

# Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan

2015-2030



*The Crown, in Wye and Crundale Downs Special Area of Conservation*

### ***Dedication***

***This document is dedicated to Ian Coulson (1955 - 2015). Ian's infectious enthusiasm for conserving Wye was shown through his contributions to the Village Design Statement and Village Plan, and more recently in propelling the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan as chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Group 2012-15.***

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## Foreword

*Neighbourhood Plans* are new under the *Localism Act* and give villagers and the Parish Council greater influence over Planning and how Wye and the surrounding Parish will develop. Specifically over:-

- Housing development
- Business development
- Protecting and enhancing green spaces
- Transport and traffic management
- Community facilities provision

Neighbourhood Plans have their origins in the Government's determination to ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions that affect them. The Wye with Hinxhill Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNP) has been developed to establish a vision, set of principles and policies to help deliver the community's aspirations and needs for the period 2015 to 2030. Unlike the Wye Village Design Statement which was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, this Plan will become an essential part of the overall Development Plan for Ashford Borough and one of the key documents for determining land-use planning decisions in the Parish for that period.

This document has been revised and approved by the Parish Council following the analysis of responses received from statutory consultees, residents, landholders and businesses within the parish. The document will be submitted formally to Ashford Borough Council (ABC) who will consult for a further 6 week period. The comments they receive will form the basis of a public examination. The examiner may recommend further changes. The Plan may be further amended before it will be brought back to the residents (those on the electoral roll) and subjected to a referendum. If more than 50% of those who take part in the referendum are in support, the plan will then, with the new Ashford Local Plan, become the *statutory* Development Plan for Wye with Hinxhill Parish for the next 15 years.

As was stated in the booklet 'Planning for the Future of Wye', published at the outset of this process in early summer 2012, this is a vital time for residents to agree broadly what is important, so we can set out to secure Wye's future as a **sustainable rural community**. No plan can solve every problem and satisfy everyone, but we have committed to forming one that reaches a broad consensus to encourage development, while carefully protecting what is good and enhancing it further to deliver sustainability and quality of life for all.

The main text is supported by Appendices and Background Documents (BDs) that summarise research and workshop outputs. All documents are available online from the Parish Council's web site

[www.wyewithhinxhillpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/](http://www.wyewithhinxhillpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/)

## Schedule of policies

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## 1 Preparing the plan

### 1.1 Purpose

In April 2012 the Localism Act 2011<sup>1</sup> amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, introducing rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development in their community by preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan which can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood. This document is a draft of the Wye with Hinxhill Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNP) as defined by the Act.

### 1.2 Submitting body

The plan is submitted by Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council (the Parish Council), which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

### 1.3 Neighbourhood Area

The Plan applies to the Parish of Wye with Hinxhill (the Parish) in Ashford Borough, Kent as shown in Figure 1.1.

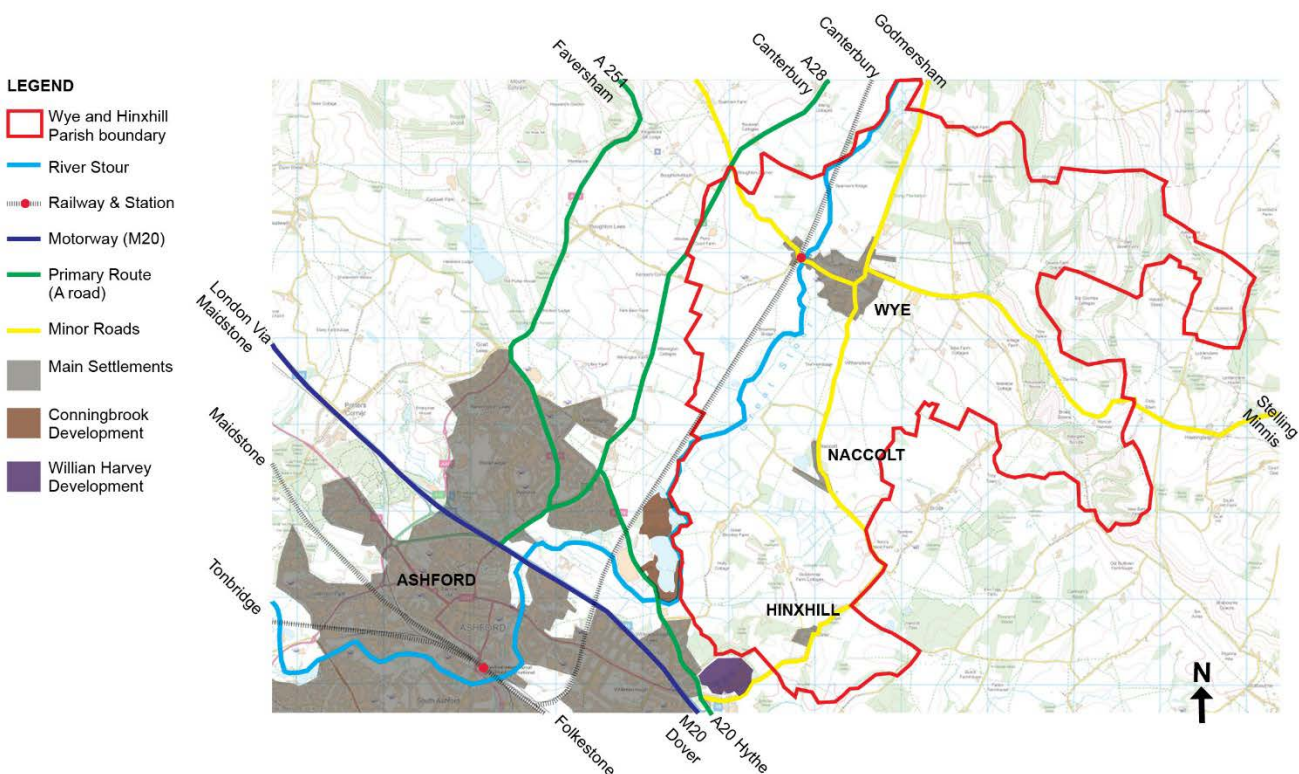


Figure 1.1 Wye with Hinxhill Parish boundary in local context with nearby major development allocations marked

<sup>1</sup> Which received Royal Assent on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011

In accordance with part 2 of the Regulations, Ashford Borough Council (ABC)<sup>2</sup>, the local planning authority publicised the application from the Parish Council and advertised a consultation period beginning on 9<sup>th</sup> November and ending on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012. The application was approved by the Cabinet of ABC on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and the Parish designated as the Neighbourhood Area<sup>3</sup>.

The Parish Council confirms that this Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP):

- relates only to Wye with Hinxhill Parish and to no other Neighbourhood Areas.
- is the only NDP in the designated area. No other Neighbourhood Plan exists nor is in development for part or all of the designated area.

#### 1.4 Context

The Plan must:

- have appropriate regard to national planning policy;
- contribute to sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area and
- be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

Wye with Hinxhill Parish is part of Ashford Borough (the Borough). The local strategic context (see 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point above) is therefore set by ABC's Core Strategy which was adopted on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008<sup>4</sup> and the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010<sup>5</sup>.

#### 1.5 Plan Period, Monitoring and Review

It is intended that the Plan will run until 2030 – the proposed plan period for the emerging Ashford Local Plan is 2011-2030. It is however, a response to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today and it is recognised that current challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period.

The Parish Council, as the WNP authority, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan (including formal assessments every 5 years) to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery. The WNP will be reviewed after the formal adoption of the new Local Plan (expected in 2017).

#### 1.6 Plan Development Process

The Parish has strong community cohesion and has previously produced documents to influence the development of the area, including a Parish Plan (2006) and a Village Design Statement (2000). Background Documents 1 and 2 (BD1 and BD2) show how the community has been kept well informed about progress on the development of the WNP and how residents, employees and the owners/managers of businesses in the Parish have engaged with the plan process. The plan has been produced by the Wye Neighbourhood Plan Group (the Group) – a Working Group of the Parish Council – which was set up in spring 2012. It has consisted of 8-12 parish councillors and residents and is chaired by

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix A contains a list of abbreviations used in this Plan

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/?page=neighbourhood-plans>

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/core-strategy-2008>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/tenterden-and-rural-sites-dpd>



a resident. A freelance community planner, environmental architect and planning consultants have advised the group.

This submission is supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (BD9) that addresses the impact of development proposed on the sensitive environments in the parish. The Basic Conditions Statement identifying the conformity of Wye with Hinxhill Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNP) with national and local planning policies is also appended as BD14. The SEA/HRA screening report prepared by ABC is provided as BD15. The Consultation Document analysing responses to the pre-submission consultation draft is presented as BD16.

### *1.6.1 Housing Need*

Housing need was established by:

- asking residents about their housing needs in the household survey given out to every household in July 2012,
- commissioning a Housing Needs Survey from Action for Communities in Rural Kent in the winter of 2012,
- and through the series of workshops undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan group during the plan period.

The July 2012 survey established that 75.3% of households considered that it was ‘very important’ (43.9%) or ‘important’ (31.4%) to provide affordable housing. The Housing Need Survey established that there was a need for up to 28 affordable homes, for the following local households:

- 4 single people,
- 9 couples without children,
- 15 families

The parish council also consulted closely with ABC’s Housing department.

### *1.6.2 Potential sites*

These were identified through:

- the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document (TRSDPD) October 2010.
- a series of workshops undertaken by the NPG mentioned above.
- by reviewing the ‘Call for Sites’ undertaken by Ashford Borough Council in spring 2014.
- discussions with specific landowners and developers (BD11).
- reviewing the WYE3 Framework Masterplan produced by Imperial College London.

The assessment of sites is detailed in Section 2.4, Planning Context.

### *1.6.3 A picture of life in the parish*

This was obtained through:

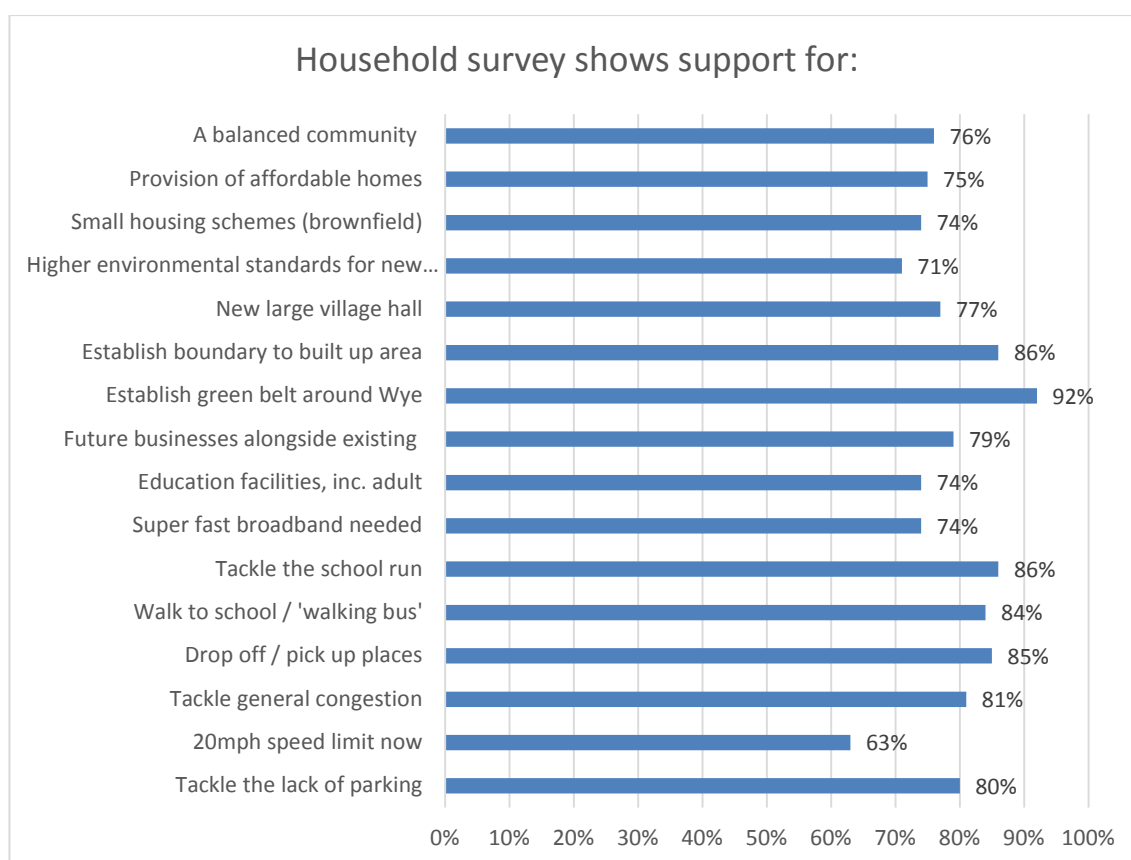
- incorporating and building on the Wye Village Design Statement 2000,
- reviewing the results of the previous Wye Parish Plan 2006,
- a household survey undertaken in July 2012 which achieved a 75% response rate,
- a survey of views on the proposed site of the Free School undertaken in January 2013 and
- a survey of under 18s taken at school bus stops and at an event for young people in April 2013.

### 1.6.4 Design of development and housing

The objectives and policies for the design of new developments and housing have been based on the Wye Village Design Statement 2000 and followed up through household surveys, workshops and community events.

### 1.7 Community engagement

From the outset, the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Group have sought to engage with as wide a range of residents and other stakeholders as possible. The programme of community engagement began with the publication of a booklet in early summer 2012, explaining the Plan process. This was followed by a household survey carried out in July 2012. The survey was delivered to all households, generated a 75% response and produced over 10,000 pages of information. The main highlights of that survey are listed below (for further detail of community engagement see BD1 and BD2).



#### 1.7.1 Scenarios and workshops

The information from the survey, as well as the Principles from the Wye Village Design Statement and other documents, were provided to consultants recruited by the Parish Council, to prepare a series of scenarios that future development might take. These scenarios were used to inform the first of a series of

five planned workshops, and exhibitions of their results, held between October 2012 and April 2013<sup>6</sup>. The scenarios have been adapted and developed during the course of the last two years and form the basis of the final proposals maps that show which areas of land have been allocated for development in the Plan. The close agreement between conclusions reached for WNP and the TRSDPD is evident from Table 2.1.

#### 1.7.2 Free school survey

The application from the local Free School group for funding to establish a new secondary school in Wye was successful. However, by the end of 2012, there was growing uncertainty in the community over where the proposed Free School should be located. To clarify the views of the village, a questionnaire was devised by the Neighbourhood Plan Group and distributed to every household in Wye in January and February 2013 (for full details see BD2). The sponsors of the Free School (United Learning), the Education Funding Agency (the government's agency) and landowners Telereal Trillium, now plan to locate the Free School on the Kempe Centre site with adjacent playing fields within WYE3, as described in 6.3.1.

#### 1.7.3 Public meetings

A series of public meetings has been held to which residents and other stakeholders including Wye Business Association, landowners, the district council (ABC), Kent County Council (KCC) and potential developers have been invited to attend. Most of these meetings were held in Wye Parish Church and have ensured that residents have been kept abreast of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan at every stage.

#### 1.7.4 Transport study

Transport, road safety and congestion have figured strongly from the outset. The results of the household survey (see BD1) highlighted several concerns, in particular, the buildup of long queues at the level crossing, and these were addressed in the transport workshop (Workshop V – see BD2). As a result, the Parish Council commissioned an appraisal of traffic and parking by the transport consultancy MLM, modelling the impact of various different growth scenarios on traffic flows in and around the village (BD4).

### 1.8 Evidence Base Overview

The analysis, principles and proposals in this Neighbourhood Plan have drawn on a variety of sources.

- **Population, employment, housing, deprivation, car ownership** were obtained largely from Kent County Council's Research and Evaluation Unit Ward Profile for Wye with Hinxhill Parish March 2012 based on the Census 2010 .
- **Housing need** was obtained from an independent survey carried out by Action for Communities in Rural Kent (see BD6) supported by information provided by ABC housing register, local estate agents, and the views of residents in the household survey and at the public meetings and workshops.
- **Housing** generally from ABC's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009 and reviewed 2014 and Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 (available from [www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk)).

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<sup>6</sup> Full reports are available from: <http://www.wyewithinxhillpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/>

- **Life in the village** was obtained from the Wye Village Design Statement (2000, BD8), Parish Plan (2006), the views of residents from the household survey (see BD1 for the full report), consultation with Wye Business Association, public consultations and workshops, and meetings with key service providers including the doctors' surgery and schools in the village.
- **Landscape** was obtained from the Character of the environment description unit (LDU) Kent Downs AONB Unit and from professional landscape assessment carried out by Mark Hanton (see BD3).
- **Flood risk** was obtained from the Environment Agency.
- **Transport from** the MLM study commissioned by the Parish Council and Parking Surveys undertaken in 2006 and 2014 (BD4).
- **Economy** from the Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners Rural Economic Assessment jointly commissioned by the Parish Council and ABC (BD7).

More detailed information on this extensive evidence base, including reports on the village consultations and workshops, can be found in BD2 and on the parish council website

<http://www.wyewithinnoxhillpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/>

## 2. Wye with Hinxhill - Our Parish (the Neighbourhood Area)

Wye with its surrounding parish is acknowledged to be a place of significant historic and landscape importance that has managed to retain its special characteristics. It is important in planning for the future to understand Wye's heritage and its role as a hub for other settlements nearby. Within the parish to the south of Wye are two small settlements; Naccolt which lies about 1.5 miles along Oxenturn Road is largely comprised of buildings associated with the now redundant Brickworks, while Hinxhill further south, is home to the Hinxhill Estate, a cluster of commercial and residential buildings at Court Lodge Farm, and an attractive 13<sup>th</sup> century church. The following section gives a short description of the important features of Wye and sets a framework for how future growth should be managed (a more detailed overview is given in BD5).

### 2.1 The structure of Wye, its heritage and landscape

#### 2.1.1 *The historic village of Wye*

Wye is located 5km north east of Ashford within the Kent Downs AONB. It is situated on the River Stour as it flows from Ashford to Canterbury cutting through the Downs and forming the Stour Valley (Figures 1.1 and 2.1a and b). Wye and Crundale Downs to the east is an important European Special Area of Conservation for biodiversity (EU Code UK0012831). The population of 2,500 occupies many historic buildings in the village's built Conservation Area, and additional housing developments built since the 1940s. There are extremely important sites in the settlement focus dating from the Prehistoric Period and Roman and early medieval sites nearby. Details are given in the Historic Towns Survey for Wye (KCC and English Heritage, 2005) which was produced as supplementary guidance for Local Plans and provides an assessment of the development of Wye as a medieval market town.

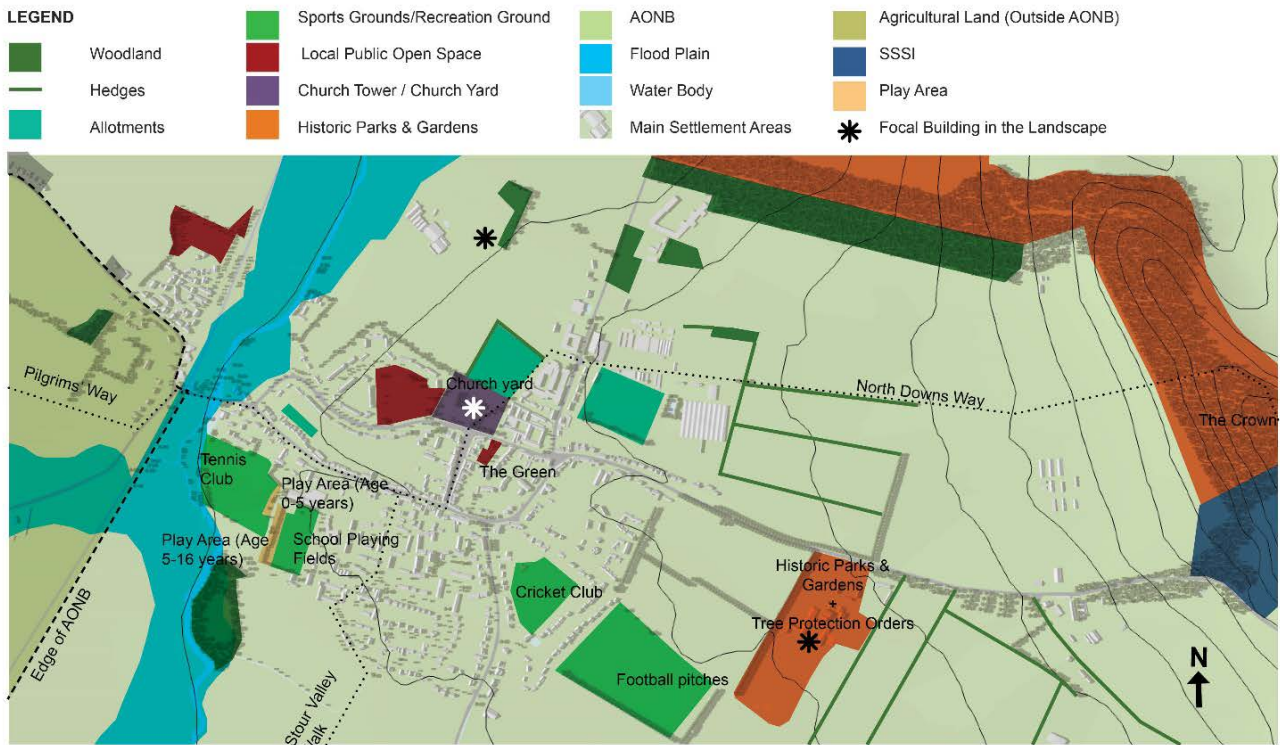


Figure 2.1a Landscape setting for Wye. Note that Wye village lies within the Kent Downs AONB

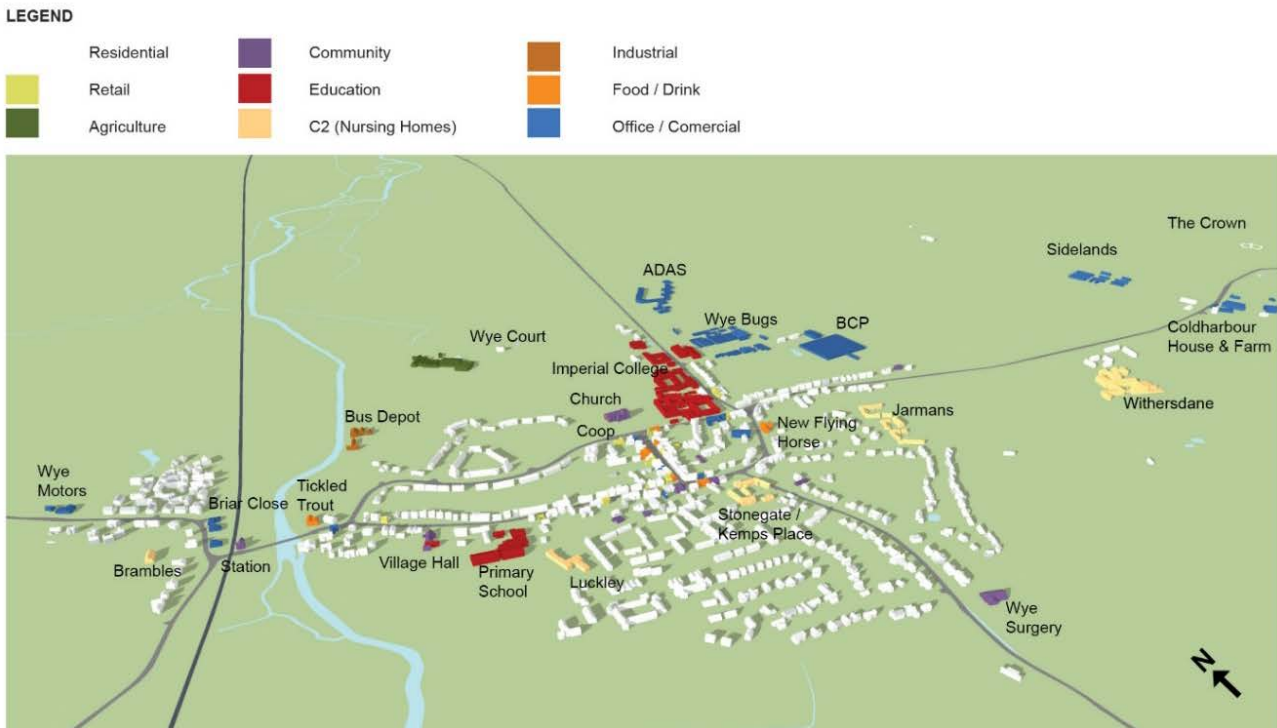


Figure 2.1b Land use plan for Wye.

Wye supports a very active local economy and business association. The village is home to many small businesses. The hospitality sector is also well represented, reflecting Wye’s role as a tourist destination, with a number of bed and breakfasts, four pubs and four separate restaurants. The village retains essential facilities including a library and post office in addition to the small Co-op supermarket. There is a fortnightly farmers market and an annual beer and food festival. There are over 50 local activity associations, as well as three active churches. The village aspires to a sustainable lifestyle through local business initiatives such as the Community Farm.

The College buildings (due to their extent and architectural importance), together with the Church and the Bridge over the river Stour still dominate the village and how it functions. The Conservation Area status means that little can change in the heart of the village. This makes the context for planning the future of Wye one of preserving a valued set of assets whilst allowing for carefully considered and planned growth. The historic form of Wye is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

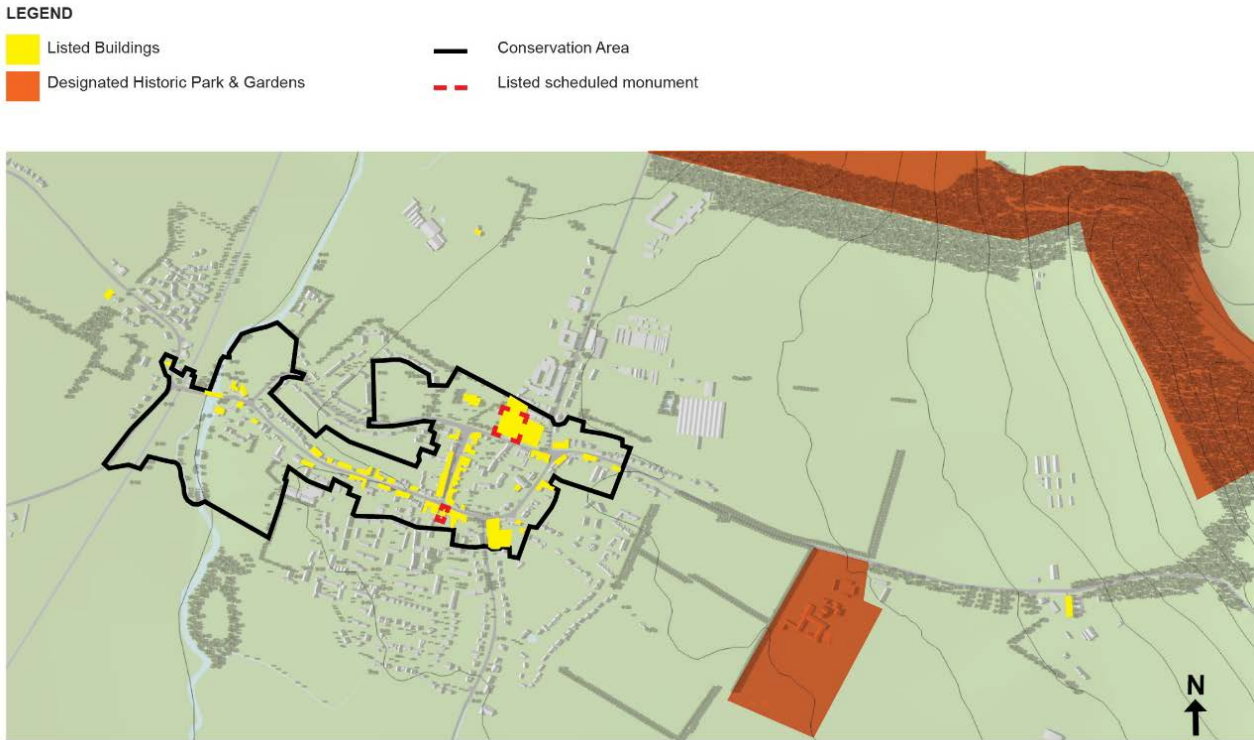


Figure 2.2 The historic legacy of Wye

### 2.1.2 Landscape and statutory protection of the surrounding environment

The importance of the historically significant and naturally beautiful landscape around Wye is recognised and protected. The village and much of the surrounding Parish fall within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Olantigh Park is further protected as a Grade II Park listed in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens, while the grounds of Withersdane Hall are locally listed. Any development proposals will need to be observant of the statutory protections of the local landscape and conscious of their impact on such a sensitive context.

The ecological value and biodiversity of the surrounding chalk grassland, including rare species of plants and insects, is also nationally and internationally recognised and afforded statutory protection. The Wye and Crundale Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC EU designation UK0012831), Wye National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), run along the Kent Downs to the east of the village. These protected environments are characterised by fragments of ancient woodland and calcareous grassland, both UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) Priority Habitats. The Parish also has two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas within its boundary.

The Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) the UK's only native dormouse and a protected species (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Schedule 5) can be found in the woodlands around Wye. The SSSI grassland adjacent to Wye is rich in orchid species, including the specially protected (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Schedule 8) spider orchids *Ophrys sphegodes* and *O. fuciflora*. It also provides habitat for the Black-veined Moth (*Siona lineata*) which is a protected species.

Wye is on the North Downs Way, the Pilgrims Way, the Stour Valley Walk (Figure 2.1a), on Sustrans Cycle Route 18 and adjacent to a network of bridleways. A new off-road stretch of Cycle Route 18 was opened in May 2014 close to Wye, between Godmersham and Shalmsford Street. There are plans to extend the off-road cycle route to Ashford and this would raise the potential for Wye to develop as a cycling centre. Many people visit the parish to enjoy the landscape and its natural history – or just to walk. A detailed description of the surrounding environment, AONB and background for our environment policies is given in BD3. Significantly, the Character of the Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004) identified that the landscape around Wye was in need of restoration.

### 2.1.3 Views and green spaces

The attractive landscape setting generates outstanding views out of and into the village. The Parish church itself acts as a landmark and its tower is a focal point for most views to and within the village. Views and viewpoints identified for protection are marked in detail in Figure 2.3 and illustrated in Figures 2.4 and 2.5.



LEGEND

- \* Focal Building in the Landscape    → Key Views
- ☀ Vantage Point
- Key Vistas

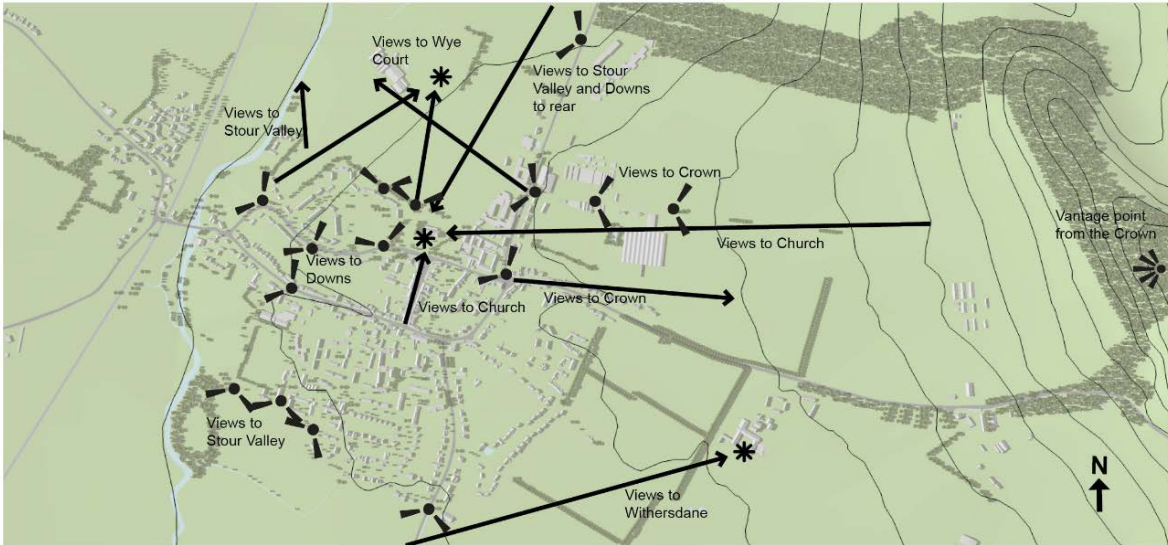


Figure 2.3 Views and viewpoints in and around Wye



Figure 2.4 View of Wye from the Downs to the east



*Figure 2.5 View from the Wye National Nature Reserve*

The network of open spaces in Wye results from, and is mostly related to the medieval street layout that shaped the village. The countryside surrounding Wye spreads into Wye through these spaces and they afford views within and out of the village. The North Downs Way and a number of public footpaths provide direct access to Wye and pass through it up Churchfield Way and the High Street. In this way, walking through the village is part of Wye's attraction for visitors as well as residents.

#### **2.1.4 Roads**

The road network is consistent with a village environment, with varying road widths and priority junctions providing the intersections. In the heart of the village, apart from Church Street, roads are narrow even at the intersections with limited visibility for drivers, for example the Little Chequers/Bridge St junction. Oxenturn Road to the south and Olantigh Rd to the north are increasingly used by many villagers to access Ashford and Canterbury respectively, as ways of avoiding being caught at the level crossing. Harville Road and Bramble Lane meet immediately to the west of the level crossing and provide connections out of the village towards the A28 – to the south and north respectively. These two routes are the busiest access points to the village, converging on the level crossing. Junctions 1-7 examined in the detailed traffic analysis presented in Background document BD4, are shown in Figure 2.6.



Figure 2.6 Transport and walking in Wye showing key road junctions

Transport issues dominated responses to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire (see 1.7 and BD1). The extent of queuing at the level crossing on a typical day during the school term is illustrated in Fig 2.7. The crossing will not be automated until after 2020 but this is expected to reduce closure times by only 5 min in the hour. Any reduction in gate closures through automation is likely to be offset by the increasing number of HS1 trains passing through Wye. In response to regular and formal consultation, Network Rail have not provided any clear details about future developments. The proposed junction 10a on the M20 may increase traffic passing through Wye.



Figure 2.7 Aerial view showing queues at the level crossing on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2014, 9.25am. Note the tail back extending along Bridge Street following the school drop off (image provided by High –flying Productions).

### 2.1.5 Public transport

Wye is well served by trains to Canterbury and London. The high speed service to St Pancras allows London to be reached in one hour, making Wye a relatively easy commute from the city. There is a vital, regular bus service to Ashford and Canterbury (Route 1) serving the village, operated by Stagecoach. Bus stops are shown in Figure 2.6.

### 2.1.6 Parking and speeding

In some of the older parts of the village (particularly the Conservation Area), on-street and off-street parking is in short supply. Typically speeds are not high through the village as a consequence of the tight road network. However speeding within the 30mph limits on the entry routes along Olantigh Rd, Oxenturn Rd, Scotton St, Harville Rd and Bramble Lane causes concern. A worrying development is parking over dropped kerbs thereby restricting access for wheelchairs, pushchairs and the disabled. Results of parking surveys are reported in BD4.

## 2.2 Towards balanced development

At the heart of planning for Wye's future is the desire to balance the provision of any additional housing and jobs in order to ensure that the village continues to thrive as a sustainable settlement. The closure of the Imperial College London Dept. of Agricultural Sciences (formerly Wye College) in 2010 has meant that many jobs were lost in the Parish and there has been a downturn for businesses that relied on commercial activity from the campus. The closure also resulted in a decline in Wye's population as

student and staff housing was left empty. More recently, that housing has started to revert to family use and this has led to an encouraging demographic change in favour of young families, increasing the number of schoolchildren able to walk to school. The planned substantial expansion of housing in Ashford to the south and west means that, in terms of allocations within the Borough, there is no reason to expand the Wye housing stock other than to meet local considerations. Detailed appraisals of housing and business activities are provided in BD5.

In order to obtain an objective view of the status of employment and business in Wye, in addition to consultation with Wye Business Association, a Rural Economic Assessment was commissioned from the consultancy Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) by the Parish and Borough Councils. The findings of the report have helped to inform both ABC's allocation of business space in the Borough and the WNP policies. The full report is included in BD7. The key findings reported for Wye are quoted as follows -

- *“There are three attractions to siting business in Wye:*
  - i. Access to a local labour force comprising highly skilled workers*
  - ii. Availability of suitable commercial premises that meet existing business requirements*
  - iii. A pleasant rural environment where many business owners choose to live and work locally.*
- *There are three constraints to the development of businesses in Wye:*
  - i. Accessibility by road due to the delays at the level crossing. There is relatively little that can be done about this with Network Rail's planned changes (automatic barriers but more trains) being unlikely to reduce the delays. Improvements in vehicular access with new or wider rural roads are constrained by the AONB.*
  - ii. Loss of retail and office use to residential use, reflecting the high prices that housing fetches in Wye*
  - iii. The protected status of much of Wye that limits land availability and development.”*

In balancing the pressures for new development, the Neighbourhood Plan aims to regain some of the jobs lost, many of which supported the village's retail and commercial activities. This economic infrastructure contributes strongly to the way that Wye remains an active hub for surrounding settlements.

## 2.3 Education and community

### 2.3.1 Learning

Wye, unusually for its size, has a strong tradition in education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. A significant part of this heritage was lost with the closure of the Imperial College London campus in 2010. The opening of Wye (Secondary) School in 2013 (a Free School funded following an application to the Department for Education) has helped to redress the loss. Figure 2.1a and b show the current/probable future locations of schools and recreational areas. Current education provision is met by Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) State Primary School, Spring Grove Independent Primary School, Wye (Free) Secondary School, and Wye Under Fives Pre School. Wye also has an active University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age (U3A) group.

### 2.3.2 Community and Recreational Facilities

Wye has significant recreation space but the closure of the college, that traditionally provided venues for meetings, has led to increasing pressure on other sites. The main community and recreational facility in Wye is the Village Hall and its accompanying recreation ground (see Figure 2.1b). Playground facilities are located to the south of the village near the primary school but away from potential developments on WYE3.

- **Wye Village Hall** includes the main hall and its linked small hall. The hall buildings are in constant use and provide a vital resource for the village community in all its aspects.
- **Village Sports Field and Playgrounds** Surrounding the Hall is the Sports Field (about 7 acres). The grass area was previously the village football pitch, but is now a communal area, part of which is given over to Wye Tennis Club. A new multiuse games area (opened August 2014), and playgrounds for infants and older children are located to the north of the sports field.
- **The Churches of St Martin and St Gregory, St Ambrose and the Methodist Church** are in active use for worship and also provide much needed space for various community groups.
- **Former Wye College games field** The playing fields and pavilion are heavily used by Wye Monarchs FC and, on a temporary basis, Wye School.
- **Wye Cricket Ground** enjoys a picturesque venue for cricket in Kent, in elegant surroundings with the Wye Crown as a backdrop (see cover image). The club runs two Saturday sides, well-supported coaching for juniors and was established in 1882.

### 2.3.3 Health and health care

The Wye Practice covers the parish and surrounding area and has c. 8000 patients. It is situated on Oxenturn Rd on the outskirts of the village (Figure 2.1b). The area has an increasing population of elderly people, but there is no social/meeting place specifically for the elderly. Important social issues related to the elderly are being addressed by the “Our Place” project (see BD10).

The household survey showed residents’ concerns that health facilities were already stretched and that increasing the population of Wye by building new houses will only increase the pressure on all of the facilities (see BD1). Increased traffic congestion on Bridge Street and at the level crossing will make it even more difficult for social care, health and all emergency services to access and operate in the village.

## 2.4 Planning context

The WNP is in conformity with the NPPF (2012) and with the saved policies of the Ashford Borough Local Plan (2000), the Borough's adopted Core Strategy (CS2008) and the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document (TRSDPD, 2010). The adopted CS is currently under review by the Borough Council but at the current time contains the policies against which emerging development proposals will be considered. It is in the context of the Core Strategy that the TRSDPD was produced.

### 2.4.1 Core Strategy

**Policy CS1** sets out the 'Guiding Principles' for development within the borough, and it specifically notes that sustainable development and high quality design are at the centre of the council's approach to plan making and deciding planning applications. In addition the guidelines highlight the need for

- *the best use of previously developed land and buildings ..... and the carefully phased release of green field land to make best use of a finite resource...*

All of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan support the Core Strategy guiding principles CS1 (see Appendix E).

Of particular significance to Wye is the allocation of housing. The spatial objectives of the CS are to focus large scale development within the Ashford growth area. Elsewhere, the CS advocates focusing smaller scale development at Tenterden and at the other larger settlements of Charing, Hamstreet and Wye. The intention is to protect and where possible, enhance the countryside for its landscape, heritage, nature conservation and recreational value whilst allowing minor development within the smaller villages.

**Policy CS6** 'The Rural Settlement Hierarchy' confirms that formal housing allocations for the rural areas will be made through the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD based on a hierarchy of settlements suitable for limited expansion, and specifically confirms that Wye should provide sites for the development of 110 dwellings in the period 2006 to 2021 with 50 dwellings to be provided in Phase 1 (2006 to 2013) and 60 dwellings in Phase 2 (2014 to 2021). The policy continues by noting that this hierarchy will also be used as a basis for employment land allocations on a scale to avoid any worsening of the jobs to homes ratio in the rural area as a whole and the larger settlements in it.

Additional aspects of the Core Strategy are expanded in Appendix E.

### 2.4.2 Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD (TRSDPD, adopted October 2010)

This DPD applies to the areas of the borough that lie outside the Ashford urban growth area and covers the period from 2006 to 2021.

Paragraph 5.11 confirms that the principle of phasing the release of development sites, as identified in Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy, will be retained and reinforced. However the proposed phasing dates are altered with Phase 1 to be 2006 to 2016 and Phase 2 to be 2017 to 2021. Accordingly, the proposed phasing of development for Wye is for 45 dwellings to 2016 but no specific allocation 2017-21 because of uncertainty over the future of the Wye College site. These totals mean that there is a shortfall of 65 dwellings allocated within Wye (in the period up to 2021) from the figure of 110 dwellings stipulated in Policy CS6. The DPD contains policy specific to Wye in the form of site specific allocations: WYE1 (Land off of Churchfield Way), WYE2 (Luckley Field) and WYE3 (former Wye College Campus). The lack of allocation for Phase 2 in Wye is a direct consequence of the uncertainty that has surrounded the future of

Imperial's Wye Campus. The planning context for WYE3 is described in more detail in the WNP policy for this site (Section 6). Note that planning consent has been given for 25 houses on WYE2 rather than 20 as incorporated in the TRSDPD. An application for 27 dwellings on WYE1 has now received approval (March 9<sup>th</sup> 2015). This means that the actual Phase I number is likely to be 52. The TRSDPD focuses on new housing developments, but does not consider windfall and change of use both of which continue to contribute significantly to the parish's housing stock.

### 2.4.3 Protection of the environment

The approach adopted in the WNP for specific local sites supports national and local planning policies to protect the environment as summarised in Table 1AE in Appendix E. A full appraisal of the accord between WNP, local and national planning policies is provided in the Basic Conditions Statement (BD14).

### 2.4.4. Site assessments

The sites assessed for the TRSDPD and considered for the WNP are shown in Figure 2.8. The conclusions reached in the TRSDPD and from the WNP site selection process, are summarised in Table 2.1.

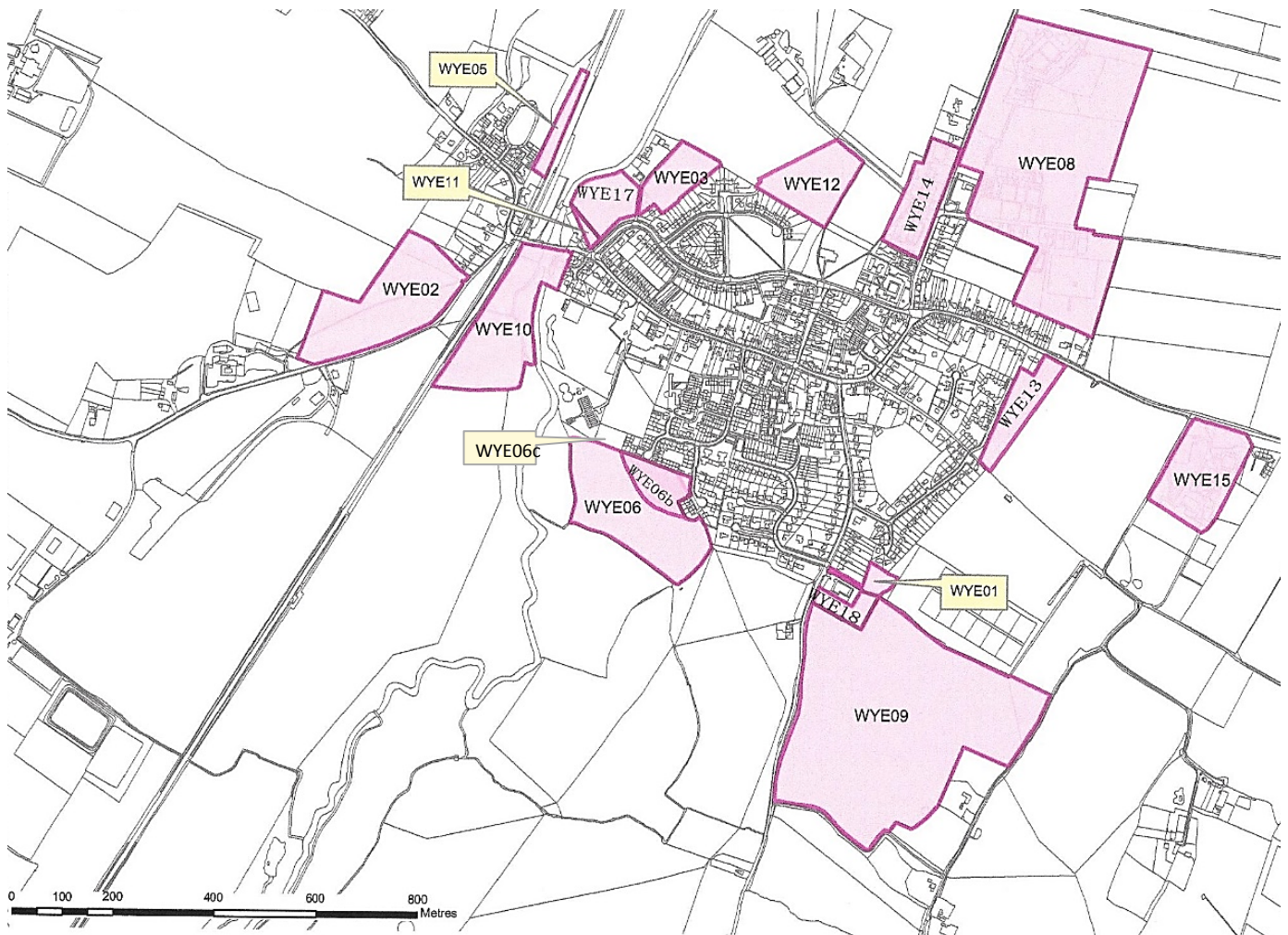


Figure 2.8 Location of potential development sites assessed in TRSDPD SA/SEA document and WNP workshops. The designation shown is as reported in the TRSDPD SA/SEA.



**Table 2.1 Site assessments: components of the WYE1, WYE2 and WYE3 sites are highlighted in pink**

Site designation in TRSDPD SEA	Site designation in TRSDPD	Conclusion in TRSDPD SA/SEA on suitability for housing (2009)	WNP assessment and comment
WYE01		A small site that would extend development to the rear of existing housing beyond the existing confines of the settlement. The site is not a suitable location for development.	Acceptable for windfall development within the village envelope if access improved
WYE02		A large area of open land that is a key part of the entrance to the village from the west. Partly affected by flooding the site is not considered suitable for development.	Not considered suitable for development
WYE03	WYE1	A self-contained site that is located between existing commercial uses and residential use in a relatively sustainable location. There is limited impact on the landscape and the site is suitable for development.	Suitable for development - planning approved
WYE05		A brownfield site adjacent to the railway line - there may potentially be some redevelopment potential but not considered suitable for residential development.	Not considered suitable for residential development, but would be suitable for car park extension <sup>a</sup>
WYE06		This large site adjoins open countryside to the south of the village. The site lies within the flood plain and development would be a significant intrusion into open countryside The large site is not considered suitable for development.	Not considered suitable for development
WYE06b	WYE2	This site adjoins open countryside to the south and adjoins a larger site that falls within the flood plain that is not considered suitable for development. This site is suitable for limited development that would limit the impact on the surrounding countryside and would enable a distinct edge to the village to be created.	Suitable for development - planning approved
	WYE06c	Not included in TRSDPD	This site adjoins open countryside and allows views out from the village to the Stour Valley. It is also adjacent to the sewage works and confines a playing field area used by the school. It is considered unsuitable for development
WYE07		A key area of open land adjoining the riverside that is affected by flooding and forms part of the landscape setting of the village. Not considered suitable for development.	Not considered suitable for development
WYE08	WYE3	Re-use or redevelopment potential of this site can only be assessed as part of a full	East of Olantigh Rd – suitable for mixed

		evaluation of the future of the college campus.	development ADAS site not suitable for major development (see below)
WYE09		No comment in TRSDPD SEA	A large area of open farm land that is a key part of the entrance to the village from the south. The site is distanced from the centre of the village and is not considered suitable for development.
WYE10		A key area of open land adjoining the riverside that is affected by flooding and forms part of the landscape setting of the village. Not considered suitable for development.	Not considered suitable for development
WYE11		A small site that is part of a wider open area that is an important part of the village that is affected by flooding. Not considered suitable for development.	Not considered suitable for development
WYE12		A significant intrusion into the surrounding open countryside that is not well related to the settlement. The site is not suitable for development.	Not considered suitable for development
WYE13		An extension into open countryside to the west of the village not considered suitable for development	Not considered suitable for development
WYE14	WYE3	A sustainable location in the village, the existing college buildings may have re-use or redevelopment potential but this can only be assessed as part of a full evaluation of the future of the college campus.	Main campus north – suitable for mixed development
WYE15	WYE3	The site is detached from the village and currently has existing buildings on site. Not considered to be a suitable site for substantial redevelopment but as a brownfield site further consideration is needed as to the future of the site in association with the potential for future uses of the college campus.	Withersdane – suitable for establishment as a care home or equivalent residential centre
WYE17		A large area of open land area that is an important part of the village that is affected by flooding. Not considered suitable for development.	Not considered suitable for development
WYE18		A small site that is a relatively unsustainable location outside the village confines. The site is not suitable for development.	Not considered suitable for housing development, but located within the village envelope as a potential site for extension of the surgery

<sup>a</sup> As proposed in ABC Local Plan 2000 Policy S69F

Additional sites considered as part of the preparation for the WNP were -

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*The ADAS site* to the north of the village and within WYE08 (part of WYE3), has been considered separately by the Parish for redevelopment. However, it lies well outside the 5 minute walking distance from the village centre and residential or intensive business use would not, therefore, be appropriate. Proposals to return the site to countryside as a managed woodland or that it be developed for renewable energy, including as a solar farm, have received strong support.

*Naccolt brickworks site (not included in the TRSDPD)* although outside the Wye village confines and a rural site that was previously used as a recycling centre, it was considered suitable for a small development of housing (see BD 13) and an application for residential development (nine dwellings) has now been approved (February 2015).

### 3. Vision and principles

The fourth community workshop, held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2012 discussed a draft Vision proposed by the Council. It also started to develop a set of Principles that flowed from the Vision. A follow up exhibition was held in Wolfson Hall on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November at which residents were asked to vote on their preferred vision statement (see BD2). The following vision statement for the parish was finally adopted by the Parish Council.

#### 3.1 Vision

- *Wye village should remain a distinct settlement with a clear division between the village and the surrounding countryside.*
- *Wye should retain a balanced community providing some local employment and should not become purely residential.*
- *Any development in Wye should respect the landscapes around it, so that it retains its rural character.*
- *The environment should continue to make the community feel safe.*
- *The active and energetic community should continue to enjoy many activities, with most of the needed facilities and amenities for the parish provided in the village.*
- *Any changes should respect Wye's history and its historic buildings.*

This vision is based on what people value now and how these characteristics should be protected now and improved in the future. The overall aim is to retain Wye as a vibrant village hub within the parish and AONB.

#### 3.2 The principles that the Neighbourhood Plan must support

The following principles derived from the Village Design Statement, were overwhelmingly endorsed in the household survey and refined at the plan workshops. They provide clear guidance when any development is considered.

##### 3.2.1 Change and new development in Wye

- New development should be proportionate to the character and nature of a village.
- Development should be generally concentric around the historic centre, so that residents can easily walk to facilities in the centre of the village.
- New homes should be built in clusters easily linked to the centre of the village.
- Developments should be assessed within the constraints of the existing infrastructure and not result in excessive growth.
- A fit for purpose business hub sympathetic to the local environment, to promote economic growth and local employment, should be created.
- The role of Wye as a hub for the parish and surrounding neighbourhood should be protected and enhanced by mixed development in the village.

### 3.2.2 *Design of development*

- Wye's position in the AONB and with a conservation area must be protected.
- The scale and height of developments and buildings should be appropriate to their context.
- The height and density of any new buildings should decrease from the centre of the village to the perimeter.
- Particular care should be taken in the Conservation Area to ensure that alterations and new buildings relate in architecture and scale to their surroundings, and make a satisfactory contribution to the historic core of the village.
- Where development is allowed, it should be to good contemporary design and result in energy efficient buildings that use sustainable design, technology, materials, construction and site management. Self-build is encouraged.
- The question of vehicle parking and movement should be specifically addressed for all new developments.
- Developers should involve local people in early discussions for any proposed new developments.

## 4 Key Objectives and linked Core Policies

The Principles listed in 3.2 provide the basis for the six key objectives of the WNP. Each of the objectives 1-6 listed below is complemented by a Core Policy (WNP Policies 1-6) that will apply across all future developments. The focus of these policies is on the village of Wye, but impacts on the surrounding parish and highly protected landscape are highlighted.

### **Objective 1: Protect and enhance the village of Wye's sense of place within the parish and its surrounding countryside**

The concept of a concentric village with the centre within easy walking distance is a cornerstone of the WNP's approach to the future planning and development of the village. A good indicator of a sustainable settlement is the location of housing within 5 min walk, or about 400m, from the centre of the village, which in the case of Wye is defined as the Bridge St/Church St junction. This concept allows a village envelope to be designated to enclose development to 2030, as shown in Figure 4.1. Development within this area will allow pedestrians to have good access to essential facilities e.g. the primary school, medical centre and railway station, and will preserve the surrounding countryside. The envelope defines the built confines and is drawn within the boundaries of gardens facing the countryside.

In conformity with Policy TRS1, minor residential development or infilling will also be acceptable within the envelope providing that the following requirements are met:

*“a) the development can easily be integrated into the existing settlement without the need to substantially improve the infrastructure or other facilities; b) the proposal is of a layout, scale, design and appearance that is appropriate to the character and density of its surrounding area; c) it does not result in the displacement of other active uses such as employment, leisure or community uses in the area; and, d) the proposal would not result in the loss of public or private open spaces or gaps that are important characteristics of the settlement.”*



Figure 4.1 The village envelope defining the built confines of Wye 2030 is marked in red. The dotted red line indicates that this section of the envelope is to be defined through the masterplan referred to in Policy WNP6.

**Policy WNP1a *Village envelope*** Development outside the village envelope, as defined in Figure 4.1, will only be permitted in accordance with development plan and national policies for development in the countryside and the AONB. Between Olantigh Road and Scotton Street the village envelope will be defined by the masterplan referred to in policy WNP6.

**Policy WNP1b *Local Green Spaces***

The following areas shown on the map in Appendix F, are allocated as Local Green Spaces:

- Havillands meadow
- Meadow between Churchfield Lane and the River Stour
- Churchfield Green
- Playing fields – Horton’s Meadow cricket ground, School Playing Field, Village Playing Field
- Churchyard and burial ground
- Central Green Spaces: Gregory Court Green, The Green, Imperial College Gardens, Ambrose Green
- Long’s Acre Green, Little Chequers Green

Within these areas new development will only be permitted in very special circumstances or where it is compatible with their character and function as Local Green Spaces.

The Bridge Street, Churchfield and Beanfield allotments will be retained as allotments.

*The protected areas, as mapped in Appendix F, have been designated as Green Spaces according to NPPF Planning Practice Guidance paras 005 and 006 (revised 6/3/2014).*

*Policy WNP1a conforms to **Policies TRS1**, Minor residential development or infilling; **TRS2** New residential development elsewhere, and **TRS3** Replacement dwellings in the countryside.*

**Policy WNP1c *Views***

Developments that significantly detract from the following views into, out of and within the village (shown in Fig 2.3), by failing to respect their distinctive characteristics, will not be supported.

- a) *Views to the west*
  - i. The North Downs from Bridge St
  - ii. The Downs and Stour Valley from Churchfield Way
  - iii. Panoramic views to the northwest from Churchfield Green
  - iv. The Downs from Olantigh Rd
- b) *Views to the east*
  - i. The Crown and Downs viewed from the Kempe Centre
  - ii. The Crown and heritage buildings viewed from Golden Square
- c) *Views to the north and south* from the river bridge
- d) *Views into Wye*

Views from the Downs (east and west), Nacolts, Stour Valley and Boughton Aluph church also need to be preserved and enhanced.



Projects on the improvement of the green infrastructure within and around Wye are proposed (Appendix B). Where appropriate, these will be supported through financial support from developer contributions, Section 106 and CIL.

*These policies conform to and are supported by ABC's 2008 Core Strategy Policy CS1: Guiding Principles – e.g..C - Protection for the countryside, landscape and villages from adverse impacts of growth and the promotion of strong rural communities; 2000 Saved Policies EN9 Setting and entrances of towns and villages , EN10 Development on the edge of existing settlements, HG3 c) Design in villages – protecting views into and out of villages, EN11 Merging of distinct settlements; NPPF core planning principles to promote sustainable transport –para 17; Sustainability policies 11 and 12 and the AONB Management Plan (2014-2019).*

## **Objective 2: Protection of Wye's architectural heritage**

The community, through the household survey, has strongly supported the existing Village Design Statement 2000. The VDS (Appendix D and Background document BD8) is currently recognised as Supplementary Planning Guidance by ABC and continues to provide clear guidelines for design and development. Policy WNP2 promotes the key design principles of the VDS.

**Policy WNP2 High quality design** Proposals for all forms of new development must plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive built and landscaping design, at the same time demonstrating they have sought to conserve local distinctiveness and the aesthetic qualities of traditional rural settlements and buildings found in the Kent Downs AONB.

- Applications proposing unsympathetic designs which fail to respect the connections between people and places, or are inappropriate to its location, landscape or biodiversity considerations will be refused.
- Proposals for renewable energy generation systems (Low and Zero Carbon Technology), will be supported as long as they do not detract from the conservation area and the AONB, specifically where they:
  - are in keeping with the scale, form and character of their surroundings;
  - do not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area;
  - do not significantly increase vehicular traffic flow in the village.
- Each development proposal should include a proportionate statement and illustrations demonstrating how the principles and guidelines of the VDS have been addressed (Appendix D).

*This policy is supported by NPPF Core planning principles – conserve heritage assets – para.17; conserving and enhancing the historic environment – paras. 128-138, 140-141 core planning principles – high quality design and amenity – para.17; ABC 2008 Core Strategy Policy CS1: Guiding Principles – e.g. para.B - The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and built heritage of the Borough, Policy CS9: Design Quality – Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to listed design criteria, notably:*

- Character, Distinctiveness and Sense of Place
- Continuity and Enclosure

- *Quality of Public Spaces*
- *Flexibility, Adaptability and Liveability*
- *Richness in Detail*

### **Objective 3: Protection against the impacts of increased traffic**

Traffic flow through Wye, parking difficulties and queuing at the level crossing were the most frequently highlighted issues in responses to the household survey (BD1) and have been analysed in detail (BD4). Appropriate development is encouraged, but proposals for new business activities or housing must ensure that they will not create unacceptable levels of congestion, damage the quality of life in the Parish or the character of Wye. There must be no harmful impacts on the sensitive, protected environments within the parish such as the Wye and Crundale Downs SAC, the river, SNCI, SSSI and ancient landscapes, or on Wye village itself as a tourist centre within the AONB. Traffic management has been earmarked as a priority for developer contributions (see Appendix B and WNP11).

**Policy WNP3 *Traffic impact*** New developments will only be permitted if they will not cause a significant increase in the volume of traffic leading to:

- **severe queuing along the roads leading to the level crossing (Harville Rd, Bramble Lane, Bridge St and Churchfield Way) as identified by the failure of queues to clear when the gates are open, or**
- **serious harm to highway safety because of the overuse of rural roads leading to Wye from Bilting, Boughton Aluph, Godmersham, Hastingleigh and Naccolt.**

**To support control of the impact of increased traffic,**

- **applications for development of business activity (involving more than 5 workers) or residential development of more than 10 dwellings must be supported by**
  - **traffic analysis including modelling of traffic flow at the level crossing and travel plans that encourage walking or cycling within the village and**
  - **analysis of impacts on the roads leading into and within the village, schools access and effects on neighbouring residents' convenience.**

The Parish council will provide access to its modelling studies to facilitate the application of this policy. Where significant new housing development takes place (10+ houses) developers will be expected to fund traffic calming and parking improvements through the Section 278 Highway Agreement process. Details of any improvements should be agreed with Kent County Council, the Local Highway Authority.

*This traffic policy supports the **NPPF** Core planning principle - promoting sustainable transport, and Sustainability policies 4 and 11 (minimising pollution of all kinds, the **NPPF** Presumption in favour of sustainable development – paras. 11-14 Ensuring viability and deliverability – para.177), **Core Strategy 2008 CS15, Transport and the AONB Management Plan.***

#### **Objective 4: The promotion of business activity**

Section 2.2 outlines the need to replace employment opportunities after the closure of Wye College. One goal of the Neighbourhood Plan is to recover some of the jobs lost, many of which supported retail and commercial activities in the parish. Further loss of retail premises is unwanted, as set out in the Core Strategy. Strengthening the economic sustainability of Wye, including the growth of tourism, supports the village as an active Tier 2 hub for surrounding settlements, a conclusion supported by the NLP Rural Economic Assessment (BD7). Any development must, however, be sustainable in conforming with the need to protect the sensitive environment around Wye.

**Policy WNP4 *Supporting business* Proposals for business development to replace jobs lost through the closure of the College, particularly in education, research, food production and tourism will be supported providing that they conform to other policies in this plan.**

*This policy is supported by NPPF Core planning principles – promote vitality of urban areas and support sustainable economic development to deliver the thriving local places needed – para.17. Promoting sustainable transport – balance land uses in the area to encourage minimum journey lengths for employment – para.37; ABC 2008 Core Strategy defines PolicyCS2 - The Borough Wide Strategy - Smaller scale development opportunities, including opportunities for employment and other non-residential uses will be identified in the rural centres of Tenterden, Charing, Hamstreet and Wye.*

#### **Objective 5: Integration of new affordable and general needs housing within mixed developments.**

The WNP conforms with the existing ABC policy that developments of more than 15 dwellings should include 35% of affordable housing. The household questionnaire (BD1) identified support for affordable housing and this was confirmed in two housing surveys (BD6). The analysis of available sites (2.4) suggests that it will not be easy to identify suitable exception sites for Local Needs Housing. While this possibility cannot be excluded, the integration of affordable and local needs housing in developments within the village is the approach supported by the Parish Council.

**Policy WNP5 *Integrated housing* Local Needs Housing should mainly be met by integration within the affordable housing component of any new developments in Wye.**

*This policy is supported by paragraph 54 of the NPPF and ABC Lettings Policy (Revision 2014), as expanded in BD5.*

## **Objective 6: To achieve the mixed redevelopment of WYE3**

In recognition of the importance of WYE3 and in particular the need to replace employment opportunities lost to the parish after the closure of the college, the following overarching policy aims to guide the future development of the site during the lifetime of the WNP.

**Policy WNP6 *Mixed development*** Development proposals for the WYE3 site should deliver a mix of uses, including education, business, community infrastructure and some housing. Given the scale of the site in relation to the village, such development should be delivered in a phased manner in accordance with a masterplan that has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by Ashford Borough Council.

Prior to any planning application pursuant to the agreed masterplan an application for a screening determination regarding the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment shall be made to Ashford Borough Council. Subject to that opinion any application should be accompanied with an appropriate Environmental Impact Assessment.

*This policy is supported by NPPF sustainable development policies 1, 2 and 11 and Core Strategy 2008 guiding principles CS1: the best use of previously developed land and buildings ..... the carefully phased release of green field land to make best use of a finite resource; the timely provision of community services; provision of a commercial environment that is conducive to encouraging new and existing businesses; CS policy CS18 and TRSDPD policy for WYE3.*

## 5. General Policies

### 5.1 Community and wellbeing

The Vision and Principles of this NP seek to achieve a safe and active community for residents of all ages. The community of Wye Parish relies on the Village Hall for a number of activities for young and old. Improvement to the hall complex is the priority project identified for support from developer contributions (see Appendix B).

The TRSDPD recognises that Wye with other larger (Tier 2) rural service centres provides an important primary care function within the parish. Within the context of a small rural community, and owing to the poor transport links to neighbouring centres, the provision of health care should be provided where possible by increasing capacity within the parish. Section 2.5 Health and Health Care sets out the current health care provision and emerging health and wellbeing issues within Wye. Key amongst these are a growing aging population but also a recent influx of families since the closure of the college. Wye's "Our Place" project reinforces the parish's focus on community and health care (BD10). In terms of health infrastructure, the existing GP surgery and its pharmacy provision are nearing capacity. For example, there is no day care facility for elderly residents and any future growth in housing will need to make a contribution to enhance these facilities within the parish.

**Policy WNP7 *Community support* Where new housing development takes place, developer contributions through CIL and Section 106 agreements where the legal requirements in paragraphs 203 and 204 of the NPPF are met having regard to the development proposed, will be directed towards;**

- **improvements to the village hall complex,**
- **the provision of a day care facility for elderly residents in Wye.**

*This is supported by NPPF sustainable development principles –promoting health and community wellbeing; ABC Core Strategy 2008, Policy CS1: Guiding Principles: L. Healthy sustainable communities Policy CS18: Meeting the Community's Needs.*

### 5.2 Countryside and Environment

The parish of Wye is situated in a particularly highly protected landscape. The importance of the natural environment to the character and life of Wye and its residents has been highlighted in Section 2. The WNP is fully supportive of the Kent Downs AONB management plan 2014 and details on the interaction between the WNP and AONB management policies are provided in BD3. Full account should be taken of the land form in any new developments proposed on the edge of the village, particularly when visible in long views. Attention must be given to the impact on views into and out of the village, for example to and from the river and Crown, and also to sensitive views within the village for example of the Church and village greens. The policies described below have been developed to reinforce reference to the environment and sustainability made in Core Policies (Section 4). Implementation of our policies will be supported by projects described in Appendix B including the creation of an innovative cycle path around

the village of Wye, riverside access, and appraisal of the development of a community wide energy generation system.

**Policy WNP8 *Countryside and environment***

- a) **All new development will respect the qualities of the Kent Downs AONB and development that is harmful to these qualities will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.**
  
- b) **The impact of new development on the Wye and Crundale Downs SAC, NNR and SSSI, and on the Kent Downs AONB having regard to the Kent Downs Management Plan, must be specifically addressed in planning application documentation.**
  
- c) **Details of landscaping for developments of more than five houses should include a landscape strategy which will incorporate the following details:**
  - i. **existing and proposed hard and soft landscaping;**
  - ii. **a condition survey of all existing trees and hedgerows;**
  - iii. **an outline of the measures to be taken to protect existing trees and hedgerows during construction;**
  - iv. **consideration of both near and distant views of the development from the principal public vantage points showing existing landscaping and that proposed to be established after 10 years; and**
  - v. **details, where appropriate, of how those areas retained for open space and/or woodland will be managed in the future.**
  
- d) **Development proposals shall adequately address the potential for ecological impacts to arise, giving appropriate consideration to protected and designated species and designated areas, including Wye and Crundale Downs SAC, NNR and SSSI. The mitigation hierarchy shall be followed to avoid, minimise and, as a last resort, compensate for any identified ecological impacts.**

Complementary National and Local Planning Policies supporting protection of the environment are listed in Table AE1 within Appendix E

## 5.3 Housing

### 5.3.1 Scale of housing development

Overall indicative numbers of new houses including all areas of potential change identified in the parish are set out below in Table 5.1. Windfall levels are indicative and are based on the history of development applications in the parish, while change of use numbers include the numbers of college buildings likely to come forward for conversion to dwelling houses from lecture rooms, offices and student accommodation, during the lifetime of the WNP.

#### **Policy WNP9 Scale of housing development**

**The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the development of approximately 150 dwellings over the period up to 2030 as set out in Table 5.1.**

**Table 5.1 Indicative numbers of dwellings for phased development up to 2030**

Development	NP proposals to 2030
WYE1 <sup>a</sup>	27
WYE2 <sup>b</sup>	25
WYE3 <sup>c</sup>	approx. 50
Change of use <sup>d</sup>	approx. 35
Windfall	approx. 15
<b>Total</b>	<b>approx. 150</b>

<sup>a</sup> Planning application approved March 2015

<sup>b</sup> Planning approved August 2014

<sup>c</sup> Subject to masterplan

<sup>d</sup> Eight dwellings approved on the Old Brickworks site Nacolts (February 2015).  
Permission for one change of use on the east side of the road, was granted October 2014.

The construction of approximately 150 new dwellings in total proposes an increase of c. 15% in housing numbers within the plan period 2014-2030. The Plan accepts that these numbers will increase traffic significantly in Wye and on the surrounding access roads, but consider that the impact of building *up to* the numbers specified will not be severe (see BD4). The high numbers allocated to Change of use is considered realistic given the developments already under consideration by Telereal Trillium for Wolfson House (Upper Bridge St), Carruthers House, Bexley House and Wolfson Lecture Theatre (High St) and, significantly, unused Edwardian buildings on the WYE3 Campus North site (see site policy WNP11).

The increase in housing proposed equates to about 50 additional dwellings in the Parish every 5 years. This reflects (but is slightly greater than) the recent growth in the Wye housing stock since the 1970s and the long held approach to quanta of development in this parish adopted by the Local Planning Authority (see BD5). This figure takes into account the need to use land to provide more employment as well as the suitability of the development of housing given significant infrastructure, landscape and heritage constraints on building within an AONB (see NPPF para 116). Fundamental issues about the suitability of new housing development are the major concern of parishioners. These have already been addressed in Core Policies WNP1a and b (the protection of Wye’s sense of place), WNP2 (design principles) and WNP5 (affordable housing).

In seeking to protect and enhance the character of the village, the incremental development of Wye to reach the targeted number of new dwellings requires an indication of anticipated phasing to minimise impacts on the environment and traffic in particular. Phasing of new development will be essential in order to ensure that the village does not lose its character and that growth is organic. It is considered unrealistic to attempt to phase windfall and change of use sites. The sites allocated in the TRSDPD, WYE1 and WYE2 would be expected to come forward for construction within the first 5 years of the plan, similarly the approved development of nine dwellings on Nacolts brickworks site (as change of use). Completion of building on sites WYE1 and WYE2 is expected to occur within the period 2015-20. In order to control impact on the village, the sites within WYE3 would be expected to be phased later in the plan period to 2030 as outlined in Table 5.2 below. The proposed phasing of Change of use and Windfall sites is included in italics for additional guidance.

**Table 5.2 Indication of anticipated phasing of the completion of dwellings**

<b>Site</b>	<b>2015-2020</b>	<b>2020-2025</b>	<b>2025-2030</b>	<b>Total</b>
WYE1	27	-	-	27
WYE2	25	-	-	25
WYE3	-	50		50
<i>Change of use</i>	15	10	10	35
<i>Windfall</i>	5	5	5	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>80</b>		<b>152</b>

Note that the numbers for WYE3, Change of use and Windfall are approximate, as shown in Table 5.1

The impact of development will be assessed every 5 years to ensure that the village infrastructure is able to absorb the new housing in addition to increased business activity.

### 5.3.2 Tenure and housing type

The household survey (BD1) identified a strong preference for a balanced mix of housing types (tenure and size) in any development, as supported by CS13. In conjunction with surveys carried out through the “Our Place” project (BD10), results indicate a growing need for housing with enhanced ease of access. These views are reflected in the new mobility standards issued by ABC, and these are fully supported by WNP.



The household survey also showed strong support for the provision of super-fast broadband in Wye (see BD1). A high proportion of residents work from home either full or part-time. Wherever possible it is desirable that new development should be accessible to the super-fast broadband network.

### 5.3.3 Density and Layout

Workshops strongly supported the guidance expressed in the Village Design Statement. Housing density has been identified as a critical issue for any new developments, particularly on the edge of the village. The importance of green routes through the village to preserve character and link amenity spaces has been to the forefront of workshop discussions on the environment. The development of village infrastructure that supports the Core policies WNP1b and WNP2 is reinforced by WNP10.

#### **Policy WNP10 Density and layout**

- **Densities should reflect the existing pattern of housing at 20-30 dwellings per hectare (outside the higher densities at the core of the village). Densities of below 20dph will be acceptable in developments on the edge of the village.**
- **Development will be encouraged to provide links with safe walking and cycling routes to the village centre, facilitating access to schools, the surrounding countryside and station - minimising the need for car use. The loss of existing footpaths and cycleways will be resisted. New development should be built round the idea of a walkable village with integrated adequate pathways directly connecting to the centre of the village.**
- **Major developments should be designed to provide new green amenity spaces, reflecting and extending the existing network of accessible green space running through the village.**

*WNP housing policies provide local focus and complement **NPPF** Core principles – the delivery of homes, promotion of mixed use and using brownfield land, and Sustainability policies 5 and 6; and **Core Strategy 2008** CS1 guiding principles C and F, CS2 Borough wide strategy and support CS6 The rural settlement hierarchy.*

## 6. Site Policies

The sites submitted for allocation in the TRSDPD are shown in Figure 2.8. These sites were also considered in the preparation of the WNP. The conclusions reached in the TRSDPD and from the WNP site selection process, are summarised in Table 2.1. During preparation of the WNP, planning permission was granted for 27, 25 and 9 dwellings on WYE1, WYE2, and the Nacolts brickworks sites respectively. Background information on these sites is provided in BD13.

In addressing the allocation of land for additional development the NP has considered the following

- The availability of brownfield sites (see BD12)
- Alternative uses for built areas
- Designation of the village envelope (Policy WNP1a)
- Appropriate housing densities (see Policies WNP2 and WNP10)

With regard to previously developed or brownfield land, the former landholdings of Imperial College London at Wye, now acquired by Telereal Trillium, represent the key areas with potential for redevelopment in the parish.

### 6.1 The former Imperial College London Campus at Wye, the WYE3 site

For many years the economic and social vitality of the parish was focused around the presence of Wye College. The redevelopment of the former college site (WYE3) therefore represents a tremendous opportunity to shape Wye for the future, preserving and enhancing the vitality and sustainability of the historic village and surrounding Parish. In particular, there has been a long-standing commitment from both the borough and parish council to continuing the original and long-established educational use of this site and this has been strongly endorsed through Neighbourhood Plan questionnaires (BD1 and BD2).

The college land holdings in the village are shown in Figure 6.1. To the west of Olantigh Road lie the historic college buildings, laboratories and student's union building (described here as the Main campus). To the east are the Kempe Centre, glasshouses, a number of other smaller buildings, including some housing and further north the derelict ADAS site. To the east of the village (off the map) along Scotton Street/Coldharbour Lane is Withersdane Hall and a number of other buildings including student accommodation. The combined area of these three sites is approximately 25 hectares. The landscape of the college landholding is particularly varied, encompassing formal gardens, campus recreation space, agriculture, parkland and woodland. The designation of brown- and greenfield sites in WYE3 is shown in BD12.



Fig 6.1 WYE3 sites (inside the red line) within the village. Note that Withersdane lies to the east along Scotton St (see Figure 2.1b)

### 6.1.1 Main campus

**The historic college buildings** The medieval and Edwardian buildings form a significant and highly attractive part of the village centre. The buildings, some of which are Grade I and Grade II listed, make a major contribution to Wye’s distinctive character. This site is a densely arranged cluster of interlocking buildings that range from the 15th to early 20th centuries. The buildings are arranged around external courtyards (see Fig 6.2) and are an integral part of the historic core of Wye and its Conservation Area.



- This site was considered by the Parish for residential development (see 2.4.4). However, it lies well outside the 5 minute walking distance from the village centre.

## 6.2 WYE3 Planning Policy Context

Both the Ashford Core Strategy (paragraph 6.27) and the TRSDPD highlight the importance of the educational facilities at Wye College, not just to the local economy of Wye but the wider economy of the Borough. The TRSDPD advocates a properly masterplanned approach to the future of the College facilities given their local importance. The outcome should inform the formal review of the Core Strategy and subsequently, the review of the DPD. The current policy position with regard to the former Wye College Campus and its future development options is set out in Policy WYE3 of the TRSDPD:

### **Policy WYE 3 - Imperial College, Wye**

*The long term future of the buildings, facilities and land at Imperial College campus in Wye (as shown on the Proposals Map as WYE3) shall be the subject of an active and comprehensive marketing campaign for educational and related research and business uses for a minimum continuous period of 6 months with the aim of securing a future for such uses on all or part of the campus.*

*If the marketing campaign demonstrates that such uses are not possible on all or part of the WYE3 area, then a masterplanning exercise encompassing all of the WYE3 area shall be undertaken in order to establish the nature, scale, location and mix of any alternative uses to deliver a high quality, mixed use development. This exercise should inform the first review of the Core Strategy to be adopted prior to the end of 2014 or, alternatively, a formal review of this policy or the adoption of a SPD based on the agreed masterplan.*

*In the meantime, the main educational uses of the campus shall be retained and any development functionally related to the continuation of those uses or the associated agricultural, horticultural or employment uses taking place on the land either side of Occupation Road will be acceptable in principle subject to:-*

- a. the scale, design and use being compatible with the character of the area and not being visually intrusive within the AONB; and,*
- b. the development not generating an unacceptable level, or type, of traffic;*
- c. the development not generating an unacceptable level, or type of noise or disturbance, or loss of residential amenity.*

*Development proposals that would prejudice the potential future use of the campus for educational uses and related research and business uses prior to the conclusion of the comprehensive and active marketing campaign referred to above will not be acceptable.*

Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD (2010) Policy WYE3

**The NPPF, para 116** demonstrates the caution required in determining the scale of development on a site such as WYE3 within the AONB stating.....

*Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas (AONBs) except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

The overall scale of developments proposed in the parish including the WYE3 component has been assessed through the SEA (BD9). WNP complements ABC's Core Strategy Review and the TRSDPD, and has been developed in cognisance of ICL's proposed masterplan.

### **6.3 Background to the provision of education, commercial, community infrastructure facilities and housing on WYE3**

#### **6.3.1 Education**

Following a successful application to the DfE, Wye Free School, now known as Wye School, has been established on the WYE3 site. The secondary school opened in September 2013 in the Kempe Centre building that was modified for conversion into temporary school accommodation. A hard play area has been established on the adjacent land previously used as a car park. The school has a three form entry in year 7 and will have a maximum of 600 pupils at full capacity, indicating an expected loss of some sixth form students in time. Wye College sports field is currently used by the school, in a sharing arrangement with Wye Monarchs Football Club.

The WNP supports the location of the school on the WYE3 site. The school has planning permission to operate from the adapted Kempe Centre building for 3 years. The EFA, United Learning and Telereal Trillium have agreed that, subject to planning permission, Wye School will be permanently located in the former Kempe Centre building with additional buildings to be constructed, together with new playing fields, to support its expansion.

#### **6.3.2 Commercial**

Currently there are small units based in portakabin-like buildings along Occupation Rd that support a range of businesses (designation B6). These provide a good mix of employment opportunities and if renewed and replaced, would provide an attractive component of the eastern entrance into Wye from the North Downs Way. An additional area of land to the south of Occupation Road is currently in commercial use focused on biological control of plant pests. This work generates a number of employment opportunities and is encouraged to continue in Wye. Some rationalisation of the space allocated for horticultural business is recommended in order to improve the facilities available. The location of the workshops and horticultural businesses is also shown in Figure 6.1.

Withersdane lies outside the walkable village. The results of the WNP questionnaire supported the establishment of a care home or clinic on the site which was formerly used, for the most part, as student accommodation (see BD1 questionnaire results) given that such a development would bring employment to the Parish. Such support is on the condition that any such re-use is of an appropriate scale that would not have a harmful impact on traffic flows along Scotton Street which has very limited capacity. The gardens of Withersdane House are locally listed as a Historic Park/Garden and the WNP therefore seeks to encourage the gardens to be open to the public on certain times of the year. Footpath links between Withersdane and the village should be upgraded to allow mobility scooter access. ICL have adopted this approach with the current proposed use as a clinic being put in place.

### *6.3.3 Community infrastructure*

The location of the Main campus part of the college in the heart of the village of Wye makes it an appropriate location for community use. A detailed plan of the Campus North site is given in Figure 6.2 with dates of construction indicated.

The Campus Community Project (Appendix B) provides details on how the Grade I listed buildings might be developed with various sources of funding including the Heritage Lottery Fund. Some examples of potential developments are given here.

- The setting up of a visitors centre for walkers, cyclists and tourists
- The opening of the nationally important historic buildings to the public and for exhibitions
- The relocation of the Wye public library looking for larger premises in the village
- The provision of a community café and day centre (see Our Place)
- The provision of a venue for weddings and events in the period rooms and old hall (this use was successful when the College was functioning)
- The provision of permanent space and meeting rooms for various community groups currently lacking a place of their own
- Access to the buildings for a meeting place for the Church including the chapel
- Use of the Old Hall for concerts and gatherings
- Use of the Old Lecture Theatre as a cinema (there is an existing cinema club using part of the village hall).
- Accommodation on the first floor would be used to support residential courses eg summer schools and field courses.

### *6.3.4 Housing*

The Russell Labs and Students Union building on Olantigh Rd are in disrepair and of little architectural merit. Demolition of the current buildings would enable this part of the College site, which is sustainably located on the edge of the walkable village, to be redeveloped for housing. Highway calming measures would be required to be delivered here as part of any such redevelopment to mark the entrance to the village and reduce the speed of vehicles commensurate with the pedestrian use of this area in particular by children attending the secondary school.

Policy WNP11 is flexible with respect to the location of housing on other parts of the WYE3 site, but defines the quantum of new build appropriate.

#### 6.4. WNP Policy for WYE3

One of the core objectives of the WNP (Objective 6; Core Policy WNP6) is to achieve a mixed use redevelopment of WYE3 in order to ensure the continued viability of the village and a thriving sustainable community here. It is apparent from our questionnaire returns that the major concerns for the Parish arising from any redevelopment of such a significant landholding in this relatively modest-sized village are,

- the impact of the proposed redevelopment of the WYE3 site on traffic flow (in particular queuing at the level crossing),
- that any additional house building occurs only within walking distance and at the edge of the existing envelope, that is in the region of 400m from the village centre and
- the impact on the environment receives particularly careful consideration as part of the planning application process given the highly protected landscape in which these areas of land lie.

Proposals for the establishment of the Secondary School, new low intensity business opportunities (including the re-use of Withersdane), and provision of community space in the main campus will, taken together, result in a level of traffic equivalent to that from the earlier activity at the College (see Section 2.1.4 and BD4) and have, therefore, received support from the community as part of the preparation of WNP. The establishment of the school in particular, is an exciting development that will maintain Wye's heritage as a centre of learning. However, it is recognised that even with these developments there will remain some redundant brownfield land within WYE3 where new housing may represent the most appropriate land use in some areas.

It is essential that the WYE3 site is considered as a whole and that its redevelopment is the subject of an inclusive masterplan approach in the first instance and is compliant with Policy WNP11. Piecemeal applications should not come forward if they will prejudice an integrated solution for what is the major site for development in the village. Policy WNP11 addresses the overall redevelopment of the campus landholding.

#### **Policy WNP11 *The former Imperial College London campus at Wye***

**As outlined in Core Policy WNP6, the former Imperial College London landholding at Wye (WYE3) is proposed for a mix of uses, including education, business, community infrastructure and housing. In this regard development proposals for this site shall, subject to viability:**

- a) **Provide for the continued use of part of the site for education through the establishment of a secondary school or equivalent activity on the site.**
  - **Any such development should include the adoption of a travel plan to limit the use of cars to bring staff and students to and from the site prior to the commencement of any such development. Detailed design should be submitted to and agreed by the local planning authority and the highways authority for the entrance to the school and the Occupation Rd/Olantigh Rd junction in agreement**



with the developers of the remaining Occupation Rd site prior to the occupation of the buildings for this use.

- b) Redevelop part of the site as a business hub (B1 Office or A2 Research and development).
- c) Retain and enhance the existing commercial land use along the southern side of Occupation Road for employment use (B1).
  - Renovation of the properties here would improve the appearance of the entry route into the village from the North Downs Way.
  - For (b) and (c), adequate parking provision for such commercial floorspace should be provided as part of any such redevelopment.
- d) Incorporate the continued use of the land south of Occupation Rd for horticultural businesses.
- e) Achieve the positive re-use of the Grade 1 and Grade 2 listed, and other unused Edwardian buildings of the former Wye College by a mix of community, residential and business uses.
  - Such development would require provision of a new pedestrian and vehicular access route into the site.
  - Small scale B1 use, live/work units and some residential change of use would also be supported here to encourage the development of a thriving community hub in these historic buildings in the heart of the village.
- f) Retain the Withersdane site for institutional, residential (C2) use, subject to traffic generation being compatible with the highway constraints of Scotton Street and the upgrading of footpath links between the site and the village to ensure mobility scooter access.
- g) Re-develop areas of land not used by the school or business hub for approximately 50 dwellings.
- h) Achieve appropriate reuse of the site of the former ADAS buildings, having regard to the concept of the walkable village.
- i) Pay particular attention to the potential for innovation in materials and form in the design of new buildings, and should where possible embody elements such as green roofs and non-reflective materials to limit the visual impact of additional development here on the surrounding AONB. Any development should provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, as advised by Southern Water.
- j) Ensure that all additional landscaping provided across the site is of high quality given its setting within the AONB, is comprised of species native to this area of the Kent Downs and of a design, scale and format appropriate to its setting close to the SAC. Applications should demonstrate how proposed landscaping has been designed to enhance views from the AONB.
- k) Where appropriate, having regard to the statutory requirements, development of WYE3 will be subject to Section 106 agreements to support traffic calming on Olantigh Rd., Scotton Street and Oxenturn Rd., improvement to the village hall complex and the establishment of a day care centre for the elderly (see Appendix B).

WNP policies for the sites in WYE3 complement and conform to the following national and local planning policies -

**NPPF Basic Principles**- plan led based on a positive local vision, promoting economic development and delivery of homes and infrastructure, promoting the character and vitality of communities, promoting mixed use, conserving heritage, conserving and enhancing the natural environment, using brownfield land, promoting Health and social and cultural well being.

**NPPF Sustainability Policies** - 1. Building a strong, competitive economy, 6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes, 7. Requiring good design, 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

**Core strategy 2008** CS1 guiding principles A-L, Policy CS2 Borough wide strategy, CS17 Tourism, CS18 meeting the communities need.

**Saved policies 2000** EN10 Policy 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, EN16 Development in conservation areas.

**TRSDPD Policy WYE3**

## 7. Concluding remarks

In summary, the WNP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in the framework of national and local planning policies by:

- a) protecting the AONB and local habitats by focusing development within the village envelope and by the promotion of the use, recovery and restoration of previously developed sites;
- b) protecting community assets that enhance the quality of life in Wye village;
- c) locating new development within easy walking distance of existing village facilities, close to bus stops, to minimise traffic congestion and thus the related emissions and pedestrian safety concerns;
- d) protecting and enhancing the historic environment of Wye by encouraging high quality development that responds to the distinctive, Kent Downs character and protecting open spaces within the built up area and
- e) encouraging flexible working in the parish by improving the electronic infrastructure, promoting sites for commercial development and educational use, by allocating new housing, helping local businesses and organisations.

## 8. Acknowledgments

Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Group wish to thank all members of the parish who have contributed to the WNP. The submission version of the plan included substantial revision made following receipt of responses to the pre-submission consultation document. We wish to thank all those who responded during the consultation period. The final plan has been revised as required by the Examiner, Richard High.

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Tony Shoults (Chairman of the Parish Council)

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