

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



6.7: Hawkhurst

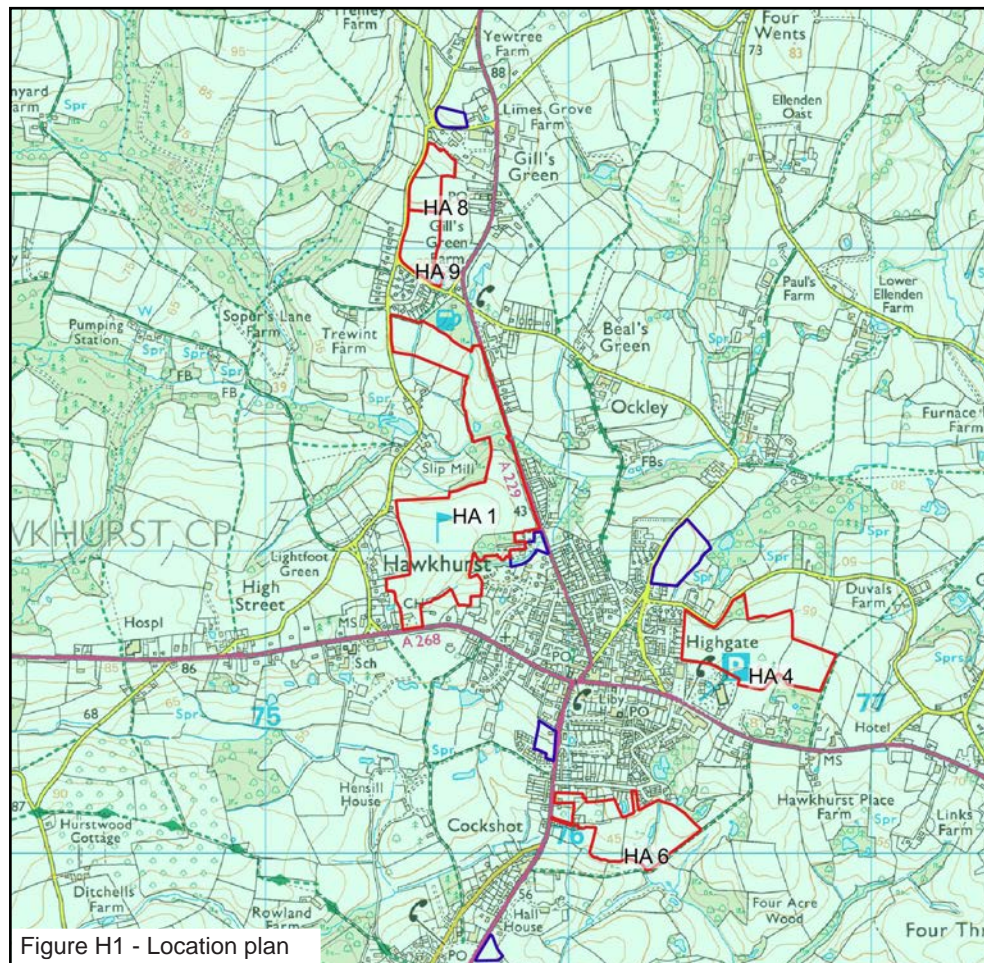
Revision B

6.7 Hawkhurst

Hawkhurst sites considered:

- HA 1 - Land forming part of the Hawkhurst Golf Course to the north of the High Street ;
- HA 4 - Land at Fowlers Park ;
- HA 6 - Land off Copthall Avenue and Highgate Hill ;
- HA 8 - Hawkhurst Station Business Park ;
- HA 9 - Land at Santer's Yard, Gill's Green Farm ;

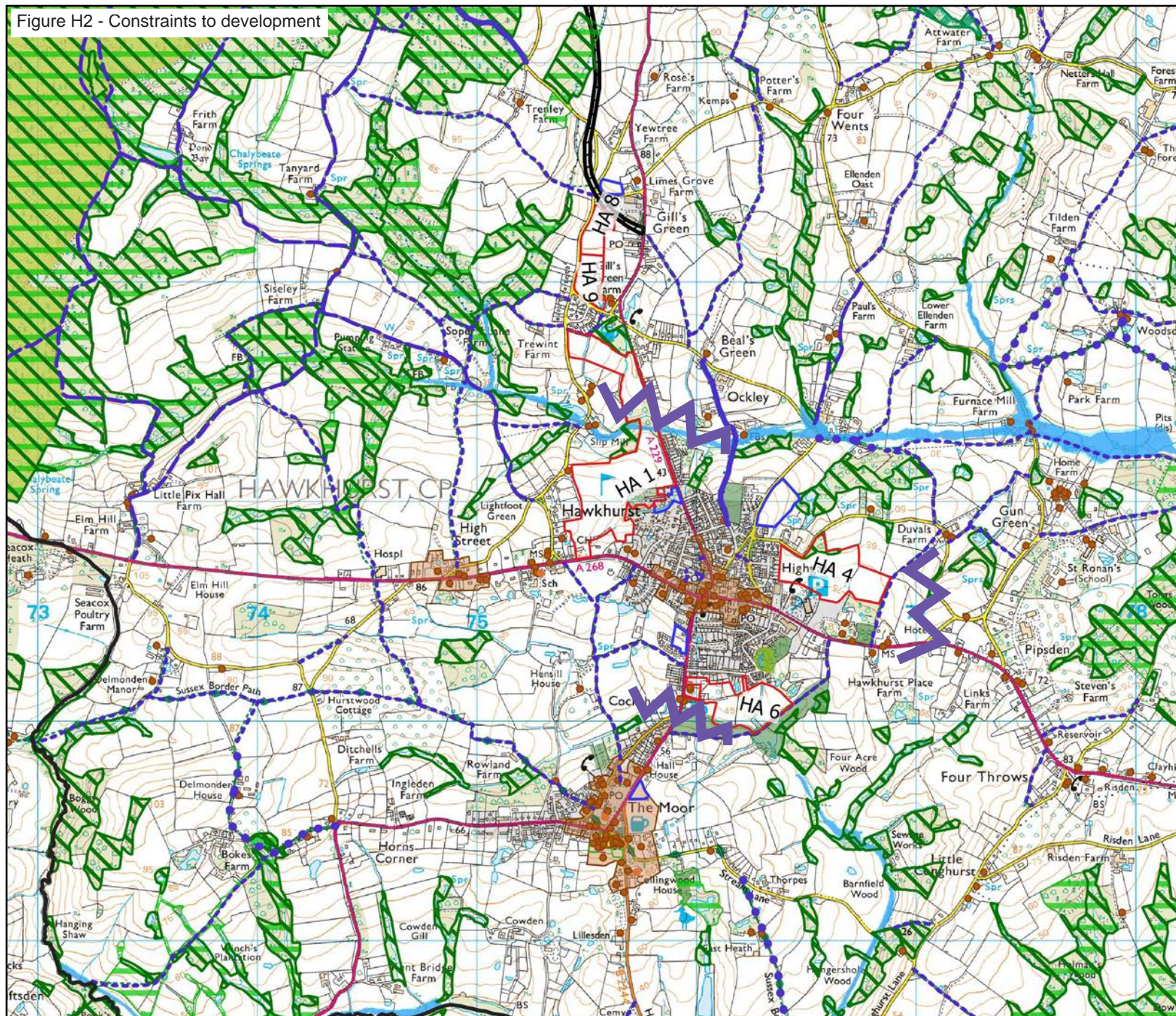
See Figure H1 for site locations. The High Weald AONB is shown as a green wash.



6.7.1 Settlement Context

- 6.7.1.1 Hawkhurst is a large rural village located approximately 17.5km to the south-east of Royal Tunbridge Wells, approximately 24km to the south-west of Ashford and approximately 22km south of Maidstone. Cranbrook is the nearest large village, located approximately 4km to the north-east of Hawkhurst.
- 6.7.1.2 Hawkhurst consists of three separate but interconnected ridge-top settlements, separated by steeply sided valleys. The main settled area is located at Highgate, centred on a crossroads between the A268 and the A229, with Gills Green to the north and The Moor to the south. The wider village is surrounded by small hamlets or clusters of buildings associated with rural lanes. Maintaining the separate identities of these settlements is an important consideration for local identity and settlement character.
- 6.7.1.3 The whole parish displays the typical topography of the High Weald, with an undulating landform of high sandstone ridges interlaced with steeply sided valleys and ghylls, set within a landscape structure of woodland and thick hedgerows. The A268 follows the line of an east-west ridge, with the settlement of Highgate located on the ridge top and side slopes. The Moor is also located on an east-west ridge, whereas Gill's Green is located on a plateau of high ground on a ridgeline that extends to the north. The A229 ascends and follows the line of this ridge past Gills Green to Hartley. The valleys are laced with streams, typified by gill streams and woodland. Shaws of woodland are located on the higher ground. Bedgebury Forest lies to the north-west of the study area.
- 6.7.1.4 The study area, including all settlement, lies within the High Weald AONB. The village has a rich built heritage, with three designated Conservation Areas: The Moor, Highgate and All Saints Church, and Iddenden Green (Sawyers Green). The Conservation Areas contain numerous listed buildings and there are many more scattered within the rural landscape. A SSSI is located to the north-east of the village at Robins Wood. The majority of the woodland within the study area is designated Ancient Woodland and many of these Ancient Woodland areas to the north-west and east of the village are also designated Local Wildlife Sites. Bedgebury Forest is a large expanse of Ancient Woodland, which is also a Local Wildlife Site and Open Access Land. It is an important resource for nature and recreation within the borough.
- 6.7.1.5 Other constraints to development within this area include areas of 'Local greenspace', which are generally located on the edges of Highgate and The Moor. A safeguarded railway line runs north and west from the old station at Gills Green. There is a small flood plain associated with the springs and streams that flow east between Highgate and Gills Green. The village and surrounding rural landscape is well served by public rights of way.

Figure H2 - Constraints to development

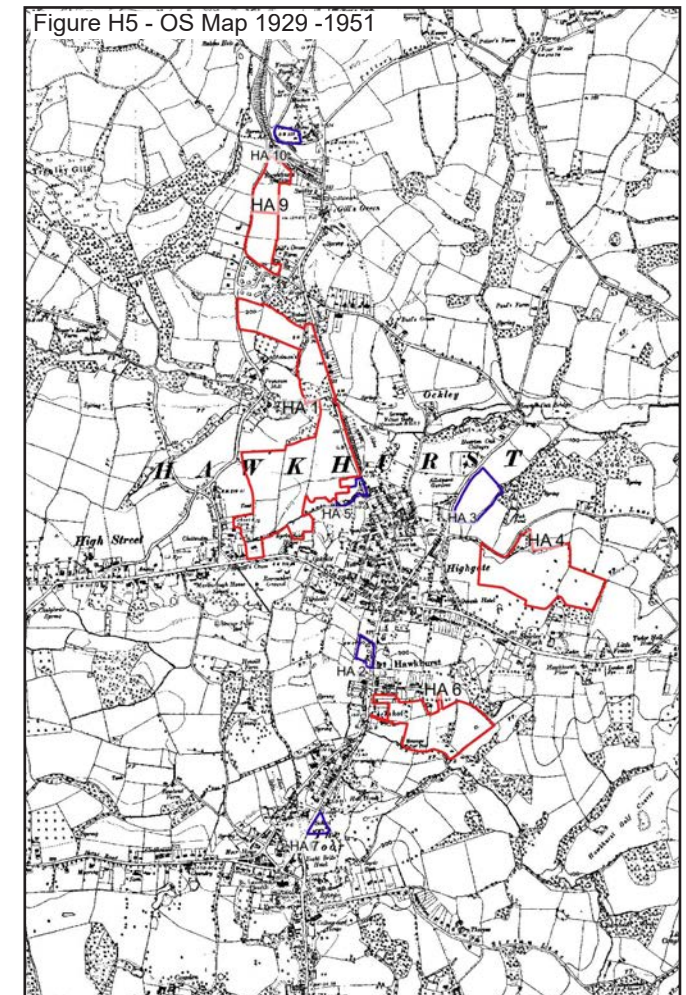
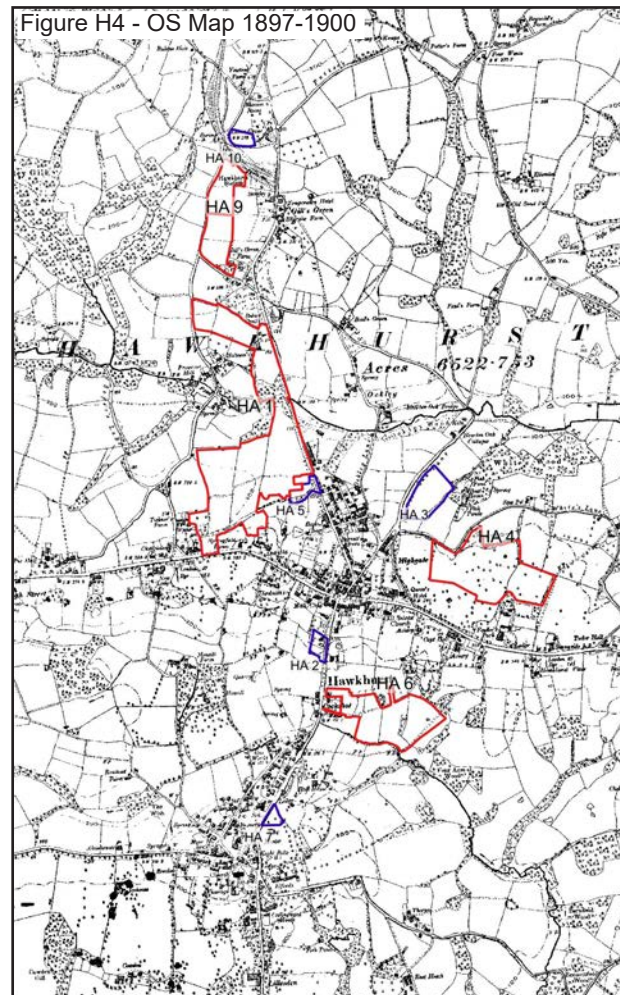
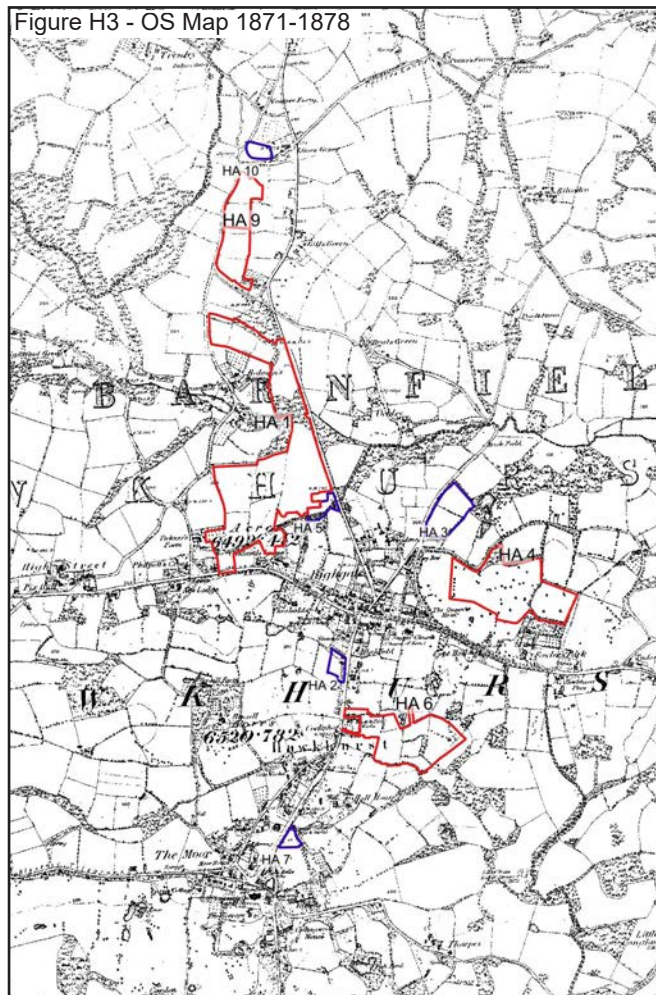


KEY

- 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)
- Separation to settlement

6.7.2 Settlement Evolution

6.7.2.1 Settlement has been recorded within the study area since C.1200 and originated as small settlements (hursts) that were carved out of the surrounding woodland. Hawkhurst has historic associations with the cloth and iron industries. In the 1800's all 5 of the sites were part of the wider agricultural landscape, while settlement has slowly evolved to meet them (see figures H3 - H5).



6.7.3 Historic Landscape Character

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

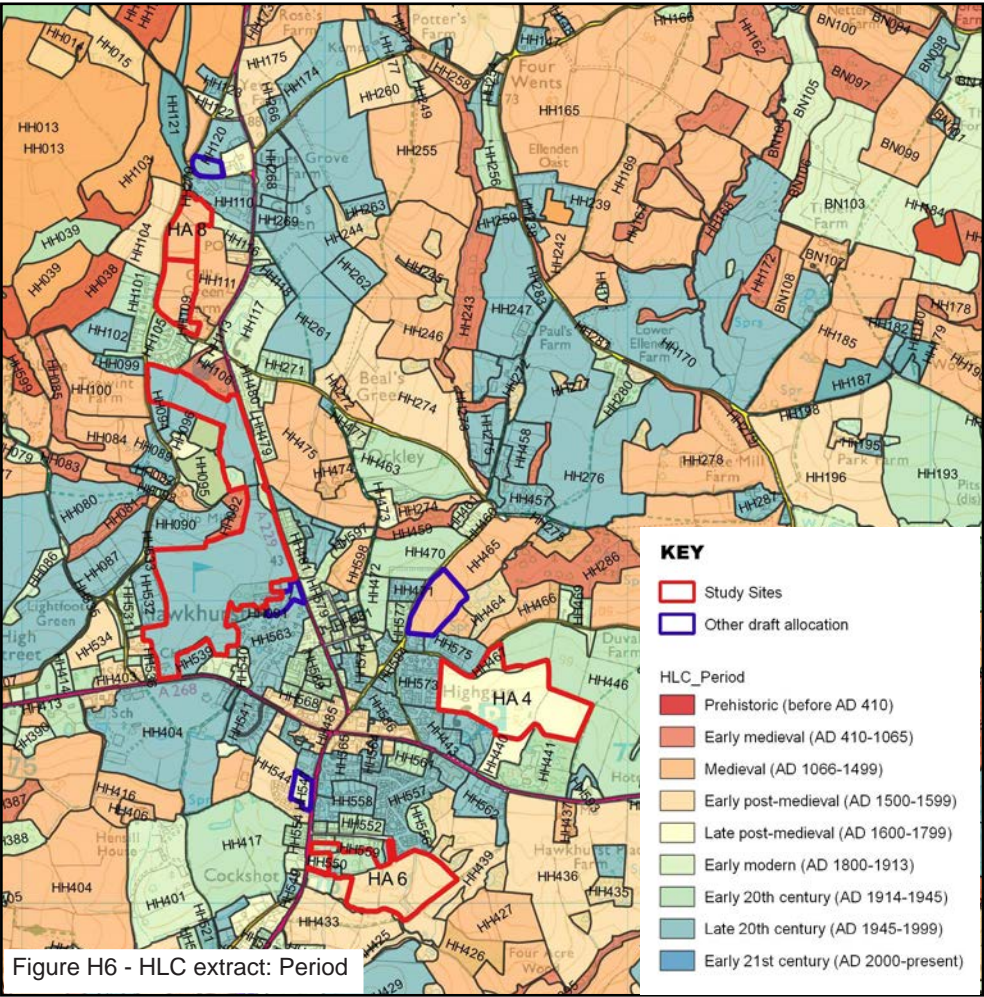


Figure H6 - HLC extract: Period

Site	HLC ID	Type	Period	Additional information
HA 1	HH091	Golf courses	Late 20th century	Golf courses
	HH093	Regenerated secondary woodland	Early modern	Pre-1801 scarp and steep valley woodland
	HH094	Golf courses	Late 20th century	Small regular fields with wavy boundaries
	HH095	Aggregate assart fields	Medieval	Small regular fields with wavy boundaries
HA 4	HH440	Parkland	Late post-medieval	Small regular fields with straight boundaries
	HH467	Coppices	Early modern	Small regular fields with straight boundaries
HA 6	HH439	Regular informal fields	Early post-medieval	Small regular fields with straight boundaries
	HH529	Paddocks	Early 20th century	Small regular fields with straight boundaries
	HH550	Ribbon settlement	Early modern	Post-1801 settlement (general)
	HH559	Planned estate	Early 20th century	Post-1801 settlement (general)
HA8	HH111	Cohesive assart fields	Medieval	Small regular fields with wavy boundaries
HA9	HH109	Large farmstead	Late 20th century	Post-1801 settlement (general)
	HH111	Cohesive assart fields	Medieval	Small regular fields with wavy boundaries

6.7.4 Landscape Character

6.7.4.1 The Hawkhurst study sites sit within two different character types identified within the Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) SPD (LUC December 2017). Within this assessment, the landscape of the borough has been divided into Landscape types, which have been further subdivided into Landscape Character Areas.

6.7.4.2 Sites HA 4, HA 6 and the southern part of site HA 1 are located within the Wooded Farmland Character Type, which is described as:

'Extremely varied and complex landscape. Distinct, high ridges with weathered sandstone outcrops intersected by ravine woodland, beech and holly hedges and sunken lanes. These contrast with unimproved pasture and common land. Other characteristics include rolling upland areas, incised by valleys, with small settlements and pastures hidden within a framework of deciduous, ghyll and shaw woodlands.'

6.7.4.3 The three sites are located within the 'Hawkhurst Wooded Farmland' Character Area. Key characteristics of the Character Area include:

- 1) Strong upland ridge of Tunbridge Wells Sand dropping to valleys to the north and south incised by deep narrow tributary valleys that join the Hexden Channel and Kent Ditch and ultimately flow to the River Rother.
- 2) Mixed agricultural landscape of small-scale pasture and medium-large scale arable fields, with larger rolling arable slopes to the valleys and occasional fields of orchards and hops.
- 3) Wooded character arising from thick linear ancient ghyll woodlands, shaws, hedgerow trees and overgrown hedgerows.
- 4) Numerous rural lanes following a pattern of ancient routeways crossing north-south through the area and joining with the main east-west routeway following the ridgeline.
- 5) Ridgetop settlements, dominated by brick and weatherboarded buildings. An occasional windmill or church tower provides distinctive landmarks in mid-distant views. Small farmsteads line the minor ridges separating the ghyll valleys.
- 6) A peaceful rural ambience with dark skies away from the main settlement of Hawkhurst.

6.7.4.4 '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:

- 6) ... settlement contained within the topographical and wooded framework.
- 7) The distinctive character of the ridgetop villages and the distinctive landmark features.'

6.4.4.5 The Benenden Wooded Farmland Character Area is located to the north-east of the

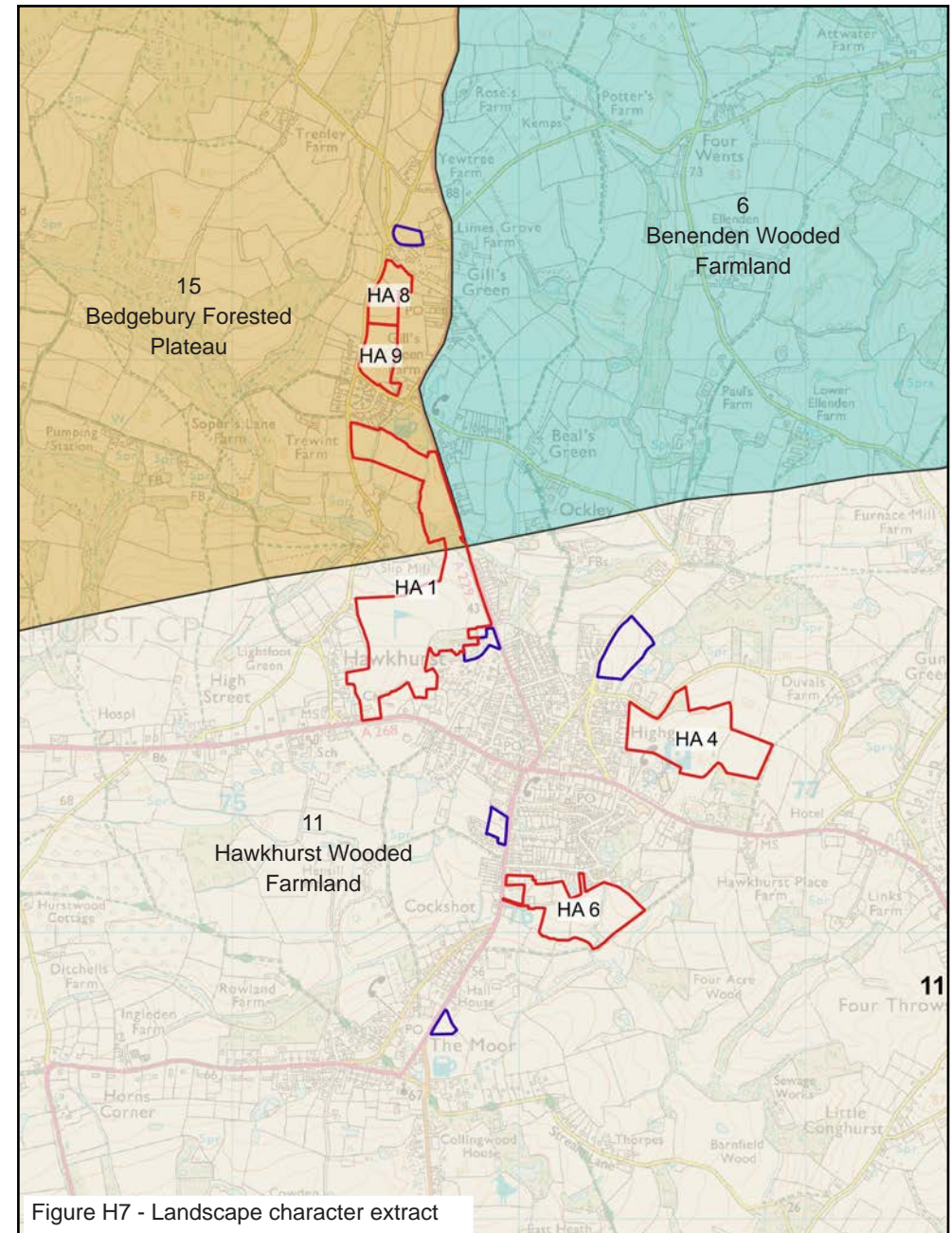


Figure H7 - Landscape character extract

settlement. There are no study sites within this character area, however site HA 1 lies adjacent to the western boundary of the character area.

6.4.4.6 Sites HA 8, HA 9 and the northern part of HA 1 are located within the Forested Plateau Character Type and the 'Bedgebury Forested Plateau' Character Area. The Forested Plateau type is described as:

'Comprehensive forest cover comprising a mosaic of semi-natural woodlands, coniferous plantation and managed coppice and heath.'

6.7.4.7 Key characteristics of the 'Bedgebury Forested Plateau' Character Area include:

- '1) High plateau landscape of broad rolling domed ridges, predominantly on Tunbridge Wells Sandstone.*
- 2) Large-scale forest patchwork, mainly coniferous plantation with localised broad-leaved plantation woodland, smothering the ridgetops and extending down the sides of valleys.*
- 3) Lower slopes and valleys under arable cultivation with large fields intersected by mixed coniferous/deciduous ghyll woodlands, which merge with the upland forest.*
- 4) General absence of visible settlement and buildings creates a sense of relative remoteness.*
- 5) Low vehicle accessibility but relatively well served with bridleways and footpaths. The absence of roads and lanes traversing the area present the illusion of a vast elusive area that can only be admired from afar.*
- 6) Localised pockets of ornamental parkland character.*
- 7) A generally large-scale, remote, exposed and isolated character, particularly along the ridges.*
- 8) Recreation.'*

6.7.4.8 '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:

'4) A strong natural character which is readily and extensively accessible on foot. The woodlands, wooded ghylls and mosaic of pasture, heathland, wildflower meadows for example, provide a rich perceptual experience for the local population to experience wildlife from footpaths and recreational routes.

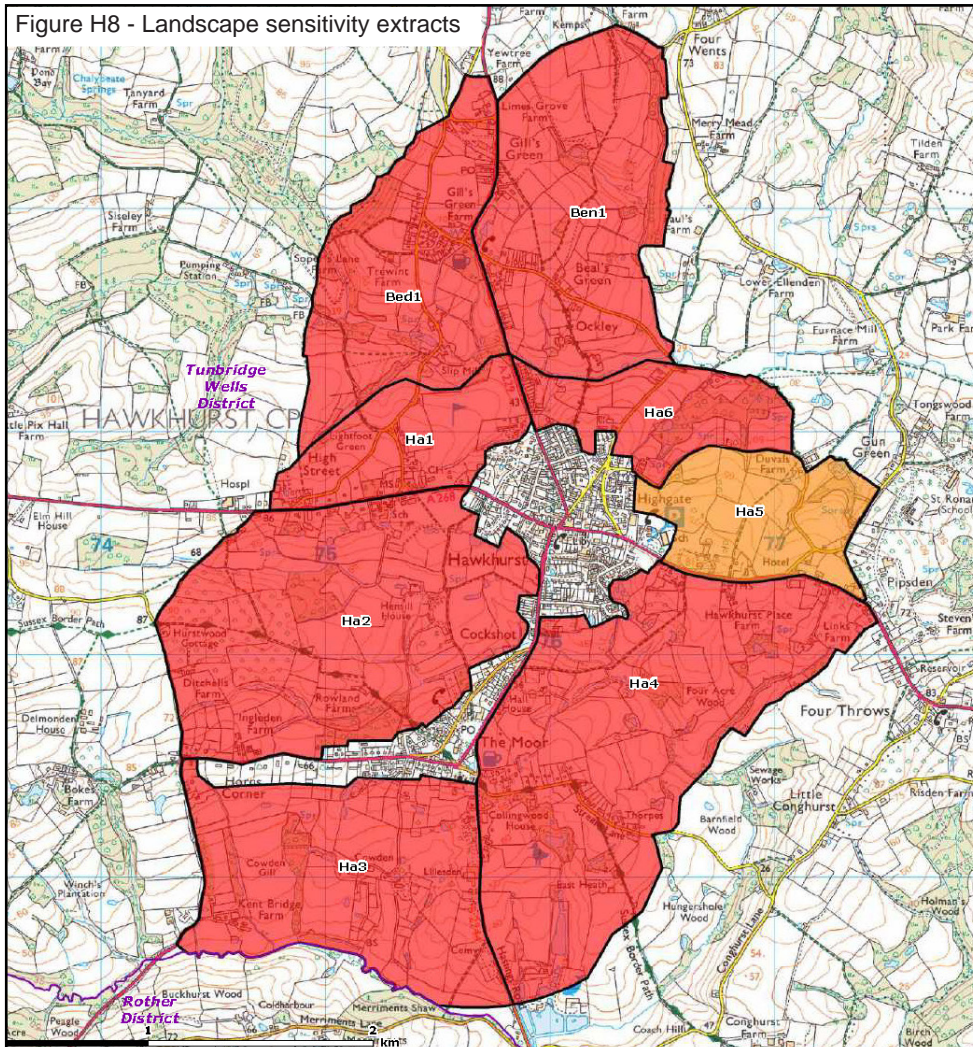
5) The sense of relative remoteness and a 'secret' quality provided by the enclosure of woodland and ridges, with occasional glimpsed views from high points. The relative lack of modern intrusions such as main roads and views of modern development, particularly in the core of the character area (where there are very dark skies), provides a valued sense of 'escape'.'

6.7.4.9 The Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) recognises locations that contribute to

local landscape character, as well as valued viewpoints. Woodland is defined as providing a distinctive setting to the parish (p21 of the HNP). Spaces that contribute to the landscape character of the parish are set out on pages 24 and 25 of the HNP. Spaces located near to the proposed allocation sites include:

- 26 'Spring Field' - located to the east of site HA 1;
- 22 Fowlers Wood - located to the south-east of site HA 4;
- 24 Fowlers Park Wood - within site HA 4;
- 20 'Little Switzerland' including bridge and valley - footpath runs to the south and east of site HA 6; and
- 17 Gills Green including green bank and steps - located beyond the existing industrial estate, to the east of site HA 8.

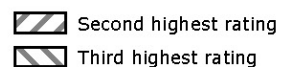
6.7.4.9 Principal views proposed for protection through the Neighbourhood Plan are mapped on page 52 of the HNP. The mapped views are unlikely to be affected by the draft allocation proposals set out within this study, due to the location and orientation of the protected views.



Highest sensitivity rating



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



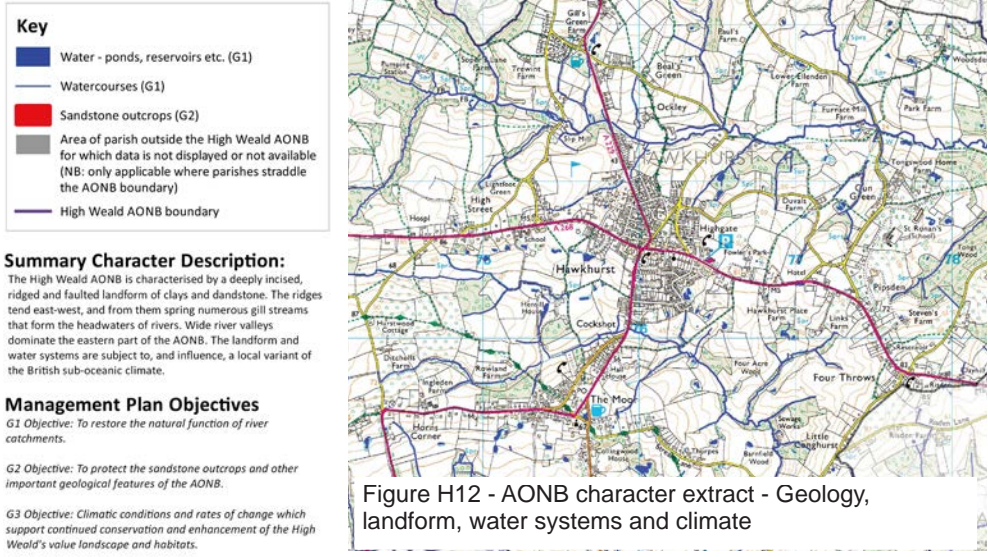
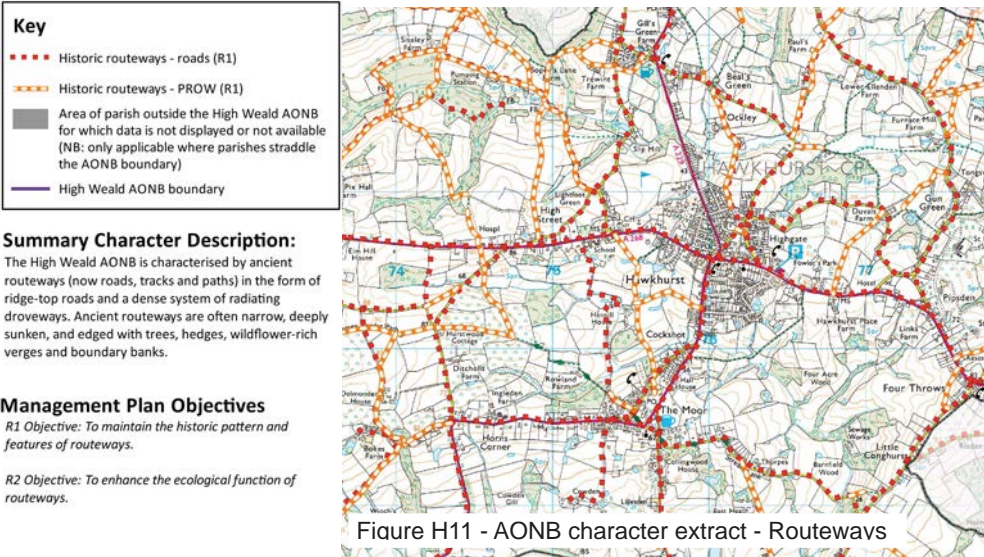
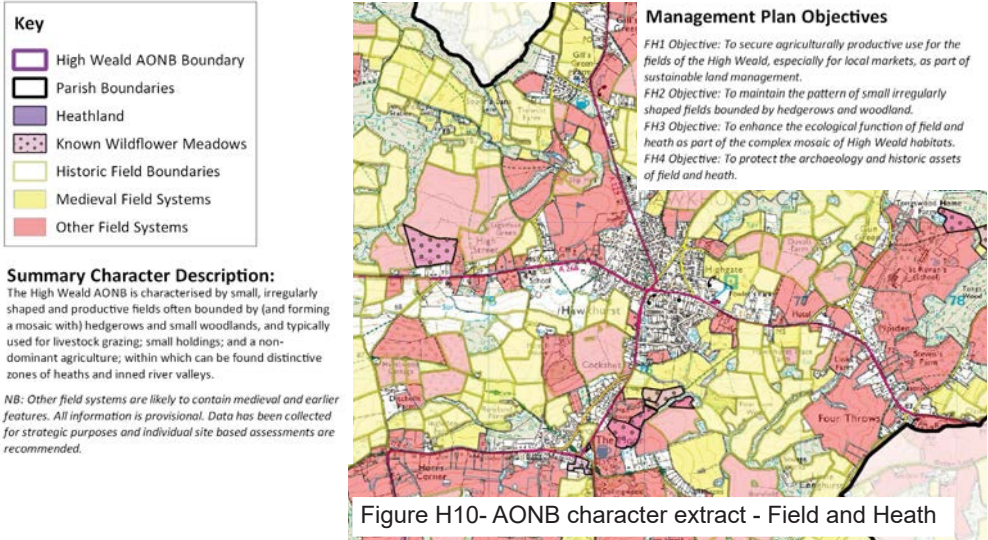
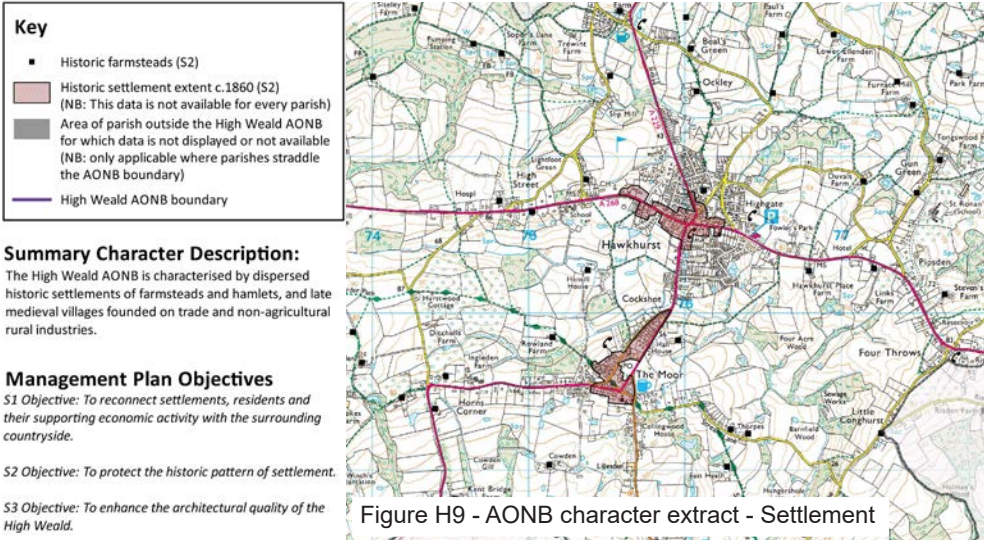
6.7.5 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 6.7.5.1 In February 2017 the council published the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of Countryside around Tunbridge Wells, produced by LUC. Figure H8 shows a plan extract from the study, which identifies the different Sub-Areas and associated sensitivity judgements for the parish.
- 6.7.5.2 Study Site HA 1 straddles Sensitivity Sub-Areas: Ha1 (south) and Bed1 (north) (see figure H8). Study site HA 4 lies within Sub-Area Ha5 and site HA 6 is located within Sub-Area Ha4. Study Sites HA 8 and HA 9 are located within the same Sensitivity Sub-Area: Bed1.
- 6.7.5.3 The table opposite provides extracts from the assessment, which have been collated into table format for ease of reference.
- 6.7.5.4 The HA 4 study site is located within a sensitivity sub-area (Ha5) that has been assessed as having a lower landscape sensitivity, than much of the rest of the landscape surrounding the village.

Study Site (s)	Sensitivity Sub-Area	Sensitivity rating	Sensitivity text
HA 1 (south)	Ha1	High / Medium High (small development)	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
HA 4	Ha5	Medium High (small development)	<p>This area is an important buffer between the settlement and the wider rural countryside and outlying rural settlements.</p> <p>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>
HA 6	Ha4	High / Medium High (small development)	<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.</p> <p>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>
HA 1 (north), HA 8 and HA 9	Bed1	High	<p>The overall sensitivity is identified as high, in recognition of the intact historic pattern, extensive ancient woodland and incised topography.</p> <p>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>

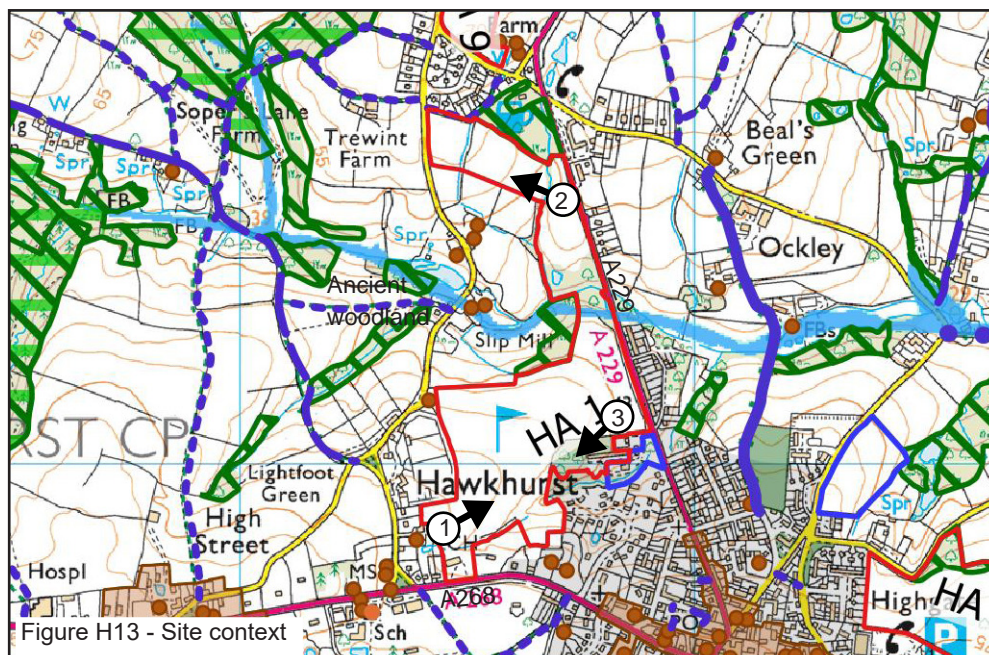
6.7.6 AONB Landscape Character Analysis

6.7.6.1 The High Weald AONB Unit has published a set of Landscape Character Plans for Hawkhurst Parish, which relate back to the 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 Figure H2.



Site : HA 1 - Land forming part of the Hawkhurst Golf Course to the north of the High Street;

Site : HA 1 - Land forming part of the Hawkhurst Golf Course to the north of the High Street;



Site location and context:

The site is located to the north-west of Hawkhurst and comprises Hawkhurst Golf Course. The entrance to the site and clubhouse are located on the A268 (High Street), to the south of the site. The site extends north, with the north-western boundary abutting the southern edge of Gills Green. The A229 Cranbrook Road, runs to the east of the site, adjacent to the eastern site boundary. Slip Mill Road is located to the west, but only abuts the site on the north-western boundary. The site is a typical golf course with expanses of amenity grassland broken up by tree groups and bunkers. It is contained by semi-natural tree belts, woodland and native hedgerows at the site boundaries. A stream divides the northern and southern part of the site and the northern part contains two further watercourses.

Designations and development considerations:

The site lies within the AONB and abuts two areas of Ancient Woodland. The site is divorced from the Conservation Area by existing settlement, however there are a number of listed buildings located to the south, west and north of the site. The landscape within the site forms part of the settlement separation between Hawkhurst and Gills Green. There is no public access within the site, however a public right of way is located just beyond the north-western site boundary. A band of Flood Zone 3 is associated with the central stream and the site is part of a biodiversity opportunity area.



Photograph 1: Panoramic view north to south across the site from the high point to the south-west of the site.



Photograph 2: View north-west from the north-eastern corner of the site.



Photograph 3: Looking at the south-eastern boundary 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 straddles two landscape character areas and lies adjacent to a third. The site contains some of the key characteristics of these areas, but is not representative of any of them.</p> <p>The site exhibits the complex landform that typifies the High Weald and the ghyll stream that divides the northern and southern parts of the site is a characteristic landscape feature. Other characteristic features are found at the site boundaries.</p> <p>The character within the site is typical of a golf course, with large areas of amenity grassland interspersed with mixed tree groupings. The land use is an anomaly within the wider rural landscape, however the site does have both physical and visual links to the wider landscape.</p> <p>The AONB landscape has a high landscape value, however susceptibility to the type of change proposed varies across the site. The southern part of the site fits with the existing settlement pattern, whereas the northern part is more divorced from settlement, retains a stronger field pattern and contributes to the separation between Hawkhurst (Highgate) and Gill's Green.</p> <p>Key landscape features within the site (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodland located at the edges of the site; • Other broadleaved tree belts - generally at the site boundary; • Intact native hedgerows with hedgerow trees; • Streams and waterbodies; • Mixed tree groups within the golf course; • Lines of single species trees; and • The golf course. 	<p>The site is very well contained from public viewpoints. There are occasional glimpsed views from the footpath to the north of the site (south of Gills Green), through the boundary hedgerow and trees. Motorists are only likely to experience transient glimpses of the site from adjacent roads. These views will reduce further in summer when trees and hedgerows are in leaf.</p> <p>There are distant views of the trees and vegetation within the site from local vantage points including the hill near Trenley Farm to the north-west of the site. Within these views the site is a small part of a panoramic view, within which the rooftops of properties within Hawkhurst are visible amongst the trees.</p> <p>There are limited views from the A229 Cranbrook Road, with the majority of views into the site screened by rising landform and vegetation. There are occasional glimpses of the northern part of the site from Slip Mill Road.</p> <p>There are glimpsed and partial views of the site from the site access to the south, however only the car park and clubhouse are visible within the view.</p> <p>There are open, partial and glimpsed views from local properties surrounding the site. These include properties on Cranbrook Road to the east, properties on Oakfield and the A268 to the south, along Slip Mill Road to the west and some limited views from Wellington Cottages to the north.</p> <p>Visual receptors (public views) to be considered (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers the public footpath adjacent to the northern site boundary; • Pedestrians on pavements lining local roads including the A229 and the A268; and • Motorists on local roads including the A229, the A268 and Slip Mill Road. 	<p>The site generally has an attractive and pleasant character of manicured greens and tree groupings. The landscape is well kept and generally in good condition. The perception of the site is highly influenced by its use as a golf course. The landscape pattern within the site is at odds with the wider landscape.</p> <p>The changes in topography and land cover create a complexity and visual interest within the landscape. There are long, framed views across the landscape from some of the high points within the site, which are contrasted by the containment of the steep valleys and lower land enclosed by tree belts.</p> <p>The site feels connected to the wider landscape but remains very different in character to the agricultural landscape that surrounds it. It has a relatively weak connection with settlement, particularly to the north and west. Dwellings are visible, but the existing settlement edges to Hawkhurst and Gill's Green are generally soft.</p> <p>The site was not in use at the time of the field survey (due to recent heavy rainfall), however it is anticipated that its use leads to a general feeling of activity. The A229 to the west of the site is a busy road.</p> <p>There are no known associations with people, places, events, art or literature.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The landform of the site is typical of the High Weald with ridges and steep valleys associated with streams.</p> <p>Settlement: The site lies close to the historic core of Highgate and there are several historic farmsteads within the vicinity of the site. Development within the southern part of the site would be consistent with the historic settlement character. Development of the whole site would be at odds with the existing settlement pattern and would erode the separation between Highgate and Gill's Green.</p> <p>Routeways: There are no routeways within the site. The A268 (to the south) and Slip Mill Road (to the west) are both mapped as historic routeways.</p> <p>Woodland: There are two copses of Ancient Woodland adjacent to the site, one to the north and one to the west of the stream that runs through the centre of the site. There are broadleaved tree belts at the site boundaries, particularly to the east.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site is not in agricultural use and the internal historic field boundaries have been lost. There are opportunities for improvement both in terms of field pattern and ecological function.</p> <p>Other qualities: The site has some of the perceptual qualities that people value, however there are opportunities to improve the character and accessibility of the site.</p> <p>Summary: The site does contain some of the character components of the High Weald, particularly with respect to landform and water systems. The central part of the site, to either side of the watercourse (and adjacent to Ancient Woodland) has a high contribution towards the AONB. The golf course itself is not typical of the High Weald landscape and is at odds with some of the surrounding countryside. There is potential to enhance the site in order to introduce more typical characteristics of the AONB landscape.</p>

Proposals:

Site : HA 1

Figure H14: Allocation proposal (From policy)

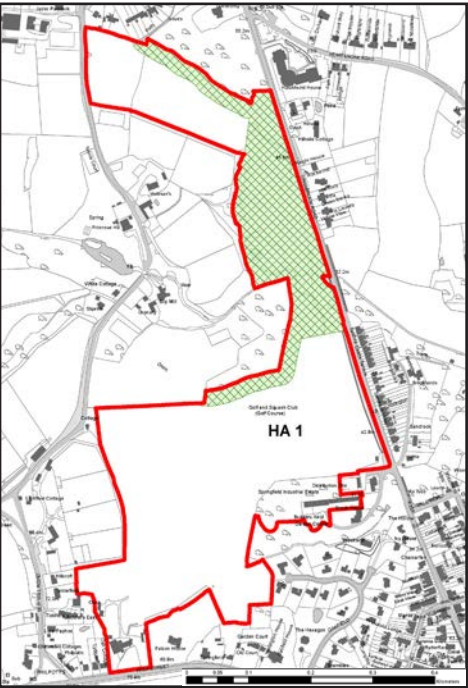
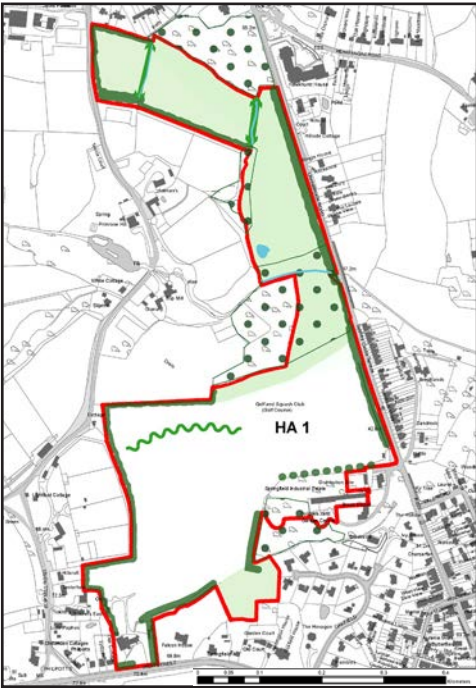


Figure H15: Strategic Green Infrastructure



KEY

- Existing GI retained
- Proposed public open space
- Proposed landscape buffer
- Existing / proposed parkland / woodland
- Proposed landscape feature / connection

Description of proposed development:

A proposed residential development of between 400 and 450 dwellings. To include a relief road and a community centre with associated parking.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/HA 1.	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
No buildings to be located within the open space and landscape buffer (Allocation Proposal).	Retain the northern part of the site as open space. Provide landscape and biodiversity enhancements within this area.
An overarching masterplan for the site, including the provision of the relief road and pedestrian permeability (Policy).	Retention and protection of key landscape features within the site, including woodland, waterbodies and tree belts.
Provision of a pedestrian / cycle link to Gill's Green (Policy).	Where possible retain internal trees.
Demonstration of biodiversity net gain and contribution towards Biodiversity Opportunity Area targets (Policy).	Introduce additional screening on the high ground of the site.
Provision of: a community facility, allotments, amenity / natural green space, parks and recreation including children and youth play (Policy).	Propose controls on external lighting within the open space and landscape buffer.
Demonstration that the development would not harm local heritage assets (Policy).	

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

There are a number of opportunities to improve recreational facilities and enhance landscape character within the site. These include:

- New footpath links and access for informal recreation;
- Reinstatement of historic field boundaries and characteristic woodland to the north of the site;
- Improvements to biodiversity, including improved habitat connectivity and the creation of new complementary habitats; and
- Opportunities for formal recreation and community facilities within the development.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/HA 1, the site analysis plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>The retention of the Ancient Woodland buffers, woodland edges and central stream within open space, protects the areas of the site with the highest contribution to landscape character.</p> <p>Development within the north-western part of the site is likely to have adverse effects on landscape character and the separation between settlement. It may also result in feature loss, through the provision of vehicular access.</p> <p>There would be measurable adverse effects within the proposed development area to the south, however these effects have the potential to be moderated by the retention of key landscape features within the site and enhancements within the retained open space. The proposals on the high ground within the site would need to be carefully designed and screened in order to prevent adverse effects on the wider landscape.</p> <p>Predicted effects on landscape features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodland - retained and protected; • Other broadleaved tree belts - some retained within open space, however potential for substantial loss elsewhere, particularly through a vehicular access onto the A229; • Intact native hedgerows with hedgerow trees - potential for loss; • Streams and waterbodies - streams retained, however north-western ditch may be lost; • Mixed tree groups within the golf course - potential for loss; • Lines of single species trees - potential for loss; and • The golf course - the majority would be lost to the development. <p>The effects on recreation are likely to be positive as there is currently no public access within the site.</p>	<p>The visibility of the proposed draft allocation will largely be dependent on the sensitivity of the design. Predicted visual effects would be higher if they include the removal of boundary vegetation and internal features, with no replacement planting.</p> <p>Visual effects would be lower if the proposals continue to be contained within the strong existing landscape structure and include additional planting within the development to break up distant views.</p> <p>Public viewpoint locations that are likely experience changes within the view include the A229 Cranbrook Road (depending on the access proposals for the relief road) and distant views from local vantage points. The retention of existing boundary trees and additional tree planting as part of the proposals would be key to mitigating visual effects from these locations.</p> <p>Providing that the existing boundary vegetation is retained there are unlikely to be significant adverse visual effects from the footpath to the north of the site (south of Gills Green), Slip Mill Road or the A268.</p> <p>Private views: There are likely to be open, partial and glimpsed views of the proposed development from properties surrounding the site.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: It would be possible to provide the allocated development without adverse effects on this character component. The steepest slopes within the site and the stream are protected within open space.</p> <p>Settlement: Development within the southern part of the site would fit in with the existing settlement pattern, whereas development in the north-western part of the site would adversely affect the settlement pattern of Gill's Green.</p> <p>Routeways: Development within the site, is unlikely to cause adverse effects on the A268. A new vehicular access onto Slip Mill Road could harm the character of this routeway.</p> <p>Woodland: It would be possible to provide the allocated development without adverse effects on this character component, however the proposals (both in terms of buildings and infrastructure) could have adverse effects on the tree belts at the site boundaries. There are opportunities to enhance this component within the proposed open space. The Ancient Woodland adjacent to the site is unlikely to be adversely affected.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The proposed draft allocation would not remove any land from agricultural use and is unlikely to adversely affect existing field pattern, however there are opportunities to enhance this component within the proposed open space.</p> <p>Other qualities: The proposed development has the potential to both harm and enhance the High Weald AONB. It has the potential to open up access to new areas of the High Weald and improve opportunities for recreation. In contrast, the proposed draft allocation could harm the character and appearance of the AONB, adversely affect settlement pattern and settlement separation (particularly to the north) and could also increase activity and noise, which would reduce the peaceful character of parts of the study area.</p>	<p>Retention of the northern part of the site would enable the retention of key landscape features, protect adjacent Ancient Woodland and would maintain the settlement separation between Gill's Green and Hawkhurst. It would also provide considerable opportunity for enhancement in terms of biodiversity and informal recreation.</p> <p>The northern areas of grassland could be managed / re-seeded to create species rich grassland or meadow. Historic field boundaries could be re-introduced to enhance local landscape character and provide habitat connectivity. An area of new woodland could be re-created within the centre of the site, on the steep valley sides of the existing stream.</p> <p>There is the opportunity to enhance public access as part of public open space provision, providing new informal routes around the proposed open space.</p> <p>The retention of existing boundary trees and hedgerows would help to mitigate the predicted visual effects of the proposals. The proposed additional buffer planting on the high ground within the site would allow the proposed development to blend into the existing landscape.</p> <p>These measures would protect the areas which contribute most to the character and appearance of the AONB and would provide scope for significant landscape enhancements within the northern part of the site. The additional measures would reduce feature loss within the site and protect the visual amenity from publicly accessible viewpoint locations. Carefully planned and designed development would reduce the potential adverse effects on the character of the southern part of the site.</p>

Conclusions:

The site consists of a golf course and club house, which is dominated by amenity grassland and groups of amenity trees. There are semi-natural tree belts at the site boundaries along with intact native hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The site has an undulating landform, which affords long views to the north and west from the high ground. A stream runs through the centre of the site within a steeply sided valley.

The site straddles two landscape character areas and two associated sensitivity sub-areas identified within the sensitivity study carried out by LUC. Both areas have been assessed as having a high sensitivity to new development, however the southern part of the site covers an area adjacent to the settlement edge, within a golf course, which was recognized as having a lower sensitivity than the remainder of the sensitivity sub-area.

There is the potential for sensitive development within the site, following the principles set out within the allocation policy, but with the removal of the northern area of development, adjacent to Gill's Green. This extension of open space would protect the separation between settlement and would protect the character of the routeway which runs along Slip Mill Road. The development should be focussed within the southern part of the site, where the sensitivity to new development is lowest and the proposed dwellings would fit the existing settlement pattern. This change to the proposed allocation would need to be balanced against the viability of the site.

The proposed relief road has the potential to cause significant landscape and visual effects, particularly at the access onto the A229, where there is the potential for substantial regrading and feature loss. The site should only be allocated if the access onto the A229 can be designed without substantial effects on landscape features or the introduction of a large and engineered junction at a rural edge location within the village.

The additional mitigation measures outlined within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan, build upon those already proposed within the allocation policy and plan, in order to minimise the potential adverse effects of the proposed allocation. The proposed open space would allow the retention, protection and enhancement of the areas of the site which have the highest contribution to the character and appearance of the AONB. The key components of character outlined for the High Weald would be protected, where present. There is scope within the proposals for considerable enhancement to the AONB landscape within the northern part of the site, along with new recreational opportunities. There is scope to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity between Hawkhurst and Gill's Green.

Providing that an acceptable vehicular access onto the A229 can be developed, the allocation

of the southern part of the site in conjunction with the proposed mitigation, could be achieved without long-term residual significant landscape or visual effects (from publicly accessible viewpoints). It is likely that the housing numbers proposed within the site would need to be reduced in order to reflect the removal of the northern development area from the allocation.

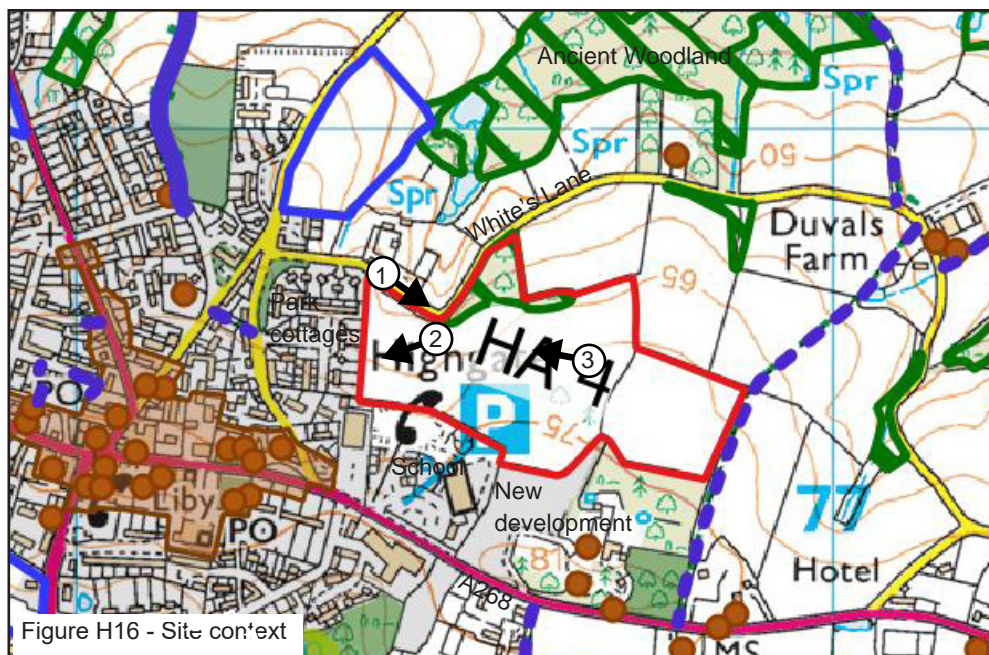
Hawkhurst has a made Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed allocation should be considered as part of any development within the site.

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

- Include wording restricting built development, road infrastructure and external lighting within the proposed open space and landscape buffer;
- Seek a requirement for a detailed access design for the vehicular junction onto the A229. The design should include tree survey data, proposed changes in level and visibility splays and should clearly identify and feature loss and subsequent mitigation planting.
- Provision of a long-term maintenance plan for the open space within the site; and
- Include a requirement for an LVIA as part of the application, to inform the masterplan for the site.

Site : HA 4 - Land at Fowlers Park ;

Site : HA 4 - Land at Fowlers Park ;



Site location and context:

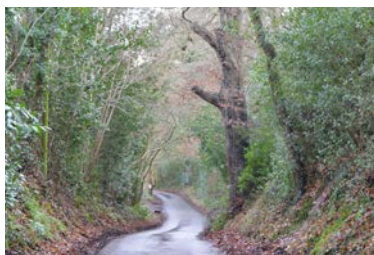
The site is located to the north-east of Hawkhurst, between the A268 (to the south and White's Lane (to the north). Hawkhurst Primary School and a supermarket lie to the south-west, and Park cottages lie to the west of the site. The eastern and north-eastern boundaries are bound by hedgerows, with fields in pasture beyond.

The site consists of two medium sized fields in pasture, bound by hedgerows and tree belts, both containing isolated mature specimen trees. The boundary between the two fields is defunct and some of the northern boundary hedgerows are in decline. The site sits on a north-facing slope, with long views out from the high ground across the rural landscape to the north.

Designations and development considerations:

The site lies within the AONB and contains a small copse of Ancient Woodland (Fowlers Park Wood) adjacent to the northern boundary. Some of the mature trees are protected by TPO's. The site forms part of the separation between Hawkhurst and Gun Green. Part of Fowlers Wood (to the south-east of the site) is designated Local greenspace. A footpath runs adjacent to the eastern site boundary.

Development of within the site has the potential to affect the following valued elements: existing woodland (also valued within the Neighbourhood Plan) and long views out to the north.



Photograph 1: White's Lane



Photograph 2: View west from the low ground on the northern edge of the site



Photograph 3: Looking west from the centre 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 displays a number of the key characteristics of the wider landscape character area, with respect to topography, woodland cover, presence of rural lanes and ridgetop settlement.</p> <p>The western part of the site is located on lower ground, with strong influences from adjacent settlement. To the east, the character of the site becomes more rural, with both physical and visual links to the wider landscape.</p> <p>There is a gradation in susceptibility across the site, with the eastern field and high ground to the south-east being more susceptible to change than the land to the west.</p> <p>Key landscape features (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small copse of Ancient Woodland in the northern corner of the site. • Mature specimen trees within the site (subject to TPO); • Woodland at the south-eastern site boundary; • Tree belts at the northern, eastern and southern site boundaries; and • Boundary hedgerows, which vary in intactness and condition. <p>There is some variation across the site in terms of condition and intactness of boundary features, with some features, particularly the tree belts, having a high contribution to site character, whereas some of the northern hedgerows and the assortment of western boundary types have scope for enhancement.</p> <p>There is evidence that the site is used for informal recreation, as an unofficial link between the footpath to the east and White's Lane.</p>	<p>A footpath runs adjacent to the eastern site boundary. Boundary trees and associated understorey vegetation reduces views to glimpses for the stretch of path adjacent to the boundary, however there open views into the eastern part of the site through the field gate to the north-east of the site. On the northern stretch of the path, between the site and Duvals Farm, the high ground to the east of the site can be seen over boundary vegetation, with woodland forming the background to the view.</p> <p>There are occasional glimpses of the site from White's Lane, however the tree belts lining the lane screen the majority of these views. There are also glimpsed views of the site seen from the residential streets to the west (Park Cottages) and from the newly completed development (Birchfield Grove) to the south of the site. Within these views the site is seen in the context of existing houses.</p> <p>The site, particularly the eastern field, is visible from the high ground of distant footpaths and rural roads located to the north of the site. Within these views the boundary trees and hedges of the site are visible, along with the high ground of the site. The western part of the site is seen in the context of the existing settlement of Hawkhurst.</p> <p>Private views: There are open, partial and glimpsed views of the site from adjacent properties to the south and west. There are also distant partial and glimpsed views from properties located in the surrounding landscape.</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 to the east of the site; • People using White's Lane; • Walkers and Motorists on distant footpaths and rural lanes; and • Walkers and Motorists on nearby residential streets. 	<p>The long views north available from the high ground within the site are panoramic, attractive and provide visual interest. Within the western part of the site these views are screened by the woodland to the north and the housing to the west.</p> <p>The lower ground within the site feels more enclosed.</p> <p>The undulating topography, changes in outlook and boundary features provide variety across the site.</p> <p>The site generally has a smooth internal texture, punctuated by the individual specimen trees to the west. The edges of the site and the borrowed landscape to the north of the site provide additional texture and variety.</p> <p>The site is generally more active to the west and more peaceful to the east. There is evidence that the site is used for recreation, despite the lack of public access.</p> <p>The site consists of a pleasant landscape which is accentuated by the visual connection with the wider landscape available the high ground and eastern part of the site.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site is located on the north-facing slopes of a sandstone ridge, however no rock was visible at the time of the field survey. There are no water features associated with the site.</p> <p>Settlement: The western part of the site has a strong relationship to Hawkhurst and development of this part of the site would be consistent with the existing settlement pattern. The site has some contribution to the connection to the wider countryside from the eastern edge of Hawkhurst.</p> <p>Routeways: White's Lane and the footpath to the east of the site are both mapped as historic routeways within the AONB database and have the potential to be influenced by development within the allocation. White's Lane has the characteristic tree-lined and enclosed character associated with the routeways.</p> <p>Woodland: There is a small copse of Ancient Woodland within the northern corner of the site. The woodland within the site does not have public access. An area of woodland abuts the site to the south-east, which has a footpath running through it. There are also native tree belts at some of the site boundaries.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The land within the site is in agricultural use. The eastern field has been mapped as having historic field boundaries, however the site has a stronger historic association with parkland. The desk top analysis has identified the northern woodland as being a priority habitat.</p> <p>Other qualities: There are opportunities to increase the appreciation of the AONB and provide additional educational resource through improved access into the AONB from the adjacent school and residential area. The site contains some of the perceptual values that people value, including attractive views and woodland.</p> <p>Summary: The eastern part of the site is representative of the AONB. The western part of the site still has many of the qualities associated with the AONB, but has stronger connections to existing settlement. There are opportunities to enhance the condition and intactness of landscape features (particularly hedgerows) within the site. There are also opportunities to improve recreational connectivity through the site.</p>

Figure H17: Allocation proposal (From policy)

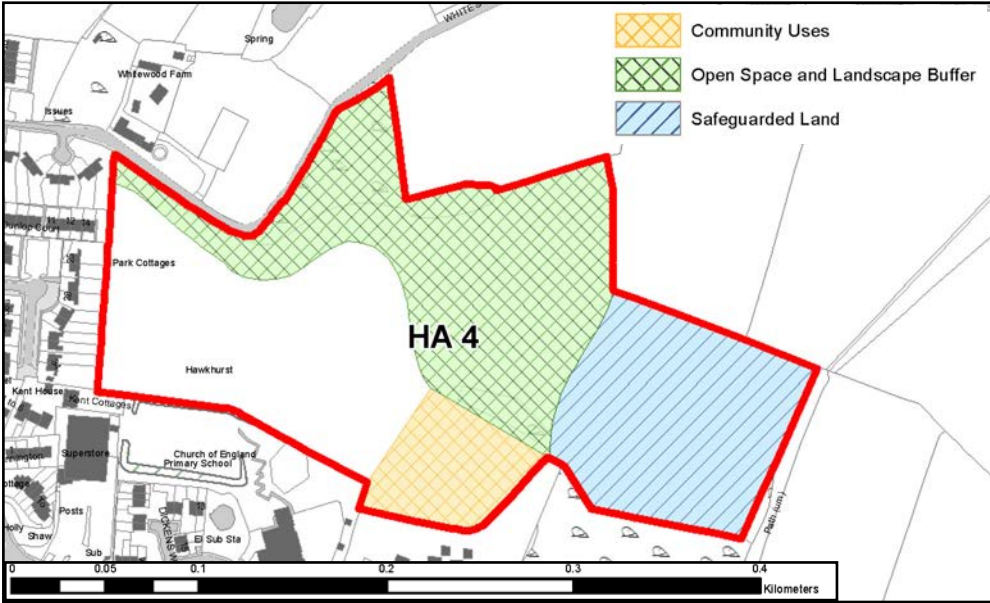
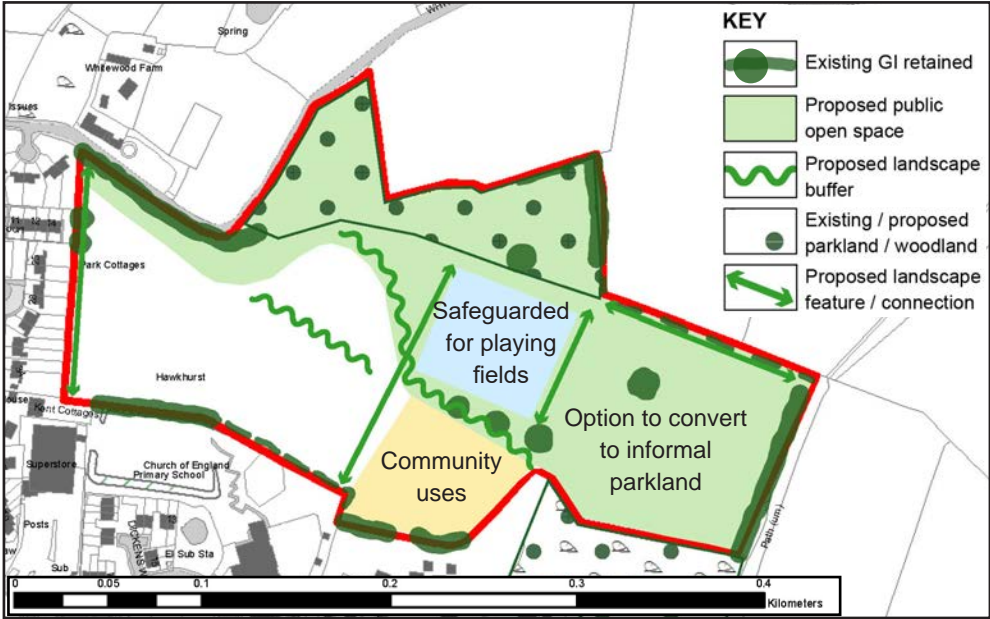


Figure H18: Strategic Green Infrastructure



Description of proposed development:

A residential development of ~100 units, a medical centre or community facility (location identified as a yellow hatch) with associated parking, and an area of land (shown in blue) for relocation of school playing pitches.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/HA 4 and associated proposal plan	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Retention of the northern part of the northern part of the site as open space / landscape buffer. The open space provides a minimum of a 15m buffer to the Ancient Woodland. Retain the eastern field as safeguarded land for the relocation of school playing pitches (Allocation Plan).	Review the proposed locations and specification of open space and safeguarded land in order to protect the landscape character sensitivity of the land to the east of the site.
Vehicular access to be taken from Birchfield Grove, with no vehicular access (except for emergency vehicles) permitted from White's Lane(Policy).	Provide new structural planting within strategic locations within the open space to the south of the site, to enclose the proposed development, whilst retaining some of the long views to the north.
To have regard for and respond to Ancient Woodland, TPO trees, other mature trees and existing hedges within the site (Policy).	Extend the existing woodland copse and re-instate the historic field boundary between the eastern and western fields.
Provision of a 'green route' between the existing primary school and the safeguarded land (Policy).	
Provision of on-site allotments, amenity / natural green space and children's / youth play space (Policy).	

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

The proposed combination of open space and safeguarded land to the east of the site would maintain a soft transition from the edge of the village to the wider rural landscape. New tree and hedgerow planting could be implemented, which would provide additional screening of the development and biodiversity enhancements. The tree planting could be designed to maintain vistas to the north, retaining some of the attractive existing views. The surface water drainage solutions required for the development, offer an opportunity to create new complementary spaces and habitats.

There is the opportunity to provide pedestrian connections through the site, from White's Lane to the public right of way located to the east of the site. There are also opportunities to improve recreation and community involvement within the AONB.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/HA 4, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>The draft allocation proposes development on the south-western part of the site, which would retain the higher sensitivity areas of the site to the east and north as open space land uses. Development on the south-western part of the site would fit in with the ridgetop settlement pattern of the 'Hawkhurst Wooded Farmland' Character Area, whereas the introduction of development to the east would be inconsistent. The placement of public open space provides the opportunity to retain and enhance boundary features within the site and to protect the character of White's Lane to the north.</p> <p>The eastern field is safeguarded for future recreation provision for the nearby primary school. This land has a strong relationship with the wider rural landscape and features associated with formal playing fields, particularly external lighting, have the potential to have adverse effects on the surrounding landscape</p> <p>Within the site there would be a change in character, with existing paddocks being replaced by development and open space. The scale and nature of the effects expected by the proposed development would be subject to detailed design. A poor design, with a hard edge would be more harmful to the AONB than a sensitively designed development which provides a new soft edge to the village.</p> <p>The allocation plan and draft policies provide scope to retain all key landscape features within the site including the Ancient Woodland, trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>The effects on recreation within the site are likely to be positive and the proposed connections between the village and existing rights of way would be beneficial to the local community.</p>	<p>The visibility of development within the proposed allocation site would vary with design. In a worst-case scenario, the proposed development would be a noticeable change in character from distant viewpoint locations. A sensitively designed scheme could result in long-term improvements to the perceived village edge from locations to the north and east.</p> <p>There would be limited views of the safeguarded land within the site from the short stretch of footpath to the south-east of the site, with occasional glimpses of development beyond. Boundary trees and associated understorey vegetation would continue to screen most views for the stretch of path adjacent to the boundary. On the northern stretch of the path, between the site and Duvals Farm, the high ground to the east of the site would continue to be seen over boundary vegetation, however the change to the view is unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>There would be occasional glimpses of the proposed housing from White's Lane, however the changes proposed are consistent with baseline views.</p> <p>There would be glimpsed views of new dwellings, seen in the context of existing houses, from the residential streets to the west (Park Cottages) and from Birchfield Grove to the south of the site.</p> <p>Private views: There would be open, partial and glimpsed views of the allocation development from the adjacent properties to the south and west (private views). There would be distant partial and glimpsed views of the proposals from properties located in the surrounding landscape.</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 the scope of this assessment.</p> <p>Settlement: The proposals are in keeping with the existing settlement pattern and sensitive development on the western part of the site would only affect the connection to the countryside for a limited number of residents within Hawkhurst.</p> <p>Routeways: The proposed allocation sets development back from the routeway (White's Lane) located to the north of the site, which could maintain the rural outlook and views experienced from the lane. Insensitive development could adversely affect the wider visual setting of the routeway.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland, and there is the potential for improved access to woodland.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The proposals involve the loss of two fields in pasture. The integrity of the eastern field could be retained through it's safeguarded use as playing fields. The opportunity exists to re-instate the field boundary to the west of the eastern field.</p> <p>Other qualities: The proposed development has the potential to provide access to new areas of the High Weald. There are opportunities to improve recreation and community involvement within the AONB. Any external lighting within the land safeguarded for use as school playing fields would have adverse effects on the dark night skies of the AONB.</p>	<p>The proposed open space buffer to the north of the site, would allow the retention and protection of the existing Ancient Woodland and tree belt lining the routeway: White's Lane. There are opportunities to improve both features and to enhance woodland connectivity across the northern part of the site.</p> <p>The retention of the existing hedgerows and tree belts would conserve the historic field pattern, maintain habitat connectivity and would break up the visual massing of the proposed development. The proposed GI plan sets out the opportunity to reinstate the historic western boundary to the eastern field and to enhance the condition of existing boundaries with new planting and improved maintenance.</p> <p>The GI proposals also seek to switch the locations of the safeguarded playing field land and open space. This rearrangement would contain the urban edge land-uses, leaving the eastern field of the site with a more rural character, which would reduce the potential effects of the development on the wider landscape. This proposal is subject to more detailed levels information for the site. If the safeguarded land stays in the position shown in the draft allocation, it is recommended that a corridor of open space is maintained to the north to allow both habitat and pedestrian connectivity. It is recommended that the playing fields are not lit.</p> <p>The proposed allocation would round off the existing edge to Hawkhurst and in tandem would provide opportunities to create new recreational routes and facilities. The quantum of open space proposed would provide opportunities for enhancement within the site, which would benefit the AONB.</p> <p>These measures would reduce predicted effects on the amenity of the existing routeway, local views and the character of the site and wider landscape.</p>

Conclusions:

The site is located on the south-eastern edge of Hawkhurst and consists of two fields in pasture with a small copse of Ancient Woodland to the north. The site has a tangible increase in rurality from west to east. The eastern field is wholly rural in character with a strong connection to the wider landscape. The western part of the site has a stronger association with existing settlement. The Ancient Woodland and intact site boundaries are highly sensitive landscape features, which should be retained and enhanced.

There are some long views to the north from the higher ground at the south of the site, however views into the site from the wider landscape are seen in the context of existing settlement. There are opportunities to enhance the character components of the AONB through the implementation of new woodland planting and additional parkland trees and by restoring existing hedgerow boundaries.

The sensitivity study carried out by LUC concluded that there was some scope for development on the existing settlement edge, providing that the wooded setting to the village was maintained. The assessment of sensitivity for the assessment-area that the site sits within is lower than the other assessment areas surrounding Hawkhurst.

Hawkhurst has a made Neighbourhood Plan and policies within this should be considered as part of any development of the site.

The design of the proposed development will be critical for the acceptability the proposed allocation site as the site (and surrounding settlement) sit on a local ridge and therefore is likely to be visible from the surrounding landscape. The scheme should be compatible with the existing settlement pattern and should include a soft edge to break up the massing of the proposals. The proposed mitigation measures should be considered if development is to be accommodated, without significant harm to the landscape within the site or to the character and appearance of the wider AONB

Key landscape features within the site could be retained and there is sufficient space within the proposed open space to the north of the site, to introduce characteristic new features, and provide ecological enhancements to existing features, including the tree belt lining the routeway; White's Lane. The proposed housing within the allocation could designed to be in keeping with existing views over the settlement.

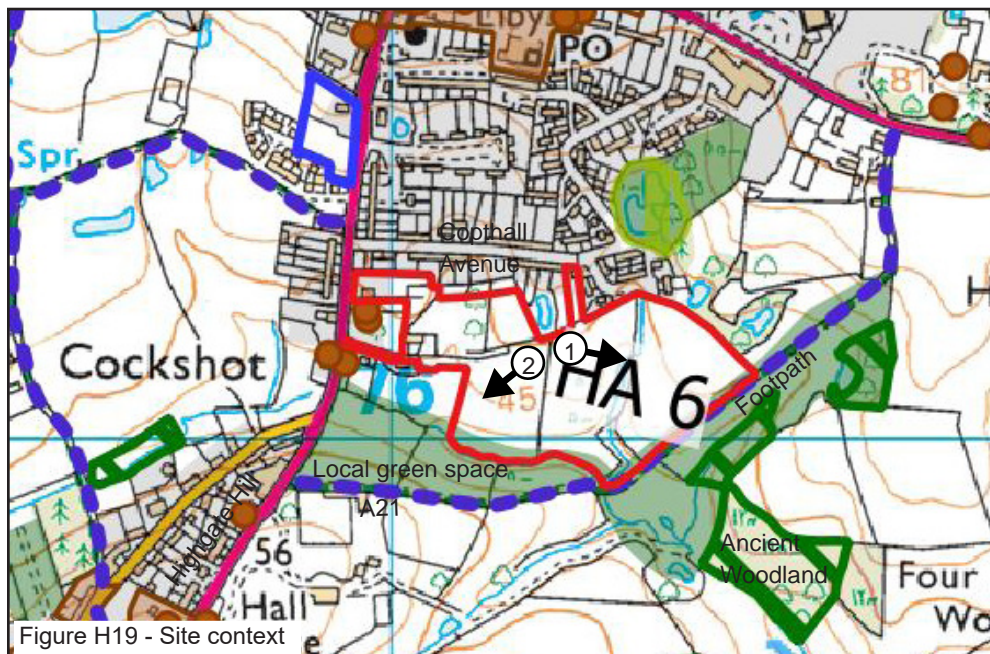
Policy recommendations for the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Local Plan include:

- Include a requirement for heights parameters as part of any planning application, particularly on the high ground to the south of the site.

- Photomontage visualisations to be provided from a selected number of key viewpoints as part of the prescribed LVIA in order to demonstrate that the proposals fit in with the settlement pattern of Hawkhurst and don't damage long-range views of the village.
- Place restrictions on external lighting within the proposed open space and safeguarded land.

Site : HA 6 - Land off Copthall Avenue and Highgate Hill ;

Site : HA 6 - Land off Copthall Avenue and Highgate Hill ;



Site location and context:

The site is located on the southern edge of Hawkhurst, to the north of The Moor. The northern boundary abuts the housing to the south of Copthall Avenue, with access onto Highgate Hill, and the southern boundary is formed by a steeply-sided ghyll stream. The western-most boundary links to Highgate Hill.

The site consists of five small fields in pasture / paddocks, bound by thick hedgerows and tree belts but also contains residential properties and gardens and a barn to the west. There are two small blocks of woodland within the site. A pond lies within the south-western copse of woodland and a tree belt and ditch separate the eastern field from the remainder of the site. Trees line the ghyll stream to the south.

Designations and development considerations:

The site lies within the AONB with listed buildings located to the west of the site, along Highgate Hill. A copse of Ancient Woodland lies to the south-east of the site at Four Acre Wood. The land to the south and east of the site is designated Local green space, known locally as 'Little Switzerland' (Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan). A footpath passes through the Local green space, to the south of the site at the opposite side of the valley, and to the east, adjacent to the eastern boundary hedgerow. The site forms part of the separation between Hawkhurst (Highgate) and The Moor.



Photograph 1: View east across the site from the high ground on the north-eastern edge of the site.



Photograph 2: Looking south-west towards The Moor, from the northern boundary of the south-western field 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 is typical of the 'Hawkhurst Wooded Farmland' Character Area, comprising small scale, geometric fields at the edge of settlement with strong field boundaries and a wooded ghyll stream to the south. The landform within the site is typical of the High Weald.</p> <p>The southern and eastern parts of the site have a strong rural character, whereas the northern and western areas have stronger associations with the settlement edge of Hawkhurst.</p> <p>The site has some relationship with the wider landscape, however the strong vegetated boundaries are containing features.</p> <p>Landscape features are associated with field boundaries and are generally intact, however they would benefit from improved management in order to maintain their condition. The site is currently under-managed and the eastern field is currently fallow, with rough grass and emerging scrub present.</p> <p>Telegraph poles and lines cross the site and are detracting features.</p> <p>Key landscape features (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small copses of woodland within the site; • Ghyll stream and associated woodland on the southern site boundary; • Pond and ditches within the site, with associated tree cover; • Intact native hedgerows; • Mature individual trees; and • Fields in pasture. 	<p>The site is generally well contained from publicly accessible viewpoints.</p> <p>There are intermittent winter views from the footpath to the south of the site, glimpsed through the trees lining the stream at the southern site boundary.</p> <p>There are partial views of the eastern field from the section of the footpath located on the high ground to the north-east of the site. The eastern boundary hedgerow is dense and blocks views of the site from the section of path adjacent to the boundary.</p> <p>There are partial views into the eastern field from sections of All Saints Road and Fieldways, which are residential streets to the north of the site. The site forms the background to the view, framed by trees and woodland, with housing in the foreground. There are also glimpsed views of the central southern field from Fieldways, over the northern hedgerow boundary. There are intermittent glimpses of the south-western field within the site from Highgate Hill.</p> <p>The lanes to the south and east of the site have intermittent distant glimpsed views of the site through gaps in the roadside vegetation and intervening trees. The site is seen in the context of existing settlement at Hawkhurst and The Moor.</p> <p>Private views: there are open, partial and glimpsed views from adjacent properties, filtered and screened by the northern boundary hedgerows and trees.</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 that passes to the south and east of the site; • Walkers and Motorists using All Saints Road; • Walkers and Motorists Fieldways; • Walkers and Motorists using Highgate Hill; and • Motorists using the lanes to the south and east of the site. 	<p>The site is pleasant and rural in character, with intermittent picturesque views are available from the high ground to the north of the site. The historic field pattern remains visible within the landscape.</p> <p>The site is small scale and intimate. The small northern fields are enclosed and have a physical and visual relationship with adjacent settlement. The southern fields are semi-enclosed, with the sense of enclosure increasing on the lower ground to the south of the site. The site does not feel isolated.</p> <p>The southern fields in particular have a rough texture and slightly unkempt appearance associated with the lack of visible management.</p> <p>The undulating topography adds visual interest, however the site does not have the dramatic scenic quality of other parts of the High Weald.</p> <p>The site is peaceful and aside from the telegraph lines crossing the site, there are no other detracting features associated with the site.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site is located the south-facing slopes connecting the ridge-top to the ghyll stream located at the southern site boundary. A further ditch and pond are located within the site.</p> <p>Settlement: The northern and western parts of the site are associated with existing settlement. This settlement consists of historic buildings lining Highgate Hill to the west and more modern and suburban housing to the north. The site forms part of the sense of connection between the village and the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Routeways: The road; Highgate Hill is mapped as a historic routeway. There are no other routeways that have the potential to be influenced by changes within the site.</p> <p>Woodland: There are a number of small copses and tree belts within the site, however the site does not currently contribute to woodland accessibility. There is no Ancient Woodland that could be affected by development within the site.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site is formed of small and regular fields in pasture bound by hedgerows and trees. The field pattern of the southern fields has some time depth. Some of the fields are unmanaged and show little recent evidence of grazing or cutting.</p> <p>Other qualities: The site contains a number of perceptual qualities associated with the High Weald. The lack of access and intervisibility with the site (from publicly accessible viewpoints) means that these qualities are not currently able to be appreciated by the public.</p> <p>Summary: Parts of the site are highly representative of the AONB. The northern and western parts of the site have stronger associations with settlement than the southern and eastern areas. The condition of the site could be improved.</p>

Figure H20: Allocation proposal (From policy)

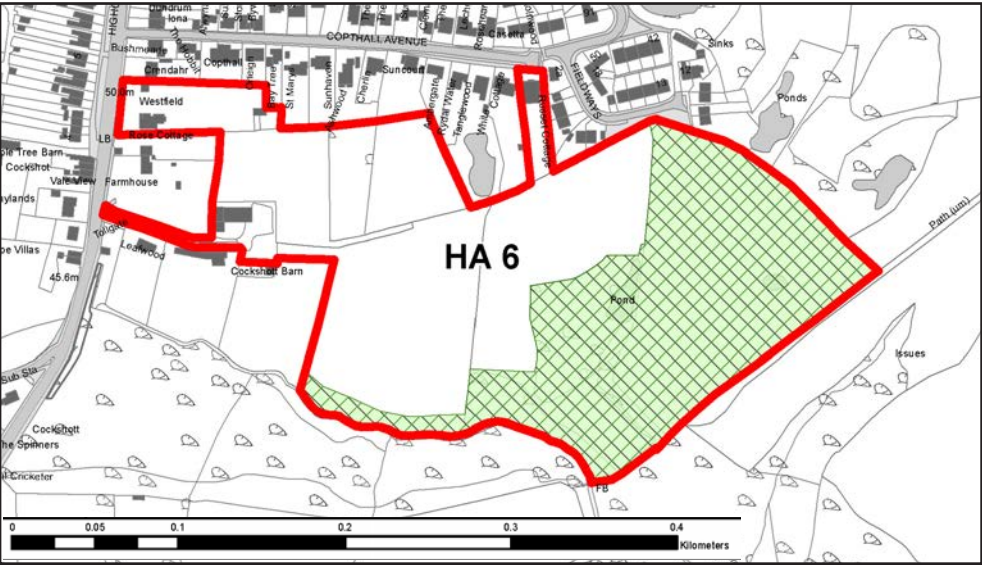
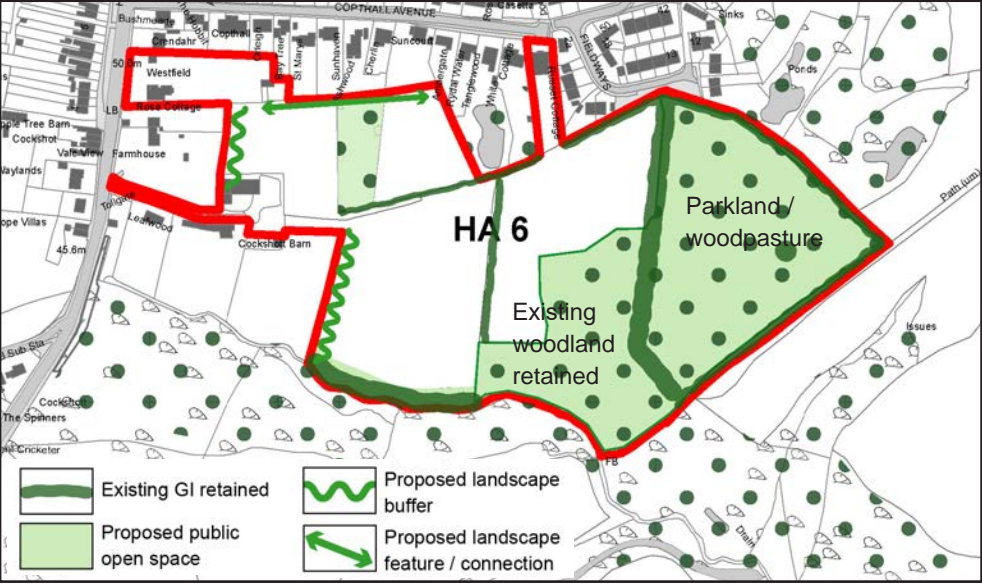


Figure H21: Strategic Green Infrastructure



Description of proposed development:

A residential development of 70-79 homes and extensive areas of open space.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/HA 6 and associated proposal plan	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Retention of the eastern field, southern tree belt and south-eastern woodland within public open space (Allocation Plan).	Retain the eastern field as informal open space, managed to enhance biodiversity.
Access to be taken from Highgate Hill, with emergency access from Copthall Road (Policy).	Introduce new structural planting at the western boundary.
To have regard for mature trees, particularly TPO trees) and existing hedges within the site (Policy).	Retain and enhance existing features within the site including the block of woodland to the north and internal hedgerows.
To include a high quality and sensitive design for development, which considers it's edge of settlement location and protects the significance of local listed buildings (Policy).	Provision of new links through the site, connecting to the existing right of way.
Provision of on-site allotments amenity / natural green space and children's play space, including informal open space within the eastern part of the site (Policy).	Provide a long term maintenance and management plan for the site, which would maintain the quality and condition of the AONB.

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

The large area of open space to the east provides the opportunity to retain key characteristics and features, whilst providing new complementary features. New tree planting could be implemented within the eastern field, which would provide improved woodland connectivity across the site and associated biodiversity enhancements. This would also provide additional screening of the development from the west, maintaining a soft edge to the village.

The open space would provide new recreational opportunities within the site, including potential pedestrian connections through the site to the Local green space and public right of way located to the east of the site.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/HA 6, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>The site is well contained and the most rural areas are proposed for protection within the open space defined by the allocation plan. The proposed housing is located in the part of the site that has the strongest associations with the existing settlement pattern.</p> <p>The retention of the southern and eastern parts of the site within open space reduces the potential effects on the wider landscape, outside the site and protects the character of the adjacent Local greenspace to the east and south.</p> <p>There would be some adverse effects on the separation between Hawkhurst (Highgate) and The Moor, however this is limited. The proposed development would not affect the narrowest part of the existing gap and the new settlement edge would remain physically contained by existing landscape features.</p> <p>Within the site the change in character would be noticeable; with existing fields in pasture being replaced by development and open space. The effects on the landscape character within the site have the potential to be significant without careful design.</p> <p>Predicted effects on landscape features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small copses of woodland - the south-eastern copse would be retained within open space. There is potential for loss within the northern woodland; • Ghyll stream and associated woodland on the southern site boundary - retained; • Pond and ditches within the site, with associated tree cover - retained; • Hedgerows - potential for loss within development area; • Mature individual trees - potential for no adverse effects; and • Fields in pasture - lost to the development. <p>The effects on recreation within the site are likely to be positive, with opportunities for new recreational provision and connections.</p>	<p>The site would continue to be generally well contained from publicly accessible viewpoints.</p> <p>There would be intermittent winter views of the proposed housing from the footpath to the south of the site, glimpsed through the trees lining the stream at the southern site boundary.</p> <p>There would be partial views of the eastern field from the section of the footpath located on the high ground to the north-east of the site. This area of the site would be retained as open space, so the change to the view is unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>There would continue to be partial views of the eastern field from sections of All Saints Road and Fieldways. This area of the site would be retained as open space, so the change to the view is unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>There would be glimpsed views of the proposed dwellings from Fieldways and Highgate Hill, which would be limited in extent and consistent with the existing views of housing experienced from these locations.</p> <p>There would be limited distant glimpsed views of the proposed development from sections of the lanes to the south and east of the site. The changes to the view are unlikely to be significant, providing that the proposals are sensitively designed.</p> <p>There would be open, partial and glimpsed views of the allocation development from the properties at the northern and north-western site boundaries (private views).</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: Existing water features are located within open space, with the potential for retention and enhancement. The proposed housing allocation would need to be carefully designed to avoid adverse effects on landform.</p> <p>Settlement: The proposals are in keeping with the existing settlement pattern and sensitive development would only affect the connection to the countryside for a limited number of residents within Hawkhurst.</p> <p>Routeways: The only mapped routeway with potential to be affected by the site is Highgate Hill. This road already contains housing development and would only be adversely affected if the site access was poorly designed.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland, however there is the potential for tree loss within the site. There is potential for improvement to the woodland connectivity and management within the site.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site forms part of a historic field system, which would be affected by development within the allocation. The fields in pasture would be lost to the development.</p> <p>Other qualities: A significant proportion of the site is proposed for open space, which provides opportunities for enhancements, both in terms of biodiversity and recreation. The proposed development is likely to adversely affect the rurality of the site, particularly to the west and may increase the lighting levels within this part of the AONB.</p>	<p>The inclusion of the eastern and southern parts of the site within open space would protect existing landscape features and would limit the potential for new development to affect the character of the wider rural landscape.</p> <p>The open space has the potential to include the enhancement of existing features and new complementary habitats, which could link existing habitats within and around the site. The space would maintain the rural edge to the site and the retention of existing trees and woodland would filter and screen views of the proposed development.</p> <p>The inclusion of an appropriate new landscape buffer to the western site boundary would assist in protecting the significance of adjacent heritage assets.</p> <p>The proposed allocation would be consistent with the existing settlement pattern to the south of Hawkhurst. It would provide opportunities to create new recreational routes and facilities for existing and new residents.</p> <p>The introduction of a long term management plan for the site would maintain the quality and condition of the AONB landscape within the site.</p> <p>These measures would reduce predicted effects on internal landscape features, local views and the character of the site and wider landscape.</p>

Conclusions:

The site is a small scale and semi-enclosed landscape, with many features and characteristics that are typical of the High Weald AONB. Features are generally intact; however the condition of the site is in decline. The site forms part of the separation between Hawkhurst (Highgate) and The Moor.

The site is a relatively small part of the assessment area considered by LUC within the sensitivity study. The whole area was assessed as having a high sensitivity, as it is representative of the AONB landscape. The assessment mentioned that some land at 'the immediate southern/western settlement edges of Hawkhurst' (i.e. the site) could have lower landscape sensitivity.

It is recommended that any proposed development should be concentrated to the north and west of the site as shown on the draft allocations map. The small, northern copse of woodland should be included within the open space provision for the site. The design of the proposed housing development will be critical in determining whether the site is suitable for development. A sensitive and well designed housing development would be acceptable in this location, providing that it creates a positive edge to settlement and respects the separation between Highgate and The Moor.

Hawkhurst has a made Neighbourhood Plan and policies within this should be considered as part of any development of the site.

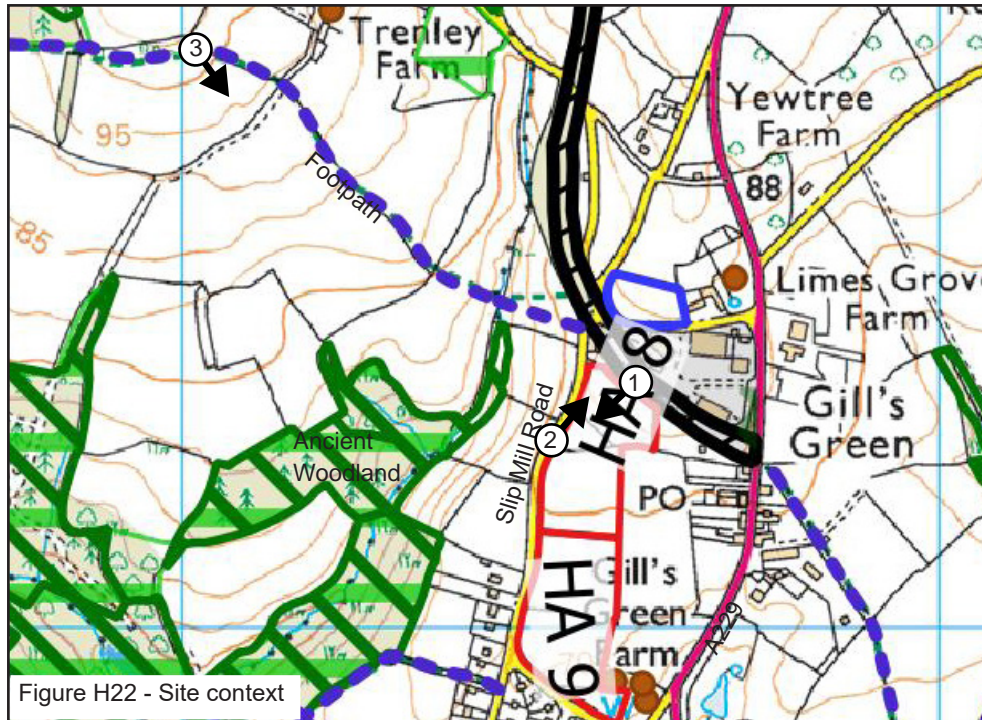
The proposed open space to the south and east of the site offers opportunities for enhancements, both in terms of landscape character, biodiversity and recreation. By following the proposed GI strategy and policy measures outlined above, it would be possible to mitigate for development within the site and provide some on-site enhancements that would contribute positively to the character and appreciation of the AONB.

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

- Include a requirement for a long-term management plan for the site.
- Within the policy promoting design, include wording to consider the separation between settlement as part of the design process.
- Development should consider the policies set out within the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan.

Site : HA 8 - Hawkhurst Station Business Park ;

Site : HA 8 - Hawkhurst Station Business Park ;



Site location and context:

The site is located to the east of Slip Mill Road and to the south of Hawkhurst Station Business Park (an industrial estate). The A229 Cranbrook Road lies approximately 132m to the east of the eastern site boundary and the hamlet of Gill's Green lies approximately 70m to the south (at the nearest point). The site is located on a plateau of high ground, which falls away to the west, before rising again to Trenley Farm.

The site consists of a single field in pasture, bound by hedgerows and tree lines. The tree lines to the south and south-east are single species birch, whereas the tree belts to the north-east and south-west are mixed native. A Leylandii hedge on a bund forms the north-western boundary and the boundary to the north is open to the industrial estate. The site is disturbed, with piles of rubble and building materials and is heavily influenced by the industrial estate to the north.

Designations and development considerations:

The site lies within the AONB and there is a safeguarded railway to the north. The stepped and banked access to the disused railway line from the A229, is one of the valued spaces set out within the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan. The site forms part of the separation between the industrial estate and the housing associated with Gill's Green.



Photograph 1: View south across the site from the northern edge of the site.



Photograph 2:
Looking north
along Slip Mill
Road, to the west
of the site.



Photograph 3:
View south-east
towards the
site from the
footpath on the
hill adjacent to
Trenley Farm.

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 is degraded and has few characteristic features. The field boundary has historic links, however many of the boundary features show more recent planting of atypical species. The industrial estate to the north has a strong influence on the site.</p> <p>The site is generally well contained from the surrounding landscape, where the incongruous landscape features are less noticeable. The exception is the Leylandii hedge on the north-western site boundary, which affects the character of adjacent Slip Mill Road.</p> <p>The topography of the site is relatively flat, which is unusual in the High Weald.</p> <p>Landscape features are associated with field boundaries and are generally intact. There are opportunities to replace some features with more characteristic boundary treatments.</p> <p>Key landscape features (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed native tree belts at the north-eastern and south-western site boundaries; • Native hedgerows at the site boundaries; • Lines of Birch trees; and • Leylandii hedge at the north-western site boundary. <p>There is no public access within the site.</p>	<p>The site is well contained with views limited to receptors adjacent to the site boundary and long distance views from the high ground to the north-west.</p> <p>There are infrequent glimpsed winter views of the site through the boundary vegetation on Slip Mill Lane, adjacent to the western site boundary (photograph 2).</p> <p>There are distant glimpses of the site from the high ground to the north-west (photograph 3). The site boundary trees are visible within the view, however the boundary trees screen the ground within the site. The shipping container within the site can be seen over the western boundary. The industrial estate to the north is visible within the view and is a detracting feature.</p> <p>There may also be distant glimpses of the site from the high ground to the west and south-west.</p> <p>There are open views into the site from the adjacent and open boundary of the industrial estate to the north of the site. Views are similar in character to photograph 1.</p> <p>There are glimpsed views into the site from nearby residential properties, however these views are seen in the context of the existing industrial estate.</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 to the north-west of the site; • Walkers and Motorists using Slip Mill Road; and • People at the south-western edge of the industrial estate, to the north of the site. 	<p>The site unkempt and neglected, with scattered piles of rubble and a shipping container forming detracting features within the site. The open views of the industrial estate to the north are also detractors. The site feels discordant with the surrounding rural landscape.</p> <p>Aside from these detractors, the site is relatively simple, but lacks coherence. This is largely due to the variety of boundary features, some of which are characteristic of the local landscape, while others are less typical.</p> <p>The site is semi-enclosed with distant trees on high ground visible to the south and west beyond the boundary vegetation.</p> <p>The area of the site nearest to the industrial estate is relatively active, whereas the remainder of the site feels vacant.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site is located on a relatively flat plateau. There are no water features or sandstone outcrops associated with the site.</p> <p>Settlement: The site is separated from local settlement but has a strong relationship with Hawkhurst Station Business Park.</p> <p>Routeways: Slip Mill Road is mapped as a historic routeway within the AONB database. The road is adjacent to the western site boundary and has the potential to be influenced by development within the proposed site allocation. The road is enclosed and is generally rural in character (photograph 2).</p> <p>Woodland: There is no woodland within or adjacent to the site, however there are two native tree belts at the site boundaries. The site does not currently contribute to woodland accessibility.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site consists of a small field in pasture, which has been used to store topsoil and rubble. There are opportunities to enhance ecological function and connectivity.</p> <p>Other qualities: There are few locally distinctive features associated with the site.</p> <p>Summary: The site is neglected and degraded in character. There are opportunities for enhancement within the site.</p>

Figure H23: Allocation proposal (From policy)

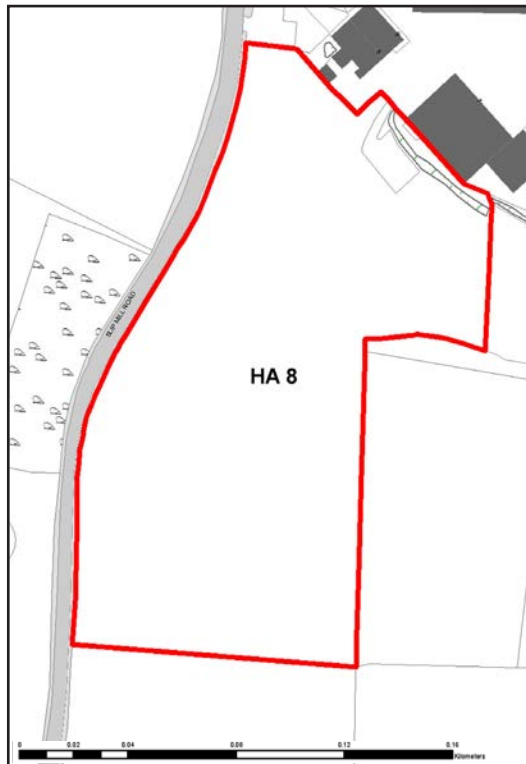


Figure H24: Strategic Green Infrastructure



Description of proposed development:

Allocated for employment uses including B1/ B2 and B8 uses.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/HA 8 and associated proposal plan	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Requirement for the site to be accessed through the existing industrial estate to the north (Policy).	Retention and enhancement of existing boundary trees and hedgerows. Produce a long-term proposal to replace atypical boundary treatments over time.
Requirement for an LVIA to inform the height and massing of proposed buildings and to include the height and colour of roofs (Policy).	Retain the western and southern part of the site as open space, within which enhancements to the landscape of the AONB are expected.
Demonstration of a contribution towards biodiversity opportunity area targets (Policy).	Provision of additional structural tree planting on the western edge of the site.
Provision of a long-term management scheme (Policy).	Include photomontages from Slip Mill Road and the footpath to the north-west as part of a submitted LVIA.
Provision of a new pedestrian and cycle connection to Gills Green (Policy).	

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

Provision of open space to the west and south of the site allows existing boundary features to be retained and enhanced with new planting. The provision of open space to the south would maintain the separation between the industrial estate and the residential part of Gill's Green. There are opportunities to create new and complementary habitats within the open space. The draft policy anticipates a north-south link through the site, which will improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity with Gill's Green.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/HA 8, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>The site is degraded and does not display many of the character components that are distinctive of the AONB. The surrounding rural landscape is therefore more susceptible to harm as a result of development within the site, rather than the character of the site itself. Poorly designed proposals may still be sufficient to cause harm to the AONB landscape within the site.</p> <p>The magnitude of effect on the surrounding landscape would be intrinsically linked to the visibility of the proposals, which would introduce detracting features into the wider landscape and would affect the perception of the High Weald from locations where the proposed development is visible.</p> <p>The loss of boundary features is likely to cause harm to the character of the site and would also increase the visibility of the proposals from the wider landscape.</p> <p>There is no proposed open space requirement within the allocation plan and no requirement for feature retention within the draft policy. There is the potential that this would result in the loss of boundary features, which could have significant adverse effects on landscape character.</p> <p>The effects on recreation within the site may be positive and are unlikely to be negative.</p>	<p>The employment uses set out within the draft allocation often involve large-scale buildings. The size, massing, orientation and colour of the proposed buildings will affect the visibility of the proposals.</p> <p>There are likely to be glimpsed winter views of the proposals through the boundary vegetation on Slip Mill Lane, adjacent to the western site boundary. The visibility of the proposals may increase if the proposed buildings are located adjacent to the boundary, such that the buildings are visible over the boundary vegetation. This would increase the severity of the visual effects.</p> <p>If no controls are set on building heights, there could be open views of the proposed development from the high ground to the north-west. If this is the case, the visibility of the industrial estate would extend substantially within the view. The change to the view could cause significant adverse visual effects.</p> <p>Depending on the scale and nature of the built form, the proposals may also be visible from the high ground to the west and south-west of the site.</p> <p>There would be open views of the development from the existing industrial estate, however views are likely to be consistent with those already experienced within the industrial estate.</p> <p>There could be (depending on design) glimpsed and partial views of the proposals from nearby residential properties, however these views would continue to be seen in the context of the existing industrial estate.</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 the scope of this assessment.</p> <p>Settlement: The proposals are partly in keeping with the development pattern of the existing industrial estate and would form a logical extension to the employment site.</p> <p>Routeways: The routeway associated with Slip Mill Lane has the potential to be adversely affected by the proposed development, particularly if the proposals include the removal of any of the western site boundary vegetation.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland, however there is the potential for tree loss within the site.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site would change from a disturbed field in pasture to an industrial estate.</p> <p>Other qualities: The site is currently in decline, however without any mitigation measures, the proposals are likely to further harm the character of the site. There are opportunities to enhance areas of the site as part of the development and to improve the recreational connectivity through the site.</p>	<p>The measures set out within the draft allocation policy and additional GI prescriptions seek to implement controls that would reduce the potential harm as a result of the proposed development and seek to implement enhancements within the site.</p> <p>The policy controls would ensure that the design of the proposals consider the height, massing and colour of the proposed buildings, which would be designed to minimise visual intrusion to the landscape. Accessing the site through the existing industrial estate would avoid feature loss and additional traffic on Slip Mill Road.</p> <p>The retention of boundary features, would help to contain views of the proposals. The additional open space and buffer planting to the west of the site would help to soften views of the proposals from known viewpoint locations. Additional screening could also be introduced to the south of the site, if additional views are identified through more detailed LVIA work.</p> <p>The open space provision would allow for localised enhancements to features and habitats within the site. Naturalistic surface water drainage systems (e.g. ponds, basins or swales) could be located within the open space, forming complementary habitats.</p> <p>The additional open space to the north-west would allow the phased replacement of the Leylandii hedgerow with some more characteristic and wildlife friendly buffer planting, which would benefit the routeway (Slip Mill Lane) in the long term.</p> <p>These measures would reduce predicted effects on the amenity of the existing routeway, local views and would protect key features that contribute to the character of the site.</p>

Conclusions:

The site consists of a disturbed and unkempt field in pasture, which is heavily influenced by the industrial estate to the north. The site is enclosed by mature vegetation including tree belts and hedgerows, some of which comprise native species, while others are less typical of the local landscape. A Leylandii hedge on a bund forms the north-western boundary, which forms an anomaly in the character of the adjacent Slip Mill Lane, which is mapped as a historic routeway. The site is well contained from the wider landscape, however the introduction of tall buildings within the site is likely to change this assessment of visibility.

The site is a relatively small part of the assessment area considered by LUC within the sensitivity study. The whole area was assessed as having a high sensitivity, as it is representative of the AONB landscape. The more developed areas at Gills Green were noted as being less sensitive to change.

Any development should be designed to minimise visibility and subsequently the effects of the development on the wider AONB. Providing that existing structural landscape features within the site and at the site boundaries can be retained and enhanced with new planting, it would be possible to include sensitively designed development within the site, without causing significant adverse effects on the character and appearance of the AONB. The suitability of the site for development is largely dependent on the employment need and the detailed design of the proposals.

The site is degraded, has few characteristic features and would benefit from landscape improvements and long-term management. Key landscape features within the site could be retained and there is sufficient space within the proposed open space to the south and west of the site, to introduce characteristic new features, which could contribute to the screening of the site. The proposed pedestrian and cycle link to Gill's Green would provide some recreational benefits.

Hawkhurst has a made Neighbourhood Plan and policies within this should be considered as part of any development of the site.

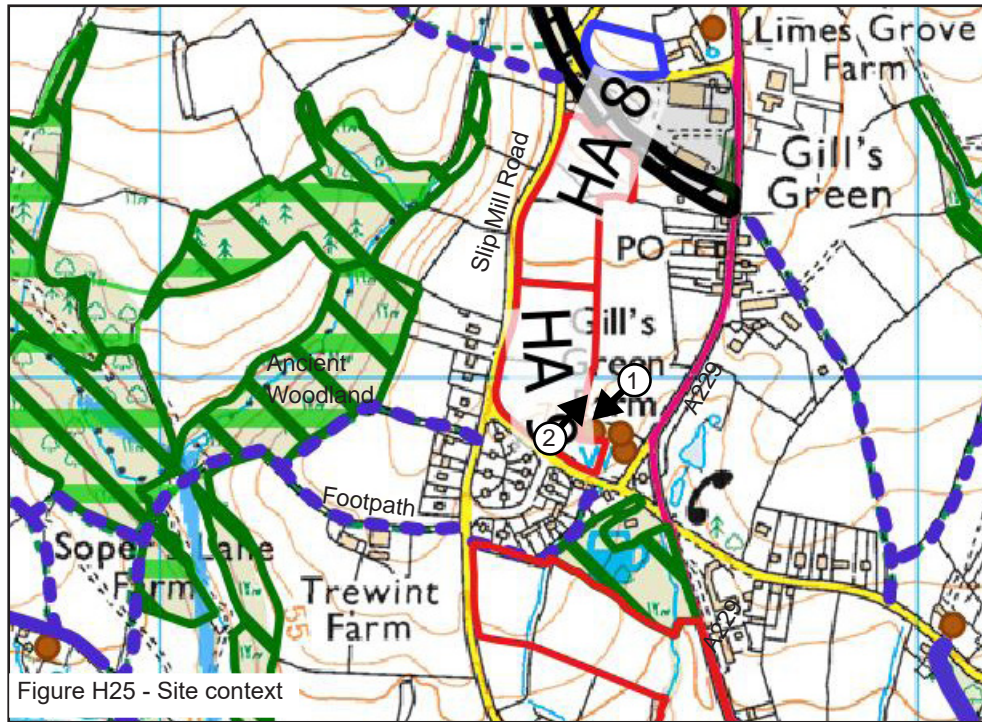
By following the proposed GI strategy and policy measures outlined above, it would be possible to mitigate for development within the site and provide some on-site enhancements that would contribute positively to the character and appreciation of the AONB.

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

- Photomontages to be provided from a selected number of key viewpoints as part of the prescribed LVIA.
- Include wording to protect boundary features within the site.

Site : HA 9 - Land at SanTERS Yard, Gill's Green Farm ;

Site : HA 9 - Land at SanTERS Yard, Gill's Green Farm;



Site location and context:

The site is located to the east of Slip Mill Road and to the north of Wellington Cottages at Gill's Green. The A229 Cranbrook Road lies approximately 109m to the east of the eastern site boundary and Hawkhurst Station Business Park lies approximately 170m to the north (at the nearest point). The site is located on a plateau of high ground, which falls away to the west, before rising again to the north-west at Trenley Farm and south-west at Sisley Farm.

The site consists of two small fields in pasture, bound by hedgerows and tree lines. The boundaries are also fenced with post and wire fencing, which is visible where there are gaps in the boundary vegetation. The southern field contains a dwelling and a barn.

Designations and development considerations:

The site lies within the AONB and abuts listed buildings to the south-east, at Gill's Green Farm. The site forms part of the separation between the industrial estate and the housing associated with Gill's Green.



Photograph 1: View east across the northern field from the western site boundary.



Photograph 2: View south-east into the southern field from the western site boundary.



Photograph 3: Looking north along Slip Mill Road, from a location to the south of the site. The south-western hedgerow boundary is visible within the view.

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 does not contain many of the key characteristics of the 'Bedgebury Forested Plateau' Character Area, however it is relatively typical of the small scale pastoral landscapes found adjacent to settlement within the High Weald. AONB.</p> <p>The site has some relationship with the wider landscape, however the strong vegetated boundaries are containing features. The site has a rural character with few detracting features. There is some influence from the adjacent housing at Gill's Green.</p> <p>The southern field is mapped as having historic field boundaries and both parts of the site have associations with the historic farmstead; Gills Green Farm.</p> <p>Landscape features within the site are associated with field boundaries and are generally intact, however some are gappy and would benefit from additional planting.</p> <p>Key landscape features (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed native tree belt at the north-western site boundary; • Native hedgerows at the site boundaries; • Lines of trees along the north-eastern boundary; and • Fields in pasture. <p>There is no public access within the site.</p>	<p>The site is well contained with public views limited to the two lanes to the east and south of the site.</p> <p>There are infrequent glimpsed winter views of the site through the boundary vegetation on Slip Mill Lane, adjacent to the western site boundary. The site boundary trees and hedgerow dominate the view.</p> <p>There are open views of the southern boundary hedgerow from the lane to the south, however the hedgerow screens most views of the site, with only limited winter glimpses possible through the dense vegetation.</p> <p>There are open and partial views into the southern part of the site from the first floor, north facing windows of Wellington Cottages (private views). Views contain the field in pasture and existing barn seen over the boundary hedgerow. Views from ground floor windows (the primary living space) are screened by the intervening hedgerows. There would also be open views of the site from the dwelling located within the site boundary.</p> <p>Views of the site from remaining local properties would be restricted to occasional glimpses.</p> <p>Visual receptors (public views) to be considered (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers and Motorists using Slip Mill Road; and • Walkers and Motorists on the lane to the south of the site. 	<p>The site is small and well contained by vegetation, which provides a sense of intimacy and enclosure.</p> <p>In winter there are glimpses of surrounding dwellings through the boundary vegetation, along with views of dwellings to the south and south-east, which provide a village-edge feel.</p> <p>There is a limited connection to the wider landscape.</p> <p>The site is rural in character and the barn within the site associates the site with the farmstead to the east.</p> <p>The site is relatively simple, and pleasant in character with texture provided by boundary features. The fields are peaceful and the only activity is associated with the intermittent vehicle and pedestrian use of the lanes to the south and west.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site is located on a relatively flat plateau. There are no water features or sandstone outcrops associated with the site.</p> <p>Settlement: The southern field within the site has settlement on three sides and is generally consistent with the settlement pattern of Gill's Green. The northern field is less consistent with the existing settlement pattern. A historic farmstead with listed buildings lies adjacent to the eastern site boundary. The site forms part of the rural setting to Gill's Green.</p> <p>Routeways: Both Slip Mill Road and the lane to the south of the site are mapped as historic routeways within the AONB database. Both lanes are narrow and enclosed by hedgerows and trees, retaining their characteristic rural appearance. Both lanes have the potential to be influenced by development within the proposed site allocation.</p> <p>Woodland: There is no woodland within or adjacent to the site, however there is a native tree belt at the north-western site boundary. The site does not currently contribute to woodland accessibility.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site consists of two small fields in pasture, which are typical of a settlement edge within the AONB. There are opportunities to enhance ecological function and connectivity.</p> <p>Other qualities: There field boundaries and pattern are locally distinctive features associated with the site.</p> <p>Summary: The site is small scale and well contained. Development within the southern field is consistent with the existing settlement pattern at Gill's Green</p>

Figure H26: Allocation proposal (From policy)

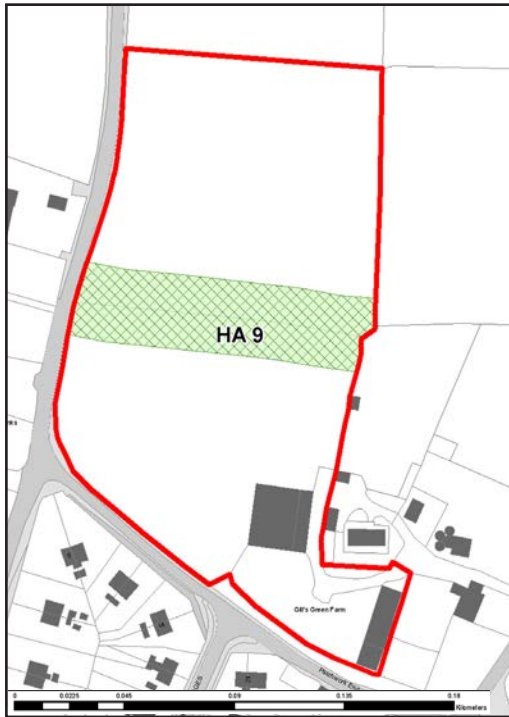







Figure H27: Strategic Green Infrastructure



-  Existing GI retained
-  Proposed public open space
-  Proposed landscape buffer
-  Existing / proposed parkland / woodland
-  Proposed landscape feature / connection

Description of proposed development:

The northern field is allocated for B1/ B2 / B8 employment uses and the southern field is allocated for a residential development of approximately 38 units. A landscape buffer is proposed at the existing field boundary, to separate the two proposed uses.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/HA 9 and associated proposal plan	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Requirement for an LVIA to inform the height and massing of proposed buildings and to include the height and colour of roofs (Policy).	Remove the employment allocation for the northern field and retain the land as open space. Potential to combine with the proposed open space within site HA 8.
The design should respond positively to AONB components, adjacent listed buildings and historic farmstead (Policy).	
Demonstration of a contribution towards biodiversity opportunity area targets (Policy).	Proposed vehicular access to be informed by detailed topography and tree survey information and located to minimise tree and hedgerow loss. Investigate opportunities to re-prioritise / pedestrianise a section of the lane to the south in order to minimise the adverse effects of the site access. Any removed sections of hedgerow to be replanted.
Requirement for vehicular access to the northern field (employment site) to come from the northern boundary, through draft allocation HA 8. Vehicular access for the southern site (residential) to come from the lane to the south or Slip Mill Road (Policy).	
Provision of a new pedestrian / cycle link to allocation HA 8 to the north links (Policy).	
Provision of on-site amenity / natural green space (Policy).	Retention and enhancement of existing boundary trees and hedgerows. Provide additional structural planting to screen views of the proposed development area.
Avoidance of demolition where possible (Policy).	
Provision of a long-term management scheme (Policy).	

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

This report proposes the removal of the employment allocation from the northern half of the site, to be replaced with a large area of open space. This space would main the separation between Gill's Green and the proposed employment allocation HA 8. Additional tree / parkland planting within the open space would reinforce the separation and would provide additional screening for the proposed housing. The open space would also provide recreational opportunities for residents within the hamlet and workers within the industrial estate. Existing landscape features at the site boundaries should be retained and enhanced.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/HA 9 the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>Development of the whole site would erode the separation between Gill's Green and the industrial estate to the north and would adversely affect the size and pattern of settlement within the hamlet. This has the potential to harm the character of the village and the AONB landscape.</p> <p>Additional effects on the character of the surrounding landscape is likely to be linked to the visibility of the proposals, which would introduce detracting features into the wider landscape and would affect the perception of the High Weald from locations where the proposed development is visible.</p> <p>Within the site the change in character is likely to be pronounced; with existing fields in pasture being replaced by development and open space. The effects on the landscape character within the site have the potential to be significant without further mitigation.</p> <p>The loss of boundary features is likely to cause harm to the character of the site and the adjacent rural lanes (routeways). It would also increase the visibility of the proposals from the wider landscape.</p> <p>Predicted effects on landscape features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed native tree belt at the north-western site boundary - potential for no effects; Native hedgerows at the site boundaries - potential for loss associated with vehicular access to housing allocation; Lines of trees along the north-eastern boundary- potential for no effects; and Fields in pasture - lost to development. <p>The effects on recreation within the site are likely to be positive.</p>	<p>In a worst-case scenario, the access to the proposed development would require significant feature loss along the southern or south-western boundary, which would open up views into the site from either the lane to the south or Slip Mill Road. While the views are likely to be consistent with existing housing to the south and west of the road, the green and enclosed character of the road would be lost, with open views of the proposed development.</p> <p>Without restrictions on building heights, there is the potential for long distance glimpsed views of the proposals from footpaths on the high ground to the north-west and south-west.</p> <p>There would be open and partial views of the proposed housing allocation from the first floor, north facing windows of Wellington Cottages (private views). The visibility of the proposed housing would depend on the level of feature loss associated with the proposed site access. Views are likely to be consistent with those experienced to the south of these properties. Views from ground floor windows (the primary living space) would continue to be filtered by the hedgerow located between the housing and the lane to the south of the site.</p> <p>Views of the site from remaining local properties would be restricted to partial views and glimpses.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: No water features, or sandstone outcrops would be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>Settlement: The proposed housing allocation is in keeping with the existing settlement pattern, however the proposed employment allocation to the north of the site is inconsistent. The proposals are likely to affect the connection to the countryside for a limited number of residents within Gill's Green.</p> <p>Routeways: The draft allocation has the potential to harm local routeways, particularly as the proposed vehicular access to the site is created. The enclosed and vegetated nature of the existing routeways could change if a substantial stretch of the site boundary hedgerow is removed as part of the development.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland, however there is the potential for tree loss within the site.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site forms part of a historic field system, which would be affected by development within the allocation. The fields in pasture would be lost to the development.</p> <p>Other qualities: Development within the site is likely to adversely affect the AONB qualities within the site. The extent to which this occurs will be dependent on the scale and nature of the development and the proposals for the site access. The proposed development has the potential to improve public access to the High Weald. There are opportunities to improve recreation and community involvement within the AONB.</p>	<p>The removal of the employment allocation from the site would reduce the potential harm to local landscape character as a result of the proposed development and would provide opportunities to implement enhancements within the site. This change would also protect the settlement pattern and character of Gill's Green. Approximately half of the site would be retained within open space land uses.</p> <p>The measures set out within the draft allocation policy and additional GI prescriptions would protect the existing boundary vegetation of the site and protect the historic field pattern. It would allow for the introduction of new characteristic features within the proposed open space, which could further screen the settlement from the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>The policy controls would ensure that the design of the proposals is well thought through and designed to minimise visual intrusion to the landscape.</p> <p>Careful location of any vehicular access on the southern or south-western boundary, combined with the replacement planting of any lost hedgerow or trees, would maintain the rural character to the two routeways adjacent to the site.</p> <p>These measures would reduce predicted effects on local landscape character, the amenity of the existing routeways and would protect key features that contribute to the positive character of the site. They would also provide opportunities to improve recreation and pedestrian and cycle connectivity within Gill's Green.</p>

Conclusions:

The site consists of two small fields in pasture, which do not display many of the characteristics of the Tunbridge Wells Character Assessment, but are reasonably characteristic of the AONB. The southern field is surrounded on three sides by existing housing. The northern field is part of the landscape setting to the village and forms part of the separation between the hamlet of Gill's Green and the industrial estate, located to the north. The site is contained by mature vegetation including tree belts and hedgerows, which form a strong sense of enclosure within the site.

The site is a relatively small part of the assessment area considered by LUC within the sensitivity study. The wider area was assessed as having a high sensitivity, as it is representative of the AONB landscape. The more developed areas at Gills Green were noted as being less sensitive to change.

Development of both fields would significantly alter the size and pattern of development at Gills Green. The proposed housing allocation within the southern field would be consistent with the existing settlement pattern, whereas the employment allocation in the northern field would be atypical. The cumulative effects of the proposed development with the adjacent allocation HA 8 (to the north) are likely to be harmful to the settlement pattern and character of Gill's Green. The removal of the employment allocation from this site would reduce the potential for significant adverse effects.

There is a high probability that a new vehicular access and associated visibility splays, for the residential allocation within the southern field, would require the extensive loss of boundary hedgerows, which would alter the character of the hamlet. The suitability for the southern field for a housing development will be dependent on the ability to maintain the enclosed and vegetated character of the lanes to the south and west, which are both mapped as historic routeways.

If an acceptable vehicular access is possible without substantial feature loss, an appropriately designed housing development, to a high standard commensurate with its location within the AONB, may be possible without significant harm to the local AONB landscape. Existing boundary features should be retained and enhanced as part of any development. It is recommended that the proposed employment allocation is removed from northern field, which could then be proposed as open space. There is the potential to include landscape buffers and a parkland landscape within this open space, which would introduce characteristic features, maintain the separation between the residential and employment areas and further screen the settlement.

Hawkhurst has a made Neighbourhood Plan and policies within this should be considered as part of any development of the site.

By following the proposed GI strategy and policy measures outlined above, it would be possible to mitigate for development within the site and provide some on-site enhancements that would contribute positively to the character and appreciation of the AONB.

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

- Removal of the employment allocation
- Photomontages to be provided from a selected number of key viewpoints as part of the prescribed LVIA.
- Include wording to protect boundary features within the site.

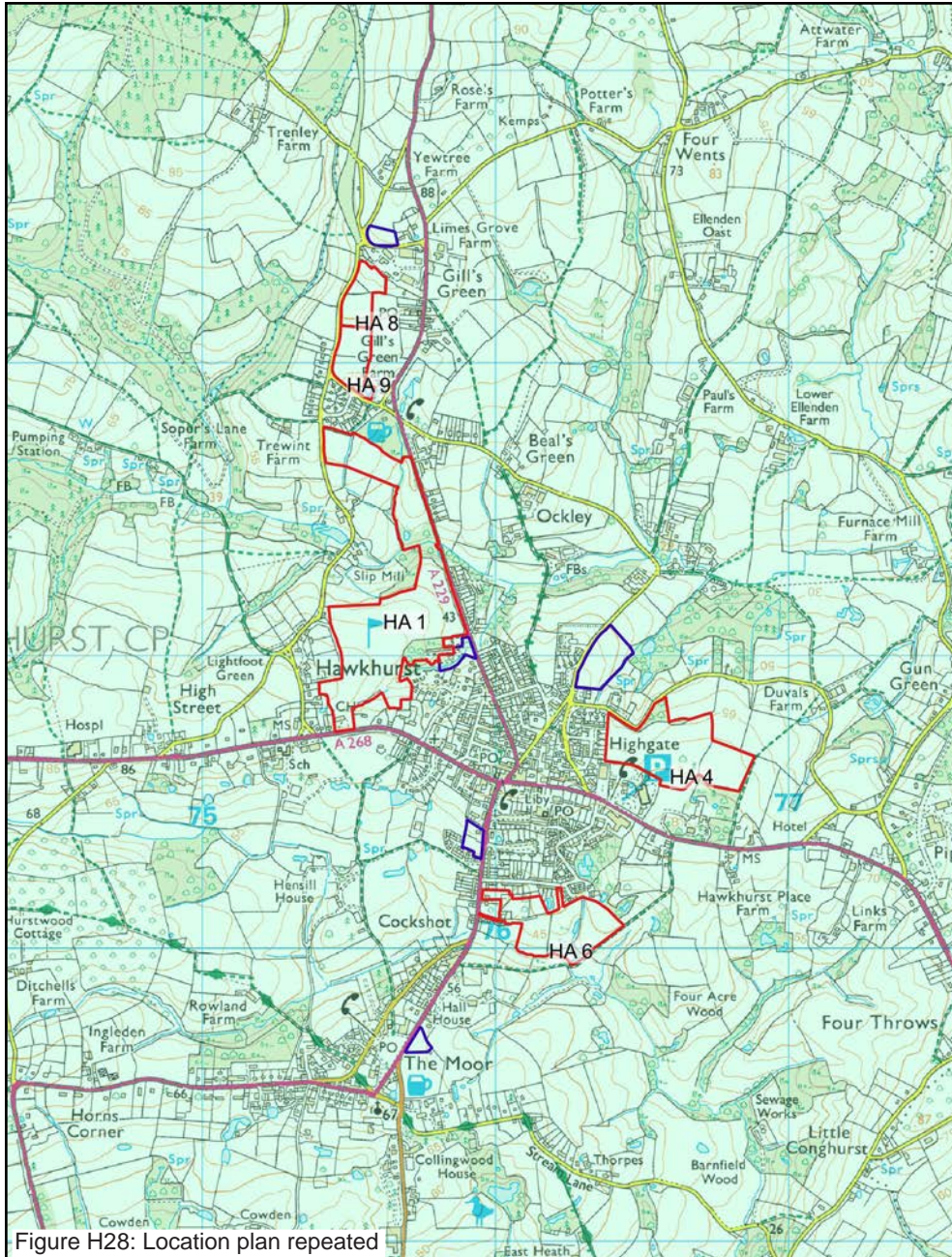
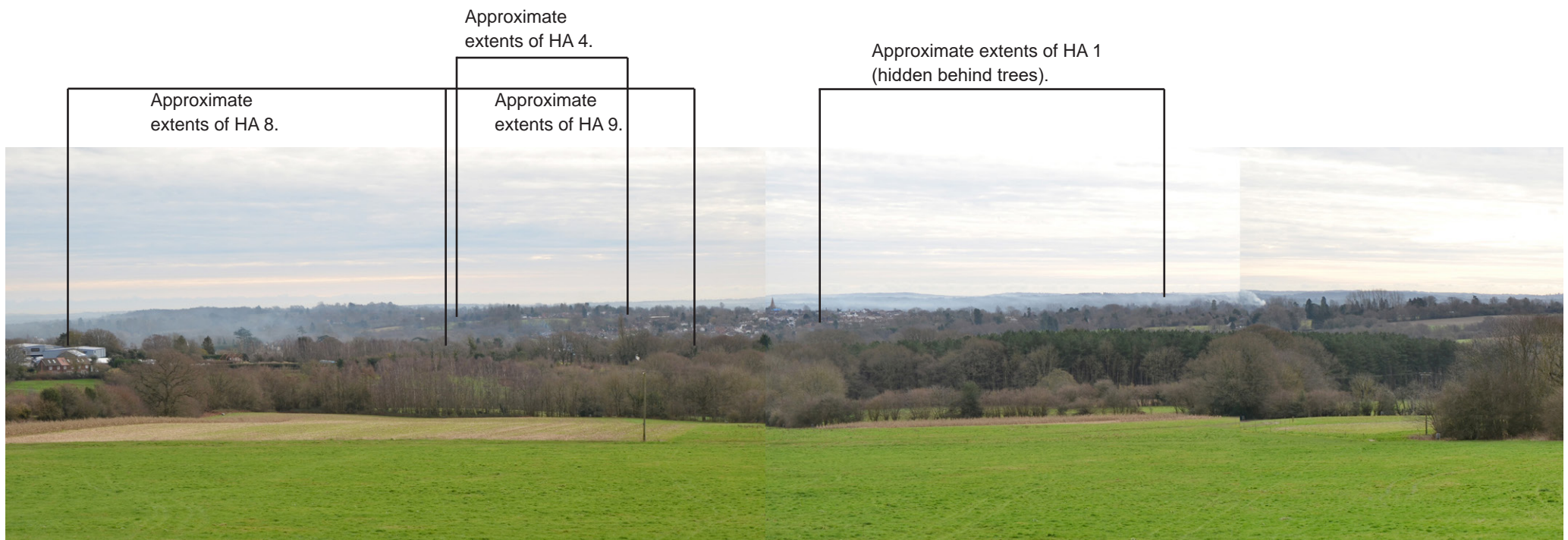


Figure H28: Location plan repeated

6.7.7 Cumulative effects of development proposed at Hawkhurst

- 6.7.7.1 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 Hawkhurst.
- 6.7.7.2 The most notable cumulative effects would be as a result of allocations HA1, HA 8 and HA 9, which in combination have the potential to significantly alter the settlement pattern of Hawkhurst and Gill's Green. Development of HA 8 and HA 9 in combination (without mitigation) would join the housing development at Gill's Green with the industrial estate to the north, doubling the settlement area of the hamlet. The additional non-major allocation located to the north of Gills Green (reference HA 10), would further exacerbate these effects. There are also likely to be cumulative visual effects, particularly from Slip Mill Lane and elevated viewpoints, e.g. at the hill adjacent to Trenley Farm.
- 6.7.7.3 The additional housing proposed to the north-east of draft allocation HA 1 would add to the distortion of the existing settlement pattern and would reduce the separation between Hawkhurst (Highgate) and Gill's Green. This development (in combination with (HA 8 & HA 9) would also have cumulative effects on the character of Slip Mill Road, a mapped historic routeway.
- 6.7.7.4 There is the potential for cumulative visual effects as a result of development within sites HA8, HA9 and HA 4 as all three sites are visible from some viewpoint locations on the elevated land to the north of Hawkhurst. An example is the hill adjacent to Trenley Farm.
- 6.7.7.5 The introduction of the Green Infrastructure (GI) measures outlined within this report are likely to reduce these predicted effects. The removal of parts of sites HA 1, HA 8 and HA 9 from allocation as a development, to open space provision, would retain the settlement identity of Gill's Green and would maintain the separation between Gills Green and Hawkhurst (Highgate). This strategy would also reduce the predicted cumulative effects on Slip Mill Road.
- 6.7.7.6 The additional structural planting proposed within the GI proposals would also reduce the cumulative visual effects of allocations HA 1, HA 4, HA 8 and HA 9.
- 6.7.7.7 There are unlikely to be any cumulative visual effects associated with the allocation of site HA 6 in combination with the other Hawkhurst sites, even the non-major site to the north-west (reference HA 2).

6.7.7.8 Without the mitigation proposed (and suitable mitigation within non-major allocations around Hawkhurst), the scale of development would result in cumulative effects on local character areas and ultimately the character of the High Weald AONB. The mitigation proposals outlined within each site analysis page seek to reduce the potential for adverse effects within the AONB and to provide opportunities for mitigation and enhancements that would protect the character and appearance of the AONB in the long term.



Photograph C1: View south-east towards the site from the footpath on the hill adjacent to Trenley Farm.

6.7.8 Summary and conclusions

- 6.7.8.1 Draft allocation site HA 1 is a golf course located to the north-west of Highgate and south of Gill's Green. The proposed development area set out within the draft allocation includes two development areas, the main area to the south and a secondary area to the north-east. In order to take this allocation forward and mitigate for some of the predicted effects, the northern area of settlement should be removed from the allocation and replaced with open space, which could offer multiple benefits for landscape character, biodiversity and recreation. The site should only be allocated if the access onto the A229 can be designed without substantial effects on landscape features or the introduction of a large and engineered junction at a rural edge location within the village.
- 6.7.8.2 Site HA 4 is located to the west of the village and consists of two fields in pasture with a small copse of Ancient Woodland to the north. The site has a tangible increase in rurality from west to east. This change in development potential across the site is reflected in proposals map for the draft allocation, which safeguards the more sensitive areas of the site as open space land-uses. These provide opportunities for enhancement within the site, including potential new recreational routes and facilities, which would benefit the AONB landscape within the site.
- 6.7.8.3 The proposed allocation could round off the existing edge to Hawkhurst without significant harm to the wider AONB, however the design of the proposed allocation will be critical. The proposed housing should be designed to sit well with the existing settlement, with a soft edge to break up the massing of the proposals.
- 6.7.8.4 Draft Allocation HA 6 is located to the south of Highgate and north of The Moor. The site is a small scale and semi-enclosed landscape, with many features and characteristics that are typical of the High Weald AONB. It is recommended that any proposed development should be concentrated to the north and west of the site as shown on the draft allocations map, which would maintain settlement separation and protect the more rural areas of the site to the south and east. A sensitive and well designed housing development would be acceptable in this location, providing that it creates a positive edge to settlement and respects the separation between Highgate and The Moor.
- 6.7.8.5 Allocation sites HA 8 and HA 9 are located at Gill's Green and abut each other. Site HA 8 is located to the north, adjacent to the existing business park, whilst HA 9 is located to the south. The southern field of site HA 9 is consistent with the residential settlement pattern of Gill's Green. Development of both sites would significantly alter the size and pattern of development at Gills Green and would harm the character and appearance of the AONB.
- 6.7.8.6 Site HA 8 consists of a disturbed and unkempt field in pasture, which is heavily influenced by the industrial estate to the north. The site is well contained from the wider landscape, however the introduction of tall buildings within the site is likely to change this assessment of visibility. The suitability of this site for development is largely dependent on the employment need and the detailed design of the proposals.
- 6.7.8.7 This report recommends that if the allocation is to be taken forward, the additional mitigation measures set out within this report should be included. Any development within the site should be designed to minimise visibility and subsequently the effects of the development on the wider AONB. The open space proposed within the GI plan provides opportunities to protect existing features and provide enhancements within the site.
- 6.7.8.8 Site HA 9 is more typical of a village edge landscape within the High Weald and is more rural in character than site HA 8. The site consists of two small fields in pasture enclosed by tree belts and hedgerows. The southern field is surrounded on three sides by existing housing. The northern field is part of the landscape setting to the village and forms part of the separation between the hamlet of Gill's Green and the industrial estate, located to the north.
- 6.7.8.9 It is recommended that the employment allocation within the northern field should be removed from the allocation. The suitability for the southern field for a housing development will be dependent on the ability to maintain the enclosed and vegetated character of the lanes to the south and west, which are both mapped as historic routeways. If it can be demonstrated that the access could be achieved without harm to the character of the routeways, the residential part of the allocation could be implemented, along with the additional open space to the north, which would mitigate for the predicted adverse effects of the development and would provide recreational improvements for the hamlet.
- 6.7.8.10 Hawkhurst has a made Neighbourhood Plan and the development of any of the proposed allocation sites should consider the policies set out within the Neighbourhood Plan in addition to National and Local Plan policy.