Sandhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024 to 2038

Referendum Version

February 2026

Setting the Pattern for future development in Sandhurst Parish

Prepared by the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of Sandhurst Parish Council

Foreword

This Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared by Sandhurst Parish Council, which is the 'Qualifying Body' permitted by government to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The main work has been carried out by a Steering Group (SG) which is a working group of the Parish Council comprising eleven residents, two borough councillors and two parish councillors. A certain amount of the work has followed on from that undertaken by a previous group which was started in 2014, but which was never completed. For those initial efforts we are grateful. We acknowledge too the help and support we have received from our Planning Consultant, Alison Eardley, and our Community Engagement consultant, James Boot as well as many of the residents of the parish.

All who live in Sandhurst parish appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds them and whilst they accept that change and growth are inevitable, they would hope that any development would seek to preserve that beauty wherever possible.

Kathy O'Neil

Chair of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Members of the Steering Group

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Additional support was provided by other members of the community during the course of the Plan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document is the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (SNDP). It sets out planning and land-use policy for Sandhurst village and the wider Parish, over the period 2024 to 2038, forming part of the development plan for Tunbridge Wells borough. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), as the local planning authority, designated the Sandhurst neighbourhood area on 19 September 2014. The neighbourhood area shares its boundary with that of the Parish (*Figure 1*).

1.2 The SNDP 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 (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body, set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group comprising local councillors and volunteers from the community, to lead on the preparation of the Plan. In consultation with the community, local businesses and others, the Steering Group has established a vision and framework for the future of the designated area and set out how that vision will be realised through planning land use and development change over the period 2024 to 2038.

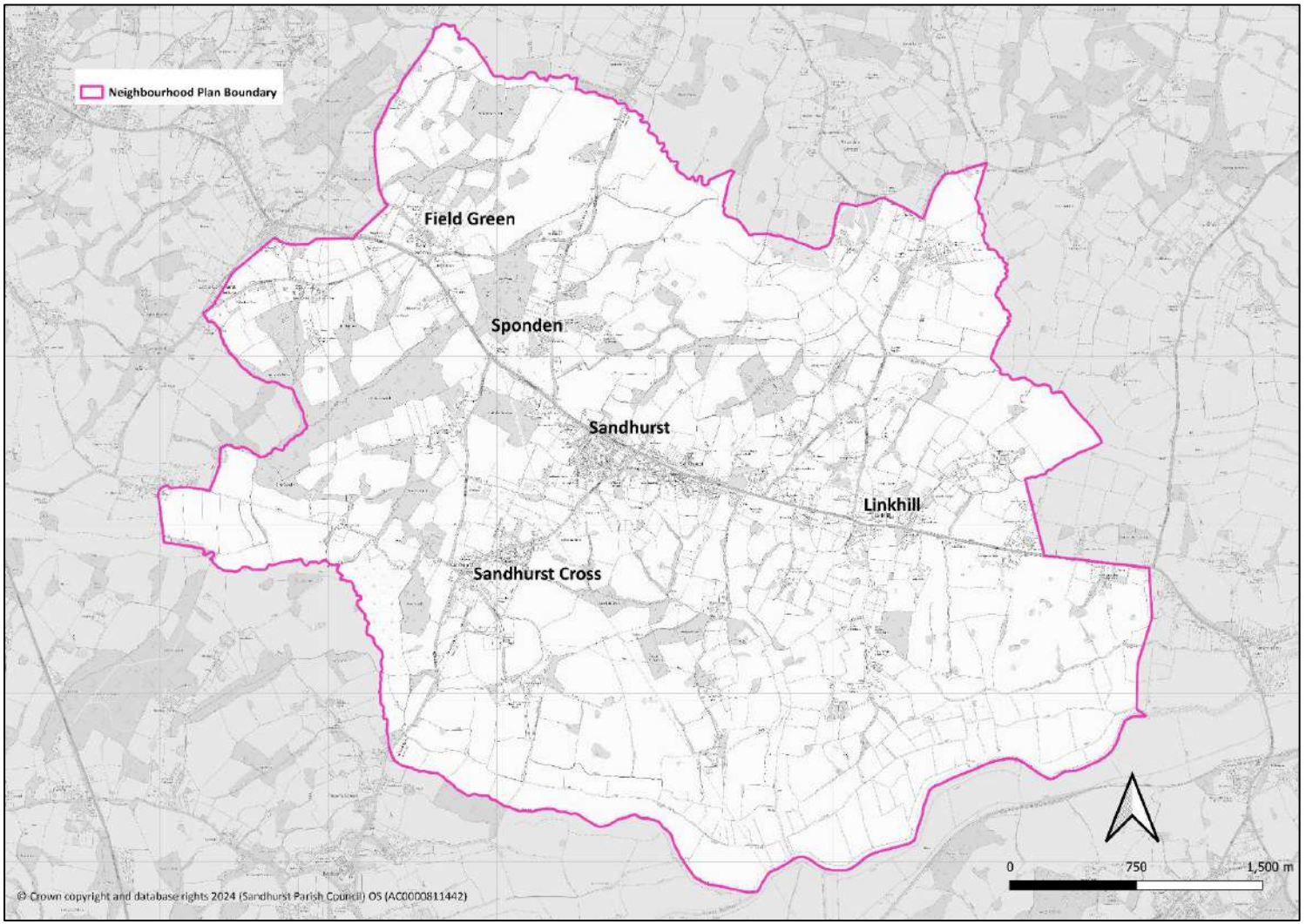
1.3 The SNDP policies form part of the development plan for Tunbridge Wells borough and must be considered by any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within Sandhurst Parish. The policies also set out how land should be considered, in planning terms, locally, and is a material planning consideration in the determination of applications, alongside the policies of the local development plan.

1.4 The process of producing the SNDP has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance in Sandhurst parish. Within each section there is a summary of what the policy seeks to achieve and a justification, providing the necessary understanding of why the policy is needed and how it should be applied. The policies themselves are presented in the green boxes and these will be used to determine planning applications. To understand the full context for any individual policy, it should be read alongside the supporting text and evidence documents that have been compiled to underpin the SNDP.

1.5 Beneath each policy is a conformity reference, listing the relevant policies in the TWBC adopted Borough Local Plan, the relevant objectives of the High Weald National Landscape (formally known as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Management Plan and the paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) that the policy conforms to.

1.6 The SNDP also identifies local community projects that are not met through planning policy, but which are important to the well-being of the community. Finally, the Plan sets out the Community Infrastructure Priorities and a framework for monitoring, implementation and review.

Figure 1: Sandhurst Neighbourhood Plan designated area



The Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

1.7 The SNDP has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF (most recently revised in December 2024). Paragraphs 29 and 30 state:

> *29. "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).*
>
> *30. 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."*

Local Planning Policy

1.8 The policies of this Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2020 to 2038 which was adopted in December 2025.

1.9 The Local Plan seeks to deliver, across the borough, a minimum of 12,204 dwellings and 14 hectares of employment (Use Classes B (Business use) and E (Commercial use)) land, together with supporting infrastructure and services over the Plan period (Policy STR 1). The development strategy is shown indicatively on the Key Diagram.

1.10 The strategy for Sandhurst (Policy PSTR/SA 1) is as follows:

1. Set Limits to Built Development for Sandhurst village, as defined on the Policies Map (Inset Map 31) as a framework for new development over the plan period, incorporating the allocation Policies AL/SA 1 and AL/SA 2 into the Sandhurst Limits to Built Development;
2. Build approximately 20-30 new dwellings (including 40 percent affordable housing) on two sites at Sandhurst village, as allocated under Policies AL/SA 1 and AL/SA 2;
3. In relation to all development proposals for major development which would generate more than 100 light delivery vehicles (cars and vans of less than 3.5 tonnes gross weight) or 25 heavy duty vehicles (lorries, buses, etc. over 3.5 tonnes gross weight) annual average daily traffic (AADT) movements through the northern arm of the crossroads in Hawkhurst (i.e. approximately 250m to the north of the crossroads along the Cranbrook Road)) per day, to be accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment, with the development providing appropriate mitigation measures;

4. Seek developer contributions, either in kind (normally land) and/or financial, from residential schemes to be used towards the provision of a range of facilities.

1.11 The Development Plan also consists of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) 2024 to 2039. It was adopted in March 2025. In addition, The County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, has advised that there are significant safeguarded land-won minerals in the neighbourhood area, mainly a suite of sandstones that have low to no current demand. These minerals are now only suitable for historic building/structure restoration and building purposes. Any mineral safeguarding considerations would have to be addressed, as required by the adopted Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024 to 2039 and policy DM 8 where relevant.

The High Weald National Landscape Management Plan

1.12 The entire Parish, including the settlements fall wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. 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 to 2029 is used to guide environmental land management and assess the impact of development or other changes on the NL. The objectives of the Management Plan have been considered in the development of this Neighbourhood Plan, as has the advice contained in the High Weald Housing Design Guide.

Minerals and Waste

1.13 Planning for minerals and waste falls outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. The following information has been provided by Kent County Council (KCC), as the Minerals and Planning Authority. KCC confirms that within the plan area, there are no safeguarded waste management facilities. With regards to safeguarded minerals, there are safeguarded sandstones (of various types) and some Sub-Alluvial River Terrace Deposits (sands and gravels) to which the Neighbourhood Plan does not refer. One of the housing allocations from the emerging Tunbridge Wells Local Plan is coincident with a safeguarded mineral - the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. As part of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan process, the County Council concluded that the mineral safeguarding issues are not objectionable. Given that the very extensive nature of the sandstone formations, which are met by two quarries operating in East Sussex and the economic market demands at this time which are low to non-existent, the County Council has no land-won mineral safeguarding concerns for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Community engagement

1.14 From the beginning, work on the SNDP has been guided by the need to engage as widely as possible with the local community. Efforts have been made to reach those people who are often more difficult to involve in formal consultations. Apart from the statutory requirements for public consultation at various stages, measures to draw in a wider range of contributions included presentations, parish surveys, workshops and exhibitions. These are set out in the Consultation Statement, which will be submitted alongside the Submission SNDP later in the process. A timeline of activity is summarised in *Table 1*.

Table 1: High-level summary of key milestones and engagement activity

Date	Milestone	Key activities
2022	Launching the Plan	• Designating the neighbourhood area • Setting up a Steering Group • Issuing community questionnaire
2023	Identifying Key themes Engagement and evidence gathering	• Visioning Event • Working up the objectives for each of the key themes • Engagement with the primary school • Commissioning Housing Needs Survey • Developing Design Guidance
2024 to 2026	Pre-Submission Draft Plan Submission Plan Examination Referendum	• SEA/ HRA Screening of the emerging draft plan • First round of formal consultation at Regulation 14 • Submitting documents to TWBC and Regulation 16 consultation • Examination • Plan 'made'

1.15 Discussions with TWBC and the High Weald National Landscape have taken place on each of the topic areas covered by the SNDP. In addition, communication with local groups and neighbouring parishes has taken place.

Images from the local consultation events

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.16 The Parish Council is currently discussing whether to declare a climate emergency at the local level, following in the footsteps of KCC and TWBC.

1.17 TWBC has screened the SNDP to ascertain whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required. Their initial screening opinion was subject to consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Screening Determination Statement (published in May 2024) has concluded that the SNDP is unlikely to result in

significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

1.18 In parallel, the screening opinion determined that the 'appropriate assessment' stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process, that ascertains the effect on integrity of the European Site, does not need to be undertaken. This conclusion was sent to Natural England for consideration, who agreed with this finding. Therefore, an HRA is not required.

1.19 Copies of the Screening Determination statements are available on the Sandhurst Parish Council website: HRA Screening; SEA Screening.

2. ABOUT SANDHURST PARISH

2.1. The parish of Sandhurst comprising the settlements of Sandhurst, Sandhurst Cross, Field Green, Sponden and Linkhill is located to the far south-eastern side of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells. It lies approximately 2.9 miles from Hawkhurst to the north west and approximately 3.6 miles from Benenden to the north. Northiam, in the neighbouring district of Rother, East Sussex, is approximately 4.1 miles away to the south east. Bodiam is 2.5 miles to the south. The parish comprises 4,421 acres and is almost exactly 2.5 miles across. It occupies a low ridge between old river estuaries which possibly as late as the Norman Conquest were covered with sea water at high tide.

2.2. The parish is located wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. The majority of the parish forms part of the Hawkhurst Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area, with the remaining area of the parish being part of the Rother Valley River Valley Landscape Character Area, sited in the southern part of the parish.

2.3. Sandhurst village is the principal settlement of the parish which has an historic core designated as a conservation area and includes a number of listed buildings. There are also a number of historic farmsteads scattered across the parish. Sandhurst village has a defined Limits to Built Development, which is defined through the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan, and the conservation area overlaps part of this.

2.4. The A268 (named Queen Street/Rye Road as it runs through Sandhurst village) runs approximately across the middle of the parish, in an east-west direction.

2.5. According to the Census of 2021 there were 1,421 residents in the parish which interestingly compares with the 1,401 of the 1841 census. There were 585 households recorded in 2021.

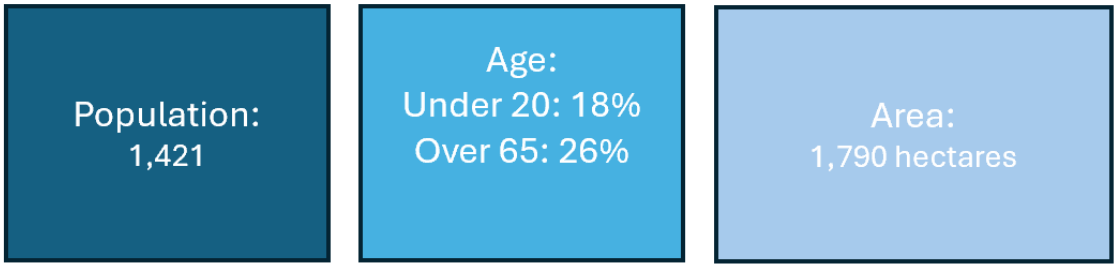
2.6. Sandhurst means 'a wooded place in sandy ground' and is first ever mentioned in 791 when the swine pastures of Sandhurst were granted by King Offa to Christ Church Canterbury. The early development of Sandhurst was centred around the Church of St Nicholas in Sandhurst Cross which dates back to 1220.

2.7. The Roman Road from Hastings to Rochester is still in aerial evidence running from north to south in the parish. This main route north/south was replaced during the 18th century with the creation of the Maidstone to Hastings Road. This was crossed by 1771 by the west/ east Turnpike Road and whilst the focus of the parish was still on the church at Sandhurst Cross, the turnpike attracted development along its length. Thus began the diminishing of Sandhurst Cross and the more significant beginnings of Sandhurst village centre as we know it today.

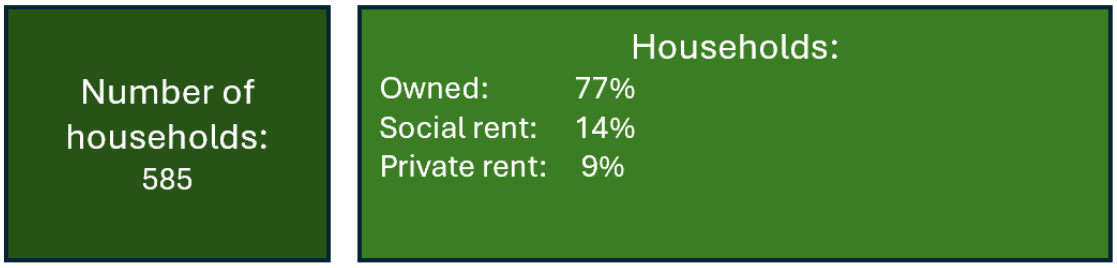
2.8. Whilst Sandhurst was a self-supporting community 100 years ago, today sees a much- reduced scenario. Sandhurst is now served by a service station with general store attached and a second general store with Post Office. There is also a garage, a beauty salon and a fine dining restaurant. The parish has three churches, both primary and nursery schools and a social club.

2.9. The numerous bus services linking Sandhurst to the wider community were radically reduced in 2023 leaving the Hawkhurst/ Hastings two-hour service – not so far removed from 1920 situation when the only service was a horse bus once a week to Tenterden or Hawkhurst.

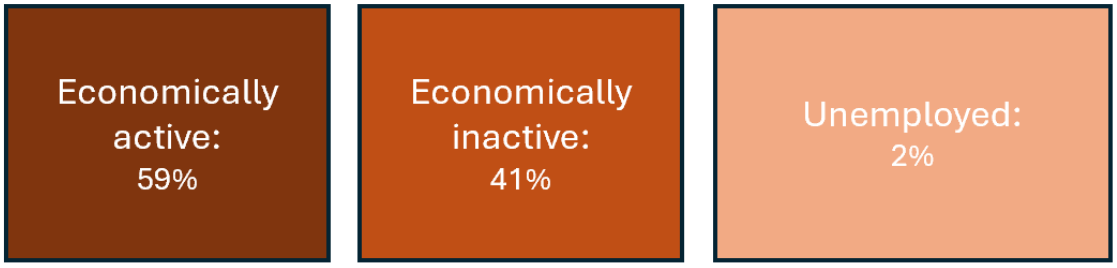
Key characteristics of the Parish (2021 Census)



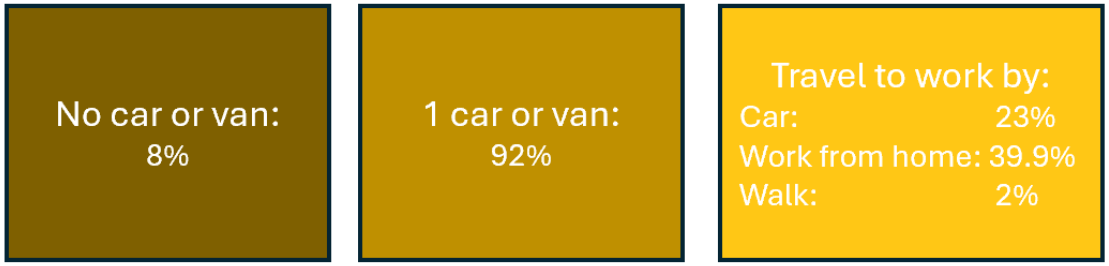
Households



Employment



Car and van availability



Issues and opportunities facing Sandhurst

2.10. In consultation with the community, including the community surveys and visioning and objectives workshop, the SNDP seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community. Some of the issues sit outside planning policy and land-use but are nevertheless captured as they are important to the community. In summary these challenges are:

- Traffic speeding and congestion – in the context of the A268 that cuts through Sandhurst village, there is a need to reduce further speeding traffic through the village. The school lacks parking and at peak times, congestion is severe.
- The lack of public transport – there is one regular bus service to nearby Hawkhurst (349), which many local people need to access for a wider variety of local facilities, including the GP and pharmacy. The Borough Local Plan designates developer funding to Hawkhurst for various facility improvements, but it is difficult for Sandhurst residents to get there without a car. There are no buses to other destinations such as Rye or Tenterden.
- Promoting active travel – there are opportunities to support primarily walking, but also cycling and recreational horse-riding locally, related both to practical and recreational journeys.
- A village hub – there is an opportunity to develop a village hub to bring together a series of community activities and amenities in a central location in Sandhurst.
- Lack of youth facilities – there is a deficit in activities and facilities for teenagers.
- Mitigating climate change – there is support for encouraging homes and other development to mitigate the impacts of climate change, but the housing stock is largely older and there is a challenge in relation to retrofitting. A Climate Action Group has been set up in the parish.
- Supporting biodiversity – located in the National Landscape, there are opportunities to improve biodiversity and developments do not damage what exists.
- Wastewater/sewage overflow – data released by the Environment Agency in May 2024 has revealed that the wastewater and sewage treatment works in Hawkhurst, between Tenterden and Tunbridge Wells, released overflows into streams more than anywhere else in Kent during 2023. Sandhurst featured third on the list of worst spills, with 111 spills into the Hexden Channel. Whilst this issue sits outside the scope of SNDP policy, the Parish Council will work with agencies to seek improved infrastructure investment and resilience. Further information on how Southern Water is addressing this is included in Southern Water's Clean Rivers and Seas investment map. This shows £1.27million of investment is planned for delivery during 2025-2030 at Sandhurst wastewater treatment works in order to address the root causes of problems resulting in storm overflows discharging too frequently at this location.

3. A VISION FOR SANDHURST

Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1. In consultation with the community, the vision for Sandhurst to 2038 is:

Sandhurst parish in 2038 will be a welcoming, supportive, cohesive, sustainable, strong community, with a café – social hub for all generations at its centre. It will be safe for walking and cycling, with 30mph speed limits on the main and side roads and a school time speed limit of 20mph. It will be wildlife friendly with protected green spaces and a community garden for all ages. There will be fast fibre broadband to every home and business.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.2. The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Objective 1: Sustainable development and housing: There are well-designed homes to meet the needs of the local community. They allow growth and adaptation to serve all phases of life, promoting health & wellbeing. The architecture uses passive energy and low carbon building materials and there is increased biodiversity and reduced carbon emissions for existing and proposed development.

Objective 2: Protecting the natural and built environment: The natural environment of the High Weald National Landscape is protected and celebrated. Green spaces that are important to the community are safeguarded and opportunities for biodiversity improvements are sought. There is a network of ecological corridors that connect through the villages and to the wider countryside. Space for a wide range of active and passive recreation, for all ages. The value of the parish's dark skies is recognised. The parish's historic buildings are protected and conserved. They are appreciated alongside contemporary architecture as part of our daily activities.

Objective 3: Safe and active travel: Opportunities to improve the public rights of way network to encourage walking (and 'wheeling') and, where practical, cycling are optimised to encourage active travel for local journeys. Improvements to recreational horse-riding routes will be supported. There is the infrastructure to support electric vehicles.

Objective 4: Connected and supported communities: The existing facilities are safeguarded and, where necessary improved and expanded, to serve all needs – for health, social and wellbeing, local food produce, education, culture, retail, sport and recreation. They are inclusive spaces that connect and bring people together linked to active travel and green spaces. A community hub is supported.

Objective 5: Sandhurst village centre and local economy: Established local businesses and new businesses are supported, including working from home. The village centre continues to provide a focal point for activity.

4. SPATIAL STRATEGY

Policy S1: Location of development

Purpose

4.1. This policy sets out the SNDP approach to the location of development within the parish. It emphasises the importance of new development being directed to the most sustainable locations, near to local services and amenities, which will help to protect the valued National Landscape and important green spaces and green corridors in the area. It will also help to protect against coalescence between the settlements in the parish.

POLICY S1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

A. Development proposals will be supported within the Limits to Built Development as shown on the map in *Figures 2 and 3*. Development proposals on brownfield land will be particularly supported, subject to compliance with other policies in this plan.

B. Development in the countryside, beyond the Limits to Built Development, will be strictly controlled in the interests of conserving the nationally important landscape of the High Weald National Landscape (and its setting) and will only be supported where:

i. the proposal is necessary to meet a demonstrable agricultural or forestry need or needs of other activities which require a rural location, in accordance with national planning practice guidance; or

ii. it relates to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available; or

iii. the proposal is a "rural exceptions scheme" to provide social housing tailored to meet local needs in the parish, supported by appropriate evidence, in accordance with Policy S2 (Meeting Local Housing Needs) of the Neighbourhood Plan, and managed in perpetuity by a social housing provider in accordance with Core Policy 6 of the adopted Core Strategy or in any successor policy; or

iv. it relates to limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land so long as it meets the criteria set out in paragraphs 154(g) and 190 of the NPPF (2024); or

v. the proposal brings redundant or vacant agricultural/farm buildings into use or historic buildings of heritage value back into viable use consistent with their conservation.

Any such development should:

vi. not individually or cumulatively result in physical and/or visual coalescence and loss of separate identity of the individual communities in the parish, in particular coalescence between Sandhurst and Sandhurst Cross, Sponden and/or Linkhill; and

vii. preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area, with consideration given to how the proposal will mitigate any impacts on the character, or visual amenity, or tranquillity impact on the High Weald National Landscape; and

viii. where appropriate, enhance biodiversity in accordance with Policy S8 (Green and Blue Infrastructure).

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: all; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: PSTR/SA 1, STR 1, STR 3, STR 9; NL Management Plan objectives: S1-3, PQ1-3, LBE2; NPPF (2024): 7, 8, 29, 61, 73, 82, 83, 84, 98, 111, 124, 125, 126, 129, 135, 187

Justification

4.2. Sandhurst lies wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. The engagement process revealed a strong desire among local people to preserve this special landscape and characterful setting of the parish.

4.3. The adopted Borough Local Plan allocates approximately 20-30 new dwellings in the parish, with one site having already delivered 15 of these dwellings. The Borough Local Plan does not identify a housing figure to be delivered through the SNDP itself, as it is considered that housing supply will have been addressed adequately at the strategic level through the strategic allocations and any windfall sites. The SNDP therefore does not allocate sites for housing, rather it sets out a series of parameters to support TWBC's growth strategy. These are:

- Conserving and enhancing the nationally important landscape of the High Weald National Landscape;
- Prioritising the reuse of brownfield sites (Borough Local Plan Policy STR 3) and only permitting greenfield major development on the edge of the settlement in exceptional circumstances, with clear and strict guidance on what is appropriate;
- providing new dwellings in the period to 2038 on sites in accordance with the Borough Local Plan;
- ensuring that the overall quantum of development does not put an unacceptable strain on infrastructure capacity;
- encouraging small-scale residential developments (windfall) that are sympathetic to their surroundings;
- ensuring that new developments include a mix of housing to meet the needs of local people, considering the current and projected demographic of the parish;
- ensuring that new development is well-connected to the rights of way network, improving and adding to this where possible, to provide pedestrian and cycle links; and
- providing well-designed dwellings that are sympathetic to the character of the settlement.

Figure 2: Map showing the Limits to Built Development for Sandhurst

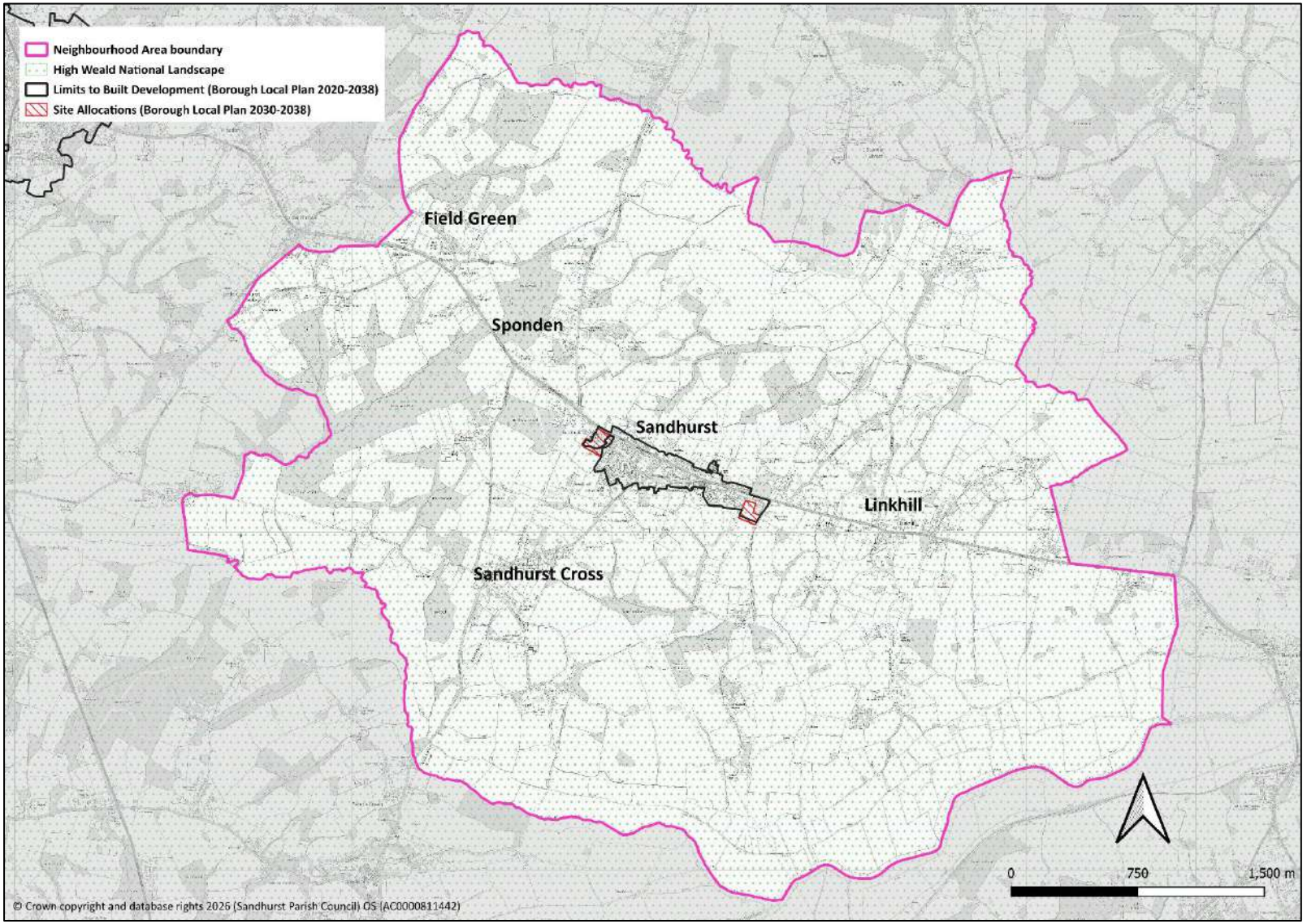
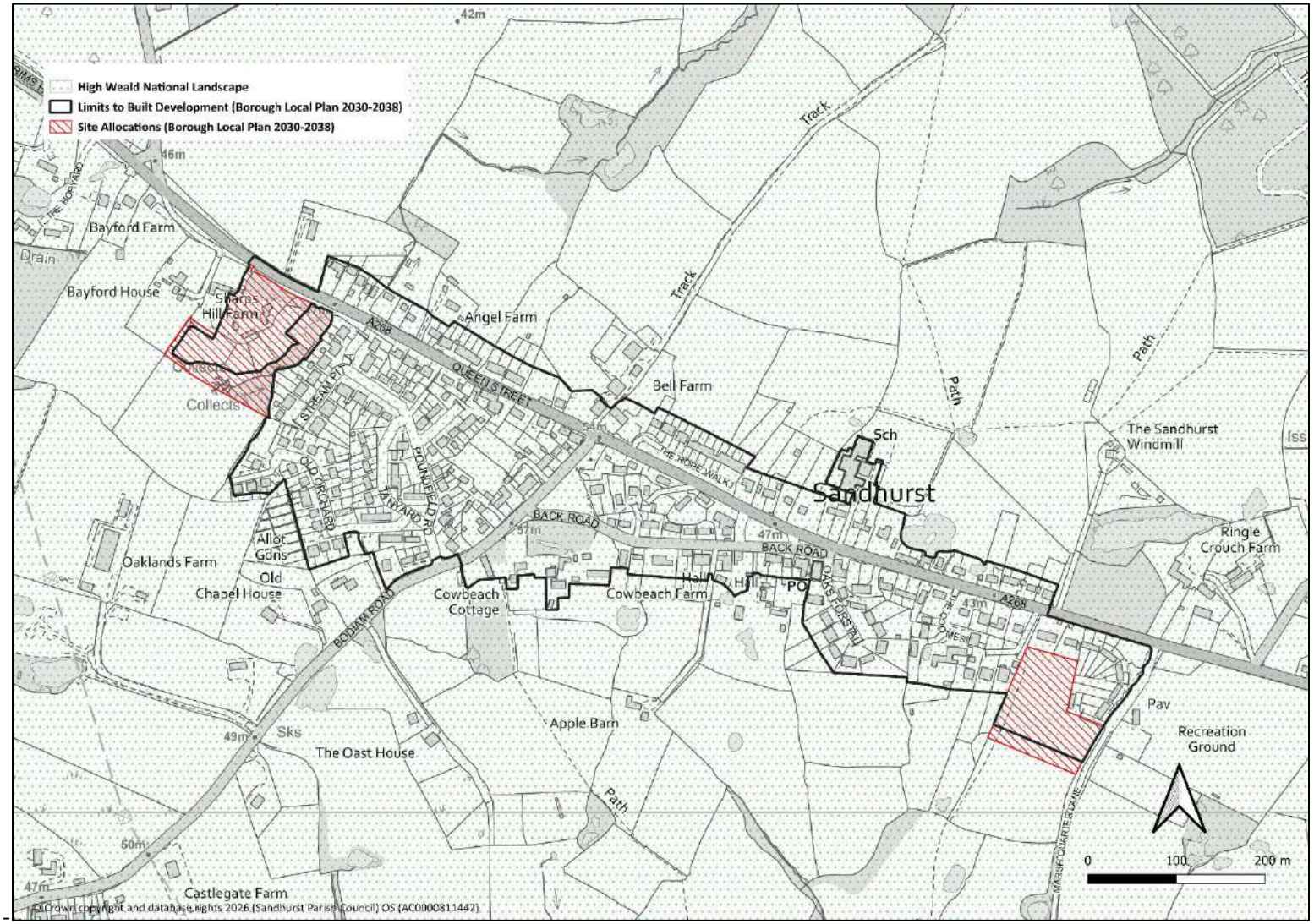


Figure 3: Map showing the Limits to Built Development for Sandhurst (village inset)



5. HOUSING

Policy S2: Meeting local housing needs

Purpose

5.1. This policy seeks to ensure that there is a range of housing that is designed to be capable of meeting the specific housing needs of the parish.

POLICY S2: MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

A. Other than in development designed to meet an identified specialist housing need, the mix of housing sizes, types, tenures, and affordability in proposed development should, in so far as is reasonably practicable and subject to viability, assist in meeting needs identified in the most recently available Sandhurst Housing Needs Assessment. In particular:

i. proposals which provide a mix of dwelling sizes with a particular focus on 1- and 2-bedroom homes to address the needs of single people, young couples, smaller families and those wishing to downsize;

ii. proposals that deliver an appropriate mix of affordable housing, based on 50:50 split between social rent and affordable housing for sale (intermediate housing);

iii. proposals that enable greater affordability uplifts and prioritise those with a local connection to Sandhurst (see Glossary) local residents and key workers when it comes to allocating housing (such as the use of First Homes).

B. Residential development that could reasonably be expected to meet the needs of older people (by virtue of its size and location) should demonstrate how it has reflected the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles and the guidance contained in the RTPI's "Dementia and town planning: Creating better environments for people living with dementia". Support may be provided for provision of ground floor bedroom/ bathroom space to support this.

C. Affordable homes should be well integrated with market housing. The type and size of affordable homes should meet the specific needs identified for the neighbourhood area. Where exceptional circumstances exist to demonstrate that affordable housing cannot be met on-site, a commuted sum will be required to ensure that the provision of affordable units is not lost.

D. Subject to the other policies of this plan, proposals for self- and custom build housing will be supported.

Conformity Reference: NP objective: 1; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: PSTR/ SA 1, STR 1, H 1, H 3, H 6, H 8; NL Management Plan objectives S1; NPPF (2024): 61, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 71, 73, 82-84

Justification

5.2. It is important that any new residential development – be it allocated or windfall – in Sandhurst parish addresses local housing needs. Policy H1 (Housing Mix) of the Borough Local Plan states that *"proposals for residential development should support the creation and maintenance of balanced communities by providing an appropriate housing mix with a range of sizes, types, and tenures of dwellings"*. It suggests that the mix may be informed by

intelligence on local housing needs and demands, and such information may be explored as part of a Neighbourhood Plan.

5.3. To inform this policy, a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), contained in the Evidence Base, was prepared for Sandhurst in January 2024, building on the work of the Strategic Market Housing Assessment at the strategic level as well as national datasets and population forecasts. In addition, a housing survey of the local residents was undertaken. The findings revealed:

5.4. **Affordability and affordable housing**: An offering of Affordable Housing tenures would be beneficial in Sandhurst to widen access to those with varying home ownership/renting aspirations. An indicative mix of 50% 50% rented to 50% ownership is recommended, with a proposed split shown in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Indicative tenure split (Affordable Housing) (HNA)

Tenure	**Indicative Mix**
Routes to homes ownership:	**50%**
• Shared ownership	• 45% (could be increased)
• Rent to Buy	• 5%
Affordable housing for rent:	**50%**
• Social rent	• To be set by registered providers
• Affordable rent	• To be set by registered providers

5.5. The HNA also suggests that the number of affordable homes to be delivered / already delivered via the allocated sites is likely to fall short of need. To address this, the potential for a site allocation will be considered as part of any future review of the SNDP.

5.6. **Type and size of housing:** The data indicates that there is likely to be a significant increase in households 55+ and notably 65+ years and over the next 15 years. In contrast, the number of younger households is expected to reduce significantly. The HNA finds that Sandhurst should prioritise the provision of dwellings that would be appropriate to accommodate the area's growing elderly population. Based on these projections alone, it may, for example, be appropriate to focus on delivery of smaller-sized dwellings for older households who may be looking to downsize. However, the rate of future ageing across the parish may also depend on its ability to retain and attract a replacement younger population. This could entail employment and lifestyle reasons but may also be supported by a more diverse and modern housing offer.

5.7. The suggested dwelling mix as presented in the HNA for Sandhurst to 2038 is shown in *Table 3* and proposals should seek to address this. This focus on smaller homes aimed at younger families / first time buyers, was reflected in the Sandhurst village survey. Within this mix,

Affordable Housing might require a greater weighting towards smaller sizes while market homes focus on mid-sized homes and some larger options.

Table 3: Suggested dwelling size mix to 2038 for Sandhurst parish (source: HNA, 2024)

Number of bedrooms	Current Mix (2011) (2021 not available at parish level yet)	Suggested mix (2038)	Balance of new housing to reach suggested mix
1	4.6%	13.4%	44.2%
2	23.8%	24.9%	26.6%
3	40.7%	34.7%	10.5%
4	17.8%	18.3%	18.7%
5+	13.0%	8.7%	0.0%

5.8. **Housing to suit the needs of older people:** With an ageing population projected, it will be important to ensure that homes meet the needs of older people. Specialist housing for older people (including care and residential homes) is being considered at the strategic level. At the local level, improved accessibility and adaptability standards should be a key consideration for new homes (both market and affordable). The "Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)" has developed a series of principles for good design of housing covering light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage. They have particular relevance to older persons' housing. The ten principles are:

- Space and flexibility
- Daylight in the home and in shared spaces
- Balconies and outdoor space
- Adaptability and 'care ready' design
- Positive use of circulation space
- Shared facilities and 'hubs'
- Plants, trees, and the natural environment
- Energy efficiency and sustainable design
- Storage for belongings and bicycles
- External shared surfaces and 'home zones'

5.9. Good design to deliver these criteria is particularly important for smaller dwellings including apartments and bungalows. Housing should be designed to support the needs of those living with disabilities. The Royal Town Planning Institute's guidance "Dementia and town planning: Creating better environments for people living with dementia" should inform planning applications.

6. CHARACTER, HERITAGE, AND DESIGN

Policy S3: Character and Design of development

Purpose

6.1. Good quality housing design can improve social wellbeing and the quality of life by improving the built environment, reducing crime, improving public health, easing transport problems and providing supportive neighbourhoods. The policy seeks to encourage development proposals within Sandhurst Parish to comply with the highest design standards, adhere to the High Weald National Landscape Housing Design Guide and the locally specific Design Guidelines and Codes (Appendix B) prepared for the Parish. The policy and its supporting text add greater detail to the Local Plan policies. which require development to reflect local distinctiveness but are not specific.

POLICY S3: CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT

A. Development proposals should incorporate a high quality of design, which responds to and integrates well with its surrounds in the context of the character area it falls within. Proposals should meet the changing needs of residents and minimise the impact on the natural environment of the High Weald National Landscape. The scale, character, and siting of the proposal should respect the landscape and its features, valued views into and out of the settlement, the local streetscape and heritage assets. It should reflect the variety of architectural styles found locally, using materials that are in keeping with those used in existing buildings in the immediate locality. Innovation in design will be supported where this demonstrably enhances the quality of the built form in a local character area.

B. Development proposals should demonstrate how they have sought to address the following matters as they are appropriate to their scale, nature and location:

- **i. adhere to the Sandhurst Parish-wide Design Guidance, the High Weald Management Plan, the High Weald Housing Design Guide and the Kent Design Guide SPD; and**
- **ii. make a positive contribution to the visual appearance of the main highway approaches into Sandhurst village (this applies particularly to the A268 and Bodiam Road). Improvements and enhancements should include, where appropriate, additional tree planting, the enhancement of roadside green spaces (for instance through planting), the reduction/consolidation of road signs and other street furniture and wider green infrastructure improvements that are identified as being necessary; and**
- **iii. incorporate soft landscaping and other boundary treatments including the retention and enhancement of established trees and hedgerows, or the replacement of these if not possible; and**
- **iv. provide adequate vehicular access and space for cycle parking and vehicular off-road parking for residents, visitors and service vehicles, in accordance with the adopted car parking standards for TWBC; and**
- **v. respect and protect heritage assets and the Sandhurst Conservation Area; and**
- **vi. ensure that there is no unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring uses through the loss of privacy loss of light or visual intrusion on the views and surroundings that create the backdrop to an area; and**

vii. ensure that traffic generation and parking does not adversely affect vehicular (including cycle) and pedestrian safety.

C. Where development sites abut open countryside, development on the rural boundary edge should mitigate any detrimental visual impacts on the countryside. 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 on both the open countryside and existing village-scape.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 4, STR 6; NL Management Plan objectives: S1-3, PQ1-3; NPPF (2024): 96, 125, 129, 130-139

Justification

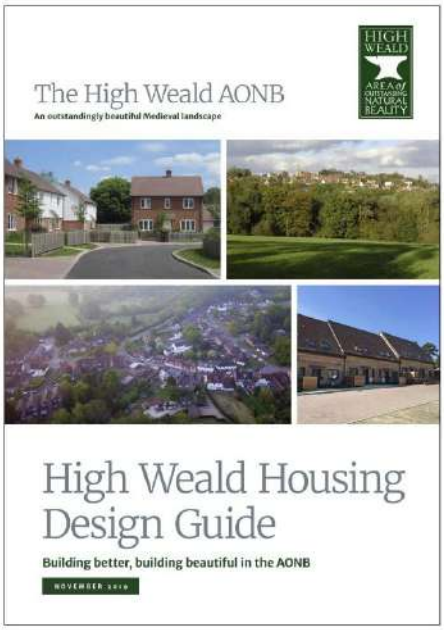
6.2. Past generations of people and development have created the features that give Sandhurst its identity today. This process has been gradual, taking place over many centuries, and the settlement that exists today has a distinctiveness that derives from variety. The parish contains heritage assets of all kinds, including buildings of character, historic landmarks and archaeological features, both exposed and still beneath the ground.

6.3. The importance of good design has received renewed attention over recent years. In October 2019, a National Design Guide was launched, forming part of the Government's collection of Planning Practice 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 Guide expands on the ten characteristics and was used in the creation of the Sandhurst Design Guidance and Codes.

6.4. Furthermore, 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 Secured by Design. It should be used to inform development proposals along with other policies contained within this plan to achieve the industry standard's 'Building for a Healthy Life' commendation.

6.5. It is important that development is designed from a landscape-led perspective and the High Weald Housing Design Guide provides a comprehensive set of advice, specific to the characteristics of the landscape, to promote well-designed places and the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape. This will help to ensure higher quality and landscape-led design that reflects intrinsic High Weald character, and is embedded with a true sense of place, without stifling innovation and creativity.

Images show: The High Weald Housing Design Guide and the Design Guidance and Codes for Sandhurst



6.6. Within the context of both windfall sites and new sites being allocated for housing development in Sandhurst village, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group commissioned AECOM to develop a more localised set of design codes guiding future development in the parish.

6.7. The Sandhurst Parish-wide Design Guidance forms part of formal policy for the SNDP, to support the creation of distinctive places that are well-integrated within the existing settlements in the parish and to promote high-quality and popular built forms. It draws on the design guidance available at the national, regional, and county level, and that which exists at the local level. It was also informed by local engagement in the form of a series of 'walkabouts' and feedback drawn from the community surveys and workshops. The Guidelines should be applied to all development proposals in the parish including the strategic site allocations.

6.8. The Design Guidance identifies six Character Areas in the parish, areas, each Area with its own distinctive variations in street patterns, patterns of growth, building lines and plot sizes (*Figure 4*). Applicants are advised to consult the Design Guidance when putting forward proposals to ensure that they adhere to the specifications of the relevant character area.

6.9. In addition, the Guidance provides detailed information to inform the design further, by theme. *Figure 5* provides an overview of this.

Figure 4: Character Areas in the Parish (source: Sandhurst Parish-wide Design Guidance)

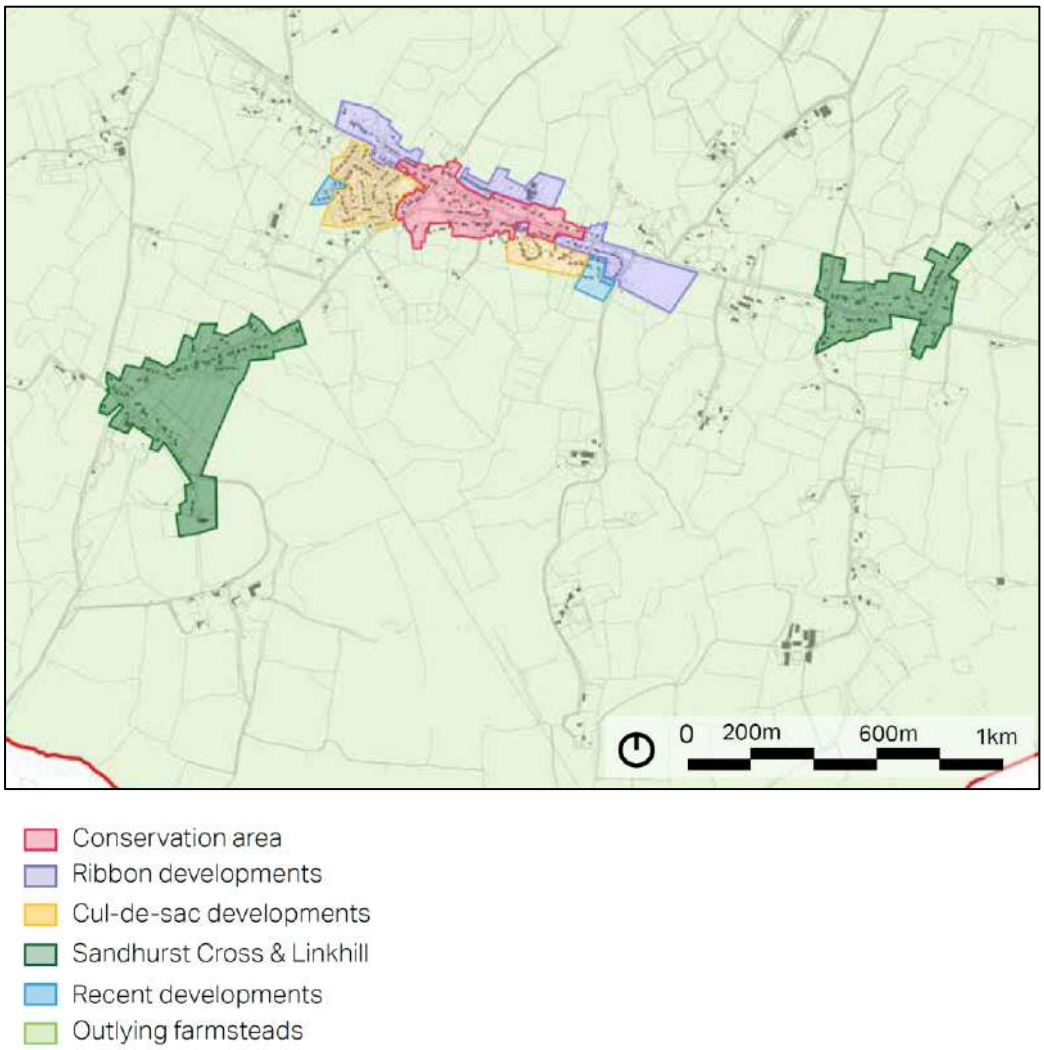
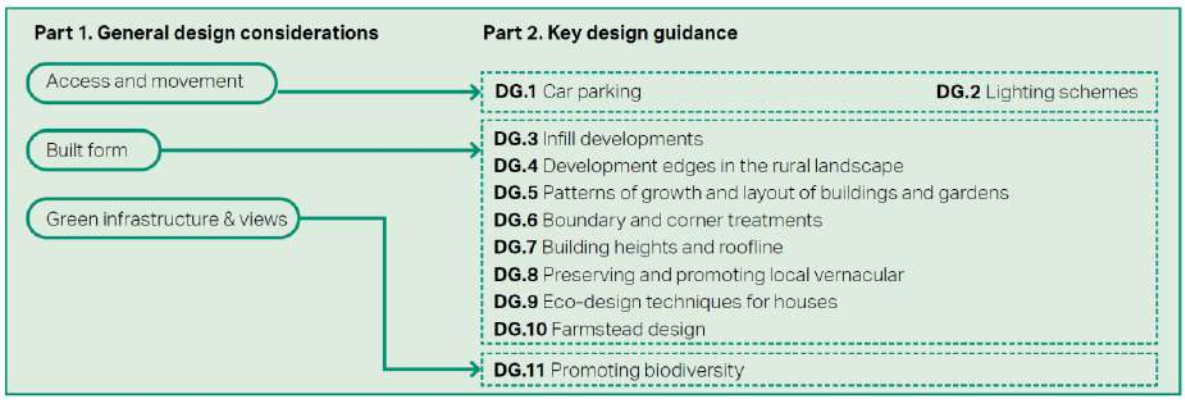


Figure 5: Aspects of design guidance to be followed in Sandhurst parish



6.10. Policy S3 has a close relationship with Policy S4 (Energy Efficiency and Design) of this Plan. This is equally the case for developments relating to the historic environment.

Policy S4: Energy efficiency and design

Purpose

6.11. This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use. This will help mitigate the effects of climate change and contribute to achieving the national target of zero net carbon by 2050.

POLICY S4: ENERGY EFFICENCY AND DESIGN

A. Proposals which incorporate design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption, to reduce carbon emissions and climate effects will be supported, subject to compliance with other policies in this Plan.

B. Proposals which incorporate the following sustainable design features as appropriate to their scale, nature and location will be strongly supported, where measures will not have a significant detrimental impact on character, landscape and views:

- **i. siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.**
- **ii. the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials.**
- **iii. installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing. A fabric-first approach is supported.**
- **iv. incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable/low carbon heating sources such as solar panels, ground/ air source heating and energy generation etc.**
- **v. reducing water consumption using water re-use measures including rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems. Personal water consumption per day for new build should not exceed the Building Regulations recommended standard for water efficiency in water stressed regions.**
- **vi. providing low carbon sustainable design and avoid or mitigate 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 panels) and, only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions.**
- **vii. provision of infrastructure, including power supply, to enable EV charging points at new developments;**
- **viii. existing flow routes and drainage features within the site should be identified and preserved eg ditches, seasonally dry watercourses, historic ponds;**
- **ix. integrate sustainable drainage measures to minimise and control surface water run-off. SuDS measures should be designed to take appropriate account of local conditions.**

C. Alterations to existing buildings, including sensitive measures to alter historic buildings, should be guided by Historic England's Retrofit and Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings. They should demonstrate designs to achieve energy reduction and compliance with current sustainable design guidance and construction standards, subject to other policies in this Plan.

D. Proposals for individual and community scale energy schemes, for instance the installation of solar panels on community and public sector buildings, will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- **i. the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape; and**
- **ii. the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents; and**

iii. the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 7; NL Management Plan objectives: G3, S1-3, PQ3; NPPF (2024): 136, 162, 164, 165, 167

Justification

6.12. On 12 June 2019, the Government voted to amend 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. As part of this, the government has set an interim target to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. Being '2050 ready' means that new development will be required to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions.

6.13. The Future Homes Standard, once introduced, will require CO_2 emissions produced by new homes to be 75-80% lower than those built to current standards. Homes will need to be 'zero carbon ready'. Fossil fuel heating (such as gas boilers) will be banned in new homes, with an expected shift to reliance on heat pumps and heat networks.

6.14. Unlike Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are more limited in what they can dictate in terms of environmental standards, as they must confirm to the minimum requirements as set out by national policy and building regulations. The SNDP can, however, strongly encourage the design and layout of new development to maximise its potential to be as energy efficient as possible and to encourage the use of renewable energy.

Examples of discreet solar panels (source: Historic England)

6.15. TWBC declared a climate emergency in 2019, and principles are embedded in the Borough Local Plan. Policy EN 1 of the Borough Local Plan supports development proposals to be designed to enable significant carbon dioxide emission reductions and to use more sustainable energy sources. This can be achieved through energy efficiency improvements and facilitating low and zero carbon technology to ensure development supports a path to net zero emissions by 2030.

6.16. As part of the work on the SNDP, the Environment Working Group has sought to embed Sandhurst as a low carbon neighbourhood in the future for residents and a richly biodiverse neighbourhood for wildlife. This is the initial response to the current climate emergency. An associated action will be for Sandhurst Parish Council to consider recognising the UK climate

emergency, and the neighbourhood plan will be one way to help promote this within the planning system.

6.17. Opportunities to improve and promote sustainability in the neighbourhood area, which would help to deliver the government's climate change targets, include:

- following basic passive environmental design including use of efficient and insulative materials;
- integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings;
- reducing water consumption including through grey water systems;
- promoting sustainable forms of transport through priority systems for pedestrians and cyclists and public transport (buses); and
- encouraging more resilient and efficient homes, conserving both energy and water.

6.18. The design of developments should seek to ensure that surface water is appropriately managed, as close to source as possible. In terms of future flood risk, better rainwater management through SuDS is the preferred approach to avoid placing added pressure on drainage networks during heavy rainfall. The SNDP strongly supports the requirement to include SuDS within all development.

6.19. The availability of water is an issue in the south-east. Southern Water's Business Plan 2025-30 states that the plan is to reduce average individual daily water use to 120 litres by 2030 (from around 128 litres today) and ultimately to 100 litres per person by 2040. This is supported in Policy S4. The use of new technologies such as smart water butts, to help alleviate drainage issues during periods of significant rainfall, should be considered as part of the overall development design. Such adaptation measures could help reduce susceptibility in new developments to surface water flooding, especially with increases in impermeable surfaces associated with development.

6.20. Community-scale energy schemes will be supported where these can be undertaken sympathetically within the landscape.

Policy S5: Conserving heritage assets

Purpose

6.21. This policy recognises the important contribution that heritage assets – designated and non-designated – make to the local character and distinctiveness of Sandhurst, both individually and collectively. They should be conserved, enhanced and celebrated.

POLICY S5: CONSERVING HERITAGE ASSETS

A. Designated heritage assets: Development proposals affecting designated heritage assets, either directly or indirectly, should conserve or enhance the significance of the asset and those elements of the setting that contribute to the significance. This could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with specific focus on the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area. These details should be explained in a Heritage Statement. In addition, development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on above and below ground archaeological deposits. Where a scheme has a potential impact on archaeological remains (below or above the ground) a Heritage Statement or similar should be prepared to address how archaeological deposits will be safeguarded.

B. Non-designated heritage assets: The following buildings and structures as shown on *Figure 6* are designated as non-designated heritage assets:

- **Mission Church**
- **Old School Hall**
- **Heritage finger post**
- **George VI post pox**
- **K6 telephone box**

Proposals affecting the non-designated heritage assets will be determined based on national planning policy.

C. Rural lanes and historic routeways: Development proposals should respect the character and appearance of rural lanes and routeways within the neighbourhood area. Development proposals should demonstrate how impacts have been mitigated using the guidance contained in and the Sandhurst Parish-wide Design Guidance and the TWBC Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance.

D. Farmsteads and oast houses: Development proposals should respond positively to the scale, integrity and character of the dispersed farmsteads in accordance with the Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough

E. Sandhurst Conservation Area: Particular care should be taken in the conservation area to ensure that alterations and new buildings conserve or enhance the historic environment, in accordance with the guidance set out in the Sandhurst Parish-wide Design Guidance.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 8; NL Management Plan: R1, R2, W1, FH4; NPPF (2024): 125, 202, 204, 207, 213-217

Justification

6.22. Part of Sandhurst village is designated as a conservation area. There is currently no Conservation Area Appraisal, and this is something the Parish Council should pursue as an action with TWBC. In the absence of an appraisal, the Sandhurst Parish-wide Design Guidance should be used to inform development in the conservation area.

6.23. There are 96 individual/groups of heritage assets in Sandhurst parish today that are recognised through a listing for their contribution to national heritage.

6.24. Further information on the historic landscape of Sandhurst can be found in the Parish of Sandhurst Historic Landscape Characterisation Report, 2017.

6.25. There are many other heritage assets, however, that contribute to the historic local context and story of the parish, but which are not nationally important enough to be included on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest compiled by the Government.

6.26. The National Planning Practice Guidance supports the identification of non-designated heritage assets through the neighbourhood planning process (Paragraph 018-039). An audit of local buildings and assets was undertaken by members of the Steering Group to determine non-designated heritage assets, recognising their value to the local character and history of the parish. The following assets have been identified with photographs and descriptions provided in Appendix C:

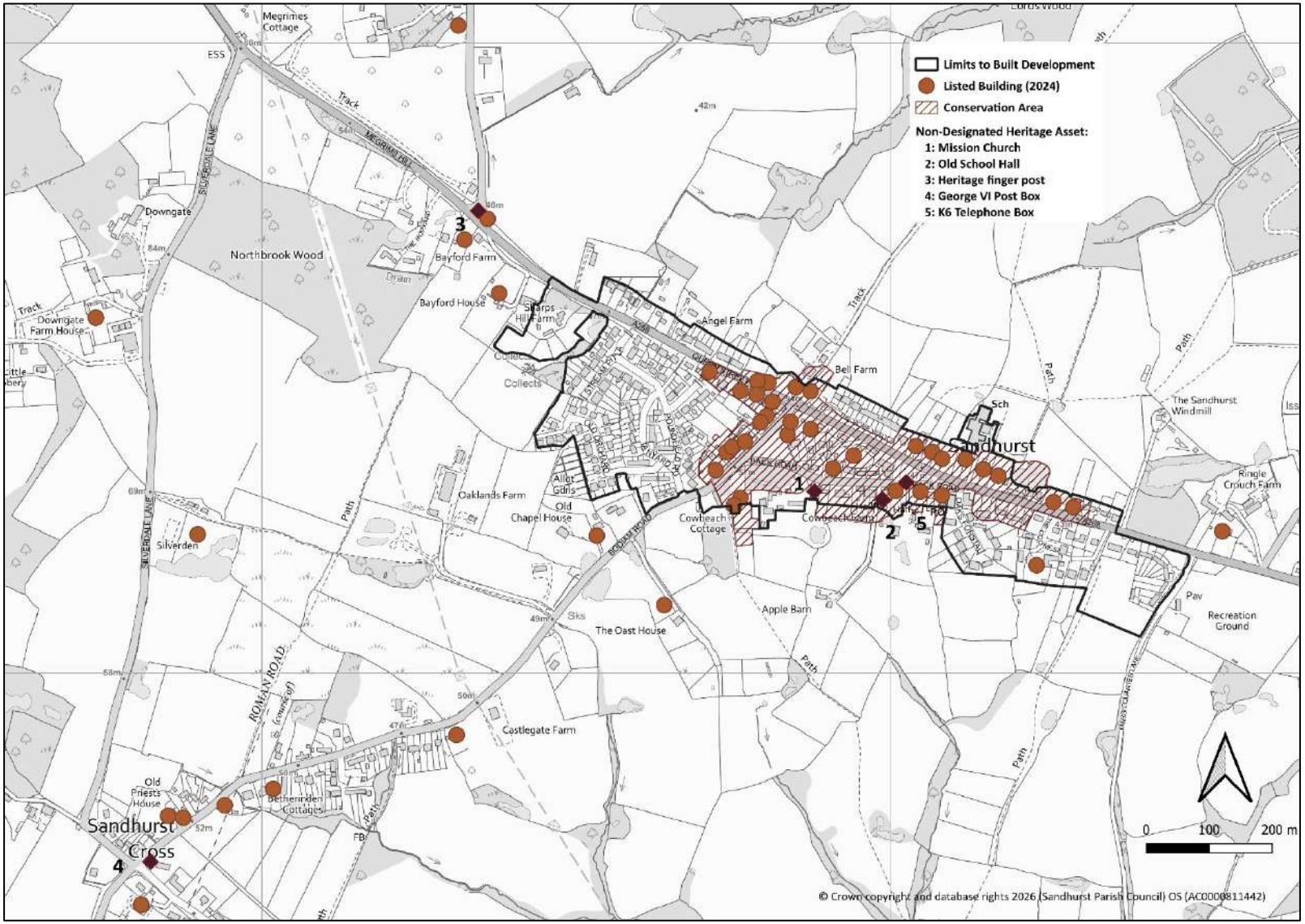
- Mission Church
- Old School Hall
- Heritage finger post, Sandhurst
- George VI post box
- K6 Telephone box, village green

6.27. Figure 6 shows the location of the assets on a map.

6.28. In addition, the parish is home to a number of rural lanes and historic routeways, which not only contribute to local character, but also provide green wildlife corridors. Development should be guided by the TWBC Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance so that adverse impacts can be avoided.

6.29. Finally, there are several farmsteads and oasthouses in Sandhurst Parish which are typical in this part of Kent. TWBC has prepared Historic Farmstead Guidance about how to identify these and how they should be considered if any proposals come forward relating to them.

Figure 6: Designated and non-designated heritage assets



6.30. In addition, the Historic Environment Record contains details of heritage assets, some of which are not nationally listed. The record should be consulted by prospective developers.

6.31. In parallel with this policy, it is proposed that the identified non-designated heritage assets are considered by TWBC for inclusion on their list of local heritage assets. However, the inclusion of any building or structure on such a register is not necessary for the application of this policy.

Local Heritage at Risk

6.32. Historic England produces an annual Register of Heritage at Risk. Outside of London it does not include Grade II listings, apart from churches. TWBC is in the process of developing an 'at risk' Register to identify these assets and others in the Borough. Whilst no assets within Sandhurst have been identified at this time, an audit of buildings and assets should be undertaken to inform TWBC's work.

6.33. Opportunities to restore assets should be taken when they arise, in partnership with the owner.

7. EMPLOYMENT IN SANDHURST

Policy S6: Supporting flexible workspaces and opportunities for homeworking

Purpose

7.1. This policy recognises the growing contribution of home-based and small-to-medium sized businesses in Sandhurst and seeks to encourage opportunities for them, including by supporting the provision of start-up and move-on business units as well as the provision of a shared office space. This would provide a greater incentive and opportunity for local people to work locally. Homeworking too has become commonplace for many in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

POLICY S6: SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKSPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOMEWORKING

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

i. the provision of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings, within the parish;
ii. enabling extensions and garden offices to facilitate homeworking;
iii. enabling microbusinesses;
iv. supporting the diversification of rural businesses, in accordance with Policy S1; and
v. the provision of start-up businesses by enabling low-cost facilities in cooperative clusters.

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, the local landscape, ecology and heritage, and on the capacity and safety of the local highways network.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives 5; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, ED 2, ED 4, ED 12; NL Management Plan: LBE1; NPPF (2024): 85, 86, 88

Justification

7.2. The 2021 census reveals that a large percentage of those living in Sandhurst are working from home: 39.9% compared to 31.5% nationally.

7.3. Due to its location within the National Landscape, the parish is fairly limited in its ability to identify land for employment uses. There is however an opportunity to explore ways to provide more space for early-stage businesses and start-ups, shared working space and opportunities to enable further homeworking, where this can be done sympathetically within the landscape and without compromising local heritage and ecology.

7.4. TWBC will assess such impacts and each case on its merits having regard to its planning application validation checklist requirements (such as the requirement to submit landscape and visual impact assessments, heritage statements, ecological surveys etc.) and relevant development plan policies.

8. ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACE

Policy S7: Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain

Purpose

8.1. This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of Sandhurst's green and blue spaces – including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in off-setting the effects of air pollution – are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development.

8.2. It also sets out how development proposals should incorporate flora and fauna effectively.

POLICY S7: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

A. As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connect chains of green and blue infrastructure, as identified on *Figures 7 and 8,* and provide a measurable biodiversity net gain at least 10%. Proposals that deliver a measurable biodiversity net gain of greater than 10% will be supported.

B. Development proposals that would improve the connectivity between local wildlife sites, other designated sites, wildlife areas and green spaces will be supported. Development proposals which would reduce connectivity between local wildlife sites, other designated sites, wildlife areas and green spaces will not be supported.

C. Where biodiversity net gain units cannot be delivered on site, they should be prioritised for use within the parish, focusing on maintaining and improving identified biodiversity opportunity areas.

D. Development proposals should maintain, enhance the natural environment, landscape features and the rural character and setting of the neighbourhood area. Development proposals should seek to incorporate natural features typical of the parish, for instance trees, wildflower meadows, heath and hedgerows. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters:

<u>Trees and woodland:</u>

- **i There is no unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees or woodlands during or as a result of development. Ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees must not be removed except in exceptional circumstances and in that case, they should be replaced with trees of a similar potential size and native species elsewhere on the site.**
- **ii Where trees and/or shrubs are replaced with new plantings, native or locally appropriate varieties attractive to insects, birds and other wildlife must be used.**

<u>Hedgerows</u>

- **iii The infilling of hedgerows with native species will be supported.**
- **iv Development that would result in the loss of, or the deterioration in the quality of, hedgerows will not be supported with the exception of removal for vehicular access; in this case, the access should include trees at either end of the retained hedgerow to aid wildlife to cross overhead from crown to crown.**

Fauna:

- **v The provision of hedgehog holes in new residential fencing will be supported.**
- **vi Development proposals which provide bird and bat nesting boxes will be supported.**
- **vii The provision of a communal pond and wildlife friendly communal 'green spaces' within new major developments will be supported.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 8; NL Management Plan objectives: G1-4, R2, W1, W2, FH2, PQ1-3; NPPF (2024): 135, 136, 187 to 190, 192 to 195

Justification

Green and blue infrastructure

8.3. The entire parish of Sandhurst sits within the High Weald National Landscape. Such areas are afforded a high level of protection in national planning policy and this is further recognised in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023), which has amended section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities *to 'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area'* when discharging their functions in National Landscapes. The new duty replaces the previous requirement for relevant authorities to *'have regard'* to the purpose of National Landscapes and is intended as a more proactive and strengthened requirement.

8.4. To inform the SNDP, the Kent Biodiversity Record Centre prepared information about the species found in the parish. It reveals that there is a significant number of species of both flora and fauna recorded locally that are considered to be protected, scarce or at risk. This includes bluebells, orchids, great-crested newts, slow-worms, newts, bats and badgers.

8.5. The NPPF states that plans should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. A useful starting point is to map the existing habitats and networks as well as those that offer opportunities for the future. *Figure 7* identifies the green stepping-stones and, importantly, the unbroken green and blue corridors within the area. *Figure 8 shows this for Sandhurst Village.* It has been informed by the High Weald Management Plan, the Borough-wide green infrastructure Framework and information from the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC). The public rights of way network offers opportunities for planting, to enable wildlife routes through the villages and into the wider countryside; to inform this further, members of the Environment Working Group undertook an audit of existing hedgerows and trees to inform where 'infill' can be prioritised to link areas of ancient woodland.

8.6. Individual habitats and wildlife corridors provide critical spaces as wildlife refuges and routes for wildlife, such as bats, to prevent species becoming isolated. Where it can be achieved sustainably, they can also be important spaces and routes for the local community to access for recreational purposes, contributing to people's physical well being and mental health.

8.7. The green and blue infrastructure assets of the parish should be maximised and made properly accessible, where feasible. Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between these wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for instance by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Biodiversity net gain

8.8. The Environment Act includes provision for a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain. TWBC has been successful in achieving this, with many developments contributing more than this. The Kent Nature Partnership (KNP) is promoting the adoption of a 20% biodiversity net gain requirement across the county, and the Parish Council, through Policy AB1, supports this. To assist this, the KNP has undertaken a strategic level viability assessment for 15% and 20% requirements. The assessment has found that a shift from 10% to 15% or 20% biodiversity net gain will not materially affect viability in the majority of instances when delivered onsite or offsite. Further detail can be found in its report, *Viability Assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain in Kent – June 2022*.

8.9. The Environment Act also recognises the need to protect what it describes as "Nature Recovery Networks", joined-up system of places important for wildlife on land and at sea. At the Kent level, the Making Space for Nature Kent project is developing a strategy to enable biodiversity improvement across Kent. An action for Sandhurst Parish Council will be to work with the project to identify biodiversity opportunity areas within the parish where developers looking to 'spend' their net gain can be used. It is expected that where a development within the parish cannot demonstrate that the net gain can be delivered (wholly) on-site, suitable spaces within the parish should be sought in the first instance before spaces further afield.

Flora and fauna-friendly development

8.10. The Neighbourhood Plan supports methods of land management that 'lock up' carbon in the ground and store additional carbon in our trees, fields, hedgerows and gardens.

8.11. Particular features of the landscape of note in the parish include:

8.12. Trees and ancient woodland - The parish is home to a significant number of trees and woodland, including veteran trees and ancient woodland (*Figures 7 and 8).* As noted in the NPPF, trees play a vital part in dealing with the effects of climate change and managing pollution. 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.

8.13. 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 ancient or notable trees will not be permitted except in wholly exceptional circumstances, as set out in 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.

8.14. Numerous veteran trees, mainly oak, exist in large arable fields as remnants of former hedgerows which are subject to damaging farming practices such as ploughing close to the tree, thereby damaging the root system and removing lower branches to permit close approach by farm machinery. These practices are to be discouraged.

Figure 7: Biodiversity features in the parish

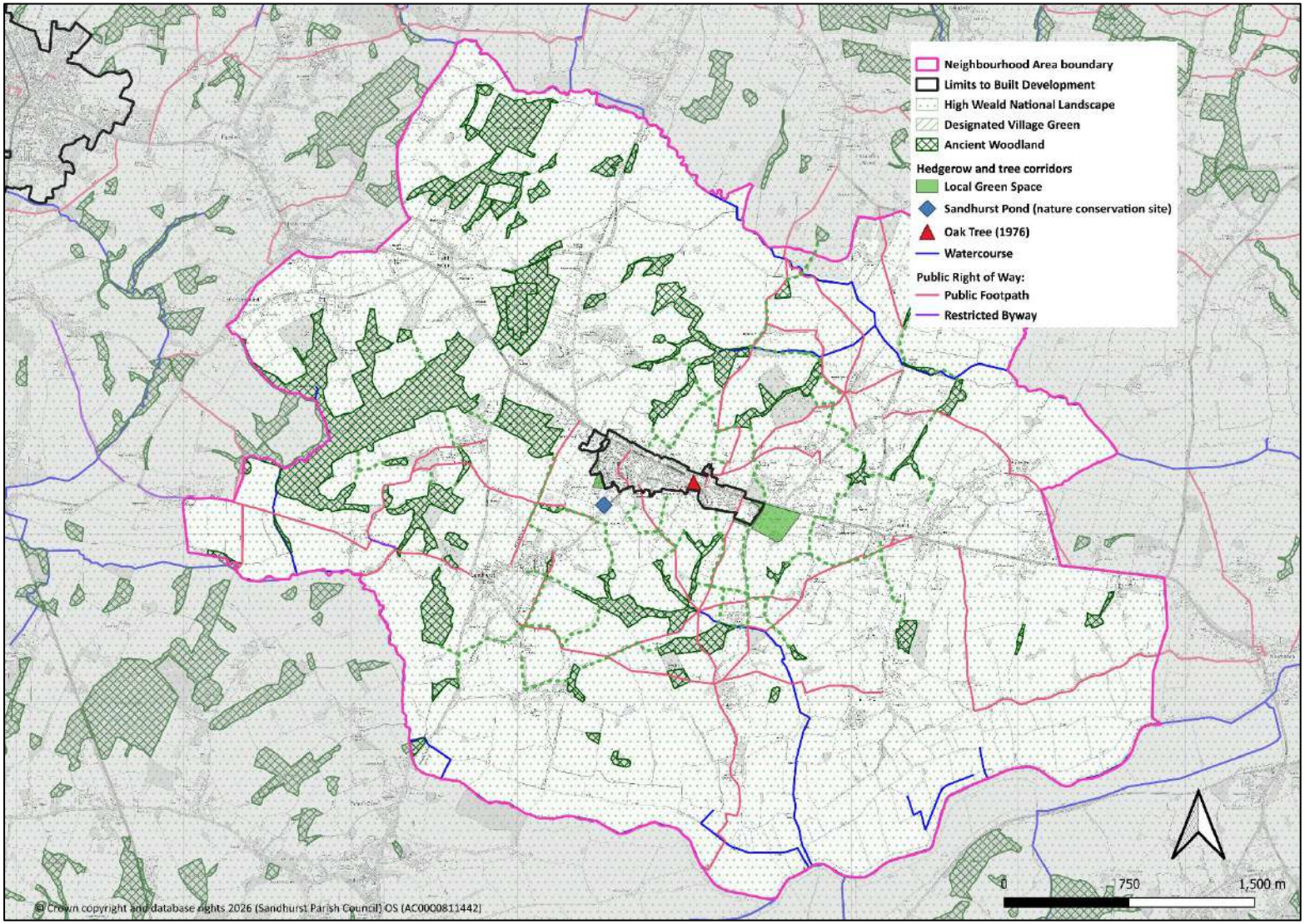
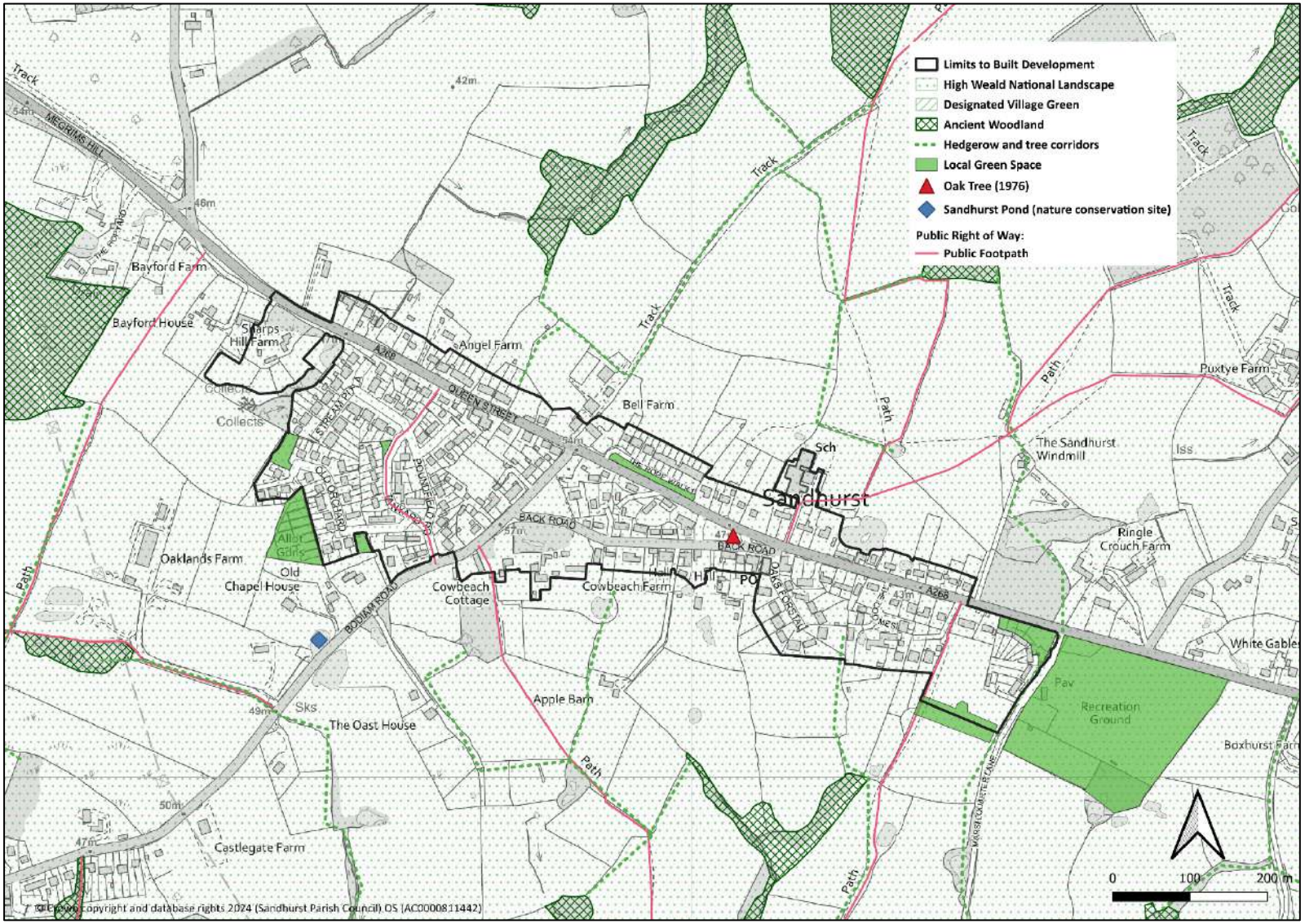


Figure 8: Biodiversity features - Sandhurst Village



8.15. Planning permission should be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as veteran trees and trees of a high conservation value, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. In this instance, substantial compensation as quantified by the Defra biodiversity metric will be considered.

American plants tree to record celebration

MRS ALICE Stevenson, an American living in Sandhurst, and the chairman of the parish council, Mr Ernest Weller, planted eight young trees in the village playing field on Saturday as part of a big tree planting scheme to commemorate the American Bicentenary of Independence.

A committee set up for the American fund chose one village from each district for trees to be planted on each site.

The parish council decided to accept the offer and combine it with a ceremony to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Parish councillors and former members of the jubilee committee attended the planting. Also there was Mr Mark Watkins, a past president of the parish council.

The trees planted in the playing field are:— two checkers, two turkey oaks, one common oak, and three standard limes.

Two flowering cherry trees were planted at Forgefield Estate later in the day.

Mr Weller presented Mrs Stevenson with a bouquet from the last year's jubilee committee and the parish council.

MR ALICE STEVENSON plants a tree with the help of the Sandhurst Parish Council chairman, Mr E. Weller, at the Sandhurst playing fields last Saturday

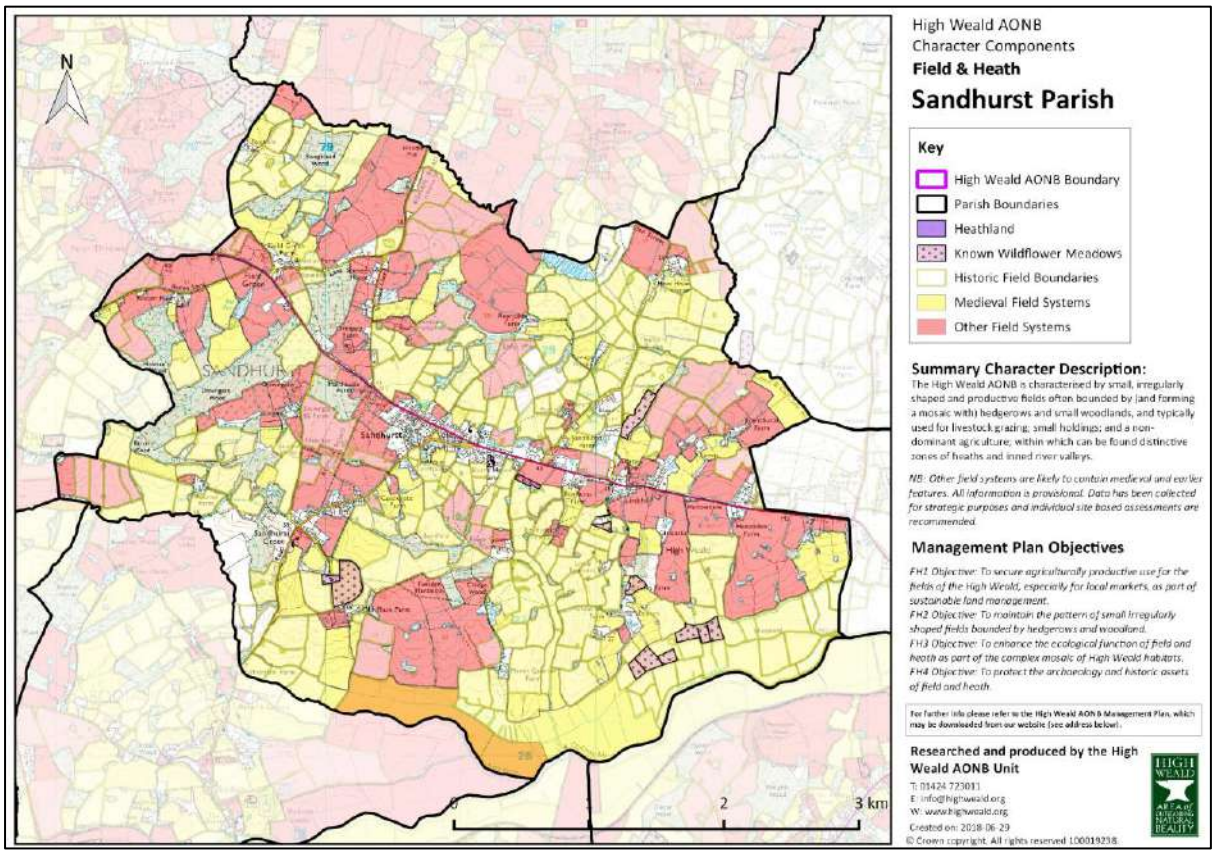
KENT & SURREY COURIER FEBRUARY. 16, 1979

The 1976 Oak Tree in Sandhurst

8.16. Hedgerows - Not only do these provide habitats for a range of fauna, they also link up habitat patches and have a conservation value in their own right. Hedgerows should be retained and extended wherever possible. The use of hedgerows to define the street scene should be integral to development.

8.17. Field and heath - Heathland is a valuable habitat and an integral part of the High Weald landscape (*Figure 9).*

Figure 9: Field and heath in Sandhurst parish



8.18. Provision for wildlife needs on-site includes, for example, bird and bat nesting-boxes, hedgehog holes in fencing, ponds (a distinctive feature locally) and wildlife friendly communal green spaces.

Policy S8: Local Green Space

Purpose

8.19. The policy designates Local Green Spaces within Sandhurst that are demonstrably special to the local community.

POLICY S8: LOCAL GREEN SPACE

The following are designated as local green space as shown on *Figure 10:*

1. **Millers Meadow**
2. **Old Orchard Green Space**
3. **Old Orchard Play Area**
4. **Orchard Allotments**
5. **Playing Fields**
6. **Ringle Green**
7. **Rope Walk**
8. **Green space in Tanyard**

Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belt.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 5; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ2; NPPF (2024): 106 to 108, 153 to 160, 198

Justification

8.20. Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans can designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the community. This will afford them protection from development other than in very special circumstances. The NPPF states 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.

8.21. A survey of green spaces in Sandhurst parish was undertaken by the Environment Working Group. Building on feedback from the local community via the surveys and workshops, they reviewed the green spaces across the parish to ascertain whether they might be suitable for designation as a Local Green Space. *Figure 10* shows the areas to be designated. Detailed maps of each space are shown in Appendix D along with details as to how they each meet the NPPF criteria.

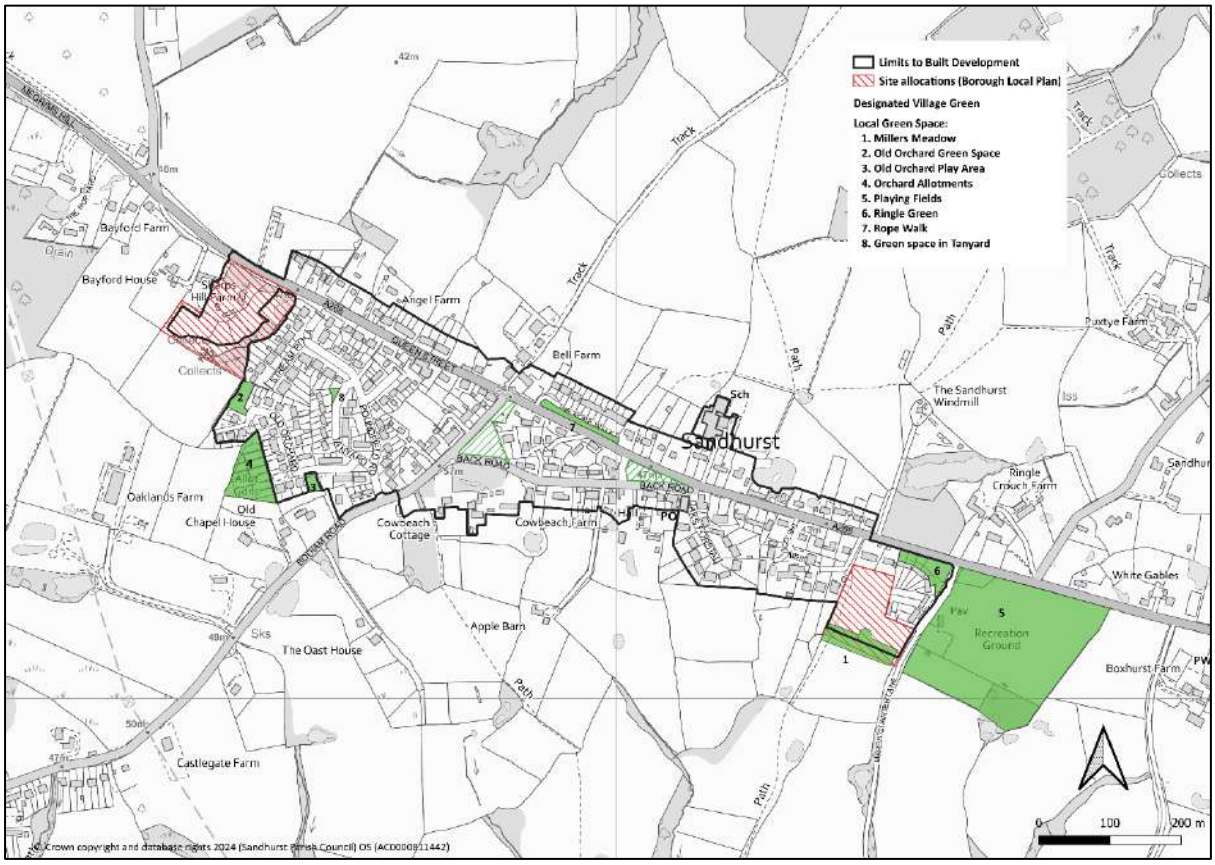
8.22. It should be noted that two of the Local Green Spaces identified have also been identified within the Borough Local Plan:

- Space 5 (Playing Fields) is identified as Site number 235 in the adopted Borough Local Plan.

- Space 6 (Ringle Green) is identified as Site number 234 in the adopted Borough Local Plan.

8.23. Several green spaces that are considered important to the local community, for instance the Village Greens, have not been proposed for designation as Local Green Space. This is because they are already adequately protected from inappropriate development by other mechanisms, such as Village Green Status and ancient woodland.

Figure 10: Local Green Spaces



Policy S9: Locally significant views

Purpose

8.24. This policy sets out a series of views in and across the parish, which have been identified by the community as being important to safeguard. The policy seeks to safeguard the views from inappropriate development.

POLICY S9: LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

The Plan identifies eleven Locally Significant Views as shown on *Figure 11* (and as described in Appendix D).

As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals within the shaded arcs of the various Locally Significant Views as shown on *Figure 11* should be designed in a way that demonstrates how they has taken into consideration the importance of the Locally Significant View or Views in the layout, design or masterplanning of the site(s) concerned and have appropriately mitigated any adverse impact on those views.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 7, STR 8; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ2; NPPF: 131-135, 187

Justification

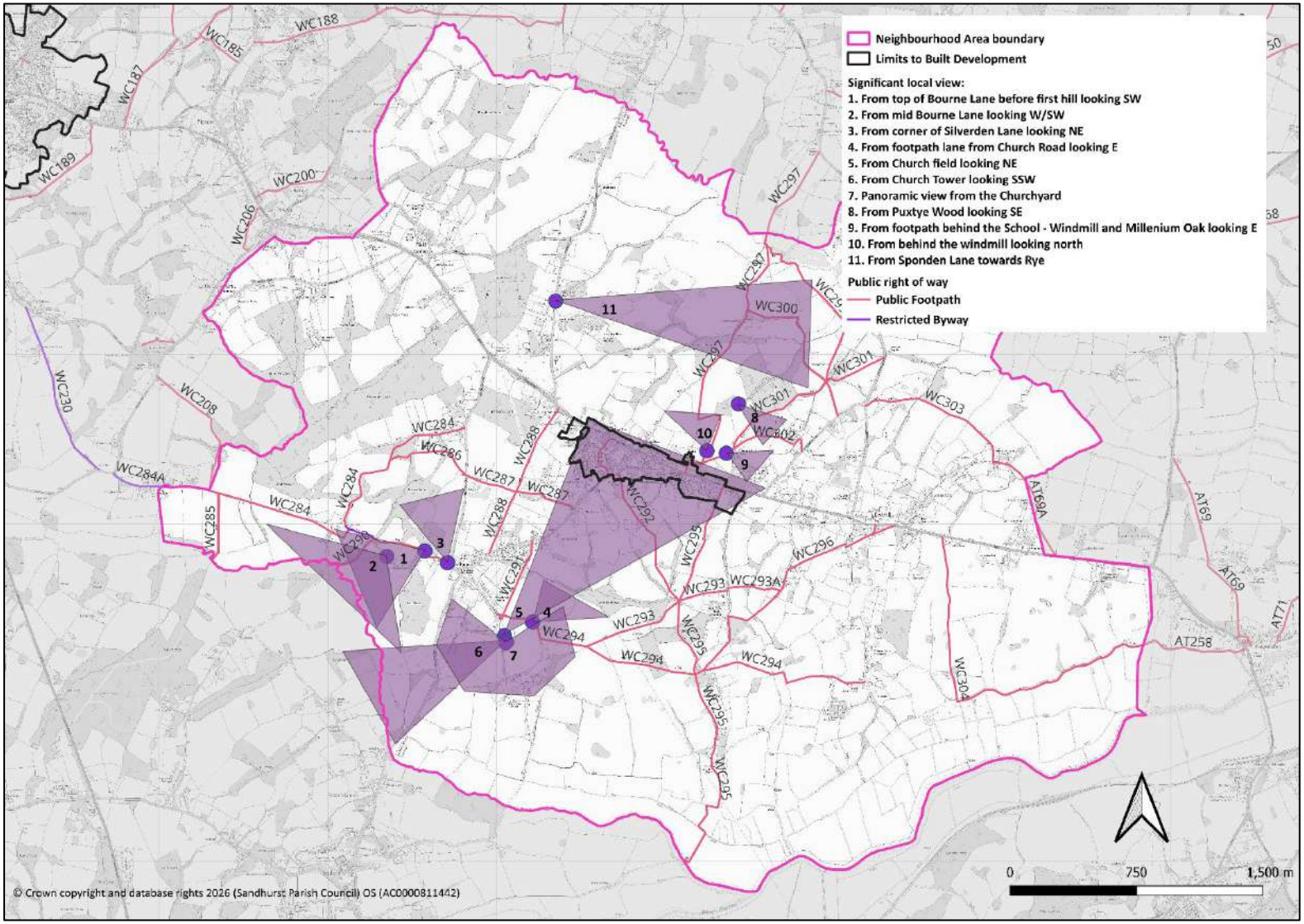
8.25. In consultation with the community, eleven views have been identified, which are felt to be particularly important. *Figure 11* provides a map of the views and further details about why they are important is contained in Appendix D.

8.26. Development should be designed in a way that safeguards, where possible, the locally significant view or views concerned. It attempts to provide the flexibility required for the range of development proposals which will come forward within the Plan period.

8.27. In circumstances where the proposed development would be likely to have a significant impact on an identified Locally Significant View – which is highly likely for the views coinciding with the allocated sites – the planning application concerned should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated within the design of the development proposed and captured in the assessment. It is accepted that in some areas, views will be compromised, but developers should seek to incorporate glimpses of views within proposals. This will assist in embedding a landscape approach to development and perpetuate a sense of place, connecting with the High Weald.

8.28. It is noted that Policy EN1 (Sustainable Design) of the Borough Local Plan requires proposals to respect site characteristics including its topography, natural features, relationship with immediate surroundings, historic setting, and views into and out of the site.

Figure 11: Locally Significant Views



Policy S10: Dark skies

Purpose

8.29. Situated in the High Weald National Landscape, parts of Sandhurst parish provide ideal locations from which to enjoy dark skies and stargazing. These dark skies also support both nocturnal and diurnal wildlife. This policy seeks to ensure that development does not encroach on this valued aspect of the parish.

POLICY S10: DARK SKIES

Development proposals which include external lighting should protect the night sky from light pollution, and meet the following criteria:

i. **the lighting is necessary for operational, safety or security reasons;**
ii. **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. **impact on nearby residential properties, wildlife, local heritage assets or the wider landscape is minimised; and**
iv. **the guidance on lighting provided in the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light (and any subsequent revisions) is adhered to. Proposals should consider carefully, and provide details of, 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. Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors so that they only come on when needed.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 8, EN 8; NL Management Plan objectives: DS1, DS2; NPPF (2024): 96, 131, 135, 187, 198

Justification

8.30. Despite its location close to Ashford and Royal Tunbridge Wells, pockets of the parish remain largely unlit (*Figure 12*), for instance the significant areas of woodland away from Sandhurst village. The dark night skies in these areas are predominantly unspoilt, and it is important that they are kept that way.

Figure 12: Map showing levels of radiance for Sandhurst Parish, 2016 source: The Countryside Charity (formerly CPRE). Each pixel shows the levels of radiance (night lights) shining up into the night sky

8.31. The benefits derived from the prevention of light pollution include:

- 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
- Energy efficiency – reducing wastage from unnecessary or excessive lighting, thus reducing the parish's carbon footprint.

8.32. The High Weald NL Management Plan (Objective DS1) seeks to protect and maintain the existing dark skies within the High Weald for the benefit of all, including future generations, for our health, wellbeing and enjoyment, to increase our understanding and sense of place in the universe; and for the benefit of wildlife and to reduce energy consumption. It encourages neighbourhood planning groups to include policies that minimise light pollution, without compromising public safety.

8.33. The impact of light pollution is particularly harmful in the open countryside where rural character is eroded. Light pollution can also compromise the architectural and historical character of conservation areas and listed buildings or their settings. Artificial lighting has an impact on biodiversity especially for nocturnal animals and invertebrates can be seriously affected by artificial light at even very low levels, adversely affecting their ability to feed and reproduce.

9. TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

Policy S11: Improving safe movement and promoting active modes of travel

Purpose

9.1. This policy seeks to enhance safer movement through Sandhurst village for all. This accords with national policy and the strategic transport priorities for the area, as set out in the Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the Balance, published by Kent County Council, which support opportunities for 'active travel' (walking and cycling). KCC is also working on a Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP). Although, the current proposals do not affect Sandhurst Parish.

9.2. The community particularly supported improvements to enable walking along routes which are most likely to encourage a shift away from the private car for short journeys in and around Sandhurst. There may be opportunities to improve provision for cycling too.

9.3. Finally, the policy seeks to promote the provision of infrastructure to support recreational horse-riding, as there are currently few bridleways in the parish, forcing riders onto the rural lanes.

POLICY S11: IMPROVING SAFE MOVEMENT AND PROMOTING ACTIVE MODES OF TRAVEL

A. To ensure that residents can safely, and in a sustainable way, access social and community amenities and facilities as well as public transport and the school in Sandhurst and the neighbouring settlements, all new residential developments should ensure safe pedestrian, and where possible cycle, access to link up with the existing active movement network, and public transport network.

B. The provision of new, and/or the enhancement of existing pedestrian (and where feasible segregated cycle) routes that are, where possible, physically separated from vehicular traffic and from one another will be strongly supported. Such routes should be of permeable material and ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured.

C. The design and layout of works related to the widening of footways or the provision of traffic-calming measures should enhance the rural, village character, for example retaining and/or providing hedgerows, trees and soft verges where possible. Materials and layout must be sympathetic to local character.

D. Development proposals must not adversely affect the existing public right of way network. Proposals for new public rights of way, including bridleways, will be supported wherever possible; in all new developments existing bridleways must be retained where they exist or, alternatively, new or amended bridleway links provided together with safe road crossing points that enable connectivity between Sandhurst village and the wider countryside.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 3; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 5, STR 6, TP 2, EN 21; NL Management Plan objectives: S1, LBE1, PQ3; NPPF (2024): 96, 105, 109, 110, 111, 115, 116, 117, 135

Justification

9.4. Sandhurst is surrounded by an extensive system of public rights of way (*Figure 13)* routed across large swathes of farmland, sections of woodland and ancient woodland, with stunning views, one of which is the High Weald behind St Nicholas Church. Having this wonderful asset around our village promotes walking and is good for tourism. Kent County Council Highways, via their Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan, supports the provision of a high quality, well maintained public rights of way network.

9.5. Engagement for the SNDP highlighted the following issues in relation to transport and movement:

9.6. Traffic and road safety – There is a high incidence of traffic speeding through Sandhurst, exacerbated by the fact that the A268 runs through Sandhurst village. The sheer volume of cars is also significant, particularly at peak times or when there have been accidents and delays on the strategic route network, causing traffic to divert through the village and along the more rural roads.

9.7. The primary school is located on the northern side of the A268 while some of the housing – including the two sites allocated in the Borough Local Plan (one of which has been built) are on the southern side. There are no road crossing points in the village centre to enable safe access across and this causes problems during school drop off and pick up times.

9.8. Such road issues fall within the remit of KCC as the Highways Authority and an action in this SNDP is to work with KCC to explore options for traffic calming along the A268 and Bodiam Road as well as options for the introduction of a crossing point near to the school.

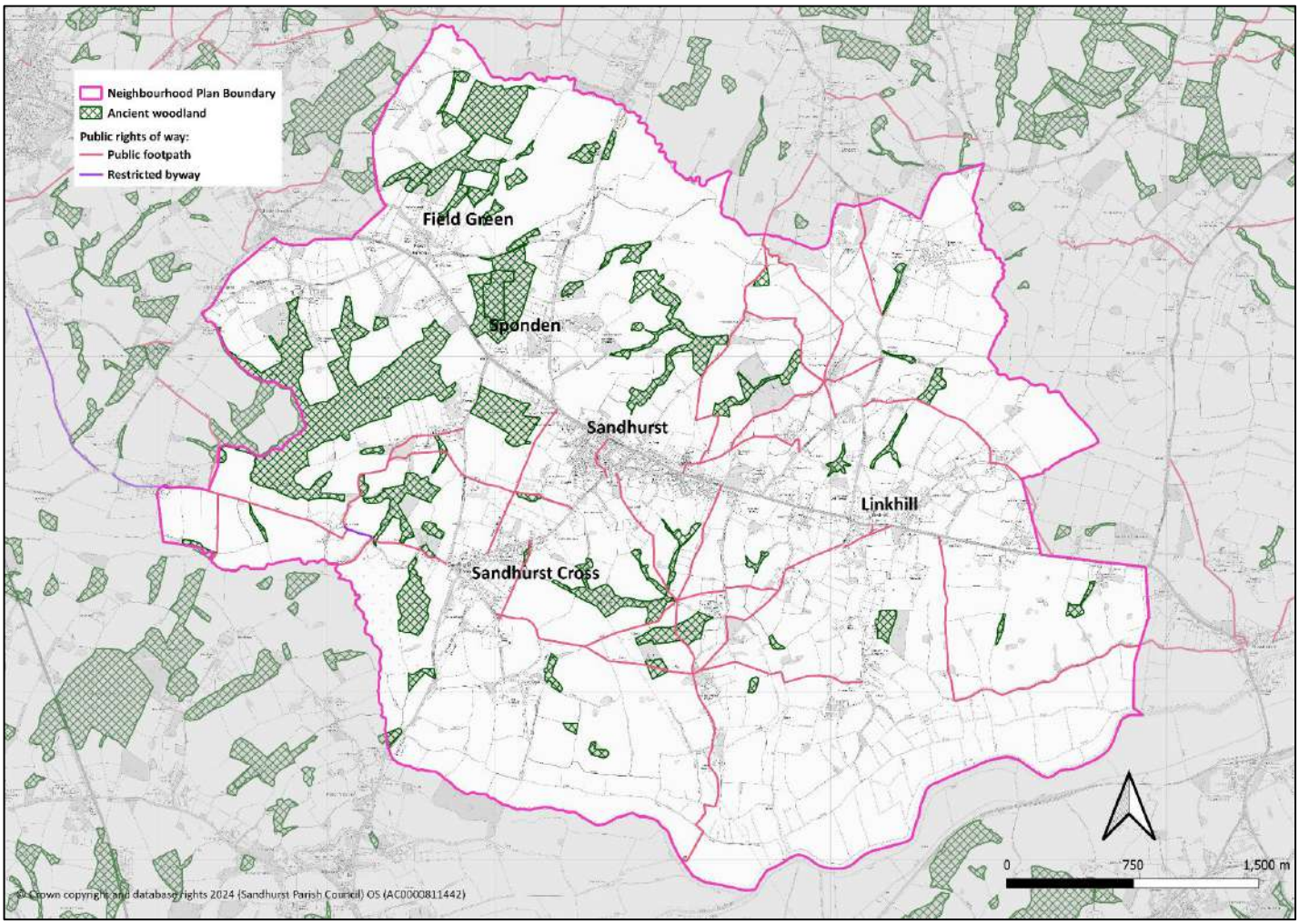
Image of the complex road network opposite the school entrance (shown in red circle)

Images of the congested road network in the area opposite the school entrance

9.9. Movement by foot and, where practical, by bicycle: An aspiration locally is to encourage more people to access local facilities predominantly by means other than the car. Notably there was a preference to access by foot, but where feasible, opportunities to introduce viable cycle routes should be explored. This would not only contribute to people's health and well-being but would also reduce the number of local cars on the roads. There are a series of challenges to this though:

- the facilities in Sandhurst Village are quite spread out, with the recreation ground to the east, the allotments to the (south) west, St Nicholas Church (a mile) to the south and the school and village amenities in the centre.
- the A268, as noted previously, runs through the village with no pedestrian crossing points.
- there are sections of footway throughout the village that are unsuitable especially for parents with small children and pushchairs, older people and disabled residents.
- Bodiam Road, connecting Sandhurst Cross to Sandhurst is a fast road with sections of pavement missing.
- there are no dedicated cycle lanes in the village.
- there are no designated bridleways for equestrian pursuits.
- the 40mph speed limit through Linkhill is considered too fast by some residents. Traffic calming measures could be usefully introduced here.
- Some footways are increasingly overgrown with vegetation and other debris and/or have some subsidence. This needs to be monitored and tackled, to ensure access for all users. An example is the footway around Linkhill between Marsh Quarter and Ethnam Lane. This is exacerbated by the 40mph speed limit noted above.

Figure 13: Public rights of way in Sandhurst parish



9.10. The size of Sandhurst village lends itself to being very walkable (and potentially cyclable, if viable ideally segregated routes can be identified), both to those living in the village, and those in the nearby settlements. Opportunities should be sought to improve walking and, where possible, introduce cycling ways. Potential improvements include the following:

1. The central part of the village sees a number of roads converging, all within a short distance of the village centre and shops, the village green and the primary school. It can become very dangerous particularly at peak hours. A solution is needed to make this area safer for pedestrians, especially if the village hub is to be located here. There needs to be community engagement to resolve these issues, which is acceptable from both a planning and highways perspective.

2. The footway heading beyond Marsh Quarter in an easterly direction to Linkhill and further should be improved as a priority for walking as it becomes narrow and increasingly constricted by hedgerows. Pedestrians are exposed to traffic travelling in excess of the 40mph speed limit. This also applies to residents at Linkhill who have great difficulty in crossing the A268. Traffic exiting Ethnam Lane onto the A268 and who wish to turn right, have a severely restricted view to their left from vehicles travelling from a

westerly direction. Options need to be explored to address these issues, including how to improve visibility.

3. Back Road could have its speed limit reduced to 20mph to improve safety for pedestrians, school children, the elderly, cyclists and those using mobility scooters.
4. The area immediately outside the school should be considered as a place to put a crossing point or designated as a shared space to make it easier for pedestrians to cross the road. The latter could be achieved for instance by changing the surfacing colour and material. Introducing lower speed limits here and/or advisory 20mph signs at school times (as noted in the Sandhurst Highways Improvement Plan) would also be helpful.
5. Improving the footways between Sandhurst to Sandhurst Cross would be helpful to enable those villagers to access the main services without the need for a car. There are parts of Bodiam Road (40mph limit) that lack pavement, therefore improving off-road walking routes would also be helpful.
6. The provision of bridleways to support those wishing to horse-ride locally is supported. At present, the network is very limited.

9.11. Whilst such improvements sit outside the scope of the neighbourhood plan itself, they are noted within the Non-Policy Actions section as activities for the Parish Council and wider community to pursue with private operators and the highways authority.

9.12. In parallel to improving the active travel network, there are a series of factors that may help to improve the environment for walkers, cyclists (and horse-riders). Many are beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and the priority should be to work with KCC Highways and National Highways to explore their viability. Projects include:

- introducing slower speed limits in parts of the village. Speed limits on other roads could also be usefully reduced for instance:
    a. the 60mph speed limit could be reduced to 40mph on the western approach to the village, before the right hand junction of Silverden Lane and continuing down Megrims Hill until it meets the 30mph limit at the gateway signs at the entrance to the village.
    b. The 60mph speed limit could be reduced to 40mph on the approach in Sponden Lane to its junction with the A268 and junction layout improvements could be considered.
    c. The 40mph speed limit could be reduced to 30mph along Bodiam Road from Sandhurst Cross to the existing 30mph zone prior to the Tanyard Estate to improve safety for pedestrians since much of the route has no footway. Junction layout improvements could be considered.
    d. The 30mph speed limit could be reduced to 20mph for the entire length of Back Road to reflect the narrow road with no footways which is a main route leading to the village amenities for pedestrians.
- Redirecting HGVs away from rural lanes – a dialogue with Kent County Council and National Highways would help to consider ways to re-route vehicles, for instance by altering SatNav guidance provided to private companies.

- Problems associated with rat-running, where local routes are used by drivers to avoid congestion on the nearby trunk roads.
- In areas where there would be significant effect on PRoW, the network must also be included in the landscape planning of the infrastructure as a whole. Where PRoW would be directly affected by development proposals, plans should clarify intentions for positively accommodating, diverting, or enhancing paths.
- Working with Kent County Council Highways and private operators to improve public transport provision in Sandhurst parish, in terms of routes served, timings and punctuality.
- Working with Kent County Council Highways to help achieve the aims of the Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Framing Kent's Future strategy.

9.13. Applicants for new developments engage with the County Council PRoW and Access Service at the earliest opportunity. This would allow the County Council to review proposals for access improvements and consider appropriate developer contributions for PRoW network enhancements.

Public transport

9.14. Public transport sits largely outside the influence of the SNDP, however is a topic that has been commonly raised throughout the engagement. For those people who cannot drive and / or afford to run a car, access to services such as secondary schools, colleges, health facilities and employment opportunities are very limited.

9.15. Currently Sandhurst village is served by only one bus - the No 349 Hawkhurst to Hastings which offers a two hourly service. Whilst there is a link with Hawkhurst the wait for the return service is impractical and means that people now use their cars which adds to the pollution and extreme delays at the traffic lights in Hawkhurst.

9.16. Section 106 contributions and other grants or donations made available via TWBC or directly to Sandhurst Parish Council should be used to fund projects to improve the public transport facilities within the villages, for instance bus shelters. Lobbying for additional services, for instance to connect more regularly to Cranbrook Grammar School, could also be explored. Further information is provided in Section 13 (Non-Policy Actions).

Policy S12: Publicly accessible parking

Purpose

9.17. The policy seeks to safeguard existing public car parking and support new parking in areas where parking is a challenge. Residential car parking is addressed via local Design Guidance.

POLICY S12: PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE 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 will be supported subject to the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan. In particular proposals which would ease the congestion around the primary school at peak times.

C. Insofar as planning permission is required the following facilities will be strongly supported where they complement existing and new parking provision:

i. dedicated covered and secure bicycle parking facilities, preferably with e-bike charging points; and

ii. future-proofed four hour or faster electric vehicle charging points (or wireless charging facilities).

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 3; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 5, STR 6, TP 4; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ3, LBE1; NPPF (2024): 109

Justification

9.18. Whilst the SNDP promotes active travel (walking, wheeling cycling and equestrian), the parts of the parish beyond Sandhurst village itself are rural and there is inevitably high car reliance. In the parish, approximately 92% of residents own at least one car. Only 8% have access to no vehicle, compared to 15% across the borough. Some journeys are simply not easy to make by foot or bike and therefore vehicle access to the key services is essential.

9.19. Parking outside of school hours is not a major problem as there is usually space outside the shop or village hall or further up Back Road by the Upper Green. Very limited safe and legal parking on the main A268 means that at drop-off and pick-up times, however, the situation becomes extremely challenging as a significant proportion of pupils are driven in from outside of the village. The end of Back Road opposite the school drive is a bottleneck where traffic for the shop, post office, school, service station as well as Oaks Forstal and Back Road residents all converge, making it dangerous and at times impassable. The parents of the school requested a petition to ask KCC to come up with a solution, but none is forthcoming.

9.20. There is a need to encourage greater use of the car parking spaces at the playing fields, and this would be enhanced if pupils could safely walk to the school from this location – for instance with the provision of a crossing point. The parking area could also incorporate safe cycle storage and parking as well as the provision of electric vehicle charging points.

10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Policy S13: A village hub for Sandhurst

Purpose

10.1. The provision of local facilities and services is critical in a small rural parish such as Sandhurst. This policy seeks to support proposals that would contribute to the development of a Village Hub within Sandhurst village, creating a focal point for local activities.

POLICY S13: A VILLAGE HUB FOR SANDHURST

A. Proposals for multi-purpose community facilities within a 'Village Hub' in Sandhurst 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; and**
- **iii. the proposal would respect the character and wider setting in accordance with Policy S3 (Character of Development) of this Neighbourhood Plan; and**
- **iv. wherever practicable, the proposal should provide on-site renewable energy generation; and**
- **v. where possible, electric vehicle charging points (for cars and bicycles) is provided; and**
- **vi. the proposal should incorporate mixed uses and an active frontage and interact with adjacent public realm and open spaces.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 5; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 5; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ1, PQ3; NPPF (2024): 88, 90, 96, 98

Justification

10.2. There is a parish wide aspiration to have a community 'hub' where all residents of Sandhurst village – and wider rural settlements - can come together in a variety of ways to enhance village life and offer opportunities for socialising, learning, office space by the hour, meeting rooms and generally improving community connections for all. Ideas for its use that have been put forward at the neighbourhood planning events include, knit and natter, silver surfers, coffee mornings, displaying local artists work etc. The precise offering would need to be worked out, but the overall premise of a central 'hub' is supported.

10.3. The location for such a hub is a challenge but possible options being explored are developing the village hall space to its full potential with a local architect or finding another suitable location within the heart of the village.

Policy S14: Retaining and improving opportunities for community and cultural facilities, sport and recreation

Purpose

10.4. This policy seeks to ensure that those living in and moving to the parish are adequately served with a range of good quality facilities and activities and that there are opportunities for residents to shape this.

POLICY S14: RETAINING AND IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL FACILITIES, SPORT AND RECREATION

A. Proposals for new community, recreational, cultural and leisure facilities – including facilities for teenagers, a community orchard and rewilding projects - and the improvement of existing facilities will be supported where:

- **i. the proposal is contributes to the High Weald National Landscape and its setting; and**
- **ii. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment; and**
- **iii. the proposal would not have significant adverse impacts upon the local road network; and**
- **iv. the proposal would not have harmful impacts on the heritage aspects, including the setting, of the facility;**
- **v. and the proposal would take appropriate opportunities to enhance the local environment through the delivery of multi-functional outdoor spaces that incorporate sustainable urban drainage measures.**

B. The provision of new and upgraded play areas to serve the needs of children of all ages, in accordance with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Local Plan/Open Space Study standards Local Plan policy OSSR2 (or it successor), will be supported. Where possible, these should incorporate areas for 'natural play' (defined as play provision with natural environments as opposed to 'man-made' ones).

C. Existing community, leisure and recreational facilities should be retained unless the facility is surplus to requirements and there is no longer a proven need for such a facility or alternative and equivalent facilities can be provided that:

- **i. are of at least an equivalent scale, specification and located in an accessible location to the community to be served; and**
- **ii. reprovision of these facilities will incorporate adequate safeguards for delivery; and**
- **iii. the proposal satisfies all other relevant policy expectations of this neighbourhood plan.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 5; Borough Local Plan 2030-2038: STR 2, STR 5, ED 12, OSSR 1, OSSR 2; NL Management Plan objectives: PQ1, PQ2; NPPF (2024): 96, 98, 100, 101, 103, 104

Justification

10.5. Sandhurst is fortunate to have a number of community facilities serving the local community, including a small number of shops, the village hall, allotments, playgrounds and a fine dining restaurant (within what was the former public house). It is important that such facilities are safeguarded against loss and, where required, improved or expanded to cater for local need.

10.6. Engagement undertaken with the community for the SNDP has highlighted the following priorities:

- Safe space for teens - there is a youth club held for those up to age 11 in the Baptist Church. For older teenagers the recreation ground is the main open space available. Additional youth space would be welcomed, for example a teen shelter. A 'rig' (teenage climbing frame) has been installed. Such provision is supported in the Borough Local Plan (Policy PSTR/SA 1).
- Community Orchard – a desire has been expressed to see the introduction of a community orchard, which would encourage self-sufficiency and contribute to the health and well-being of local residents.
- Rewilding projects – the planting of wildflowers at various locations to encourage biodiversity.

10.7. In terms of meeting spaces, an audit was undertaken of the existing facilities (*Table 4).*

Table 4: Audit of existing community spaces

Facility	**Commentary**
Pavilion Rye Road	The pavilion is located at the recreation ground and is used by those playing sports. It does not have enough inside space to accommodate users in winter or in bad weather. There would be potential support to extend the facility so that it could serve additional users.
Mission Church Back Road	Primarily a place of worship. The space is used for a range of activities including choir rehearsal, the youth church (Connect 4), toddler group and bridge club. The space is in good condition but could be updated to improve the quality and accessibility of accommodation offered.
Old School Hall Back Road	This is a community hall used for meetings, events and classes. As there is no pavement or streetlighting outside, parents of younger children can be reluctant to let them walk there on their own / unaccompanied by an adult. The space could benefit from some additional works including improving the passageway, providing storage space internally and exploring the installation of solar panels. There are plans in hand with the Parish Council to rearrange the toilets and improve the entry/ exit to the side to improve disabled access.
Sandhurst Social Club Back Road	This space is used for social meeting and functions. There is no kitchen on site.

10.8. Whilst the scope of the strategic allocations is set out in the Borough Local Plan, opportunities to provide these facilities should be sought. There may be opportunities to do so as part of windfall development.

11. IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

11.1. Sandhurst Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan.

11.2. 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 SNDP are being interpreted and used in the way intended. 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, in partnership with other organisations.

11.3. 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 Section 13, divided into priorities towards which developer contributions may be directed and broader, community projects, which have been collated throughout the process, but which sit beyond planning policy. 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 Big Lottery Fund.
- Commenting on planning applications or consultations relating to the neighbourhood plan area – the Parish Council has a role in ensuring that the SNDP 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 TWBC would be a useful step in ensuring 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 SNDP 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.
- Maintaining a dialogue with TWBC and the promoter/developers of the sites allocated within the Borough Local Plan.

11.4. 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.
- 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 Meeting – is provided, to feed back to the community on progress about both the effectiveness of the policies and the pursing of the projects.

11.5. 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. Such issues can be most effectively understood by maintaining open dialogue with the community and other partners.

11.6. 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 future review will enable the Parish Council to keep the Plan up-to-date. Any review will be undertaken in partnership with and ensuring the engagement of the wider community.

11.7. The Parish Council will consider how best to progress these actions.

12. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

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

12.2. 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), if adopted by TWBC, would be a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site, and levied by the Borough Council. Different charge rates would apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its local plan. With a 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Plan, the local community would 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 neighbourhood area. Further information on TWBC's approach to CIL is available in the Local Development Scheme (March 2025).

12.3. Spending and infrastructure priorities for Sandhurst Parish are included within the TWBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and within the Borough Local Plan, the strategic parish policy for Sandhurst, PSTR/SA 1, and the strategic policy on infrastructure and connectivity, Policy STR 5.

12.4. The Parish Council intends to regularly review its spending priorities. Any proposed changes to spending principles or priorities will be published for comment by the community and other interested parties. Once finalised, any updated list will be published on the Parish Council website and in relevant literature.

13. NON POLICY ACTIONS

13.1 There have been many responses from residents of the parish to the neighbourhood plan surveys and these include requests and suggestions which are beyond the remit of the SNDP. However, we acknowledge their importance in reflecting the wishes of the village and so they are included here as projects and aspirations actions. They may be pursued by the Parish Council or other local groups.

- Well-maintained infrastructure – water and drains
- Farm shop
- Police presence
- Medical facilities
- More shops
- Area for teenagers to meet
- Benches in recreation field
- New/better village hall
- Activities for younger people/Scouts
- Maintained footpaths/pavements
- Nice village pub
- Roundabout at junction with Sponden Lane
- Luncheon club
- Picnic benches
- Bench seats
- Clear footpath signage
- Benches by vineyard church
- Café
- Bus shelters
- Lobby for improved bus connectivity, including to nearby secondary schools.
- Taxis
- More planning control
- Businesses
- Basketball/netball club
- Internet café
- Wildlife project
- Cinema evening
- Community garden
- Traffic calming along the A268 and Bodiam Road as well as options for the introduction of a crossing point near to the school.
- Development of a directory of parish services
- Work with KCC to develop a Masterplan for improved public rights of way (walking, wheeling, cycling, equestrian) in the parish.
- Explore traffic calming along parts of the local route network for instance, the A268, Bodiam Road and through Linkhill
- Options for the introduction of a crossing point near to the school.
- Explore ways to improve safety around the school, shop, petrol station area, for instance through traffic calming.
- Lobby for improved public transport links.
- Work with TWBC to develop an Appraisal for the Sandhurst Conservation Area

14. POLICIES MAPS

14.1 The maps (*Figures 14 and 15*) on the next two pages show the designations in the Parish. Once the SNDP is 'made', the mapping layers will be viewable on the TWBC online Planning Map.

Figure 14: Policies Map parish

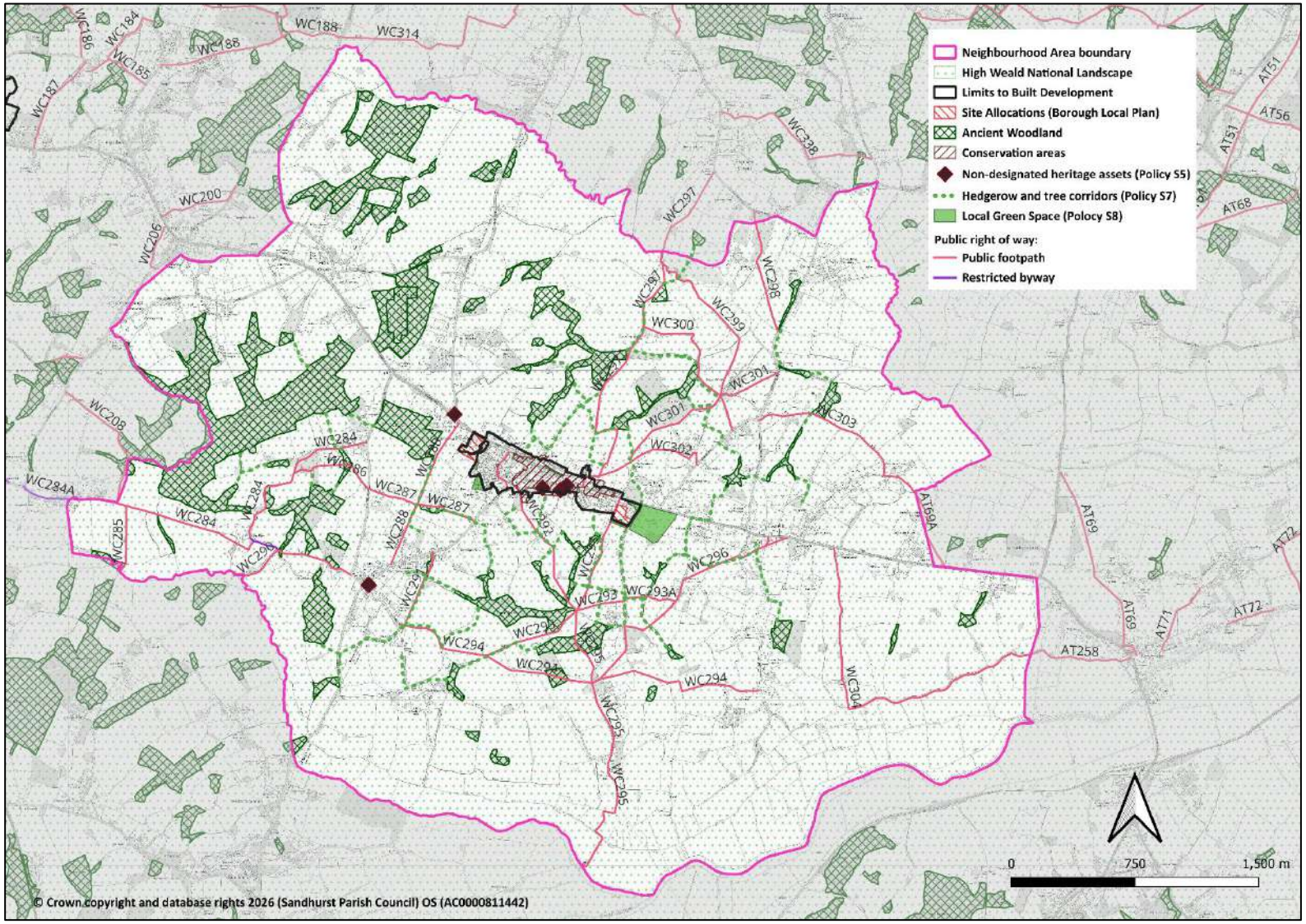
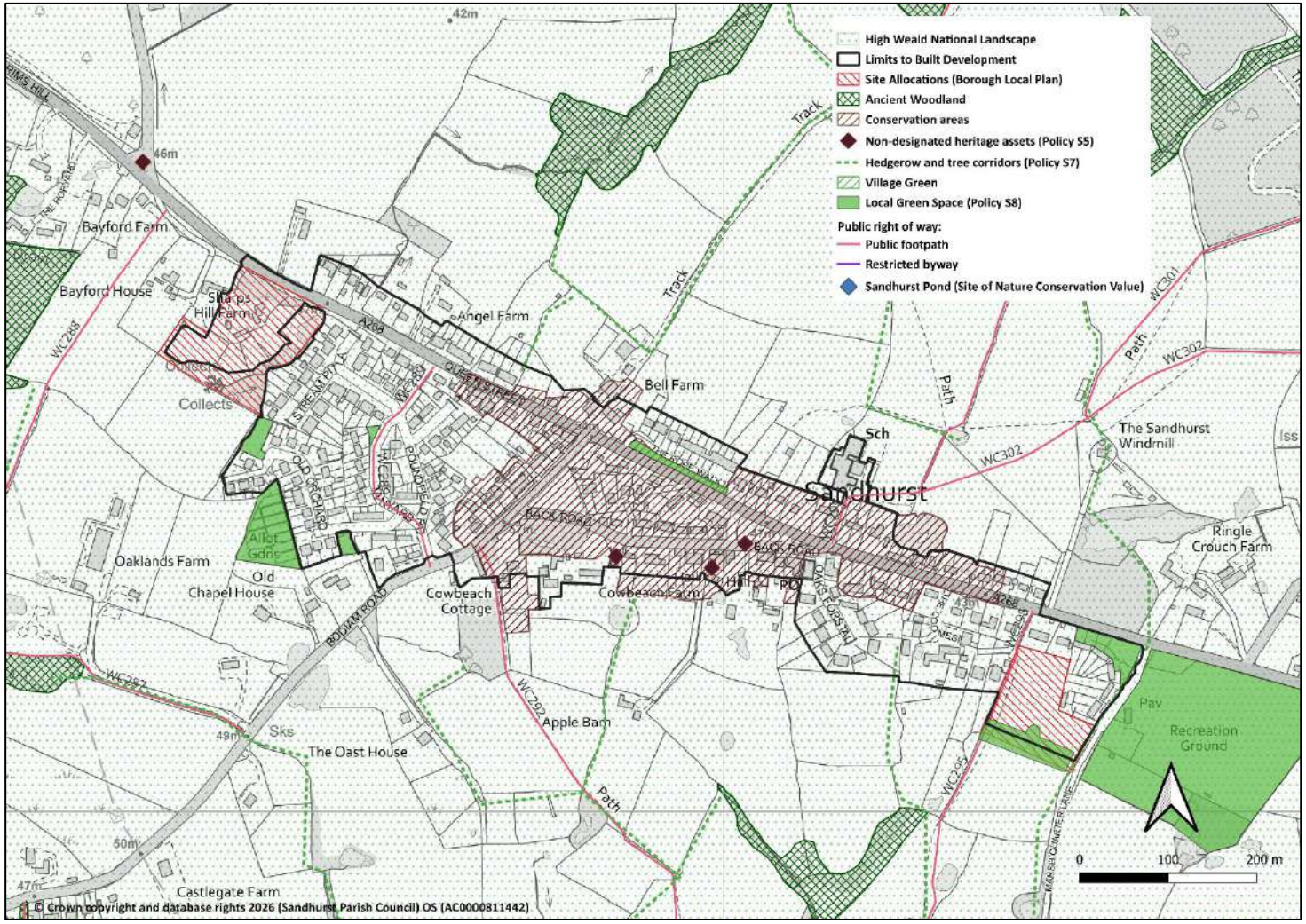


Figure 15: Policies Map - Sandhurst village



15. GLOSSARY

- **Active travel:** as defined in the Kent Active Travel Strategy: Active Travel means walking or cycling as a means of transport, in order to get to a particular destination such as work, the shops or to visit friends. It does not cover walking and cycling done purely for pleasure, for health reasons, or simply walking the dog (Welsh Government (2014) Active Travel: Walking and Cycling www.gov.uk.government/statistics/ active-travel-financial-year-ending-March-2015)
- **Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

  a) Social Rent: meets all of the following conditions: (i) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent; (ii) the landlord is a registered provider; and (iii) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

  b) Other affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

  c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

  d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.
- **Ancient or veteran tree/tree of arboricultural 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.
- **Blue infrastructure:** Blue infrastructure refers to water elements, like rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains, water treatment facilities, etc. Green infrastructure refers to trees, lawns,

hedgerows, parks, fields, forests, etc. These terms come from urban planning and land-use planning.

- **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 would be set, once adopted, by TWBC.
- **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
- **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.
- **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).
- **Kent 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.
- **Limits to built development (LBD):** 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.
- **Local connection:** For the purposes of allocating affordable homes, housing shall be occupied in accordance with the Borough Council's standard allocation procedures with priority given to applicants who can demonstrate that they have a local connection to the parish of Sandhurst 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.
- **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.
- **Previously developed land/ brownfield land:** Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.
- **Public right of way:** A way over which the public have a right to pass and repass, including Public Footpaths, Public Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic.
- **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.
- **SMEs (Small to medium-sized enterprises):** The UK definition of SME is generally a small or medium-sized enterprise with fewer than 250 employees. While the SME meaning defined by the EU is also business with fewer than 250 employees, and a turnover of less than £42 million,

or a balance sheet total of less than £35 million. Within this umbrella there are three different categories: medium-sized, small, and micro-businesses. These categories are defined by turnover and number of employees.

- **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.
- **Use Classes Order**: The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended in 1995, 2005 and 2013) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.
- **Windfall sites:** Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

16. LIST OF EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

16.1 All links correct at February 2026. Evidence documents relating to the engagement activities that took place are also available on the Sandhurst Parish Council website.

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
Ancient tree guide 4: What are ancient, veteran and other trees of special interest? https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1836/what-are-ancient-trees.pdf	The Woodland Trust	2008
Building for a Healthy Life 2020	HM Government	2020
Clean Rivers and Seas investment map https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/e9a1db8d193d4cd582d550285a3aeb44/page/Map/?views=Investment-plans	Southern Water	ongoing
Climate Change Act 2008 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents	HM Government	2008
Defra Biodiversity Metric Guidance https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-metric-calculate-the-biodiversity-net-gain-of-a-project-or-development	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Natural England	2021
Dementia and town planning: Creating better environments for people living with dementia	Royal Town Planning Institute's	2020
Electric Vehicle Charging Points for New Development - Guidance Note for Applicants – Update https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/359815/Electric_Vehicle_Charging_Points_for_New_Development_October-2020.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2020
Environment Act https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted	HM Government	2021
Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/343638/Farmsteads-SPD-Adopted-Feb-2016_lowres.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2016
Framing Kent's Future Strategy https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/136431/Framing-Kents-Future-strategy-document.pdf	Kent County Council	2022 to 2026
Flood Maps for Planning https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/	Environment Agency	ongoing
Green Infrastructure Framework for Draft Local Plan – Regulation 18 Consultation https://forms.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/403230/CD_3.35_Green-Infrastructure-Framework.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2019
Guidance Note 1: The reduction of obtrusive light https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/	Institution of Lighting Professionals	2021

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
Guidance Note 8: Bats and Artificial Lighting https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/	Institution of Lighting Professionals	2023
High Weald Housing Design Guide https://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/2348-high-weald-design-guide-final/file.html	High Weald National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee	2019
High Weald Management Plan 2019 to 2024 https://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/high-weald-aonb-management-plan-documents/2291-high-weald-managment-plan-4th-edition-2019-2024/file.html	High Weald National Landscape Unit	
Historic Environment Record https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/	Kent County Council	ongoing
Historic Environment Review – Part One Tunbridge Wells Borough Council https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/384748/Historic_Environment_Review.pdf	Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners	2018
Historic Landscape Characterisation (for Tunbridge Wells Borough) – Revision of Kent HLC https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/343823/5C46044EB8E17188E0531401A8C0AA14_TWB_HLC_Capel_parish_Summary.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, High Weald NS, Kent County Council	2016
Housing Register Allocations Policy (for Tunbridge Wells Borough) https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/345380/Housing-Register-Allocations-Policy-accessible-document-v.4.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2016
Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/	Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, Homes and Communities Agency	2009
Kent Design Guide https://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/data/Cabinet/20060427/Agenda/kent%20design%20append.pdf	Kent County Council	2000 (currently being updated)
Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/112585/Kent-Minerals-and-Waste-Local-Plan-2013-2030.pdf	Kent County Council	2016 (modified 2020)
Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/90491/Rights-of-Way-Improvement-Plan-2018-2028.pdf	Kent County Council	2018 to 2028
Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/kent-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan	Kent County Council	Ongoing
List of Local Heritage Assets: Nomination Form https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/343897/Local-Heritage-Assets-Nomination-Form.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	No date

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
Localism Act 2011 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted	HM Government	2011
Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition) https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag301-local-heritage-listing/#:~:text=Non%2Ddesignated%20heritage%20assets%20are,heritage%20assets%27%20(PPG).	Historic England	2021
Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the balance https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/208545/Local-Transport-Plan-5.pdf	KCC	2024
Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/	Locality	2021
National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf	HM Government	2024
National Design Guide https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf National Model Design Guide https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code	HM Government	2019/20
Neighbourhood Development Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made	HM Government	2012
Open Space Study standards https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/387545/c_Open_Space_Study.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2018
Parish of Sandhurst Historic Landscape Characterisation Report https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/343831/5C46044EB8E87188E0531401A8C0AA14_TWB_HLC_Sandhurst_parish_parish_Summary.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2017
Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents	HM Government	2004
Planners' Manual for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2019/06/planners-manual-for-ancient-woodland/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwz8emBhDrARIsANNJjS7_6poLC3yJw4R6_oDZJfohhladzPX3Whe6NZzYw-129B94syES97EaAv4REALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds	Woodland Trust	2019
Retrofit and Energy Efficiency in Historic Building	Historic England	2020

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/		
Routeways in the High Weald - A guide to their historic function, character and significance https://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/routeways/2490-routeways-in-the-high-weald/file.html	Jeremy Lake and Nicola Bannister	2021
Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Document https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/343633/SPG_Rural_Lanes.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1998
Sandhurst Housing Needs Assessment	AECOM	2024
Secured by Design	Police Crime Prevention Initiatives Limited	no date
Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Strategic Housing Market Assessment https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/387524/a-SHMA-2015.pdf	G L Hearn	2015
Ten Dark Sky Policies for the Government https://appgdarkskies.co.uk/policy-plan	Government All Party Parliamentary Group for Dark Skies	2021
Town & Country Planning Act 1990 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/contents	HM Government	1990
Traffic in Villages Toolkit: Safety and Civility for Rural Roads https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Traffic-in-villages.pdf	Dorset National Landscape and Hamilton-Baillie Associates	2020
Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment 2017 https://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/documents/s31439/Tunbridge%20Wells%20Borough%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%202017.pdf	LUC	2017
Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2030 to 2038 https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/511991/Adopted-Local-Plan-2020-2038.pdf	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2025

Appendix A – Sandhurst Parish-wide Design Guidance

The Parish-wide Design Guidance for Sandhurst forms an integral part of the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan, underpinning a number of the policies.

The document can be accessed on the Parish Council website.

Appendix B – Non-Designated Heritage Assets

The following buildings and structures are identified as non-designated heritage assets. Evidence as to why each is considered to be significant locally is provided, based on the information required by TWBC to inform nominations to their Local List.

Ref.	Description
1.	**THE MISSION CHURCH** **Address:** Back Road, Sandhurst, TN18 5JU **Type:** Ecclesiastical **Approximate age:** 35 years **Occupied?:** No **Architectural interest:** One of only a very few non-traditional wooden buildings in Sandhurst. **Historic interest:** It was built after the great storm of 1987 when the existing building made of metal and originally for hopworkers' worship was blown down. It was deemed better that the hopworkers should have their own place of worship and hence a tin tabernacle served the purpose until its loss in 1987 by which time the hop picking had ceased. **Social/Economic significance:** Used for church services for the Benefice of St Nicholas Church, Sandhurst, and St George's, Benenden. It is also used for meetings, social gatherings and private functions. **Townscape significance:** A building that catches the eye when walking down back road in the centre of the village.

Ref.	Description
2.	**OLD SCHOOL HALL** **Address:** Back Road, Sandhurst, TN18 5JS **Type:** Public building **Approximate age:** 175 years **Occupied?:** No **Architectural interest:** Old school building dating back over 175 years. **Historic interest:** Victorian School building serving the village. **Social/Economic significance:** Centre for many village activities – administrative, social and physical. **Townscape significance:** Central feature of the village.

Ref.	Description
3.	**HERITAGE FINGER POST** **Address:** Junction of Sponden Lane and A268 **Type:** Public, Street furniture **Approximate age:** Unknown **Occupied?:** No **Historic interest:** The finger signpost of historical interest because of its height. It was designed to be of a height appropriate to coaches and those on horseback. **Townscape significance:** A notable landmark feature in the parish.

Ref.	Description
4.	**GEORGE VI POSTBOX** **Address:** Junction of Church Road and Bodiam Road **Type:** Public, Street furniture **Approximate age:** Late 1930s **Occupied?:** No **Historic interest:** Post boxes such as this from the reign of George VI comprise fewer than 15% of the nation's postboxes and are therefore objects of interest. It is a 'letters only' postbox and therefore reflecting a past era when letter writing was more common. **Social/Economic significance:** The post box serves a useful purpose since the nearest one is over one mile away. The size as 'letters only' does make it restrictive. **Additional information:** In 2002, English Heritage and Royal Mail, with the approval of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, agreed a joint policy for the retention and conservation of Royal Mail post boxes. The post box has been regarded with affection over the years and in recent times has been visited by a variety of garden gnomes leading to poetry in the village magazine.

Ref.	Description
5.	**K6 Telephone Box, Village Green** **Address:** Back Road, Sandhurst, TN18 5JS **Type:** Public, Street furniture **Approximate age:** Late 1930s **Occupied?:** No **Architectural interest:** In 1935 the K6 (kiosk number six) was designed to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of George V. It was consequently sometimes known as the "Jubilee" kiosk. It went into production in 1936. The K6 was the first red telephone kiosk to be extensively used outside London, and many thousands were deployed in virtually every town and city, replacing most of the existing kiosks and establishing thousands of new sites. In 1935 there had been 19,000 public telephones in the UK: by 1940, thanks to the K6, there were 35,000. **Historic interest:** Currently the telephone box is used as a book exchange. **Additional information:** The red phone box is often seen as a British cultural icon throughout the world. As such it reminds residents fondly of the past.

APPENDIX C – Local Green Spaces

The list of Local Green Spaces (LGS) has been developed and tested following the Locality guidance "Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan".

Members of the Environment Working Group drew up a long list of potential green spaces. This included:

- Spaces that had previously been put forward as part of the Local Plan process for inclusion in the Local Plan
- Spaces identified from desk-top research and local walkabouts
- Spaces proposed by the community through the surveys and local workshops.

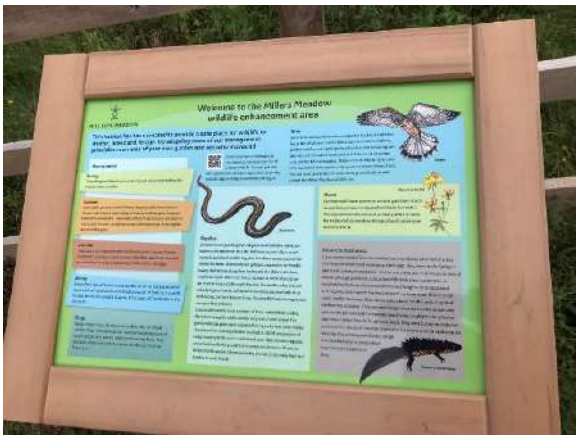
A high-level review of the spaces was undertaken by the Steering Group. Some of the spaces were considered to be already adequately protected, while others were not felt to meet the strict LGS criteria, for instance where they are verges.

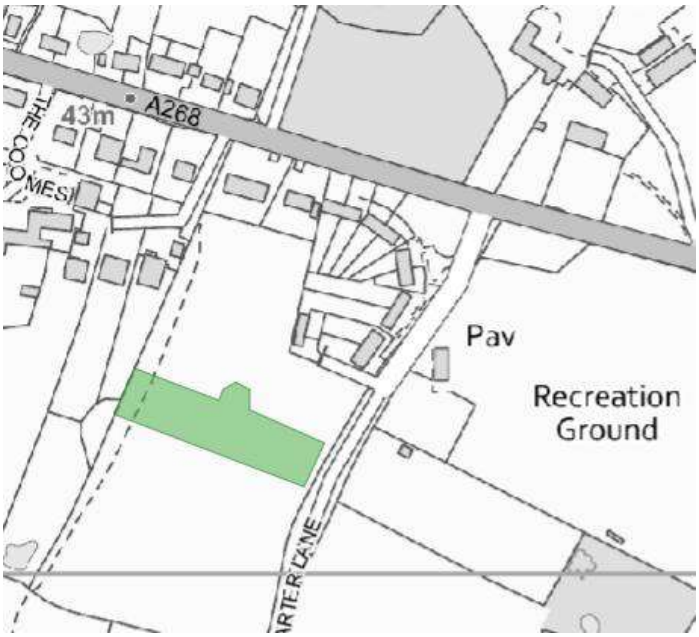
The tables below provide the justification for the Local Green Space designations. These use the methodology promoted by Locality to assess spaces.

Designations could be e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserve.

LGS1: Millers Meadow

Address and location	Millers Meadow Marsh Quarter Lane TN18 5BE (TQ 80352 28090)
Ownership details	Clarendon Homes / residents' management company.
Description and purpose / current use	An area that includes two fenced off nature areas being managed for wildflowers and animals including reptiles. The whole field in which these sit has mature hedgerows with trees along the boundary is rough grassland and has long views across open countryside towards Sandhurst Cross and St Nicholas Church. Provides amenity to the new homes but also to users of the public footpath that runs along the western boundary of the site and continues as far as the church.
Any designations	No formal designation but the interpretative board calls the site a wildlife enhancement area.
Site allocations in Local Plan	The new homes built by Clarendon and English Rural (social housing) were allocated in the Submission Local Plan as SA1 for 10-15 dwellings.
Planning permissions?	There are no further planning permissions on the site.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it	Millers Meadow is on the eastern edge of the main village but adjacent to other housing and the playing fields including a pavilion to the east of the site. It has a public footpath (right of way) running inside its western boundary from Burnt House Close to Sandhurst Cross.

serves (in meters)	
Demonstrably Special?	**Recreation:** Residents and visits are encouraged to make observations and upload these to i-record.org.uk. **Wildlife:** The interpretive board sets out the management as a wildlife meadow highlighting, slow worms, birds foot trefoil and great crested newts. Cornflowers were present in November when the site was visited. **Tranquillity:** A quiet open space away from the A268 main road. **Beauty:** Views to open countryside and St Nicholas Church to the south west.
Local in character?	Yes.
Photo	

Location map	

LGS2: Old Orchard Green Space

Address and location	Old Orchard Green Space Old Orchard Close and Stream Pit Lane (TQ 79488 28314)
Ownership details	King and Johnson Building Contractors
Description and purpose / current use	A small informal, privately owned green space. Rough grassland with wildflowers and habitat piles of logs (for bugs) with two watercourses running along two boundaries with mature trees and some newly planted amenity trees.
Any designations	Within High Weald National Landscape.
Site allocations in Local Plan	Not allocated.
Planning permissions?	None known.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves (in meters)	On the western edge of the settlement but within the Limits to Development.
Demonstrably Special?	**Wildlife:** Rough grassland with wildflowers and habitat piles of logs (for bugs) with two watercourses running along the boundaries with mature trees and some newly planted amenity trees. There is a newly planted native species hedgerow along the boundary with Old Orchard Close. Slow worms have been sighted here alongside frogs, newts and toads. It is also a nesting

	site for birds; additional trees were planted a couple of years ago which have enhanced the space for wildlife. **Historic:** The community has reported that it is the watercourse that gives Stream Pit Lane its name. **Tranquillity:** Provides a buffer between homes and the watercourse – reducing / slowing down run off including from the road into the watercourse and nearby ponds. **Beauty:** A small wild oasis in an otherwise built-up estate.
Local in character?	Yes
Photo and location map	

LGS3: Old Orchard Play Area

Address and location	Old Orchard Play Area, off Old Orchard Close and Tanyard (TQ79600 /283326)
Ownership details	Sandhurst Parish Council
Description and purpose / current use	Small play area for young children owned and managed by the parish council. Shaded by mature trees with some grass and soft surfaces.
Any designations	Within High Weald National Landscape.
Site allocations in Local Plan	Not allocated.
Planning permissions?	None known.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	It sits within and serves the immediate community of Old Orchard, Tanyard and Poundfield, a medium sized 20th century housing estate.

Demonstrably Special?	**Recreation:** Play equipment with swings (for toddlers and older children), climbing frame and slide and some picnic tables. **Wildlife:** Some mature trees and a hedge. **Tranquillity:** Set back from the road and so a quiet safe space for children to play.
Local in character?	Yes
Photo and location map	

LGS4: Orchard Allotments

Address and location	Orchard Allotments, Old Orchard Close, off Tanyard (TQ 79508 28422)
Ownership details	Sandhurst Parish Council
Description and purpose / current use	Traditional allotments serving the needs of the local community.
Any designations	Open Space Sport and Recreation in the Borough Local Plan and within High Weald National Landscape.
Site allocations in Local Plan	Not allocated.
Planning permissions?	None known.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Is on the south-western boundary of the settlement and provides a buffer between homes and open countryside.

Demonstrably Special?	**Recreation:** Well used allotments. **Wildlife:** Some mature trees and a hedge on the boundary. **Historic:** Linked to the provision of the former council homes. **Tranquillity:** It is away from roads and so is a quiet space. **Beauty:** An area of flowers, fruit and vegetables.
Local in character?	Yes
Photo	

Location map	

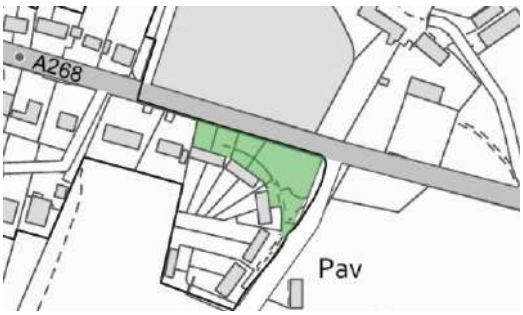
LGS5: Playing Fields

Address and location	Playing Field, Sandhurst Recreation Ground Marsh Quarter Lane (TQ 80540 28115)
Ownership details	Sandhurst Parish Council
Description and purpose / current use	An extensive area of sports pitches (cricket and football) and informal recreation space, including a well-maintained children's playground and Millennium Wood wildlife area inside its south eastern boundary. Also includes a pavilion (changing rooms) basketball net / goal posts and public toilets.
Any designations	Proposed to be designated a Local Green Space in the TWBC Submission Local Plan.
Site allocations in Local Plan	Not allocated.
Planning permissions?	None known.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The Playing Fields / Recreation Ground is on the eastern edge of Sandhurst village with its northern boundary along the A268, Marsh Quarter Lane including the new development of Millers Meadow on the western boundary and open countryside to the south and east.
Demonstrably Special?	**Recreation:** There is a cricket square and pitch and at least three football pitches as well as a car park and pavilion.

	Wildlife: There are mature trees along three sides of the site and the Millennium Wood is adjacent to ponds and woodland. **Tranquillity:** Although close to the A268, it has a rural character and feel, particularly along the southern boundary onto open countryside. **Beauty:** Views to open countryside to the south.
Local in character?	Having a children's play area, sports pitches and a pavilion it appeals to a mainly local audience.
Photo	

LGS6: Ringle Green

Address and location	Ringle Green, bordered by A264 and Marsh Quarter Lane and Ring Green homes. TN18 5JH (TQ 80456 28202)
Ownership details	Town and Country Housing
Description and purpose / current use	A small area of amenity green space in front of former council homes (approx. 1950s). An informal area for shared activities for neighbours including play space, picnics and parties.
Any designations	Proposed to be designated a Local Green Space in the TWBC Submission Local Plan, recognised as Important Open Space EN22 and within High Weald National Landscape.
Site allocations in Local Plan	Not allocated.
Planning permissions?	None known.
Access & proximity including how close to	Although on the eastern edge of the settlement is next to the playing fields and provides a green link between countryside and the settlement.

the community it serves	
Demonstrably Special?	**Recreation:** Used for informal recreation (picnics, children's games, dog walking) as well as village events. **Wildlife:** Some mature trees and a hedge. **Historic:** Linked to the provision of the former council homes. **Tranquillity:** Provide a buffer from the A264 for those homes.
Local in character?	Yes.
Photo and location map	 

LGS7: Rope Walk

Address and location	Rope Walk, adjacent but set back from A268, TN18 5JD (TQ 79970 28387)
Ownership details	Not known
Description and purpose / current use	Wooded green space and former rope walk (where ropes were traditionally made for the Royal, Merchant Navy and fishing industry), that now provides a welcome wooded buffer to homes along the busy A268. Mature trees, a wooded bank unsuitable for development.
Any designations	An Area of Landscape Importance (EN22), within the Conservation Area and High Weald National Landscape
Site allocations in Local Plan	Not allocated.
Planning permissions?	None known.
Access & proximity including how close to	Rope Walk links Sandhurst to its historic past, is set along the A268 which was the main road between Hawkhurst and the coastal town and Cinq Port of Rye.

the community it serves	
Demonstrably Special?	**Recreation:** There is a short cut at the eastern end that provides a traffic free route for households on the northwest side of the village to walk to the village school and shops. **Wildlife:** Wooded area with associated wildlife. **Historic:** Within Conservation Area. **Tranquillity:** Provides a buffer for the houses along Rope Walk from the A264. **Beauty:** Mature trees in what would otherwise be a continued linear development along A268.
Local in character?	Provides an informal recreation space for local children (particularly those living in Rope Walk).
Photo and location map	

LGS8: Green space in Tanyard

Address and location	Green Space in Tanyard, TN18 5LD
Ownership details	Town And Country Housing Group (Industrial and Provident Society No. IP30167R) of Monson House, Monson Way, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1LQ
Description and purpose / current use	A space with four mature trees giving a pleasant green break and space for wildlife amidst the housing estate.
Any designations	No.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No.
Planning permissions?	No.
Access & proximity including how close to	The space is located within a residential area, surrounding by homes on all sides.

the community it serves	
Demonstrably Special?	**Recreation:** The space serves the properties surrounding it and is often used by residents for informal recreation and as a space to socialise. **Wildlife:** There are a number of trees on the space, which provide habitats for a range of creatures.
Local in character?	Yes.
Photo and location map	

Appendix D – Locally significant views

The following views have been identified as locally significant in Sandhurst parish.

View 1: From top of Bourne Lane before first hill looking SW (TQ 786278)

A first glimpse of what lies beyond Bourne Lane.

View 2 From mid Bourne Lane looking W/SW (TQ 784278): This shows extensive vineyards where the guinea fowl live!

View 3 From corner of Silverden Lane looking NE (TQ787276): A lovely lane to walk especially in spring with birdsong.

View 4 From footpath lane from Church Road looking E (TQ 792274): Our lovely oak trees in late summer after the harvest.

View 5 From Church field looking NE (TQ 791274): Described as one of the best views in Kent shows our village with its windmill and the countryside beyond.

View 6 From Church Tower looking SSW (TQ 791274): A unusual chance to view the Rother Valley towards Bodiam from above.

View 7 Panoramic view from the Churchyard (TQ 791274): These views from the churchyard show the vastness of Sandhurst's surrounding countryside and the developing vineyards.

View 8 From Puxtye Wood looking SE (TQ 808285): View that shows the trees which surround much of the village and their autumn colours.

View 9 From footpath behind the school - Windmill and Millenium Oak looking E (TQ 803284):

The Sandhurst five sailed Windmill is special as is the oak tree which featured on the Sandhurst Millenium mug.

View 10 From behind the windmill looking north (OS TQ 804284)

Another view of Kent breath taking in its vastness.

View 11 From Sponden Lane east towards Hopehouse Lane and Rye in the distance (OS TQ 794296)

This view is visible from the lane, over the hedgerow here. The direction is due east towards Rye where on a clear day the distant wind turbines are visible.