

17 January 2017 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks
Despatched: 09.01.17



Planning Advisory Committee

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Mrs. Hunter; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Thornton
Cllrs. C. Barnes, Dr. Canet, Clark, Gaywood, Halford, Horwood, McGregor,
Mrs. Morris, Parson and Piper

Agenda

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 September 2016, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 4)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any interest not already registered.		
3. Actions from Previous Meetings	(Pages 5 - 6)	
4. Update from Portfolio Holder		
5. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)		
6. Work Plan	(Pages 7 - 8)	
7. Green Belt Assessment	(Pages 9 - 208)	Hannah Gooden Tel: 01732 227178
8. Landscape Character Assessment	(Pages 209 - 396)	Hannah Gooden Tel: 01732 227178

EXEMPT INFORMATION

At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact Democratic Services on 01732 227000 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Hunter (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dr. Canet, Clark, Gaywood, McGregor, Mrs. Morris, Parson, Piper and Thornton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Halford, Horwood and Scholey

Cllrs. Hogarth were also present.

19. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 July 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

21. Actions from Previous Meetings

There were none.

22. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder advised that the consultation on the Swanley master plan vision had commenced that day. A lot of work was happening on the Local Plan etc which was evidenced in the reports on the agenda.

23. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

24. Budget 2017/18: Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS)

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report which set out updates to the 2017/18 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report also presented proposals that had been identified which needed to be considered, together with further suggestions made by the Advisory Committees, before finalising the budget for 2017/18.

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The major message of the report was that the Council was able to remain financially self-sufficient.

The budget agreed by Council in February included £100,000 of new savings or additional income per annum and the Advisory Committees were being asked to make suggestions to Cabinet that would achieve the £100,000 required for next year. Two Member Budget Training sessions had recently taken place with the intention of increasing, or refreshing, Members knowledge of the budget process and to enhance the discussions that would take place at this round of Advisory Committees.

The Chief Finance Officer reminded Members that over £6m had already been agreed to be saved between 2011/12 and 2017/18 made up of over 130 items and over £10m had been saved since 2005/06.

Members reviewed and discussed Appendix D which contained the growth and savings proposals put forward by the Portfolio Holder and Chief Officers, and the Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) in Appendix E.

With regards to electronic only delivery of planning notifications to Town & Parish Councils (SCIA 2), Members were generally in favour of the proposal but expressed concern in relation to broadband issues and I.T equipment, and therefore thought it prudent to approach the town and parish clerks. Members expressed a desire to eventually move to 'standardised plans'.

Action 1: Officers consult with Town and Parish Councils on proposed electronic only delivery of planning notifications prior to Cabinet consideration, and present the results of the consultation to Cabinet. Wording of the consultation to be agreed with the Portfolio Holder.

Members also considered and gave their individual ideas for growth and savings items. The Chief Finance Officer summarised the suggestions put forward and Members considered whether there was anything they wanted taken forward as potential growth or savings suggestions. From the summaries Members discussed: more robust / better Planning Enforcement as a growth item; and as savings, increasing the amount of Building Control discretionary work undertaken and lobbying central government to allow fee increases.

The Chief Planning Officer advised that, with regards to enforcement, any growth suggestions had to be offset with savings. He suggested that this could be looked at within existing budgets and Members agreed to add it to the work plan.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that

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- a) the growth proposal identified in Appendix D applicable to the Advisory Committee (SCIA 1) be agreed;
- b) the savings proposals identified in Appendix D applicable to the Advisory Committee (SCIAs 2, 3, 4 & 5) be agreed subject to;
 - i) (SCIA 2 - distribution of planning applications to Town & Parish Councils) the consideration of the results of the Town & Parish Council consultation, there be a transitional period to allow Town and Parish Councils to adjust, for only plans to be sent in hard copy from 1 April 2017, and for complete electronic notification from 1 April 2018 (or sooner if individual local Councils prefer).
 - i) (SCIA 3 - Development Management Service review) the duty planner service not ceasing until satisfactory tools for self service are in place.
- c) there were no further suggestions for growth and savings from the Advisory Committee at this time.

25. Local Plan Update

The Planning Policy Team Leader provided an update on the project plan for the work needed to achieve an adopted Local Plan, including an update on the evidence base and the transition from the evidence gathering phase to the ‘issues and options’ consultation phase.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that the preparation and adoption of a Local Plan would directly impact on end users. The impacts would be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

26. Economic Needs Study

The Senior Planning Officer presented the report. The Economic Needs Study (ENS) was jointly commissioned by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to form part of the evidence base of the emerging Local Plan. The ENS was a technical study which reviewed the current status of the District’s economy and identified future employment opportunities. The study recommended an objectively assessment need (OAN) for commercial land up to 2035 of 11.6ha for Sevenoaks District this was not the Council’s commercial land target. The ENS also included analysis of the existing employment sites/land and made recommendations as to how the Council could support continued economic growth within the District up to 2035 through the Local Plan policies as well as through joint working with the Economic Development Team.

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Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that the decisions recommended through the paper directly impacted on end users. The impacts would be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Resolved: That the Economic Needs Study attached at Appendix A to the report, as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan, be noted.

27. Retail Study

Members considered a report which highlighted the findings of the Retail Study, and the full study. The emerging Local Plan required a new evidence base that would support the formation of new local planning policy. The Council first commissioned a Retail Study in 2007, and published an update in 2009. The Council had commissioned a new Retail Study for 2016, to understand the current position of town/neighbourhood centres, and how town/neighbourhood centres would evolve over the course of the new Plan period (up to 2035).

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Retail Study be noted as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan.

VOTE OF THANKS

Members showed their appreciation for all the Planning Policy Team's work.

28. Work Plan

The work plan was noted. It was discussed that the additional meeting could be used as an overflow meeting rather than having work scheduled. Possible additional items considered were revisiting red performance indicators on appeals, and the process for determining conservation areas.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.28 PM

CHAIRMAN

ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2016

Action	Description	Status and last updated 05.01.17	Contact Officer
ACTION 1	Officers consult with Town and Parish Councils on proposed electronic only delivery of planning notifications prior to Cabinet consideration, and present the results of the consultation to Cabinet. Wording of the consultation to be agreed with the Portfolio Holder.	Cabinet 1 December 2016 Minute 52	Richard Morris

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Planning Advisory Committee Work Plan 2016/17 (as at 05/01/17)

17 January 2017	25 January 2017	2 March 2017	22 June 2017	21 September 2017
Local Plan Update Green Belt Assessment Landscape Character Assessment and constraints mapping Viability CIL Governance	Swanley and Hextable Masterplan - for consideration	Local Plan Update Local List Update red performance indicators on appeals process for determining conservation areas Review of Enforcement Strategic Flood Risk Assesment Climate Change/Renewables Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study		Budget: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) Local Plan Update

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GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

Planning Advisory Committee - 17 January 2017

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by: Cabinet - 9 February 2016

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: The Green Belt Assessment was commissioned to form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan 2015-35. The Green Belt Assessment has been undertaken by Arup on behalf of the Council.

The Green Belt Assessment provides a comprehensive review of the performance of the District's green belt against the five green belt 'purposes', as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

All Green Belt performs to a greater or lesser extent. The Assessment categorises Green Belt as either strongly, moderately or weakly performing. Most of the Green Belt in the District is performing strongly. The Green Belt Assessment report provides a robust evidence base for its continued protection.

A very small number of weakly performing parcels have been identified, including sites like Sevenoaks/Greatness Quarry and the priority is to review these, and other brownfield sites in the Green Belt.

Separately, an analysis of statutory natural and historic environmental constraints and a landscape sensitivity assessment have been undertaken. The results of these separate assessments were overlaid with the NPPF assessment, which has led to the identification of parcels of land / sub-areas which are recommended by Arup for further consideration. At a future stage, further investigation and consultation will therefore be undertaken to determine which sites are to be taken forward into the Local Plan. In the meantime, these sites will not go out to public consultation.

Portfolio Holder Cllr Piper

Contact Officer Hannah Gooden, Planning Policy Team Leader, Ext. 7178

Recommendation to Planning Advisory Committee:

To support the following recommendations to Cabinet:

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- a) To note the findings of the Green Belt Assessment; and
- b) To support the further consideration of 'brownfield' sites in the Green Belt and then, if necessary, the limited number of land parcels/sub-areas identified in the Arup report.

Reason for recommendation: In order to enable discussion and advise on progress with the evidence base documents which will inform the preparation of the new Local Plan 2015-35.

Introduction and Background

- 1 This report provides an overview of the findings of an evidence base document which will help inform the production of the new Local Plan for the period 2015-35.
- 2 The Green Belt Assessment is a key evidence base document, which, together with other strands of evidence, will help the Council to protect the Green Belt. This Study has demonstrated clearly that the vast majority of the Green Belt (77 out of 101 Parcels) continues to perform one or more of these purposes strongly, while all parcels meet the purposes to a greater or lesser extent (para 2 on P.157 of the Arup report).
- 3 It will also assist in the development of strategic spatial options which will help towards meeting the needs of the District. This will include land for housing, employment, community facilities and infrastructure.
- 4 The Council is following a defined process to ensure that we arrive at a robust and deliverable housing target for the District - these steps were discussed and agreed by PAC in July 2015 (attached at Appendix A). This report considers step 4 (Assessment of Green Belt Options) and step 5 (other considerations). The previous steps involved understanding the need (through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or SHMA) and maximising the supply (through the call for sites and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment or SHLAA).
- 5 Before considering any Green Belt options, and as set out in national policy, brownfield land (both in and outside of settlement boundaries) will always be more preferable for development than utilising greenfield land, which is all Green Belt land within this District. **Appendix B sets out 'brownfield' sites that have been submitted through the call for sites, which equates to approximately 40ha of land. Subject to their suitability, accessibility, sustainability and deliverability, brownfield land will always be considered before greenfield land.** To assist in the identification and consideration of brownfield land, the Council is establishing a brownfield land register in 2017.

- 6 Perhaps unsurprisingly, the vast majority of sites submitted through the call for sites are greenfield sites located in the Green Belt.
- 7 It has been clearly and consistently stated that the preference is to focus development within existing settlements. As a result we have also interrogated:
 - potential for increased site densities as appropriate
 - under-utilised employment land
 - contribution of windfall
 - contribution of empty properties
 - contribution of office conversions under permitted development
 - Duty to Cooperate discussions with neighbouring authorities
- 8 In addition we are also reviewing our existing housing and employment land allocations, reviewing sites that featured in the 2008/09 SHLAA that have not been resubmitted or gained planning permission since, reviewing recent refused or withdrawn planning applications for 5 or more units, and investigating the properties currently on our Empty Properties Register.
- 9 In summary, Green Belt sites to be taken forward for consideration as part of the new Local Plan will initially be limited to sustainable brownfield land options, prior to more detailed interrogation, if necessary, of the other land parcels/sub-areas identified in the Arup report. **Remaining Green Belt sites submitted through the 'call for sites' process are not likely to feature as options in the Local Plan consultation unless an 'exceptional circumstances' case can be made.**

Green Belt Assessment - Overview

- 10 Arup were appointed in August 2016 to carry out the green belt assessment. They are a multi-disciplinary consultancy, based in London, who specialise in this type of work. They have completed a number of recent Green Belt Assessments including for Runnymede, Buckinghamshire, Hertsmere, Uttlesford, Elmbridge, Hounslow, Dacorum, Barnsley and Cheshire East, which has recently been examined.
- 11 Their methodology aligns very closely to the five green belt purposes/functions, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the way land performs against these purposes. To undertake the study, the whole district was split into land parcels and these were assessed against the five NPPF green belt 'purposes' outlined below, to identify the performance of different areas.
- 12 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

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- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict / other urban land.

- 13 The study provides strong evidence for justifying the retention of well performing Green Belt. Where it is demonstrated that the Green Belt continues to perform an important function, these areas are highly unlikely to be subject to any further consideration for release, except in exceptional circumstances. Further advice is being sought on the potential definition of these exceptional circumstances, as these are not defined in national planning policy or guidance. The Study will also help to identify if there are any areas of more weakly performing Green Belt land that could be considered further for potential development as part of a new Local Plan.

Green Belt Assessment - Background

- 14 Sevenoaks District is 93% Green Belt, the authority with the third largest proportion of Green Belt in the country. Only the main settlements and larger villages in the District are inset from the Green Belt, with many smaller villages washed over by it.
- 15 The concept of Green Belt dates back to the origins of the modern British planning system and is frequently credited as one of the most notable achievements of the planning system, halting the outward ‘sprawl’ of London into the countryside. The Metropolitan Green Belt, first suggested by Raymond Unwin in 1933 as a green girdle and defined by Patrick Abercrombie in the Greater London Plan of 1944 (later established in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947), curtailed the further unchecked growth of London’s urban area. Circular 42/55, released by the government in 1955, encouraged local authorities to establish their own Green Belts. The 1955 Circular set out three main functions of the Green Belt:
- To check the growth of large built-up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring settlements from merging into one another; and
 - To preserve the special character of a town.

Circular 50/57, published in 1957, distinguished the inner and outer boundaries of Green Belts and established the importance of defined and detailed permanent boundaries. The 1958 Kent Development Plan and County Map provided the first designation of Green Belt in Sevenoaks District. The 1958 Plan and Map defined the Green Belt settlement boundary

for Sevenoaks, Swanley and Hextable but did not extend into the southern and eastern parts of the District. The second iteration of the Plan and Map in 1967 extended the Green Belt boundary to include all of Sevenoaks District.

Circular 14/84 was published in 1984 and introduced two additional Green Belt objectives:

- assisting in urban regeneration and
- safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The Circulars and policy statements (PPGs) were replaced in 2012 by the NPPF, which reiterated the functions and confirmed that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt was to prevent sprawl. There have been a number of minor amendments to the Sevenoaks District Green Belt, most recently in 2015 as part of the Allocations and Development Management Plan examination, but the extent of the Green Belt remains largely unchanged from its original designation in 1967.

Methodology - Land Parcels

- 16 The key aim of the assessment is to provide a comprehensive Green Belt review of the District, assessing parcels of land against the five purposes of Green Belt designation. The methodology used to undertake this assessment is summarised below, but the full methodology is published online at: <http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/services/documents/housing/planning/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2015-35/green-belt-assessment-methodology>
- 17 The first step was to divide the entire District into parcels. Any potential alterations to the Green Belt must be based on a new permanent and defensible boundary; thus, permanent man-made and natural features were used as the basis of criteria for the identification of the Green Belt Parcels. In particular, the boundaries of the Parcels were based on the following features
 - Motorways;
 - A and B Roads;
 - Railway lines; and
 - Rivers, brooks, and waterbodies
- 18 A productive duty to co-operate workshop was held with neighbouring authorities in autumn 2016 to discuss the draft methodology and land parcels. The methodology was considered by the neighbouring local planning authorities under the duty to co-operate and cross-boundary implications were discussed. It was agreed that land parcels would not overlap the District boundary. Parcel boundaries were reviewed on site visits and amended where appropriate, for example using additional durable boundary

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features if required such as prominent ridgelines or protected woodland edges. The assessment considered 101 parcels.

Methodology - Assessment against NPPF criteria - overview

- 19 Site visits were undertaken to assess every parcel across the District. Each of the Green Belt parcels were assessed against the purposes of Green Belt, as set out in the NPPF. The purpose of the assessment was to establish any differentiation in terms of how the parcels in the Green Belt function and fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt. No national guidance exists which establishes exactly how such an assessment should be undertaken, but advice is provided by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) guidance and there are recent examples from other authorities.
- 20 For each purpose, one or more criteria have been developed using both qualitative and quantitative measures. A score out of five has been attributed for each criterion (0-weekly performing / 5-very strongly performing)

Overall Strength of Green Belt Parcel against Criterion	Score	Equivalent Wording
	0	Does not meet Criterion
	1	Meets Criterion Weakly or Very Weakly
	2	Meets Criterion Relatively Weakly
	3	Meets Criterion
	4	Meets Criterion Relatively Strongly
	5	Meets Criterion Strongly or Very Strongly

- 21 It is important to note that each of the NPPF purposes is considered equally significant, thus there is no weighting or aggregation of scores across the purposes. As such, a composite judgement is used to determine whether, overall, Green Belt parcels are meeting Green Belt purposes strongly or weakly.
- 22 A parcel fulfilling the criteria relatively weakly, weakly or very weakly (0-2) across all purposes is deemed to be weaker Green Belt. A parcel that scores 3 in any category is considered to be moderately performing Green Belt and a parcel that scores 4-5 in any category is considered to be strongly performing Green Belt. Where it is demonstrated that the Green Belt performs moderately or strongly, these areas are highly unlikely to be subject to any further consideration for release, except in exceptional circumstances. Areas that are considered to be weakly performing Green Belt are likely to be taken forward for further consideration in the Local Plan.
- 23 The assessment also considers smaller scale sub-areas within parcels which might be less sensitive and thus able to accommodate change. Therefore, although some parcels are performing strongly or moderately, there are

smaller areas within them that are considered to be weakly performing Green Belt.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 24 The original strategic purpose of the Green Belt was to check the sprawl of London. However, it is recognised that the wider Green Belt also plays a role in preventing the unrestricted growth of other large settlements. Within Sevenoaks, large built-up areas for the purpose of this Assessment have been defined to correspond to the Tier 1 and 2 settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy set out in the Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy 2015, namely Sevenoaks Urban Area and Swanley. The assessment considers the degree to which the parcel is contained by built-form and the nature of this physical containment and the extent to which the edge of the built up area has a strongly defined boundary.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 25 In addition to the clear function of this purpose in preventing towns from merging and therefore protecting existing gaps between towns, it also forms the basis for maintaining the existing settlement pattern. National policy provides no guidance over what might constitute ‘towns’ and whether this purpose should also take into consideration the gaps between smaller settlements.
- 26 Given that the Green Belt boundaries in Sevenoaks are in most cases drawn tightly to the defined settlements, the assessment of parcels considers gaps between all defined settlements (with Green Belt boundaries) in the District, as well as defined settlements in surrounding local authorities adjacent to the edge of the District.

Purpose 3 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 27 This purpose seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, or a gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change. The assessment considered openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as ‘countryside’, thus resisting encroachment from development. Openness refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built development rather than from a landscape character perspective.
- 28 The percentage of built form within a parcel was calculated. Scores were then considered further in light of qualitative assessments of character, undertaken through site visits. This assessment considered the extent to which a parcel might be reasonably identified as ‘countryside’ / ‘rural’. In order to differentiate between different areas, broad categorisation has been developed encompassing assessments of land use, morphology, context, scale and links to the wider Green Belt. These categorisations are: Strong unspoilt rural character, Largely rural character, Semi-urban character and Urban character, which are used together with the percentage of built form to determine the scoring.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 29 This purpose serves to protect the setting of historic settlements by retaining the surrounding open land or by retaining the landscape context for historic centres. The assessment of this purpose relates to very few settlements in practice, due largely to the pattern of modern development that often envelopes historic towns today.
- 30 Appropriate 'historic towns' have been identified through English Heritage's Extensive Urban Survey for Kent (2006), which identifies Sevenoaks, Westerham and Edenbridge. In addition, New Ash Green has been included in the assessment due to its unique historical identity (largely intact) as a prototype for a new way of living from the 1960s onwards. Otford was also included as it is defined in the settlement hierarchy as a 'local service centre' (together with Westerham and New Ash Green) and it has a historic core with linkages with the surrounding Green Belt
- 31 The assessment considers the role of the parcel in providing immediate context for the historic settlement (along the boundary between the settlement and the Green Belt) and the contribution of the parcel to views or vistas between the historic settlement and the surrounding countryside, looking both inwards and outwards where public viewpoints exist.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict/other urban land

- 32 Purpose 5 focuses on assisting urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land. Advice from PAS suggests that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. Therefore, assessment of Green Belt against this purpose will not enable a distinction between Green Belt Parcels as all Green Belt achieves the purpose to the same extent. Therefore an equal score is considered for all parcels in relation to this purpose. This is the approach taken in the majority of Green Belt assessments to date.

Methodology - Assessment against Local Considerations

- 33 Following on from the assessment of parcels of land against the NPPF purposes, the parcels were then separately assessed against statutory natural and historic environmental constraints ('local considerations'). The Local Considerations fall into two categories:
- 34 Absolute constraints to potential future land use change, regardless of fulfilment of green belt purposes, which encompasses:
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs),
 - Flood Plain (3b)
 - Scheduled Monuments

- Nationally Registered Park or Garden
 - Ancient Woodland
- 35 Non-absolute constraints, which make a change of land-use less preferable, but would not preclude it completely, which encompasses:
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
 - Agricultural Land Classification (Grades 1, 2, 3a)
 - Flood Plain (Zone 3a)
 - Conservation Areas
 - Local Wildlife sites
 - Areas of Archaeological Interest
 - Identified Open Space Sites
- 36 A series of maps have been produced to overlay these various constraints on the identified weakly performing Green Belt parcels and sub-areas to illustrate the extent of areas covered by absolute and non-absolute constraints and land with no constraints.

Methodology - Landscape Assessment

- 37 The separate Landscape Assessment considers the sensitivity to change with regard to local landscape character of the identified parcels and sub-areas. This was undertaken in two stages:
- High-level desk-top assessment of landscape GIS data and AONB management plans to identify constraint and opportunity
 - Fine-grain landscape and visual sensitivity analysis of the identified areas. The Landscape Assessment considers the sensitivity with regard to landscape character in terms of their ability to accommodate a change in land use if released from the Green Belt.
- 38 Field surveys were used to verify all collated information and include a comprehensive photographic record to illustrate each site. Detailed proformas were completed for each identified area, culminating in an assessment of landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity for each site.

Findings

- 39 The full Green Belt Assessment report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 40 The results of the NPPF purposes assessment have then been layered with the results of the separate constraints and landscape assessments.

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- NPPF five purposes assessment (chapter five of the Arup report)
 - Absolute/non-absolute constraints (chapter six of the Arup report)
 - Landscape assessments (chapter seven of the Arup report)
- 41 The areas recommended by Arup are set out at Table 5.2 (p.70) of the Arup report and a summary of the constraints and landscape sensitivity assessments for these recommended areas is set out at Table 10.1 (p.158).
- 42 Following the additional work needed to quantify sustainable Green Belt brownfield site options (not submitted through the call for sites), further work is needed to determine which of the areas recommended by Arup may potentially be put forward as site options, through the initial issues and options consultation for the Local Plan in 2017. Therefore, an assessment of the suitability and deliverability of these areas, in terms of availability, timeframe and sustainability (distance from town/village centres) will be undertaken, if necessary, to consider the likelihood of these areas being able to be taken forward. KCC will also provide a commentary on access and network capacity.

Conclusion

- 43 It is notable that, nearly 50 years since the current extent of the Green Belt was established across the District, the Green Belt continues to play an important role in preventing the outward sprawl of Greater London and other large built-up areas within, and adjacent to, the District. It is also crucial for maintaining the District's settlement pattern, ensuring the continued openness of the countryside, and protecting the unique rural setting of historic towns. Clearly our Green Belt also protects the character of the District that our residents know and love.
- 44 This Study has demonstrated clearly that the vast majority of the Green Belt (77 out of 101 Parcels) continues to perform one or more of these purposes strongly, while all parcels meet the purposes to a greater or lesser extent.
- 45 The Green Belt Assessment report therefore provides a robust evidence base for its continued protection.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

Preparation of a Local Plan is required by Government. The Council provided a commitment in 2014 (as part of the ADMP public examination) to review the Local Plan within five years. Not preparing a local plan will leave the Council vulnerable to unwanted planning applications and appeal decisions. Recent Government announcements also indicate that the Government will intervene to prepare plans where they are not being prepared in a timely manner locally.

Key Implications

Financial

Production of the Local Plan will be funded from the Local Plan reserve.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. There are defined legal requirements that must be met in plan making which are considered when the plan is examined by a Government Planning Inspector. Risks associated with Local Plan making are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Equality Assessment.

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The preparation and adoption of a Local Plan will directly impact on end users. The impacts will be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Conclusions

Preparation of a Local Plan is required by Government. This report provides an update on the Green Belt Assessment evidence base report.

Appendices

Appendix A - Agreed process for addressing housing need in the Local Plan

Appendix B - Brownfield sites submitted in the call for sites

Appendix 1 - Sevenoaks Green Belt Assessment (2017)

Background documents

None

Richard Morris,

Chief Planning Officer

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Appendix A

Agreed process for addressing housing need in the Local Plan

<p>Step 1 Understanding Need</p> <p>Undertake Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)</p> <p>Understand other adjacent authorities need via Duty to Cooperate discussions</p>	
<p>Step 2 Maximising supply</p> <p>Undertake Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) including a call for Sites</p> <p>Explore potential for increased site densities</p> <p>Explore potential for focussed increased site densities such as near railway stations</p> <p>Assess quantum of under-utilised employment land</p> <p>Assess potential contribution of windfalls</p> <p>Assess potential contribution of empty properties</p> <p>Assess potential contribution of office conversions</p> <p>Discuss supply options in other authority areas under the Duty to Cooperate</p> <p>Consider potential contribution of brownfield land</p>	
<p>Step 3 Understanding shortfall</p> <p>Match steps 1 and 2 findings for need and supply to understand level of any shortfall</p>	
<p>Step 4 Assessment of Green Belt Options</p> <p>Undertake full Green Belt Review of the District- assess parcels of land against the five purposes of Green Belt designation. Undertake detailed assessment at settlement boundaries and broad level assessment elsewhere</p>	
<p>Step 5 Other considerations</p> <p>Assess potential land options against other criteria, including:</p> <p>Category 1 constraints (national/international) e.g. Green Belt, AONB, flood risk</p> <p>Category 2 constraints (county/district) e.g. Conservation area, local wildlife sites</p> <p>Landscape Character</p> <p>Assessments undertaken in neighbouring authorities</p>	
<p>Step 6 Identification of land options for further consideration</p>	
<p>Step 7 Housing target identified</p>	

Appendix B - Brownfield sites submitted in the call for sites

***Please note that these sites have not been assessed in terms of their suitability, accessibility, sustainability or deliverability**

‘Brownfield’ land, for the purposes of this report, is land that has been previously developed, without the exclusions stipulated in the framework (acknowledging that this does not replicate the definition in the NPPF)

‘Brownfield’ sites in the Green Belt (submitted through the call for sites) Total: 30ha

SHLAA site ref	Site address	Ward	Site size (Ha)
H04	Harringtons Nursery, Highlands Hill, Swanley	Swanley White Oak	1.79
H022	Knocka Villa, Crow Drive, Halstead	Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount	0.35
H024	Calcutta Club, London Road, Badgers Mount	Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount	0.3
H025	Land at Polhill Business Centre, London Road, Badgers Mount	Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount	1.3
H045	Garages at Richards Close, Chiddingstone Causeway	Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway	0.05
H048	Garages at Old Orchard, Charcott, Leigh	Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway	0.1
H049	Highfield Farm, Crow Drive, Halstead	Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount	0.69
H052	Chapel Wood Enterprises, Ash Road, Hartley	Hartley & Hodsoll Street	0.51
H078	Florence Farm Mobile Home Park, Main Road, West Kingsdown	Fawkham & West Kingsdown	1
H086	Chaucers of Sevenoaks, London Road, Dunton Green	Dunton Green & Riverhead	0.23
H087 / MX9	Upper Hockenden Farm, Hockenden Lane, Swanley	Swanley St Mary's	2.36
H099 / EM5	Sevenoaks Garden Centre, Main Road, Sundridge	Brasted, Chevening & Sundridge	1.82
H0104	Baldwins Yard, Noahs Ark, Kemsing	Kemsing	0.38
H0108	Redleaf Estate Yard, Camp Hill, Chiddingstone Causeway	Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway	0.14
H0109	Highways Depot, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway	Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway	0.21
H0115	Causeway House, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway	Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway	0.52
H0121	Land south of Morleys Road and west of the railway line, Sevenoaks Weald	Seal & Weald	0.58
H0124	Wested Farm, Eynsford Road, Crockenhill	Crockenhill & Well Hill	1.17
H0127	Gills Farm, Gills Road, South Darenth	Farningham, Horton Kirby & South Darenth	0.92
H0129	Terrys Lodge Farm, Terrys Lodge Road, Wrotham	Fawkham & West Kingsdown	0.45
H0132 / EM6 / MX14	Bartram Farm, Old Otford Road, Sevenoaks	Otford & Shoreham	1.24
H0143	Foxbury Farm, Stone Street, Seal	Seal & Weald	1.19
H0150	Chelsfield Depot, Shacklands Road, Badgers Mount	Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount	4.86
H0165	Fawkham Business Park, Fawkham Road, Fawkham	Fawkham & West Kingsdown	0.78
H0170	Land at Burton Avenue, Leigh	Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway	0.19
H0229	Land east of Fruiterers Cottages, Eynsford Road, Crockenhill	Crockenhill & Well Hill	0.11
EM2	Beechcroft Farm Industries, Chapel Wood Road, New Ash Green	Ash & New Ash Green	1.49
EM3	Construction Yard, Main Road, Sundridge	Brasted, Chevening & Sundridge	1.59
EM12	Former Park and Ride, Otford Road, Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks Northern	1.25
EM13	Turvins Farm, Sundridge Road, Sundridge	Brasted, Chevening & Sundridge	0.93
MX2	Grange Park Farm, Manor Lane, Fawkham	Fawkham & West Kingsdown	0.68
MX12	Station Yard, Station Hill, Chiddingstone Causeway	Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway	0.86

Agenda Item 7

'Brownfield' sites in existing settlements (submitted through the call for sites) Total: 9ha

Site ref	Site address	Site size (ha)	Potential site capacity
HO12	Car park, High Street, Kemsing	0.15	5 units
HO35	JD Hotchkiss Ltd, London Road, West Kingsdown	0.55	9 units
HO44	51-59 Mount Pleasant Road, Sevenoaks Weald	0.39	20 units
HO83	Berkeley House, 7 Oakhill Road, Sevenoaks	0.46	34 units
HO102	Otford Builders Merchants, High Street, Otford	0.46	8 units
HO131	Employment area at Ryewood, Dunton Green	0.33	29 units
HO198	The Woodlands, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley	0.44	13 units
HO217	Sevenoaks Town Council offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks	0.32	25 units
HO224	Former Furness School, Rowhill Road, Hextable	4.02	200 units
HO226	Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre, Bradbourne Road, Sevenoaks	0.60	20 units
HO227	Land at Horton Place, Westerham	0.08	8 units
HO270	59 High Street, Westerham	0.06	4 units
HO272	Rajdani, London Road, West Kingsdown	0.40	12 units
MX1	6 Pembroke Road, Sevenoaks	0.13	8 units and 100sqm office
MX28	18 Cedar Drive, Edenbridge	0.03	12 units and 100sqm retail
MX29	Sevenoaks Community Centre, Otford Road, Sevenoaks	0.89	10 units and 1150sqm community use

Sevenoaks District Council
Green Belt Assessment
Report: Methodology and
Assessment

251351-4-05-01

Issue | January 2017

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 251351-00

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Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Appendix B

Summary of matters raised during Duty to Cooperate Workshop on proposed methodology

Appendix C

Draft Pro-Forma for NPPF Purposes Assessment

Appendix D

Draft Pro-Forma for Landscape Assessment

Appendix E

Approaches to Green Belt in neighbouring authorities

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd (Arup) has been appointed by Sevenoaks District Council to undertake a Green Belt Assessment as part of the evidence base to inform the production of a new Local Plan for the District. The Green Belt Assessment assesses the Sevenoaks Green Belt against the purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other local considerations.

1.2 Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of a Green Belt Assessment is to provide evidence of how different areas perform against the Green Belt purposes set out in national policy; the planning authority may then take this into account in its plan-making process, including any consequential changes to Green Belt boundaries, alongside other evidence in making decisions about possible changes to Green Belt boundaries. A boundary revision can take the form of an expansion or a contraction. However, equally a Green Belt Assessment may conclude that no changes are appropriate and it can provide robust evidence for protecting strongly performing Green Belt.

The Green Belt Assessment provides an independent and objective appraisal of all existing Green Belt land in Sevenoaks. This report has been undertaken in accordance with the agreed methodology, which sets out the main aims of the Study as follows:

- Review national and local policy context of the Green Belt, best practice in Green Belt assessments and existing Green Belt assessments undertaken by neighbouring local authorities in order to identify and agree detailed methodology for the Study;
- Review the existing Green Belt in the District against the five aims and purposes set out in the NPPF;
- Review the existing Green Belt against statutory natural and historic environmental considerations (Local Considerations Assessment); and
- Consider sensitivity to change with regard to landscape character of identified zones.

1.3 Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 sets out the context at the national and local level;
- Chapter 3 provides the policy context at the national and local level, together with a summary of Green Belt Assessments undertaken by neighbouring authorities;
- Chapter 4 sets out the methodology for the Study;

- Chapter 5 sets out the key findings and recommendations of the assessment against NPPF purposes;
- Chapter 6 sets out the findings from the assessment against local considerations;
- Chapter 7 sets out the key findings from the landscape assessment;
- Chapter 8 sets out the boundary assessment;
- Chapter 9 provides a summary of historical boundary anomalies which are recommended for correction;
- Chapter 10 sets out the overall conclusions of the Study;
- Annex Report 1 contains the detailed pro-formas for the assessment against NPPF purposes;
- Annex Report 2 contains mapping for the assessment against local considerations;
- Annex Report 3 contains the detailed pro-formas for the landscape assessment;
- Annex Report 4 contains mapping for the identified historical boundary anomalies.

2 Sevenoaks Green Belt

2.1 Designation of the Green Belt in Sevenoaks

The 1958 Kent Development Plan and County Map provided the first designation of Green Belt in Sevenoaks District. The 1958 Plan and Map defined the Green Belt settlement boundary for Sevenoaks, Swanley and Hextable but did not extend into the southern and eastern parts of the District. The second iteration of the Plan and Map (1967) extended the Green Belt boundary to include all of Sevenoaks District and defined settlement boundaries for Hartley and West Kingsdown for the first time, as well as minor changes to the boundaries of Swanley, Sevenoaks and Hextable.

The extension of the Green Belt throughout the District preceded minor changes to inner Green Belt settlement boundaries for Swanley, Sevenoaks and Hextable, while new boundaries were designated for Hartley and West Kingsdown.¹

In 1972, a North West Kent Town Map consolidated town maps for Hartley-Longfield and Meopham, West Kingsdown, Swanley Junction and Hextable, and illustrated the extent of the revised Green Belt and detailed inner Green Belt settlement boundaries in Sevenoaks. A 1978 revision to the Map resulted in minor amendments to the boundaries of Swanley, Hartley and New Ash Green.

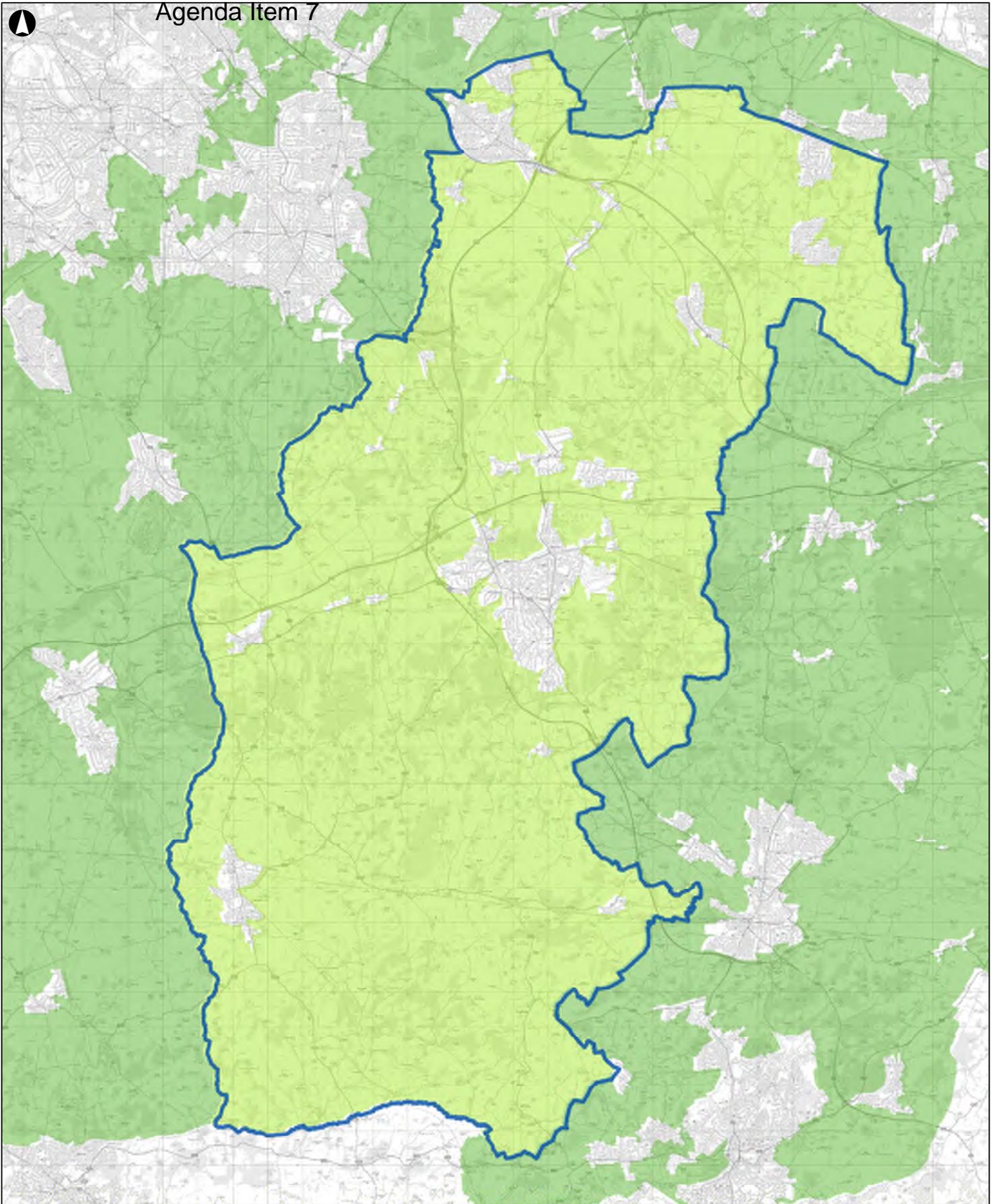
Sevenoaks, and the wider County of Kent, were covered by the Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) (2001) which reiterated the importance of the Green Belt in preventing sprawl from built-up areas. Policy E3 (Green Belts) stated that *'there is no regional case for reviewing Green Belt boundaries in light of this strategy'* and that local authorities should frame policies in accordance with advice in PPG2. The Policy went on to state that selective Green Belt reviews may be required *'in the Metropolitan Green Belt to the north east of Guildford, and possibly to the south of Woking'* and *'smaller scale local reviews are likely to be required in other locations, including around Redhill-Reigate'*; however Sevenoaks was not mentioned as a suitable location for a review.

At present, 93% of the District (approximately 34,400 hectares) is designated as Green Belt (Map 4.1).

2.2 Previous Green Belt Reviews

Sevenoaks District Council produced a topic paper on the Green Belt of Sevenoaks in 2013. The topic paper recognised the remit of the NPPF and set out how the consistent and long term application of Green Belt policy remains appropriate for the Local Development Framework (LDF) / Local Plan as had been established in the adopted Core Strategy (2011). The topic paper assessed the permanence of the Green Belt in the District and set out the case for three small scale adjustments and the reasons for rejecting other proposed changes.

¹ https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/109901/Green-Belt-Topic-Paper-vFinal.pdf



- Legend**
-  Sevenoaks District Boundary
 -  Neighbouring Green Belt
 -  Sevenoaks Green Belt

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P1	18-08-16	CG	ML	AB
Issue	Date	By	Checked	Approved

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Sevenoaks District Council
Job Title
Sevenoaks Green Belt Assessment



Map 4.1 Sevenoaks Green Belt

Scale at A3
1:103,347

Job No 000000-00	Drawing Status Draft
Drawing No 001	Issue P1

The topic paper concluded that the District's LDF / Local Plan reaffirmed the long-standing general extent of the Green Belt as stated in the adopted Core Strategy and stated that it was not appropriate for the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) to propose anything other than minor amendments to the Green Belt where exceptional circumstances merit change. It was confirmed that exceptional cases were not justified for other sites which still fulfil Green Belt purposes and that no further amendments to the Green Belt boundary in the ADMP were considered appropriate.

The topic paper recommended the return of 0.3 hectares at Billings Hill Shaw (Hartley) to the Green Belt to correct an historic anomaly where previous Green Belt land had been removed without satisfactory justification. The topic paper further recommended the removal of two previously developed sites from the Green Belt:

- Warren Court, Halstead (0.59 ha); and
- Land at College Road and Crawfords, Hextable (0.36 ha).

3 Policy, Guidance and Context

This section provides a summary of relevant Green Belt policy and guidance at the national level (NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance, ministerial statements, and legal cases) and local level, together with a review of other relevant guidance.

3.1 National Context

At the national level, the NPPF, national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and ministerial letters provide the policy and guidance context for the role and function of the Green Belt. The following sections summarise the current position.

3.1.1 National Policy

The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning framework for England and how it is expected to be applied. Central to the NPPF is the ‘*presumption in favour of sustainable development*’ which, for plan-making means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet development needs and meet objectively assessed needs unless specific policies of the NPPF (such as Green Belt policy) indicate that development should be restricted.

Protection of Green Belt around urban areas is a core principle of the NPPF, as detailed in section 9 of the Framework which emphasises the importance that the Government attaches to Green Belts.

It advocates openness and permanence as essential characteristics of the Green Belt stating that ‘*the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open*’ (paragraph 79). The NPPF details five purposes of the Green Belt, three of which are consistent with early Green Belt policy²:

1. *‘To check against unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
2. *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
3. *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
4. *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
5. *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land’.* (paragraph 80)

For ease of reference in this Assessment, these purposes are subsequently referred to as NPPF Purposes 1 to 5, with the assigned number corresponding to the order in which they appear in the NPPF, as above.

In addition to the purposes of the Green Belt, Paragraph 81 states that ‘*local planning authorities are required to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use*

² Circular 42/55 highlighted the importance of checking unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas and of safeguarding countryside from encroachment. It sets out three main functions of Green Belt which are now upheld in the NPPF: to check the growth of a large built-up area; to prevent neighbouring settlements from merging into one another; and to preserve the special character of a town.

of the Green Belt' once Green Belt boundaries have been defined including looking for opportunities to:

- *'Provide access;*
- *Provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation;*
- *Retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or*
- *Improve damaged and derelict land'.*

Paragraph 83 states that *'local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans'* and that *'once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan'*. Importantly, the NPPF acknowledges the permanence of Green Belt boundaries and the need for them to endure beyond the plan period (paragraph 83). The need to promote sustainable patterns of development when reviewing the Green Belt boundaries is also acknowledged (paragraph 84).

The NPPF seeks to align Green Belt boundary review with sustainable patterns of development (paragraph 84). Local planning authorities are encouraged to *'consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary'*.

Paragraph 85 states that *'when defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:*

- *Ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- *Not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- *Where necessary identify in their plans areas of "safeguarded land" between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- *Make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;*
- *Satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and*
- *Define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'*

3.1.2 National Guidance

The national PPG provides guidance on the requirements of the planning system. The current PPG reiterates the importance of the Green Belt and acknowledges

that Green Belt may restrain the ability to meet housing need. The following paragraphs are considered relevant to this Green Belt Assessment:

- **‘Paragraph 044 Do housing and economic needs override constraints on the use of land, such as Green Belt? – The NPPF should be read as a whole: need alone is not the only factor to be considered when drawing up a Local Plan. The Framework is clear that local planning authorities should, through their Local Plans, meet objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted’ (as it is with land designated as Green Belt). ‘The Framework makes clear that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.’**
- **‘Paragraph 045 Do local planning authorities have to meet in full housing needs identified in needs assessments? - Assessing need is just the first stage in developing a local plan. Once need has been assessed, the local planning authority should prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period, and in so doing take account of any constraints such as Green Belt, which indicate that development should be restricted and which may restrain the ability of an authority to meet its need.’**

The PPG does not provide any specific guidance on conducting a Green Belt Assessment *per se*.

3.1.3 Ministerial Statements

Letters and general statements from ministers of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) or local government officers have clarified or re-affirmed aspects of Green Belt policy. During his time as Planning Minister (November 2012 to August 2014), Nick Boles issued a series of Ministerial Statements on the Green Belt which, in general, continued to emphasise the protection of the Green Belt.

Perhaps the most significant statement came in March 2014 when correspondence with PINS reaffirmed the importance and permanence of the Green Belt and that Green Belt may only be altered in ‘exceptional circumstances’ through the preparation or review of local plans.³ The correspondence recognised the special role of the Green Belt in the framing of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which sets out that local authorities should meet objectively assessed needs unless specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted, with the Green Belt identified as one such policy.

³ Nick Boles / DCLG (2014) Inspectors’ Reports on Local Plans, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292648/Scan-to-Me_from_ela-mfd-f6-zc1.link.local_2014-03-03_180547.pdf

This position was reaffirmed in October 2014 when the national Planning Practice Guidance was amended (see section 3.1.2).

3.1.4 Legal Cases – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ and ‘Very Special Circumstances’

As set out above (sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.3), ‘exceptional circumstances’ relates to plan-making in the context of Green Belt boundaries. There is no definition of ‘exceptional circumstances’ provided in the NPPF, and there is limited case history relating to decisions about the setting or change of Green Belt boundaries in local plans and the definition of ‘exceptional circumstances’. However, there are two recent relevant examples of note.

The first is the Solihull Local Plan (Solihull Metropolitan District Council). In this case, a developer’s sites in Tidbury Green were placed into the Green Belt by the Solihull Local Plan (SLP) adopted in December 2013. The developer challenged the SLP on three grounds: (i) that it was not supported by an objectively assessed figure for housing need; (ii) the Council has failed in its Duty to Cooperate; and (iii) the Council adopted a plan without regard to the proper test for revising Green Belt boundaries. The claim succeeded at the High Court.

Solihull appealed against the decision, but the appeal was dismissed by the Court of Appeal. The Court held that the Inspector and Solihull had failed to identify a figure for the objective assessment of housing need as a separate and prior exercise, and that was an error of law. In addition, the Judge dismissed the Inspector’s reasons for returning the developer’s sites to the Green Belt, saying that:

‘The fact that a particular site within a council’s area happens not to be suitable for housing development cannot be said without more to constitute an exceptional circumstance, justifying an alteration of the Green Belt by the allocation to it of the site in question’.

In the April 2015 High Court case of Calverton Parish Council v Nottingham City Council, Broxtowe Borough Council and Gedling Borough Council, this position was upheld. In this case, the Parish Council applied to the High Court to quash parts of the Aligned Code Strategies of the three authorities, arguing that: (i) it had failed to consider whether housing numbers should be reduced to prevent the release of Green Belt land; and (ii) it had failed to apply national policy in considering its release. However, the Claim was rejected.

In Paragraph 42 of the decision, referring to the earlier Solihull decision, the Judge stated:

‘In the case where the issue is the converse, i.e. subtraction, the fact that Green Belt reasons may continue to exist cannot preclude the existence of countervailing exceptional circumstance – otherwise, it would be close to impossible to revise the boundary. These circumstances, if found to exist, must be logically capable of trumping the purposes of the Green Belt; but whether they should not in any given case must depend on the correct identification of the circumstances said to be exceptional, and the strength of the Green Belt purposes’.

While supporting the earlier Solihull case, the judgement also confirms that ‘exceptional circumstances’ may override the purposes set out in the NPPF, depending on the strength of these purposes. In determining what is exceptional, an authority should balance:

- The ‘*acuteness/intensity of the housing need*’;
- The ‘*constraints on the supply/availability of land...suitable for development*’;
- The ‘*difficulties in achieving sustainability without impinging on the green belt*’;
- The ‘*nature and extent of the harm to this green belt*’; and
- How far the impacts on Green Belt purposes could be reduced.

In his decision, the Judge believed the Inspector had taken a ‘*sensible and appropriate*’ approach to adjudging the weight of exceptional circumstances versus the strength of the Green Belt purposes by weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of different alternative options for meeting housing need, including those which would not have involved Green Belt adjustments.

The need for a robust Green Belt Assessment is thus a necessity in order to identify weaker performing Green Belt, with this work feeding into the broader task of identifying what might constitute ‘exceptional circumstances’ within Sevenoaks.

The NPPF sets out that ‘*very special circumstances*’ relates to the consideration of planning applications in the context of existing Green Belt. Paragraph 87 states that ‘*As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*’. Paragraph 88 goes on to state that ‘*When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations*’. Paragraph 89 identifies those type of development within the Green Belt which may be considered as acceptable in the context of ‘*very special circumstances*’:

- ‘*Buildings for agricultural and forestry;*
- *Provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- *The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- *The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- *Limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or*

- *Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.'*

Paragraph 90 expands on the above list by identifying other forms of development that are also not appropriate provided they '*preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt*' namely:

- *'Mineral extraction;*
- *Engineering operations;*
- *Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
- *The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and*
- *Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order'.*

3.2 Local Context

Planning policy in Sevenoaks is currently made up of the NPPF, the Core Strategy DPD (2011), the ADMP (2015) and saved policies from the following documents:

- Kent Minerals Subject Plan: Brickheath Written Statement (1986);
- Kent Minerals Local Plan: Construction Aggregates (1993);
- Kent Minerals Local Plan: Chalk and Clay (1997);
- Kent Minerals Local Plan: Oil and Gas (1997);
- Kent Waste Local Plan (1998).

Sevenoaks is currently producing a new Local Plan for the District which will cover the period 2015-2035. It is anticipated that this will go out to Issues and Options Consultation in spring / summer 2017, Draft Local Plan Consultation in spring 2018, Pre-submission Publication in summer 2018, Submission in autumn 2018 and Adoption in summer 2019.

3.2.1 Sevenoaks Core Strategy DPD (2011)

In relation to the Green Belt, the Core Strategy deals with Green Belt at the strategic level and states:

'There is no need to amend the Green Belt to meet development needs. The case for any small scale adjustments to cater for situations where land no longer contributes to the Green Belt can be considered through the Allocations and Development Management DPD' (paragraph 4.1.17).

The Spatial Vision of the Core Strategy sets out that the District will provide for future development requirements by making effective use of urban land within existing settlements, while protecting the environment.

3.2.2 Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) DPD (2015)

The purpose and requirements of the Green Belt are stated in the ADMP as follows:

‘The particular function of the Green Belt in Kent is to preserve the open countryside between the edge of Greater London and the urban areas of the Medway towns, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

The approved Green Belt in West Kent extends to about 12-15 miles from the built-up edge of Greater London. Within West Kent, the Green Belt has an important role in preserving the identity of the separate communities and in curbing urban pressures by restraining the growth of towns and other settlements’.

The ADMP sets out the following policies applying to development in the Green Belt:

- Policy GB1 - Limited Extension to Dwellings in the Green Belt;
- Policy GB2 - Basements within Residential Developments in the Green Belt;
- Policy GB3 – Residential Outbuildings in the Green Belt;
- Policy GB4 – Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt;
- Policy GB5 – Dwellings Permitted under Very Special Circumstances or as Rural Exceptions in the Green Belt;
- Policy GB6 – Siting of Caravans and Mobile Homes in the Green Belt;
- Policy GB7 – Re-use of a Building within the Green Belt;
- Policy GB8 – Limited Extension to Non-residential Buildings in the Green Belt;
- Policy GB9 – Replacement of a Non-residential Building in the Green Belt.

The ADMP was adopted in February 2015 with the purpose of delivering the Core Strategy development requirements for the period to 2026. One of the main modifications required by the Inspector in finding the ADMP sound and capable of adoption is the undertaking of an early review of the Core Strategy within the next five years, which Sevenoaks District Council has committed to, in order to ensure that it has an up-to-date suite of policies and proposals in place to deliver sustainable growth in accordance with the NPPF.

Sevenoaks District Council is currently producing an up-to-date evidence base to support the development of a new Local Plan. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) published in September 2015 identifies an objectively assessed housing need for Sevenoaks of 12,400 new homes (2012-2033). The publication of the SHMA was followed by a “call for sites” in October 2015 and

the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment suitability assessments are expected to be completed in Spring 2017.

This Assessment forms part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan which, when brought together with Duty to Cooperate discussions and balanced against the objectively assessed need, will determine a housing target for the District.

3.3 Relevant Guidance to Green Belt Assessment

3.3.1 PAS Guidance

The most relevant non-policy guidance in relation to Green Belt Assessment is that published by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) in 2015⁴ in the context of the need to accommodate strategic housing (and employment) requirements. The guidance highlights that *‘the purpose of a review is for the identification of the most appropriate land to be used for development, through the local plan. Always being mindful of all the other planning matters to be taken into account and most importantly, as part of an overall spatial strategy’*.

Emphasis is placed on the need for assessment against the five purposes of the Green Belt in the first instance. The guidance acknowledges that there are planning considerations, such as landscape quality, which cannot be a reason to designate an area as Green Belt, but that could be a planning consideration when seeking suitable locations for development.

The guidance outlines considerations to be given in relation to the five purposes:

- **Purpose 1 – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas:** consider the meaning of sprawl compared to 1930s definition, and whether positively planned development through a local plan with good masterplanning would be defined as sprawl.
- **Purpose 2 – to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another:** the purpose does not strictly suggest maintaining the separation of small settlements near to towns. The approach will be different for each case. The identity of a settlement would not be determined solely by the distance to another settlement; the character of the place and of the land in between must be taken into account. A ‘scale rule’ approach should be avoided. Landscape character assessment is a useful analytical tool for this type of assessment.
- **Purpose 3 – to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment:** seemingly, all Green Belt does this so distinguishing between the contributions of different areas to this purpose is difficult. The recommended approach is to look at the difference between land under the influence of the urban area and open countryside, and to favour open countryside when determining the land that should be attempted to be kept open, accounting for edges and boundaries.

4

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/documents/332612/1099321/Planning+on+the+doorstep+green+issues+Mar+15/7bdeb666-8058-49b2-a614-2a3cc993a204>

- **Purpose 4 – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns:** it is accepted that in practice this purpose relates to very few settlements as a result of the envelopment of historic town centres by development.
- **Purpose 5 – to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land:** the amount of potentially developable land within urban areas must have already been factored in before Green Belt land is identified. All Green Belt would achieve this purpose to the same extent, if it does achieve the purpose, and the value of land parcels is unlikely to be distinguishable on the basis of this purpose.

The PAS guidance additionally recognises the relevance of Duty to Cooperate, as set out in the Localism Act 2011, and soundness tests of the NPPF to Green Belt assessment. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to ‘*work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans*’ (paragraph 179). Additionally the level of housing that a local authority is required to for is also determined by whether there is an ‘*unmet requirement*’ from a neighbouring authority (paragraph 182).

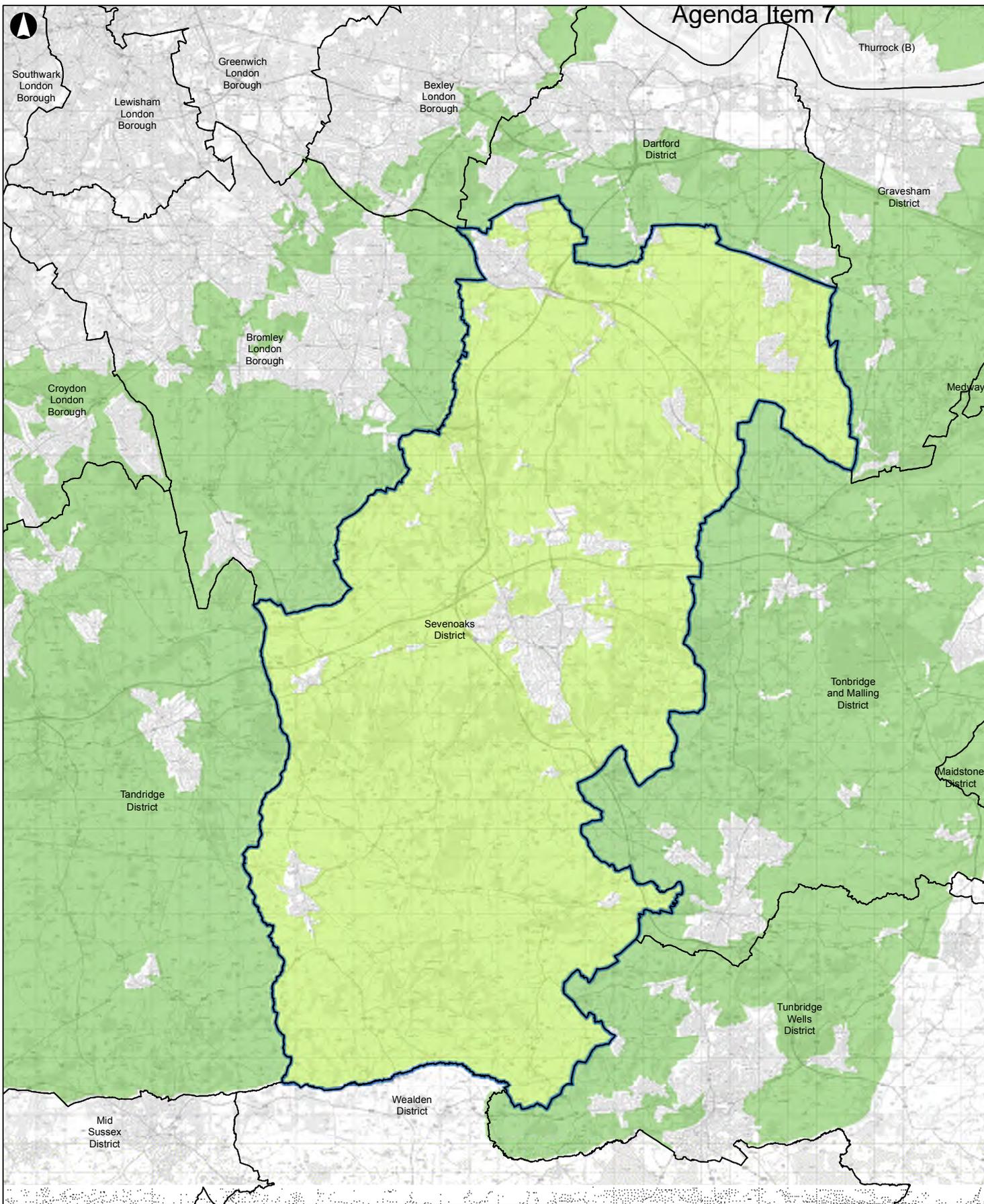
The guidance recognises that Green Belt is a strategic policy and hence a strategic issue in terms of Duty to Cooperate. Areas of Green Belt should therefore be assessed collectively by local authorities. This is important particularly for areas of Green Belt land that fall into different administrative areas, and the significance attached to that land.

3.3.2 Neighbouring Local Authorities Experience

Local planning authorities now hold the responsibility for strategic planning following the revocation of regional strategies in the Localism Act 2011. The national Planning Practice Guidance outlines the Duty to Cooperate as:

‘...a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local and Marine Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.’

Understanding how each of the neighbouring local authorities are approaching Green Belt issues is pertinent. Where Green Belt Assessments have been completed, understanding the methodology employed is important to ensure a level of consistency where possible. Additionally, it is helpful to understand how neighbouring authorities identified ‘parcels’ of Green Belt for assessment. It is notable that Green Belt in adjoining districts (Map 3.1) may achieve the purpose of checking unrestricted sprawl from the urban areas both within and outside Sevenoaks. It may also play a role in protecting strategic gaps between urban areas and settlements both within and outside Sevenoaks. The potential release of any Green Belt land within or outside Sevenoaks may impact on settlement patterns and the role of the wider Green Belt.



Legend

-  District boundaries
-  Sevenoaks District Boundary
-  Neighbouring Green Belt
-  Sevenoaks Green Belt

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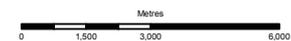
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Map 3.1 Sevenoaks and Neighbouring Authorities' Green Belt

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The approaches to Green Belt Reviews taken in neighbouring authorities have been summarised in Table 3.1 and described in further detail in Appendix E.

Table 3.1 Green Belt approaches in neighbouring authorities

Local Authority	Green Belt Assessment	Date Completed
London Borough of Bexley	N/A	N/A
London Borough of Bromley	N/A	N/A
Dartford Borough Council	N/A	N/A
Gravesham Borough Council	In progress	TBC
Wealden District Council	N/A	N/A
Tandridge District Council	Tandridge District Council Green Belt Assessment (Stage 1) (2015)	2015
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Green Belt Study (September 2016)	2016
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	In progress	TBC

3.3.3 Other Local Authorities Experience

A brief examination of a selection of Green Belt Assessments carried out elsewhere in the country revealed the following key lessons in terms of methodology:

- A two stage process has typically been used to firstly identify those Green Belt areas least sensitive to change and where development would be least damaging in principle, before moving onto a second stage to consider technical site constraints.
- For the purposes of the assessment, authorities have primarily divided the Green Belt into land parcels for assessment using durable, significant and strong physical boundaries which are clearly defined in the methodology, though some have used grid squares of a defined size to identify the land parcels for assessment.
- Only those purposes deemed relevant to the local context have been used in assessments rather than necessarily using all five, while in some instances authorities have combined multiple purposes within their assessments.
- In terms of interpreting the national purposes, definition of terms (both within the purposes themselves and criteria applied) is of key importance to a successful and transparent assessment.
- Assessment criteria used to assess individual purposes have been tailored to local circumstances.
- Qualitative approaches are primarily used in assessments, although some authorities have used more quantitative measures. The approach to scoring in

assessments varies from simplistic traffic light systems to more complex approaches to scoring.

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- Assessment criteria used to assess individual purposes have been tailored to local circumstances.
- Qualitative approaches are primarily used in assessments, although some authorities have used more quantitative measures. The approach to scoring in assessments varies from simplistic traffic light systems to more complex approaches to scoring.

3.4 Implications for the Assessment

National policy, as set out in the NPPF, emphasises the importance and permanence of Green Belt. The NPPF sets out clearly the five purposes that the Green Belt is intended to serve, highlights that the Local Plan process offers the only opportunity for the Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed and stresses that boundaries should be defined using permanent and recognisable physical features. Neither the NPPF, nor the supporting national Planning Practice Guidance, provide guidance on how to conduct a Green Belt Assessment *per se*. The implied emphasis is thus on each authority to develop a methodology which is appropriate to the local context.

Crucial to the development of such a methodology is the establishment of satisfactory definitions for the key terms used in the NPPF purposes (yet not explicitly defined) – different interpretations of such terms would significantly alter how the Assessment is carried out. While a number of Green Belt

Assessments do not articulate clearly how terms have been defined, the Green Belt Boundary Review for Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield provided definitions based on a combination of legitimate sources (for example, the Oxford English Dictionary) as well as the known aspirations sought through national and local policy.

Some key definitions which were considered for this methodology include:

- *Large built-up areas* (Purpose 1): This originally referred to London for Metropolitan Green Belt, but the scope of how this is interpreted has shifted over time to include other large settlements. The Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield review applied the term to London, Luton/Dunstable and Stevenage. The Central Bedfordshire Green Belt Assessment applied the definition more broadly, considering any area deemed ‘urban’. When defining this term, the methodology for Sevenoaks was developed to consider the settlement structure across the District and adjoining districts.
- *Sprawl* (Purpose 1): The definition of this term varies significantly. The PAS guidance queries whether development that is masterplanned and promoted positively through a development plan would constitute sprawl, but this does not provide a specific and measurable definition which could be applied in a Green Belt Assessment. Other Green Belt Assessments, for example the Guildford Green Belt and Countryside Study, have adopted a more spatial definition, considering sprawl as the ‘*creeping advancement of development beyond a clear physical boundary of a settlement*’. Given sprawl is a multi-faceted concept, it was deemed prudent to consider both of these spheres in the definition adopted for this Study.
- *Neighbouring towns* (Purpose 2): The interpretation of ‘towns’ varies across previous Green Belt Assessments. While it tends to be aligned to the defined settlement hierarchy, as set out in the relevant development plan, some authorities have chosen to apply a more local purpose. For example, in Runnymede, the threat of coalescence between many smaller settlements led to the Green Belt Review considering all settlements equally, including those ‘washed over’ in the Green Belt. By contrast, the joint Dacorum/St Albans/Welwyn Green Belt study utilised an additional ‘local’ purpose (*‘To broadly maintain the existing settlement pattern’*). In defining the ‘towns’ for assessment in Sevenoaks, the methodology accounts for the particular role that the Green Belt plays in the local context. Given that in Sevenoaks the Green Belt boundaries are, for the most part, closely abutting the edge of settlements in Sevenoaks, it was considered appropriate to define all non-Green Belt areas as the ‘towns’ in the assessment.
- *Countryside* (Purpose 3): The Dacorum, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield Review adopted a ‘functional’ as opposed to ‘political economy’ definition of this term, centred on pastoral and primary land uses, while others adopted broader definitions which took countryside to mean any open land. Evidently, this interpretation is not appropriate in areas which are entirely semi-urban, where Green Belt may have been applied to areas which are open but not genuinely of a ‘countryside’ character. Given the contrast between urban and rural areas seen in and around Kent, in a similar fashion to other areas at the

fringe of London (for example, in Buckinghamshire and Essex), a similar ‘functional’ definition was adopted in this assessment.

- *Historic Towns* (Purpose 4): While many towns in the metropolitan Green Belt have a long history in terms of their foundation, or even retain historic architectural features or layouts in their cores, in most cases their historic centres have been enveloped by modern development. In some cases, this results in a limited relationship between the Green Belt and the historic areas of settlements. The West Midlands Joint Green Belt Review defined its historic towns by identifying settlements with conservation areas in their centres and considering the inter-visibility between these and the Green Belt. Others have utilised wider policy instruments to identify relevant settlements. For example, the Epping Forest Stage 1 Green Belt Review drew on a county-wide SPG, Essex Historic Towns, which clearly defined the district’s historic towns. In this assessment, relevant policy and evidence was drawn upon to define the relevant settlements for this assessment in the Sevenoaks context.

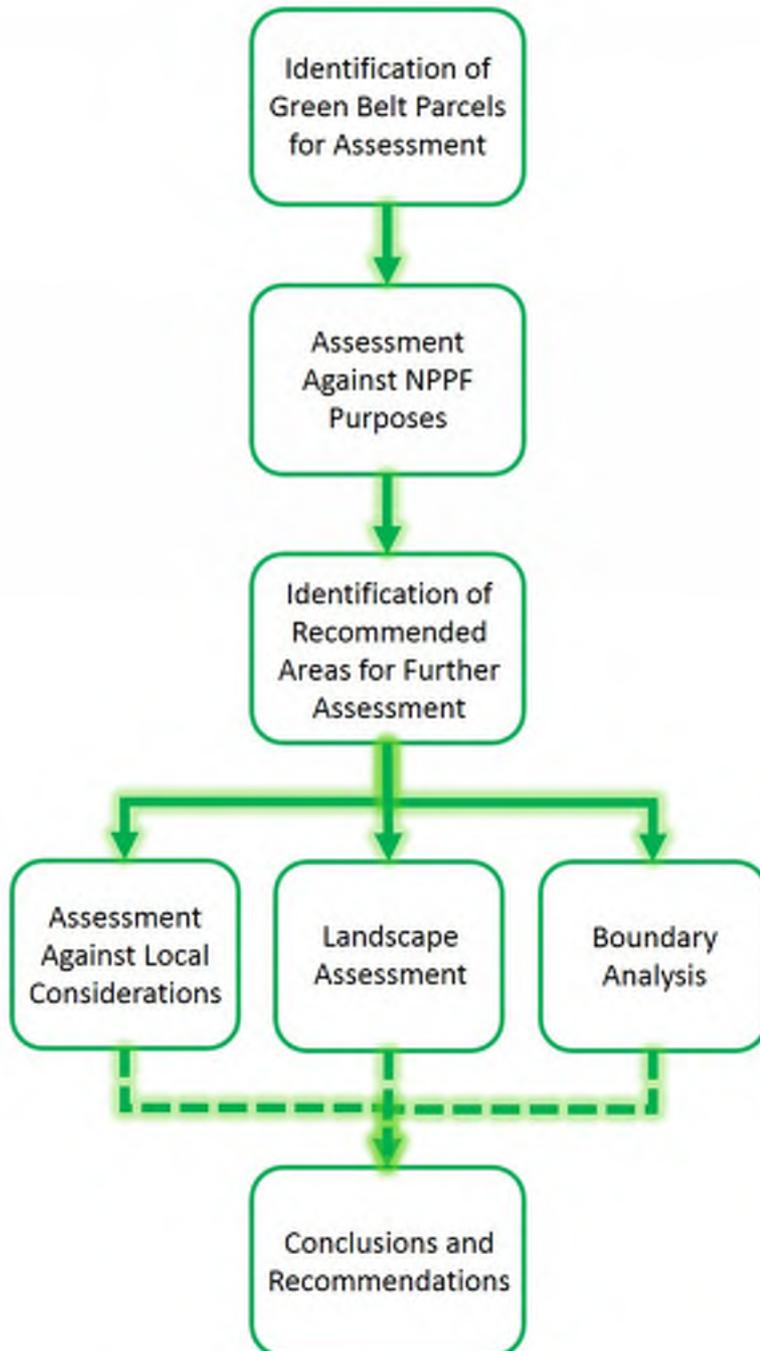
In addition, the PAS guidance is particularly helpful in setting out key parameters to consider when developing a Green Belt Assessment methodology. Key points to note are:

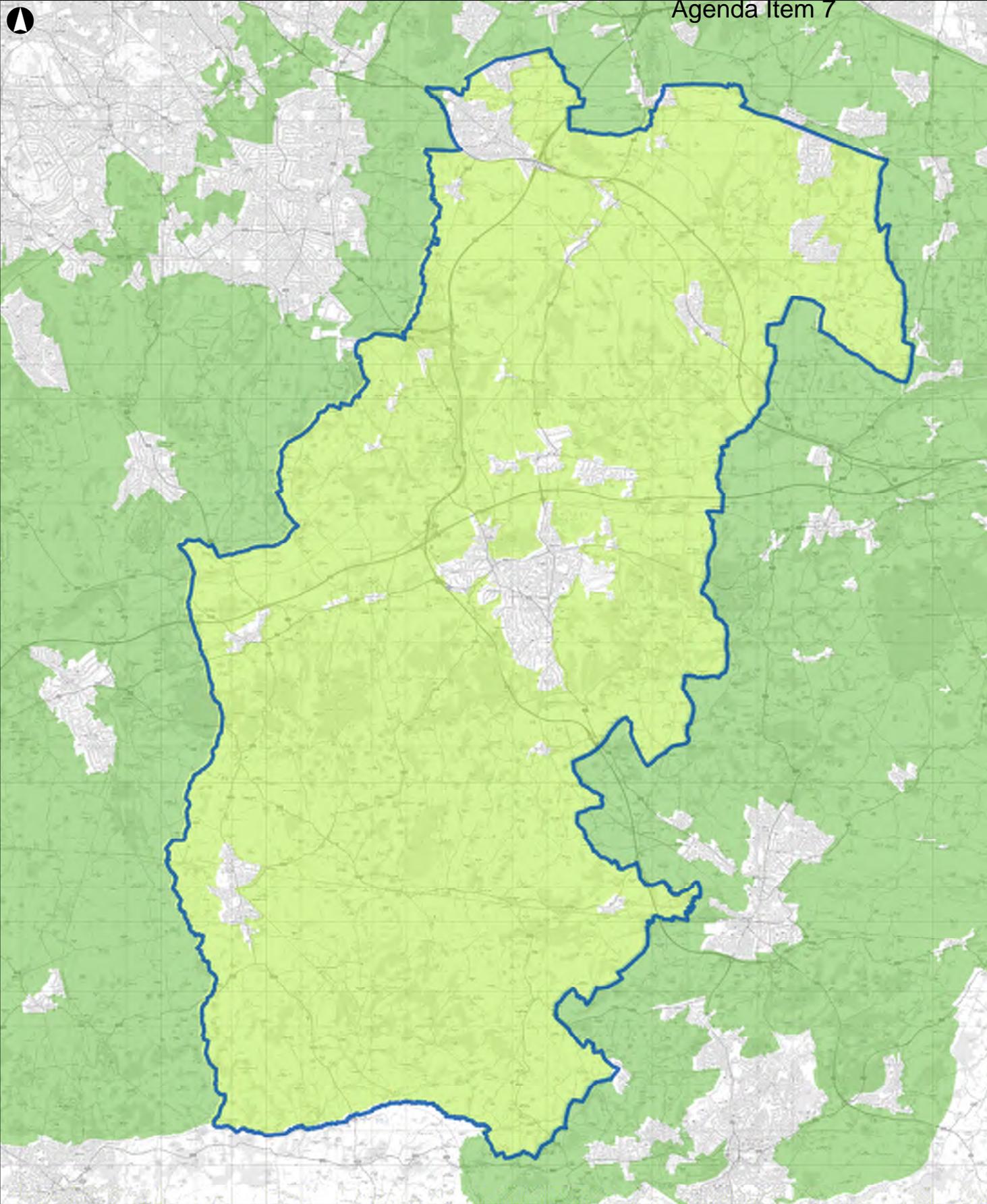
- A Green Belt Assessment is not an assessment of landscape quality, though elements of landscape assessment assist in assessing the Green Belt (for example, in identifying potential new boundaries or differentiating between areas of unspoilt countryside or semi-rural areas).
- The label ‘historic towns’ applies to a select number of settlements and it is therefore accepted that the Purpose 4 assessment will only be relevant in very few instances. As set out in section 4.3.4 of this report, Purpose 4 was only considered to be relevant to the Sevenoaks Green Belt Assessment in very limited locations.
- Purpose 5 is not helpful in terms of assessing relative value of land parcels. However, the overarching importance of Purpose 5 at the regional level is acknowledged.
- Green Belt is a strategic issue and should be considered collaboratively with neighbouring authorities under Duty to Cooperate, thus emphasising the importance of ongoing consultation with neighbouring stakeholders.

4 Methodology

The following section sets out the methodology that was used to undertake the Sevenoaks Green Belt Assessment. This encompasses an assessment of the whole of the Green Belt within Sevenoaks (as shown in Map 4.1). Figure 4. 1 provides an overview of the adopted methodology and further details of each stage is provided in the subsequent sections.

Figure 4. 1 Methodology Diagram





- Legend**
- Sevenoaks District Boundary
 - Neighbouring Green Belt
 - Sevenoaks Green Belt

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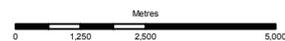
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Map 4.1 Sevenoaks Green Belt

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4.1 Duty to Cooperate

Since the introduction of the Localism Act (2011), local authorities hold the responsibility for strategic planning and a clear Duty to Cooperate on strategic issues, such as Green Belt. The potential release of any Green Belt land within Sevenoaks may also impact on the role of the Green Belt in adjoining authority areas as part of the wider London Green Belt. As a result it is important to engage with neighbouring authorities on the methodology for the Green Belt Assessment.

A workshop was held with neighbouring authorities on 30 August 2016⁵ to discuss the methodology and to seek a level of consistency with neighbouring Green Belt studies, where this was possible / relevant. A summary of the key points raised and discussed is provided in Appendix B.

The methodology was published on the Council's website for consultation prior to the commencement of the Assessment described below.

4.2 Identification of Green Belt Parcels for Assessment

4.2.1 Green Belt Parcels

Any potential alterations to the Green Belt must be based on a new permanent and defensible boundary; thus, permanent man-made and natural features were selected as the basis of criteria for the identification of the Green Belt Parcels. In particular, the boundaries of the Parcels are based on the following features (Map 4.2):

- Motorways;
- A and B Roads;
- Railway lines; and
- Rivers, brooks, and waterbodies.

Given the varying character of Sevenoaks, from the semi-urban fringes of Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge to the relatively unspoilt countryside throughout the remainder of the District, a flexible approach to the identification of Parcels was adopted. This was achieved through consideration of Parcel boundaries during the site visits, in particular in and around the non-Green Belt settlements, and using additional durable boundary features, such as:

- Unclassified public roads and private roads;
- Smaller water features, including streams, canals and other watercourses;
- Prominent physical features (e.g. ridgelines);

⁵ Attendees comprised: representatives of Dartford Borough Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Tandridge District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

- Existing development with strongly established, regular and consistent boundaries; and
- Established areas of woodland and/or hedgerows.

This process of Parcel boundary refinement accounted for the local context and involved an element of professional judgement.

In some cases, boundary features are located close together, for example where roads, rivers, and/or railway lines run parallel to each other. Where appropriate, these features have been taken together to form one boundary rather than being considered separately which would have led to small slithers of Green Belt land which would not form logical Parcels for assessment.

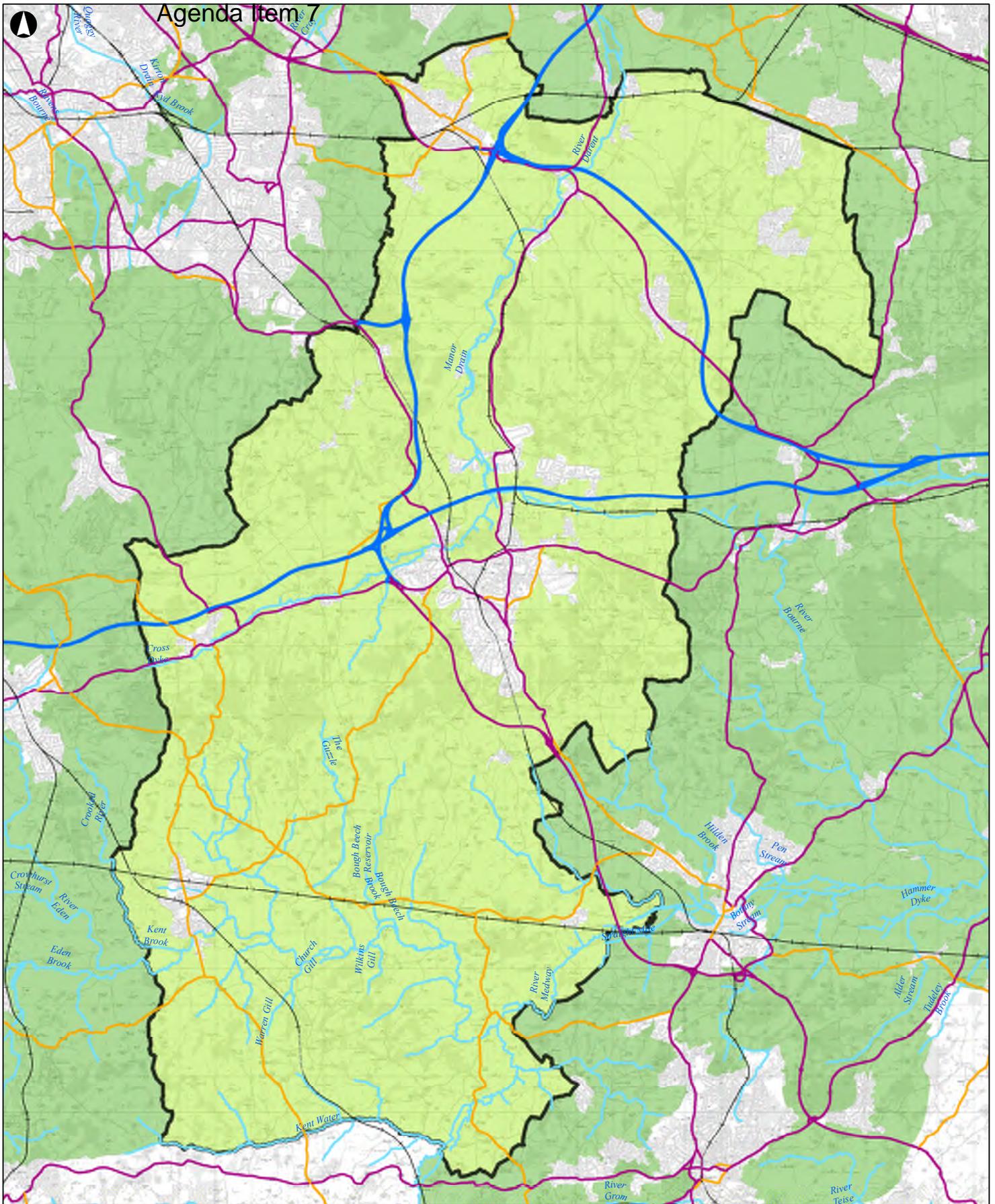
To ensure consistency with the approach to Green Belt assessment in neighbouring local authority areas, the identified Parcels do not extend beyond the Sevenoaks District boundary even where this boundary does not coincide with permanent and durable boundary features.

The Parcels that were used for the Assessment are provided in Map 4.3.

4.2.2 Non-Green Belt

Green Belt boundary revisions can take the form of an expansion as well as a contraction. For that reason, consideration of land that is not allocated as Green Belt for possible inclusion in the Green Belt is required. Based on previous experience of conducting Green Belt Reviews, the starting point for identifying non-Green Belt land was open land outside of the defined settlement limits set out in local plans but not included in the Green Belt.

Discussion with the Council concluded that existing Green Belt boundaries are drawn sufficiently tightly to the built environment to negate the need for any additional investigation within existing settlement limits.



- Legend**
- Motorway
 - +— Railway Line
 - A Road
 - B Road
 - River
 - Sevenoaks Green Belt
 - Neighbouring Green Belt
 - Sevenoaks District Boundary

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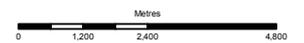
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Map 4.2 Defining Features for Green Belt Parcels

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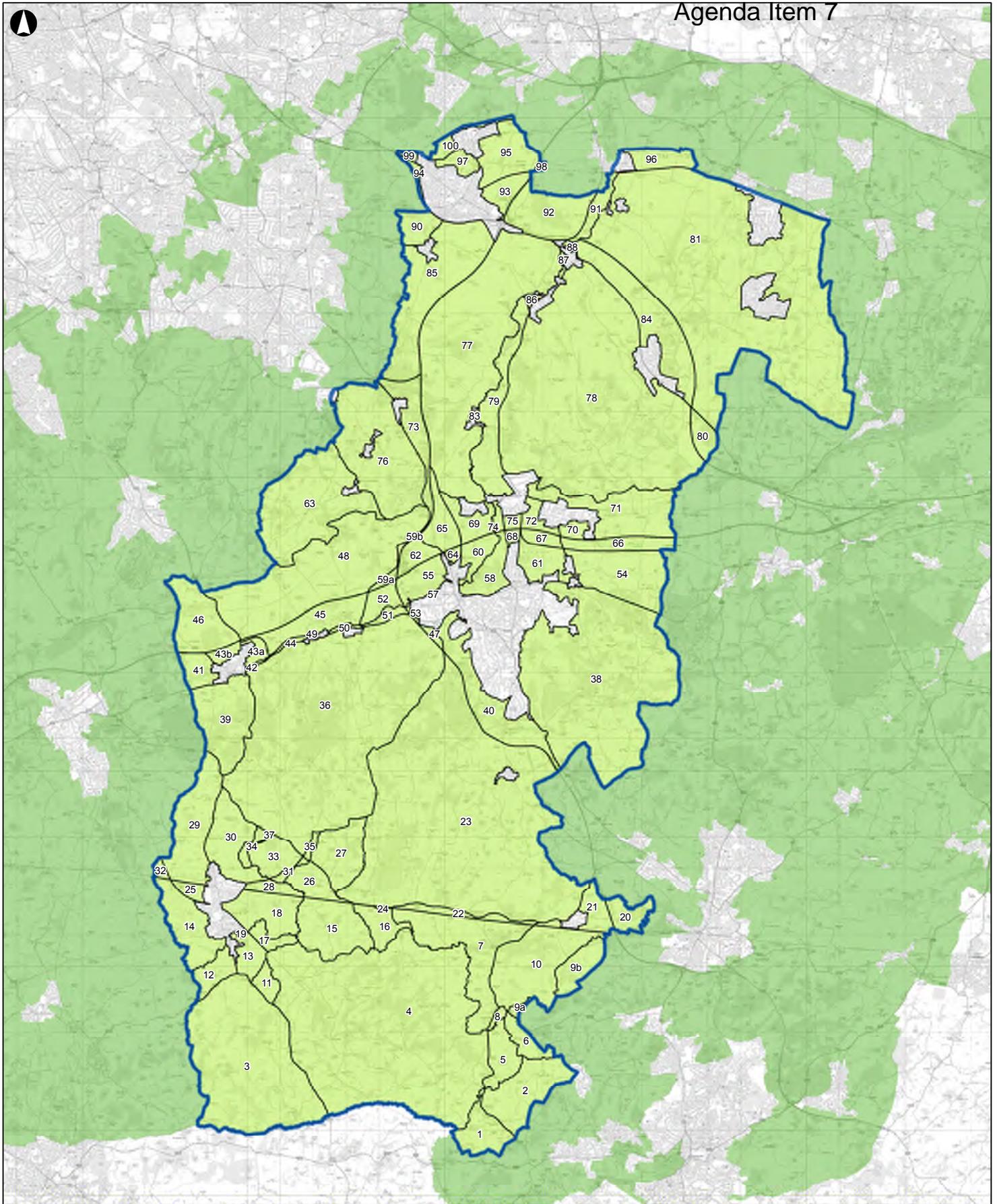
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- Legend**
- Green Belt Parcel
 - Sevenoaks District Boundary
 - Sevenoaks Green Belt
 - Neighbouring Green Belt

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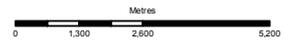
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4.3 Assessment Against NPPF Purposes

Each of the Green Belt Parcels identified in section 4.2.1 and Map 4.3 were assessed against the purposes of Green Belt, as set out in the NPPF. No national guidance exists which establishes exactly how such an assessment should be undertaken. The PAS guidance, recent examples and previous experience reiterates the need to respect local circumstances and the unique characteristics that affect the way that the NPPF purposes of the Green Belt are appraised. The purpose of the assessment is to establish any differentiation in terms of how the Parcels function and fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt.

For each purpose, one or more criteria have been developed using both qualitative and quantitative measures. A score out of five is attributed for each criterion (Figure 4.2). If a Parcel is considered to make no contribution to a specific purpose, in addition to the detailed analysis undertaken, a statement is added to the pro-forma to this effect and no score is attributed.

It is important to note that each of the NPPF purposes is considered equally significant, thus no weighting or aggregation of scores across the purposes is undertaken. As such, a composite judgement is necessary to determine whether, overall, Green Belt Parcels are meeting Green Belt purposes strongly or weakly. The assessment also considers whether there are any smaller scale sub-areas within Parcels which might be less sensitive and thus able to accommodate change. In these cases, the potential for Green Belt boundaries to be adjusted without significantly reducing the ability of the wider parcel's ability to meet NPPF purposes is considered. A Parcel fulfilling the criteria relatively weakly, weakly or very weakly (1 or 2) across all purposes is deemed to be weaker Green Belt. These recommendations will be taken forward to inform any recommendations on amending the Green Belt boundaries following further assessment work (see chapters 6 and 7).

Figure 4.2 Criterion Scores

Overall Strength of Green Belt Parcel against Criterion	Score	Equivalent Wording
	0	Does not meet Criterion
	1	Meets Criterion Weakly or Very Weakly
	2	Meets Criterion Relatively Weakly
	3	Meets Criterion
	4	Meets Criterion Relatively Strongly
	5	Meets Criterion Strongly or Very Strongly

The following sections examine the definition of each of the five purposes of the Green Belt in relation to local objectives and role of the Green Belt in terms of achieving its purpose locally; and set out the criteria and associated scoring applied.

4.3.1 Purpose 1

Purpose 1: To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The original strategic purpose of the Green Belt was to check the sprawl of London. However, as discussed in section 3.4, it is recognised that the wider Green Belt also plays a role in preventing the unrestricted growth of other large settlements. This assessment therefore considers the role of Green Belt Parcels in preventing the sprawl of London, but also in restricting the sprawl of large built-up areas across the District and within neighbouring local authorities. Within Sevenoaks, large built-up areas for the purpose of this Assessment were defined to correspond to the Tier 1 and 2 settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy set out in the Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy 2015 Update for the AMR (2015)⁶. Large built-up areas within neighbouring authority areas were identified using relevant settlement hierarchies (see Map 4.4; Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Large Built-Up Areas considered in Purpose 1 Assessment

Sevenoaks	Neighbouring Local Authorities
<p>Sevenoaks Urban Area (as defined by the settlement boundary)</p> <p>Swanley</p>	<p>Greater London built-up area (including Orpington and Sidcup)</p> <p>Dartford / Gravesend built-up area (Dartford Borough Council / Gravesham Borough Council)</p> <p>Tonbridge (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)</p> <p>Royal Tunbridge Wells / Southborough (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)</p> <p>Oxted (Tandridge District Council)</p>

Although ‘sprawl’ is a multi-faceted concept and thus has a variety of different definitions, this Assessment has adopted a simple definition, considering sprawl as ‘*the outward spread of a large built-up area at its periphery in a sporadic, dispersed or irregular way*’. In order to appraise the extent to which the Green Belt keeps this in check, it is necessary to consider:

- a) Whether the Green Belt Parcel falls at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up area(s);
- b) The degree to which the Green Belt Parcel is contained by built-form, and the nature of this physical containment, as well as the linkage to the wider Green Belt; and
- c) The extent to which the edge of the built-up area has a strongly defined, regular or consistent boundary.

There are two stages in this assessment:

Assessment 1(a)

Firstly, a Parcel must be at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up area(s) in order to prevent development which would constitute sprawl. This criterion

⁶ <http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=326&MIId=1975&Ver=4>

must therefore be met for Purpose 1 to be fulfilled and is applied on a Yes/No basis.

Assessment 1(b)

As stated at Assessment 1(a), Green Belt should function to protect open land at the edge of large built-up area(s) (Figure 4.3). However, the extent to which a Parcel prevents sprawl is dependent on its relationship with the respective built-up area(s).

Assessment 1(b) initially focusses on the degree to which Green Belt abuts or is contained by the built-up area(s), the nature of this relationship and links to the wider Green Belt. The following criteria were used for assessment:

- A Parcel predominantly surrounded or enclosed by two or more distinct areas of built form and that also retains a strong link to the wider Green Belt, would play a particularly important role in preventing sprawl. For the purpose of this assessment, this is referred to as *'contiguous'*.
- A Parcel displaying a low level of containment by a large-built area, such as if it was simply abutting a large-built area, may prevent sprawl but to a lesser extent. This assessment refers to such areas as *'connected'* with a large built-up area.
- A Parcel almost entirely contained or surrounded by built development which forms part of a single built-up area and has limited connections to the wider Green Belt, would only prevent sprawl to a limited extent (rather, potential development would likely be classified as infill), is referred to here as *'enclosed'* by a single built-up area.

This initial assessment is supplemented by additional analysis on the role of Green Belt in preventing sprawl which would not otherwise be restricted by another barrier. The NPPF states that local authorities should *'define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent'* (paragraph 85). Boundary identification reflected this, based on the following definitions:

- Examples of durable features (likely to be permanent):
 - Infrastructure: motorway; public and man-made road; railway line; river.
 - Landform: stream, canal or other watercourse; prominent physical feature (e.g. ridgeline); protected woodland/hedge; existing development with strongly established, regular or consistent boundaries.
- Examples of features lacking in durability (soft boundaries):
 - Infrastructure: private/unmade road; bridleway/footpath; power line.
 - Natural: field boundary; tree line.

Where sprawl would not otherwise have been restricted by a durable boundary feature, the extent to which the existing built form had strongly established or recognisable boundaries is assessed based on the following definitions:

- ‘Regular’ or ‘Consistent’ built form comprising well-defined or rectilinear built-form edges, which would restrict development in the Green Belt.
- ‘Irregular’ or ‘Inconsistent’ built-form comprising imprecise or softer edges, which would not restrict growth within the Green Belt.

Purpose 1 Assessment Criteria

The criteria used to assess the Parcels against Purpose 1 are set out below. Ordnance Survey base maps and aerial photography, together with observations during the site visits, were used to undertake this assessment.

Figure 4.4 Purpose 1 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criteria	Score
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas	YES: Green Belt Parcel meets Purpose 1. NO: Green Belt Parcel does not meet Purpose 1 and will score 0 for Criteria (b).
	b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary.	5+: Green Belt Parcel is contiguous with two or more large built-up areas which are predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.
		5: Green Belt Parcel is contiguous with two or more large built-up areas which are predominantly bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features.
		3+: Green Belt Parcel is connected to one or more large built-up area(s) which is/are predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.
		3: Green Belt Parcel is connected to one or more large built-up area(s) which is/are predominantly bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features.
		1+: Green Belt Parcel is enclosed by one large built-up area which is predominantly bordered by features lacking in durability or permanence.
		1: Green Belt Parcel is enclosed by one large built-up area which is predominantly bordered by prominent, permanent and consistent boundary features.
Score	xx/5	



Dartford/Gravesend
Built-Up Area

Greater
London Built
Up Area

Swanley

Sevenoaks
Built-Up Area

Oxted

Tonbridge

Royal Tunbridge Wells / Southborough

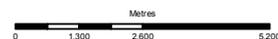
- Legend**
-  Large Built-Up Area
 -  Sevenoaks Green Belt
 -  Neighbouring Green Belt
 -  Sevenoaks District Boundary

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**Map 4.4 Large Built-Up Areas
considered in Purpose 1
Assessment**

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4.3.2 Purpose 2

Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.

In addition to the clear function of this purpose in preventing towns from merging and therefore protecting existing gaps between towns, it also forms the basis for maintaining the existing settlement pattern. National policy provides no guidance over what might constitute ‘towns’ and whether this purpose should also take into consideration the gaps between smaller settlements.

Given Sevenoaks’ predominantly nucleated settlement pattern, and that the Green Belt boundaries are in most cases drawn tightly to the defined settlements, the assessment of Parcels considers gaps between all non-Green Belt settlements in the District, as well as non-Green Belt settlements in surrounding local authorities adjacent to the edge of the District. Settlements in Sevenoaks were identified through the settlement hierarchy, while those in neighbouring authorities were identified using adopted Local Plans (Map 4.5; Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Settlements considered in Purpose 2 Assessment

Sevenoaks	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Sevenoaks Urban Area (as defined by the settlement boundary)	Greater London built-up area (including Orpington and Sidcup, and Pratt’s Bottom (within Sevenoaks District))
Swanley	
Edenbridge (including Marlpit Hill)	Dartford / Gravesend built-up area (Dartford Borough Council / Gravesham Borough Council)
Westerham	
Otford	Bean (Dartford Borough Council)
New Ash Green	Betsham (Dartford Borough Council)
Hartley (including Longfield and New Barn (Gravesham Borough Council))	Darenth (Dartford Borough Council)
West Kingsdown	Hawley (Dartford Borough Council)
Seal	Joydens Wood (Dartford Borough Council)
Kemsing	Longfield (Dartford Borough Council)
South Darenth (including area within Dartford Borough Council)	Longfield Hill (Dartford Borough Council)
Hextable	New Barn (Dartford Borough Council)
Brasted	Southfleet (Dartford Borough Council)
Crockenhill	Wilmington (Dartford Borough Council)
Eynsford	Culverstone Green (Gravesham Borough Council)
Halstead	Hook Green (Gravesham Borough Council)
Farningham	Istead Rise (Gravesham Borough Council)
Knockholt & Knockholt Pound	Meopham Green (Gravesham Borough Council)
Sevenoaks Weald	Vigo Village (Gravesham Borough Council)
Leigh	Borough Green (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
Shoreham	
Horton Kirby	Hildenborough (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
Sundridge	
Badgers Mount	Ightham (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
Pratt’s Bottom	

Sevenoaks	Neighbouring Local Authorities
	Plaxtol (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
	Tonbridge (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
	Wrotham (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
	Bidborough (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
	Langton Green (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
	Royal Tunbridge Wells / Southborough (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
	Speldhurst (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
	Lingfield (Tandridge District Council)
	Oxted (Tandridge District Council)
	Biggin Hill (LB Bromley)

The extent to which an area of Green Belt protects a land gap is assessed using the following definitions:

- ‘*Essential gaps*’, where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between settlements.
- ‘*Wider gaps*’, which may be less important for preventing coalescence.
- ‘*Less essential gaps*’, where development is likely to be possible without any risk of coalescence of settlements.

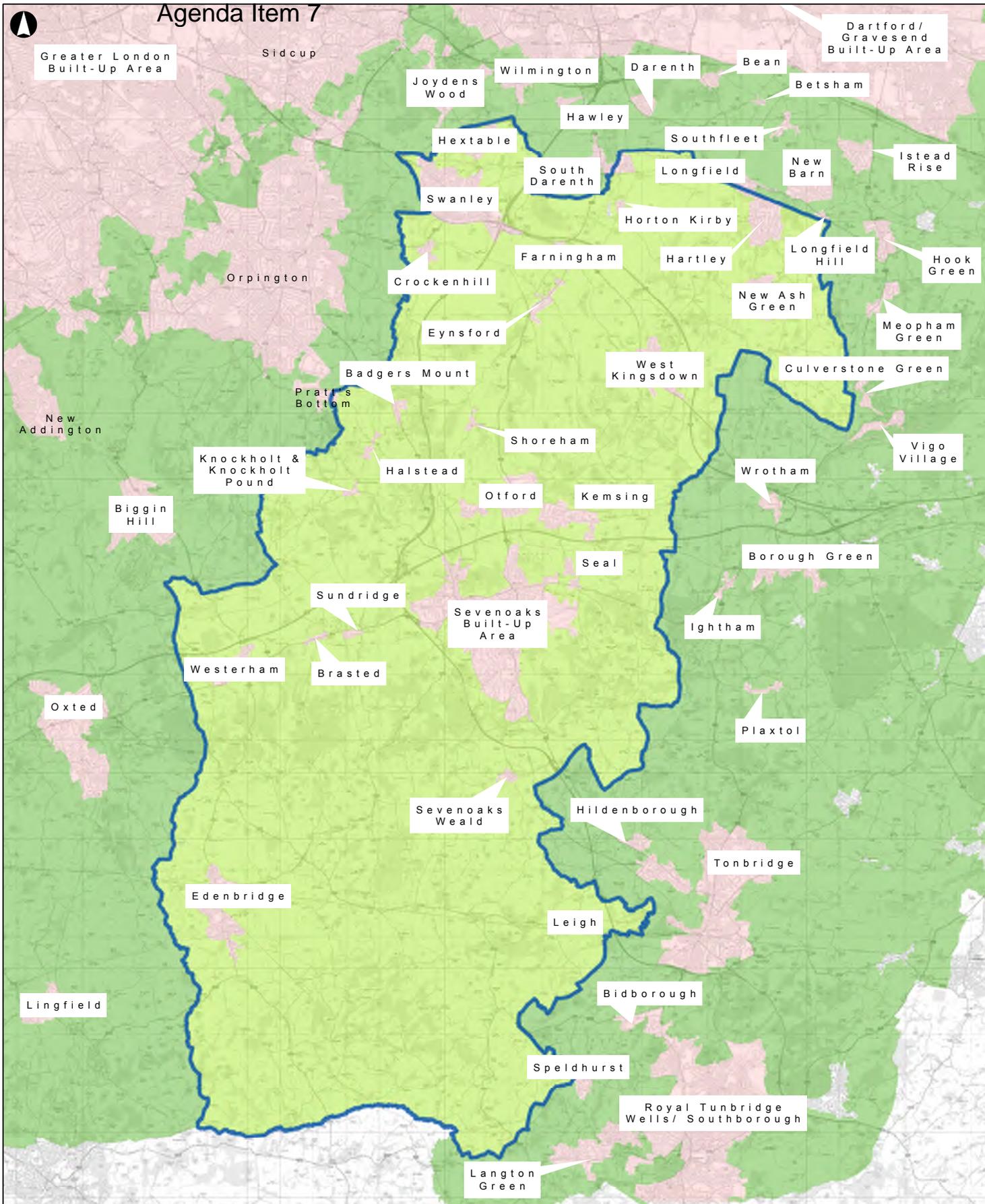
Purpose 2 Assessment Criteria

The criteria used to assess the Parcels against Purpose 2 are set out below.

Figure 4.6 Purpose 2 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criteria	Score
<p>To prevent neighbouring towns from merging</p>	<p>Prevents development that would result in merging of, or significant erosion of, gap(s) between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.</p>	<p>5: An essential gap between non-Green Belt settlements, where development would significantly visually or physically reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.</p>
		<p>3: A wider gap between non-Green Belt settlements where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging.</p>
		<p>1: A less essential gap between non-Green Belt settlements, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging of settlements.</p>
		<p>0: Green Belt Parcel does not provide a gap between any settlements and makes no discernable contribution to separation.</p>
	<p>Score</p>	<p>xx/5</p>

Agenda Item 7



- Legend**
- Settlement
 - Sevenoaks Green Belt
 - Neighbouring Green Belt
 - Sevenoaks District Boundary

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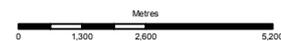
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Sevenoaks District Council

Job Title
Sevenoaks Green Belt Assessment



Map 4.5 Settlements Considered in Purpose 2 Assessment

Scale at A3

1:110,000

Job No
251351-00

Drawing Status
Draft

Drawing No
4.5

Issue
P1

4.3.3 Purpose 3

Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

This purpose seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, or a gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change. The assessment considered openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as ‘*countryside*’, thus resisting encroachment from development. Openness refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built development rather than from a landscape character perspective, where openness might be characterised through topography and presence or otherwise of woodland and hedgerow cover.

Historic open land uses associated with the urban fringe and urban characteristics as well as the countryside exist in the Sevenoaks Green Belt and include but are not limited to farmland, commons, caravan parks, a racing track, nature and wildlife reserves, a deer park, country houses and grounds and golf courses. Some of the semi-urban uses listed above have an impact on the ‘openness’ of the Green Belt as identified in the assessment.

Purpose 3 Assessment Criteria

The criteria used to assess the Parcels against Purpose 3 are set out below. Ordnance Survey base maps and aerial photography were reviewed in order to undertake the openness assessment.

The percentage of built form within a Green Belt Parcel were calculated using GIS tools based on the land area of features that are classified as manmade (constructed) within the Ordnance Survey MasterMap data, excluding roads and railway lines. The data includes buildings, some surfaced areas such as car parks, infrastructure such as sewerage treatment works, glasshouses and other miscellaneous structures.

The score attributed to a Parcel is initially determined on the basis of the percentage built form. Scores were then considered further in light of qualitative assessments of character, undertaken through site visits and revised as judged appropriate. This assessment considers, in particular, the extent to which a Parcel might be reasonably identified as ‘*countryside*’ / ‘*rural*’ (in line with the NPPF). In order to differentiate between different areas, broad categorisation has been developed encompassing assessments of land use (including agricultural use), morphology, context, scale and links to the wider Green Belt:

- ‘*Strong unspoilt rural character*’ is defined as land with an absence of built development and characterised by rural land uses and landscapes, including agricultural land, forestry, woodland, shrubland/scrubland and open fields.
- ‘*Largely rural character*’ is defined as land with a general absence of built development, largely characterised by rural land uses and landscapes but with some other sporadic developments and man-made structures.
- ‘*Semi-urban character*’ is defined as land which begins on the edge of the fully built up area and contains a mix of urban and rural land uses before

giving way to the wider countryside. Land uses might include publicly accessible natural green spaces and green corridors, country parks and local nature reserves, small-scale food production (e.g. market gardens) and waste management facilities, interspersed with built development more generally associated with urban areas (e.g. residential or commercial).

- ‘Urban character’ is defined as land which is predominantly characterised by urban land uses, including physical developments such as residential or commercial, or urban managed parks.

Figure 4.7 Purpose 3 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criterion	Score
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development.	5: Contains less than 3% built form and possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
		4: Contains less than 5% built form and/or possesses a strong unspoilt rural character.
		3: Contains less than 10% built form and/or possesses a largely rural character.
		2: Contains less than 15% built form and/or possesses a semi-urban character.
		1: Contains more than 15% built form and/or possesses an urban character.
		0: Contains more than 20% built form and possesses an urban character.
Total score		xx/5

4.3.4 Purpose 4

Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

This purpose serves to protect the setting of historic settlements by retaining the surrounding open land or by retaining the landscape context for historic centres. As outlined in the advice note published by PAS, the assessment of this purpose relates to very few settlements in practice, due largely to the pattern of modern development that often envelopes historic towns today.

In developing the methodology for this purpose, it was noted that a high level Green Belt Assessment prepared by Oxford City Council identified traits of the surrounding countryside which contributed to the city’s special character and historic setting. This relationship between the fringes of settlements and the surrounding Green Belt is a key factor in considering the contribution of a Parcel to this purpose.

Appropriate ‘historic towns’, both within Sevenoaks District and neighbouring authorities, were identified through English Heritage’s Extensive Urban Survey for Kent (2006)⁷ and Surrey (2006)⁸ (Map 4.6; Figure 4.7). In addition, New Ash Green was considered in the assessment due to its unique historical identity (largely intact) as a prototype for a new way of living from the 1960s onwards. The neighbourhoods in New Ash Green are designed along ‘Radburn’ lines, separating roads from pedestrian paths. As well as housing, the village’s public and county buildings include a shopping centre, offices, community centre, church, library, clinic and primary school.

Figure 4.8 Historic Areas considered in Purpose 4 Assessment

Sevenoaks	Neighbouring Local Authorities
Sevenoaks	Old Oxted (Tandridge District Council)
Westerham	Wrotham (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
Edenbridge	Ightham Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
New Ash Green	Tonbridge (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council)
Otford	Tunbridge Wells (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)

Purpose 4 Assessment Criteria

Two aspects are of particular importance with regard to assessment of the Parcels against Purpose 4:

- The role of the Parcel in providing immediate context for the historic settlement (along the boundary between the settlement and the Green Belt); and
- Contribution to views or vistas between the historic settlement and the surrounding countryside, looking both inwards and outwards where public viewpoints exist.

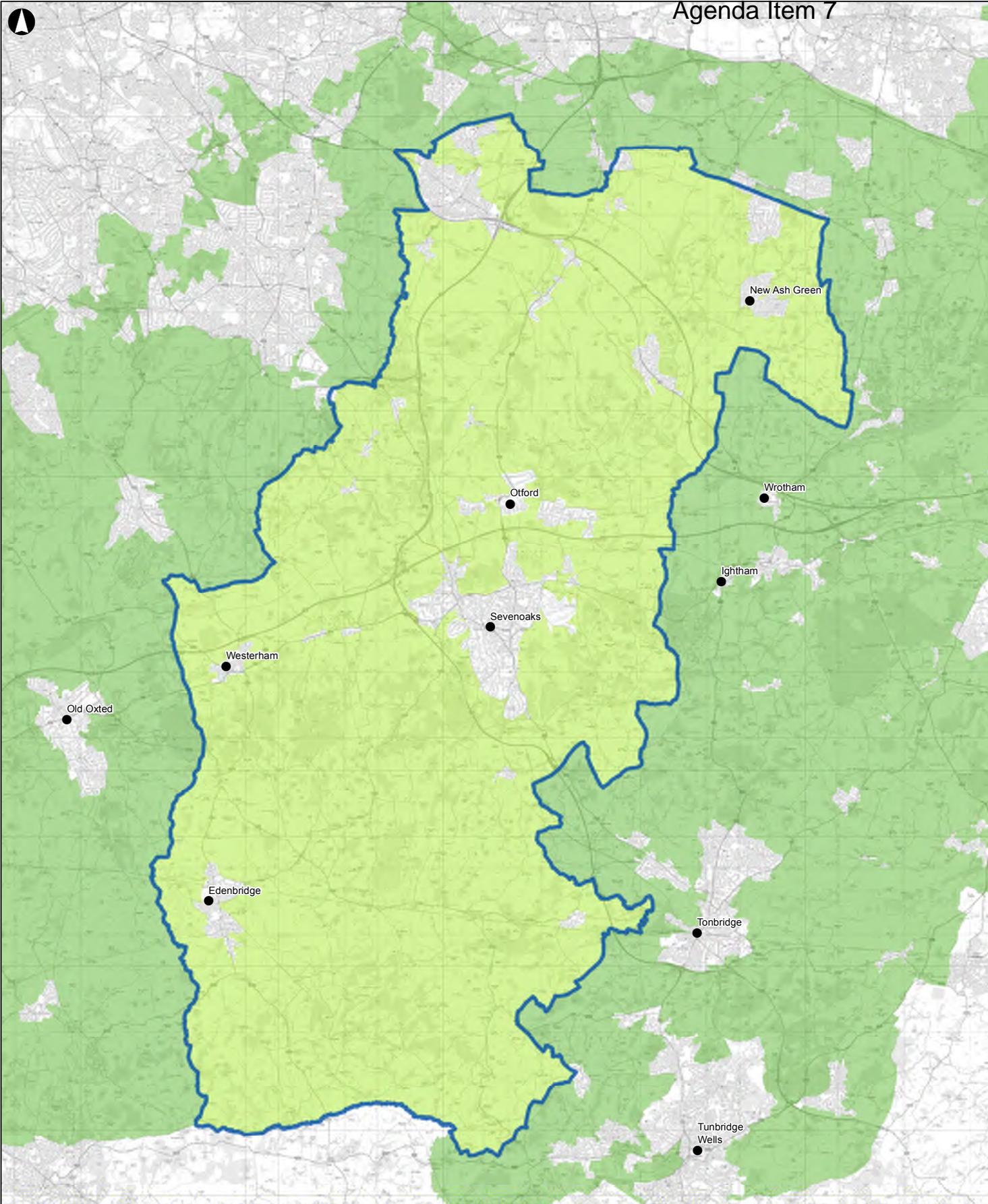
The relative importance of particular landforms or landscape features to the setting and special character of a historic town were adjudged using available documentation (for example, Conservation Area Appraisals). Potential vistas were also identified using Ordnance Survey contour maps and sense checked on site visits.

⁷ http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/kent_eus_2006/index.cfm

⁸ http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/surrey_eus_2006/

Figure 4.9 Purpose 4 Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criterion	Score
<p>To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</p>	<p>Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for a historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside.</p>	<p>5: Green Belt Parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic settlement by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, and protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.</p> <hr/> <p>3: Green Belt Parcel plays an important role in maintaining the unique setting of a historic settlement by providing unspoilt vistas of surrounding countryside from within the settlement or unbroken vistas into the settlement from afar, or protects open land which has a strong connection with the historic core, contributing to its immediate historic setting.</p> <hr/> <p>1: Green Belt Parcel makes limited contribution to the broader setting of a historic town by providing a countryside setting for a historic core which is inward facing, and has a weak relationship with the surrounding countryside.</p> <hr/> <p>0: Green Belt Parcel does not abut an identified historic settlement core.</p>
<p>Total score</p>		<p>xx/5</p>



Legend

- Settlement
- Sevenoaks Green Belt
- Neighbouring Green Belt
- ▭ Sevenoaks District Boundary

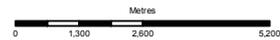
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**Map 4.6 Historic Areas
 Considered in Purpose 4
 Assessment**

Scale at A3

1:110,000

Job No
251351-00

Drawing Status
Draft

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4.6

Issue
P1

4.3.5 Purpose 5

Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Purpose 5 focuses on assisting urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land. As outlined in chapter 3, the advice note issued by PAS suggests that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land. Therefore, assessment of Green Belt against this purpose will not enable a distinction between Green Belt Parcels as all Green Belt achieves the purpose to the same extent.

It is noted that Swanley town is the key regeneration priority in the district and a draft vision document exists for the Swanley and Hextable area (July 2016)⁹ which highlights the potential constraints to such regeneration created by current Green Belt designation. However, given this is a particularly unique issue relating to a single geographical area and not the wider district, it was considered that a district-wide assessment of Parcels against Purpose 5 would add little value to the Study.

4.3.6 Pro-Forma

A pro-forma template for the assessment against the NPPF purposes is provided in Appendix C.

4.4 Identification of Recommended Areas for Further Assessment

Following completion of the assessment against the NPPF purposes, a summary of the overarching performance of the Green Belt is provided across each of the purposes. From this, an initial series of conclusions and recommendations are made which can be split into the following categories:

- Parcels scoring weakly overall against all NPPF purposes which could be considered further for release from the Green Belt.
- Whole parcels or clusters of parcels which, although medium or strongly scoring against the NPPF purposes, have particular characteristics or synergies with neighbouring weaker parcels, which might lend themselves to further consideration. These specific characteristics are set out clearly for each recommended area.
- Medium or strongly scoring Parcels where there is clear scope for sub-division to identify weakly performing sub-areas, including the presence of boundary features which have the potential to be permanent and readily recognisable, which could be afforded further consideration in accordance with the above provisions.

⁹ <http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/s28619/06%20Appendix%20A.pdf>

4.5 Further Assessment

Those areas (either whole Parcels or sub-areas) recommended for further consideration at this stage are then subject to three further separate and concurrent assessments as set out in the following sections:

- Assessment Against Local Considerations;
- Landscape Assessment; and
- Boundary Analysis.

4.5.1 Assessment Against Local Considerations

This Assessment involved consideration of the Recommended Areas (as identified through the assessment against the NPPF purposes) against statutory natural and historic environmental constraints (e.g. 'local considerations'). This was undertaken at two levels:

- **Absolute Constraints** are possible 'show-stoppers' to potential future land use changes thus, regardless of fulfilment of the Green Belt purposes, there may be limited value in de-designating. This category of constraints encompassed:
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
 - Ramsar;
 - Special Protection Areas (SPA);
 - Flood Plain (Zone 3b);
 - Scheduled Monuments;
 - Nationally Registered Park or Garden;
 - Ancient Woodland.
- **Non-absolute Constraints** which would make a change of land-use less preferable, but would not preclude it completely. These included:
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
 - Agricultural Land Classification (Grades 1, 2, 3);
 - Flood Plain (Zone 3a);
 - Conservation Areas;
 - Local Wildlife Sites;
 - Local Nature Reserves;
 - Areas of Archaeological Significance (designated locally);

- Open Space Designations.

The constraints analysis was desk-based. Using GIS, a series of maps were produced which overlay the various constraints on the Green Belt Parcels to illustrate the extent of areas covered by absolute and non-absolute constraints and land with no constraints. This was accompanied by a descriptive narrative for each constraint and an overall summary for both constraint categories.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

While it is recognised that major development may be appropriate in AONB in ‘exceptional circumstances’ (paragraph 116 of the NPPF), thus precluding the designation from being an absolute constraint to a change in land-use, the particularly special status of the designation is also noted. The NPPF states:

‘Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty...’ (paragraph 115).

It goes on to state that, when considering whether major development might be appropriate, *‘the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area’* should be assessed. Given that a proportion of the Green Belt in Sevenoaks falls outside of the two AONBs, it is therefore appropriate to afford additional weight to areas which are designated as AONB when determining which to exclude from possible release from the Green Belt. The test here will be the extent to which Green Belt release would materially affect the identified special qualities underpinning the AONB designation (as stated in the relevant AONB Management Plan) and whether it would therefore affect the integrity of the designation in material terms. Consideration is given to the representation of special qualities as they relate to character in the individual Recommended Area landscape assessment pro-formas (see Annex Report 3).

The concept of setting with regard to AONBs is not always clearly defined, but it can and should consider many factors beyond only visual character, views and intervisibility. The representation of landscape characteristics which reflect AONB special qualities in the wider landscape is an important indicator (as are key views, advertised views and the visual contribution made prominent features of the AONB, such as scarp landforms and wooded ridges). Such elements are considered in the landscape assessment.

4.5.2 Landscape Assessment

This Assessment involved consideration of the sensitivity to change of the Recommended Areas (as identified through the assessment against the NPPF purposes) with regard to local landscape character should they be considered for release from the Green Belt. The task was undertaken in two stages.

Stage 1: High level assessment of areas of opportunity and constraint:

Relevant spatially referenced GIS data were overlaid (LCA/designated landscape interests, Historic Landscape Characterisation or HLC) and a review undertaken of key landscape characteristics (plus condition and quality information in the existing Landscape Character Assessment and the emerging findings from the new Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study). The relevant special qualities/significances set out in the management plans¹⁰ for the High Weald AONB and the Kent Downs AONB were also reviewed. The primary focus in this exercise was to understand the degree to which wider landscape characteristics and qualities were reflected in the Recommended Areas.

The purpose of this exercise was to understand areas of constraint and potential to inform the Green Belt Assessment.

Stage 2: Fine grain landscape and visual sensitivity analysis of the locations

This stage considered the landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Areas in terms of their ability to accommodate change in land use without fundamentally and adversely changing wider landscape character if released from the Green Belt.

It is important to note that the assessment undertaken is not a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), although the approach was based on the baseline part of the LVIA guidance¹¹. The methodology drew upon the information contained within the District Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)¹² and approaches to landscape sensitivity developed in recent years by Landscape East¹³ and in the most recent iteration of the national guidance on landscape characterisation¹⁴. Information was used from the existing LCA on condition, intactness and visual character to provide additional background information for the assessment. The methodology was also reviewed against the initial findings of the emerging District-wide Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study, so that these strategic scale assessment criteria were reflected appropriately in this finer grain assessment in relation to the Recommended Areas.

Field surveys were used to verify all collated information and included a comprehensive photographic record to illustrate each Recommended Area. Detailed pro-formas were completed for each identified area, capturing information and evidence in relation to a defined series of landscape attributes, culminating in an assessment of landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity for

¹⁰ High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (2014) *The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019*; Kent Downs AONB Partnership (2014), *Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019*.

¹¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd edition, 2013. Often referred to as 'GLVIA3'

¹² Sevenoaks District Council, 2011, *Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment Supplementary Planning Document*

¹³ Landscape East, 2011, *Guidance on Assessing the Sensitivity of the Landscape of the East of England*

¹⁴ Natural England, 2014, *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*

each site. Where land use change could potentially be accommodated within a smaller, refined part of the identified Recommended Area, without compromising surrounding Green Belt and where alternative permanent, robust and defensible boundaries were identified, this was also noted.

The approach to the landscape appraisal is detailed below.

Assessment Approach

Landscape Value

In order to carry out the landscape appraisal, account was first taken of landscape value¹⁵ in relation to the Recommended Areas, considering the following aspects:

- Presence of designated landscape interests, specifically representation of relevant AONB Special Qualities / scenic qualities (drawing from the AONB Management Plans);
- Rarity and representativeness of character and elements (with reference to published information such as landscape character assessments);
- Quality, condition and intactness (drawing from the existing LCA and the field survey undertaken for this work);
- Evidence of recreational value (whether formal/informal, Public Rights of Way / Open Access Land / common land)
- Associations, whether artistic, literary or historic (drawing from AONB Management Plans, LCA or Conservation Area Appraisals as appropriate).

The Recommended Areas were then assigned a value from national-regional-district-local/communal, according to their representation or otherwise of designated interests and special qualities, rarity, representativeness and quality, or their associative significance as captured in published texts and other works, as described above.

Landscape Susceptibility

An assessment of the susceptibility (or the vulnerability) of the landscape to the given change scenario (in this case larger scale residential and mixed use development) was next undertaken, considering the following, drawing from the existing LCA, emerging Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study, and AONB Management Plans in particular.

A series of attributes denoting higher or lower susceptibility to change arising from the scenario were defined for testing and assessment in the field, to understand what was important about the landscape character of each Recommended Area and the degree to which they represented wider landscape character. Professional judgement was used to assign and calibrate susceptibility

¹⁵ With reference to the European Landscape Convention or ELC (Council of Europe, 2000), all landscapes are of value to somebody, irrespective of their designation and / or quality, and all modern landscape assessment methodologies seek to take account of this.

ratings in relation to each criterion, using a five point scale ranging from High through Moderate-High, Moderate, Moderate-Low to Low).

The assessment criteria drew from information in the AONB special qualities and key landscape characteristics in the existing LCA. The criteria were also designed to take account of the approach in the emerging district wide Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study, and are set out in Table 4.1 below, with supporting definitions.

Table 4.1 Landscape attribute susceptibility to change

Characteristic / Attribute	Discussion / rationale / guidance notes for the assessment
Physical character (Landform, landscape pattern and scale)	Landscapes with a high degree of landform intricacy and / or intimate spatial scale and complex / intact landscape pattern would typically have a higher susceptibility to change resulting from residential and mixed use development than would landscapes defined by simple landforms and expansive, simple landscape patterns. This is by virtue of the potential effect of such development footprints upon their legibility.
Visual character (Skylines and sense of enclosure / openness)¹⁶	‘Natural’ or undeveloped skylines would be more susceptible to change resulting from residential and mixed use development than would those already characterised by development, as would very open and / or dramatic skylines characterised by prominent topographic / landscape features, the scale and dominance of which could be adversely affected by development. Very open and exposed landscapes with a high degree of ‘intervisibility’ would have a higher susceptibility to change in visual terms than would landscapes with a strong sense of enclosure (whether this provided by intervening vegetation, topography or settlement).
Perception and experiential quality	Landscapes with a strong sense of tranquillity and / or remoteness and characterised by few intrusive / overtly modern human or development influences would have a higher susceptibility than would landscapes where tranquillity is weak or eroded or where there are many intrusive development influences.
Cultural and historic character	Landscapes with a strong sense of time depth (e.g. presence of recognisable historic features and layers such ridge and furrow / fossilised field systems / holloways and green lanes and / or sense of historic landscape planning and management, for example parklands / estates etc) would have a higher susceptibility to change resulting from residential and mixed use development than would landscapes with less obvious cultural pattern / where this has been eroded. This is due to the potential for adverse effect on landscape value, legibility and the significance which may be ascribed to such features through designation.
Settlement setting	Landscapes which form a buffer between settlement / development, or which form a positive gateway / sense of arrival to the settlement, or which display a range of high quality landscape features in proximity to the settlement edge,

¹⁶ These criteria should not ‘cancel one another out’. It is a question of professional judgement in each case as to what is most important to character, and this is carried forward in the assessment.

Characteristic / Attribute	Discussion / rationale / guidance notes for the assessment
	would have a higher susceptibility to change than landscapes which do not form a strong element of the setting whether by virtue of condition / management, or landscapes which detract from the settlement setting for these reasons.
Settlement edge and form	Well integrated, defined and defensible settlement edges (by vegetation / topography / age of development etc) would have a higher susceptibility to change resulting from residential and mixed use development than would expanded / poor / exposed / eroded settlement edges which may offer considerable mitigation potential through well-designed new development.

Sensitivity analysis and definitions

After making judgements as to landscape value and landscape susceptibility for each Recommended Area, a judgement was made on overall landscape sensitivity to residential and mixed use development, taking these judgements into account. For this Study, landscape sensitivity has been defined on a five point scale, as described below (with the intermediate Moderate-High and Moderate-Low categories intended to provide calibration and to capture a wider range of ratings in situations where clear cut judgements could not always be made).

Where variations in landscape sensitivity occurred across or within Recommended Areas these were noted by the field surveyors using the pro-formas in Annex Report 3 and specific detail was brought out in the assessment, as appropriate.

High

Key characteristics of the Recommended Area’s landscape are highly sensitive to change arising from residential and mixed use development, with such change highly likely to result in a significant change to valued characteristics. A very high degree of care will be needed in considering the location, design and siting of any change within the landscape.

Moderate-High

Many of the key characteristics of the Recommended Area’s landscape are likely to be vulnerable to change arising from residential and mixed use development, with such change likely to result in a potentially significant change to valued characteristics. A high degree of care will be needed in considering the location, design and siting of any change within the landscape.

Moderate

Some of the key characteristics of the Recommended Area’s landscape may be vulnerable to change arising from residential and mixed use development. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb change, some alteration in character may result. Considerable care may still be needed in locating and designing change within the landscape.

Moderate-Low

Relatively few of the key characteristics of the Recommended Area's landscape are likely to be vulnerable to change arising from residential and mixed use development. The landscape is likely to have more ability to absorb change with low levels of alteration to existing character, and may offer more opportunity for mitigation, enhancement and restoration potential. Sensitive design is still needed to accommodate change.

Low

Key characteristics of the Recommended Area's landscape are less likely to be adversely affected by change arising from residential and mixed use development. Change can potentially be more easily accommodated without significantly altering the existing character and there may be considerable opportunities to positively create new character, as well as to restore, enhance and mitigate. Sensitive design is still needed to accommodate change.

Field survey

Field survey was undertaken in November 2016 by a landscape architect experienced in landscape appraisal and a town planner to ensure bench marking with the assessment against Green Belt purposes where appropriate. At a number of the sites the surveyors were also accompanied by an experienced Chartered Landscape Architect (Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute or CMLI) with a background in landscape characterisation and methodology development. Records were captured in the form of survey notes and map annotations, using the pro-forma shown at Appendix D and supported by geo-located photographs to show the landscape character and context of the Parcels.

Developing recommendations and guidance

Upon completion of the sensitivity analysis and reporting, concise spatial recommendations for appropriate mitigation and integration (linked to key landscape characteristics or robust / mappable salient landscape features) were developed for the Recommended Areas. These responded to the landscape baseline and the findings of the landscape appraisal to create a clear, evidenced audit trail for recommendations and decision making. Where Recommended Areas were of such sensitivity that release for development would be inappropriate in landscape and visual terms, this was also clearly stated.

4.5.3 Boundary Analysis

Each Recommended Area was considered in more detail to identify appropriate defensible boundaries, with the identified areas modified where appropriate to ensure alignment with recognisable features (drawing on additional desk-based analysis and site visits). This adopted the broad principles of identifying boundaries for Green Belt parcels, as set out in section 4.2.1, though with a greater level of flexibility to identify smaller features (appropriate to the more granular scale of assessment).

Given the likelihood of future modifications to proposed Green Belt boundary amendments through the Local Plan process, a series of broad principles was developed for the identification of the new Green Belt boundaries for the district.

4.6 Historic Boundary Anomalies

Separate to the above activities, a review of all Green Belt boundaries adjoining settlements across the District was undertaken to identify any small scale anomalies where the boundary does not follow a physical feature which is readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Such boundary anomalies are often the result of the accuracy of the original Green Belt mapping or where small-scale development has taken place close to the boundary.

Boundary anomalies include situations where the Green Belt boundary cuts:

- Across open areas (for example, residential gardens or car parks) where no boundary feature is present.
- Through a building;
- Through a row of houses / development which appear to have been built around the same time.

By their nature, these boundary anomalies are therefore small scale and would not impact on the role of wider Green Belt.

The following are not considered as anomalies and are therefore not identified:

- Identifiable, self-contained development sites (e.g. school sites);
- Extended rows of housing / development which could be seen as ribbon development beyond the settlement boundary and where adjustment of the Green Belt boundary in such a location could increase the risk of coalescence with other settlements;
- Areas of development that are located beyond an existing Green Belt boundary that is readily recognisable and likely to be permanent, and where amendment to the Green Belt boundary would effectively weaken the boundary.

5 Assessment against NPPF Purposes

5.1 Key Findings

This section summarises the key findings from the assessment of Green Belt Parcels against the NPPF purposes.

In accordance with the approach set out in section 4.1, 101 Green Belt Parcels were identified for assessment (see Map 4.3). Table 5.1 sets out the scores for each Green Belt Parcel against NPPF purposes 1-4, with the purpose scoring illustrated spatially in Maps 5.1 – 5.4 and overall scores in Map 5.5.

Detailed pro-formas setting out the assessments for each Parcel can be found in Annex Report 1.

5.1.1 Purpose 1 Assessment

The overall findings of the Purpose 1 assessment are illustrated spatially in Map 5.1.

78 of the 101 Green Belt Parcels (77%) do not lie at the edge of an identified large built-up area and do not directly prevent sprawl, thus failing to meet Purpose 1. While some of these Parcels abut the edges of settlements, they play no role in preventing the sprawl of ‘large built-up areas’ (in reference to the specific policy set out in NPPF Paragraph 80, and defined for the purposes of this assessment in Figure 4.3 of this Report).

Generally, these Parcels tend to be concentrated in the more rural parts of the District; areas that are physically distant from the identified large built-up areas and do not directly prevent their outward growth. Broadly, two swathes of Green Belt can be identified that do not meet this purpose: an area to the south and south-west of Sevenoaks and an area in the north-east of the District.

Two Parcels (57 and 64) make only a limited contribution to this purpose, scoring 1+. Although these parcels directly adjoin the edge of Sevenoaks, they are ‘enclosed’ within the existing built area and thus do little to prevent sprawl. In the case of Parcel 57, this has arisen simply as a result of historic patterns of development around the River Darent, which has left this area severed from the wider Green Belt, whilst Parcel 64 has arisen as a result of modern infrastructure development (the M26 to the north) which has effectively brought formerly rural land within the settlement footprint.

21 Green Belt Parcels (21%) are ‘connected’ to a large built-up area, scoring 3 or 3+. In the almost all cases, these areas immediately prevent the outward sprawl of the district’s identified large built-up areas, Sevenoaks and Swanley. There are limited instances (for example, Parcel 76) where the Green Belt in Sevenoaks plays a role in preventing the outward sprawl of Greater London, the built-up area of which extends westwards towards the edge of the District.

Of these 21 Parcels, one third (7) score 3+ and therefore play a heightened role in preventing sprawl by providing a barrier where the boundary between the Green Belt and the large built-up area is not robust, durable or readily recognisable.

In some instances only very small areas of Green Belt separate Parcels from large built-up areas; for example in the case of Parcel 51 which is separated from Sevenoaks to the east by a very narrow strip of Green Belt (Parcel 53). Such instances have been noted qualitatively in the pro-formas in Annex Report 1 on a case by case basis.

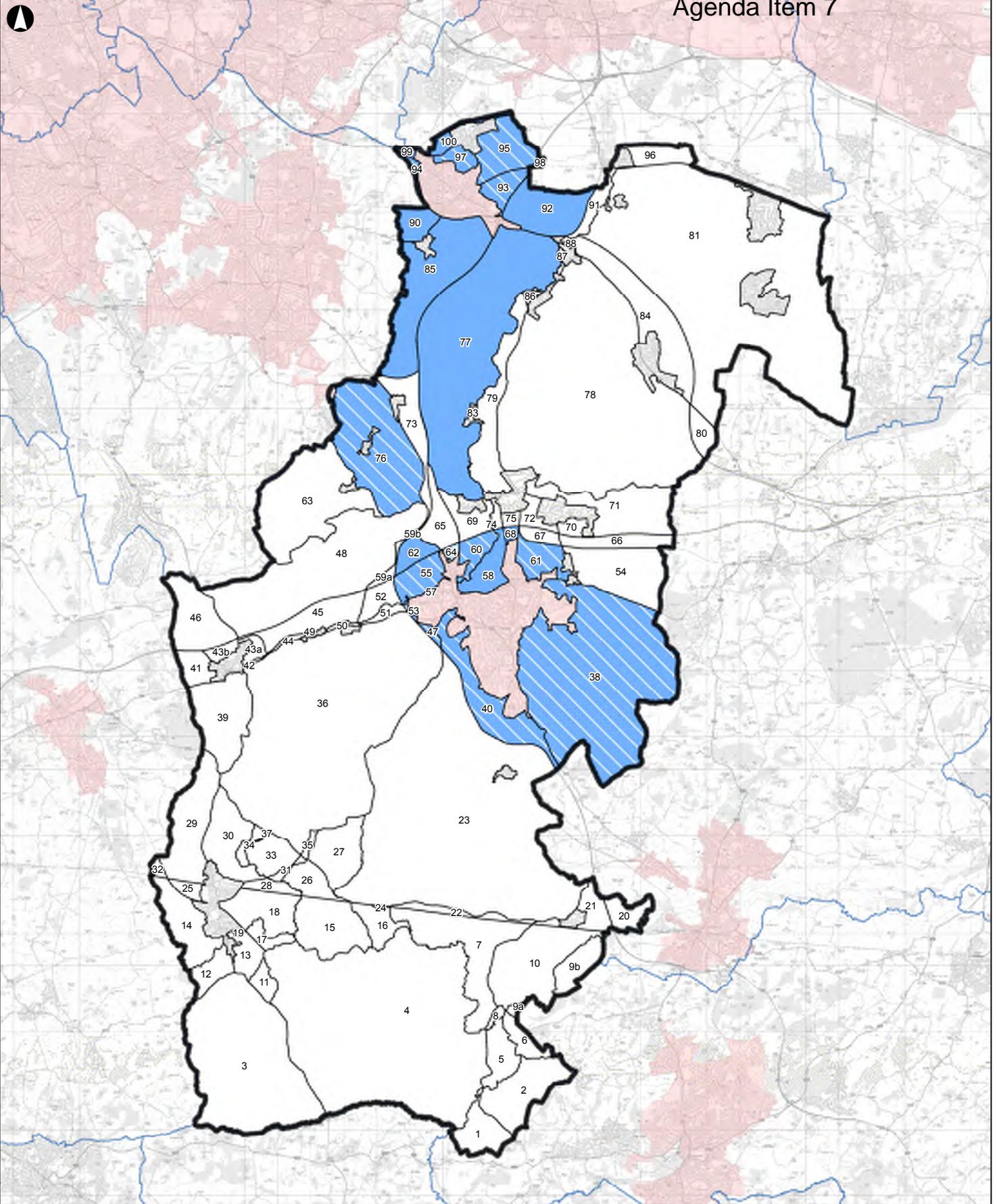
It is notable that no Parcels were identified as ‘contiguous’, scoring 5 or 5+. This can be attributed to the limited direct linkage between Green Belt in Sevenoaks District and the edges of surrounding large built-up areas, in particular Greater London and Dartford / Gravesend. However, it should be acknowledged that, as this Study has focused solely on the performance of Green Belt within Sevenoaks District, the role of certain Green Belt Parcels in preventing sprawl at a wider scale has not been identified through the quantitative assessment. In particular, Parcels along the north-eastern, northern and south-western edges of the District that are physically connected to the wider Green Belt may, at a strategic level, play an additional role in preventing the outward sprawl of large built-up areas beyond the District boundaries, including Greater London, the Dartford / Gravesend built-up area, Royal Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.

5.1.2 Purpose 2 Assessment

The overall findings of the Purpose 2 assessment are illustrated spatially in Map 5.2. In broad terms, the overall performance of the Green Belt against this purpose increases moving north through the District. This is linked to development patterns, with a denser network of larger, dispersed settlements closer to London in the north, and occasional nucleated settlements and sparser development further south.

25 of 101 Parcels (25%) fail to meet Purpose 2 and make no discernable contribution to the separation of settlements. These are generally so small in scale that, in relative terms, they play no role as part of larger-scale gaps between settlements (for example, Parcels 31, 35 and 33), and additionally may be so closely associated with existing settlements that they are effectively enveloped within the built area and do not form part of the gap to another settlement (for example, Parcels 19 and 83). It should be noted that, while these represent 25% of the total number of parcels, they make up a small proportion of the Green Belt in terms of area.

17 Parcels (17%) meet Purpose 2 only weakly, scoring 1. These Parcels may form less essential gaps, those which are physically large in scale (for example, Parcels 4 and a number of parcels immediately to the north, which lie between Edenbridge, Speldhurst and Royal Tunbridge Wells), or are judged to be less essential parts of smaller-scale gaps; this might be as a result of their relatively limited scale (such as Parcels 43a or 53) or as a result of physical or topographical features which restrict the potential for coalescence.



Legend

Purpose 1b Scores

- 0
- 1
- 1+
- 3
- 3+
- 5
- 5+

Large Built-Up Area

Green Belt Parcel

Neighbouring District Boundary

Sevenoaks District Boundary

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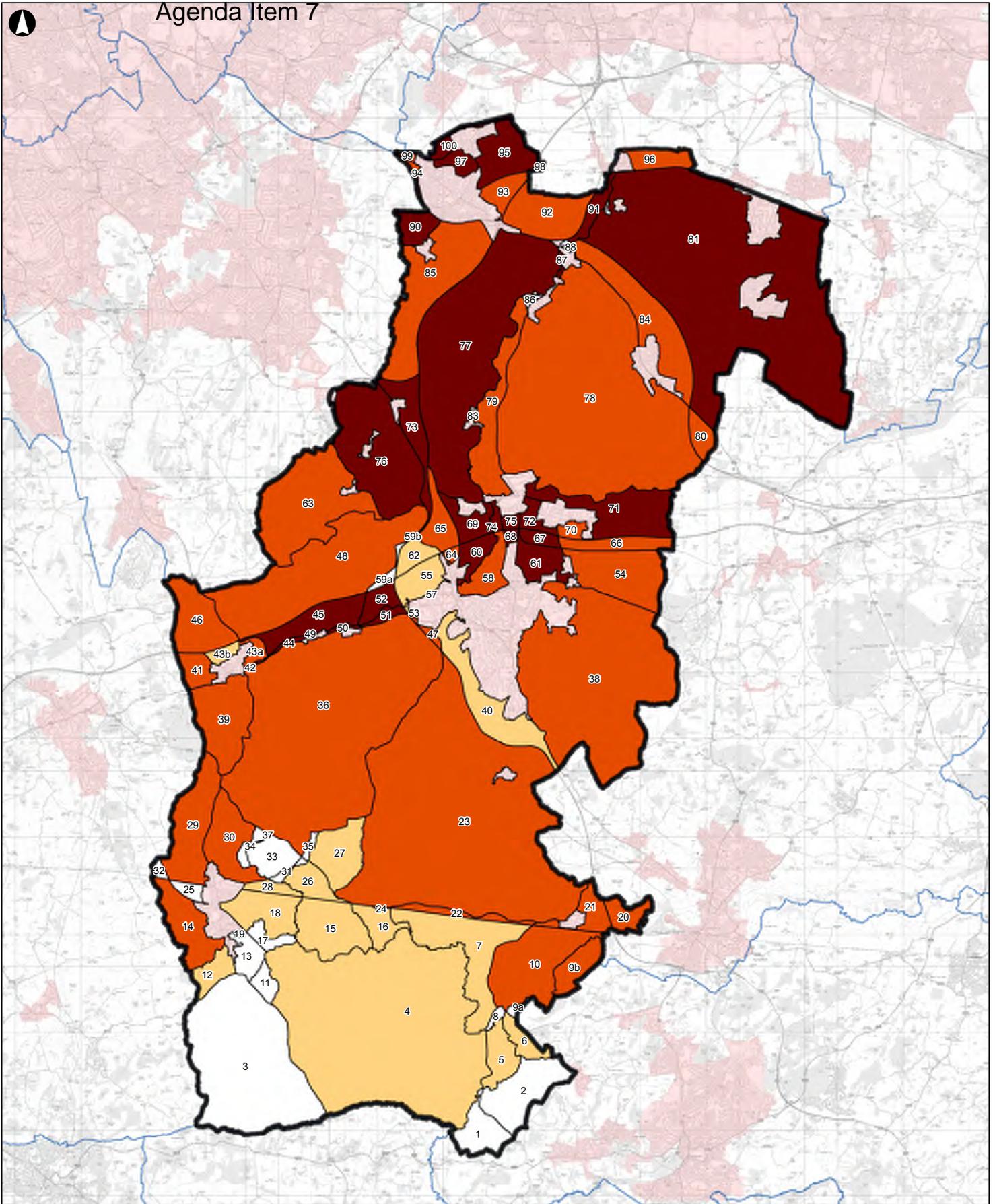
Map 5.1. Purpose 1 Assessment Scores

Scale at A3
1:110,000

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Drawing No 5.1.	Issue P1
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Legend

Purpose 2 Score

- 0
- 1
- 3
- 5

- Green Belt Parcel
- Neighbouring District Boundary
- Settlement
- Sevenoaks District Boundary

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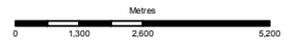
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Map 5.2. Purpose 2 Assessment Scores

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Over one third of Parcels, 34 out of 101 (34%), meet Purpose 2 moderately, scoring 3. These 'wider gaps' are generally concentrated through the central and northern parts of the District and tend to closely reflect the District's settlement pattern, aligned with wider areas of open land set in between more settled corridors, along river valleys and major roads. It should be noted that, in some cases, smaller areas within these Parcels may be less important for preventing coalescence; these observations are noted qualitatively throughout the pro-formas in Annex Report 1.

25 Parcels (25%) meet Purpose 2 strongly, scoring 5. This significant proportion reflects the particularly important role that the Green Belt in Sevenoaks plays in preventing settlements from merging. These Parcels are generally concentrated along more intensely developed corridors, where the Green Belt maintains gaps that are small in scale and often at risk of being compromised by ribbon development; for example, the series of closely-located settlements along the A25, or the concentration of linear settlements along the Darent Valley. Other Parcels are important for maintaining the pattern of settlements in the north of the District at the London and Dartford / Gravesend fringes (for example, Parcels 95, 97 and 100 which maintain the narrow gap between Swanley and Hextable). Again, occasional cases where smaller areas within these Parcels may play a lesser role in preventing coalescence are noted qualitatively throughout the pro-formas in Annex Report 1.

5.1.3 Purpose 3 Assessment

The overall findings of the Purpose 3 assessment are illustrated spatially in Map 5.3.

All of the 101 Parcels meet this purpose to a greater or lesser extent, reflecting the largely rural nature of the District.

While no Parcels score 1 against Purpose 3, seven of the 101 parcels (7%) score 2, meeting the purpose weakly. These are distributed widely across the district, but in the majority are located at the fringes of settlements, including Sevenoaks, Swanley, Brasted, Farningham and Leigh. These Parcels are judged not to function as open countryside, possessing a semi-urban character with higher levels of built form, interspersed amongst some areas of open land. In some limited cases, Parcels that are isolated from existing settlements have been identified as weakly performing as a result of their more urban character and particularly high proportion of built-form (for example, Parcel 24 which contains a cluster of residential dwellings at Bough Beech).

30 Parcels (30%) meet Purpose 3 moderately, scoring 3. These Parcels, primarily concentrated in the far north and centre of the District, largely consist of open countryside but may be subject to some urbanising influences, such as ribbon development or large-scale infrastructure, or contain small areas with a contrasting, more urbanised character. However, the Green Belt continues to play an important role in preventing encroachment into the countryside.

The majority of Parcels, 64 of 101 (63%), meet Purpose 3 relatively strongly or strongly, scoring 4 or 5. This notably high proportion reflects the broadly rapid

transitions from urban-fringe to open countryside at the edge of the District's settlements, as well as the significant swathes of largely unspoilt countryside subject to little or no physical development that extent across the District. Much of the south of the District, as well as areas to the north-east, north and west of Sevenoaks, play a particularly important role in preventing encroachment into the countryside.

5.1.4 Purpose 4 Assessment

The overall findings of the Purpose 4 assessment are provided spatially in Map 5.4.

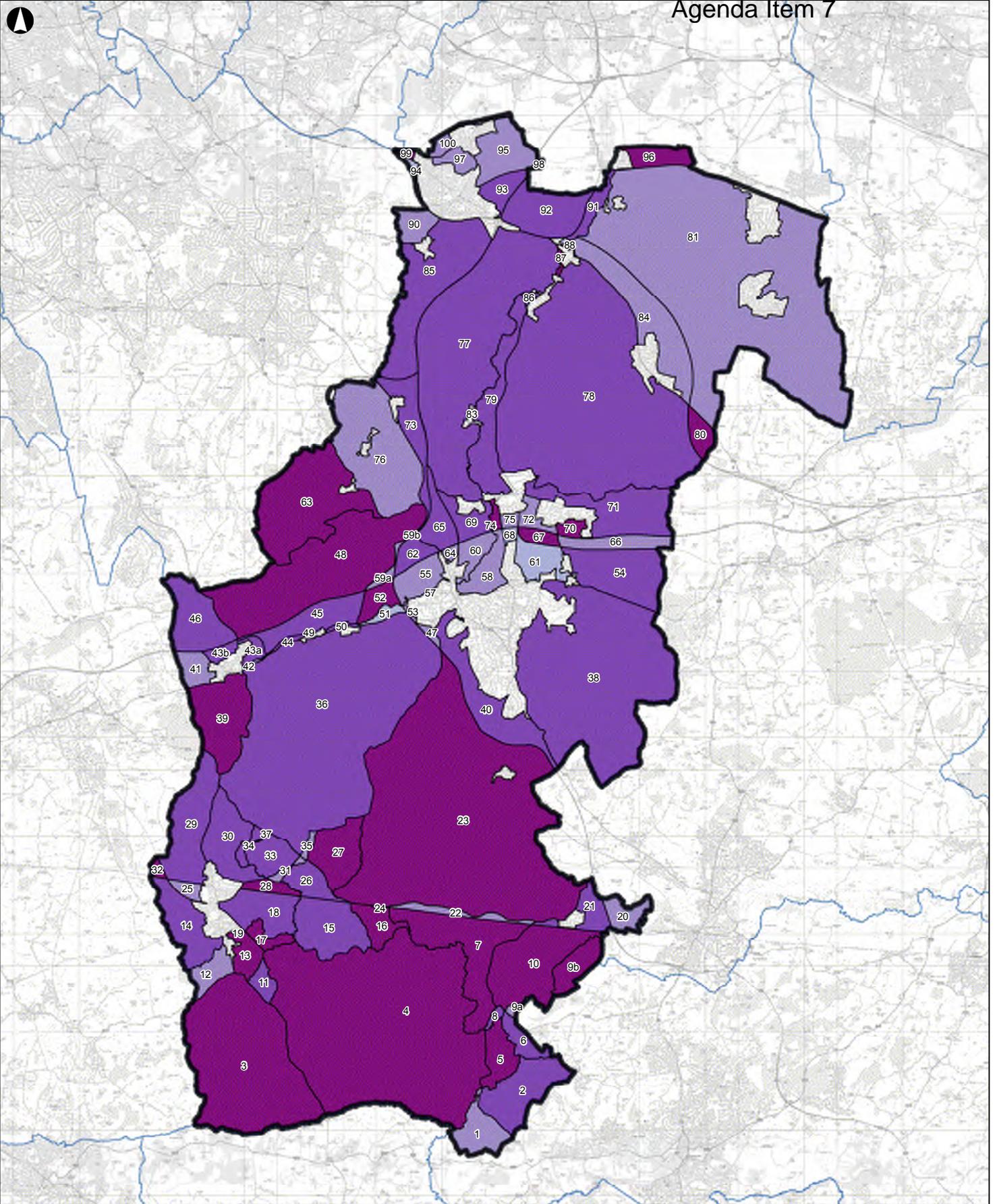
While the Green Belt undoubtedly maintains the setting of a substantial number of historic settlements in Kent, national policy is specific in its reference to historic 'towns' for this assessment. Appropriate settlements for consideration in this Study (being larger settlements with potential for strong linkage between the Green Belt and their historic cores) were identified through the Kent Historic Towns Survey and discussions with District officers. As such, the majority of Parcels, 88 of 101 (87%), do not meet Purpose 4.

Six of the 101 Parcels (6%) meet Purpose 4 weakly. While these areas are directly adjacent to the historic cores of the identified historic settlements, it was judged that they contribute only to the broader contextual settings of these settlements; for example by maintaining open land or countryside. In many cases, these areas have little or no visual connection with the historic core, such as where the settlement is inward facing (for example, Parcel 38 and the historic core of Sevenoaks) or where physical features or natural characteristics limit the connection between the settlement and the countryside (for example, Mont St Aignan Way which separates the historic core of Westerham from Parcel 14, or dense woodland around New Ash Green which limits visibility between the wider countryside and the Green Belt).

Five of the 101 Parcels (5%) score 3, meeting Purpose 4 moderately. These areas either provide immediate rural context for the historic settlement (such as Parcel 39, which maintains Westerham's unique riverside and parkland setting) or contribute to vistas between the historic core and the surrounding countryside (for example, Parcels 69 and 74 which afford views between the historic core of Otford and the wider countryside and vice versa).

Two Parcels score 5 and are judged to meet Purpose 4 strongly. These Parcels (13 and 79) are deemed particularly important to preserving the setting and special character of Edenbridge and Otford (respectively) by providing both immediate rural context for the historic settlements and unspoilt views between the historic cores and surrounding countryside.

It should be noted that, in many cases, the scores attributed to Parcels for Purpose 4 only apply to part of a wider area. Where this is the case, this is noted qualitatively in the relevant pro-formas in Annex Report 1.



Legend

Purpose 3 Score

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

- Green Belt Parcel
- Neighbouring District Boundary
- Sevenoaks District Boundary

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Map 5.3. Purpose 3 Assessment Scores

Scale at A3

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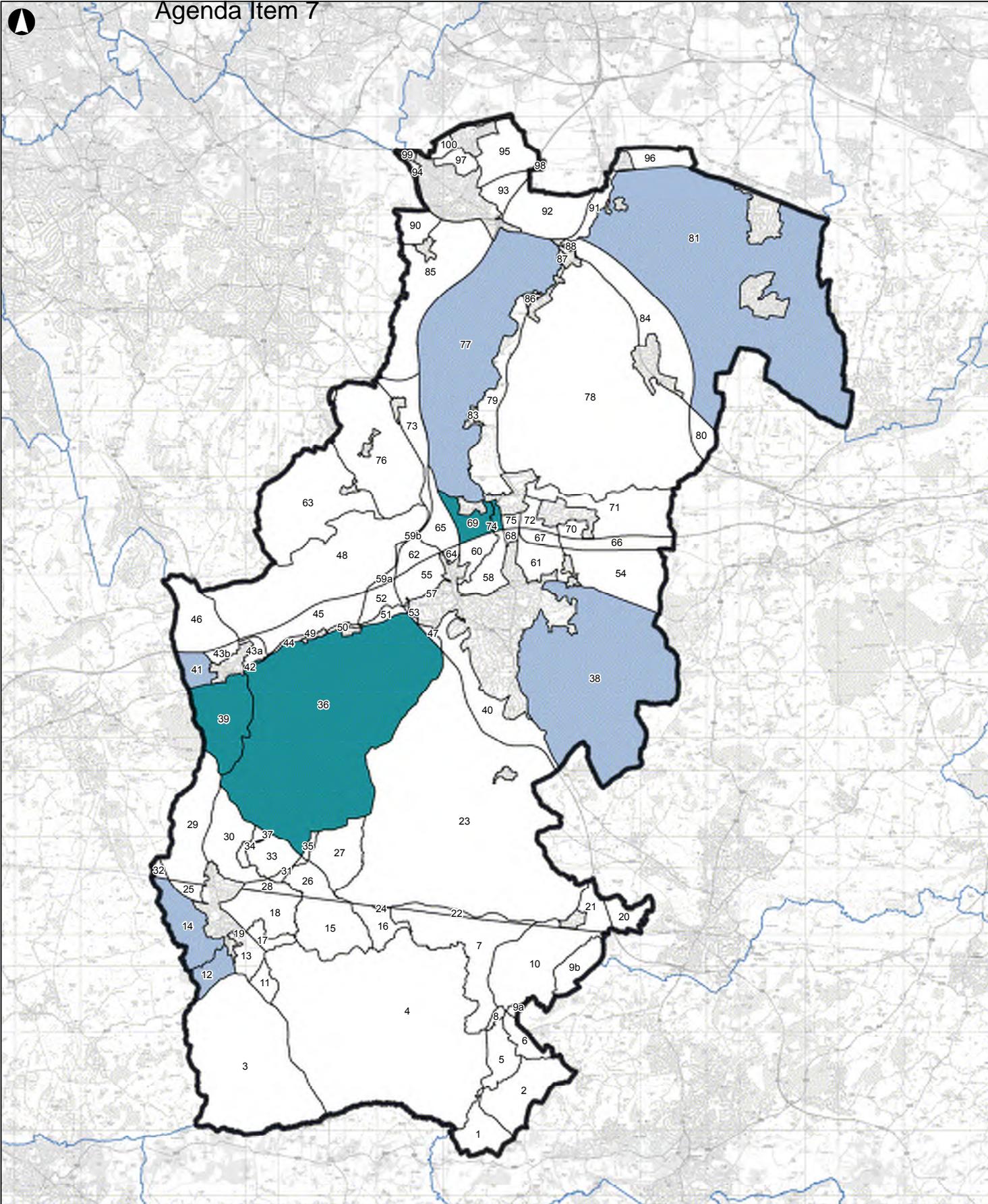
Job No
251351-00

Drawing Status
Draft

Drawing No
5.3.

Issue
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Legend

Purpose 4 Scores

- 0
- 1
- 3
- Green Belt Parcel
- Neighbouring District Boundary
- Sevenoaks District Boundary

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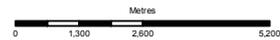
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Map 5.4. Purpose 4 Assessment Scores

Scale at A3

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Drawing Status
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5.1.5 Overall Summary

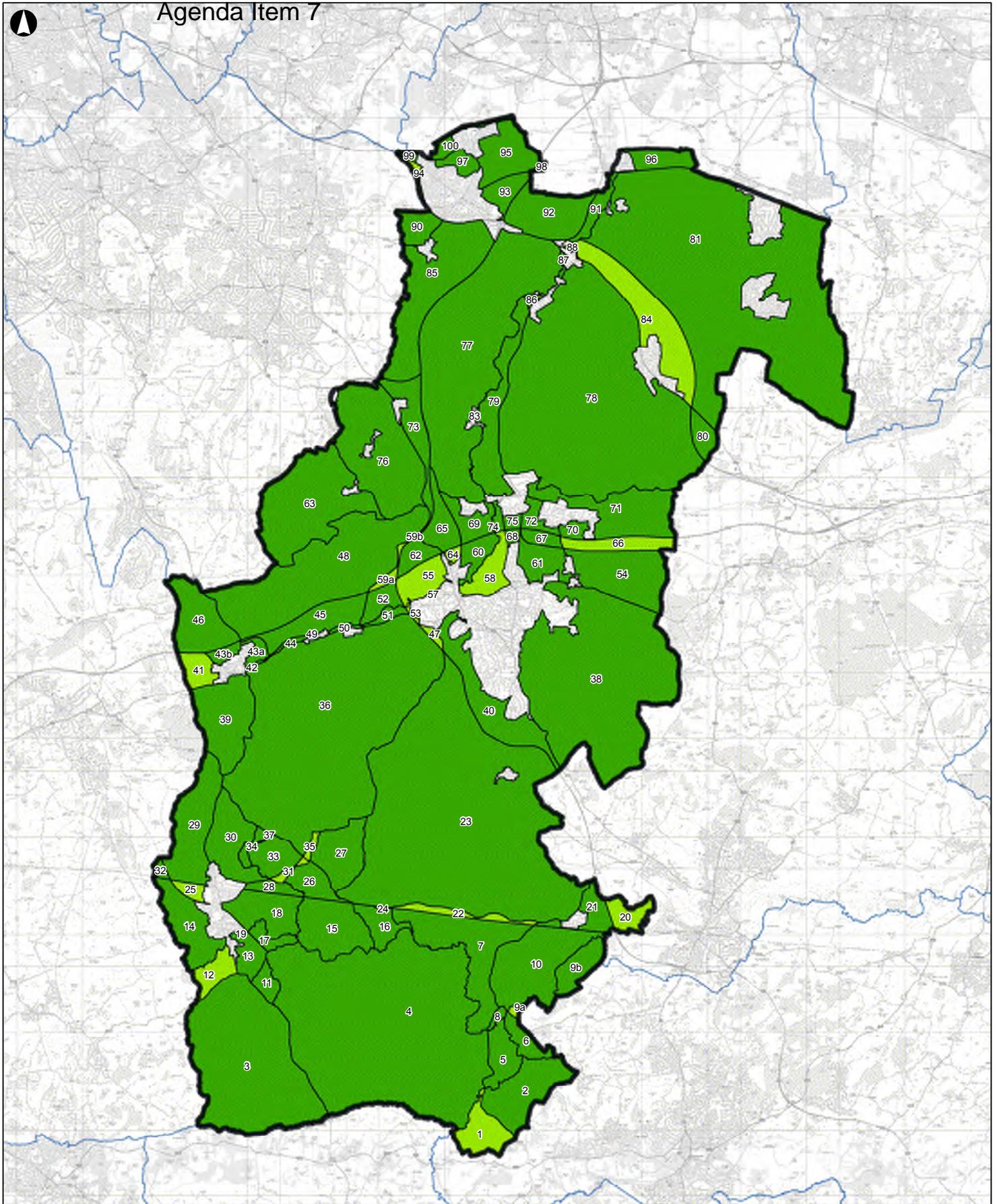
All 101 Green Belt Parcels meet one or more of the NPPF purposes to varying degrees. The individual purpose scores for Parcels are set out in Table 5.1.

In order to summarise the outcomes from the assessment and begin to draw overall conclusions from the assessment against the NPPF purposes, Parcels have been categorised as follows:

- 77 Parcels are judged to be strongly scoring Green Belt, meeting at least one of the purposes strongly (scoring 4 or 5);
- 21 Parcels are judged to be moderately scoring Green Belt, with a moderate score (3) against at least one purpose and failing to score strongly (4 or 5) against any purpose;
- 3 Parcels are judged to be weakly scoring Green Belt, failing to meet any purpose or weakly meeting all purposes (scoring 1 or 2).

The categorisation of Green Belt Parcels is also set out in Table 5.1 and illustrated in Map 5.5.

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Overall Score

- Does not meet Green Belt purposes
- Weak
- Moderate
- Strong

Green Belt Parcel

- Green Belt Parcel

Neighbouring District Boundary

- Neighbouring District Boundary

Sevenoaks District Boundary

- Sevenoaks District Boundary

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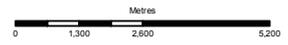
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Map 5.5. Overall Assessment Scores

Scale at A3
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Drawing No 5.5.	Issue P1

Table 5.1 Overall Summary of Findings for NPPF Purposes Assessment

Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
		(a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
1	176.1	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate
2	334.2	NO	0	0	4	0	Strong
3	1364.7	NO	0	0	5	0	Strong
4	2876.6	NO	0	1	5	0	Strong
5	149.7	NO	0	1	5	0	Strong
6	90.4	NO	0	1	4	0	Strong
7	505.0	NO	0	1	5	0	Strong
8	17.0	NO	0	0	4	0	Strong
9a	15.2	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate
9b	143.7	NO	0	3	5	0	Strong
10	498.7	NO	0	3	5	0	Strong
11	61.3	NO	0	0	4	0	Strong

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Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
		(a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
12	107.3	NO	0	1	3	1	Moderate
13	96.9	NO	0	0	5	5	Strong
14	270.4	NO	0	3	4	1	Strong
15	324.5	NO	0	1	4	0	Strong
16	114.6	NO	0	1	5	0	Strong
17	59.9	NO	0	0	5	0	Strong
18	233.0	NO	0	1	4	0	Strong
19	3.5	NO	0	0	5	0	Strong
20	103.3	NO	0	3	3	0	Moderate
21	115.3	NO	0	3	4	0	Strong
22	68.1	NO	0	3	3	0	Moderate
23	3386.8	NO	0	3	5	0	Strong
24	3.6	NO	0	0	2	0	Weak
25	41.0	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate

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Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
		(a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
26	120.4	NO	0	1	4	0	Strong
27	246.7	NO	0	1	5	0	Strong
28	55.7	NO	0	1	5	0	Strong
29	402.4	NO	0	3	4	0	Strong
30	280.0	NO	0	3	4	0	Strong
31	19.0	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate
32	19.3	NO	0	0	5	0	Strong
33	139.0	NO	0	0	4	0	Strong
34	38.0	NO	0	0	4	0	Strong
35	17.9	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate
36	2837.7	NO	0	3	4	3	Strong
37	2.0	NO	0	0	5	0	Strong
38	1943.6	YES	3+	3	4	1	Strong
39	393.0	NO	0	3	5	3	Strong

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Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
		(a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
40	363.6	YES	3+	1	4	0	Strong
41	93.4	NO	0	3	3	1	Moderate
42	5.2	NO	0	5	3	3	Strong
43a	38.1	NO	0	3	4	0	Strong
43b	41.6	NO	0	1	4	0	Strong
44	13.8	NO	0	5	4	0	Strong
45	231.9	NO	0	5	4	0	Strong
46	304.2	NO	0	3	4	0	Strong
47	21.6	YES	3+	3	3	0	Moderate
48	1131.8	NO	0	3	5	0	Strong
49	1.2	NO	0	0	2	0	Weak
50	12.3	NO	0	5	4	0	Strong
51	33.6	NO	0	5	2	0	Strong
52	88.8	NO	0	5	5	0	Strong

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Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
		(a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
53	7.4	YES	3+	1	3	0	Moderate
54	403.1	NO	0	3	4	0	Strong
55	142.2	YES	3+	1	3	0	Moderate
57	2.0	YES	1+	0	4	0	Strong
58	142.1	YES	3	3	3	0	Moderate
59a	21.9	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate
59b	8.3	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate
60	93.1	YES	3+	5	3	0	Strong
61	145.5	YES	3+	5	2	0	Strong
62	83.1	YES	3	1	4	0	Strong
63	740.9	NO	0	3	5	0	Strong
64	18.5	YES	1+	3	3	0	Moderate
65	139.3	NO	0	3	4	0	Strong
66	134.5	NO	0	3	3	0	Moderate

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Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
		(a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
67	49.3	NO	0	5	5	0	Strong
68	17.7	YES	3+	5	2	0	Strong
69	115.0	NO	0	5	4	3	Strong
70	40.5	NO	0	3	5	0	Strong
71	409.9	NO	0	5	4	0	Strong
72	59.9	NO	0	5	3	0	Strong
73	204.7	NO	0	5	4	0	Strong
74	23.3	NO	0	5	5	3	Strong
75	23.0	NO	0	5	3	0	Strong
76	739.1	YES	3+	5	3	0	Strong
77	1665.5	YES	3	5	4	1	Strong
78	2879.6	NO	0	3	4	0	Strong
79	340.8	NO	0	3	4	5	Strong
80	81.3	NO	0	3	5	0	Strong

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Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
		(a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
81	3345.1	NO	0	5	3	1	Strong
83	3.4	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate
84	452.4	NO	0	3	3	0	Moderate
85	654.9	YES	3	3	4	0	Strong
86	13.7	NO	0	0	4	0	Strong
87	11.0	NO	0	5	5	0	Strong
88	6.2	NO	0	0	3	0	Moderate
89	3.0	NO	0	0	2	0	Weak
90	105.6	YES	3	5	3	0	Strong
91	76.0	NO	0	5	4	0	Strong
92	314.8	YES	3	3	4	0	Strong
93	98.7	YES	3+	3	4	0	Strong
94	21.3	YES	3+	3	2	0	Moderate
95	239.6	YES	3+	5	3	0	Strong

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Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment					Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas		Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	
		(a) Parcel is at the edge of one or more distinct large built-up areas	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements	Protects the openness of countryside and is least covered by development	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside	
96	118.5	NO	0	3	5	0	Strong
97	61.8	YES	3+	5	3	0	Strong
98	6.2	NO	0	1	5	0	Strong
99	12.3	YES	3+	3	5	0	Strong
100	55.7	YES	3	5	3	0	Strong

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5.2 Initial Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the assessment of Green Belt Parcels against the NPPF purposes, this section sets out an initial series of recommendations which Sevenoaks District Council may wish to consider in the development of the new Local Plan, including consideration of whether ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist to justify any alterations to the Green Belt boundary.

While it is clear that the majority of the Green Belt in Sevenoaks is performing an important role in terms of the NPPF purposes, a number of areas have been identified which may warrant further consideration. The areas for further consideration can be broadly categorised as follows:

1. Whole Parcels scoring weakly overall against all NPPF purposes which could be considered further.
2. Whole parcels which, although medium or strongly scoring against the NPPF purposes, have particular characteristics in their own right or synergies with neighbouring weaker parcels, which might lend themselves to further consideration. These specific characteristics are set out clearly for each recommended area.
3. Medium or strongly scoring Parcels where there is considered to be clear scope for sub-division to identify weakly performing sub-areas, including the presence of boundary features which have the potential to be permanent and readily recognisable, which could be afforded further consideration in accordance with the above provisions.

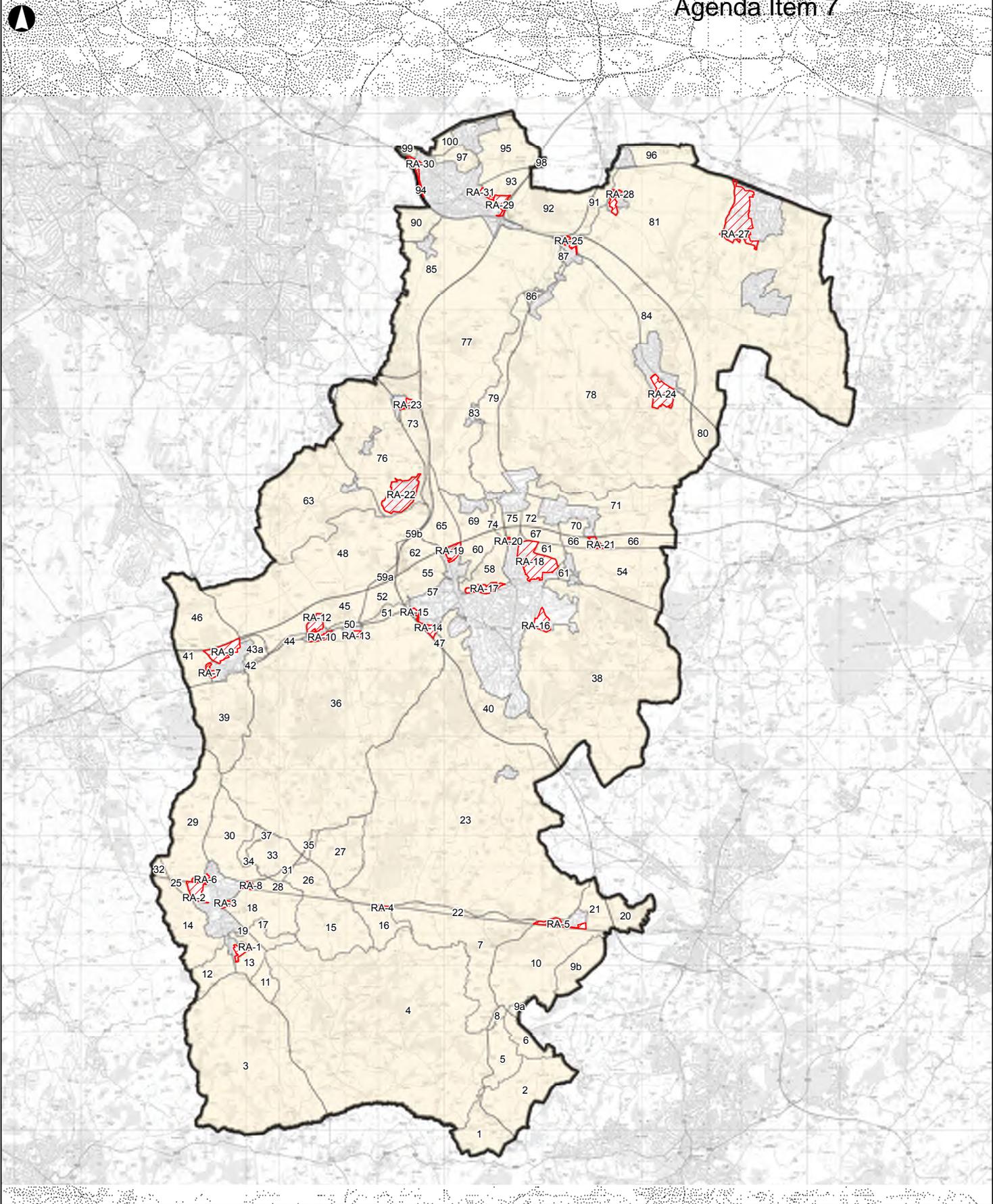
With regard to category 3, sub-areas recommended for further consideration are identified in line with the general principles for identifying boundaries of Green Belt Parcels. Where possible, boundaries of recommended sub-areas follow man-made and natural features within existing Parcels which, based on initial site visits and further desk-based work have the potential to be permanent. It is important to note that sub-area boundaries are advisory only at this stage. An initial, more detailed audit of potential boundary features is set out subsequently in chapter 8, but it is likely that further detailed consideration of exact Green Belt boundaries would be required as part of the formulation of the new Local Plan.

It should also be noted that all Recommended Areas have been identified for further consideration based on their performance against NPPF purposes only, rather than their suitability in terms of sustainability, infrastructure and wider planning considerations.

All Recommended Areas have been assigned a new ID number. A summary of all areas recommended for further consideration, including cross-references between original Green Belt Parcel IDs and Recommended Area IDs, is provided in Table 5.2. The Recommended Areas are shown spatially in Map 5.6, with further detail provided in the following sections.

Table 5.2 Summary of Recommended Areas

Category	Recommended Area	Approximate size (ha)	Recommendation Category	Green Belt Parcel
1	RA-4	4	1	24
	RA-11	1	1	49
	RA-26	3	1	89
2	RA-9	38	2	43b
	RA-19	19	2	64
	RA-25	6	2	88
3	RA-1	14	3	13
	RA-2	23	3	25
	RA-3	6	3	18
	RA-5	17	3	21
	RA-6	8	3	29
	RA-7	9	3	41
	RA-8	6	3	28
	RA-10	11	3	36
	RA-12	20	3	45
	RA-13	6	3	36
	RA-14	11	3	47
	RA-15	3	3	53
	RA-16	22	3	38
	RA-17	21	3	58
	RA-18	87	3	61
	RA-20	2	3	68
	RA-21	9	3	66
	RA-22	79	3	76
	RA-23	9	3	73
	RA-24	45	3	78
	RA-27	109	3	81
RA-28	15	3	81	
RA-29	15	3	93	
RA-30	12	3	94	
RA-31	5	3	5	



Legend

-  Green Belt Areas for Consideration in Stage 2
-  Areas Not for Consideration in Stage 2
-  Sevenoaks District Boundary

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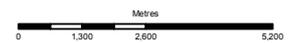
P1	10-11-16	CG	ML	AB
Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appr

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Sevenoaks District Council

Project Title
Sevenoaks Green Belt Assessment



Map 5.6 Areas for Further Consideration at Stage 2

Scale at A3
1:110,000

Job No
251351-00

Drawing Status
Draft

Drawing No
6.1

Issue
P1

5.2.1 Recommended Areas

The following areas have been identified for further consideration in the next stages of this Study. It should also be noted that all Recommended Areas have been identified for further consideration based on their performance against NPPF purposes only, rather than their suitability in terms of sustainability, infrastructure and wider planning considerations.

5.2.2 Category 1

RA-4



RA-4 consists of the whole of Green Belt Parcel 24, located between Leigh and Edenbridge. The Parcel meets the NPPF purposes weakly, failing to meet Purposes 1, 2 and 4 and making only a weak contribution to Purpose 3. Aside from woodland at its fringes, much of the Parcel consists of residential development clustered along Chequers Hill and The Close in Bough Beech. The Parcel has a semi-urban character and a relatively strong sense of enclosure from the wider countryside, bounded by defensible, recognisable features (B2027 and the railway line).

Recommendation: Parcel 24 (RA-4) meets the NPPF purposes weakly and while it could be considered further, it is acknowledged that the Recommended Area is an anomalous outcome of the methodology as a result of the particularly high concentration of development within a small Parcel, located some distance from an identified settlement.

RA-11



RA-11 consists of the whole of Green Belt Parcel 49, located to the north of Brasted. The Parcel meets the NPPF purposes weakly, failing to meet Purposes 1, 2 and 4 and making only a weak contribution to Purpose 3. The Parcel is visually and functionally part of the settlement of Brasted, comprising residential properties and gardens. It has a semi-urban character and a strong sense of enclosure from the wider countryside, bounded by the River Darent to the north.

Recommendation: Parcel 49 (RA-11) meets the NPPF purposes weakly and could be considered further. Adjacent RA-12 (Parcel 45) has a strong functional and physical relationship to RA-11; these Recommended Areas may therefore warrant joint consideration.

RA-26



RA-26 consists of the whole of Green Belt Parcel 89, located at the edge of Farningham. The Parcel meets the NPPF purposes weakly, failing to meet Purposes 1, 2 and 4 and making only a weak contribution to Purpose 3. Aside from woodland at its fringes, the Parcel comprises the car park and beer garden for the Red Lion public house. The Parcel has a semi-urban character and a strong sense of enclosure from the wider countryside, bounded by defensible, recognisable features (A20, Dartford Road and the River Darent).

Recommendation: Parcel 89 (RA-26) meets the NPPF purposes weakly and could be considered further. Adjacent RA-25 (Parcel 88) has a strong functional and physical relationship to RA-26; these Recommended Areas may therefore warrant joint consideration.

5.2.3 Category 2

RA-9



RA-9 consists of the whole of Green Belt Parcel 43b, located to the north of Westerham. Although the Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, this relates to only one of the five NPPF purposes (Purpose 3) and it is judged that there is an exceptional case to consider it further.

The Parcel makes only a weak contribution to Purpose 2, forming a small, less essential part of the gap between Westerham and Biggin Hill to the north; it is deemed that the gap is of sufficient scale that the settlements will not merge. It is also judged that, as a result of surrounding topography, this area has a very limited relationship with the historic part of Westerham (which is visually more connected with land to the north in Parcel 46), and as such the Parcel does not score against Purpose 4.

Although the Parcel scored strongly against Purpose 3, as a result of its relative openness and largely rural land uses, it is largely isolated from the wider countryside in both physical and visual terms, and has a much stronger sense of connectivity with the prominent urban edge of Westerham to the south.

Furthermore, although only a small proportion of the total area of the Parcel is covered by built-form, this is visually prominent and dispersed throughout, including the Churchill Primary School in the south, large residential properties with ancillary developments in the south-east and dwelling houses and light industrial buildings in the east. The M25 immediately to the north is an additional urbanising influence and creates severance to the wider Green Belt. As a result of these particular characteristics, it is considered that the loss of this area may have little or no impact on the integrity and purpose of the wider Green Belt, and it was judged that it should be considered further in its entirety.

Recommendation: Parcel 43b meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but it was judged that there is scope for it to be considered further due to its isolation from the wider countryside, the strong sense of connectivity with the Westerham, and the pattern of existing built form. As such it is recommended that the whole Parcel is considered further alongside those Parcels which have been identified as scoring weakly.

RA-19



RA-19 is located to the north of Sevenoaks at Dunton Green, and comprises the entirety of Green Belt Parcel 64. Although the Parcel meets the NPPF purposes moderately, it is judged that there is an exceptional case to consider it further.

It is judged that RA-19 plays a limited role in preventing the outward sprawl of Sevenoaks, as it is effectively 'enclosed' by development along its southern, western edges and partially along its eastern edge. The remainder of the Parcel is strongly bound by large-scale infrastructure: the M26 to the north; and the South Eastern Main Line to the east. These features limit the role of the Parcel in preventing the outward sprawl of Sevenoaks (Purpose 1). Furthermore, although the Parcel forms part of the gap between Sevenoaks and Otford, it is felt that its role is reduced as a result of its strong sense of enclosure from the wider countryside and small scale (Purpose 2). While much of the Parcel has an open character, it is surrounded by urbanising influences and cut off from the wider Green Belt, therefore playing a lesser limited role in preventing encroachment (Purpose 3).

Recommendation: Parcel 64 (RA-19) meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but it was judged that there is scope for it to be considered further due to its enclosed nature and scale, limited connection to the wider countryside, and lesser role in preventing encroachment. As such it is recommended that the whole Parcel is considered further alongside those Parcels which have been identified as scoring weakly.

RA-25



RA-25 consists of the whole of Green Belt Parcel 88, located at the edge of Farningham.

Parcel 88 meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but it should be noted that this relates only to Purpose 3 and the Parcel fails to meet Purposes 1, 2 and 4. It has therefore been judged that there is a case to consider it alongside adjacent Parcel 89 (RA-26). Although the north-east of the Parcel is more open, it is physically and visually severed from the wider countryside to the east by the A20 and is subject to a number of urbanising influences, including Farningham Cricket Ground and residential development immediately to the west (Purpose 3).

Recommendation: Parcel 88 meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but it was judged that there is scope for it to be considered further, as described above. Adjacent RA-26 (Parcel 89) has a strong functional and physical relationship to RA-25; these Recommended Areas may therefore warrant joint consideration.

5.2.4 Category 3

RA-1



RA-1 is located to the south-east of Edenbridge, in the western part of Green Belt Parcel 13.

As a whole, this Parcel scores strongly against the NPPF purposes, preventing the encroachment of urban development into open land which has an unspoilt rural character (Purpose 3) and maintaining the setting and special character of the historic core of Edenbridge (Purpose 4). It meets neither Purpose 1 nor Purpose 2.

However, an area in the west of the Parcel (RA-1) may perform weakly if considered alone. This area at the edge of Edenbridge, bounded by Hever Road, and established planted buffers, has suffered previous encroachment, containing a series of small enclosed fields punctuated by built structures including stables, a caravan site, sheltered housing and a former hostel. Furthermore, the area is physically and largely visually severed from the wider countryside by dense hedgerows, both within the area and along its southern edge (Purpose 3). RA-1 is not connected to the historic core of Edenbridge thus making no contribution to Purpose 4 unlike the wider Parcel.

Recommendation: Parcel 13 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the west at the edge of Edenbridge (RA-1) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-2



RA-2 is located to the west of Edenbridge, in the eastern part of Green Belt Parcel 25.

As a whole, the wider Parcel scores moderately against the NPPF purposes. While it fails to meet Purposes 1, 2 or 4, it scores moderately against Purpose 3. Noting the presence of ribbon development along Little Browns Lane, the Parcel plays a role in preventing further encroachment into the countryside.

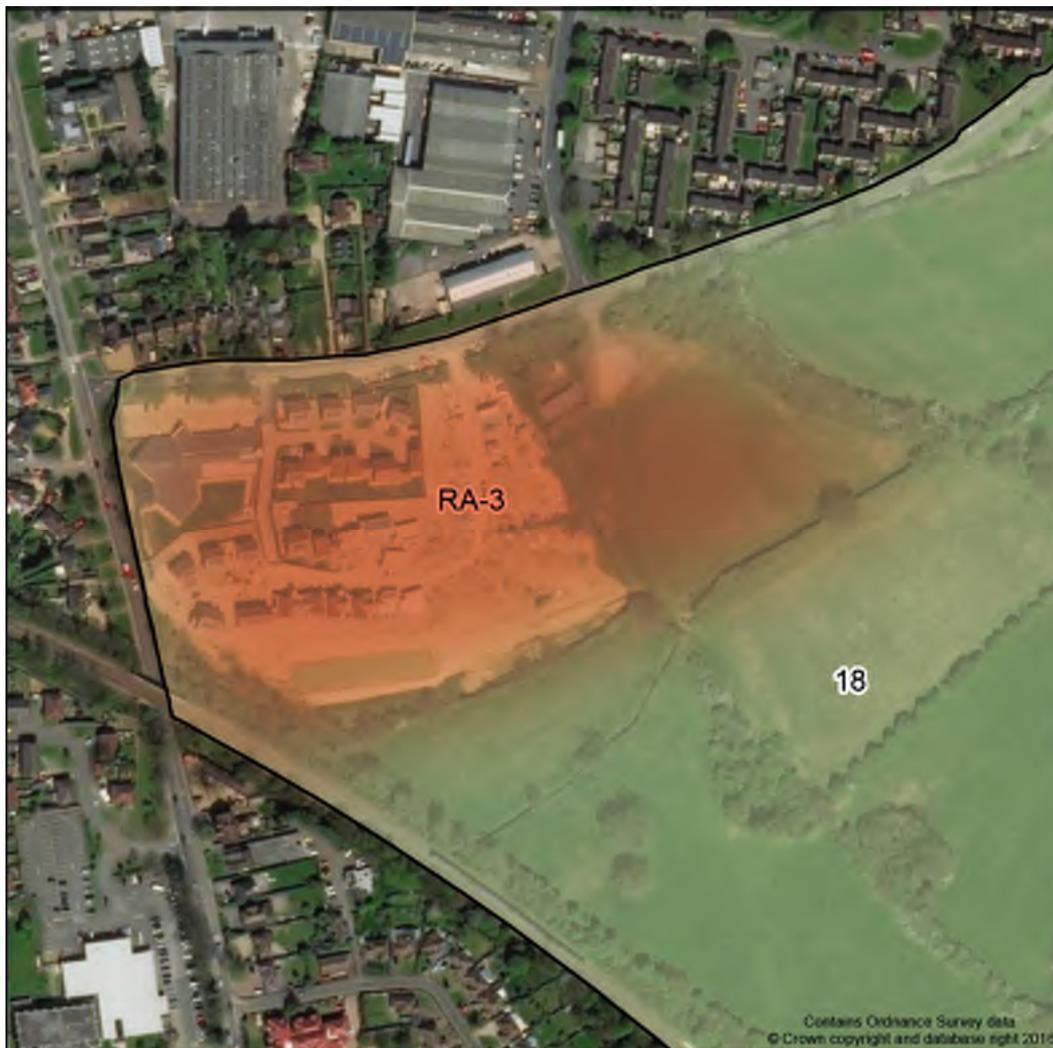
A sub-area in the east of the Parcel (RA-2) may score weakly if considered separately. This area at the edge of Edenbridge, bounded by Crouch House Road and railway lines to the north and south, has a sense of enclosure as a result of existing built form and infrastructure and a limited connection to the wider countryside. Urbanising influences, including a business park immediately to the east, residential development to the south and existing built-form along Crouch

House Road, diminish the area's rural character and limit its role in preventing encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3).

Any further consideration of this area should take into account emerging recommendations for RA-6 which directly abuts this area to the north.

Recommendation: Parcel 25 meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the east at the edge of Edenbridge (RA-2) may score weakly and could be considered further. Adjacent RA-6 (Parcel 29) has a strong functional and physical relationship to RA-2; these Recommended Areas may therefore warrant joint consideration.

RA-3



RA-3 is located to the east of Edenbridge, in the western part of Green Belt Parcel 18.

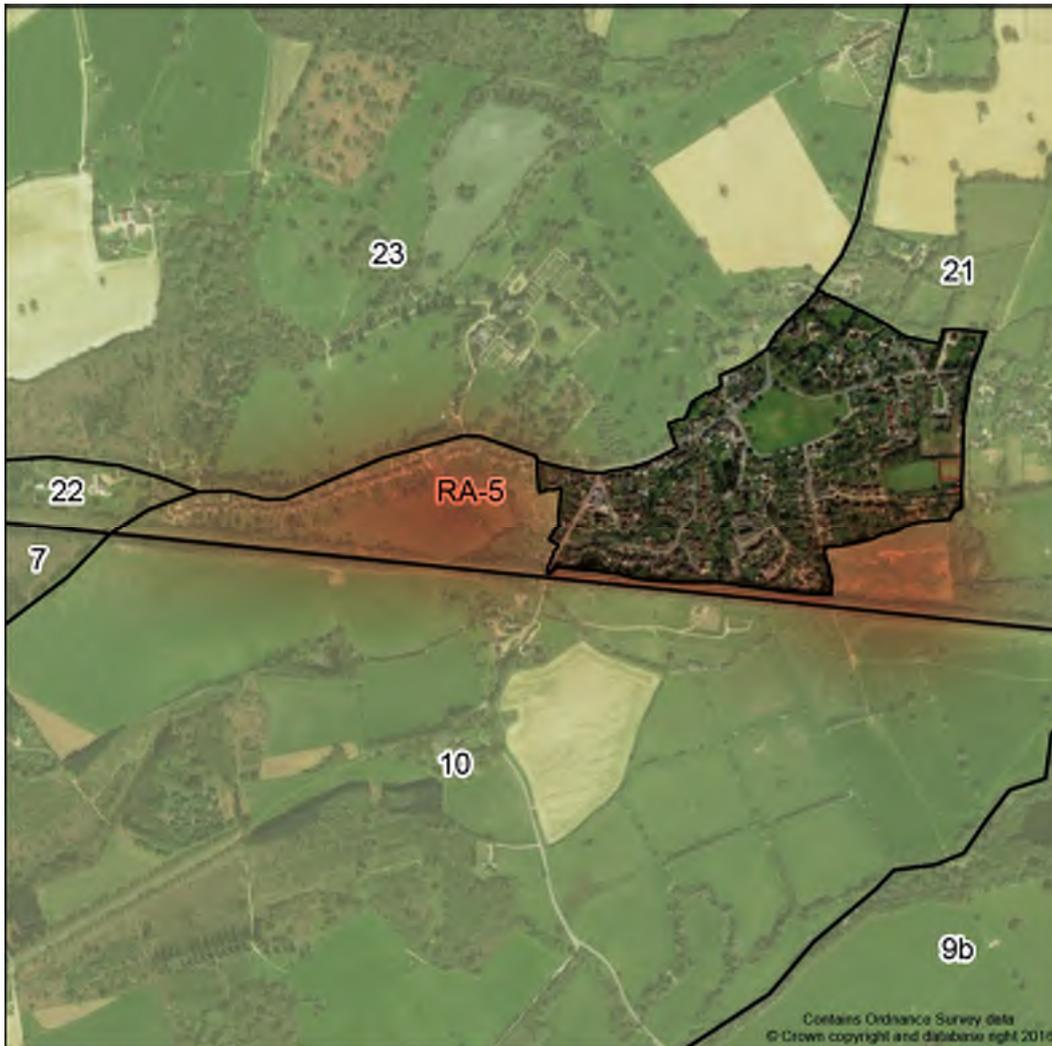
The wider Parcel scores strongly against the NPPF purposes. Although it does not meet Purposes 1 or 4, it prevents encroachment into open land of a largely unspoilt, rural character (Purpose 3). The Parcel also makes a weak contribution

to Purpose 2, forming a small part of the less-essential gap between Edenbridge and Sevenoaks.

However, a small sub-area in the west of the Parcel (RA-3) may score weakly if considered in isolation. This area, at the edge of Edenbridge, includes an area of existing development and has an urban character (Purpose 3). This includes dwelling houses and a community centre. Although the land immediately to the east is undeveloped, it does contain some hard standing (in the north) and has a stronger visual relationship with the urban fringe than the wider countryside as a result of established dense hedgerows. RA-3 is of a relatively small scale and effectively falls within the existing settlement footprint of Edenbridge and thus plays no role in preventing coalescence between settlements (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 18 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the west at the edge of Edenbridge (RA-3) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-5



RA-5 consists of two small areas to the south-east and west of Leigh, connected by a narrow strip of Green Belt along the Redbridge-Tonbridge railway line, and located in the far west of Parcel 21.

Although the wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, preventing encroachment into open land of an unspoilt, rural character (Purpose 3) and maintaining part of the wider gap between Leigh and Tonbridge (Purpose 2), a sub-area in the west of the Parcel (RA-5) may score weakly if considered alone.

This area is effectively split into two distinct parts, connected by just a narrow strip of Green Belt. The western part of the sub-area consists of a small, enclosed area of open land enclosed by existing residential development along Peshurst Road and Lower Green and the railway line to the south, which is elevated on an embankment and heavily vegetated. This area is subject to urbanising influences on all sides and is physically and visually separated from the wider countryside, thus playing a very limited role with respect to preventing encroachment (Purpose 3). The eastern area is similarly dis-connected from the wider countryside by residential dwellings along Lealands Avenue and Green View Avenue, the railway to the south and a densely wooded plantation immediately to the east. Additionally, no part of RA-5 forms part of the gap between Leigh and Tonbridge, which is located further to the east (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 21 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the west at the edge of Leigh (RA-5) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-6



RA-6 is located to the west of Edenbridge, in the south-eastern corner of Green Belt Parcel 29.

As a whole, this Parcel scores strongly against the NPPF purposes, forming much of the wider gap between Edenbridge and Oxted (Purpose 2) and preventing the encroachment of urban development into open land which has an unspoilt rural character (Purpose 3). It meets neither Purpose 1 nor Purpose 4.

A small sub-area in the south-east of the Parcel (RA-6) may score less strongly if considered separately. This area is of such a small scale that it plays a very limited role in terms of the gap between Edenbridge and Oxted (Purpose 2). It encompasses existing residential properties on Hilders Lane, which has a semi-urban character, and pony paddocks which are strongly enclosed by densely planted edges. These areas of open land are more connected with the prominent settlement edge of Edenbridge and have very limited connectivity with the wider countryside, thus playing little or no role in preventing encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3).

Further consideration of this area should take into account emerging recommendations for RA-2 which directly abuts this area to the south.

Recommendation: Parcel 29 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the east at the edge of Edenbridge (RA-6) may score weakly and could be considered further. Adjacent RA-2 (Parcel 25) has a strong functional and physical relationship to RA-6; these Recommended Areas may therefore warrant joint consideration.

RA-7



RA-7 is located to the west of Westerham, at the eastern edge of Green Belt Parcel 41.

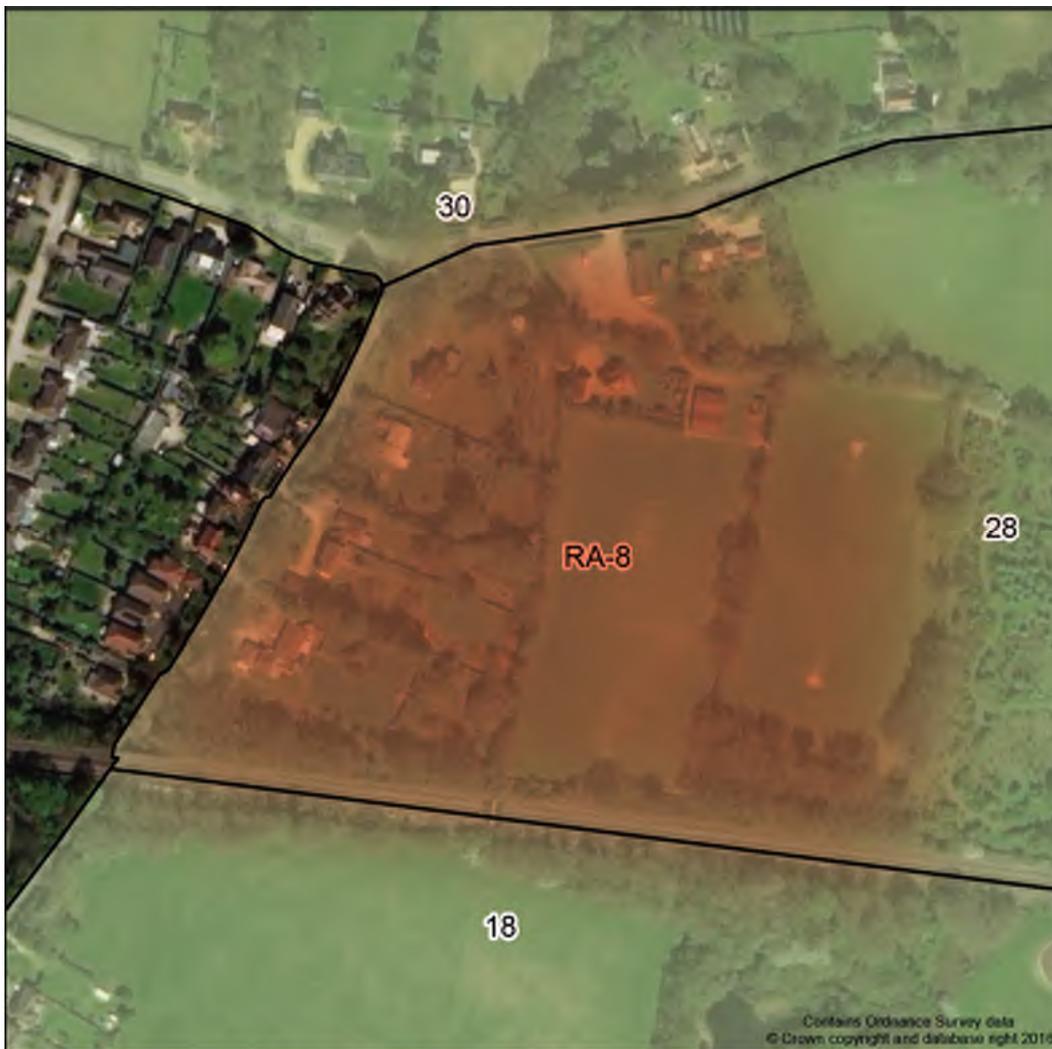
The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes moderately, maintaining part of the wider gap between Westerham and Oxted (Purpose 2) and preventing encroachment into open countryside, particularly in the west (Purpose 3). The Parcel also makes a weak contribution to the wider rural setting of historic Westerham (Purpose 4).

However, a small area at the edge of Westerham (RA-7) may score weakly if considered alone. This area, bounded by Farley Lane and Croft Road, has suffered encroachment and contains a number of residential properties as well as allotments, which contribute towards a more semi-urban character. The area has a

very contained feel with little connection to the wider countryside further west and is frequently impacted by urban influences, including the prominent settlement edge, to which the sub-area has a stronger visual connection. It therefore plays a very limited role in preventing encroachment (Purpose 3). Additionally, its small scale and sense of containment limits its role as part of the gap between Westerham and Oxted (Purpose 2) and the proliferation of residential properties limits the sub-area's contribution to the settlement's historic setting and special character (Purpose 4).

Recommendation: Parcel 41 meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the east at the edge of Westerham (RA-7) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-8



RA-8 is located to the north-east of Edenbridge, at the western edge of Green Belt Parcel 28.

The wider Parcel scores strongly against the NPPF purposes, preventing the encroachment of urban development into largely unspoilt, open countryside (Purpose 3). The Parcel also scores weakly against Purpose 2, forming a small

part of the less essential gap between Edenbridge and Sevenoaks, Sevenoaks Weald and Leigh.

However, an area in the west of the Parcel at the edge of Edenbridge (RA-8) may score weakly if considered alone. This area, comprising residential properties, playing fields and leisure facilities, has suffered historic encroachment and possesses a more semi-urban character when compared with the largely unspoilt, rural feel of areas to the east. Dense, established planted woodland along the eastern edge of the area increase its sense of enclosure and separation from the wider countryside, further reducing its role in meeting Purpose 3. Furthermore, this area is of such a small scale and has a sufficiently strong relationship with the edge of Edenbridge that it plays almost no role in maintaining the gaps to Sevenoaks, Sevenoaks Weald and Leigh (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 28 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the west at the edge of Edenbridge (RA-8) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-10



RA-10 is located to the south of Brasted, at the northern edge of Green Belt Parcel 36.

The wider Parcel scores strongly against the NPPF purposes, particularly in relation to Purpose 3 by preventing the encroachment of urban development into unspoilt, rural areas throughout much of the Parcel. The Parcel also plays a moderate role in relation to Purpose 3 by maintaining the scale of the wider gaps between Edenbridge and Sevenoaks, and Westerham and Edenbridge, and preventing ribbon development along the A25 between Westerham, Brasted and Sundridge. It is also noted that the north-west of the Parcel plays a role in maintaining the unique setting of Westerham’s historic core (Purpose 4).

However, a small area in the north of the Parcel along the southern edge of Brasted (RA-10) may score weakly if considered alone. Much of this area has been subject to encroachment in the form of residential properties, and is both visually and physically separated from the wider countryside to the south by a prominent ridgeline, lined with mature planted features. This gives the area a semi-urban character and limits its role in preventing encroachment (Purpose 3). While the role of the Green Belt around Brasted in preventing coalescence with neighbouring Sundridge and Westerham is noted, it is judged that this small-scale area to the south plays no role in maintaining these gaps by preventing ribbon development (Purpose 2), while it is physically removed from Westerham and does not contribute to the town’s setting or special character (Purpose 4).

Recommendation: Parcel 36 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north at the edge of Brasted (RA-10) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-12

RA-12 is located to the north of Brasted, at the southern edge of Green Belt Parcel 45.

The wider Parcel scores strongly against the NPPF purposes, particularly in relation to Purpose 2 by maintaining the narrow, essential gaps between Westerham, Brasted and Sundridge. The Parcel also meets Purpose 3 strongly by preventing encroachment into areas of unspoilt, open countryside, particularly in the eastern and western parts.

However, an area to the north of Brasted (RA-12) may score weakly if considered alone. This area, at Church Road, Coles Lane, Rectory Lane and Brasted Hill Road, has suffered encroachment with built-form dispersed throughout, primarily residential dwellings. The eastern part of the area is divided into smaller, compartmentalised areas of open land with limited connectivity to the wider countryside, enclosed by established planted features and interspersed with residential properties set in large gardens. The western part contains a higher concentration of built form, including large properties set in grounds and more regular, planned housing developments at Thorn's Meadow and St Martins Meadow. These areas in particular have a semi-urban character, while the whole

of the area has a strong sense of connection to the settlement edge of Brasted as opposed to the wider countryside, with a contrasting character to the more open, rural areas immediately to the west and north-east (Purpose 3). Despite the important role of the wider Parcel, this area is not physically part of the gap between Brasted and surrounding settlements and plays a lesser role in preventing coalescence (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 45 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the centre at the edge of Brasted (RA-12) may score weakly and could be considered further. Adjacent RA-11 (Parcel 49) has a strong functional and physical relationship to RA-12; these Recommended Areas may therefore warrant joint consideration.

RA-13



RA-13 is located to the south of Sundridge, at the northern edge of Green Belt Parcel 36.

The wider Parcel scores strongly against the NPPF purposes, particularly in relation to Purpose 3 by preventing the encroachment of urban development into unspoilt, rural areas throughout much of the Parcel. The Parcel also plays a

moderate role in relation to Purpose 3, maintaining the scale of the wider gaps between Edenbridge and Sevenoaks, and Westerham and Edenbridge, and preventing ribbon development along the A25 between Westerham, Brasted and Sundridge. It is also noted that the north-west of the Parcel plays a role in maintaining the unique setting of Westerham's historic core (Purpose 4).

However, a small area in the north of the Parcel along the southern edge of Sundridge (RA-13) may score weakly if considered alone. This area, consisting of managed open space and grassland, is both visually and physically separated from the wider countryside to the south by a prominent ridgeline, lined with mature planted features, as well as existing residential development immediately to the east and west. This gives the area a semi-urban character and limits its role in preventing encroachment (Purpose 3). While the role of the Green Belt around Brasted in preventing coalescence with neighbouring Sundridge and Westerham is noted, it is judged that this small-scale area to the south plays no role in maintaining these gaps by preventing ribbon development (Purpose 2), while it is physically removed from Westerham and does not contribute to the town's setting or special character (Purpose 4).

Recommendation: Parcel 36 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north at the edge of Sundridge (RA-13) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-14



RA-14 is located to the south-west of Sevenoaks, consisting of the northern part of Green Belt Parcel 47.

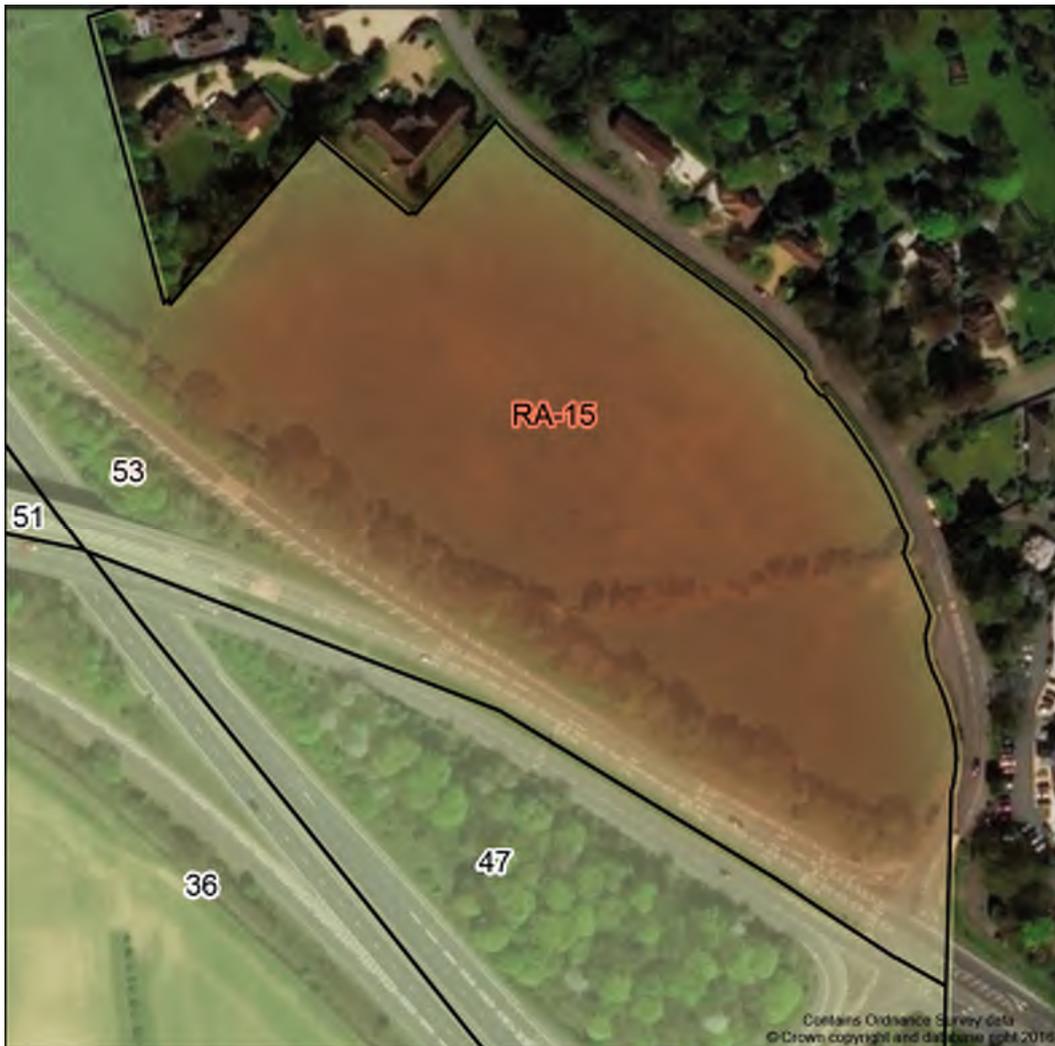
The wider Parcel scores moderately against the NPPF purposes, preventing the outward sprawl of Sevenoaks into open land (Purpose 1), forming part of the wider gap between Sevenoaks and Sundridge (Purpose 2) and preventing the encroachment of urban development into the countryside (Purpose 3).

However, a sub-area in the north of the Parcel (RA-14) plays a lesser role in relation to these purposes and may score weakly if considered alone. The area to the west of Bank Lane has a strong sense of enclosure, with development wrapping around to the north and partially to the east, and the A21 (along with associated dense planted buffers) severing connectivity of this area to the wider countryside. Together with the area's small scale, these factors limit the area's performance in terms of Purpose 1. While the Parcel is part of the gap between Sevenoaks and Sundridge, this represents only a small proportion of the gap and the area is disconnected from the countryside to the west which forms this strategic open gap (Purpose 2). In relation to Purpose 3, the area is visually and physically connected to the edge of Sevenoaks as opposed to the wider

countryside, primarily as a result of dense planted buffers, severance by infrastructure and topography, with the area sloping upwards towards Back Lane.

Recommendation: Parcel 47 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north at the edge of Sevenoaks (RA-14) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-15



RA-15 is located to the west of Sevenoaks, consisting of the southern part of Green Belt Parcel 53.

The wider Parcel scores moderately against the NPPF purposes, preventing the outward sprawl of Sevenoaks into open land (Purpose 1) and preventing the encroachment of urban development into the countryside (Purpose 3). The Parcel also meets Purpose 2 weakly, forming a small, less essential part of the gap between Sevenoaks and Sundridge.

However, a sub-area in the south of the Parcel (RA-15) may score weakly against these purposes if considered alone. Although this area is open and comprises paddock fields, its strong visual connection to the edge of Sevenoaks (Homedean

Road), small scale and sense of enclosure from built development to the north and east, and road infrastructure to the south and west, limits its contribution to both Purposes 1 and 3.

Recommendation: Parcel 53 meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south at the edge of Sevenoaks (RA-15) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-16



RA-16 is located to the south-east of Sevenoaks, in the north-eastern part of Green Belt Parcel 38.

The wider Parcel scores strongly against the NPPF purposes, particularly in relation to preventing encroachment into largely unspoilt countryside (Purpose 3). The Parcel also: plays an important role in preventing the outward sprawl of Sevenoaks (Purpose 1); scores moderately against Purpose 2 by maintaining the wider gaps between Sevenoaks, Hildenborough and other settlements further east; and meets Purpose 4 weakly by maintaining the wider setting of the historic core of Sevenoaks.

However, a small sub-area in the north-western corner of the Parcel (RA-16) may meet the purposes weakly if considered separately. This area is effectively ‘enclosed’ by built development to the north, east and west, and separated from the wider Knole Park parkland to the south by a planted lane and existing ribbon development. This would check the outward sprawl of the large built-up area (Purpose 1). As the area is effectively enveloped within the existing settlement footprint, it also plays no role in preventing coalescence between settlements (Purpose 2). Furthermore, this area has a very different character to the countryside immediately to the south. While it is largely open, the existing uses are a golf driving range and small scale paddock fields, and the area is influenced by existing urban built form which is visible as a result of local topography. The area has a semi-urban character and plays a limited role in preventing encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3). It plays no role in relation to Purpose 4, as the historic area of Sevenoaks is some distance to the south.

Recommendation: Parcel 38 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north-east at the edge of Sevenoaks (RA-16) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-17

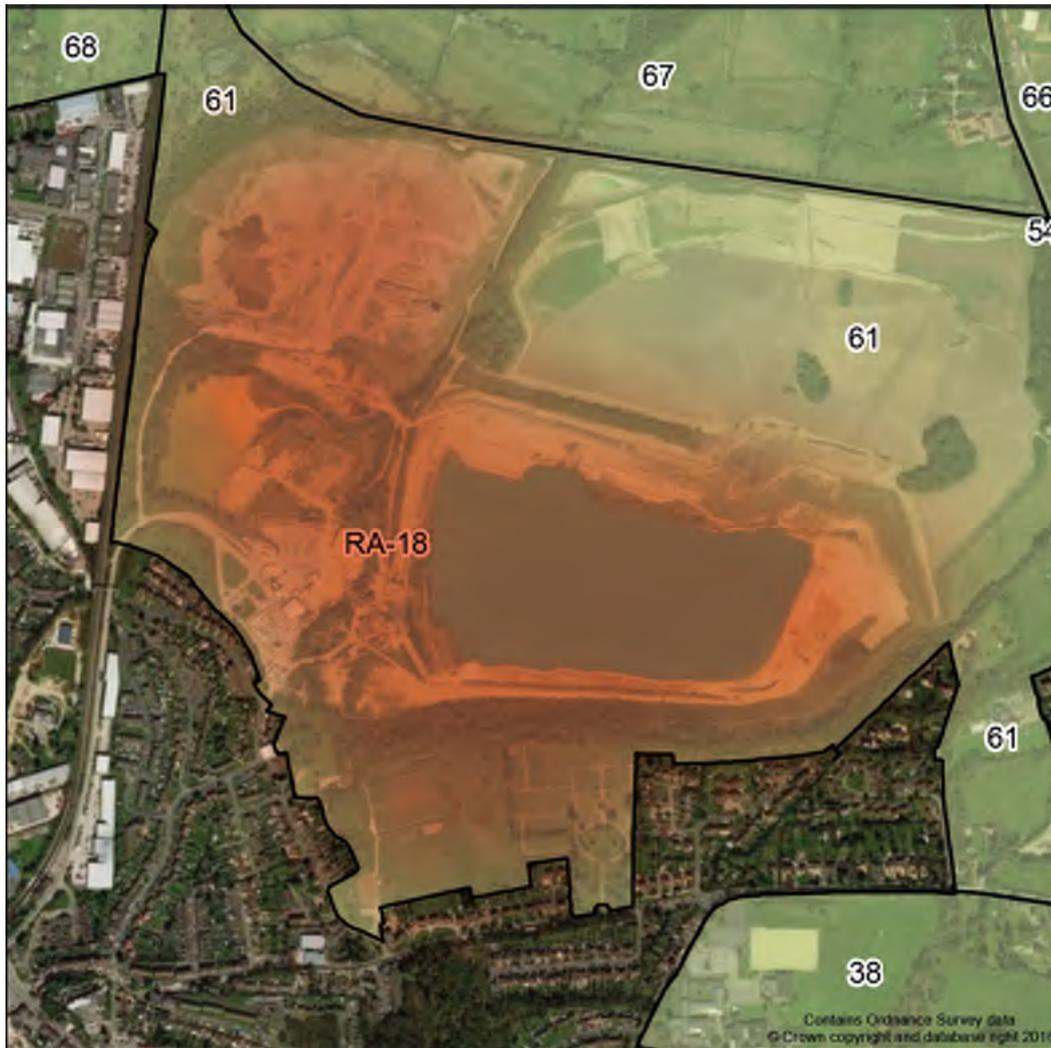


RA-17 is located to the north of Sevenoaks, at the southern edge of Green Belt Parcel 58.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes moderately, preventing the outward sprawl of Sevenoaks (Purpose 1), maintaining the wider gap between Sevenoaks and Otford (Purpose 2) and preventing encroachment into open countryside (Purpose 3).

However, an area in the south of the Parcel (RA-17) may score weakly if considered alone. This area, bounded by the edge of dense woodland to the north and Sevenoaks to the south, comprises land of a semi-urban, urban fringe character which has been subject to some previous encroachment and, in many cases, has a strong visual relationship with the wider settlement edge (Purpose 3). The area feels disconnected from the nature reserve to the north and is effectively 'enclosed' within the existing settlement footprint of Sevenoaks, thus plays a limited role in preventing outward sprawl (Purpose 1). This also limits its contribution to the gap between Sevenoaks and Otford to the north (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 58 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south at the edge of Sevenoaks (RA-17) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-18

RA-18 is located to the north of Sevenoaks, in the south-western corner of Green Belt Parcel 61.

The wider Parcel meets the Green Belt purposes strongly, in particular by preventing the coalescence of Sevenoaks and Seal (Purpose 2), where the gap is small and scale and has previously suffered encroachment. The Parcel also prevents the outward sprawl of Sevenoaks in areas where the existing edge of the settlement is weakly bounded (Purpose 1), and scores weakly against Purpose 3, preventing encroachment into open land (albeit areas that have a more semi-urban character).

An identified area in the south-west of the Parcel (RA-18) may score weakly against the NPPF purposes if considered alone. This area comprises the extent of the Sevenoaks Quarry, as well as Greatness Recreation Ground and Cemetery. Quarrying and landfill activity has had a substantial impact on this area, which no longer has any connection with the wider countryside in visual or functional terms, while the southern part of the area has an urban character, thus playing a very limited role in preventing encroachment (Purpose 3). Additionally, while the eastern and northern areas of the Parcel continue to form an important strategic

gap between Sevenoaks and both Seal and Otford, the sub-area is effectively severed from these gaps and plays a limited role in preventing the merging of settlements (Purpose 2). Furthermore, given its semi-urban character and the level of existing development that has occurred here, as well as its stronger relationship with the surrounding settlement, its role in preventing further sprawl is also reduced (Purpose 1).

Recommendation: Parcel 61 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south-east at the edge of Sevenoaks (RA-18) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-20



RA-20 is located to the north of Sevenoaks, at the southern edge of Green Belt Parcel 68.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, particularly in terms of Purpose 2, maintaining a sizeable proportion of the small and essential gap between Sevenoaks and Otford. The Parcel also plays an important role in preventing the outward sprawl of Sevenoaks (Purpose 1).

However, a small area in the south of the Parcel (RA-20) has a contrasting character to the wider Parcel and may score less strongly if considered alone. This area, comprising low density structures in commercial/light industrial uses, is functionally attached to the settlement as opposed to the wider countryside and plays no role in preventing encroachment (Purpose 3). Additionally, the area's very small scale and relative enclosure limit its contribution to preventing sprawl (Purpose 1) or maintaining the gap between Sevenoaks and Otford (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 68 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south-east at the edge of Sevenoaks (RA-20) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-21



RA-21 is located to the south of Kemsing, in the centre of Green Belt Parcel 66.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes moderately by forming part of the wider gap between Sevenoaks and Kemsing, as well as the less essential gap between Kemsing and Ightham (Purpose 2) and preventing encroachment into largely open countryside (Purpose 3).

However, a small area in the centre of the Parcel at Noah’s Ark (RA-21) may meet the purposes less strongly if considered alone. This area has a different character to the wider Parcel, having suffered encroachment from residential and small-scale commercial development (ribbon development along Noah’s Ark and estate development at Greenlands Road). It has a semi-urban feel and plays a limited role in preventing encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3). Given the area is already largely developed and connected to the existing settlement of Kemsing to the north, it also plays no role as part of the wider, open gap between Kemsing and settlements to the south, east and west (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 66 meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the centre at Noah’s Ark (RA-21) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-22



RA-22, located north-west of Sevenoaks and west of Otford, is in the southern part of Green Belt Parcel 76.

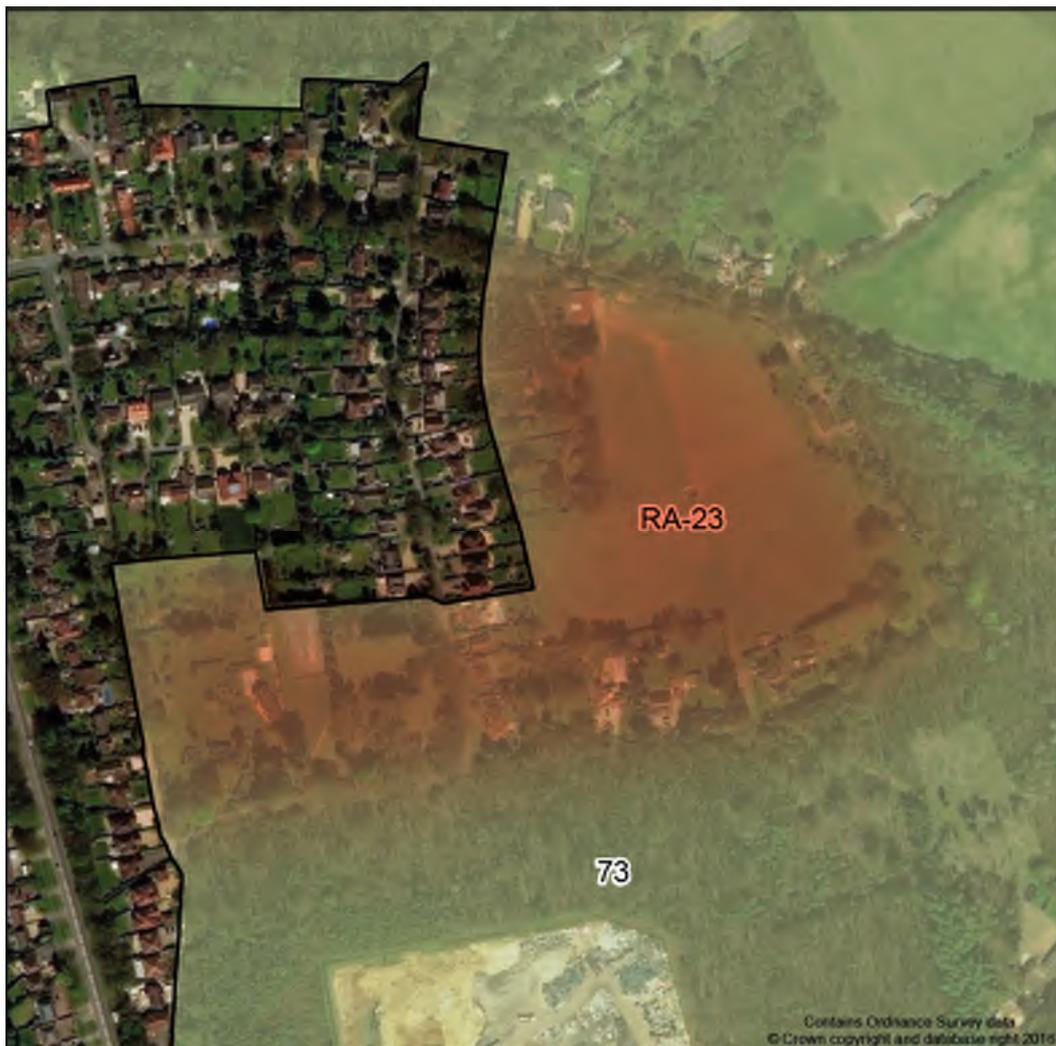
The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, particularly in relation to Purpose 2 by maintaining the essential gaps between Knockholt, Halstead and

Badgers Mount. It also plays an important role in preventing the outward sprawl of Greater London (Purpose 1) and preventing encroachment into largely open countryside (Purpose 3).

However, it is judged that an identified sub-area in the south of the Parcel incorporating the Fort Halstead site (RA-22) may score weakly against the NPPF purposes if considered alone. It constitutes an extensive area of existing encroachment and possesses a semi-urban character (Purpose 3). It is generally inward facing, separated from the wider countryside by extensive, dense planted buffers, thus limiting its role in preventing coalescence between settlements (Purpose 2). Furthermore, its distance from the edge of Greater London and its status as a standalone built-up area means that it would not constitute 'sprawl' (Purpose 1).

Recommendation: Parcel 76 meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south at Fort Halstead (RA-22) may score weakly and could be considered further, although it is noted that this site is already one of the Council's identified Major Developed Employment Sites in the Green Belt.

RA-23



RA-23 is located to the east of Badgers Mount, in the west of Green Belt Parcel 73.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, particularly in relation to Purpose 2 by maintaining the narrow, essential gaps between Badgers Mount and Shoreham, and between Badgers Mount and Otford. It also prevents the encroachment of urban development into countryside that is largely unspoilt in character (Purpose 3).

However, it is judged that an identified sub-area at the edge of Badgers Mount (RA-23) may score weakly against the NPPF purposes if considered alone. Much of the area has been subject to encroachment, with residential properties and gardens dispersed across the south, east and north-west of the area. This area has a semi-urban character and is functionally and visually linked to Badgers Mount, playing a limited role in preventing encroachment into the countryside (Purpose 3). Additionally, it is of such a small scale that it plays little role in preventing settlements from merging (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 73 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the west at the edge of Badgers Mount (RA-23) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-24



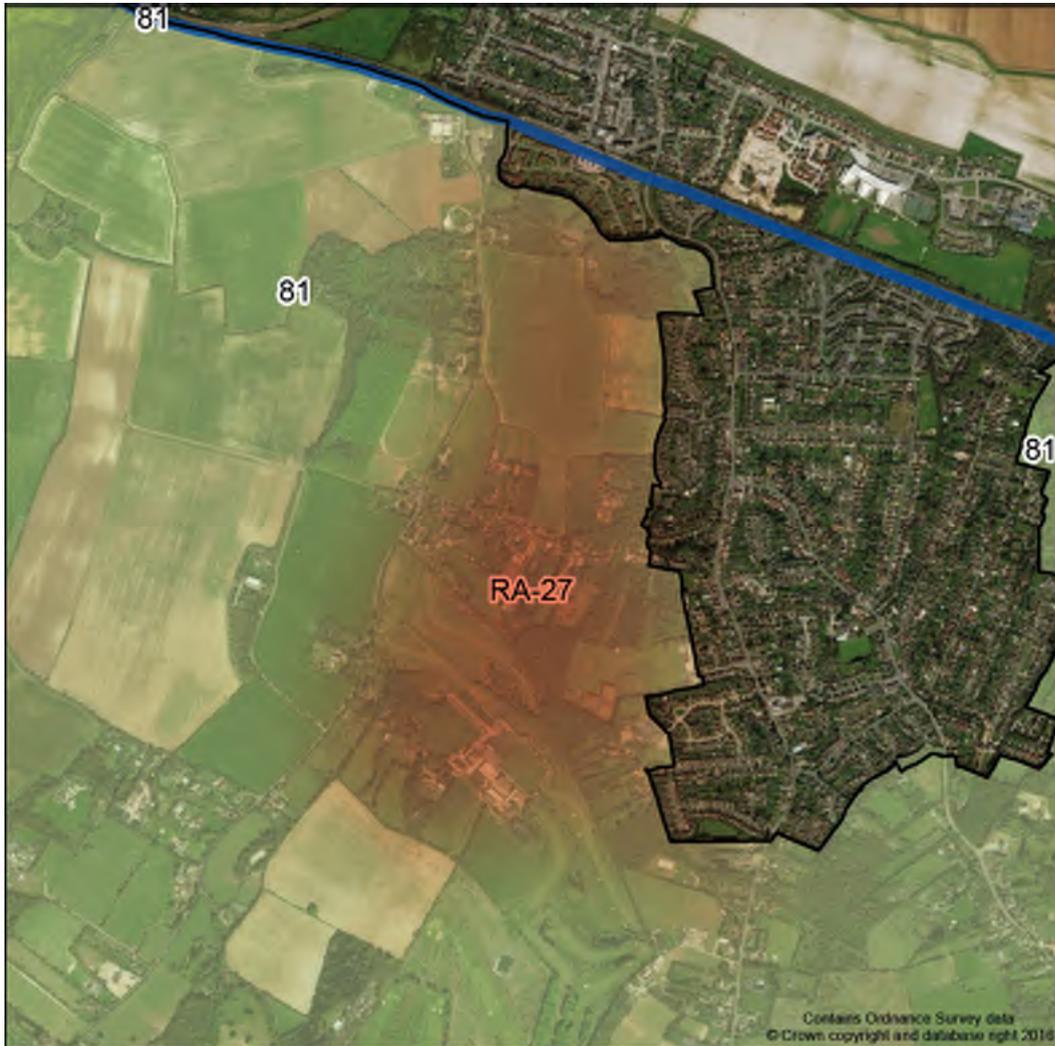
RA-24 is located to the south-east of West Kingsdown, in the north-eastern part of Green Belt Parcel 78.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, particularly in relation to Purpose 3 by preventing encroachment into unspoilt countryside. The Parcel also meets Purpose 2 moderately by maintaining a series of wider gaps between settlements, including West Kingsdown and Farningham, Eynsford and Kemsing.

However, an area in the north-east of the Parcel (RA-24) may score weakly if considered alone. This area has suffered encroachment, including residential development along School Lane, London Road and The Grove, low density structures at the former National School and leisure facilities in the north-west. Although much of the identified area is in agricultural use, it is separated from the wider countryside by wooded buffers and roads, and subject to a number of urbanising influences around its edges (Purpose 3). Additionally, this area plays a limited role in preventing the merging of settlements, as the gap between West Kingsdown and Kemsing is sufficiently large in scale that they are unlikely to coalesce (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 78 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north-east at the edge of West Kingsdown (RA-24) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-27



RA-27 is located to the west of Hartley, in the north-eastern part of Green Belt Parcel 81.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, in particular by maintaining the essential gaps between Hartley, New Ash Green and Horton Kirby (Purpose 2). The Parcel also prevents encroachment into open countryside (Purpose 3) and, in the immediate vicinity of New Ash Green, makes a minor contribution protecting the wider setting of the historic settlement (Purpose 4).

However, a broad sub-area in the north-east of the Parcel at the edge of Hartley (RA-27) may score less strongly against the purposes if considered alone. This area has been subject to some encroachment, including residential and light-industrial development along Fawkham Road, Valley Road and Castle Hill, and sports facilities in the south of the area. Although much of the area has an open character, there are a number of urbanising influences that diminish its rural

character. Additionally, the area has a strong sense of enclosure and limited connectivity to the countryside further west as a result of local topography (Purpose 3). It is noted that the area plays a lesser role in preventing the coalescence of settlements, as Horton Kirby is a substantial distance to the west (Purpose 2), and the area does not form part of the rural area around the settlement of New Ash Green (Purpose 4).

Recommendation: Parcel 81 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north-east at the edge of Hartley (RA-27) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-28



RA-28 is located adjacent to Horton Kirby, in the north-western part of Green Belt Parcel 81.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, in particular by maintaining the essential gaps between Hartley, New Ash Green and Horton Kirby (Purpose 2). The Parcel also prevents encroachment into open countryside (Purpose 3).

However, a small sub-area in the north-west of the Parcel (RA-28) may score less strongly against the purposes if considered alone. This area is effectively set within the existing settlement form of Horton Kirby. The southern area is enveloped by development on all sides and separated from the wider countryside physically and visually. While it retains an open character, the proximity to urbanising influences significantly reduces its contribution to preventing encroachment (Purpose 3). The northern part of the area has been encroached by development and functions as part of the settlement, thus has a semi-urban character. Given the area is effectively within the settlement form of Horton Kirby, it also makes no contribution to preventing the coalescence of settlements (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 81 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the north-west at Horton Kirby (RA-28) may score weakly and could be considered further.

RA-29



RA-29 is located to the north-east of Swanley, in the southern part of Green Belt Parcel 93.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, in particular by preventing encroachment into unspoilt rural areas (Purpose 3). The Parcel also scores moderately against Purpose 2, forming part of the wider gap between Swanley and South Darent / Horton Kirby, and plays an important role in preventing the outward sprawl of Swanley (Purpose 1).

However, a sub-area in the south of the Parcel (RA-29) may score less strongly against the purposes if considered alone. This has suffered encroachment from development including the Olympic club and golf driving range which severs the degraded open land to the south from the wider countryside, and diminishes its rural character. The sub-area also plays a limited role in relation to Purpose 1, as a result of its small scale and envelopment by existing development and infrastructure. The sub-area does not form a discernible part of the gap between Swanley and South Darent / Horton Kirby (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 93 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south at the edge of Swanley (RA-29) may score weakly and could be considered further. Adjacent RA-31 (Parcel 93) has a strong functional and physical relationship to RA-29; these Recommended Areas may therefore warrant joint consideration.

RA-30



RA-30 consists of much of Green Belt Parcel 94, located immediately to the south-west of Swanley.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes moderately, preventing the outward sprawl of Swanley (Purpose 1) and forming a small part of the wider gap between Swanley and Greater London (Purpose 2). It also contributes weakly to Purpose 3, preventing encroachment into open land.

However, a sub-area in the south of the Parcel (RA-30) may score weakly if considered alone. This area is ‘enclosed’ within the built-up area of Swanley, with development wrapping around to the east and north, and the A20 severing linkage to the wider countryside (Purpose 1). It is of a relatively small scale in terms of the wider gap to London to the west (Purpose 2) and has suffered encroachment from low density structures in the northern part, comprising retail, commercial and light-industrial uses. It is also strongly aligned with the prominent settlement edge to the east (Purpose 3).

Recommendation: Parcel 94 meets the NPPF purposes moderately, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified areas in the south at the edge of Swanley (RA-30) may score weakly and could be considered further, although it is noted

the southern section of the Recommended Area comprises only a small slither of land between the built-up area of Swanley and the A20.

RA-31



RA-31 is located to the north-east of Swanley, in the southern part of Green Belt Parcel 93.

The wider Parcel meets the NPPF purposes strongly, in particular by preventing encroachment into unspoilt rural areas (Purpose 3). The Parcel also scores moderately against Purpose 2, forming part of the wider gap between Swanley and South Darenth / Horton Kirby, and plays an important role in preventing the outward sprawl of Swanley (Purpose 1).

However, a sub-areas in the south of the Parcel (RA-31) may score less strongly against the purposes if considered alone. The Recommended Area is a distinct, urban-fringe area, physically separated from the wider countryside to the north by planted features. This area has been subject to light-industrial use and is more functionally aligned with the edge of Swanley (Purpose 3). The sub-area also plays a limited role in relation to Purpose 1, as a result of its small scale and

envelopment by existing development. The sub-area does not form a discernible part of the gap between Swanley and South Darenth / Horton Kirby (Purpose 2).

Recommendation: Parcel 93 meets the NPPF purposes strongly, but there is scope for sub-division; an identified area in the south at the edge of Swanley (RA-31) may score weakly and could be considered further. Adjacent RA-29 (Parcel 93) has a strong functional and physical relationship to RA-31; these Recommended Areas may therefore warrant joint consideration.

6 Assessment Against Local Considerations

This section considers each of the Recommended Areas (identified in section 5.2) against 'local considerations' in the form of absolute and non-absolute constraints. This process will assist the Council in determining whether there should be any release of Green Belt through the plan-making process, and help identify areas of land which may be less constrained for possible future development. Land covered by absolute constraints is not ruled out from further assessment at this stage on the basis that this assessment provides a high-level overview of constraints likely to preclude development but does not explore potential mitigation that might overcome such a constraints (for example, site configuration or a technical solution). These factors should be considered further through the Council's ongoing plan-making process.

All mapping in this section shows Recommended Areas with a hard edged boundary to ensure the area stands out from other constraints layers in the mapping. However, it should be noted that the boundaries of the Recommended Areas will be subject to further refinement if progressed through the Council's planning-making process.

Absolute constraints are statutory natural and historic environmental constraints that are likely 'show-stoppers' to potential future land use changes. This results in there being little or no value in de-designating affected land from the Green Belt regardless of its fulfilment of the purposes.

This category encompasses:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
- Ramsar;
- Special Protection Areas (SPA);
- Flood Plain (Zone 3b);
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Nationally Registered Park or Garden;
- Ancient Woodland.

Non-absolute constraints are statutory natural and environmental constraints which would make a change of land use less preferable but would not preclude it completely. This category encompasses:

- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Agricultural Land Classification (Grades 1, 2, 3);
- Flood Plain (Zone 3a);
- Conservation Areas;
- Local Wildlife Sites;

- Local Nature Reserves;
- Areas of Archaeological Significance (designated locally);
- Open Space Designations.

6.1 District Overview

This section provides a summary of absolute and non-absolute constraints at the District level. Annex Report 2 provides maps showing all local considerations (absolute and non-absolute) at the District level as follows:

- Maps C.1 – C.5 – absolute constraints;
- Maps C.6 – C.13 – non-absolute constraints;
- Map C.14 – all land covered by absolute constraints in combination; and
- Maps C.15 – C.22 – all land covered by absolute constraints in combination, together with each of the non-absolute constraints.

6.1.1 Absolute Constraints

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Map C.2, Annex Report 2)

SSSIs are protected by law to conserve their wildlife or geology, and are designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Sevenoaks District Council is required to protect these sites from development through development plans. As such they are considered an absolute constraint on development.

There are 17 SSSIs located within the District. These are distributed sporadically across the District; however there is a higher concentration in the centre and north of the District.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) (no map)

SACs are European sites that are strictly protected under the EC Habitats Directive. No SACs are designated within Sevenoaks District.

Ramsar and Special Protection Areas (SPA) (no map)

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. SPAs are designated under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wildlife to safeguard the habitats of migratory and threatened birds. In the UK, Ramsar sites are also SPAs. No Ramsar or SPAs are designated within Sevenoaks District.

Flood Zone (Zone 3b) (Map C.1, Annex Report 2)

Flood Zone 3b, being the highest level of flood zone designation, is identified as land where ‘*water has to flow or be stored in times of flood*’¹⁷ and as such is not suitable for any development other than Essential Infrastructure (where the Exception Test is applied) and Water Compatible uses.

In the north of the District, there is a linear area of Flood Zone 3b stretching from Sundridge to Sevenoaks and from Sevenoaks to South Darent, reflecting the course of the River Darent and its tributaries. In the south of the District, there is a linear area of Flood Zone 3b stretching from Edenbridge in the west to Penshurst in the east, and from Leigh southwards, which reflects the course of the River Eden and the River Medway and their tributaries. Another small area of Flood Zone 3b (Bough Beech Reservoir) is located to the east of Edenbridge.

Scheduled Monuments (Map C.5, Annex Report 2)

Scheduling is a designation for nationally important sites of archaeological character. In England, Scheduled Monuments are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, and recorded on the National Heritage List for England (Historic England). Under the Act, Scheduled Monuments must be preserved as far as possible. As such, Scheduled Monuments are considered an absolute constraint on development.

The District has 29 Scheduled Monuments, located in both Green Belt and non-Green Belt land. These are distributed sporadically across the District. The largest concentration is around Sevenoaks.

Registered Parks and Gardens (Map C.4, Annex Report 2)

Historic England compiles a national Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England in order to encourage their appropriate protection through the statutory planning process and as such are considered an absolute constraint on development. Registered Parks and Gardens can include gardens and grounds of private houses, public parks, cemeteries and other ‘designed’ landscapes.

The District has 17 Registered Parks and Gardens in total, which are located sporadically across the District. There are clusters in the south-east around Penshurst, around Sevenoaks and Westerham, and around Eynsford.

Ancient Woodland (Map C.3, Annex Report 2)

Ancient Woodland is any wooded area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD and all areas are logged on Natural England’s national inventory. Ancient Woodland can be either ancient semi-natural woodland or ancient replanted woodland, and both are offered the same protection in national policy terms.

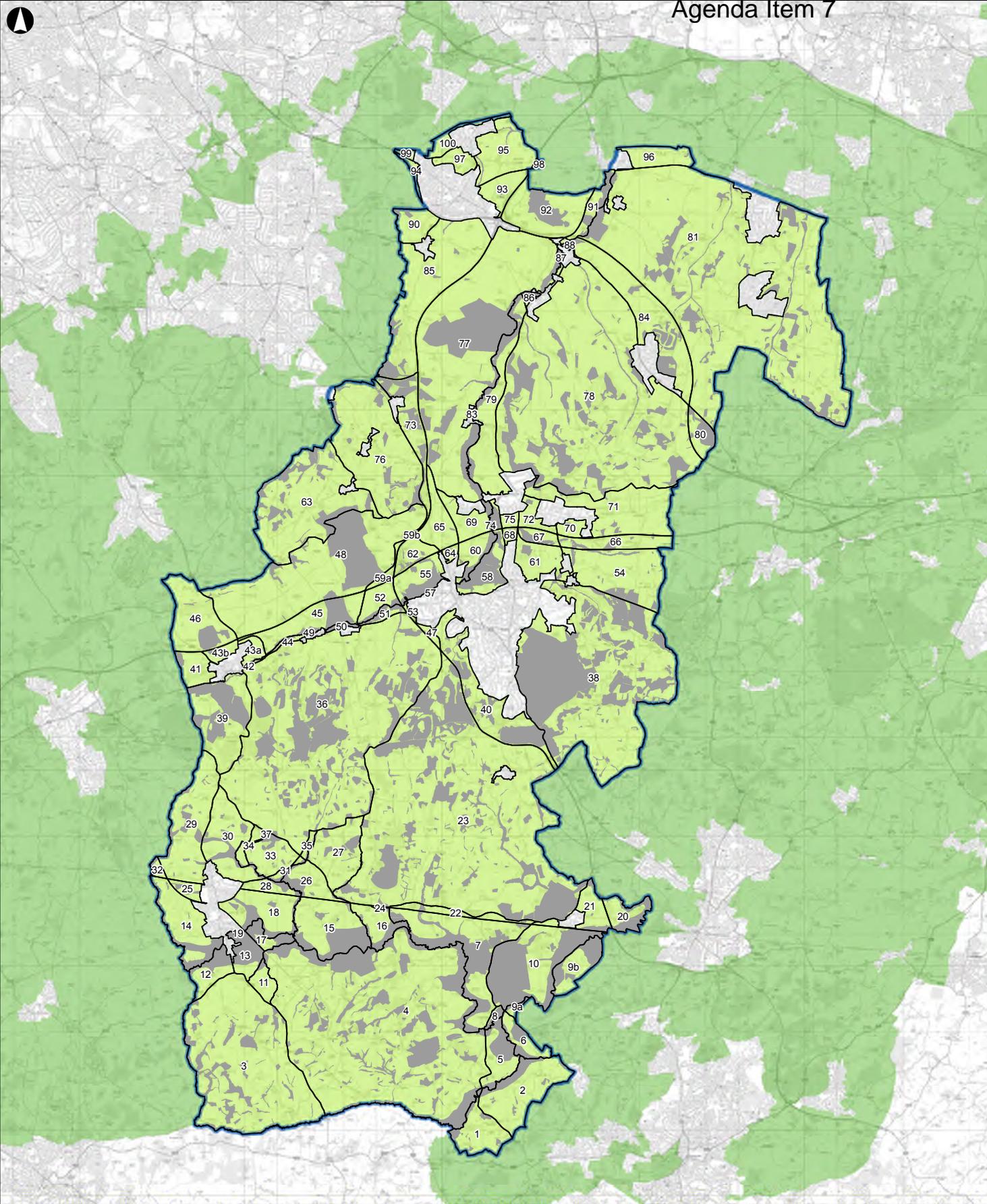
There is a significant portion of the District covered by Ancient Woodland. While this is distributed sporadically across the District, there is a noticeable band across

¹⁷ PPG, Paragraph 067, 2014 (<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change/flood-zone-and-flood-risk-tables/table-3-flood-risk-vulnerability-and-flood-zone-compatibility/>)

the middle of the District from below Westerham in the west, to areas to the south and east of Sevenoaks.

Absolute Constraints in Combination

Map C.14 provides an overview of all absolute constraints in combination across the entirety of the District.



- Legend**
- Combined Absolute Constraints
 - Green Belt Parcel
 - Sevenoaks District Boundary
 - Sevenoaks Green Belt
 - Neighbouring Green Belt

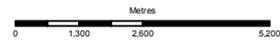
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P1	10-10-2016	RS	ML	AB
Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appr

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Client
Sevenoaks District Council



**Map C.14 Refined Green Belt
 Parcels Following Absolute
 Constraints**

Scale at A3
1:110,000

Job No
251351-00

Drawing Status
Draft

Drawing No
C.14

Issue
P1

6.1.2 Non-Absolute Constraints

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (Map C.10, Annex Report 2)

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Natural England has the power to designate AONBs in England that are outside of national parks and that are considered to have such natural beauty it is desirable they are conserved and enhanced.

While it is recognised that major development may be appropriate in AONB in ‘*exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest*’ (paragraph 116 of the NPPF), thus precluding the designation from being an absolute constraint to a change in land use, the special status of the designation and the weight which natural policy places on its protection is noted.

Over 60% of the District is covered by two AONBs. The majority of the District is covered by the Kent Downs AONB, which surrounds Sevenoaks, stretching north to Swanley and Eynsford, and beyond the District boundaries to the east and west. The south of the District, to the south of Edenbridge, is covered by the High Weald AONB.

Agricultural Land Classification (Grades 1, 2, 3) (Map C.9, Annex Report 2)

Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) assesses the quality of farmland to ensure that the best and most versatile agricultural land is preserved. The quality of agricultural land is identified spatially in Natural England’s Regional ALC Maps across five grades relating to the level of protection it should be afforded. The ALC Maps were originally produced at a strategic level (as a scale of one inch to one mile) between 1967 and 1974, and updated following amendments to the classification system in 1988. Since these changes, more detailed maps have been prepared on a piecemeal basis, including identification of 3a/3b grading; at present these do not cover Sevenoaks District in its entirety and all grade 3a/3b land has not been mapped. As such, for the purpose of consistency across the District, land classified as being Grades 1-3 is considered to be subject to a non-absolute constraint.

The majority of the District is covered by Grade 3 land. There is a small amount of Grade 2 land which is mainly located in a band across the District to the north of Sevenoaks and northwards towards Eynsford, Swanley and Horton Kirby. There is no Grade 1 land within the District.

Flood Zone (Zone 3a) (Map C.6, Annex Report 2)

Flood Zone 3a covers land identified as having a high probability of flooding. Development on Zone 3a land is restricted. Highly Vulnerable development will not be permitted, while essential infrastructure and More Vulnerable uses, such as hospitals, residential and retail premises and landfill, will be subject to the Exceptions Test.

The boundaries for Zone 3a are generally conterminous with those for Zone 3b, being tightly contained within the river valleys. Within the District therefore land constrained by Zone 3a is focussed along the courses of the River Darent, the River Eden, and the River Medway, together with Bough Beech Reservoir.

Conservation Areas (Map C.11, Annex Report 2)

In England and Wales, Local Authorities have the power to designate as a Conservation Area any area of special architectural or historic interest. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Local Authorities have the power to control works and demolition of buildings, amongst other types of development, within a Conservation Area to protect or improve the character of appearance of the area.

The District has 53 Conservation Areas which are distributed sporadically across the District in both Green Belt and non-Green Belt land. There is a large concentration in the centre of the District in and around Sevenoaks, and around Sundridge and Westerham. There is also a cluster of Conservation Areas in the south-east of the District.

Local Wildlife Sites (Map C.7, Annex Report 2)

Local wildlife sites are sites of local importance for nature conservation, but which are not legally protected. These sites are designated by Kent County Council and protect threatened species and habitats acting as buffers, stepping stones and corridors between nationally-designated wildlife sites.

There are 61 Local Wildlife Sites located within the District. While distributed sporadically across the District, there is a concentration in the west between Sevenoaks and Swanley, and in the south of the District to the south of Edenbridge.

Local Nature Reserves (Map C.8, Annex Report 2)

Local Nature Reserves are designated at the local level for places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally.

There are two Local Nature Reserves located within the District: Farningham Woods to the east of Swanley, and Hartley.

Areas of Archaeological Significance (Map C.12, Annex Report 2)

Local Authorities can, through their Local Plan, designate areas which are of Archaeological Significance. Areas of Archaeological Significance are a form of non-designated heritage asset that protects archaeological sites, and the potential knowledge that can be obtained within them, from being harmed by development.

The District has a significant amount of land covered by Areas of Archaeological Significance. While this is distributed sporadically across the District, there is a noticeable concentration in a wide band across the middle of the District around Sevenoaks, a band across the south of the District from Edenbridge to Penshurst, and a band in the north of the District from Sevenoaks to Horton Kirby.

Open Space Designations (Map C.13, Annex Report 2)

Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities and is designated at the local level.

Within Sevenoaks, open space covers a variety of different uses including amenity space and/or equipped play areas, sports pitches, allotments, burial land, parks and gardens, civic spaces, urban fringe or areas of water such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs. Open space designations are distributed across the District, with a particular concentration around Sevenoaks.

6.2 Recommended Area Assessment

This section provides commentary on the presence of absolute and non-absolute constraints within the Recommended Areas identified through the assessment against NPPF purposes (see chapter 5). Keys to the absolute and non-absolute constraints considered for each Recommended Area are provided in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Key for absolute (left) and non-absolute (right) constraints mapping



6.2.1 RA-1

Figure 6.2 RA-1 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

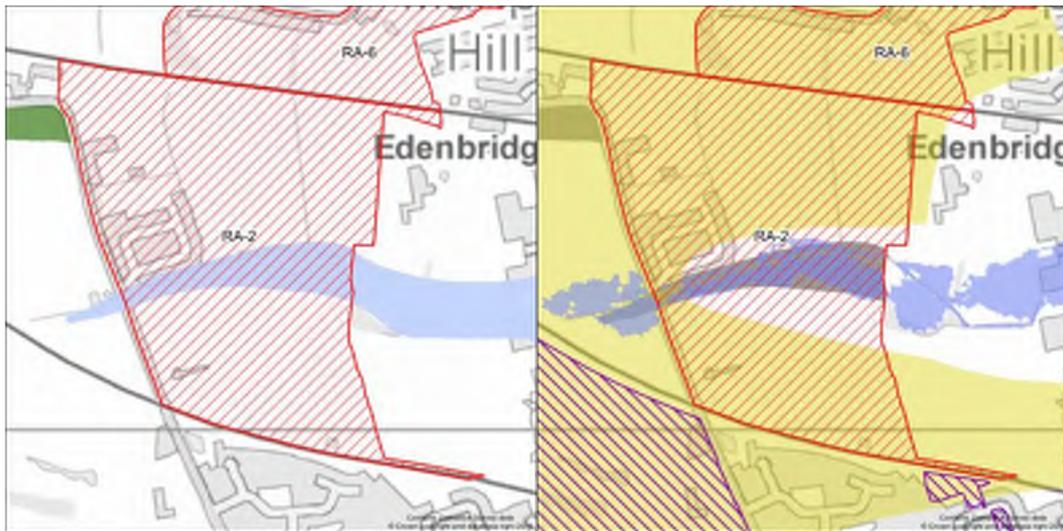
The Recommended Area is entirely within an area of Flood Zone 3b, associated with the River Eden. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The majority of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. The remainder of the Recommended Area does not fall within any non-absolute constraints. There is a Conservation Area (Edenbridge Conservation Area) and an Area of Archaeological Significance adjacent to the western and northern boundary, and a Local Wildlife Site within close proximity to the northern boundary.

6.2.2 RA-2

Figure 6.3 RA-2 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The centre of the Recommended Area is partially within an area of Flood Zone 3b. The remainder of the Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints, although there is an area of Ancient Woodland within close proximity to the western boundary.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The majority of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification with the exception of land in the centre of the Recommended Area which is largely covered by Flood Zone 3a. There are Open Space Designations in close proximity to the south-west and south-east corners of the Recommended Area.

6.2.3 RA-3

Figure 6.4 RA-3 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

Two small portions of the Recommended Area are within an area of Flood Zone 3b; in the north and east. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The eastern and southern sections of the Recommended Area are covered by Open Space Designations, which are also in close proximity to the north-east and south-west. An Area of Archaeological Significance partially covers the western section of the Recommended Area. The rest of the Recommended Area does not contain any non-absolute constraints.

6.2.4 RA-4

Figure 6.5 RA-4 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

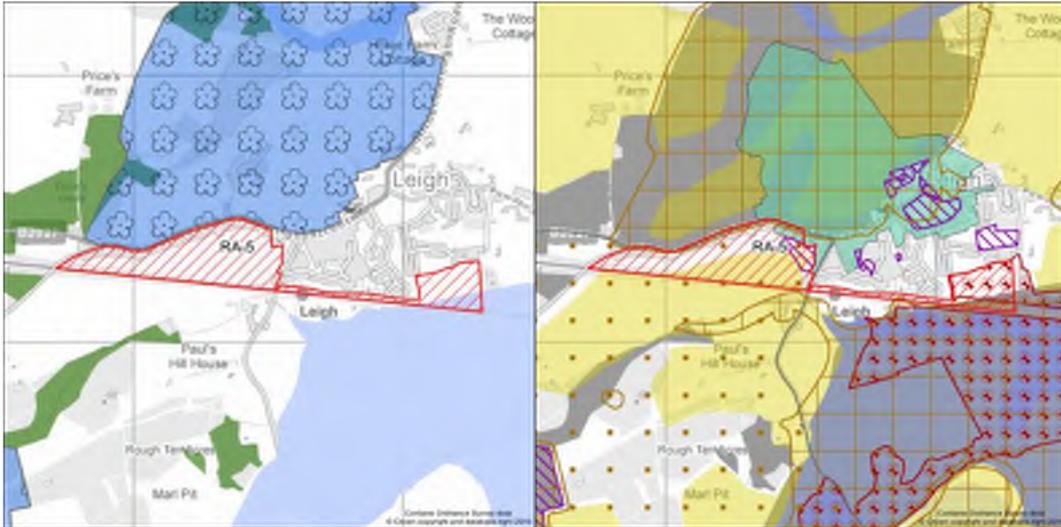
A small portion of the east of the Recommended Area is within an area of Flood Zone 3b associated with a tributary to the River Eden. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is covered in its entirety by an area of the Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. A small portion of the east of the Recommended Area is within an area of Flood Zone 3a, while there are two small areas of Open Space Designations in the south and west.

6.2.5 RA-5

Figure 6.6 RA-5 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

A small portion in the eastern corner of the Recommended Area is within an area of Flood Zone 3b associated with the River Medway. There is a Registered Park and Garden adjacent to the northern boundary (Hall Place) and areas of Ancient Woodland within close proximity to the southern and north-western boundaries.

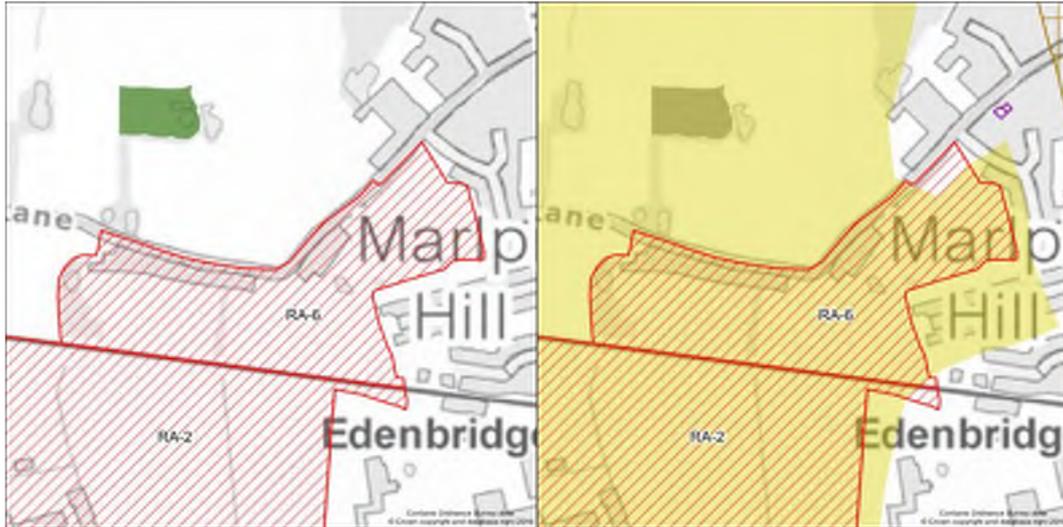
Non-Absolute Constraints

The western section of the Recommended Area is within the High Weald AONB and is also partially covered by Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. A small portion of the western section is also covered by the Leigh Conservation Area, an Area of Archaeological Significance, and an Open Space Designation.

The eastern section of the Recommended Area is within a Local Wildlife Site and is partially covered by an Area of Archaeological Significance. This section of the Recommended Area is in close proximity to an area of Flood Zone 3a associated with the River Medway.

6.2.6 RA-6

Figure 6.7 RA-6 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is almost entirely within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. No other non-absolute constraints are present.

6.2.7 RA-7

Figure 6.8 RA-7 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB, and almost entirely within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. A section of land in the centre/north of the Recommended Area is partially within a Local Wildlife Site and a very small portion in the west is within an Area of Archaeological Significance. Two Open Space Designations are presents; one in the centre and one in the south-east.

6.2.8 RA-8

Figure 6.9 RA-8 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints.

Non-Absolute Constraints

Open Space Designations cover approximately half of the Recommended Area. The east of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. The rest of the Recommended Area (western section) does not contain any non-absolute constraints.

6.2.9 RA-9

Figure 6.10 RA-9 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

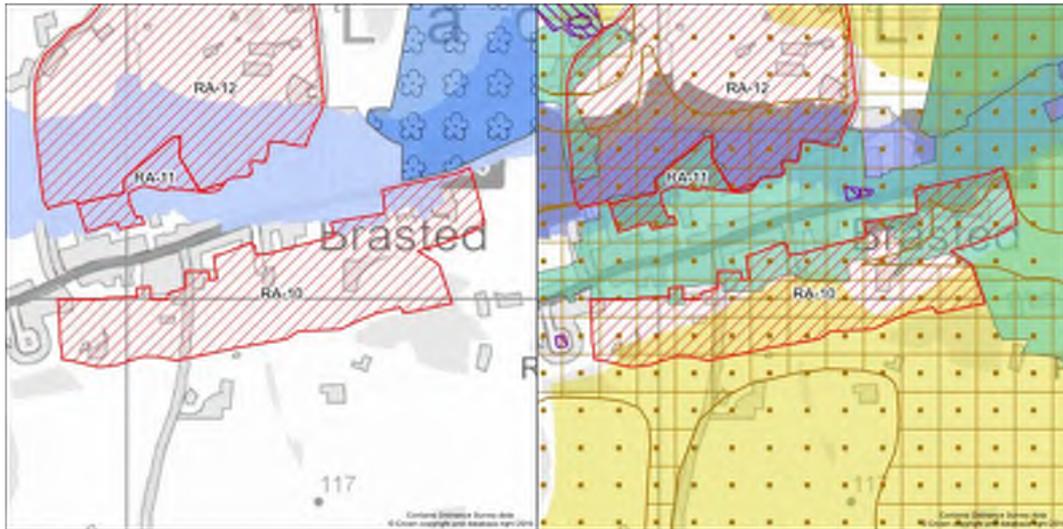
A small portion of land in the north-west of the Recommended Area is covered by a SSSI (Westerham Wood) and an area of Ancient Woodland. The remainder of the Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints, although there is a further section of the Westerham Wood SSSI and Ancient Woodland within close proximity of the northern boundary, to the north of the M25.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB and almost entirely within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. A small portion of land in the east of the Recommended Area is within an Area of Agricultural Land Classification. Open Space Designations cover a central portion of the Recommended Area.

6.2.10 RA-10

Figure 6.11 RA-10 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

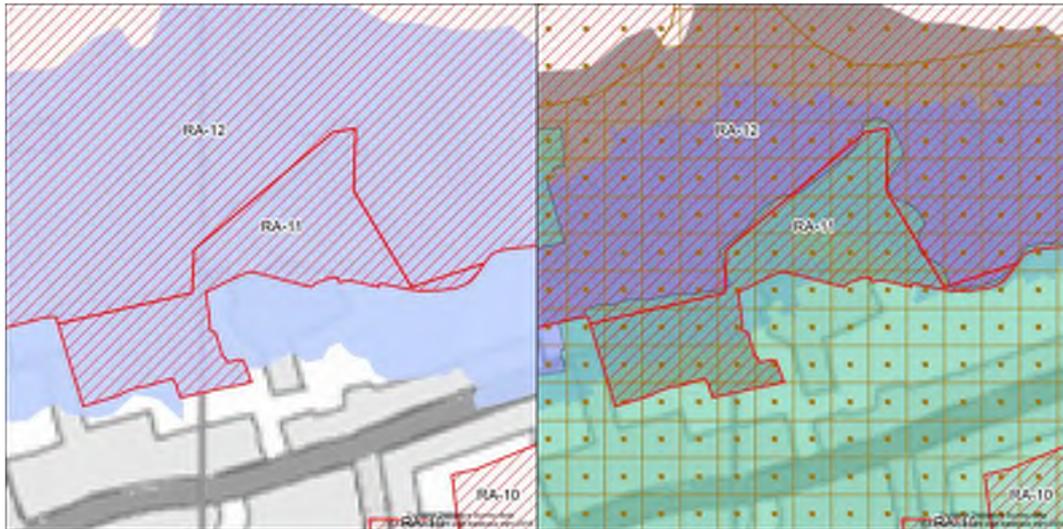
A small portion of land in the north-east of the Recommended Area is within an area of Flood Zone 3b associated with the River Darent. The remainder of the Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints, although there is a Registered Park and Garden (Combe Bank) adjacent to the north-east corner.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB and the majority is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. The north of the Recommended Area is partially within a Conservation Area (Brasted High Street) and a small portion in the north-east is within an area of Flood Zone 3a.

6.2.11 RA-11

Figure 6.12 RA-11 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within an area of Flood Zone 3b, associated with the River Darent. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB and an Area of Archaeological Significance, and almost entirely within a Conservation Area (Brasted High Street) and an area of Flood Zone 3a.

6.2.12 RA-12

Figure 6.13 RA-12 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The south of the Recommended Area is partially within an area of Flood Zone 3b associated with the River Darent. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB. The north of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification and is also partially covered by an area of Open Space Designations. The south (and sections in the east and west) of the Recommended Area is within an Area of Archaeological Significance and an area of Flood Zone 3a. The Recommended Area is partially within two Conservation Areas – Brasted High Street Conservation Area to the south and Brasted Church Conservation Area to the west.

6.2.13 RA-13

Figure 6.14 RA-13 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB and an Area of Archaeological Significance, and largely within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. The Recommended Area is partially within and adjacent to a Conservation Area (Sundridge) along its eastern and western boundaries. An area of Open Space Designation covers the central portion of the Recommended Area.

6.2.14 RA-14

Figure 6.15 RA-14 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

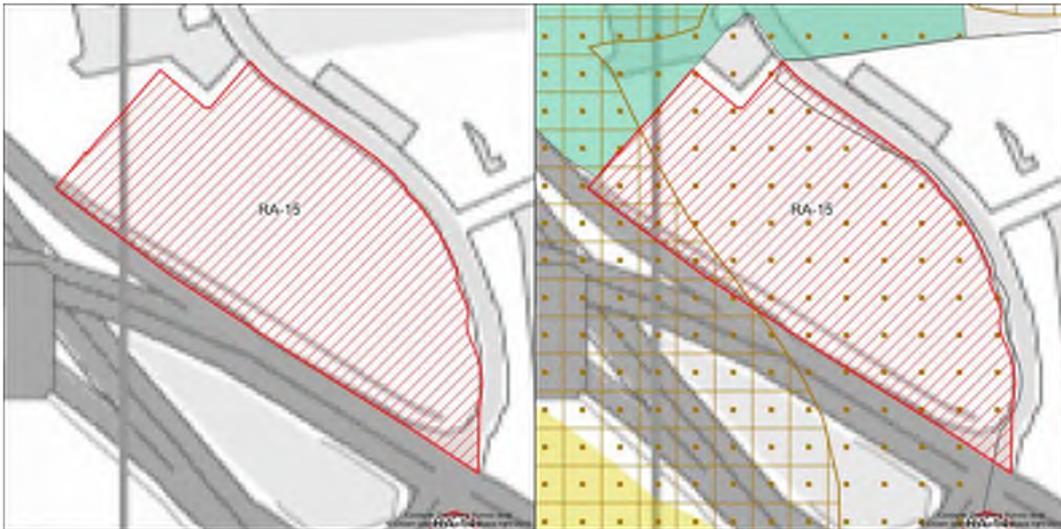
A small portion of land in the west of the Recommended Area is covered by an area of Ancient Woodland. No other absolute constraints are present. There is an SSSI (Dryhill) in close proximity to the west of the Recommended Area (to the south-west of the A21 (Sevenoaks Bypass)).

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is almost entirely within the Kent Downs AONB and an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. The centre and south of the Recommended Area is within an Area of Archaeological Significance. The Recommended Area is adjacent to a Conservation Area (Bessels Green) along its northern boundary, there is a Local Wildlife Site within close proximity to the south-west, and areas of Open Space Designations to the west, north and east.

6.2.15 RA-15

Figure 6.16 RA-15 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is almost entirely within the Kent Downs AONB. A small portion of land in the west of the Recommended Areas is within an Area of Archaeological Significance, and there is a Conservation Area (Chipstead) adjacent to the northern boundary.

6.2.16 RA-16

Figure 6.17 RA-16 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

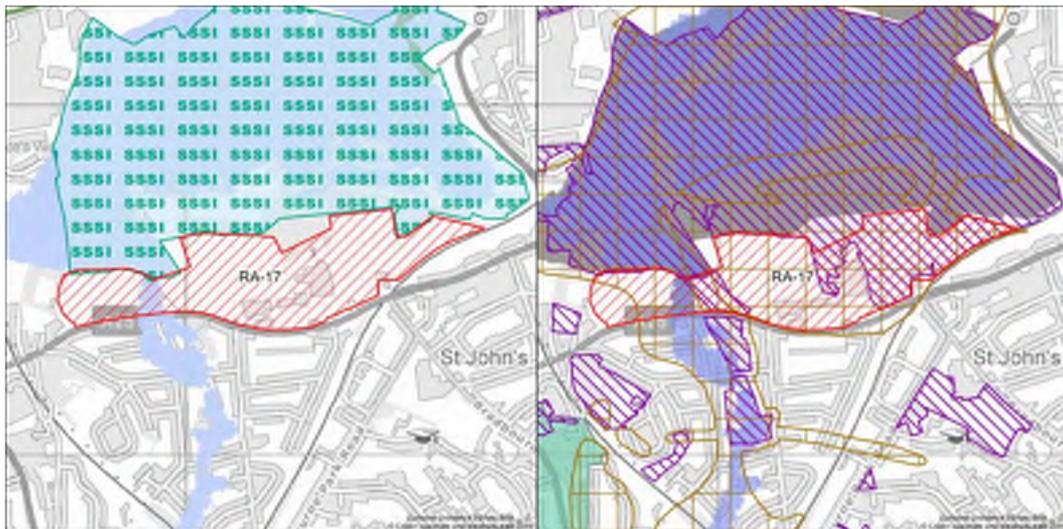
The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints. However, it is adjacent to a SSSI (Knole Park) and Registered Park and Garden (Knole) along its southern boundary, and an area of Flood Zone 3b along its western boundary.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within an Area of Archaeological Significance and almost entirely within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. The Recommended Area is adjacent to the Kent Downs AONB along its southern boundary, a Conservation Area (Wildernesse) on its north-east boundary, and an Open Space Designation to the south.

6.2.17 RA-17

Figure 6.18 RA-17 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

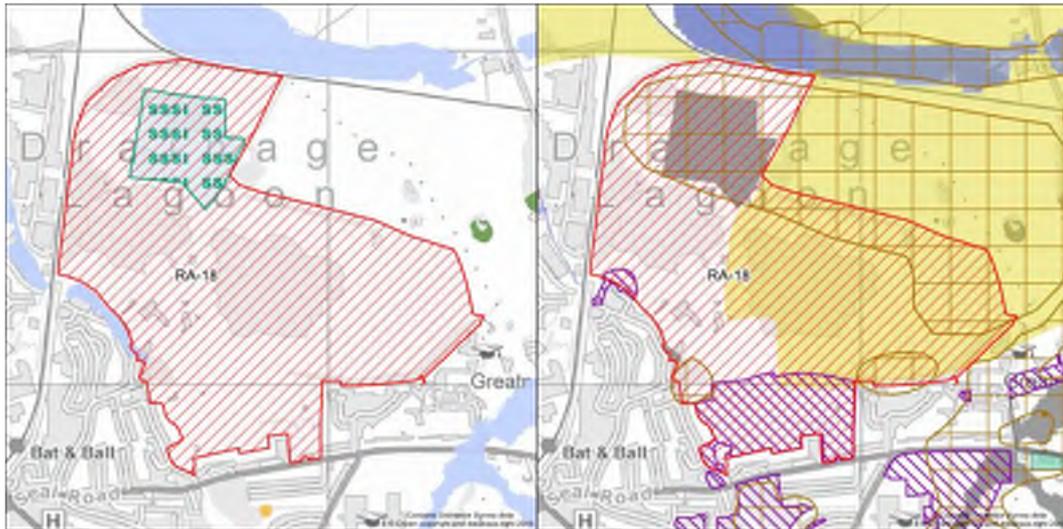
Small portions of the Recommended Area are within a SSSI (Sevenoaks Gravel Pits) which is adjacent to the Recommended Area’s northern boundary, and Flood Zone 3b in the west.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is almost entirely within an Area of Archaeological Significance and a small portion in the west is within an area of Flood Zone 3a. A number of areas covered by Open Space Designations are within, and adjacent to, the Recommended Area.

6.2.18 RA-18

Figure 6.19 RA-18 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

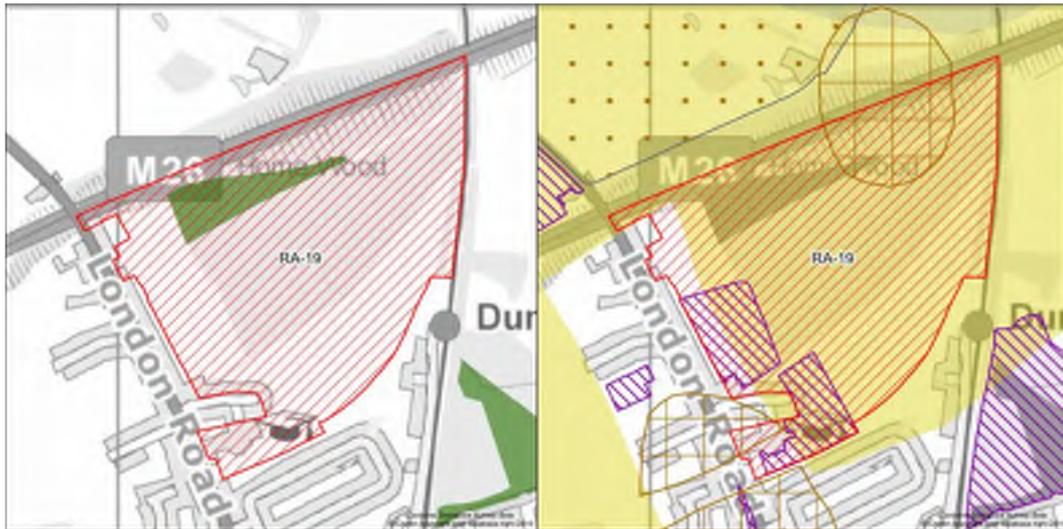
Part of the north of the Recommended Area encompasses a SSSI (Greatness Brickworks) and a small portion in the west is within an area of Flood Zone 3b which is also adjacent to the northern boundary. There is an area of Ancient Woodland within close proximity to the eastern boundary and a Scheduled Monument (Bowl barrow in Millpond Wood) to the south.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The east of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification and Areas of Archaeological Significance covers land in the north, east and south. The south of the Recommended Area contains Open Space Designations. The majority of the western section of the Recommended Area (with the exception of a small area covered by Open Space Designations) does not contain any non-absolute constraints.

6.2.19 RA-19

Figure 6.20 RA-19 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

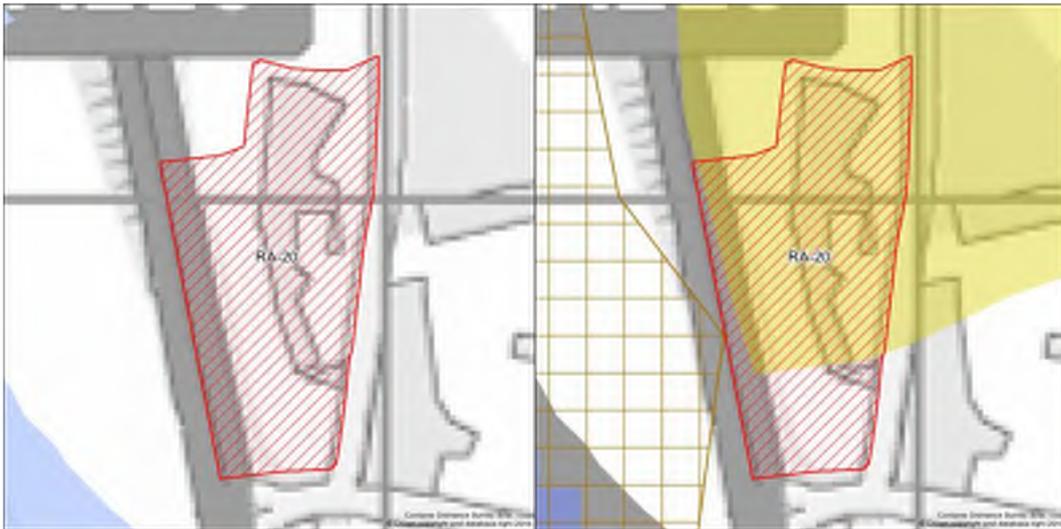
A small portion of the Recommended Area encompasses an area of Ancient Woodland. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is almost entirely within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification and is partially within, and adjacent to, two Areas of Archaeological Significance to the north and south. Two areas in the west/south-west are covered by Open Space Designations. The Kent Downs AONB is located to the north of the M26.

6.2.20 RA-20

Figure 6.21 RA-20 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

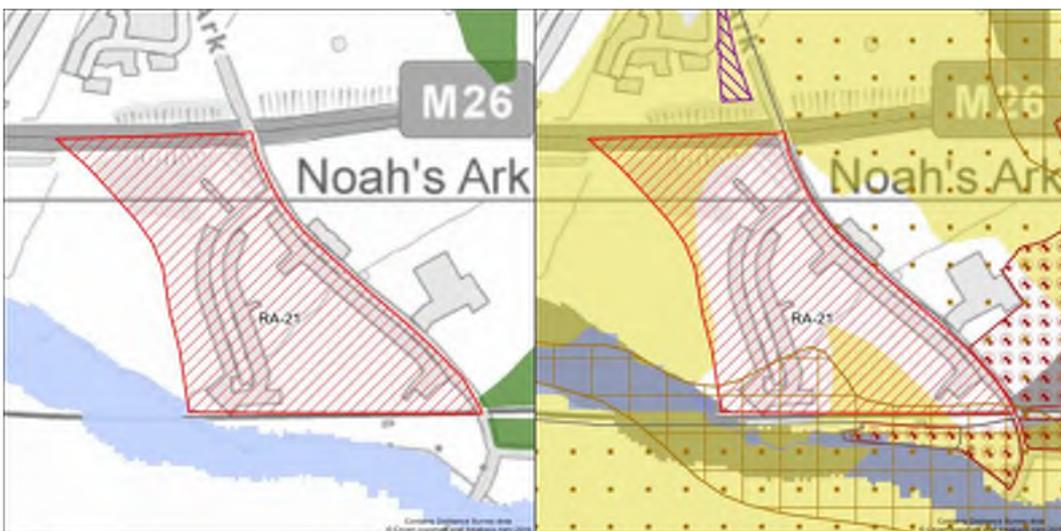
The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The majority of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. No other non-absolute constraints are present, although an Area of Archaeological Significance along its western boundary.

6.2.21 RA-21

Figure 6.22 RA-21 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is nearly entirely clear of absolute constraints, with on a very small portion in the south-west within an area of Flood Zone 3b. No other absolute constraints are present, although there is an area of Ancient Woodland within close proximity to the south-eastern boundary.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is partially within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification in the north-west and south, and an Area of Archaeological Significance is located in the south. The Recommended Area is adjacent to the Kent Downs AONB and a Local Wildlife Site to the south and east.

6.2.22 RA-22

Figure 6.23 RA-22 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area contains, and is adjacent to, a number of areas of Ancient Woodland in the north, east and west. A Scheduled Monument (Fort Halstead) is located in the south-east.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB and is partially within an Area of Archaeological Significance in the south-east an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification in the south-west. Two small areas in the north-west of the Recommended Area are covered by Open Space Designations.

6.2.23 RA-23

Figure 6.24 RA-23 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints. There are areas of Ancient Woodland within close proximity to the southern and northern boundaries.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB and is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site along the southern and eastern boundaries. An area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification is located to the north-east.

6.2.24 RA-24

Figure 6.25 RA-24 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

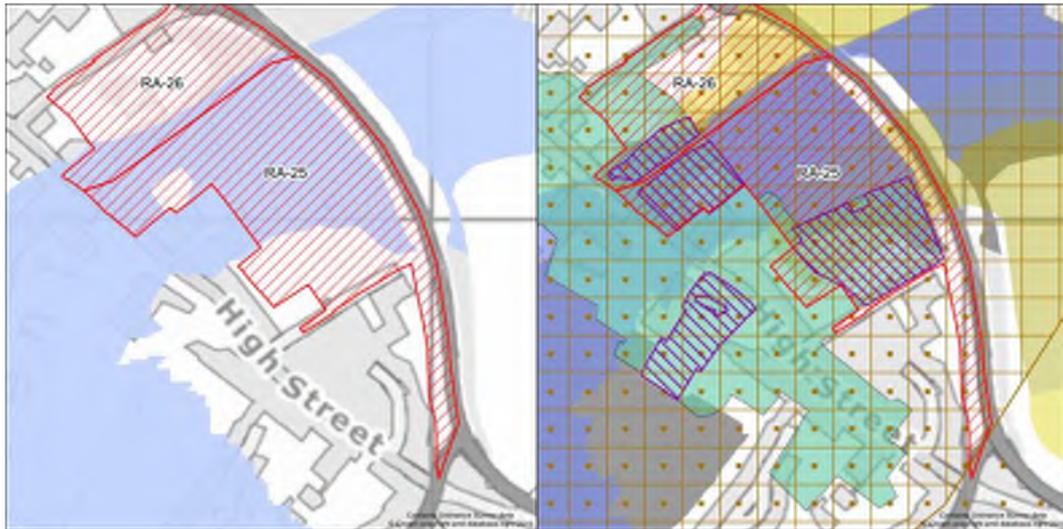
The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints, with the exception of a very small area of Ancient Woodland in the south-west corner. Areas of Ancient Woodland are located to the north, west and south of the Recommended Area.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The majority of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification and approximately half is within the Kent Downs AONB. The north-west corner (and a very small area in the north-eastern corner) are covered by Open Space Designations. The Recommended Area is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site along its southern and western boundaries.

6.2.25 RA-25

Figure 6.26 RA-25 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

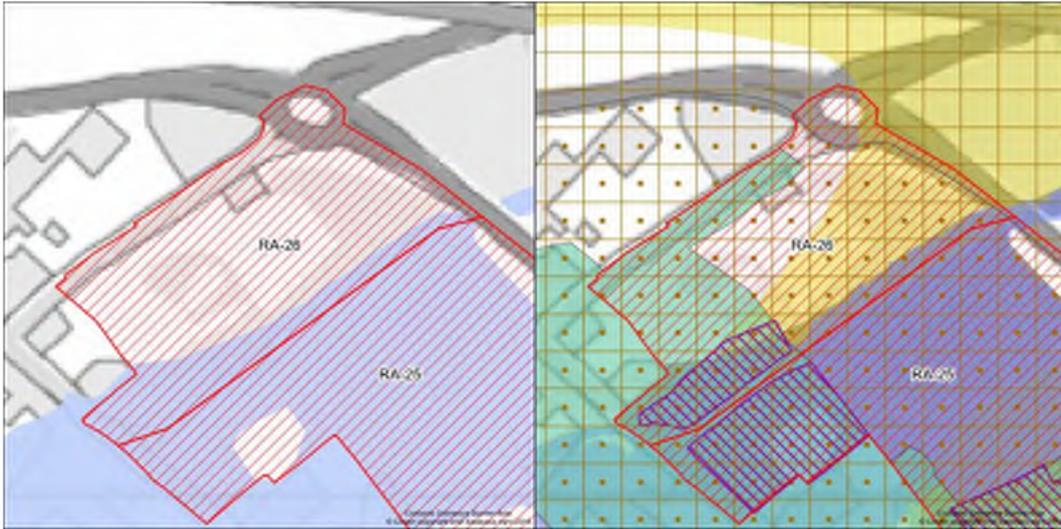
The majority of the Recommended Area is within an area of Flood Zone 3b associated with the River Darent, which is also adjacent to the Recommended Area to the north-east and south-west. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within the Kent Downs AONB and almost entirely within an Area of Archaeological Significance. The Recommended Area is partially covered by an area of Flood Zone 3a, a Conservation Area (Farningham), an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification, and Open Space Designations.

6.2.26 RA-26

Figure 6.27 RA-26 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

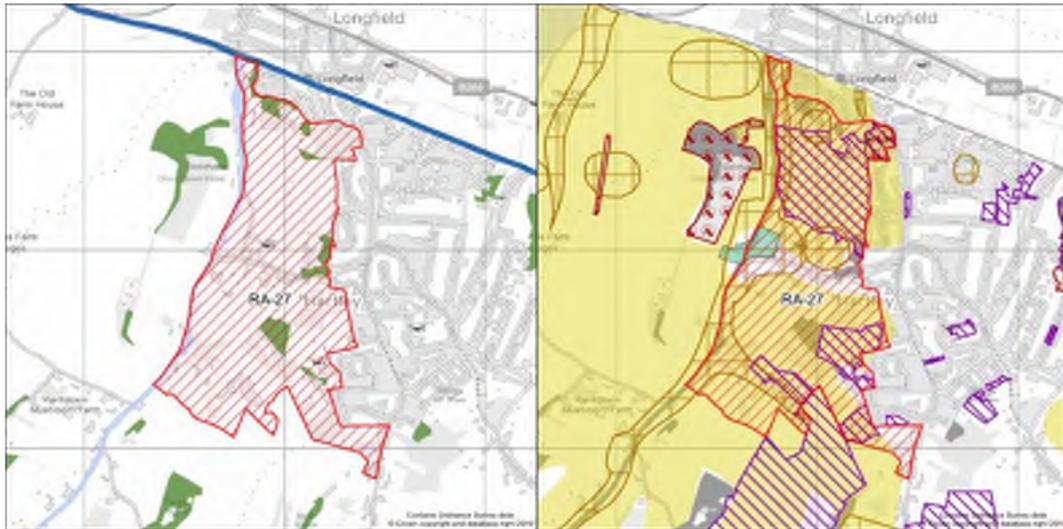
The south of the Recommended Area is within an area of Flood Zone 3b associated with the River Darent which is also adjacent to the Recommended Area to the north-east and south-west. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is entirely within an Area of Archaeological Significance and almost entirely within the Kent Downs AONB. The south-west of the Recommended Area is within a Conservation Area (Farningham) and contains an Open Space Designation, and the east is within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification.

6.2.27 RA-27

Figure 6.28 RA-27 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

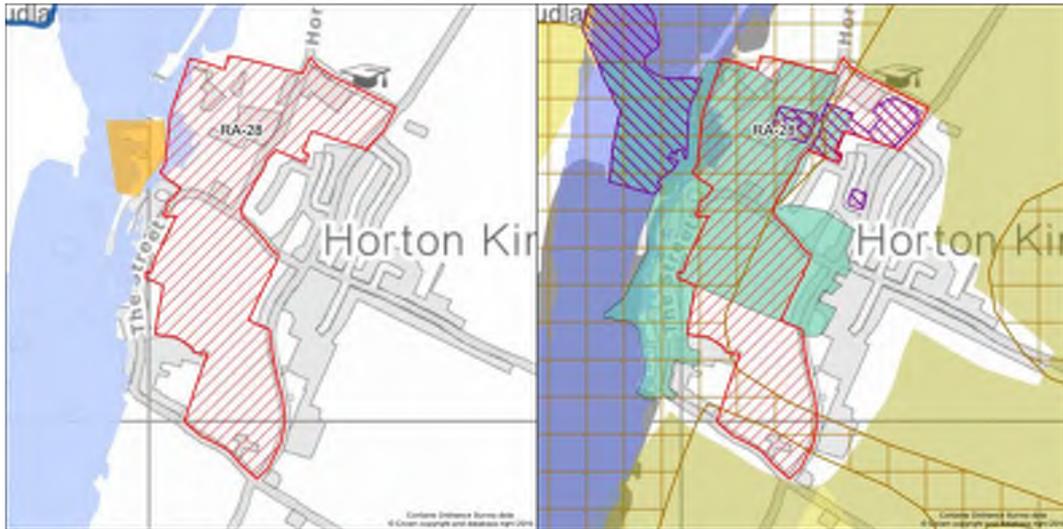
The Recommended Area contains, and is adjacent to, a number of areas of Ancient Woodland. A very small section of land on the western boundary is within an area of Flood Zone 3b. No other absolute constraints are present.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is almost entirely within an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification. A small portion of the Recommended Area is within a Conservation Area (Baldwins Green) in the west, and a small portion is partially within a Local Wildlife Site in the north-east. Another Local Wildlife Site is located to the west of the Recommended Area. There are a number of Areas of Archaeological Significance and Open Space Designations across the Recommended Area.

6.2.28 RA-28

Figure 6.29 RA-28 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints, with the exception of a very small portion of land in the west which is within an area of Flood Zone 3b associated with the River Darent. The west of the Recommended Area is adjacent to a Scheduled Monument (Roman Granary).

Non-Absolute Constraints

The majority of the Recommended Area is within a Conservation Area (Horton Kirby) and within an Area of Archaeological Significance. A small portion of land in the west of the Recommended Area is within an area of Flood Zone 3a. Open Space Designations are present in the north of the Recommended Area. An area of Grade 2 Agricultural Land Classification is located to the north, east and south of the Recommended Area.

6.2.29 RA-29

Figure 6.30 RA-29 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints, with the exception of a very small portion of land in the north which contains an area of Ancient Woodland.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area is almost entirely within an area of Grade 2 and Grade 3 Agricultural Land Classification and Open Space Designations are present in the north, and adjacent to the west. An Areas of Archaeological Significance is located to the east of the Recommended Area.

6.2.30 RA-30

Figure 6.31 RA-30 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The majority of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 2 Agricultural Land Classification with the southern section covered by an Open Space Designation.

6.2.31 RA-31

Figure 6.32 RA-31 absolute constraints (left) and non-absolute constraints (with absolute constraints shaded in grey) (right)



Absolute Constraints

The Recommended Area does not contain any absolute constraints. There is an area of Flood Zone 3b in close proximity to the western boundary.

Non-Absolute Constraints

The majority of the Recommended Area is within an area of Grade 2 Agricultural Land Classification. Open Space Designations cover the eastern and western sections of the Recommended Area.

6.3 Summary

In summary of absolute constraints:

- Two Recommended Areas (RA-1 and RA-11) are completely covered by absolute constraints.
- 19 Recommended Areas (RA-2, RA-3, RA-4, RA-5, RA-9, RA-10, RA-12, RA-14, RA-17, RA-18, RA-19, RA-21, RA-22, RA-24, RA-25, RA-26, RA-27, RA-28, and RA-29) are partially covered by absolute constraints.
- Ten Recommended Areas (RA-6, RA-7, RA-8, RA-13, RA-15, RA-16, RA-20, RA-23, RA-30 and RA-31) are not covered by any absolute constraint.

In summary of non-absolute constraints:

- 12 Recommended Areas (RA-4, RA-7, RA-9, RA-10, RA-11, RA-12, RA-13, RA-16, RA-22, RA-23, RA-25, and RA-26) are completely covered by non-absolute constraints.
- 19 Recommended Areas (RA-1, RA-2, RA-3, RA-5, RA-6, RA-8, RA-14, RA-15, RA-17, RA-18, RA-19, RA-20, RA-21, RA-24, RA-27, RA-28, RA-29, RA-30, and RA-31) are partially covered by non-absolute constraints.
- No Recommended Areas are not covered by any non-absolute constraint.

In summary of absolute and non-absolute constraints in combination:

- 11 Recommended Areas (RA-1, RA-4, RA-7, RA-10, RA-11, RA-12, RA-13, RA-16, RA-22, RA-23, and RA-25) are completely covered by a combination of absolute and non-absolute constraints.
- 20 Recommended Areas (RA-2, RA-3, RA-5, RA-6, RA-8, RA-9, RA-14, RA-15, RA-17, RA-18, RA-19, RA-20, RA-21, RA-24, RA-26, RA-27, RA-28, RA-29, RA-30, and RA-31) are partially covered by a combination of absolute and non-absolute constraints.
- No Recommended Areas are not covered by a combination of any absolute and non-absolute constraints.

7 Landscape Assessment

The findings from the landscape assessment for each Recommended Area are summarised below, in term of overall landscape sensitivity to residential and mixed use development and spatial recommendations in landscape and visual terms. The location of each Recommended Area is shown in Map 5.6. Further detail and evidence is given in the individual pro-formas in Annex Report 3.

7.1 Summary of Findings

7.1.1 RA-1

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **low sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development by virtue of its condition and development influences. However there is variation within this overall sensitivity judgement – the southern parts of the Recommended Area are judged to have a **moderate sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development, due to the more rural quality and its more prominent position resulting from its position towards the top of the valley slopes.

Development in the northern part of the Recommended Area could potentially strengthen the settlement edge of Edenbridge and have a positive impact on the condition of the landscape in this area. However, any proposal should consider the impact of the existing trading estate and how to integrate new development within the existing fabric of Edenbridge.

If the land in the southern part of the Recommended Area is to be considered for release for residential or mixed use development, strengthening or widening of the southernmost boundary planting is recommended in order to prevent visual encroachment of the development on the wider countryside. Account should also be taken of the intervisibility between the south facing slope and the wider landscape, through use of new planting to break up and integrate rooflines.

7.1.2 RA-2

The overall landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Area to residential and mixed use development is judged to be **low to moderate**, due to the impact of existing urban influences on the otherwise intact landscape pattern and the severance created by the railway lines.

Based on the Recommended Area's sense of enclosure and relative sense of isolation, it is judged that it could be released for residential and mixed use development in landscape and visual terms without fundamentally changing the wider landscape character. However, consideration should be given to the type of development located in the north of the area due to greater level of intervisibility with the wider landscape. Consideration should also be given to retaining and enhancing areas of intact, mature field boundaries within any new development in order to enhance the local green infrastructure network, and to better absorb any new development in visual terms.

7.1.3 RA-3

Overall landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Area to residential and mixed use development is judged to be **low** by virtue of recent development that has occurred within the Recommended Area and its relationship to the wider settlement edge.

In landscape and visual terms, the Recommended Area could be released for development without adversely impacting upon wider landscape character due to its enclosed nature. This would provide the opportunity to improve the quality of existing settlement edges and enhance the value and connectivity of green infrastructure within the Recommended Area, including improving its qualities as a gateway to the wider countryside.

7.1.4 RA-4

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development by virtue of the fact that development already exists within it, but further development would result in the loss of woodland which is important to the settlement's wider setting.

Under the precedent set by previous development of the area, in landscape and visual terms the central part of the Recommended Area could be released without adversely impacting upon wider landscape character. Development of the western parts should be avoided due to the landscape structure and pattern in this area which would potentially be vulnerable to development footprints.

7.1.5 RA-5

The overall landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Area to residential and mixed use development is judged to be **low to moderate**. It is unlikely that wider landscape character would be adversely effected by residential or mixed use development of the area due to the general strength of edges to the Recommended Area. However, the western portion of the Recommended Area may be more sensitive due to forming part of the High Weald AONB and its proximity to Leigh Conversation Area.

Well-designed development within the eastern part of the Recommended Area could enhance the quality and setting of the settlement and of the Public Right of Way (PROW) as a gateway to the wider countryside. Appropriate mitigation against harm caused by increased traffic through Leigh's historic core to access the development should be considered in terms of character and visual amenity.

In landscape and visual terms, the western part of the Recommended Area may be more sensitive to change due to its more historic quality and character, though the railway embankment to the south serves as a strong visual and physical buffer which would limit harm to the wider landscape.

7.1.6 RA-6

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **low sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development, by virtue of existing development influences and eroded rural landscape character. The southern fields are more sensitive to residential and mixed use development, because of higher levels of intervisibility resulting from sloping landform.

Reinforcement of the southern boundary is recommended in order to minimise the adverse impact of potential residential or mixed use development on views towards the Recommended Area from other points within the wider landscape. Retention and enhancement of hedgerow and tree vegetation along Hilders Lane is also recommended, in order to improve the area as a gateway to the settlement.

7.1.7 RA-7

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development by virtue of the landscape's recreational value and physical characteristics. The northern part of the area is less sensitive due to its relationship with the adjacent settlement edge and low landscape variance/quality.

In landscape and visual terms, the northernmost field could be released for residential or mixed use development without fundamentally changing wider landscape character. However, development should not adversely impact on the historic qualities of Farley Lane. Development in this area could also be allied with reinforcing the value of Farley Common as a recreational and green infrastructure resource.

7.1.8 RA-8

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development, by virtue of its condition and value for recreational use in close proximity to Edenbridge.

Based on the assessment, the Recommended Area could be released in landscape and visual terms without fundamentally changing the character of the wider landscape. However, retention of existing green infrastructure assets within the Recommended Area, such as dividing hedgerows and mature tree species would be recommended along with retaining the area's recreational value. There is also potential to enhance the Recommended Area's role as a gateway to the wider countryside.

7.1.9 RA-9

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate to high sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development by virtue of its exposed position within the wider landscape, presence of designated landscape features and representation, in parts, of wider AONB special characteristics and qualities.

Based on the overall assessment for RA-9, in landscape and visual terms land could be released to the east of Churchill Church of England Primary School on

London Road, along the Recommended Area's eastern edge. This area possesses a high degree of enclosure and is more heavily influenced by urban fringe characteristics than the fields to the west of Churchill Church of England Primary School. Development in this area could have a wider impact on landscape character due to the high degree of exposure.

7.1.10 RA-10

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate to high sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development by virtue of the impact development within the parcel could have on the wider historic landscape character.

Development within the Recommended Area could fundamentally change the historic settlement pattern of Brasted and it is therefore recommended that the Recommended Area is not considered for release for development in landscape and visual terms.

7.1.11 RA-11

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **high sensitivity** to residential and mixed development by virtue of the small scale of the area and strong influence of landscape features on the character of the landscape which could fundamentally be altered as a result of development. The area forms part of the Brasted High Street Conservation Area which is also highly sensitive in townscape character terms.

Due to the designated status, intimate spatial scale formed by the landscape pattern and associated physical landscape characteristics, such as the high degree of tree coverage and its maturity, it is recommended that the Recommended Area is not considered for release, in landscape and visual terms, for development.

7.1.12 RA-12

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development by virtue of its varying topography and degree of enclosure in regards to intervisibility with the wider landscape.

Due to the small scale riparian character of the southern part of the Recommended Area, this is not considered a suitable location for development. Therefore, any consideration for release for development should be concentrated in the central part of the Recommended Area in proximity to existing development.

7.1.13 RA-13

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **low sensitivity** to residential development by virtue of its condition and existing development influences.

Based on the assessment, the Recommended Area could be released in landscape and visual terms without adversely impacting upon or fundamentally changing the wider landscape character. Well considered and integrated development could

enhance the recreational and green infrastructure value of the landscape while also strengthening the settlement edge of Sundridge.

7.1.14 RA-14

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development by virtue of its topographic nature, which could heighten the degree of visual impact of any new development on the surrounding landscape.

The Recommended Area could be developed in part in landscape and visual terms, using the ridgeline as a defensible boundary with which to contain settlement extension to the north. This could be strengthened further by reinstating historic field boundaries and strengthening green infrastructure assets such as the area of ancient woodland.

If development were to breach the ridgeline and continue onto the south facing slope, it could have an adverse impact on the continuity of the wider landscape.

7.1.15 RA-15

The overall landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Area to residential and mixed use development is judged to be **low to moderate** by virtue of its landscape character having been eroded in parts by human influences, although its close relationship Chipstead Conservation Area and its location falling within the Kent Downs AONB render these parts more sensitive.

Based on the assessment of RA-15, the Recommended Area could be released in landscape and visual terms without fundamentally changing wider landscape character. However, consideration should be given to the form and character of development in order to preserve the historic vernacular of the adjacent settlement of Chipstead and also to respond to the AONB setting in terms of development materials, scale, density and relationship to important characteristics and special qualities.

7.1.16 RA-16

This Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate** overall sensitivity to residential and mixed use development, by virtue of the simple landscape pattern and relatively few distinct landscape features, balanced against the level of intervisibility with the wider landscape in the southern part of the area, which is more sensitive.

Due to the prominence and intervisibility of the southern part of the Recommended Area with the wider landscape, it has a limited ability to accommodate development in landscape and visual terms. A smaller quantum of well-designed development to the northern and eastern extents of the Recommended Area and incorporating a strong green infrastructure buffer to help integrate the character of the development with that of the wider settlement could however mitigate and strengthen settlement edges in this area.

7.1.17 RA-17

The overall landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Area to residential and mixed use development is judged to be **moderate** by virtue of the combination of its location immediately adjacent to the Sevenoaks Gravel Pits SSSI and existing urban fringe characteristics.

Due to the presence of development towards the central, eastern and south-western parts of the Recommended Area (south of the existing mature woodland and east of the Darent Valley Path), and high level of enclosure within this area, releasing this portion of the Recommended Area for further development would be unlikely to fundamentally alter the wider landscape character. However, in landscape and visual terms, the western part of the area should not be considered for release for development due to the presence of historic qualities and the presence of more intact and mature landscape structure/vegetation which would be difficult to replace and therefore vulnerable to potential development footprints for this reason.

7.1.18 RA-18

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate** overall sensitivity to residential and mixed use development by virtue of the visual containment and landscape disturbance, balanced against the geological interest this has revealed and the emerging succession landscape mosaic apparently being created as a result.

This is a provisional judgement based on desktop survey due to the lack of site access and it is suggested that this judgement is re-visited when site access is available.

This Recommended Area presents notable constraints to possible release for development not least the geological SSSI, the sharp variation in levels and the deep lagoon.

7.1.19 RA-19

This Recommended Area is judged to have a **low overall sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development, by virtue of the parcel's existing urban fringe character.

The Recommended Area has the capability to accommodate development in landscape and visual terms, without fundamentally altering the wider landscaper character. Well-designed development could also strengthen the function of the Recommended Area in regard to providing improved access to the wider countryside.

7.1.20 RA-20

Overall landscape sensitivity resulting from potential residential and mixed use development is deemed to be **low** by virtue of development having already

occurred within the Recommended Area and due to the relatively weak, eroded landscape character.

Reinforcement of the northern boundary features is recommended in order to further define the settlement edge and contain the current industrial visual character of development within the Recommended Area.

7.1.21 RA-21

Overall landscape sensitivity to residential and mixed use development is deemed to be **low** by virtue of the existing developed status of a large percentage of the Recommended Area.

The Recommended Area could be released in landscape and visual terms, however there is limited space for further development to occur by virtue of the existing landscape structure and pattern. Removal of woodland in the north of the Recommended Area could fundamentally change the character of the local area as a result of exposing the M26.

7.1.22 RA-22

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **low sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development, by virtue of existing development influences and its heavily enclosed.

Based on the assessment above, in landscape and visual terms the Recommended Area could be released without fundamentally changing the wider landscape character due to the strong level of enclosure. However, recommendation would be given to sensitive re-development of the Recommended Area with a focus on retaining and enhancing the green infrastructure qualities of the remaining woodland as if removed it could result in a fundamental adverse impact upon wider landscape character.

7.1.23 RA-23

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **low sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development by virtue of the absence of high quality landscape features within the area and its high level of visual enclosure.

The Recommended Area could potentially be released in landscape and visual terms without fundamentally changing the wider landscape character, new development should reflect the wider settlement pattern and landscape character and would provide an opportunity to strengthen the settlement edges and enhance recreational value.

7.1.24 RA-24

Overall landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Area to residential and mixed use development is judged **low** by virtue of its existing urban fringe influences and uses/management, relationship to existing development and the eroded, partly degraded landscape pattern. The sense of openness and intervisibility would have

a higher sensitivity to development, as would the relationship to more intact landscapes to the south.

Well-designed and integrated development in the northern half of the Recommended Area could enhance the existing settlement edge and gateway to West Kingsdown if allied to measures to restore hedgerow, woodland and green infrastructure connectivity – creation of a positive, restored green infrastructure buffer between this and the ancient woodland to the south, to reinforce the setting of the AONB at this point.

7.1.25 RA-25

Overall landscape sensitivity to residential and mixed use development varies across this Recommended Area, from **high** at Market Meadow where the land contributes strongly to the historic setting of an approach to the village, to **medium** in other parts by virtue of the sense of enclosure. However it should be noted that the relationship of these areas to the form of the settlement is relatively poor.

Given the historic sensitivity and role as a setting to the village, it is not considered that this Recommended Area could be released for development in landscape and visual terms.

7.1.26 RA-26

Overall landscape sensitivity to residential and mixed use development is judged to be **moderate-low**, by virtue of the current land use and high degree of enclosure and visual containment, balanced against proximity to the historic assets such as the Lion Hotel and the Rococo water gate / cattle barrier on the River Darent.

By virtue of its enclosure and sense of containment, the Recommended Area could be released in landscape and visual terms although it is unlikely to be suitable for development due to other constraints and its weak relationship to the established pattern of settlement.

7.1.27 RA-27

Overall landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Area to potential residential and mixed use development is assessed as **moderate**. This in view of the settlement fringe influences, large landscape scale and eroded pattern, balanced against areas on intact historic and rural character, which along with those areas with a higher level of intervisibility/sense of openness, would have a far higher sensitivity to change in landscape terms.

In landscape and visual terms, any potential release for development should focus on more visually contained areas such as the former quarry and the industrial area south of Fawkham. Any such release should also seek to restore and re-connect field patterns to provide mitigation. Development should not breach ridgelines, to maintain the perception of settlement separation and setting. A buffer should be

maintained to the church and conservation area at Baldwins Green, to conserve setting and rural character.

7.1.28 RA-28

Overall the landscape of this Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development, by virtue of areas of intact landscape pattern and the Recommended Area's role in forming part of the setting of the historic settlement, offset by localise erosion and the presence of modern development and edges, which reduce sensitivity overall.

Overall the Recommended Area is well contained from the wider landscape and is surrounded by development to three sides. However if the Recommended Area were considered for release for development this would fundamentally change the compact form and character of this (dispersed linear) settlement and any mitigation should include generous green infrastructure corridors to maintain this sense of identity and setting.

7.1.29 RA-29

The Recommended Area is judged to have a **low overall landscape sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development. This is by virtue of its degraded condition, the substantial loss of landscape pattern and interest, and the degree of visual containment afforded by landform and enclosure provided by surrounding development.

This Recommended Area has the potential to accommodate well designed development which could improve the existing settlement edge at this point. A generous and deep wooded buffer should be provided to the boundary with the Motorway for reasons of attenuation, settlement setting and landscape connectivity, as well as visual screening in relation to the transport infrastructure.

7.1.30 RA-30

Overall this Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development. This is due primarily to topography and the presence of remnant historic landscape feature such as the holloway and the hedgebank, which greatly elevate sensitivity, as well as creating a strong existing settlement setting.

The area to the north, between Hockenden Lane and the B1273, would be less sensitive to change by virtue of development having already occurred, whilst the southern linear area would be less suitable for development due to the strong green setting which rounds off the settlement at this point and which forms a natural break to development, as well as the value of the remnant historic landscape features. Development here may fundamentally change the landscape character.

7.1.31 RA-31

This Recommended Area is judged to have a **moderate-low overall sensitivity** to residential and mixed use development, by virtue of the simple landscape pattern and relationship to existing settlement, balanced against the level of intervisibility with the wider landscape.

Due to the prominence and intervisibility of the Recommended Area with the wider landscape, it has a limited ability to accommodate development in landscape and visual terms. A small amount of well-designed residential development to the western edge, and incorporating a strong green infrastructure buffer to the edge which restores and responds to cues provided by existing landscape structure, could however mitigate and improve the rather exposed settlement edge at this point.

8 Boundary Assessment

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF states that Green Belt boundaries should be ‘*defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent*’. On this basis, following initial identification of the Recommended Areas following the assessment against the NPPF purposes, additional analysis of the durability of boundaries was undertaken concurrently with the Landscape Assessment, informed by site visits.

Where necessary and feasible, adjustments were made to these Areas to ensure alignment with boundaries that were readily recognisable on the ground. It is judged that as currently mapped, in almost all cases, Recommended Areas are bound by permanent man-made and / or natural features which are deemed to be consistent with national policy.

There are a very small number of exceptions to this, where it was judged that there would be clear scope to introduce new defensible boundaries as part of any future allocations through the Local Plan process. For example:

- **RA-15** is durably bound by physical features to the south-west by the M25 / A20, but a small length of its boundary to the north-west is not aligned with a readily recognisable feature. As this equates to around 20m, it was judged that it would be possible to establish robust planting to create a new durable boundary for the Green Belt (see Figure 8.1).
- **RA-18** is a currently an operationally active quarry with no public access. Given its current status, the extent of the Recommended Area has been identified using desk-based resources (including recent aerial photography) but could not be verified on site.

Figure 8.1 Facing west from Homedean Road across RA-15, illustrating the scale of the boundary that would need to be created to establish a robust Green Belt boundary at the north end of RA-15



Notwithstanding the principles applied to the identification of weaker areas of Green Belt, it should be noted that boundaries identified should be kept under review as part of the ongoing development of the new Local Plan. Where further consideration is afforded to possible removal of land from the Green Belt, it is suggested that the identification of suitable new Green Belt boundaries is deferred to a later point in the formulation of the Local Plan so as not to preclude the consideration of different or smaller areas to those identified by this assessment.

When reconsidering boundaries, it is recommended that the Council adopt the following principles:

- Boundaries should be based on man-made or natural physical features where, as a result of factors such as scale, magnitude or planning policies or designations, there is a strong likelihood of permanence;
- In line with the broad principles outlined in section 4.2.1, features might include:
 - Motorways and roads (both public and private);
 - Railway lines;
 - Rivers, brooks, and other smaller water features, including streams and canals;
 - Prominent physical features (e.g. ridgelines);
 - Existing or future development with strongly established, regular and consistent boundaries;
 - Protected woodland;
 - Established planted features, including hedgerows.
- Boundaries should be readily recognisable, ideally both on plan and visually on the ground;
- Where remnant or degraded features exist (e.g. remains of historic hedgerows), the potential to restore / replace these features should be explored where possible to secure and enhance the character of the landscape;
- In identifying new Green Belt boundaries, consideration should be given to the visual impact of a potential release on the wider Green Belt and, where appropriate, suitable mitigation identified to limit this impact (e.g. increasing the density of planted buffers to shield development from the wider countryside where this complements and enhances landscape character and setting and does not introduce further adverse impact);
- Consideration should be afforded to the creation of new boundaries as part of future development, and how the creation of robust features might be obligated through Local Plan site-specific and development management policies.

9 Historical Boundary Anomalies

A number of minor Green Belt boundary anomalies have been identified across the District where existing boundaries cut across open areas where no boundary feature is present; through buildings; or through rows of housing / development which appear to have been built around the same time. By their nature, these boundary anomalies are very small scale and are not considered to impact on the role of wider Green Belt.

Mapping showing the identified boundary anomalies is provided in Annex Report 4. The total area covered by these anomalies is 15.3ha.

It is recommended that the Council considers correcting these minor boundary anomalies in the production of the new Local Plan for the District.

10 Conclusions

This Study has examined the performance of the Green Belt in Sevenoaks against the Green Belt Purposes, as set out in the NPPF. The assessment has considered 101 Green Belt Parcels, bounded by readily recognisable, durable physical features.

It is notable that, nearly 50 years since the current extent of the Green Belt was established across the District, the Green Belt continues to play an important role in preventing the outward sprawl of Greater London and other large built-up areas within, and adjacent to, the District. It is also crucial for maintaining the District's settlement pattern, ensuring the continued openness of the countryside, and protecting the unique rural setting of historic towns. This Study has demonstrated clearly that the vast majority of the Green Belt (77 out of 101 Parcels) continues to perform one or more of these purposes strongly, while all parcels meet the purposes to a greater or lesser extent.

The Study has also identified a very small number of Parcels that only meet the NPPF purposes weakly. These have been recommended for further consideration by Sevenoaks District Council. In addition, a series of smaller sub-areas were also identified. These are likely to perform weakly against the NPPF purposes if considered separately, under the premise that suitable defensible boundary features can be identified to enclose such areas, and have also been recommended for further consideration.

While these Recommended Areas are distributed across the District, they generally comprise distinct areas of Green Belt which are relatively small in scale, possessing semi-urban characteristics and located adjacent to or even enclosed within urban areas, thus performing little or no role in preventing the outward sprawl of large built-up areas, the coalescence of settlements or encroachment into the countryside. Recommended Areas have been identified for further consideration based on their performance against NPPF purposes only, rather than their suitability in terms of sustainability, infrastructure and wider planning considerations.

Each Recommended Area has been subject to further assessment to understand their potential ability to absorb development. This considered, for these areas only, the distribution of absolute and non-absolute constraints, the sensitivity of the landscape to change, and the strength and durability of potential new Green Belt boundaries should land be released from the Green Belt. Table 10.1 provides a summary of these findings.

Separately, a small number of boundary anomalies were identified during the course of the Study, with suggested corrections put forward for consideration by the Council. These will ensure the continued robustness and durability of the Green Belt boundary in Sevenoaks going forward.

While the outputs of this Study will assist the Council in determining whether there should be any release of Green Belt through the plan-making process, this Study provides only an initial, high level view of sites against a select range of policy constraints. This assessment does not preclude consideration and further

assessment by Sevenoaks District Council of other areas of the Green Belt as part of its wider planning-making process (e.g. through the Site Selection process).

The recommendations set out in this Study will not automatically lead to the release of land from the Green Belt. Ensuring maximum protection for the Green Belt, in line with national policy, continues to be a core planning principle in the formulation of Local Plan policy. The Recommended Areas identified through this Study will need to be subject to more detailed assessment by the Council to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of adjustments to the Green Belt boundary. Following this work, further decision making by the Council in updating the Local Plan will determine which areas, if any, might be released from or added to the Green Belt. The Green Belt Assessment will ultimately form part of a suite of evidence, which will be used to inform the plan-making process.

Sevenoaks District Council will also need to carefully consider whether, in accordance with the NPPF, whether there are any ‘exceptional circumstances’ that justify the Green Belt boundary in the District to be altered through the preparation of the New Local Plan. At that time, the Council will need to consider the definition of new Green Belt boundaries, taking into account the principles set out in this Study and having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that any proposed boundaries are capable of enduring beyond the plan period.

Table 10.1 Summary of Constraints and Landscape Sensitivity Assessments for Recommended Areas

Recommended Area	Assessment of Absolute Constraints	Assessment of Non-Absolute Constraints	Assessment of Landscape Sensitivity
RA-1	Completely constrained	Partially covered	Low-Moderate
RA-2	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Low-Moderate
RA-3	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Low
RA-4	Partially constrained	Completely covered	Moderate
RA-5	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Low-Moderate
RA-6	Unconstrained	Partially covered	Low
RA-7	Unconstrained	Completely covered	Moderate
RA-8	Unconstrained	Partially covered	Moderate
RA-9	Partially constrained	Completely covered	Moderate-High
RA-10	Partially constrained	Completely covered	Moderate-High
RA-11	Completely constrained	Completely covered	High
RA-12	Partially constrained	Completely covered	Moderate
RA-13	Unconstrained	Completely covered	Low
RA-14	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Moderate
RA-15	Unconstrained	Partially covered	Low-Moderate
RA-16	Unconstrained	Completely covered	Moderate
RA-17	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Moderate
RA-18	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Moderate

Recommended Area	Assessment of Absolute Constraints	Assessment of Non-Absolute Constraints	Assessment of Landscape Sensitivity
RA-19	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Low
RA-20	Unconstrained	Partially covered	Low
RA-21	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Low
RA-22	Partially constrained	Completely covered	Low
RA-23	Unconstrained	Completely covered	Low
RA-24	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Low
RA-25	Partially constrained	Completely covered	Moderate-High
RA-26	Partially constrained	Completely covered	Low-Moderate
RA-27	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Moderate
RA-28	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Moderate
RA-29	Partially constrained	Partially covered	Low
RA-30	Unconstrained	Partially covered	Moderate-High
RA-31	Unconstrained	Partially covered	Low-Moderate

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Connected	Displaying a low level of containment rather than simply adjoining an area.
Contiguous	Predominantly surrounded by built form (from a least two large built-up areas) but also retaining a strong link to the wider Green Belt.
Duty to Cooperate	A legislative requirement in the Localism Act 2011 which places a duty on local planning authorities and county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively with prescribed bodies, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local and Marine Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
Enclosed	Almost entirely contained or surrounded by built development.
Encroachment	A gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change.
Essential Gap	A gap between settlements where development would significantly reduce the perceived or actual distance between them.
Green Belt Parcel	Area of Green Belt land identified for assessment against the NPPF purposes on the basis of existing permanent and defensible boundary features.
Green Infrastructure	A network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
Intervisibility	A measure of the visual exposure of a series of locations or landscapes and therefore how these series of landscapes are visually connected and define the character of a view or landscape.
Landscape Sensitivity	A measure of the ability of a landscape to accept change combining judgements of the landscape susceptibility and landscape value, to the specific type of change or development proposed (e.g. residential and mixed use development), without causing irreparable damage to the essential fabric and distinctiveness of that landscape.
Landscape Susceptibility	The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences.
Landscape Value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.
Large Built-Up Area	Areas defined to correspond to the major settlements identified in the respective Local Plans in Sevenoaks and neighbouring local authorities and used in the NPPF Purpose 1 assessment.
Largely Rural Character	Land with a general absence of built development, largely characterised by rural land uses and landscapes with some other sporadic developments and man-made structures.
Less Essential Gap	A gap between settlements where development is likely to be possible without any risk of coalescence between them.
Neighbouring Town	Refers to settlements within Sevenoaks, as well as settlements in neighbouring authorities for the assessment against NPPF Purpose 2.
Open Land	Open land refers to land that is lacking in built development.
Openness	Openness refers to the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered open from an absence of built development.

Term	Definition
Recommended Area	Area of Green Belt land (either a whole Green Belt Parcel or part of a Green Belt Parcel) identified through the assessment of Green Belt Parcels against the NPPF purposes which is recommended for further consideration.
Semi-Urban Character	Land which begins on the edge of the fully built up area and contains a mix of urban and rural land uses before giving way to the wider countryside. Land uses might include publicly accessible natural green spaces and green corridors, country parks and local nature reserves, small-scale food production (e.g. market gardens) and waste management facilities, interspersed with built development more generally associated with urban areas (e.g. residential or commercial).
Sprawl	The outward spread of a large built-up area at its periphery in a sporadic, dispersed or irregular way.
Strong Unspoilt Rural Character	Land with an absence of built development and characterised by rural land uses and landscapes, including agricultural land, forestry, woodland, shrubland / scrubland and open fields.
Urban Character	Land which is predominantly characterised by urban land uses, including physical developments such as residential or commercial, or urban managed parks.
Wider Gap	A gap between settlements which may be less important for preventing coalescence.

Appendix B

Summary of matters raised
during Duty to Cooperate
Workshop on proposed
methodology

The following methodological matters were raised during the Duty to Cooperate Workshop held with neighbouring authorities on 30 August 2016¹⁸:

- **Parcels for Assessment:** Comments were provided on the proposed parcels for assessment. In particular, a number of attendees expressed concern regarding the identification of parcels that crossed the District boundary and that this approach would not be consistent with Green Belt assessments undertaken by neighbouring districts.
 - *Response:* All comments were considered, with some minor adjustments made where specific comments were raised. With regard to the cross-district parcels, given the advanced stage of the assessments undertaken by a number of neighbouring districts, it was determined that, where parcels cross into neighbouring local authority areas, the boundaries would be modified to exclude areas outside Sevenoaks District to ensure consistency with neighbouring approaches and avoid potential conflict.
- **Purpose 1:** While, broadly there was agreement with the proposed approach to assessing Green Belt against Purpose 1, several comments were raised around the identification of particular large built-up area beyond the boundaries of Sevenoaks District. In particular, the representative of Dartford Borough Council stressed that Dartford (and urban areas to the east) should be considered separately to Greater London given these settlements have not physically coalesced.
 - *Response:* Where appropriate, the large built-up areas considered for the Study were modified, taking into account comments from neighbouring authorities. Specifically in response to the comment raised by Dartford, the Dartford / Gravesend built-up area was identified separately from Greater London.
- **Purpose 2:** There was some discussion around the proliferation of ribbon development, particularly in the north of the District around New Ash Green and Hartley, and how this would be considered as part of the Study. Specific comments were made around the identification of relevant settlements for consideration as part of Purpose 2.
 - *Response:* The presence of ribbon development was noted as a particular factor in identifying the performance of Green Belt against Purpose 2, as this may perceptually reduce the scale of gaps. The detailed criterion for the assessment acknowledge the role of ribbon development, and such characteristics will be noted qualitatively during the site visits and used to inform the conclusions. Specific modifications to the identified settlements have been made in response to comments received.
- **Purpose 4:** The identification of appropriate ‘historic settlements’ was discussed. It was suggested that Dartford’s historic core has no direct relationship with the Green Belt and should thus not be considered as part of

¹⁸ Attendees comprised: representatives of Dartford Borough Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Tandridge District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

the Study. Comments were raised around the identification of additional settlements outside of Sevenoaks District.

- *Response:* Given the specific reference to ‘historic towns’ within national policy wording, it was considered appropriate to focus assessment on larger settlements. The Kent Historic Towns Survey provides a suitably evidenced basis for identifying the primary historic settlements for consideration as part of this assessment, with additional settlements considered on a case-by-case basis utilising professional judgement in line with the wording set out in national policy.
- **Purpose 5:** It was acknowledged that Purpose 5 is not helpful in terms of assessing the relative value of parcels and should therefore not be included in the assessment criteria. However, the overarching importance of Purpose 5 at a broader scale was acknowledged.
- **Constraints and Landscape Assessment:** The assessment of constraints and landscape sensitivity alongside Green Belt was discussed at a broad level. Some concern was expressed about the conflation of what were deemed to be separate matters in planning terms.
 - *Response:* The need to separate these assessments was acknowledged. The constraints and landscape assessments have been carried out in isolation from the assessment against the NPPF purposes, clearly set out in separate sections of the report following the conclusions made on the ‘recommended areas’ arising from the Green Belt assessment. These assessments will provide additional contextual information to assist the Council in its future plan-making and will no Green Belt recommendations will be made on the basis of these separate factors.

Appendix C

Draft Pro-Forma for NPPF Purposes Assessment

Green Belt Parcel			
Area (ha)			
Local Authority			
Location Plan			
Description			
Purpose	Criteria	Assessment	Score
(1) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	(a) Land parcel is at the edge of one or more large built-up areas.		
	(b) Prevents the outward sprawl of a large built-up area into open land, and serves as a barrier at the edge of a large built-up area in the absence of another durable boundary.		
Purpose 1: Total Score			/5
(2) To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Prevents development that would result in merging of or significant erosion of gap between neighbouring settlements, including ribbon development along transport corridors that link settlements.		
Purpose 2: Total Score			/5

(3) Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protects the openness of the countryside and is least covered by development.		
Purpose 3: Total Score			/5
(4) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Protects land which provides immediate and wider context for historic settlement, including views and vistas between the settlement and the surrounding countryside.		
Purpose 4: Total Score			/5

Appendix D

Draft Pro-Forma for Landscape Assessment

Recommended Area:	
[Photo]	[Photo]
Approximate Size (ha):	
LCA context:	
2011 Countryside Character Assessment (Key characteristics represented on site, as appropriate):	
Draft Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study:	
Landscape Value	
Landscape value indicators:	
Landscape Susceptibility	
Physical character (Landform, landscape pattern and scale):	
Visual character (Skylines and sense of enclosure/openness):	
Perception and experiential quality:	

Cultural and historic character:
Settlement setting:
Settlement edge and form:
Overall landscape susceptibility rating and comments:
Landscape Sensitivity
Overall landscape sensitivity of the Recommended Area to residential and mixed use development, considering landscape value and susceptibility:
Summary recommendations:

Appendix E

Approaches to Green Belt in
neighbouring authorities

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
London Borough of Bexley	Bexley’s Local Plan consists of the Core Strategy 2012. The Council is currently preparing a Detailed Policies and Sites Local Plan. The 2012 Local Development Scheme estimated that the Detailed Sites and Policies Local Plan would be adopted in April 2015 however this is still awaiting publication.	The eastern part of the Borough contains part of south-east London’s Metropolitan Green Belt. Core Strategy (2012) Policy CS17 (Green Infrastructure) which aims to protect, enhance and support Bexley’s green infrastructure by <i>“protecting metropolitan green belt... from inappropriate development”</i> .	N/A	N/A
London Borough of Bromley	Bromley’s Local Plan consists of the saved policies from the Bromley UDP (2006) and the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan. The 2016 Local Development Scheme estimates that the new Borough-Wide Local Plan will be adopted in January 2017.	The Green Belt covers 7,700 ha of land in the Borough, representing over half of the Borough’s total area. Policy G1 (The Green Belt) in the 2006 UDP states that <i>‘within the Green Belt, as defined on the Proposals Map, permission will not be given for inappropriate development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated that clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness or any other harm’</i> .	N/A	N/A
Dartford Borough Council	Dartford’s Local Plan comprises the Dartford Core Strategy (2011) and 1995 Local Plan saved policies. The Local Development Scheme estimates that the draft Development Policies Plan Document will be adopted in	The southern part of the Borough contains part of south-east London’s Metropolitan Green Belt. Saved Strategic Policy S4 from the 1995 Local Plan (consolidated in the 2011 Core Strategy) states that	N/A	N/A

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
	November 2016 while evidence gathering for the Core Strategy review is estimated to commence at the end of 2016.	<i>'there is a presumption against development in the Metropolitan Green Belt, as defined in the Local Plan; continued protection will be given to the countryside and its amenity value and its recreation potential will be enhanced'.</i>		
Gravesham Borough Council	Gravesham's Local Plan consists of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014. The Local Development Scheme (2015) estimates that the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD will be adopted in December 2017.	78% of the Borough is designated as Green Belt. The 2014 Core Strategy does not contain any Green Belt specific policies although it does state in the section on settlement pattern that <i>'the eastern Green Belt boundary in Gravesham is considered to be very important as the gap between Gravesend and the Medway Towns is now one of the few barriers preventing the merging of settlements along the southern part of the Thames Estuary and the further eastward sprawl of London'.</i>	N/A	N/A
Wealden District Council	Wealden's Local Plan consists of the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (2013). The Local Development Scheme (2015) estimates that the new Wealden Local Plan will be adopted in 2018.	There are no Green Belt specific policies in the 2013 Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan; however Policy SPO14 states: <i>'we will maximise the use of previously developed land for new development wherever possible, and make the most efficient use of existing resources, for example by ensuring housing densities are compatible with the particular</i>	N/A	N/A

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
<p>Tandridge District Council</p>	<p>Tandridge’s Local Plan currently comprises of the 2008 Tandridge District Core Strategy. The 2015 Local Development Scheme estimates that the new Local Plan will go out to Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Stage in 2016/2017 and it is expected to be adopted in late 2017/2018.</p>	<p>The current 2008 Tandridge District Core Strategy does not have a specific Green Belt policy however Policy CSP 1 on the Location of Development states that <i>‘there will be no village expansion by amending the boundaries of either the Larger Rural Settlements or Green Belt Settlements... There will be no change in Green Belt boundaries, unless it is not possible to find sufficient land within the existing built up areas and other settlements to deliver current and future housing allocations’</i>.</p>	<p>Tandridge District Council Green Belt Assessment (Stage 1)</p>	<p>The Council are currently undertaking a Green Belt Assessment which involved three stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1: Defining the area for assessment. Assessing the entirety of the Green Belt, Strategic Green Belt areas within the Metropolitan Green Belt and Local Parcels split by durable boundaries were identified. • Stage 2: Green Belt parcels were then assessed against NPPF Green Belt Purposes 1 to 5. • Stage 3: Outputs are to be presented in a three-tiered scoring system whereby Green Belt areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrably serve the purpose - serve the purpose but to a lesser extent; or - serve the purpose to little or no extent. • In addition to the outputs above, areas will be identified within defined parcels where there is a clear deviation from the overall assessment of the wider parcel, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - serves the purposes less obviously/effectively. - serves the purposes more obviously/effectively. <p>The findings of the Green Belt Assessment have not yet been published but will form part of the</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
<p>Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council</p>	<p>Tonbridge and Malling’s Local Plan currently comprises the 2007 Core Strategy, the 2008 Development Land Allocations DPD, the 2008 Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan and the 2008 Managing Development and the Environment DPD.</p>	<p>Nearly three quarters of the Borough lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The 2007 Core Strategy states of the Green Belt: <i>‘a key feature of Green Belts is their permanence. Very special circumstances are required for any departure from Green Belt policy and an exceptional justification is required for any change to existing Green Belt boundaries’.</i></p>	<p>Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Green Belt Study (September 2016)</p>	<p>wider evidence base for the Local Plan and will be used to inform part of its preparation.</p> <p>The Council published a Green Belt Study in September 2016.</p> <p>The Study assessed the current Green Belt against four of the five NPPF Green Belt Purposes. Assessment was not made against the Purpose 5 as it was considered that this was an equal and inherent function across the whole Green Belt designation.</p> <p>Study areas were generally considered according to existing parish boundaries. However Tonbridge was defined according to the Council’s Development Plan Proposals map. Larger settlements, including Tonbridge, were broken down into parcels defined by existing physical features.</p> <p>Outputs were presented in a three-tiered scoring system, whereby a Green Belt area was judged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform well or successfully against purpose of the Green Belt; • Perform moderately against purpose of the Green Belt; or • Make limited or no contribution to purpose of the Green Belt. <p>Green Belt areas adjacent to Sevenoaks District were found to be performing moderately or well against NPPF Green Belt Purposes.</p> <p>The Study notes that further study options include:</p>

Authority	Local Plan Status	Green Belt Context	Green Belt Assessment	Methodology / Conclusions from Green Belt Assessment
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the Study in light of emerging evidence and consultation outcomes related to the Local Plan. • More detailed study into land identified as having a limited contribution to the Green Belt purposes. • More detailed study of well-performing areas, in order to consider ways of strengthening the designation/boundaries; e.g. improving access for recreation.
<p>Tunbridge Wells Borough Council</p>	<p>Tunbridge Wells’ development plan comprises the saved policies from the 2006 Local Plan, Core Strategy (2010) and Site Allocations Local Plan (2016). Work has commenced on a new Local Plan, which is expected to be adopted in 2020.</p>	<p>Core Policy 2 defines the boundary of the Green Belt through reference to the 2006 Local Plan Proposals Map. The policy states that <i>‘the general extent of the Green Belt will be maintained for the Plan period’</i> and that there is a <i>‘general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt’</i>.</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>TBC</p>

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Planning Advisory Committee - 17 January 2017

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: Sevenoaks District Council commissioned Land Use Consultants (LUC) to review and update the existing landscape character evidence base. The updated Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is intended to provide context for policies and proposals within the emerging Local Plan, inform the determination of planning applications, and inform the management of future change.

Portfolio Holder Cllr Piper

Contact Officer Hannah Gooden, Planning Policy Team Leader, Ext.7178

Recommendation to Planning Advisory Committee: To support the findings of the Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment, which will inform the initial ‘issues and options’ consultation on the Local Plan in 2017 and assist in development management decision-making.

Reason for recommendation: In order to enable discussion and advise on progress with the evidence base documents which will inform the preparation of the new Local Plan 2015-35.

Introduction

- 1 This report provides an overview of the findings of an evidence base document which will help inform the production of the new Local Plan for the period 2015-35.
- 2 The existing Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment (SCA) was carried out by Jacobs on behalf of Kent County Council, Sevenoaks District Council and Natural England in 2004. The work was carried out in accordance with the guidance “Landscape Character Assessment Guidance”, as published by Natural England in 2002. The document was subject to a light touch review and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2011. The review updated policy and contextual information but the landscape

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assessment, objectives and mapping sections remained unchanged since 2004.

- 3 The new Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment (2017) has therefore revisited each of the landscape types and character areas, to provide a comprehensive update. The format of the document and associated mapping has also been revised to make it more useable and accessible.

Background

- 4 The quality of the landscape across the whole District is high with much of it very high, and has been identified by residents as one of its main assets. Its national importance is recognised by the fact that around 60% of the District is designated as part of the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 5 Key changes since the publication of the previous iteration of this document include the introduction of the NPPF and the issue of ‘valued’ (or ‘cherished’) landscapes and the update of the national Character Area profiles. One of the core principles in the NPPF is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside. The associated National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that :

‘where appropriate, landscape character assessments should be prepared to complement Natural England’s National Character Area profiles. Landscape Character Assessment is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change and may be undertaken at a scale appropriate to local and neighbourhood plan-making’.

Method

- 6 Landscape Character Assessment is a tool to identify what makes a place unique, and can serve as a framework for decision making that respects local distinctiveness. It emerged in the 1980s as a process by which to define the character of the landscape - i.e. what makes one area distinct or different from another. The techniques and methodology have been refined, culminating in the publication of “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Natural England, October 2014), which forms the basis for the methodology for this Assessment.
- 7 The process for undertaking the study involved four main stages, described below, namely:
 - A. Desk study and classification - this stage involved the collation of a wide range of mapped information to ‘sense-check’ the existing landscape classification (e.g. geology, PROW, river features, biodiversity, historic mapping, dark skies mapping)

- B. Field survey - A field survey was undertaken to check the classification. This specifically focussed on:
- verifying and fine-tuning the classification of the landscape types and areas identified;
 - recording information on landscape character and characteristics and noting local variations in character;
 - identifying key sensitivities and valued attributes; and
 - assessing landscape quality (condition) i.e. the physical state of the landscape and its intactness.
- C. Description - For each landscape character type a map, photos and key characteristics are provided, along with information about which national character area the type falls within and brief information on geology, soils, landform and component historic landscape types.
- D. Evaluation - The evaluation covers:
- landscape condition i.e. the physical state of the landscape and its intactness (from visual, functional and ecological perspectives), as well as the presence of any detractors;
 - key sensitivities and valued attributes i.e. the features and characteristics that are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide (i.e. those things that if lost would change the character to the detriment of the landscape);
 - a vision for the landscape;
 - guidance to conserve and enhance character and achieve vision.

Consultation

- 8 A workshop was held on 29th September 2016 to present the work being undertaken and to gather views on area boundaries and names, what is valued in the landscape, cultural associations (people, events, art, literature, myths or music that relate to the area), and pressures affecting the landscape. It is acknowledged that gaining a comprehensive picture of what residents value about their landscape could be a project within itself, but the purpose of the consultation was to assist the consultants' professional judgement about what is of value and why. The contributions from this workshop are set out in the LUC report.

Findings

- 9 The Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment is set out at Appendix 1.

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- 10 Classification is concerned with dividing the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character and grouping areas of similar character together.
- 11 Landscape types have been identified that have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern in each area in which they occur. This does not mean that they will be identical, but that they have a common pattern of elements.
- 12 Each landscape type is subdivided into a number of geographically specific character areas. They share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type, but have their own particular identity or 'sense of place'.
- 13 13 landscape types and 31 landscape character areas have been identified as listed in the table below.
- 14 The SCA (2004) divided the landscape into 53 landscape character areas. Therefore some landscape character areas have been amalgamated to reduce the overall number of landscape character areas. Some boundaries have also been adjusted to follow more suitable features, for example to follow a contour line rather than field boundaries (as landform is what defines this landscape type). Settlements have been omitted from this assessment.

Number	Type		Area
1	Settled Downs	a	West Kingsdown Settled Downs
		b	Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs
		c	Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs
2	Downs	a	Farningham Downs
		b	Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs
3	Wooded Downs	a	Knockholt and Halstead Wooded Downs
		b	East Hill Wooded Downs
4	Settled Farmland	a	Hextable Settled Farmland
		b	Crockenhill Settled Farmland
5	Scarp Landscapes	a	Knockholt Scarp

		b	Kemsing Scarp
6	Scarp Foot Farmland	a	Knockholt Scarp Foot Farmland
		b	Kemsing Scarp Foot Farmland
7	Chalk Valleys	a	Darent Valley - South Darent to Farningham
		b	Darent Valley - Farningham to Otford
8	Clay Valleys	a	Upper Darent Valley - West
		b	Upper Darent Valley - East
9	Greensand Parks & Farmlands	a	Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands
		b	Seal Parks and Farmlands
		c	Knole Park
10	Charts	a	Westerham and Brasted Chart
		b	Sevenoaks Western Chart
		c	Sevenoaks Eastern Chart
11	Low Weald	a	Sevenoaks Low Weald
		b	Leigh Low Weald
12	Wealden River Valleys	a	Eden Valley
		b	Upper Medway Valley
13	High Weald	a	Cowden to Chiddingstone High Weald
		b	Chiddingstone Hoath Plateau

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		c	Penshurst and Leigh High Weald
		d	Fordcombe High Weald / Medway High Weald

- 15 Each of the 31 landscape character areas has a profile (chapter 6 of the LUC report), which reports on key characteristics, description, condition, sensitivities / valued attributes, Vision and landscape guidance.
- 16 A user- guide is also provided within the report, which assists the consideration of landscape character when planning for any type of change. The guide is arranged around a number of key stages, setting out a series of questions as prompts to assist in using available information to shape proposals / assist in planning decisions. The result is a more user-friendly and accessible document, that development management officers will be able to use to assist their decision-making and help them in their consideration of landscape matters.

Conclusion

- 17 The existing landscape character evidence base has been reviewed and updated to produce the Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment (2017), which will provide evidence for the emerging Local Plan, inform the determination of planning applications, and inform the management of future change.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

Preparation of a Local Plan is required by Government. The Council provided a commitment in 2014 (as part of the ADMP public examination) to review the Local Plan within five years. Not preparing a local plan will leave the Council vulnerable to unwanted planning applications and appeal decisions. Recent Government announcements also indicate that the Government will intervene to prepare plans where they are not being prepared in a timely manner locally.

Key Implications

Financial

Production of the Local Plan will be funded from the Local Plan reserve.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. There are defined legal requirements that must be met in plan making which are considered when the plan is examined by a Government Planning Inspector. Risks associated with Local Plan

making are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Equality Assessment.

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The preparation and adoption of a Local Plan will directly impact on end users. The impacts will be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Conclusions

Preparation of a Local Plan is required by Government. This report provides an update on the Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment evidence base report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

**Richard Morris,
Chief Planning Officer**

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Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Final Report
Prepared by LUC
January 2017



Agenda Item 8

Project Title: Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Client: Sevenoaks District Council

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
V1	20/10/16	Working draft	Rebecca Knight, Katrina Davies, Ben Gurney & Maria Grant	Katrina Davies	Rebecca Knight
V2	30/11/16	Final draft incorporating comments from SDC	Rebecca Knight, Katrina Davies, Ben Gurney & Maria Grant	Katrina Davies	Rebecca Knight
V3	21/12/16	Final report incorporating comments from SDC	Rebecca Knight, Katrina Davies, Ben Gurney & Maria Grant	Katrina Davies	Rebecca Knight



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Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Final Report
Prepared by LUC
January 2017

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Figure 4.1: Dark Skies (2016)

Figure 5.1: Classification for Sevenoaks

Part 1: Overview



1 Introduction

Background & Purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment

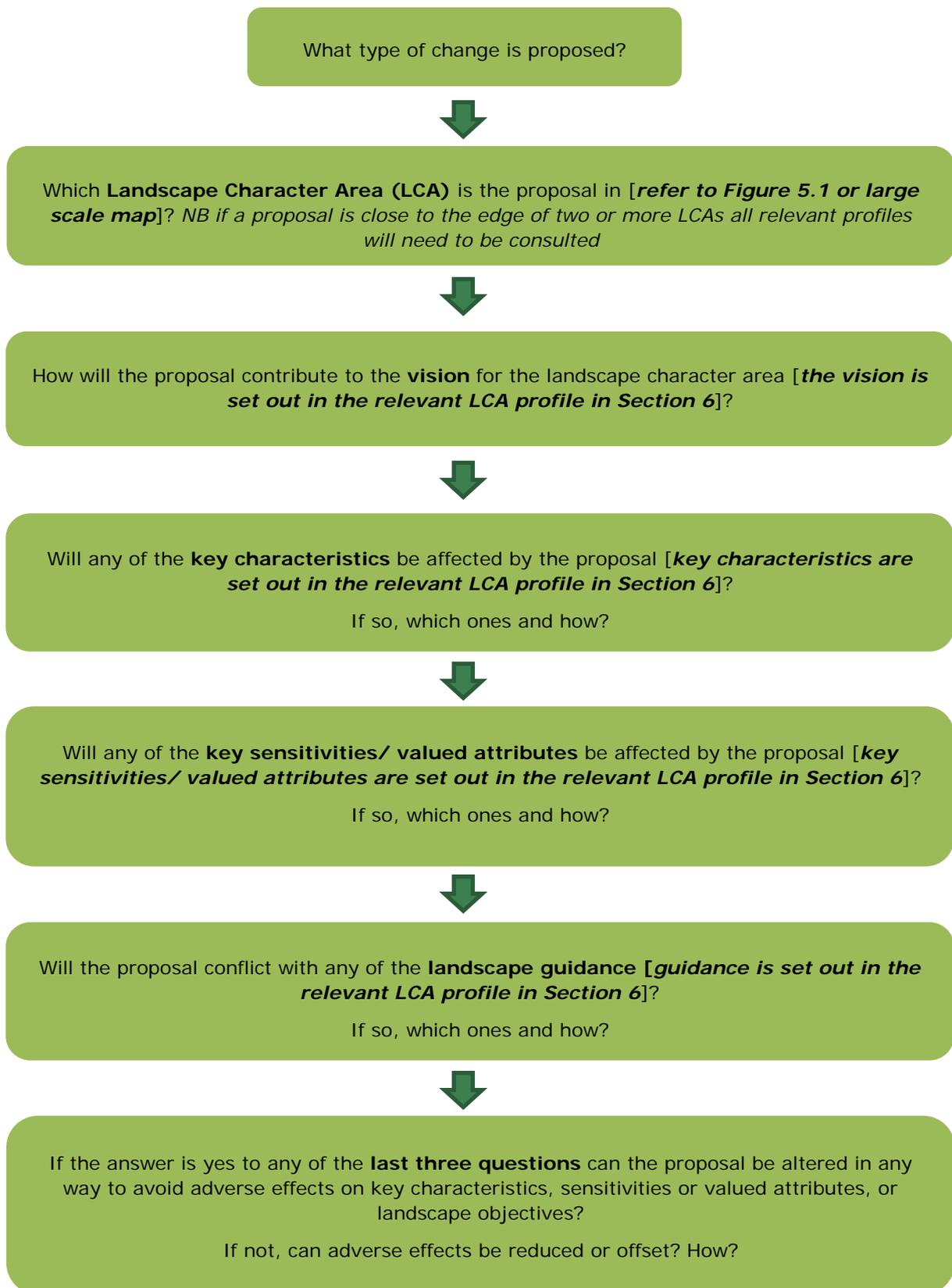
- 1.1 Sevenoaks District Council commissioned LUC in August 2016 to review and update the existing landscape character evidence base, and produce an updated landscape character assessment. It is intended to provide context for policies and proposals within the emerging Local Plan, inform the determination of planning applications, and inform the management of future change. This character assessment updates the District's previous Landscape Character Assessment¹. Some sections of text have therefore been imported from the previous report (written by Jacobs Babbie) where they are still relevant.
- 1.2 As acknowledged in the previous published assessment, the landscape is the result of the interaction between people and the environment that gives an area a local identity. Landscape Character is defined as "*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*"².
- 1.3 Landscape Character Assessment is a tool to identify what makes a place unique, and can serve as a framework for decision making that respects local distinctiveness. It emerged in the 1980s as a process by which to define the character of the landscape - i.e. what makes one area distinct or different from another. It sought to separate the classification and description of the landscape from the evaluation process, the latter being more concerned with what makes one landscape 'better' than others. During recent years, the techniques and methodology have been refined, culminating in the publication of "An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment" (Natural England, October 2014).
- 1.4 Understanding the character of place and evaluating an area's defining characteristics is a key component in managing growth sustainably and ensuring that the inherent quality of Sevenoaks' landscape can continue to be celebrated, creating places that people can be proud of. Understanding of character can be used to ensure that any change or development does not undermine whatever is valued or characteristic in a particular landscape.
- 1.5 The location of the District is shown in **Figure 1.1**. Note that 61% of the District is part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

How to use the Report

- 1.1 This report can be used to consider landscape character when planning any type of change. The flow chart over the page aims to assist in using the report and is arranged around a number of key stages, setting out a series of questions as prompts to assist in using available information to shape proposals / assist in planning decisions.

¹ Sevenoaks Countryside Assessment, Supplementary Planning Document Adopted October 2011, Jacobs Babbie for Sevenoaks District Council (based on an assessment undertaken in 2004).

² "An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment" (Natural England, October 2014)



Structure of this report

- 1.6 This report is set out in two parts. **Part 1** provides an overview, comprising:
- Section 1** presents an introduction, background and policy context.
 - Section 2** presents the methodology and approach to the landscape character assessment.
 - Section 3** presents the formative influences on the landscape.
 - Section 4** presents a summary of the issues facing the landscape today.
- 1.7 **Part 2** presents the landscape character of Sevenoaks comprising:
- Section 5** presents the landscape classification.
 - Section 6** presents the landscape character of the landscape character types and areas through a series of 'profiles'.
- 1.8 The report is supported by the following appendices:
- Appendix 1** provides a glossary of terms.
 - Appendix 2** lists the contributors to the assessment (as a result of the stakeholder consultation).
 - Appendix 3** presents the comments made by stakeholders and how these have been taken on board in the final report.
 - Appendix 4** presents the classification of Sevenoaks on a large fold-out 1:25,000 OS base map.

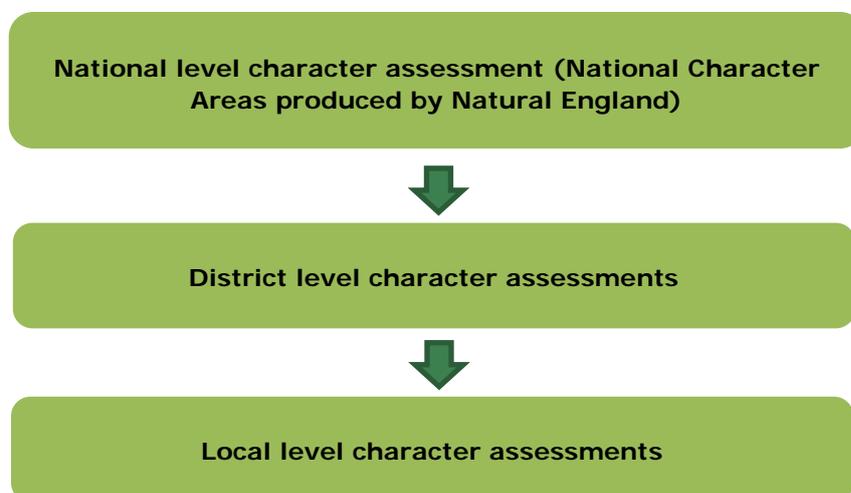
Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012

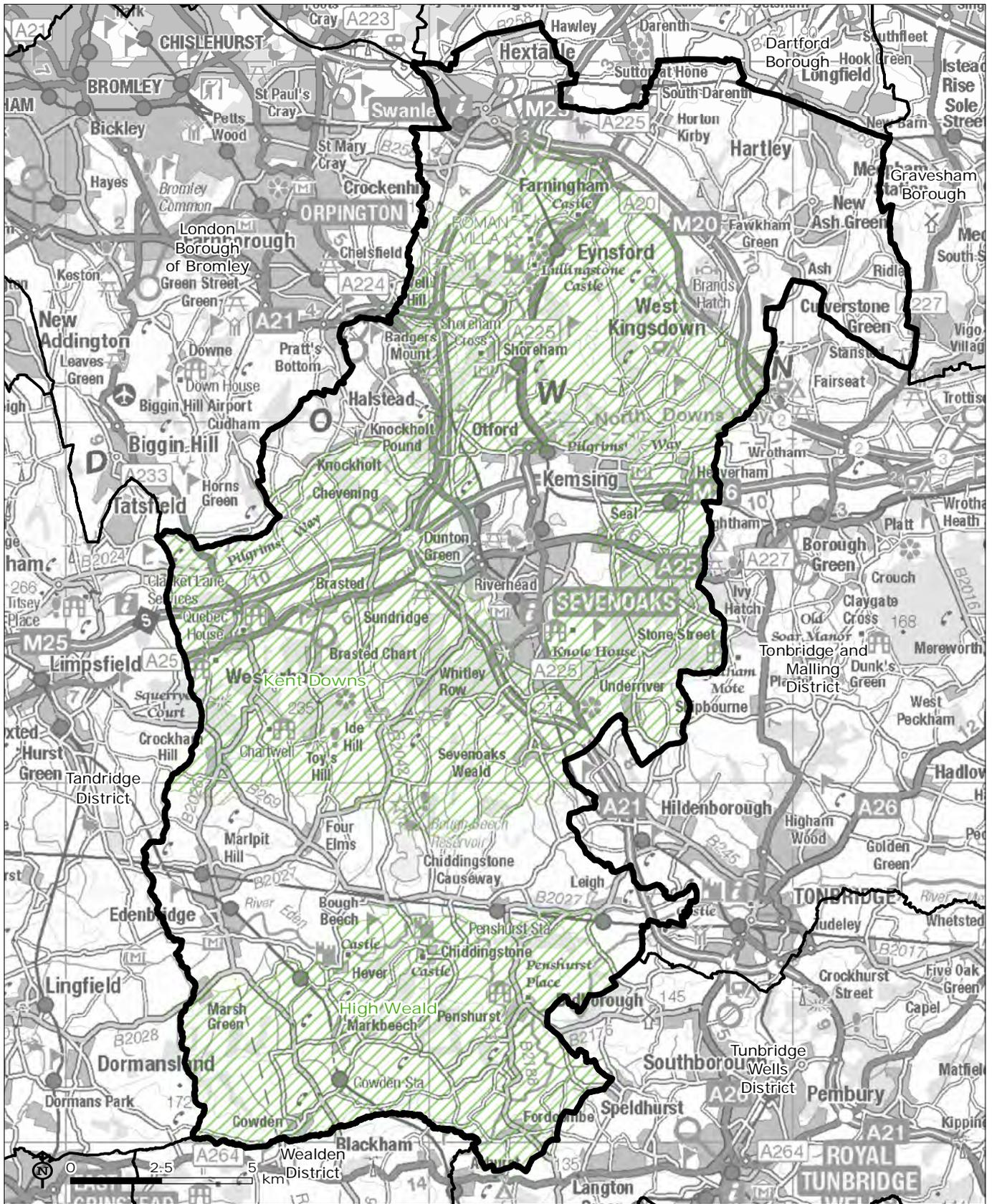
- 1.9 The NPPF refers to landscape character a number of times, in relation to recognising the different character of different areas; conserving landscapes as an important part of the natural environment; protecting valued landscapes (including – but not limited to - designated landscapes such as AONBs and National Parks); and encouraging landscape character studies as part of preparing Local Plans.
- 1.10 The following extracts from the NPPF are those most relevant to landscape and character. Words in bold are emphasised for the purposes of this report.
- Key NPPF policies in relation to landscape character:*
- 1.11 Paragraph 17 (Core planning principles):
- “**take account of the different roles and character of different areas**, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, **recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside** and supporting thriving rural communities within it...”*
- “...**contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment** and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework”.*
- 1.12 Paragraph 109 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment):
- “**The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:***
- ...**protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...**”*

Relationship to other Landscape Character Assessments

- 1.2 Landscape does not stop at administrative boundaries but continues seamlessly into surrounding administrative areas. Therefore, an aim of this assessment was to join up with the Landscape Character Assessments of adjacent authorities, and sit within the existing national assessment (the National Character Areas published by Natural England³). This is shown in the diagram beneath Paragraph 1.4. Existing national character areas shown on **Figure 1.2 –Landscape Character Context**.
- 1.3 The classifications for neighbouring authorities are illustrated on **Figure 1.3 – Neighbouring Character Areas**.
- 1.4 This assessment can also provide a framework in which more detailed assessments sit, such as local landscape character assessments produced to inform Neighbourhood Plans or assessments that focus on a particular local area. An example is the ‘The Austin Lodge Valley, Eynsford: An Appreciation’ produced by the Friends of Austin Lodge Valley in November 2016 which provides more detail about one of the valleys that forms part of LCA 2b: Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs.



³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>



-  Sevenoaks district boundary
-  Adjacent district boundary
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

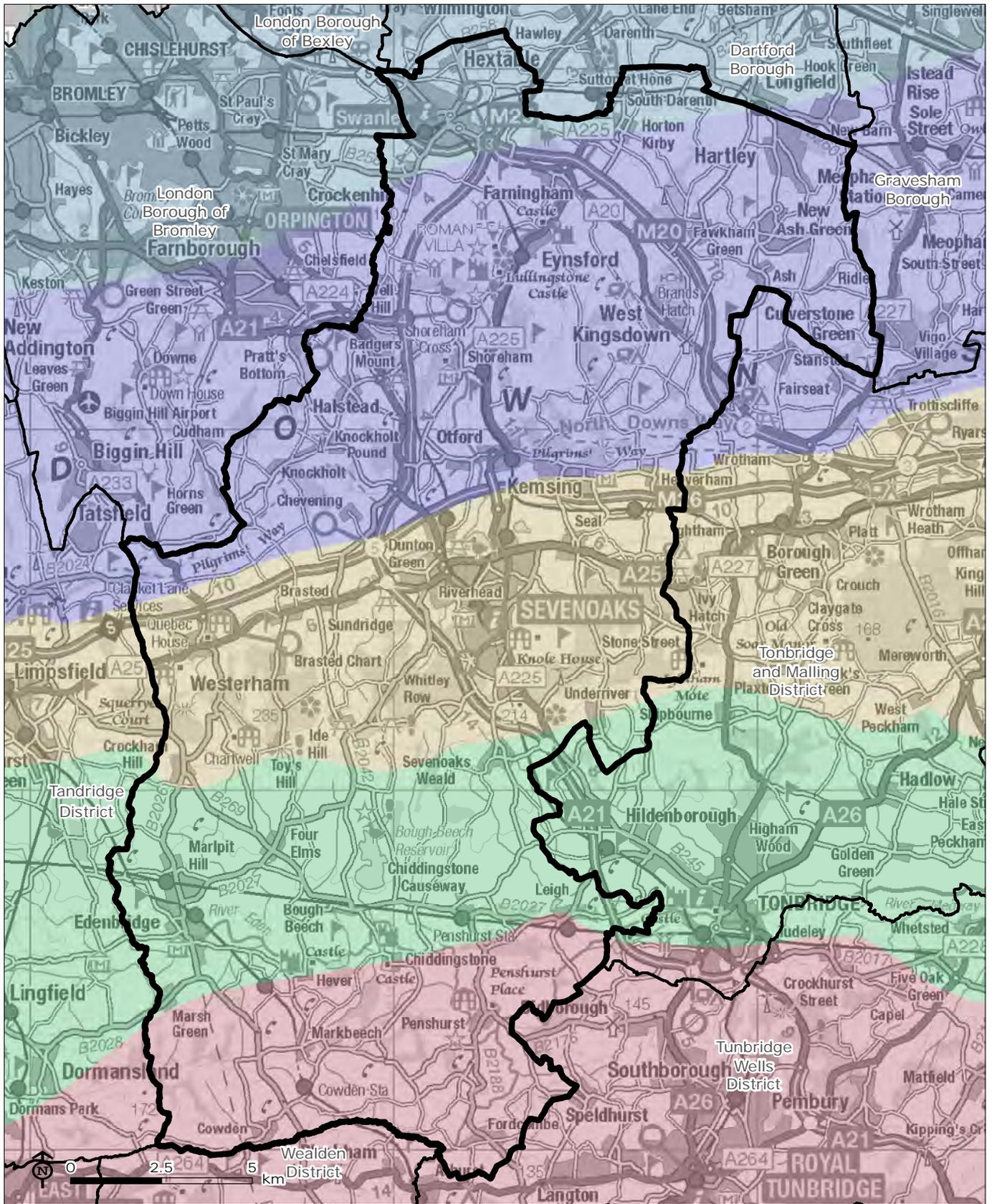
Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 1.1: Location Plan

Source: SDC, Natural England, OS



Map Scale @ A4: 1:150,000



- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Sevenoaks district boundary |  | National character areas |
|  | Adjacent district boundary |  | High Weald |
| | |  | Low Weald |
| | |  | North Downs |
| | |  | North Kent Plain |
| | | | Wealden Greensand |

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 1.2: Landscape Character Context

Source: Nature England, SDC, OS



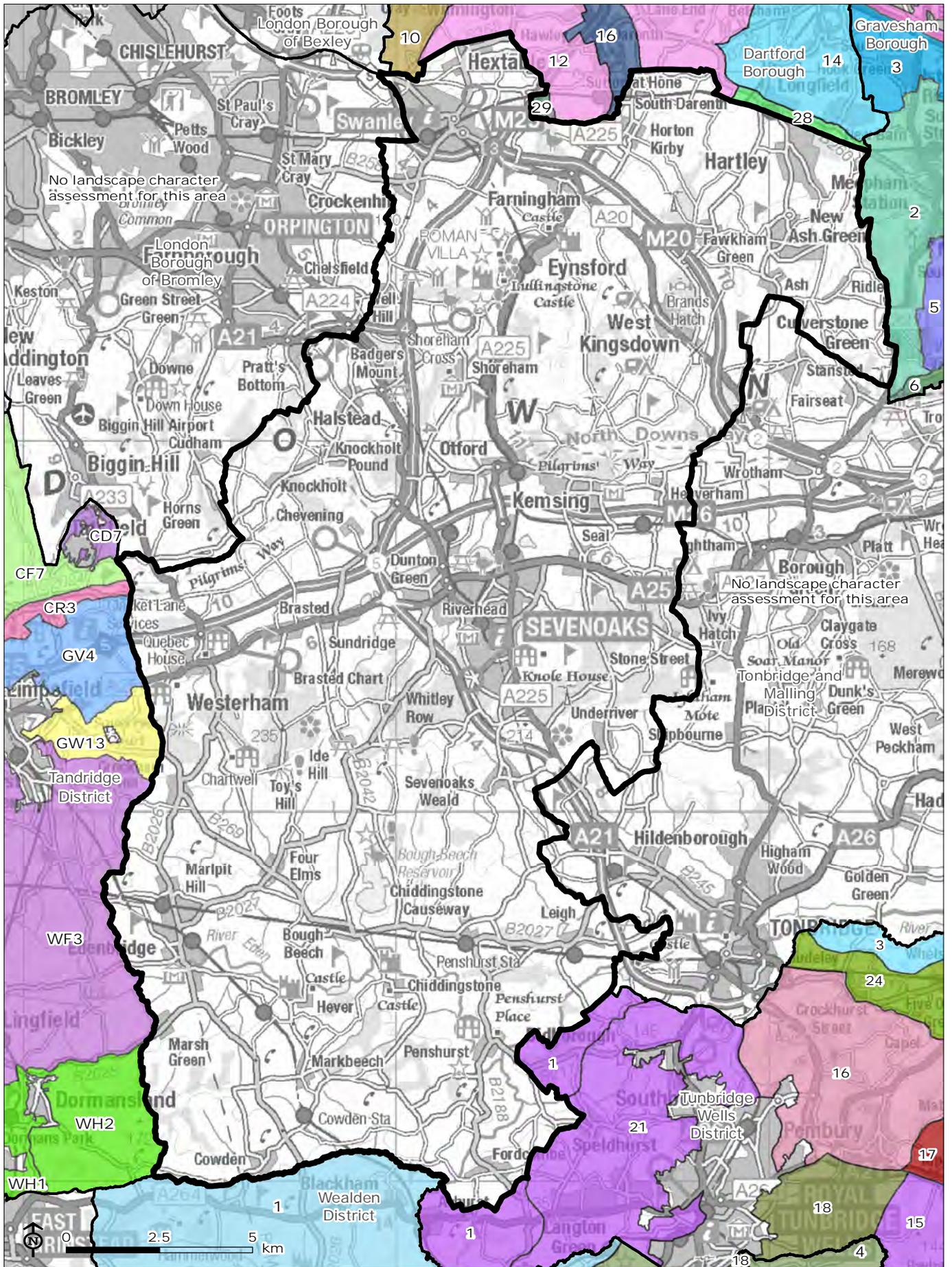


Figure 1.3: Neighbouring Character Areas

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

LUC

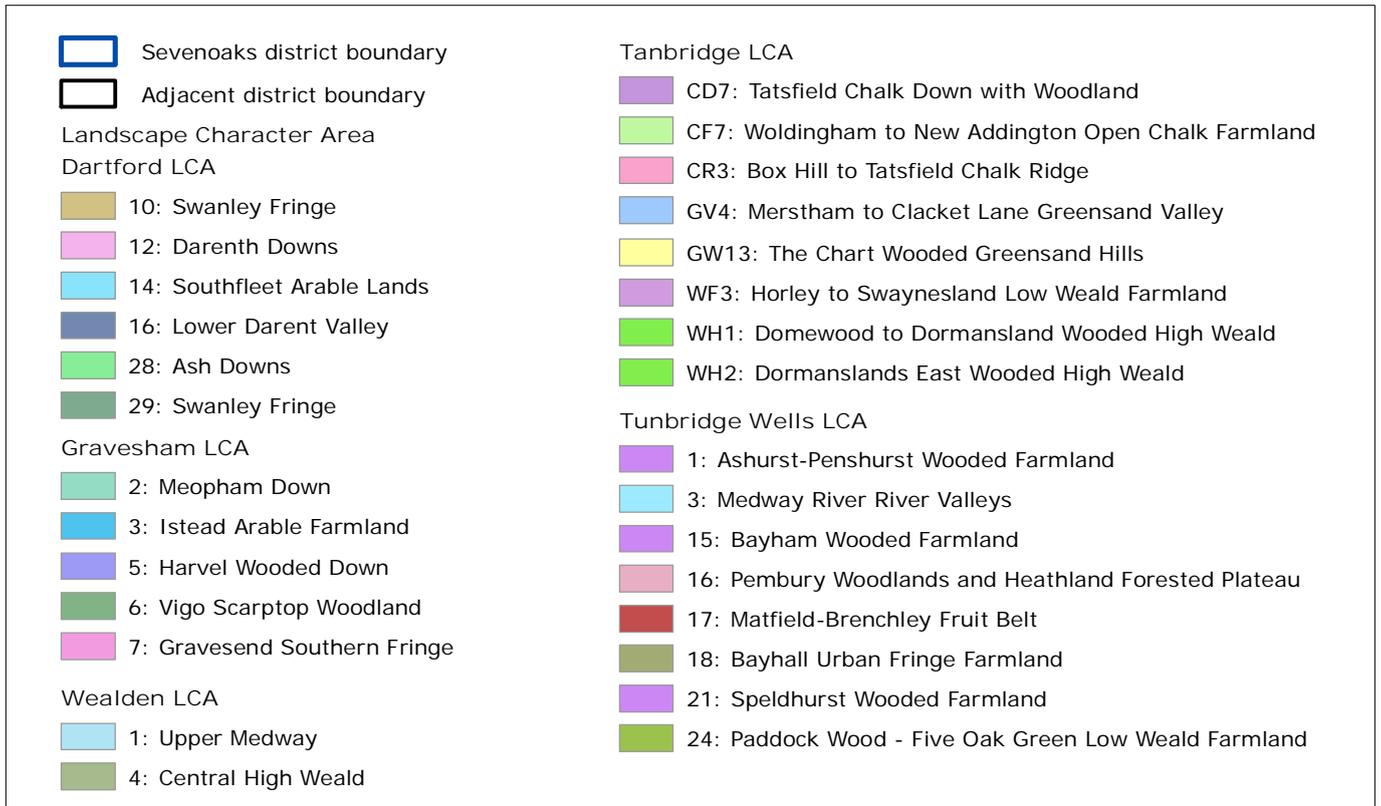


Figure 1.3: Neighbouring Character Areas - Legend

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Source: SDC, OS



CB: EB: Tzampoura_V LUCEDI 6897_Fig1-3_Neighbouring_Character_Areas_Legend_A4P 05/12/2016

2 Methodology for the Landscape Character Assessment

Approach

- 2.1 The method for undertaking this Landscape Character Assessment follows the method promoted by Natural England through 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014)⁴, which embeds the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) within it. This 2014 guidance updates the previous 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland', published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage in 2002, though the methodology is broadly the same as the previous guidance.
- 2.2 The 2014 guidance lists the five key principles for landscape character assessment as follows:
- Landscape is everywhere and all landscape has character;
 - Landscape occurs at all scales and the process of Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at any scale;
 - The process of Landscape Character Assessment should involve an understanding of how the landscape is perceived and experienced by people;
 - A Landscape Character Assessment can provide a landscape evidence base to inform a range of decisions and applications;
 - A Landscape Character Assessment can provide an integrating spatial framework- a multitude of variables come together to give us our distinctive landscapes.
- 2.3 The assessment has been prepared within the framework set by Natural England's Natural Character Areas, and aims to join up with surrounding authorities' LCAs. It supersedes the previous Sevenoaks Countryside Character Assessment (2011) and the Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004), but draws on information from the Sevenoaks 20011 assessment where this remains relevant.
- 2.4 The process for undertaking the study involved four main stages, described below, namely:
- Desk study and classification;
 - Field survey;
 - Description;
 - Evaluation.
- 2.5 GIS was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data.

Process of Assessment

Desk Study and Classification

- 2.6 This stage involved the collation of a wide range of mapped information to 'sense-check' the existing landscape classification.
- 2.7 Data used within the report, including data collated in the GIS database, is shown in **Table 2.1**.

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396192/landscape-character-assessment.pdf
[accessed February 2015]

Table 2.1: GIS Data

Name	Source
Base OS mapping at 1:50K and 1:25K	Ordnance Survey
Terrain 50 Contour data	Ordnance Survey
Solid & drift geology 1:50K	SDC
Public rights of Way	SDC
River features & floodzones	SDC
Agricultural Land Classification	Natural England
Nature conservation designations	Natural England (national datasets) and SDC Council (local datasets)
Biodiversity Opportunity Areas	SDC
Historic Landscape Character Types	SDC (from Kent CC)
Historic map (OS 1868-1895)	SDC
Heritage designations	English Heritage (national datasets) and SDC (local datasets)
Dark skies	CPRE

Field Survey

- 2.8 A field survey was undertaken to check the classification. This specifically focussed on:
- verifying and fine-tuning the classification of the landscape types and areas identified;
 - recording information on landscape character and characteristics and noting local variations in character;
 - identifying key sensitivities and valued attributes; and
 - assessing landscape quality (condition) i.e. the physical state of the landscape and its intactness.

Description

- 2.9 For each **landscape character type** a map, a representative photo and key characteristics are provided, along with information about which national character area the type falls within and brief information on geology⁵, soils⁶, landform⁷ and component historic landscape types⁸.
- 2.10 For each **landscape character area** a map and representative photo is provided and landscape character is described in terms of:
- Key characteristics (taken from the existing LCA but with any inconsistencies corrected and expanded where necessary to paint a picture of the area);
 - Fuller landscape description (taken from the existing LCA but with any inconsistencies corrected or changes included).

Evaluation

- 2.11 The "Approach to Landscape Character Assessment" document does not provide guidance on what should form part of an evaluation. Therefore we have proposed something that we feel will be useful for a number of different future applications. The evaluation covers:

⁵ Taken from solid and drift geology maps (1:50K scale)

⁶ Taken from the previous Sevenoaks Countryside Character Assessment 2011.

⁷ Taken from the previous Sevenoaks Countryside Character Assessment 2011

⁸ Taken from the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation 2001, by Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) on behalf of Kent County Council (KCC) and English Heritage (EH)

- landscape condition i.e. the physical state of the landscape and its intactness, as well as the presence of any detractors;
- key sensitivities and valued attributes i.e. the features and characteristics that are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide (i.e. those things that if lost would change the character to the detriment of the landscape);
- a vision for the landscape;
- guidance to conserve and enhance character and achieve the vision. This section notes when the LCA is located within an AONB.

Consultation

- 2.12 A workshop was held on 29th September 2016 to present the work being undertaken and to gather views on the draft area boundaries and names, what is valued in the landscape, cultural associations (people, events, art, literature, myths or music that relate to the area), and pressures affecting the landscape. A follow up email was sent to all invitees to invite further information on values and cultural associations or comments on boundaries (and provide the opportunity for those who could not attend the workshop to contribute information). It is acknowledged that gaining a comprehensive picture of what residents value about their landscape could be a project within itself, but the purpose of this consultation was to back up the consultants' professional judgement about what is of value and why. The list of contributors is provided at **Appendix 2** and comments made are included in **Appendix 3**.

3 Formative Influences

- 3.1 The landscape of Sevenoaks District has evolved over many hundreds and thousands of years. It has been created by the interaction of the natural environment and human activities, in particular the combination of physical and cultural influences. Physical influences such as geology and landform, together with the overlying pattern of settlement and land use are key determinants of landscape character.

Physical Influences

- 3.2 The basic structure of the landscape is fundamentally influenced by its underlying rocks and relief. Geology and the processes of weathering, erosion and deposition influence the shape and form of the landscape and its drainage and soils. In turn, these influence patterns of vegetation and land use.
- 3.3 **Figure 3.1** illustrates the solid (or bedrock) geology that underlies the district. This shows that there is a clear pattern of underlying geology that runs in horizontal bands.
- 3.4 The northern part of the District is underlain by White Chalk, formed approximately 66 to 100 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. This gives rise to an area of undulating chalk with dry valleys and with a steep scarp slope to the south. Below this steep scarp is a band of Lower Chalk (Grey Chalk sub-group) underlying the scarp footslopes.
- 3.5 Below the chalk is a band of mudstone, sandstone and limestone associated with the Gault Formation, formed approximately 94 to 112 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period, and which forms a gentle valley landform (the upper Darent).
- 3.6 Below this is a band of Lower Greensand that forms another ridge of scarp-and-dip slope topography with a steep scarp to the south. The Greensand typically gives rise to nutrient-poor, acid, sandy soils often associated with tracts of heaths and commons. Greensand soils have not been as extensively cleared for agriculture as some other areas, and many ancient woodlands have survived although often in fragmented patches and on steeper slopes. See **Figure 3.4** for the agricultural land classification and **Figure 3.5** for the distribution of ancient woodland.
- 3.7 Below the Greensand is an area of Wealden Beds that underlie the Low and High Weald. The Weald is a geologically complex anticline, a dome of rocks folded after their deposition with the oldest strata exposed at the centre in the High Weald. The Low Weald is dominated by the Lower Cretaceous Weald Clay formation (consisting of clays, silts and localised sands and limestones) giving rise to heavy clay soils.
- 3.8 The older rocks of the High Weald comprise fissured sandrock deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams which give rise to the headwaters and upper reaches of rivers.
- 3.9 **Figure 3.2** shows the drift (or superficial) geology. The main features are the alluvium along the river courses, the river terrace deposits beside these, and areas of clay-with-flints on some of the higher downs (formed from the rock debris left behind by weathering processes), and which give rise to thicker soils and typically support woodland areas.
- 3.10 The underlying geology has been weathered to create the distinctive landform seen across the District today. **Figure 3.3** shows the landform and drainage, showing the key river valleys and the great variety of topography across the District.
- 3.11 The presence and distribution of the natural habitats found in the District are strongly influenced by geology and landform. Kent Wildlife Trust has mapped habitats and species across Kent which can be found here: <http://www.kentbap.org.uk/habitats-and-species/>. The important ecological habitats are recognised through designations (SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves) and can be seen on **Figure 3.6 Biodiversity Designations**. Kent Wildlife Trust has identified areas to target action for biodiversity, in order to restore and reconnect wildlife and

produce a network of habitats that will give wildlife the opportunity to adapt to climate change. This network of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) not only stretches across Kent but links to that of other counties and forms the spatial expression of the South East England Biodiversity Strategy. In Sevenoaks District the key Biodiversity Opportunity Areas are:

- Central North Downs;
- Greensand Heaths and Commons;
- Medway & Low Weald Greensand & Gault; and
- High Weald.

3.12 **Figure 3.6** shows the locations of these Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. More information about each can be found here: <http://www.kentbap.org.uk/kent-boas/>



The basic structure of the landscape is influenced by its underlying rocks and relief, giving rise to steep scarps and dramatic views such as this view from Ide Hill across the Low Weald.

Cultural Influences

- 3.13 The landscapes and settlement of the District have developed over time, and have been greatly influenced by man's use of the land and successive cycles of reclamation and abandonment of woodland, pasture and arable as population and agricultural pressures have ebbed and flowed. Historic landscape character has been mapped through the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001). **Figure 3.7 Key Historic Landscape Types** provides a simplified map of these historic landscape types by amalgamating the detailed historic types into the key historic types that influence character across the District. The important historic features that remain in the landscape today are recognised through designations (Scheduled Monuments, registered Historic Parks and Gardens and Kent's local historic parks and gardens) and can be seen on **Figure 3.8 Heritage Assets**.
- 3.14 Evidence of early occupation includes Roman sites along the Darent valley. However, the origins of the modern-day settlement pattern of villages, hamlets and associated field patterns on the

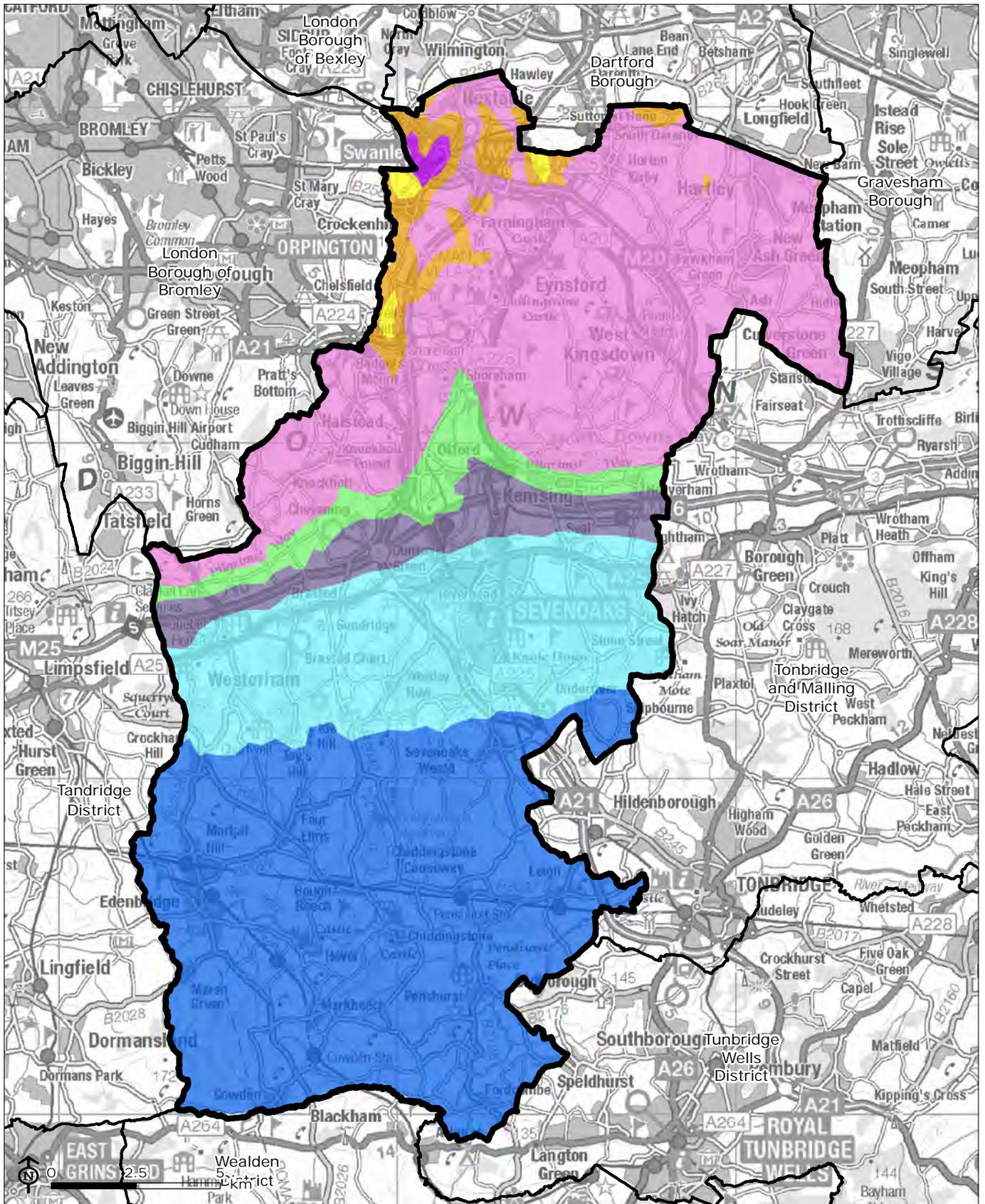
chalk downs can be traced to the Anglo-Saxon period when piecemeal clearance of woodland took place. In the medieval period and during the agricultural revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries areas of pasture and woodland have been progressively converted to arable land use. The underlying chalk has been quarried to improve clay soils and small quarries, pits and shafts (deneholes) are a feature of the chalk landscapes in the north today.

- 3.15 The generally nutrient-poor Greensand soils have not been as extensively cleared for agriculture as some other areas, but the woodlands have been an important component – coppicing hazel, hornbeam, sessile oak and sweet chestnut has been an important part of the rural economy in this area over the years. Field patterns typically reflect the irregularity of ancient enclosure or enclosure by agreement, with regular Parliamentary-type enclosure generally restricted to late enclosure of heathland. Heathland developed on the sandy and acidic soils but a high proportion of the original Greensand heaths were converted to agricultural land or forestry plantations, or became covered with secondary woodland. The system of ‘common land’ (where groups of people had collective grazing or harvesting rights over an area of land) is typical of this central area of Sevenoaks District, and wooded commons in this area are known as charts. The woodland provides a backdrop to the many landscaped parks of the area, and has been used by designers to frame 18th- and 19th-century parkland landscapes. Settlement in this area was typically a mixture of dispersed farmsteads and hamlets, and some nucleated villages, often linked by small, deeply sunken lanes, but 20th century development has altered this in places.
- 3.16 Mesolithic hunter-gatherer communities existed in the Low Weald and these were followed by Bronze Age farmers who started to clear woodlands. From at least Saxon times, livestock were driven to the Wealden forests to feast on acorns and beech masts or to the downland to graze on the higher pasture and north–south roads are a legacy of this. By the medieval period much of the Low Weald was a patchwork of assart fields and woodlands with dispersed manorial farms and market settlements. There is evidence of iron working in the Weald for over 2,000 years and large numbers of people were employed in digging ore, cutting wood, charcoal making and transporting raw materials and products. Hammer and furnace ponds, grand houses built by wealthy foundry owners and the remains of the coppiced woodland which was managed for the production of charcoal remain today. The area was also important for ship-building. As the iron industry moved to the coal fields during the Industrial Revolution, and ship-building declined, woodland was left unmanaged or cut down for pasture or building. Agriculture dominated and Oast houses were built.



Oast houses are typical across Sevenoaks District.

- 3.17 In the High Weald some woodland clearance was under way in the Neolithic Period but Medieval farmers shaped the present-day landscape of small fields and scattered farmsteads, with woodland, shaws and gill woodlands on steep valleys. The High Weald lies within one of the largest tracts of woodland in early medieval England. The medieval pattern of dispersed farms, small hamlets and villages later evolved into the characteristic High Weald ridgetop villages. Along with the Low Weald, this area produced iron. Leats, dams and hammer ponds were constructed to provide water for the forges. The area was also important for ship building. In the 17th and 18th centuries hop growing expanded and in the 19th century the arrival of the railways brought the growth of country houses and estates. More recently many farmsteads have been converted to residential uses.
- 3.18 The Kent Historic Environment Record (formerly the Sites and Monuments Record) is a database of archaeological sites, finds and buildings, Scheduled monuments, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and the Historic Landscape Classification. It is available here: <http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/>.
- 3.19 The area is associated with a number of notable people, including Henry VIII who had a palace at Otford (Henry VIII forced Archbishop Thomas Cranmer to surrender the palace in 1537), Churchill whose home was Chartwell, Jane Austin who came from a Wealden family, the painter Samuel Palmer who painted in the Darent Valley, General James Wolfe whose childhood home was in Westerham, Octavia Hill who founded the National Trust (and is associated with the Ide Hill area), and the poet John Donne who was a clergyman at St Nicholas in Sevenoaks from 1616 until 1631. The area also includes the Pilgrims Way which is thought to be the road taken by pilgrims to the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury.



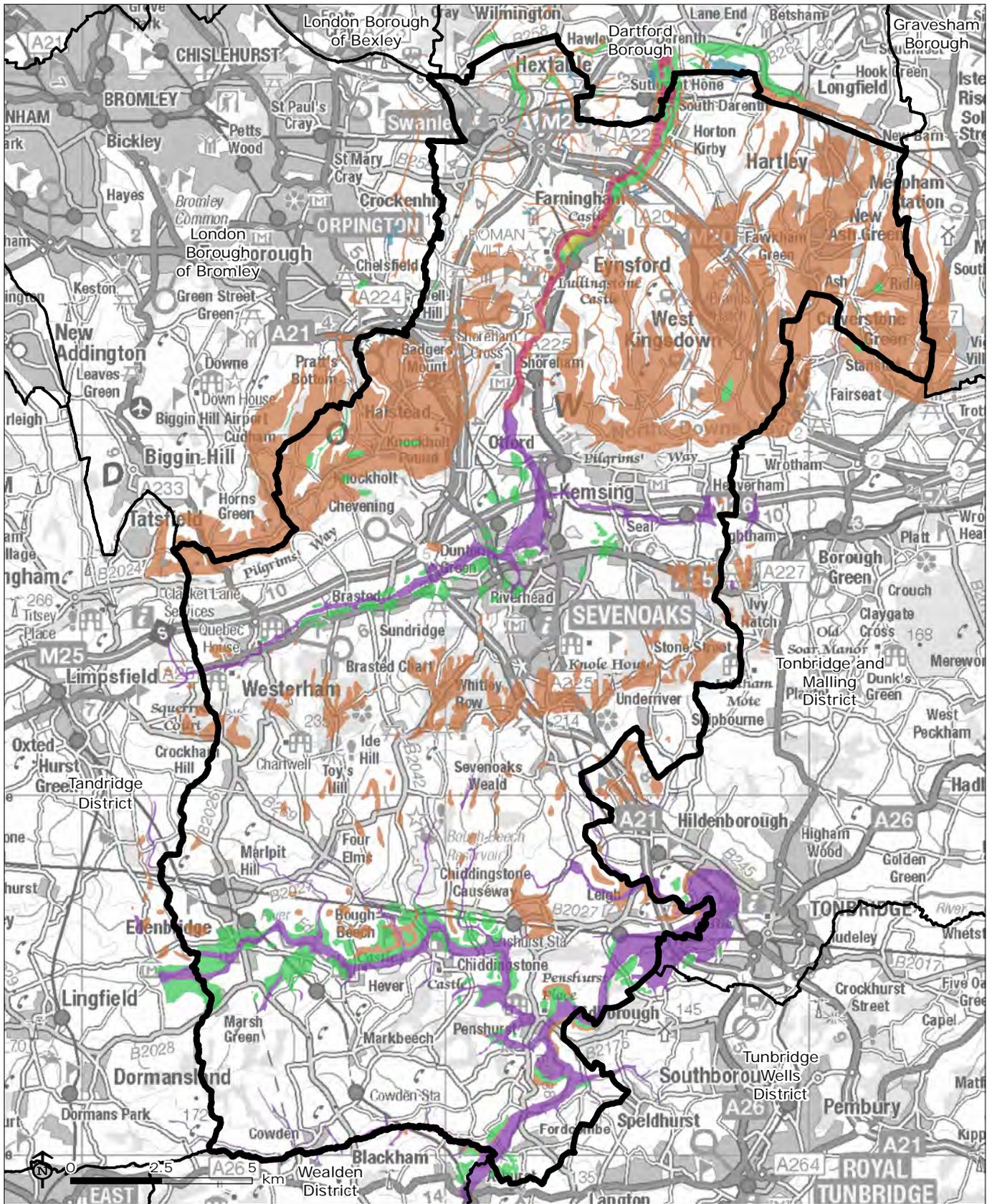
- Sevenoaks district boundary
- Adjacent district boundary
- Gault Formation And Upper Greensand Formation (Undifferentiated)
- Grey Chalk Subgroup
- Lambeth Group
- Lower Greensand Group
- Thames Group
- Thanet Sand Formation
- Wealden Group
- White Chalk Subgroup

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.1: Solid Geology

Source: BGS, OS





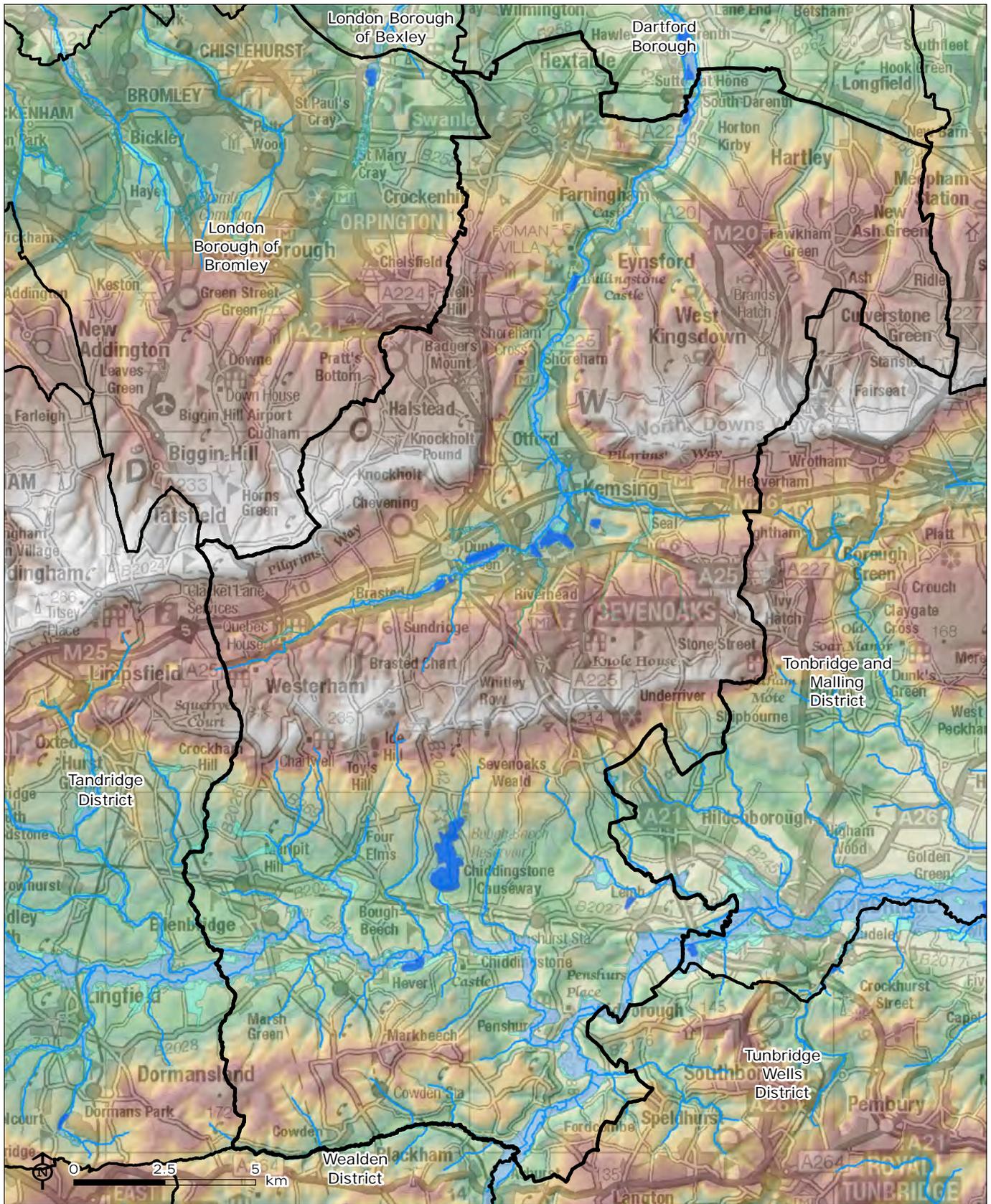
- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
|  | Sevenoaks district boundary | Drift geology description |
|  | Adjacent district boundary |  Alluvium |
| | |  Clay, Alluvium And Sand |
| | |  Gravel |
| | |  Head |
| | |  Sand And Gravel |
| | |  Sand, Alluvium And Clay |

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.2: Drift Geology

Source: SDC, OS





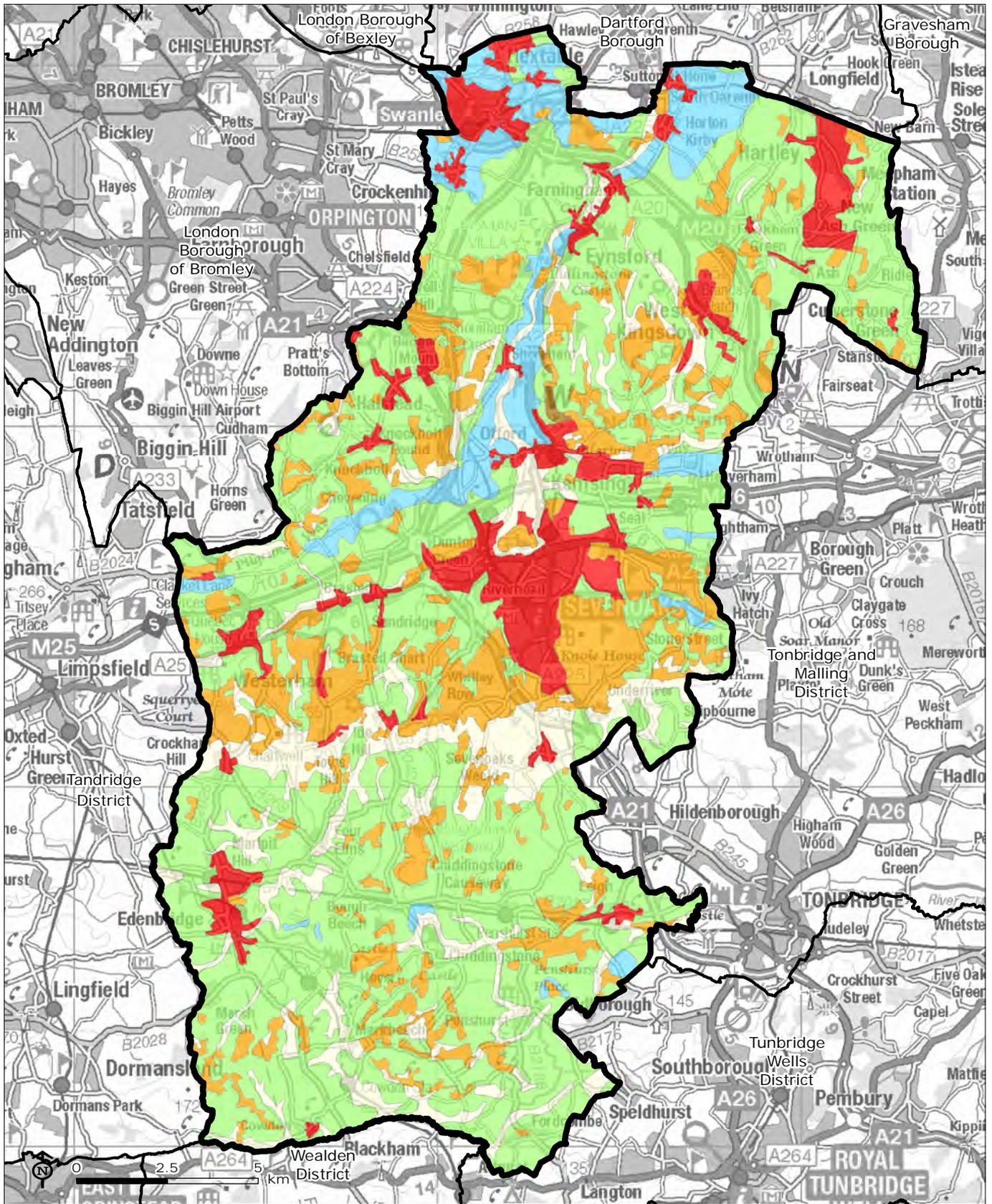
- Sevenoaks district boundary
 - Adjacent district boundary
 - Flood zone 2
 - Flood zone 3
 - River network
 - Waterbody
- Elevation (metres AOD)
- High : 267.7
 - Low : -9.3

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.3: Landform and Drainage

Source: Environmental Agency, OS





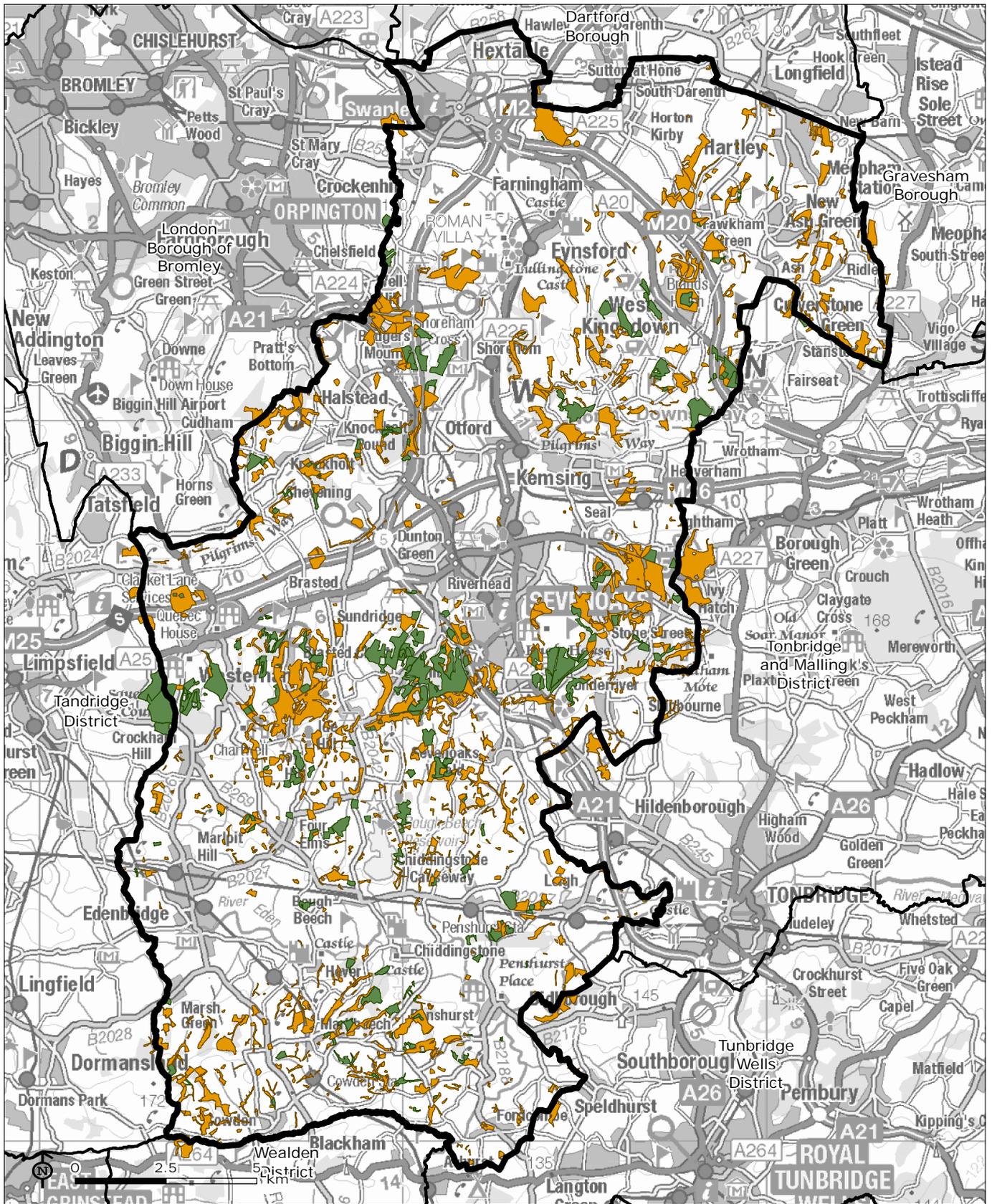
- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|------------------|
|  | Sevenoaks district boundary | Agricultural Land Classification | |
|  | Adjacent district boundary |  | Grade 2 |
| | |  | Grade 3 |
| | |  | Grade 4 |
| | |  | Grade 5 |
| | |  | Non agricultural |
| | |  | Urban |

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.4: Agricultural Land Classification

Source: SDC, Natural England





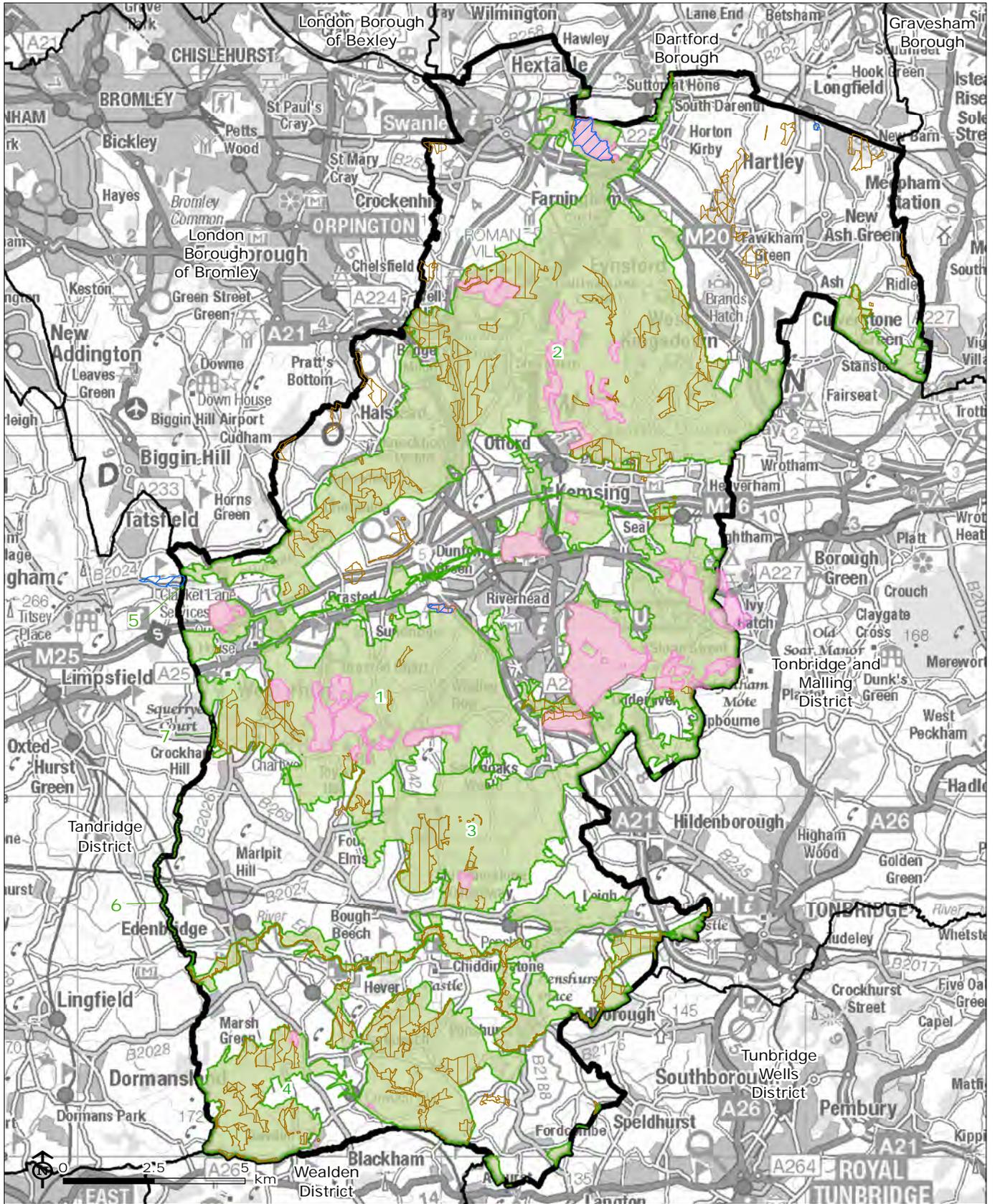
-  Sevenoaks district boundary
-  Adjacent district boundary
-  Ancient & semi-natural woodland
-  Ancient replanted woodland

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.5: Ancient Woodland

Source: SDC, Natural England, OS





- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | Sevenoaks district boundary |  | Biodiversity Opportunity Area |
|  | Site of Special Scientific Interest | 1. | Greensand Heaths & Commons |
|  | Local Wildlife Site | 2. | Central North Downs |
|  | Local Nature Reserve | 3. | Medway & Low Weald Greensand & Gault |
| | | 4. | High Weald |
| | | 5. | North Downs Scarp; Woldingham |
| | | 6. | Eden (plus tributaries) |
| | | 7. | Limspsfield Heaths |

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.6: Biodiversity Designations

Source: NE, KWT, SDC, OS



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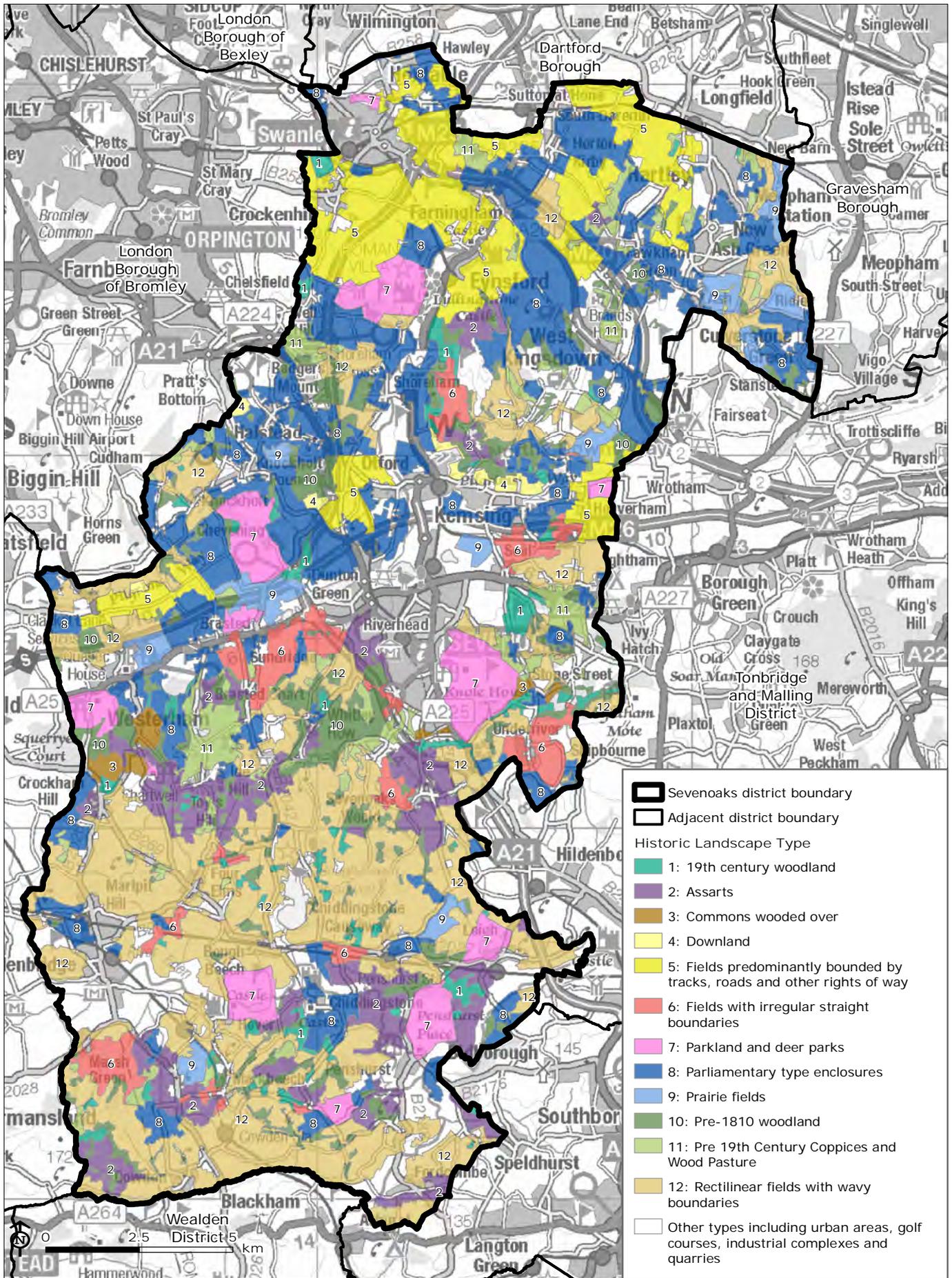
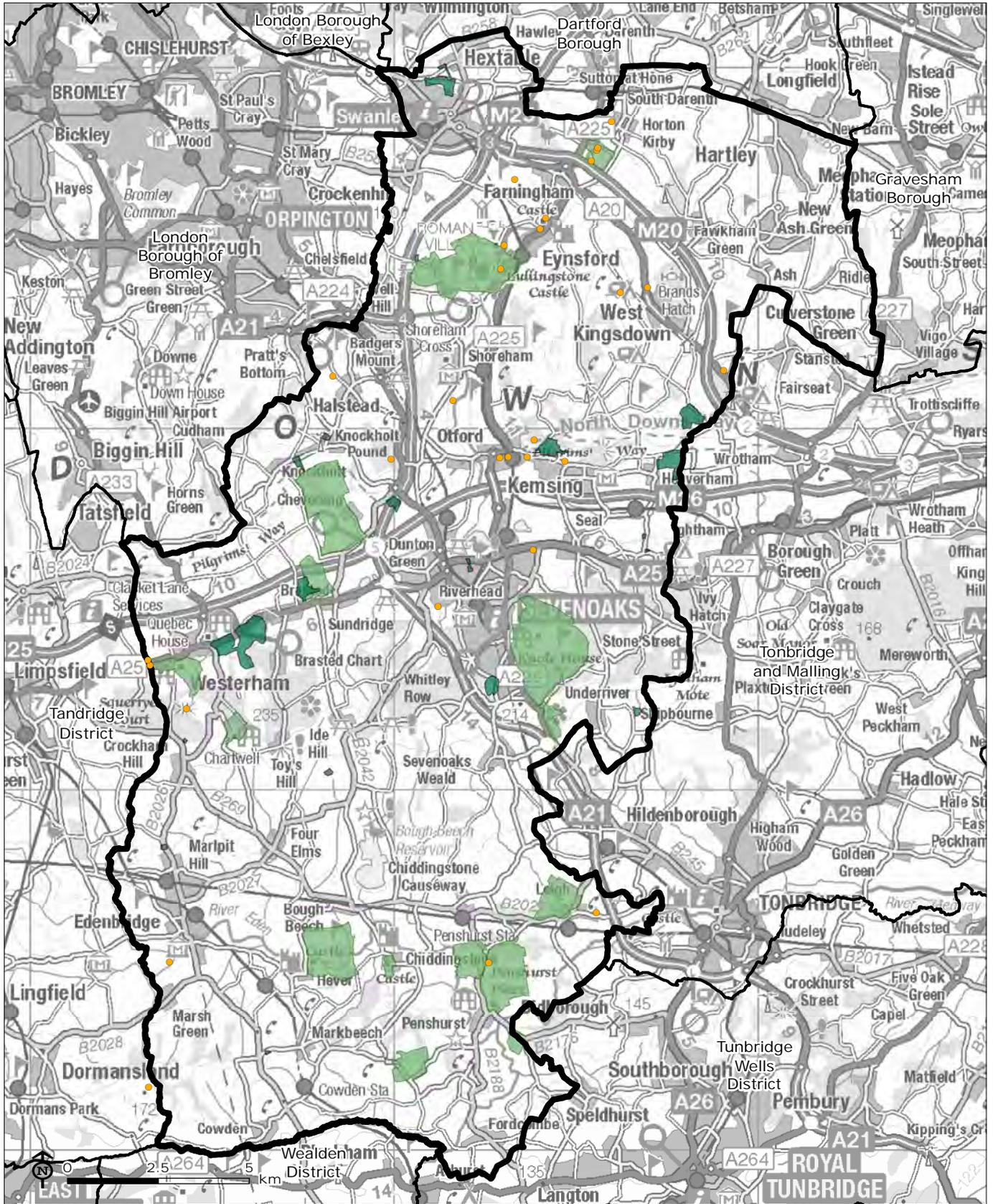


Figure 3.7: Key historic landscape types (interpreted from the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation)

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

LUC



-  Sevenoaks district boundary
-  Adjacent district boundary
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Registered Park and Garden
-  Local Historic Park and Garden

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 3.8: Heritage Assets

Source: SDC



4 Summary of Landscape Issues

- 4.1 Sevenoaks District has a high proportion of designated areas which include the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see **Figure 1.1**). Notably, there are areas of ancient woodland and grass downland. The area enjoys some areas of high visibility, where the long views are particularly important, and also a small-scale historic landscape pattern in which distinctive buildings and local vernacular are significant. Some areas are influenced by historic parkland and estate farmlands such as at Knole, or on the Chevening Scarp, dark night sky is a feature, particularly in the south of the District (see **Figure 4.1**).
- 4.2 In some areas of the Sevenoaks landscape, the condition of the landscape has deteriorated or is considered to be at risk due to factors as summarised below. It is recognised that some of the causes of poor landscape condition are outside the remit of the Planning Authority, however, some may be addressed by policy and development control.

Fringe landscapes

- 4.3 Pressure for new development is the most obvious challenge to existing landscape character. A particular problem is the growth of development which has no local distinction or relevance to the site or to the local settlement pattern, and this may include post 1801 linear built development which is frequently cited as a detracting feature within the landscape. New development on the fringe of an existing urban area often introduces an incongruous or harsh urban edge into the adjacent landscape and can introduce suburban features (such as suburban style boundaries to the rural landscape), introduce lighting into previously unlit areas, or affect the settings of historic settlements or buildings/ loss of historic features. In addition, the spread of suburban elements, such as coniferous planting, often constitute detracting elements in the view. Pressures on fringe landscapes also include recreational uses such as golf courses and littering/ fly tipping.
- 4.4 The growth of 'horsiculture' has had a marked influence on the condition of the landscape around many settlements, leading to the addition of inappropriate fencing and stabling and the deterioration of the small-scale historic enclosed landscape.

Agricultural landscapes

- 4.5 In the farmed landscape, the network of hedgerows is often vulnerable. Due to current agricultural practice, hedgerows lose their function in arable landscapes, and are often replaced by post and wire fences. Although Countryside Stewardship agreements have bought about a positive change in hedgerow management a frequent problem is the over-mature hedgerow being supplemented or replaced with post and wire fencing. Where hedgerows are characteristic but in poor condition, the integrity of these field boundaries and roadside hedges should be restored by replanting and active management.
- 4.6 Loss of traditional orchards and hop gardens and associated wind-break features has occurred over many years and remaining features continue to be vulnerable.
- 4.7 The form of modern agricultural buildings is often a detractor in agricultural landscapes, most of these buildings being of large scale and having no local distinction. Farms are generally decreasing in number and their agricultural buildings are steadily being converted to residential use with accompanying change in lighting requirements in these rural areas.
- 4.8 The Sevenoaks area has experienced an extensive loss of riparian landscape both in the Eden and Darent Valleys. In general, there is a lack of sensitive management of trees, and little replacement planting. Small areas of water meadows persist, but this type of landscape is generally in decline. Mineral extraction is also a pressure in these river valley landscapes. Water abstraction for domestic and industrial uses can alter water tables and landcover, but climate change is also likely to affect these valleys through water shortages on the one hand and flooding on the other.

- 4.9 The characteristic pattern of rural settlement, which often includes small dwellings and farmsteads located in direct relationship to the landform (such as isolated farmsteads on ridges in the Eynsford Downs) is greatly at risk from zoned or opportunist development. One general problem of the more remote parts of the Downs is the development of small buildings and small holdings – many probably having achieved deemed planning permission over time, but in the majority of cases incorporating unsympathetic land-uses and poor quality building (such as corrugated iron stabling, storage of waste goods etc).
- 4.10 Climate change is another major pressure on agricultural landscapes and is likely to result in increasingly unpredictable weather patterns with hotter drier summers, more intense rainfall and longer dry periods resulting in the need for agriculture and forestry industries to adapt to grow different crops and develop more flexible and responsive land management practices. Climate change may make some crops unviable and allow others, such as vines, to be grown. Hotter summers and increases in temperatures could result in increased demands for irrigation and domestic uses. Responses to climate change may also result in pressure for development of renewable energy.
- 4.11 The need for recreational use and access is likely to increase including demand for activity-based recreation, such as off-road cycling.

Traffic and transport

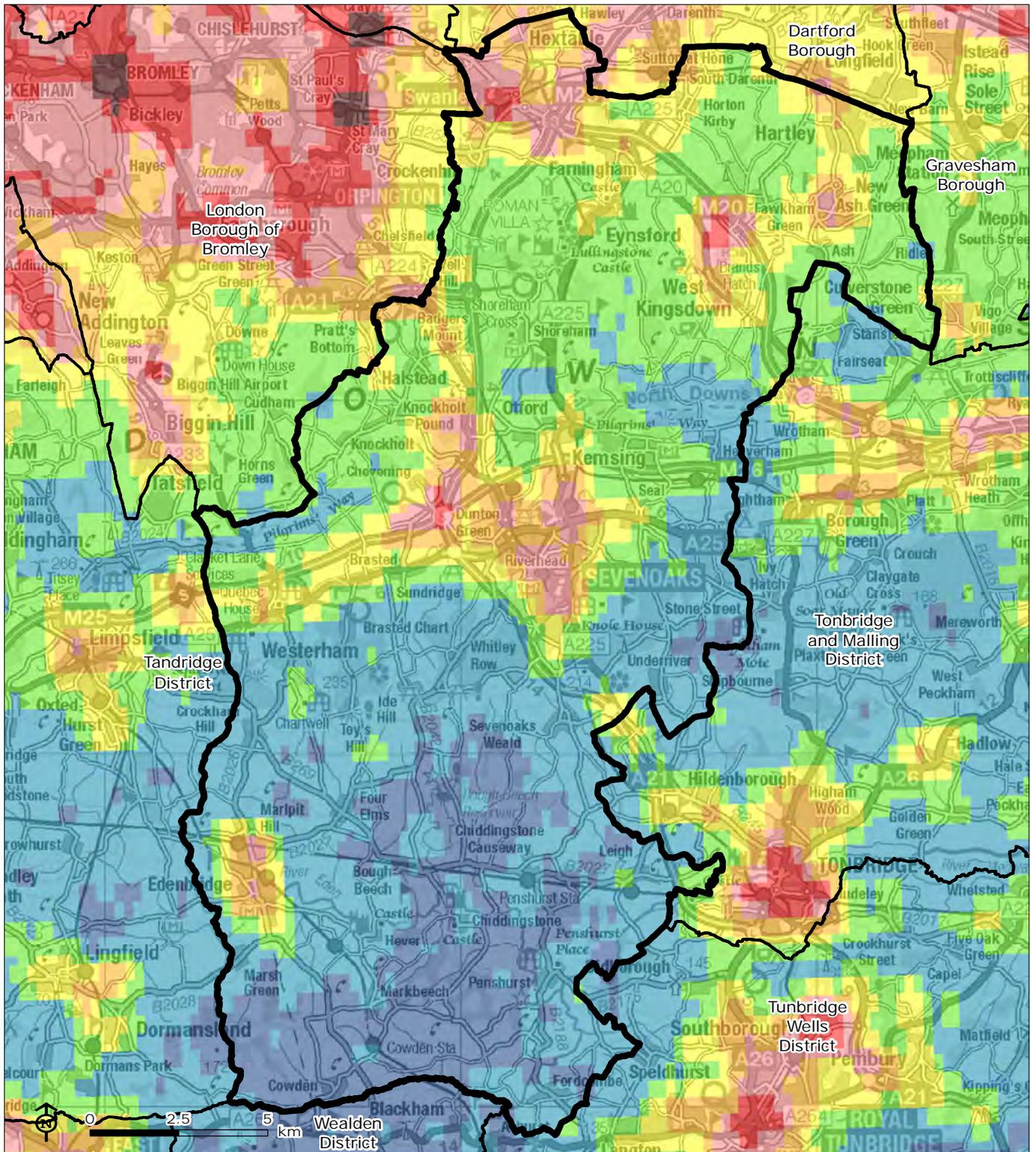
- 4.12 Motorway corridors, local highways and major communication routes have a large-scale impact on landform, including landscapes near Eynsford and Shoreham, Badger's Mount, Otford etc. The integration of transport and rail corridors into the wider landscape is needed; most major roads do not currently contribute to local distinctiveness. In particular, junctions and pockets of road-associated open space are treated as part of the linear corridor, but have no association with the landscape into which they lead.
- 4.13 The loss of distinctive features along rural roads is also an issue. Narrow verge-less roads, such as those which are characteristic in the Downs, are vulnerable to widening or experiencing an excessive number of vehicles, causing damage to chalk banks, and hedgerows. On other country lanes verges are vulnerable to erosion.
- 4.14 As roads approach urban edges, they often lose distinctive qualities and suffer abrupt transitions from the rural to the urban landscape. These areas need to embrace both highway standards while maintaining distinctive features appropriate to the area.
- 4.15 Airport expansion and increases in air traffic could also affect the area, eroding the sense of tranquillity.

Trees & woodland

- 4.16 One of the main factors in the historic deterioration of the landscape is the former loss of elm trees and hedgerow from Dutch elm disease, from which the countryside has not yet recovered. Newer diseases are now a threat, including Ash die back which could have a more profound effect than Dutch elm disease, and has been identified in the area. However, since the advent of Dutch elm disease biological understanding and techniques have advanced significantly and Biologists from John Innes Centre in Norfolk have made progress in identifying trees which could be genetically resistant to ash dieback, which it is hoped can be propagated. In addition to decline in ash, oak trees are declining in both number and condition. This could be further threatened by pests and disease, including Acute Oak Decline, as well as drought stress resulting from reduced water levels within clay soils.
- 4.17 Climate change is likely to result in increasingly unpredictable weather patterns with hotter drier summers, more intense rainfall and longer dry periods resulting in the need for forestry industries to adapt to grow different crops and develop more flexible and responsive land management practices. Changes in temperature resulting in warmer winters could alter the species composition of existing species-rich woodlands, shaws and hedgerows, favouring species with lower water demand. There are likely to be increasing incidences of pathogens disrupting timber crops and changing the species mix of woodlands, and higher temperatures and prolonged drought are likely to put woodlands under stress and increasing the risk of wildfires.

- 4.18 Some ancient woodland continues to suffer incremental damage from trampling and disturbance by livestock, machinery and recreational use. There is pressure on ancient woodland in all areas from lack of management, although recently there has been an increased interest in wood fuel initiatives which have the potential to help unmanaged woodlands back into management.

Agenda Item 8



Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 4.1: Dark Skies (2016)

More information: nightblight.cpre.org.uk

Source: OS, CPRE



- Sevenoaks district boundary
- Adjacent district boundary

Level of radiance (night light)
(NanoWatts / cm² / sr)

- >32 (high)
- 16 - 32
- 8 - 16
- 4 - 8
- 2 - 4
- 1 - 2
- 0.5 - 1
- 0.25 - 0.5

Part 2: The Landscape Character of Sevenoaks District



5 Classification

- 5.1 Classification is concerned with dividing the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character and grouping areas of similar character together.

Landscape Types and Character Areas

- 5.2 Landscape types have been identified that have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern in each area in which they occur. This does not mean that they will be identical, but that they have a common pattern of elements.
- 5.3 Each landscape type is subdivided into a number of geographically specific character areas. They share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type, but have their own particular identity or 'sense of place'.
- 5.4 13 landscape types and 31 landscape character areas have been identified as listed in **Table 5.1** below. The classification is shown on a 1:250,000 scale base map at **Figure 5.1** and in more detail on a fold-out 1:25,000 OS base map at **Appendix 4**.
- 5.5 Note that this new classification is based on the old classification, but some landscape character areas have been amalgamated to reduce the overall number of landscape character areas. Some boundaries have also been adjusted to follow more suitable features, for example the southern boundary of the Chevening Scarp has been altered to follow a contour line rather than field boundaries (as landform is what defines this landscape type). The boundary of the Low Weald has also been drawn further down slope. The part of the Darent Valley just north of Sevenoaks has been moved from the former "Downs River Valleys" landscape type into the new "Clay Valleys" landscape type as this more accurately reflects its underlying geological influences. The extent of the "Wealden River Valleys" has also been reviewed and altered. The main settlements have been omitted from this rural assessment – these equate to the areas inset from the Green Belt, provided by SDC.

Table 5.1: Landscape Character Types and Areas in Sevenoaks District

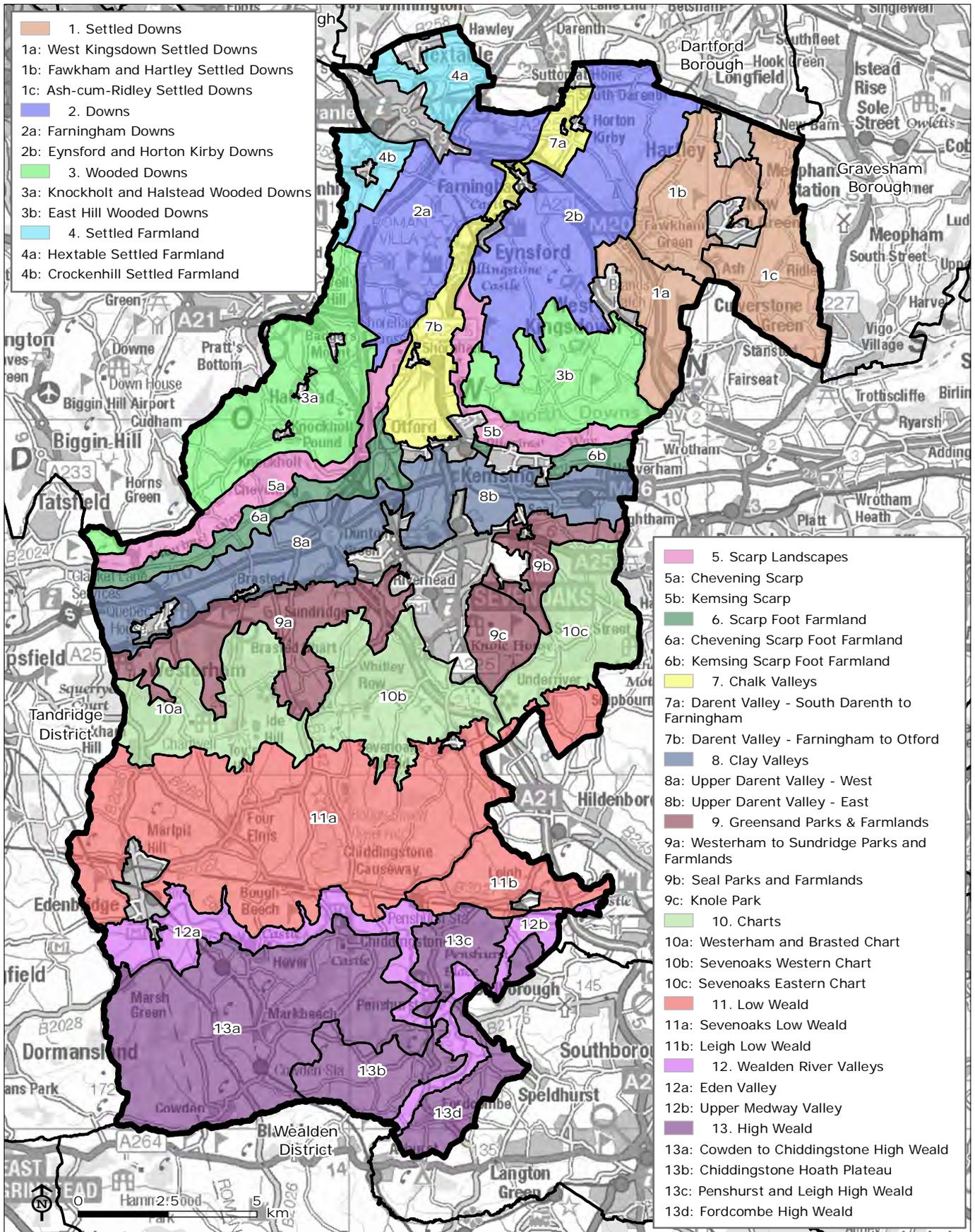
Number	Type		Area
1	Settled Downs	a	West Kingsdown Settled Downs
		b	Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs
		c	Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs
2	Downs	a	Farningham Downs
		b	Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs
3	Wooded Downs	a	Knockholt and Halstead Wooded Downs
		b	East Hill Wooded Downs
4	Settled Farmland	a	Hextable Settled Farmland
		b	Crockenhill Settled Farmland
5	Scarp Landscapes	a	Chevening Scarp

Number	Type		Area
		b	Kemsing Scarp
6	Scarp Foot Farmland	a	Chevening Scarp Foot Farmland
		b	Kemsing Scarp Foot Farmland
7	Chalk Valleys	a	Darent Valley – South Darent to Farningham
		b	Darent Valley - Farningham to Otford
8	Clay Valleys	a	Upper Darent Valley - West
		b	Upper Darent Valley - East
9	Greensand Parks & Farmlands	a	Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands
		b	Seal Parks and Farmlands
		c	Knole Park
10	Charts	a	Westerham and Brasted Chart
		b	Sevenoaks Western Chart
		c	Sevenoaks Eastern Chart
11	Low Weald	a	Sevenoaks Low Weald
		b	Leigh Low Weald
12	Wealden River Valleys	a	Eden Valley
		b	Upper Medway Valley
13	High Weald	a	Cowden to Chiddingstone High Weald
		b	Chiddingstone Hoath Plateau
		c	Penshurst and Leigh High Weald
		d	Fordcombe High Weald / Medway High Weald

The Status, Meaning and Limitations of Boundary Lines

- 5.1 The precision of boundaries drawn around landscape character areas and types varies with the scale and level of detail of the assessment. This assessment has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 which means that it is suitable for use at this scale. The scale of this classification will need to be taken into account whenever the assessment is used to ensure that the level of detail is compatible with the intended application.
- 5.2 In reality landscape character does not change abruptly at the boundaries. Boundaries therefore often represent transitions rather than marked changes on the ground.

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Sevenoaks district boundary
 Adjacent district boundary

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

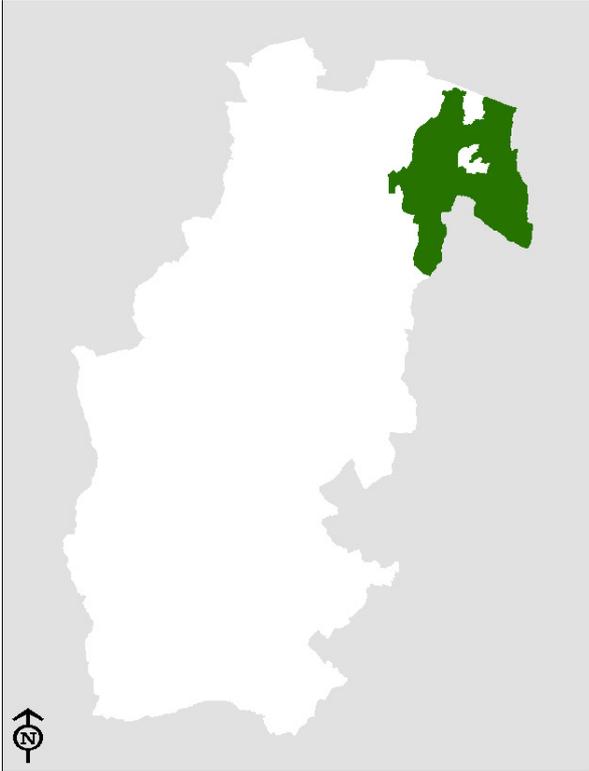
Figure 5.1: Classification For Sevenoaks



6 Landscape Character Type and Area Profiles

- 6.1 This section contains the landscape character type and area profiles including descriptive and evaluative information packaged by Local Landscape Type.

TYPE 1: SETTLED DOWNS



Key Characteristics

- Undulating chalk downland with plateaux, valleys and some dramatic steep slopes.
- Mixture of large scale open prairie fields and smaller scale enclosures, most derived from parliamentary enclosure.
- Mixture of arable and pasture farmland with woodland on hilltops.
- Thick hedgerows and coppice woodlands including beech and oak standards.
- Historic settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and hamlets, with modern houses scattered along roadsides.
- Urban influences from adjacent residential development of Hartley and New Ash Green.
- Characteristic narrow rural lanes follow contours and the valley floors, linking existing settlements.
- Large areas of recreational space including golf courses and a racing circuit.
- Views mostly well contained by woodland and topography with occasional views out from higher ground.



National landscape character

North Downs

Geology

Upper Chalk valleys with Clay-with Flints capped ridges

Soils

Loamy: rich wet neutral soils in valleys with poor wet acid soils on ridges

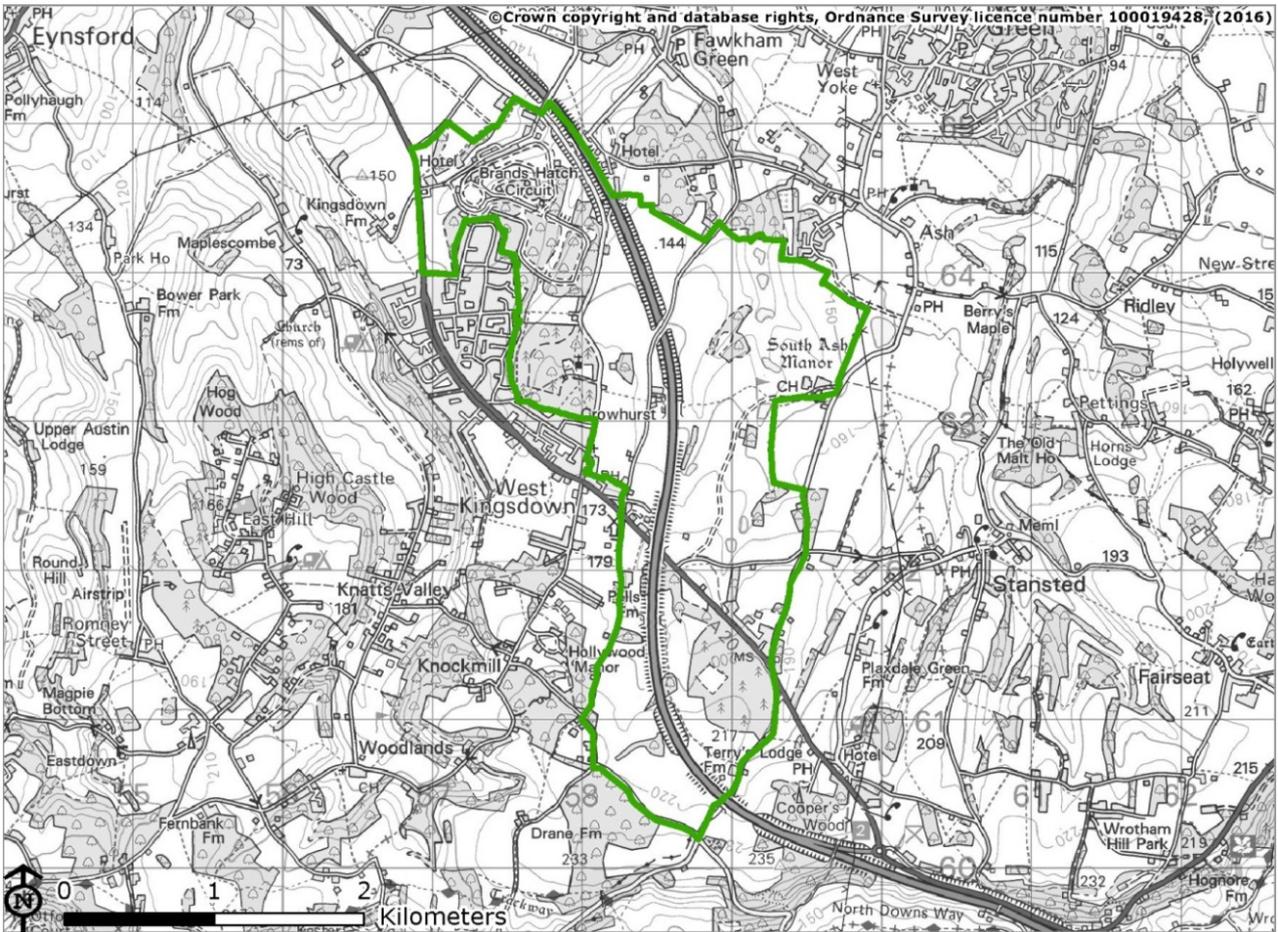
Landform

Undulating folded ridges and valleys aligned north to south

Historic landscape

Small and medium rectilinear fields of parliamentary enclosure. Medieval informal enclosure. Large 19th century enclosures with extensive boundary loss.

1a West Kingsdown Settled Downs



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Key Characteristics

- Undulating chalk plateau overlain with clay and flints. The heads of dry valleys carve the plateau.
- Blocks of broad-leaved native woodland give a well wooded appearance.
- Historic isolated manor and commons which contrast with modern adjacent development.
- Narrow rural lanes, but also affected by major routes of A20 and M20, partly in cutting.
- Major recreational uses, including London Golf Club and Brands Hatch racing circuit.
- A strong sense of enclosure is provided by the woodland. There are long views out from elevated parts of Stansted Lane.

Landscape Character Description

An elevated, gently undulating chalk plateau overlain with clay and flints. A small chalk valley leads to the northern edge of the area. Land use is predominantly residential and recreational, but was formerly commons and woodland. Large blocks of both mixed woodland and ancient woodland give the landscape a well-wooded feel.

The West Kingsdown area encompasses the village of West Kingsdown, Brands Hatch racing circuit, a golf course and long stretches of the A20 and M20 highways. Historic field patterns have largely been lost. Evidence of historic settlement is limited to the site of South Ash Manor and the Church of St Edmund. The routes of historic highways crossed the plateau in a north-south direction but these have been changed to accommodate motorway approaches and bridges, fencing, highway planting and signs and embankments. Motorway planting is a significant feature of the area.

Brands Hatch is located at the head of a chalky valley whilst the golf course is found on more undulating land. The adjacent residential area of West Kingsdown has developed along the A20 trunk road and is spreading into the woodland. Bungalows are a common form of residential style.

There are many medium range views, but these are extended near the motorway and golf course, where the landscape has been opened up. The area south of the A20 is within Kent Downs AONB.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The loss of historic landscape pattern to alternative land uses and extensive modern development, infrastructure and suburban land uses have interrupted the integrity of this landscape, adversely affecting its landscape condition. The variable management of the remaining woodland and agricultural land also affect condition. However, there are remaining intact aspects such as remaining copses (eg Church Wood, Grove Wood and Peckham Wood - also ancient woodland), shaws and 18th and 19th-century field patterns.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Semi-natural habitats on the rough ground to the east of Fawkham Road, including rough grassland and scrub which contributes to the landscape's biodiversity resource.
- Continuous thick hedgerow boundaries and shaws that create a strong landscape pattern and contribute to green infrastructure/biodiversity value.

- Areas of ancient woodland which provide backdrop to settlement and a sense of enclosure including Church Wood and Grove Wood which contain pollarded oaks.
- Historic features which have survived the rapid change of the landscape including the Grade I listed Church of St Edmund.
- Ancient twisting lanes running north-south through the area.
- Occasional long views from the elevated and open areas of the landscape.
- Sense of enclosure created by the dense woodland, shaws and hedgerows.
- Strong rural character and feeling of solitude away from development.

Vision

A rural landscape of actively managed farmland, grassland and woodland with ancient twisting lanes, a strong hedgerow network and well integrated infrastructure and built development. A landscape highly valued for recreation opportunities and good levels of ecological connectivity.

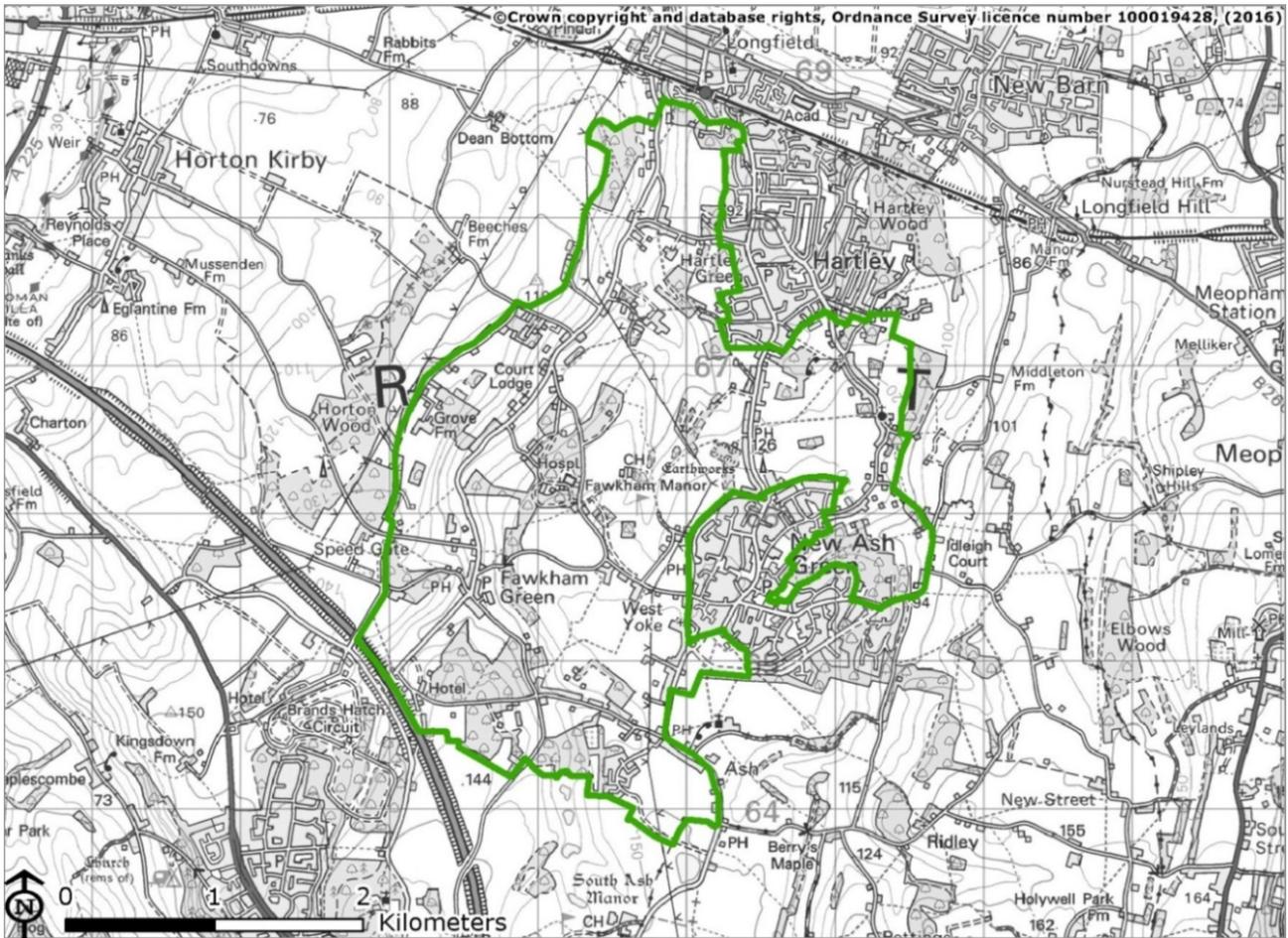
Landscape Guidance

The southern part of the Landscape Character Area is within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- All areas of unimproved grassland to be retained, managed, restored or recreated where feasible. Retain and enhance habitats on the area of rough ground to the east of Fawkham Lane.
- Conserve and enhance the valued areas of ancient woodland and supplement these habitats with areas of scrub.
- Enhance biodiversity of farmland habitats by including copses, hedges and unsprayed strips within crops.
- Encourage the sensitive management of open grassland in recreational areas to enhance biodiversity.
- Conserve valued historic features and their settings.
- Retain the character of the remaining narrow rural lanes. Create more sensitive boundary treatments to highways to screen roads and increase biodiversity value of road corridors.
- Ensure any new development is integrated into the landscape and reflects the rural vernacular to minimise impact on the rural landscape.
- Retain the rural character of the landscape away from existing development.

1b Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs



Key Characteristics

- Small scale and enclosed landscape with dramatic chalk valleys with steep slopes rising to chalk plateaux.
- Varied land cover includes ancient coppice woodland, open field systems, enclosed pastures, golf courses, parkland and estate woodland.
- Fields are enclosed by mature hedgerows with mature oak and beech and dead and regenerative elm.
- Narrow rural lanes follow contours. On the plateau are wide sweeping roads with infill development.
- Older farmsteads on higher ground with newer residential buildings in sheltered areas.
- Well-contained views limited by tall hedges and areas of tree cover.
- High levels of tranquillity.

Landscape Character Description

A small-scale and enclosed landscape which has developed around a steeply incised chalk valley, overlain with clay with flints on the higher ridges and flood plain gravels, following the bottom of the valley. The plateaux rise to 140m AOD, edged by the dry chalk valleys.

Varied field patterns reflect the differences in landform and historic landscape pattern. Small pasture fields are associated with development and steep slopes whilst on the plateaux the fields open up to larger scale arable cultivation, reflecting the gentler contours and richer soils. Woodland is frequent and encloses the valley-side pastures and covers the clay-capped ridges. Woodland is often ancient in origin. There is more recent parkland and estate woodland around the Fawkham Manor Estate. Two golf courses are found on the more gently undulating land.

Settlement follows a general pattern of older farmsteads on the higher ground and more recent linear development at the base of the valley. Traditional weatherboarded buildings and oast houses are distinctive features. New settlement at Hartley is based around an original hamlet. New Ash Green is a new village built in the early 1960's. Narrow rural roads generally follow contours but are widened and suburbanised on the plateau top.

Views along the valley are limited by tall roadside hedges and mature standard trees. Away from dense development, there are high levels of tranquillity.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The unified pattern of the landscape (small-scale fields on the valley sides and hilltop woodlands which reflect the underlying landform), the distinctive rural lanes, traditional settlement character and the intact ecological network of woodlands and hedgerows contribute positively to landscape condition. However, golf courses, horsiculture development, inappropriate modern buildings and suburbanised roads with associated road furniture detract from the condition of the landscape.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Dramatic valley/plateaux landform, reflected in the small-scale field pattern, particularly on the valley sides.
- Existing hilltop woodland habitat, including semi-natural ancient woodland comprised of oak, ash and beech of varying ages and historic coppice and pollard woodland.

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- The distinctive character of the ancient rural lanes which follow the contours of the valley.
- Traditional settlement pattern of scattered farm houses with a remote character and narrow rural lanes.
- Strong sense of time-depth and sense of place. Valued heritage features including the Grade I listed Church of All Saints.
- A sense of enclosure and isolation despite close proximity to dense urban development.
- High levels of tranquillity, feeling of solitude and sense of escape from adjacent urban areas.
- The mostly visually enclosed nature of the landscape, with the residential development screened from the surrounding rural areas by woodland.

Vision

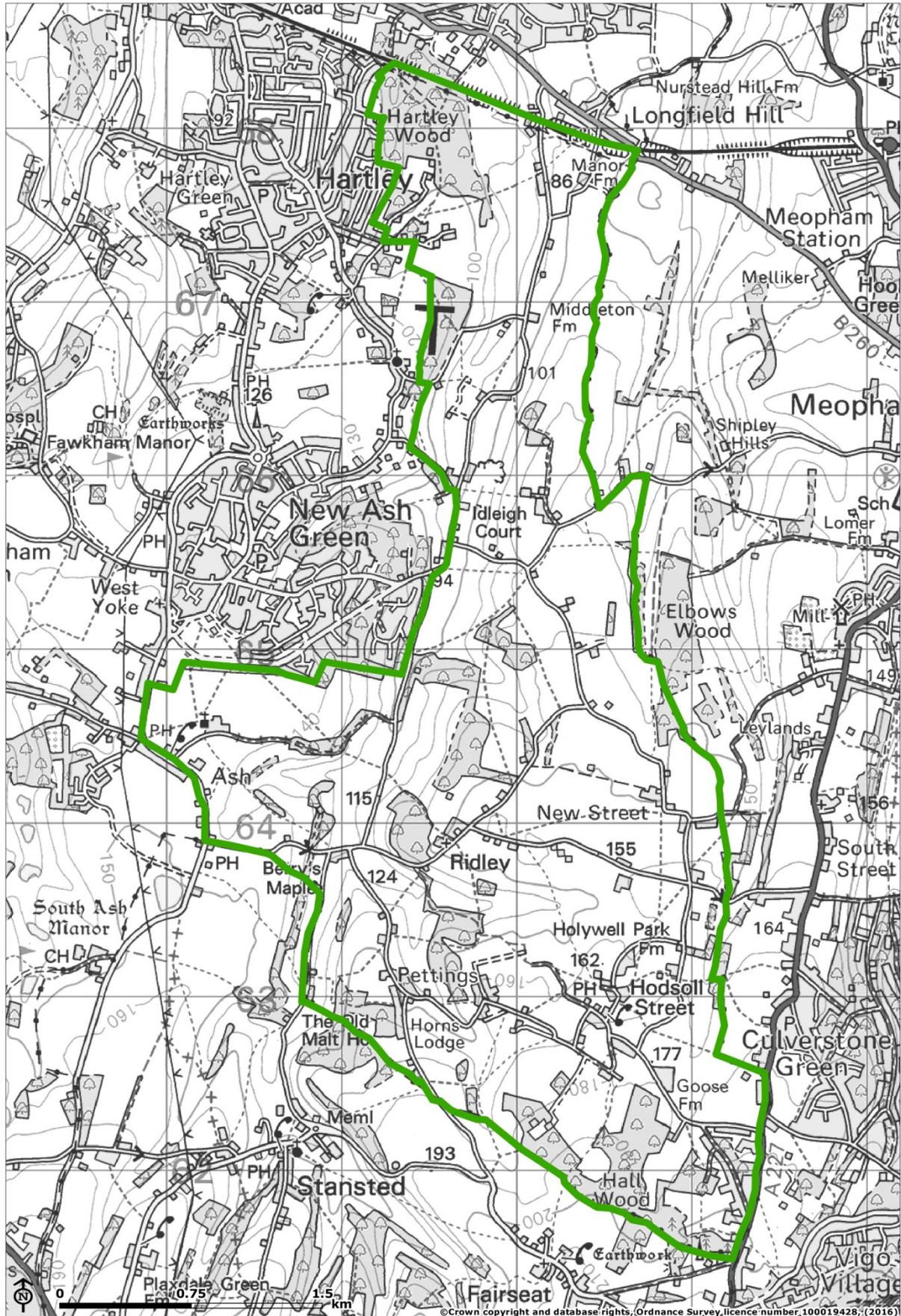
A well-managed rural landscape with a strong sense of time depth and sense of place and valued semi-natural habitats, including historic areas of coppice woodland. A landscape in which land uses are well integrated into the landscape.

Landscape Guidance

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- All areas of unimproved grassland to be retained, managed, restored or recreated where feasible.
- Areas of scrub to be encouraged and maintained especially on chalk soils both in association with grassland and woodland on its own.
- Enhance biodiversity of farmland habitats by including copses, hedges and unsprayed strips within crops.
- Conserve ancient woodland, the range of species including oak, ash and beech, and the range of age structure. Manage woodland cover on the higher ridges, and cross contour shaws which link these to the base of the valleys.
- Conserve the small-scale of the field pattern and historic features/buildings within the landscape.
- Conserve the isolation and remote character of settlements.
- Create a defined edge to existing residential areas and suburban land uses such as golf courses and pony paddocks.
- Conserve and manage existing highway works, maintaining tall hedgerows with standard oaks and ash. Manage traffic levels to reduce erosion to the rural roads.
- Retain the high levels of tranquillity and sense of escapism provided by the landscape.

1c Ash-Cum-Ridley Settled Downs





Key Characteristics

- Undulating chalk downs with clay and flints capping to ridges.
- Small-medium arable and grassland fields on the slopes with large scale prairie fields on higher ground.
- Copses of ancient woodland are frequent, along with mature in-field trees.
- Acid clay soils on hilltops support woodland and some farms.
- Small, compact farmsteads and hamlets on higher ground. Mostly brick but some flint used as a building material.
- Narrow, winding lanes with high hedges.
- Smaller scale and enclosed on steeper ground, more open and larger scale on ridge tops.
- Tranquil, rural landscape.

Landscape Character Description

This is an undulating landscape of chalk slopes and clay ridges, with a notable outcrop of Woolwich Beds around Ridley. The relief is accentuated by frequent hill-top woodlands which mark the upper edge of the chalk slopes. Field sizes are generally small-medium and bounded by hedges and woodlands which follow contours of the land, although fields are increasingly larger and more open towards Longfield Hill and north of Ridley. Land is mostly used for arable growing, with some pasture and horsiculture.

The frequency of small woodlands and shaws is an important characteristic as it contributes to the small-scale of the landscape. Avenues along lanes and mature in-field trees are a frequent feature. Much of the woodland is ancient in origin.

Lanes are narrow and hedged, with frequent passing places and standard trees such as oak and ash. Settlements consist of small hamlets and isolated farmsteads, and there is evidence of ancient settlement and civilisation in earthworks and trackways. Traditional built farm is compact using brick and tile and includes some oast houses. The use of flint is also evident. There are also larger houses of modern origin.

Attractive rural views are enclosed within the LCA, but there are occasional longer views from higher ground or along the valleys where the woodland allows. Levels of tranquillity in the landscape are high.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The unified landscape character which retains its historic land use patterns and the strong ecological network formed by the frequent woodlands connected by shaws and hedgerows contribute positively to landscape condition. However, small areas of neglected and untidy farmyards, horse paddocks with pony tape and gates/ fencing are detractors.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Small-scale of the landscape owing to the field cover pattern and the frequent woodlands and hedgerows.
- Frequent broadleaved ancient woodlands with a diverse range of native species, including some which are locally designated for wildlife value. Pollarded oaks are a characteristic feature.
- The historic settlement pattern with distinctive farms, some oast houses and cottages of traditional brick and flint vernacular, including Hodsoll Street Conservation Area.
- Distinct ancient rural lanes with holly and beech banks, which reflect the historic settlement pattern and give great time-depth to the landscape.
- The attractive rural landscape with wooded skylines.
- The highly tranquil and rural perceptual qualities of the landscape, with enclosed views and a feeling of solitude.

Vision

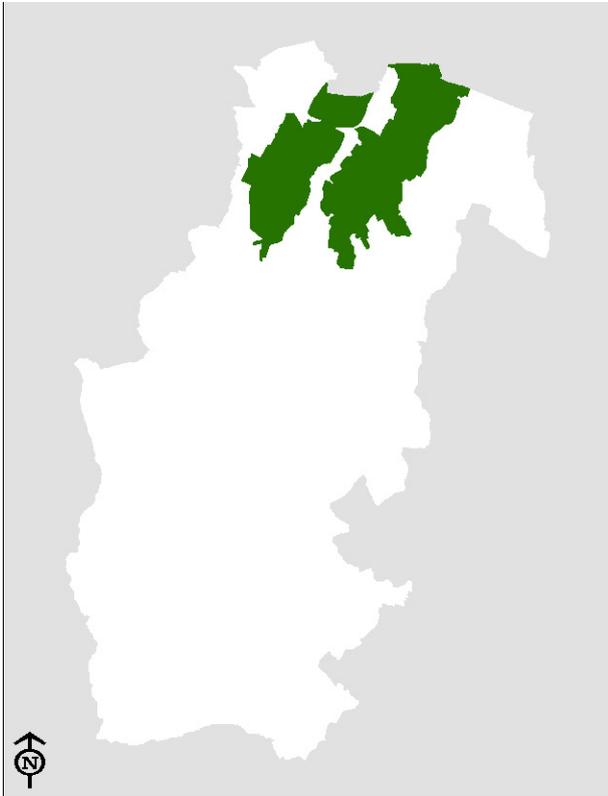
A strongly rural and tranquil landscape with historic field patterns and traditional historic settlement and road pattern, with well managed areas of native woodland which form a strong ecological network along with the shaws and hedgerows.

Landscape Guidance

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Retain, manage, and restore areas of unimproved grassland where possible.
- Maintain areas of scrub on chalk soils both in association with grassland and woodland on its own to encourage a diversity of habitats.
- Conserve the broadleaved, ancient woodland, and the historic field pattern. Encourage the management of hill-top woodlands and shaws to ensure their long term survival.
- Enhance biodiversity of farmland habitats by including copses, hedges and unsprayed strips within crops.
- Conserve the sparse settlement pattern and ensure that distinctive characteristics of traditional buildings are adapted and encouraged.
- Conserve the character of the historic rural lanes with distinctive holly and beech banks.
- Retain high levels of tranquillity and feeling of solitude within the landscape.

TYPE 2: DOWNS



Key Characteristics

- Rolling chalk downland overlain by a medium scale field pattern of regular parliamentary fields as well as some older fields, and occasional assarts.
- A mixture of arable and pastoral farmland (with a high incidence of arable cultivation on the plateau) bounded by fragmented hedgerows and shaws.
- Blocks of woodland are found on the ridges - including species mixes characteristic of ancient woodland; including yew and beech.
- Sparse settlement pattern comprising scattered farms and limited linear development in sheltered locations.
- Many historic features including Roman remains and a medieval deer-park.
- Recreational usage including golf courses and parklands.
- Narrow rural lanes with passing places, lined by hedgerows often with standard oaks.
- Dense woodland and steep topography tend to restrict views, but there are long views from open areas.



National landscape character

North Downs

Geology

Upper chalk

Soils

Loamy: Base rich calcareous and wet neutral soils

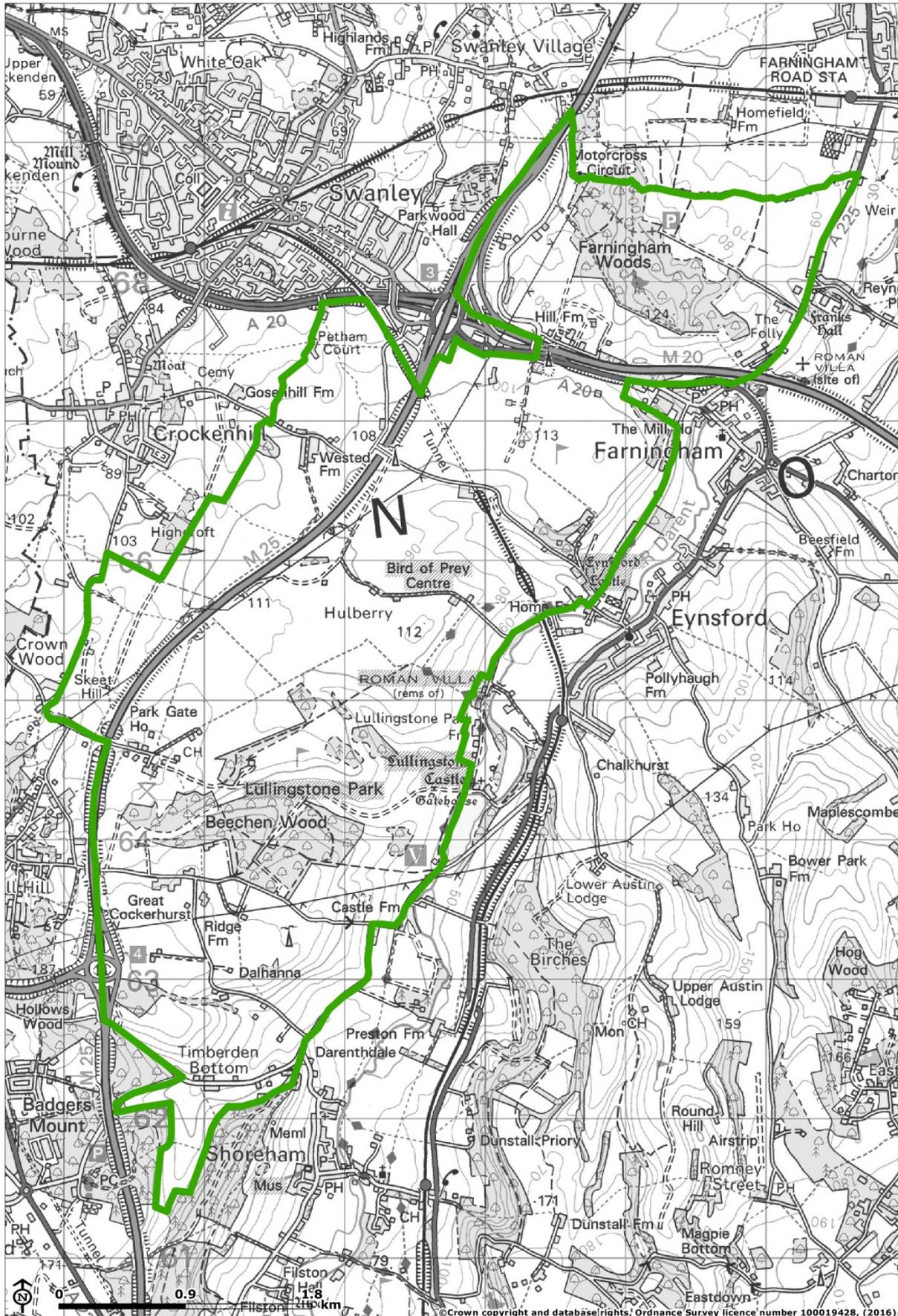
Landform

Gently undulating dip slope descending towards the Darent Valley

Historic landscape

Post-medieval informal enclosure defined by old drove roads. Medium to large scale rectilinear parliamentary enclosure.

2a Farningham Downs





Key Characteristics

- Rolling chalk downland including ridges, dry valleys and a steep slope adjacent to the Darent Valley.
- Regular shaped large and medium scale parliamentary fields, mainly in arable use, enclosed by a mixture of hedges with trees and fencing.
- Older, smaller and more irregular pastures on steeper land or in the valleys.
- Distinctive areas of ancient woodland atop the ridges.
- Specimen trees and chalk grassland are features of the historic parkland at Lullingstone Park.
- Settlement is typically scattered, isolated cottages and farms with small linear settlements in sheltered areas.
- Mixed 20th century residential properties are found along roads including converted barns and horse paddocks.
- The Country Park and golf courses are popular for recreation.
- Long, open views across the Darent Valley from higher ground.
- Pylons and motorway infrastructure are intrusive features.

Landscape Character Description

An area of gently rolling chalk downland, which slopes steeply towards the Darent Valley. Medium-large scale regular shaped (parliamentary) arable fields dominate, with older fields and pastoral uses on steeper slopes. Fragmented hedgerows with trees along lanes are supplemented by various styles of fencing. Areas of mixed woodland are found within Lullingstone and Preston Hill Country Park and ancient woodland is located at Farningham Woods. Fine specimen oaks and wood pasture are found at Lullingstone Park golf course, a historic deer park of Lullingstone Castle.

Signs of historic settlement, including Roman occupation and medieval parkland, are evident within the landscape. Settlement is limited to isolated cottages and farms and small linear settlements scattered along narrow winding, tree lined lanes with occasional passing places. Building styles include traditional flint and brick cottages, gentrified oasts, mixed style 20th century residential properties and large modern barns. Small fields of rough pasture used for horiculture are associated with settlement. Recreational usage is extensive, with two golf courses and a Country Park.

Sloping steeply to the east, there are spectacular long views from the higher areas, across the Darent Valley, and to the Greensand Ridge around Sevenoaks. Much of the southern part of character area is within the Kent Downs AONB. The M25 cuts north - south through the area, is visually intrusive and very noisy. Large pylons are visually prominent, positioned

alongside the M25 corridor.

Fort Farningham is a structure constructed during the 1890s as part of the London Defence Positions to protect the capital in the event of enemy invasion. The area also had a Second World War bombing decoy located at Lullingstone to deflect enemy bombing from Royal Air Force Biggin Hill airfield.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The coherent landscape pattern, intact corridors of semi-natural habitats including the woodlands on the ridges, mature hedgerows and the isolated farmsteads and cottages of traditional vernacular contribute to an intact landscape condition and sense of place. However, hedgerow loss is evident, and modern linear development, the motorway and rows of pylons are visual detractors.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Mature trees and hedgerows provide valued habitats within the intensively farmed landscape, as well as providing a strong landscape pattern.
- Mixed woodland at Lullingstone Park and ancient woodland at Farningham Woods which are designated as SSSI and Local Wildlife Sites for their ecological importance and provide a wooded backdrop to views.
- Areas of older fields on steeper slopes and in valleys which contribute to a more intimate character.
- The generally low density of settlement and rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads.
- Historic buildings including the Grade II listed Barn and Cowshed at Frank's Farm. Traditional farmsteads and cottages of brick and flint vernacular.
- Historic designed parkland landscape of Lullingstone Castle which is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, and its ancient trees.
- Remnant chalk grassland, including for example at Lullingstone Park and on steeper slopes.
- Recreational sites including two golf courses and Lullingstone Country Park which allow public access to, and appreciation of, the landscape.
- Long views across the Darent Valley to the Greensand Ridge around Sevenoaks from the Darent Valley Path. Views along the valley include the Eynsford viaduct.

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Vision

A rural landscape with a strong field pattern marked by well managed mature hedgerows, a well wooded character comprising deciduous woodlands and historic estate parkland, and a rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and scattered dwellings in well screened and sheltered locations. A landscape valued for its recreational functions and the long, picturesque and unspoilt views across the Darent Valley.

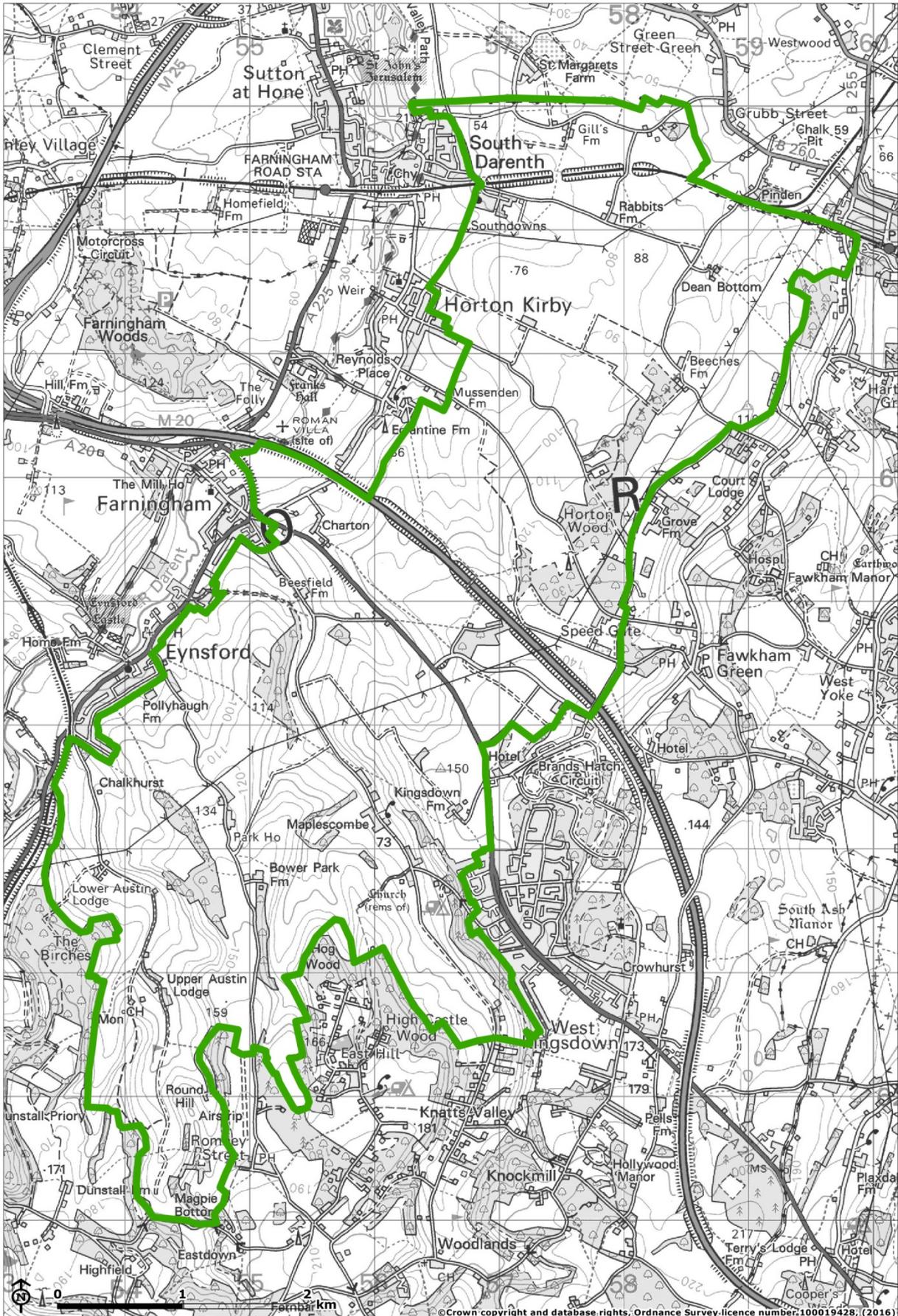
Landscape Guidance

Much of the landscape character area is within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Protect and enhance the valued semi-natural habitats including unimproved chalk grassland, scrub, deciduous woodland and hedgerows. Accentuate the rolling landscape by planting woodland which follows the landform and aim to reconnect chalk grassland sites.
- Restore lost hedgerow field boundaries by replanting hedgerows along fields and lanes, including standard trees.
- Conserve the generally low density rural settlement pattern, historic buildings and their settings – ensure any new development respects the local vernacular.
- Retain the historic estate and parkland character of Lullingstone Park, including its parkland trees – plan for the next generation of trees.
- Manage the golf courses to improve their ecological and landscape benefit.
- Explore opportunities to better integrate the M25 into the landscape whilst retaining key views from the road.
- Conserve the dramatic views across the Darent Valley and consider the impact of any development or land use change on these views, including views from the Darent Valley Path.

2b Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs





Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating chalk landscape with deep dry valleys, broad plateau tops and a steep slope adjacent to the Darent Valley.
- Medium-large scale parliamentary field pattern used for arable crops and pasture, enclosed by mature hedgerows or post and wire.
- Small paddocks are associated with farmsteads and chalk grassland survives on some steeper slopes.
- Mixed woodland on valley ridgelines and on valley slopes, including areas of coppice.
- Scattered, isolated farmsteads often with traditional flint and weatherboard buildings.
- Small isolated hamlets with some vernacular flint and weatherboard houses.
- Narrow winding lanes, contained by banks juxtapose with the busy roads of A20/M20.
- Mostly rural and tranquil, although there is urban development adjacent to South Darent and at Horton Kirby.
- Strong feeling of enclosure in the woodlands contrasts with long views along the Darent Valley from the

Landscape Character Description

The Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs is a gently undulating chalk landscape with deep, dry valleys and broad plateau tops. The land is intensively farmed for cereals within a medium-large scale field pattern. To the north, the field pattern is smaller with some lavender and hop gardens and associated poplar shelterbelts. Adjacent to settlement and farmsteads are smaller scale paddocks. Field boundaries are generally made up of mature hedgerows with some hedgerow trees with post and wire in some areas. The woodlands are predominantly coppiced sweet chestnut with oak standards, with silver birch and beech evident. Much of the woodland is within Horton Wood and Hartnips Woods which are Local Wildlife Sites. Woodland is sparse in the north of the area.

Settlement is limited to a scattering of isolated farmsteads and small hamlets of a traditional flint and weatherboard vernacular. There are also some large modern farm buildings and barns. Narrow winding lanes generally follow the ridgelines. These lanes are contained by banks, often surmounted with hedgerows. A large golf course is tucked unobtrusively within the hills to the rear of southern Eynsford.

The landscape is open and exposed with good views to the north due to the lack of tree cover. There are significant views along the valley floor and views extending up the valley sides to the wooded ridgelines. Elsewhere, there is a strong feeling of enclosure created by the topography and mature woodland growing along the ridgelines, with intermittent long views along the Eynsford Downs.

The landscape is generally rural and tranquil although encroaching urban development from Eynsford and West Kingsdown and a pylon line detract from this.

valley sides and across the Eynsford Downs.

The M20 crosses the area, introducing noise and movement and has bisected some of the rural routes.

- Views towards London from high ground.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The strong field pattern, traditional rural settlement pattern of locally distinctive flint farmsteads, and remnant ancient woodland and chalk grassland contribute to the intactness of the landscape. However, there has been field boundary reorganisation and hedgerow loss in the past, and urban fringe development, areas of unmanaged woodland, declining hedgerows and large uncharacteristic modern farm buildings adversely affect condition.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Small copses of broadleaved woodland which provide valued semi-natural habitat and contribute to visual interest, including ancient woodland at Ryecrofts Wood, Magpie Bottom SSSI and Horton Woods which is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.
- Areas of remnant chalk grassland, such as at Magpie Bottom SSSI.
- Remnant historic settlement pattern, with isolated farm buildings of a traditional flint, weatherboard and brick vernacular accessed by narrow, winding lanes lined with hedged banks such as Maplescombe Lane.
- The historic landscape pattern, with frequent woodlands on the ridgelines and areas of intact hedgerows which provide a sense of history and ecological connectivity.
- Areas which retain traditional land uses including lavender farms and hop gardens.
- Long, open views over adjacent Downs to the north which include south London and views funnelled along the valley floors between the wooded ridgelines which contrast with the sense of enclosure afforded by the topography and the woodland cover.
- The dramatic landform of the ridges and deep dry valleys which are typical of a chalk landscape and the sense of tranquillity within them.

Vision

An attractive rolling chalk landscape of farmland, woodland and chalk grassland with a strong and intact field pattern. Areas of well-managed woodland and hedgerows emphasise the underlying topography and provide a sense of enclosure, as well as contributing to the ecological diversity of the landscape.

Landscape Guidance

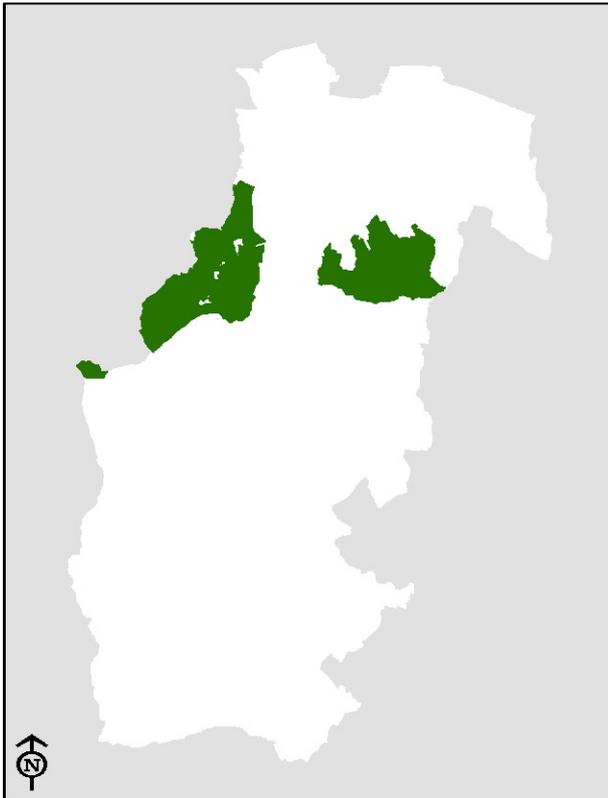
Approximately half the landscape character area is within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

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- Restore and enhance hedgerows, shelterbelts and broadleaved/ancient woodlands to maintain the historic land cover pattern.
- Unimproved chalk grassland and scrub should be retained and managed, as well as restored, to link up and extend remnant habitats.
- Conserve the rural settlement pattern of isolated, small dwellings and farmsteads linked by rural lanes.
- Restore the integrity of field boundaries through replanting, especially along historic boundary lines that have been lost.
- Preserve traditional land uses including lavender farms and hop gardens.
- Manage the golf course to improve its ecological and landscape benefit.
- Retain traditional rural lanes and avoid erosion or road widening to accommodate more traffic.
- Ensure any new development contributes to local vernacular and has sense of place.
- Explore opportunities to better integrate the M20 into the landscape.
- Conserve the dramatic views across the adjacent Downs, the Darent Valley and towards London – seek opportunities to enhance public access to these views.

TYPE 3: WOODED DOWNS



Key Characteristics

- A gently undulating chalk landscape giving rise to plateaux carved by steep valleys.
- The plateaux are mostly covered by clay-with-flints supporting frequent broadleaved woodlands which are often ancient in origin. Sweet Chestnut coppice is a local feature.
- Small to medium scale field pattern (mostly parliamentary enclosure) with larger arable fields on flatter ground and paddocks on the steeper ground.
- Hedgerows enclose fields and run along narrow, winding lanes.
- Mature in-field trees give the landscape an estate character.
- Historic farmsteads are scattered throughout the landscape and contrast with modern linear development along roads.
- Suburban land uses occur close to the settlements, including plant nurseries and distribution centres.
- Rough grasslands adjacent to settlements are used for recreation.
- Sense of enclosure afforded by the dray valleys and dense woodland, with occasional long views out from higher ground.



National landscape character

North Downs

Geology

Clay-with-Flints

Soils

Loamy free draining mineral soils

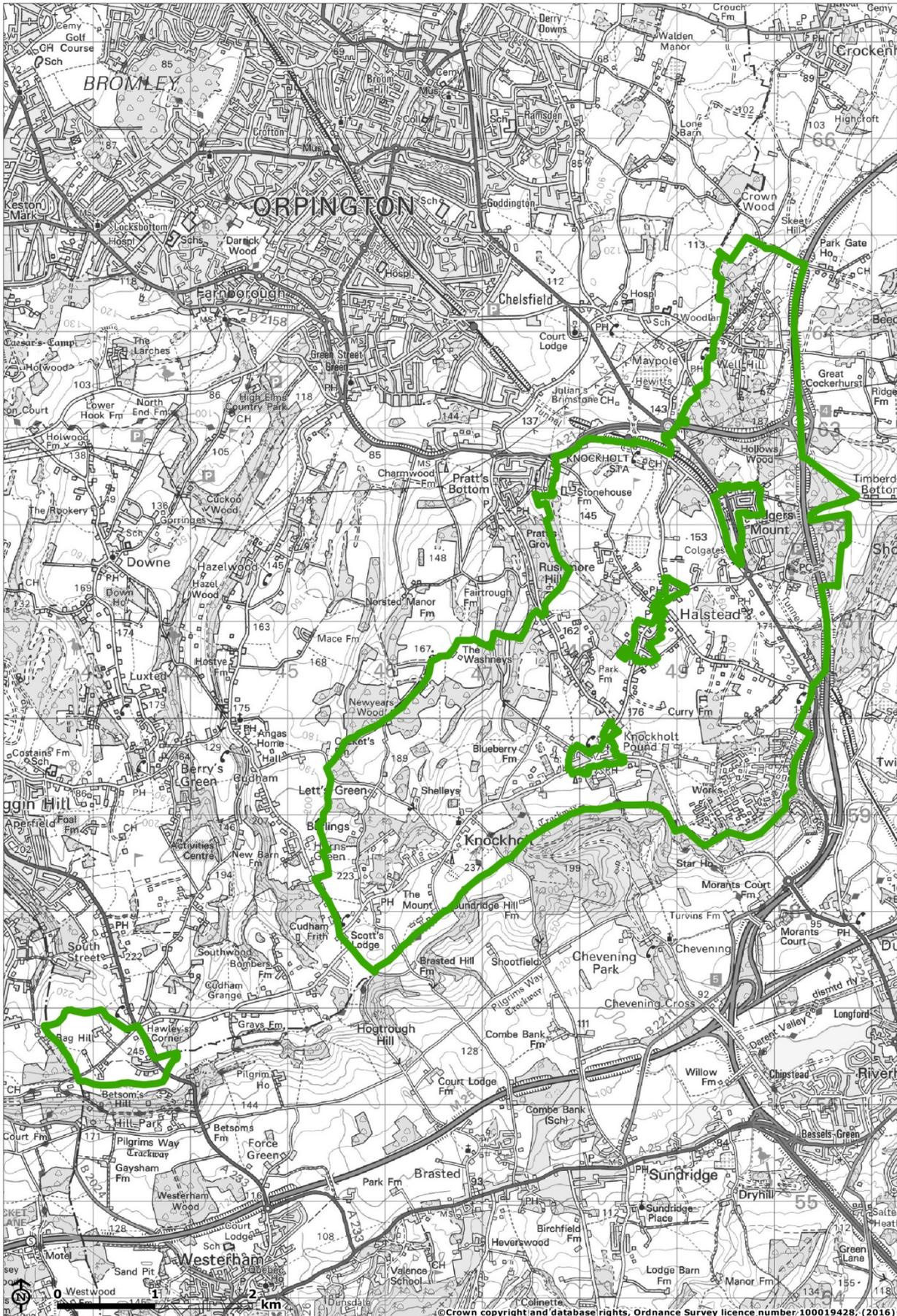
Landform

Folded

Historic landscape

Small-medium scale parliamentary enclosures. Some medieval informal enclosure.

3a Knockholt and Halstead Wooded Downs





Key Characteristics

- Generally gently undulating, but with some steep valley slopes.
- Mainly agricultural land use (arable and pasture), with plant nurseries, horsiculture, residential, commercial and recreational (including a golf course).
- During the Second World War, Ivy Farm House in Kent was an outpost to the Bletchley Park decoding centre.
- Varied field pattern comprising some small and medium regular parliamentary enclosures as well as some earlier more irregular fields.
- Large areas of woodland, including ancient coppice woods. Mature in-field oaks are frequent. Fields are bounded by hedgerows with mature beech trees.
- Small historic flint and brick vernacular properties at core of settlements, large C20th housing to the outskirts.
- Suburban development including golf courses, glass houses and distribution depots.
- Narrow rural lanes contrast with the M25 corridor and other main roads which introduce noise and movement.
- Mostly enclosed due to the extensive tree cover and high hedgerows.
- Ivy House Farm was an outpost to the Bletchley Park decoding station in the Second

Landscape Character Description

A chalk downland landscape based on a gently undulating landform with some steeper slopes associated with valleys and ridges. The field pattern is varied; with some small and medium regular parliamentary enclosures as well as some earlier more irregular fields and small paddocks on steep valley slopes. Fields are enclosed by a mixture of hedges and post and wire fencing. The main land use is agricultural (arable and pasture), but also involves areas of plant nurseries, horsiculture, residential, commercial and recreational (including a golf course). The landscape has strong wooded character with many areas of woodland which are often ancient in origin, including extensive areas of managed Sweet Chestnut coppice. Mature oaks near Blueberry Farm result in an estate character.

Small historic properties can be found at the core of the settlements, with relatively large C20th housing developments to the outskirts of the villages. Residential properties have increasingly been built within existing woodland and along main roads. There is a distinct use of flint and brick in the small buildings in local vernacular style with weatherboarding and hanging tile. Settlements are linked by suburban roads which contrast with the narrow lanes on the steeper ground. During the Second World War, Ivy Farm House in Kent was an outpost to the Bletchley Park decoding centre. The golf course and woodlands are used for recreational activity.

The landscape is mostly enclosed due to the

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World War.

extensive tree cover and topography. Trees create tunnels along rural lanes. Views are varied depending on topography and woodland. There are views funnelled down the valley and some longer views from higher ground. The M25 and A224 cross the landscape by Badgers Mount, reducing the tranquillity in the surrounding area.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

Intrusive new residential development, extensive horticulture, urban recreation, and hedgerow loss have adversely affected the condition of this area. Nevertheless, historic field patterns, areas of woodland and rough grassland provide a sense of intactness and ecological connectivity.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Small-scale fields which reflect past land uses including medieval and parliamentary enclosures.
- Distinctive areas of unimproved grassland and woodland, including ancient woodland, parkland trees, mature in-field and hedgerow trees. Many are locally designated for wildlife value including Pascalls Wood.
- Valued indicators of cultural heritage including estate woodland, historic village cores such as Halstead (which is designated as a Conservation Area) and other features including the Fort Halstead Scheduled Monument.
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by high hedges and mature trees, creating a strong sense of enclosure.
- Important for recreation purposes, including open access land at Hollows Wood and more formal facilities at Broke Hill Golf Club.
- Sense of enclosure and setting afforded by the woodland, with occasional glimpses out over the lower valley from higher ground around Lockholt/Halstead and the North Downs Way National Trail.

Vision

A strongly wooded, rural landscape with historic landscape patterns and features including village cores, narrow lanes and ancient woodland. A landscape with well integrated settlement and newer suburban land uses, which is highly valued for recreation.

Landscape Guidance

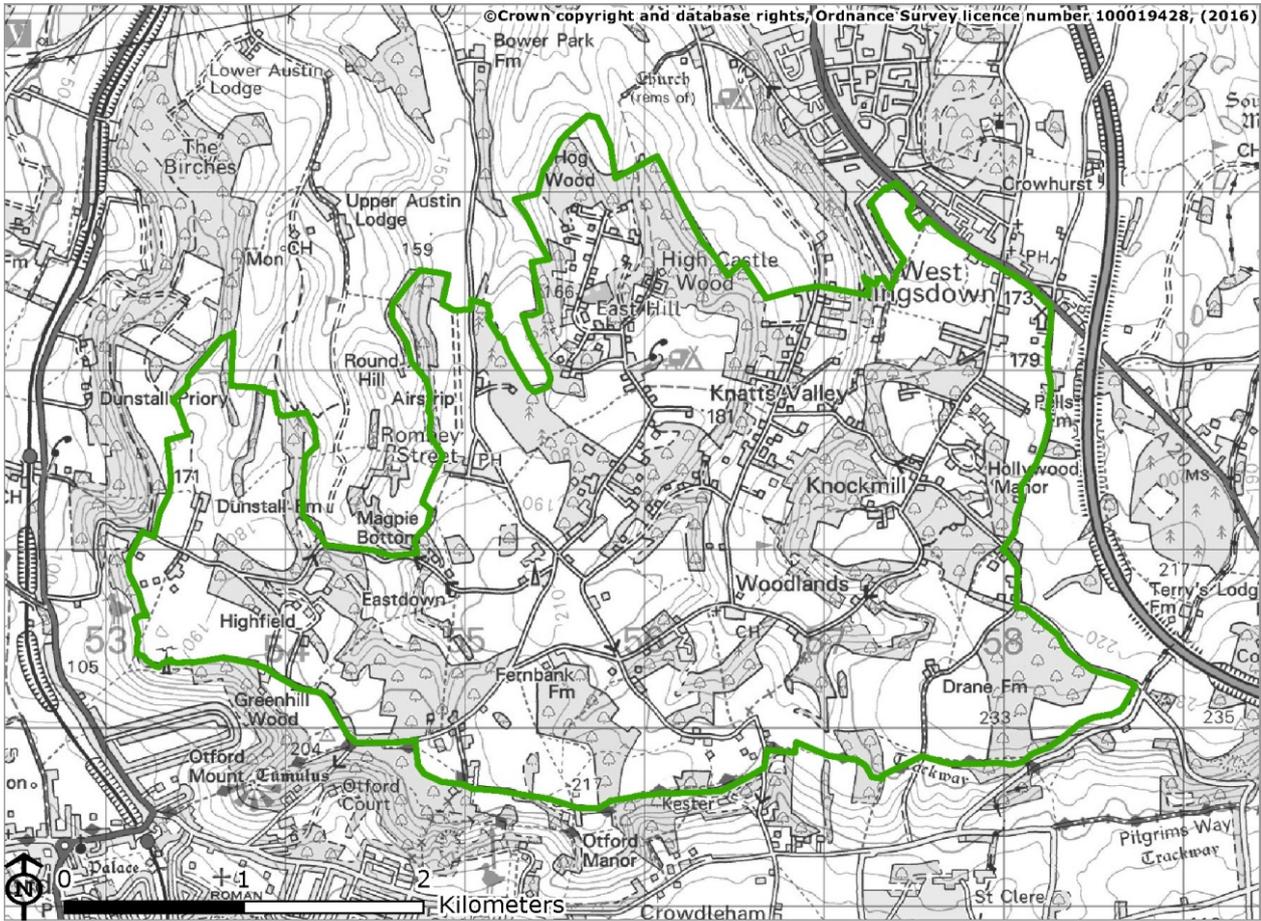
Part of this landscape character area is within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Retain the small scale parliamentary field patterns where they remain and reinstate hedgerows where they have been lost to further enhance the field structure.

- Protect and enhance valued semi-natural habitats including ancient woodland, unimproved chalk grassland and scrub. Promote ongoing management of coppice woodland.
- Protect the valued heritage features within the landscape including the historic village cores and Fort Halstead Scheduled Monument and ensure that their setting is respected.
- New features introduced into the landscape should reflect both the historic and natural characteristics of the area.
- In the farmed landscape the rural heritage features should be reinforced, such as woodlands, community orchards and hedged boundaries to roads.
- Conserve the character of the remaining narrow rural lanes and ensure traffic improvements do not degrade their distinctive enclosed character.
- Retain the important views across the landscape from higher ground including the North Downs Way National Trail.

3b East Hill Wooded Downs



Key Characteristics

- Chalk plateau landscape folding into steep valleys, with high areas capped in clay-with-flints.
- Small to medium scale irregular field pattern comprising some small and medium regular parliamentary enclosures as well as some earlier more irregular fields, bounded by woodland and hedgerows.
- Wooded plateaux including managed coppiced woodland.
- Historic farmsteads and hamlets, with extensive C20th linear residential settlements such as Knatts Valley and East Hill.
- Recreational land uses including a golf course at Woodlands Manor.
- Mostly enclosed due to high hedgerows and woodland, but with some views out from plateaux/ ridges.

Landscape Character Description

A level chalk plateau carved by steeply undulating and folding valleys. The field pattern is small to medium scale with irregular shaped fields, enclosed by woodland and hedgerows of mixed native species. Woodland is mixed coniferous and deciduous, with large blocks of mature coppiced Sweet Chestnut on the plateau giving an overall well-wooded character. Much of the woodland is ancient in origin. The valley slopes are used for agriculture and recreation. Land use includes unimproved pasture, horsiculture, arable fields and a golf course.

Settlement includes isolated farmsteads, a large caravan site and residential properties, scattered along narrow lanes. These lanes undulate across the valleys and are enclosed by dense woodland that forms vegetative tunnels over the road. Agricultural properties are generally in vernacular style and date from the 19th century. Elsewhere linear residential settlements are of mixed style 20th century housing, sited on large plots. The landscape is extensively used for recreation with many footpaths and bridleways including the North Downs Way and Woodlands Manor Golf Club.

From points on the plateau boundary, there are long views over Dartford and of Eynsford Downs. Elsewhere, views are restricted by topography and vegetation. There is a strong sense of enclosure created by the topography and large areas of mixed woodland.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

This area retains a coherent landscape pattern of small-medium scale fields, woodlands and unimproved grassland. However, urban fringe development to the north, scattered 20th century houses, hedgerow loss and suburban land uses including horse paddocks detract from the condition of the rural landscape.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The coherent small-medium scale historic landscape pattern which reflects historic usage and enclosure of the landscape.
- Extensive areas of valued semi-natural habitat, including woodlands and unimproved grassland, some of which are designated for wildlife including Magpie Bottom SSSI and Knatts Valley Local Wildlife Site.
- Historic areas of coppice woodland, some of which is ancient in origin.
- Farm properties of traditional vernacular located along trackways, some of which are listed.
- Narrow winding lanes which follow the ridges, reinforcing the underlying topography.

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- The North Downs Way National Trail which includes some views south towards the Greensand Ridge.
- Sense of enclosure afforded by the topography and frequent woodland.
- The special qualities of the Kent Downs AONB found within the landscape, including the frequent areas of coppice woodland and strong sense of time-depth.

Vision

An attractive, well-wooded, rural landscape with a strong historic landscape pattern and settlement (comprising historic farmsteads and hamlets). A landscape highly valued for its semi-natural habitat resource and recreation opportunities.

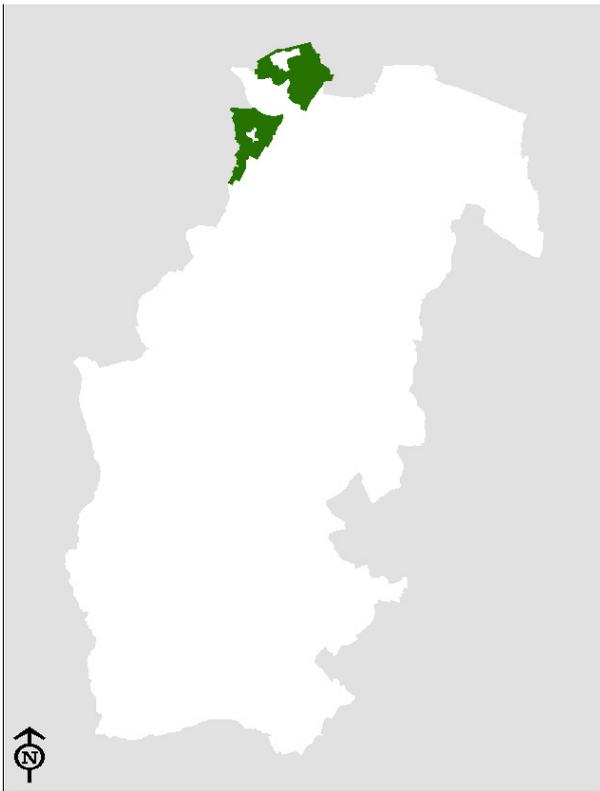
Landscape Guidance

The Landscape character area is almost entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB** (except for a small area on the edge of West Kingsdown). It is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve the coherent historic landscape pattern which reflects historic usage and enclosure of the landscape.
- Reinforce broad-leaf woodland cover by managing and maintaining the woodland network with appropriate species, and restoring woodland cover to steeper slopes. Promote coppice management where existing, and consider restoring areas of Sweet Chestnut coppice that is characteristic of the Kent Downs.
- Maintain hedgerows and reinstate those that have been lost.
- Retain and manage existing unimproved grasslands. Establish scrub to be managed adjacent to chalk grassland or woodland.
- Conserve historic farmsteads as features of the landscape.
- Conserve the rural character of the lanes, including their high hedges and tree tunnels.
- Enhance local vernacular built form and maintain the character of roads/trackways leading to historic buildings. Create a design guide for new residential and agricultural buildings.
- Respect the special qualities of the Kent Downs AONB, including the frequent areas of coppice woodland and strong sense of time-depth.

TYPE 4: SETTLED FARMLAND



Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating chalk and sandstone slopes overlain by mixed small to medium scale fields.
- Arable cultivation on fertile soils includes small-scale horticulture. Rough unimproved grassland used for paddocks.
- Fields are bounded by mature hedgerows with trees and supplemented with post and wire fencing.
- Areas of broadleaved woodland including small pockets of ancient woodland.
- Nucleated villages and scattered farmsteads with 20th century residential expansion.
- Suburban land uses including plant nurseries with glass houses.
- Recreation facilities including parkland and golf courses.
- Varied sense of enclosure, with larger-scale open areas with long views contrasting with wooded areas enclosed by trees.



National landscape character

North Downs

Geology

Tertiary deposits

Soils

Base rich loamy non calcareous soils

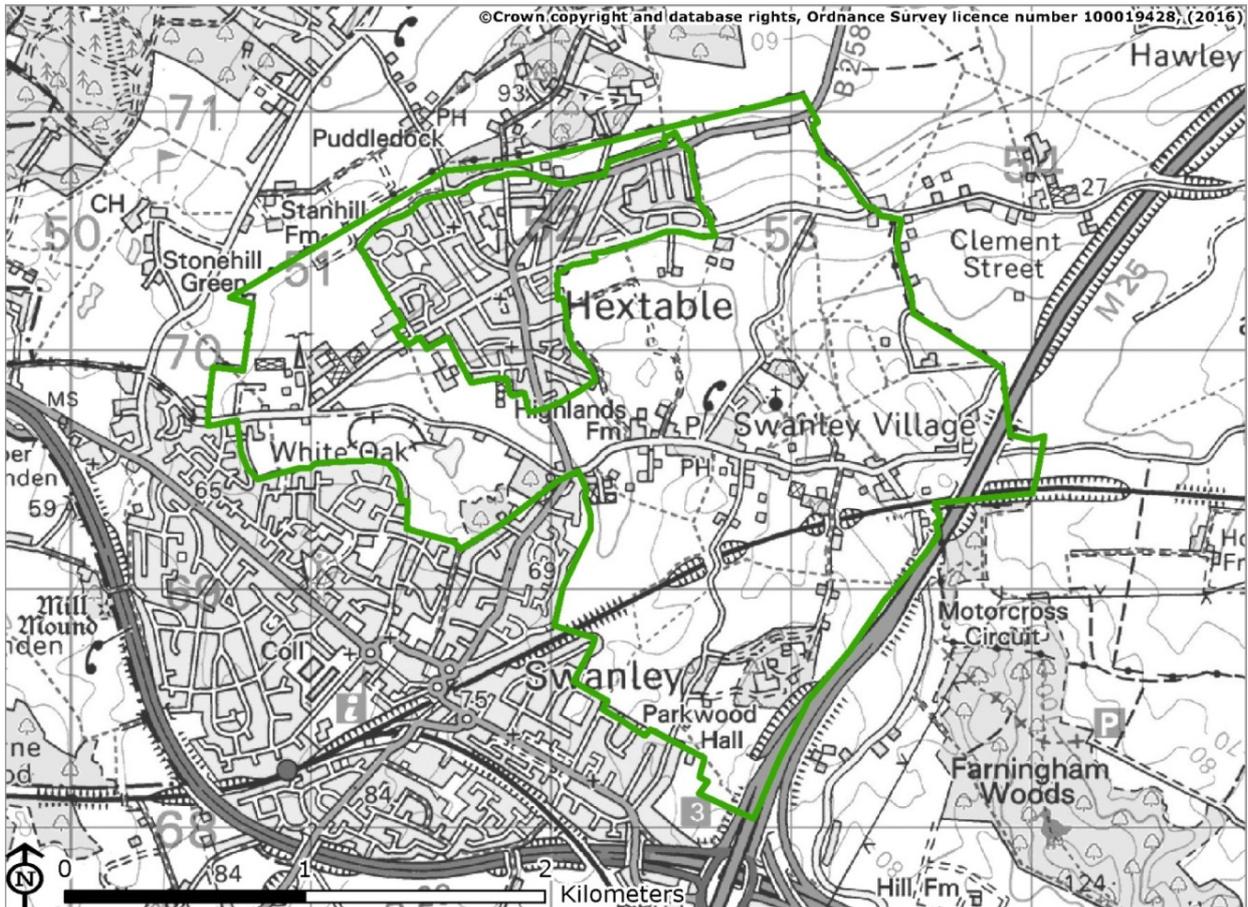
Landform

Undulating

Historic landscape

Predominantly post-medieval informal enclosure defined by old drove roads. Some small-scale rectilinear fields of parliamentary enclosure.

4a Hextable Settled Farmland



Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating chalk and sandstone slopes with varied sized fields separated by hedgerows and fences.
- Land used for arable crops and horticulture, mixed in with suburban land uses including horse paddocks and plant nurseries.
- Trees are found within parklands and hedges.
- Scattered urban fringe development, historic nucleated village and isolated farms. Busy roads link the urban areas, whilst narrow lanes are found in more rural areas.
- Strong sense of enclosure afforded by the hedges and topography, particularly in the east.
- Clear views to dense adjacent urban development at Swanley and Hextable.

Landscape Character Description

This is a gently undulating chalk and sandstone area punctuated by hills and overlain by a varied field pattern. Elevation ranges from 30 to 93 metres AOD. Small-scale parliamentary enclosures are located around Swanley Village. Land use is divided between arable crops, horticulture, pasture, and horsiculture. Hedgerows are mature, and in some areas are supplemented by post and wire fencing. Tree cover is found within Swanley Park, along roads and in hedgerows, where hawthorn and field maple are the dominant species. Ancient woodland is found at Parkwood Hall and semi-natural scrub is located east of Hextable.

Settlements include a nucleated village with historic core including some traditional flint and weather boarded properties, occasional Victorian housing and 20th century infill. Within more rural parts there are isolated cottages, farmsteads and linear development scattered along lanes. Many recently built properties are located on the undulating ridge-lines. On the urban fringe there are several glass houses and some fields have become amenity facilities such as playing fields and golf ranges. Urban highways turn into narrow winding lanes with steep banks and hedges, as they leave urban fringe areas and enter the adjacent countryside.

Enclosure is varied throughout the landscape, with areas enclosed by hedges, trees and topography contrasting with exposure and long views from within larger scale open fields. The character of the landscape is influenced by views to the hard urban edges of Swanley and Hextable.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intactness of the area has been affected by widespread suburban encroachment (including incongruous metal fences and gates in the rural landscape), large-scale transportation routes and hedgerow loss which adversely affect condition. However, there are areas of remaining intact landscape where field boundaries, rural lanes and historic villages survive. Some extensive areas of horsiculture exist in this LCA.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The remnant small-scale field pattern (parliamentary enclosures) located around the edges of the Swanley Village.
- Small copses of ancient woodland, areas of scrub and mature hedgerows which are important for the ecological value of the landscape.
- Historic settlement patterns including Swanley Village Conservation Area, which contains numerous listed buildings of a traditional vernacular.

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- Important recreational facilities including the Green Flag Award winning 60-acre Swanley Park which is valued for community events.
- Narrow rural lanes, with steep banks and high hedges.
- The sense of enclosure afforded by the topography and small-scale of the landscape, particularly to the east of Swanley Village.
- Long views across the landscape from the hill summits and more open areas.

Vision

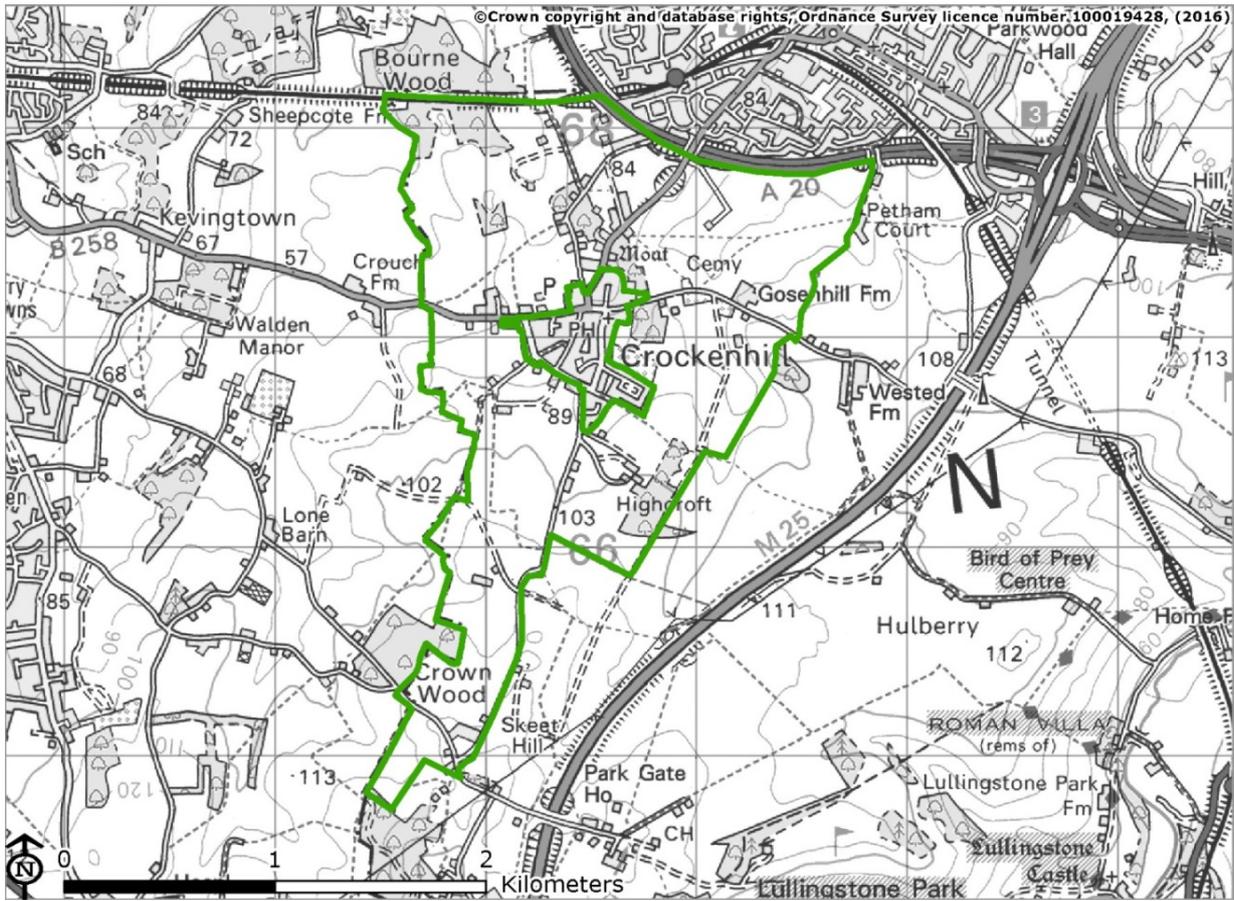
A well-managed, visually coherent landscape, where modern development and infrastructure are well integrated into the rural landscape with the historic village, frequent hedgerows and narrow rural lanes. A landscape highly valued for recreation opportunities.

Landscape Guidance

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- All native broad-leaved woodland and areas of scrub to be appropriately managed and enhanced where possible.
- Management of habitats within farmland should be encouraged including hedges, copses, road verges and unsprayed strips within crops to encourage wildlife.
- Respect the historic elements of the landscape including areas of small-scale historic field pattern and the setting to the Swanley Village Conservation Area.
- Continue to maintain Swanley Park to a high standard, including the wildflower meadows.
- Soften the urban edges with woodland which could also contribute to the landscape's ecological value.
- Seek to use building styles and materials in keeping with the local character on any new development, particularly in the rural areas.
- Retain and enhance historic characteristics of the narrow, rural lanes.

4b Crockenhill Settled Farmland



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Key Characteristics

- Undulating chalk and sandstone landscape overlain by irregular medium scale pattern of arable, pasture and horticulture.
- Horsiculture on rough grass paddocks.
- Fields divided by a mix of mature hedgerows and post and wire fencing.
- Well-wooded character including copses of ancient woodland and mature hedgerow trees.
- Nucleated historic village of Crockenhill, with isolated farms along narrow rural lanes.
- Long views to south London. A localised sense of enclosure is afforded by woodland and hedgerows.

Landscape Character Description

A gently undulating chalk and sandstone landscape overlain by an irregular, medium to small scale field pattern. Elevation ranges from 70 metres to 134 metres in the south of the area. Fields are enclosed by hedgerows and post and wire fencing. Land use includes arable cultivation, horticulture and sheep grazing and pony paddocks on rough grassland. Frequent copses of broadleaved woodland (including some of ancient origin) and mature trees give the landscape a well wooded character. Remnant orchards are found adjacent to settlement. There is a prominent poplar shelterbelt south of Crockenhill.

Settlement includes the nucleated village of Crockenhill with numerous Victorian brick properties at the core, occasional flint buildings and many mixed style 20th century houses. Elsewhere residential properties and isolated farmsteads are scattered across the rural landscape. Highways vary from wide urban roads with kerbs and pavements around Crockenhill to narrow, winding, hedge lined lanes.

Where hedges have been lost, views are open with long views north towards Swanley and the south London suburbs. Areas with woodland and hedgerows with many mature trees provide a localised sense of enclosure along the lanes.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The condition of the area is adversely affected by modern incongruous residential and farm buildings, hedgerow loss, horsiculture and a lack of general maintenance. Positive elements of the landscape include the areas of broadleaved woodland, hedge-lined roads and small-medium scale field pattern, although these are becoming fragmented or have been lost in places. Historic land uses including orchards remain but are often derelict.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The small-scale field pattern, which includes some areas of parliamentary enclosure.
- Remnant historic land uses including derelict orchards.
- Areas of ancient woodland and hedges along field boundaries and lanes which provide valued ecological resource and wildlife corridors.
- The historic core of Crockenhill, with many buildings of a traditional vernacular.
- Historic narrow winding lanes, lined by thick, mature hedgerows.
- The localised sense of enclosure afforded by the woodland and the topography, particularly to

the north west of Crockenhill.

- Long views north from Dalton Lane which include the south London suburbs.

Vision

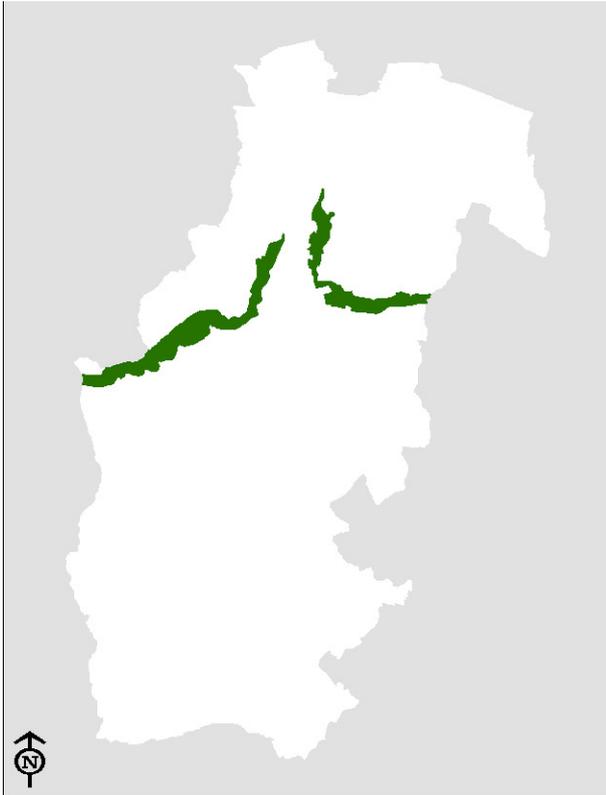
A productive, landscape with a strong wooded character and intact network of hedgerows. An area of rural farmland which provides a setting to the historic nucleated village of Crockenhill, with well-integrated development and restored orchards.

Landscape Guidance

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Retain and enhance areas of small-scale field pattern and historic uses such as orchards.
- Protect and strengthen the wooded element of the landscape, increasing connectivity between existing habitats. Conserve any areas of ancient woodland.
- Management of habitats within farmland should be encouraged including hedges, copses, road verges and unsprayed strips within crops to encourage wildlife.
- Respect the setting of the historic core of Crockenhill which contains numerous listed buildings.
- Seek to use building styles and materials in keeping with the local character on any new development.
- Retain the existing characteristics of rural lanes including tall hedgerows and small spinneys.
- Ensure that new suburban land uses including pony paddocks and urban roads respect the existing rural landscape character.

TYPE 5: SCARP LANDSCAPES



Key Characteristics

- Rolling chalk downland and distinctive steep scarp slope of the North Downs.
- Mosaic of mixed woodlands, much of which is ancient, species-rich chalk grassland and enclosed pasture.
- Regular parliamentary fields and older irregular fields enclosed by well-maintained high hedgerows.
- Network of narrow hedged lanes, including historic droveways, that run down the scarp slope.
- Ancient trackways follow contours along the ridge top and at the foot of the scarp.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and linear groups of large houses along narrow lanes at the foot of the scarp.
- Working and redundant chalk quarries.
- Occasional panoramic views but generally enclosed by tree cover.



National landscape character

North Downs

Geology

Lower Chalk Formation (Clayey chalk without flint). Occasional drift deposits of clay with flints.

Soils

Base rich shallow rendzinas

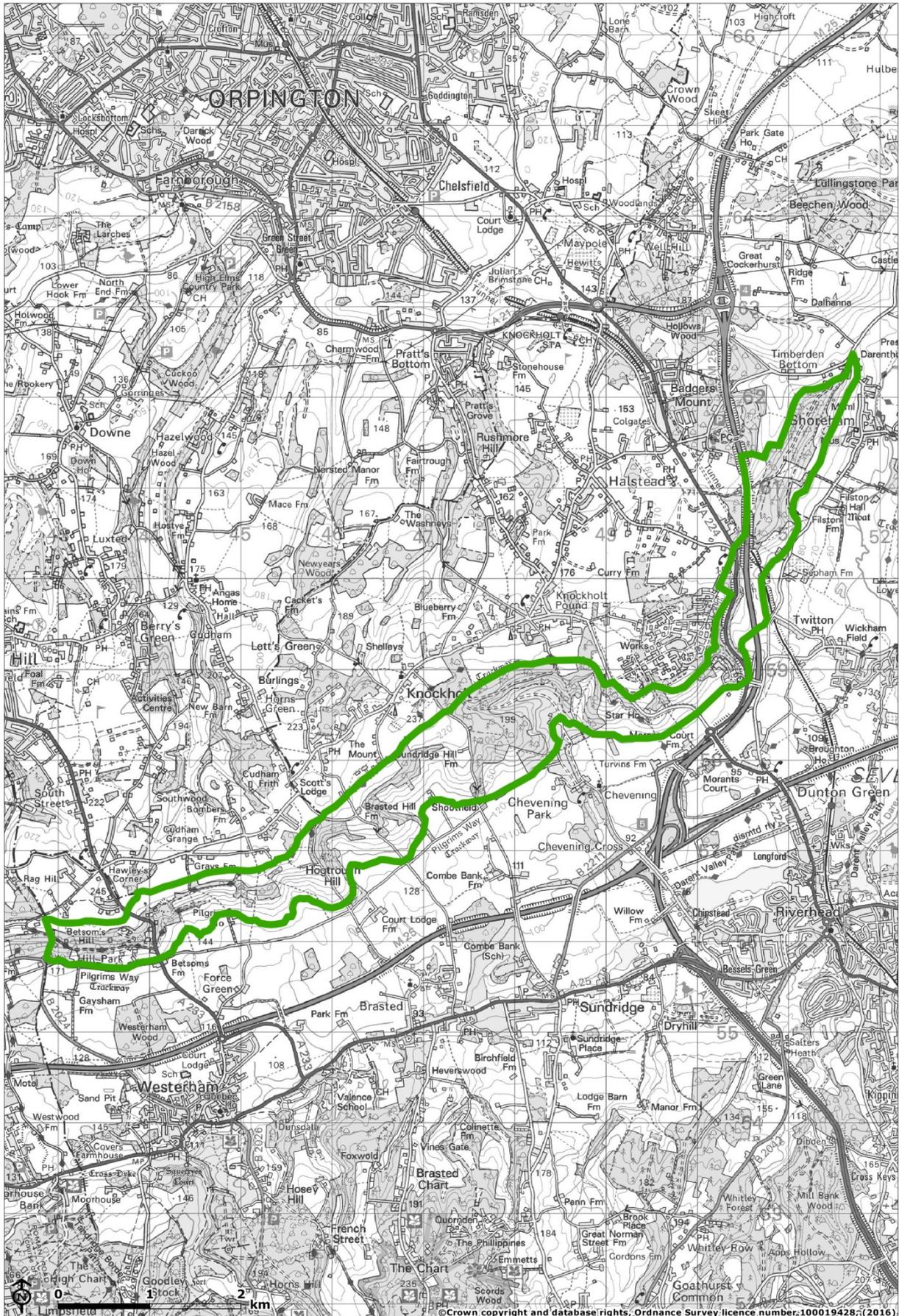
Landform

Steep, undulating scarp slope, near to vertical in some localised areas

Historic landscape

Medieval informal enclosure. Medium scale rectilinear parliamentary enclosure. Unimproved chalkland historically grazed as sheep pasture. Designed landscape typically associated with a historic house.

5a Chevening Scarp





Key Characteristics

- Steep wooded scarp supporting a mosaic of woodland and scrub, pasture and pockets of chalk grassland.
- Ancient trackways follow contours along the ridge top and base of the scarp.
- Steep enclosed lanes with no verges and high hedged banks climb up the scarp slopes.
- Areas of native broadleaf woodland, irregular pastures and chalk grassland.
- Settlement limited to large detached houses and scattered farmsteads.
- Long-distance panoramic views across the Darent Valley from the scarp.
- Working and redundant chalk quarries.

Landscape Character Description

A wooded chalk scarp slope rising above the river valley to the south. Areas of native broadleaf woodland, with remnant areas of ancient woodland, and regenerative scrub vegetation on the steeper slopes with gills and copses on lower slopes are characteristic.

Small steep irregular pastures enclosed by shaws characterise the higher slopes. The field pattern on the lower scarp is regular and larger and originates from later 19th century parliamentary enclosure. Small pockets of unimproved chalk grassland (Polhill Bank) survive on the scarp slope, an important downland habitat which supports rare orchids, and downland butterflies.

Ancient trackways follow contours along the ridge top and base of the scarp. Enclosed lanes with no verges and high hedged banks climb up the steep scarp slopes linking the valley floor to the higher pasture along historic droveways.

Settlement is limited to a small number of large detached houses at the foot of the scarp and scattered farmsteads at the top and base of the scarp. There is a well-hidden industrial estate on Lime Pit Lane. Historic parkland associated with Chevening covers a portion of the scarp.

The scarp slope provides long views over the Darent Valley and beyond, which is significantly affected by the M25 corridor. The scarp is occasionally scarred by the legacy of white chalk quarry faces.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The landscape has an intact and coherent pattern of pastures, chalk grassland and frequent blocks of ancient woodland. There are relatively few visual detractors although unsympathetic farm buildings and the presence of the M25 in the valley below are detractors. The decline of the heritage shaws and hedgerows (sometimes replaced with post and wire fencing) has also had an adverse effect on the condition of the landscape.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The distinctive landform of the steep scarp slopes which is largely free of development.
- Areas of native broad-leaved woodland, particularly remnant areas of ancient woodland on steeper slopes as well as gills and copses on lower slopes that provide visual interest and valuable habitats.
- The pastoral scenery and historic field pattern of small enclosed fields on the steep slope contributes to local distinctiveness.
- Remnant pockets of chalk grassland and scrub that provide valuable habitats supporting rare species.
- Ancient trackways at the top and base of the scarp that provide links to the past and high recreational value today.
- Historic droving routes along narrow lanes from the North Downs to the Greensand Ridge which give a strong sense of time-depth to the area.
- The rural settlement character comprising scattered farmsteads characteristically at the top and base of the scarp.
- The long views and sense of tranquillity on the elevated slopes which provides an escape from more developed areas in the valley below.

Vision

A prominent landform feature comprising a steep intact scarp supporting chalk grassland, deciduous woodland and fields of pasture divided by well-maintained hedgerow boundaries. An area that is accessible for recreation and with opportunities for panoramic views south over the Darent Valley and beyond.

Landscape Guidance

The Landscape character area is entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

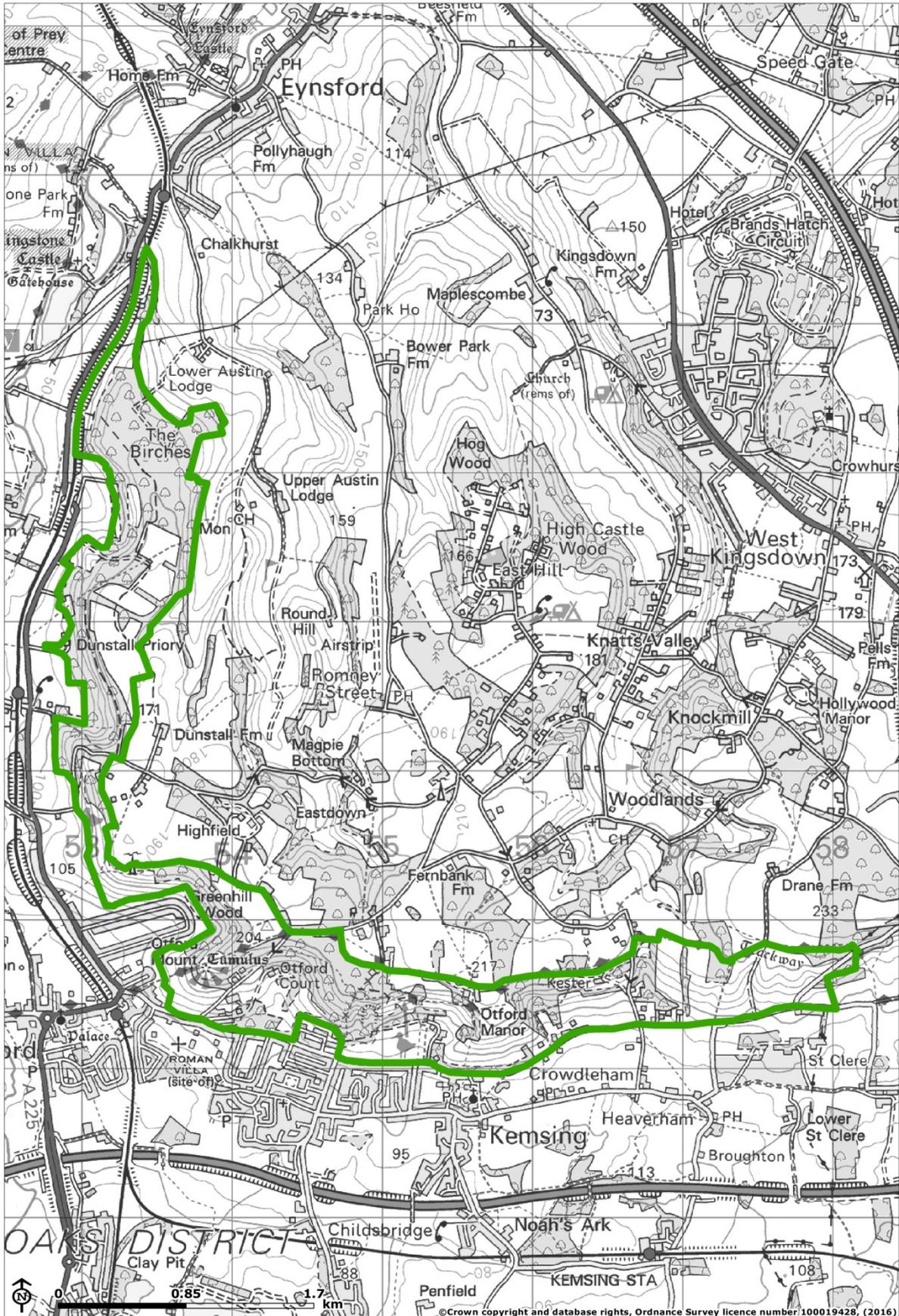
- Conserve the dominant features of broad-leaf woodland and pasture. Reinforce the diversity of species in the woodlands and encourage active management.
- Retain, manage and create new areas of scrub and copses where possible.
- Retain, manage, restore and link up areas of unimproved chalk grassland to maximise their

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conservation value.

- Conserve the irregular pattern of historic fields.
- Reinstate hedgerow enclosure of lanes and field boundaries where these have declined.
- Maintain good access to the countryside, including the ancient trackways and consider providing additional opportunities for enjoyment of the landscape which does not conflict with nature conservation objectives.
- Conserve the character of the narrow enclosed lanes with high banks – ensure road ‘improvements’ do not erode these features.
- Maintain the typical low density settlement pattern and conserve the characteristics of infrequent rural buildings and farms along the base and top of the scarp. Ensure any new built development is set back from the ridgeline and scarp and is well integrated into the landscape.
- Ensure that redundant quarries are appropriately managed in order to realise the potential of these diverse habitats.
- Keep scarp horizons clear to conserve the long views from elevated areas and maintain public access to these.

5b Kemsing Scarp





Key Characteristics

- Steep chalk scarp slope.
- Large areas of mature mixed woodlands.
- Species rich chalk grassland and scrub.
- Pastoral fields enclosed by woodland, shaws and mature hedgerows.
- Narrow winding lanes with high grassy banks.
- Ancient trackways cross the scarp.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and large individual properties.
- Historic parkland at Otford Court.
- Tranquil area with long views from upper slopes to the south and west.

Landscape Character Description

A steep chalk scarp slope with large areas of mature mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland including areas of 19th century plantation and ancient woodland. The scarp slope woods are mainly beech, with ash-field maple at the foot of the scarp.

Areas of species rich chalk grassland and chalk scrub (Kemsing Downs and Fackenden Down) are an important downland habitat which supports rare orchids and downland butterflies. A limited number of pastoral fields are enclosed by woodland, shaws and mature well-wooded hedgerows.

Narrow winding lanes, with no verges and high grassy banks, climb up the wooded scarp slopes. Ancient trackways cross the scarp, including the Pilgrim's Way at the foot of the scarp slope. The bowl barrow at Otford Mount is sited at the crest of the ridge facing south west.

Settlement is limited to scattered farmsteads and large residential properties set back from the ridge including the Victorian house and parkland at Otford Court. Kemsing is located along the base of the scarp and expansion of the village northwards has generally been constrained by the topography of the scarp.

Where the trees open to clearings there are panoramic views across the Darent Valley. (including panoramic views from Otford Mount barrow). The noise of the M26 dominates an otherwise tranquil area.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The unified pattern of landscape elements (the woodlands, the chalk grassland and ridge-top assarts), and the extensive network of mature mixed woodland and hedgerows contribute positively to landscape condition. The residential ridgeline development and lack of vernacular styles have an adverse influence on landscape condition.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The distinctive landform of the steep scarp slopes which is largely free of development.
- Extensive areas of native broad-leaved woodland, particularly areas of ancient woodland which provide valuable habitats and visual interest.
- Areas of chalk grassland and scrub which provide valuable habitats supporting rare species and providing panoramic views over the Darent valley.
- Ancient trackways at the top and base of the scarp that provide links to the past and high recreational value today.
- The intact network of hedges and copses enclosing pastoral fields.
- Narrow winding lanes with high grassy banks, and road verges that support wild flowers
- The rural settlement character comprising scattered farmsteads and large residential properties, characteristically set back from the ridge
- The long views and sense of tranquillity on the elevated slopes which provides an escape from more developed areas in the valley below

Vision

A prominent landform feature comprising a steep intact scarp supporting chalk grassland, large areas of deciduous woodland and fields of pasture divided by well-maintained hedgerow boundaries with hedgerow trees. An area that is accessible for recreation and with opportunities for panoramic views south over the Darent valley and beyond.

Landscape Guidance

The Landscape character area is entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

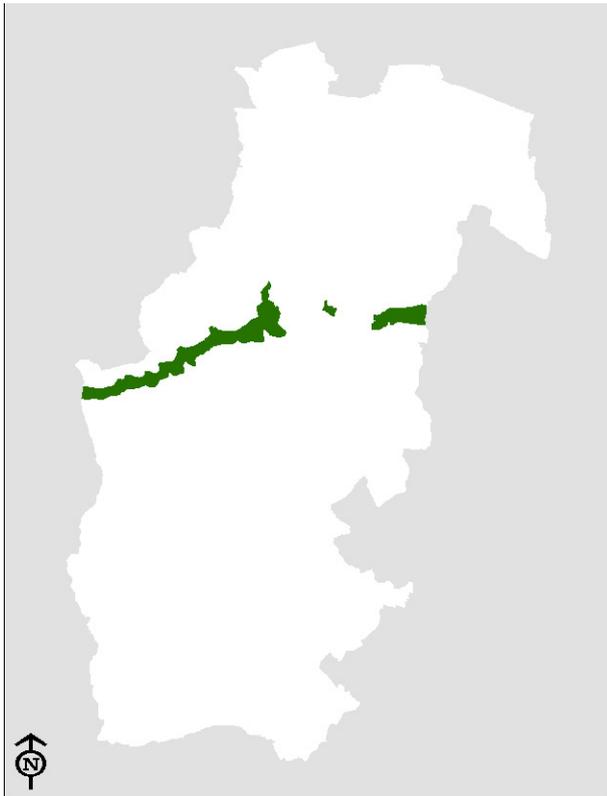
Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Retain, manage, restore and link up areas of unimproved chalk grassland.
- Retain, manage and create new areas of scrub and copses where possible.
- Conserve and reinforce the characteristic species mix of woodlands and encourage active management.
- Reinforce hedgerow enclosure of lanes and field boundaries where these are vulnerable.

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- Maintain good access to the countryside, including the route of the 'Pilgrims Way', and consider providing additional opportunities for enjoyment of the landscape which does not conflict with nature conservation objectives.
- Conserve the character of the narrow winding lanes with high grassy banks – ensure road 'improvements' do not erode these features.
- Conserve the scattered settlement pattern and its locational characteristics. Maintain the infrequent settlement pattern and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape and set back from the ridge to keep the scarp horizons clear.
- Conserve the long views from elevated areas and maintain public access to these.

TYPE 6: SCARP FOOT FARMLAND



Key Characteristics

- An undulating shelf that lies at the foot of the steep scarp of the North Downs.
- Underlain by Lower Chalk, the foot slopes form a transition between the chalk scarp to the north and the Gault Clay Valley to the south.
- Regular parliamentary fields and older informal post medieval enclosures bounded by narrow hedged lanes and tracks which follow the route of the old drove roads to and from the downlands.
- Arable and pastoral fields rise up the scarp bounded by a network of hedgerows and shaws.
- Historic parkland landscapes are an important feature at the foot of the scarp with mature parkland trees and woodland.
- Streams, arising from springs at the foot of the chalk, flow southward.
- Rural settlement pattern of isolated farmsteads and small historic villages with some 20th century sprawl to the periphery of Dunton Green.
- Many examples of vernacular building materials consisting of brick, flint and ragstone.
- The hedge lined Pilgrim's Way, and ancient trackway and iron-age trading route, marks the base of the scarp slope.
- Long views to the adjacent scarps.
- Major transport infrastructure erodes the sense of tranquillity and has fragmented the area, leaving small isolated pockets of land to revert to scrub.



National landscape character

North Downs

Geology

Lower Chalk

Soils

Base rich loamy calcareous soils

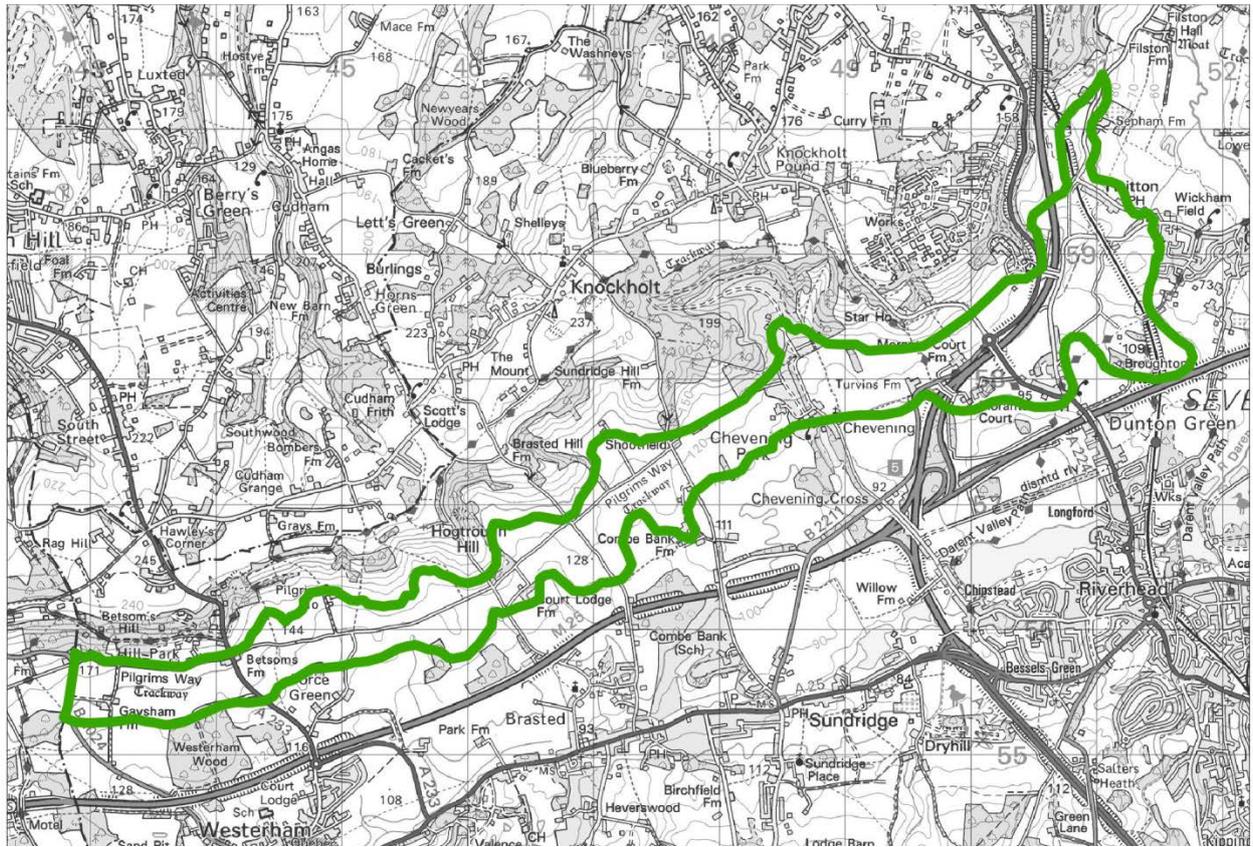
Landform

Undulating landform at the foot of the scarp

Historic landscape

Post medieval informal enclosures bounded by old drove roads. Small and medium parliamentary enclosure.

6a Chevening Scarp Foot Farmland



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Key Characteristics

- Undulating chalk slopes at the foot of the North Downs scarp.
- Arable fields bounded by mature hedgerows and shaws.
- Historic field pattern of parliamentary and older fields bounded by winding lanes.
- Ancient trackway at the foot of the scarp.
- Historic parkland at Chevening and Morant's Court.
- Settlement limited to isolated farmsteads and Chevening House.
- Long views to the North Downs and Greensand Ridge.
- Sense of tranquillity eroded by the presence of M25

Landscape Character Description

Undulating slopes at the foot of the North Downs scarp underlain by Lower Chalk. Regular parliamentary fields and older field pattern resulting from post-medieval informal enclosure bounded by narrow hedged lanes and tracks which follow the route of the old drove roads to and from the downlands. The Pilgrim's Way, an ancient trackway, dated to 500–450 BC, cuts west-east across the LCA at the foot of the scarp.

Medium scale arable fields bounded by a network of mature hedgerows and shaws. Some internal field boundaries have been removed due to agricultural intensification. Woodland is limited to small copses at field boundaries.

Historic estates with woodland and parkland trees are an important feature at the foot of the scarp and include the early 20th century park at Morant's Court and early 17th century estate at Chevening (the official residence of the British Foreign Secretary). The parkland landscape rises up the scarp slope from the house and hamlet at Chevening with a formal garden around a long canal and a triple avenue along the Pilgrim's Way.

Settlement is limited to isolated farmsteads, large villas located at the foot of the scarp, and Chevening House and its small 17th and 18th century estate cottages. There is some 20th century sprawl to the periphery of Sevenoaks at Dunton Green. Vernacular building materials in Chevening include brick and half tile hung facades. The farmsteads are late 19th century with modern barns and are built in various styles and materials.

There are long views from this area across the fields and up to the Greensand Ridge and the North Downs. Traffic noise from the M25 rebounds off the valley sides and can affect the sense of tranquillity.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

This area has an intact and well-defined pattern of fields either side of the Pilgrim's Way and intact areas of historic parkland, including Chevening Park, which contribute positively to landscape condition. The motorway is a detracting feature and intensive agriculture has resulted in loss of hedgerows and copses, fragmenting linkages between woodland habitats. Traffic is also a detractor and tends to drive fast, resulting in erosion of country lanes including the Pilgrim's Way.

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Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Estate parkland, woodland, avenues and estate buildings are a key part of the character of the area and provide a sense of history.
- Historic field pattern of regular parliamentary fields and older informal post medieval enclosures contributes to local distinctiveness.
- Narrow winding lanes and tracks which follow the route of the historic drove roads to and from the downlands give a strong sense of time-depth to the area.
- Ancient trackway of the Pilgrim's Way is valued for recreation and as a local cultural icon.
- The hedgerow network and shaws which contribute to the local landscape pattern and provides ecological links.
- The rural settlement pattern of isolated farms and Chevening (the official residence of the British Foreign Secretary) with its estate cottages contributes to local distinctiveness.
- Open views across the fields and to the scarps are locally distinctive.

Vision

A scarp foot landscape comprising areas of historic estate parkland and farmland divided by narrow lanes with well-maintained hedgerow boundaries connected to diverse broadleaf copses. A rural landscape with a low density settlement pattern of farmsteads and cottages and a built vernacular that retains its local distinctiveness. A landscape that is accessible for recreation through a network of traffic-free routes linking the valley floor villages to the scarp slopes of the North Downs.

Landscape Guidance

The Landscape character area is almost entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB** except for a small area to the east of the LCA beyond the Tonbridge to London railway line. It is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

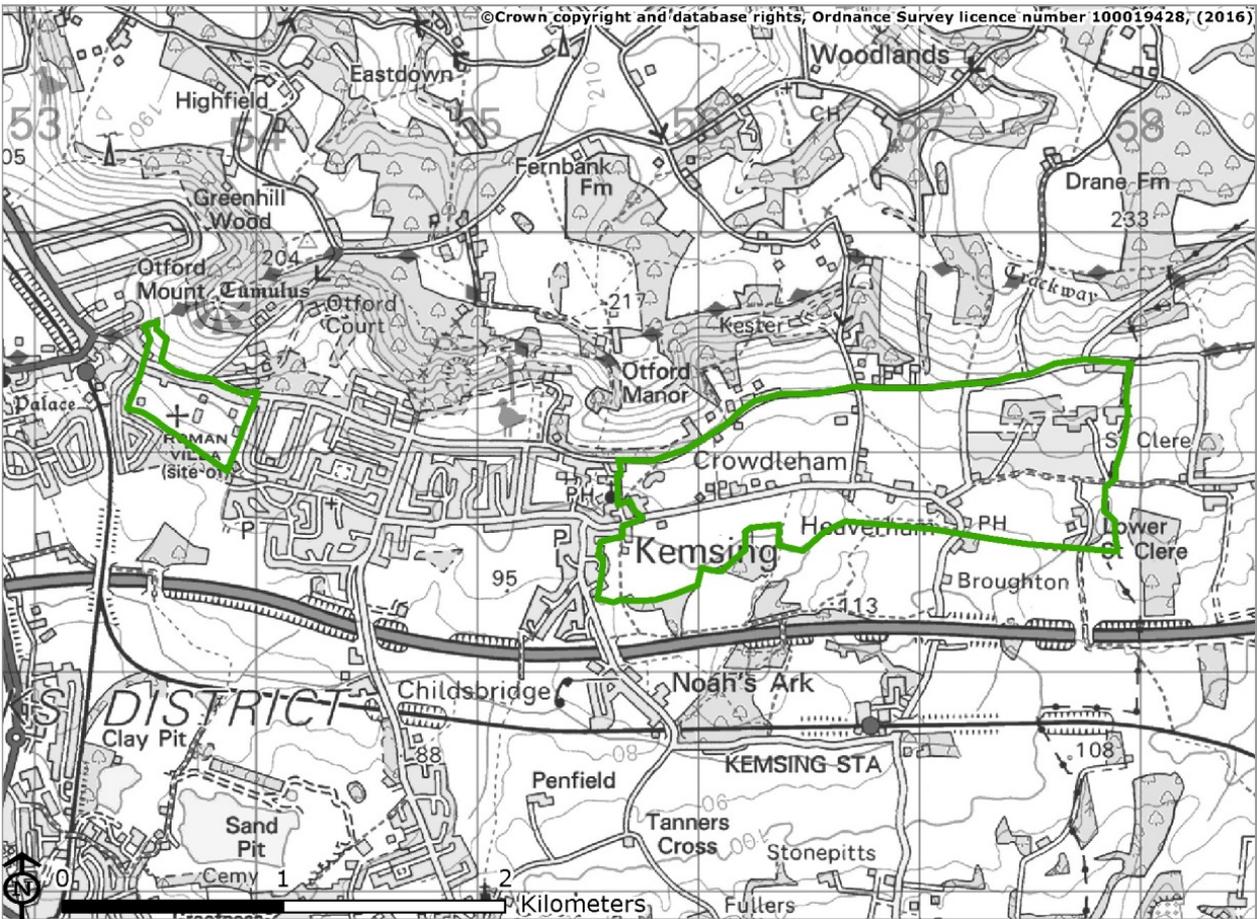
Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Reinforce north-south physical and ecological links by maintaining and enhancing hedgerow and wooded links from the scarp foot to the scarps. Maintain the historic droveways and improve physical access.
- Conserve the character of historic lanes by reducing traffic impacts
- Extend and reconnect fragmented woodland by maintaining and reinstating hedgerows, copses and shaws.
- Manage historic parkland including the planting of replacement parkland trees and avenues, to ensure their continued presence in the landscape.
- Retain the sparse rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and cottages.
- Retain distinctive building styles of estate buildings, gates and entrances. Ensure that vernacular styles are interpreted for use in new building to retain sense of place.
- Maintain or restore stock grazing in parks and wood pastures and restore traditional tree and

woodland management including pollarding.

- Develop uncropped field margins for biodiversity.
- Conserve and create opportunities for open views across the fields, particularly from the Pilgrim's Way and to the backdrop of the scarps to the north and south.

6b Kemsing Scarp Foot Farmland



Key Characteristics

- Undulating lower chalk slopes at foot of North Downs scarp.
- Pasture and arable fields bounded by mature hedgerows.
- Historic field pattern of parliamentary and older irregular fields bounded by narrow lanes.
- Ancient trackway at the foot of the scarp.
- Remnants of former parkland landscapes with tree avenues and mature parkland trees.
- Rural settlement pattern of farms and historic hamlets and scattered residential properties.
- Typical Kentish vernacular styles.
- Long views to the North Downs and Greensand Ridge.
- Sense of tranquillity eroded by the presence of the M26

Landscape Character Description

Undulating slopes at the foot of the North Downs underlain by lower chalk.

Mixed land use of arable and some pasture contained within mature hedgerows.

Regular parliamentary fields and older informal post medieval enclosures bounded by narrow hedged lanes and tracks which follow the route of the old drove roads to and from the downlands.

The Pilgrim's Way, an ancient trackway dated to 500–450 BC, runs east-west along the northern boundary of the LCA at the foot of the scarp.

Small country estates (St Clere, Lower St Clere and Crowdleham) were established along the base of the scarp. The mansions, parkland and farmland associated with these estates remain important features in the landscape. Roadside tree avenues, scattered mature parkland trees and small blocks of woodland are indicative of the parkland estates found in the area.

Otherwise, a rural settlement pattern of isolated farms, small historic hamlets with converted oasts and scattered residential properties, some dating from the Georgian period.

The buildings include some typical Kentish vernacular styles, particularly flint, ragstone and red brick.

There are long views from this area across the fields and up to the Greensand Ridge and the North Downs.

Traffic noise from the M26 which runs east-west to the south of the area is quite intrusive and erodes the sense of tranquillity.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

This area is generally intact with a clear pattern of elements and a well-defined pattern of fields and narrow hedged lanes. The historic villages, estate houses and buildings are in good condition and contribute to sense of place. Large modern agricultural buildings, intensive farmland management, loss of hedgerows, and the motorway are detractors.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Estate farmland and parkland are a key part of the character of the area and give a strong sense of time-depth.
- Historic field pattern of regular parliamentary fields and older informal post medieval enclosures

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contributes to local distinctiveness.

- Narrow winding lanes and tracks which follow the route of the historic drove roads to and from the downlands give a strong sense of time-depth to the area.
- Ancient trackway of the Pilgrim's Way is valued for recreation and as a local cultural icon.
- Historic settlement pattern of isolated farms, hamlets and small country houses contribute to the sense of place.
- Typical Kentish vernacular styles of the local buildings provide a sense of place.
- Open views across the fields and to the scarps are locally distinctive.

Vision

A scarp foot landscape comprising areas of historic estate parkland and farmland divided narrow lanes with well-maintained hedgerow boundaries connected to diverse broadleaf copses. A rural landscape with a low density settlement pattern of farmsteads, small hamlets and estate houses with a built vernacular that retains its local distinctiveness. A landscape that is accessible for recreation through a network of traffic-free routes linking the valley floor villages to the scarp slopes of the North Downs.

Landscape Guidance

The Landscape character area is within the **Kent Downs AONB** except for a small area around the Roman Villa in Otford. It is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Reinforce north-south physical and ecological links by maintaining and enhancing hedgerow and wooded links from the scarp foot to the scarps. Maintain the historic droeways and improve physical access.
- Conserve the character of historic lanes by reducing traffic impacts.
- Extend and reconnect fragmented woodland by maintaining and reinstating hedgerows, copses and shaws.
- Manage historic parkland and estates including the planting of replacement parkland trees, avenues and small plantations, to ensure their continued presence in the landscape.
- Retain the sparse rural settlement pattern of hamlets, scattered farmsteads and large estate houses.
- Retain the distinctive character of villages and respect local vernacular building techniques.
- Maintain or restore stock grazing in parks and wood pastures and restore traditional tree and woodland management including pollarding.
- Develop uncropped field margins for biodiversity.
- Conserve and create opportunities for open views across the fields and to the backdrop of the scarps to the north and south.

TYPE 7: CHALK VALLEYS



Key Characteristics

- Chalk river valley containing the course of the River Darent as it passes through the North Downs.
- The field pattern is small to medium scale and mostly regular in form. Field boundaries are supplemented or replaced by post and wire fencing, some are ditches.
- A mix of land uses with wet pasture fields on the valley floor and arable growing on the slopes. Traditional hop growing and lavender farms are a distinct feature.
- Enclosure is provided by small woodlands, riparian vegetation and embankments of major transport routes.
- Narrow, winding, hedge-lined lanes as well as main roads following the valley.
- Two Victorian arched railway viaducts crossing over the valley.
- Historic settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads and mill villages along the valley floor with features and buildings of industrial heritage. Use of flint.
- Numerous historic features including nationally important castles and Roman remains.
- High levels of tranquillity, although some major transport routes detract from this.

National landscape character

North Downs

Geology

Alluvium and Gault Clay

Soils

Alluvial and heavy clay soils

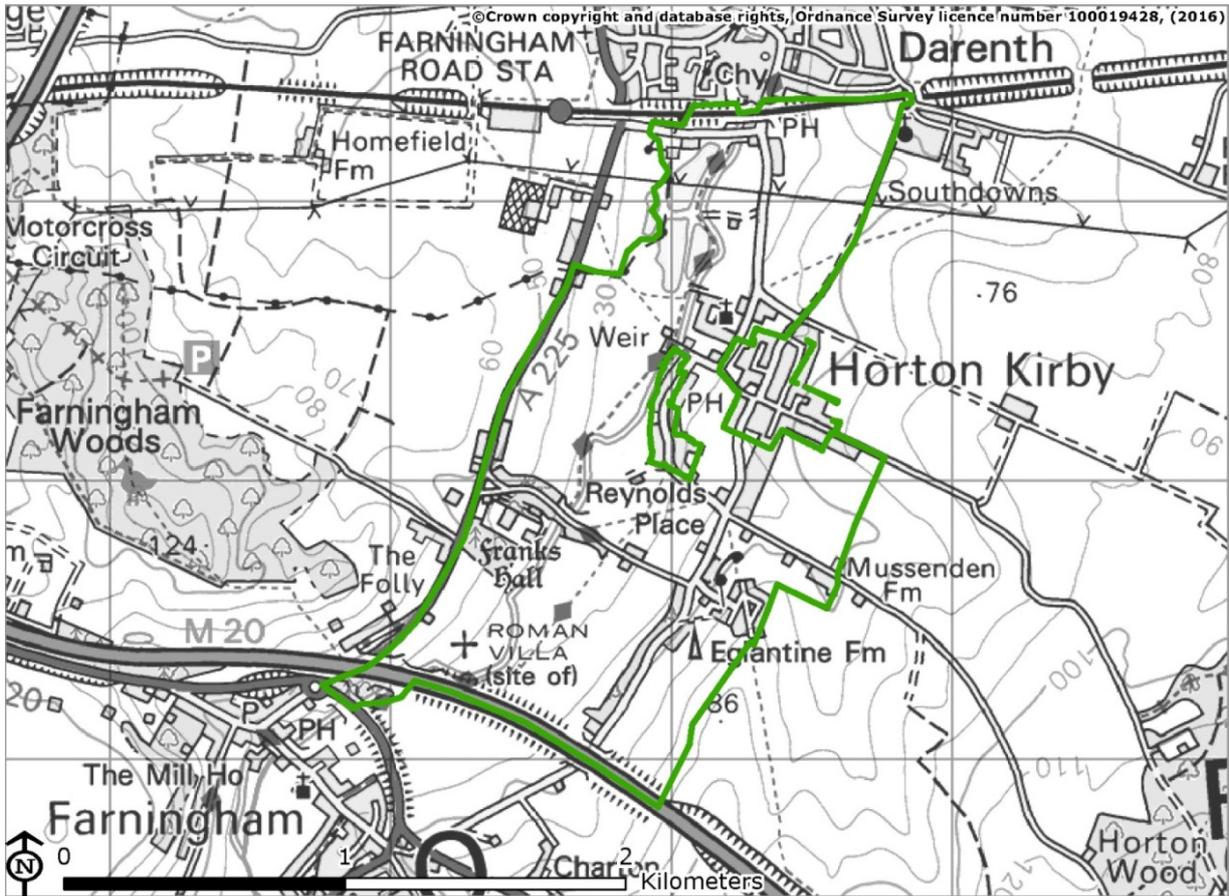
Landform

Flat or very gently undulating

Historic landscape

Medium scale rectilinear parliamentary enclosure. Enclosure of meadows and other pasture along the valley floor.

7a Darent Valley – South Darenth to Farningham



Key Characteristics

- Gentle chalk river valley containing the vegetated meandering course of the River Darent.
- A mixture of arable fields and fields of pasture, including some paddocks, enclosed by gappy hedgerows supplemented by post and wire fencing
- Significant wetland habitat to the north enclosed by dense riparian vegetation.
- Valued cultural heritage features including Franks Hall and parkland and a Roman Villa.
- Historic villages with distinct core character incorporating flint, weather board and hanging tile vernacular, and modern residential infill.
- Narrow winding lanes run parallel to, and across, the river valley.
- Dramatic landmarks of the railway viaduct (which marks the northern edge of the area) and the Paper Mill chimney (listed).
- Views often limited by topography and vegetation. Longer views across the valley from higher ground.

Landscape Character Description

A gently sloping river valley carved through chalk by the River Darent, with clay alluvium and sand deposits from the watercourse. Small-medium scale fields, used for arable cultivation, hop and lavender growing and horsiculture, are surrounded by hedgerows and post and wire fencing. These include parliamentary enclosures. Areas are used for recreational purposes, including playing fields and small scale paddocks adjacent to settlement which sometimes contain stable blocks.

Dense tracts of mature tree and scrub vegetation follow the river and the narrow lanes. To the north of the area, former gravel workings now provide wetland habitat and are enclosed by dense riparian vegetation.

There are two villages within or adjacent to the area; Horton Kirby and South Darent, with historic cores of distinct character predating 1801 and expanded thereafter. Many examples of traditional vernacular architecture include hanging tile, an ancient flint church and a large weather boarded barn. Industrial structures sited along the river include a large Victorian paper mill and railway viaduct which is prominent in views. 20th century residential development surrounds the village. Isolated modern residential clusters are found scattered along roads leading into the villages. Franks Hall is a Grade I listed building of historic interest, and a Roman Villa and granary are located adjacent to the river.

Views from the centre of the valley are limited by riparian vegetation, but there are long views across the valley from the upper slopes. Noise from the M20 is intrusive.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intact field pattern on the valley slopes, historic settlement cores and the strong ecological network provided by the river corridor and the riparian vegetation contribute positively to landscape condition. Detracting features include suburban and industrial land uses, incongruous stable blocks and gappy hedgerows (or complete hedgerow loss).

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The historic field pattern including parliamentary type enclosures.
- Valued semi-natural riparian woodland and freshwater wetland habitats along the river corridor.

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- Distinctive and locally traditional land uses such as hop and lavender growing.
- Extensive archaeology and heritage features including Grade I listed Frank's Hall which is contained within a Registered Park and Garden and the Roman Villa and granary which are designated as Scheduled Monuments.
- Distinctive heritage features including the railway viaduct and Paper Mill chimney in South Darenth.
- Historic settlement cores with numerous buildings of traditional, flint, weather board and hanging tile vernacular, including the designated Conservation Area at Horton Kirby and South Darenth.
- High recreational value; the Darent Valley Path follows the river to Dartford.
- Attractive, scenic views from adjacent landscapes across the Darent Valley.

Vision

A distinctive river valley landscape with an intact historic field pattern, strong ecological network of hedgerows and riparian vegetation and historic mill villages and buildings. A landscape valued for recreation and its attractive views, and which retains a sense of tranquillity despite the close proximity of major transport routes.

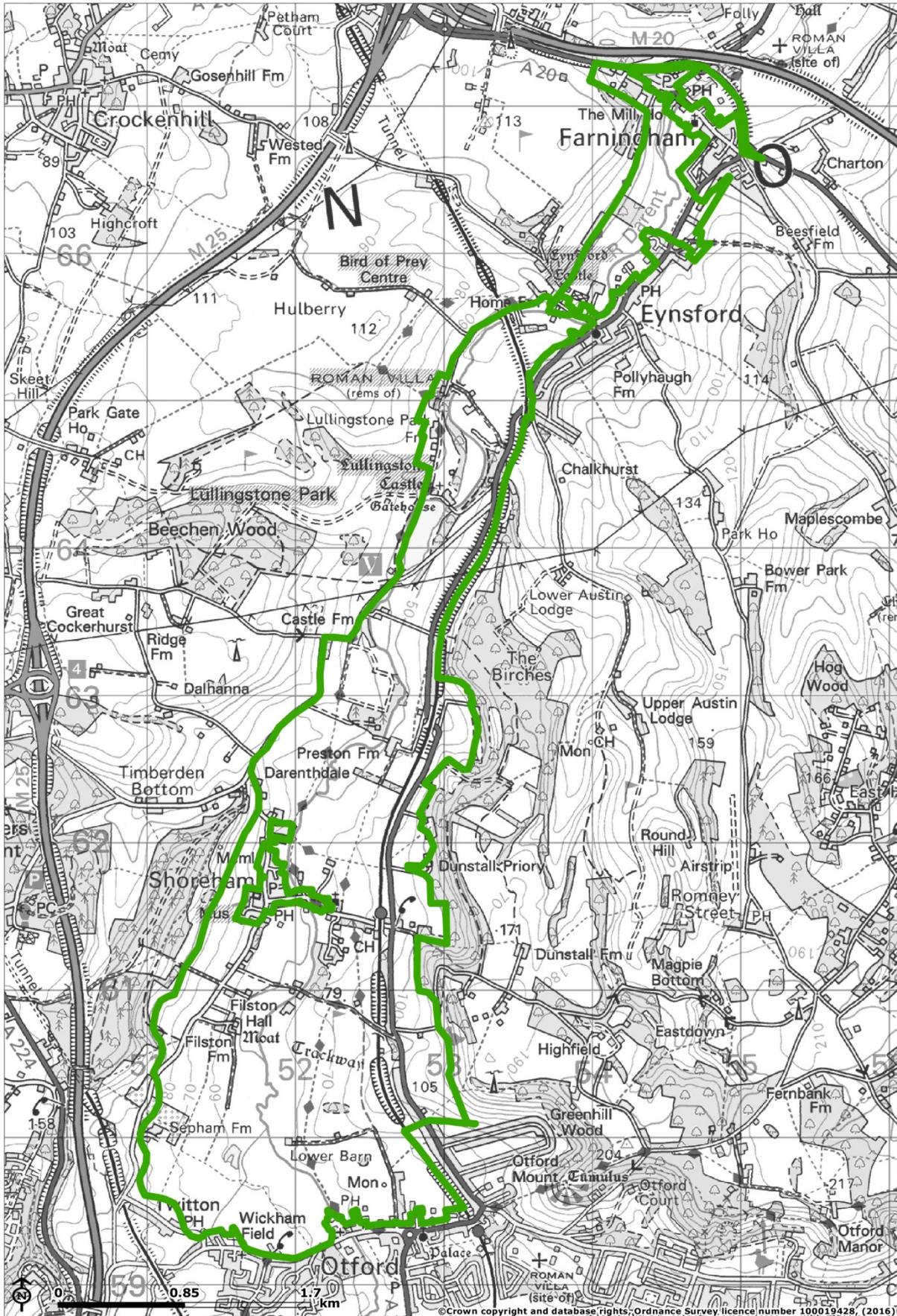
Landscape Guidance

The landscape character lies entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Retain the small-scale of the field pattern and restore hedgerows where possible to strengthen field boundaries.
- Conserve and restore linked habitats within the farmland, up the valley sides, and enhance wetland habitats around the river. Riparian vegetation should be restored around settlements along the river.
- Encourage the retention of traditional land uses within the landscape including hop growing.
- Restore and enhance historic designed landscapes to retain the sense of time-depth, including the parkland surrounding Frank's Hall and the Roman Villa as well as remaining buildings from the Industrial Revolution.
- The emphasis and the setting of historic cores to settlements should be restored a new buildings should contribute to the vernacular character of the landscape.
- Use planting to integrate major roads and hard urban edges into the landscape.
- Promote the recreational value of the landscape which includes the Darent Valley Path. Enhance access routes where possible to encourage visitors.
- Ensure that key views from higher ground across the valley are maintained.

7b Darent Valley – Farningham to Otford





Key Characteristics

- Chalk river valley containing the vegetated meandering course of the River Darent.
- Small scale irregular fields adjacent to the river become larger and more rectangular on slopes bound by hedges and post and wire fences.
- Wet pasture on the valley floor with arable fields on slopes. Lavender fields are distinctive.
- Small scale copses of broadleaved woodland between fields, with riparian trees and vegetation along the river.
- Important heritage features including Lullingstone and Eynsford Castles and a Roman Villa.
- Historic, vernacular mill villages along the river and isolated farmsteads with some modern linear development along roads.
- Narrow winding hedge-lined lanes contrast with the wide A-road and railway following the valley floor.
- Enclosure is provided by small isolated woodlands and riparian vegetation with

Landscape Character Description

This is a gently undulating rural chalk river valley with alluvial deposits, overlain by a small to medium scale agricultural landscape with many fields of parliamentary enclosure. Overall, the field pattern becomes less regular and smaller in scale adjacent to the river. The low lying areas adjacent to the river have large areas of wet pasture used for grazing, with the higher chalky ground used for arable production. There are areas of horticulture including locally distinctive lavender fields. Small scale copses are found around field boundaries and mature riparian vegetation along the river corridor. A mix of hedgerows, ditches and post and wire fencing separates the fields. The woodlands are predominantly oak and many standard oaks are found scattered across open fields.

Important historic features are found throughout the valley, including Lullingstone Roman Villa and Castle and Eynsford Castle. Historic mill villages, built on managed stretches of the river, are dominated by charming buildings in vernacular styles of oast houses, flint and brick and weather boarding, many dated pre-1801. Isolated historic farms and cottages are scattered throughout the area. Darent Valley Golf Club is located in the southern part of the character area.

Narrow lanes wind across the valley and through the villages. Away from settlements these are

- some long views funnelled down the valley.
 - Strong artistic associations with early 19th century painter Samuel Palmer.
- enclosed by dense mature hedgerows. The railway and A225 follow the valley floor. Views are mostly restricted by mature isolated woodlands and the network of well-screened transport routes that cross the valley. There are, however, some long views along the river valley to dominant features such as the railway viaduct at Eynsford and to downland scarp slopes including Kemsing and Chevening. The area has strong associations with the 19th century artist Samuel Palmer, with many of his paintings based in Shoreham.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intact field pattern on the valley slopes, extensive archaeological resource, coherent historic settlement pattern and extensive semi-natural and wetland habitats along the valley contribute positively to landscape condition. However, there are some detracting features including major transport routes, large modern agricultural buildings, and field boundary loss.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Small-medium scale field pattern with some parliamentary enclosures and area of wet pasture on the valley floor.
- Valued semi-natural riparian woodland and freshwater wetland habitats along the river corridor.
- Distinctive and locally traditional land uses such as hop and lavender growing which introduce additional colour and texture into the landscape.
- Historic settlement pattern of mill villages along the valley floor with traditional vernacular building styles including oast houses and the use of weatherboarding and flint.
- The ford at Eynsford which is used for recreation and is noted for its attractive views.
- Extensive archaeological features and resource including Lullingstone Roman Villa and Castle, and Otford Palace (in the village) – these are valued for their sense of history and are popular with visitors.
- Narrow rural lanes, with a strong sense of enclosure afforded by dense hedgerows.
- Highly valued for recreation; Darent Valley Golf Club is located in the south of the area and the Darent Valley Path follows the river to Dartford.
- Attractive and highly regarded views from adjacent landscapes across the Darent Valley.

Vision

A scenic, riparian landscape with a strong sense of time-depth, well-connected semi-natural habitats and traditional land uses including wet pasture and lavender growing. A landscape highly valued for its nationally important heritage features and recreational significance, providing visitors with a sense of history and escape from modern life.

Landscape Guidance

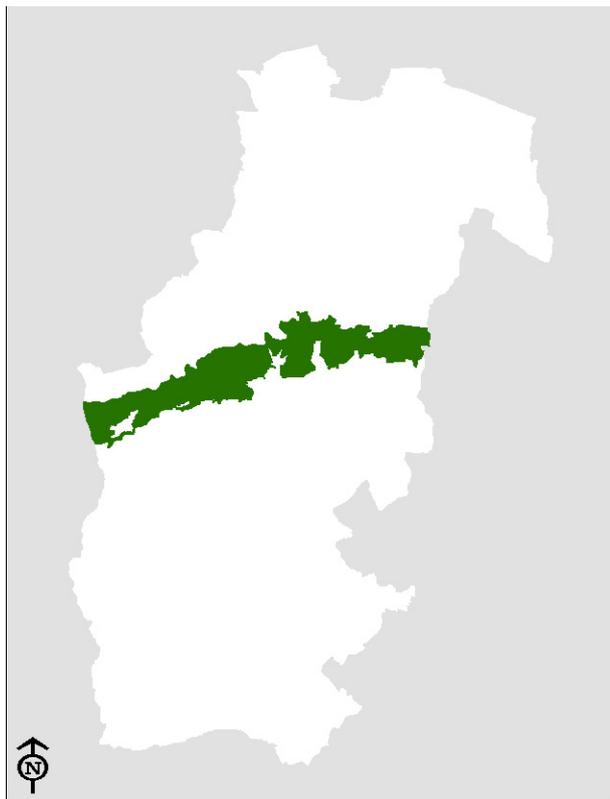
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The landscape character lies entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve the parliamentary enclosure field pattern and locally distinctive land uses including wet pasture and lavender growing.
- Conserve, restore and enhance the ecological resource of the river valley including wetlands, streams, ditches and woodlands.
- Conserve the distinctive historic settlement pattern of mill villages and create small riparian woodlands as an urban edge.
- Distinctive heritage features in the area including the Roman villa, the Eynsford viaduct, Lullingstone and Eynsford Castles are protected and enhanced where appropriate.
- Integrate the transport corridors into the wider landscape, linking the linear features of the river, rail and road routes.
- Hedgerow enclosure to fields and the local road network should be conserved and reinstated where it is lost.
- Increase the recreational value of the landscape by promoting access to the Darent Valley Path and introducing circular routes.
- Manage the golf course to improve its ecological and landscape benefit.

TYPE 8: CLAY VALLEYS



Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating valley with flat alluvial floodplains on clay and mudstone with drift deposits of alluvium along the river courses.
- Enclosed between the steep scarp slopes of the North Downs to the north and the Greensand Ridge to the south.
- Major transport routes running east-west through the valley contrast with the historic road pattern characterised by winding hedge-lined lanes linking the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.
- Mixed land use of arable and pasture contained within small fields. Boundary loss has resulted in larger prairie fields in some areas.
- Mature oaks and horse chestnut are typical in the field boundaries and scattered across fields.
- Small blocks of mixed broadleaf woodland and isolated shaws provide structure and enclosure.
- Poorly drained farmland with ponds, water filled channels and associated riparian vegetation.
- Large, open water bodies resulting from mineral workings in the alluvial floodplain.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farms and occasional hamlets with historic villages located along the River Darent.
- Long views across the valley to the North Downs and Greensand Ridge.



National landscape character

North Downs

Geology

Gault Formation (mudstone) predominates with Folkestone Formation (sandstone & mudstone) to the south. Alluvium along river course.

Soils

Alluvial and heavy clay soils

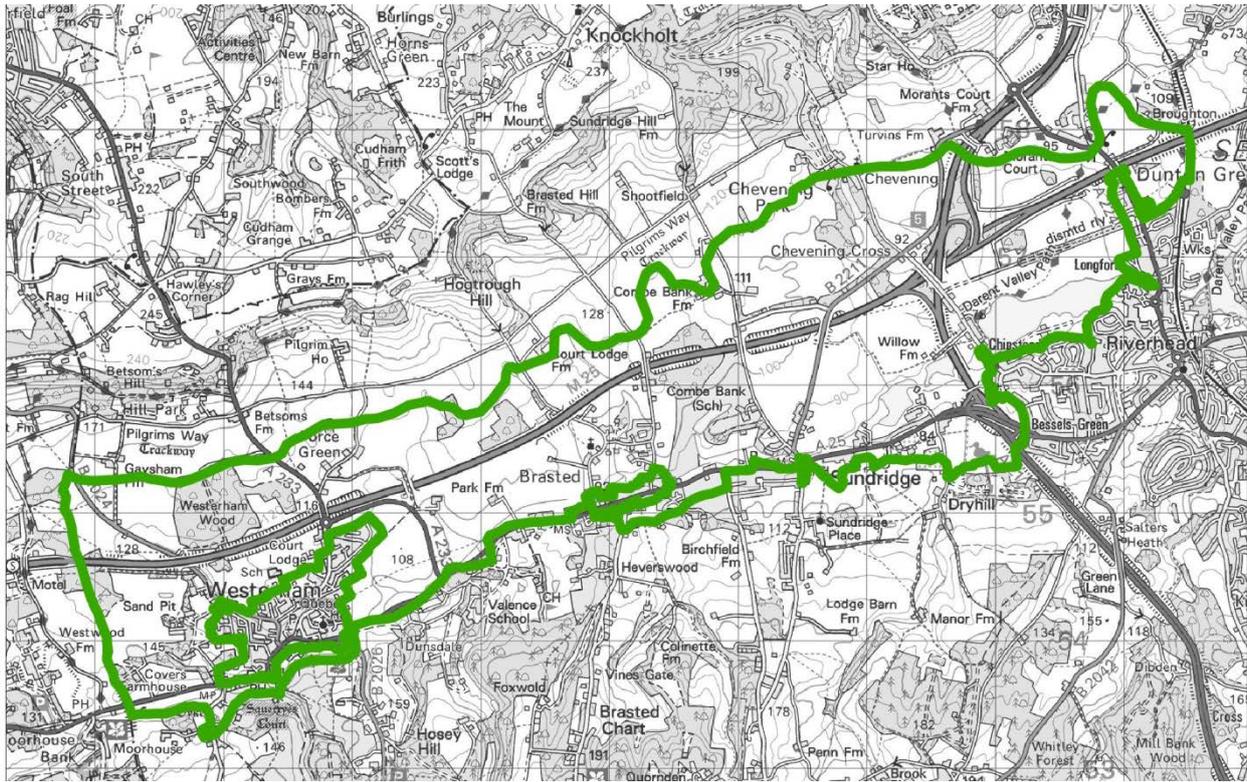
Landform

Flat or very gently undulating

Historic landscape

Small scale rectilinear parliamentary enclosure, large 19th century enclosures with boundary loss and 20th century sand and gravel works.

8a Upper Darent Valley - West



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Key Characteristics

- A gently undulating valley predominantly underlain by clay and mudstone (Gault Formation).
- Enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.
- Narrow tree-lined river corridor flows eastwards along the foot of the Greensand Ridge.
- Restored sand and gravel workings at Chipstead Lake create an ecological and recreational resource.
- Mixed land use of arable and pastoral fields. Horse paddocks on urban fringes of Sevenoaks.
- Mature hedgerows with isolated standard oaks.
- Blocks of mixed broadleaf woodlands and shaws including areas of ancient woodland.
- Historic field pattern of regular parliamentary and older irregular fields disrupted locally.
- Historic droeways from the North Downs to the Greensand Ridge.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads with scattered 20th century residential and industrial development on settlement edges.
- Historic riverside settlements.
- Characteristic vernacular architecture.
- Historic parkland at Combe Bank and Chevening.
- Long views across the valley towards the North Downs and Greensand Ridge.
- Generally a peaceful rural landscape disrupted locally by transport corridors.

Landscape Character Description

A gently undulating valley underlain by gault clay and mudstone with drift deposits of alluvium. Enclosed by the steep slopes of the chalk downs to the north and Greensand Ridge to the south. The River Darent flows eastwards from its source near Westerham, along the foot of the Greensand Ridge. Largely hidden, its path is indicated by riparian vegetation dominated by alder trees and small pockets of scrub. The river widens into artificial lakes at Chipstead created by flooding the former gravel works.

Mixed land use of arable and pasture contained by mature hedgerows with small fields on the urban fringe of Sevenoaks used for horseculture. Isolated standard oaks scattered across open fields mark former field boundaries or historic parkland. Mixed broadleaf woodland, including ancient woodland, and woodland shaws (including oak, beech, alder, willow, ash, horse chestnut and silver birch) create a sense of enclosure.

The historic field pattern is a mixture of small regular fields from C19 parliamentary enclosure and older irregular fields, disturbed along major transport routes and by quarrying. Boundary loss has resulted in some larger prairie fields. Narrow hedged lanes (including historic droeways with names such as 'Hogtrough Lane') pass over and under the motorway linking the valley floor with the higher pastures.

A rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads located slightly up-slope, small hamlets and attractive historic mill villages along the River Darent. Westerham, Brasted and Sundridge functioned as coaching stops and several coaching inns survive and a toll house at Brasted. Unremarkable C20 residential and industrial buildings are located on the outskirts of the settlements. Historic buildings include some distinctive vernacular styles, particularly local red brick, ragstone, weather boarding and half tile hung facades. Surviving historic landscapes include an early C20 garden designed by Sir Harold Hillier at Tanners, a C18 park at Coombe Bank and Chevening Park.

There are long views across the valley to the wooded slopes of the North Downs and Greensand Ridge. Primary transport routes cut across the LCA and disrupt what is otherwise a peaceful landscape, particularly to the east where the landscape is enclosed by the M25/M26 motorway embankments.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

This is an intact river-valley and floodplain, with small-scale fields bounded by hedgerows, remnant woodland, distinctive lines of riparian alders, farmsteads and well preserved historic mill villages on the

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river itself. However, the landscape pattern becomes increasingly fragmented to the east of the area where urban fringe features, transport routes and wet gravel pits are detractors. Hedgerows are generally fragmented and supplemented by post and wire fences. The M25 is a major detractor, bisecting the valley into north and south halves and forming a physical barrier to movement. 20th century development outside the established settlement areas does not reflect the local vernacular and also has an adverse effect on the condition of the landscape.

They are lined by well-maintained mature hedgerows, supplemented in parts with post and rail fencing.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The historic field pattern running down to the river floodplain contributes to local distinctiveness.
- The hedgerow network which contributes to landscape pattern and provides ecological links.
- Mixed deciduous woodlands and shaws that provide valuable a semi-natural habitat for wildlife and a sense of history including Westerham Wood, one of the few remaining ancient woodlands on Gault Clay in Kent.
- Historic droving routes along narrow lanes from the North Downs to the Greensand Ridge which give a strong sense of time-depth to the area.
- The rural settlement pattern of historic riverside mill settlements and large isolated farms located slightly up-slope.
- The local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, half tile hung facades and weatherboarding, and warm red brick which provide sense of place.
- Farley Common is both historic commonland and valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife (designated as a Local Nature Reserve and Biodiversity Opportunity Area).
- Wetlands and wet pasture on the valley floor and around large water bodies that are a valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife (several sites are designated SSSI).
- The distinctive lines of riparian alders that are vulnerable as long-term features due to their maturity.
- The historic parkland at Combe Bank and Chevening which provides a sense of history and contributes to scenic quality.
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the scarps which are locally distinctive.

Vision

A valley landscape comprising areas of woodland and farmland divided by well-maintained hedgerow boundaries and with watercourses marked by riparian alders. A rural landscape with a low density settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets, and a built vernacular that retains its local distinctiveness. A landscape that is accessible for recreation through a network of traffic-free routes which link the villages with the wider landscape either side of the M25 transport corridor.

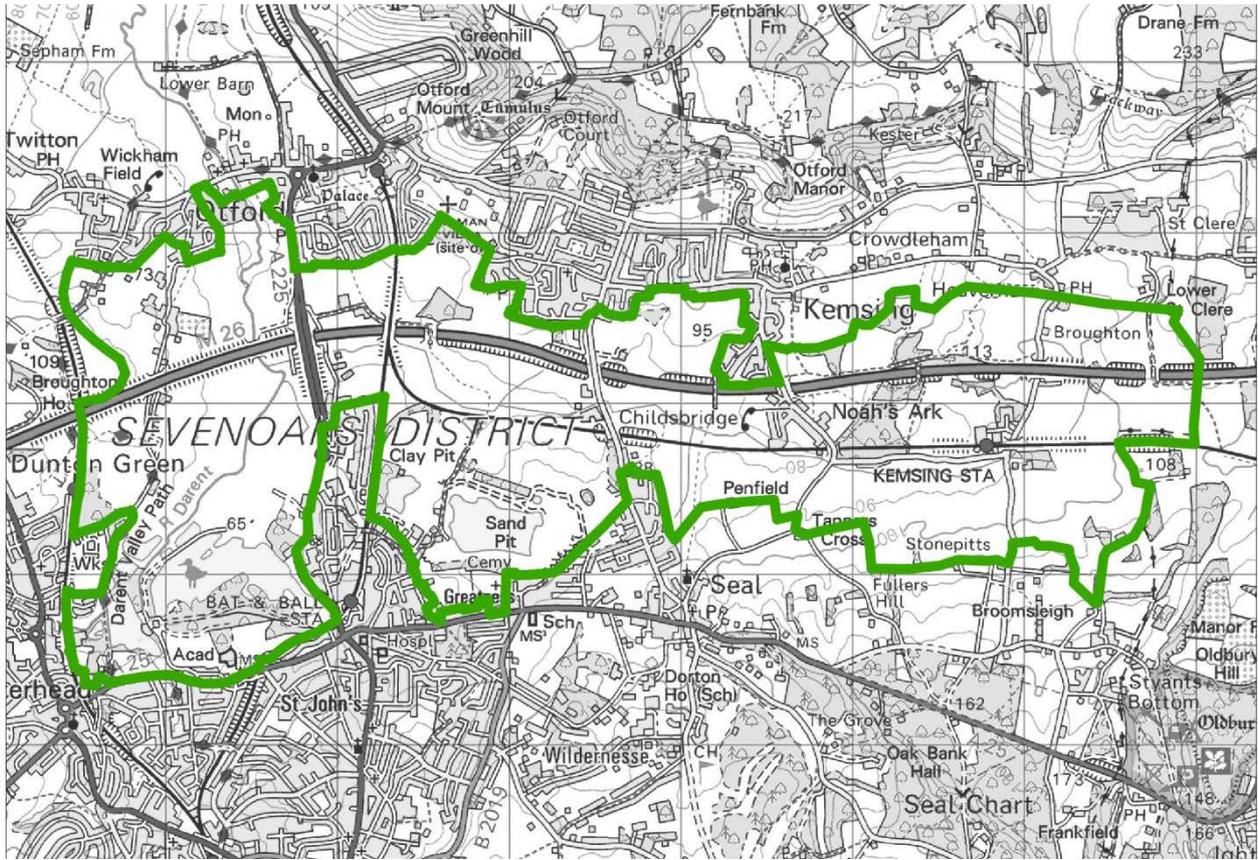
Landscape Guidance

The Landscape character area is largely within the **Kent Downs AONB** except for a small area to the east of the Darent Valley path to the north of Chipstead. It is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Retain the sparse rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and hamlets, and traditional building styles. Ensure that vernacular styles are interpreted for use in new building to retain sense of place.
- Consider improving the existing edge of residential developments on the urban edge of Sevenoaks (Dunton Green) with planting to provide an appropriate interface with adjacent rural and natural areas.
- Enhance the River Darent as a feature of the landscape through a replanting and management programme of alder and other characteristic vegetation.
- Reinforce north-south physical and ecological links by maintaining and enhancing hedgerow and wooded links from the valley to the scarps, maintaining the historic droveways and improving physical access.
- Improve or reinstate management of woodland, copses and shaws. Maintain or restore stock grazing in parks and wood pastures and restore traditional tree and woodland management including pollarding.
- Improve the integration of the A25 and motorway into the landscape, for example through the planting of woodland belts on the valley sides.
- Increase areas under grassland management in flood plains for low intensity stock grazing and hay production.
- Develop uncropped field margins for biodiversity aims. Restore farm ponds.
- Create opportunities for long views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the scarps to the north and south.

8b Upper Darent Valley - East



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Key Characteristics

- Very gently undulating valley predominantly underlain by clay (Gault Formation).
- Enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.
- River Darent and its tributary runs through the area opening into a wide floodplain with riparian vegetation.
- Active and former mineral extraction, some restored to accessible wetland.
- Mixed land use with wet pasture on the valley floor.
- Mature trees scattered across fields and along field boundaries.
- Small broadleaf woodland blocks.
- Contrast between urban-fringe dominated areas and more tranquil farmland which retains a strong sense of place.
- Scarp forms a backdrop to views.
- Despite its proximity, Sevenoaks is not dominant in views from the valley.
- Disrupted by major transport routes.

Landscape Character Description

A very gently undulating clay valley enclosed by the steep chalk escarpment of the North Downs and the southern valley side rising up to the Greensand Ridge.

A tributary of the River Darent, the Honeypot Stream, flows westwards joining the Darent north of Sevenoaks which runs northwards across a wide floodplain between Sevenoaks and Otford. Low-lying areas are subject to seasonal flooding. Ponds and fragmented water channels are characteristic of the Darent floodplain south of Otford with sedges in areas of permanently damp ground. Active and former mineral extraction dominates the valley floor north of Sevenoaks, some restored as accessible wetland such as Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve.

The land use is mixed, with arable and pasture fields contained by hedgerows with mature oaks and horse chestnuts and small blocks of mixed broadleaf woodland and copses. The valley floor is more open with horse paddocks and sheep pasture which have resulted from the enclosure of meadows. Elsewhere the field pattern is characterised by both irregular and small regular field formed by C19 and C20 enclosure.

The western part of the LCA is more settled due to its proximity to Sevenoaks with C20 sprawl extending between Sevenoaks and Otford. Further east, settlement is limited to isolated farmsteads, a well-screened industrial estate and groups of suburban residential properties which have expanded from the original centres of Kemsing and Seal including small Victorian brick cottages with mixed style 20th century housing. Historic buildings include traditional oasts and some vernacular rag and flint agricultural buildings.

The North Downs forms a distinctive backdrop in views from the valley floor with areas of housing on the scarp slope visually prominent.

Well-maintained hedges enclose busy narrow winding lanes which cross over and under the major transport routes which cross the LCA. The M26 and a railway line run east-west through the area and split the north and south part of the LCA. The M26 can be audible but for much of its length its visual impact is mitigated by screen planting and earthworks. It is most visually dominant where it crosses the valley on an embankment, blocking views across the valley. In the west of the LCA two railway lines and the A225 run north-south.

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Landscape evaluation

Condition

The simplicity of the clay valley retains an influence over the landscape. Wet pastures, the ditch network, water courses and open water contribute to a very strong ecological interest and blocks of woodland and hedgerows with standard oaks, provide localised semi-natural habitats and have a positive effect on the condition of the landscape.

However the general pattern of the landscape has been fragmented by former mineral extraction, landfill and transport routes which split the LCA. Other detractors include some large industrial buildings in the rural area, views of the urban edge and increasing number of suburban features in the rural landscape particularly in the western part of the LCA. There is some intensive agricultural use of the land on the valley floor and hedgerow boundaries are over-mature and fragmented often supplemented with post and wire fencing which have an adverse effect on the condition of the landscape.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Tranquil farmland retains a strong sense of place despite the proximity of Sevenoaks.
- Historic narrow winding lanes add a strong sense of time-depth to the area.
- The local vernacular including historic farm buildings and oasts built from Kentish ragstone and flint provide a sense of place.
- Wetland, wet pasture and ditch network along the river valley are valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife and offer accessible open spaces for the local community.
- Large water bodies enclosed with riparian scrub are valuable semi-natural habitat and offer recreational opportunities for the local community.
- The hedgerow network which contributes to landscape pattern and provides ecological links.
- Small block of broadleaf woodland and copses which provide visual interest are valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife
- Long open views to the scarp are locally distinctive.

Vision

A river valley landscape comprising areas of wetland, farmland and small block of wet woodland divided by well-maintained hedgerow boundaries with pastoral floodplain and watercourses. A landscape where historic and modern settlements are integrated into their surrounding with a built vernacular that retains its local distinctiveness. A landscape that is accessible for recreation through a network of traffic-free routes which link settlements to the wider landscape either side of the transport corridors.

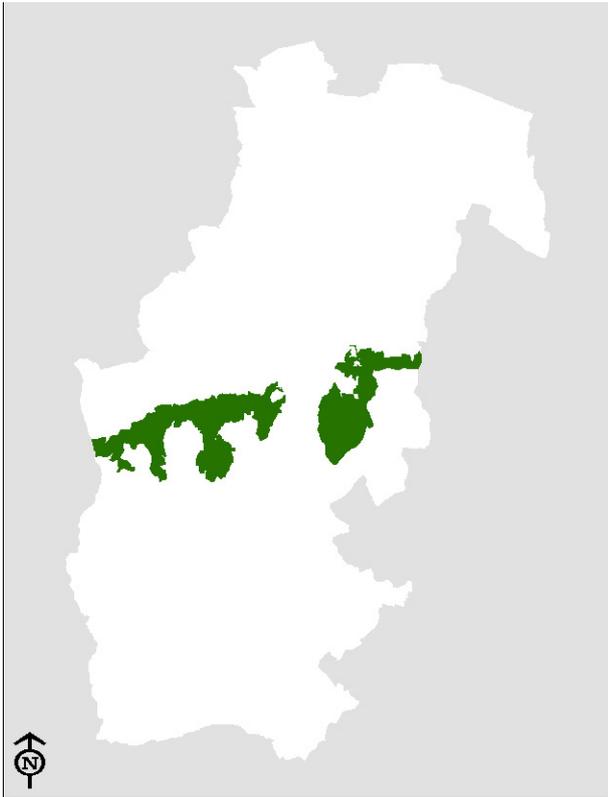
Landscape Guidance

The eastern half of this landscape character area is within the **Kent Downs AONB**. It is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Consider improving the integration between urban settlements and the countryside by reinstating hedgerows and characteristic woodland blocks to provide an appropriate interface with adjacent rural and natural areas.
- Enhance the River Darent and its tributary as a feature of the landscape through replanting and management of characteristic vegetation.
- Encourage non-intensive agricultural use of the floodplain to maintain the typical pastoral, meadow and wet woodland character. Maintain water levels in the floodplain to support these habitats.
- Enhance and extend wetland habitats around former quarries and ensure future restoration of active sites as positive features in the landscape.
- Reinforce north-south physical and ecological links by maintaining and enhancing hedgerow and wooded links from the valley to the scarps, maintaining the historic lanes and improving physical access.
- Maintain and reinforce hedgerow and ditch field boundaries. Encourage rotational ditch clearance and ditch restoration.
- Increase areas under extensive grassland management in flood plains to include low intensity stock grazing and hay production.
- Protect and improve the condition of woodland habitat. Create small riparian woodland on settlement edge of Otford and Sevenoaks.
- Reinforce historic field pattern by developing and protecting hedgerow boundaries. Reinforce the incidence of mature trees on field boundaries through appropriate management and replanting.
- Improve the integration of the major transport corridors into the landscape, for example through the planting of characteristic woodland blocks and create more extensive wetlands between the motorway and railway.
- Create opportunities for long views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the scarps to the north and south.

TYPE 9: GREENSAND PARKS & FARMLANDS



Key Characteristics

- Undulating north facing farmed slopes of the Greensand ridge between about 100 and 200m AOD.
- Drained by streams that flow north into the Darent Valley.
- Strong field pattern defined by a hedgerow network, copses and shaws.
- Variable sized irregular fields in mixed arable and pastoral use.
- Large country houses and extensive parkland with mature specimen trees scattered throughout.
- Narrow, sunken and hedge-lined lanes and droving roads.
- Rural low density settlement pattern of scattered farms and hamlets.
- Traditional vernacular building styles including Oasts and timber framed barns.
- Views north across the Darent Valley to the North Downs scarp.



National landscape character

Wealden Greensand

Geology

Lower Greensand, predominantly Hythe Beds with occasional outcrops of Folkestone and Sandgate Beds

Soils

Free draining, base poor sandy brown acid soils

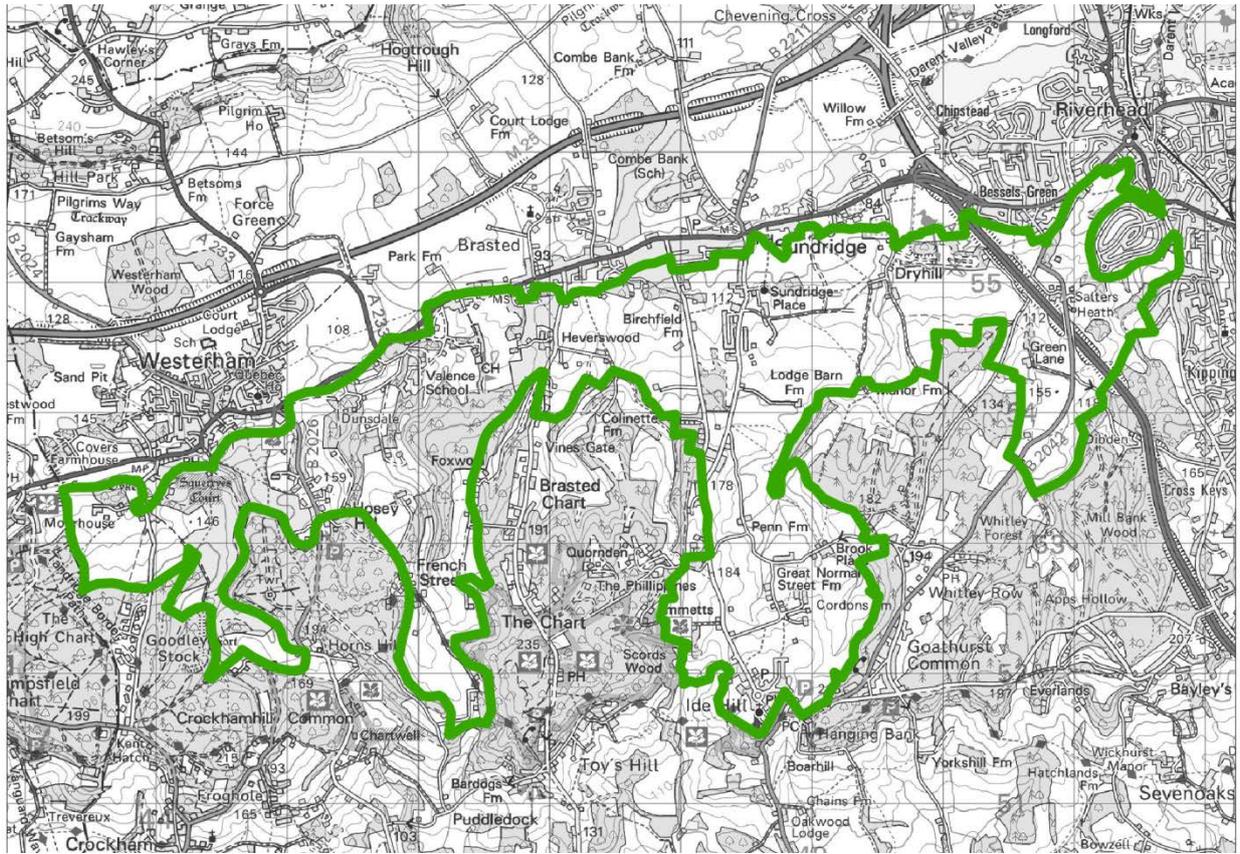
Landform

Undulating north facing slope

Historic landscape

Deer parks within 12th to 14th century hunting grounds. Small to medium fields of unknown origin. Small scale rectilinear parliamentary enclosure. Medieval informal enclosure.

9a Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands



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Key Characteristics

- Northern undulating slopes of the Greensand Ridge to the west of Sevenoaks, supporting small to medium scale fields.
- Small to medium scale enclosed agricultural landscape with strong hedgerows and scattered dense woodland.
- Rural low density settlement pattern of scattered farms and hamlets.
- Traditional vernacular building styles including Oasts, timber framed barns and properties in ragstone and/or brick, some half tile hung, and with clay tile roofs.
- Some newer residential properties, well sited within vegetative screening.
- Large country manor houses sited in areas of parkland at Squerrys Court, Dunsdale and Valence.
- Narrow sunken hedge lined lanes and droving roads.
- Glimpsed views out northwards to the North Downs scarp.

Landscape Character Description

This area is part of the parkland and estate farmland belt which runs along the gentle north-facing slopes of the Darent Valley. This section, located west of Sevenoaks, lies on a geology of Lower Greensand and includes infrequent patches of river terrace gravel around Sundridge and Dryhill.

It is a small-medium scale agricultural landscape with a near-intact hedgerow pattern to internal field boundaries, which includes hedgerow trees. Small, mixed woodlands are scattered throughout the farmland supporting a wide range of species including Birch, Beech, Oak, Pine, Cherry and Alder. Roads follow the general N-S route to the top of the Greensand Ridge from the edge of the Darent Valley (the A25). They are characteristically narrow, vergeless, with hedgerows on either side. Isolated farmsteads, linked by trackways, are the main type of settlement but there are also small hamlets and villages such as Sundridge and Ide Hill. Noise from the A21 and M25 affects the perceptual character of the area.

This undulating pastoral and woodland landscape, and its proximity to London, has led to the creation 17th and 18th century estates and parklands including Squerrys Court (a Jacobean house and park near Westerham), and a Capability Brown landscape which survives in part as a golf course between Valence School and Brasted. Follies and parkland features such as towers, temples and bridges, lodge houses, estate cottages and farmsteads are features.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The shaws, intact field boundaries and historic parkland contribute positively to landscape condition, while detractors include the A21 crossing the landscape, traffic noise from the A21 and M25, loss of parkland to arable and golf course (e.g. at Valence), and modern housing development.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Ancient woodland and historic parklands that provide a sense of history and contribute to biodiversity, as well as scenic interest.
- The intact field pattern that provides sense of history and the network of hedgerows, shaws and copses that provide an intact biodiversity network.
- The rural settlement pattern of farmsteads, historic houses and rural hamlets that contribute to the sense of history and scenic quality of the landscape.
- The narrow sunken lanes, climbing the northern slopes of the Greensand, enclosed by woodland or hedgerows and with a distinctive north to south pattern that contribute to the sense of place and history of the land uses.
- The areas of historic parklands, especially where they are still intact and historic features

survive, which provide a sense of history and contribute to scenic quality.

- The traditional vernacular building styles including Oasts, timber framed barns and properties in ragstone, brick and with tile hanging and clay tile roofs.
- The views of the North Downs scarp.

Vision

A rural landscape with a strong field pattern of small to medium fields bounded by intact and well managed hedgerows, shaws and interspersed with deciduous copses, and buildings in the local vernacular well integrated into the landscape. A landscape in which country houses, parkland narrow sunken hedge lined lanes and droving roads are features.

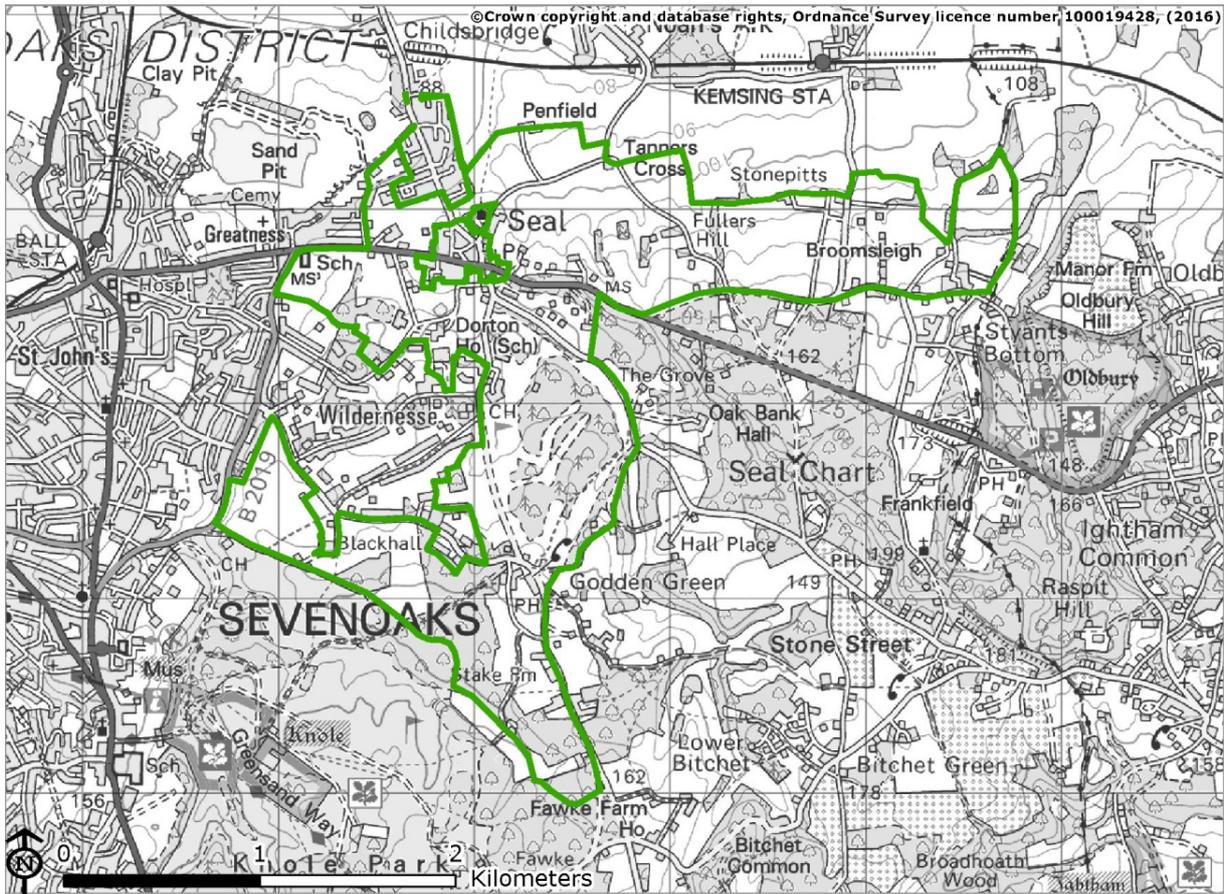
Landscape Guidance

The majority of this Landscape character area is within the **Kent Downs AONB** (a small area beside Sevenoaks is not in the AONB. It is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve the well wooded character of the landscape through conservation and active management of ancient woodland, shaws and hedgerows (including wood pasture management where appropriate) – plan for the next generation of hedgerow trees.
- Maintain the historic field pattern and consider restoring lost field boundaries where possible to strengthen the field pattern.
- Conserve the rural settlement pattern comprising farmsteads, historic houses and rural hamlets – ensure that any new development is well integrated into the landscape and reflects the rural vernacular including timber framed barns, ragstone, brick, tile hanging and clay tile roofs.
- Maintain the character of the narrow sunken lanes, resisting road improvements what would result in erosion or loss of these lanes, their verges and tree tunnels.
- Retain and enhance areas of historic parklands and their features – maintain the mature parkland trees, planning for the next generation, and consider restoring areas of arable back to pasture or parkland including species rich grassland.
- Provide opportunities to enjoy views of the North Downs scarp.
- Seek opportunities to reduce visual and noise intrusion from the A21 and M25, for example through woodland planting.

9b Seal Parks and Farmlands



Key Characteristics

- Northern undulating slopes of the Greensand Ridge to the east of Sevenoaks, supporting small to medium scale fields.
- Small to medium scale fields enclosed by hedgerows and shaws, interspersed with areas of woodland and parkland.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farms and historic hamlets with some more recent 20th century houses eg on the edges of Seal and Sevenoaks.
- Traditional vernacular building styles including Oasts, timber framed barns and properties in ragstone and/or brick, some tile hung and with clay tile roofs.
- Large country manor house sited in an area of parkland at Dorton House (formerly known as Wildernesse), plus other historic manor houses such as Stonepitts.
- Orchards, often associated with the historic houses and hamlets.
- Narrow country lanes, including sunken lanes.
- Glimpsed views out northwards to the North Downs scarp.

Landscape Character Description

This area is part of the parkland and estate farmland belt which runs along the gentle north-facing slopes of the Darent Valley. This section is located east of Sevenoaks and is underlain by the sandstones and mudstones of the Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe Formations.

It comprises a mosaic of variable sized fields small-medium scale fields with large areas of woodland and former parkland. There are areas of intact field patterns north of the A25, enclosed by hedgerows and shaws. To the south of the A25 is a large scale landscape of former parkland and woodland associated with the Wildernesse Estate and other adjacent Estates. A large golf course now occupies the area around Chance Wood.

Roads are characteristically narrow and rural and bounded by hedgerows or trees. Settlement includes small hamlets and nucleated villages with many vernacular properties, including flint, brick and rag stone. Elsewhere large detached, 20th century properties of mixed style, are scattered along lanes. These are set within large gardens and well set back from the road.

There are views north to the North Downs and this includes glimpses of Kemsing and the M26. Acid woodlands on the hill-tops are predominantly Oak, Birch and Beech, with other species including Rowan, Broom, Bracken and Heather. On the lower slopes are coppice Sweet Chestnut & Hazel.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The shaws, intact field boundaries and historic hamlets (north of the A25) and the historic parkland and woodland (south of the A25) contribute to a good landscape condition. However, detractors include the A25 crossing the landscape including traffic noise, loss of parkland to agriculture, golf course and housing, and modern housing development on the outskirts of Sevenoaks and Seal.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Ancient woodland and historic parklands that provide a sense of history and contribute to biodiversity, as well as scenic interest.
- The intact field pattern that provides sense of history and the network of hedgerows, shaws and copses that provide an intact biodiversity network.
- The rural settlement pattern of farmsteads, historic houses and rural hamlets that contribute to the sense of history and scenic quality of the landscape.

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- The rural lanes and their adjacent banks, hedges and tree tunnels that contribute to the sense of place and history of the land uses.
- The areas of historic parklands, especially where they are still intact and historic features survive, which provide a sense of history and contribute to scenic quality.
- The traditional vernacular building styles including Oasts, timber framed barns and properties in ragstone, brick and with tile hanging and clay tile roofs.
- Orchards which provide a sense of history and sense of place.
- The views of the North Downs scarp.

Vision

A rural landscape with a strong field pattern of small to medium fields bounded by intact and well managed hedgerows and shaws, and interspersed with areas of well managed deciduous woodland and intact parkland which provide a sense of history. A rural settlement pattern revealing the local vernacular architecture, and modern buildings well integrated into the landscape.

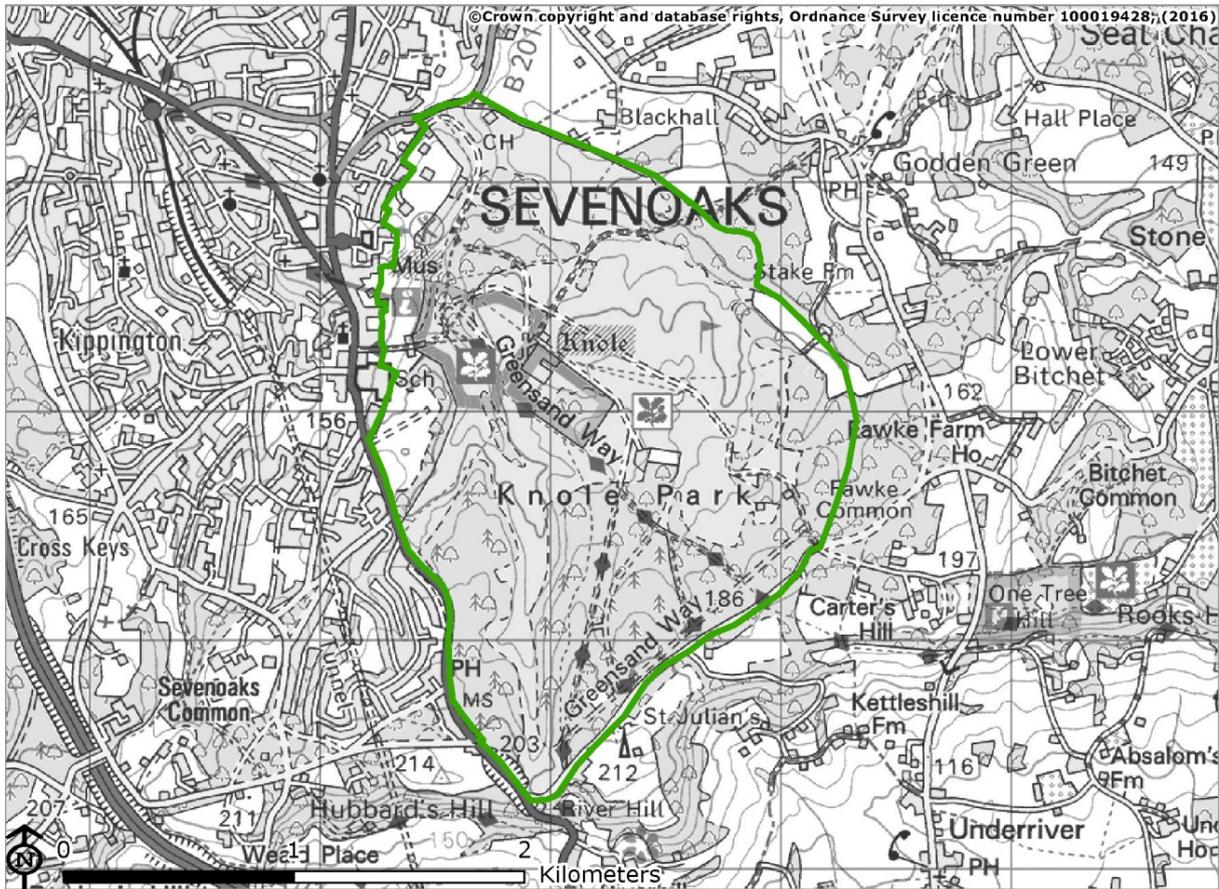
Landscape Guidance

The majority of the landscape character area is within the **Kent Downs AONB**. It is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve the well wooded character of the landscape through conservation and active management of ancient woodland, shaws and hedgerows (including wood pasture management where appropriate) – plan for the next generation of hedgerow trees.
- Maintain the historic field pattern and consider restoring lost field boundaries where possible to strengthen the field pattern.
- Conserve the rural settlement pattern comprising farmsteads, historic houses and rural hamlets – ensure that any new development is well integrated into the landscape and reflects the rural vernacular including timber framed barns, ragstone, brick, tile hanging and clay tile roofs.
- Maintain the character of the rural lanes, resisting road improvements what would result in erosion or loss of these lanes, their verges and adjacent features such as hedges and trees.
- Retain and enhance areas of historic parklands and their features – maintain the mature parkland trees, planning for the next generation, and consider restoring areas of arable land back to pasture or parkland including species rich grassland.
- Provide opportunities to enjoy views of the North Downs scarp.
- Conserve remaining orchards which provide a sense of history and sense of place, and plan for new orchards to preserve this characteristic of the landscape.
- Seek opportunities to reduce visual and noise intrusion from the A25, for example through woodland planting.

9c Knole Park



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Key Characteristics

- Steeply undulating part of the Greensand Ridge to the east of Sevenoaks, distinguished from its adjacent areas because of its strong parkland character.
- The only remaining medieval deer park in Kent, supporting a herd of Sika and Fallow deer which are direct descendants of those which inhabited it in Tudor times.
- An early Jacobean remodelling of a medieval archiepiscopal palace at its centre, built of local ragstone.
- A steeply undulating landscape of ancient woodland, dry heathland, acid grassland, wood pasture, scattered parkland trees and isolated patches of scrub and gorse on ridges.
- Other land uses within the park involve a golf course and school playing field on the edge of Sevenoaks.
- Long views from the tops of ridges across the Darent Valley towards the North Downs scarp.
- Important recreational space accessible by many footpaths.

Landscape Character Description

This area is part of the parkland and estate farmland belt on Lower Greensand. However, it is distinguished from its adjacent areas because of its strong parkland character with mature, standard trees and clear peripheral boundaries – the character area's boundaries almost exactly coincide with the registered park boundary.

Knole Park is an ancient deer park with a remarkably preserved and complete early Jacobean remodelling of a medieval archiepiscopal palace at its centre, built of local ragstone. It was built and extended by the Archbishops of Canterbury after 1456 and became a royal possession during the Tudor dynasty when Henry VIII hunted here and Elizabeth I visited. From 1603, Thomas Sackville made it the aristocratic treasure house for the Sackville family, who were prominent and influential in court circles.

The park is an undulating landscape of ancient woodland, dry heathland, acid grassland, wood pasture, scattered parkland trees and isolated patches of scrub and gorse on ridges. It is the only remaining medieval deer park in Kent and it supports a herd of Sika and Fallow deer which are direct descendants of those which inhabited it in Tudor times.

Specimen trees include cedar and sweet chestnut, oak, beech, pine, hornbeam and blackthorn are also characteristic. Grazing deer keep the grassland close-cropped, and there are also areas of bracken, and isolated ponds. Other land uses within the park involve a golf course.

There is peripheral residential development at the boundary with Sevenoaks, and some of the parkland is used as school playing fields.

The steeply undulating landform enables some long views from the tops of ridges across the Darent Valley towards the North Downs scarp.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The preservation of this ancient deer park and its features including the Jacobean mansion, ancient woodland, dry heathland, acid grassland, wood pasture, and scattered parkland trees mean that landscape condition is good. However, there are some detractors including the golf course and playing fields.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The medieval deer park character, including the herd of deer which are direct descendants of those which inhabited it in Tudor times, which provides a great sense of history and high scenic quality.
- The early Jacobean remodelling of the medieval archiepiscopal palace which provides a great sense of history as well as sense of place, being constructed from local ragstone.
- The rich variety of valued habitats including ancient woodland, dry heathland, acid grassland, wood pasture, scattered parkland trees and isolated patches of scrub and gorse on ridges.
- The opportunity for long views from the tops of ridges across the Darent Valley towards the North Downs scarp.
- The many footpaths which enable people to enjoy the landscape.

Vision

A medieval deer park supporting well managed ancient woodland, dry heathland, acid grassland, wood pasture, scattered parkland trees and scrub, supporting a herd of deer, and with intact and well preserved historic parkland features (and mansion). A rural landscape from where there are long views across the Darent Valley towards the North Downs scarp and which can be accessed and enjoyed.

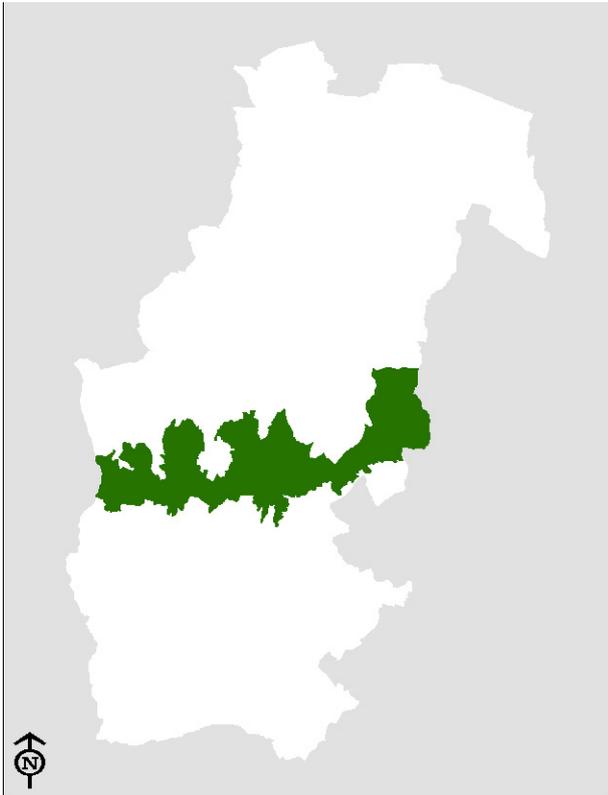
Landscape Guidance

The majority of the landscape character area is within the **Kent Downs AONB**. It is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Preserve the medieval deer park character and actively manage to ensure retention of diverse habitats including the ancient woodland, dry heathland, acid grassland, wood pasture, scattered parkland trees and scrub.
- Preserve the mansion as a feature at the centre of the park, and views to it.
- Maintain opportunities to experience long views from the tops of ridges across the Darent Valley towards the North Downs scarp – maintain views while screening modern built development from view.
- Maintain public access to ensure people can continue to enjoy the landscape and views.
- Ensure that any new building within or outside the area is well screened, particularly in historic designed views.

TYPE 10: CHARTS



Key Characteristics

- Elevated, steeply undulating pastoral and wooded landscape on a Greensand ridge.
- Dense, mature broadleaf woodlands covering the higher land with unimproved pastures and heath.
- Frequent commons and charts (an old English term for rough ground) traditionally managed as wood-pasture until the mid-nineteenth century.
- Areas of coppice traditionally managed for charcoal burning.
- Small to medium scale irregular fields of pasture defined by mature hedgerows, including assarts and planned enclosures.
- Narrow lanes lined by mature hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees.
- Rural landscape with settlements limited to hamlets and housing scattered along lanes.
- Church spires punctuate mostly wooded skylines.
- Well used for recreation.
- Occasional dramatic views south over the Weald from scarp slopes.



National landscape character

Greensand

Geology

Lower Greensand and Hythe Beds overlain with Head deposits

Soils

Free draining, base poor sandy brown acid soils

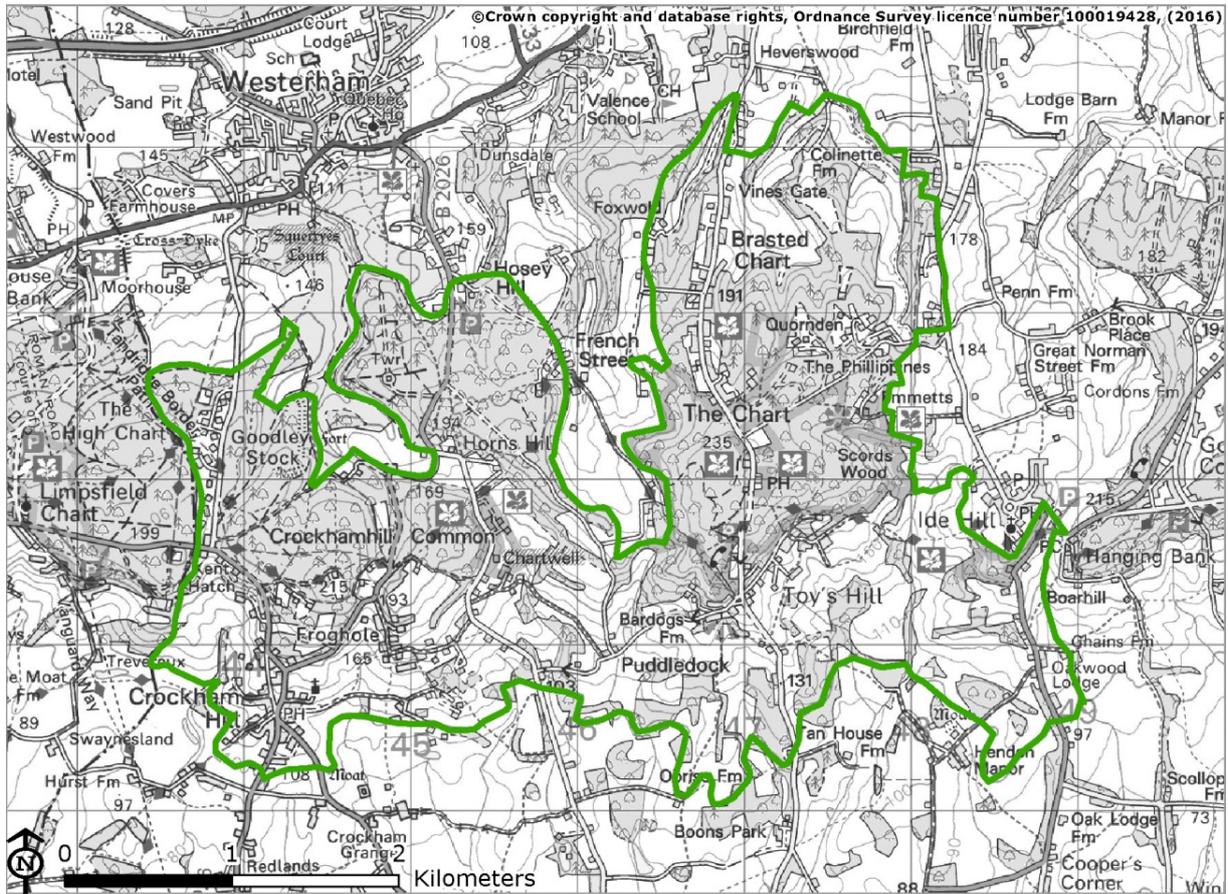
Landform

Folded, occasionally steep and intricate

Historic landscape

Pre 19th century coppices. Medieval informal enclosure. Pre 19th century replanted woodland.

10a Westerham and Brasted Chart



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Key Characteristics

- Undulating woodland and agricultural landscape, steeply climbing to central hills reaching over 200m AOD.
- Extensive wooded commons previously managed as wood-pasture.
- Mosaics of dense, mixed broadleaf, acid woodland, unimproved pastures and heath.
- Areas of coppice previously used for charcoal burning.
- Rural villages set around greens or linear settlement along common edges.
- Narrow rural tree lined rural lanes.
- Large country houses and villas including Chartwell House and gardens are tucked into the folding landform and surrounded by woodland.
- Abandoned ragstone mines.
- Generally enclosed landscape but with long views over the Weald from points along the southern scarp slope eg Toy's Hill and Ide Hill.
- The area around Ide Hill is associated with Octavia Hill, the founder of the National Trust.

Landscape Character Description

This character area is defined by steeply undulating landform predominantly situated on the Hythe sandstone formation with Wealden mudstones exposed on lower slopes at the transition to the Low Weald.

Woodland characterises the area, much of it ancient and comprising Oak and Beech with extensive Chestnut coppice and occasional Scots Pine. Wooded shaws are a feature of the steeper topography. Occasional irregular small scale agricultural fields are also interspersed within the woodland. To the south there is a higher proportion of grazing on the lower areas where the slope gradient is less. These are defined by strong hedgerow boundaries, which typically comprise Holly, Hazel and Hawthorn.

Spring line villages and farmsteads are located to the south of the area for example at Crockham Hill. Nestled within the wooded scarp, these settlements originally took advantage of the shelter and dry land above the Low Weald and more recently properties have been built to take advantage of the extensive views. Ragstone cottages, barns and oasthouses are mixed with more recent housing. Within the woodland there are linear residential settlements of usually detached houses set within large woodland plots such as at Goodley Stock and Brasted Chart.

Views out are generally limited by the woodland enclosure however extensive views are available from the edge of the Greensand Ridge where it drops steeply down to the Low Weald, for example at Toy's Hill.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The area has a unified and intact pattern of landscape elements including pastoral fields and extensive areas of mature woodland and coppice which are in variable condition but provide a strong ecological network. There are few detractors, although there is some hedgerow loss and some modern built development.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Large areas of common land and remnant wood pasture that provide a strong sense of place and historic time depth.
- The mosaic of heath, unimproved pasture and woodland that provides a distinct sense of place and important habitats.
- Extensive mature woodlands and coppice that provide a strong sense of containment and sense of place as well as tranquillity and recreational opportunities.
- Rural settlement character comprising villages set around greens or scattered in a linear form along the edge of commons.
- Large houses/ villas amongst the charts, for example Chartwell House and associated gardens (once the home of Churchill), which provides a sense of history.
- Oast houses which provide a sense of history and distinctive sense of place.
- Narrow wooded lanes that cross over the Greensand Ridge.
- The long distance views from clearings on the southern scarp slope that provide a strong sense of elevation and contribute to scenic quality.
- The Iron Age Hillfort north of Crockhamhill Common which provides an even deeper sense of history in the landscape.

Vision

An actively managed landscape comprising large areas of deciduous acid woodland fringed by small pastures defined by maintained hedgerow boundaries and areas of heath and wood pasture. A rural area with a distinctive local vernacular and a legible network of public footpaths and bridleways that provide opportunities for long distance views across the Low Weald between woodland.

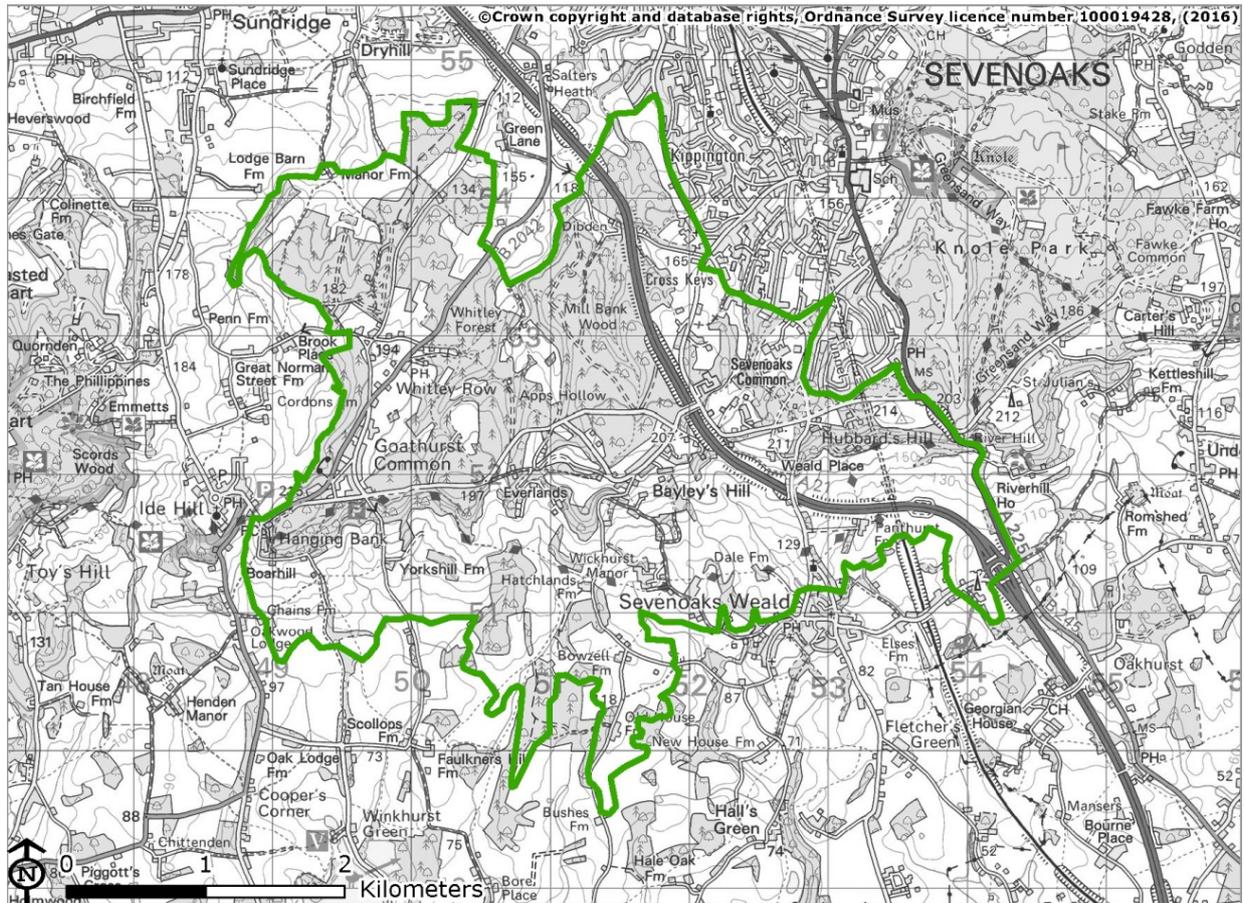
Landscape Guidance

This Landscape character area is entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve and manage woodland cover of stands of oak and beech, sweet chestnut and thickets of birch and consider diversifying woodland age and structure.
- Conserve the extent of woodland, ensure that it retains irregular shapes which relate to landform and restore wooded edges.
- Conserve the small scale pastoral landscape, retaining and maintaining thick hedgerows and shaws.
- Restore and manage heaths and acid grassland.
- Conserve, manage and restore wide shaws in the farmland.
- Conserve the wooded setting of existing small settlements and the isolation of existing large properties.
- Conserve the scale and extent of linear built development and avoid ridgeline development to conserve the wooded scarp.
- Integrate any new development on edge of villages with small woodlands and hedgerow trees.
- Seek the use of sympathetic building materials such as ragstone, brick and tile.
- Maintain the rural character of the narrow lanes including distinctive oblique angle junctions.
- Conserve dramatic views south and seek to encourage more viewing opportunities.

10b Sevenoaks Western Chart



Key Characteristics

- Undulating woodland and agricultural landscape, steeply climbing to central hills reaching over 200m AOD.
- Extensive wooded commons of dense, mixed broadleaf, acid woodland with irregular pasture clearings and heath.
- Historic land uses such as wood pasture, coppice used for charcoal burning.
- Rural settlement set around greens or in a linear pattern fringing commons.
- Large mansion houses set in woodland on the ridge, for example West Heath School.
- Generally enclosed landscape with occasional glimpsed views over the Low Weald from the steep south facing scarp.

Landscape Character Description

This area is characterised mostly by sandstone of the Hythe formation but with Weald Clay mudstone underlying the slower slopes at the transition to the Low Weald.

The undulating landform includes the steep Greensand scarp and some small, high plateau areas reaching over 200m. The land folds into valleys and ridges.

The land is almost entirely wooded, but where there are agricultural clearings, the fields are irregular, small-scale pastures with strong wooded edges. Wood pasture, historic assarts and plantations are common features.

The enclosed dense Oak and Beech woodland includes extensive areas of Sweet Chestnut coppice and some coniferous plantation. There are also pasture fields inset within the woodland.

Commons are typical features of the scarp-top plateau and Goathurst Common is an ancient and notable feature. It is also the primary location of historic linear and common-edge settlement. More recent settlement has developed on the edge of the scarp, where the views across the Low Weald are dramatic. These houses are highly visible from the south. Farmsteads and oast houses are common.

Narrow rural wooded lanes cross the ridge, although the A21 also crosses the area in cutting on the edge of Sevenoaks.

Occasional views of the Low Weald can be experienced from the scarp. There is a general perception of the landscape being elevated which is reinforced by the effect of the steep cross-contour roads which lead into the area.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

This area has a unified and intact pattern of woodland and pasture which is in variable, but generally good, condition. There is some evidence of decline/ loss in places. The A21 and some modern large properties (particularly those visible on the skyline) detract from the rural character of the area. There is also evidence of 'horsiculture' on the edge of Sevenoaks.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

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- Large areas of common land and remnant wood pasture that provide a strong sense of place and historic time depth.
- The mosaic of heath, unimproved pasture and woodland that provides a distinct sense of place and important habitats.
- Extensive mature woodlands and coppice that provide a strong sense of containment and sense of place as well as tranquillity and recreational opportunities.
- Historic assarts representing fields converted from woodland from the Medieval period.
- Rural settlement character comprising villages set around greens or scattered in a linear form along the edge of commons which reflect an historic form of settlement.
- Large mansions amongst the charts and associated gardens which provide a sense of history.
- Narrow wooded lanes that cross over the Greensand Ridge.
- The long distance views from clearings on the southern scarp slope that provide a strong sense of elevation and contribute to scenic quality.

Vision

An actively managed landscape comprising large areas of deciduous acid woodland fringed by small pastures defined by maintained hedgerow boundaries and areas of heath and wood pasture. A rural area with a distinctive local vernacular and a legible network of public footpaths and bridleways that provide opportunities for long distance views across the Low Weald between woodland.

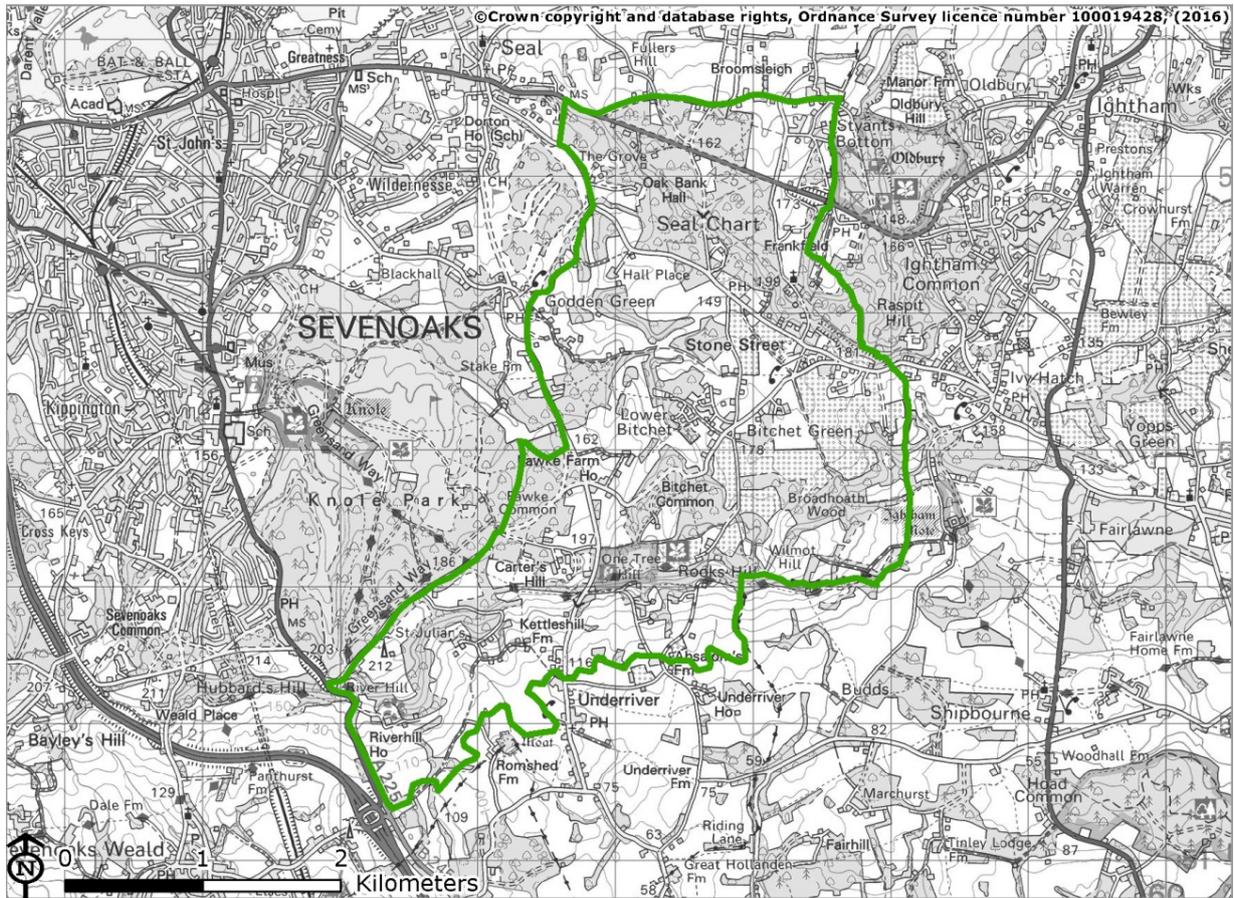
Landscape Guidance

This landscape character area is entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve the extent and characteristic species of woodland with an emphasis on mixed broadleaf acid woodland.
- Reinforce the strong pattern of hedgerows, shaws, and conserve isolated field and hedgerow oak trees.
- Conserve the enclosed, narrow lanes and plan for the next generation of hedgerow trees along roads.
- Maintain pastoral uses amongst woodland and restore habitats such as wood pasture and heathland.
- Conserve the tranquillity and rural character of the landscape.
- Maintain the scale and pattern of linear settlement around commons, isolated farmsteads and hamlets – ensure any new development respects this historic pattern.
- Ensure any new development respects the existing rural setting of small settlements, conserving distinctive greens and commons and avoid ridgeline development.
- Seek the use of sympathetic local building materials such as brick, ragstone and tile hanging.
- Conserve dramatic views south and seek to encourage more viewing opportunities.

10c Sevenoaks Eastern Chart



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Key Characteristics

- Undulating landform, steep in places with a distinctive south facing wooded scarp at the edge of the Greensand Ridge.
- Wooded commons comprising mature acid woodlands with Sweet Chestnut coppice in lower areas.
- Small to medium scale fields of arable and pasture situated on the lower slopes and amongst woodland (some assarts), defined by mature hedgerows and woodland edges.
- A large area of orchards south of Stone Street.
- A rural settlement pattern of small villages set around a green, farmsteads, or linear development along edges of commons
- Some large 20th century detached properties with extensive grounds.
- Distinctive Oast houses and use of ragstone and local brick with clay tile roofs and tile-hung facades.
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by mature hedgerows, including former drove roads.
- Strong sense of enclosure with some long distance views for example from One Tree Hill.

Landscape Character Description

The Seal Chart is situated partly on sandstone relating to the Hythe formation (to the south) and partly on sandstone and mudstone of the Folkestone formation (to the north around Seal Chart). It is an undulating area where slopes occasionally dip steeply into valleys. There is a steep greensand scarp to the south.

Land use is divided between woodland and agriculture, with areas of orchard, arable and pasture set amongst extensive woodlands.

Acid woodlands on the hill-tops are predominantly Oak, Birch and Beech, with other species including Rowan, Broom, Bracken and Heather. On the lower slopes are coppice Sweet Chestnut and Hazel. There is a large area of orchards south of Stone Street.

The irregular field pattern is small to medium scale and is enclosed by woodland and mature hedgerows. Arable field boundaries have largely been replaced by post and wire fencing, but along the narrow winding lanes hedgerows are strong and intact.

Settlement includes isolated farmsteads, small nucleated hamlets and scattered large houses, with many properties built in local materials including brick, ragstone with weather-boarded and half tile-hung facades. The A25 (Maidstone Road) cuts across the north of the area.

Extensive mature woodlands and hedgerows contribute to the sense of enclosure and restrict views out of the area. Views north from the upper slopes do, however, include glimpses of Kemsing and the Chevening scarp to the north, and over the Low Weald to the south, for example from One Tree Hill.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

This is generally a well-managed and intact rural landscape of woodland cover, orchards and pasture. However, there is some hedgerow loss evident and the A25 is a detractor, carving a straight line through the landscape.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Acid woodland that provides extensive semi-natural habitat with high ecological value and a distinct sense of place.
- The orchards that provide a sense of place and sense of history.
- Assarts, wooded commons, ancient broadleaf and plantation woodlands that provide a sense of time depth and sense of place.
- The network of public rights of way crossing the Chart that are important for recreation.
- The sparsely settled landscape comprising small villages set around greens, linear development alongside commons and scattered farmsteads/ large houses.
- The distinctive built vernacular that creates visual interest including Oast houses, and local materials including brick, ragstone with weather-boarded and half tile-hung facades which create a distinct sense of place.
- The narrow winding lanes enclosed by mature hedgerows, including former drove roads, that contribute to the strong sense of place.
- Dense tree cover and natural folds in the landform that create a range of visual experiences – but of particular value are the dramatic views south from the scarp, for example from One Tree Hill.

Vision

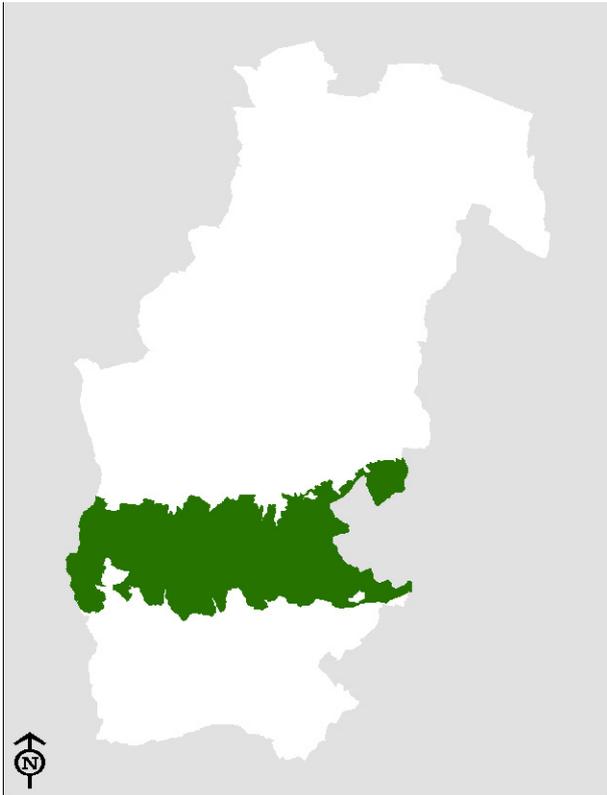
An actively managed landscape comprising large areas of deciduous acid woodland fringed by small pastures defined by maintained hedgerow boundaries and areas of heath, wood pasture and orchards. A rural area with a distinctive local vernacular and accessible via a legible network of public footpaths and bridleways providing a variety of visual experiences.

Landscape Guidance

This landscape character area is entirely within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

- Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:
- Conserve the extent and unique characteristics of the acid woodlands, ensuring that species diversity is retained.
- Support the retention, and expansion, of apple/pear orchards, and consider the reintroduction of cobnut plots (cobnut orchards) which were once typical of this area.
- Conserve the pattern of assarts and commons which provide a sense of history, and consider the reintroduction of wood pasture where appropriate.
- Restore and manage heath and acid grasslands.
- Maintain the network of public rights of way crossing the Chart that are important for recreation.
- Maintain the sparsely settled character, and respect the pattern of settlement comprising small villages set around greens, linear development alongside commons and scattered farmsteads and Oast houses.
- Seek the use of distinctive building materials such as local brick, ragstone, weather-board and half tile-hung facades which create a distinct sense of place.
- Maintain the rural and wooded character of the narrow winding vergeless lanes and Greensand drove roads.
- Conserve dramatic views south and seek to encourage more viewing opportunities.

TYPE 11: LOW WEALD



Key Characteristics

- Low-lying gently undulating and agricultural clay vale landscape.
- Distinctive field pattern of irregular fields enclosed by hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands.
- Many small rivers, tree-lined streams and ponds resulting from brick making, quarrying and the Wealden iron industry.
- Scattered farmsteads and large houses interspersed throughout arable and pasture fields.
- Essentially rural character with scattered settlement around greens or commons – local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades typical.
- Historic houses in parklands and oast houses and typical features.
- Long range views with intervening vegetation providing some areas of enclosure.



National landscape character

Low Weald

Geology

Weald Clay Formation with occasional head deposits

Soils

Poor draining, base rich, loamy soils

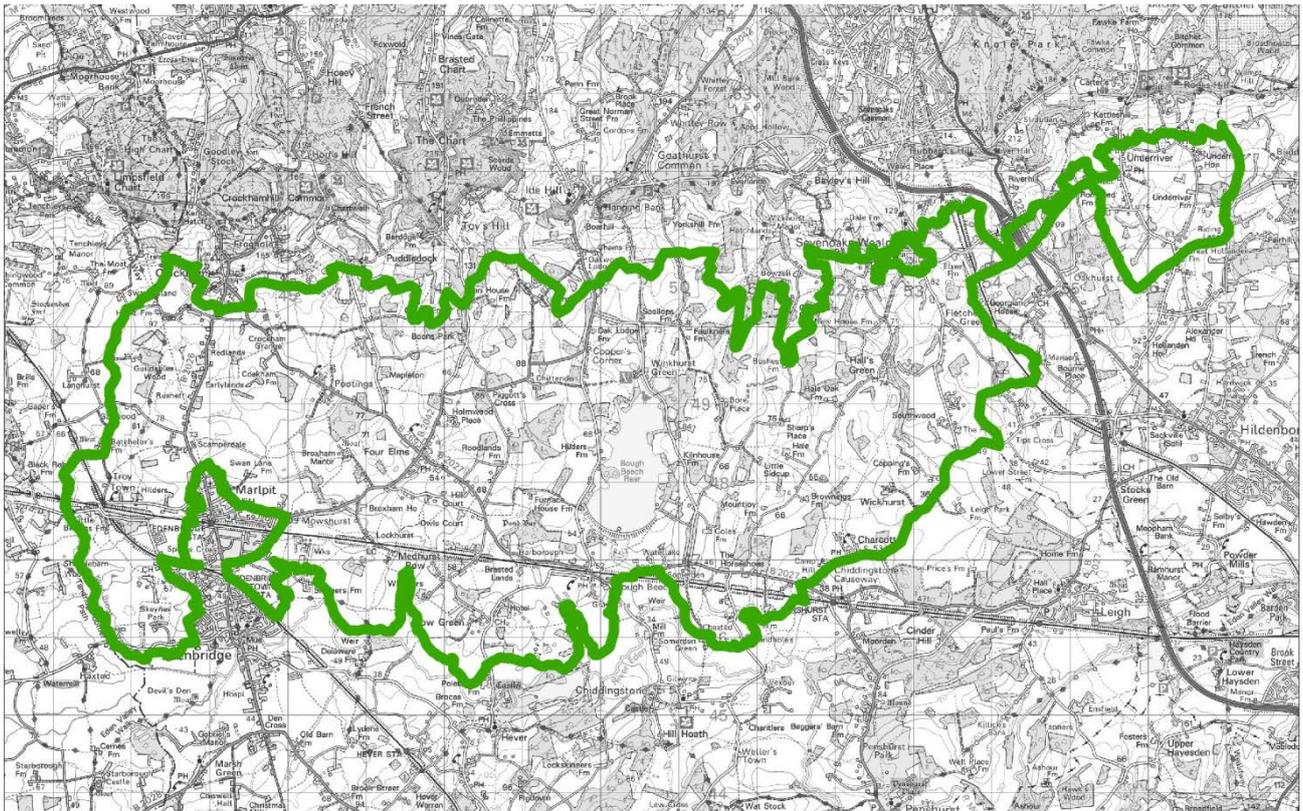
Landform

Very gently undulating

Historic landscape

Medieval informal enclosure. Medium to large medieval informal enclosure. Post medieval enclosure with ponds formed from historic marl pits.

11a Sevenoaks Low Weald



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Key Characteristics

- Low-lying gently undulating and agricultural landscape on Wealden Clay.
- Many streams and ponds as well as Bough Beach Reservoir.
- Mixture of arable and pasture land use within small to medium scale irregular fields.
- The field pattern is well-defined by hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands.
- Old and traditional orchards and remnants of the hop-growing industry including oast houses.
- Isolated farmsteads, large houses and small hamlets scattered throughout the landscape.
- Narrow, hedge-lined rural lanes with wide verges.
- Long views to higher ground: the Greensand scarp to the north and the High Weald to the south.

Landscape Character Description

This area is a low-lying gently undulating agricultural landscape on the Wealden Clay Formation. The land gently slopes from 40m AOD adjacent to the Eden river valley up to 100m AOD on the slopes of the charts.

Lakes, ponds and streams are frequent elements within the area and Bough Beach Reservoir, a flooded valley, provides recreational opportunities.

The majority of the landscape is made up of arable and pasture farmland defined by hedgerows, shaws and woodland edges. Fields are typically small to medium scale, irregular in form, and are connected by irregular woodland (much of it ancient) and a network of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Some arable fields are more open and larger in scale where post and wire fencing has replaced hedgerows. Mature oaks are a feature of this landscape in hedgerows, or in open fields where boundary loss or woodland clearance has occurred.

The settlement pattern is formed by scattered farmsteads, isolated houses and hamlets with traditional buildings comprising red brick, weatherboarding, tile-hung facades and timber frame. Oast Houses are also a feature (buildings designed for drying hops as part of the brewing process).

Highways are traditionally narrow and hedge-lined, but lanes with wide verges also cross the landscape.

The well-treed context provides a strong degree of enclosure although there are some long views to the Greensand scarp and over the Weald where small undulations in topography and open field boundaries allow.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intact historic field pattern, and the strong network of features including woodland, tree belts, hedgerows and watercourses contribute to the intact nature of landscape, contributing positively to landscape condition. There has been some hedgerow loss resulting in a decline in condition in places, and there are some urbanising influences around Edenbridge. However, overall there are relatively few detracting features.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The well wooded character comprising woodland and mature Oaks which provide a sense of

enclosure, biodiversity and time depth.

- The historic field pattern and accompanying shaws (remnant strips of cleared woodland) that provide an intimate and historic landscape.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern with small villages/ hamlets set around greens or commons and featuring local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades which give the area a unique identity.
- The narrow rural lanes, ancient highways and former Roman roads that provide a sense of history and contribute to the scenic quality.
- The ponds and leats that provide wetland habitats and a sense of history relating to quarrying and the Wealden Iron industry.
- Remnant orchards and oast houses that represent the remnants of the hop-growing industry, both of which provide a sense of history and local distinctiveness.
- Historic houses in designed parklands that contribute to visual interest as well as provide a sense of history.
- Views to the Greensand scarp to the north and the High Weald to the south.

Vision

An actively managed lowland rural landscape of small historic fields, well-defined by an intact network of thick hedgerows with mature oaks and shaws. A strong network of woodland that provides a sense of enclosure and texture, with winding country lanes and scattered rural farmsteads and hamlets.

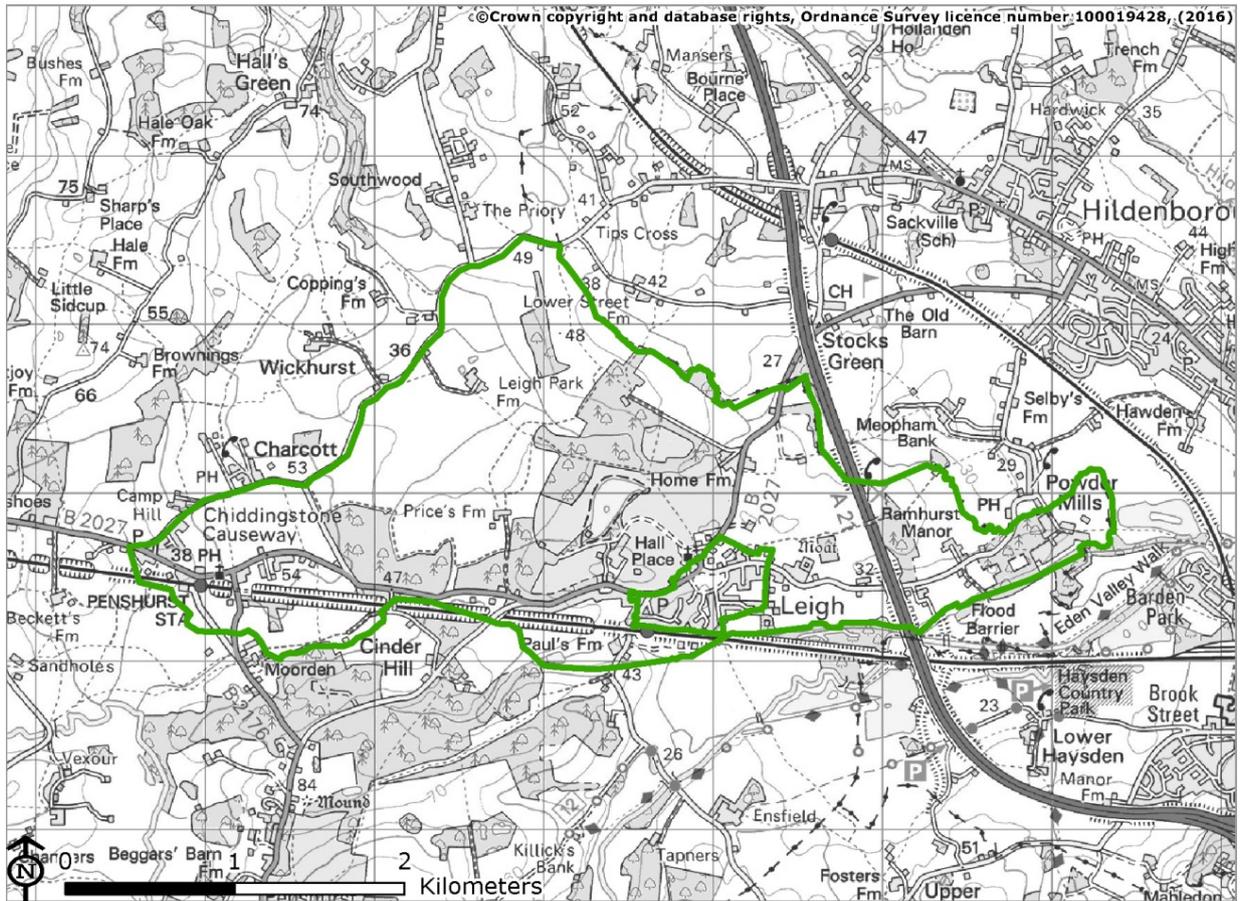
Landscape Guidance

The northern part of this landscape character area falls within the **Kent Downs AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve the small scale, historic enclosure pattern and associated hedgerows and shaws – consider opportunities to reinstate field boundaries where these have been lost. Promote planting to hedgerow oaks.
- Conserve the areas of woodland and encourage appropriate management programmes to ensure their long term survival. Promote the use of wood products linked to management of woodlands.
- Maintain the diversity of tree cover in woodland, tree belts, hedgerows and standard trees and use planting to screen urbanising influences such as the A12.
- Conserve the ponds which provide a sense of history, particularly those linked to the Wealden Iron Industry.
- Manage water courses and features for their biodiversity interest.
- Conserve the character of the narrow rural tree lined lanes – resist sub-urbanisation or urbanisation of these routes.
- Maintain the rural character of the area and the sparse, well integrated settlement – ensure that any new development respects existing built character and responds to sense of place.
- Seek the use of sympathetic local building materials in any new development such as local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades.
- Conserve the remnants of the orchard and hop-growing industry, including oast houses. Consider replanting orchards.
- Conserve views to the Greensand scarp to the north and the High Weald to the south.

11b Leigh Low Weald



Key Characteristics

- Low lying gently sloping landscape underlain by Wealden Clay and Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation.
- A transitional area between the High and Low Weald comprising rural farmland.
- Tree-lined streams draining into the River Medway.
- Agricultural landscape comprising a variety of field sizes, defined by hedgerows and wooded edges.
- Irregular blocks of woodland and plantations are features.
- Settlement typically rural farmsteads, hamlets and the village of Leigh.
- Historic halls and estates at Knotley House and Hall Place with parkland features and estate walls.
- Generally contained area with intervening vegetation limiting long views out.

Landscape Character Description

This area is partly on Wealden Clay and partly on the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. It is an area of low lying and gently sloping landform, rising from 30m AOD around the small streams that flow through the area up to just over 50m AOD at Chiddingstone Causeway. It is generally less undulating than the adjacent Area 11A.

Streams drain east into the River Medway. Other water features in this relatively lowland landscape include a number of small ponds around isolated farmsteads and the lake at Hall Place.

Land use comprises a mix of arable and pasture fields which vary in size with smaller older fields around hamlets and larger fields (where field amalgamation/hedgerow loss has occurred) on higher ground. Fields are mostly defined by hedgerows and woodland edges as well as tree-lined streams following field boundaries. Irregular blocks of woodland (much of it ancient or ancient replanted woodland) and rectilinear plantations are key features of the landscape, particularly around the estate parkland at Hall Place. Parkland trees are also a feature of this area.

Historically, the settlement pattern has been a rural pattern of scattered farms, Halls, hamlets (eg Chiddingstone Causeway) and the small village of Leigh serving the agricultural community. Leigh is an extended village, inset within the character area, with a village green at one end surrounded by older buildings, Victorian Gothic buildings scattered along the High Street and around the boundaries of Hall Place, and modern buildings to the south. Trees are abundant throughout and tree belts also characterise the urban edge. Buildings include materials such as hung-tiles and weatherboarding. Main roads are infrequent although the A21 cuts across the eastern area from north to south.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

Ancient woodland, plantations and historic parkland contribute to an intact landscape and contribute positively to landscape condition. However, the amalgamation of fields and decline in hedgerows have eroded condition in some parts of the LCA. The A21 and modern residential development are detractors.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The rural character of the landscape that provides a sense of peace and tranquillity.
- The network of hedgerows and remnant areas of historic field patterns that provide a sense of history and contribute to biodiversity.
- The designed landscapes/ estates of Knotley House and Hall Place which provide a sense of history and contribute to scenic quality.

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- Buildings that reflect the local vernacular including ragstone, tile-hung facades and weatherboarding.
- The remnant ancient woodlands and other plantations which provide biodiversity value, a backdrop to views.
- The field ponds and naturalistic watercourses that provide visual and biodiversity interest.

Vision

An actively managed rural landscape with a well-defined network of mature hedgerows marking historic field patterns, ancient woodland and historic parkland with historic buildings. An area rural farmland and woodland that provides an essentially rural setting to small villages and hamlets with minimal urbanising influences.

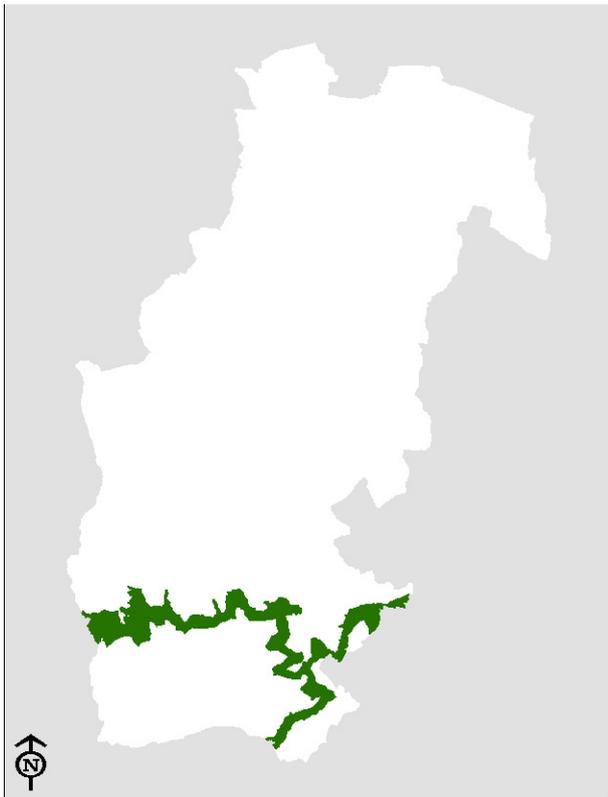
Landscape Guidance

Only a very small part of this LCA lies within the **High Weald AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. The majority lies outside the AONB designation. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve the essentially rural character of the landscape, resisting suburbanising or urbanising features.
- Create and reinforce the hedgerow network through replanting lost boundaries and ensuring ongoing management and replanting, including planting of hedgerow trees.
- Ensure ongoing management of woodlands to ensure their long term survival. Consider extending to enhance the green infrastructure network.
- Conserve the historic character of the parkland landscapes, their historic buildings, and estate walls.
- Seek the use of sympathetic local building materials in any new development such as brick, ragstone and tile hanging.
- Ensure any new development respects the rural character of settlements, conserving distinctive greens and commons – refer to the Leigh Conservation Areas Appraisal for any proposals in that area.

TYPE 12: WEALDEN RIVER VALLEYS



Key Characteristics

- Low-lying, wide valleys containing the meandering courses of the River Eden and the River Medway.
- Mixture of irregular fields of pasture and some larger arable fields above the floodplain.
- Tree cover is limited to watercourses, field boundaries and small scattered shaws.
- Some mature hedgerows are intact along lanes elsewhere fragmented and over mature and supplemented with post and wire fencing.
- River courses are marked by trees.
- Many streams cross the landscape and drain into the river.
- Rural qualities with low density of settlement comprising isolated farmsteads and dwellings as well as some small villages and hamlets.



National landscape character

Low Weald / High Weald

Geology

Alluvium with river gravels and head deposits

Soils

Heavy soils affected by groundwater

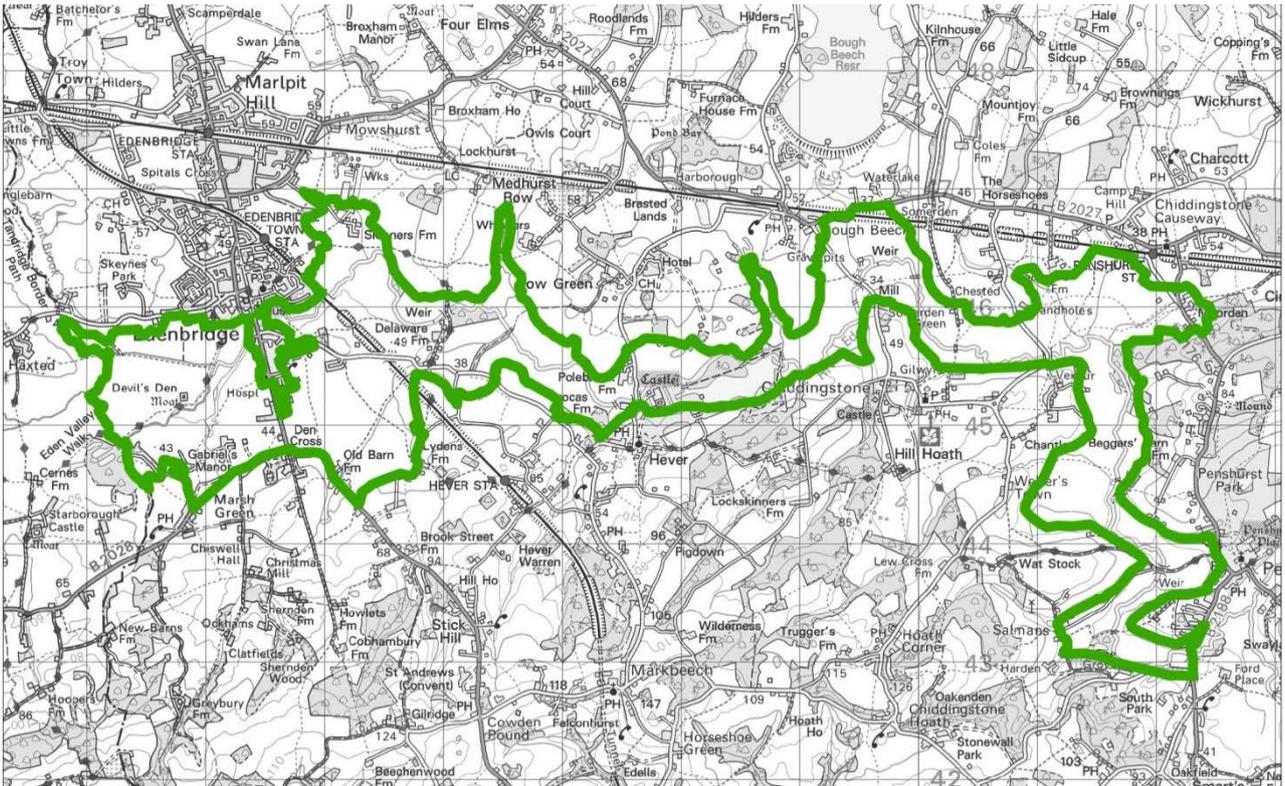
Landform

Flat to gently undulating river valleys

Historic landscape

Predominately enclosure of meadows and other pastures along the valley floor.

12a Eden Valley



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Key Characteristics

- Low lying flat to gently undulating valley bottom located on Wealden group bedrock, but influenced by superficial river deposits.
- The River Eden meanders through the area.
- Seasonally flooded with many small ponds and crossed by small streams.
- Tree cover limited to field boundaries
- Rough grassland and sheep pasture are features.
- Development typically limited to scattered farmsteads on the edges.
- Hever Castle with its historic ornamental gardens is a feature (also the childhood home of Anne Boleyn).
- Long views to the Greensand Ridge to the north.

Landscape Character Description

This low-lying area is characterised by flat to gently undulating landform ranging from between 30m and 45m AOD. The landscape is influenced by underlying river terrace sand and gravels, and silty alluvium deposits, underlain by Wealden Group bedrock. The River Eden meanders through the landscape passing close to the settlement edge of Edenbridge in the west and Penshurst in the east, and is well-defined by tree belts. Some smaller ponds are situated close to farmsteads scattered throughout the area and other smaller streams run along field boundaries connecting with the main river.

Irregular fields, both arable and pasture, make up much of the landscape with tree belts, hedgerows and small watercourses delineating the field pattern. Post and wire fencing is also present around arable fields. Tree cover is generally limited to field boundaries although there are small areas of woodland around the settlement edge of Edenbridge including a traditional orchard. Concentrations of woodland are also located around Hever Castle and there is an area of assarts east of Chiddingstone.

Development is typically limited to scattered farmsteads and is crossed by a number of roads including the B2026 which follows the old route of a roman road. There are some long views to the Greensand ridge to the north, and wide views generally over the farmland.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intact field pattern and intact ecological network of hedgerows and semi-natural habitats contribute to condition. However, intensive farming practices have compromised the integrity of this in places and development at Edenbridge and on the fringes of the valley as well as the roads and railway that cross the area are detracting features.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The river, associated drainage ditches and wetland habitats including wet woodland and shaws which provide a network of habitats of strong ecological value.
- The historic pattern of small pastoral fields (including medieval fields and assarts) defined by ditches and species rich hedgerows that provide a sense of history.
- Lowland meadows and fen which are typical of the river valley floodplain and are of interest for their history and biodiversity, as well as providing scenic interest.
- The rural character of the lanes that cross the river and historic river crossing points including the survival of the Roman road at Edenbridge.
- The rural character of the area and low density rural settlement pattern of scattered

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farmsteads.

- Hever Castle and its associated grounds and woodland which create a strong sense of place and contribute to the sense of history (Hever Castle was the childhood home of Anne Boleyn).
- The medieval moated site at Devil's Den which provides a sense of history (designated as a scheduled monument).
- The network of public rights of way including the Eden Valley Walk which provide public access and enjoyment of the valley landscape.

Vision

A habitat-rich floodplain landscape in which the course of the River Eden is prominent and accessible to the public. A landscape with historic field patterns defined by species rich hedgerows with mature trees and remnant shaws, and a rural low density settlement pattern of scattered isolated rural properties, enclosed by tree planting.

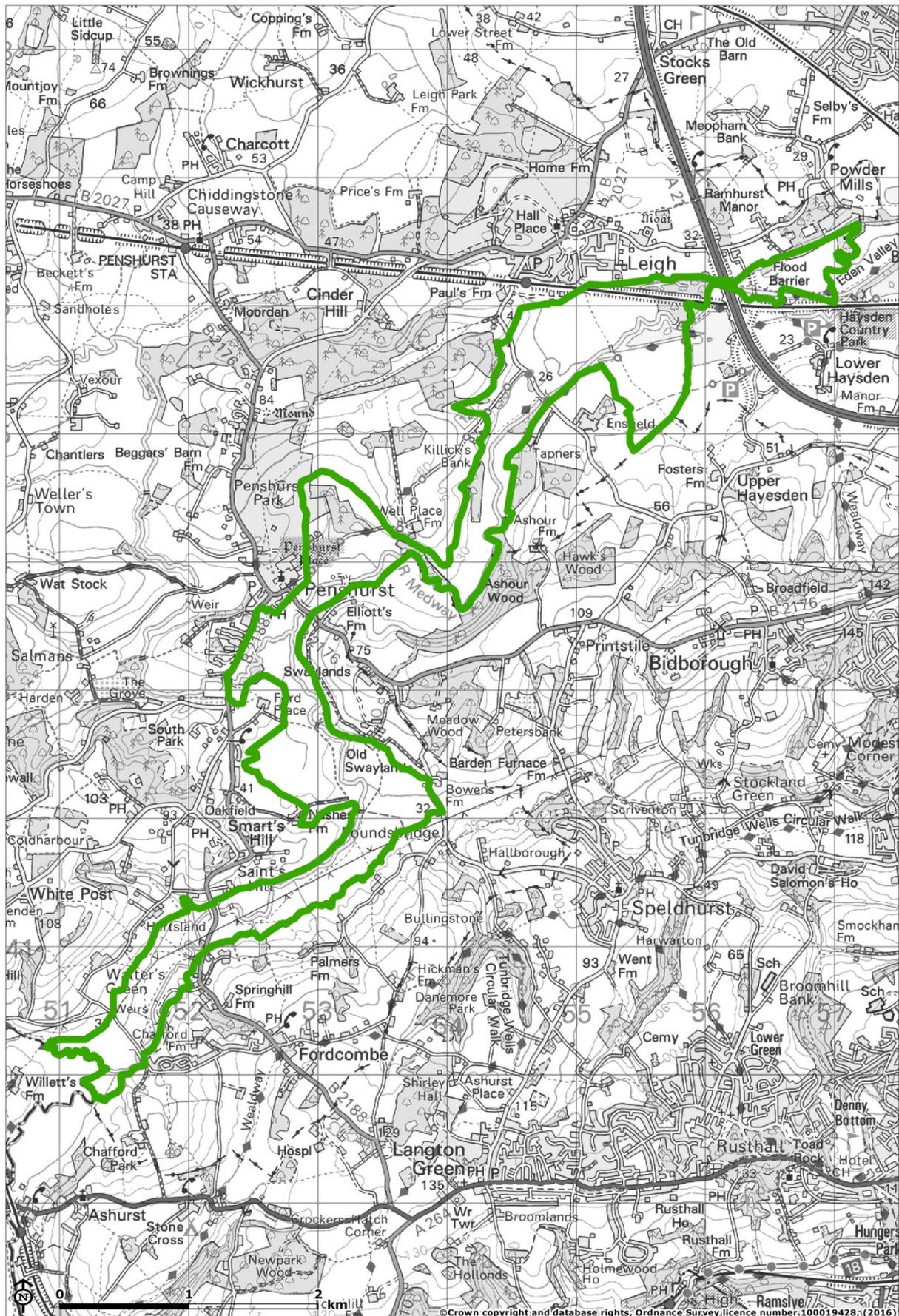
Landscape Guidance

The eastern part of this landscape character area is partially within the **High Weald AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve and manage the river, associated drainage ditches and wetland habitats for biodiversity interest and aim to restore and create fen, wet woodland, reedbed and wet grassland habitats.
- Maintain the low density rural settlement character and use trees to screen modern development in views from the valley. Avoid developing in the floodplain.
- Conserve and restore the historic field pattern and consider the reestablishment of hedgerows and reintroduction of standard trees where they were historically present. Aim to connect fragmented woodland.
- Conserve historic features such as Hever Castle, the medieval moated site at Devil's Den and the Roman road, and encourage the appreciation of these assets.
- Aim to restore and create lowland meadows and fen adjacent to the river.
- Conserve views to the Greensand ridge to the north.

12b Upper Medway Valley





Key Characteristics

- Low lying flat to gently undulating valley bottom located on Wealden group bedrock, but influenced by superficial river deposits.
- River Medway meanders through the flood plain with many adjoining streams and drainage ditches.
- Mostly pasture land use with fields defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees, with some arable on the higher land.
- Trees mark the river banks with small shaws in field corners.
- Several lanes cut across the valley and bridges are a feature.
- Rural character with low density of settlement of scattered isolated properties mainly confined to higher ground on valley edges and at river crossings.
- Pylons visually prominent across the river valley.

Landscape Character Description

This valley landscape is characterised by flat, low-lying topography ranging from 25m to 30m AOD, underlain by alluvium drift deposits and bedrock geology of the Wealden Group. The River Medway meanders through the valley with small tributaries flowing into the river from the valley sides. Drainage ditches defining field boundaries are also common particularly in the north.

The area predominantly comprises irregular pasture fields defined by hedgerows and tree belts (including remnant shaws). Trees mark the river banks. In other areas, the land is under arable use, particularly around Penshurst and these areas have been subject to some boundary loss.

A number of narrow lanes cross the valley and ornamental bridges in different styles are a feature. Built form is sparse and limited to a few isolated properties (including farmsteads) at the outer edges of the floodplain and at river crossings.

The landscape is relatively open allowing some relatively long views across the flat floodplain farmland. Woodland and tree belts are features in these views. Pylons are noticeable features as they cross the valley.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intactness of this floodplain landscape (including the vegetated watercourse, intact field patterns with mature hedgerows and wetland habitats) contribute positively to landscape condition and provide a relatively strong ecological network. However detractors include hedgerow loss, pylons that are prominent in this flat landscape and the A21 which crosses the valley on embankment.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The river, associated drainage ditches and wetland habitats including wet woodland and shaws which provide a network of habitats of strong ecological value.
- The historic pattern of pastoral fields defined by ditches and species rich hedgerows that provide a sense of history.
- Lowland meadows and fen which are typical of the river valley floodplain and are of interest for their history and biodiversity, as well as providing scenic interest.
- The rural character of the lanes that cross the river which contribute to the sense of rurality and scenic quality of the valley.
- Distinctive bridges across the River which add to the sense of history and contribute to scenic quality (as well as allowing access to the river).
- The low density rural settlement pattern of scattered isolated rural properties which provides a sense of rurality.
- The network of public rights of way which provide public access and enjoyment of the valley landscape.
- Views across and along the valley.

Vision

A habitat-rich floodplain landscape in which the course of the River Medway is prominent and accessible to the public. A landscape with historic field patterns defined by species rich hedgerows with mature trees and remnant shaws, and a rural low density settlement pattern of scattered isolated rural properties, set within tree planting.

Landscape Guidance

The Landscape character area is almost entirely within the **High Weald AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

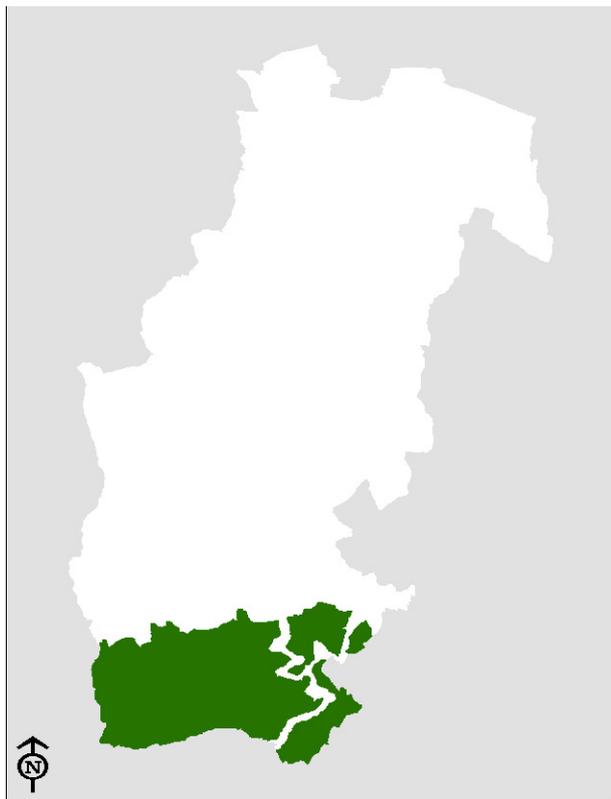
Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve and manage the river, associated drainage ditches and wetland habitats for biodiversity interest and aim to restore and create fen, wet woodland, reedbed and wet grassland habitats.
- Maintain the low density rural settlement character and use trees to screen modern development in views from the valley. Avoid developing in the floodplain.
- Conserve and restore the historic field pattern and consider the reestablishment of hedgerows and reintroduction of standard trees where they were historically present.
- Aim to connect fragmented woodland and restore and create lowland meadows and fen adjacent to the river.
- Restore the visual prominence of bridging points across the river.

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- Conserve historic features such as the landscape features within Peshurst Park and Peshurst Conservation Area.
- Conserve views along and across the valley and consider providing opportunities to stop and enjoy the views.

TYPE 13: HIGH WEALD



Key Characteristics

- Well-wooded, undulating farmland with steep wooded gills and elevation varying between 35m and almost 150m AOD.
- A strong field pattern of small to medium-scale irregular fields of Medieval assarts of other informal enclosures dating to the medieval or 17th/18th-centuries.
- A large number of mature broadleaf woodlands and shaws, many ancient.
- Sweet chestnut plantations are a feature on the lower slopes.
- Fields are mostly in pastoral use with some arable fields. Orchards are a locally distinctive feature.
- Narrow rural lanes are lined by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees or enclosed by woodland creating tree tunnels.
- Rural settlement pattern of historic farmsteads and hamlets with some more modern ribbon residential development along lanes.
- Numerous parklands, Medieval manor houses and Oast houses.
- Remnant ponds along gills (eg Furnace Pond) are remnants of the Wealden Iron Industry.
- A generally enclosed landscape, but with occasional long views north over the Low Weald towards the Charts, and over the adjacent Wealden River Valleys.
- Dark night skies.

National landscape character

High Weald

Geology

Ashdown Beds overlain with Wadhurst Clay and Tunbridge Wells Sand

Soils

Poorly draining, sandy and silty clays

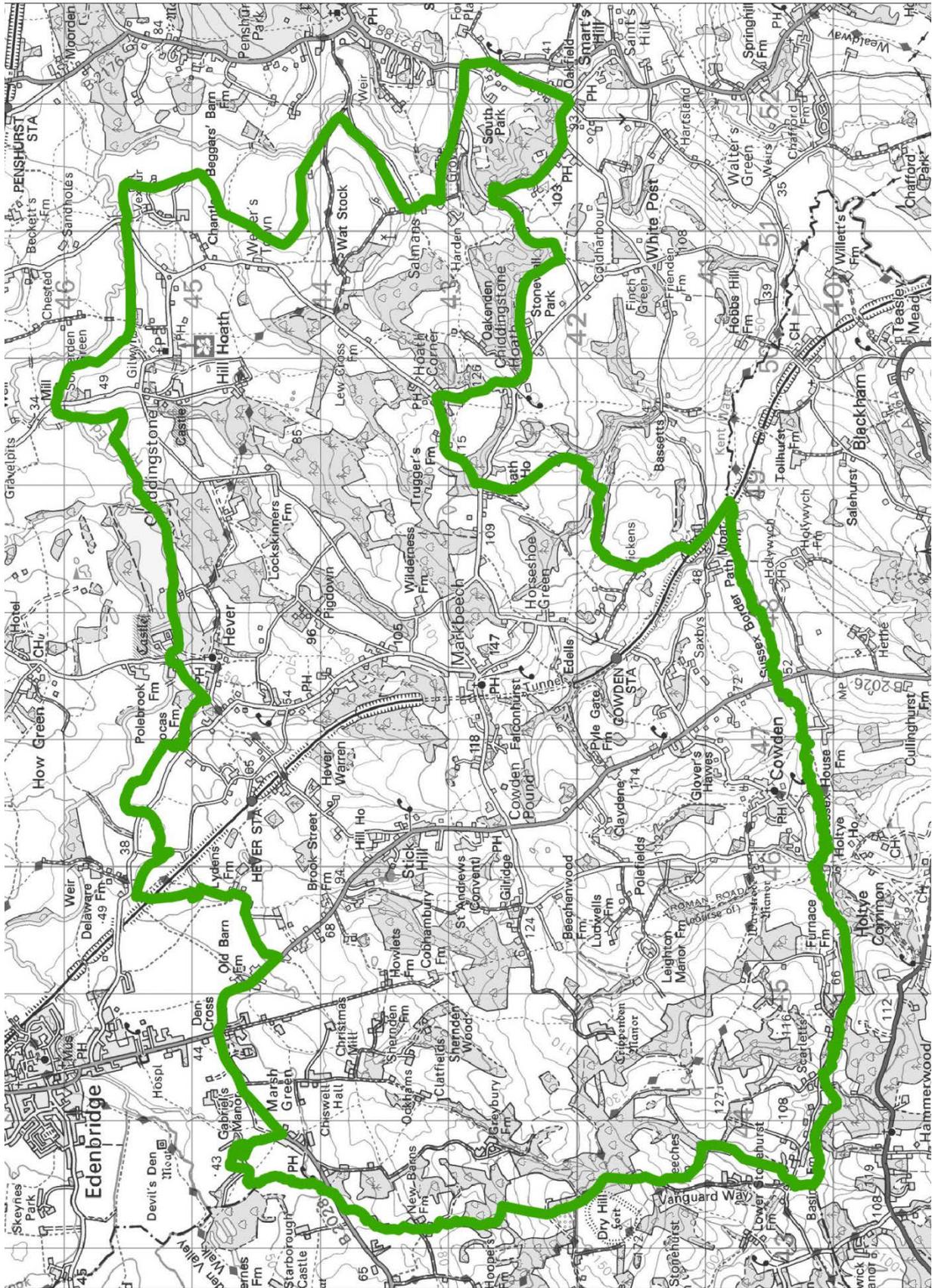
Landform

Steeply undulating

Historic landscape

Post medieval enclosure with ponds formed from historic marl pits. Medieval informal enclosure.

13a Cowden to Chiddingstone High Weald



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Key Characteristics

- Elevated and undulating topography underlain by Wadhurst clays and Ashdown sandstones with rocky deposits.
- Steep wooded gills cutting through the landscape, containing ponds linked to the former Iron Industry. Many infield ponds are also present.
- Small to medium scale pastoral landscape enclosed by woodlands, shaws and dense hedgerows.
- Large irregular areas of coppice and mixed broadleaf woodland.
- Narrow and wide country lanes, many with grass verges, some enclosed entirely by woodland – these include ancient routeways or droveways which are often sunken.
- Rural settlement pattern of historic farmsteads, Medieval manors houses and hamlets.
- Traditional Kentish style properties including local brick and steep clay tile roofs, weatherboarding and tile hanging.
- Distinctive Oast houses with links to the former hop industry, and orchards.
- Designed landscapes including the grounds of Hever Castle, Chiddingstone Castle country house and historic estate parklands, and

Landscape Character Description

This area is situated predominantly on mudstones associated with the Wadhurst Clay formation with Ashdown silty sandstone outcrops. The topography is characterised by elevated and undulating land ranging from between about 40m and 147m AOD at Markbeece. Natural ponds within fields are common and gills are incised into the landscape, containing ponds linked to the former Wealden Iron Industry.

There is a strong field pattern of historic fields and a high density of woodland comprising coppice, mixed broadleaf (some ancient) and coniferous woodland. Shaws and thick hedgerows are also typical and enclose fields. Pasture predominates, although there are some areas of arable. Oak and ash trees within fields are also common singularly and as small groups and small paddocks delineated by post and rail fencing are common close to settlements.

The settlement pattern is of historic farmsteads, small hamlets and Medieval manor houses. These are linked by both narrow and wide country lanes, many of the latter with grass verges. There are many traditional Kentish style properties with a range of building styles that include timber-framed, weatherboarded, local brick and hung tile with steep local clay tile roofs. There are also occasional Oasts and thatched

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Stonewall Park.

- Generally enclosed but with some long views north over the Low Weald and over the adjacent Eden Valley.

cottages around small areas of hops and soft fruit growing.

This area includes parkland associated with Hever Castle, Chiddingstone Castle country house and estate and Stonewall Park. Distinctive features such as metal park fencing and wattle hurdles have been introduced around field and property boundaries.

Views within the area are generally enclosed by woodland, but there are some long range views out to the Greensand Ridge to the north, as well as across the High Weald and into the adjacent Eden Valley.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The unified pattern of historic field patterns and intact woodlands connected by a network of mature hedgerows and shaws and historic buildings results in a rural landscape in good condition. However, some field boundary loss has resulted in an adverse effect on landscape condition in places.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The ancient field pattern of Medieval assarts and other informal enclosures which provide a distinctive sense of place and sense of history.
- The steep wooded gills that are distinctive features, and the ponds linked to the former Iron Industry that provide a sense of history.
- The woodlands (many ancient), shaws and dense hedgerows with trees that provide the well wooded character and distinct sense of place.
- Remnant orchards which indicate the historic importance of the landscape for fruit growing.
- The country lanes and adjacent verges, thick hedges and tree tunnels that provide sense of place and contribute to the rural character of the area, including ancient routeways or droveways which are often sunken.
- The low density and rural settlement pattern including the historic farmsteads, Medieval manors houses and hamlets which provide a sense of history.
- The traditional Kentish architecture including local brick and steep clay tile roofs, weatherboarding and tile hanging that provides a distinct sense of place.
- The distinctive Oast houses which provide a recognition of the former hop industry and provide distinctive sense of place.
- The designed parkland landscapes which provide a sense of history and contribute to scenic quality.
- The long views north over the Low Weald and over the adjacent Eden Valley.

Vision

A rural and historic landscape with a distinctive High Weald character comprising a strong field pattern defined by a network of woodlands, shaws and thick well managed hedgerows and rural settlement with a distinctive vernacular. A naturalistic area with a good network of footpaths which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and opportunities to enjoy the views across adjacent river valleys and to the Cherts to the north.

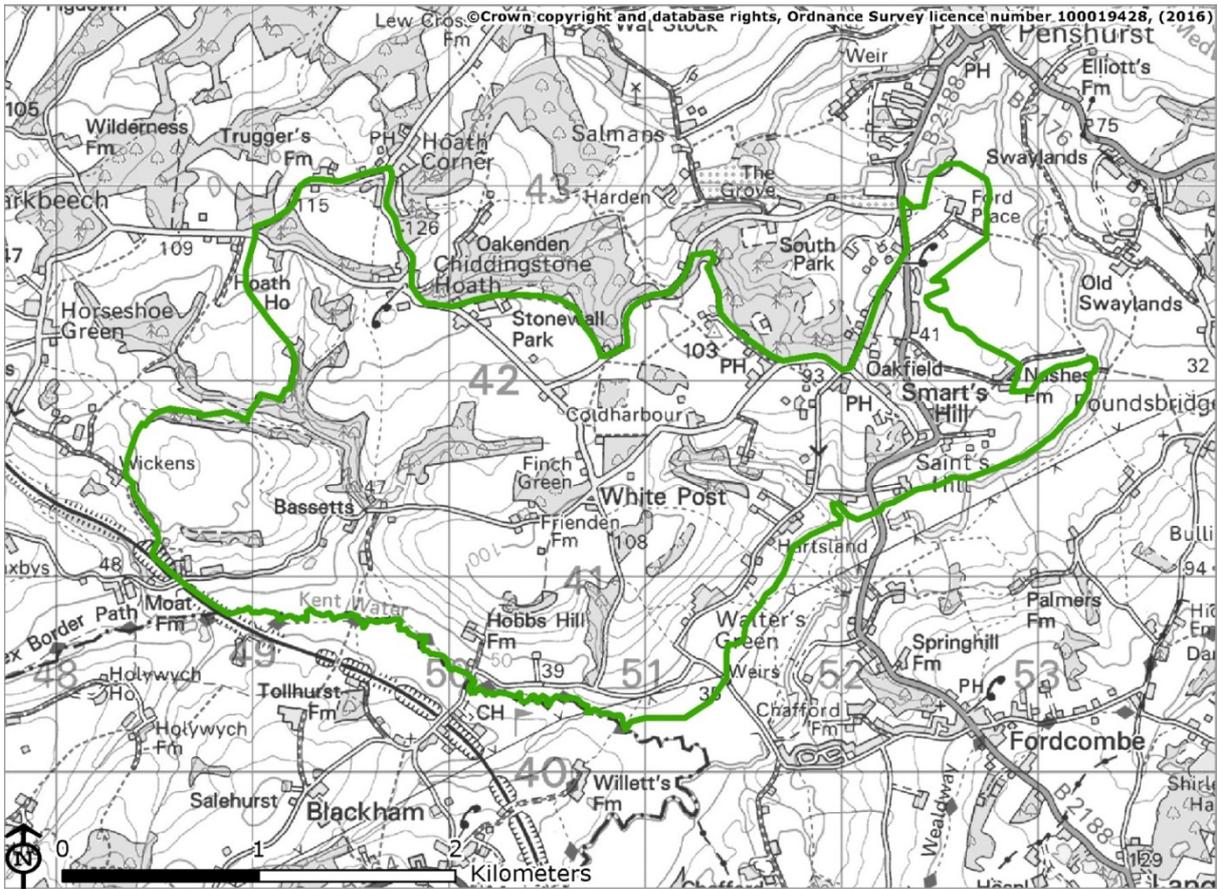
Landscape Guidance

This landscape character area is almost entirely within the **High Weald AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Maintain the strong field pattern of Medieval assarts and other informal enclosures and their boundary features including shaws and dense hedgerows. Consider replanting field boundaries where they have been lost.
- Respect the steep wooded gills, ensuring management for their long term survival, and preservation of the ponds linked to the former Iron Industry.
- Conserve and manage the woodlands to ensure their long term survival, including planning for the next generation of hedgerow trees. Promote the use of wood products linked to management of woodlands.
- Conserve historic orchards and consider reinstating where they have been lost to preserve this historic land use.
- Manage water courses and features for their biodiversity interest.
- Maintain the character of the country lanes, maintaining their adjacent verges, thick hedges and tree tunnels and resisting erosion or road improvements that would change their character – this is particularly important for the ancient routeways or droveways.
- Maintain a low density and rural settlement pattern, preserving the historic buildings (including farmsteads, Medieval manors and Oast houses), and ensuring any new development is well integrated into the landscape, respects existing built character and responds to sense of place.
- Preserve the traditional Kentish architecture including local brick and steep clay tile roofs, weatherboarding and tile hanging that provides a distinct sense of place.
- Conserve the designed parkland landscapes and their settings.
- Provide opportunities to enjoy the landscape, and the long views north over the Low Weald and over the adjacent Eden Valley.

13b Chiddingstone Hoath Plateau



Key Characteristics

- Complex geology of sandstone formations with rocky outcrops on the high ground.
- Steeply undulating slopes leading to an elevated plateau with wooded gills containing ponds linked to the former Iron Industry.
- A mixed arable and pasture farmland landscape with a strong field pattern enclosed by woodlands, shaws and hedgerows.
- Holm oaks and field ponds are notable features.
- Narrow and wide country lanes, many with grass verges, some enclosed entirely by woodland.
- Tranquil landscape with a rural settlement pattern of historic farmsteads and hamlets including locally distinctive oast houses.
- Grand manor houses of historic interest including Stonewall Park.
- Relatively open aspect with topography and small wooded shaws framing long distance views over the Medway Valley.

Landscape Character Description

This area is characterised by a complex geology of different sandstones situated within a larger of Wadhurst clays. Large rocky outcrops occur on high ground and the acidity of the soils particularly around these outcrops is indicated by the surrounding vegetation of Rhododendron, Broom, Gorse and Bracken.

The landform is undulating and ranges from between 110m AOD on the plateau and 35m AOD where it meets the adjacent river valleys. The steep folds in landform are lined with extensive wooded gills which run into the valley floors and are characteristic elements of the landscape. There are also some ponds within the fields and in the gills, with links to the former Wealden Iron Industry.

Irregular, medium scale fields of Medieval assarts of other informal enclosures dating to the medieval or 17th/18th-centuries supporting a mixture of arable and pasture make up much of the landscape. Small scale woodlands and shaws can be seen scattered over the steep slopes and contain a characteristic mix of Beech, Holly and Oak. Holm Oaks within in fields are a notable feature and Hazel hedgerows are characteristic of the winding rural lanes.

Settlement is generally low density and rural in character, comprising historic farmsteads (some with Oasts) and small hamlets e.g. Chiddingstone Hoath. The area also has grand manor houses of historic interest including Stonewall Park which comprises a large Georgian house, first built by the Woodgate family in the 16th century. Part of the associated parkland is located in this LCA.

This area is not as enclosed as other parts of the high Weald and there are some relatively long distance views from the plateau tops, as well as over the adjacent Medway Valley.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intact field patterns, woodland, hedgerows, steep wooded gills and historic settlement pattern contribute positively to landscape condition. However, there has been some hedgerow loss which has had an adverse effect on condition.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- Rocky outcrops on high ground surrounded by distinctive acid loving vegetation of

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Rhododendron, Broom, Gorse and Bracken which provides an indication of the underlying geology.

- The deep wooded gills containing ponds linked to the former Iron Industry which provide a distinct sense of place and time depth.
- The strong field pattern of irregular, medium scale fields of Medieval assarts of other informal enclosures dating to the medieval or 17th/18th-centuries which provide a sense of history.
- The deciduous woodlands and shaws which contribute to the wooded character of the landscape, and many of which have great time depth.
- The hedgerows with hedgerow trees that define the field patten, as well as the holm oaks and field ponds that are locally distinctive.
- The rural lanes, their grass verges and bordering hedges/ trees.
- The rural settlement pattern and particularly the historic farmsteads and hamlets including oast houses that are locally distinctive and a local vernacular including brick, weatherboarding, tile hung facades and steeply pitched clay tile roofs.
- Grand manor houses of historic interest including Stonewall and its adjacent park.
- The long distance views over adjacent Medway Valley.

Vision

A rural and historic landscape with a distinctive High Weald character comprising a strong field pattern defined by a network of woodlands, shaws and thick well managed hedgerows and rural settlement with a distinctive vernacular. A naturalistic area with a good network of footpaths which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and opportunities to enjoy the views across adjacent river valleys and across the high Weald.

Landscape Guidance

The whole of this landscape character area is within the **High Weald AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

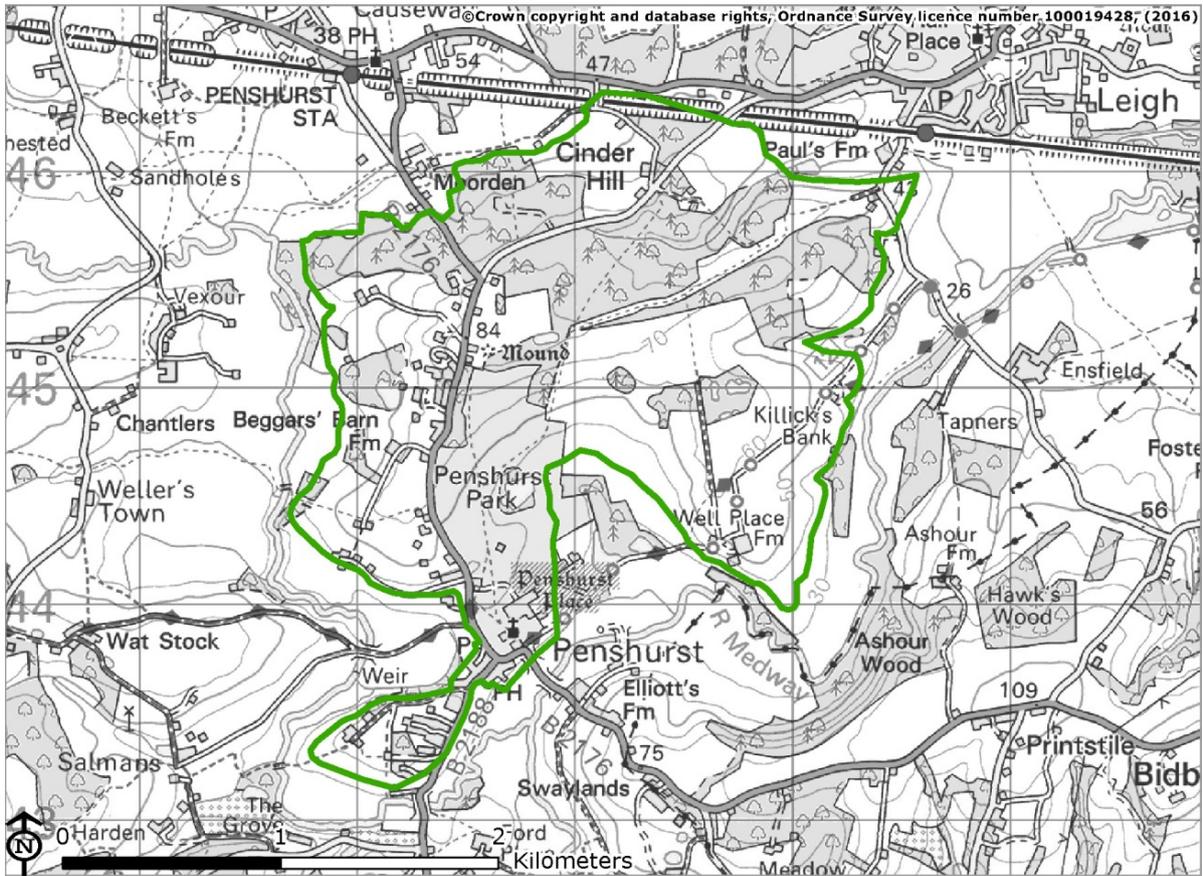
Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Protect the rocky outcrops on high ground surrounded and the associated acid loving vegetation of Rhododendron, Broom, Gorse, Bracken.
- Maintain the strong field pattern of Medieval assarts and other informal enclosures and their boundary features including shaws and hedgerows. Consider replanting field boundaries where they have been lost.
- Respect the steep wooded gills, ensuring management for their long term survival, and preservation of the ponds linked to the former Iron Industry. Manage water courses and features for their biodiversity interest.
- Conserve and manage the woodlands to ensure their long term survival, including planning for the next generation of hedgerow trees. Promote the use of wood products linked to management of woodlands.
- Maintain the character of the country lanes, maintaining their adjacent verges, hedges and trees and resisting erosion or road improvements that would change their character.
- Maintain a low density and rural settlement pattern, preserving the historic buildings (including farmsteads, Medieval manors and Oast houses), and ensuring any new development is well integrated into the landscape, respects existing built character and responds to sense of place.
- Preserve the traditional Kentish architecture including local brick and steep clay tile roofs, weatherboarding and tile hanging that provides a distinct sense of place.
- Conserve the designed parkland landscapes and their settings.

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- Provide opportunities to enjoy the landscape, and the long views over the High Weald and over the Medway Valley.

13c Penshurst and Leigh High Weald



Key Characteristics

- Geology of clays and sandstone with Upper Tunbridge Well Sand formation underlying the higher land.
- Sloping landform rising out of the River Medway and the Eden floodplain. Many natural ponds occur throughout.
- Substantial areas of woodland, including areas of mixed age coppice.
- Small to medium scale pasture and arable fields, cut into woodland areas.
- Scattered farmstead and large isolated properties situated along roads and lanes
- Hedgerows along lanes breaking down and with fencing in places.
- Impressive historic parkland estate at Penshurst Place with estate walls and mature planting.
- Long distance views to the Greensand Ridge between intermittent tree planting.

Landscape Character Description

This part of the High Weald is bounded by the River Eden to the west and River Medway to the east, and dominated by the parkland associated with Penshurst Place.

It is located on complex bands of Ashdown and Wadhurst Clay formations with an outcrop of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand formation situated on the higher land. The landform rises from 35m AOD along the Medway and the Eden river floodplains up to 88m AOD in Penshurst Park.

The parkland is surrounded by more typical High Weald landscape of Medieval assarts (irregular to the west of the parkland, and regular to the east). There are substantial areas of managed, mixed age coppice many mature standards remain within the hedgerows which contributes to a well treed landscape. There are also a number of gills and ponds typical of the High Weald.

Penshurst forms a nucleated village with a built vernacular consisting of timber frame, hung tile and red brick. The general settlement pattern of the wider character area is of scattered farmsteads and large isolated properties located along roads and lanes. Buildings of local sandstone are a highly distinctive feature. Hedgerows along lanes are breaking down and are being supplemented or replaced with post and wire, post and rail and temporary fencing in places.

There is an impressive historic parkland estate at Penshurst Place which is a 14th century manor house and gardens, once belonging to King Henry VIII. Pasture fields make up much of the landscape within the estate with avenue of trees providing noticeable features.

Tree cover provides a degree of enclosure to the landscape although gaps in vegetation frame long distance views towards the Cherts to the north.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intact landscape pattern of historic fields, parkland and woodland contribute positively to landscape condition. There are few detractors present, although some hedgerow loss and areas of horsiculture are evident.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

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- The strong field pattern of Medieval assarts (irregular to the west of the parkland, and regular to the east) which provide a sense of history.
- The areas of managed, mixed age coppice and mature standards in hedgerows which contribute to a well treed landscape.
- The steep gills with ponds typical of the High Weald.
- The impressive historic parkland estate at Penshurst Place which provides a sense of history.
- The rural settlement pattern of historic farmsteads and villages including Penshurst which includes a built vernacular consisting of timber frame, hung tile, red brick, weatherboarding and sandstone.
- The long distance views to the Greensand Ridge to the north.

Vision

A rural and historic landscape with a distinctive High Weald character comprising a strong field pattern defined by a network of woodlands, shaws and hedgerows, and with parkland associated with Penshurst Place. A good network of footpaths which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and opportunities to enjoy the views across adjacent river valleys and northwards to the Charts on the Greensand Ridge.

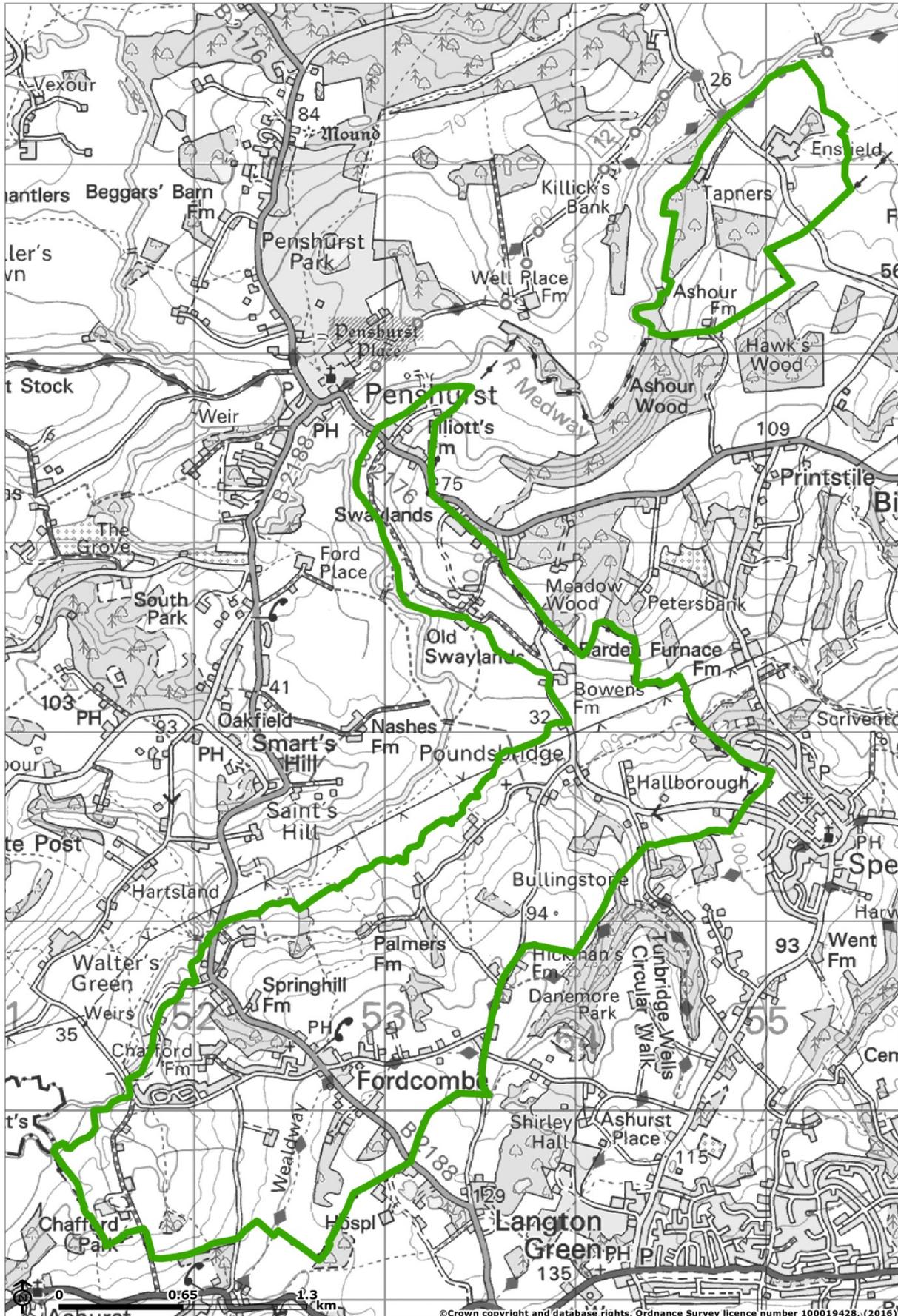
Landscape Guidance

The whole of this landscape character area lies within the **High Weald AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Conserve the strong field pattern of Medieval assarts (irregular to the west of the parkland, and regular to the east) which provide a sense of history.
- Ensure management of woodlands and coppice to ensure their long term survival, and plan for the next generation of hedgerow trees. Promote the use of wood products linked to management of woodlands.
- Conserve the steep gills, their woodlands and ponds. Manage water courses and features for their biodiversity interest.
- Conserve the parkland forming the setting around Penshurst Place including the historic buildings, estate walls, woodland and trees.
- Maintain the rural settlement pattern of historic farmsteads and villages, ensuring any new development is well integrated into the landscape, respects existing built character and responds to sense of place.
- Seek the use of sympathetic local building materials in any new development including those that reflect the distinctive local vernacular such as use of timber frame, tile hanging, local red brick, sandstone and weatherboarding.
- Maintain, and create, opportunities to experience the long distance views to the Greensand Ridge to the north.

13d Fordcombe High Weald





Key Characteristics

- Complex geology of sandstone and mudstone formations.
- Undulating slopes forming the eastern valleys sides of the Medway between 35m at the base of slope and reaching over 100m on the hill tops.
- A mixed arable and pasture farmland landscape with a strong field pattern formed by Medieval assarts and other informal enclosures.
- Woodlands, shaws and hedgerows create a sense of enclosure and backdrop to views.
- Orchards at Chafford Farm form a remnant of formerly more extensive orchards.
- Rural lanes cross the area, enclosed by hedgerows and woodland – some lead down to river crossing points.
- Rural settlement pattern of historic farmsteads including oast houses, manors, hamlets and mills within side valleys.
- Historic designed landscape at Swaylands (a mid-19th century country villa with terraced gardens and parkland).
- Views over the Medway Valley to other parts of the High Weald.

Landscape Character Description

This area lies on the east side of the Medway Valley – it continues across the administrative boundary into Tunbridge Wells.

The area is underlain by a complex geology of different sandstone and mudstone formations. The landform steeply slopes from about 35m AOD along the valley floor up to 120m AOD around the village of Fordcombe with streams flowing through incised side valleys (gills).

It is a medium scale landscape in which small woodlands and a patchwork of small-medium scale irregular Medieval assarts and other informal enclosures run down-slope. There are ditches alongside some lanes, and many ponds are located within fields. Narrow, hedge-lined roads fall steeply through the area down to fording and bridging points over the Medway valley, or turn sharply to follow the upper edge of the floodplain.

The settlement pattern is one of historic farmsteads and hamlets (including manor houses and Oasts). There are properties dating from C14th to modern day. This includes Swaylands which comprises a mid-19th century country villa with terraced gardens and parkland. The historic village of Fordcombe has expanded in a linear form, but is generally well-contained within woodland and tree belts.

Vegetation tends to restrict views, although there are occasional long views over the Medway Valley towards other parts of the High Weald.

Landscape evaluation

Condition

The intact landscape pattern of historic fields, parkland and woodland contribute positively to landscape condition. There are few detractors present, although some woodland and hedgerow loss is evident which makes this area less wooded than other parts of the High Weald, and there is some modern development on the edges of the villages.

Key sensitivities / valued attributes

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The strong historic field pattern of Medieval assarts and other informal enclosures which provide a sense of history and sense of place.
- The deciduous woodlands, shaws and hedgerows that create a sense of enclosure and backdrop to views.
- The remaining orchards that provide a remnant of formerly more extensive orchards.
- The rural character of the lanes and historic routes leading down to river crossing points, providing a time depth to the landscape.
- The rural character of settlement and distinctive local vernacular including historic farmsteads, oast houses, manors, and mills – constructed from local materials including timber frame, hung tile, red brick, weatherboarding and sandstone.
- The historic designed landscape at Swaylands (a mid-19th century country villa with terraced gardens and parkland) which provides a sense of history and contributes to scenic quality.
- The opportunity for views over the Medway Valley to other parts of the High Weald.
- The network of public footpaths including the Wealdway that provide recreational value and enable enjoyment of the landscape.

Vision

A rural and historic landscape with a distinctive High Weald character comprising a strong historic pattern of fields bounded by a network of woodlands, shaws and thick well managed hedgerows. A distinct settlement pattern with buildings in the local vernacular (including historic farmsteads and Oast houses) and an opportunity to enjoy views over the Medway Valley.

Landscape Guidance

This landscape character area lies almost entirely within the **High Weald AONB**, a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint. Refer to the AONB Management Plan for further guidance within the AONB.

Local objectives to conserve and enhance landscape character are outlined below:

- Maintain the strong field pattern of Medieval assarts and other informal enclosures and their boundary features including shaws and hedgerows. Consider replanting field boundaries where they have been lost and plan for the next generation of hedgerow trees.
- Ensure management of woodlands, shaws and coppice to ensure their long term survival. Consider replanting areas that have been lost and promote the use of wood products linked to management of woodlands.

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- Conserve the remaining orchards and consider recreating these to preserve them as features of this part of Kent.
- Manage water courses and features for their biodiversity interest.
- Maintain the rural character of the lanes and historic routes leading down to river crossing points – avoid road improvements that result in suburbanisation of the roads, or loss of verges and adjacent hedgerows/ trees.
- Maintain the rural character of settlement and distinctive local vernacular – preserve features such as historic farmsteads, oast houses, manors, and mills and resist urbanisation of the area.
- Encourage use of local styles and materials including timber frame, tile hanging, red brick, weatherboarding and sandstone.
- Conserve the historic designed landscape at Swaylands (a mid-19th century country villa with terraced gardens and parkland) which provides a sense of history and contributes to scenic quality.
- Provide opportunity for appreciation of views over the Medway Valley and the High Weald beyond.
- Maintain the network of public footpaths including the Wealdway to ensure the landscape can be enjoyed.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Aesthetic	Concerning the visual appeal of a feature or landscape
Amenity	The pleasantness or attractiveness of a place.
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation.
Agricultural Land Classification	The classification of agricultural land in England in Wales.
Ancient woodland	Woods that are believed to have been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD.
Alluvium	Loose soil or sediments, which have been eroded, reshaped by water in some form, and redeposited in a non-marine setting.
Arable	The growing of crops.
Assart	A piece of land converted from forest to agricultural use. Most such piecemeal enclosures date to the medieval or early post-medieval period and are bounded by species rich hedgerows, an indicator of land assarted from woodland.
Assarting	The act of clearing forested lands for use in agriculture or other purposes (in English land law, it was illegal to assart any part of a Royal forest).
Biodiversity	The measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems.
Built Form	The characteristic nature of built development.
Characteristic	A distinctive element of the landscape that contributes to landscape character for instance a particular hedgerow pattern or sense of tranquillity.
Charts	Wooded commons distinctive of east Surrey and west Kent.
Cobnut platts	Cobnut orchards producing a kind of cultivated hazelnut characteristic of the Kent Downs. There was once a thriving industry in Kent but there are few cobnut platts left today.
Condition	A judgement on the intactness and condition of the elements of the landscape.
Coniferous woodland	Woodland comprised of coniferous trees often having needle like leaves. They are usually evergreen.
Copse	A small group of trees

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Deciduous woodland	Woodland where the majority of tree lose their leaves at the end of the growing season
Drift	The name for all material of glacial origin found anywhere on land or at sea, including sediment and large rocks.
Enclosure	The placing in private hands of land to which there was previously common rights; the merging of strip fields to form a block surrounded by hedges.
Floodplain	The area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks, or high tides and stormy seas cause flooding in coastal areas.
Geodiversity	The variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, landforms, sediments and soils in an area, together with natural processes, such as erosion and landslips that may still be active.
Gill	A narrow steep-sided valley typical of the Weald.
GIS	Geographic Information System.
GPS	Global Positioning System.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
Hammer pond	An artificial pond for maintaining a head of water, for example at a water mill
Head	A superficial geological deposit formed mostly by solifluction and/or hillwash and soil creep, typically comprising gravel, sand and clay depending on the upslope source.
Heathland	A shrubland habitat found mainly on free-draining infertile, acidic soils, characterised by open, low-growing woody vegetation.
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation.
HLT	Historic Landscape Type
Horsiculture	Development of farmland for horses and equestrianism
Hydrology	The science dealing with the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the earth and its atmosphere
Intact	Not changed or diminished
Land cover	The physical material at the surface of the earth.
Landscape character	The distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape and how these are perceived. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.
Landscape character areas (LCA)	Single unique areas that are the discrete geographical area of a particular landscape type.

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Landscape character types (LCT)	Distinct types of landscape that is relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historic land use and settlement pattern.
Landmark	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location (from the Oxford Dictionaries online: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/landmark)
Local Plan	A development plan prepared by local planning authorities.
Marl Pit	A pit from which marl, a mixture of clay and carbonate of lime, is excavated. Marl is used as a fertilizer.
Naturalness	The quality or state of being natural.
NCA	National Character Area – defined within the <i>National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013)</i> - NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
Nucleated settlements	A settlement that is clustered around a centre, in comparison to a linear or dispersed settlement.
Oast house	A building containing an oast (a kiln used for drying hops), typically built of brick in a conical shape with a cowl on top.
OS	Ordnance Survey.
Perceptual	The ability to interpret or become aware of something through the senses.
Permeability	The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it
Remnant	A part or quantity left after the greater part has been used, removed, or destroyed.
Rural	Relating to or characteristic of the countryside
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change
SDC	Sevenoaks District Council
Sense of Place	A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that makes a place memorable.
Sensitive	The response to change or influence.
Shaws	Remnant strips of cleared woodland
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.

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SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest.
Superficial deposits	Geological deposit from the Quaternary age may include stream channel and floodplain deposits. All pre quaternary deposits are known as bedrock.
Time depth	The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
Topography	The arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area.
Valued attributes	Positive features and characteristics that are important to landscape character and that, if lost, would result in adverse change to the landscape.

Appendix 2: List of contributors

The following people were invited to the workshop on 29th September 2016:

Invited	Attended/ comments provided
High Weald AONB	Yes
Kent Downs AONB	Yes
KCC	
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Yes
Tandridge District Council	
Wealden District Council	
Dartford Borough Council	Yes
London Borough of Bexley	Comments provided
London Borough of Bromley	
Gravesham Borough Council	Yes
Natural England	
Kent Nature Partnership	
CPRE	Yes & comments provided
NWKCP	Yes
Kent Wildlife Trust	Yes
Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme	Yes
Historic England	
Environment Agency	
KCC Archaeology	
Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council	
Badgers Mount Parish Council	
Brasted Parish Council	Yes
Chevening Parish Council	

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Chiddingstone Parish Council	
Cowden Parish Council	
Crockenhill Parish Council	
Dunton Green Parish Council	Comments provided
Edenbridge Town Council	Yes & comments provided
Eynsford Parish Council	Yes
Farningham Parish Council	Yes
Fawkham Parish Council	
Halstead Parish Council	
Hartley Parish Council	Yes
Hever Parish Council	Yes & comments provided
Hextable Parish Council	Yes
Horton Kirby & South Darenth Parish Council	Yes
Kemsing Parish Council	
Knockholt Parish Council	Yes
Leigh Parish Council	
Otford Parish Council	Yes
Penshurst Parish Council	
Riverhead Parish Council	Yes
Seal Parish Council	
Sevenoaks Town Council	Yes & comments provided
Sevenoaks Weald Parish Council	
Shoreham Parish Council	
Sundridge w/ Ide Hill Parish Council	Comments provided
Swanley Town Council	
Tunbridge Wells BC	Yes
Westerham Town Council	Yes & comments provided
West Kingsdown Parish Council	

Appendix 3: Consultation responses

A workshop was held on 29th September 2016 to present the work being undertaken and to gather views on area boundaries and names, what is valued in the landscape, cultural associations (people, events, art, literature, myths or music that relate to the area), and pressures affecting the landscape. A follow up email was sent to all invitees to invite further information on values and cultural associations or comments on boundaries (and provide the opportunity for those who could not attend the workshop to contribute information). It is acknowledged that gaining a comprehensive picture of what residents value about their landscape could be a project within itself, but the purpose of this consultation was to back up the consultants' professional judgement about what is of value and why. The tables below set out a summary of information provided in the Workshop as well as comments made subsequently, and LUC's responses. The values, cultural associations and issues set out in the initial tables have been fed into the reports where possible and relevant, at a scale appropriate to the District wide study.

VALUES	LCA
Rural character & feeling of solitude	All LCT 1s
Ancient twisting lanes	"
Pollarded oaks	"
Lullingstone Country Park which provides recreational opportunities	2A
Darent Valley Path and views over the valley from this path from adjacent high areas	2A/ 7B
View of viaduct and river	2A
Long distance views to the Thames and Epping Forest from Eynesford Rise footpath	2E
Rural drive along Maplescombe Lane	2E
Views from the high ground around Lockholt/Halstead	3A
Views from Fort Halstead	3A
North Downs Way National Trail and views south towards the Greensand Ridge	3A/ 3B
Drive along minor road in 4b (see map for name)	4B
Views from public footpath along valley	4B
Swanley recreational space valued for community events	4A
High recreation value – paths along chalk ridges (rare orchids/butterflies)	ALL 5s
Sevenoaks: view to chalk scarp from town centre, eg. High street	6a & 6c
Pilgrim's Way – links to Bishop's Palace	6a
Darent Valley villages eg. Otford: views east and west – gaps btw houses. Nestled in between hills	6c & 6b

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Fort Halstead (MOD) landmark. Beacon where Darent valley turns north – views to and from	6b
Views from the M26 across the Darent Valley	7C
Views from M20 across the Darent valley	7a/7b
Wildlife Park	7C
Historic settlement pattern (all 7s) and historic buildings: Roman Villa, Lullington Castle & Eynesford Castle (7B)	All 7s and 7B
Flint buildings materials	All 7s
Fresh water	All 7s
Extensive archaeology	All 7s
Eynesford Ford for recreation and views	7B
Darent Valley: high recreation value – Darent Valley Path follows river to Dartford. Attempts to open up as far as source at Westerham	7c
Local landmarks/Views to St. John's Church, Closed churchyard at St. John's, Dunton Green War Memorial, Rose Garden, Longford Meadow, Crown Meadow Wood, Rye Wood, The Old Chapel (London Road), Dunton Green Village Hall, Dunton Green Primary School, Donnington Hall Recreational value: Dunton Green Recreation Ground, footpath network through the village, Longford Meadow, Crown Meadow Wood Valued for natural environment: Footpath network through the village, Crown Meadow Wood, Rye Wood, Longford Meadow Historic value: St. John's Church, Closed churchyard at St. John's, Dunton Green War Memorial, Rose Garden, The Old Chapel (London Road), Dunton Green Village Hall, Dunton Green Primary School, Donnington Hall	8b
Ex quarries/landfill north of Seal Road due to be restored. Debate on what's form of restoration – potential links to Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve	8c
Ide Hill: views to the south from ridge, Greensand Way, Emmetts	9c & 11b/c
Knole Park: highly valued locally as open space nr Sevenoaks	9d
High recreation value –access for all / accessible from London but separate from London (tranquillity) e.g. bluebell woods e.g. Greensand Way Too many golf courses	All 9 & 10
Views to south from high charts	All 10
Views from One Tree Hill (NT)	10d
Views from Crockham Hill	11
Bough Beech Reservoir: cycling, natural environment etc	11

Edenbridge: seaffods Wood, View of Church; views of the open farmland to the North of Hilders Lane, which has spectacular views as far as Troy Town and the area to the west of the town; the views to Swan Lane Farm from the north east; views west from the Crouch House Road towards the river; views from the south towards the hills bordering the valley.	11
Bore Place	11
Oast houses	All 11 & 12 & 13
Eden valley: tourist route through valley: Eden Valley Path, cycling and walking routes, viewpoints,	12
Historic Houses & parkland legacy: e.g. Chiddingstone Castle, Penshurst	13
WW2 Features	11 & 13
Dark skies	13
Ancient woodland, historic trees (ancient, veteran trees)	13
Stick Hill	13
Powder mills	13

CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS	LCA
London's '4 th ' airport (and dummy airfield during the war)	2A
Ivy Farm Decoding Station	3A
Chevening House, the official residence of the British Foreign Secretary	6a
Samuel Palmer painter throughout the Darent Valley	7s (partic 7B)
Henry VIII, Otford Palace	7c
Percy Pilcher – first test flight across Eynesford	7B/2E
General Wolfe – Quebec House , Westerham	8a
Jane Austin, Sevenoaks [<i>NB The urban area of Sevenoaks itself is not included in the assessment so this comment has been incorporated in Chapter 3</i>].	-
John Donne, Sevenoaks [<i>NB The urban area of Sevenoaks itself is not included in the assessment so this comment has been incorporated in Chapter 3</i>].	-
Octavia Hill, founder of National Trust, Ide Hill	9c
Churchill, Chartwell	10a
Oldbury Hill – iron age fort (one of oldest in UK) [<i>NB this is outside the District so not included in the LCA</i>]	10C

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Edenbridge Cemetery – Arts and Crafts. [<i>NB The urban area of Edenbridge itself is not included in the assessment so this comment has been incorporated in Chapter 3</i>].	11a
Industrial heritage, Mill Leat	11
Childhood home of Anne Bolyne, Hever Castle	12

ISSUES AFFECTING THE LANDSCAPE
Northern area
Population growth and associated pressures such as need for water (increased water abstraction), suburbanisation including inappropriate garden boundary styles, and increase in lighting.
Pressures from tourism and recreation
More traffic on country lanes, and larger traffic, leading to erosion of verges.
Agricultural uncertainty and changes to use of agricultural land.
Noise pollution from vehicular and air traffic eroding tranquillity (eg Biggin airport expansion).
Infill/ extending outside the built envelope
Climate change – resulting in changes to crops, and effect on the sensitive River Darent
Ash dieback – as there area has high proportions of Ash.
Central area
Housing pressures, particularly in and around Westerham, Sevenoaks and Fort Halstead
Pressure for business parks around Otford and Sevenoaks, and associated traffic.
Air quality around the M25/M26.
Traffic pressures on country lanes and spillage onto A225 and A25 from the M25/M26.
Effects on tranquillity
Southern area
Flood management
Brexit and uncertainty in future countryside management
Housing/ employment
Lack of habitat connectivity
Farming industry
Littering, fly tipping

Changes in planning legislation
Travellers – unauthorised encampments
Noise – planes, drones?, helicopters – Gatwick expansion
Light pollution
Climate change
Renewable energy? Fracking?
Invasive species, disease, hornets?
Tourism mismanaged?
Festivals

Comments on boundaries and LCA names

NAMES AND BOUNDARIES	LCA	LUC RESPONSE
LCT 2 Downs Farmlands – consider amalgamating LCA 2c, d and e	2c 2d 2e	LCAs amalgamated into LCA 2b Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs.
LCT 4 ‘Fringe Landscapes’ – suggest changing name	4a-d	This LCT renamed LCT Settled Farmland.
LCA6b ‘Otford Valley West’ and LCA6c ‘Otford Valley East’ suggest changing to ‘Darent Valley’	6b & 6c	LCA renamed Darent Valley Farningham to Otford.
LCA 6b & 6c and LCA 7c – suggest amalgamating as valley is open and shallow	LCA 6b & 6c and LCA 7c	LCAs amalgamated into LCA 7b Darent Valley Farningham to Otford.
LCA 10c Seal Chart and 10d Sevenoaks Eastern Chart have very similar character - suggest extending to include Seal Chart	LCA 10c & 10d	LCAs amalgamated into LCA 10c Sevenoaks Eastern Chart.
LCT 11 Low Weald – consider amalgamating 11a, 11b and 11c	11a-c	LCAs amalgamated into LCA 11a Sevenoaks Low Weald.
LCT 12 – Wealden River Valleys – retained boundary with LCT 11 as important change in character	12 a-c	LCT 12 Wealden River Valleys retained
LCT 13 –13a-d and 13f-g - suggest amalgamating as similar in character.	LCT 13	LCA 13 a-d amalgamated into LCA13a Cowden to Chiddingstone High Weald. LCA 13f-g amalgamated into LCA 13d Fordcombe High Weald.
Knockholt Scarp is misleading we suggest North Downs West Scarp	5a	Re-named 5a as ‘Chevening Scarp’ and 6a as ‘Chevening Scarp foot

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		farmland’.
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Other comments

COMMENT	LUC RESPONSE
Comments by Jillian Barr, CPRE (11/10/16)	
Please include the background evidence mapping in the document itself, since this helps understand and interpret the landscape information in the document. This should include the following: geology, soils, drainage, heritage designations, landform, biodiversity designations, land use, flood zones, agricultural land classification, ancient woodland, dark skies, tranquillity, and landscape designations	We will include mapping for data we hold. Note we do not have soils data in digital format (although the paper copy maps have informed the classification). We hold various data that indicates land use (such as woodland, urban areas), but an overall dataset called ‘land use’ does not exist.
The document should seek to understand ‘living landscapes’ conservation and identify Biodiversity Opportunity Networks. The strong relationship of biodiversity conservation to landscape, land use and the way the countryside is managed is obvious. The landscape character assessment can contribute guidance at the landscape scale to ensure key opportunities to link habitat networks are not lost, or alternatively changes to land use do not increase the fragmentation of a network... The landscape character assessment (for each character area) should include relevant parts of this information (mapping, description and key recommendations). In this way the document will assist the council to demonstrate they understand the contribution of landscapes to ‘wider ecological networks’ and plan for ‘biodiversity at a landscape scale across local authority boundaries’ in accordance with NPPF 113, 117. It is also possible (as was achieved by Swale Borough Council and Canterbury City Council) to use the 2012 Kent Habitat Survey to identify habitat networks for different habitat types	We are using Biodiversity Opportunity Maps and Statements to inform the assessment.
It is understood the previous assessment was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. We would, of course, like this to be the case again. As you know this would require further detailed consultation	Comment for Sevenoaks DC.
Guidance on using the document in planning application submissions would be helpful. We would hope that all relevant planning applications will be expected to identify Landscape Character Areas and demonstrate an understanding of the recommendations. Perhaps this should happen at the validation stage	We will be including a ‘User Guide’ as part of the report to assist in the use of the LCA by both developers and decision makers.
At the presentation it was suggested that the	We are continuing to use words such as ‘restore’,

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<p>'matrix' method would not be repeated in the revised document. Please ensure there is a clear 'direction of travel' in the recommendations for each character area if that is the case. Restore, conserve etc, are still useful terms</p>	<p>'conserve' and 'enhance' in the guidance section.</p>
<p>Please include a suggested list of appropriate tree and hedgerow species in each character area</p>	<p>This is not part of our current contract and would be an additional piece of work – Sevenoaks DC to note this request.</p>
<p>Ensure the impact of climate change on land use, and countryside management and farming practices is recognised and the importance of habitat network as mitigation is understood</p>	<p>We will record this in Section 4 of the LCA Report "Summary of Landscape Issues".</p>
<p>Ensure the likely impact of ash dieback is understood</p>	<p>We will include this in Section 4 of the LCA Report "Summary of Landscape Issues".</p>
<p>The Kent Downs AONB unit have both a Management Plan and a Landscape Design Handbook, together with other land use advice. Please ensure you explore the assessment, and recommendations in detail with the Kent Downs AONB Unit. It is important that the landscape character assessment does not conflict with the statutory AONB Management Plan, which the Council has Adopted as SPD. Signposts to the statutory document should be clear. The format may need to be a little different for character areas that are also AONB.</p> <p>Much of the same may apply to the High Weald AONB</p>	<p>We are reviewing the AONB Management Plans (and Landscape Design Handbook) for relevant LCAs to ensure that the LCA does not conflict with the Management Plans.</p> <p>We are also providing signposts to the statutory documents where relevant.</p>
<p>Ensure the final document is accessible and easy to use. Ensure there is an easy way to identify sites or areas and match them to a character area. It is helpful if the file can be moved around electronically, and this might mean dividing the document into logical bits, such as character types. We notice that the High weald AONB hold mapping data at the Parish scale.</p>	<p>We are in discussions with the District Council to ensure the document is accessible and easy to use.</p>
<p>Make reference to the Kent Historic Environment Record and its value to understanding landscape</p>	<p>We will add reference to the Kent HER in Section 3 (Formative Influences).</p>
<p>Include an understanding of landscape as it relates to urban areas, as well as rural</p>	<p>This assessment is for the rural landscape – there are other studies covering urban areas, such as the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/services/documents/housing/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/srcaa/srcaa-final-document</p>
<p>Comments by Tracy Godden , Dunton Green Parish Council (12/10/16)</p>	
<p>Request that the boundaries are assessed so that the village falls into fewer Landscape Character</p>	<p>This assessment is for the rural landscape and there are other studies covering urban areas.</p>

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<p>areas (and that does not mean extend the Sevenoaks Urban area). We have identified that the parish (and we do understand that the boundaries are not along the parish boundaries, for obvious reasons) falls within four different areas. The concerning point for DGPC is that Dunton Green is not referenced in any of the names/descriptions.</p> <p>The parish lies within the following areas:</p> <p>8b Darent Valley - Sundridge and Chipstead</p> <p>6b Otford Valley - West</p> <p>7c Darent Valley - Otford</p> <p>5a Knockhot Scarp</p>	<p>The assessment divides the District into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) which do not follow parish boundaries but divisions based on geology, topography, landuse etc. The landscape character of the Parish is complex and includes the river valley, scarpfoot and steep chalk scarp and as a result falls into more than one LCA. These areas have now been revised and as a result Dunton Green Parish falls into the Sevenoaks Urban area as well as:</p> <p>8a Upper Darent Valley - West</p> <p>6a Knockholt Scarpfoot Farmland [note this is now being changed to Chevening Scarpfoot Farmland in response to other comments]</p> <p>5a Knockholt Scarp [note this is now being changed to Chevening Scarp in response to other comments]</p> <p>Dunton Green is not referenced in any of the names used for the LCAs as the nomenclature is more generic for this area.</p>
<p>Part of the village also lies within the Sevenoaks Urban area (not strictly speaking identified on the map as a Landscape Character area). Dunton Green Parish Council has long voiced its objections to any part of the parish being categorised by SDC as being part of Sevenoaks Urban area.</p>	<p>Comment for Sevenoaks DC.</p>
<p>Alex Csicsek, London Borough of Bexley (12/10/16)</p>	
<p>London Borough of Bexley has no comments on the LCA boundaries and names proposed.</p> <p>I note that we are also undertaking work to identify Potential Areas of Special Landscape Character. One potential area is the Cray Valley, which includes the area where the London Borough of Bexley meets Sevenoaks District, as identified in the map below. The potential area is recognized for characteristics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meandering River Cray and important associated aquatic marginal habitats • The ornamental man-made lake in Foots Cray Meadows • Historic houses and farms (Hall Place, Loring Hall, The Dower House, Little Mascall Farm, Manor Farm) • A fine and varied collection of Statutory Listed and Local Listed buildings • Considerable amount of 'horsiculture' around Bunkers Hill/ Parsonage Lane i.e. fenced off fields, stables and shelters 	<p>This information is useful to note. The information in the Sevenoaks District LCA should support rather than detract from this work.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large detached properties on generous plots along Parsonage Lane. • Patchwork landscapes, with open fields and attractive rolling farmland • Rural lanes, including a “hollow way” (on Cocksure Lane); grass verges; tall boundary hedgerows; and large individual mature trees • The area contains remnants of unique designed landscapes at the site of the former Foots Cray Place; and North Cray Place (landscaped by ‘Capability’ Brown and later by Thomas Mawson) • Large areas of dense ancient woodland straddling the boundary between Kent and Bexley (Joyden’s Wood, Chalk Wood, Gattons Plantation). <p>I do not anticipate that the proposed LCA boundaries within your updated Landscape Character Assessment will have an impact on our potential area.</p>	
<p><i>Comments by Graham Hughes, Sundridge with Ide Hill Parish Council (04/10/16)</i></p>	
<p>Having studied the map, I find it rather surprising that the actual village of Sundridge has been placed in area 8a – Darent Valley – Westerham and Brasted, as opposed to the more relevant area 8b – Darent Valley – Sundridge and Chipstead! In fact, there is very little of Sundridge village in area 8b, despite its name. Surely this can be easily rectified without much inconvenience – the line simply needs re-drawing slightly to the left of its current path!!</p>	<p>The boundaries and names of the Landscape Character Areas have been revised and Sundridge falls into LCA 8a Upper Darent Valley – West.</p>
<p><i>Nicholas Cave, Sevenoaks Town Council (13/10/16)</i></p>	
<p>Firstly we are pleased to see the area North of Bradbourne Vale rd., included in 7c the Darent Valley Otford zone as this is predominantly river basin although it mainly consist of gravel pits.</p>	<p>The boundaries and names of the Landscape Character Areas have been revised and the area to the north of Bradbourne Vale Road is now in LCA 8b Upper Darent Valley East. This is distinguished from Area 7b Darent Valley Farningham to Otford due to the change in bedrock geology from chalk (Lower Chalk Formation) to mudstone (Gault Formation).</p>
<p>In 8c Kemsing Clay farmlands you have included an area to the south of the railways line that runs west-east, this consist of Greatness Sand quarry and Greatness recreation ground, both areas are part of the greensand with soils and Geology very similar to Seal Chart, and certainly not clay until you travel north closer to the railway line. Unfortunately I think a geological map is needed to get the precise line where the sand meets the clay.</p>	<p>The area to the south of the railways around Greatness sand quarry is now part of LCA 8b Upper Darent Valley – East. The geology in the river valley is complex and includes areas of alluvium, sand and gravel, and as you mention sandstone & mudstone (Folkestone Formation) in the far south of the LCA around Greatness Quarry, however the LCA is principally characterised by mudstone (Gault Formation). The boundaries of the LCA are based on diverse factors including geology but also</p>

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	<p>topography, landuse etc. This LCA now sits adjacent to LCA 9b Seal Farms and Farmland which has been separated from LCA 10c Sevenoaks Eastern Chart.</p>
<p>In the south of the town you have correctly included the areas of Sevenoaks Common as 10b Sevenoaks Wooded Chart except for a small triangle coloured correctly but not outlined, this is the last section of Sevenoaks common it is bordered by Weald rd.; and on two sides Ashgrove rd. It lies alongside West Heath School.</p>	<p>This triangle of land has been included in LCA 10b Sevenoaks Wooded Chart.</p>
<p>Comments by Angela Howells, Westerham Town Council (27/10/16)</p>	
<p>Values:</p> <p><i>Views and landmarks</i></p> <p>The unique location of Westerham - a town on a hill in the centre of a valley with views both ways from and to the town and the uplands. Westerham has a very tight boundary around the town.</p> <p>Views across the Darent Valley of Westerham town. Betsoms Hill is the highest point in Kent at Fort Westerham showing the openness and open views to London. Views across The Weald.</p> <p>View to the church tower from top of hill.</p> <p>View to North Downs Way.</p> <p>View to folly across Squerryes – atop hill behind Squerryes house. View either side of A25 heading to Oxted. View from Westerham hill towards Westerham. View of Pilgrims Way. View from Hosey Common Lane above Chartwell looking as far as Ashdown Forest. View from North Downs Way towards Westerham</p> <p>The source of the River Darent. Round Pond and the brook. Long pond and area south – Park Lodge Field. Squerryes fields to the right of Goodley Stock Road. Crockham Hill – a compact little hamlet in beautiful surroundings. Tree line between fields on long walk. Woodlands – Westerham Chart</p> <p>Vineyards on Pilgrims Way. The openness of the farm land.</p> <p><i>Recreation</i></p> <p>The Greensand Way and Greensand Ridge.</p> <p>Squerryes land behind Mill Lane and Mill Street. Hosey Hill woods. Bridlepaths for horse riders. King George Park. Westerham Green. Westerham & Brasted Parklands. Pilgrims Way. Fields behind Madan Road. Toys Hill. Farley common. NGS gardens throughout the summer. Toboggan Hill.</p> <p><i>Natural Environment:</i></p>	<p>The landscape character around Westerham has been reviewed in light of these comments and values fed in where possible/ appropriate to the scale of the assessment. Some of the comments are too detailed for the scale of the Sevenoaks District Assessment and are recorded in a more generic way. Other comments relate to the urban rather than rural area and are therefore not necessarily all included in the LCA. The comments have also fed into the landscape sensitivity assessment (separate document).</p>

<p>Local bluebell woods in Westerham and Crockham Hill. Westerham & Brasted Chart. Westerham Wood. Squerryes Park. Hosey Hill woods. Hosey Common. French Street. Toys Hill. Farley common. Tower Wood. Crockham Hill Common</p> <p><i>Historic places:</i></p> <p>Squerryes Court – (Wardes were the Fathers of fox hunting). Sites of two former water mills used for the breweries. Quebec House - Home of Wolfe. St Mary's Church & Church Yard. Water Lane – historic significance for residents for access to the river. Knole Park. Chartwell. The Tower. Round Pond. Long Pond. Pilgrims Way. Emmetts gardens. Hever Castle. Down House. Titsey Place & Gardens. Charts Edge Gardens. Fort Westerham – highest point in Kent. French Street graveyard – one of very few private cemeteries.</p> <p><i>Experience of the landscape:</i></p> <p>Scenic beauty, ever changing wild flowers and fauna with the season, well used and well-kept footpaths and bridle paths.</p> <p>Wild deer, pheasants, badgers, bats, newts, birds, foxes etc. in abundance & enormous variety.</p> <p>The High Chart is used extensively by walkers, ramblers and cyclists. All of Westerham Parish including Crockham Hill is extensively valued by visitors, tourists and local people for its views, it has 186 listed buildings its historic features and National Trust land used for rambling.</p>	
<p>Cultural associations</p> <p>General Wolfe. Rowley Atterbury - Westerham Press. Audrey Atterbury – puppeteer (Andy Pandy, Bill & Ben, The Wooden Tops). The Hansards – printers, in particular for Houses of Parliament. Alice Hargreaves..... inspiration for Alice in Wonderland. Charles Darwin. William Pitt. John Frith. Colonel Sir Francis Younghusband – Explorer. Octavia Hill – co-founder of NT and credited with concept of Green Belt. Noel Streatfield – children’s author. Freda Lingstrom & Maria Bird- produced popular puppet series for TV. Ruth Ellis. Westerham Amateur Dramatics. Westerham Ramblers. Westerham Town Council. Beating of the bounds. Fleapit cinema club. Westerham Brewery. Westerham Green events – summer, celebration of historic dates, Xmas shopping evening Westerham Town Partnership. Stone quarries at Hosey Hill – many houses locally built from these quarries but they are now protected home to bats. Mr Nissan – invented the Nissan Huts. U3A. WI. Film club.</p>	<p>These have been reviewed and fed in where appropriate to the scale of the assessment. Note that some of these associations are too specific for the scale of the assessment and may not therefore be included. Some are more relevant to a Westerham-specific assessment including the Conservation Area Appraisal.</p>
<p>Comments by Christine Lane, Edenbridge Town Council (25/11/16)</p>	

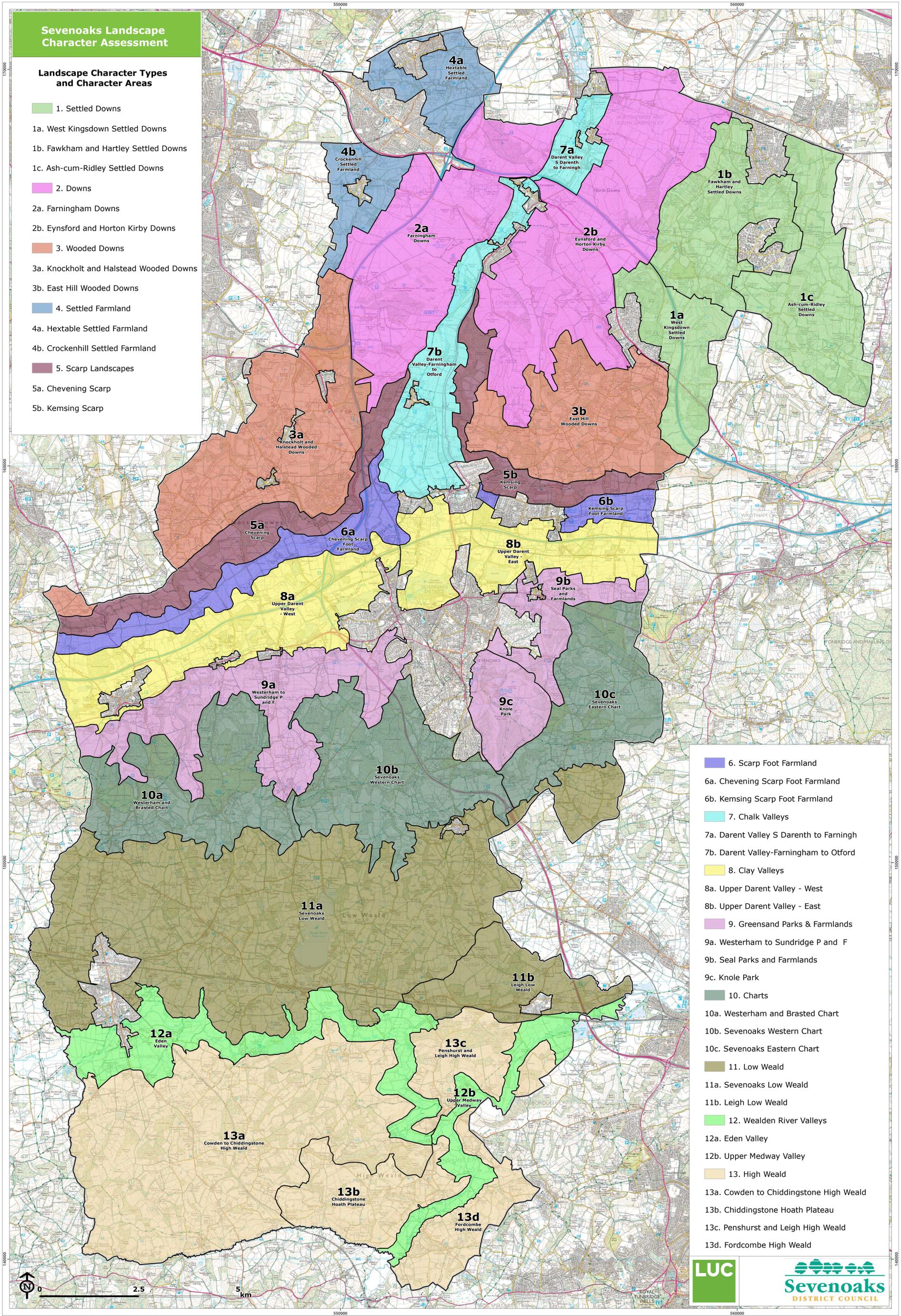
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<p>Edenbridge Town Council supports the view that, due to its location within the Eden Valley, it believes that the views out from the town are important to maintain the character of the area. However, they specifically wished to highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the open farmland to the North of Hilders Lane, which has spectacular views as far as Troy Town and the area to the west of the town• the views to Swan Lane Farm from the north east• views west from the Crouch House Road towards the river• Views from the south towards the hills bordering the valley	<p>The value of views from the Greensand Ridge looking south over Edenbridge and towards the High Weald have been included in the LCA. The other views have been considered as part of the landscape sensitivity assessment work where relevant.</p>
<p>Comments by Friends of the Austin Lodge Valley, Eynsford (24/11/16)</p>	
<p>The Friends of the Austin Lodge Valley have produced a document called 'The Austin Lodge Valley, Eynsford: An Appreciation' which sets out why the valley is special. The covering letter suggests that more detail is added to a new Countryside Assessment "so that places like the Austin Valley are not overlooked".</p>	<p>'The Austin Lodge Valley, Eynsford: An Appreciation' is a detailed landscape assessment of a small part of Sevenoaks District. The area forms part of our LCA 2b Eynsford and Kirby Downs in the Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment. We have incorporated some of the local features into our character area description but it should be noted that the local character assessment is at a more detailed scale than the Sevenoaks District Assessment. The local assessment is consistent with the Sevenoaks District Assessment. We have included reference to 'The Austin Lodge Valley, Eynsford: An Appreciation' as an example of a detailed landscape assessment that fits beneath the Sevenoaks District Assessment.</p>

Appendix 4: A0 size map

This appendix presents the classification on a 1:25,000 scale OS base map. The map has been slightly reduced in scale to 1:30,000 so that it fits into an A0 page. If you are reading this in electronic form the map will be available to download as a separate document from the Council's website.

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Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Types and Character Areas

- 1. Settled Downs
 - 1a. West Kingsdown Settled Downs
 - 1b. Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs
 - 1c. Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs
- 2. Downs
 - 2a. Farningham Downs
 - 2b. Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs
- 3. Wooded Downs
 - 3a. Knockholt and Halstead Wooded Downs
 - 3b. East Hill Wooded Downs
- 4. Settled Farmland
 - 4a. Hextable Settled Farmland
 - 4b. Crockenhill Settled Farmland
- 5. Scarp Landscapes
 - 5a. Chevening Scarp
 - 5b. Kemsing Scarp

- 6. Scarp Foot Farmland
 - 6a. Chevening Scarp Foot Farmland
 - 6b. Kemsing Scarp Foot Farmland
- 7. Chalk Valleys
 - 7a. Darent Valley S Darenth to Farningham
 - 7b. Darent Valley-Farningham to Otford
- 8. Clay Valleys
 - 8a. Upper Darent Valley - West
 - 8b. Upper Darent Valley - East
- 9. Greensand Parks & Farmlands
 - 9a. Westerham to Sundridge P and F
 - 9b. Seal Parks and Farmlands
 - 9c. Knole Park
- 10. Charts
 - 10a. Westerham and Brasted Chart
 - 10b. Sevenoaks Western Chart
 - 10c. Sevenoaks Eastern Chart
- 11. Low Weald
 - 11a. Sevenoaks Low Weald
 - 11b. Leigh Low Weald
- 12. Wealden River Valleys
 - 12a. Eden Valley
 - 12b. Upper Medway Valley
- 13. High Weald
 - 13a. Cowden to Chiddingstone High Weald
 - 13b. Chiddingstone Hoath Plateau
 - 13c. Penshurst and Leigh High Weald
 - 13d. Fordcombe High Weald



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