

Hurst Green Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2028

Referendum Version

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FOREWORD

Hurst Green has been galvanised by the neighbourhood planning process. The Parish Council is grateful for the contributions of the hundreds of residents and stakeholders who provided feedback as this plan was developed - filling in surveys, contributing evidence, taking part in policy workshops, and attending public meetings and an exhibition.

The Council wish to thank the volunteers and Councillors who freely gave their time to the preparation of the plan, and to the professional advisors who supported the work, principally funded by grants from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Set within beautiful countryside, the district of Rother, of which Hurst Green is located, is entirely within the High Weald National Landscape (formally called the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Naturally, residents are concerned that as there are no available housing sites for development within Hurst Green itself, that there is no alternative within Rother District Council's Core Strategy, except to extend the existing development boundary to accommodate new housing development. To compensate for this and to mitigate against this loss, the community has articulated through this plan, the desire to designate valued green spaces and the need to create new accessible public green space.

Evidence gathering has shown that road safety concerns, and that of noise and pollution are high on the list of issues residents want to see addressed. This is closely followed by a need to improve the general aesthetics of our residential areas, addressing antisocial behaviour, particularly in the park, and to address inconsiderate vehicle parking throughout the village.

Along with ideas for positive design themes, such as introducing parking for homes that were built decades before car use was widespread, as well as tackling several decades of poor planning decisions, historical lacklustre housing design and poor area master planning. The plan takes an objective view, which when looking across the parish, it's clear that the same rules and regulations designed to control housing development, have effectively stopped the natural expansion of the parish, and could be limiting our economic prosperity.

Councillors understand that not everyone will support everything in this plan – in particular, neither the Neighbourhood Plan or the Parish Council has any jurisdiction over the much-needed major infrastructure projects which Hurst Green requires, or any control of the housing development numbers set by successive Governments. That said, from the evidence gathered, there is a local need for additional affordable and market housing for those already here, and we believe that as a community those who wish to move to our area should be welcomed, so that they can enjoy the benefits of our parish and countryside living.

Building on local resident feedback around strengthening our community, it is our hope that existing and new residents will start a new chapter in the development of Hurst Green, supporting the community projects which will be needed to deliver on the aspirations outlined within this plan and detailed within the *Vision for Hurst Green* document.

The policies and themes within the plan provide a clear vision for the future of Hurst Green, and will provide both strong foundations, and the financial boost needed for additional recreational facilities in the parish. The plan's content supports Rother District Council's desire outlined in their emerging local plan, to "Live Well Locally".

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Hurst Green Parish Council has developed this Neighbourhood Plan for the entire parish, which is located within the High Weald National Landscape, and comprises the settlements of Hurst Green, Silver Hill, Swiftsden, and the rural areas beyond. It sets out planning and land-use policies for the parish to cover the period 2021 to 2028 and, once 'made', will form part of the local development plan for Rother District, complementing the adopted Rother District Council Local Plan documents, which are currently being reviewed and will be superseded by the [emerging Rother Local Plan](#).
- 1.2 Rother District Council, as the local planning authority, designated the neighbourhood area, which matches the parish boundary, on 8th June 2017. Figure 1.1 provides a map to show this. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared under the leadership of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, a Working Group of the Parish Council, and in consultation with the local community, local businesses, statutory and non-statutory consultees, and Rother District Council.
- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan presents a vision for the future of Hurst Green and how that will be realised through planning land use and development change over the plan period 2021 to 2028. The planning policies will be used to provide strict guidance to any interested parties, in particular to those wishing to submit planning applications for development within the parish and to those determining the outcome.
- 1.5 Plan Policies are presented in **blue** boxes and it is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed.
- 1.6 Each policy is accompanied by a description of its purpose, a justification as to why it is required and guidance on how to apply it. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with its supporting text and with reference to the evidence documents that have been compiled to underpin the Plan.
- 1.7 In addition to the policies, the Neighbourhood Plan identifies community aspirations that cannot be addressed through the planning system, but which are nevertheless important to the well-being of the community and development of the parish of Hurst Green. These are set out in the document, [Vision for 2030](#), and it is proposed that activities to support them would be undertaken by a range of organisations, including the Parish Council.
- 1.8 The Plan also sets out the Community Infrastructure Priorities to which any future developer contributions should be allocated and proposes a framework for the monitoring of the Plan.

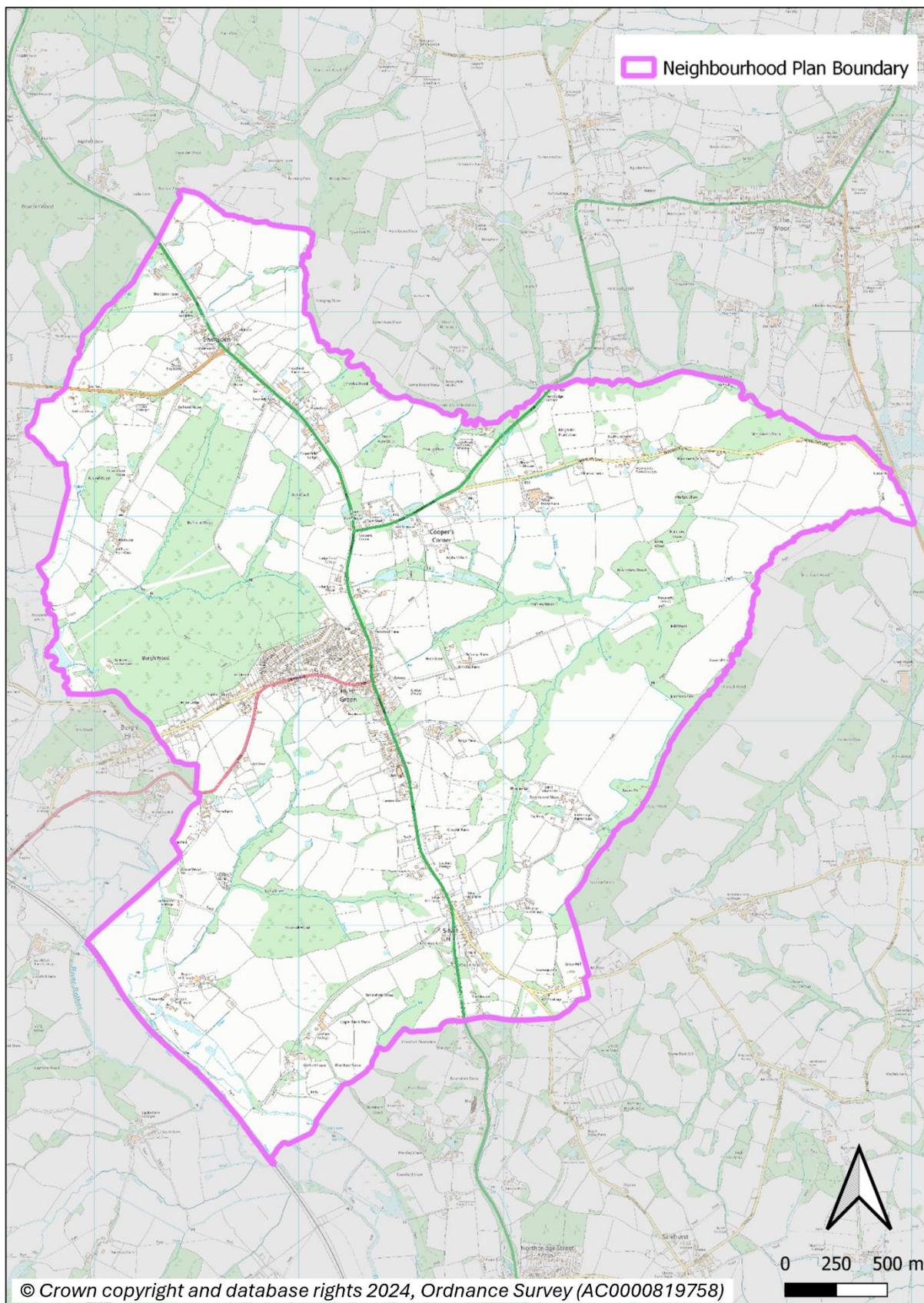


Figure 1.1: Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan designated area

The Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

1.9 The Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states at paragraphs 30 and 31:

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.

Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies (Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area).

Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.

1.10 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Hurst Green Parish Council and has been submitted to Rother District Council, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July 2021, and revised in December 2023, December 2024 and February 2025.

Local Planning Policy

1.11 The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local development plan which, for Rother District, comprises the following:

- Part 1: the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2014)
- Part 2: the Rother Development and Site Allocations Plan (DaSA) (adopted 2019): The following DaSA policies are strategic: DHG1, DHG2 as they supersede CS policies LHN2 and LHN3 respectively, and DEN3, DEC3 and HAS1. The remainder are non-strategic policies.
- The saved policies in the Local Plan 2006 that were not replaced by the Core Strategy or the DaSA: The 2006 policies are not classed as strategic/non-strategic as they preceded the NPPF which sets this out as a requirement of Local Plans. Not all of the saved policies are strategic.

1.12 Rother District Council is currently developing a new Local Plan for the district, which will set out the spatial strategy to 2040 for the distribution and development of new homes, employment and supporting infrastructure across Rother, whilst protecting the valued natural and historic environment. As this is some way from completion, while the Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformance with the Draft Local Plan 2020-2040, the adopted Rother Local Planning documents have provided the strategic framework for this Neighbourhood Plan.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan

1.13 Hurst Green parish falls wholly within the High Weald National Landscape, formally called the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (often referred to as an AONB). Local authorities with land in a National Landscape are legally obliged under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to produce a Management Plan. The [High Weald Management Plan 2024-2029](#) is used to guide environmental land management and to assess the impact of development or other changes on the AONB.

1.14 The objectives of the High Weald Management Plan have been considered in the development of this Neighbourhood Plan, as has the advice contained in the [High Weald Housing Design Guide](#).

Community engagement

1.15 From the beginning, work on the Neighbourhood Plan has been guided by the need to engage as widely as possible with the local community. A wide variety of engagement activities has been carried out including workshops, surveys, public meetings, letters, posters, leafleting and articles in the parish newsletter, *the Hurst* delivered to every household.

1.16 The group has also maintained an active [website](#) and social-media presence. These activities are described in the Consultation Statement that has been submitted alongside the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 1.2 below summarises the timeline of key activities.

Date	Milestone	Key activities
2017	Parish Council decides to develop a plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for undertaking the Plan Community engagement activity to understand the aspirations for the area
2018 - 2020	Evidence collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local engagement Evidence Surveys
2021	Draft Plan created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional evidence and surveys Housing sites and landscape assessments Local consultation on informal draft Plan and potential sites for inclusion
2022	Draft Plan completed Formal consultation on the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local engagement Ongoing engagement with Rother District Council Finalising the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulation 14 consultation
2023	Consultation on the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local engagement
2024	Formal consultation on the Plan Referendum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local engagement Policy refinement with Rother District Council Regulation 16 consultation Examination Referendum

Figure 1.2: Key engagement activity timeline

1.17 In addition to community involvement, discussions with Officers from both Rother District Council and the High Weald National Landscape Unit have taken place as the Neighbourhood Plan has evolved. In addition, communication has taken place with businesses, local groups and neighbouring parishes.

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.18 A screening opinion as to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitats Regulations Assessment was requested by the Parish Council in 2018, and given the passage of time, again in 2024. A consultation with Rother District Council, Historic England, the Environment Agency, and Natural England determined that an SEA should be undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, notably because the Plan proposed the allocation of housing sites; the area falls wholly within the High Weald National Landscape, formally called the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); and as there are a significant number of heritage assets within the parish.
- 1.19 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has therefore been developed alongside the Neighbourhood Plan, to inform the development of appropriate policies. The conclusion of the SEA finds that the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant environmental effects either individually or cumulatively.
- 1.20 The Screening Determination Statement and SEA can be found in the evidence base.

2 ABOUT HURST GREEN

- 2.1 Located in East Sussex, in the northern part of Rother District, adjacent to the county border with Kent, approximately 1,200 people live within the parish of Hurst Green across 622 households (source: 2021 census).
- 2.2 The parish of Hurst Green comprises of Hurst Green village itself, as well as the hamlets of Silver Hill and Swiftsden, and the surrounding rural area.
- 2.3 The entire parish is within the High Weald National Landscape (formally called the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), and its character reflects one of scattered farmsteads, woodlands, many of which are ancient, small and irregular-shaped fields.
- 2.4 Before the Norman conquest, Hurst Green was part of the parish of Salehurst, however at the time few people lived in the area. The village of Hurst Green started expanding in the 1890's, by the 1930's, the local population had increased to around 600 people.
- 2.5 Until the middle of the twentieth century the village was still largely self-sufficient, with several hotels and pubs, two butchers, a slaughterhouse, a baker, a dairy, fishmonger-poulterer, four grocers, sweet shops, a newsagent, cobblers, tailors, a doctor and a vet, a foundry, blacksmith, plumber's shop, builder's yard, coal yard, a furniture and wireless shop, a cycle shop, laundry, and a once-a-week bank.
- 2.6 By the 1980's many of these local businesses had closed, and today the parish has relatively few shops and few public amenities. In particular there is no supermarket, chemist, doctor or dentist.
- 2.7 Residents are highly dependent on vehicles to reach the neighbouring service villages of Hawkhurst and Robertsbridge, and to a lesser degree Etchingham, which has a direct, but relatively slow train service to Tunbridge Wells, Hastings and London.
- 2.8 Walking and cycling within the parish are heavily constrained by both geography and existing poor road design. None of the surrounding villages are connected to other settlements by pavements or cycle paths, with walking on the heavily used, unlit, and dangerous A-roads is neither practical or safe, effectively mandating the use of motor transport to get around. The 2011 census showed that just 8% of households in the parish had no access to a car (over three times less than the national average of 26%). Despite investment in local bus provision, car ownership in the parish has increased, the 2021 census showed that only 6.5% of households in the parish had no access to a car or van, and that over half (53.4%) of households had access to more than 1 car or van.
- 2.9 For many years employment within the parish was centred around the large estates of Iridge, Bernhurst and Boarzell, with many people being employed to work on the land and in associated activities.
- 2.10 Today, employment opportunities within the parish are limited, although an increasing number of residents are working from home, and there are several thriving businesses located in Swiftsden, as well as in Hurst Green village and in the rural parts of the parish.
- 2.11 Further information about the Parish, including on the economy, health and demographics, can be found in the [Hurst Green Parish Profile](#), prepared by East Sussex County Council.

3 A VISION FOR HURST GREEN

Challenges and opportunities facing the parish

3.1 As a community, the following challenges have been identified that the Plan seeks to address:

- The need to balance growth (housing and employment) with reducing adverse environmental impact and preserving local character and landscape features.
- A shortage of family-sized homes and homes that are affordable.
- The difficulties posed by the busy route of the A21 (London Road), which effectively cuts the village in half, making movement by foot and bike challenging.
- Adapting and providing for an aging population and improving health and wellbeing.
- The picturesque backdrop and proximity to visitor attractions, which could attract visitors to stay in Hurst Green.
- A desire to improve the aesthetics of the village and wider parish.
- The lack of a central focal point in Hurst Green village, with facilities scattered across the settlement.
- The desire to support existing businesses, and provide space for those working from home, in the parish, as well as attracting new ones.
- The lack of space for car parking, particularly for homes designed and built before the widespread use of cars.
- A desire to solve the connectivity issues between Hurst Green and Silver Hill and to neighbouring service villages.
- A desire to improve walking and cycling opportunities, but the limited opportunities to do so.
- A desire to improve the range of local amenities and recreational facilities available to residents.

Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

3.2 Using the feedback from resident surveys and from the public engagement events held throughout 2018 and 2019, a vision and key aims for the plan were developed. To ensure the vision remained current, it was regularly referred to and reviewed throughout the plan creation process.

The community vision for the parish of Hurst Green is:

Health and Happiness

Hurst Green will become a thriving, safe and friendly village within the High Weald, along with the hamlets of Swiftsden and Silver Hill, which foster a healthy lifestyle and encourage residents to live active, social, and meaningful lives.

Business, Economy and Tourism

We will strongly support local prosperity and will create a thriving village community that supports existing and new local businesses, and seeks to boast a prosperous, well-presented village, where people want to live, work and visit.

Housing

We will support sustainable and landscape-sensitive housing development that enables us to deliver on our vision and objectives, developing the facilities that are needed to address the current and future needs of our community.

Travel and Transport

We will support proposals that help to create an environment that will encourage walking, cycling and low carbon transport over car-use, particularly for shorter journeys in and around the Parish improving both physical and mental wellbeing. We will also work with partners to explore ways to reduce the impact of the A21 on the parish.

Land and Nature

We will go to great lengths to protect and promote our outstanding natural environment and will seek to improve access to the countryside and our nearby green spaces, restoring land for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan objectives were developed in a similar way to the vision. To help guide policy development and to ensure these remained current, the objectives were regularly referred to and reviewed throughout the plan creation process.

The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

- 1) To protect against inappropriate and speculative development and to provide guidance and greater influence over how Hurst Green should be developed in the future. This includes ensuring that new homes meet the particular needs of the local community.**
- 2) To promote opportunities for more sustainable modes of travel in and around the Parish, whilst exploring ways to minimise the impacts of the A21, particularly through the village.**
- 3) To create an environment that encourages residents to live active, social, and meaningful lives that promote good health and well-being. This includes bringing forward action on facilities and improvements, which are needed by the village of Hurst Green; and the hamlets of Silver Hill and Swiftsden.**
- 4) To improve the visual appearance and overall perception of Hurst Green as a place where people want to live, work and visit. This includes conserving and enhancing the built and historic environment and improving the general street scene around the parish.**
- 5) To enhance our existing, and create new, open green spaces and improve access to the countryside. This includes identifying ways to support and enhance biodiversity.**
- 6) To increase business, retail and tourism opportunities to encourage local employment, and to grow the local economy.**

4 SPATIAL STRATEGY

Policy HG1: Location of development

Purpose

4.1 Policy HG1 seeks to ensure that any development within Hurst Green parish is directed to the most appropriate, sustainable locations, where its impact on the natural and historic environment can be minimised and sprawl and coalescence with the settlement of Etchingham avoided. In addition, it identifies the sites to be allocated to meet the housing numbers required by Rother District Council, as set out in the Core Strategy 2014 and the Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) 2019.

Justification

4.2 Residents strongly value the special landscape within which Hurst Green is located and are keen to safeguard its many natural and historic features against inappropriate development. This means retaining the rural nature of the Parish's settlements – in terms of size and character - and avoiding coalescence between Hurst Green village and Etchingham village to the west, and the hamlet of Swiftsden to the north.

4.3 There is a recognition that the Parish needs to accommodate a certain degree of growth to ensure the ongoing vitality of the settlements, to meet local housing needs and to contribute to Rother District Council's strategic housing, economic growth and employment targets. Indeed Hurst Green has been provided by Rother District Council with a target of 75 new homes to accommodate through its neighbourhood plan policies.

4.4 Hurst Green village is the only settlement in the parish that has a development boundary, which was defined in the 2006 Local Plan. The expectation is that any development should be directed to within this boundary or adjacent to it, unless it is appropriate for a countryside location, as defined in Rother District Council Policy RA3 and Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan Policy HG16. Such uses include Rural Exception Sites, to meet a proven need, and development to support agricultural and tourism uses.

4.5 There are several smaller settlements in the parish, including Silver Hill and Swiftsden. Whilst not promoted as general locations for development, where a particular need is demonstrated – for instance for affordable housing, recreational space or the extension of existing uses – these would be supported, where they can be undertaken sensitively and in line with the policies of the Development Plan. The emphasis in settlements should be development restraint and the retention of services, as set out in the Rother District Council Rural Settlements Study (p.112).

4.6 This approach is also supported by the evidence contained in the Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment prepared by Rother District Council in 2009, which demonstrates that Hurst Green has low to no capacity beyond the settlement boundaries. This was also the conclusion of the Hurst Green High Level Landscape Report, 2020.

4.7 Policy HG1 proposes an amendment of the development boundary to encompass the sites that already have been delivered since the Local Plan was adopted, have planning permission, or which are allocated in this Neighbourhood Plan.

- 4.8 Any additional windfall development (housing sites of fewer than six dwellings) or development proposals should also be located within this boundary outlined within Policy HG1, other than in exceptional circumstances where the development meets the strict criteria set out within Policy HG1 which would allow for new dwellings in the countryside.
- 4.9 The extent of the new development boundary and the location of the sites are shown in Figure 4.1. Note that the development boundary extends beyond the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan into neighbouring Etchingham parish. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will only apply to development proposals within the Hurst Green neighbourhood area.

- Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Existing Development Boundary
- Proposed Extension to the Development Boundary
- Sites with planning permission
- Sites allocated in the HGNP

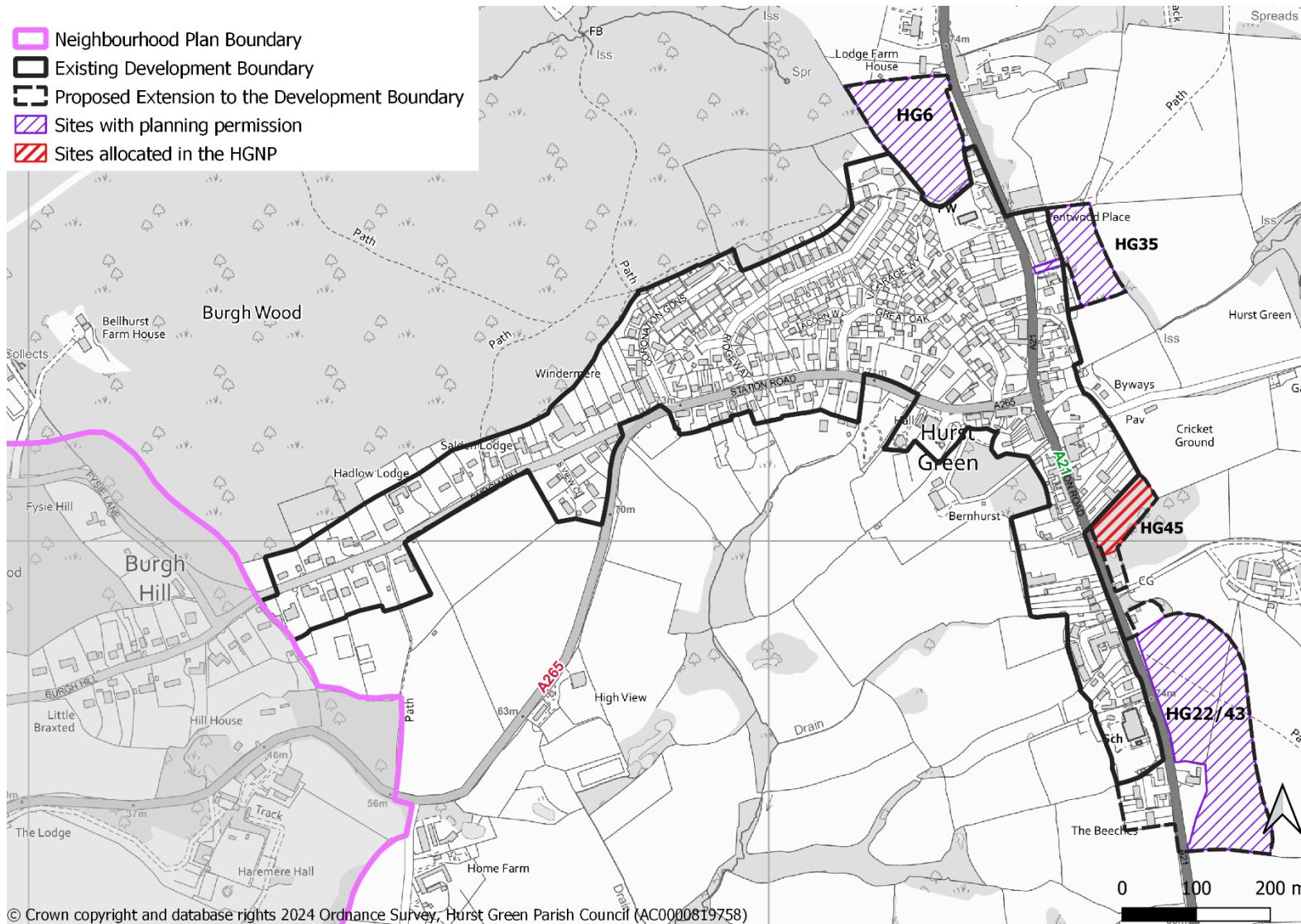


Figure 4.1: Development boundary for Hurst Green village

POLICY HG1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

- A. Development in Hurst Green parish shall be focused within the development boundary as shown in Figure 4.1.**
- B. Development proposals outside the development boundary will be strictly controlled in the interests of conserving the nationally important landscape of the High Weald National Landscape and will be supported where:**
 - i. it is in accordance with the development plan policies on appropriate uses in the countryside; or
 - ii. it allows for small-scale infill and redevelopment to enable local needs for housing and community facilities to be met;
 - iii. the development brings redundant or vacant agricultural/farm buildings or historic buildings of heritage value back into optimal beneficial use in a manner that does not cause significant harm to the High Weald National Landscape; or
 - iv. supports the development of tourism in a manner that does not cause significant harm to the High Weald National Landscape; or
 - v. it relates to necessary utility infrastructure; or
 - vi. it is on sites allocated for those uses in the adopted development plan.
- C. Development that would be visually intrusive when viewed from publicly accessible locations, or where it is at odds with the character, identity and history of the local context of the site, will not be supported unless mitigated with significant, maintainable and appropriate native landscape screening.**
- D. Proposed developments on redundant brownfield land will be supported.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 1; Core Strategy: OSS2, OSS3, EN1, EN3, LHN3, RA1, RA2, RA3; DaSA: DEN2, DIM2, DHG2; High Weald Management Plan: S2; NPPF: 7, 8, 11, 12, 13-14, 17-18, 73, 20, 86, 87, 130, 131, 132, 189

5 HOUSING REQUIREMENTS AND STRATEGY

Policy HG2: Housing Strategy

Purpose

5.1 Policy HG2 sets out the housing strategy for Hurst Green, to meet the required housing allocation set by Rother District Council.

Justification

5.2 The adopted Rother District Council Core Strategy seeks to deliver at least 5,700 net new dwellings between 2011 and 2028, with 1,670 of these to be delivered in the villages of the district. To determine how this village figure should be split, the 2013 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) assessed the sites put forward for consideration through the district Call for Sites in each of the parishes. For Hurst Green Parish, Rother District Council identified that there was scope to deliver 75 dwellings, excluding any windfall development (housing sites of fewer than 6 dwellings).

5.3 Rather than allowing Rother District Council to allocate the location for housing development, Rother District Council's Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan allows parishes who have elected both to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and to make housing allocations to do so. Not all parishes are writing a Neighbourhood Plan and, in these cases, the DaSA allocates housing sites. The work to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan has included consideration of sites to meet this identified housing target, using the 2013 SHLAA as a starting point. Given the length of time that has passed since the 2013 SHLAA and the DaSA housing site review, Hurst Green Parish Council also undertook a local call for sites and commissioned further research into local housing needs and a reassessment of potential housing sites by consultancy AECOM and other qualified professionals. The relevant Housing Documents are available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan website.

5.4 Extensive work concluded that five potential housing sites (HG 6, HG 11, HG 22/43, HG 40 and HG 45) were available and were assessed as being potentially suitable for housing development, all subject to constraints, largely relating to landscape.

5.5 All of the potential housing sites are located outside the 2006-defined development boundary, so it has been necessary to consider which combination of sites (if any) might be the most sustainable from primarily an ecological and landscape perspective and also from a social perspective in terms of any community benefits a given site might provide.

5.6 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) prepared alongside the Neighbourhood Plan by professional consultancy, AECOM, has assessed the potential impacts of each of the sites individually and cumulatively. It also included an assessment of a possible site in Silver Hill, in case this should be considered suitable as a rural exception site in the future.

5.7 Bearing in mind that three housing sites: Site HG 6, London Road (North), accommodating 26 dwellings, Site HG 35, Foundry Close (accommodating 20 dwellings), and Site HG 22/43, Land off London Road (accommodating 28 dwellings) have already received planning approval outside of the Neighbourhood Planning process, the target figure of 75 dwellings needing to be identified by the Neighbourhood

Plan, as set by Rother District Council to meet the Core Strategy target of 75 dwellings, is reduced to 1 dwelling.

- 5.8 Work on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), alongside a high-level landscape assessment, a town-scape study and feedback from the local community, led to HG 6, HG 11, and HG 22/43 being allocated for development in the regulation 14 version of the neighbourhood plan.
- 5.9 Following additional consultation with residents of Burgh Hill in 2023 and 2024, and the submission of an outline planning application relating to the possible HG 11 site, the Parish Council has decided to remove site HG 11 from the submission version of the neighbourhood plan, principally as the site, as proposed in the outline planning application would not deliver any benefit to the community, a key objective of the plan.
- 5.10 The HGNP allocates for 74 dwellings. This includes the 20 dwellings to be delivered at Foundry Close (HG 35), 26 dwellings to be delivered London Road north (HG 6), and a further 28 dwellings at London Road south (HG 22/43), as shown in the table below:

	Allocation figure	Existing commitments	Dwellings
Hurst Green village	75 dwellings	HG 35* HG 6* HG 22/43*	20 dwellings 26 dwellings 28 dwellings
TOTAL	74 dwellings		74 dwellings

** Sites HG22/43, HG 35 and HG 6 have already been approved by Rother District Council*

- 5.11 In addition to these allocations, as it would offer a new pedestrian access to Drewetts Sports Ground the Neighbourhood Plan allocates Site HG 45: Land Adjacent to Iridge Place for approximately 4 dwellings. Including the HG 45 site, the HGNP is allocating a total of 78 dwellings.
- 5.12 Housing growth is to be accommodated in a sensitive landscape-led way and the strategy for the individual housing sites is articulated in more detail in Section 11 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

POLICY HG2: HOUSING STRATEGY

Over the period 2021 to 2028, in addition to consents that pre-date this Plan, new residential development of approximately 58 dwellings will be accommodated on the land now allocated as below, with the detail provided in and in accordance with the related Policy as referenced:

- **Site HG 45: Land Adjacent to Iridge Place (Policy HGSA4) – 4 dwellings**
- **Site HG6: Land north of London Road – 26 dwellings**
- **Site HG22/43: Land south of London Road – 28 dwellings**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 1; Core Strategy: OSS1, OSS2, RA1, DHG9, DHG10; DaSA: DIM2; High Weald Management Plan: PQ2, LBE2; NPPF:12, 13-14, 17-18, 65, 71, 73, 74, 75, 20, 86

Policy HG3: Meeting local housing needs

Purpose

5.13 Policy HG3 seeks to ensure that new housing development in Hurst Green contributes to the identified local housing need.

Justification

5.14 Housing mix, in terms of dwelling size, type and tenure, is an important issue in Hurst Green. The parish profile, based on Census figures, shows that Hurst Green parish has a higher than district average number of younger adults (aged 25 to 44) and children (aged under 15), indicating that it is popular with families. The combination of landscape, a good local school, easy car access to nearby towns and to the railway station at Etchingham, and lower than average house prices, have contributed to this.

5.15 The high number of older adults and teenagers in the parish would suggest that families tend to remain in the area. Nevertheless, the younger family demographic fell significantly between 2001 and 2011, which implies that fewer younger families have been moving in. Should this trend continue, it will lead to an older, aging demographic.

5.16 House prices in the parish are generally lower than in neighbouring settlements (rightmove.co.uk). There is a predominance of 3-bedroom homes, which tend to be popular among growing families. Findings from the Hurst Green Local Housing Demand Survey 2019 revealed that, in general, the community consider the type of housing in the area to be about right; 78% of households live in accommodation suitable for their needs. It is therefore useful to try to understand why the lower age demographic is falling; and why fewer younger people are moving to Hurst Green. The 2019 Local Housing Demand Survey prepared by the Parish Council reveals part of the answer, indicating that the issue may be less about housing availability and more about the extent to which the community views the area: 28% of households responded to say that the Hurst Green area was not their preferred place to live, the top reasons being: a) limited facilities, b) road noise / traffic and c) it being difficult to meet people and make friends. Overall, 33% of respondents were unhappy with the parish, and the issues identified were also routinely identified during the neighbourhood plan evidence gathering process.

5.17 Census data shows that the predominant type of home in the parish is detached, followed by semi-detached, although there are higher numbers of terraced houses than across Rother. More recently a large commercial property in Hurst Green village has been converted to approximately 30 flats. Properties are predominantly 3 or 4 bedrooms, with a significant proportion under-occupied. Whilst this, in conjunction with the reducing numbers of younger people, might indicate a need for smaller, more affordable dwellings with fewer bedrooms, in fact the Local Housing Demand Survey demonstrated that detached houses were in demand, of at least 2 bedrooms. Furthermore, the parish has a high number of people working from home, a figure that grew following the Covid-19 pandemic and changing ways of working. Therefore, it is possible that those people living in homes considered to be underoccupied are in fact utilising a spare bedroom(s) as office space.

- 5.18 Tenure-wise, most homes in Hurst Green parish are privately owned and whilst the number of affordable units has increased, the Local Housing Demand Survey reveals unfulfilled demand for both affordable homes and for private rental.
- 5.19 In addition to the Local Housing Demand Survey, a Local Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) for Hurst Green Parish was prepared for AECOM in 2019, which followed the government-endorsed methodology. The findings of this broadly align with the findings of the Hurst Green Local Housing Demands Survey.
- 5.20 The HNA found Hurst Green has a high rate of provision of specialist housing. The parish was also found, not unexpectedly, to be a less suitable place for significant further specialist housing provision. This is due to the parish's position in the settlement hierarchy, and its available facilities, including shopping and healthcare.
- 5.21 Households headed by older people (65 and over), while forming a significant proportion of households in Hurst Green at 26%, make up a smaller part of total households compared to across Rother District, where 41% of households are headed by someone aged 65 and older. Furthermore, the HNA found that Hurst Green has a lower than regional and national average proportion of disabled persons. However, it still recommended requiring a minimum measure of adaptability through policy.
- 5.22 The Parish Council intends to update the Hurst Green Local Housing Needs Assessment on a regular basis (every 3-5 years).
- 5.23 The Core Strategy states that in determining the appropriate housing mix within new developments, an assessment should be made within the context of the surrounding area, including the following:
 - Local tenure mix and whether there is a concentration of a particular tenure of housing that could benefit from diversification or greater choice;
 - Local household characteristics and whether there is a bias towards certain types of households;
 - Local economic performance and whether there are any issues around deprivation and regeneration which need to be taken into account; and
 - Site specific viability.
- 5.24 Policy HG3 sets out the expected housing mix for the neighbourhood area, based on the objective of securing affordable homes and delivering against the need identified in the Local Housing Demand Survey, which is updated periodically. There may be scope to deliver community-led housing sites and an action to explore opportunities for this is contained as a non-policy action. It is important that affordable housing is brought forward and provided in an integrated way alongside market housing, to support mixed and balanced sustainable communities.

5.25 First Homes have been introduced by the government as the preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:

- must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
- are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria;
- on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and
- after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000.

POLICY HG3: MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

- A. The mix of housing sizes, types, tenures and affordability in proposed development should assist in meeting needs identified in the most recently available Hurst Green Local Housing Needs Assessment and Local Housing Demand Survey as reasonably practicable and subject to viability considerations.**
- B. At least 25% of the affordable housing units must be delivered as First Homes, with priority given to those with a local connection (see Glossary) to Hurst Green Parish. An uplift to the minimum 30% discount required upon sale will be particularly supported to address the affordability gap evidenced in the Local Housing Needs Assessment.**
- C. To support mixed and balanced sustainable communities, housing proposals must deliver a mix of tenures in accordance with Policy DHG1 of the DaSA. Affordable homes must be well integrated with market housing. The type and size of affordable homes should meet the specific needs identified for the neighbourhood area.**
- D. Subject to the other policies of this plan, proposals for community-led housing projects, including self-build and co-operative housing, will be supported.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 1; Core Strategy: OSS1 (clause c), LHN1, LHN2, CO4, CO5, RA1; DaSA: DHG1, DHG6; DaSA: DHG1; High Weald Management Plan: LBE2; NPPF: 66-70

6 CHARACTER, HERITAGE, AND DESIGN

Policy HG4: Character of development

Purpose

- 6.1 The High Weald is one of the best-preserved medieval landscapes in North West Europe. The High Weald's Housing Design Guide describes the special features that contribute to its unique character: its underlying clay and sandstone geology, the historic settlements that have evolved over centuries, the routeways that connect those settlements, the abundance of woodland (much of which is ancient), and the patchwork of agricultural field and heath, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and that are typically used for livestock grazing, with distinctive areas of lowland heaths and river valleys.
- 6.2 Policy HG4 seeks to ensure that development proposals within Hurst Green parish reinforce this character – both from a landscape and villagescape perspective.

Justification

- 6.3 Hurst Green parish displays many features characteristic of the High Weald, including ancient woodland (at Burgh Wood and across the parish), scattered historic farmsteads and hamlets, a wealth of listed buildings and the main village itself, located at the confluence of a series of historic routeways. Furthermore, the numerous archaeological notification areas illustrate the rich heritage that exists locally (Archaeological Notification Areas [ANAs] are areas where there is evidence of archaeological remains).
- 6.4 The High Weald Housing Design Guide provides advice on how development should respond to local character, both built and natural, across the wider area. This involves more than simply reflecting the visual appearance of the current setting, rather it includes understanding how the landscape and its settlements have evolved and why the area is the way it is today. For Hurst Green, the guidance should be applied to any development proposals within the parish.
- 6.5 Rother District Council has also set out a series of Key Design Principles (p.198), which should inform development proposals:

- Character (Identity & Place-Making) & Legibility
- Continuity & Enclosure
- Quality of Public Realm & Ease of Movement
- Diversity
- Landscape Setting of Buildings and Settlements
- Design in Context
- Building Appearance & Architectural Quality
- Sustainable Design

- 6.6 For Hurst Green village itself, and to support the Neighbourhood Plan, the Hurst Green Design Codes (see Appendix A) document was commissioned in order to apply an additional, more local level of detail to the guidance contained in the AONB's Design Guidance. Five Character Areas have been identified, informed by the Hurst Green Design Codes, each of which are considered to possess their own, unique characteristics. These have been identified based on variables including each sharing similar coherent character and form, type and scale of development, and the presence of particular landscape features. These are mapped on Figure 6.1 and then summarised.

- 6.7 The built character across each Character Area ranges in style, age, size and housing density. For each Area to maintain its character, a balance needs to be struck between the scale, bulk, density and height of the built form and that of open green spaces and, where relevant, the wider countryside.
- 6.8 Furthermore, development must consider its impact on local heritage assets – both designated and non-designated – as well as the below-ground archaeological remains; much of central Hurst Green village is within an archaeological notification area (in particular London Road-Core) and there are other such areas across the other settlements too.
- 6.9 All development should be designed to be of high quality and to reinforce and enhance local character, heritage assets and the High Weald setting of the area. The density of development should create a character that is appropriate to the site's context, including the landscape in which it is set, whilst making best use of the land available. Lower density housing should be located towards the outer edges of the settlement where it abuts open countryside, to maintain views from and into the individual settlements.
- 6.10 New housing development should have regard to both the character of the area in which it is set and to the character of the area overall. Policy HG4 has a close relationship with Policy HG5 and Policy HG6, and development proposals should take account of each of these policies.
- 6.11 Furthermore, the National and Local List of Planning Application Requirements published by Rother as their Validation Checklist, should be consulted, for instance in respect of the requirement for heritage statements.

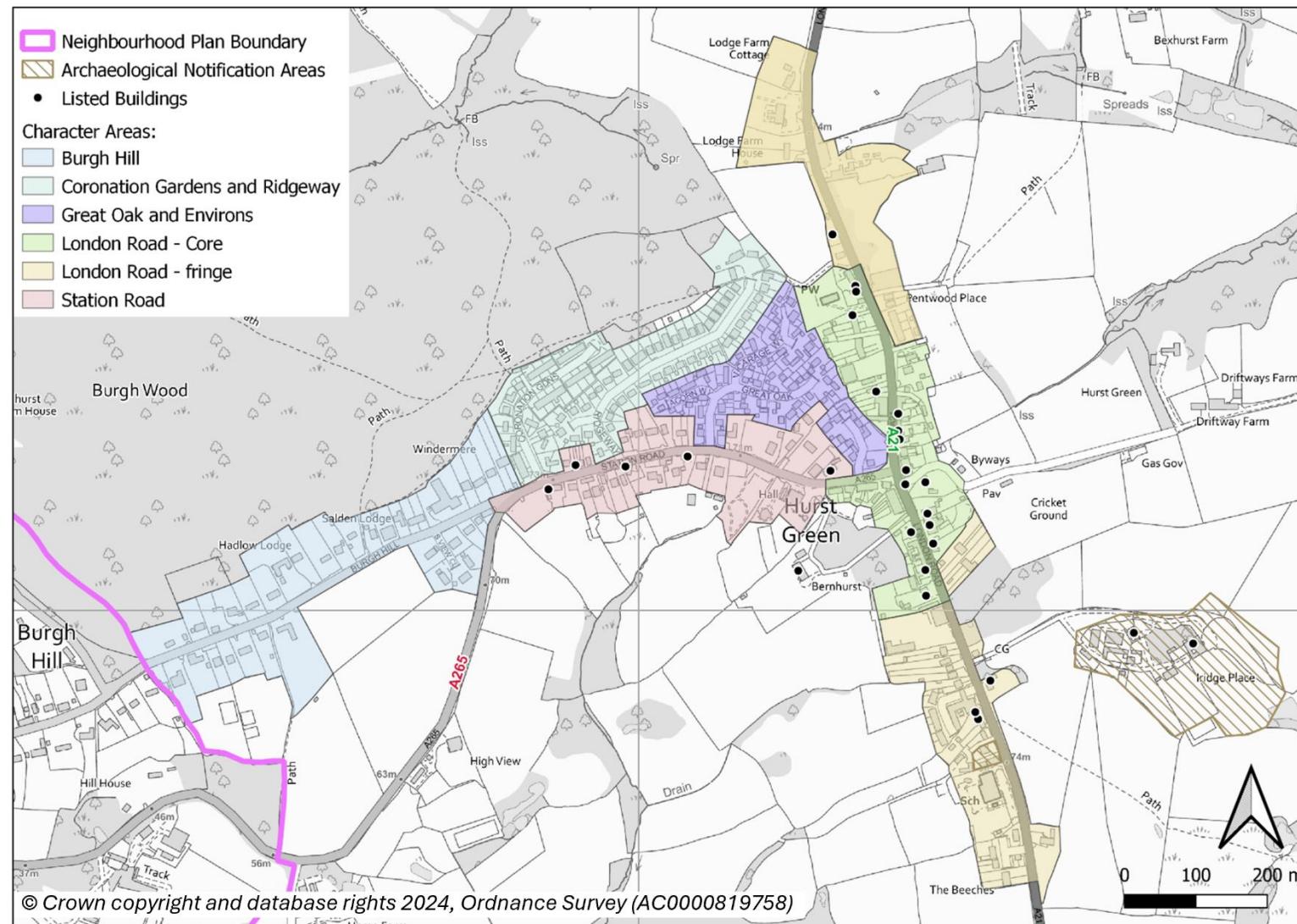


Figure 6.1: Character Areas within Hurst Green village

1. Station Road

In addition to housing, this area comprises of Lodge Field Children's Park, located in the eastern part of the character area, together with the village car-park and the Village Hall.

Key characteristics are:

- larger predominantly 2-storey detached brick buildings set back from the road within their own grounds, with subservient outbuildings.
- several Grade II listed buildings.
- good pedestrian environment with some public benches and footpaths on both sides of the road.



Station Road (A265)



Lodge Field Children's Park, Station Road



Station Road (A265)

2. London Road – Core

The historic core of Hurst Green, defined by the ribbon development along the A21 (London Road) and a row of terraces along Station Road.

Key characteristics are:

- London Road (the A21) suffers from traffic congestion at weekends and at peak times. The road carries a large volume of traffic and is a designated part of the UK's Strategic Road Network, connecting Rother District to London and the M25 motorway. The road creates a strong separation, dividing the village into its eastern and western part.
- Busy T-junction with the A21 / A265 at the western end of Station Road, and a staggered junction with the A265 / A21 / A229.
- Area comprises residential and non-residential buildings with a characteristic Grade II listed Old Court House with a feature clock tower.
- Pedestrian environment within this character area is mixed with narrow and congested footpaths to the southern side of Station Road and more generous footpaths along London Road.



Hurst Green Social Club at the Junction of Station Road (A265) / London Road (A21)



London Road (A21)

2A. London Road – Fringe

This area is of lower density than London Road – core.

Key characteristics are:

- Area comprises residential and non-residential buildings.
- Extensive landscape parcels, well screened from the settlement by dense boundary tree and planting.
- 2-storey detached, 19th-century dwellings are present in this part of London Road, as well as historic terraces with clay roof tiles, clay tile cladding of the first floors and characteristic chimney stacks typical of the High Weald.
- Pedestrian connectivity in parts is limited with a footpath only on the western side of A21.



London Road (A21) south



London Road (A21) north

3. Great Oak and Environs

This is a residential character area comprising of the following roads: Great Oak, Vicarage Way, Acorn Way and McMichaels Way.

Key characteristics are:

- Mostly detached and semi-detached mid to late 20th century dwellings arranged around cul-de-sac courts.
- Area is looser in terms of its urban form, with mostly 2 storey dwellings and a group of bungalows in Vicarage Way, arranged beyond grass verges.
- Poor permeability between the Great Oak, Vicarage Way and McMichaels Way, however, there is a pedestrian connection between Ridgeway and Vicarage Way.
- McMichaels Way provides more recent developer-led, 2 storey homes to the south accessed from Station Road. These dwellings are larger, mostly detached and semi-detached arranged around a generous sized court.
- McMichaels Way is the only road in the parish with a shared access surface (where vehicles and pedestrians use the same access). Community feedback showed that this concept is not well-liked, as it exasperates the existing on-street parking issue (with lack of available parking for nearby residents) and that the lack of separate pedestrian access is of most concern to residents with children, and to those who find walking more difficult.



Vicarage Way



McMichaels Way

4. Coronation Gardens & Ridgeway

The area comprises late 20th century residential developments along cul-de-sac streets dominated by semi-detached houses, terraced houses and bungalows characterised by the regular street scene.

Key characteristics are:

- Properties are a repeated typology of 2 storey, semi-detached, detached houses, bungalows and terraces with parking spaces on driveways.
- Higher density area, when compared with Great Oak character area. to the south. Dwellings tend to have modest front gardens and larger rear gardens.
- Pedestrian environment is good with footpaths and grass verges along both sides of Ridgeway and Coronation Gardens.
- Area lies directly south of ancient woodland and is connected with the network of woodland paths via pedestrian links.



Coronation Gardens



Ridgeway

5. Burgh Hill

This is a lower density character area of detached 1.5 - 2 storey dwellings set in their own generous grounds and defined by grass verges and generous front and rear gardens.

Key characteristics are:

- Includes South View Close, a cul-du-sac with 5 dwellings, located close to the junction with Station Road, and Burghwood House, a retirement housing complex with 25 flats.
- Majority of houses are located on land that is rising towards Burgh Wood.
- Majority of front gardens are enclosed by high hedgerows, low walls, or wooden picket fences forming the edge of Burgh Hill and defining plot boundaries.
- Pedestrian connectivity is poor, with no pavements along the majority of Burgh Hill, providing no safe connections to Etchingham (roughly a 3-minute drive or an approximately 25-minute walk), where the nearest railway station is located.



Burgh Hill

POLICY HG4: CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT

- A. Development should conserve and enhance the Character Area in which it is located (as shown in Figure 6.1 and described in the Hurst Green Design Codes). The design of new development should demonstrate how it has taken account of the local context and has reflected the character and vernacular of the area, using architectural variety in form and materials, to avoid building design that is inappropriate to the Plan area. Innovation in design will be supported where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form in a character area.**
- B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should meet the following criteria:**
 - i. Having demonstrable regard to the Hurst Green Design Codes or any updated version conserving those features identified as contributing to the character of the area.**
 - ii. Be guided by the principles included in the High Weald Management Plan, the High Weald Housing Design Guide and the Rother District Council Key Design Principles.**
- C. Development proposals directly affecting heritage assets should respect the significance and context of the asset and demonstrate how they will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the heritage asset through the most viable and sustainable method. Development proposals affecting the significance of non-designated heritage assets will be judged having regard to the scale of any harm or loss against the significance of the asset.**
- D. Development proposals should where appropriate demonstrate that they have taken into account the potential impact on above and below ground archaeological deposits to ensure that evidence which could contribute to the understanding of human activity and past environments is not lost.**
- E. Where development sites abut open countryside, development on the rural boundary edge should mitigate any detrimental visual impacts on the countryside. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, this should be achieved through the siting of lower density development at the rural boundary of the site in order to provide a gradual transition from the built form to open countryside, or by other means such as through a layout that clearly minimises the visual impact of any larger buildings.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 5, 8; Core Strategy: EN1, EN2, EN3; DaSA: DEN1, DEN2, RA2, RA4; High Weald Management Plan: S2, S3, LBE2, W3, FH4; NPPF: 135-143, 203

Policy HG5: Design of development

Purpose

6.12 Good quality housing design can improve social wellbeing and the quality of life by improving the built environment, reducing crime, improving physical and mental public health, easing transport problems and providing supportive neighbourhoods. It can help to reduce social isolation and improve social cohesion by providing places for people to meet and interact. Policy HG5 seeks to encourage development proposals within Hurst Green parish to comply with the highest design standards, adhere to the High Weald National Landscape Housing Design Guide and the locally specific Hurst Green Design Codes prepared for Hurst Green parish.

Justification

6.13 The importance of good housing design has received renewed attention. In October 2019, a National Design Guide was launched, forming part of the Government's collection of Planning Practice Guidance. It is a material consideration in the decision-making process, particularly in the absence of local design guidance. The document sets out the ten characteristics necessary for creating a well-designed place, contributing to its physical character, a sense of community and addressing environmental issues affecting climate. The National Model Design Code expands on these ten characteristics.

6.14 The guide Building for a Healthy Life 2020 is the Government-endorsed industry standard for the design of new housing developments. It is a tool for assessing the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods. The criteria also link to other standards for housing design, including the Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) standards and Secured by Design. It should be used to inform development proposals along with other policies contained within this plan for Hurst Green to achieve the industry standard 'Building for a Healthy Life' commendation.

6.15 It is important that development is designed from a landscape-led perspective. The High Weald National Landscape Housing Design Guide provides a comprehensive set of advice that is specific to the characteristics of the landscape, and promotes well-designed places and the conservation and enhancement of the High Weald National Landscape. The guide focusses on three core considerations: respecting the setting of the High Weald; incorporating sympathetic placemaking principles; and encouraging detail design.

6.16 At a local level, the Hurst Green Design Codes should be used for future development proposals, including the site allocations included in this neighbourhood plan.

6.17 Issues raised particularly from the community engagement that it seeks to address include:

- Retaining the Village feel – the scale, height, density and grain of the surrounding context, including local character, should be reflected in development. Comments were received about dwellings not being too close together and smaller developments as opposed to large sites 'added on' to the existing village, which accords with the High Weald unit's guidance on reducing sprawl.

- Integrating green space and planting – the use of native planting and, for all developments, the inclusion of accessible green space (private or communal gardens) will help to reflect the green character of the wider landscape within the villagescape.
- Ensuring that any new development is adequately served by segregated vehicle and pedestrian access to avoid the challenges cited by residents, with McMichaels Way being the only development in the Parish that utilises shared surfaces. Further evidence supporting these viewpoints, and in particular the accessibility incompatibility with shared surfaces can be found in the Department for Transport's Inclusive Transport Strategy.
- Providing adequate car parking – much of the existing housing was built at a time before cars became prevalent which, in light of the high car ownership in the parish, has led to vehicles often being parked on pavements and grass verges. This can be unsightly, and creates difficulties for pedestrians and leads to the narrowing of roads for other road users. Where garages have been provided in the past, these are often too small for modern vehicles and therefore largely used for storage. There is a need to ensure that new development not only includes sufficient practical parking for its residents and visitors, but also considers providing spaces that can be used by the wider community. Further detail on parking is contained at Policies HG19 (Public Car Parking) and HG20 (Residential Car Parking) in Section 10 of this Plan.
- Connecting new housing developments – ensuring that new developments are within easy access of the footpath network, to encourage active travel.
- Shielding the community from the negative effects of the A21 (part of the strategic road network) – ensuring that dwellings are set back from the road and heavily buffered, for instance with trees and with the use of triple glazing, to protect against road noise and vibration, intrusive (high-sided) vehicles and air pollution.
- Ensuring housing is suited to an ageing population - the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) has, since 2009, developed a series of principles for good design of housing. Many are recognisable from good design generally - good light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage - but they have particular relevance to the spectrum of older persons' housing which needs to both offer an attractive alternative to the family home and be able to adapt over time to meet changing needs. In 2018, this guidance was strengthened for rural areas such as Hurst Green, in the publication 'Rural Housing for an Ageing Population: Preserving Independence (HAPPI 4)'. Development proposals should seek to incorporate this guidance.
- There are many types of long-term health conditions that might impact on how development is designed. For instance, The Alzheimer's Society suggests that in 2015 there were around 850,000 people in the UK living with dementia, a figure expected to rise to over 1 million by 2025. East Sussex County Council estimates that in the county, around 10,200 people (1.88% of the population) has dementia. The Royal Town Planning Institute's (RTPI) publication, Dementia and Town

Planning, provides guidance to enable better environments for those living with dementia. Development proposals should seek to incorporate this guidance.

- 6.18 Additional factors to consider include flood risk and the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is expected. The East Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provide further detail on this.
- 6.19 Developers and Landowners are encouraged to work closely with those affected by their proposals, to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community.
- 6.20 When these building standards and design guides are updated or superseded, this Neighbourhood Plan should use the updated versions for good quality, well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.
- 6.21 Policy HG5 has a close relationship with both Policies HG4 (Character of Development) and HG6 (Energy Efficiency and Design) of this Plan. Where it is appropriate to do so developments should take account of each of the policies.

POLICY HG5: DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT

Development is expected to demonstrate a high quality of design, which responds and integrates well with its surroundings, meets the changing needs of residents and minimises the impact on the natural and historic environment. Development proposals, subject to their scale, nature and location, will be expected to demonstrate how they have considered and sought to address the following matters:

- i. The guidance contained within the High Weald National Landscape Housing Design Guide and the Hurst Green Design Codes.
- ii. Residential development proposals adjacent to the A21 shall be designed to mitigate the impact of noise from the A21 on residents, using such measures as may be determined based on acoustic survey, which could include high performance glazing and ventilation systems, building set back, landscaping and layout of the building.
- iii. All new residential properties shall be provided with the necessary ducting and infrastructure to enable the property to be connected to superfast broadband.
- iv. Provide adequate parking for residents, visitors and service vehicles, in accordance with East Sussex County Council's 'Guidance for Parking at New Residential Development' and Policy HG18 (Residential Car Parking) of this Neighbourhood Plan.
- v. To ensure that areas requiring service and maintenance including water courses are accessible at all times.
- vi. Provision of sufficient shared or dedicated storage space, away from publicly accessible routes, for resident waste bins and recycling containers.
- vii. Limited use of shared surfaces (for road users and pedestrians).

Development that is required to provide Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is expected to provide this on-site, unless there are technical reasons why this is impractical. Such development is encouraged to demonstrate the use of a wide range of creative SuDS solutions, for example through the provision of SuDS as part of green spaces, green roofs, permeable surfaces and rain gardens. SuDS provision must demonstrate how its design will enhance wildlife and biodiversity as well as minimise the impacts of flooding. Only where it is demonstrably unviable will an absence of any on-site SuDS provision be permissible in such developments.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 1, 3, 8; Core Strategy: EN1, EN2, EN3, EN7, CO6; DaSA: DHG4, DHG7, DEN5; High Weald Management Plan: S3; NPPF: 135-144,180

Policy HG6: Energy efficiency and design

Purpose

6.22 On 12 June 2019 the Government amended the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a new target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. This is a demanding target, which will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities to businesses and local and national government.

6.23 In June 2022, Hurst Green Parish Council declared a climate emergency. Policy HG6 reflects the Plan's vision to secure energy efficient and sustainable developments within the parish by providing a clear set of requirements and support for developments to incorporate measures that will secure energy efficiency and sustainability in line with national and local objectives. This is particularly important within the setting of the High Weald National Landscape.

Justification

6.24 Being '2050 ready' means that all new development will be required to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions over the year. It should be highly insulated, have low water demand and be fitted with, or directly connected to renewable energy systems. Opportunities to retrofit existing developments will also be supported, where this can be achieved sympathetically to their character and design and without detriment to neighbouring properties or the landscape.

6.25 Nearly Zero-Energy requirements for new developments came into force in 2019. Prior to this, standards for ecologically sustainable homes and developments were optional. Planners and developers are strongly encouraged to make use of energy efficient materials and to consider high-efficiency alternative systems and facilities for development sites. In this context, the orientation of buildings can be important in order to make best use of available sunlight.

6.26 The Code for Sustainable Homes was withdrawn by the Government in 2015 and this has been replaced by national technical standards which include additional optional Building Regulations regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard, which is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations. The Future Homes and Buildings Standard will be introduced in 2025 to complement the Building Regulations and ensure that new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes delivered under current regulations. As an interim step, announcements surrounding changes to Part L are expected to come into force to ensure new homes built from 2022 will produce 31% less carbon emissions.

6.27 There is an opportunity to improve and promote sustainability in the parish by:

- following basic passive environmental design, encouraging the use of insulating materials to minimise energy loss;
- integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings;
- reducing water consumption through grey water systems;
- promoting sustainable forms of transport through priority systems for pedestrians and cyclists;

- promoting sustainable waste management and recycling; and
- supporting landscape-sensitive, community-scale renewable energy schemes, tailored to the conservation of the High Weald National Landscape.

6.28 Policy HG6 seeks to encourage energy efficient and sustainable well-designed development.

POLICY HG6: ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND DESIGN

A. Development is encouraged to achieve the highest level of sustainable design, in order to reduce energy consumption and climate effects. Development proposals which incorporate the following sustainable design features as appropriate to their scale, nature and location will be supported, where measures will not have a detrimental impact on character, landscape and views:

- i. Incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources.
- ii. The siting and orientation of solar energy solutions to optimise solar gain, where they are suitably sited and screened and clearly associated with the buildings or properties that they are intended to serve; are appropriate in scale to the property being served; and there is no unacceptable adverse impact on local amenity or conflict with public safety.
- iii. The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials.
- iv. Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft, draft and wall insulation and triple glazing.
- v. Reducing water consumption through the use of grey water systems.
- vi. Providing low carbon sustainable design and avoiding or mitigating all regulated emissions using a combination of on-site energy efficiency measures (such as insulation and low energy heating systems), on-site zero carbon technologies (such as solar tiles) and only where necessary off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions.
- vii. Alterations to existing buildings should be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with current sustainable design and construction standards.

B. Proposals to alter existing historic buildings to improve energy efficiency should be informed by Historic England best practice principles and research and designed to reflect Historic England's 'whole building' approach.

C. Development proposals for renewable, community-scale energy schemes that contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon zero targets will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal:

- i. has regard to High Weald National Landscape guidance
- ii. makes provision for the removal of the facilities and reinstatement of the site, should it cease to be operational
- iii. ensures existing public access is not impeded
- iv. does not result in the loss in use of Grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 3; Core Strategy: SRM1, SRM2, EN3, TR3; DaSA: DEN1, DEN7, DRM2, DRM3; High Weald Management Plan: G3; NPPF: 162-169, 187b

Policy HG7: Enhancing the public realm

Purpose

6.29 This policy sets out how development proposals can contribute to the improvement of the public realm throughout Hurst Green.

Justification

6.30 Key aims of the Neighbourhood Plan are to improve the visual appearance and overall perception of Hurst Green as a place where people want to live, work and visit, through the enhancement of the public realm. At the moment, the quality of the pedestrian environment within Hurst Green is mixed. The severance of the village by the A21 creates a challenging environment for pedestrians and other users. Priorities raised by the community, and reflected in the Hurst Green Design Codes and Hurst Green Aims and Vision include:

- A desire for pedestrian crossings along the A21 to provide safe east-west connections, serving key desire lines.
- The need for public realm improvements throughout the village, which should recognise and enhance the special character of the village and the character areas.
- Adopting an appropriate style of street and footpath design that incorporates landscaping typical for the High Weald.
- Pursuing greening initiatives to improve the appearance of the village, utilising street verges and green amenity spaces. Such improvements should champion indigenous species and refer to the High Weald Housing Design Guide section DG10.
- Progressively enhancing road verges within residential areas, by introducing appropriate new tree species, hedgerows, flower beds or edible plants. This would assist in discouraging anti-social car parking on verges.
- Improved way-finding to promote the rights of way and linkages between local facilities.
- Using trees and shrubs to frame views and create a transition between the settlements and the wider countryside.

6.31 Additionally, there is a desire locally to encourage more traditional looking (as opposed to modern) street furniture, in particular street lighting. This is particularly so in the older parts of the village (London Road Core).

6.32 Policy HG7 supports the delivery of these enhancements, which will help to ensure that village centre and wider parish remains vibrant and attractive to pedestrians and other users. This in turn may help to support the conditions required to enable shops and businesses to thrive.

POLICY HG7: ENHANCING THE PUBLIC REALM

A. Development proposals to enhance Hurst Green, as set out in the Hurst Green Aims and Vision and supported by the Hurst Green Design Codes, and in accordance with the High Weald Housing Design Guide, will be supported where the works are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, are directly related to the development and are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. As appropriate, proposals should seek to:

- i. make a positive contribution to the visual impact of the main entry approaches into Hurst Green Village, Swiftsden, and Silver Hill – the A21 and A265 – bearing in mind the prevailing local character. Such improvements and enhancements should include the incorporation of gateway signage, additional tree planting, the enhancement of roadside green spaces, and the reduction/consolidation of road signs and other street furniture.**
- ii. be well designed, in terms of the scale, form, mass and external materials of which reflect and are appropriate to the prevailing character of the village, in accordance with Policy HG4 (Character of Development);**
- iii. improve access to and circulation within the village centre, for pedestrians and cyclists, in accordance with Policy HG18 (Encouraging Active Travel) and contribute to improved wayfinding and signage, provided that they can be satisfactorily integrated within their surroundings;**
- iv. support the provision of additional or reconfigured car parking where required, in accordance with Policy HG19 (Public Car Parking);**
- v. optimise the use of native planting within the public realm, including verges, and amenity space enhancements; and**
- vi. Incorporate new, or upgrade existing, street lighting that is traditional (luminaire style) in design.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 3, 4; Core Strategy: EN2, EN3, EN4; High Weald Management Plan: S2, S3; NPPF: 93, 99, 100, 105, 135, 136

Policy HG8: Protecting Hurst Green's dark skies

Purpose

6.33 Hurst Green parish benefits from some of the lowest levels of radiance in the district, despite the A21 cutting through the parish. Light pollution from development will predominantly stem from two sources: from internal lighting spilling externally and from external lighting, including street lighting, installed to support development.

6.34 Dark skies are defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as “places where the darkness of the night sky is relatively free of interference from artificial light”. This policy supports measures to protect and enhance the dark night sky that is a feature of the High Weald and of Hurst Green parish.

Justification

6.35 The High Weald is an intrinsically dark landscape, benefitting from some of the darkest skies in the south east. These unusually dark skies have been identified as worthy of conservation by the International Dark Sky Association (IDSA), with benefits including:

- Enjoyment and appreciation – improving quality of life and providing creative inspiration
- Health – promoting better sleep patterns and reducing stress
- Wildlife – supporting a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals
- Tourism – boosting numbers in the quieter, darker months, including outside traditional visitor hotspots
- Educational outreach – potentially including formal education and more informal activities
- Scientific advantages – enhancing conditions for astronomy
- Energy efficiency – reducing wastage from unnecessary or excessive lighting

6.36 The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) states that planning policies and conditions should “limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”. It is supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance on Light Pollution (2014).

6.37 The Campaign to Protect Rural England has developed an interactive light pollution map and the map for Hurst Green parish is shown in Figure 6.2. Each pixel on the map shows the level of radiance (night lights) shining up into the night sky. These are categorised into colour bands to distinguish between different light levels.

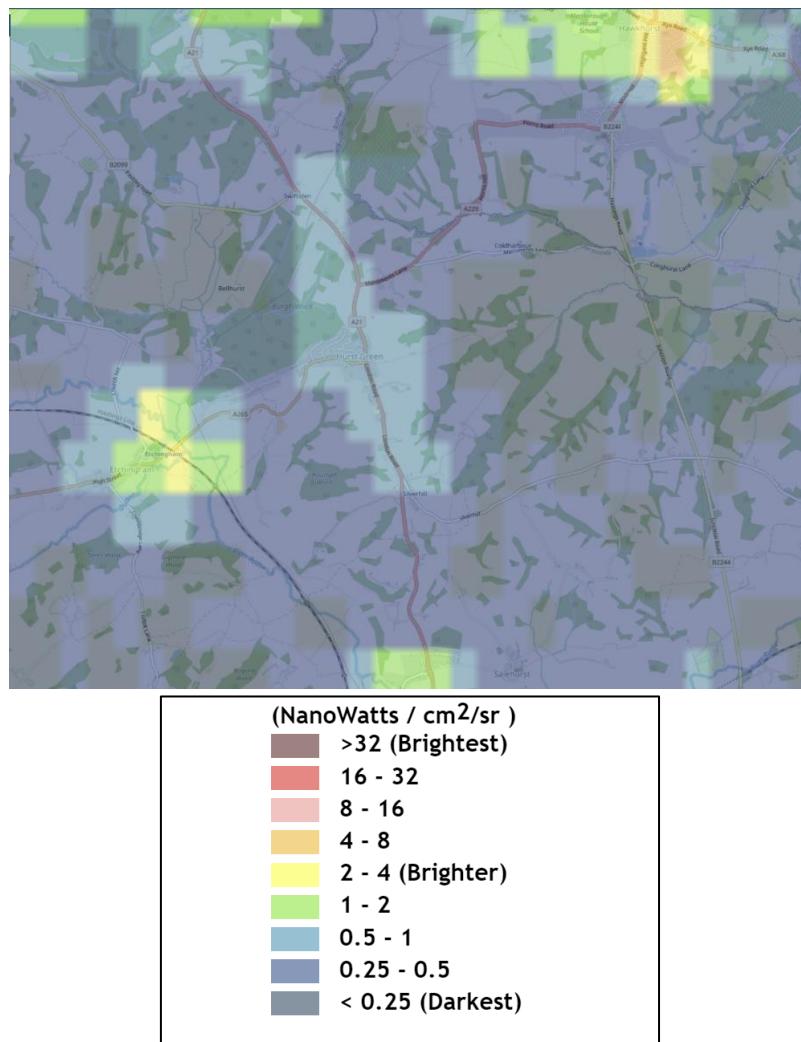


Figure 6.2: Map showing level of radiance emanating from Hurst Green parish

6.38 Policy EN1 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development protects and, where possible, enhances the tranquil and remote areas of the district, including the dark night sky. This is further emphasised in the DaSA, which suggests that the Environment Zones as set out in the Guidance Note 1 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP), 2011) and shown in Figure 6.3 may be applied to Rother as follows:

- E1: the Pevensey Levels and the Dungeness Complex of international nature conservation sites, the High Weald AONB outside of towns and villages;
- E2: within settlements and elsewhere outside areas in E1 and E3;
- E3: within Bexhill and the town centres of Battle and Rye.

Zone	Surrounding	Lighting environment	Examples
E0	Protected	Dark (SQM 20.5+)	Astronomical Observable dark skies, UNESCO starlight reserves, IDA dark sky places
E1	Natural	Dark (SQM 20 to 20.5)	Relatively uninhabited rural areas, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, IDA buffer zones etc.
E2	Rural	Low district brightness (SQM ~15 to 20)	Sparsely inhabited rural areas, village or relatively dark outer suburban locations
E3	Suburban	Medium district brightness	Well inhabited rural and urban settlements, small town centres of suburban locations
E4	Urban	High district brightness	Town / City centres with high levels of night-time activity

Figure 6.3: Environment Zones

6.39 The High Weald Housing Design Guide emphasises the importance of maintaining dark skies, stating the following about street lighting, which is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan.

“Street lighting is often not appropriate and would cause unacceptable light pollution to the High Weald National Landscape. Street lighting should only be used where it is absolutely necessary and should conform to the Institution of Lighting Professionals for AONBs and be capable of night time switch-off.

Site-specific solutions should be created that minimise light pollution and glare. Where lighting is needed, the suburban impact of street ‘clutter’ of a proliferation of lighting columns, uncharacteristic in many of the villages in the High Weald, can be minimised through a more place-sensitive product selection; a combination of Passive Infrared lights (PiRs) on building access points (e.g. porch lights), low level bollard lighting on key public routes, and wall-mounted lighting within parking courts.”

6.40 Notwithstanding permitted development rights, the policy seeks to minimise light pollution from internal and external sources.

POLICY HG8: PROTECTING HURST GREEN'S DARK SKIES

New developments should not detract from the unlit environment of the parish. Proposals should follow the guidance issued by the Institute of Lighting Professionals in Guidance Note 1 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light 2021 or any successor publication. Proposals should consider carefully the light source and intensity being used, the luminaire design, height, and angle, adding baffles and cut-off shields where required, and details of control mechanisms to dim or switch off lighting schemes when not required.

Internal lighting:

Proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that light spill from within buildings will be reduced by:

- i. avoiding or recessing large areas of vertical fenestration;
- ii. minimising glazing which is facing upwards (whether horizontal or angled) including conservatory roofs; and
- iii. within a site, locating and orientating development to minimise light pollution.

External lighting:

Proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that light spill from within buildings will be reduced by:

- i. only providing lighting that is necessary for operational, safety or security reasons
- ii. ensuring any light spillage beyond the application site is eliminated, or reduced by measures such as timing and proximity controls, orientation, screening, shielding or glazing
- iii. ensuring that there is no adverse impact on nearby residential properties.
- iv. the lights are controlled by passive infrared detectors so they only come on when required.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 5, 8; Core Strategy: EN1; DaSA: DEN1, DEN7; High Weald Management Plan: DS1, DS2; NPPF: 198c

7 ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE

Policy HG9: Protecting the natural features of the Parish

Purpose

7.1 Policy HG9 recognises the distinctive features of the parish that provide vital habitats for flora and fauna, including trees, woodland, meadows, grassland and hedgerows, not all of which are protected through statutory designations. The majority of these are in private ownership. The policy seeks to protect and enhance these to ensure well-designed, positive development that contributes both to the ecology natural landscape character of the High Weald and enabling wider accessibility for local people where this can be sustainably managed.

Justification

7.2 The parish comprises numerous habitats as shown in Figures 7.1 and 7.2. Non-statutory site designations are:

- Local Wildlife Sites:
 - Burgh Wood Complex - a large ancient woodland situated on the edge of Hurst Green, on land which slopes down to a stream. The wood is dominated by Sweet Chestnut coppice, with patches of ground flora which are rich in species indicative of ancient woodland.
 - Hurst Green Meadows & Woodland - a collection of gently sloping meadows and pastures, separated by woodland strips, large hedges and small streams. Species diversity is high throughout the fields and as a collection of relatively unimproved pastures and a mosaic of small woods.
 - Stage Field, Silver Hill – an area of underused public green space located in Silver Hill, separated by woodland strips and hedges.
- Designated Road Verge – Fysie Lane

The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SBRC) should be contacted for up-to-date mapping of the Local Wildlife Sites and designated road verges, as boundaries are subject to change.

- Section 41 habitats (which are those habitats considered most threatened and requiring conservation action under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act) – The full list of habitats and species of national importance can be found in national guidance. Within Hurst Green, habitats include Deciduous woodland, Ancient woodland and Ghyll woodland, as shown on Figures 7.1 and 7.2. There is also one example of a Lowland Meadow. The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Guide 4 - Trees of Special Interest should be consulted to determine how best to identify and protect important trees in the parish.

7.3 The distinctive features of the area that are less protected, yet provide vital habitats for flora and fauna, include individual trees, woodland, hedgerows, mature planted gardens, lowland heathland, and grazing marshland. Information from the SBRC reveals an abundance of protected species present in the parish, including those of international or

national importance. Fauna includes, for example, Hazel Dormouse, Common Newt and Great Crested Newt, Long-eared bats, Long-horned bee. Notable flora includes Bluebells, Wood-Sorrell and Wild Strawberry. The full report is considered confidential by SBRC and applicants should consult with SRBC when considering development proposals.

Delivering a net gain in biodiversity

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. The [Environment Act 2021](#) requires a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10%.

The [Defra biodiversity metric](#) has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value, in terms of habitats, and the consequent measures required to ensure measurable net gain. Natural England considers this to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering biodiversity net gain.

Ecological assessment by suitably qualified people must utilise this metric on all habitats to determine net gain. Ecological reports must be consistent with [BS 42020 Biodiversity – code of practise for planning and development](#).

Guidance for applicants on achieving biodiversity net gain is available from the [Planning Advisory Service](#) and the [Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management](#).

- 7.4 The habitats have evolved in response to local geology and land use and have taken hundreds of years to establish themselves. They cannot be replaced in any meaningful way if lost. Development must therefore seek to protect and enhance habitats and, where necessary, include an appropriate landscape and ecological management plan to ensure it contributes positively to the High Weald landscape and character. For small-scale development, RDC's [planning validation list](#) recommends preparing a [Wildlife Assessment Check](#) to determine the need for fuller ecological advice. For major development, an [Environmental Impact Assessment](#) would be required in accordance with [EIA regulations](#).
- 7.5 Enhancements should involve the planting of new trees and hedgerows of native species in gardens, communal areas and on roadsides, where practical, which will provide the added benefit of screening against road noise and traffic fumes. Species characteristic of the area include traditional mixed hedge of hawthorn, field maple, beech, and hornbeam, sometimes with trees such as oak, native cherry or ash. In addition, species such as laurel, hazel, holly, yew, box, hornbeam and beech are typical of the village streetscape. Provision for wildlife needs on-site includes, for example, bird and bat nesting-boxes, hedgehog holes in fencing, ponds (a distinctive feature of the High Weald) and wildlife friendly communal green spaces.
- 7.6 There are records of invasive non-native species within the parish and these should be reported if found to the SBRC. An example is the invasive Rhododendron found within Burgh Wood. Further advice on non-native species can be sought from the [SBRC](#) and

from national guidance. The High Weald AONB Unit also prepared a survey on invasive species, which can be consulted.

POLICY HG9: PROTECTING THE NATURAL FEATURES OF THE PARISH

- A. Development proposals should demonstrate how they maintain, incorporate and enhance the natural environment and landscape features – including woodland, meadows, grassland and heath – that contribute to the character of Hurst Green and the High Weald National Landscape and which provide habitats for a range of flora and fauna.**
- B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters:**

Trees and hedgerows:

- a. retain ancient trees and/or trees of arboricultural value, in accordance with The Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Guide 4 - Trees of Special Interest;**
- b. plant additional native species trees and/ or continuous hedgerows within developments to provide wildlife corridors, to offset the effects of air pollution and to provide cooling and shelter for people as well as a habitat for wildlife will be supported;**

Wildlife-friendly features:

- c. provision of hedgehog holes in new residential fencing will be supported.**
- d. Development proposals which provide bird and bat nesting boxes will be supported.**

Landscape buffers:

- e. include new landscape buffers where a development abuts open countryside. These must be of an appropriate scale and in keeping with local landscape character to ensure effective mitigation and sympathetic integration of any development;**

Incorporate open space that is:

- f. in usable parcels of land and not fragmented**
- g. safe, easily accessible and not severed by any physical barrier**
- h. welcoming, safe and accessible for all**
- i. creates a safe environment considering lighting and layout**
- j. complemented by landscaping**
- k. enables views across the wider landscape.**

The use of an appropriate legal agreement is encouraged to ensure appropriate management of the open space in perpetuity.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 6; Core Strategy: EN1, EN5; DaSA: DEN1, DEN2, DEN4, DEN7; High Weald Management Plan: FH2, FH3, R2; NPPF: 189, 193, 194, 198, 199

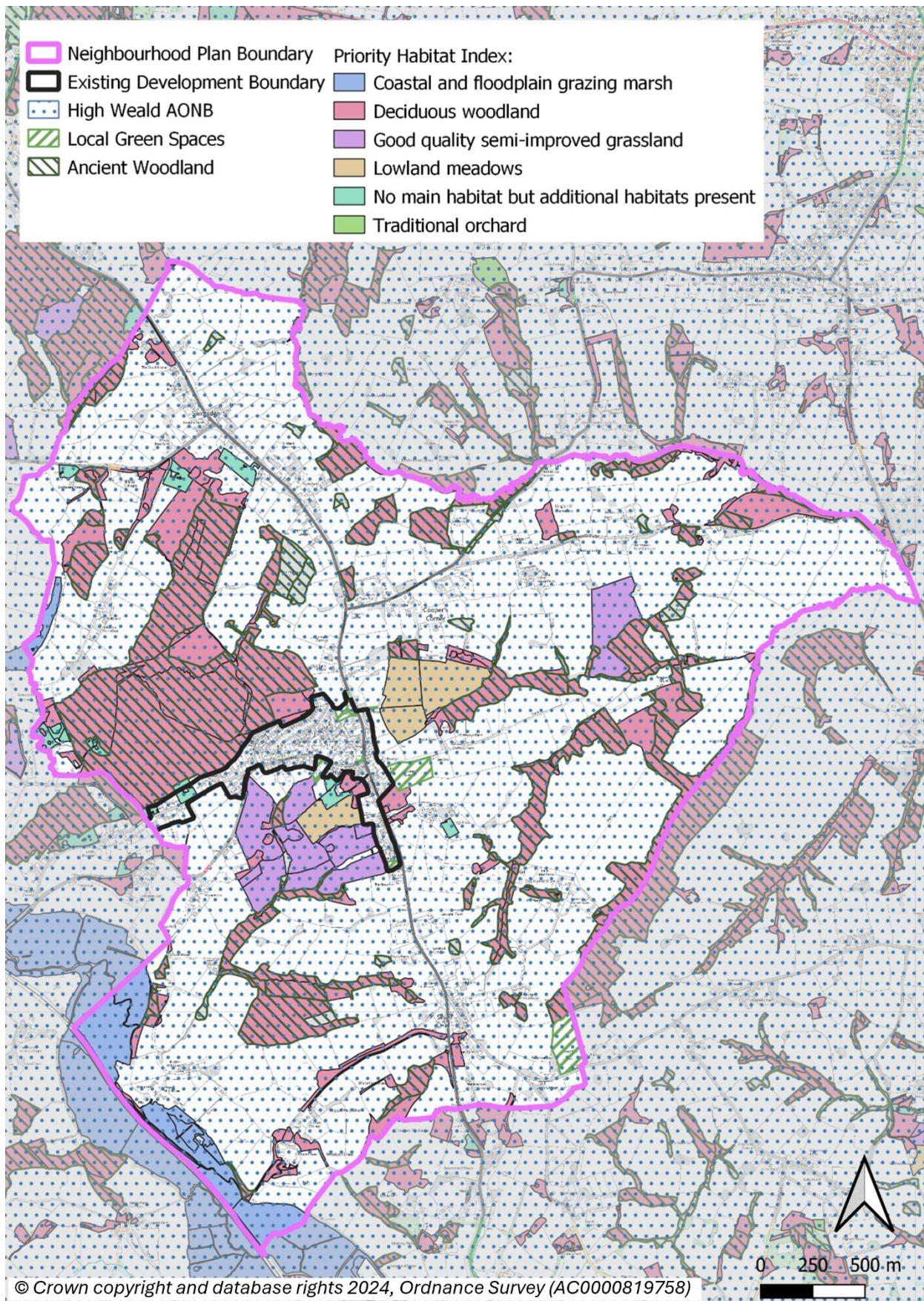


Figure 7.1: Green Infrastructure and habitats within Hurst Green

■ Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
■ Existing Development Boundary
■ High Weald AONB
■ Local Green Spaces
■ Ancient Woodland

Priority Habitat Index:
■ Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
■ Deciduous woodland
■ Good quality semi-improved grassland
■ Lowland meadows
■ No main habitat but additional habitats present
■ Traditional orchard

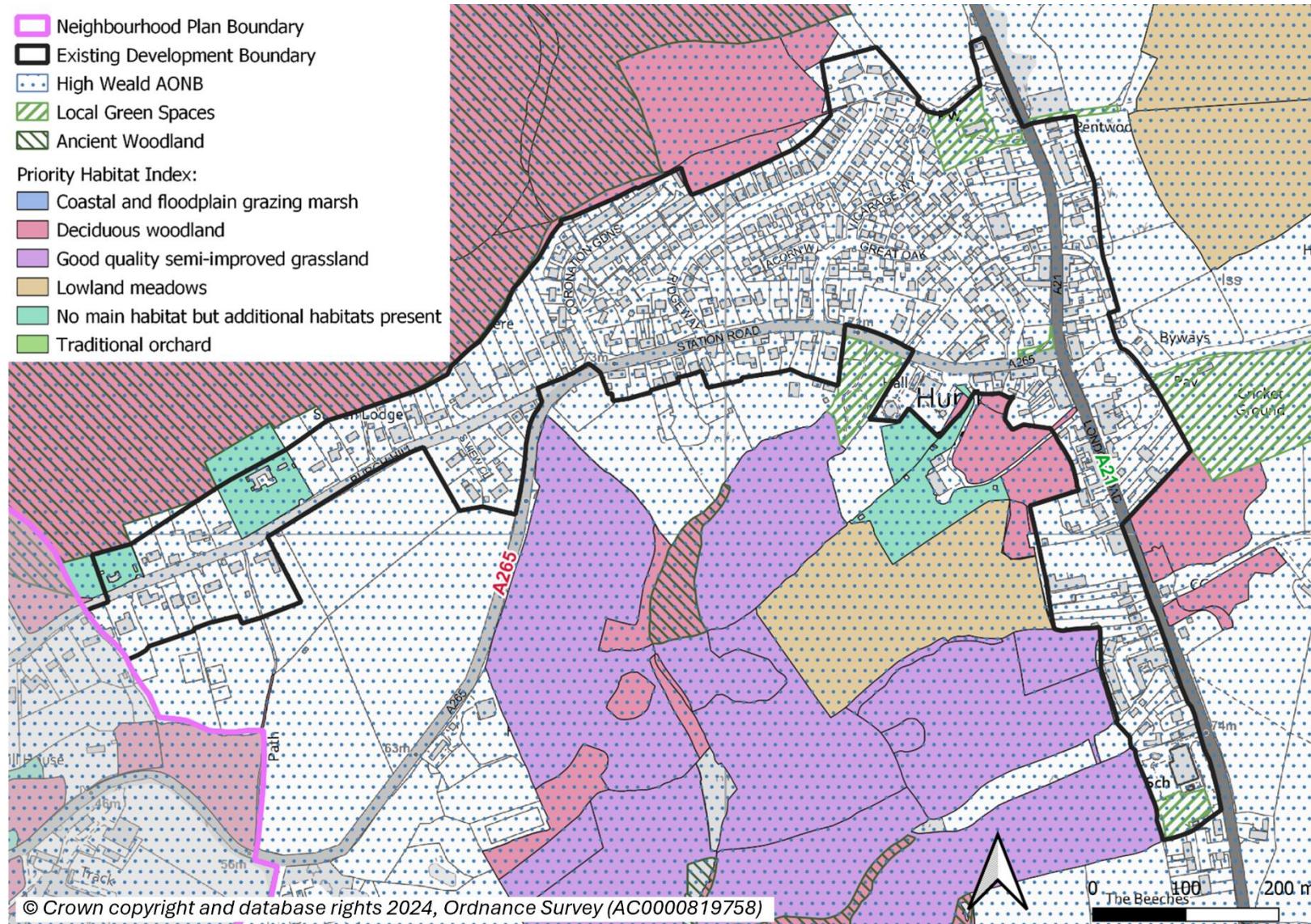


Figure 7.2: Green Infrastructure and habitats within Hurst Green village

Policy HG10: Green infrastructure

Purpose

7.7 Policy HG10 seeks to protect and enhance the network of green and blue spaces (areas dominated by surface waterbodies or watercourses) and corridors within the parish. These provide multiple benefits, including combating pressure on wildlife, providing habitats and wildlife movement routes, enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity and in offsetting the effects of traffic noise and air pollution. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure.

Justification

7.8 Both the NPPF and the Environment Act 2021 recognise the need to protect so-called “Nature Recovery Networks”, joined-up systems of places important for wild plants and animals.

7.9 Located in the heart of the High Weald National Landscape, Hurst Green benefits from a wealth of such green spaces and corridors, as shown on Figures 7.1 and 7.2. Many enable recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to the area. All provide critical spaces as wildlife refuges and stepping-stones that prevent species becoming isolated.

NPPF para 192 states that “To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity”.

7.10 The green infrastructure assets of the parish should be maximised and, where possible, made accessible to all. Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community.

7.11 Policy HG10 has been designed to ensure that development proposals to improve green infrastructure respect the wider landscape value of the High Weald National Landscape.

Extending and enhancing access to the network of green infrastructure

7.12 Residents of Hurst Green support the need to increase public access to green space, as demonstrated through the various local engagement events.

7.13 In addition, the Parish Council is leading a project to create a new public nature reserve at Stage Field (See Figure 7.3 [Local Green Spaces] for location), an underused area of public land located within a relatively short walk from Hurst Green village via footpath. A working group is looking at options, which include planting a new wood, sowing a

wildflower meadow, installing accessible footpaths and trails, providing information boards and picnic facilities to encourage families and individuals – both from the parish and beyond - to connect with Hurst Green's history, and the High Weald National Landscape. Further information on this project can be found at: <https://hurstgreen2030.uk/community-project-silverhill/>

Trees and ancient woodland

7.14 The parish is home to a significant number of trees and woodland – including veteran trees and ancient woodland. As noted in the NPPF at paragraph 136, trees play a vital part in dealing with the effects of climate change. They provide shade, reduce flood risk, enable carbon capture, improve air quality and contribute to the purification of water. They also contribute to local character.

7.15 Ancient woodland and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats, which have both heritage and cultural value. Natural England advises that development which would result in the loss of, or damage to, ancient woodland and veteran or notable trees will not be permitted except in wholly exceptional circumstances, as set out in paragraph 186 of the NPPF. They also advise that it is preferable to link up fragmented areas of woodland, which might be divided by development, with green bridges or tunnels. Also, to buffer ancient woodland and notable/veteran trees by leaving an appropriate zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the woodland, providing wildlife corridors, and balancing new developments and residential areas with green infrastructure and allowing space for trees.

7.16 A series of enhancements relating to trees were raised through the public engagement, for instance signposting and information boards within Burgh Wood.

7.17 Policy HG10 supports the provision of such additional green space, to contribute to the wider network.

Biodiversity opportunity areas (BOAs)

7.18 BOAs identify areas where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit to wildlife. The main aim within BOAs is to restore biodiversity at a landscape scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of BAP priority habitats. The BOAs have been identified by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership in consultation with local authorities, statutory agencies and conservation organisations in Sussex. They were identified by taking into account existing concentrations of BAP habitat and important areas for priority species. The potential for habitat restoration was assessed by taking into account geology, topography and hydrology.

7.19 RDC's Green Infrastructure Background Paper sets out opportunities for biodiversity improvements exist across west Rother. Huge tracts of both west and east Rother are within the 'Rother, Brede and Tillingham Woods' BOA. The River Rother flood zone is an area that is rich in opportunity for wetland restoration; however, its tributaries and those of the Brede and Tillingham flow through the heavily wooded Rother District Local Development Framework 82 Green Infrastructure Study landscape of the High Weald. Much of this landscape is being looked at by the Rother Woods Project, where the

important butterfly populations of the area are being conserved by a woodland management approach. The woodlands that are selected in this opportunity area are considered priorities for biodiversity action. Within this area there are also many lowland meadows, which have been surveyed by the Weald Meadows Initiative. Opportunities Identified in the BOA for this area include wetland and meadow habitat management, restoration and creation; woodland management and restoration, woodland butterfly interest, education and community engagement and access improvements.

POLICY HG10: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- A. Development proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connect chains of green infrastructure, as identified in Figures 7.1 and 7.2 and RDC's Green Infrastructure Background Paper.**
- B. Development proposals must demonstrate how negative impacts would be minimised and should demonstrate:**
 - i. that where significant harm cannot be avoided, proposed development and other changes should adequately mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the harm.**
- C. Proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces - particular within the identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas - will be encouraged to enhance the green infrastructure of the Neighbourhood area. Conversely, proposals which threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.**
- D. Development proposals must ensure that any new streets are tree-lined and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments, such as parks and community orchards. Unless there are clear, justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate.**
- E. Proposals to extend the network of green infrastructure - including at Stage Field - will be strongly supported.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 6; Core Strategy: EN5; DaSA: DEN4; High Weald Management Plan: G3, G3, S2; NPPF: 140, 193, 194, 189, 198, 199, 206

Policy HG11: Local Green Space

Purpose

7.21 Policy HG11 designates seven sites as Local Green Spaces because they are demonstrably special to and valued by the local community.

Justification

7.22 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF), Neighbourhood Plans can designate Local Green Spaces (LGS) which are of particular importance to the local community. This will afford protection from inappropriate development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- *in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- *demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- *local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

7.23 Potential LGS sites were identified during public workshops, residents' surveys, and two public Call for Sites exercises undertaken by Hurst Green Parish Council in 2018 and 2019. Each potential site was considered against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria, with input from members of the public, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, local Parish Councillors, District Councillors and Rother District Council officers. The following areas are considered to fulfil all the criteria of the NPPF:

LGS1: Countryside passageway

LGS2: Drewetts sports ground

LGS3: Lodge field playing ground

LGS4: School playing field

LGS5: Silver Hill Stage field

LGS6: Station Road corner garden

LGS7: Holy Trinity churchyard

7.24 Figure 7.3 maps the location of the Local Green Spaces. Individual maps for each space can be found in Appendix B along with details of how each fulfils the Local Green Space criteria.

POLICY HG11: LOCAL GREEN SPACE

The following seven sites, defined on Figure 7.3, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- LGS1: Countryside passageway**
- LGS2: Drewetts sports ground**
- LGS3: Lodge field playing ground**
- LGS4: School playing field**
- LGS5: Silver Hill Stage field**
- LGS6: Station Road corner garden**
- LGS7: Holy Trinity churchyard**

Development proposals which demonstrably accord with development appropriate within Green Belt will be supported, subject to compliance with other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 6; Core Strategy: EN5; DaSA: DEN4; High Weald Management Plan: S2; NPPF: 108-110,157-161

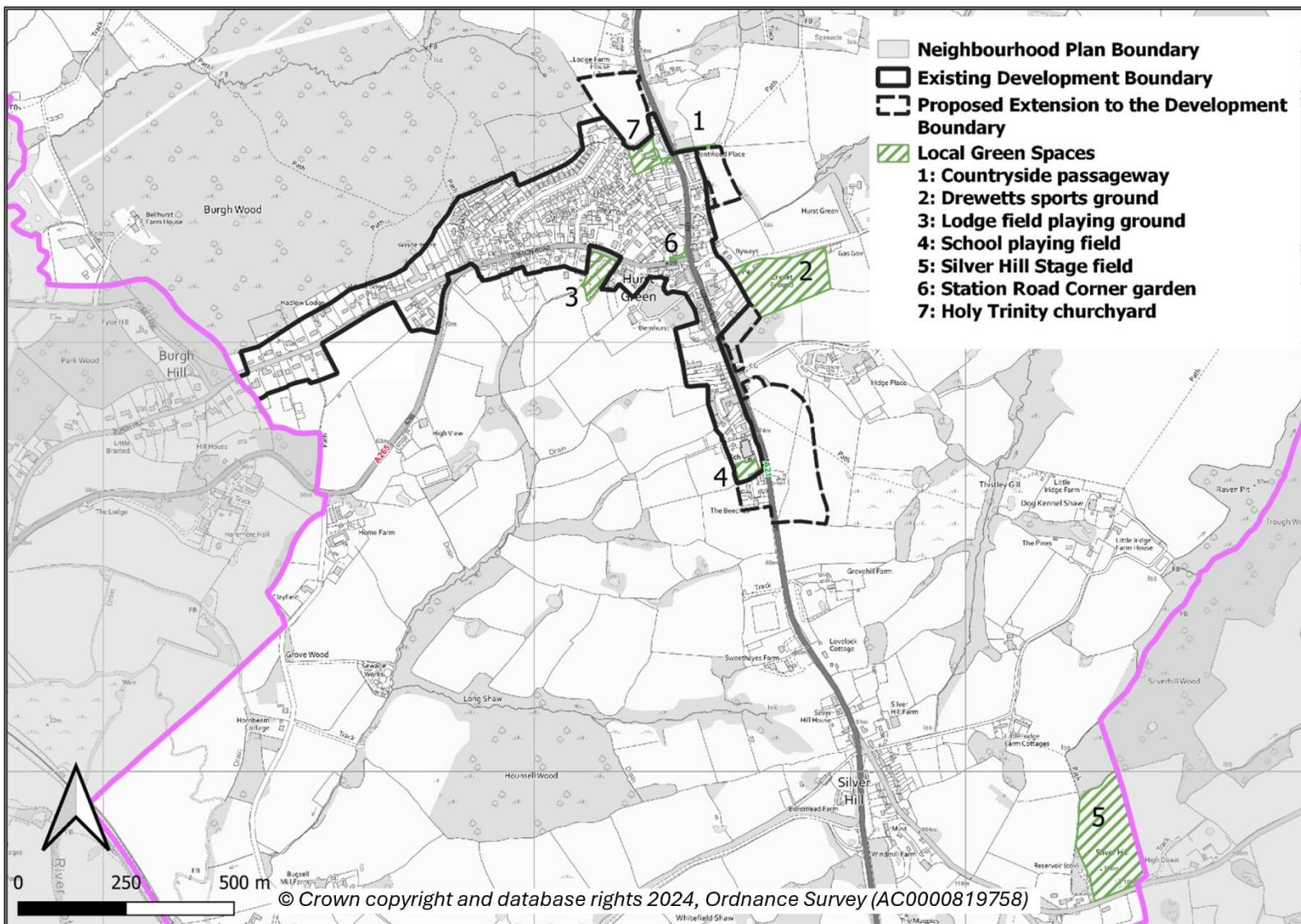


Figure 7.3: Local Green Spaces

Policy HG12: Protection of locally significant views

Purpose

7.25 Hurst Green's location within the High Weald affords a number of publicly accessible impressive views across the wider landscape. Such views not only contribute to the sense of place, but also offer mental health and wellbeing benefits to the community. The policy seeks to safeguard two notable public views from the impacts of development.

Justification

7.26 Views both across and from the largest and the only publicly accessible lowland meadow in the parish have been identified as being particularly significant to local people. Policy HG12 identifies two specific views visible from a Public Right of Way (PRoW) of importance locally (mapped in Figure 7.4).

7.27 Policy HG12 also encourages development proposals to incorporate views of the wider landscape as part of their overall design.

Important Views

View 1: View over the lowland meadows from the end of the footpath tree tunnel. This panoramic view across the High Weald, notably has no visibility of any built development, and which should be safeguarded from the impacts of development.



View 2: From the footpath opposite the church, looking eastward towards the lowland meadows



Development proposals are required to be designed in a way that safeguards the locally significant view or views concerned. It attempts to provide the flexibility required for the wide range of development proposals which will come forward within the Plan period. In the majority of cases proposals will be of a minor nature and will have little or no effect on the identified views. In circumstances where the proposed development would be likely to have an impact on any identified key view, the planning application concerned should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Any appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated within the design of the development proposed and captured in the assessment.

POLICY HG12: PROTECTION OF LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

A. The Plan identifies two locally significant views:

V1: View over the lowland meadows from the end of the footpath tree tunnel

V2: From the footpath opposite the church, looking eastward towards the lowland meadows

B. Development proposals should be designed in a way that safeguards these locally significant views.

C. Development proposals beyond these views should identify and, where possible, sensitively integrate views across the High Weald, in particular where these can be enjoyed by the general public.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 6; Core Strategy: EN3; DaSA: DEN2; High Weald Management Plan: PQ2; NPPF: 135, 136, 139

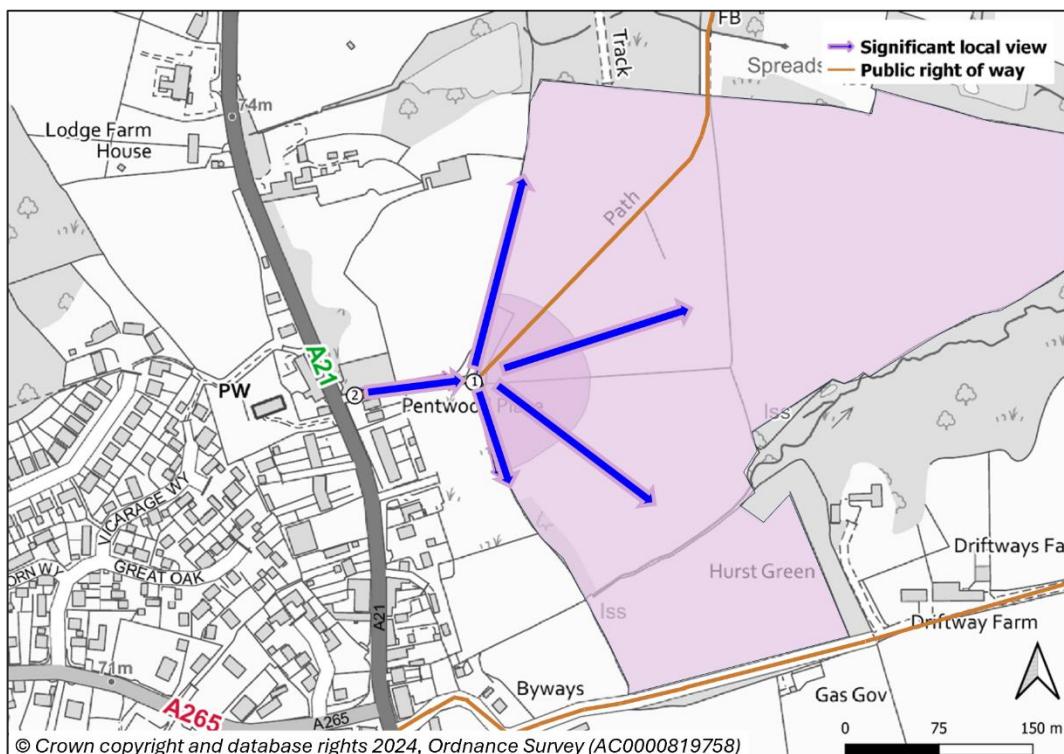


Figure 7.4: Locally significant views



8 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Policy HG13: A Green Village Hub for Hurst Green

Purpose

- 8.1 The provision of local facilities and services is critical in a small rural parish such as Hurst Green. Policy CO1 of the Core Strategy already safeguards existing facilities and supports new ones in appropriate locations where there is a demonstrated demand. This is further supported by Policy DC01 of the Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) within the Rother District Council Local Plan.
- 8.2 This Neighbourhood Plan policy therefore does not repeat strategic policy. Instead Policy HG13 seeks to support proposals that would contribute to the development of the Green Village Hub for Hurst Green, using land and buildings under the control of the Parish Council (or other branches of Government), creating a focal point in the village for local activities, and being in support of the District Council's priority to be '*Green to the Core*'.

Justification

- 8.3 Hurst Green village is typical of many High Weald settlements, characterised by tight-knit linear built frontage, which follow the ridgetops. More modern development has tended to 'spill' out, contrary to this historic settlement pattern within the landscape. This, coupled with the A21 as a primary presence, has left a legacy of no obvious village centre. Whilst the village hall, playground and playing field are contained, these facilities are fragmented in nature and the permeability within and between the individual sites is poor. Other local facilities are located in the other quadrants of the village.
 - The church to the north and beyond this a farm shop;
 - The primary school to the south;
 - The sports field to the east;
 - Etchingham railway station to the west, just beyond the parish boundary.
- 8.4 Despite the reference in Hurst Green's name, notably there is no village green, and the need to provide one was raised frequently during the community engagement.
- 8.5 Professional master planning work undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan proposed enhancing the village hall and the area around it. This would provide the much-needed strong village hub providing a focal point for businesses and the community of Hurst Green. It would recognise the park, already used to host local events as a Village Green, possibly with the introduction of a staged area. The children's playground here has recently received funding for a renovation to modernise it and to include natural play. Significantly, there is a desire to improve the visual appearance and overall perception of the village as a place where people want to live, work and visit. The hub, focused on the Village Hall and Lodge Field (where the children's park is located), will provide physical and mental health benefits by enabling additional community facilities and accessible places for all, reducing social isolation and improving the social cohesion of the area.

- 8.6 The green village hub area could also provide additional car parking spaces to reduce the need for those visiting the village hall, for instance, to park on nearby residential roads where space is at a premium.
- 8.7 Resident feedback frequently cited that any proposals at the village hub should incorporate mechanisms to generate renewable energy to serve the facilities on site, for instance solar panels and ground and air source heat pumps. In addition, the installation of electric vehicle (car and bike) charging points to serve the car park. As such the village hub concept has been named the 'Green Village Hub' to emphasise and draw importance to this. The Parish Council could benefit from 'green' funding to enable such projects.

POLICY HG13: A GREEN VILLAGE HUB FOR HURST GREEN

A. Proposals for multi-purpose community facilities as a Green Village Hub in Hurst Green village are supported, subject to the following criteria:

- i. the proposal would not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment; and
- ii. the proposal would not have significant adverse impacts upon the local road network, in accordance with Policy HG21 (Highway capacity at key road junctions) of this Neighbourhood Plan; and
- iii. the proposal would respect the character and wider setting in accordance with Policy HG3 (Character of Development) of this Neighbourhood Plan; and
- iv. if relevant, the proposal should:
 - a. provide and use on-site renewable energy generation; and
 - b. provide electric vehicle charging points (for cars and bicycles) if provided; and
 - c. incorporate mixed uses and an active frontage and interact with adjacent public realm and open spaces.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 7, 4; Core Strategy: RA1, CO1, SRM1, TR3; DaSA: DEN4; High Weald Management Plan: S2; NPPF: 97, 98, 164, 165



Figure 8.0: Village Hub area

Shaded areas show the location of the Village Hall with access road and parking behind, and Lodge Field which contains the infant and junior playgrounds and community orchard.

Policy HG14: Sports and leisure facilities in Hurst Green

Purpose

8.8 Policy HG14 seeks to secure, improve and, where appropriate, expand the sports and leisure facilities within the parish, to meet community needs for all ages and to contribute to the attractiveness of Hurst Green as a place to live and to visit.

Justification

8.9 The Local Housing Demand Survey 2019 revealed that many residents were concerned about the attractiveness of Hurst Green as a place to live, because of its relative lack of local facilities.

8.10 The table below sets out some considerations that have emerged from the community consultation:

Issue	Commentary
Lack of facilities for older children/ teenagers	<p>The lack of provision is recognised as a 'medium priority' in Rother District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Currently there is a teenage shelter located near to the park, however this is in a poor state of repair and not well used. Proposals to improve the facilities at Drewetts Field will help to address this, as well as providing benefits to other members of the community. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• creating a multi-use all-weather sports area• levelling and improving the existing football pitch• exploring potential to include a tennis court• installing an outdoor gym and bike path• replacing the pavilion to include changing facilities• increasing car and cycle parking provision <p>There may be scope to increase facilities attractive to teenagers within Burgh Wood, for instance cycle paths.</p>
Need to improve children's play equipment at Lodge Field	<p>In 2024, the Parish Council undertook the part-replacement of much of the existing play equipment, which serves to enhance the offer at the Village Hub.</p>
Lack of shared spaces for community to relax in	<p>This will be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the enhancement of the Village Hub• reintroduction of a community village green• the development of a nature reserve at Stage Field• the provision of new, publicly accessible green spaces within the site allocations• enhancing accessibility within Burgh Wood

Lack of broader sports facilities	Interest has been expressed by the community in identifying a site for an outdoor bowling green and the creation of an associated club.
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8.11 Whilst not all these aspirations may be achievable in the short-term, the Drewetts sports ground project seeks to deliver a much-improved sporting and recreation facility to serve the parish.

POLICY HG14: SPORTS AND LEISURE FACILITIES IN HURST GREEN

To provide for the increased need for leisure provision to serve all ages and abilities to support the growing population of Hurst Green, development proposals that deliver the following shall be strongly supported:

- i. The improvement in the quality of existing play areas to conform to National Playing Field Association Standards. Where possible, this should incorporate areas for 'natural play' (play provision within natural environments as opposed to man-made.). New major residential development should demonstrate how it has actively provided for natural play through the design of public green spaces.
- ii. The regeneration of Drewetts Field to deliver:
 - a. creating a multi-use all-weather sports area
 - b. levelling and improving the existing football pitch
 - c. exploring potential to include a tennis court
 - d. installing an outdoor gym and bike path
 - e. replacing the pavilion to include changing facilities
 - f. increasing car and cycle parking provision, including with electric charging points
 - g. Increased pedestrian access to the facility from all parts of the village.
- iii. The provision of additional facilities aimed at older children and teenagers, for instance bike trails.

Provision should incorporate sufficient storage space, changing facilities and adequate car and bicycle parking, including for electric vehicles.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 3, 4; Core Strategy: CO3; NPPF: 97, 98, 105, 106, 107



Figure 8.1: Indicative concept plan for Drewetts Field sportsground

Policy HG15: Allotments and community growing spaces

Purpose

8.12 The policy seeks to safeguard the existing allotment space within the parish. It also supports the provision of new allotment space.

Justification

8.13 Many people wish to grow their own food and allotments provide space to do this. They provide other benefits, including bringing together people of different social-economic and cultural backgrounds, improving physical and mental health, providing a source of recreation and wider contributions to green and open space.

8.14 There is one allotment site in Hurst Green located off the A21 on the outskirts of Hurst Green village near Silver Hill. The allotment is currently oversubscribed. Community engagement revealed support to safeguard this provision and to seek the provision of additional allotments closer to Hurst Green village itself.

8.15 The location of the existing allotment site is outside the villages and therefore not accessible to all residents. Those that do access it, typically do so by car. Policy HG15 supports the provision of allotments, and smaller community growing spaces, which can either be incorporated into new developments or be provided within existing open spaces in the parish.

8.16 There is potential to incorporate growing space within new development proposals.



Examples of community growing spaces

POLICY HG15: ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GROWING SPACES

- A. Proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of existing allotment spaces will not be supported.**
- B. Development proposals that incorporate new community growing spaces of a size appropriate to the development, will be supported, in particular where these can be used to create attractive green screening, for example, car parking areas, roads, and commercial servicing areas.**
- C. Proposals that seek to deliver community orchards will be supported.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 3, 6; Core Strategy: CO3; High Weald Management Plan: FH1; NPPF: 97c, 98, 105

9 BUSINESS, ECONOMY AND TOURISM

Policy HG16: Promoting sustainable rural tourism

Purpose

9.1 Hurst Green's attractive location within the High Weald, coupled with its proximity to a great number of regionally and nationally significant visitor attractions, presents an opportunity for the parish to develop itself as both a destination and base for sustainable rural tourism. Policy HG16 supports proposals that would help to achieve this.

Justification

9.2 By 2025, VisitBritain estimates that the UK will have a tourism industry worth over £257 billion – just under 10% of UK GDP and supporting almost 3.8 million jobs, which is around 11% of the total UK number.

Rother's Visitor Economy 2017

- 6.3 million trips were undertaken
- 5.8 million day trips, 0.5 million overnight visits
- 2.3 million nights in the area as a result of overnight trips
- £274.3 million spent by tourists during their visit to the area
- £22.8 million spent on average in the local economy every month
- £112.6 million generated by overnight visits
- £161.6 million generated from day trips
- £329.2 million spent in the local area as a result of tourism (taking into account multiplier effects)
- 7,837 jobs supported, both for local residents and from those living nearby

More information can be found at: www.rother.gov.uk/business/support-and-advice/accommodation-start-up-pack/tourism-stats-strategies-and-surveys

9.3 At a regional level, a pan-Sussex tourism initiative exists - the Sussex Visitor Economy Initiative. Funded by 3 councils, East Sussex, West Sussex, and Brighton & Hove City, the Initiative has published a report Sussex Visitor Economy, which outlines that the visitor economy to Sussex is large and significant with £3.9bn of spend (£5bn of impact), an amount that is comparable to Iceland and 2/3 that of Wales, and that 'it deserves to be taken seriously as an economic driver for the region'. Hurst Green's positioning aligns well with that overarching pan-Sussex vision and the Parish Council will engage with this project.

9.4 Following the Covid-19 pandemic, it is highly likely that visitor numbers to the area and the visitor economy have increased since the 2017 Rother study was undertaken.

9.5 The Hurst Green Local Tourism Survey, 2020, revealed that the local community would support the idea of developing Hurst Green's role as a gateway to the High Weald, promoting activities that are sympathetic with, and celebrate the rural nature of, the parish, including walking, cycling, visiting historic sites, enjoying local food and drink and visiting museums and farm shops. Local sites include Devil's Leap waterfall (within

Burgh Wood), Stage Field, English Heritage castles and National Trust sites, privately owned gardens, such as Merriments Gardens, and Pashley Manor, all within a few minutes' drive, as well as the National Pinetum and Forest at Bedgebury, and Bewl Water (reservoir and woodland activity centre).

- 9.6 Attracting visitors to the parish – particularly those staying at least one night – could provide a valuable source of income for local shops, businesses, and accommodation providers, as well as creating new employment opportunities for local people, offer scope for farm diversification and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the local area.
- 9.7 The existing local infrastructure available to support visitors, however, is limited, with a handful of B&Bs and few places to eat. Therefore proposals that would support the development of such facilities, in a way that is in keeping with the rural character of the High Weald, would be welcomed. In particular, there is support for lower-impact facilities such as camping and glamping, which could capitalise on the area's dark skies and its good connectivity to the wider area.
- 9.8 The rural location of Hurst Green, and the geographic spread of attractions, makes it difficult to visit without access to a car. Nevertheless, Hurst Green's proximity to Etchingham Station should be promoted and there could be potential for bike hire and associated cycle parking, including for electric cycles (which could be particularly welcome given the steep hill between Etchingham and Hurst Green), to support more sustainable modes of transport between the station, accommodation and attractions and wider area. Applicants are encouraged to refer to [the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) and liaise with the Parish Council and Rother District Council to see whether funding might be available to progress such links, and to develop a case for such a scheme which might help with future funding opportunities to help deliver such initiatives.
- 9.9 Hurst Green already supports a number of tourism and service-related businesses. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposal will contribute to the local economy, environment and community. For instance, employing local people, reducing the need for people to travel out-of-parish for work, supporting other local businesses such as an accommodation provider and local eateries.

POLICY HG16: PROMOTING RURAL TOURISM

Development proposals that support rural tourism-related facilities, recreational enterprises, visitor accommodation, attractions and activities – including opportunities for glamping and camping - to encourage day and staying visitors will be welcomed and supported where the following criteria can be met:

- i. there are demonstrable economic benefits to the proposals; and**
- ii. there is no significant detrimental impact on the existing community; and**
- iii. proposals where possible meet the concept of rural tourism regarding green travel, as defined by the High Weald AONB Unit; and**
- iv. the siting, scale and design has strong regard to the local character of the High Weald.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 7; Core Strategy: EC1, EC6, RA2, RA3, RA4; DaSA: DEC2; High Weald Management Plan: LBE2; NPPF: 89, 90, 189

Policy HG17: Supporting local employment opportunities

Purpose

9.10 The Local Plan already safeguards against the loss of existing commercial premises. This policy recognises the contribution of home-based and smaller businesses to Hurst Green and seeks to encourage opportunities for these, including the provision of start-up and move-on business units. This would provide a greater incentive and opportunity for local people to work locally.

Justification

9.11 It is important that the employment base of Hurst Green is protected. There are only two large commercial sites within Hurst Green village and these are shown on Figure 9.1.

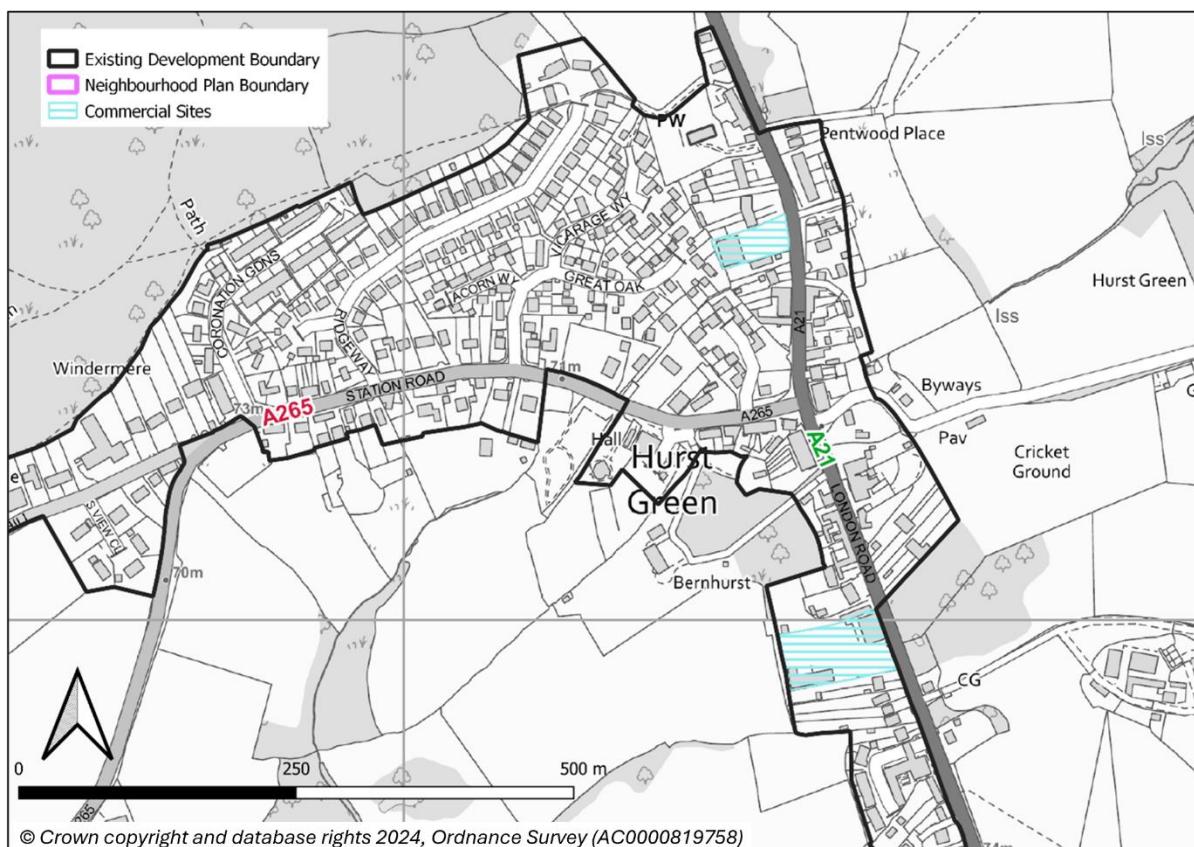


Figure 9.1: Commercial sites in Hurst Green village

9.12 There are however numerous commercial sites elsewhere in the parish, which provide local employment including agricultural businesses, garden centres, several restaurants, a haulage company, farm shops and other service businesses.

9.13 It is notable that a high percentage of people work from home in the parish, 18% at the time of the 2011 census. Changes to ways of working, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, are likely to have resulted in a rise in numbers. Unfortunately, as there was a national lockdown during the 2021 census, this is the most up-to-date reliable data, however in 2021 this number had increased to 30.1%. Therefore, opportunities to encourage and enable homeworking should be supported. This includes ensuring that

all new development is served by superfast broadband (which is currently unavailable to all residents), and existing capacity increased to meet demand.

- 9.14 The workforce living in the parish of Hurst Green is well-qualified, but the majority of employment opportunities for those living here are in nearby settlements such as Hawkhurst and Tunbridge Wells and also further away, including in Hastings, Bexhill, Maidstone, and beyond, including in London.
- 9.15 Opportunities to commute by non-car modes are limited; the nearest railway station, whilst close-by at Etchingham, is only used by 8% of people (2011 Census). Inevitably the majority of people working away from Hurst Green will do so by car.
- 9.16 The provision of local employment opportunities will not only provide greater prospects for local people to access local jobs but will ensure that these are sustainable in terms of the patterns of commuting that they generate. Therefore this policy seeks to protect existing commercial sites against change of use. It also seeks to encourage new start-up opportunities by supporting proposals for flexible business units. It will be important to encourage appropriate buildings or units that can be rented out at sufficiently low rents to attract their use by business start-ups and existing home workers.

POLICY HG17: SUPPORTING LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Encouraging flexible start-up space and homeworking

A. Proposals to provide working spaces that encourage homeworking and creative small industries, for instance through accommodation suitable for incubator/start-up business space on flexible terms, will be supported through:

- i. provision of new buildings or units or the conversion of existing buildings;
- ii. enabling extensions and small new garden offices to facilitate home-working.

B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location proposals for new workspaces should demonstrate the way in which they can be incorporated within their immediate locality without generating any unacceptable impact on the amenity of residential properties and on the capacity and safety of the local highways network.

C. Proposals to provide start-up business space – including office/workshop space, incubator and start-up units - on flexible terms will be supported, especially where:

- i. there is no adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding areas; and
- ii. access by public transport, cycle and on foot, and catering for all users including children and those with disabilities, is created, maintained and enhanced where it is appropriate; and
- iii. there is no unacceptable impact on the capacity and safety of the local highways network; and
- iv. The site has suitable vehicular access and the appropriate level of local car parking that conforms to the ESCC standards (ESCC Guidance for Parking in Non-Residential Developments).

D. All new commercial and community properties within the Neighbourhood Plan area should have the necessary infrastructure and ducting so as to be capable of being served by (or be ready for) a superfast broadband (fibre-optic) connection, unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with providers that this would not be either possible, practical or economically viable.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 7; Core Strategy: EC3, EC4, RA2; DaSA: DEC2; High Weald Management Plan: LBE2; NPPF: 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 97, 98

10 GETTING AROUND – SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

Policy HG18: Encouraging active travel

Purpose

10.1 With the population of Hurst Green set to grow through the allocation of a number of housing sites in and around Hurst Green village, traffic and movement around and through the village will be an even greater issue for residents and visitors alike than at present. This policy seeks to encourage non-car modes of transport to access facilities within the parish and identify where new paths and connections might be created or existing ones enhanced. This will provide both physical and mental health benefits for those living locally by increasing active travel in the area.

Justification

10.2 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan cannot prevent people from using their cars for short journeys, maintaining and improving (in terms of accessibility, signage and attractiveness) the public rights of way network will encourage shorter, local journeys to be made by foot or bicycle. This help to alleviate congestion and associated air pollution (particularly outside the school and at the main junctions) it will encourage regular healthy exercise.

10.3 Linking both existing and new developments to the network of existing routes is vital to encourage more walking and cycling and less use of the car but also to connect these areas and their residents to the key facilities in the village. This approach is being explored as part of East Sussex's Rural Spatial Strategy for the wider area, in particular how settlements could share facilities and have better shared transport connections.

10.4 Figures 10.1 and 10.2 show the existing foot and cycleways in the wider parish. As part of the Master Planning work undertaken by the Parish Council, a number of aspirational additional route connections that would assist in connecting up the various local facilities with the main housing areas were identified.

10.5 Two new crossing points across the A21, one opposite the school and one to the north of Hurst Green village. The delivery of the southern crossing is considered as part of the site allocations contained in this Neighbourhood Plan. The northern crossing would require further discussions with National Highways alongside any other traffic calming measures that could improve the setting for non-car users.

POLICY HG18: ENCOURAGING ACTIVE TRAVEL

- A. To ensure that residents can access the main local facilities and recreational areas – including the Village Hub, the school, Drewetts Field, and the Church - in Hurst Green in a sustainable and safe way, all new residential development proposals, subject to their nature and scale, should ensure safe pedestrian access to link up with the existing footpath and cycleway network, and public transport network, as defined in Figures 10.1 and 10.2.
- B. The development of footpath and cycle routes which link Hurst Green, Silver Hill and Swiftsden to the nearby villages of Hawkhurst, Robertsbridge, and Etchingham will be supported.
- C. Development that includes the provision of new access roads will be encouraged to provide segregated pedestrian, vehicular and, where possible, cycle access, and also ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured. The use of shared surfaces will not be supported except in limited cases.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 2, 6; Core Strategy: RA1, TR2, TR3; High Weald Management Plan: R1; NPPF: 97, 107, 111, 112, 113, 115, 117

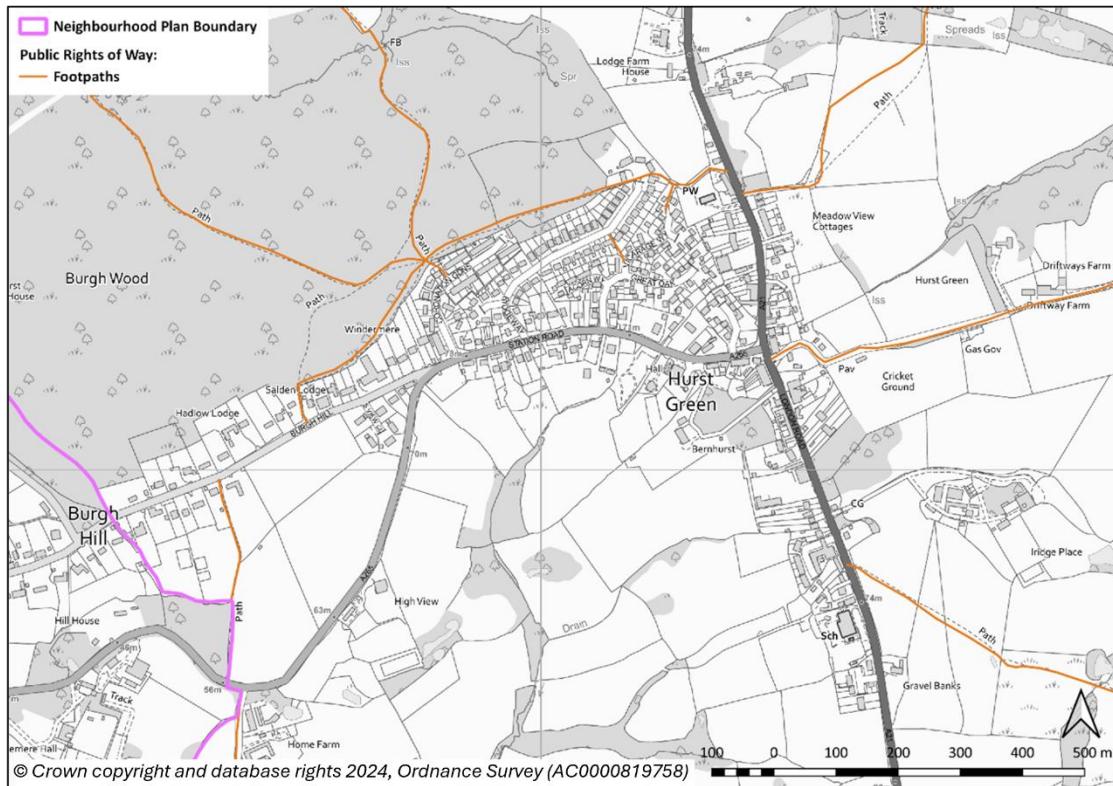


Figure 10.1: Public Rights of Way network across the parish (village inset)

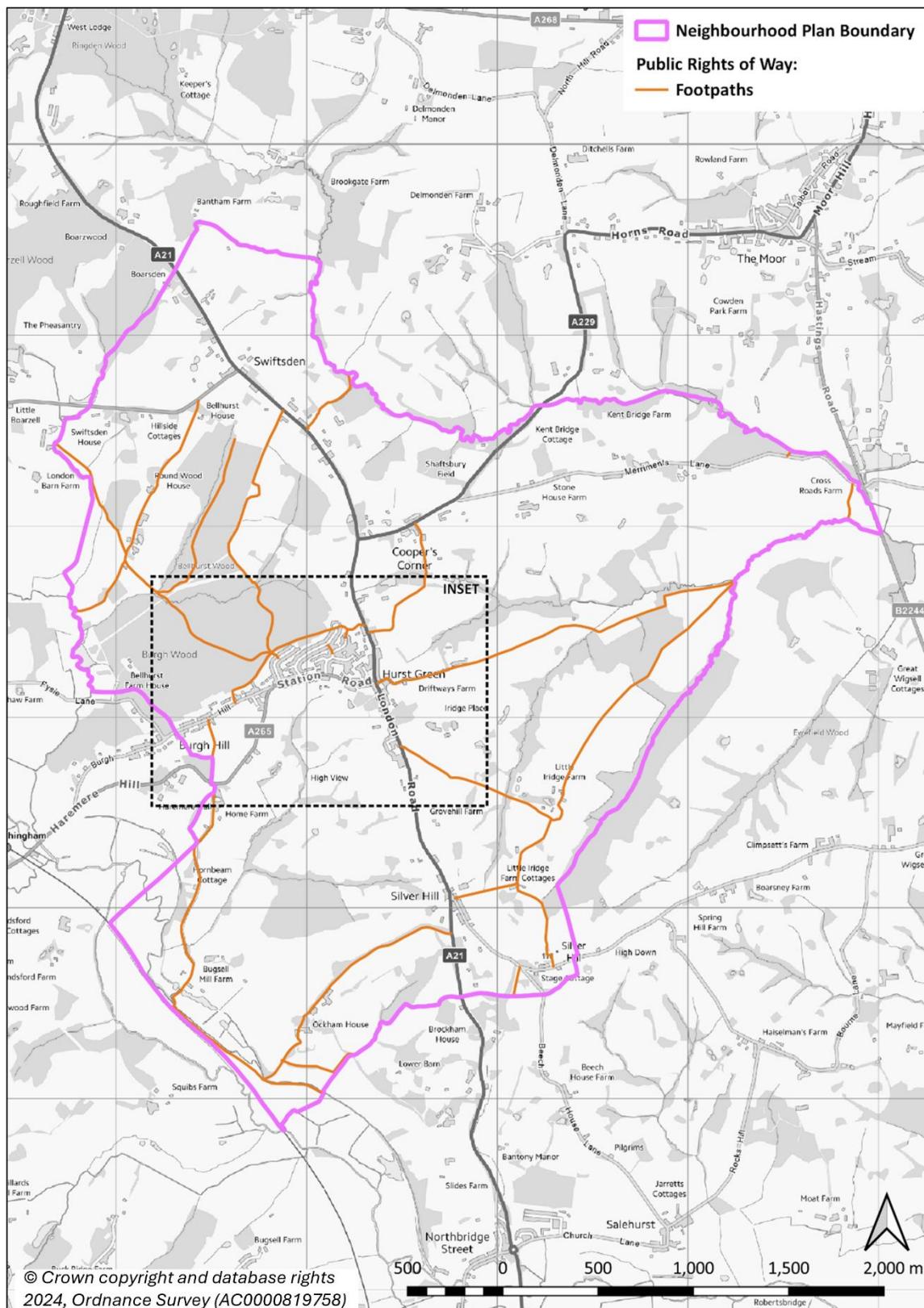


Figure 10.2: Public Rights of Way network across the parish

Policy HG19: Public car parking

Purpose

10.6 Policy HG19 seeks to ensure that any existing public, off-road parking is not lost and that opportunities to provide additional parking are maximised.

Justification

10.7 Car parking is a significant issue in Hurst Green with many homes – including those built more recently - being built without adequate parking provision. The Local Parking Survey, undertaken in 2019 to support the Neighbourhood Plan, revealed that 90% of respondents do not consider there to be sufficient car parking for residents in the village, which has led to heavy on-street parking, with cars frequently blocking verges and pavements. Hotspots include: Coronation Gardens, Dairy Close, Great Oak, Foundry Close, McMichaels Way, Station Road and London Road.

10.8 Off-street public car parking is currently available at the Village Hub and there may be scope to increase the number of spaces in this area. In addition, the plans to improve facilities at Drewetts Field include provision for car parking. Finally, the development (previously proposed as Policy HGSA2 [Site HG22/43: Land Opposite Hurst Green School]) which has been granted planning permission ahead of the neighbourhood plan being completed, includes provision for a drop-off point for the primary school (and an associated crossing) and parking for those using the new village green.

10.9 Notwithstanding the emphasis to promote sustainable and active modes of transport, it will be important to retain, manage and improve the quality of the existing car parking areas, especially where they are off-street. In addition, to support proposals that enable the provision of additional public car parking, particularly considering the desire to promote the parish as a visitor destination. Cycle parking and electric vehicle (including bikes) charging points should be provided.

10.10 This policy complements policy HG20 (Residential car parking), which seeks to ensure that any new development within the parish provides adequate off-street car parking and not exacerbate existing parking problems.

POLICY HG19: PUBLIC CAR PARKING

- A. Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces will not be supported.**
- B. Proposals that enable the provision of additional, publicly accessible off-road car parking spaces – including provision of car parking - to alleviate parking congestion in the village particularly along Coronation Gardens, Great Oak, Foundry Close, Dairy Close, Station Road and London Road will be supported.**
- C. Alongside public car parking provision, the following facilities will be strongly supported to be provided as part of that provision:**
 - i. dedicated bicycle parking facilities, preferably with e-bike charging points, covered and secure; and**
 - ii. future-proofed electric vehicle charging points.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 2; Core Strategy: TR4; NPPF: 108, 112

Policy HG20: Residential parking provision

Purpose

10.11 Policy HG20 seeks to ensure that new developments provide sufficient practical parking and do not exacerbate the existing problems. Where possible, spaces should be provided, which can be used by the wider community.



Justification

10.12 As well as safeguarding public car parking, the community is insistent that all new dwellings should have sufficient car parking spaces to cater for the residents, visitors, and service vehicles. Many of the older properties in Hurst Green have insufficient parking for the number of cars owned by those occupying the dwellings. Some of this is because the housing is sufficiently old that car usage was not taken into account when they were built. The result of this is that as car ownership has grown, there are high levels of on-street parking which has led to the narrowing of roads (particularly on Station Road near the A21/A265 junction), making it difficult for vehicles to pass, particularly emergency vehicles, buses and larger vehicles. It also makes it dangerous for pedestrians who must cross the road between parked cars.

10.13 The Hurst Green Design Codes includes advice, by broad development area, about the optimum way to provide provision for parking, and this should be followed.

10.14 In addition, and considering the high levels of car ownership, well above district and regional averages, the parking standards for any new development as set out in the East Sussex Parking Standards must be regarded as a minimum standard and should be exceeded where possible.

POLICY HG20: RESIDENTIAL PARKING PROVISION

- A. Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking must provide suitable parking laid out in accordance with the recommendations set out in the Design Codes document, in order to minimise obstruction of the local road network in the interests of the safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.**
- B. For all new residential developments, including redevelopments where there is an increase in the number of bedrooms in a property, the minimum number of car parking spaces to be provided will be in accordance with, and where possible exceed, East Sussex's Guidance for Parking at New Residential Development, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative provision would be appropriate on a specific site.**
- C. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location the design of parking should:**
 - i. Use landscaping with native species to minimise the visual impact of parked cars.**
 - ii. Provide space for dedicated cycle parking and/or storage.**
 - iii. Maximise the number of parking spaces close to and in sight of the dwellings they serve.**
 - iv. Provide appropriate levels of parking for visitors and service vehicles.**

Subterranean or basement car parking that meets these design points would be supported.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 2, 6; Core Strategy: TR4; NPPF: 112, 113, 114, 115

11 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

Purpose

- 11.1. Rother District Council's adopted Core Strategy requires the Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan to deliver at least 75 dwellings over the current and emerging Local plan period (to 2040). During the Neighbourhood Plan preparation, Site HG 35 (Foundry Close), Site HG 6 (London Road North), and Site HG 22/43 (London Road South) have already received planning permission from Rother District Council, leaving a residual housing need of at least 1 new home.
- 11.2. The entire parish of Hurst Green is contained within the High Weald National Landscape, and therefore the landscape surrounding any settlements is very sensitive. There are also many heritage assets, above and below ground, that need careful consideration. This section of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out the site allocations to deliver the homes required.

Justification

- 11.3. To support the housing site allocation process, in 2019 Hurst Green Parish Council identified an initial long list of potential sites for housing. These were identified through two local Call for Sites exercises (conducted in 2018 and 2019), and a review of Rother District Council's SHLAA and DaSA site allocations (which were undertaken prior to the neighbourhood plan), and of other sites known to Rother District Council. The Parish Council, with support from The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, commissioned professional consultancy, AECOM, to undertake a high-level assessment of the suitability of these potential sites for development. Some of the sites were found to be unavailable, leaving 17 as available and potentially suitable.
- 11.4. Following the publication of AECOM's high-level assessment report in May 2019, a further six potential sites were identified for consideration. These, along with the 17 original sites, were assessed again by professional planner, Alison Eardley, and included comments sought from both the High Weald AONB unit and from Rother District Council. The second assessment reduced the list of potential sites to 12. The Site Assessments Summary Report, available in the evidence base, details the process.
- 11.5. The list of 12 possible housing sites was further reduced to six: one site had already received planning permission, two had amalgamated, one had recently been refused planning permission and three were located well beyond the development boundary.
- 11.6. The largest constraining factor facing every potential housing site was the impact on the landscape. For this reason, the potential sites were subject to a further high level landscape assessment commissioned by the Parish Council. This presented detailed information about the potential for each site, and whether sites could be developed in a way that would mitigate impact landscape impacts.

- 11.7. Rother District Council have been involved in the housing site selection process throughout the development of this plan, conducting on-site visits, reviewing proposals and providing advice and feedback on possible housing sites.
- 11.8. Rother District Council informed the Parish Council early on in the development of the plan, that any future housing sites would need to be within or adjacent to the existing development boundary to be considered for allocation. Two sites, additional to the six, explored within the landscape assessment, were in Silver Hill. They were included as it was felt by the Parish Council, that should the need for a housing exception site come forward, that this landscape information would support this process. Of the two sites in Silver Hill, one was found to have potentially significant landscape impacts if developed. The other would also have landscape impacts, but to a lesser extent. As this site is outside the development boundary, it is not considered for allocation.
- 11.9. In parallel with the landscape report, AECOM was commissioned to prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment to inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, which would consider the environmental impacts of all the Plan policies, including the potential sites. A series of options were presented, detailing the number of dwellings that could be delivered, and the relative impact on different aspects of the environment.
- 11.10. Details of the six possible sites and the potential delivery options were displayed at a public exhibition on October 17th 2021, along with a general explanation of the selection process and planning policies linked to each site. Feedback from the residents was considered by the Steering Group to inform the list of sites and the mitigation measures required to enable developments to take place in line with the policies in this Plan, the NPPF and the Rother Core Strategy.
- 11.11. The site allocation policies are set out below. Option A of the SEA Options Appraisal was considered to deliver the quantum of homes required, with the least environmental impacts. These sites were also considered to offer additional community benefits in line with the objectives of the neighbourhood plan. Site HG 06 is also identified for development, as this would provide additional homes to provide a suitable buffer in the context of potential rising housing numbers in the context of the emerging Local Plan.
- 11.12. A further site (HG 45) is also allocated for approximately four homes. Whilst the size of this possible housing site falls under the level that Rother District Council would consider contributing to the overall housing need (anything less than 6 dwellings is considered windfall), the site has the potential to offer community benefit, by way of a new public footpath serving Drewetts Sportsground, and therefore has been allocated to secure this community benefit.
- 11.13. Following additional consultation with residents in Burgh Hill, undertaken during 2023-2024, in March 2024, the Parish Council decided to remove site HG 11 from the plan. To avoid any confusion with documents published at regulation 14, the housing policies in the plan have not been renumbered.

Policy HGSA2: Site HG22/43: Land opposite Hurst Green School, London Road



Site context

- 11.14. This is a 2.05 ha greenfield site located in the High Weald AONB, directly east and beyond the development boundary of Hurst Green, and it is also directly east of the A21. The Site gently rises and is highest on the south end, approximately 81m above ordnance datum and drops away to the northern boundary to a low point at 75m above ordnance datum.
- 11.15. The site has a water main and easement which runs from midway across the northern boundary to gravel banks before hugging the site's western boundary to the south. The landscape is comprised of semi-improved grass field on light to medium soils. To the east the boundary is on rising ground and it is delineated by a post and wire fence.
- 11.16. The site is an undulating semi-improved grass field located at the village edge. It is well screened from the settlement by dense boundary tree and understorey planting which creates a sense of enclosure to the west, north and south. To the elevated eastern areas of the site, it is more open and therefore more influenced by the parkland landscape around Iridge Place to the north and north east and the countryside High Weald character to the east and south. There is intervisibility with a handful of neighbouring properties and there are long distance and high-quality open views to the High Weald ridge line to the east and north east with more limited views from the south to the High Weald ridge lines to the west. The boundaries to the south, west and north are densely planted with trees and understorey planting which creates a sense of enclosure in those directions.
- 11.17. Within the site there are several high-quality mature specimen trees which contribute to the parkland character. The air and noise pollution of the A21 is a landscape detracting element, which becomes more significant towards the western boundary.

PRoW HG29 bisects the site as it moves from the north west part of the site before exiting approximately half way down the eastern boundary.

- 11.18. There is one Grade II* Listed Building, Iridge Place (Reference 1365292) located 150m north east of the site (also an Historic Farmstead). There are four Grade II Listed Buildings in close proximity to the site, these are: 115 and 117 London Road (Reference: 1365327); and 119, 121 and 123 London Road (Reference: 1034436) all of which are on the opposite side of the A21.
- 11.19. Abutting the north west corner of the site is 76 London Road (Reference: 1276290) which is located north of the site's northern boundary (also an Historic Farmstead) and the Stables of Iridge Place to the north west of the House (Reference: 1034440). The A21 is an Historic Routeway (Road) and PRoW HG29 is an Historic Routeway (PRoW). The site's southern boundary is an Historic Field Boundary.
- 11.20. There is evidence of a historic treeline that ran across the site in the 1700s, of which two oak trees remain.



*Red line indicating evidence of the historic treeline running across the site
(Source: Google Earth)*

Proposed development

- 11.21. The site is considered suitable for approximately 28 dwellings.
- 11.22. The access to the site to be agreed with National Highways, is from the A21 London Road. Development proposals will have to demonstrate the ability to accommodate a satisfactory vehicular access. The access to the site provides an opportunity to create a distinctive gateway into Hurst Green village as well as a school drop-off and collection point.

- 11.23. In order to provide the opportunity for a greater degree of connectivity by foot and cycling between the proposed development and local facilities including the village hub and the proposed nature reserve. The opportunity should be taken to provide a new crossing point to access the school. PRoW HG29 should be enhanced and incorporated into the overall design of the site, providing a walking link to the existing public green space at Stage Field in Silver Hill.
- 11.24. The most sensitive part of the site is located on the Southern and Eastern areas, where there are good quality views to the High Weald ridge line to the east, where there is a parkland character. These areas should form a large-scale Village Green as an amenity for the whole village if the site is developed. The Village Green must have a minimum size of 800m². There is a historic tree line that runs diagonally across the site, which should be reinstated. Any development should be to the west of this tree line.
- 11.25. The northern and lowest area of the site has the potential to receive surface water from across the site. The proposed surface water attenuation strategy could link via a series of bio-engineered surface water retention features to a village pond or ponds with the associated green infrastructure (GI), landscape, ecological and amenity benefits. The road and path design should be dictated by the GI design. The GI (rather than the road design) should lead the masterplan process to create a development that is sensitive to its landscape context. The road should explore the option to be shared use and seek to re-use the surface water it generates for landscape and ecological benefit.
- 11.26. New dwellings, built forms and structures (including fences) that face on to sensitive outlooks such as the High Weald to the east and the Listed Buildings must be sympathetic in terms of architectural elevations with high quality design, the use of local vernacular or appropriate contemporary materials and disguising built forms with earthworks, planting, green roofs, green walls etc. Low level or cowled lighting to be used to lessen impacts on dark skies. High quality public views to be retained.
- 11.27. The development should utilise the existing slopes to create a sense of place and setting with built forms that step down with the topography and which emphasise horizontal lines. The constraints of the water main and the need to protect PRoW HG29 offer opportunities for new green spines through the Site which could enhance the GI.
- 11.28. The boundary planting should be strengthened with indigenous species and a high percentage of evergreens where screening of views is required.
- 11.29. As the site is so sensitive, including from a landscape and environmental perspective, this policy is comprehensive to ensure that any development on the site is appropriate.

POLICY HGSA2: SITE ALLOCATION – LAND OPPOSITE HURST GREEN SCHOOL (HG22/43)

A. The site is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 28 dwellings. These homes shall provide a mix of unit size and a mix of tenure in line with Policy HG2.

B. Proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

Design

- i. The design of any new buildings on the site will be required to demonstrate how it relates to the local character and is appropriate to its rural location. Guidance is provided in the High Weald AONB Management Plan, Masterplan and Design Codes, detailed in Policy HG4, and in the High Weald Housing Design Guide.
- ii. A car parking strategy should be agreed at the outset with an aim of reducing landscape and visual impacts (specifically avoiding glint and glare impacts for views back in from the High Weald to the south). Car parking in driveways and on the road is more visually intrusive and suburbanising than discretely located and easily accessible block parking. The former should be avoided with a preference for the latter wherever possible.
- iii. The southern extreme of the site should provide an enhanced gateway into Hurst Green Village.

Landscape and heritage

- iv. The existing boundary planting should be strengthened with indigenous species and a high percentage of evergreens where screening of views is required.
- v. A publicly accessible Village Green space of at least 800m² must be provided; this should be located at the most sensitive part of the site, to minimise impacts on views and the setting of the heritage asset.
- vi. The path of the historic treeline running diagonally north-east to south-west across the western half of the site must be retained and replanted.
- vii. Provision of information board at the village green which document the site's former history, landscape setting and village green amenity.
- viii. Provision of benches within the village green.

Biodiversity net gain

- ix. The constraints of the water main and the need to protect PRoW HG29 offer opportunities for new green spines through the Site which could enhance the Green Infrastructure. The replanting of the historic treeline would also add to habitat provision.

Access

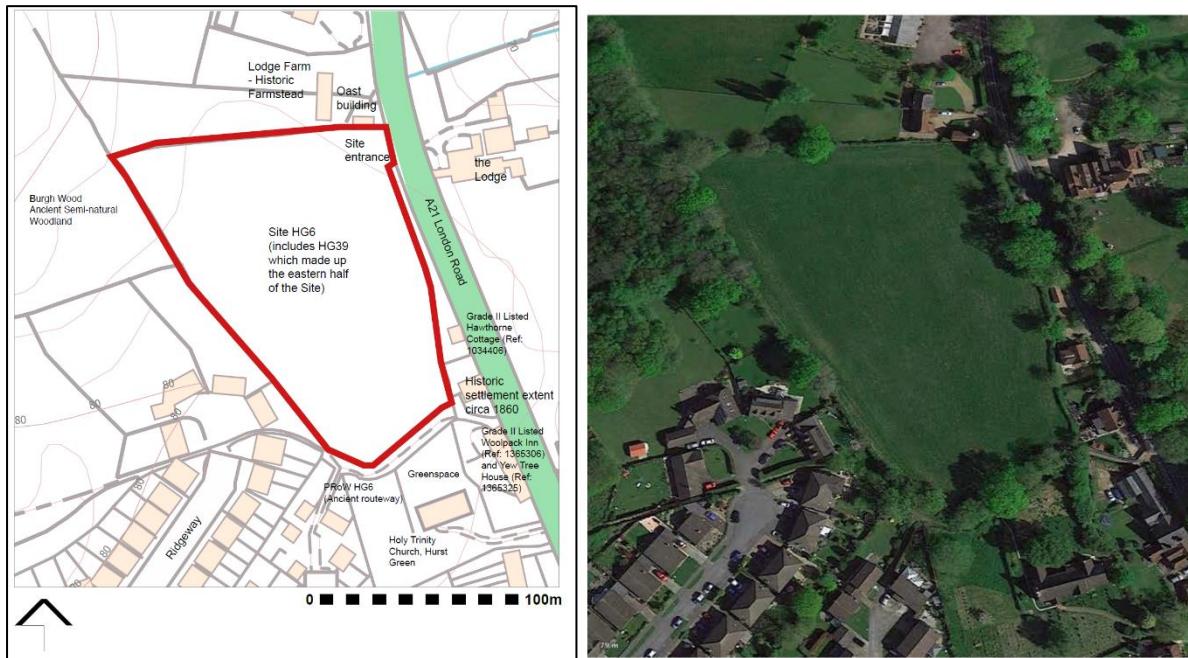
- x. Dwellings within the site must be accessible by a separate pedestrian access (i.e. pavement) as opposed to a shared surface (road/pavement).
- xi. The main vehicular access to the site could be from A21 London Road.

- xii. **Provision must be made for a community car park, incorporating a school drop off/collection point.**
- xiii. **Provision should be made for a new crossing point across the A21 London Road.**
- xiv. **The Public Right of Way HG29 must be enhanced and incorporated into the design and layout to improve cycle and pedestrian connections to the existing public green space at Stage Field in Silver Hill.**

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 1; Core Strategy: RA1, OSS2, OSS3, OSS4, RA2, RA3, EN1, EN2, EN5; DaSa: DEN1, DEN2, DEN4, DEN5, DIM2; NPPF:

11, 12, 13-14, 17-18, 66-70, 71, 73, 77-79, 108-110, 125-126, 130-138, 189, 210, 212

Policy HGSA3: Site HG6: The field opposite the Lodge, London Road



Site context

11.30. This is a greenfield site of 1.71 ha. It is a medieval field with historic field boundaries that is located in the High Weald AONB, directly north and beyond the Development Boundary of Hurst Green. It is approximately 5 metres (m) west of the A21 the busy trunk road that runs through the village to link Hastings in the south to London (via Tunbridge Wells) in the north. The site is semi-improved grassland on medium to light soils, in Flood Zone 1 and is Grade 3 Listed agricultural land. The site gently rises from the north up to a high point at the centre of the site at an approximate level of 75m above ordnance data and then drops away to the north west. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and located to the north west of a wider open field.

11.31. The site is a village edge, semi-improved grassland field of historic interest in the nationally protected High Weald AONB landscape. The site is visually well contained as it is enclosed by boundary planting although there are occasional gaps that allow some partial and obscured views and is more open to the north. The site's tranquillity is heavily influenced by the landscape detracting traffic and noise from the A21 which physically severs Hurst Green to create distinct east and west village halves.

11.32. The site's local context is described as follows: to the north east and opposite the A21 the character is rural village edge with a large house (the Lodge) set back and obscured from the site by the A21. To the south east there is historic settlement (including listed buildings) in a residential ribbon pattern as the village follows the A21 to the south. To the south is Public Right of Way (PRoW) Hurst Green (HG) 6, the Hurst Green Holy Trinity Church (a landmark building) and a small area of Greenspace associated with the Church. To the south west is the Ridgeway, a late 20th Century, suburban, residential cul-de-sac with some first floor intervisibility from a handful of houses (at the cul-de-sac end). To the north there are some houses including the landmark oast building in the Historic Farmstead of Lodge Farm, the farm shop (with its landscape detracting car parking) and beyond is high quality High Weald rural,

undulating landscape with its irregular agricultural historic field pattern defined by historic hedge and tree boundaries. Buildings in the local context to the site, have a mix of poor to high quality architecture, built forms and materials which have varied levels of historic interest. There are suburban gardens located directly west of the site which act as a buffer between the site, the village edge and Burgh Wood Ancient Woodland

11.33. The Burgh Wood ancient semi-natural woodland is located at the site's north western boundary and the 15m protected buffer zone (government guidance zone) extends into the site. Grade II Hawthorne Cottage (Reference: 1034406) and its setting (although heavily impacted by the A21) is located directly east of the site with first floor open views directly into the site. There are also Grade II buildings (Listed Woolpack Inn (Ref: 1365306) and Yew Tree House (Ref: 1365325) located south-east of the site although it is judged that there is a lack of intervisibility with the site from these buildings. The area to the southeast which includes the Listed Buildings (above) is listed as historic settlement (extent circa 1860) and follows the A21 through the central part of the village to the south.

11.34. Existing trees are generally indigenous and located along the boundaries

Proposed development

11.35. The site is considered suitable for approximately 26 dwellings. The access to the site would be from the A21 and would need to be agreed with National Highways.

11.36. The development should take a landscape-led approach taking account of the topography of the site. The most site sensitive parcel of land is located on the highest central area of the site where there are high quality views to the High Weald ridge line to the north. This area has the opportunity for lower (height) level landscape proposals (rather than taller built forms) such as amenity open space.

11.37. All planting to boundaries and along the Green Infrastructure (GI) routes to strengthen High Weald historic interest with indigenous species (include consideration of increasing the percentage of evergreen species where views may need to be screened all year round). An area east of the ancient woodland buffer could link the open spaces for enhanced protection and a high quality green and blue infrastructure connection through the site. This space should be a minimum of 15m to meet government guidance, but ideally should be larger.

11.38. The Grade II Listed Hawthorne Cottage setting offers an opportunity for mitigation in the form of sensitive open space and to be an integral part of the green/blue (attenuation) Infrastructure through the site. Opportunities to link the site to PRoW HG6 (historic routeway) and greenspace network should be undertaken. Community engagement revealed that the Church has no car park, and this should be accommodated as part of the development.

11.39. In order for the development to occur the following are required: detailed topographic survey; highway design (or feasibility must be confirmed); a heritage scoping statement; further ecological survey; and a tree survey (including tree protection measures). Further landscape assessment would be needed as and when a Highways design would be forthcoming.

**POLICY HGSA3: SITE ALLOCATION: FIELD OPPOSITE THE LODGE,
LONDON ROAD (HG6)**

- I. The site is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 26 dwellings. These homes shall provide a mix of unit size and a mix of tenure in line with Policy HG2.

Proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

Design

- II. The design of any new buildings on the site will be required to demonstrate how it relates to the local character and avoids a suburban feel. Guidance is provided in the Masterplan and Design Codes, detailed in Policy HG4, and the High Weald Design Guide.
- III. Open space is to be provided in the setting of the Grade II Listed Hawthorne Cottage and other listed buildings.
- IV. Provision of community growing spaces (allotments) within the site boundary.

Landscape and heritage

- V. The higher parts of the site are less suitable for development and should be retained for accessible open space.
- VI. A minimum 15m buffer is to be provided between the ancient woodland and proposed development.
- VII. All planting must be indigenous species that blend with the retained existing habitats with a consideration to increase the percentage of evergreen species where views may need to be screened all year round. Provision of a public information board at the village green which documents the site's former history, landscape setting and amenity.

Biodiversity net gain

- VIII. Creation of a village pond, to serve as an attenuation pond.
- IX. Provision of public green space with benches.
- X. Green corridors are to be provided throughout the site, linking the natural features: ancient woodland, the pond, green spaces.

Access

- XI. Dwellings within the site must be accessible by a separate pedestrian access (i.e. pavement) as opposed to a shared surface (road/pavement).
- XII. The main vehicular access to the site could be from A21 London Road.

XIII. Links to PRoW HG6 (Historic Routeway) and the wider greenspace network must form an integral part of the site access.

XIV. The provision of publicly accessible car parking to serve the village church.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 1; Core Strategy: RA1, OSS2, OSS3, OSS4, RA2, RA3, EN1, EN2, EN5, TR3, TR4; DaSa: DEN1, DEN2, DEN4, DEN5, DIM2, DHG12; NPPF: 11, 12, 13-14, 17-18, 66-70, 71, 73, 77-79, 108-110, 125-126, 130-138, 189, 210, 212

Policy HGSA4: Site HG45: Land adjacent to Iridge Place, London Road



Site Context

- 11.40. This site is 0.44 hectares (ha) in size and is located in the High Weald AONB directly south east and beyond the eastern edge, on the opposite side of A21, of the Hurst Green development boundary. It is located in close proximity and south east of the historic settlement boundary.
- 11.41. PRoW HG31 (historic routeway) runs east to west approximately 70m to the north and Drewetts Field Sportsground (a public open space) directly abuts the north eastern boundary. The site is relatively flat at a level around 75m above ordnance datum.
- 11.42. The site is recti-linear in shape, it is part of a modern field pattern and a village edge location. It is densely overgrown with naturally regenerating and impenetrable trees and scrub. The main features of the site are difficult to discern as access has been limited however there are some key influences on the character and these are: the naturally regenerating secondary vegetation to the centre of the site; the mature tree planting to all boundaries; the openness to 70 London Road (Oaklands) located at the north western boundary; the landscape detracting (air and noise pollution) from the A21 located at the site's south eastern boundary; and the proximity to the (Iridge Place) parkland landscape to the south and Drewetts Sportsground greenspace to the north east. The north east boundary is an historic boundary. Obliquely opposite the site and on the opposite side of the A21 is the Grade II Listed 93 London Road.
- 11.43. The site is comprised of semi mature secondary tree and shrub planting with a dense scrubby understorey towards the north east area with dense naturally regenerating woodland planting towards the south west end all of which is growing on light to medium soils. The site has a wooded and wild character although there are views to Oaklands directly north west and there are obscured views through the well planted north eastern boundary to the playing field to the north, both of which have a slight suburbanising influence.

- 11.44. The site has a historic boundary to the north east. There are unlikely to be any significant views from the Historic Settlement boundary located on the opposite side of the A21 including the Grade II Listed 93 London Road (Reference: 1034435). There is indiscernible intervisibility with PRoW HG31 (Historic Routeway) and views from the A21 (historic routeway) see the south west densely planted boundary only.
- 11.45. Existing mature trees are generally indigenous and these are all located within the site as well as along the boundaries. The internal area of the site includes much secondary mature and semi mature tree and scrub planting, much of which is assumed to be self-seeded.

Proposed development

- 11.46. The site is considered suitable for approximately 3 to 4 dwellings. The least sensitive part of the site for access is from the A21 at the south west boundary. This would involve the removal of existing tree planting which could open up views into the site and reduce habitat biodiversity. It is recommended that as much existing tree cover as possible is retained at the front of the site, and that the vehicular access might be a dog-legged layout so as to lessen the visual impact.
- 11.47. It is also recommended that if the buildings were set back from the road and aligned with the neighbouring buildings and matching their density, mass and scale then the ribbon settlement pattern would be incrementally extended for a congruous fit within the village. The sensitive location of the gardens (front and back) could offer less visually impacting spaces in the more sensitive locations. Sensitive boundary treatments must be implemented for instance estate railing or ha-ha boundaries are more sympathetic to the parkland context than suburbanising close board fencing.
- 11.48. Design proposals must be landscape-led and the designers must demonstrate an ability to produce highest quality architecture which retains existing trees within the built form context and avoid blanket arboricultural clearance and templated standard house builder design.
- 11.49. There are a great number of mature trees on the site and these should be retained where possible. This site could be part of a new gateway to the historic village settlement with high quality pavement treatments, street furniture, signage, art and planting.
- 11.50. In order for the development design to occur the following are required: detailed topographic survey; a highway design (or feasibility must be confirmed); a heritage scoping statement; a further ecological survey; and a tree survey (including tree protection measures). Further landscape assessment would be needed as and when a highways design is forthcoming.
- 11.51. As the site is so sensitive, including from a landscape and environmental perspective, this policy is comprehensive to ensure that any development on the site is appropriate.

POLICY HGSA4: SITE ALLOCATION: LAND ADJACENT TO IRIDGE PLACE TN19 7PN (HG45)

A. The site is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 3 to 4 dwellings.

B. Proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

Design

i. The design of any new buildings on the site will be required to demonstrate how it relates to the local character and is appropriate to its rural location. Guidance is provided in the High Weald AONB Management Plan, and the Hurst Green Design Codes, detailed in Policy HG4, and the High Weald Design Guide.

Landscape

ii. New buildings and hard landscape would generate surface water and the proposed attenuation strategy must be an integral part of the overall design which must be initiated at the outset so that surface water can be used for landscape and ecological benefit.

iii. All planting must be indigenous species that blend with the retained existing habitats with a consideration to increase the percentage of evergreen species where views may need to be screened all year round.

Biodiversity net gain

iv. Planting on the site, including for the purposes of screening and green infrastructure, must maximise retention of present trees and other plants. Where it is not possible to retain existing trees, new native species trees must be planted to compensate, at a ratio of at least two new trees for every tree removed.

v. The access road should explore the option to be shared use and seek to reuse the surface water it generates for landscape and ecological benefit.

vi. Opportunities to include a wildlife pond, accessible to the community, should be sought.

Access

vii. The main vehicular access to the site could be from A21 London Road.

viii. Provision of a new footpath link between the A21 London Road and Drewetts Field, incorporating adequate space at the A21 to accommodate individuals wishing to cross.

Conformity reference: Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 1; Core Strategy: RA1, OSS2, OSS3, OSS4, RA2, RA3, EN1, EN2, EN5, TR3, TR4; DaSa: DEN1, DEN2, DEN4, DEN5, DIM2, DHG12; 7, 8, 28, 29, 61-65, 68, 69, 82, 83, 84, 108e, 109, 110, 111, 131 to 139, 205, 124, 125, 182, 200

12 IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

- 12.1. Hurst Green Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 12.2. Once the Plan has been 'made', there will be a series of actions that need to be undertaken to ensure that the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan are being interpreted and used in the way intended by those making planning decisions. It will also be necessary to maintain a watching brief on changes to the planning policy landscape, both at the national and local planning authority levels, which may have an impact on the Plan's policies. Finally, any non-planning-related projects and activities that were identified will need to be prioritised for delivery.
- 12.3. Specific actions to be undertaken are as follows:
 - Pursuing the projects and activities that are not policy-based, but nevertheless contribute to the delivery of the plan - these are set out in the Vision for 2030 document. A range of organisations may be involved in delivering these projects and there will be a need for a co-ordinated approach. Many will require funding and therefore it would be helpful to consult with the community to understand the potential costs and achievability of each. Funding may be sourced from developer contributions or tailored funds, such as The National Lottery Community Fund and the Sussex Lund Foundation.
 - Commenting on planning applications or consultations relating to the neighbourhood plan area – the Parish Council has a role in ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan policies are being adequately considered, where relevant, in decisions to determine the outcome of planning applications in the parish. A meeting between local councillors, planning committee members and the supporting planning officers at Rother District Council will be requested by the Parish Council to ensure that the purpose and application of the policies is fully understood by all parties. This will assist in ensuring that policies are interpreted and applied in the way intended.
 - Monitoring the application of the Neighbourhood Plan policies to ensure they have been applied consistently and interpreted correctly in response to planning applications – there is scope to identify indicators to measure the effect that each policy is having and the extent to which this is delivering against the associated objective. As a minimum, the Parish Council would wish to maintain a log of planning applications relating to the neighbourhood area, detailing which Neighbourhood Plan policies have informed the Parish Council response and the outcome of the decision. This will assist in understanding whether the policies have been used in the manner intended or whether changes may be required, for instance in any future review of the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Ensuring that the Plan's policies and design codes are accessible and online.
 - Maintaining a dialogue with Rother District Council regarding the timing and content of the emerging Local Plan – it will be important to consider the policies in the emerging document and how these may impact the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

The adoption of the new Local Plan may trigger an update of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Maintaining a dialogue with Rother District Council and the promoter/developers of the sites allocated within the Local Plan.

12.4. Maintaining a watching brief on the national policy landscape – changes at the national level may impact on the policies contained in the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore important to keep abreast of this, as this could also provide a trigger to undertake a light-touch review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Maintaining a dialogue with neighbouring parishes on cross-boundary projects, particularly with Etchingham Parish Council.
- Maintaining a dialogue with the local community on the plan implementation – ensuring that all records of how the plan has been used should be made public. It is also recommended that a regular update – for instance at the Annual parish Assembly Meeting – is provided, to feed back to the community on progress about both the effectiveness of the policies and the pursing of the projects.

12.5. Considering gaps in the Neighbourhood Plan – local issues, concerns or opportunities may arise during the lifespan of the plan that trigger the need for the inclusion of a new policy or a modification to an existing policy. Such issues can be most effectively understood by maintaining open dialogue with the community and other partners.

12.6. Whilst it is not a legislative requirement to review a Neighbourhood Plan, it is good practice to do so periodically. This may be because of any of the points noted above. A light-touch review will enable the Parish Council to keep the Neighbourhood Plan up to date in general terms, and to ensure that it remains in general conformity with the wider development plan. Any review should be undertaken in partnership with and ensuring the engagement of the wider community.

12.7. The Parish Council will take responsibility for considering how best to progress these actions.

13 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

13.1 Hurst Green is desperately in need of considerable major infrastructure improvements, notably new roundabouts, pedestrian pavements between nearby settlements, cycle routes, pedestrian crossings, average speed cameras, and a bypass for the A21. However, these are outside the scope of neighbourhood planning.

13.2 The Parish Council is keen to influence the way in which housing developer contributions are spent in the parish to the full extent of their powers under national legislation and planning guidance.

13.3 There are different types of contributions arising from section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

- A section 106 agreement (based on that section of The 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) or planning obligation is a private agreement made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable, development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.
- A section 278 agreement refers to a section of the Highways Act 1980 that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the local authority to make alterations or improvements to a public highway as part of a planning application.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site and is levied by the District Council. Different charge rates apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to part-fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its local plan.

13.4 With a 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plan, the local community will benefit from an uplift in the level of CIL received, from 15% (capped at £100 per existing property) to an uncapped 25% of CIL receipts from Rother District Council.

13.5 The Community Infrastructure Levy priorities for the Parish Council include: the replacement and improvement of the children's park, the development and the improvement of recreational facilities, including enhancing the Drewetts Sportsground.

13.6 The Parish Council intends to annually review its Community Infrastructure Levy spending priorities. Any proposed changes to spending principles or priorities will be published by the Parish Council for comment by the community and other interested parties. A Council motion to amend these will be raised and, if approved, any updated list will be published on the Neighbourhood Plan website and within relevant literature, including the Council's agendas and minutes.

14 NON-POLICY ACTIONS

The Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a series of non-policy projects and aspirations.

These are set out in detail within the Hurst Green Vision for 2030 document, which can be found here: <https://hurstgreen2030.uk/the-vision/>

15 POLICIES MAPS

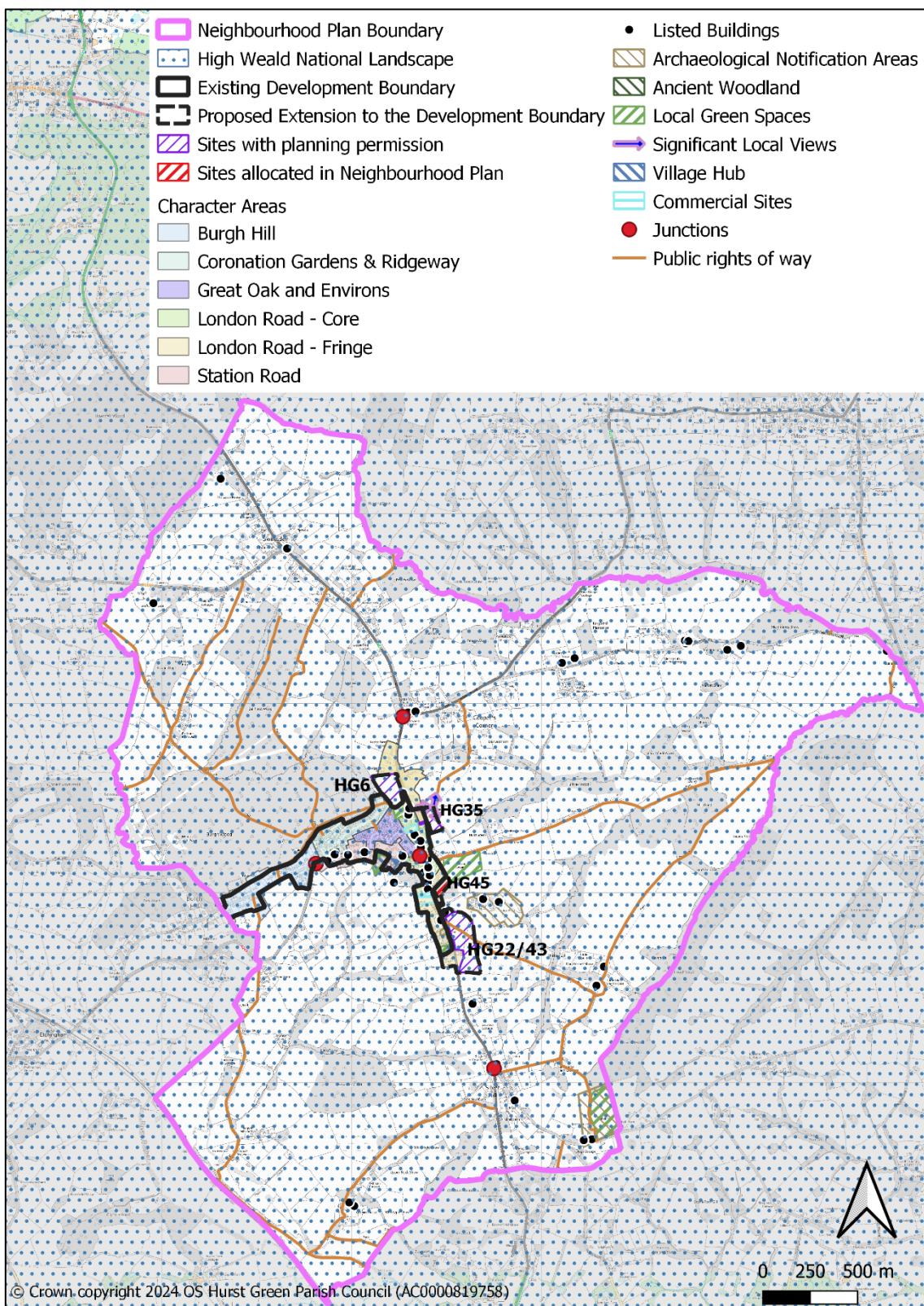


Figure 15.1: Policies map (with National Landscape area showing)

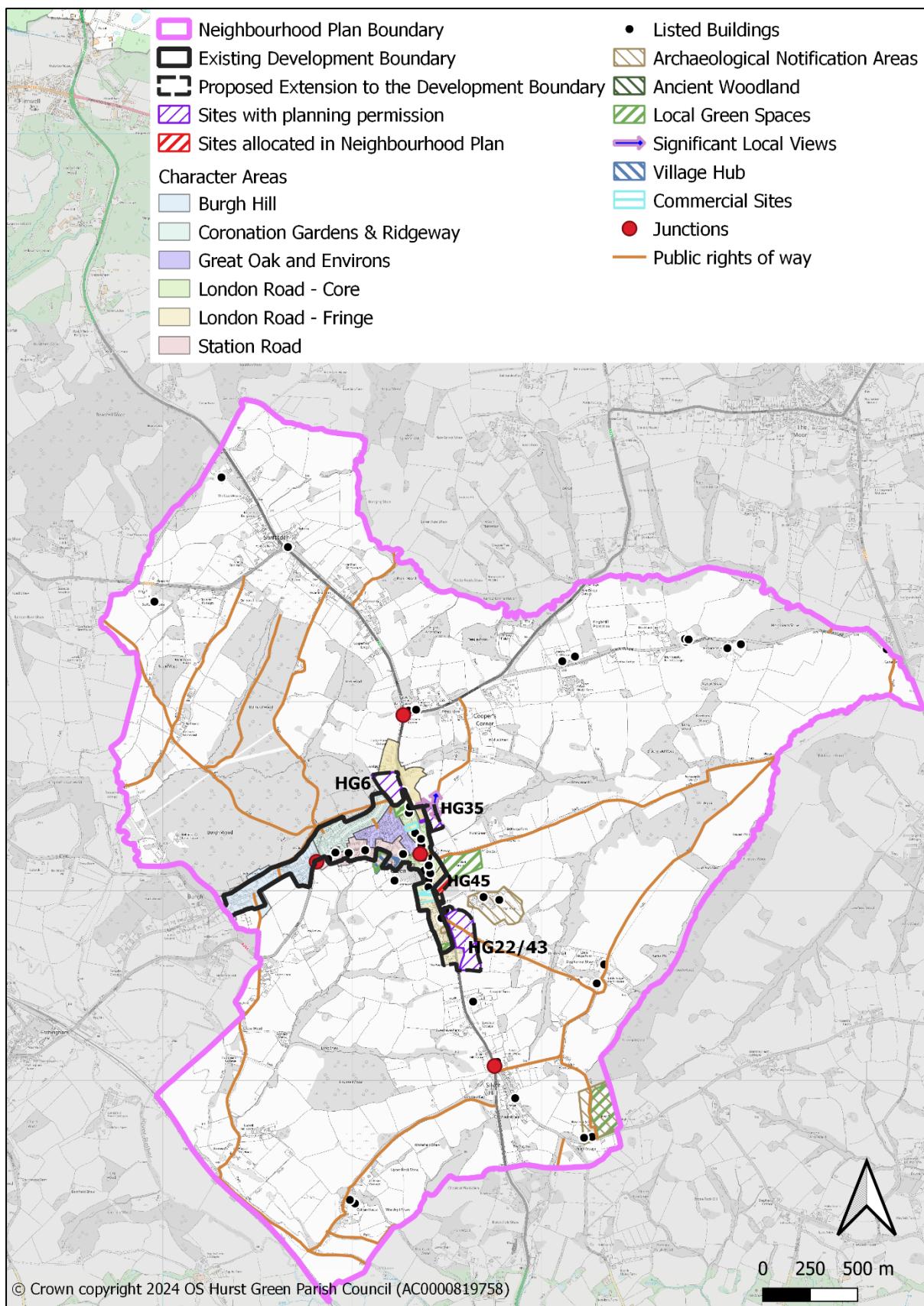


Figure 15.2: Policies map (with National Landscape area not showing)

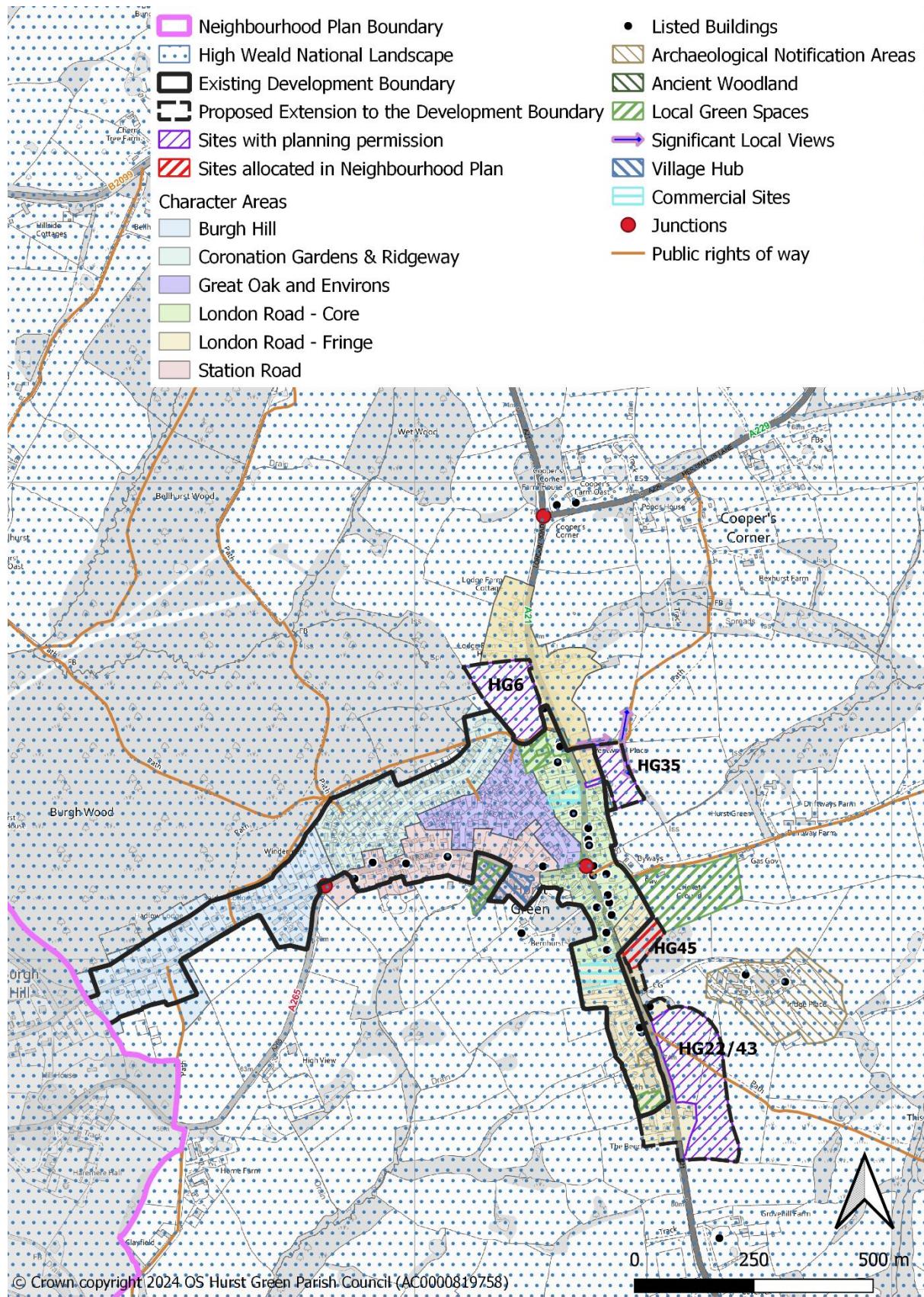


Figure 15.3: Policies map – Village insert (with National Landscape area showing)

16 GLOSSARY

- **Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.
- **Ancient or veteran tree/tree of arboriculture value:** A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.
- **Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **Archaeological Notification Areas:** Areas where there is evidence of archaeological remains.
- **Change of Use:** A change in the way that land or buildings are used (see Use Classes Order). Planning permission is usually necessary to change a "use class".
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by Rother District Council.
- **Conservation area:** an area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.
- **Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation
- **Development boundary:** These identify the areas of primarily built form, rather than countryside. They identify areas within which development of brownfield land may normally be appropriate, including infilling, redevelopment and conversions in accordance with Government Policy and Guidance (NPPF and NPPG). They do not include a presumption for the development of greenfield land such as playing fields and other open space. Identified built-up area boundaries do not necessarily include all existing developed areas.
- **Disability:** There is no single definition for 'disability'. Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
- **First Homes:** First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:
 - must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
 - are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria (see below);
 - on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,

- d. after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).

First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.

- **Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- **Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- **Local connection:** For the purposes of allocating affordable homes, housing shall be occupied in accordance with Rother District Council's standard allocation procedures as set out in the Housing Allocations Policy 2019 - with priority given to applicants who can demonstrate that they have a local connection to the Parish of Hurst Green (within the Ticehurst Rural Parish Cluster) at the time of occupation.
- **Local housing need:** The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 60 of this Framework).
- **Local Plan** - Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design for the area they cover. They are a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals, as Local Plans (together with any Neighbourhood Development Plans that have been made) are the starting-point for considering whether applications can be approved. It is important for all areas to put an up-to-date Local Plan in place to positively guide development decisions.
- **Major Development:** For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** the national planning policy document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Nature Recovery Network:** An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as

and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.

- **Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.
- **Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.
- **Permitted development:** Permitted development rights are an automatic grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Most houses have permitted development rights, but flats and maisonettes do not, so planning permission is required. A further example is the conversion of offices, for instance to flats, without the need for planning permission.
- **Pop-up shop:** A pop-up shop is a short-term, temporary retail space where brands—usually ones without a physical presence—can interact in person with current customers and communicate their message to potential new ones.
- **Previously developed land/ brownfield land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
- **Rother District Council:** the local authority for Rother District, the Council is responsible for land-use planning, parks and open spaces, recreation facilities, housing, waste collection and car parking. Rother District Council prepare the development plan for Rother.
- **Section 106 agreement:** A mechanism under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** Supplementary Planning Documents may cover a range of issues, both topic and site specific, which may expand policy or provide further detail to policies contained in a Development Plan Document, where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery.
- **East Sussex County Council:** The county-wide authority has responsibility for strategic matters including waste and minerals planning, maintaining the public rights of way network, education, libraries and roads.

17 LIST OF EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

All links correct at April 2024. Evidence documents are also available on the Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan website: <https://hurstgreen2030.uk/evidence-documents/>

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
Analysis of 2021 Speed Data Through Hurst Green and History of A21 Upgrades	Local resident	2021
Ancient tree guide 4: What are ancient, veteran and other trees of special interest?	Woodland Trust	2008
Biodiversity metric	Defra	2021
Biodiversity Net Gain for local authorities	Planning Advisory Service (Local Government Association)	2022
Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development, A Practical Guide	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)	2022
BS 42020 – a code of practice for biodiversity in planning and development	BSI	no date
Census	Office for National Statistics	2011, 2021
Climate Change Act 2008	HM Government	2008
Dementia and Town Planning	Royal Town Planning Institute	2020
Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan	Rother District Council	Adopted 2019
East Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	East Sussex County Council	2016-2026
Energy efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to improve energy efficiency	Historic England	2018
Environment Act 2021	HM Government	2021
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	HM Government	2010
Guidance for Parking at New Residential Development	East Sussex County Council	2020
Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light 2021	Institution of Lighting Professionals	2021
Habitats and species of principal importance in England – Guidance	HM Government	2022
Heritage at Risk Register	Historic England	ongoing
High Weald Housing Design Guide	High Weald National Landscape (AONB)	2019
Historic Environment Record	Historic England in partnership with ALGAO and IHBC	ongoing
Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)	Housing LIN	2012
Housing Quality Indicators	Homes and Communities Agency	2011
Housing Standards Review	HM Government	2012 (and amended)

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
<u>Hurst Green Design Codes</u>	Hurst Green Parish Council / AR Urbanism	2021 - 2024
<u>Hurst Green High Level Landscape Assessment</u>	Hurst Green Parish Council / Harper Landscape Architecture LLP	2020
<u>Hurst Green Local Housing Demand Survey 2019</u>	Hurst Green Parish Council	2019
<u>Hurst Green Parish A21 Highways traffic speeding analysis (2018)</u>	Local resident	2018
<u>Hurst Green Parish Local Housing Needs Assessment</u>	Prepared by AECOM for the Parish Council	2019
<u>Hurst Green Tourism Survey</u>	Hurst Green Parish Council	2020
<u>Inclusive Transport Strategy: Achieving equal access for disabled people</u>	Department for Transport	2018
<u>Localism Act 2011</u>	HM Government	2011
<u>Market Towns and Villages Landscape Assessment Volume 1 Main Report (pdf)</u>	Rother District Council	2009
<u>National Heritage List for England (NHLE)</u>	Historic England	ongoing
<u>National Planning Policy Framework (amended December 2023)</u>	HM Government	Amended 2023
<u>Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act</u>	HM Government	2006
<u>Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended)</u>	HM Government	2012
<u>Non-native Invasive Species Survey Upper Rother sub-catchment</u>	B.M. Crisford for the High Weald AONB Unit	2016
<u>Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004</u>	HM Government	2004
<u>Rother District Council Key Design Principles (Core Strategy Appendix 4)</u>	Rother District Council	2014
<u>Rother Local Plan 2006 (saved policies)</u>	Rother District Council	2006
<u>Rother Local Plan Core Strategy</u>	Rother District Council	Adopted 2014
<u>Rural Settlements Study</u>	Rother District Council	2008
<u>Secured by Design</u>	Policy Crime Prevention initiatives Ltd.	ongoing
<u>Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan</u>	Prepared by AECOM for Hurst Green Parish Council	2022
<u>Strategic Housing Local Authority Assessment (SHLAA) 2013 Review</u>	Rother District Council	2013
<u>The High Weald National Landscape AONB Management Plan</u>	High Weald AONB	2024 to 2029
<u>Town and Country Planning Act 1990</u>	HM Government	1990
<u>Urban Air Quality</u>	Woodland Trust	2012
<u>Use Classes</u>	Planning Portal	2021
<u>Vision for 2030</u>	Hurst Green Parish Council	2019-2024

Appendix A – Hurst Green Design Codes

These are an integral part and appendix of the Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan. They are included as a separate document / links due to their size.

Hurst Green Design Codes

<https://hurstgreen2030.uk/design-codes/>

Appendix B – Local Green Spaces

The following seven sites are proposed for Local Green Space designation:

- i. Countryside passageway
- ii. Drewetts sports ground
- iii. Lodge field playing ground
- iv. School playing field
- v. Silver Hill Stage field
- vi. Station Road corner garden
- vii. Holy Trinity churchyard

i. **Countryside passageway**

Address and location	Countryside Passage, A21 Grid reference: TQ733274
Ownership details	Public land.
Description and purpose / current use	On route of PRoW 31, provides access to farmland and countryside beyond ribbon development of houses alongside the east side of the A21. Used by farmers, local people, dog walkers and hikers.
Any designations	No specific designations.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	None
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Serves the Hurst Green community, is located within Hurst Green village, opposite the church.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: Provides informal recreation for walkers and the community.</p> <p>Tranquillity: Provided a connection between the built area of the village and the countryside, the further down the passage the sounds of the busy A21 road disappear and are replaced with bird song. Walking towards the village offers views of the Lychgate and war memorial.</p> <p>Beauty: Green space between housing, and tree tunnel leading to open countryside.</p> <p>Historic: One of a number of historic walkways in and around the Hurst Green settlement.</p>
Local in character?	Historic Passageway.

Photo



Location map



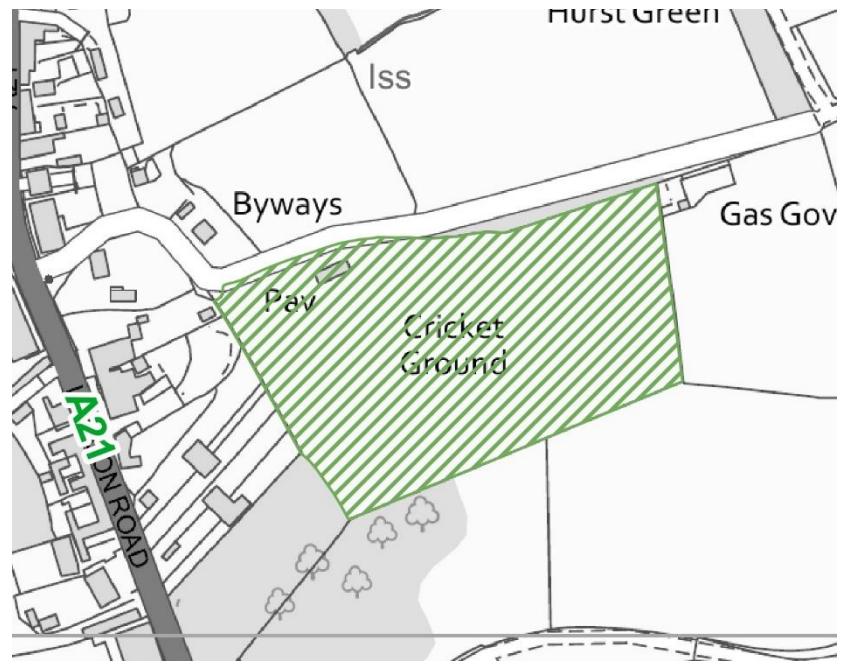
ii. **Drewetts Sports Ground**

Address and location	Located to the east of the village and accessible via the lane alongside the Old Court House on London Road. Grid reference: TQ735271
Ownership details	Maintained by the local Hurst Green Cricket Club with financial assistance from the Parish Council.
Description and purpose / current use	The local cricket ground that was also used for the Queens Jubilee celebrations summer fete in June 2022.
Any designations	No specific designations.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	None.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Accessible from the centre of the village via the lane beside the Old Court House, to the east of the A21.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: Used by the local cricket club as well as by dog and other walkers. Historic: Village cricket matches have been played on the site for hundreds of years, and more recently successful used for the summer fete and Queens Jubilee celebration weekend in June 2022.
Local in character?	Drewetts Sports Ground (often referred to as Drewetts Cricket Field) was given in trust to the village in 1932 for the purpose of playing cricket and tennis. The field is set away from the A21 and bordered on three sides by fields. The western edge borders the back gardens of properties along the A21. The area is used year-round by dog walkers, families and others seeking a flat area to exercise or relax. During the summer, when cricket is played on most Sundays, spectators will turn out to relax and watch the game from the benches that are dotted around the perimeter of the pitch. A large oak tree dominates the view from all around the field. The only building on the field is a small cricket pavilion with associated storage space. Drewetts Sports Ground is the best maintained, largest, and enclosed green space in the village, away from roads and provides a safe and peaceful place for the community, in particular for families and dog walkers to relax within year round.

Photo



Location map



iii. Lodge Playing Field Ground

Address and location	Station Road, Hurst Green Grid reference: TQ731271
Ownership details	Owned and maintained by the Parish Council.
Description and purpose / current use	Green space and accompanying children's' playground close to the village 'hub' near the Hurst Green Village Hall. Provides an area of open green space and play equipment principally used by families with children for play and relaxation. An all-weather shelter is provided for older children to hang out in and there is a small grass football pitch surrounded on three sides by chain link fencing.
Any designations	No designations
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	None
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Centrally located within walking distance for the village.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: Historically used for hosting the annual Hurst Green Summer Fete. A safe space for children to play away from the A21. Summer Fêtes have been held here regularly over the years prior to covid lockdowns.
Local in character?	Situated within the village centre.
Photo	

	
Location map	

iv. School Playing Field

Address and location	Hurst Green Church of England Primary School, A21 Grid reference: TQ734267
Ownership details	Land owned by the Church of England. School buildings maintained by East Sussex County Council.
Description and purpose / current use	Primary school playing field. Children 5 to 11 years of age.
Any designations	No designations.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	None
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Located to the south end of Hurst Green alongside the A21. The playing field is enclosed by child-secure fencing for a safe playing area for the children during the school day.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: School playing field, Used for day-to-day exercising, recreation and also school sports days which are also attended by the local community. Historic: The current school buildings completed around the year 2000 replaced the previous Victorian school buildings.
Local in character?	Yes, located within Hurst Green.

Photo



Location map



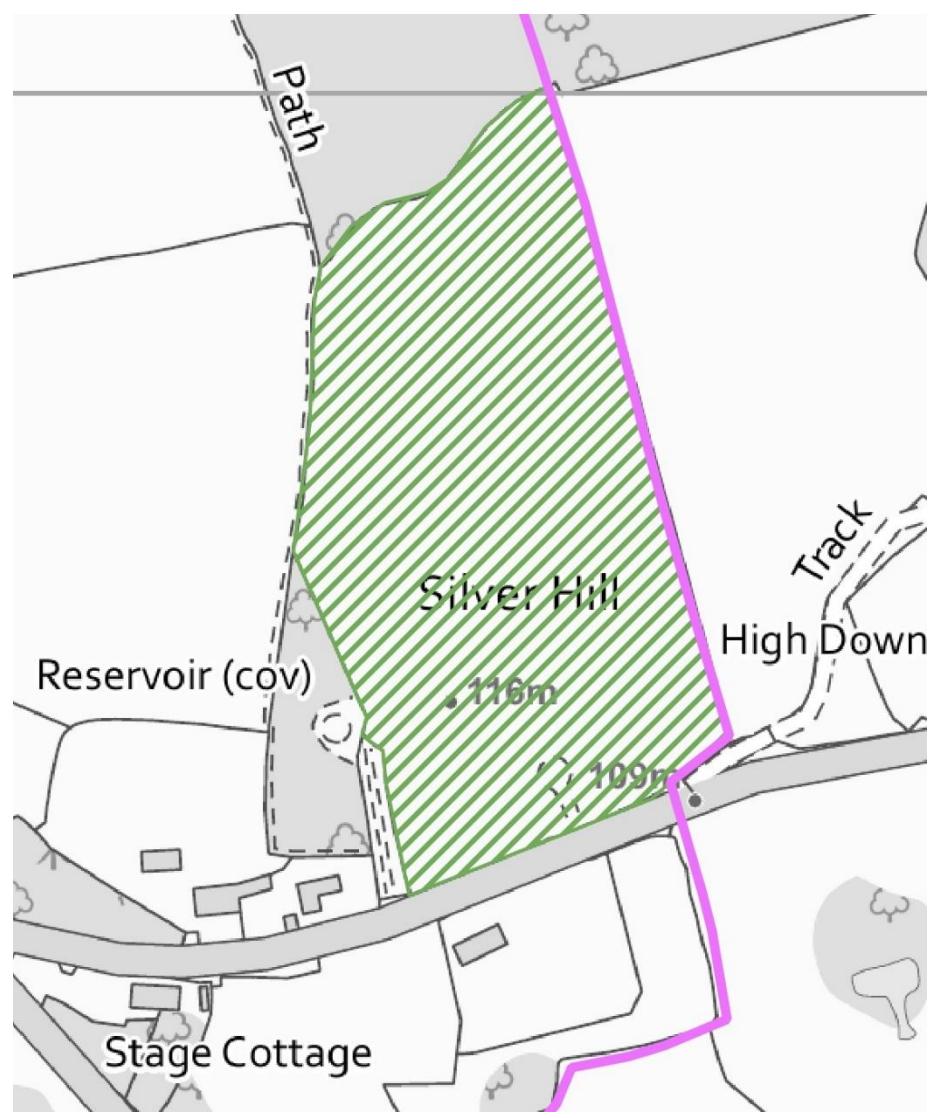
v. **Silver Hill Stage Field**

Address and location	Bodiam Road Grid reference: TQ743258
Ownership details	Owned and maintained by the Parish Council.
Description and purpose / current use	Historically a viewing point and a high point for beacon signalling across the Weald. A wooden platform (or stage) for viewing purposes used to be sited here (hence 'stage' field). Parking area introduced in 2018. Beacon lighting as part of the Queens Jubilee celebrations June 2022.
Any designations	No designations.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No.
Planning permissions?	None.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	At the very southern end of the parish, it is generally accessed by car drivers who then might dog-walk or hike. The field can be accessed via the path opposite 123 London Road in Hurst Green, but which then entails a cross-country walk across fields, a stream valley and local woods to get there.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: Dog walking and beacon lighting (most recently June 2022) Beauty: Some significant views can be seen across the weald AONB from this field, along with a rich historical past. It is a peaceful, tranquil place maintained by the Parish Council and is used by the community for sports, games, picnicking and events. Historic: At the base of the beacon is a bunker construction from the 1950's which was intended to help command a local defence force.
Local in character?	An attractive public green space at the top of one of the highest hills in the area.

Photo



Location map



vi. **Station Road Corner Garden**

Address and location	Located along the north-west edge of the junction of the A21 with Station Road. Grid reference: TQ733272
Ownership details	Owned and maintained by the Parish Council with help from volunteers.
Description and purpose / current use	Houses the Parish Council's notice board and decorative shrubs.
Any designations	None
Site allocations in Local Plan	No.
Planning permissions?	No.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Serves the entire community visually and by presentation of notices put on the notice board.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: Visual ornamentation of the near-centre of Hurst Green. Historic: From the Corner Garden is a good viewpoint of the Old Court House across the A21.
Local in character?	A green space providing a visual green centre to Hurst Green.

Photo



Location map



vii. Holy Trinity Churchyard

Address and location	Holy Trinity Church, A21 Grid reference:
Ownership details	Church of England church with surrounding land and graveyard.
Description and purpose / current use	Religious prayer, religious services and celebrations and coffee mornings are all held in, or around, the church premises.
Any designations	None.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No.
Planning permissions?	None.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The church provides services available to the whole community. Can be easily accessed via pavements alongside the A21
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: Services and celebrations. Historic: Unusual Victorian brick-built Church. William Morris wall paintings on the interior of the church. The village churchyard surrounds the church building.
Local in character?	Views of the bell tower from the surrounding area. Lych gate and war memorial. Generations of villagers are interred in the Churchyard. Churchyard may predate the church. Mid-19th Century earliest grave. Church built in 1882.
Photo	 

Location map

