

Tunbridge Wells - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of Proposed Allocation Sites within the High Weald AONB



Chapter 6.6: Cranbrook

Revision E

6.6 Cranbrook

Cranbrook sites considered:

CRS 4 – Land south of Hartley Road, Cranbrook

CRS 6 - Land east (CRS 6a) and west (CRS 6b) of Glassenbury Road, Hartley

CRS 7 - Land north of Golford Road, Cranbrook

See Figure C1 for site locations.

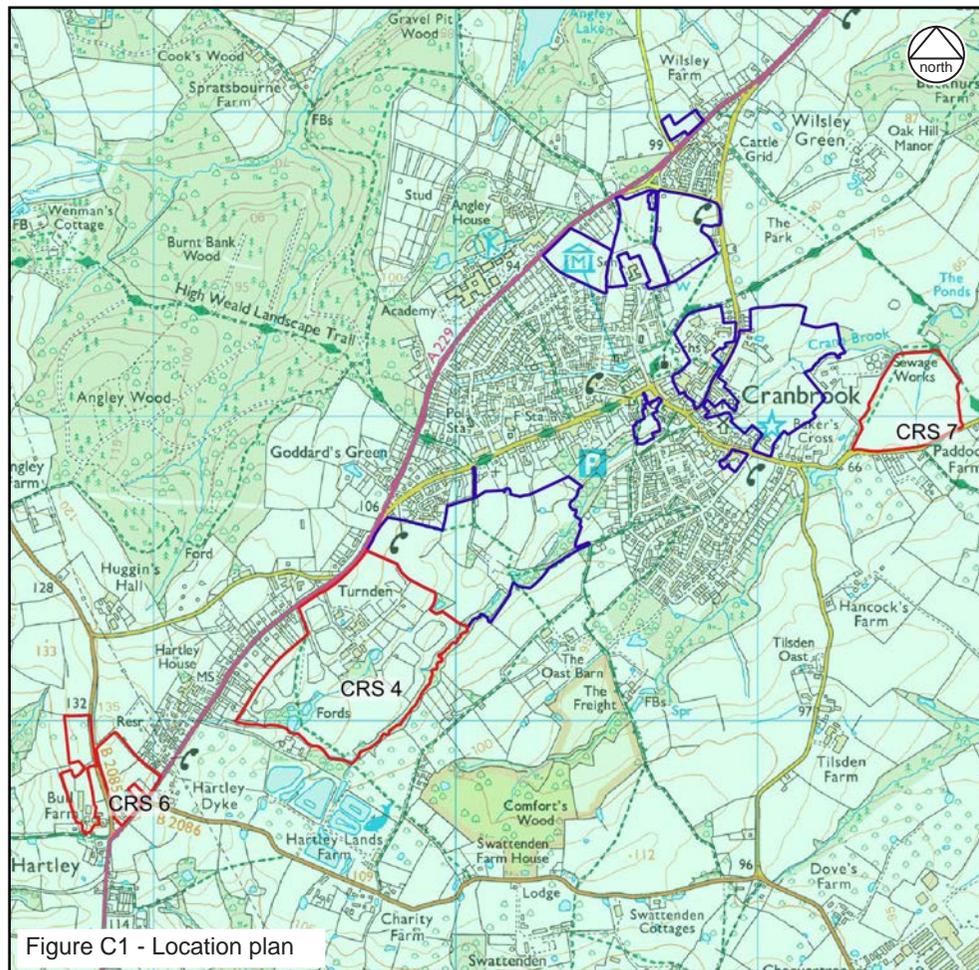


Figure C1 - Location plan

6.6.1 Settlement Context

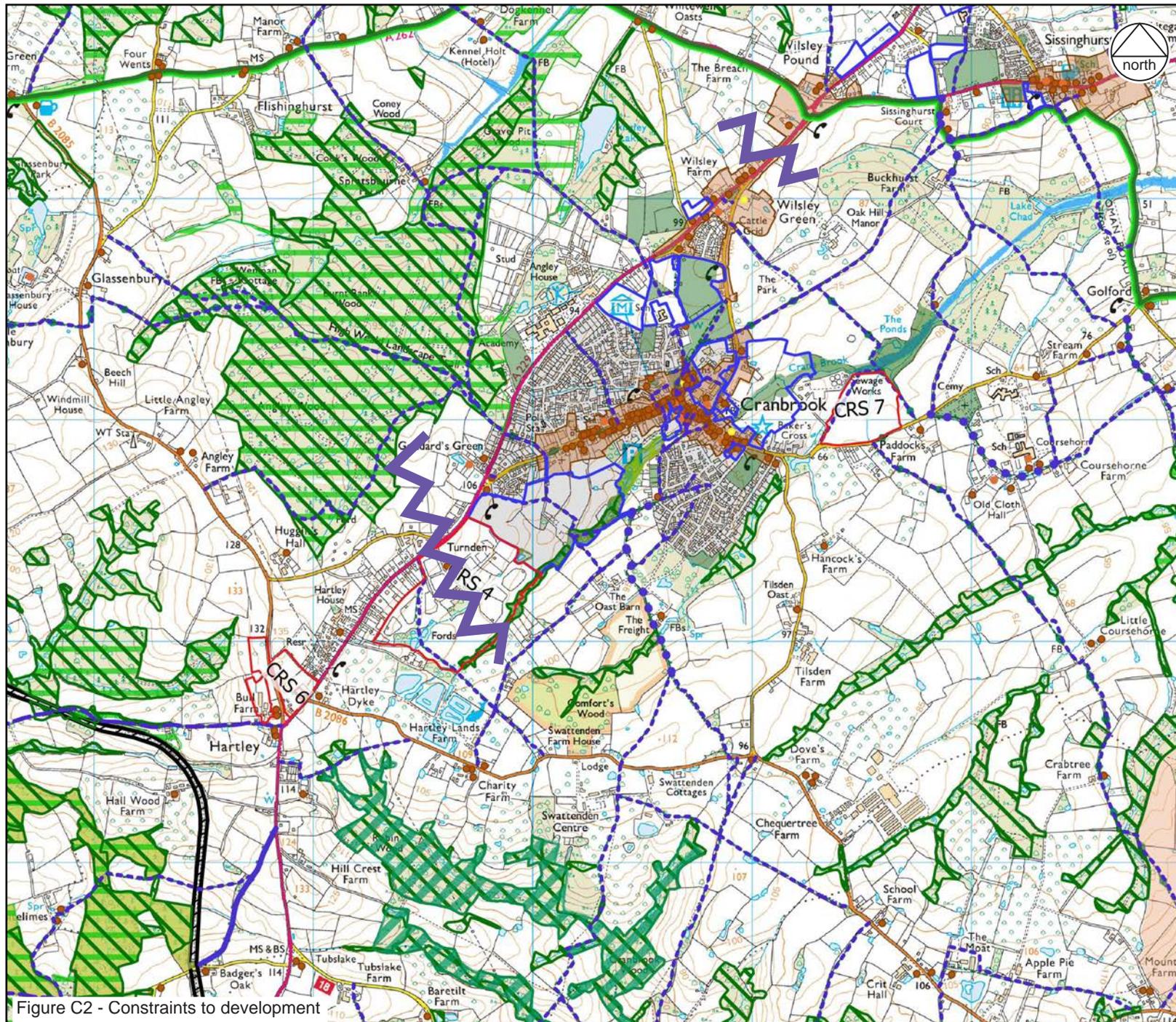
6.6.1.1 Cranbrook is a market town located within the rural landscape of the High Weald. The town is located between four larger settlements, with Maidstone approximately 20km to the north, Hastings approximately 25km to the south, Ashford approximately 25km to the east and Royal Tunbridge Wells approximately 19km to the west. The A229 is the primary road serving the town, with the remaining road network formed by B-roads or lanes. The hamlet of Hartley is located to the south-west of Cranbrook and originated as group of farmsteads scattered around the junction of Glassenbury and Hartley Road, with modern ribbon development to the north on Hartley Road. The village of Sissinghurst lies to the north-east, centred on the A260 Sissinghurst Road.

6.6.1.2 Cranbrook historically established at a crossing of the Crane Brook, which flows south-west to north-east through the centre of the town, focussed on a single line of development located to either side of the High Street. The majority of the settlement now extends west from the historic centre. The town is bound to the south by woodland and contained to the north and west by the A229 (Hartley Road). Ribbon development extends south along Hartley Road.

6.6.1.3 The town broadly lies within a valley formed by tributary watercourses of the Crane Brook. The historic core of the town (a Conservation Area) extends along three historic routes, centred in the valley floor and rising up the valley sides. The brook flows in a north-easterly direction, to the south west the terrain rises to Hartley Road and associated ribbon development. Watercourses and ponds are a common feature within the local landscape.

6.6.1.4 The study area lies within the High Weald AONB, with the northern boundary of the AONB running to the north of Cranbrook, between the town and Sissinghurst. The town centre is designated as a Conservation Area, with further Conservation Areas to the north at Wilsley Green and Wilsley Pound. The Conservation Areas contain numerous listed buildings and there are many more scattered within the rural landscape. A SSSI is located to the south of the study area at Robins Wood. The study area contains significant areas of woodland, particularly to the west, the majority of which is designated Ancient Woodland. The woodland to the west and south-west of Cranbrook are also designated Local Wildlife Sites.

6.6.1.5 Other constraints to development within this area include areas of 'Local greenspace', which are generally located to the north of the town. There is a recreation ground and Local Nature Reserve that sit alongside the Crane Brook, close to the town. A flood plain is associated with the Crane Brook. The town and surrounding rural landscape is well served by public rights of way, including the High Weald Landscape Trail.



- KEY**
- Study Sites
 - Other draft allocation
 - Borough boundary
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - Ashdown Forest 7km Buffer (EN13)
 - SSSI
 - Ancient woodlands
 - Local Wildlife Site
 - Sites of Nature Conservation Value
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - Candidate Local Nature Reserve
 - Conservation areas (EN7)
 - Grade I Listed Building
 - Grade II* Listed Building
 - Grade II Listed Building
 - Scheduled monuments
 - Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
 - Byway Open to All Traffic
 - Public Bridleway
 - Public Footpath
 - Restricted Byway
 - Country parks
 - Open Access Land
 - Local greenspace (EN17)
 - Flood zone 3b
 - Flood zone 3a
 - Flood zone 2
 - Safeguarded railways
 - Arcadian areas (EN19)
 - Existing limits to built development (STR1)
 - Essential separation to settlement

Figure C2 - Constraints to development

6.6.2 Settlement Evolution

- 6.6.2.1 The historic centre of Cranbrook lies around the Vestry Hall, White Horse Inn and St Duncan's Church at the junction of the High Street, Stone Street and Carriers Road. It established as a linear development following the High Street (mapped as a historic routeway). The historic part of the town (mapped as a Conservation Area) extends west along the High Street and South along Stone Street. Early settlement associated with the Study Site's include Henniker's Pit and Turnden Farm within CRS4; two farmsteads, Bull Farm and Sheepfold partly within CRS6; and Fir Tree Farm opposite CRS7.
- 6.6.2.2 Limited early and mid 20th Century development saw Cranbrook expand west and south along the main routes through the town. To the west, this included outlying development alongside Hartley Road (A229) between Turnden Road and the old Union Workhouse (adjacent to CRS4); and to the at the old Brewery at Bakers Cross at the junction with Tilsden Lane and Golford Road.
- 6.6.2.3 Until the early 1960's the Hawkhurst branch railway line extended west of Hartley between Goudhurst and Hawkhurst. Cranbrook station was located to the west of the village some 3km from Cranbrook itself. The station resulted in only limited development in Hartley itself, most notably the Railway Hotel, on Hawkhurst Road (A229) to the south of Bull Farm. However, the presence of the Station to the south of the town is likely to have been one of the drivers for the pattern of development which extended alongside Hartley Road (A229).
- 6.6.2.4 Post war and modern development has seen further expansion of Cranbrook predominantly to the north between the High Street and Angley (A229) and to the south of Baker's cross. To the west of Cranbrook's small modern estates extend ribbon development beyond the old workhouse (now a nursing home) to Hartley Dyke and adjacent to CRS6.
- 6.6.2.5 Further information on the settlement evolution of Cranbrook and adjacent villages, hamlets and farmsteads can be found within the 'Small Settlements Rapid Characterisation, Tunbridge Wells Report and Cranbrook Case Study', produced by the High Weald AONB.

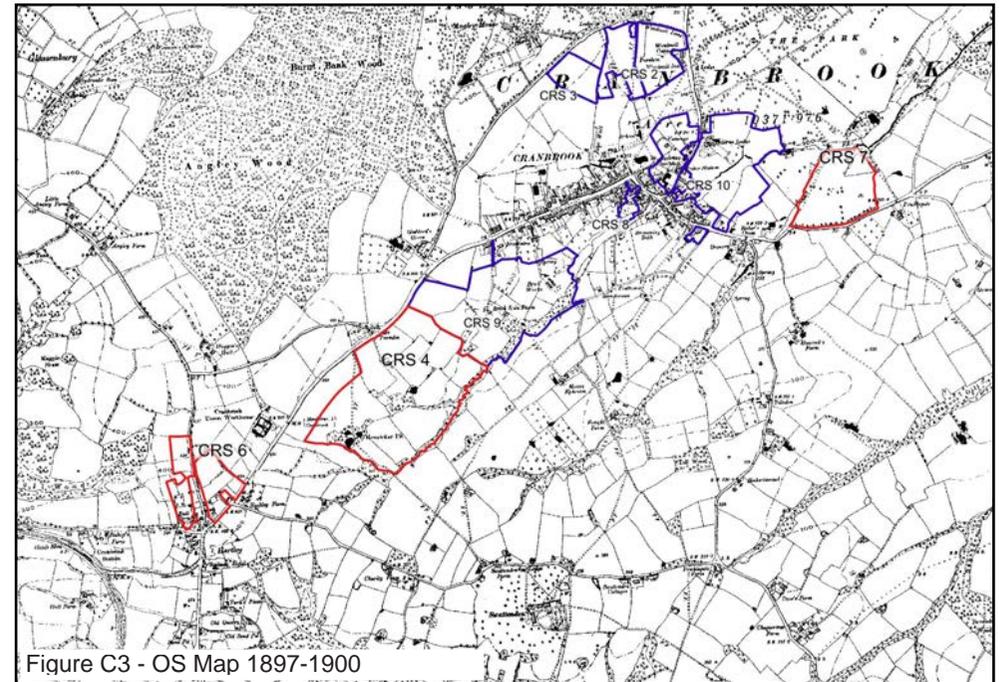


Figure C3 - OS Map 1897-1900

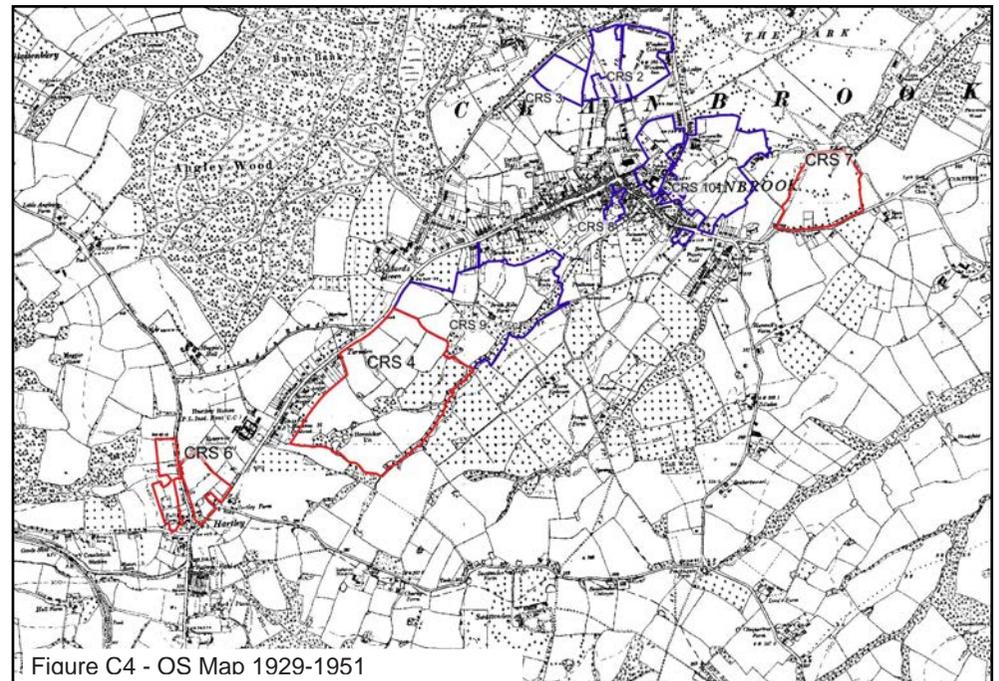
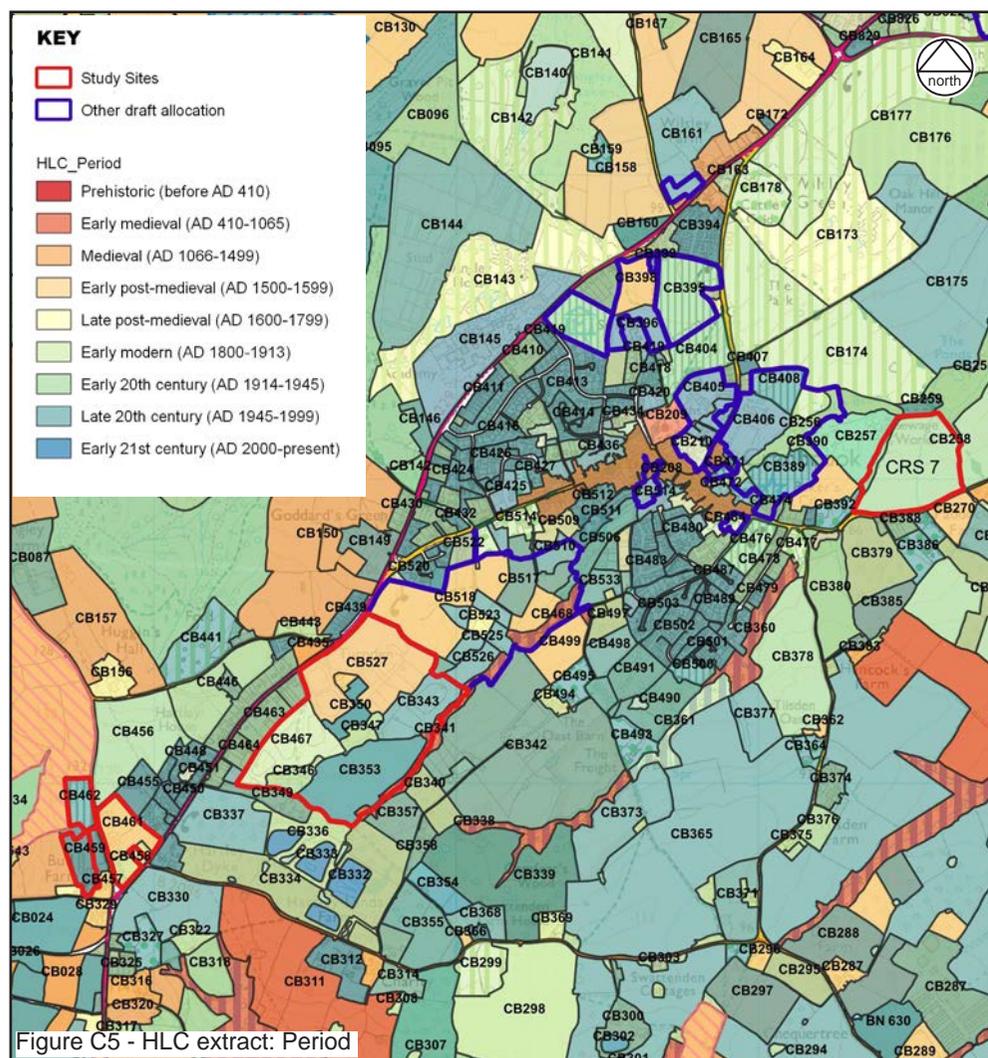


Figure C4 - OS Map 1929-1951

6.6.3 Historic Landscape Character

6.6.3.1 The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation was updated for Tunbridge Wells Borough in 2017. Extracts from the study, relevant to the Cranbrook sites, are shown on the table opposite. This data has been used to gauge the historic context of the town and surrounding landscape, which has then been tested through fieldwork in order to analyse which elements are reflected in the current landscape and town setting.



Site	HLC ID	Type	Period	Additional information
CRS4	CB399	Small farmstead	Late 20th century	Post-1801 settlement (general)
	CB341	Gill	Early medieval	Medium to large fields with wavy boundaries
	CB343	Modern field amalgamation	Late 20th century	Medium to large fields with wavy boundaries
	CB346	Regenerated secondary woodland	Early modern	Medium to large fields with wavy boundaries
	CB347	Regenerated secondary woodland	Early modern	Post-1801 settlement (general)
	CB350	Large farmstead	Late 20th century	Post-1801 settlement (general)
	CB351	Large farmstead	Early post-medieval	Post-1801 settlement (general)
	CB352	Modern field amalgamation	Late 20th century	Medium to large fields with wavy boundaries
	CB467	Modern field amalgamation	Early modern	Medium to large fields with wavy boundaries
CRS6	CB527	Consolidated strip fields	Early post-medieval	Small regular fields with straight boundaries
	CB457	Large farmstead	Early post-medieval	Hamlet or village 1801 extent
	CB458	Large farmstead	Early modern	Hamlet or village 1801 extent
	CB459	Small-scale industrial complexes	Late 20th century	Medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries
	CB461	Regular informal fields	Early post-medieval	Post-1801 settlement (general)
CRS7	CB462	Sports grounds and cricket pitches	Late 20th century	Medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries
	CB257	Water treatment	Early 20th century	Reservoirs and water treatment
	CB258	Modern field amalgamation	Early 20th century	Medium regular fields with straight boundaries

6.6.4 Landscape Character

6.6.4.1 The majority of the Cranbrook study site lies within the Fruit Belt Character Type identified within the Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) SPD (LUC December 2017).

6.6.4.2 The Fruit Belt Type is described as:

'An intensively managed and cultivated series of landscapes comprising orchard plantations extending across sandstone plateaux, rolling slopes and ridges which in turn are intersected in parts by intricate wooded ghyll valleys and sunken lanes. The undulating ridge around Goudhurst has a more intricate, rural landscape comprising smaller orchards, occasional hop fields and open to long views.'

6.6.4.3 The landscape character type has been broken down into Landscape Character Areas. Study sites CRS 4, CRS 7 and the eastern part of CRS 6 all lie within the 'Cranbrook Fruit Belt' character area.

6.6.4.4 Key characteristics of the 'Cranbrook Fruit Belt' Character Area include:

- 1) *Gently undulating upland plateau that shelves towards the north.*
- 2) *Network of small watercourses that have been influential in the development of the area.*
- 3) *Intermittent views to the surrounding wooded ridges and hills.*
- 4) *Large fields of arable farmland divided by ghyll woodland and with wavy boundaries of hedgerows.*
- 5) *An informal regular pattern of small and medium fields many of which are early medieval or medieval. Fields are characterised by arable, sheep pasture and orchards with thick hedges and shaw boundaries.*
- 6) *Orchards particularly concentrated around settled areas.*
- 7) *High proportion of woodland. To the east this is the large coniferous plantation forest of Hemsted, whereas in the west a more deciduous character is created by Angley Wood.*
- 8) *Settlement contained within the topographical and wooded framework and a pattern of dispersed farmsteads.*
- 9) *The small town of Cranbrook has been termed the capital of the High Weald and is the focus of settlement. A distinctive town nestled in the landscape, with a strong vernacular townscape created by various brick, timber and weatherboarded styles with a windmill, cupola on the Big School and sandstone church creating particular landmarks.*

6.6.4.5 'Valued features and qualities' that are unique to the character area, relevant to the study sites and sit outside of the special qualities noted within the AONB Management

Plan include:

'8) The rural setting of Cranbrook, particularly the 'wedge' of landscape provided by the Crane Brook which permeates into the town centre. The relationship of the town with the surrounding landscape is of particular value for the contribution to recreation and views.'

6.6.4.6 The western part of CRS 6 lies within the Wooded Farmland Character Type and specifically the 'Kilndown Wooded Farmland' character area. Key characteristics of the 'Kilndown Wooded Farmland' Character Area include:

- 1) *An intricate topography with a rolling sandstone plateau that forms a series of high ridges which are regularly incised by the thin narrow tributary valleys of the River Teise.*
- 2) *Views from the area are varied and intermittent, creating great visual richness.*
- 3) *A well-wooded appearance with a framework of thick ghyll valley woodland and interconnected shaws in the north, and large continuous blocks of ancient woodland in the south.*
- 4) *Irregular medium-large fields of arable and small fields of pasture farmland with occasional hop fields.*
- 5) *Network of rural lanes, which run along the ridges and dip down into the valleys. Wooded roadside verges are an important feature.*
- 6) *Hedgerows of highly variable quality, with many remnant hedgerow trees, varying from thick species-rich woodland shaws, to bare hedgerows or those which have been replaced by post and wire fencing.*
- 7) *Frequent historic and converted vernacular buildings and the small village of Kilndown.*
- 8) *The landscape has importance for formal and informal visitor attractions e.g. Finchcocks Musical Museum, Scotney Castle and Bewl Reservoir, and there are numerous countryside and woodland trails.*

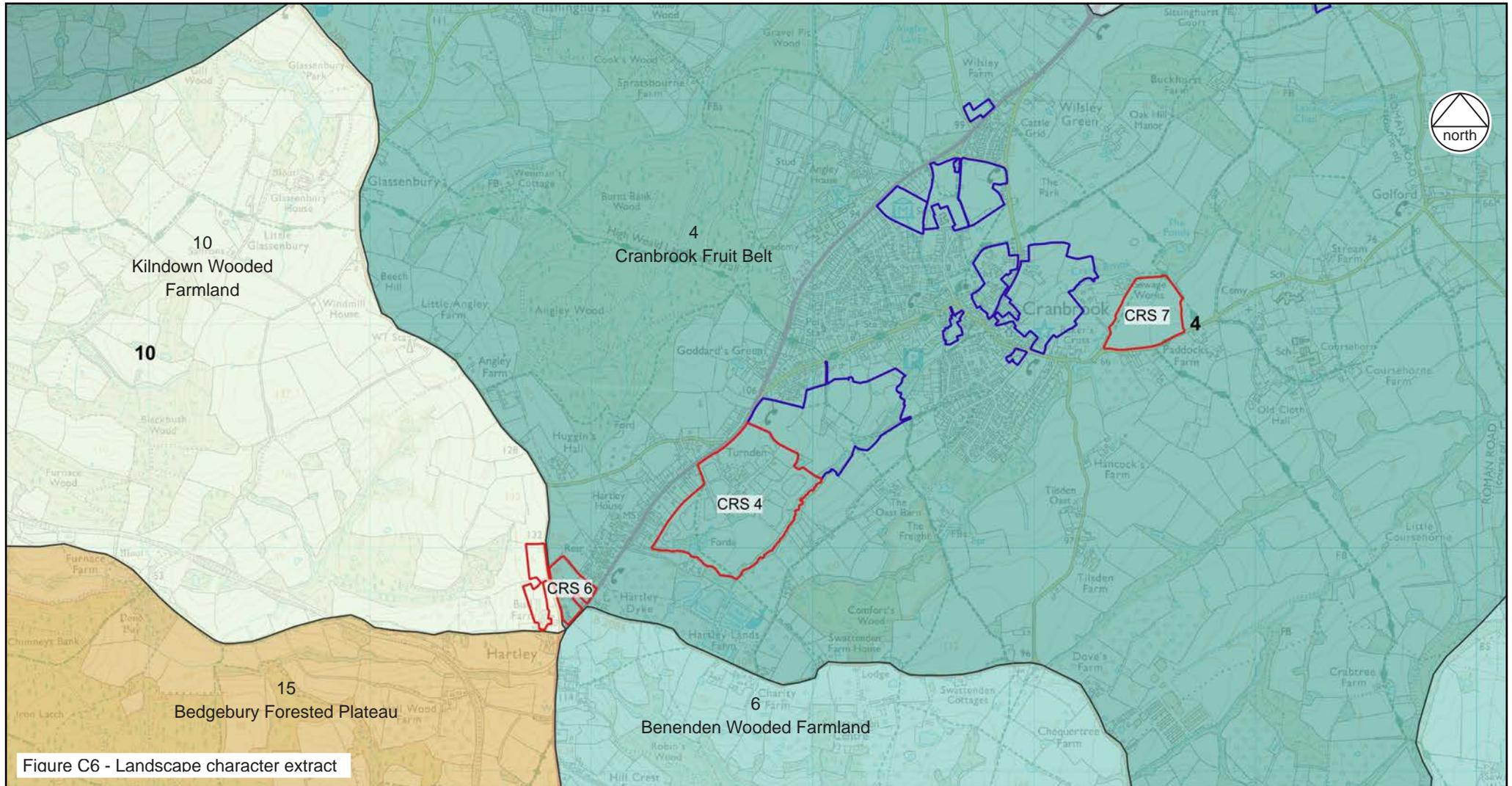
6.6.4.7 'Valued features and qualities' that are unique to the character area, relevant to the study sites and sit outside of the special qualities noted within the AONB Management Plan include:

'2) ...Historic farmsteads - many of which are connected by ancient droeways - oasts, manor houses and historic parks and gardens survive as remnants of the historic evolution of settlement in the landscape. Locally distinctive and historic buildings add important local character to the landscape.'

This text is also included as one of the valued features and qualities of the 'Cranbrook Fruit Belt' character area.

6.6.4.8 To the south of Study site CRS 6 are the Forested Plateau and Wooded Farmland Character Types specifically the 'Bedgebury Forested Plateau' character area and the 'Benenden Wooded Farmland' character area. The northern boundary to 'Bedgebury Forested Plateau' is formed by Hartley Road (adjacent to the eastern part of CRS 6) and Swattenden Lane. The northern boundary to 'Benenden Wooded Farmland' is formed by Bishops Lane (adjacent to the western part of CRS 6).

6.6.4.9 Areas of local character and valued viewpoints are mentioned within draft documents of the emerging Cranbrook Neighbourhood Plan (CNP). The contents of the plan have been considered, however the plan remains at an early stage and therefore the contents are given less weight than the published landscape character assessment.

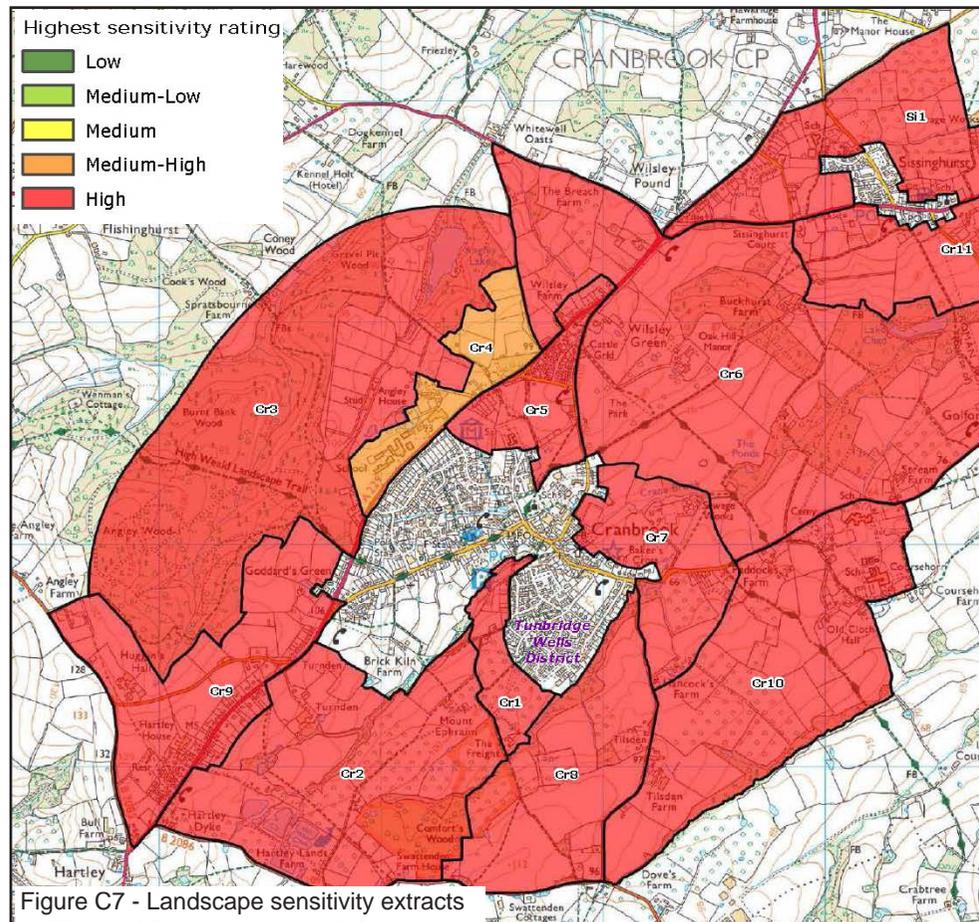


6.6.5 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

6.6.5.1 In February 2017 the council published the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of Countryside around Tunbridge Wells, produced by LUC. Study Site CRS 4 lies within sensitivity Sub-Area Cr2. The eastern part of site CRS 6 lies within sensitivity Cr9, however the western part of the site lies outside of the sensitivity assessment area.

6.6.5.2 The eastern field of Study Site CRS7 lies within sensitivity Sub-Area Cr7 and the western field lies within sensitivity Sub-Area Cr6.

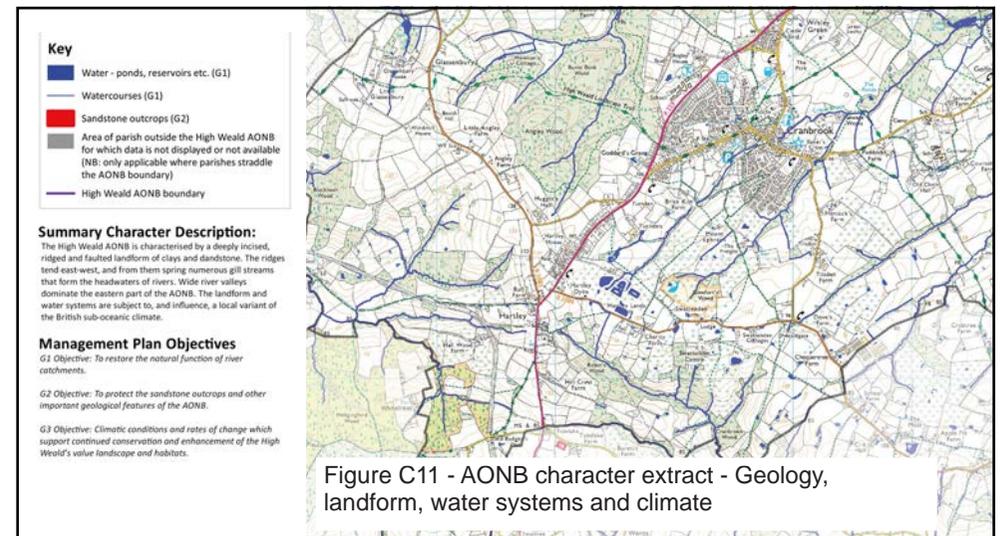
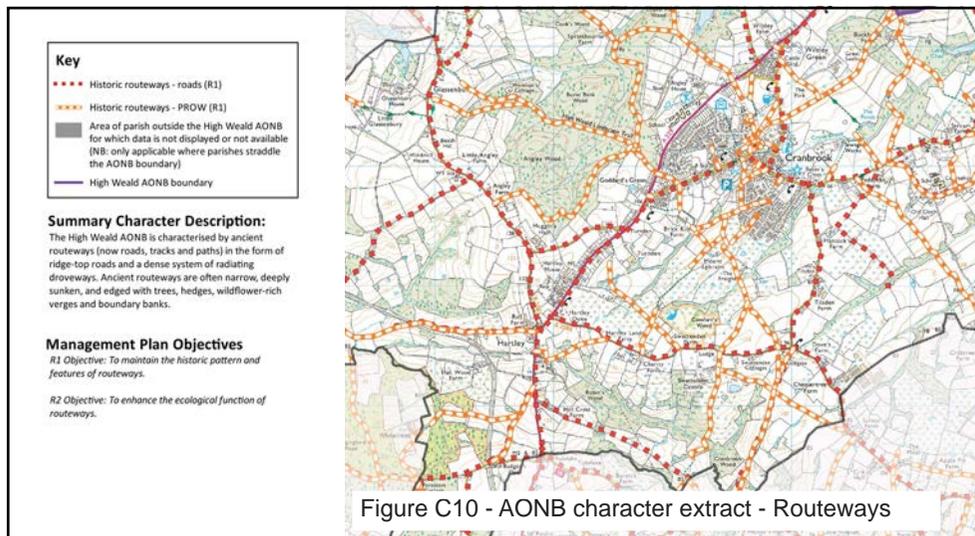
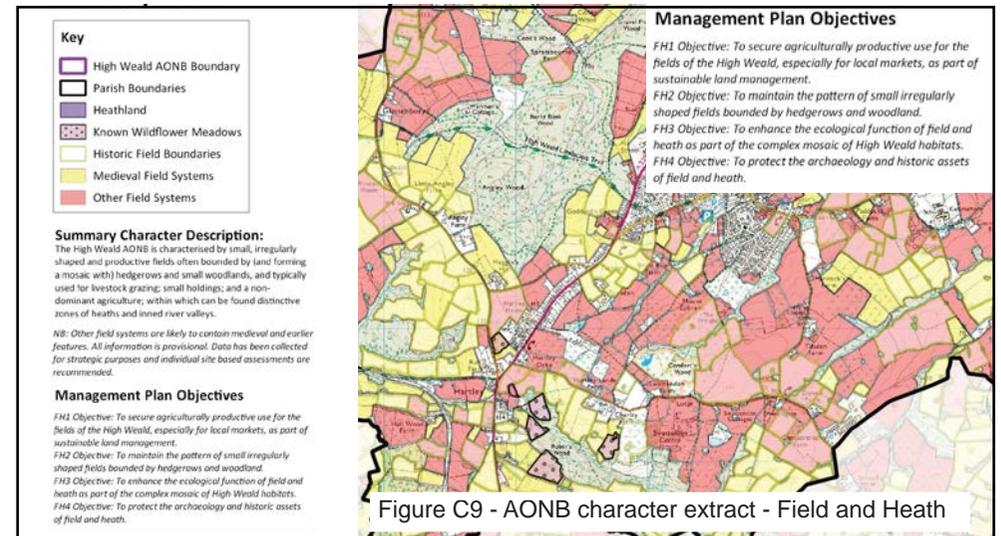
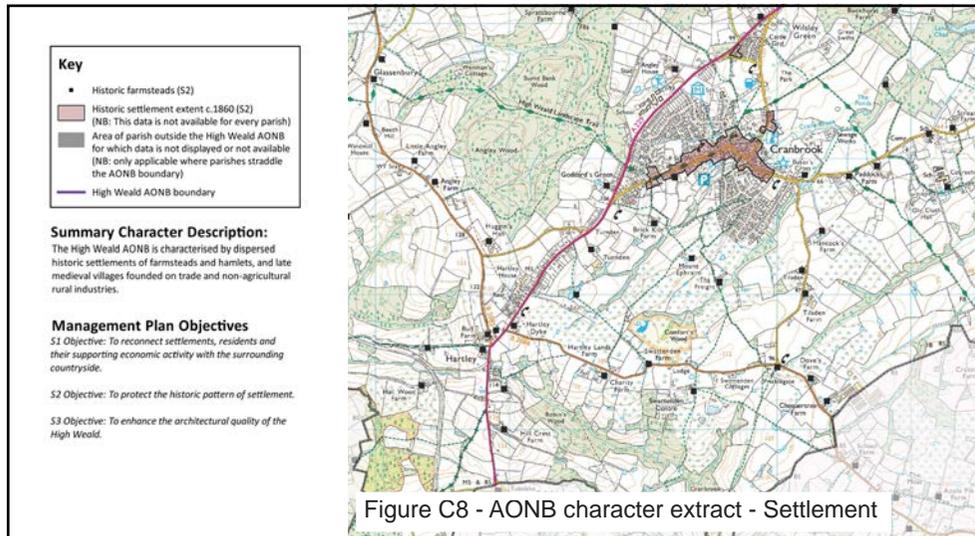
6.6.5.3 The table opposite provides extracts from the assessment, which have been collated into table format for ease of reference.



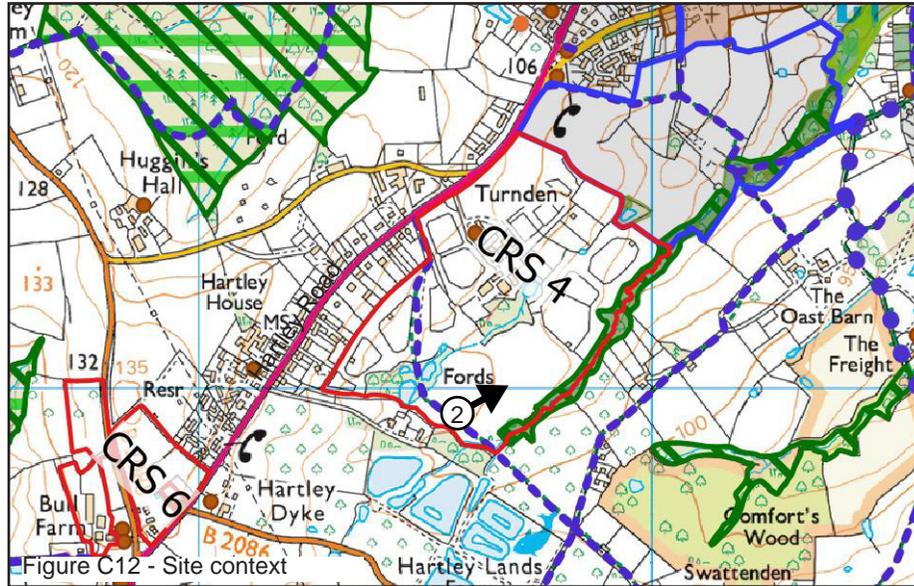
Study Site(s)	Sensitivity Sub-Area	Sensitivity rating	Sensitivity conclusions
CRS 4	Cr2	High/High Medium (small development) and High (medium development)	The area is typical of the AONB landscape of ridges and wooded ghyll valleys, with frequent orchards. These are characteristic features of the AONB 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.
CRS 6 (eastern part)	Cr9	High/High Medium (small development) and High (medium development)	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.
CRS 7	Cr7	High (small and medium development scenarios)	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.
	Cr6	(small and medium development scenarios)	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.

6.6.6 AONB Landscape Character Plans

6.6.6.1 The High Weald AONB Unit has published a set of Landscape Character Plans for Cranbrook Parish, which relate back to objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. Extracts of the maps and associated key information are shown below. The Ancient woodland map is not shown below as this information is included within C2.



Site : CRS 4 - Land south of Hartley Road



Site location and context

CRS 4 lies to the south-east of Hartley Road (A229) to the west of Cranbrook town and east of Hartley. Ribbon development extends along Hartley Road, which almost joins the two settlements. The site lies at the head of a valley feature with south-east facing slopes that drain to the formation of the Crane Brook on the south-eastern boundary. A tributary stream with a series of pond features flows through the centre of the site. The ponds are associated with historic quarrying activities at Henniker Pit. Spurs of higher ground to the north and south contain the site.

To the north-west the site is bound by Hartley Road and associated development and to the north-east by a field of pasture, allocated as part of the Brick Kiln Farm site (now with outline planning permission), which will form a new edge to Cranbrook. To the west the site is bound by the Crane Brook and associated woodland; and to the south-west by Hartley Lands Fisheries. The site is centred on Turnden Farm, a historic farmstead, which included industrial storage sheds (now demolished as part of a detailed planning permission to be redeveloped for 36 residential dwellings and restoration of the Farmhouse). Within the site land uses include Turnden Farm together with large scale equestrian facilities, associated fields in pasture, woodland and paddocks.

Designations and development considerations

The site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The woodland associated with Crane Brook, adjacent to the site's south-east boundary is designated as Ancient Woodland and local greenspace (Policy EN17). Within the site, Turnden Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building.

A public footpath crosses the south-western part of the Site between Hartley Road and the Crane Brook extending south-east to Swattenden Lane. Further public rights of way lie beyond the site boundary but may be influenced by changes within the site. 'A walk through time – Bedgebury' extends along Hartley Road north-west of the site.

Development of the site should consider the 'Valued features and qualities' set out within the Tunbridge Wells Character Assessment. Of particular relevance is: *'...the 'wedge' of landscape provided by the Crane Brook which permeates into the town centre. The relationship of the town with the surrounding landscape is of particular value for the contribution to recreation and views.'*



Photograph 1: View north-west across the northern part of the site



Photograph 2: View north-east from the section of footpath to the south-east of the site

Landscape baseline and key features	Visual baseline and key viewpoints	Perceptual and experiential qualities	Representativeness of AONB Qualities (with reference to the relevant character components and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan)
<p>The site has a noticeable relationship with existing settlement, and the urban edge character will increase as the permitted development to the north of the site and at Turnden Farm is built out.</p> <p>The site lies on the same plain as the majority of the town, within the catchment of the Crane Brook and is contained from the wider rural landscape by ridges of higher ground and woodland. Existing built development alongside the A229 (Hartley Road) forms the site's northern boundary. Noise and development associated with the A229 (Hartley Road) is a detracting feature particularly within the adjacent field areas.</p> <p>The timber fenced paddocks and stable buildings across the majority of the rest of the site appear to be disused and are falling into disrepair. Other detracting features include the predominance of stable buildings and building works associated with the redevelopment of Turnden Farm (photograph 1).</p> <p>The south-eastern part of the site (photograph 2) is separated from settlement by a tree belt and hedgerows. This part of the site is more rural in character and has a stronger relationship with the landscape to the east.</p> <p>Vegetation within the site includes woodland associated with the stream together with trees and remnant hedgerow.</p> <p>Key landscape features within the site (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodland forming the site's south-eastern boundary; • Tributary stream with pond features and associated woodland within the site at Henniker Pit; • The Grade II Listed Turnden Farmhouse; and • Mature trees and gappy field boundary hedgerow. <p>The south-western part of the site is crossed by a public footpath (WC115), which provides opportunities for informal recreation.</p>	<p>The site is generally contained in views from the wider landscape by a combination of local landform, vegetation and existing settlement. The Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Draft Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-Submission Draft, July 2019) identifies a series of protected views, which take in parts of the site</p> <p>Within the site, there are views across southern areas from the footpath that runs through the site. This includes a view back towards Cranbrook from within the southernmost field, identified as an important view by the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (July 2019). In this view there are distant glimpses of Cranbrook seen beyond woodland within the site and the site's boundaries. This woodland also prevents views of the northern parts of the site.</p> <p>There are glimpses of the eastern part of the site, from footpaths to the south-east, through the woodland that lies to the east of the site boundary. Similar glimpses are experienced from the locally important view identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, from Mount Ephraim.</p> <p>There are glimpsed and partial views of the site seen from the footpath to the north-east of the site, beyond the Brick Kiln Farm allocated site.</p> <p>To the west, there are glimpses and partial views of the site from sections of the A229 (Hartley Road, which also forms part of the 'A walk through time – Bedgebury' walking route.</p> <p>Visual receptors (public views) to be considered (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers on the footpath within the site; • Walkers on public footpaths to the south-east of the site; • Walkers on public footpaths to the north-east of the site; • Walkers on the A229 (Hartley Road); and • Motorists on the A229 (Hartley Road). 	<p>The site feels contained and to some extent separated from the wider AONB landscape by a combination of landform woodland and existing settlement.</p> <p>Fields within the site are small to medium scale with irregular boundaries. In-part, these fields have been sub-divided by pony paddocks, which appear to be disused and in disrepair. Woodland, streams, ponds and individual trees within the site and to the site boundaries provide interest and character.</p> <p>Within the southern site area, the view identified in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan from WC115, is an attractive view over open pasture towards Cranbrook.</p> <p>Noise and development associated with the A229 (Hartley Road) and construction works associated with permitted development at Turnden Farm are detracting elements.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site lies within the Crane Brook catchment. Associated water features and riparian woodland lie within the site and the site's south-eastern boundary.</p> <p>Settlement: The site is contiguous with existing settlement at Cranbrook, contained by spurs of higher ground and woodland. Historic farmsteads within the site comprise Turnden Farm and Henniker Farm of which only the ponds at Henniker Pit remain.</p> <p>Routeways: The footpath within the site and Hartley Road are mapped as historic routeways within the AONB database. Development of the site has the potential to influence the character of these routeways.</p> <p>Woodland: Ancient Woodland forms the site's south-eastern boundary. There is also woodland at Henniker Pit, mature trees and gappy hedgerow within the site, which contribute to woodland connectivity.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site comprises small-medium scale fields of pasture, which are in-part bound by hedgerows and wood. A small field pattern around Turnden Farm relates to a Medieval Field System, however one of the mapped field boundaries has been lost.</p> <p>Whilst the site displays some of the qualities of the AONB, it is separated from the wider rural landscape by the existing development, woodland and the local landform.</p>

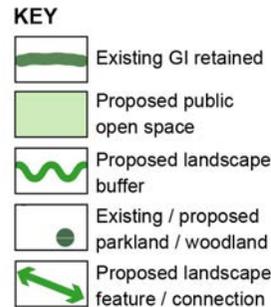
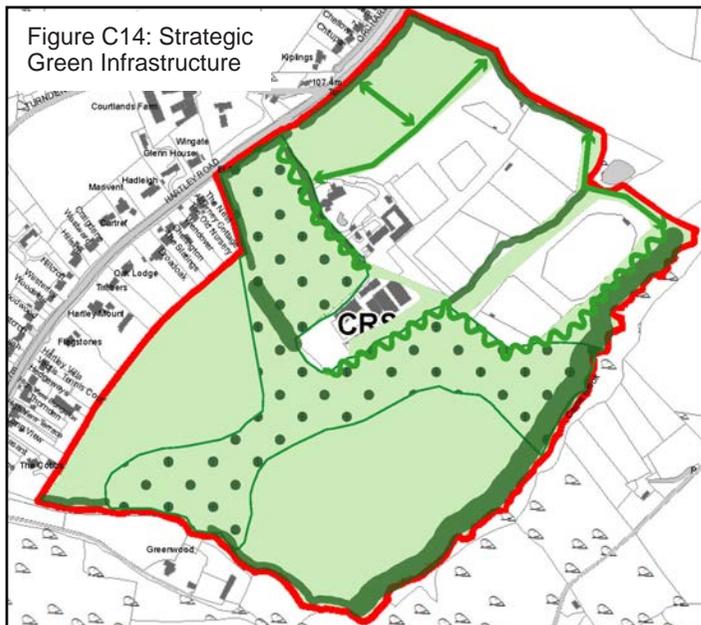
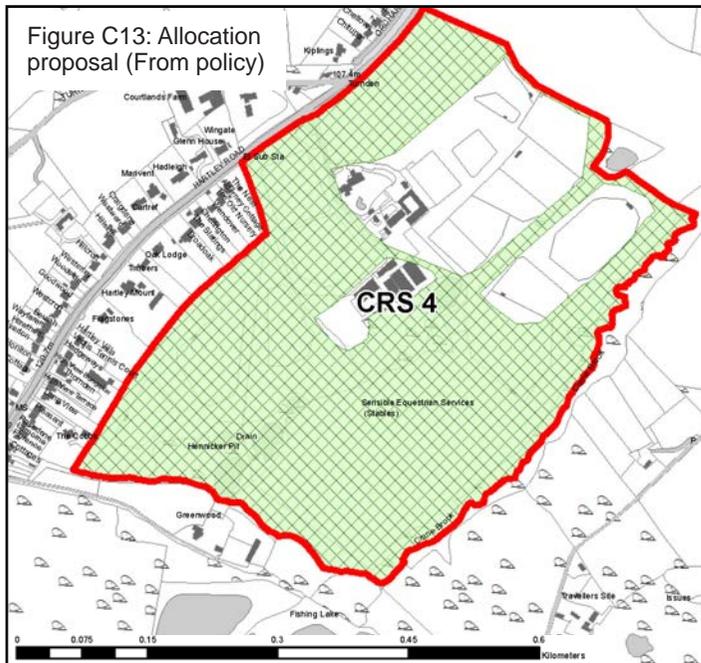
Proposals:

Site : CRS 4

Description of proposed development:

160-170 (124-134 excluding those permitted at Turnden Farm) dwellings within the north-eastern part of the site and significant green infrastructure within the remainder of the site.

Proposed mitigation measures:



Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/CRS 4.	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Open Space and Landscape buffer including the south-western part of the site (Allocation Proposal).	New woodland planting between Turnden Farm and public footpath WC116 within the site between Hartley Road and existing woodland at Henniker Pit to reinforce separation with existing settlement alongside Hartley Road and enhance woodland connectivity
Retain and improve meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, water bodies and water courses. To include Landscape buffers to existing woodlands (Policy).	
The reinstatement of historical field boundaries with hedgerows, shaws and woodlands (Policy).	Reinstate the historic tree belt and new woodland between existing woodland to the south of Turnden Farm (extending from Henniker Pit to Ancient Woodland on the site's south-eastern boundary to provide a woodland buffer between development and the open space and landscape buffer to the south-west and enhance woodland connectivity.
Provision of, and adherence to, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to cover all public spaces, retained and restored habitats, and any retained agricultural land (Policy).	
Provision of pedestrian and cycle links to corresponding routes on the allocated site to the north (and on into Cranbrook); the footway on Hartley Road; and the wider public rights of way network to the south (Policy).	Establish and maintain wildflower meadows within the open space and landscape buffer to enhance biodiversity and public amenity.
Improvements to the Public Right of Way on site (Policy).	
Provision of on-site allotments, amenity/natural green space, parks and recreation grounds, children's play space and youth space (Policy)	

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

Creation of new woodland and wildflower meadows together with the retention, enhancement and management of existing features, would provide biodiversity and amenity enhancements. There are opportunities to re-introduce historic field boundaries to the north of the site. The surface water drainage solutions required for the development also offer opportunities to create new and complementary habitats.

There are opportunities to create new informal routes within the proposed open space, which could link existing rights of way and settlement and allow residents to enjoy the potential habitat enhancements within the site. This could include an alternative route off-set from Hartley Road to enhance the 'A walk through time – Bedgebury' recreational walk.

<p>Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/CRS 4, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)</p>
<p>Approximately 1/3rd of the site is proposed for development as part of the reg 18 allocation, with the remainder proposed as open space / landscape buffer, which would protect the majority of the site in perpetuity.</p> <p>Development within the proposed allocation would have limited effects on the ‘Cranbrook Fruit Belt’ Character Area, due to the physical and visual separation between the proposed development area and wider rural AONB landscape.</p> <p>Within the site development would result in a change of character from paddocks and fields to development and open space. The effects upon character would be limited by the existing urban influence, which include existing settlement, Hartley Road, permitted development and construction associated with permitted development at Turnden Farm. This influence would increase as the permitted development to the north is built out.</p> <p>Without mitigation the effects are likely to be significant and would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of existing farm sheds and restoration of Turnden Farmstead together with residential development – permitted development under construction. • Loss of small-medium fields of pasture including areas of medieval field pattern. • Potential loss of native hedgerows – subject to detailed design. • Potential loss of individual trees subject to detailed design. <p>The effects on recreation within the site are likely to be positive as there are opportunities for additional recreational provision within the retained open space.</p>	<p>The existing containment of the site would restrict the visibility of the proposed development. Within the site there are likely to be glimpsed or partial views of the development from the footpath that runs through the south-western part of the site. In these views, the foreground of the view would reflect baseline view of pasture, which would be protected as open space, with views of development seen in the background of the view. From the stretch of path to the north of Henniker Pit, glimpses of the proposed housing would be seen beyond the permitted development at Turnden Farm.</p> <p>From the stretch of path to the south of Henniker Pit there are likely to be glimpsed or partial views of the south-eastern edge of development. These views would be seen beyond existing retained pasture and woodland. The distant view towards Cranbrook, identified in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan would be retained.</p> <p>There would be glimpses of the proposed development from sections of footpath to the south-east of the site.</p> <p>From the footpath to the north-east, there may be glimpses of the proposed development beyond the allocated Brick Kiln Farm site.</p> <p>The proposed housing allocation is set back from the A229 (Hartley Road). If the existing roadside vegetation is retained, views of the proposals would be restricted to occasional glimpses and partial views of the northern part of the development. Where visible, the proposals would be seen in the context of the permitted developments to the north and at Turnden Farm.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: No water features, or sandstone outcrops would be affected by the proposed development. The effects on climate conditions fall outside of the scope of this assessment.</p> <p>Settlement: The proposals are in keeping with Cranbrook’s existing settlement pattern, linking allocated and permitted development.</p> <p>Routeways: The footpath within the site would be retained within open space and the proposed development would be set back from Hartley Road. The proposed access into the site from Hartley Road would not have a significant effect upon this existing busy A Road. The effects of the proposals on local routeways are likely to be limited.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland, however there is the potential for loss of trees and hedgerow subject to detailed design. There is the potential for access to woodland to be improved.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The proposals would involve the loss of some of the small fields and pony paddocks associated with Turnden Farm, which relate to a medieval field system. These fields are not currently in good condition. Approximately half of the fields would be retained within open space.</p> <p>Other qualities: The proposed development has the potential to open up access to new areas of the High Weald AONB. There are opportunities to improve recreation and community involvement within the AONB. Light levels and noise within the northern part of the site are likely to increase.</p>	<p>The retention of approximately 2/3 of the site as open space allows for some substantial enhancements within the site. The internal fencing could be removed or repaired, and historic field boundaries could be re-created. Green corridors across the site could be enhanced, improving habitat connectivity and existing woodland and grassland habitats could be enhanced through new planting and improved management.</p> <p>The proposed woodland would further screen views of both the proposed allocation and the permitted developments to the north of the site and at Turnden Farm, which would be beneficial for people using rights of way to the south and south-west of the proposed allocation.</p> <p>The draft allocation open space and proposed landscape buffers would maintain the sense of separation between Cranbrook and Hartley.</p> <p>Proposals for new woodland planting to the south west of Turnden Farm, would effectively screen the development edge in views from the footpath to the south-east of the site.</p> <p>Proposed new woodland, together with wildflower meadow planting would replace disused pony paddocks and associated buildings, enhancing the character of the south-western part of the site and the AONB.</p> <p>The scheme can be sensitively designed to ensure that important hedgerow and trees are retained and managed. Overall, the proposals would result in a significant increase in woodland cover and enhanced management.</p>

Conclusions:

The site is separated from the wider rural landscape by a combination of local landform, woodland and settlement together with permitted and allocated development land. The site and the site boundaries contain characteristic features of the AONB including woodland associated with streams, historic routeways and a medieval field pattern adjacent to Turnden Farm. The majority of the site comprises disused pony paddocks of which associated timber fences and buildings are in declining condition. The susceptibility to change within these areas of the site is lower than elsewhere within the wider AONB landscape, which is reflected in the judgements of the LUC sensitivity study.

The draft allocation seeks to develop approximately 1/3 of the site, with the remainder allocated as open space, within which the rural landscape character would be protected. The allocation proposes development to the north and east of the site, integrating the permitted development at Turnden Farm with the allocation located to the north of the site. The retained open space to the west and south, protects the separate settlement identities between Cranbrook and Hartley and provides opportunity for substantial enhancements within the site. This approach responds positively to the 'Valued features and qualities' set out within the Tunbridge Wells Character Assessment. In particular *'...the 'wedge' of landscape provided by the Crane Brook which permeates into the town centre. The relationship of the town with the surrounding landscape is of particular value for the contribution to recreation and views.'*

There is potential for sensitive development within the site, following the principles set out within the allocation policy and relevant design guides. The development could be assimilated into the landscape through the mitigation outlined within Figure C14, which would establish additional woodland cover and grassland enhancing the route of the footpath within the site footpath and creating new recreational opportunities. The key components of character outlined for the High Weald would be protected, where present.

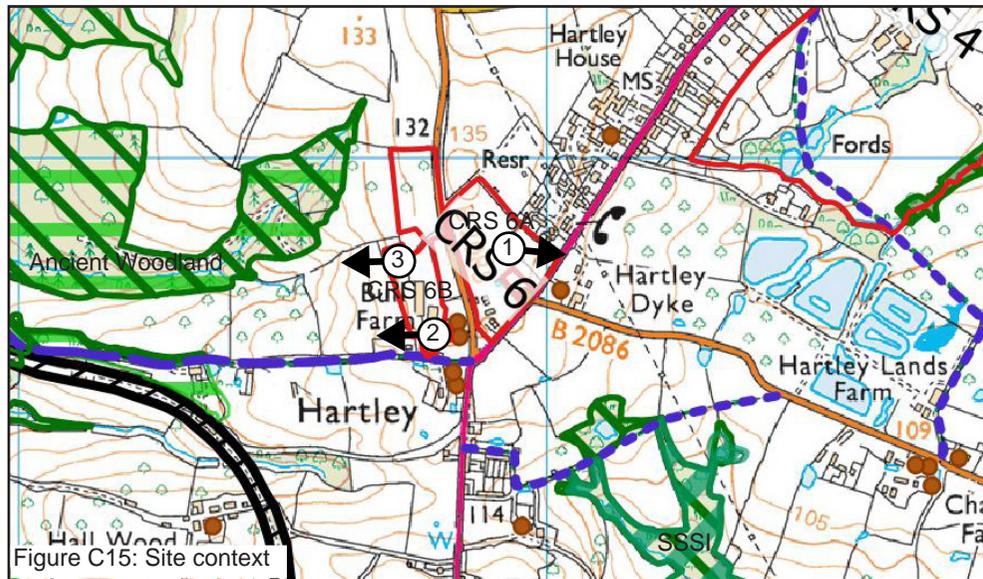
The development of the site in conjunction with the proposed mitigation could be achieved without residual significant landscape and visual effects (from publicly accessible viewpoints). There is also the potential for the proposals within the allocated site to enhance the landscape of the AONB with areas of the site allocated for open space uses.

Policy recommendations for the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Local Plan would include:

- Wording to protect trees within the site as well as hedgerows.
- Locate play facilities within an accessible part of the site – with good natural surveillance.
- Incorporate wildlife enhancements within the area of the site allocated for open space to offset the effects of development within the north-eastern area and to provide enhanced access to the AONB.
- Phase development so that the proposed woodland is planted prior to the development parcel to the north-east of the site.

Site : CRS 6 - Land east and west of Glassenbury Road

Site : CRS 6 - Land east and west of Glassenbury Road



Photograph 1: View south-east from the southern field within CRS6 A



Photograph 2: View west from the southern part of CRS 6B



Photograph 2: View west from the western edge of the ménage within CRS 6B

Site location and context

Site CRS 6 lies on the north-western side of Hartley Road (A229) between existing development to the north-east and south of the hamlet of Hartley. The site straddles Glassenbury Road with part of the site to the east (referenced as CRS 6A within this chapter) and part of the site at Bull Farm to the west (referenced as CRS 6B). To the north-east ribbon development extends along Hartley Road almost forming an almost continuous line of settlement to Cranbrook. Hartley originated as a group of farmsteads scattered around the junction of historic routeways at Glassenbury and Hartley Road. This historic settlement core lies to the south and west of the site, together with some more recent additions.

The site lies across a ridge of higher ground. To the west, the ridge falls away steeply, incised by a series of thin narrow tributary valleys of the River Teise. To the east the topography falls away gently to tributaries of the Crane Brook. Parcel CRS 6A comprises two small fields of pasture separated by a mature hedgerow and trees. The ruins of a farmstead (Sheepfold) including dilapidated corrugated metal farm sheds lie within the southern corner of the site area. The majority of the site area is also bound by mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees.

Parcel CRS 6B comprises modern farm sheds associated with Bull Farm and a field to the north, which is open to the wider landscape. A ménage lies to the north-west of the sheds. A residential dwelling lies between the northern and southern parts of this site area, however it does not form part of the site. The majority of the parcel is bound by hedgerow and trees, however the western edge of the site has an open boundary. There are a number of mature trees within the parcel.

Designations and development considerations

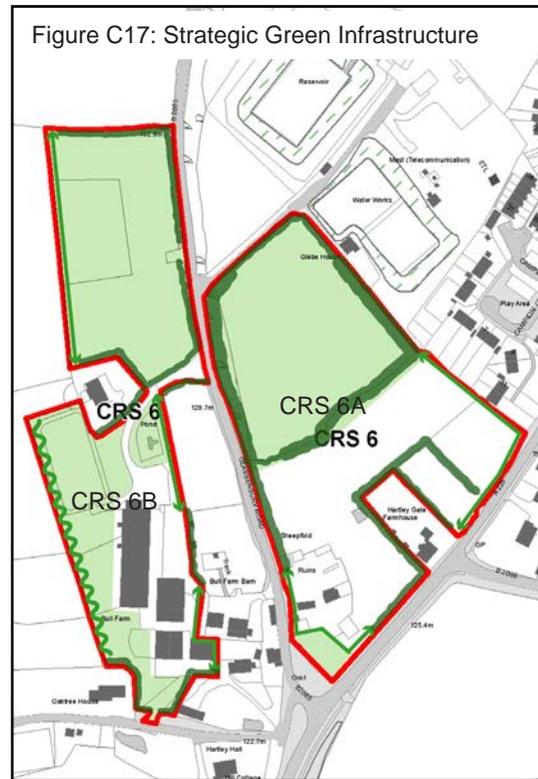
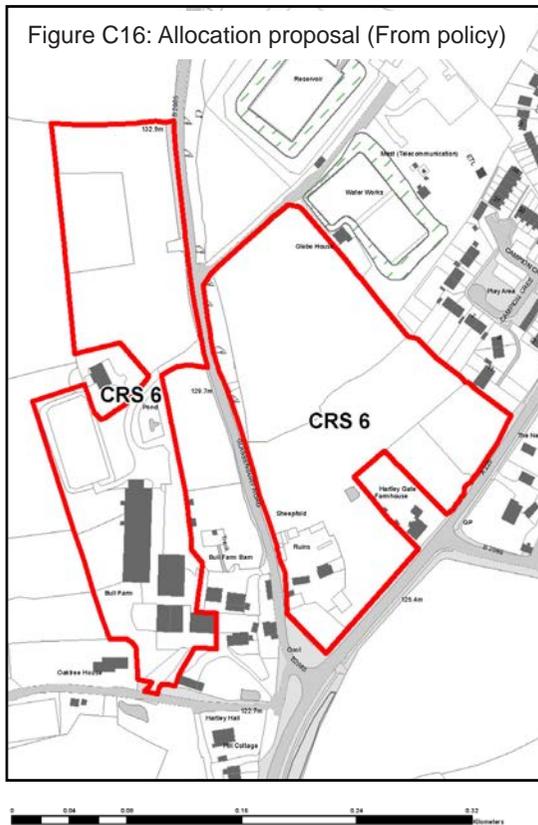
The site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB). There are three listed buildings adjacent to the Site. Grade II Listed Hartley Gate Farmhouse on Hartley Road is bound by the southern edge of CRS 6A; Grade II Listed Bull Farmhouse and Barn west of Glassenbury Road are adjacent to CRS 6B; and The Grade II Listed Hartley House and Hill Cottages are to the south of CRS 6B on the opposite side of Bishops Lane. An area of Ancient Woodland is around 150m to the west of CRS 6B. There are no Public Rights of Way within the Site, however to the south of CRS 6B Public Bridleway WC127 extends west from Hartley Road on Bishops Lane. This Public Right of Way also forms part of the 'A walk through time – Bedgebury' promoted recreational route.

Development of the site should consider the 'Valued features and qualities' set out within the Tunbridge Wells Character Assessment. Of particular relevance is: *'Historic farmsteads - many of which are connected by ancient droveways – oasts, manor houses and historic parks and gardens survive as remnants of the historic evolution of settlement in the landscape. Locally distinctive and historic buildings add important local character to the landscape.'*

Landscape baseline and key features	Visual baseline and key viewpoints	Perceptual and experiential qualities	Representativeness of AONB Qualities (with reference to the relevant character components and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan)
<p>The site lies over a high ridgeline, which forms a break between modern ribbon development alongside the A229 (Hartley Road) and the grouping of buildings around Bull Farm, which form part of the original settlement of Hartley.</p> <p>Whilst the whole site falls within the original dispersed farmstead settlement of Hartley the relationship with built development varies across the site. The southern half of 6A has a relatively strong relationship to the existing settlement pattern, whereas the northern and western parts of the site, particularly within 6B, have a stronger relationship to the wider landscape.</p> <p>The site lies at an intersection between four character areas, with parcel CRS 6A located within the 'Cranbrook Fruit Belt' and parcel CRS 6B located within 'Kilndown Wooded Farmland'. Site CRS 6B has a visual relationship with 'Bedgebury Forested Plateau' character area to the south-west.</p> <p>The two parcels within the site have different characteristics. Parcel CRS 6A is small scale and highly contained by mature boundary hedgerows and trees. The south-eastern part of this parcel is influenced by existing settlement. The historic ruins to the south-west of the parcel are in poor condition but form part of the historic settlement pattern and provide a link to the past. The A229 (Hartley Road), B2085 (Glassenbury Road), adjacent modern development and the covered reservoir are detracting features. The southern corner of the site contributes to the landscape setting of Hartley.</p> <p>The southern part of Parcel CRS 6B contains modern farm sheds, hard standing and a ménage. These are consistent with the rural landscape character, however there is scope to improve upon this. The undeveloped areas to the west and north of the parcel are rural in character and have panoramic views over the landscape to the west.</p> <p>There are characteristic elements within both parcels which have intrinsic landscape value and contribute to the character and scenic beauty of the AONB. Other areas of the site e.g. the larger and more modern buildings within parcel 6B, have a lower susceptibility to change.</p> <p>There is no public access within the site.</p>	<p>Although there are panoramic views from within the site, public views of the site itself are difficult to perceive from the wider landscape due to the steep gradients to the west, existing settlement to the east and south together with mature boundary vegetation and fencing.</p> <p>There are no public footpaths within the site. Bishops Lane (Public Bridleway WC127) located to the south of the site also forms part of the 'A walk through time – Bedgebury' recreational route. There are partial views of the existing sheds within parcel CRS 6B from the access gate into the site from the lane. From other stretches of the lane, only the southern boundary vegetation is visible.</p> <p>There are open views of the hedgerows and trees forming the site boundaries from both the A229 Hartley Road and the B2085 Glassenbury Road. This vegetation largely screens views into the site. There are glimpses and partial views into the site from access gates off the road.</p> <p>There are private views into the site from adjacent residential dwellings.</p>	<p>The two fields that form CRS 6A are small-scale and intimate in character with mature hedgerow and trees. The northern field has a more enclosed and rural character, whereas the southern field is influenced by adjacent settlement and the main road to the south.</p> <p>The existing ruins within the site are not in good condition, but form part of the historic settlement pattern and provide a link to the site's past. There are some long views to the south available over the existing boundary vegetation.</p> <p>Gaps in hedgerows and the unkempt nature of the site affect the overall condition and appearance of the site.</p> <p>Parcel CRS6 is exposed with panoramic views over the AONB landscape to the west, which are attractive and provide strong visual links to the wider landscape.</p> <p>The southern part of the parcel contains development in the form of modern agricultural buildings, hardstanding and a ménage. The northern field contains no built development.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site is located at the end of a sandstone ridge, however no rock was visible at the time of the field survey. The ridge lies between the Crane Brook catchment to the east and the tributaries of the Tiese to the west.</p> <p>Settlement: The site lies to the south of six Grade II listed buildings associated with four historic farmsteads comprising Hartley Gate Farmhouse; Hartley Farmhouse; Bull Farmhouse and Barn; and Hartley House and Hill Cottages. Development has the potential to influence the setting to these historic buildings. The remnant buildings on site are part of the historic settlement pattern.</p> <p>Routeways: Hartley Road, Glassenbury Road and Bishops Lane are all mapped as historic routeways within the AONB database. Development of the site has the potential to influence these routeways.</p> <p>Woodland: The site does not contain Ancient Woodland, but does contain mature trees, tree belts and hedgerow which contribute to woodland connectivity. The nearest area of Ancient Woodland is around 100m west of the north-western corner of the site. The site does not contribute to woodland accessibility.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The two fields within parcel CRS 6A are part of a medieval field system with historic field boundaries. The northern field is also mapped by the AONB board as a Wildflower Meadow, however this should be verified through survey work by a suitably qualified ecologist. Parcel CRS 6B does not form part of an historic field pattern however adjoining fields are part of a medieval field system with historic field boundaries.</p> <p>Other qualities: From within CRS 6B panoramic views extend west over the AONB landscape.</p>

Proposals:

Site : CRS 6



KEY

	Existing GI retained		Proposed landscape buffer
	Proposed public open space		Proposed landscape feature / connection

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

The protection of large portions of the site as open space would provide opportunities to retain, enhance and manage existing features and create new complementary features and habitats. Retention of existing features at the site boundaries, would protect the character of adjacent historic routeways.

If the site is developed holistically, there are opportunities to provide new pedestrian routes through the site which connect to existing rights of way. The proposed open space provides opportunity for on-site amenity and play space in line with the allocation policy.

Description of proposed development:

90 dwellings (including land at Bull Farm), plus employment (B1/B2/B8), and community uses

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/CRS 6.	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
A masterplanned approach to ensure a comprehensive scheme for the whole parcel (Policy).	Remove the north-western field of parcel CRS 6B from the allocation or allocate it as a landscape buffer / open space, within which enhancement could be carried out.
Provision of improved pedestrian and cycle links to Hartley and Cranbrook, including investigations into the feasibility of a pedestrian footway on the north side of Hartley Road (Policy).	Retain the northern field of parcel CRS 6A as open space. Retain and enhance any meadow habitat within this part of the site.
Regard will be given to existing hedgerows and mature trees on site, with the layout and design of the development protecting those of most amenity value, as informed by an arboricultural survey and an LVIA (Policy).	Restrict development within CRS 6B the footprint of existing buildings and associated areas of hardstanding. The design of any new buildings should reflect and enhance the historical context of the existing farmsteads and listed buildings.
Provision of a strong and robust soft landscaping boundary along the entire far western boundary of the site and additional soft landscaping along the northern boundary (Policy).	Design proposals will be required to reflect and respond sensitively to the existing farmsteads and clusters of buildings present on the site (Policy).
Development proposals will need to demonstrate where appropriate a positive contribution to Biodiversity Opportunity Area targets (Policy).	Design proposals to consider and minimise the impact on the listed farmhouses and buildings within the site (Policy).
The layout and design of the scheme to give full consideration to the location of the site on the edge of settlement, and to provide a scheme that is sensitively designed and provides a suitable urban edge to settlement (Policy).	Provision of on-site amenity/natural green space and children's play space and improvements to existing allotments, parks and recreation grounds and youth play space (Policy).
Design proposals will be required to reflect and respond sensitively to the existing farmsteads and clusters of buildings present on the site (Policy).	Protect and where appropriate enhance existing hedgerow boundaries.
Design proposals to consider and minimise the impact on the listed farmhouses and buildings within the site (Policy).	Avoidance of unnecessary demolition (Policy)

<p>Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/CRS 6, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)</p>
<p>Without mitigation, development within the proposed allocation is likely to have a detrimental effect upon the character of the 'Cranbrook Fruit Belt' and Kilindown wooded farmland' character areas due to the site's intrinsic value and contribution to the character of the AONB. The site lies in an elevated location, and forms part of the setting to historic farmsteads and routeways;</p> <p>The proposals within the southern half of the allocation are adjacent to existing settlement at Hartley, however the scale of development proposed within the draft allocation is at odds with the size of the existing hamlet and the historic farmstead context.</p> <p>Feature loss associated with the proposed development, particularly the creation of a new site access could have detrimental effects on the character of the hamlet and the routeway that runs along Hartley Road.</p> <p>Within the site the change in character could be pronounced with wildflower meadow, medieval field patterns and the potential for some historic hedgerows and trees to be lost to development. There is also the potential for new development to be discordant with the historic farmstead settlement pattern. These effects are likely to be significant.</p> <p>Predicted effects on landscape features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapped wildflower meadow and fields of pasture – removed; • Potential loss of boundary and internal hedgerow and trees subject to detailed design; • Potential loss of historic farmstead context. 	<p>The existing containment of the site would restrict the visibility of the proposed development if existing boundary and internal vegetation features are retained.</p> <p>There would be glimpsed and partial views of development from adjacent sections of Hartley Road, Glassenbury Road and Bishops Lane.</p> <p>Development within the northern fields of the site would introduce views of housing to sections of Glassenbury Lane that are currently wholly rural in character.</p> <p>Access proposals and visibility splays requiring the removal of vegetation would have the potential to make development more prominent from local roads and footpaths.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: No water features, or sandstone outcrops would be affected by the proposed development. The effects on climate conditions fall outside of the scope of this assessment.</p> <p>Settlement: The proposals could have adverse effects on the landscape setting of six Grade II listed buildings associated with four historic farmsteads and effect the historic farmstead settlement pattern on site. Development of the site would be partly consistent with the existing settlement pattern, but of a scale that would damage the character of the existing hamlet.</p> <p>Routeways: The site lies adjacent to mapped routeways on Hartley Road, Glassenbury Road and Bishops Lane. Although Hartley Road and Glassenbury Road are heavily trafficked, development is likely to introduce urbanising elements to these routeways including potential frontage development, access and infill between Hartley Road, Glassenbury Road and Bishops Lane.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland, however there is the potential for loss of trees and hedgerow subject to detailed design. There are opportunities to improve existing hedgerow and tree cover.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The proposals would involve the loss of two small meadows, a pony exercise area and paddocks. The meadows and field boundaries within site area CRS6A are associated with a Medieval Field pattern and the northernmost field is mapped as a Wildflower Meadow.</p>	<p>The significant reduction in development as demonstrated by the Strategic GI Plan would retain approximately 50% of the site within open space land uses and would protect existing boundary features with contribute positively to local character.</p> <p>Within the open space there are opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the existing northern hedgerow boundary to CRS 6A; • Establish a new western landscape buffer to CRS 6B comprising trees and hedgerow; • Enhance hedgerow and tree boundaries between CRS 6A and Hartley Road; • Replacement of the existing pony paddock and exercise area within the northern half of CRS 6B to complementary habitat; and • Removal of security fencing and modern boundary features to CRS 6B and creation of opportunities for public access to enjoy panoramic views out. <p>Within site CRS 6A, the proposed development would be limited to the southern part of the site, which is more consistent with the existing settlement pattern and would re-develop the ruins to the south-west of the site, which should be done in a sensitive manner.</p> <p>Within CRS 6B, development would be limited to the replacement of modern farm sheds with buildings which reflect the local vernacular.</p> <p>Any new development would need to demonstrate how it responds to the character and setting of the historic farmsteads and listed buildings.</p>

Conclusions:

The site lies at the end of a Sandstone ridge line, which forms the boundary to the 'Cranbrook Fruit Belt' character area, in which the majority of Hartley is located. The site forms part of the setting to four historic farmsteads including Bull Farm, of which some modern farm sheds lie within the site. From within the site, there are panoramic views out, particularly over the Kilndown Wooded Farmland character area to the west. High value features within the site, that are characteristic of the AONB include the historic field pattern, bound by mature hedgerows, trees and meadows. Low value features, include pony paddocks, exercise areas and modern agricultural buildings.

The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (February 2017) Sensitivity study assesses the site area as having a high level of sensitivity to the north of the ridge and a lower level to the south of the ridge. The northern part of the site is located on / to the north of the ridge and has intrinsic landscape value and contributes to the character and scenic beauty of the AONB in it's own right and is therefore highly sensitive to change.

The southern part of parcel CRS 6A, located to the east of Glassenbury Road, has associations with settlement to the east and south-east and contains the ruins of a farmstead to the south-west. There is some limited potential for development within the southern half of this parcel, provided that the northern half is enhanced and that the characteristic hedgerow boundaries are retained and protected. The suitability of this site for development is subject to the provision of a site access that would not have unacceptable impacts on the character or features of adjacent roads, and that the design of the proposed development responds positively to the historic farmsteads on and adjacent to the site. In order for this to be achieved it is recommended that the housing allocation for the site is reduced substantially and that any proposal for the site is consistent with the Farmsteads Assessment Guidance SPD.

Parcel CRS 6B, to the west of Glassenbury Road, is highly sensitive and is generally not suitable for development. There is, however potential for sensitive redevelopment to the south-east of the parcel, through the replacement of existing modern farm sheds, providing that enhancements are carried out within the remainder of the parcel. This could provide an opportunity to improve the setting to the listed Bull Farmhouse and barn by replacing the current sheds with more sympathetic built form. Redevelopment should be assimilated into the landscape through the mitigation outlined within figure C17.

It is recommended that the allocation should be split, with a reduced housing allocation to the east of Glassenbury Lane (providing that a suitable access can be designed), and the employment allocation within the redeveloped agricultural buildings associated with Bull Farm. Sensitive redevelopment of the site in conjunction with the proposed mitigation could then be achieved without residual significant landscape and visual effects (from publicly accessible viewpoints). There is also the potential for the proposals within the allocated site to enhance the landscape of the AONB with areas of the site allocated for open space uses.

Policy recommendations for the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Local Plan include:

- Significant reduction of the proposed housing allocation.
- Protection of the northern fields within the site and retention of their rural character and land use. Within site CRS 6A, the proposed development would be limited to the southern part of the site, which fits in with the existing settlement pattern.
- Development within the parcel CRS 6B to the west of Glassenbury Road to be restricted to redevelopment of existing agricultural buildings and hardstanding. The proposals should reflect the existing layout and pattern of the farmstead and should consider and enhance the setting to Bull Farmhouse
- New development should respect and respond positively to the character of historic farmsteads and routeways and should follow the guidance set out within the Farmsteads Assessment Guidance SPD.
- Mitigation and enhancement planting to include new native trees and hedgerow to the site's western boundaries and reinforcing existing boundaries (including internal field boundaries) with native planting where there are gaps.
- Development proposals shall be accompanied by a management plan for the removal of uncharacteristic features (such as security fencing pony paddocks and exercise areas) and the creation, protection and ongoing management of natural habitats, amenity areas, boundary features and publicly accessible routes.

Site : CRS 7 - Land north of Golford Road

Site : CRS 7 - Land north of Golford Road

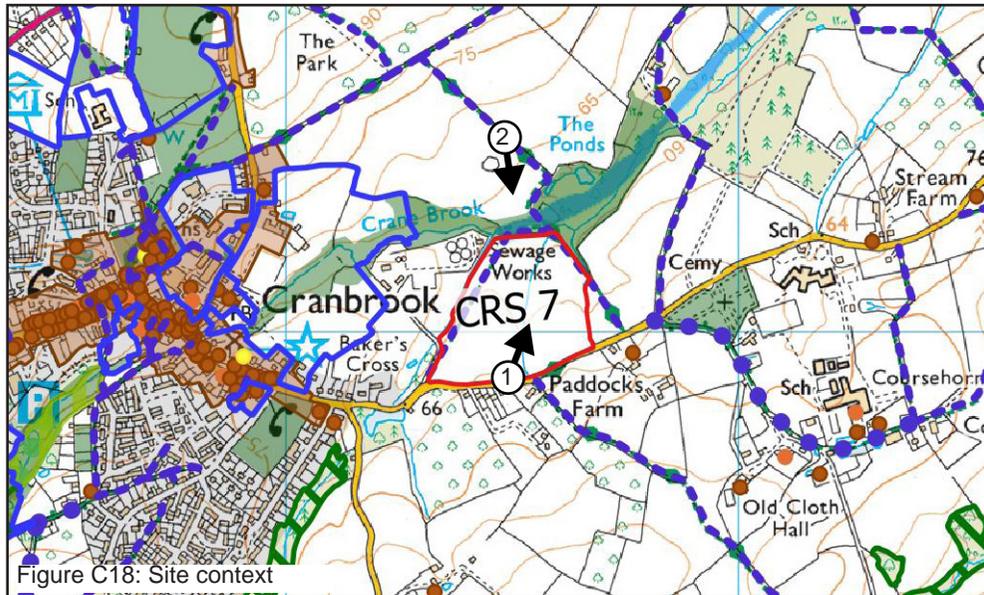


Figure C18: Site context



Photograph 1: View north across the site from Golford Road



Photograph 2: View south from footpath WC109 north of the site - the western part of the site is seen beyond the tree line.

Site location and context

CRS 7 lies to the north of Golford Road, to the east of Cranbrook town and to the west of the small hamlet of Coursehorn. The site is divorced from the existing settlement edge of Cranbrook.

The site lies to the south of the Crane Brook with north facing slopes that drain to the stream on the northern boundary. The north facing slopes are incised by tributaries to the east, west and through the centre of the site creating a locally undulating pattern of landform.

The site is bound to the west by woodland, paddocks and a sewage treatment works; to the north by the Crane Brook, associated woodland and arable fields; to the east by arable fields; and to the south by Golford Road. On the opposite side of Golford Road lies Fir Tree Farm and a number of other outlying properties together with fields in pasture and scrub land. Hedgerow and woodland trees bound the majority of the site.

The site consists of two rectilinear arable fields. The fields are separated by a minor tributary to the Crane Brook, a gappy hedgerow and mature trees.

Designations and development considerations

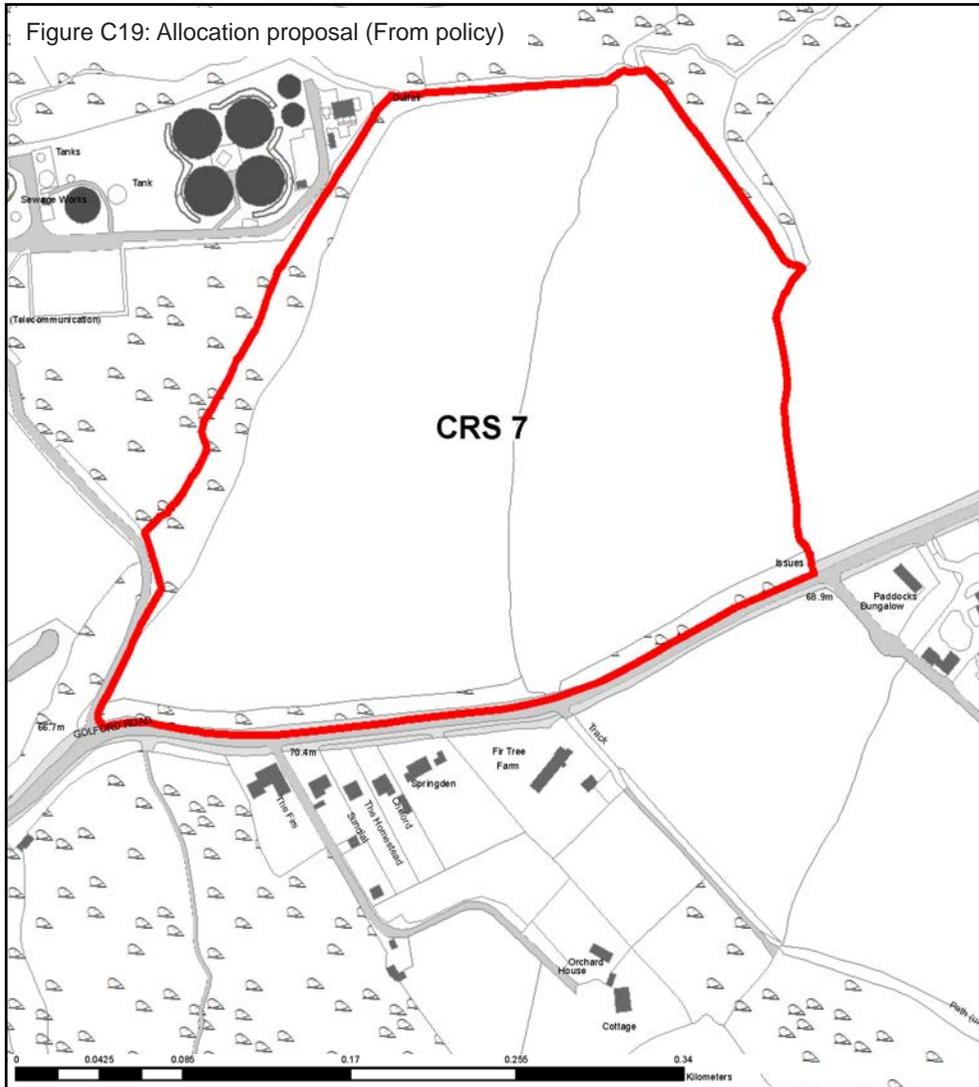
The site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Woodland associated with the Crane Brook is proposed as local greenspace (Policy EN17). The nearest Listed Building is to the Grade II Listed Paddock's Farmhouse, which lies around 150m east of the site on Golford Road.

Two Public Rights of Way cross the site. One follows the western site boundary and the other crosses the site's north-eastern corner extending south-east to Golford Road and north-west to the Crane Brook. The north-eastern footpath forms part of the promoted recreational routes 'The High Weald Landscape Trail' and 'A walk through time – Benenden'. The High Weald Landscape Trail continues to the north and south of the site. Around 300m east of the site's southern boundary a further footpath extends north-east from Golford Road. This footpath forms part of the promoted route 'Walks in West Kent – Cranbrook'.

Development of the site should consider the 'Valued features and qualities' set out within the Tunbridge Wells Character Assessment. Specifically: *'...the 'wedge' of landscape provided by the Crane Brook which permeates into the town centre. The relationship of the town with the surrounding landscape is of particular value for the contribution to recreation and views.'*

Other constraints to development include odour from the sewage works located to the north-west of the site.

<p>Landscape baseline and key features</p>	<p>Visual baseline and key viewpoints</p>	<p>Perceptual and experiential qualities</p>	<p>Representativeness of AONB Qualities (with reference to the relevant character components and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan)</p>
<p>The site lies within areas identified by the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (February, 2017) as being of High Sensitivity. The Site has intrinsic landscape value and contributes to the character and scenic beauty of the AONB in its own right and is therefore highly sensitive to change.</p> <p>The site has a weak relationship with the existing settlement of Cranbrook. The tributary valley feature to the west of the site forms a boundary to the town. The valley feature, together with woodland vegetation, paddocks and playing fields, physically and visually separates the site from the existing settlement. To the south of the site outlying development is low density and rural in character. The site's northern and eastern boundaries are open to the wider landscape.</p> <p>The site forms part of the setting to the Crane Brook which, together with associated woodland, represent characteristic components of the AONB. The Sewage Treatment Works to the north-west is a detracting feature, however it is in-part screened by boundary trees and woodland and together with paddocks and playing fields contributes to separation between the site and existing built edge of Cranbrook. Landscape features within the site include boundary and internal hedgerow and mature trees, alongside tributaries to the Crane Brook.</p> <p>Two public footpaths cross the site on the north-eastern and western boundaries. These routes contribute to the informal recreation provision of Cranbrook.</p>	<p>There are open views of the site from the sections of footpath that run through the site, including a short stretch of the High Weald Landscape Trail. Views consist of open arable fields, with an undulating landform and the internal gappy hedgerow.</p> <p>In views from sections of footpath to the north, the north-facing slopes of the western portion of the site are visible (photograph 2). Partial views of the site are seen beyond intervening trees, which will reduce the extent of visibility in the summer months.</p> <p>There are partial and glimpsed views of the site, from sections of footpath to the east, seen beyond a gappy boundary hedgerow.</p> <p>There are open and partial views of the site from Golford Road to the south, seen through large gaps in the roadside hedgerow (photograph 1). Views are of arable fields enclosed by tree belts.</p> <p>To the west, views are almost entirely obscured by intervening trees and vegetation, however there are glimpsed views of the site approaching on Golford Road.</p> <p>Visual receptors (public views) to be considered (order from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers on public footpaths within the site particularly promoted recreational routes which include a section of the 'High Weald Landscape Trail'; • Walkers on public footpaths to the north and east of the site particularly promoted recreational routes which include a section of the 'High Weald Landscape Trail'; • Walkers on Golford Road particularly promoted recreational routes which include a section of the 'High Weald Landscape Trail'; and • Motorists on Golford Road. 	<p>Fields within the site are small scale and semi-enclosed. Hedgerows and field boundaries are gappy in places with opportunities for enhancement through additional planting and management. Public footpaths in and around the site appear to be well-used by dog walkers in particular.</p> <p>The incised north-facing slopes create a varied and interested topography across the site. From the section of the 'High Weald Landscape Trail' within the site, there are attractive views over most of the site, which extend as far as the boundary trees, woodland and outlying development on Golford Road. The site also contributes to the visual amenity of public rights of way outside the site boundary.</p> <p>Although relatively small-scale and in-part screened by adjacent vegetation, the Sewage Treatment Works (STW) is a detracting feature in views from the adjacent footpaths.</p> <p>The site is semi-enclosed, with the open and rolling landform contained by tree belts, which provide a structure and pattern to the landscape. The site is relatively simple but attractive.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site lies over north facing slopes, incised by tributary valleys, which drain to the Crane Brook on the site's northern boundary.</p> <p>Settlement: The existing settlement extends south-east to a tributary of the Crane Brook. The site, lies outside of this settlement pattern and contributes to the rural setting of the settlement. Farmsteads and associated development lie to the south of Golford Road.</p> <p>Routeways: The footpaths within the site and Golford Road are mapped as historic routeways within the AONB database. The development of the site has the potential to influence the character of these routeways.</p> <p>Woodland: There are no areas of Ancient Woodland within or adjacent to the site. The site lies to the south of woodland associated with the Crane Brook, Mature trees and hedgerow within the site and the site boundaries contribute to woodland connectivity.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site comprises small-scale arable fields bound by hedgerow and woods historically associated with small farmsteads.</p> <p>The site and adjacent land uses are representative of the AONB qualities.</p>



Description of proposed development:

Residential development of up to 150 dwellings.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/CRS 7.	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
The provision of pedestrian links to the footway south of the site (on the opposite side of the road) to link into the wider pedestrian network and to provide a pedestrian link to the commercial centre of Cranbrook (Policy).	No additional mitigation measures have been proposed as the site is not considered suitable for development in landscape terms
Provision of a suitably designed green infrastructure link along the Crane Valley to link into routes provided further north along the valley, providing an improved green route into the centre of Cranbrook (Policy).	
The location of built development to be informed by a LVIA (Policy).	
Provision of on site allotments, amenity/natural green space, parks and recreation grounds, children's play space and youth place space (Policy).	
The design and layout to be informed by a comprehensive energy and climate change strategy (Policy).	

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

There are opportunities to provide landscape and recreational enhancements within the site including the restoration of existing hedgerows and tree belts, through infill planting.

The provision of an off-road footpath route connecting existing rights of way would be beneficial.

<p>Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)</p>	<p>Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/CRS 7, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)</p>
<p>Development within the proposed allocation would have a detrimental effect upon the character of the 'Cranbrook Fruit Belt' character area due to the site's intrinsic value and contribution to the character and scenic beauty of the AONB.</p> <p>The site is visually and physically separate from the existing settlement pattern of Cranbrook. It forms part of the setting to the Crane Brook and associated woodland, which is a characteristic component of the AONB.</p> <p>Within the site the change in character would be substantial, with existing open fields replaced by development and open space. The predicted change to the rural character of the site is considered to be significant in landscape terms.</p> <p>Development within the site would have a detrimental effect upon the rural character of recreational routes which run through the site including sections of the 'High Weald Landscape Trail' and 'A walk through time - Beneden' recreational routes.</p>	<p>There would be open views of development from the stretches of footpath within the site, which include sections of the 'High Weald Landscape Trail' and 'A walk through time – Benenden' recreational routes. These have the potential to give rise to significant adverse visual effects.</p> <p>From the footpath to the north of the site, the existing views of the facing western portion of the site, would be replaced by development. The extent of these views would decrease in the summer months when the trees are in leaf.</p> <p>There would be partial and glimpsed views of the proposed development from sections of footpath to the east of the site.</p> <p>There would be partial and open views of development from the adjacent section of Goldford Road. Approaching the site from the west on Goldford Road there would also be glimpsed views of development.</p> <p>The proposals are likely to have a significant effect upon visual receptors on the 'High Weald Landscape Trail' and 'A walk through time – Benenden'.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: Development of the site is likely to have an adverse effects upon the setting to the Crane brook, its tributaries. The undulating landform of the site may be disrupted by earthworks associated with the proposed development.</p> <p>Settlement: Development of the site would have an adverse impact upon the setting to two historic farmsteads. It would be inconsistent with the existing settlement pattern and would have a detrimental effect upon the rural setting to Cranbrook.</p> <p>Routeways: Development would introduce urbanising elements to historic routeways within and adjacent to the site. The character and amenity of the routeways is likely to be adversely affected.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland, however there is the potential for loss of trees and hedgerow subject to detailed design.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The proposals would involve the loss of two small scale arable fields historically associated with small farmsteads.</p>	<p>Development of the site is likely to result in significant impacts upon landscape character and visual receptors.</p> <p>There are no perceived mitigation proposals that are considered be sufficient to moderate the predicted harm to the High Weald AONB. As such, no proposals have been put forward with this report as the site is not considered to be suitable for development.</p> <p>Should the site remain as an allocation within the local plan, any new development should be accompanied by proposals that protect, maintain and reinforce boundary hedgerow and trees together with enhanced green infrastructure and access to the wider countryside. Views of the site seen from local footpaths and historic routeways should be protected.</p>

Conclusions:

The site lies over north-facing slopes which drain to the Crane Brook adjacent to the site. The site and its immediate rural setting are physically and visually separated from the existing settlement of Cranbrook by a tributary valley feature together with woodland, vegetation, paddocks and playing fields.

The site contributes '*...the 'wedge' of landscape provided by the Crane Brook which permeates into the town centre. The relationship of the town with the surrounding landscape is of particular value for the contribution to recreation and views.*' This represents one of the 'Valued features and qualities' set out within the Tunbridge Wells Character Assessment.

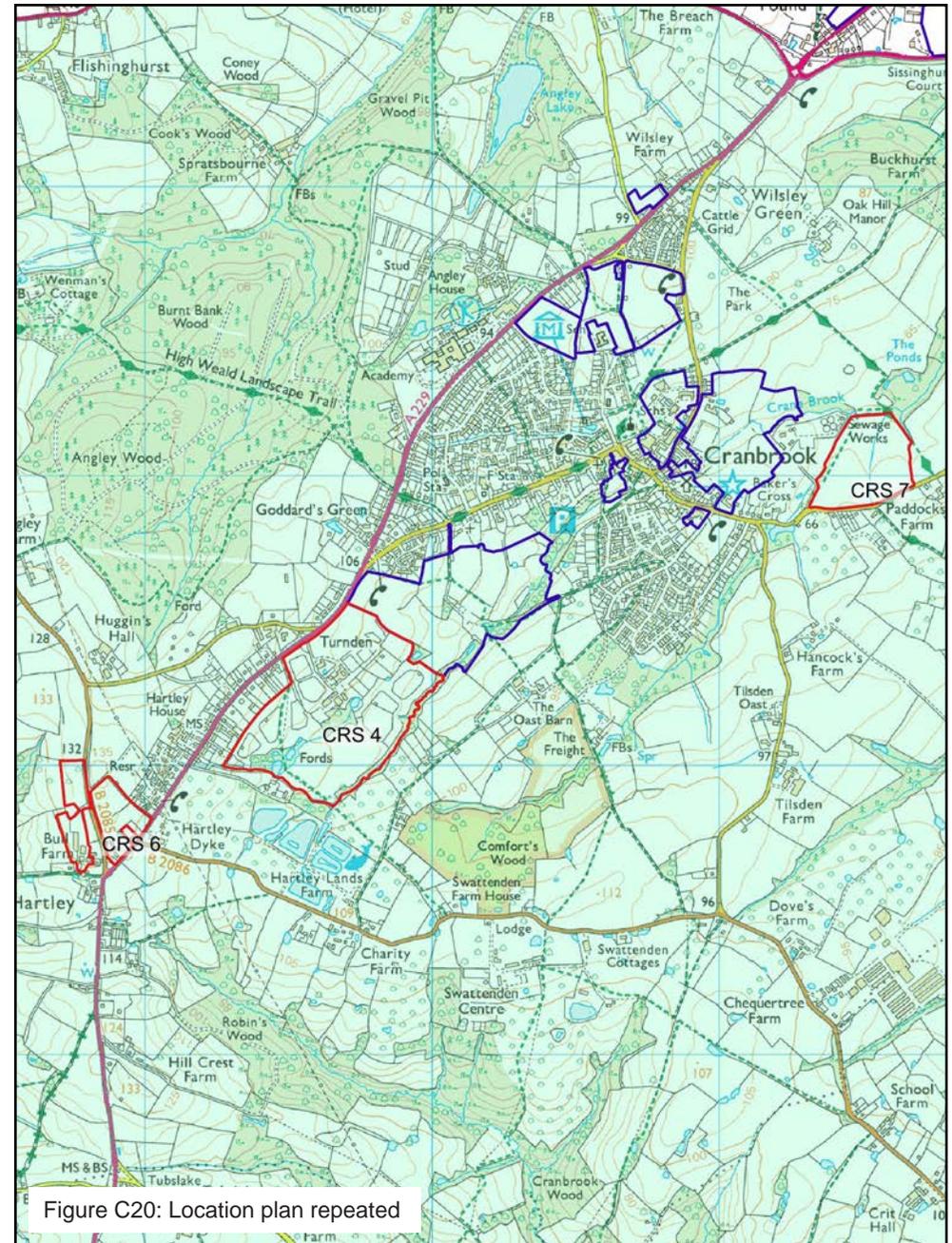
There are views of the site from sections of public footpath, which include part of the 'High Weald Landscape Trail'. The site has a high sensitivity to change, which is reflected in the assessment within the LUC sensitivity study.

The site would not be appropriate for development given its weak relationship with existing settlement; contribution to the AONB character; and the likely impact upon views from local visual receptors, which include sections of the 'High Weald Landscape Trail'. Development within the site would harm the character and appearance of the High Weald AONB and there are no perceived mitigation measures that would be sufficient to moderate the predicted adverse effects on the environment or recreation as required by part c) of paragraph 172 of the NPPF.

It is recommended that the site is not taken forward as an allocation within the local plan.

6.6.7 Cumulative effects of development proposed at Cranbrook

- 6.6.7.1 The proposed allocations as shown in the reg 18 submission are likely to lead to cumulative landscape and visual effects on the AONB landscape surrounding Cranbrook, however whether these would lead to significant adverse effects would depend upon the detailed design of individual sites. Development of all draft allocation site will substantially increase the size of Cranbrook.
- 6.6.7.2 The development of the three proposed study sites for Cranbrook would have significant cumulative effects if no mitigation is proposed alongside the development. Site CRS 7 has the potential for significant adverse effects on the landscape of the AONB and should be removed as an allocation.
- 6.6.7.3 Site CRS 6 is divorced from the main settlement of Cranbrook and is instead associated with the hamlet of Hartley. The site is both physically and visually separated from the allocations associated with Cranbrook and is therefore unlikely to give rise to cumulative effects. The advice presented for the development of the site remains key to the acceptability of this site for allocation.
- 6.6.7.4 The development of site CRS 4 in conjunction with the allocation to the north has the potential for cumulative effects, however these may be detrimental or beneficial. If the two proposed development are linked in design and provide landscape enhancements (as recommended for site CRS 4), the cumulative effects are not likely to be significant adverse. Consideration of the potential cumulative visual effects on footpath users to the east of the site should be an important part of the design within these sites.
- 6.6.7.5 There may be cumulative effects associated with the landscape to the north of Cranbrook as a result of the development of allocations considered to be non major by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (shown in blue on figure C20). More information is required to make an informed assessment. Any application within these sites should consider cumulative landscape effects on local character and features, along with the potential cumulative visual effects on the High Weald Landscape Trail and other local footpaths.



6.6.8 Summary and conclusions

- 6.6.8.1 Draft allocation CRS 4 is located to the south of Cranbrook and is separated from the wider rural landscape by a combination of local landform, woodland and settlement together with permitted and allocated development land. The draft allocation seeks to develop approximately 1/3 of the site, with the remainder allocated as open space. The allocation proposes development to the north and east of the site, integrating the permitted development at Turnden Farm with the allocation located to the north of the site. The retained open space to the west and south, would protect the separate settlement identities between Cranbrook and Hartley and provides opportunity for substantial enhancements within the site.
- 6.6.8.2 The development of the site in conjunction with the proposed mitigation could be achieved without residual significant landscape and visual effects (from publicly accessible viewpoints). There is also the potential for the proposals within the allocated site to enhance the landscape of the AONB with areas of the site allocated for open space uses.
- 6.6.8.3 Draft allocation CRS 6 is located to either side of Glassenbury Road, within the hamlet of Hartley. The site has intrinsic sensitivities associated with field pattern, long and attractive views and landscape features. The south-eastern part of the site is consistent with the ribbon development that defines the settlement pattern of the eastern part of the hamlet. The proposals set out within the GI policy combined with the Strategic Green Infrastructure proposals set out within this report seek to protect and enhance the key features and characteristics of the site. It is recommended that if this site is to be retained as an allocation that it be split into two parts, with a substantially reduced housing allocation to the east of Glassenbury Lane (providing that a suitable access can be designed), and the employment allocation located within redeveloped agricultural buildings associated with Bull Farm. The northern fields of the site should not be developed.
- 6.6.8.4 Draft allocation CRS 7 lies to the east of Cranbrook, within a rural agricultural landscape that is divorced from existing settlement. The site is not considered to be appropriate for development given its weak relationship with existing settlement; contribution to the AONB character; and current contribution to the visual amenity of sensitive visual receptors, including walkers using the 'High Weald Trail'. Development within the site would harm the character and appearance of the High Weald AONB and there are no perceived mitigation measures that would be sufficient to moderate the predicted adverse effects on the environment or recreation as required by part c) of paragraph 172 of the NPPF.