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Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of additional settlements in Tunbridge Wells

Paddock Wood, Horsmonden, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook

Report for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Prepared by LUC
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Planning & EIA
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1 Introduction

Assessment Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this study is to provide an assessment of the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape around four settlements within Borough (Paddock Wood, Horsmonden, Hawkhurst and Cranbrook) is, in principle, susceptible to change as a result of introducing particular types of development.
- 1.2 The study does not address potential capacity in terms of the quantity of built development, as this would be dependent on a much wider range of considerations other than landscape and visual effects – such as highways impact, ecological effects, archaeological constraints and other environmental and sustainability factors.
- 1.3 It is intended that the assessment will help to inform the preparation of the Local Plan and, alongside consideration of other aspects of development potential such as feasibility, viability and availability, will assist in Development Management decisions regarding potential development areas or sites for allocation. Any locations identified for further consideration will require more detailed landscape and visual assessment.
- 1.4 The study highlights likely sensitivities, and provides guidance on landscape management and enhancements that would help mitigate the effects of potential development. It does not consider specific development proposals, where these might exist. It is undertaken at 1:25,000 scale and provides a broad character based assessment rather than a site level assessment as might be required for a planning application.

Assessment Scope

- 1.5 A *Landscape Character and Capacity Study* was carried out by The Landscape Group of East Sussex County Council in 2009, for study areas around the main urban areas, defined at the time as 1 km around Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough and 0.5 km around Paddock Wood, Hawkhurst and Cranbrook.
- 1.6 This new sensitivity assessment is an update of the 2009 study in relation to Paddock Wood, Hawkhurst and Cranbrook, plus the additional settlement of Horsmonden. The updated Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough landscape sensitivity study is provided as a separate report (2017). This new study extends to a greater area around the settlements as compared to the 2009 study.
- 1.7 The location of the four settlements and respective study areas is shown in Figure 1.1.

**Tunbridge Wells - Borough
Landscape Character
Assessment**

Figure 1.1

**Study Area for Landscape
Sensitivity Assessment
(Paddock Wood, Horsmonden,
Hawkhurst and Cranbrook)**

-  Tunbridge Wells
-  Study Area
-  AONB Boundary



Map Scale @ A3: 1:75,000



2 Methodology

Assessment Approach and Definition of Sub-Areas

- 2.1 The assessment is based on a combination of desktop study and detailed field survey. The principal source of written information for carrying out the sensitivity assessment is the *Borough Landscape Character Assessment (BLCA)*, which has recently been updated (2017).
- 2.2 Information from the BLCA has been supplemented by other published sources, including:
 - The analysis that supported the 2009 *Landscape Character and Capacity Study*;
 - The *High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019* (High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee, 2014);
 - *The Making of the High Weald* (High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee, 2003), including datasets for the key AONB components identified in that study;
 - *Revision of the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation for Tunbridge Wells Borough, 2016 Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough* (TWBC, 2016).
- 2.3 As a starting point, sensitivity is considered in the context of the key characteristics and values identified in the BLCA for each of its defined landscape character areas (LCA's) that cover the search area around the settlement.
- 2.4 Each LCA is then divided into assessment sub-areas, using the areas identified in the 2009 Capacity Study where appropriate, with the aim of identifying sub-areas of similar character which are likely to be broadly consistent in terms of their sensitivity and to avoid variation and complexities across each sub area. Where such variations do occur this is explained in the supporting text.
- 2.5 It is important to note that all sub-areas are still a broad character-based framework and not a detailed field by field assessment. This work is not a substitute for detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) at the allocations/ application stage, although it can provide an important baseline for more detailed analysis. A guideline minimum size for a sub-area has been set at 20 hectares.
- 2.6 We have not defined precise outer boundaries for assessment sub areas. The 1km search radius is a guide but it has been extended to include outlying area of settlement, including:
 - Paddock Wood - study area extended westwards to incorporate Five Oak Green
 - Hawkhurst – study area extended up to 2km to incorporate Gill's Green to the north and The Moor to the south
 - Cranbrook – study area extended northwards to incorporate Sissinghurst
- 2.7 The naming convention used for sub-areas reflects their LCA-based structure. The sensitivity assessment output is organised by settlement.
- 2.8 Fieldwork to build on the initial desktop analysis is an essential element of the study. All identified sub-areas were visited, assessed and photographed, and sub-area boundaries amended as necessary to reflect findings. The sub-areas were reviewed following site survey and assessment. It is important to note that field survey was undertaken from rights of way and publically accessible vantage points.

Assessment Criteria and Considerations

- 2.9 Landscape and visual character sensitivity is assessed for each defined sub-area with reference to six criteria, which are set out in Table 2.1 along with examples to illustrate different levels of sensitivity. The criterion are:
- Physical and natural character (the shape, scale and complexity of the landform, the landscape pattern and the presence of natural or semi-natural features that are important to landscape character);
 - Settlement form and edge (the extent to which the sub-area relates to the form and pattern of existing adjacent settlement, and the character of the adjacent settlement edge);
 - Settlement setting (the extent to which the sub-area contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement, by way of its character and/or scenic quality, or its value for recreation in which experience of the landscape is important);
 - Visual character (the visual prominence of the sub-area, the degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape, the role the sub-area plays in contributing to valued views, and the character of skylines);
 - Perceptual qualities (qualities such as rurality, sense of remoteness or tranquillity);
 - Historic character (the extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' – a sense of being a historic landscape – and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character).
- 2.10 Text is provided for each of the six criteria, reflecting the value and qualities of the sub-area and the extent to which development could affect these. A judgement is made as to what 'key sensitivities' are applicable to the sub-area.
- 2.11 Maps accompanying each assessment illustrate a range of landscape information and environmental constraints. These include:
- Limits to Built Development (as defined in the Local Plan);
 - The Tunbridge Wells Borough boundary;
 - Public rights of way;
 - The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
 - Cultural heritage information: conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and sites listed in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens;
 - Natural designations: ancient woodland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites;
 - Hydrological designation: flood zone 3.
- 2.12 In assessing landscape and visual sensitivity, reference is made to any environmental designations or constraints which influence judgements. Some of the constraints shown may not directly affect landscape character or sensitivity, but often the areas concerned may also have landscape sensitivities associated with landscape elements – for example the habitats in designated wildlife sites are often also valued in landscape terms.
- 2.13 Of the settlements included in this study Hawkhurst and Cranbrook are entirely within the AONB, with part of the surroundings edges in the Cranbrook study area extending to Sissinghurst to the north which it outside the boundary of the AONB. Horsmonden is likewise outside the AONB with the designated boundary lying close to the west and southern edge. Paddock Wood and Five Oak Green lie entirely outside the AONB boundary, with views from the AONB across parts of this landscape. All of the settlements lie within the High Weald National Character Area.
- 2.14 Available data from the High Weald AONB Unit on the components of 'natural beauty' as defined by the AONB Management Plan has also been noted, as this is central to the purpose of the designation and can affect physical, visual and historical sensitivity. This data is underpinned by further referenced work on Historic Landscape Classification and other studies. Mapped evidence of historical features and components of natural beauty also applies to those areas that are

excluded from the AONB, where relevant. Contribution to AONB character and qualities is therefore considered as part of the assessment criteria.

- 2.15 All settlements lie outside the Green Belt designation apart from the western edge of Paddock Wood, and Five Oak Green. It should be noted however that quality of landscape is not a reason for, or purpose of, Green Belt designation, and so there is no direct relationship between that designation and landscape sensitivity.

Table 2.1 Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment Criteria				
Physical character				
This considers the shape, scale and complexity of the landform, the landscape pattern and the presence of natural or semi-natural features that are important to landscape character - i.e. the representation of elements which are key characteristics or valued features. Reference is made to the Borough Landscape Character Assessment and the High Weald AONB Management Plan.				
Lower sensitivity		→	Higher sensitivity	
<i>E.g.</i> The landscape is simple, with few landscape features that contribute positively to local landscape character.		<i>E.g. The landscape has some natural or semi-natural features that contribute to, but are not key to local landscape character, or some characteristic elements of everyday value.</i>		<i>E.g. The landscape makes a strong contribution to local landscape character – e.g. it has a distinctive landform, an intact, natural landscape with strong hedgerows, mature trees and other features of interest, such as ponds or watercourses. Strong landform features such as ghyll valleys are likely to be more sensitive.</i>

Settlement form and edge

The extent to which the sub-area relates to the form and pattern of existing adjacent settlement, and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it. The degree to which potential development is likely to be in keeping with/ contrary to settlement pattern.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

E.g. The landscape is strongly associated with an existing settlement and for this reason, if developed, would be likely to be perceived as part of the settlement rather than an intrusion into the countryside. The existing settlement edge may be improved through development, enhancing the relationship between the settlement and wider countryside.

E.g. Development within the sub-area may be perceived as settlement advancement into the countryside but would not represent a step-change in settlement form. It would not cross a distinctive boundary feature.

E.g. Development would have a poor relationship with existing settlement form, crossing a boundary feature and/or extending into an area with a distinctly different landscape – e.g. the extension of settlement beyond a ridge crest, onto steep slopes or into a valley.

Settlement setting

The extent to which the sub-area contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement, by way of its character and/or scenic quality, or its value for recreation in which experience of the landscape is important - for example by providing an attractive backdrop/ setting to the settlement, playing an important part in views from a settlement or functioning as a public open space. This also considers the extent to which the area contributes to a perceived gap between settlements (the loss of which would increase coalescence). Higher levels of sensitivity would typically apply to gaps between larger settlements than gaps between a larger settlement and an outlying hamlet or farmstead.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

E.g. The landscape in the sub-area does not contribute to the character of the settlement; it does not provide an attractive backdrop to the settlement or play an important part in views from it.

The landscape in the sub-area does not contribute to the physical or perceived separation of settlements either because of distance or the absence of a visual relationship.

E.g. The landscape makes some contribution to the character of the settlement, as a backdrop or visual element.

The landscape either a) contributes to the gap between settlements, but not to an extent where development would have a strong effect on the perception of separate settlements; or b) contributes more significantly to a gap between a settlement and an outlying farmstead or hamlet, although development would still leave some sense of separation.

E.g. The landscape of the sub-area is important to the setting of one or more settlement areas, providing a distinctive element in many or notable views, inward or outward, that are key to the character of the settlement.

The landscape of the sub-area is important in the perception of a gap between distinct settlements.

Visual character

This considers the visual prominence of the sub-area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform or land cover), and the degree of intervisibility with the surrounding landscape (i.e. the extent to which potential development would be visible). It considers the role the sub-area plays in contributing to valued views, such as particular views within, towards or from the AONB, attractions related to their landscape context, promoted viewpoints and scenic views from key recreational routes. It also considers the skyline character of the sub-area including whether it forms a visually distinctive skyline (e.g. due to the presence of important landmark features) or as an important undeveloped skyline.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

E.g. The landscape is enclosed/visually contained and well screened as a result of landform and/or land cover and is not visually prominent in the landscape.

E.g. Development within the sub-area would potentially be visible to some degree or may be partially screened.

The sub-area does not contain important landmark features that form a distinctive or prominent skyline.

E.g. The sub-area is prominent in views from the wider landscape (e.g. as a result of openness or landform).

The sub-area plays a key role in contributing to valued views, such as scenic views within, from or to the AONB.

Distinctive or undeveloped skylines with important landmark features are likely to be more sensitive to built development, which may detract from these as features in the landscape.

Perceptual qualities

This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. Consistently high scenic value, perceived naturalness, freedom from human activity/disturbance and widespread 'dark skies' would all add to sensitivity in relation to this criterion.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

E.g. An area significantly influenced by development/human activity, where new development would not be out of character.

E.g. A landscape with some sense of rurality, but with some modern elements.

E.g. A relatively tranquil landscape, lacking strong intrusive elements. Extensively dark skies and a high perceived degree of rurality/naturalness with few modern human influences. High scenic value.

Historic character

The extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' – a sense of being a historic landscape – and/or the presence of heritage assets that are important to landscape character (i.e. a large number or highly valued features – which may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments or listed buildings for example – or other features important to the local history of the landscape such as ancient routeways, that are key contributors to character), with reference to the Borough Landscape Character Assessment and the High Weald AONB Management Plan) because these would potentially be liable to loss or degradation. Reference has been made to the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) dataset of field/land use types, but no specific reference is made to these within the assessment unless they have any particular scarcity value. Other data which may be referred to includes the 'AONB Components' data set, HER data set and historic farmsteads.

Lower sensitivity



Higher sensitivity

<p><i>E.g. A landscape with few historic features important to the character of the area, and little time-depth. The landscape may be much altered or disturbed in recent times.</i></p>		<p><i>E.g. A landscape with some visible historic elements but not of key importance to local character.</i></p>		<p><i>E.g. A landscape with many/ highly valued historic features, characteristics or heritage assets that are key to local landscape character.</i></p> <p><i>The presence of medieval landscape types such as assarts and commons, which are valued characteristics associated with the High Weald AONB, is likely to increase sensitivity, as is the presence of many/important historic components including ancient routeways, Scheduled Monuments or Conservation Areas.</i></p> <p><i>Landscapes which are intact medieval landscapes are likely to be more sensitive.</i></p>

Sensitivity Judgements

- 2.16 A rating for landscape sensitivity is provided in relation to each of the development scenarios (see below for the typologies assessed). This is a judgement based on consideration of the range of sensitivities identified and the weight attached to any particular criteria in the area in question.
- 2.17 These factors give an indication as to the likelihood of significant landscape or visual effects resulting from development, and guideline definitions for levels of sensitivity are given in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.1 Sensitivity Rating Definitions

Sensitivity	Definition
High	The landscape has strong character and qualities and notable features which are highly sensitive to change from the type and scale of development being assessed.
Medium-high	
Medium	The landscape has some distinctive characteristics and valued qualities, with some sensitivity to change from the type and scale of development being assessed.
Medium-low	
Low	The landscape lacks distinct character and qualities and has few notable features, or is robust with regard to the type and scale of development being assessed.

- 2.18 A sub-area rated as having *high* sensitivity may do so because it has a relatively high sensitivity to a number of different criteria but it may also do so because of a particularly high sensitivity to just one criterion. Intermediate sensitivity levels, *medium-high* and *medium-low*, will be used where appropriate.
- 2.19 The process for defining sub-areas aims to minimise the extent to which significant differences in sensitivity are likely to occur within one area, but in some cases a gradual change in sensitivity can be identified – for example a gradual increase in sensitivity with distance from an existing settlement edge. Limitations in terms of the resolution of the assessment (see Paragraph 2.5) may also mean that different parts of a sub-area are considered to have different levels of sensitivity. Significant variations will be noted in the assessment text and more than one sensitivity rating will be given, to reflect the differences within the sub-area.
- 2.20 For Paddock Wood areas with multiple ratings are indicated on the map outputs. For the smaller settlements the maps only show the highest sensitivity rating and the text will need to be interrogated to show and variations across the sub area. These would need to be tested on site in light of the sensitivities identified in the assessment.

Development Typologies

- 2.21 The sensitivity of each sub area is assessed with respect to three ‘scales’ of development, as set out in Table 2.3 below. These scales relate to the *form* of buildings rather than the *quantity* of development. The assessment commentary will provide more detail where applicable, including reference to any constraints to the extent and location of development, and consider the potential for mitigation measures to reduce any predicted adverse effects on landscape or views.

Table 2.2 Development Typologies

Development scenario	Description
 <p data-bbox="263 443 331 472">Small</p>	<p data-bbox="579 344 1412 465">Two/two and a half-storey residential dwellings – either terraced, semi-detached or detached – with associated access roads, private gardens and garaging, and with an assumed density of approximately 30-40 dwellings per hectare.</p>
 <p data-bbox="263 638 352 667">Medium</p>	<p data-bbox="579 506 1412 600">Three or four-storey residential development – e.g. blocks of flats, care homes or hotels with associated access roads, parking and communal open space; or</p> <p data-bbox="579 618 1412 712">Small scale commercial/industrial use – maximum 2 to 3 storeys with associated access roads, parking and open space – e.g. local business park units.</p>
 <p data-bbox="464 884 528 913">Large</p>	<p data-bbox="579 748 1412 842">Large commercial/industrial units or hotels – e.g. warehouses or office blocks, with large expanses of cladding or glass, access roads, large car parks and associated landscaping</p>

3 Format of Outputs

Report Structure

- 3.1 The sub-area assessments are grouped to reflect their relationship with a specific LCA. Each group of sub-area assessments is preceded by a map (on OS 1:25,000 base) showing the LCA boundaries, the 1km search area boundary, all the defined sub-areas and the designations that reflect potential constraints on development (as listed in Paragraph 2.12 above).
- 3.2 The detailed assessment for each sub-area includes:
- A map (on OS 1:25,000 or 1:10,000 base) showing the sub-area in question and any relevant designations (as per the whole LCA map);
 - A photograph to illustrate the sub-area;
 - A brief description of the sub-area, making reference to any key defining features, to the extent of development within the sub-area and to its relationship with the urban edge;
 - Assessment of landscape/visual sensitivity against the six criteria identified in the methodology (Table 2.1 above);
 - Sensitivity ratings, using a 5-point scale (see Table 2.2 above) for each of the three development typologies (see Table 2.3 above);
 - A summary of key landscape and visual sensitivities identified from the assessment; and
 - Guidance on potential mitigation and enhancement/ management opportunities.

Summary of Findings

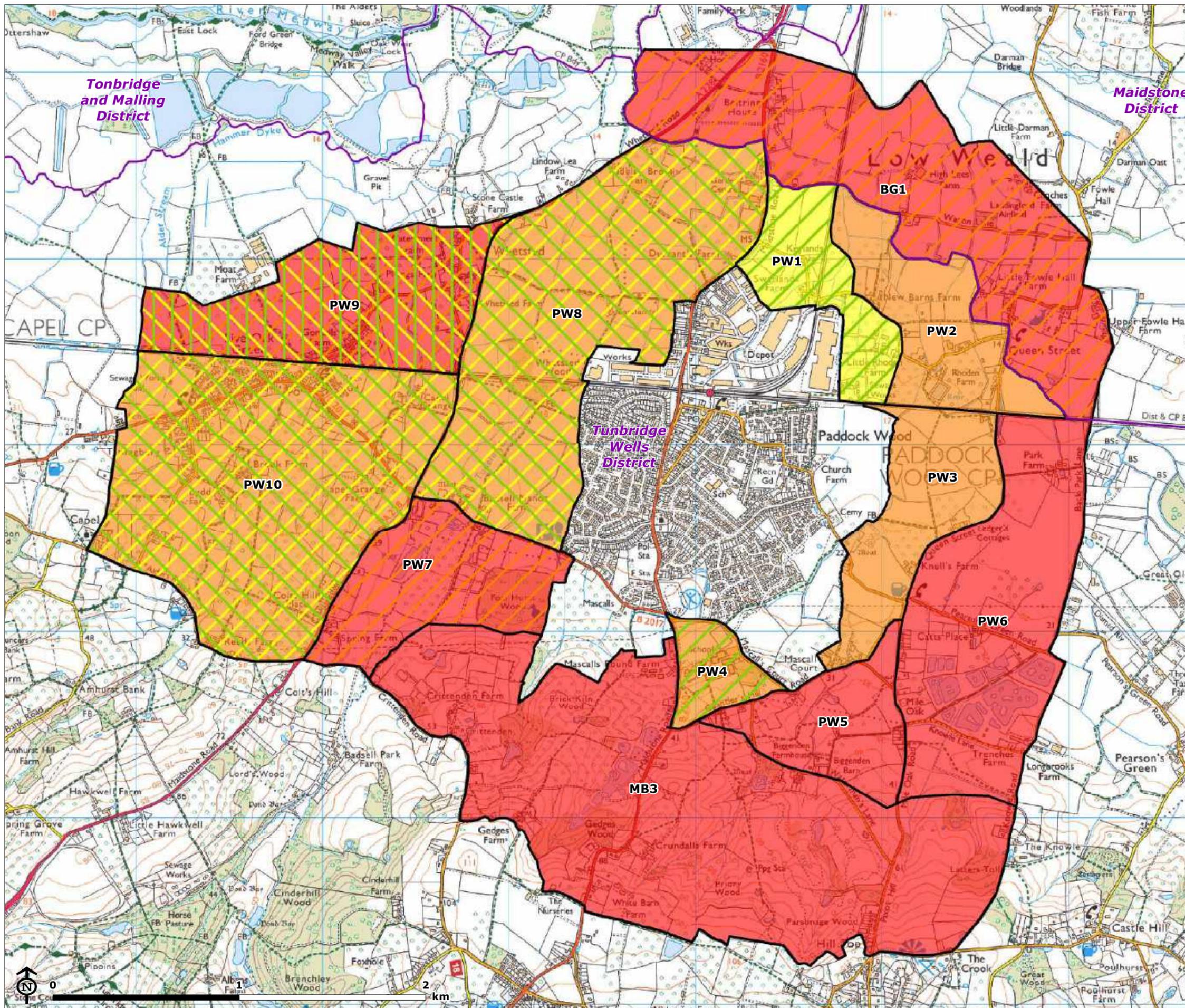
- 3.3 Assessment results are summarised in a tabular form, using colour-coding to highlight sensitivity ratings. A separate table is provided for each of the three defined development typologies.
- 3.4 Maps are provided to visualise the results of the assessment of landscape sensitivity for each development typology. These are colour-coded to provide a simple overview of the spatial pattern of landscape and visual sensitivities to development across the relevant part of the Borough.
- 3.5 For Paddock Wood, where differing levels of sensitivity have been identified within a sub-area, the colour-coding for the sub-area as a whole will reflect this. Solid colour will denote the rating applicable to the majority of the sub-area, but this will be hatched with the colour(s) applicable to the rating(s) for smaller parts of the sub-area.
- 3.6 For the smaller settlements the maps only show the highest sensitivity rating and the text will need to be interrogated to show and variations across the sub area.

4 Summary of Findings

- 4.1 The findings for each settlement are presented in the following chapters. The table and figures here summarise the sensitivity ratings in table and map format. Note that the key sensitivities and guidance presented for each of the assessment areas should be read in conjunction with these overall findings. In some case more than one sensitivity rating is provided – to indicate where there is spatial variation in sensitivity across an assessment area. The text should be interrogated to identify any areas of higher and lower sensitivity and relevant guidance/criteria applying.

Table 4.1 Assessment Ratings Summary

Sensitivity Area	Small Development Scenario	Medium Development Scenario	Large Development Scenario
Cranbrook			
Cr1	H/MH/M	H	H
Cr2	H/MH	H	H
Cr3	H	H	H
Cr4	MH/M	H/MH/M	H/MH
Cr5	H/MH/M	H/MH	H
Cr6	H	H	H
Cr7	H	H	H
Cr8	H	H	H
Cr9	H/MH	H	H
Cr10	H	H	H
Cr11	H/MH	H	H
Si1	H/MH	H	H
Hawkhurst			
Bed1	H/MH	H	H
Ben1	H/MH	H	H
Ha1	H/MH	H	H
Ha2	H/MH	H	H
Ha3	H	H	H
Ha4	H/MH	H	H
Ha5	MH	H	H
Ha6	H/MH	H	H
Horsmonden			
Ho1	H/MH/M	H	H
Ho2	H/MH	H	H
Ho3	H	H	H
Ho4	H	H	H
Ho5	H	H	H
Ho6	H/MH	H	H
MB4	H	H	H
MB5	H	H	H
Paddock Wood			
BG1	H/MH	H	H
MB3	H	H	H
PW1	M/ML	M	MH/M
PW2	MH	H	H
PW3	MH	H	H
PW4	MH/ML	H/M	H
PW5	H	H	H
PW6	H	H	H
PW7	H/MH	H	H
PW8	MH/M/ML	MH/M/ML	H/MH
PW9	H/MH/M/ML	H/MH	H
PW10	MH/M/ML	H	H



Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Paddock Wood - Small Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

- District boundary
- Highest sensitivity rating**
 - Low
 - Medium-Low
 - Medium
 - Medium-High
 - High
- Other sensitivity ratings (colour of line shows level of sensitivity)**
 - Second highest rating
 - Third highest rating
 - Fourth highest rating

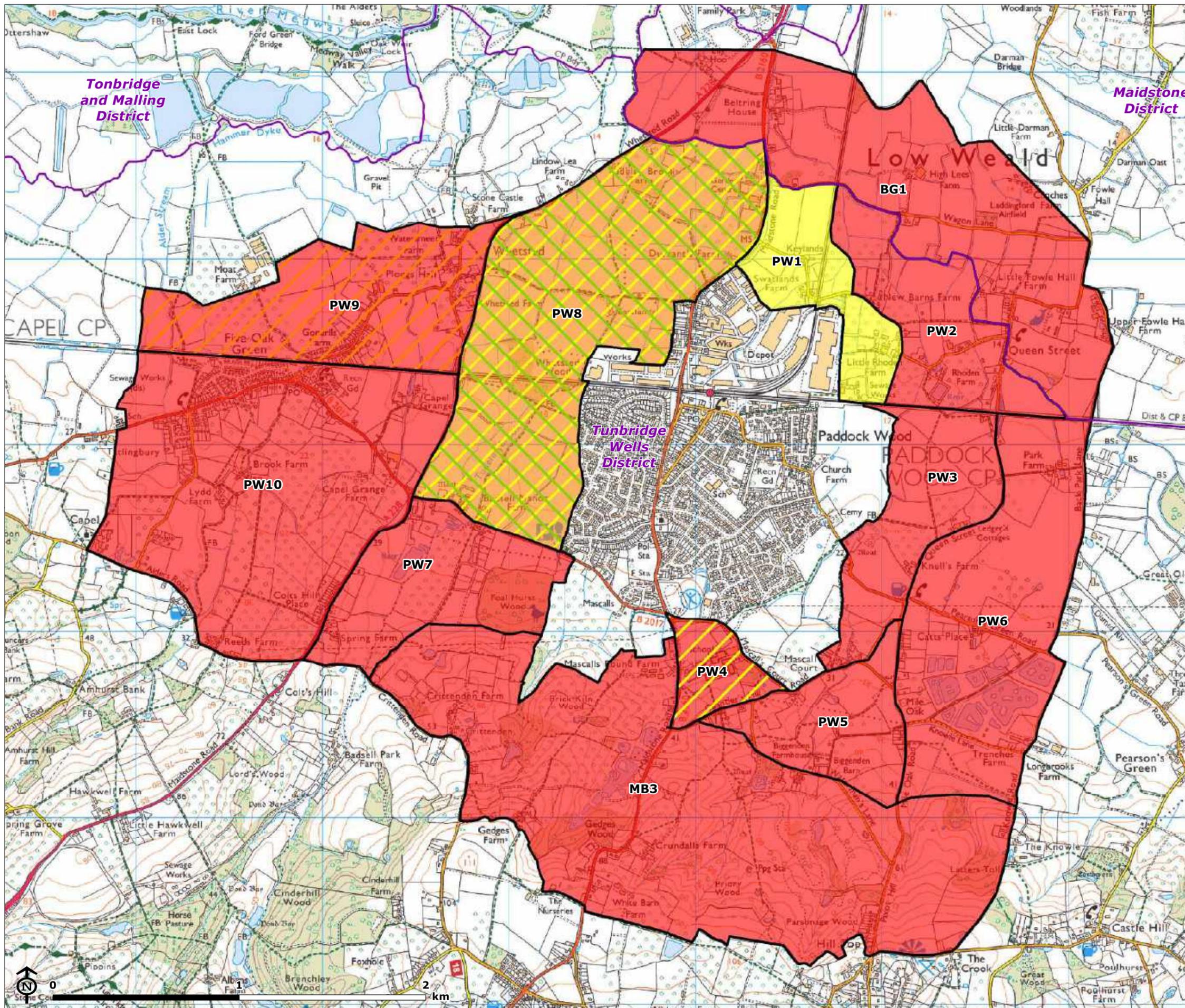
All parcel sensitivity ratings

- BG1** - H/MH
- MB3** - H
- PW1** - M/ML
- PW2** - MH
- PW3** - MH
- PW4** - MH/ML
- PW5** - H
- PW6** - H
- PW7** - H/MH
- PW8** - MH/M/ML
- PW9** - H/MH/M/ML
- PW10** - MH/M/ML

Small development scenario
Two/two and a half-storey residential dwellings – either terraced, semi-detached or detached – with associated access roads, private gardens and garaging, and with an assumed density of approximately 30-40 dwellings per hectare.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:20,000





Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Paddock Wood - Medium Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

- District boundary
- Highest sensitivity rating**
 - Low
 - Medium-Low
 - Medium
 - Medium-High
 - High
- Other sensitivity ratings (colour of line shows level of sensitivity)**
 - Second highest rating
 - Third highest rating

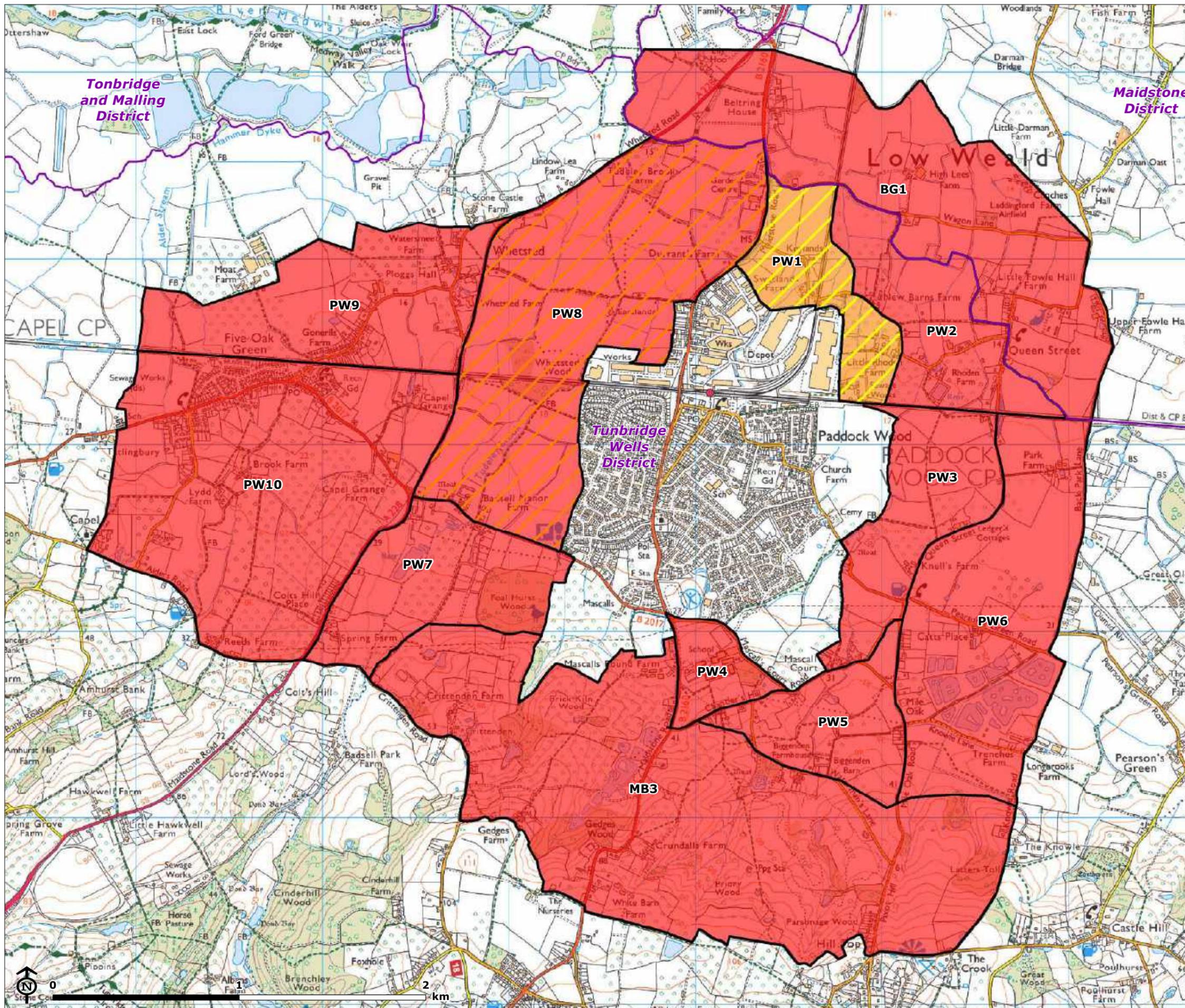
All parcel sensitivity ratings

- BG1 - H
- MB3 - H
- PW1 - M
- PW2 - H
- PW3 - H
- PW4 - H/M
- PW5 - H
- PW6 - H
- PW7 - H
- PW8 - MH/M/ML
- PW9 - H/MH
- PW10 - H

Medium development scenario
 Three or four-storey residential development – e.g. blocks of flats, care homes or hotels with associated access roads, parking and communal open space; or
 Small scale commercial/industrial use – maximum 2 to 3 storeys with associated access roads, parking and open space – e.g. local business park units.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:20,000





Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Paddock Wood - Large Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

- District boundary
- Highest sensitivity rating**
- Low
- Medium-Low
- Medium
- Medium-High
- High

Other sensitivity ratings (colour of line shows level of sensitivity)

- Second highest rating

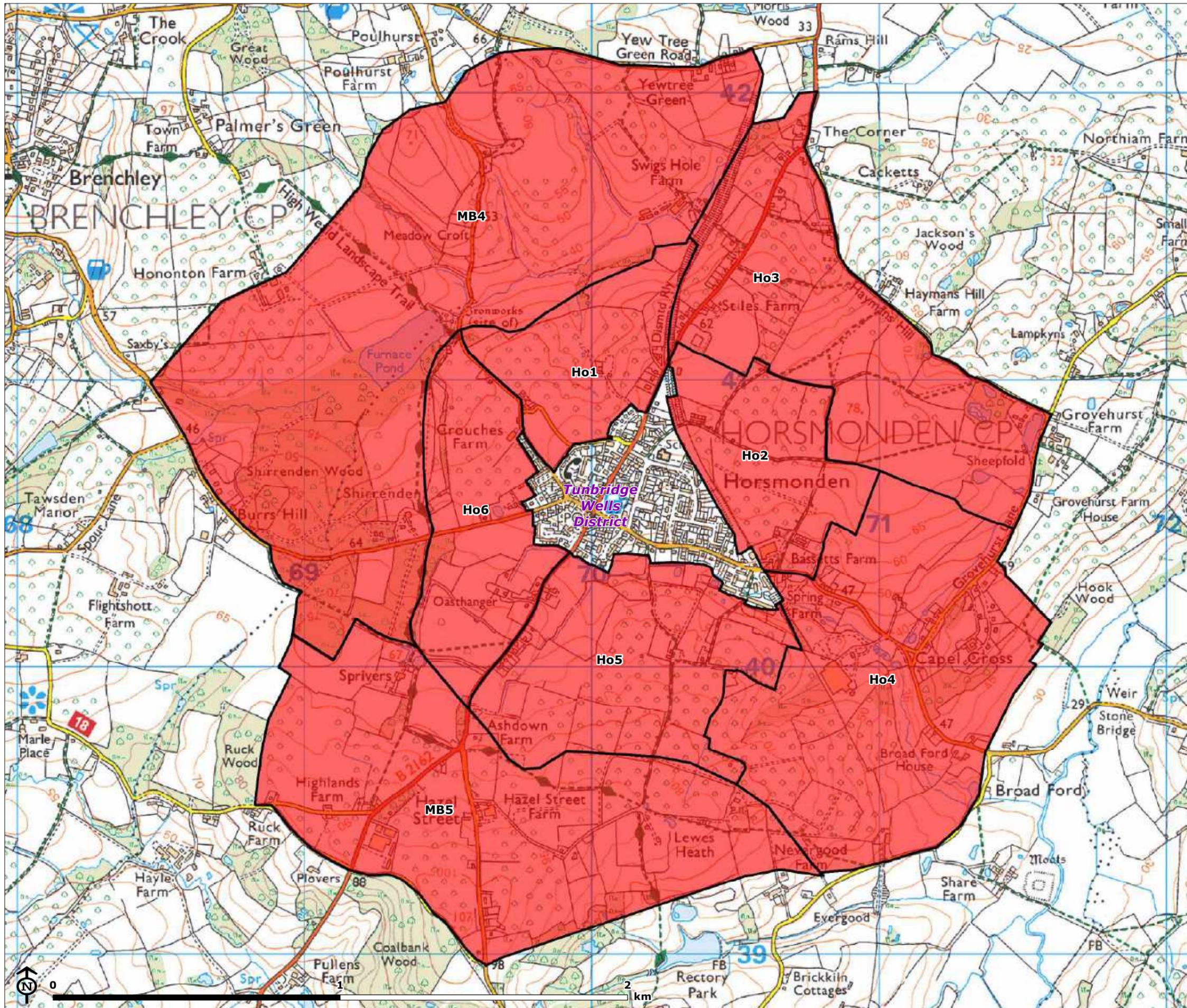
All parcel sensitivity ratings

- BG1** - H
- MB3** - H
- PW1** - MH/M
- PW2** - H
- PW3** - H
- PW4** - H
- PW5** - H
- PW6** - H
- PW7** - H
- PW8** - H/MH
- PW9** - H
- PW10** - H

Large development scenario
 Large commercial/industrial units or hotels - e.g. warehouses or office blocks, with large expanses of cladding or glass, access roads, large car parks and associated landscaping

Map Scale @ A3: 1:20,000





Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Horsmonden - Small Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

District boundary

Highest sensitivity rating

Low

Medium-Low

Medium

Medium-High

High

All parcel sensitivity ratings

Ho1 - H/MH/M

Ho2 - H/MH

Ho3 - H

Ho4 - H

Ho5 - H

Ho6 - H/MH

MB4 - H

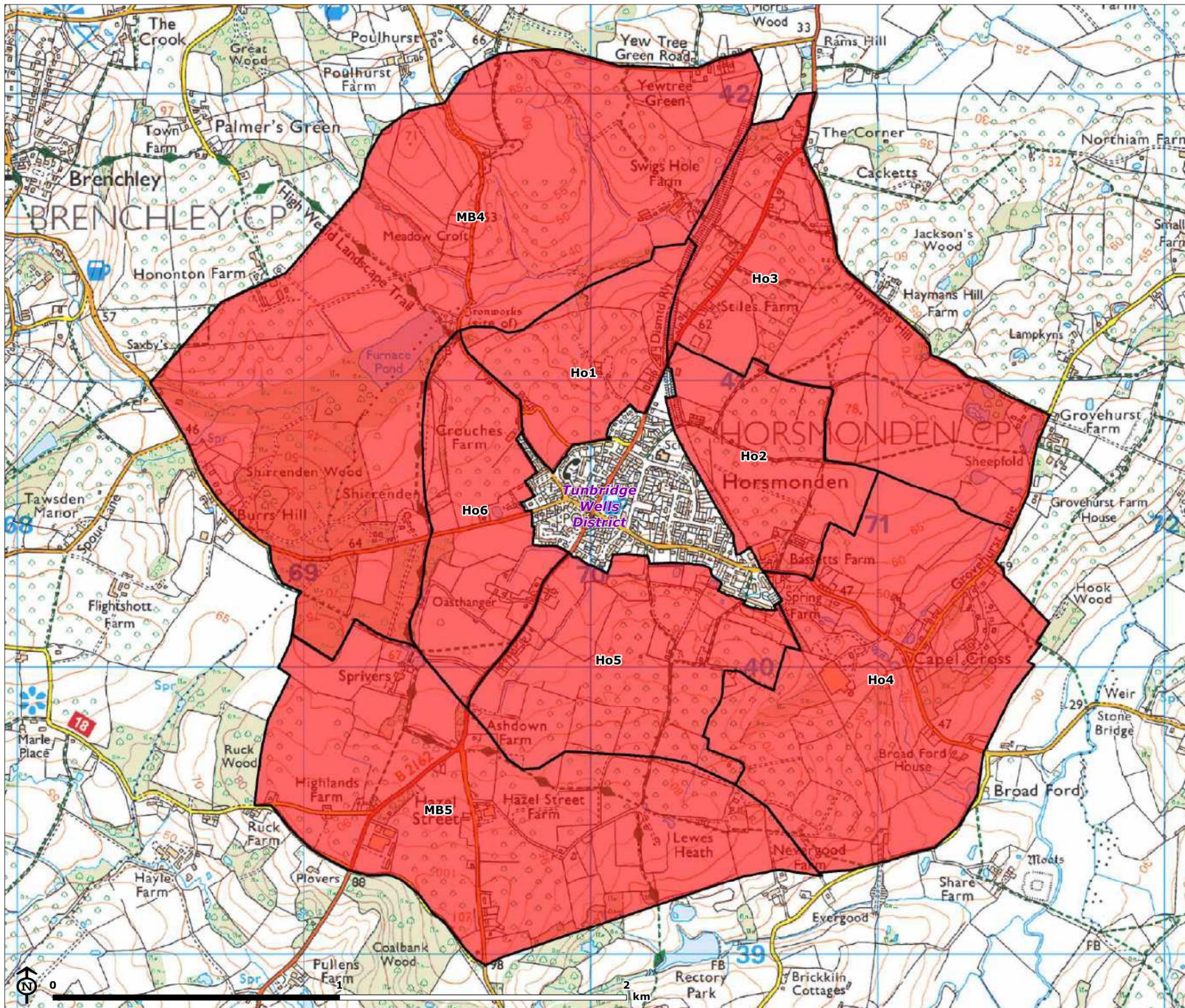
MB5 - H

Small development scenario

Two/two and a half-storey residential dwellings – either terraced, semi-detached or detached – with associated access roads, private gardens and garaging, and with an assumed density of approximately 30-40 dwellings per hectare.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:13,000





Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Horsmonden - Medium Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

District boundary

Highest sensitivity rating

Low

Medium-Low

Medium

Medium-High

High

All parcel sensitivity ratings

Ho1 - H

Ho2 - H

Ho3 - H

Ho4 - H

Ho5 - H

Ho6 - H

MB4 - H

MB5 - H

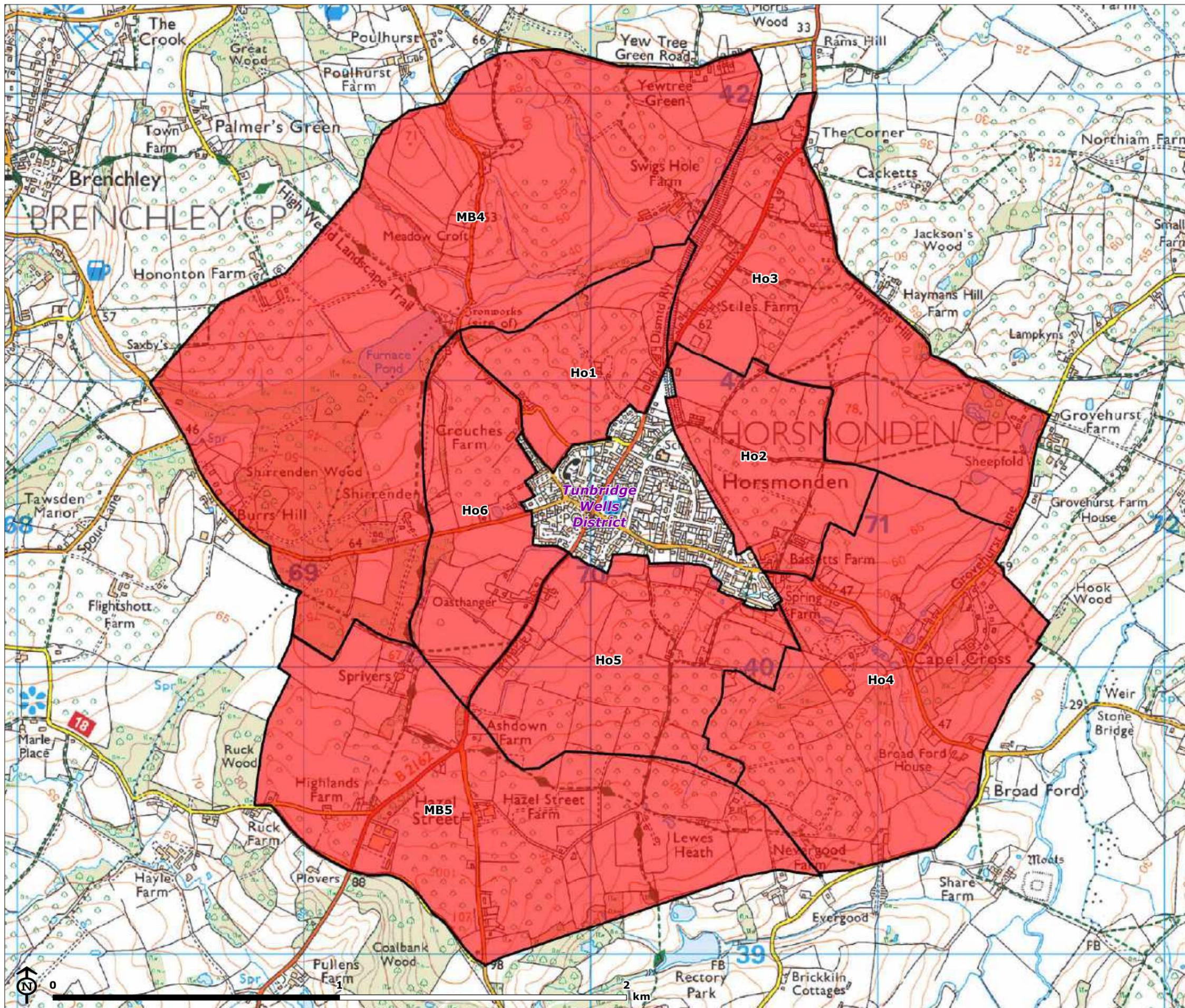
Medium development scenario

Three or four-storey residential development – e.g. blocks of flats, care homes or hotels with associated access roads, parking and communal open space; or

Small scale commercial/industrial use – maximum 2 to 3 storeys with associated access roads, parking and open space – e.g. local business park units.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:13,000





Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Horsmonden - Large Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

District boundary

Highest sensitivity rating

- Low
- Medium-Low
- Medium
- Medium-High
- High

All parcel sensitivity ratings

- Ho1 - H
- Ho2 - H
- Ho3 - H
- Ho4 - H
- Ho5 - H
- Ho6 - H
- MB4 - H
- MB5 - H

Large development scenario
 Large commercial/industrial units or hotels - e.g. warehouses or office blocks, with large expanses of cladding or glass, access roads, large car parks and associated landscaping

Map Scale @ A3: 1:13,000



Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Hawkhurst - Small Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

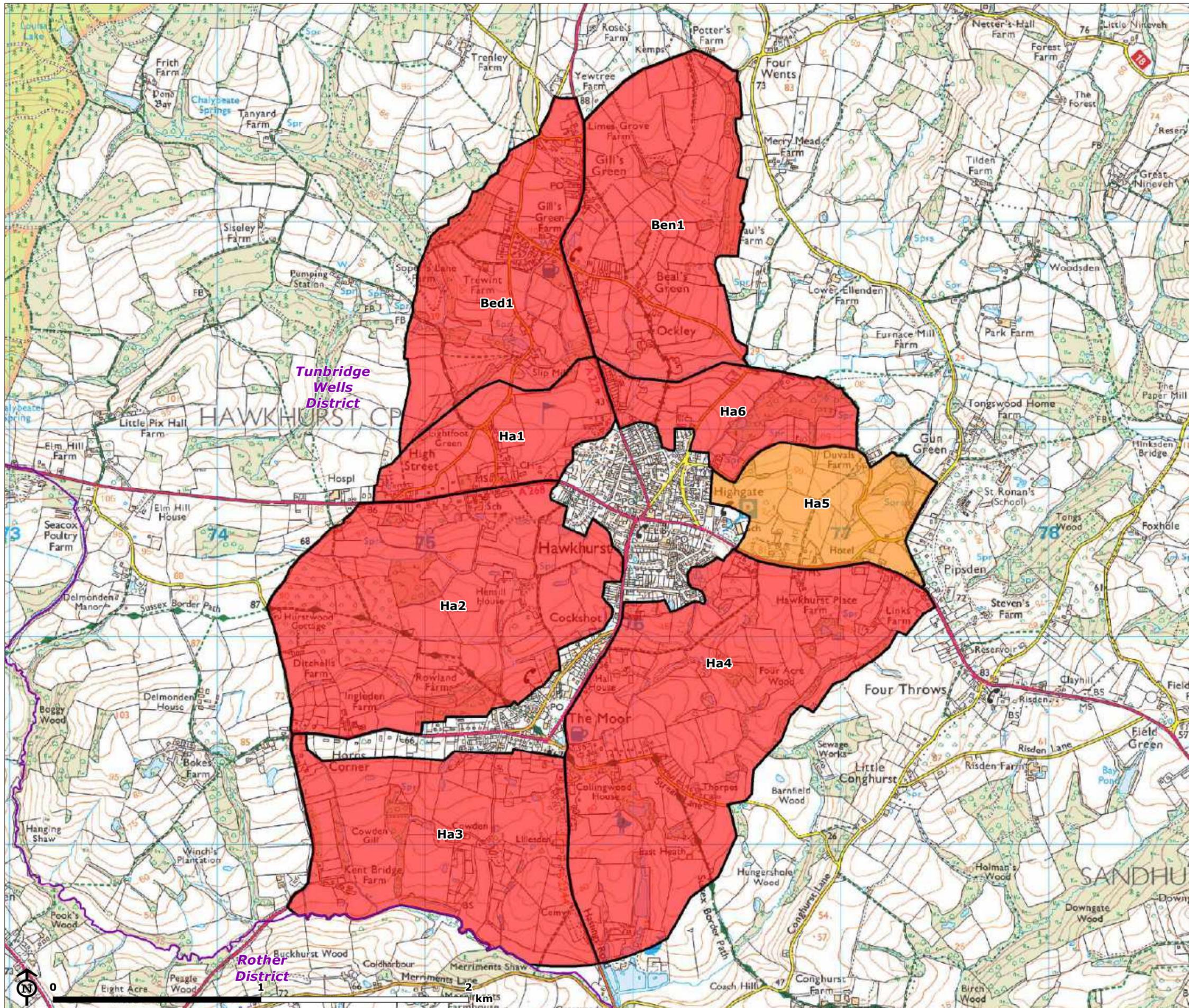
-  District boundary
- Highest sensitivity rating**
-  Low
-  Medium-Low
-  Medium
-  Medium-High
-  High

All parcel sensitivity ratings

- Bed1** - H/MH
- Ben1** - H/MH
- Ha1** - H/MH
- Ha2** - H/MH
- Ha3** - H
- Ha4** - H/MH
- Ha5** - MH
- Ha6** - H/MH

Small development scenario
Two/two and a half-storey residential dwellings – either terraced, semi-detached or detached – with associated access roads, private gardens and garaging, and with an assumed density of approximately 30-40 dwellings per hectare.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:18,000



Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Hawkhurst - Medium Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

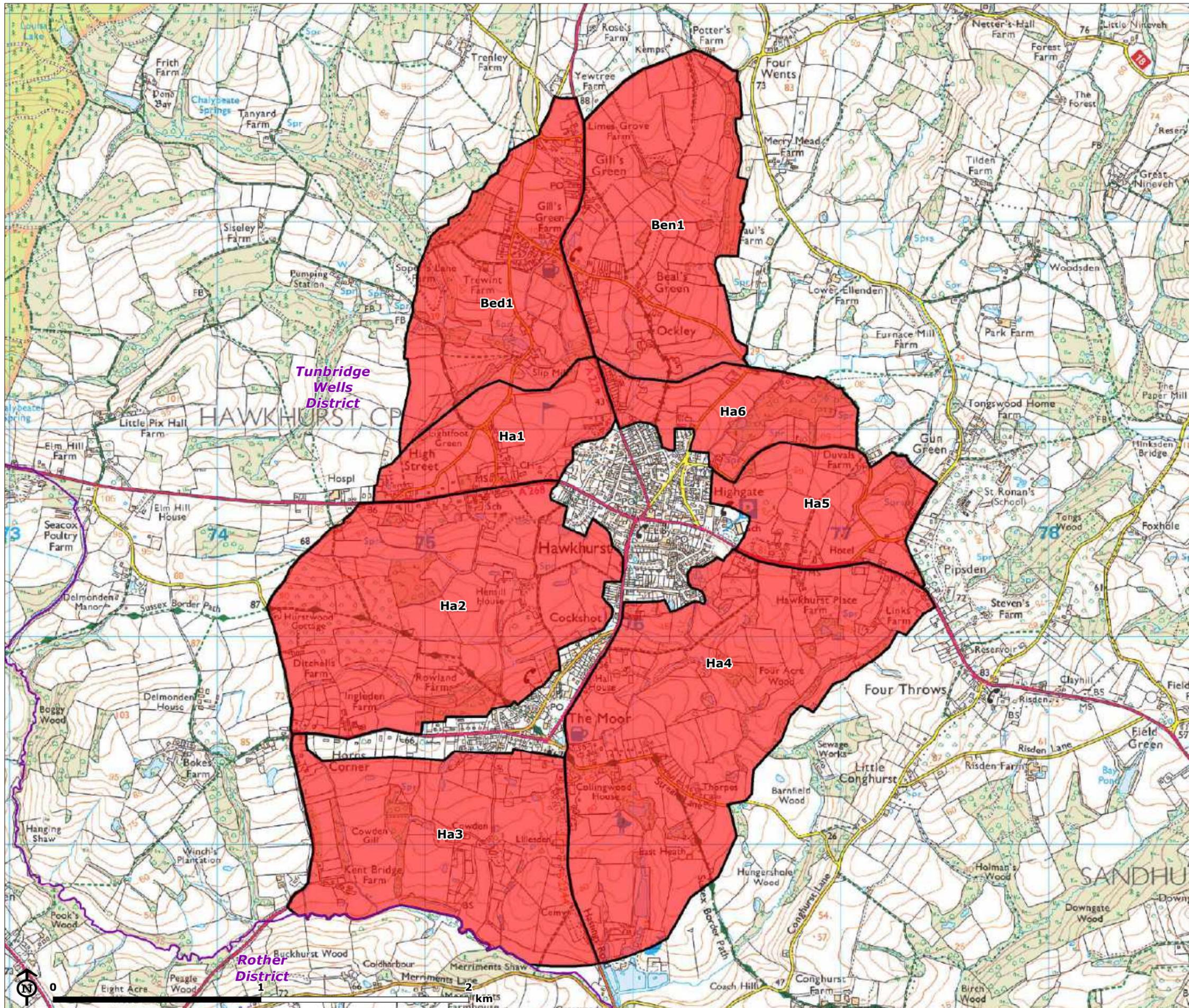
-  District boundary
- Highest sensitivity rating**
-  Low
-  Medium-Low
-  Medium
-  Medium-High
-  High

All parcel sensitivity ratings

- Bed1** - H
- Ben1** - H
- Ha1** - H
- Ha2** - H
- Ha3** - H
- Ha4** - H
- Ha5** - H
- Ha6** - H

Medium development scenario
 Three or four-storey residential development – e.g. blocks of flats, care homes or hotels with associated access roads, parking and communal open space; or
 Small scale commercial/industrial use – maximum 2 to 3 storeys with associated access roads, parking and open space – e.g. local business park units.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:18,000



Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Hawkhurst - Large Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

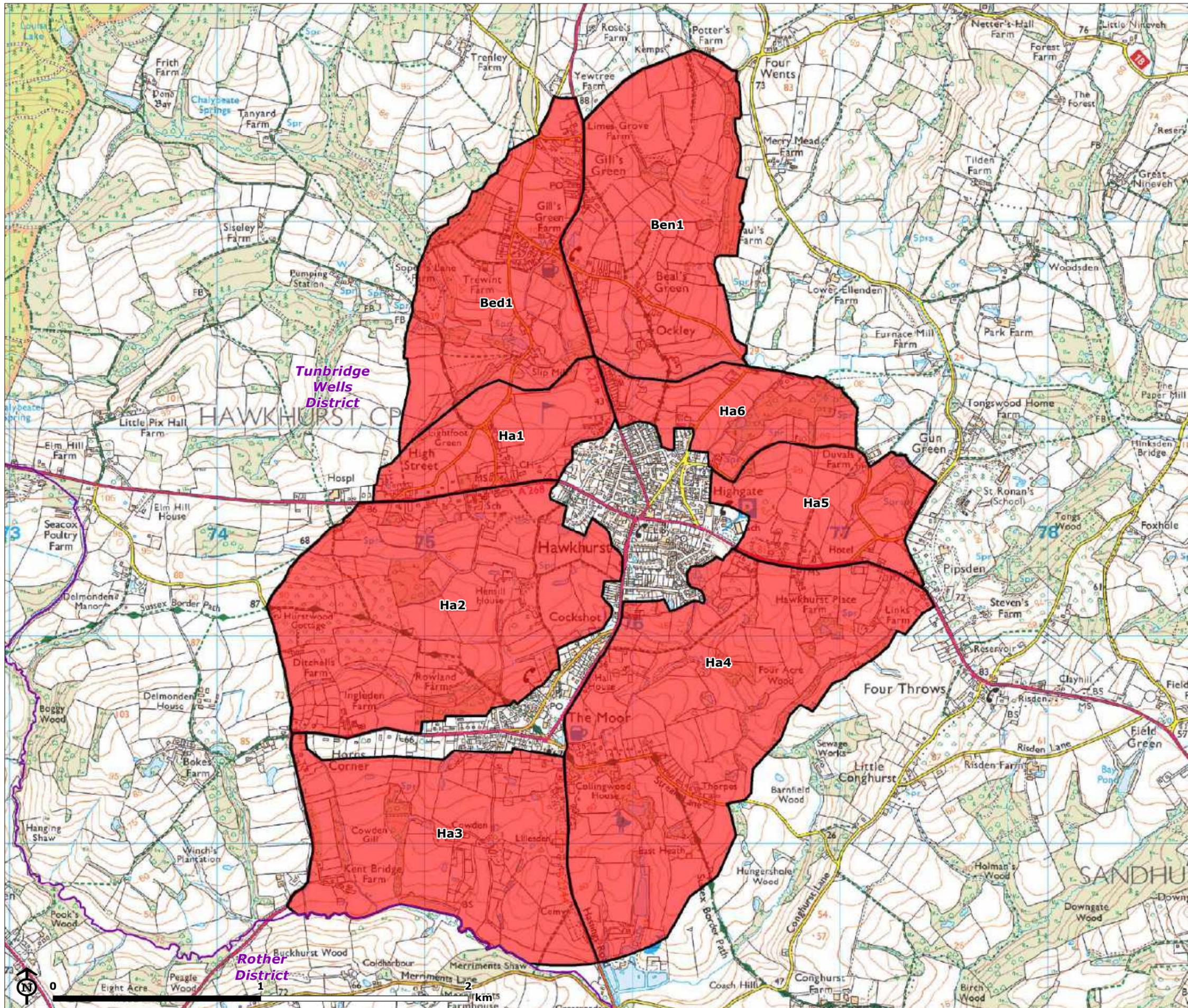
-  District boundary
- Highest sensitivity rating**
-  Low
-  Medium-Low
-  Medium
-  Medium-High
-  High

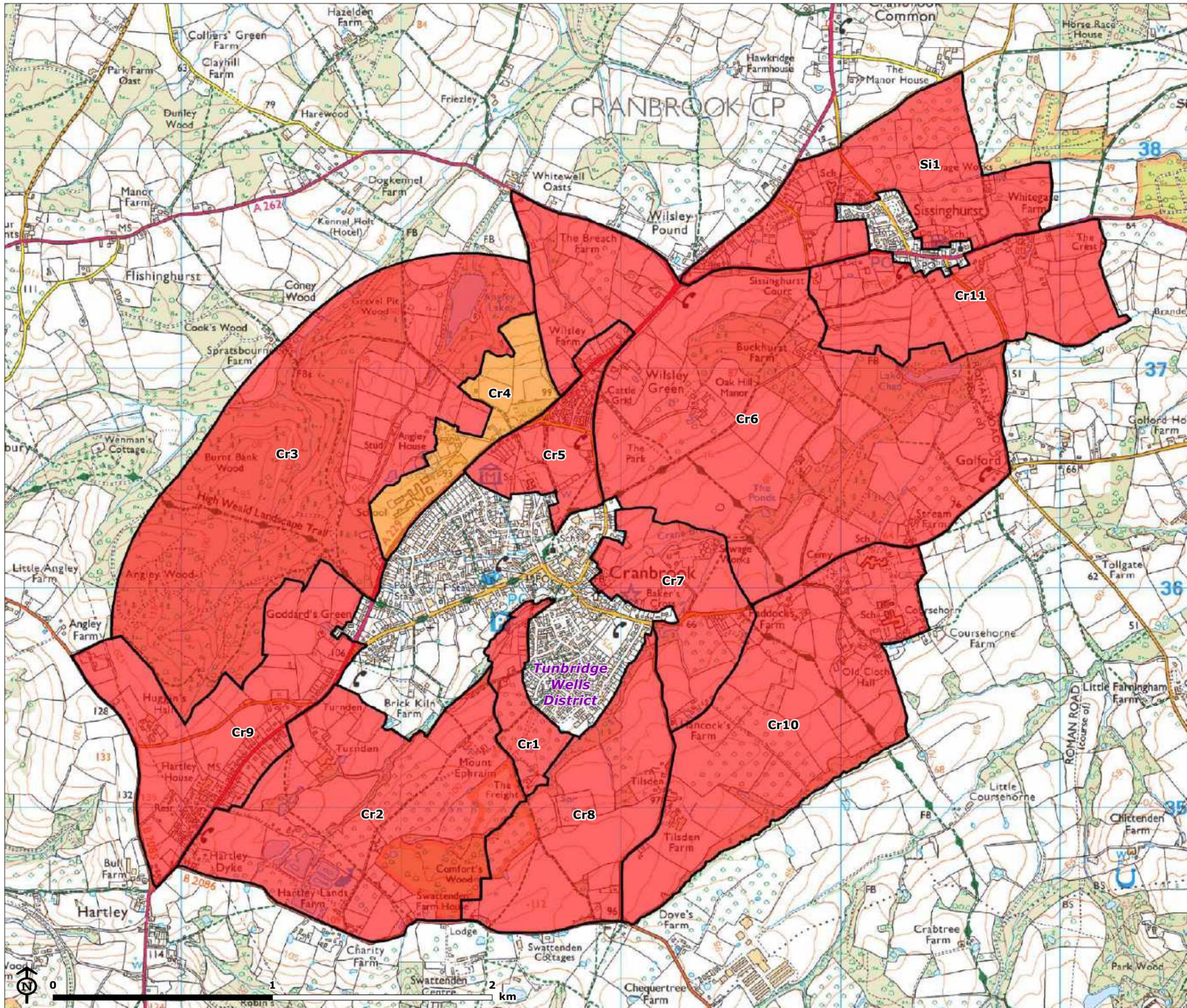
All parcel sensitivity ratings

- Bed1** - H
- Ben1** - H
- Ha1** - H
- Ha2** - H
- Ha3** - H
- Ha4** - H
- Ha5** - H
- Ha6** - H

Large development scenario
 Large commercial/industrial units or hotels - e.g. warehouses or office blocks, with large expanses of cladding or glass, access roads, large car parks and associated landscaping

Map Scale @ A3: 1:18,000





**Tunbridge Wells - Borough
Landscape Character
Assessment**

**Cranbrook - Small Development
Scenario Sensitivity Assessment**

District boundary

Highest sensitivity rating

- Low
- Medium-Low
- Medium
- Medium-High
- High

All parcel sensitivity ratings

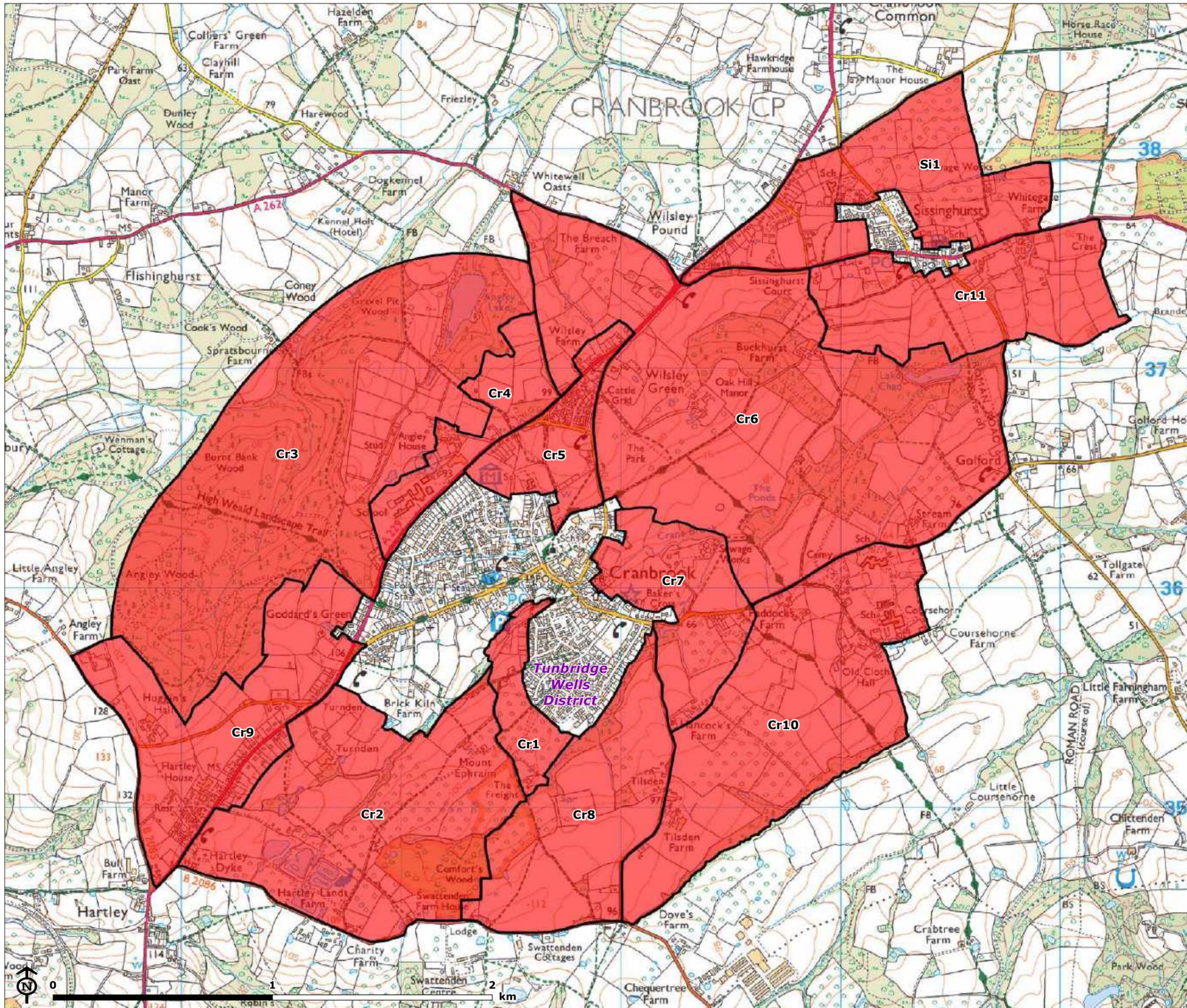
- Cr1 - H/MH/M
- Cr2 - H/MH
- Cr3 - H
- Cr4 - MH/M
- Cr5 - H/MH/M
- Cr6 - H
- Cr7 - H
- Cr8 - H
- Cr9 - H/MH
- Cr10 - H
- Cr11 - H/MH
- Si1 - H/MH

Small development scenario

Two/two and a half-storey residential dwellings – either terraced, semi-detached or detached – with associated access roads, private gardens and garaging, and with an assumed density of approximately 30-40 dwellings per hectare.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:17,000





Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Cranbrook - Medium Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

District boundary

Highest sensitivity rating

Low

Medium-Low

Medium

Medium-High

High

All parcel sensitivity ratings

Cr1 - H

Cr2 - H

Cr3 - H

Cr4 - H/MH/M

Cr5 - H/MH

Cr6 - H

Cr7 - H

Cr8 - H

Cr9 - H

Cr10 - H

Cr11 - H

Si1 - H

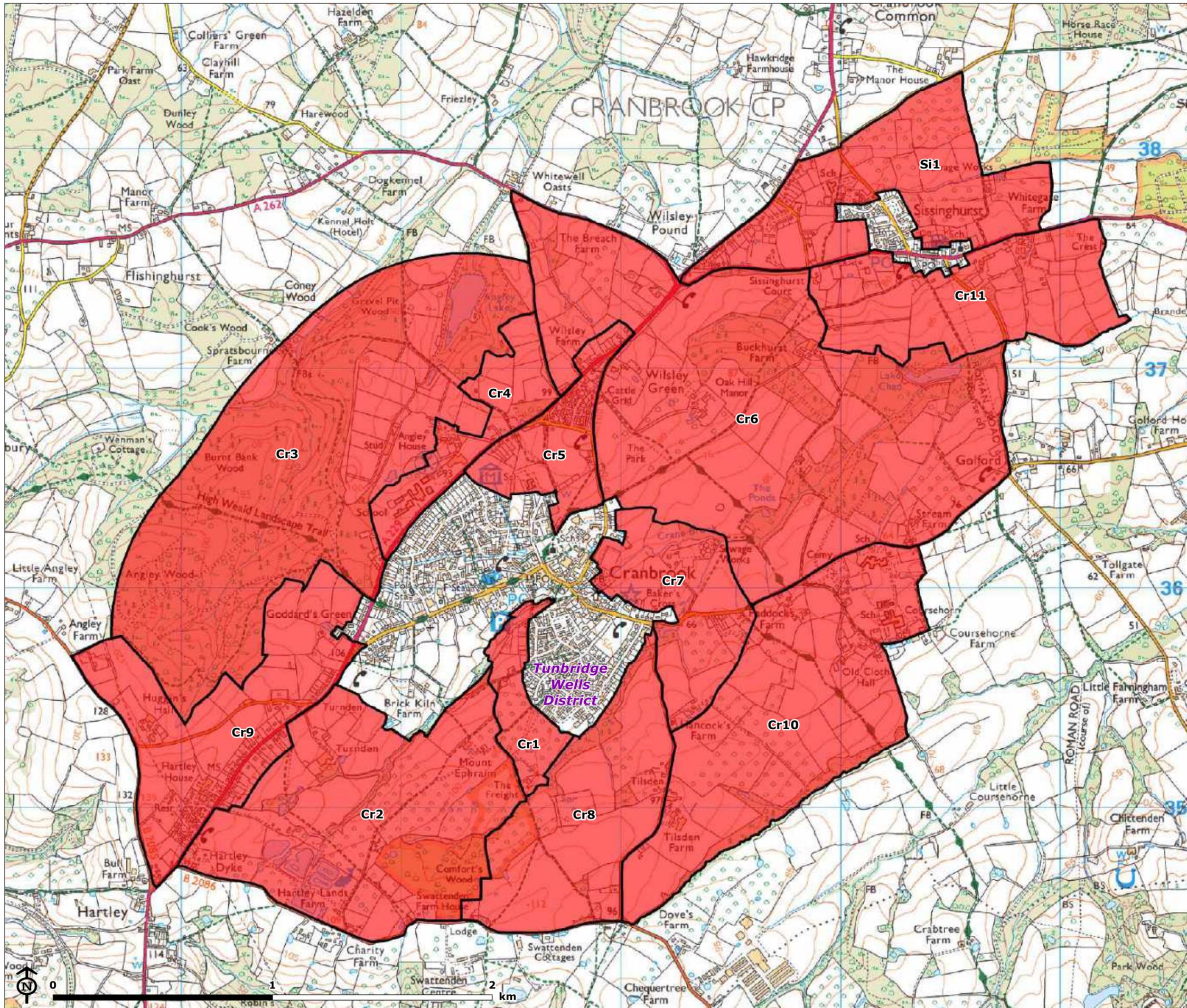
Medium development scenario

Three or four-storey residential development – e.g. blocks of flats, care homes or hotels with associated access roads, parking and communal open space; or

Small scale commercial/industrial use – maximum 2 to 3 storeys with associated access roads, parking and open space – e.g. local business park units.

Map Scale @ A3: 1:17,000





Tunbridge Wells - Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Cranbrook - Large Development Scenario Sensitivity Assessment

District boundary

Highest sensitivity rating

Low

Medium-Low

Medium

Medium-High

High

All parcel sensitivity ratings

Cr1 - H

Cr2 - H

Cr3 - H

Cr4 - H/MH

Cr5 - H

Cr6 - H

Cr7 - H

Cr8 - H

Cr9 - H

Cr10 - H

Cr11 - H

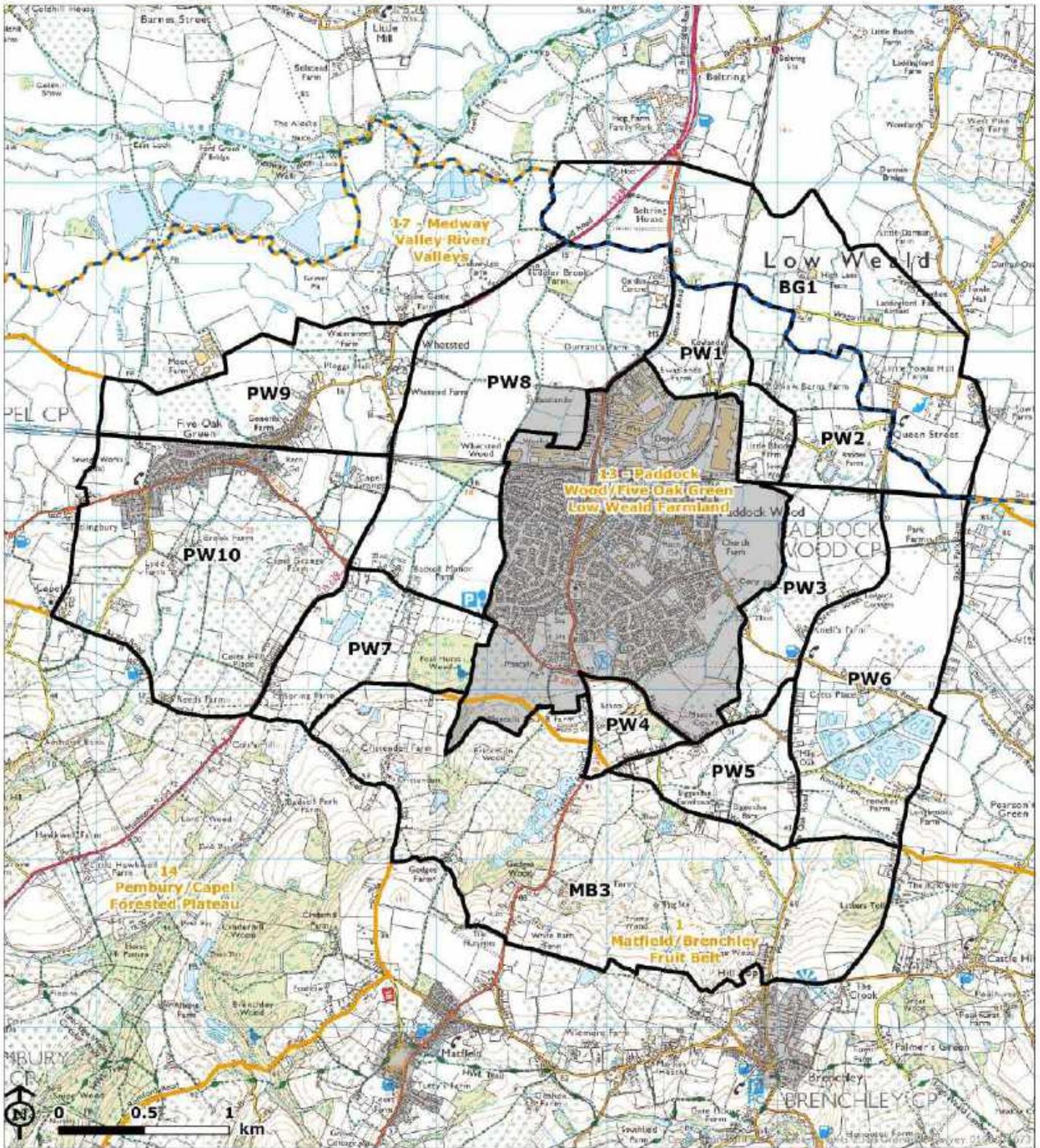
Si1 - H

Large development scenario

Large commercial/industrial units or hotels - e.g. warehouses or office blocks, with large expanses of cladding or glass, access roads, large car parks and associated landscaping

Map Scale @ A3: 1:17,000

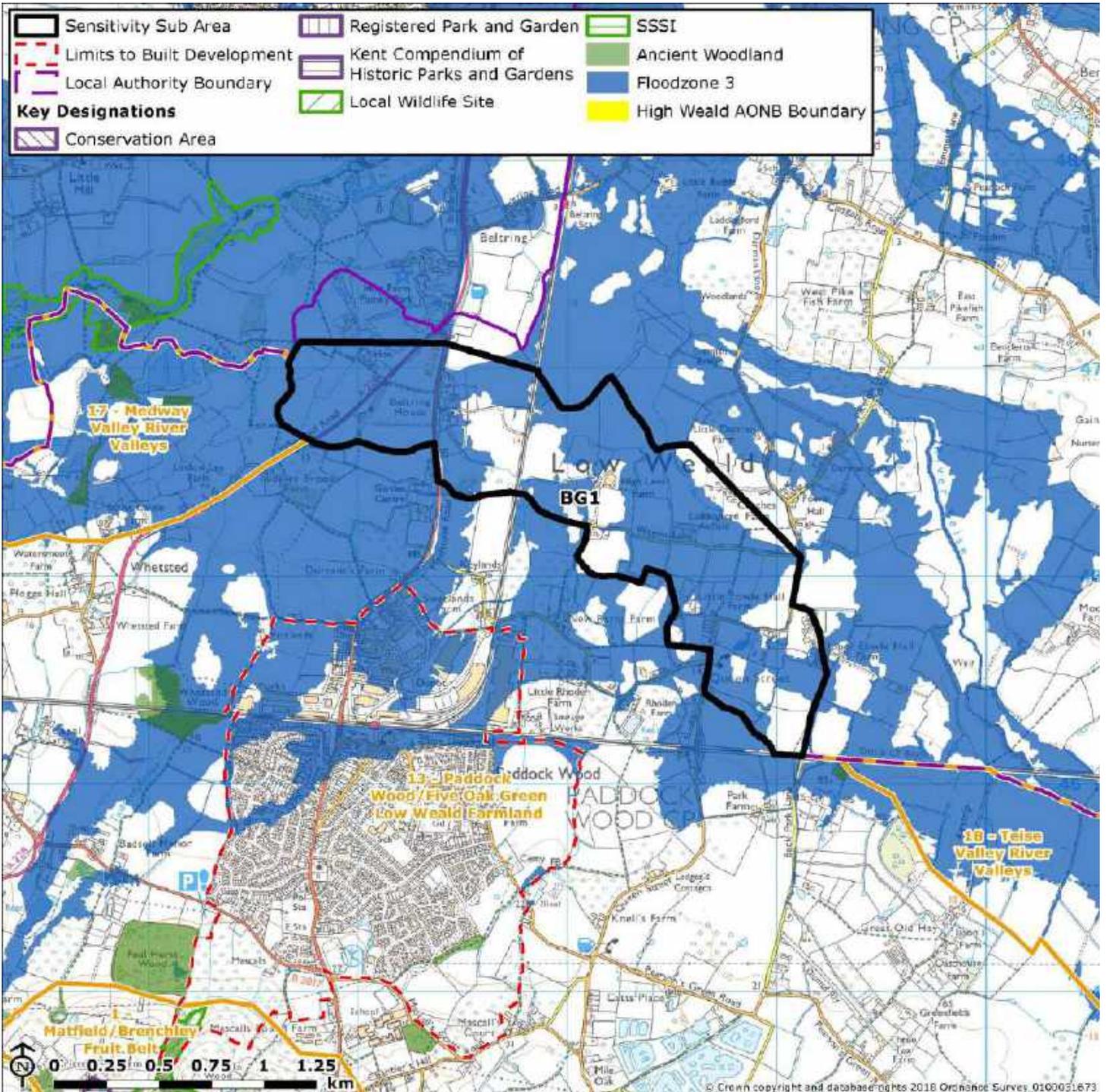




The town of Paddock Wood is located at transition point between the High and Low Weald areas, on very gentle slopes beneath the High Weald's northernmost ridge but above the Medway Valley floodplain. The study area falls mostly within the *Paddock Wood / Five Oak Green Low Weald Farmland* LCA, but also extends south to encompass rising slopes up to the High Weald AONB edge, within the *Matfield / Brencley Fruit Belt* LCA, and north to include part of Maidstone District's *Beltring Grasslands* LCA. The settlements themselves are not within the AONB.

Paddock Wood is a relatively recent settlement, having evolved from a hamlet following the establishment of a railway station in 1842. Arable farmland and orchards are the principal uses of surrounding farmland, the former having increasingly replaced the latter over recent decades. In earlier years hop-farming was very prominent locally, with the railway providing the means for seasonal hop-pickers to reach the area from London, and for produce to be exported.

The study area has been extended westwards beyond the 1km zone to incorporate the area around Five Oak Green, a village that has some urban characteristics.

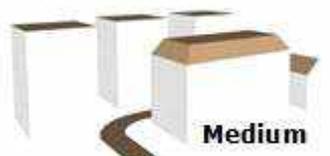


Representative views



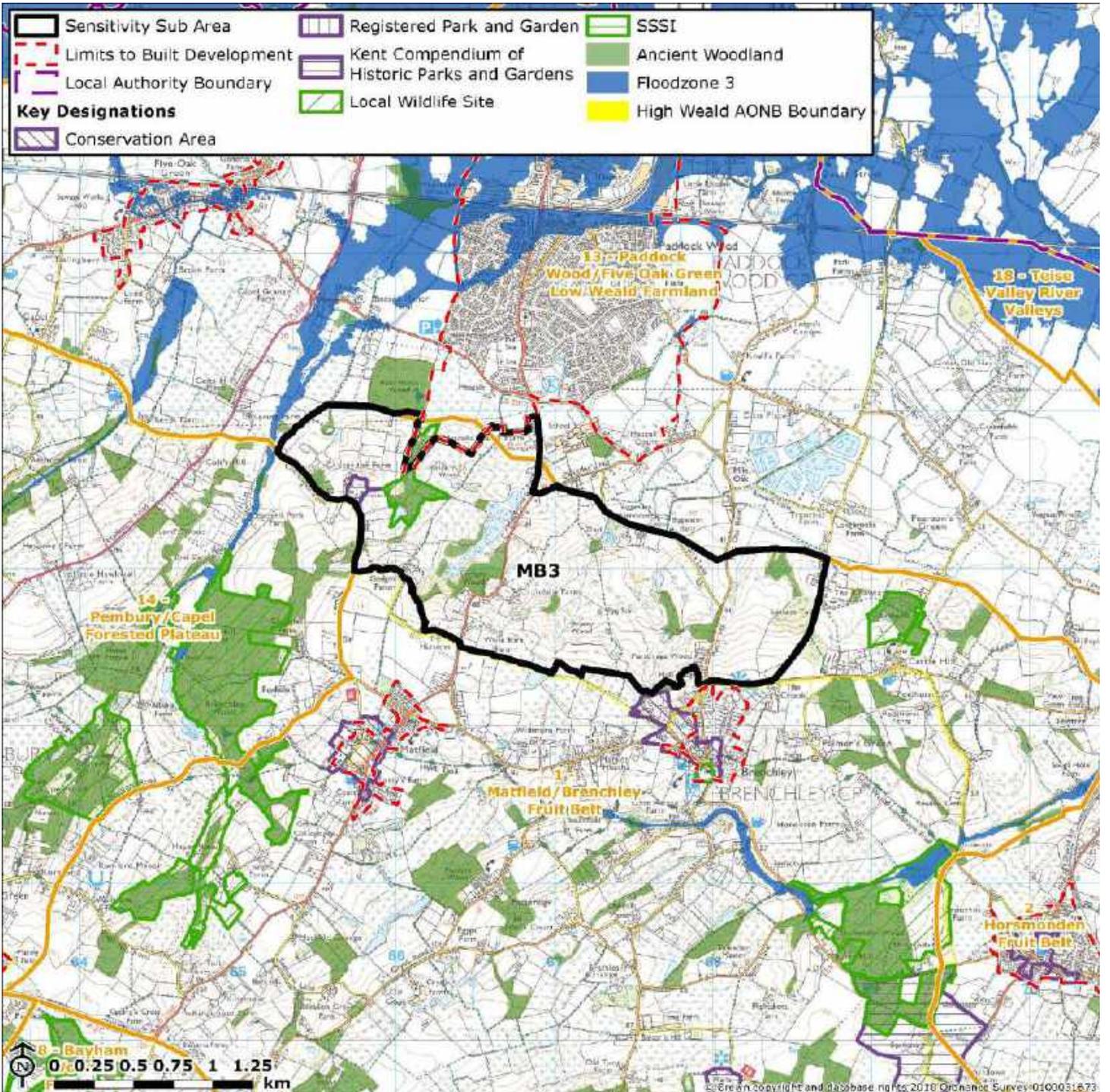
Looking south towards Little Fowle Hall Farm from Wagon Lane

Paddock Wood		Sub-Area BG1
Description		Area (Ha) - 181
<p>The sub area covers land within Maidstone Borough, over 500m beyond the northern edge of the town of Paddock Wood. It is in places defined by roads – sections of Wagon Lane to the north and Queen Street to the east – but in part following field boundaries or crossing through fields. The majority of the sub-area is defined in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment as part of the <i>Beltring Grassland</i> LCA, but a small part is in the <i>Teise Valley</i> (LCA 57). The sub-area consists mostly of grassland, with some strong tree-lines and small woodland blocks, and is divided by low hedgerows. Built development is limited to part of the dispersed hamlet of Queen Street, on the eastern edge of the sub-area, and scattered farmsteads and dwellings. The A228 and B2160 pass north-south through the western part of the sub-area.</p> <p>All of the sub-area is in the Medway floodplain, most of it Flood Zone 3.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	This is a flat, homogeneous landscape, characteristic of the wider LCA, which lacks complex landscape elements but has a homogeneous character, particularly to the north of Wagon Lane. There are a few modern houses and park homes off Wagon Lane that have a limited local urbanising influence, but otherwise settlement is sparse and limited to occasional farmsteads.	
Settlement form and edge	The urban area of Paddock Wood is too distant, and too screened by intermittent tree cover, to have any significant influence on the character of the sub-area. The South East Main Line railway adds to separation between the sub-area and the main residential area of the town. There is no change in landform between the sub-area and Paddock Wood, but Wagon Lane, defined by a strong tree line, marks a shift northwards to a more expansive, and more sparsely settled, open landscape, characterised by grassland rather than horticulture. The sense of separation is reduced towards the western side of the sub-area by the B2160 Maidstone Road and associated roadside development between the sub-area and Paddock Wood (including some park homes, a garden centre and several other commercial developments).	
Settlement setting	The sub-area forms part of the wider rural setting of Paddock Wood, but there is no visual relationship with the town. Expansion of Paddock Wood this far north would have an adverse impact on the perceived openness of the Medway Valley between Paddock Wood and East Peckham.	
Visual character	The sub-area is contained in term of visibility from the Medway Valley, but development would potentially, depending on localised screening, be visible from high ground on the Wealden ridge to the south (e.g. the Millenium Viewing Point on Crook Road, Brenchley). Expansion of Paddock Wood this far north would be evident from some locations on the edge of the AONB, but there would be no sense of encroachment on the designated area. The multiple oasts at Beltring Hop Farm are a prominent visual feature that could be diminished by extensive nearby development.	
Perceptual qualities	The A228, B2160 and Medway Valley railway line create some localised intrusion, but the landscape's openness and general lack of settlement, within a framework of tree lines that provide visual containment, gives it a strong rural character and a degree of isolation in places.	
Historic character	There is a scattering of historic farmsteads with characteristic oast houses, principally in the eastern part of the sub-area, but no integrated historic field pattern and no significant association with the special qualities of the AONB.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The principal sensitivities associated with this sub-area are its rurality and lack of relationship with Paddock Wood, its visual exposure in relation to views from higher ground to the south. These sensitivities apply more strongly to the area north of Wagon Lane and east of the Medway Valley railway line, which is rated 'high' for sensitivity to all scales of development. Land to the south of Wagon Lane has more built development, with some limited urbanising influences, and land to the west of the railway has greater intrusion from traffic; both areas are therefore rated 'medium-high' for sensitivity to small-scale development.</p>		

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

It would be important to minimise impact on the landscape to the north of the sub-area. Woodland is characteristic of valley floor closer to the River Medway, so new planting could be used to reinforce a distinction between urban settlement and the valley core, and to avoid, in views from higher ground to the south, a sense of urban sprawl across the Medway Valley.

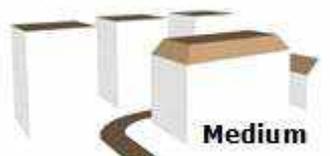


Representative views



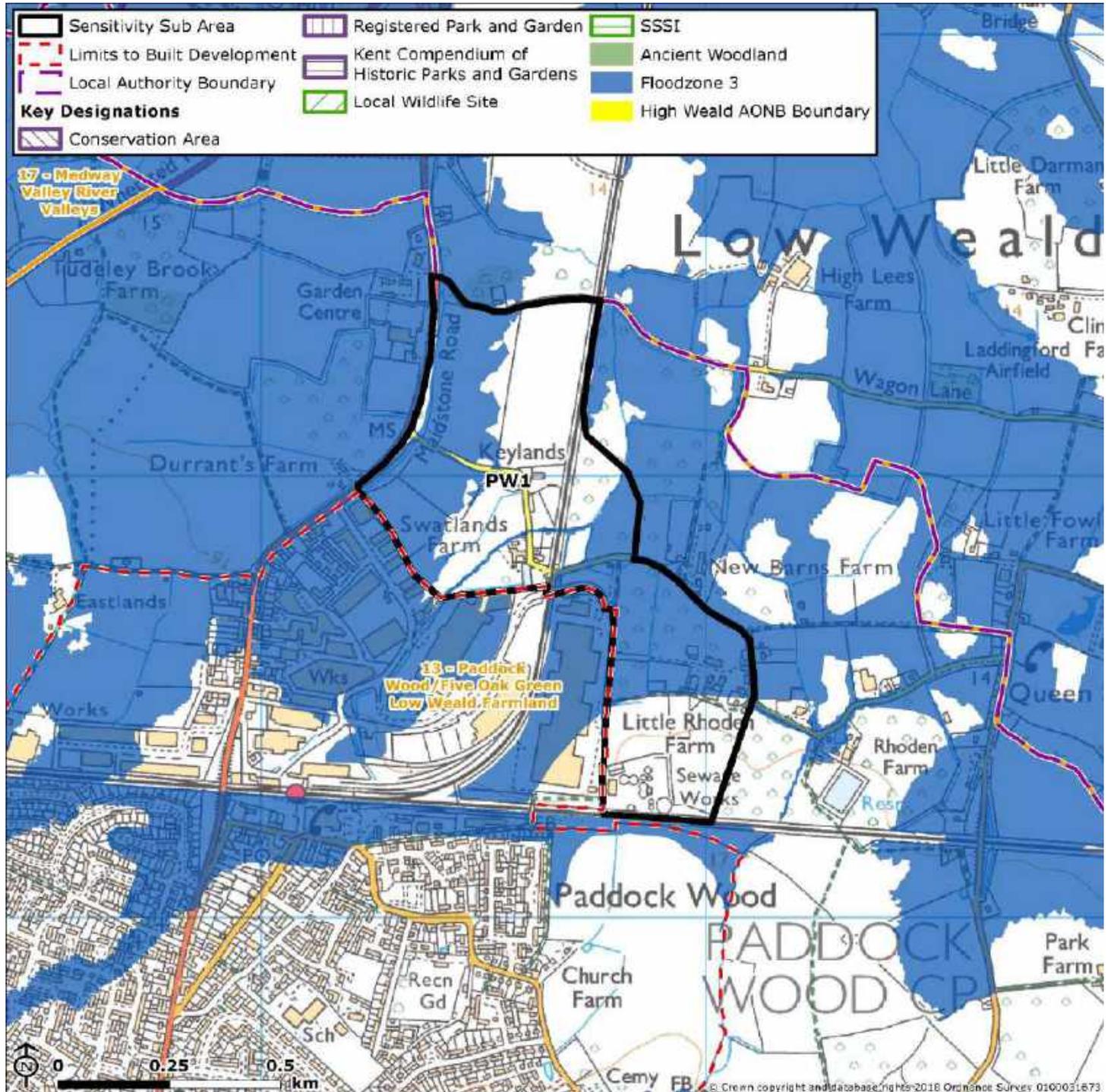
Looking north across orchards around Mascalls Pound Oast

Paddock Wood		Sub-Area MB3
Description		Area (Ha) - 322.8
<p>The sub-area abuts the Limits to Built Development to the south of Paddock Wood on the western side of the B2160 Maidstone Road, where residential development is to take place at Mascalls Farm (Site Allocation Local Plan Policy AL/PW 4), but is for the most part separated from the urban edge by farmland. The northern edge of the Matfield / Brenchley Fruit Belt LCA has been defined to correspond to a recognisable change in landform, from the more gentle slopes of the Low Weald to the more undulating, steeper slopes that rise up to sub-area's southern edge: the ridge crest that marks the boundary of the High Weald AONB.</p> <p>The sub-area consists of pastures, paddocks and orchards, characterised by a smaller field pattern and a stronger element of tree cover compared to the shallower slopes of the Low Weald to the north; however a large area between the B2160 Maidstone Road (which runs north-south through the centre of the sub-area) and Mile Oak Road is occupied by pasture and tree belts that were formerly the Kent National / Moatlands Golf Club. Other landscape elements include a chain of fishing lakes (Geddes Lakes) and, at the eastern end, a large arable field that occupies the full north-south depth of the sub-area.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	There is higher sensitivity associated with the steeper and more undulating slopes, and with woodland blocks and belts. There are a number of small areas of Ancient Woodland, of which Geddes Wood and Brick Kiln Wood are distinctive for their ghyll valley locations, which create an association between the sub-area and the AONB (in which such features are a key characteristic). There are a few small remnants of traditional orchard, but the more extensive fruit growing also adds sensitivity, strengthening the relationship between the area and the AONB where orchards are a characteristic land use.	
Settlement form and edge	The sub-area is for the most part remote from any substantial settlement. It abuts the Limits to Built Development at Paddock Wood but most of the land in the southern part of the AL/PW 4 allocation is to be retained as a landscape buffer. To the south it abuts the village of Brenchley along Crook Road, where a woodland belt along the southern side of the road, combined with a very clear break in slope at the ridge crest, create a strong distinction between the village and the sub-area. Development within the sub-area is limited to farmsteads and isolated houses.	
Settlement setting	The sloping topography means that it forms an undeveloped backdrop to the town of Paddock Wood.	
Visual character	These slopes are prominent in views from more open locations in the Medway Valley, including the River Medway Walk, to which they form a scenic backdrop. Views from the High Weald AONB edge are generally contained by tree cover along the southern edge of the sub-area, but there are strong views down to the Medway Valley from the Millenium Viewpoint Point on Crook Road, Brenchley, where the open, arable slopes at the eastern end of the sub-area are highly visible.	
Perceptual qualities	Elevation creates isolation from Paddock Wood, even in the few locations from which the town is substantially visible, and a sense of rural remoteness prevails. The former golf course, although atypical in terms of its localised landform and pattern of vegetation is not an intrusive influence, and has a parkland character.	
Historic character	There are some ancient woodland and traditional orchard remnants and several Medieval assarts, but no cohesive historic landscape patterns. However the historic farmsteads scattered through the area, with their characteristic oast houses, are a valued historic landscape element. The gardens of Crittenden House are on the Kent Compendium's list of historic parks and gardens, dating from the mid-20th Century but featuring an earlier hammer pond.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>This sub-area has a strong sense of rurality and separation from Paddock Wood, and its elevation and location give it value as part of the setting of the AONB and as a setting to Paddock Wood and the Medway Valley.</p>		

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.



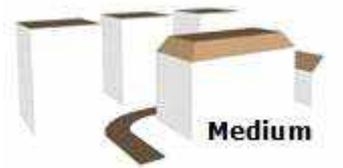
Representative views



Looking north along eastern edge of Paddock Wood, from footpath at Little Rhoden Farm

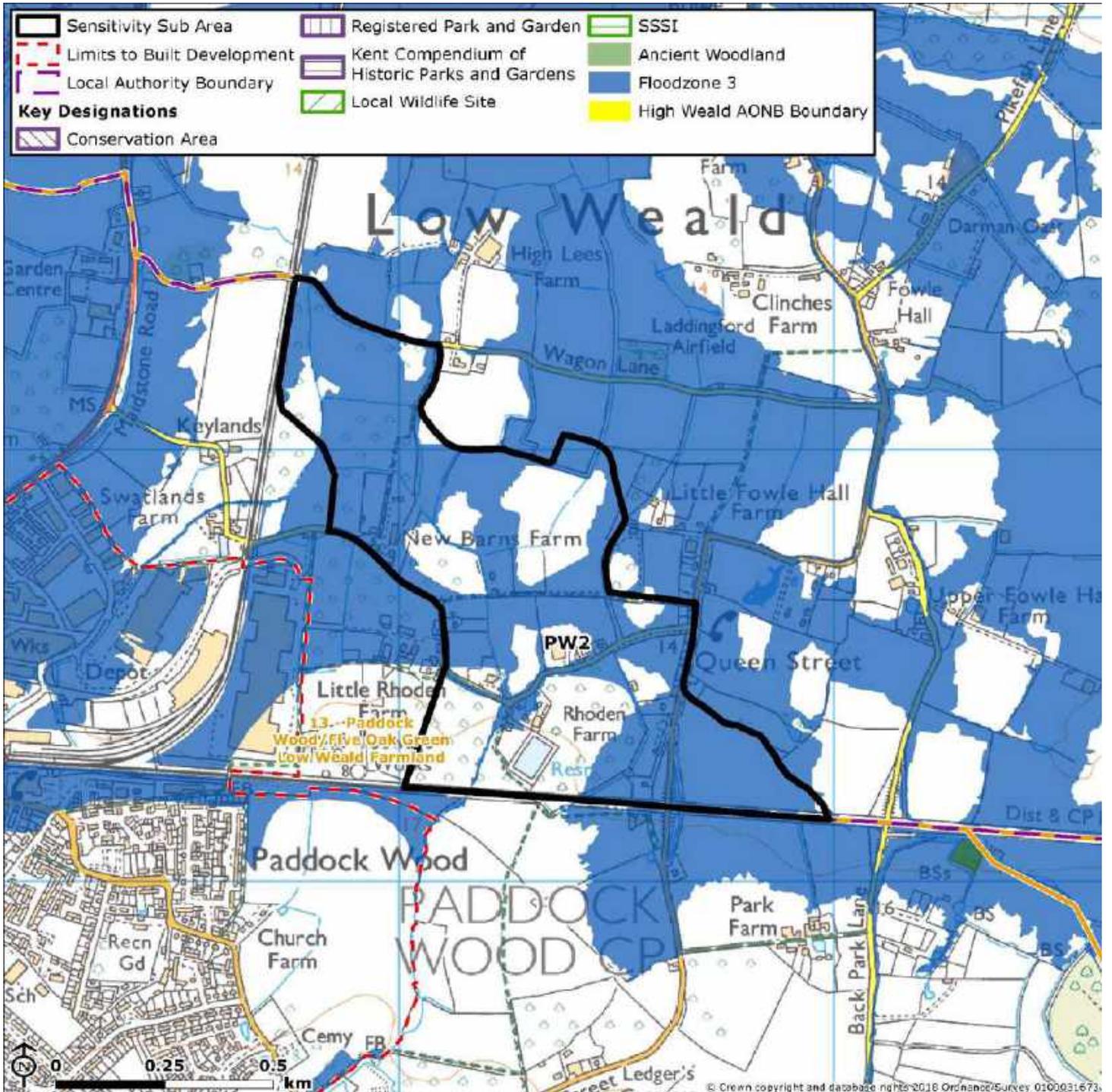
Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW1
Description		Area (Ha) - 45.6
<p>Land adjacent to the industrial northern edge of Paddock Wood, crossed east-west by Lucks Lane and north-south by the Medway Valley railway line. There is a mix of land uses: grazing pasture, grassland, horse paddocks and orchards. A number of historic farmsteads are located along Lucks Lane, with some limited modern infill (e.g. houses on Queens Court) and a sewage works is located on the southern boundary adjacent to the urban edge and the South East Main Line railway.</p> <p>Most of the sub-area – all of the land to the north of the footpath passing Little Rhoden Farm between Lucks Lane and the urban edge – is in floodplain, much of it Flood Zone 3.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The landscape is flat, reflecting its location in the Medway Valley floodplain. Several watercourses pass through the area but these are deep, functional drainage channels that generally lack associated riparian vegetation. There are several small copses of trees, and tree cover along the B2160 Maidstone Road and Wagon Lane, but for the most part the landscape lacks natural features which make a strong positive contribution to landscape character. The farmsteads, with associated oasts, are characteristic of the area, reflecting the traditional dispersed settlement pattern and horticultural land use, and a small area of traditional orchard remains at Swatlands Farm. However conifer lines screening some of the dwellings from the urban edge, and paddocks with post and wire fencing, detract from landscape character.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Large warehouses and associated security fencing form a sharp settlement edge. Landform and land cover do not create any significant separation between industry and countryside: where hedgerows remain on the urban edge they are diminished by the strong presence of adjacent buildings.</p> <p>The South East Main Line forms the southern edge of the sub-area, but land to the south, to the east of Church Lane, is currently being developed for housing.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The historic farmsteads and remaining areas of orchard cultivation help to retain a rural character to the setting of Paddock Wood, and retention of open space between the farmsteads and the urban edge contributes to this. However loss of agricultural/ horticultural use, particularly at the southern end of the parcel around Little Rhoden Farm where fenced paddocks have replaced much of the orchard planting, combines with the scale of the adjacent warehousing to offset this, creating a more urban fringe character.</p>	
Visual character	<p>Localised views in this flat landscape are contained by field edge tree cover, and footpaths along the urban edge are dominated by commercial buildings.</p> <p>In views from the Wealden ridge, such as from the Millenium Viewing Point on Crook Road, Brenchley (at the edge of the AONB), the industrial area of Paddock Wood is a prominent feature in a settlement which, due to the flat terrain, appears contained by strong tree cover. The elevation of views from the High Weald creates a strong sense of separation between the AONB and Paddock Wood, so development in this sub-area immediately to the north of the town would, particularly in the context of the scale of existing commercial development, have little additional impact on the designated landscape.</p> <p>There are also elevated views from the Greensand Ridge to the north, but at over 6km only the large, white, warehouse buildings stand out.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>Rurality and tranquility are significantly affected by the visible urban edge, by lack of agricultural land management in places and, in the western part of the sub-area, by proximity to the busy Maidstone Road and the railway line. Where the urban edge is screened from view, and in particular where orchards remain and there are views of historic farmsteads, there is a stronger sense of rurality.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Historic farmsteads, oast houses and fruit growing, which are characteristic of the Wealden countryside, give a localised sense of place, but urban influences and the fragmented nature of land use limits any sense of being in an integrated historic landscape.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>Landscape character and integrity across most of the sub-area has suffered as a result of proximity to a visually dominant urban edge and reduction in agricultural management, but the extent of this varies locally. The grazed fields in the western part of the sub-area to the south of Lucks Lane, and the adjacent traditional orchard and small woodland blocks to either side of the railway line, are considered to make a positive contribution to the setting of Paddock Wood, preserving a rural buffer to the historic farmsteads at Swatlands and Keylands.</p> <p>To the east of the railway line the urban edge is starker, and land use is more urban fringe in character. Older buildings at Little Rhoden, and the houses at Queens Court, are screened from the urban edge by</p>		

planting, and most of the modern farm buildings that occupied the area to the west of these have been demolished in recent years, leaving just a single modern house and storage building. This reduces sensitivity to a degree, but preservation of separation between the urban edge and dispersed settlement along Lucks Lane nonetheless helps to retain some rural character, which in turn helps to preserve the greater sense of rurality experienced further north in the Medway Valley.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

In the context of existing industrial development, sensitivity to further development of the same character is less than would otherwise be the case; however the creation of a 'softer' settlement edge, with a reduction in scale and density towards Lucks Lane and preservation of a degree of separation between Paddock Wood and the historic farmsteads, would create a more integrated rural-urban fringe.



Representative views



Looking north-east from Lucks Lane across orchard near New Barns Farm buildings

Paddock Wood	Sub-Area PW2
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Description	Area (Ha) - 63.3
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Land to the north of the South East Main Line railway and east of the Medway Valley line, separated from the industrial northern end of Paddock Wood by fields to the west/south of Lucks Lane. The outer northern edge of the parcel corresponds to the Borough boundary, which also marks the boundary between the *Paddock Wood / Five Oak Green Low Weald Farmland* LCA and the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment's *Beltring Grasslands* LCA. Queen Street defines the eastern boundary, other than at the south-eastern corner where the Borough boundary follows a field edge to the east of the road.

The sub-area comprises a mixture of apple orchards, grassland and paddocks, associated with three farmsteads: New Barns Farm, Rhoden Farm and Little Fowle Hall Farm (the buildings of the latter are just outside of the sub-area). There are several isolated dwellings along Lucks Lane, and part of the hamlet of Queen Street, including a park homes site, lies on the eastern edge of the sub-area.

All of the sub-area, aside from land to the south and east of Rhoden Farm next to the South East Main Line, is in floodplain, much of it Flood Zone 3.

Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description
Physical character	The landscape is flat, reflecting its location in the Medway Valley floodplain. A number of watercourses pass through the area but these are deep, functional drainage channels that generally lack associated riparian vegetation. There is tree cover associated with the farmsteads, including a copse at New Barns Farm, and there are small tree blocks adjacent to Wagon Lane and several lines of trees, e.g. alongside the railways. The remaining fruit growing is characteristic of the Wealden area and adds to associations with the AONB. These features have some landscape value, and the ditch-edged roads and generally open character are also characteristic of the wider valley floodplain landscape, but the sub-area lacks natural features that make a strong positive contribution to character.
Settlement form and edge	There is intermittent visibility of the large warehouses that define the urban edge of Paddock Wood to the north of the railway line, but the fields in this sub-area typically have a stronger association with the wider Medway Valley countryside. There are no strong separating landscape/landform features, but the farmsteads along Lucks Lane retain sufficient rural character to offset urbanising influence associated with the settlement edge. Development into this sub-area would therefore constitute significant encroachment into the countryside, and loss of separation between Paddock Wood and the dispersed hamlet of Queen Street would blur the settlement edge.
Settlement setting	The historic farmsteads and remaining areas of orchard cultivation help to retain a rural character in the wider setting of Paddock Wood, but the flat landscape precludes any significant intervisibility between the sub-area and the town.
Visual character	Localised views in this flat landscape are largely contained by field edge tree cover. In views from the Wealden ridge, such as from the Millenium Viewing Point on Crook Road, Brenchley (at the edge of the AONB), the industrial area of Paddock Wood is a prominent feature in a settlement which, due to the flat terrain, appears contained by strong tree cover. The elevation of views from the High Weald creates a strong sense of separation between the AONB and Paddock Wood, which limits the impact on the AONB that would result from development on the valley floor, but development extending this far east from the settlement edge would nonetheless detract from the general impression of a broad and largely rural valley between the High Weald and the Greensand Ridge. There are also elevated views from the Greensand Ridge to the north, but at over 6km only the large, white, warehouse buildings on the edge of Paddock Wood stand out.
Perceptual qualities	Some development within the sub-area, such as the park homes on Queen Street, can be considered to detract from rural character, and in this location close to Paddock Wood and the railway line there is no sense of tranquility. However the area shares physical characteristics with the wider rural landscape, and whilst paddocks can have urban fringe associations there is sufficient orchard use for the sub-area to retain a productive rural character.
Historic character	New Barns and Rhoden, and also Joys Cottages (on Lucks Lane), are classified as historic farmsteads. These farmsteads, with associated oasts, are characteristic of the area, reflecting the traditional dispersed settlement pattern and horticultural land use, but the area as a whole does not have features to convey a strong historic character.

Sensitivity conclusions

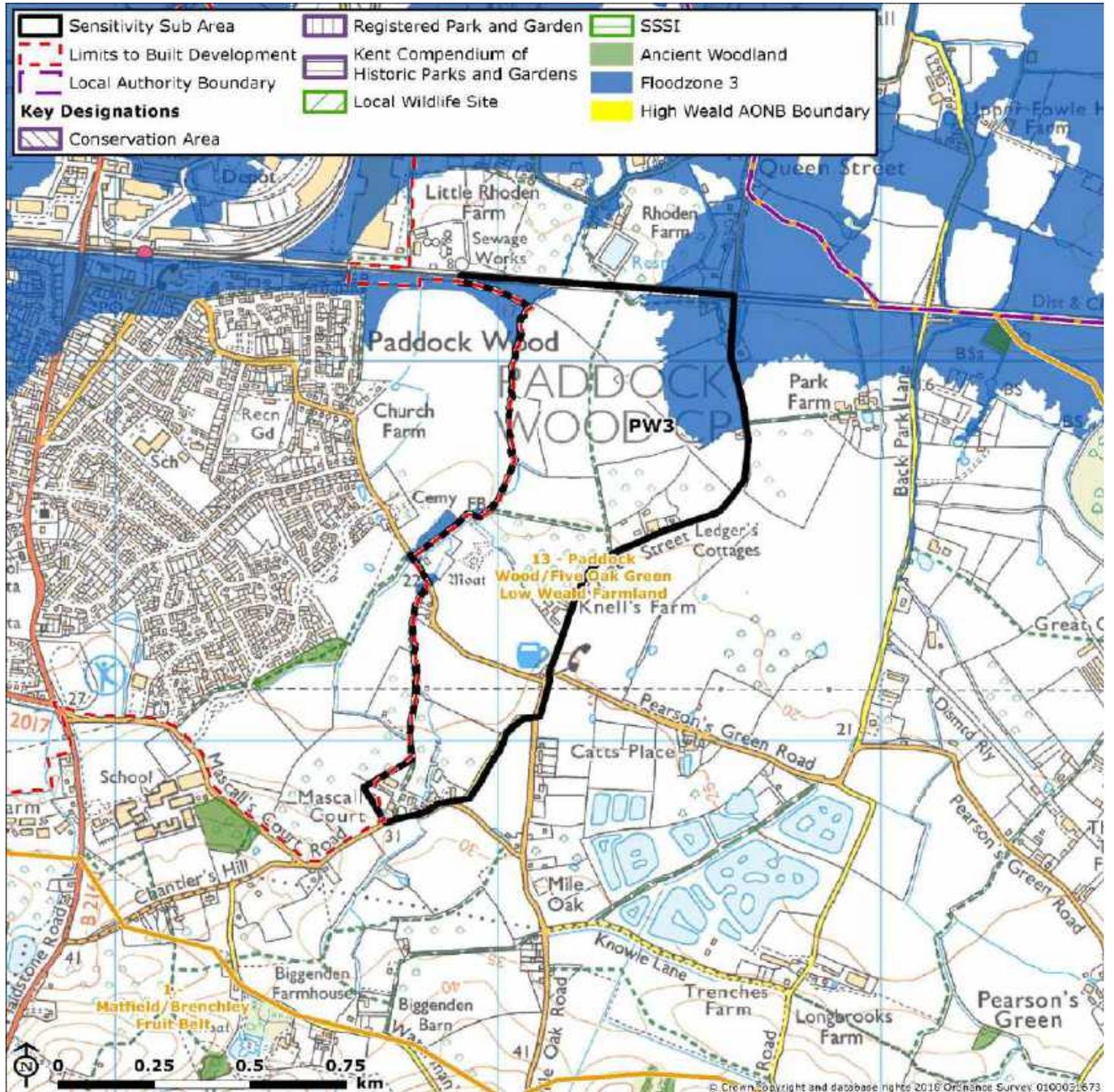
The principal sensitivities associated with this sub-area are its visual exposure in relation to views from higher ground to the south, particularly in relation to larger scale development scenarios, and the role of its historic farmsteads and remaining fruit cultivation in preserving rural character. Development in this area would not represent a step change but rather a continued erosion of rural character with potential

consequent impact on landscape character to the north and east.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 Small	H	MH	M	ML	L
 Medium	H	MH	M	ML	L
 Large	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

Retention of an open, rural gap between new development and the hamlet of Queen Street, including Little Fowle Hall Farm, would help to reduce impacts on the surrounding countryside character. Preservation of tree cover associated with the farmsteads along Lucks Lane, so that their settings are not dominated by modern development, would likewise help to retain some historic character in the sub-area.

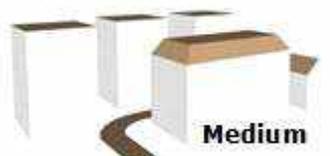


Representative views



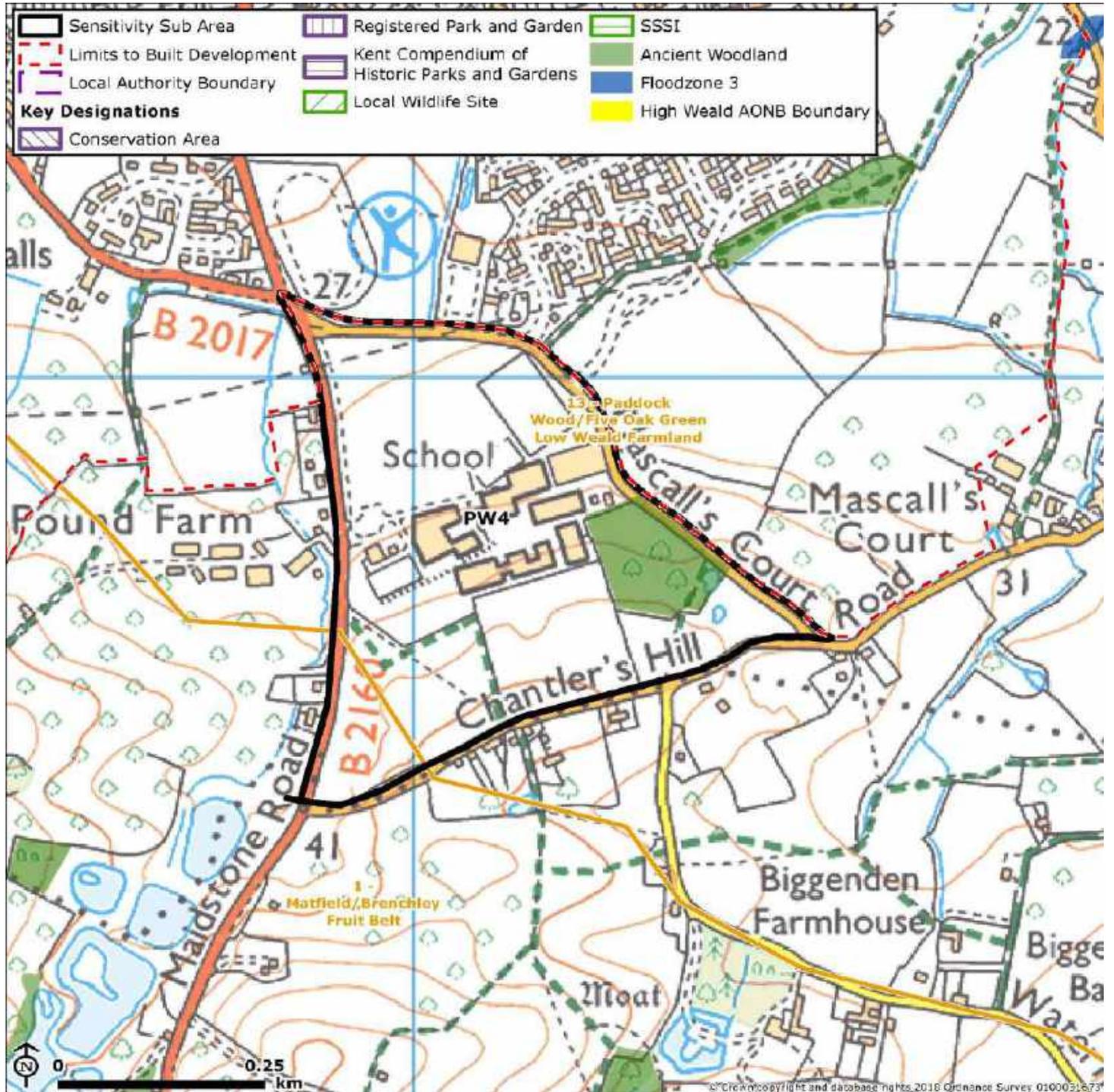
Looking north-west from footpath at centre of parcel towards tree-line along the Limits to Built Development

Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW3
Description		Area (Ha) - 64.4
<p>Land to the south of the South East Main Line, and east of fields at Church Farm and east/north of Mascalls Court Road that were allocated for development in the 2016 Site Allocations Local Plan (Policies AL/PW3 and AL/PW3b). Queen Street defines the outer (eastern) edge of the sub-area, and Mascalls Court Road the southern edge.</p> <p>The sub-area is a mix of arable farmland, soft fruit and apple orchards, and contains two farmsteads (Mascall's Court and Knell's Farm) and several isolated clusters of dwellings along Church Road and Queen Street, together with commercial premises on the latter.</p> <p>A small proportion of the sub-area, principally at the northern end, lies within Flood Zones 2 or 3.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The landform is fairly even, rising only gently to the south, forming a transition between the flatter floodplain landscape, contained principally to the north of the railway line in this locality, and the slopes of the High Weald plateau to the south. Orchards are recognised as a locally distinctive component of landscape character in the High Weald AONB, and although the sub-area is clearly outside of the AONB, and lacking the more distinctive terrain of the High Weald with which fruit growing is often associated, this land use does add to the value of the sub-area as part of the AONB's setting.</p> <p>The former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst branch line (the 'hop pickers' line') crosses the northern end of the sub-area, but as a physical feature its former route in this location is marked only by a hedgerow and so is not considered to have any great value as a physical landscape element.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>A watercourse (a short tributary of the River Teise, feeding into the Medway) marks the defined urban edge alongside much of the sub-area, and to the north of Church Road it is strengthened by tree cover (in particular a woodland block close to Church Road). However there is no significant landform change.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The flat landscape precludes any significant intervisibility between the sub-area and the existing edge of the town, and tree cover is likely to significantly filter views of the new settlement edge to the east of Church Road, but there will be stronger intervisibility between the sub-area and the new settlement edge near Mascall's Court. The maintenance of a gap between the urban edge and historic farmsteads helps to retain rural character in the setting of Paddock Wood.</p>	
Visual character	<p>Adjacent roads provide passing views into the sub-area, where it can be viewed as part of the rural foreground to the High Weald AONB.</p> <p>In views from the Wealden ridge, notably the Millenium Viewing Point on Crook Road, Brenchley (at the edge of the AONB), the copse and tree line along the western edge of the sub-area create a strong distinction between the sub-area and the town. The elevation of views from the High Weald creates a strong sense of separation between the AONB and Paddock Wood, which limits the impact on the AONB that would result from development on the valley floor. However, extending this far east from the settlement edge would constitute a significant expansion into open farmland.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>Visually the sub-area has relatively strong separation from the urban area, although this may potentially change as new housing is developed on adjacent sites. Arable farming and fruit production also help to maintain a sense of rurality. Built development in the area is largely rural in character, with the exception of the business premises on Queen Street, but tranquillity is diminished by traffic on Queen Street and by the adjacent railway line.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Historic farmsteads, oast houses and fruit growing, which are characteristic of the Wealden countryside, give some sense of place, but the area does not have a strong historic character. The hop pickers' line, although not visually recognisable as a heritage asset, is valued as such and also has potential as a GI asset for walking and cycling that is recognised in the Site Allocations Local Plan (policy AL/STR3).</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The principal sensitivities associated with this sub-area are its visual separation from the urban area by field boundary trees and woodland, which is evident in views from the AONB edge to the south, and its rural character, derived from rural land uses, historic farmsteads and an absence of significant urbanising influences. The sub-area retains a stronger relationship with the wider rural landscape than with Paddock Wood.</p>		

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 Small	H	MH	M	ML	L
 Medium	H	MH	M	ML	L
 Large	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

Retaining physical separation between any new development and the farmsteads at Mascall’s Court and Knell’s Farm would help to retain some perception of rural character on the outer edge of the sub-area, limiting impact on countryside to the east and south.

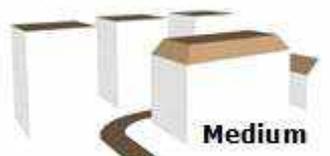


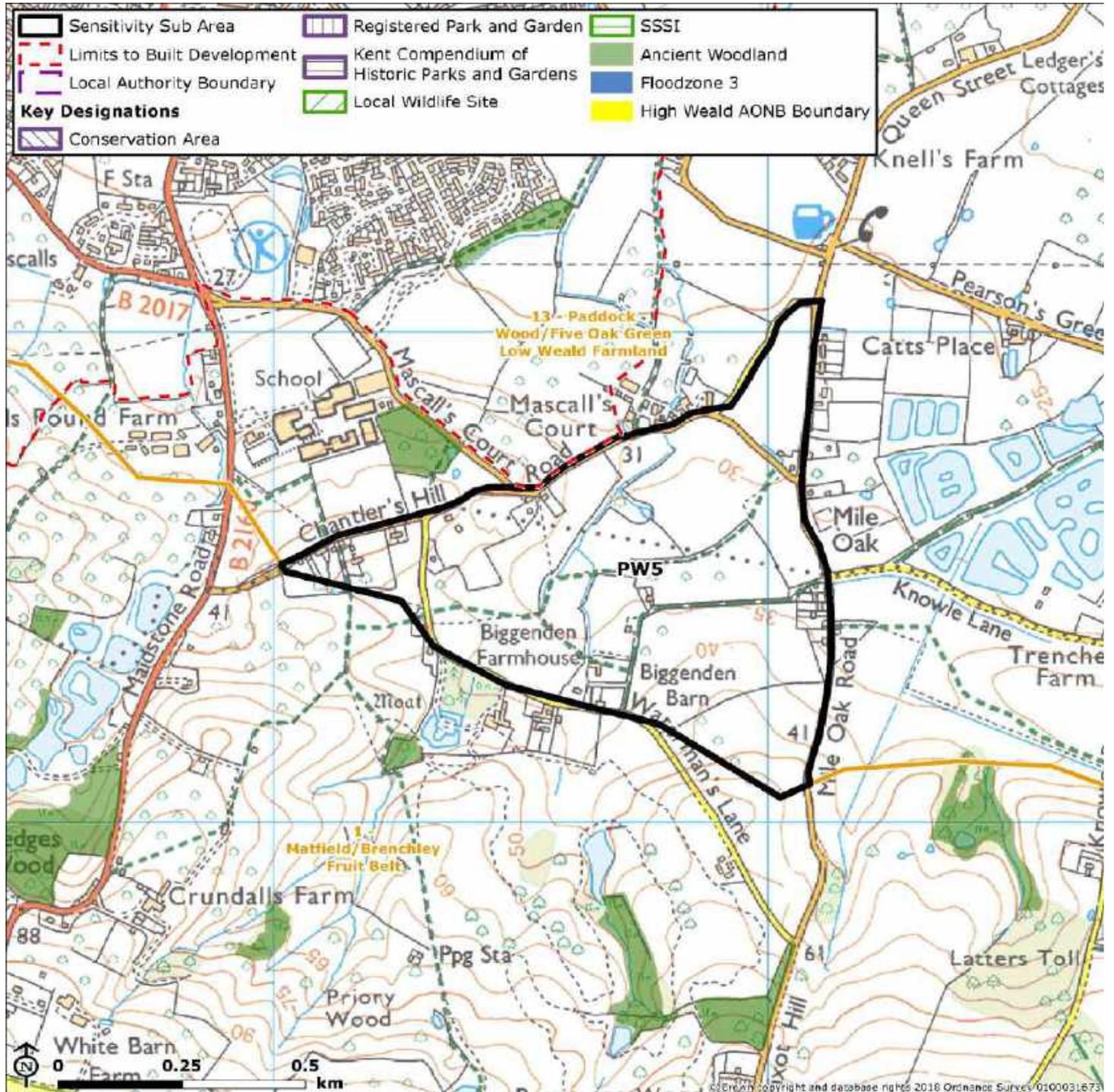
Representative views



Looking north from Chantler's Hill towards Mascalls Academy

Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW4
Description		Area (Ha) - 21
<p>The sub-area is adjacent to the southern edge of Paddock Wood, where the Limit to Built Development follows Mascalls Court Road, and is contained to the west by the B2160 Maidstone Road and to the south by Chantler's Hill. The sub-area is dominated by the buildings of Mascalls Academy; playing fields and artificial sports pitches lie to the north of the school buildings but most of the land to the south is open grassland. The school is bounded by tree cover to the east along Maidstone Road, separating it from Mascalls Pound Farm, and by a woodland block to the west.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>From the northern edge of the sub-area the landform rises relatively gently southwards, but slope steepness increases to the south up to Chantler's Hill. Although the school buildings and associated playing fields diminish the natural character of the landscape, the slope is important in terms of the distinction it creates between the southern end of the site and Paddock Wood.</p> <p>The woodland block to the west of the school buildings is Ancient Woodland which also plays a strong visual role in the setting of the southern edge of Paddock Wood.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>There is a clear distinction between the northern and southern halves of the sub-area. The northern half has a strong relationship with the urban edge – isolated from the wider countryside by the school buildings and contained between the existing urban edge to the north and committed developments to the east (Site Allocations Local Plan Policy AL/PW3B) and west (AL/PW4) – although tree cover helps to retain a sense of this being at the settlement edge.</p> <p>Despite the proximity and scale of the school buildings, the elevation of the open grasslands in the southern half of the sub-area helps to visually connect the area with the wider rural landscape. There are a number of dwellings along Chantler's Hill but, although they are a mix of late Victorian and modern, they retain the character of a rural hamlet. The woodland block within the sub-area marks a strong edge to the urban area.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The northern part of the site has a strong association with the town due to its containment by the school buildings, but this rising, open slope does, combined with tree cover beyond, add to the perception of this as the limit of the urban area.</p> <p>In terms of visibility from the urban edge, the southern part of the sub-area is largely screened by Mascalls Academy, but the woodland block within it is an important element in views out from the town. The elevation of this area relates it strongly to the adjacent High Weald edge slopes that form a significant element in the setting of Paddock Wood.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The rising slopes of the sub-area give it visual prominence in relation to views from the north and from adjacent slopes, in which the area to the south of the school buildings appears clearly distinct from the town. From higher ground, including the AONB edge, intervening tree cover means that there is limited visibility.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The elevation of Chantler's Hill, and views from it of orchards and woodlands on adjacent hillsides, give a strong sense of separation from Paddock Wood despite the urbanising influence of the school buildings on rural character.</p> <p>The town edge signage, 30mph speed limit and commencement of street lighting are located within the tree cover on Maidstone Road immediately to the west of the school buildings. This increases the sense that the school marks the edge of the urban area.</p>	
Historic character	<p>There are no historic sensitivities associated with this sub-area, aside from the surviving block of Ancient Woodland.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>There is a strong distinction between the sensitivity of the playing fields to the north of the academy buildings, where landscape value is limited by association with the urban area and separation from the countryside, and the sensitivity of the higher slopes in the southern part of the sub-area. Although retention of openness in the northern part of the sub-area does help to strengthen the sense that the main urban area is contained to lower ground, and that the academy is an outlying development, there is no significant distinction between this area and the Putlands recreation ground to the north (which is defined as within the Limits to Built Development). Sensitivity of this area to small-scale development is 'medium-low', and sensitivity to medium-scale development is 'medium'.</p> <p>A stronger association with the rural setting of Paddock Wood, and sense of separation from the town, mean that landscape sensitivity to the south of the school buildings is 'medium-high' for small-scale development.</p> <p>The elevation of the sub-area above the residential urban area means that sensitivity to large scale development anywhere within it is 'high'.</p>		

Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW4			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
No potential measures are identified for this sub-area.					

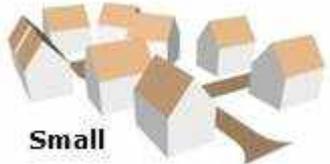


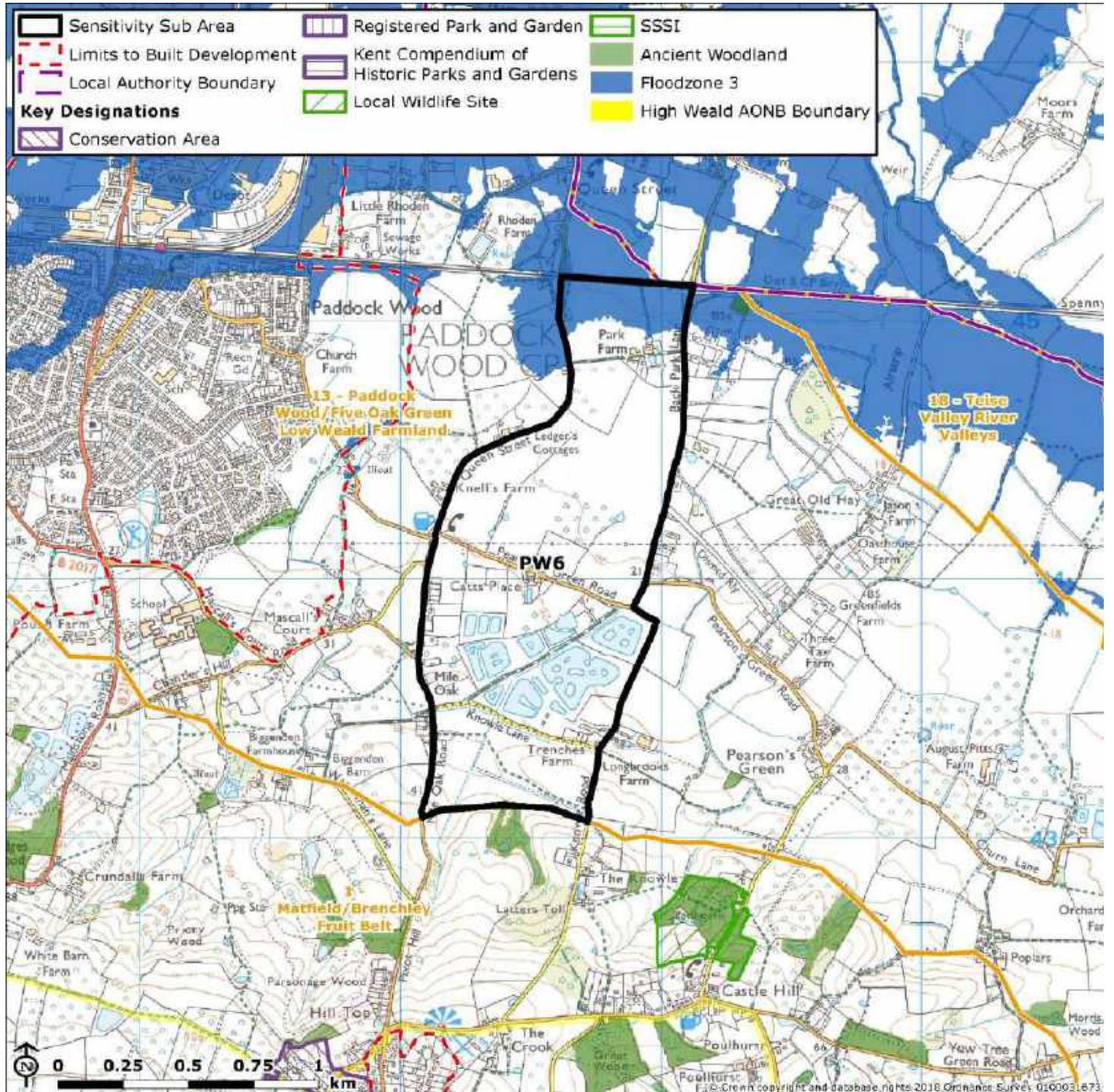
Representative views



Looking north-east from public footpath towards oasts at Mascall's Court, on the Limits to Built Development

Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW5
Description		Area (Ha) - 50
<p>The sub-area lies on rising ground to the south of Paddock Wood. It is only in part contiguous with the Limits to Built Development: Mascalls Court Road marks the forthcoming urban edge along part of the northern boundary, where housing is allocated in the Local Plan (Policy AL/PW3B). Chantler's Hill forms the boundary to the north-west, and Mile Oak Road to the east. To the south, the sub-area is defined by the boundary between the <i>Paddock Wood / Five Oak Green Low Weald Farmland</i> LCA and the <i>Matfield/Brenchley Fruit Belt</i> LCA. It is largely under arable cultivation but also includes an apple orchard and soft-fruit.</p> <p>There is one active farm within the sub-area, Biggenden Farm, and the former Mile Oak Farm house and oast are located at the junction of Mile Oak Road and Mascalls Court Lane. The Mascall's Court Farmstead is just outside of the sub-area, on its northern edge. There are small hamlets on the eastern edge of the sub-area, and on Chantler's Hill.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	The sub-area forms a shallow valley, the lower end of a feature which cuts more deeply into the higher slopes to the south. Valley-floor watercourses are lined by well-treed hedgerows. The remaining fruit growing is characteristic of the area and adds to associations with the AONB.	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Landform and tree cover strengthen create, across most of the parcel, a relatively strong sense of separation from the existing urban area of Paddock Wood, and the retained buffer of open land in the southern part of the Mascalls housing allocation (Policy AL/PW3B) will preserve this post-development. The flatter terrain in the eastern part of the parcel to the north of Mile Oak has less physical distinction from the urban area, but the visible presence of Mascall's Court Farm, with its three oast houses, on the edge of the Limit to Built Development helps to reinforce a more rural character here.</p> <p>There are no significant urbanising features in the sub-area: houses on Chantler's Hill, although some are modern, are well-screened from the rest of the sub-area by strong tree cover, and Mile Oak is a characteristic Wealden hamlet, composed mostly of listed vernacular buildings. Catts Place is a short row of pre-War houses on the eastern edge of the sub-area.</p>	
Settlement setting	The sub-area is largely hidden from view from Paddock Wood, but forms part of its wider rural setting and part of the transition between Low and High Weald. Trees along field boundaries create a sloping, wooded backdrop to the southern side of the town.	
Visual character	<p>Visually the sub-area is mostly quite contained, with local views limited to footpaths within the area, but its tree cover and higher orchard-planted slopes contribute to the character of southward views from the town.</p> <p>In views from the Wealden ridge, notably the Millenium Viewing Point on Crook Road, Brenchley (at the edge of the AONB), the eastern half of the sub-area is visible as part of the sloping rural foreground to Paddock Wood, with tree cover creating a strong distinction between the sub-area and the town. Development extending this far south from the urban edge would constitute a significant encroachment towards the AONB.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	Although in relatively close proximity to the town, the valley landform and tree cover, views south up to the High Weald ridge, presence of historic farmsteads and absence of urbanising influences create a sense of rural isolation.	
Historic character	Biggenden, Mile Oak and Mascall's (the latter just outside of the sub-area but visible from it) are historic farmsteads with characteristic oast houses that contribute to local landscape character. The vernacular architecture of dwellings in the hamlet of Mile Oak likewise contributes positively. There is no particular historic character associated with field patterns, mostly amalgamations now in arable use.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The sub-area is for the most part physically distinct from Paddock Wood, and retains a rural character lacking in urbanising influences. It is visible from and contributes to the rural setting of the High Weald AONB. Any scale of urbanising development would represent a significant expansion of Paddock Wood into the countryside.</p>		

Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW5			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.</p>					



Representative views



Looking north from the Millenium Viewing Point on Crook Road, Brenchley (the edge of the AONB). The southern edge of the parcel is part way through the arable field beyond the tree at the centre-foreground of the view.

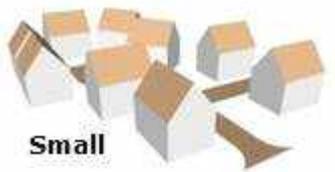
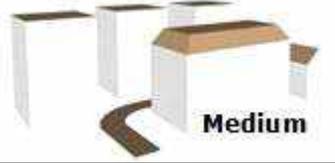
Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW6
Description		Area (Ha) - 141.2
<p>Land to the east of Queen Street and Mile Oak Road, separated from the Limits to Built Development of Paddock Wood by a belt of farmland to the west of Queen Street. The sub-area contains a variety of land uses, principally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arable farmland to the south of Knowle Lane; • a series of fishing lakes between Knowle Lane and Pearson's Green Road; • a solar farm and arable farmland to the north of Pearson's Green Road: and • orchards around Park Farm at the northern end of the sub-area, adjacent to the South East Main Line railway. <p>The hamlet of Mile Oak and a short line of cottages, Catts Place, lie along the western edge of the sub-area on Mile Oak Road, and there are a few isolated houses along Queen Street and, on the eastern side of the sub-area, Willow Lane. The sub-area contains a number of farmsteads.</p> <p>The northern edge of the sub-area – much of the land to the north of the buildings of Park Farm, is in Flood Zone 3.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The large, open arable fields at the southern end of the area, dotted with isolated field trees set, are on undulating terrain. Framed by woodland and rising up towards the High Weald Ridge, this area has greater sensitivity in terms of landform than the rest of the sub-area, which is relatively flat. The fishing lakes were only created in recent years, and the solar farm has no positive landscape value, but there are some mature, well-treed hedgerows around them, and along the green lane that passes through the fishing lake complex, that add to landscape and visual character.</p> <p>Orchards are recognised as a locally distinctive component of landscape character in the High Weald AONB, and although the sub-area is clearly outside of the AONB, and lacking the more distinctive terrain of the High Weald with which fruit growing is often associated, this land use does add to the value of the sub-area as part of the AONB's setting. The older orchard standards to the south of Catts Place Farmhouse, probably dating to the early post-War period, have greater landscape value.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The sub-area does not adjoin the urban area, with farmland to the west of Queen Street and Mile Oak forming a physical gap, and tree cover providing visual separation in this flat landscape. Settlement in and close to the sub-area, locally characteristic dispersed rows of houses, and farmsteads, does not have any significant urbanising influence.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>Large arable fields, lakes and the solar farm do not make a strong contribution to the setting of Paddock Wood, but the dispersed settlement pattern, including farmsteads with characteristic oast houses, helps to preserve the rural character of the town's setting.</p> <p>The connectivity between the fields to the south of Knowle Lane and the crest of the High Weald ridge means that this area plays a more significant landscape role, in particular in relation to views towards Paddock Wood from the Millenium Viewing Point on Crook Road, Brenchley.</p>	
Visual character	<p>There are views into the sub-area from adjacent roads and several public rights of way, but boundary trees and hedgerows limit visibility, particular from further afield in the lowland area. However the sub-area is more widely visible in views from the Wealden ridge, notably from Brenchley Millenium Viewing Point. From here the solar farm is a prominent and also incongruous landscape element, but is clearly set in rural surroundings a significant distance away from the urban edge of Paddock Wood. The solar farm appears largely contained by tree cover, which entirely masks the fishing lakes, and the hamlets and farmsteads along Mile Oak Road and Queen Street are framed by open farmland.</p> <p>The elevation of views from the High Weald creates a strong sense of separation between the AONB and Paddock Wood, which limits the harm to the AONB that would result from development on the valley floor, but extending this far east from the settlement edge would constitute a major expansion into the countryside. Development on the sloping ground at the southern end of the sub-area would represent a more significant encroachment on the immediate setting of the AONB itself.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>Aside from the undulating slopes to the south of Knowle Lane, the sub-area does not have strong scenic value, and the roads bordering and crossing it, together with the railway, carry sufficient traffic to limit any sense of isolation. However, the area retains a rural character and lacks any significant relationship with the urban area of Paddock Wood.</p>	

Paddock Wood	Sub-Area PW6
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Historic character	Historic farmsteads with oast houses convey some historic character, but the solar farm, fishing lakes and arable fields limit any sense of time-depth across the sub-area as a whole. There are no remaining historic field patterns of note.
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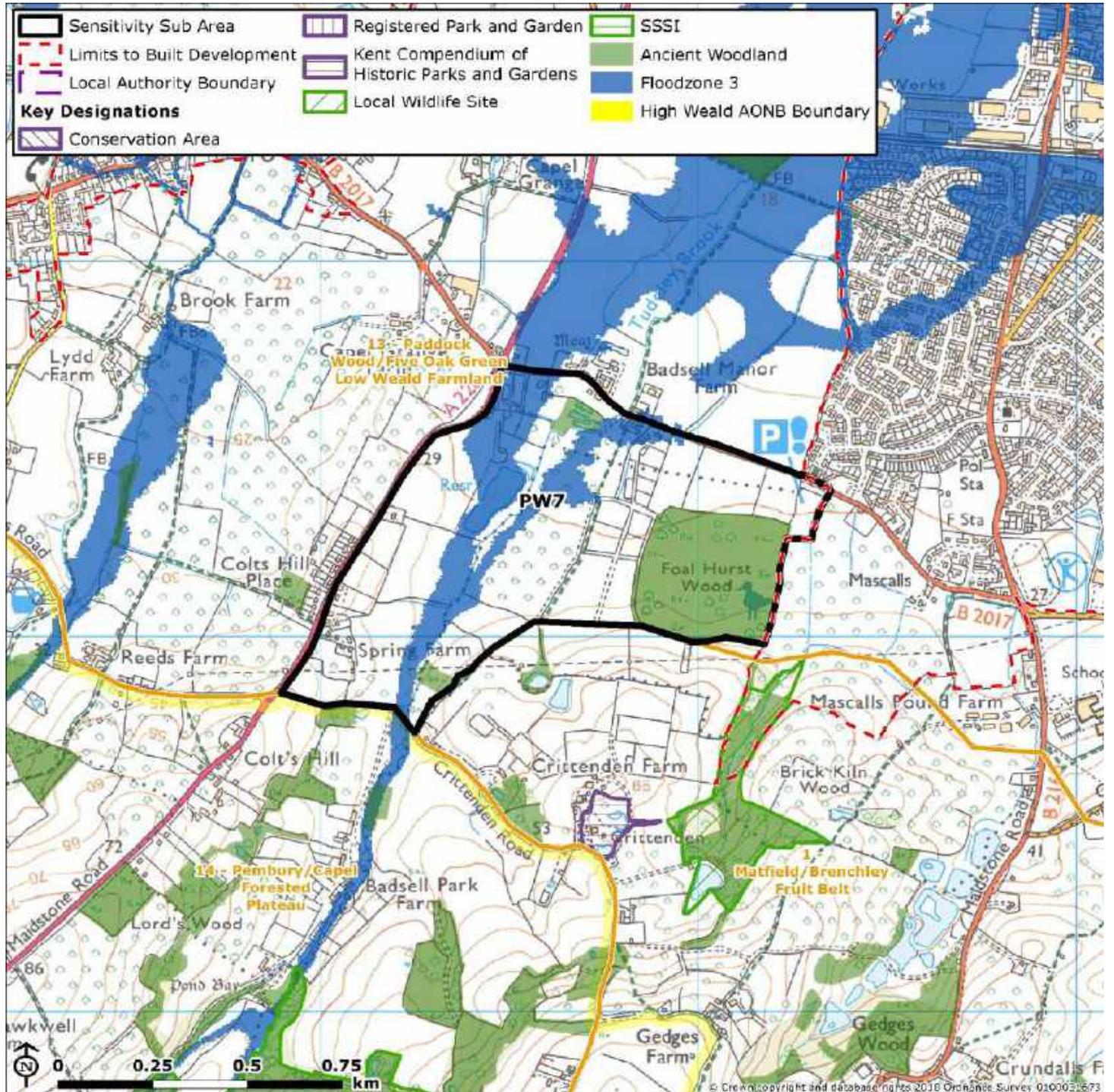
Sensitivity conclusions

Much of the sub-area's land use is out of keeping with the valued characteristics of the wider Wealden area, but the dispersed settlement pattern, historic farmsteads, physical and visual separation from Paddock Wood mean that this is nonetheless a rural landscape. Taking into consideration the area's visual relationship with the AONB edge, there is high sensitivity to any expansion of the town this far eastwards.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.



Representative views



Looking north-east from orchard at centre of parcel towards Badsell Manor Farm

Paddock Wood	Sub-Area PW7
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Description	Area (Ha) - 72.6
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The sub-area occupies land at the foot of the steeper slopes of the *Matfield/Brenchley Fruit Belt* LCA, contained to the north by the B2017 Badsell Road and to the west by the A228. The north-eastern corner of the sub-area, occupied by a small car park for visitors to Foal Hurst Wood and adjacent public open space and allotments, abuts the urban edge across the B2017 at the far south-western corner of Paddock Wood.

Foal Hurst Wood occupies the south-eastern part of the sub-area, and there are smaller areas of woodland on the south-western edge, close to Crittenden Road, and at Badsell Manor Farm on the northern edge. Tudeley Brook flows northwards through the western part of the sub-area. Land use is a mix of pasture, arable, paddocks and apple orchards, and there is a fishing lake alongside the Brook.

There are buildings on the northern and western edges of the sub-area: farmstead-focused development in the vicinity of Badsell Manor, with a few modern houses, and several dwellings in the vicinity of Spring Farm, facing onto a row of pre-War houses at Colt's Hill.

Crittenden Road, on the south-western edge of the sub-area, marks the edge of the High Weald AONB.

Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description
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Physical character	The landform is mostly relatively flat, forming only a shallow valley around Tudeley Brook and rising more steeply only on the southern and western fringes of the sub-area. There is sensitivity associated with development in the vicinity of the Brook, as its floodplain currently provides containment to the western edge of Paddock Wood, and with the higher slopes, which represent a transition into the more wooded and undulating High Weald. Foal Hurst Wood and several other small patches of woodland are valued as Ancient Woodland, and there are several well-treed field boundaries – e.g. to the east and west of the orchard. Fruit growing is characteristic of the area and adds to associations with the AONB.
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Settlement form and edge	The role of the B2017 as a clear urban edge has been diminished by Site Allocation Policy AL/PW4, which increases the importance of Foal Hurst Wood as a strong visual containing feature, marking the south-western extent of the town. Modern infill and the presence of a busy road has had some impact on landscape character around Badsell Manor Farm, but developed is still focused on a historic farmstead and has relatively strong containment by well-treed hedgerows and small woodland blocks. Linear development along the A228 at Colt's Hill is isolated from Paddock Wood and has, due to its elevated location and to screening by intervening tree cover, little relationship with the rest of the sub-area.
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Settlement setting	Foal Hurst Wood is a key feature in the setting of Paddock Wood. Although the land uses in the fields separating Paddock Wood from Badsell Manor Farm have some urban edge character, with allotment and equestrian uses, their openness is important in retention of rural character at Badsell Manor. Foal Hurst Wood and the tree lines to either side of the orchard preclude any intervisibility between the sub-area and the urban edge, but the sub-area constitutes part of the town's wider rural setting.
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Visual character	The sub-area is relatively well contained from the wider landscape, with extensive tree cover screening views from within the AONB to the south. In views from public rights of way along the western side of Paddock Wood, Foal Hurst Wood creates strong separation between the sub-area and the town.
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Perceptual qualities	The main roads that border the area have a local impact on tranquility, but tree cover creates visual separation from roads and from Paddock Wood, ensuring that most of the sub-area retains a rural character.
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Historic character	There are historic farmsteads at Badsell Manor and Colt's Hill (Spring Farm), and ancient woodland remnants in the vicinity of these farms contributes to their historic character; however the busy roads alongside which they are located has an adverse impact in this respect. One of the fields on the steeper southern edge of the sub-area, adjacent to a block of Ancient Woodland, is a medieval assart, but the field pattern for the most part reflects 20th Century changes.
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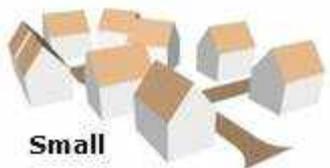
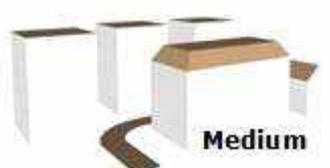
Sensitivity conclusions

The juxtaposition of Foal Hurst Wood between the sub-area and the urban edge is a key sensitivity. Any expansion of Paddock Wood to the west of Foal Hurst Wood would have a weak relationship with the main urban area, so sensitivity to this is 'high'.

There is slightly less ('moderate-high') sensitivity associated with expansion between the B2017 and Foal Hurst Wood, where urban edge influence is stronger, but loss of separation between the town and Badsell Manor Farm would diminish the historic character of the farmstead, and weaken the consistent alignment of the western edge of Paddock Wood.

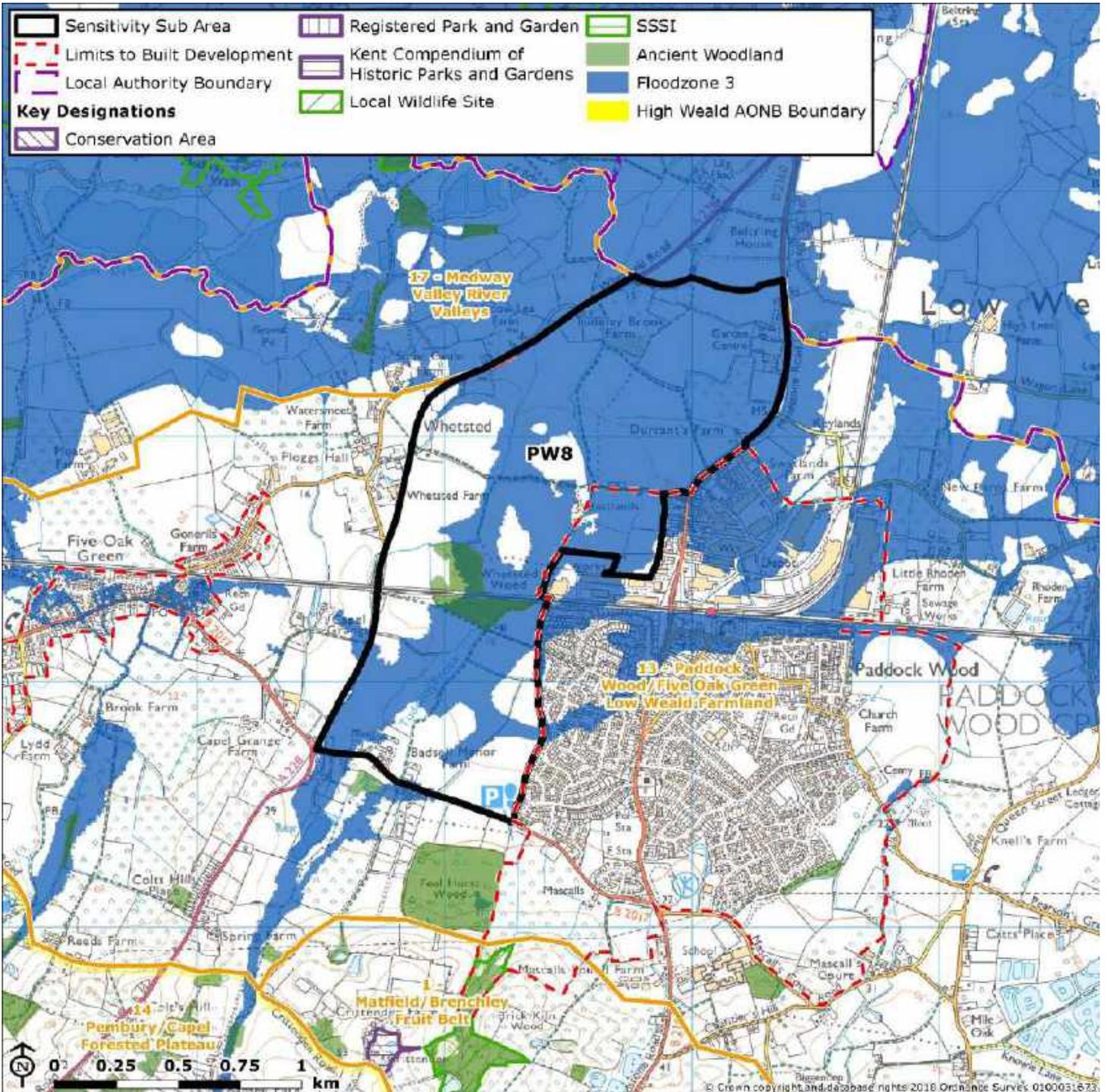
There is likewise slightly less sensitivity associated with small-scale development scenarios focused on

expansion of Colts Hill rather than Paddock Wood, with Tudeley Brook providing a boundary feature and Foal Hurst Wood maintaining visual separation from Paddock Wood, but any development here would affect the rural character of the intervening area.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

Any new development edge to the north of Foal Hurst Wood should be strengthened by woodland belt planting, to retain separation from Badsell Manor.



Representative views



Looking south-east toward the urban edge on the B2160 Maidstone Road, from footpath alongside Tudeley Brook

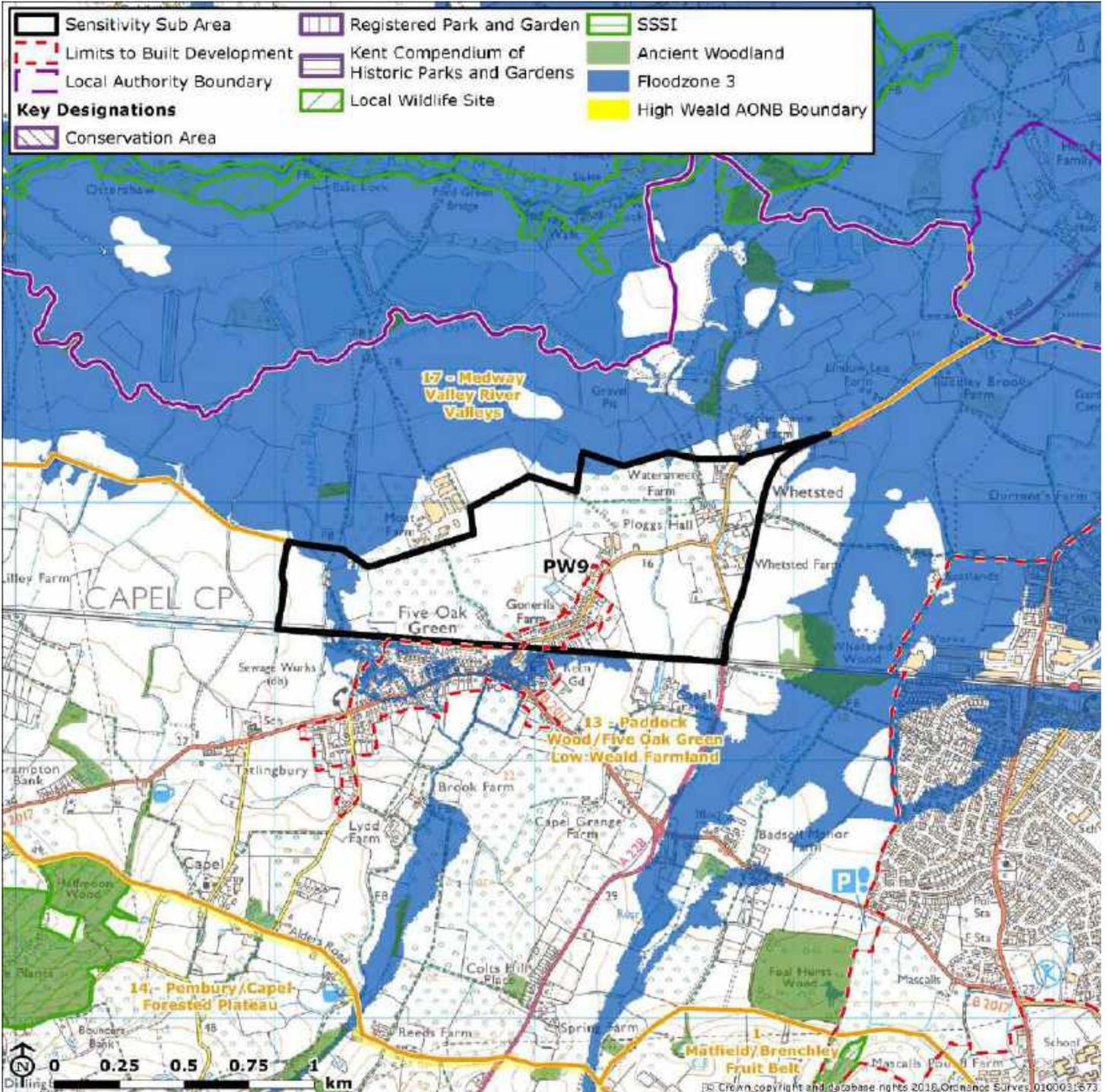
Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW8
Description		Area (Ha) - 199.8
<p>Fields between the western edge of Paddock Wood (extending north to include a stretch of the B2160) and the A228 Maidstone Road. This is primarily an open, large-scale arable landscape, but there are also several woodland blocks: to either side of the South East Main Line, which crosses east-west through the sub-area, and on the urban edge to the north of Eldon Way.</p> <p>The sub-area is largely uninhabited, reflecting that fact that it is largely in the floodplain of Tudeley Brook which runs north-south through it, but there are several farmsteads and isolated dwellings around the margins, such as Badsell Manor Farm on the B2017 (the southern edge of the sub-area) which forms part of a larger cluster of dwellings extending across the road. There is an area of commercial development together with a small group of park homes alongside the A227 to the north of Paddock Wood.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The area has a very flat, open and expansive character, in particular to the north of the railway line, reflecting the extent of the floodplain. Large-scale arable fields are not characteristic of the wider Medway Valley or Low Weald area, and reflect localised change, principally the removal of orchards. Tudeley Brook lacks any significant vegetation to the north of the railway line, reflecting its role as a drainage channel. Whetsted Wood, bisected by the railway line, is valued as an Ancient Woodland and the fields to the south of it, which retain well-treed boundaries, are medieval or early modern in form. A small area of traditional orchard remains to the west of Paddock Wood Garden Centre and Newbridge Park (a park homes site) off the B2160.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>To the south of the railway line, a mature well-treed hedgerow forms the residential western edge of Paddock Wood, but there are similar field boundaries within the parcel and there is no landform distinction between settlement and countryside.</p> <p>Immediately to the north of the railway line there are stronger settlement edges: commercial/industrial development on Eldon Way abuts Tudeley Brook, and woodland and rough grassland that has developed since the 1990's encloses the northern side of Eldon Way.</p> <p>The B2160 forms the north-western edge of the Paddock Wood, adjoining arable fields from which the urban edge, which includes some large commercial buildings, is very visible. Hedgerows offer alternative boundaries in the vicinity of farmsteads at Eastlands and Durrants Farm.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>To the north of the railway line the sub-area provides separation between Paddock Wood and the small village of Whetsted, which in turn has only a narrow belt of farmland separating it from the larger, more urban village of Five Oak Green. The visual openness of the arable farmland increases sensitivity to significant settlement expansion, but more limited development would have less impact in this respect, given the existing intervisibility between the sub-area and the urban edge. There is not a significant level of sensitivity associated with proximity to Eastlands or Durrants Farm: in the former case development would not significantly affect the rural setting of the farmstead, which is screened from the settlement edge by conifers, and in the latter case commercial/industrial uses have already significantly reduced rural character.</p> <p>In the vicinity of the B2017, the sub-area represents the gap between Paddock Wood and the farmstead-focused development at Badsell Manor, which in turn, as a result of sporadic 20th Century roadside development, lacks a strong sense of separation from Five Oak Green.</p>	
Visual character	<p>Tree cover has a strong screening impact in this flat landscape, even from higher ground to the south, so strong views are limited to rights of way in the immediate locality.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>Busy main roads and the visible urban edge minimise any sense of tranquillity, but the large scale, homogeneous, agricultural character of the landscape means that in places there is a strong sense of landscape form – the broad valley contained to the north and south by largely undeveloped hillsides – which strengthens rural character and gives some sense of isolation from the urban edge.</p>	
Historic character	<p>The post-medieval historic landscape pattern is relatively intact to the south of Whetsted Wood and the railway line, with Badsell Manor contributing to historic character. Elsewhere historic character is limited: the field pattern is mostly modern and none of the other historic farmsteads around the sub-area fringes have any listed buildings.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>Large-scale arable farmland is not a valued landscape in the context of the wider Low Weald, but lack of settlement across most of this area, and expansive views towards higher ground from the more open locations, mean that it retains a functional rural character and relationship with the wider landscape</p>		

despite its visible proximity to Paddock Wood. The area as a whole also plays an important role in preserving separation from Five Oak Green and linear development extending out eastwards from it. Sensitivity across most of the sub-area is therefore 'medium-high'. The breadth of the sub-area means that sensitivity to small or medium-scale development scenarios is 'medium' in close proximity to the north-western edge of Paddock Wood, and 'medium-low' where existing tree lines would provide a degree of containment around an extended settlement edge. Sensitivity to more visible, larger scale development scenarios in these areas would be 'medium-high'. Around Eldon Way, where woodland forms a visual screen, and to the south of the railway line, where the historic field pattern is retained and the gap to Five Oak Green is more fragile, there is greater sensitivity, especially to larger scale development scenarios.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p style="margin-top: 5px;">Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p style="margin-top: 5px;">Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p style="margin-top: 5px;">Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures
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Hedgerow and woodland block planting would help to soften any extended settlement edge in the larger arable field next to the B2160.



Representative views



Looking east along the the back of houses on the north side of Whetsted Road towards Gonerils Farm oasts, from the access road to Moat Farm

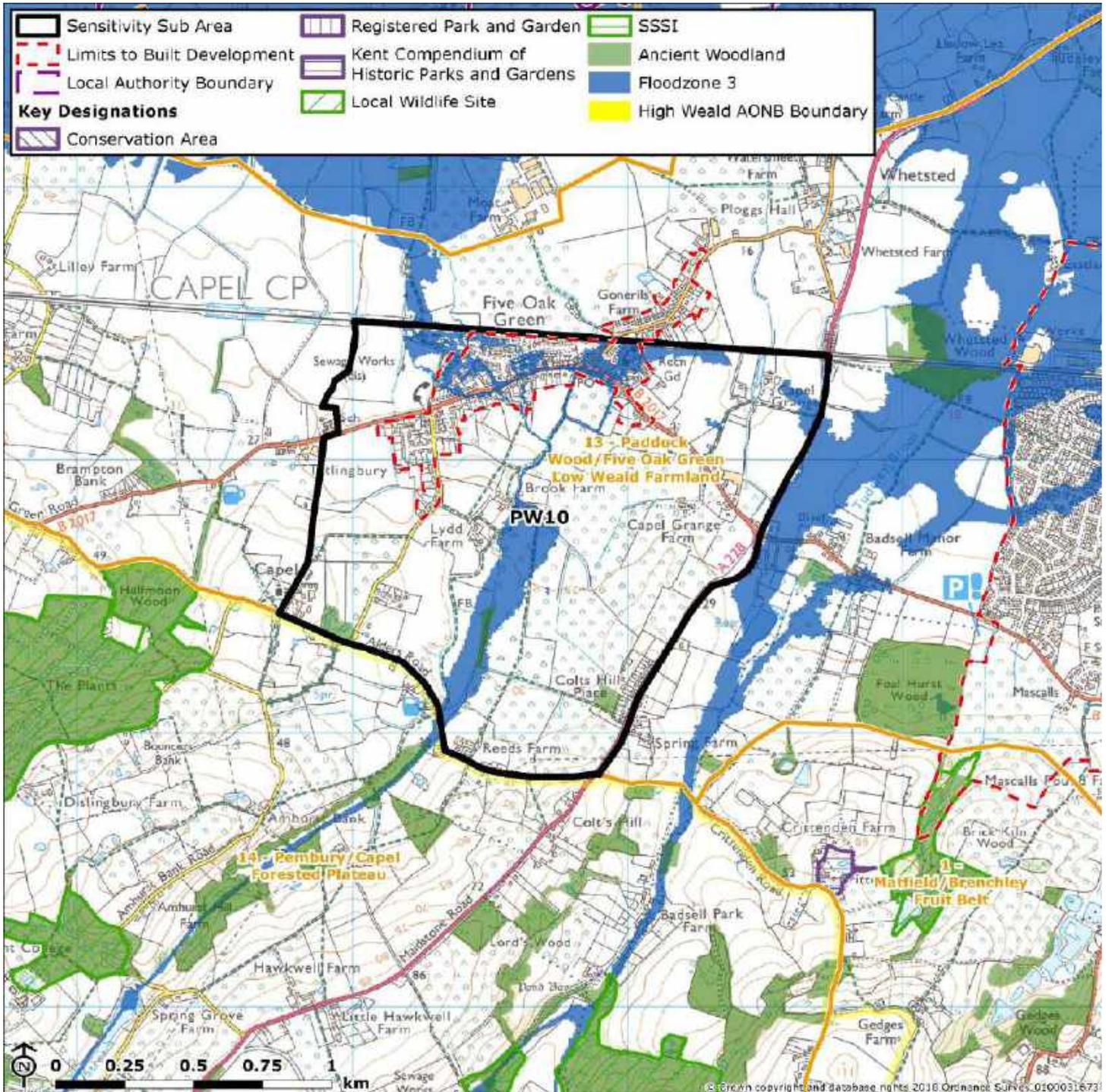
Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW9
Description		Area (Ha) - 101
<p>Land to the north of Five Oak Green, defined by the South East Main Line railway other than where the Limits to Built Development extend further north-east along Whetsted Road. Paddock Wood is c.700m to the east, beyond a belt of open, arable farmland. The A228 Maidstone Road marks the eastern extent of the sub-area, and a field boundary c.350m to the west of the village, adjacent to the Hadlow Place Solar Farm, marks the western edge. The boundary between the <i>Paddock Wood / Five Oak Green Low Weald Farmland</i> LCA and the <i>Medway River</i> LCA has been taken as the northern edge of the study area.</p> <p>The sub-area includes the hamlet of Whetsted, a short distance from the eastern edge of Five Oak Green. Moat Farm, a large, modern farm complex with large fruit storage sheds, lies just beyond the northern edge of the LCA. Much of the land use is orchard fruit, with some arable and also some grazing pastures and paddocks closer to the settlement edges.</p> <p>The Alder Stream, and a tributary, run northward through the western part of the sub-area. The land in between them is floodplain (mostly Flood Zone 2 but Flood Zone 3 close to the tributary channel).</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>This is a very flat and for the most part visually open, agricultural landscape, although tree/hedgerow boundaries create some local screening. It is relatively featureless, but it is a distinctive landscape that relates strongly to the wider Medway Valley.</p> <p>There is a traditional orchard on the south-western edge of Whetsted, and the extensive fruit-growing area at Moat Farm, although modern in form, is characteristic of the area and adds to associations with the AONB.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The railway line and associated tree cover form a distinct boundary to the larger part of Five Oak Green, particular where it runs along an embankment towards the western end of the sub-area, although in places there are views northward from settlement edge dwellings. Development along Whetsted Road, much of it modern, breaches this barrier and, although it retains a linear form, is relatively closely spaced.</p> <p>Whetsted, although close to the edge of Five Oak Green, retains a low-density dispersed form, focused on three farmsteads.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The sub-area provides an expansive rural setting to Five Oak Green, but lacks relationship with the town of Paddock Wood. The openness of land to the east of the village is important in retaining the rural character of Whetsted, and loss of the gap between Five Oak Green and Moat Farm would also increase perception of countryside encroachment. There is a transition between the <i>Low Weald Farmland</i> and the <i>River Valley</i> landscape character types, rather than any clear distinction, although orchards are characteristic of settlement edge locations.</p>	
Visual character	<p>Tree cover has a strong screening impact in this landscape, with woodlands and tree/hedge lines on the valley floor to the north and on the sloping valley sides limiting views into the sub-area from further afield (e.g. from the Medway Valley Walk long distance route). Viewpoints from the Greensand Ridge to the north are too distant for there to be any strong sensitivity to built development adjacent to the existing settlement of Five Oak Green, unless that development was large in scale. Strong views of the sub-area are therefore limited to rights of way in the immediate locality.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The sub-area is perceived as part of a wider agricultural landscape, and there is some sense of separation from urban development towards the northern and western fringes, but this diminishes with proximity to the urban edge north of the railway line. The A228 and railway line are intrusive.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Whetsted has a historic character, with a number of farmsteads and oast groups. Moat Farm is also a historic farmstead, although its large modern storage buildings are detracting elements.</p> <p>The irregular arable fields to the west of the Alder Stream are medieval in origin, and the field adjacent to the traditional orchard on the south-western edge of Whetsted is early post-medieval.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The extent of the valley landscape and absence of distinctive features means that the highest level of sensitivity does not apply to small-scale development in this sub-area, other than to the west of the Alder Stream where there are historic fields and a greater physical separation by the railway line. However the railway line is a significant separating feature between the sub-area and the western end of Five Oak Green, and the arable and orchard fields that make up the majority of the sub-area relate strongly to the wider rural landscape of the Medway Valley. Sensitivity in these areas is therefore 'medium-high'. There is lower sensitivity to development that relates strongly to the existing settlement edge, and which avoids reducing the historic character of Whetsted or encroaching significantly on Moat Farm. Paddocks to the north of Whetsted Road and west of the large apple storage units, and opposite these to the south of the road, are assessed as having 'medium-low' sensitivity to small-scale development scenarios. The field</p>		

to the east of this, separated from the settlement edge by a poplar/alder wind break, has 'medium' sensitivity to small-scale development scenarios. Sensitivity to medium-scale development scenarios is higher, and large-scale development anywhere in the sub-area would have a significant impact on open, rural character.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 Small	H	MH	M	ML	L
 Medium	H	MH	M	ML	L
 Large	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

Hedgerow and woodland block planting would help to soften any extended settlement edges.



Representative views



Looking north-west towards Tolhurst Road on the southern edge of Five Oak Green, from public footpath near Brook Farm

Paddock Wood		Sub-Area PW10
Description		Area (Ha) - 219.7
<p>Land to the south of Five Oak Green and the South East Main Line railway. The A228 Maidstone Road marks the eastern extent of the sub-area, which is c.700m from the town of Paddock Wood. Church Lane and a field boundary to the north of it, c.350m to the west of the village, define the western edge. The boundary along Alders Road between the <i>Paddock Wood / Five Oak Green Low Weald Farmland</i> LCA and the <i>Pembury Forested Plateau</i> LCA has been taken as the northern edge of the study area.</p> <p>There is some arable farmland on the north-eastern and north-western edges of the sub-area, but most of it is under orchard plantation, grazing pasture or the Capel Grange Solar Farm, which has recently replaced c.12ha of orchard. The hamlet of Capel lies in the south-western corner of the sub-area, and there is also housing at Colt's Hill on the A228 on the south-eastern edge. There are three farmsteads to the south of Five Oak Green: Capel Grange, Brook Farm and Lydd Farm, and some scattered development along Alders Road on the southern boundary.</p> <p>Small areas of the sub-area, close to the railway line, alongside the Alder Stream and extending north-east from Brook Farm towards Whetsted, are in floodplain.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>Land immediately to the west, east and south-east of Five Oak Green is flat, but the landform slopes up towards Capel and Colt's Hill, located on ridges extending north from the High Weald. This higher ground has a stronger relationship with the AONB, and therefore greater sensitivity.</p> <p>The area to the south of the village and east of the Alder Stream is characterised by small, strongly hedged fields, associated with the historic farmsteads of Brook Farm and Lydd Farm, which contrast with the larger scale landscape of fruit trees and solar panels at Capel Grange Farm to the east. There is one traditional orchard backing onto houses along the B2017 Badsell Road, but the Capel Grange Farm orchards, although modern in form, are characteristic of the area and add to associations with the AONB. A sizeable area of traditional orchard remains in the south-eastern part of the sub-area, towards Colt's Hill.</p> <p>Sports pitches, allotments and grassland to the east of the village, on the north side of the B2017, have little sensitivity in terms of physical or natural character, and likewise the arable fields to the west of the village.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Most dwellings in Five Oak Green lie to the north of the B2017, with the houses along the southern side of the main road marking the settlement edge; however the western edge of the village extends southwards along Sychem Lane, with residential roads extending off from it to either side. Strength of containment by vegetation along the village's immediate southern edge varies, but the complex of small fields in this area creates a strong buffer to the wider countryside. To the south-east, the Capel Grange Solar Park, with containing hedgerows and retained orchards, also constitutes a strong boundary to the settlement, but there is no significant containment to the east or west of the village.</p> <p>Capel is a small hamlet with a number of listed buildings. It also has a cluster of modern dwellings, Redwood Park, but these are too isolated to have any significant urbanising influence.</p> <p>A close-set row of houses on the A227 Maidstone Road is strongly contained by a small Ancient Woodland block and hedgerows, backed by traditional orchards.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>As a whole, the complex of strongly hedged fields to the south of Five Oak Green, and the associated historic farmsteads, form a strong setting to the village, but the degree of containment means that the impact of development within individual fields would be more limited. The solar farm is largely contained by retained apple orchards, which also form a characteristic setting.</p> <p>Residential dwellings at Capel Grange, in the vicinity of a former farmstead, form an outlying area of low-density development to the east of Five Oak Green, but there is less sensitivity here than would be associated with a more historic collection of farm buildings, and with functioning agricultural land. Along the B2017, modern infill has had some impact on the character of the approach to Five Oak Green from Capel Grange Farm, with pavement extending out as far as the A228 junction.</p> <p>To the west, alongside the railway line, Flinches Farm lies immediately adjacent to a very visible settlement edge, which diminishes its contribution to rural and historic character.</p>	
Visual character	<p>Tree cover has a strong screening impact in this landscape, with woodlands and tree/hedge lines on the valley floor to the north and on the sloping valley sides limiting views into the sub-area from further afield. Strong views of the sub-area are therefore limited to rights of way in the immediate locality.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The visible edges of Five Oak Green and proximity of the B2017 limit perceptual qualities at the eastern and western edges of the village, although the area is essentially rural. To the south, the patchwork of small pasture fields still retains a rural character despite visibility of the settlement edge in places. On the rising ground</p>	

Paddock Wood	Sub-Area PW10
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Perceptual qualities	beyond this, and in the extensive orchard area, there is a stronger sense of rural isolation.
Historic character	Historic farmsteads, with oast houses, and a preserved network of medieval and early post-medieval fields, give a cohesive historic character to the south-western side of Five Oak Green. The farmstead at Tatlingbury, to the west of the village, has sufficient separation from the village to retain its historic character, so there would be sensitivity to development that diminished this separation. Modern development has diminished rural character along the B2017 in the vicinity of Capel Grange Farm, but fields to the north-east of this, adjacent to the A227, are likely to be early post-medieval in form.

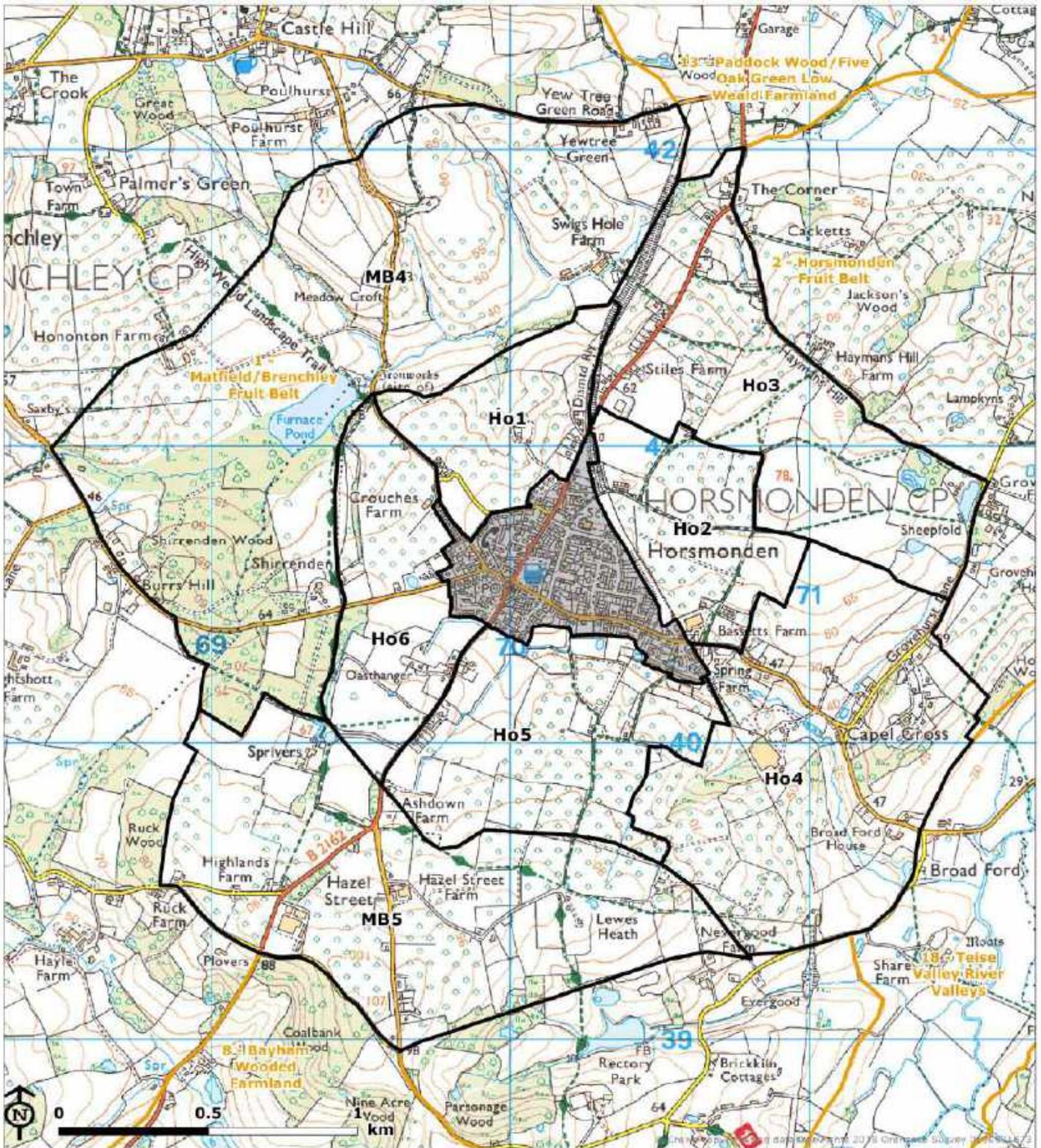
Sensitivity conclusions

Key sensitivities are the rural character and lack of urban influence in the southern half of the sub-area, the landscape and historic value of the preserved patchwork of pasture fields to the south of the village, and the retention of separation between the western edge of the village and Tatlingbury. Sensitivity in relation to these areas is 'medium-high' for small-scale development scenarios, and 'high' for larger scales. To the north of the B2017, sensitivity to residential expansion eastwards, where there are already urban-edge influences, is 'medium-low', rising to 'medium' where it closes the gap between the main body of the village and outlying settlement. To the west there is 'medium' sensitivity to expansion of settlement into the field between the B2017 and Flinches Farm, where the hedgerow would represent a stronger settlement boundary than the existing edge. Sensitivity to medium or large scale development in these areas would be 'high', due to impact on the relationship between the village and its rural setting.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

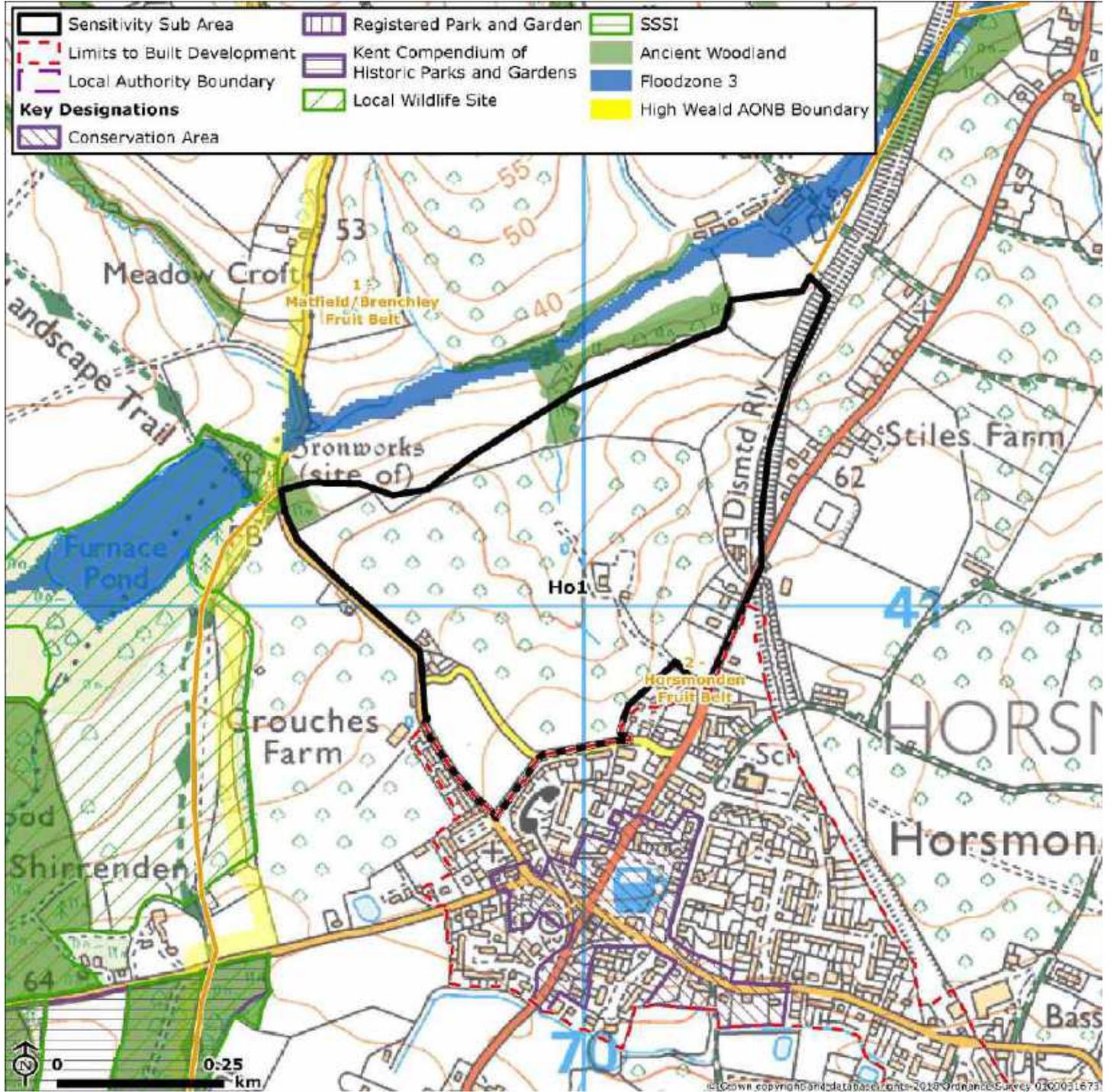
Preservation of an open gap to the south of Flinches Farm, in the same way that a gap has been left to the east, would help preserve some rural character.



District Boundary
 Limits to Built Development
 Sensitivity Sub Areas
 Character Areas

The settlement of Horsmonden is located on the south-facing slope of a valley that conveys a tributary of the River Teise; the northern edge of the village lies at the crest of another valley. A broad, low hill contains the settlement to the east, falling away to the River Teise, whilst Shirrenden Wood provides containment to the west. The study area falls mostly within the *Horsmonden Fruit Belt* LCA, which encompasses the immediate surrounds of the village, but land on the north side of the valley to the north of the village, the woodlands to the west and the higher slopes to the south form part of the *Matfield-Brenchley Fruit Belt*. Horsmonden is outside the AONB with the boundary of the designation close to the southern and eastern edge of the settlement.

Horsmonden was an important centre of the Medieval iron industry – Furnace Pond in the valley to the north of the village is a reminder of this – and later became one of the local centres of hop and fruit growing. Embankments and tree lines marking the course of the Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst Branch Line, the ‘hop-pickers line’, define the eastern edge of the village.



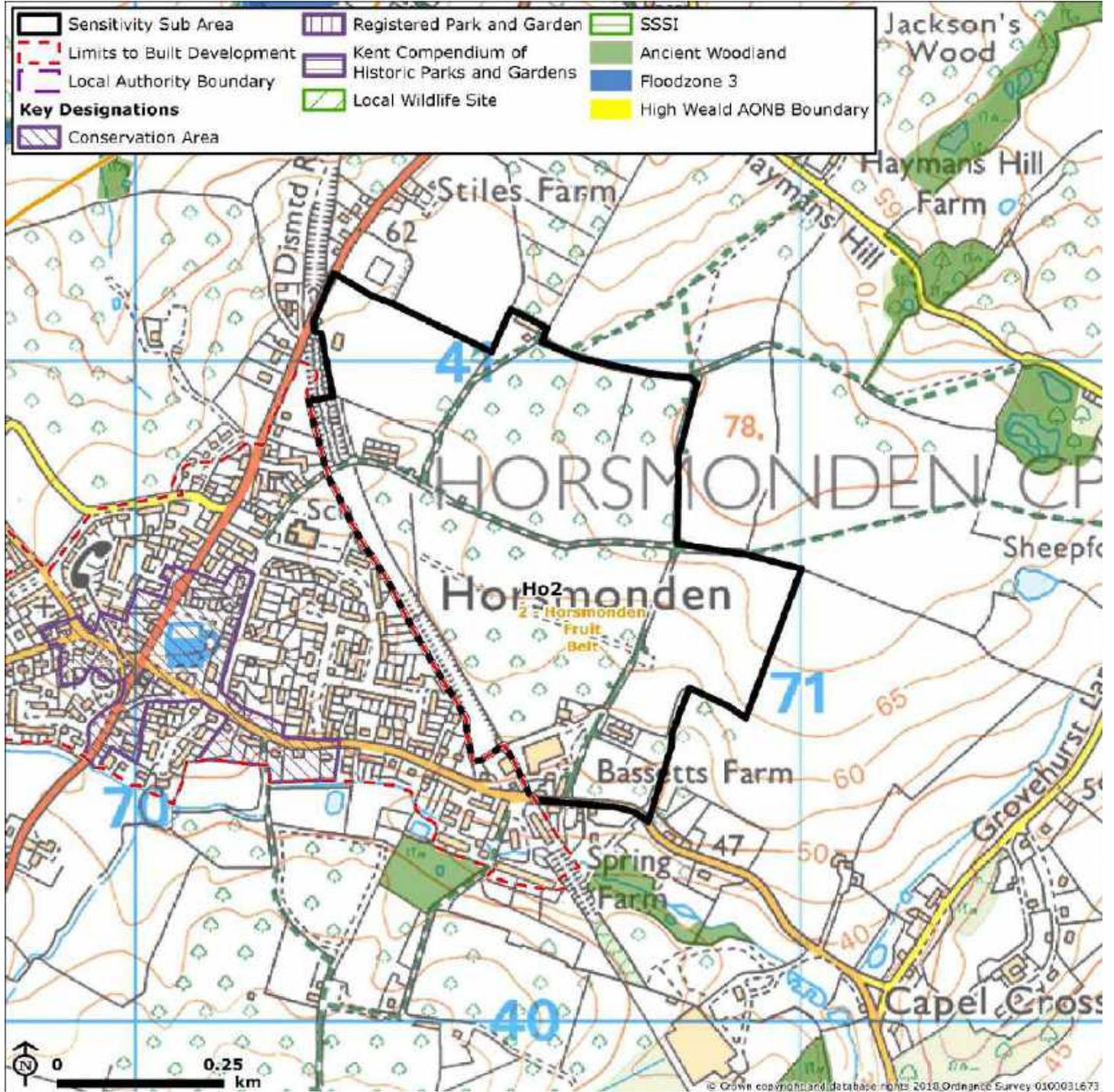
Representative views



Looking north-west from Willard Place towards Brenchley

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho1
Description		Area (Ha) - 30.4
<p>The sub-area consists of land to the north of Horsmonden contained between Furnace Lane to the west, the B2162 Maidstone Road and disused railway line to the east, and the floor of a valley (with a tributary stream of the River Teise) to the north.</p> <p>The area includes a mix of arable and pastoral farmland along with a small area of remaining traditional orchard. There are several farmsteads in the sub-area, a row of houses on Maidstone Road and several dwellings along Furnace Lane. A close of houses, Willard Place, was built in 2013 on the village edge to the north of Gibbet Lane.</p> <p>The sub-area is not in the AONB but abuts it in the north-western corner, adjacent to Furnace Pond.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>There is sensitivity associated with the sub-area's sloping landform: the northern edge of Horsmonden lies along the crest of the valley, into which a tributary valley dips south from the settlement edge.</p> <p>There is less sensitivity associated with land use, other than where there is a remnant of traditional orchard along the eastern edge of the sub-area. A much larger area of traditional orchard occupied, until c.4 years ago, what is now the large arable field at the centre of the sub-area. Some of the woodland that lies along the valley floor is classified as Ancient.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The slope crest on the southern edge of the sub-area marks a clear distinction between settlement and countryside, so advancement beyond this would represent a significant change in settlement form. Kirkins farmstead, set on the slope of the tributary valley, retains a strong sense of separation from the urban edge. Ridgetop development on Maidstone Road has a stronger association with the village, but topography isolates it from the rest of the sub-area.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The openness of the valley of which this sub-area forms the southern slopes identifies Horsmonden as a plateau village, distinct from the agricultural landscape to the north. Retention of a gap between the village and Kirkins farmstead is important in avoiding any sense of encroachment on the agricultural setting of the Horsmonden, and lack of development in this area is also important to the village's separation from Brenchley, which has a prominent hilltop setting to the north-east.</p>	
Visual character	<p>Although to an extent screened by tree cover, Horsmonden has a distinctive setting between hilltops to the south and north-east. The openness of this sub-area is important in providing views across the valley to the village. The High Weald Landscape Trail, passing along the eastern side of Shirrenden Wood, past Furnace Pond and through the orchards towards Brenchley, is an important visual receptor.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>Modern houses are prominent on the edge of Horsmonden, but the valley landform preserves a sense of rural distinction from the village. Urban influence is stronger in the field at the south-western corner of the sub-area, between Furnace Lane and Gibbet Lane, which is contained by residential development on three sides.</p>	
Historic character	<p>The Kirkins farmstead has a number of listed buildings, including an oast, and is prominent in the setting of Horsmonden. Fields on the valley floor, in part contained by Ancient Woodland, are Medieval assarts, and there is some remnant traditional orchard to the east of Kirkins.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>Most of the sub-area has 'high' sensitivity to built development in terms of its landform, which creates a distinction from the plateau village of Horsmonden, and gives it a role as a setting for both Horsmonden and Brenchley. The open slopes of the sub-area are visible from the AONB, including views from the High Weald Landscape Trail, and Kirkins farmstead and the remaining fruit-growing within the sub-area also contribute to associations with the AONB-designated landscape nearby.</p> <p>The field in the south-western corner of the sub-area, between Furnace Lane and Gibbet Lane, has 'moderate' landscape sensitivity to small-scale development. Its more gently-sloping, elevated location, and the extent of development north along Furnace Lane, give it a stronger association with the settlement form.</p>		

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho1			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>Across most of the sub-area there is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. In the south-western corner it would be important to limit any sense of development extending down from the plateau into the valley. Reducing built density towards the northern end of the field, and breaking up built mass with tree planting, would assist in this respect.</p>					

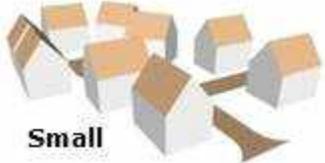
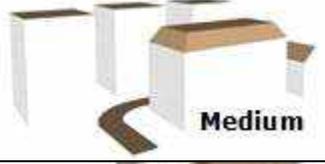


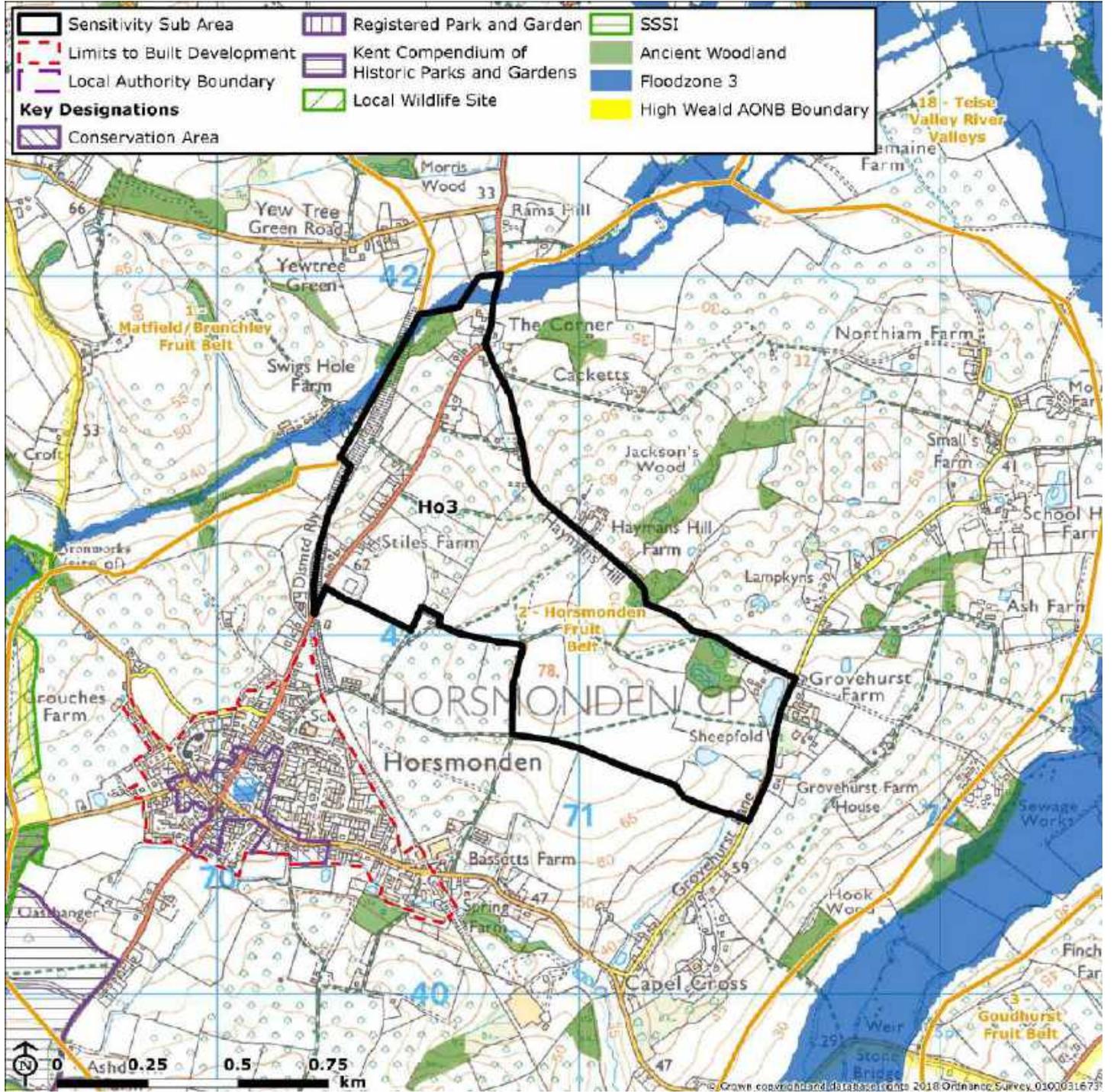
Representative views



Loking south from the ridge-crest to the east of Horsmonden toward the south-eastern edge of the village on Goudhurst Road

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho2
Description		Area (Ha) - 34.2
<p>The sub-area consists of land to the east of Horsmonden, contained between the B2162 Maidstone Road to the north and Goudhurst Road to the south, sloping generally towards the village edge. The disused Hawkhurst Branch Railway line marks Horsmonden's Limits to Built Development.</p> <p>The area is mostly orchard planting, but also includes, in its north-western corner, the village recreation ground. Built development is limited to the buildings of Bassetts Farm, alongside Goudhurst Road, a large fruit storage shed close to Upper Hayman's Farm, the cricket club pavillion and several cottages close to the village edge near the primary school.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The slopes of the sub-area are relatively gentle, and consistent with the landform on which the village is located.</p> <p>Orchards are recognised as a locally distinctive component of landscape character in the High Weald AONB, and although the sub-area is outside of the AONB, and lacking the steeper terrain of the High Weald with which fruit growing is often associated, this land use creates some association with the designated area.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The former railway line and lines of trees to either side of it mark a clear and consistent boundary between Horsmonden and the sub-area, although the role of this feature in defining the village edge is weakened somewhat along Maidstone Road, where sporadic development continues eastwards beyond it. Towards the northern end of the sub-area the course of the railway is embanked, and towards the southern end it runs in cut, with both physical forms adding to the distinction between settlement and countryside. The dwellings to the east of the tree line near Horsmonden Primary School, located along an unmade track, are distinct from the settlement edge and do not represent a significant urbanising influence on the sub-area.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>Tree cover along the edge of Horsmonden, and the moderate slope angle, mean that the sub-area does not form a strong visual element in the setting of the village, but the orchards that occupy most of the area, consistent with land use to the south and west of Horsmonden, makes a positive contribution to local character.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The sub-area is fairly well contained between the village-edge tree lines and the low hilltop to the east, so its contribution to inward views is limited. However there is a strong network of public rights of way crossing the area, from which rural character and the absence of urban influence can be appreciated.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The village is largely screened by tree cover along the former railway line, and where houses are visible looking south down the hillside towards Goudhurst Road they have a valley location distinct from the undeveloped slopes of the sub-area. Most of the area therefore, whilst not isolated from human influence, retains a rural character, although urban-edge associations are slightly stronger in the vicinity of the recreation ground where housing extends, albeit at a low density, north-eastwards along Maidstone Road. Floodlit tennis courts immediately to the east of the recreation ground are also an urbanising influence.</p>	
Historic character	<p>There are no historic field patterns within the sub-area, but the Hawkhurst Branch railway, the 'hop-pickers line', has cultural heritage interest and is recognised as an ecological and potential recreational resource. Bassetts Farm, whilst itself lacking any strong historic character, forms part of a broader group of buildings (mostly to the south of Goudhurst Road, including oast houses) that do give a historic, rural character to the south-eastern edge of Horsmonden. Stiles Farm is located close to the vilage edge on Maidstone Road, but its farmhouse and oast are attractive historic buildings in the local vernacular that contribute to the sense of transition from urban to rural.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The former railway line, with associated tree cover and banks, serves to strengthen the rural character of the sub-area, by creating a clear distinction between the village and the countryside, and is a valued landscape element in its own right. Orchard land use contributes to local character, so sensitivity to built development across most of the sub-area is 'high'.</p> <p>The sub-area is relatively contained in the wider landscape, so where urban edge influence is stronger, in the vicinity of the recreation ground adjacent to Maidstone Road, sensitivity is slightly lower; but the former railway line nonetheless forms a significant boundary to urban development.</p>		

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho2			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>Across most of the sub-area there is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.</p> <p>Were development to take place to the east of the former railway line, it would be important to minimise any loss of integrity of the tree corridor that marks its route, which has value as an ecological and potentially a recreational resource, and which contributes to the wooded backdrop of the village in views from the north and west.</p>					



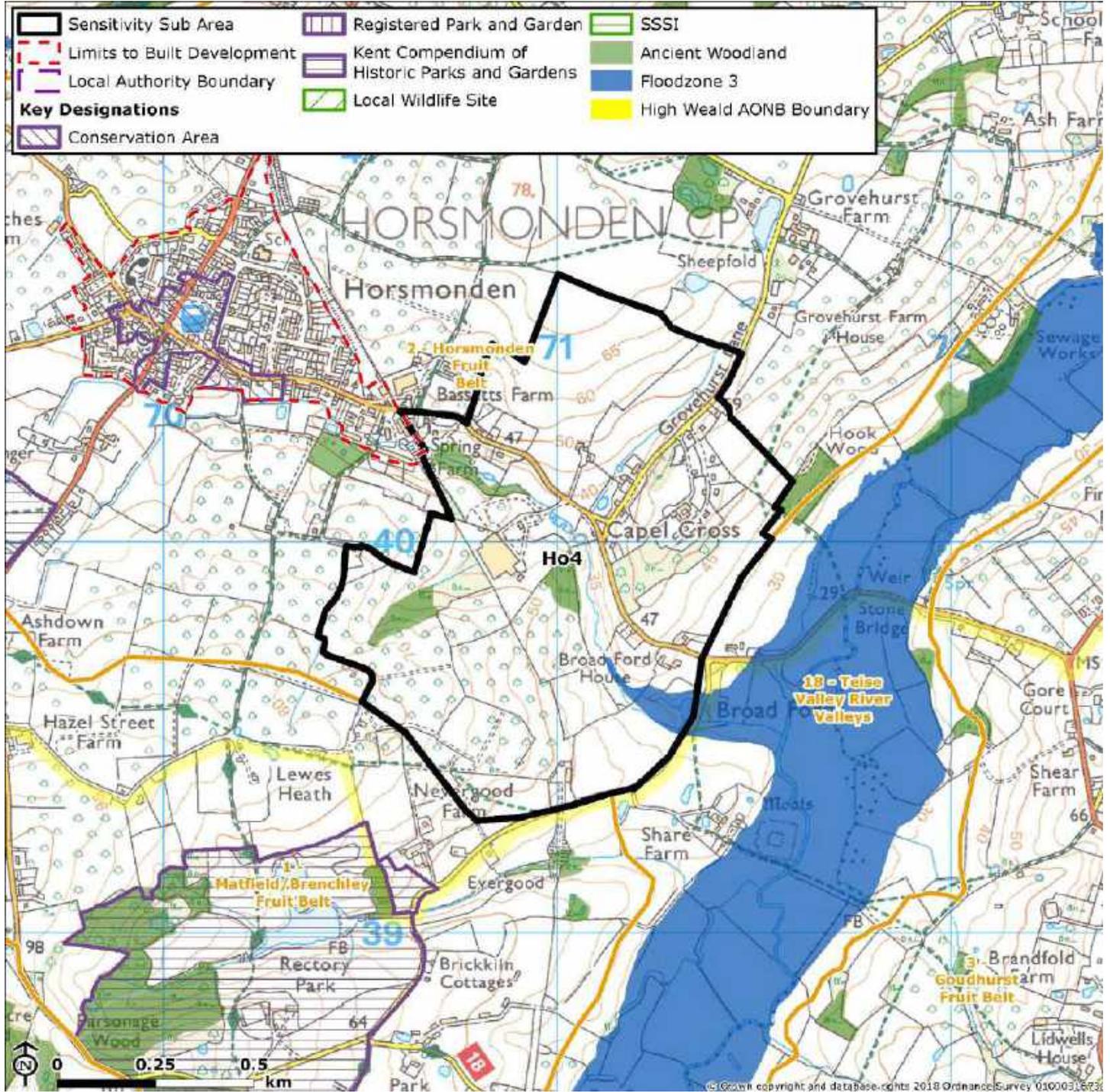
Representative views



Looking east towards Haymans Hill Farm

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho3
Description		Area (Ha) - 77.3
<p>The sub-area comprises the north and east-facing slopes of a hill to the east of Horsmonden, contained between the densely-treed embankment of the former Hawkhurst Branch Railway to the north-west, Haymans Hill to the north-east and Grovehurst Lane to the south-east. The west-facing slopes between the sub-area and the edge of Horsmonden are assessed separately as sub-area Ho2.</p> <p>Orchards are the principal land use other than at the western end of the sub-area, to either side of the B2162 Maidstone Road, and at the eastern end adjacent to Grovehurst Lane, where grassland predominates. There are several farmsteads and isolated dwellings within or adjacent to the sub-area, and sporadic development extending out from Horsmonden along Maidstone Road, including a line of 12 semi-detached pre-War houses, a church and floodlit tennis courts (the latter separated from the village's defined Limits of Built Development by a recreation ground within sub-area Ho2).</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The southern end of the sub-area is for the most part relatively flat, forming a broad hilltop, but it falls away more steeply towards its eastern edges, along Haymans Hill and Grovehurst Lane. The northern part of the sub-area forms a spur and valley sloping north down towards a tributary of the River Teise. There is greater sensitivity associated with the steeper slopes.</p> <p>Orchards are recognised as a locally distinctive component of landscape character in the High Weald AONB, and although the sub-area is outside of the AONB there is not a strong distinction between the landscape in this area, particular where the orchards are on steeper slopes, and that within the designated area. There is also high sensitivity associated with two blocks of ancient woodland located on the slopes above Haymans Hill.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Most of the sub-area has a strong sense of separation from the village of Horsmonden, being either elevated plateau farmland and orchards, or east and north-facing slopes. There is a slighter stronger association with the village at the northern end of the parcel, where housing extends out along Maidstone Road, but the relatively steep slopes down towards the former railway line nonetheless create a clear distinction from the main body of the village (housing along Maidstone Road is also defined as outside of Horsmonden's Limits to Built Development).</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The sub-area's separation from Horsmonden means that it does not form part of the villages' immediate visual setting, but the open orchards and farmland on the plateau form part of the expansive setting of Goudhurst, a hilltop village within the AONB to the south/east of the Teise Valley.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The higher parts of the sub-area are just visible from AONB high ground to the north-west, at Castle Hill, above tree cover along the former railway line, and there are more open views from the edge of Goudhurst. Horsmonden is largely screened from views by tree cover, so development on the plateau would appear remote from any other substantial settlement. Public rights of way within the sub-area provide reciprocal views, particularly across the Teise Valley from the eastern edge of the plateau.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The plateau and east-facing slopes provide a strong sense of rurality, and remoteness from urbanising influences. This is weaker in the immediate vicinity of Maidstone Road, but the sloping landform means that the fringes of the sub-area alongside the former railway line still retain a sense of separation from built development.</p>	
Historic character	<p>There are no historic field patterns within the sub-area, but the Hawkhurst Branch railway, the 'hop-pickers line', has cultural heritage interest and is recognised as an ecological and potential recreational resource. Westernhanger and Tolls Cottage are historic farmsteads that add character to the northern end of the sub-area, and the buildings of Haymans Hill Farm and Grovehurst Farm, although just outside of the defined sub-area, are listed structures that contribute to historic character within it.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The sub-area has a strong sense of separation from Horsmonden. Development on the steeper slopes would diminish the rural and historic character of the lanes that border the sub-area, and the hilltop plateau is visually sensitive, particular in relation to views from Goudhurst in the AONB.</p>		

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho3			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.</p>					

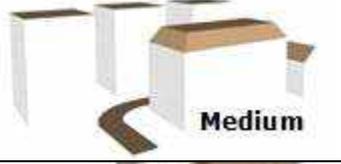


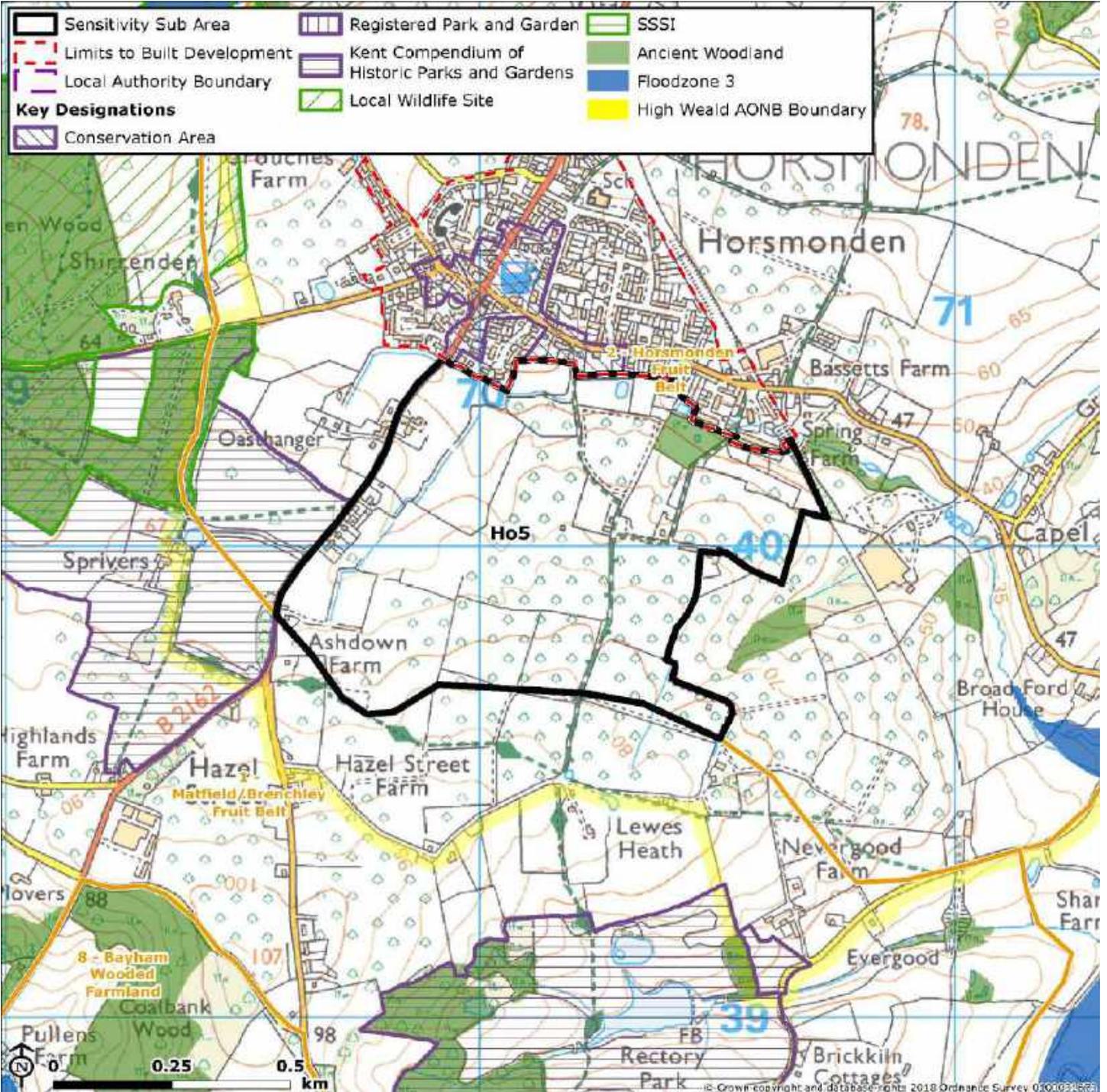
Representative views



Looking towards Horsmonden from the edge of Goudhurst, although the village is largely hidden from view by landform and vegetation. The approximate location of the sub-area is edged in red.

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho4
Description		Area (Ha) - 99.5
<p>The sub-area is centred on the hamlet of Capel Cross, along Goudhurst Road and Grovehurst Lane to the east of Horsmonden. It comprises land sloping down from all sides to the two roads, both of which follow stream valleys. There are orchards and grazing paddocks/pastures but also a strong woodland component. There is scattered development along the valley floor roads, largely of a historic character but including a modern fruit storage facility, and a farmstead and larger dwelling (Capel Manor House), set higher on the slopes. Brick Kiln Lane along the south-eastern edge of the sub-area mark the edge of the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The valley topography here is considered sensitive to built development. The historic centre of Horsmonden lies along the same lower valley side as Goudhurst Road within the sub-area, but the slopes here are typically steeper, and tree cover provides additional constraint.</p> <p>Orchards are recognised as a locally distinctive component of landscape character in the High Weald AONB, and although the sub-area is outside of the AONB this land use creates some association with the designated area. A greater value is attached to two remaining areas or traditional orchard to the west of Goudhurst Road, and there are also several small fragments of ancient woodland.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The sub-area abuts Horsmonden's defined Limits to Built Development alongside Bassetts Farm, which along with some historic farmstead buildings to the south of Goudhurst Road, backed by woodland, marks a transition from urban to rural. The defined settlement edge also follows the former Hawkhurst Branch Line, although its course is only visible, marked by tree cover, for a short distance south of Goudhurst Road. The sub-area is well-settled, but dwellings are low-density and rural in pattern, lacking any strong relationship with Horsmonden.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>Tree cover and orchards in the sub-area make a positive contribution to the wider rural setting of Horsmonden, but the lower slopes towards the centre of the sub-area are very contained by landform and tree cover, and lack relationship with the village. The sub-area also contributes to the wider rural setting of Goudhurst, within the AONB.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The sub-area is very contained, no significant views into it from local public rights of way and limited views from the well-hedged valley floor roads. In longer views from high ground on the edge of Goudhurst, in the AONB, Horsmonden is largely hidden from view and the sub-area's appearance is largely wooded; but buildings on its higher fringes would potentially be visible.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The relatively busy Goudhurst Road detracts from tranquility, but houses along it and on Grovehurst Lane are predominantly of a traditional character, with a number of listed buildings. Strong tree cover preserves rural character away from the road.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Historic buildings, fragments of ancient woodland and traditional orchards give the sub-area some historic character. There are some early post-Medieval fields close to the valley floor but the orchard land-use across much of the area has cleared earlier field patterns.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>Existing settlement is rural in character, and landform and tree cover, whilst providing a degree of containment, also create separation from Horsmonden and form a relatively small-scale landscape that is sensitive to further built development of any scale. There is also sensitivity associated with the sub-area's role as part of the setting of the AONB, including the wider rural setting of the historic hill-top village of Goudhurst.</p>		

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho4			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.</p>					



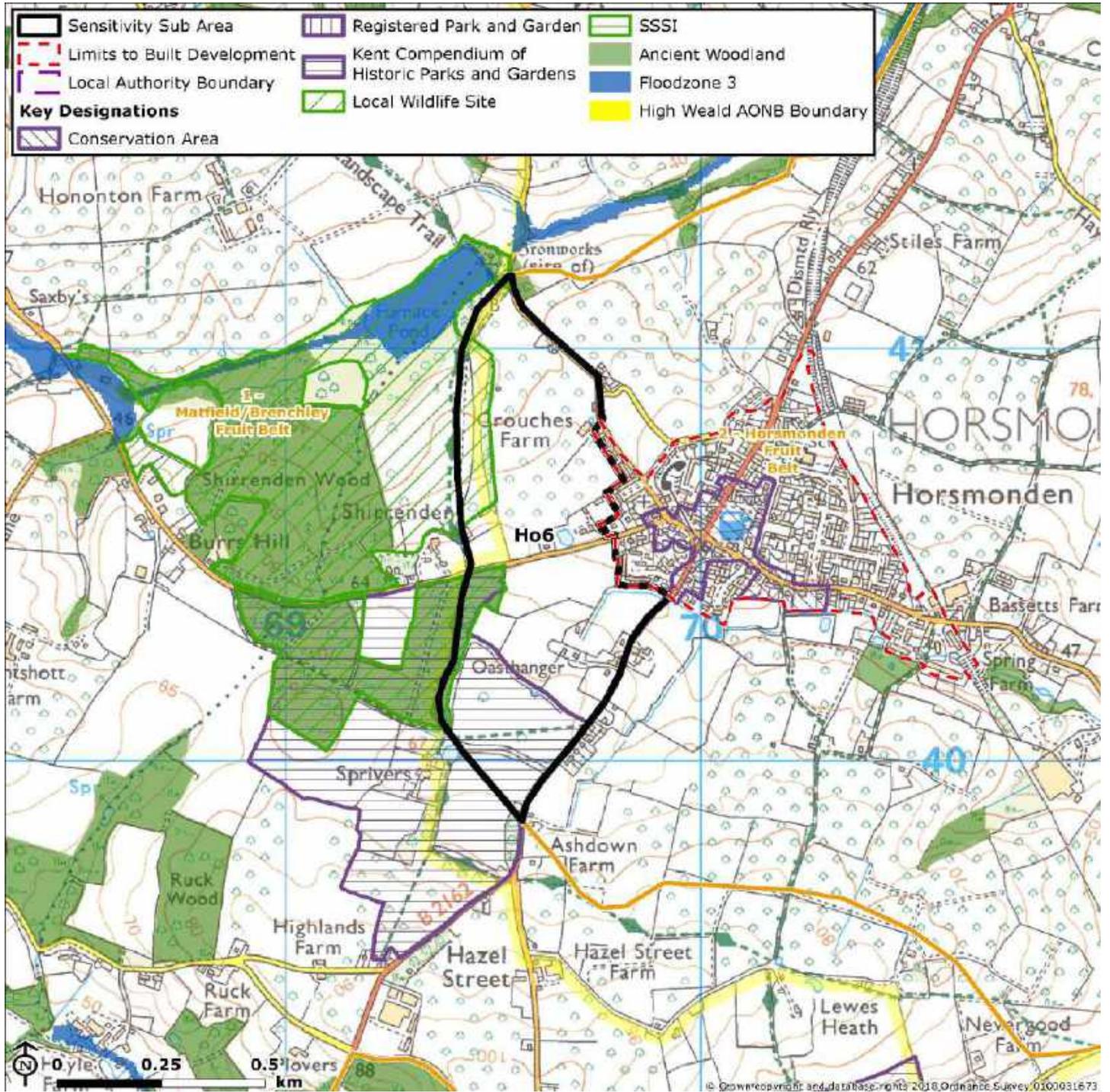
Representative views



Looking north towards Horsmonden from orchard just south of the sub-area boundary

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho5
Description		Area (Ha) - 57.4
<p>Gently undulating slopes, predominantly orchards, rising south from the valley-floor watercourse which marks the southern edge of Horsmonden. The B2162 Lamberhurst Road marks the western edge of the sub-area whilst the eastern boundary reflects the approximate change from slopes facing north towards the village to slopes facing east towards the hamlets of Capel Manor and Broad Ford. The southern boundary, which doesn't follow any specific physical landscape features, marks the change in Borough landscape character area from the Horsmonden Fruit Belt to the Matfield-Brenchley Fruit Belt. The AONB boundary lies only a short distance to the south of this.</p> <p>In addition to apple orchards there is hop cultivation on the western edge of the sub-area. Built development is mostly limited to the western edge the area: a row of semi-detached pre-War houses adjacent to an older cottage on Lamberhurst Road, and several farmsteads along the same road; however there are also several isolated modern dwellings largely contained by orchards close to the south-eastern corner of Horsmonden.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	The topography is relatively gentle and therefore not highly sensitive to built development, but orchards and hop gardens are recognised as a locally distinctive component of landscape character in the High Weald AONB, and although the sub-area is outside of the AONB this land use creates some association with the nearby designated area. There is also value attached to the small block of ancient woodland alongside the settlement edge to the south of Olivers Court, and to a lesser extent to well-treed hedgerows with which it is contiguous.	
Settlement form and edge	The sub-area abuts Horsmonden's defined Limits to Built Development along the floor of a relatively shallow valley, with urban development contained, with the exception of short rows of modern houses along the southern ends of Olivers Court and Lamberts Place, to the north of the valley floor stream (a tributary of the River Teise). Strong tree cover along and to the south of the stream combines with topography to define a clear southern edge to the village. Along Lamberhurst Road there is a distinct gap between the village edge and historic farmsteads to either side of the road c.150m to the south.	
Settlement setting	Facing Horsmonden across the valley, the sub-area's orchards form a rural, agricultural setting to the village.	
Visual character	The sub-area's orientation towards Horsmonden to an extent screens it from wider view, including most of the AONB to the south. However there are views from the High Weald Landscape Trail within the AONB on higher slopes to the north-west, around Palmer's Green, in which the rising orchard-covered slopes form a distinctive setting to the AONB ridgeline beyond. There are also distant views from high ground to the north of the Medway Valley, but visual sensitivity at this distance is likely to be limited. The High Weald Landscape Trail also passes close to the southern edge of the sub-area, providing strong views of the rural setting of Horsmonden, and another public right of way crosses the area north-south.	
Perceptual qualities	Much of the sub-area has a visual relationship with modern development in Horsmonden that can be considered to detract from scenic values, but its elevation or, on the northern fringes, its well-treed boundary, provide a sense of rural separation from the settlement. None of the development within the parcel represents significant urban intrusion.	
Historic character	Historic buildings, fragments of ancient woodland and traditional orchards give the sub-area some historic character. Historic character is relatively strong along the western fringe of the sub-area, where fields adjacent to historic farmsteads on Lamberhurst Road, largely used for hop-growing, are identified as Medieval co-axial fields and aggregated assarts. Elsewhere the orchard land-use has largely cleared earlier field patterns, but where the village conservation area abuts the sub-area the openness of adjacent fields can still be considered to contribute to historic character.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The sub-area is clearly separated from Horsmonden by topography and land cover, and forms an important part of the village's rural setting. Its land uses, apple orchards and hop-growing, are characteristic of the High Weald and contribute to the setting of the adjacent AONB and to views from the High Weald Landscape Trail, which passes close by. Historic farmsteads and field boundaries add sensitivity along the western edge of the sub-area.</p>		

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho5			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.</p>					

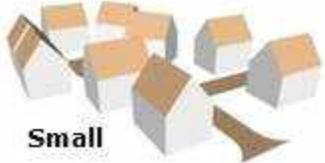
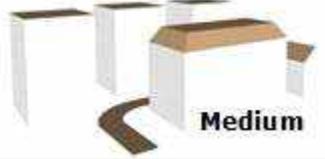


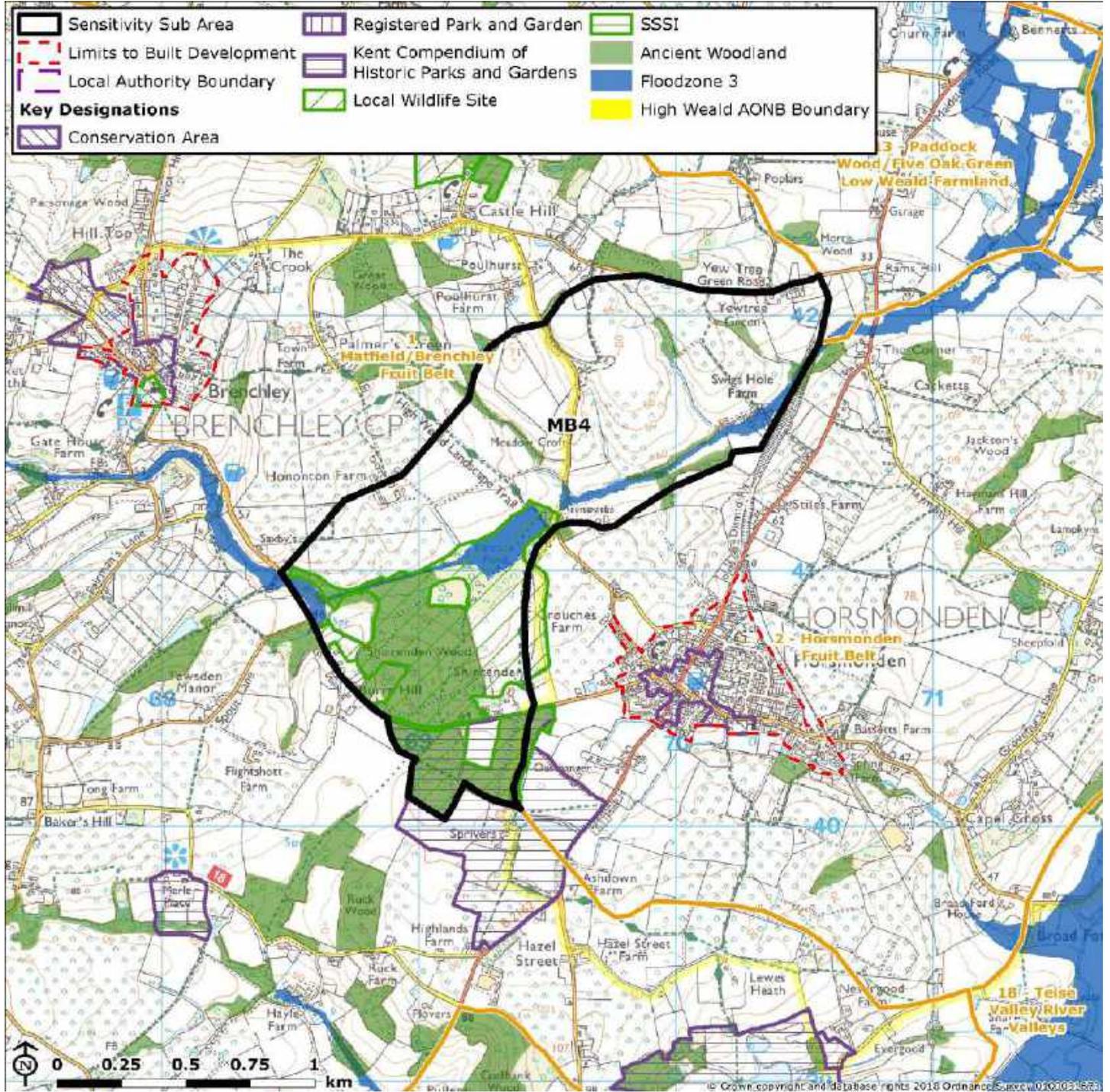
Representative views



Looking east from Brenchley Road towards the settlement edge on Fromandez Drive

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho6
Description		Area (Ha) - 40.4
<p>Land on the western side of Horsmonden, sloping very gently down from south to north. Furnace Lane and Lamberhurst Road define the eastern side of the sub-area to the north and south of the village respectively. The western edge of the sub-area follows the boundary between the Horsmonden Fruit Belt and the Matfield-Brenchley Fruit Belt landscape character areas, but also aligns fairly closely to the edge of the AONB. The fringes of the area are marked by woodland and a strong tree belt, linking to the more extensive Shirrenden Wood to the west.</p> <p>Brenchley Road crosses east-west through the sub-area, with land to the north largely fruit-growing and land to the south mostly well-hedged grassland. Development is limited to isolated dwellings and farmsteads, notably the Oasthanger farmstead and adjacent historic dwellings along Lamberhurst Road. Two large houses in extensive grounds, Shirrenden and Sprivers, lie just to the west of, but well-screened from, the sub-area.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The topography is for the most part relatively flat and and therefore not highly sensitive to built development. Orchards are recognised as a locally distinctive component of landscape character in the High Weald AONB, and although the sub-area is outside of the AONB this land use creates some association with the adjacent designated area. There is also value attached to a belt of ancient woodland along the western edge of the sub-area to the south of Brenchley Road, and to the adjoining well-treed field boundaries and several mature parkland trees within those fields.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>There is no strong boundary feature to provide separation between the edge of Horsmonden and the sub-area, other than along the south-western edge of the village where a stream forms a consistent boundary both here and to the east of Lamberhurst Road. At the northern end of the village, the buildings of Crouches Farm lie immediately adjacent to houses within the defined Limits to Built Development along Furnace Lane, and on Brenchley Road there are several dwellings in large plots adjacent to the defined settlement edge. To the south, in addition to the stream, a well-hedged field separates Oasthanger from the village edge.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The sub-area's fields provide an open, rural setting to the western side of Horsmonden, to which trees along the edges of Shirrenden and Sprivers provide an attractive wooded backdrop.</p>	
Visual character	<p>Woodlands to west and north, and Horsmonden to the east, provide relatively strong containment, so the sub-area is not widely visible from the surrounding countryside. There are no public rights of way within the sub-area other than the High Weald Landscape Trail, which passes through woodland along the western boundary and so has no significant eastward views, and a footpath crossing the southernmost field.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>A few modern houses are visible along the settlement edge to the south of Brenchley Road, but these do not represent a strong urbanising influence on what is principally a rural landscape. Woodland and strong hedgerows provide containment that increases seclusion but also limits the scenic qualities provided by longer views. Parkland trees enhance landscape character at the southern end of the sub-area.</p>	
Historic character	<p>The fields at the southern end of the sub-area, containing several mature parkland trees, are part of the Sprivers estate and listed in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens. The late Medieval house at Sprivers lies just to the west. A cluster of historic buildings alongside the Oasthanger farmstead, close to Lamberhurst Road, add to historic character in this part of the sub-area.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The historic parkland character of the southern part of the sub-area, the presence of nearby historic buildings around Oasthanger and the physical and visual separation of this area from the urban edge make it very sensitive to built development. The strongly-hedged field to the south of the urban edge provides separation between Oasthanger and the village, and the stream along the village edge also forms a consistent boundary to the east of Lamberhurst Road, so this area is also of high sensitivity. The lower slopes at the northern end of the sub-area have sufficient separation from Horsmonden to also be considered of high sensitivity to development, but the field immediately to the south of Brenchley Road, and the orchards to the north, are assessed as having moderate-high sensitivity to small-scale development. These areas form a rural setting to Horsmonden but are contained within the wider landscape and have a slightly stronger relationship with the village. Strong tree cover protects the more isolated character of the AONB parklands to the west.</p>		

Horsmonden		Sub-Area Ho6			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>A buffer area should be retained between any new development and the ancient woodland on the western edge of the sub-area south of Lamberhurst Road. To the north of Lamberhurst Road it would be important to minimise any visibility of houses from the High Weald Landscape Trail beyond the tree line to the west.</p>					

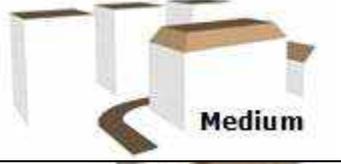


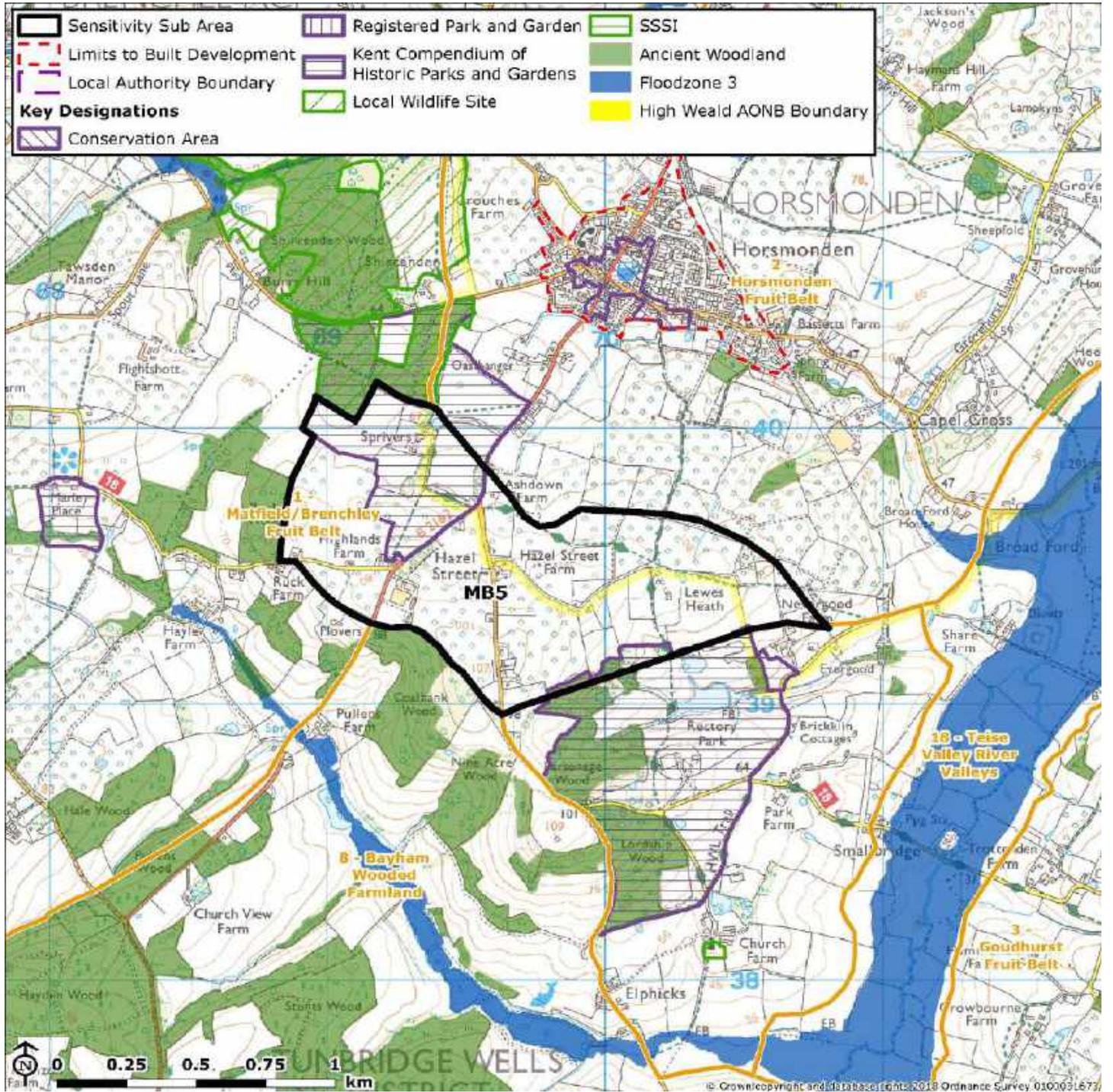
Representative views



Looking south-east towards houses on Kirkins Close, from the High Weald Landscape Trail north of Furnace Pond

Horsmonden		Sub-Area MB4
Description		Area (Ha) - 189.8
<p>The boundary between the <i>Matfield / Brenchley Fruit Belt</i> LCA and the northern edge of the <i>Horsmonden Fruit Belt</i> LCA approximates to a stream valley that feeds into the River Teise several miles to the north-east of Horsmonden. To the west the boundary between the two LCAs broadly follows the eastern edge of Shirrenden Wood. The southern edge of the wood also defines the edge of this sub-area.</p> <p>Most of the sub-area to the south of the valley floor is wooded, with pockets of pasture, whilst the northern slopes are a mixture of orchards, arable and pasture. Habitation is limited to isolated farmsteads.</p> <p>The AONB boundary runs north-south through the sub-area, with Shirrenden Wood and land on the north side of the valley to the west of Furnace Lane included in the designated area.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	There is sensitivity associated with the landform, with tributary valleys cutting into the main valley from the north. Land uses are also sensitive, in particular in the AONB where Shirrenden Park and Woods, designated an SSSI, have Ancient Woodland and wildflower grasslands (both characteristic features of the High Weald AONB). The larger hammer pond on the northern edge of the wood is also a distinctive landscape element. There are no remaining traditional orchards in the sub-area, but modern orchard planting is still a valued characteristic of the locality and the AONB.	
Settlement form and edge	Shirrenden Wood, the wooded valley floor to the east and the undeveloped lower slopes between the valley floor and Horsmonden create strong separation between the sub-area and the village. There is some outlying development on the northern edge of the village, along the B2162 Maidstone Road, that is close to the sub-area edge, but the high wooded embankment of the former Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst branch line (the 'Hop Pickers line') and sloping terrain down from the main road form very strong separation. Development within the sub-area is limited to farmsteads and isolated houses.	
Settlement setting	The rising slopes of the sub-area form a rural backdrop to the northern edge of the village, clearly separated from it by the tree-lined valley floor, and Shirrenden Wood forms the backdrop to views westwards. Lack of development in these areas is important to the character of Horsmonden, and to its separation from Brenchley which has a prominent hilltop setting to the north-east.	
Visual character	Although to an extent screened by tree cover, Horsmonden has a distinctive setting between hilltops to the south and north-east. The openness of this sub-area is important in providing views across the valley to the village, and even more so in preserving the hilltop character of Brenchley. The High Weald Landscape Trail, passing along the eastern side of Shirrenden Wood, past Furnace Pond and through the orchards towards Brenchley, is an important visual receptor.	
Perceptual qualities	The sub-area has a strong rural character, isolated from any significant urbanising influences and from major roads.	
Historic character	The sub-area has several historic farmsteads, such as Swigs Hole and Wrangling Green. The Furnace Pond, indicating the former location of an ironworks, is a characteristic element of the High Weald's historic character, as is the adjacent Ancient Woodland at Shirrenden. Woodland at the southern end of the sub-area, to the south of Brenchley Road, form part of the historic Sprivers estate: a 15th Century manor house with gardens retaining elements from the 16th Century onwards, which is listed in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens. The former 'Hop Pickers line' is a prominent historic landscape element along the eastern edge of the sub-area, where it runs along a high, wooded embankment across the valley.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>This sub-area is sensitive to any form of development. It is sensitive in terms of its landform, its separation from Horsmonden, its historic elements and its role as a setting for both Horsmonden and Brenchley, visible from one of the principal long-distance routes that passes across the High Weald. The value of its physical and natural attributes is reflected the inclusion of much of the sub-area within the AONB, and that part which is not within it nonetheless forms a significant element in the setting of those parts which are.</p>		

Horsmonden		Sub-Area MB4			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.</p>					



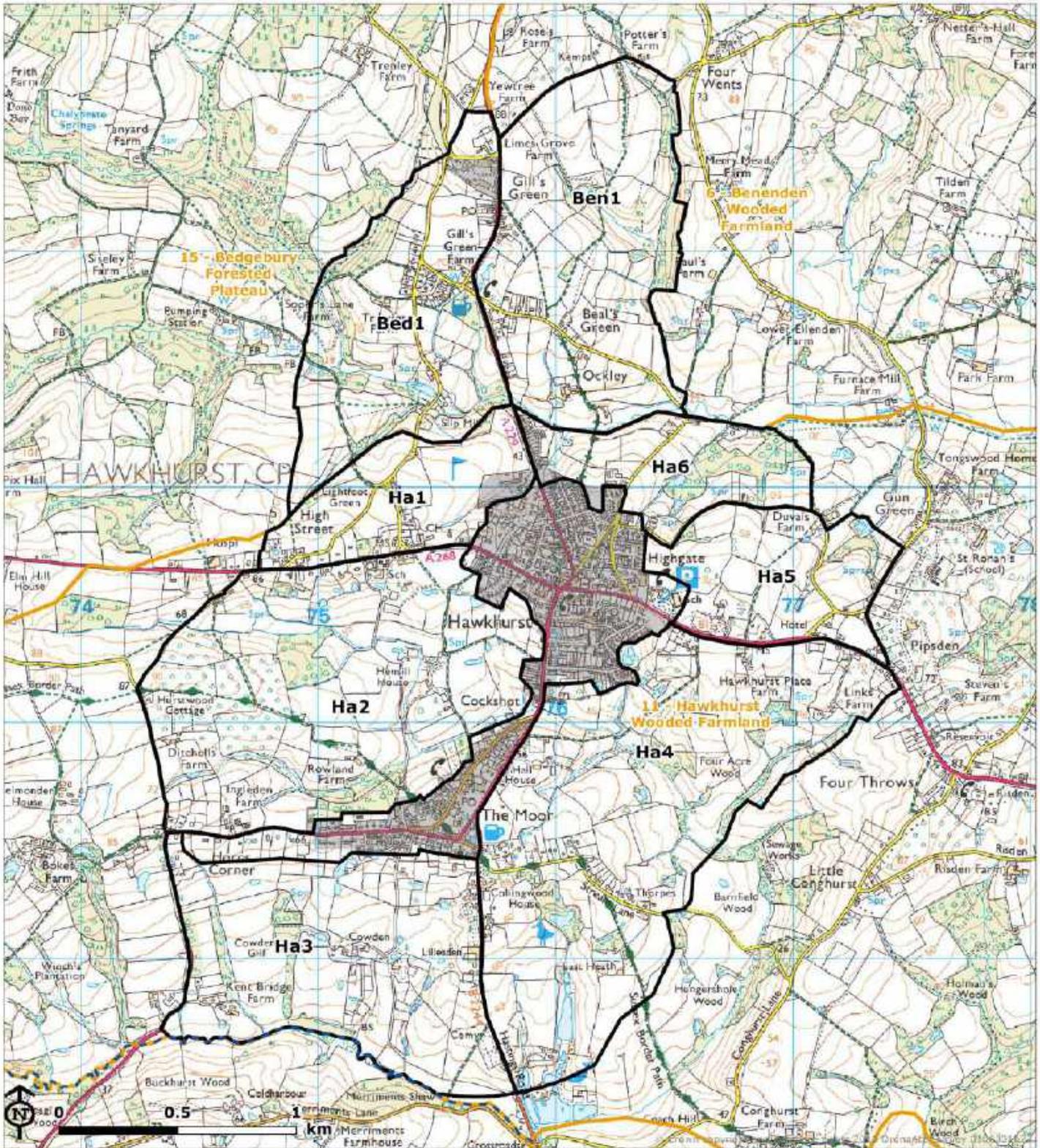
Representative views



Looking north-east across parkland at Sprivers, from the High Weald Landscape Trail

Horsmonden		Sub-Area MB5
Description		Area (Ha) - 113.1
<p>The sub-area occupies the higher north and east-facing slopes of a hill that rises up from the southern edge of Horsmonden. Shirrenden Wood and Ruck Wood define the western extent of the sub-area, whilst steeper slopes down to tributaries of the River Teise lie to the south.</p> <p>Orchards are the predominant land use, but there are some smaller pasture fields along the north-western edge of the sub-area, on the Sprivers estate, and on the south-eastern edge around Lewes Heath. Habitation is limited to isolated farmsteads and houses, with a small cluster forming the hamlet of Hazel Street. Sprivers is a 15th Century manor house and associated estate, managed by the National Trust.</p> <p>Most of the sub-area – all but the lower slopes along the northern edge – lies within the High Weald AONB</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	The landform is moderately sloping and not complex, but there is sensitivity associated with the well-treed hedgerows in the vicinity of Sprivers and Lewes Heath, and woodland blocks and belt marking the northern edge of Rectory Park, a medieval manor house in extensive parkland to the south of the sub-area. There are no traditional orchards in the sub-area, but modern orchard planting is still a valued characteristic of the locality and the AONB.	
Settlement form and edge	An extensive area of fruit cultivation separates the sub-area from Horsmonden, and the southern edge of the village is also distinguished by landform from the area to the south, with a valley floor watercourse defining its extent. There is some built development between the village and the sub-area along the B2162 Lamberhurst Road, but this is centred on historic farmsteads and is of a form that is characteristic of settlement in the High Weald. Development within the sub-area is limited to farmsteads and isolated houses.	
Settlement setting	The slopes and ridge crest of the sub-area form a rural backdrop to the southern edge of Horsmonden. Views from the village itself are limited by planting on the intervening slopes, but the settlement's setting can be appreciated from higher ground to the north and east.	
Visual character	The sub-area's orchards and ridge-crest tree cover (Coalbank Wood, Ruck Wood and trees in Rectory Park lie immediately to the south) form the skyline to views from the north, including from the High Weald Landscape Trail long distance route.	
Perceptual qualities	The sub-area has a strong rural character, its elevation adding to a sense of isolation from any significant urbanising influences and from major roads.	
Historic character	The contained Medieval assarts around Sprivers, with parkland landscape features, retain a strong historic estate character, and the fields between Lewes Heath and Rectory Park retain a largely Medieval and early post-Medieval structure. There are also several historic farmsteads in the vicinity of Hazel Street.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>Although high ground is commonly a settlement location in this area, the absence of significant settlement, and the consequent retention of a strong rural character here means that the sub-area makes an important contribution to the setting of Horsmoden and to the visual character of the AONB edge. Those parts of the parcel within the AONB have the most sensitivity, particularly in terms of their historic character, but the absence of development on the slopes below is important in preserving the character of the AONB fringe.</p>		

Horsmonden		Sub-Area MB5			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.</p>					



District Boundary
 Limits to Built Development
 Sensitivity Sub Areas
 Character Areas

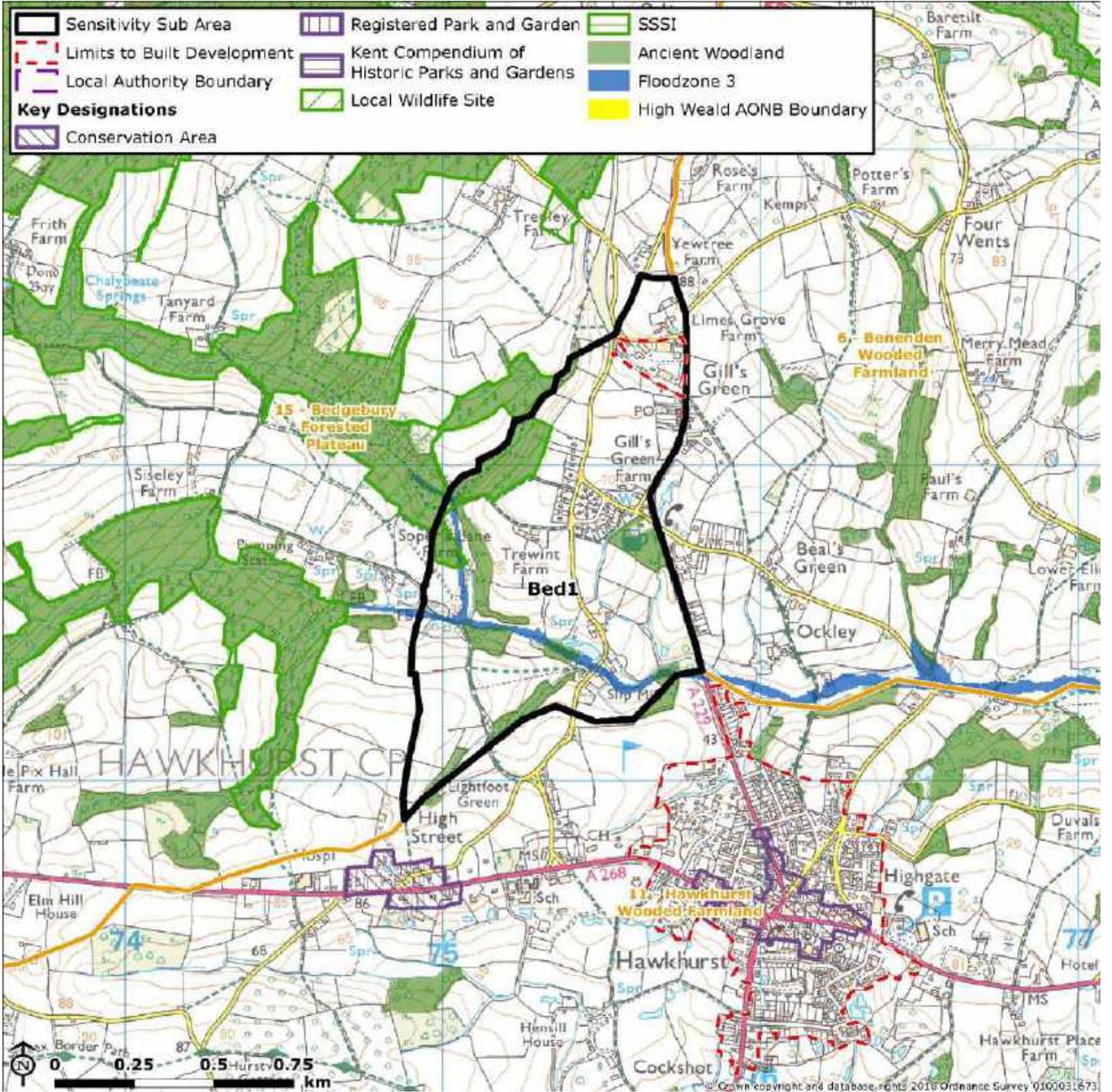
Hawkhurst is located on an elevated ridge between the River Rother and Hexden Channel. The ridge top location of the settlement is accentuated by local incised valleys to the north and south. The study area covers up to 2 km from the settlement edge and has been extended north to include the settlement at Gill's Green and south to include The Moor. Hawkhurst and its surroundings is entirely within the AONB.

The settlement is located at the junction of three Borough Landscape Character Areas. The majority of the area to the west, south and east is within LCVA 11 Hawkhurst Wooded Farmland. To the north, the area around Gill's Green, east of the A229 falls into LCA 6 Benenden Wooded Farmland while that to the west is within LCA 15 Bedgebury Forested Plateau. The boundaries of the LCAs are broad transitions and are generally not distinct boundaries on the ground at this detailed scale of assessment. At this local level, the Borough character areas have been used to define the settlement sensitivity areas, subdivided into eight separate sub areas around the settlements of Hawkhurst, The Moor and Gill's Green.

Settlement at Hawkhurst itself dates from before the thirteenth century, developing at the junction of route ways (drive ways) from the coast to London. It has a high quality built environment, the core being a Conservation Area. The edges of the settlement are generally well contained in their rural setting. The ridge top location means that the settlement and particularly

Landscape Character Area Hawkhurst

the church spire is a prominent and distinctive landmark in longer landscape views. Settlement extends westwards on the ridge along the High Street (A268) to a small Conservation Area at Iddenden Green. To the south, the settlement extends off the ridge along Hastings Road and merges with The Moor, another ridgetop historic settlement with a distinctive character set around a large green and with a prominent sandstone church, also a Conservation Area. To the north, in comparison, settlement is mostly contained on the upper ridge although intermittent development occurs along the Cranbrook Road, with a small separate residential development at Gill's Green and commercial/business park development at the site of the former Hawkhurst station. To the west along the Rye Road development is contained to the ridgetop road and forms a rural approach to Hawkhurst.



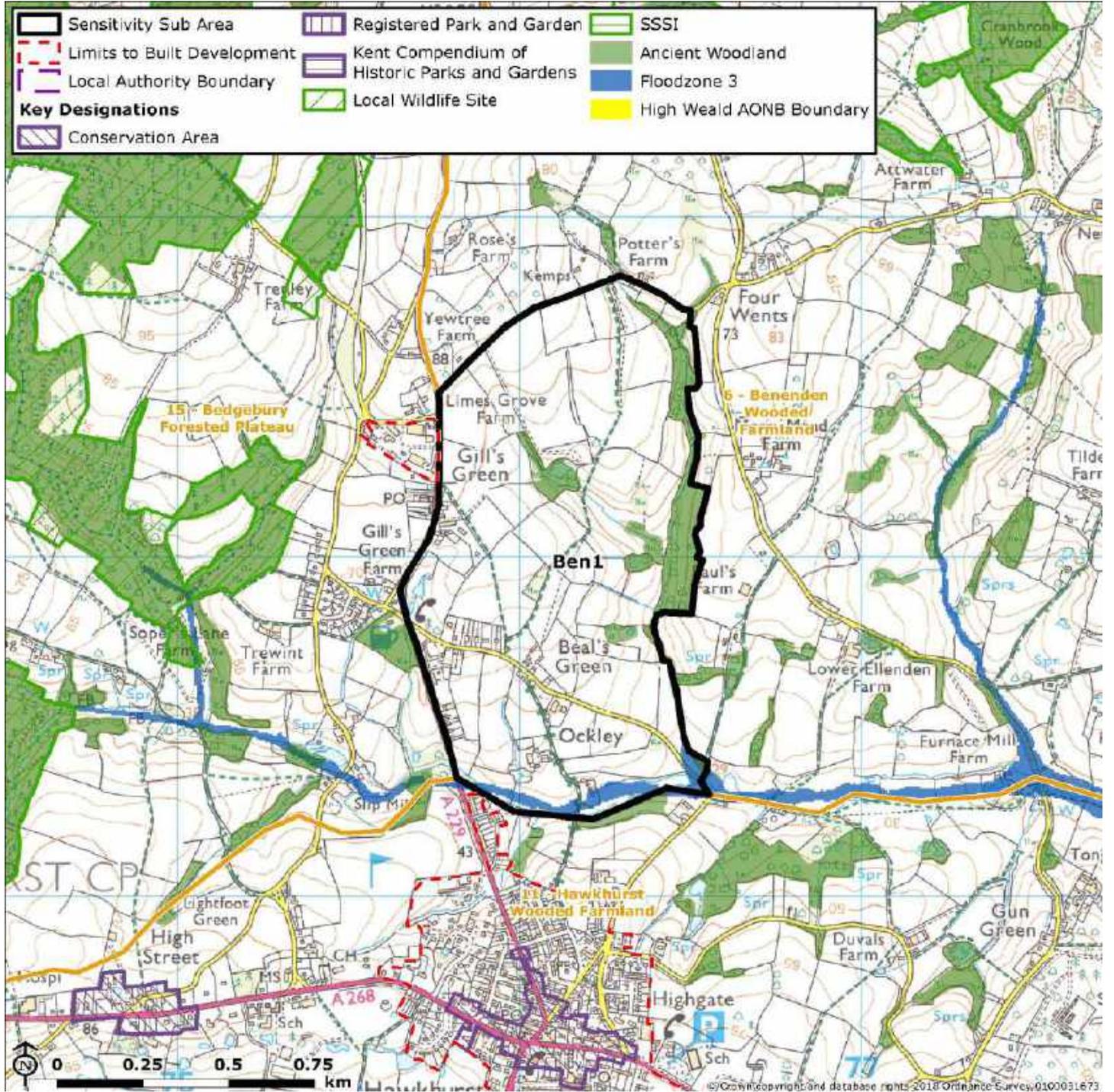
Representative views



View from Slip Mill Road across golf course, to the distinctive church on wooded ridgetop at Hawkhurst

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Bed1
Description		Area (Ha) - 87.8
<p>Sub-area Bed1 is located to the north west of Hawkhurst covering the area west of the Cranbrook Road (A229) and north of the wooded valley at Slip Mill which forms the character area boundary with HA1. It is an area of undulating arable and pasture, bound by a network of hedgerows plus a small area of golf course which extends north of the Slip Mill valley. The whole area is within the AONB. To the west the backdrop is formed by the extensive forested horizons of Bedgebury.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	An undulating area of farmland, with a distinctive feature created by the deep wooded valley at Slip Mill, with its stream and mill ponds. Blocks of deciduous woodland, mainly ancient, are connected by a network of hedgerow boundaries. The intact landscape pattern is typical of the AONB and sensitive.	
Settlement form and edge	This area is separate from Hawkhurst although there are views from the higher land north of Slip Mill to Hawkhurst where it appears as a distinctive ridge top settlement. Twentieth century residential development has extended out at Gill's Green Farm forming a small residential enclave within the rural area. Further to the north commercial/retail development/Business Park occupies an area at the former Hawkhurst station site. The A229 Cranbrook Road is distinctive in being mostly undeveloped along its western side.	
Settlement setting	The area provides a rural setting separating the settlements of Hawkhurst and Gill's Green. The undeveloped western edge of the Cranbrook road helps reinforce this gap and sense of a rural approach to Hawkhurst.	
Visual character	The undulating landform and extent of woodland creates a relatively contained landscape, although with some long views from more elevated areas towards Hawkhurst. The undeveloped wooded edge along the Cranbrook Road approach to Hawkhurst is a valued feature reinforcing the separation of Gill's Green and Hawkhurst.	
Perceptual qualities	An intact rural character; the special qualities of the AONB are well represented in the area including the network of historic boundaries, ancient woodland including along the ghyll woodland valley at Slip Mill and a number of historic farmsteads. There is good access via. rights of way, linking to the extensive recreation networks at Bedgebury. Along the Cranbrook Road the business park and linear development create a more urban character.	
Historic character	The field pattern is almost entirely of medieval origin with small irregular fields, plus an extensive area of ancient woodland along the Slip Mill Valley. There are a number of historic farmsteads, and the narrow lane at Slip Mill is identified as a historic routeway. The buildings at Slip Mill, associated with the watercourse, are of historic interest including the white weatherboarded former mill. The historic components are all sensitive.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The overall sensitivity is identified as high, in recognition of the intact historic pattern, extensive ancient woodland and incised topography. The more developed areas at Gill's Green are less sensitive and there may be a small area of lower (moderate – high sensitivity) associated with this area, north of the existing settlement. Generally, it is unlikely that development could be accommodated in these areas without impinging on the valued qualities and sensitive features of this area or reducing the sense of separation from Hawkhurst, and this is particularly the case for the area south of Gill's Green.</p>		

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Bed1			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>The overall sensitivity is high for this area. While there may be limited potential for small extensions of development this would need to take account of the role of this area in providing separation between Gill's Green and Hawkhurst and the impact on historic landscape features.</p>					



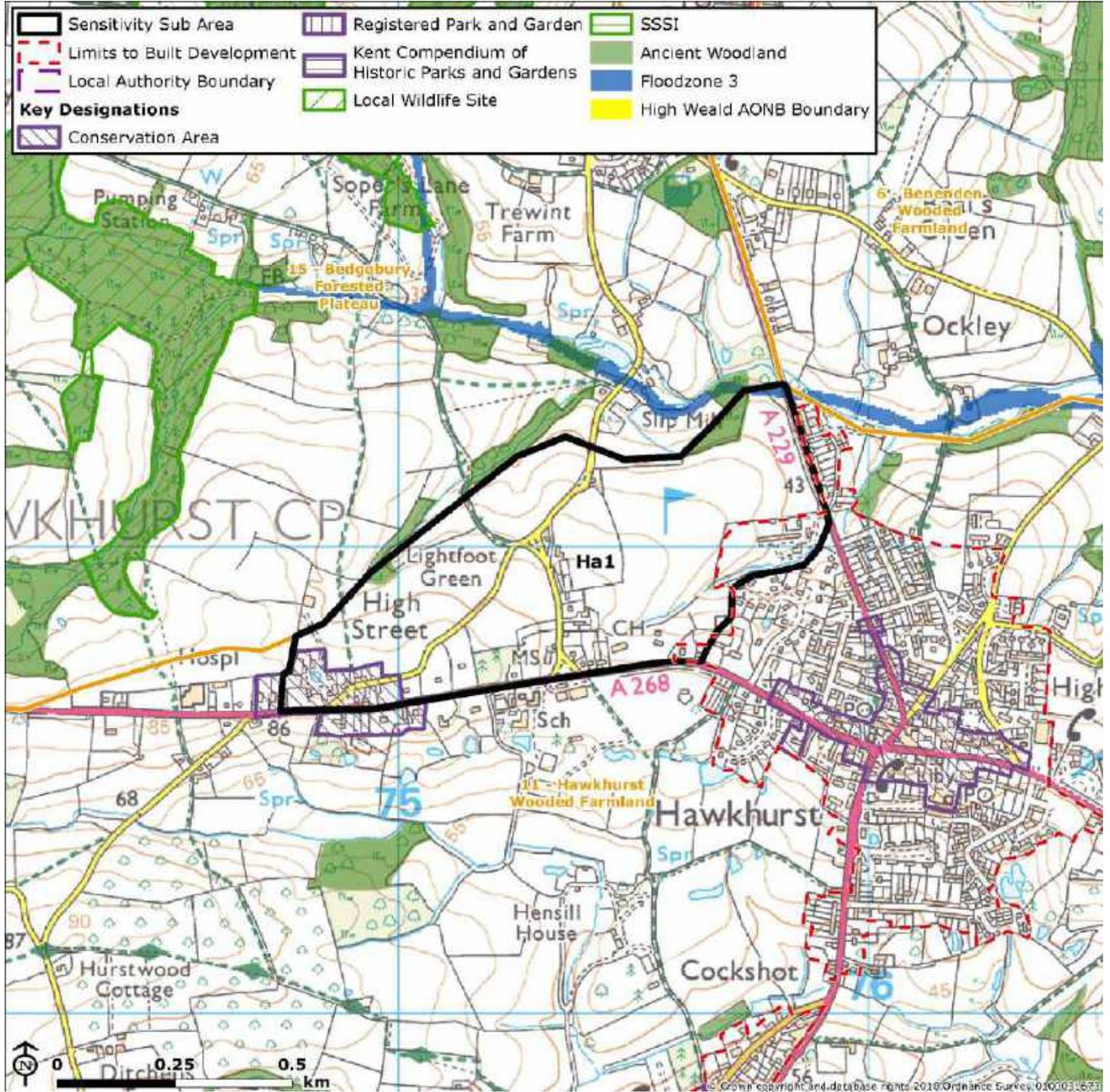
Representative views



New development along Cranbrook Road

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ben1
Description		Area (Ha) - 108.5
<p>Sub-area Ben1 is located to the north of Hawkhurst, covering the area east of the A229 Cranbrook Road extending from the character area boundary along the stream valley with HA6, to Potters Lane in the north. It contains slopes rising to the north of the valley and is a typical High Weald landscape cut by streams, with small blocks and belts of woodland. The whole area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	A typical undulating High Weald landscape of mixed pasture and arable farmland, cut by deep ghyll valleys with blocks and belts of woodland. The physical/natural character is characteristic of the High Weald AONB and therefore of high sensitivity.	
Settlement form and edge	The area is separate and unrelated to the edge of Hawkhurst although from the southern part e.g. at Beal's Green there are views of the settlement and landmark spire on the ridgetop. There is intermittent development along the eastern edge of the A229 Cranbrook Road and residential development at Beal's Green. The eastern edge of Gill's Green includes retail/garden centre development and a single line of Victorian residential development along the road, and new development at Santer's Close. This is mostly well integrated from the wider rural area by hedges, garden boundaries and a cricket field although a starker edge of development is apparent in places. This is a rural landscape and area, and despite linear development along the roads there is no distinct settlement edge.	
Settlement setting	As noted above, this area does not have a direct relationship with Hawkhurst, but is important in providing a rural landscape setting. Existing linear developments along the main road are generally well integrated and do not intrude into the wider area.	
Visual character	The undulating landform and extent of woodland reduces views although there are some long views south to Hawkhurst, for example from Beal's Green, and long rural views from elevated locations such as Potters Lane.	
Perceptual qualities	The landscape has a strong rural character, typical of the AONB. Piecemeal development along the A229 at Gills Green does not intrude into the wider rural area, although the road itself is busy and creates a relatively 'developed' approach to Hawkhurst from Gill's Green. The rural character and open gaps along the road are sensitive.	
Historic character	The HLC shows an extensive area of historic field pattern including assarts, along with more modern patterns and field amalgamation, notably in the area immediately east of Gill's Green. There are a large number of historic farmsteads scattered throughout the area, and the narrow lanes are identified as historic routeways. Strips of ancient woodland occupy steep slopes in the stream valleys. All these historic features are sensitive.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The key sensitivities of the area relate to its essential rural character and separation from any significant areas of settlement/development. The overall sensitivity is considered to be high; generally further development along the roads or extending away from the roads deeper into the area from Gill's Green would change and detract from the rural character which currently does not have any large blocks of development. The existing green breaks and gaps along the Cranbrook Road are important in the approach to Hawkhurst and its separation from Gill's Green. Given the redevelopment at the western end of Beal's Green Road there may be a small area of lower sensitivity in this area.</p>		

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ben1			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>This is a rural landscape expressing the distinctive qualities of the AONB. While there may be some potential for very small development or re-development of sites along the A229 in association with existing development at Gills Green, a key aim must be to maintain the gap and separation from Hawkhurst and avoid perception of development spreading away from the road into this area.</p>					



Representative views



The western edge of Hawkhurst is formed by a well contained golf course separating this area from the wider rural landscape

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha1
Description		Area (Ha) - 44.1
<p>Sub-area Ha1 is located on the north west edge of Hawkhurst, between the A268 and the A229 forming the northern edge of the Hawkhurst Wooded Farmland Character Area, at the boundary with the more wooded Bedgebury Forested Plateau to the north, from which it is separated by an incised valley (Slip Mill). The area adjoining suburban housing at Oakfield and Springfield Industrial Estate is a golf course with a ridge of agricultural land, swathes of ancient woodland extending westwards from Slip Mill Road. The whole area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The A268 High Street runs along an east- west ridge bounded by agricultural land dropping away north from the ridge.</p> <p>The large area east of Slip Mill Road to the settlement boundary is a golf course, with the remainder formed by mixed pasture and arable fields. The ridge dips down to a small incised ghyll valley to the north at Slip Mill enclosed by ancient woodland (forming the boundary with the adjacent character area Bedgebury Forest).</p> <p>Slip Mill Road is a narrow rural wooded lane descending the ridge to the cluster of buildings at Slip Mill.</p> <p>The physical character is characteristic of the High Weald AONB and therefore of high sensitivity. The ridge landform sloping to a ghyll valley makes a strong contribution to local landscape character. The golf course is less sensitive, although relatively well screened and contained within the rural landscape.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The north west edge of Hawkhurst is formed by low density modern housing at Oakfield and the small industrial park at Springfield. The industrial park is well screened by an area of woodland, and a narrow stream valley forms the edge of residential development and the golf course.</p> <p>Linear development extends along the A268 to the west to the small hamlet at Iddenden, including a number of large houses in substantial gardens. Clusters of Listed buildings at junctions of Slip Mill Road and the High St, including a medieval historic farmstead. Scattered development occurs alongside Slip Mill Road on the western boundary of the golf course.</p> <p>Iddenden Green to the west is a small historic settlement (Conservation Area) centered on a village green with small scale domestic buildings.</p> <p>Lightfoot Green, Slip Mill and Philpott's Cross form small clusters of development with a distinct and separate identity to main settlement of Hawkhurst on its western edge.</p> <p>The settlement form and setting is sensitive.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>To the west of Hawkhurst there is scattered development along the A268, mainly individual houses set within large gardens with green boundaries along the road. This forms a rural approach to and gateway to Hawkhurst, notably the small village green at Iddenden (Sawyers Green) Conservation Area.</p> <p>To the north of Hawkhurst the area (golf course) forms an open rural gap along the west side of the A229 providing separation from development around Gills Green. It provides the rural setting and rural views from the small Conservation area at Iddenden and very small rural settlements of Slip Mill and Lightfoot Green and views to the church at Hawkhurst (Conservation Area).</p>	
Visual character	<p>The area forms part of a ridge top and offers impressive views out over the High Weald landscape as well as a wooded backdrop in views. The extent of woodland and tree'd boundaries means that the narrow band of ridgetop development along the A268 is not perceived in longer views, for example from the slopes to the north, and does not appear as an expanded area of Hawkhurst. There are views to the church at Hawkhurst which rises above the wooded ridgeline.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The landscape has some a strong rural character, despite piecemeal development along the A268 and forms a largely rural approach to Hawkhurst, notably the green at Iddenden.</p>	
Historic character	<p>The HLC shows an extensive area of medieval field pattern, enclosed by ancient woodland to the west of Slip Mill Road, although nearer to Hawkhurst the pattern is of more modern formed by the golf course.</p> <p>There are a number of historic farmsteads, and the narrow lane at Slip Mill is identified as a historic routeway and maintains this character linking the valley mill buildings with the ridgetop. The area has a role as the rural setting to the two Conservation Areas.</p>	

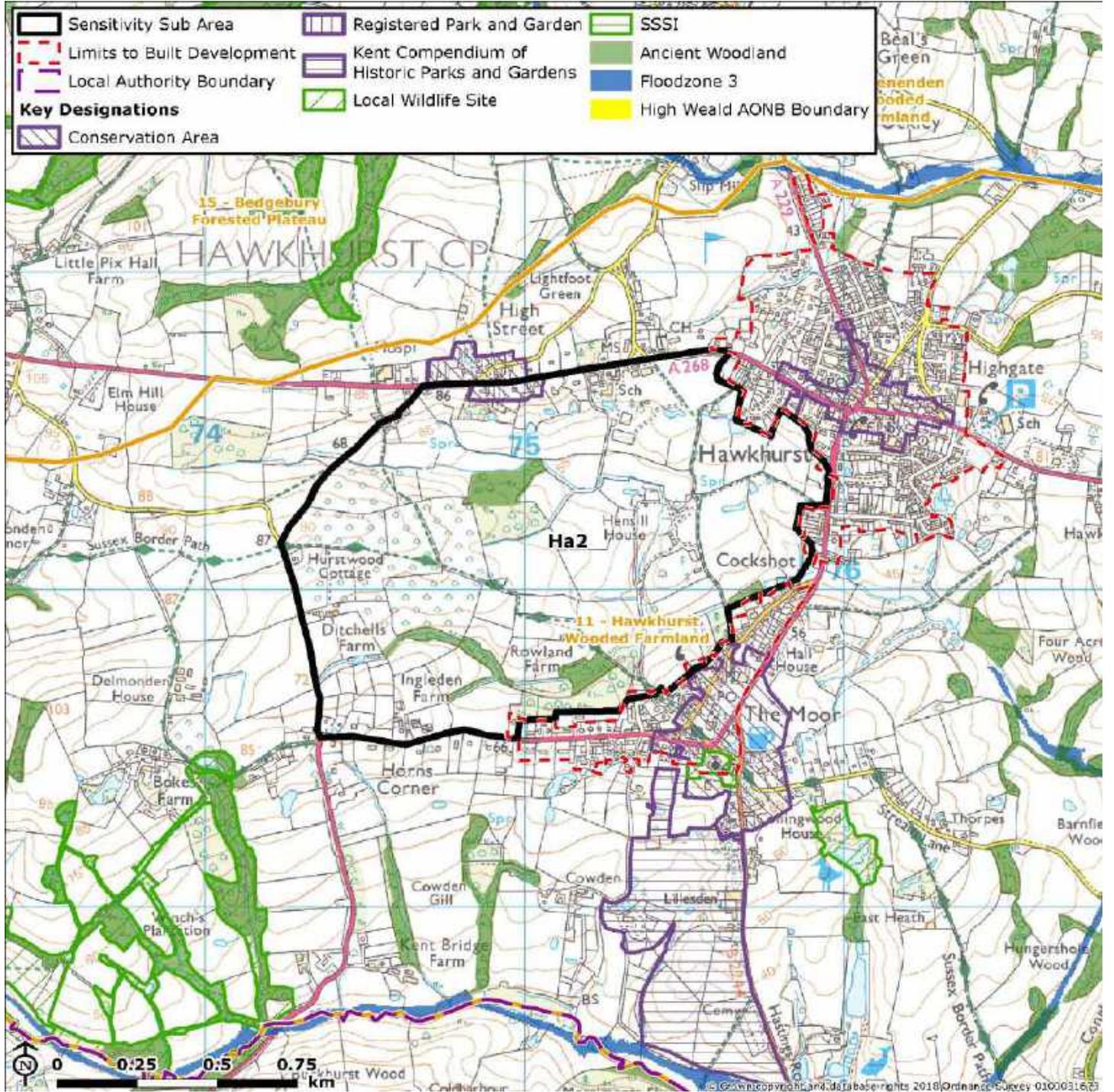
Sensitivity conclusions

The key sensitivities of the area relate to its physical characteristics which are typical of the character area and the AONB involving ridge top settlement, with topography dropping away to the narrow valley and ancient woodland at Slip Mill. Despite the scattered development along the A268 it forms a rural approach and gateway to Hawkhurst including the small Conservation Area centered around a green at Iddenden. It provides separation from this area and other small settlement clusters at Lightfoot and Slip Mill. It also forms an open rural landscape to the west of the A229 on the northern approach to Hawkhurst. The overall sensitivity is high, although it is noted that there may be small areas of lower sensitivity adjacent to the immediate settlement edge and golf course.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

The area is a narrow ridgetop forming a rural approach to Hawkhurst from the west, with a rapid transition dropping north of the ridge top to the ghyll valley at Slip Mill - a rural landscape expressing all the distinctive qualities of the AONB. While there may be some potential for small development or re-development of sites along the ridge or the immediate north west settlement edge of Hawkhurst, this would need to be of a very small scale and sensitive to the character of the landscape and role as the rural approach to Hawkhurst along the A268 and A229, and separation from outlying settlement clusters.

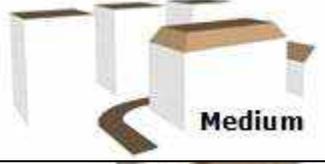


Representative views



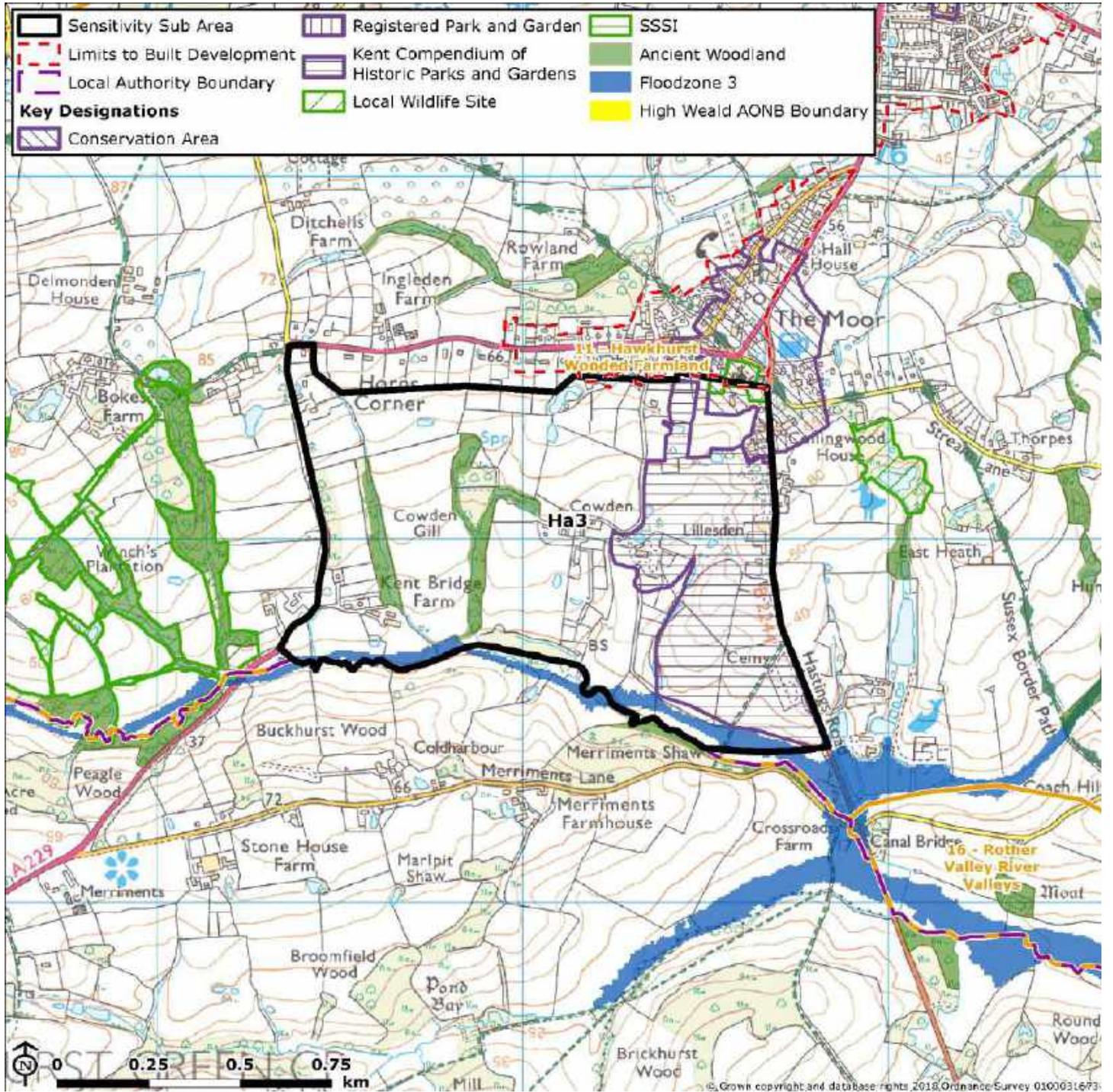
The minor valley provides rural separation between the ridgetop settlements of Hawkhurst and The Moor.

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha2
Description		Area (Ha) - 151.2
<p>Sub-area Ha2 is located on the west edge of Hawkhurst; an area of arable and pasture, bound by a network of thick hedgerows. It extends in a broad sweep between the ridge top roads of the A268 to the north and the A229 to the south as a broad valley creating separation between the settlement at Hawkhurst and extended area of Cockshot and The Moor. The whole area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>A sweeping area of farmland, small woodland blocks and modern orchards between two hill top ridges. Incised by narrow ghyll valleys containing ancient woodland, which are valued features of the character area and AONB. Blocks of deciduous woodland are connected by an intact network of hedgerow boundaries, and modern orchards occur around Ditchells Farm. In addition there are a large number of small waterbodies. Together, these create an intact and visually attractive landscape pattern which is typical of the AONB and sensitive to change. The valley which separates development at The Moor and Hawkhurst is an important feature.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Hawkhurst developed at the crossroads of two main routeways forming a nucleated hilltop town. The Moor has developed as a linear ridgetop settlement along the road to the south and now merges with Hawkhurst with settlement into the valley joining the two ridges. In the north piecemeal development including a school extends along the ridge top road of the A268, and this is still perceived as a rural approach to Hawkhurst. Similarly, to the west of The Moor linear ridge top development extends along the A229 to Horns Corner. The rural edge is almost entirely back gardens directly onto farmland. North and west of The Moor, a narrow ghyll valley and swathe of woodland provides an effective limit to development and buffer from the wider rural area. The development edge west of the A229 Highgate Hill is more open, with the adjacent farmland.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The area provides a rural setting separating the two ridge top settlements of The Moor and Hawkhurst which despite merger are along the A229 are still perceived as separate settlements in views from the wider area. It offers opportunities for public access including the Sussex Border Path and rights of way linking Hawkhurst and The Moor. While the physical gap between Hawkhurst/Cockshot and The Moor along the A229 is very narrow, this sub area as a whole provides an important rural setting and separation for the two settlements.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The area is relatively open, although from the ridgetops roads views are largely concealed by development along the roads. There are views to the churches on the ridgetop of The Moor and Hawkhurst from footpaths across the valley such that the settlements are still perceived as distinct separate areas in views from this area.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>A strong rural character, the special qualities of the AONB are well represented in the area including the former ancient routeways along the main roads, ridgetops with expansive views, an intact network of historic boundaries, ancient woodland including along the ghyll woodland valleys and a number of historic farmsteads.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Conservation Areas at both Hawkhurst and The Moor. Much of the area, west of Hensill House represents an intact medieval landscape with a legible pattern of boundaries, and there are a number of historic farmsteads and historic routes along the ridges and crossing the valley. Modern field patterns characterise part of the area to the immediate west of the settlement edge, which is more open.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The area is typical of the AONB landscape of ridges and ghyll valleys with historic field patterns, woodland, orchards and water bodies. These features are special qualities of the AONB and the character area, valued for scenic qualities, biodiversity and sense of place. The area also contributes to the sense of separation between the ridgetop settlements of Hawkhurst and The Moor to the south and creates a rural setting for the area as well as views to settlement (churches) on the ridge top. The overall sensitivity is identified as high, although it is acknowledged that some small areas of the immediate settlement edges, south of Hawkhurst and north of the The Moor may have a lower, moderate –high sensitivity to small scale residential development, providing the lower valley, which separates these areas remains undeveloped.</p>		

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha2			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

The overall sensitivity is high for this area. While there may be limited potential for small extensions of development to the west of Highgate Hill this would need to be aligned with landscape restoration of boundaries and woodland to provide integration in this more open landscape. Here, the open valley slopes at Cockshot are particularly sensitive and development should avoid the lower valley slopes south of the public footpath. Any infill of development along the A229 west of The Moor would need to be of a very small scale and sensitive to the character of the landscape, ridgetop location and role as the rural backdrop in views.

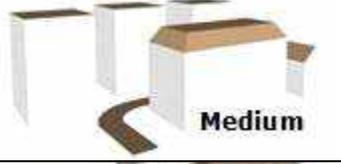


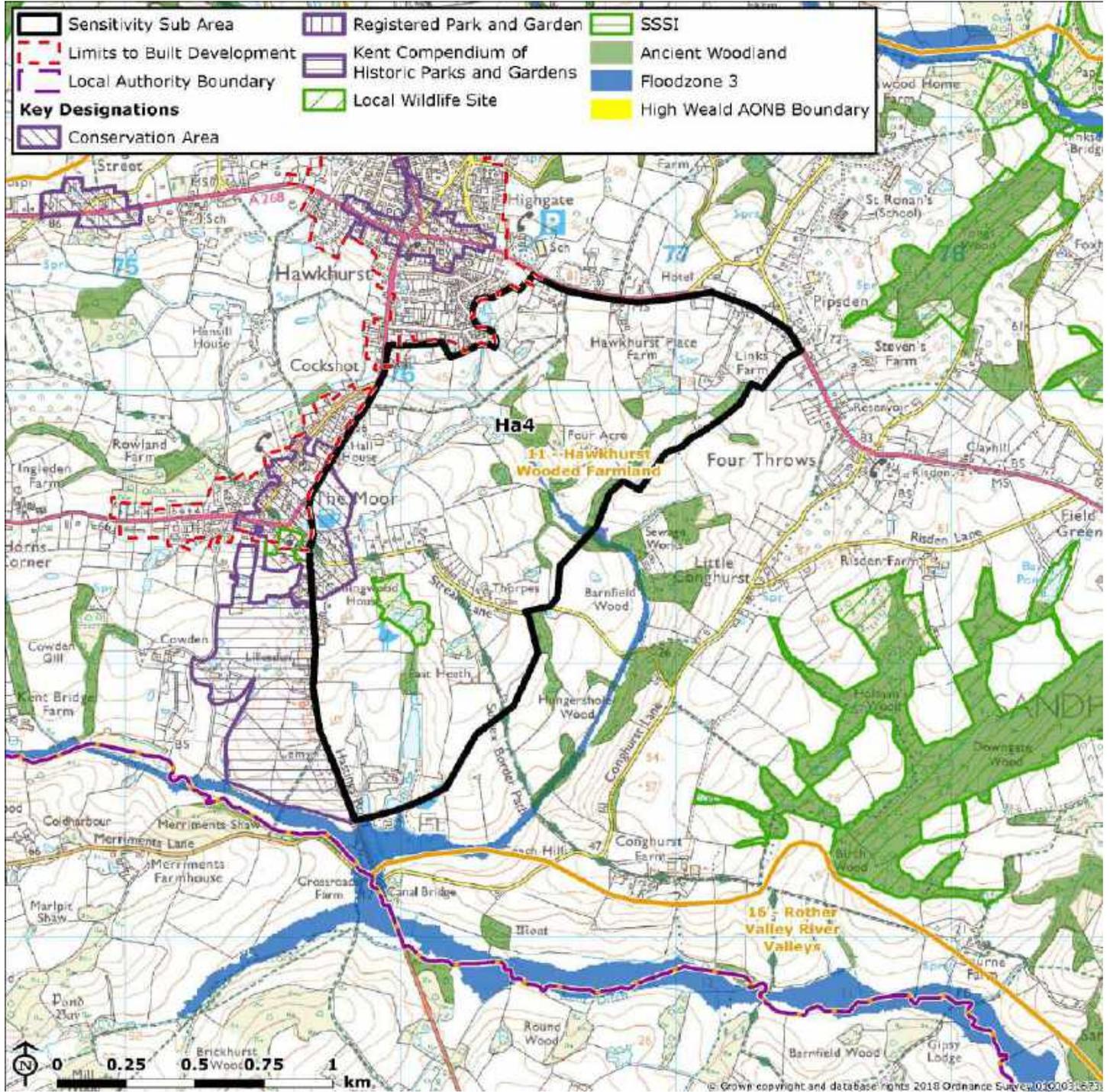
Representative views



View north from Merriments, including settlement on the ridgetop west of The Moor.

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha3
Description		Area (Ha) - 110
<p>Sub-area Ha3 is located to the south of The Moor forming the rural landscape between the ridgetop road of the A229 in the north and the B2244 Hasting Road to the east. It contains relatively large fields and a substantial area of parkland. There is limited access into the area. The boundary of Rother District lies to the south. The whole of the area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>A typical topography of the High Weald forming broad slopes descending south from the ridgetop of The Moor to a narrow ghyll valley marking the borough boundary. It is formed of large fields, some enclosed by broad belts of woodland, with an extensive area of parkland at Lillesden to the east. There are a large number of small water bodies. These are all sensitive features. St Lawrence churchyard at The Moor is a Local Wildlife Site</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The Moor is a linear settlement extending along the A229 on the ridgetop. It is relatively open in form with The Moor itself forming a large area of open space at its heart, along with the churchyard adjoins this area. The descending slopes form a limit to development to the south which is contained on the ridge. Larger houses set within extensive grounds occur along the road to the west towards Horns Corner forming the approach to The Moor. The settlement edge is generally well integrated although there are some views up to ridge top development along the A229, in views from the south along Meriments Lane. Intermittent development is present along the B2244 Hastings Road including redevelopment at Lillesden. There are limited public views into the parkland landscape.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The open character of The Moor, low density and height of development mean that there are glimpses across this rural area from the settlement. The area offers long views south from The Moor (e.g. from the churchyard) and forms its rural setting to the south which is distinctive in comparison to the area north of The Moor where settlement extends and merges with Hawkhurst. Along the Hastings Road to the south there are intermittent buildings associated with the Lillesden Estate.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The square sandstone tower of St Lawrence Church at the high point on The Moor is a visible landmark in views from this area, and there are views across the rural landscape from elevated locations on The Moor.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The area has a strong rural character. The undulating landform descending from the ridge at The Moor, ancient woodland shaws along ghyll valleys plus waterbodies and historic routeways are well represented and are special qualities characteristic of the AONB. There is relatively little public access into this area other than along the lanes such as to Cowden, and a short right of way in the south.</p>	
Historic character	<p>A large area to the west of the Hastings Road is identified as Lillesden Kent Historic Park and Garden, a mid c19 mansion and garden, set within extensive parkland of pasture and arable with some former parkland trees remaining creating an ornamental quality, although with limited public access and views. A cluster of listed buildings are associated with the Moor Conservation Area around St Lawrence Church. There is relatively little built development within the area apart from historic farmsteads as at Cowden and Kent Bridge Farm. The field pattern is relatively modern although a historic pattern persists around Cowden Gill, with associated narrow ancient woodland shaws.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The area is typical of the AONB landscape of ridges and valleys, although in parts has a more modern pattern than other areas. It forms a strong rural setting to the south of The Moor, and the open slopes descending from settlement on the ridgetop are considered to be of high sensitivity. Any development south of The Moor would further expand the already merged settlement of Hawkhurst and The Moor beyond the southern ridge and create a major change in the perception of this rural area.</p>		

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha3			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. Any infill of development on the edges of The Moor would need to be of a very small scale and sensitive to the character of the landscape, ridgetop location and role as the rural backdrop in views and notably the essentially undeveloped rural landscape to the south.</p>					



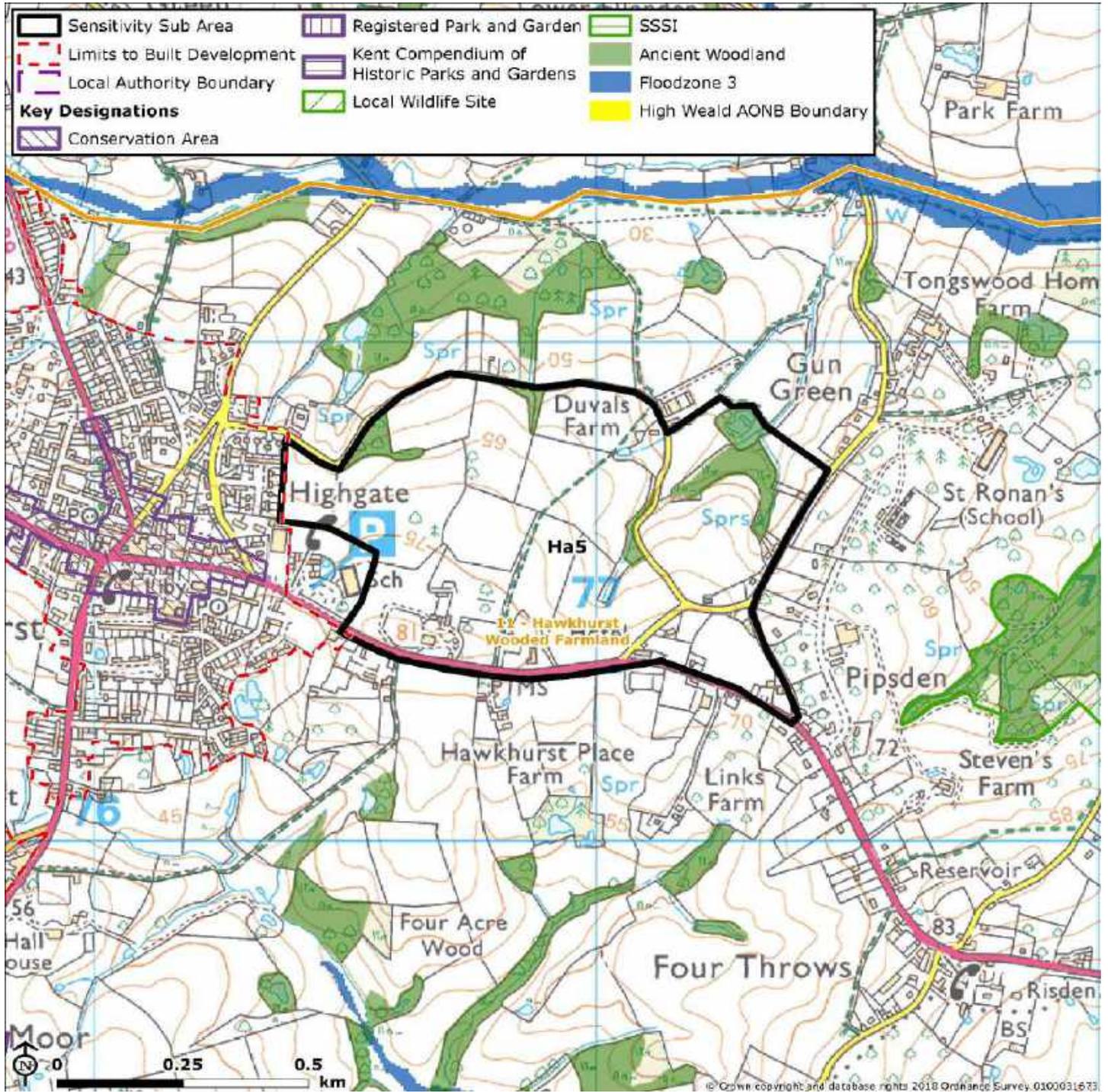
Representative views



View north to Hawkhurst on ridge top

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha4
Description		Area (Ha) - 176.8
<p>Sub area Ha4 is located south of Hawkhurst and east of The Moor and extends out into the rural area with an outer boundary formed by a narrow ghyll valley and watercourse. It comprises an area of undulating mixed pasture and arable farmland, cut by minor wooded stream valleys. It is distinct in that there is relatively little access into the area apart from Stream Lane east of The Moor and a footpath on the southern edge of Hawkhurst. The whole of the area is within the AONB. It is a relatively large sub area, and has not been subdivided as there is minimal access, consistent character and sensitivities across the area.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>A relatively complex undulating landform cut by several incised valleys, and numerous springs and small ponds.</p> <p>A connected habitat network is represented by the linear belts and larger blocks of ancient woodland which define the numerous narrow ghyll valleys within the area. A Kent Wildlife Trust LWS is identified at the woodland and lake at Collingwood House, with plantation, native woodland and a lake part of the designed landscape of Collingwood House Estate.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Hawkhurst is a nuclear ridge top settlement developed at the cross roads of two important routeways to the coast/London. The edge of Hawkhurst along Copthall Avenue, All Saints Road is primarily back gardens – in part with development exposed on the slopes and part visually contained by a large block of woodland. Small intermittent development also extends east along the A229 Rye Road from Hawkhurst, although this is largely well contained by landform and tree cover.</p> <p>In contrast The Moor is a separate linear ridgetop settlement, primarily located to the east of the A229 with the road and recreation grounds being the main interface with this rural area. Low density linear settlement extends out from The Moor eastwards along Stream Lane.</p> <p>Hastings Road along the western edge of the area contains intermittent buildings associated with the Collingwood Estate.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The open space of the recreation ground on the approach to The Moor from Hawkhurst is an important feature of the settlement and its sense of openness allows views out over this rural area. The tower of the sandstone church is a distinctive feature and a landmark in views from much of this area</p>	
Visual character	<p>The undulating landform cut by minor valleys, means that parts of the area are highly visible and the higher slopes also offers long views. Particularly notable are the long rural views from south of Stream Lane into Rother District. The hill top churches of The Moor and Hawkhurst are landmark features of local views.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The area has a strong rural character. The undulating landform descending from the ridges, extensive ancient woodland shaws along ghyll valleys plus historic routeways are well represented and are special qualities characteristic of the AONB. The area contains a footpath around the edge of Hawkhurst and a part of the Sussex Border Path providing recreational amenity value. The KWT reserve site provides access to nature and biodiversity value.</p>	
Historic character	<p>An extensive network of intact historic boundaries enclose a medieval and early post medieval field pattern of irregular assarts and copses, with an area of more regular modern parliamentary fields immediately south of The Moor and south of the Rye Road. Historic farmsteads are present at Hall House and Hawkhurst Place. Historic routeways are identified along the ridgetop roads.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The area is typical of the AONB landscape of ridges and wooded ghyll valleys, with a strong medieval field pattern of assarts and copses. It forms a strong rural setting to the south of The Moor and Hawkhurst, and the open slopes descending from settlement on the ridgetop are considered to be of high sensitivity and notably the very rural, undeveloped character that persists south of The Moor. It is acknowledged that some very small areas of the immediate southern/western settlement edges of Hawkhurst (south of Copthall Avenue and Rye Road) may have lower i.e. moderate-high sensitivity.</p>		

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha4			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>The overall sensitivity is high for this area. While there may be limited potential for very small extensions of residential development on the upper slopes to the south of Hawkhurst this would need to respect the natural limits defined by the minor valley and footpath in this area and aligned with restoration and planting of boundaries and woodland buffers to provide integration of the settlement and create a defined and contained urban edge.</p>					

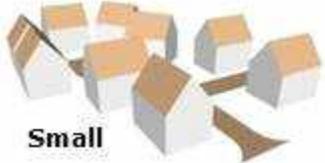
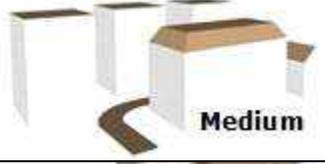


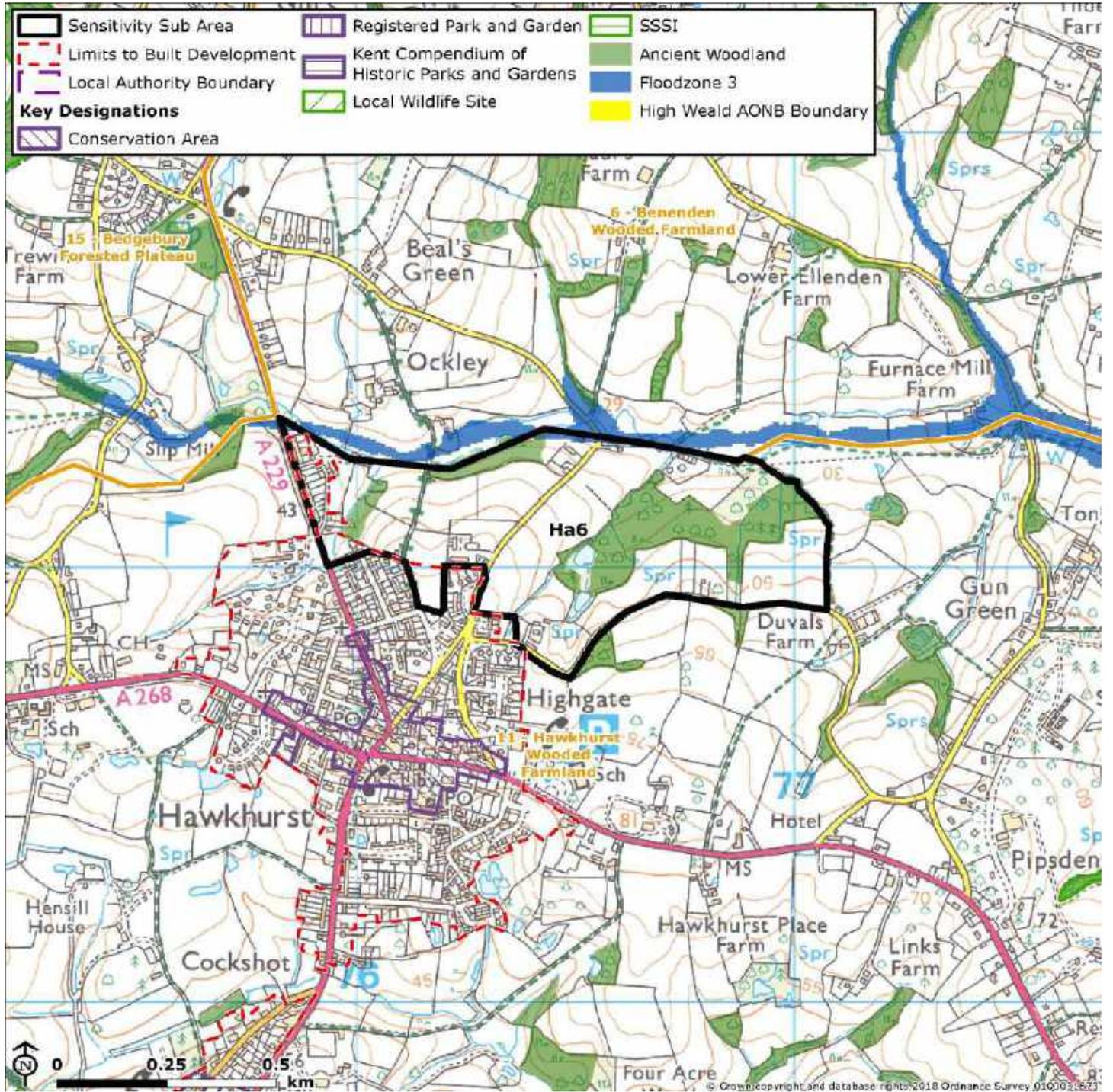
Representative views



Opportunities to create a better integrated settlement edge for the east of

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha5
Description		Area (Ha) - 49.1
<p>The small area sub-area Ha5 is located to the east of Hawkhurst, north of the Rye Road and extending northwards to White Lane /Duvals. It comprises an area of arable fields and small blocks of woodland sloping northwards from the intermittent development along the ridgetop road. The whole of the area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>An elevated landform sloping gently northwards from the Hawkhurst ridgetop. A pattern of small regular fields, mainly in arable land use with some hedgerow boundaries and small areas of thicker woodland belts, including a small area of ancient woodland along White Lane. A small woodland plantation screens development at Fowler's Park. The woodland cover and hedgerows are important for screening development on the eastern edge of Hawkhurst.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The existing settlement edge comprises large scale retail development and a school as well as residential development. Landform and boundary planting means that the edge is relatively well integrated and there is a rapid transition to a more rural character along White Lane, apart from the immediate edge where residential development east of Queen Road has a more exposed edge.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The area forms a rural setting to Hawkhurst, with a particularly strong rural character along the narrow White Lane and linking to outlying settlement at Gun Green and Pipsden. There are limited views to and from the settlement edge into this area, apart from at Queens Road. Rye Road forms the eastern approach to Hawkhurst, with car parking, school and hotel on the approach although maintains a rural character and approach to the town.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The area is for the most relatively well contained with few views in or out, although in some cases the settlement edge is more exposed. From the east along the footpath linking Hawkhurst Place and Duvals Farm there are long views from this relatively elevated location out over the surrounding rural landscape.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>There are some urban influences associated with residential edges and development along the busy Rye Road, but essentially this area has a peaceful, secluded rural character despite its proximity to Hawkhurst. The narrow wooded lanes (White Lane and Water Lane) have particular scenic value and contribute to the quiet rural character and the AONB qualities.</p>	
Historic character	<p>The field pattern is small parliamentary enclosures. Historic character includes the lanes identified as historic routeways and a small area of ancient woodland. It also has a role as the eastern rural approach to Hawkhurst Conservation Area.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>This area is an important buffer between the settlement and the wider rural countryside and outlying rural settlements. The sensitivity is identified as moderate – high for small scale residential development on the immediate settlement edge, provided that this is aligned with opportunities for further planting and boundary restoration to create and maintain a wooded setting and a well- integrated urban edge.</p>		

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha5			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>Limited opportunities for small scale residential development associated with the existing urban edge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the rural character of the narrow lanes, notably White Lane, with access via the existing settlement/built up area • Maintain existing blocks and belts of woodland and seek to reinststate hedgerow boundaries where these have been lost • Limit development to those areas well related to the existing urban edge on the ridge and avoid extending development downslope north of the Rye Road <p>Maintain the green rural character of the Rye Road and approach to Hawkhurst</p>					

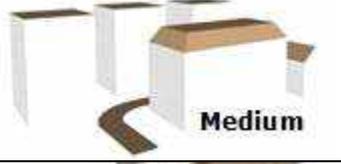


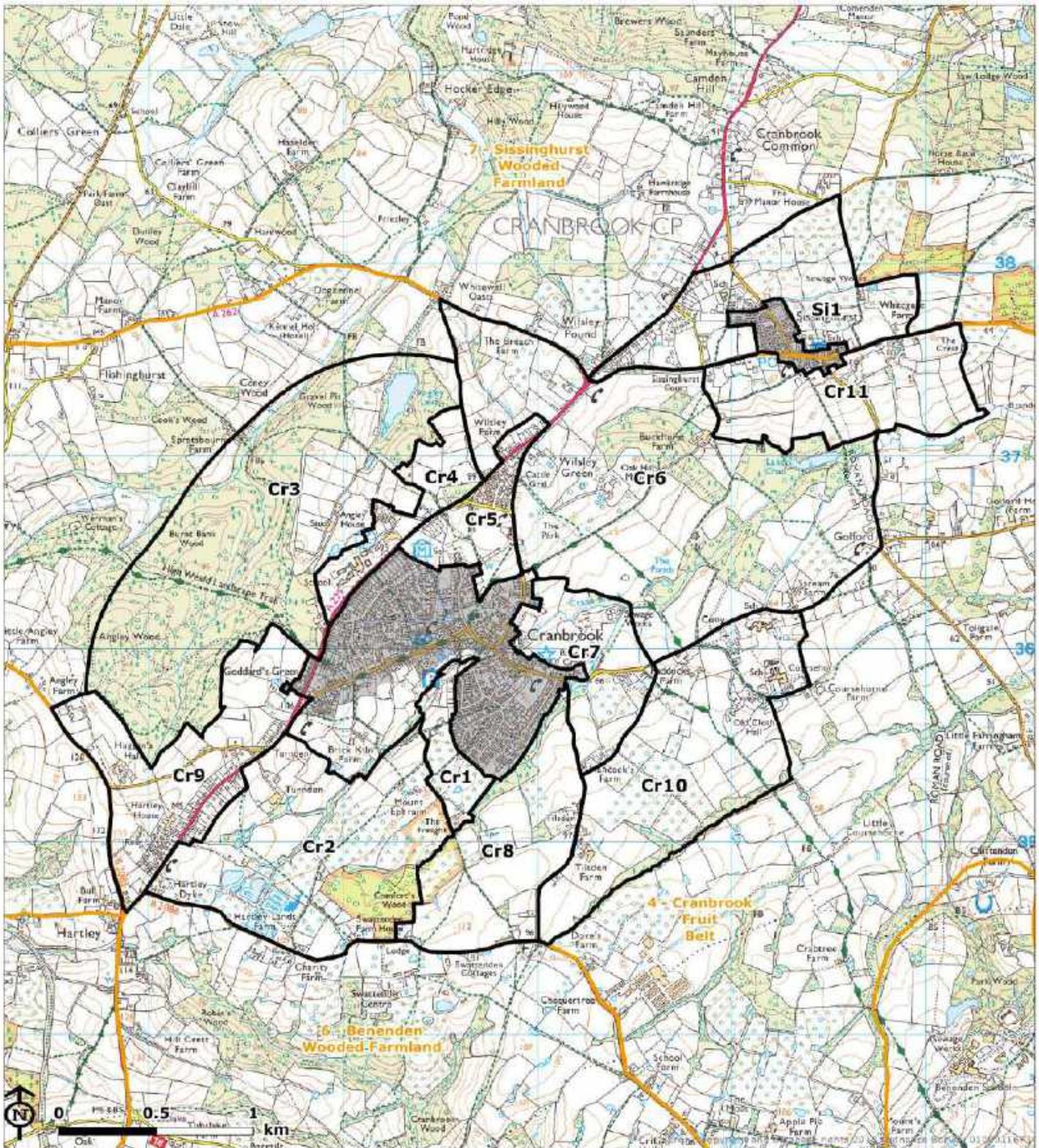
Representative views



Slopes forming rural setting to Hawkhurst on the ridgetop

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha6
Description		Area (Ha) - 40.7
<p>The small area sub-area Ha6 is located to the north and east of Hawkhurst, north of White Lane and extending to the boundary of character area 11, Hawkhurst Wooded Farmland at the stream valley running from Ockley Wood to Furnace Mill Farm. It comprises an area of undulating farmland and woodland occupying the north facing slopes of the Hawkhurst ridge.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The area is characterised by land sloping relatively steeply away from the ridge top to north and east down to the minor stream valley which forms the northern boundary of the character area. It is cut by several minor ghyll valleys issuing from the ridgetop and running northwards. The pattern is one of medium fields with a mix of both pasture and arable, contained by thick belts of woodland radiating out from the large ancient woodland blocks at White's Wood and Ockley Wood. Elsewhere boundaries are gappy creating a sense of a larger scale landscape. The woodland blocks, hedgerow belts and stream valleys are all sensitive features.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The existing settlement is formed by ad hoc new and older residential development in small blocks extending down the slopes along Gunther Close, Vale Road and along Ockley Road, plus a small scrayard site. Allotments, recreation areas and blocks of woodland help integrate the settlement edge with the wider rural landscape. A linear row of Victorian terraced cottages extends northwards along the Cranbrook Road.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The area forms part of the rural setting to Hawkhurst, and the undeveloped valley and views out and back to the village help reinforce the sense of Hawkhurst as a distinct ridge top settlement, despite linear develop northwards along the A229. The stream valleys and woodlands are key features in creating this rural character. The area also has a role in separating Hawkhurst from development along Heartenoak Road/ Beals Green.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The sloping topography means that this area is highly visible, with the existing settlement of Hawkhurst extending northwards down the slopes, in view from a number of locations. Views of settlement associated with the ridge top including the church spire, is a key feature and further extension of development downslope would be highly sensitive.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>There are some urban influences from the edge of the settlement. However, the most part of the area is intact rural countryside and a typical of the character area and the AONB including undulating landform, ghyll valleys, extensive ancient woodland and rural lanes. It can be accessed via a right of way (a historic routeway) linking Hawkhurst to a wider network.</p>	
Historic character	<p>The area contains many features of historic interest, including the extensive area of ancient woodland at Whites Wood, substantial intact historic field boundaries representing a medieval field pattern and historic routeways. These are valued as key characteristics of the AONB and character area.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The area is considered overall to have high sensitivity due to its role in creating the northern rural valley setting for the ridgetop settlement of Hawkhurst; any further development downslope into the valley would change this perception. Features within the area including the stream valleys, ancient woodland and intact hedgerow boundaries are all sensitive. It is acknowledged that there may be opportunities for some minor development associated with the existing urban edge (identified as moderate- high) providing this is allied with landscape restoration (boundaries and woodland belts), particularly in relation to views to Hawkhurst.</p>		

Hawkhurst		Sub-Area Ha6			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>Strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. Any minor development should be closely related to the existing settlement edge or existing developed sites (e.g. scrapyard), avoid descending further downslope and include measures to enhance and integrate the settlement edge in views from the north.</p>					

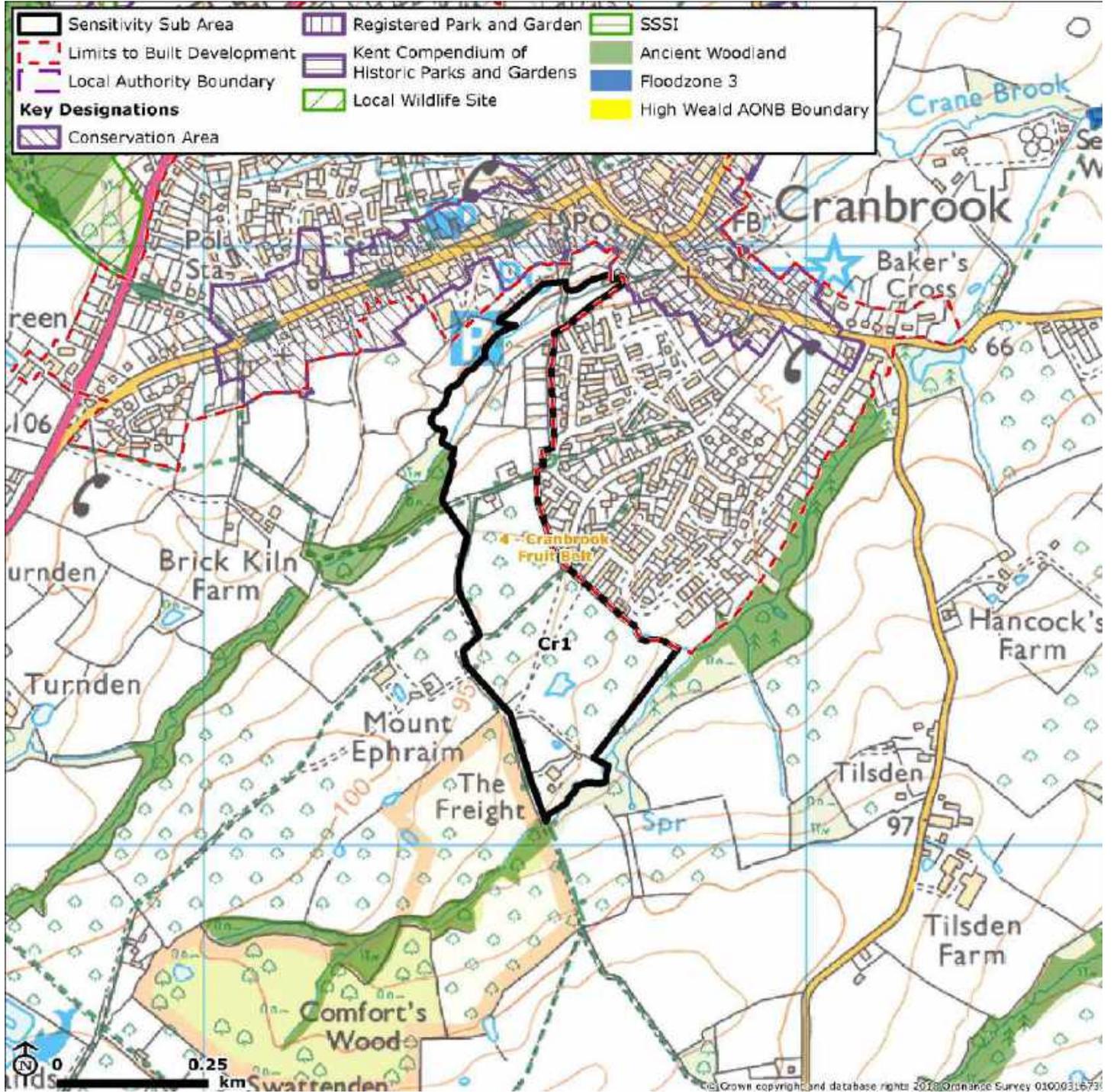


District Boundary
 Limits to Built Development
 Sensitivity Sub Areas
 Character Areas

The settlement of Cranbrook is centred on the floor and slopes of the Crane Brook valley, with modern expansion extending it further upslope westwards, to the A229, and southwards between the Crane Brook and an adjacent wooded watercourse. To the south-west development has spread out along the A229 from hamlets at Hartley and Goddards Green, and to the north there is only a narrow gap between Cranbrook and the hamlet of Wilsley Green. The study area extends northward to include the village of Sissinghurst, a linear Medieval settlement that has expanded northwards in modern times and which has only narrow separation from Wilsley Pound, a hamlet that has also expands northward, along the A229. Most of the study area falls within the *Cranbrook Fruit Belt* LCA, but land to the north of the A262 Sissinghurst Road is characterised as *Sissinghurst Wooded Farmland*. The whole of Cranbrook and its surroundings is within the AONB. Sissinghurst is located on the edge of the AONB within the area to the south of the settlement within the designation and area to the west, north and east outside the AONB.

Cranbrook was an important centre of cloth-making in Medieval times, but agricultural subsequently became the principal element of the local economy, with fruit and hop-growing predominant. Cranbrook School, which has its origins in the early 16th Century, is significant in terms of landscape character around the margins of the town, with its playing fields occupying much of the open space between the school buildings and Wilsley Green. To the west of the A229, Angley Park was a large

Victorian estate, and the sizeable Angley Wood is an important landscape element bordering the town.

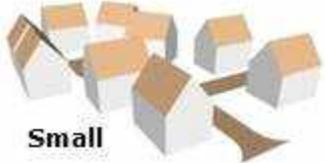
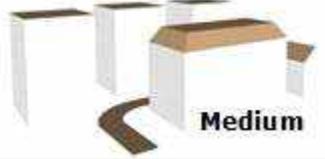


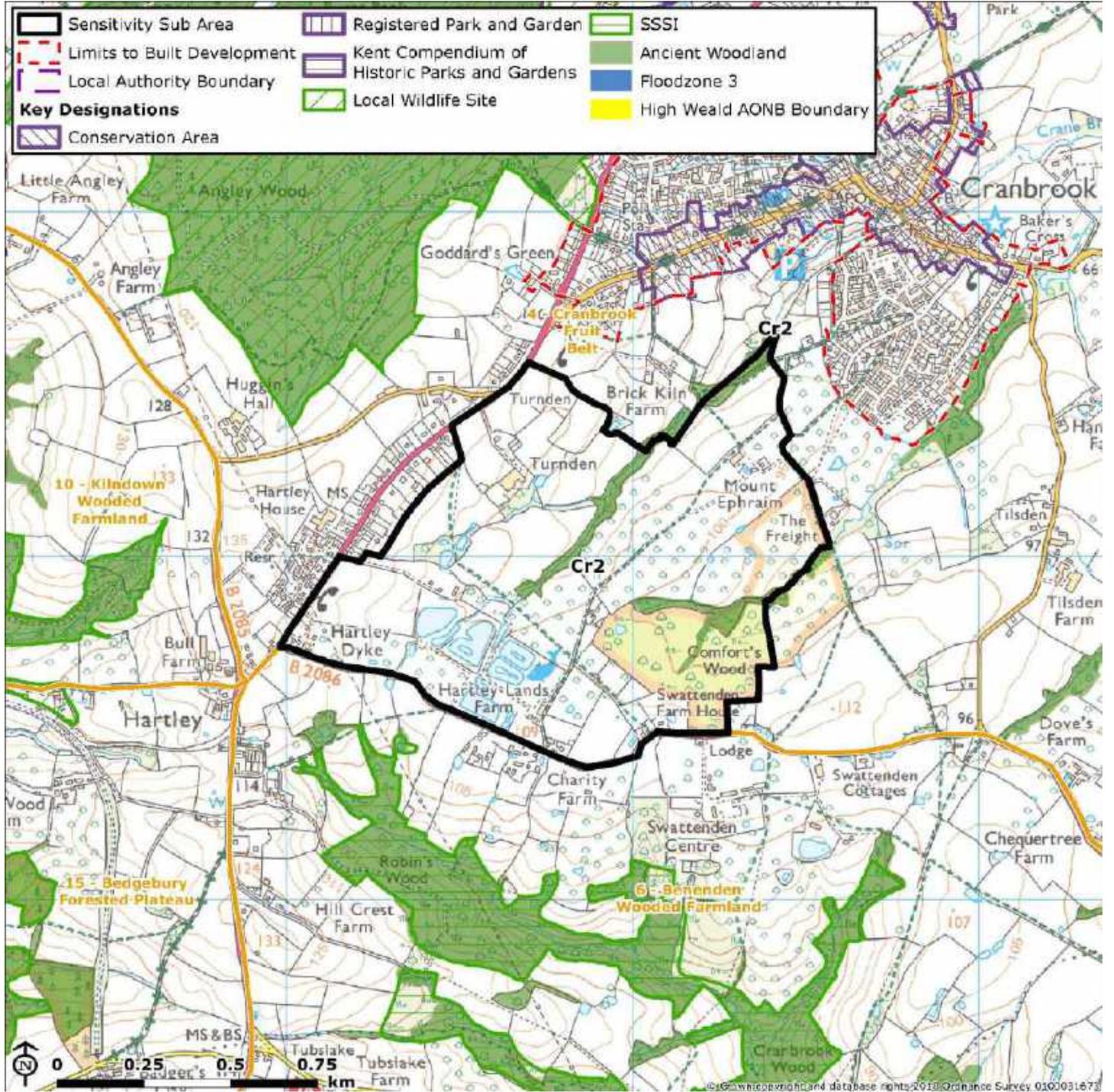
Representative views



Looking east from Freight Lane towards houses on Frythe Way (remnant traditional orchard to the left and young woodland to the right)

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr1
Description		Area (Ha) - 15.4
<p>Sub-area Cr1 is located on the southern edge of Cranbrook, between the edge of housing at Frythe Way/ Bramley Drive/ Turner Avenue to the east, and the Crane Valley and Mount Ephraim Farmhouse to the west. It comprises a ridgetop which falls towards ghyll valleys to the east and west; the northern part of the area contains the upper Crane Brook whilst the ridgetop is occupied by grassland, young woodland and several remnant traditional orchards. The whole of the area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>Ghyll valleys which contain ancient woodland to the west and ancient woodland just outside the area to the east, are valued features of the character area and AONB. To the north the Crane Valley forms a green wedge penetrating into the centre of the town; part of which is designated as the Crane Valley Local Nature Reserve. Traditional orchards are valued for biodiversity and because fruit production is a characteristic High Weald land use, adding to the AONB's distinctive character.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Topographically the land on the ridgetop within the sub-area is similar to that occupied by adjacent modern housing at Frythe Way/ Bramley Drive/ Turner Avenue. The settlement edge is largely contained by tree cover.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The Crane Brook 'green wedge' is important to the setting of Cranbrook, penetrating into the heart of the village, and is of particular value for its contribution to recreation and local views. The northern part of the sub-area lies close to Cranbrook Conservation Area, and contributes to its setting. Two public rights of way cross through the area, and one follows the southern boundary.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The area is relatively well-enclosed by woodland, however, due to its ridgetop location removal of woodland would increase the prominence and visual sensitivity of the area. The elevated location means it is highly sensitive to taller buildings as they would be likely to break the tree-line and alter the character of longer views towards Cranbrook.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The landscape has some sense of rurality where tree cover screens the urban edge, but proximity to the modern housing estate and visual containment from the wider countryside also have an influence.</p>	
Historic character	<p>The Freight is a listed building and medieval historic farmstead in the south west of the area, and Mount Ephraim is also a historic farmstead. Other listed buildings nearby include 'The Pest House' is a listed building which is just within the Limits to Built Development at the start of Freight Lane, but this and other dwellings along the lane, including The Freight itself, add to the historic character of this route, increasing the sense of distinction from the urban area.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The key sensitivities of the area relate to its physical characteristics which are typical of the character area and the AONB: the Crane Brook, ghyll valleys (including ancient woodland just beyond the sub-area) and remnant traditional orchards. The valley side at the northern end of the sub-area, facing the village conservation area and with open public access, is highly sensitive to any type of development. Further south there are sensitivities associated with historic farmsteads and a stronger rural character, but the open field adjacent to Frythe Way is relatively well contained by tree cover and so has a more moderate level of sensitivity to development that is modest enough in scale to avoid appearing above tree lines. The adjacent young woodland is slightly more sensitive, but less so than the remnant orchards.</p>		

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr1			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>Any development in the area would need to be in well-contained areas and the design of development should be sensitive to the character of the landscape and townscape of Cranbrook and its Conservation Area, and particularly the character and special qualities of the AONB. Intrusion on the rural character of Freight Lane should be minimised by creating a screening buffer of vegetation, and habitat linkage across the sub-area to the ghyll valleys should be maximised.</p>					

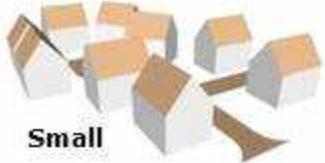
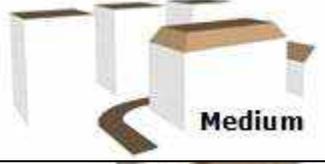


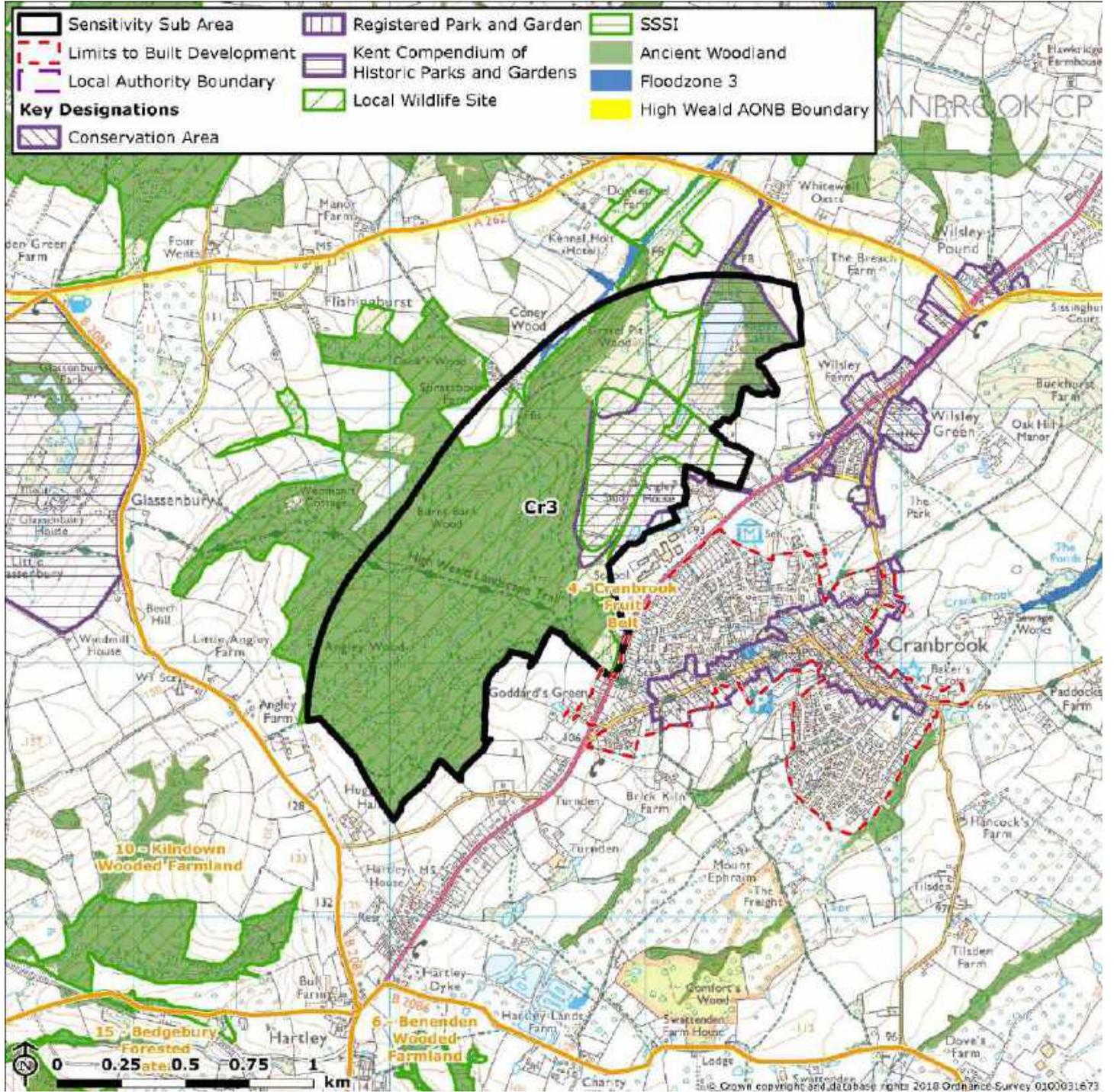
Representative views



Looking north-west across the Crane Brook valley towards development along the A229 Hartley Road

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr2
Description		Area (Ha) - 112.4
<p>Sub-area CR2 is located south of Cranbrook and to the north east of Hartley between the A229 Hartley Road and the B2086 Swattenden Lane. It comprises undulating landform of ridges and ghyll valleys and varied land cover of orchards, a farm shop and fishery, equestrian centre at Turnden, woodland farm buildings and cottages and agricultural fields. The whole of the area is within the AONB.</p> <p>The sub-area doesn't adjoin the existing settlement edge, but the land between Turnden and houses along Green Way is allocated for development under the Site Allocation Local Plan (Policy AL/CR4).</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>Ghyll valleys containing ancient woodland are valued features of the character area and AONB. BAP habitats of deciduous woodland, at the Woodland Trust's Comfort's Wood, and traditional orchard around Mount Ephraim, are valued for biodiversity. The traditional orchards but also modern fruit growing on the valley side to the south are distinctive to local character, and characteristic of the AONB. A large number of water bodies and the upper reaches of the Crane Brook are also distinctive features of the character area and AONB (although there is no sensitivity associated with the artificial fishing lakes at Hartley Lands Farm).</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The Limits to Built Development of Cranbrook have been extended to the south, where Policy AL/CR4 requires landscape buffers to separate new development from the A229 Hartley Road, the Crane Valley and the village core to the north. An existing copse and tree line combined with new buffer planting will help to retain a boundary between the sub-area and the new settlement edge, but there is no distinction in terms of landform between the two areas. The linear form of Hartley is distinct from the nucleated settlement form of Cranbrook, but the presence of almost continual development out from Cranbrook along Hartley Road combined with the allocated new development further down in the valley does weaken the settlement boundary to a degree.</p> <p>Land to the south/east of the wooded Crane Brook valley, including fields sloping south-east towards another wooded ghyll valley, has a stronger sense of separation from Cranbrook.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The Crane Brook valley is a significant element in the setting of Cranbrook, but sensitivity can be considered to diminish with increasing proximity to development along the ridge crest. The higher ground to the south/east of the brook is visible from the ridge to the north, forming part of the wider rural setting of the village. Public footpaths cross through the area and open access land is present at Comfort's Wood and to the north-east between Comfort's Wood and Freight Lane.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The area is relatively open, with views from the ridgetops of the B2086 and A229 across the area to surrounding ridges and valleys, but the lower slopes of the valley are largely screened from views from the opposite valley side by the ghyll woodland.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The combination of open grassland or orchard-covered slopes down to wooded ghylls, with views to more distant wooded high ground, has scenic qualities typical of the AONB. Rural character is stronger to the south/east of the Crane Brook, and in the field between Turnden and Hartley Lands Farm (contained on three sides by woodland but with long views to the north-east) and ridge-crest settlement has only a limited urbanising influence.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Five historic farmsteads are recorded in the sub-area, but only two of these have historic buildings remaining. Post-Medieval consolidated strip fields are noted in the HLC around Turnden, but these are now equestrian paddocks and do not form part of any recognisable historic landscape.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The area is typical of the AONB landscape of ridges and wooded ghyll valleys, with frequent orchards. These are characteristic features of the AONB and the character area, valued for scenic qualities, biodiversity and sense of place, so sensitivity to built development is generally high, in particular in the area to the south/east of the Crane Brook which has a strong sense of remoteness from Cranbrook. Adjacent to the allocated AL/CR4 development on the edge of Cranbrook, around Turnden, and in remaining open gaps along Hartley Road, proximity to existing/intended development means that sensitivity is slightly lower.</p>		

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr2			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
Retention of openness around the Turnden farmhouse would help to preserve its rural setting, and to retain a degree of separation between Cranbrook and Hartley. Elsewhere wotland provides strong containment and should be conserved and managed.					



Representative views



Looking west across paddocks at Angley Stud

Cranbrook	Sub-Area Cr3
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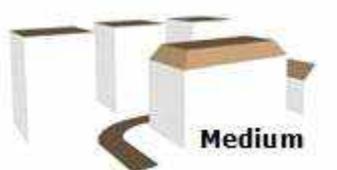
Description	Area (Ha) - 182.6
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Sub-area CR3 is located west of Cranbrook. It comprises Angley Wood and the parkland associated with Angley House, including a large lake and a stud farm. The whole of the area is within the AONB.

Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description
Physical character	Angley Wood Local Wildlife Site is a large area of ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland dissected by ghylls, features important to local character and the special qualities of the AONB. On the north-eastern perimeter of the woodland is an area of unimproved acid grassland. The area is a large High Weald woodland complex which supports numerous species of flora and fauna
Settlement form and edge	The woodland and Angley Park lie to the west of a ridge crest and the A229, which provide a distinct separation from Cranbrook. The High Weald Academy and adjacent sports centre form a sizeable grouping of large, modern buildings on the edge of the sub-area, but tree cover in Angley Park screens this from the open fields of Angly Stud to the north.
Settlement setting	Angley Wood and the numerous public rights of way within it, including the High Weald Landscape Trail, provide a valued recreational amenity and visual setting to Cranbrook. The historic relationship of the woodland to Cranbrook also contributes to its value as part of the settlement's setting.
Visual character	The woodland could visually contain some degree of development, although any change to the elevated ridgelines would be likely to be more widely visible. Public rights of way, including the High Weald Landscape Trail long distance route, pass through the sub-area.
Perceptual qualities	The undulating scenic ridges and valleys, ancient woodland and water bodies are strongly characteristic of the AONB and the character area.
Historic character	Angley Park historic park and garden provides historic interest: the grounds were laid out from the early 18th century around a country house and extensive park and woodland (although it is now in use as Angley Stud with fields divided by post and wire fencing). There is a listed building and historic farmstead at Spratsbourne Farm in the north of the area. Ancient woodland and ancient replanted woodland are of considerable historic landscape value.

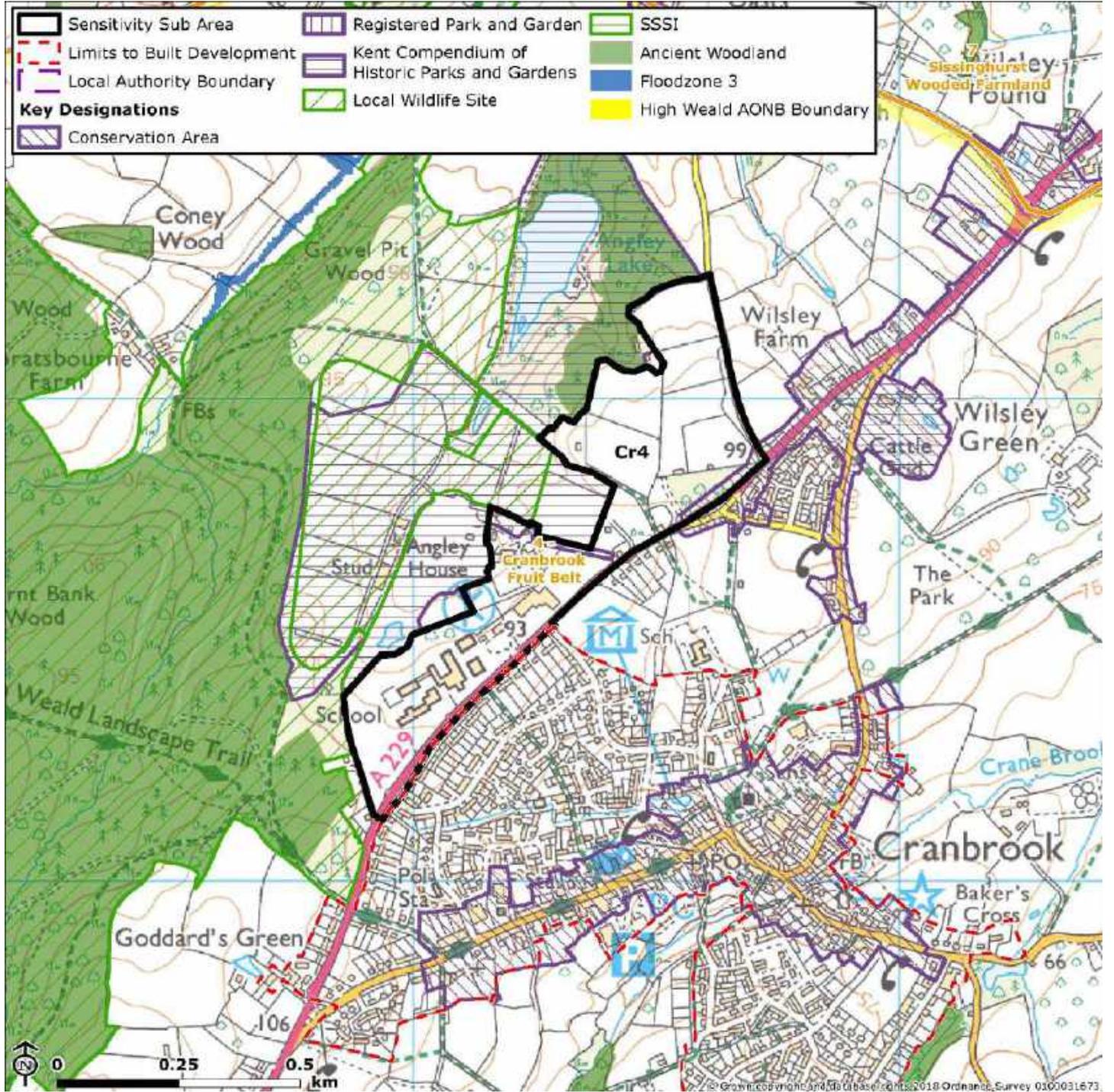
Sensitivity conclusions

The area is typical of the AONB landscape and of the character area, with Angley Wood ancient and replanted woodland a key valued feature. High scenic qualities, biodiversity and sense of place as well as the historic Angley Park are valued features. The visibility of the area further increases sensitivity as the settlement of Cranbrook is currently well screened in the landscape.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.

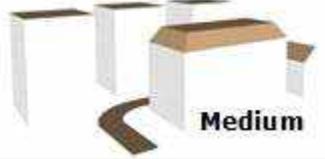


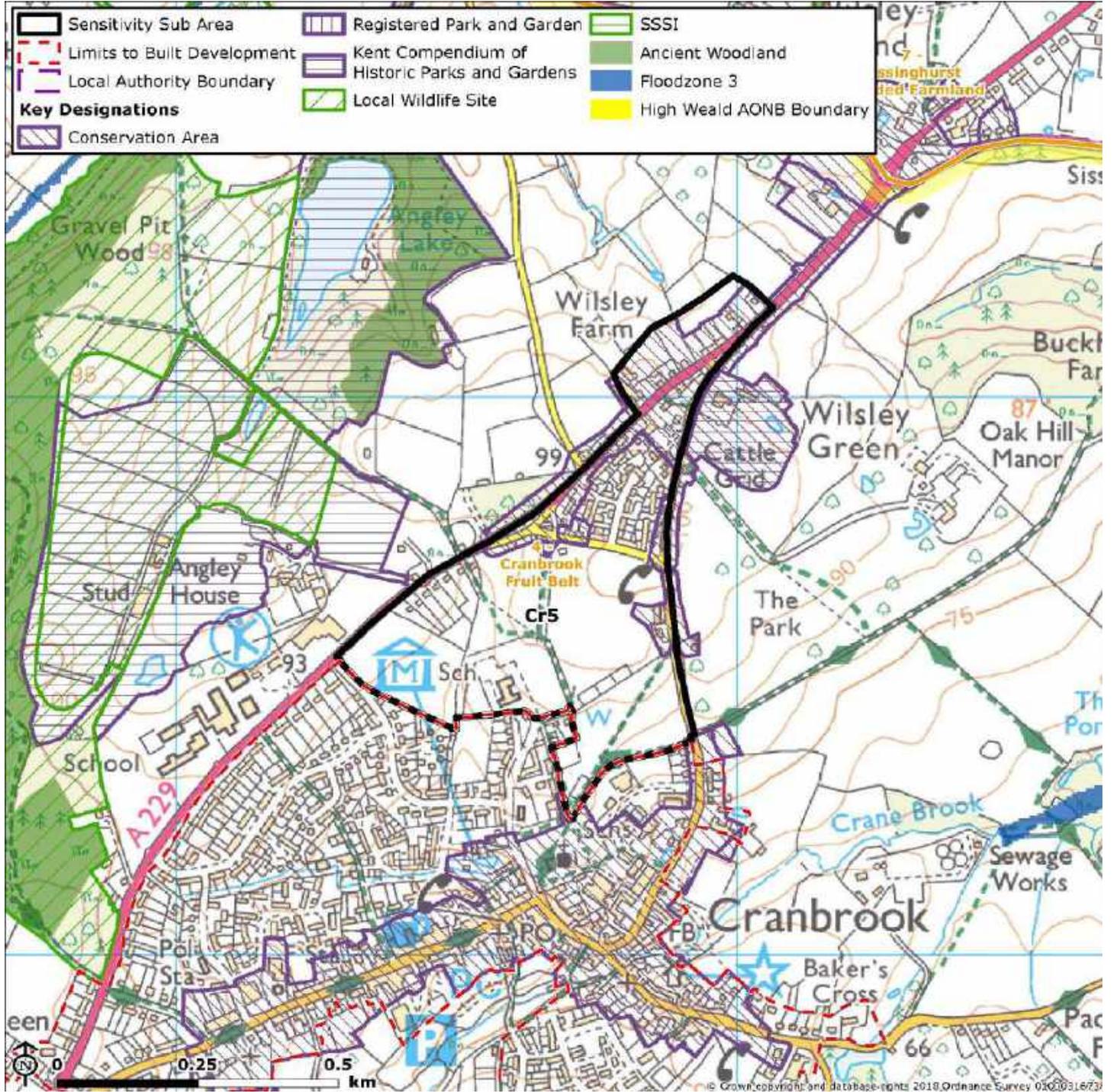
Representative views



Looking west from the A229 at Wilsley Green across the Rugby Club towards Angley Wood

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr4
Description		Area (Ha) - 26.1
<p>Sub-area CR4 is located adjacent to the north-west of Cranbrook, where the A229 forms the defined Limits to Built Development. It comprises the High Weald Academy and the Weald Sports Centre, with some associated outdoor recreational space, Cranbrook Rugby Club and cricket ground, and open fields and detached houses in large grounds. The whole of the area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>Built development and associated formal recreational spaces dominate the southern part of this area, which is for the most part relatively flat or sloping gently down towards Angley Park. Further east it includes some mature tree cover, particularly around The Oaks, a house just to the north of the entrance road to Angley Park, and part of the avenue of trees along the Angley Park entrance road, which contribute to landscape character.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Residential development in Cranbrook is for the most part contained by the A229, but the extent of containment by Angley Park and Angley Wood limits the extent to which the school and sports centre can be considered to weaken this boundary. Cranbrook's Limits to Built Development run to the south of the Cranbrook School playing fields, east of Oatfield Drive, so there is some separation between the sub-area and the town. A row of dwellings outside of the defined settlement faces the sub-area in the vicinity of the entrance to Angley Park, but tree cover alongside the main road strengthens separation. The eastern end of the sub-area, near Whitewell Lane, abuts the outlying hamlet of Wilsley Green. The hamlet is a mix of historic buildings and modern development, but a woodland block between the A229 and the rugby/cricket pitches within the sub-area forms a strong boundary.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>Woodland and parkland trees to the north and west are more significant in the setting of Cranbrook than landscape elements within the sub-area itself, but although there are urban fringe land uses the general absence of development to the east of the sports centre is important in preserving the perceived separation along the main road between Cranbrook and the hamlet of Wilsley Green.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The sub-area is strongly contained by tree cover other than in views of the developed southern edge from the A229, and of the rugby club pitches from the A229/Whitewell Lane junction and from Whitewell Lane, although the latter are seasonally very filtered by hedgerow.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>There are some urban influences from the edge of the settlement and the A229 is a busy road. Recreational and education uses create a semi-rural character. There are no particularly strong scenic qualities associated with the area.</p>	
Historic character	<p>There is historic interest associated with Angley Park, listed in the Kent Compendium of Parks and Gardens, but Angley House itself has been rebuilt on a number of occasions, and a number of private dwellings have been built on adjacent plots. The HLC shows the rugby club and adjacent fields as early post-Medieval formal planned fields, but they have no particular historic landscape character. Trees along the south-eastern fringe of the sub-area are included as part of the Wilsley Green Conservation Area; not because of any particular qualities relating to the trees themselves but for their role in providing woodland containment.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The extent of existing development at the High Weald Academy and Weald Sports Centre limits sensitivity to further development in the same area, but a 'moderate' rating still applies because of the detrimental impact of intensified development on views of Angley Wood and Park. This increases to moderate-high for large-scale development.</p>		

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr4			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>Minimise tree loss and retain some through-views to Anlgey Wood and Park. Consider impacts on the Wilsley Conservation Area and the historic character of Angley Park. Avoid development of a height that would have skyline impact.</p>					

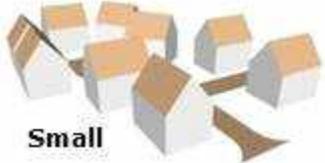
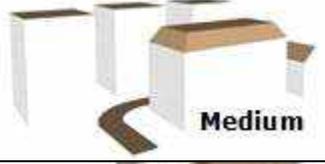


Representative views



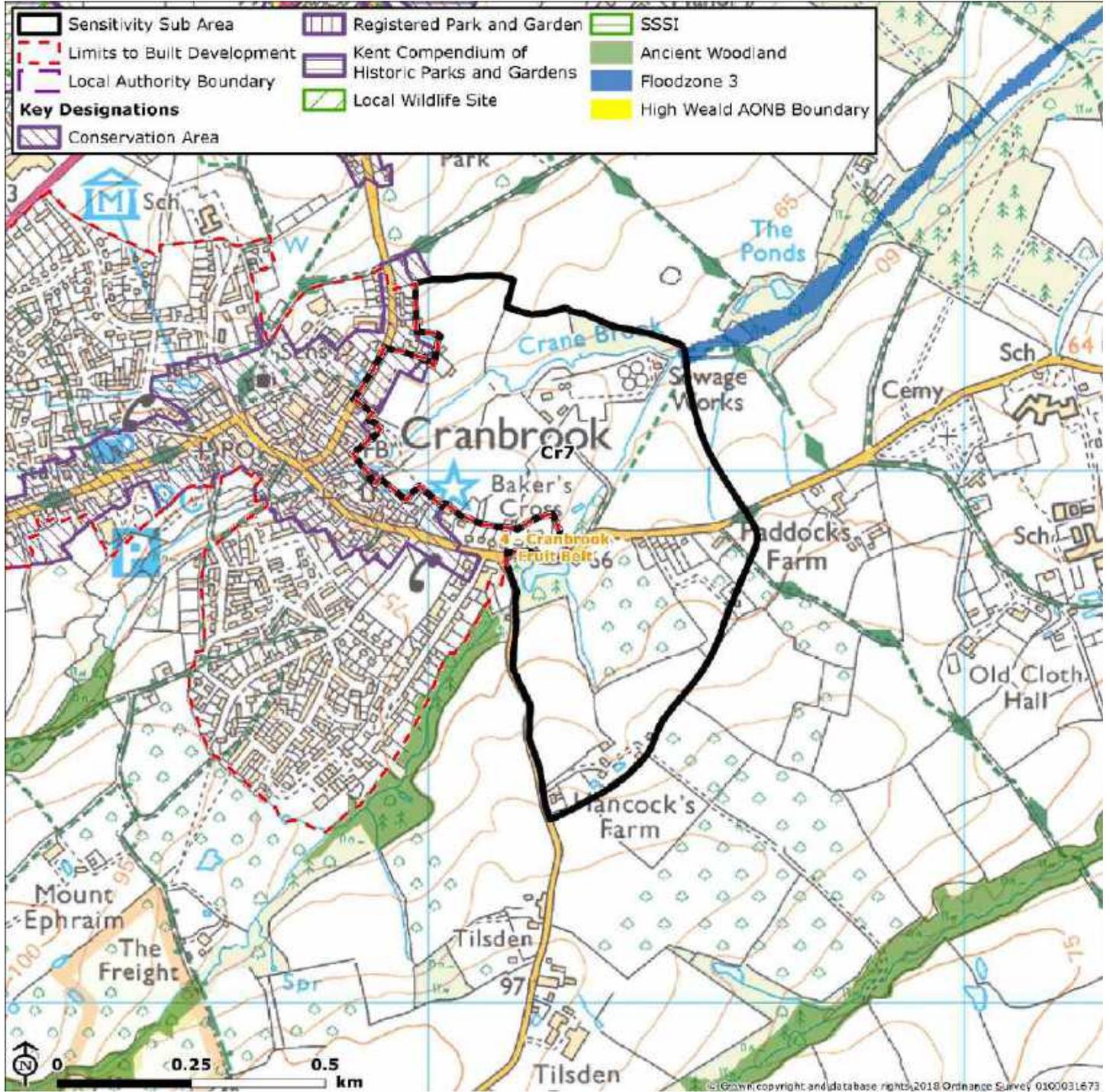
Looking east across Cranbrook School playing fields towards houses on Waterloo Road

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr5
Description		Area (Ha) - 25.7
<p>Sub-area CR5 is located to the north of Cranbrook, between the A229 Angley Road to the west/north and Waterloo Road to the east. It includes Cranbrook Primary Sschool, allotments, some houses along the A229 and Waterloo Road and, occupying most of the area, playing fields mostly belonging to Cranbrook School (the buildings of which are to the south of the sub-area, within the Limits to Built Development). At the northern tip of the sub-area is the hamlet of Wilsley Green, much of which is designated a Conservation Area although the central area away from the bounding roads has been infilled with 20th Century residential development. The whole of the area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	Tree cover around the fringes of the sub-area, and some field boundary trees/hedgerow within it, are important to local landscape/townscape character. Due to the recreational and education uses – the landform slopes only gently to the south – there are no other physical or natural features important to character.	
Settlement form and edge	Tree cover softens the settlement edge of Cranbrook, but there is no clear, consistent boundary. The primary school is excluded from the Limits to Built Development, and short rows of houses along both Angley Road and Waterloo Road weaken the gap between Cranbrook and Wilsley Green. The extent of development in and around the sub-area means that it does not represent a transition from town to countryside.	
Settlement setting	The open character of the area resulting from the extensive sports pitches and other open space is a distinctive and valued feature of Cranbrook’s setting, providing accessible recreational space, within picturesque surroundings, in close proximity to the historic village centre. The area constitutes the narrow gap, c.400m, between Cranbrook and the hamlet of Wilsley Green, with intervisibility between the two limited by the plateau landform.	
Visual character	The area is on elevated land sloping towards Cranbrook, allowing views from the eastern half down towards key features within the townscape: the church, Cranbrook School and the windmill. Tree cover contains wider views from much of the area, but from some locations there is visibility of more distant wooded ridges.	
Perceptual qualities	The character of the area is only semi-rural, due to its formal recreational uses and proximity to built development, but it has attractive perimeter tree cover and some views towards the town’s wider rural setting. Its sense of openness is a positive quality.	
Historic character	The sub-area adjoins both of the Conservation Areas of Cranbrook and Wilsley Green, the latter extending into the area itself to encompass several older/vernacular buildings. The area forms part of the open setting to both Conservation Areas.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>Although not a typical AONB landscape the openness of this area is important to the historic rural setting of Cranbrook, to the Wilsley Green Conservation Area and to separation between Cranbrook and Wisley Green. A ‘high’ level of sensitivity applies to the central and eastern parts of the sub-area, which are the most significant in terms of historic settings and settlement separation, but sensitivity is judged to be ‘moderate’ at Jaegers Field, the recreation ground alongside the A229 opposite the Weald Sports Centre, which is more contained and adjacent to modern development on Oatfield Drive and Oatfield Close.</p>		

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr5			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
A landscape buffer along the A229 is required to reduce the impact of any development at Jaegers Field on perceived separation between Cranbrook and Wilsley Green.					

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr6
Description		Area (Ha) - 220
<p>CR6 encompasses a large area of land located centrally between Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. Much of the area is associated with the Oak Hill Manor estate, with parkland in the western part of the sub-area, adjoining the gardens around another large property, Old Wilsley. Farmland and woodland form the rest of the estate to the north and east: The Crane Brook, contained by valley-floor woodland, runs through the eastern part of the sub-area, and another wooded stream valley links into it along the northern edge of the area. A triangle of land to the north of the A229, between Whitewell Lane and the A262 Goudhurst Road, largely orchards, is also included in this sub-area. Settlement is very sparse, comprising only isolated farmsteads. All of the area lies within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The sub-area slopes downhill relatively gently from a high point at Wilsley Green, on its western edge, but valleys cut into the slope, including one to the north of Wilsley as well as those associated with the Crane Brook, add sensitivity. Extensive woodland in the valleys of the Crane Brook and its tributary, characteristic of the AONB landscape, add further sensitivity. Parkland landscape elements – trees lines, water features and gardens – provide landscape interest around Oak Hill Manor and Old Wilsley. The orchards to the north of the A229, although not traditional larger trees, are a characteristic AONB land use that adds to local landscape character.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>The south-western tip of the sub-area abuts the Limits of Built Development at Cranbrook, on Waterloo Road, but the expansive open fields and parkland within the sub-area represent a strong distinction from the urban area. Tree cover alongside the road precludes any significant intervisibility between town and countryside, and trees on the western edge of the parkland area contribute to the wooded setting of the Wilsley Green Conservation Area. The hamlet of Wilsley Pound lies along the A229 on the northern edge of the sub-area, but the well-treed A262 Sissinghurst Road contains it to the south.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The sub-area constitutes the core of the separation between Cranbrook and Sissinghurst, which is relatively broad across the main body of the sub-area but which is perceived as smaller along the A229, where the hamlets of Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound narrow the gap. Although not directly visible from within Cranbrook, the sub-area provides an expansive rural setting to this side of the town, and it also provides a strong rural setting to the south of Sissinghurst.</p>	
Visual character	<p>There are extensive views across large, open fields with wooded backdrops. A number of public rights of way cross the area. The High Weald Landscape Trail passes across the southern end, close to Cranbrook, providing long vistas over the Crane Brook valley woodlands.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>Lack of built development and characteristic High Weald woodlands and landforms give this area a strong rural, tranquil character and scenic quality.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Old Wisley is a 1920's garden set out around a Medieval house and listed in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens. Oak Hill Manor, as far east as the Crane Brook woodlands and encompassing the large field adjacent to the north between the A229/A262 and the valley woodland, has been proposed for inclusion in the Compendium. Most of the farmsteads within the sub-area are historic, and the varied form of the woodland edges in the eastern part of the area contain an early post-Medieval field pattern.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The sub-area has strong separation from adjacent settlements. Expansive views, lack of habitation other than isolated farmsteads, and characteristic AONB stream valleys and woodlands make it very sensitive to any strategic development. Openness close to the A229 is important in preserving rural character and separation between Cranbrook and Sissinghurst.</p>		

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr6			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>There is little scope for mitigation, as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.</p>					



Representative views



Looking east from Waterloo Road, opposite the Queen's Hall Theatre at Cranbrook School, across synthetic pitches towards woodland along the Crane Brook

Cranbrook	Sub-Area Cr7
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Description	Area (Ha) - 40.3
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Sub-area CR7 encompasses land adjacent to the eastern side of Cranbrook, where the Crane Brook and a smaller tributary stream emerge from the centre and southern edge of the town respectively, merging alongside the sewage works. Playing fields at Cranbrook School, and several associated buildings, occupy the flatter ground above the wooded streams. All of the sub-area is within the AONB.

Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description
Physical character	The valley here is for the most part moderate in slope, although steeper in the immediate vicinity of the watercourses and flatter in between the two streams. Wooded stream valleys are a characteristic feature of the AONB. An area of traditional orchard, which has ecological value and is a traditional, characteristic land use in the High Weald, remains on the valley side to the south of Golford Road.
Settlement form and edge	Dwellings along Bakers Cross, The Hill and Waterloo Road back onto the school playing fields. There is no significant sense of distinction between the town and this area, other than on the rising wooded slopes to the south of Golford Road and east of Tilsden Lane.
Settlement setting	Woodland in the valley bottom and on the slopes to the south is a principal element in the contained setting of the historic core of Cranbrook. Woodland along the brook is clearly visible from Waterloo Road in the town centre, looking over sports pitches.
Visual character	The area is largely contained from wider view by tree cover.
Perceptual qualities	The sports pitches give an urban fringe character to the sub-area, with woodland creating separation from the wider countryside. However the woodlands also screen the sewage works, and contribute positively to landscape character.
Historic character	The formal recreational use of the area means that it has no historic character in its own right, but it has a close relationship with the adjacent historic centre of Cranbrook, a Conservation Area, with views to landmarks such as the Union Mill, St Dunstan's church and the main school buildings.

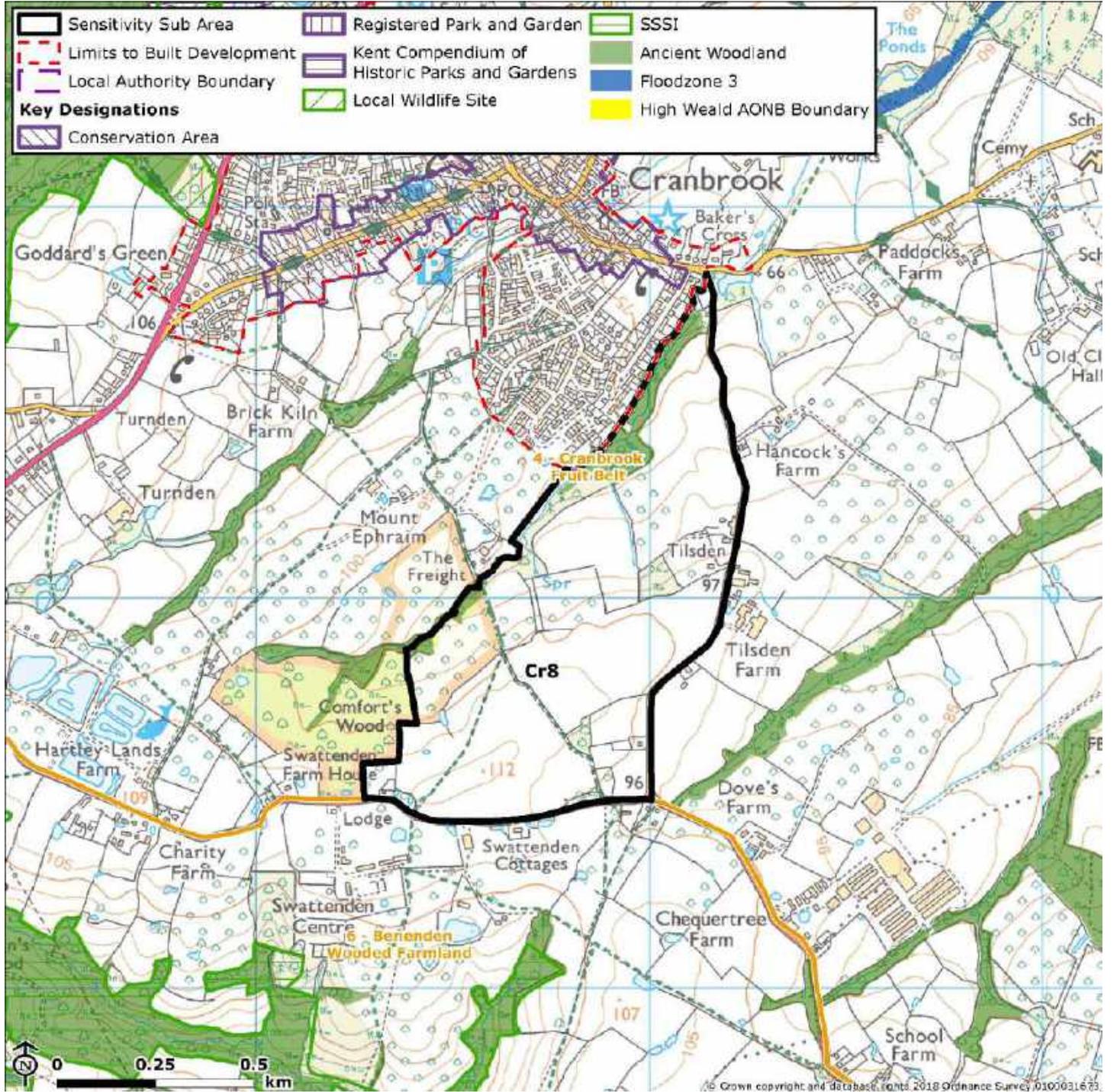
Sensitivity conclusions

The wooded stream valleys are a characteristic AONB landscape component and also play a significant role in the setting of the Cranbrook Conservation Area, and the wooded slopes to the south of Golford Road form a strong edge to the town. There is 'high' sensitivity associated with both of these areas. Openness of the land occupied by sports pitches contributes to the setting role of the wooded valley floor area, and proximity to the Conservation Area adds sensitivity.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 Small	H	MH	M	ML	L
 Medium	H	MH	M	ML	L
 Large	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

There is little scope for mitigation, as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.



Representative views



Looking north from public footpath north of Swattenden Lane towards Cranbrook (the windmill can just be seen amongst the trees that screen most of the town from view)

Cranbrook	Sub-Area Cr8
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Description	Area (Ha) - 64.5
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CR8 consists of expansive open arable fields sloping north down to a wooded ghyll valley running along the northern side of the sub-area, from Comfort's Wood in the west to southern edge of Cranbrook in the east. It contains no built development except a farmstead at Tilsden and two isolated houses along Tilsden Lane and the B2086 Swattenden Lane. These roads define the eastern and southern boundaries of the sub-area.

Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description
Physical character	There is sensitivity associated with this very open landscape sloping down to a wooded valley which is characteristic of the AONB. Much of the woodland along the stream, a tributary of the Crane Brook, is ancient, which further adds to its value.
Settlement form and edge	The wooded valley creates strong visual and physical separation between the sub-area and the edge of Cranbrook on gently rising ground to the north.
Settlement setting	The extent of tree cover, and the presence of another ridge and valley between this sub-area and the south-western edge of Cranbrook, means that there is little direct intervisibility between the sub-area and the town, but it contributes to its wider rural setting.
Visual character	This is a very open landscape, permitting a long vista northwards in which, as is typical of the AONB, woodland dominate, appearing as a series of ridges. Most of Cranbrook sits below the tree line, so only a few buildings are discernable; there is no sense of being close to a town. Two public footpaths cross the sub-area, meeting alongside an area of open access grassland near Comfort's Wood.
Perceptual qualities	There is a strong sense of rurality and isolation in this elevated landscape with little visible development.
Historic character	The large, open arable fields have no historic qualities. Tilsden is a 17th Century farmstead with a listed house.

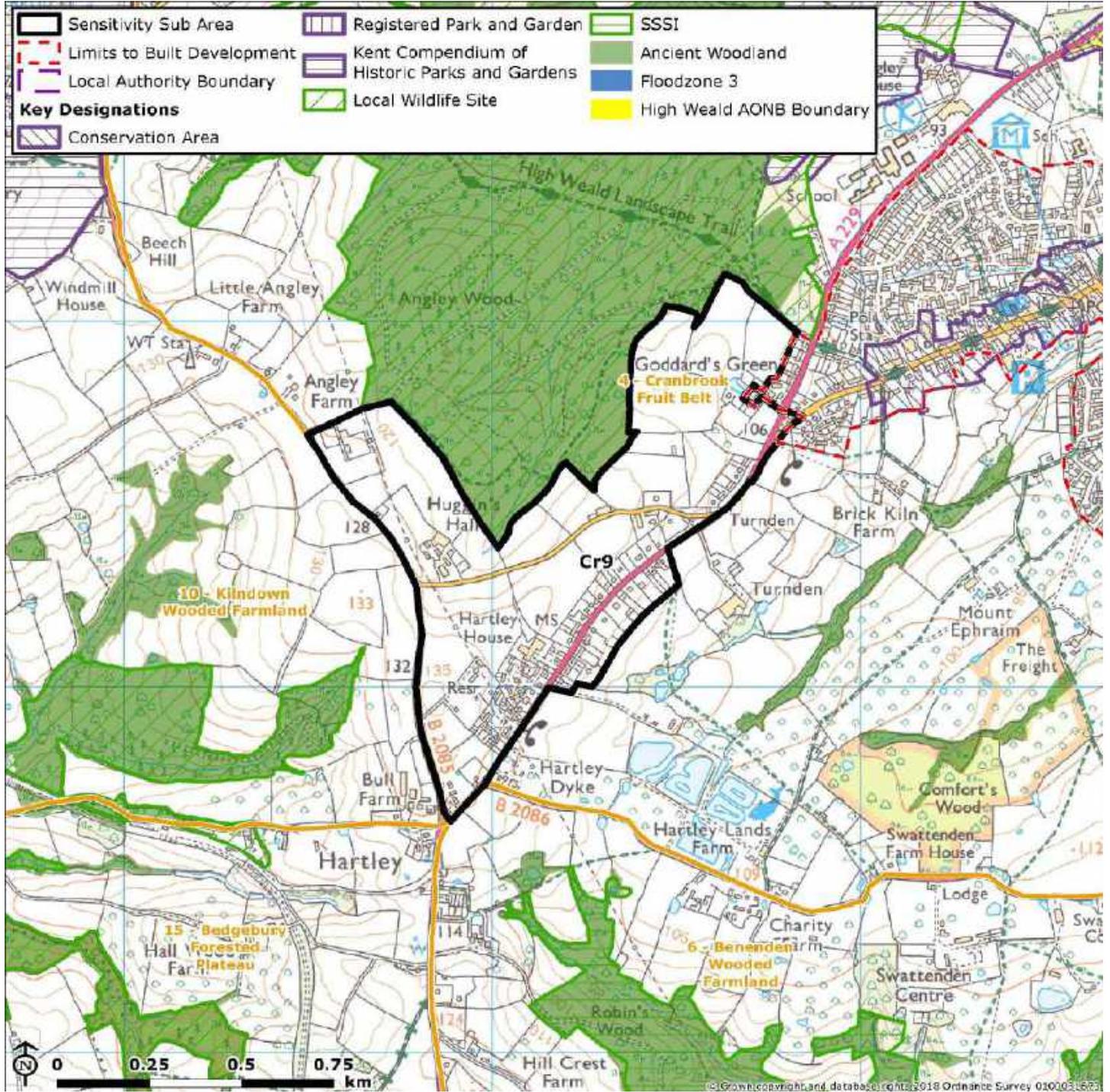
Sensitivity conclusions

This sub-area is separated from Cranbrook by a sensitive wooded stream valley, characteristic of the AONB, and has an open, rural character. Any expansion of Cranbrook into this area would relate badly to the existing settlement form and would intrude on a very rural landscape.

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

There is little scope for mitigation, as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.



Representative views



Looking north-east from Turnden Lane across grazing pasture alongside Angley Wood

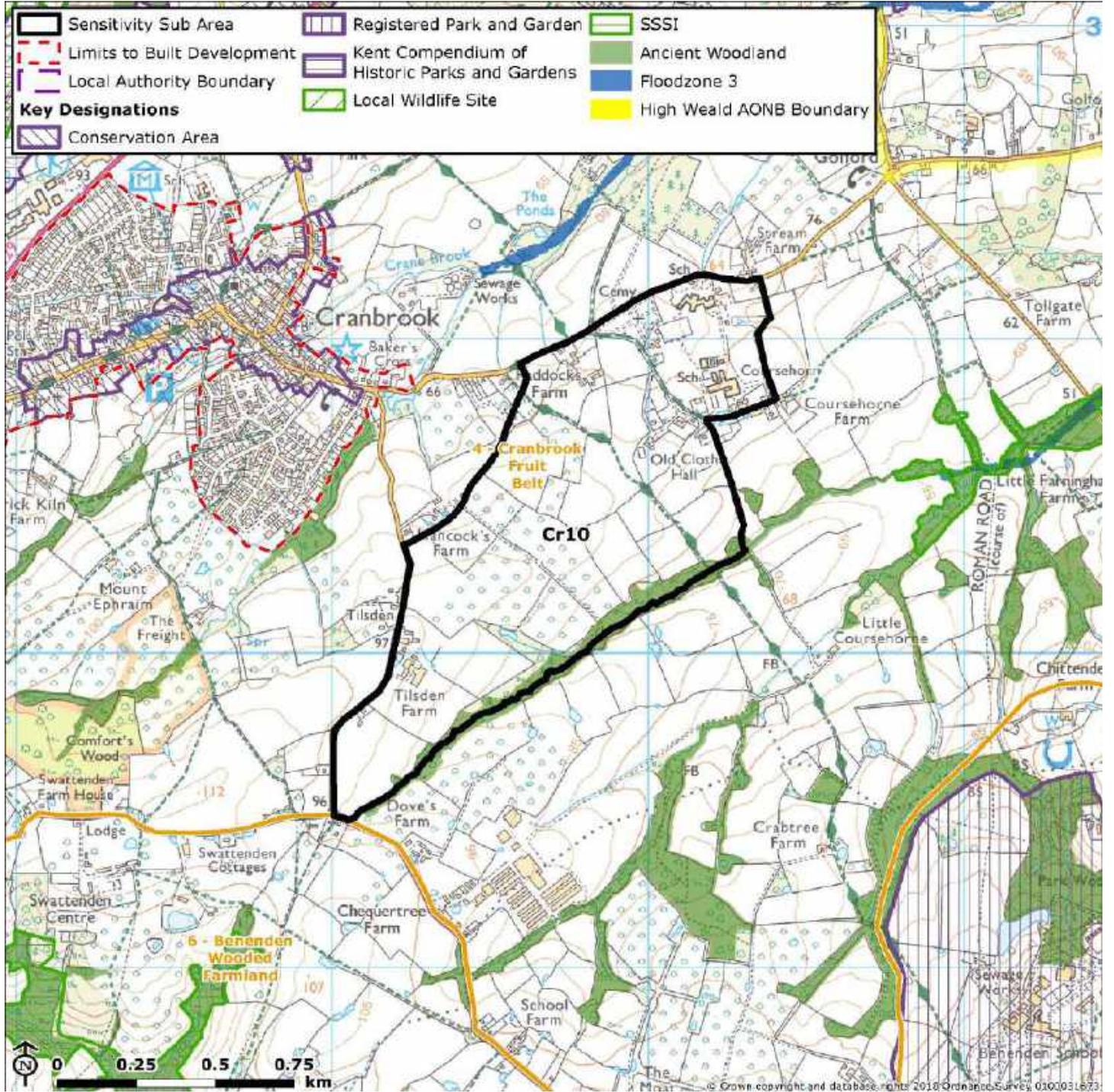
Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr9
Description		Area (Ha) - 70.9
<p>Sub-area CR9 is located to the south-west of Cranbrook, between the A229, B2085 and Angley Wood. The main body of the sub-area comprises open fields of grassland and pasture to either side of Turnden Road, but there is also a sizeable built development component: houses spread out along the A229 between Cranbrook and Hartley, including three closes that extend development back from the main road into the sub-area, a care home, several farmsteads, two farm-based small business/industrial estates and an electric substation and battery storage unit. All of the sub-area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>A broad ridgeline runs through the parcel parallel but to the west of the A229, rising to a high point at the western end, near the B2085 Glassenbury Road, where a covered reservoir is located. There are no particular sensitivities associated with landscape elements, other than in the vicinity of Angley Wood, a replanted ancient woodland site (assessed as a separate sub-area, CR3).</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Open fields in the sub-area abut development on the edge of Cranbrook within the defined Limits to Built Development, and also the linear village of Hartley. There is almost continuous development alongside the A229 between Cranbrook and Hartley, backing onto gently rising ground, but an orchard and grazing pasture adjacent to the farmstead at Goddard's Green form a gap of c.150m.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>The gap at Goddard's Green, and the rural, historic character of that farmstead complex, are important to the setting of Cranbrook. The pasture to the south of the orchard allows glimpsed views from the main road across to Angley Wood. Although the ridge through the sub-area rises slightly higher than roadside houses, it is not sufficiently elevated to form a prominent feature in the setting of the town, or of Hartley.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The area is relatively open, with views from the ridgetops of the B2086 and Turnden Road, but no off-road public rights of way cross the area. In longer views across the Crane Brook valley from the south, houses along the main road appear against a wooded skyline of Angley Wood and trees surrounding residential dwellings. New development of a similar scale would not be sufficiently high to intrude on the skyline, but could potentially be perceived in these longer views.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>There are some urban influences from development on the edge of Cranbrook, and at Hartley, and the A229 is a busy road. However to the north of the ridgeline the sub-area has a stronger rural character, with scenic views across pasture fields sloping down to the extensive Angley Wood. Historic buildings at Huggin's Hall and Angley Farm add to landscape character. Pylons and the battery storage facility near Glassenbury Road are detracting elements, but do not constitute urbanising features at this end of the sub-area, which is more remote from the A229 and adjacent housing.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Most of the fields adjacent to Angley Wood, to the north of Turnden Road, are Medieval assarts, which in combination with the historic farmsteads and replanted ancient woodland are of value as key characteristics of the AONB and character area. South of the ridge crest, the more modern settlement along the A229 is less sensitive in this regard, but the farmsteads at Goddard's Green on the edge of Cranbrook, and Gate Farm near the western end of Hartley, add to sensitivity locally.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>A high level of sensitivity is attached to the rural landscape to the north of the ridge, overlooking Angley Wood, which has little relationship with urbanising settlement . Sensitivity is generally lower to the south of the ridge, where existing development along and set back from the A229 has a significant influence, but there is likely to be very limited capacity for further small-scale development that would not impinge on local views from the northern part of the sub-area and longer views from the southern crest of the Crane Brook valley. High sensitivity is attached to the settlement gap to the south of Goddard's Green, and to the area around Gate Farm, which retains a more rural character.</p>		

Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
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 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures
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Across most of the sub-area there is little scope for mitigation, as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. There is moderate sensitivity to development to the south of the ridge, in the vicinity of existing housing, but any significant increase in visibility of development in views from the northern part of the sub-area, or from the southern crest of the Crane Brook valley, should be avoided.

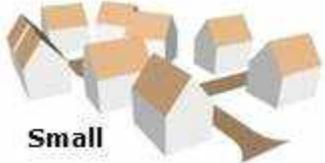
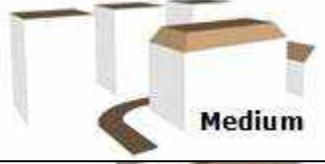


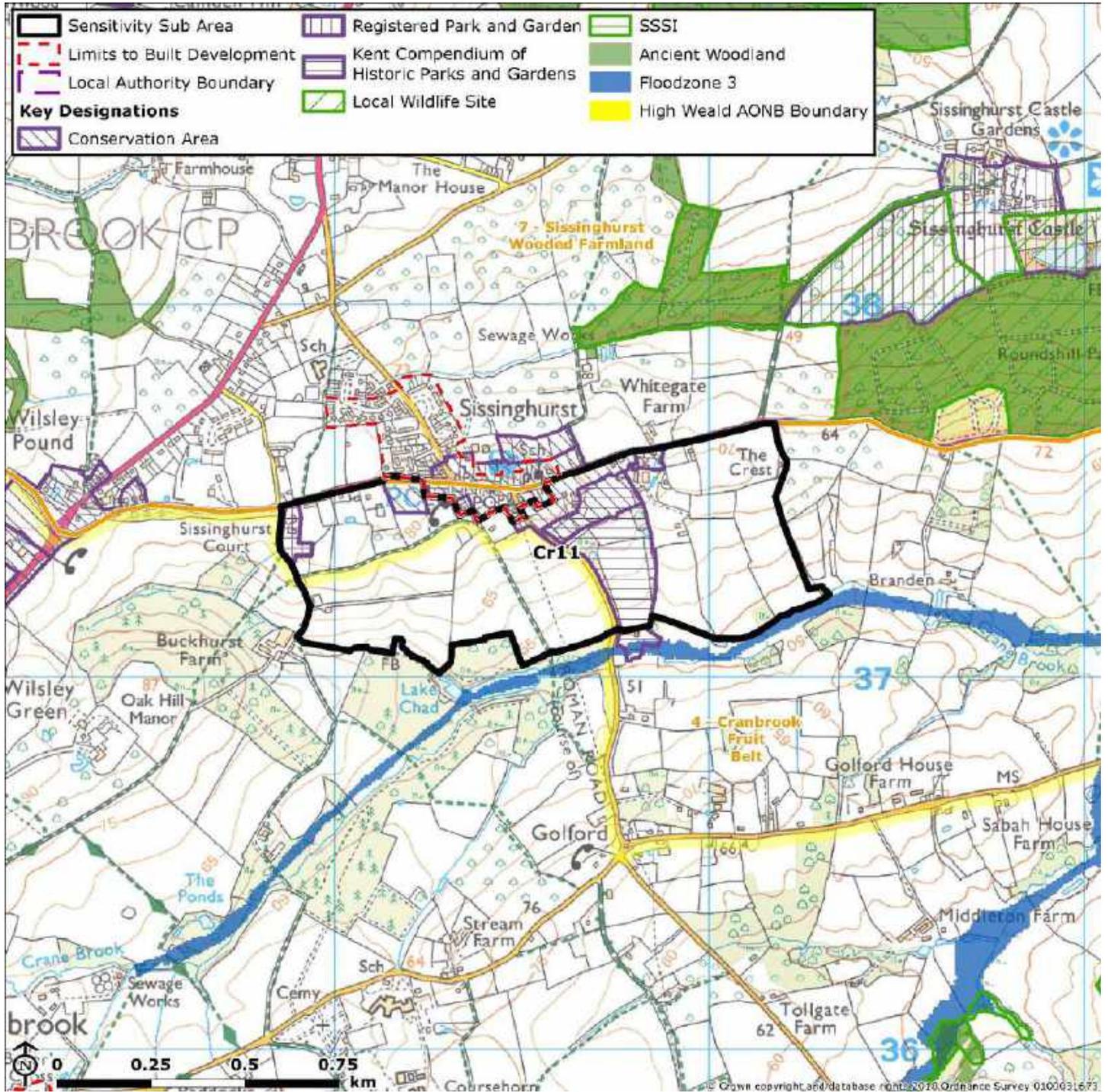
Representative views



Looking north from the High Weald Landscape Trail toward Paddock Farm on the northern edge of the sub-area, with Crane Brook valley woodlands beyond

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr10
Description		Area (Ha) - 107.1
<p>Higher slopes of arable and pastoral farmland, to the north and south of a ridge line falling gently from a high point in sub-area CR8, close to Swattenden Road, eastwards down to Golford Road. The southern edge of the sub-area is marked by a wooded ghyll. There is a cluster of development at Coursehorn, a hamlet at the eastern end of the ridge which has a number of historic buildings centred on a Medieval farmstead but also the modern buildings of Dulwich Preparatory School. Away from Coursehorn there are only isolated farmsteads and houses on the northern and western fringes of the sub-area. All of the sub-area is within the AONB.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	The ridge and wooded stream valley topography is considered sensitive to built development, being characteristic of the AONB.	
Settlement form and edge	A wooded valley along the edge of Cranbrook (in sub-area CR8) and rising wooded slopes to the east of it (in sub-area CR7) create strong physical and visual separation between the town and this sub-area. There is no sense that the sporadic development along Golford Road constitutes sprawl out from the town. Although the school comprises several large buildings, these are widely spaced, giving the site an open character. Neither this nor the adjacent historic farmstead buildings have any significant urbanising influence.	
Settlement setting	This sub-area does not form part of Cranbrook's immediate visual setting, but contributes to its wider rural setting. There are fairly frequent dwellings along Golford Road, but not of a density or form that detracts significantly from rural character. Strategic scale development would potentially change this.	
Visual character	The ridge provides some long views across wooded Wealden ridges, including from the High Weald Landscape Trail, and development here would potentially have skyline impact from some locations. Away from the higher ground the surrounding woodlands constrain visibility of the sub-area.	
Perceptual qualities	This is a rural landscape with only sporadic development, especially away from Golford Road, in which woodlands provide a strong backdrop. The elevation of the sub-area's higher slopes provides scenic views.	
Historic character	There is a strong grouping of historic buildings at Coursehorn, including the Grade II* listed farmhouse and Old Cloth Hall, but these are too contained by tree cover to have a strong influence over the character of the wider sub-area, and the modern nearby school buildings detract from historic character. Many of the fields in the southern part of the site, mostly sloping down from the ridge to the valley woodland, are identified in the HLC as possible early Medieval co-axial fields.	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The principal sensitivities to development are the degree of separation from Cranbrook, the prominence of the ridge and the rural character of the area. The presence of modern school buildings at Coursehorn does not diminish the harm to landscape character that would result from strategic-scale built development in this rural location.</p>		

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr10			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
Any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics.					

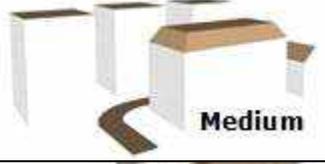


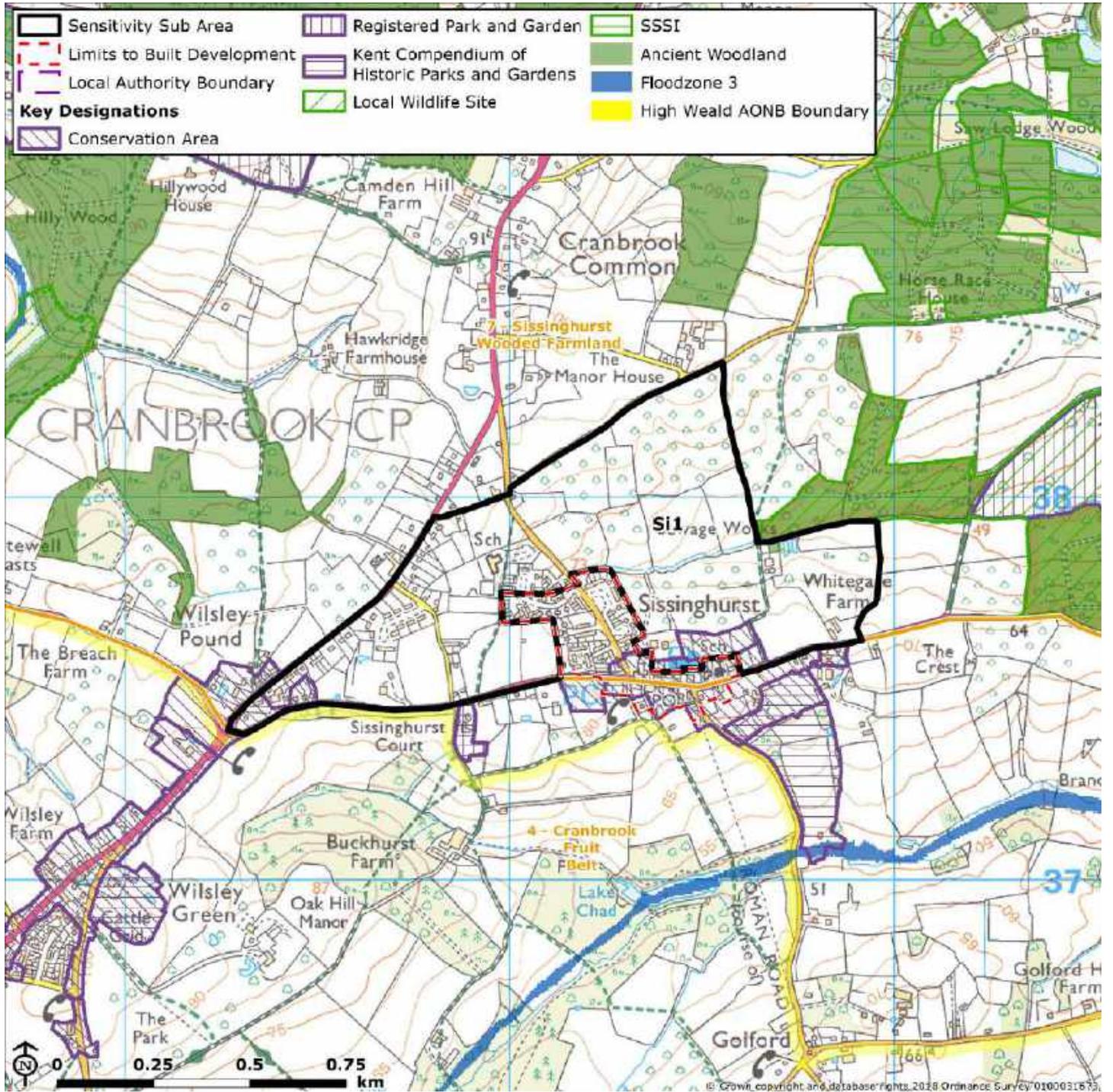
Representative views



Looking south-east from the top of the arable field nearest the western edge of the sub-area

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr11
Description		Area (Ha) - 59.9
<p>Land to the south of Sissinghurst and the A262, extending east as far as the entrance road to Sissinghurst Castle and Gardens (located to the north), west as far as the entrance road to Buckhurst Farm and south down to valley floor woodlands alongside a tributary of the Crane Brook.</p> <p>Much of the area is arable farmland, but there are also some pasture fields towards the eastern end. A band of low-density development, including some dwellings in large gardens (notably Sissinghurst Court and Sissinghurst Place), separates the village's defined Limits to Built Development from the surrounding farmland.</p> <p>Chapel Lane runs north-south through the sub-area. The area to the east of this, and also the area to the west containing low density residential development and the recreation ground and tennis club, is excluded from the AONB, as is Sissinghurst Village itself and land to the north of the A262. The arable fields to the south of the residential area and west of Chapel Lane are included in the AONB designation.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The undulating land slopes down toward the wooded stream valley, relatively steep towards the western end but becoming shallower to the east, are a characteristic AONB landscape. To the east of Chapel Lane the slope is shallower and there is less valley-floor woodland, but connectivity with the adjacent AONB means that there is still significant sensitivity.</p> <p>There is value associated with a small area of traditional orchard within the grounds of one of the large dwellings to the south-west of the defined village edge.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Well-treed hedgerows and a woodland block on the eastern side of Chapel Lane provide containment around the residential edge. This forms a more distinct boundary to the large, visually open arable fields than the defined Limits to Built Development.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>Tree cover limits intervisibility between the settlement and the sub-area, but the retention of openness in this area is important in preserving Sissinghurst's character as a ridge-top village.</p>	
Visual character	<p>Two footpaths cross the sub-area, providing expansive views, typical of the AONB, out over what appears as a heavily wooded landscape with trees in the valley below and on more distant ridges (e.g. Hemsted Forest, near Benenden). From outside of the sub-area, woodland limits inward views.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The open fields combine with woodland to the south to form a rural landscape that has little relationship with built development. The contained gardens and playing fields along the northern edge of the sub-area have a stronger relationship with the settlement, and are largely screened from intervisibility with the wider landscape, but represent a semi-rural transition to the more densely developed village core.</p>	
Historic character	<p>Sissinghurst Court and Sissinghurst Place have listed buildings and gardens that feature in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens, and there are two historic farmsteads adjacent to the A262 at either end of the village: Gatehouse and Plummer's. The Sissinghurst Conservation area incorporates most of the contained area between the Limits to Built Development and the open farmland to the east of Chapel Lane, and also the Jubilee Playing Field to the west. Most of the fields to the east of Chapel Lane are classified in the HLC as possible Medieval co-axial.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>The belt of contained, low-density development in the northern part of the parcel forms a strong edge to Sissinghurst, contrasting strongly with the open slopes to the south. There is a 'high' level of sensitivity associated with the AONB area to the west of Chapel Lane, which provides views over a typical High Weald landscape, but also to the east of the road where farmsteads and historic buildings fall within the Conservation Area, and farmland is very disconnected from the main body of the village and potentially retains a Medieval field pattern.</p> <p>The area outside of the AONB and Conservation Area to the west of the village is slightly less sensitive – a 'moderate-high' rating – but strong tree cover along the A262, and the presence of several listed buildings, form a transition between the countryside and the village core that has a positive impact on townscape character.</p>		

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Cr11			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>Across most of the sub-area there is little scope for mitigation, as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. Any intensification of development on the western edge of the village should have regard to the contribution to landscape character made by trees and historic buildings.</p>					



Representative views



Looking toward orchards in the valley to the north of Sissinghurst, from the car park of The Bull Inn

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Si1
Description		Area (Ha) - 65.9
<p>Si1 surrounds Sissinghurst to the north of the A262, and incorporates the hamlet of Wilsley Pound along the A229, which defines the western edge of the sub-area. Frittenden Road marks the northern extent of the area and field boundaries and the edge of Bull Wood (part of the Sissinghurst Castle Estate) marks the eastern boundary. Most land to the east of Common Road is used for fruit growing, but the field between the Limits to Built Development along Common Lane and the junction with Frittenden Road is in the process of being developed for housing. The sub-area also includes grounds and gardens associated with properties along the main village road (the A262 Sissinghurst Road), including the burial grounds of the parish church.</p> <p>Land to the west of Common Lane between Sissinghurst and Wilsley Pound is mostly grazing pasture or recreational space (St George's Field) but also includes Sissinghurst Primary School (relocated from the village centre in 2011). The sub-area is outside of the AONB, the edge of which lies just to the south of the village.</p>		
Assessment criterion	Sensitivity description	
Physical character	<p>The area between the A262, A229 and Common Road forms a flat plateau, beyond which the land falls away into valleys to the east, west and south. The ridge continues beyond the sub-area to the north to Cranbrook Common, terminating at Camden Hill and Hocker Edge. There would be higher sensitivity associated with development on the steeper slopes down to the valley that runs west to east towards Bull Wood.</p> <p>The orchards in the eastern part of the sub-area are modern plantings, but are valued as a defining characteristic of the area. Although not within the AONB, extensive fruit growing creates an association with it, being recognised as one of the distinctive characteristics of the Weald.</p>	
Settlement form and edge	<p>Development is associated with this ridge and plateau, so there is increasing sensitivity with distance downslope from this area. With the forthcoming development to the north of the village, Frittenden Road will form the settlement edge. Historically the village was linear, focused on the A262, but modern development off of Common Road has introduced housing along closes. Consequently there is little distance between Sissinghurst and Wilsley Pound, although relatively strong hedgerows preserve visual separation.</p>	
Settlement setting	<p>Fields between Sissinghurst and Wilsley Pound preserve the separate nature of these two settlements. The orchards to the east of Common Road, sloping down to the valley floor, are an important element in Sissinghurst's setting, including views from the Conservation Area.</p>	
Visual character	<p>The plateau between Sissinghurst and Wilsley Pound is largely contained by well-treed hedgerows. The valley to the east of Common Road is exposed to views from surrounding higher ground, particularly from the higher northern side along Frittenden Road. One public footpath crosses the eastern end of the sub-area, from which the elevated setting of Sissinghurst can be appreciated.</p>	
Perceptual qualities	<p>The broad valley forming the eastern part of the sub-area retains a strong rural character, and strong hedgerows minimise urban intrusion in the remaining open fields between Sissinghurst and Wilsley Pound. Some of the 20th Century development in the latter, along the main road, and more recent developments on closes – Cramptons in Wilsley Pound and Skinner Gardens in Sissinghurst, has an urbanising influence, but Mill Lane, with a number of older buildings and views to open, tree-fringed fields, retains a rural character.</p>	
Historic character	<p>The Sissinghurst Conservation Area includes the gardens and grounds behind properties on Sissinghurst Road, and the Wilsley Conservation Area extends north from Wilsley Green to include the southern tip of Wilsley Pound. The lane along the northern edge of the sub-area connecting Wilsley Green to Common Road, is a narrow, rural lane with several listed buildings.</p>	
Sensitivity conclusions		
<p>Modern development has had an impact on the settlement form at Sissinghurst, with construction to either side of Common Road, but the broad valley of orchards to the east retains a strong rural character so there would be high sensitivity to any development descending further downslope in this direction. The openness of this valley and the ridge beyond contributes to the setting of Sissinghurst, so any development further east along Frittenden Road would impinge on this, and relate poorly to the historic core of the village. The gap between Wilsley Pound and Sissinghurst has been greatly diminished by modern development but the well-hedged fields to either side of Mill Lane, and to the north of the Primary School, retain a rural character. The containment of this area limits the impact that loss of these remaining open areas would have on wider landscape character; however the character of the approach to Sissinghurst from the west along the A262, which could be diminished by modern development close to the road, is an important consideration.</p>		

Cranbrook		Sub-Area Si1			
Development scenario	Sensitivity assessment				
 <p>Small</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Medium</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
 <p>Large</p>	H	MH	M	ML	L
Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures					
<p>To the east of Common Road there is little scope for mitigation, as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. Strong boundary hedgerows limit the perception of dwellings on the western outskirts of Sissinghurst along the A262, so consideration should be given to creating a landscape buffer, should any development take place in the fields to the north.</p>					