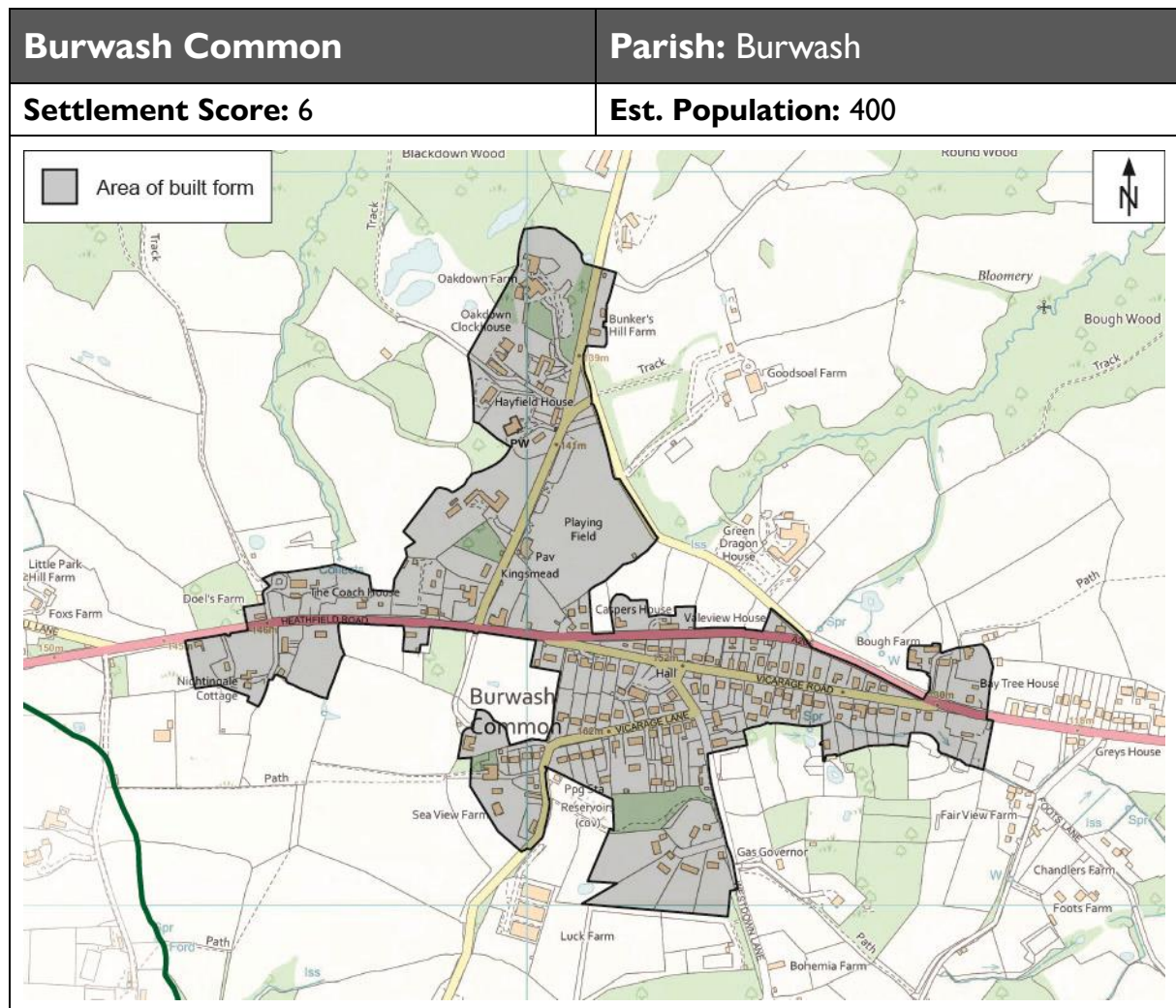
Burwash is one of the larger villages within the district. Its sustainability score and its location in respect of a number of larger neighbouring settlements means that some development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of a northern cluster of rural settlements. It is considered to be potentially sustainable, subject to the Development Strategy.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

There are areas to the north of the village within the Shrub Lane area that may provide some opportunities for development, as well as the existing permission at Strand Meadow. Through improving the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of larger rural villages, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing new development between in areas adjacent to Shrub Lane along with other less-sensitive locations, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Burwash Common is one of three connected villages including Burwash Weald and Burwash, and is the nearest to the Wealden District boundary to the east. It is situated on the A265 which runs along the high ridge forest separating the valleys of the Rother and Dudwell. Burwash Common is the second largest of the three villages. Burwash Common sits almost contiguous with Burwash Weald to the east, to which it is connected via a footway.

Burwash Common is some 3km west of Burwash and 6km to the east of Heathfield in Wealden District, which is the nearest larger settlement. Further afield, the centre of Tunbridge Wells in Kent is roughly 16.5km to the northwest, while the town centre of Hastings is around 22km to the south east.

Housing and Population

The population of Burwash Common is an estimated 400, which is based on the number of dwellings, 174, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Burwash Common is closely linked with the two other Burwash Villages, Burwash and Burwash Weald and therefore its heritage and history and interlinked with these settlements. The area was developed by King Henry III as a trading place with a weekly market. The immediate area was important within the Wealden Iron Industry, being closely connected with the Heathfield Furnace which was owned by the Fuller Family. As the iron industry in the area faded, smuggling established an important role locally in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries.

Burwash Common's development is relatively modern, although there are four listed buildings within the village.

Landscape Character

Burwash Common is wholly within the High Weald NL and is situated on a ridge with the river valleys of the Rother to the north and the river Dudwell to the south. To the north of the village are views the high-quality landscape designated within the High Weald Area of Natural Beauty (AONB). As a ridgetop settlement, Burwash Common lies between two landscape character areas (LCAs); these being the Dudwell Valley to the south, and the Upper Rother Valley to the north.

Dudwell Valley LCA

The Dudwell Valley is a narrow winding and tree lined stream valley with a network of streams arising from springs on higher ground on both sides of the valley and flowing into the Dudwell River. This area is known for being one of the more picturesque valleys in upper Rother and is overlooked by ridges and spurs with fine views across the valley. There are many farms, cottages and scattered historic farmsteads.

Upper Rother LCA

The landscape has stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges and a relatively open valley floor with small, winding, partly tree lined rivers. The area also features a strong pattern of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods on the valley slopes. This area contains larger settlements on the high ground including Mayfield to the west, Wadhurst and Ticehurst to the north, Hurst Green to the east and Burwash to the south. The landscape hosts the Hastings to Tunbridge Wells railway, which follows the valley from Robertsbridge to Wadhurst.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around Burwash Common and Burwash Weald as part of landscape assessment areas BC1 to BC2, which are summarised below:

BC1 – Burwash Common North

This area has a sense of place and sits on the open slopes falling away from the Burwash Ridge. There are large open fields in places which are enclosed by woodland to north. Wooded ghyll valleys are a characteristic. The open recreation ground is a setting to some fine houses their gardens.

The landscape is described as being of good to high quality and a high value AONB area. It has both high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The area has low capacity to accept residential development and no capacity to accept business development. The existing open slopes and characteristic settlement pattern would be sensitivity to change and should be retained, therefore there is low potential for mitigation.

BC2 – Burwash Common South

This area is more intimate and enclosed than the area to the north (BC1). It is rolling countryside with frequent tracks and lanes. There is a patchwork of small paddocks with a distinct field pattern. The area is dissected by wooded ghyll valleys.

The landscape area is described as being of good to high quality and a high-quality AONB area, with both moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The area has low to moderate capacity to accept residential development and a low capacity to accept business development. There is moderate potential for mitigation with some scope to strengthen landscape structure, but extensive planting would be out of character.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

An open gap to the south of the A265 to the western edge of Burwash Common was considered to be outside the main settlement, which would be sensitive due to its function as a green open space, its sloping aspect and the presence of a historic boundary hedge.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Burwash Common is wholly within the AONB. There are areas of deciduous ancient woodland bounding the village to the north and south. Henhurst Farm Woodland and Meadows Local Wildlife Site is located to the southeast of the village, which is species rich, unimproved and semi improved grasslands and small woodlands. A section of the settlement to the southwest encroaches slightly on the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

There are almost no areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding within the settlement area, while to the north and south are channels susceptible to surface water flooding that are consistent with watercourses that flow down into each valley.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Burwash Common has a very limited range of services, with only a convenience store, meeting the definition for an essential service. The village is in close proximity to the larger village of Burwash which has a limited, but wider, range of services, including a doctor's surgery. The nearest supermarkets are located in the town of Heathfield, and potentially Hawkhurst. Burwash Common scores a 1 for its essential services.

Service Level

As stated above, due to the proximity to the larger village of Burwash, Burwash Common essentially shares many of its services and facilities with this larger village. In terms of the services and facilities available considered accessible from Burwash Common itself, these consist of a sports pitch including a pavilion, a play area, a café, and the Wheel Inn Pub in neighbouring Burwash Weald. With a minimal service level, Burwash Common scores a 0.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Burwash Common has some employment opportunities. An employment site at Luck Farm on Vicarage Lane provides a small amount of employment across a number of business units. The other forms of employment may come from the larger village of Burwash, which has a small number of pubs, restaurants and tea rooms. Burwash Common scores a 1 in respect of its opportunities for employment, which is consistent with other similarly sized settlements in the district – which typically score either a 2 or 1.

Public Transport

Burwash Common has an average bus service, with five services towards Heathfield, Etchingam, Uckfield and Battle, as well as a school time bus that goes towards Uckfield College. Etchingam train station is a 5-10 minute drive from Burwash Common and is also

accessible by daily bus services. Public transport in Burwash Common, ultimately, is limited and scores a 2.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available to Burwash Common, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Burwash Common.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience store • Close relationship to Burwash, which provides access to a reasonable range of services
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal services and facilities • Less frequent bus service • Limited employment options • Relatively remote from larger settlements, with Heathfield in Wealden being the nearest town at 5.5km to the west • Areas of open AONB countryside, limit the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

This is a rural settlement with a minimal service level, and an overall low sustainability score. Consequently, it is dependent on its proximity to Burwash and Heathfield which provide residents some means of accessing services for their day-to-day requirements. It is considered to have a low overall sustainability.

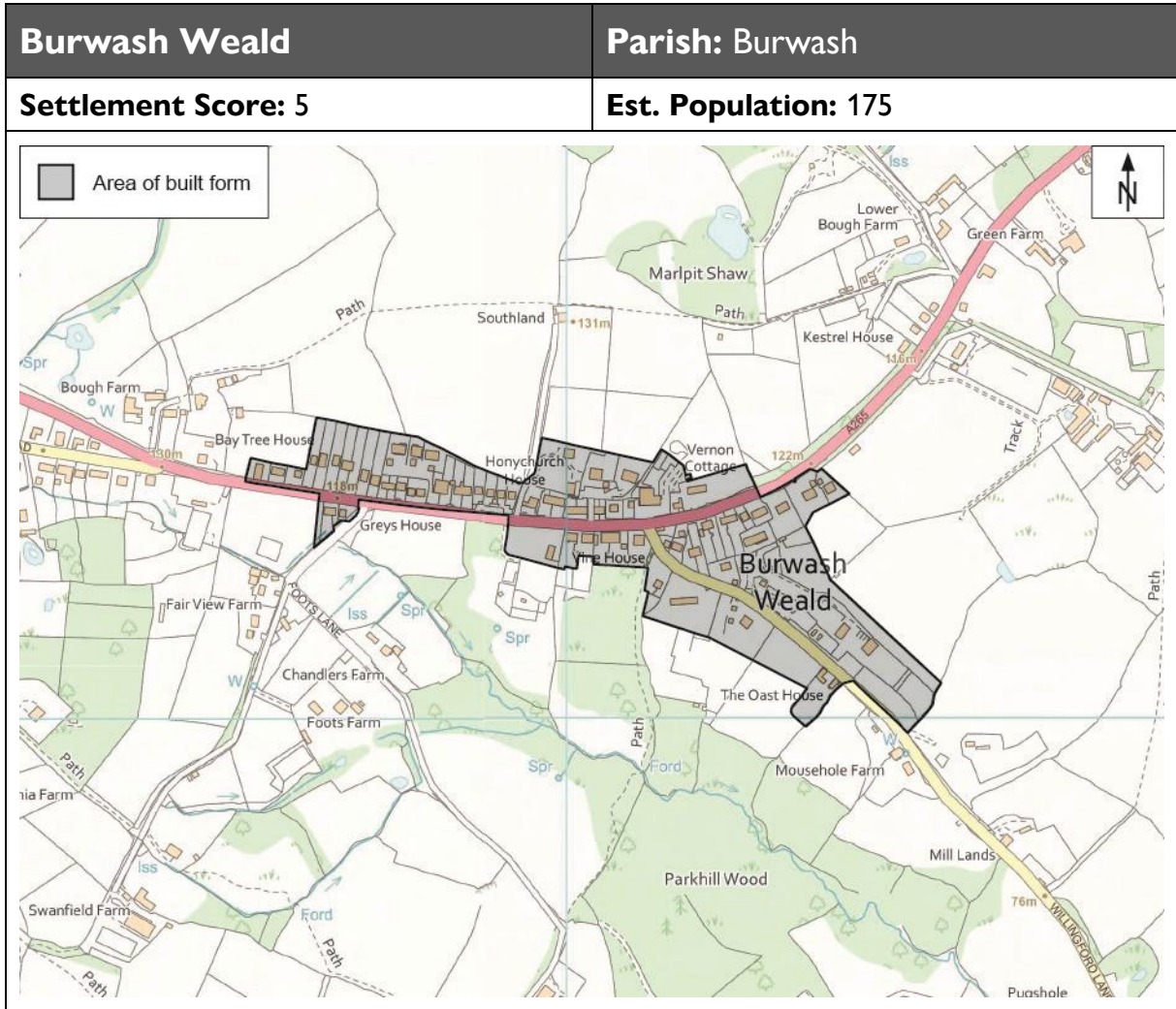
Its location in respect of a number of larger neighbouring settlements means that improvements to public transport accessibility as part of a northern cluster of rural settlements, would enable easier access to this wider range of services that these larger settlements would provide.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

The above landscape assessments indicate that there may be scope for a limited amount of development within the south of Burwash Common. Sustainability could potentially be increased through a small improvement in the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of larger rural villages; with the emphasis here on an improvement to bus connectivity and frequency, as any redevelopment would be minimal in its capacity to deliver additional services.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing a limited level of new development between in less sensitive locations could potentially support the development of a very small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Burwash Weald is one of the three villages including Burwash Common and Burwash. Burwash Weald lies on the A265 and development straddles the main road, with ribbon development extending along the north of the road to the west with views over the river valley to the south that can be glimpsed over hedgerows. Burwash Weald sits almost contiguous with Burwash Common to the west, to which it is connected via a footway.

Burwash Weald is some 2.5km west of Burwash and 6.5km to the east of Heathfield, which is the nearest larger settlement.

Housing and Population

The population of Burwash Weald is an estimated 175, which is based on the number of dwellings, 76, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Burwash Weald was formally known as 'Burwash Wheel' – taking its name from the original pub. This pub then became a poor house in 1760 when the later pub, 'The Wheel Inn', was built. The immediate area was important within the Wealden Iron Industry, being closely connected with the Heathfield Furnace which was owned by the Fuller Family. As the iron industry in the area faded, smuggling established an important role locally in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries. The Wheel Inn was itself a focus of smuggling gangs, and in 1834 had even been given the title of the "roughest public house" by a resident of Portsmouth.

There is one listed building within the built form of the settlement.

Landscape Character

Burwash Weald is wholly within the High Weald NL and is situated on a ridge with the river valleys of the Rother to the north and the river Dudwell to the south. To the north of the village are views the high-quality landscape designated within the High Weald Area of Natural Beauty (AONB). As a ridgetop settlement, Burwash Weald lies between two landscape character areas (LCAs); these being the Dudwell Valley to the south, and the Upper Rother Valley to the north.

Dudwell Valley LCA

The Dudwell Valley is a narrow winding and tree lined stream valley with a network of streams arising from springs on higher ground on both sides of the valley and flowing into the Dudwell River. This area is known for being one of the more picturesque valleys in

upper Rother and is overlooked by ridges and spurs with fine views across the valley. There are many farms, cottages and scattered historic farmsteads.

Upper Rother LCA

The landscape has stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges and a relatively open valley floor with small, winding, partly tree lined rivers. The area also features a strong pattern of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods on the valley slopes. This area contains larger settlements on the high ground including Mayfield to the west, Wadhurst and Ticehurst to the north, Hurst Green to the east and Burwash to the south. The landscape hosts the Hastings to Tunbridge Wells railway, which follows the valley from Robertsbridge to Wadhurst.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around Burwash Weald and Burwash Common as part of landscape assessment areas BC1 to BC2, which are summarised below:

BC1 – Burwash Common North

This area has a sense of place and sits on the open slopes falling away from the Burwash Ridge. There are large open fields in places which are enclosed by woodland to north. Wooded ghyll valleys are a characteristic. The open recreation ground is a setting to some fine houses their gardens.

The landscape is of good to high quality and a high value AONB area. It has both high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The area has low capacity to accept residential development and no capacity to accept business development. The existing open slopes and characteristic settlement pattern would be sensitivity to change and should be retained, therefore there is low potential for mitigation.

BC2 – Burwash Common South

This area is more intimate and enclosed than the area to the north (BC1). It is rolling countryside with frequent tracks and lanes. There is a patchwork of small paddocks with a distinct field pattern. The area is dissected by wooded ghyll valleys.

The landscape area is described as being of good to high quality and a high quality AONB area, with both moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. The area has low to moderate capacity to accept residential development and a low capacity to accept business development. There is moderate potential for mitigation with some scope to strengthen landscape structure, but extensive planting would be out of character.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Sites to the north of the A265 were considered by the Assessment. It was considered that there could be some scope to extend ribbon development to the eastern boundary of the village. While this would to some extent fit alongside the exiting settlement pattern, it would require individual accesses that would impact on a historic tree belt and boundary bank associated with the A265 as a historic routeway. There was also some potential for a small amount of infill development to the north of the A265, and it was considered that a small section of land to the south of the A265 could have some potential without having an unacceptable impact on the AONB landscape.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Burwash Weald is wholly within the AONB. There is a parcel of deciduous woodland bounding the village to the south, very close by is further ancient and deciduous woodland. Also, to the south is the Henhurst Farm Woodland and Meadows Local Wildlife Site is located to the south of the village, which is species rich, unimproved and semi-improved grasslands and small woodlands. A section of the settlement to the southeast encroaches slightly on the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. There are larger areas of ancient deciduous woodland a little way to the north of the settlement.

There are few areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding within the settlement area, while to the north and south are channels susceptible to surface water flooding that are consistent with watercourses that flow down into each valley.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Burwash Weald is a very small village and has no essential services. Although being located in close proximity to the larger villages of Burwash and Burwash Common, the essential services within those settlements are not within walking distance of Burwash Weald and it consequently scores a 0.

Service Level

As stated above, although near the larger village of Burwash, the services and facilities located there are not within walking distance and the level of services within Burwash Weald itself is extremely limited, consisting only of the Wheel Pub. Therefore, it scores a 0. See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Burwash Weald has employment areas in proximity, including the Industrial Estate at Perrymans Lane. The other forms of employment may come from the larger village of Burwash, which has a small number of pubs, restaurants and tea rooms. Burwash Weald scores a 1 in respect of its opportunities for employment, which is at least consistent with other smaller settlements in the district.

Public Transport

Burwash Weald has an average bus service, with five services towards Heathfield, Etchingam, Uckfield and Battle, as well as a school time bus that goes towards Uckfield College. Etchingam train station is a 5–10-minute drive from Burwash Common and is also accessible by daily bus services. Public transport in Burwash Common, ultimately, is limited and scores a 2.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available to Burwash Weald, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Burwash Weald.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No essential services, and minimal wider service level • Adjacent to Burwash Common and in a close relationship to Burwash, which provide some access to a reasonable range of services
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small – population of less than 200 • Minimal services and facilities • Less frequent bus service • Limited employment options • Relatively remote from larger settlements, with Heathfield in Wealden being the nearest town at 6.5km to the west • Areas of open AONB countryside, limit the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

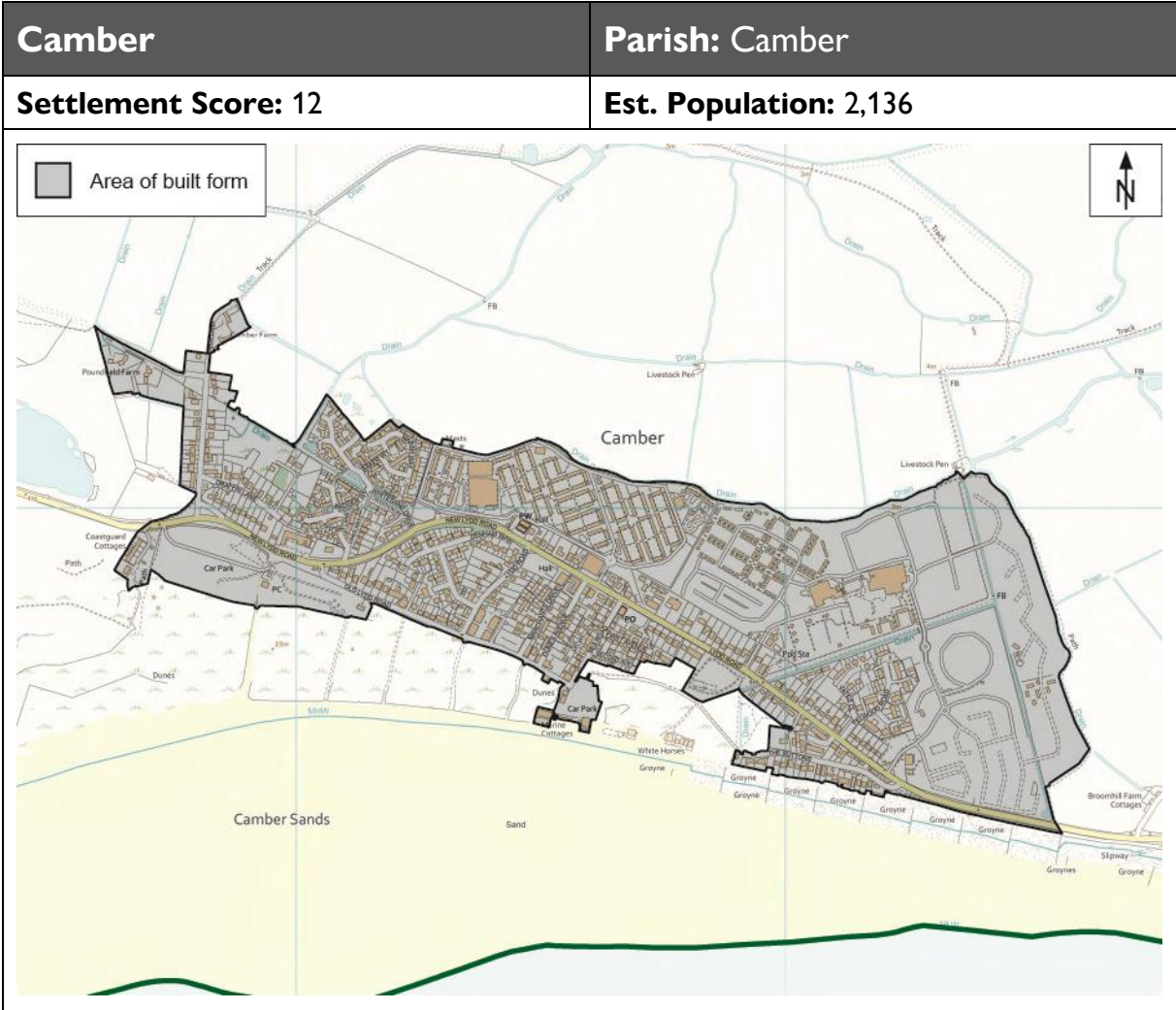
Burwash Weald is a small rural settlement. It has a minimal service level, and an overall low sustainability score. Consequently, it is dependent on its proximity to Burwash and Heathfield in Wealden which provide residents some means of accessing services for their day-to-day requirements. Its location in respect of a number of larger neighbouring settlements means that improvements to public transport accessibility as part of a northern cluster of rural settlements, would enable easier access to this wider range of services that these larger settlements would provide.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

The above landscape assessments indicate that there may be scope for a limited amount of development within the south of Burwash Weald. Sustainability could potentially be increased through a small improvement in the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of larger rural villages; with the emphasis here on an improvement to bus connectivity and frequency, as any redevelopment would be minimal in its capacity to deliver additional services.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing a limited level of new development in less sensitive locations could potentially support the development of a very small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

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 village to a tourism hotspot as a result of its coastal position.

The settlement is in the far east of the district, not far from the Kent boarder. It is located nearly 4km southeast of Rye, while the centre of Hastings is some 17.5km to the west of Camber.

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 2,136 although it is considerably more crowded during the summer months when tourist accommodation is full. The car park behind the dunes which serves the visitors is one of the largest in Sussex and this quickly becomes filled my day-visitors in summer months. In recent years Camber has become a popular location for self-catered accommodation, Airbnb's and second homes. Given such demand has led to the development of luxury beachside properties along 'The Suttons'.

Housing and Population

Camber has an estimated population of 2,136, which is based on the number of dwellings, 971, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Camber has only one listed building which is a farmhouse to the northwest periphery of the settlement, which would have existed prior to the settlement. There is also a small Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) and scheduled monument within the sands to the southeast, which denotes the position of an 18th or 19th Century shipwreck. For the most part, Camber is essentially a modern settlement.

Landscape Character

Camber is situated within the Rye-Winchelsea Area (LCA).

The Rye-Winchelsea Area LCA

The Rye-Winchelsea Area generally consists of a wide tract of coastal levels, dominated by grazing marsh as the western area of the Romney marshes and overlooked by bold spurs, steep inland cliffs and 'islands' of higher ground, including the twin citadels of Rye and Winchelsea. There are significant areas of pasture, sheep grazing and arable farming, while tree cover is concentrated on the slopes and the towns of Winchelsea and Rye. The area features open coastal and valley levels with straightened or engineered drainage channels. The area is crossed by the Rother and the Royal Military Canal, with historically corresponding Martello towers. The coastal stretches include broad shingled areas with lakes from gravel working, and the extensive area of Dunes and sandy beach at Camber which are unique in East Sussex. From Rye there are distinctive views towards Dungeness power station and the wind farm at Little Cheney Court Farm, with views to Camber Castle on the levels to the south. There is a strong sense of remoteness in the areas further from built development.

Camber Sands, with its wide bay and large dune system, has been used in a variety of creative media. The area has featured in many films and television programs. The area is mentioned in songs and pictured on album covers. It is a popular place for artists to live and has been used for art installations.

In terms of the immediate landscape, the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape surrounding the settlement. An area which incorporates part of the far west of the settlement as well as its immediate landscape, is landscape area C1 – Farm Lane. This area has since seen significant development in the form of the 'Whitesands' residential development. The area to the east, north and northwest of Camber as part of landscape assessment area C2 – Walland Marsh.

C2 – Walland Marsh

This area has a strong sense of place. It is low lying flat and very open landscape. There is a vast landscape of huge skies and long views with little vegetation. Drainage ditches fringed by reeds are characteristic. The settlement is typically seaside development of caravan parks and chalets.

The assessment defines the immediate landscape area as being of both high quality and high value is identified as being medium-low. The landscape character sensitivity to change and its visual sensitivity are also both high. It is considered that the wide-open marshes would be very susceptible to change, while there would be no scope for tree or shrub planting by way of landscape mitigation. Consequently, the landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'none' for residential and business development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Camber is subject to significant national and international environmental constraints. Large areas around the settlement on all boundaries, (apart from a small area to the west) are subject to SSSI designation, while large areas directly adjoining the settlement to the south and north-west are subject to Ramsar and SPA designations known collectively as the Dungeness Complex of Habitats Sites.

The majority of the village is within Flood Zone 3, excluding a section in the southwest. The village's constraints are such that outward expansion of the village is highly unlikely to be deliverable.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Camber has a number of convenience stores, including one with over 200sqm of convenience floorspace. Even so, it would be expected that residents would travel further afield for supermarket shopping in nearby Rye. It also has a doctor's surgery and a Post Office. It lacks a primary school, with the nearest being in Rye. With three types of essential service, Camber scores a 3.

Service Level

Notable facilities not mentioned already as essential services include a village hall and a sports pitch. There are around two dozen units within the category of

'Pub/Restaurant/Café/Take Away', however a significant number of these are either seasonal, or are accessible only through Day Passes to the Holiday Parks contained within the settlement. The service level in Camber is comparable with the other large villages within the district, and it scores a 2.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Camber's employment is centred on its busy tourist industry, including Pontin's holiday camp. However, the majority of this work is seasonal, and yields lower paid jobs. Rye is the largest local employment centre, while Rye Harbour and nearby Dungeness power station may provide further forms of higher skill employment. Again, the level of employment opportunities within Camber is comparable to other similarly sized settlements in the district, and it scores a 2.

Public Transport

The 102 which connects Camber to locations including Rye and Folkestone is a good bus service, with 10+ daily bus services each day. There are also school time buses to secondary and higher educational facilities in Tenterden and Bexhill. With a good bus service, Camber scores 3 for its public transport provision.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Camber, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	2

Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	12

Current development commitments

The DaSA allocated two sites within Camber.

Policy CAM1 – Land at the Former Putting Green Site, Old Lydd Road, is allocated for some 10 dwellings. This site is currently the subject of planning application RR/2021/2947/P for the development of 10 dwellings.

Policy CAM2 - Land at the Central Car Park, Old Lydd Road, is allocated as a comprehensive mixed-use development to include an improved public realm together with tourism, commercial and operational uses (beach patrol office, police/ medical offices) and some car parking.

There is also a planning permission for the change of use from public carpark to water sports centre at Broomhill Car Park, Lydd Road as subject to RR/2019/903/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest population of any village within Rother, which in principle should help support services and facilities • A service level comparable with its size • Good bus service • Some employment opportunity provided by local tourism
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant environmental constraints, with SSSI, RAMSAR and SPA designations • Large areas within Flood Zone 3, including surrounding areas • Lack of primary school • Many of the services recorded are within holiday camps, and not ordinarily available • Relatively remote in respect of larger towns

- Lack of substantial employment

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Camber is the largest village by population in the district, as well as having a good bus service to Rye, which is roughly 4km to the north west. While the settlement has decent service level, its overall sustainability score is lower than the next three largest villages, for the fact that unlike these villages, Camber does not have a primary school and therefore lacks the full range of services. It is considered to be of moderate overall sustainability, which positions it alongside other larger villages within the district.

In spite of its relative proximity to Rye, Camber is in an isolated location, sitting on the periphery of the district and the Romney Mars area; while the main road of access – Camber Road – is winding and indirect.

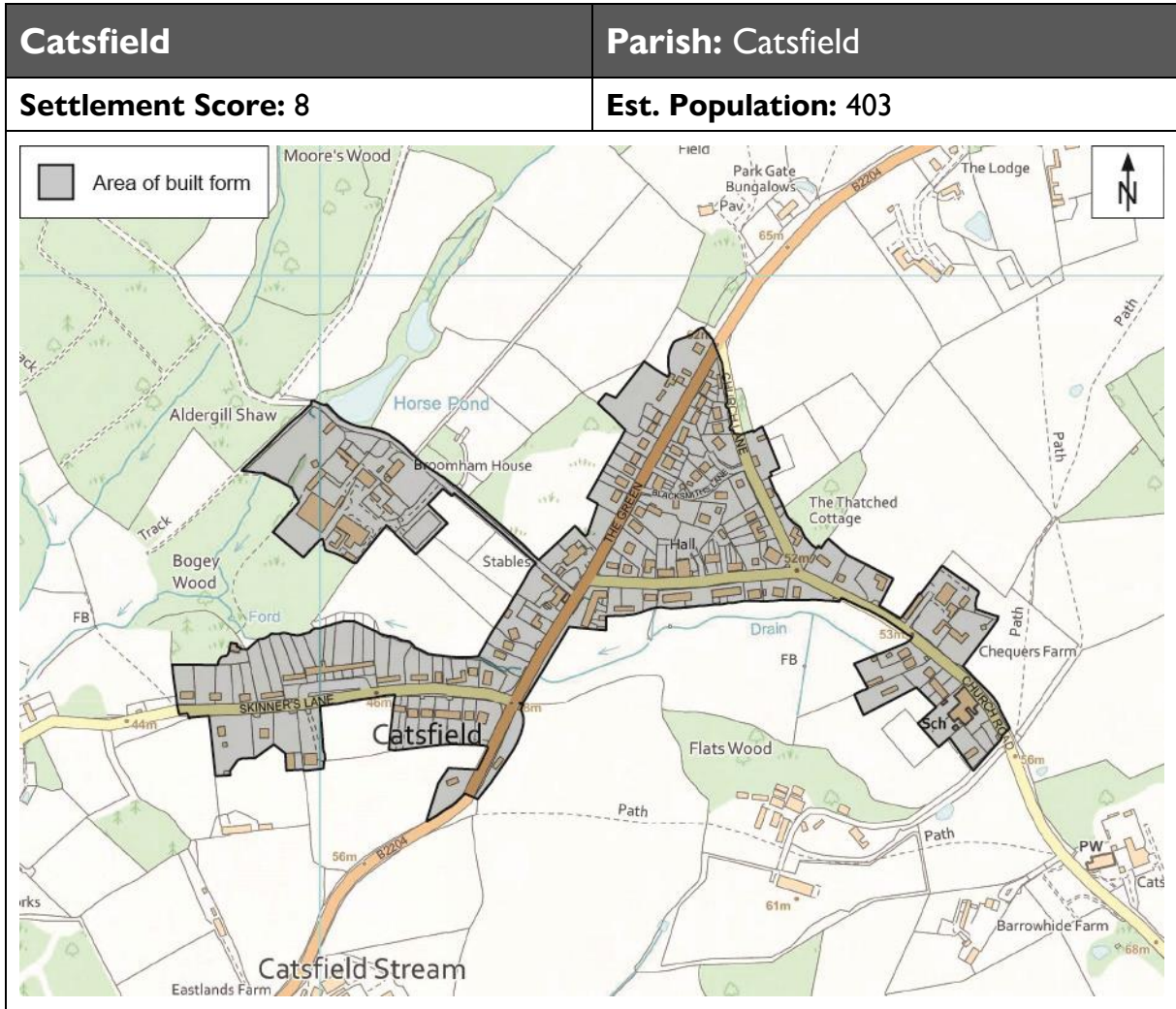
Opportunities to improve sustainability

To improve Camber's overall sustainability, it would be beneficial to deliver a new local primary school, coupled with increasing the quantity and quality of local convenience shopping. It is unknown whether Camber's population is large enough to sustain a primary school, which is pertinent as its geographical isolation means that it would not sit within the catchment of other rural areas. Geographical limitations may also impact on the demand for a supermarket. In any case, significant environmental and flooding constraints substantially limit Camber's capacity for new development and overall growth.

Outward expansion is very unlikely, with all current commitments constituting the redevelopment of car parks within the village; indicating that redevelopment is the most realistic opportunity for growth. In this vein, the only significant opportunity for significant development would be the redevelopment of the large areas currently occupied by holiday camps. With such limited opportunities for development, the most likely means of improving the sustainability of the village would be further bus services and improving connectivity to Rye, with potential connections to additional locations.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing the redevelopment of existing lower density developments and other brownfield land, could support existing services and potentially a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Catsfield is a relatively small historic village, the main part of which is a nucleated settlement pattern built around three roads that form a triangle. The settlement is bounded on two of three sides, to the northwest, north and northeast, by the High Weald NL. 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.

It is located on the A269, and some 3 km southwest of the historic town of Battle and around further afield, Catsfield is 6.5km north from the centre of Bexhill. The nearest village is Ninfield, which is nearly 2km to the southwest of Catsfield, and more locally is the smaller settlement of Catsfield Stream which is some 0.5km to the south west.

Housing and Population

The population of Catsfield is an estimated 403, which is based on the number of dwellings, 161, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The first known mention of the village is in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it was recorded as 'Cedesfille'. However, the origins of the name 'Catsfield' are unknown, though it may derive from the Saxon tribe called The Catti, who settled in Sussex during the Roman era.

The triangular configuration of development built around the meeting of the three roads constituted the original form of development, which would have originally centred on a village green. It is within this area that the majority of the ten listed buildings within Catsfield are located, including the Methodist church and the White Hart Inn.

Sited in the southeast outskirts of Catsfield is the old parish church of St Lawrence, which dates in part from the beginning of the twelfth century, while nearby Catsfield Place dates back to 1600. It is rumoured that in 1791 Marie Antoinette sent her jewels to Catsfield Place, which also has a mythical tunnel that is reputed to reach Battle Abbey some 2km away.

Landscape Character

Catsfield is bound to the northeast and north west by the High Weald NL, and its surrounding landscape therefore functions as a buffer to the wider AONB.

Catsfield is set within the Combe Haven Valley landscape character area, which is characterised by a series of small, winding High Wealden valleys converging to form a tract of levels which curve east and south to almost reach the sea at Glyne Gap, between Hastings and Bexhill. This pleasant rolling, well-wooded countryside affords excellent views of the sea and coastal towns.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of three areas 'CAT1', 'CAT2' and 'CAT3', which are summarised below:

CAT1 - Chequers Farm

This area has a strong sense of place enhanced by a fine old farmhouse and village school. The surrounding landscape is of rural countryside with large angular fields. Fences have replaced some hedgerows to create large fields. There are some fine tree belts and hedges along lanes into the village. The tall church steeple is a distinctive local feature and focal point.

The landscape is of good-high quality, and a high value part AONB area with high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It has a low-none capacity for both residential development and no capacity for business development. It is noted that the lack of a strong field pattern structure would make this area vulnerable to significant change. The compact nature of this settlement would make it difficult to develop into green field countryside without detracting from the nucleated character of the village. The potential for mitigation is low.

CAT2 – Flats Wood

This is an area of lower lying pastoral landscape to the south of the village. Some large open fields where hedgerow structure has been lost, but the intensity of agricultural use is lower than in CAT1. The area has a strong sense of place as a pleasant open stream valley and a setting for the village.

It has been defined as good quality and of medium value, and functions as an AONB buffer. It has a moderate-high high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is determined as having a low-moderate capacity for housing development and no capacity to accept business development. The area would be vulnerable to change due to loss of landscape structure. Any proposed development would be limited to brown field land and infill and not encroaching on the open stream valley which should be retained as a setting for the village and AONB buffer. The potential for mitigation is moderate, with some scope to replace lost field boundaries and create new tree belts.

CAT3 - Broomham

The area is in the AONB, apart from the extreme southern end, but is not of high quality. It is an enclosed area of mixed uses –including playing fields, and pony paddocks. There has been some loss of landscape structure due to the loss of field pattern and hedges. There are strong treed hedges and areas of woodland enclosure, some parkland trees, feature pines and poplar belts. The area has some sense of place and local distinctiveness.

The landscape is of good quality, though as a whole it is of high/medium value area that is mostly within the AONB. It has a moderate-high high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity, and it is determined that the area has a moderate capacity for housing development and a low capacity for business development. It is noted that the area has been influenced by intensive uses such as pony paddocks. The character is not stable and could be enhanced with new Green Infrastructure.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

Of the areas assessed, two areas are considered to have potential for small scale development. First is the near section of paddocks to the read of the Post Office west of

The Street, which may be acceptable if close to the village edge, while also providing an opportunity to improve the overall site and to create screening to bound the adjacent sand school. Any development would need to be enclosed by landscape buffer. An additional area of paddocks to the east of Church Lane is also considered to have some potential for small scale development where this is close to the village edge, while providing an opportunity for the larger site area to be enhanced in relation to the adjacent countryside through buffer planting and the reinstating of lost field boundaries. Larger and open fields away from the core of the village are not considered to be suitable for development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The boundary of the High Weald NL is immediately to the northeast and north west of Catsfield, but does not include the village itself, or the land to the south of the village on the eastern side of Church road or south of Skinners Lane. There is a parcel of ancient deciduous woodland bounding ribbon development to the northeast of Skinners Lane, and a further parcel to the south of but not bounding development south of Church Road. A parcel of deciduous woodland is adjacent to the northern boundary of the village.

The area to the south of Church Road is a stream valley. This meadow area and other section within the south of the village, including Church Road, are susceptible to surface water flooding as a result of the presence of east west watercourses that pass through and adjacent to the settlement. Bounding the settlement to the west is an area that is significantly susceptible to surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Catsfield has a good range of services, considering the settlements relatively small population. There is a convenience store, a pre-school and primary school. Catsfield has a compact, nucleated settlement pattern, which is contrast to other small villages of which many are linear and/or dispersed in their settlement form. For this reason, Catsfield services

are all within easy walking distance from areas of the village, as well as from each other. The settlement scores a 3 for its range of essential services.

Service Level

In addition to the essential services discussed above, Catsfield also has other services and facilities available. These include a post office, butchers, pub, village hall, church and recreation ground. Despite these services there is no doctor's surgery, pharmacy or dentist, and ultimately, like many smaller villages within the district, scores a 1 for its wider services and facilities.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the village itself are extremely limited. However, Battle and Bexhill some employment opportunity reasonably nearby, although they are too far to be considered within the scoring. The settlement scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Public transport availability within the village itself is limited. There are two bus services. The main service connects Catsfield with Bexhill, Battle and the Conquest Hospital, with five to seven busses running in each direction Monday to Saturday. The second runs between Little Common and Claverham secondary school in Battle, and a service predominantly for the school runs has only one service a day in either direction. The village is however relatively close to Battle and Crowhurst train stations, which both have regular services between Hastings and London. The settlement scores a 2 for its public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available across the breadth of the village. The settlement scores a 2 for its internet services.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	8

Current development commitments

There is one allocated site within Catsfield. DaSA Policy CAT1 allocates the Land west of the B2204 for 35 dwellings, including a village green area. There are currently no planning applications for this site.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to three essential services, including a primary school, convenience store and post office • Proximity to Bexhill and Battle of 6.5km and 3km respectively, both of which have a good range of services and facilities • Compact settlement means that all parts of the settlement are within easy walking distance
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less frequent bus services to serve the larger nearby settlements • Minimal local employment options • Landscape and flood related constraints limit development potential despite being mostly outside of the AONB.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Catsfield is a rural settlement. It has a reasonable range of essential services and its relationship with Battle and Bexhill means that some small development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as

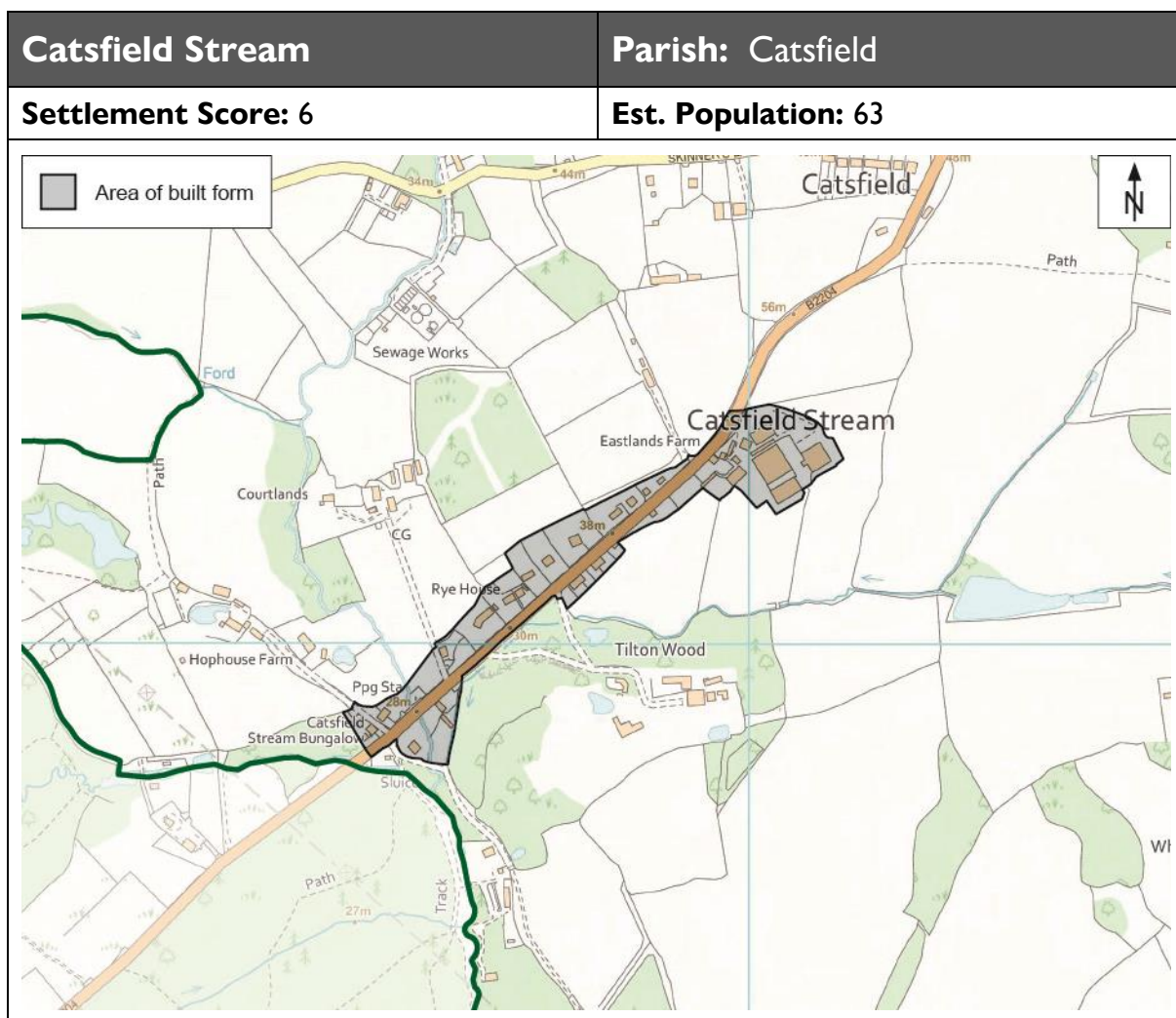
part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connected to Battle or Bexhill. At the same time its overall scoring means that it is considered to have a low overall sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

DaSA allocation CAT1, by allocating housing and a village green to the west of The Street, identifies this area as the core of the village. If not yet developed, the DaSA allocation should be carried forward. There may be further opportunities for development in the less landscape sensitive parts of the village. Through improving the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of rural settlements connected to Bexhill or Battle, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

While there are significant landscape constraints, the extant DaSA allocation indicates that there is the potential for some development within the village, which could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area, to improve overall sustainability.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Catsfield Stream is a very small settlement located away to the south west of Catsfield, on the very western edge of the district. Catsfield Stream and Catsfield are connected by a footway along the B2204, and it is therefore considered that Catsfield Stream functions as part of a 'wider Catsfield'. It is primarily linear in form and is dispersed along the B2204.

Ninfield, in neighbouring Wealden District, is approximately 1.3km further along the road to the southwest. Bexhill is technically the nearest town, the northernmost edge of which is approximately 3km to the south, however Battle, some 4km to the northeast, is perhaps more accessible.

Housing and Population

The population of Catsfield Stream is estimated to be approximately 63, which is based on the number of dwellings, 25, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are five listed buildings in the vicinity of the settlement area, all of which are Grade II. The oldest, Hophouse Farmhouse, dates back to the 17th century or earlier.

Landscape Character

Catsfield Stream lies just to the south of the High Weald NL, and its surrounding landscape therefore functions as a buffer to the wider AONB.

It is set within the Combe Haven Valley landscape character area, which is characterised by a series of small, winding High Wealden valleys converging to form a tract of levels which curve east and south to almost reach the sea at Glyne Gap, between Hastings and Bexhill. This pleasant rolling, well-wooded countryside affords excellent views of the sea and coastal towns.

The landscape immediately surrounding Catsfield Stream is not assessed in the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#), however LCA character areas CAT2 and CAT3 are only a short distance away to the north east and may offer some useful insights. They are summarised below:

CAT2 – Flats Wood

This is an area of lower lying pastoral landscape to the south of the village. Some

large open fields where hedgerow structure has been lost, but the intensity of agricultural use is lower than in CAT1. The area has a strong sense of place as a pleasant open stream valley and a setting for the village.

It has been defined as good quality and of medium value, and functions as an AONB buffer. It has a moderate-high high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is determined as having a low-moderate capacity for housing development and no capacity to accept business development. The area would be vulnerable to change due to loss of landscape structure. Any proposed development would be limited to brown field land and infill and not encroaching on the open stream valley which should be retained as a setting for the village and AONB buffer. The potential for mitigation is moderate, with some scope to replace lost field boundaries and create new tree belts.

CAT3 - Broomham

The area is in the AONB, apart from the extreme southern end, but is not of high quality. It is an enclosed area of mixed uses –including playing fields, and pony paddocks. There has been some loss of landscape structure due to the loss of field pattern and hedges. There are strong treed hedges and areas of woodland enclosure, some parkland trees, feature pines and poplar belts. The area has some sense of place and local distinctiveness.

The landscape is of good quality, though as a whole it is of high/medium value area that is mostly within the AONB. It has a moderate-high high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity, and it is determined that the area has a moderate capacity for housing development and a low capacity for business development. It is noted that the area has been influenced by intensive uses such as pony paddocks. The character is not stable and could be enhanced with new Green Infrastructure.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The boundary of the High Weald NL is some 300m to the north of Catsfield Stream at its nearest point, but does not include the village itself, or the land immediately surrounding it.

There are significant areas of Ancient Woodland to the south and smaller parcels of woodland scattered around to the east and west.

The village sits at a low point in the local landscape, which means that the small stream that runs through the south of the settlement can cause some issues with flooding.

Consequently, there are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3, as well as areas at some risk of surface water flooding, in the southernmost extent of the village.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Catsfield Stream is a small, low-population settlement with no essential services of its own. It does, however, have access to the convenience store and post office in nearby Catsfield village, some 800m to the northeast. Therefore, the settlement scores a 2 for its essential services.

Service Level

The only service within Catsfield Stream itself is the Catsfield Christmas Tree Farm. Other services and facilities within walking distance are limited, consisting of Catsfield Village Hall, The White Hart Inn and Catsfield Pre-School, again in nearby Catsfield village. The settlement scores a 1 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within Catsfield Stream are essentially non-existent. Residents would be reliant on commuting to work, perhaps in nearby Ninfield or the towns of Bexhill and Battle. The settlement scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

There are no public transport options whatsoever, within walking distance of the settlement and therefore scores a 0.

Broadband Access

Ultrafast broadband which is defined as download speeds of 300Mb/s or more is available in Catsfield Stream, giving the settlement a broadband score of 3.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	0
Broadband Access (3)	3
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Catsfield Stream.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultrafast Internet Broadband access • Forms part of a larger community due to its close proximity and connectivity with Catsfield
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small rural village – population less than 100 • Minimal services and facilities • Minimal employment opportunities • No public transport options

- Nearby Ancient Woodland and AONB landscape
- Some fluvial and surface water flood risk

Recommendations for the Local Plan

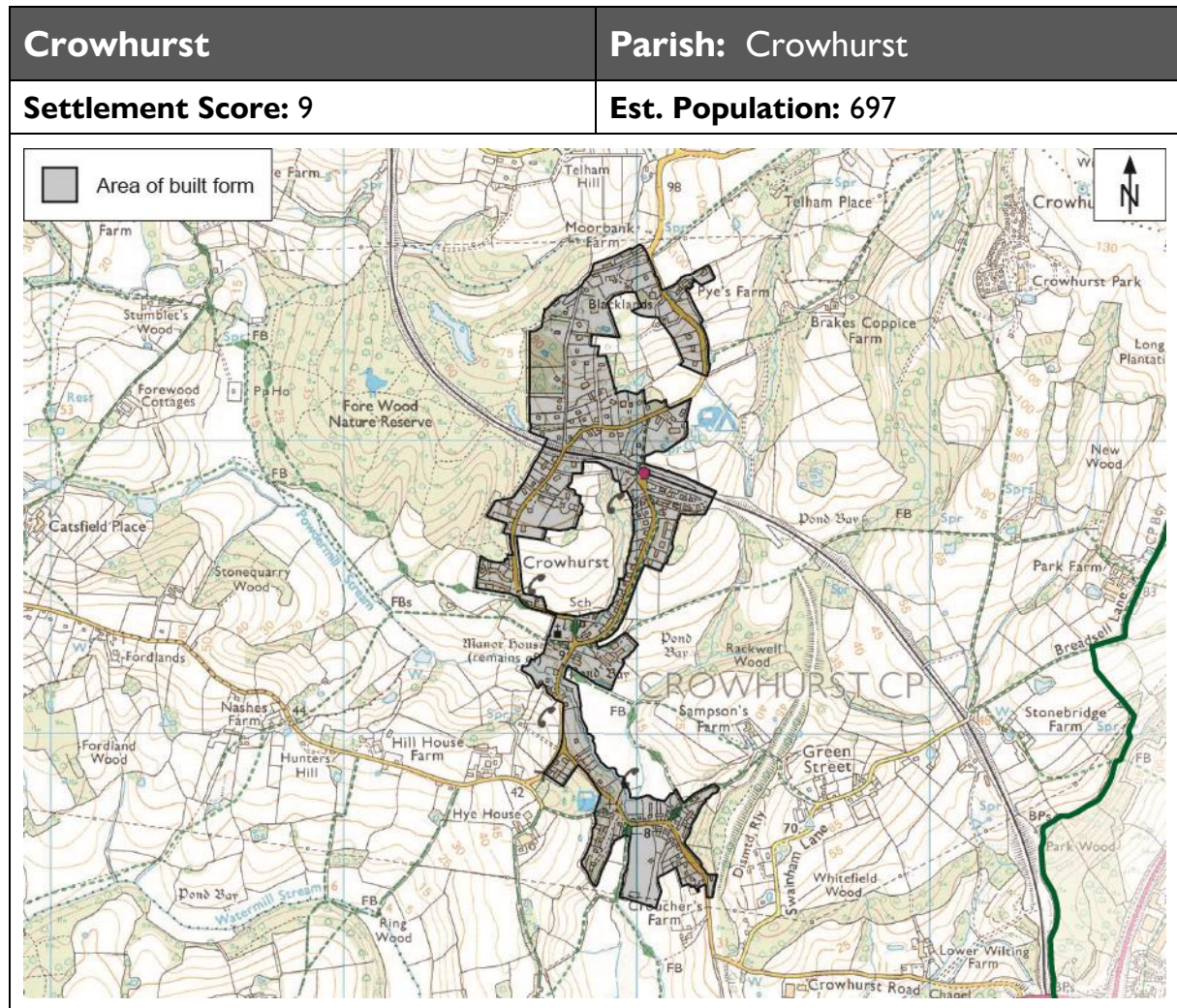
Catsfield Stream is a very small rural settlement, with a low level of sustainability. Its sustainability score indicates that there are minimal services and facilities within the village, making its residents likely to travel to larger settlements including Bexhill and Battle, which, due to the lack of any public transport options, would be entirely by car. While it is possible to access services by foot in nearby Catsfield, these services are not considered to be within easy walking distance.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its tiny population and remote location, it is unlikely that Catsfield Stream's sustainability can be significantly improved. The most obvious improvement would be the provision of a bus service, running between Battle and Bexhill, via Ninfield. This could be problematic however, due to the narrowness of the local lanes and roads.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It is unlikely that any development in the vicinity of Catsfield Stream would be appropriate. However, if there were to be any development, it would have to be small scale, sensitive development that is unlikely to be able to support further services and facilities within the settlement.



Settlement Overview

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, with accessibility between these areas being limited. 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 centre of the village and the Pub and recreation area to the south.

The central segment of Crowhurst, which contains the primary school and the church, is approximately 5.5km northeast of Bexhill town centre, 6km north west of Hastings town centre, and 3.4km south west of Battle town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Crowhurst is an estimated 697, which is based on the number of dwellings, 268, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.6 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

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

There are 8 listed buildings in the village, mostly ranging from 14th to 17th Century. Most notable is the Grade I listed Parish Church of St George which sits in an Archaeological Notification Area defining a medieval and post-medieval village. Next to the church are also the remains of the Manor House which is a Scheduled Monument.

The area around the church has a distinctly open and rural character and is integral to the setting of the Grade I listed parish church and the adjacent manor house. Almost any development in the immediate area would adversely impact on this historic section of the village, and these listed buildings.

Landscape Character

Combe Haven Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Crowhurst forms part of the wider Combe Haven Valley Landscape Character Area which sits on the edge of the High Weald National Landscape (AONB). It consists of a series of small winding High Wealden stream valleys which converge on a tract of levels to join the flat winding valley floor of the Combe Haven basin, while being enclosed by the Battle Ridge to the north.

The parish is characterised by a landscape of ridges, valleys, gill streams, woodland, scattered farmsteads, and fragmented settlement. The Filsham reed beds at the eastern end of the Combe Haven Valley are one of the largest areas of reedbeds in East Sussex.

While much of the landscape is well wooded, its rolling nature and the presence of several larger agricultural fields mean that the landscape in and around Crowhurst has several vantage points, making undeveloped areas surrounding the settlement generally open and exposed to wide views. The landscape to the south of the village is also generally open, where the village opens out onto the Combe Haven basin. North of the railway, Crowhurst has a distinctly rural character, with sporadic development and winding narrow country lanes without footways.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Crowhurst as part of three main character areas for the village, these being the areas surrounding the Church (Cr1), Station Road (Cr2) and the Powdermill Valley area (Cr3), which are summarised below:

Cr1 – Crowhurst Church

This is an area of fine rolling countryside with a strong sense of place and as a setting for the parish church. It is a Pastoral landscape with enclosing deciduous wood to north strong field pattern with hedges and mature trees. It has a strong sense of place. The settlement pattern is of scattered farmsteads and large houses in a garden setting scattered along windy lanes. The focal point is around the church and ruined abbey.

The landscape is described as being of high quality and a high value AONB area. The area has a high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is commented that this is a landscape with stable character where there are no opportunities for any significant change. It has a strong sense of place and is a historic part of Crowhurst settlement. The potential for mitigation is low, as extensive woodland planting would detract from landscape character. Overall, the capacity to accept change in respect of residential development business development is low-none.

Cr2 – Station Road

This is an area of farmed countryside. It has a strong landscape structure with a distinct pattern of fields and hedgerows. There are more detractors than in Cr1 including modern farm buildings and some horse paddocks. The area has a strong sense of place. The settlement pattern is typically of scattered farms with modern ribbon development on Station Road.

The landscape is a good-high quality and high value AONB area, while having a moderate-high character sensitivity and high visual sensitivity. Overall, this area has a moderate capacity for housing development, and a low capacity for business development. The assessment notes that the existing ribbon development is well contained by trees and woodland. Further development would detract from character and create sprawl. The potential for mitigation is considered to be moderate, with some scope to strengthen landscape structure and replace lost field boundaries, however the open farmed landscape is characteristic and extensive planting would not be in character.

Cr3 – Powdermill Valley

This is a broad valley with houses on the valley slopes and open recreational uses on the valley floor. There are large houses in gardens on valley sides. The area has some sense of place. The later village development is ribbon development along the road. The area is well contained and restricted by landform. Although adjacent to the AONB this area is not of the character and quality.

Cr3 is a good quality and medium value landscape, and it has a moderate character sensitivity to change and moderate visual sensitivity. The area has a medium capacity to accept residential development and a low capacity to accept business development. This is the core of the village and is generally well contained in the valley landscape. Any proposed development would need to have well defined edges and be contained close to the existing built-up area. The potential for mitigation is moderate and there would be some scope to strengthen landscape structure and replace lost field boundaries.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

It is considered that there is scope to extend the allocation south of Station Road to incorporate modern agricultural buildings to the south and east, which at present are judged to detract from the landscape. As such, such an extension, perhaps as a mixed-use development would have the potential to enhance the immediate landscape. It is also considered possible to slightly increase the density of the existing allocation south of Forewood Rise given the sights enclosure and location. Two other sites were considered to have development potential in terms of landscape impact; including an area between Forewood Lane and Station Road that comprises a nursery, as well an infill area to the far south of the village along Sandrock Hill as a continuation of existing ribbon development.

Two other areas were considered that fall within Crowhurst Parish, although are outside of the village. An area to the north of the Combe Valley Way at Lower Wiltings Farm is considered to have possible capacity for solar panels, while part of Upper Wiltings Farm to the south of the road is highly sensitive, being within the Combe Valley Countryside Park, and is considered to have no capacity for development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The majority of the village is within the High Weald NL, excluding the southernmost tip of the settlement centred around the recreation ground. Within the northern portions of the Crowhurst, there are numerous areas of ancient and deciduous woodland, adjacent or near to the village boundary. Most notable is Fore Wood, which bounds the entire west and northwest of the village, a large portion of which is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Coombe Haven and Marline Biodiversity Opportunity Area snakes its way from the northwest of the village, through its centre before exiting the southern tip of the settlement.

There are specific areas of the village that are vulnerable to flooding (Flood Zones 2 & 3), particularly within the southern half of the village, as well as many surface water vulnerable areas throughout. Areas susceptible to flooding are generally consistent with the path of the Powdermill Stream and Rackwell Stream, which run through the centre of the village and to the south. A ground water source protection zone is present in and around Fore Wood.

The entire east and south of the settlement is bound by the Battle/Bexhill/Crowhurst and Hastings Strategic Gap, as designated by the Rother Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan. In addition, the southern tip of the settlement is bound by the Combe Valley Countryside Park, which is also designated by the DaSA. The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan has designated several parcels of Local Green Space within the south and centre of the village, as well as several Important Open Areas.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Crowhurst's essential services are limited. There is no supermarket or convenience store and therefore essential shopping would have to be done in the other nearby towns and villages or online. Crowhurst, however does have a primary school and a visiting doctor's surgery that is held at the village hall. With access to two essential services, Crowhurst scores a 2 in its sustainability score for essential services.

Service Level

The range of other non-essential facilities and services is generally very limited within Crowhurst. There is a nursery Pre-school, pub, a village hall, a church, and a sports pitch (with children's play area). However, the settlement has, as described above, no shopping provision and also has no bank, post office, pharmacy or dental surgery. The train station with transport links to Hastings and Battle offer essential links to these larger settlements and the services they provide. Ultimately Crowhurst scores a 1 for its sustainability score for its service level, which is comparable with similarly sized settlements within the district. However, given the village's disconnected development form, walking between services and different parts of the village can be a significant undertaking, and routes are frequently without footways.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Crowhurst has very limited employment opportunities within itself. However, due to the rail service there are employment opportunities available outside of the settlement in the larger villages and towns nearby. Crowhurst scores a 1 for its employment in the sustainability scoring.

Public Transport

Public Transport in Crowhurst is limited, with no bus service available, while the village's diffuse settlement pattern and narrow winding lanes makes potential bus connectivity problematic. There is however a train station with regular services towards Battle, Hastings and onwards to London. Crowhurst scores a 3 for public transport in the sustainability scoring. Again however, it should be noted that the village's disjointed development means that the train station is often remote for large sections of the village.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, which is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available in Crowhurst. Crowhurst scores a 2 for internet access in this sustainability score.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	9

Current development commitments

The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan allocates 30 dwellings as part of three allocations within the village:

Policy CH1 – Land at Station Road and Forewood Lane, is allocated for 12 dwellings

Policy CH2 – Land south of Forewood Rise, is allocated for 12 dwellings

Policy CH3 – Land adjacent to the Station Car Park, is allocated for 6 dwellings

There are currently no other significant development commitments within Crowhurst, while none of the allocated sites has yet received an associated planning application.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located between Hastings, Battle and Bexhill, which provide access to a wide range of services and facilities • Has a primary school • Train station

Settlement Weaknesses

- Disjointed settlement pattern and lack of village centre significantly reduces walkability within the village
- Limited services and facilities
- Minimal employment opportunities within the village
- No bus services, which combined with a lack of accessibility to the village's train station means that residents are reliant on the private vehicle for accessing larger Bexhill and Hastings
- Lack of footways within the village
- Roads providing access to and within the village are narrow, winding country lanes
- Significant landscape constraints and surface water flooding issues in the centre of the village limit development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

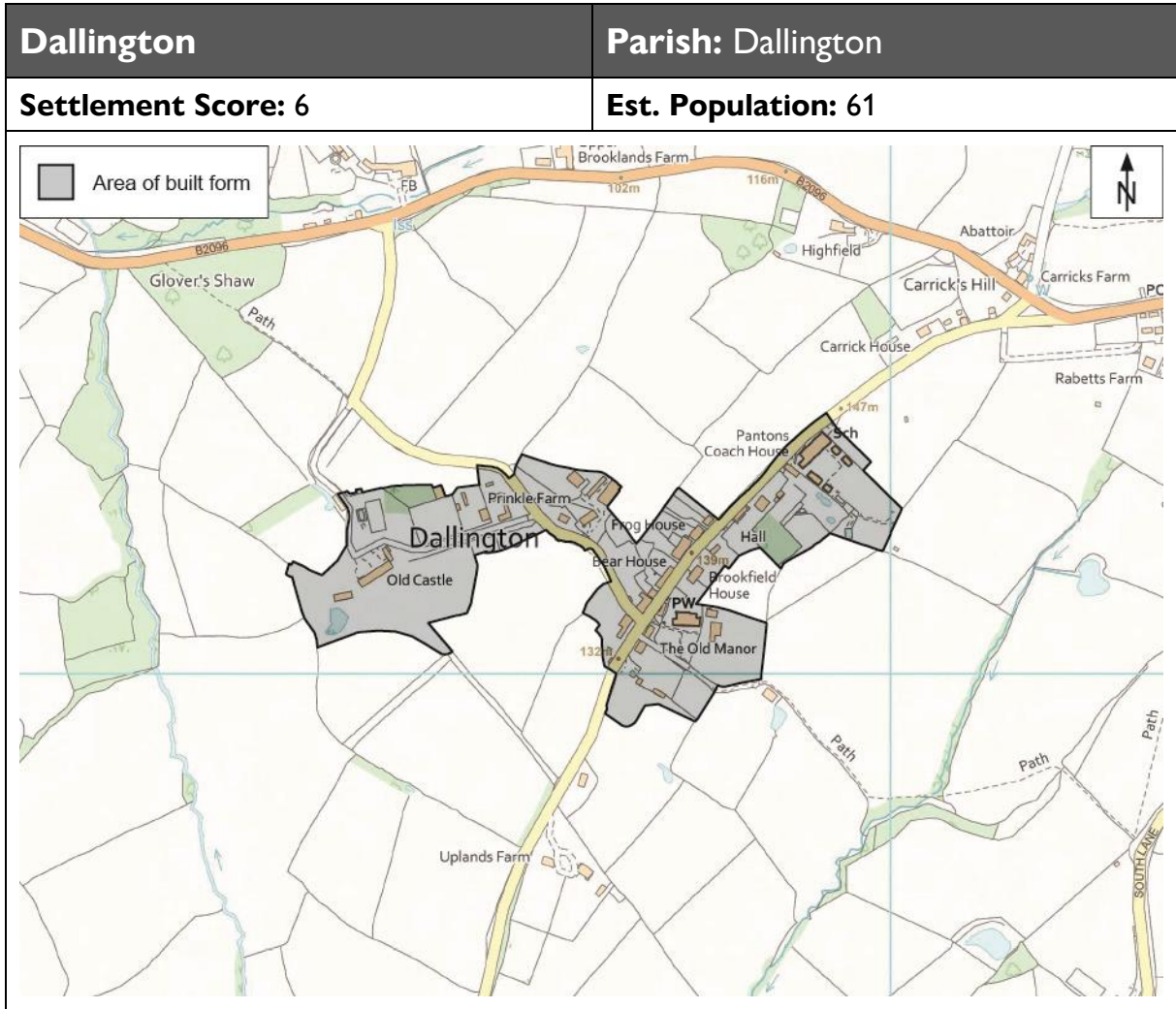
Crowhurst is a rural settlement located close to two major settlements and a market settlement. At the same time Crowhurst has limited services and facilities, while accessibility to and within the village are limited. Its relationship with Hastings means that its sustainability could be increased by improvements in public transport accessibility as part of a cluster of rural settlements that are connected linearly to Hastings, as well as any potential improvements to local services. It is possible that connectivity to Bexhill, which is also relatively nearby, could be facilitated by the provision of a bus service. Crowhurst is considered to be a potentially sustainable settlement.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

If not yet developed, the three Neighbourhood Plan allocations should be carried forward. There may be further opportunities for development in the less sensitive parts of the village, including the potential intensification of the existing allocations to provide an increase in the number of dwellings. Through improving the range of local services and public transport accessibility via a cluster of rural settlements that are connected linearly to Hastings, overall sustainability can be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The development of the existing allocations, and potentially allowing further development in less sensitive areas of the settlement, could support the development of a very small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Dallington is a remote settlement situated with under 100 population. While the core of the settlement consists of linear development, the village is closely associated with a listed manor house and associated buildings immediately to the west, known as the Old Castle. The settlement is wholly within the High Weald NL.

It is located to the south of the B2096, and some 7km southeast of Heathfield, and nearly 9km to the north west of Battle of the historic town of Battle.

Further afield, Dallington is over 14km northwest from the centre of Bexhill. Dallington is closely related to Woods Corner, which is 0.5km to the northeast along the B2096. The

two settlements are almost entirely connected by footways, and their facilities and services are shared.

Housing and Population

Dallington has an estimated population of 61, which is based on the number of dwellings, 29, multiplied by the household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Dallington is a distinctly historic village and has remained virtually untouched by development since the first half of the twentieth century. One of the earliest known mentions of the village is in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it was recorded as 'Dalintone', and held by Robert, the Count of Eu².

The settlement has retained its linear settlement pattern with existing development being effectively limited to fronting either side of The Street while forming a concentrated nucleus of listed buildings. With the exception of The Parish Church and the Church Rectory, there is almost no development to the rear of the buildings fronting The Street, which would otherwise detract from its exemplary linear form.

Dallington has a very high proportion of listed buildings, with 18 overall. Most notable of these is the Grade II* listed Parish Church of St Giles, which was rebuilt in 1864 with only its fifteenth century tower and stone spire escaping attention. Another notable listed building is the Grade II listed Old School, which now serves as the Village Hall, and forms the northernmost edge of the nucleated columns of listed buildings that straddle The Street.

As mentioned previously, to the immediate west of Dallington lies a listed manor house known as 'Old Castle' which dates from 1600. Adjacent to the north of this is a Grade II listed barn, which is indicative of Dallington's rural historic character.

² Bryant-Mole, K. *Dallington: The History of a Sussex Village*

Landscape Character

South Slopes of the High Weald – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The settlement lies wholly within the High Weald NL and is surrounded by undulating farmland. Dallington is located in an elevated and central position atop the Heathfield Battle Ridge, and offers remarkable views of the surrounding countryside, and beyond to the English Channel in the south and across the South Downs to the southwest. The village is set within the very north of the South Slopes of the High Weald whose landscape falls gently southwards from the Heathfield Battle ridge to the Low Weald and Pevensy Levels. Generally, the South Slopes of the High Weald LCA is characterised as an area deeply dissected into innumerable north-south ridges, valleys and ghylls, with frequent scattered small woods and shaws, many of which are Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland. This landscape has a settlement pattern featuring scattered small historic villages and hamlets centred around a church or a pub.

This is one of the most isolated areas of the district, and the areas of commercial woodland that lie to the north-west which intensifies the isolated and remote character. A significant feature of the landscape particularly to the northwest, are the areas of conifer plantations which add to the sense of remoteness and endless forest. To the east are large tracts of woodland which are designated as Ancient Woodland

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) identifies the Woods Corner, along with Dallington to the south west as part of single character area 'D1 Dallington', including also well as the interlaying ridgetop gap and the ridge area to the east of Woods Corner:

This area is of rural farmland on either side of the roads, and there are open fields to the south of the B2096 which fall away from a slight plateau. The landscape to the north of road is more enclosed. There are some large fields where hedges have been lost to intensive agriculture.

The landscape has been defined as high quality, high value AONB area with high character and visual sensitivities. It has a low to no capacity to accept housing or business development. It is noted that any development opportunities would be limited to small scale infill which would need to be in character with the existing settlements at road junctions and typical ribbon development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Dallington is wholly within the AONB. There are scattered small parcels of ancient woodland, as well as deciduous woodland and good quality semi-improved grassland Priority Habitats. The Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed Biodiversity Opportunity Area neighbours the village a short distance to the west.

There are practically no forms of flood risk within the settlement area.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Dallington, despite its small size and low population, has some range of essential services. The settlement has a primary school, and access to a convenience store and post office in neighbouring Woods Corner. Dallington scores a 3 for its access to essential services. It should be noted that there is a short gap between the footways connecting Dallington and Woods Corner where the B2096 joins The Street. Given its remoteness, residents may have to travel some way in order to access a GP, while the nearest supermarket is likely to be in Heathfield, or as far as Hailsham.

Service Level

Dallington, in addition to the essential services referenced above, has a small range of other services and facilities. These include within Dallington, a pre-school, a village hall and a church; and in Woods Corner there is the Swann Inn pub. With its generally limited service level, Dallington scores a 1.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the village and surrounding area are extremely limited. The nearest main employment centres are Heathfield and Battle. Due to the absence of public transport, commuting would be dependent on the use of the private vehicle. Dallington scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Public transport availability is extremely limited, and none from the village of Dallington itself. There is only a community transport bus using the number 225, which runs between Battle and Heathfield with a stop in Woods Corner opposite the Swann Inn. It is run by Wealdlink and funded by East Sussex County Council. The bus runs twice a day every Tuesday and Thursday. Dallington scores a 0 for its public transport.

It is worth emphasising that Dallington is especially remote, with no larger settlements nearby. At 7km, Heathfield is the nearest larger settlement, while the nearest train stations in Battle and Robertsbridge are further afield, and driving requires the navigation of narrow and winding country roads.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available in Dallington. The settlement scores 2 for its internet service.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	0

Public Transport (5)	0
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are no significant development commitments within or near to Dallington.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to three essential services, including primary school, convenience store and post office
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small population – less than 100 • Very remote – Heathfield is nearest larger settlement at 7km • Minimal employment options • Minimal public transport • Significant landscape and heritage constraints severely restrict development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

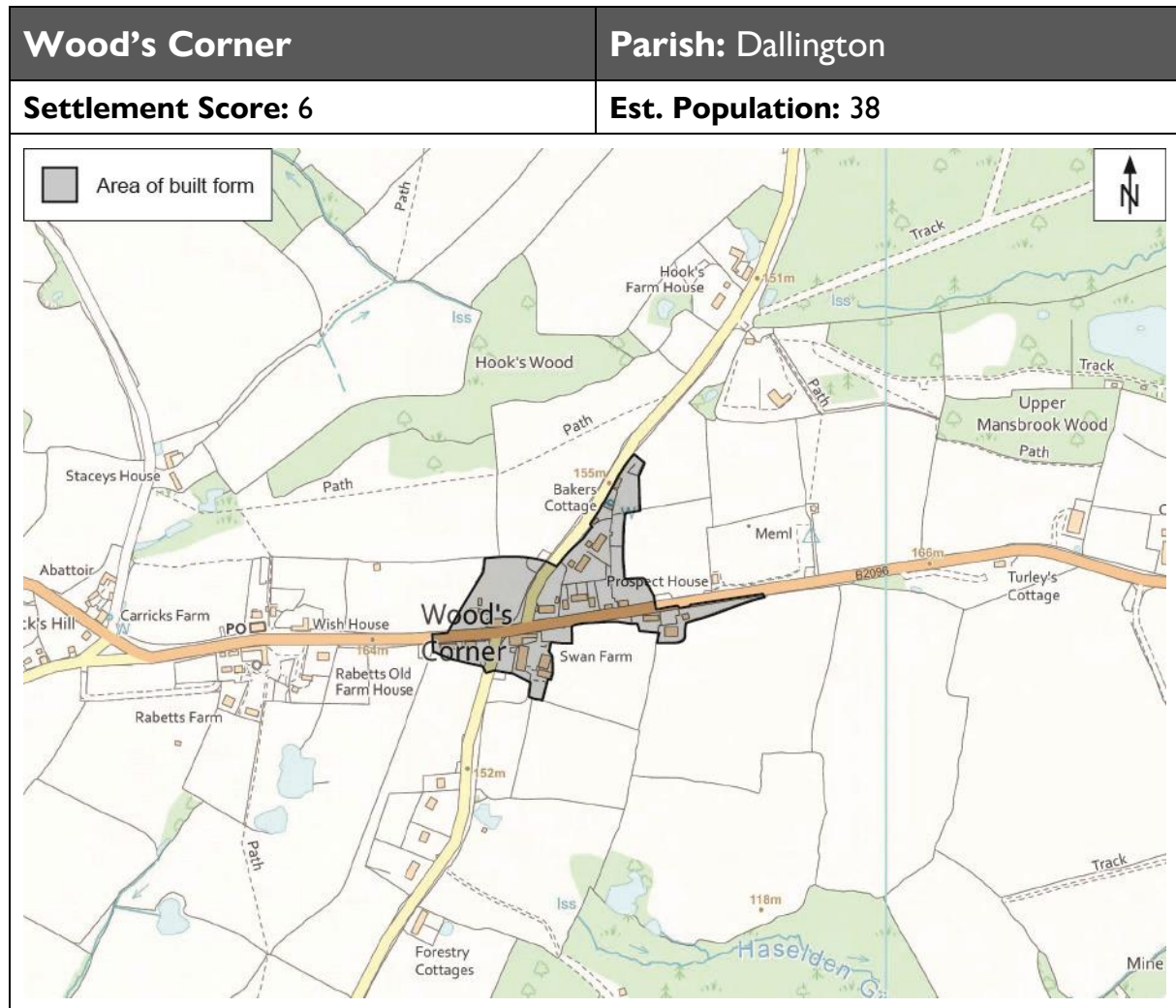
This is a very small and remote rural settlement, and ultimately has a low overall sustainability. It has access to some facilities and services, including essential services, however these services are unlikely to support day to day living locally, while its remoteness limits access to a wider range of services in larger settlements.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

There is very little opportunity to improve sustainability through the provision of additional services and facilities, due to the minute existing population, as well as the very limited capacity for further development. Improvements to sustainability are more likely to be delivered through a more frequent bus service and access to local services in Heathfield and Battle, although Dallington's isolation means that it does not form an obvious network connected to other areas of the district.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

With such significant landscape constraints to development, it is unlikely that additional services and facilities could be achieved within the village through growth.



Settlement Overview

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. The settlement is wholly within the High Weald NL.

Located along the B2096, it is some 7.5 km southeast of Heathfield, and nearly 8km to the north west of Battle of the historic town of Battle.

Further afield, Woods Corner is over 14km northwest from the centre of Bexhill. Woods Corner is closely related to Dallington, which is 0.5km to the northeast along the B2096 and The Street. The two settlements are almost entirely connected by footways, and their facilities and services are shared.

Housing and Population

Woods Corner has an estimated population of 38, which is based on the number of dwellings, 18, multiplied by the household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Woods Corner is typical of the historic settlement pattern of the High Weald. It is a small linear ridgetop settlement along the Heathfield Battle Ridge, that while generally dispersed, is also clustered around crossroads along the B2096 at the convergence of several historic routeways. This historic origin is reflected in the grouping of listed buildings around the crossroads. The historic character of the settlement is significant for its sense of place, and for its connection to the surrounding High Weald landscape.

There are 6 listed buildings within the settlement, which are all prominent fronting the B2096. Of note is the Grade II listed Swann Inn, which serves as a focal point within the centre of the settlement and faces out over open far-reaching views to the south of the Heathfield Battle Ridge. Within the west of the settlement is the Grade II listed Rabetts Farmhouse and farmstead, which connects the settlement to the agricultural landscape to the south and provides a rural feel.

Nearby to the northeast of the settlement and adjacent to the recreation field is the 'Sugar Loaf', a peculiar conical Grade II* listed folly said to have been built in order to win a bet by local eccentric Mad Jack Fuller. Fuller built a number of these follies, and they are a characteristic of this section of the High Weald.

Unlike nearby Dallington, there has been a proportion of 20th and 21st Century development featuring in the eastern side of the settlement. However, the linear development pattern is relatively intact and the historic and rural character of the settlement has been generally retained.

Landscape Character

South Slopes of the High Weald – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The settlement lies wholly within the High Weald NL and is surrounded by undulating farmland. Woods Corner is located in an elevated and central position atop the Heathfield Battle Ridge, and offers remarkable views of the surrounding countryside, and beyond to the English Channel in the south and across the South Downs to the southwest. The village is set within the very north of the South Slopes of the High Weald whose landscape falls gently southwards from the Heathfield Battle ridge to the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels. Generally, the South Slopes of the High Weald LCA is characterised as an area deeply dissected into innumerable north-south ridges, valleys and ghylls, with frequent scattered small woods and shaws, many of which are Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland. This landscape has a settlement pattern featuring scattered small historic villages and hamlets centred around a church or a pub.

This is one of the most isolated areas of the district, and the areas of commercial woodland that lie to the north-west which intensifies the isolated and remote character. 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

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) identifies the Woods Corner, along with Dallington to the south west as part of single character area 'D1 Dallington', including also well as the interlaying ridgetop gap and the ridge area to the east of Woods Corner:

This area is of rural farmland on either side of the roads, and there are open fields to the south of the B2096 which fall away from a slight plateau. The landscape to the north of road

is more enclosed. There are some large fields where hedges have been lost to intensive agriculture.

The landscape has been defined as high quality, high value AONB area with high character and visual sensitivities. It has a low to no capacity to accept housing or business development. It is noted that any development opportunities would be limited to small scale infill which would need to be in character with the existing settlements at road junctions and typical ribbon development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Woods Corner is wholly within the AONB, and the eastern end of the settlement is within the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. There are some areas of ancient deciduous woodland that neighbour the settlement to the north.

There are no forms of flood risk within or surrounding the settlement, although the majority settlement is within the Pevensey Levels Hydrological Catchment area, which is identified in DaSA Policy DEN5(vi).

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

In spite of its very small population, Woods Corner has access to three essential services, these being Dallington Stores, which includes a convenience store and a post office, as well as Dallington Primary School, which is some 600m away in neighbouring Dallington. With three essential services, Woods Corner scores 3. It should be noted that there is a short gap between the footways connecting Woods Corner and Dallington where the B2096 joins The Street. Given its remoteness, residents may have to travel some way in order to access a GP, while the nearest supermarket is likely to be in Heathfield, or as far as Hailsham (both in Wealden District).

Service Level

Woods Corner has a pub (Swann Inn), and a sports/recreation field including a play area; while accessible services and facilities in Dallington village include has a pre-school, a village hall and a church. Woods Corner scores 1 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the village and surrounding area are extremely limited. The nearest employment centres are Heathfield and Battle. Woods Corner scores 0 for its employment opportunity.

Public Transport

Public transport availability is also extremely limited. There is only a community transport bus using the number 225, which runs between Battle and Heathfield with a stop in Woods Corner opposite the Swann Inn. It is run by Wealdlink and funded by East Sussex County Council. The bus runs twice a day every Tuesday and Thursday. With only a limited bus services, Woods Corner scores 0 for its access to public transport.

It is worth emphasising that Woods Corner is especially remote, with no larger settlements nearby. At 7km, Heathfield in Wealden is the nearest larger settlement, while the nearest train stations in Battle and Robertsbridge are further afield, and driving requires the navigation of narrow and winding country roads.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Woods Corner, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	0
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are no significant development commitments within or near to Wood’s Corner.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to three essential services, including primary school, convenience store and post office
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small population – less than 50 • Very remote – Heathfield is nearest larger settlement at 7km • Minimal employment options • Minimal public transport • Significant landscape constraints severely restrict development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

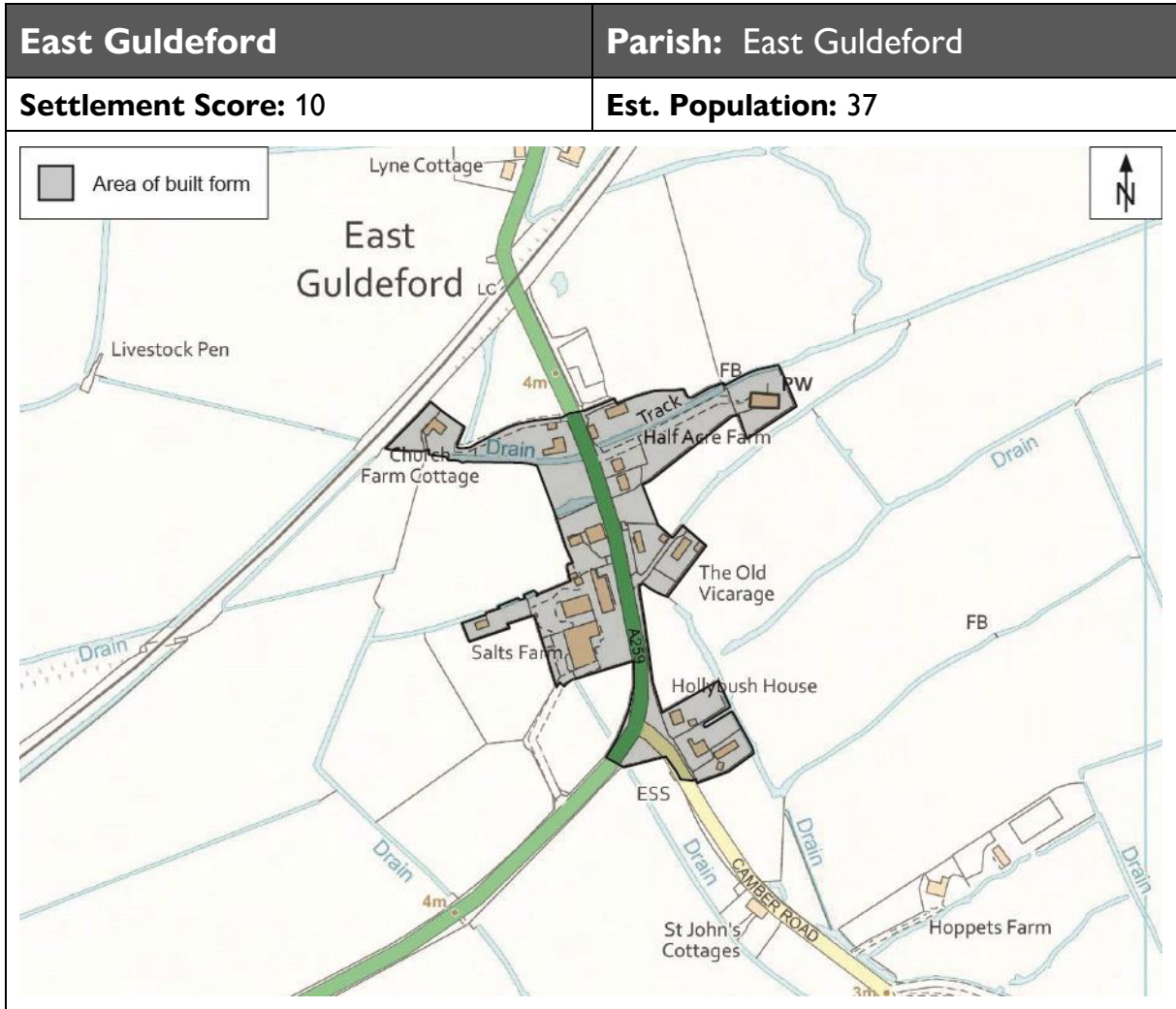
This is a very small and remote rural settlement, and ultimately has a low overall sustainability. It has access to some facilities and services, including essential services, however these services are unlikely to support day to day living locally, while its remoteness limits access to a wider range of services in larger settlements.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

There is very little opportunity to improve sustainability through the provision of additional services and facilities, due to the minute existing population, as well as the very limited capacity for further development. Improvements to sustainability are more likely to be delivered through a more frequent bus service and access to local services in Heathfield and Battle, although Wood's Corner's isolation means that it does not form an obvious network connected to other areas of the district.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

With such significant landscape constraints to development, it is unlikely that additional services and facilities could be achieved within the village through growth.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

East Guldeford is a very small settlement on the A259, located just outside of Rye in the east of the district. It is essentially composed of a handful of dwellings and business units that have sprung up around the church and farm. It is noted that this is the only recognised settlement within the Parish.

Housing and Population

The population of East Guldeford is approximately 37. This is based on the number of dwellings, 17, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Before the 15th century, the area was mostly salt marshes, and had a thriving salt manufacturing industry, by drying shallow sea water pools.

In 1512 the harbour at Rye was looked on as important by Sir Richard Guldeford, who built the small defensive fort of Camber Castle. This was expanded by Henry VIII to provide cover to the harbour in the Camber (Chambre) between present Camber, East Guldeford, Rye and Winchelsea. The fort became obsolete by 1637 as the Camber had silted so badly. The church around which this small settlement grew is situated in a field on a bleak out-post of the Guldeford (pronounced Gilford) Levels.

There are five listed buildings in the vicinity of the settlement, four of which are Grade II listed. The Parish Church of St Mary is Grade II* listed and is thought to have been built between 1499 and 1505 under the auspices of Sir Richard Guldeford.

The settlement is entirely within an Archaeological Notification Area defining a medieval and post-medieval village.

Landscape Character

It is set within the Rye-Winchelsea landscape character area, which is characterised by a wide tract of coastal levels, dominated by the grazing marshland of the Romney marshes and overlooked by bold spurs, steep inland cliffs and 'islands' of higher ground. The area has a strong sense of remoteness, especially in the areas further from built development, and there are long views across the Levels, towards Dungeness power station and the wind farm at Little Cheney Court Farm.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape in and around the village, under reference EG1, which is summarised below:

EG1 – East Guldeford

This is a low lying, flat and very open landscape with huge skies. There are some intrusive uses, fenced paddocks barns etc and the fast A259 road. It is an isolated roadside settlement with some important vernacular buildings and historic scattered farm settlement.

It has been defined as good quality and of moderate value. It has both a high character sensitivity and a high visual sensitivity. It is determined as having a none-low capacity for housing development and no capacity to accept business development. The area would be vulnerable to change due to the lack of landscape structure and the nature of the existing development. The potential for mitigation is low, with little scope for planting due to the open character of the area, however some planting to enclose the existing settlement may be appropriate.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

East Guldeford, and the land surrounding it, is extremely constrained. The land immediately to the north, east and west of the settlement are part of the internationally designated Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Complex, which includes Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site designations. The only undesignated areas are the settlement itself and the land to the south.

Due to the low lying, reclaimed nature of the land, the entirety of the settlement and surrounding landscape are within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There are small patches of land that are at risk of surface water flooding scattered throughout the area.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

East Guldeford is a small, low-population settlement and the only essential service is the local farm shop, which acts as a convenience store. Therefore, the settlement scores a 1 for its essential services.

Service Level

The general level of services and facilities available to the settlement is low. All services and facilities that are within walking distance are contained within the settlement itself, mostly on Salts Farm. They consist of a church, café, hairdresser and garden centre. The settlement scores a 1 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within East Guldeford itself are minimal, consisting only of the services and facilities mentioned above. The Rock Channel employment site in nearby Rye, however, is within a sustainable distance and so provides some additional opportunity. Realistically, residents are likely to be commuting into Rye, Rye Harbour or London via Rye Train Stations for work. The settlement scores a 2 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Public transport accessibility in East Guldeford is good. Rye train station is within 2km of the settlement and the 102 bus service runs between Rye and Lydd, stopping at East Guldeford more than 10 times a day. The settlement therefore scores a 4.

Broadband Access

Ultrafast broadband which is defined as download speeds of 300Mb/s or more is available in East Guldeford, giving the settlement a broadband score of 3.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0

Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	3
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	10

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within East Guldeford.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good public transport accessibility, which is particularly significant in terms of its very close proximity to Rye • Ultrafast Broadband access
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small rural village – population less than 100 • Minimal services and facilities • Surrounding land is extremely constrained due to international designations and flood risk

Recommendations for the Local Plan

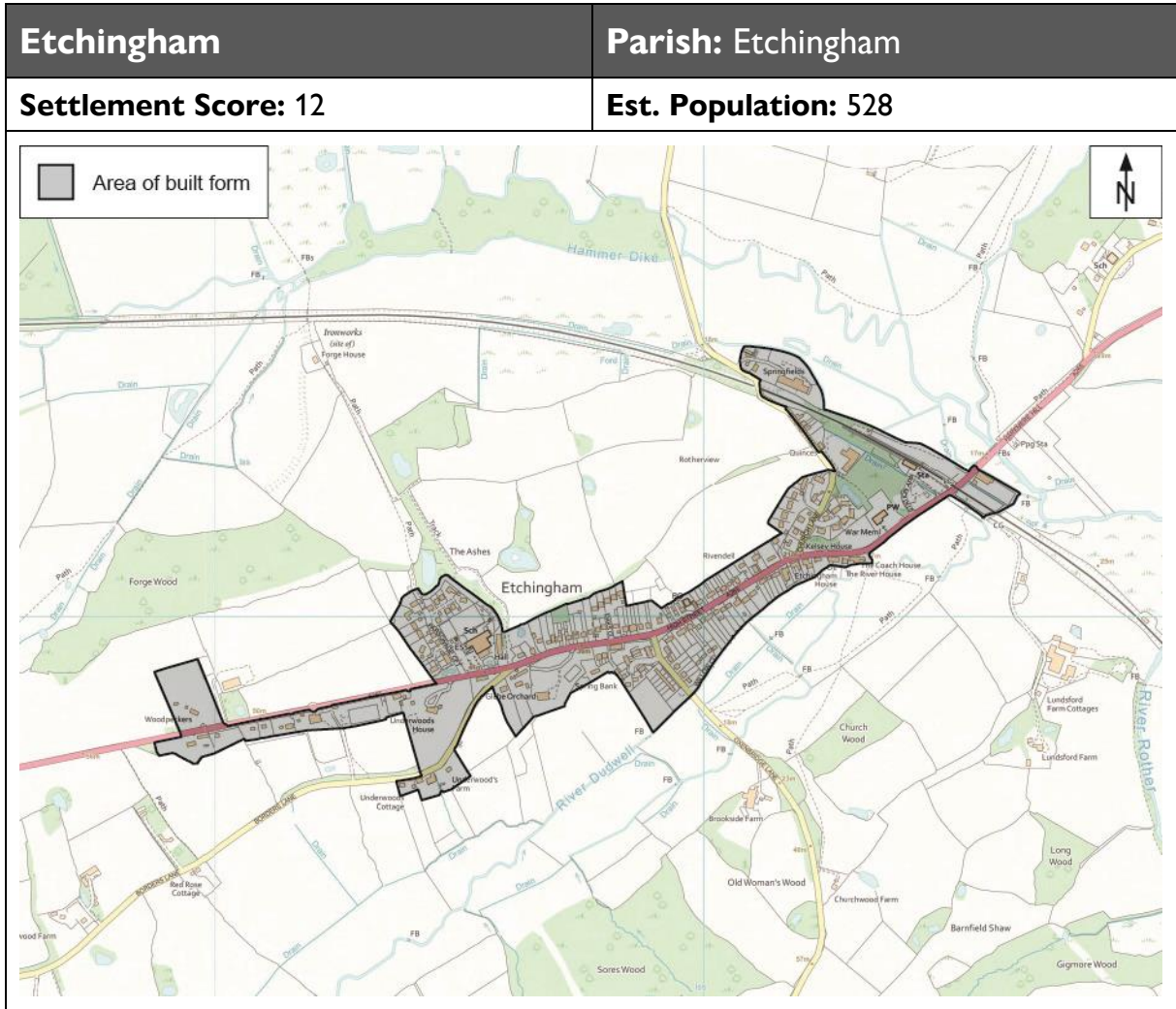
East Guldeford is a very small rural settlement. It is near Rye, as well as its relatively high score, means that it could potentially be considered as a village with a radial connection to Rye as part of the development strategy. At the same time, it has almost no services and facilities, no internal footways, and the highly constrained land surrounding the settlement limits development here. For these reasons, it cannot be considered a sustainable settlement.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its tiny population and constrained nature, it is unlikely that East Guldeford’s sustainability can be significantly improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It is unlikely that any development in the vicinity of East Guldeford would be appropriate. However, if there were to be any windfall development, it would have to be small scale, sensitive development that is unlikely to be able to support further services and facilities within the settlement.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Etchingham Village is a relatively small village, situated where the Dudwell River joins the Rother. The village is known for its attractive rolling countryside and the impressive golden stone structure of the railway station.

Etchingham is located approximately 24 km southeast of Royal Tunbridge Wells in Kent and 21 km northwest of the coastal town of Hastings. The village is predominately linear in form and straddles the A265 road, between nearby Hurst Green, which is roughly 2.3km to the east and Burwash, which is 3.5km to the west.

Etchingham is relatively well located in respect of the road network, as it is centred around the A265 which is the principle east/west route, while also being five minutes along the A265 from the A21 truck road in Hurst Green to the east. The A265 does however receive significant levels of traffic, including heavy goods vehicles.

Housing and Population

The population of Etchingham is an estimated 528, which is based on the number of dwellings, 211, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Etchingham may date back to an early Anglo-Saxon settlement prior to the Norman invasion in 1066. The fourteenth century church of St Mary and St. Nicholas is today 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. Indeed, the church spire is said to host the oldest brass weathervane in England.

The original manor house stood at the site that is today occupied by the Railway Station. 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 principal attractions today.

Notable former residents include Anthony Burgess, who lived there in a semi-detached house on the High Street between 1960 and 1968, where he also wrote 'A Clockwork Orange'.

Etchingham has 9 listed buildings, including the Grade 1 listed church, a number of historical cottages and farmhouses. In addition, the village contains the grade II listed Etchingham War Memorial which is located in the St Mary and St Nicholas Churchyard. The eastern end of the settlement is within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA), which denotes the location of a 14th Century settlement.

Landscape Character

Etchingam is positioned on a south facing slope within the High Weald National Landscape (AONB). This attractive rolling countryside consists predominately of pasture and woodland, 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. Etchingam is divided between the Dudwell Valley to the southwest quadrant, and the Upper Rother Valley, which encompasses the majority of the surrounding landscape.

Dudwell Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Dudwell Valley is a narrow winding and tree lined stream valley with a network of streams arising from springs on higher ground on both sides of the valley and flowing into the Dudwell River. This area is known for being one of the more picturesque valleys in upper Rother and is overlooked by ridges and spurs with fine views across the valley. There are many farms, cottages and scattered historic farmsteads.

Upper Rother – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The landscape has stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges and a relatively open valley floor with small, winding, partly tree lined rivers. The area also features a strong pattern of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods on the valley slopes. This area contains larger settlements on the high ground including Mayfield to the west, Wadhurst and Ticehurst to the north, Hurst Green to the east and Burwash to the south. The landscape hosts the Hastings to Tunbridge Wells railway, which follows the valley from Robertsbridge to Wadhurst.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of three areas 'E1' and 'E2', which are summarised below:

E1 – North and West of the Village

This area is characterised by large open fields to the north of the village which are under intensive agriculture. The loss of field structure where hedgerows have been removed has had an impact on the historic character. There are remnant hedgerows, trees and ponds. This area lacks a sense of place. A footpath crosses the area at the western end, but the area is mostly inaccessible on public rights of way. There is fast traffic on the High Street which detracts from the severs the village.

The landscape is of ordinary to good quality, and a high value AONB area, with moderate-high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It has a moderate capacity to accept residential development and low capacity to accept business development. It is commented that development should not take place on high ground or north of ridge, or west of The Ashes track. There would be some scope to replace lost landscape structure and strengthen the village edge. Blocks of woodland planting could be used to link existing trees and woodland; therefore, the area has moderate potential for mitigation.

E2 - Willow Close and South of Village

This area is comprised of land which slopes to the south of the village and surrounding river valley landscape. The area is prone to flooding. This area is characterised by flat open fields with stream side vegetation. This area has some sense of place and an attractive riverside landscape.

The landscape is good quality and a high value AONB area. It has a high character sensitivity and a high-moderate visual sensitivity. This landscape has a low capacity to accept housing development and no capacity to accept business. Due to the openness of the landscape, development would need to be restricted to the village edge. There is low potential for mitigation, however there would be some scope to strengthen lost landscape structure with tree belts, especially along field boundaries.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

The only site that the 2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment considered is a strip of land to the east of Church Lane to the north of the village, opposite a row of houses. It was

considered that this site is part of the wider AONB landscape, and that development here would be out of character with the countryside setting of the village.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Etchingham is wholly within the High Weald NL. There are sections of the settlement that are bound by small parcels of ancient woodland and deciduous woodland, particularly to the north and northwest, as well as Good quality semi-improved grassland and areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh – which are predominant in the area surrounding the eastern end of the settlement.

There are large areas of land that are within Flood Zone 3 along the southern boundary of the settlement, while the far eastern end of the settlement corresponding with the floor of the Rother and Dudwell valleys around, are within Flood Zone 3. Most of the land to the immediate north of the village is on higher ground and therefore not impacted by flooding except for small patches that are susceptible to surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Etchingham's essential services consist of a convenience store, a recently built primary school and a post office. The nearest doctor's surgeries are in Burwash and Robertsbridge, while the nearest supermarkets are located in Hawkhurst, which is located some 6.5km to the northeast. The nearest secondary schools are in Robertsbridge and Wadhurst – which is around 10km to the northwest. With three essential services, Etchingham scores 3.

Service Level

Aside from its essential services identified above, Etchingham has a limited range of facilities and services. Some of these include 3 pubs, a nursery pre-school, a recently built village hall, a play area near the station and the parish church. The nearest pharmacy is in Burwash.

Etchingham therefore scores a 1 for its range of services and facilities, although this score is comparable with other similarly sized villages.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Etchingham has a small number of local businesses, primarily located at the eastern end of the village, including Flint Timer Yard and Barnfield Business Park. Etchingham scores a 2 for employment.

Public Transport

Etchingham has a train station with regular services that form effective commuter connections towards London, Tunbridge Wells and Hastings. Buses are somewhat limited, as the village is without a 'good' bus service (10+ buses per day). Buses stopping in Etchingham include routes to Uckfield, Heathfield, Sedlescombe, Burwash and Battle. There are also school time bus services to Uplands College in Wadhurst and Bexhill College. A more frequent bus service would go some way to improving the overall sustainability of the settlement. Etchingham scores a 3 on public transport, as has access to a train station, but no 'good' bus services.

Broadband Access

Ultrafast broadband, defined as having download speeds over 300Mbps, is available. Etchingham scores a 3 for its broadband service.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	3
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	12

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Etchingham.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three essential services, including primary school, post office and convenience store

- A wider range of services is available in Burwash, which is some 3.5km distant.
- Train station, with effective commuter service

Settlement Weaknesses

- Less frequent bus service
- Limited wider services and facilities
- Somewhat distant from larger towns
- Linear settlement pattern which limits walkability
- Flood Zone 3 within eastern areas of the settlement, and to the immediate south
- Areas of open AONB countryside surrounding the settlement limit the potential for new development
- The busy A265 creates a degree of severance within the village

Recommendations for the Local Plan

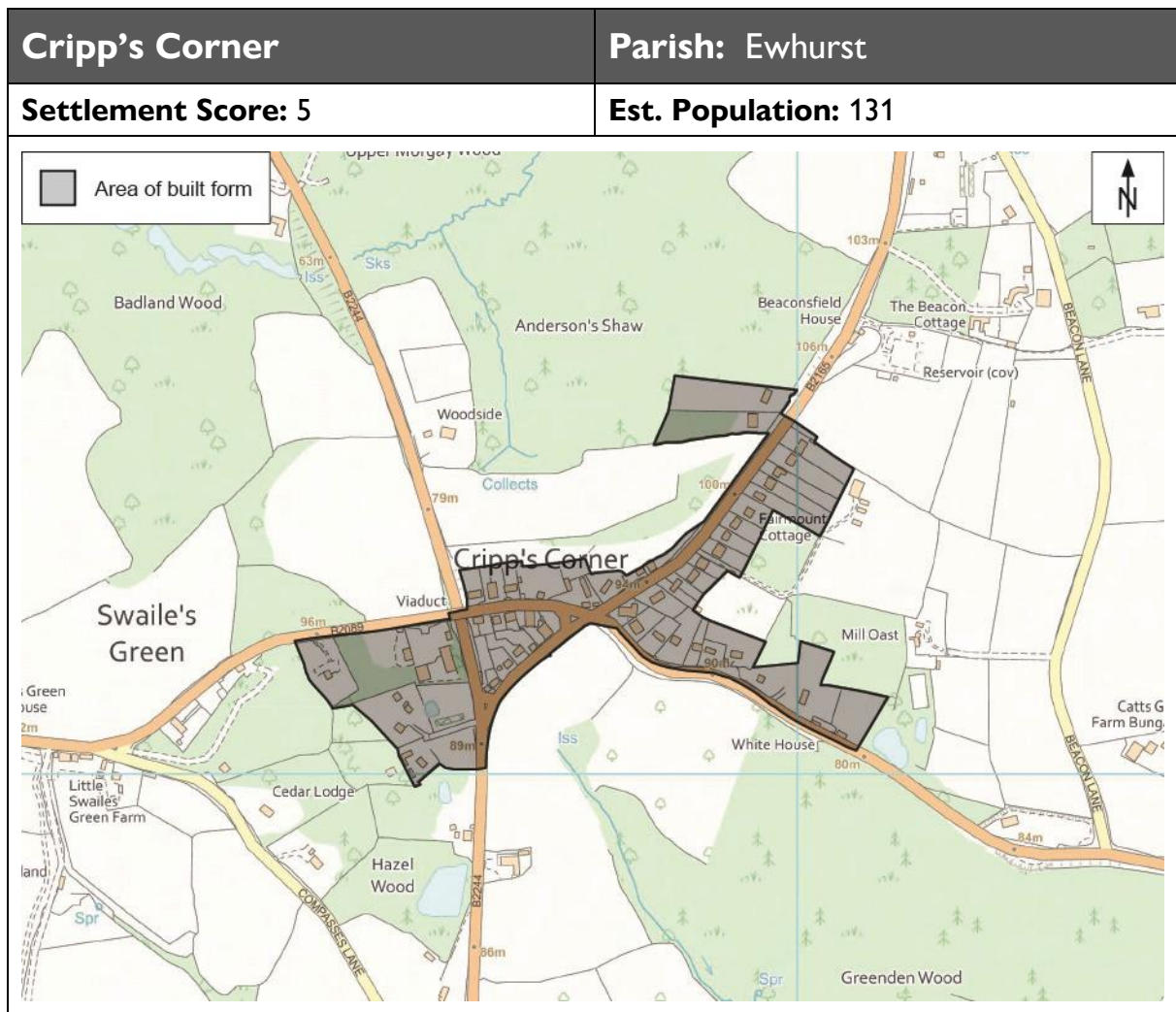
This is a sustainable rural settlement. Its scoring and its relationship with Burwash and some of the larger settlements within the north of the District means that some development could help its community to live better locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of a northern cluster of larger rural settlements, including those outside of the District, including Hawkhurst and Wadhurst. Its scoring mean that it is considered to have a moderate sustainability, which positions it alongside the more sustainable rural villages within the District. Moreover, Etchingham's train station, with connections to Hastings, Tunbridge Wells, and London makes it a potential transport hub for this area of the District.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

There may be opportunities for development in areas adjacent to or within the built-up area. There may also be some opportunity to consider if there is scope to expand any of the commercial sites within the east of the village. Through improving the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of larger rural settlements, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing new development in less sensitive locations, could provide additional housing to support the sustainability of the village.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Cripp's Corner is a small settlement, clustered around the crossroads of the B2244, the B2089, and the B2165, and is approximately 850m south of Staplecross and 2.6km north of Sedlescombe.

Further afield, Staplecross is some 5.8km northeast of Battle, and roughly 12km north east of Hastings town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Cripp's Corner is an estimated 131, which is based on the number of dwellings, 57, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The settlement lies 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.

Cripp's 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.

There are two listed buildings within Cripp's Corner and almost of the settlement is covered by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) which denotes the location of part of the Hastings to Ashford Roman road.

Landscape Character

Cripp's Corner sits on the northern slopes of the Brede Valley and enjoys some pleasing south facing views.

Brede Valley LCA

Brede Valley is characterised as the broad valley of the River Brede with a flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, wide vistas from the enclosing ridges and well wooded side slopes with scattered farmsteads and orchards. Villages and their churches can be sound

perched on the slopes overlooking the valley, notably Brede, Udimore and Icklesham. Lying to the north of the valley, Cripp's Corner is located within the centre of several extensive areas of semi-natural ancient deciduous woodland.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Cripp's Corner is wholly within the High Weald NL, and abuts two Local Wildlife Sites, the Cripp's Corner Meadows LWS and the Powdermill Reservoir, Brede High Woods & Hurst Wood Complex. The settlement lies adjacent to a number of significant areas of ancient deciduous woodland on all sides, including Brede High Woods to the southeast, Upper Morgay Wood to the north, Badland Wood to the north west and Hazel Wood bounding the settlement to the south west.

Cripp's Corner is constrained in landscape terms, given its relative ridgetop position, with the settlement's edges being exposed to wide countryside views, particularly to the east and southeast where woodland is not too closely present. In addition, Cripp's Corner is small in size, and has a distinctly rural character, which makes it sensitive to modern development.

Due to its ridgetop position, there are almost no flood related constraints.

There are limited constraints in terms of heritage assets and development with only two listed buildings within the settlement. However, the settlement is covered by an ANA and the rural character is important to the setting of the listed buildings.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Cripp's Corner, being a very small and low population settlement, has no essential services. The settlement is near Robertsbridge to the north which has a better range of services. Cripp's Corner scores a 0 for its essential services.

Service Level

There are also no other additional services and facilities within the settlement. The settlement has none of the services and facilities set out in the sustainability scoring. Cripp's Corner therefore also scores a 0 for its services and facilities.

Employment Opportunities

As Cripp's Corner is a very small settlement with no services or facilities, employment opportunities are extremely limited. Employment is likely found in the larger nearby settlements of Robertsbridge, Hastings or Battle. Cripp's Corner scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Cripp's Corner has no train station, but it does have an average level of bus service. There are services towards Hastings, Robertsbridge, the Sainsburys Supermarket in Hastings and Battle. Cripp's Corner scores a 2 for its public transport.

Broadband Access

Ultrafast broadband, which is defined as download speeds of 300Mb/s or more, is available in Cripp's Corner, giving the settlement a broadband score of 3.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	3
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Cripp's Corner.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Ultrafast Broadband access

Settlement Weaknesses

- Small rural village
- No essential services or other services and facilities and no employment opportunities, so that residents would be dependent on the private car
- High Weald NL setting limits development options

Recommendations for the Local Plan

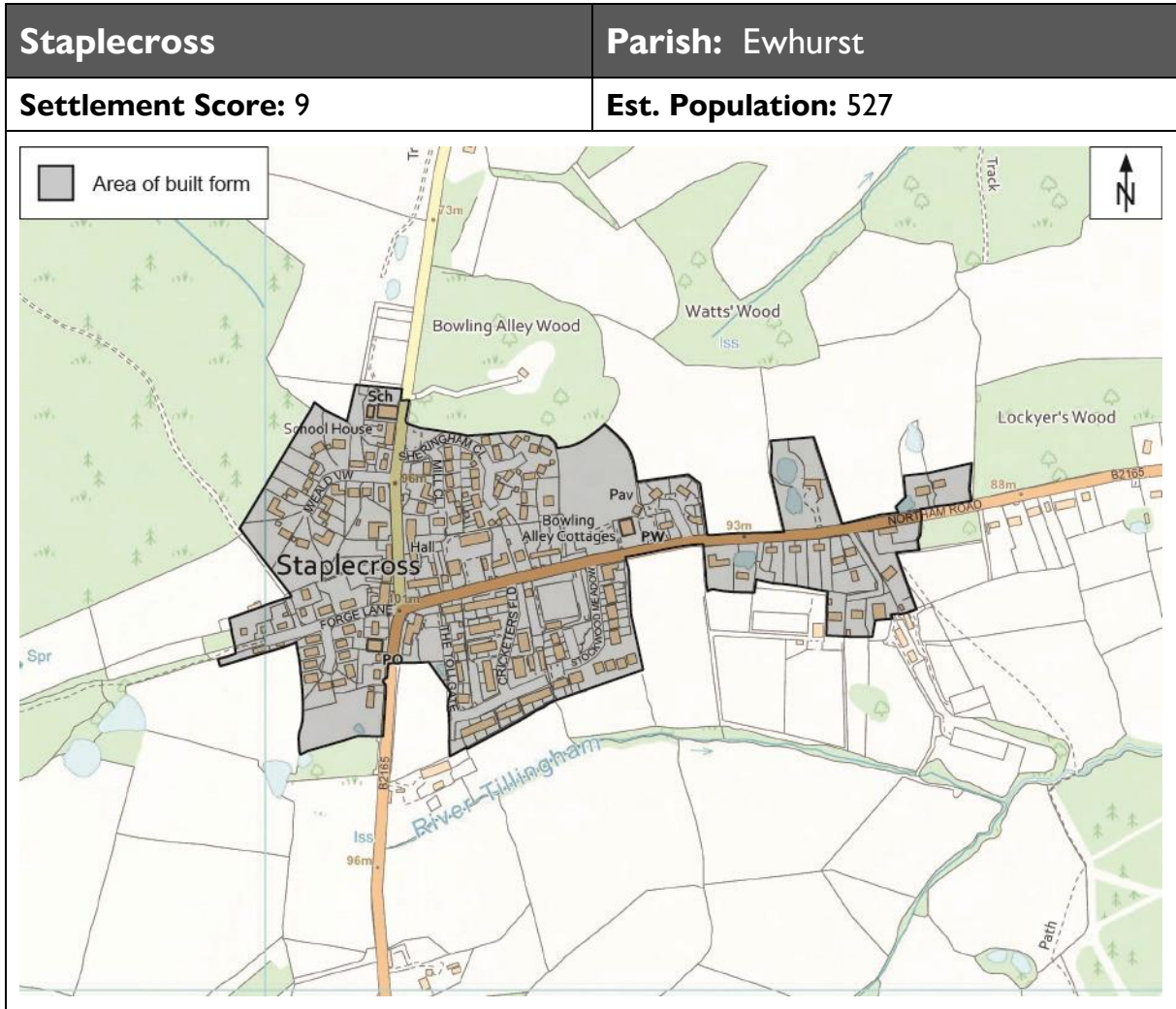
Cripp's Corner is a small and remote rural settlement. Its sustainability score indicates that there are no services and facilities within walking distance of the village, making its residents likely to travel to larger settlements such as Robertsbridge, Battle or Hastings. It is considered to have low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its small population, remote location and High Weald NL setting, it is unlikely that Cripp's Corner's sustainability can be significantly improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It is unlikely that any development in the vicinity of Cripp's Corner would be appropriate. However, if there were to be any development, it would have to be small scale, sensitive development that is unlikely to be able to support further services and facilities within the settlement.



Settlement Overview

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 527. Staplecross is a reasonably compact village within its Local Plan defined development boundary centred upon a junction of the B2165.

The nearest settlements are Crips Corner, which is roughly 1km to the south, and Ewhurst Green, which is some 2km to the northeast. In terms of larger settlements, Robertsbridge is 4.3km to the west, Hawkhurst is just over 8km to the north, and the town centre of Hastings is around 13km to the south.

Housing and Population

The population of Staplecross is an estimated 527, which is based on the number of dwellings, 229, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The name Staplecross originates from it being was the central point in the Hundred of Staple, which was formed of Northiam, Ewhurst Green, Bodiam, Mountfield, Whatlington and Brede. A 'hundred' is a Saxon measure of a land area that was served by a hundred court.

There are 19 listed buildings within the settlement with the majority being concentrated around the crossroads, while some listed farm buildings to the east are also included within the settlement. The areas around the crossroads are also within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) in relation to the Hastings to Ashford Roman road.

There is a relatively high concentration of listed buildings within the settlement. New development that extends too far from the crossroads, would risk detracting from the settlement's sense of place in terms of its historic centre.

The settlement also features a number of modern residential developments, the most recent being 25 dwellings at Stockwood Meadow.

Landscape Character

Lower Rother Valley LCA

Staplecross is within the High Weald NL and is located within the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area, while itself being on high ground to the south of the valley.

The Lower Rother Valley area extends from Robertsbridge in the west to Rye in the east, the boundary with Kent in the north and the ridgetop B2089 to the south. The broad valley of the lower reaches of the River Rother are to the north.

There are spectacular views across the valley of the lower Rother from the northern outskirts of the village. Near Staplecross in particular, the Lower Rother Valley area features scattered woodland across the valley slopes and higher ground, much of this is ancient woodland. The village enjoys large expanses of ancient woodland to the west, and a smaller area to the north-east. In terms of historic development, typical High Weald white weatherboarding is present in the area, while oast houses are also characteristic and found on most farmsteads, with many now converted into houses.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Staplecross in area S1.

S1 – Staplecross

This is the landscape surrounding an historic hamlet which is perched high on the edge of the valley. It is pleasant, unspoilt farmland with no detractors. The village has a strong sense of place enhanced by the landscape setting. It is a largely intact historic landscape with feature brick and tile hung and white weatherboard cottages.

The settlement is a compact hamlet/village at the crossroads of ancient tracks.

The landscape area is of high quality and a high value AONB area. It has a moderate-high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is considered that Development potential would be limited to an enclosed area close to the village. This landscape is sensitive, and its character would be degraded by medium or large-scale development. The potential for mitigation is low, due to the existing landscape character being stable and established so that extensive planting would detract from this existing character. The capacity for development is identified to be low.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

This recent Assessment identifies that there may be scope for some limited development within gaps along Northiam Road close to the village centre, although there are also other constraints to consider, and strong landscape buffers would be required. In landscape terms, there may also be some potential to the south of the village, to the left of the B2165, insofar as development would be screened from the wider landscape.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

In terms of designations, Staplecross is wholly within the High Weald NL, and there are significant areas of ancient and deciduous woodland adjacent and near to the northern half of the settlement. The Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area is also adjacent to the north west.

Areas within the settlement are generally free from flood risk, although areas to the south are susceptible to surface water flooding due to the presence of an east-west watercourse.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

The essential services in Staplecross include a convenience store, a Londis, a pre-school, primary school and a post office. The settlement has three of the essential services and therefore scores a 3 for this sustainability score. The nearest doctor's surgeries are in Sedlescombe and Broad Oak, while Hastings or Hawkhurst in Kent are the nearest locations for supermarket access. Robertsbridge and Hastings likely provide the nearest options for secondary schools.

Service Level

The wider service level in Staplecross is limited. Facilities and services include two pubs, a church, a village hall and a sports pitch. Staplecross scores a 1 for its services and facilities, which is comparable with other settlements of its size, as well as a number of larger villages.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities are limited in Staplecross. Employment within the village itself is generally limited within the services which are in the settlement. The Compass Park Estate employment area is within 2km of Staplecross and is therefore included within its employment scoring, however it is not accessible either by walking or via public transport. As of the 2016 Employment Sites Review, the Compass Park Estate consists of 4.38ha and is occupied by three businesses. Further afield, there are larger employment areas outside of the settlement in Battle and Robertsbridge. The settlement scores a 1 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Staplecross has an average bus service with six or seven services a day, in the direction of Hastings and Cranbrook, including stops at Hawkhurst and Sedlescombe. There is also a school time bus service to Robertsbridge, with one bus per day. There is no train station, with the nearest rail services being in Robertsbridge and Battle. The settlement scores a 2 for its public transport service.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, which is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300 Mbps is available within the settlement, giving it a score of 2 for its internet service.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	9

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Staplecross, including no current Local Plan allocations. The village has recently seen the completion of 25 dwellings at Stockwood Meadow subject to permission RR/2014/1256/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three essential services, including primary school, convenience store and post office • Range of facilities and services for size of settlement
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively isolated from larger settlements, making it difficult to access a wider range of services • Less frequent bus service, which combined with the settlement's remoteness ensures that residents are reliant on the private vehicle • Lacks a doctor's surgery • Constrained AONB landscape, given its prominence in respect of the Rother Valley, limits the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

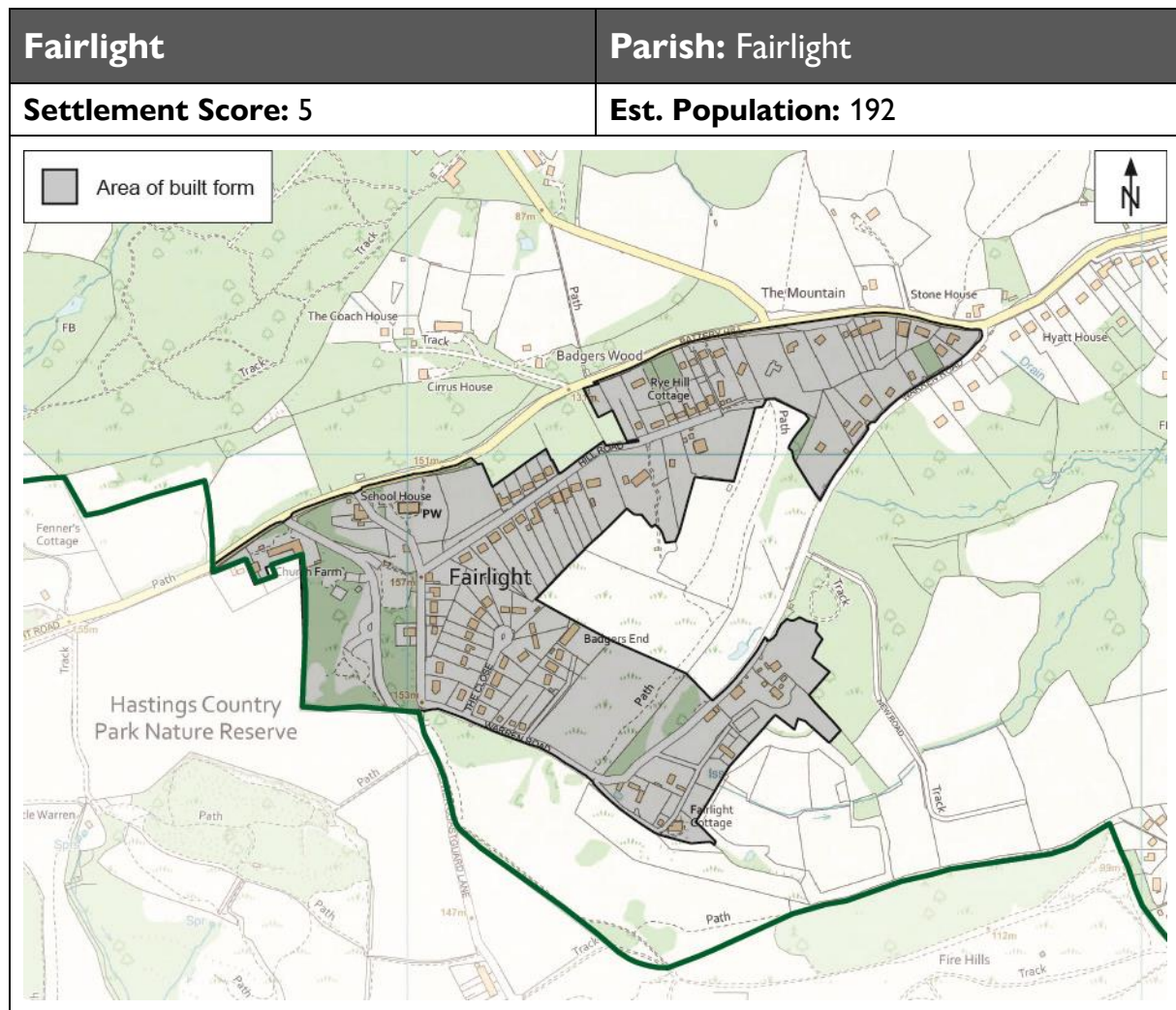
This is an isolated rural settlement. With three essential services, an improvement of local services and public transport accessibility as part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connecting to a wider range of services and facilities would help its community to live well locally. Its score indicates that it is a potentially sustainable settlement, subject to further consideration through the Development Strategy.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

With significant landscape constraints, there is only small potential to improve services within the village. Given that the village has a reasonable sustainability score, and contains three essential services, its sustainability could be improved by an increase in the frequency and range of bus services which could be achieved through the village's incorporation within a network of rural services.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing some development in less sensitive part of the village could support a very small level of new services and facilities within the village, although given its landscape constraints any new development would be limited in scale.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Fairlight is slightly inland and to the north of Fairlight Cove. This small settlement is contiguous with Fairlight Cove and consists mainly of historic coastguard cottages. The settlement is known for its 19th century stone parish church of St Andrews which stands some 172 meters above sea level, whose 25-meter tower provides an important landmark for shipping.

As stated, Fairlight is practically contiguous with Fairlight Cove to the east, due to their close proximity and accessibility by a footway along Battery Hill. Fairlight is also 2.5km from the coastal town of Hastings, to which it is connected to via Fairlight Road.

Housing and Population

Fairlight has an estimated population of 192 which is based on the number of dwellings, 96, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.0 persons per dwelling.

2020 population estimates put Rother as having the highest proportion of residents that are over 65 within East Sussex. Within Rother, Fairlight Parish has the highest percentage, with 48.1% of its residents being over 65.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The settlement of Fairlight is first mentioned in historical records as 'Farlegh' in 1220 and was not until 1823 that the village was recorded as being named Fairlight. As with many coastal and rural areas in East Sussex, Fairlight has historical links to smuggling with many historical reports of contraband goods being landed at Fairlight.

In present time the settlement is known for its 19th Century grey stone parish church of St Andrews which stands over 560 feet above sea level. The area is known for its excellent views across Hastings and the coast.

Fairlight is also close by to the Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, which is considered one of the foremost coastal nature reserves in the UK. The Park encompasses a Country Park, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Fairlight consists predominantly of 20th Century development, with only two listed buildings - one of these being St Andrews Church. An undeveloped area within the west of the settlement is covered by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) that relates to an Iron

Age promontory fort at East Hill, and further prehistoric remains within Hastings Country Park.

Landscape Character

High Wealden Coast – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Fairlight, as distinct from Fairlight Cove, is one of the highest topographies in the district, and the highest in the area. Behind and to the north the village, the ground slopes steeply to the Marsham Stream, below Pett and Friars Hill. Its elevation, and relative prominence, means that there are fine views over the surrounding countryside and over the sea. To the south and the immediate west lies the Hastings Country Park which includes coastal, heathland and wooded habitats with open agri-environment farmland and recreational access.

Fairlight is situated within the High Wealden Coast Landscape Character Area (LCA). The High Wealden Coast is where the Hastings to Battle Ridge reaches the sea to form a distinctly unique coastline, with terraced, crumbling cliffs of soft pink sandstone where the geology of the High Weald meets the sea. Varying ages of cliff falls, some of which are still bare earth and others with established woodland. Fairlight Cove includes areas where properties close to the cliff edge have subsided into the sea. The area features deep ghylls, locally known as 'glens', which fall steeply to the sea and where the associated streams and springs form frequent muddy waterfalls, while higher areas exhibit scrubby heathland and wind sculpted trees growing on the coastal terraces of slumped cliffs.

The main ridge running inland between Batchelor's Bump and Cliff End offers long views across the Brede Valley to the north and Winchelsea, Rye, Dungeness, and on a clear day the coast of France. On the sheltered north side of the main ridge the patchwork of fields and woods is typical of the High Weald landscape, including Scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland, the largest being Mallydams Wood. This area contains Scattered historic farmsteads and interesting older country house estates at Fairlight Hall and The Hall.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of three areas 'F1' and 'F2', which are summarised below:

F1 - Stonelynk Farm (area to the north of Fairlight Road)

This is countryside falling away from the cliff top development. There are some larger fields where hedgerows have been removed. The area is mainly pasture with some arable farming. There are scattered hedgerows and tree belts. The woodlands and shaws provide enclosure. The area has a strong sense of place.

The settlement is of modern development spreading from the main coastal historic route way towards the cliff top.

The assessment defines the immediate landscape as being of good quality but high value high value AONB area. Its character sensitivity to change and its visual sensitivity are both identified as moderate-high. Battery Hill/Pett Level Road is identified as the barrier to dense development, and ultimately any significant expansion to the north of this would intrude into the AONB countryside. Some infill in more enclosed fields to the east of Fairlight Cove may be acceptable in a strong landscape structure, while there may be some scope to strengthen the landscape structure with new tree belts and hedges. The assessment concludes that this landscape area has a capacity of low – none for further development.

F2 - Warren Farm (section of countryside between Fairlight and Fairlight Cove)

These more enclosed areas are to the west of Fairlight Cove where the land dips into a natural bowl. There are pastures with a distinct field pattern and woodland and scrub in patches. It should be noted that this area includes some small areas of residential development and associated paraphernalia.

The settlement is of dense modern development to the edge of the woodland. Public paths give access to Hastings Country Park.

The assessment identifies the landscape as being of ordinary-good quality but also being high value AONB area, while its character sensitivity to change and its visual sensitivity are moderate. Development in this area would be limited to pockets close to the urban edge and should avoid intrusion onto the cliff top or country park. A major constraint is the eroding coast. There may however be some scope to strengthen the built-up edge. Extend

woodland and tree belts but need to retain open character. The assessment concludes that this landscape area has a capacity of moderate – low for further development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Fairlight has significant environmental and landscape constraints. The majority of the historic and undeveloped areas of the settlement are within the High Weald NL, excluding sections of modern residential development including their sometimes quite large curtilages. There is a small, non-contiguous section of the Hastings Cliffs to Pett Beach SSSI within the northwest of the settlement. To the south and southwest, at points as close as 110m, is the main body of the Hastings Cliffs to Pett Beach SSSI, as well as the Hastings Cliffs Special Area of Conservation (SAC). To the south and the immediate west of the settlement sits the Hastings Country Park, which is a Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site (LWS). A further LWS including ancient woodland, 'Knowle Wood', bounds the southeast of the settlement. The settlement area frequently encroaches on and is bound by areas of priority habitat, including Maritime cliff and slope and deciduous woodland.

Given its raised topography, there are relatively few constraints related to flooding, other than slight areas potentially susceptible to surface water flooding. The whole settlement is within the Fairlight and Pett Level Drainage Area.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Fairlight has no essential services - scoring 0.

Service Level

The service level in Fairlight is minimal, consisting of a café and the church, while the immediately adjacent Hastings County Park functions as a public park. For service level it scores 0.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the village are minimal. Fairlight scores a 0.

Public Transport

There is a good bus service in respect of the 101 Bus with connections to Hastings and Rye, with over 10 buses a day in each direction. In view of this, Fairlight scores 3 for public transport

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Fairlight, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Fairlight, including no current Local Plan allocations.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Good bus service to Hastings
- Relative proximity to Hastings with Ore Village and the Town Centre being 2.3km and 4.3km to the west respectively.

Settlement Weaknesses

- Minimal facilities and services
- Minimal employment opportunities
- Extensive landscape and environmental constraints that significantly impact on further development potential.
- Very small in size

Recommendations for the Local Plan

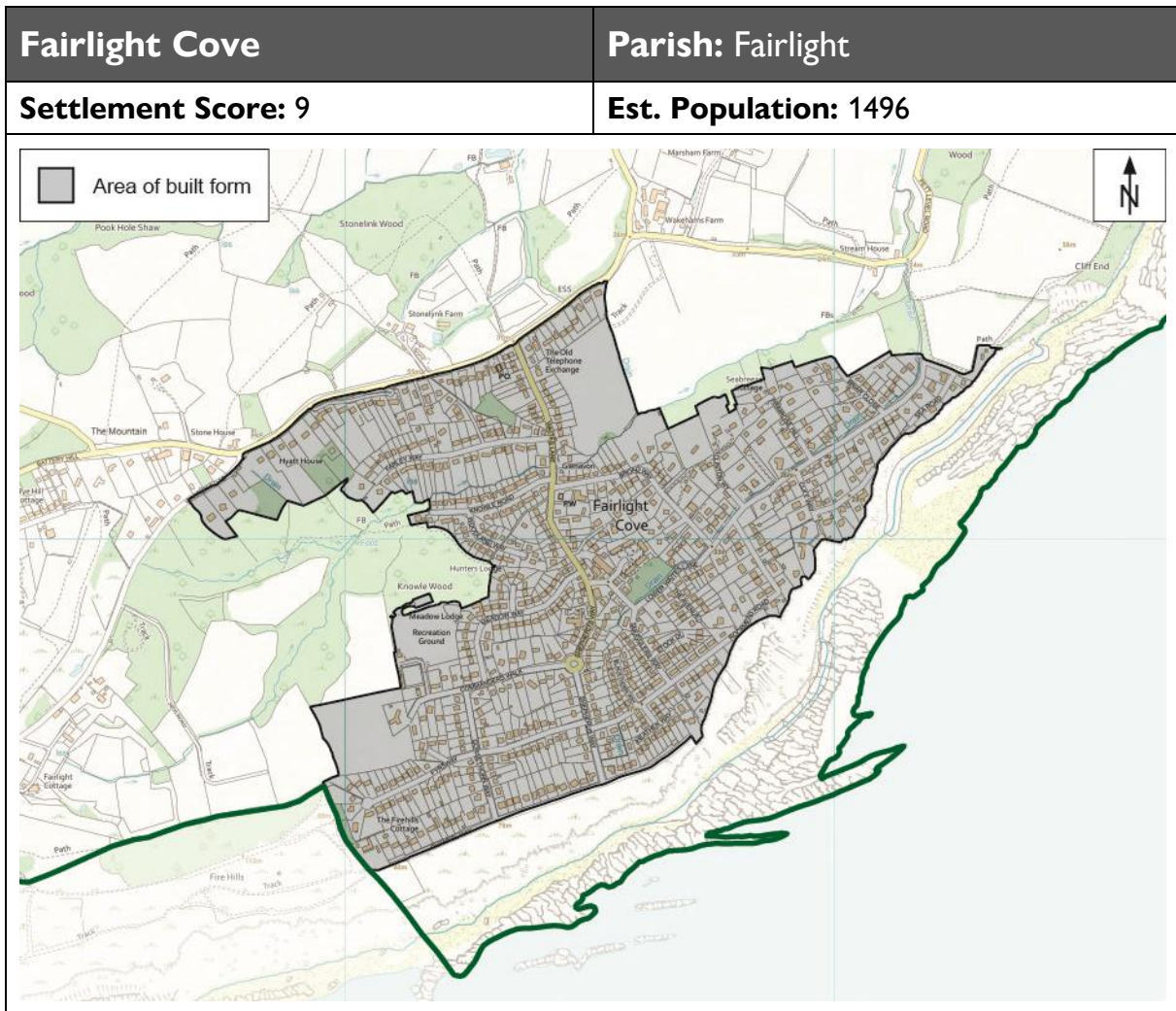
Fairlight is a small rural settlement, that has minimal services and facilities. It has a good bus connection to Hastings and Rye, which provides some means of accessing essential day to day services via public transport. Overall it is considered to have low sustainability.

Opportunities for Growth

There are limited opportunities for further development within Fairlight due to its significant physical, environmental and landscape constraints, and it is unlikely that its minimal service level could be remedied through development within the village. Given that it has minimal services and facilities, including no essential services, the village's sustainability is dependent upon its access to the large town of Hastings via public transport.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Some limited development may support existing services or a very small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Fairlight Cove is a village of generally 20th Century development characterised by bungalow dwellings. 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.

Fairlight Cove is situated on the coast approximately 5.5km to the northeast of Hastings town centre. Pett and Pett level are relatively nearby, being some 1.5km and 1km to the north and northeast respectively. Guestling Green is located roughly 2.5km to the northeast. To the northwest along Fairlight Road, Fairlight Cove is contiguous with the smaller settlement of Fairlight.

Housing and Population

Fairlight Cove has an estimated population of 1,496, which is based on the number of dwellings, 748, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.0 persons per dwelling.

2020 population estimates put Rother as having the highest proportion of residents that are over 65 within East Sussex. Within Rother Fairlight Parish has the highest percentage, with 48.1% of its residents being over 65.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

It is possible that Fairlight Cove once functioned as a Smuggler's haunt, but as previously noted, the village almost wholly of modern development. In this respect, there are no heritage listed buildings nor Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs) within the Fairlight Cove boundary, although adjacent Fairlight contains the listed St Andrew's Church and the former village hall.

Landscape Character

High Wealden Coast – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Fairlight Cove is situated within the High Wealden Coast Landscape Character Area (LCA). The High Wealden Coast is where the Hastings to Battle Ridge reaches the sea to form a distinctly unique coastline, with terraced, crumbling cliffs of soft pink sandstone where the geology of the High Weald meets the sea. Varying ages of

cliff falls, some of which are still bare earth and others with established woodland. Fairlight Cove includes areas where properties close to the cliff edge have subsided into the sea.

The area features deep ghylls, locally known as 'glens', which fall steeply to the sea and where the associated streams and springs form frequent muddy waterfalls, while higher areas exhibit scrubby heathland and wind sculpted trees growing on the coastal terraces of slumped cliffs.

The main ridge running inland between Batchelor's Bump and Cliff End offers long views across the Brede Valley to the north and Winchelsea, Rye, Dungeness, and on a clear day the coast of France. On the sheltered north side of the main ridge the patchwork of fields and woods is typical of the High Weald landscape, including Scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland, the largest being Mallydams Wood. This area contains Scattered historic farmsteads and interesting older country house estates at Fairlight Hall and The Hall.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape surrounding the settlement as part of two landscape areas. Area F1 Stonelynk Farm addresses the area to the north and east of the settlement, north and south of Battery Hill/Pett Level Road. The area which forms the undeveloped gap between Fairlight Cove and Fairlight to the west, is assessed within area F2 Warren Farm.

F1 - Stonelynk Farm (area to the north and northeast of Fairlight Cove)

This is countryside falling away from the cliff top development. There are some larger fields where hedgerows have been removed. The area is mainly pasture with some arable farming. There are scattered hedgerows and tree belts. The woodlands and shaws provide enclosure. The area has a strong sense of place.

The settlement is of modern development spreading from the main coastal historic route way towards the cliff top.

The assessment defines the immediate landscape area as being of good quality but high value high value AONB area. Its character sensitivity to change and its visual sensitivity are both identified as moderate-high. Battery Hill/Pett Level Road is identified as the barrier to dense development, and ultimately any significant expansion to the north of this would intrude into

the AONB countryside. Some infill in more enclosed fields to the east of Fairlight Cove may be acceptable in a strong landscape structure, while there may be some scope to strengthen the landscape structure with new tree belts and hedges.

The assessment concludes that this landscape area has a capacity of 'low' for housing development, and 'none' for business development.

F2 - Warren Farm (section of countryside between Fairlight and Fairlight Cove)

These more enclosed areas are to the west of Fairlight Cove where the land dips into a natural bowl. There are pastures with a distinct field pattern and woodland and scrub in patches. It should be noted that this area includes some small areas of residential development and associated paraphernalia.

The settlement is of dense modern development to the edge of the woodland. Public paths give access to Hastings Country Park.

The assessment identifies the landscape area as being of ordinary-good quality but also being high value AONB landscape, while its character sensitivity to change and its visual sensitivity are moderate. Development in this area would be limited to pockets close to the urban edge and should avoid intrusion onto the cliff top or country park. A major constraint is the eroding coast. There may however be some scope to strengthen the built-up edge. Extend woodland and tree belts but need to retain open character. The assessment concludes that this landscape area has a capacity of 'moderate' for housing development, and 'low' for business development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Fairlight Cove is effectively bound by the High Weald NL, although small sections are within the AONB. The settlement is bound by the Hastings Cliffs to Pett Beach SSSI along the entirety of its southern extent, while a short distance beyond this lies the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Special Protection Area. This area to the south forms a cliff, which is gradually giving way and braking into the sea below, with a number of properties lost to the sea already. Immediately to the southwestern boundary is the Hastings Cliffs Special Area of Conservation, as well as the Hastings Country Park Local Nature Reserve

and Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Areas around the cliff feature continuous areas of maritime cliff and slope priority habitat. Separating Fairlight Cove from Fairlight to the west is 'Knowle Wood', which contains ancient woodland and is also LWS. Sections to the north of the settlement are bound by parcels of deciduous woodland.

The village has several watercourses running through it, including along the entirety of Lower Waites Lane, along the north eastern boundary, and in various other locations; which are subject to the highest identified risk of surface water flooding. The whole settlement is within the Fairlight and Pett Level Drainage Area.

It is also worth noting that much of roads within the settlement are narrow, while some also lack footways.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Fairlight Cove has three essential services; these being a convenience store including a post office, and an outreach doctor's surgery that meets at Fairlight Village Hall. With three essential services Fairlight Cove scores 3. It is worth noting that being an outreach service, the doctor's surgery has only limited opening hours. The lack of a primary school is notable.

Service Level

Excepting the essential services listed above Fairlight Cove has a fairly limited. Notable services excluding the essential services listed above include a nursery pre-school, a village hall, pharmacy and library, although attention is again drawn to limited opening hours, in this case for the pharmacy and library. Other services and facilities include Fairlight Recreation Ground, a pub and a hairdresser. Fairlight Cove scores 1 for its service level, which puts it in the lower half of settlements with over a 1,000 population

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the village are minimal, and Fairlight Cove scores a 0.

Public Transport

Public transport availability in the village is reasonable. There is a good bus service in the 101 Bus with connections to Hastings and Rye, with over 10 buses a day in each direction. The 347 Bus which has connections to Hastings and Pett also stops in Fairlight Cove, but is much less frequent, however. With a good bus service, the village scores a 3.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Fairlight Cove, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	9

Current development commitments

There are two allocated sites in the DaSA within Fairlight Cove.

Policy FAC1 allocates the Land at the Former Market Garden, Lower Waites Lane for 16 dwellings. There are currently no planning applications for this site.

Policy FAC2 allocates the Land east of Waites Lane, Fairlight Cove for 30 dwellings, including a serviced plot for a new doctor’s surgery. There are currently no planning applications for this site.

There are no other significant commitments within Fairlight Cove.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three essential services • Good bus service to Hastings • Relative proximity to Hastings with Ore Village and the Town Centre being 3.6km and 5.5km to the west respectively.
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited overall facilities and services • Absence of primary school • Minimal employment opportunities • The cliffs to the south and countryside to the west form extensive physical and environmental constraints • Significant landscape constraints bound the village, limiting outward expansion • Poor internal road network

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Fairlight Cove is one of the larger villages in the district and is in close proximity to Hastings with which it has good bus connections. Limited services however impact on the ability of its community to live well locally, most notably the lack of a primary school, and it is generally reliant on services and facilities within Hastings. Despite its population, its score means that it can only be considered to be potentially sustainable.

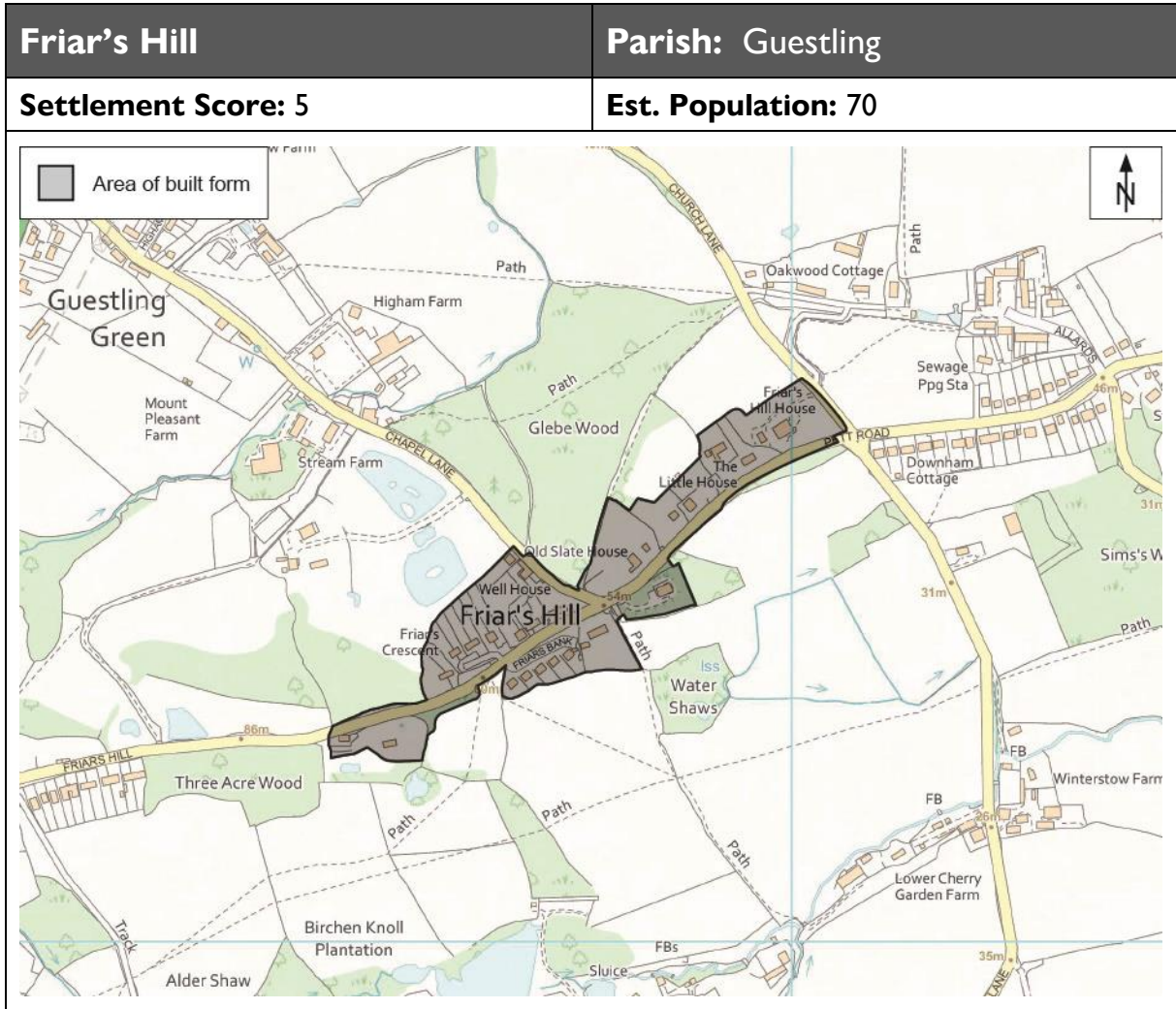
Opportunities for Growth

Any scope for additional services and facilities would improve the sustainability within the village, although there is little potential for significant further development due to significant physical and environmental constraints within the village, in addition to the surrounding

AONB landscape. There is already a good bus connection to Hastings, although services could be improved by being extended further throughout the village, as some sections of the village are remote from bus stops. However, a greater service coverage within Fairlight Cove may not be possible due to the village's narrow roads.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Carrying forward the extant Local Plan allocations would support the sustainability of the village and provide much needed additional housing.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Friar's Hill is a very small settlement located on Pett Road, off the A259. It is linear in form and is essentially contiguous with Pett. The villages of Guestling Green and Bachelor's Bump are relatively close, being approximately 1km to the northwest and 1.5km to the west, respectively. Hastings is the closest town, the nearest edge of which is some 2km to the southwest.

Housing and Population

The population of Friar's Hill is approximately 70. This is based on the number of dwellings, 32, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are three listed buildings in the vicinity of the settlement, all of which are Grade II listed cottages that date from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Landscape Character

Friar's Hill is predominantly within the Brede Valley landscape character area, however there are some small areas on the southern boundary of the settlement which extend into the High Weald Coast landscape character area. This part of the LCA is characterised by a sense of tranquillity away from the main settlements and

Roads, wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley floodplain, well wooded slopes with scattered farmsteads and orchards and scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald.

The landscape immediately surrounding Friar's Hill is not assessed in the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) however LCA character areas GG1 and P1, relating to Guestling Green and Pett respectively, are only a short distance away and may offer some useful insights. They are summarised below.

GG1 – Guestling Green, East of A259

This is an area of rolling countryside surrounding the main A259 and a hamlet at the junction with Chapel Lane. The farmland is of large rectangular fields surrounded by significant hedges and trees belts. There has been some apparent loss of historic field pattern. The area has some sense of place and some historic vernacular buildings. The settlement is of ribbon

development radiating from road junction. It is a small settlement – Historically probably supporting 6 -7 houses.

It has been defined as good quality and of high AONB value. It has a moderate-high character sensitivity and a high visual sensitivity. It is determined as having a low capacity for housing and business development. Any development would need to be located north of Chapel Lane only, close to existing development and avoiding spreading into larger fields. The historic size of the settlement would limit potential to expand. The potential for mitigation is low, as the open character would not support extensive new planting in open meadows, though there would be some scope to replace lost field structure or to link up existing woodland.

P1 – Pett Village

This is an area of farmland falling away from the ridge top settlement to the north and south of Pett Road. There are large open fields, mainly under pasture. There has been some loss of landscape structure. The key feature is a ridge top settlement and church. The settlement is of ribbon development on the ridge top road. There is a Central church and some older buildings.

The landscape is defined as good-high quality and a high AONB value area. It has a moderate-high character sensitivity and a high visual sensitivity. It is determined as having a low capacity for housing and no capacity for business development. Any development would be limited to infill to ribbon development. The open slopes and ridge top character would make it difficult to integrate dense development. The potential for mitigation is low, as the open character of this area would not accommodate extensive woodland planting.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Friar's Hill and the land surrounding it is within the High Weald NL. To the north of the settlement, the mild slopes are fairly well wooded and include the Glebe Wood Ancient Woodland. There are further, smaller parcels of Ancient Woodland to the east, south and west.

There are relatively small areas around the local ponds and streams that are at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Friar's Hill is a small, low-population settlement and the only essential service within walking distance is the Guestling Bradshaw CE Primary School in neighbouring Guestling Green. Therefore, the settlement scores a 1 for its essential services.

Service Level

The general level of services and facilities available to the settlement is very limited. Other than the primary school mentioned above, the only other services and facilities within walking distance are The Old Butchers Shop in the western extent of Pett and Icklesham Koi and the White Hart Beefeater on the A259. The settlement scores a 0 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within Friar's Hill itself are non-existent and there are no larger employment or industrial sites within a 2km radius. The settlement scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Public transport accessibility in Friar's Hill is moderate, with the 347 bus service passing through the settlement some five times a day. The settlement therefore scores a 2.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, which is defined as download speeds between 30Mb/s and 300Mb/s, is available in Friar’s Hill, giving the settlement a broadband score of 2.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Friar’s Hill.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively close proximity to Hastings, while being adjacent to Guestling Green and directly adjacent to Pett • Superfast Broadband access
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small rural village – population less than 100 • Very limited services and facilities and employment opportunities • High Weald NL setting and low capacity to accept change limits development options

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Friar’s Hill is a very small rural settlement, with almost no services or facilities. Its relatively proximity to Hastings means that it could potentially be considered as part of a cluster of

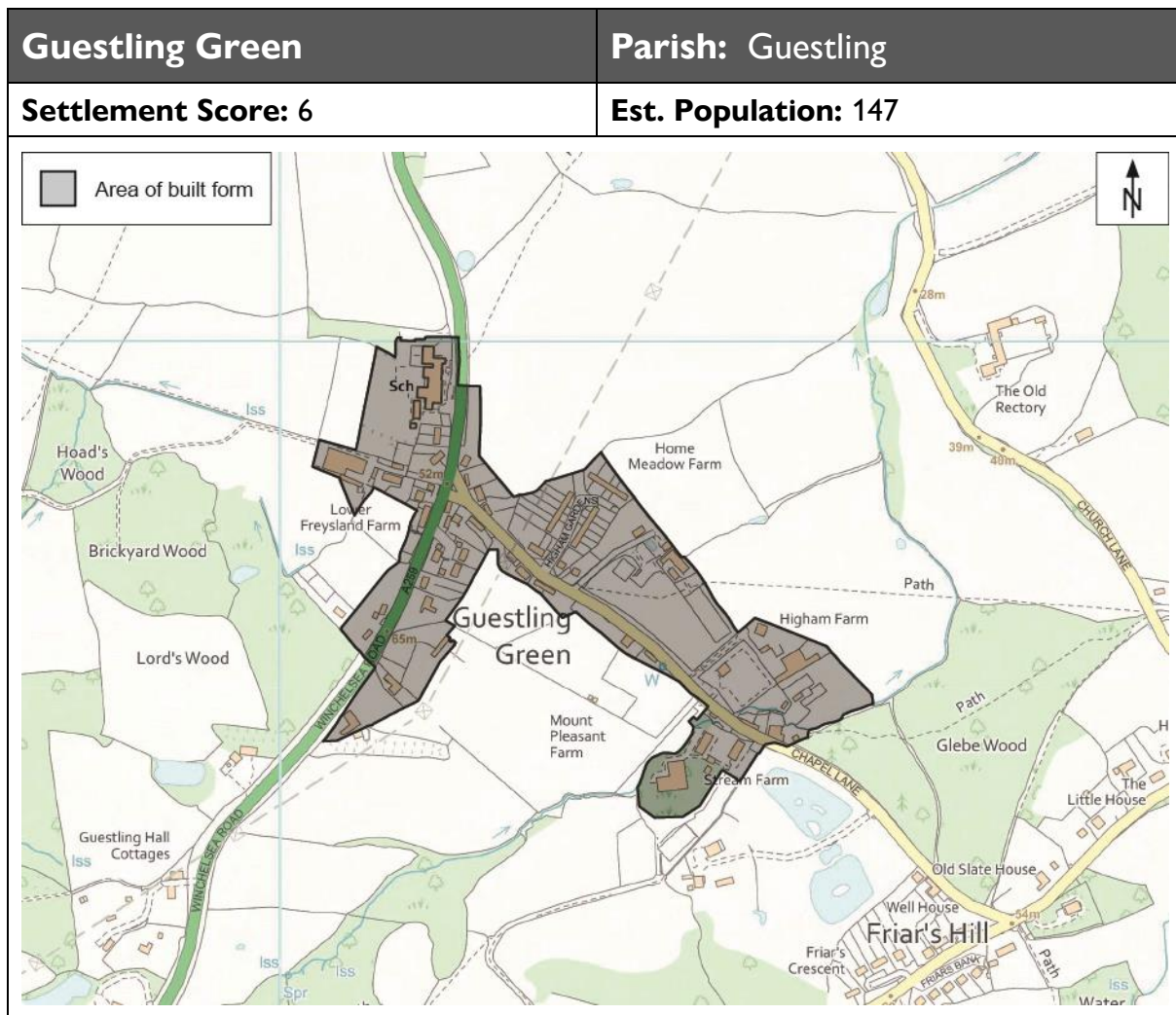
villages that are served by Hastings for other services and facilities in the development strategy, though the High Weald NL landscape limits development here. However, this review considers the settlement to be of low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its very small population and High Weald NL setting, it is unlikely that Friar's Hill's sustainability can be significantly improved. Providing additional services and facilities within Guestling Green or western Pett, which are within walking distance, could be the best option for improving sustainability within the settlement.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It is unlikely that any development in the vicinity of Friar's Hill would be appropriate. However, if there were to be any development, it would have to be small scale, sensitive development that is unlikely to be able to support further services and facilities within the settlement.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Guestling Green is a small settlement located within the parish of Guestling and centred around the junction of the A259 Winchelsea Road and Chapel Lane. The busy A259 serves to subdivide the settlement between east and west areas.

Guestling Green is located roughly 2.5km northeast of Ore Village and is some 5km from Hastings town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Guestling Green is an estimated 147, which is based on the number of dwellings, 67, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are 8 listed buildings within Guestling Green, with the majority clustered around the Winchelsea Road-Chapel Lane Junction, indicating that this has historically been an important meeting point. The parish of 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. This Norman church is the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Laurence and is outside of a settlement some 600m northeast of Guestling Green.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Guestling Green is in the High Weald National Landscape, and just within the southern boundary of the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area. The Brede Valley generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes. The landscape features scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald. It is also characterised by undulating countryside and wide vistas across the landscape. Guestling Green's surrounding landscape is generally exposed, with large open fields to the north, steeply sloping and prominent countryside to the south, while the area to the west of the settlement has a number of farm buildings and is rural in character. The Brede Valley is generally served by winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients. The south coast railway is an element of the landscape as it cuts across the southeast part of the valley.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Guestling Green as part of two landscape assessment areas either side of the main road.

GG1 – East of A259

This is an area of rolling countryside surrounding the main A259 and a hamlet at the junction with Chapel Lane. The farmland is of large rectangular fields surrounded by significant hedges and trees belts. There has been some apparent loss of historic field pattern. The area has some sense of place and some historic vernacular buildings. The settlement is of ribbon development radiating from road junction. It is a small settlement – historically probably supporting 6 -7 houses.

The landscape is of good quality and a high value AONB area. The area has a moderate-high character sensitivity to change and a high visual sensitivity. Any new development would need to be located close to existing development and avoid spreading into larger fields. The historic size of the settlement would limit potential to expand. The capacity to accept change in respect for new development is low. The potential for mitigation is low - there is scope to link up existing woodland, however the open character would not support extensive new planting in open meadows field boundaries.

GG2 – West of A259

These are west facing slopes down to Brede Valley. The area consists of large gardens, school grounds and fields. There are large fields and some loss of historic structure (hedgerows). The large modern farm buildings on the edge of the village detract from the setting. The settlement is of ribbon development radiating from road junction. It is a small settlement – historically probably supporting 6 -7 houses.

The landscape is of good quality and a high value AONB area. The area has a moderate character sensitivity to change and a moderate-high visual sensitivity. Development would be acceptable only close to the village edge and where it could be contained by woodland and existing built form. Development would not be acceptable not on the more open slopes to the west. The capacity to accept change in is low-moderate in respect new development.

The potential for mitigation is low – moderate, potentially with some scope to strengthen woodland structure on village edge linking with existing woods.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

In landscape terms, there is some scope for small scale development, including landscape buffer within the northern corner of the field to the south of Chapel Lane, with further limited potential to the north of Chapel Lane given the presence of man-made influences. Although open to long distance landscape views, due to the adjacent development, there may be some limited scope for small development close to existing residential development, southeast of Lower Fraysland Farm. Further up the A259 to the south, and immediately north of the Beefeater Pub, there may again be some potential for smaller scale development that retains the treed boundaries.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Guestling Green is wholly within the High Weald NL. There are adjacent areas of ancient and deciduous woodland to the southwest and the east of the settlement, with other parcels of ancient woodland to the south, while Guestling Wood is some 500m to the north east.

Guestling Green is generally unaffected by flooding, except for a column of land in the southeast of the settlement that corresponds to the path of a tertiary river through this part of the settlement.

As stated previously, there are 8 listed buildings within the settlement. Their rural setting would require consideration.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Guestling Green has a primary school, but no other essential services and its scores a 1.

Service Level

Beyond the primary school noted above, all of Guestling Green's identified services and facilities sit outside of the settlement and would require walking beside the busy A259. Examples of these include Guestling Village Hall and the Parish Church to the north. In terms of its service level, Guestling Green has minimal services and facilities, and it scores a 0.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Guestling Green's employment opportunities are minimal, being mostly limited to its very few services, and it scores a 0.

Public Transport

Guestling Green has two good bus services, the 100 and 101 Buses, which have connections to Rye and Hastings. The 100 and 101 have at least 10 services a day. Guestling is also served by the 347 Bus connecting Pett and Hastings, although its frequency is much more limited. The village's score of 4 for public transport is due to the location of Three Oaks train station, which is within a 2km radius of Guestling Green. There are no footways to connect to the train station however, and no bus services that go there, making it accessible only by private vehicle.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Guestling Green, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Guestling Green.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses**Settlement Strengths**

- Primary School, which serves a wider catchment area in the surrounding rural area
- Good bus services to Hastings and Rye
- Nearby Three Oaks train station

Settlement Weaknesses

- Minimal facilities and services, and the majority of these are outside of the settlement
- Minimal employment opportunities
- AONB landscape constraints limit development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Guestling Green is a small rural settlement, with good connectivity to Hastings. Despite having a primary school, there are practically no services and facilities within the village, making its residents dependent on traveling to nearby Hastings. Its score indicates that it has only low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

With its minimal overall service level, it is unlikely that Guestling Green's sustainability can be significantly improved, excepting the strength of its existing bus connections to Hastings and elsewhere.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There may be some limited scope for development within enclosed and previously developed sites north of Chapel Lane, although it is uncertain whether this would be enough to support further services and facilities within the village.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Guestling Thorn is a very small settlement, located around the junction of the A259 and North Lane, in the north of the parish some 1.6km to the north of Guestling Green. It is linear in form, wrapping around the bend in the A259. The village of Three Oaks is relatively close, being approximately 1km to the southwest along Butcher's Lane.

Hastings is approximately 5km to the southwest and Rye some 8.5km to the north east. Three Oaks train station is around 1.7km by road to the south west.

Housing and Population

The population of Guestling Thorn is approximately 57. This is based on the number of dwellings, 26, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are three listed buildings in the vicinity of the settlement, all of which are Grade II listed. Copshall Farmhouse and Copshall Barn, dating from the 17th and late 16th centuries respectively, are notable for their thatched roofs.

The parish of 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. This Norman church is the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Laurence and is some 1.4km to the south.

Landscape Character

Guestling Thorn is within the Brede Valley landscape character area. This part of the LCA is characterised by a sense of tranquillity away from the main settlements and Roads, wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley floodplain, well wooded slopes with scattered farmsteads and orchards and scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald.

The landscape immediately surrounding Guestling Thorn is not assessed in the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#), however LCA character area TO1, relating to Three Oaks some 1km to the south west, may offer some useful insights. It is summarised below.

TO1 – Maxfield Lane, Three Oaks

The area has some sense of place. It is a farmed landscape of enclosed fields surrounding houses. There is a sense of enclosure and small scale and remote character. It is heavily wooded with mature trees and hedges.

There has been some loss of field structure. The area is mainly modern ribbon development strung along country lanes and has probably grown up around the railway halt. Any older settlement is of scattered farms.

It has been defined as good-ordinary quality and of high AONB value. It has a moderate character sensitivity and a low visual sensitivity. It is determined as having a moderate capacity for housing change and low capacity for business development. Development would only be acceptable within the development boundary, but with some limited potential on more enclosed sites. The characteristic and historic development pattern should not be compromised. The potential for mitigation is moderate and there would be some scope to strengthen field boundaries and plant woodland to “join up” existing woods.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Guestling Thorn is within the High Weald NL. The land immediately surrounding the settlement is relatively unconstrained, however there are numerous parcels of Ancient Woodland slightly further out in all directions.

There are small areas around the local ponds and streams that are at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Guestling Thorn is a small, low-population settlement and the only essential service within walking distance is the Buckswood Secondary School. Therefore, the settlement scores a 1 for its essential services.

Service Level

The general level of services and facilities available to the settlement is very limited. Other than the secondary school mentioned above, the only other service or facility within walking distance is the Hollypark Organics natural food shop. The settlement scores a 0 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within Guestling Thorn itself are not available and there are no larger employment or industrial sites within a 2km radius. The settlement scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Public transport accessibility in Guestling Thorn is high. It has access to a good bus service, the 100, which runs from the Conquest Hospital in Hastings to Rye. It also has access to a train station in nearby Three Oaks, some 1.5km to the southwest. The settlement therefore scores a 4.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, which is defined as download speeds between 30Mb/s and 300Mb/s, is available in Guestling Thorn, giving the settlement a broadband score of 2.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	7

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Guestling Thorn.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High public transport accessibility • Superfast Broadband access
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small rural village – population less than 100 • Very limited services and facilities and employment opportunities • High Weald NL setting limits development options

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Guestling Thorn is a very small rural settlement. Considering its size its sustainability score appears quite high, although it is still only considered to have a low sustainability. This overall score is primarily based on its high scoring for access to public transport, which is predicted on having access to frequent bus services along the A259 and railway stations nearby. However, both railway stations are accessible only via the car, and ultimately the settlement is not as sustainable as its score might indicate. Its relative proximity to Hastings means that it could potentially be considered as part of a cluster of villages that are served

by Hastings for other services and facilities in the development strategy, though the High Weald NL landscape limits development here.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its very small population and High Weald NL setting, it is unlikely that Guestling Thorn's sustainability can be significantly improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

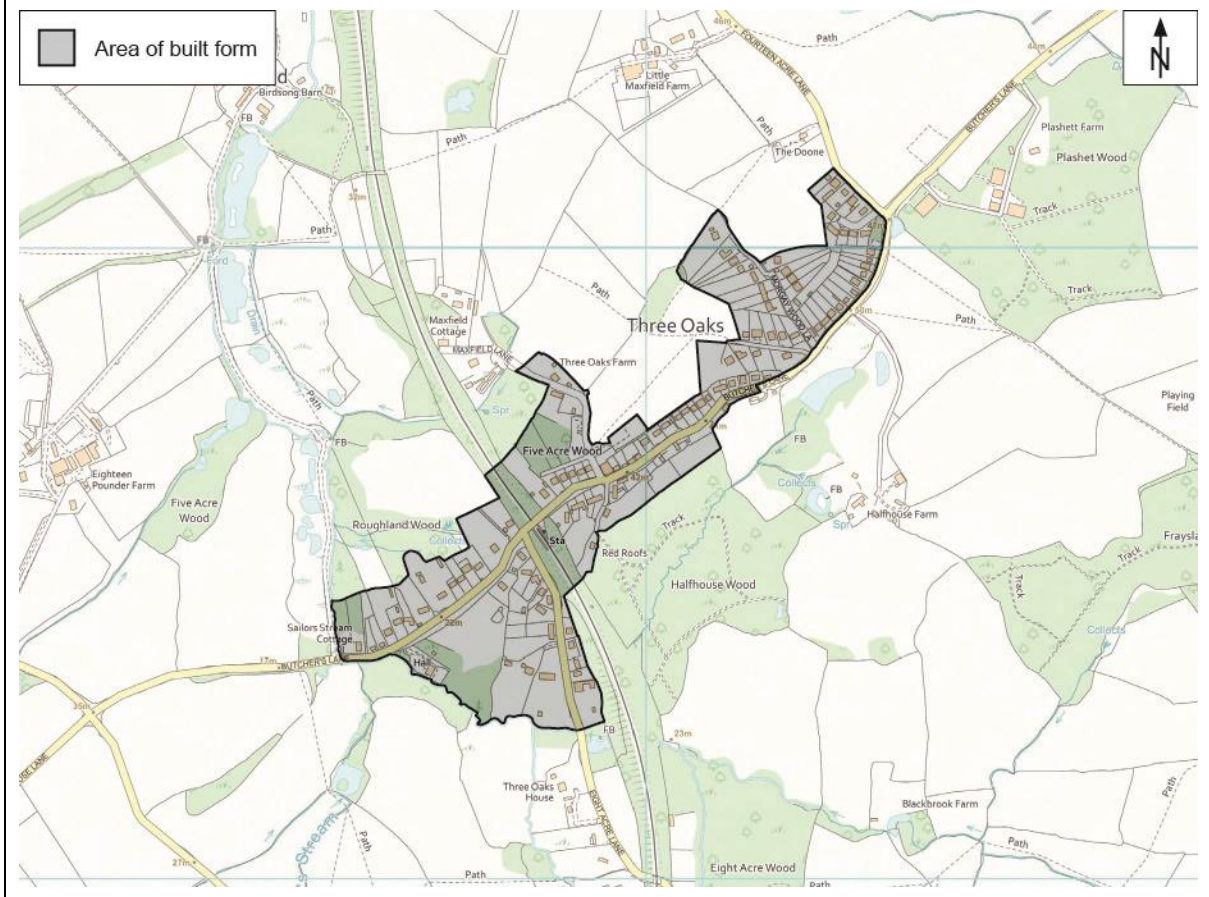
It is unlikely that any development in the vicinity of Guestling Thorn would be appropriate. However, if there were to be any development, it would have to be small scale, sensitive development that is unlikely to be able to support further services and facilities within the settlement.

Three Oaks

Parish: Guestling

Settlement Score: 5

Est. Population: 290

**Settlement Overview****Introduction**

Three Oaks is a small rural settlement of just under 300 people and is dissected by the Hastings to Rye railway, with a station within the village. It is principally linear in form with some of the buildings being of the same age as the railway. It is located approximately 2.km north from Ore Village, and some 4.7km northeast of Hastings town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Three Oaks is an estimated 290, which is based on the number of dwellings, 132, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Three Oaks train station was opened in 1907, being originally named Three Oaks Bridge Halt.

Development within Three Oaks is predominantly modern, with only two listed buildings within the settlement.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley LCA – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Three Oaks is within the High Weald NL and is within the southern half of the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area. The Brede Valley generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes. More local to Three Oaks, the landscape features scattered areas of semi natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald. The area is generally served by winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients. The south coast railway is an element of the landscape as it cuts across the southeast part of the valley.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Three Oaks in area TO1.

T01 – Three Oaks

The area has some sense of place. It is a farmed landscape of enclosed fields surrounding houses. There is a sense of enclosure and small scale and remote character. It is heavily wooded with mature trees and hedges. There has been some loss of field structure. The area is mainly modern ribbon development strung along country lanes and has probably grown up around the railway halt. Any older settlement is of scattered farms.

The landscape is of good-ordinary quality and a high value AONB area. The area has a moderate character sensitivity to change and a low visual sensitivity. The capacity for new development is identified to be moderate-low. It is commented that development would only be acceptable within the development boundary, but with some limited potential on more enclosed sites. The characteristic and historic development pattern should not be compromised. The capacity for mitigation is moderate, with some scope to strengthen field boundaries and plant woodland to “join up” existing woods.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

Of the three areas assessed within Three Oaks, none were identified as suitable for development. Open undeveloped sites either side of Butchers Lane were considered to be important for the rural character of the village, while the large area to the rear of the Three Oaks Pub is very open with long views.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Three Oaks is wholly within the AONB, and large areas of the settlement are bound by various parcels of ancient deciduous woodland which include areas covered by collective TPOs. The Local Wildlife Site Half House Wood & Eight Acre & Hulls Wood Ghyll bounds the settlement to the south, while a small section of the Romney Marsh Biodiversity Opportunity Area flanks the settlements western boundary. Good quality semi-improved grassland can also be found to the immediate west of the settlement. In general, Three Oaks does not sit within prominent topography, and it is often well screened by woodland.

The settlement itself is generally free from flood risk, although areas to the south and west are susceptible to surface water flooding due to the presence of watercourses that feed in to the Doleham Ditch and the Brede to the north.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Three Oaks has no essential services, and it scores 0.

Service Level

In terms of its service level, Three Oaks has only a Village Hall and a pub, and therefore scores a 0.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Three Oaks scores a 0 with minimal employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Three Oaks scores a 3 for its public transport provision on account of it having a train station, with services into Hastings town centre to the southwest, and to Rye and Ashford to the northeast. There are however no bus services, while train services themselves are generally less than one train an hour. Indeed, the roads connecting Three Oaks are narrow, especially to the west along Ivyhouse Lane. The narrowness of access severely limits the potential for larger vehicles, including buses, to gain effective access to the village.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Three Oaks, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Three Oaks.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train Station within settlement, that forms a stop along the Marsh Link with east-west connections • Proximity to Hastings – some 2.5km to the north
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No essential services • Minimal service level • Minimal employment opportunities • No bus services • Access from the west is via narrow country lanes.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

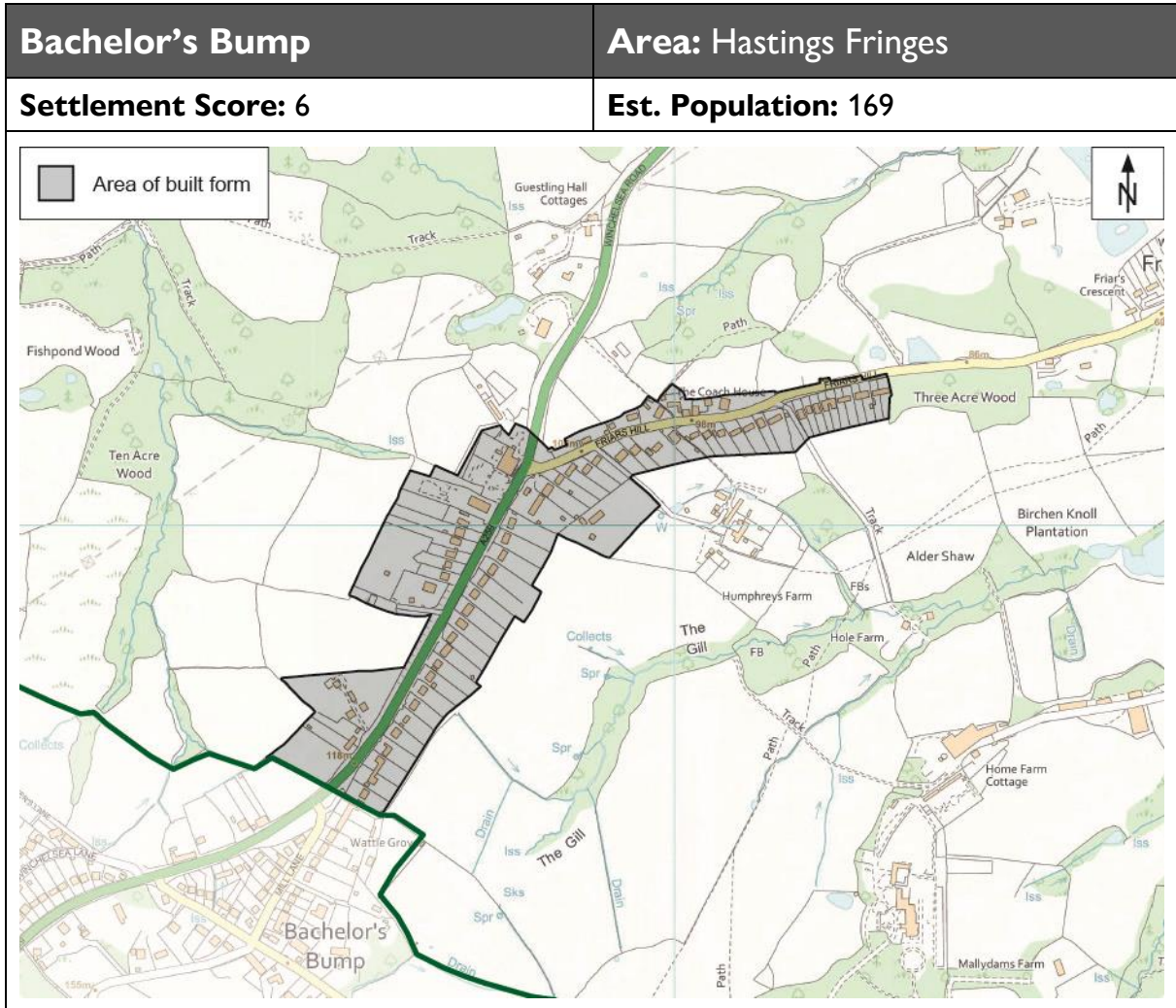
Three Oaks is a small rural settlement with minimal services and facilities, except for a pub and village hall, making its residents dependent on accessing Hastings and other settlements for their day-to-day requirements. Three Oaks could potentially form part of a cluster of villages that are connected to Hastings, insofar as it is nearby to Hastings and has a railway station. However, for the purposes of this Review, its score indicates that it is a settlement of low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

With its minimal overall service level, it is unlikely that Three Oaks' sustainability can be significantly improved through development. The introduction of bus services and/or the increase in frequency of train services would be of significant benefit to Three Oaks' residents' ability to access Hastings and other settlements via public transport; although the former may require widening of country lanes that access the village, which may not be feasible. The use of smaller buses as part of a local community bus network may provide Three Oaks with some bus access, including a radial connection to Hastings.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There may be some potential for limited development in some of the more enclosed sites within the village; which could assist in supporting the pub and village hall, while perhaps supporting a very small level of new services and facilities.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Bachelor's Bump is not a separate settlement but is a small Hastings Fringe area, that while part of and contiguous with the town of Hastings, is within the administrative area of Rother District Council. It consists of the final section residential ribbon development that stretches northeast out of Ore along the A259 and down Friars Hill and is therefore perhaps the remotest residential area of Hastings. The area of Ore Village, which has a range of services and facilities is not considered to be within easy walking distance from Bachelor's Bump, around 1 mile to the southwest, while Hastings town centre is roughly 4km to the southwest. The village of Guestling Green is closer at some 850m to the northwest.

Housing and Population

The population of Bachelor's Bump has an estimated population of 169, which is based on the number of dwellings, 77, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Bachelor's Bump consists almost entirely of 20th Century ribbon development, except for the White Heart Inn Pub, which is Grade II listed - probably dating back to the late 17th Century.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley & High Wealden Coast – East Sussex Landscape Character Areas

Bachelor's Bump is partially within the High Weald National Landscape, including all of the development fronting Friar's Hill; while it is otherwise wholly bound by the AONB except for its boarder where it adjoins Hastings along the A259. It sits atop a ridgeline extending northeast from Hastings, and effectively straddles the boundary between the Brede Valley LCA to the west and the High Wealden Coast LCA to the east, with far reaching views across the landscape in both directions.

The Brede Valley LCA is focussed on the broad valley of the River Brede with a flat valley floor that is enclosed by relatively steep slopes, while there are wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley floodplain. There are scattered areas of Semi natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald; while there are extensive areas of woodland around the valley head to the west. The High Wealden Coast is the area in which the Hastings to Battle Ridge reaches the sea, forming a distinctly unique coastline. Being inland, Bachelor's Bump faces the sheltered, but steep north side of the main ridge with its patchwork of fields and woods is typical of the High Weald landscape.

The main ridge running inland between Batchelor's Bump and Cliff End offers long views across the Brede Valley to the north and Winchelsea, Rye, Dungeness, and on a clear day the coast of France.

The Rother District Council Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment (2009) describes the landscape to the immediate west of Bachelor's Bump, facing into the Brede Valley as part of landscape area BB1:

BB1 – Batchelor's Bump

This is an area of farmland and gardens which fall away from the ridge. It is characterised by small fields enclosed by hedges. There is a wooded stream valley at the base of the slope.

There is ribbon development along the main A259 which consists predominantly of modern houses with large gardens. Gardens and paddocks create a buffer to the AONB countryside.

The landscape is of ordinary – good quality, and a high value AONB area with high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It has a 'low' capacity for further development. It is stated that there would be no capacity for development on the open slopes or away from the A259. Moderate ribbon development may be acceptable close to the road, however open long views out should be retained from the A259.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

As mentioned previously, Bachelor's Bump is either within or otherwise bound by the AONB. In addition, the southern half of the settlement area is within the Hastings Fringe Biodiversity Opportunity Area. There is an ancient and deciduous woodland shaw that bounds Bachelor's Bump to the west, and there are further off parcels of ancient woodland both to the east, west and north.

Given its ridgetop location, Bachelor's Bump is free from flooding related issues, although almost all of the settlement area is within the Fairlight and Pett Level Drainage Area, as designated by DaSA Policy DEN5(vii).

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Bachelor's Bump has no access (within 1km) to either a convenience store, a doctor's surgery, a primary school or a post office and therefore scores 0 for its access to essential services. The Ore Village Primary Academy is some 1,500m to the south, and Hastings Academy secondary school is just over 1km to the southeast – both within Ore. The nearest primary school however is Guestling Primary School, which is just over 1km to the northeast. The nearest convenience shopping (including Aldi supermarket), doctor's surgery and post office are within Ore Village to the southeast.

Service Level

At the further periphery of Hastings, Bachelor's Bump has almost no services and facilities, except for a pub, and two other small specialist businesses. A good range of services and facilities can be found in Ore Village, which being located over 1km to the southeast are considered to be outside of easy walking access.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are minimal employment opportunities available locally to residents of Bachelor's Bump. There are a number of businesses along the eastern end of the Ridge that are some 1.7km away, particularly within the Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate. Employment opportunities may otherwise exist in respect of the various services, facilities and shops within Ore Village. A far greater range of employment opportunities are found throughout Hastings as a whole, although access to other parts of the town would require some journey time. Given its remote location, Bachelor's Bump scores 0 for its access to employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Bachelor’s Bump has access to two good bus services (10+ buses per day) with connections to various locations within Hastings town, including the Conquest Hospital as well as to Rye. Three Oaks train station has been included within the scoring as it is within 2km of the settlement area to the north, however, it should be noted that it is outside of walking distance and has no bus service connections.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available within Bachelor’s Bump, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	6

Current development commitments

The development of 10 dwellings further north to the west of the A259 to the south of Bachelor’s Bump, as per RR/2018/2040/P and RR/2021/629/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential access (over 1km) to Ore Village, including a number of shops and services • Access to a good range of bus services, with a train station less than 2km away • Within wider Hastings settlement area

Settlement Weaknesses

- Almost complete absence of accessible service and facilities
- Ultimately remote from Hastings town centre, including its wider range of facilities and employment options
- Significant landscape constraints due to topography and position in respect of the AONB
- Minimal employment opportunities

Recommendations for the Local Plan

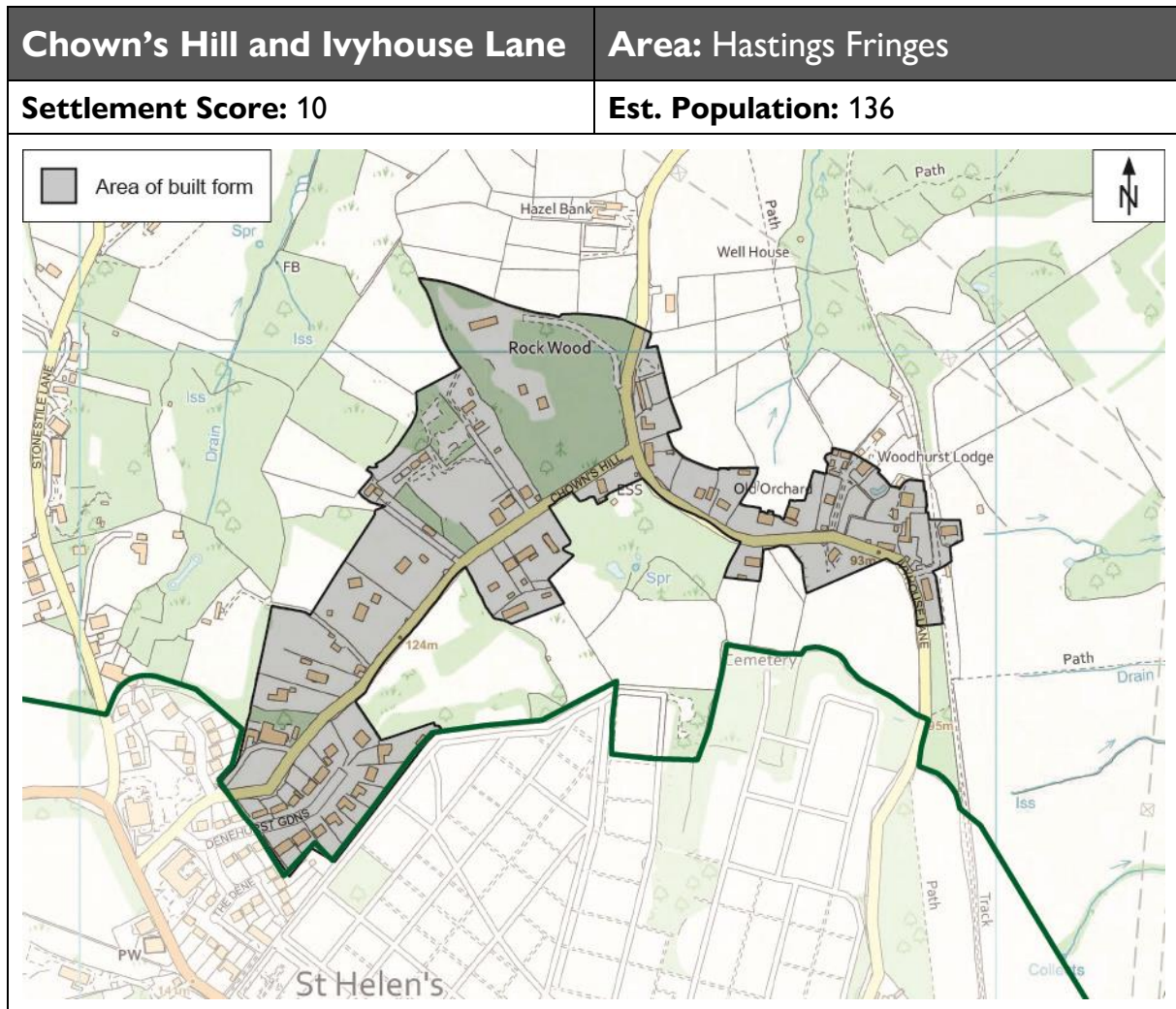
Bachelor's Bump is a remote Hastings Fringe area, with almost no services and facilities available locally. Bachelor's Bump is 1.4km northeast of Ore Village, so that that the latter's services are not considered to be easily accessible by walking, although it ultimately has wider bus connections across Hastings, which have access to a very good range of services. However, for the purposes of this Review, Bachelor's Bump has a low overall score and is considered to have low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Being on the far edge of Hastings makes Rock Lane and Austen Way beyond walking distance for almost all of the town, making access into areas such as Ore and the town centre dependent on the use of public transport and the car. While there are good bus services already, their overall improvement and frequency would increase accessibility to the wide range of services within Hastings. Given its peripheral location and small area population, it is difficult to see many opportunities to improve the locally available services and facilities.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There are very limited development opportunities in the immediate vicinity of Bachelor's Bump given its position in respect of the AONB, and the significant landscape constraints associated within being so topographically prominent. Limited further development opportunities linked with its peripheral location make it unlikely that additional services and facilities may come forward.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

This is an area of scattered residential ribbon development that extends north of the Ridge and Hastings Cemetery along the country lane of Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane into the landscape to the north of the town. It is therefore not a separate settlement but is a small Hastings Fringe area, that while part of and contiguous with the town of Hastings, is within the administrative area of Rother District Council.

Access to the Ridge along Chown's Hill is problematic, particularly for pedestrians as it is narrow and winding, while also having no pedestrian footway except for the stretch of road nearest the Ridge.

Housing and Population

The population of Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane has an estimated population of 136, which is based on the number of dwellings, 62, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane consists almost entirely of 20th Century ribbon development, and there are no listed buildings or heritage assets.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Being to the north of the Ridge, the low-density development of Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane is almost wholly within the High Weald National Landscape, as the lane slopes down to the town's surrounding landscape and into the Brede Valley. It also features some far reaching views to the north, given its initially high topographical position. The Brede Valley generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, with wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley floodplain. The landscape features scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald. The area is generally served by winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients. The south coast railway is an element of the landscape as it cuts across the southeast part of the valley.

The Rother District Council Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment (2009) describes the landscape of a small but indicative section of the Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane area as it slopes down north of the Ridge, as part of landscape area CH1:

CH1 – Hastings Ridge

This is an area of mixed heathy scrub and woodland, with a dominance of mature sycamore. There has been recent clearance of scrub and rhododendron. It is non-agricultural land surrounded by houses on Chown's Hill, gardens and the cemetery. The land is very steep. There is a strong sense of place.

The landscape is of ordinary quality, but a high value AONB area with high character sensitivity and moderate visual sensitivity. It has a 'low' capacity for further development. It is noted that the topography would be a constraint to high density housing, awhile it is observed that development should avoid the high crest of the site or potential adverse visual impact on the cemetery.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

As mentioned previously, Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane is almost wholly within the High Weald National Landscape, while it is entirely within the Hastings Fringe Biodiversity Opportunity Area. There is a parcel of ancient and deciduous woodland that bounds Chown's Hill to the north and between developed areas, and another parcel that bounds Ivyhouse Lane to the south. There are other areas of deciduous woodland that are within and bounding the settlement area, with woodland present in the area generally.

Given its raised and sloping topography, Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane is practically free from flooding related issues.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

In terms of essential services, Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane is within 1km of a convenience store (the SPAR on the ridge) adjacent to a petrol station, and a specialist school for pupil between year 3 to year 11 to the east. It should be noted however, as is mentioned in the introduction, that except for the area adjacent to the Ridge there is no

pedestrian footway access from the majority of Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane to these services, which are found along the Ridge.

With two essential services within a 1km radius, the settlement area scores a 2. While not within Walking Distance, the Conquest Hospital is relatively local.

Service Level

Overall, Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane has access to a very limited range of services and facilities. Beyond those mentioned above, the settlement area has 1km access to a Shell petrol station, a pub/restaurant (the Conquerors March), and Sandhurst Recreation Park containing a sports pitch, as well as a church and two retail-based businesses. Nearby along the Ridge is the Conquerors March, which functions as a pub and a restaurant. With so few facilities and services Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane here scores only 1.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are some employment opportunities available locally, most notably within the Ivyhouse Lane employment area which is a relatively short way to the east, accessed either by Ivyhouse Lane or the Ridge. Again, the majority of residents within the settlement area would only have access via private car, due to the lack of footways. Another potentially larger source of employment is the Conquest Hospital, which is roughly 1 mile to the west and accessed via the Ridge. Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane scores 2 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane has theoretical access to three good bus services (10+buses per day), with connections throughout parts of Hastings and as far as Tenterden, as well as a more infrequent service with connections to Rye. However, these buses are accessed along the Ridge, and footway access to these buses is not available to much of the settlement area.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available within Chown’s Hill and Ivyhouse Lane, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	10

Current development commitments

Land north of A265, Ivyhouse Lane, Hastings is allocated as part of DaSA Policy HAS3 for 1,800sqm of employment floorspace. There are currently no planning applications for this site.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within wider Hastings settlement area • Is within 1km of two essential services on the Ridge • Some employment opportunity given the proximity of Ivyhouse Lane employment area and the Conquest Hospital • Areas adjacent to the Ridge have access to three good bus services
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of footways, and winding, narrow nature of Chown’s Hill, mean that pedestrian access to the Ridge is severely restricted • Very limited local services and facilities • Ultimately remote from Hastings town centre, including its wider range of facilities and employment options

- Significant landscape constraints due to topography and position in respect of the AONB

Recommendations for the Local Plan

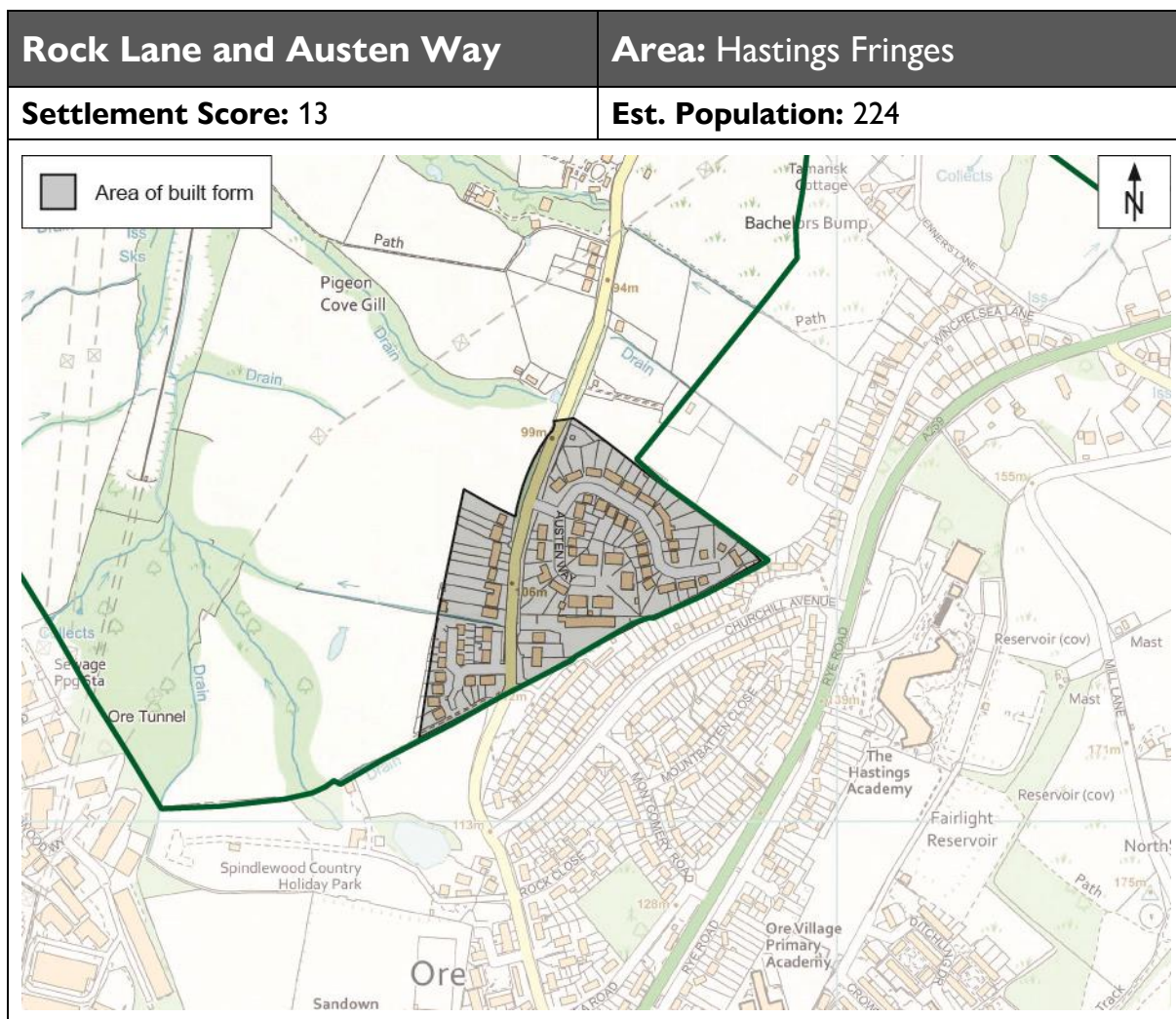
Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane is for the most part a remote and rural Hastings Fringe area, with very few accessible services and facilities available, which is partly due to the lack of footways within the majority of the settlement area. This also impacts on the accessibility of the good range of bus services that are available along the ridge. While being within the Hastings area ultimately means proximity to an excellent range of services and facilities, this is the least sustainable of the Hastings Fringe settlements due to the lack of necessary footway access and a limited scope for development.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

With its strongly peripheral location, and its lack of footway access, Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane are beyond walking distance for almost all of the town, making access into areas such the town centre dependent on the use of public transport and the car. An extension of the footways along Chown's Hill would enable access to good bus services along the ridge and facilitate walking access to local services. However, the winding and narrow aspect of Chown's Hill may not physically allow for an extension of the footways along its whole length, while this would be very costly to achieve given the length of the lane that is without footway. Moreover, given its peripheral location and small area population, it is difficult to see many opportunities to improve the locally available services and facilities.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There are very limited development opportunities in the immediate vicinity of Chown's Hill and Ivyhouse Lane given its position in respect of the AONB, and the significant landscape constraints associated within being so topographically prominent. Limited further development opportunities linked with its peripheral location make it unlikely that additional services and facilities may come forward.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Rock Lane and Austin Way is not a separate settlement but is a Hastings Fringe area, that while part of and contiguous with the town of Hastings, is within the administrative area of Rother District Council. The area of Ore Village, which has a range of services and facilities is some 500m to the south and within easy walking distance, while Hastings town centre is some 2.5km to the southwest although Hastings Old Town is potentially closer at just over a mile to the south.

Though a part of Hastings, Rock Lane itself quickly becomes a rural narrow lane, and the area of built form is bound to the north and west by the High Weald NL, with the area to the west of Rock Lane forming open countryside that functions as a transition between the urban built-up edge of Hastings and the wider High Weald landscape.

Housing and Population

The population of Rock Lane and Austen Way has an estimated population of 224, which is based on the number of dwellings, 108, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Rock Lane and Austen Way effectively forms a modern residential extension to Hastings and has no listed buildings or other heritage assets within its boundary. This is also true of the surrounding urban areas to the south and the east.

Ore village to the south originates as of the early 19th Century, from when Hastings began to expand as a fashionable Victorian seaside resort – with Ore developing as a housing area for building labourers involved in the construction of the growing town.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Rock Lane and Austen Way are wholly developed, however the undeveloped areas that surround it are within the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area. The Brede Valley generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, with wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley floodplain.

The landscape features scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald. The area is generally served by winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients. The south coast railway is an element of the landscape as it cuts across the southeast part of the valley.

The Rother District Council Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment (2009) describes and assesses the landscape to the immediate north of Rock Lane and Austen Way as part of landscape area BB1, which covers a topographically prominent the area to west of the A259 and associated ribbon development atop a high ridge that moves northeast of Hastings.

BB1 – Batchelor’s Bump

This is an area of farmland and gardens which fall away from the ridge. It is characterised by small fields enclosed by hedges. There is a wooded stream valley at the base of the slope.

There is ribbon development along the main A259 which consists predominantly of modern houses with large gardens. Gardens and paddocks create a buffer to the AONB countryside.

The landscape is of ordinary – good quality, and a high value AONB area with high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It has a ‘low’ capacity for further development. It is stated that there would be no capacity for development on the open slopes or away from the A259. Moderate ribbon development may be acceptable close to the road, however open long views out should be retained from the A259.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

An enclosed field to the immediate north Austen Way may have some potential, although development would need to be in keeping with residential development at Austen Way, while the existing tree belt would need to be retained, and a further landscape buffer created to the east.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The undeveloped edges to the north and west of Rock Lane and Austen Way are immediately in the High Weald NL, while the entire settlement is within the Hastings Fringe Biodiversity Opportunity Area. To the northwestern boundary of Rock lane is an intervening series of trees that are covered by a collective Tree Preservation Order. There are parcels of ancient woodland to the west, as well as a larger area of deciduous woodland.

Certain areas of the roads are lightly susceptible to surface water flooding, but otherwise the area is free from flood risk.

The undeveloped area to the west of Rock Lane is within the Rock Lane Urban Fringe Management Area as designated in the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan under Policy HAS4, which is recognised for its role as a buffer between the urban edge of Hastings and the wider AONB landscape.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Rock Lane and Austen Way has access to at least one of each essential service, with two primary schools, a doctor's surgery on Fairlight Road, and a post office. It is very close to an Aldi Supermarket at the top of Ore Village, as well a Co-op of over 200sqm of retail space, as well as 6 other convenience stores. Although it is not counted as an essential service, it is notable that there is the Hastings Academy secondary school less than 200m to the east.

Service Level

Being located close to Ore Village means that Rock Lane and Austen Way has a good array of local services and facilities in addition to the essential services identified above. Notable services that are considered accessible include, two pharmacies, a community centre a greengrocer and a bakery. Despite its very good range of essential services, Rock Lane and Austen Way scores 2 for its range of services and facilities. Outside of this score, Rock Lane

and Austen Way also benefit from being within reasonable proximity of the wider services and facilities within the wider Hastings town. Despite its proximity to the AONB countryside, which is accessible both to the west of Rock Lane, and the nearby Hastings County Park, there is an absence of recreation and sports pitches, while there are also no park areas or children's play areas.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are a number of businesses along the eastern end of the Ridge that are accessible to Rock Lane and Austen Way, particularly within the Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate. Employment opportunities may otherwise exist in respect of the various services, facilities and shops within Ore Village. A far greater range of employment opportunities are found throughout Hastings as a whole, although access to other parts of the town would require some journey time. Given its peripheral position to the town, Rock Lane and Austen Way scores 2 for its access to employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Rock Lane and Austen Way has 6 good bus services (each with 10+ buses per day); with a range of connections, including to wider Hastings town, the Conquest Hospital and Rye. There are also town less frequent services, including to nearby Pett Village. While there is an Ore train station, this is some distance to the southeast of Ore Village and is therefore too distant to be included as part of the scoring. Overall, Rock Lane and Austen Way score 3 for its public transport provision.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available within Rock Lane and Austen Way, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	13

Current development commitments

The development of 10 dwellings further north to the west of the A259 at Bachelor's Bump, as per RR/2018/2040/P and RR/2021/629/P.

Land north of A265, Ivyhouse Lane, Hastings is allocated as part of DaSA Policy HAS3 for 1,800sqm of employment floorspace. There are currently no planning applications for this site.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the Ore Village community, including a number of shops and services • The area provides a full range of essential services, including Aldi supermarket and secondary school • Access to a good range of bus services • Within wider Hastings settlement area • Local to the Ivyhouse Lane employment area
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially remote from Hastings town centre, including its wider range of facilities and employment options • Limited opportunity for further development given the immediate location of the AONB, as well as landscape constraints generally. • Ore train station is too distant to be considered accessible. • Lack of sports and recreation pitches.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Rock Lane and Austen Way are a Hastings Fringe area, while being located near to Ore Village District Centre with its local concentration of services and facilities, as designated in the Development Plan for Hastings Borough Council. This combined with its relative proximity and access to Hastings itself makes Rock Lane and Austen Way one of the most sustainable locations within the district.

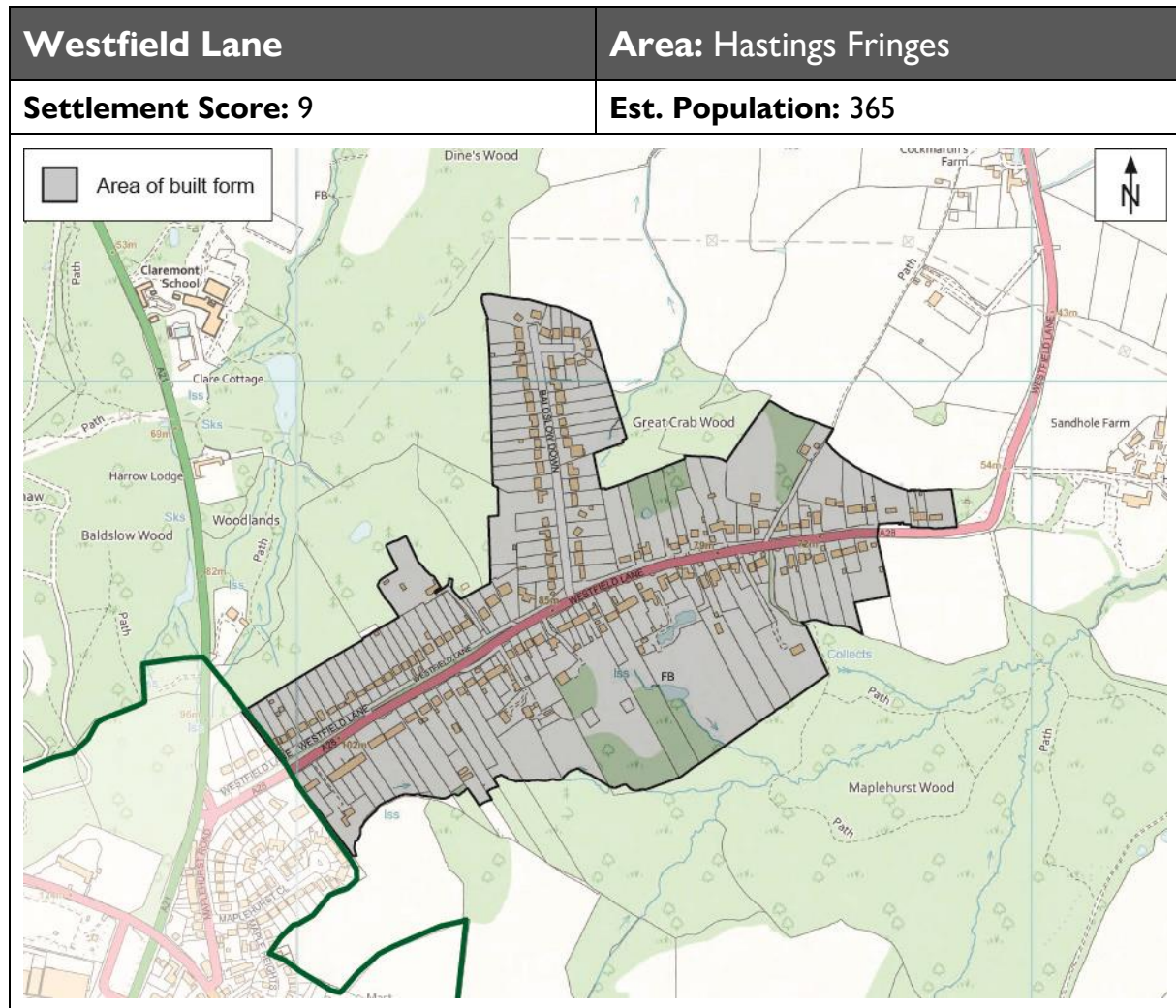
Opportunities to improve sustainability

Being on the edge of Hastings makes Rock Lane and Austen Way beyond walking distance for much of the town, making access into areas such as the town centre dependent on the use of public transport and the car. While there are good bus services already, their overall improvement and frequency would always be of benefit. Unfortunately, Ore Train Station is not within easy walking distance, although the buses are perhaps having the most potential as a means of public transport within Hastings.

The exiting policy HAS4: Rock Lane Urban Fringe Management Area, seeks to retain and improve the open landscape of the area of land to the west of Rock Lane, while increasing its accessibility and recreational function. This area is identified as an important resource of for the local urban community in this sense, and the policy should be carried forward as part of the new Local Plan.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Development opportunities in the immediate vicinity of Rock Lane and Austen Way maybe limited as it is bound by the north and west by the AONB, while the Rock Lane Urban Fringe Management Area also bounds Rock Lane to the west. Any additional local population may help to maintain some of the existing services within Ore Village, including doctor's surgery, the post office as well as other shops and businesses.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Westfield Lane is an area of residential ribbon development along Westfield Lane and Baldslow Down, that is joined to but effectively extends out into the countryside to the north of Hastings. It is not a separate settlement but is a small Hastings Fringe area, that while part of and contiguous with the town of Hastings, is within the administrative area of Rother District Council. It is connected to the Ridge and the rest of the town via Maplehurst Road and the A21.

Housing and Population

Westfield Lane has an estimated population of 365, which is based on the number of dwellings, 152, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.4 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Westfield Lane consists almost entirely of 20th Century ribbon development, and there are no listed buildings or heritage assets.

Landscape Character

Hastings and Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

As a spur of ribbon development extending into the countryside Westfield Lane is wholly within the High Weald National Landscape, except for the small area where it is contiguous with Hastings urban area. The development along Westfield Lane and Baldslow Down consists of detached 20th Century development along either side. At the same time, the settlement area has more a semi-urban than suburban character, due to the low-density nature of the houses, front garden hedges, as well as an intervening line of trees and hedgerow that forms the northern edge of Westfield Lane; while there are also occasional glimpses of the countryside beyond.

The settlement area of Westfield Lane is effectively surrounded by the Brede Valley LCA, and any outward development would likely encroach into this landscape area. The Brede Valley generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, with wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley floodplain. The landscape features scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald. The area is generally served by winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients.

The Rother District Council Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment (2009) describes and assesses the landscape within the boundary of the Westfield Lane settlement area, as part of landscape area WL1.

WL1 – Westfield Lane south and north

This is an area of large houses in large garden settings. There are mature feature trees as remnant woodland. The area has some sense of place, although a key detractor is the busy A28.

The area is ribbon development along the A28. It is high quality suburban Arcadia with large gardens and established trees. The long gardens and associated vegetation, notably mature trees and woodland do act as a buffer to the surrounding AONB countryside.

The landscape is of good-high quality, and a high value area that functions as a buffer to the surrounding AONB landscape, for which the mature trees in the landscaped gardens are important. At the same time, it has a moderate character sensitivity and a low visual sensitivity. Overall, the capacity to accept change is moderate. The Arcadian character would be sensitive to intensive development. Proposed development would need to retain a buffer to the ancient woodland. Development potential is limited due to the many significant, mature trees in gardens and on the boundaries. There would be some capacity but not beyond the enclosing woodland framework and not encroaching into open green fields and countryside.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

While being effectively bound by the AONB, much of Westfield Lane is also bound by large areas of ancient and deciduous woodland, including Maplehurst Wood along the southern boundary and Baldslow Wood to the northwest, with further areas of ancient and deciduous woodland bounding the settlement area to the north east. Maplehurst Wood, which bounds the settlement along most of its southern border and extending to the east, is also a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). A number of the larger residential curtilages to the south of Westfield Lane also contain extensions of Maplehurst Wood, including encroaching areas of ancient deciduous woodland and other Priority Habitat. Across the A21 to the west is Local Wildlife Site Beauport Park. As within the area covered

by the AONB, the entire settlement area is bound by the Hastings Fringe Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

There are patches that to varying degrees are susceptible to surface water flooding, predominantly in garden areas to the north of Westfield Lane. These areas are consistent with the presence of several watercourses that pass through the settlement area.

Encroaching a small area of the settlement area is a Waste and Minerals Consultation Area, and slightly further to the east is the Hole Farm Waste and Minerals Safeguarded Site.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

In terms of essential services, the population weighted centre of Westfield Lane is within 1km of two convenience stores on the Ridge and Baldslow Post Office. With two types of essential service Westfield Lane scores 2. Though not included within the scoring, western areas of Westfield Lane are within 1km of the Sainsbury's supermarket off of Sedlescombe Road North to the southeast.

Service Level

Other than the essential services noted above, Westfield Lane has access only to a very limited range of services (at least in terms of its population weighted centre). Closest of these is the Harrow pub at the top of Maplehurst road, which is adjacent to Annant Convenience Store. Westfield Lane scores only 1 for its range of services and facilities. Though not included within the scoring, western areas of Westfield Lane are also within 1km of two petrol stations, a McDonalds and the Windmill pub/restaurant.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Westfield Lane is itself wholly residential, and therefore it has effectively no employment opportunities within itself. There are however some employment opportunities local to Westfield Lane, and it scores 1. These include potential employment opportunities relatively nearby however, including at the Conquest Hospital, Ark Helenswood Academy and the Sainsbury's supermarket. There is also a small industrial area opposite Whitworth Road, which is less than a kilometre to the southwest.

Public Transport

Westfield Lane has access to 4 bus services, one of which is a good bus service (10+ buses per day) with connections between Hastings town centre and Tenterden. Other less frequent bus connections include rural locations such as Rye, Battle and Mountfield. With one 'good' bus service, Westfield Lane scores 3 for its public transport access.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available within Westfield Lane, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	9

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Westfield Lane.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within wider Hastings settlement area • Within 1km of two types of essential service • Relatively close to Sainsbury’s supermarket and Conquest Hospital • Access to a good bus service (10+ per day) with services into Hastings • There may be some scope for windfall development within the larger curtilages along Westfield Road
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimately remote from Hastings town centre, including its wider range of facilities and employment options • Limited services and facilities • Isolated from the remainder of Hastings - connected only via Maplehurst Road and the A21 • Significant constraints as the majority of the area is bounded by ancient woodland, including a SSSI. It is also wholly within the AONB, with some areas being topographically exposed.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

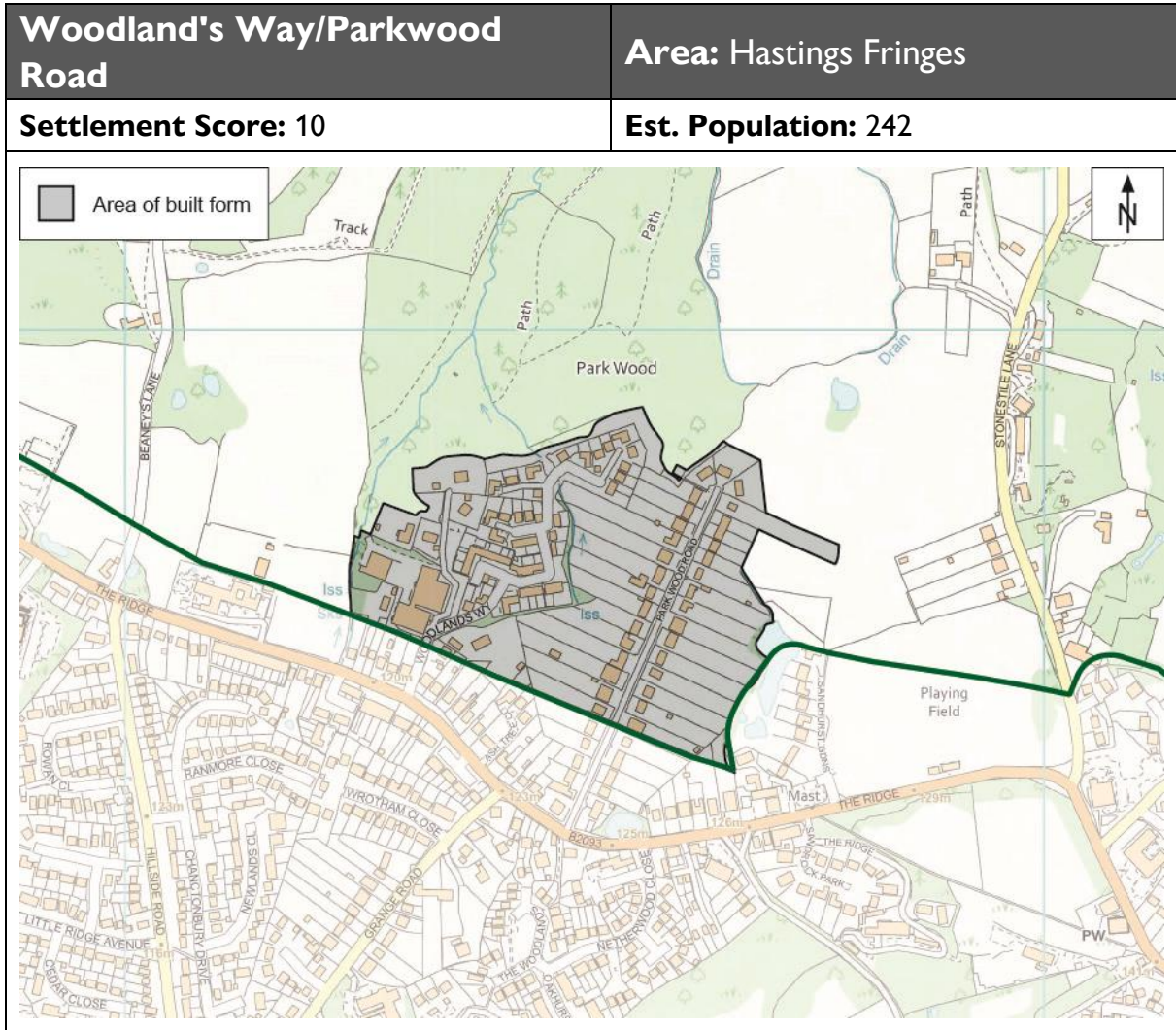
Westfield Lane is for the most part a rural Hastings Fringe area, with few accessible services and facilities, which is partly due to its position within the countryside to the north of Hastings. There is generally good footway coverage, except for the eastern end north of the A28. At the same time however, being within the Hastings area ultimately represents an excellent potential range of services and facilities. For the purposes of this Review, the settlement area is considered to be potentially sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

With its peripheral location, Westfield Lane is beyond walking distance for almost all of the town, making access into areas such the town centre dependent on the use of public transport and the car. While there are good bus services already, their overall improvement and frequency would always be of benefit. Moreover, given its remote location within the context of the town, and small area population, it is difficult to see many opportunities to improve the locally available services and facilities.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There are very limited development opportunities in the immediate vicinity of Westfield Lane given its position in respect of the AONB, and the significant environmental constraints associated with being bound by ancient woodland and the Maplehurst Wood SSSI. At the same time, the large size of many curtilages within the settlement areas suggests that there could be some potential for rear garden development, although consideration of ancient woodland and the SSSI would be required, including a 15m buffer. Limited further development opportunities, linked with its peripheral location, make it unlikely that additional services and facilities may come forward.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road is not a separate settlement but is a small Hastings Fringe area, that while part of and contiguous with the town of Hastings, is within the administrative area of Rother District Council. This is an area of modern residential development that extends north of the Ridge and Hastings before butting up to Park Wood to the north.

As it is titled, Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road consists of two distinct developments; with a series of large 20th Century dwellings along either side of Parkwood Road, and to the

west a recent development known as Woodland's Way while also containing the Michael Tyler Furniture workshop.

Housing and Population

The population of Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road has an estimated population of 242, which is based on the number of dwellings, 101, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.4 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road consists entirely of modern development and there are no listed buildings or heritage assets.

Landscape Character

Hastings and Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road is contiguous with the wider Hastings urban area to the south along the Ridge, while it is bound by the High Weald NL to the north, west and northeast, with a small section within the AONB to the north west. With its ridgetop situation, the settlement area straddles both the Hastings and the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area. The majority of Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road is within the Hastings Urban Landscape Area.

Hastings town is well connected to the surrounding countryside where it includes networks of woodland and green open space. Sandhurst Recreation Park which is adjacent to the east of Woodland's Way is a green space that forms the northern end of a green network that makes its way to St Helen's Woods near the centre of the town. The northern end of Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road is within the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area. The Brede Valley generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River

Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, with wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley floodplain.

The landscape features scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald. The area is generally served by winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

As mentioned previously, Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road is bound by the High Weald National Landscape to the north, with a small section within the AONB, while it is almost entirely within the Hastings Fringe Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The settlement area is bound by a large area of ancient deciduous woodland known as Park Wood across the northern boundary. There is also a significant area of trees within the settlement area between Woodlands Way and Parkwood Road which is identified as Priority Habitat.

There are large areas within the settlement area that are susceptible to surface water flooding, albeit the majority of these areas at a low annual probability of 0.1% annually. There are also three watercourses that are present within the settlement area, which flow north into gills within Park Wood – these watercourses are therefore vulnerable to changes in water quality.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

In terms of essential services, Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road is within 1km of a convenience store (the SPAR on the ridge) adjacent to a petrol station, and a secondary school (Ark Helenswood Academy). It is also within walking distance of the Conquest Hospital to the west, although this is not counted as an essential service.

Service Level

In addition to the services mentioned above, there is the adjacent Sandhurst Recreation Park, which functions as sports pitches and public park area. There is also an adjacent petrol station, while Helenswood Sports Centre is around 800m to the west. Some half a kilometre to the east along the Ridge is the Conquerors March, which functions as a pub and a restaurant. The scoring includes two cafés, however these are located within the hospital and Kings Church.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are some employment opportunities available locally, most notably within the Ivyhouse Lane employment area, which is within the Employment Sites Review Background Paper, and less than 2km to the east. Overall, the settlement area scores a 2. It is also worth considering that the relatively nearby Conquest Hospital, Helenswood Ark Academy may provide further employment opportunities. Otherwise, the settlement area, while peripheral to Hastings, is generally well connected to the remainder of the town by bus connections.

Public Transport

Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road has access to three good bus services (10+buses per day), with connections throughout parts of Hastings and as far as Tenterden, as well as a more infrequent service with connections to Rye. The settlement area scores 3 points for its access to public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available within Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	10

Current development commitments

Land north of A265, Ivyhouse Lane, Hastings is allocated as part of DaSA Policy HAS3 for 1,800sqm of employment floorspace. There are currently no planning applications for this site.

The land currently occupied by Michael Tyler Furniture, Woodlands Way, Hastings is allocated for 40 dwellings as part of DaSA Policy HAS2.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within wider Hastings settlement area • Two essential services, a convenience store and secondary school, are available on the Ridge • Some employment opportunity given the proximity of Ivyhouse Lane employment area • Three good (10+ each) bus services • The Conquest Hospital is within walking distance
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited local services and facilities • Ultimately remote from Hastings town centre, including its wider range of facilities and employment options • Significant landscape constraints due to topography and position in respect of the AONB

Recommendations for the Local Plan

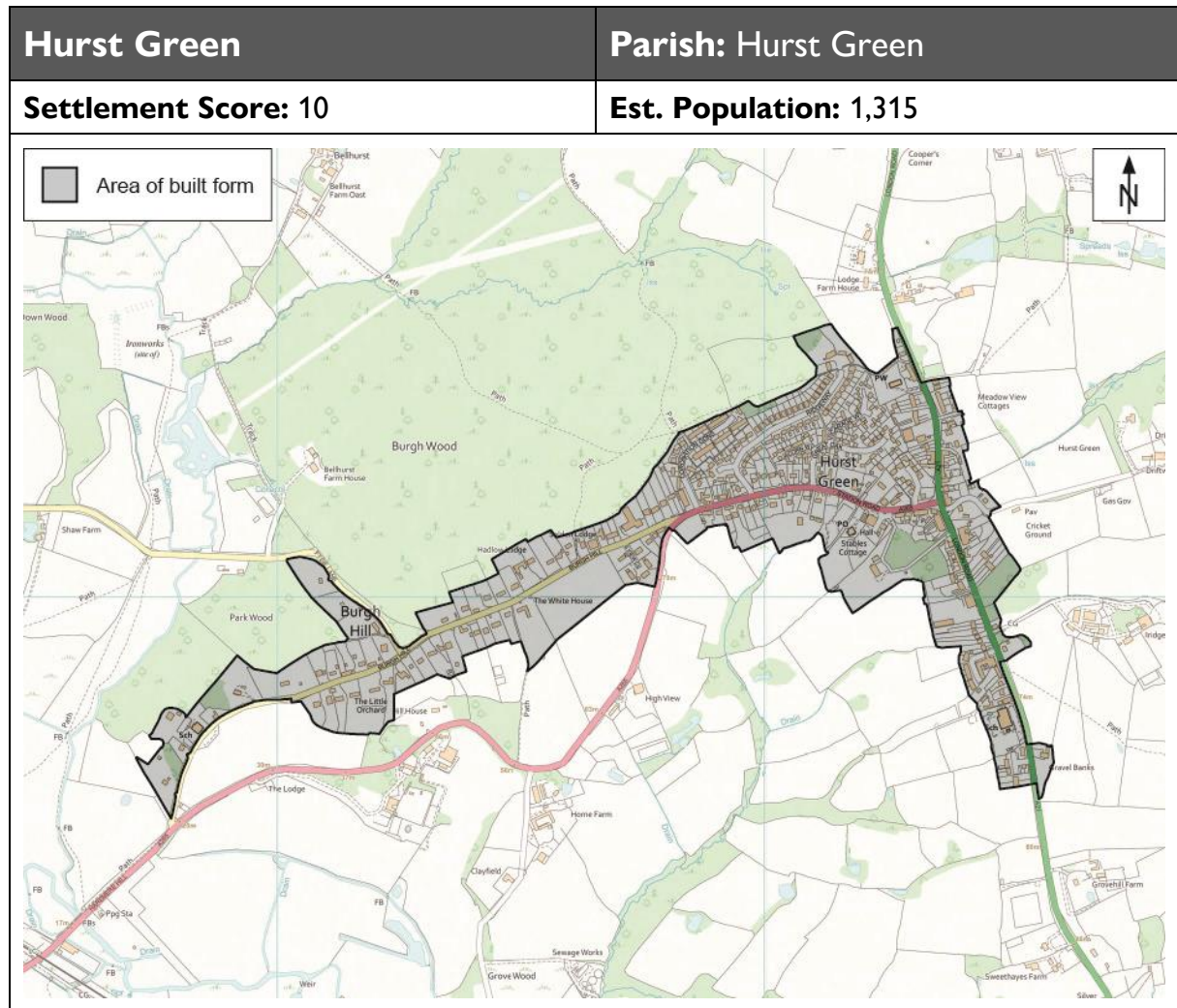
Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road is a Hastings Fringe area, with generally limited range of services and facilities available. It does, however, have access to two essential services, including a secondary school. It is also near to the Conquest Hospital, and benefits from good bus services that have access across Hastings, making this a relatively sustainable location within the district. In terms of this Review, the settlement area scores reasonably well and is considered to be potentially sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its peripheral location, Woodland's Way and Parkwood Road are beyond walking distance for almost all of the town beyond the Ridge, making access into areas such the town centre dependent on the use of public transport and the car. While there are good bus services already, their overall improvement and frequency would always be of benefit.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There is little scope for new facilities and services, despite their relative deficit, due to the lack of developable space. This is a result of the proximity of the AONB and ancient woodland to the north, and the already developed nature of the land bounding the settlement area to the south, east and west. It may be possible that any increase in the number of residents locally could better support the existing range of facilities and services, including potentially their improvement.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Hurst Green is one of the larger villages in Rother and is centred on the convergence of the A21 trunk road and the A265, which constitutes the village’s historic core of 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, which is a ribbon form of development of mature dwellings which extends some way out of the village. Burgh Hill is within the parish of Etchingham but is contiguous with Hurst Green. 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.

Hurst Green is situated upon the broad road transport corridor that connects London to the Sussex Coastal towns of Hastings and Bexhill, while the A265 and A229 also connect the village to the road network on an east-west axis. 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. 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.

Hurst Green is situated around 4.5km from Flimwell and 3.5km from Robertsbridge, which are located to the north and south respectively along the A21. Hurst Green is effectively equidistant between the town centres of Hastings to the southeast and Tunbridge Wells to the north west, both being some 19km distant from the village.

Housing and Population

The population of Hurst Green is an estimated 1,315, which is based on the number of dwellings, 526, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling. Hurst Green, when combined with Burgh Hill, has a total population of 1,388.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Hurst Green, prior to the Norman Conquest was part of the parish of Salehurst. It has been estimated that the nearby area of Burgh Hill may have been the location of an Anglo Saxon fort built by Alfred the Great, as an elevated defensive position against Viking longboats, which would have been able to navigate the Rother Valley at this time. Indeed, the Wealden iron industry dating back to the Roman period was centred around the settlement, with the settlement with goods transported along the Rother from Stonegate, through Etchingham and Robertsbridge. The area was known to be frequented by smugglers, in particular those associated with the notorious Hawkhurst Gang; with one of the smugglers - George Chapman - being gibbeted within Hurst Green in 1740. The village's position on the A21, linking it to London and the southern coastal towns, has been central to its growth during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Hurst Green contains 26 listed buildings, with the majority of these concentrated adjacent to the main north-south and east-west routeways. In addition, near to the southwest of the village is the Grade 1 listed Haremere Hall, which dates back to the early 17th Century, and was once home to James Temple who was one of the judges at the trial of King Charles I.

Landscape Character

Hurst Green is situated atop a north-south ridge, with the River Rother winding its way to the west of the village south towards Robertsbridge. With its ridgetop position, Hurst Green forms part of the eastern boundary of the Upper Rother Valley Landscape Character Area.

Upper Rother Valley LCA

The landscape has stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges and a relatively open valley floor with small, winding, partly tree lined rivers. The area also features a strong pattern of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods on the valley slopes. This area contains larger settlements on the high ground including Mayfield to the west, Wadhurst and Ticehurst to the north, Hurst Green to the east and Burwash to the south. The landscape hosts the Hastings to Tunbridge Wells railway, which follows the valley from Robertsbridge through to Wadhurst. The landscape is comprised of a network of winding, sunken lanes with scattered settlements and dwellings. This is a largely unspoilt rural landscape with few intrusive features, it is generally in good condition with farmland and a strong historic structure.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of three areas 'HG1', 'HG2' and 'HG3', which are summarised below:

HG1 – East of the A21

Much of this landscape is comprised of enclosed paddocks close to the village edge. There are locally distinctive features including white weather boarded houses which are set back

from the road in long gardens. The main detractor to the area is the traffic on the A21 which severs the village west from east.

Well treed hedgerows and tree belts enclose parts of the built development from the wider countryside. Good quality farmland extends beyond the village boundaries.

The landscape is of good quality and a high value AONB area, with moderate character sensitivity and a moderate to low visual sensitivity. The area has moderate capacity to accept residential development and business development where this is close to the A21. It is commented that some development would be acceptable close to built-up area and in character with existing development, but not encroaching open countryside to the east. There is moderate potential for mitigation and there could be some scope to strengthen planted edge to the countryside. Mitigation measure could replace lost tree belts and use planting to strengthen the village edge.

HG2 South of Station Road

This area is characterised by open slopes falling away from the edge of the village to the south. There are locally distinctive features including white weather boarded houses and vernacular buildings along Station Road. Treed hedgerows, parkland trees and tree belts enclose parts of the built development from the wider countryside. Good quality farmland extends beyond the village boundaries. The rural fringe is less well managed near the village with some urban fringe influences in places.

The landscape good quality and a high value AONB area, with a low character sensitivity and a moderate visual sensitivity. There is low capacity to accept residential development and no capacity to accept business development. Comments state that some development may be acceptable close to built-up area, within the existing development boundary and in character with existing development, but not encroaching on open countryside to the south. There could be some scope to strengthen the planted edge to the countryside and redefine the village edge. However, this could obscure valued long views to the south. There is low potential for mitigation.

HG3 – North of Station Road

This part of the village has had the most recent development in densely developed cul-de-sacs. Locally distinctive features include white weather boarded houses along the A21 and set back from the road in long gardens. A main retractor is the traffic from the A21. This area is enclosed to the north by Burgh Wood. A few open fields and large gardens remain undeveloped between the Wood and the built-up edge of the village. There are footpaths from the village giving access to the woodland.

This landscape is of ordinary-good quality but a high value AONB area, and it has a moderate capacity to accept residential development but no capacity to accept business development. It is noted that some development would be acceptable close to built-up area and in character with existing development, but not where this would encroach on the wildlife and amenity value of the Burgh Wood Complex Local Wildlife Site. There is low potential for mitigation and there would be little scope to plant more trees in this heavily wooded area.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

The only area considered for Hurst Green were fields either side of the A21 to the north of the settlement, parallel to Merriments Lane. This area is considered to be too remote from the village, and are important within the High Weald NL, and therefore have no potential for development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Hurst Green, including Burgh Hill, is wholly within the High Weald NL, and has a significant level of biodiversity and landscape constraints. The north/north-west of village is bound Burgh Wood, which constitutes some 95ha of ancient deciduous woodland; the majority of which forms the Burgh Wood Complex Local Wildlife Site. A further Local Wildlife Site is mostly adjacent to the west and south of the village core, and is formed by a mixture of priority habitats, including lowland meadow, good quality semi-improved grassland, as well as ancient woodland. The area to the east of development fronting the A21 is formed of enclosed pastures, including areas of deciduous woodland and lowland meadow priority habitats.

The village sits at an elevated position so there is very little in the way of flooding related constraints, excluding a few areas at risk of surface water flooding predominantly along some of the residential roads.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Hurst Green is one of the larger villages in the district, but despite this, it is still limited in terms of its range of essential services. The settlement does however have a convenience store and a primary school. Hurst Green does lack some of the other essential services such as a doctor's surgery or Post Office.

With two of the essential services identified in the sustainability scoring the village therefore scores a 2 for its essential services. The nearest post office is provided in Etchingam, which is 2.3km to the west, while the nearest doctor's surgeries are within Robertsbridge and Burwash – the latter being 6km to the west. Hawkhurst, which is 4.2km to the northeast provides the nearest supermarkets, and the nearest secondary school is Robertsbridge Community College.

Service Level

As set above, Hurst Green despite its size has quite a limited range of essential services, this is also the case with regards to the additional non-essential services. Other than the essential services listed above, facilities and services include pubs and restaurants, a pre-school, a village hall, a sports pitch and a church. Given the limited services Hurst Green scores a 1 for its service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Hurst Green has limited employment opportunities. There is no business park within 2 km or any larger services within the village which may ordinarily provide local employment opportunities. Hurst Green scores a 1 for its employment opportunities. However, being located on the A21 means that the settlement is located with some access to larger settlements which provide a wider range of employment, as well as Etchingham Train Station.

Public Transport

Hurst Green has a good level of public transport access. There are two average bus services, the 304 and 305, both with connections to Hawkhurst, Robertsbridge and Hastings. Combining both services together effectively makes 12 daily services towards these locations, and it is therefore considered that Hurst Green has one good bus service. Other less frequent services include early morning buses to Tunbridge Wells, and school time buses to Bexhill and Uckfield. The settlement does benefit from having Etchingham Train Station within a 2km distance which as services towards London and Hastings, with onward connections. Where the combined 304 and 305 make up one good service and Etchingham railway station is within 2km, Hurst Green scores 4 for its access to public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband which is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps is available within the settlement. Hurst Green scores a 2 for its internet service.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	10

Current development commitments

Land to the rear of Foundry Close, has planning permission for 20 dwellings, subject to RR/2019/2194/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger settlement – over 1,000 residents • Position on junction of A21, A265 and A229 locates Hurst Green within a network of larger villages, which together provide a wider range of services • Good public transport connections, including frequent bus availability, and a nearby train station • Primary school
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village is without a post office and doctor's surgery • Low level of wider range of services and facilities for the size of village • Limited employment opportunities • The A21 and A265 create a degree of severance within the settlement • Some areas of open AONB countryside surrounding the settlement limit the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Hurst Green is one of the larger villages within the district, however it has a relatively low overall sustainability score, and is considered to be only potentially sustainable. Its overall sustainability is ultimately for the determination of the Development Strategy. Its provision of some services, and its relationship with some of the larger settlements within the north of the district means that some development could help its community to live better locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of a northern cluster of larger rural settlements, including those outside of the district, including Hawkhurst in Kent, Etchingham and Robertsbridge.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

There are some opportunities for development in the more enclosed areas, that area adjacent to the built-up edge, particularly to the east of the A21 and potentially to the north of Station Road. Through improving the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of larger rural settlements, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing new development in the more enclosed sites of the village that area adjacent to the settlement boundary, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Silver Hill is a very small settlement, located around the junction of the A21 and Bodiam Road, in the north of the district.

The village of Hurst Green is relatively close, being approximately 1.2km to the north, further along the A21. Robertsbridge, to the south, is some 2.6km away.

Housing and Population

The population of Silver Hill is approximately 95. This is based on the number of dwellings, 38, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are three listed buildings in the vicinity of the settlement, all of which are Grade II listed. Silver Hill Farmhouse is a 16th century timber-framed building, Stangate dates from the 18th century or earlier and Ingram House dates from the early 19th century.

An Archaeological Notification Area defining a medieval & post-medieval farm, and the site of Napoleonic barracks lies some 500m to the east.

Landscape Character

Silver Hill sits on the very western edge of the Lower Rother Valley landscape character area. This part of the LCA is characterised by ridge top, ribbon development extending along the main roads, typical High Weald scattered development of farmsteads, hamlets and large country house estates. There is scattered woodland across the valley slopes and higher ground, much of which is ancient woodland. About half of the latter has been planted and some with extensive areas of conifers.

The landscape immediately surrounding Silver Hill is not assessed in the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#), however LCA character area HG2, relating to Hurst Green some 1.2km to the north, may offer some useful insights. It is summarised below.

HG2 – South of Station Road, Hurst Green

This area is characterised by open slopes falling away from the edge of the village to the south. Locally distinctive features include white weather boarded houses and other vernacular buildings strung along Station Road.

Well treed hedgerows, parkland trees and tree belts enclose parts of the built development from the wider countryside. Good quality farmland extends beyond the village boundaries. The rural fringe is less well managed near the village with some urban fringe influences in places. The settlement pattern is typically of ribbon development on ancient route ways and at crossroads. There are some more modern cul-de-sacs.

It has been defined as good quality and of high AONB value. It has a moderate-high character sensitivity and a high visual sensitivity. It is determined as having a low capacity for housing change and no capacity for business development. Development would only be acceptable within the built development boundary. Some development would be acceptable close to built-up area and in character with existing development, but not where this would encroach on the wildlife and amenity value of the Ancient Woodland. The potential for mitigation is low as there would be little scope to plant more trees in this heavily wooded area.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

In landscape terms, there may be some potential for a small level of development to the south of existing ribbon development along Bodium Road, to the extent that it fits into the existing development pattern and is sensitive to the surrounding landscape.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Silver Hill is within the High Weald NL. The small, irregular fields surrounding the settlement are typical of the High Weald NL and are bounded by strong, mature hedgerows. There are numerous parcels of woodland surrounding the settlement, many of which are ancient. Several areas of woodland to the southwest are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

There are minor areas that are at risk of surface water flooding around the local ponds and streams.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Silver Hill is a small, low-population settlement and the only essential service within walking distance is the Hurst Green CE Primary School to the north. Therefore, the settlement scores a 1 for its essential services.

Service Level

The general level of services and facilities available to the settlement is very limited. Other than the primary school mentioned above, the only other services or facilities within walking distance are the Little Acorns Nursery pre-school in Hurst Green and the Stage Field sports pitch to the east. The settlement scores a 0 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within Silver Hill itself are non-existent and there are no larger employment or industrial sites within a 2km radius. The settlement scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Public transport accessibility in Silver Hill is moderate. There are two average bus services, the 304 and 305, both with connections to Hawkhurst, Robertsbridge and Hastings. Combining both services together effectively makes 12 daily services towards these locations, and it is therefore considered that Silver Hill has one good bus service. The settlement therefore scores a 3.

Broadband Access

Standard broadband, which is defined as download speeds between 10Mb/s and 30Mb/s, is available in Silver Hill, giving the settlement a broadband score of 1.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0

Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	1
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Silver Hill.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position in respect of the A21, A229 and B2099 provides good road access to larger and neighbouring settlements
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small rural village – population less than 100 Very limited services and facilities and employment opportunities High Weald NL setting limits development options No access to Superfast Broadband

Recommendations for the Local Plan

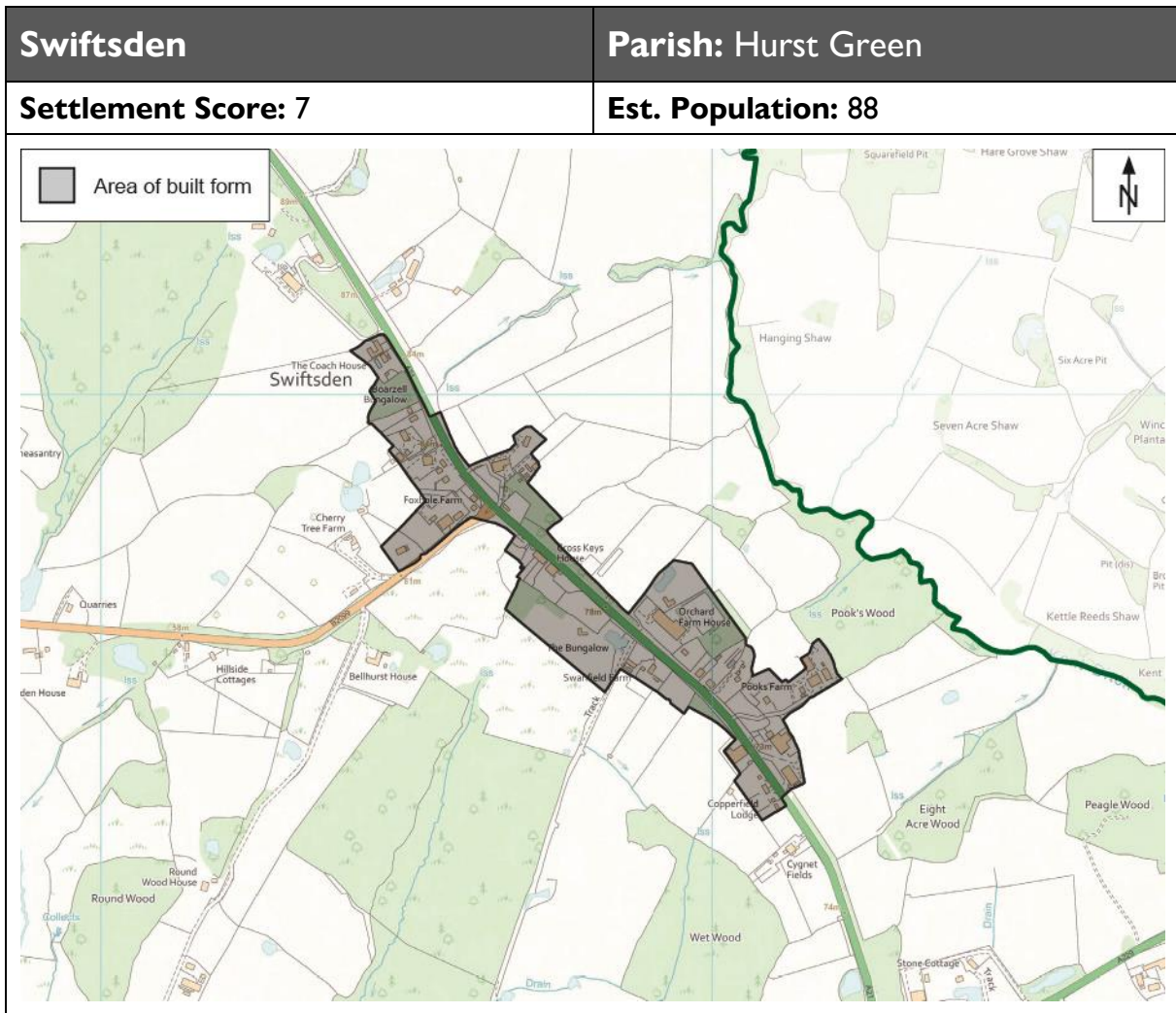
Silver Hill is a very small rural settlement. Its proximity to Hurst Green and Robertsbridge means that it could potentially be considered as part of a Village Cluster in the development strategy, though the High Weald NL landscape generally limits development here. Its score means that it is a settlement of low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its very small population and High Weald NL setting, it is unlikely that Silver Hill's sustainability can be significantly improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It is unlikely that any development in the vicinity of Silver Hill would be appropriate. However, if there were to be any development, it would have to be small scale, sensitive development that is unlikely to be able to support further services and facilities within the settlement.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Swiftsden is a small settlement some 1km north of Hurst Green, which it is also in the parish of Hurst Green. The settlement forms a small area of ribbon development that straddles the A21, which constitutes the settlements core and built form. As well as the A21, the settlement has good access to the A229 and the B2099.

The settlement does have a footpath which runs alongside the A21 but this busy road running through the settlement does decrease the walkability of the settlement and some areas are lacking consistent footpaths, making it difficult or unsafe to walk the journey to the larger settlement of Hurst Green.

Housing and Population

Swiftsden has an estimated population of 88, which is based on the number of dwellings, 35, multiplied by the household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The history and heritage of Swiftsden is closely linked to the parish and settlement of Hurst Green. Hurst Green, prior to the Norman Conquest was part of the parish of Salehurst. There is speculation that the nearby area of Burgh Hill may have been the location of an Anglo-Saxon fort built by the Alfred the Great. The most notable history of the settlement relates to the Wealden iron industry which dates back to the Roman period, with goods being transported through Rother from the nearby settlements of Stonegate, Etchingam and Robertsbridge.

There are two listed buildings in Swiftsden, Swiftsden House and Swiftsden Lodge.

The settlement also contains a Scheduled Monument, Old Boarzell moated site, which sits 100m northeast of Swiftsden Farm. This site is estimated to have been constructed during the late 13th or early 14th centuries, based on the analysis of pottery sherds found during its excavation.

Landscape Character

Swiftsden is within the High Weald NL and is situated atop a ridgeline to the eastern boundary of the Rother Valley Landscape Character Area. Though positioned upon a ridge, large areas of intervening woodland preclude far reaching landscape views across the valley to the west, with several enclosed field areas lying along the western settlement boundary.

Upper Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Upper Rother Valley landscape has stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges and a relatively open valley floor with small, winding, partly tree lined rivers.

The area also features a strong pattern of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods on the valley slopes. This area contains larger settlements on the high ground including Mayfield to the west, Wadhurst and Ticehurst to the north, Hurst Green to the east and Burwash to the south. The landscape hosts the Hastings to Tunbridge Wells railway, which follows the valley from Robertsbridge through to Wadhurst. The landscape is comprised of a network of winding, sunken lanes with scattered settlements and dwellings. This is a largely unspoilt rural landscape with few intrusive features, it is generally in good condition with farmland and a strong historic structure.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

Areas around Swiftsden are considered to be less sensitive to some development, due to the flat lying and enclosed nature of the immediate landscape. In the absence of any settlement centre, it is considered that development could bring an opportunity to create a sense of place.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

There are large areas of woodland adjacent to the west of the settlement, which includes deciduous woodland, as well as significant section of ancient woodland a little further out. To the southwest is the Burgh Wood Complex which is a large area of ancient deciduous woodland that is also a Local Wildlife Site. The landscape to the east and the north also consists of parcels of ancient deciduous woodland, although these are a little further out from the development boundary. There are a number of Tree Preservation Orders within the large curtilage of a dwelling in the north of the settlement, to the west of the A21.

Given its ridgetop location, Swiftsden is generally free from flood related constraints, although some stretches of the A21 here are susceptible to surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Swiftsden has three convenience stores, albeit two of these are located within petrol stations on either side of the A21, while the third is within Planters Farm Shop. With access to convenience stores, the settlement scores 1 for access to essential services. Hurst Green being 1km to the south means that none of its services are considered accessible for Swiftsden. Residents would be required to travel for almost all services. The nearest other essential services are likely accessed in Hawkhurst and Ticehurst, which are 3.5km and 4.4km distant respectively. The nearest supermarkets are in Hawkhurst, while the nearest secondary school is Robertsbridge Community College

Service Level

In addition to small convenience store, Swiftsden has the two petrol stations and farm shop/garden centre mentioned above, as well as several cafes and restaurants, and an antique shop. With its very limited range of services, Swiftsden scores 1 for its wider service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The employment opportunities in Swiftsden are extremely limited, having no services or facilities, there is no employment centre within the settlement. Employment opportunities would be found outside of the settlement in the larger towns and villages locally. Swiftsden scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

The public transport in Swiftsden consists of two average bus services, the 304 and 305, both with connections including Hawkhurst, Robertsbridge and Hastings. Combining both services together effectively makes 12 daily services towards these locations. According to

the methodology, this equates to one good bus service. There is no train station, and the nearest rail service is in the village of Etchingam approximately six miles away. Swiftsden scores a 3 for its level of public transport as it is considered to have a 'good' bus service (10+ buses per day per service).

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds of up to 300Mbps is available in Swiftsden. The settlement scores a 2 in this category.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	7

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Swiftsden.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position in respect of the A21, A229 and B2099 provides good road access to larger and neighbouring settlements • There is some footway access to Hurst Green to the south
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited essential services and facilities • Very small settlement – population of less than 100 • Minimal employment opportunities • No single ‘good bus service’ • Relatively distant from larger settlements, with Hastings being nearly 16km to the southeast

Recommendations for the Local Plan

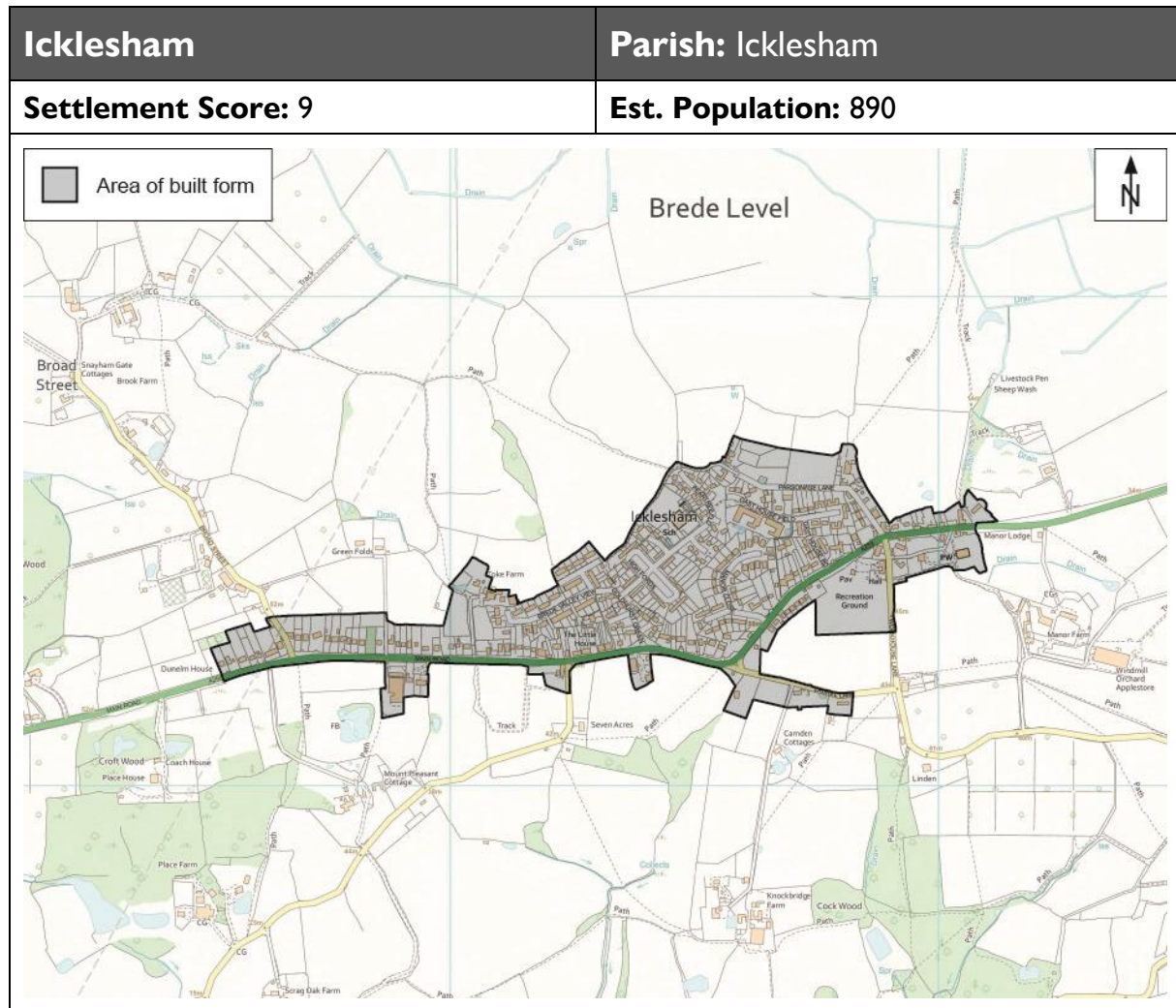
Swiftsden is a very small rural village with very limited services and facilities, making its residents dependent on accessing larger nearby settlements for their day-to-day requirements. The services it does have are focussed on the regional traffic that passes along the A21, rather than the small number of residents that live in the settlement. It is considered to have low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

With its very limited overall service level, it is unlikely that Swiftsden's sustainability can be significantly improved through development; especially when it is considered that existing services are supported and focused on the regional daily traffic along the A21 rather than the very few dwellings within the settlement. With a good number of regular daily buses to surrounding larger villages, as well as Hastings, it is unlikely that there is much room for improvement in terms of additional bus services.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There are enclosed areas of landscape adjacent to the settlement, particularly to the west where there are several fields with extensive tree cover that provides screening from the wider countryside. However, as is stated above, the settlement has a very small resident population, and any potential growth in population is unlikely to reach a level that would provide the demand that would support additional services and facilities. Those that exist presently are focussed on demand from daily traffic along the A21.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Icklesham is a generally linear settlement developed adjacent to the A259 atop a ridge to the south of the Brede Valley. It sits between Hastings and Rye.

Much of the settlement's earlier development 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. The original settlement is clustered to the east of the settlement around the Norman church.

Housing and Population

Icklesham has an estimated population of 890, which is based on the number of dwellings, 424, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Saxon references to the village go back as far as 772 and being of strategic importance due to its location in respect of the River Brede, which was larger and tidal at that time, and consequently it is thought that the village was one of the first to be seized by William the Conqueror upon landing. The parish church has been a place of worship for over 800 years and was originally dedicated to All Saints before being re-dedicated to St Nicholas by Henry VIII³.

The majority of the 16 listed buildings within the settlement boundary are located within the historic core to the east of the village, which is covered by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) pertaining to the original settlement. Of these is the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Nicholas.

In terms of the Brede Valley itself, its landscape character assessment defines the history of the area is one of a thriving agricultural landscape. From the 12th century onward the marshy valley floor was reclaimed for farming. Severe storms in the late 13th century breached the sea defence and flooded much of the valley floor farmland. This opened up a river channel as far inland as Brede Bridge so that timber and iron products and later coal could be transported downstream to Winchelsea and Rye. This easy access to the valley led to the siting of great houses on either side.⁴

³ <https://winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk/icklesham/>

⁴ <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/6760/area-11-brede-valley.pdf>

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Icklesham is within the High Weald National Landscape. It is situated on a ridgeline that forms the southern boundary of the Brede Valley, with wide views to the north of the valley, while the panel valley lies to the south; both of which are within the landscape character area. The Brede Valley is characterised by the broad valley of the River Brede with its flat valley floor and enclosed by relatively steep slopes, while it extends westwards towards the Battle-Hastings ridge. Settlements and their churches are situated atop the valley's enclosing ridges, which feature wide vistas across the river valley floodplain. Lower down the river levels and marshes are criss-crossed by reed fringed ditches or 'sewers', and swans, herons and other wetland birds are very much features in the landscape. The south coast railway cuts across the Brede Valley between Doleham and Rye. The overall landscape area also contains scattered areas of semi-natural ancient woodland on the valley slopes, many of which are ghyll woodlands, a key characteristic of the High Weald, and there is a sense of tranquillity away from the main settlements and roads.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around of Icklesham as part of landscape assessment areas I1 – Icklesham South, and I2 – Icklesham North.

I1 - Icklesham South

The area is characterised by open slopes falling away from the ridge. There are typically large fields with some loss of hedgerow structure. Some horse paddocks. The area has a strong sense of place.

The settlement has a nucleus of development around the older hamlet, church and school.

The assessment defines the landscape as being of high quality and a high value AONB area, with a high character sensitivity to change visual sensitivity. From this assessment, the landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'none-low' for development. It is determined that the wide, open landscape would be vulnerable to change. It notes that there may be limited scope in the vicinity of the existing business units occupied by Sherwood Industrial Park and Icklesham Joinery, but that this would be dependent on a strong woodland structure to the south. However, the assessment also considers that there would be generally little scope to enclose areas with planting as open views are part of character of the area.

I2 - Icklesham North

This is largely an agricultural landscape with wide open slopes on the south side of the Brede Valley. There are some more enclosed paddocks bounded by tree belts and strong hedges. The area has some sense of place.

The settlement is ridge top and ribbon development. There are some vernacular buildings.

This landscape area is also described as being high quality and high value AONB area, with a moderate character sensitivity to change and a moderate-high visual sensitivity. As a result, the landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'low-moderate' for development. It is noted the potential for development would be low to none on the more open slopes of the valley, while this is moderate in enclosed fields closer to the village. In addition, consideration should be taken with regard to the setting of listed buildings. In terms of mitigation, while there would be some scope to strengthen the village edges. It would be inappropriate to obstruct open views across the Brede valley.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

It is considered that development to the south of the A259 would be detrimental to the settlement pattern which is almost entirely north of the A259. There could be some potential for development to the north of ribbon development north of the A259 where sites are enclosed and without public access, and where there is no impact on the historic listed farmstead. Such development would need to be of a small scale, with well-defined landscape buffers to the wider countryside.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The settlement is wholly within the AONB. There are several nearby parcels of ancient woodland to the north and south, with larger areas of ancient woodland being present further to the west of the settlement. At its closest The Brede Valley Local Wildlife Site is located some 300m to the north, while the immediately surrounding field structure feature historic field boundaries. There are small parcels of priority habitat within the settlement, including deciduous woodland and two areas containing traditional orchards.

Areas within the settlement that are susceptible to surface water flooding within the settlement generally include road surfaces, most notably the A259. Being atop an east-west ridge, there are narrow columns of land susceptible to surface water flooding that emanate to the north and south of the settlement that descend into the Brede and Pannel Valleys.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Icklesham has two essential services, with a primary school and a twice weekly doctor's surgery that takes place at the Community Hall. Notably, there is no convenience store in the village, and residents would need to venture to the Hastings area to access supermarkets. There is also no post office. With two essential services, Icklesham therefore scores 2 which is less than average for villages of its size.

Service Level

Icklesham's services and facilities not listed as essential services include a nursery pre-school, as well as a sports pitch and play area, a community hall and two pubs. Pupils of secondary and higher education would also need to travel to nearby towns, most likely Hastings, Rye or Bexhill. In terms of its wider facilities and services Icklesham scores a 1, although its score is broadly comparable with settlements of a similar size within the district.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

A very small amount of employment may be found associated identified services and facilities. There are also several small units that comprise Sherwood Industrial Park and Icklesham Joinery. For the most part, residents would be dependent upon commuting to nearby towns such as Hastings, Bexhill or the Rye areas. Overall, Icklesham scores a 2 for its employment opportunities, although this score is comparable to the larger villages within the district.

Public Transport

Icklesham is situated on the A259 has and has one good daily bus service, the 100, with more than 10 daily buses stopping in Icklesham each day. The 100 bus has connections to Hastings and Rye, including the Conquest Hospital. With a good bus service, Icklesham scores a 3 for public transport. There are no train stations within walking distance, although the nearest train station is Winchelsea, which is just over 3km to the northeast.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Icklesham, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	9

Current development commitments

There are currently no allocated sites within Icklesham.

A site to the western boundary of the village, to the north of the A259, is currently being developed for 15 affordable dwellings subject to planning permission RR/2019/243/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good bus service, while being equidistant between Hastings and Rye. • Primary School within village • Reasonable range of facilities including a sports pitch and play area, a community hall. • Comparatively higher level of employment opportunities compared to other villages of less than 1,000 inhabitants.
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparatively low level of essential services; notably without a convenience store. • Open and constrained AONB landscape limits the potential for further development. • Linear settlement pattern which limits walkability

Recommendations for the Local Plan

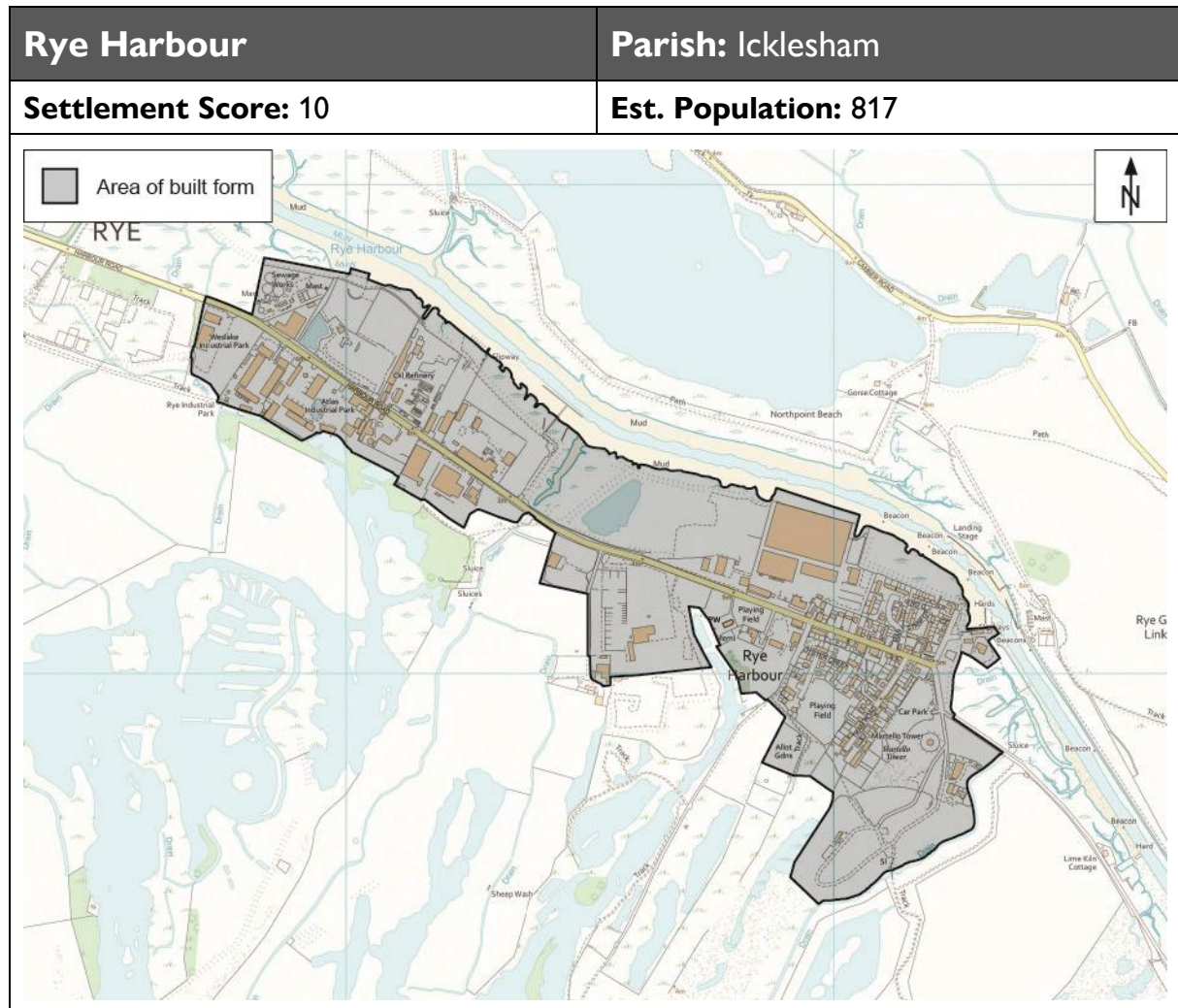
Icklesham is a rural village situated on the A259 trunk road between Hastings and Rye, with good bus connections to both towns. It has a reasonable range of services, notably with a primary school, although it is generally lacking in essential services. Its scoring means that it is considered to be potentially sustainable, with this determination to be determined through the Development Strategy.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Icklesham has a comparable service level with settlements of a similar size. Any improvement in the provision of local services, particularly through the addition of a convenience store would go some way to making Icklesham a more sustainable settlement. Increasing the range of essential services would help its community to live well locally

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

With significant landscape constraints Icklesham has limited potential for expansion. There may be limited scope for some further development north of the Main Road, which would support existing services and could potentially support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Located at the tidal reaches of the Rivers Rother, Brede and Tillingham, Rye Harbour is within Icklesham parish and has a population of approximately 817. Rye Harbour is just over 500m to the southeast of Rye, although the immediate linear stretch of the village is occupied by a large industrial area that straddles Harbour Road for a further 1.3km before the residential section of the village is reached. Although Rye Harbour has close economic links with nearby Rye, it is considered a distinct settlement, which is consolidated by the existing Strategic Gap between the two settlements.

Access to Rye Harbour is solely along Harbour Road, which joins the A259 trunk road just south of Rye. Other than Rye, nearby settlements include Camber which is located 1.5km to

the east, and Winchelsea Beach which is roughly 2.5km to the southwest. Rye Harbour is some 15.5km to the northeast of the centre of Hastings.

Being a harbour village, Rye Harbour has a fishing fleet, while also catering for other boats associated with the Harbour Road Industrial area, as well as moorings for leisure boating.

Rye Harbour is also immediately adjacent to Rye Harbour Holiday Park to its south, which contains a large number of static caravans.

Housing and Population

The population of Rye Harbour has an estimated population of 817, which is based on the number of dwellings, 389, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

In historic terms, Rye Harbour is a relatively recent settlement as the land it is sited on was originally part of the sea, which flowed up to the inland cliffs at Playden while surrounding Rye as an island. Since medieval times the sea has gradually retreated to form the Rye Bay as it currently exists, in which time nearby Camber Castle was built between 1512 and 1543, and more recently Martello Tower 28 to the immediate south of the village, which was built in the early 1800s to defend the entrance to Rye in the event of an invasion by Napoleon. The earlier sections of Rye Harbour also date back to the early 1800s. Today the sea has retreated a further 1km or so to the south.

Rye Harbour is host to 10 listed buildings, including the Martello Tower (also a scheduled monument), The Church of the Holy Spirit, and 1-5 School Cottages. The tower is also surrounded by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA). The Tudor built Camber Castle is a Grade I listed building and scheduled monument and is sited around 1.7km west of the settlement.

In 1928, the Mary Standford lifeboat based in Rye Harbour while responding to a Latvian ship caught in severe weather. The Mary Stanford was herself overcome by the storm and was capsized, tragically killing all of the 17 crew who were onboard.

Landscape Character

Rye-Winchelsea – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Rye Harbour is situated within the Rye-Winchelsea Landscape Character Area and is outside of the High Weald National Landscape. The Rye-Winchelsea Area generally consists of a wide tract of coastal levels, dominated by grazing marsh as the western area of the Romney marshes and overlooked by bold spurs, steep inland cliffs and ‘islands’ of higher ground, including the twin citadels of Rye and Winchelsea. There are significant areas of pasture, sheep grazing and arable farming, while tree cover is concentrated on the slopes and the towns of Winchelsea and Rye. The area is crossed by the Rother and the Royal Military Canal, and also features a number of Martello towers. Coastal stretches include broad shingled areas with lakes from gravel working, and the extensive area of Dunes and sandy beach at Camber which are unique in East Sussex. From Rye there are distinctive views towards Dungeness power station and the wind farm at Little Cheney Court Farm, with views to Camber Castle on the levels to the south. There is a strong sense of remoteness in the areas further from built development.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) assesses the whole length of Rye Harbour as part of landscape assessment area H1 - Rye Harbour Road.

H1 - Rye Harbour Road

This is an area of open marshland adjacent to the ribbon development of Rye Harbour Road. There are open areas with enclosure provided by scrub and shelter belts. Features are the open marshes, Martello tower and church.

Settlement is mainly industrial development between the road and river. The older settlement at the eastern end surrounds the Martello tower and church.

The assessment defines the landscape area as ordinary-good quality, and a medium landscape value area, with a moderate character sensitivity to change and high visual sensitivity. From this assessment, the landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'moderate' for residential and business development. It is noted that any development capacity should be limited to the disturbed and brownfield sites only. Proposed development should not encroach on to the marshes. It would not be appropriate to consider developments of mixed residential and industrial uses. There are some options by way of mitigation, and there may be some scope to strengthen the existing built-up edges. Appropriate planting would be native tree species and scrub and to avoid exotics. Landform and mounding could be used in places.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

While outside of the AONB, Rye Harbour has significant environmental constraints to further development. All land surrounding the settlement is either protected by international designations (SAC/SPA/Ramsar) or is within Flood Zone 3, or both. In addition, Rye Harbour Local Nature Reserve directly adjoins settlement to the south-west and also lies to the southeast. Due to these designations, any potential for further development would be limited to areas within the settlement boundary. Land to the west/northwest of the settlement boundary, which is not within the designations is within the Strategic Gap and within the adjacent Rye Civil Parish, while also being within Flood Zone 3 in any case.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Rye Harbour has only one essential service, this being a convenience store. The nearest schools, post office and doctor's surgeries are found in nearby Rye. By itself, Rye Harbour scores only 1 for the category of essential services.

Service Level

The village has a community hall, a convenience store, a sports pitch, a pub and two cafés. Ultimately, Rye Harbour scores a 1 for its overall service level, which is comparable to other similarly sized villages within the district. That said, Rye Harbour potentially benefits from its proximity to the good range of services available in Rye.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The Harbour Road employment area provides a substantial amount of employment and is significant for the eastern area of the district. The Harbour Road employment area has a long-established concentration of industrial uses, including some heavy industry such as the oil refinery operated by Rye Oil Ltd. Subject to safeguarding the surrounding areas of designated wildlife, as well as limitations within the local road network, the Council's existing Local Plan is in favour of further intensification of the Harbour Road employment area, including the relocation of distribution activities from Rye. This general approach is currently covered by DaSA Policy RHA2. This industrial area also includes Rye Wharf, which is the district's only commercial wharf for sea-going ships. Rye Wharf facilitates imports of aggregates and exports of grain to mainland Europe. While some uses still relate to its wharf-side origins, the area now accommodates a broad range of businesses and provides the main industrial area serving the eastern part of the district. In terms of employment opportunities, Rye Harbour is second in the district only behind Bexhill, and its scores a 4.

Public Transport

Public transport in Rye Harbour is generally limited. It has up to nine buses a day to Rye, with Northiam being the last stop. From Rye, national rail services can be accessed, as well as further bus connections. However, the earliest bus gets into Rye at 8:40, which may limit the use of public transport from Rye Harbour for commuter purposes. With under 10 bus services a day and no train station, Rye Harbour scores 2 for public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Rye Harbour, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	4
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	10

Current development commitments

There is one allocated site within Rye Harbour. Land at Stoneworks Cottages is allocated by DaSA Policy RHA1 for 40 dwellings.

In addition, the DaSA allocates the Harbour Road Employment Area, within which applications for industrial uses will be permitted, subject to the policy’s criteria. Within this area there are 9 currently permissions that will provide a combined 22,246sqm gross of new employment space⁵.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd highest level of employment opportunity within District behind only Bexhill • A wide range of facilities and services are available in Rye, which is only some 3km distant from the residential section of Rye Harbour.
Settlement Weaknesses

⁵ [Rother District Council, Employment Land Supply April 2021 position statement](#)

- Very few facilities and services within Rye Harbour, while having no primary school, post office or doctor's surgery.
- Considerable environmental constraints, including SAC, SPA and RAMSAR areas.
- Majority of settlement within Flood Zone 3, including areas outside of settlement
- Limited public transport, with up to only 9 buses per day.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

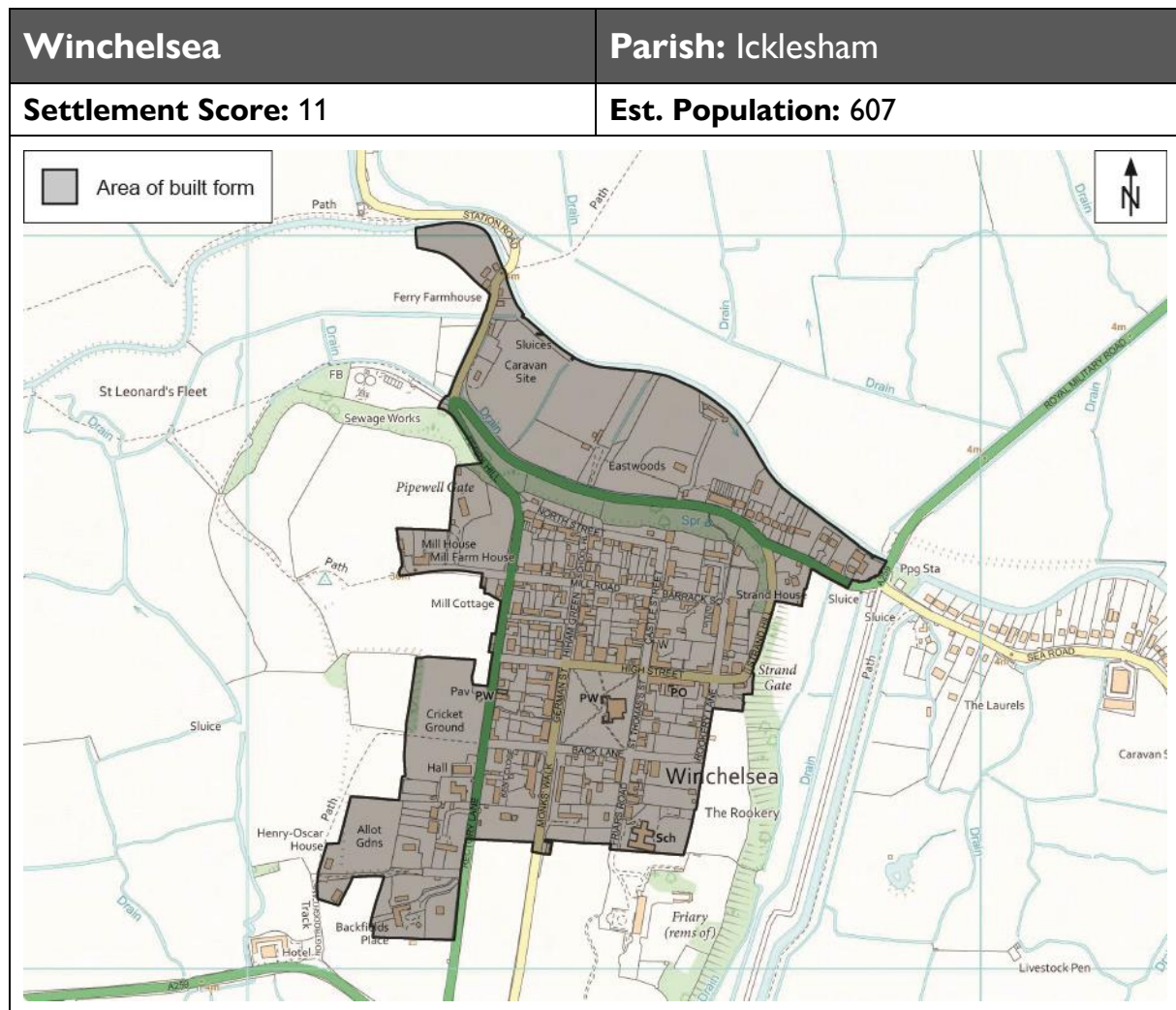
Rye Harbour is a relatively small rural village with a population of just over 800 residents. While the village itself has a limited range of services and facilities, neighbouring Rye has a good service level, with all four types of essential service, also including a secondary school and a small Jempsons supermarket. The adjacent industrial complex along Harbour Road is the most significant employment area within the district and provides a good level of local employment opportunity. In this way, Rye Harbour and Rye are strongly linked, and they have a lateral connection with Rye providing a wide range of services while Rye Harbour contains a significant level of employment opportunities. Its overall score of 10 means that Rye Harbour is considered to be potentially sustainable, although its suitability for further development will be further considered in the Development Strategy; particularly in view of its close relationship with Rye.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

In spite of Rye Harbour's limited service level, the everyday needs of its residents could be better served by a more frequent bus service to capitalise on the close proximity of Rye; at present Rye Harbour has less than 10 bus services per day. Being part of a network of local rural settlements via improved bus services would also provide better connections to Rye Harbour's employment opportunities from surrounding areas. There are, however, limited opportunities for Rye Harbour's outward growth, due to the level of environmental constraints that surround the village. The extant allocation at Stoneworks Cottages should be carried forward, as it constitutes an opportunity to deliver 40 dwellings within the village. There may also be some opportunities for redevelopment of areas within the village.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing new development where it does not infringe upon environmental designations, and be outside of Flood Zone 3, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Winchelsea is officially a town, albeit the smallest in the country with a population slightly more 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 A259 runs around the western and northern perimeter of the settlement and acts as a by-pass to much of the town. It links Winchelsea with Rye, 2.5km to the north-east and Hastings, the centre of which is some 11km to the south-west. Despite its town status and historic importance, Winchelsea is within the Parish of Icklesham, whose village and earlier Norman Church is located 2.5km to the west.

Housing and Population

Winchelsea has an estimated population of 607, which is based on the number of dwellings, 289, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling. This compares to the previous population estimate of 580 in 2008 and a dwelling count of 267. This increase in the number of dwellings is not a result of development, but a slight change to the previous area of built form, which now includes additional areas to the south, west and northwest.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Winchelsea is of immense historic and archaeological interest and value, and is an outstanding and rare example of medieval town planning. The settlement replaced a former 'old' Winchelsea of likely Saxon origin, which was built on an area of shingle that was lost to coastal erosion and is now below the sea in the Rye Bay, with tides moving far inland as far as Appledore⁶. 'New' Winchelsea 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 site chosen for new Winchelsea was a hill called Iham Hill that formed a spur that projected into the estuary of the River Brede⁷. The port of Winchelsea was located on the River Brede, along what is now Tanyard Lane, and was divided into a public quay, and 79 harbourside plots⁸. 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. The town had defences built – starting around 1295, and consisted of three towers – Strand Gate, Ferry Gate, and New Gate – as well as a town wall and surrounding ditches⁹, as well as three churches and two

⁶ [History Of Winchelsea \(archive.org\)](#)

⁷ [History Of Winchelsea \(archive.org\)](#)

⁸ [History Of Winchelsea \(archive.org\)](#)

⁹ [History Of Winchelsea \(archive.org\)](#)

monasteries¹⁰. Its defensive significance explains its membership of the Cinque Ports Confederation.

At its peak Winchelsea had a population of up to 6,000 people, and it was a very important port, which exported large quantities of iron and wood products from Europe, while importing wine from Gascony in France, as well as being the starting point for voyages to sites of pilgrimages in Spain¹¹. However, just as changes to the location of the sea and the coast were integral to Winchelsea's founding, further changes were the cause of its decline from the 15th Century. By this time, Winchelsea's access to the sea had started to erode, and even before this, the estuary location of the port meant that larger, deeper ships were unable to use it.

In terms of its area of built form, Winchelsea is much smaller than it was – with formally important historic buildings, such as the New Gate, the ruins of the Ruins of the Church of Grey Friars Monastery and St John's Hospital, now being part of the surrounding countryside. Even so, within this now smaller area of settlement, Winchelsea contains 94 listed buildings, including four that are listed Grade 1 and six listed Grade II*. Of particular note is the Parish Church of St Thomas the Martyr, almost all of which was built in the 14th Century. It was originally planned as a cruciform church, but the nave was burned down by the French in the same century, although some of the ruins remain. Its Historic England entry notes that the church represents the finest decorated work in Sussex. Furthermore, the entire settlement, including immediately surrounding landscape, is covered by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA), and is a Conservation Area (CA).

Landscape Character

The Rye-Winchelsea Area – East Sussex Landscape Character

Winchelsea is situated within the High Weald National Landscape. It is within the Rye-Winchelsea Area, which generally consists of a wide tract of coastal levels, dominated by grazing marsh as the western area of the Romney marshes and overlooked by bold spurs, steep inland cliffs and 'islands' of higher ground, including the twin citadels of Rye and

¹⁰ [History of Winchelsea - Visit 1066 Country](#)

¹¹ [History of Winchelsea - Visit 1066 Country](#)

Winchelsea. There are significant areas of pasture, sheep grazing and arable farming, while tree cover is concentrated on the slopes and the towns of Winchelsea and Rye. The area is crossed by the Rother and the Royal Military Canal, and also features a number of Martello towers. Coastal stretches include broad shingled areas with lakes from gravel working, and the extensive area of Dunes and sandy beach at Camber which are unique in East Sussex.

From Rye there are distinctive views towards Dungeness power station and the wind farm at Little Cheney Court Farm, with views to Camber Castle on the levels to the south. There is a strong sense of remoteness in the areas further from built development.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around of Winchelsea as part of landscape assessment area W1 – Winchelsea Village.

W1 – Winchelsea Village

The village and surrounds have a very strong sense of place. This special settlement is a historic town with many historic buildings and features, such as gateways, straight grid pattern roads and surrounding parkland.

This is an historic settlement with a unique grid pattern. At the top of a raised cliff and previously on the coast.

The assessment defines the landscape as being high quality and a high value AONB area, with a high character sensitivity to change and high visual sensitivity. From this assessment, the landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'none-low' for new development. It is determined that development would only be acceptable within the development boundaries and only of a scale and design which would not detract from the sensitive historic village and surrounding landscape. The potential for mitigation of new development is low, given that the character of the area is so distinctive.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

To the immediate east of Winchelsea is Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI, and the Greyfriars Local Wildlife Site to the south of that. Winchelsea is mostly surrounded by

areas of good quality semi-improved grassland and deciduous woodland priority habitat, as well as parcels of ancient woodland along its northern and eastern boundary. Encircling the settlement on the lower ground is the Romney Marsh Biodiversity Opportunity Area, and an adjacent landscape of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh.

Surrounding the hilltop area of Winchelsea is land within Flood Zone 3, although the central areas of the settlement are generally free from significant flood risk.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Winchelsea has three essential services, with a primary school, post office and one convenience stores. It consequently scores 3. While there are two convenience stores, they are particularly limited in range. Residents would be expected to venture to the Hastings area to access supermarkets, while pupils of secondary and higher education would also need to travel to nearby towns – most likely Hastings, Rye or Bexhill. The nearest doctor's surgeries are in Rye and Icklesham.

Service Level

In terms of its wider facilities and services, relative to its size it has a reasonable range of services and facilities. In addition to those identified as essential services, Winchelsea also has (but is not limited to) a nursery pre-school, a sports pitch and play area, a community hall and a pub. Overall however, Winchelsea has a limited service level and its scores a 1.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Winchelsea itself has a very low employment opportunities, likely limited to any services within the settlement, and it scores a 1. It is expected that residents would need to commute to larger nearby towns in order for employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Bus services are good, with more than 10 daily bus services stopping in Winchelsea owing to its position along the A259, including the 100 and 101 buses between Hastings and (Conquest Hospital).

In addition, there is a school time service that connects to Bexhill College. Winchelsea train station, while outside of the settlement, is within a 2km radius of the population weighted centre of the settlement and is consequently included within the scoring, although it should be noted that Station Road on which the station is located, is a winding, narrow country lane without a footway. With a good bus service and a nearby railway station, Winchelsea scores 4 for its level of public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Winchelsea, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	11

Current development commitments

There currently no significant development commitments within Winchelsea.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Relatively good essential services, including a primary school
- Good bus connections between Hastings and Rye
- Adjacent to Winchelsea train station
- Compact, with good walkability

Settlement Weaknesses

- Substantial heritage constraints
- Significant landscape constraints, including open AONB landscape
- Significant environmental and physical constraints, including ecological designations and flood areas.
- Significant lack of convenience shopping
- Generally limited services and facilities
- Lack of employment
- Small overall size

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Winchelsea is a small historic town. For its small population it has a reasonable level of essential services, including a primary school, but it is likely that its residents would need to travel to larger nearby settlements in order to fulfil many of their day-to-day requirements. Winchelsea is well located in respect of Rye, while it also has a good bus service and a train station with connections to both Rye and Hastings. For the purposes of this Review, Winchelsea is considered to be potentially sustainable.

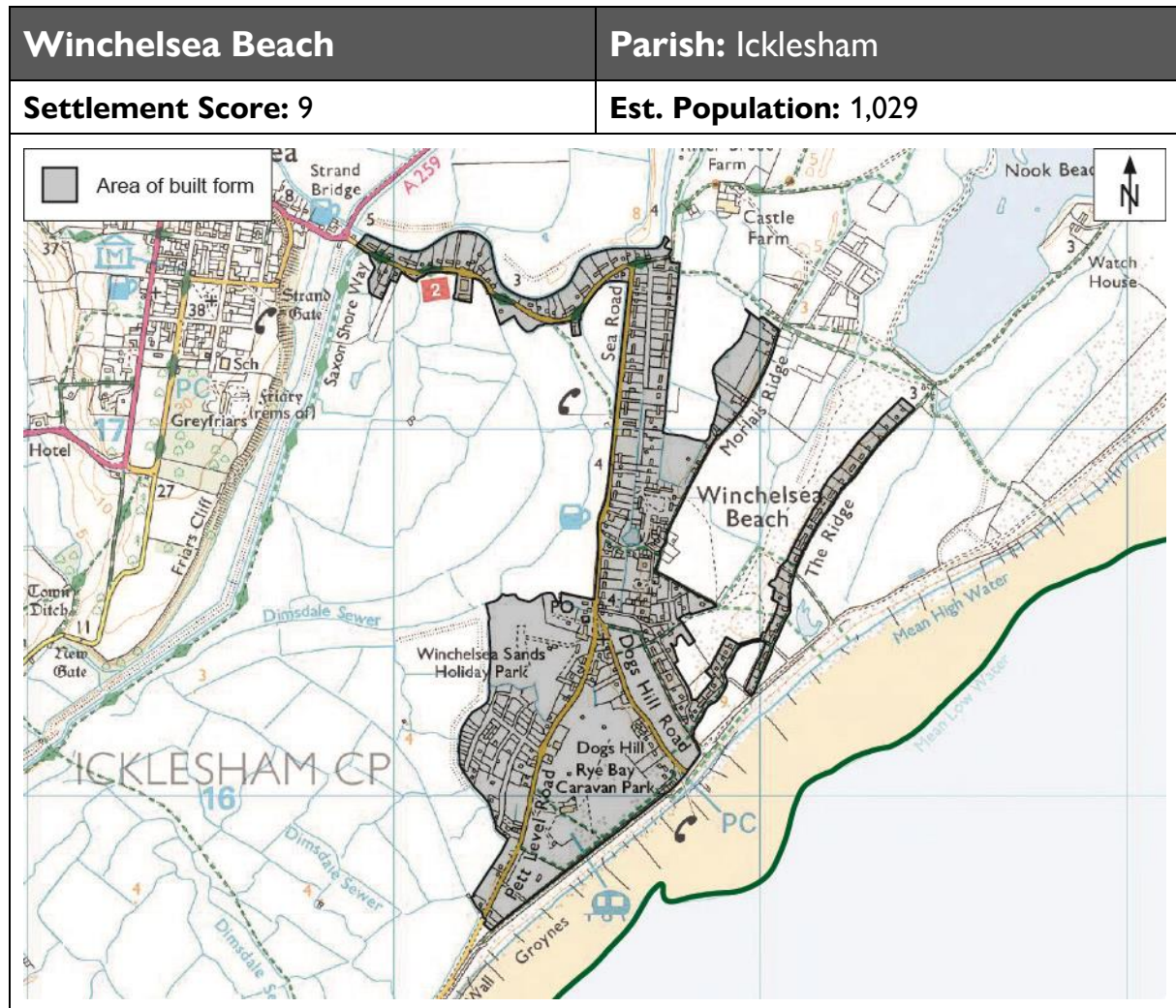
Opportunities to improve sustainability

Winchelsea is a very important historic settlement with significant heritage and landscape constraints. In addition, there are a considerable number of ecological and environmental constraints. Almost any new development within Winchelsea, especially within the central

historic area, would cause harm to the Town's historic assets, and therefore development cannot be relied upon to improve its sustainability. While the town already has good public transport connections, their improvement, including the creation of networks of local settlements, may facilitate better access to additional facilities and services.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It is difficult to envisage almost any significant new development being acceptable within Winchelsea and therefore substantive growth is unlikely, although small windfall development may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.



Settlement Overview

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.

Given Winchelsea Beach's linear, albeit winding built form, it is difficult to define a village centre. However, the majority of the settlement's services are concentrated around the location where Pett Level Road becomes Sea Road, which for the purposes of this study is therefore set out as the village core. The northwestern extent of the settlement is practically adjacent to Winchelsea to the west, however this furthest extent of the settlement forms a long arm of linear development along one side of Sea Road, and it is ultimately some distance from the village core. Consequently, it is considered that Winchelsea and Winchelsea Beach do not form a functional single settlement area.

The centre of Winchelsea Beach is found 1.2km southwest of the citadel section of Winchelsea, while being 3.3km to the south west of Rye. Pett Level is around 2.7km to the southwest along Pett Level Road. The centre of Hastings is further afield at some 11km to the southwest.

Housing and Population

Winchelsea Beach has an estimated population of 1,029, which is based on the number of dwellings, 490, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

As previously noted, Winchelsea Beach as a settlement dates back predominantly to the pre-war period, and the three listed buildings within the settlement existed prior to the settlement and consist of two farmhouses and an isolated cottage. However, the settlement's proximity to the historically important citadel of Winchelsea and the Royal Military Canal, means that there are in any case heritage considerations in respect of their landscape setting.

Landscape Character

The Rye-Winchelsea Area – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Winchelsea Beach is situated within the Rye-Winchelsea Area (LCA). The Rye-Winchelsea Area generally consists of a wide tract of coastal levels, dominated by grazing marsh as the western area of the Romney marshes and overlooked by bold spurs, steep inland cliffs and 'islands' of higher ground, including the twin citadels of Rye and Winchelsea. There are significant areas of pasture, sheep grazing and arable farming, while tree cover is concentrated on the slopes and the towns of Winchelsea and Rye. The area features open coastal and valley levels with straightened or engineered drainage channels. The area is crossed by the Rother and the Royal Military Canal, with historically corresponding Martello towers. The coastal stretches include broad shingled areas with lakes from gravel working, and the extensive area of Dunes and sandy beach at Camber which are unique in East Sussex. From Rye there are distinctive views towards Dungeness power station and the wind farm at Little Cheney Court Farm, with views to Camber Castle on the levels to the south. There is a strong sense of remoteness in the areas further from built development.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around of Winchelsea Beach as part of landscape assessment area W2 – Winchelsea Beach.

W1 – Winchelsea Beach

The area has some sense of place. It is an open landscape of reclaimed marshes. There is scattered development and small holdings and a distinct transition from the built-up area to the open marshes. The Caravan parks detract from the areas but are part of the character of the area in recent history.

The settlement is of ribbon development associated with the coast road. There are some older farmsteads, but it is mostly plot lands and holiday caravan development.

Open areas act as a buffer to the AONB landscape.

The assessment defines the immediate landscape as being of ordinary quality and a medium value landscape, while functioning as a buffer to the AONB. The landscape character sensitivity to change is moderate-high, as its visual sensitivity. From this assessment, the landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'none-low-moderate' for development. It is noted that the caravan development is characteristic of the area, and that any replacement of the existing caravan development with higher density housing development may not be in character with the seaside setting. Any proposed development would need to be carefully designed and sited so not to detract from the open seaside character of the area. There would be some scope to strengthen built up edges, especially to improve the appearance and impact of the caravan parks. Native scrub belts would be appropriate as tree planting would not establish.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

There are significant environmental constraints to further development in Winchelsea Beach. All of the land surrounding the settlement is SSSI, as well as areas designated as SPA, SAC and RAMSAR, with the exception of land to the west, which is in the High Weald NL. Priority Habitats border the settlement in every direction except a small area to the NW. The only location not covered by SSSI designation/ Priority Habitat is open area enclosed by Sea Road to the north and east within the north of the settlement, but even this section would be highly unlikely to be suitable for development given its location within Flood Zone 3.

The settlement and its surroundings are almost entirely within Flood Zone 3. There are also concerns regarding the sewerage infrastructure within the settlement, which would require considerable investment to resolve.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Winchelsea Beach has only one essential service, this being a convenience store. There is no supermarket in the village – for which residents would need to venture to the Hastings area,

or potentially Peasmarsch to the north. The most local primary schools are in Winchelsea and Rye. Pupils of secondary and higher education would also need to travel to nearby towns – most likely Hastings, Rye or Bexhill.

With only one essential service, Winchelsea Beach scores a 1.

Service Level

Winchelsea Beach has a limited number of services and facilities considering its population of 1,029. It does however fare well for leisure facilities, with a sports pitch, public park and play areas, as well as a community hall. It also has several food take-away outlets, as well as two pubs and a café. Winchelsea Beach again scores a 1 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The majority of employment opportunities within the village are confined to tourism, including caravan holiday parks and leisure facilities. Nearby Rye Harbour and Rye provide some employment opportunity, but it is expected that residents would be reliant on commuting further afield. Winchelsea Beach scores 2 for its access to employment opportunities, which is comparable with other larger villages within the district.

Public Transport

Public transport in Winchelsea Beach is relatively good. It has a good bus service, with up to 13 buses a day between Rye and the Conquest Hospital in Hastings. From Rye, national rail services can be accessed, as well as further bus connections. Overall, Winchelsea Beach scores 3 for its access to public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Winchelsea Beach, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	9

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Winchelsea Beach, including no current Local Plan allocations.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good bus connection to Hastings and Rye • Relatively good leisure and community facilities
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few essential facilities and services • Considerable environmental constraints to outward expansion, including SSSI, SAC, SPA and RAMSAR designations • Majority of settlement within Flood Zone 3 • Lack of employment consistent with being within a rural area

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Winchelsea Beach is a coastal settlement, that is close to Rye and relatively near to Hastings – both of which are readily accessible via a regular bus service. However, for the size of its population, Winchelsea Beach has a low level of service level, and with only one essential service, its residents are dependent on visiting nearby settlements for the many of their day-

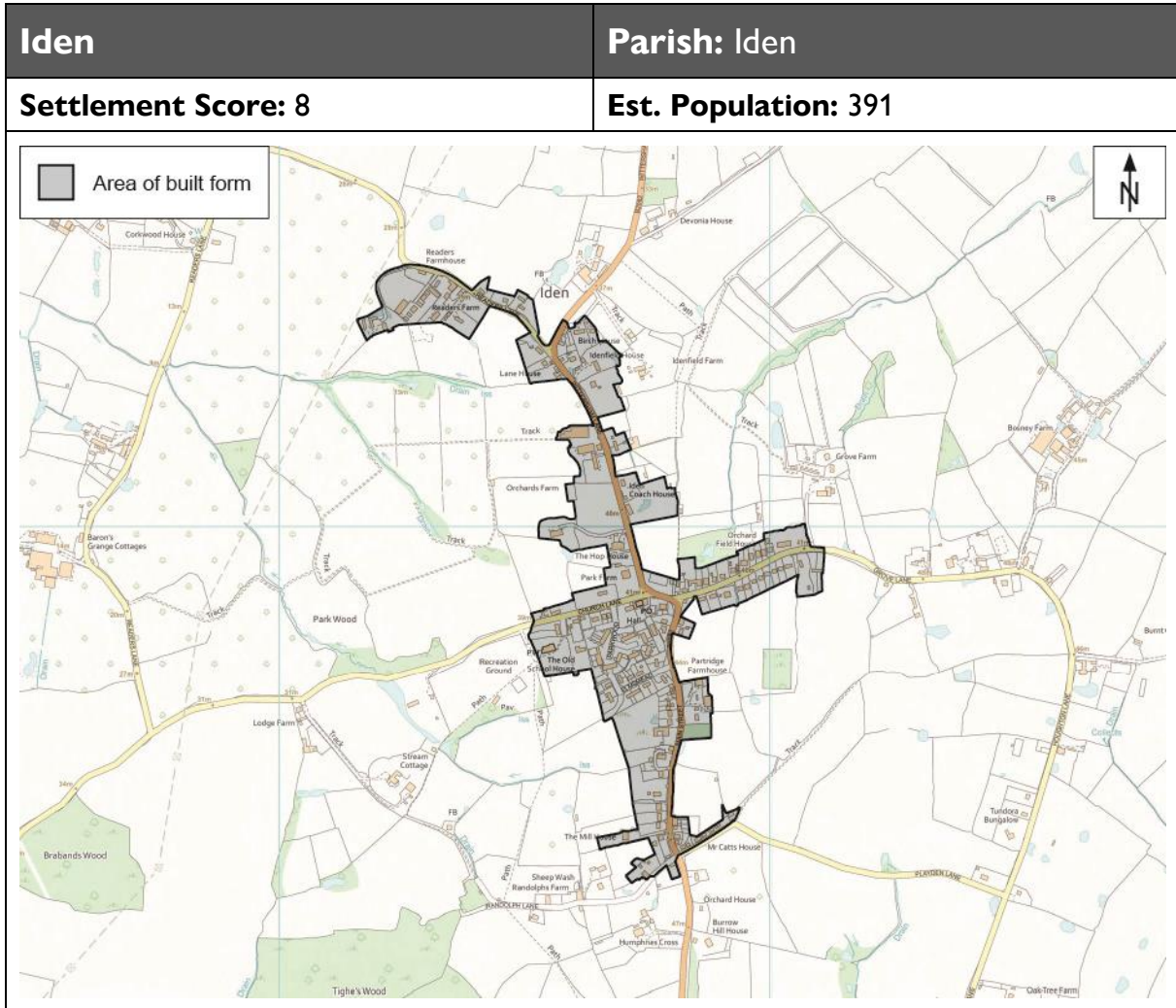
to-day needs. For the purposes of this Review, Winchelsea Beach's score means that it is considered to be potentially sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

The largest factor weighing against the village's sustainability is its lack of essential services. However, with practically all areas within and outside of Winchelsea Beach being covered wither by a significant ecological designation or being within Flood Zone 3, the village is severely restricted in terms of its opportunities for further development. It is unlikely that the lack of essential services could be remedied through development within the village. Some redevelopment of existing brownfield sites or the conversion of smaller caravan sites may provide some means of development. The other potential option to improve sustainability is for the improvement in public transport connections to better serviced settlements, although as Winchelsea Beach already has a good bus service, the gains to be had from improved bus connectivity is perhaps questionable.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Some limited development may support existing services or a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Iden is a small rural village approaching some 400 people, situated to the north of Rye. Iden is within the eastern end of the district, with the Kent boarder being between 1.1km and 1.8km to the north and east respectively, while overlooking the marshes and the Royal Military canal to the east. The settlement is principally linear in form, although the village is centred around the crossroads of the B2082, Wittersham Lane, Church Lane and Grove Lane. Post-war developments have created some in-depth developments on the western side of the village.

Iden is relatively isolated, while being 2.7km to the north of Rye. Nearby smaller settlements include Peasmarsch, which is circa 2.5km to the west, and Playden, 2km to the south. Further

afield, the centre of Hastings is some 17.5km to the southwest, with the centre of Ashford being 20km to the northeast.

The village does not benefit from a gas supply and there is a large dependence on heating oil.

Housing and Population

Iden has an estimated population of 391, which is based on the number of dwellings, 186, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Iden has a history and heritage dating to the Domesday book. There is a high density of listed buildings, with 30 in the village, including the Grade I listed Parish Church of All Saints. The majority of the settlement is covered by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) which denotes the siting of a medieval and post medieval village. There are also several neighbouring ANAs and scheduled monuments in the surrounding countryside.

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.

Landscape Character

Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area

Iden is within the High Weald NL and lies to the far eastern end of the Lower Rother Valley LCA. The settlement is set on topography that gradually slopes down to the lower reaches of the Rother which forms a broad valley, which circles Iden at a distance of 1km from the northwest around to the east.

The landscape within the valley features an intricate pattern of rectangular fields bounded by reed fringed ditches in the flood plains, while on higher ground a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing can be found. The landscape in this eastern section of the Lower Rother Valley lacks the coherent structure of the High Weald, such as hedges and woodland. The assessment notes that the Lower Rother Valley features some exceptionally remote unspoilt areas away from the main roads and villages.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds the stretch of ribbon development which forms the village identified as area 'I1', which is summarised below:

I1 – Iden

This is pleasant pastoral countryside around an unspoilt village. Orchards and grazing land are characteristic, as are feature vernacular buildings. This is a nucleated village which has grown around a crossroads. There is more modern ribbon development on the roads out of the village.

The assessment defines the landscape area as high quality, and a high value AONB area with moderate-high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. Consequently, this landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'low' for residential development and 'none' for business development. It is noted that there may be some potential for development close to the village edges. This would need to be in a strong landscape framework to avoid intrusion into the countryside. As for mitigation potential there would be some scope around the village edges to create new tree belts.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

Areas to the southern tip of the settlement are not considered to be suitable as they are located apart from the village core and adjacent only to ribbon development. The immediate area to the southeast of the central cross roads has housing to most sides, and therefore has some capacity for development, perhaps that could mirror the development on the other side of the B2082. There may be some cope for small scale development in open sites north of the crossroads along Wittersham Lane, however these sites are also sensitive, while hedgerows are a constraint.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Iden is wholly within the AONB. There are several small parcels of priority habitat, including deciduous woodland and a traditional orchard, that are adjacent to the southwest and east of the settlement. Slightly further out are a number of small parcels of ancient woodland which neighbour the settlement.

There are significant areas that are subject to surface water flooding to the east and west of the northern parts of the settlement and are consistent with watercourses that drain into the Rother Valley to the north. The village itself however is generally free from flood related issues.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

In terms of essential services Iden has a small convenience store containing a post office. The nearest primary school is St Michaels CE in Houghton Green, which is 1 km distant to the southeast. While the nearest doctor's surgery is likely to be in Rye. While Iden has a convenience store, the nearest access to a supermarket would be Jempsons, which is 4km along Coldharbour Lane and the A268 to the southeast in Peasmarsch, or otherwise Tenterden to the north. With two essential services Iden scores 2.

Service Level

Beyond the services listed above, notable services and facilities include a convenience shop, pub, post office, community hall and a recreation ground. Iden only scores a 1 for its overall service level, however its range of facilities and services is reasonable for its size and are comparable with a number of larger villages within the district.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Iden's situation is wholly rural, and there are very little employment opportunities in the immediate vicinity, and it scores 1. There are several small light industrial units located nearby at Orchard Farm, The Old Dairy, Readers Farm, outside the village to the north. Residents would most likely be dependent on commuting to larger settlements for work. The nearest centre for employment is Rye. Rye also provides commuting train line links to Hastings and Ashford.

Public Transport

Iden has an average bus service with up to seven daily services running between Rye and Tenterden, as well as an additional school bus service to Tenterden. There is also a single Thursday service to Tunbridge Wells, although this service does not run during the school summer holidays. Rye train station is a 10-minute drive from Iden and is also accessible by daily buses. Without a more frequent bus service Iden scores a 2 for its public transport provision.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Iden, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score	8

Current development commitments

There is one allocated site within Iden. DaSA Policy IDE1 allocates the Land south of Elmsmead for 12 dwellings, including a public ecology area as part of the scheme. There are currently no planning applications for this site.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Post Office and convenience store
- A reasonable service level for the size of village
- Some 2.7km north of Rye, which has a good range of services and facilities

Settlement Weaknesses

- No primary school or doctor's surgery
- Landscape and heritage constraints impact significantly on development potential
- Less frequent bus service
- Low local employment opportunities

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Iden is a small and remote rural settlement. Its reasonable sustainability score and its relationship with Rye means that some smaller scale development could help its community to live well locally by potentially improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connected to Rye. Ultimately however, its score puts it alongside settlements that are considered for the purposes of this Review to have low sustainability.

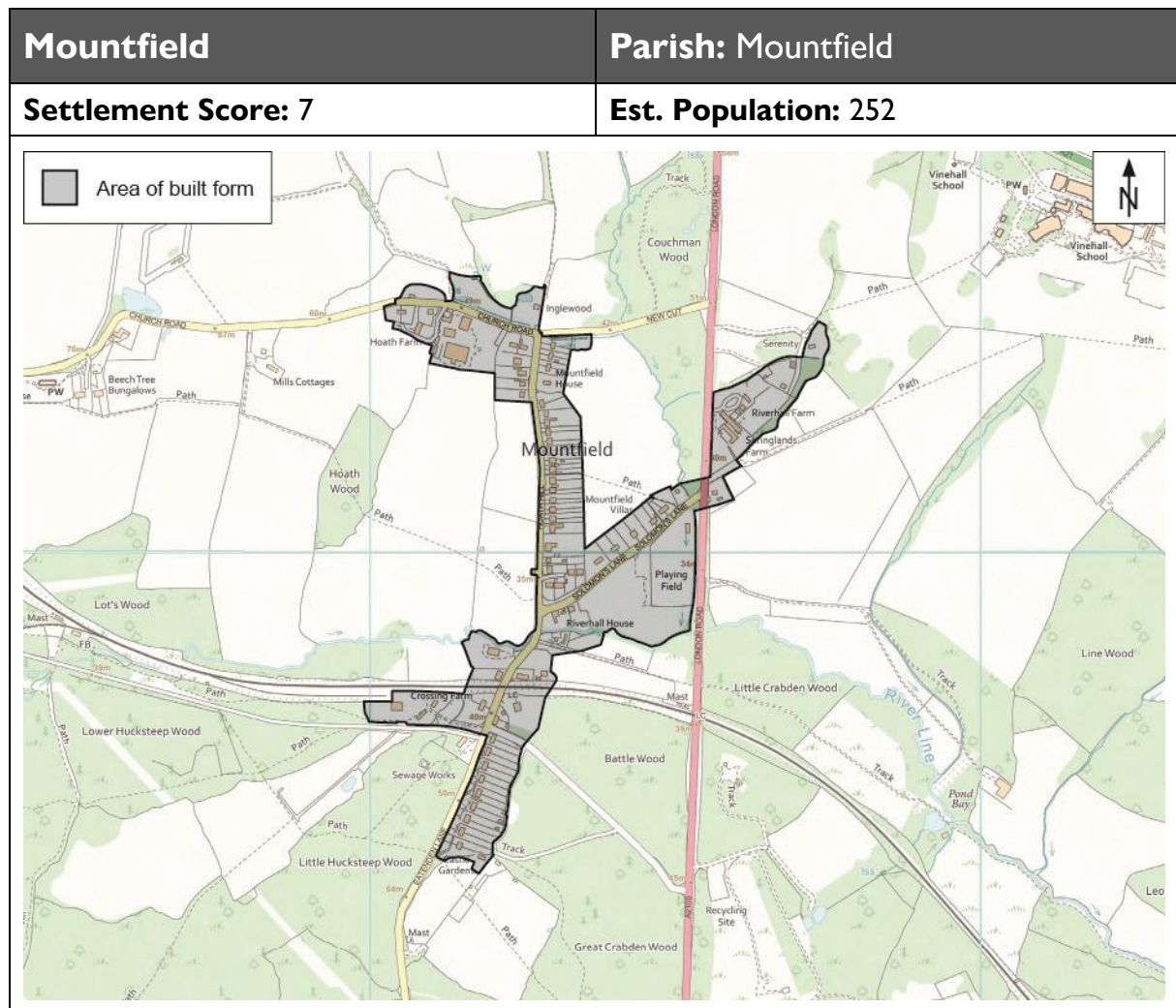
Opportunities to improve sustainability

There is some potential for some very small-scale development within more enclosed areas of the village, which reflects the existing DaSA allocation. This allocation, if not developed, should be carried forward. The most significant way by which the village could be made more sustainable would be to capitalise its relative proximity to Rye with a more frequent

bus service, which could be delivered through Iden's incorporation a network of rural settlements connected to Rye.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

With significant landscape and heritage constraints, there is potential only for a very small amount of growth. There is therefore limited potential for development to support new services and facilities.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Mountfield consists of two discrete parts, the original small settlement along Church Road lies to the west of more recent development located at Hoath Hill both north and south of the railway and approximately 3.5km north of Battle. Slightly closer, Mountfield is some 3km south of Robertsbridge, while further afield Mountfield is roughly 12km to the north of the centre of Hastings and Bexhill. The nearest settlement is Johns Cross, which is 0.75km to the north.

The original settlement has a handful of dwellings, whereas the more recent settlement is linear in pattern and has a population of approximately 252 people which probably grew as a result of the nearby gypsum mine. 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.

Housing and Population

Johns Cross has an estimated population of 252, which is based on the number of dwellings, 97, multiplied by the household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.6 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Mountfield is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it had a noted population of 11 households, and was held by Tenant-in-chief Robert, the Count of Eu, to whom it had an annual value of 4 pounds.

As previously stated, Mountfield comprises two discrete areas of built form. The larger, eastern section is generally more modern, featuring dwellings mainly from the early 20th Century, however it includes one listed building to its south. The small western section of the Village is historic in character, and contains 3 listed buildings, including the Grade II* listed Parish Church of All Saints of which significant sections were built in the early 12th Century. This western section is also wholly within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) which identifies the location of a medieval and post-medieval village. In the 600m gap intervening between the two sections of the village lies a farmstead with two listed buildings including a farmhouse.

Perhaps as far back as the 17th Century, it was thought that the area around Mountfield had unexploited coal seams and in 1876 a 2,000 foot deep exploratory bore hole was drilled. Although no coal was found, gypsum was found, and has provided the area with a thriving industry ever since.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Mountfield is wholly within the High Weald NL and lies to the northwestern edge of the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area (LCA), which generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes. However, the landscape surrounding Mountfield falls outside of the Brede Valley as it relates to the River Line to the south of the village, which is a tributary of the River Brede, which is much smaller and winds its course south east through areas woodland. Mountfield is more associated with the head of the Brede valley, which has extensive areas of Semi-Natural Ancient deciduous woodland.

Being on the northwestern periphery of the Brede Valley, Mountfield is almost immediately adjacent to the Darwell Valley LCA, which is bounded by the Brightling ridge to the north and the Netherfield ridge to the south. While the larger area of the settlement is within the general proximity of the A2100, it is related to the Darwell Valley to the northwest, which is a landscape of bold heavily wooded ridges and secluded valleys and is one the most densely wooded areas of the high Weald giving a sense of endless forest and a character of exceptional remoteness.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes three landscape areas surrounding the larger north western section of the village through the identification of three areas ‘M1’, ‘M2’ and ‘M3’, which are summarised below:

M1 - Solomons Lane

This is a low-lying meadow area which is enclosed by woodland on the valley slope to the south. The area is a stream valley and part flood plain as well as a recreation ground. A key detractor – is noise from the A2100. It should be noted that since the LCA was produced, a wastewater treatment works has been building within the south of this area, which does detract from the landscape character as described.

The landscape has been defined as good-high quality, and a high value AONB area with high character sensitivity and moderate-high visual sensitivity. As a result, this landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'none-low' for residential development and 'none' for business development. In addition, it is noted that this area of open valley landscape would be sensitive to change or extensive planting.

M2 – Hoath Hill

Enclosed fields close to the Edwardian / Victorian ribbon development of the village. The area is of meadows with well treed hedgerows. It has a strong sense of place.

The landscape has been defined as a good quality, and a high value AONB area with moderate-high character sensitivity and high visual sensitivity. It is identified as having a capacity of 'none-low' for residential development and would be sensitive to change. In addition, the potential for mitigation is low.

M3 – Mountfield Villas

This is a large but enclosed field with arable crops, which is backed onto by the rear gardens of the adjacent ribbon development along Hoath Hill and Solomon's Lane. These gardens are enclosed by neat hedges, while the east of the field is bound by a parcel of ancient woodland.

The landscape has been defined as a good-ordinary quality, high value AONB area with moderate-low character sensitivity and moderate-low sensitivity. It is identified as having a capacity of 'Low-Moderate for residential development, while no capacity for business development, and would be sensitive to change. In addition, the potential for mitigation is low. Overall, it is noted that there would be some scope to develop in this area, as it is more enclosed and is backed onto by houses.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Mountfield is wholly within the High Weald NL. There are extensive areas of ancient deciduous woodland surrounding the village, especially to the south of the railway line, where the settlement is effectively bounded by ancient woodland. North of the railway line,

the village is effectively screened from the A2100 by a north south parcel of ancient woodland, while there is a further parcel of ancient woodland to bounding the fields to the immediate west of Hoath Hill; both of which effectively enclose Mountfield from the wider landscape.

Most of the area between Solomon's Lane and the railway is within Flood Zone 3, while there are areas to the north and the east of the village that are subject to surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Mountfield has no primary school, doctor's surgery, convenience store, or post office. Without any essential services Mountfield scores 0. Residents are likely to be dependent on driving to Battle and Robertsbridge for access to essential services, including school access.

Service Level

Mountfield has a very limited range of local services and facilities, which include a village hall, a two sports pitches, the church and a nursery pre-school. The village hall and church are within the historic western part of the village, which is 600m walk from the main residential area of the settlement, and this distance has no footway connection. One of the sports pitches, King George Field, is within Johns Cross to the north, and is not accessible via walking due to the lack of footways along the A2100. Mountfield scores 1 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the village itself are extremely limited. In terms of the surrounding area within a 2km radius, there is a nearby Gypsum mine operated by British Gypsum. Gypsum is used today in the manufacture of plasterboards and cement and the British Gypsum mine next to 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, while the overall site covers an area of approximately 36.8ha. The British Gypsum site is by far the largest industrial area in rural Rother. Vine Hall Farm Industrial Park is also located in Mountfield Parish and covers an area of 1.2ha with a total of 42 business units (but less businesses). It is otherwise expected that residents would need to commute to Battle, or further afield to larger towns such as Bexhill and Hastings. Nearby Robertsbridge and Battle also provide commuting train services to London. Mountfield scores 2 for access to employment, which is better than average for the size of the settlement.

Public Transport

Public transport is limited. The 305 bus is a daily service with six buses per day, with connections to Robertsbridge, Battle, Hastings and Hawkhurst. There are otherwise community transport buses operated by Battle Area Community Transport, which runs a one a day service on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to various rural settlements including Robertsbridge and Battle. In addition, there are school time buses to Robertsbridge College and Claverham College in Battle. There is no train station, with the nearest stations being in Robertsbridge and Battle. Without a good bus service, Mountfield scores 2.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Mountfield, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	7

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Mountfield.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3km and 3.5km distant from Robertsbridge and Battle respectively, allowing access to a good range of facilities and services • Some local employment opportunity
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal services and facilities, including essential services • Less frequent bus service • Limited walkability between sections of the settlement due to lack of footways • The presence of Flood Zone 3 to the south of Solomon's Lane • Significant landscape constraints impact on development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

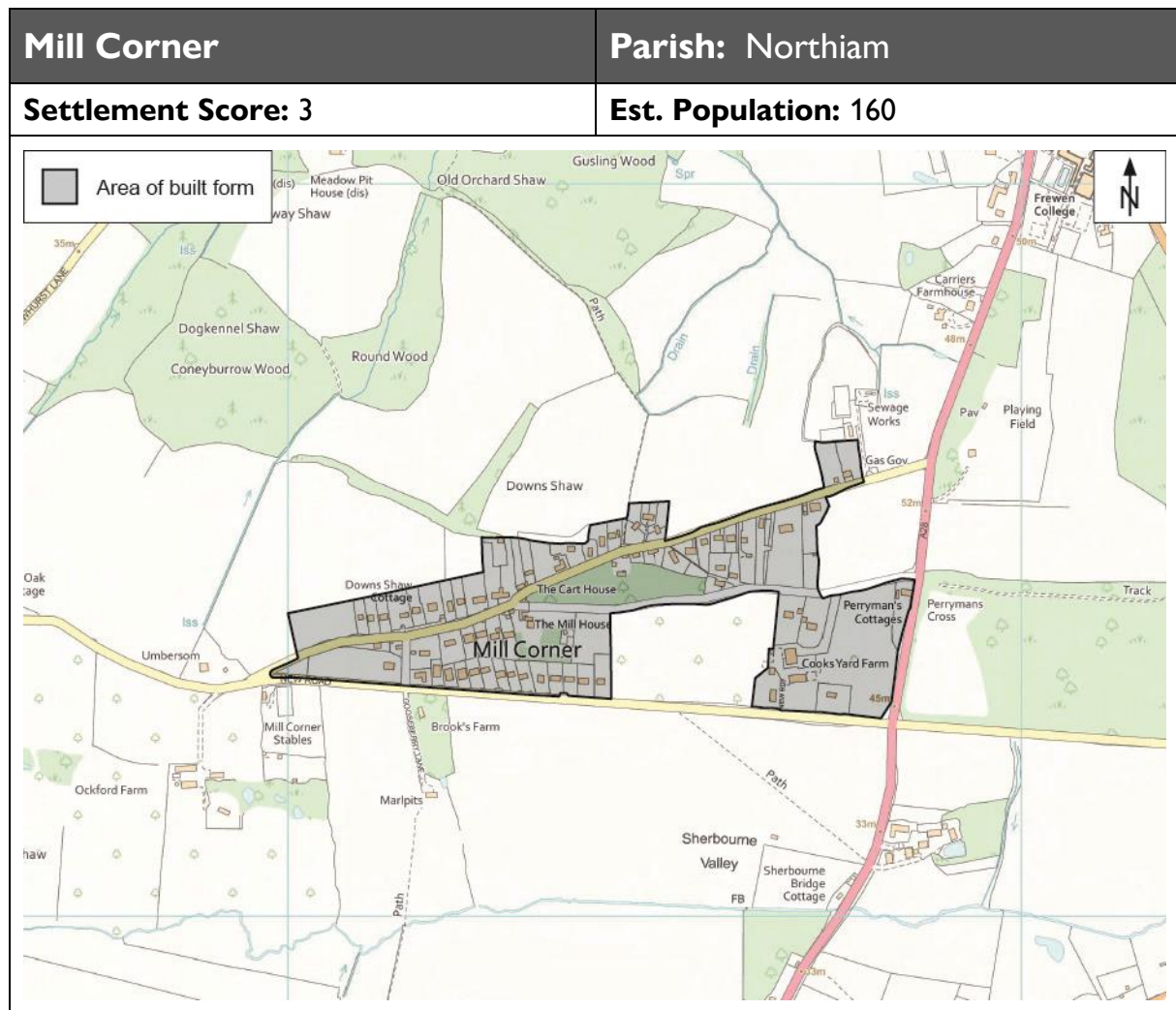
Mountfield is a small rural settlement, located equidistant between Battle and Robertsbridge. There are very few services and facilities within the village, making its residents dependent on traveling to larger settlements. Its score means that it has only low sustainability.

Opportunities for new growth to support additional services and facilities

With its minimal overall service level, it is unlikely that Mountfield's sustainability can be significantly improved. Indeed, there is limited scope for development due to landscape and flooding constraints. The improvement of public transport accessibility through a network of rural settlements connected to Battle, would be the most substantial means by which sustainability could be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There is little potential for any significant development within the village due to landscape constraints, and therefore it is unlikely that additional services and facilities could be supported by way of growth.



Settlement Overview

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.

Mill Corner is closely related to Northiam, being only 630m or so to the south. It is some 9.5km to the northwest of Rye and roughly 14km north of Hastings town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Mill Corner is an estimated 160, which is based on the number of dwellings, 76, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There is a reasonably high concentration of listed buildings within Mill Corner, with 15 in total. Furthermore, the Northiam Conservation Area is immediately to the east of Mill Corner, as well as the Grade II* listed Brickwall Garden.

Landscape Character

The surrounding landscape is within the High Weald NL and typical of the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area. Mill Corner's character is distinctly rural, and undeveloped areas are generally integrated into the surrounding countryside.

Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Lower Rother Valley extends from Salehurst in the west to Rye in the east, with the boundary with Kent in the north and the ridgetop B2089 to the south, while Mill Corner sits somewhere in the middle of these areas. It is dominated by the broad valley of the lower reaches of the River Rother, as well as the Tillingham Valley to the south. The landscape features long dramatic views across both valleys from the enclosing ridges and spurs. There is scattered woodland across the valley slopes and higher ground, much of this is ancient woodland. In terms of the built environment, the High Weald white weatherboarding and some villages have more subtle weatherboarding of pastel shades giving a seaside feel, while there are also significant houses and designed landscapes at Brickwall, Great Dixter and Peasmarsch Place. To the immediate north of Northiam is the Kent and East Sussex Steam Railway runs from Bodiam to Tenterden in Kent.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Mill Corner is wholly within the High Weald NL, and the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. There is a parcel of deciduous woodland within the centre of the settlement, and an area of traditional orchard within the eastern boundary and adjacent to the A28. 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. There are scattered areas of ancient woodland to the northwest.

There are practically no flooding related constraints within or immediately surrounding Mill Corner.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Mill Corner has no essential services, therefore scoring a 0. Residents are dependent on accessing essential services in Northiam, which is a short distance to the north, and while there is a footway, it is generally narrow and the fast traffic along the A28 makes it a potentially hazardous walk.

Service Level

There are also no facilities and services within Mill Corner, and it scores a 0. Again, the nearest range of services and facilities are found in neighbouring Northiam, while larger services require journeying to larger settlements such as Tenterden in Kent and Rye.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Mill Corner has practically no employment opportunities, and it scores 0. Some employment opportunity is provided in Northiam however, but otherwise residents are required to travel to much larger settlements further afield.

Public Transport

Buses to Mill Corner are only once per day, and therefore it scores only 1.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Mill Corner, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	1
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	3

Current development commitments

There are no current development commitments within Mill Corner.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Points of Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Northiam is 630m to the north and is potentially accessible by a footway along the A28.
Limits to Sustainability

- Small population
- No facilities and services
- Minimal employment opportunities
- Rural character and surrounding AONB landscape and Brickwall Gardens severely limit development potential
- Minimal public transport

Recommendations for the Local Plan

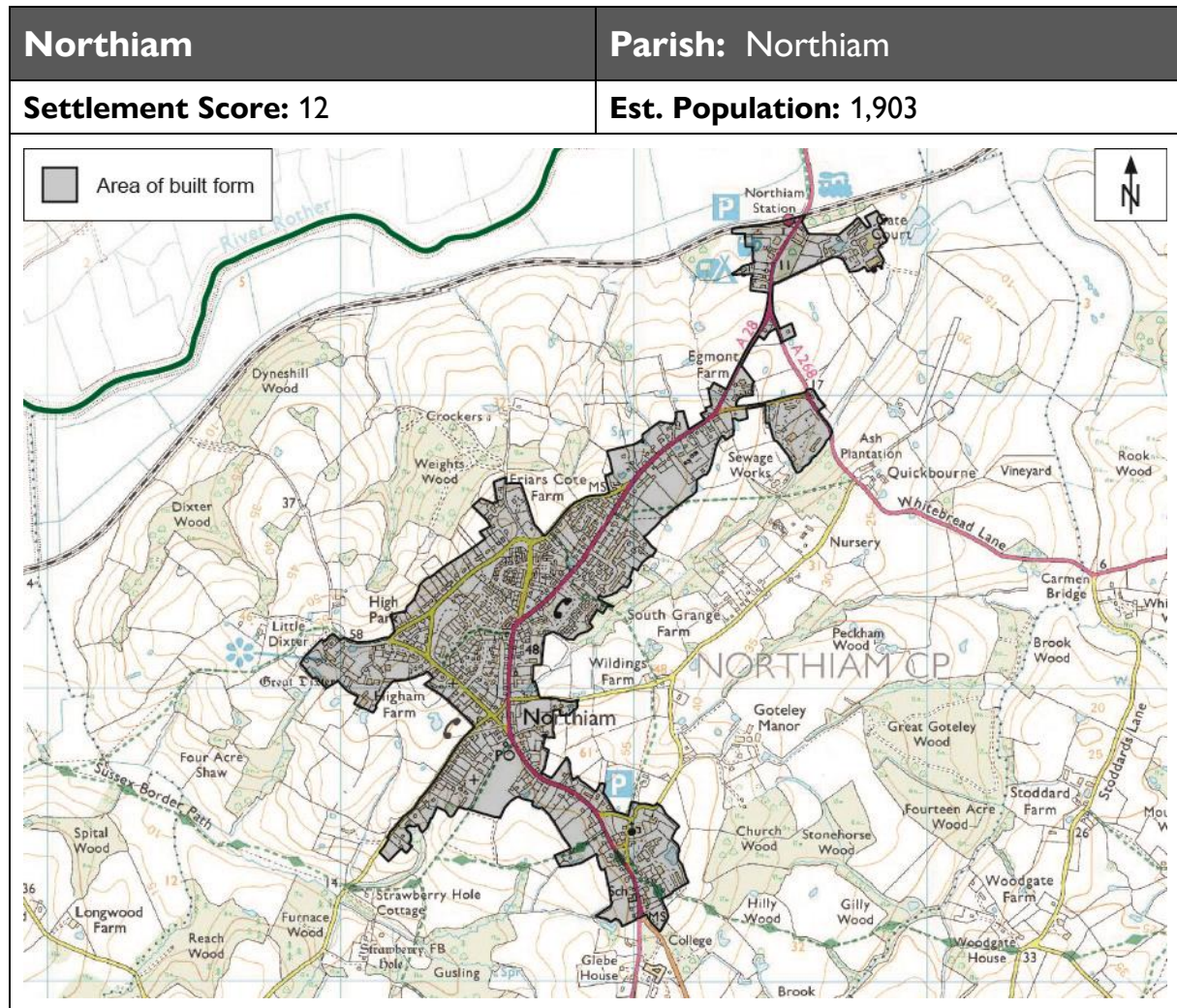
Mill Corner is a very small and remote rural settlement. It has no services or facilities of its own, and residents are wholly reliant for day-to-day activities on accessing services in Northiam or larger settlements that are further afield. Mill Corner is considered to have no potential as a sustainable settlement.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Existing residents could potentially be assisted to live better locally through improved bus connections, particularly into Northiam. It may not be possible however to identify Mill Corner within a network of eastern rural settlements connected to Rye as it has no services of its own and is very small. Such a rural network would likely be accessible via Northiam.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There is practically no capacity for development within Mill Corner, and therefore no opportunity to support any services or facilities.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

With nearly 2,000 people, Northiam is one of the most populated villages in the district and supports a reasonable range of services and facilities. The village lies along a generally north to south running ridge, situated on the A28, and is located 15km north of Hastings, 10.5km northwest of Rye, and about 9km south west of Tenterden. Northiam is however relatively remote, with Tenterden being the nearest higher order settlement.

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.

Housing and Population

The population of Northiam is an estimated 1,903, which is based on the number of dwellings, 906, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The Domesday Book of 1086 records a settlement called Higham located within the north of the village, which was detailed as having an annual value to the lord of 6 pounds.

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. 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.

Winston Churchill and three other Commonwealth prime ministers visited the village on 12th May 1944 to inspect the troops of Southern Command that were preparing for the D-Day landings on 12th May 1944. This event is commemorated by the erection of village gates on which their names are listed.

There is a relatively high concentration of listed buildings within Northiam with 80 in total. The majority of the settlement is within a Conservation Area, which also extends beyond the village to the south. An Archaeological Notification Area also covers the majority of the settlement, denoting the location of a medieval village.

Landscape Character

Northiam is within the High Weald NL and is seated on relative high ground to the immediate south of the River Rother.

Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Lower Rother Valley extends from Robertsbridge in the west to Rye in the east, with the boundary with Kent in the north and the ridgetop B2089 to the south, while Northiam is positioned somewhat equidistant in the valley between Robertsbridge and Rye. It is dominated by the broad valley of the lower reaches of the River Rother, as well as the Tillingham Valley to the south. The landscape features long dramatic views across both valleys from the enclosing ridges and spurs. There is scattered woodland across the valley slopes and higher ground, much of this is ancient woodland. In terms of the built environment, the High Weald white weatherboarding and some villages have more subtle weatherboarding of pastel shades giving a seaside feel, while there are also significant houses and designed landscapes at Brickwall, Great Dixter and Peasmarsh Place. To the immediate north of Northiam between the village and the river is the Kent and East Sussex Steam Railway, which runs from Bodiam to Tenterden in Kent.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Northiam as part of landscape assessment areas N1 to N4. These areas are set out below:

N1 – Church Lane

An area relatively unspoilt farmland close to the village edge. Typically, there are large fields but a strong landscape structure with tree belts and tall hedges. Features are the church, windy lanes, vernacular buildings, Frewin College and parkland. A main detractor is the electricity substation. The area has a strong sense of place. Settlement is of an Historic village with some very important vernacular buildings and more modern extensions to the north.

The landscape is described as a high quality and high value AONB area. The area has a moderate-high character and visual sensitivity. It is commented that this area is the setting for several listed buildings and the Conservation Area.

There may be some scope to infill within the development boundaries or in more enclosed fields close to the village edges. Any development would need to be in character with the local vernacular and Conservation Area. The potential for mitigation is low, as extensive planting would impact on local landscape character. There may be some scope to strengthen field boundaries. Overall, the capacity for residential and business development is low-moderate.

N2 – The Haven

This is a more enclosed landscape around the village fringe. There are some small holdings with pony paddocks, orchards and large gardens. The area has some sense of place. A key detractor is the industrial estate. The settlement is a historic village with some very important vernacular buildings. There are more modern extensions to the north and modern ribbon development along the lanes.

The landscape is a high quality and value AONB area, with a moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It has a moderate capacity for housing development, but a low-moderate capacity for business development. Any proposed development would need to be close to the village edges. Business uses would only be acceptable in association with existing established business areas. The potential for mitigation is considered to be moderate, with some scope to plant woodland and tree belts to link with existing trees and hedges. Strengthen the built-up edges with the countryside create new woodland to link with existing.

N3 – Dixter Lane

This is the landscape which falls away from the village edge to form the south slopes of the Rother Valley. It is an attractive landscape as the setting for the village edge and notably Great Dixter. The settlement is a historic village and there are some very important vernacular buildings. There are modern extensions to the village to the north and more

modern ribbon development along the lanes. There are scattered farms. Features are Great Dixter, long views and a strong sense of place.

The landscape is both high quality and high value AONB landscape, while also having a high character and visual sensitivity. Consequently, this area has low-no capacity to accept residential or business development. If anything, there may be some limited scope for development in enclosed pockets and between houses, but not on the open slopes. The potential for mitigation is low due to open views.

N4 – Northiam South

This is an area of pleasant, farmed slopes falling away from the village to the south. The area has a strong sense of place. Features include the white weather boarded houses. This is an Historic village with some very important vernacular buildings and more modern extensions to north.

The landscape is a high quality and high value AONB landscape, whilst also having high character and visual sensitivity. These are wide open landscapes with strong landscape characters and that have a low to no capacity for residential and business development. There is again a low potential for mitigation, due to the open character of the landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

The Assessment covers undeveloped areas beyond the northern boundary of the village to the west of the A28, as well as undeveloped areas either side of Coppards Lane to the northeast of the village. Areas to the west of the A28 are found to be highly sensitive and integral to the rural character of the village. Due to adjacent industrial development, there is some potential for a small amount of development to the north Coppards Lane, while any development to the south would constitute an unacceptable encroachment into the countryside.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Northiam is wholly within the High Weald NL. In the south there are scattered areas of ancient and deciduous woodland, adjacent or near to the village boundary, including fields

bounded by veteran trees. The majority of the areas to the east and south of the village are within the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Flooding issues are generally limited, with areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding usually consisting of residential roads.

To the west there are a few scattered parcels of ancient and deciduous woodland that neighbour the settlement, however these are further out from the village. The exception is Weight Wood, which is a larger area of ancient woodland that is directly adjacent to the northwest of the village. Flooding issues are limited, except for unsubstantial patches that are susceptible to occasional surface water flooding.

The northern end of the village forms part of the open sloping Rother Valley. Adjacent to the north of the village is the Romney Marsh Biodiversity Opportunity Area, and areas of Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, as well as smaller parcels of ancient deciduous woodland. The immediate north of the village is within Flood Zone 3, as corresponding with the proximity of the River Rother. However, within the village there are generally only small areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Northiam has a primary school and a dedicated doctor's surgery. It has two convenience stores – a SPAR and a Jempsons Local – the latter of which contains a post office. The nearest supermarket access would either be to Tenterden to the northeast, or more locally the Jempsons supermarket in Peasmarsh. The nearest secondary schools are likely to be in Tenterden, Rye and Robertsbridge.

Service Level

Notable facilities and services, in addition to the ones identified above, include a nursery pre-school, a dentist, a village hall, a dedicated sports hall, and a recreation ground. There is also a bakery and an Indian restaurant, and a number of other Class E uses. It is notable

however that there are currently no public houses within the village. While Northiam scores a 2 for its wider service level, it is comparable to the other larger villages in the district for its number and range of facilities and services.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The northeast end of Northiam is a centre of employment uses around 'Coppards Lane' which totals a site area of around 3.46ha, while there are a number of businesses throughout the village. There is also a range of light industrial type businesses in the locality. Other instances of employment may be found in Northiam's range of services and facilities. Northiam scores 2 for employment uses, which again is comparable with the other large villages in the district.

Public Transport

Northiam is served by two average bus services. The number 2 bus which travels between Hastings and Tenterden has up to 9 buses per day, and the number 313 journeys to Rye and Rye Harbour, of which there are 6 buses per day.

There is a railway station to the north of Northiam forming part of the Kent and East Sussex Railway which is a tourist attraction, however at present it does not connect with national rail services, and therefore cannot function as a commuter service. The nearest train stations are in Robertsbridge and Rye. Without any frequent bus services (10 or more per day), Northiam scores 2 for its public transport provision which puts it below average for Rother's larger villages, which usually have access either to a good bus service or to a train station.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Northiam, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	12

Current development commitments

The DaSA allocates three housing sites within Northiam for a total of 16 dwellings, within the following sites.

Policy NOR1: Land south of Northiam Church of England Primary School – 6 dwellings

Policy NOR2: Land south of The Paddock/ Godden's Gill – either some 52 age-restricted dwellings for older people, or some 36 dwellings. This allocation is subject to permissions RR/2019/2738/P and RR/2021/2743/P for the development of 34 dwellings.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full range of essential services • Relatively good range of facilities and services • Some employment opportunities
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only average frequency bus services, with no nearby train stations (national railways) • Relatively isolated from larger towns • Lack of supermarket • Open AONB landscape to the west of the settlement limits development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

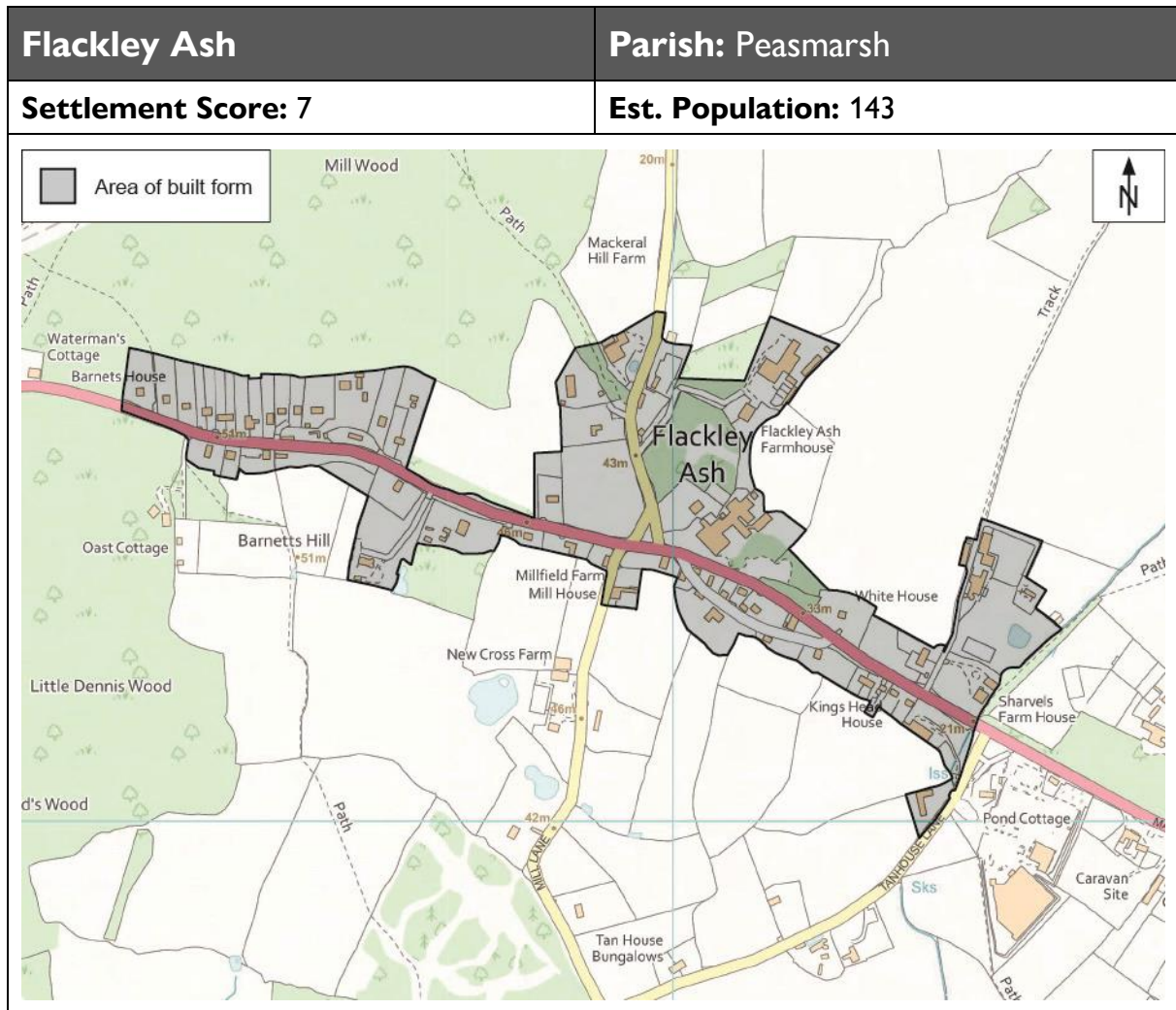
Northiam is a larger sustainable rural village, that is situated within a remote area within the northeast of the district. Its relatively high sustainability score means that some development would help its community to live well locally, while residents would also remain dependent on travelling to the nearest larger settlements, including Tenterden in Kent and Rye. This review considers Northiam to have moderate sustainability, which is comparable with other higher scoring rural villages within the district.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

The majority of village has significant landscape constraints, however there are some less sensitive, enclosed areas close to the east of the settlement that may have some capacity for further development. Further development also includes the existing DaSA allocations, which if not developed, should be carried forward into the new plan period. Sustainability would also be improved through an improved access to public transport, specifically buses to larger settlements such as Tenterden and Rye, which have a wider range of services including supermarkets and secondary schools. This may be assisted through Northiam's inclusion within an eastern cluster of rural settlements centred on Rye; with Rye functioning as interchange hub for wider rail and bus connections

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The development of the existing allocations and allowing further development in less sensitive areas within the east of the settlement, may support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Flackley Ash is a small settlement which is to the west of and practically contiguous with Peasmarsch. Like its larger neighbour, Flackley Ash is linear in form, constituting sections of ribbon development astride the A268. Unlike Peasmarsch, Flackley Ash's linear development is generally dispersed, and features undeveloped gaps either side of the A268, so that it feels for like the countryside than a settlement. That said, where Flackley Ash shares the same facilities and services as Peasmarsch, the two settlements form a functional unit for the purposes of the Local Plan, and to a lesser extent Rye Foreign adjacent to the east along the A268.

Housing and Population

Flackley Ash has an estimated population of 143, which is based on the number of dwellings, 62, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling. The population for the larger Peasmarsh settlement area, with which Flackley Ash is a contiguous settlement, along with the adjacent of Rye Foreign, makes an estimated combined population of 1,253.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Flackley Ash has a high concentration of listed buildings, with 16 Grade II listed buildings in total. In addition, at least half the settlement is covered by the Peasmarsh Historical Village Archaeological Notification Area (ANA).

Landscape Character

Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Flackley Ash is within the High Weald National Landscape. The immediate landscape to the south of the settlement is typical of the High Weald, with small irregular fields, that are often surrounded by and dispersed with trees and hedgerows. The landscape to the north of the eastern half of the settlement is more open, with larger fields that gradually slope down towards the Rother Valley. The Landscape Character Area features scattered woodland across the valley slopes and higher ground, while west and northwest of the settlement is surrounded by a substantial area of woodland. The area exhibits a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing. It is identified that the landscape area has a network of winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients where they drop down into the valleys. The assessment notes that the Lower Rother Valley features some exceptionally remote unspoilt areas away from the main roads and villages. In general, the village has a distinctly rural setting, and is generally open to the landscape either north or south of the existing ribbon development along the A268. Undeveloped sections alongside the A268 are likely an important part of the existing settlement's character, and

the protection of this character is important for the setting of the significant number of listed buildings; further limiting development opportunities.

The eastern half of the settlement is covered by the 2009 Market Towns and Villages Landscape Character Assessment, under area 'P1 - West of Village'; the description of which can be found in the previous section on Peasmarsch.

P1 - West of Village

This is pleasant Wealden countryside. The area has a parkland character with feature trees, lime avenues, horse chestnuts and unimproved meadows. There are enclosed fields close to the village and more open fields on rising ground to the north and west. The area has a sense of place which is enhanced by feature oast houses and weatherboard cottages.

The landscape is of good quality, and a high value AONB area with moderate-high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It has a 'low' capacity for both residential and business development. It is noted that there is scope for infill, although this would be limited by the rising nature of the open countryside and so development would not be acceptable on the open countryside slopes. Since 2009, a number of infill developments have been completed in this area. The assessment also highlights the parkland setting of listed Woodside House and other vernacular buildings of the area. It advises that any development would need to be designed within a strong landscape framework to avoid intrusion into the countryside, and that there may be some scope to plant limited hedgerows and hedgerow trees, reflecting the existing treed nature.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The whole settlement is within the High Weald NL, and there is an extensive area of ancient woodland to abutting the settlement to the west and north of the settlement, as well as smaller areas of deciduous woodland also bounding the settlement to the north. Open areas contain a network of historic field boundaries.

There is a column of land that is susceptible surface water flooding that encroaches into the settlement area where it meets Peasmarsch. Otherwise, except for a few patches, Flackley Ash is generally free from flooding related issues.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Flackley Ash shares Jempsons supermarket and Post Office with adjacent Peasmarsch. With access to two essential services Flackley Ash scores a 2 for its essential services provision.

Service Level

In addition to the essential services listed above, Flackley Ash has access to a pharmacy and café which are also provided within Jempsons. It also has access to a petrol station, a further café, a pub and restaurant. Peasmarsch village hall is also considered to be accessible distance; although the primary school – being to the east of Peasmarsch – is not considered to be within an accessible distance. Flackley Ash scores 1 for its service level which categorises as a very low service level. However, this is reasonable given the settlement's small size; the range of accessible services is due to Flackley Ash's immediate proximity to Peasmarsch.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities would mostly be shared with Peasmarsch, and mostly relate to facilities and services within an accessible distance. Overall Peasmarsch has minimal employment opportunities and scores a 0. Nearby sources for employment may include Rye and Rye Harbour.

Public Transport

Flackley Ash has access to the 313 bus, which has around 5 services per day, with connections to Rye, Rye Harbour and Northiam. There are also a number of infrequent, and predominantly rural buses that serve the village. Without a good bus service (a service with 10+ buses per day) Flackley Ash score 2 for its access to public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available to residents of Flackley Ash, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	7

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Flackley Ash, including no current Local Plan allocations.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Peasmarsh affords a relatively good range of services and facilities for the size of the settlement • Nearby Peasmarsh Primary School • Just over 3km northwest of Rye

Settlement Weaknesses

- Small – population of approx. 143, therefore difficult to support services and facilities
- Its rural character and openness to the surrounding AONB landscape limit the potential for new development.
- Less frequent bus service
- Limited employment options
- Diffuse linear development pattern that reduces walkability

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Flackley Ash is a remote and small rural settlement. While its sustainability score is quite low, in practice it shares many of adjacent Peasmarsch’s services. Its relationship with Rye means that some development in Peasmarsch could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connected to Rye, even if the potential development within Flackley Ash itself is limited due to its rural character and landscape constraints. In terms of its scoring however, Flackley Ash is considered to have only low sustainability. Its suitability for development will be the consideration of the Development Strategy.

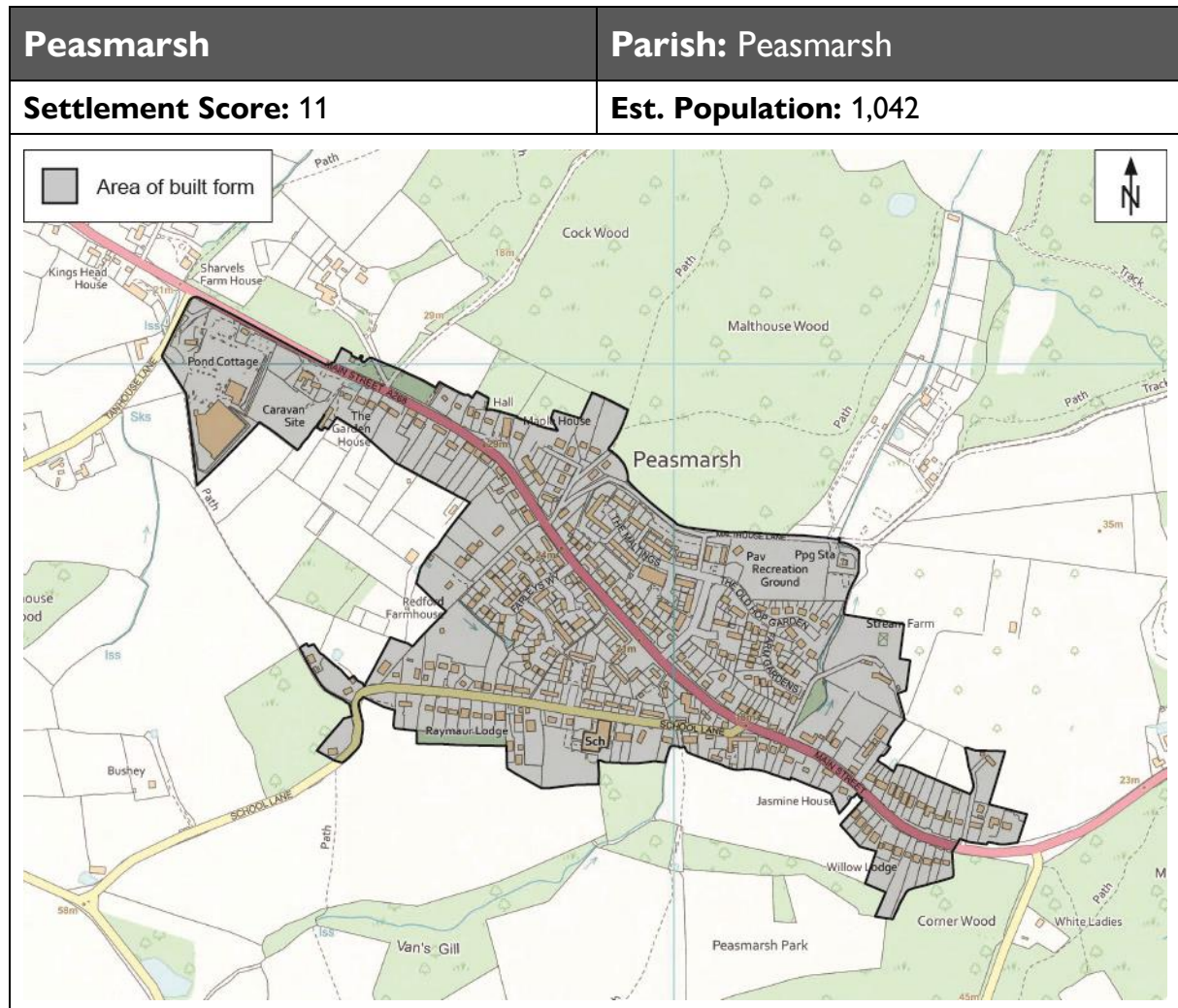
Opportunities for Growth

Peasmarsch superstore and associated facilities could be identified as the functional heart of both Peasmarsch and given its immediate proximity, also for Flackley Ash. The far east of the settlement is therefore the most sustainable.

Through improving the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of rural settlements connected to Rye, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Given the proximity of Peasmarsch and the close relationship of the two settlements, growth in Peasmarsch that supports new services would be beneficial for Flackley Ash also. Allowing new development between Church Lane and Main Street in Peasmarsch, along with other sensitive locations, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Peasmarsh is situated within the north-east of the district. Compared to most villages of its scale, it has a less defined village centre as the village developed in a linear form, with dwellings abutting the A268 that runs through the centre and School Lane that branches from it. This linear form continues to the north-west as the village is effectively coalescent with the smaller settlement of Flackley Ash.

The lack of a village centre and the linear development form increase the distances between services and facilities, therefore limiting the walkability of the settlement (although there are pavements on both sides of Main Street). The Main Street / School Lane triangle contains a primary school, (including a pre-school) and a pub (Horse & Cart), but other key services are located in the superstore (which also contains a post office, café, pharmacy and petrol filling station) to the north-west end of the village.

The nearest settlements to Peasmarsh are Beckley and Four Oaks which are some 2.4km to the northwest, while the much smaller settlement of Rye Foreign is roughly 200m to the east. In terms of larger settlements, Rye is some 5.5km to the southeast, with the centres of Hastings and Ashford being some 14.5km to the south west and 22.5km to the north east respectively.

Housing and Population

Peasmarsh has an estimated population of 1,042, which is based on the number of dwellings, 453, multiplied by the household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling. The adjacent Flackley Ash has an estimated population of 143, which makes for a combined greater Peasmarsh population of 1,185.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

In Roman times, Peasmarsh was an iron smelting centre, and developed around an Anglo-Saxon Minster where the present Norman church of St Peter and St Paul (situated half a mile away in an isolated meadow down Church Lane to the south of Peasmarsh) now stands. The village was recorded in a census of 1070 but does not appear in the Domesday Book of 1086. It is said that the isolated location of the church points to an earlier settlement being wiped out by the Black Death in the 14th Century and the population being relocated as a result¹².

¹² <https://www.highweald.org/learn-about/villages-a-towns/746-peasmarsh.html>

There are 16 listed buildings within Peasmarsh, not counting a number of listed buildings to the south of the village; including the Grade I listed Norman church. There are a further 16 listed buildings in Flackley Ash, which also contribute to the historic character of the area. The settlement's listed buildings are generally farmhouses and workers cottages now interspersed with other dwellings creating a continuous linear development. There are more modern cul-de-sacs behind the properties fronting Main Street. The road facing sections of Peasmarsh, and much of Flackley Ash are within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA). The area surrounding the Norman church is part of a separate ANA, denoting the abandoned historic settlement.

Landscape Character

Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Peasmarsh is within the High Weald National Landscape. It is sited between the Rother and Tillingham Valleys to the north and south, although it lies within a landscape that gradually slopes down to the Rother. The area features typical High Weald scattered development of farmsteads, hamlets and large country house estates – including Peasmarsh Place to the south of the village, and its associated designed landscape. The Landscape Character Area features scattered woodland across the valley slopes and higher ground, while the area to the west of Peasmarsh, to the south of Beckley, is heavily wooded with accessible ancient woodland. Peasmarsh's 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 southeastern boundary of the village. The area exhibits a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing. It is identified that the landscape area has a network of winding and very narrow sunken country lanes with steep gradients where they drop down into the valleys. The assessment notes that the Lower Rother Valley features some exceptionally remote unspoilt areas away from the main roads and villages.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of three areas 'P1', 'P2' and 'P3', which are summarised below:

P1 - West of Village

This is pleasant Wealden countryside. The area has a parkland character with feature trees, lime avenues, horse chestnuts and unimproved meadows. There are enclosed fields close to the village and more open fields on rising ground to the north and west. The area has a sense of place which is enhanced by feature oast houses and weatherboard cottages.

The landscape is of good quality, and a high value AONB area with moderate-high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It has a 'low' capacity for both residential and business development. It is noted that there is scope for infill, although this would be limited by the rising nature of the open countryside and so development would not be acceptable on the open countryside slopes. Since 2009, a number of infill developments have been completed in this area. The assessment also highlights the parkland setting of listed Woodside House and other vernacular buildings of the area. It advises that any development would need to be designed within a strong landscape framework to avoid intrusion into the countryside, and that there may be some scope to plant limited hedgerows and hedgerow trees, reflecting the existing treed nature.

P2 – Central Paddocks

This is the central part of the village on either side of Main Street. As well as the built-up area, it is characterised by enclosed paddocks which extend out beyond the gardens of the residential development. The paddocks are generally enclosed by tall well treed hedgerows. Weatherboard cottages are local features.

The landscape, although within the wider high value AONB, is of fair quality, with low character sensitivity and low visual sensitivity. There is consequently a 'moderate' capacity for residential development and 'low' capacity for business development. There would be scope to infill with sensitive development and redefine the village boundaries where they interface with the countryside, and that there may be scope in enclosed paddocks close to the village edge.

P3 - South and East of Village

This is an area of more open countryside which surrounds the village to the south and east. Ribbon development along Church Lane does not detract from the rural character of the area. The area is characterised by grazed meadow areas with some areas of orchards to the east of the village. Several footpaths run through the area giving access to the wider countryside.

The landscape is good quality, within in wider high value AONB area, and has a moderate-high character and visual sensitivity. This landscape area has a 'low' capacity for residential development and 'none' for business development. There may be limited scope in enclosed areas and as infill development close to the village edge. Mitigation measures could include strengthening the village edge to the south by extending tree belts and linking existing woodlands. There would be scope to replace lost hedges with tree belts and hedges.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

There was found to be some potential for development to the rear of development along the main road, between the existing allocation to the east and Jempsons supermarket to the west, provided that it does not extend further south than the existing allocation. At the same time, landscape views to the southwest would need also to be protected through a landscape buffer and tree planting. Sites to the immediate west of here however, despite their proximity to the village, form part of the AONB landscape, and are too sensitive to allow development. An area to the south of Main Street to the eastern end of the village was also assessed, but was considered to be wide and open, while forming a part of the landscape. Its development would consequently have an adverse landscape impact, while detracted from the linear settlement pattern in this location.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

There are significant areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding, that relate several watercourses that cross the settlement. Notable areas are within the centre of the village particularly running along the roads including most of Main Street, as well as the north west of the supermarket car park.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Peasmarsh's essential services consist of a Jempsons supermarket (containing a post office), a primary school (with pre-school) and a doctor's surgery (a once a fortnight outreach facility). It is notable that Jempsons does not open on Sundays. With one of each essential service, Peasmarsh scores 4 in this sustainability category.

Service Level

Relative to its size, Peasmarsh has a reasonable range of facilities services. In addition to the essential services listed above, notable services in Peasmarsh include its village hall, two pubs, and a recreation ground. The Jempsons supermarket also contains a pharmacy, a café and a petrol station, while there is a food takeaway service adjacent to the Cock Inn. Peasmarsh scores 2 for its service level which categorises it as having a low service level. However, its provision and score are comparable to the larger villages within the district, and in relation to this it is significant that Peasmarsh has one of each essential service.

In addition, Peasmarsh includes the Flackley Ash Hotel & Restaurant, which contains a gym and indoor swimming pool, while Rye Foreign adds The Royal Oak pub. While these services are not counted within the service level scoring as they are outside of the maximum distance required for their inclusion, their general locality is of note.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are a number of small light industrial units within the village that offer local employment, particularly at the Maltings Business Park which contains six units totalling 290sq.m. Local services such as Jempsons Supermarket may also provide some further employment opportunities. Peasmarsh scores a 1 in respect of its opportunities for

employment, which again is relatively consistent with other settlements of a similar size – which typically score either a 2 or 1.

Residents would most likely be dependent on commuting to larger settlements for work. The nearest centre for employment is Rye. Rye also provides potential commuting train line links to Hastings and beyond to the west and Ashford International to the east, although limited bus links to the train station (the first bus being at 08.23am) make commuting solely by public transport problematic (it is a seven minute drive away).

Public Transport

The village has an average bus service with up to 5 buses daily running between Rye and Northiam, together with school bus services to Rye, Bexhill, Tenterden and Robertsbridge. A more frequent bus service would go some way to improving the overall sustainability of the settlement. In summary, public transport in Peasmarsch is generally limited for its size and it scores a 2.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Peasmarsch, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	11

Current development commitments

There is one allocated site within Peasmarsh. DaSA Policy PEA1 allocates the Land south of Main Street for 45 dwellings, including a children’s play area. There are currently no planning applications for this site.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger village – population over 1,000 • Relatively good range facilities and services for size of settlement, including all four essential services • Some 3km northwest of Rye, which has a good range of services and facilities

Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less frequent bus service • Limited employment options, for the size of the settlement • Lack of village centre • Linear settlement pattern which limits walkability • Surface water flooding issues in the centre of the village • Areas of open AONB countryside to the east and west limit the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Peasmarsh is a generally sustainable rural settlement. Its sustainability score and its relationship with Rye means that some development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connected to Rye. With a score of 11, Peasmarsh is considered to be potentially sustainable, with the ultimate determination as to its suitability for further development to be left to the Development Strategy.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

The superstore and associated facilities could be identified as the heart of the village, with opportunities for development between Church Lane and Main Street, identified as the least landscape sensitive part of the village and the more sustainable. Through improving the

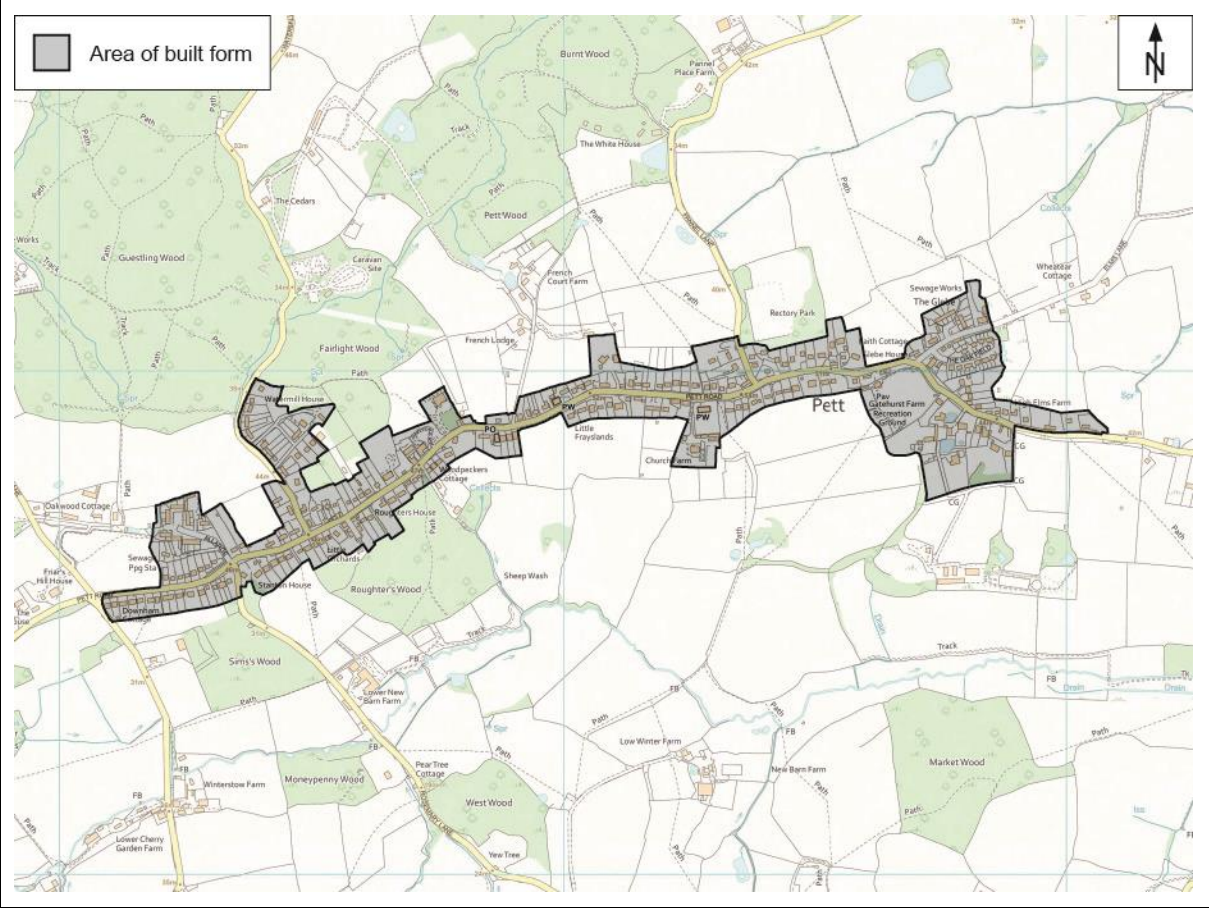
provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of rural settlements connected to Rye, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing new development between Church Lane and Main Street along with other sensitive locations, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.

Pett	Parish: Pett
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Settlement Score: 8	Est. Population: 667
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Settlement Overview

Introduction

Pett is a village with a linear development form straddling a historic east west ridgetop routeway, which is characteristic of many villages in the High Weald NL. This ridge eventually tapers down to the southeast where it meets the sea at Pett Level. Due to its linear form, there is no distinct village centre, although the parish church of St Mary and St Peter provides a clear focal point.

The village is located some 6km northeast of Hastings, and roughly 3.3km north east of Ore Village which is the nearest service centre. The beach of Pett Level is just over 1km to the southeast, and the neighbouring village of Guestling being 1km to the west. Pett is also contiguous with the settlement of Friars Hill immediately to the west along Pett Road. Slightly further is the village of Fairlight Cove which is some 1.6km to the south.

Housing and Population

The population of Pett is an estimated 667, which is based on the number of dwellings, 303, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

As noted previously Pett developed straddling Pett Road, which is a historic ridgetop routeway, and it is likely for this reason that almost all of the villages listed buildings are adjacent to the road.

There are two Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs) within Pett. The largest of these encompasses roughly half of the linear development within the geographical centre of the village, denoting a defining a medieval and post-medieval hamlet. 8 of the 14 listed building in the village can be found in this area. That said, there is no nucleated historical village core as listed buildings are scattered throughout the linear built form of the village.

The second ANA is of defining a moated medieval/post-medieval farm complex known as Gatehurst Farm, which is located at the most easterly section of the village along Pett Road and contains the Grade II listed 18th Century Gatehurst Farmhouse.

The Parish church of St Mary and St Peter is found within the centre of the village, and it is located near the highest point of the ridge. While it is unlisted and was only built in 1864, it sits within a much older medieval churchyard.

Landscape Character

Pett is situated on a ridge that is astride two landscape character areas. North and south of Pett Road, Pett is divided into two landscape character areas (LCAs); to the north of the road is the Pannel Valley, which is within the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area, and to the south is the High Wealden Coast Landscape Character Area. Being situated on high ground, Pett has far reaching views to the northeast that reach across the Brede Valley towards Rye, and wide views to the south across the Marsham Sewer and up to the Fairlight Ridge.

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The bold Brede valley runs to the north of the village, from Netherfield in the West to Rye in the east and is dominated by the course of River Brede. The well wooded valley sides are steep and contrast with the flat predominantly open levels on the valley floor. This is a landscape of long views. The expanses of uncluttered farmland are fundamental to the character and beauty of this landscape. There is a remoteness here which is rare in the southeast today.

High Wealden Coast – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

This stretch of coast lies between the eastern edge of Hastings and Pett Levels. The Heathfield-Battle-Hastings ridge reaches the sea to form an invigorating coastline of highly distinctive character. Terraced, crumbling cliffs of soft sandstone are separated by deep ghylls (here called ‘glens’) which fall steeply to the sea, ending in cliffs and waterfalls. The glens contain wind sculpted woods. Otherwise, scrubby heathland is typical, grading inland to a patchwork of small fields, woodland and wind-bent trees. The farmland behind the Country Park has been fragmented by piecemeal removal and decay of structural elements in the landscape such as hedgerows.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of three areas ‘P1’, which is summarised below.

This is an area of farmland falling away from the ridge top settlement to the north and south of Pett Road. There are large open fields, mainly under pasture. There has been some loss of landscape structure. The key feature is a ridge top settlement and church. The settlement is of ribbon development on the ridge top road, while there are a number of older buildings.

It has been defined as a high quality, high value AONB area with moderate to high character, and high visual sensitivities. It has a low capacity to accept change for housing and no capacity to accept change for business. Any development potential This would be limited to infill to ribbon development. The open slopes and ridge top character would make it difficult to integrate dense development.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

GUE0010

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The village is wholly within the High Weald NL, while touching on the Hastings Fringe Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) to the west and located near the Romney Marsh BOA to the south. There are large areas of ancient deciduous woodland bounding parts of the western end of the settlement, including woodland that connects to Guestling Woods – which represents a substantial area of accessible woodland.

The village is relatively free of areas susceptible to surface water flooding, although south facing areas of the village are within the Fairlight and Pett Level Drainage Area as designated in the Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Pett has two essential services, these being a doctor's surgery and post office. However, it should be noted both the surgery are outreach services and are only available twice per

week. The absence of convenience shopping and a primary school are notable. The nearest supermarket available is in Ore Village, while Hastings provides a much greater range of shopping facilities.

Service Level

Notable services and facilities excluding the essential services listed above include, two sports pitches and a village hall, two pubs, both including a restaurant services, as well as a café. Overall, Pett scores 1 for its service level. There is no identifiable village centre, and consequently services are dispersed throughout the settlement, while its linear development form reduces walkability between services.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the village are locally limited, with very few businesses within the village. In this respect Pett scores 1. It is expected that residents would need to commute elsewhere for employment, notably Hastings and Bexhill.

Public Transport

Public transport availability in the village is limited. There is a bus service which runs between Pett and Hastings, with four to six busses running in each direction, Monday to Saturday. The lack of better public transport services means that residents are dependent on the car. With only an average bus service, Pett scores 2 for the availability of public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Pett, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	8

Current development commitments

There are no significant development commitments within Pett.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach doctor's surgery and Post Office services • Reasonable range of leisure services and facilities, including two sports pitches and a village hall • Some 4km to the northwest of Ore, which has a good range of services and facilities.
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of any dedicated essential services, including absence of primary school or convenience shopping • Limited overall facilities and services • Minimal employment opportunities • Some significant landscape constraints given the topographical prominence and openness of the east of the village

Recommendations for the Local Plan

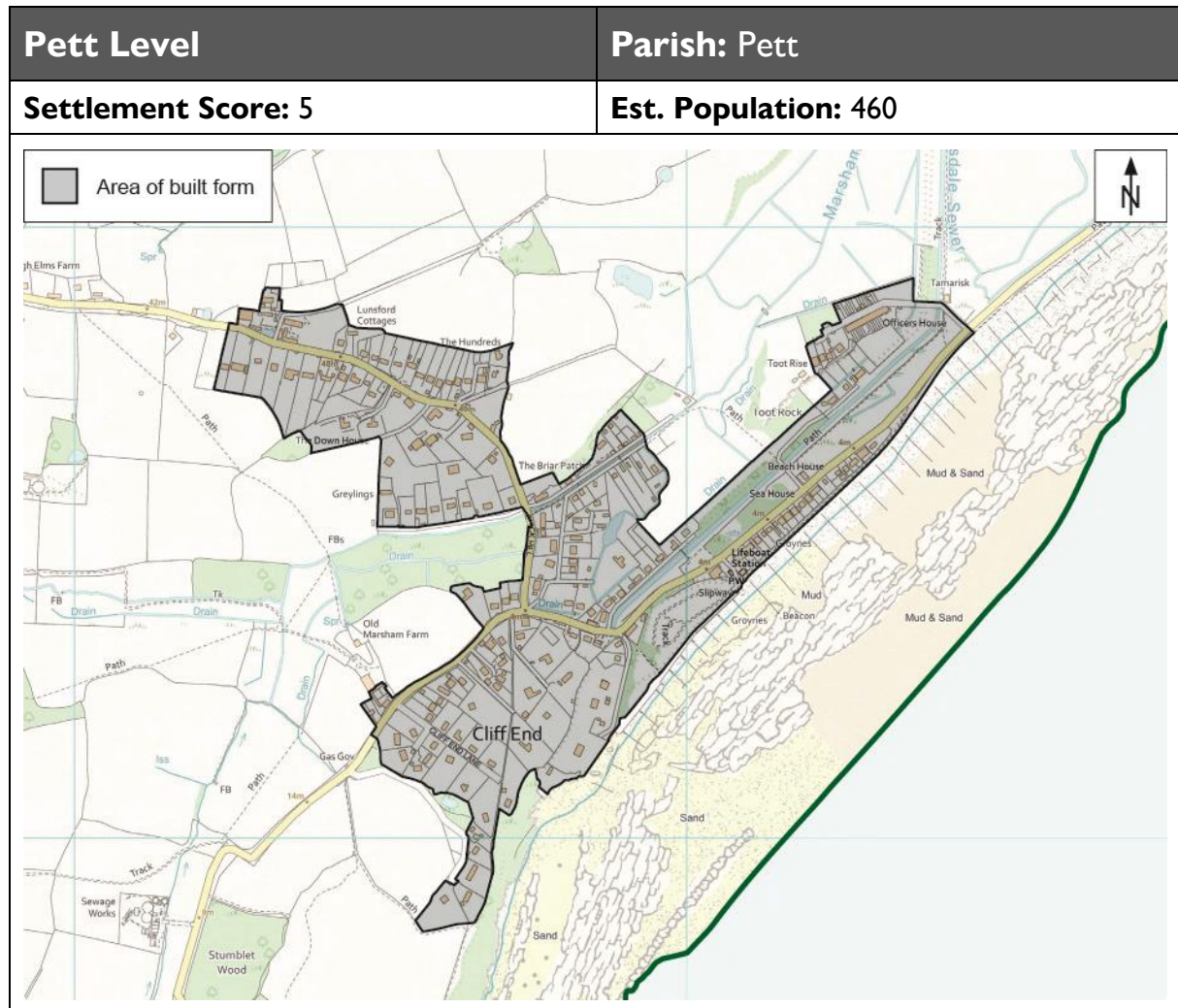
Pett is a medium sized rural village that has a limited range of services and facilities. While it is relatively close to Hastings, it also lacks a good bus service, and it is expected that its residents would be dependent on the use of the private car to access nearby facilities and services. Ultimately, Pett is considered to have only low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

While the area centred around the village Hall, the Two Sawyers Pub and the village allotments could be identified as a form of village centre, the settlement has no full-time essential services, and the settlement's landscape constraints significantly restrict the potential of significant further development enough to support additional services and facilities. Pett's sustainability could be improved by increasing the frequency of local transport accessibility through a network of local settlement within the orbit of Hastings.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There may be some scope for limited further development within the village, there is little potential for any larger scale development that would significantly improve its overall service level.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Pett Level is situated on a stretch of marshland which leads to Winchelsea in the northeast and rises to Fairlight Cliffs in the west, while extending up Chick Hill and along Pett Road to the north west.

In summer months the village is popular with tourists, as well as featuring a number of recently developed beach side villas with individual contemporary designs.

A distinctive local feature is that Pett Level marks the western end of both the 1940s sea defence wall and the Royal Military Canal, which stretches as far east as Hythe and was built in 1804 to protect against invasion from Napoleon. The Saxon Shore Way passes through Pett Level.

Neighbouring settlements include Pett, which is roughly 175m west of the development that extends beyond Chick Hill, and Winchelsea Beach is some 2.5km to the northeast along Pett Level Road. To the northeast also is Rye, which is roughly 7km, while Hastings town centre is just over 8km to the west.

Housing and Population

The population of Pett Level is an estimated 460, which is based on the number of dwellings, 209, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The majority of development in Pett Level is from the 20th Century or later. However, there are five listed buildings in the village, including Lunsford Farmhouse adjacent to Pett Road, and interestingly, a beachfront house built between 1959-60; listed on account of its being an excellent example of architect designed modernist house associated with a lifestyle that was not traditionally found on the British coast at the time.

As noted previously, Pett Level contains the western terminus of the Royal Military Canal, which is a Scheduled Monument and is also covered by an associated Archaeological Notification Area.

Landscape Character

High Wealden Coast – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Pett Level sits to the southeast of the High Wealden Coast Landscape Character Area. This stretch of coast lies between the eastern edge of Hastings and Pett Levels which reach the boundary of Winchelsea to the north.

The Heathfield-Battle-Hastings ridge reaches the sea to form an invigorating coastline of highly distinctive character that terminates at Cliff End in Pett Level. It features terraced, crumbling cliffs of soft sandstone are separated by deep ghylls (here called 'glens') which fall steeply to the sea, ending in cliffs and waterfalls. To the northeast of Cliff End is the Pett Levels, which contains the Royal Military Canal and a crisscross of ditches known locally as 'sewers', as well as the Colonel Body Memorial Lakes popular with wildfowl and bird watchers.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The majority of Pett Level is excluded from the High Weald NL, with the AONB bounding the village on all sides. The landscape here being as exposed as it is, development within the settlement would likely impact on the surrounding AONB landscape.

The 'hub' of the village, the eastern coastal stretch, is also the most environmentally constrained. It is now being almost entirely surrounded by internationally protected Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA), both of which directly about the development boundary. Significant areas are also either within or immediately adjacent to the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Development is bound by areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat. In terms of flood risk, this section is entirely within the high probability flood zone (Flood Zone 3) based primarily on tidal models.

The western and northern sections of Pett Level's development boundary have a notably different character. The intervening and lower lying sections, including Canal Bank and the southern end of Chick Hill, are within Flood Zone 3 based on tidal modelling. Rising to the west is an area of lower density housing, sometimes referred to as Cliff End. South facing development at Cliff End is bound by the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar and SPA, as well as the Maritime Cliff and Slope SSSI. Adjacent priority habitats include maritime cliff and slope and deciduous woodland. There are serious constraints on vehicular

access here, the roads are narrow and unadopted roads, while visibility is constrained at access points.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Pett Level has no essential services and therefore scores 0.

Service Level

Facilities and services in Pett Level consist of a private beach club, a café and a church.

Overall, the village has a minimal service level, scoring a 0.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Pett Level has minimal employment opportunities, and scores 0.

Public Transport

Bus services are good, with more than 10 daily bus services stopping in Pett Level via the 101 bus between Hastings and (Conquest Hospital) and Rye. With good bus service Pett Level scores 3 for its public transport provision.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Pett Level, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are no significant development commitments within Pett Level.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good bus connections between Hastings and Rye • Excellent access to public open space with the immediate vicinity of Pett Level Beach.
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal facilities and services • Minimal employment opportunities • Significant areas of the village are within Flood Zone 3 • Extensive landscape and environmental constraints that significantly impact on further development potential.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

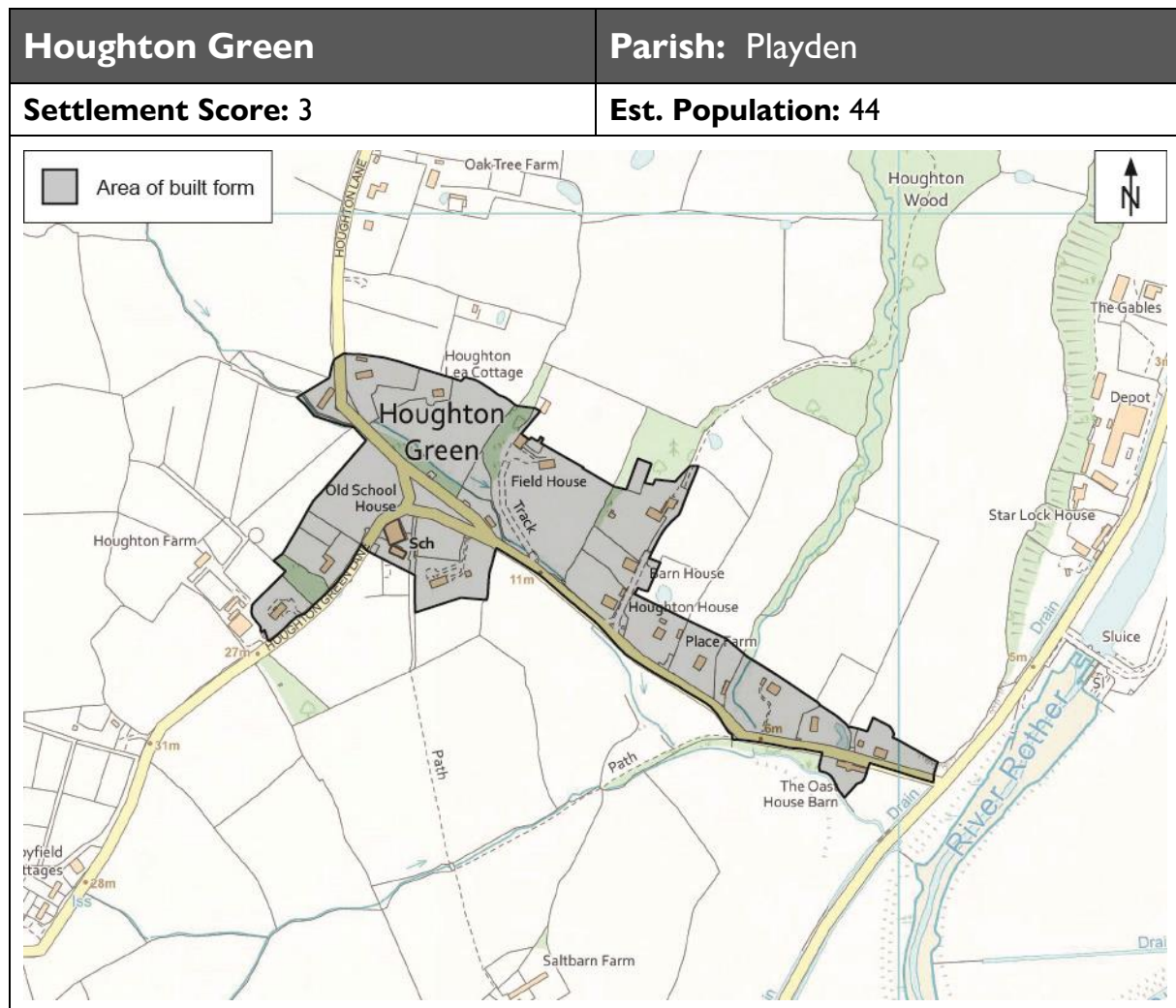
Pett Level is a small coastal settlement, that has minimal services and facilities. It has a good bus connection to Hastings and Rye, which provides some means of accessing essential day to day services via public transport. With a low overall score, Pett Level has only low sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

There are limited opportunities for further development within Pett Level due to its significant physical, environmental and landscape constraints, and it is unlikely that its minimal service level could be remedied through development within the village. Given that it has minimal services and facilities, including no essential services, the village's sustainability is dependent upon its access to the large town of Hastings via public transport, which is a relationship that it shares with other nearby villages. Improvements in connectivity to Hastings may be facilitated via a bus network between these villages that is centred on Hastings.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Some limited development may support existing services or a very small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Houghton Green is a sparsely developed settlement, that is centred around the intersection of Houghton Green Lane and Houghton Lane, while also spreading out along Houghton Green Lane to the southeast until it meets Military Road. It has a population of only 44.

Houghton Green is located some 1km to the northeast of Playden and roughly 2km north of Rye town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Houghton Green is estimated to be approximately 44, which is based on the number of dwellings, 20, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are three Grade II listed cottages, that are spread out within the settlement area. An Archaeological Notification Area corresponding with the Royal Military Canal is located some 200m to the northeast.

Landscape Character

Houghton Green sits within an open landscape that slopes up to the northwest from the River Rother, which is around 50m to the south east. To the other side of the Rother is the Walland Marsh, while along its northwestern and north eastern boundaries Houghton Green is effectively bound by the High Weald NL, and therefore forms an important landscape buffer to the AONB. Being within a transitional landscape, Houghton Green therefore straddles two landscape character areas, with the northwest of the settlement being within the Lower Rother Valley, and nearer the river being within the Rye-Winchelsea area.

The Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Lower Rother Valley LCA covers the area to the immediate west and north of Rye, including parts of Playden that are built on ancient inland sea cliffs. The area features the valleys of the Tillingham and Rother, the rivers of which then converge at Rye from the west and east respectively. The Tillingham Valley has with a flat open floor and stepwell wooded sides, while the lower reaches of the Rother form a broad valley. There are a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing.

The Rye-Winchelsea – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Rye-Winchelsea Area generally consists of a wide tract of coastal levels, dominated by grazing marsh as the western area of the Romney marshes and overlooked by bold spurs, steep inland cliffs and ‘islands’ of higher ground, including the twin citadels of Rye and Winchelsea. There are significant areas of pasture, sheep grazing and arable farming, while tree cover is concentrated on the slopes and the towns of Winchelsea and Rye. To the south of the town is a large area comprising of a diverse coastal landscape with a number of protected habitats. The area is crossed by the Rother and the Royal Military Canal, and also features a number of Martello towers.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The High Weald NL effectively forms the northwestern and north eastern boundary of Houghton Green, while small areas of the settlement are also within the AONB. A parcel of deciduous woodland intersects the settlement area from the northeast, and there is a slightly larger parcel of ancient and deciduous woodland to the east of the settlement. The southeastern tip of the settlement directly connects to the Houghton Green Cliff SSSI, while the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI, RAMSAR and Special Protection Area is present to the opposite side of the Military Road.

Houghton Green is bisected by a watercourse that runs through the centre of the settlement area along a large section of Houghton Green Lane before it meets the River Rother, the land surrounding which is highly susceptible to surface water flooding. A further watercourse within the eastern end of the settlement has the same effect. Flood Zone 3 is present to the opposite the Military Road to the east of the settlement.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Within Houghton Green is St Michael’s Primary School, which gives the settlement a score of 1.

Service Level

There are no other service or facilities within Houghton Green itself. Neighbouring Poppyfield contains the Playden Women's Institute Hall which functions as a community hall facility, while the Playden Oasts Inn in Playden is within 1km distance. With minimal accessible services, Houghton Green scores a 0. A larger range of services and facilities can be found nearby in Rye, although they are too far distant to be considered accessible and are therefore excluded the scoring. There is also no footway to connect to neighbouring or nearby settlements.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within Houghton Green, except for the primary school, are non-existent and there are no larger employment or industrial sites within a 2km radius. Houghton Green scores a 0 for its access to local employment opportunities, although it is likely that Rye and Rye Harbour provide a degree of employment opportunity, although they cannot be included within the scoring.

Public Transport

Houghton Green has access to two infrequent bus services, with connections including Rye, Playden and Tenterden. Within only infrequent bus services, Houghton Green scores a 1.

Broadband Access

Standard broadband, which is defined as download speeds between 10Mb/s and 30Mb/s, is available in Houghton Green, giving the settlement a broadband score of 1.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	1
Broadband Access (3)	1
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	3

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Houghton Green.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school • Rye is 2km distance away and provides a range of facilities and services
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small isolated rural village – population less than 50 • Almost no services and facilities within Houghton Green itself • No footway connection to neighbouring settlements • Infrequent bus services • Entirely rural settlement that forms buffer area to the AONB to the north, severely limiting development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

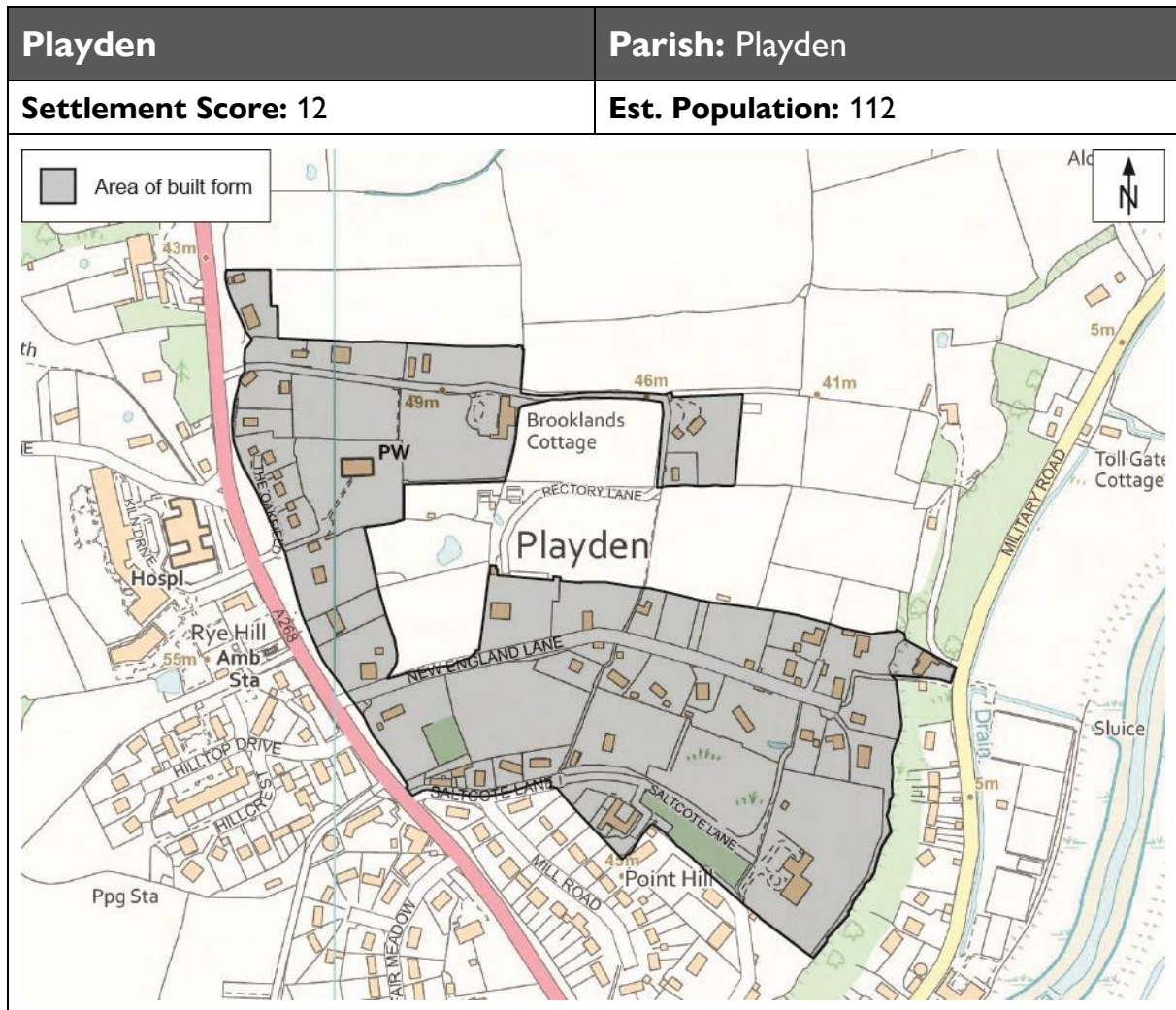
Houghton Green is a very small and remote rural settlement. There are minimal services and facilities within the village, and bus services are infrequent, making its residents wholly dependent on the use of private vehicles for accessing larger settlements in order to access everyday services and facilities. It is not considered to be a sustainable settlement.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its tiny population and rural situation, it is unlikely that Houghton Green's sustainability can be improved to the point where it could be considered suitable for any significant development. Sustainability would be significantly improved through a more frequent bus service to Rye and other nearby settlements. This could potentially be achieved through its incorporation as part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements centred around Rye.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Any development significant enough to support services and facilities would not be acceptable within Houghton Green, due to its size, landscape sensitivity and its entirely rural aspect.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Playden is a small, historically rural village to the north of Rye, east of the A268. In modern times Playden has become contiguous with Rye, however, like Rye Hill, Playden is being considered separately in the context of this study as it is in the separate parish of Playden. That said, where Rye Hill shares the same facilities and services as Rye, it is proposed that Rye and Rye Hill will be considered as a functional unit for the purposes of the Local Plan, together with adjacent Playden to the east of the A268.

Housing and Population

Playden has an estimated population of 112, which is based on the number of dwellings, 51, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling. This compares to a previous 92 dwellings in the last settlement study in 2008, which was based on a count of 37 dwellings.

The combined population for the larger Rye area, with which Playden and Rye Hill are contiguous settlements, makes an estimated overall population of 5,847.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Playden is identified in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Pleidena, where it was recorded as having a population of 37 households¹³. There have also been findings to suggest that a Roman Villa once stood near to the cliff top¹⁴.

Formerly the sea surrounded the Playden Cliffs, and in the 1400s Playden had a fish market rivalling that of nearby Rye. According to the parish website, fishing was the main source of income for the village, and the name 'saltcote', which has today been applied to Saltcote Place and Saltcote Lane, derives from the area where fish would have been salted towards the east of New England Lane¹⁵.

Playden has four listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Michael, which dates back to 1190. The village is almost entirely within the Rye Hill Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) and the Playden ANA.

Landscape Character

Landscape Character areas relevant for Playden include the Rye LCA and the Lower Rother Valley LCA.

¹³ <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ9121/playden/>

¹⁴ [Playden - \(Saltcote and fish\) \(villagenet.co.uk\)](http://villagenet.co.uk)

¹⁵ <https://www.playden.info/about>

Rye LCA

The Rye LCA observes that the Citadel is built on a sandstone hill above the surrounding open marshes, at the confluence of, and bounded by, three rivers. Its history as a walled, almost moated, defensive site and its unique geography have contributed to its compact intimate character. Rye's landscape setting provides a soft, flat, semi-natural contrast to the urban edge of the town and enhances its maritime character; from viewpoints within the town, it gives fine quality views out to the distant landscape and coast.

The LCA notes the challenges that impact upon the character of the town. The busy A259 and large parking areas ultimately detract from its historic setting, while the town also features modern housing areas which lack character, and sometimes form an abrupt urban edge to the surrounding countryside.

Lower Rother Valley LCA

The Lower Rother Valley LCA covers the area to the immediate west and north of Rye, including parts of Playden. The area features the valleys of the Tillingham and Rother, the rivers of which then converge at Rye from the west and east respectively. The Tillingham Valley has with a flat open floor and stepwell wooded sides, while the lower reaches of the Rother form a broad valley. There are a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing.

In terms of the immediate landscape of Rye, the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) considers Rye Hill to the south of Leasam Lane, which is identified through the area 'R2'.

R2 – Playden

This is rolling countryside with well a defined field pattern in characteristic rectangular plots. The Historic landscape character is evident together with ancient field structure and hedges. Sunken lanes cut through the greensand of the raised cliff. The area has a strong sense of place. Features include the raised cliff and some vernacular buildings.

Ancient tracks which would have run down to the river have been truncated by new build. There are historic settled plots between these ancient tracks. Saltcote Street probably gave access to the river and is now a dead end.

The assessment identifies this landscape area as being high quality, and of medium - high landscape value. The character sensitivity is high – moderate, while visual sensitivity is considered moderate. This landscape area is summarised as having a ‘moderate’ capacity for residential development and a capacity of ‘none’ for business development. It is commented that development should only be considered in the more enclosed areas, and that any proposed development should not intrude into historic character of the area and field pattern. It is identified that there would be some scope to strengthen the field boundaries as part of the historic field 66 it is noted that there would be some scope to redefine the urban edge and create a woodland buffer to the AONB Countryside, however it would not be desirable to enclose long views out.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

Some small-scale development adjacent to Playden Forge could be acceptable, but it would need to be designed to be sympathetic to surrounding uses. Due to their enclosure, open areas at the start of New England Lane may accept some small-scale development in landscape capacity terms, while access remains a key constraint.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Playden is less constrained than many other settlements due to its location outside the AONB and, it is not affected by many other designations. The Landscape Assessment found moderate capacity for residential development in the more enclosed areas only. Playden is 100m west north of the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI, RAMSAR and SPA, and there are a number of listed trees within the curtilage of Saltcote Place.

Compared to Rye, Playden is outside Flood Zone 2 and 3, and generally has no flooding related issues. Some of New England Lane is susceptible to surface water flooding along the road itself.

There are other physical constraints, however. Access constraints are likely to affect many areas unless they can be accessed directly from the main road (A268) as existing lanes are narrow and/or private. While services in Rye are relatively close at around 1km, appeal decisions have referred to the A268 providing a poor pedestrian connection to Rye, with narrow/missing footways in places.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Playden has 1km access to a convenience store, primary and secondary schools, and a doctor's surgery. With three of the four types of essential service, Playden scores a 3. In practical terms it can be argued that Playden also has access to a post office and a supermarket given that Rye Post Office and Jempsons supermarket are both less than 130m beyond the 1km radius.

Service Level

Taken by itself Playden has a small number of services. These are limited to the Playden Oast Inn pub, church, and a community hall in the form of the WI Hall. There is also a public park area. However, when considered part of the greater Rye settlement area, Playden has access to a good range of services, making it in this respect one of the more sustainable locations in the district. Notable services other than those identified above include a pharmacy, a leisure centre, two community halls and two sports pitches. Given the walkability of the Rye town centre area, it can again be argued that residents of Playden have effective access to the full range of services within the town, and therefore its score of 2 does not adequately reflect the ultimate range of accessible facilities and services.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are almost no employment opportunities within Playden itself. However, a reasonable amount of employment within the greater Rye area, with further employment provided in Rye Harbour employment area, although the latter is outside of the 2km catchment area. Additionally, Rye train station provides connections to Hastings and Ashford. Overall, Playden scores 2 for its access to employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Playden has a reasonably regular bus service, including connections to Tenterden and Rye Harbour, although the nearby transport hub at Rye provides a good range of public transport options, including a train service, which is within a 1km radius. Just outside of this radius are three good bus services (10+ buses per day each), with connections to Hastings and Lydd. Playden scores 3 for the availability of public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Playden, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	12

Current development commitments

There are no significant development commitments currently in Playden. In terms of the wider Rye settlement area, the existing Rye Neighbourhood Plan allocates a total of 7 sites within that together would provide at least 160 dwellings, with two of these (allocations H5 & H6) also providing employment floorspace, as well as the provision of a petrol station and convenience store. It should be noted that the Rye Neighbourhood Plan does not cover the specific settlement area of Playden, due to Playden being within a different parish. The allocations within the Rye Neighbourhood Plan are set out below:

H3 - Former Tilling Green School for at least 20 dwellings.

H4 - Rock Channel for at least 30 dwellings. Permission has so far been granted as per RR/2019/789/P & RR/2021/2045/P for the southern section of the site for a multipurpose arts centre, as well as a total of 11 dwellings (including 3 live/work artist accommodation units), leaving the north of the allocations site to come forward independently to deliver the remaining 'at least' 19 dwellings.

H5 - Winchelsea Rd East for at least 10 dwellings, and employment space

H6 - Winchelsea Rd West for at least 20 dwellings, and employment space

H7 - Freda Gardham School for at least 30 dwellings.

H8 - Lower School Site for at least 50 dwellings. Permission has been granted for the development of the site for 63 dwellings as per RR/2017/1778/P.

B3 - Former Freda Gardham School site for a petrol station and/or convenience store of up to 500sqm.

Permission has also been granted for 6 dwellings at Tower Street subject to RR/2017/2217/P, and 7 dwellings at 48 Ferry Road subject to RR/2018/1828/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- A part of the wider Rye town settlement
- Effective access to Rye's services and facilities
- Secondary school within 1km radius
- Relatively good level of employment, given Playden's access to Rye
- Rye Train station is within walking distance, with good bus services not far beyond

Settlement Weaknesses

- Significant landscape constraints to development, with external areas functioning as a buffer to the adjacent AONB.
- Limited walkability between Playden and Rye Town Centre
- Employment within Rye is often low paid and seasonal
- Limited convenience goods floorspace within the Rye settlement area.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

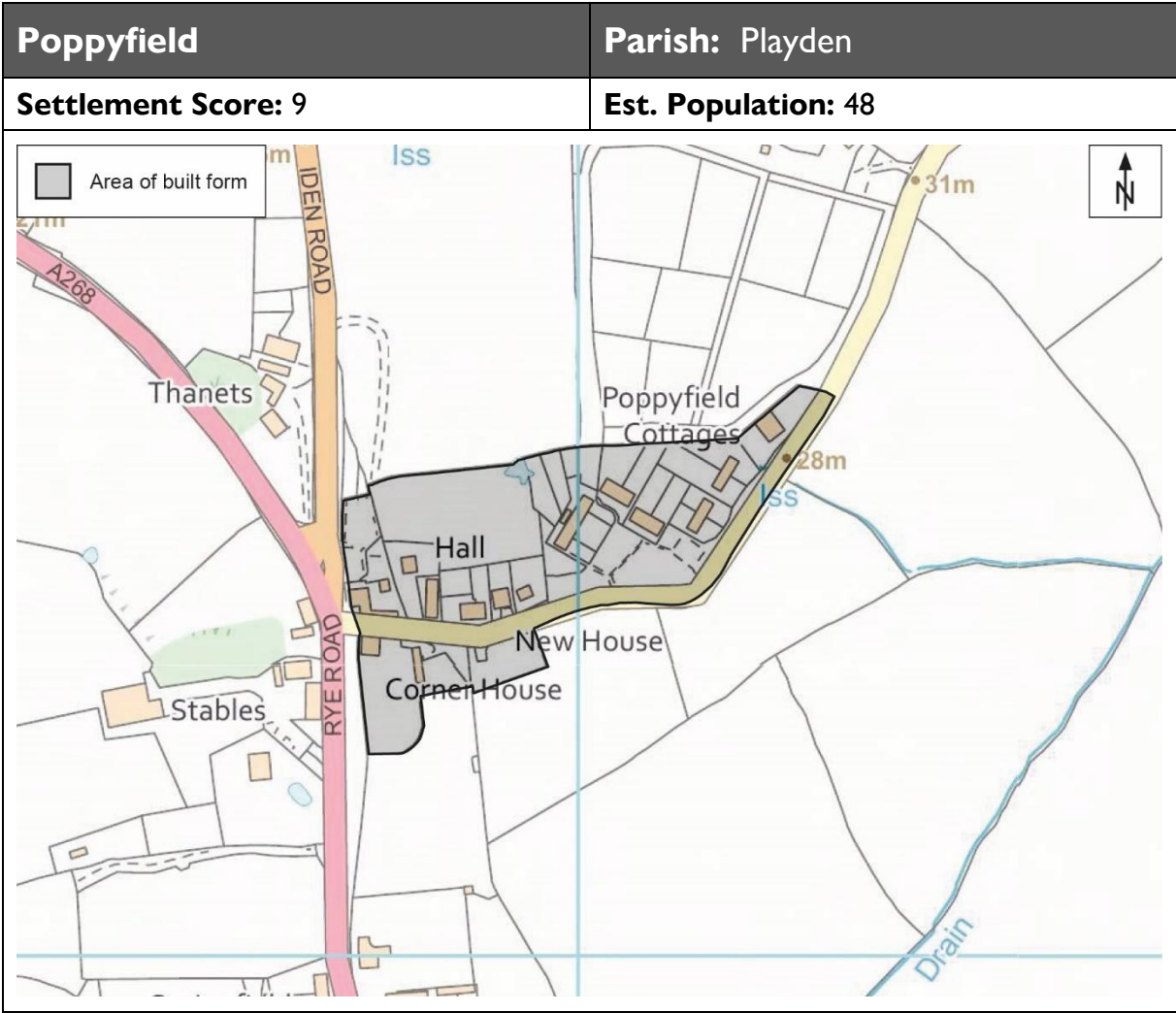
Playden is a fringe area of the market town of Rye, that sits just outside of the High Weald NL. Its proximity to Rye's range of services and facilities, including its public transport connections, makes it potentially one of the more sustainable locations for further development within the district. The majority of day-to-day services are within walking distance. Its overall score means that Playden is considered to be moderately sustainable.

Opportunities for Growth

Any consideration for growth within Playden is justified insofar as Playden may provide opportunities for development centred on the services and facilities within Rye; while Rye itself has a significant number of environmental constraints, severely limiting the number of suitable sites. Playden has fewer designations and constraints than Rye Hill as it does not sit directly adjacent to the AONB, while it was found by the Landscape Assessment to have moderate capacity to accept housing development compared to Rye Hill which was found to have low potential (although only the southern part of it was assessed). There are a number of undeveloped areas within Playden along New England and Saltcote Lanes that may offer limited opportunities for smaller scale development – however access along these lanes is potentially problematic. There may be some potential to extend both settlements northwards where there are larger existing residential curtilages, although this is likely to cause landscape harm while the northern parts of both settlements are further from services in Rye, so generally less sustainable. Appeal decisions have referred to the A268 providing a poor pedestrian link to Rye with narrow/missing footways in places.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Any significant development within Playden may warrant improved pedestrian links between Playden and Rye, while also providing support for the existing services and facilities within the greater Rye settlement (Rye, Rye Hill and Playden).



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Poppyfield is a small settlement a stone’s throw to the north of Playden, at the junction of Rye Road and Houghton Green Lane and consists mainly of dwellings as well as other development. There is no footway access along Military Road to connect Saltbarn Lane with nearby settlements. It has a population of only 48.

Poppyfield is located some 100m to the north of Playden and Rye Hill, while Rye is around 1.5km to the south, all of which are accessible via a footway along Rye Road.

Housing and Population

The population of Poppyfield is estimated to be approximately 48, which is based on the number of dwellings, 22, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There is one listed building within the settlement area, which is Grade II listed and known as Playden Oasts Hotel. There is also an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) within the west of the settlement area at the junction, which denotes a medieval and post-medieval village in relation to Playden. A further ANA is present 60m to the north of Poppyfield, defining Mesolithic activity and Bronze Age ring ditches representing a settlement.

Landscape Character

Poppyfield sits outside of, but immediately adjacent to the High Weald NL to the north and west. As a very small and rural settlement, it therefore forms part of an important buffer area to the AONB, making it particularly unsuitable for any significant development.

The Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Poppyfield is within the Lower Rother Valley, which covers the area to the immediate west and north of Rye, including parts of Playden that are built on ancient inland sea cliffs. The area features the valleys of the Tillingham and Rother, the rivers of which then converge at Rye from the west and east respectively. The Tillingham Valley has with a flat open floor and stepwell wooded sides, while the lower reaches of the Rother form a broad valley. There are a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

As previously mentioned, the High Weald NL is effectively across the Rye Road from Poppyfield, as well as being a just to the north of the settlement area.

An area to the west of Rye Road is covered by deciduous woodland priority habitat, while the start of the B2092 to the northwest is lined by a series of trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

Poppyfield is effectively free from flood risk, including surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Poppyfield has access to St Michael's Primary School in nearby Houghton Green, as well as having access to a doctor's surgery opposite Rye & Winchelsea Memorial Hospital in Rye Hill, which is located just less than 500m to the south. With access to two types of essential service, Poppyfield scores a 2. It should be noted that there is no footway access to St Michael's Primary School which is located some 700m along Houghton Green Lane.

Service Level

Being the size it is, there are no service or facilities within Poppyfield itself except for the Playden Women's Institute Hall which functions as a community hall facility. The vast majority of services and facilities identified as accessible area located in Rye Hill and Playden, most notably including include a pharmacy, two pubs, a second community hall, and a public park area. Ultimately the overall service level within 1km is limited, and Poppyfield scores a 1. Where Rye is only a short distance further, it is likely that residents are able to make full use of the wider services and facilities in the town, especially as Rye is accessible via a footway along Rye Road.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within Poppyfield itself are non-existent, however the Rock Channel employment area within Rye is considered within an accessible distance, which as of the 2016 Rother Employment Sites Review contained 13 businesses and covers 2.5ha. Poppyfield scores a 1 for its access to local employment opportunities, although it is likely that Rye and Rye Harbour provide a degree of employment opportunity, although they cannot be included within the scoring.

Public Transport

Poppyfield has access to two average bus services, with connections that include Rye, Rye Harbour, Tenterden and Northiam. Combined these services amount to more than 10 buses to Rye per day, which while not being reflected in the scoring, effectively constitutes a good bus service in the direction of Rye. Rye train station is within 2km, and is therefore counted within the scoring, giving Poppyfield a score of 3 for access to public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Poppyfield, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	9

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Poppyfield.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rye town with its wide range of services is just over 1km to the south • Primary school and doctor’s surgery are within 1km accessible distance • Walking access to Rye along Rye Road • More than 10 buses per day to Rye
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small rural hamlet – population less than 50 • Minimal services and facilities within Poppyfield itself • Entirely rural settlement that forms buffer area to the AONB to the north west, which severely limits development potential

Recommendations for the Local Plan

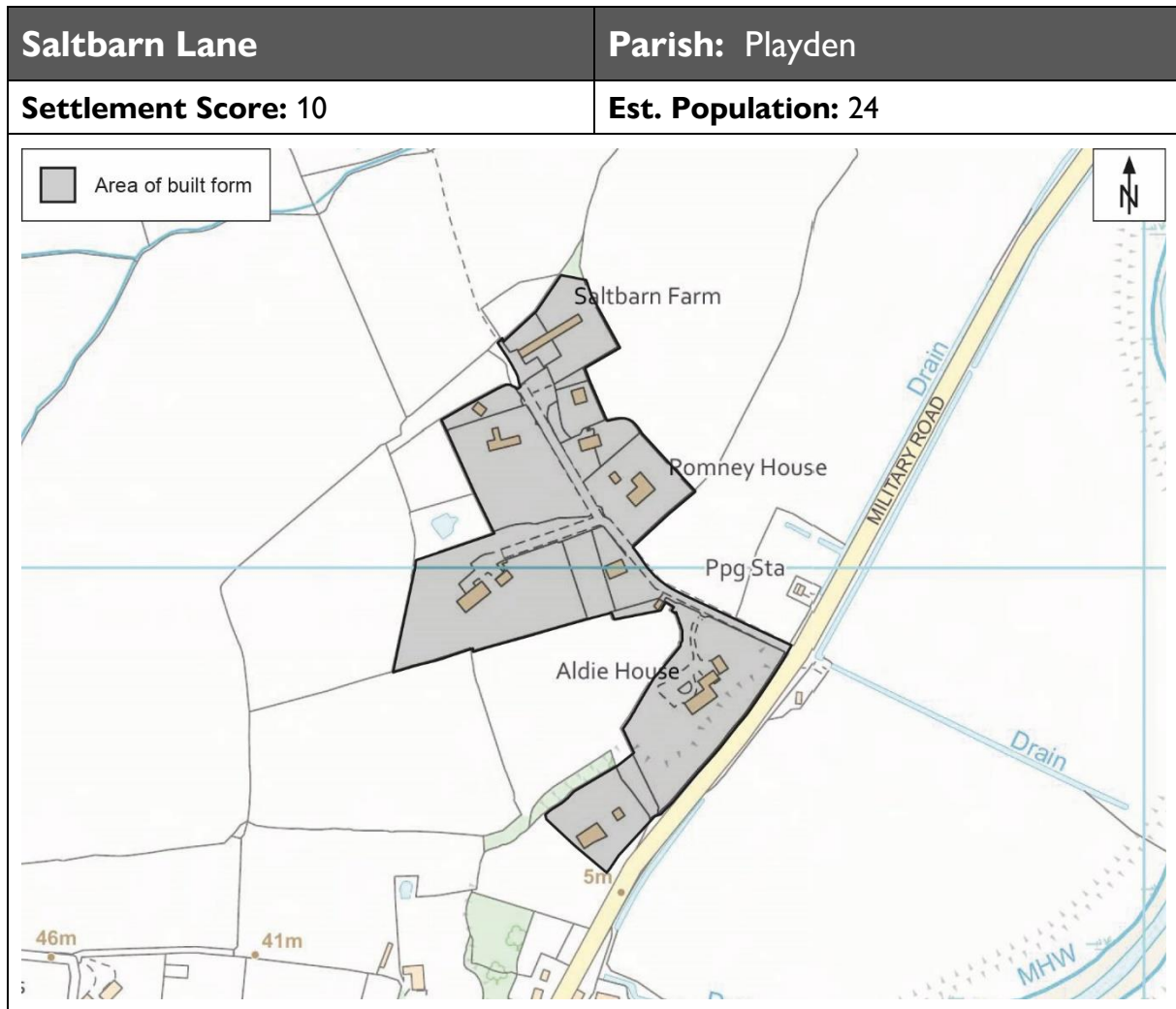
Poppyfield is a very small rural settlement. There are minimal services and facilities within the village, although it does have access to a wider range of services due to its proximity to the greater Rye town area, which is also connected via footway. Poppyfield is however in a sensitive location in respect of the adjacent AONB, as well as its small rural aspect, make any significant development inappropriate. Despite its overall score, Poppyfield is not considered to be sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its tiny population and rural situation, it is unlikely that Poppyfield’s sustainability can be improved. There are already relatively decent bus connections between Poppyfield and Rye, although the range and frequency of bus connections could perhaps be improved by Poppyfield or Playden’s inclusion within a network of eastern rural settlements centred around Rye.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Any development significant enough to support services and facilities would not be acceptable within Poppyfield, due to its size and entirely rural aspect.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Saltbarn Lane is a very small settlement, consisting of a sparse collection of dwellings and farm buildings fronting a small cul-de-sac off the Military Road to the northeast of Rye. There is no footway access along Military Road to connect Saltbarn Lane with nearby settlements. It has a population of only 24.

Saltbarn Lane is located within the far east of the district. Rye Town Centre is some 1.3km to the southeast, while Playden and Rye Hill are both just within 1km in the same direction.

Housing and Population

The population of Saltbarn Lane is estimated to be approximately 24, which is based on the number of dwellings, 11, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are no listed buildings or other heritage constraints within the settlement area.

Landscape Character

Saltbarn Lane sits within an open landscape that slopes up to the northwest from the River Rother, which is 250m to the south east. To the other side of the Rother is the Walland Marsh, while the slopes within which Saltbarn Lane sits, while not within the High Weald NL, effectively form a buffer to the AONB. Being within a transitional landscape, Saltbarn Lane therefore straddles two landscape character areas, with the northwest of the settlement being within the Lower Rother Valley, and nearer the river being within the Rye-Winchelsea area.

The Lower Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Lower Rother Valley LCA covers the area to the immediate west and north of Rye, including parts of Playden that are built on ancient inland sea cliffs. The area features the valleys of the Tillingham and Rother, the rivers of which then converge at Rye from the west and east respectively. The Tillingham Valley has with a flat open floor and stepwell wooded sides, while the lower reaches of the Rother form a broad valley. There are a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing.

The Rye-Winchelsea – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Rye-Winchelsea Area generally consists of a wide tract of coastal levels, dominated by grazing marsh as the western area of the Romney marshes and overlooked by bold spurs,

steep inland cliffs and 'islands' of higher ground, including the twin citadels of Rye and Winchelsea.

There are significant areas of pasture, sheep grazing and arable farming, while tree cover is concentrated on the slopes and the towns of Winchelsea and Rye. To the south of the town is a large area comprising of a diverse coastal landscape with a number of protected habitats. The area is crossed by the Rother and the Royal Military Canal, and also features a number of Martello towers.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The southern section of the settlement is covered by deciduous woodland priority habitat that runs adjacent to the Military Road. The southeastern corner of the settlement area abuts the Romney Marsh area Biodiversity Opportunity Area, while being some 200m distant from the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI, RAMSAR and Special Protection Area that cover the marshland adjacent to and beyond the River Rother. The High Weald NL is some 500m to the northwest.

The southeast boundary of the settlement area is adjacent to Flood Zone 3, which is to the opposite side of Military Road. A small area within the south of the settlement, and Saltbarn Lane itself, are susceptible to surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Saltbarn Lane is a very small settlement area, with no essential services of its own. However, it is somewhat situated between Playden and Rye Hill to the west and Houghton Green to the north, and therefore a number of services and facilities fall within 1km and are therefore considered accessible. In respect of essential services, Saltbarn Lane has access to St Michael's Primary School in Houghton Green, while there is a doctor's surgery in Rye Hill, which is adjacent to Rye & Winchelsea Memorial Hospital. With two types of essential service, Saltbarn Lane scores a 2. It should be noted however, that walking to Houghton

Green or Playden/Rye Hill requires the use of Public Rights of Way which may become somewhat inaccessible during wet weather or in the winter.

Service Level

Again, there are no service or facilities within Saltbarn Lane itself, with all services and facilities identified as accessible being located in Rye Hill, Playden and Houghton Green. Facilities and services considered within an accessible distance include a pharmacy, three pubs, two community halls, as well as a tennis club. Ultimately the overall service level within 1km is limited, and Saltbarn Lane scores a 1. Where Rye is only a short distance further, it is likely that residents make full use of the wider services and facilities in the town, albeit residents are more likely to rely on the car.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within Saltbarn Lane itself are non-existent, however the Rock Channel employment area within Rye is considered within an accessible distance, which as of the 2016 Rother Employment Sites Review contained 13 businesses and covers 2.5ha. Saltbarn Lane scores a 1 for its access to local employment opportunities, although it is likely that Rye and Rye Harbour provide a degree of employment opportunity, although they cannot be included within the scoring.

Public Transport

Public transport within Saltbarn Lane is non-existent, with no buses stopping in or adjacent to the settlement area. Rye train station is within 2km, and is therefore counted within the scoring, giving Saltbarn Lane a score of 3 for access to public transport. It is notable however that the train station is assumed to be accessible only by private car, due to the absence of footway and bus stop from Saltbarn Lane.

Broadband Access

Ultrafast broadband which is defined as download speeds of 300Mb/s or more is available in Saltbarn Lane, giving the settlement a broadband score of 3.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	3
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	10

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Saltbarn Lane.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rye town with its wide range of services is just over 1km to the south east Primary school and doctor's surgery are within 1km accessible distance
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small rural hamlet – population less than 50 No services and facilities within Saltbarn Lane itself No buses Absence of footways between Saltbarn Lane and nearby settlements eliminates walkability Entirely rural settlement that forms buffer area to the AONB to the north west

Recommendations for the Local Plan

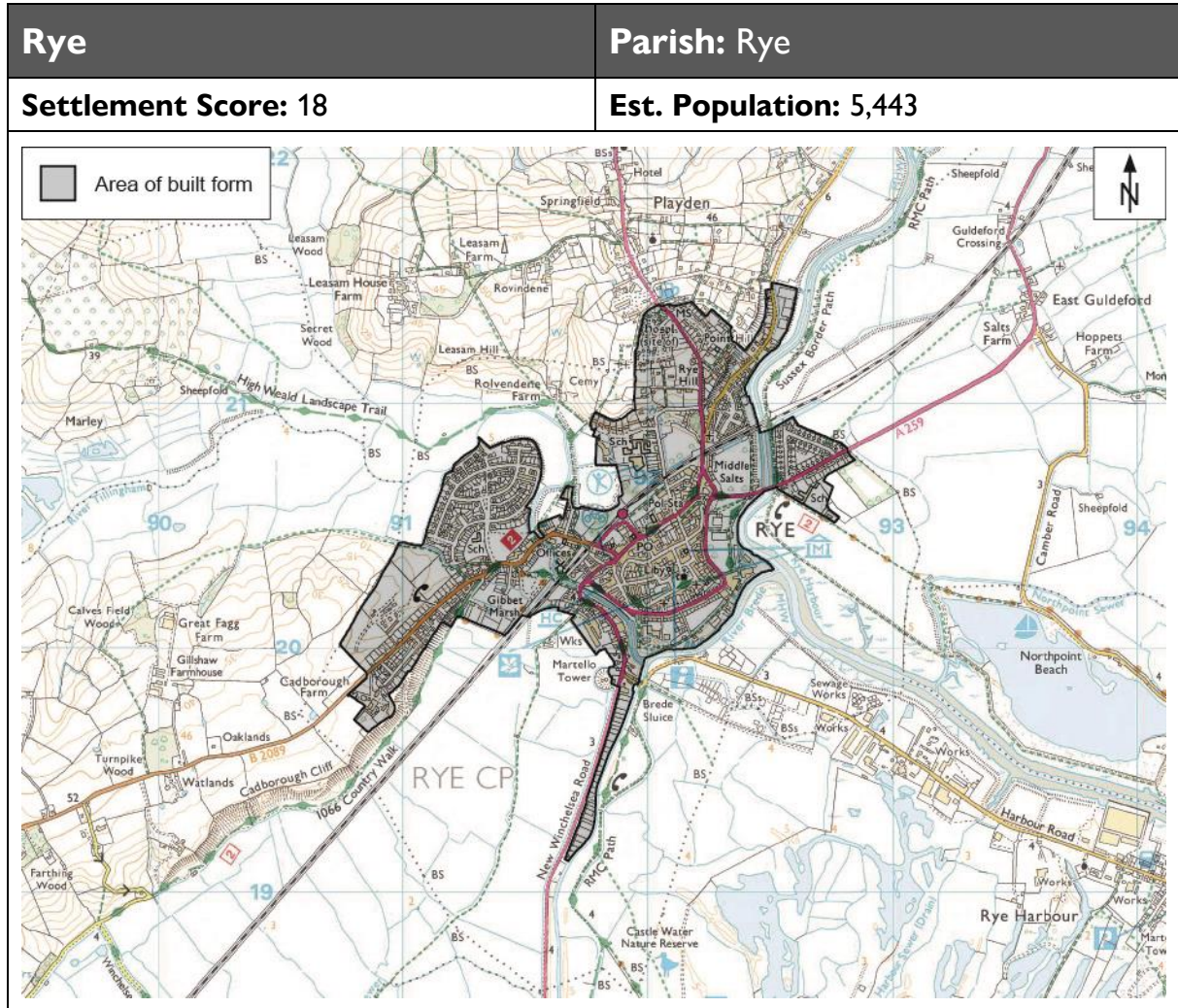
Saltbarn Lane is a very small rural settlement. There are no services and facilities within the village, and in spite of its proximity to a number of services, there are no means of public transportation and walking to access services and facilities in the local area is reliant on Public Rights of Way, making its residents more dependent on private vehicles. For these reasons its relatively high score does not reflect its lack of sustainability. Despite its overall score, Saltbarn Lane is not considered to be sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its tiny population and rural situation, it is unlikely that Saltbarn Lane's sustainability can be improved. The most obvious improvement would be the provision of a bus service, perhaps running between Saltbarn Lane and Rye. This may not however be identified as a reasonable option due to Saltbarn Lane's tiny population. Such access to bus transport could perhaps be achieved through a potential future 'on-demand' bus service.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Any development significant enough to support services and facilities would not be acceptable in the vicinity of Saltbarn Lane, due to its size and entirely rural aspect.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Rye is a market town within the civil parish of Rye, while also being contiguous with the settlements of Playden and Rye Hill to the north. Playden and Rye Hill are within the separate parishes of Playden and Rye Foreign respectively, and together with Rye they form the greater Rye settlement area.

Rye is within the low-lying eastern end of the district and is therefore situated on the eastern end of Sussex and near the Kent border. Rye is centred around a rocky sandstone outcrop which forms the historic citadel of the town and dominates the locality, although large residential areas of the town are also sited on the hills to the north and the surrounding flatlands, including 20th Century development to the east of the River Rother. Rye sits at the confluence of 3 rivers, the Rother, Brede and Tillingham, which merge into the River Rother before meeting the sea 3km to the south east. Rye also contains riverside and marina developments fronting the River Brede and Rother to the west, south and southeast, although these areas are physically cut-off from the citadel by the busy A259 which runs through the southern part of the town.

Nearby to Rye is Rye Harbour, which is a satellite village to Rye and is located some 650m to the southeast of the town and is separated by open countryside. Residents of Rye Harbour use the services found in Rye and both settlements have close historical links. Nearby settlements also include the historic Town of Winchelsea, which is some 2.5km to the southwest, the seafront Winchelsea Beach village is nearly 4km to the south. Notably, Camber and Camber Sands are located around 3.5km to the southwest. In terms of larger settlement, the centre of Hastings is located 14km to the southwest, while the centre of Ashford is 23km to the north east. The A259 trunk road goes through Rye, with Hastings and Ashford both being a circa 30-minute drive in opposite directions. Locations to the northeast can alternatively be accessed via the Military Road.

Housing and Population

Rye has an estimated population of 5,443, which is based on the number of dwellings, 2,592, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.1 persons per dwelling. The previous estimated population for Rye was 4,945, which was derived from the number of households as per 2,436 dwellings.

The population for the larger Rye area, including the contiguous settlements of Playden and Rye Hill makes up an estimated combined population of 5,847.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Rye is an ancient citadel town of national historic importance and high architectural value. The town's geographical location as discussed previously was considered to be highly defensible but was readily accessible to the sea. During the 11th century Rye became a full member of the Confederation of Cinque Ports, a network of settlements given the responsibility of defending the south coast from raids and attacks from foreign invaders. Being a citadel town, its ancient defences are very much evident today namely the old town wall and Ypres Tower.

During the Middle Ages Rye enjoyed a period of significant growth directly as a result of its success as a maritime trading port. Its success was later tempered by changing physical conditions as human intervention resulted in the gradual silting and drainage of the surrounding areas and the town retreated from the coastline.

The town is popular with tourists and visitors, with the character of the town often cited as being one of the main reasons for a visit. Rye possesses a rich architectural heritage and a townscape of strong visual character and quality. The compact town centre reflects the medieval street pattern. Within the town there are over 300 listed buildings and buildings of historic significance. The core is designated a Conservation Area.

Landscape Character

The setting of the historic core of Rye, the levels and the rivers importantly aid the perception that the core is a citadel, vertically separated from the surrounding plain. From viewpoints within the town the setting provides fine quality views out to the distant landscape and coast. The tidal rivers and estuary are a key component of Rye's maritime character. To the south-east the open landscape provides a gap between the town and industrial units sited along Rye Harbour Road and Rye Harbour Village.

Rye straddles the meeting point of three Landscape Character Areas (LCA); the Rye-Winchelsea LCA, the Lower Rother Valley LCA to the northwest, and the Brede Valley LCA to the west, while Rye is itself covered by a separate LCA assessment for urban areas.

Rye LCA

The Rye LCA observes that the Citadel is built on a sandstone hill above the surrounding open marshes, at the confluence of, and bounded by, three rivers. Its history as a walled, almost moated, defensive site and its unique geography have contributed to its compact intimate character. Rye's landscape setting provides a soft, flat, semi-natural contrast to the urban edge of the town and enhances its maritime character; from viewpoints within the town, it gives fine quality views out to the distant landscape and coast.

The LCA notes the challenges that impact upon the character of the town. The busy A259 and large parking areas ultimately detract from its historic setting, while the town also features modern housing areas which lack character, and sometimes form an abrupt urban edge to the surrounding countryside.

The Rye-Winchelsea Area LCA

The Rye-Winchelsea Area generally consists of a wide tract of coastal levels, dominated by grazing marsh as the western area of the Romney marshes and overlooked by bold spurs, steep inland cliffs and 'islands' of higher ground, including the twin citadels of Rye and Winchelsea. There are significant areas of pasture, sheep grazing and arable farming, while tree cover is concentrated on the slopes and the towns of Winchelsea and Rye. To the south of the town is a large area comprising of a diverse coastal landscape with a number of protected habitats. The area is also home to Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. The area is important for breeding and wintering waterbirds, birds of prey, passage warblers and breeding seabirds. The area is crossed by the Rother and the Royal Military Canal, and also features a number of Martello towers. Coastal stretches include broad shingled areas with lakes from gravel working, and the extensive area of Dunes and sandy beach at Camber which are unique in East Sussex. From Rye there are distinctive views towards Dungeness power station and the wind farm at Little Cheney Court Farm, with views to Camber Castle on the levels to the south. There is a strong sense of remoteness in the areas further from built development.

Brede Valley LCA

The adjacent section of the Brede Valley features the broad valley of the River Brede with a flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes. The river levels and marshes criss-crossed by reed fringed ditches or 'sewers', and swans, herons and other wetland birds are very much features in the landscape. There are wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley floodplain.

Lower Rother Valley LCA

The Lower Rother Valley LCA covers the area to the immediate west and north of Rye, including parts of Playden that are built on ancient inland sea cliffs. The area features the valleys of the Tillingham and Rother, the rivers of which then converge at Rye from the west and east respectively. The Tillingham Valley has with a flat open floor and stepwell wooded sides, while the lower reaches of the Rother form a broad valley. There are a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing.

In terms of the immediate landscape of Rye, the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) considers the landscape that surrounds the town, , which are identified through the areas 'R3', 'R4', and 'R5'. The landscape areas of Playden and Rye Hill (R1 & R2) are set out within their respective sections.

R3 – River Floodplain

This is the flat landscape on river meadows surrounding the Rivers Rother and Brede. The area is occupied by grass areas in mixed use. There are wide areas of grazed pasture on the floodplain. This area is the riverside setting for the historic town on Rye Citadel. Flood banks are characteristic features lining the riverbanks.

This area is the floodplain surrounding the confluence of the Brede and Rother rivers. There is scattered development of farm buildings, boat yards and some residences. There are typical urban edge uses such as small holdings and public open spaces including the cricket and recreation ground. The Citadel sits above the area.

The assessment defines the landscape area as good quality, with a high landscape value. The area has a high character and visual sensitivity. This landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'low-moderate' for residential development and 'low' for business development. Overall comments state that development potential would be limited to brown field sites only; while noting that the entire area is in the floodplain. Any proposals would need to have regard for the setting of the historic citadel town and the open character of the landscape south of the river. In terms of mitigation potential, it is noted that extensive planting would be out of character in the open landscape, while there may be scope to remove and enhance intrusive uses.

R4 – Gibbet Marsh, Marley Lane

These are more enclosed areas on urban fringe. The larger meadows are grazed. Other more enclosed areas have varied uses. Landscape features include a windmill and Martello Towers, the setting of these would be sensitive to change.

The area is characterised by riverside settlement. Areas of open fields which are not in the AONB do act as a buffer between the built-up edge and AONB.

The assessment defines the landscape area as good quality, while of medium-high landscape value which is partly within the AONB, although of high value in respect of its function as an AONB buffer area. Character sensitivity is moderate-high while visual sensitivity is high. Consequently, this landscape area is identified as having a 'low-moderate' capacity for residential development and a 'low capacity' for business development. Further comments summarise that development could be considered in the enclosed areas close to built-up edges only where not AONB buffer, however, there is no potential for development in the open riverside grazing areas (some of which is SSSI). There would be moderate scope for mitigation on the urban edges where there would be potential to strengthen built up Edges, although there is low to no potential for new planting on the open marshes.

R5 – Udimore Road

Open grazed fields at the rear of ribbon development on Udimore Road. The area has a pleasant character with extensive views to the surrounding ridge. There are some hedgerows and scattered mature trees.

The housing is typically post-war ribbon development. The areas of open fields which are not in the AONB do act as a buffer between the built-up edge and AONB but are not of AONB character or quality.

The assessment defines the landscape area as good quality, while of medium and high landscape value which is partly within the AONB, while also functioning as an AONB buffer area. Character and visual sensitivity are both moderate. This landscape area is identified as having a 'moderate' capacity for residential development and a 'low' capacity for business development. It is noted that development would be acceptable close to the built-up edge. A strong landscape framework would be needed to minimise impact from views on the Leasam ridge and on the AONB). Regarding mitigation potential, there would be some scope to mitigate new development by replanting lost hedgerows and strengthening tree belts.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

The Assessment asserts that development in the Strategic Gap between Rye and Rye Harbour should be resisted, particularly areas adjacent south of the riverbank. It is noted that the river forms the boundary to the core of the town. It is also considered that development in the area of Udimore Road at the far western edge of the settlement would not be appropriate. The allocated site to the west of Winchelsea Road is suitable for a mixed-use development, including larger retail.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The countryside surrounding Rye is subject to a number of environmental designations, signifying its landscape character and conservation importance. There are a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), RAMSAR and Special Protection Areas (SPA). In addition, much of the surrounding area to the North and West is classed as the High Weald National Landscape, and there are a number of Ancient Woodlands.

Below sets out the constraints identified for the areas to the south, west / north-west, and east of Rye. Areas to the north have been assessed as part of separate studies of Playden

and Rye Hill – which can be found in their respective sections. The urban areas of Rye are not included in these assessments as they are already densely developed.

Rye South

Rye (south) is highly environmentally constrained. Land east of the ribbon development on New Winchelsea Road (A259) is Ramsar/SPA/SSSI together with land in the northern part of and to the north of the Strategic Gap, around the River Rother. Additionally, almost all of the land adjoining this part of the settlement is categorised as "Priority Habitat" (Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh). There is an area within the Strategic Gap which is not subject to these designations or Priority Habitat. Land west of the A259 is within the High Weald NL and largely within the Brede Valley Local Wildlife Site.

All the land adjoining this part of the settlement is within Flood Zone 3 other than 2 very small areas adjoining the Martello Tower (which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and at Rock Channel (which is within the settlement boundary and already developed).

Rye West / North-west

The western part of Rye is perhaps the least constrained part of the settlement in some ways, it does not have the SSSI or international designations of the eastern part, or the heritage constraints of the central part. However, most of the land surrounding the western part of the settlement is within the AONB and there are likely to be significant landscape constraints to developing most of the surrounding countryside.

Flood risk is also an issue across land in the north-western part of the settlement and the surrounding countryside, although the south-western part is not within Flood Zones 2 or 3.

Rye East

Land east of this part of the settlement is highly environmentally constrained (SPA and Ramsar), this land also tends to be very flat and exposed in the landscape. The only areas to the east not within the SPA and Ramsar are land south of the A259 (east of the river - although most of this land is Priority Habitat) and north of existing development on the eastern side of Military Road (north of Tennis Club), although both of these areas are still

within Flood Zone 3. Land to the west is more undulating. Rye cemetery adjoins this part of the settlement to the west, and land to the west of this is within the AONB and there are likely to be landscape constraints to further development.

All land outside of the settlement boundary within this area is within Flood Zone 3.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Rye has a full range of essential services. Rye has a primary and a secondary school, two doctor's surgeries, a post office, one supermarket (Jempsons) and two further convenience stores. With at least one of each service Rye scores 4. However, for its size Rye has a notable deficit of convenience shopping within the town. Residents that have access to a car generally travel to Hastings, Ashford and Peasmarsh to do their weekly bulk shop. At the moment the only significant food retailer in Rye is the Jempsons store on Station Approach and is closed on Sundays.

Service Level

Rye as a settlement is second only behind Bexhill in terms of the number of facilities and services that it has. In addition to those listed above, Rye has three dentists, two pharmacies, a bank and a petrol filling station. Additionally, the built form of Rye is relatively compact, and therefore its services and facilities are generally within walking distance. Rye also has a large number of shops, cafés and restaurants, while leisure activities are well served with a cinema, a leisure centre and a permanent library. Rye scores 4 for its range of services and facilities.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

As is expected given the market and tourism role of Rye, employment is centred on the tourism, retail and service industries, and these sectors are particularly strong in the local economy. To this extent, Rye has a proportionally high quantity of hotels and visitor accommodation compared with national averages, although restaurant counts are slightly lower than average. Other employment areas including public administration, education and health; and in terms of absolute employment, the public sector is the second largest employer. Distribution is also a feature of Rye's economy. However, its dependency on tourism means that Rye suffers from a pattern of seasonal unemployment. Additionally, there is generally a lack of well-paid skilled employment, and such job opportunities are dependent on having to commute further afield.

Nearby Rye Harbour contains the Harbour Road employment area which has a long-established concentration of industrial uses, including some heavy industry such as the oil refinery operated by Rye Oil Ltd. Subject to safeguarding the surrounding areas of designated wildlife, as well as limitations within the local road network, the Council is in favour of further intensification of the Harbour Road employment area, including the relocation of distribution activities from Rye. Overall, Rye scores 4 for its access to employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Rye is served by a train station and sits in the middle of the Marshlink line between Hastings and Ashford, both of which provide connections to London, which Ashford also provides high speed (HS1) and international. However, the Marshlink is a diesel operated single track which is inefficient and can lead to lengthy journey times. It is noted that there can be heavily congestion on the service at peak times, especially as you travel beyond Hastings towards Eastbourne and Brighton. There have long been discussions relating to an extension of the HS1 high speed services from Ashford to Eastbourne, and stopping in Rye, although this remains an aspiration at this stage, as funding is not forthcoming. Nonetheless, Network Rail is currently undertaking studies into options as to such rail improvements¹⁶.

¹⁶ [Bexhill Hastings high speed rail – East Sussex County Council](#)

Rye has a good number of bus services relative to other large settlements in the district including Bexhill. However, while services are good for shoppers and day visitors, they can be less convenient for commuters and college students. Young people find the lack of early morning and evening services restricts journeys to college and leisure activities. A community transport service is provided for by the Rye and District Community Transport. Rye scores 4 for its access to public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Rye, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	4
Employment Opportunities (5)	4
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	18

Current development commitments

The existing Rye Neighbourhood Plan allocates a total of 7 sites within that together would provide at least 160 dwellings, with two of these (allocations H5 & H6) also providing employment floorspace, as well as the provision of a petrol station and convenience store. These allocations are set out below:

- H3 - Former Tilling Green School for at least 20 dwellings.
- H4 - Rock Channel for at least 30 dwellings. Permission has so far been granted as per RR/2019/789/P & RR/2021/2045/P for the southern section of the site for a multipurpose arts centre, as well as a total of 11 dwellings (including 3 live/work artist accommodation

units), leaving the north of the allocations site to come forward independently to deliver the remaining 'at least' 19 dwellings.

H5 - Winchelsea Rd East for at least 10 dwellings, and employment space

H6 - Winchelsea Rd West for at least 20 dwellings, and employment space

H7 - Freda Gardham School for at least 30 dwellings.

H8 - Lower School Site for at least 50 dwellings. Permission has been granted for the development of the site for 63 dwellings as per RR/2017/1778/P.

B3 - Former Freda Gardham School site for a petrol station and/or convenience store of up to 500sqm.

Permission has also been granted for 6 dwellings at Tower Street subject to RR/2017/2217/P, and 7 dwellings at 48 Ferry Road subject to RR/2018/1828/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- 3rd highest population in District – 5,847 including Rye Hill and Playden
- Full range of essential services, including secondary school
- Good level of services and facilities – second only to Bexhill
- Public transport hub, including train station and good bus services
- Walkability
- Relatively good level of employment, including less than 2km proximity to Rye Harbour employment area

Settlement Weaknesses

- Significant environmental and landscape constraints to further development, including the widespread occurrence of Flood Zone 3
- Limited supermarket options
- Employment within Rye is often low paid and seasonal
- No college for higher education

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Rye is a market town within the rural east of the district. Its high sustainability score indicates that the town's community is able to carry out most of its daily activities locally. It also functions as an important hub in respect of its services and facilities within the

surrounding rural areas. This is also true of its centrality within the local public transport network, as well as its access to employment opportunities. In addition to warranting further development within town itself, Rye's higher sustainability score may also serve to predicate further development in a network of nearby of otherwise remote rural settlements where these have potential for good public transport connections with Rye. Its overall score means that it is considered to be a sustainable settlement, along with Battle and Sidley & Little Common Catchment Areas, while the only areas scoring higher are Bexhill and Bexhill Town Centre.

Opportunities for Growth

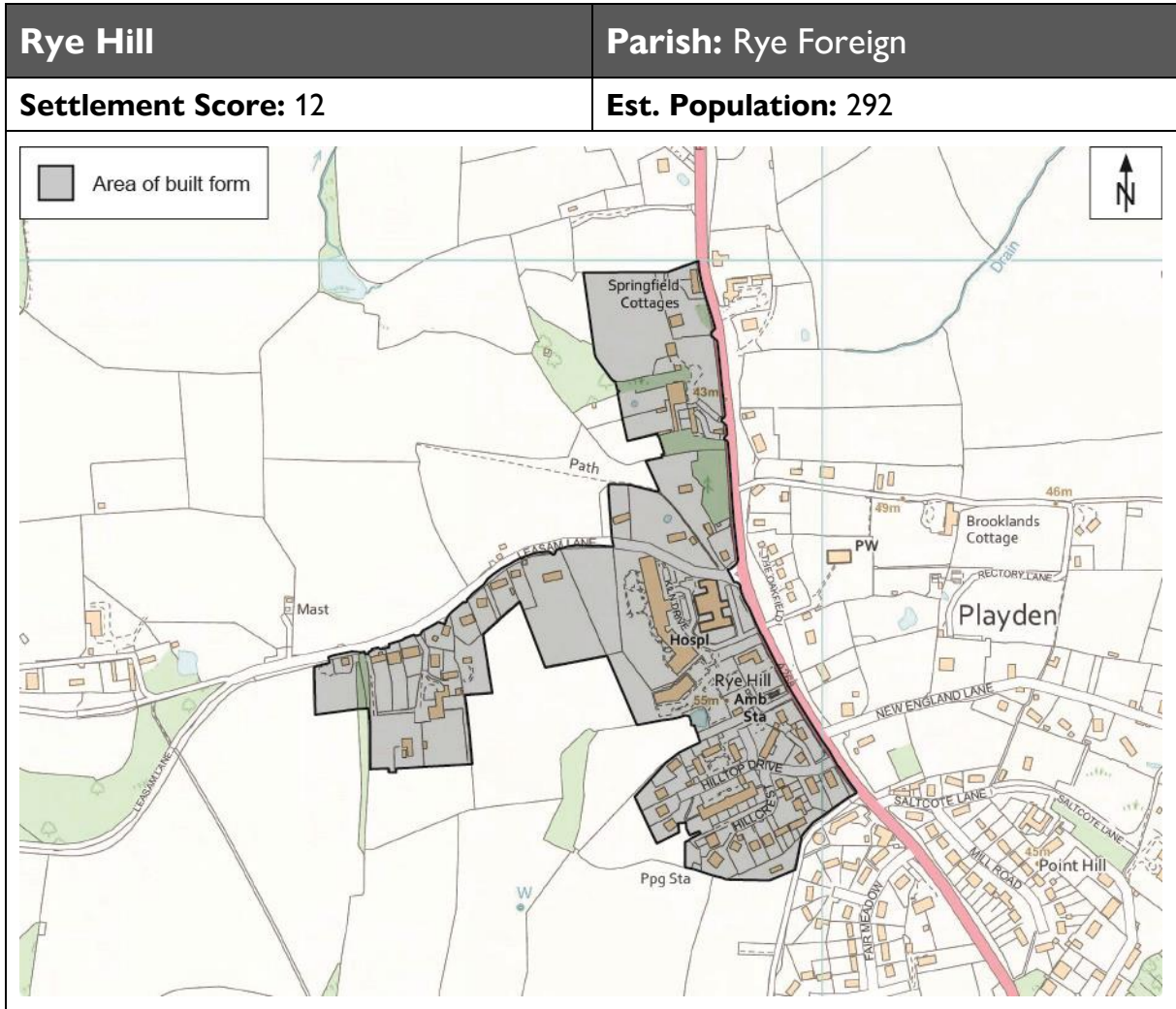
The existing Rye Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for a total of 'at least' 160 dwellings, some related employment floorspace, as well as a petrol station and/or convenience store. Of these sites, 74 dwellings have so far been permitted, as well as a multi-purpose arts centre. Many of the opportunities for growth that were identified within the Neighbourhood Plan are yet to be permitted, with none yet commenced.

Any consideration of future opportunities for growth needs to consider carrying forward the extant Neighbourhood Plan allocations. Beyond these extant allocations, it is difficult to identify specific areas for future growth, without a finalised HELAA in place, due to the considerable constraints to development within and surrounding Rye. It is possible that any further requirements for future growth would necessitate the re-evaluation of the extant allocations in order to identify if any of these sites may be re-allocated with a higher density than at present. There may also be development opportunities within Rye Hill and Playden as they are not subject to the same constraints (notwithstanding the AONB and further landscape constraints), that while in separate parishes, are nonetheless within the greater Rye town.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

An increase in the population with Rye, as well as increases to those of nearby settlements that form a sustainability network around Rye, would have the potential to support the existing services within Rye, while also fostering new demand that could perhaps facilitate the attractiveness of Rye for the development of an additional supermarket (subject of course to site availability). Such additional population within Rye and the surrounding area,

would also lend additional strength to Rye's claim to be included within a high-speed extension from HS1 in Ashford, if such a scheme were to come forward at some point. A high-speed rail extension remains aspirational at this stage, however.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Rye Hill is a small area of mainly residential development to the north of Rye, west of the A268. Its built form is technically contiguous with Rye, however it is being considered separately in the context of this study as it is outside the Civil Parish. That said, where Rye Hill shares the same facilities and services as Rye, it is proposed that Rye and Rye Hill will be considered as a functional unit for the purposes of the Local Plan, together with adjacent Playden to the east of the A268.

Housing and Population

Rye Hill has an estimated population of 292, which is based on the number of dwellings, 146, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2 persons per dwelling. The population for the larger Rye area, with which Rye Hill is a contiguous settlement, along with Playden makes up an estimated combined population of 5,847.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Rye Hill is historically a separate entity from Rye and the Rye Conservation Area to the South. The southern part of Rye Hill, including Rye Cemetery, is covered by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) which relates to the siting medieval industrial area, as well as the land to the south and east. There is also a section of the settlement alongside the A268 which is within the Playden ANA. Rye Hill generally consists of modern residential development, although it has two Grade II listed buildings, including Hill House Hospital and Springfield Court manor house.

Landscape Character

Landscape Character areas relevant for Rye Hill include the Rye LCA and the Lower Rother Valley LCA.

Rye LCA

The Rye LCA observes that the Citadel is built on a sandstone hill above the surrounding open marshes, at the confluence of, and bounded by, three rivers. Its history as a walled, almost moated, defensive site and its unique geography have contributed to its compact intimate character. Rye's landscape setting provides a soft, flat, semi-natural contrast to the urban edge of the town and enhances its maritime character; from viewpoints within the town, it gives fine quality views out to the distant landscape and coast.

The LCA notes the challenges that impact upon the character of the town. The busy A259 and large parking areas ultimately detract from its historic setting, while the town also features modern housing areas which lack character, and sometimes form an abrupt urban edge to the surrounding countryside.

Lower Rother Valley LCA

The Lower Rother Valley LCA covers the area to the immediate west and north of Rye, including parts of Rye Hill. The area features the valleys of the Tillingham and Rother, the rivers of which then converge at Rye from the west and east respectively. The Tillingham Valley has with a flat open floor and stepwell wooded sides, while the lower reaches of the Rother form a broad valley. There are a few remaining extensive areas of orchards and some remnants of hop growing.

In terms of the immediate landscape of Rye, the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) considers Rye Hill to the south of Leasam Lane, which is identified through the area 'R1'.

R1 – Playden West

This is the area of land which slopes from Leasam Lane Southwards. It is typically pasture enclosed by treed hedges and scattered woodland. There are some more open slopes. A feature of this part of Rye is the raised cliff. The area has a strong sense of place. However, there is more modern ribbon development along ridge top track. This is a historic track and access to the listed Leasam House and Farm.

Areas of open fields which are not in the AONB do act as a buffer between the built-up edge and AONB, and it is noted that their development would impact on the AONB.

The assessment defines the landscape area as high quality, with a high value in terms of functioning as an AONB buffer area. Character sensitivity is high – moderate, while visual sensitivity is considered high. Consequently, this landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'low' for residential development and 'none' for business development. It is noted that development should avoid the open slopes adjacent to the A21 to the northwest and those to the south of the village to the west of the A21 and should otherwise be limited to infill and more enclosed locations close to the village. By way of mitigation potential, it is

noted that there would be some scope to redefine the urban edge and create a woodland buffer to the AONB Countryside however, it would not be desirable to enclose long views out.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The High Weald NL is adjacent to the west and north of the settlement, with some areas of Rye Hill and the north encroaching the AONB. There are also several parcels of traditional orchard priority habitat adjacent to and within the settlement boundary. Rye Hill's proximity to the AONB means that undeveloped areas here function as a buffer to the AONB.

In contrast with much of the areas surrounding Rye, there are few constraints due to flooding risk, with only small areas affected by surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Rye Hill has access to a convenience store, primary and secondary schools, and a doctor's surgery within 1km. With three of the four types of essential service, Rye Hill scores a 3. In practical terms it can be argued that Rye Hill also has access to a post office and a supermarket given that Rye Post Office and Jempsons supermarket are both less than 100m beyond the 1km radius.

Service Level

If taken by itself, Rye Hill is small and has few services. Notably, the Rye and Winchelsea Hospital is sited within Rye Hill, which provides a range of local outpatient and inpatient services. Connecting with the hospital is a new community centre, which includes a café. However, when considered part of the greater Rye settlement area, Rye Hill has access to a good range of services, making it in this respect one of the more sustainable locations in the district. Notable services other than those identified above include a pharmacy, a leisure centre, two community halls and two sports pitches. Given the walkability of the Rye town

centre area, it can again be argued that residents of Rye Hill have effective access to the full range of services within the town, and therefore its score of 2 does not adequately reflect the ultimate range of accessible facilities and services.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are almost no employment opportunities within Rye Hill itself. However, a reasonable amount of employment within the Greater Rye area, with further employment provided in Rye Harbour employment area, although the latter is outside of the 2km catchment area. Additionally, Rye train station provides connections to Hastings and Ashford. Overall, Rye Hill scores 2 for its access to employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Rye Hill has a reasonably regular bus service, including connections to Tenterden and Rye Harbour, although the nearby transport hub at Rye provides a good range of public transport options, including a train service, which is within a 1km radius. Just outside of this radius are three good bus services (10+ buses per day each), with connections to Hastings and Lydd. Rye Hill scores 3 for the availability of public transport.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Rye Hill, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	3
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	2

Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	12

Current development commitments

There is currently one significant development commitment within Rye Hill, to the southwest of Rye medical centre. It consists of a 60 room care home, including 28 parking spaces, subject to planning permission RR/2017/2097/P.

In terms of the wider Rye settlement area, the existing Rye Neighbourhood Plan allocates a total of 7 sites within that together would provide at least 160 dwellings, with two of these (allocations H5 & H6) also providing employment floorspace, as well as the provision of a petrol station and convenience store. It should be noted that the Rye Neighbourhood Plan does not cover the specific settlement area of Rye Hill, due to Rye Hill being within a different parish. The allocations within the Rye Neighbourhood Plan are set out below:

H3 - Former Tilling Green School for at least 20 dwellings.

H4 - Rock Channel for at least 30 dwellings. Permission has so far been granted as per RR/2019/789/P & RR/2021/2045/P for the southern section of the site for a multipurpose arts centre, as well as a total of 11 dwellings (including 3 live/work artist accommodation units), leaving the north of the allocations site to come forward independently to deliver the remaining 'at least' 19 dwellings.

H5 - Winchelsea Rd East for at least 10 dwellings, and employment space

H6 - Winchelsea Rd West for at least 20 dwellings, and employment space

H7 - Freda Gardham School for at least 30 dwellings.

H8 - Lower School Site for at least 50 dwellings. Permission has been granted for the development of the site for 63 dwellings as per RR/2017/1778/P.

B3 - Former Freda Gardham School site for a petrol station and/or convenience store of up to 500sqm.

Permission has also been granted for 6 dwellings at Tower Street subject to RR/2017/2217/P, and 7 dwellings at 48 Ferry Road subject to RR/2018/1828/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- A part of the wider Rye town settlement
- Effective access to Rye's services and facilities
- Secondary school within 1km radius
- Relatively good level of employment, given Rye Hill's access to Rye
- Rye Train station is within easy walking distance, with good bus services not far beyond

Settlement Weaknesses

- Significant landscape constraints to development, with external areas functioning as a buffer to the adjacent AONB.
- Limited walkability between Rye Hill and Rye Town Centre
- Employment within Rye is often low paid and seasonal
- Limited convenience goods floorspace within the Rye settlement area.

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Rye Hill is a fringe area of the market town of Rye. Its proximity to Rye's range of services and facilities, including its public transport connections, makes it potentially one of the more sustainable locations for further development within the district. The majority of day-to-day services are within walking distance. Its overall score means that Rye Hill is considered to be moderately sustainable.

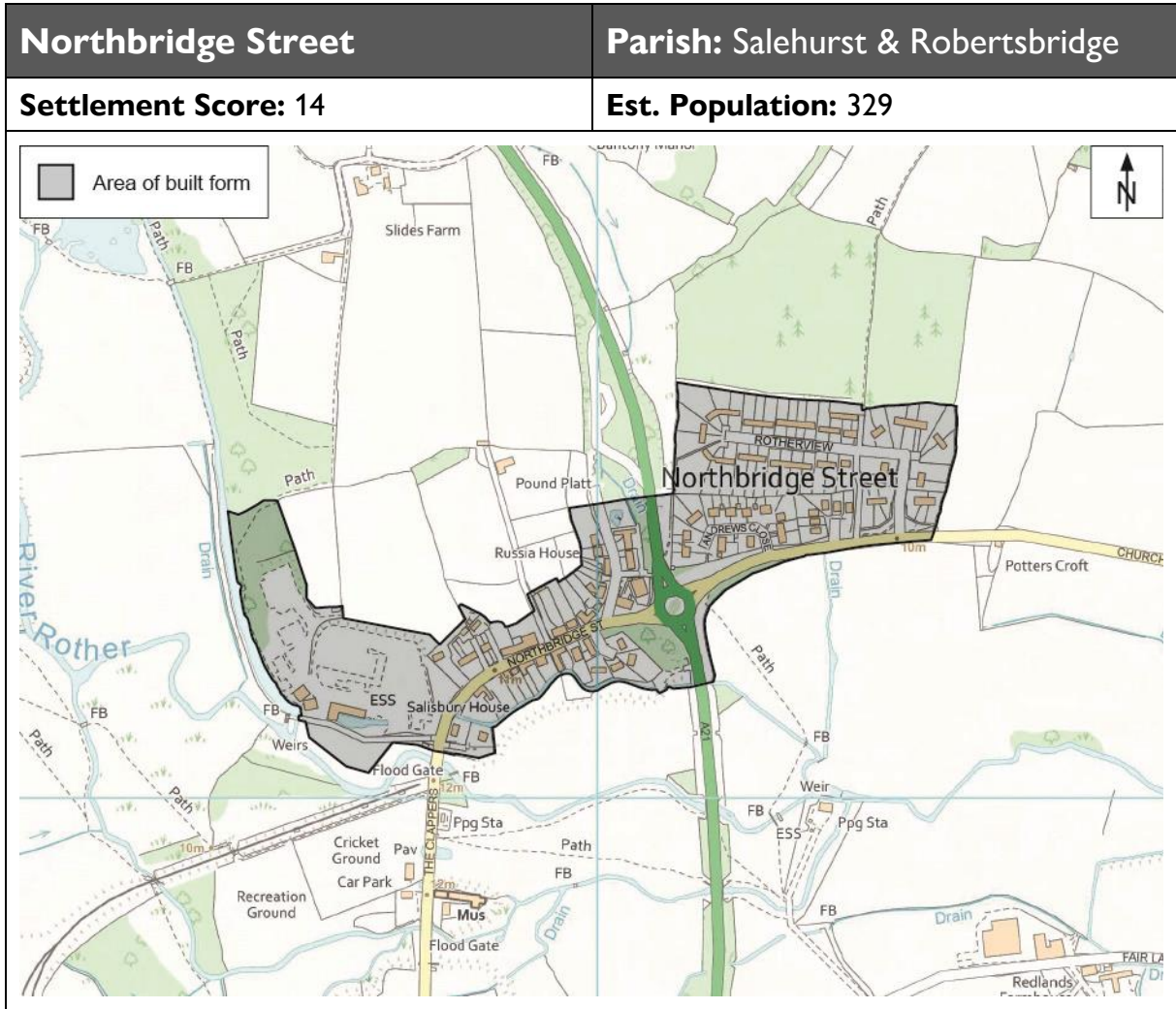
Opportunities for Growth

Any consideration for growth within Rye Hill is justified insofar as Rye Hill may provide opportunities for development centred on the services and facilities within Rye; while Rye itself has a significant number of environmental constraints, severely limiting the number of suitable sites. Extending the settlement westwards will encroach into the AONB, so if either Rye Hill or Playden is to be extended, Playden has fewer designations and constraints, and was found by the Landscape Assessment to have moderate capacity to accept housing development compared to Rye Hill which was found to have low potential (although only the southern part of it was assessed).

Potential to extend both settlements northwards although this is likely to cause landscape harm while the northern parts of both settlements are further from services in Rye, so generally less sustainable. Appeal decisions have referred to the A268 providing a poor pedestrian link to Rye with narrow/missing footways in places. Overall, Rye Hill is unlikely to offer any significant scope for expansion.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Any significant development within Rye Hill may warrant improved pedestrian links between Rye Hill and Rye, while also providing support for the existing services and facilities within the greater Rye settlement (Rye, Rye Hill and Playden).



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Northbridge Street is a small settlement in the parish of Robertsbridge and Salehurst with a population of approximately 329. The settlement is closely linked in both history and proximity to the larger historic settlement of Robertsbridge. Many areas in Northbridge Street are closer to Robertsbridge's services than some western areas of Robertsbridge; effectively, Northbridge Street forms part of the wider Robertsbridge area.

Northbridge Street and Robertsbridge are separated by a causeway over the low-lying pastureland of floodplain, and whilst they are discrete settlements of development, they both evolved as areas of habitation at a similar time in the 14th Century. Northbridge Street sits around 3.5km from Hurst Green to the North and 6.5km to Battle from the south, with Robertsbridge being only 225m to the south.

Northbridge Street is effectively split into two distinct areas due to the presence of the A21. To the west of the A21, and immediately north of Robertsbridge is the historic Core, while the area to the east consists of modern 20th Century residential development and effectively severed from the main area of the settlement.

Housing and Population

The population of Northbridge Street is an estimated 329, which is based on the number of dwellings, 143, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The heritage and history of Northbridge Street is entwined with the larger settlement of Robertsbridge. Robertsbridge is linked to the presence of the only Cistercian Abbey in Sussex which was founded in 1176.

In 1541 a forge and furnace were erected on the Abbey lands around Robertsbridge and in the 18th century the area was a centre of the iron industry and locally made cannons were used by the Navy.

The western side of Northbridge Street has a high concentration of listed buildings, with 13 in total, which is reflected by the designation here of the Northbridge Conservation Area. It is also covered by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA), which denoted the location of a medieval suburb.

Landscape Character

Northbridge Street is within the High Weald National Landscape (AONB). The village sits at the eastern end of the Upper Rother Valley, and immediately north of the River Rother itself.

Upper Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The broad valley of the River Rother dominates the landscape and is overlooked by bold ridges and spurs. The landscape has stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges and a relatively open valley floor with small, winding, partly tree lined rivers. The area also features a strong pattern of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods on the valley slopes. This area contains larger settlements on the high ground including Mayfield to the west, Wadhurst and Ticehurst to the north, Hurst Green to the east and Burwash to the south. The landscape hosts the Hastings to Tunbridge Wells railway, which follows the valley from Robertsbridge to Wadhurst.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of landscape areas 'R5' and 'R6', which overlap with areas of Robertsbridge also. These areas are described below:

B5 – Cricket Ground

This is the valley floodplain between Robertsbridge and Northbridge Street. It is pleasant pastureland accessible from the village via several footpaths and includes the cricket ground and public open space. It provides important Green Infrastructure to the village. This area is the floodplain gap between the main village settlement and Northbridge Street.

The landscape is a good quality and high value AONB area. This area has high character sensitivity and moderate visual sensitivity. There is low to no capacity to accept residential or business development, and low potential for mitigation. There would be some scope to plant wet woodland and streamside trees. It is important to retain the gap between Robertsbridge and Northbridge Street settlements. The character of the area is as open flood plain and further development would encroach into the green infrastructure around the village.

B6 – Northbridge Street

This is an area of enclosed pastures and meadows on the edge of the village settlement. It is enclosed by hedges and some trees belts. The area provides the setting for the old mill buildings. There are some historic cottages in local vernacular style. A footpath crosses the western end of the river.

This is a good quality and high value AONB area, and it has a moderate character sensitivity to change and visual sensitivity. It has a moderate capacity to accept residential development and low capacity to accept business development. Development would only be acceptable close to the village edges. There is moderate potential for mitigation with some scope to strengthen the edge of the village in views to the High Weald beyond.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

The assessment focuses on the undeveloped land to the immediate north of the Mill site. It is considered that while the proposed development of Hodson's Mill as a brownfield site would enhance the AONB, the land to the north is integral for the landscape setting of the village, and any further expansion into the countryside should be avoided.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The settlement is wholly within the High Weald NL. In respect of the settlement area to the west of the A21, the western extent of the settlement partially encroaches and is bound by deciduous woodland. This side of the settlement is also bound by coastal and floodplain grazing marsh to the south. The southern ends of both sides of the settlement are within the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The northeastern side of Northbridge Street is wholly bound by dense vegetation and woodland.

Significant areas of the settlement are within Flood Zone 2 and 3 in connection with the Rover Rother, while there are areas that are susceptible to surface water flooding. However, areas to the north of existing development slope upwards away from the valley floor and are therefore generally outside of flood areas.

The Salehurst and Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan has designated the land to the northwest and south west of the western side of the settlement, and the entirety of the land to the immediate north of the eastern side of the settlement, as Local Green Space.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

The proximity to the larger settlement of Robertsbridge allows for many shared services and facilities between the two settlements. Northbridge Street has access to a convenience store, a pre-school, primary school, doctor's surgery and a post office.

With one of each essential service, Northbridge Street scores a 4 for its range of essential services.

As with Robertsbridge, there is no supermarket, meaning that convenience shopping is limited, with the nearest supermarkets being in Hastings and Hawkhurst, the latter being just over 6.6km to the northeast.

Service Level

Beyond essential services, Northbridge Street's wider service level also includes a dentist, pharmacy, sports pitch and church, amongst other services and facilities. The vast majority of these shared with the nearby larger settlement of Robertsbridge. Northbridge Street scores a 2 for its service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are two smaller employment areas that are within 2km of the village and are therefore considered accessible, these being; Russet Farm and Redlands Farm, which at the time of the 2016 Employment Sites Review each had 8 and 5 businesses together. There are also a small number of businesses located adjacent to the train station north of Station

Road, including cricket equipment manufacturer Gray-Nichols, Culverwell Cars, and Robertsbridge Garden Machine Centre. Overall, Northbridge Street has access only to a modest level of employment opportunities, and its scores 2.

Public Transport

Northbridge Street has access to a number of bus services, with routes and destinations that include Battle, Bexhill, Hastings and services to local schools and colleges. Notably, there are two average bus services, the 304 and 305, both with connections including Hawkhurst, Battle and Hastings. Combining both services together effectively makes 12 daily services towards these locations, and equates to Northbridge Street having access to one good bus service according to the Methodology. Adjacent Robertsbridge also has a train station which serves as an effective commuter service with regular daily services towards Tunbridge Wells, London, Battle and Hastings. Northbridge Street scores 4 for its public transport as it is considered to have a 'good' bus service (10+ buses per day per service), as reflecting the effective combination of the 304 and 305 buses.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds up to 300Mbps, is available within the settlement of Northbridge Street. This gives the settlement a score of 2 for its internet service.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	14

Current development commitments

The Salehurst and Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan has allocated one housing site in the vicinity of Northbridge Street, the Mill Site, for a total of 85-100 dwellings and 1,200sqm of employment space.

This site also has planning permission under RR/2017/382/P for the development of 96 dwellings, and 1,200sqm of employment space.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full range of essential services • One of the highest levels of service and facilities of all villages within the district • Larger settlement – over 2,000 residents when combined with the population of Robertsbridge • Good public transport connections, including frequent bus availability, and a nearby train station • Position on junction of A21, provides good road access to larger settlements

Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of supermarket • Relatively distant from larger settlements, with Hastings being nearly 16km to the south east • No single ‘good bus service’ • Modest level of employment opportunities • The A21 severs the settlement in two, which serves to isolate the eastern side of the settlement • Some areas of open AONB countryside and priority habitat surrounding the settlement limit the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Together with adjacent Robertsbridge, Northbridge Street has the highest sustainability score of any village in the district. Its sustainability score and its connectivity via the A21 to larger villages to the north, as well as Robertsbridge, means that some development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of a northern cluster of larger rural settlements, including those outside

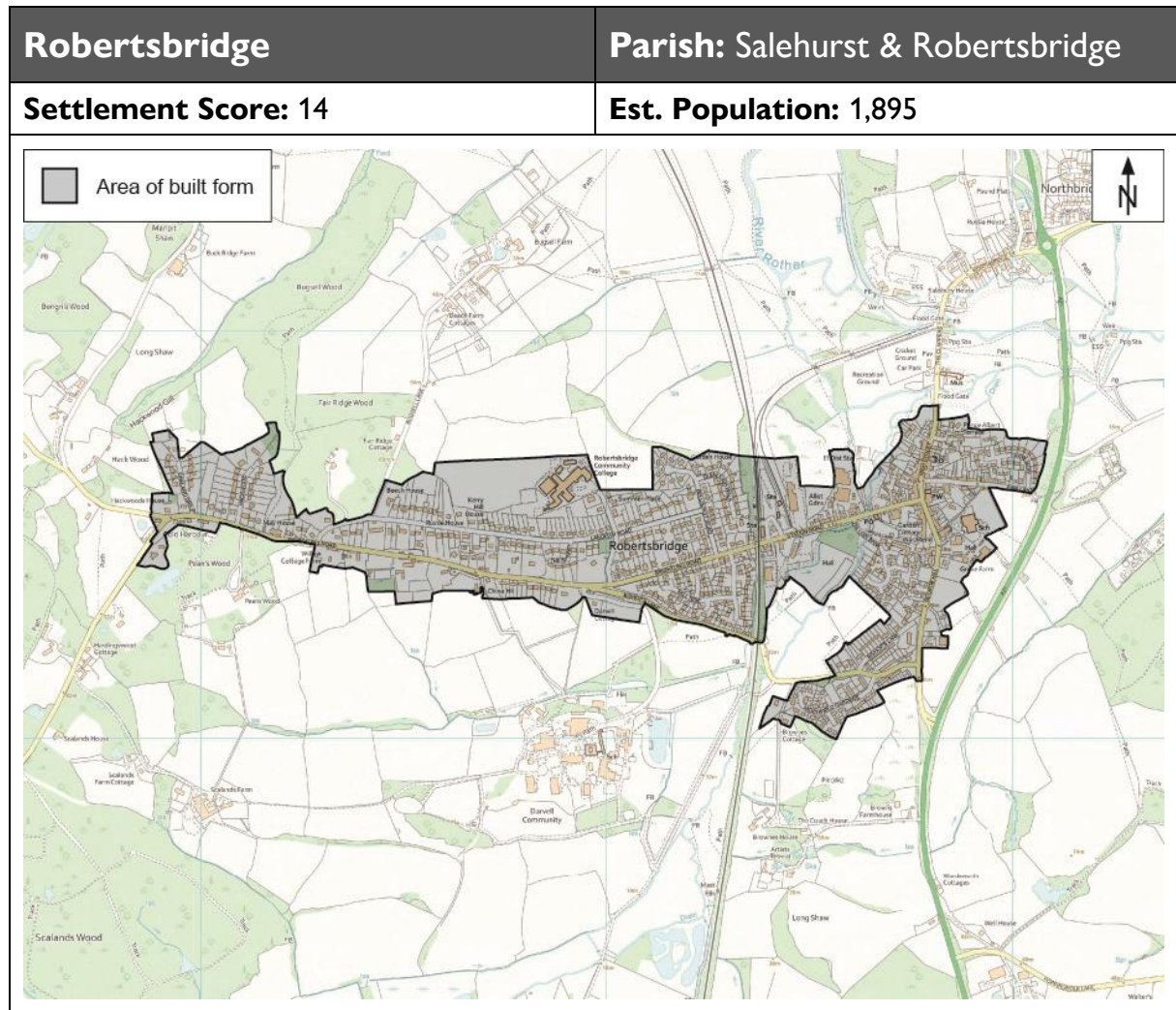
of the district. Its overall score means that Northbridge Street, like Robertsbridge, is considered to be moderately sustainable.

Opportunities for Growth

If not already delivered, the existing allocation at Hodson's Mill should be carried forward into the new plan period, as it will provide a significant amount of development for Northbridge Street and Robertsbridge. There may be other small, enclosed areas that may permit a limited amount of development. Through improving the provision of local services in the wider Robertsbridge settlement area and public transport accessibility through a network of larger rural settlements, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The development of the existing allocation, and potentially allowing further development in less sensitive areas of the settlement where identified, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the wider Robertsbridge settlement area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Robertsbridge is a relatively large historic village lying in the parish of Robertsbridge and Salehurst. It has a population of approximately 1895. Robertsbridge sits around 3.5km from Hurst Green to the north and 6.5km to Battle from the south. Further afield, Hastings town centre is nearly 16km to the southeast along the A21 and connected by rail.

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.

Robertsbridge lies within the High Weald National Landscape (AONB) and has patches of ancient woodland to the east and west sides.

While Robertsbridge would appear to take a linear form, with residential development extending some distance to the west either side of Brightling Road, the settlement features a nucleated core centred around the High Street and Station Road. For the purposes of the Settlement Study, Northbridge Street to the immediate north has been identified as a separate area of built form, however it effectively forms part of the greater Robertsbridge settlement area, being connected to Robertsbridge High Street.

Robertsbridge is generally well connected by road, being immediately to the west of the A21, which effectively forms a bypass that circumvents the village. The bypass means that Robertsbridge, and significantly the High Street, has very little through traffic. This is relatively rare for settlements within the High Weald and add to the village's character and walkability.

Housing and Population

The population of Robertsbridge is an estimated 1895, which is based on the number of dwellings, 824, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling. When combined with the population of Northbridge Street, the population of the greater Robertsbridge settlement area equates to an estimate population of 2,224.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The history of Robertsbridge is linked to the presence of the only Cistercian Abbey in Sussex which was founded in 1176. The village of Robertsbridge was founded in the early 13th century. In the late 14th century and early 15th century Robertsbridge experienced a period of wealth and growth, and 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 the Abbey lands in

Robertsbridge and in the 18th century the area was a centre of the iron industry and locally made cannons were used by the Navy.

Historically, the flour mill has been the town's most enduring employer. Robertsbridge is also renowned for its cricket bats with Gray-Nicholls being based there, being made of locally sourced willow.

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 and is also covered by an Archaeological Notification Area. In total, Robertsbridge is host to 105 listed buildings which include the Post Office, the Ostrich Hotel and a number of cottages and historic farmhouses. Despite its size, Robertsbridge is not a parish and has no church of its own, instead it has links with St. Marys Church in nearby Salehurst.

Landscape Character

Robertsbridge is within the High Weald National Landscape (AONB). The village sits at the divide which 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. There is ancient woodland fringe to the east and west sides of the village.

Robertsbridge effectively sits at the meeting point of the Darwell Valley Landscape Character Area to the south and the Upper Rother Valley to the north. Some 50m to the east of the settlement is the Lower Rother Valley Landscape Character Area. Robertsbridge consists of the Upper Rother Valley.

Upper Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The broad valley of the River Rother dominates the landscape and is overlooked by bold ridges and spurs. The landscape has stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges and a relatively open valley floor with small, winding, partly tree lined rivers. The area also features a strong pattern of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods on the

valley slopes. This area contains larger settlements on the high ground including Mayfield to the west, Wadhurst and Ticehurst to the north, Hurst Green to the east and Burwash to the south. The landscape hosts the Hastings to Tunbridge Wells railway, which follows the valley from Robertsbridge to Wadhurst.

Darwell Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Darwell Valley is bounded by the Brightling ridge and Robertsbridge to the north and the Netherfield ridge to the south. It is a landscape of bold heavily wooded ridges and secluded valleys and is one of the most densely wooded areas of the High Weald, which gives it a sense of endless forest and a character of exceptional remoteness.

In addition, there are no main roads crossing the area, and this reinforces its remote character. Part of the Darwell valley is flooded to form the Darwell reservoir a smaller reservoir than Bewl water which lies to the north west. A network of streams arising from springs in the south of the area and flowing northeast to the River Rother.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of landscape areas 'R1' to 'R6'. These areas are described below:

R1 – Grove Park

This area of open fields to the east of the village are severed from the countryside by the A21 Robertsbridge bypass. This area is a mixture of school playing fields and grazed farmland. There are some detracting features such as farmland clutter. A footpath crosses to the countryside beyond and across the bypass. The area is enclosed by maturing roadside planting.

The landscape is of good quality and a high value AONB area, and it has a low character sensitivity and a moderate visual sensitivity. It has a moderate capacity to accept residential and business development. There is scope to redefine the village edge in this location, although a green corridor should be retained between A21 and the village edge. The area has a moderate potential for mitigation which could include creating a new field structure and strengthen character.

R2 – Browns Bridge

This area has a sense of place. It has accessible meadows to the rear of the residential area with some footpaths and informal access. The area is used by local people for informal recreation and is considered good green infrastructure. The lower areas are prone to flood and is rich with vegetation and hedges to back gardens.

The landscape is good quality and a high value AONB area, while it has a moderate to high character sensitivity to change and visual sensitivity. The area has low capacity to accept residential or business development. This is valued green infrastructure through the village centre, while there would be limited scope for infill development so long as it would not detract from this. There is moderate potential for mitigation which could include some scope to plant trees and hedges, however it would not be desirable to enclose views across the valley.

R3 – Darvell, South of Village

This is an area of sloping farmland falling from the built-up ridge. There are open slopes with more enclosed areas at the bottom of the valley. The area is crossed by footpaths and is accessible from the village. The development is typically ribbon development which has grown from the railway. The Darvell community settlement has become established around a farmstead and oast.

It is described as being of good-high value and a high AONB area, and it has a high character sensitivity and high visual sensitivity. This area has low to no capacity accept residential or business development. The area forms the setting for the village and further development on the southern slopes would intrude into High Weald countryside, and consequently the area has low potential for mitigation.

R4 - Bugsell Lane

This area is the open countryside slopes which fall away from the developed ridge to the north of the village. This area is accessible from the village on footpaths and tracks. The

secondary school, Robertsbridge Community College, sits on the ridge. This part of the village developed since the creation of the railway.

The landscape is described as being a good quality and a high value AONB area. It has moderate-high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. There is low to no capacity to housing or business development, and low potential for mitigation. Further development northwards would encroach on the open High Weald countryside.

B5 – Cricket Ground

This is the valley floodplain between Robertsbridge and Northbridge Street. It is pleasant pastureland accessible from the village via several footpaths and includes the cricket ground and public open space. It provides important Green Infrastructure to the village. This area is the floodplain gap between the main village settlement and Northbridge Street.

The landscape is a good quality and high value AONB area. This area has high character sensitivity and moderate visual sensitivity. There is low to no capacity to accept residential or business development, and low potential for mitigation. There would be some scope to plant wet woodland and streamside trees. It is important to retain the gap between Robertsbridge and Northbridge Street settlements. The character of the area is as open flood plain and further development would encroach into the green infrastructure around the village.

B6 – Northbridge Street

This is an area of enclosed pastures and meadows on the edge of the village settlement. It is enclosed by hedges and some trees belts. The area provides the setting for the old mill buildings. There are some historic cottages in local vernacular style. A footpath crosses the western end of the river.

This is a good quality and high value AONB area, and it has a moderate character sensitivity to change and visual sensitivity. It has a moderate capacity to accept residential development and low capacity to accept business development. Development would only be acceptable close to the village edges. There is moderate potential for mitigation with some scope to strengthen the edge of the village in views to the High Weald beyond.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

The assessment identifies that in landscape terms there is some potential for development for to the south and east of the village, in particular the undeveloped land between George Hill/the Highstreet and the A21 bypass. Areas to the south, along Bishops Lane and south of Heathfield Gardens, while showing some capacity, also have a number of constraints. In purely landscape terms, there is an enclosed area to the far west of the settlement that could perhaps accept some development, although otherwise it is a long way from the village core. There little potential to the north of the village, an sites adjacent to the school and to its north are judged to be contiguous with the wider landscape, and therefore very sensitive to development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

In terms of biodiversity and landscape constraints, the eastern side of Robertsbridge is directly adjacent to areas of Priority Habitat, including deciduous woodland, as well as coastal and floodplain grazing marsh abounding the River Rother. A significant proportion of undeveloped areas have also been designated as Local Green Space in the Salehurst and Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan, many of which coincide with the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area, which passes through the settlement from north to south.

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 Flood Zone 3.

Much of the far western end of the village is closely bound by areas of ancient deciduous woodland.

Unlike the eastern end of the village the areas around Brightling Road are largely free from flood risk, excluding the area bounding the western side of the railroad to the south of the village which is in Flood Zone 3.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Robertsbridge has a good level of essential services, some of which serve the surrounding rural areas. It has access to two convenience stores, a post office, primary school and secondary school, and a doctor's surgery. There is no supermarket which does mean that convenience shopping is limited, with the nearest supermarkets being in Hastings and Hawkhurst, the latter being just over 7km to the northeast. With access to all four essential services, including a secondary school, Robertsbridge scores a 4.

Service Level

Other than Ticehurst, Robertsbridge has the highest overall service provision of all the villages within the district. Services include a nurse, restaurants and cafes, a pub, a dentist and pharmacy. Facilities include a village hall, two community halls, a recreation ground and a play area. However, there is no bank, public parks or petrol stations. Ultimately, Robertsbridge scores a 2 for its wider service level, although as noted, its overall provision is significant within the rural areas.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are two smaller employment areas that are within 2km of the village and are therefore considered accessible, these being; Russet Farm and Redlands Farm, which at the time of the 2016 Employment Sites Review each had 8 and 5 businesses together. There are also a small number of businesses located adjacent to the train station north of Station Road, including cricket equipment manufacturer Gray-Nichols, Culverwell Cars, and Robertsbridge Garden Machine Centre. Overall, Robertsbridge has access only to a modest level of employment opportunities, and its scores 2.

Public Transport

Robertsbridge has approximately 10 bus services, with routes and destinations that include Battle, Bexhill, Hastings and services to local schools and colleges. Notably, there are two average bus services, the 304 and 305, both with connections including Hawkhurst, Battle and Hastings. Combining both services together effectively makes 12 daily services towards these locations and equates to Robertsbridge having access to one good bus service according to the Methodology. Robertsbridge also has a train station which serves as an effective commuter service with regular daily services towards Tunbridge Wells, London, Battle and Hastings. Robertsbridge scores 4 for its public transport as it is considered to have a ‘good’ bus service (10+ buses per day per service), as reflecting the effective combination of the 304 and 305 buses, while having access to a railway station.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Robertsbridge, which is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement. This gives Robertsbridge a score of 2.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	4
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	14

Current development commitments

The Salehurst and Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan allocates three housing sites within Robertsbridge for a total of 71-80 dwellings and constitute the following sites.

Heathfield Gardens – 35-40 dwellings

Grove Farm – 30 dwellings. This site is the subject of planning permission RR/2017/1629/P for 30 dwellings

Vicarage Land – 6-10 dwellings

There is also planning permission for Land at Culverwells for the erection of a 1,300sqm commercial light industrial unit and up to 17 dwellings.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Full range of essential services, including a secondary school
- 2nd widest service level of all villages within the district
- Larger settlement – nearly 2,000 residents and over 2,000 residents when combined with the population of Northbridge Street
- Good public transport connections, including frequent bus availability, and a nearby train station
- Position on junction of A21, provides good road access to larger settlements

Settlement Weaknesses

- Lack of supermarket
- Relatively distant from larger settlements, with Hastings being nearly 16km to the southeast
- No single 'good bus service'
- Modest level of employment opportunities
- Areas of open AONB countryside surrounding the settlement limit the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Robertsbridge is a relatively large rural village, and together with adjacent Northbridge Street, has the highest sustainability score of any village in the district. Its sustainability score and its connectivity via the A21 to larger villages to the north means that some development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of a northern cluster of larger rural settlements, including those outside of the district. Robertsbridge is considered to be moderately sustainable, which puts it below Rye and Battle for the purposes of this Review.

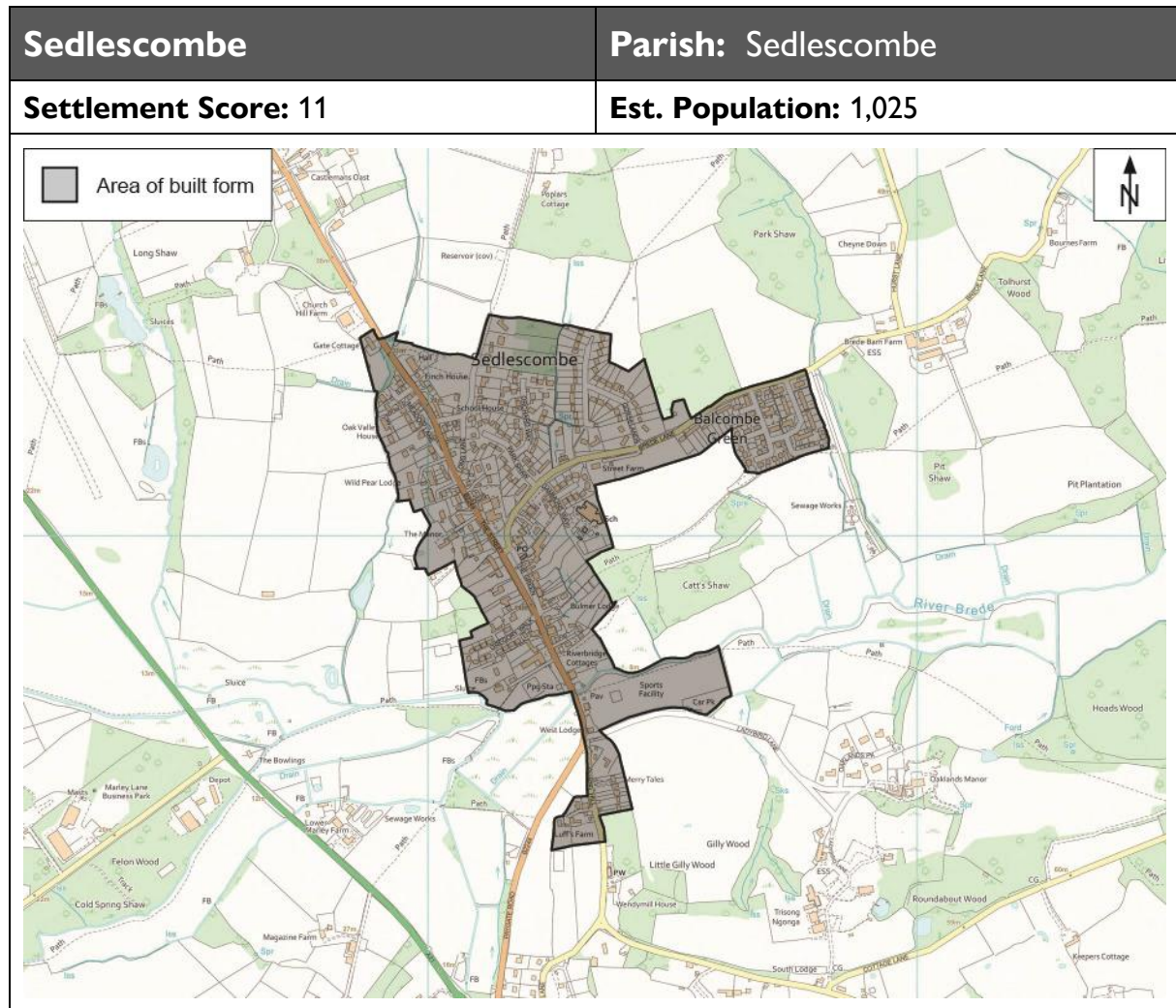
Opportunities to improve sustainability

While the majority of the village has significant landscape constraints, there are less-sensitive areas that have capacity for further development, including the existing neighbourhood plan allocations, which if not developed, should be carried forward into the new plan period.

Through improving the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of larger rural settlements, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The development of the existing allocations and allowing further development in less sensitive areas of the settlement, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Sedlescombe village is centrally located within Rother District with a population of approximately 1,025. Sedlescombe sits around 3.5km to the northeast of Battle and just over 5km to Hastings.

Sedlescombe is situated on a gently sloping south-facing slope at the start of the Brede Valley. The village hosts many timbered houses of the fifteenth century and its picturesque pump on the large village green.

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.

Housing and Population

The population of Sedlescombe is an estimated 1,025, which is based on the number of dwellings, 466, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.2 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Sedlescombe parish is a former iron founding area that has roots to pre-Roman times. In the nineteenth century a hoard of coins was discovered in the village, which was believed to be Harold's war chest which was never recovered after the Battle of Hastings.

Sedlescombe is host to 57 listed buildings which include a number of historical farmhouses, cottages and inns. There is also the Parish Church of St John the Baptist. The central section of the settlement has very high concentration of listed buildings that include a number of burgage plots to the rear of buildings to the east of the Street, including an area designated within a Conservation Area, making the central part of the settlement particularly sensitive to new development. The majority of Sedlescombe is within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) defining a medieval and post-medieval village, while a further ANA that links undeveloped parts of the settlement identifies the location of the Hastings to Ashford Roman Road. The central area either side of the Street and the Green area are also within a Conservation Area.

The wider parish area provides a haven for the children of the Pestalozzi Village which is located $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile south of the Sedlescombe development boundary. This was founded in 1959 and is based on the teachings of the education reformer of the same name.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Sedlescombe is within the High Weald NL, and it is positioned on the south facing slopes of the Brede Valley, adjacent to the start of the river. The landscape is dominated by the broad valley of the River Brede, which is characterised by a flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes. This area is a largely unspoilt rural landscape with few intrusive features.

Further to the east, the landscape consists of well managed farmland, historic structures and wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley and floodplain. There are villages and churches on the slopes overlooking the valley, including those of Brede, Udimore and Icklesham.

In terms of the immediate landscape, the Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape around Sedlescombe as part of landscape assessment areas S1 to S4.

S1 – Brede Valley South of Village

This area of the Brede Valley is a pleasant and accessible river valley landscape. The flat valley floor supports meadows with encroaching scrub. This area is part of the flood plain and SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The noise of the A21 road detracts from the local area and the area is also historically prone to flooding.

The landscape area is described as being of good quality and a high value AONB area. It has high character sensitivity and moderate visual sensitivity. The area has a no capacity to accept residential or business development. The area also has low potential for mitigation - there is little scope for tree planting and the open valley and meadow character should be maintained. The character of the river valley landscape would be sensitive to change and it is a flood plain.

S2 – West of Village

This is a pleasant and tranquil countryside and an area of transition from large gardens and large houses. There are meadows with horse paddock and some loss of field structure due

to the removal of hedges. There are enclosed gardens with garden vegetation including feature pine trees on the higher ground.

The landscape area is described as being a good quality and high value AONB area, with moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. There is moderate capacity to accept residential development and low capacity to accept business development. There is moderate to low potential for mitigation noting that there is some scope to strengthen the village edge.

S3 – East of Village

This area is comprised of long gardens, meadow or paddocks adjacent to the countryside. There are historic houses fronting the green with long back gardens. The more modern development has extended on the East of the village associated with the school.

The landscape area is described a good quality and a high value AONB area, with moderate character sensitivity to change and low to moderate visual sensitivity. The area has moderate capacity to accept residential development and low capacity to accept residential development. There is moderate potential for mitigation, noting that there would be some scope to replace lost field structure and hedges but not on open meadows. The garden settings of historic properties should be protected and open land to the north of the Brede Valley is part of the valley landscape.

S4 – North of Village

This is an area of rolling countryside with well managed pasture. The open meadow character has well treed field boundaries along roads and tracks. The area is typically countryside to the north of the village with scattered farms along the lane.

The landscape area is described as a high value and high quality AONB area. The area also has high character sensitivity to change and high visual sensitivity. The area has no capacity to accept either residential or housing development, and there would be little scope for mitigation as extensive planting would change the character of the area.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

It is considered that there is no capacity for any further residential development within the former Pestalozzi Estate, and it is noted that the existing Oaklands Park does not set a precedent for such development. There may otherwise be opportunities within the estate to replace the existing buildings with new institutional, leisure and educational facilities. There may be some capacity for a very small extension to Gorselands to the north of the village, provided that it does not extend into the countryside.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Sedlescombe and its surrounding landscape designated within the High Weald NL, featuring gently undulating countryside, with large tracts of mixed woodland including ancient and deciduous woodland.

There are a number of priority habitats within and adjacent to the settlement, including coastal and floodplain grazing marsh adjacent to the River Brede, as well as areas of deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, and traditional orchards. To the immediate south of the settlement and encompassing the river Brede is the Brede Valley Local Wildlife Site (CR57). A number of undeveloped sites have been designated as Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan, which serve to reduce development potential within the village.

In terms of flooding, an area of floodplain within Flood Zone 3 intersects the southern end of the settlement as it continues its course to the east along the Brede Valley. Surface water flooding is generally present along the road within the southern half of the settlement. There is also a Groundwater Source Protection Zone to the southwest of the settlement, near the start of the River Brede.

There are three areas of Local Green Space within the settlement area, as designated by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

One of each essential service is available in Sedlescombe, including a convenience store, which includes a post office, a primary school, and a doctor's surgery. With one of each type of essential service, Sedlescombe scores a 4.

Service Level

Beyond the essential services identified above, Sedlescombe has a generally limited range of services and facilities including a pharmacy, a village hall, a sports pitch and a church. Sedlescombe scores a 1 for its service level, which on average puts it within the bottom half of villages within the district with a population of over 1,000.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There are two employment areas on Marley Lane that are within 2km of Sedlescombe and are therefore counted within Sedlescombe's employment opportunities scoring. As of the Council's 2016 Employment Sites Review the Marley Lane Business Park covered 1.7ha, while further to the west, but also within 2km is Rutherfords Business Park covers an area of 1.75ha and was occupied by approximately 7 businesses. While they are included within the scoring, neither of these two employment areas are accessible either via walking or public transport. Sedlescombe is ultimately in fairly close proximity to better served employment areas of Battle and Hastings, some of which may be accessible by public transport. There may be some employment within the settlement at the services and the nearby garden centres, but ultimately employment is primarily outside of the settlement. Sedlescombe scores a 2 for its employment opportunities, which is directly comparable to the larger villages within the district.

Public Transport

Sedlescombe is primarily served by the 349 bus, which has up to seven buses per day, and connects to various locations within Hastings and rural settlements in the direction of Cranbrook. Other less frequent bus services include connections to Battle and surrounding villages, while there are school time services to Bexhill College and Robertsbridge. There is no train station, with the nearest being in Battle. Sedlescombe scores a 2 for its public transport level.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds up to 300Mbps, is available in Sedlescombe. The settlement scores 2 for its internet availability.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	11

Current development commitments

There is a total of 5 sites within the Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Plan that are allocated in the village for a total of 34-39 dwellings.

Land at Sunningdale – 9 dwellings (no fewer than 6)

Land North of Village Hall - 10 - 12 dwellings

Land at Gate Cottage - 8 dwellings

Land at Church Hill Farm – 10 dwellings

Land at Pump House Yard – proposals for dwellings will be supported.

There are currently no significant permissions within Sedlescombe, including within any of the above allocated sites.

There are currently 2 employment allocations at the following sites, and both within 2km of Sedlescombe’s population weighted centre:

2006 allocation at Rutherfords Business Park, as part of policy EM3 for 2,700sqm net of employment space

DaSA Local Plan allocation at Land at Felon’s Field, Marley Lane as part of policy MAR1 for 3,000sqm of employment space

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger village – population over 1,000 • The settlement has access to all four essential services and facilities • Relatively close (just over 5km) to the major town of Hastings, and 3.5km northwest of Battle. • Some access to employment within 2km
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less frequent bus service • Limited overall range of service and facilities • Areas of open AONB countryside, particularly in the vicinity of the Brede Valley floor, limit development potential • Heritage constraints limited development potential within the centre of the village

Recommendations for the Local Plan

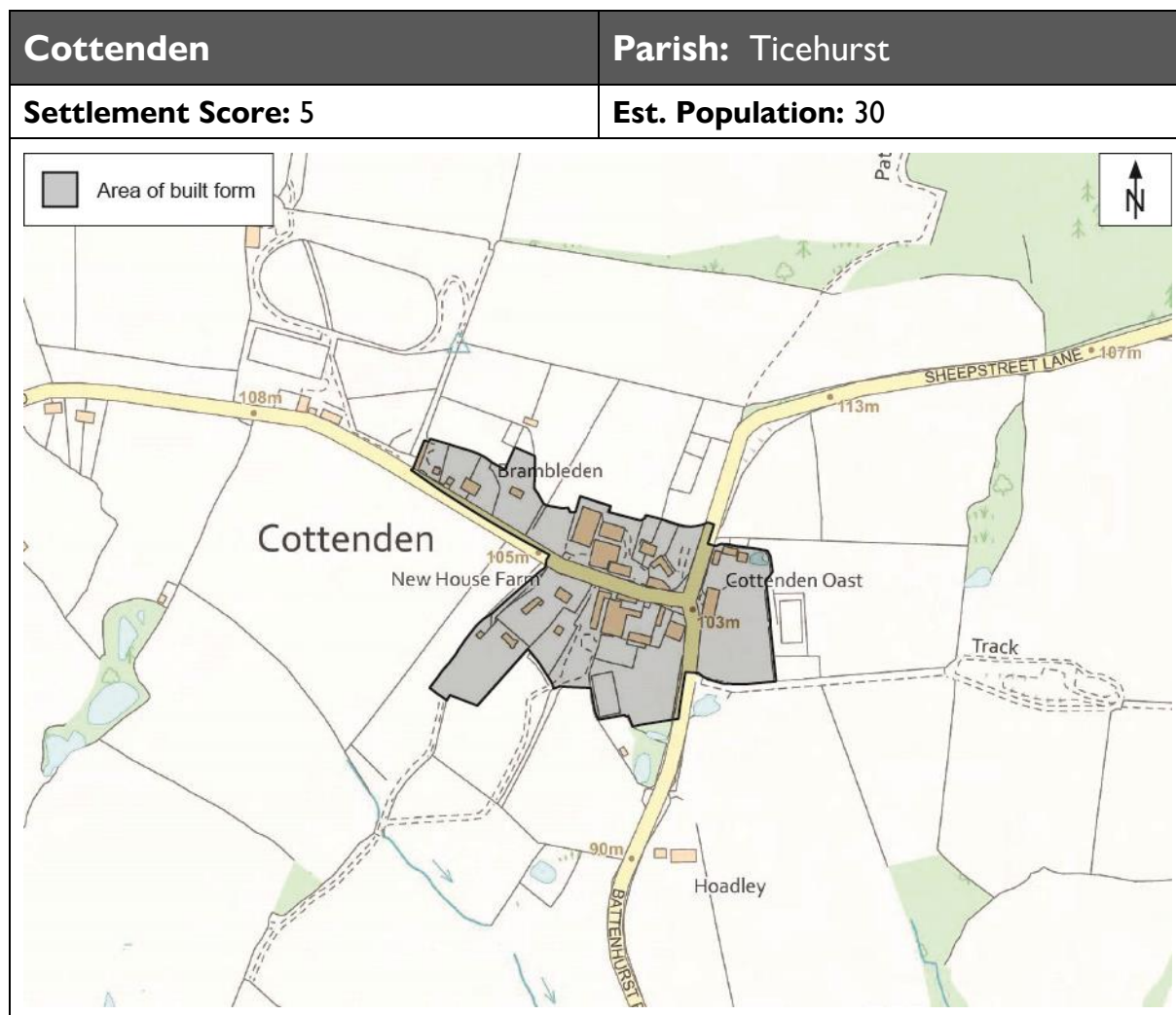
Sedlescombe is generally one of the larger rural villages within the district, and it has all four essential services. Its sustainability score and its relationship with Hastings and Battle means that some development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connected to both towns. While it is considered to be potentially sustainable, the fact that it has all four essential services, makes it more sustainable than other settlements in this Review that are also considered to be potentially sustainable.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

None of the existing Neighbourhood Allocations for housing, nor Local Plan employment designations along Marley Lane have yet received planning permission and remain undeveloped. Any extant allocations should be carried forward, and potentially intensified where possible. Through improving the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of rural settlements connected to Hastings or Battle, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The development of extant allocations, as well as some limited development within areas with less sensitive landscape constraints, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Cottenden is located within the Upper Rother Valley and the Parish of Ticehurst. It is a very small rural settlement, made up of farm buildings including farmhouses, and other houses around a crossroads of country lanes, these being Cottenden Road, Batternhurst Road and Sheepstreet Lane. It has a population of approximately 30.

Cottenden Road connects to Stonegate, which is less than 1km to the west, while the nearest larger settlement is Ticehurst which is just over 2km to the northeast.

Cottenden itself is particularly remote and is some distance off the A265 to the south and B2099 to the north, so that road access requires some distance travelled on narrow country lanes.

Housing and Population

The population of Cottenden is estimated to be approximately 30, which is based on the number of dwellings, 12, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are two Grade II listed buildings within the settlement area, consisting of two farmhouses, these being Cottenden Farmhouse and New House Farmhouse. A stone's throw to the north of the settlement is an Archaeological Notification Area defining a prehistoric enclosure surviving as a crop mark.

Landscape Character

Cottenden along with Stonegate sits at a relatively high topography within the north side of the Upper Rother Valley. Undeveloped sections within or adjacent to the settlement boundary often command long distance views across the countryside. The immediate setting of Cottenden is entirely rural, being made up farmsteads clustered around narrow lanes without footways.

The Upper Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Upper Rother Valley is a Rolling, richly wooded landscape centred on the broad main valley of the River Rother. The valley slopes exhibit a string patterns of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods, networks of smaller medieval fields. The iron industry was historically important in this area, and as a result it has many scattered hammer ponds as a relic of this activity. The area has a close network of winding, sunken lanes with scattered settlements and individual dwellings often strung out along them; however, there are no main roads crossing the area. The valley area has extensive areas of remote countryside especially in the valleys and larger woods, and there are stunning views across the valley.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The settlement area is wholly within the High Weald NL. A parcel of traditional orchard priority habitat bounds the settlement to the north, while there are scattered small areas of ancient woodland in the immediately surrounding landscape. A larger area of ancient woodland known as Limden Wood is present a short way to the northeast of the settlement.

There are no flooding related issues within Cottenden, although the settlement sits within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone which relates to the River Limden to the north.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Cottenden is a very small settlement area, with no essential services of its own. It does, however, have access to the primary school in neighbouring Stonegate, which is 800m to the west; therefore, therefore scoring a 1 for essential services. It should be noted however that there is no footway access between Cottenden and Stonegate, meaning that it is likely that the distance would be travelled by car.

Service Level

There are no services or facilities within Cottenden itself, with all services and facilities identified as accessible being located in Stonegate. These services include a pre-school, Stonegate Village Hall, a Cricket Ground and a play area. With these services within 1km, Cottenden scores 1 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within Cottenden itself are minimal, however Parsonage Farm employment area is some 1.6km to the northeast (to the south of Ticehurst), which, as of the 2016 Rother Employment Sites Review, contains eight businesses. Overall, Cottenden scores a 1 for its access to local employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Public transport is non-existent, with no buses passing through the settlement or within neighbouring Stonegate.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Cottenden, which is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement. This gives Cottenden a score of 2.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	0
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Cottenden.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to primary school in neighbouring Stonegate (by private vehicle only however)

Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very small rural village – population less than 50• No services and facilities within Cottenden itself• Very remote – accessible only by narrow lanes• No public transport options• Lack of footways between Cottenden and Stonegate eliminates walking access• Entirely rural settlement within AONB landscape severely impacts on development capacity

Recommendations for the Local Plan

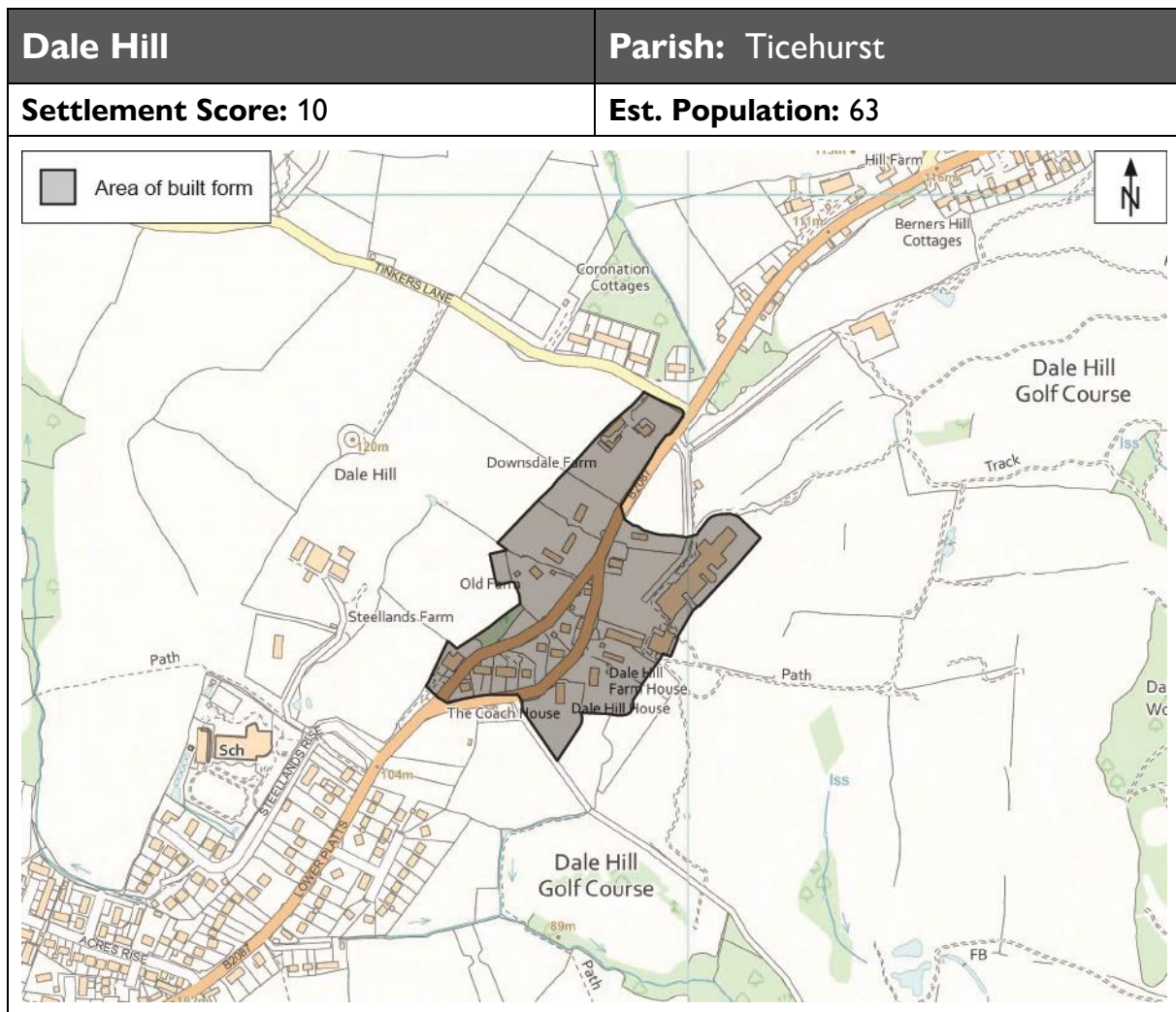
Cottenden is a very small and remote rural settlement. There are no services and facilities within the village, while there are no means of public transportation or safe walking to access services and facilities in the local area, making its residents wholly dependent on private vehicles. It is not considered to be a sustainable settlement.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its tiny population and total remoteness, it is unlikely that Cottenden’s sustainability can be improved. The most obvious improvement would be the provision of a bus service, perhaps running between Ticehurst and Stonegate, via Cottenden. This could be problematic however, due to the narrowness of the local lanes and roads.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Any development significant enough to support additional services and facilities would not be acceptable in the vicinity of Cottenden, due to its size and entirely rural aspect.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Dale Hill is predominantly a cluster of modern dwellings located between the generally open gap between Ticehurst and Flimwell, where the B2087 splits into two separate one-way lanes. The settlement area also includes The Cherry Tree Inn, Dale Hill Golf Club and several farmhouses.

There is no footway connection within the Dale Hill settlement area, and there is little visibility and difficult access where the B2087 splits into two. It should be noted that there is also no footway connection between Dale Hill and Ticehurst.

Housing and Population

The population of Dale Hill is estimated to be approximately 63, which is based on the number of dwellings, 25, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There are three Grade II listed buildings within the periphery of the settlement area, consisting of two farmhouses and the Cherry Tree Inn public house.

Landscape Character

The settlement sits within the top of a ridgeline that also includes adjacent Flimwell and Ticehurst. From Dale Hill Golf Club there are distant views out to the south across the Lower Rother Valley, while the 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 less woodland.

With respect to its linear ridgetop location, Ticehurst lies on the edge of two Landscape Character Areas (LCA); the Upper Rother Valley LCA to the south and the Bewl Water Area LCA to the north.

Upper Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

This area is described as a Rolling, richly wooded landscape centred on the broad main valley of the River Rother. The valley slopes exhibit a string patterns of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods, networks of smaller medieval fields. The iron industry was historically important in this area, and as a result it has many scattered hammer ponds as a relic of this activity. The area has a close network of winding, sunken lanes with scattered settlements and individual dwellings often strung out along them; however, there are no main road crossing the area. The valley area has extensive areas of remote countryside especially in the valleys and larger woods, and there are stunning views across the valley.

Bowl Water – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

This landscape is an area bounded to the north by the Kent/ Sussex border with Wadhurst on the western boundary and Flimwell to the east. It features a large branching reservoir formed from the upper tributaries of the Bowl River which were dammed in 1975 to form the largest artificial area of water in the southeast. The steep wooded ghylls so characteristic of the High Weald have become narrow bays and inlets around the reservoir. The area features a typical high weald patchwork of small fields including scattered historic farmsteads divided by hedges and small woodlands, while there are also Orchards, hop fields and large arable fields on more fertile soils where the hedges have been removed.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the settlement through the identification of landscape area 'T1' which also includes all of Ticehurst north of the B2099. This area is described below:

T1 – North of the Village

This is the area of countryside to the north of adjacent Ticehurst. It is enclosed farmland with mixed arable and pasture. There has been some loss of landscape structure where intensive agriculture has created large fields with hedges removed. Modern farm buildings detract from the visual amenity of the area. There is some sense of place. Remnant orchards are characteristic. This is a historic nucleated village settlement around the church and crossroads. The ancient Coaching Inn and Market Cross are in the heart of the village.

The landscape is of high quality (while being only 'good' closer to Ticehurst), and a high value AONB area, with moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. Consequently, this landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'moderate' for residential development and 'low' for business development. It is noted that development could be acceptable close to the village edges in a well-defined landscape structure. This would need a strong landscape structure as a buffer to the wider countryside. Since this LCA was produced in 2009, the northern edge of the village has seen the development of Banky Field, comprising a development of 40 dwellings, including a landscaped buffer area.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

The settlement area is wholly within the High Weald NL. There are some parcels to the northeast of the settlement along the B2087.

Dale Hill lies wholly within the Ticehurst Flimwell Green Gap, as designated by the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan. This gap recognises the threat of coalescence between Flimwell and Ticehurst, predominantly due to development within Dale Hill. The Green Gap resists development that would impact on the openness of this area between the two settlements.

There are no flooding related issues within or around Dale Hill.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Dale Hill is a very small settlement area, with no essential services of its own. It does, however, have access to the primary school and doctor's surgery in Ticehurst, as both are less than 1km distant – the primary school only being some 200m away within the northeast of Ticehurst. Therefore, the settlement scores a 2 for its essential services.

Service Level

The only services within Dale Hill itself are The Cherry Tree Inn public house and the Dale Hill golf club. Services within Ticehurst that are accessible include a pre-school as part of the primary school, the village hall, the recreation ground, as further restaurant and a café. The settlement scores a 1 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Dale Hill's proximity to Ticehurst means that it has access to a reasonable level of local employment opportunities. There are three employment sites that are within 2km of the settlement, including Gibbs Read Farm, Parsonage Farm and Tate Fencing Ltd – the latter being accessed off of the A21 south of the crossroads. Dale Hill also has access to employment within Ticehurst that is connected to its various services and facilities.

Public Transport

There is a good bus service that stops within Dale Hill, with 10+ buses per day, with connections including Wadhurst, Ticehurst and Hawkhurst. With a good bus service, Dale Hill scores a 3 for its access to public transport. The nearest train stations are in Wadhurst and Stonegate.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Dale Hill, which is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement. This gives Dale Hill a score of 2.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	2
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	10

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Dale Hill.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Ticehurst means access to a reasonable range of services and facilities, including a primary school and doctor’s surgery • Good bus connectivity, including connections to Hawkhurst and Wadhurst • Some employment opportunities
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small rural village – population less than 100 • Lack of footways between Dale Hill and Ticehurst limits walking access to local services and facilities • Wholly within Ticehurst-Flimwell Green Gap

Recommendations for the Local Plan

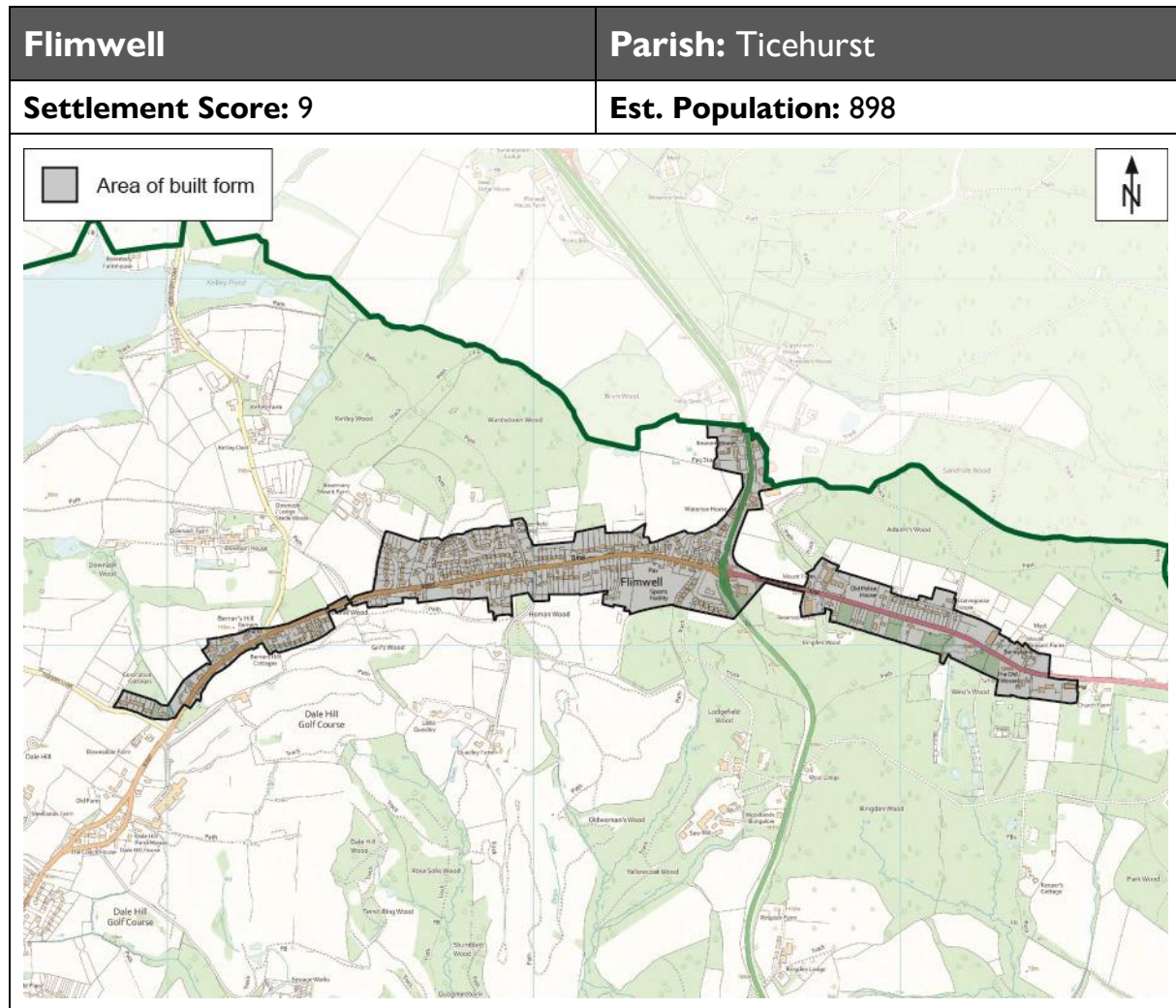
Dale Hill is a very small rural settlement, that forms a fringe area of Ticehurst. Its sustainability score and proximity to Ticehurst indicate that it has access to a range of services and facilities; although walking between Dale Hill and services within Ticehurst is potentially dangerous due to the lack of footway and the narrowness of the B2087 in this location. Some residents do however have the option to use the good bus service which stops in the settlement area; although again, the lack of footways within the settlement mean that not all residents have access to the bus stop, and it is not therefore considered to be a sustainable settlement.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

Given its tiny population and inadequate footway and road access, it is unlikely that Dale Hill’s sustainability can be improved. Moreover, the bus service is already good, with a high frequency of buses.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It is unlikely that any obtrusive development within Dale Hill would be appropriate, primarily due to the Green Gap between Ticehurst and Flimwell and the need to keep the two settlements separate.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Flimwell is within the parish of Ticehurst and is located in the far north of the district with the northernmost portion of the village being situated within Kent County (this section is not considered within this summary). The village lies on an east to west running ridge approximately 130 metres above sea level and is somewhat centred around the B2087-A21 crossroads, although the majority of the village's development mass lies to the west of the A21. The main access to the village is from the A21 Trunk Road the main strategic north south route, which links London to Hastings.

The village lacks a defined centre, although a number of employment buildings, and the new village hall weigh its centre of mass around. 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 traffic along the A268 (Hawkhurst Road) often moves at high speeds, and as the pedestrian footways here have mostly been grown over, walking through the eastern half of the village is generally hazardous. 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.

The centre of Flimwell running along the B2087 is located around 2.3km to the northeast of Ticehurst, and 4.5m west of Hawkhurst. In terms of the larger settlements, Flimwell is closer to Tunbridge Wells, which is 15km to the northwest, than is to Bexhill and Hastings which are some 23km to the south. Closer afield, Flimwell is roughly 7km east of the centre of Wadhurst.

Housing and Population

Flimwell has an estimated population of 898, which is based on the number of dwellings, 359, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Like neighbouring Ticehurst, Flimwell is not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, and the area was generally unpopulated at that time due to its being covered by the great forest of Andredesweald. However, the place name Flimwell appears to date back to at least 1210 where it was recorded as Flimenwelle, which in Old English (*flīemena - wīelle*) meant Fugitives' spring¹⁷. The significance of the name lies in the fact that the location is adjacent to the county border, and therefore served as a place whereby fugitives from each county may have sought refuge and provisions.

¹⁷ [Flimwell :: Survey of English Place-Names \(nottingham.ac.uk\)](http://Flimwell::SurveyofEnglishPlace-Names(nottingham.ac.uk))

In 1264 Henry III rested his army in Flimwell, on the way to the Battle of Lewes. It is said that during their stay some of the locals, who had sided with the Barons, had killed the King's cook during an altercation. Seeking compensation, the King had some 300 local people rounded up and beheaded in a site to the south of Flimwell now called Yellowcoat Wood¹⁸.

The early Flimwell settlement is characteristic of a High Weald development pattern and would have been a small settlement based around or near to the ridgetop crossing point of two major routeways. There are a total of 17 listed buildings within the settlement boundary, which are scattered along the B2087 and A268, including roadside cottages as well as the fairly recent 19th Century Church of St Augustine of Canterbury to the far east of the settlement. However, the major proportion of the village 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.

Landscape Character

Flimwell is wholly within the High Weald NL. 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, 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.

With respect to its linear ridgetop location, Flimwell lies on the edge of two Landscape Character Areas (LCA); the Upper Rother Valley LCA to the south and the Bewl Water Area LCA to the north.

Upper Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

¹⁸ http://orig.villagenet.co.uk/?v=flimwell_east%20sussex

The landscape is described as a Rolling, richly wooded landscape centred on the broad main valley of the River Rother. The valley slopes exhibit a string patterns of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods, networks of smaller medieval fields. The iron industry was historically important in this area, and as a result it has many scattered hammer ponds as a relic of this activity.

The area has a close network of winding, sunken lanes with scattered settlements and individual dwellings often strung out along them; however, there are no main roads crossing the area. The valley area has extensive areas of remote countryside especially in the valleys and larger woods, and there are stunning views across the valley.

Bowl Water – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

This landscape area is area bounded to the north by the Kent/ Sussex border with Wadhurst on the western boundary and Flimwell to the east. It features a large branching reservoir formed from the upper tributaries of the Bowl River which were dammed in 1975 to form the largest artificial area of water in the southeast. Just north of the village, the sloping landscape features many areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and steep inaccessible ghyll woods, among a series of north south gentle spurs and valleys with streams feeding the reservoir. The steep wooded ghylls so characteristic of the High Weald have become narrow bays and inlets around the reservoir. The area features a typical high weald patchwork of small fields including scattered historic farmsteads divided by hedges and small woodlands, while there are also Orchards, hop fields and large arable fields on more fertile soils where the hedges have been removed. The Registered parkland of Ticehurst House lies to the northwest of Ticehurst and is significant as a historic psychiatric hospital with grounds designed specifically for rehabilitation.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of landscape area 'F1', which is described below:

F1 – Flimwell

The landscape surrounding the ribbon development of village is comprised of fields

sloping away from the village. It is mainly meadow pasture often enclosed by woodland. There is a wooded landscape to north and south. Features in the landscape are weather boarded cottages, mature oak trees and clumps of pinetrees. A main detractor is speeding traffic. The settlement is of ridge top development lining old route ways. The village has developed around a very busy crossroad on the A21.

The assessment defines the landscape area as good quality, and a high value AONB area with moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is identified as having a capacity of moderate for residential development and low for business development. It is noted that development should avoid the open slopes adjacent to the A21 to the northwest and those to the south of the village to the west of the A21 and should otherwise be limited to infill and more enclosed locations close to the village. By way of mitigation potential, it is noted that there is some scope to join up tree belts and woodland and redefine village edges with planting. Since this LCA was produced in 2009, the southeast of the crossroads has seen the development of the Corner Farm development, comprising a development of 25 dwellings, including a new village hall and village parking area; while there has been a development of 9 dwellings to the east of Old Wardsdown.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

In terms of landscape sensitivity, it is considered that there is some potential for development to the east of the A21. There are areas north and south of the A268 that are deemed to have a moderate capacity where they are screened from the wider landscape by extensive woodland that surrounds this section of the settlement. There is also some limited capacity to the north of Union Street, to the west of the A21, for the same reasons. Otherwise, the immediate area to the northwest of the crossroads is open and would be highly sensitive to development, while edge of settlement areas at the western end of Flimwell are particularly sensitive, in part due to the need to keep open the countryside gap between Flimwell and Ticehurst.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

In terms of designations, the whole village lies within the AONB. Flimwell also has several ancient woodlands in proximity. To the west of the A21, Wardsdown Wood is close to the

north of the settlement boundary to the north of Union Street. Wardsdown Wood is itself wholly within the Bewl Water Biodiversity Opportunity Area. To the southwest of the main crossroads lies Lodgefield Wood (which connects to Yellowcoat Wood). To the south of the east side of the A21 and Ringden wood tightly bounds the settlement and is generally restrictive except for a well screened clearing of open space that may have formerly been a recreation ground. Ringden Wood is also a Local Wildlife Site. Some 100m beyond the linear development to the north of Hawkhurst Road lies an extensive area of replanted ancient woodland, which screens a large area of undeveloped land to the rear of existing linear development from the wider landscape.

Given its ridgetop location, there are very little flood related constraints in the village, expect for a few minor patches that may occasionally be susceptible to surface water flooding.

There are a number of existing Development Plan designations in the village to the west of the A21, which includes two Local Green Spaces designated by the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan (TNP); one just south of Wardsdown Wood and the other encompasses the sports field to the south of the B2087.

The TNP has also identified the land adjacent to the west of the settlement either side of the B2089, as part of a designated Green Gap between Ticehurst and Flimwell, which limits expansion in this direction. This recognises the vulnerability of the countryside gap that prevents settlement coalescence, as a consequence of modern development that encroaches on this gap.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Flimwell has only one essential service, a convenience store, and therefore scores 1. This score is generally below average for settlements of a similar size. Flimwell's convenience store, the Weald Smokery, is however limited in its function as a convenience store, as it sells artisanal food products as opposed to everyday essentials. Residents of Flimwell are

best served for convenience shopping in nearby Hawkhurst, which has two supermarkets. The nearest post office and doctor's surgery are also to be found in Ticehurst. The nearest Primary School is in Ticehurst, which also has a day nursery, however this is not within walking distance. There are no secondary schools in Ticehurst however, and none within walking distance. The nearest are Uplands Community College in Wadhurst which is 5.6km to the west of Ticehurst along the B2099, and Robertsbridge Community College at 11.3km using the B2099 and A21.

Service Level

The most notable services and facilities not considered essential services, are the recently built village hall to the southwest of the central crossroads, as well as Flimwell Cricket Ground. There is the Royal Oak pub to the northeast of the crossroads, the Weald Smokery which also functions as a café and Birchwood restaurant further to the east. Ultimately Flimwell has a very low service level, scoring only 1 overall.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The Woodland Enterprise Centre to the south of Flimwell accessed from the A21, provides 1,080sq.m of floorspace comprising offices and workshops. There is also the recently completed Flimwell Park development, which provides 914sqm of office and workshop space across 8 units. To the east of Flimwell is the employment estate '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 sqm of mostly light industrial use class. With a score of 2, Flimwell has a low level of employment; however, this score is relatively competitive when compared with settlements of a similar size.

Residents would most likely be dependent on commuting to larger settlements for work. Flimwell is reasonably well located to Tunbridge Wells, which is also accessible by bus. Wadhurst Train Station provides a rail connection via bus into the centre of London.

Public Transport

Though it has no train station, Flimwell scores a 3 for public transport due to having a good provision of bus services. Public transport consists of a regular bus service that runs between Tunbridge Wells and Hawkhurst (with at least 10 buses per day) with connections to Hastings from Flimwell. There may be less regular community bus services to additional locations. The nearest train stations are Etchingham, which is 7.4km via the A21 and A265, and Stonegate, which is 8.4km by road to the southeast. Wadhurst while further away at 11km, is accessible by a regular bus service.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Flimwell, giving it a score of 2. Superfast broadband is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score	9

Current development commitments

The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan allocates Land at Wardsdown House for 9 dwellings. There are also two sites that have been permissioned for employment space that are currently under development.

RR/2014/1089/P - Hawkhurst Road - Flimwell Bird Park, for 914sqm of employment floorspace

RR/2019/2836/P - Royal Oak Garage, London Road, for 280sqm of employment floorspace

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Well located in respect of Strategic Road Network, with connections to larger and neighbouring settlements
- Ticehurst and Hawkhurst are 2.3km and 4.5km, and each provide a range of services and facilities
- Good bus services
- Relatively good local employment opportunities for its size

Settlement Weaknesses

- Very few facilities and services
- Prominent ridgetop AONB location limits the capacity for development in many areas
- Busy A21 creates a severance of the eastern and western areas of the settlement
- Strongly linear settlement pattern and lack of suitable footways east of the A21 significantly reduce walkability

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Flimwell is a medium sized rural village. It has good connectivity due its position on the crossroads of the A21 and the east-west road between Hawkhurst and Wadhurst, together with good bus service availability. However, its very limited services, including an effective absence of essential services, means that its residents are wholly dependent on travelling to larger neighbouring services, although its overall score means that it is considered to be potentially sustainable.

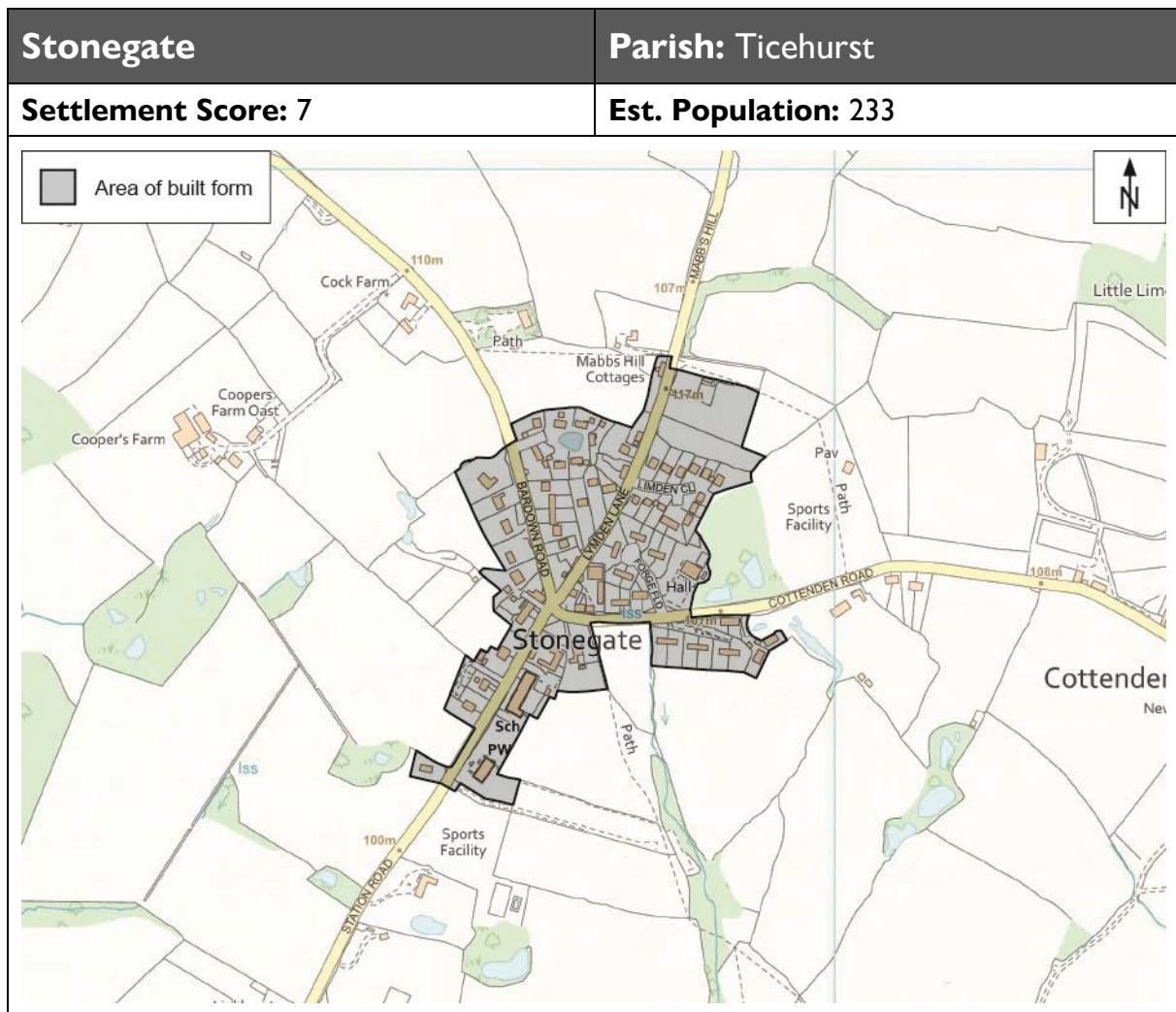
Opportunities to improve sustainability

There are some areas to the northeast of the settlement that are screened from the wider landscape that may have some scope for development. Almost any development that would improve local services could go some way to helping its community to live better locally. That said, with so few existing services and facilities, it is unlikely that the provision of additional services and facilities would change resident's dependency on needing to travel to neighbouring villages for day-to-day requirements. Development to the east of the settlement may facilitate the provision of an effective footway, that would enable walking accessibility between urban areas to the east of the A21. Flimwell is well located to be included within part of a northern cluster of larger rural settlements, including those outside

of the district; although it is perhaps questionable how much connectivity can be improved given the good frequency of bus services that the village already has access to.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

Allowing development in less sensitive areas of the settlement, and the development of the existing Neighbourhood Plan allocation, could support the development of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Located within the Upper Rother Valley, Stonegate is within Ticehurst parish and has a population of approximately 229. It is a compact settlement, being centred around a set of historic crossroads. 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 is consequently a remote and unspoiled village and situated on a secondary ridge of the Rother. Despite its name, Stonegate Train Station is located outside of the village some 1,5km to the south, and there is no footway or bus service to connect it to the village.

Local villages include the Parish centre of Ticehurst, which is some 2.5km to the northeast, while the larger village of Wadhurst is roughly 4.7km to the north west. Stonegate is located 3.3km to the north of Burwash. More immediately, the Hamlet of Cottenden, which is only 300m to the east along Cottenden Road. In terms of the larger settlements, Stonegate is closer to the centre of Tunbridge Wells, which is 13km to the northwest, than it is to the centres of Bexhill and Hastings which are some 22.5km and 24km to the south east respectively.

Housing and Population

Stonegate has an estimated population of 233, which is based on the number of dwellings, 93, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

There is no mention of Stonegate in the Domesday Book, however, the immediate area may trace its roots as early as the Romans, and the settlement is sited in the crossroads of two roman roads, one of which may have connected iron works at nearby Bardown (just to the northwest of the village) with connections to the sea possibly at Etchingam or Salehurst. Following the Norman Invasion, the area then became lands of Robertsbridge Abbey, until its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1539.

Stonegate originally had a church built in 1838, although this was demolished due to bad workmanship and replaced with the current church in 1904. Stonegate railway station was built in 1851, although it was originally called Witheringden after a mill to the south within the Rother Valley.

Stonegate has 8 listed buildings, including the Grade II listed Church of St Peter, and a row of 4 terraced cottages.

Landscape Character

Stonegate sits at a relatively high topography within the north side of the Upper Rother Valley. Undeveloped sections within or adjacent to the settlement boundary often command long distance views across the countryside.

The Upper Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Upper Rother Valley is a Rolling, richly wooded landscape centred on the broad main valley of the River Rother. The valley slopes exhibit a string patterns of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods, networks of smaller medieval fields. The iron industry was historically important in this area, and as a result it has many scattered hammer ponds as a relic of this activity. The area has a close network of winding, sunken lanes with scattered settlements and individual dwellings often strung out along them; however, there are no main roads crossing the area. The valley area has extensive areas of remote countryside especially in the valleys and larger woods, and there are stunning views across the valley.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of landscape areas 'S1' and 'S2'. These areas are described below:

ST1 - St Peter's Churchyard

The area surrounding the village is very pleasant pastoral landscape. The countryside forms a Rural setting to the village with the church and school as a backdrop. There is a strong field structure with well-maintained hedgerows. Mature oaks along the boundaries of fields are a particular feature as are flower rich meadows. The settlement is nucleated around the crossroads. There are some older listed buildings as ribbon development along the roads. The relatively modern church may be the site of an older church. The area is characterised by generally large houses in large gardens.

The assessment defines the landscape as high quality, and a high value AONB area, with both high character sensitivity and high visual sensitivity. Consequently, this landscape area is identified as having a capacity of low-none for residential development with no capacity for business development. It is noted that any development proposals should be restricted to

infill within the built-up edge and development boundaries. In terms of mitigation potential, it is noted that there would be limited scope as the historic character of fields and hedges is intact, and that wholesale planting could detract from the local character, while long views across the Weald should not be enclosed.

ST2 - Limden Lane

This is countryside similar to ST1. These north facing slopes fall away from the village. The area is dissected by winding lanes. It is generally more enclosed due to taller hedgerows and a scattering of small woods. The village settlement is nucleated around the crossroads. There are some older listed buildings spread out as ribbon development along the roads. The area is characterised by generally large houses in large gardens.

The assessment goes on to identify the landscape as high quality and high value AONB area, with moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is determined that this landscape area is identified as having a capacity of low-moderate for residential development and low for business development. It is noted that development could take place only in the enclosed fields close to existing village only. Mitigation possibilities may include the extension of woodland and wooded hedgerows close to village edges.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

The immediate area north of Limden Close and the Acorns, north of the village, may have some capacity for low density development, as the existing development creates a hard edge for this part of the village. Any development would need to be accompanied by a substantial Green Infrastructure offer, which would be required to mitigate any impacts on the Public Right of Way to the north.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

There are two parcels of ancient woodland to the southwest and the east of the village boundary, while there is also a parcel of deciduous woodland to the east. The whole of the 'The Acorns' is covered by a collective Tree Preservation Order.

There are patches of land within the village that are susceptible to surface water flooding, most notably road surfaces. Surrounding the north of the village is the steep is a Groundwater Source Protection Zone in respect of the River Limden in the steep side valley to the north.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Stonegate has a relatively small population, and this corresponds with having a limited number of services. The settlement has and a primary school. It does not have a convenience store, post office or doctor's surgery – with the nearest of these being in Ticehurst. The nearest supermarket access is either in Hawkhurst, which is some 9.5km to the east, or in Tunbridge Wells. The settlement scores a 1 for its essential services.

Service Level

Beyond the services listed above, Stonegate's services and facilities notably including a pre-school, a sports pitch, a community hall and a church. The settlement scores a 1 for its non-essential services and facilitates, although this score is comparable other smaller villages within the district.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

There is very limited employment within Stonegate itself. A small amount of employment may be found in nearby Ticehurst and Wadhurst, although it is likely that residents would need to commute further afield via the station. Stonegate scores a 1 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

There are no regular bus services within the village. Stonegate train station is 1.5km to the south of the village, although it is difficult to walk to on account of there being no connecting footway. The station serves as an effective commuter link with connections to Tunbridge Wells, London and Hastings. With a station within a 2km radius of the village, Stonegate scores a 3 for its access to public transport.

Broadband Access

Stonegate has access to standard broadband, defined as having download speeds between 10 and 30Mbps. Stonegate scores a 2 for its internet access.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	1
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	7

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Stonegate.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a primary school and some community facilities • Nearby train station • 2.5km from Ticehurst, which has a modest range of services and facilities
Settlement Weaknesses

- Remote settlement, accessible only by minor roads
- Very limited services and facilities
- No regular bus services
- Open AONB landscape surrounding the village significantly reduces capacity for further development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

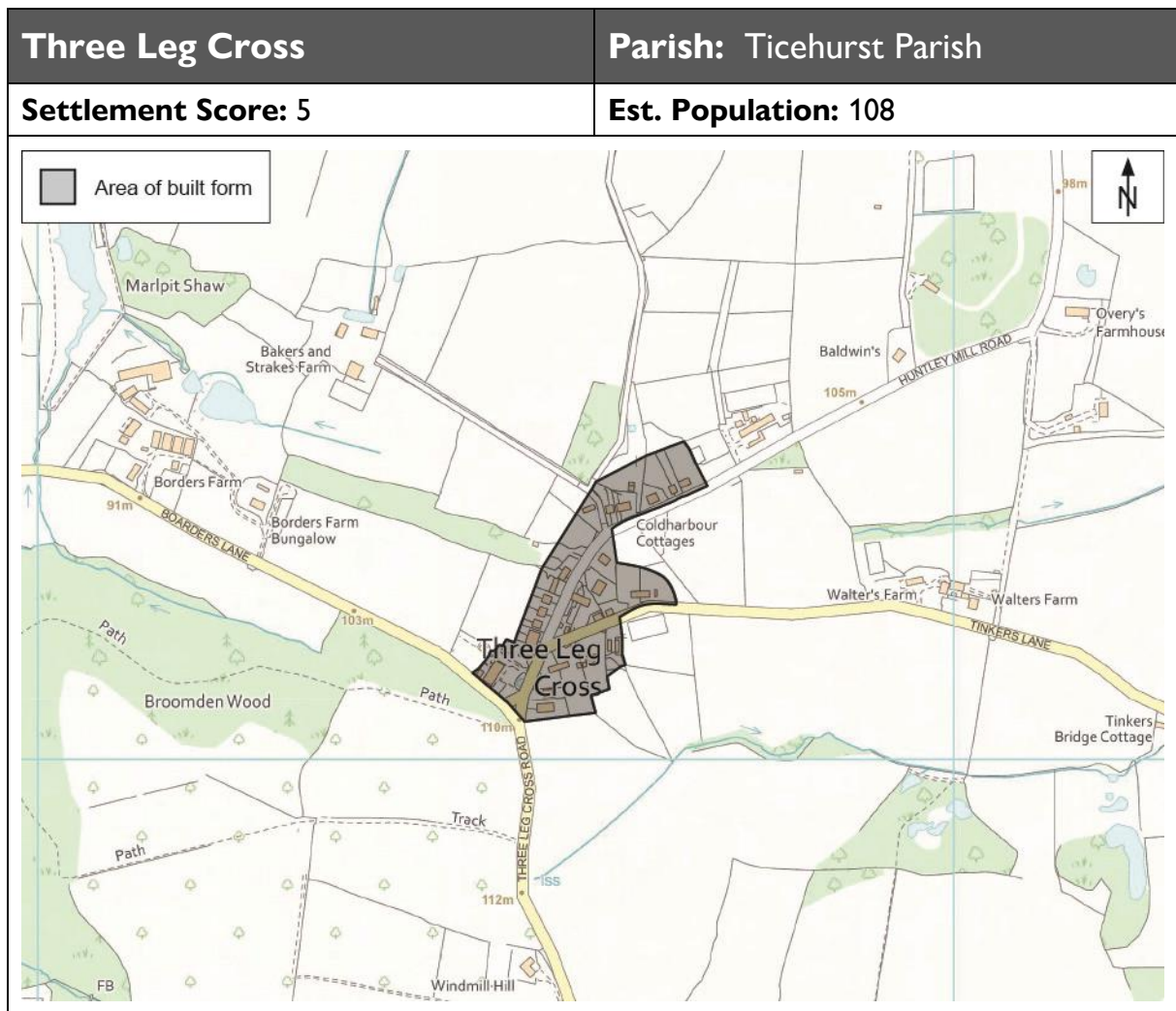
Stonegate is a small and remote rural village. Despite having a primary school and some community facilities, ultimately it has a very limited service level, and it is expected that residents would need to travel to larger neighbouring settlements in order to meet their day to day requirements. At the same time, due to its remoteness, Stonegate has no regular bus services, and the train station is not within walking distance, meaning that residents are dependent on the use of private vehicles. Its overall score means that it is considered to have a low sustainability.

Opportunities for Growth

It is unlikely that the small amount of development that may be permissible in less landscape sensitive areas of Stonegate could support even a very small level of additional services and facilities within the village. Even with an increase in services, residents would be dependent on journeying to larger settlements to fulfil day to day requirements. More significant would be the provision of regular bus services, that could connect Stonegate to Ticehurst as well as the train station to the southwest, which would enable residents to travel to meet their needs via public transport. It may be possible that Stonegate's provision of local services and public transport accessibility could be improved through a network of larger rural settlements to the north of the district. However, given its remote location and narrow access roads, it is not certain whether this could be achieved. There may be some scope to include Stonegate within a dedicated commuter bus service connecting Ticehurst and perhaps Burwash to Stonegate Station.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

It may be possible that very small level of development could take place in more screened sites to the north of the village, however it would not be of a quantity that could be expected to support additional services and facilities.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Three Leg Cross is a small and wholly rural settlement located to the far north of the district between the village of Ticehurst and the reservoir of Bewl Water. It is within the boundaries of Ticehurst Parish.

The settlement's interesting name may derive from the three lanes that come adjoin the main road within the settlement. There is a popular pub, 'the Bull' at the centre of the settlement but very little else by way of services or facilities.

Three Leg Cross is 0.5km north of Ticehurst, and only 12.5km southeast of Tunbridge Wells town centre, while being nearly 25km north east of Hastings town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Three Leg Cross is an estimated 108, which is based on the number of dwellings, 43, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.5 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

The area between Three Leg Cross and Bewl Water less than 1km to the north, is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086 as the settlement of Hazelhurst. The settlement is recorded as having had an annual value to the Lord of the Manor of 7 pounds at the time.

Three Leg Cross itself has 5 listed buildings, which include the Bull Inn public house.

Landscape Character

Three Leg Cross is within the High Weald NL and is situated just to the south of Bewl Water, in an immediate landscape that is characterised by rural country lanes, open fields and farmland.

Bewl Water – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The wider landscape of Three Leg Cross is within the Bewl Water landscape area. This area is surrounded to the north by the Kent/Sussex boarder with Wadhurst sits to the western boundary and Flimwell to the East. The landscape includes Bewl Water reservoir which was formed in 1975 to create the largest artificial area of water in the southeast. Bewl Water reservoir is a popular natural and recreational feature.

The area is a rural landscape with few intrusive features and well managed farmland and a strong historical structure. The area is comprised of ridgetop villages and historical churches, orchards and hop fields, wooded and hedge patterned slopes and rural hedge bound lanes. There are slopes between the spurs of the reservoir which support a typical high weald patchwork of small fields divided by hedges and small woodlands. Near to the reservoir, the steep wooded ghylls so characteristic of the High Weald have become narrow bays and inlets.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Three Leg Cross is wholly within the High Weald NL. It is bound briefly by a shaw and ancient woodland to the west, and deciduous woodland to the southwest.

There are no flood related issues within the settlement itself, although the road to the south of the settlement is occasionally subject to surface water flooding.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Three Leg Cross is a very small rural settlement, with a population of little over 100, and therefore there are very limited level of essential services. Being within 1km of parts of Ticehurst, the settlement does have access to the doctor's surgery on Pickforde Lane. The settlement scores a 1 for its level of essential services.

Service Level

Three Leg Cross has a limited level non-essential services and facilities, and in terms of those within Three Leg Cross itself, there is only a pub – The Bull Inn. However, given its close proximity to the larger settlement of Ticehurst, it has access to a small number of services within Ticehurst (those within a 1km radius), including a sports pitch and several café's and other shops. That said, the 700m walk to Ticehurst along Cross Lane Cross is potentially dangerous, as it forms narrow winding country lane without a footway; and the accessibility

of services within Ticehurst is therefore questionable. The settlement scores a 1 for its overall service level.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Three Leg Cross, being so small in size and with very limited services, has a limited range of employment opportunities. It is however located within 2km of Parsonage Farm employment site to the south of Ticehurst, which is comprised of a small number of light industrial units. Employment would need to be found outside of the settlement. The settlement is around 12.5km southeast of Tunbridge Wells which is a larger centre for employment. The settlement scores a 1 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Three Leg Cross itself has no public transport links or services and therefore scores a 0 for its public transport service level. Bus serves within Ticehurst are not considered to be accessible by walking due to the lack of footway along Cross Lane.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, defined as having download speeds up to 300Mbps, is available in the settlement, giving Three Leg Cross a score of 2 for its internet service.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	1
Service Level (5)	1
Employment Opportunities (5)	1
Public Transport (5)	0
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Three Leg Cross.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Ticehurst means that there is some degree of accessibility to Ticehurst, with which Three Leg Cross shares a number of services including a doctor’s surgery • Some access to very limited employment opportunities
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small settlement – population of just over 100 • Very limited services and facilities • No public transport • Remote – being accessible only by narrow country lane • Relatively distant from larger settlements, with Hastings being some 25km to the south east and Tunbridge Wells 12.5km to the north west • Significant landscape constraints due to being a wholly rural settlement within the AONB severely restricts development capacity

Recommendations for the Local Plan

This is a very small and remote rural settlement. It has almost no services of its own, meaning that its small number of residents are wholly dependent on accessing Ticehurst and other nearby settlements villages for services and facilities. Three Leg Cross has no access to public transport. Its scoring means that it is considered to have low sustainability.

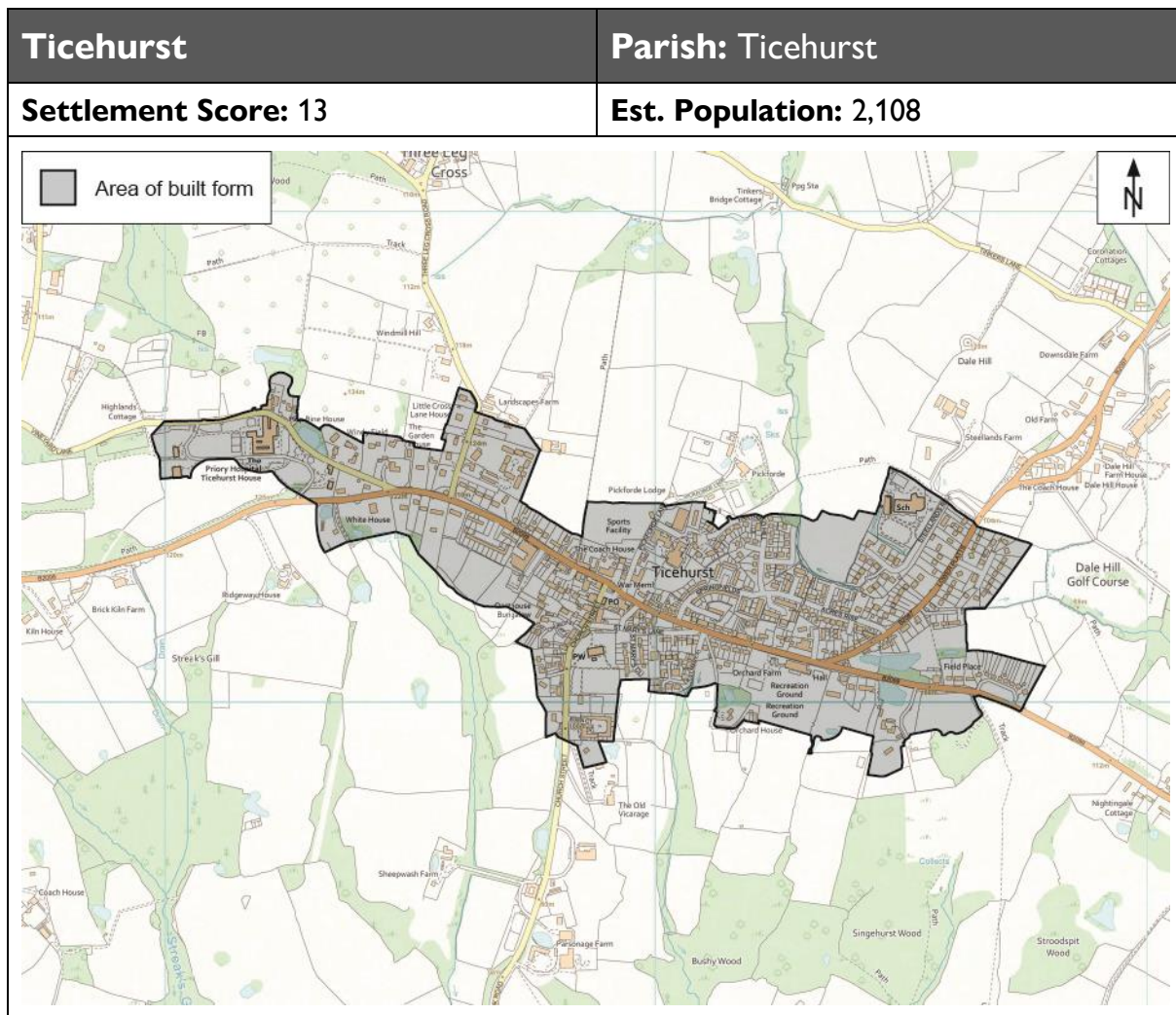
Opportunities to improve sustainability

Having such a small population and a remote location, it is difficult to see that any new services or facilities would be supported within the settlement. Residents are wholly dependent on accessing Ticehurst and other larger settlements for their day-to-day requirements, however the lane to Ticehurst is not considered walkable and there is no bus connection, making residents dependent on car use. Again, given its remote location, narrow access and small population, it is unlikely that the settlement could be incorporated within a

wider cluster of settlements to the north of the district, that would provide regular bus services. However, the provision of some small community bus service into Three Leg Cross would perhaps enable residents to access services and facilities without the use of a car, thereby improving sustainability.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There almost no capacity for new development within Three Leg Cross given its size and rural setting. Consequently, there is very limited potential for new facilities and services by way of growth within the settlement.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Ticehurst is a ridge top settlement in the far north of the district situated approximately 110 metres above sea level, just south of Bewl Water. With an estimated population of 2,108, Ticehurst is the second most populated village in the district after Robertsbridge.

Ticehurst's development is focused around the B2099 and B2087. Being in the far north of the District, Ticehurst is some 23.3km north of the centre of Bexhill, and just over 24km northwest of the centre of Hastings. Ticehurst is therefore closer to larger towns in west Kent, being some 13.5km and 18.3km to the south of the centre of Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge respectively. More locally, the centre of Ticehurst is roughly 2.3km to the west of the centre of Flimwell where the B2087 meets the A21.

Housing and Population

The population was estimated at 2,108 in 2022, based on an average household size of 2.5 persons as identified in the 2011 Census, spread across 843 dwellings.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Ticehurst is not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, and there was generally no significant human occupation in this area until the eleventh century, covered as it was by the great forest of Andredesweald. However, there is an entry in the Domesday Book for 'Hazelhurst', which is roughly 1.7km to the north of the village. The name Ticehurst is said to have originated from the Anglo-Saxon, "tice" meaning goats and "hurst" meaning woods. From 1600 expansion was rapid, thanks largely to hops and the Sussex iron industry. Ticehurst made history on 17 May 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 44 of the 61 of the listed buildings in Ticehurst are situated, while also being 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.

Landscape Character

The position of the village in this elevated ridgetop location affords long distance views out of the village over woods and pasture designated within the High Weald National Landscape, particularly to the south, where steep valley sides descend to the Corridors of ancient woodland fringe the south flowing tributary streams of the Limden. 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 northwest.

With respect to its linear ridgetop location, Ticehurst lies on the edge of two Landscape Character Areas (LCA); the Upper Rother Valley LCA to the south and the Bewl Water Area LCA to the north.

Upper Rother Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

This area is described as a Rolling, richly wooded landscape centred on the broad main valley of the River Rother. The valley slopes exhibit a string patterns of linear ghyll woods as well as many larger woods, networks of smaller medieval fields. The iron industry was historically important in this area, and as a result it has many scattered hammer ponds as a relic of this activity. The area has a close network of winding, sunken lanes with scattered settlements and individual dwellings often strung out along them; however, there are no main road crossing the area. The valley area has extensive areas of remote countryside especially in the valleys and larger woods, and there are stunning views across the valley.

Bewl Water – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

This landscape is an area bounded to the north by the Kent/ Sussex border with Wadhurst on the western boundary and Flimwell to the east. It features a large branching reservoir formed from the upper tributaries of the Bewl River which were dammed in 1975 to form the largest artificial area of water in the southeast.

Just north of the village, the sloping landscape features many areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and steep inaccessible ghyll woods, among a series of north south gentle spurs and valleys with streams feeding the reservoir. The steep wooded ghylls so characteristic of the High Weald have become narrow bays and inlets around the reservoir. The area features a typical high weald patchwork of small fields including scattered historic farmsteads divided by hedges and small woodlands, while there are also Orchards, hop fields and large arable fields on more fertile soils where the hedges have been removed. The Registered parkland of Ticehurst House lies to the northwest of Ticehurst and is significant as a historic psychiatric hospital with grounds designed specifically for rehabilitation.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes the landscape that surrounds and includes the village through the identification of landscape areas 'T1' and 'T2'. These areas are described below:

T1 – North of the Village

This is the area of countryside to the north of the village. It is enclosed farmland with mixed arable and pasture. There has been some loss of landscape structure where intensive agriculture has created large fields with hedges removed. Modern farm buildings detract from the visual amenity of the area. There is some sense of place. Remnant orchards are characteristic. This is a historic nucleated village settlement around the church and crossroads. The ancient Coaching Inn and Market Cross are in the heart of the village.

The landscape is of high quality (while being only 'good' closer to the village), and a high value AONB area, with moderate character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. Consequently, this landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'moderate' for residential development and 'low' for business development. It is noted that development could be acceptable close to the village edges in a well-defined landscape structure. This would need a strong landscape structure as a buffer to the wider countryside. Since this LCA was

produced in 2009, the northern edge of the village has seen the development of Banky Field, comprising a development of 40 dwellings, including a landscaped buffer area.

T2 – Orchard Farm

These are the open slopes which fall away from the village to the south. There are some more enclosed areas where wooded ghyll valleys enclose areas to the west. The meadows are enclosed by hedges and woods. The area has a strong sense of place as a setting for the village. The historic centre of the settlement is situated around church and road crossroads.

The landscape is a high quality and a high value AONB area, with moderate character sensitivity and high visual sensitivity. This landscape area is identified as having a capacity of 'low-moderate' for residential development and business development. It is further noted that any further development would be acceptable close to the built-up edges only. This would need to be in a strong landscape structure and with buffer areas to the countryside.

2022 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

It is considered that there are very few areas around the village where the landscape may have some capacity for development. There may be some scope for smaller scale developments that tightly adjoin the village to the southwest and the north west of the junction at the village centre, although the creation of new access onto the High Street here could adversely impact on the Conservation Area. Other areas assessed included north of the recent Banky Field Development, which is identified to consist of very sensitive AONB ridgetop countryside that is visibly beyond the village edge. The immediate landscape to the east of the village between the B2099 and the B2087 is identified as being AONB countryside that is beyond the village envelope, with a character and topography that makes it unsuitable for development.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

In terms of designations, Ticehurst is wholly within the High Weald NL, and there are adjoining areas of ancient and deciduous woodland along the south and northwest of the settlement.

There are also areas of surface water flooding within and around the settlement, although there are no nearby instances of flood zone 2 or 3.

There are a number of existing Development Plan designations in the form of Local Green Spaces in and around the settlement that have been identified by the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan (TNP). Local Green Spaces are designated pieces of land, which are close to the community and are demonstrably special due to their beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife, and their existence further limits the availability of land that is suitable for development.

The TNP has also identified the land adjacent to the northeast of the settlement either side of the B2089, as part of a designated Green Gap between Ticehurst and Flimwell. This recognises the vulnerability of the countryside gap that prevents settlement coalescence, as a consequence of modern development that encroaches on this gap. This designation is a constraint to further development to the northeast of the settlement.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Ticehurst has one of each essential service; these being, a convenience store, a primary school, a full-time doctor's surgery and a post office. Ticehurst is ultimately limited in its offer of convenience shopping, having only a Londis Store, with the nearest supermarkets being in Hawkhurst. There are also no secondary schools in Ticehurst however, and none within walking distance. The nearest are Uplands Community College in Wadhurst which is 5.6km to the west of Ticehurst along the B2099, and Robertsbridge Community College at 11.3km using the B2099 and A21. Nonetheless, with 4 types of essential service, Ticehurst scores 4.

Service Level

Beyond those essential services listed above, Ticehurst is well served with a variety of shops, and a chemist, a pre-school, public houses and cafés. There is a church, a recreation ground, children's play areas and a village hall that are readily accessible within the confines of the village. In terms of its overall service level, Ticehurst scores 2, although it has the highest number of services and facilities out of all villages within the district.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Ticehurst itself has a generally low level of employment opportunity, scoring 2 points in this respect – however this again is comparable with the other larger villages in Rother.

Ticehurst parish contains the employment area 'Gibbs Reed Farm' which has 18 units of mostly light industrial floorspace. A smaller employment area is at Parsonage Farm also comprising light industrial uses. There are further opportunities for employment in the shops and service industries within the village. Residents are otherwise dependent on commuting to larger settlements for work. Ticehurst is reasonably well located to Tunbridge Wells, which is accessible by bus, and nearby Wadhurst train station provides a rail connection into the centre of London.

Public Transport

Though it has no train station, Ticehurst scores a 3 for public transport due to having a good provision of bus services. Public transport consists of a regular bus service that runs between Tunbridge Wells and Hawkhurst (with at least 10 buses per day) with connections to Hastings from Flimwell. There are also less regular community bus services to additional locations. The nearest stations are Stonegate, which is 5.3km by road to the southeast, and Wadhurst while further away at 5km along the B2099, is accessible by a regular bus service.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband is available in Ticehurst, which is defined as having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300Mbps, is available within the settlement. This gives Robertsbridge a score of 2.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	3
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	13

Current development commitments

The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan allocates three housing sites within Ticehurst for a total of 16 dwellings, in the following sites:

Land at Singehurst – 10 dwellings. This allocation is subject to RR/2020/585/P, which is delegated to approve, for the development of 10 dwellings

Land at Orchard Farm – 6 dwellings

There is also planning permission at Hillbury Field for the erection of 30 dwellings, subject to RR/2019/2818/P.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger village, with a population of over 2,000 persons • Full range of essential services • Highest service level of all villages within the district

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good bus services• Equidistant between Hawkhurst and Wadhurst, which provide supermarket and secondary school access respectively• Compact village centre, which facilitates walkability and a sense of place
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of supermarket and secondary school• Relatively distant from larger settlements, with Hastings being nearly 24km to the south east• Modest level of employment opportunities• Areas of open AONB countryside surrounding the settlement limit the potential for new development

Recommendations for the Local Plan

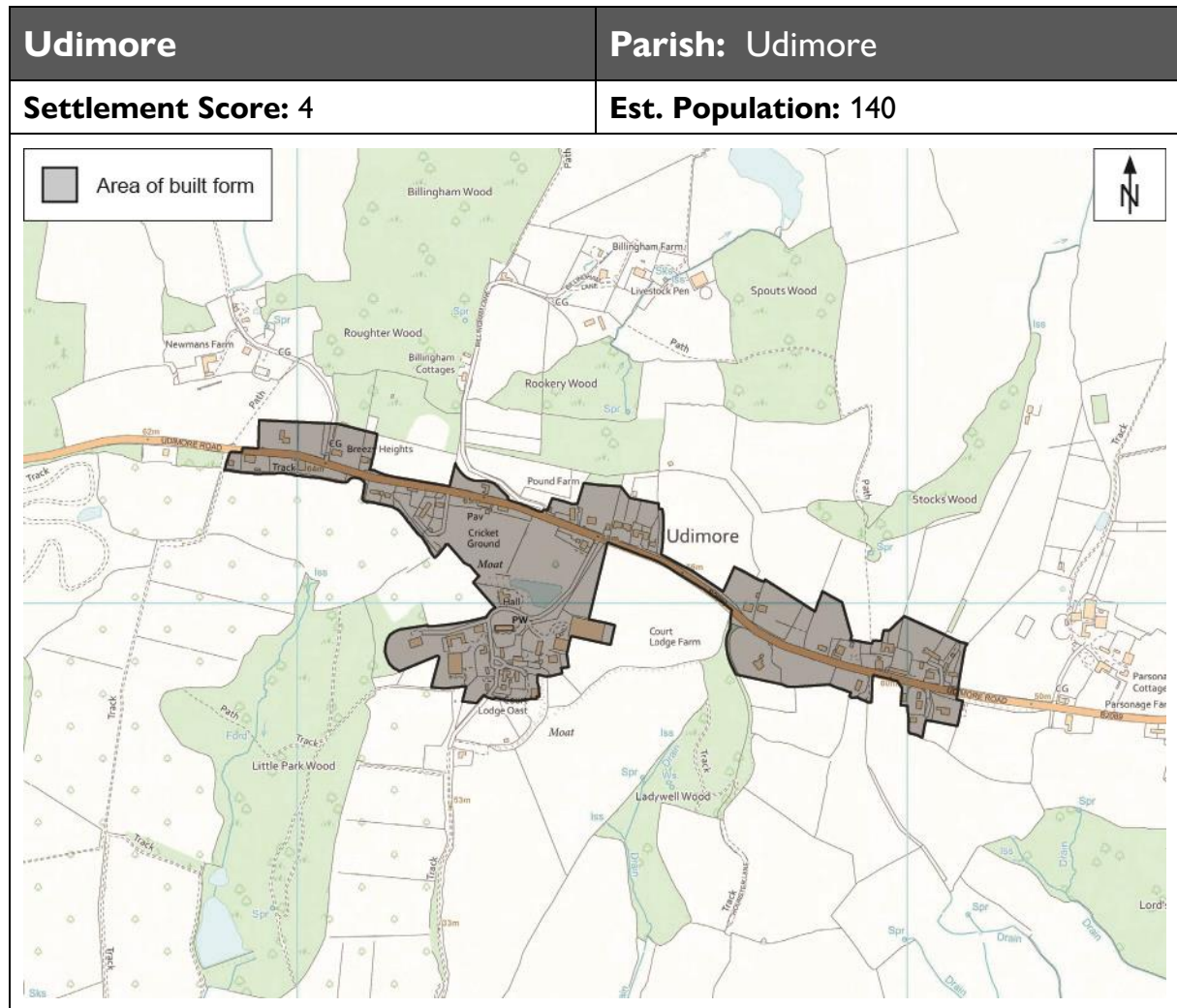
Ticehurst is one of the largest villages in the district. Its high sustainability score and its location between Hawkhurst and Wadhurst mean that some development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of a northern cluster of larger rural settlements, including those outside of the district. Like Robertsbridge and some of the larger rural villages within the District, Ticehurst is considered to be a moderately sustainable settlement.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

The majority of village has significant landscape constraints, however there may be some less-sensitive areas that have some capacity for further development, including the existing neighbourhood plan allocations, which if not developed, should be carried forward into the new plan period. There may be some scope to improve the provision of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of larger rural settlements. While Ticehurst is already served by good bus connections, public transport accessibility to Stonegate train station would improve sustainability.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The development of the existing allocations and allowing further development in less sensitive areas of the settlement, may support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Udimore is a small settlement formed of sporadic development which has no central core and is located on the road that links Broad Oak with Rye. 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.

Udimore is some 5.6km west of Rye, and roughly 10km northeast of Hastings town centre.

Housing and Population

The population of Udimore is an estimated 140, which is based on the number of dwellings, 61, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.3 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Udimore is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086. It was recorded as having a population of 22 households, placing Udimore within the 40% largest settlements recorded.

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. However, officially, the name Udimore originates in Anglo Saxon, meaning ‘boundary of the woods’.

Udimore has a relatively high concentration of listed buildings, with 15 in total, including the Grade I listed Norman Parish Church of St Mary. There is also an Archaeological Notification Area in the vicinity of the church which denotes the location of the Saxon village.

Landscape Character

This is a dispersed historic village within the High Weald NL, situated atop an exposed ridge overlooking the Brede and Tillingham river valleys and consequently there are outstanding views across wide stretches of the High Weald from many vantage points. Given its prominent ridgetop position, Udimore sits on the boundary of the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area (LCA) with broad southward views to the entire landscape and the sea beyond, and the Lower Rother Valley (LCA) where it overlooks the Tillingham Valley to the north.

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Brede Valley is characterised as the broad valley of the River Brede with a flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes, wide vistas from the enclosing ridges and well wooded side slopes with scattered farmsteads and orchards. Villages and their churches can be sound perched on the slopes overlooking the valley, notably Brede, Udimore and Icklesham.

Lower Rother Valley - East Sussex Landscape Character Area

The Lower Rother Valley incorporates both the broad valley of the lower reaches of the River Rother, and the Tillingham Valley with its flat open floor and steep sides. Scattered woodland is found across the valley slopes and higher ground, much of this is ancient woodland. The central area is heavily wooded in particular, with the Beckley, and Flatropers woodland areas, much of which is publicly accessible

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Udimore is wholly within the High Weald NL and is partially within the Romney Marsh Biodiversity Opportunity Area two the south. There are areas of ancient and deciduous woodland adjacent to the south and the north of the settlement.

Udimore has almost no flood related constraints due to its elevated topography.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Udimore has no essential services, therefore scoring a 0.

Service Level

There are also minimal facilities and services within Udimore, and it scores a 0. Its facilities and services consist of a village hall, the Kings head pub, Udimore Cricket Ground and the Parish Church.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Udimore has minimal employment opportunities, and it scores 0.

Public Transport

There are only infrequent bus services within Udimore. There is the 326 operated by Rye Community Transport which runs twice a day which connects to Broad Oak and Rye, the 342 which connects to Hastings and Rye once per day, and the 313 also run by Stagecoach which connects to Rye, running once a day. Given their infrequency, Udimore only scores 1 for public transport.

Broadband Access

Ultrafast broadband is available in Udimore, giving it a score of 3. Ultrafast broadband is defined as having download speeds of over 300Mbps.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	1
Broadband Access (3)	3
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	4

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Udimore.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultrafast broadband coverage
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small population • No essential services • Minimal service level • Minimal employment opportunities • Significant landscape constraints, severely impact development potential • Minimal public transport

Recommendations for the Local Plan

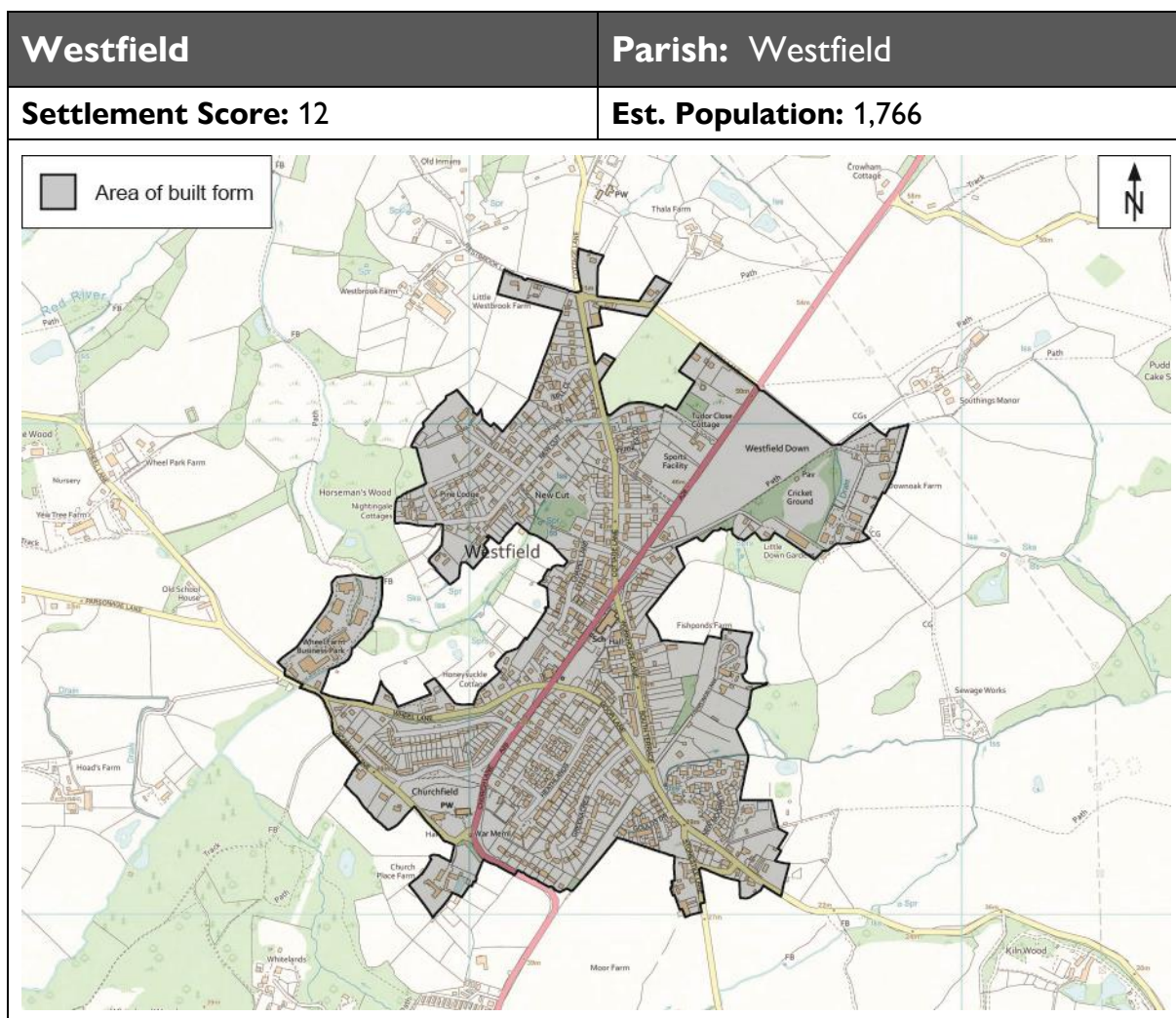
Udimore is a small remote rural settlement and is situated in a particularly exposed section of the AONB landscape. There are practically no services and facilities within the village, making its residents dependent on traveling to larger settlements, while public transport access is very limited. However, its position on the B2089 means that it could form part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connected to Rye via improved bus services. For the purposes of this Review, its very low score means that Udimore is not considered to be a sustainable settlement.

Opportunities for Growth

With its minimal overall service level, it is unlikely that Udimore’s sustainability can be significantly improved. Bus connectivity is currently very infrequent, and its sustainability could be improved through its inclusion as part of a network of rural settlements connected to Rye where a good range of services and facilities could become accessible.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There is almost no scope for any significant development within the settlement due to landscape constraints, and therefore it is unlikely that additional services and facilities could be supported by way of growth.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

The former iron-smelting village of Westfield straddles the A28 some 5km north of Hastings town centre. 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.

With almost 1,800 people, Westfield is one of the larger villages in the district. Westfield has a more modern feel to it than many of the villages in Rother, and has developed to some extent as a satellite village of Hastings with a relatively high level of post-war development.

Neighbouring settlements include Sedlescombe, which is roughly 3.2km to the northwest, and Battle, which is some 4.5km to the west. The smaller village of Brede is roughly 3.2km to the north.

Housing and Population

The population of Westfield is an estimated 1,766, which is based on the number of dwellings, 736, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.4 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

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. Westfield is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086.

In total there are eleven listed buildings within the village, five of which are clustered in the southeast corner of the settlement, and four Archaeological Notification Areas (ANA). These ANAs designate, the location of the Hastings to Brede Roman road, and the Hastings to Ashford Roman road, and a medieval and post-medieval hamlet in the centre-west.

Westfield's major modern attraction is the local Vineyard, which produced its first vintage in 1976.

Landscape Character

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Westfield is within the High Weald NL and sits within the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area - which is dominated by the broad valley of the River Brede with a flat valley floor which is enclosed by relatively steep slopes along east west ridges. Westfield is positioned some way to the south of the River Brede, and close to the tributary Forge Stream, which is closely to the north of the village. It is sited atop a north south plateau, which affords fine

views out from sections of the village. The landscape of the Brede Valley consists of well managed farmland, historic structures and wide vistas from the enclosing ridges across the river valley and floodplain. There are villages and churches on the slopes overlooking the valley, including Brede, Udimore and Icklesham.

The Rother District Council [Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment \(2009\)](#) describes and assesses the landscape in and around Westfield as part of landscape assessment areas W1 to W4.

W1 – Moorhurst / Highlands

This is well managed open countryside with open fields bounded by low hedgerows. There are typically straight field boundaries and rectangular plots. The fast A28 road detracts. This is pleasant and accessible countryside. There are some modern houses in large, small-holding plots.

The pattern of built form is of scattered settlement radiating from the village along main roads. There are some older farm settlements, but development is typically of modern buildings in rectangular small holding plots.

The landscape is described as being a high quality and value AONB area. The area has a moderate-high character sensitivity and visual sensitivity. It is considered that the area could accommodate some limited development but only close to the existing village boundaries and only within a strong landscape structure. The capacity for housing development is identified as moderate. The potential for mitigation is moderate, as there may be some scope to redefine the village edge and strengthen field boundaries.

W2 – West brook / Hop Pole Castle

This area is of countryside surrounding the village. It is very similar to area 1 but more rolling countryside. The gardens create a soft edge to the countryside. The area has a local sense of place.

The settlement pattern is a suburban cul-de-sac extension to the historic core of the village.

The landscape is of good quality and a high value AONB area. The area has a high character sensitivity and a moderate-high visual sensitivity. It is noted that modern development has already extended into the countryside, and that further encroachment would impact on the AONB landscape. Consequently, this area has a low-moderate capacity for development. The potential for mitigation is low, due to the character of the AONB landscape here.

W3 – New Cut

This is a wooded valley with a stream in a steep ghyll. The houses and gardens are in small cul-de-sacs which extend into the area. It is difficult to access by car. There is a sense of place offered by the small scale and windy lanes with no footpaths.

There are feature vernacular buildings strung along windy lanes.

The area is a good quality and high value AONB landscape. It has a moderate character sensitivity and a low visual sensitivity. However, it is noted that the area has a distinctive character, and the heavily wooded valley would be vulnerable to change. Capacity for development is therefore considered to be low.

W4 – Church Place Farm

This is countryside on the edge of the village. It is typically pasture enclosed by woodland. The field boundaries are managed hedgerows. Landscape features include the fine vicarage and surrounding garden. There are fine Lime trees, and the area has a strong sense of place.

There is a church and vicarage away from the village centre. Inter-war Council housing is set in a characteristic cul-de-sac, with gardens, neat hedges and trees. This area is an older part of the village and the setting for the church and vicarage. The character would be vulnerable to change.

The landscape is a good quality and high value AONB area, with a moderate character and visual sensitivity. These are wide open landscapes with strong landscape characters and that have a low-no capacity for new development. The potential for mitigation is low, as the area is stable in character.

W5 – Fish Ponds

This is a village fringe landscape of scattered farmsteads, small holdings and pony paddocks. It is typified by enclosed pastures. There are some detracting farm buildings and well treed tall hedges and enclosing shaws. There is a locally strong sense of place. This is valued as accessible countryside adjacent to the village.

The settlement is along an ancient lane with some older farm settlement.

The landscape's quality is good, and it is a high value AONB area. It has a moderate sensitivity, and a low visual sensitivity. The capacity for development is moderate. It is noted that development could only be considered within a strong landscape framework and close to the village edge. The important Green Infrastructure role of this area should not be underestimated as an accessible buffer between the village and the AONB countryside. The potential for mitigation is moderate, with some scope to strengthen field boundaries.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2022

It is considered that areas to the north of the village between Mill Lane and Cottage Lane have some scope for development, provided that a strong landscape buffer is retained towards the north of the area. The network of irregular historic fields to the west of Fishponds Lane form are important for the setting of the east of the village, and are not considered suitable for development, although some of the enclosed field to the south of the lane may have some potential, in part due to adjacent development. To the south of the village, the large open field to the south of Goulds Drive is considered to relate to the landscape more than adjacent residential development, however, there may be some scope for development within the north of the field, that remains close to the built-up edge of the village, while a landscape buffer would be required. Finally, a westward extension of the Wheel Lane employment site is not considered appropriate due to its separation from the village and open character.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Excepting its AONB designation the area is relatively unconstrained. There is one area of deciduous woodland bounding the settlement to the east, and a large area of ancient and

deciduous woodland to the southwest. Otherwise, the south of the village is partly within the Hastings Fringe Biodiversity Opportunity Area, which extends to the south from here.

There are several areas within and adjacent to the village that are susceptible to surface water flooding, which correspond with the location of a number of watercourses.

There is one parcel of ancient and deciduous woodland adjacent to the northwest of the settlement, with areas of deciduous woodland and traditional orchard relatively close to the northern boundary. A short way to the north is a section of the Romney Marsh Biodiversity Opportunity Area, and the Brede Valley Local Wildlife Site.

The presence of watercourses means that there are some areas within the north of the village that are susceptible to surface water flooding, particularly along certain roads. A tributary of the River Brede lies to the north west of the village, with the land adjacent to it being within Flood Zone 3.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Westfield's essential services consist of two convenience stores, a pre-school/nurse, primary school and a doctor's surgery. The nearest supermarkets are located within nearby Hastings. With one of each essential service the settlement scores 4 for its range of essential services.

Service Level

There is a reasonable number of additional services and facilities within the settlement. This includes a pub, coffee shop, restaurant, village hall and church. Westfield scores a 2 for its additional services and facilities.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities in Westfield are limited, although broadly comparable (if not slightly below average) with the other larger villages within the district. The Wheel Farm Business Park is located to the immediate west of the village along Wheel Lane. It covers an area of 1.82ha and in the 2016 Employment Sites Review contained 10 businesses. There are a small number of services, set out above, which may provide very minimal employment, but employment will primarily be sought outside of the settlement. Westfield scores a 2 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

There is an average bus service in Westfield with nine services a day with connections including Hastings, Tenterden, Battle, and two limited services which cover more rural areas, as well as Sainsbury's supermarket in Hastings. There is no train station in Westfield, with the most local stations being within Battle and Three Oaks. The settlement scores a 2 for its public transport service.

Broadband Access

Superfast broadband, as defined by having download speeds of between 30Mbps and 300 Mbps is available within the settlement. Westfield scores a 2 for its internet service.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	4
Service Level (5)	2
Employment Opportunities (5)	2
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	2
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	12

Current development commitments

The DaSA allocated three sites within Westfield, for a total of some 89 dwellings.

Policy WES1: Land at Westfield Down is allocated for some 39 dwellings, as well as recreation land including sports pitches, changing facilities and car parking. The recreation land within the allocation is currently subject to permissions RR/2017/1293/P for 39 dwellings and RR/2019/1067/P & RR/2021/1757/P for proposed changing rooms and associated parking.

Policy WES2: Land at the former Moorhurst Care Home is allocated for some 40 dwellings, including a communal open space area. This allocation is currently the subject application RR/2021/3010/P for the development of a 64 bed care home.

Policy WES3: Land south-east of Goulds Drive is allocated for some 10 dwellings. There are no permissions or applications for this site.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger village – population over 1,000, opportunity to support services and facilities • Reasonable range facilities and services for size of settlement, including all four essential services • Some 2.5km north of major town Hastings & 5km north of Hastings town centre
Settlement Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of 'good' bus service • Comparatively smaller range of employment options than some of the other larger villages within the district • The potential for outward expansion will ultimately be limited by its AONB location

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Westfield is a large village that has a good sustainability score due to having access to all four essential services, and it is considered to be moderately sustainable in line with other larger rural villages within the district. At the same time, Westfield is well located in respect of

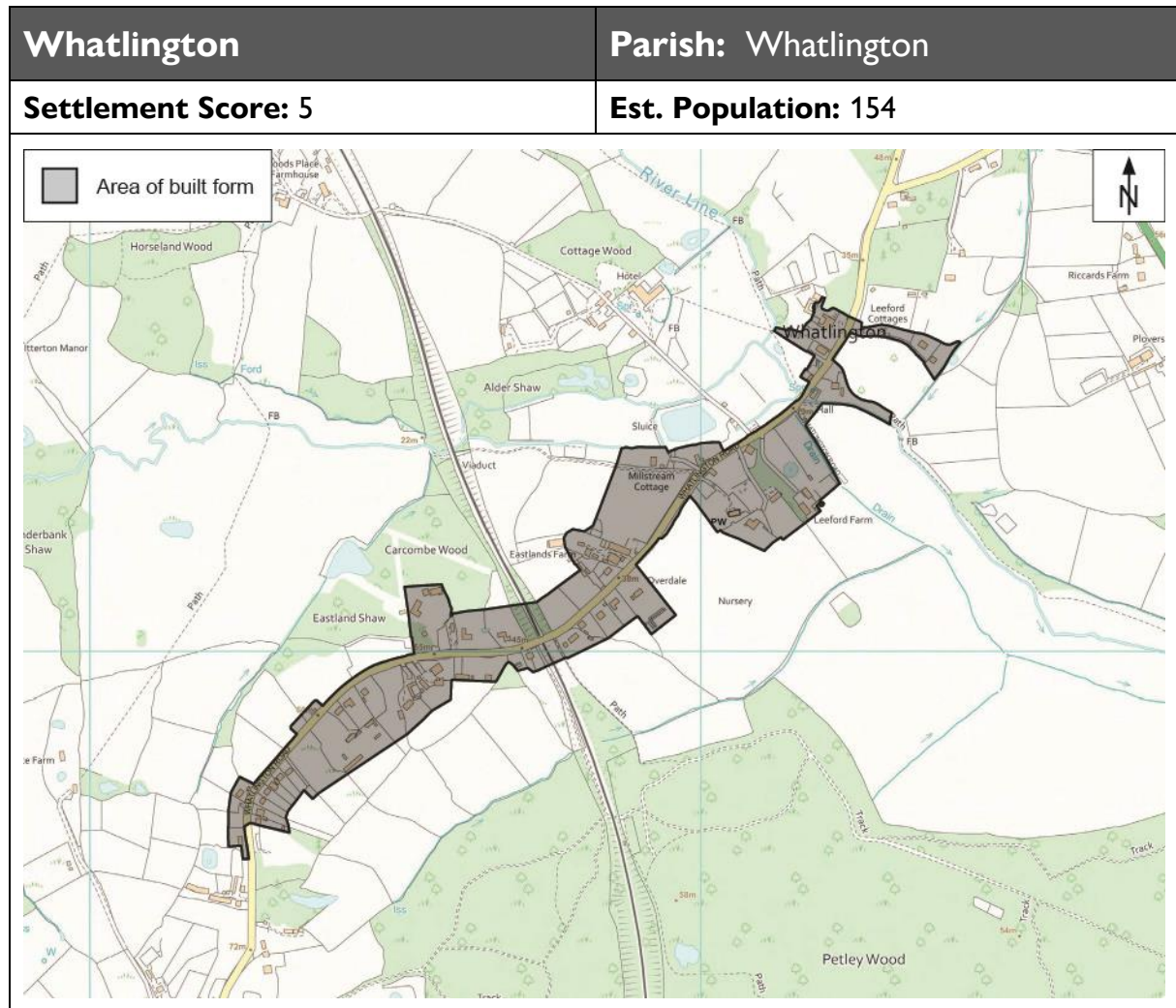
Hastings. Its sustainability score and relationship with Hastings mean that some development could help its community to live well locally by improving local services and public transport accessibility as part of an eastern cluster of rural settlements connected to Hastings.

Opportunities for Growth

There is potential for some development within the northeastern areas of the village, which reflects the two existing DaSA allocations at Westfield Down and the former care home at Moorhurst combine here for a total of 79 dwellings as well as modern sports pitches. Existing allocations, if not already developed should be carried forward, while there may be some potential for further small-scale development to the east of the village, which was also assessed as being one of the less landscape sensitive parts of the village. Through improving the range of local services and public transport accessibility through a network of rural settlements connected to Hastings, overall sustainability will be improved.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

The development of the existing allocations and allowing further development in less sensitive areas of the settlement, could support the development of a small level of new services and facilities within the built-up area.



Settlement Overview

Introduction

Whatlington is located 10km northwest of Hastings town centre and approximately 2.5km north east of the centre of Battle. The settlement has no central point and is highly dispersed along Whatlington Road, which is a 'C' classified road that links the A21 with Battle.

Housing and Population

The population of Whatlington is an estimated 154, which is based on the number of dwellings, 55, multiplied by the latest household data from the 2011 Census, which identified an average household size of 2.8 persons per dwelling.

Historical and Landscape Character

Heritage and History

Whatlington appears in the 1086 Domesday Book and was recorded to have an annual value of 2 pounds and 10 shillings.

There are seven listed buildings within the settlement area, as well as 2 Archaeological Notification Areas denoting the location of a medieval settlement. The Grade II* listed Parish Church of St Mary Magdalen dates back to the 13th Century, and until 1987 contained a yew tree that was traditionally thought to be 1,000 years old.

Landscape Character

The surrounding countryside consists of gently undulating countryside interspersed with large tracts of ancient woodland and narrow little valleys. The settlement is sparsely developed and has a strong rural character in its relationship to the surrounding countryside. Part of the settlement is low lying, alongside the River Line.

Brede Valley – East Sussex Landscape Character Area

Whatlington sits within the Brede Valley Landscape Character Area. The Brede Valley generally relates to the landscape centred on the broad valley of the River Brede and its flat valley floor enclosed by relatively steep slopes. However, the landscape surrounding Whatlington is more associated with the head of the Brede valley, which is characterised by undulating countryside and wide vistas across the landscape, with extensive areas of semi-natural ancient deciduous woodland. The River Line which flows through part of the settlement, forms a tributary to the River Brede to the south east near Sedlescombe.

Physical and Environmental Constraints

Whatlington is wholly within the High Weald NL, and a small section is within the Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area. A parcel of ancient and deciduous woodland known as Carcombe Wood/Eastland Shaw lies within and adjacent to the northwest of the settlement, while Petley Wood which is a large area of ancient woodland lies near to the south.

The River Line flows through the northern eastern end of the settlement, and the immediate area is within Flood Zone 3, and is susceptible to surface water flooding. The majority of the settlement to the southwest however is generally without flood related constraints.

Constraints maps for the settlement can be found in Part 3: Appendices and Maps.

Settlement Sustainability

Essential Services

Whatlington is a dispersed and low-population settlement and has no essential services. The settlement scores a 0 for its essential services.

Service Level

The Leeford Place Hotel which hosts a restaurant is within the settlement, along with a church and a village hall. There are no other services or facilities in Whatlington. The settlement scores a 0 for its overall services and facilities.

See Figure A2.2 in Part 3: Appendices and Maps for a full breakdown of the services and facilities available to the settlement.

Employment Opportunities

The employment opportunities in Whatlington are very minimal, with no employment sites located, other than Leeford Place Hotel. Employment, therefore, is reliant on traveling

outside of the settlement to the larger towns, most likely either Battle or Hastings. The settlement scores a 0 for its employment opportunities.

Public Transport

Whatlington has an average bus service, with around 6 buses a day, with connections including Battle, Hastings, Robertsbridge and Hawkhurst. There are also two school time bus services, with connections to Claverham College in Battle, and Robertsbridge College in. Whatlington is some 2.5km away from the larger settlement of Battle, which has a train station with regular services towards London and Hastings. With only an average bus service, and no train station, Whatlington scores a 2 for its public transport services.

Broadband Access

Ultrafast broadband which is defined as download speeds of 300Mbps or more is available in Whatlington, giving the settlement and internet service score of 3.

Sustainability Score

Sustainability Scoring	Score
Essential Services (5)	0
Service Level (5)	0
Employment Opportunities (5)	0
Public Transport (5)	2
Broadband Access (3)	3
Total Settlement Sustainability Score (23)	5

Current development commitments

There are currently no significant development commitments within Whatlington.

Summary of Settlement Strengths and Weaknesses

Settlement Strengths

- Availability of Ultrafast Broadband
- Some 2.5km northeast of Battle, which has a good range of services and facilities

Settlement Weaknesses

- Very small rural village – population less than 200
- Minimal services and facilities, and no essential services
- Minimal employment opportunities
- Served by a less frequent bus service
- Access is only via a narrow country lane
- Significant AONB landscape and flooding constrains impact on development potential
- Linear settlement patten and lack of footways limit settlement walkability

Recommendations for the Local Plan

Whatlington is a small remote rural settlement. Its sustainability score indicates that there are minimal services and facilities within the village, making its residents entirely dependent on traveling to larger settlements including Hastings and nearby Battle. Whatlington has low overall sustainability.

Opportunities to improve sustainability

With its minimal overall service level, it is unlikely that Whatlington's sustainability can be significantly improved, other than through an improvement of its bus connectivity that could perhaps be facilitated through its incorporation into a network of rural settlements connected to Battle. Improvements to the village's bus connectivity may be problematic however, due to the narrow and winding aspect of Whatlington Road.

Ability for new growth to support additional services and facilities

There may be some limited scope for small scale development within enclosed and previously developed sites within the village, however this would not likely be of a scale that could support further services and facilities within the village.

Other Hamlets and Areas of Built Form

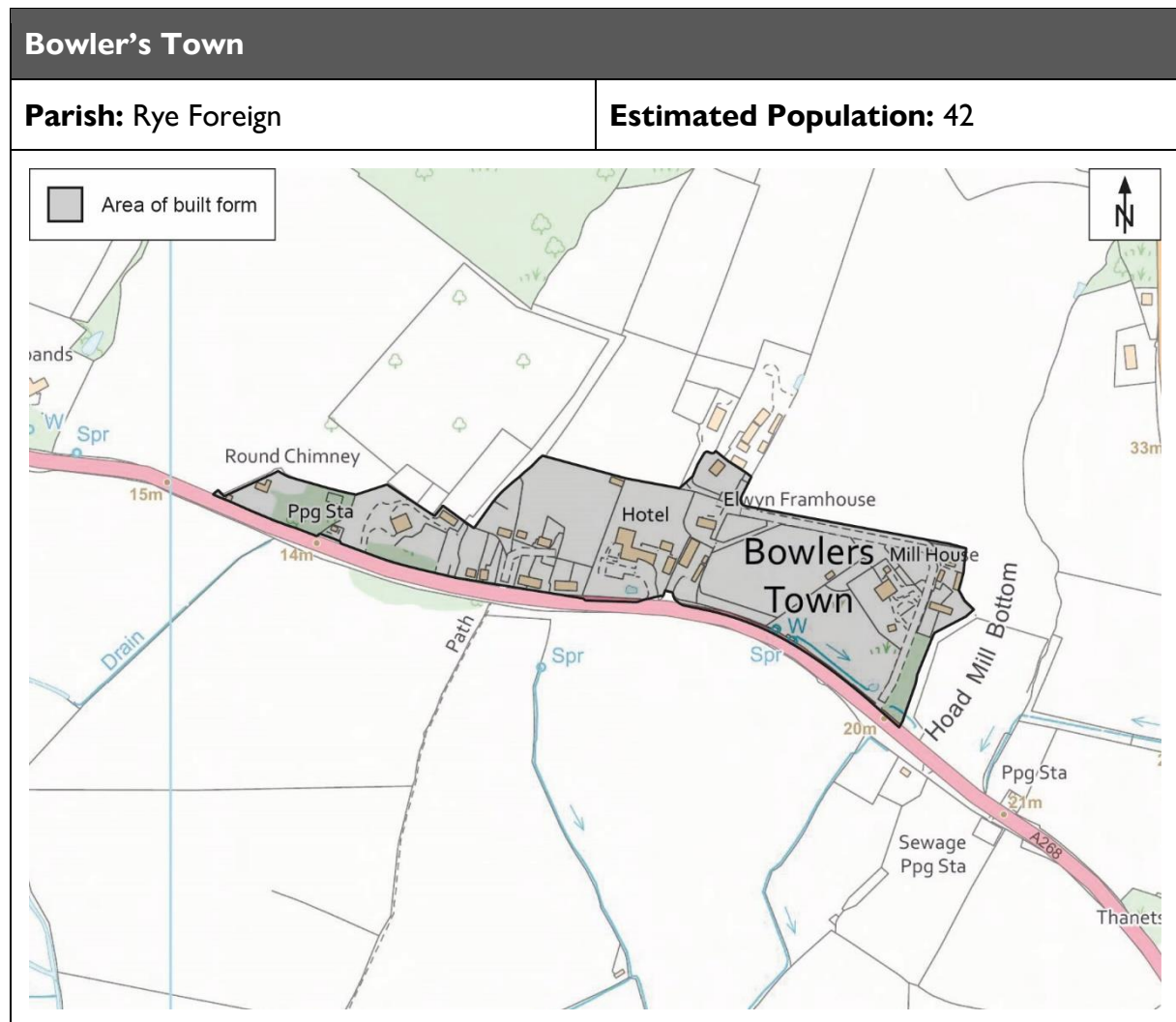
As discussed in the Main Report and Methodology, the criteria for areas of built form to be assessed in detail are to have a population of at least 100 or have access to an essential service.

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.

Settlements discussed below are:

- Bowler's Town
- Brightling
- Broad Street
- Broadland Row
- Brownbread Street
- Burgh Hill
- Clayhill
- Cock Marling
- Doleham
- Ewhurst Green
- Green Street
- Henley's Down
- Hollingrove
- Horns Cross
- John's Cross
- Jury's Gap
- Kent Street
- Moat Street
- Oxley's Green
- Penhurst
- Pons Green
- Rye Foreign

- Salehurst
- The Pound
- Twelve Oaks
- Vinehall Street
- Wallcrouch
- Whydown
- Woodman's Green



Bowler's Town is composed of a handful of dwellings nestled between two farms on the A268, between Playden to the southeast and Rye Foreign to the west.

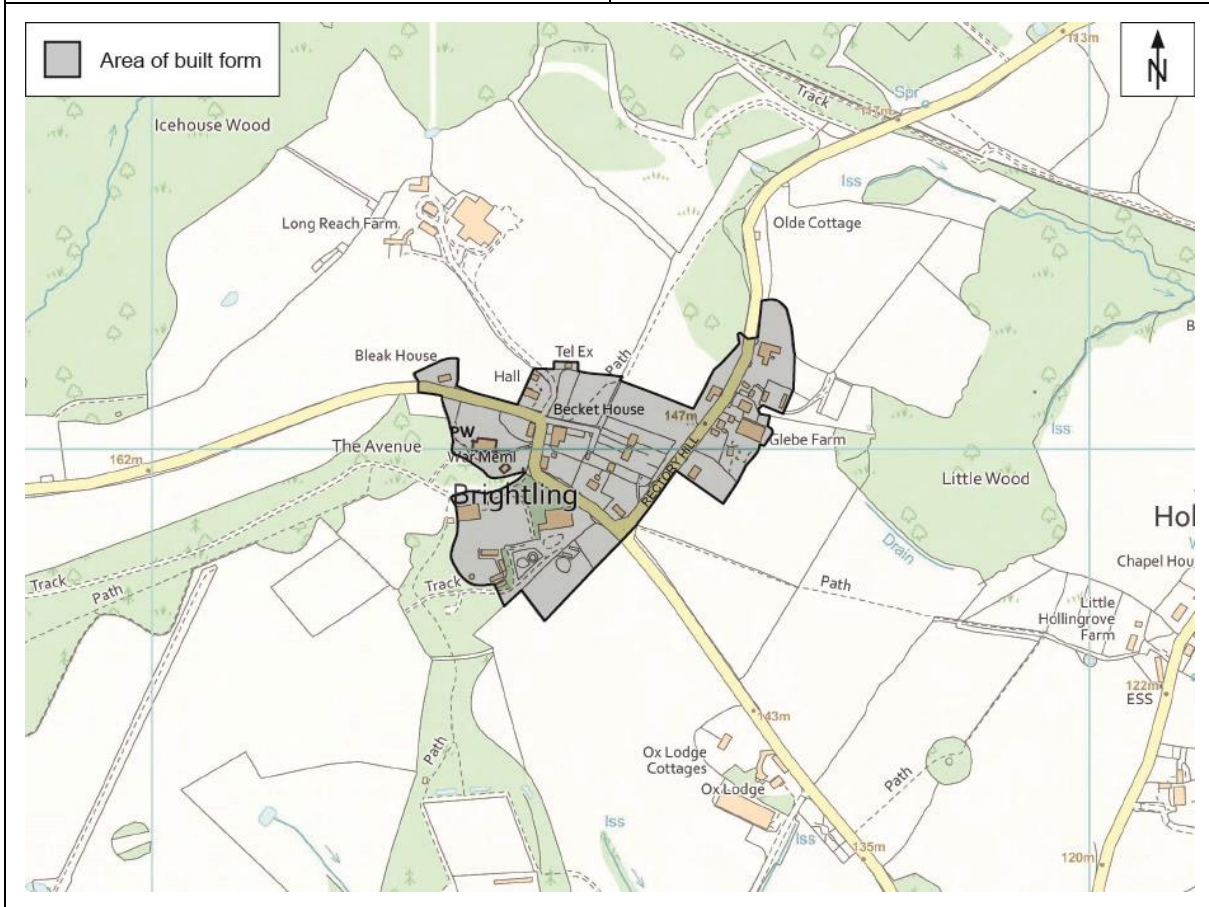
It is within the High Weald NL and Rye Foreign parish. The gently sloping landscape affords long views to the south.

There is a small farm shop within the settlement and the Playden Oasts Inn and Playden Women's Institute Hall are a short walk to the southeast.

Brightling

Parish: Brightling

Estimated Population: 53



Brightling village is in a relatively remote location located off the B2096 on the southern forest ridge. It is a small settlement, 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'.

Broad Street

Parish: Icklesham

Estimated Population: 21



Broad Street is a small collection of some 10 dwellings, built linearly along a short lane from which it takes its name. It is located a short distance to the west of Icklesham village, just off the A259.

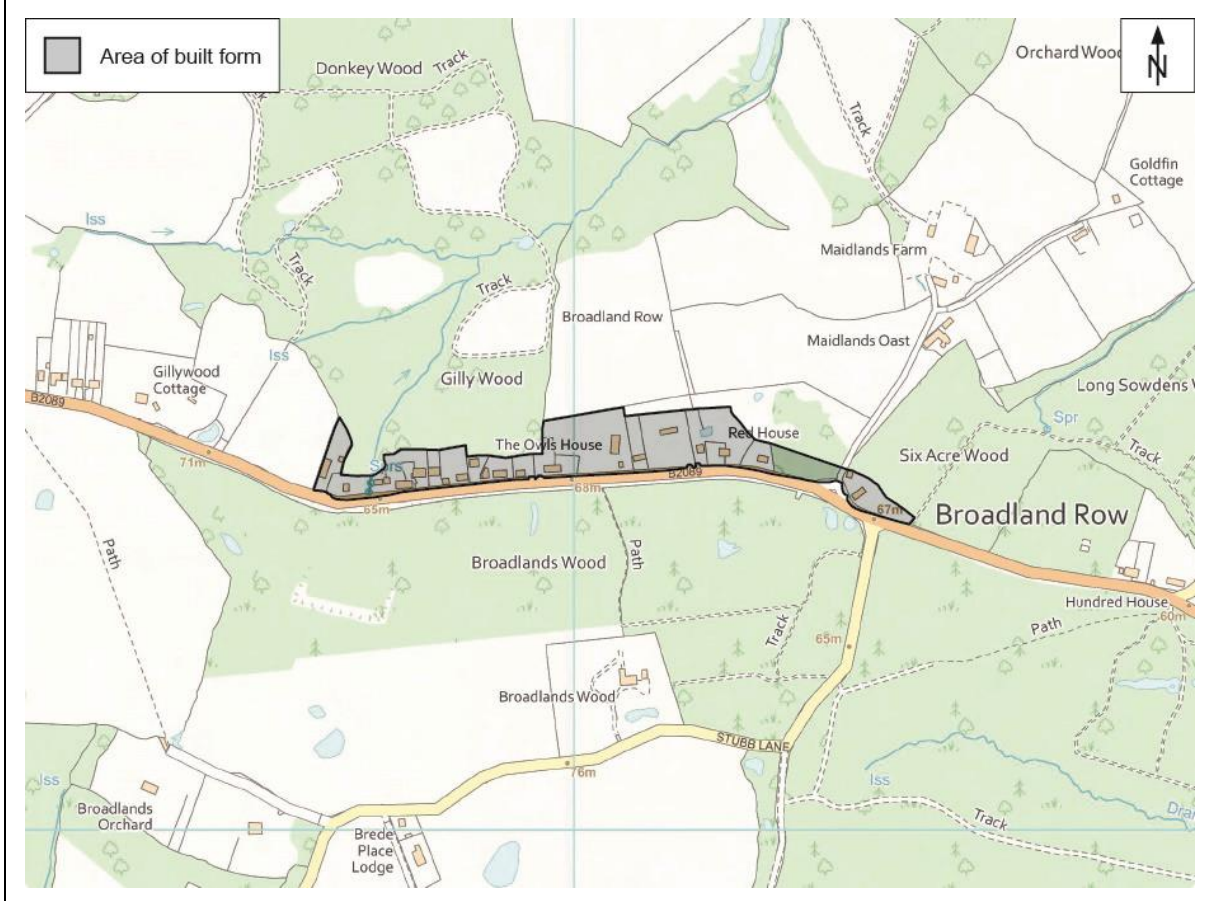
It is within the High Weald NL and Icklesham parish. There are extensive, long views to the northeast across the Brede Valley.

There are no services or facilities within Broad Street.

Broadland Row

Parish: Brede

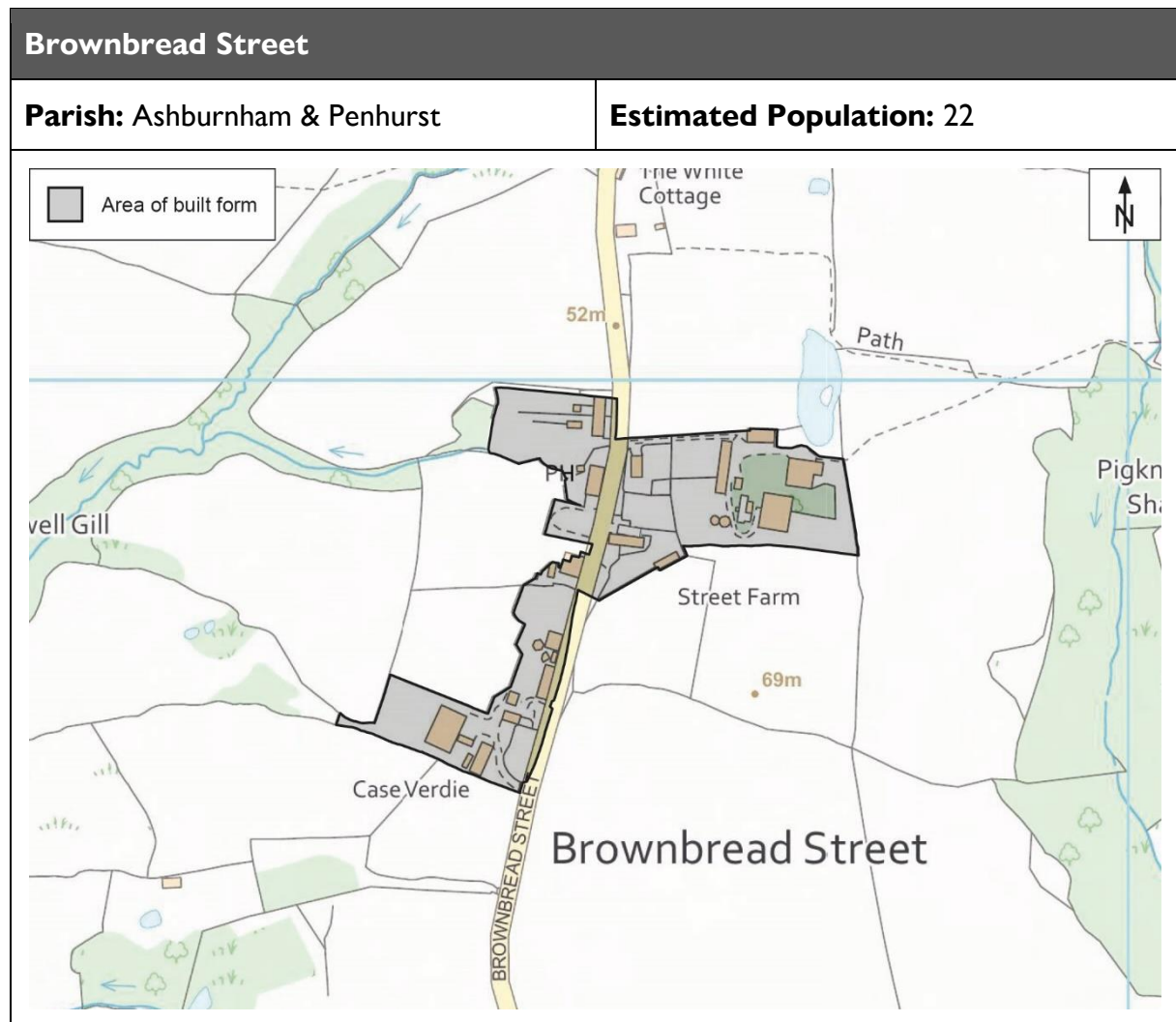
Estimated Population: 46



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 NL 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.



Brownbread Street is a small hamlet on a narrow lane, from which it takes its name.

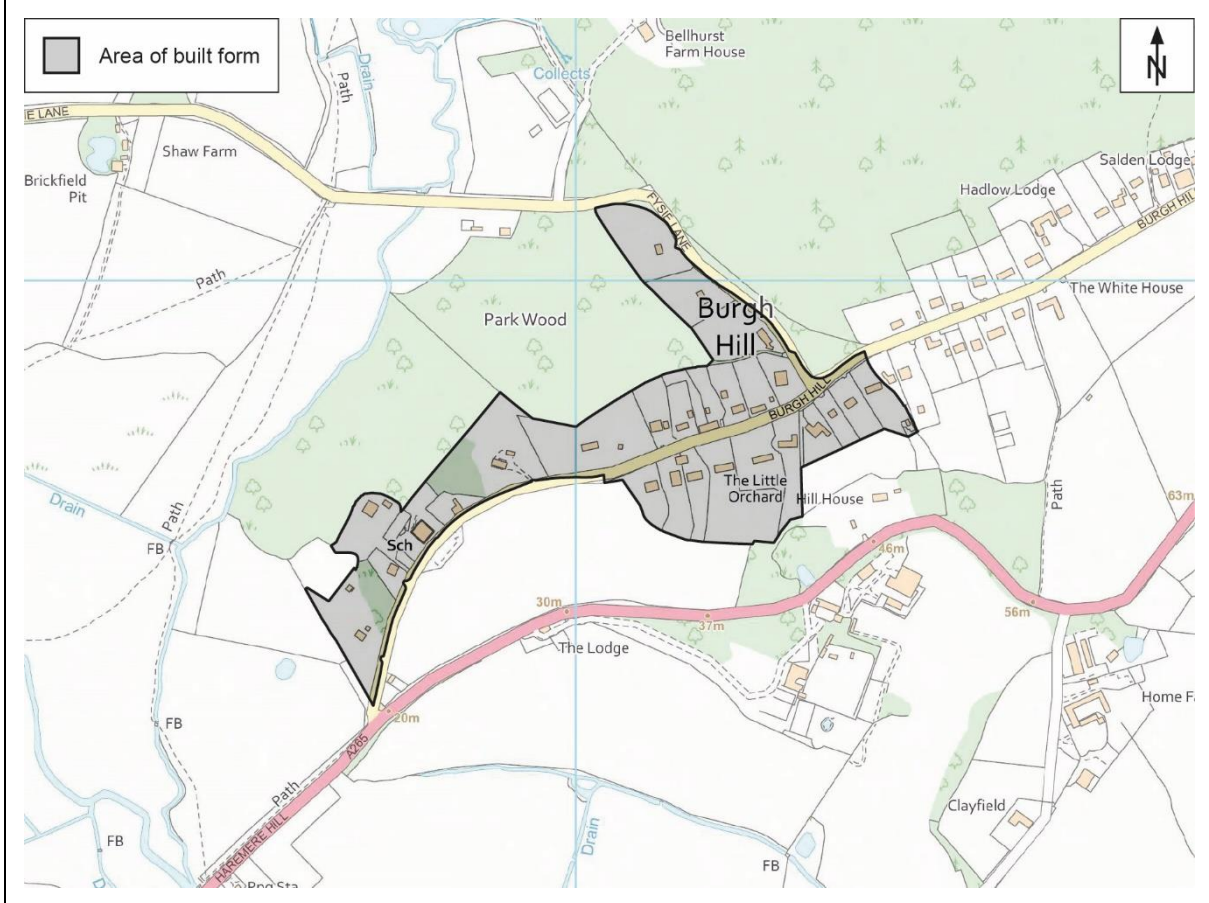
It is within the High Weald NL and is one of four small settlements within Ashburnham parish, in the west of the district.

The Ash Tree Inn is the only service or facility within the settlement, though there is a church, pre-school, recreation ground and village hall within walking distance.

Burgh Hill

Parish: Etchingham

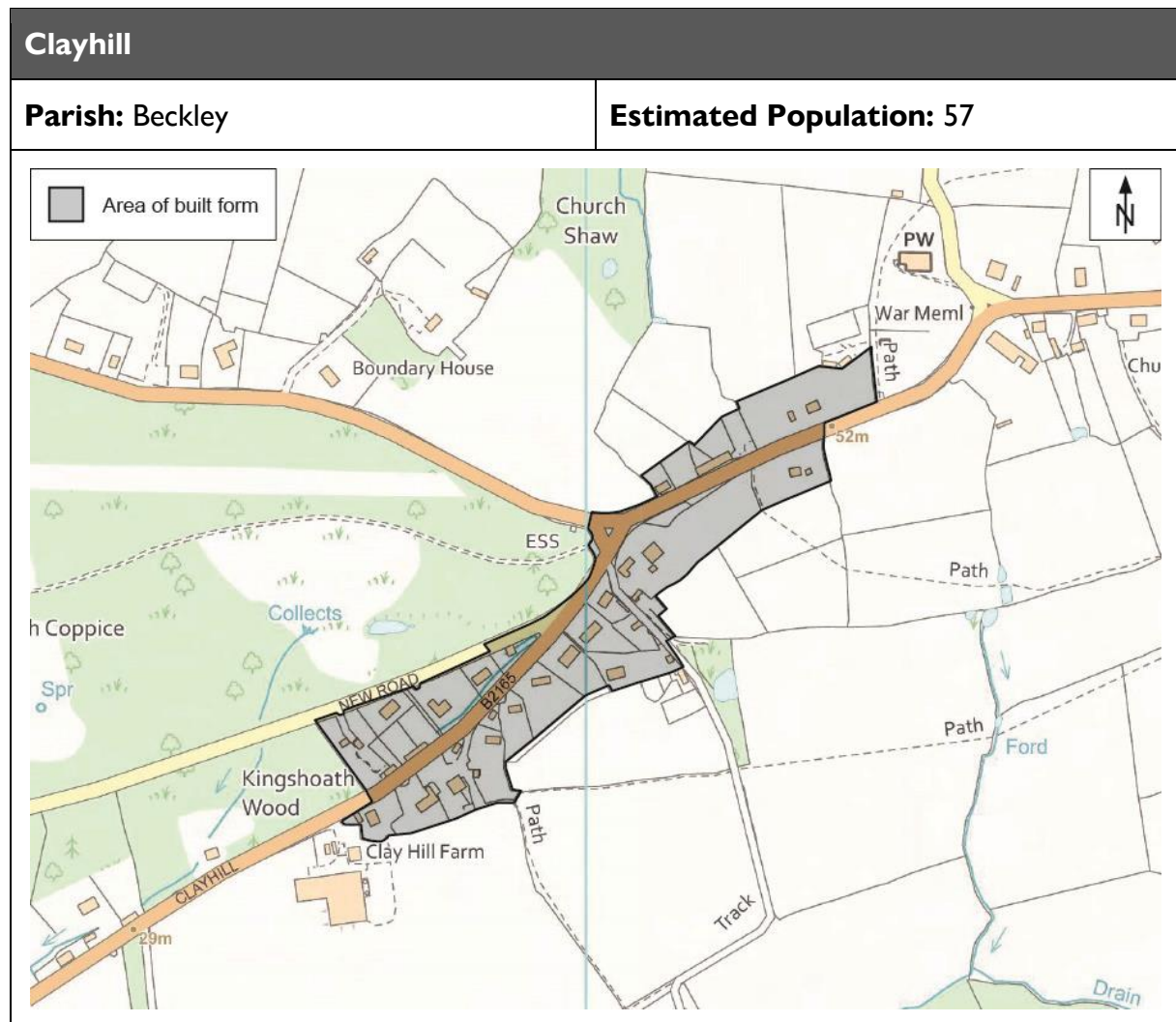
Estimated Population: 73



Burgh Hill is essentially the western most tip of Hurst Green village, which extends from Hurst Green parish into neighbouring Etchingham parish. For the purposes of this Review however, it has been considered separately. It is located on Burgh Hill Road, just off the A265 and approximately 1km northeast of Etchingham village.

It is within the High Weald NL and is bounded by Ancient Woodland to the north and Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the valley to the southwest. There are extensive, long views to the south.

There are no services and facilities within the settlement itself, however there are a handful of services in Etchingham which are within walking distance, including Etchingham train station.



Clayhill is located west of Beckley on the B2165 in 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 with the High Weald NL. 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

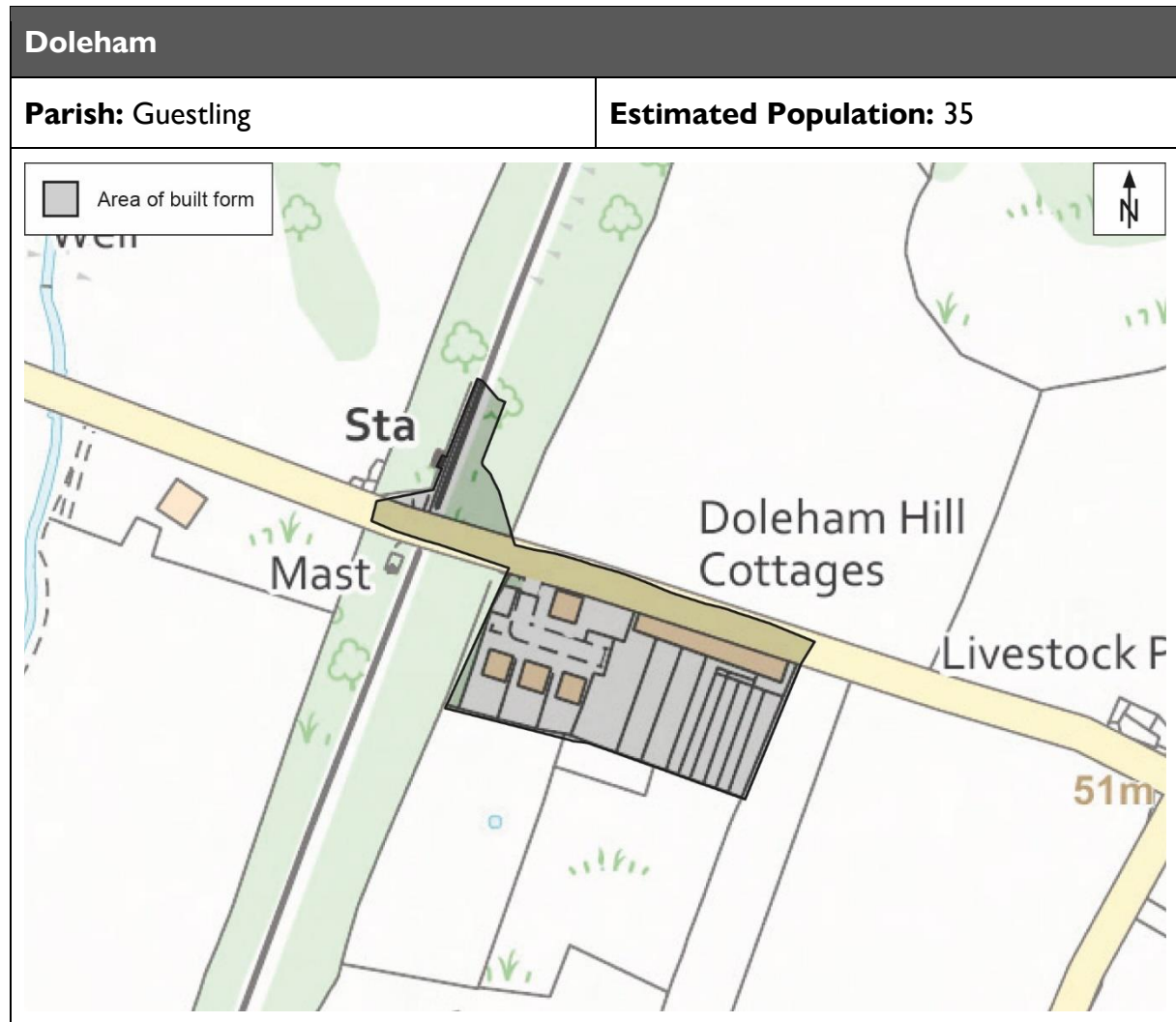
Parish: Udimore

Estimated Population: 37



Cock Marling is within Udimore Parish 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.



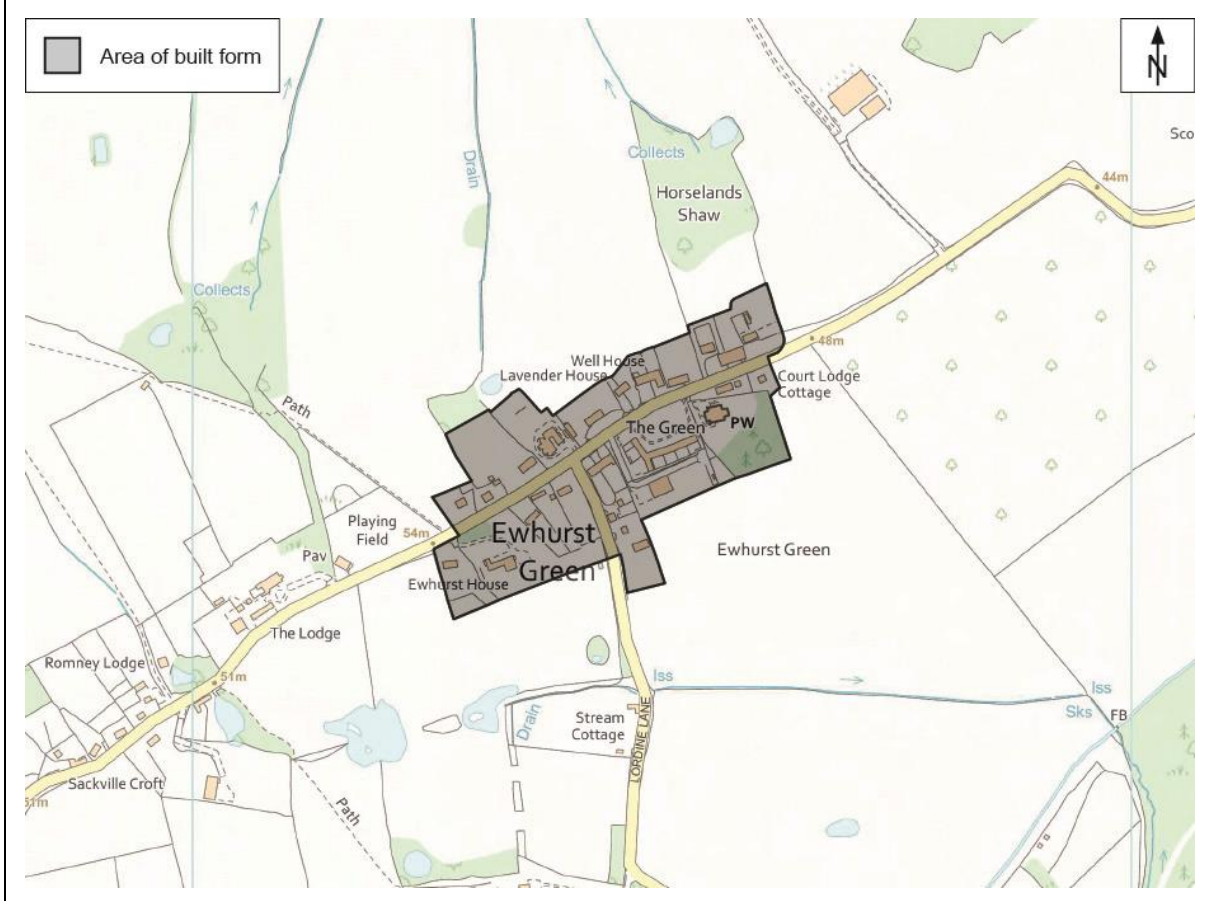
Doleham is sited within an isolated section of the Brede Valley and consists of a cluster of dwellings and adjoining train station located alongside the crossing of Doleham Lane and the Marshlink railway between Three Oaks and Winchelsea.

The station has a small number of train services per day, with connections including Hastings and Ashford. Except for the station, Doleham has no services or facilities.

Ewhurst Green

Parish: Ewhurst

Estimated Population: 97



Ewhurst Green 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 CE 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.

Green Street

Parish: Crowhurst

Estimated Population: 23



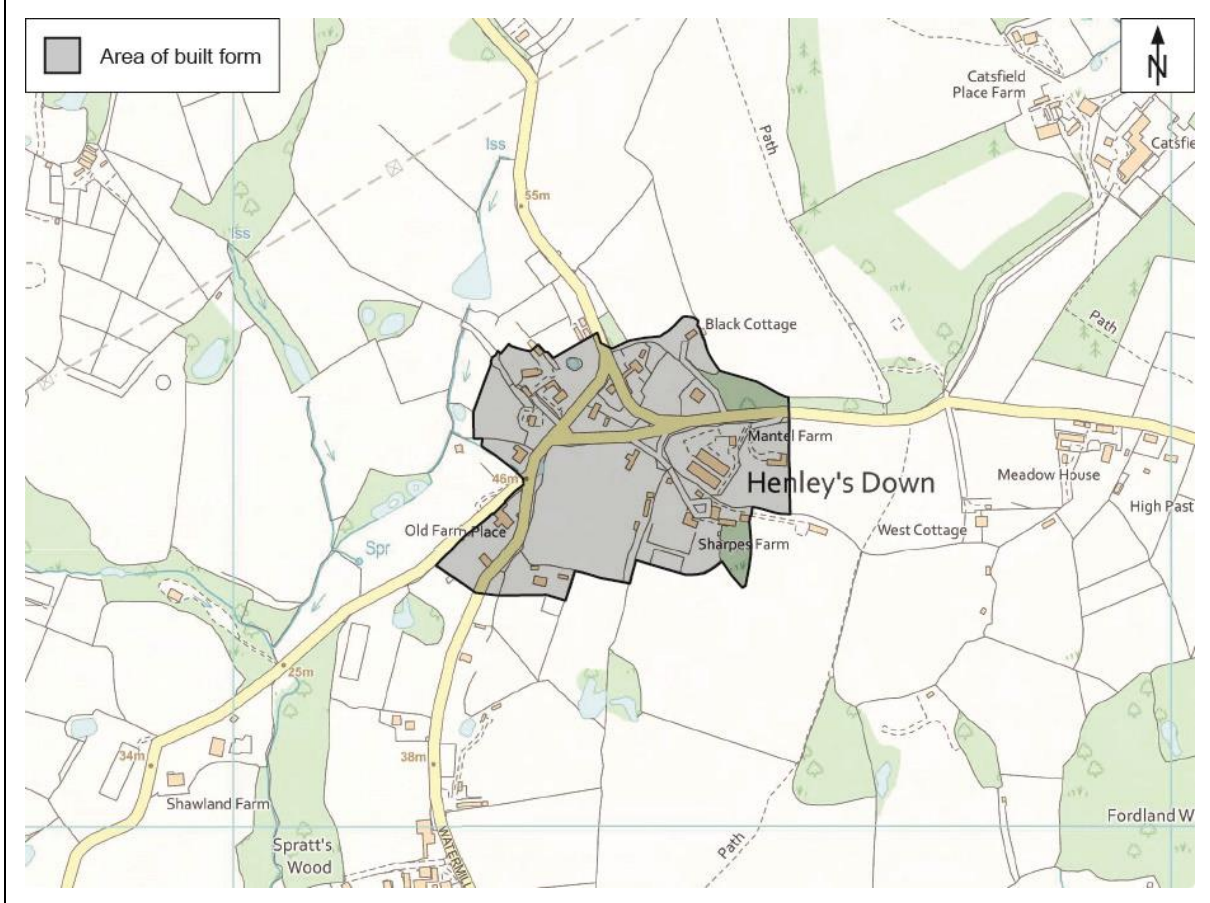
Green Street is small collection of dwellings clustered around the Green Street and Horseshoe Farms within Crowhurst parish.

It is situated on a small hill on the boundary of the High Weald NL and lies just to the east of Crowhurst village.

Henley's Down

Parish: Catsfield

Estimated Population: 48



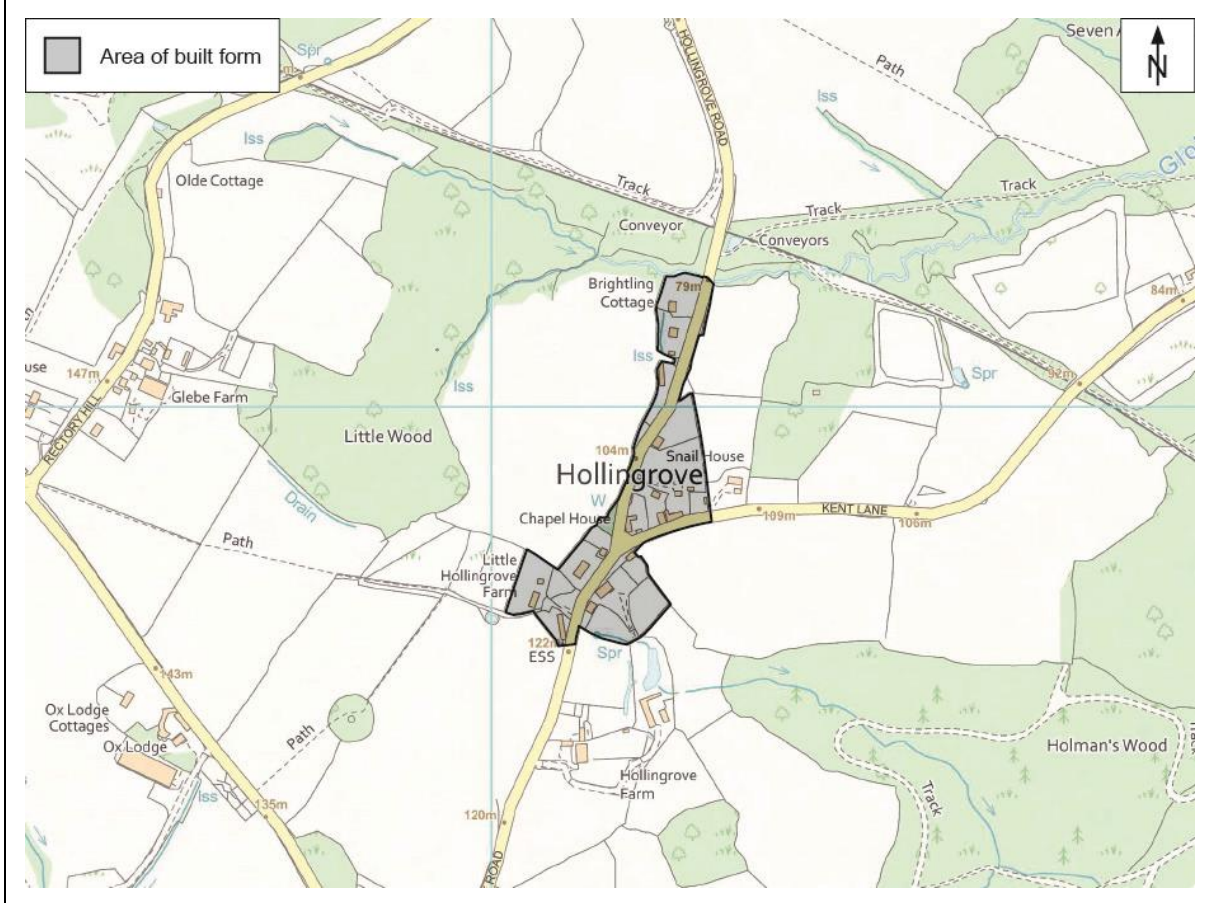
Henley's Down is within Catsfield Parish and is clustered around two farms, between Catsfield and Crowhurst.

It is situated on the southern boundary of the High Weald NL with a number of listed buildings present in the settlement.

Hollingrove

Parish: Brightling

Estimated Population: 34



Hollingrove is one of four small, clustered settlements in the parish of Brightling, located just north of the B2096.

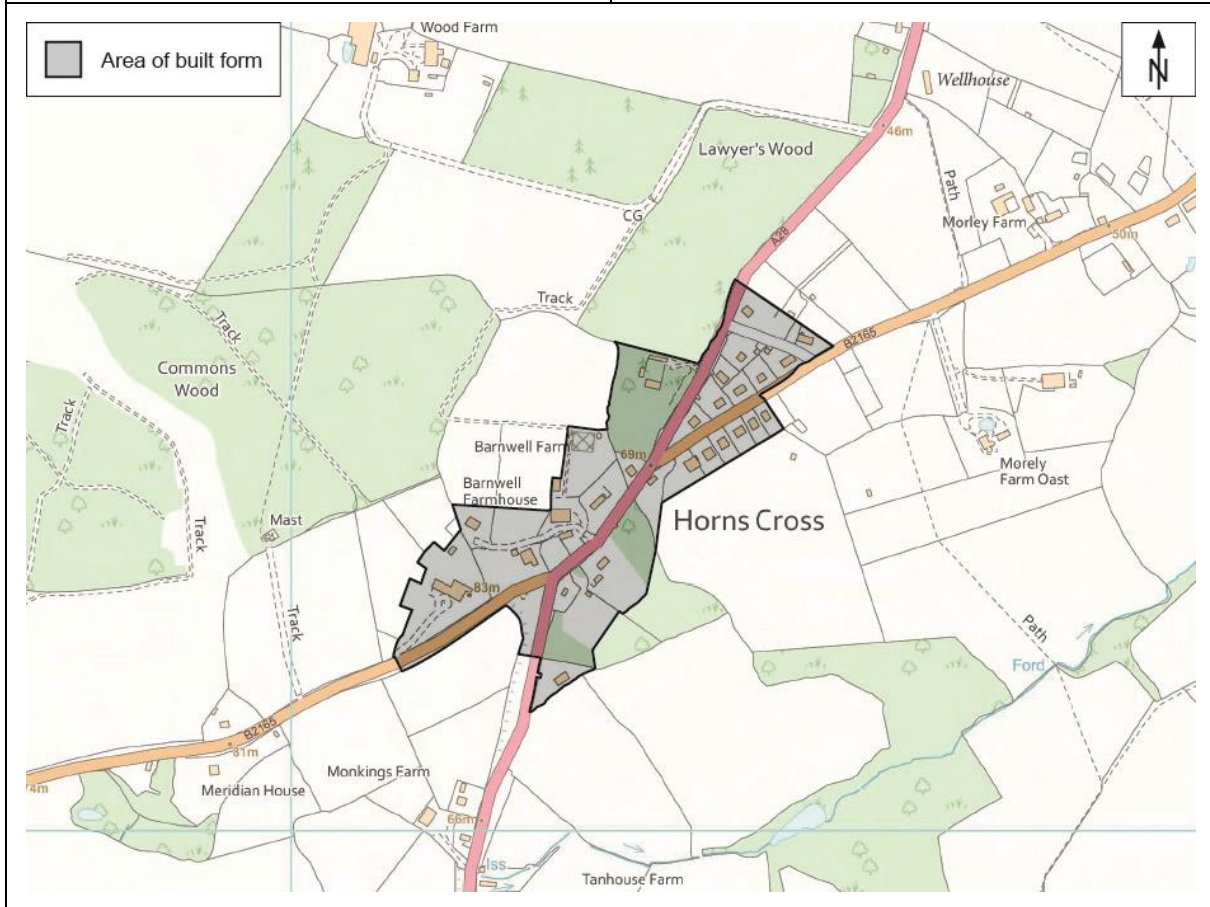
It is within the High Weald NL and surrounded by Ancient Woodland.

It is also within the Brightling, Mountfield and Robertsbridge mineral site as notified by East Sussex County Council.

Horn's Cross

Parish: Northiam

Estimated Population: 55



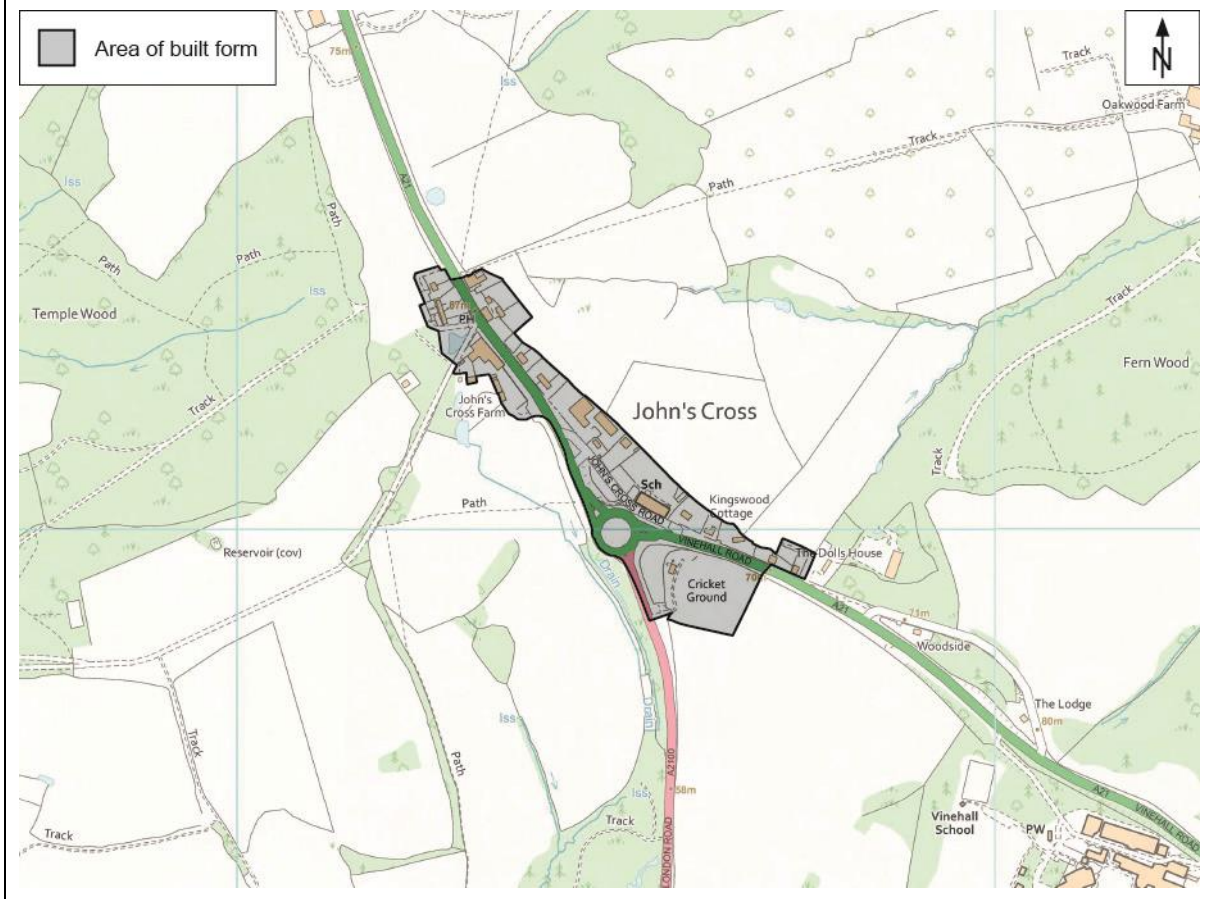
Horn's Cross is within Northiam Parish and is located on the junction of the A28 with B2165 between Northiam and Broad Oak.

The village is within the High Weald NL and there are several areas of ancient woodland in the surrounding vicinity.

Johns Cross

Parish: Mountfield

Estimated Population: 70



Johns Cross is a small settlement of mixed uses that has developed along the A21 trunk road, just under 4.5km from Battle and 2.5km from Robertsbridge. It has a population of approximately 70 people.

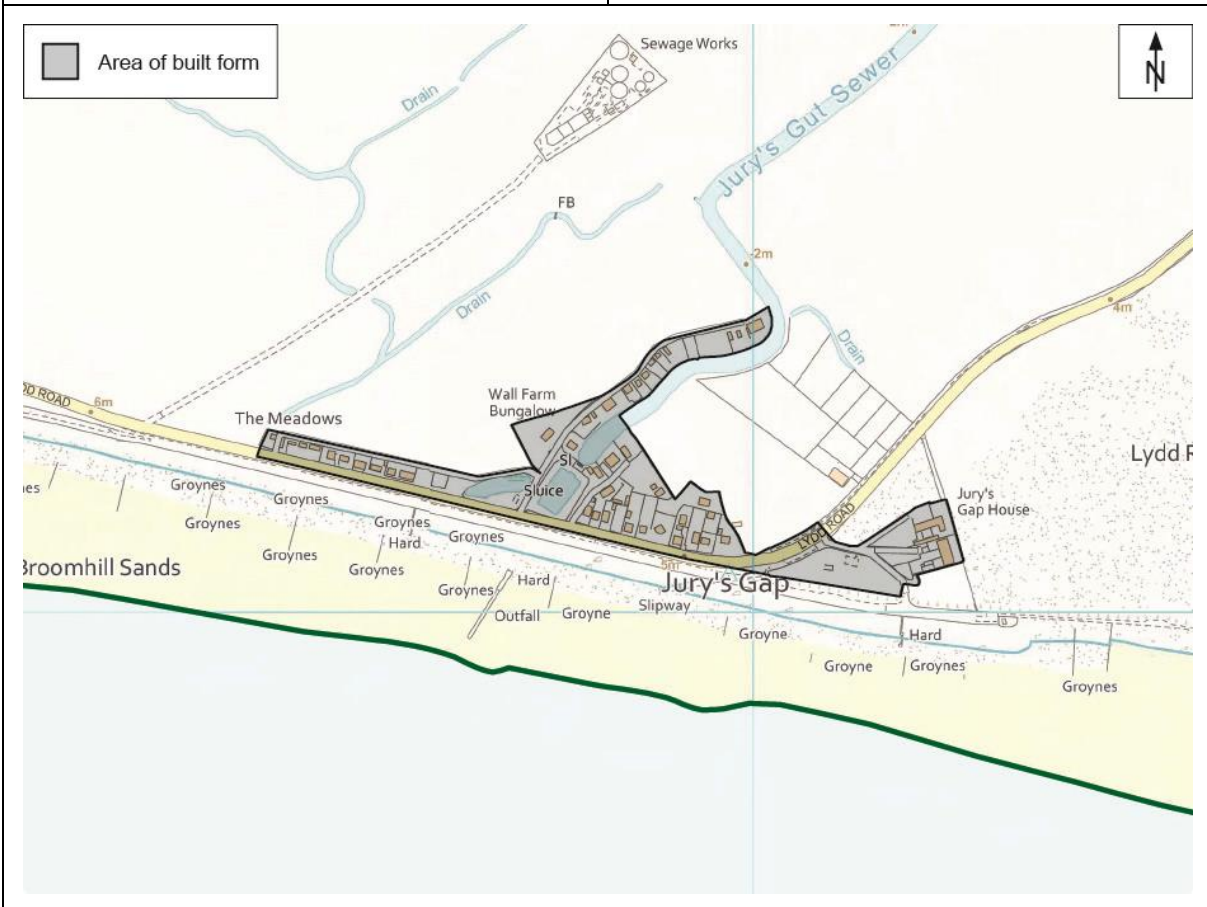
It is within the High Weald NL and Mountfield parish.

Johns Cross has a very limited range of local services, which are effectively limited to a sports pitch/playing field to the south. Mountfield Heath School caters specifically for younger children with special educational needs and is therefore of a specialist nature.

Jury's Gap

Parish: Camber

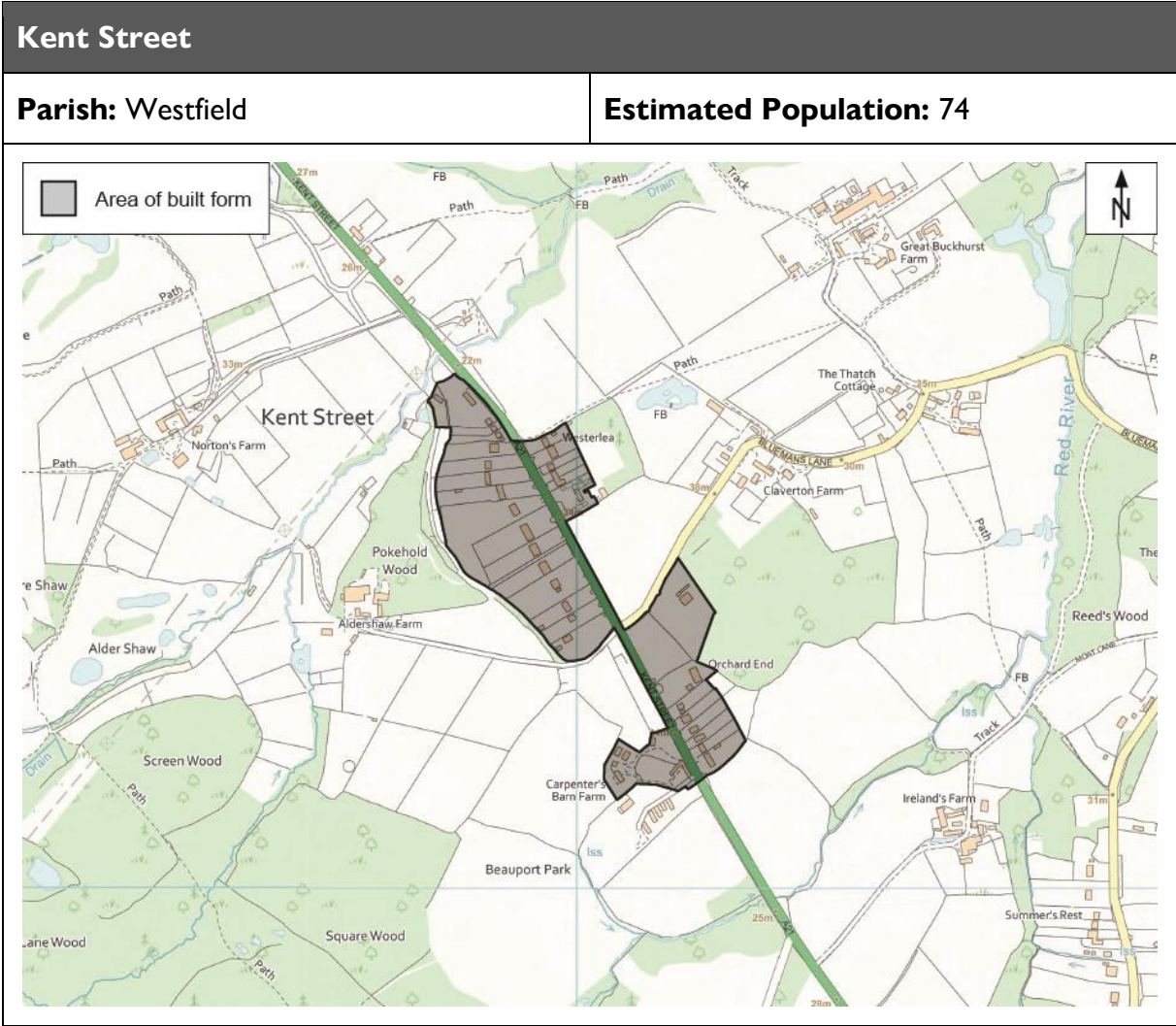
Estimated Population: 99



Jury's Gap is within Camber Parish and is located on the eastern periphery of the District on the road that links Camber with Lydd in Kent.

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.



Kent Street is a small collection of houses on the A21 some 3km north of Hastings.

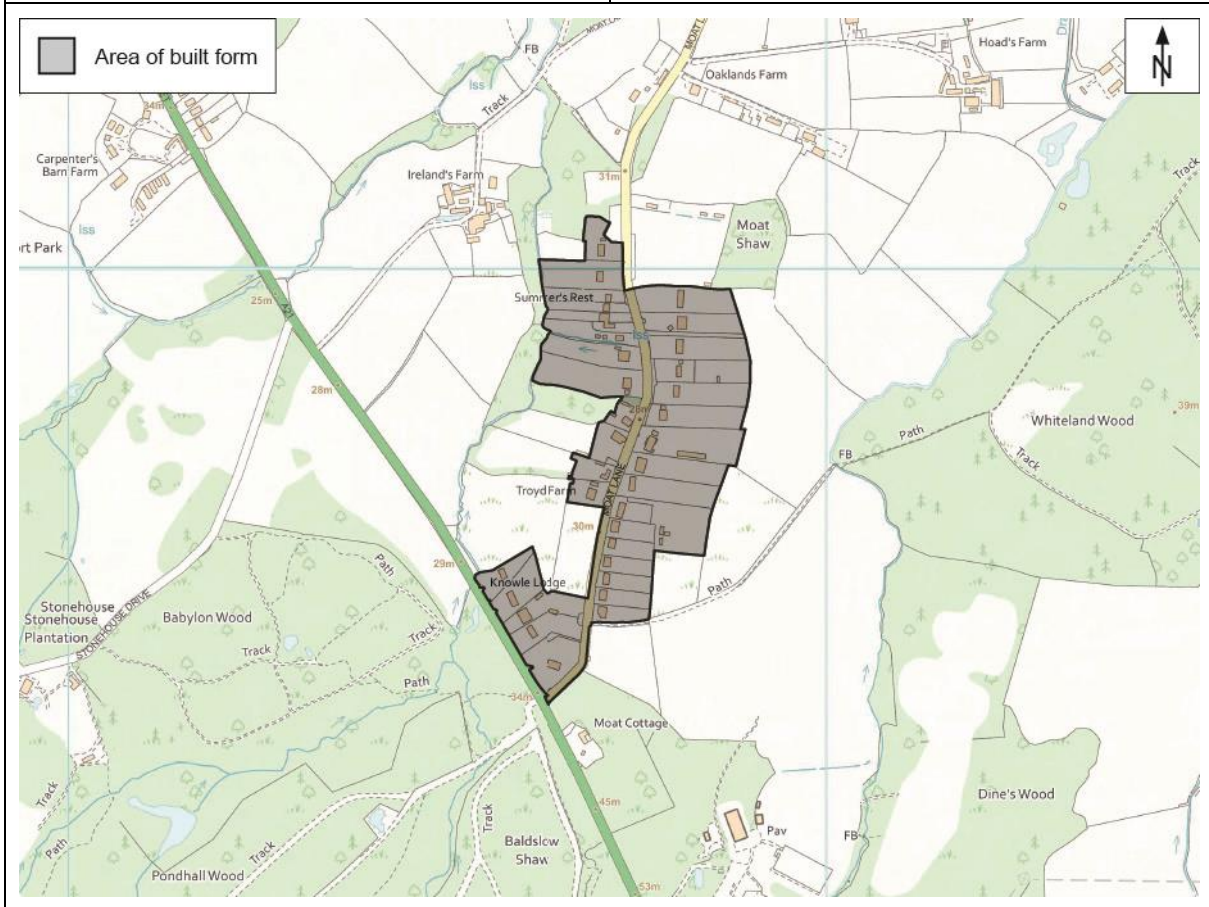
It is within the High Weald NL and Westfield parish.

There are no services or facilities within the settlement, other than a small plant nursery, though the Sedlescombe Golf Club is just to the northwest.

Moat Lane

Parish: Westfield

Estimated Population: 86



Moat Lane is an isolated section of ribbon development along Moat Lane, directly adjoining the A21. The settlement at Moat Lane consists entirely of residential development.

Mill Corner is closely related to Hastings, which is just over 1km to the south. It is some 1.4km to the west of Westfield, while being 4.5km and 5km distant from Battle and Hastings town centres respectively.

It is within the High Weald NL and Westfield parish.

There are no facilities and services that are accessible to Moat Lane, other than Claremont Preparatory School which is 0.5km to the north.

Oxley's Green

Parish: Brightling

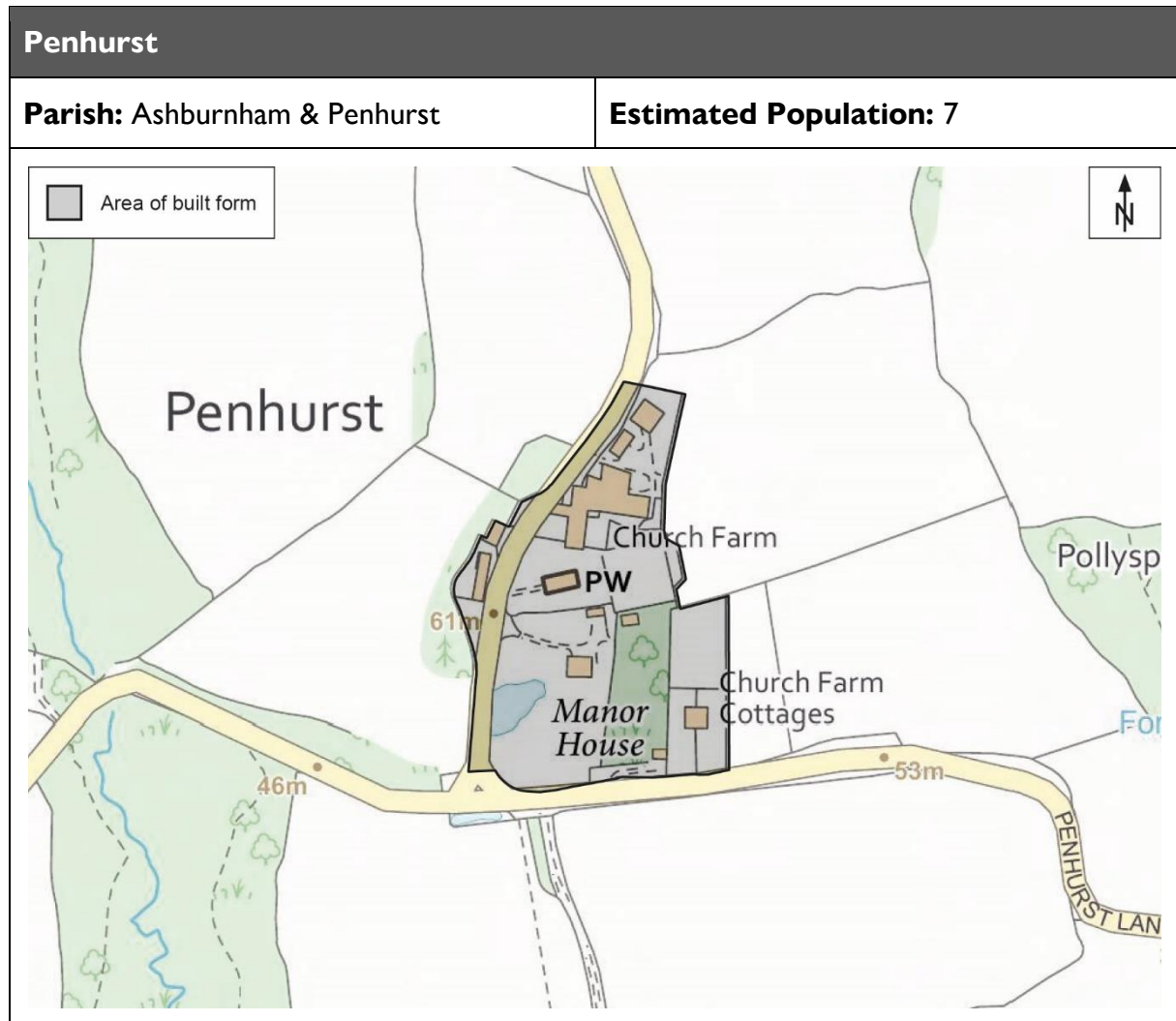
Estimated Population: 31



Oxley's Green is a tiny settlement of northeast of Brightling. It is in the High Weald NL and there is much ancient woodland in the vicinity in the form of heavily wooded ridges and valleys.

It is also within the Brightling, Mountfield and Robertsbridge mineral site as notified by East Sussex County Council.

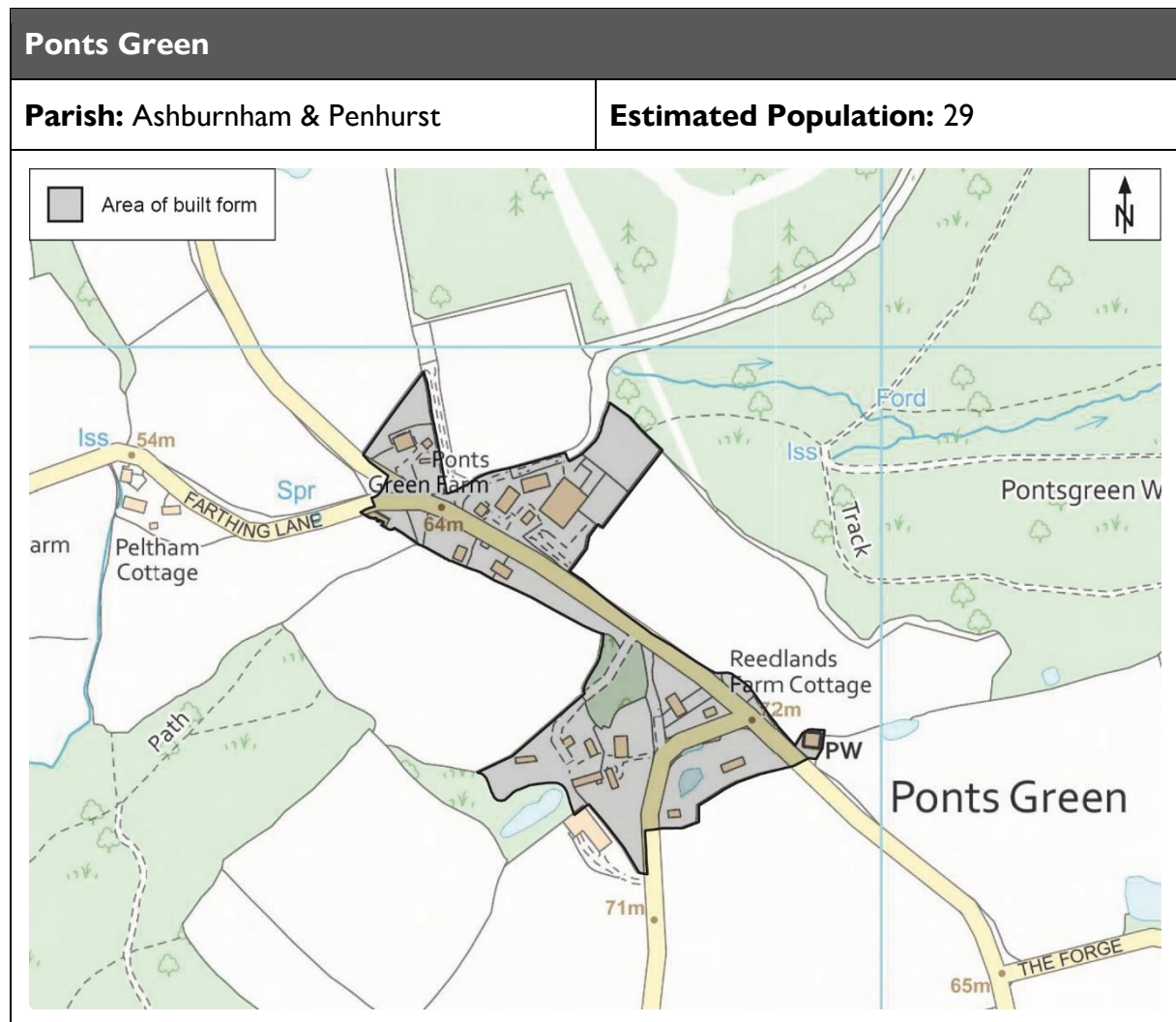
The area is notable for its particularly poor accessibility to the transport network. This creates a sense of remoteness both in the settlements and the wider parish.



Penhurst is very small but warrants a mention since it centres the Parish of the same name.

The settlement is centred upon the St Michael the Archangel Church. 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 southwest of the village and the whole area is within the High Weald NL.



Ponts Green is within Ashburnham Parish 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

Parish: Rye Foreign

Estimated Population: 68

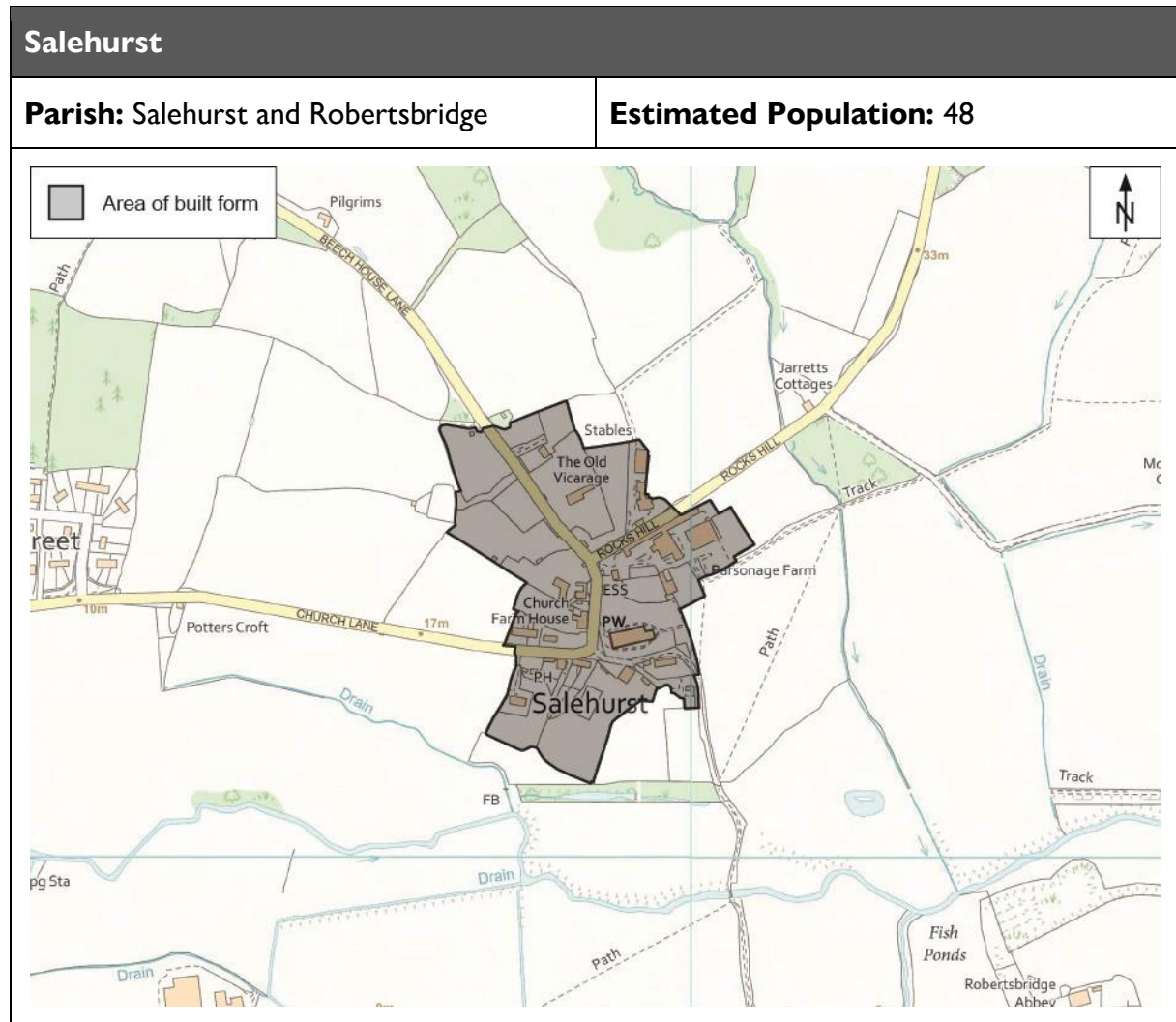


The settlement is principally linear in pattern with the majority of the dwellings located on the north side of the A268, approximately 5km north-west of Rye.

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 Peasmarsh.

The village and the surrounding Countryside are within the High Weald NL. Many of the nearby tracts of woodland are designated as Ancient Woodland.



Salehurst is a small historic village, located approximately 2.5km northeast 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 NL.

The Pound

Parish: Ashburnham & Penhurst

Estimated Population: 17



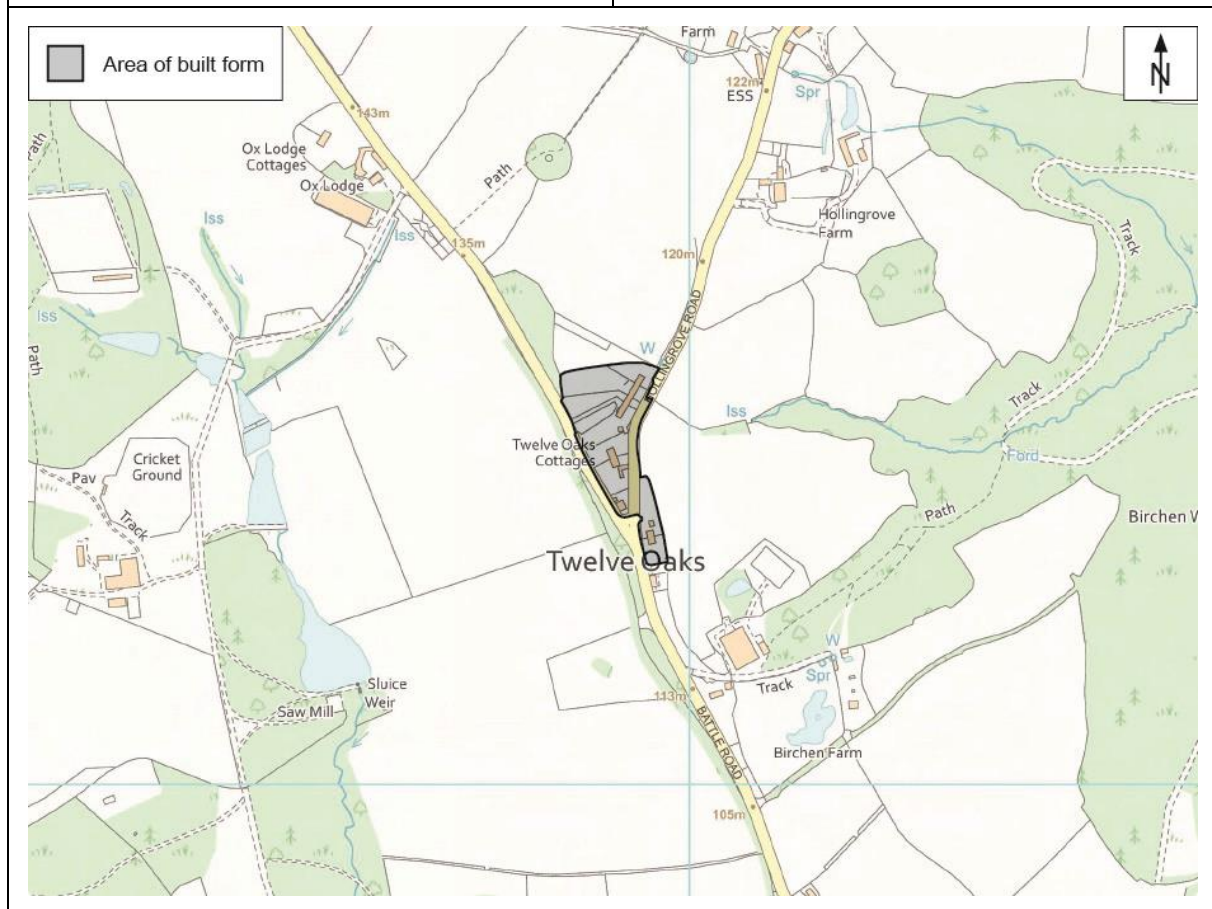
The Pound is a very small settlement comprised of some seven dwellings.

It is within the High Weald NL and Ashburnham parish. The historic Ashburnham Place and Ashburnham Church are nearby to the east.

Twelve Oaks

Parish: Brightling

Estimated Population: 26



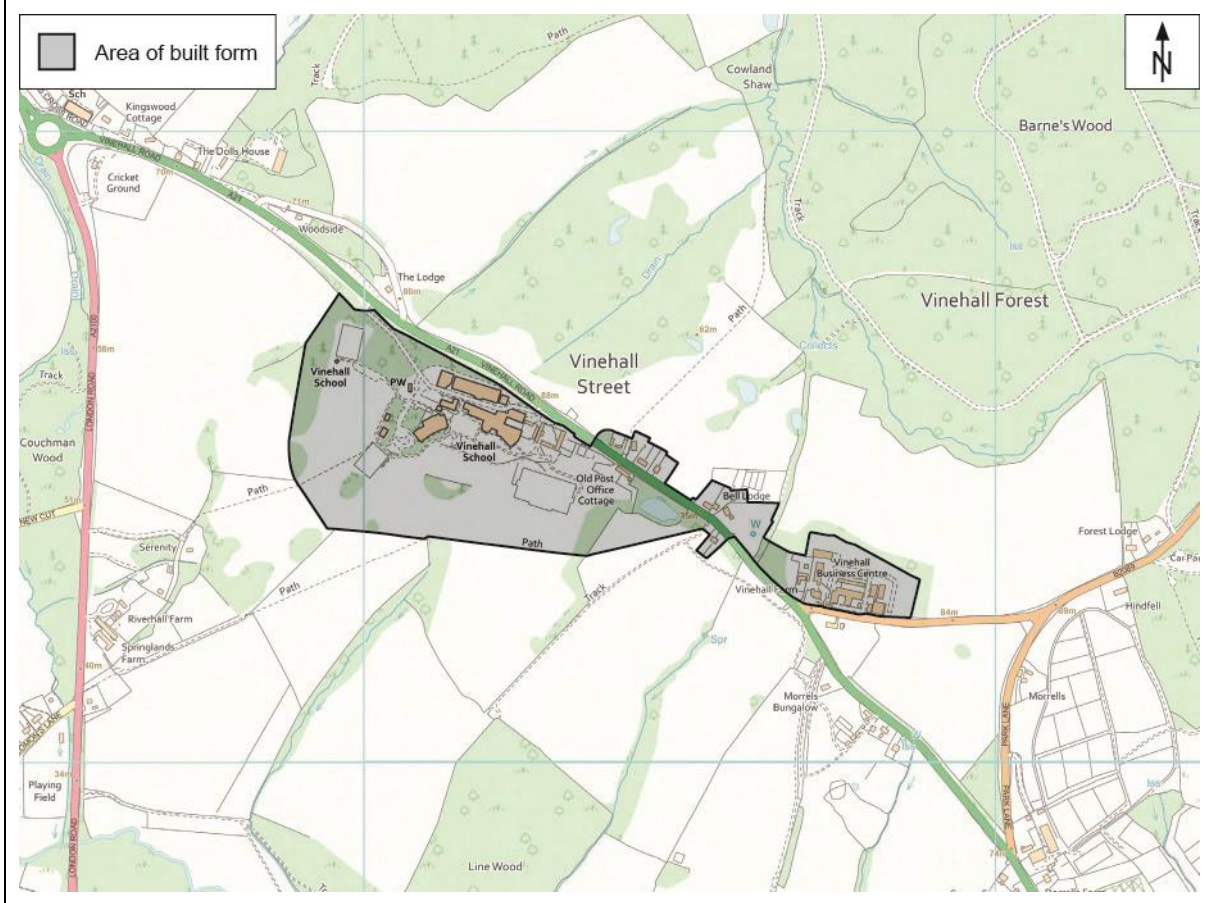
Twelve Oaks is located southwest of Brightling in the heart of the Darwell Valley. Politically it is within Brightling Parish and Darwell ward. The majority of buildings are listed for their historic importance. There are no services to speak of and residents are obliged to rely on Netherfield, Battle 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

Parish: Mountfield

Estimated Population: 65



Vinehall Street is a very small settlement in the east of Mountfield parish, comprising a handful of dwellings, the Vinehall Business Centre and the Vinehall Preparatory School. It is located on the A21 about 1km south of Johns Cross and is linear in form. Robertsbridge is the nearest larger village, some 3.5km further up the A21 to the north.

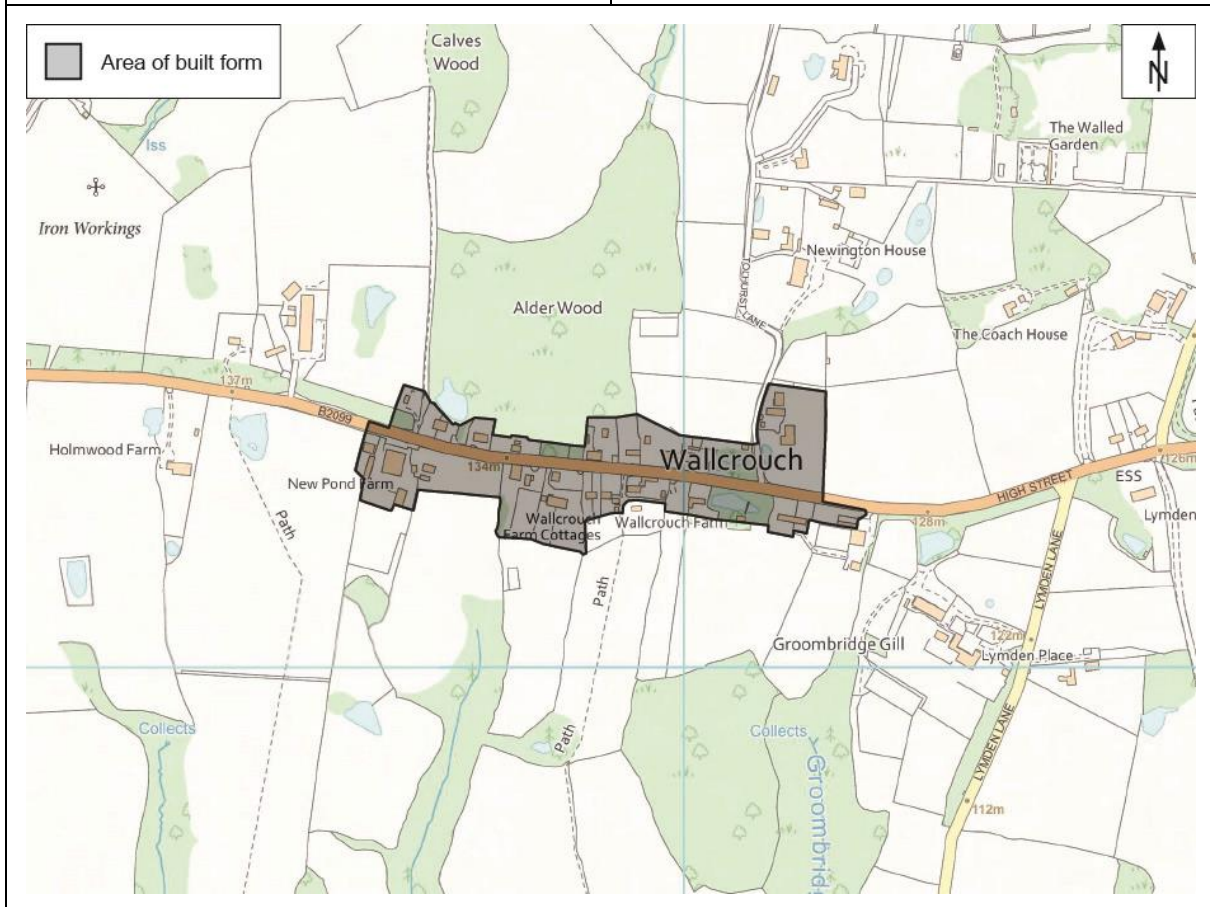
It is within the High Weald NL and Mountfield parish.

There are no services or facilities within walking distance of the settlement, other than the private Vinehall preparatory school.

Wallcrouch

Parish: Ticehurst

Estimated Population: 78



Wallcrouch is a small rural hamlet in the north of the district. It sits on the B2099, approximately one mile west of Ticehurst village.

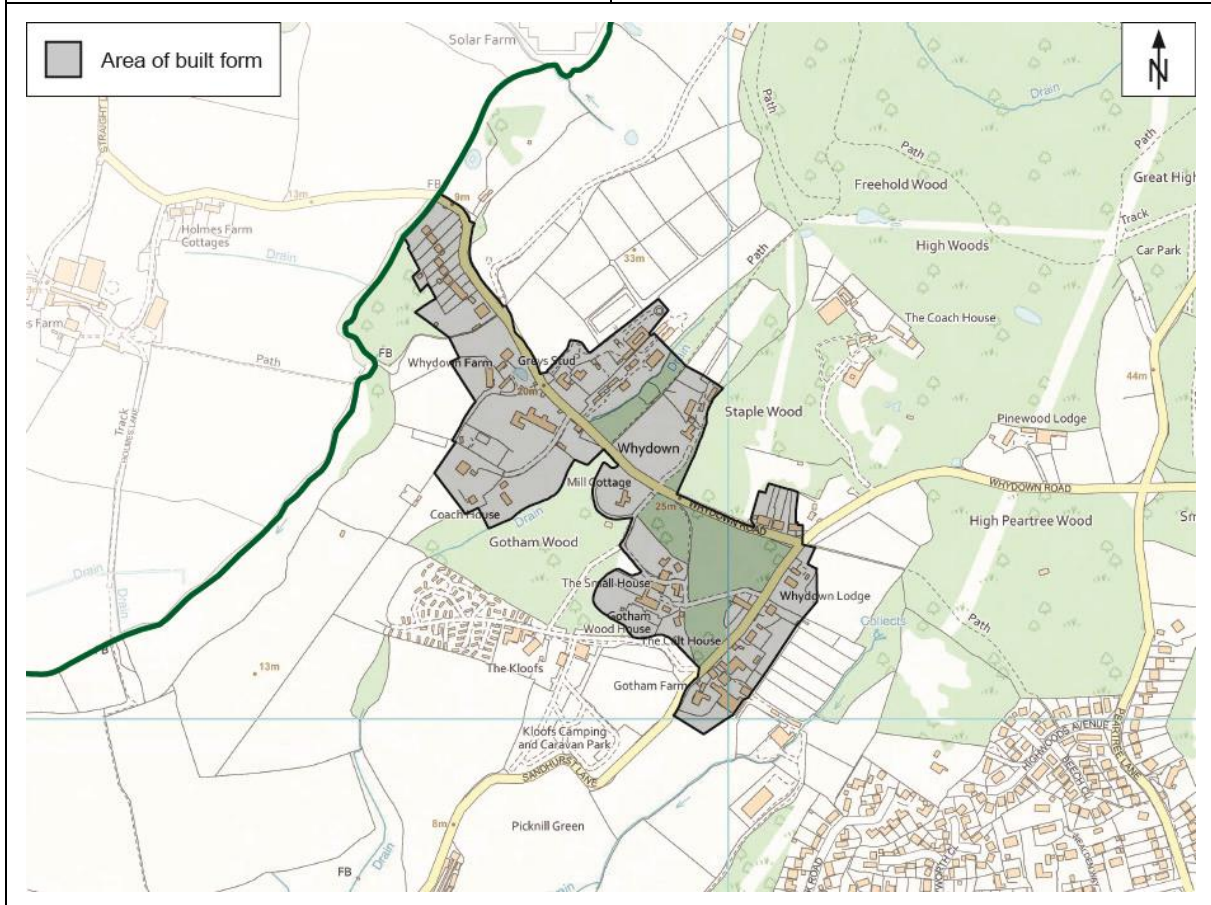
It is within the High Weald NL and Ticehurst parish.

There are no services and facilities within the settlement, or within walking distance, though it does contain a good-sized trade/DIY store.

Whydown

Parish: Bexhill

Estimated Population: 90



Whydown is small settlement to the northwest of Bexhill and is composed mainly of large, detached houses on generously sized plots.

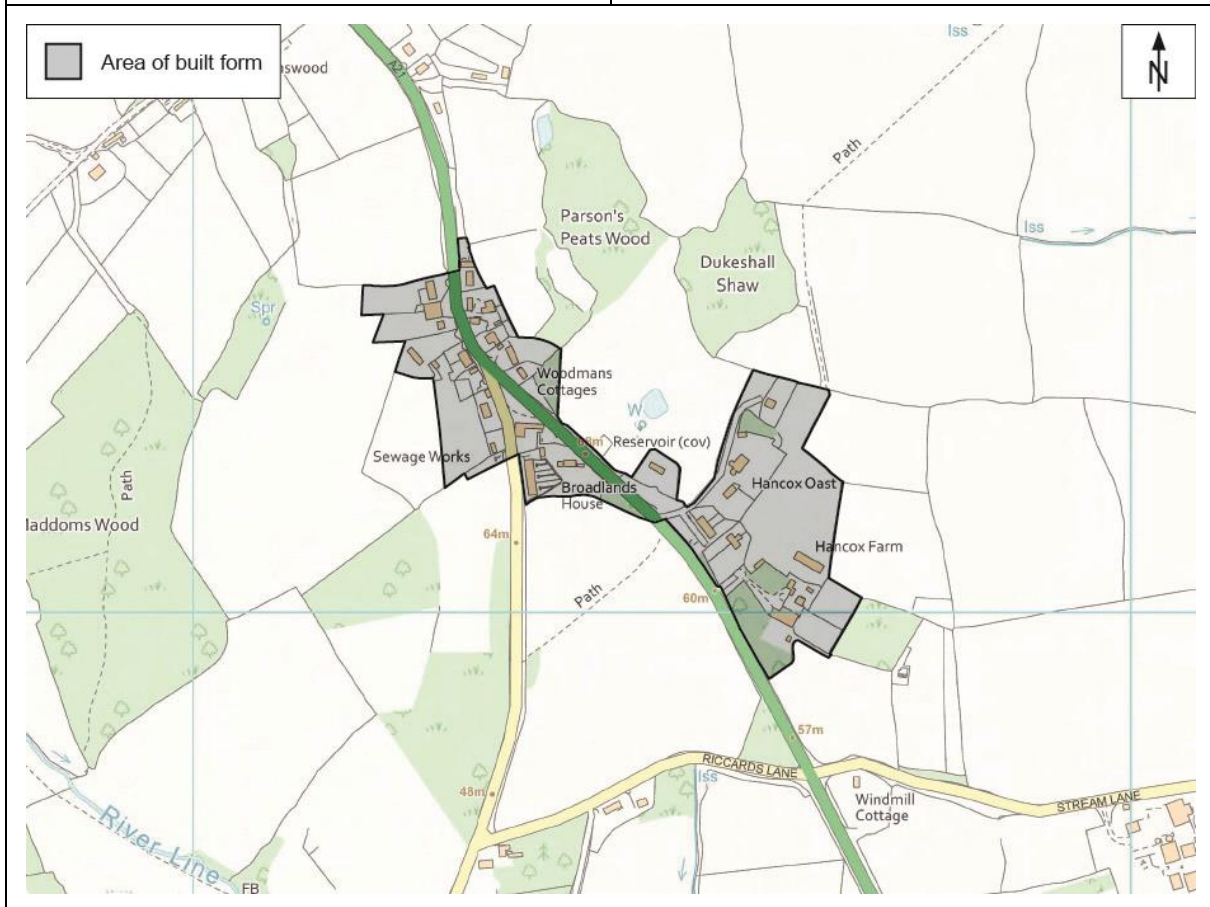
Despite its proximity to Bexhill, it has a secluded, rural feel, predominantly due to the large amount of woodland in and around the settlement.

The Highwoods SSSI and Ancient Woodland bounds the settlement to the east and Wealden District bounds it to the west. A caravan park can be found just to the south.

Woodman's Green

Parish: Whatlington

Estimated Population: 95



Woodman's Green is a small hamlet on the A21, situated on the junction with Whatlington Road, approximately one mile north of Whatlington village.

It is within the High Weald NL and Whatlington parish.

There is a pub/restaurant and a small garage within the settlement. Whatlington Parish Church, Whatlington village hall and the Leeford Place Hotel are within walking distance to the south.



Rother District Council

Town Hall
London Road
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex
TN39 3JX