

Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Environmental Report to accompany Regulation 14
consultation

Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

December 2017

Quality information

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Non-Technical Summary

What is strategic environmental assessment?

A strategic environmental assessment has been undertaken to inform the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan. This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan, and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan?

The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan presents a plan for the administrative area of Ticehurst Parish for the period to 2028. The Neighbourhood Plan area incorporates the settlements of Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate in East Sussex. Prepared to be in conformity with the Rother Core Strategy it sets out a vision and a range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area. These relate to a range of topics, including, but not limited to, landscape and townscape character, the quality of life of residents, tourism and the protection and enhancement of the environment.

It is currently anticipated that the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Rother District Council in 2018.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This purpose of this Environmental Report, which accompanies the Regulation 14 consultation version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan, is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan;
- The likely significant environmental effects of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan; and
- The next steps for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA process.

Assessment of alternative approaches for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

A key aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure that housing delivered in the parish is appropriately located for local needs.

As the first level of the assessment of reasonable alternatives, the SEA considered where broadly in the parish new housing growth should go. This was with a view to exploring the sustainability implications of delivering housing in three alternative broad locations in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Corresponding with the three main settlements of the Neighbourhood Plan area, i.e. Flimwell, Stonegate and Ticehurst, the options are as follows:

Option 1: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Flimwell

Option 2: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Stonegate

Option 3: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Ticehurst

These three options were then appraised as 'reasonable alternatives' against both the baseline and relatively (i.e. against each other). These were considered through the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during scoping and the three options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant SEA Theme.

The findings of the appraisal are presented in Table 4.1 in the main body of the Environmental Report.

Following the consideration of where broadly new development should go in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and the outcomes of consultation events undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, it was considered that Ticehurst would be the most appropriate location for allocations put forward through the Neighbourhood Plan. This is due primarily due to the broader range of services and facilities in the settlement than the other two settlements considered.

Assessment of alternative options for a housing site allocation

Following the choice of Ticehurst village as the most appropriate location for new housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the SEA process has considered the sites which were proposed in the village as a potential location for allocations through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The six sites are as follows:

- Site 5: Singehurst, Pashley Road
- Site 8: Land at Orchard Farm
- Site 11: Dale Hill Farm
- Site 13: Land at 40/41 High Street
- Site 14: Banky Field
- Site 15: Hillbury Field

To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites, the SEA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the sites and potential effects that may arise. **Tables 4.2 to 4.7** in the main body of the Environmental Report present the findings of the appraisals.

Following the consideration of the findings of the site assessments undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA findings, consultation events and an ongoing consideration of viability and achievability,

the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan allocates two sites for housing in Ticehurst. These are as follows:

- Site 5: Singehurst, Pashley Road
- Site 8: Land at Orchard Farm

In addition the Neighbourhood Plan recognises that Site 14: Banky Field and Site 15 Hillbury Field have outline planning permission, and supports in principal development at these sites if they meet the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan also recognises that there is a requirement from Rother District Council to deliver a further nine homes in Flimwell. On this basis, one site has been allocated for nine dwellings in Flimwell at Wardsdown House.

The Wardsdown House site was taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan for the following reasons:

- The landowner was willing to take forward the sites for not more than 10 dwellings.
- The site adjoins the current Development Boundary.
- The site has a good access onto the B2087 with acceptable sight lines.
- The site has a good pedestrian access to both the east and the west directions over pavements to a bus stop.
- The site is within Flood Zone 1 very low risk of flooding.
- Existing residential development is present on both the south and eastern boundaries.
- The site would not impact on listed buildings or the wider character of a conservation area.
- The site is screened by Wardsdown Wood to the north.

Assessment of the current version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

The current version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan presents 19 planning policies for guiding development in the Ticehurst area, and a number of accompanying community projects.

Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process has assessed the policies put forward through the current version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following sustainability themes:

- Biodiversity and geodiversity;
- Climate change;
- Landscape and historic environment
- Land, soil and water resources
- Community and facilities;
- Transportation.

The assessment has concluded that the current version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'community and facilities' SEA Theme. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on facilitating and enhancing access to community provision in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the delivery of housing in appropriate locations and of a type which meet local needs, approaches which will enhance the economic vitality of the area and the Neighbourhood Plan's support for health and wellbeing through green infrastructure provision and its encouragement healthier modes of travel. The Neighbourhood Plan is also likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'landscape and historic environment' theme. This relates to Neighbourhood Plan's close focus on maintaining and enhancing the rural nature of the parish, and

protecting the distinctiveness of its three main settlements. The Neighbourhood Plan also sets an appropriate context for supporting the integrity of the High Weald AONB in the parish and on protecting and enhancing the setting of the historic environment.

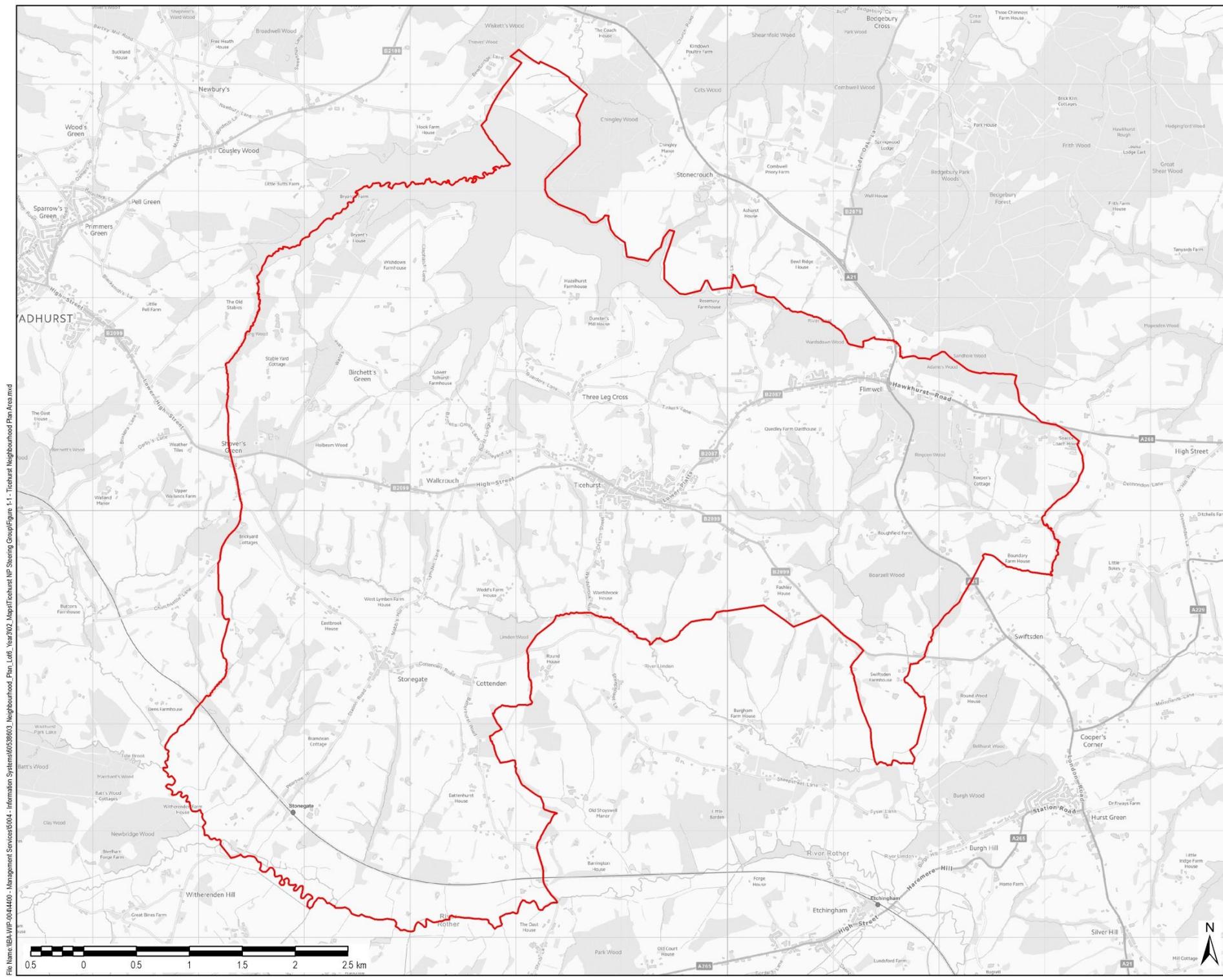
The current version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will initiate a number of beneficial approaches regarding the 'biodiversity and geodiversity', 'climate change', 'land, soil and water resources' and 'transportation' SEA Themes. This reflects the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on green infrastructure enhancements, reducing the need to travel and encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes. However these are not considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, the scale of proposals and existing Core Strategy policies.

Next steps

Subsequent to the current consultation on the Regulation 14 version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan, the plan will be updated by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to reflect comments received. This Environmental Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the plan.

The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan and Environmental Report will then be submitted to Rother District Council for its consideration. Rother District Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Local Plan.

If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by Rother District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to Rother District Council with a request it is adopted. Once adopted, the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for Ticehurst Parish.



File Name: \\BA\WP_00\4400 - Management Services\5004 - Information Systems\65596603_Neighbourhood_Plan_Ld6_Year2017_Maps\Ticehurst_NP_Steering Group\Figure 1.1 - Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan Area.mxd

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LEGEND

Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan Area

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Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

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Project Title **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE TICEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title **TICEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA**

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan area, which includes the administrative area of Ticehurst Parish in East Sussex (Figure 1.1), is being prepared in the context of the Rother Core Strategy.
- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Rother District Council in 2018.
- 1.4 Key information relating to the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

Name of Qualifying Body	Ticehurst Parish Council
Title of Plan	Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood Planning
Purpose	<p>The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the Rother Core Strategy.</p> <p>The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>
Timescale	To 2028
Area covered by the plan	The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the parish of Ticehurst in East Sussex. It incorporates the settlements of Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate (Figure 1.1).
Summary of content	The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Plan contact point	<p>Sheena Carmichael, Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group</p> <p>Email address: sheena.carmichael1@gmail.com</p>

SEA explained

- 1.5 The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan has been screened in by Rother District Council as requiring an SEA due to the potential for significant environmental effects from site allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 1.6 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative environmental effects and maximising positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the emerging Neighbourhood Plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.7 The SEA has been prepared in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive¹.
- 1.8 The SEA Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.9 In line with the SEA Regulations this Environmental Report must essentially answer four questions:
- What is the scope of the SEA?
- What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?
- 'Reasonable alternatives' must have been appraised for the plan.
- What are the appraisal findings at this stage?
- i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
- What happens next?
- 1.10 These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which present 'the information to be provided within the report'. **Table 1.2** presents the linkages between the regulatory requirements and the four SEA questions.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC

Structure of this Environmental Report

1.11 This document is the Environmental Report for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed above with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations.

1.12 Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the Environmental Report in order to meet regulatory² requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ³
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
What's the scope of the SEA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) The likely significant effects associated with alternatives Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next steps for plan making/SEA process.

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

³ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

2. Local Plan context and vision for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to be in general conformity with the provisions of the Rother Local Plan.
- 2.2 The Rother Core Strategy was adopted in 2014. The Core Strategy, which forms Part 1 of the Local Plan, is the key planning policy document within the Rother Local Plan. It sets the overall vision and objectives for development in the district up to 2028 and includes policies relating to the scale and distribution of development across its towns and rural areas. It also contains 'core policies' that address key issues facing the district, in relation to sustainable resource management, community development, housing, the economy, the environment and transport.
- 2.3 Ticehurst village is defined as a Rural Service Centre in the Core Strategy, reflecting the range of services and facilities present in the village and its role for the surrounding area.
- 2.4 In relation to housing delivery in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the Core Strategy suggests that the 129 homes should be delivered in Ticehurst Parish between 2011 and 2028⁴. It also provides a the breakdown for the key settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area, as follows:
 - 83 homes at Ticehurst village;
 - 44 homes at Flimwell
 - 2 homes at Stonegate.
- 2.5 The Core Strategy will be accompanied by, when adopted, the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan (DaSA). The DaSA will form Part 2 of the Council's new Local Plan and develops the spatial strategies and core policies set out in the Core Strategy. It reviews existing site allocations and development boundaries and will allocate specific areas of land for particular uses in line with the development provisions of the Core Strategy. It will also put forward more detailed policies where these are needed to provide guidance for the effective management of development in relation to key issues.
- 2.6 The 'Options and Preferred Options' consultation on the DaSA was undertaken at the end of 2016/beginning of 2017, and it is anticipated that the Regulation 19 consultation on the Pre-Submission version of the DaSA will be undertaken in spring 2018

⁴ Policy RA1 and Figure 12 of the Core Strategy

Vision, aims and objectives of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

2.7 The Vision Statement for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan, which was developed during earlier stages of plan development, is as follows:

“

Ticehurst Parish will continue to develop its friendly, safe, and attractive communities within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

- *Ticehurst as the largest village will provide the working heart of the Parish, with a good range of retail outlets and service-based industries.*
- *Flimwell, with its strategic situation on the A21, will support businesses for which good transport links are important, as well as developing woodland enterprises linked to the AONB.*
- *Stonegate will support the traditional rural economy, tourism, and skilled artisan enterprises, whilst remaining attractive to those who wish to live in a rural environment with good primary schools and rail links.*

Vision Statement for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

”

2.8 To help implement the Vision Statement, a number of 'Major Aims' have been developed for the Neighbourhood Plan, accompanied by a set of objectives.

2.9 The Major Aims of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

- To maintain and enhance the rural character of the Parish within the special landscape of the High Weald
- To support and extend the employment opportunities within the Parish
- To provide high-quality housing for all residents in small developments which reflect the High Weald's historic pattern of settlement.
- To improve the infrastructure and amenities within the Parish, enhancing the quality of life for all parishioners.

2.10 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

1. Conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.
2. Provide good movement round the parish by cycle and footpaths.
3. Use local resources to build the local economy, supported by good infrastructure.
4. Ensure that the Parish residents have the facilities they need (health, education, leisure, retail).
5. Provide affordable housing, particularly for Ticehurst residents and workers.
6. Ensure that all new development is well-planned and relates to existing housing.
7. Encourage good environmental design of housing and business developments.
8. Protect and regenerate the heart of each village, conserving our heritage.
9. Reduce the impact of traffic through the parish.
10. Develop a local energy plan and encourage energy-efficient buildings.

2.11 To support the Neighbourhood Plan's Vision Statement, aims and objectives, the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan sets out a number of Neighbourhood Plan policies. The latest iteration of these policies has been appraised in **Chapter 5** of this Environmental Report.

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Introduction

3.1 This chapter introduces the reader to the scope of the SEA, i.e. the issues / objectives that should be a focus of (and provide a broad methodological framework for) the SEA.

3.2 This scope of the SEA sets out:

- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan;
- Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed;
- The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- An 'SEA Framework' of objectives and questions against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.

Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in **Appendix A**. The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below.

Key sustainability issues

3.3 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the scoping process identified a range of sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of SEA. These issues are as follows, presented by seven environmental themes:

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- There are no European or nationally designated sites within or adjacent to the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- The northern tip of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for residential, rural residential and rural non-residential development.
- There are a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats located within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including ancient and semi-natural woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland and lowland meadows.
- Bewl Water is located in the northern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area and supports populations of a variety of birds, including Goldcrests, Long Tailed Tits, Wagtails, Skylarks, Lapwings, Kingfishers, Herons and Great Crested Grebe.

Climate Change

- Any increases in the built footprint of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan area (associated with the delivery of new housing and employment land) has the potential to increase overall greenhouse gas emissions in the parish.
- The total CO₂ emissions per capita within the Rother District are higher than the regional and national totals, however, the overall percentage reduction of emissions within the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2005 and 2012 was greater than regional and national totals.
- There are areas of land adjacent to the River Rother, River Limden and their tributaries which are located within Flood Risk Zone 3, and as such, have a >1% chance of being flooded each year.

- The most recently completed Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Rother District highlights the following locations as being prone to highway flooding in the Neighbourhood Plan area: 'B2099 Ticehurst High Street' 'Witherenden Road, Stonegate' and 'Tinkers Lane, Filmwell'.
- There is a need to increase the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change by supporting and encouraging adaptation strategies.

Landscape and Historic Environment

- The entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- There are a variety of heritage assets within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area, including one Grade I, four Grade II* and 153 Grade II listed buildings, one scheduled monument, the Ticehurst Conservation Area and the Grade II* listed Ticehurst House Hospital historic park and garden.

Land, Soil and Water Resources

- A detailed agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken within the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, the 1:250,000 regional scale maps indicate that much of the Neighbourhood Plan area is classified as Grade 3 land.
- There are four main waterbodies within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the River Rother, the River Limden, the Kent Ditch and Bewl Water.
- Land in the southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area contains Zone 1, Zone 2 and Zone 3 groundwater Source Protection Zones.
- The southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within a Surface Water nitrate vulnerable zone, defined as an 'area of land that drains into a freshwater water body which has or could have if action is not taken, a nitrate concentration greater than 50mg/l'.

Community and Facilities

- In regards to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) categories, all of the three Lower Super Output Areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the top 30% most deprived deciles for the 'geographical barriers' sub-domain and the 'barriers to housing and services domain'. Overall though, the area has low levels of overall deprivation. In this context two of the three LSOAs within the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the top 30% least deprived in England for the Overall IMD category.
- Similar to other locations within the country, the population of the Neighbourhood Plan area is ageing.
- 85.0% of residents consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', higher than the totals for East Sussex (79.4%) and England (81.4%) but broadly aligning to the total for the South East of England (83.6%).
- The 2016 Joint Strategic Needs & Assets Assessment profile for Rother District outlines a number of key findings which help to identify the issues and health needs for local communities, including relating to population, wider detriments of health, overall health status, healthy lifestyles, health protection, disease and poor health, mental health, older people and places of death.

Transportation

- Residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to Stonegate and Wadhurst station, which is served by the South Eastern Railway service between Hastings and London Charing

Cross. There are hourly services from Stonegate and half hourly services direct to London Charing Cross (journey time approximately 75 minutes, with half hourly services during peak times) and Hastings (journey time approximately 35 minutes).

- As of November 2017, the principal bus route through the Neighbourhood Plan area is the number 254, connecting residents to the neighbouring settlements of Tunbridge Wells, Wadhurst and Hawkhurst.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is well linked to the national road network, with access to the A21, A268, B2087, B2099 and a variety of country roads.
- Residents have access to the Sussex Border Path and the Bewl Water reservoir for recreation and leisure activities.
- There are no national cycle routes located within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Over 91% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to a car or van.

SEA Framework

- 3.4 These issues were then translated into an 'SEA Framework' of SEA objectives and assessment questions. This SEA Framework provides a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline.
- 3.5 The SEA framework for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan is presented below. The objectives and assessment questions have been grouped by the SEA Themes and the relevant objectives utilised for the Sustainability Appraisal process undertaken for the Rother Local Plan.

Table 3.1: SEA Framework for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

SEA Objectives	SEA assessment questions
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	
Headline Rother Local Plan SA Objective:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity 	
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the integrity of locally designated sites of interest? • Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species? • Protect and enhance ecological networks? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Support enhancements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate Change	
Headline Rother Local Plan SA Objectives:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases • Minimise the risk of flooding and resulting detriment to people and property 	
Promote climate change mitigation in Ticehurst Parish	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the parish from population growth? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Increase the number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?

SEA Objectives	SEA assessment questions
Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)? • Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the plan area to the effects of climate change, including enhancements to ecological networks?
Landscape and Historic Environment	
<p>Headline Rother Local Plan SA Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the high quality natural and built environment 	
Protect, maintain and enhance the Neighbourhood Plan area's cultural heritage resource, including the historic environment and archaeological assets.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest? • Support the integrity of the historic setting of key buildings of cultural heritage interest? • Conserve and enhance the integrity of the Ticehurst Conservation Area? • Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and villagescapes.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the High Weald AONB • Support the integrity of the local landscape character? • Conserve and enhance landscape and villagescape features?

SEA Objectives	SEA assessment questions
Land, Soil and Water Resources	
Headline Rother Local Plan SA Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve efficiency in land use and encourage the prudent use of natural resources • Maintain, improve and manage water resources in a sustainable way 	
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land? • Direct development to lower quality agricultural land?
Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of waste produced? • Support the minimisation, reuse and recycling of waste? • Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside? • Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?
Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improvements to water quality? • Minimise water consumption? • Protect waterbodies?
Community and Facilities	
Headline Rother Local Plan SA Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home. • Improve accessibility to services and facilities for all ages across the District. • Improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health. 	
Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community facilities? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? • Minimise fuel poverty?

SEA Objectives	SEA assessment questions
Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?
Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Support enhancements to the current housing stock? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?
Improve the health and wellbeing of residents	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Align to the priority areas outlined in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment? • Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards? • Promote the use of healthier modes of travel? • Improve access to the countryside and coastline for recreational use?

Transportation

Headline Rother Local Plan SA Objective:

- Reduce road congestion and pollution levels and ensure air quality continues to improve by increasing travel choice and reducing car usage.

Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development? • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel? • Enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Facilitate working from home and remote working?
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4. What has plan making / SEA involved up to this point

Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include...
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, this chapter explains how the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan's development strategy has been shaped through considering alternative approaches for the location of new housing allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.3 A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan. The SEA Regulations⁵ are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report should present an appraisal of the '*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*'.
- 4.4 In relation to housing delivery in the Neighbourhood Plan area, Rother District Council has set the following targets for Ticehurst Parish to 2028:
- A minimum of 87 homes at Ticehurst village;
 - A minimum of 43 homes at Flimwell
 - No requirement for new homes at Stonegate.
- 4.5 Much of this requirement has already been met in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In this context the following commitments exist in **Ticehurst village**:
- The Old Coachworks (net 21 flats) completed in 2015
 - Banky Field (40 houses) – outline planning permission
 - Hillbury Field (30 houses) – outline planning permission
- 4.6 This provides a total of 91 dwellings, which exceeds the target of 87 homes.
- 4.7 **Flimwell** has met most of its commitment as follows:
- Broomhill/Old Wardsdown (9 houses, currently being built)
 - Corner Farm (25 houses, outline planning permission granted)
- 4.8 Providing a total of 34 dwellings, this provides a net requirement is 9 dwellings.

⁵ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

- 4.9 In light of these requirements, the following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred approach for the Neighbourhood Plan area and potential policies for shaping new housing growth in the parish. These consider two sets of options relating to the location of Neighbourhood Plan housing allocations.
- 4.10 In this context the following sections consider reasonable alternatives for
1. A broad spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
 2. Locations for potential site allocations.

Alternative options for the broad spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.11 As the first level of the assessment of reasonable alternatives, the SEA has considered where broadly in the parish new housing growth should go. This is with a view to exploring the sustainability implications of delivering housing in three alternative broad locations in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 4.12 Corresponding with the three main settlements of the Neighbourhood Plan area, i.e. Flimwell, Stonegate and Ticehurst, the options are as follows:
- Option 1:** Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Flimwell
- Option 2:** Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Stonegate
- Option 3:** Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Ticehurst
- 4.13 The following table presents appraisal findings in relation to the three options introduced above. These are organised by the six SEA Themes.
- 4.14 These three broad options have been assessed as 'reasonable alternatives' against both the baseline and relatively (i.e. against each other). The options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant SEA Theme.
- 4.15 For each SEA Theme, a commentary on the likely effects is presented. Options are also ranked numerically reflecting their relative sustainability performance, with '1' the most favourable ranking and '3' the least favourable ranking.

Option 1: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Flimwell

Option 2: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Stonegate

Option 3: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Ticehurst

SEA Theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>In relation to potential impacts on the SSSIs in the wider vicinity of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including Combwell Wood SSSI and Scotney Castle SSSI, none of three settlements are within an Impact Risk Zone for residential development. As such housing development taken forward in any of the settlements will be unlikely to have the potential to lead to impacts on the SSSIs.</p> <p>In terms of key biodiversity habitats, all of the three settlements have Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat and areas of ancient woodland located within or adjacent to the settlement.</p> <p>In this context:</p> <p>To the east of Stonegate (adjacent to the sports field) is one small area of deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitat, which is also an area of ancient woodland.</p> <p>North of Flimwell is a significant area of deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitat and ancient woodland, which covers Ketley Wood, Wardsdown Wood and Birch Wood. A further significant area of deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitat and ancient woodland covers Ringden Wood, located south of the village on both sides of the A21.</p> <p>Ticehurst has a large number of areas of deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitat scattered around the settlement, with a number of these areas ancient woodland.</p> <p>Overall Flimwell and Ticehurst are most constrained by priority habitat, with Stonegate also constrained in some limited parts of the village.</p>	3	1	2

Option 1: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Flimwell

Option 2: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Stonegate

Option 3: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Ticehurst

SEA Theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Climate change	<p>In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, road transport is an increasingly significant contributor to emissions in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The extent to which the three options have the potential to support climate change mitigation through facilitating a reduced level of car dependency is therefore a key element.</p> <p>In this context Option 3 has the most potential to limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport through locating housing growth in Ticehurst, which is the settlement with the broadest range of facilities. This includes a significant cluster of retail and commercial facilities, and a range of services and amenities including a doctors' surgery, primary school and village hall.</p> <p>In contrast, focussing development in Flimwell through Option 1, which is reliant on services and facilities in Ticehurst, and does not have a school, is likely to lead to an increase in the need to travel for services and facilities. Similarly, Option 2, through directing new development to Stonegate, which has a more limited range of services than Flimwell, will do less to limit the need to travel for day-to-day activities. Whilst Stonegate has a railway station, with links to London, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Hastings, this is located approximately 1.7km away, which is not in easy walking distance. As such it is unlikely that additional development in the village will do more to significantly limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport than locating development within Ticehurst and Flimwell in this respect.</p> <p>Overall, through locating development in the settlements which have fewer services and facilities, Options 1 and 2 would do the most of the options to increase the need to travel for day-to-day activities, stimulate car dependency and limit the scope for walking and cycling. As such, the focus of Option 3 on locating development in Ticehurst has the most potential of the options to limit emissions from transport.</p> <p>In terms of climate change adaptation, whilst Flimwell, Stonegate and Ticehurst do not have significant flood risk issues, it is considered that the provisions of the NPPF and national policy in relation to flooding will help guide development away from flood risk areas and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented. For example, the NPPF does not permit development within flood risk areas or where the effect would be to increase flood risk elsewhere without appropriate mitigation measures. Likewise, adherence to the recommendations and guidance presented in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) undertaken for the wider district will help limit effects.</p>	3	2	1

Option 1: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Flimwell

Option 2: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Stonegate

Option 3: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Ticehurst

SEA Theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Landscape and historic environment	<p>All three settlements are covered by the High Weald AONB. As such poorly sited and designed development taken forward through all of the options have the potential to have impacts on landscape character within the area covered by this national designation.</p> <p>Ticehurst has a rich historic environment, with numerous listed buildings present and a conservation area which covers the historic core of the village. The Grade II* listed Ticehurst House Hospital Registered Park and Garden is also present in the west of the village.</p> <p>Five listed buildings are located within Stonegate and eleven are present in (the larger village of) Flimwell. Whilst no conservation areas are present in Stonegate or Flimwell, both settlements in parts have distinctive villagescapes.</p> <p>Whilst the significance of the effects from each option on features of cultural, built and archaeological heritage assets depends on the location, scale and nature of development, it can be considered that the increased level of growth facilitated in Flimwell through Option 1, in Stonegate through Option 2 and Ticehurst facilitated by Option 3 increases the likelihood (and potential magnitude) of negative effects on the heritage assets present locally in the respective settlements. This is linked to an increased likelihood of direct and indirect impacts on the fabric and setting of features and areas of historic environment interest.</p> <p>It should also be noted though that, whilst development has the potential to have negative effects on the fabric and setting of the historic environment, well sited development coupled with high quality design and layout can support enhancements to cultural heritage assets and their settings. Likewise new development areas offer significant opportunities to rejuvenate disused and underutilised heritage assets and enhance their settings. As such, effects on the historic environment (and local character) have the potential to be both positive and negative through all three options.</p>	1	1	3

Option 1: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Flimwell**Option 2: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Stonegate****Option 3: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Ticehurst**

SEA Theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Land, soil and water resources	<p>In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been undertaken within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England and utilised for strategic purposes, the land in the Neighbourhood Plan area is largely Grade 3 good to moderate, with smaller areas of Grade 4 land. However there is no detailed information available as to whether the Grade 3 areas are Grade 3a (i.e. land classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land) or 3b (which is not). As such it is not possible to differentiate between the options in this regard.</p> <p>The northern and eastern edges of Stonegate are within a Zone 3 Groundwater Source Protection Zone. Flimwell and Ticehurst are not within Source Protection Zones.</p> <p>In relation to water supply, the NPPF states that local plans should plan positively to ensure the provision of infrastructure for water supply, including an assessment of its quality and capacity. In the context of the current assessment, it is anticipated that the Water Resources Management Plans prepared by water supply companies will be expected to address long-term water supply issues associated with growth in the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>	?	?	?
Community and facilities	<p>Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. Of the three settlements considered through the options, Ticehurst has by far the broadest range of services and facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area. These include a school, a doctors' surgery, a range of shops, sports and recreational facilities and public houses. In contrast, services and facilities in Stonegate are largely limited to a primary school, a village hall and (1.7km away) a railway station, and facilities in Flimwell are limited to a pub, church, cricket club and some retail shops and trade outlets designed to serve shoppers from a wider catchment area</p> <p>In this context Option 3, through focusing housing in the settlement with the broadest range of amenities, will do more to promote the location of new housing in accessible locations. This will help limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities, supporting their quality of life.</p> <p>In terms of housing numbers, it is considered that all of the options will meet the Local Plan requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area, and will, given the likely size of allocations of over five dwellings, facilitate the provision of 40% affordable housing in line with the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.</p> <p>In relation to health, directing development to Ticehurst will enhance accessibility through directing housing to the settlement with the broadest range of services and facilities. This will have benefits for the wellbeing of residents. Locating more housing in closer proximity to the facilities available will also support physical and mental health and wellbeing through promoting walking and cycling and active lifestyles.</p>	2	3	1

Option 1: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Flimwell

Option 2: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Stonegate

Option 3: Focus the delivery of housing growth through the Neighbourhood Plan in Ticehurst

SEA Theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Transportation	<p>Option 3, through focusing housing in Ticehurst, which is the settlement with the broadest range of services and facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area will help reduce the need to travel for certain amenities, and support sustainable modes of travel, including walking and cycling.</p> <p>Options 1 and 2, through focusing housing in the settlements with a more limited range of services and amenities, will do less to promote the location of new housing in accessible locations. This will increase the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p> <p>Whilst Stonegate has a railway station, with links to London, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Hastings, this is located approximately 1.7km away, which is not in easy walking distance. The private car will therefore continue to be the primary mode of transport to travel to the station for most, limiting the relative merits of Option 2 in this regard.</p>	2	2	1

Assessment of sites for housing in Ticehurst

- 4.16 Following the consideration of where broadly new development should go in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and the outcomes of consultation events undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, it was decided that Ticehurst village would be the most appropriate location for allocations put forward through the Neighbourhood Plan. This is due primarily due to the broader range of services and facilities available in the settlement than the two other settlements considered. This is reflected by the designation of the village as a Rural Service Centre by Rother District Council.
- 4.17 To support the consideration of sites for potential allocation in Ticehurst through the Neighbourhood Plan, a site assessment has been undertaken of a number of sites in Ticehurst. These sites, which were brought forward through a Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites undertaken in November 2016, are as follows:
- Site 5: Singehurst, Pashley Road
 - Site 8: Land at Orchard Farm
 - Site 11: Dale Hill Farm
 - Site 13: Land at 40/41 High Street
 - Site 14: Banky Field
 - Site 15: Hillbury Field
- 4.18 Three further sites were brought forward in the wider vicinity of Ticehurst through the Call for Sites. The sites, and the reason why they were not considered for the purposes of the SEA process as follows:
- Site 7: Land at Vineyard Lane (0.5 ha). Site is not contiguous with Ticehurst village development boundary.
 - Site 9: The Walled Garden, Burnt Lodge Lane (2.4 ha). Site is not contiguous with Ticehurst village development boundary.
 - Site 10: The Drill Hall, Pashley Road (0.04 ha). The site was too small for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation.
- 4.19 To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the sites and potential effects that may arise. In this context the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision making questions developed during SEA scoping (**Section 3**) and the baseline information.
- 4.20 The tables below present a summary of this appraisal, and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the six SEA Themes.

Table 4.1: Site 5: Singehurst, Pashley Road

Site size: 1ha

Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent to the boundary of the site. The site is not within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential, rural residential or non-rural residential development.</p> <p>There is an area of ancient and semi-natural wet woodland BAP Priority Habitat located adjacent to the southern site boundary, and a pond BAP Priority Habitat located approximately 30m to the west of the site. These habitats provide a role for ecological networks and should be retained where possible through new development proposals. However, given they are both outside of site boundaries, direct impacts from landtake are not anticipated.</p>
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The site is also not within an area at risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The site is within proximity to a primary school, community hall, public house, general store/post office and a doctor's surgery. As such, it is considered that development on site will support a limitation of emissions.</p>
Landscape and historic environment	<p>The whole of the site is situated within the High Weald AONB. However, the site is predominantly screened from view from the trees and hedgerows located along the boundaries. There are short views into the south western section of the site from the neighbouring residential properties. As the site is currently an undeveloped greenfield area, development would provide a contrast to its existing character.</p> <p>There are no heritage assets located within or adjacent to the site. Also, the site is not within the wider setting of any heritage assets.</p>
Land, soil and water resources	<p>It is not possible to confirm if development on the site will result in a loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as a detailed classification assessment has not been undertaken. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England and utilised for strategic purposes, the site is Grade 3 good to moderate. However, there is no detailed information available as to whether the site is Grade 3a land (i.e. land classified as the best and most versatile) or Grade 3b (which is not).</p> <p>The entirety of the site is situated within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. The primary source of nitrate pollution occurs from diffuse agricultural water run-off and therefore, the proposed allocation is unlikely to have a bearing on future levels of nitrate pollution.</p> <p>As the site is greenfield location, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p>

Community and facilities	<p>Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. Ticehurst has by far the broadest range of services and facilities within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including a primary school, community hall, three public houses, general store/post office, a church and a doctor's surgery. The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p> <p>The site could deliver up to 24 dwellings, contributing to local housing needs and incorporating affordable housing.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing will be supported by the site's proximity to a sports ground, recreational ground and the Dale Hill Golf Course, encouraging participation in sport and outdoor activities.</p>		
Transportation	<p>The site is within proximity to frequent public transport links, particularly the number 254 'Tunbridge Wells – Wadhurst – Ticehurst – Hawkhurst' bus service which operates between Mondays and Saturdays.</p> <p>Access into the site is possible via the existing road network, via a turning from the B2099.</p> <p>The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p>		
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

Table 4.2: Site 8: Land at Orchard Farm

Site size: 0.2ha

<p>Biodiversity and geodiversity</p>	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent to the boundary of the site. The site is not within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential, rural residential or non-rural residential development.</p> <p>There is a corridor of ancient and semi-natural deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitat located adjacent to the south western boundary of the site, with the western and southern site boundaries comprising of trees which connect to the deciduous woodland corridor. There is also a pond BAP Priority Habitat located approximately 20m to the east of the site, and a small stream that flows adjacent to the western site boundary and through the deciduous woodland corridor. These habitats provide a role for ecological networks and should be retained where possible through new development proposals.</p>
<p>Climate change</p>	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The majority of the site is not at risk of surface water flooding; however land towards the north eastern corner of the site is at high risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The site is within proximity to a primary school, community hall, public house, general store/post office and a doctor's surgery. As such, it is considered that development on site will support a limitation of emissions.</p>
<p>Landscape and historic environment</p>	<p>The whole of the site is situated within the High Weald AONB. However, the site is predominantly screened from view from the trees located along the boundaries.</p> <p>As the site is currently an undeveloped greenfield area, development would be a contrast to its existing character. Nonetheless, development would fit within the context of the residential areas located directly to the north, east and west of the site.</p> <p>There are no heritage assets located within or adjacent to the site. Also, the site is not within the setting of any heritage assets.</p>
<p>Land, soil and water resources</p>	<p>It is not possible to confirm if development on the site will result in a loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as a detailed classification assessment has not been undertaken. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England and utilised for strategic purposes, the site is Grade 3 good to moderate. However, there is no detailed information available as to whether the site is Grade 3a land (i.e. land classified as the best and most versatile) or Grade 3b (which is not).</p> <p>The whole of the site is situated within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. The primary source of nitrate pollution occurs from diffuse agricultural water run-off and therefore, the proposed allocation is unlikely to have a bearing on future levels of nitrate pollution.</p> <p>As the site is greenfield, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p>

<p>Community and facilities</p>	<p>Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. Ticehurst has by far the broadest range of services and facilities within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including a primary school, community hall, three public houses, general store/post office, a church and a doctor’s surgery. The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p> <p>The site will deliver six dwellings, which would do less to meet local housing needs.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing will be supported by the site’s proximity to a sports ground, recreational ground and the Dale Hill Golf Course, encouraging participation in sport and outdoor activities.</p>		
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>The site is within proximity to frequent public transport links, particularly the number 254 ‘Tunbridge Wells – Wadhurst – Ticehurst – Hawkhurst’ bus service which operates between Mondays and Saturdays.</p> <p>Access into the site is possible from the existing road network, although this is currently a single-lane track extending south west via a turning from the B2099.</p> <p>The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p>		
<p>Key</p>			
<p>Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)</p>		<p>Likely positive effect</p>	
<p>Neutral/no effect</p>		<p>Uncertain effects</p>	

Table 4.3: Site 11: Dale Hill Farm

Site size: 1.1ha

Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent to the boundary of the site. The site is not within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential, rural residential or non-rural residential development.</p> <p>There is a pond BAP Priority Habitat and a small stream located along the southern site boundary. Along with the trees located along the western and southern site boundaries, the pond provides a role for ecological networks. These habitats should be retained where possible through new development proposals.</p>
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The majority of the site is not at risk of surface water flooding; however there is an area of land within the southern section of the site is at low risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The site is within proximity to a primary school, community hall, public house, general store/post office and a doctor's surgery. As such, it is considered that development on site will support a limitation of emissions.</p>
Landscape and historic environment	<p>The whole of the site is situated within the High Weald AONB. Trees and hedgerows located along the site boundaries provide some screening.</p> <p>As the site is currently an undeveloped greenfield area, development would be a contrast to its existing character. Additionally, development would reduce the 'green-gap' role of the area between the built-up area of Ticehurst and the residential properties at Dale Hill.</p> <p>There are no heritage assets located within or adjacent to the site. Also, the site is not within the setting of any heritage assets. Land to the north of the site is within an Archaeological Notification Area as it contains recorded archaeological remains.</p>
Land, soil and water resources	<p>It is not possible to confirm if development on the site will result in a loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as a detailed classification assessment has not been undertaken. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England and utilised for strategic purposes, the site is Grade 3 good to moderate. However, there is no detailed information available as to whether the site is Grade 3a land (i.e. land classified as the best and most versatile) or Grade 3b (which is not).</p> <p>The entirety of the site is situated within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. The primary source of nitrate pollution occurs from diffuse agricultural water run-off and therefore, the proposed allocation is unlikely to have a bearing on future levels of nitrate pollution.</p> <p>As the site is greenfield, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p>

<p>Community and facilities</p>	<p>Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. Ticehurst has by far the broadest range of services and facilities within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including a primary school, community hall, three public houses, general store/post office, a church and a doctor’s surgery. The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p> <p>The site could deliver up to 26 dwellings, contributing to local housing needs and incorporating affordable housing.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing will be supported by the site’s proximity to a sports ground, recreational ground and the Dale Hill Golf Course, encouraging participation in sport and outdoor activities.</p>		
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>The site is within proximity to frequent public transport links, particularly the number 254 ‘Tunbridge Wells – Wadhurst – Ticehurst – Hawkhurst’ bus service which operates between Mondays and Saturdays.</p> <p>The site is accessible from the existing road network, via a turning from the B2087.</p> <p>The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p>		
<p>Key</p>			
<p>Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)</p>		<p>Likely positive effect</p>	
<p>Neutral/no effect</p>		<p>Uncertain effects</p>	

Table 4.4: Site 13: Land at 40/41 High Street



Site size: 1.9ha

<p>Biodiversity and geodiversity</p>	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent to the boundary of the site. The site is not within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential, rural residential or non-rural residential development.</p> <p>No BAP Priority Habitats are present on or adjacent to the site. There are trees along the south eastern boundary which provide a role for ecological networks, and should be retained where possible through new development proposals.</p>
<p>Climate change</p>	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The majority of the site is not at risk of surface water flooding; however there are patches of land along the southern site boundary and within the eastern section of the site which are at low risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The site is within proximity to a primary school, community hall, public house, general store/post office and a doctor’s surgery. As such, it is considered that development on site will support a limitation of emissions.</p>
<p>Landscape and historic environment</p>	<p>The entirety of the site is situated within the High Weald AONB. There are direct views into the site from the residential properties located along the southern and western boundaries.</p> <p>As the site is currently an undeveloped greenfield area, development would be a contrast to its existing character. Additionally, there is a public right of way located adjacent to the eastern site boundary. Development would result in a change in the character of the views experienced by those using the right of way.</p> <p>Tree Preservation Orders have been allocated to the trees located along the eastern site boundary in order to protect their amenity value. Additionally, land to the west of the site has been designated as a Tree Preservation Order Area.</p> <p>Land within the central and south eastern sections of the site is designated as an Archaeological Notification Area as it contains recorded archaeological remains.</p> <p>The south eastern corner of the site borders the Ticehurst Conservation Area and as such, the proposed allocation has the potential to impact the setting of the conservation area and the heritage assets located within its boundary.</p>

Land, soil and water resources	<p>It is not possible to confirm if development on the site will result in a loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as a detailed classification assessment has not been undertaken. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England and utilised for strategic purposes, the site is Grade 3 good to moderate. However, there is no detailed information available as to whether the site is Grade 3a land (land classified as the best and most versatile) or Grade 3b (which is not).</p> <p>The western and south eastern sections of the site are situated within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. The primary source of nitrate pollution occurs from diffuse agricultural water run-off and therefore, the proposed allocation is unlikely to have a bearing on future levels of nitrate pollution.</p> <p>As the site is greenfield, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p>		
Community and facilities	<p>Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. Ticehurst has by far the broadest range of services and facilities within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including a primary school, community hall, three public houses, general store/post office, a church and a doctor's surgery. The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p> <p>The site could deliver up to 45 dwellings, contributing to local housing needs and incorporating affordable housing.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing will be supported by the site's proximity to a sports ground, recreational ground and the Dale Hill Golf Course, encouraging participation in sport and outdoor activities.</p>		
Transportation	<p>The site is within proximity to frequent public transport links, particularly the number 254 'Tunbridge Wells – Wadhurst – Ticehurst – Hawkhurst' bus service which operates between Mondays and Saturdays.</p> <p>The site is currently not accessible from the existing road network. There is the potential to create access points into the site, but not without encroaching on privately owned land.</p> <p>The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p>		
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

Table 4.5: Site 14: Banky Field

Site size: 2ha

Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent to the boundary of the site. The site is not within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential, rural residential or non-rural residential development.</p> <p>No BAP Priority Habitats are located on or adjacent to the site. There are trees along the eastern, southern and western site boundaries which provide a role for ecological networks, and should be retained where possible through new development proposals.</p>
Climate change	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The majority of the site is not at risk of surface water flooding; however land towards the south western boundary of the site is at medium-high risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The site is within proximity to a primary school, community hall, public house, general store/post office and a doctor's surgery. As such, it is considered that development on site will support a limitation of emissions.</p>
Landscape and historic environment	<p>The whole of the site is situated within the High Weald AONB. The southern part of the site is predominantly screened from view from the trees located along the boundaries, however the northern part of the site is more visible. Development would result in a change in the character of the views experienced by those using the public right of way located directly to the north of the site.</p> <p>As the site is currently an undeveloped greenfield area, development would be a contrast to its existing character.</p> <p>Tree Preservation Orders have been allocated to the trees located along the eastern site boundary in order to protect their amenity value.</p> <p>There are no heritage assets located within or adjacent to the site. Also, the site is not within the setting of any heritage assets.</p>
Land, soil and water resources	<p>It is not possible to confirm if development on the site will result in a loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as a detailed classification assessment has not been undertaken. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England and utilised for strategic purposes, the site is Grade 3 good to moderate. However, there is no detailed information available as to whether the site is Grade 3a land (land classified as the best and most versatile) or Grade 3b (which is not).</p> <p>As the site is greenfield, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p>

Community and facilities	<p>Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. Ticehurst has by far the broadest range of services and facilities within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including a primary school, community hall, three public houses, general store/post office, a church and a doctor's surgery. The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p> <p>The site could deliver up to 48 dwellings, contributing to local housing needs and incorporating affordable housing.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing will be supported by the site's proximity to a sports ground, recreational ground and the Dale Hill Golf Course, encouraging participation in sport and outdoor activities.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is within proximity to frequent public transport links, particularly the number 254 'Tunbridge Wells – Wadhurst – Ticehurst – Hawkhurst' bus service which operates between Mondays and Saturdays.</p> <p>There is the possibility to create an access point into the eastern section of the site via an extension of Steelands Rise.</p> <p>The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

Table 4.6: Site 15: Hillbury Field

Site size: 1.8ha

<p>Biodiversity and geodiversity</p>	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or adjacent to the boundary of the site. The site is not within a SSSI impact risk zone for residential, rural residential or non-rural residential development.</p> <p>There is a corridor of ancient and semi-natural deciduous woodland BAP Priority Habitat located directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the site, which is also recognised as an area of ghyll woodland BAP Priority Habitat. These habitats provide a role for ecological networks and should be retained where possible through new development proposals.</p>	
<p>Climate change</p>	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is not located within identified flood risk zones for fluvial flooding; the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The northern section of the site is not at risk of surface water flooding; however there are patches of land within the south western section of the site at medium-high risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The site is within proximity to a primary school, community hall, public house, general store/post office and a doctor's surgery. As such, it is considered that development on site will support a limitation of emissions.</p>	
<p>Landscape and historic environment</p>	<p>The entirety of the site is situated within the High Weald AONB. The site is predominantly screened from view from the trees located along the boundaries. However, there are views into the site from the residential properties located directly to the north of the site.</p> <p>As the site is currently an undeveloped greenfield area, development would be a contrast to its existing character.</p> <p>The north eastern section of the site is within proximity to the Ticehurst Conservation Area and as such, the proposed allocation has the potential to impact the setting of the conservation area and the heritage assets located within its boundary.</p>	
<p>Land, soil and water resources</p>	<p>It is not possible to confirm if development on the site will result in a loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as a detailed classification assessment has not been undertaken. Based on the 1:250,000 series of ALC maps produced by Natural England and utilised for strategic purposes, the site is Grade 3 good to moderate. However, there is no detailed information available as to whether the site is Grade 3a land (i.e. land classified as the best and most versatile) or Grade 3b (which is not).</p> <p>The entirety of the site is situated within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. The primary source of nitrate pollution occurs from diffuse agricultural water run-off and therefore, the proposed allocation is unlikely to have a bearing on future levels of nitrate pollution.</p> <p>As the site is greenfield area, development would not make the best use of previously developed land.</p>	

<p>Community and facilities</p>	<p>Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. Ticehurst has by far the broadest range of services and facilities within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including a primary school, community hall, three public houses, general store/post office, a church and a doctor’s surgery. The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p> <p>The site could deliver up to 43 dwellings, contributing to local housing needs and incorporating affordable housing.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing will be supported by the site’s proximity to a sports ground, recreational ground and the Dale Hill Golf Course, encouraging participation in sport and outdoor activities.</p>		
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>The site is within proximity to frequent public transport links, particularly the number 254 ‘Tunbridge Wells – Wadhurst – Ticehurst – Hawkhurst’ bus service which operates between Mondays and Saturdays.</p> <p>The site is accessible via the existing road network, via a turning from the B2099 (High Street).</p> <p>The site is within walking distance from Ticehurst village centre, which will limit the need for residents to travel for day-to-day services and facilities.</p>		
<p>Key</p>			
<p>Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)</p>		<p>Likely positive effect</p>	
<p>Neutral/no effect</p>		<p>Uncertain effects</p>	

Current approach in the Neighbourhood Plan and the development of Neighbourhood Plan policies

Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.21 The current version of the Neighbourhood Plan allocates two sites for housing in Ticehurst. These are as follows:
- Site 1: Singehurst
 - Site 8: Land at Orchard Farm
- 4.22 This follows the consideration of the findings of the site assessment undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA findings presented above, consultation events and an ongoing consideration of viability and achievability.
- 4.23 In addition the Neighbourhood Plan recognises that Site 14: Banky Field and Site 15 Hillbury Field (both in Ticehurst) and Site 16: Corner Farm (in Flimwell) have outline planning permission, and supports in principal development at these sites if they meet the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- 4.24 The Neighbourhood Plan also recognises that there is a requirement to deliver a further nine homes in Flimwell. On this basis, one site has been allocated in Flimwell at Wardsdown House.
- 4.25 The Wardsdown House site was taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan for the following reasons:
- The landowner was willing to take forward the sites for not more than 10 dwellings.
 - The site adjoins the current Development Boundary.
 - The site has a good access onto the B2087 with acceptable sight lines.
 - The site has a good pedestrian access to both the east and the west directions over pavements to a bus stop.
 - The site is within Flood Zone 1 very low risk of flooding.
 - Existing residential development is present on both the south and eastern boundaries.
 - The site would not impact on listed buildings or the wider character of a conservation area.
 - The site is screened by Wardsdown Wood to the north.
- 4.26 In terms of potential reasonable alternatives in Flimwell, four more sites initially came forward through the call for sites. However these sites were discounted for the following reasons:
- Site 02: West of A21 (9.3 ha). The site is large and was put forward as able to provide Flimwell's target of 44 dwellings plus the village's need for houses over the next 20-30 years, with a potential for 150-180 houses. This does not fit with the TNP spatial strategy of developments of no more than 10 dwellings. There is also no suitable access for a large development.
 - Site 03: Homan Wood by Villa Flair (0.4 ha). This site has very restricted access which would restrict the number of houses and make it problematic to develop.
 - Site 04: Cherry Hill Nursery (0.6 ha). This site is not contiguous with the Flimwell village development boundary.

- Site 12: Berners Hill (1 ha). Development here would compromise the green gap between Ticehurst and Flimwell.

Neighbourhood Plan policies

To support the implementation of the Vision Statement, aims and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in Section 2.7, the current version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan puts forward 19 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The policies, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are as follows:

Table 4.7: Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan policies

Rural policies

R1	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
R2	Maintain Green Gaps Between Settlements
R3	Protect and Enhance Green Spaces
R4	Develop the Footpath & Cycle Networks

Employment Policies

E1	Protect and Enhance Local Services & Facilities
E2	Support Tourism & Recreation
E3	Promote the Diversification of Agricultural Businesses
E4	Protect & Enhance Existing Business Employment Sites and Encourage Additional Employment Sites
E5	Protect & Enhance the Village Centres
E6	Improve Essential Infrastructure

Housing Policies

H1	The Spatial Plan
H2	Housing Site Allocations
H3	Mix of Housing Sizes & Tenures
H4	Affordable Housing
H5	The Design of New Buildings
H6	Conservation & Heritage

Social & Community Infrastructure Policies

INF1	Improvements to Village Centres
INF2	Community Energy Projects
INF3	Community Areas in Housing Developments

4.27 An initial version of these policies was assessed through the SEA process in September 2017 and a number of recommendations made. This was undertaken with the aim of identifying particular elements of the plan which could be updated to support the sustainability

performance of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan policies were then updated in response to these recommendations.

5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

Introduction

- 5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings in relation to the current Regulation 14 version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.2 The chapter therefore presents an appraisal of the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan under the six SEA Theme headings, and subsequently discusses the overall conclusions at this current stage.

Approach to the appraisal

- 5.3 The appraisal is structured under the six SEA Themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA.
- 5.4 For each theme 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.
- 5.5 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 5.6 Biodiversity features of note within the Neighbourhood Plan area and which may be affected by poorly planned development include the network of ancient and semi-natural woodlands which are located throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area, areas of good quality semi-improved grassland located in the eastern and northern sections of the Neighbourhood Plan area and also an isolated patch of lowland meadows located along the south eastern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 5.7 With regard to the overall spatial strategy, housing Policy H1 (Spatial Plan) sets a spatial strategy that focuses development in the existing villages of Ticehurst and Filmwell. It states that *"No development will be allowed outside the villages' development boundaries [...] unless a countryside location is essential or other exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated"*. Through directing development to the existing built up areas, and imposing strict requirements for any development which is proposed outside the settlement boundaries, this policy should have a minor positive effect on biodiversity through limiting the level of development which may come forward in areas of higher biodiversity value in the open countryside. The approach does

not however preclude development in areas of high biodiversity value in the vicinities of the settlements within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

- 5.8 Rural Policy R3 (Protect and Enhance Greenspaces) sets out a number of areas which the Plan designates as local green space. These spaces include: *“the recreation grounds, village and primary-school playing fields, together with allotments in each village”*. Although this policy will clearly have a positive effect with regards to protecting green spaces, the positive effect on biodiversity may be less pronounced as typically, the features to be protected will have a relatively low biodiversity value. As such this policy could potentially be strengthened further to include provision for protecting woodland, mature trees or other features with high biodiversity value. However the policy sets out the Neighbourhood Plan’s intention to deliver a green infrastructure approach aligned to the work being carried out by Rother District Council, East Sussex County Council and Natural England. This will help support enhancements to ecological networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area through encouraging the development of a multifunctional green infrastructure network which will support enhancements to habitats and biodiversity linkages.
- 5.9 Rural Policy R2 (Maintain Green Gaps Between Settlements) requires that the integrity of different communities in the parish are sustained through the maintenance of the green gaps in between the key settlements in the parish. Although the focus of this policy is not directly related to protecting and enhancing biodiversity, it should have positive effects in this regard by ensuring that development is focused close to existing settlement boundaries, and reducing potential impacts on habitats and ecological networks between: Rosemary Lane and Berners Hill Junction, Flimwell and Steellands Rise and Lower Platts Junction, Ticehurst; between Ticehurst and Stonegate; and Ticehurst and Wallcrouch.
- 5.10 The allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan at Singehurst and Land at Orchard Farm in Ticehurst and Wardsdown House in Flimwell will not take place at locations with significant biodiversity constraints. Potential impacts on habitats on and adjacent to the sites will also be limited through the policy approaches put forward through the Core Strategy, including Core Strategy Policy EN5 (Biodiversity and Green Space).

Climate change

- 5.11 The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies which have direct relevance to climate change considerations. The assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan’s performance with regard to climate change is outlined below, with discussions relating to climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation.

Climate change mitigation

- 5.12 In terms of climate change contribution, per capita greenhouse gas emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.13 Whilst the delivery of homes through the Neighbourhood Plan will increase greenhouse gas emissions either directly through construction, or indirectly through an increase in population, the built footprint of the area and associated travel and consumption behaviours, this level of housing is reflected by the provisions of the Rother Core Strategy. As such the level of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan will not lead to increases in greenhouse gas emissions over and above that would be seen otherwise.
- 5.14 The spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan will help limit per capita greenhouse gas emissions through seeking to focus new development in the settlement in the parish (Ticehurst village) with the broadest range of services, facilities and amenities. This will help reduce the

need for residents to travel and reduce car dependency, helping to limit emissions from road transport.

- 5.15 In terms of renewable energy provision, Policy INF2 (Community Energy Projects) – in line with the UK Government’s Community Energy Strategy which promotes community-led energy projects to reduce carbon emissions – sets out that community energy projects will be supported provided that they meet a range of criteria which place protection on landscape, agricultural land, and existing communities. The supporting text states that the Neighbourhood Plan has an *“ambition to develop a local energy plan to generate electricity from sustainable sources.”* This policy will therefore support climate change mitigation by encouraging local energy production from sustainable sources, and help reduce dependence on electricity from the grid which may be produced from less sustainable sources.
- 5.16 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy which focuses on the design of new buildings – Policy H5 (The Design of All New Buildings). The policy does not include any specific measures with regards to encouraging energy efficient and low carbon design features in homes. On this basis, it would be considered beneficial for the policy to include aspirational aims for new development to include energy efficient measures and to make use of innovative low carbon design features. It should be noted however that the Code for Sustainable Homes was formally withdrawn in a Ministerial Statement published on 25th March 2015, which outlined the Government’s new national planning policy on the setting of technical standards for new dwellings and Local Plan making. In addition to this, the Deregulation Act also brought in a clause which amended the Planning and Energy Act 2008 to prevent local authorities from requiring higher levels of energy efficiency than existing Building Regulations. On this basis, it would not be appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to set specific targets for energy efficiency as part of a design policy.

Climate change adaptation

- 5.17 The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. However, there are areas of land adjacent to the River Rother, the River Limden and their tributaries (southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area) which are located within Flood Risk Zone 3 and are therefore at higher risk of flooding, however it should be noted that this land is predominantly rural agricultural land and there is therefore a limited risk to the built environment within the Neighbourhood Plan. Bearing this current situation in mind it is important to note that climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change (such as flooding due to increased precipitation). This will create an associated need for resilience and adaptation.
- 5.18 In this context, the NPPF states that well planned green infrastructure can help an area adapt to, and manage the risks of climate change (including flood risk). Enabling and providing for green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area is a key way in which the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan can help to promote climate change adaptation measures. Responding to this, Policy R3 (Protect and Enhance Green Spaces) designates a number of areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area as greenspace. Additionally, the supporting text states that *“The Neighbourhood Plan delivers a green infrastructure approach aligned to the work that is being carried out by Rother District Council, East Sussex County Council and Natural England.”* Aligning the approach in this way should have a significant positive effect with regards to the delivery of green infrastructure and wider green networks, and should therefore ensure positive gains with regard to climate change adaptation measures within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 5.19 Whilst none of the sites allocated have significant flood risk issues, it is recognised that the provisions of the NPPF and national policy will help guide development away from flood risk areas and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.

Landscape and historic environment

- 5.20 The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan area is located wholly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It also has a rich historic environment, including the Grade I listed Pashley Manor, four Grade II* and 153 Grade II listed buildings. In addition to these, the Ticehurst Conservation Area covers the central section of Ticehurst village.
- 5.21 In light of these significant historic environment and landscape constraints and designations, the Neighbourhood Plan has a strong focus on conserving and enhancing the historic environment and landscape.
- 5.22 With regard to policies which may have an impact on the landscape of the Neighbourhood Plan area, Policy H1 (the Spatial Strategy) sets out that the Neighbourhood Plan strategy is to focus development in the existing villages of Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate. Consequently, the policy dictates that no development outside the villages' development boundaries will be approved unless countryside location is essential or other special circumstances can be demonstrated. Given that the landscape in the High Weald AONB is highly sensitive to development, this policy should have a positive effect on landscape character by limiting the amount of development which occurs in open countryside.
- 5.23 Rural Policy R1 (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) specifically seeks to deal with development and the AONB. This policy requires that any development coming forward within the AONB will be expected to conserve and enhance its natural beauty – and that it should demonstrate that there will not be unacceptable adverse visual impact on the landscape setting. The policy also seeks to ensure that new development is taken forward with due regard to the provisions of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (2014-2019) or its replacement. Similar provisions in this regard are put forward through the other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, including Policy H5 (Design of All New Buildings), Policy E3 (Promote The Diversification of Agricultural Businesses) and Policy E2 (Support Tourism & Recreation). This provides an appropriate basis for the protection and enhancement of the High Weald AONB.
- 5.24 Rural Policy R2 (Maintain Green Gaps Between Settlements) requires that the integrity of different communities in the parish are sustained through the maintenance of the green gaps between Ticehurst, Flimwell, Stonegate and Wallcrouch. This will help support the distinctiveness of the three main settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan through reducing impacts from new development on landscape and villagescape character between: Rosemary Lane and Berners Hill Junction, Flimwell and Steellands Rise and Lower Platts Junction, Ticehurst; between Ticehurst and Stonegate; and Ticehurst and Wallcrouch. This will be further supported by Policy R3 (Protect and Enhance Green Spaces), which designates nine Local Green Spaces in Ticehurst village, five in Stonegate and three in Flimwell.
- 5.25 Policy H5 and H6 will help conserve and enhance the historic environment – while allowing sensitive development to come forward. In this context Policy H6 (Conservation and Heritage) is a key Neighbourhood Plan policy with regards to conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. It requires that all development *“must have regard to the historic environment and the heritage”* and states that all development in and adjacent to the Ticehurst Conservation Area is required to be carried out in conjunction with the Ticehurst Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan. Given the detailed context provided by a Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan, this will provide an appropriate basis for supporting the integrity of the Ticehurst Conservation Area.
- 5.26 Policy H5 (Design of All New Buildings) also makes provisions for limiting the negative impact of new development on the *“traditional form, layout, character, and style of the parish’s vernacular architecture”*. This will have benefits for landscape and villagescape quality, local distinctiveness and the setting of the historic environment.

- 5.27 In relation to the impact of the allocations proposed for the Neighbourhood Plan, none of the allocations are located within areas of significant sensitivity in relation to the historic environment, and are unlikely to lead to impacts on the fabric and setting of heritage assets.

Land, soil and water resources

- 5.28 The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is covered by Grade 3 agricultural land, although it was not possible to distinguish between areas of Grade 3a (e.g the best and most versatile) and Grade 3b.
- 5.29 In this regard, the Neighbourhood Plan takes a strong focus on limiting the area of greenfield land take by future development. For instance, Policy H1 (Spatial Plan) sets a spatial strategy which focuses development in the existing villages of Ticehurst, Filmwell and Stonegate. It states that “No development will be allowed outside the villages development boundaries [...] unless a countryside location is essential or other exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated”. Through directing development to the existing built up areas, and imposing strict requirements for any development proposals for outside settlement boundaries, this policy should have a minor positive effect on land and soil resources through limiting the level of development which may come forward on agricultural land.
- 5.30 Additionally, Rural Policy R2 (maintain green gaps between settlements) should help to limit development in rural areas of potentially high value in terms of agricultural use. In the built up areas, Rural Policy R3 (protect and enhance greenspaces) provides specific protection to a number of allotments which will have significant value as community growing spaces.
- 5.31 The southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within a Surface Water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). There are defined as an *“area of land that drains into a freshwater water body which has or could have if action is not taken, a nitrate concentration greater than 50mg/l.”* A key component of nitrate pollution is caused by surface water runoff from agricultural activities. Although influencing farming practices may be outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan – it does have an ability to slow down surface water runoff rates (which contribute to agricultural and other pollution entering water bodies) by minimising the area of impermeable surfaces created by the built environment by encouraging innovative drainage systems such as Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDs). However it is considered that the provisions of the NPPF and the Core Strategy in this will help implement such provision in this regard.

Community and facilities

- 5.32 In terms of housing provision, the Neighbourhood Plan allocates 16 homes in Ticehurst and nine homes in Filmwell. Given this is anticipated to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy, it is assumed that this growth quantum will meet the objectively assessed housing needs arising locally. This will be supported by Policy H3 (Mix of Housing Sizes & Tenures) which seeks to facilitate a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures and aims to support the delivery of housing that meets local housing needs, based on the most recent housing market assessment and housing needs analysis for the area.
- 5.33 The delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs will be promoted through Housing H4 (Affordable Housing), which states that developments of 6-9 houses should provide an affordable housing contribution, and new development of over ten dwellings should include provision of at least 40% affordable housing. The policy also seeks to allocate where possible affordable housing to those with a local connection.
- 5.34 The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan sets out a range of provisions which will support the quality of life of the Neighbourhood Plan’s residents. In this respect accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. In this context Policy H1 (Spatial Plan) puts forward a spatial strategy which focuses development in

- Ticehurst village, Flimwell and Stonegate. This is further supported by the housing allocations promoted through Policy H2, which focus new housing in Ticehurst village and Flimwell. This will promote accessibility through directing new development to the locations with the broadest range of services and facilities. In particular, the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on directing new development to Ticehurst, which is the settlement with the broadest range of amenities, including a school, a doctors' surgery, a range of shops, sports and recreational facilities and public houses will promote accessibility in this regards.
- 5.35 Supporting this further, a number of the Neighbourhood Plan policies have a close focus on protecting and enhancing the provision of key services and facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In this regard, Policy E1 (Protect and Enhance Local Services and facilities) aims to *"retain and develop"* the local services and facilities in the three village centres and that changes of use will be resisted in the village retail cores. This will be reinforced by Policy E6 (Improve Essential Infrastructure), which aims to support proposals for new and improved Community Infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and Policy INF1 (Improvements to Village Centres), which seeks to enhance and revitalise the village centres of Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate.
- 5.36 Promoting accessibility further, Policy R4 (Develop the Footpath and Cycle Networks) sets out a range of provisions for enhancements to pedestrian and cycle networks in the parish. This includes through seeking to create and improve footpaths and cycle routes in Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate and promoting proposals for a footpath between Flimwell and Ticehurst along the existing B2087. This will also support health and wellbeing, which has been discussed in more detail below.
- 5.37 The Neighbourhood Plan also has a strong focus on the economic viability of Ticehurst. This is a key consideration as a strong local economy can help promote community vitality and viability. In this context there are a number of policies which are geared towards ensuring that development supports local economic vitality. Policy E4 (Protect and Enhance Existing Business Employment Sites and Encourage Additional Employment Sites), and Policy E5 (Protect and Enhance the Village Centres) should both have significant positive effects in this regard.
- 5.38 The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that tourism is an important element of the local economy in that it *"provides a valuable source of income for shops and businesses in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, offering opportunities for farm diversification and varied employment in the leisure industry"*. As such, Policy E2 (Support Tourism and Recreation) states that development which supports tourism-related and recreational industries will be supported provided that they meet a number of criteria including *"The concept of sustainable rural tourism regarding green travel, sustainable employment and the production and consumption of local produce and materials"*.
- 5.39 The Neighbourhood Plan policies will bring a range of benefits for health and wellbeing. The main impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies on health and wellbeing will be through protecting and enhancing the Neighbourhood Plan area's high quality environment and public realm (as discussed under Section 5.20 onwards) and green infrastructure provision. Green infrastructure provides space – including natural green space – for recreation and relaxation, and access to nature has been evidenced to improve people's health and wellbeing, through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation⁶. This will support physical and mental health and wellbeing. A key policy in this regard is Policy R3 (Protect and Enhance Green Spaces), which designates nine Local Green Spaces in Ticehurst village, five in Stonegate and three in Flimwell. Green infrastructure provision in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be further supported by the supporting text for the policy, which states that *"The Neighbourhood Plan delivers a green infrastructure approach aligned to the work that is being carried out by Rother District Council, East Sussex County Council and Natural England."* This will help ensure that the

⁶ Public Health England (2017)

full range of benefits from a high quality green infrastructure network for the community can be realised.

- 5.40 Green infrastructure provision will be further supported by Policy INF3 (Community Areas in Housing Developments), which places a requirement on developers to provide informal open spaces (in the case of developments of 10 or fewer houses) or, in the case of developments which comprise part of a larger scheme of over 10 dwellings, requires a proportional contribution to future formal community areas on-site. Furthermore, this policy places a requirement on developers to maintain outdoor play spaces and facilities until a formal transfer of management is in place. The supporting text of the policy notes that *“There is evidence to suggest that the distance young children are able to travel from home on their own is limited to one or two streets and younger pre-school children require supervised outdoor play opportunities. Therefore the quality and diversity of the outdoor environment is extremely important if children’s needs for active, creative and social play are to be satisfied.”* As such, this policy should be particularly beneficial for supporting the health and wellbeing of younger children, and also for encouraging community vitality through creating neighbourhoods that young families would wish to live in.
- 5.41 In the context of the above therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan places a strong emphasis on maintaining community services and facilities, promoting the social and economic vitality of the parish, and promoting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents.

Transportation

- 5.42 Based on the 2011 census data, 91.8% of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to at least one car or van and it is the most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area. New development has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional congestion issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area, particularly at any existing congestion hotspots. In this context, the Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to implement policies which will help to promote a modal shift from the private car, limit a growth in traffic in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and help reduce the impact of traffic on the public realm.
- 5.43 In this regard, Policy R4 (Develop the Footpath and Cycle Networks) sets out a range of provisions for enhancements to pedestrian and cycle networks in the parish. This includes through seeking to create and improve footpaths and cycle routes in Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate and promoting proposals for a footpath between Filmwell and Ticehurst along the existing B2087. The supporting text notes that the Neighbourhood Plan also seeks to *“support links between schools and residential areas which are traffic-segregated”* and that: *“New developments on the edge of the village should seek to enhance this access, in line with Rother District CS policy TR3 (i) and (ii).”* Overall, this policy should help to improve the accessibility of walking and cycling as a preferred mode of transport for short distances around the parish and therefore reduce the reliance on cars. Consequently, it should have positive effects on transport objectives.
- 5.44 Policy E6 (Improve Essential Infrastructure) aims to support proposals for new and improved Community Infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Plan area (including bus, train, roads, and car parking). The supporting text also states that parking and the conditions of roads were a particular concern of local employers, and that the Neighbourhood Plan will support new parking areas within Ticehurst. This will support accessibility for car users. However it will do less to encourage modal shift from the private car to sustainable transport modes.
- 5.45 Accessibility to services and facilities will be supported through the spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to focus most development in Ticehurst. Reducing the need to travel for accessing key services and facilities, this will help reduce the need to travel and promote walking and cycling as alternatives the car. This has been discussed in more detail under the community and facilities SEA Theme.

Conclusions at this current stage

Potential significant effects

- 5.46 The assessment has concluded that the current version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'community and facilities' SEA Theme. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on facilitating and enhancing access to community provision in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the delivery of housing in appropriate locations and of a type which meet local needs, approaches which will enhance the economic vitality of the area and the Neighbourhood Plan's support for health and wellbeing through green infrastructure provision and its encouragement of healthier modes of travel. The Neighbourhood Plan is also likely to lead to significant positive effects in relation to the 'landscape and historic environment' theme. This relates to Neighbourhood Plan's close focus on maintaining and enhancing the rural nature of the parish, and protecting the distinctiveness of its three main settlements. The Neighbourhood Plan also sets an appropriate context for supporting the integrity of the High Weald AONB in the parish and on protecting and enhancing the setting of the historic environment.
- 5.47 The current version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will initiate a number of beneficial approaches regarding the 'biodiversity and geodiversity', 'climate change', 'land, soil and water resources' and 'transportation' SEA Themes. This reflects the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on green infrastructure enhancements, reducing the need to travel and encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes. However these are not considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, the scale of proposals and existing Core Strategy policies.

6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 Subsequent to the current consultation on the Regulation 14 version of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan, the draft plan will be updated by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to reflect comments received. This Environmental Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the plan.
- 6.2 The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will then be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Rother District Council, for its consideration with this Environmental Report. Rother District Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Local Plan.
- 6.3 Subject to Rother District Council's agreement, the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to independent examination. The Examiner will consider whether the plan is appropriate having regard to national policy and whether it is in general conformity with the emerging Rother Local Plan.
- 6.4 The Examiner will be able to recommend that the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan is put forward for a referendum, or that it should be modified or that the proposal should be refused. Rother District Council will then decide what should be done in light of the Examiner's report. Where the report recommends modifications to the plan, Rother District Council will invite the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to make modifications to the plan, which will be reflected in an updated Environmental Report. Where the Examiner's Report recommends that the proposal is to be refused, Rother District Council will do so.
- 6.5 Where the examination is favourable, the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will then be subject to a referendum, organised by Rother District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to Rother District Council with a request it is 'made'. Once 'made', the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan for Ticehurst.

Appendix A Context review and baseline

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Context Review

At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy⁷ was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- Set criteria-based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. 'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities').
- Plan positively planning for 'green infrastructure' as part of planning for 'ecological networks'.
- High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)⁸ sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

⁷ European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7%5b1%5d.pdf

⁸ Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

At the local level, Policy EN5 'Biodiversity and Green Space' within the 'Rother Local Plan Core Strategy' (adopted in September 2014) directly relates to the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SEA Theme.

Summary of Current Baseline

European & Nationally Designated Sites

There are no European or nationally designated sites for biodiversity within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area. The nearest nationally designated sites to the Neighbourhood Plan area are the Combwell Wood SSSI (located approximately 2km to the north) and Scotney Castle SSSI (located approximately 1km to the north).

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. In this context, the northern tip of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within an IRZ for residential, rural residential and rural non-residential development.

Locally Designated Sites

There is a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats located within the Neighbourhood Plan area, outlined below:

- A network of ancient and semi-natural woodlands located throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area, including 'Hoadley Wood', 'Church Wood Shaws' and 'Upper Collingtons' in the southern section, 'Garden Wood', 'Starve Wood/Bryantswoods' and 'Long Wood' in the north western section, and 'Ringden Wood', 'Hazelden Wood' and 'Chestnut Field Wood' in the eastern section;
- Patches of good quality semi-improved grassland located in the eastern and northern sections of the Neighbourhood Plan area; and
- An isolated patch of lowland meadows located along the south eastern boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, on land adjacent to Wardsbrook Farm and Roughfield Wood.

It is important to note that not all biodiversity sites are subject to national or European designations, and there are a variety of non-statutory locally important sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Located in the northern section, Bewl Water⁹ is recognised as a nature reserve which supports a variety of birds including Goldcrests, Long Tailed Tits, Wagtails, Skylarks, Lapwings, Kingfishers, Herons and Great Crested Grebe. Additionally, the banks of the reservoir support frogs, newts, dragonflies and voles.

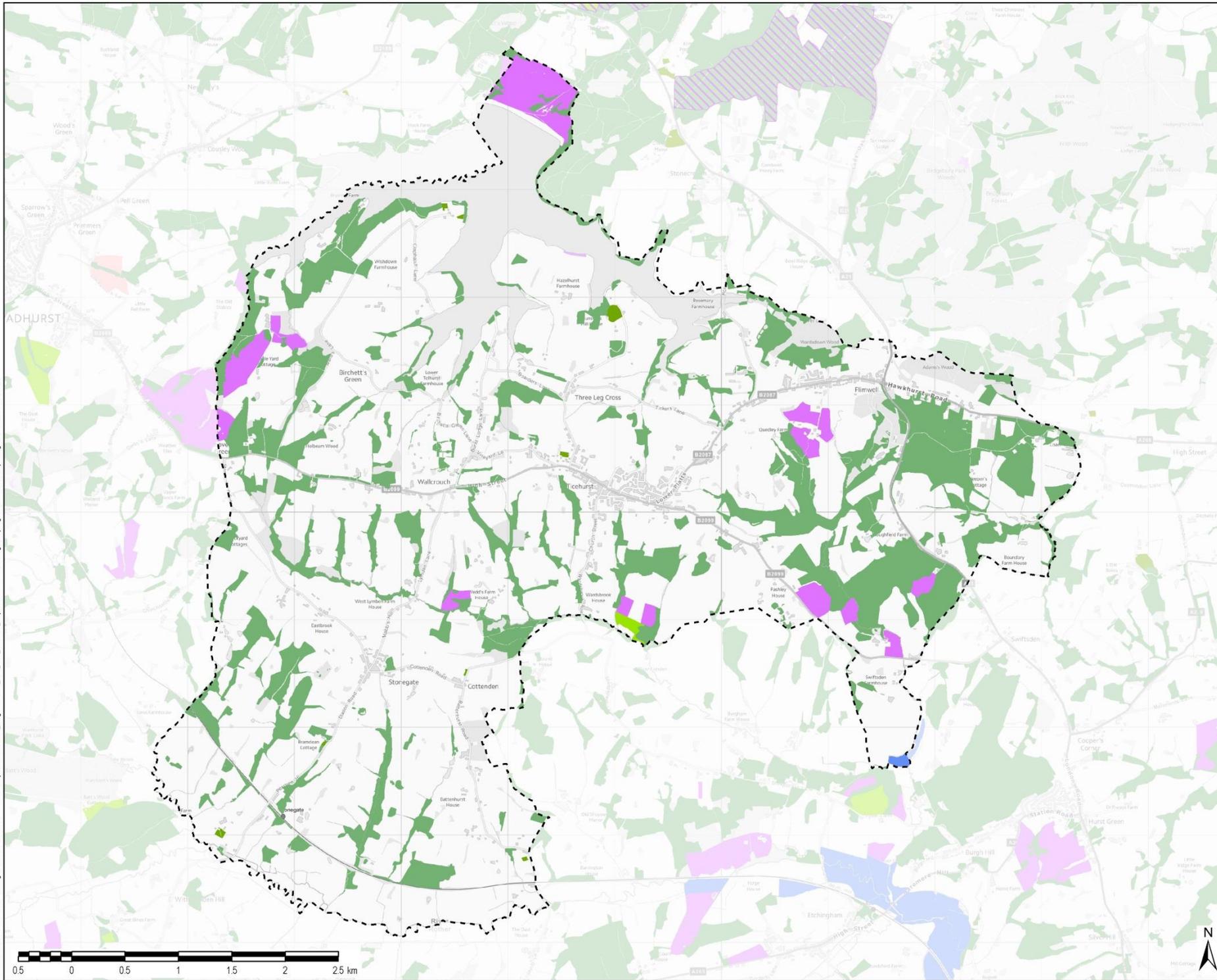
Summary of Future Baseline

Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats.

Benefits for biodiversity have the potential to arise from the increasing integration of biodiversity considerations within decision making through policies within the Local Plan and local initiatives for biodiversity enhancements.

⁹ Bewl Water (no date): 'Things to do: Nature', [online] available to access via: <<https://www.bewlwater.co.uk/things-to-do/nature/>> last accessed [29/11/17]

File Name: \BA\WP-04\4400 - Management Services\004 - Information Systems\60538603_Neighbourhood_Plan_L06_Year302_Maps\Ticehurst NP Steering Group\Figure 3-1 - Biodiversity Designations and Habitats.mxd



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LEGEND

- Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Deciduous Woodland
- Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Heathland
- Lowland Meadows
- Traditional Orchard

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Purpose of Issue: **DRAFT**

Client: **TICEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Project Title: **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE TICEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title: **BIODIVERSITY DESIGNATIONS AND HABITATS**

Drawn CN	Checked JW	Approved RP	Date 30/11/2017
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Rev: **01**

Climate Change

Context Review

In its 2007 strategy on climate change, the European Commission assesses the costs and benefits of combating climate change and recommends a package of measures to limit global warming to 2° Celsius¹⁰. In relation to energy, the Commission recommends that the EU's energy efficiency improves by 20% and the share of renewable energy grows to 20% by 2020.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core planning principle'.
- There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gases (GHG), including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008¹¹. Specifically, planning policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:
 - planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;
 - actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;
 - setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;
 - positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and
 - encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
- Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

The Flood and Water Management Act¹² highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings)
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)¹³

¹⁰ Commission of the European Communities (2007) Limiting Global Climate Change to two degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0002:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹¹ The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO₂ emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

¹² Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

¹³ N.B. The provisions of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force on the 1st of October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.

Further guidance is provided in the document Planning for SuDs¹⁴. This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.

At the local level, the following policies within the 'Rother Local Plan Core Strategy' (adopted in September 2014) directly relates to the Climate Change SEA Theme:

- Policy SRM1: Towards a low carbon future
- Policy EN6: Flood Risk Management
- Policy EN7: Flood Risk and Development

Summary of Current Baseline

Contribution to Climate Change

In relation to GhG emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that the district of Rother has had consistently higher per capita emissions total than that of both the South East of England and England as a whole between 2005 and 2012. However, the district of Rother has also seen a 16.9% reduction in the percentage of total emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012, greater than the reductions for East Sussex (15.5%) and the South East of England (15.9%) but broadly similar to the total reduction for England (16.7%).

Potential effects of Climate Change

The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team¹⁵. UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the South East of England by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario¹⁶ are likely to be as follows:

- The central estimate of increase in winter mean temperature is 2.2°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.8°C; and
- The central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is 16% and summer mean precipitation is -19%.

Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Plan area. These include:

- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;

¹⁴ CIRIA (2010) Planning for SuDs – making it happen [online] available at: <http://www.ciria.org/service/knowledgebase/AM/ContentManagerNet/ContentDisplay.aspx?Section=knowledgebase&NoTemplate=1&ContentID=18465>

¹⁵ The data was released on 18th June 2009: See: <<http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/>> last accessed [04/02/17]

¹⁶ UK Climate Projections (2009) South East 2050s Medium Emissions Scenario [online] available at: <<http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/23907?emission=medium>> last accessed [28/03/17]

- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

Flood Risk

The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within Flood Zone 1, showing that there is a <0.1% chance (1 in 1000) of river flooding in any given year. There are areas of land adjacent to the River Rother, the River Limden and their tributaries (southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area) which are located within Flood Risk Zone 3, and have a >1% chance of being flooded each year. It is important to note that this land is predominantly rural, agricultural land, and there is a limited risk to the built-environment within the Neighbourhood Plan area from river flooding.

Surface water drainage and sewer flooding is a risk for some parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Completed in 2008, the most recent Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)¹⁷ for Rother District highlights the following locations as being prone to highway flooding: 'B2099 Ticehurst High Street' 'Witherenden Road, Stonegate' and 'Tinkers Lane, Filmwell'.

Summary of Future Baseline

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change, with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.

A Critical Drainage Area (CDA) is a discrete geographic area where multiple and interlinked sources of flood risk causes flooding in one or more Local Flood Risk Zones (LFRZ) during severe weather, impacting people, property and/or local infrastructure. Rother District Council may wish to designate their own CDAs (in the absence of any designations from the Environment Agency)¹⁸ within the Neighbourhood Plan area within the future, for reasons such as surface water capacity issues.

In terms of climate change contribution, per capita GhG emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of GhG emissions.

¹⁷ Rother District Council (2008): 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1', [online] available to download via: <<http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/4900/Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment>> last accessed [29/11/17]

¹⁸ GOV.UK (2017): 'Flood Risk Assessment in Flood Zone 1 and Critical Drainage Areas', [online] available to view via: <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-in-flood-zone-1-and-critical-drainage-areas>> last accessed [06/04/17]

Landscape and Historic Environment

Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- Develop 'robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics'.
- Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Adopt 'proactive strategies' to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England¹⁹ sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

The 2014-2019 AONB Management Plan for High Weald²⁰ sets out the long term objectives for conserving the landscape, identifying five key components of character that combine in a distinctive pattern and form the special qualities which contribute to and enhance visitor's understanding and enjoyment of the AONB: 'geology, landform, water systems and climate', 'settlement', 'routeways', 'woodlands' and 'field and heath':

- G1 Objective: To restore the natural function of river catchments;
- G2 Objective: To protect the sandstone outcrops and other important geological features of the AONB;
- G3 Objective: Climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald's valued landscape and habitats;
- S1 Objective: To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside;
- S2 Objective: To protect the historic pattern of settlement;
- S3 Objective: To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald;
- R1 Objective: To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways;
- R2 Objective: To enhance the ecological function of routeways;
- W1 Objective: To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland;
- W2 Objective: To enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale;
- W3 Objective: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands;

¹⁹ HM Government (2010) The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx

²⁰ High Weald AONB (2014): 'AONB Management Plan: 2014-2019', [online] available to download via: <http://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html> last accessed [28/11/17]

- W4 Objective: To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets;
- FH1 Objective: To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management ;
- FH2 Objective: To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands;
- FH3 Objective: To enhance the ecological function of field and heath and part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats;
- FH4 Objective: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath;
- UE1 Objective: To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald;
- UE2 Objective: To increase the contribution of individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB;
- UE3 Objective: To increase community involvement in conservation and enhancement of the AONB;
- UE4 Objective: To develop and manage services that support informal open-air recreation to facilitate 'green' use by all residents and visitors; and
- UE5 Objective: To promote the perceptual and aesthetic qualities that people value.

At the local level, the following policies within the 'Rother Local Plan Core Strategy' (adopted in September 2014) directly relates to the Landscape and Historic Environment SEA Theme:

- Policy EN1: Landscape Stewardship
- Policy EN2: Stewardship of the Historic Built Environment
- Policy EN3: Design Quality
- Policy EN4: Management of the Public Realm

Summary of Current Baseline

National Character Areas

National Character Areas (NCAs) are landscape areas which share similar characteristics, following natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. Developed by Natural England, NCA profiles describe the natural and cultural features that shape each of these landscapes, providing a broad context to its character. The Neighbourhood Plan area is located within NCA 122 'High Weald', with the accompanying profile outlining the following key characteristics of particular relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan area²¹

- A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east-west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of the major rivers, including the Rother;
- A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages, with a dominance of timber-framed buildings with steep roofs;
- Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks;
- An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity and a strong feeling of remoteness; and

²¹ Natural England (2013): 'NCA Profile 122: High Weald (NE508)', [online] available to download via: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4706903212949504?category=587130> last accessed [28/11/17]

- Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.

Landscape Character

Designated in October 1983, the 'High Weald' AONB covers approximately 146,170 ha of land and is the largest AONB within South East England. The five key components of the landscape character for the High Weald AONB are as follows:

- Geology, landform, water systems and climate: deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone. The ridges tend east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB. The landform and water systems are subject to, and influence, a local variant of the British sub-oceanic climate;
- Settlement: dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets, and late medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries;
- Routeways: ancient routeways (now roads, tracks and paths) in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. These routeways are often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks;
- Woodland: the great extent of ancient woods, gills, and shaws in small holdings, the value of which is inextricably linked to the long-term management; and
- Field and heath: small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by (and forming a mosaic with) hedgerows and small woodlands, and typically used for livestock grazing, small holdings, and a non-dominant agriculture, within which can be found distinctive zones of heaths and inned river valleys.

Described as an outstanding cultural landscape, the 'vision for 2034' as stated in the 2014-2019 AONB Management Plan for High Weald is for a landscape which:

- Retains its remarkable character and scenic beauty, and is functioning successfully as an attractive place to live and work;
- Is adapting well to changing economic and climatic conditions;
- Is recognised and valued by those living, working and visiting the area as a nationally important protected landscape championed by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee;
- Is maintained under 'traditional' land management practices, carried out by people connected to the land through work, lifestyle and leisure;
- Displays the benefits of appropriate management in its highly interconnected and biodiverse ancient woodlands, meadows and heathland; and the improving condition of its routeways, sandrock and more naturally functioning river systems.
- Is embracing a low-carbon future with green technologies underpinning a strong rural economy and thriving communities;
- Accommodates an increasing number of households without compromising the characteristic historic settlement pattern as a result of strong planning policies and a sound understanding of the dynamics of sustainable communities;
- Celebrates its woodland history and nurtures a woodland economy whose timber products are highly valued;
- Sees land managed by a myriad of different people through diverse activities that are supported and nurtured where they deliver public benefits;
- Encourages active participation by people, their communities and businesses, in conserving the area and managing change; and

- Provides a warm welcome and high quality experience for residents and visitors seeking inspiration and enjoyment of its landscape and rich, well understood and celebrate cultural heritage.

Historic Environment

The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment. Numerous features and areas of historic environment interest in the Neighbourhood Area are recognised through historic environment designations. These include nationally listed buildings and a scheduled monument, a historic park and garden and a conservation area. Natural England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains the Grade I listed 'Pashley Manor', four Grade II* and 153 Grade II listed buildings.

The Grade II* listed buildings are as follows:

- Courthorpes Whiligh;
- Dunsters Mill House;
- The Parish Church of St Mary; and
- Wardsbrook Farmhouse.

Scheduled monuments are sites of national importance and protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. According to the National Heritage List for England²², the 'Old Boarzell moated site 100m north east of Swiftsden Farm, Little Swiftsden' was designated as a scheduled monument in January 1997. Located at the south eastern corner of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the scheduled monument and is one of a group of medieval moated sites which cluster in the clay vales of the Eastern Wealds.

Historic parks and gardens are noted as a fragile and finite resource by Historic England²³, as they can easily be damaged beyond repair or lost forever. Designated in April 2002, the Grade II* listed 'Ticehurst House Hospital' is a psychiatric hospital with a history dating back to the late 18th century. The description of the site states that *'the site occupies a shoulder of land which slopes down to the north and south from a central spine running from west to east which opens out at the east end of the site to form the plateau on which the hospital building sits. The setting is rural, with the picturesque village of Ticehurst adjacent to the east. Long rural views extend south from the main hospital building, pleasure grounds and parkland across the Rother valley and from the north boundary to Bewl Water'*²⁴.

Conservation areas are designated because of their special architectural and historic interest²⁵. Conservation area appraisals are a tool to demonstrate the area's special interest, explaining the reasons for designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of its character - mentioned within the 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' advice note by Historic England²⁶. Ideally, appraisals should be regularly reviewed as part of the management of the Conservation Area, and can be developed into a management plan. Designated in December 1990, the 'Ticehurst Conservation Area'²⁷ covers the central section of the town including Church Street, St

²² Historic England: National Heritage List for England: <<http://list.historicengland.org.uk>> last accessed [09/05/2017.]

²³ Historic England (2017): 'Registered Parks and Gardens' [online] available at: <<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>> last accessed [07/11/17]

²⁴ Historic England (2017): 'Ticehurst House Hospital', [online] available to access via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001600>> last accessed [28/11/17]

²⁵ Historic England (2017): 'Conservation Areas', [online] available to access via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/conservation-areas/>> last accessed [07/11/17]

²⁶ Historic England (2016): 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Advice Note 1', [online] available to download from: <<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>> last accessed [07/11/17]

²⁷ Rother District Council (2017): 'Conservation Areas', [online] available to access via: <<http://www.rother.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1404>> last accessed [28/11/17]

Mary's Lane and a small section of the B2099 located towards the northern boundary of the conservation area. There are 43 Grade II listed buildings within the boundary of the conservation area, all of which surround the Grade II* listed 'Parish Church of St Mary'. As of November 2017, there is currently no appraisal or management plan in place for the Ticehurst Conservation Area.

Since 2008, Historic England has released an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields, wreck sites and conservation areas deemed to be 'at risk'. The register does not include Grade II listed buildings. The 2017 Heritage at Risk Register for South East England²⁸ shows that none of the heritage assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area are at risk.

It should be noted that not all of the area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are seen as important by local communities. For example, the East Sussex Historic Environmental Record²⁹ contains over 21,000 archaeological sites within the county.

Summary of Future Baseline

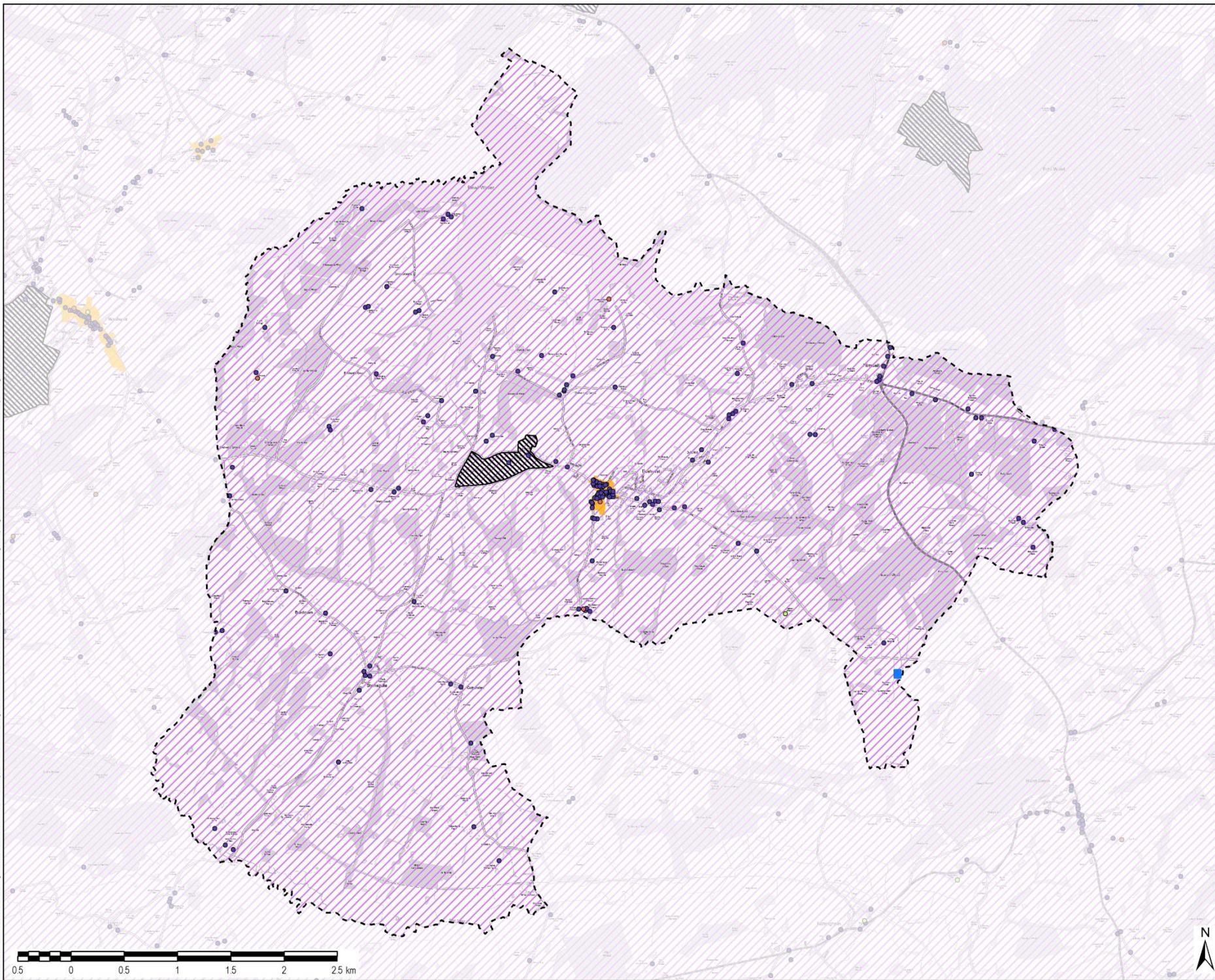
New development areas in the Neighbourhood Plan area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets; for example through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings.

Alongside, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area there may be opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the village and better reveal assets' cultural heritage significance.

New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and townscape character and quality in and around the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes from the loss of landscape features and areas with an important visual amenity value.

²⁸ Historic England (2017): 'Heritage at Risk 2017 Register – South East', [online] available to download via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2017-registers/>> last accessed [28/11/17]

²⁹ East Sussex County Council (2017): 'The Historic Environment Record', [online] available to access via: <<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/archaeology/her/>> last accessed [28/11/17]



THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ISSUE THAT IT WAS ISSUED FOR AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

LEGEND

- Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Garden
- Conservation Area
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Listed building

- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

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Purpose of Issue: **DRAFT**

Client: **TICEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Project Title: **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE TICEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title: **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS**

Drawn CN	Checked JW	Approved NCB	Date 30/11/2017
AECOM Internal Project No: 60538603		Scale @ A3 1:32,500	

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Land, Soil and Water Resources

Context Review

The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy³⁰ presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

The Water Framework Directive drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. The Environment Agency is currently seeking to establish 'Significant Water Management Issues' within catchments with a view to presenting second River Basin Management Plans to ministers in 2015. The plans will seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- Encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances'.
- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply.
- With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan.

Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England³¹, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the Water White Paper³², which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England³³ recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

At the local level, Policy SRM2 'Water Supply and Wastewater Management' within the 'Rother Local Plan Core Strategy' (adopted in September 2014) directly relates to the Land, Soil and Water Resources SEA Theme.

³⁰ European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm

³¹ Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf>

³² Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

³³ Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf>

Policy SRM2: Water Supply and Wastewater Management

Summary of Current Baseline

Quality of Agricultural Land

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality.

In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has not been undertaken in the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, the 1:250,000 scale regional agricultural land classification map³⁴ for London and the South East indicates that the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is covered by Grade 3 agricultural land, although it not possible to distinguish between areas of Grade 3a and Grade 3b.

Watercourses

There are four main waterbodies within the Neighbourhood Plan area:

- The River Rother flows west-east through the southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area towards Rye Bay, where it meets the English Channel.
- The River Limden flows west-east through the central section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, joining the River Rother in the village of Etchingham in the neighbouring parish.
- The Kent Ditch flows north-south through the eastern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area and is primarily used for highways drainage.
- Bewl Water is a reservoir located in the northern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area. Completed in 1975, the reservoir is the largest body of inland water in South East England.

Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The zones show the risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area. Land in the southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area contains Zone 1, Zone 2 and Zone 3 SPZs.

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwater are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs), and as such, they are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. NVZs for 2017-2020 started on January 1st 2017³⁵, including new areas of NVZs and excluding areas that have been re-designated. The southern section of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within a Surface Water NVZ, defined as an 'area of land that drains into a freshwater water body which has or could have if action is not taken, a nitrate concentration greater than 50mg/l.

Summary of Future Baseline

Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improving recycling and composting rates.

In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (and its replacement) are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area. Water

³⁴ Natural England (2011): 'Agricultural Land Classification map London and the South East (ALC007)', [online] available to access via: <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/141047?category=5954148537204736>> last accessed [28/11/17]

³⁵ GOV.UK (2017): 'Nutrient Management: Nitrate Vulnerable Zones' [online] available to access via: <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nutrient-management-nitrate-vulnerable-zones>> last accessed [17/03/17]

quality has the potential to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and future physical modifications to water bodies.

Communities and Facilities

Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', local planning authorities should meet the 'full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing' in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.
- With a view to creating 'sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities' authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.
- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.
- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Ensuring that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.
- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- A core planning principle is to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities'
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.

In relation to other key national messages in relation to health, Fair Society, Healthy Lives ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: "overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities".

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

The Joint Strategic Needs & Assets Assessment (JSNAA) for East Sussex identifies the health and wellbeing needs and assets of the people, communities and populations in East Sussex. At the local level, the 2016 JSNAA profile for Rother District³⁶ outlines a number of key findings relating to population, wider detriments of health, overall health status, healthy lifestyles, health protection, disease and poor health, mental health, older people and places of death. These key findings help to identify the issues and health needs for local communities.

At the local level, the following policies within the 'Rother Local Plan Core Strategy' (adopted in September 2014) directly relates to the Communities and Facilities SEA Theme:

- Policies C01-CO6 within the 'Communities' chapter of the Core Strategy;
- Policies LHN1-LHN6 within the 'Local Housing Needs' chapter of the Core Strategy;
- Policies EC1-EC7 within the 'Economy' chapter of the Core Strategy; and
- Policy IM2: Implementation and Infrastructure.

Summary of Current Baseline

Population

The population of East Sussex increased by 7.0% between the years 2001 and 2011, similar to the totals for the South East of England (7.9%) and England (7.9%). Based on the 2011 census data, approximately 0.7% of the population of East Sussex live within the Neighbourhood Plan area³⁷.

Age Structure

Generally, a higher proportion of residents are within the 60+ age category in the Neighbourhood Plan area (26.6%) in comparison to the totals for the South East (23.4%) and England (22.3%). However this is lower than the total for East Sussex (30.2%). In contrast there are a similar proportion of residents within the working age categories (25-44 and 45-59) in the Neighbourhood Plan area (42.9%) in comparison to the total for East Sussex (42.6%). However this is lower than the totals for the South East of England (46.4%) and England (46.9%). The total number of residents within the younger age categories (0-15 and 16-24) within the Neighbourhood Plan area (30.5%) is comparable to the regional and national totals, but higher than the total for East Sussex (20.1%)³⁸.

Household Deprivation

Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarized below:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick.

³⁶ East Sussex County Council (2016): 'Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group 2016 Needs and Assets Profile' [online] available to download via: <<http://www.eastsussexjsna.org.uk/>> last accessed [28/11/17]

³⁷ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Population Density 2011 (Table QS102EW)

³⁸ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Age Structure 2011 (Table KS102EW)

- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health, or has a long term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

Based on the 2011 census data, fewer households are deprived in 1 or more dimensions within the Neighbourhood Plan area (45.4%) in comparison to the totals for East Sussex (57.7%), the South East of England (52.3%) and England (57.5%). Out of the 45.4% of households which are deprived in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the majority are deprived in one or two dimensions, which is similar to the regional and national averages³⁹.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
 1. 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
 2. 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.
 3. 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
 4. 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.

Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:

- **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index:** The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
- **Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index:** The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardized geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people.

³⁹ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Households by Deprivation Dimensions 2011 (Table QS119EW)

In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalized into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales. There are three LSOAs that are either fully or partially in the Neighbourhood Plan area, described below:

E01021139: Rother 001D covers approximately 15% of the Neighbourhood Plan area and is located within the central-northern section, including the settlement of Ticehurst. The LSOA is within the top 20% least deprived decile for the outdoors sub-domain, and the top 50% least deprived decile for the health deprivation and disability domain, the crime domain, the living environment domain, the income deprivation affecting children index, and the adult skills sub-domain. In contrast, the LSOA is within the top 50% most deprived deciles for the remaining IMD categories and as such, this LSOA is one of the top 50% most deprived in England.

E01021140: Rother 001E covers approximately 45% of the Neighbourhood Plan area in the north western and north eastern sections, including the settlement of Filmwell. There are notable contrasts between the IMD categories. The LSOA is within the top 30% most deprived decile for the indoors sub-domain, the top 20% most deprived decile for the barriers to housing and services domain, and the top 10% most deprived decile for the geographical barriers sub-domain. Comparatively, the LSOA is within the top 50% least deprived deciles for the remaining IMD categories. Overall, this LSOA is one of the top 30% least deprived in England.

E01021141: Rother 001F covers approximately 40% of the Neighbourhood Plan area in the south and south western sections, including the settlement of Stonegate. There are a number of contrasts between the IMD categories. The LSOA is within the top 30% most deprived decile for the living environment domain, the top 20% most deprived decile for the barriers to housing and services domain, and the top 10% most deprived decile for the indoors sub-domain and the geographical barriers sub-domain. Comparatively, the LSOA is within the top 30% least deprived deciles for the remaining IMD categories. Overall, this LSOA is one of the top 30% least deprived in England.

Housing Tenure

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, 76.0% of residents either own their home outright or with a mortgage, higher than the totals for East Sussex (69.2%), the South East of England (67.6%) and England (63.3%). There are fewer residents living within privately rented accommodation in the Neighbourhood Plan area (9.7%) in comparison to East Sussex (17.8%), the South East of England (16.3%) and England (16.8%). The number of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area living in socially rented accommodation (11.6%) broadly aligns to the total for East Sussex (11.0%), but is lower than the totals for the South East of England (13.7%) and England (17.7%)⁴⁰.

Education

Based on the 2011 census data, 16.1% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area have no qualifications, lower than the totals for East Sussex (22.6%), the South East of England (19.1%) and England (20.7%). Comparatively, 33.4% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area have a Level 4 qualification or above, which is greater than the totals for East Sussex (26.2%), the South East of England (29.9%) and England (27.4%)⁴¹.

Employment

In regards to employment within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the following three occupation categories support the most residents:

- Skilled trades occupations (17.7%)
- Professional occupations (17.2%); and
- Managers, directors and senior officials (16.7%);

⁴⁰ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Tenure-Households 2011 (Table QS405EW)

⁴¹ ONS (no date): Census 2011: Highest Level of Qualification 2011 (Table QS501EW)

Overall, 51.6% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are employed in one of the above three occupation categories, compared with 42.0% for East Sussex, 42.1% in the South East of England and 39.7% in England. This suggests that the Neighbourhood Plan area has a highly skilled workforce, supported by the percentage of residents with a Level 4 qualification or above, previously mentioned. In contrast, fewer residents are employed within 'administrative, professional and technical occupations', 'sales and customer service occupations', 'process plant / machine operatives occupations' and 'elementary occupations', in comparison to the regional and national trends⁴².

General Health

Deprivation is a significant contributor to poor health and can have adverse effects on wellbeing, with elements related to poor housing quality, living environment, income and employment. Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, 85.0% of residents consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', higher than the totals for East Sussex (79.4%) and England (81.4%) but broadly aligning to the total for the South East of England (83.6%). In comparison, 3.7% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves to have 'bad health' or 'very bad health', lower than the totals for East Sussex (5.8%) and England (5.4%) but broadly aligning to the total for the South East of England (4.3%)⁴³.

There is now robust evidence that access to the natural environment improves people's health and wellbeing through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation. In this context, residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to 'Bowl Water'. Completed in 1975, the reservoir is the largest body of inland water in South East England, with opportunities to get involved in a variety of water sports, cycling, walks and fishing. As such, the reservoir is an important tourist destination and contributes to the visitor economy of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Disability

In general terms, the total number of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area who report that their day-to-day activities are limited 'a little' or 'a lot' (15.1%) broadly aligns with the total for the South East of England (15.7%), but is lower than the totals for East Sussex (20.3%) and England (17.6%). Therefore, 84.9% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area report that their day-to-day activities are not limited⁴⁴.

Summary of Future Baseline

Similar to other parts of the UK, the population of the Neighbourhood Plan area is ageing. This has the potential to place pressures on the existing services and facilities within the timeframe of the Neighbourhood Plan. This could negatively impact the future vitality of the local community and economy.

In regards to the IMD categories, the LSOAs within the Neighbourhood Plan area are within some of the most deprived deciles for the 'geographical barriers' sub-domain and the 'barriers to housing and services' domain. The suitability of housing for local requirements depends in part on the successful implementation of policies outlined in the Local Plan.

Health and wellbeing levels within the Neighbourhood Plan area are generally good, with a high percentage of residents reporting 'good' or 'very good' health, and a low percentage of residents reporting that their activities are limited in some way.

In addition to the key findings outlined within the 2016 JSNAA report for the Rother District, obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

⁴² ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Occupation 2011' (Table KS608EW)

⁴³ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'General Health 2011' (Table QS302EW)

⁴⁴ ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Long-term Health Problem or Disability 2011' (Table QS303EW)

Transportation

Context Review

European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.

Adopted in 2011, the third Local Transport Plan (LTP)⁴⁵ for East Sussex sets out the objectives, future direction, and vision for transport until 2026, and is supported by short term Implementation Plans showing how the vision is being delivered. The vision for the LTP is *'to make East Sussex a prosperous county where an effective, well managed transport infrastructure and improved travel choices help businesses to thrive and deliver better access to jobs and services, safer, healthier, sustainable and inclusive communities and a high quality environment'*. The following transport specific objectives (amongst others) support this vision:

- Improve strategic and local connectivity of communities to facilitate economic and physical growth and renewal;
- Reduce congestion by improving the efficiency of the transport network and encouraging greater use of sustainable modes of transport;
- Improve maintenance and efficient management of the transport network; Improve road safety for vulnerable road users – pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders;
- Improve access to jobs, service and leisure; and
- Improve personal health and wellbeing by encouraging and enabling increased physical activity through active travel.

At the local level, the following policies within the 'Rother Local Plan Core Strategy' (adopted in September 2014) directly relates to the Transportation SEA Theme:

- Policy TR1: Management and Investment in Strategic Accessibility
- Policy TR2: Integrated Transport
- Policy TR3: Access and New Development
- Policy TR4: Car Parking

Summary of Current Baseline

Rail Network

Residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to Stonegate and Wadhurst⁴⁶ railway station. The station is served by South Eastern Railway services between Hastings and London Charing Cross. There are hourly services direct to London Charing Cross from Stonegate (journey time approximately 75 minutes, with half hourly services during peak times) and half hourly services to London from Wadhurst. There are also services from both stations to Hastings (journey time approximately 35 minutes) and intermediate stations including Battle.

⁴⁵ East Sussex County Council (2011): 'Local Transport Plan: 2011-2026' [online] available to download via: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/localtransportplan/ltp3/downloadltp3/> last accessed [28/11/17]

⁴⁶ National Rail (2017): 'Stonegate Station: Departure Board', [online] available to access via: <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/sog/details.html> last accessed [29/11/17]

Bus Network

In regards to the bus network, as of November 2017 the interactive route map⁴⁷ provided by East Sussex County Council shows a number of services passing through the settlements of Ticehurst and Filmwell within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including Routes 254, 255, 293, 299, 305 and 354. The principal service is Route 254 'Tunbridge Wells – Wadhurst – Ticehurst – Hawkhurst'. Operated by 'Stagecoach in Hastings', there are frequent services (one per hour) between 09:00-18:00 between Monday and Saturday, with at least two services per hour between 07:00-09:00 between Monday and Friday.

Road Network

The Neighbourhood Plan area is well connected to the national road network. Key routes are as follows:

- The A21 passes through the eastern section of the Neighbourhood Plan areas, connecting the parish to the surrounding towns of Royal Tunbridge Wells (approximately 15km to the north west) and Hastings (approximately 40km to the south).
- The A268 extends eastwards from the Neighbourhood Plan area, connecting to the surrounding settlements of Hawkhurst (approximately 10km to the east) and Rye (approximately 40km to the south east). The B2087 connects Filmwell to Ticehurst, and provides a corridor between the A268 and the B2099.
- The B2099 passes through the central section of the Neighbourhood Plan area, through the settlement of Ticehurst and extending north westwards through the village of Wadhurst (approximate 5km distance) and connecting to the A267 just south of Royal Tunbridge Wells.
- A network of country roads are present in the parish, including Stonegate Road, Limden Lane, Wardsbrook Road, Ticehurst Road, Birchett's Green Lane, Borders Lane, Tinkers Lane and Three Legs Cross Road.

Cycle Footpath and Network

Opened in 1983, the 'Sussex Border Path'⁴⁸ extends for approximately 240km around the inland boundary of the county of Sussex. Split into a sequence of 18 walks, the Neighbourhood Plan area is located along Walk 12 'Cousley Wood to the Moor, Hawkhurst'. The walk traverses the northern boundary of Bewl Water before extending south eastwards through the semi-natural and ancient woodlands of 'Ringden Wood', 'Lodgefield Wood' and 'Hazelden Wood'.

There are no national cycle routes passing through the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Availability of Cars and Vans

Based on the 2011 census data, 91.8% of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to at least one car or van, which is over 10% higher than the totals for East Sussex (78.1%) the South East of England (81.4%) and England (74.2%). The total number of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area with access to at least two (39.6%), three (11.6%) and four (5.9%) cars or vans is also greater than the regional and national totals.

Travel to Work

The most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van (42.1%), higher than the totals for East Sussex (38.7%) and England (36.9%), but broadly aligning to the totals for the South East of England (41.3%). A higher percentage of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area choose to catch a train to work or work mainly from home in comparison to

⁴⁷ East Sussex County Council (2017): 'East Sussex Interactive Bus Map', [online] available to download via: <<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/public/buses/routes>> last accessed [29/11/17]

⁴⁸ Sussex Ramblers (no date): 'The Sussex Border Path: Walk 12 (Cousley Wood to the Moor, Hawkhurst)', [online] available to access via: <<http://www.sussexborderpath.co.uk/>> last accessed [29/11/17]

the regional and national trends. In contrast, fewer residents choose to cycle to work, catch a bus, minibus or coach to work, or walk to work in comparison to the regional and national trends. 32.9% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are not in employment, lower than the totals for East Sussex (36.1%) and England (35.3%), but broadly aligning to the total for the South East of England (32.1%).

Summary of Future Baseline

New development has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional congestion issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area, particularly at any existing congestion hotspots. Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network may be mitigated in part by the latest Local Transport Plan, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations.

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