



# Lamberhurst Parish



## Neighbourhood Development Plan - Public Consultation Statement

**Setting the pattern for future development in Lamberhurst Parish  
Regulation 15 version September 2020**

**Prepared in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood  
Planning (General) Regulations 2012-2017**

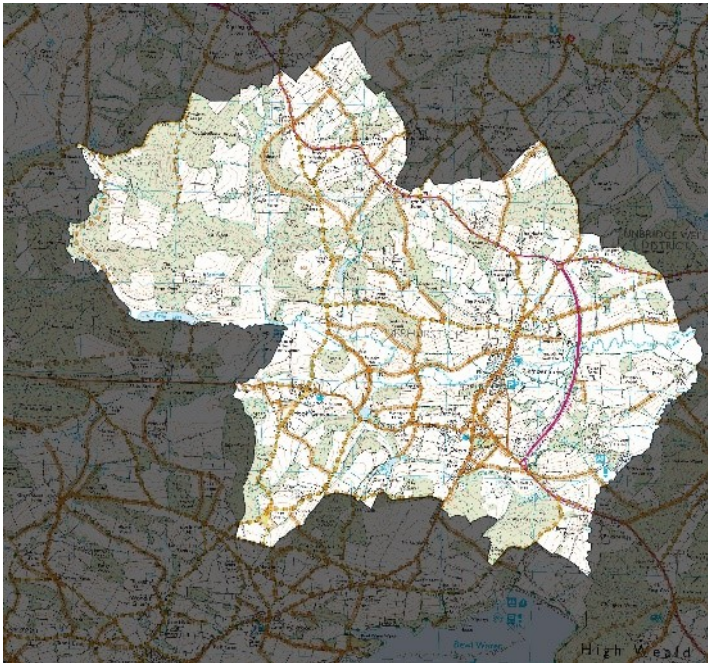
**[www.lamberhurstvillage.org](http://www.lamberhurstvillage.org)**

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## Introduction

Lamberhurst is a rural parish in the High Weald of Kent, about 10km (6 miles) south-east of Tunbridge Wells. It extends from the border between Kent and East Sussex, north and east across the main A21 road (London – Sevenoaks – Tonbridge / Tunbridge Wells - Hastings). At its maximum, the parish is about 5km (3 miles) north to south and 7 km (4 miles) east to west. It covers 21.66 square km. The parish is bisected by the valley of the river Teise, a tributary of the Medway. Settlement is focused in the village of Lamberhurst, with outlying hamlets at Hook Green and Lamberhurst Quarter. Bewl Water, the largest reservoir in south east England, dammed and flooded in 1975, lies immediately to the south of the parish and is also an important leisure attraction.



Since 2017, Lamberhurst Parish Council has been working with the local community to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan (LNDP) to guide the future development of the parish up to 2036.

The Plan covers the entire parish all on which is included in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in recognition of its nationally important landscape.

## The purpose of this document

2.1 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 set out a legal requirement at Regulation 15 that a parish council submitting a neighbourhood plan proposal to the local planning authority must include certain documents, amongst which is a “consultation statement”

2.2 In this regulation, “consultation statement” means a document which:

- a) contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan
- b) explains how they were consulted
- c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- d)
- e) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan

2.3 This document is intended to fulfil the above legal requirement

established and continuing residential use rights and the current building is unstable or uneconomic to repair.

not result in the loss of employment or of an asset of community value.

## Our overall approach to the consultation

3.1 Throughout the preparation of the Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan, we have tried to promote the widest possible engagement of the local community in planning for the future development of the parish. Our guiding principles have been:

- a) to commence community engagement early on, before we started drafting anything, and to seek a clear understanding of those issues and concerns which are of most importance to the local community
- b) as work progressed on the plan, to offer further opportunities for comment as draft objectives and planning policies were worked up and a draft plan prepared
- c) and direct contact with key groups in the local community (such as businesses, clubs and societies) and external consultees. We have also sought to regularly liaise with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council’s planning department.
- d) tapping into the knowledge and experience available in the local community wherever possible, by making the process as open and inclusive as possible
- e) through all the above actions, to meet the statutory requirements for public engagement set out in the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations.





## The consultation process

The proposal to create an LNBP was outlined at a public meeting held in Lamberhurst Memorial Hall on the 18th April 2017, attended by 70 residents. The meeting unanimously agreed that such a plan would be of benefit to the Parish and, following the meeting, our intention was registered and subsequently accepted by TWBC.

Community training and awareness meetings were held between December 2017 and February 2018, during which volunteers were sought for the steering and working groups. At the first Steering Group held on the 26 March 2018 Graham White was elected Chairman. The group is supported by planning consultants, Jim Boot and Lindsay Frost.

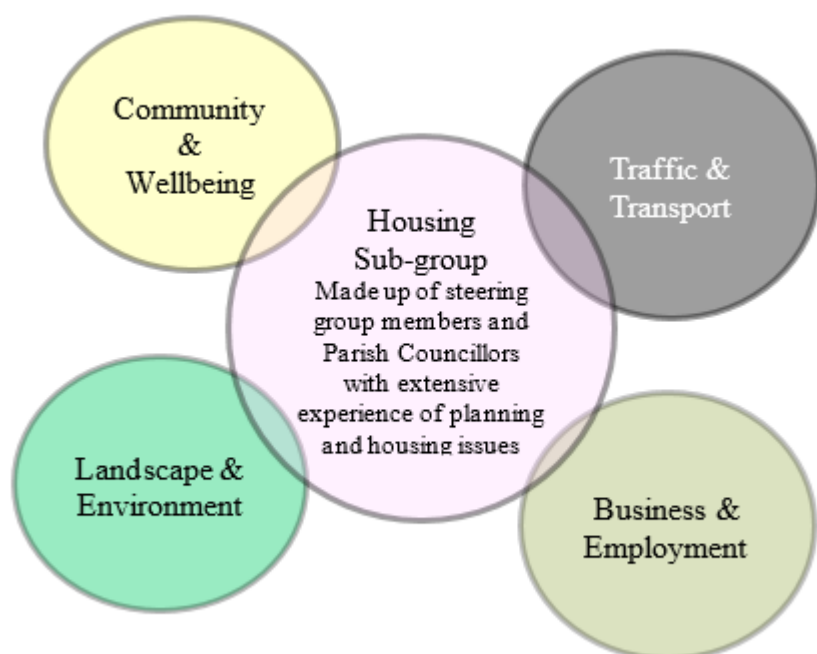
The key objectives of the steering group were to understand:

1. Future housing needs in Lamberhurst
2. Criteria to be used when considering potential sites for housing
3. Where new housing might be located
4. Design requirements for new developments
5. Aspects of living in the Parish that are important to residents
6. How to formulate plans for the delivery of sustainable development

Following the decision to produce a community-led plan, five working groups were tasked with building an evidence base and identifying issues, objectives and policy areas.

*"In 2036 Lamberhurst Parish will be a vibrant and diverse community that takes care of its environment and provides suitable housing for residents of all ages and means"*

The key steps undertaken were:



Date	Activity
18 April 2017	70 residents attended a meeting in the Memorial Hall to listen to presentations from Parish Council representatives about the benefits of developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the steps to be taken in the process.
December 2017 to January 2018	25 residents volunteered for working groups.
24 June 2018	Launch of the questionnaire
August 2018	A summary of the questionnaire results was delivered to all households.
September 2018	An exhibition of findings from the questionnaire was held in the Memorial Hall.

## Evidence gathering activities

Date	Activity
September to November 2018	Four public workshops and one workshop for business owners were held in different venues around the Parish.
12 <sup>th</sup> January 2019	Lego family friendly workshop
9 <sup>th</sup> April 2019	Photographic competition, an exhibition of entries and a public vote to determine the winners, which are found in the Plan and on our Parish website
June 2018 to September 2018	Assessments were carried out by the groups on character, greenspaces, favourite views and parking survey
June 2018 to September 2018	Regular Parish Magazine and facebook articles
January 2019	Lamberhurst Parish Housing Needs Survey produced

## Questionnaires

A questionnaire was launched on the 24th June 2018 and ran until the 21st July 2018. It was open to all residents age 14 or above. Paper copies of the questionnaire were sent to each household in the Parish. It was also available online. 330 responses were received, representing 46% of paper questionnaires circulated.

A separate questionnaire was also sent to over 90 local businesses and received a response from 67%

## Local business consultation

A specially designed business survey was devised to gather information about the commercial activities and structures of over 90 business organisations identified in Lamberhurst Parish. The following information is based upon a 67% response to the survey and from the opinions expressed by business leaders at a dedicated business focus group.

## Community Workshops



Public workshops were held with the aim of creating a set of objectives and exploring options and proposals for the LNDP. In the workshops, we examined the evidence gathered through the questionnaire and identified a number of development options. The impact of each option was assessed, for the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Small, medium and large development scenarios were all discussed. In addition, there was a family workshop to engage younger residents and one for interested business owners, who had also been sent a business questionnaire. Details are set out later in the LNDP.

<b>Workshop</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Vision and Objectives	27 September 2018	Creating visions for the parish and setting objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan.
Housing & Design	1 November 2018	Developing design policies, considering future housing needs and setting site selection criteria
Traffic & Economy	27 November 2018	Addressing traffic issues raised in the questionnaire and understanding the local economy and its potential.
Landscape & Community	15 November 2018	Identifying those aspects of Parish life that are most valued by residents. This includes the societies, amenities, facilities and aspects of the landscape that are most beneficial to quality of life.
Business	27 November 2018	business owners and other members of the parish community in order to discuss the survey findings and any other points of interest.
Lego Family workshop	17 January 2019	Children and parents came along together and built models of the facilities they would like to see in the parish, using Lego and recycled materials.



Summary reports of these meetings can be found at <https://www.lamberhurstvillage.org/ndp-documentation.html>

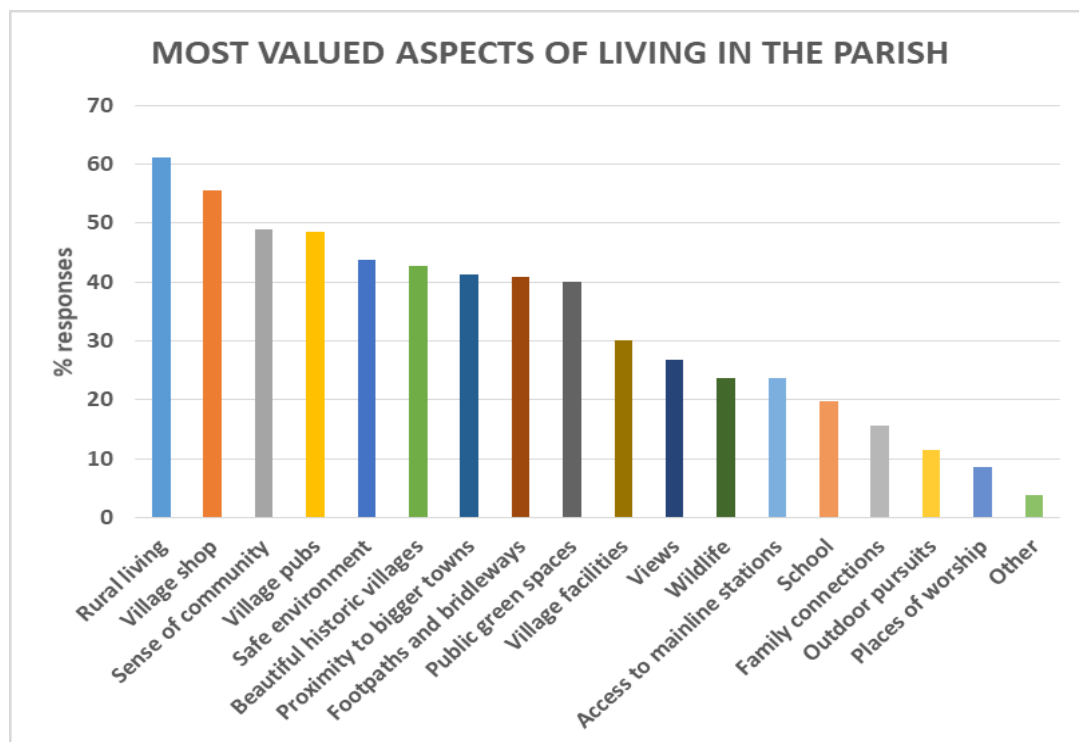
## Key findings from Residents Survey

A residents questionnaire was developed by the Steering Group and either posted or sent via the Parish Magazine to all households in the Parish in July 2018.

330 surveys were completed representing a response of 46% of the number of paper surveys that were circulated.

Some highlights of the Residents Questionnaire are:

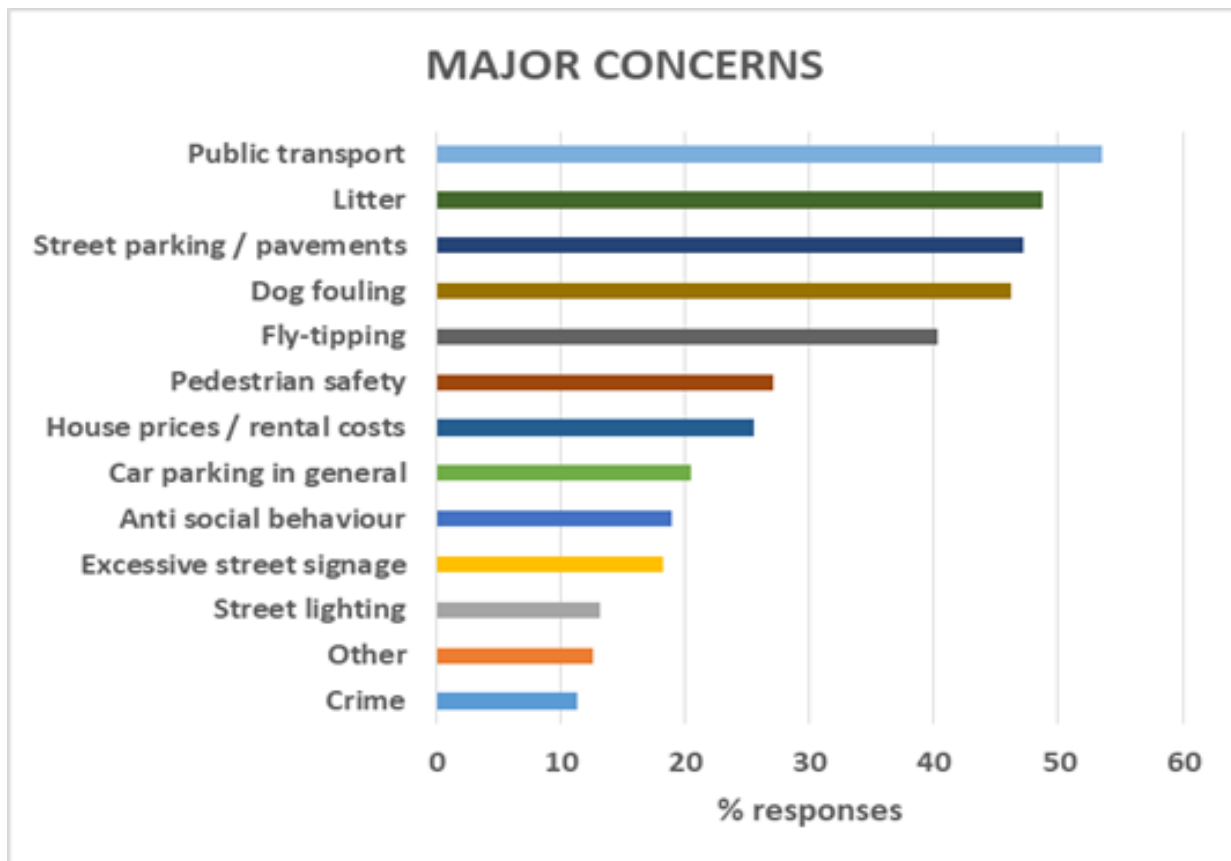
The level of new homes that respondents thought needed to be built over the next 15 years varied (see Chart 4) however less than 30 and between 31 and 60 were the most favoured levels. Even 60 new homes over the next 15 years would only mean an average annual rate of 4 per year.





The most valued aspects of living in the Parish were rural living, village amenities and a sense of community. The public green spaces and footpaths/bridlepaths within a historic environment were also highlighted.

Our concerns are with litter, car parking on streets and pavements, dog fouling and public transport being the main concerns. Whilst the facilities we would most like to see most developed or improved are broadband and mobile phone coverage



The summary of findings and questionnaire are detailed in Appendix 5, which is a copy of a leaflet that was delivered to homes in the parish and presented at the subsequent Community workshops.

## Key findings from the Business Survey

The scale of business and other workplace activity (i.e. including education and health) in the Parish of Lamberhurst is much greater than it appears at first sight. This is because many of the outlying farmsteads have converted former farm buildings to property suitable for renting for commercial purposes. Many of these sites provide an agreeable working environment with good parking and competitive rents. Whilst a number of commercial activities are (not surprisingly) agri-related, there is a very broad range of business types many in the service sector but including some manufacturing.

There is some demand from existing employers for more space but it seems likely that any incremental business property expansion would quickly attract demand from new businesses.

The main negative issue for businesses is the quality of broadband and mobile communications. This is already problematic for a number of existing business and will, unless addressed with some urgency, potentially cause some existing businesses to leave the parish. The full survey can be found at [www.lamberhurstvillage.org](http://www.lamberhurstvillage.org)



## Pre-Submission Draft Consultation



Following months of evidence gathering by working groups recruited from the local community alongside liaison with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's (TWBC) planning and advice from professional advisers a Pre-submission draft LNDP was produced in July 2019 and public consultation commenced for an eight week between 12 July and 6 September 2019.

A direct email was sent to all statutory consultees (see appendix 7), the list of which can be found in Appendix 8 and was advised to us by TWBC planning department.

Plan documents were made available both online at [www.lamberhurstvillage.org](http://www.lamberhurstvillage.org) and in hard copies made available at the Parish office situated on the High Street in the centre of the village.

Feedback forms were also made freely available at the Parish office and an online response made available via Survey Monkey.

Extensive publicity was undertaken during the consultation period, both using posters, the parish magazine and online using the two very popular and well used parish Facebook sites.

Additionally, two consultation events and exhibitions were at Lamberhurst Village Memorial Hall during the consultation period.

## Responses to Reg 14 Consultation

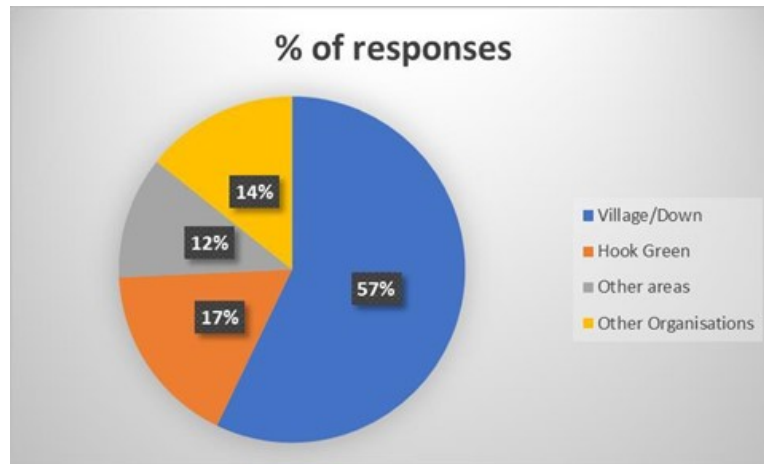


Comments received on our pre-submission plan during the regulation 14 consultation (12 July-6 September) and how we have taken these into account.

Responses were received from the following statutory consultees:

- Goudhurst Parish Council and NDP Chair
- Historic England
- Natural England
- National Grid
- High Weald AONB
- Kent County Council

We received 112 responses from local residents



**Chart 1: where the responses to Reg 14 came from:**

The Appendix 8 lists comments received and how we have responded to them in completing our plan for formal submission.

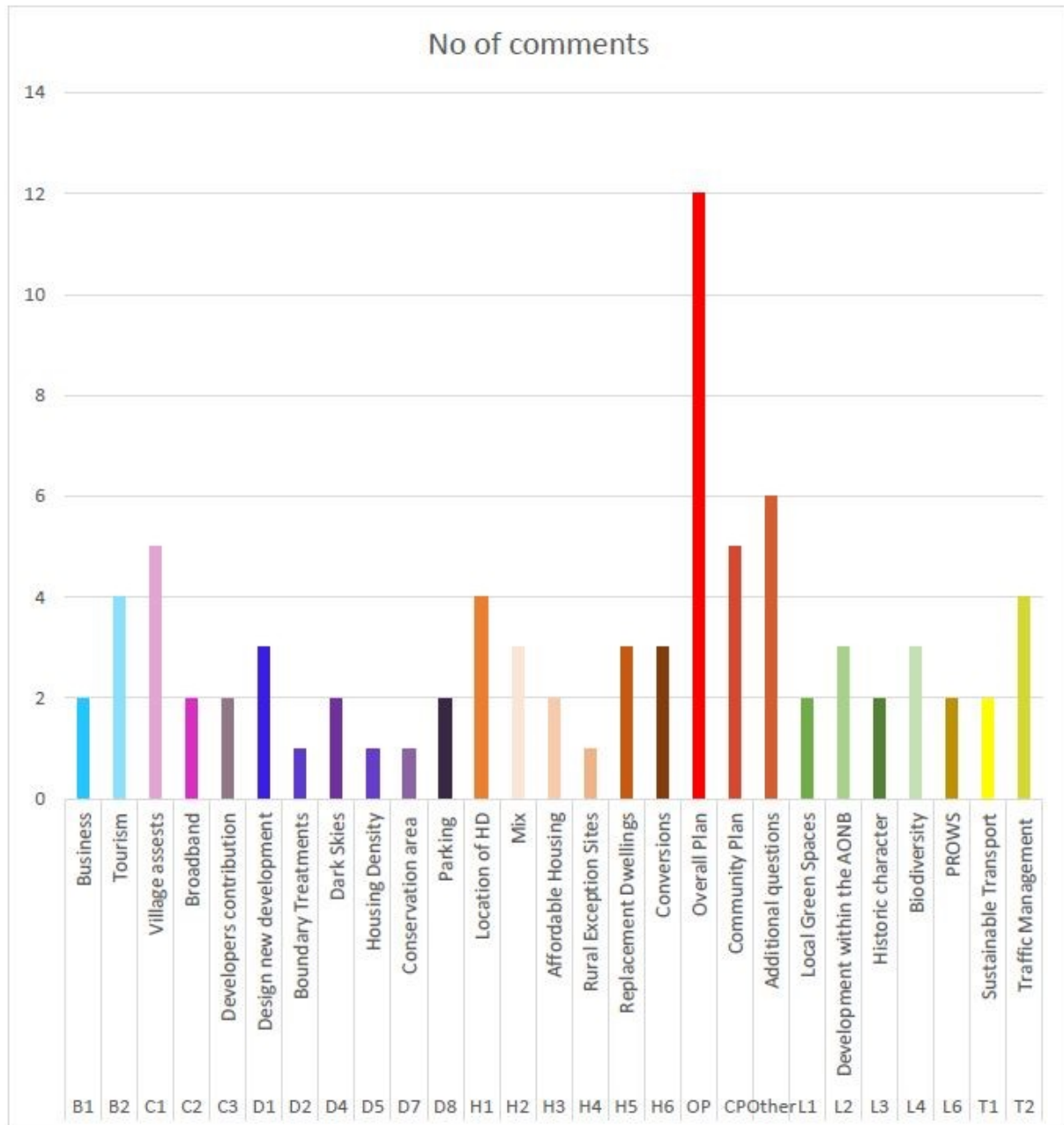
The Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation Reg 14 was conducted in Summer 2018. 121 responses were received, and they were evenly spread over most of the Policies as well as comments on the overall Plan and Community Plan. A sub-group of the steering group has a meeting on in February 2020, analysed the data and update changes. We also had advice

from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and High Weald AONB Partnership on areas that we needed to improve

Changes were divided into major and minor. Major being policy modification, additional evidence required and Minor being minor modification of text to make it read clearer such as adding in Rationale and Evidence; adding in clearer maps and moving images so that they made more sense with the text. The number of responses per policy/topic can be seen in Chart 2. The responses covered most policies and tended to be within the same parameters.

#### Major Changes:

- Modification of Several Policies including D5 Policy, housing density: aligning the density with the character assessments
- Additional evidence for D8 on Parking by including a map and additional survey information
- Additional map for Viewpoints around the Parish
- Additional evidence in the Design section to align with wider AONB & National Design Guides and to include the character assessment
- Update Green Space chart



All public responses were in overall agreement with the plan and mostly sought to add points of emphasis. Likewise, statutory consultee responses were supportive and looking for small adjustments that have been accommodated in our final submission. full table of responses and action taken as a result is detailed in Appendix 8.