

Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan: Regulation 16 Consultation 11 January to 22 February 2021: Response Report

Comment Number	Which part of the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan (or supporting documents) this response relates to.	Response	If the appointed Examiner determines that a hearing is necessary, do you wish to attend?	Would you like to be notified of the Council's decision regarding the outcome of the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan under Regulation 19?	Name/ Organisation	Agent	Supporting Documents
GO_1	TWBC Test	TWBC Test to ensure online consultation is working.			Tunbridge Wells Borough Council		
GO_2	Section 7.19 Rivers and Watercourses Page 43	<p>Southern Water is the statutory wastewater undertaker for the settlements of Goudhurst, Kilndown and Curtisden Green. A network of sewers collect wastewater arising from properties within these settlements for treatment at one of four small wastewater treatment works (WTWs) located within the parish, in proximity to the settlements they serve.</p> <p>Whilst Southern Water supports the requirement for development to ensure no risk to groundwater sources, it is not clear why it is considered that there is a 'lack of mains drainage in the Parish' as stated in the third paragraph of Section 7.19.</p> <p>Any new development would be required to connect to the existing sewer network, where it is feasible to do so, in accordance with the foul water drainage hierarchy set out in requirement H1 of the Government's Building Regulations (2010) Approved Document H. This will ensure that wastewater arising from new development is treated at one of Southern Water's WTWs in accordance with its environmental permit, issued and enforced by the Environment Agency, who define the standards of treatment that must be met in order to protect water quality objectives.</p>	No	Yes	Southern Water Services Ltd, Growth Planning Team,		
GO_3	Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2033 Additional policy supporting the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure	<p>We could find no policies in the neighbourhood plan to provide for new or improved infrastructure to support development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the importance of achieving sustainable development and paragraph 177 states that '<i>It is equally important to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect that planned infrastructure is delivered in a timely fashion.....For this reason, infrastructure and development policies should be planned at the same time</i>'. Also the National Planning Practice Guidance states that '<i>Adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support sustainable development</i>'.</p> <p>Although the Parish Council is not the planning authority to wastewater development proposals, support for essential infrastructure is required at all levels of the planning system.</p> <p>On this basis, we propose the following policy provision:</p> <p><i>Proposals for new and improved utility infrastructure will be encouraged and supported in order to meet the identified needs of the community.</i></p>	No	Yes	Southern Water Services Ltd, Growth Planning Team,		

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GO_4	All parts of the plan	Horsmonden Parish Council supports the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan	No	Yes	Horsmonden Parish Council		
GO_5	Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan	<p>We always recommend an objective is included to protect and enhance the environment. Indicators should relate to the environmental constraints in your local area. This may include flood risk, water quality, biodiversity.</p> <p>Together with Natural England, English Heritage and the Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. (copy attached). There is a useful check list in this document.</p> <p>We also recommend your Regulation 16 takes account of relevant Tunbridge Wells' policies, plans and strategies including Tunbridge Wells' Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, flood risk strategies (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-current-schemes-and-strategies), and the South East River Basin Management Plan (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-east-river-basin-management-plan).</p> <p>We hope this information is useful. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any further information.</p>			Environment Agency		Standard response attached
GO_6	Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan	<p>Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 08 January 2021.</p> <p>Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.</p> <p>Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.</p> <p>Natural England does not have any specific comments on the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan.</p>			Natural England		
GO_7	The designation of two fields belonging to Bethany School as Local Green Spaces. AS1 and AS2 on page 32 of the	<p>We objected to the inclusion of both AS1 and AS2 in October 2019 and clearly stated the grounds for our objections. The School is most disappointed that it has not been responded to on these matters.</p> <p>The Consultation Statement does not seem to take account of our letter of 2019 (only mentioning our 2018 letter) and has omitted it from the representations in Section 7.</p> <p>In addition, the Draft Local Green Space Assessment Document published in July 2019 stated that AS2 was not suitable.</p>	Yes	Yes	Bethany School		Response to TWBC October 2019 Local Green Space

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	Goudhurst Neighbourhood Regulation Plan 16.	The grounds for our objections have not changed, nor have they been addressed and therefore the letter of objection is again submitted for your in-depth perusal. We hope that these will be considered and addressed.					
GO_8	Section 7.1 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Overall, the High Weald AONB Unit supports the information provided in this section and Policy L1 Development within the AONB. Paragraph 60 says "In June 2019 the HWAONB issued for consultation design guidance8". Footnote 8 says "High Weald Design Guide". This should be amended to "The High Weald Housing Design Guide was approved by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee in November 2019". It would also be useful to refer to the High Weald AONB 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development' which was published in October 2017. All references to the Management Plan should refer to it as the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-24 (or as updated) and a link to the document could be provided: www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html * TWBC: extra comment inserted at Question 2 (Yes/No tick box): If it would assist the Examiner I am happy to attend.	Yes	Yes	High Weald AONB Unit		
GO_9	Policy H6 Conversion of Existing Dwellings.	Reference is made to the following document, section, and paragraphs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Version 2.0 – Regulation 15 Draft 2013-2033 Setting the Pattern for Future Development in Goudhurst ParishSection 9 Housing Policies: 9.9 Conversion of Existing BuildingsParagraphs 210-214 The Ministry of Justice supports the principles of policy H6 for the conversion of existing buildings to alternative uses, including residential uses, and is in strong support of the statement in paragraph 213. that development within the existing developed footprint of Blantyre House would be supported. The Ministry of Justice suggests, however, that the wording of policy H6 should be refined so that it is consistent with the statement in paragraph 213. regarding development within the existing developed footprint of Blantyre House, and provides clarity on what is meant by development within the existing developed footprint.	Yes	Yes	Principal Portfolio Surveyor Ministry of Justice	Cushman & Wakefield, Andrew Teage	

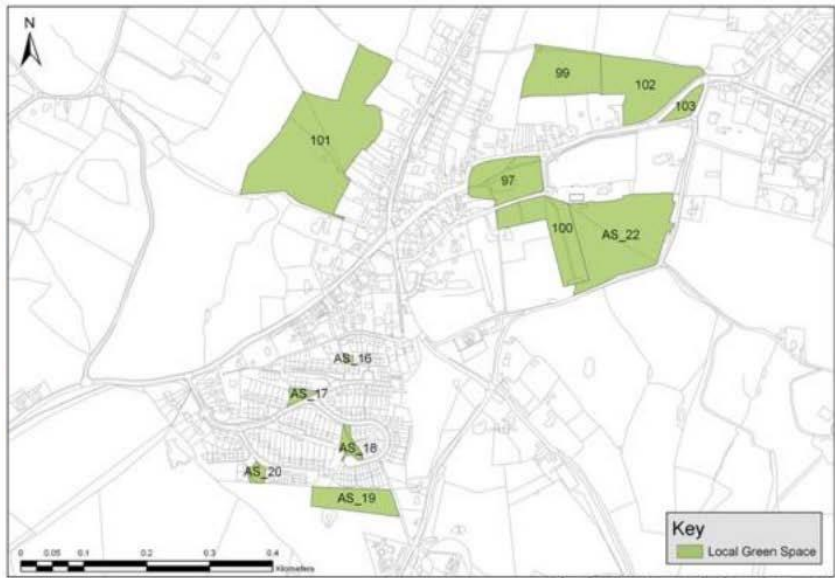
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		<p>As currently drafted, policy H6 only addresses the conversion of existing buildings but does not provide any reference to appropriate and sensitive development/redevelopment within the existing developed footprint of existing brownfield sites that may come forward during the lifetime of the plan. If the policy wording is not refined in this way then the opportunity to achieve NDP objectives such as improved land-use, the retention of character buildings, and alternative commercial and/or residential development that would assist in meeting local needs, will be diminished.</p> <p>This does not just apply to Blantyre House but would also apply to the NDP's aspirations for Bedgebury Manor. Paragraph 212. of the NDP makes the statement that the site has the potential for conversion and re-development, which we assume refers to the conversion of the Grade II* manor house and the re-development of the range of subsidiary buildings that were developed when the site was used as a school. Paragraph 212. also refers to the aspiration for the creation of an overall Masterplan to assist in achieving these objectives.</p> <p>To enable an applicant and decision maker to be clear how they should react to development proposals in relation to policy H6, and to achieve the objectives set out in paragraphs 212. and 213. of the NDP, the wording of policy H6 should be refined so that it is clear and unambiguous as to the expectation for sensitive development/redeveloped within the existing developed footprint of existing brownfield sites.</p> <p>The NDP's aspirations and expectations for Blantyre House should also be consistent with its aspirations and expectations for Bedgebury Manor. Similar to Bedgebury Manor, the Blantyre House estate has incrementally developed over time from its original use as a Fegan Home for Boys, through its conversion to a Detention Centre for young offenders, before its final conversion to a resettlement prison for long term prisoners, which was designed to prepare men for their eventual release through training, education and lifestyle skills. The Blantyre House estate is therefore much more than just the main residential accommodation; it too has a range of subsidiary buildings and infrastructure that extend the developed footprint of the site comprising some 26 buildings, a swimming pool, farm area with poly tunnels, and associated hardstanding and car parking. Paragraph 213. and policy H6 should therefore provide the same opportunity at Blantyre House as that at Bedgebury Manor in that it should include the potential for conversion and re-development within the developed footprint and have reference to the creation of a masterplan to demonstrate that proposals are sensitive to the inherent site constraints.</p> <p>The NDP rightly identifies the need to address the future uses of both Blantyre House and Bedgebury Manor to safeguard these large scale brownfield sites from falling into vacancy and potential dereliction, which would disbenefit local residents and harm the local environment.</p> <p>Positive, effective, and clear policy guidance will achieve this objective rather than leaving the future of these important assets to windfall opportunities.</p> <p>This approach is clearly aligned and consistent with national policy and advice, specifically paragraph 118. and 79. of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where planning policies should:</p>					

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		<p>encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside; promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained, and available sites could be used more effectively; and re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance their immediate setting.</p> <p>Furthermore, Annex 2 of the NPPF defines previously developed land as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Ministry of Justice requests that the following refinements (underlined / strike through) are made to policy H6 and paragraph 213. of the NDP:</p> <p>Policy Objective: Re-purpose existing buildings <u>and/or the developed land</u>^[1] within their curtilage to provide new housing or business premises</p> <p>Policy H6 Conversion and Re-Purposing of Existing Buildings and Developed Land Within their Curtilage</p> <p>Development proposals for the conversion <u>and/or redevelopment</u> of existing buildings <u>and developed land within their curtilage</u> to alternative uses will generally be supported provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed conversion <u>and/or redevelopment</u> will not materially or adversely affect the character and amenities of the surrounding area or the building <u>and developed land within its curtilage</u> itself; and 2. It does not result in the loss of a village amenity <p>Proposals for the conversion of buildings to residential use will need to be compatible with other relevant policies and the above criteria.</p> <p>213. The second brownfield site is Blantyre Prison which has in recent years been used as a training centre by the Ministry of Justice in use as a Category C/D Semi-Open Resettlement Prison. The prison, <u>which formally closed in 2019,</u> is on the site of the original Fegan Society home, which was built in the 19th century. Some of the original <u>19th century</u> buildings remain <u>and exist alongside a range of other buildings and infrastructure that have been developed over time through the sites use as a Detention Centre for young offenders and as a prison.</u> The site therefore has an extensive developed footprint that comprises some 26 buildings, a swimming pool, farm area with poly tunnels, and associated hardstanding and car parking. <u>A row of houses in private ownership are also present on the site, along with some housing, originally for prison staff, and offender accommodation.</u> The site is surrounded by a high metal fence and, within the</p>					

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		<p>site, the buildings are surrounded by grassland. This site is remote from all other development, with very limited road and other infrastructure. <u>Conversion of existing buildings and/or the redevelopment or development of developed land within the existing developed footprint/curtilage would will</u> be supported but any proposal should be sensitive to the inherent constraints of this site <u>and considered within an overall masterplan.</u></p> <p><u>[1]In accordance with the definition of Previously developed land contained within Annex 2 of the NPPF 'land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure'.</u></p>					
GO_10		<p>Thank you for sharing the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan. At this time we (SGN) do not have any comments we wish to make as part of the consultation.</p> <p>If you do have any questions for us relating to the gas infrastructure please feel free to get in touch.</p>			SGN		
GO_11	The Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan (Submission Plan)	<p>The National Trust welcome consultation on the Draft Setting the Pattern for Future Development in Goudhurst Parish 2013-2033 Neighbourhood Plan. We support the overall plan and would like to make the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support the aims of Policy L1: Development Within the AONB for proposals within the AONB to, where appropriate, make a positive contribution to the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. • We support Policy L4: Conserve Landscape and Heritage Assets that development must conserve the historic landscape of the parish and the setting of its heritage assets. We would welcome the inclusion of the Scotney Castle Estate within this policy, as part of our estate is within the Goudhurst Parish boundary. • We support Policy L7: Trees which ensures the future health of ancient woodland, protected trees and veteran trees. Scotney Castle Estate includes xxx ancient woodland. • Within Policy L8: Protect Dark Skies 'Nightscape' and Minimise Light Pollution, the Trust particularly support the first paragraph of this policy, which states that inappropriate glazing leading to an incongruous appearance in the setting of the historic rural nightscape should be avoided. • The National Trust support policy L10: Views to conserve important views into, out of and between the settlements from any area to which the public has access. We recognise that Scotney Castle is included within view 5: Descending Clay Hill westwards from the village towards the junction of Lurkins Rise and the A262 looking west towards Spelmonden and Finchcocks. We support this designation. <p>We support Policy B1: New Business Space regarding planning permission for new business space and tourism facilities. We have recently consulted on the Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan which also</p>	No	Yes	National Trust		

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		<p>includes Scotney Castle Estate within its boundary. We would welcome the inclusion of a similar policy, or addendum to Policy B1, within the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan, which would support visitor infrastructure at Scotney. For reference, the National Trust policy included within the Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan is worded as follows:</p> <p><i>The National Trust is seeking to maintain and enhance the visitor offer at Scotney Castle to ensure its sustainable future whilst sensitively caring for its historic significance and sense of place. Central to vision is enhancing public access to enjoy the beauty and history the property offers. A major master planning exercise is ongoing to identify new and improved visitor infrastructure enhancements that will create a better arrival experience and help solve local parking issues. Proposals for the enhancement of the visitor attraction within the Scotney Castle Estate including new visitor infrastructure, will be supported</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finally, we support Policy D3: Climate Change that all new development should seek to achieve high standards of sustainability. As part of the master planning process currently ongoing at Scotney Castle, sustainability of any new design elements will be considered carefully. <p>The National Trust thank you for this opportunity to feed into your Neighbourhood Plan process and we would welcome further involvement as the Neighbourhood Plan progresses.</p>					
GO_12		<p>Thank you for your notification dated 08 January 2021, inviting Highways England to comment on the Regulation 16 Consultation on the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan seeking responses no later than 22 February 2021.</p> <p>Highways England has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the strategic road network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such Highways England works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity. We will therefore be concerned with proposals and policies that have the potential to impact the safe and efficient operation of the SRN.</p> <p>In the case of Goudhurst, our focus will be on any impact to the A21 corridor which passes through the parish, and through the junctions of Flimwell and Copers Corner.</p> <p>Highways England have reviewed the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan which sets out rough wording for planning policies to promote and control new development in the parish.</p>			Highways England		

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		<p>We also note that the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) Draft Local Plan outlines a clear housing strategy for Goudhurst in Policy STR/GO1 which includes the allocation of between 21 and 26 dwellings and identifies the delivery of this allocation through Policies AL/GO1 and AL/GO2.</p> <p>However, as the Tunbridge Wells Draft Local Plan is not yet adopted, the Goudhurst Local Plan does not include the housing strategy or sites outlined above although a stated objective is that</p> <p><i>“Our plan supports an average delivery of between 2 and dwellings per annum across the Parish in the period to 2033 providing sustainable sites can be found and all other policies in our plan are complied with.”</i></p> <p>We must continue to be consulted on any planning applications for any proposals that are adjacent to or directly access the A21. Larger sites will be expected to provide a transport assessment of the traffic impact upon Flimwell and Hawkhurst Junctions. If the proposed new housing sites come forward or the quantum of development in the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan significantly exceeds the 21-26 dwelling allocation up to 2037, then we will wish to be consulted and may require an assessment of the cumulative impact upon the A21 corridor.</p> <p>We look to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to assess and mitigate any impacts of development in its Local Plan to 2037, including housing to be provided through neighbourhood plans, upon the SRN.</p> <p>On this basis and understanding, Highways England does not have any objections to the Regulation 16 Consultation on the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan.</p>					
GO_13	<p>The Draft document as a whole</p> <p>Individual NDP policies L5, L9, T1</p> <p>All policies relating to housing</p>	<p>We have been approached by our client, Mr Henley, to prepare and submit representations to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in respect of Goudhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (“The NDP”).</p> <p>This representation should be read in conjunction with those previously submitted in November 2018 (APPENDIX 1) as part of the Regulation 14 consultation. While some concerns raised by our client were addressed by the release of the “Green Spaces – Assessment and Allocation” document, many issues relating to the earlier representations remain unresolved.</p> <p>1. LOCAL GREEN SPACES</p>	Yes	Yes	Mr Jim Henley	The Rural Planning Practice	

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		<p>1.1. In November 2018 our client's representations strongly opposed the allocation of site known as the Site 102 – 'Agricultural land opposite Tattlebury Green' as a Local Green Space. These representations re-iterate this position.</p> <p>1.2. Paragraph 015 [Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 37-015-20140306] of the Planning Practice Guidance is clear that Local Green Space designation should not be proposed as a "back door" way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of green belt by another name. It is clear from the figure 1 below, that the LGS designation appears to create large areas surrounding Goudhurst and includes sites which could in the future act as potential development sites.</p> <p>7.13 Goudhurst Sites</p> <div> <div> <p>97 St Mary's Churchyard</p> <p>99 Old Cricket Pitch</p> <p>102 Five Fields</p> <p>103 'Triangle' by Maypole</p> <p>101 Fields to west of Goudhurst</p> <p>100 Cemeteries south of St Mary's church</p> <p>AS16 Land between Mary Days & High Ridge</p> <p>AS17 Land between Bankfield Way and High Ridge</p> <p>AS18 Land within Culpepers 'loop'</p> <p>AS19 Recreation Area within the Housing Association area</p> <p>AS20 Land on south side of Lurkins Rise</p> <p>AS22 Lower Glebe Field</p> </div>  <p>Figure 7 Goudhurst Local Green Spaces Map</p> <p>NDP Version 2.0 – Regulation 15 Draft</p> <p>Page 30 of 89</p> <p><i>Figure 1 - Local Green Spaces map extract from the draft version of the Goudhurst NDP</i></p> <p>1.3. The NDP Steering Group published its methodology which was used to identify and assess individual sites. This methodology is based on 'Local Green Space Designation Methodology' published by the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. In turn, the TWBC's is underpinned by the 'Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: Review and Toolkit for their Implementation' [http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/65021] which was produced in</p> </div>					

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		<p>order to assure that people in urban areas have the opportunity to experience nature. It notes that English Nature recommends that provision should be made of at least 2ha of accessible natural green space per 1,000 population. The English Nature document also recommended an introduction of a tiered system which outlined distances from the nearest area of natural greenspace, and its desired size to serve its purpose as an area of natural green space.</p> <p>1.4. While this tiered system is appropriate for an assessment of size of natural green spaces in larger urban areas, it is wholly inappropriate for assessment of size of natural green spaces in small villages that tend to be surrounded by an open countryside. It is therefore questionable whether the methodology followed by the NDP Steering group is appropriate in the context of location of the village, and whether any practical reasons exist for allocation of Local Green Spaces in Goudhurst.</p> <p>1.5. It is unclear what process was followed to select and to identify sites for assessment in the initial stages. The information given is that “<i>the Landscape Character Group was responsible for scoping the overall process</i>” and that “<i>the list grew as a result of the public workshops</i>”. Most worryingly “personal recommendations from residents” contributed to the long list of sites. It is unclear whether the landowners were formally approached, informed or identified at this stage.</p> <p>Methodology of Green Spaces – Assessment and Allocation</p> <p>1.6. The methodology for site selection was divided into a two-stage process and assessment criteria are clearly stated, and easy to follow. The first stage looks at the context of existing planning activities and other designations. The second stage looks at criteria outlined by the paragraph 100 of the NPPF, with further criteria added without any reasoned justification.</p> <p>1.7. Sites designated as ‘village green’ were discounted during the stage 1, as were sites detached from settlements.</p> <p>1.8. A single table in Section 5 of the document is provided as a means of site assessment of the second stage of site selection. However, marked inconsistencies are particularly visible in assessment in of sites 102 (Five Fields) and AS21 (Grieves Lord Field) – both of these are assessed as tranquil, and rich in wildlife, but only site 102 is considered suitable, while site AS21 is discounted as not meeting the relevant criteria. There is no explanation, or objective assessment present to justify such approach.</p> <p>1.9. The explanation given for discounting of the site AS24 (Chequer Field) is most peculiar. The site provides sports facilities for local clubs and school, but it is not noted as having any recreational value. The site is discounted at the Stage 2 under the premise that the ownership of the land by the Parish Council will provide sufficient protection from development.</p>					

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		<p>1.10. Site number 98 is not named and is labelled as 'to not designate' without any assessment or justification provided.</p> <p>1.11. The Consultation Statement accompanying the Draft NDP notes that questions from landowners were raised, and that the Landscape Team will revisit the methodology in light of those comments. Its further noted that discussions with landowners will be sought. However, it remains unclear whether any of these took place.</p> <p>1.12. None of the individual critical comments made in respect of the Policy L9 were fully responded to.[Please see responses to submitted responses nos. 11, 14 and 15 in]</p> <p>1.13. In the light of the above, we are of the opinion that the methodology employed to assess and allocate sites as Local Green Spaces is inconsistent, inappropriate and unjustified. As such, the Policy L9 – Local Green Spaces is not robustly justified.</p> <p>1.14. Furthermore, we are of the opinion that NDP Policy 9 – Local Green Spaces is not needed in this location</p> <p>2. SITE NO. 102 – FIVE FIELDS</p> <p>2.1. Section 6 of the Green Spaces – Assessment and Allocation document provides the rationale for acceptance of sites.</p> <p>2.2. We strongly disagree with the NDP Steering Group's assessment of the site, in particular to the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"the contrast between Little Goudhurst LBD and the open space is striking for motorists using the A262" – the site's frontage is relatively short and it is likely that any motorist will be focusing on avoiding potential collision with pedestrians using the footway. Any views into the site from the A262 may be impeded if a hedge or tree planting is introduced</i> • <i>"for those [motorists] heading west, this is the first indication of Goudhurst's prominent ridge top position" and "the site permits medium and long distance views to the north downs" – These statements are incorrect. As indicated in figures 2 and 3 below, the views into the site from A262 are relatively short. The most prominent medium and long distance views are only available from the PROW which runs along the northern boundary of the site. The motorists therefore have only limited view into the site itself and no long-distance views into the valleys</i> 					

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		<div><div><div><div>Church Rd</div><div>Goudhurst, England</div><div>Google</div><div>Street View</div></div></div><p><i>Figure 2 - view into the Five Fields site from A262 as seen from the western approach Google Earth Pro)</i></p><div><div><div><div>Church Rd</div><div>Goudhurst, England</div><div>Google</div><div>Street View</div></div></div><p><i>Figure 3 - view into the Five Fields site from A262 as seen from the eastern approach (Google Earth Pro)</i></p></div></div>					

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		<p>• “the AONB and Conservation area status would not protect this space from potential future development” – these designations, together with local and national policies, are strong enough to prevent inappropriate and unsustainable development in rural locations. Furthermore, the site’s location with the AONB means that the presumption in favour of sustainable development under the provisions of paragraph 11 does not apply even if the relevant policies of the development plan are not up-to-date.</p> <p>2.3. Our client has previously submitted his objection to allocation of the above site as a LGS on the grounds that the site does not have qualities which would justify its designation.</p> <p>2.4. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states that LGS designation should <u>only</u> be used where the green space is:</p> <p>a) In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;</p> <p>b) 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</p> <p>c) Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.</p> <p>2.5. It is agreed that the site is in close proximity to Goudhurst and that, in this respect, it complies with criteria a).</p> <p>2.6. However, it is <u>strongly disputed that the site is demonstrably special or locally significant</u> as required by criteria b).</p> <p><i>Is the site beautiful?</i></p> <p>2.7. The site is an agricultural field. It is regularly ploughed to grow feed crops, and for grazing. There are no special features within the site itself which would distinguish it from any other agricultural field in this locality.</p> <p>2.8. As indicated above the long-distance views into the surrounding countryside are only available from the footpath which crosses the site. In contrast, the views into the site from the A262 are of no distinguishable quality (figures 2 and 3), and will soon be blocked by a maturing hedge. Is the site historically significant?</p>					

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		<p>2.9. The site forms part of the Goudhurst Conservation Area but is not afforded any special mention as a site of historic significance.</p> <p><i>Does the site have a recreational value?</i></p> <p>2.10. The PROW crossing the site is regularly used as an alternative pedestrian route between settlements. However, no recreational activities are permitted, or indeed possible, within the site. This is due to its continuous agricultural use and occasional presence of grazing animals.</p> <p>2.11. The playing fields used for recreational activities are located on the southern side of the A262 (site labelled as no 98). Incidentally, the playing fields have been discounted from the assessment and were not considered to be designated as LGS.</p> <p><i>Is the site tranquil?</i></p> <p>2.12. The presence of A262 has an undeniable impact on the village as a whole. In fact, the NDP identifies that traffic issues and the growing number of HGV on A262 are an ongoing problem. As such, the site within this locality cannot be seen as demonstrably tranquil in character.</p> <p><i>Is the site known for its richness of wildlife?</i></p> <p>2.13. The NDP Steering Group did not present any robust evidence which would demonstrate that the site is rich in wildlife, or that it accommodates valuable habitats.</p> <p>2.14. As noted above, the site is used for agricultural uses and for grazing of sheep. Although due to its size the site is not viable for arable agriculture, the soil is regularly turned over and beet is planted for grazing. As such, the presence of wildlife, or potential of valuable habitats, will be limited by these activities.</p> <p>2.15. Overall, it is concluded that it has not been robustly demonstrated by the NDP Steering Group that the site holds a particular local significance which would warrant its designation as LGS. As such, the criteria b) of paragraph 100 of the NPPF is not satisfied.</p> <p>2.16. It is acknowledged that the site is local in character, but it is no more local in character than any other agricultural field in the vicinity of the village. Furthermore, at approximately 1.05ha in size, the site is of a significant size when compared with other selected sites. It is an extensive tract of land, particularly if combined with the old cricket field to the west. As such the criteria c) of paragraph 100 of the NPPF is also not satisfied.</p> <p>SUMMARY</p>					

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		<p>2.17. We are of the opinion that the methodology for assessing and allocating Local Green Spaces is flawed and inconsistent. As such, the Policy L9 – Local Green Spaces is not robustly justified.</p> <p>2.18. It has been demonstrated that the site no. 102 – Five Fields does not satisfy criteria outlined in paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and therefore should not be designated as a Local Green Space.</p> <p>2.19. Furthermore, the Five Field site is already protected from inappropriate development by national and local policies regarding development in open countryside. Any potential for development is further restricted by the site's location within the High Weald AONB and the Goudhurst Conservation Area which offer higher planning policy constraint to development than that of a policy consistent with Green Belt.</p> <p>3. PLAN MAKING – TESTS OF SOUNDNESS</p> <p>3.1. In addition to the comments above, which only dealt with a single policy of the Goudhurst NDP, we would like to highlight that, in its current form, the plan fails the tests of soundness.</p> <p>3.2. Section 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework is concerned with plan-making and provides comprehensive framework, including clear guidance on how both strategic and non-strategic are to be prepared.</p> <p>3.3. Paragraph 29 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that “<i>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 Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.</i>” (our underlining)</p> <p>3.4. Paragraph 16 specifies that Plans should:</p> <p><i>a) Be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;</i></p> <p><i>b) Be prepared positively in a way that is aspirational be deliverable;</i></p> <p><i>c) Be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between planmakers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees;</i></p>					

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		<p><i>d) Contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals;</i></p> <p><i>e) Be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation; and</i></p> <p><i>f) Serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)</i></p> <p>3.5. Firstly, the Plan does not seek to achieve sustainable development. It does not direct development within the Parish to appropriate or sustainable locations and simply defers any allocation for housing to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ("TWBC").</p> <p>3.6. Secondly, the Plan as a whole appears to be overly protective with no aspiration to support local housing for future generation, or for its own ageing population.</p> <p>3.7. The NDP steering group have failed to engage with local landowners during the early stages of the preparation and did not positively engage with objectors during the later stages of preparation.</p> <p>3.8. As discussed below, the NDP contains policies which are inconsistent with the strategic plan in the area. This has a potential to lead to confusing during the decision making.</p> <p>3.9. It is clear that the NDP Steering Group attempted to develop a shared vision for their area and we applaud all involved in the complex plan-making process. However, we are of the opinion that substantial changes to the Plan need to be made to assure that it can help to deliver sustainable development for all.</p> <p>3.10. Once the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan is formally adopted, its policies will take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area. As such, it is vitally important that the plan is sound. Paragraph 35 of the NPPF states that Plans are 'sound' if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positively prepared, • justified, • effective, and 					

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		<p>• consistent with national policy.</p> <p>3.11. In its current form the draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan cannot be considered to be sound.</p> <p><i>Is the NDP positively prepared?</i></p> <p>3.12. In general, the Plan appears to focus on 'prohibitive' policies which seek to limit the development in the area by placing additional constraints to development even where the existing local and national policies already provide sufficient protection.</p> <p>3.13. One such example is NDP Policy L5 which seeks to maintain the gap between the existing LBDs. The draft TWBC Local Plan (published January 2021) does not include references or policies for maintain Gaps between settlements.</p> <p>3.14. As discussed earlier in our representations, NDP Policy L9 is of particular concern as it allocates vast areas of land surrounding the village as a 'Local Green Spaces' ('LGS'). Paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that any such designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. Furthermore, the National Planning Practice Guidance further specifies that LGS should not create new areas of 'green belt' by another name.</p> <p>3.15. Consequently, any blanket designations of open countryside adjacent to Goudhurst settlements is neither appropriate nor acceptable.</p> <p>3.16. All responsibility in respect of housing allocations is placed on TWBC Local Plan.</p> <p>3.17. The NDP clearly identifies that the existing population is ageing with the number of residents of over 65 rapidly increasing. At the same time, the NDP acknowledges that the Parish has a large proportion of detached dwellings and that there is a growing need to provide smaller and more affordable housing options to support younger families and for those who wish to downsize. However, the NDP does not make any allocations for such development to take place over the plan period.</p> <p>3.18. Furthermore, its housing policies contained in the NDP are not supported by an up-to-date local housing needs assessment. The steering group commissioned a Housing Need Survey [Goudhurst and Kilndown Housing Needs Survey, October 2011 by Action with Communities in Rural Kent]. Instead, the data from the latest Housing Needs Study 2018 [Borough of Tunbridge Wells – Housing Need Study, Final Report July 2018] should be used as the figures contained within better reflect the current market conditions and housing need in the area. As a result, the NDP policies fail to</p>					

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		<p>positively plan for identified needs of the Parish and fail to boost housing delivery in line with requirement of paragraph 59 of the NPPF.</p> <p>3.19. The NDP Policy H2 is particularly problematic. It is inconsistent with paragraph 63 of the NPPF which states that affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments (defined as developments of more than 10 dwellings, or on sites of 0.5ha and more).</p> <p>3.20. Furthermore, the NDP Policy H2 requires provision of 25% of affordable housing contributions from developments of 4 to 8 dwellings. However, the emerging Local Plan Policy H3 seeks provision of 20% of affordable housing on greenfield sites located in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty [Policy H3 (4) of the pre-submission Draft TW Local Plan (published 13th January 2021)]which are delivering 6 to 9 dwellings.</p> <p>3.21. Overall, the NDP's housing and affordable housing policies cannot be seen as positively prepared as they are inconsistent with policies contained in the emerging TWBC Local Plan. At the same time, the NDP as a whole does not support the Government's aim to boost housing and achieving sustainable development.</p> <p><i>Is the NDP justified?</i></p> <p>3.22. As discussed in section 1 of our representations, the Plan lacks robust justification in regard to the Local Green Space. However, other policies within the Plan are also not supported by robust technical evidence.</p> <p>3.23. One such example is the NDP Policy T1 which is concerned with parking and demands that new homes with the Goudhurst conservation area and for 200m along B2079 from the village centre must provide one off-street parking space per bedroom. This is in direct conflict with the Parking Standards set in the emerging TWBC Local Plan which seeks lower onsite provision. While this is acknowledged in paragraph 287 of the NDP, no reasoned or technical assessment is provided to justify this.</p> <p>3.24. Insufficient justification is provided to explain the NDP's lack of allocations to allow for housing and economic growth over the plan period.</p> <p><i>Is the NDP effective?</i></p> <p>3.25. To be effective, the Plan has to be deliverable over the plan period and be based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic matter that have been dealt with rather than deferred.</p> <p>3.26. Firstly, the plan period of the NDP needs to be brought in line with that of the strategic plan for the area. The emerging TWBC Local Plan covers the period of 2020 – 2038 in line with the requirement of</p>					

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		<p>the paragraph 22 of the NPPF which demands that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period in order to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities.</p> <p>3.27. In contrast, the Goudhurst NDP plan period currently stands as 2013 – 2033. By the time the NDP is ‘made’ it will have less than 15-year plan period. If it remains inconsistent with the strategic policies for the area, it will have to be immediately reviewed to maintain its significance in the decision making.</p> <p>3.28. Secondly, housing allocations in Goudhurst are simply deferred to the TWBC and its emerging Local Plan. While there may be practical and resource related issues which lead the Steering Group to do so, any such deferral undermines the NDP’s basic function to direct the future development into places where the community could and would accept it. We are of the opinion that all of the housing policies of the NDP should be reconsidered.</p> <p>3.29. Section 9.10 of the NDP is concerned with the self-build provision. For practical reasons it refers to the TWBC Self-build register and notes that the Borough Council is best placed to manage the statutory self-build register. However, the NDP does not make any provision for this form of development, despite the fact that the national policy clearly sees the self-build as a viable and sustainable form of development, including affordable housing.</p> <p>3.30. In its current form the <u>Goudhurst NDP is effective in preventing sustainable development</u>. The plan period needs to be revisited and brought in line with the plan period of the emerging local plan in order to be effective. Housing allocations should not be deferred but instead should be dealt with appropriately and proportionately. Sites for housing and economic development should be found through an open ‘call for sites’ exercise. Self-build policy should be introduced as this could assist with delivery of sustainable and affordable homes in this area.</p> <p><i>Is the NDP consistent with national policy?</i></p> <p>3.31. It has been highlighted throughout this document that, in its current form the NDP fails to boost the supply of housing, including affordable housing. As such, the NPD is in direct conflict with requirements of paragraphs 59, 60, 61, 62 and 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>3.32. Failure to allocate any sites for housing is also in direct conflict with paragraphs 68 and 69 of the NPPF which highlight that small and medium sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and that neighbourhood groups should consider allocating such sites in their areas.</p> <p>3.33. Instead of providing space for both economic and housing growth on sites which could be sustainably located closed to the existing settlement boundaries, the Goudhurst NDP designates large swathes of land as Local Green Spaces which do not satisfy the criteria stated in paragraph 100 of the</p>					

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		<p>NPPF, and which effectively create an area of green belt around the settlements of Goudhurst, Curtis Green, and Kilndown.</p> <p>3.34. Such approach is not only in conflict with the national planning policy (paragraphs 99 and 100), but also creates unnecessary layers of policy which are neither justified nor effective. It is unlikely that the regular reviews of the Plan will be able to address these issues.</p> <p>4. CONCLUSION</p> <p>4.1. Our representations clearly demonstrate that the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan is not positively prepared plan. Numerous prohibitive policies are introduced which add unnecessary layers of policy to prevent development of sites that could otherwise be suitable for development</p> <p>4.2. Local Green Spaces designation within the High Weald AONB are unnecessary and inappropriate as the level of protection afforded by the Local Green Space designation is lower than that of existing local and national policies.</p> <p>4.3. In its current form the NPD Policy LP9 is not justified as the methodology employed for site assessment is inconsistent and highly subjective.</p> <p>4.4. We object, in the strongest possible terms, to the LGS designation of site no. 102 – Five Fields. The site clearly does not comply with criteria b) and c) of paragraph 100 of the NPPF and therefore its allocation is not justified and should be immediately removed.</p> <p>4.5. Numerous Goudhurst NDP policies are inconsistent with strategic policies in the emerging TWBC Local Plan.</p> <p>4.6. As demonstrated in Section 3 of our representations, the Goudhurst NDP is not positively prepared. Robust justification needs to be presented to support its policies. The plan is not effective, and if adopted in its current form, it will result in unnecessary confusion for the future decision makers.</p> <p>We trust that that our comments are of assistance and await confirmation of receipt of our representations in due course.</p>					
GO_14	Section 1 (Para 5, 9, 11, 27) Section 5	<p>Section 1 Purpose</p> <p><u>Para 5</u>: TWBC Local Plan also includes the TWBC Core Strategy that runs to 2026, adopted June 2010; and the TWBC Site Allocations Local Plan adopted July 2016</p> <p><u>Para 9</u>: list of documents will also need to include the SEA screening report. The list currently implies there is a report that covers both HRA and SEA but these should be listed as separate reports so there</p>	Yes	Yes	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council		

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	<p>Section 7 (7.6, 7.12)</p> <p>Section 8 (C4)</p> <p>Section 9 (H1, H2, H5)</p> <p>Section 10 (B1, B2, B3)</p> <p>Section 11 (D1, D2, D3)</p> <p>General comments</p> <p>Climate change</p>	<p>are nine additional documents, not eight. In addition, the 5th bullet point could be made more accurate as follows:</p> <p>'A Sustainability Appraisal assessing the sustainability of the proposals in the plan and <u>inform</u> whether a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is required.'</p> <p><u>Para 11</u>: TWBC Pre-Submission Local Plan is for the period 2020 to 2038</p> <p><u>Para 27</u>: as at 26th Jan 2020, 27 sites located within Goudhurst parish have been promoted through the TWBC Call for Sites process</p> <p>Section 5 Our Policies</p> <p>It would be useful if there were hyperlinks in the table of policies which took you to the policies you wanted to look at.</p> <p>Section 7 Landscape and Environment Policies</p> <p><u>Section 7.6 Limits to Built Development (LBD)</u></p> <p>Note: the TWBC Pre-Submission Local Plan has made a number of amendments to the LBDs at Goudhurst village. The gap between the LBDs referred to in <u>Policy L5</u> is to remain.</p> <p>It is proposed that the LBD for Kilndown is not carried forward into the new TWBC Local Plan</p> <p><u>Para 80</u>: suggest add wording (as underlined) 'This situation will be addressed as part of the NDP and Borough Local Plan activities, <u>resulting in likely revisions to the LBD boundaries</u>'.</p> <p><u>Para 84</u>: suggest add wording (as underlined) 'Kilndown currently has its own LBD, which covers the majority of the developed area of Kilndown and incorporates the conservation area. TWBC's <u>Local Plan review and supporting</u> LBD Topic Paper proposes <u>that</u> 'The whole of this LBD boundary is to be removed as it is considered to be an unsustainable settlement for further development with a small number of facilities and services and limited bus services.' This <u>Neighbourhood Plan</u> would support this proposal'.</p> <p>Section 7.12 Local Green Spaces</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan's proposed/not proposed Local Green Spaces (LGS) broadly align with those sites in the TWBC Pre-Submission Local Plan. While TWBC's Local Plan does not propose to designate any sites which the NDP is not proposing to designate, there are <u>4 sites in the NDP proposed for</u></p>					

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		<p><u>designation that are not proposed in the Local Plan</u> as they do not meet TWBC's own designation methodology and criteria. These sites are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 – Goudhurst Cemetery; • 105 – Kilndown Churchyard; • AS_2 – Field to the South of the Firs Pitch; and • AS_20 – Green Space Adjacent to Lurkins Rise. <p>TWBC's reasoning for not proposing these sites will be published in its upcoming revised Local Green Space Assessment document, due to be published in March 2021. Despite this, TWBC will continue to work with the Goudhurst NDP Group to agree wherever possible the list of LGSs in the parish. If the NDP is adopted prior to the adoption of the TWBC Local Plan, TWBC will adopt the proposals in the NDP and not include them in the TWBC Local Plan.</p> <p>It is also important to note that the evidence base used to inform the list of sites found in the NDP requires updating, as the "2013-2033 Green Spaces – Assessment and Allocation" identifies 3 additional sites beyond the 17 proposed in the NDP as suitable for LGS designation. These sites are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97 – St Mary's Churchyard; • AS_17 – Land between Bankfield Way and High Ridge; and • AS_23 – Playground. <p>Section 8 Community & Wellbeing Policies</p> <p><u>Policy C4 Assets of Value Within the Community</u> : suggest that more details are provided for clarity</p> <p>Section 9 Housing Policies</p> <p><u>Policy H1 Housing Mix</u></p> <p>Note: TWBC PSLP Policy H1 Housing Mix states</p> <p>'the mix should reflect any requirements set out in relevant policies in the Local Plan or a 'made' neighbourhood plan for the area'</p> <p><u>Policy H2 Affordable Housing</u></p> <p>Note: TWBC PSLP Policy H3 Affordable Housing applies to developments with a net increase of more than nine dwellings. Sites in AONB delivering six to nine expected to provide a financial contribution.</p>					

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		<p>No provision for sites delivering less than nine.</p> <p><u>Policy H5 Replacing or combining Existing Dwellings</u></p> <p>Could be worth incorporating mention here about demolition and rebuild often being an unsustainable form of development/use of resources and is being discouraged in the TWBC Local Plan.</p> <p>Section 10 Business and Employment Policies</p> <p><u>Policy B2 Retention of Business Premises</u></p> <p>General comments and information:</p> <p>Use Class E of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) was introduced on 1st September 2020 and covers the former use classes of A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional), A3 (restaurants and cafes) as well as parts of D1 (non-residential institutions) and D2 (assembly and leisure).</p> <p>Introduction of two new use classes E - Commercial, Business and Service uses and F - Local Community and Learning uses which replace some of the uses in existing classes A, B and D. The changes allow more flexibility in permitted changes of use (without requiring the submission of a planning application) in some cases - new Class E is in 11 parts and more broadly covers uses previously defined in the revoked Classes A1(shops)/A2 (financial and professional services)/A3 (restaurants and cafes), B1 (offices, research, light industrial uses), D1(a-b) (non-residential institutions – schools, nurseries, clinics etc.) and ‘indoor sport’ from D2(e). Link: Use Classes Change of use Planning Portal.</p> <p>The current government (MHCLG) consultation (ending 28 January 2021) ‘Supporting housing delivery and public service infrastructure’ Link: Supporting housing delivery and public service infrastructure - GOV.UK makes proposals for a new permitted development (PD) right which will enable the change from any use within Class E to residential use within Class C3, without requiring planning permission. Some exceptions are proposed where the right would not apply, including National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Listed Buildings (likely to apply for Goudhurst).</p> <p><u>Policy B1 New Business Space</u></p> <p>Criterion 3 additional wording suggested (as underlined):</p> <p>‘A proportionate extension to an existing building for business or tourist use that is on a scale <u>appropriate to the needs and functioning of the business and which should not be visually harmful to the appearance and setting of the existing building</u>, the settlement or the open countryside’.</p>					

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		<p><u>Policy B2 Retention of Business Premises</u></p> <p>Use Class order changes – amendment needed to reflect changes to Use Class Order</p> <p><u>Policy B3 - Adapting Existing Buildings for Live/Work</u></p> <p>Suggest the supporting text should include a sentence to say that working from home and making related adaptations/extensions does not always require planning permission, but where it does, Policy B3 would apply.</p> <p>In line with the policy objective, suggest adding a criterion to the policy that proposals should not harm the amenities of neighbouring properties by virtue of noise, overlooking etc.</p> <p>Section 11 Design Policies</p> <p><u>Para 243</u>: it would be helpful and appropriate to reference the information about the highest proportion of surviving medieval buildings in Western Europe</p> <p><u>Policy D1 Design Considerations</u></p> <p>Criterion (c) additional wording regarding resources (as underlined):</p> <p>‘using good quality <u>and where possible locally sourced</u> materials that complement the existing materials and fall within the High Weald colour palette’</p> <p>Criterion (e) additional wording regarding EV charge points (as underlined):</p> <p>‘adopting innovation to achieve sustainable low carbon energy design, in particular the integration of renewable energy technologies<u>and electric vehicle charge points</u>’</p> <p><u>Policy D2 Boundary Treatments</u></p> <p>Is it appropriate that <u>all</u> new development include native species hedges? A policy on boundary treatments is very welcome but this may be too prescriptive, though could be re-worded.</p> <p><u>Policy D3 Climate Change</u></p> <p>Preamble to policy should include mention of the Borough Council’s target to become carbon neutral by 2030.</p>					

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		<p>Criterion (1) additional wording (as underlined):</p> <p>'Reduce the use of fossil fuels <u>in line with expectation for net zero emissions by 2030</u>'</p> <p>Would be worth including need to adapt to the impacts of climate change within the policy box, not just paragraph 265. See Pre Submission Local Plan Policy EN 3 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. Suggest an additional bullet point is added to Policy D3 with words to this effect.</p> <p><u>11.6 Conservation Areas/Policy D4 Inside Conservation Areas</u></p> <p><u>Para 266:</u> suggest replacing 'sustain and protect' in the second sentence to 'conserve and enhance' to reflect the policy wording. This will help with being compliant with the NPPF and also include enhancement as well as protection.</p> <p>In the second paragraph of Policy D4, is the intention that ALL buildings be protected from demolition in the absence of alternative development? Or just buildings that positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.</p> <p><u>General comments</u></p> <p>This is an opportunity to identify certain risks and opportunities in the historic environment, for instance as set out in the Historic England guidance note on Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment (HEAN11). For instance, drawing up a list of local heritage assets for inclusion in the NDP, identification of heritage at risk and where there may be opportunity to bring it out of risk, and working with the Borough Council to review the conservation area appraisal and management plan.</p> <p><u>Section 12 Traffic and Transport Policies</u></p> <p>12.2. Private Cars</p> <p>The background text could mention the benefit that car clubs can have in reducing ownership of second cars.</p> <p>-</p> <p>General Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TWBC Local Plan – during the preparation of the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan, TWBC have been preparing a new Local Plan. The draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan now being consulted upon under Regulation 16 January/February 2021 has been prepared with reference 					

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		<p>to the TWBC Local Plan 2006, Core Strategy 2012, Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 and the draft TWBC Local Plan consulted through Regulation 18, September/November 2018. It should be noted that the Pre-Submission Local Plan is due to be consulted upon during March/May 2021, the document having become available for public inspection on 31st December 2020.</p> <p>Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TWBC Draft Local Plan did not include a strategic policy for Climate Change. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council declared its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies and its ambition to make the entire borough carbon neutral by 2030 in July 2019 (see Full Council 17 July 2019, Item FC29/19). The Pre-submission Local Plan includes a strategic policy for Climate Change. <p>The Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement sets out how the draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan compares with the TWBC Development Plan (the documents listed above up to, and including, the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> References to Evidence Base in the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan: clarity is required about who has prepared the document – the neighbourhood plan group or TWBC (as part of developing the evidence base to support the preparation of the TWBC Local Plan) Clarity about the title of all evidence base documents referred to in the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan: this could be set out in a glossary (to include any shortened title referred to in the text). Titles of evidence base documents prepared by TWBC should be as set out in the relevant TWBC Local Plan webpages <p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be helpful to have a list or table of individual policies at the front of the plan: Policy Number, Policy Name and page number 					
GO_15	<p>Page 3 Forward para 3, then, Section 12 paras 271, 272, 273, 274. etc then Policies T2 and T3.</p> <p>In addition</p>	<p>In all of the following sections of the NDP it is made clear that the ever increasing amount of traffic in general and of large HGVs in particular on the A262 is at the top of residents' concerns and is having a massive negative effect on residents' quality of life. I am concerned that the possibility of a bypass is not mentioned anywhere in the plan. A search of the document for the word 'bypass' finds nothing. Clearly, there are plusses and minuses deriving from a bypass but it seems surprising that this solution is not mentioned.</p> <p><u>List of traffic sections in Plan:</u></p>	Yes	Yes	David Robert Boniface		

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	[submitted responses in Goudhurst-NDP-Consultation-Statement-0.2AS.pdf] refers.	Page 3 Forward para 3, then, Section 12 paras 271, 272, 273, 274. etc then Policies T2 and T3. Interestingly, two submissions to an earlier consultation [See submitted responses in Goudhurst-NDP-Consultation-Statement-0.2AS.pdf] suggested that a bypass would be a good solution. See p.32 response 4, and p.48 response 48: 'If possible Goudhurst needs a bypass but I am sure it would be difficult to find a satisfactory route'.					
GO_16	<p>p.13 Objectives that deliver our Goals - Protecting our dark skies.</p> <p>p.15 L8 Protect dark Skies 'Nightscape' and minimise Light Pollution</p> <p>To protect the intrinsically dark rural landscape and dark skies ('nightscape') by considering the impact of new building and alterations on the 'nightscape'</p> <p>p.18 L8 Light Pollution To remain a dark skies community and continue to minimise the impact of light pollution whether from public or private sources.</p>	<p>The policy L8 refers only to new builds and extensions where the planning process can scrutinise planned external lighting and large windows. However, the great majority of external lighting is installed on existing buildings. There is no policy of establishing a by-law that would require that conditions be fulfilled for any exterior lighting whether on a recent build , or on an existing property.</p> <p><u>List of relevant dark sky sections in Plan:</u></p> <p>See answer to Question 1.</p>	Yes	Yes	David Robert Boniface		

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	7.11 Protection of the Rural Landscape at Night (nightscape) Section 102. and 103. Refer.						
GO_17		<p>Thank you for consulting Kent County Council (KCC) on the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>The County Council has reviewed the Neighbourhood Plan and for ease of reference, has provided comments structured under the chapter headings and policies used within the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p><u>11.5 The Impact of Climate Change</u></p> <p><i>Policy D3 Climate Change</i></p> <p>The County Council is supportive of this policy. The County Council would welcome reference to the Energy and Low Emissions Strategy (ELES) within the Neighbourhood Plan. The ELES outlines Kent and Medway's ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero emissions by 2050. Taking an evidence-based approach, it identifies a pathway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, eliminate poor air quality, reduce fuel poverty and promote the development of an affordable, clean and secure energy supply for the county.</p> <p><u>Section 3 Goudhurst – A History</u></p> <p>There is considerable evidence, in the form of numerous flint arrowheads found in the parish, that humans have been accessing the woodlands in Goudhurst since the Mesolithic period (c. 10,000 – 4,000 BC) – this should be referenced within the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p><u>Section 7 Landscape and Environment Policies</u></p> <p><i>L4 Conserve Landscape and Heritage Assets</i></p> <p>As this is the only policy that directly references heritage, the County Council would recommend that this is strengthened and expanded. The County Council recommends the following wording <u><i>“Development must preserve and enhance the historic landscape of the Parish, and its heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance”</i></u>.</p>			Kent County Council, Environment, Planning and Enforcement		

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		<p><u>7.5 Heritage</u></p> <p><i>Paragraph 73</i></p> <p>The County Council recommends consideration of the Historic Town Survey (2006)[1] as a useful document in understanding the heritage of Goudhurst._</p> <p><i>Paragraph 77</i></p> <p>Goudhurst village and the hamlets of the parish sit within a landscape that is both historic and vulnerable. To understand and value landscape character fully, it is important to consider its historic aspect. This means the pattern of tracks, lanes, field boundaries and other features that comprise the historic character of the modern landscape and which can shape future growth. The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001) and the Tunbridge Wells Historic Landscape Characterisation (2017) have identified the historic character of the landscape of Kent and are important tools for managing change and should be considered within the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p><u>Section 11 Design Policies</u></p> <p><u>11.6 Conservation Areas</u></p> <p><i>Policy D5 Outside of the Conservation Area</i></p> <p>It should be noted that much of Kent has historically had a dispersed settlement pattern. Development between villages and hamlets and among farm buildings would in many places be consistent with the historic character of those areas. Historic England, KCC and Kent Downs AONB have published guidance on historic farmsteads in Kent that considers how rural development proposals can be assessed for whether they are consistent with existing character[2]. This should be considered within the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Minerals and Waste</p> <p>The County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, notes that there are safeguarded minerals present in the Plan area:</p> <p>Superficial-the Sub-Alluvial River Terrace and River Terrace sands and gravels, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crustal geological units- the Ashdown Formation (sandstone) and the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation (sandstone) [that is part of a wider sandstone formation] 					

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		<p>The Neighbourhood Plan should acknowledge the presence of these safeguarded minerals and safeguarding matters to ensure the Plan is in accordance with the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2013-2030)[3]. The County Council would be happy to discuss how this can be addressed with the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>KCC would welcome continued engagement as the Neighbourhood Plan progresses. If you require any further information or clarification on any matters raised above, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p> <p>[1] https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/kent_eus_2006/downloads.cfm?area=Goudhurst</p> <p>[2] http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/historic-farmsteads.html</p> <p>[3] https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/planning-policies/minerals-and-waste-planning-policy#tab-1</p>					
GO_18		<p>Thank you for consulting Historic England on the submission version of the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan. Historic England's remit is for the historic environment including promoting the conservation and enjoyment of heritage assets and championing good design in historic places. As such our comments are limited to those areas of the plan that fall within our areas of interest and silence on other matters should not be treated as consent.</p> <p>I am happy to confirm that we have no objections to raise in response to the submission version of the plan.</p> <p>We do wish to express our support for Policy L10 and in particular the inclusion of the detail of the table setting out the key qualities of the views to be protected, which we feel will be important to the implementation of the policy. Indeed, to ensure the policy provides clarity to decision making it may be helpful to include the phrase "...as described in table X" in the policy and to number the table at page 38.</p> <p>We hope these comments are of assistance.</p>			Historic England		

Supporting Documents attached to responses

GO_5 Environment Agency



Kent South London and East Sussex Neighbourhood Plan Advice Note

Last updated: January 2021

Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the environment. This document sets out the key environmental issues which should be considered. Due to the high volume of work we are unable to provide detailed comments on Neighbourhood Plans at the present time.

Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/Environment-Toolkit-20181220.pdf>

We also recommend your Plan takes account of relevant Local Planning Authority's policies, plans and strategies including Local Planning Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, flood risk strategies (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-current-schemes-and-strategies>), and the South East River Basin Management Plan (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-east-river-basin-management-plan/>) Thames River Basin Management Plan (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289937/geth0910bswa-e-e.pdf) as appropriate.

The information below explains the key issues we would consider in reviewing your Plan. We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment.

Flood risk

Development must be safe and should not increase the risk of flooding.

Neighbourhood Plans should conform to national and local policies on flood risk:

If a Neighbourhood Plan is proposing sites for development please check whether there are any areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3 within the proposed site allocations.

You can view a site's flood zone on the Flood Map for Planning on our website: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

If the proposed allocation is located within Flood Zone 2 or 3 you should consult the Flood Risk and Coastal Change pages of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG): <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change/>

Here you can determine whether the flood risk vulnerability of the proposed development and the flood zone are compatible. In accordance with national planning policy the Sequential Test should be undertaken to ensure development is directed to the areas of lowest flood risk. This should be informed by the Environment Agency's floodmap for planning and the Local Planning Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), if they have one. We recommend you contact the Local Planning Authority to discuss this requirement further.

We would have concerns if development is allocated in this high risk flood zone without the Sequential Test being undertaken.

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

It is important that your Plan also considers whether the flood risk issues associated with these sites can be safely managed to ensure development can come forward.

We can provide any flooding information which we have available – such as predicted flood levels and historical flood data. Please note that there may be a charge for this information. Please contact our Customers and Engagement Team at ksle@environment-agency.gov.uk for further details.

In addition to the above you should also check with the Local Planning Authority's Neighbourhood Planning team with regards to other sources of flooding (such as surface water, groundwater, sewers and historic flooding) as detailed in their Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), now has responsibility for local flood risk management and may hold flooding information that is not identified on our Flood Map.

Climate Change Allowances

The Local Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should indicate the extent of flood zones with likely climate change.

On 19 February 2016, we published new guidance for planners and developers on how to use climate change allowances: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>.

Flood Defences

Areas of your Neighbourhood Plan area, or proposed sites, may be given protection by a flood defence/alleviation scheme. Where this is the case the Plan should acknowledge this and identify the level of protection provided (including any climate change allowance). It should be noted that flood defences are intended to protect existing properties and are not to facilitate new development in areas that would otherwise be impacted by flooding. Any assessment of development behind flood defences should consider the impacts of a breach or overtopping. Where it is determined that new development should be behind a flood defence financial contributions may be sought to maintain or improve the structure.

Thames Estuary 2100 (Tidal Defences)

In line with requirements set out in the Thames Estuary 2100 ([TE2100](#)) plan, developments in this location will need to demonstrate how the flood defence could be raised in the future to meet the demands of climate change.

No activities on site should preclude access to the flood defence from maintenance or prevent the future raising of flood defences. In some cases we hold technical drawings of flood defence structures which may be of use. To request these you should contact our Customers and Engagement Team at ksle@environment-agency.gov.uk

Ecology

Proximity to watercourse/ Ecology

Main rivers can be viewed on the Environment Agency's map:

<https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=17cd53dfc524433980cc333726a56386>

We normally require a buffer zone of 8 metres (fluvial) and 16 metres (tidal) between any new development and the top of the bank of the main river. The permanent retention of a continuous unobstructed area is an essential requirement for emergency access to the river for repairs to the bank and for future maintenance and/or improvement works. A buffer between new development and the river wall is also required to ensure no adverse loading which could impact the stability of the channel wall. This buffer zone will help provide more space for flood waters, provide improved habitat for local biodiversity and allows access for any maintenance requirements.

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0345 988 1188

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Where development is proposed next to the river we recommend that it includes a green buffer strip alongside the watercourse. Where such a buffer strip does not currently exist, we normally seek that it is established. This is a key way in which we carry out our legal duty to further and promote the ecological and landscape value of rivers and land associated with them. In urban areas, in particular, rivers have often been degraded by past development, and we expect that any new development should go some way to redress the balance.

The provision of green infrastructure, particularly along rivers, and the inclusion of sustainable drainage techniques can help reduce the risk of flooding. This can also provide recreational and wildlife benefits. Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in the Plan will be encouraged. In accordance with national policy, any development proposal should avoid significant harm to biodiversity and seek to protect and enhance it; delivering biodiversity net gain. We would not support development proposals if there was shown to be a likely detrimental impact on the water environment.

Water Management and Groundwater Protection

Local level actions and decision making can help secure improvements to the water environment. This is widely known as the catchment-based approach and has been adopted to deliver requirements under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). It seeks to:

- deliver positive and sustained outcomes for the water environment by promoting a better understanding of the environment at a local level; and
- encourage local collaboration and more transparent decision-making when both planning and delivering activities to improve the water environment.

Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the water environment. Local WFD catchment data can be obtained from: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict/>

Overall deterioration in water quality and promoting improvement in the ecological status of any water body. Actions to achieve this are listed in the Thames River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and the South East River Basin Management Plan <https://www.gov.uk/search?q=River+Basin+Management+Plans>

Where appropriate, a WFD Assessment (<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/water-supply-wastewater-and-water-quality/water-supply-wastewater-and-water-quality-considerations-for-planning-applications/>) should assess any potential impacts on the watercourse and demonstrate that the required enhancements will be delivered. Any development that has the potential to cause deterioration in classification under WFD or that precludes the recommended actions from being delivered in the future is likely to be considered unacceptable to us.

Groundwater Quality

Development must not cause pollution to the water environment.

Aquifers and Source Protection Zones

Some of your local area, and specific potential site allocations, may be located upon or within aquifers and Source Protection Zones (link below). SPZ 1 is especially sensitive. You might consider these within your Plan and when allocating sites. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be seen with reference to our Groundwater Protection guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

To see if a proposed development is located within a Source Protection Zone, please use our online map: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-source-protection-zones-spzs>

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Land Contamination

You must consider land contamination when preparing your plan. Managing it during development is key to addressing past contamination and preventing further impacts during development.

You can establish if a site may be contaminated in several ways. Your Local Authority may hold a register of sites it knows to be contaminated. A list of potentially contaminated sites can be accessed on the following link:

<https://www.claire.co.uk/useful-government-legislation-and-guidance-by-country/76-key-documents/198-doe-industry-profiles>

We recommend you contact your Local Authority's Environmental Health team who may hold records on known/potential land contamination. Please note our primary concern is with regards to water quality. Your Local Authority's Environmental Health team will advise you on issues related to human health.

Further information can be accessed on the following links:

Guiding principles for the Land Contamination

<https://www.claire.co.uk/useful-government-legislation-and-guidance-by-country/192-guiding-principles-for-land-contamination-gplc>

Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination:

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328160926/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/scho0804bibr-e-e.pdf>

Approach to Groundwater Protection:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692989/Environment-Agency-approach-to-groundwater-protection.pdf

Water supply and foul drainage

When allocating sites in you Plan, you will need to consider if the water supply and foul drainage infrastructure can accommodate the development. Your local water company can provide further information about water supply and sewerage capacity.

Surface water drainage

The inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) should always be a consideration within any development to reduce the risk of surface water flooding on and off site. The Lead Local Flood Authority, is the main contact for SUDS issues. However, we have interest in SUDS from a groundwater protection perspective and those area of critical drainage.

The collection and dispersal of clean surface water to ground to recharge aquifer units and prevent localised drainage or surface systems flooding in heavy rainfall is encouraged. However, dispersal into the ground through soakaways or other infiltration systems requires a site-specific investigation and risk assessment. Generally, we would accept roof drainage going to soakaway (or other systems), but other surface drainage may need to go through treatment systems or to foul main, for instance vehicle parking. Infiltrating water has the potential to cause mobilisation of contaminants present in shallow soil/made ground which could ultimately cause pollution of underlying groundwater resources. Where contamination is known or suspected, remedial or other mitigating measures will likely be required so that it can be demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to Controlled Waters.

We advise applicants to follow our guidance – Groundwater Protection. This is a report that highlights the importance of groundwater and encourages industry and other organisations to act responsibly and improve their practices. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

The design of the drainage systems should be in line with G1, G9, G12 and G13 position statements: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements>

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Infrastructure Delivery

We would recommend that environmental infrastructure, including habitat enhancements, water storage areas, and green space, is taken into account if the Plan looks to fund local infrastructure.

Environmental Permitting Regulations

To see if a proposed development requires an Environmental Permit under the Environment Permitting Regulations please refer to our website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-need-an-environmental-permit>

Under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, a flood risk activity permit (FRAP) may be required for work:

- in, over or under a main river;
- within 8m of the bank of a main river, or 16m if it is a tidal main river;
- within 8m of any flood defence structure or culvert on a main river, or 16m on a tidal main river.

Flood risk activities can be classified as: exclusions, exemptions, standard rules or bespoke. These are associated with the level of risk the proposed works may pose to people, property and the environment. Local Authorities should advise developers to refer to the [flood risk activity permit section](#) of gov.uk for further information.

Please note

This document is a response to a Neighbourhood Plan consultation and does not represent our final view in relation to any future planning application made in relation to any site.

You should seek your own expert advice in relation to technical matters relevant to any planning application before submission.

If you have any questions please contact the Kent and South London Sustainable Places team:

kslplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk

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03708 506 506

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Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall
Royal Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN11 1RS



24 October 2019

Dear Sirs,

Local Green Space Consultation

1. Introduction and Summary

I am writing on behalf of Bethany School in response to your letter of 29 July 2019 which informed us that land owned by the school (Site AS-1 (The Firs Pitch)) was likely to be proposed in whole or in part for Local Green Space designation.

Your draft Local Green Space Assessment dated July 2019 also refers to a second parcel of land owned by the school (Site AS-2 (Field to the South of the Firs Pitch)). The draft Local Space Assessment states that there is insufficient evidence that this second site meets the designation criteria. However, we understand from the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan committee that they may still consider whether this second site should be proposed for designation. Consequently this letter also deals with that second site.

In the case of both plots of land we do not believe that the statutory criteria for designation are met and in particular, we are concerned that your proposed designation of Site AS-1 appears to have been based on inaccurate information provided to you. Therefore we do not believe that either site can or should be so designated as a local Green space.

2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

As you are of course aware, the NPPF provides, at paragraph 100, that:

"Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

(a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves

(b) demonstrably special to a local community, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife"

We understand that both TWBC and those preparing the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan have had regard to these criteria.

The Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan expressly sets out how the criteria in (b) have been applied in relation to each Site. The TWBC Local Green Space Designation Methodology, while also referring to paragraph 100, sets out a number of sub-criteria which TWBC will consider. We have commented on those in relation to each site below.

However we believe that in considering those criteria both TWBC have been misled as to the history and use of the sites and that consequently the conclusions reached on designation are unsafe and should be reconsidered.

Taking each Site in turn

3. Site AS-1 (The Firs Pitch)

In the TWBC Local Green Space Assessment it states that:

Curtisden Green, Goudhurst¹ Cranbrook, Kent TN11 1LB
e: schooloffice@bethanyschool.org.uk w: www.bethanyschool.org.uk t: 01580 211 273 f: 01580 211 151
Headmaster: Francie Healy, BSc, HDipEd, NPQH
Bethany School Ltd. • Registered Charity Number: 307937

“This area is used by the local community for informal recreational activities. This area is also of local historic significance, having previously been called the Cricket Meadow back into the 19th century and has been continuously used since for walking dogs, families and children playing football, cricket, picnics etc. This area is an important central open space that makes a positive and significant contribution to the local landscape character. This area also has panoramic views to the south and east looking onto the AONB”

This wording is similar to much of that contained in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, from which we assume it was derived.

However it is not accurate.

The land now forming the Firs Pitch, then called Newhouse Farm, was acquired by the school in 1885. The sale included the farm house, four cottages, farm buildings and a saucer-shaped field that was then used for cricket by the school (the “cricket meadow”). The swamp near the Firs was filled in in 1973. For a while the area was used as an open tip. In around 1977 the Firs meadow was levelled, enlarged by removing an old path, hedge and trees and the school’s vegetable patch, and filling in the old clay pit, to create the current playing fields. The source for this information is the History of Bethany School “From Acorn to Oak Tree”, published some 20 years ago. A copy of the relevant extracts is attached to this letter.

Over the last 30 years any use of the Firs pitch has only been with the permission of the school. That has normally been permitted (and a few years ago a neighbourhood event was held on the field). No doubt, given that the school has not chosen to fence the field, locals do occasionally walk over the field but the walking of dogs is, for obvious reasons, as it is a playing field, not permitted.

It is helpful to review this Site against the sub-criteria in your Local Green Space designation methodology. Taking each in turn (with our comments in italics):

“The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its beauty

- Does the space contribute to the visual attractiveness of the townscape or character/setting of the settlement?

Clearly the fact that the Firs Pitch is there gives a more attractive outlook for houses in Curtisden Green than if it was not - but no more so than any other green space.

- Is the site specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments as a particular point of interest or does it contain features that are characteristic of the area?

Not mentioned so far as we are aware. As a flat playing field it does not contain characteristic features

- Does the site contribute to the setting of a historic building/place or other special feature?

No

- Is the site highlighted in literature or art (e.g. the site is mentioned in a well-known poem or shown in a famous painting)?

No

- Are there valued views of the site or does it afford particular views?

There are no particular valued views of the site. As with most open spots in the local area there are some views of surrounding countryside. However, that is only relevant if the school permits access. There is no public right of access.

The proposed space is of particular local historic significance

- Are there any historic buildings or heritage assets on the site (e.g. listed buildings; scheduled ancient monuments; registered parks and gardens; ancient routeways)?

No

- Are there any important historic landscape features on the site (e.g. old hedgerows; historic ponds or historic garden features)?

No

- Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town?

No

- Did any important historic events take place on the site?

No

- Do any historic rituals take place on the site (e.g. maypole dancing)?

No

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its recreational value

- Is the site used for playing sport?

No community use for playing sport. It is used only by Bethany School

- Is the site used by the local community for formal and/or informal recreation?

It is not used by the local community for formal recreation. Occasional use by walkers has not historically been prevented by the School but it is not available for informal recreation.

- If the site is a school's private playing field, then is the site either publicly accessible or visually prominent?

It is a private playing field. It is only accessible with the permission of the school. It is obviously visually prominent to the inhabitants of the limited number of buildings adjoining the field – but not otherwise.

- Are the public able to physically access the site?

As the School has currently chosen not to fence the field, the public are physically able to access the field, although they need permission to do so.

We note that the draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan Stage 2 assessment did not consider that the criteria for recreational value were met.

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its tranquillity

- Do you consider the site to be tranquil (e.g. there are no roads or busy areas close by)?

The site is surrounded by roads (albeit minor village roads) on each side and therefore it is not particularly tranquil.

- Is the site within a recognised tranquil area (e.g. within the Campaign to Protect Rural England's tranquillity maps)?

No

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its richness of wildlife

- Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value (e.g. a Local Wildlife Site)?

No

- Does the site contain notable biodiversity interest or value and in particular are there notable species or habitats present (e.g. the site may be an important wildlife corridor or provide a buffer to other higher value areas)?

No

- Is the site part of a long-term study of wildlife by members of the local community?"

No

Based on the above we can see no basis for designation of this Site. In particular the suggestion in the draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan "Assessment and Allocation" document that it should be designated because of its historic significance, tranquillity and richness of wildlife, seem to us to be completely groundless.

4. Site AS-2 (Field to the south of the Firs Pitch)

As referred to above, TWBC did not in your Local Green Space Assessment propose designation of this Site. We believe that to be correct.

However, also as mentioned above, we understand that this view may not be shared by the authors of the draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan and therefore we have addressed your designation sub-criteria below.

There is no description of this property in your draft Local Green Space Assessment. However the Neighbourhood Plan "Assessment and Allocation" document claims that "This area is of local significance because it affords long reaching views over the AONB...This area is used by the adjacent Bethany School for occasional hockey games as well as regularly by the community as a recreational walking area and for flying kites, playing with children and exercising dogs".

This area of land was formerly an orchard and there is no historic access to it. It is also not in "reasonably close proximity" to the settlement at Curtisden Green (as required by paragraph 100 of the NPPF). The

description quoted suggests regular use by the community for recreational activities (which is contrasted, misleadingly, with “occasional” school use). There has been no recreational use – and although the School has historically tolerated occasional walkers, any greater use would require its permission and this has not been given. The views from this field are limited and it is sloped. The school has not used it as a playing field for a number of year due to the sloped nature of its surface. It is a privately owned school field with no permitted access to the public.

“The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its beauty

- Does the space contribute to the visual attractiveness of the townscape or character/setting of the settlement?

The field is not visible from all but one property in the settlement at Curtisden Green and therefore does not add anything to the setting. It is no more attractive than any other green field.

- Is the site specifically mentioned in any relevant landscape character assessments as a particular point of interest or does it contain features that are characteristic of the area?

No. It does not contain particular characteristic features as far as we are aware

- Does the site contribute to the setting of a historic building/place or other special feature?

No

- Is the site highlighted in literature or art (e.g. the site is mentioned in a well-known poem or shown in a famous painting)?

No

- Are there valued views of the site or does it afford particular views?

There are no particular valued views of the site. As with most open spots in the local area there are some views of surrounding countryside. However, that is only relevant if the school permits access. There is no public right of access.

The proposed space is of particular local historic significance

- Are there any historic buildings or heritage assets on the site (e.g. listed buildings; scheduled ancient monuments; registered parks and gardens; ancient routeways)?

No

- Are there any important historic landscape features on the site (e.g. old hedgerows; historic ponds or historic garden features)?

No

- Did the site play an important role in the historic development of the village or town?

No

- Did any important historic events take place on the site?

No

- Do any historic rituals take place on the site (e.g. maypole dancing)?

No

We note that the draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan Stage 2 assessment did not consider that the criteria for beauty were met.

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its recreational value

- Is the site used for playing sport?

No community use for playing sport. It is used only by Bethany School

- Is the site used by the local community for formal and/or informal recreation?

It is not used by the local community for formal recreation. Occasional use by walkers has not historically been prevented by the School (although there is no public right of way) but it is not made available for informal recreation.

- If the site is a school's private playing field, then is the site either publicly accessible or visually prominent?

It was used as a private playing field and not in recent years due to its sloped surface . It is only accessible with the permission of the school. It is visually prominent only to the inhabitants of one property adjoining the field – but not otherwise.

- Are the public able to physically access the site?

The public are physically able to access the field, although they should obtain permission to do so.

We note that the draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan Stage 2 assessment did not consider that the criteria for recreational value were met.

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its tranquillity

- Do you consider the site to be tranquil (e.g. there are no roads or busy areas close by)?

No. The site is adjoined by a minor road.

- Is the site within a recognised tranquil area (e.g. within the Campaign to Protect Rural England's tranquillity maps)?

No

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its richness of wildlife

- Is the site formally designated for its wildlife value (e.g. a Local Wildlife Site)?

No

- Does the site contain notable biodiversity interest or value and in particular are there notable species or habitats present (e.g. the site may be an important wildlife corridor or provide a buffer to other higher value areas)?

No

- Is the site part of a long-term study of wildlife by members of the local community?"

No

We note that the draft Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan Stage 2 assessment did not consider that the criteria for richness of wildlife were met.

Based on the above we can see no basis for designation of this Site. In particular the suggestion contained in the draft Neighbourhood Plan that it should be designated because of its tranquillity (in the absence of the other factors above) seems to us completely groundless.

5. Conclusion

As can be seen from the evidence above, it is beyond reasonable doubt that there is no case for the designation of either AS-1 or Site AS-2 as Local Green Spaces. Indeed, the designation of sites which are not in accordance either with the National Planning Policy Framework or in accordance with the methodology set by TWBC for the identification and designation of Local Green Spaces would render any related Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan clearly unsound and open to challenge.

If it would be useful for the school to provide any further information, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely



Wendy Kent

Vice Chair of the Board of Governors of Bethany School

Attachment: extract from the History of Bethany School

The Firs Pitch History

Extract "from Acorn to Oak Tree" – A History of Bethany School from 1866 to 1988 page 26 states.

Newhouse Farm was purchased for £1,287 by Bethany School in 1885. Included in this deal were four cottages on the Green, Farm Buildings with their contents and a saucer shaped field that immediately became the new cricket meadow. The elegant farm house was renamed The Firs.

Extract "from Acorn to Oak Tree" – A History of Bethany School from 1866 to 1988 page 123 states.

One of the earliest was the filling in of the swamp near "The Firs", begun in 1973. For a while the spot was used as an open tip, and there is a great deal of curious rubbish under the ground to mystify future excavators, including the signs of a fire which broke out spontaneously amidst the rubbish one evening. This was the prelude to the levelling of the Firs Meadow, enlarged by removing the old path, the hedge beside it and a clump of trees originally planted by Kenneth Pengelly. The school vegetable patch was also taken in. The result, regretted at first by traditionalists, has been a magnificent playing area that has become the First XV pitch as well as providing for cricket.