

Sandhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024 to 2038

Basic Conditions Statement

April 2025

**Prepared by the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
on behalf of Sandhurst Parish Council**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Basic Conditions Statement has been produced to accompany the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (SNDP).
- 1.2. The relevant legal framework for the preparation and making of neighbourhood plans is supported by the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and found in the:
 - Town and Country Planning Act 1990: ss. 61F, 61I, 61M-P and Schedule 4B
 - Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: ss 38A-C
 - Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (2012 No.637) (as amended)
- 1.3. Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 requires a neighbourhood plan to meet five basic conditions before it can proceed to a referendum. These are:
 - i. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
 - ii. The making of the neighbourhood development plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - iii. The making of the neighbourhood development plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
 - iv. The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, (retained) EU obligations; and
 - v. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan. The prescribed condition is that the 'making' of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).
- 1.4. There are two further basic conditions which are relevant only to the making of a Neighbourhood Development Order and are therefore not considered in this document.
- 1.5. This document sets out how the SNDP meets the Basic Conditions.

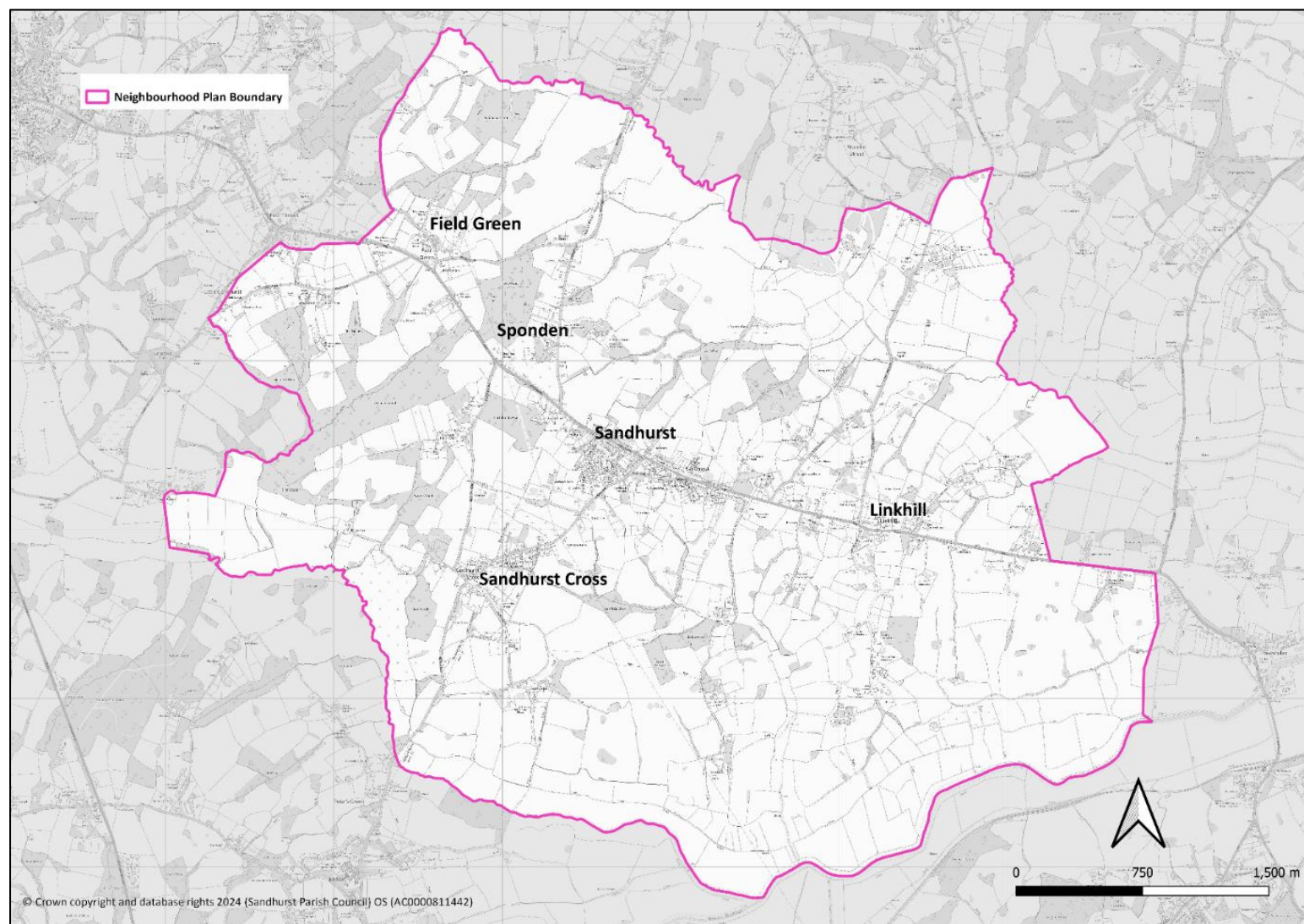
Supporting documents and evidence

- 1.6. The Submission Version SNDP, with its policies, is supported by a Consultation Statement, this Basic Conditions Statement and an extensive evidence base. It has also been subject to a Screening, organised by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), to ascertain whether it requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or a Habitat Regulations Assessment, and the Determination Statement is included as part of the accompanying documentation.
- 1.7. Alongside the planning policies, the SNDP contains both infrastructure priorities and a series of projects which fall outside planning policy. These are intended to contribute towards the achievement of the Plan's vision and form the basis of the principles for the use of any developer funding and other monies arising from other planning obligations. They complement the Neighbourhood Plan document but are not a formal part of the Development Plan.

Key statements

- 1.8. The Neighbourhood Area shares its boundary with that of the Sandhurst Parish (*Figure 1*).
- 1.9. TWBC designated the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Area on 19 September 2014.
- 1.10. The SNDP sets out planning policies that relate to the development and use of land within the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Area only.
- 1.11. The SNDP refers only to the administrative boundary of the parish. There are no other adopted Neighbourhood Plans that cover all or part of the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.12. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared the SNDP to establish a vision for the future of the parish. It has engaged with the community to set out how the vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period 2024 to 2038.
- 1.13. The Plan does not contain any policies which relate to excluded development as defined by section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Figure 1: Sandhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan designated area



2. Basic condition (i) - conformity with national planning policy

- 2.1. To meet this condition, it is necessary to demonstrate that the SNDP has regard to national planning policies and the advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. National policy and guidance are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG').
- 2.2. It should be noted that the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF, most recently revised in December 2024.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.3. The NPPF has 13 key objectives which are:
- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 - Building a strong, competitive economy
 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
 - Promoting sustainable transport
 - Supporting high quality communications
 - Making effective use of land
 - Achieving well-designed places
 - Protecting Green Belt land
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
 - Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals
- 2.4. This basic conditions statement explains how the SNDP policies contribute to meeting these objectives, where relevant, and also notes the specific national policies that the Plan is intended to support and supplement.
- 2.5. The SNDP vision is: ***Sandhurst parish in 2038 will be a welcoming, supportive, cohesive, sustainable, strong community, with a café – social hub for all generations at its centre. It will be safe for walking and cycling, with 30mph speed limits on the main and side roads and a school time speed limit of 20mph. It will be wildlife friendly with protected green spaces and a community garden for all ages. There will be fast fibre broadband to every home and business.***
- 2.6. There are five objectives, which seek to deliver the overall vision. These are shown in *Table 1* alongside the corresponding NPPF objective or objectives that each one seeks to address.

2.7. Table 2 provides further detail by setting out the 14 policies of the SNDP and which specific paragraphs of the NPPF each has had regard to along with a commentary.

Table 1: Assessment of the SNDP ambitions against NPPF (2024) goals

SNDP ambition	Relevant NPPF goal
Objective 1: Sustainable development and housing: There are well-designed homes to meet the needs of the local community. They allow growth and adaptation to serve all phases of life, promoting health & wellbeing. The architecture uses passive energy and low carbon building materials and there is increased biodiversity and reduced carbon emissions for existing and proposed development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting healthy and safe communities • Delivering a sufficient supply of homes • Making effective use of land • Achieving well-designed places • Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Objective 2: Protecting the natural and built environment: The natural environment of the High Weald National Landscape is protected and celebrated. Green spaces that are important to the community are safeguarded and opportunities for biodiversity improvements are sought. There is a network of ecological corridors that connect through the villages and to the wider countryside. Space for a wide range of active and passive recreation, for all ages. The value of the parish's dark skies is recognised. The parish's historic buildings are protected and conserved. They are appreciated alongside contemporary architecture as part of our daily activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment • Conserving and enhancing the historic environment • Promoting healthy and safe communities • Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Objective 3: Safe and active travel: Opportunities to improve the public rights of way network to encourage walking (and 'wheeling') and, where practical, cycling are optimised to encourage active travel for local journeys. Improvements to recreational horse-riding routes will be supported. There is the infrastructure to support electric cars with fewer miles travelled by vehicle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting sustainable transport • Promoting healthy and safe communities
Objective 4: Connected and supported communities: The existing facilities are safeguarded and, where necessary improved and expanded, to serve all needs – for health, social and wellbeing, local food produce, education, culture, retail, sport and recreation. They are inclusive spaces that connect and bring people together linked to active travel and green spaces. A community hub is supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting healthy and safe communities • Supporting high quality communications
Objective 5: Sandhurst village centre and local economy: Established local businesses and new businesses are supported, including working from home. The village centre continues to provide a focal point for activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a strong, competitive economy • Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Table 2: Assessment of how each policy in the SNDP conforms to the NPPF

Policy Title and Reference	NPPF Ref.	Commentary
POLICY S1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT	7, 8, 29, 61, 73, 82, 83, 84, 98, 111, 124, 125, 126, 129, 135, 187	<p>A core principle of national policy is the need for the planning system to contribute to sustainable development.</p> <p>The SNDP does not seek to allocate sites at this time, as this is being undertaken at the Local Plan level, which is at an advanced stage. A new Local Plan will be prepared in due course, however, and this may provide a trigger to review the SNDP.</p> <p>Policy S1 provides an important overarching spatial strategy for the parish, to influence any future allocations and/or windfall sites. In the context of the parish falling with the High Weald National Landscape, the SNDP set outs a series of important principles in terms of where development is appropriate and should be focussed (i.e. the most sustainable locations) and where it should be avoided. The Built Up Area boundary provides the guide for this. The policy will help to ensure that development proposals in the rural parish are planned comprehensively and sustainably located and delivered.</p> <p>The policy supports the reuse of brownfield land where feasible and seeks to minimise coalescence between the individual communities within the parish, to retain their distinctive character and identities. This is particularly important in the High Weald setting.</p> <p>Overall, the policy will contribute to sustainable development by ensuring that development takes place in the most appropriate places and in a way that minimises its negative impacts.</p>
POLICY S2: MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS	61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 73, 82-	<p>The NPPF sets out that the size, type, and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. Whilst the SNDP does not seek to allocate housing sites, it does seek to influence the sort of housing delivered should sites be proposed. The evidence base and local engagement revealed an ageing population, with a predominance of larger-sized homes within a price band well above the</p>

	84	<p>average for the wider geographic area and largely out of reach financially for individuals and couples on lower quartile or even median local salaries.</p> <p>The needs of the rural parish are more defined than those set out of the wider local authority areas as a whole, which includes some more urbanised areas. Policy S2 therefore seeks to ensure that all residential development proposals are adequately informed by the locally specific Housing Needs Assessment that drills down to the neighbourhood level as opposed to relying solely on data prepared at the strategic levels.</p>
POLICY S3: CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT	96, 125, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139	<p>National policy encourages neighbourhood plans to develop policies that achieve well-designed places that reflect local aspirations and which are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of the area's defining characteristics. Policy S3 contributes to this aim by ensuring that development in the parish is designed to respect local character and its High Weald setting.</p> <p>Underpinning the policy is the Sandhurst Design Guidance and Codes, which draws on strategic (national and local) design guidance, to provide detailed guidance at the neighbourhood level. It will inform the development of sites allocated in the Local Plan as well as windfall development and extensions. The Sandhurst Design Guidance and Codes forms an integral part of the SNDP and hence is part of formal policy.</p> <p>The policy also describes and provides design principles applicable to the Sandhurst Conservation Area, which currently does not have an appraisal prepared for it.</p> <p>The use of trees is encouraged, as per national policy, as is the consideration of edge of settlement development and how it should be designed appropriately as it transitions to open countryside.</p>
POLICY S4: ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND	136, 162, 164,	<p>Policy S4 supports the national objective of designing development to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Notwithstanding the fact that such matters are largely controlled by the Building Regulations, the policy (supported by the Sandhurst Design Guidance and Codes) identifies a series of design features which would be strongly supported where they are</p>

DESIGN	165, 167	<p>incorporated into development. This includes features aimed at reducing carbon emissions, energy consumption and energy loss that should be incorporated into both new development and installed retrospectively into existing, often historic buildings.</p> <p>The policy also provides support for community-scale energy schemes with locally specific criteria against which they should be considered. This is particularly important given the National Landscape setting.</p>
POLICY S5: CONSERVING HERITAGE ASSETS	135, 202, 203, 207, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217	<p>Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is a key aim of national policy. The parish has a wealth of heritage assets, some of which are already protected by way of national designation. Policy S5 plans positively for the conservation and enjoyment of this local heritage. It also identifies five non-designated heritage assets that are considered to have historic value at the community level. The policy takes a proactive approach to tackling heritage that may be at risk.</p> <p>It recognises the role that rural lanes play, both in terms of contributing to local character and providing wildlife corridors. Such routes are an important part of this in the parish and should hence be carefully safeguarded against the negative impacts that may come with development. Finally, it recognises the contribution of farmsteads and oast houses to local character in this part of Kent.</p> <p>An associated action is to work with TWBC to develop an Appraisal for the Sandhurst Conservation Area.</p>
POLICY S6: SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKSPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOMEWORKING	85, 86, 88	<p>In a rural parish such as Sandhurst, there is inevitably a high proportion of residents choosing to work at home, either wholly or partially. This brings benefits in terms of reducing out-commuting. The policy supports the national objective of enabling sustainable growth and expansion in rural areas, where this can be undertaken in a sympathetic way. In particular it supports new and flexible working practices.</p>

POLICY S7: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN	135, 136, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 195	<p>This policy supports the national objective of ensuring that development contributes to and enhances the natural environment and biodiversity. It maps out, at the parish level, components of wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation through protecting designated and non-designated landscape assets.</p> <p>It recognises the importance of trees and the variety of roles they play, seeking to safeguard them against loss and planting of new ones.</p> <p>In line with the Environment Act, the policy requires developments to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%, although at least 20% is encouraged in line with advice from the Kent Nature Partnership. Where this cannot be achieved on-site, there is a desire for it to be delivered within the Parish in the first instance. The identification of biodiversity opportunity areas would be formally pursued by the Parish Council.</p> <p>The policy identifies, at a local level, the significant landscape features, such as trees, ponds and hedgerows that are particularly important within the parish context. These features should be retained and, where possible enhanced. The policy also provides guidance to applicants on how they can best incorporate open space within development as well as wildlife-friendly features.</p>
POLICY S8: LOCAL GREEN SPACE	106, 107, 108, 153 to 160,	The NPPF enables communities to designate spaces that are demonstrably special to them as Local Green Space. The policy identifies eight such spaces in the parish and provides the justification as to how each meets the NPPF criteria. This will ensure that these spaces are

	198	protected against inappropriate development.
POLICY S9: LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS	131 to 135, 187	<p>The NPPF states that neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of their area and explaining how these should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.</p> <p>This policy identifies 11 views/ viewpoints that are considered to be locally distinctive – either because they encompass a local landmark or notable landscape. The policy seeks to ensure that any development that takes place within the view ‘arcs’ limits its impact on the view itself and, where possible, enhances it.</p>
POLICY S10: DARK SKIES	96, 131, 135, 187, 198	<p>The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.</p> <p>One aspect of this is to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. Given its location within the High Weald National Landscape, the parish benefits from dark skies, which contribute positively to health, local wildlife and enjoyment of the area. The policy seeks to safeguard this important natural resource, where this does not comprise safety.</p>
POLICY S11: IMPROVING SAFE MOVEMENT AND PROMOTING	96, 105, 109, 110, 111,	This policy supports the NPPF objective of encouraging sustainable modes of transport by supporting the improvement of movement routes within the neighbourhood area that would enable people to access local facilities more easily and directly by foot (and, to a lesser extent by bike), rather than relying on less sustainable modes of transport. Equestrian

ACTIVE MODES OF TRAVEL	115, 116, 117, 135	<p>movement in the parish is fairly popular and this is also considered, particularly in terms of access to the wider surrounding countryside and in the context of there being very few bridleways. The policy seeks to ensure that development proposals link up to the movement route network and that existing public rights of way are protected, maintained and, where feasible, enhanced, to encourage greater and safer usage. It follows the 'walkable' neighbourhood concept, as promoted by a number of national bodies including the Town and Country Planning Association.</p> <p>The policy is supported by a series of associated projects to improve the network that could be discussed with the Highways Authority.</p>
POLICY S12: PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE PARKING	109	<p>Notwithstanding the focus on promoting active travel, in a rural parish such as Sandhurst, there is inevitably a high dependency on cars. The location of facilities is fairly spread out across Sandhurst village, which means that some residents are more reliant on using a car to access them. Furthermore, many of the properties are older and without off-road car parking, which means that residents are often parking on-street, causing congestion.</p> <p>This policy seeks to safeguard existing car parking and support new parking (off-road) where it will help to alleviate parking congestion. It also supports the provision of electric vehicle charging points in public locations, which will assist in effecting a shift toward less polluting vehicles. Finally, it supports the provision of safe and covered cycle parking facilities. This will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.</p>
POLICY S13: A VILLAGE HUB FOR SANDHURST	88, 90, 96, 98	<p>National planning policy sets out that planning policies should promote healthy, inclusive and safe places that support social interaction and the provision of local shops and other facilities. An aspiration in Sandhurst parish is the development of a community hub, central to the main village, which could offer a flexible community space for a range of activities. Whilst the policy does not allocate a specific site, should a proposal come forward, the policy will provide the mechanism through which to support such a project and sets out criteria</p>

		against which it would be considered.
POLICY S14: IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL FACILITIES, SPORT AND RECREATION	96, 98, 100, 101, 103, 104	The NPPF encourages policies that contribute to healthy, inclusive communities. The parish benefits from a range of local facilities valued by the community and this policy seeks to safeguard these from loss. In addition, it sets out particular additional amenities that would be supported in planning terms, as evidenced by the community engagement.

3. Basic condition (ii) - contribution to sustainable development

- 3.1. The NPPF states in paragraph 7 that *‘the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.’*
- 3.2. For the SNDP, sustainable development has provided the fundamental basis of each of its policies. The National Planning Practice Guidance advises that *‘sufficient and proportionate evidence should be presented on how the draft neighbourhood plan ... guides development to sustainable solutions’* (Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 072 Reference ID: 41-072-20140306).
- 3.3. Table 3 summarises how the overarching ambitions and policies in the SNDP contribute towards economic, social and environmental sustainable development, as defined in the NPPF. Many of the ambitions of the SNDP overlap the three strands of sustainability, so for the purposes of this document, the most relevant strand has been taken to illustrate conformity.

Table 3: Assessment of the SNDP ambitions and policies against sustainable development

Deliver economic sustainability
NPPF definition – ‘to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.’
SNDP Objectives: Objective 5: Sandhurst village centre and local economy: Established local businesses and new businesses are supported, including working from home. The village centre continues to provide a focal point for activity.
NP Policies: Policy S6: Supporting flexible workspaces and opportunities for homeworking
Commentary: The of the SNDP collectively seek to support the environment required for a vibrant and viable rural economy, for instance by supporting the continued provision of local services and amenities (which provide local employment) and supporting new ways of working, such as from home. The Plan recognises the role of Sandhurst village centre and a community hub is promoted here. In these ways, the Plan seeks to contribute to building a sustainable economy.
Deliver social sustainability
NPPF definition – ‘to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that

reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.'

SNDP Ambitions:

Objective 1: Sustainable development and housing: There are well-designed homes to meet the needs of the local community. They allow growth and adaptation to serve all phases of life, promoting health & wellbeing. The architecture uses passive energy and low carbon building materials and there is increased biodiversity and reduced carbon emissions for existing and proposed development.

Objective 3: Safe and active travel: Opportunities to improve the public rights of way network to encourage walking (and 'wheeling') and, where practical, cycling are optimised to encourage active travel for local journeys. Improvements to recreational horse-riding routes will be supported. There is the infrastructure to support electric vehicles.

Objective 4: Connected and supported communities: The existing facilities are safeguarded and, where necessary improved and expanded, to serve all needs – for health, social and wellbeing, local food produce, education, culture, retail, sport and recreation. They are inclusive spaces that connect and bring people together linked to active travel and green spaces. A community hub is supported.

NP Policies:

Policy S1: Location of development

Policy S2: Meeting local housing needs

Policy S11: Improving walking, cycling and equestrian opportunities

Policy S12: Publicly available electric vehicle charging

Policy S13: A village hub for Sandhurst

Policy S14: Improving opportunities for community, cultural, sporting and recreational facilities

Commentary:

The NPPF underlines the importance of supporting strong, vibrant, inclusive and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

The SNDP has been developed following community engagement to understand local priorities to contribute to this national objective. Whilst the Plan does not seek to allocate homes at this time (as it is considered and agreed with the local planning authorities that this will be adequately addressed through the emerging Local Plan process), it does focus on the type, mix, size, tenure and affordability of housing that should be supported in the parish, based on the findings of the local housing needs assessment, which offers a more nuanced picture compared to the borough as a whole.

The Plan includes a policy to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services to address the community's needs.

A key principle of the SNDP is to support the sustainable location of new development. It supports active travel principles, whereby residents should be able to access a range of facilities to serve their daily needs within a short time distance on foot (and to a lesser extent) by bike. This will support healthier lifestyles and could also help to reduce local traffic on the roads.

In these ways, the Plan aims to support social sustainability.

Deliver environmental sustainability

NPPF definition – *'to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy,'*

SNDP Ambitions:

Objective 2: Protecting the natural and built environment: The natural environment of the High Weald National Landscape is protected and celebrated. Green spaces that are important to the community are safeguarded and opportunities for biodiversity improvements are sought. There is a network of ecological corridors that connect through the villages and to the wider countryside. Space for a wide range of active and passive recreation, for all ages. The value of the parish's dark skies is recognised. The parish's historic buildings are protected and conserved. They are appreciated alongside contemporary architecture as part of our daily activities.

NP Policies:

Policy S3: Character and Design of development
Policy S4: Energy efficiency and design
Policy S5: Conserving heritage assets
Policy S7: Green and blue infrastructure and delivering biodiversity net gain
Policy S8: Local Green Space
Policy S9: Locally significant views
Policy S10: Dark skies

Commentary:

Policies to celebrate, protect and enhance the natural and built environment of the parish is an important element of the SNDP and conforms to the national aims set out in the NPPF.

A locally distinctive Sandhurst Design Guidance and Codes has been developed and forms an integral part of the plan, underpinning many of the policies. It sets out expectations including in relation to local character, design, biodiversity and environmental considerations.

In terms of local character, the plan seeks to consolidate all those elements that make the parish – and its individual settlements distinctive. Alongside existing designations, this includes the identification of non-designated heritage assets, locally important views and viewpoints, the network of sunken lanes and Kent farmsteads and oast houses.

It maps out the green (and blue) spaces and corridors at the local level that form a network of habitats, with a view to encouraging their protection, improvement and connection. Natural features distinctive to the parish are identified, to encourage their protection and for inclusion in the design of new development. In addition, a series of Local Green Spaces, considered to be demonstrably special to the community, are designated. Finally, the SNDP seeks to limit the impacts of development on the valued dark skies.

The Plan emphasises the need to promote more sustainable modes of transport in order to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions, while supporting healthy lifestyles.

In these ways, the Plan seeks to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment of the neighbourhood area.

- 3.4. As demonstrated in *Table 3*, the strategic objectives of the Plan are considered to comprise a balance of social, economic, and environmental goals. The policies in the Plan demonstrably contribute to sustainable development.

4. Basic condition (iii) - general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan

- 4.1. The policies of the SNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan for TWBC, excluding other Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.2. The adopted Development Plan comprises:
- The saved policies of the Local Plan 2006 - Remaining 2006 Local Plan saved policies are listed in Appendix 1 of the [Site Allocations Local Plan document](#)
 - The [Core Strategy Development Document](#) (adopted 2010)
 - The [Site Allocations Local Plan](#) (adopted 2016)
 - [The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030](#) (adopted 2016, modified in 2020) - this is currently subject to further review and examination (submitted for examination in May 2024).
 - 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans across the borough

A new Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells

- 4.3. Whilst the policies of the SNDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan, a new Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells borough is currently being developed. The latest [Local Development Scheme](#) (October 2024) sets out the proposed timetable for the emerging Local Plan and states that the intention is to adopt the new Local Plan in May 2025. Once adopted, the new Local Plan will replace the saved policies of the 2006 Local Plan, the Core Strategy (2010) and the Site Allocations Local Plan (adopted 2016).
- 4.4. The emerging Local Plan is being progressed with a 10-year rather than a 15-year Housing Land Supply. This means that TWBC is committed to a partial early review of the Local Plan to seek ways of meeting growth needs for the period beyond the 10-year post adoption of the Local Plan. The new Local Plan is now seeking to deliver 10,100 dwellings over the 10-years post adoption.
- 4.5. The proposed policies within the emerging Local Plan have been carefully considered as part of this statement, to identify areas of conformity.
- 4.6. It is confirmed that there are no policies in the strategic documents relating to minerals and waste that are of relevance to the SNDP.
- 4.7. *Table 4* sets out which adopted Local Plan policies each SNDP policy conforms to. Note that in the adopted Core Strategy (2010), strategic policies are prefixed with 'Core Policy'. In the Submission Local Plan, they are prefixed with 'STR'.

Table 4: Relevant strategic policies

Policy Title and Reference	Adopted policies	New Local Plan proposed policies	Commentary
POLICY S1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): LBD1, H5, H8, H9-H11, H13 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policies 1 and 14.	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): PSTR/SA 1, AL/SP 1, AL/SP 2STR 1, STR 2, STR 3, STR 4,	<p>The strategic planning policies set out the level of growth to be accommodated across the borough and broad principles that should be applied when considering proposals. They define the Built Up area for the neighbourhood area, due to be amended in the SLP.</p> <p>The SNDP itself does not allocate sites as these are being progressed at the strategic level via the SLP. These sites, combined with windfall allowance, are anticipated to deliver the level of growth required at the local level to meet local housing need, while contributing to the strategic need.</p> <p>Policy S1 provides a spatial strategy for the parish, aligning to the strategic policies in terms of safeguarding the natural environment and ensuring that development in the High Weald National Landscape is carefully considered. It will ensure that new development is concentrated within the Built up area boundaries and that residents have access to commercial and community facilities. It adds additional local detail, for instance by seeking to restrict sprawl and coalescence between individual settlements in the parish and promoting the walkable neighbourhood concept, to ensure that all new development is planned in a sustainable way.</p>
POLICY S2: MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): n/a Core Strategy (2010): Core Policy 6	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): PSTR/SA 1, STR 1, H1, H3, H6, H8	<p>The policy seeks to ensure that housing proposals meet the specific housing needs of the parish in terms of size, tenure, affordability, and the needs of people at different stages of their lives. It adds additional local detail to the evidence compiled at the strategic level, being based on the Sandhurst Housing Needs Assessment.</p>

POLICY S3: CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): EN1, EN5, TP5 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policies 4 and 5	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): PSTR/SA 1, STR 2, STR 4, STR 6	The policy adds additional local detail to the strategic policies, seeking to ensure that development is 'in-keeping' with and contributes positively to local character through high quality design. It does this by defining the character of the area within the Sandhurst Design Guidance and Codes, a document which forms an integral part of the SNDP policy. It sets out parish level guidance to which new development should adhere.
POLICY S4: ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND DESIGN	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): EN1 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policies 4 and 5	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, STR 7	The policy sets out detail at a neighbourhood level about how development proposals can contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change. It seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials, and energy use. This will help to mitigate against climate change and contribute to achieving the national target of zero net carbon by 2050. Sustainable design policy has evolved greatly since the publication of the adopted Local Plan documents and, in the absence of more recently adopted Local Plans, this policy seeks to align itself to the national objectives.
POLICY S5: CONSERVING HERITAGE ASSETS	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): EN5, EN10 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policy 4	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, STR 8	The policy recognises the important contribution that the Conservation Area and heritage assets (both designated and non-designated) make to the local character and distinctiveness of the parish and its settlements. It advises that, where possible, they should be conserved, enhanced, and celebrated. In particular, it adds local detail to strategic policy by identifying five non-designated heritage assets. The heritage value of the rural lanes, farmsteads and oast houses is also recognised.
POLICY S6: SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKSPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): n/a Core Strategy (2010): Core	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, ED2, ED4, ED12	Local Plan policy supports the strengthening of the rural economy through encouraging the re-use of surplus rural buildings for employment use in accordance with the approach set out in Core Policy 14: Development in the Villages and Rural Areas. Policy S6 seeks to provide a locally distinctive version of this policy, to encourage new flexible workspaces and home working.

HOMEWORKING	Policies 7 and 14		
POLICY S7: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): EN13, EN25 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policies 7 and 14	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, ED2, ED4, ED12	<p>The policy addresses the green and blue infrastructure assets of the parish, including their importance in combatting pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in offsetting the effects of air pollution. The policy conforms to strategic policies, which seek to safeguard and enhance biodiversity and landscapes across the wider geographic area. It provides additional local detail by mapping out, at the local level, the network of green infrastructure, including wildlife corridors. It supports an uplifted net gain in biodiversity, where possible, in line with the advice of the Kent Nature Partnership and suggests that any net gain delivered off-site should be located within the parish where possible.</p> <p>The policy adds additional local detail to strategic policies by identifying the specific features of the landscape (both designated and non-designated) that should be safeguarded against loss. Such features might also provide inspiration for development proposals seeking to integrate natural features within their schemes. The policy sets out specific guidance on trees, hedgerows and the use of wildlife friendly features in design. It also provides guidance to development in terms of the use of green space.</p>
POLICY S8: LOCAL GREEN SPACE	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): n/a Core Strategy (2010): Core Policy 4	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, STR 5	The policy identifies eight Local Green Spaces that are demonstrably special to the community and evidences these in the context of the criteria set out in the NPPF. This adds additional local detail to the policies of the Local Plan.

POLICY S9: LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT VIEWS	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): EN1 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policies 4 and 5	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 7, STR 8	Strategic policy recognises the contribution that views can make to the character of an area, helping to create a 'sense of place' and identity for local people. The policy adds additional local detail by identifying 11 views that are considered to be particularly significant in the parish – because they take in a landscape feature or historic asset – that epitomises the character and place.
POLICY S10: DARK SKIES	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): EN4 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policy 4	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, STR 8, EN8	Strategic policies acknowledge the importance of protecting darks skies, including their role in supporting biodiversity. The SNDP policy supports this, providing detailed guidance on how developers can contribute positively to this using national guidance. This will ensure that light pollution is minimised without compromising safety for residents.
POLICY S11: IMPROVING SAFE MOVEMENT AND PROMOTING ACTIVE MODES OF TRAVEL	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): TP1, TP3 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policy 3	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 5, STR 6, TP2, EN21	The policy supports the strategic aims of encouraging, as far as possible, sustainable transport modes and active travel. Opportunities for greater linkages and improvements are described where this would further assist active travel. This will help deliver sustainable development by providing the infrastructure that would allow access to key facilities without recourse to having to make car journeys.
POLICY S12: PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE PARKING	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): TP9 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policy 3	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, STR 5, STR 6, TP4	The policy recognises that there is a need to provide adequate parking provision locally, as some people are not in a position to walk/cycle on all occasions. It seeks to ensure that adequate provision is made for electric vehicle charging, notably in public locations, which will assist in effecting a shift toward less polluting vehicles. It also supports cycle parking provision.

POLICY S13: A VILLAGE HUB FOR SANDHURST	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): CS6, R1 Core Strategy (2010):	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, STR 5	The policy adds additional local detail to the strategic policies by setting out support for this specific type of flexible shared space, which will contribute to local facilities.
POLICY S14: IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL FACILITIES, SPORT AND RECREATION	Saved Local Plan policies (2006): OSSR2, CS6, R1 Core Strategy (2010): Core Policy 8	Submission Local Plan (not yet adopted): STR 2, STR 5	The policy safeguards existing community facilities and sets out specific detail on additional ones that would be particularly supported based on the feedback from the community. In this way, it adds additional local detail to the strategic policies.

5. Basic Condition (iv) - conformity with EU obligations

- 4.1 The SNDP, and the process under which it was made, conforms to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (EU 2001/42/EC) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).
- 4.2 In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, as the responsible authority, determined in May 2024 that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required as the SNDP's policies – individually or collectively - are unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
- 4.3 A copy of the body of the report of the Screening Statement is contained within the evidence base submitted alongside the Submission Version SNDP.

6. Basic condition (v) - conformity with the prescribed conditions

- 4.4 Under Directive 92/43/EEC, also known as the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora'), it must be ascertained whether the SNDP is likely to breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Assessments under the regulations are known as Habitats Regulations Assessments ("HRA"). An appropriate assessment ("AA") is required only if the Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European protected species or site. To ascertain whether it is necessary to undertake an assessment, a screening process is followed.
- 4.5 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, as the responsible authority, determined in May 2024 that the SNDP is unlikely to have significant impact on European sites and therefore does not require a full HRA to be undertaken.
- 4.6 In addition to conforming to its EU obligations, the SNDP does not breach and is not otherwise incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared and forms part of the Evidence Base for the Plan.
- 4.7 A copy of the body of the report of the Screening Statement is contained within the evidence base submitted alongside the Submission Version SNDP.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The relevant basic conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the Sandhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan and all the policies therein. It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the SNDP complies with Paragraph 8(1) (a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.