

Green Belt Compensatory Improvements

to support the development of
TUDELEY VILLAGE

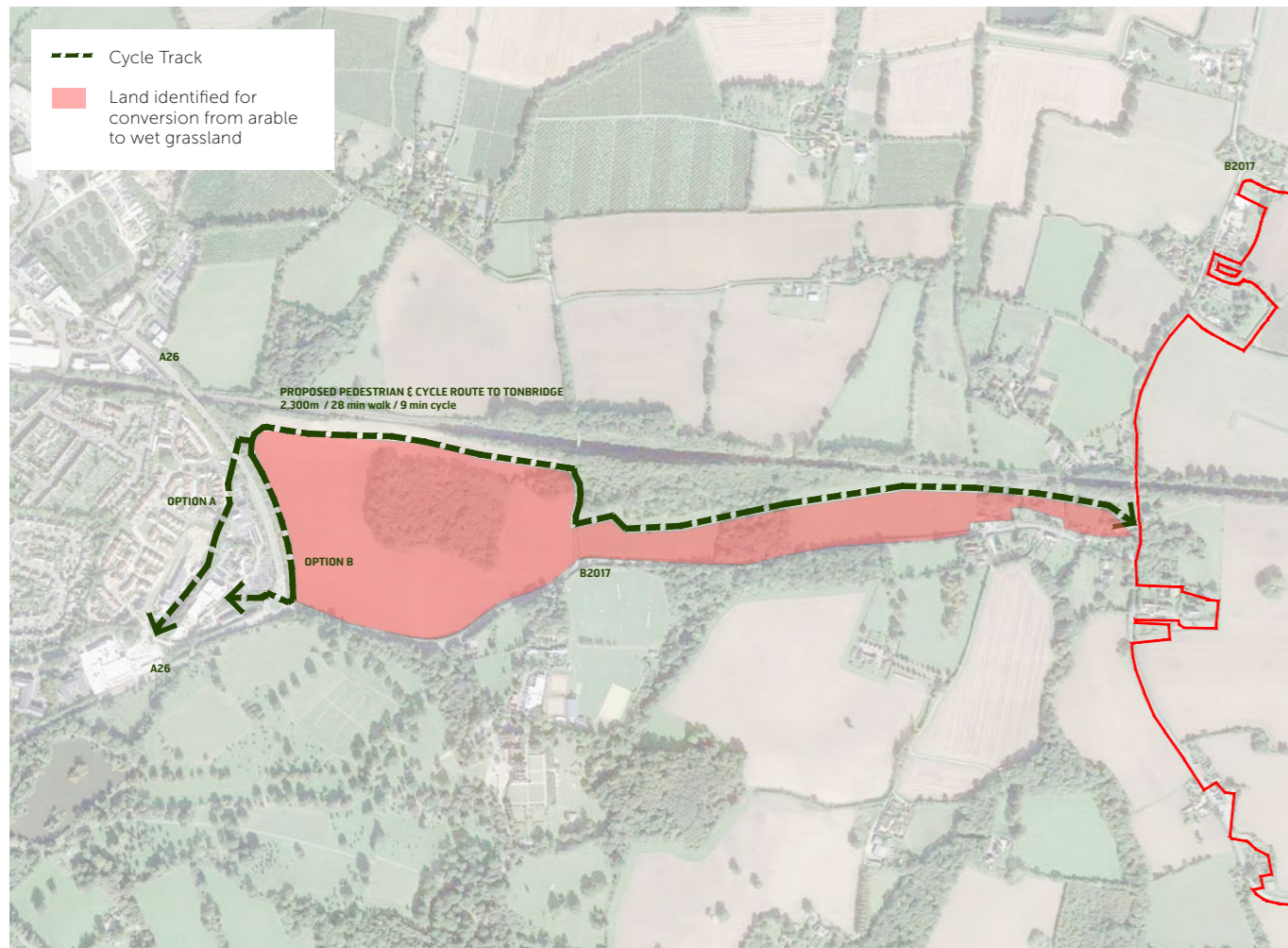
May 2022

THE
HADLOW
ESTATE

Green Belt Compensatory Improvements

Both the Tudeley Village Delivery Strategy, published in December 2020, and the Statement of Common Ground between Hadlow Estate and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, published in October 2021, outline proposals by Hadlow Estate to make compensatory improvements to areas of the Green Belt within its ownership outwith the Tudeley Village site. The Estate has undertaken work to evidence its proposals for offsetting the impact of removing land from the Green Belt by improving the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land, alongside the delivery of further benefits in terms of landscape, ecology, heritage and flooding in conjunction with delivery of the Tudeley Village allocation. They include:

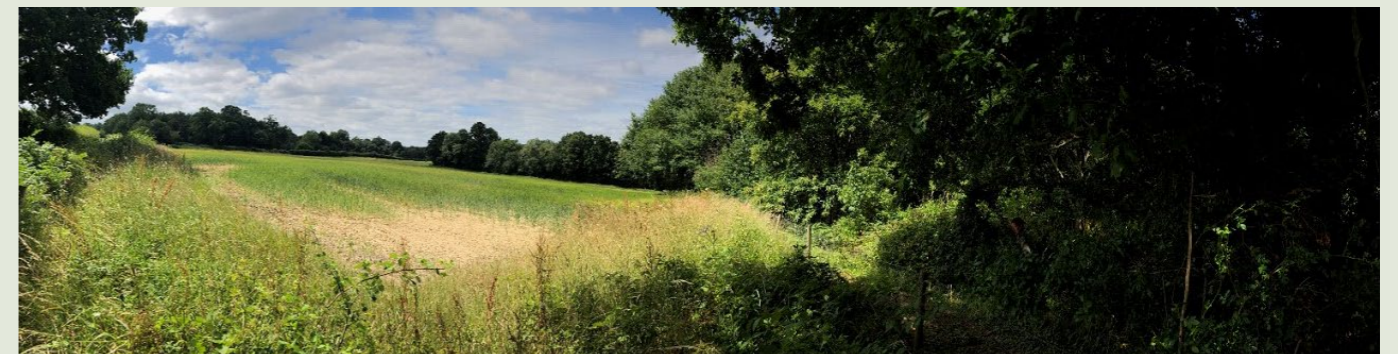
1. New pedestrian and cycle path between Tudeley Village and Tonbridge.
 2. Conversion of fields within the ownership of Hadlow Estate to the west of the site between Tudeley Village and Tonbridge, north of B2017 and south of rail line, from arable to permanent grassland.
 3. New and enhanced pedestrian routes within defined areas to the south of the site.
 4. Landscape and visual mitigation comprising a range of measures including setting back certain edges of development along the B2017 and for the landscape treatment of these set-back areas; multiple scattered individual trees and copses within the Medway Valley to the north of the allocated site; and the provision of Community Woodland between the proposed secondary school site, within the allocation, and Capel Primary School.
 5. Green Belt, landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity enhancements including planting to the south, south-east and south-west of the B2017 on land owned by the Hadlow Estate. This will include converting fields from arable to meadow grass, scrub, traditional orchard and wildflower meadow, aligned with Kent Biodiversity Action Plan habitat targets; and hedges with scattered hedgerow trees and copses that either reinforce existing hedgerows or are planted in alignment with former hedgerows.
 6. Re-instatement of ditch to south of B2017 and enhancement to create SUDS basin to reduce flooding risk.
 7. Long-term commitment to preservation and management of Tudeley Woods Reserve.
 8. Development of SUDS features and Natural Flood Management to alleviate flood risk and enhance biodiversity.
 9. Improvements to existing permanent ponds across the estate (on AONB Southern Field Boundaries, across the Estate, and on Medway and Mill Stream as part of wider Estate ecology strategy.
- An explanation of each proposal is set out below together with reference photographs and plans to help illustrate the area in question.



Plan 1

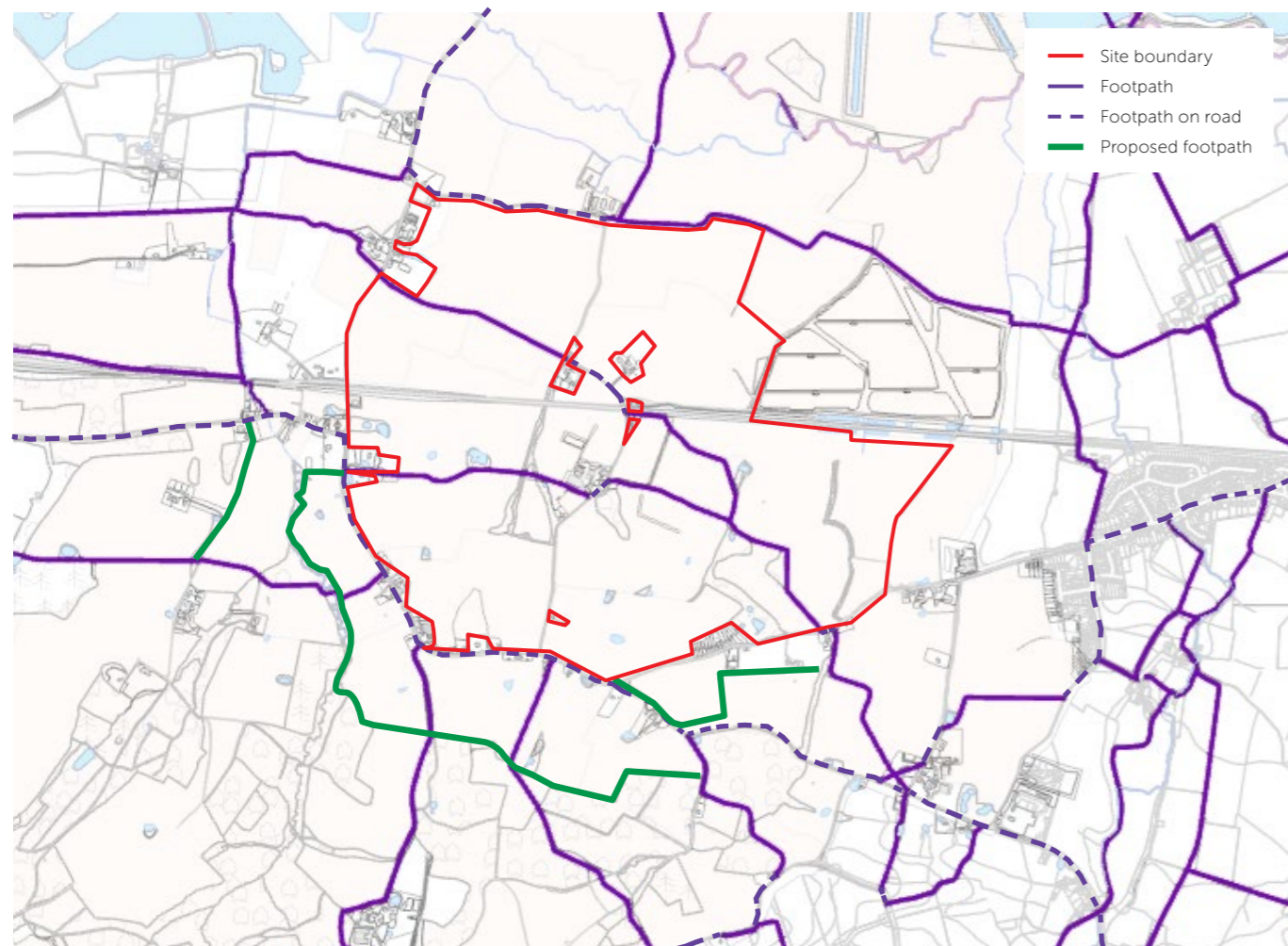
1. New pedestrian and cycle path between Tudeley Village and Tonbridge

Between the western edge of Tudeley Village and the edge of Tonbridge, the Estate proposes a pedestrian and cycle route, entirely separate from vehicular routes. The route is based on existing traces on the land and can be delivered entirely on Hadlow Estate land up to the boundary of Tonbridge at the A26 Woodgate Way. This off-line pedestrian and cycle link between Tudeley Village and Tonbridge would be built during Phase 1 of the Village development. The initiative will help promote wider connections in the local area, which do not rely on existing roads. From the village centre, it is estimated that the journey to Tonbridge Station will be 22 minutes by bicycle. The route is indicated on Plan 1.



2. Conversion of fields west of site, north of B2017 and south of rail line from arable to permanent grassland

Covering the area between Tudeley Village, Tonbridge, the B2017 and the railway line, and traversed by the proposed pedestrian and cycle path between Tudeley Village and Tonbridge, this area will be converted from arable to permanent grassland or wet grassland, delivering additional biodiversity benefits.



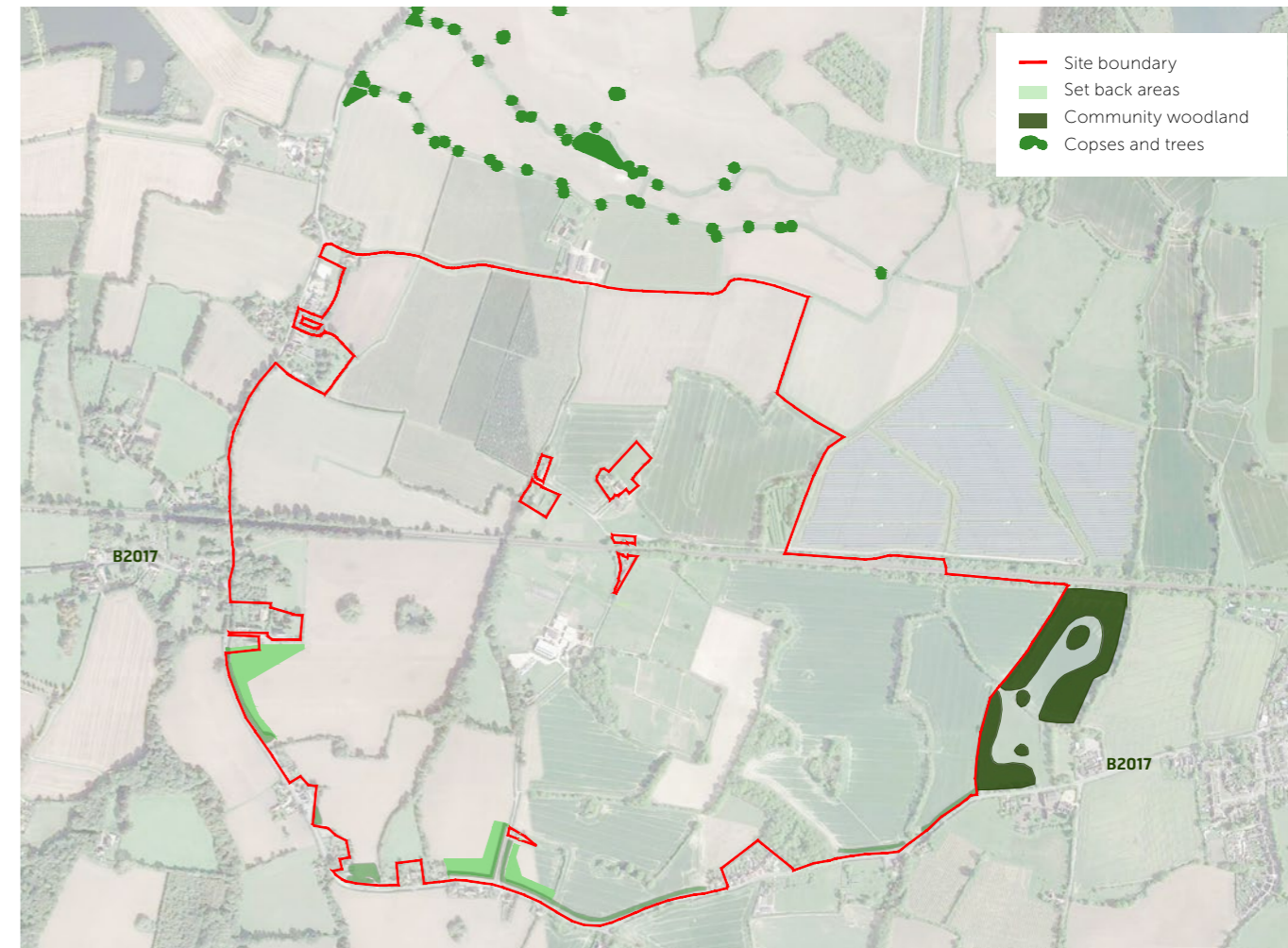
Plan 2

3. New and enhanced pedestrian routes within defined areas to the south of the site

Hadlow Estate has identified opportunities for the establishment of new or enhanced pedestrian routes extending from Tudeley Village, on land owned by the Estate. As indicated on Plan 2 above, these include a new route from the south of the settlement, connected to existing footpaths, plus the connection of two routes which run parallel from westward from the site towards Tonbridge. Access to safe pedestrian and cycle routes encourages sustainable travel choices and improves access to Green Belt land, including existing routes like the 13-mile Pembury Circular Walk.

In consultation with the KCC PRow team, works to the existing footpath network on the Estate will be carried out to improve accessibility. This will include the replacement of styles with gates, improved surface treatments and improved drainage.

Described in more detail at Point 7, Hadlow Estate will make a long-term commitment to the preservation and management of Tudeley Woods as a nature reserve. This will secure public access to 4.5 miles of footpaths within that woodland.



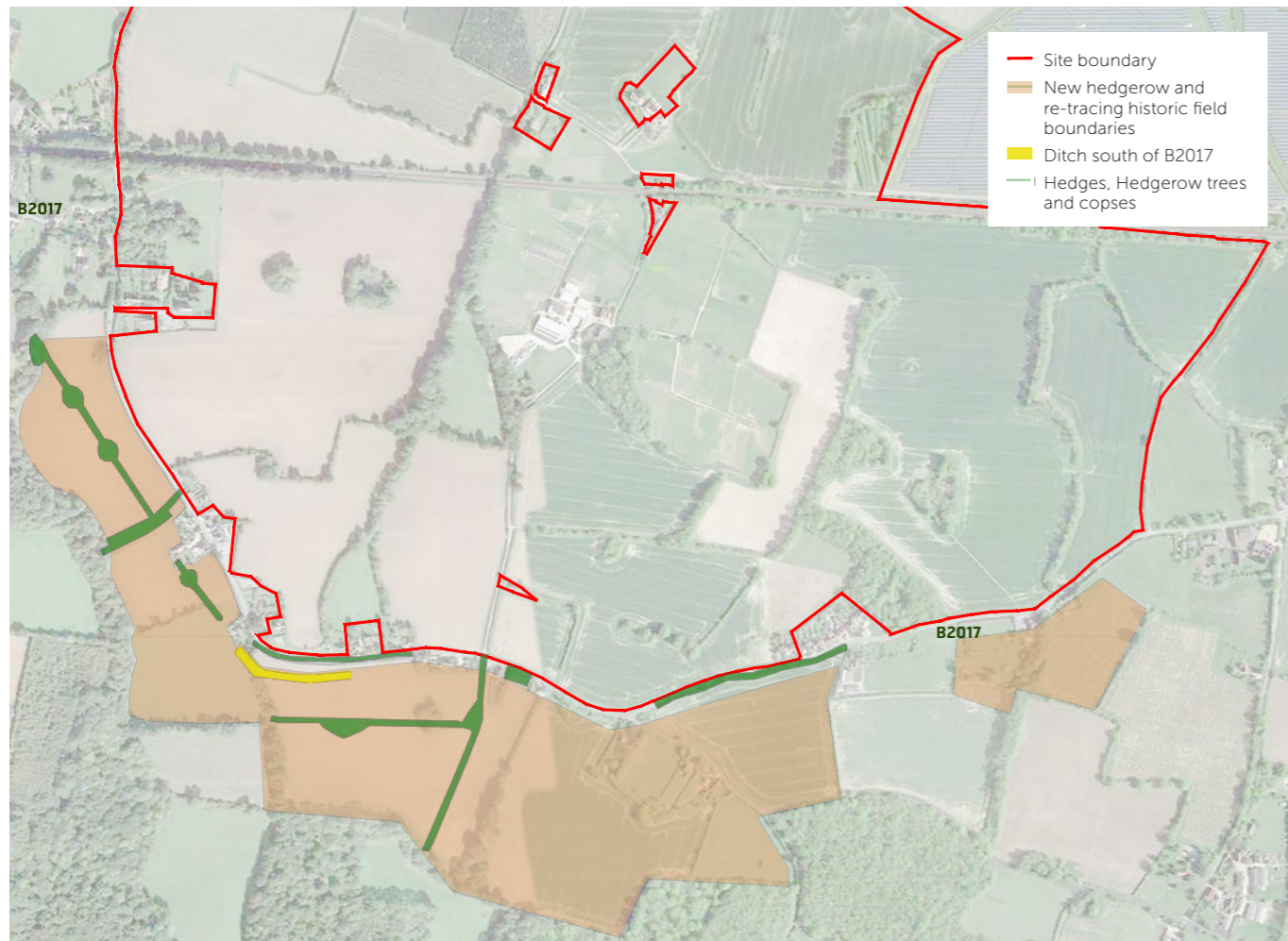
Plan 3

4. Landscape and Visual Mitigation

Landscape and visual mitigation measures have been proposed to offset the release of Green Belt land at Tudeley Village and enhance the remaining Green Belt land adjacent to the site. These include:

- Strengthening the B2017 boundary by enhancing hedges and the introduction of woodland copses and belts. This is achievable both within the site boundary on land which fronts the B2017, as shown at Plan 3, and on land to the south and west of the development within the ownership of the Hadlow Estate – see Plan 4. This will have a dual role of mitigating the effect of Tudeley Village on the setting of the AONB;
- Reducing the urbanising effect of development along the B2017 through use of set-back and appropriately designed road infrastructure to maintain the rural character of the road, and gradation in scale of built form, with lower density development to the periphery and in vicinity of the railway and B2017;

- Multiple scattered individual trees and copses within the Medway Valley to the north of the site; and
- The creation of a Community Woodland between the proposed secondary school site, within the allocation, and Capel Primary School.



Plan 4

5. Green Belt, landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity enhancements

Hadlow Estate propose a series of enhancements on land within its ownership to the south, south-east and south-west of the B2017 to offset the release of Green Belt land at Tudeley Village, enhance the remaining Green Belt land, and provide a range of additional benefits.

It is proposed to convert a number of arable fields within Estate ownership, marked on Plan 4, to a range of habitats including meadow grass, scrub, traditional orchard and wildflower meadow, with precise details to be determined in collaboration with TWBC and statutory stakeholders.

Traditional orchards, for example, are a distinctive, yet rapidly disappearing, part of the County's heritage. They make a significant contribution to biodiversity and local distinctiveness, not simply in

terms of the varieties of orchard trees, but also in terms of the local landscape and culture. The traditional orchard is a largely lost landscape, though core to the identity of the area around Tudeley Village. Due to changes in the rural economy, many have been grubbed and converted to arable or improved grassland. The Kent Biodiversity Plan objectives include halting the continuing loss of old orchards, restoring and enhancing existing traditional orchards (especially in the main fruit growing areas), creating more community orchards and creating new orchards and plats along traditional lines.

This proposal would also add to biodiversity, local distinctiveness and wider landscape amenity value to this area in close proximity to the proposed development. It could have a further benefit of managing to slow over-land surface water run-off rates, which could in turn contribute benefit in terms of reducing flood risk arising from extreme rainfall situations.

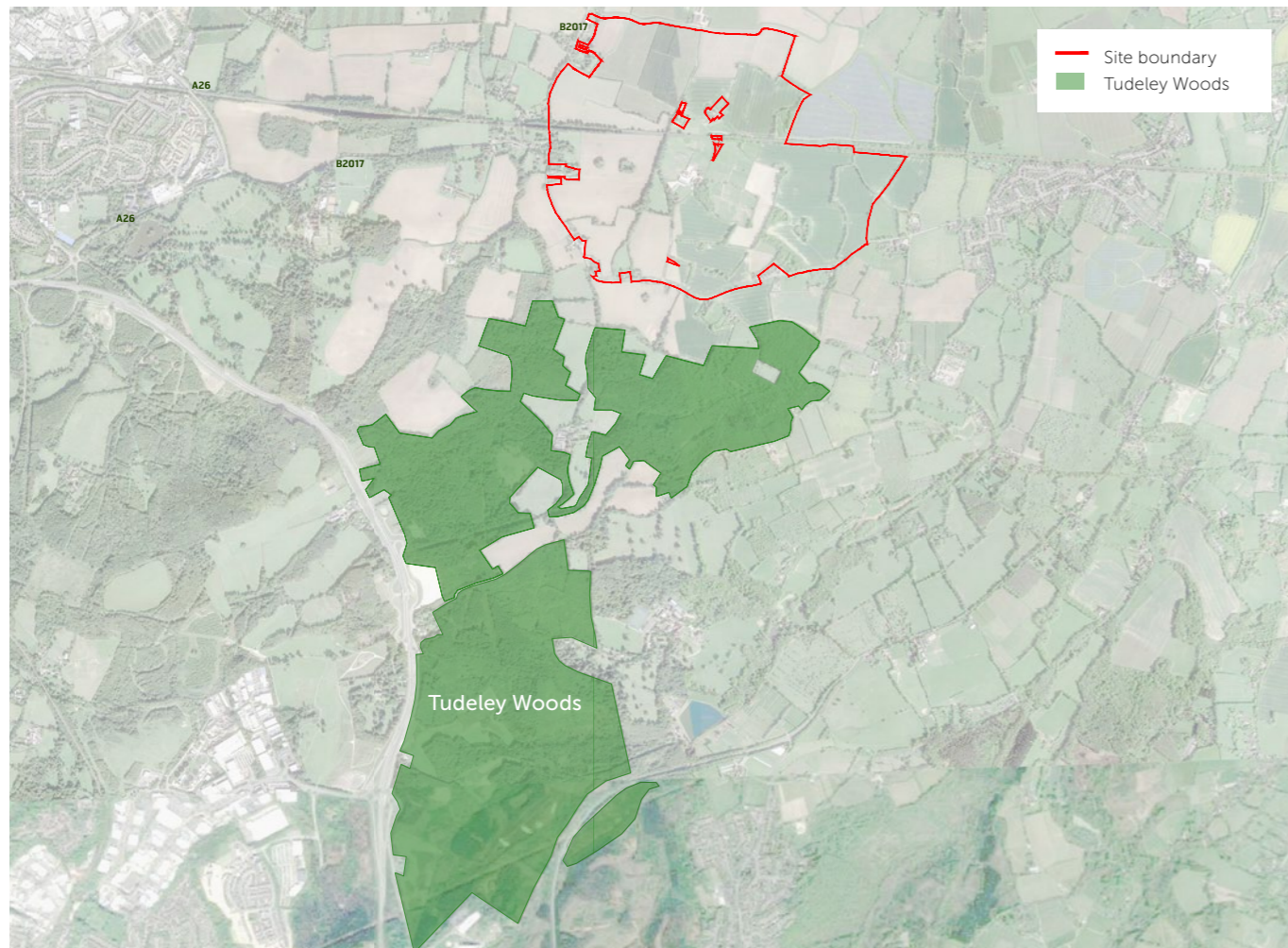


Aerial photo from south of the B2017 looking towards the western part of the site

Hadlow Estate also proposes improvements to existing hedgerows with scattered hedgerow trees and copses, plus the establishment of additional hedgerows on land to the south and south-west of the site in alignment with historic hedgerows which have been cleared. In intensively farmed areas, hedgerows can be the most significant semi-natural habitat, acting as wildlife corridors that are essential for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. They are a refuge for a great many woodland and farmland plants and animals and are especially important for butterflies, moths, farmland birds, bats and dormice. New hedgerow planting and re-tracing historic field boundaries in the fields adjacent to the southside of the B2017 would enrich the hedgerow habitat, benefiting the landscape and ecology. Species-rich, high quality hedgerows also have the potential to screen the development from viewpoints within the AONB – a further broader benefit.

6. Re-instatement of ditch to south of B2017 and enhancement to create SUDS basin to reduce flooding risk

Where the Estate has control of land adjacent to the boundary of the B2017 to the south, there is an opportunity to re-instate ditches and create SUDS basin facilities to offer further flood risk management from surface run-off from the higher land to the south i.e. that outside of the allocation. Plan 4 illustrates the potential for this improvement.



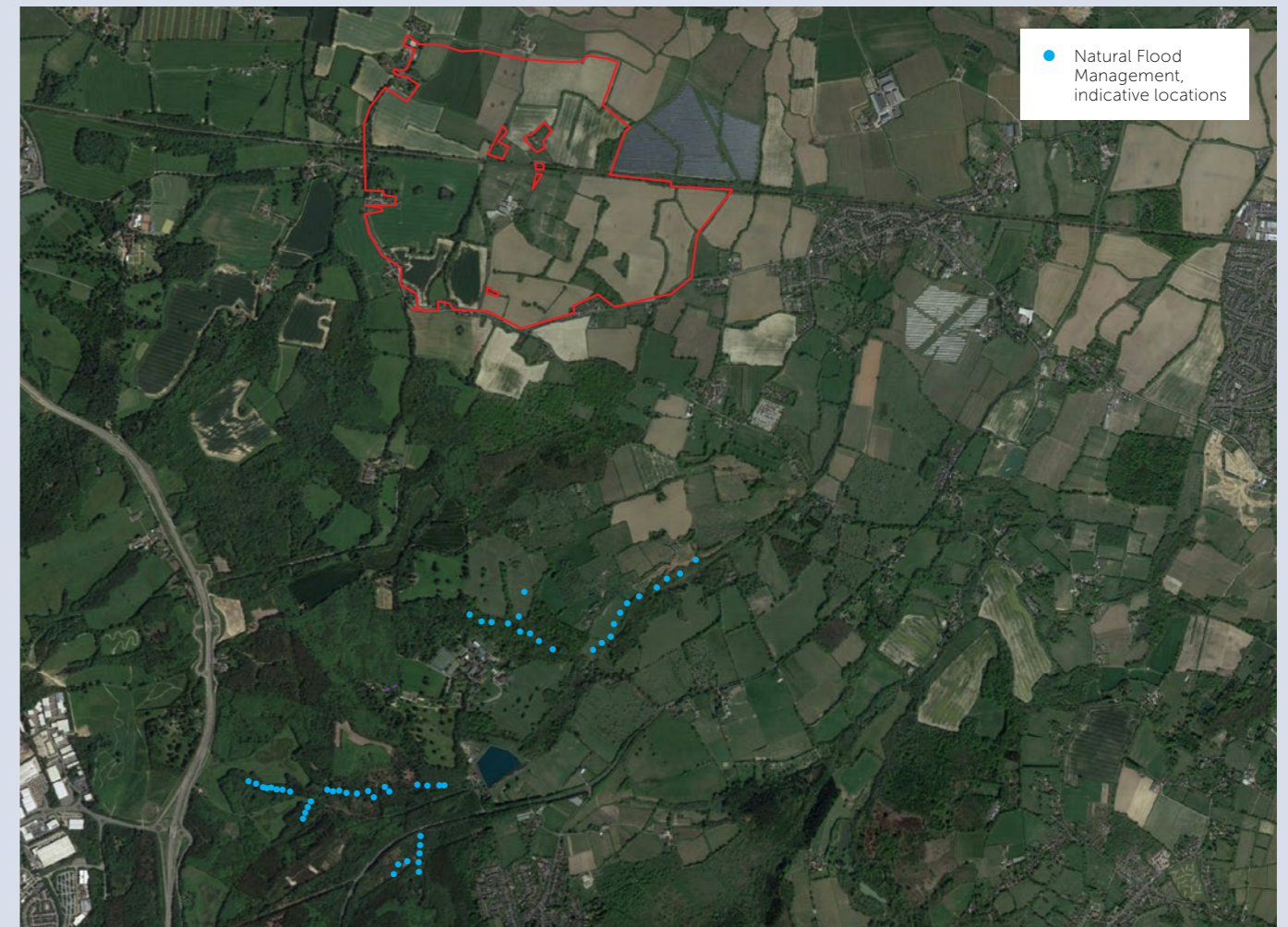
Plan 5

7. Long-term commitment to preservation and management of Tudeley Woods Reserve

Tudeley Woods, an area of ancient, semi-natural mixed woodland owned by Hadlow Estate, is currently managed as a Nature Reserve in conjunction with the RSPB. The woodland, highlighted on Plan 5, is crisscrossed with a number of ancient drovers sunken paths, footpaths and rides, as well as three nature trails, which give access for people to enjoy the Nature Reserve. As part of the grant of planning permission for Tudeley, the Estate would propose to undertake the following:

- Put in place a 30-year commitment to provide for the long-term security of the Tudeley Woods Reserve, meaning that permissive access to paths and trails through the woods would be secured through this period. A commitment of this duration would result in longer-term planning and management of the Reserve and greater certainty that conservation efforts and public access will endure over time.

- Further proposed improvements include:
 - Pond creation at Decoy Pond Cottages
 - A programme of Rhododendron clearance
 - Birch regeneration clearance on the main heathland
 - Wider heathland regeneration works
 - Support for the diversification of species with particular emphasis on the restoration of native species



Plan 6

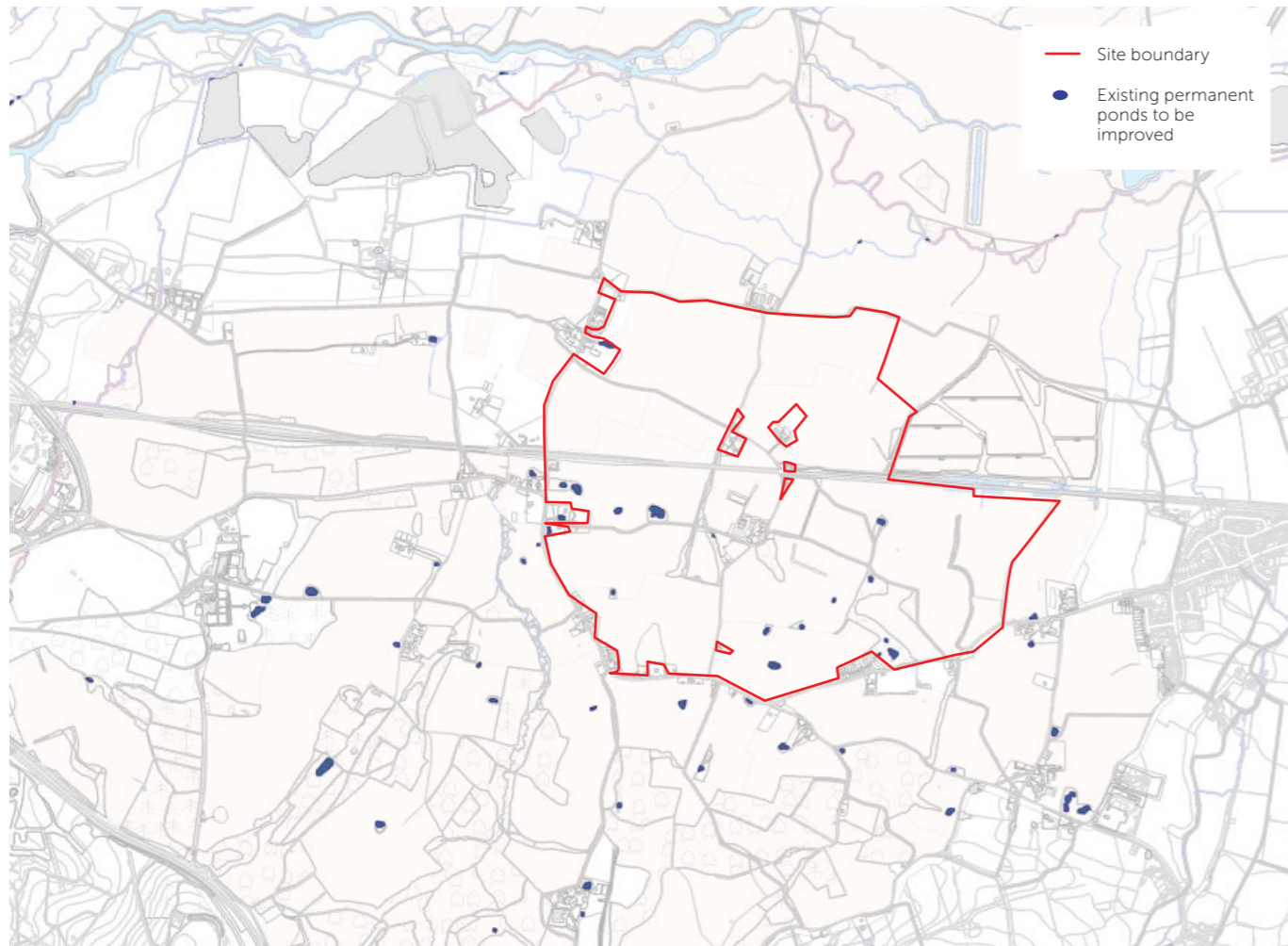
8. Development of SUDS features and Natural Flood Management to alleviate flood risk and enhance biodiversity

Hadlow Estate has installed Natural Flood Management measures, such as leaky dams, to reduce and control flood surges in the area. Such features force water to disperse onto the forest floor and infiltrate rather than coalesce into a stream. This, thereby, increases the retention time of the catchment and can alleviate flooding. Further NFM projects will be pursued. The Estate would propose to retain and, where possible, add further installations to further enhance the flood management and biodiversity benefits from the leaky dams.

The Estate is also aware of ongoing discussions between TWBC and the Environment Agency around the potential for further flood mitigation measures to be implemented in the vicinity of Sychem Lane and in association with the proposed new link road to the south of Five Oak Green. The Estate is content to support the principle of these measures being implemented on Estate land and so has included this opportunity within the package of compensatory improvements set out in this note.



Above: Natural Flood Management measures such as leaky dams reduce and control flood surges in the area.



Plan 7

9. Improvements to existing permanent ponds across the estate (on AONB Southern Field Boundaries, across the Estate, and on Medway and Mill Stream as part of wider Estate ecology strategy

Hadlow Estate propose a programme of more intensive management of these key permanent pond features as part of its wider strategy of ecological land management. The works are likely to include, but not be limited to: the cutting back of undergrowth and overgrowth which may be effecting the ecological value of the water features; selective coppicing and tree canopy management where appropriate to improve sun and daylight penetration; and the installation of bird box and other features to encourage species welfare. Plan 6 highlights the location of the key water features in question.

Broader Benefits

The Green Belt compensatory interventions have a range of broader benefits – whether this is to landscape, biodiversity, flooding, and access. These are captured in the matrix compiled below.

Proposals	Potential Benefits				
	AONB Mitigation	Green Belt Compensatory Measures	Biodiversity Net Gain	Flooding	Public Access
Options for on-site and off-site works under consideration					
1. New pedestrian and cycle path connecting the site to Tonbridge		✓			✓
2. Conversion of fields west of site, north of B2017 and south of rail line from arable to wet grassland.		✓	✓	✓	✓
3. New and enhanced pedestrian routes within defined areas to the south of the site		✓			✓
4. Landscape and Visual Mitigation	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5. Green Belt, landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity enhancements	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6. Re-instatement of ditch to south of B2017 and enhancement to create SUDS basin to reduce flooding risk.		✓	✓	✓	
7. Long-term commitment to preservation and management of Tudeley Woods Reserve.		✓	✓		✓
8. Development of SUDS features and Natural Flood Management to alleviate flood risk and enhance biodiversity		✓	✓	✓	
9. Improvements to existing permanent ponds across the estate (on AONB Southern Field Boundaries, across the Estate, and on Medway and Mill Stream as part of wider Estate ecology strategy.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Delivery

Hadlow Estate owns considerable land contiguous with the Tudeley Village site, within the Medway floodplain to the north and around Tudeley Woods to the south. By virtue of these wider landholdings, the Estate has been able to put forward the following proposals for Green Belt compensatory improvements outwith the Tudeley site as a means to offset the release of the Tudeley Village site from the existing Green Belt, in addition to on-site measures to the same effect. This land and habitats within it have a significant and perhaps unique potential for environmental and biodiversity improvements, as well as opportunities to enhance accessibility to the Green Belt. This is a special opportunity to secure improvements to the Green Belt, as the Statement of Common Ground between Hadlow Estate and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council notes.

The proposals set out in this document explain in more detail the mitigation measures Hadlow Estate has outlined in its Delivery Strategy and Statement of Common Ground with TWBC. The Estate's ownership of broader areas of Green Belt land contiguous with the Tudeley Village site provides a rare opportunity to secure the delivery of compensatory improvement to the Green Belt. Subject to detailed consideration and engagement with TWBC, compensatory improvements to the Green Belt will be detailed as part of the planning application for Tudeley Village and will be secured through legal agreement, together with a programme of phased implementation.

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