

Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2038



Submission (Regulation 15) Draft

Horsmonden Parish Council with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, June 2022

<http://horsmondennp.co.uk/>

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Glossary

The terms below are used throughout this plan.

These bodies are frequently referred to:

| | |
|------|---|
| KCC | Kent County Council who are responsible for highways, minerals and waste plan, social services and education etc in the borough |
| PC | Horsmonden Parish Council, the local village parish council who has the authority to produce a neighbourhood plan |
| SG | The Steering Group appointed by the Parish Council to assist in pulling together this neighbourhood plan |
| TWBC | Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, the Local Planning Authority |

Certain key documents are regularly mentioned:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| SLP | The emerging new Local Plan being produced by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council containing policies relating to development throughout the whole of the Borough to 2038, including Horsmonden. SLP refers to the Submission draft Local Plan was published on TWBC's website on 1st November 2021 and submitted for independent examination to start in Spring 2022. The finally adopted plan may differ from the SLP. |
| HNP | Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan (ie this plan) containing policies specific to development within the parish of Horsmonden |
| Site Assessments | Site Options Assessment undertaken by AECOM, October 2020, analysing the suitability of various sites promoted in Horsmonden for development |

Consultation events and surveys have been held to inform this plan:

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|-----------------|--|
| Exhibition | Development Exhibition, Autumn 2018 |
| HN Survey | Housing Needs Survey undertaken by Action for Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK), January 2020 |
| Questionnaire | Household questionnaire, Winter 2018/19 |
| Visioning Event | Village Visioning Event, April 2018 |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Workshops | Themed community workshops that took place in Spring and Summer 2019 |
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These key planning terms are used throughout:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Affordable Housing | Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). See end of document for full government (NPPF) definition. |
| AONB | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| NCA | National Character Area |
| NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework |

Introduction

1. This Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by Horsmonden Parish Council (the PC) which is the 'Qualifying Body' permitted by government to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The main part of the work has been carried out by a Steering Group (SG) which is a working group of the PC comprising residents and two parish councillors.
2. Horsmonden PC applied to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) for the designation of a neighbourhood area under The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The area proposed covers the whole of the parish area of Horsmonden and was the first step for Horsmonden PC in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. TWBC approved the Neighbourhood Area on 24 November 2017.

Sustainable development

3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states 'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'
4. Horsmonden Parish Council, the first tier of local government, has its own Sustainable Development Policy which states: 'Through our actions and our behaviour, we aim to equally promote the three aspects of sustainable development: social; environment and economic whilst maintaining the character of the parish and without causing detriment to any aspect.' For planning matters, this means: 'all developments (large and small) are designed and built with sustainability in mind. Where possible, properties should include consideration to high sustainability targets in line with the government's 25 Year Environment Plan that aspires towards a low carbon lifestyle.'
5. The Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) has been written with these goals in mind and will, in each chapter, set out how development can be achieved more sustainably within the parish.

The role of neighbourhood plans in planning

6. Planning policy in England is set out by the government's NPPF (with a latest revision published in July 2021). However, in September 2020 the government proposed radical changes to the planning system in the White Paper "Planning for the Future". This led to widespread concerns being expressed, including by the PC that made a formal response to the White Paper which is available on the PC's website (www.horsmonden-pc.gov.uk/Planning_33517.aspx).
7. Subsequently Michael Gove was appointed Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) with responsibility for the planning system; he has announced that the ideas set out in the White Paper are now under review with further proposals coming forward. Despite this uncertainty, the government appears to remain firmly committed to neighbourhood plans, in particular supporting their role in expressing local community vision and requirements for the design of new developments.

8. Other challenges that the HNP will need to be able to respond to over the immediate and longer term include:
- Climate Change –The government is now committed to achieving Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2050. TWBC declared a climate emergency in July 2019. To address these a range of targets will evolve including new sustainable construction standards for homes by 2025, ceasing the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and transitioning to sustainable energy including electricity generated using renewables (wind, solar, wave).
 - The Covid-19 pandemic – The pandemic has produced severe shocks and will result in some lasting changes to our priorities. New challenges, opportunities, and accelerated rate of change may include a permanent reduction in daily commuting to partial or full time homeworking for many, increased recognition of the importance of local services and community activities that people can walk or cycle to, increased use of local open spaces for recreation, health and wellbeing, and demand for improved space and routes for pedestrians.
9. More immediately, neighbourhood plans must be prepared with regard to the national policies of the NPPF and ‘strategic policies’ of the Local Plans drawn up by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), which in Horsmonden’s case is Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC). The Localism Act 2011 made provision for neighbourhood plans, once ‘made’ to become statutory ‘development plan’ policy to be given equal weight in planning decisions as the TWBC Local Plan documents for the area covered by the HNP (Horsmonden Parish). Neighbourhood plans provide additional, fine grain detail specific to very local areas such as Horsmonden and express local community views on how future development should be shaped.
10. The preparation of the HNP has identified strong support in the local community for a range of policies that are important to local people but not necessary to include in the plan as these are better addressed by others (for example setting detailed standards for sustainable construction of new homes or retrofitting of existing homes). Similarly, objectives and projects for action have been identified that go beyond the scope of ‘development plan’ policies for the use of land. Therefore, this document and related documents have been produced to clearly distinguish between ‘development plan’ policies and other material and projects to be pursued by the PC in other ways.

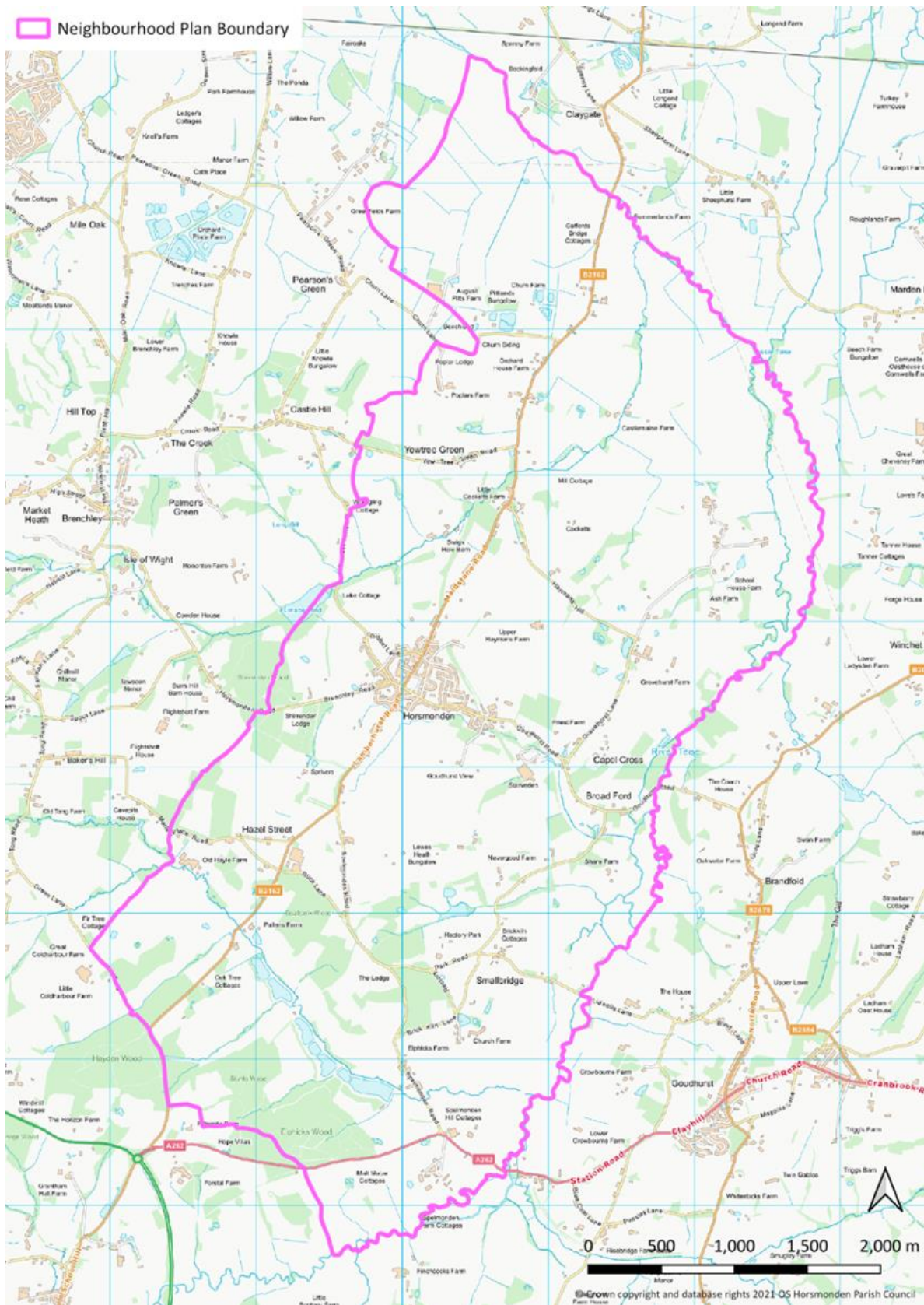


Figure 1: Map showing the designated neighbourhood plan area (civil parish of Horsmonden).

Chapter 1: Overall Strategy

The Horsmonden Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

11. In the first Pre-Submission or Regulation 14 draft of the HNP, the SG and the PC set out a draft vision, objectives and a range of policies and projects and asked residents and stakeholders (such as the borough and county councils, statutory bodies such as Natural and Historic England, landowners and developers) to give their feedback. Based on this feedback, this second Submission or Regulation 15 draft has been drawn up to be submitted to TWBC. The HNP is tested against what are known as the Basic Conditions as set down in legislation. Following further consultation conducted by TWBC, the plan will be independently examined, against the Basic Conditions criteria. If it meets the criteria (generally there will be some modifications recommended by the examiner), it will then progress to a referendum before it comes into force or is made. Everyone on the electoral register for Horsmonden Parish will be able to vote on whether they agree or disagree with the proposed plan. If more than 50% of those who vote agree, the plan will then be 'made' and accorded the status of 'development plan' policy for the Horsmonden parish for the purpose of determining all planning applications within the parish.

Summary of Community Engagement

12. The first draft HNP was based on the extensive consultation that took place over the preceding three and a half years (progress has been slowed and disrupted by the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic). This second draft responds to the submissions made during the Regulation 14 or Pre-Submission consultation that took place between 13th September and 24th October 2021. The results of the Regulation 14 consultation as well as the consultation events and other activities that are listed below are explained in more detail in the supporting Consultation Statement document. The events /activities are listed earliest to latest with a brief description.

Village Visioning Event, April 2018 (Visioning Event)

13. Local interest groups, businesses and local residents discussed some of the key issues that are important to the village in a series of discussion groups on: People and Places, This is a Special Place, Future Housing Growth, Learning from Other Places, Main Challenges, Streets Lanes and Roads and the Future Vision. Six visions were created, and a preferred vision (set out overleaf) has emerged.

Summer Festival – Saturday 9th June 2018

14. The SG was active at the festival with a stand on the Heath to raise awareness about the plan and asked people questions about the future of the village and how it could be shaped to grow sustainably.

Website Launch – September 2018

15. A dedicated website was launched with links from the PC website containing information and resources to assist and support the plan.

Development Exhibition, Autumn 2018 (Exhibition)

16. The purpose was to make local interest groups, businesses and local residents aware of the HNP and changes on the horizon that could have far-reaching effects on the parish. People were asked to get involved. The exhibition panels can still be viewed on the website: <http://horsmondennp.co.uk/community-events/>.

Household questionnaire, Winter 2018/19 (Questionnaire)

17. A survey was devised by the SG based on the results of the previous consultation activities and sent to every household. There were 206 responses. The majority of respondents (173) were in the 40–79-year age groups with 29 responses from 14-39 year olds. Themes included amenities, transport, facilities, services, housing, the environment, heritage and employment. These themes were used to develop working groups, the subsequent workshops and chapters of the HNP. The results of the questionnaire are set out by theme in each of the subsequent chapters.

Evidence gathered by the steering and working groups 2019

18. Some volunteers preferred to join themed working groups who were briefed and tasked to gather further quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform the emerging HNP policies. The chair of each working group attended the monthly SG meetings. The working groups contributed to writing and editing the chapters for their theme.

Themed community workshops that took place spring and summer 2019

19. Three themed workshops were held on:
 - Housing and Development, Community and Leisure;
 - Landscape and Environment, Design and Style;
 - Access and Movement, Business and Employment.
20. Again interest groups, businesses and residents took part and following a presentation of the results of the questionnaire and subsequent evidence-gathering, undertook analyses of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by topic under each theme. The results are summarised in the following chapters and set out in detail in the Consultation Statement and Workshop Reports (see <http://horsmondennp.co.uk/workshop-reports/>)

Masterplanning and Design work undertaken by AECOM including the public workshop in Autumn 2019

21. The PC and SG were able to commission a free Technical Support Package from Locality (see <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/technical-support/>) led by an urban design and

landscape architecture team from AECOM to Masterplan the Bassetts Farm proposal site (HO3) and consider building and landscape design opportunities and threats and develop Design Guidelines. These were shared and discussed at an event with interest groups, businesses and residents held in October 2019, revised and published.

Housing Needs Survey undertaken by Action for Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK), January 2020 (HN Survey)

22. The PC and SG were able to commission a Local Housing Needs Survey that was delivered to every household in the parish to enquire about current and future housing needs. The aim was to understand overcrowding, unsuitable housing and cost pressures experienced by households in the parish. Of the 1075 surveys distributed 307 were completed representing a 29% response rate. Overall, a need for up to 18 local affordable homes was identified and a further 14 local homes for older households. Fuller details are presented in the Housing chapter and the full report can be found online at <http://horsmondennp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Horsmoden-HNS-Report-March-2020-PDF.pdf>.

Site Options Assessment undertaken by AECOM, October 2020 (Site Assessments)

23. TWBC are proposing to allocate housing sites in Horsmonden. By the summer of 2020 it was not clear to either the PC or SG whether it would be advantageous for the HNP to also allocate housing development sites. A further free Technical Support Package was accessed from AECOM to objectively assess all the sites that had were put forward in response to TWBC's 'call for sites'. Further details of this report are set out later in this chapter and the full report can be read online at <http://horsmondennp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Horsmonden-SOA-Final-Report-121120.pdf>. The conclusion of the research was that no alternative suitable sites could be found and therefore no site allocations should be made in the HNP. The HNP does however include policy requirements pressing on these sites.

Meetings with developers for the Brenchley Road (AL/HO2) and Bassetts Farm (AL/HO3) sites.

24. The local development plan comprises the TWBC Local Plan (2006), Core Strategy (2010), the Site Allocations Local Plan (2016), and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (2020). A new Regulation 19 Submission Local Plan (SLP) 2020-2038 was submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination on 1 November 2021; hearing sessions are expected to continue through 2022.
25. The SLP allocated three sites within Horsmonden Parish shown on Inset Map 26. Site AL/HO1 received planning permission prior to the SLP being examined (18/01976 approval for 49 dwellings, granted 26 March 2021). To better understand the aspirations of the proposers/ developers of these sites and to share the emerging policy intentions of the HNP, meetings were held in 2020 with Lambert & Foster (both sites), Persimmon (AL/HO3) and Rosconn (AL/HO2). Key issues discussed were access, pavements, design, community facilities and open spaces. Subsequently, Persimmon attended a HPC planning committee meeting in November 2021 and Rosconn gave an online presentation.

Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Responses

26. The pre-submission consultation for the draft HNP lasted for six weeks from Monday 13th September to Sunday 24th October 2021. There were 33 responses via an online survey form, 12 emails of which five had no comment to make. These are set out in full in the Consultation Statement. While some of these praised the HNP, SG and PC for their endeavours and there was support for the vision statement (5 strongly support, 16 support, 1 not sure, 3 do not support and 2 strongly not support), there was also a lot of concern expressed particularly by residents for the volume of housing proposed by TWBC in their SLP, the location of sites in the parish and the impact on traffic and community infrastructure as well as the environment. Many of the responses noted the challenge faced by the HNP in navigating this. Two of the proposed developers of the Brenchley Road (AL/HO2) and Bassetts Farm (AL/HO3) made submissions. TWBC for its part submitted an extensive commentary that can be read in full in the Consultation Statement supporting documents.

Horsmonden Parish Profile

27. The HNP is also designed to address issues revealed in the statistical evidence available for the parish. This parish profile is derived from Census 2011 as outputs and findings based on the Census 2021 were not available at the time of writing. (As events allow these figures will be updated).

Population

28. In 2011 Horsmonden had a total population of 2,435. At the time, Horsmonden had a relatively young population, with a quarter of the population (25.3%) aged 0-15 years compared to 20.5% at the borough level and 19.4% in Kent as a whole. However, it had a lower proportion of young adults (16—24 years) at 7.4% than both the borough (9.7%) and county (11.3%). This may be as a consequence of young people moving away to gain work and higher education, and unwilling or unable to afford to move back. This is also suggested by the small size of next age cohort (25-44 years) which again is lower (22.4%) than the borough (27%) and county (25%). The older population 65+ accounts for 17.2% of the population or 419 people which is broadly in line with the borough (16.6%) and county (17.9%). The population is largely White British (95%).

Health

29. People living in Horsmonden were healthier than the borough and county averages with 87.8% reporting very good or good health compared to borough (85%), the county (81.5%). And while 12% reported a long-term health problem or disability compared to the borough (14.2%) and county averages (17.6%), 5% reported that their day-to-day activities 'are limited a lot' compared to the borough (6.1%) and county (8%). 215 residents were providing unpaid care to friends or family members (8.8%) compared to the borough (9.2%) and county (10.4%).

Household composition

30. In 2011 there were 41 lone parent families with dependent children (4.5% of households) in the parish compared to the borough (5.2%) and county (6.8%). There are 110 people aged over

65 living alone (12% of households) which is largely in line with the borough (12.3%) and county (13.1%).

Housing stock

31. There is a significantly larger proportion of detached houses or bungalows in the parish (43.6%) compared with the borough (26.7%) and county (25.1%) and a slightly greater proportion of semi-detached houses or bungalows (34.2%) compared to the borough (29.4%) and county (30.5%). This means that there are fewer smaller properties such as terraced houses (12.7%) compared to the borough (17.9%) and county (24.8%), and even fewer flats proportionately (8.5%) compared to the borough (25.7%) and county (18.7%). This may also be linked to the low proportion of younger adults living in the parish and so the HNP makes provision for more smaller homes, in particular terraces and flats in the proposed new developments.

Housing tenure

32. Housing tenure in Horsmonden is also different to the borough and county. In Horsmonden just 22.3% rent their homes (with roughly equal proportions rented privately and from a housing association) compared to the borough (32.1%) and county (30.4%). This suggests that people on lower incomes would struggle to find a property to rent in the parish. The Housing Needs Survey Report (January 2020) stated: "High property prices and a predominance of privately-owned homes means that some local people are unable to afford a home in Horsmonden. At the time of writing the report, the cheapest property for sale in the parish was a 2-bed apartment for £195,000; to afford to buy this home a deposit of approximately £41,250 would be required and an income of £66,786. To afford to rent privately an income of approximately £51,000 would be required to afford the cheapest 2 bed property found for £1,275 pcm."
33. The survey itself identified: "A total need for 20 local affordable homes; 2 of which are for older households. In addition, there is a requirement for 12 open market properties suitable for older households who want to downsize/move to more suitable housing for their needs." The Housing and Development chapter proposes measures for addressing this identified local housing need.

Employment

34. The percentage of the population that is economically active is 69.6% which is in line with the county as a whole (69.9%) but lower than the borough (73.1%). Of these a slightly higher proportion are self-employed (18%) compared to the borough (13.6%) and county (10.9%) and so provision is made in the plan to address the needs of self-employed people to expand their businesses within the parish.

Transport

35. Reflecting the poor local public transport, in 2011, 72 households in the parish (7.9%) were without a car compared to the borough (17.5%) and county (20%). Even in 2011, 147 people worked mainly from home (8.9%) compared to the borough (5.9%) and the county (3.9%). But

of the 954 people travelling to work 665 (69.7%) drove a car or van with just 6.2% walking (56 people) or cycling (8 people) to work. So the majority of residents drive to work with just a very small proportion walking or cycling suggesting that work is often outside the village and that cycling is an option for very few people, due in part to remoteness, hilly terrain and road safety.

Education

36. The local population is relatively well educated. Graduates (Level 4 qualifications and above) are a larger proportion of the population (36.6%) than for any other category which is in line but slightly above the borough (34.6%) but more than 10% higher than the county (24.7%). And while 16.7% of Horsmonden's population had no qualifications, this is lower than both the Kent and national averages of 22.5% and 22.7% respectively.

Vision for Horsmonden

37. At the Visioning Event residents worked together in groups to develop a range of possible visions for what Horsmonden should be like in 15 years' time, the length of the neighbourhood plan. The SG and PC suggest that one of the visions in particular had the right balance of valuing the best from the past and embracing positive change:

Vision

"In 15 years' time, Horsmonden will be a village that has retained its character, community spirit and rurality but that has embraced new technologies and social and economic opportunities. It will have diversified to allow improvements in transport, housing, and leisure, to cater for all members of the community."

38. The Pre-Submission Consultation responses showed support for the vision statement. It is proposed by the SG and PC that this vision is adopted for the Neighbourhood Plan.
39. The vision, consultation findings and other evidence collected by the working groups were then presented at the Workshops, where different future growth scenarios were discussed, in order to develop a series of objectives for each chapter that, together with the supporting evidence and policies, will make up the land-use elements of the HNP (i.e. those elements that will regulate the way that land in Horsmonden can be used and developed). Other issues of importance to Horsmonden could be addressed through projects or actions that have been identified in consultation events and are set out in an appendix to the HNP.

Objectives

40. For each of the themes in the HNP, an objective has been drawn up by the SG to assist in achieving the vision for that theme. Below are the themes and objectives and a short description of the strategy for each theme. Some of the themes (chapter headings) and objectives have been refined following the Pre-Submission Consultation.

Access and movement

Objective: To improve access and movement across the parish, to create a 'walkable village' for all, including residents of new developments.

41. The HNP will seek to ensure that residents and visitors to new developments (including people with disabilities, with very young children and who are elderly) are able to walk, cycle or otherwise safely access village services and facilities such as the shops, pub and primary academy without recourse to the car, reducing congestion on roads at peak times and the risk of accidents, particularly at the cross-roads.

Business and employment

Objective: Provision should be made for businesses to expand and flourish.

42. A common concern is that Horsmonden should not simply become a dormitory village for people commuting to work in places such as Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells or London. The pandemic has accelerated trends to increased homeworking, which is expected to be long-lasting. This will enable more people to 'be around' in the village in the working week and in turn support local existing and new businesses such as the pub and shops. The potential for a new enterprise or business hub, building on the success of the existing Business Centre, has emerged for start-ups or simply for home-based workers to 'get out of the house', network or share facilities. A final goal is for people employed locally to be able to secure housing close to where they work.

Community infrastructure

Objective: New development should bring with it the opportunity to provide improved community, health and leisure facilities to existing and new residents of the parish.

43. Horsmonden has a strong community spirit and this is reflected in the large number of clubs, groups and activities that take place. Lack of parking, at the current village hall and other halls such as the social club and church halls, is a limiting factor, and the limitations of the facilities and condition of some buildings is also a concern. The HNP anticipates the development of a new village hall and medical centre within the plan period to meet local needs in response to a substantially increased population.

Design and character

Objective: To provide design policies that can be applied to any new development proposals in the parish to help ensure that they are sustainable and in keeping with local character.

44. With the historic Heath and conservation area at its centre, over 100 listed buildings, physical evidence of iron making (Furnace Pond), Jane Austen's family and hop growing (oast houses and Hop Picker's railway line), Horsmonden is a village with immense heritage and architectural character. New sustainable development should reflect this character, respond

sensitively to its location on the edge of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and at the same time be environmentally efficient and of high quality.

Housing and development

Objective: New homes and development should meet the needs of the local community, particularly for smaller new homes, should regenerate previously developed land, be affordable and within walking distance of village facilities.

45. The HN Survey Report states that high property prices and a predominance of privately owned homes means that some local people are unable to access or afford a home in Horsmonden. At the same time, TWBC's SLP proposes that approximately 240-320 new dwellings be built on three sites (Furnace Lane, Brenchley Road and Bassetts Farm) before 2038. The Site Assessments carried out by AECOM on behalf of the PC found no alternative viable sites in the area and identified concerns about TWBC's proposed sites, in particular in relation to pedestrian access. HNP policies seek for all of these sites to contribute to sustainable development but striking a balance of the potential benefits from growth on this scale, with ensuring that new and existing residents can continue to live safe and healthy lives and contribute to the vitality of the parish.

Landscape and environment

Objective: To retain the distinctive agricultural heritage of the parish, protect landscape and views, enhance biodiversity, protect ancient woodland and green spaces and retain dark night skies.

46. Horsmonden is recognised as being set in a highly sensitive landscape. It is wholly within Natural England's High Weald Special Landscape Character Area, with a large part within the High Weald AONB. It has beauty spots such as the St Margaret's Churchyard, Sprivers historic park and gardens and Furnace Pond, all connected by the High Weald Landscape Trail. The HNP identifies Local Green Spaces and important views that should be protected from development. It proposes that the opportunities afforded for new sustainable developments should enhance historically important but neglected areas (such as the Hop Picker's Line) and should create new and publicly accessible open space for local people to enjoy.

A challenging planning landscape

47. A challenge that the HNP faces is that the existing TWBC planning framework now dates from 2006/2010/2016 and the new Local Plan is still in the process of production (new Local Plan to 2038). TWBC undertook a Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Local Plan in the autumn of 2019 and the emerging SLP has yet to be examined by the government's Planning Inspectorate and is unlikely to be adopted before early 2023. While changes set out in the government's White Paper "Planning for the Future" were withdrawn, a further set of policy changes and reforms are anticipated in the near future, so the HNP needs to be flexibly written and be 'future proof' to such changes.
48. The status of the SLP has made one decision a particular challenge – namely, whether or not the PC (as the qualifying body for the HNP) should allocate sites for housing development, in

preference to sites being allocated by TWBC's Local Plan. In order to assist with this decision, a Site Assessment was conducted by AECOM. This assessment reviewed all 24 of the sites put forward to TWBC in their LP 'call for sites'. The sites were assessed against a range of criteria including whether they were:

- Available (is the site available for development?),
- Achievable (is the site economically viable for development?) and
- Deliverable (whether the site is likely or able to be delivered in the period of the plan before 2038).

49. Based on these and other criteria, AECOM gave each site a score, using a red, amber, green (RAG) scoring. No additional or alternative sites were identified beyond those that TWBC proposed for Horsmonden in its SLP. Considerable constraints were identified for all three sites, in particular, in relation to the lack of pavements and the possibility of adequately providing these. Visual impact (including on the setting of the High Weald AONB) was also a concern. At May 2022, this is the status of the three sites proposed by TWBC for development:

- AL/HO1 (Furnace Lane) has been granted planning permission.
- AL/HO2 (Brenchley Road) was rated as Amber by the Site Assessment. The plans and commitment shown so far by the developer and highways authority to deliver the vitally important pedestrian pavements to the site are not considered to be proven.
- AL/HO3 (Bassetts Farm) was rated a Green by the Site Assessment, although some concerns remain regarding access by vehicles and pedestrians to the rest of the village, and whether development will be truly comprehensive and deliver all the potential opportunities to enhance the village. identified in the AECOM masterplan (see <http://horsmondennp.co.uk/masterplanning/>).

50. While TWBC's housing policies AL/HO1, 2 & 3 aren't identified by TWBC as "strategic policies", as the Site Assessment did not identify any viable alternative sites, it is not proposed to allocate sites in the HNP. We have instead developed policies which focus on design, environmental sustainability and access that should be applied to all development sites in the parish. These are set out with their context and supporting evidence in the following chapters of the plan. However, by way of an overview these are listed on the following pages under the Objectives but also showing the UN Sustainability Goals that they are helping to achieve.

Sustainable Development Goals

51. [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are











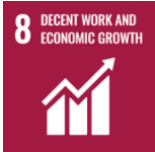


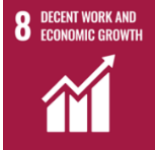


Figure 4: UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development





an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.





52. To demonstrate the alignment between our policies and the principles of sustainable development we have mapped our policies against those goals which we consider they contribute towards.
53. As a general point, the following individual policies are subject to compliance with other relevant policies in this Plan, the existing Development Plan, the SLP and with national policy. For each policy, the linked UNSDGs are shown. The policies are set out in their full context in each chapter.








Policy Summary by Objective with UNSDGs










| Objective / heading | Policy | UNSDG |
|---|--|---|
| Objective 2: Access and Movement | To improve access and movement across the parish, to create a 'walkable village' for all, including residents of new developments. | |
| 2.1 Walkable village | Development proposals for new housing that are demonstrably within safe, walkable distance of the village centre will be supported in principle. |  |
| 2.2 Minimising traffic speeds | Development proposals will be supported if demonstrably designed to minimise traffic speeds. |  |
| 2.3 Enhancing public rights of way | Where development is proposed that includes or is adjacent to an existing PRoW, PRoWs should be enhanced to improve connectivity within the site and links with other PRoWs and pavements suitable for active travel modes. |  |
| 2.4 Adequate pavements | Development proposals will be supported so long as they provide pavements in line with the Manual for Streets for all users to the village centre as appropriate. |  |
| 2.5 School access crossing | Developer contributions will be sought for provision of facilities for improved safe road crossing of the Maidstone Road adjacent to the school and integrated with the village pedestrian network, from all developments over 10 homes to the west of the Maidstone Road / Lamberhurst Road. |  |
| 2.6 Public parking | All developments should include a suitably designed, shared, publicly accessible visitor parking spaces in accordance with TWBC parking standards. Access to the public visitor parking spaces should remain available (limited-stay restrictions will be acceptable) to visitors and deliveries at all times and be in addition to the private or off-road provision for residents. (see policy 2.7). Proposals for additional publicly available useable parking in the village will be positively considered. |  |
| 2.7 New parking | Development proposals must include sufficient parking with due regard to the TWBC Parking Standards contained in Figure 15. |  |

| Objective / heading | Policy | UNSDG |
|---|--|---|
| 2.8 Charging points | Developments that make provision for electric car and cycle charging points in the parking areas (for resident, visitor and public spaces) will be supported. |  |
| Objective 3: Business and Employment | Provision should be made for businesses to expand and flourish. | |
| 3.1 Retain and intensify the use of existing employment sites | Proposals to develop existing employment sites that retain and intensify the potential use for industrial and employment uses, will supported in principle. |  |
| 3.2 Broadband | New development proposals must be designed to include the provision of fibre broadband infrastructure. Proposals that will enable and improve the provision of broadband connectivity to the proposal site, adjacent area and wider community will be supported subject to compliance with other relevant development plan policies, guidance and national policy. |  |
| 3.3 Conversion of farm buildings | Applications for conversion of existing farm buildings to hubs for smaller (Class B) general industry, storage and distribution uses, or serviced offices and services (Class E) will be supported in principle. |  |
| 3.4 Business associated with vineyards and fruit growing | Proposals for development and diversification of vineyards or other fruit growing businesses to include retail outlets, cafes / restaurants and leisure uses (Class E and F) will be supported in principle. |  |
| 3.5 Mobile phone and data transmission | Proposals for improvements to mobile phone and data transmission network infrastructure will be supported. |  |
| Objective 4: Community infrastructure | New development should bring with it the opportunity to provide improved community, health and leisure facilities to existing and new residents of the parish. | |
| 4.1 New medical facilities | Development proposals for new medical facilities within the village which provide adequate parking and appropriate pedestrian access will be supported in principle. New housing developments should ensure the provision of necessary medical infrastructure for residents |  |

| Objective / heading | Policy | UNSDG |
|--|---|---|
| | which may necessitate financial contributions towards provision where justified. | |
| 4.2 Allotments | Land should be set aside for allotments within larger developments and made available to the new and existing residents. The site should have sufficient parking provision for allotment holders, mains water and be located within 800 metres of the village centre (10 minute walk). |  |
| 4.3 Facilities for children and young people | Where planning permission is given for larger developments (50-99+ homes), developers will provide a play facility for young children on site, and for very large developments (100+) contribute for a skate park and basketball court/multi-use games area for young people and outdoor gym to be sited at the Sports Ground. |  |
| 4.4 New village hall | Development proposals for a new village hall will be supported provided it is 400 metres (5 minute walk) from the village centre and has adequate safe pedestrian access. |  |
| Objective 5: Design and Character | To provide design policies that can be applied to any new development proposals in the parish to help ensure that they are sustainable and in keeping with local character. | |
| 5.1 Design of new development | <p>New development will be expected to demonstrably apply the Horsmonden Design Guidelines and will be supported in principle where it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is designed to a high quality that responds positively to the heritage and distinctive character of Horsmonden as identified in the Character Analysis; Respects the scale, external appearance, height, form, layout/orientation and density of its parish context; Utilises good quality durable materials, locally sourced where possible, and adopts detailing and appearance that complements those characteristically used within Horsmonden; Respects the boundary treatments and landscape features of the site and its context; Minimises the impact on the residential amenity of existing neighbouring properties; Is designed to meet Lifetime Homes Standards (or successor schemes); |  |

| Objective / heading | Policy | UNSDG |
|---|--|---|
| | Has regard to the High Weald AONB Housing Design guide where appropriate. | |
| Objective 6: Housing and development | New homes and development should meet the needs of the local community, particularly for smaller new homes, should regenerate previously developed land, be affordable and within walking distance of village facilities. | |
| 6.1 Meeting housing need | <p>New housing developments will be supported in principle where they:</p> <p>Provide an appropriate proportion of smaller homes (1, 2 and 3 bedrooms) in line with the latest available housing need data at parish or borough level;</p> <p>Provide, in line with SLP Policy H3, affordable housing in a range of tenures including for social rent and shared ownership that meets the latest identified local need for single people, couples, families and older residents.</p> |  |
| 6.2 Windfall residential development | <p>Small scale windfall residential development (up to 10 homes) will be positively considered subject to the following criteria:</p> <p>Within the limits to built development (LBD), as defined in the LP;</p> <p>Outside the LBD on previously developed land (PDL), or the conversion of appropriate rural buildings, which are not currently in business use;</p> <p>And subject to development management policies.</p> |  |
| 6.3 Provision of sheltered housing | Development that includes sheltered housing or warden care bungalows or similar to meet the needs of elderly residents who wish to downsize and remain within the parish will be supported. |  |
| 6.4 Replacing or combining existing dwellings outside the Limits of Built Development | The replacement of an existing dwelling by another dwelling within the same residential curtilage will be supported where the scale, form, height and massing including relationship with the site boundaries, of the replacement dwelling is compatible with its rural location and the surrounding form of development. |  |

| Objective / heading | Policy | UNSDG |
|---|--|---|
| Objective 7: Landscape and environment | To retain the distinctive agricultural heritage of the parish, protect views, enhance biodiversity, protect ancient woodland and green spaces and retain dark night skies. | |
| 7.1 Local Green Spaces | The areas identified are designated Local Green Space where inappropriate new development will not be allowed except in very special circumstances. |  |
| 7.2 Protecting important views | Development must not cause any loss or diminution of historical or significant views (listed above) within and into and out of settlements from any publicly accessible area. |  |
| 7.3 Biodiversity net gain | All development should minimise impacts on and result in a measurable long term net gains for biodiversity, secured for the lifetime of the development and demonstrated with use of accepted metrics for Biodiversity Net Gain and a strict adherence to mitigation strategy (avoid, mitigate, compensate) to justify all unavoidable impacts on diversity. |  |
| 7.4 Trees and hedgerows | Development must not encroach on or cause harm to ancient woodland, ancient trees or veteran trees of ecological or amenity value, or protected hedgerows. Where development is proposed, there must be a plan for the continued maintenance of the hedgerow for its amenity and wildlife value. |  |
| 7.5 New open spaces | Development should be designed to provide new open amenity spaces, reflecting and expanding the existing network of accessible open space in the parish. |  |
| 7.6 Retaining the best, most versatile and characteristic agricultural land | Development that retains high quality agricultural land (Grade 2 and above), Hop Gardens and the Fruit-belt will be supported. |  |
| 7.7 Light pollution | Lighting proposals that illuminate external areas around buildings must be designed to minimise both the ecological impact of the lighting and minimise glare and impact on the night sky. |  |

| Objective / heading | Policy | UNSDG |
|---|--|---|
| 7.8 Development within the AONB | Proposals for development in the AONB will be permitted only where they meet the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. |   |
| 7.9 Development adjacent to the AONB | Where development is proposed outside of the AONB it must not damage or detract from the environment, character and landscape setting of the AONB. |   |
| 7.10 Development adjacent to ancient woodland | Where development is proposed adjacent to Ancient Woodland, a curtilage or buffer of 50m must be included within the development to ensure that it does not damage or detract from the environment, character and landscape of the Ancient Woodland, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would suffice. |   |
| 7.11 Flooding | Development should not compromise the ability of the natural environment to mitigate flood risk, both to the development and to existing neighbouring properties. Developers should utilise natural environmental techniques to mitigate extreme weather events and flooding, such as Sustainable Urban Drainage and permeable surfaces, and be cognisant of the Habitats Directive and the HPC Sustainability Policy. |    |

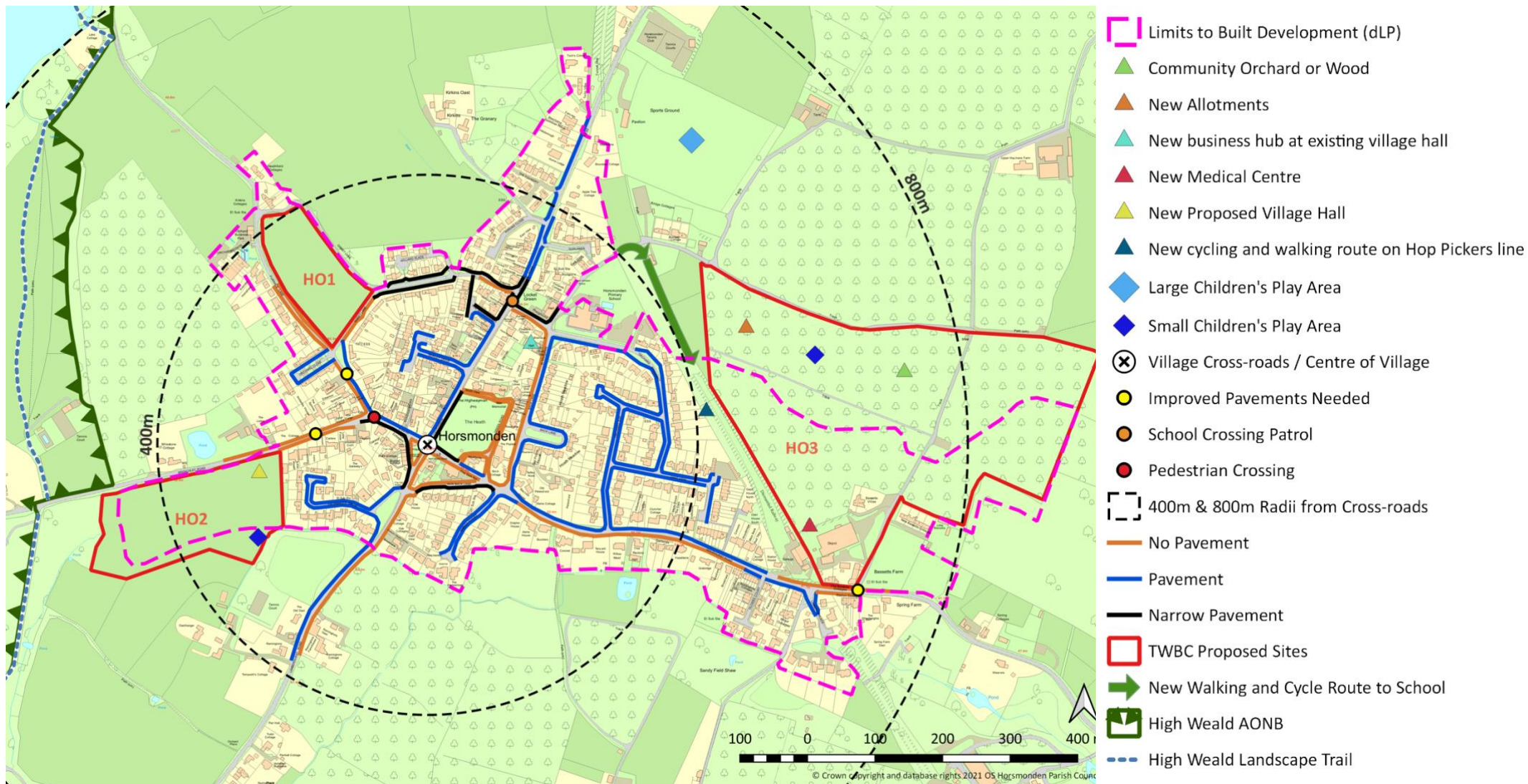


Figure 5: Strategy Map – illustrates some of the key issues and addressed in and around the village of Horsmonden through the HNP

Chapter 2: Access and movement

Objective

To improve access and movement across the parish, to create a 'walkable village' for all, including residents of new developments.



Introduction

54. This chapter explains how the HNP can contribute to improving access and movement across the parish and the limitations on what can be achieved. Built before widespread car use, Horsmonden faces a range of transport and traffic challenges but is sufficiently small for walking to remain a viable option to access local services and facilities such as the shop, primary academy and village hall.
55. With regard to traffic in and through the village, this will likely increase over the next few years. Together with background growth in traffic, development of the three sites allocated by the SLP will inevitably bring more traffic into and through the village centre, where the crossroads are already a dangerous pinch point.
56. Pedestrian safety is important if we are to discourage short car journeys and encourage residents to walk to local shops and services. Crossing the road on any of the four approaches to the village centre can be dangerous for pedestrians and is especially so for the disabled and elderly. Safe crossing points are essential. Developer contributions will be sought from any developments, where justified, to fund improvements to aid pedestrian safety.

Planning Summary

Although there are limitations as to what can be achieved through the HNP in relation to traffic and existing village roads, the HNP can provide policies to address access and movement in the village, in line with TWBC's Transport Policies. For example, only KCC as the highways authority has the power to restrict speed limits, but the HNP can be a strong influence on new road junction layouts and making them more pedestrian friendly. The Tunbridge Wells LP 2006 and Core Strategy 2010 contain a number of policies which address access and movement considerations. These include Policies TP1-TP4 and Core Policy 3 which require a Transport Assessment to be submitted with development proposals that should address issues of highway capacity and suitability. The SLP Policy TP 2 says that development proposals will only be permitted provided ... 1. There is safe pedestrian access to public transport services and infrastructure within reasonably close proximity. Also that Active Travel will be prioritised and improvements to signage, surfacing and the creation of new path links will be sought. The HNP can help provide local context to help to deliver these improvements in the right places. There are eight policies proposed to address the access and movement issues highlighted in this chapter.

Evidence

57. This chapter reviews the community engagement that has taken place, the empirical evidence that has been gathered and the resulting policies seek to balance the social, economic and environmental impacts of access and movement to make for more sustainable development in the future.
58. The access and movement policies aim to contribute towards Horsmonden's environment becoming less dominated by vehicles and a more 'walkable village', with improved provision for other alternatives to car use such as cycling, riding, mobility scooters (collectively referred to as 'active travel' modes) and public transport. Active travel modes have benefits both for physical and mental wellbeing. As a rural area with poor public transport, the car will inevitably remain important for getting to work, schools and services. Although gradually petrol and diesel engine vehicles will be replaced with less carbon producing and less polluting electric vehicles, this will not reduce the dominance of traffic nor safety concerns.
59. Horsmonden does not always feel like a safe place to get around on foot or by bike due to narrow or non-existent pavements and unsafe crossing points, and narrow roads. This is exacerbated by road traffic and lack of public parking spaces close to the village centre. Traffic includes high volumes of lorries, delivery vans, commuting and school-run cars and some large farm vehicles, particularly at the morning and evening peak. A study by MLM Consulting Engineers in 2016 (see supporting documents): "observed that the crossroads is a busy junction/area with relatively high through traffic, vehicles parking on both sides of the carriageway for the adjacent post office/convenience store/café and pupils being picked up for school bus services."

Traffic survey

60. The Access and Movement Working Group also carried out two traffic surveys on 16th April 2019 during the school holidays and on 30th April during term time. This was because anecdotally a lot of traffic is presumed to be school-related. The results which are summarised bear this out:
 - On 16th April 6.30-8.30am 1064 vehicles passed through the centre of the village. Of these 766 were cars, 209 vans, 43 small lorries, 31 large lorries, 3 buses, 2 farm vehicles, 6 motorcycles and 4 bicycles.
 - On 30th April from 7am to 9am 1538 vehicles passed through the village. Of these 1186 were cars, 259 vans, 40 small lorries, 30 large lorries, 12 buses, 1 farm vehicle, 7 motorcycles, and 3 bicycles.
 - Importantly, when considering the potential location of new housing, they also recorded the direction of vehicle movements showing that nearly fifty percent of morning the traffic came from the direction of Goudhurst, heading towards either Maidstone or Brenchley and hence Tunbridge Wells.

Pavement study

61. A pavement study undertaken by the Access and Movement Working Group shows that there are key parts of the village, adjacent or leading to proposed development sites HO1, HO2 and HO3 where pavements are either absent (HO2 and HO3) or partial (HO1). Where pavements do exist, they are often too narrow to allow pedestrians to pass or pushing a buggy, holding a child's hand or using a mobility scooter. (The covid pandemic has added to concerns with social distancing requirements being unachievable too).
62. By contrast, the parish is blessed with a comprehensive network of public rights of way (PRoW), bridleways and pavements that enable residents to quickly access the surrounding countryside for exercise and recreation. These footpaths offer great potential, if better linked and maintained, to provide alternative routes to school, the village centre and bus stops. Where footways and public footpaths are to be integrated into new developments, they need to be wide enough to allow for all users, physical distancing, particularly when they are well used routes likely to be crowded at times, such as close to the village school, existing or new village facilities.
63. A much greater proportion of the population than is apparent may be reliant on public transport to leave the village during the working day. This is clearly the case for teenagers and anyone without access to a car. According to the Census 2011, 7.9% of households are without a car or van but a much larger 32.6% have access to only one car or van, which may already be in use during the day for work or commuting. Public transport provision is poor with buses to Paddock Wood (which has the nearest mainline station to London) only available at limited times on three days a week, making a regular commute by public transport impractical.

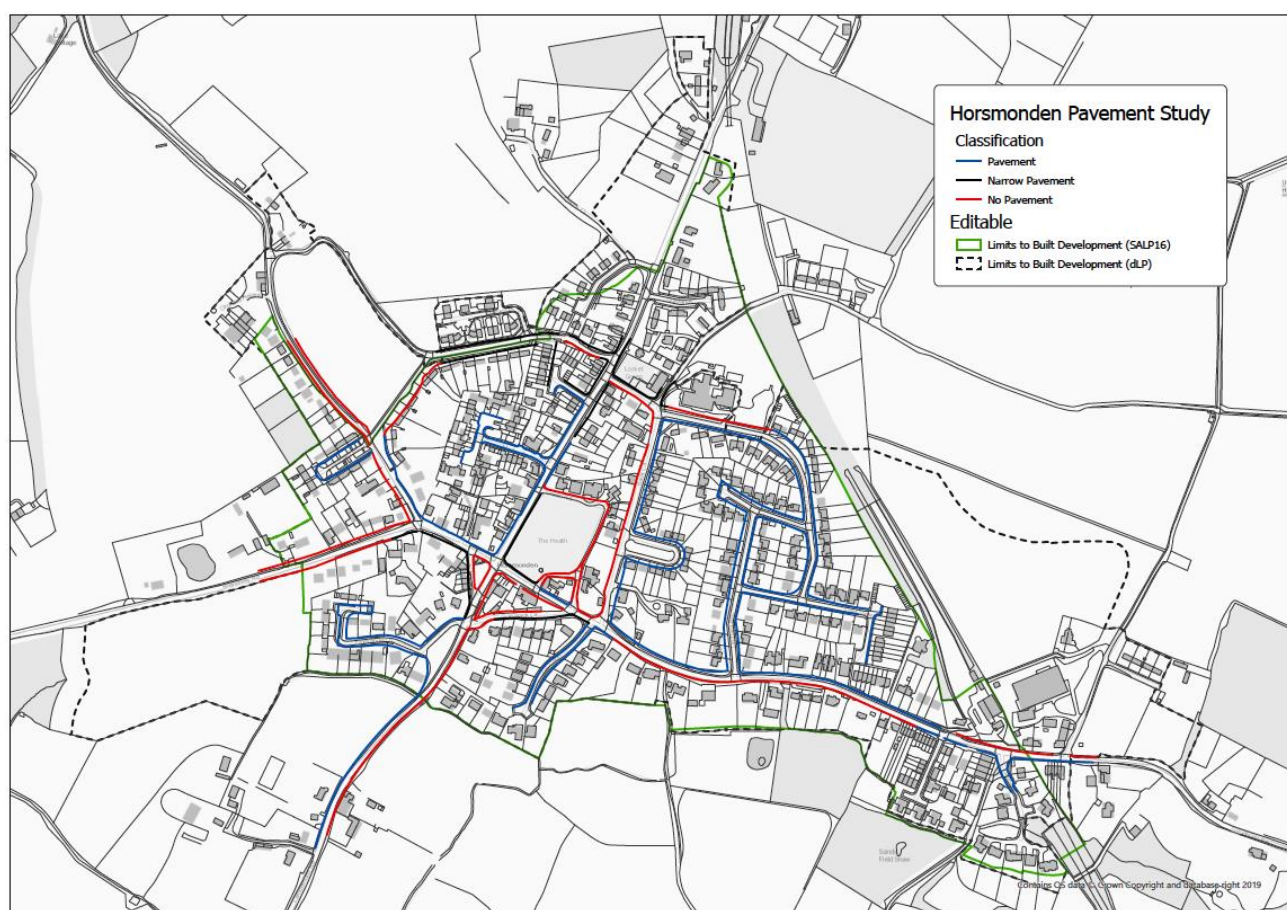


Figure 6: Pavement Study Map

64. The HNP seeks to ensure that all new development contributes to greater sustainability and that adverse impacts are mitigated. While the car is likely to remain the primary form of private transport for the life of this plan, finding alternative ways for people to get around the parish remains paramount. According to the 2011 Census, 8.9% of the working age population worked mainly at or from home. This increased during the pandemic and a sustained increase in home working is likely to be a lasting legacy. This in turn will increase the potential use of sustainable modes of travel for local trips, use of pavements and local facilities and services.

Visioning event

65. The views and issues relating to access and movement that emerged from the Visioning Event can be summarised as:
- High traffic volumes crossing the village during the peak period.
 - Queuing issues at peak times at junctions within the village.
 - Traffic volume and speed has a deterring effect on pedestrians and cyclists in the village centre.
 - Poor quality pavements and lack of dedicated footways [pavements] make walking a challenge.

- Country lanes that access Paddock Wood have raised traffic levels in early mornings and evenings.

Questionnaire

66. In the Questionnaire only 3.8% of respondents cited the 'nearby train link to London' as their main reason for living in Horsmonden although when asked 'What do you value most?' about living in Horsmonden, 'Commutable to London' was listed by 21.1% of respondents and 'proximity to nearby towns (Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook)' was listed by 32.1%.
67. 'Footpaths and bridleways' were listed by 44.5% of respondents in response to the question 'What do you value most?' about living in Horsmonden. When asked 'which amenities you use' 83.7% listed footpaths and bridleways, just below the village pharmacy (85.6%) and village shops (91.9%) and slightly higher than the doctors' surgery (76.6%).
68. In the report that followed the Questionnaire it was suggested that protecting footpaths and bridleways where they may be affected by development should be included in the NP.
69. A follow-up question 'Other than traffic, what concerns you' elicited the answers 'public transport' 50.2% and 'pedestrian safety' 65.6% and 'car parking' 58.9%. Only 'loss of village/ landscape character' had a higher rating with 74.6%.
70. The question 'Thinking of the parish over the next ten years, which of the following should be a priority' the top answer was 'Road safety measures' 80.4%, 'Additional pavements' was selected by 40.2%.



Figure 7: Two lorries at the crossroad illustrating the lack of footpath on the Lamberhurst Rd. Photo: Stephen Crane

Policy context and policies

71. The proposed allocation for 115-165 dwellings on the Goudhurst Road on the Bassetts Farm site (HO3) could result in excess of 300 additional vehicle movements on this road at peak times as people travel to work, take children to school and so forth. On the other hand, greater use of local facilities and an increasing trend to internet shopping and home deliveries offer some reduction in outward trips for shopping throughout the week.
72. The HNP proposes that housing development should be located to the west or north of the central crossroads to minimise vehicle movements and hence potential accidents and congestion through the village centre. Also, development should ideally be located within 400 metres (5-8 minutes) and certainly no further than 800 metres (10-12 minute walk) of the village centre to encourage walking as the primary means of accessing village services such as the shop, pub, chemist, primary academy, Heath, business centre and social club. This is in line with the National Design Guide (2021), National Model Design Code and Manual for Streets (HM Gov, 2007) the latter which recommends paragraph 3.5.4 setting objectives including: 'Typical objectives might be: enabling local children to walk and cycle unaccompanied from all parts of a development to a school, local park or open space; promoting and enhancing the vitality and viability of a local retail centre;'

Policy 2.1: Walkable village

Development proposals for new housing that are demonstrably within safe, walkable distance of the village centre will be supported in principle.

Traffic speeds

73. In the Household Questionnaire, 89.5% of respondents selected 'speed of traffic' as one of the aspects of traffic throughout the Parish that they are concerned about.

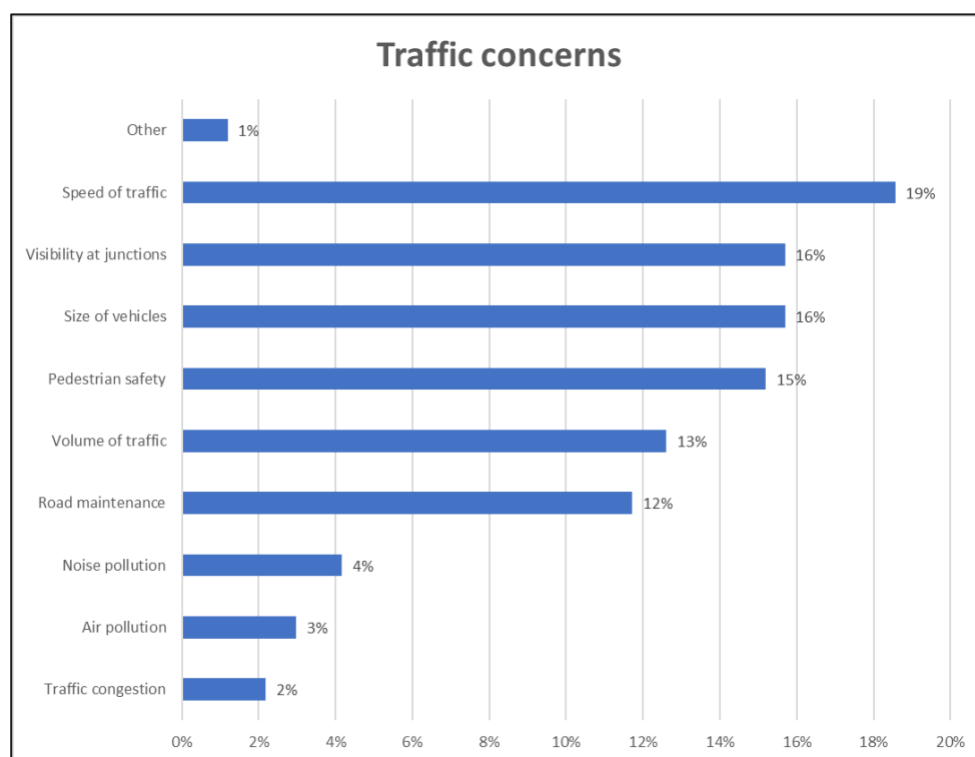


Figure 8: Concerns about traffic

74. While it is difficult for the HNP to resolve existing traffic issues, it may seek developer contributions from new developments to try and ameliorate existing problem areas/ hotspots but generally this can only be close to where new development takes place. Addressing the speed of traffic is generally within the remit of KCC as the highways authority. Having said that, the newly extended 30mph limit on the Brenchley Road was a collaboration between the county and parish councils. Its implementation resulted in part of the MLM report which states: "From the ATC speeds surveys the Brenchley Road approach has the highest average and 85th percentile vehicle speeds coming into the village". Given the challenge of providing adequate pavements to the Brenchley Road development, consideration could be given to reducing the speed limit to 20mph between the village centre (and beyond) to the pedestrian entrance to that site. The Manual for Streets (HM Gov, 2007) recommends in paragraph 1.6.1: 'designing to keep vehicle speeds at or below 20mph on residential streets unless there are overriding reasons for accepting higher speeds.' The HNP will also seek to create 'home-zones' in new developments where traffic is restricted to 20mph. The HNP proposes the following:

Policy 2.2: Minimising traffic speeds

Development proposals will be supported if demonstrably designed to minimise traffic speeds.

HGV movements

75. In the Questionnaire, 87% of respondents expressed concern about the number of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and other commercial vehicles that are not supporting local businesses, using roads through the village.

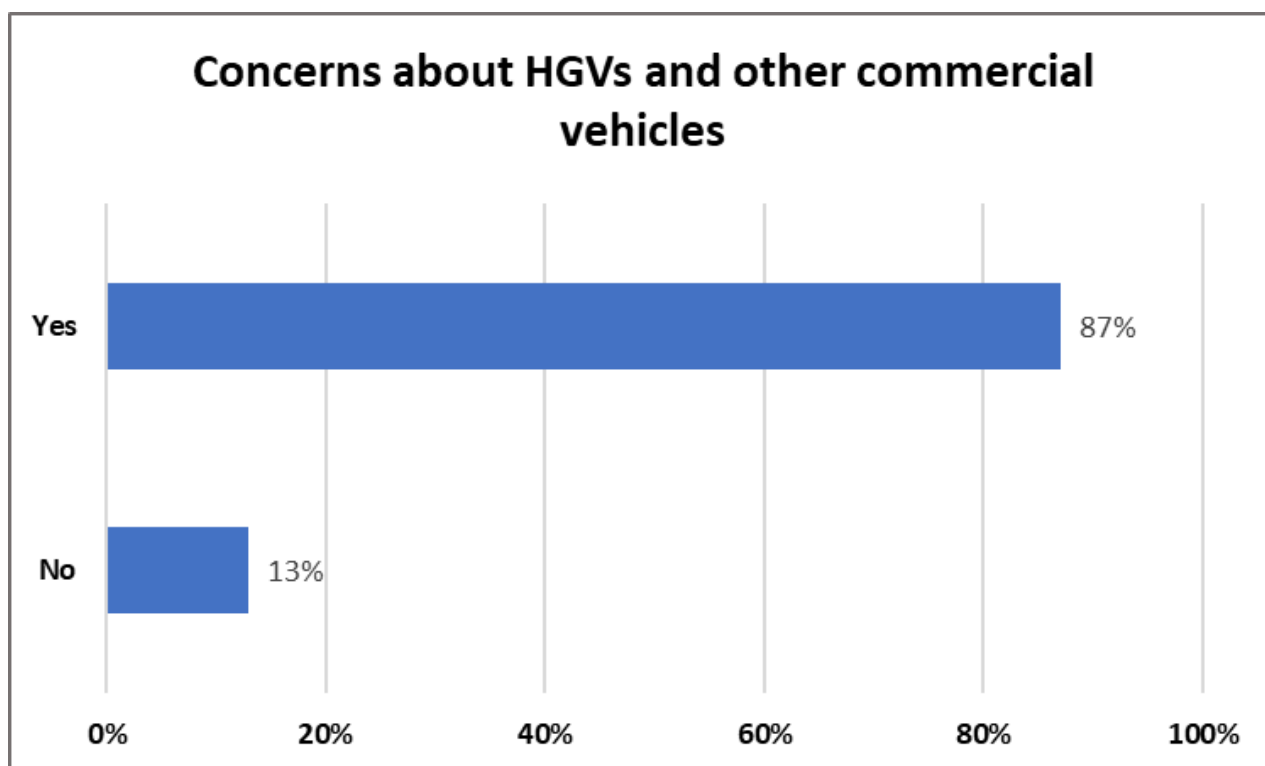


Figure 9: Questionnaire concern about HGV and other commercial vehicle movements

76. Weight restrictions on roads are in the remit of KCC Highways. While it may be desirable to limit the numbers of HGV movements, in particular during the morning and evening peak periods, the HNP is unable to influence the issue of through traffic (journeys starting or finishing outside the parish). When planning permission for change of use is sought for agricultural buildings within the parish to storage or other commercial uses or during the building of new housing estates to minimise the impact on neighbours, the existing Local Plan and Core Strategy already require a Transport Assessment and potentially Travel Plan to be submitted with development proposals and these should be encouraged to address the concerns stated above.

Pedestrian safety

77. In the Questionnaire, in response to the question 'Do you think that people living in, or visiting, the Parish can walk, cycle or ride a horse safely?' 91% felt that 'main roads' were unsafe, 63% that 'minor roads' were unsafe and 60% 'that it was unsafe for walking, cycling and riding' in the village.

78. This chart shows the views of respondents as to the measures they thought might improve safety.

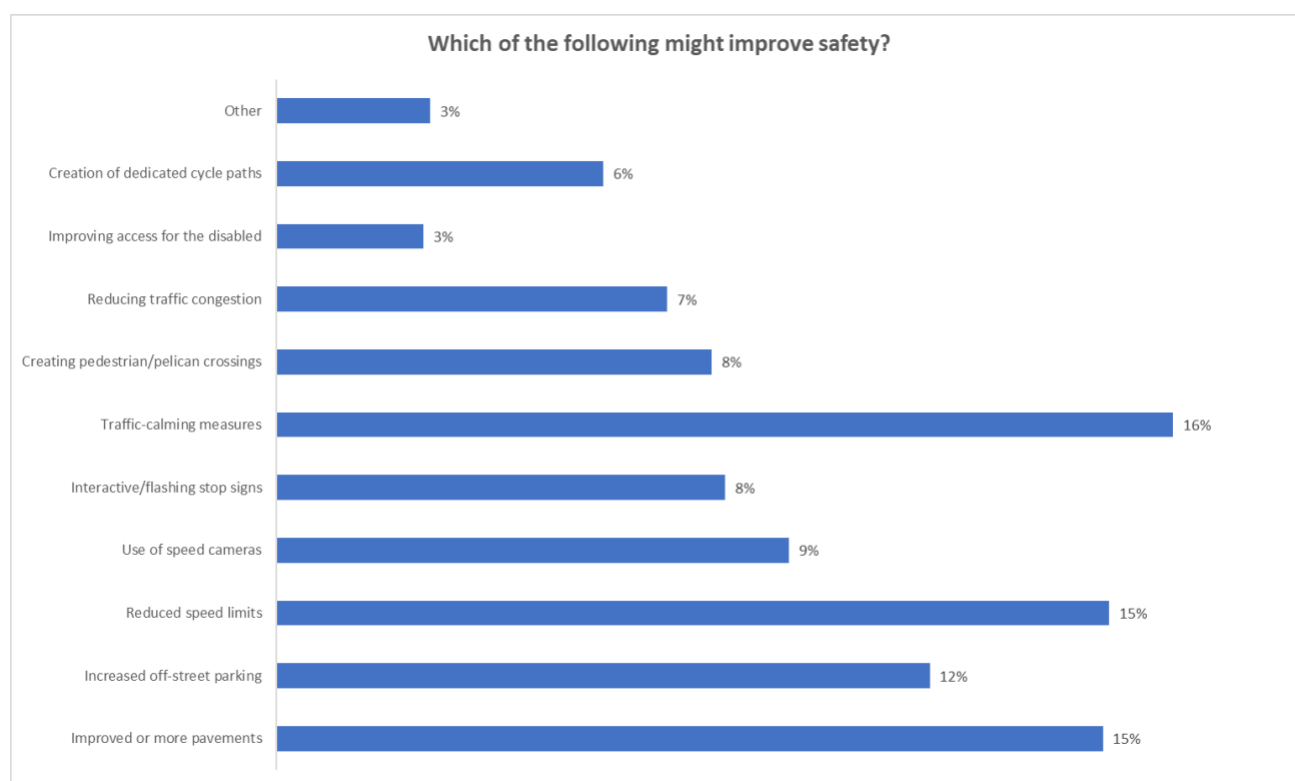


Figure 10: Questionnaire - measures to improve road safety

The public rights of way network

79. While sites AL/HO1 and AL/HO2 will not affect the existing PRow network, site AL/HO3, on the eastern side of the village, is crossed by part of Restricted Byway WT340A with Public Footpath WT341 running along its northern boundary. KCC have said that they will work with the TWBC to protect these paths when detailed plans come forward for the site. However, KCC also recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan supports the retention of these paths, and all PRow in the parish, by including a specific policy supporting protection of PRow where development is proposed and requiring their enhancement for the benefit of connectivity.

Policy 2.3: Enhancing Public Rights of Way

Where development is proposed that includes, or is adjacent to, an existing PRow, PRow should be enhanced to improve connectivity within the site and links with other PRow and pavements suitable for active travel modes.

80. KCC has also commented that the HNP considers how new paths could be created to redress the 'lack of footpaths in the south west of the parish' (SWOT analysis from public workshop). Additionally that some existing public footpaths may be suitable to upgrade to bridleways to extend the public's access right to cyclists and horse riders which together with policy 2.3 could create a new cyclable route between the village and Sprivers that may prove a popular alternative to the car for existing and future residents. There may be other opportunities to work with neighbouring parishes to establish new off-road routes to Brenchley and Goudhurst,

the two nearest settlements or even for a cycle route to Marden and the nearest railway station. In their submission they state: 'KCC recommends that the HNP encourages opportunities for off-road enhancements which could be delivered around the parish when funding becomes available'. In response to this the HNP proposes a new Project:

Project 2.1: Enhancing cycling, riding and walking routes within the parish and to neighbouring settlements

The PC will work with KCC, neighbouring parishes and developers to identify and put in place enhancements to the existing PRoW network to increase provision for cycling, riding and walking (active travel) within the parish and connectivity with neighbouring settlements where possible.

Workshops

81. Road and pedestrian safety was one of the topics that was the subject of a round table discussion at the Workshops, resulting in a group SWOT analysis (for detail see workshop report).
82. Although this discussion group did not emphasise any particular priority action (as they were all considered priorities), there was clear support for improvement to pavements and parking (see below in relation to parking).
83. The opportunity for the HNP to offer retrofitting measures to address road safety issues more widely within the village is limited, however opportunities are greater where new traffic restrictions or new links and pavements are required to create a safe direct walking route from new development sites to the village centre, shops, services and school. However, there are minimum requirements for these that would be difficult to achieve without reducing the width of roads which have their own minimum requirements. The Manual for Streets (HM Gov, 2007) states '6.3.22 There is no maximum width for footways. In lightly used streets (such as those with a purely residential function), the minimum unobstructed width for pedestrians should generally be 2 m. Additional width should be considered between the footway and a heavily used carriageway, or adjacent to gathering places, such as schools and shops.' Further guidance on minimum footway widths is given in Inclusive Mobility. It should be noted that HPC also submits proposals for local improvement priorities to the Highways Authority through an annual Highways Improvement Programme.

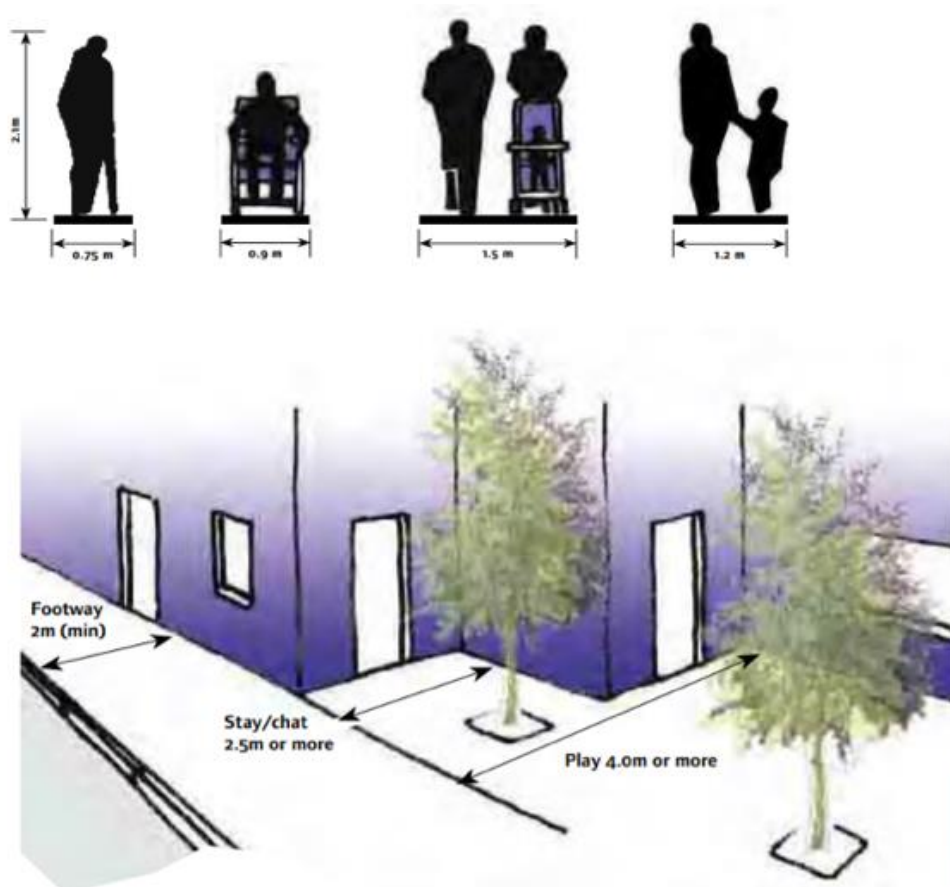


Figure 11: Extract from Manual for Streets showing minimum footway width 2m

84. Inclusive Mobility 2002 advises that: 'ideally the width of the footway [pavement] should be 2000mm to facilitate two people in wheelchairs to pass each other comfortably.

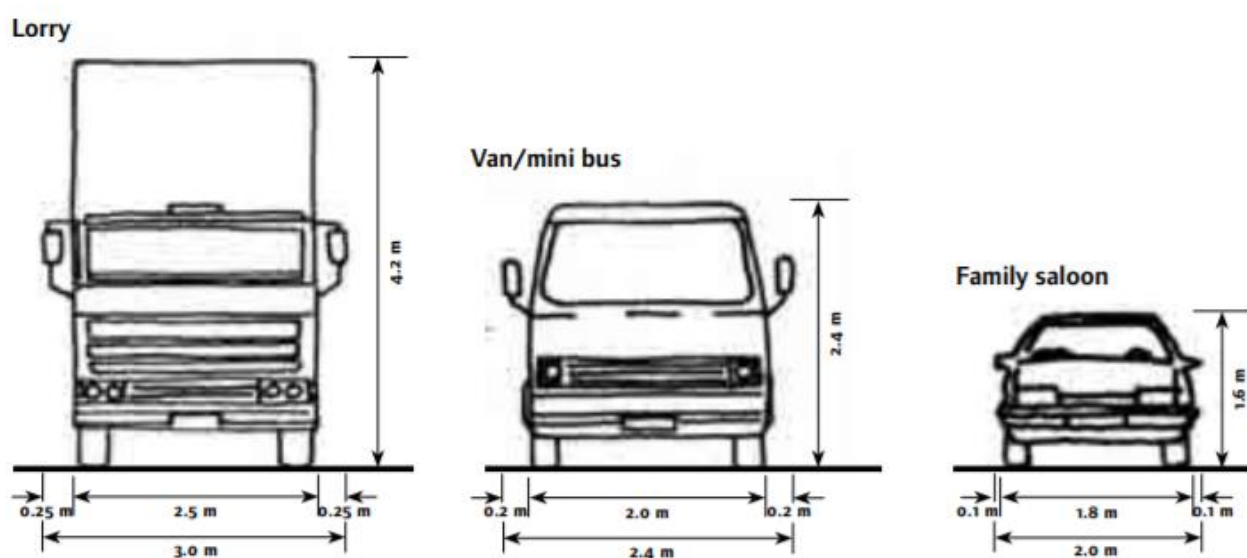


Figure 12: Extract from Manual for Streets showing vehicle widths

85. Where this width is not possible a clear width of 1500mm should be provided, with an absolute clear minimum width of 1000mm in exceptional cases.' The illustration of vehicle

widths (Fig 7) demonstrates that a 6m wide carriageway is only just wide enough to accommodate two lorries, buses or large agricultural vehicles to pass each other even at very low speed to avoid their wing mirrors touching and this will leave pedestrians on an adjacent narrow pavement, feeling very vulnerable. The pandemic also highlights that narrow pavements on only one side of the road make it extremely difficult to adhere to social/physical distance restrictions. Given the concerns that already exist and the recognition that some older developments did not make adequate pavement provision the HNP proposes the following

Policy 2.4: Adequate pavements

Development proposals will be supported so long as they provide pavements in line with the Manual for Streets for all users to the village centre as appropriate.

86. The discussion group at the Workshop also identified the need to provide safe crossings where the residents of new developments to the south of the village centre would need to cross safely to access the primary academy, pharmacy or sports ground. It is noted that 'people will always take the shortest route' and so these natural desire lines must be taken into account when making provision. As it is acknowledged that roads are narrow in the village, crossings should ideally be either Zebra or Pelican crossings which do not require a safe pedestrian refuge as this would narrow the road and potentially cause a risk to cyclists and riders when drivers speed up or attempt to squeeze past to overtake. Particularly dangerous are the Brenchley Road/ Furnace Lane junction where crashmap.co.uk identifies two serious incidents in 2019 and 2020 and the junction with the Lamberhurst/Maidstone Road with seven slight incidents with 14 casualties between 2016 and 2020.

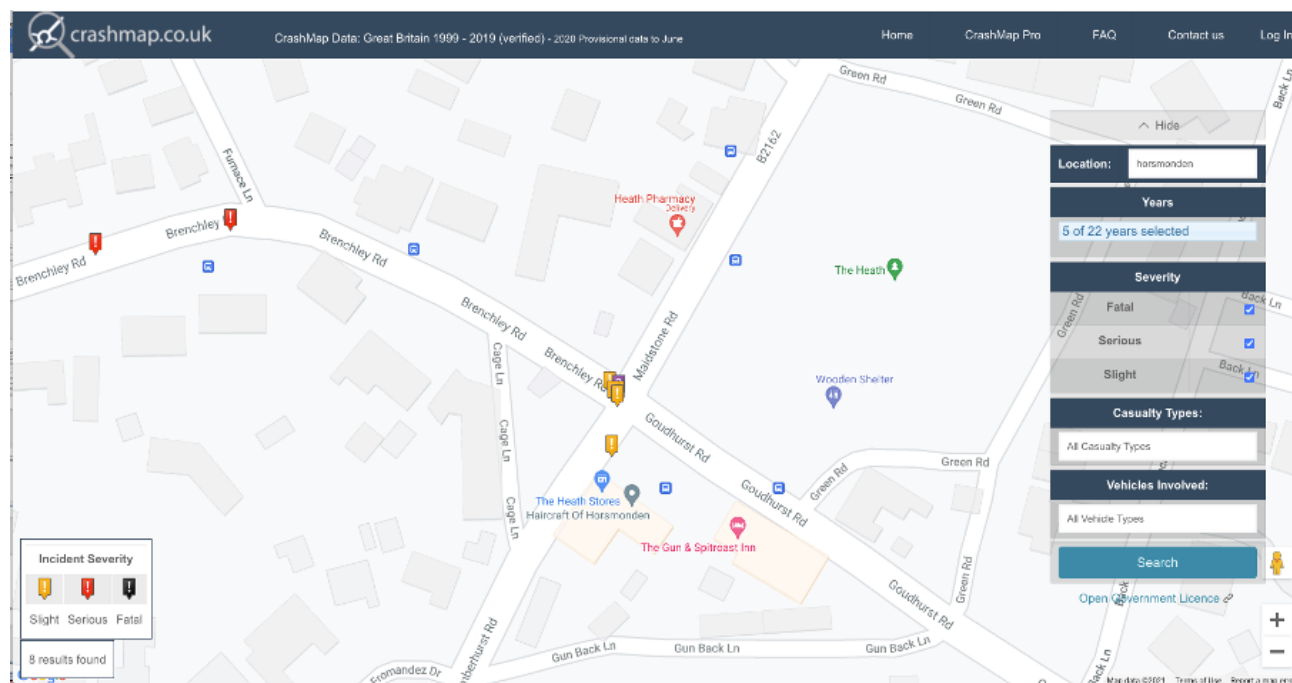


Figure 13: Crashmap showing slight and serious incidents on the Brenchley Road (Information DfT, Google maps)

87. There is no safe crossing point on Maidstone Road near the primary academy for families wishing to walk to school. The HNP proposes the following:

Policy 2.5: School access crossing

Developer contributions will be sought for provision of facilities for improved safe road crossing of the Maidstone Road adjacent to the school and integrated with the village pedestrian network, from all developments over 10 homes to the west of the Maidstone Road / Lamberhurst Road.

Project 2.2: Safe Road Crossing on the Maidstone Road

The PC will develop options for suitable costed schemes with KCC Highways, TWBC and developers.

Public transport

88. In the Questionnaire, 76.1% of respondents indicated that they use the buses available in the parish. When asked to indicate what would encourage or increase the use of buses, the responses were as per the chart below.

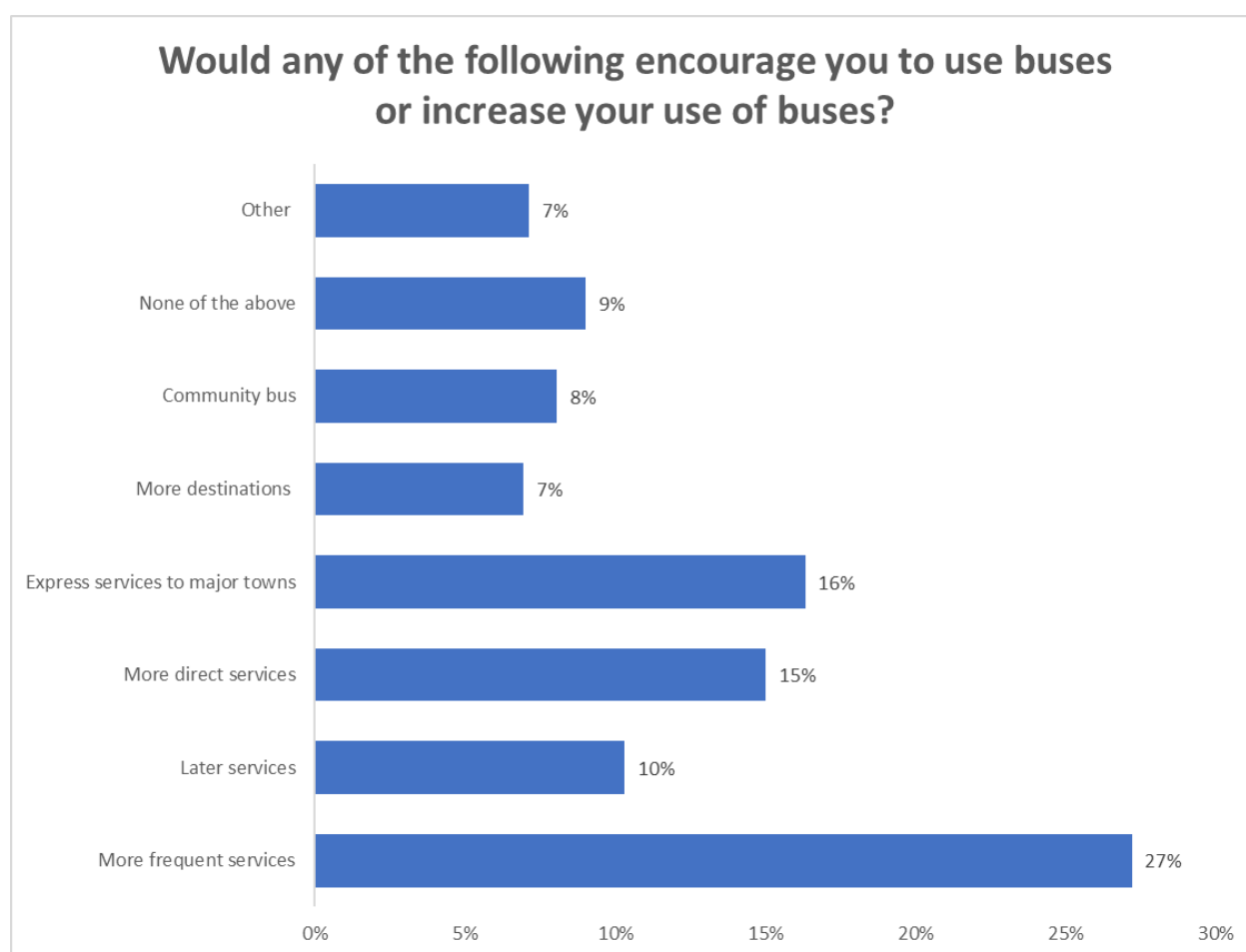


Figure 14: Questionnaire responses on public transport

89. Public transport in the village was one of the topics that was the subject of a round table discussion at the Workshops (for detail see workshop report).

90. The good school bus service and Readycall (dial-a-ride type or demand responsive mobility service) were commended by residents but the lack of bus routes to Paddock Wood for commuters and others was highlighted as a weakness or even a threat to the occupancy of new estates.
91. As with other transport issues, influencing bus service provision and usage through the HNP is challenging, particularly in a climate of austerity with KCC reducing subsidised bus routes to villages. Only quite significant development would trigger contributions from developers to increase the frequency of services or provide a demand response service, for example, a daily commuting service to Paddock Wood station. These may have to be time-limited if agreed, but it is reasonably common for the subsidy to be in place for up to five years after which point the service would be expected to become self-financing or be considered uncommercial. However, rather than simply serve commuters, such a service should serve a wider audiences including young and elderly people if well researched and marketed. The HNP proposes the following as a project:

Project 2.3 Bus Provision

The PC will encourage discussions between developers and transport providers to provide a daily (possibly demand response bus service) to Paddock Wood railway station during the morning and evening commuting peak and off-peak during the weekday and at weekends and encourage developers and transport providers to monitor and evaluate its viability after two and five years.

Parking

92. Residents were also concerned to see provision of adequate off-street parking in new developments so that neighbouring streets would not be obstructed by over-spill or for visitor parking for new developments, adding to an already congested parking situation during the evenings or at weekends.
93. Parking is clearly a challenge with additional parking needed in or around the centre of the village. The HNP proposes that the requirements for parking for new developments should be in line with the new Parking Standards being proposed by TWBC which are reproduced in Figure 13. The HNP proposes the following:

Policy 2.6: Public parking

All developments should include a suitably designed, shared, publicly accessible visitor parking spaces in accordance with TWBC parking standards. Access to the public visitor parking spaces should remain available (limited-stay restrictions will be acceptable) to visitors and deliveries at all times and be in addition to the private or off-road provision for residents (see policy 2.7). Proposals for additional publicly available usable parking in the village will be positively considered.

Policy 2.7: New parking

Development proposals must include sufficient allocated and visitor parking provision with due regard to the TWBC Residential Parking Standards contained in Figure 15.

| Parking standard definition (average) | Minimum |
|---|--------------|
| 1 Bed Flat | 1 |
| 1 Bed House | 1 |
| 2 Bed Flat | 1.5 |
| 2 Bed House | 1.5 |
| 3 Bed Flat | 2 |
| 3 Bed House | 2 |
| 4+ Bed Flat | 2 |
| 4+ Bed House | 2.5 |
| Additional Visitor Parking | 0.2 per unit |
| Note: Garages will not be counted within parking standards unless they are of a minimum 3.6m (width)/7m (length) in size. For visitor spaces to be considered suitable for light goods delivery vehicles the dimensions will be 3.5 x 7,5m as set out in the KCC Highways guidance. | |

Figure 15: TWBC proposed new parking standards for new developments

94. The HNP references the evidence provided by TWBC in support of their new parking standards.

Sustainable development

95. The PC has a Sustainability Policy. This recommends that all developments (large and small) are designed and built with sustainability in mind. Where possible, properties should include consideration to high sustainability targets in line with the government's plans that aspire towards a low carbon lifestyle. Permitted development provides for the installation of retrospective provision of charging equipment to existing homes within the residential curtilage. It is expected that many householders will add installations over this decade. The situation is more difficult for residents who park on-street or in communal parking areas.

96. With that in mind it is proposed to future-proof new developments by providing for car charging points in the parking areas of all new developments:

Policy 2.8 Charging points

Developments that make provision for electric car and cycle charging points in the parking areas (for resident, visitor and public spaces) will be supported.

Project 2.4 Car and Cycle Charging Points

The PC will work with stakeholders to develop strategies for provision of car and cycle charging points for use where feasible.

Other considerations

97. Although only the southern half of the parish is within the High Weald AONB it is also worth giving consideration to the Objectives within the recently agreed High Weald AONB Management Plan relevant to the planning of new development and the impact of these on historic routeways which are a common feature more widely within the parish:

“High Weald AONB Management Plan Objective R1: To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways

- Discourage new access points that damage the character of sunken routeways or dilute the pattern of routeways
- Identify historic routeways in highway improvement plans and consider management tailored to enhance their historic character including early intervention to protect banks
- Invest in creative highway engineering solutions, delivering quality, best practice highway alterations which are sensitive to AONB character
- Ensure that routeways are recognised as non-designated heritage assets in the planning process.”

98. In Horsmonden, these routeways are generally in the south of the parish within the AONB but one other important historic routeway is the former Hop Pickers’ Line that runs through the proposed Bassetts Farm (AL/H03) development. This is highlighted in the AECOM Masterplan as a potential route through the site and it was suggested in the Masterplan that this could potentially act as a walking and cycling link from the south to the north of the site to the sports ground, Back Lane, kindergarten and primary academy. However, the route of the Hop Pickers’ line is outside of the control of Persimmon who propose to deliver AL/HO3 and so it is unlikely that this ambitious goal will be achieved. Instead, a walking and cycling route should be achieved through the site following desire lines to ensure that school ‘drop-off’ traffic is minimised.

A note about transport and neighbourhood plans

99. Locality (who support neighbourhood plan making on behalf of the government) have produced a Neighbourhood Planning and Transport Tool-kit which states on page 7:

‘Many traffic matters fall outside of the scope of planning. For example, traffic management on existing transport networks are usually a matter for the highways authority to deal with. So, changes

to traffic lights, restrictions, speed limits, signage, traffic circulation, crossing points and other traffic management devices usually falls outside the scope of planning.'

'A possible exception to this may be where new development would impact on existing networks and this necessitates changes to those networks in order to accommodate such development. However, even in cases like these, a neighbourhood plan cannot be prescriptive about the actual solutions and therefore cannot set out, for example changes to the speed limit or specific highways improvements.'

'However, the plan could highlight localised traffic capacity and safety issues, or infrastructure deficiencies that would need to be addressed when considering development proposals. It would then be down to the local planning authority (LPA) to assess development proposals submitted for planning permission and to decide whether it would be necessary to impose conditions or a Section 106 obligation in order to approve the scheme.'

Supporting documents

- Horsmonden Village Traffic Calming Appraisal, 30th August 2016, MLM Consulting Engineers Ltd, Ashford
- KCC (Tunbridge Wells Borough), (Prohibition of Waiting) No. 3 Order 2019 [Proposed no waiting at any time (Double yellow lines)]

Chapter 3 Business and employment

Objective

Provision should be made for businesses to expand and flourish.



Introduction

100. Horsmonden is surprisingly diverse for business. Farming forms a large part of the local economy with several rural business centres scattered throughout the Parish.
101. It was decided early on in the HNP process to ensure that the plan was not just about housing, but that provision should be made for businesses to expand and flourish, and to support them to do so through a range of policies. Questions were included on employment and homeworking in the original questionnaire and a working group was formed led by local business people, further surveys carried out face-to-face and then followed up with a questionnaire directly for businesses to find out their needs and issues.
102. Feedback from the consultations indicate that residents do not want Horsmonden to become a ghost village between 8am and 6pm and want and need parishioners to have the capability to work in the village, which decreases traffic and helps the local economy.
103. Through this work the group identified the following parish 'trends': A shift from light engineering and some sizeable local businesses such as Boddingtons (who have now moved out of the parish), to commuting, small businesses, home based businesses or homeworkers in the service industry. A large percentage of land in the parish is still farmed.

Planning summary

The new NPPF July 2021 seeks to support the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings, the diversification of agricultural businesses including tourism and leisure and retaining local services and community facilities. However, it must also be sensitive to the surroundings and not have an unacceptable impact on local roads. TWBC policies seek to retain employment land from development for housing and strengthen the rural economy, particularly for uses related to the land such as agriculture and forestry. The new SLP seeks to support farm diversification and the viability of rural businesses.

Evidence

104. The Census 2011 revealed strengths and weaknesses in the local economy including lower paid jobs locally as opposed to commuters to London where there are higher paid jobs. A high percentage of employees are in the so-called 'knowledge economy' such as professional advisers and 50% of residents have a degree or higher qualifications.

105. Their local research revealed that there were 80 businesses in the parish, that farms remain a major employer and homeworkers are on the increase. This latter trend has probably been accelerated by the pandemic crisis. The questionnaire for businesses also revealed:
106. The chart below shows a wide range of employment types but with Accountancy, Banking and Finance and Hospitality and Event Management as the largest. Businesses were asked if they were likely to increase the number of employees in the next five years with ten saying they were very or fairly likely to increase, nine saying not very likely and four not going to increase.

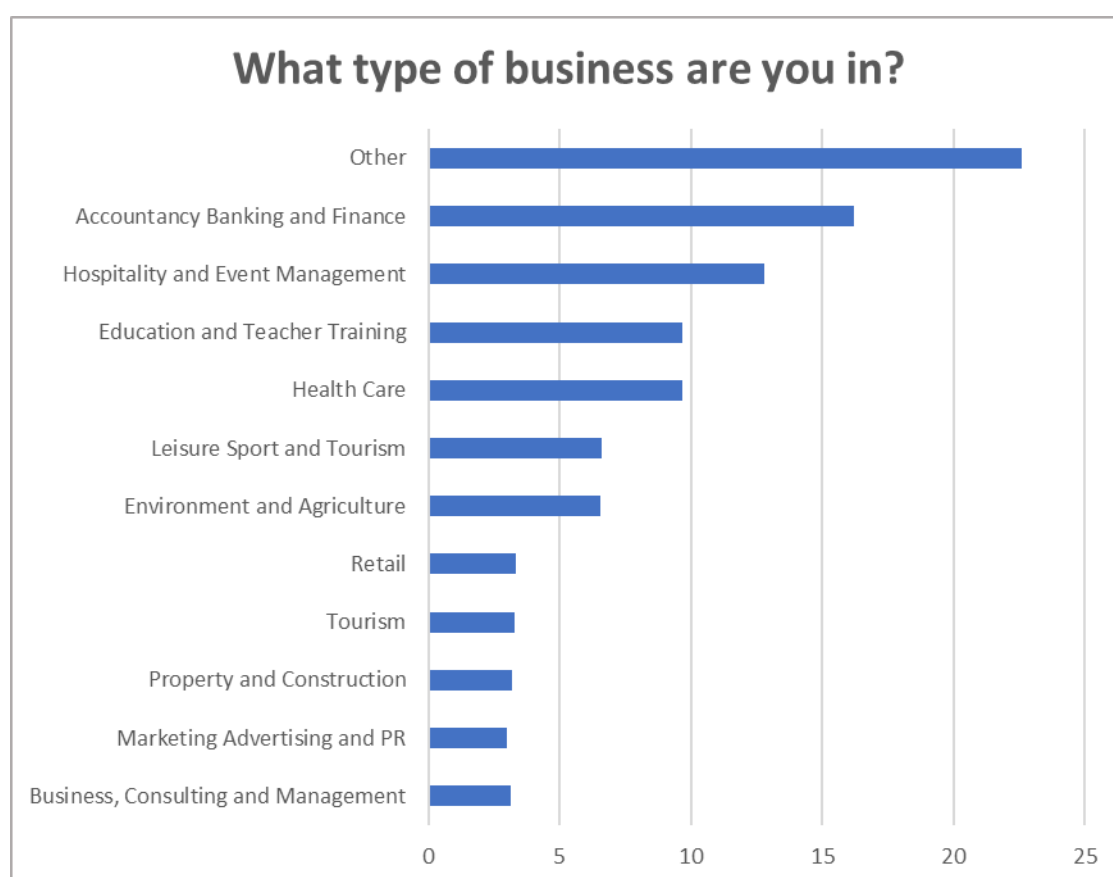


Figure 16: Business questionnaire responses on business type

Policy context and policies

107. This suggests that there is some scope for making provision for businesses to expand in the parish in the HNP, rather than risk losing them to nearby areas. The parish contains a resource of existing employment sites and buildings that are not identified as Key Employment Sites by TWBC but which should be retained for local employment and business. In recent times changes to the Use Classes Order have increased the degree of flexibility for changes in activity without the need for planning permission to be sought within Classes B (general industry and storage and distribution), Class E (offices and business services, retail, food and drink and leisure), and Class F (appropriate leisure and other uses of appropriate type and scale). However, the scope for buildings may be increased by suitable redevelopment, reflecting other planning policies and requirements. Support in principle is subject to avoiding and mitigating harmful impacts and compliance with other relevant policies. Development proposals should, unless justified, maintain existing employment land and premises in employment use.

Policy 3.1 Retain and intensify the use of existing employment sites:

Development proposals to develop existing employment sites that retain and intensify the potential use for industrial and employment uses, will be supported in principle.

108. Positively (a small majority of) businesses did not have a problem with broadband. However, new housing developments should be designed in such a way to incorporate the growing trend towards home working either on a full- or part-time basis including the possibility of 'live/work' units. While it is not generally within the scope of neighbourhood plans to address poor mobile phone coverage or broadband in homes or businesses that are already built, it should be acknowledged that the additional homes proposed will put stress on an already strained network and provision should be made boosting both or at least maintain existing levels of network coverage.

Policy 3.2 Broadband:

New development proposals must be designed to include the provision of fibre broadband infrastructure. Proposals that will enable and improve the provision of broadband connectivity to the proposal site, adjacent area and wider community will be supported subject to compliance with other relevant development plan policies, guidance and national policy.

109. When asked what type of additional workspace or facilities in the parish might be needed in the next five years, the majority did not require any, but there was some limited demand for light industrial premises, hot-desking and serviced/non-service rented offices and storage. Local storage encourages more people into the village and supports those who need more so they do not have to move out. The HNP gives consideration to allocating some employment land potentially within existing farm buildings to accommodate modest demand for light industrial and hot-desking as well as serviced/non-serviced rented offices and storage (to meet local parish-based business needs). Feasibility for a business or enterprise hub and café utilising the current village hall should be considered or accommodating this in the proposed new village hall.

Policy 3.3 Conversion of farm buildings:

Applications for conversion of existing farm buildings to hubs for smaller (Class B) general industry, storage and distribution uses, or serviced offices and services (Class E) will be supported in principle.

110. More parking in the village centre was suggested as a means of supporting nearby businesses. This is addressed in the Access and Movement chapter.
111. Top fruit (apples, pears and cherries), soft fruit (strawberries, raspberries and blackcurrants) and grape vines were the highest land-uses (50% respondents) with arable around 25% and no livestock (from respondents). Farms employed up to seven seasonal staff with three full-time and two part-time with 60% fairly likely to increase their employment.
112. Support in principle is subject to avoiding and mitigating harmful impacts and compliance with other relevant development plan policies.

Policy 3.4 Business associated with vineyards and fruit growing:

Proposals for development and diversification of vineyards or other fruit growing businesses to include retail outlets, cafes / restaurants and leisure uses (Class E and F) will be supported in principle.

113. For farms (perhaps as they are located outside the centre of the village) the percentage experiencing problems with their broadband connection were much higher (80%) which is problematic when applying for grants or generally managing their businesses efficiently and effectively. Only 40% of farms provide space for other small businesses although half of these had as many between 6-10 businesses. This suggests that diversification is strong with 80% receiving 1-5 requests per year for facilities for small businesses, but with 75% unable to respond positively because of 'no space', although 80% were keen to if supported by the PC and the HNP. When asked 'what areas would best support your business development in the parish in the coming years' they responded:

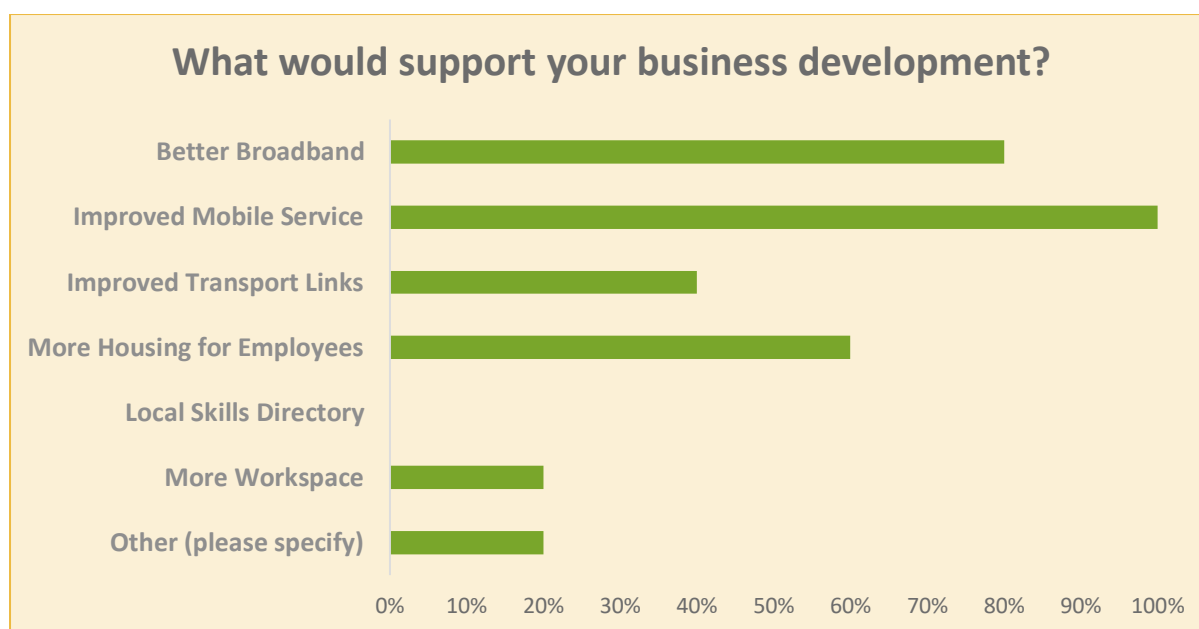


Figure 17: Business Questionnaire - What would support your business development?



Figure 18: Hazel Street Vineyards (Granville Davies)

114. As well as a concern about broadband quality, poor mobile phone coverage was identified even more widely as a constraint on business. There are two masts on Bassetts Farm (although at the time of writing only one appears to be operational). The support for improvement works in Policy 3.5 is subject to avoiding and mitigating and compliance with other relevant policies and guidance.

Policy 3.5 Mobile phone and data transmission:

Proposals for improvements to mobile phone and data transmission network infrastructure will be supported in principle subject to compliance with other relevant development plan policies, guidance and national policy.

115. More housing accessible to employees was also identified by 60% of business respondents. This may reflect the high cost of housing in the area in comparison with local wages which we have already identified are lower. It was unclear whether this is permanent or temporary/seasonal accommodation, and we would like to hear further from employers to confirm what sort of accommodation is needed. Provision of affordable housing for key and farm workers should be considered when providing for affordable housing. Also see SLP Policy H7 in relation to Rural Workers' dwellings.

Supporting documents

- Business and Employment Working Group Presentation 06-02-19

Chapter 4 Community infrastructure

Objective

New development should bring with it the opportunity to provide improved community, health and leisure facilities to existing and new residents of the parish.



Introduction

116. Horsmonden has a strong community spirit and this is reflected in the large number of groups and activities taking place. These groups need places in which to meet and there are a number of facilities including the Village Hall, three church halls and the Social Club.
117. The annual Summer Festival is organised on the Heath by HoVEC (Horsmonden Village Events Committee) and is very well supported by the community and visitors. The annual Horse Fair is a long-standing and colourful tradition taking place on the Heath.
118. Horsmonden has a long and distinguished sporting history. Cricket was first recorded in 1743 and the football and tennis clubs are keenly supported. Indoor facilities for short mat bowls, yoga and pilates are available in the Village Hall and the Social Club has snooker and table tennis facilities.
119. This chapter identifies the issues facing the parish now and in the future and sets out a series of policies to address these. There are also proposals for a new village hall and medical centre which are in development.

Planning summary

The NPPF July 2021 states that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and to provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs and plan positively for the provision of shared space and community facilities. TWBC's development plan policies have sought to resist the loss of rural services and encourage the development of new community facilities to meet the needs of local communities. The new SLP seeks to provide a new village hall and medical centre integrated with the proposed 240-320 new homes on sites AL/H02 and 03.

Evidence

Visioning Event

120. At this event held in April 2018 residents identified the places they cherish: 'Frequently mentioned positive places were Heath Stores, the Gun & Spitroast Inn, the tennis courts, the sports ground, the primary academy and kindergarten, doctors' surgery and oast houses on Lamberts Lane. In some instances, people stated they support the function of the space but not the appearance of the building – this was the case for the Business Centre and St

Margaret's Church Hall.' This event suggested that the HNP provided an opportunity to revisit the provision of community facilities of all types.

Questionnaire

121. The responses to the Questionnaire revealed that what residents valued most about living in the parish was 'a sense of community' (63%), with village shops (58%) and with village facilities lower (34%) and the doctors' surgery (31%). The results suggest there is some dissatisfaction with these latter facilities. When asked about which amenities in the parish people use the responses were different with village shops again top (92%) with the pharmacy (86%) next and doctors' surgery (76%). Only 45% of respondents use the Village Hall.
122. When asked which facilities or services people would like to see developed or improved, outdoor facilities for children and teenagers came highest (38%) followed by dog waste bins (28%) and community allotments (18%). Residents were then asked what should be the priority for the parish over the next ten years. The results were:

| Thinking of the Parish over the next ten years, which of the following should be a priority? * see note below | # of adult respondents | % of total adult respondents |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Retaining and growing local shops and businesses | 263 | 62% |
| Services for older people | 200 | 47% |
| Facilities for young people | 175 | 41% |
| Medical facilities | 164 | 38% |
| Improved school facilities | 82 | 19% |
| Children's playground | 50 | 12% |
| Sports and leisure facilities | 49 | 12% |
| Access for the disabled | 36 | 8% |
| Community allotments | 31 | 7% |

Figure 19: Questionnaire parish priorities for next ten years (high to low)

123. The first priority 'retaining and growing local shops and businesses' is addressed in the Business and Employment chapter. Services – except where they are delivered from a building – are difficult to address through a neighbourhood plan which is more about land use but facilities for young people and medical facilities are addressed in both the SLP and HNP with a new medical centre being proposed in the SLP Policy STR/HO3 at Bassetts Farm and a range of new play facilities for young people.

Themed workshop

124. The survey results, together with an audit of the village assets, were presented at the Workshop in July 2019. The attendees worked in groups to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the community assets and services.
125. The number of services (GP surgery, chemist) and clubs were identified as strengths. The ageing population and the lack of social support or care were recognised as weaknesses. People were concerned about losing the GP surgery and too many new houses and their impact on the overstretched infrastructure. However, they also recognised these as opportunities to be addressed – even to provide welcome packs to new residents so they can quickly find out and start using facilities and services and enjoying local clubs and activities.

Policy context and policies

Health

126. Residents were concerned that a substantial increase in housing in the parish by approximately 240 to 320 homes proposed by TWBC's SLP could overwhelm existing services including the doctors' surgery. Although it is reported that NHS policy is to concentrate primary healthcare including GP surgeries in larger practices in towns, rather than small practices in rural areas, the SLP makes provision for a new medical centre to be built on the Bassetts Farm site (AL/HO3) on land which will be reserved by the developer for that purpose. This is given a cautious welcome as the site is quite removed from the centre of the village compared to the existing surgery. AECOM's Masterplan suggests that these facilities should be located in the southern part of that site as close as possible to the Goudhurst Road to facilitate easier access for existing residents with sufficient parking for people with limited mobility or driving from outlying areas such as neighbouring villages and staff. Bearing these points in mind it is therefore proposed:

Policy 4.1: New medical facilities:

Development proposals for new medical facilities within the village of Horsmonden which provide adequate parking and appropriate pedestrian access will be supported in principle. New housing developments should provide financial contributions, where justified, to ensure the provision of necessary medical infrastructure for residents.

Clubs, societies, and sports facilities

127. Despite a healthy voluntary sector with well-attended clubs and societies (including sports clubs) there is a strong feeling that the organisation of these falls on the shoulders of a few older volunteers. Engaging younger people with families is challenging. Despite the challenges there is enthusiastic support for a range of projects that could benefit from developer contributions or have land allocated in new development sites including for example:
- Allotments (AL/HO3/Bassetts Farm)
 - Nostalgia/Heritage Centre (site to be determined)

- New pavilion (for cricket and football – possibly shared with the tennis club) at the Sports Ground

128. There are no allotments in Horsmonden currently. SLP Policy OSSR 2 includes a table setting out the requirement for new developments to make provision for allotments for sites over 100 dwellings (and of new play spaces (youth) and new play spaces (children) for sites between 50 and 99 dwellings).
129. The PC recently advertised for interest from existing residents in the parish for people interested in renting allotments resulted in 11 positive responses with numbers likely to be increased by new residents.

Policy 4.2: Allotments

Land should be set aside for allotments within larger developments (AL/HO3) and made available to the new and existing residents. The site should have sufficient parking provision for allotment holders, mains water and be located within 800 metres of the village centre.

130. The most suitable allotment site which is large enough, accessible and in reasonable proximity to complementary uses, is at AL/HO3 Bassetts Farm. The SLP has made provision for community land to the north of the site and this would be a good location for allotments (within 800 metres or a 10 minute walk for a reasonably fit person), particularly in the north east corner closest to School House Lane which would facilitate easier pedestrian access (approximately 500 metres) to the village and potentially a school allotment as well. Initially the allotments will be managed by the PC but in time the land will be passed to a separate and suitably constituted local group.
131. This workshop also identified a lack of facilities for young people and play facilities for younger children. While it may be appropriate to have some limited play facilities for very young children within new developments to meet the needs of residents and their visitors only, it would be more appropriate for facilities for older children and young people to be sited at the Sports Ground where there is more opportunity for interaction, independent play and to benefit the existing established community.

Policy 4.3: Facilities for children and young people

Where planning permission is given for developments (50-99+ homes), developers will provide a play facility for young children on site, and for larger developments (100+) contribute for a skate park and basketball court/multi-use games area for young people and outdoor gym to be sited at the Horsmonden Sports Ground.

Community buildings including halls and schools

132. The SWOT exercise identified that there were several community halls available but that lack of parking at the village centre, the need for further investment and the lack of small meeting rooms are limiting factors. Similar issues arise in terms of 'dependency on a few community-minded individuals' to run these. Further research has shown (See Community Assets Survey supporting document) confirmed the findings of the earlier SWOT exercise, that the condition

of some buildings are of concern, and that they are constrained by location, lack of parking and size.

133. It was proposed at the Workshop that combining facilities – even selling off existing sites to assist in financing a new village hall with reduced running costs and more modern standards – is an option that needs to be explored. TWBC proposes in its SLP that a new village hall should be built on the Brenchley Road site (AL/HO2). While this is closer to the village centre (Heath Stores crossroads), it is unclear whether adequate and safe pedestrian access can be secured from the village centre along the Brenchley Road (see Access and Movement chapter). It is therefore proposed that if a suitable site cannot be found on any of the proposed development sites, contributions will be sought from developers for a new community centre and sports facility on another site in the village.

Policy 4.4: New village hall

Development proposals for a new village hall will be supported provided it is a 400 metres (approximately 5 minute walk) from the village centre and has adequate safe pedestrian access.

Chapter 5 Design and character

Objective

To provide design policies that can be applied to any new development proposals in the parish to help ensure that they are sustainable and in keeping with local character.



Introduction

134. With the historic Heath and conservation area at its centre, over 100 listed buildings, strong links to iron-making (Furnace Pond), Jane Austen’s family and hop growing (oast houses and Hop Picker’s railway line), Horsmonden is a village with immense heritage and character. New sustainable development should reflect this , respond sensitively to its location on the edge of the High Weald AONB and at the same time be environmentally efficient and of high quality.
135. Over the last 40 years, many village industries have closed down and their sites have been redeveloped as smaller housing developments. Small outlying developments, mainly of housing but also businesses and farmsteads are dispersed along the four main routes out of the village. The 14th century St Margaret’s church and its small hamlet lie one and a quarter miles south of the village. Just outside the village on the west side is [Sprivers](#), a 16th century manor house now owned by the National Trust.
136. This chapter takes into account the Character Assessment undertaken by the Design and Style Working Group and the Design Guidelines produced by AECOM. Both can be found in the list of key supporting documents on the HNP website.

Planning summary

The NPPF July 2021 reinforces the government’s espoused commitment to “Achieving well-designed places”, stating that “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.” And Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans should set out “a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.” TWBC for its part has encouraged sustainable design best practice and heritage conservation. This approach has been bolstered recently by the publication of the High Weald Housing Design Guide (2020).

Evidence

Visioning event

137. At the visioning event held in April 2019, a discussion was held on Valued Places:

‘The groups discussed the places they cherish and the places they do not. The Heath (village green) was most commonly mentioned as a great place, along with the historic buildings surrounding it. Other frequently mentioned positive places were Heath Stores, the Gun and

Spitroast Inn, the tennis courts, the sports ground, the primary school and kindergarten, doctors' surgery and oast houses on Lamberts Lane. In some instances, people stated they support the function of the space but not the appearance of the building – this was the case for the Business Centre and St Margaret's Church Hall.

Questionnaire

138. This discussion on what residents cherished or valued in terms of character and design of buildings was re-stated in the Questionnaire:

80% of respondents felt it was very important (17% fairly important) that historic buildings and sites across the parish are protected from future housing development.

139. When asked what they value most, a 'beautiful historic village' was cited by 37.8% of residents. And when asked 'Other than traffic, what concerns you', 74.2% responded: 'Loss of village/landscape character', the highest of all responses. In the Housing Supply and Design section of the questionnaire residents when asked: 'Should our Plan have a policy which encourages buildings with a low carbon footprint whilst still maintaining character?' and 94.3% responded positively.
140. When asked what principles should influence the design of new homes in the parish most agreed that new developments should:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Be sympathetic to its surroundings/reflect and enhance the distinctive character of the locality | 204 |
| Have adequate parking | 200 |
| Have outside space (eg Garden or communal space) | 199 |
| Provide adequate external amenity space for refuse and recycling storage | 196 |
| Respect/maintain adequate space between existing housing and new development | 190 |
| Have a low carbon footprint through use of renewable energy technologies | 190 |
| Encourage diversity of design | 126 |
| Increase the level of housing density | 41 |

Figure 20: Questionnaire design principles (high to low)

Workshop

141. A Landscape and Design Workshop was held on 15th June 2019. The following topics were presented and discussed by residents around tables using SWOT analysis. People recognised that attractive design draws people to the village and maintains the character and feel of the village, but they were concerned about 'fake Disney' styling, pattern book or 'catalogue pick and mix'. They were concerned that developers might see good design as expensive. However they also recognised opportunities including:

- Use of sloping land to add character
- Attractive bungalows for older people
- Specify design codes
- Reduce running costs through good design

142. The residents prioritised specifying design codes for new developments, an approach that has been taken forward through AECOM's Design Guide which sets out the main characteristics of Horsmonden:

| | HORSMONDEN |
|--|--|
| Streets and Public Realm | Horsmonden has been developed far from the original village centre. The village is approximately 2 miles apart from the original nucleus (around St Margaret's Church). The spine of Horsmonden lays along Brenchley Road and Goudhurst Road (east-west direction) and Maidstone Road and Lamberhurst Road (north-south direction). Other streets connect the village through these four main streets. In general there is a good level of accessibility and walkability in the central section of the village which can be attributed to a connected street network. However, residential housing along the four main roads stretches beyond the available footways. There are some areas in the centre of the village which lack footways (notably to the side of the village shop) or where the footways are too narrow for modern usage. There are several cul-de-sac developments in the village sprouting close enough from the main distributor roads. The village has well located and accessible public open spaces and paths that lead to the countryside. |
| Pattern and Layout of Buildings | There is a good mix of house typologies spread in Horsmonden. The most common house typology present in the village consists of detached houses, followed by less present types like semi-detached and terraced buildings of which there are relatively few. Orientation of buildings varies but with most of the buildings fronting the street and only a few addressing the street with the end gable. |
| Building Heights and Roofline | Building heights vary between one and two and a half storeys. Typically the roofline is either pitched or hipped, other less frequently used types of roof present in the village include cross hipped and half hipped roofs. Many buildings have chimneys and on the roofs gabled dormers are frequently present. A particularity of Horsmonden (and Kent in general) are Oast houses with conical tall roofs and pointed skyline (cowl). |
| Car Parking | There are different approaches to car parking within the village. A characteristic of the village is garage parking or on plot parking. It is common that these garages have one or two parking spaces. Other parking modes include: parking in the front garden, parking on the side of the house and also parking on the street. |

Figure 21: Local Character Analyses, Horsmonden Character Analysis and Design Guidelines (AECOM, 2019)

Policy context and policies

143. At the workshop a SWOT exercise on energy efficient housing identified the perception that more energy-efficient homes are more expensive to build and buy but suggests that this is a misconception as the technologies are becoming more mainstream. Above all they recognised

the 'Ability to market houses with eco-credentials and lower bills' (particularly energy- and water-efficiency) could be very attractive to house-buyers and renters, particularly those on lower incomes.

144. A SWOT exercise looking at modern design, identified that design should be sustainable and affordable. While new housing should be designed to meet Lifetime Homes Standards as set out in Policy 5.1, so that homes can be more easily adapted to meet any additional needs residents might have as they grow older, it should also encourage the efficient use of water and energy, and locally sourced and recycled materials in line with proposed changes to building regulations (see Housing and Development chapter).

Design

145. The SG also worked with a team of urban designers and landscape architects from international planning and engineering consultancy AECOM to develop Design Guidelines for future development. Following an initial meeting and site visit, the team undertook an urban design and landscape assessment, a follow-up visit by the landscape architect and the preparation of design principles and guidelines. These were presented to the SG and then at a follow-up event held in October 2019 with residents and developers.
146. Based on feedback from this event a final report, heavily illustrated with maps, plans and photographs, was presented to the parish. Homeowners and developers are encouraged to read the guidelines and accompanying Landscape and Delivery documents in full. The Local Character Analyses on page 13 (also shown overleaf) should particularly be given consideration at an early stage.



Figure 22: House showing typical tiled gable

147. Photographs of typical architectural details from the parish such as decorative bargeboards, gable dormers and decorative brickwork are illustrated on page 14 and clay tile, hung tiles and sandstone, white painted weather boarding and picket fencing on page 15. General issues to consider in development proposals are set out on pages 18 and 19.
148. A series of guidelines or recommendations specific to Horsmonden are then listed on the following pages, the most important of which are highlighted overleaf:

COLOUR PALETTES



Figure 23: Colour palette for Horsmonden

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN HORSMONDEN

- STREET GRID LAYOUT: pedestrian paths should be included in new developments and be integrated with the existing pedestrian routes.
- LOCAL GREEN SPACES, VIEWS AND CHARACTER: Existing trees and hedgerows should be considered at the earliest design stage to allow them to be successfully integrated into new development.
- PATTERN AND LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS: Boundaries such as walls [low, picket fencing] or hedgerows, whichever is appropriate to the street, should enclose and define each street along the back edge of the pavement, adhering to a consistent building line for each development group.
- BUILDING LINE AND BOUNDARY TREATMENT: Buildings should be aligned along the street with their main facade and entrance facing it, where this is in keeping with local character. The building line should have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions but will generally form a unified whole.
- BUILDING HEIGHTS/ROOFLINE: Dormers can be used as a design element to add variety and interest to roofs. However, care needs to be taken with their design elements, proportions and how they are positioned on the roof.
- MATERIALS AND BUILDING DETAILS: Materials and architectural detailing in Horsmonden contribute to the rural character of the area and the local vernacular. It is therefore important that the materials used in proposed development are of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness. Any future development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the

surrounding built environment (see extract from High Weald Design Guide reproduced below/overleaf). The design guide particularly highlights:

- Mixed tonality red brick
- Sash windows
- Hung tiles on upper floor (shingles)
- White timbered weather boarding
- Chimneys



Figure 24: Traditional boundary treatments in Horsmonden

- PUBLIC REALM AND STREETSCAPE: Oak bollards, post and rail ‘Sussex Fencing’, picket fences and black railings rather than galvanised steel ‘scaffolding poles should be used for street furniture. Landscaping and public realm should be interconnected to create a network of green infrastructure both within any site and to connect to wider routes and places.
- MANAGING LIGHTING: Ensure that lighting schemes will not cause unacceptable levels of light pollution particularly in intrinsically dark areas. These can be areas very close to the countryside or where dark skies are enjoyed.
- TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE: Buildings are predominantly two storeys and the change in roof heights and the presence of chimneys contribute to the visual interest of the historic core. The most prominent and symbolic vernacular of the village are the oast houses, hung tiles on the upper floor of the buildings, and white painted timber weather boarding.
- WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT: New development should always aim to strengthen biodiversity and the natural environment. This can be done by the creation of new habitats and wildlife corridors, aligning gardens and public spaces and linking with existing ecological assets. Hedges, wildflower meadows, old trees, ponds, hard landscaping

features such as rock piles, nest boxes installed at the eaves of the buildings, frog habitat corridors, and bug houses can all make a significant contribution to species diversity.

- SOLAR ROOF PANELS: Solar panels on roofs should be designed to reduce their visual impact. On new builds they should be designed-in from the start, forming part of the design concept. Some attractive options are solar shingles and photovoltaic slates or tiles. In this way the solar panels can be used as roofing material in their own right.
- PERMEABLE PAVEMENTS: Pavements add to the composition of the building. Thus permeable pavements should not only perform its primary function which is to let water filter through but also: respect the material palette, help to frame the building, create an arrival statement, be in harmony with the landscape treatment of the property and help define the property boundary.
- WASTE COLLECTOR INTEGRATED DESIGN: Create a specific enclosure of sufficient size for all the necessary bins. Place it within easy access from the street and, where possible, able to open on the pavement side to ease retrieval. Refer to the materials palette to analyse which would be a complementary material. Use it as part of the property boundary. Add to the green feel by incorporating a green roof [planted] or side planting element to it. And combine it with cycle storage.

149. One key area that was not directly addressed in the design guide was how developers should treat the transition from new developments to the rural or farmed landscape. This has been addressed in other neighbourhood plans and with the kind permission of AECOM and Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council this diagram which shows how this transition can be sensitively managed has been reproduced:

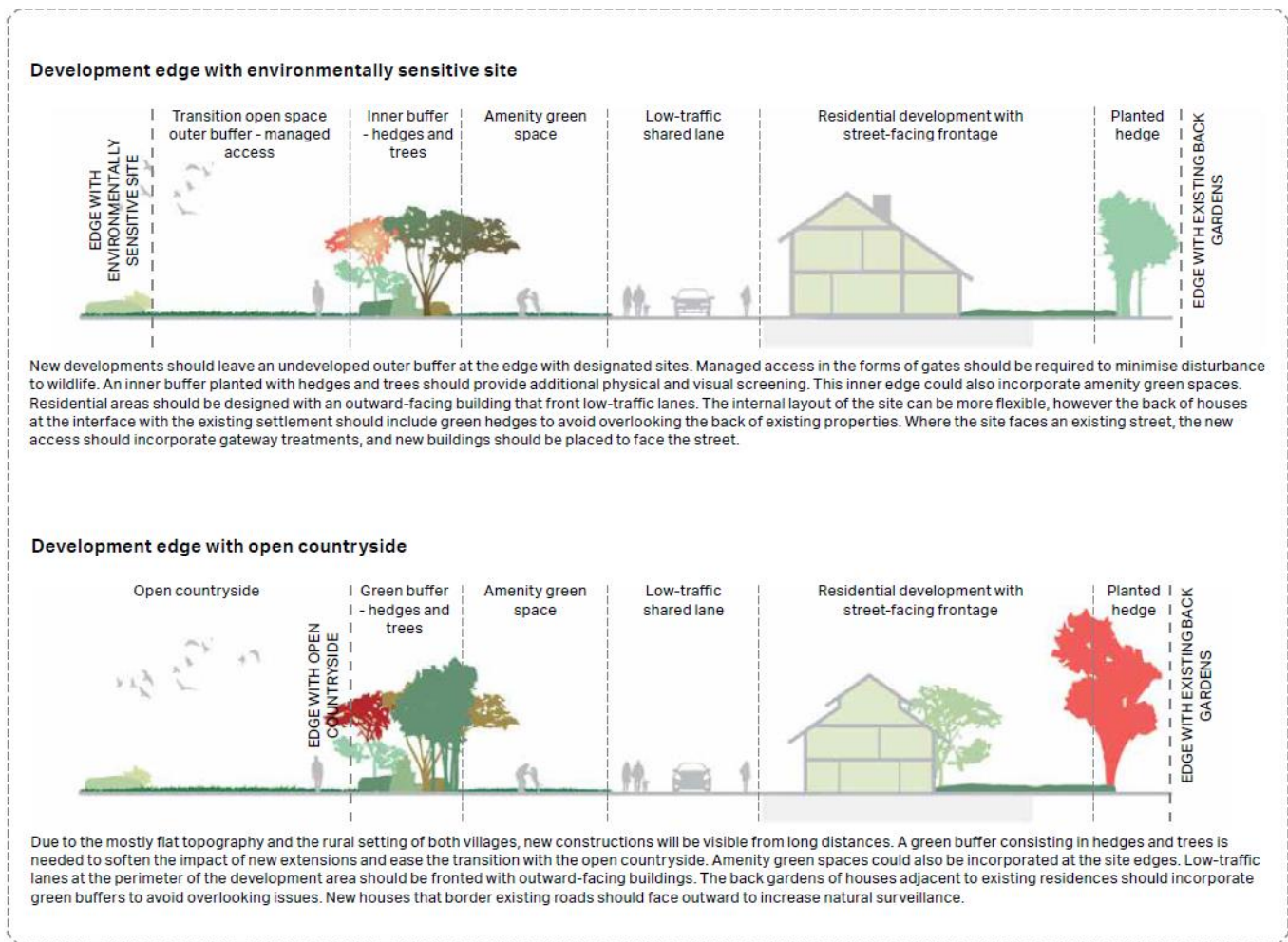


Figure 25: How new developments should transition to open countryside

150. While different approaches may be suitable for different settings, a general rule is that close boarded fencing at the edge of developments which give a 'hard edge' facing onto open countryside should be avoided at all costs. Also, as described above, consideration should also be given on how the new development adjoins existing homes and a native or ornamental hedge (avoiding leylandii or cyprus) could be incorporated rather than close boarded fencing except where this would enhance the privacy of the existing homes. The views of the existing residents should be considered before plans are decided upon.

151. In line with the character assessment that was undertaken and in support of the design guidelines developed by AECOM on behalf of the parish, the following design policy is proposed:

Policy 5. 1 Design of new development:

New development will be expected to demonstrably apply the Horsmonden Character Analysis and Design Guidelines and will be supported in principle where it:

- Is designed to a high quality that responds positively to the heritage and distinctive character of Horsmonden as identified in the Character Analysis;
- Respects the scale, external appearance, height, form, layout/orientation and density of its parish context;
- Utilises good quality durable materials, locally sourced where possible, and adopts detailing and appearance that complements those characteristically used within Horsmonden;
- Respects the boundary treatments and landscape features of the site and its context;
- Minimises the impact on the residential amenity of existing neighbouring properties;
- Is designed to meet Lifetime Homes Standards (or successor schemes);
- Has regard to the High Weald AONB Housing Design guide where appropriate.

Supporting documents

- Horsmonden Workshop 1 Landscape and Design and Style Report 15th June 2019
- Horsmonden Character Analysis and Design Guidelines, AECOM, October 2019
- Links to the Horsmonden Design Guidelines can be found here:
<http://horsmondennp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Masterplanning-Ch3-Design-Guidelines.pdf>
- Links to the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide can be found here:
<http://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

Chapter 6 Housing development

Objective

New homes and development should meet the needs of the local community, particularly for smaller new homes, should regenerate previously developed land, be affordable and within walking distance of village facilities.



Introduction

152. According to the HN Survey (January 2020) high property prices and a predominance of owner-occupied homes means that many local people are unable to afford a home in Horsmonden. At the time of writing the report, the cheapest property for sale in the parish was a 2-bed apartment for £195,000; to afford to buy this home a deposit of approximately £41,250 would be required and an income of £66,786. To afford to rent privately the cheapest 2-bed property found for £1,275 pcm, an income of approximately £51,000 would be required.
153. At the same time, TWBC's strategic policy STR/HO1 provides that between 240-320 new dwellings be built on three sites (Furnace Lane, Brenchley Road and Bassetts Farm) before 2038. Currently TWBC requires 35% of the homes built on these three sites to be affordable (increasing to 40% in the new SLP). However, the government's definition of affordable housing is broad and includes forms of one-off discounted purchase that means the stock will not be available in perpetuity and not as accessible as traditional forms of rented housing from a registered social landlord or provision for essential rural workers and rural exception sites. Because a large proportion of the local housing stock is of larger units, there is also a need for smaller units of accommodation for older residents to 'downsize' to.

The NPPF July 2021 defines Affordable housing as: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). It lists: Affordable housing for rent from councils or housing associations but also includes Build to Rent (20% below market rents), Starter Homes, Discounted market sales housing (20% below local market value), shared ownership or rent to buy. See NPPF Glossary for full definition.

154. The challenge for the village (and the HNP) is to ensure that the affordable housing element meets local needs as well as the needs of the wider borough. The housing needs for the parish, identified in Rural Kent's Housing Need Survey in March 2020, were:

Overall, a need for up to 18 affordable homes for the following local households currently living in Horsmonden, was identified:

- 7 single people
- 4 couples
- 7 families

The Housing Need Survey also identified a requirement for 14 homes for older households currently living in Horsmonden:

- 10 single people
- 4 couples
- 2 of these older households need affordable homes, which are required in addition to the 18 affordable homes identified above.

The Housing Need Survey therefore identified a total need for 20 affordable homes, 2 of which are for older households.

(The full survey report is a supporting document to this plan and is available from the website.)

155. These findings are largely in line with TWBC's Housing Needs Study 2018 in particular:

Estimates of household groups who have particular housing requirements

6.26: The continued growth in house prices has resulted in most family-sized housing being unaffordable to many local households. With limited access to housing at social or affordable rents, many families are meeting their own needs through private renting, but in turn this increased demand has led to continued increases in rental prices.

6.27: A major strategic challenge for the Council is to ensure a range of appropriate housing provision, adaptation and support for the Borough's older population. The number of people across the Borough of Tunbridge Wells aged 65 or over is projected to increase from 22,600 in 2017 to 31,800 by 2033 (40.7% increase).

156. The Site Assessments carried out by AECOM on behalf of the PC found no alternative viable sites and identified issues with TWBC's proposed sites, in particular in relation to pedestrian access. Policies will seek to balance the potential benefits from growth on this scale, while ensuring that new and existing residents can continue to live safe and healthy lives and contribute to the vitality of the parish.

Planning summary

The new NPPF July 2021 continues to propose that planning policies should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing development that meets local needs and enhance the vitality of rural communities. TWBC's Core Strategy 2010 and Site Allocations Local Plan 2016 limited development in rural areas; to meet local housing needs and within village boundaries (Limits to Built Development). The draft new strategic policies in the SLP by contrast, propose significant development in rural villages, including Horsmonden, with 240-320 new homes proposed in Horsmonden in the plan period.

Evidence

Visioning event

157. The focus of this event in relation to housing was mainly on where future housing growth might be located in the village. This is largely reflected in the sites that TWBC has proposed for development in the SLP. However, one other issue that was identified was the difficulty for young families to get on the housing ladder. This is why provision of a range of types of housing types and tenures for young families is proposed later in this chapter including starter

homes at below market prices, smaller homes for rent from a housing association (what would formerly have been considered 'council housing') and smaller homes for shared ownership where people are able to part-buy, part-rent their home and eventually, if they should so choose, using the equity they have built up in their home, to move to the conventional market or other home.

Household Questionnaire

158. The Questionnaire took a bold approach to the matter of future housing in the parish. Residents were asked if there was a need for new homes in the parish and a majority said that there was (60.3%). Asked what type of new homes were needed, the following were most needed:

- Retirement or sheltered housing (61%)
- Houses with one or two bedrooms (60%)
- Houses with 3 or 4 bedrooms (44%)
- Shared ownership (37%)

159. According to TWBC's Housing Needs Assessment looking at the whole borough in 2018, there are 40 households in housing need in Horsmonden. This was broken down further in terms of net annual affordable housing imbalance by area, property size and designation in the period 2017-22 with Horsmonden requiring two 1-2 bed units, three 3+ bed units or five units in total each year.

160. The next question was preceded by the factual statement: 'Since 2006 an average of 11 new homes have been built in the Parish per year. In view of the national housing shortage, it is likely that more homes will need to be built in the village as part of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan.'

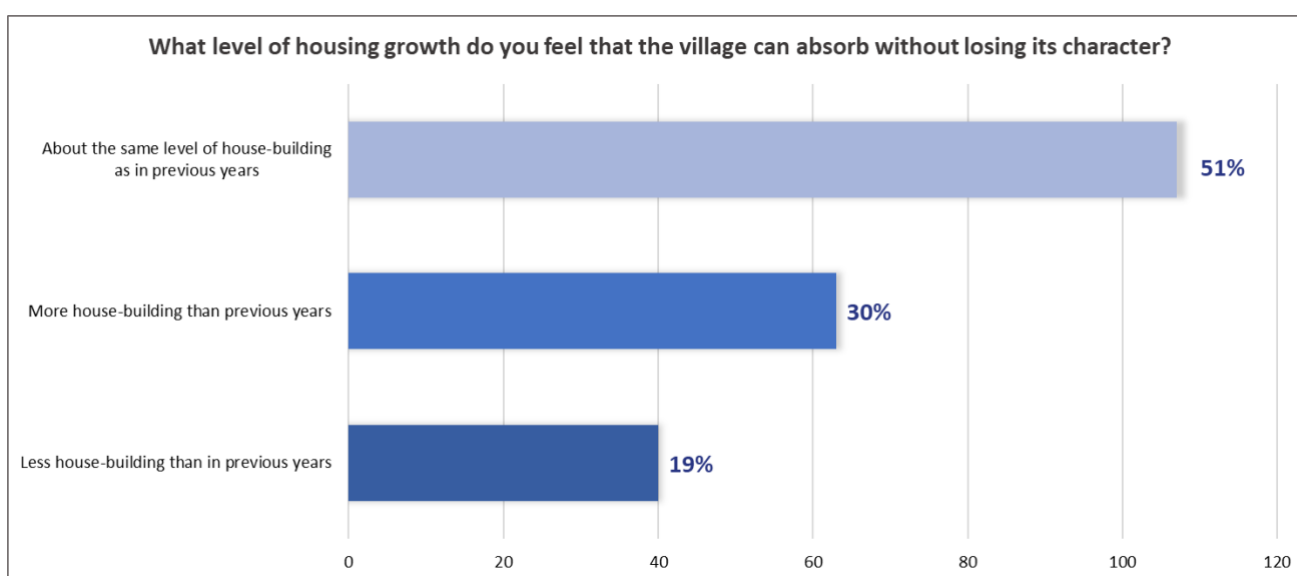


Figure 26: Questionnaire - housing growth

161. Given that the new HNP will cover the period from 2022 until 2038 (the same period as the SLP), while 19% of respondents would like less housebuilding, 51% of residents would support 'about the same' which would amount to 176 new homes in the period. As previously indicated, TWBC has proposed between 225 and 305 new homes in Horsmonden until 2038, which exceeds the level felt to be acceptable by the majority of residents, although 30% of respondents indicated they would accept more – although how many more was not specified.
162. The Questionnaire revealed there was strong support for housing for people on low incomes (83%) with a local connection. This was in part the spur for commissioning Rural Kent to undertake the HN Survey published in March 2020. There are at least two ways of achieving this:
163. Though the 'market' – TWBC Core Strategy Core 2010 Policy 6 stated: 'Developments on sites providing affordable housing will generally provide 35% of the total number of dwellings as affordable dwellings.'
164. The other approach set out in the NPPF for rural exception sites and entry-level exception sites, and the TWBC Core Strategy for building local needs housing on small sites that would not normally be developed but 'well related to the Limits of Built Development (LBD) of the village they are intended to serve. Housing development on such sites will provide affordable housing to meet a local housing need in perpetuity...'

Policy context and policies

165. Given the large strategic allocation to the parish village and lack of further suitable sites, no further allocations are included in the NDP. However, given the identified housing need it is proposed that new developments should provide for smaller and affordable homes:

Policy 6.1 Meeting housing need:

New housing developments will be supported in principle where they:

1. Provide an appropriate proportion of smaller homes (1, 2 and 3 bedrooms) in line with the latest available housing need data at parish or borough level;
2. Provide, in line with SLP Policy H3, affordable housing in a range of tenures including for social rent and shared ownership that meets the latest identified local need for single people, couples, families and older residents.

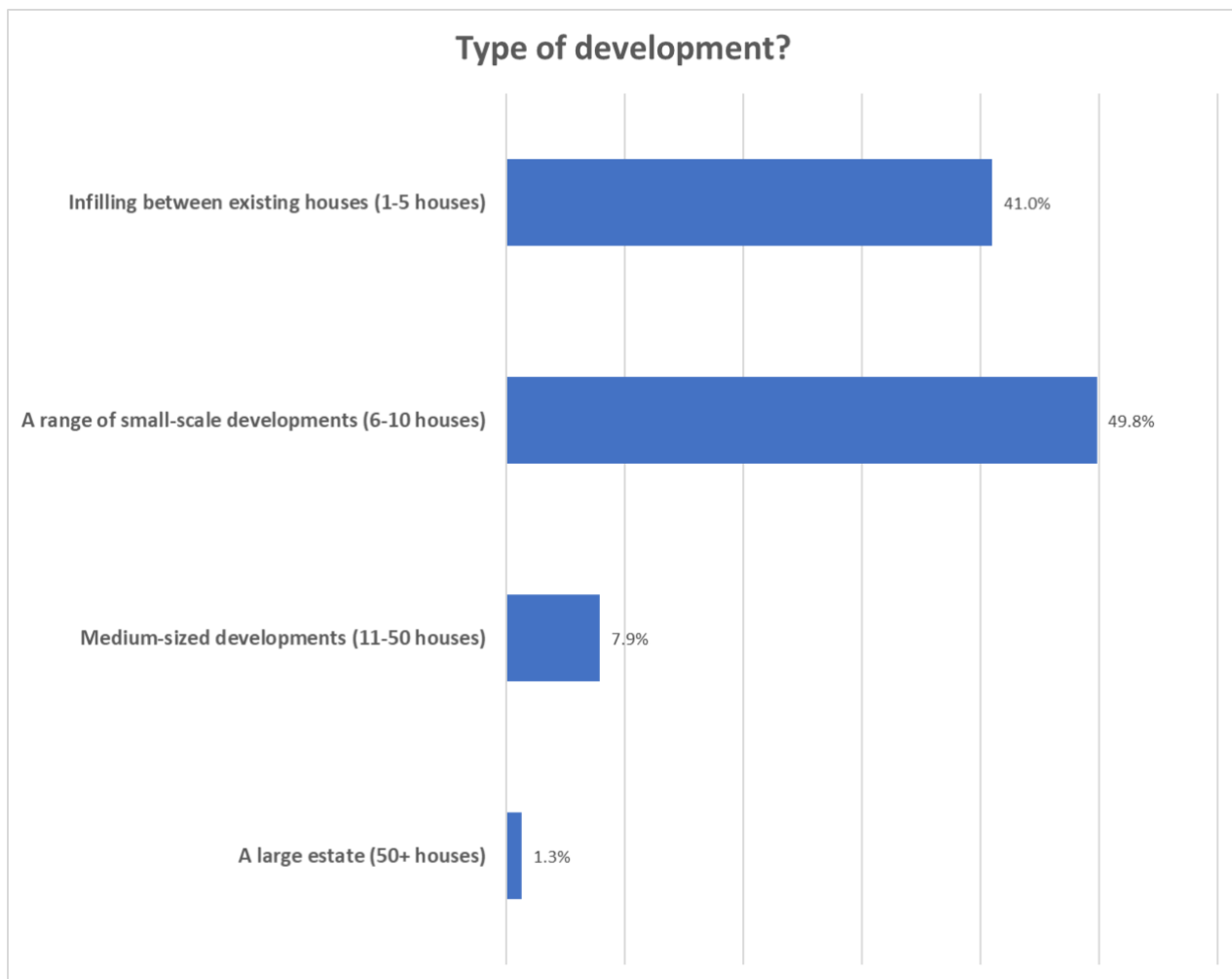


Figure 27: Questionnaire - preferred type of development

166. From the responses, it is clear that the community would prefer to see smaller scale developments of less than 10 homes and infilling rather than medium or even large estates as people generally feel these tend to lead to better integration and have a smaller impact on school places, roads and visually. However, TWBC's SLP¹ is proposing three larger sites of 80-150 each. TWBC considers this a strategic policy and as such the HNP should be in general conformity with this. However, in line with the aspirations expressed in the Questionnaire, a policy allowing for small windfall sites is described below.

Policy 6.2 Windfall residential development

Small scale windfall residential development (up to 10 homes) will be positively considered subject to the following criteria:

Within the limits to built development (LBD), as defined in the SLP;

Outside the LBD on previously developed land (PDL), or the conversion of appropriate rural buildings, which are not currently in business use;

¹ (Policy STR1 and Table 3) set out the development strategy for scale and distribution of development in the borough, with three sites allocated in Horsmonden and a total of between 225 and 305 dwellings over the plan period.

167. New development should be designed to create a neighbourhood feel in such a way that children and families will get to know each other with priority given to walking and cycling to village facilities, over parking and roads. The parish council will also monitor the impact of development on the local infrastructure and request phasing or other mitigation measures if appropriate through the planning process.

Low carbon homes

168. Building regulations require homes to be built to a much higher standard than in the past in terms of their carbon footprint even for traditional styles of homes. Building Regulations are in the process of being updated with the aim of preparing the industry for the Future Homes Standard (to be brought in by 2025) which will require new homes to produce 75 to 80 per cent less carbon than those built to current standards. Already housing associations such as Hastoe, Orbit and English Rural are building new homes to Passivhaus or nearly Passivhaus standards. The Questionnaire revealed a high level of support for building homes with a low carbon footprint (94.3%).
169. As stated above, by the time the HNP is made, all new homes will be required to be built to a much higher environmental standard. In the meantime it is worth stating that the ambition of the HNP is that new homes should be cheap to run in terms of energy and produce very low carbon (in layperson's terms):
- Plenty of insulation: walls, floors and roofs are insulated to a standard significantly in excess of that required by Building Regulations;
 - High performance doors and windows: double or triple glazed, with minimal thermal breaks, filled with low-conductivity gas and/or having a low-E coating to minimise radiant heat loss from inside to out;
 - Excellent control of draughts and careful attention to reduce thermal bridging (i.e. at junctions of building elements where heat can 'leak out');
 - Excellent internal air quality: simple, effective infiltration and almost maintenance-free heat recovery ventilation fans in kitchens and bathrooms help to provide continuous all year-round ventilation and recover heat from the air normally lost through extraction.
 - No or very limited use of fossil fuels. The village is not on the gas mains network. Putting gas into new builds is building in obsolescence. New builds should have air or ground source heat pumps or other emerging technologies.

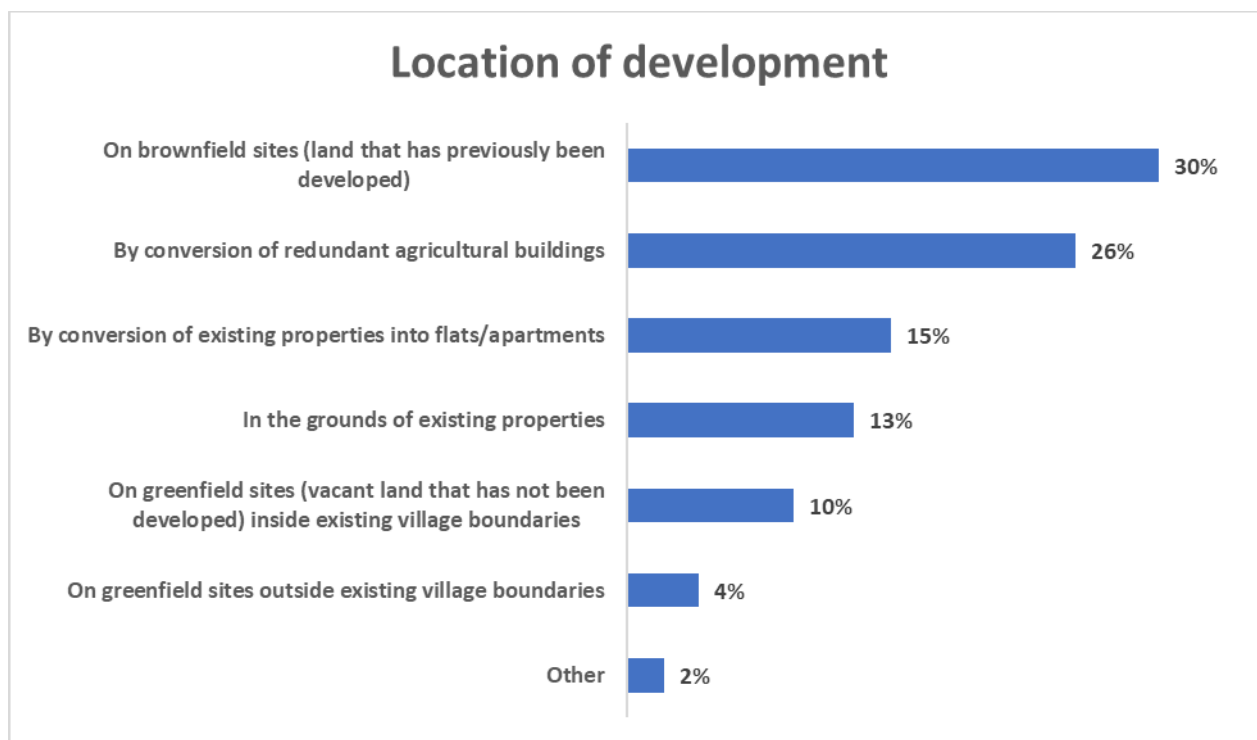


Figure 28: Questionnaire responses on location of development

170. There is already a presumption in the NPPF that new development should take place on previously developed land (brownfield land) where suitable sites are available². TWBC is proposing to allocate three sites in Horsmonden that are outside but adjacent to the limits to built development (village boundary). Rather than allowing further larger sites to be developed, any further new developments during the lifetime of this plan should be within the village boundary where this does not conflict with other policies in the HNP (for example for designated Local Green Spaces – see Landscape and Environment Chapter).

Housing Need

171. As previously mentioned, the PC commissioned rural development charity Action for Communities in Rural Kent to undertake a Local Housing Needs Survey (HN). The HN Survey Report March 2020 sets out the challenges facing rural communities in relation to the lack of affordable housing available:

In a report published in June 2018 by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) it is stated that: ‘The affordability gaps in rural areas are high compared to urban areas. The average rural house price is around £19,000 above the average for England as a whole, at £320,700 compared to £301,900, and is more than £87,000 higher than the urban average excluding London (£233,600).

Small developments of local needs housing schemes can provide affordable housing for local people, thereby enabling them to stay in their community and contribute to village life. This can make a real difference to the vitality of village services.

² NPPF Chapter 11 Making effective use of land paragraph 118 (c) and 119

The housing needs of older people in rural areas have also been a subject of concern given the growing numbers in that age group whose needs are not being met by the market. A nine-month enquiry starting in 2017 on Housing and Care for Older People concluded in their report that ‘policy makers must recognise the growing housing needs of older people living in the countryside. It recommends that Local Planning Authorities ensure provision of new homes for older people, noting the value of both the building of small village developments – “perhaps six bungalows on an unused scrap of land” – or larger scale retirement schemes in towns close by.”

172. As well as the previous general policy on affordable homes and tenure, it is proposed that some warden or sheltered housing provision – ‘modern alms-houses’ – is included in the largest development site Bassetts Farm (H03) to meet the needs of elderly residents to remain in the parish rather than having to move to towns such as Paddock Wood or Tunbridge Wells. This is also sensible given the intention to build a medical centre on the Bassetts Farm site. Given that loneliness is a well-understood concern for older people the development could incorporate some shared facilities such as a lounge, dining and kitchen areas, a communal garden and one or more units of en-suite visitor accommodation and provision for a live-in warden.

Policy 6.3 Provision of sheltered housing:

Development that includes sheltered housing or warden care (including bungalows) to meet the needs of older residents who wish to downsize and remain within the parish will be supported.

173. Such developments should also incorporate:

- Safe and convenient approach routes into and out of the home, gardens and shared outside areas as well as access to the wider village facilities and services.
- Suitable circulation space and suitable bathroom and kitchens within the home.
- External and internal doorways should be of sufficient width to enable wheelchair users and those supported by a carer ease of access. Additionally, such doorways should have no raised threshold.
- Wheelchair user dwellings include additional features to meet the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs or allow for adaptations to meet such needs.

See Government Guidance Document: “Housing for older and disabled people” Published 26th June 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people>

Workshops

174. The Housing and Community Workshop held on Saturday 13th July 2019 gave the opportunity for residents to discuss some of the emerging issues and options in relation to housing in the HNP. As well as sharing the results of the Questionnaire, the chair of the housing working group shared a comparison of housing stock by tax band in Horsmonden, Kent and England:

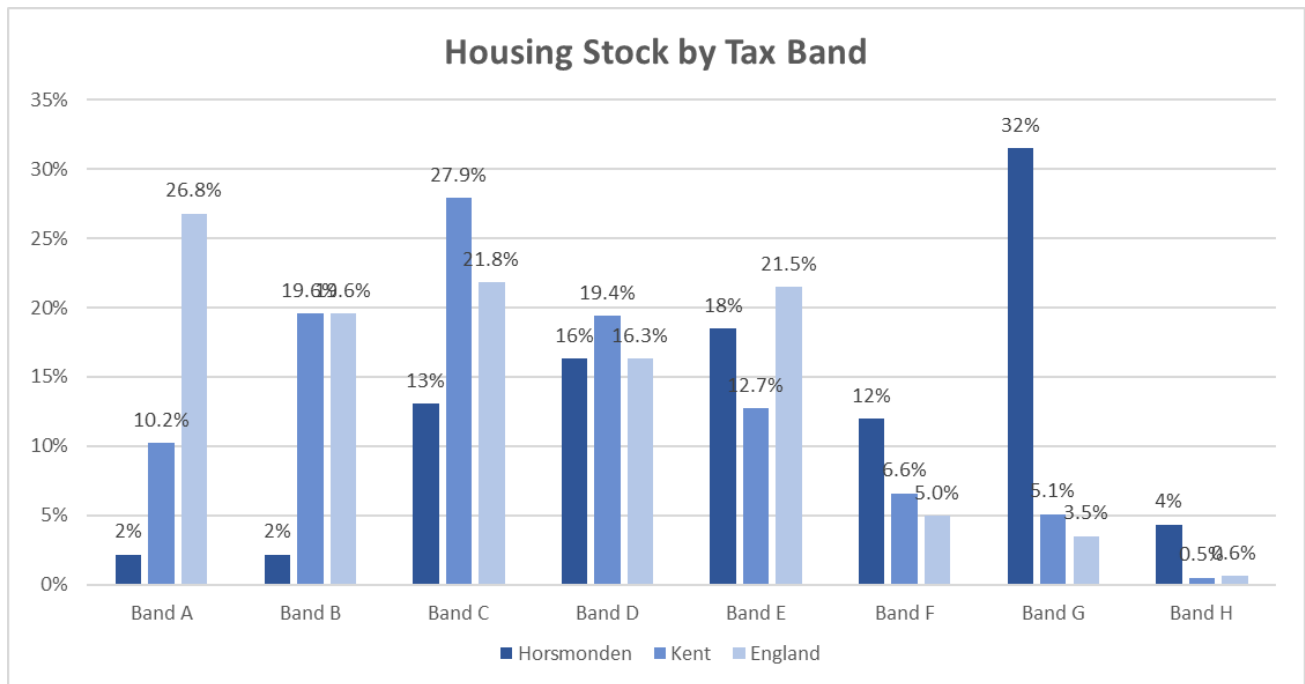


Figure 29: Comparison of council tax bands in Horsmonden with Kent and England

175. This showed that Horsmonden has a much higher percentage of its homes in the higher bands for council tax F, G and H than the Kent and England averages and that the existing housing stock is therefore more expensive. Also 47% of homes in Horsmonden have four or more bedrooms. The next figure compares housing type in the parish compared to other neighbouring rural parishes:

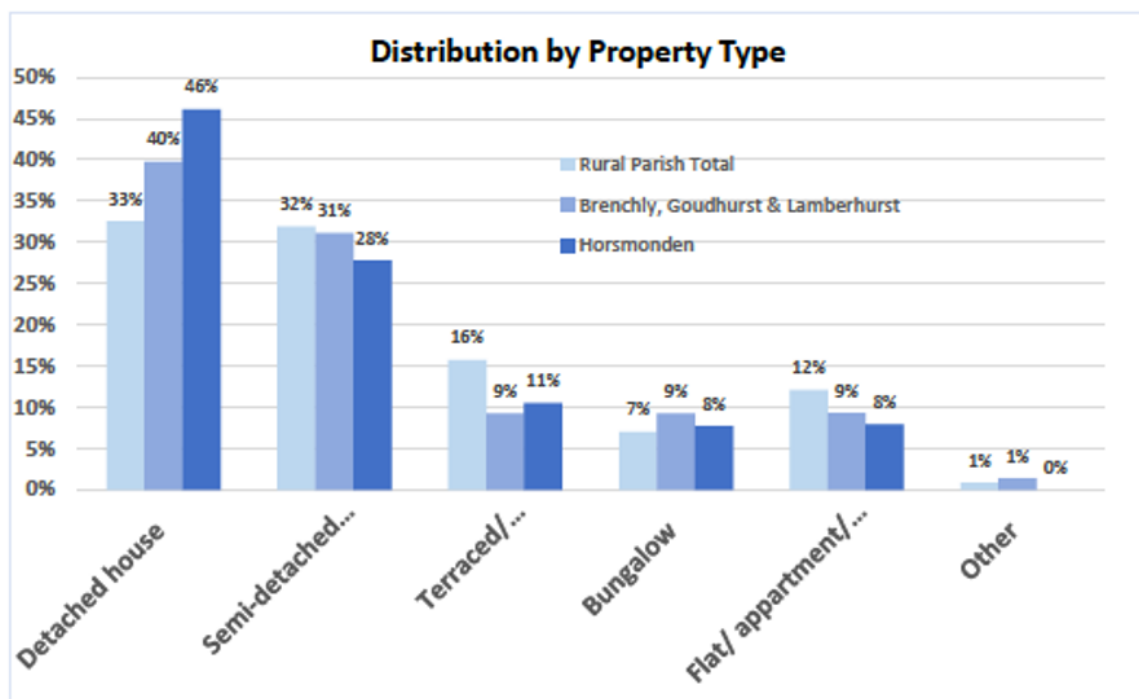


Figure 30: Housing in Horsmonden by type compared to neighbouring parishes and Kent rural parishes

176. The working group interpreted this as meaning that future development in the parish would need to include more smaller homes including semi-detached and terraced homes, bungalows and apartments rather than larger detached homes as set out in Policy 6.1.
177. The first of the two tables show that to rent a three-bedroom house would cost a household £1,320 per calendar month (2019). The second table shows that this is significantly more than the cost of a mortgage. This makes it very difficult for households on low or modest incomes to save for a deposit on a home. To purchase a three-bedroom home at £325,000 would require a substantial deposit although aid for this can be provided in the form of an additional loan from the government under their First Time Buyer Help to Buy equity scheme.

| Property Rents in TN12 by Number of Bedrooms | | | | Purchase Price | |
|---|-------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| | No. of properties | Average rent | Median rent | | £325,000 |
| One bedroom | 12 | £721 pcm | £689 pcm | Personal Deposit 5% | £16,250 |
| Two bedrooms | 12 | £1,073 pcm | £886 pcm | First Time Buyer 20% | £65,000 |
| Three bedrooms | 19 | £1,320 pcm | £1,326 pcm | Total Deposit | £81,250 |
| Four bedrooms | 3 | £1,609 pcm | £1,426 pcm | Mortgage | £243,750 |
| Five bedrooms | 4 | £2,437 pcm | £2,500 pcm | Repayment Rate per Month - Range | £990-£1,080 |
| Data from 'Home.co.uk Property Search Engine' | | | | | |

178. Following the presentations, in small groups residents discussed the findings using a SWOT analysis. The threats/ opportunities identified not already addressed included:

- Smaller properties 1-2 beds to keep young and old in the village
- Smaller properties for young create a commuter town [when not tied to local jobs]
- Social housing should be retained for local families
- Re-balance our housing mix
- Building closer to the village centre [within] 400 yards
- Pressures on school places and doctors

Social affordable housing retained

There was an aspiration expressed in the Pre-Submission Regulation 14 Draft HNP that new social housing be retained as such in perpetuity. However, the parish council has been advised that doing so is outside the scope of planning policy. Planning policies cannot be used to override statutory legislation in respect of retaining affordable homes in perpetuity and right to buy. New affordable homes can only be retained in perpetuity if they are built on a rural exception site i.e., outside the limits to built (LBD) development. If they are secured on a site within the LBD TWBC can secure first lets for local people, and by agreement with the Registered Provider, TWBC can advertise them for local people for the re-lets, but this cannot be bound by planning law 'in perpetuity'. Affordable housing built in the rural areas can only have an exemption from the right to acquire if it is a 'Designated Protected Area' under the Housing, Right to Enfranchise Act 2009. Horsmonden is. Ref: Article 7 of the Housing (Right to Enfranchise) (Designated Protected Areas) (England) Order 2009.

The Right to Buy is a statutory instrument that Council tenants have. The Council do not have stock in this Borough and therefore it is the Right to Acquire that Registered [social housing] Providers tenants have that is applicable for TWBC.

179. As touched on in the Business and Employment chapter, local businesses have identified a lack of affordable homes as a barrier to recruiting staff. This also includes newly qualified teachers, doctors and nurses. The pandemic has also highlighted the role played by a range of key workers in the local community including care workers and public sector workers in general. Typically, local needs housing is reserved for people who have a 'local connection', for example having lived in the parish for at least five years or have had to move away because of a lack of affordable housing. In addition to this criterion, people employed by local businesses, including key workers, will also be eligible for affordable housing if one of their household can demonstrate an employment link within the parish.

Key worker and local employee housing:

There was also an aspiration expressed in the Pre-Submission Regulation 14 Draft HNP that affordable housing should be retained for people on lower or average incomes who have lived in the parish for a minimum of five years or have had to move away because of a lack of affordable housing. Also, that people employed locally, including key workers, will also qualify for affordable housing. However, the parish council has again been advised that Planning policies cannot be used to set out how/who can access affordable housing. This is the role of the TWBC's Housing Allocations Policy. TWBC can use a S106 Agreement to prioritise affordable housing to be allocated to households with a strong local connection to the Parish, (3 years residence not 5) or through employment. However, they must also qualify for affordable housing i.e. be in Housing Need as per TWBC's Allocations Policy.

Replacement dwellings

180. There have been significant number of infill developments within the parish in the last few years where a developer might promote the demolition and rebuild of properties. Often a smaller home is demolished to make way for a much larger property. This type of development reduces the number of smaller properties in the parish and increases the number of larger properties adding to the overall imbalance in our housing stock. Within the conservation area, demolition of existing dwellings will be resisted unless criteria set out in other policies in this plan are met. The intention is not to prevent the replacement of dwellings with new development but to seek to ensure mass and scale are not significantly greater than existing structures. The HNP encourages such development to consider the number of units that can be delivered on a site.

Policy 6.4 Replacing or combining existing dwellings outside the Limits of Built Development

The replacement of an existing dwelling by another dwelling within the same residential curtilage will be supported where the scale, form, height and massing including relationship with the site boundaries, of the replacement dwelling is compatible with its rural location and the surrounding form of development.

Self-Build Sites

181. There is a demand from time to time for self-build sites and interest/requirements for self-build sites can be registered with TWBC who maintains a register of interest. Interest in such sites in Horsmonden has been and is likely to continue to be only small, so managing a separate list of self-build interests for our parish is not proposed. When a self-build project is proposed it will need to be assessed on its merits and the other policies in this plan and in relation to the SLP Policy H8 Self-build and custom housebuilding.
182. However, the SG and PC are concerned about the length of time that self-build projects can take and the visual impact of a long duration construction project until the exterior and landscaping of a building is completed. For this reason, we would prefer smaller sites, as a multi-plot site developed over several years could have a detrimental visual impact during the construction phase.

Supporting documents

- Housing Needs Survey, Rural Kent, January 2020
- Site Options Assessment, AECOM, October 2020

Chapter 7 Landscape & environment

Objective: To retain the distinctive agricultural and horticultural heritage of the parish, protect views, enhance biodiversity, protect ancient woodland and green spaces and retain dark night skies.



Introduction

183. The whole of Horsmonden parish lies within Natural England's High Weald National Character Area 122 (NCA), with the southern 50% within the High Weald AONB. The introduction to Natural England's NCA Profile states:

The High Weald NCA is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wildflower meadows are now rare but prominent and medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape. Some 26% of the NCA is covered by woodland, comprising wooded shaws, pits and gills, farm woods and larger woods; of this 26%, 17% is ancient semi-natural woodland and 5% is ancient, replanted woodland. The majority of the woodland cover is ancient, managed in the past as coppice with standards surrounded with native woodland flora such as bluebells and wood anemones in the Spring. Evidence of the area's industrial past is prominent, from the large iron-master houses to iron industry charcoal hearths, pits and hammer ponds found throughout the ancient woodlands.

184. This description covers many of the natural and heritage features you would find today in Horsmonden parish. To the south of the settlement and within the High Weald AONB boundary is the 14th century St Margaret's Church with views to the neighbouring hilltop village of Goudhurst. There is an extensive historic parkland landscape at nearby Rectory Park categorised by Natural England's Magic Maps as ancient wood pasture with areas of semi-natural grassland and veteran trees.
185. The High Weald Landscape National Trail, which makes its way past the church, continues west through orchards, vineyards, fields and ancient woodland towards Sprivers, a Grade II listed house and historic park and garden, managed by the National Trust. Just across the Brenchley Road is Shirrenden House, a former iron-master house extensively remodelled in the 18th and 19th centuries, set in parks and gardens and an extensive area of ancient woodland 'Shirrenden Woods' which is also a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Moving further north along the High Weald Landscape Trail is Furnace Pond (a former hammer pond), a popular beauty spot and LWS with walks, an ornamental cascade and the site of the ironworks, around which the economy of Horsmonden was built.

186. By contrast at the heart of the village is the large and attractive designated Village Green known as the Heath, site of the annual horse fair. Further north along the Maidstone Road is the extensive sports ground at the Dog House (predominately cricket and football) which the HNP will seek to protect as a Local Green Space. The sports ground is close to the route of the former Hop Picker's railway line which runs in a north easterly direction cutting across the Maidstone Road to the north and beyond and the Goudhurst Road to the south. The route originally went from Hawkhurst to Paddock Wood and parts have potential to act as an informal green footpath/corridor/cycle path.
187. Hop gardens and orchards and more recently vineyards are also dominant in the landscape with the TWBC Landscape Assessment 2017 identifying the parish as 'Local Character Areas 2: Horsmonden Fruit Belt' summarising its character as: "the raised sandstone plateau is almost entirely covered by fruit plantations". Also, "a belt of Grade 2 agricultural land, which is relatively rare in the Borough, extends across the middle of the ridge top and in part accounts for the intensity of cultivation."
188. This chapter of the HNP proposes policies to protect and enhance this rich agricultural landscape, historic and environmental heritage. The Landscape Sensitivity Study commissioned by TWBC in 2019 for the SLP shows that all the farmland, orchards and woodland around Horsmonden are considered to have a High Sensitivity Rating for even small-scale developments.

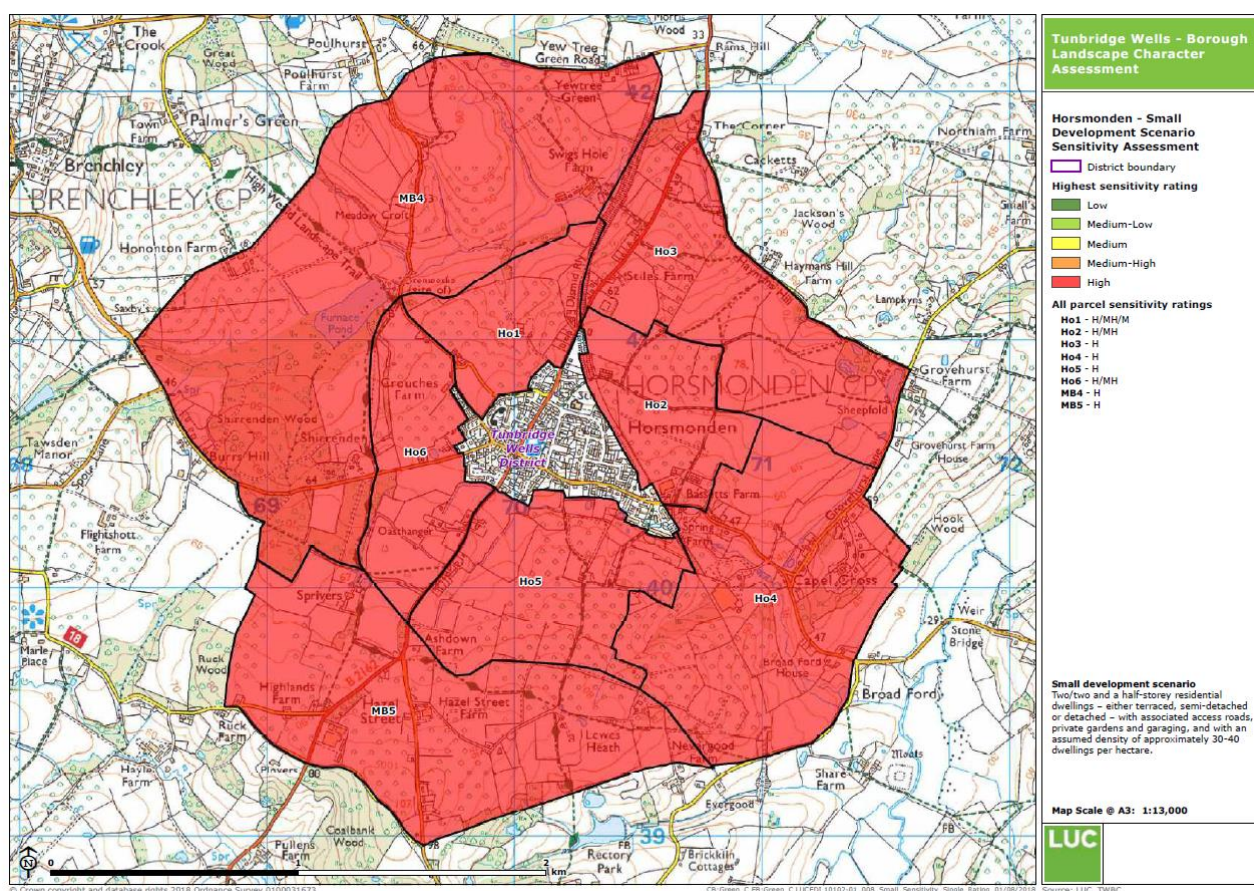


Figure 31: Extract from Landscape Sensitivity Study (TWBC, 2019)

Planning summary

The new NPPF July 2021 continues the government's support for conserving and enhancing the natural environment and meeting the challenge of climate change. It states that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and provide net gains for biodiversity. In regard of AONBs it seeks to limit the scale and extent of development and states that development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts [on the AONB]. TWBC's policies have valued and sought to conserve landscapes, local character and biodiversity. The new SLP also seeks to achieve biodiversity net gain in new development and retain or create new well-managed green infrastructure. Trees, woodland, particularly ancient woodland, and hedges are singled out for protection as well as historic parkland, all of which Horsmonden has an abundance.

Evidence

Visioning event

189. At the Visioning Event, the report of the discussion group on Valued Places: "discussed the places they cherish and the places they do not. The village green (The Heath) was most commonly mentioned as a great place, along with the historic buildings surrounding it. Other frequently mentioned positive places were Heath Stores, the Gun and Spitroast Inn, the tennis courts [and] the sports ground. The groups chose their top ten qualities for Horsmonden. After collating all the results, the overall top ten were as follows:

1. Friendly
2. Welcoming
3. Attractive
4. Vibrant
5. Safe
6. Unique
7. Green
8. Inclusive
9. Peaceful
10. Distinctive

190. The policies in this chapter of the HNP seek to retain these qualities.

Questionnaire

191. In the Questionnaire residents were asked which amenities they used and environmental aspects were amongst the most frequently identified:

- The main reason cited by residents for living in Horsmonden was the environment (70%)
- Most used amenities were: footpaths and bridleways (83.7%), Sprivers (73.2%) and public green spaces (78.9%).
- Preservation of the existing environment was rated as very important (88%) or important (11%) by practically all residents.

- 90% of respondents said preservation of green spaces was very important.
 - When asked 'Other than traffic, what concerns you?' the residents rated 'Loss of village/landscape character' highest (74.2%).
 - When asked for their priorities over the next ten years, wildlife habitats and biodiversity were prioritised by 37.8%.
 - 94.3% of respondents wanted to encourage buildings with a low carbon footprint while still maintaining character.
 - The preservation of the existing landscape was considered very important/important by 99% of respondents.
192. The pandemic has served to reinforce the value of green spaces and footpaths to residents as a resource for physical exercise and recreation, which the World Health Organisation has identified as benefiting individuals' mental well-being.

Workshops

193. At the Landscape and Environment Workshop held in July 2019, a series of table-top discussions were had on the following topics:
- Local Green Spaces (LGS)
 - Biodiversity and wildlife
 - Landscape and views
 - Landscaping and green space in new developments
194. Participants were asked to carry out a SWOT analysis at their tables. The Local Green Spaces discussions revealed that residents said they were accessible, well used and maintained but that there was a lack of footpaths in the southwest of the parish [towards Sprivers]. They were concerned about development encroaching on green space, overuse, lack of maintenance, dog mess and climate change. They recognised opportunities for more events and better sign posting or promotion of walking routes.
195. The workshop participants recognised Horsmonden's special setting on the edge of the High Weald AONB, also the well-maintained public places and footpaths and the importance of orchards and farmland in the landscape but also that farming appeared to be declining. They were concerned on pressures on local green spaces including the village green for parking, but that development such as that proposed at Bassetts Farm, if done in a sensitive way, could lead to the Hop Picker's line being developed for cycling and walking. Also, that attractive sites and views could be protected.
196. They also identified that there were opportunities to create new outdoor activities – perhaps through the provision of new spaces and to publicise walking routes such as the High Weald Landscape Trail better – perhaps through events as well as publicity. The group considering LGS suggested the following should be considered by the HNP to be designated:
- Furnace Pond
 - Locket Green

- Sprivers
- The Heath
- Footpaths
- Church graveyard

Policy context and policies

Local Green Spaces

197. TWBC has carried out a similar exercise in relation to the SLP. Although there is general agreement on some sites, there are some differences, which have been discussed with TWBC. New sites have also been proposed in the interim including notably the former orchard at Bassetts Farm Cottages (proposed by TWBC) the small Community Garden off Back Lane and the triangle of greenspace off Fromandez Drive at the southern entrance to the village where there are two memorial trees planted. The SG has now carried out assessments of all the LGS proposed in the HNP using guidance and proforma provided by Locality. The following table sets out all the LGS proposed in the SLP and HNP and the reasoning for these. The full assessments of all the LGS proposed in the HNP are available on request to the PC clerk.

| Proposed Local Green Spaces | HNP | TWBC SLP | HNP Justification for Designating as LGS |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|---|
| Bassetts Farm Cottages former orchard | Yes | Yes | A former orchard with a few remaining fruit trees between Bassetts Farm Cottages and the Goudhurst Road. Could be re-planted with traditional varieties typical to the area. |
| Fromandez Drive | Yes | No | It is a large verge at the southern entrance to the village and so gives character to this part of the village. |
| Furnace Pond | The part within the parish | Yes | As a Local Wildlife Site and popular beauty spot it is demonstrably special. However, half of the site lies in Brenchley and Matfield Parish. |
| Heath village green | No | No | As a designated Village Green it already has sufficient protection. |
| Locket Green | Yes | Yes | This area is a charity trust site given to the community in perpetuity. The local Kindergarten uses it as an extended play area and is used for general recreational use. |
| Sports field | Yes | Yes | This area is a recreational open space, used by the local community for formal and informal activities. |
| Sprivers | Yes | Not assessed | As popular with walkers, a National Trust property and an historic park and garden it is demonstrably special. Will be in closer proximity to settlement if HO2 Brenchley Road site is built. |
| St Margaret's church graveyard | Yes | Not assessed | On heritage, beauty and tranquillity grounds is demonstrably special. Although remote from the main settlement, it is part of a small hamlet. |
| Willard Place Local Green Space | Yes | Not assessed | A small informal green space created by the development of Willard Place with extensive views over farmland towards oasts at Kirkins Close and Brenchley Church. |

Policy 7.1 Local Green Spaces

The areas listed below and identified in Figs [27 & 16] are designated Local Green Space where inappropriate new development will not be allowed except in very special circumstances:

Bassetts Farm Cottages Orchard

Fromandez Drive

Furnace Pond (area within the parish)

Locket Green

Sports Field

Sprivers

St Margaret's Church Graveyard

Willard Place

Note in regard of Furnace Pond

This site was previously not proposed for designation in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan due to insufficient evidence that the area meets the designation criteria and because the area was partly already protected under other designations. However, upon further review for Regulation 19, and that only a small proportion of the site is already protected (4% Ancient Woodland), it is considered that this site should benefit from Local Green Space protection because of its special value to the local community as explained by the Parish Council: "This area is of particular local historic significance and is considered extremely significant in the establishment and growth of the village. Horsmonden was one of the major centres of the Wealden ironworks due to the availability of water, iron and wood, as well as access to Chatham Dockyards via Yalding and the River Medway. Furnace Pond is one of the largest and finest examples of the artificial lakes made to provide waterpower for the hammer of a furnace. At its height in 1613 under John Browne the Furnace employed over two hundred men in making great guns for the Army and Navy and the flames of the furnace could be "seen about the country at 10 miles distance". Such was Browne's skill in casting and proving guns that he was later granted a monopoly as "Gun founder for the King's Service". In 1638, well before any Royalty visited any springs in Tunbridge Wells, Charles I himself came to the Furnace in Horsmonden to watch a gun being cast. Browne also supplied guns to the Dutch, at that time who were the greatest naval sea power. Then, on the arrival of Cromwell and the Commonwealth, he was quick to switch his allegiance and was casting guns for Parliament until his death in 1651. Furnace Pond has therefore had a huge impact on the growth of the village and its development at that time and the surrounding area".

Note: approximately half of this area also crosses into Brenchley and Matfield Parish, so only the part within the parish will be designated.

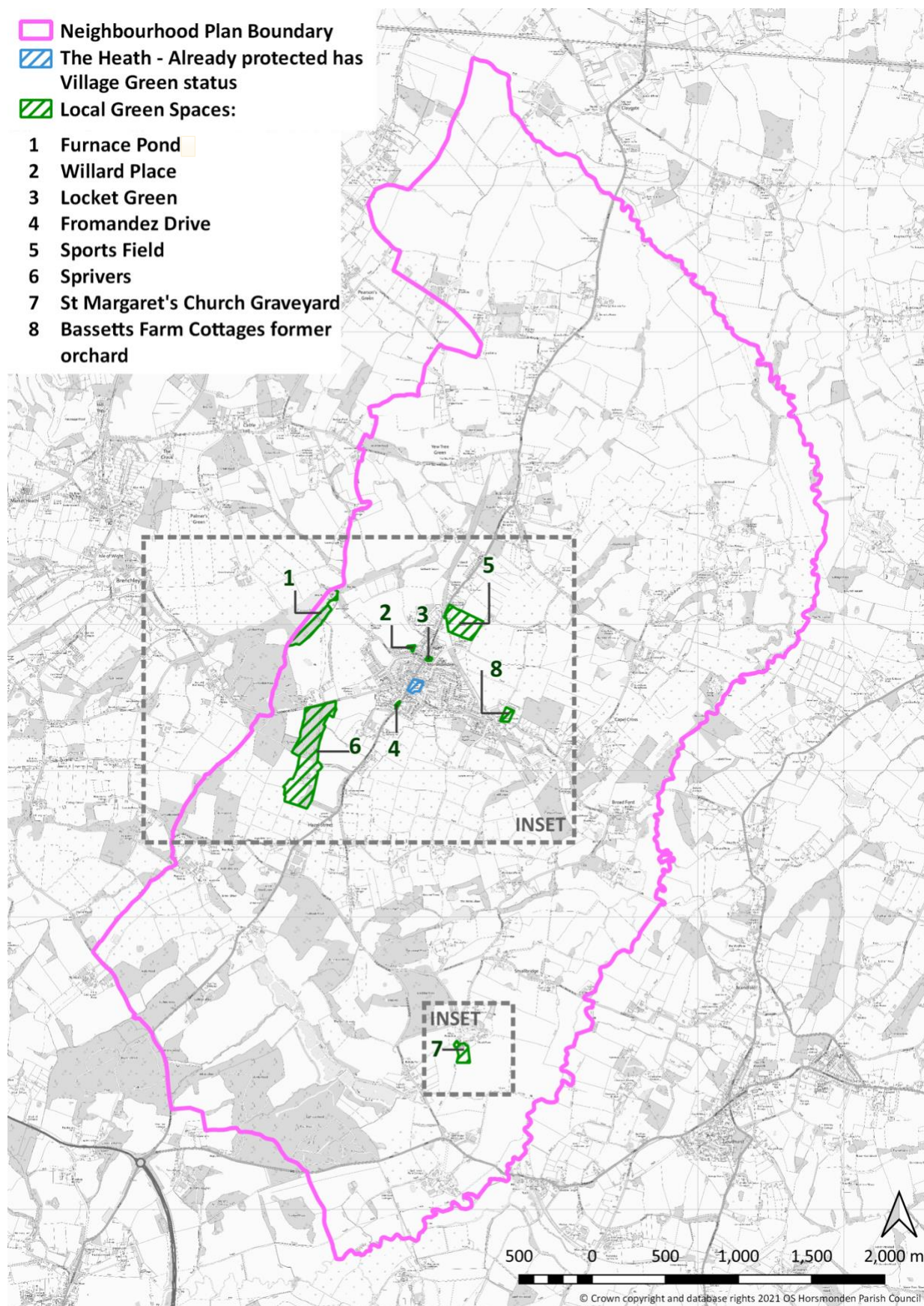


Figure 32: Local Green Spaces overview

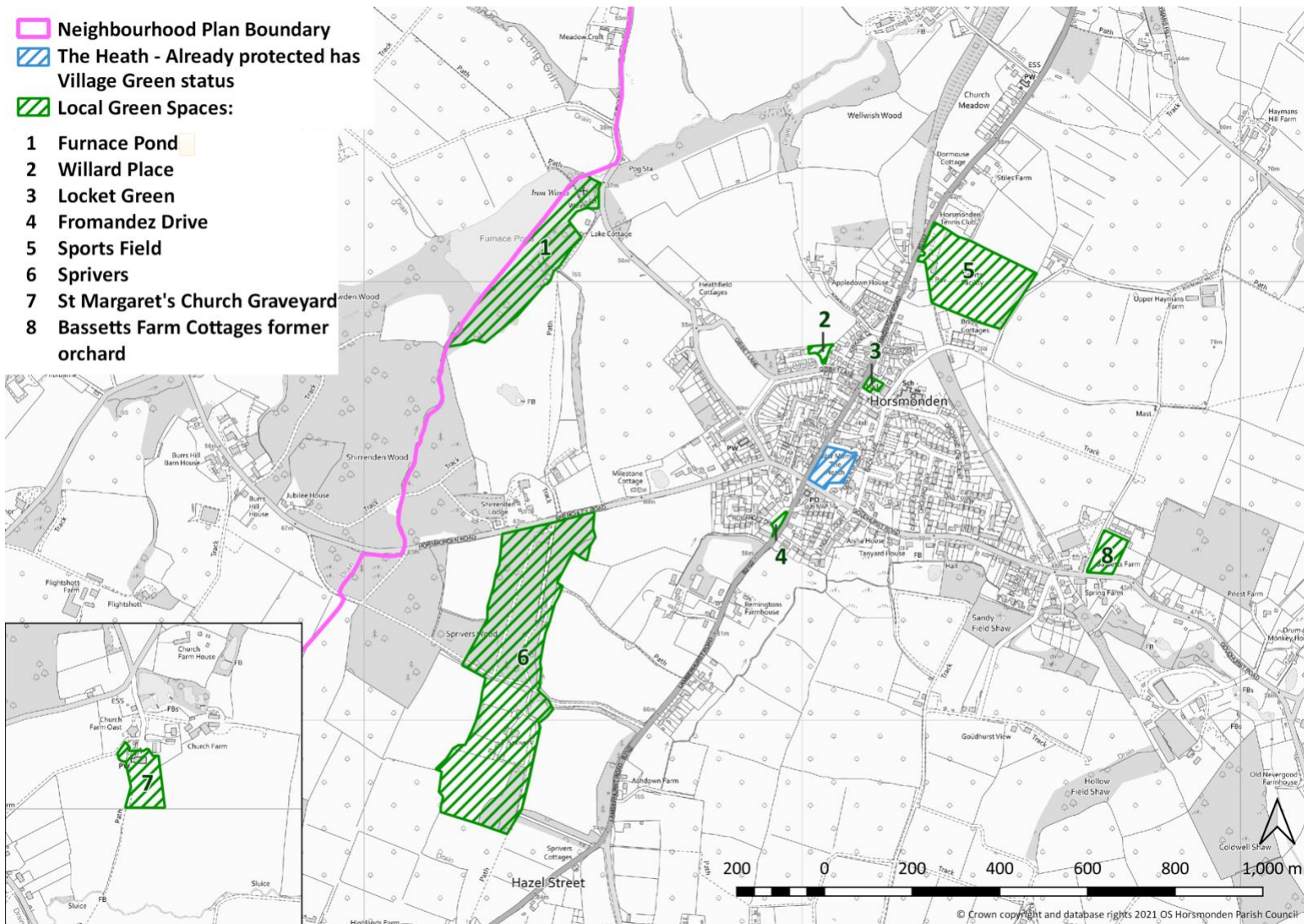


Figure 33: Local Green Spaces insets

Views

198. The following set of views were proposed at the Landscape and Design Workshop for protection in the HNP.

| Photo | Description |
|--|---|
| Haymans Hill Horsmonden | If you stand at Haymans Hill farm at the top of the hill, you can see north into the distance for miles. It is a spectacular, unspoilt view and should be preserved. |
| N/A | Swiggs Hole Farm |
| Hazel Street Farm towards village (x 2) | Standing on higher ground you can see Brenchley to the left with Horsmonden nestling unobtrusively like a hamlet in lower ground allowing fantastic views over the rooftops of the Weald and orchards beyond and further to the right is Goudhurst. Surrounded by the most wonderful wildlife and birdsong. |
| Aerial photos of village (x 2) | The village outline is clear, and if Horsmonden is to remain a village, there is very little scope for additional development. |
| Behind Millstone cottage towards Castle Hill | Behind Millstone cottage towards Castle Hill |
| Destruction near Goudhurst Road | The first makes me sad. Total destruction of landscape and wildlife habitat, allegedly because some of the trees were unsafe, however there are a number of unsafe, leaning trees further up the path, but they have been left! |
| Orchards at Hazel Street Farm | Picture two makes me happy as this farmer invests in the future and enhances the environment |
| Alley from Goudhurst Road to Hazel Street Farm | Picture three is the path to peace for me, the footpath from Goudhurst Road up to the orchards and hop gardens. Radox for the soul |
| View towards Goudhurst from near Lewis Heath | Taken from public pathway running from behind Hilltop |
| Bassetts Hill towards Hazel Street Farm x 2 | View from EE mobile area at top of Bassetts Farm, looking towards Hazel Street Farm |
| Sledging Field | View from Farmer Richard's sledging field towards the village |
| Brenchley Road to Furnace Pond | View from Footpath running alongside Shirrenden from Brenchley Road towards Furnace Pond |
| Furnace Pond to Brenchley Road | View from Footpath running alongside Shirrenden from Furnace Pond towards Brenchley Road |
| Furnace Pond | View across Furnace Pond from footpath |
| Path Up from Mobile aerial | View up path running up Bassetts Farm towards EE mobile aerial |
| Pond at Sprivers | View across Pond from Sprivers towards Lamberhurst Road |
| Waterfall at Furnace Pond | View of waterfall from weir at Furnace Pond |

Figure 34: Workshop long list of important views

199. The SG then undertook a series of assessments of the views using Planning Aid's "How to prepare a character assessment to support design policy within a neighbourhood plan" including the Character Assessment Document Template on page 9.

200. As a result of this work, the following views are proposed for protection in the HNP:

| |
|-------------------------------|
| 1. Weir at Furnace Pond |
| 2. Furnace Pond to Shirrenden |

| |
|--|
| 3. Swigs Hole Farm |
| 4. Hayman's Hill towards Maidstone Road; |
| 5. Hayman's Hill looking North |
| 6. Bassetts Farm towards Hazel Street Farm |
| 7. Bassetts Farm towards EE mobile mast |
| 8. Horsmonden Village Green |
| 9. Shirrenden towards Furnace Pond |
| 10. Sprivers Estate |
| 11. Sprivers Pond and Parklands |
| 12. Hazel Street Farm towards Horsmonden |
| 13. Hazel Street Farm towards Bassetts Farm |
| 14. Lewes Heath towards Goudhurst |
| 15. Towards Goudhurst from Smallbridge Road |
| 16. Towards St Margaret's Church |
| 17. View East from Rectory Park Road towards Goudhurst |

201. A map showing the viewpoints and view direction and extent based on the Planning Aid Character Assessment Document Template is shown overleaf.

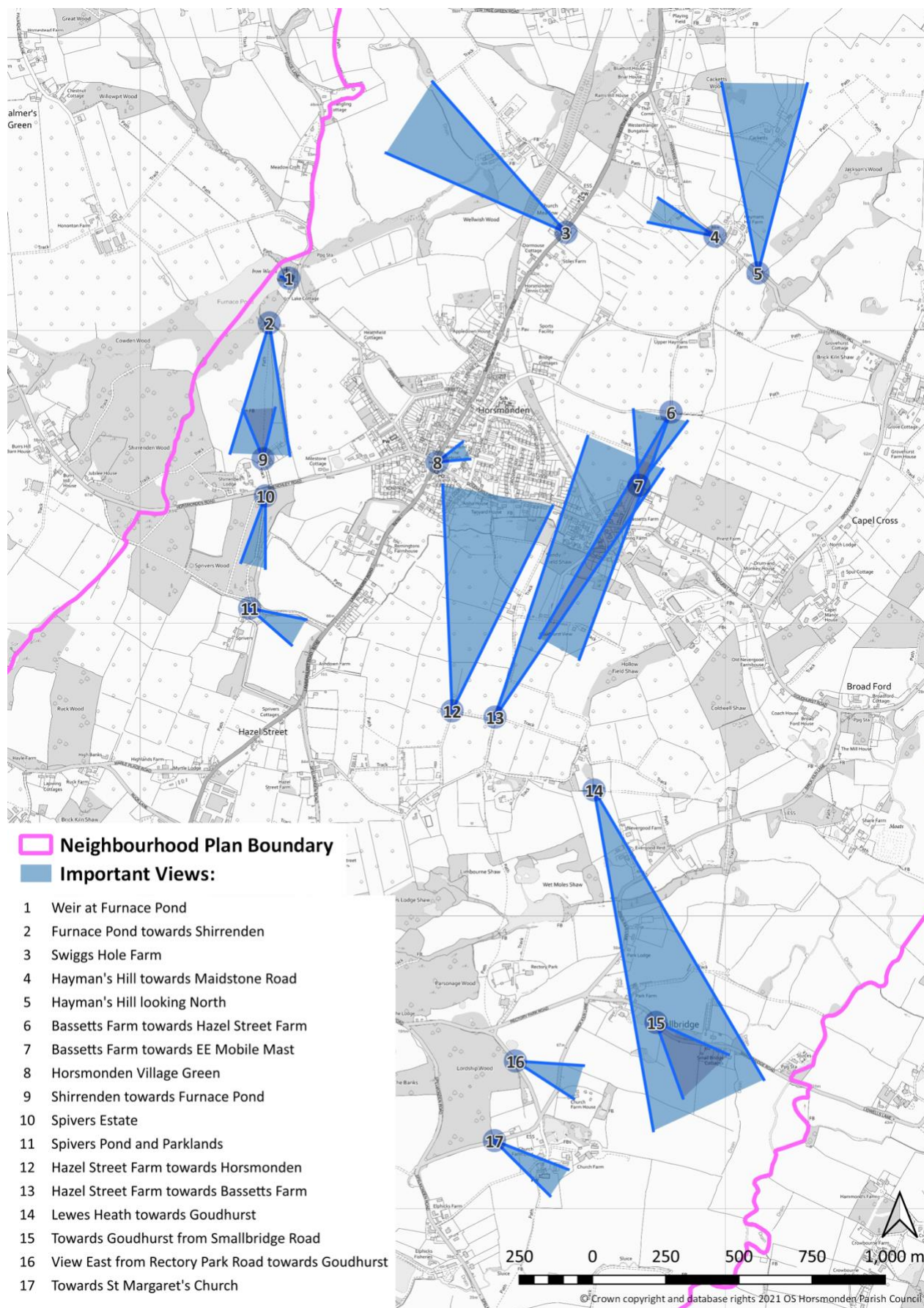


Figure 35: Important views

202. Below is an example of the pro forma used to assess views. There are assessments for all 19 views that can be made available on request to the parish council.

| Bassett's Farm towards Hazel Street Farm – WT304A | |
|--|---|
| Map of view direction and extent  | Photograph with viewpoint location denoted  |
| Photograph of view  | |

Figure 36: Example view proforma for Bassett's Farm

203. The following policy to protect the views is proposed:

Policy 7.2 Protecting important views

Development must not cause any loss or diminution of historical or significant views (mapped in Fig 35 and listed in table) into and out of settlements from any publicly accessible area.

204. The intention of this Policy is also supported by the TWBC Landscape Assessment 2017 (p37) which recognises the importance of views from the settlement: "Horsmonden's elevation affords views to the wider countryside, including the wooded hills of the High Weald – eastwards along the valley towards Goudhurst and southwards to the wooded ridge of the edge of the High Weald AONB. Views towards the west from Horsmonden to Brenchley connect this area to its wider landscape, providing a visual transition to the High Weald AONB."

Biodiversity

205. Biodiversity and wildlife were also discussed at the Workshop recognising the value of Sprivers and Furnace Pond but also mentioning Lewes Heath wildflower meadows and species rich hedgerows. Concerns related to spraying of hop gardens and orchards and 'hope of development' leading to clearing of potential sites. Also traffic, intensification of farming and threats to views. Opportunities were for increased tree planting – including the proposal to plant 5 trees for every house built - and the creation of new ponds and wetlands in new developments. Since the Workshop, volunteers from the local Village Footprint group have planted over 700 new trees and hedging on private land to increase biodiversity and combat climate change. The TWBC Landscape Assessment 2017 also identifies the main natural, landscape and priority habitats within the Character Area 2: Horsmonden Fruit Belt:

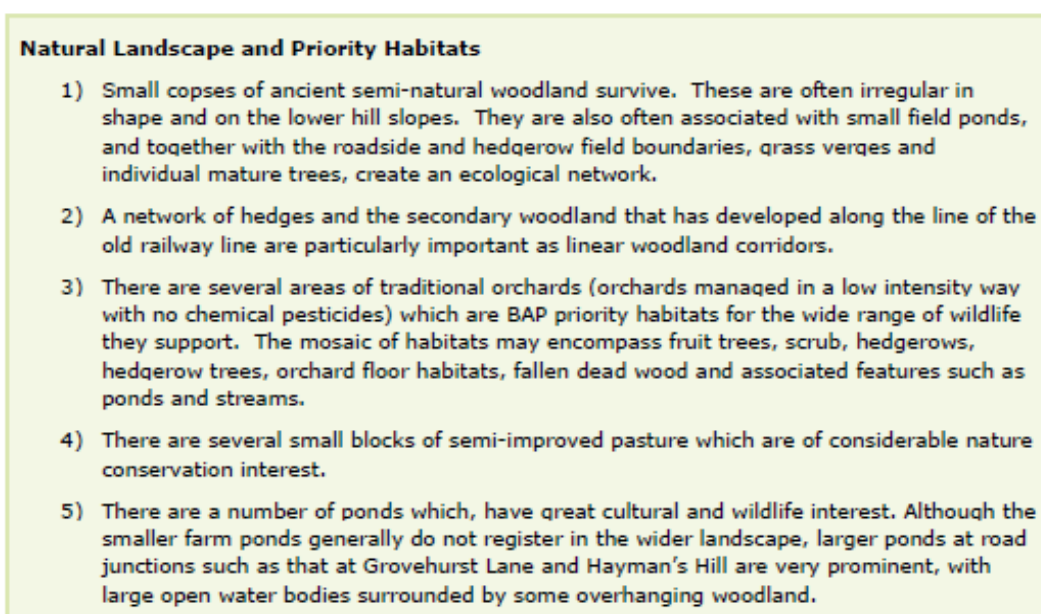


Figure 37: Horsmonden Fruit Belt, Natural Landscape and Priority Habitats, from Landscape Assessment (TWBC, 2017)

206. Given the rich nature of the natural landscape and priority habitats described above, but also the Climate Emergency declared by the UK Government and TWBC the following policies to protect biodiversity and landscape features including trees and hedgerows are proposed. Developers should apply the Defra Biodiversity Metric (or any subsequent replacement) through a biodiversity gain plan.
207. In line with the Environment Act, all qualifying development proposals will be subject to a requirement for the developer to submit a biodiversity gain plan to show how at least 10% net gain can be achieved. The net gain will be calculated using the approved Biodiversity Metric which was developed to help stakeholders assess changes in biodiversity value. Under the Act, habitat identified to deliver the net gain must be secured for at least 30 years via obligations/conservation covenant and can be delivered on or off-site.

Policy 7.3 Biodiversity net gain:

All development should minimise impacts on and result in a measurable long term net gains for biodiversity, secured for the lifetime of the development and demonstrated with use of accepted metrics for Biodiversity Net Gain and a strict adherence to mitigation strategy (avoid, mitigate, compensate) to justify all unavoidable impacts on diversity.

Landscape Character

208. The TWBC Landscape Character Assessment 2017 (p41-46) describes the area of the settlement outside of the AONB in great detail. Whereas the landscape within the AONB is characterised by ancient woodland and surviving medieval field patterns delineated by mature hedges, the character area identified to the north are different. Here the landscape, characterised as LCA2 Horsmonden Fruit Belt, is dominated by both older and newer orchards, functional hedgerows or shelter belts with ‘only very small isolated woodland copses surviving’ and ‘in isolated areas where fruit or arable cultivation is not dominant holly hedges are a locally distinctive feature.’ The description continues ‘... there is evidence of the removal of hedgerow boundaries to create larger arable fields’.... ‘in general, the whole area has a less ‘wooded’ feel compared with other parts of the High Weald plateau, although high hedges and nature individual standard trees give a strong texture and structure to the landscape’. As such the HNP seeks to give added protection to avoid further erosion of the trees and hedgerows important to the character of this landscape.
209. Necessarily hedgerows do require regular cutting and skilled management to maintain their condition, while excessive cutting or any ‘grubbing out’ should be prohibited. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 provide protection for hedgerows that are more than 30 years old or ones longer than 20 metres. Tree felling in hedgerows and the countryside also requires a felling licence from the Forestry Commission (see Tree Felling, Getting Permission, Forestry Commission 2021).

Policy 7.4: Trees and hedgerows:

Development must not encroach on or cause harm to ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees of ecological or amenity value, or protected hedgerows. Where development is proposed, there must be a plan for the continued maintenance of the hedgerow for its amenity and wildlife value.

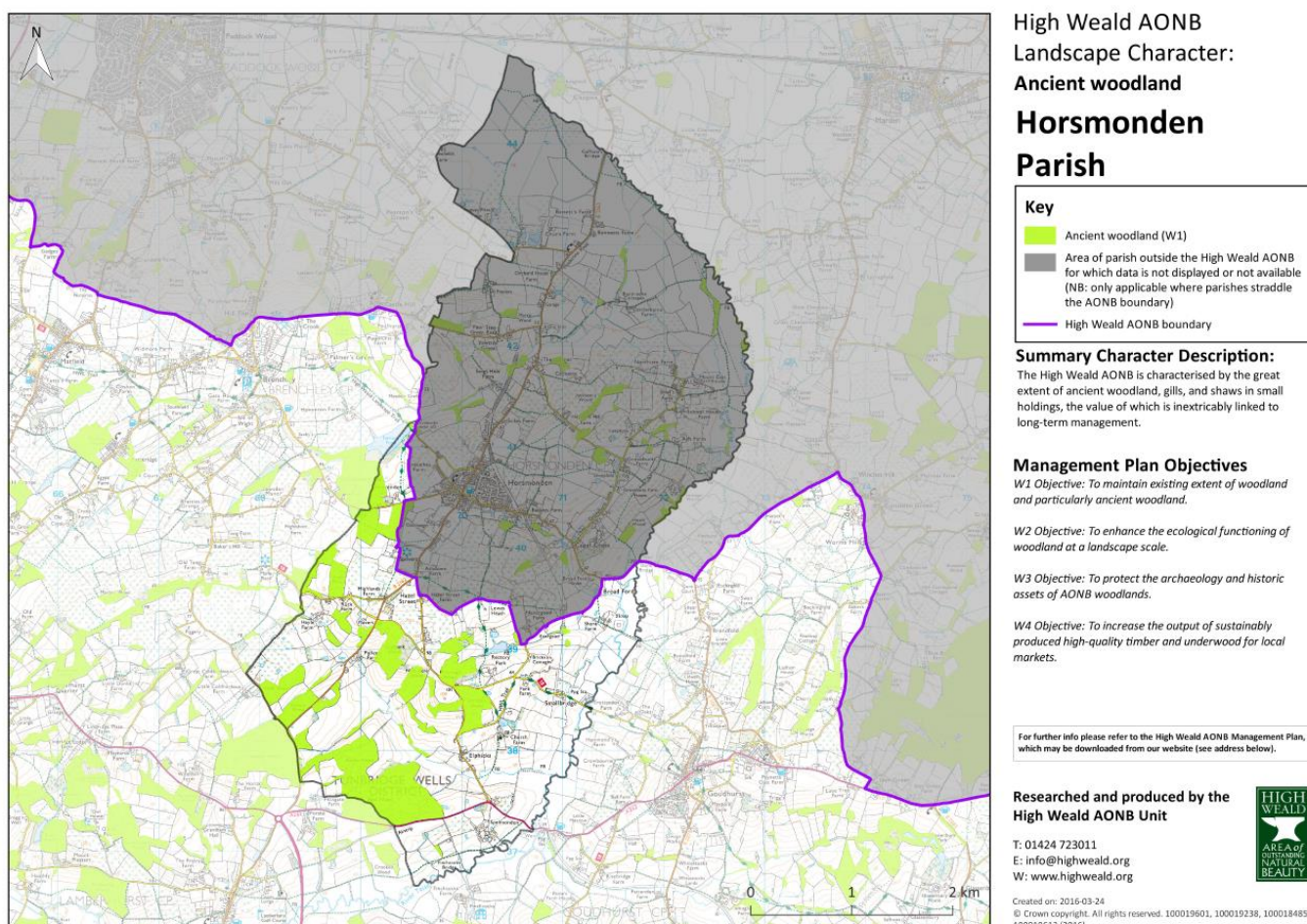


Figure 38: High Weald AONB Landscape Character Assessment showing the extent of Ancient Woodland within the parish inside (south of purple line) and outside of the AONB (dark grey area)

210. TWBC's Landscape Assessment for the Horsmonden Fruit Belt sets out a Landscape Strategy:

Landscape Strategy

The Local Character Area should be considered in the context of the High Weald AONB, particularly the role the character area plays in the setting of the AONB. The valued features and qualities of the landscape should be conserved and enhanced.

- 1) Development will need to be sensitive to the essentially rural character of the area which, with both agricultural decline and intensification occurring in tandem, is vulnerable to change.
- 2) Ensure that incremental small scale developments do not erode the character of the area.
- 3) Seek to provide an appropriate sense of visual containment for Horsmonden through protection and enhancement of its orchard setting.
- 4) Consider opportunities for further woodland copse and screen planting in association with new development in this open landscape.

Figure 39: Horsmonden Fruit Belt, Landscape Strategy, from Landscape Assessment (TWBC, 2017)

211. The new development provided for in the SLP and HNP will lead to several currently open sites to be developed. Therefore new development should be designed to include new open spaces, to help integrate these developments into the existing settlement, to provide vital amenity spaces for future occupiers, and connect to the network of corridors and spaces throughout the parish. In line with this, and the Landscape Strategy previously mentioned, the following policies are also proposed:

Policy 7.5 New Open Spaces:

Development should be designed to provide new open amenity spaces, reflecting and expanding the existing network of accessible open space in the parish.

212. The Landscape Character Assessment also identifies: “A belt of Grade 2 agricultural land, which is relatively rare in the Borough, extends across the middle of the ridge top and in part accounts for the intensity of cultivation.” A policy to protect the most valuable and versatile agricultural land in the parish is therefore proposed:

Policy 7.6 Retaining the best, most versatile and characteristic agricultural land:

Development that retains high quality agricultural land (Grade 2 and above), Hop Gardens and Fruit Belt (orchards) will be supported.

213. The Landscape Assessment also identifies the importance of ‘dark skies’ in the parish, in particular: “Dark skies away from the main settlement of Horsmonden, particularly in the area north of Haymans Hill, indicate a sense of rural calm.” The NP therefore proposes a policy to protect ‘dark skies’ and recommends that all development proposals including small scale by individual households seek to limit light pollution (see Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light):

Policy 7.7 Light pollution:

Lighting proposals that illuminate external areas around buildings must be designed to minimise both the ecological impact of the lighting and minimise glare and impact on the night sky.

High Weald AONB

214. The High Weald AONB Management Plan has published Landscape Character maps for the part of the parish within the AONB. As Horsmonden parish contains areas of ancient woodland, wood pasture (Rectory House), Medieval Field Systems and ‘Known Wildflower Meadows’, the following management plan objectives should be given consideration:

| Management Plan Objectives: Woodland | Management Plan Objectives: Field and Heath |
|---|--|
| W1 Objective: To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland | FH1 Objective: To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management. |
| W2 Objective: To Enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale. | FH2 Objective: To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodland. |
| W3 Objective: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands. | FH3 Objective: To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats. |
| W4 Objective: to increase the amount of sustainably produced high quality timber and underwood for local markets. | FH4 Objective: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath. |

215. In line with these management plan objectives it is proposed to include the following policies in the NP:

Policy 7.8 Development within the AONB:

Proposals for development in the AONB should demonstrate a positive contribution to the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

Policy 7.9 Development adjacent to the AONB:

Where development is proposed outside of the AONB, it must not damage or detract from the environment, character and landscape setting of the AONB.

Ancient Woodland

216. New Woodland Trust guidance (Planners' Manual for Ancient Woodland, 2019) states: "As a precautionary principle, a minimum 50 metre buffer should be maintained between a development and the ancient woodland, including through the construction phase, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would suffice".
217. For veteran trees the latest Standing Advice now provides a clear new recommendation for buffers areas, which is to provide:
- "A buffer zone at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree or 5m from the edge of the canopy, if that's greater".
218. Taking an example of a substantial ancient tree with a trunk diameter of 2m, the required buffer would now be at least 30m from the tree, as against the maximum root protection area of 15m recommended by arboriculture British Standard (BS 5837:2012).
219. It is therefore proposed to follow the Woodland Trust's recommendation:

Policy 7.10 Development adjacent to Ancient Woodland:

Where development is proposed adjacent to Ancient Woodland, a curtilage or buffer of 50m must be included within the development to ensure that it does not damage or detract from the environment, character and landscape of the Ancient Woodland, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would suffice.

Flooding

220. A key consideration when planning new development is the potential for flooding of new or adjacent properties. The flood map (overleaf) shows that extensive areas to the east of the parish are prone to flooding and some smaller areas to the west. None of these are currently proposed for development and as they are within Flood Zone 3 are unlikely to be. However, Climate Change incidents of flash and surface water flooding from intense periods of rainfall are likely to become more common, as was demonstrated at various locations in Horsmonden in the summer of 2021. As more of the current agricultural land is developed, but also smaller areas such as front gardens to become driveways, formerly vegetated areas which act to absorb rainfall can instead cause run-off particularly into streets and neighbouring properties. Therefore, it is proposed to include the following policy on flooding:

Policy 7.11 Flooding:

Development should not compromise the ability of the natural environment to mitigate flood risk, both to the development and to existing neighbouring properties. Developers should utilise natural environmental techniques to mitigate extreme weather events and flooding, such as Sustainable Urban Drainage and permeable surfaces, and be cognisant of the Habitats Directive and the HPC Sustainability Policy.

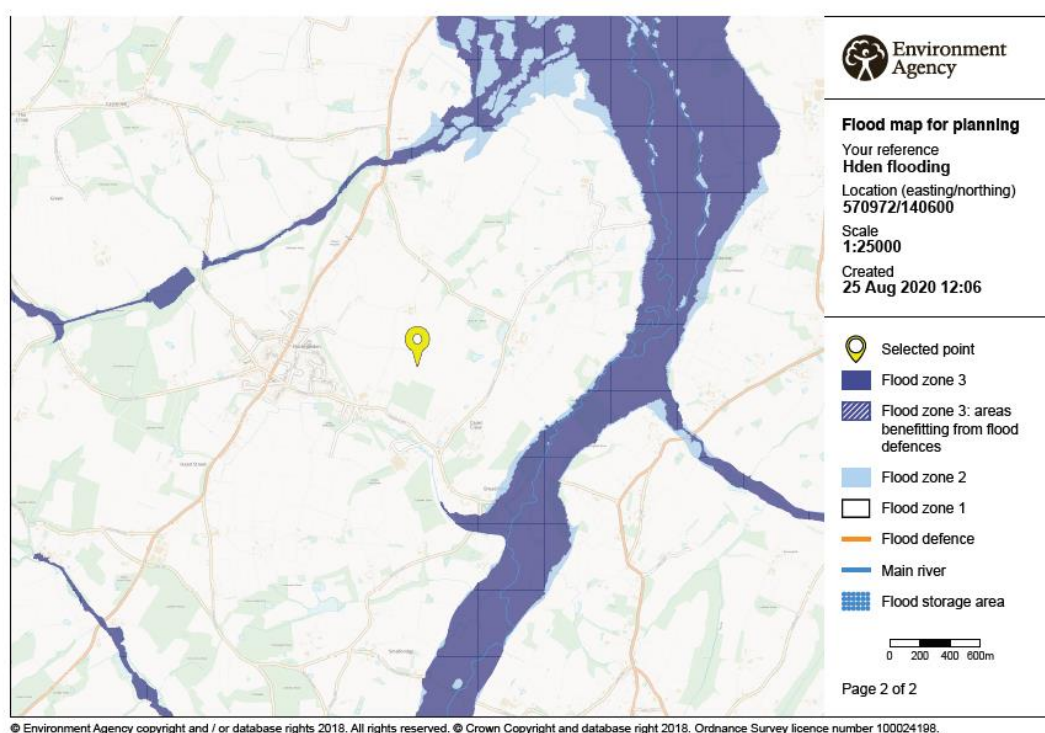


Figure 40: Screenshot highlighting Flood Zone 3 areas within Horsmonden Parish

Supporting documents

- SLP Local Green Space Assessment 11 Parish: Horsmonden
- TWBC Landscape Character Assessment, February 2017
- Landscape Sensitivity Study for Paddock Wood, Horsmonden, Hawkhurst and Cranbrook, July 2018

Appendix A: Affordable housing definition (NPPF July 2021)

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers) and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation **made** under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold **at** a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which **includes** a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

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List of Supporting documents

- Horsmonden Village Traffic Calming Appraisal, 30th August 2016, MLM Consulting Engineers Ltd, Ashford
- KCC (Tunbridge Wells Borough), (Prohibition of Waiting) No. 3 Order 2019 [Proposed no waiting at any time (Double yellow lines)]
- Business and Employment Working Group Presentation 06-02-19
- Horsmonden Workshop 1 Landscape and Design and Style Report 15th June 2019
- Horsmonden Character Analysis and Design Guidelines, AECOM, October 2019
- Links to the Horsmonden Design Guidelines can be found here:
<http://horsmondennp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Masterplanning-Ch3-Design-Guidelines.pdf>
- Links to the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide can be found here:
<http://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>
- Housing Needs Survey, Rural Kent, January 2020
- Site Options Assessment, AECOM, October 2020

- SLP Local Green Space Assessment 11 Parish: Horsmonden
- TWBC Landscape Character Assessment, February 2017
- Landscape Sensitivity Study for Paddock Wood, Horsmonden, Hawkhurst and Cranbrook, July 2018