

Agenda Item No:

Report To: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 30th September 2021

Report Title: Adoption of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan

Report Author & Job Title: Harriet Turner – Planning Officer (Plan Making and Infrastructure)

Portfolio Holder Cllr. N Bell, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development
Portfolio Holder for:



Summary:

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for examination in late 2020 and the Council received the Examiner's report in April 2021.

The Examiner's report recommended that the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum subject to a number of modifications and on the 29th July 2021, the amended and final version of the Neighbourhood Plan was the subject of a local referendum in the parish and 92.67% voted in favour of the plan.

Following the successful referendum it is now the Local Planning Authority's responsibility to formally 'make' (i.e. adopt) the Plan, which will confer full Development Plan status for decision making purposes. Formally 'making' the Neighbourhood Plan must be agreed by Full Council, so this report recommends that the Cabinet endorse the Neighbourhood Plan and ask Full Council to 'make' it.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: Downs West and Goat Lees Wards

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- I. Recommend that Full Council 'make' the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood plan 2013-2030 in accordance with Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to become part of the Development Plan.**

Policy Overview: The adoption of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan will mean that it becomes part of the borough Development Plan and its policies shall have the same weight in decision-making as those adopted policies

contained within the Borough Council's own Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Financial Implications:	25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy monies received from development in the Neighbourhood Plan area must be top sliced to the Parish Council, rather than 15% for those parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan.
Legal Implications	None
Equalities Impact Assessment	See Attached
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	None
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	None
Sustainability Implications:	The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development within the parishes.
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2030 (Appendix 1)
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Report Title: Adoption of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction and Background

1. Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011, and enables local communities to shape development and growth in their area through the production of a neighbourhood development plan, a neighbourhood development order, or a community right to build order.
2. A neighbourhood plan covers a geographic area and can be taken forward by town and parish councils or 'neighbourhood forums'. It will be the role of the local planning authority to agree who should be the neighbourhood. A neighbourhood plan, if adopted, becomes part of the statutory development plan for that area and will be used in determining planning applications.
3. In this borough, there are three Neighbourhood Plans already adopted, the Wye Neighbourhood Plan, the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan, and the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan with a number of others in various stages of production. The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan will be the fourth Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted in the Borough.
4. Work commenced on the production of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2014, and the process has involved significant consultation with the local community. Throughout the process, planning policy officers from the borough council have supported the Neighbourhood Planning Group in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes to ensure that the eventual Plan met not only the aspirations of local residents, but also fulfilled the tests of compliance with national and local planning policy.
5. Following two formal stages of public and stakeholder consultation on the draft Plan, the Council appointed an independent examiner to formally consider whether the Plan met the necessary 'basic conditions' tests set down in legislation. The examination took place over written representations throughout early 2021. In April, the Council received the examiner's report which concluded that, subject to a number of modifications, the Plan was sound and did meet the 'basic conditions' tests and therefore should progress to the final stages of the process – a local referendum.
6. The local referendum on the Plan, as amended by modifications, was held in the parish on 29th July 2021. Of the 368 people who voted (a turnout of 19%), 92% supported the Plan.

Proposal/Current Position

7. As more than 50% of those who voted in the local referendum were in favour of the Plan, the Local Planning Authority must 'make' (adopt) the Plan as soon as reasonably practicable, as part of the Development Plan.

Implications and Risk Assessment

8. The 'making' of the Neighbourhood Plan will confer full Development Plan status on its policies. This means that for decision-making purposes, applications should be determined in accordance with its policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Neighbourhood Plan should therefore play a central role in guiding the Local Planning Authority in assessing planning applications in the parishes alongside the policies in the Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Equalities Impact Assessment

9. Members are referred to the attached Assessment. Although the Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted by others, it is necessary to consider EIA if the Council is to adopt its policies.
10. It is concluded that the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan do not prejudice any existing groups. The Plan provides a framework for development that will support all sections of the local community.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

11. As set out in the background section of this report, significant consultation has taken place on the Plan, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, which has helped to shape the Plan.

Other Options Considered

12. The Council must 'make' (adopt) the plan unless it is considered that that the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any human rights. In my opinion, there is no such incompatibility and therefore, the Council should progress to the formally 'make' the Plan.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

13. The Council are required to 'make' the Plan, following the successful referendum, unless the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any human rights, and there are no such reasons.

Next Steps in Process

14. If the Cabinet agree the recommendation, then it will be for the Full Council to approve and formally 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan so that it can become a part of the Council's Development Plan for the borough, alongside the Local Plan 2030 and other Development Plan documents.
15. In addition, the relevant regulations require the borough council to publish this decision on the council's website and a statement setting out the reasons for making that decision. This should also be published and made available

locally within the parish. The adopted version of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be made available on the Borough Council's website.

Conclusion

16. The Parish Council as a whole and the members of the Neighbourhood Planning Group in particular, deserve much credit for undertaking and persevering with the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan through to its conclusion. The referendum result shows support for the Plan by the local community and demonstrates the efforts to engage the community throughout the process.
17. It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the Neighbourhood Plan and request that Full Council formally 'make' the Plan to form part of the Development Plan for the borough.

Portfolio Holder's Views

18. I am very supportive of local communities taking an active role in the future evolution of their environment. These plans then inform future decisions being taken by the Local Planning Authority to develop a comprehensively beneficial place for all. The work and commitment of all having undertaken this exercise is to be commended.

Contact and Email

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Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2030

October 2021



Boughton Aluph & Eastwell
PARISH COUNCIL

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Acknowledgements

This document has been developed and produced by Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council in close cooperation with local community volunteers on behalf of the Parish community.

The team would like to particularly thank the following in preparation of the documents and for their support during the process:

- The community groups, local societies and school in the Parish for providing support and comment throughout the process;
- The late Derek Anthony, former Parish Councillor and Chair of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council who initiated the Neighbourhood Plan project;
- Carol & Nigel Bunker;
- Jane Hall
- Borough Councillor Larry Krause;
- Erica Lasparini OBE;
- Jason Matthews, former Chair of Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council
- Borough Councillor Winston Michael;
- Alan Vaughan, Chair of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Residents' Association and the BAERA Committee, and
- Tony Fullwood of Tony Fullwood Associates - Chartered Town Planners, who was our professional planning consultant.

The Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would like to thank the whole community for participating in the process and for coming together and supporting the Neighbourhood Plan over its development.

Section 1: Introduction

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of planning document produced in the Parishes. It is part of the Government's approach to planning which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the Localism Act that came into force in April 2012.

The plan passed at a local referendum in July 2021. The Neighbourhood Plan will therefore be adopted by Ashford Borough Council as the plan which must be used in law to determine planning applications in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes. It will become part of the Development Plan alongside the Borough Council's Local Plan.

The Plan therefore provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long-term future of the Parishes for the period 2013 - 2030. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.

In order to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which comprised 2 Parish Councillors supported by a number of local volunteers¹.

Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area specific and apply only to the relevant areas illustrated on the associated Map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, the Parish and Borough Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole and cross-referencing between Plan policies has been minimised.

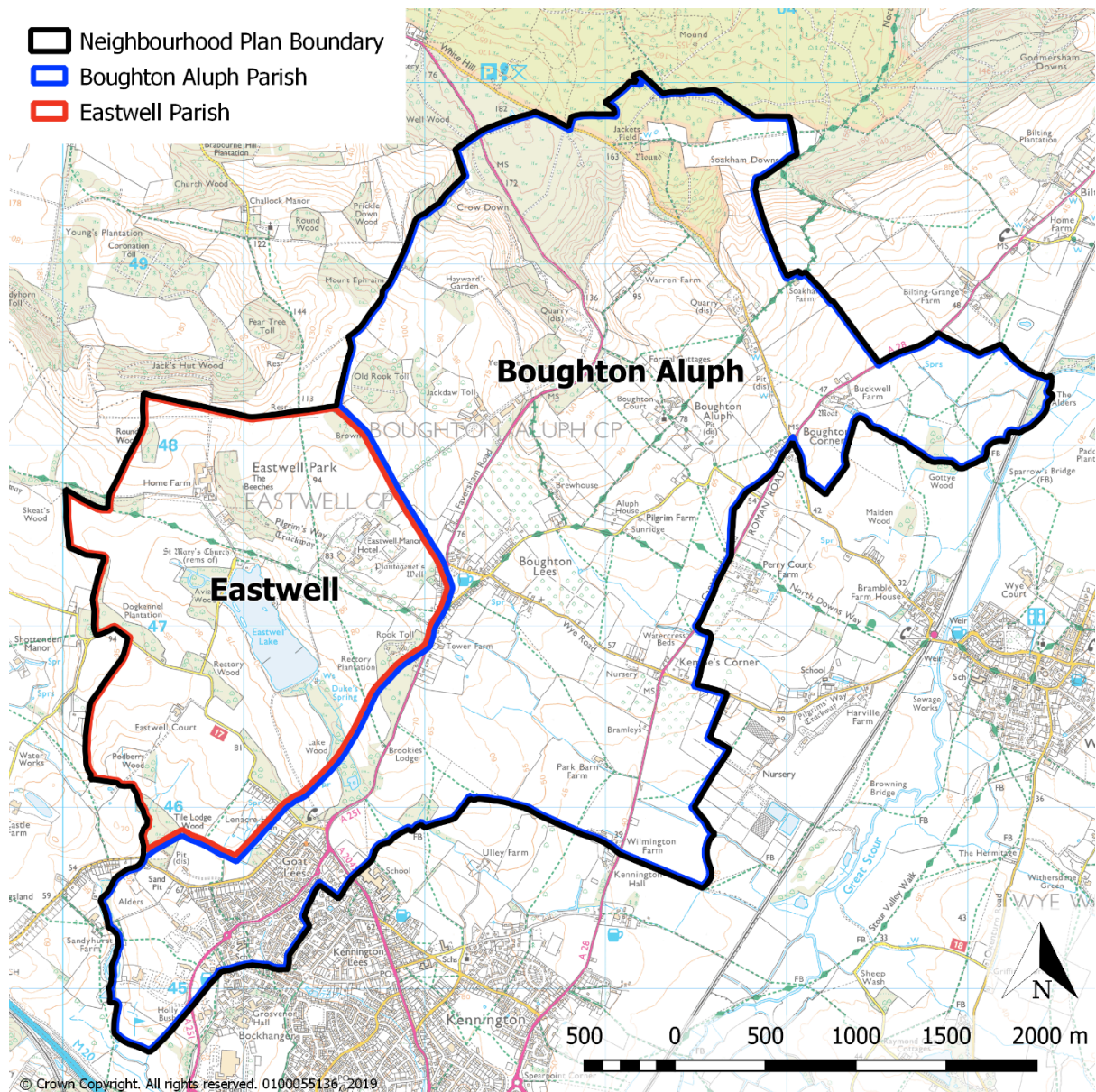
The Plan should also be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 (NPPF), Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan 2030 and the Neighbourhood Plan evidence documents.

¹ Past and present members of the Neighbourhood Steering Group are listed here:

- Carol Bunker
- Ray Burrough
- Bryan Hall
- Jane Hall
- Anna Kirke
- Erica Lasparini OBE
- Fiona Miller
- Bob Morgan
- Nigel Bunker
- Spencer Phillips

Which Area Does the Neighbourhood Plan Cover?

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan relates to the designated area covered by Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council. The neighbourhood plan designation was approved by Ashford Borough Council on 12 June 2014. The area to which the Plan applies is shown on the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Designation Map (Map 1).



Map 1 - Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Area

Involvement in the Neighbourhood Plan Process

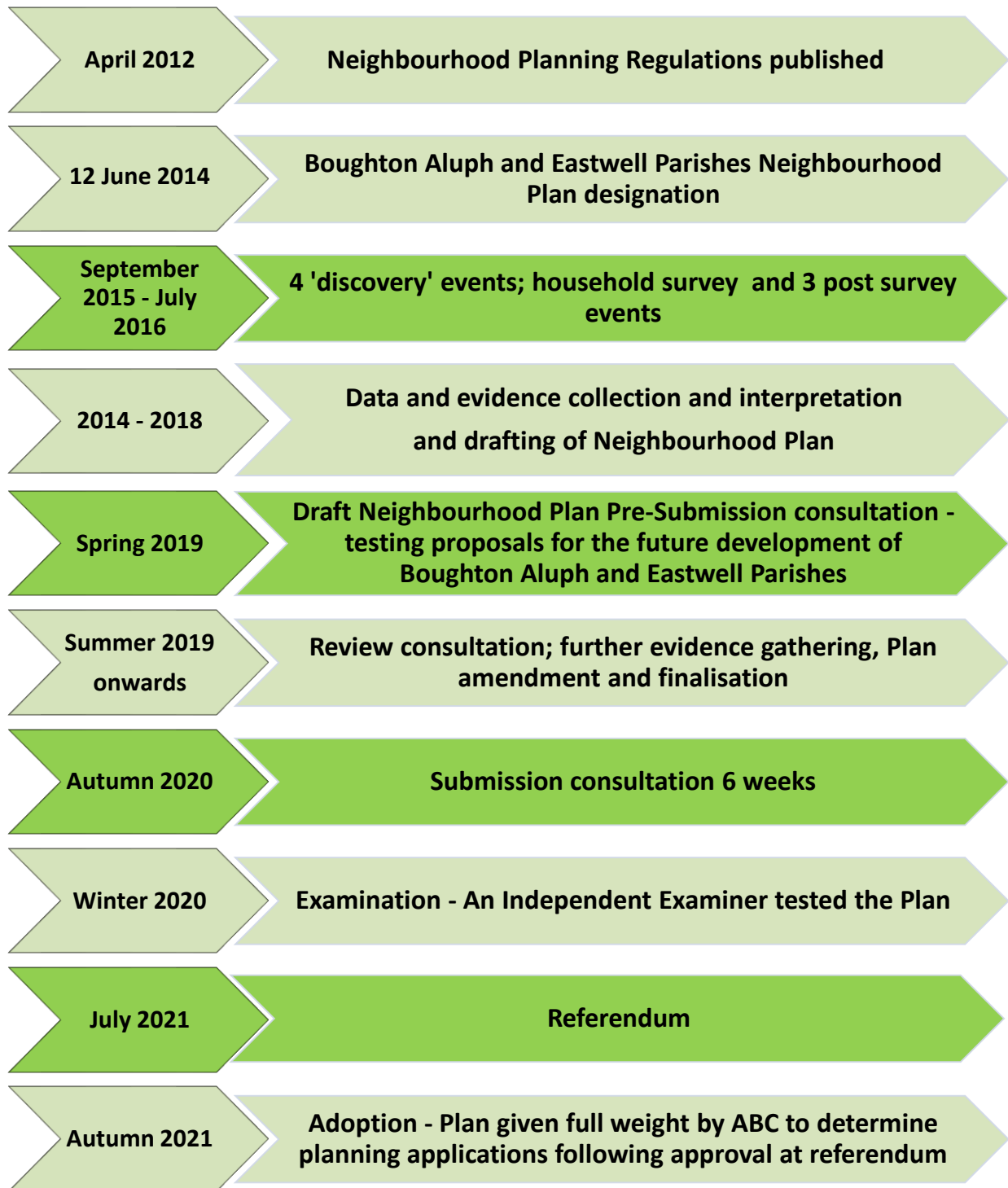
The Neighbourhood Plan team has followed the necessary legal steps to create the Plan. Importantly the team has ensured engagement with the people of both Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish and others with an interest in the area.

Details of engagement and consultation are recorded in the Consultation Statement which is available to download from the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council website.

The process is set out in Figure 1 below with the opportunities for local involvement highlighted in dark green.

The Plan incorporates those modifications required by the independent Examiner to allow the Plan to go to referendum. This gives the local electorate the power over whether they want their Plan to be used in local decisions.

Figure 1 – Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Process



How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the planning system

Although the Government's intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their area, all Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with higher level planning policy. That is, within the constraints imposed by national guidance and local policy, neighbourhoods should develop a shared vision for their area and develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.

Neighbourhood Plans must comply with European Regulations on strategic environmental assessments and habitats, and with the NPPF, and they must generally conform with the strategic policies in the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Nevertheless, after being passed at a local referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted by Ashford Borough Council as the plan which must be used in law to determine planning applications in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes.

What is in the Neighbourhood Plan?

The Plan is for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes as a whole and looks at a wide range of issues, including:

- Protecting the distinctive character of the built-up area; recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside; conserving and enhancing the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and achieving high quality development which fits well with the location;
- Retaining the Local Green Spaces important to local heritage, amenity, recreation and/or wildlife;
- Protecting important public views;
- Carefully assimilating high quality housing and business development at the strategic Eureka site in a parkland setting;
- Enabling local people to stay in or return to the Parishes by ensuring a supply of affordable housing; and
- Protecting and enhancing Eureka Place Local Centre; community buildings; recreation open space and the network of local footpaths.

What period does the Neighbourhood Plan cover?

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan covers the Plan period from 2013 – 2030 to coincide with the period for the Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. To determine whether the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan requires a SEA it is necessary to screen the proposals in the plan to determine whether it is likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Ashford Borough Council is legally required to determine whether a neighbourhood plan will require SEA. As part of this screening process it is necessary to consult the SEA consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) to get their opinion on whether or not the plan is likely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore whether a SEA is required.

The Screening Report for the Neighbourhood Plan finds no significant negative effects will occur as a result of the Plan and it is concluded that a full SEA is not required at this time.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the appropriate assessment required for any plan to assess the potential implications for European wildlife sites. The first stage of the HRA process is a screening exercise undertaken by Ashford Borough Council where the details of nearby internationally designated sites are examined to assess whether there is the potential for the implementation of the Plan to have an impact on the sites. Following such an assessment, it is considered that the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan proposals will not adversely affect the integrity of the internationally designated sites, alone or in combination with other projects and plans. It is therefore considered that a full HRA of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan is not required.

How this Plan is organised

The Plan is divided into the following sections:

Section 2: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Now: a brief description of the Parishes today and the key issues that have influenced the Plan

Section 3: The Vision for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes: a long-term vision for the Parish up to 2030

Section 4: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Strategy: the broad planning approach for the Parishes and how this conforms with higher level planning policy

Section 5: Neighbourhood Plan Policies: sets out policies to support the overall vision, including site specific allocations for new development. Policies are arranged in the following themes:

- Environment
- Housing and Business
- Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

Section 6: Monitoring and Review: which explains how the Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored and the circumstances which may lead to a review of the plan.

Section 2: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Now

The earliest part of the Parishes has its origins in a Roman road junction, where the route linking the Weald to Canterbury crossed the road running from Dover to Faversham and Reculver (remains can be seen at Kempe's Corner). The ancient Pilgrims' Way to Canterbury doglegs through the middle of the Parishes, with a branch dividing off from the eastern end of Boughton Lees towards Folkestone and Dover.

Settlement in both Boughton Aluph and Eastwell dates back to Saxon times, and they feature in the Domesday Book of 1086. The gradual growth and increasing significance of Eastwell Park Estate, especially in the nineteenth century, led to additional housing for estate workers and trades (including blacksmith, wheelwright, butcher and grocer) in Boughton Lees around a triangular green. In this way the village grew around the green rather than by the two churches of St Mary the Virgin Church, Eastwell, and the pilgrim's church of All Saints at Boughton Aluph.

In more recent times, Ashford has expanded into the southern tip of the Parishes. Between the 1991 and 2001 censuses the population rose from 695 to 1099. More strikingly still the 2011 census shows the Parishes recording the highest percentage population increase in Kent, 126%, from 1099 to 2490 persons.

Today around 90% of the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes population reside within the Ashford urban area with the remaining 10% residing in Boughton Lees and smaller hamlets within the rural part of the Parishes. Conversely, the Parishes area is predominantly rural with approximately 75% countryside with the remaining 25% to the south west of the Parish being a well-developed, residential and employment suburb of Ashford – the Eureka/Goat Lees area.

A wide range of issues have been considered in producing the Neighbourhood Plan. These are grouped under three themes:

- Environment
- Housing and Business
- Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

The key issues for these themes are set out below. The main issues have been identified from research along with issues raised by local people at the various consultation events. The background reports used to help prepare the Neighbourhood Plan are referred to in more detail in Section 5.

Environment

More than half of the Plan area is situated within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which skirts the northern and western edges of Boughton Lees and extends north-east and south-west to include the hamlets of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell. The remaining areas of countryside have a distinctive character and provide the setting for the AONB. There are dramatic panoramic views across open arable land of the North Downs, including from Ashford and Boughton Lees. One of the distinctive features which results from the topography and layout of development is the strong visual connectivity

between both Ashford and Boughton Lees and the landscape – offering long and shorter distance views from the built-up area.

The extensive and picturesque Eastwell Park, a Historic Park and Garden in Kent, extends between the edge of Ashford and Boughton Lees and is located within the AONB.

Areas of ancient woodland, poplar shelter belts and remnant hedgerows add to the landscape character and biodiversity of the area.

Boughton Aluph Parish incorporates the northern edge of Ashford and part of the extensive Eureka Park housing and business park allocation. The area of Ashford within the Parish Council area incorporates five distinctive areas, each with a different character. The adopted Local Plan allocates a strategic site at Eureka Park for a mix of commercial and housing development.

The historic centre of Boughton Lees is designated as a Conservation Area for its special architectural and historic character and the village comprises six distinctive character areas.

Historic England's register shows a number of listed heritage assets in the Parishes.

Without careful planning, the distinctive character and sensitive landscape and ecology are under threat from significant and inappropriately located or designed development. The landscape forms a setting which contributes to the attraction of Ashford, Boughton Lees and the hamlets as places to live and work, and plays a vital role in maintaining the health and wellbeing of the population.

Housing and Business

The 2011 census tells us that in 2011 Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes had 1,337 dwellings located primarily within the Goat Lees area of Ashford. There is a predominance of family housing (45% of homes having 3 bedrooms or more). 64.7% of homes are owned, with 13.3% available for social rent, 17.6% private rent and 1.6% shared ownership.

Between 2001 and 2011 some 540 dwellings were added to the housing stock of the Neighbourhood Plan area, primarily in the Goat Lees area which was completed 20 years ago.

The NPPF, 2019 states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. In addition, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.

The adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030, allocates an area for a mix of commercial (around 20ha) and residential development (indicative capacity of 375 dwellings). That part of this strategic development which is located within the Parishes is supported in the Neighbourhood Plan. In accordance with the NPPF (Para. 21), the Neighbourhood Plan contains further development principles for this site.

The number of dwellings already completed within the Neighbourhood Plan area since the start of the plan period (2013) is 5 and a further 7 dwellings are committed through planning permissions. With further windfalls and potentially some of the 375 dwellings from the

Eureka site located in the Plan area, the Parishes are anticipating much slower housing growth following the significant change over the past 20 years.

There are established B1 uses at Eureka Park Business Park originally designated as a key strategic employment area with high quality buildings within a parkland and wetland setting. The area provides a different type of offer to the other business locations in Ashford with lower density development able to be incorporated within a landscaped setting - and it is important that this type of provision continues to be accommodated. However, it is possible that other uses beyond B1 office developments, such as health care facilities or similar high-quality services, could complement the wider B1 office elements of the site.

The facilities and services at Eureka Place Local Centre together with the hotels; self-catering and bed and breakfast accommodation located in the area, provide further diversity in local employment opportunities.

The Parish Council considers that a Neighbourhood Plan should be in place to help guide and coordinate the future development of the Parishes. Residents are keen to ensure that development is absorbed within the environmental constraints identified and can be supported by sufficient infrastructure to ensure the quality of life of existing and future residents.

When planning new development, it is important to understand the characteristics of each distinct area of Ashford and Boughton Lees and designs should respond to the distinctive local character.

Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

The focus of the Parishes population at the edge of the Ashford urban area means that most of the facilities and services in the Neighbourhood Plan area are concentrated in the Goat Lees area - clustered within the Eureka Place Local Centre. The primary school, shops, a public house, cafes/ restaurants, medical facilities, dental practice and a community hall are all found at the Local Centre which provides a focus for the area and an important opportunity for social interaction whilst enabling more sustainable linked trips to a variety of services.

Goat Lees Primary School opened in 2013 but is at capacity. The Eureka Park residential development could generate a need for approximately 105 primary school places and the only primary school within walking distance is Goat Lees. Kent County Council indicates that St. Theresa Primary School in Ashford town centre will be able to expand and that other primary schools are being planned. However, these are at some distance from the Eureka site and beyond walking distance. The lack of primary school places locally will increase the number of vehicle trips at peak time on the local roads.

There is no secondary school located within the Parishes, although Towers Secondary School abuts the Neighbourhood Plan boundary and two grammar schools are located in Ashford town centre.

There are no GP surgeries located in the Parishes with the closest found in Wye or Bybrook, Ashford.

The Parishes are served by three community halls: Goat Lees Community Hall (within the Eureka Place Local Centre); Sandyacres Sports and Social Club (which serves as a sporting hub) and the Iron Room, Boughton Lees.

Of the two public houses found in the Parishes, one is located within Eureka Place Local Centre - The Pheasant; the other adjoining the Green at Boughton Lees -The Flying Horse Inn.

In terms of outdoor sports pitches, Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space, Sandhurst Lane, provides football and rugby pitches as well as tennis courts (which are out of use). The Boughton Lees village green has seen cricket played there for over 200 years. An informal playing area with a football goalpost is located between Guernsey Way and Rothbrook Drive, Goat Lees, although this is subject to flooding during winter months. A Youth Play Space is provided at Trinity Road, Goat Lees. An extensive network of footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways cross the Parishes and are widely used and valued by residents.

The Goat Lees development abuts the Kennington area to the north and west and the Eureka leisure complex and Ashford Golf Course to the south. As a consequence, community facilities and services are used by many people from outside of the Parishes. Similarly, Parish residents utilise service and leisure facilities outside the Parishes, particularly within the Ashford urban area e.g. the cinema and restaurant/fast food outlet at Eureka is in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan boundary. Wye village centre also offers facilities such as restaurants, pubs, schools, medical and sporting facilities that are utilised by Parish residents.

Section 3: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Future: a vision to 2030

Our vision is for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes to retain its distinctive rural character at the urban edge of Ashford, surrounding the village of Boughton Lees and within the hamlets of Boughton Aluph, Eastwell and Kempe's Corner by carefully integrating the Eureka Park expansion of Ashford into the local landscape (including the setting of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and successfully interweaving high quality new development into the Goat Lees area of Ashford and the historic fabric of Boughton Lees. The Parishes will continue to be served by enhanced key local services and public open space.

Section 4: Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Strategy

Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes need to continue to evolve and the Neighbourhood Plan looks to set out a planning strategy appropriate for the expansion of Ashford at Eureka Park and small scale development within Boughton Lees whilst protecting valued landscapes (including the highly valued Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty, Eastwell Historic Park and Garden, ancient woodland and public footpaths and bridleways), local green spaces and important local views.

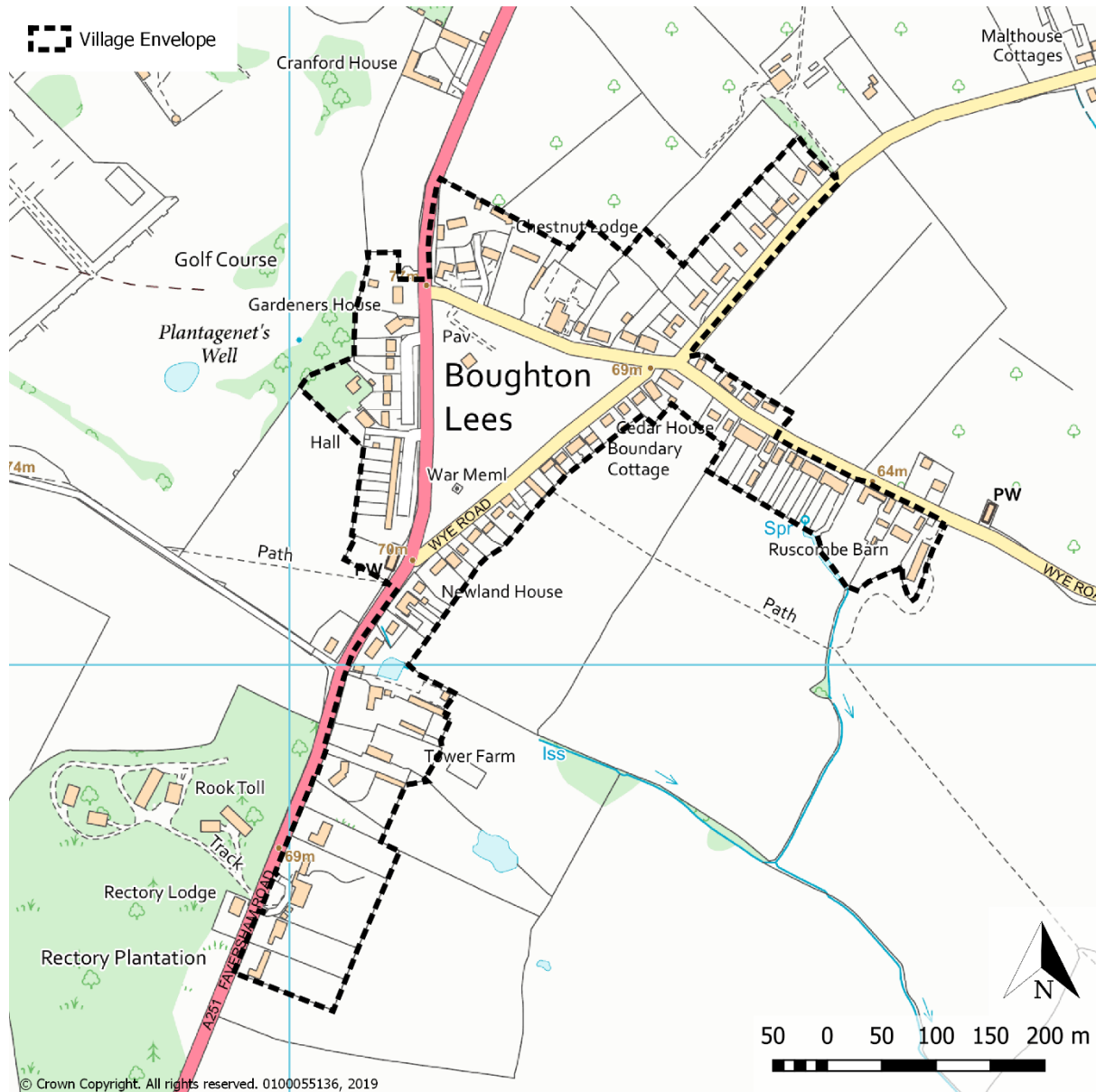
All plans should be based on, and reflect, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and take account of the NPPF with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally. The national planning policy background to each of the Neighbourhood Plan topics is set out in the relevant sections of the Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan and should support the strategic development needs set out in the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area. The Neighbourhood Plan should reflect these policies and should plan positively to support them. The Neighbourhood Plan should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan strategy is well aligned with the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. The Plan positively supports the strategic allocation for housing and commercial development at Eureka Park and recognises specific policies in the NPPF. These indicate where development should be restricted and seek to minimise any adverse impacts which development may cause to the locally valued distinctive characteristics of the area.

Recognising the strategic Local Plan allocation at Eureka Park for housing and commercial development, the planning strategy is to focus well designed development in a parkland

setting at Eureka Park - providing the necessary transport, community and open space infrastructure to ensure the quality of life of existing and future residents of the Parishes.

The built-up confines of Boughton Lees are defined (see Map 2 below) and the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to enable small scale residential development opportunities within the village whilst protecting its rural setting and the surrounding countryside from inappropriate development.



Map 2 – The built-up confines of the village of Boughton Lees

Hamlets such as Boughton Aluph; Eastwell and Kempe’s Corner are not sustainable places for new housing development and both Boughton Aluph and Eastwell are situated within the Kent Downs AONB.

Local Green Spaces and Important Public Views are identified and to be protected.

Affordable housing will be provided through adopted Local Plan policies within the Eureka development or an exception site at the edge of Boughton Lees if housing need can be demonstrated in the village.

The Plan seeks high quality designs which respond to the distinct character of the individual areas of Goat Lees and Boughton Lees and will preserve and enhance the character and setting of the Boughton Lees Conservation Area.

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the important community networks in Goat Lees and Boughton Lees and seeks to protect and enhance the social and economic hub of the Eureka Place Local Centre together with other community and leisure facilities which are important to the social fabric of the Parishes.

Section 5: Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Environment

Objectives

- To protect the character of the landscape and conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which provides the setting for houses at Goat Lees, the village of Boughton Lees and hamlets of Boughton Aluph, Eastwell and Kempe's Corner.
- To conserve and enhance the heritage of our Parishes, including the Boughton Lees Conservation Area.
- To protect Local Green Spaces within the built-up areas of the Parishes.
- To protect distinctive, locally valued views.
- To ensure high quality design in all forms of development which responds to the distinctive landscape, heritage and character of the Parishes.

Environment Policies

High Quality Design

The NPPF states that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. The NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.

Distinctive Character Areas

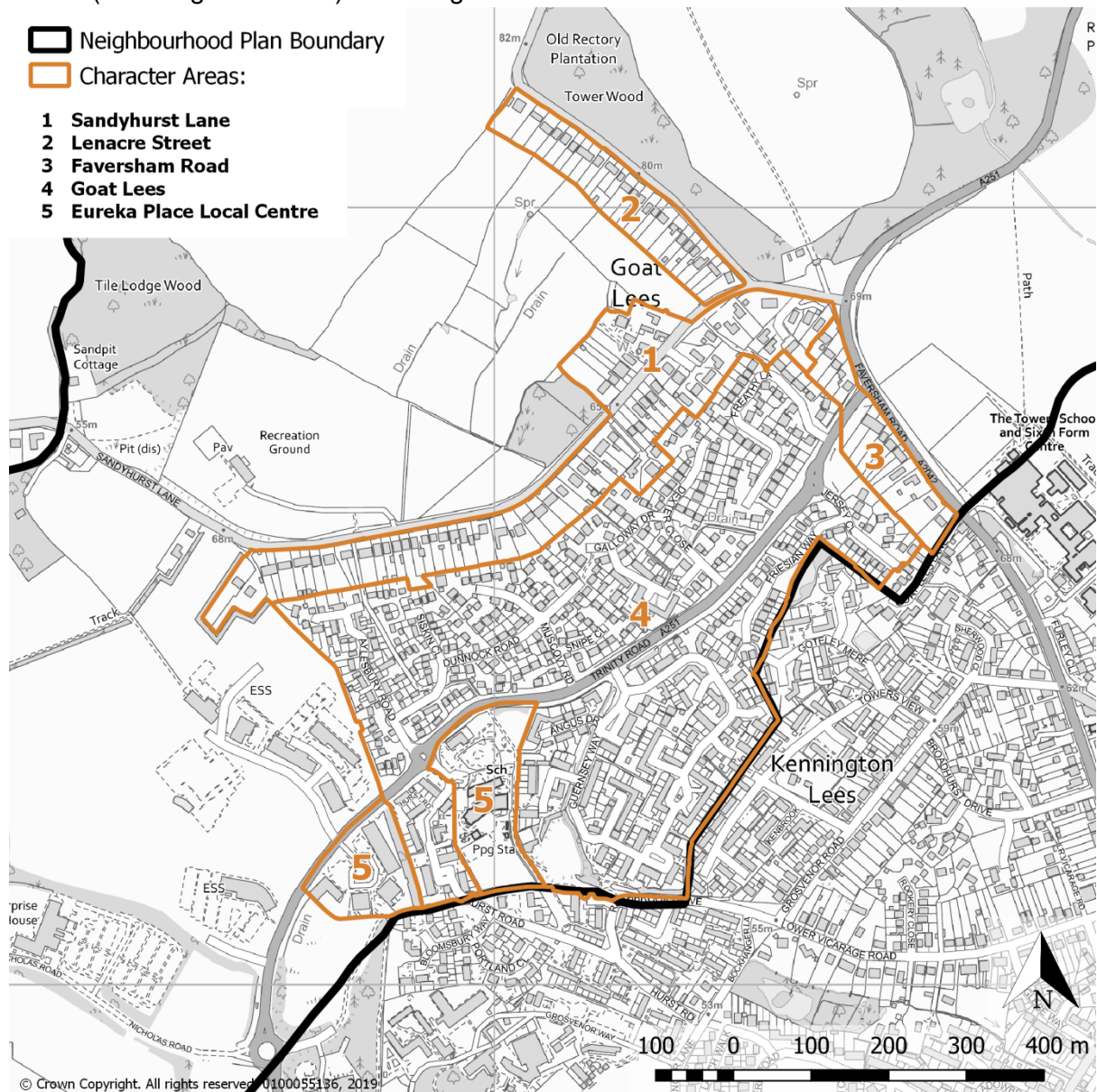
The Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy SP6 - Promoting High Quality Design attaches great importance to the quality of design in new development including demonstrating a positive response to character, distinctiveness and sense of place.

The 'character of an area' is often mentioned in the context of considering development proposals. What is often missing is a clear identification of, and agreement about, the locally distinctive features of an area that give it character that should be given careful regard in considering proposals for development. The Neighbourhood Plan can play an important role in identifying the special character of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in the designs of proposed development. For this purpose, the Neighbourhood Plan identifies five areas of distinctive character within the south west of Boughton Aluph Parish (including Goat Lees) (see Map 3 below) and a further six areas of distinctive character at Boughton Lees (see Map 4 below).

Through evaluation, there is a good understanding of the distinctive characteristics of each of the character areas. Buildings of Note are also identified where the use, mass, scale, design or visual prominence of a building mean that it plays an important role in the character of an area. Whilst many Buildings of Note are listed buildings, others are not, but the Neighbourhood Plan would seek to protect all such buildings.

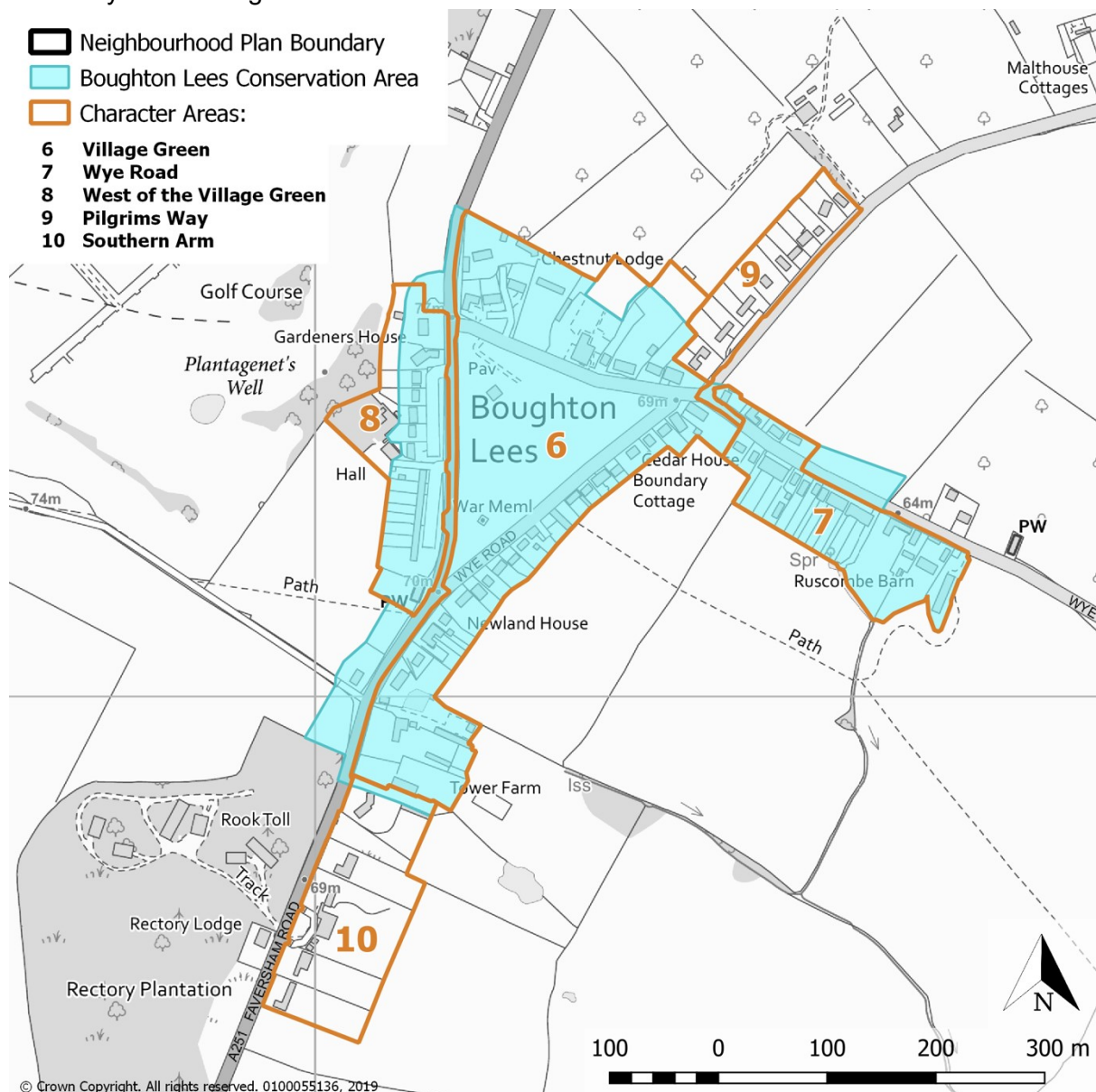
Generally, the Character Areas are in good condition but a limited number of features which detract from the character have been noted.

Appendix 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out the distinctive character; Buildings of Note and detractors for each separate character area within the south west of Boughton Aluph Parish (including Goat Lees) and Boughton Lees.



Map 3 - South West of Boughton Aluph Parish (including Goat Lees) Character Areas

Map 4 below shows the position of the 6 Character Areas in Boughton Lees in relation to the boundary of the Boughton Lees Conservation Area which is shaded blue.



Map 4 - Boughton Lees Character Areas and Conservation Area

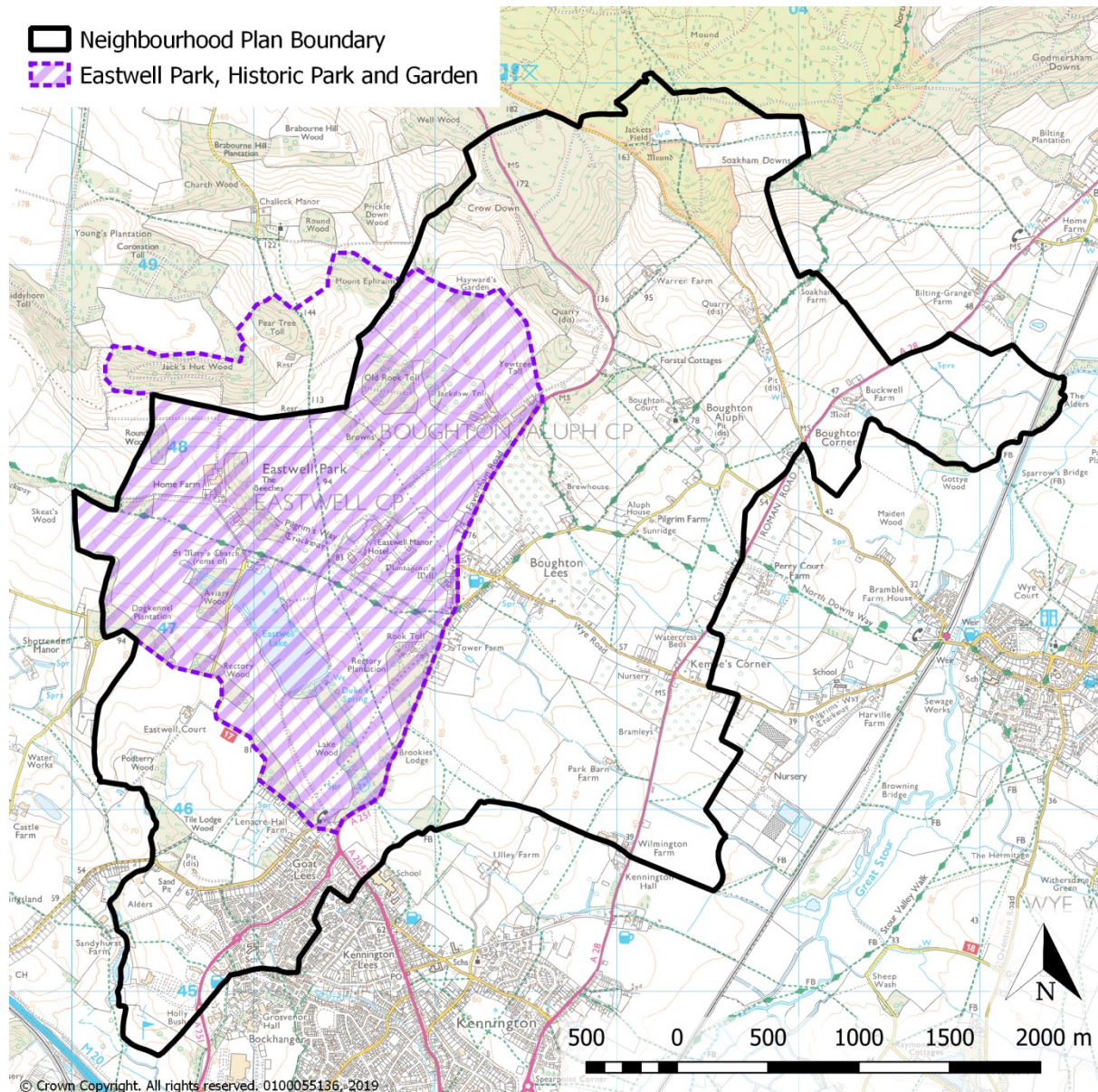
Heritage

The historic centre of Boughton Lees is designated as a Conservation Area as shown on Map 4 above. The Conservation Area is made up of areas of different character. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to proposed development within, and affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements. In the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the Conservation Area, the special character of these designated areas can be derived from Appendix 1.

The NPPF also seeks the protection of the character and setting of listed buildings and Conservation Areas. Historic England's register shows 39 listed heritage assets in the

Parishes, of which 36 are buildings (the others are a wall, a milestone and a burial mound - Long Barrow, Jacketts Field - which is a scheduled monument estimated to be 5,000 years old).

The extensive Eastwell Park which extends beyond the Plan area is designated a Historic Park and Garden in Kent. It is made up of part of the farmed estate and Eastwell Manor and grounds. The principal building was constructed between 1793 and 1799 and demolished in 1926. Only the gatehouse and Eastwell towers of the original buildings remain, with a new house constructed on the site between 1926 and 1928 by Sir John Pennefather.



Map 5 - Eastwell Park, Historic Park and Garden in Kent

In addition, there are areas known to be of archaeological interest and areas with archaeological potential around Boughton Aluph; within Eastwell Park and Kings Wood and around the long barrow to the west.

These designated and undesignated heritage assets provide an important context for new development.

Landscape

The northern and western part of the Plan area is situated within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - see Map 14 below.

The remaining areas of countryside have a distinctive character and provide the setting for the AONB. There are dramatic panoramic views across open arable land of the North Downs, including from Ashford and Boughton Lees.

The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection. The AONB Management Plan seeks to ensure that the natural beauty, special character and the vitality of its communities are recognised, maintained and strengthened.

Without careful planning, the distinctive character and sensitive landscape would be under threat from development of an inappropriate scale, location or design. Any development must be well integrated into the landscape for example through the use of existing and new landscape buffers.

Policy BAE NP1 - Design of New Development and Conservation

New development in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan will be supported where it:

a) Is designed to a high quality which responds to the heritage and distinctive characteristics of the individual area in which it is located within the south west of Boughton Aluph Parish (including Goat Lees) and Boughton Lees, as defined in Appendix 1, by way of:

- i. height, form, layout, orientation, materials, fenestration and boundary treatment;
- ii. the scale, design and materials of the public realm (highways, footways, open space and landscape);

b) Protects and enhances heritage assets and their setting (including the following Buildings of Note as set out in Appendix 1);

- Lenacre Hall Farmhouse, Sandyhurst Lane
- Eastwell Towers, Eastwell Park, Faversham Road
- Stone House, Faversham Road
- Goat Lees Primary School, Hurst Road
- The Flying Horse Inn, Wye Road
- Eastwell Terrace, Wye Road
- St Christopher's Church, Faversham Road
- Gardeners House, Faversham Road

c) Protects and sensitively incorporates landscape features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site; and

d) Is well integrated into the landscape.

Development proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets, either directly or indirectly, should respect the significance of the local context of the asset as well as the positive contribution that the heritage asset makes to local character and distinctiveness.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Number of applications to which Parish Council have objections to the design of development.	No applications to which Parish Council have objections to the design of development.

Areas of Local Green Space

Responses to community consultation including the Neighbourhood Plan household survey identified important open spaces within the Parishes.



Green space at junction of Trinity Road and Jersey Close/Friesian Way, Goat Lees

Public open spaces within, and close to, the built-up areas of Goat Lees and Boughton Lees are important to local amenity, the heritage and/or character of the area as well as providing opportunities for leisure and wildlife in the Parishes and are to be protected in the Neighbourhood Plan.



St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Eastwell

Away from the built-up areas there are two local green spaces at the hamlets of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell which provide the setting for listed churches as well as tranquil informal recreation spaces and these are also to be protected in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Through Neighbourhood Plans, local communities are able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them.

The location and importance of open spaces within the Parishes has been summarised in the Local Green Space Assessment, 2018. All Local Green Spaces are relatively small but, being within or close to areas of Goat Lees; Boughton Lees, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell, all are in close proximity to the communities they serve.

The areas are important for a number of sometimes overlapping reasons which are outlined below:

Open Spaces of Historic Importance

The relationship of buildings and village green is important in creating the special character of Boughton Lees Conservation Area. In other cases, the local green space is important to the setting of listed buildings at All Saints Churchyard, Church Lane, Boughton Aluph; St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Eastwell and in front of Tower Lodge and adjoining flint wall, Eastwell Park Estate, at the Sandyhurst Lane/ A251 Faversham Road junction.

Open Spaces Contributing to the character of an area

Open spaces can play an important role in creating the distinctive character of an area which is not designated as a heritage asset.

Open Space of Local Visual Amenity Value

A number of open spaces within the built-up confines provide important visual amenity.

Recreational Value

Most open spaces act as informal or formal recreational amenity space to the adjoining residential development. The churchyards provide more tranquil spaces with St Mary the Virgin Churchyard beside Eastwell Lake.

Wildlife Value

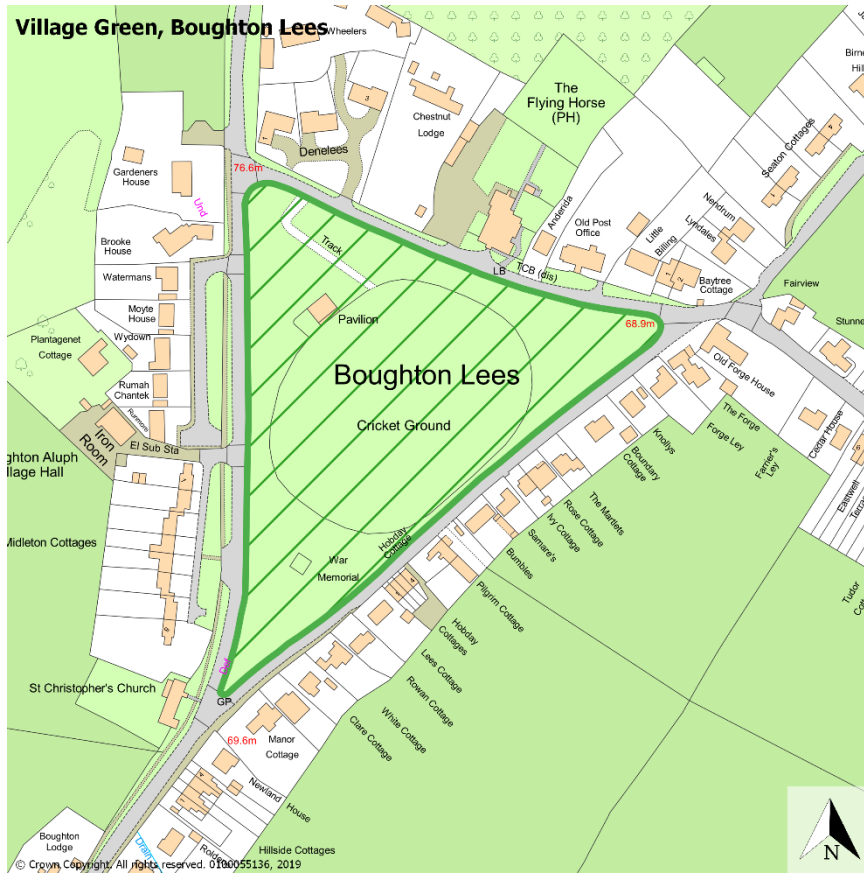
All Saints and St Mary the Virgin Churchyards contain wildlife interest on the gravestones and through ancient trees and surrounding vegetation.

The sites are listed below, and their location is identified on Maps 6 - 12 below.

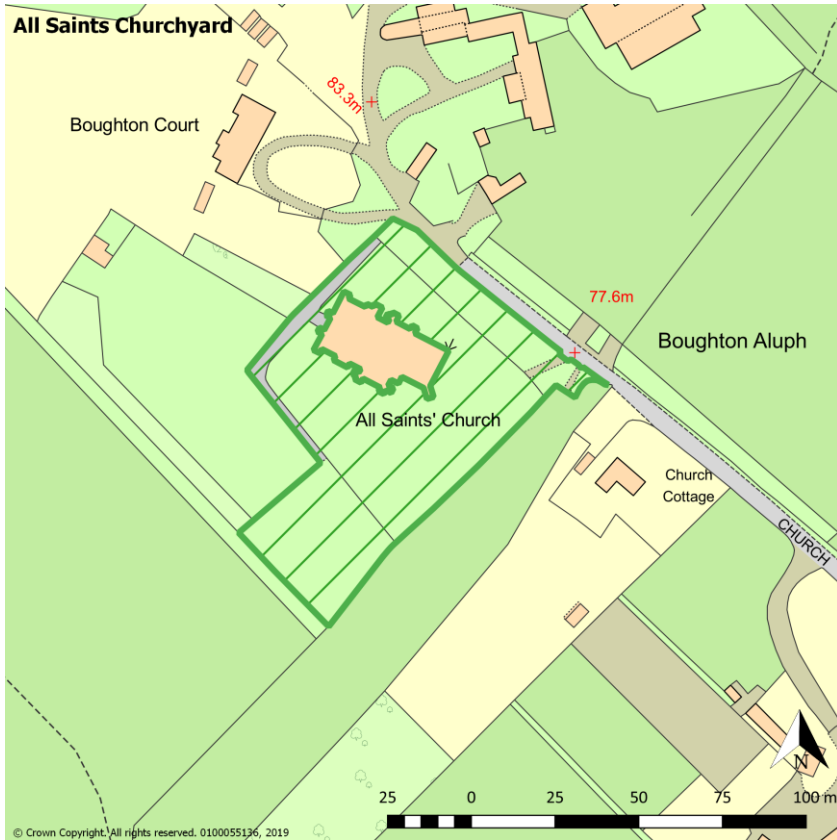
LGS Ref No.	Local Green Space Description
1	The Village Green, Boughton Lees
2	All Saints Churchyard, Church Lane, Boughton Aluph
3	St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Eastwell
4	Green space in front of Eastwell Towers and adjoining flint wall at junction of Sandyhurst Lane and A251 Faversham Road
5	Children’s play area and amenity space, Hurst Road, Goat Lees
6	Green space and informal recreational area, Guernsey Way, Goat Lees
7	Green space at junction of A251 Trinity Road, Jersey Close and Friesian Way, Goat Lees

Three of the spaces provide a cricket pitch, an informal football pitch and a sports and social recreation open space respectively whilst another is a children’s play space. Provision of appropriate built facilities in connection with the use of land for outdoor sport and outdoor

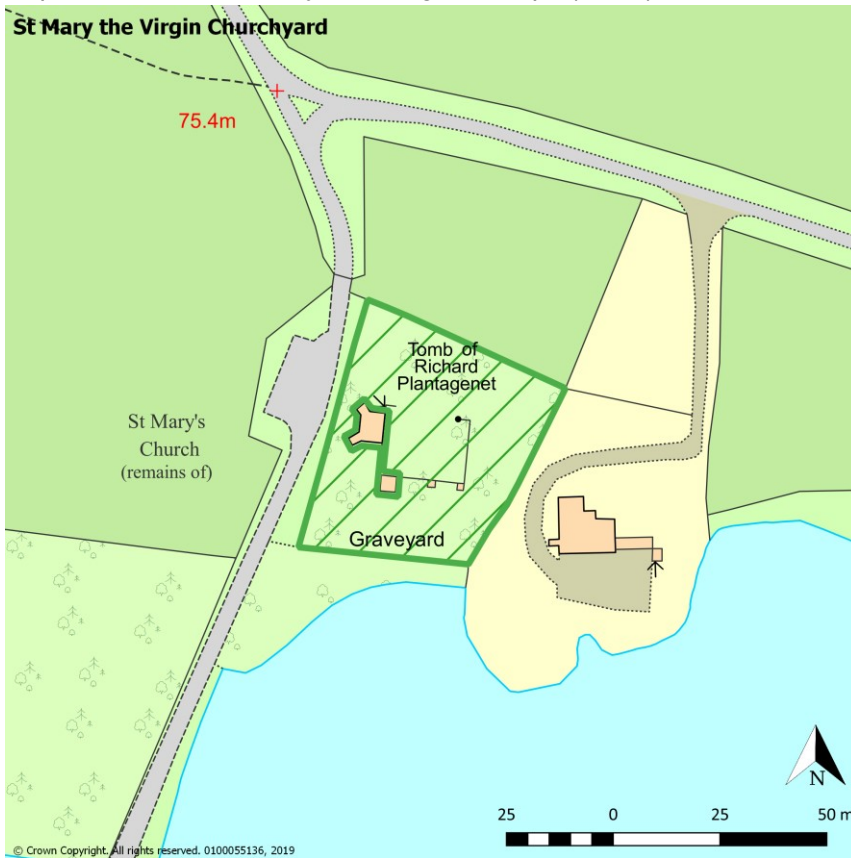
recreation would be appropriate within the Local Green Space provided this would not be in conflict with retaining the open green character of the designated space.



Map 6 - Village Green, Boughton Lees (LGS1)

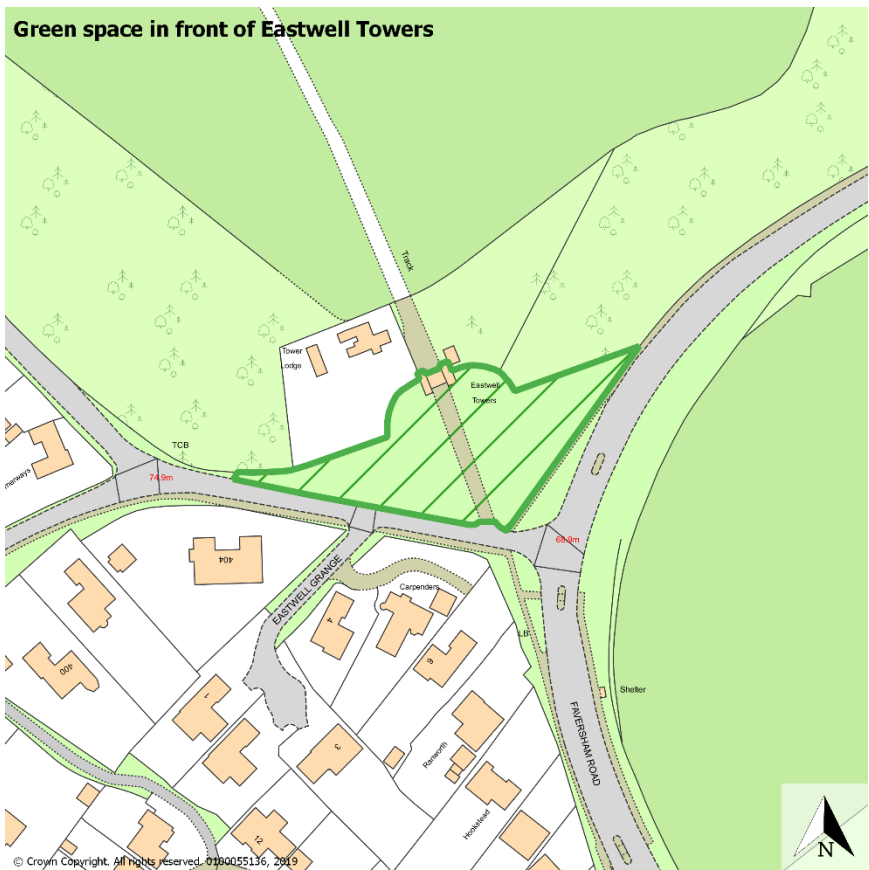


Map 7 - All Saints Churchyard, Boughton Aluph (LGS2)



Map 8 - St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Eastwell (LGS3)

Green space in front of Eastwell Towers



Map 9 - Green space in front of Eastwell Towers (LGS4)

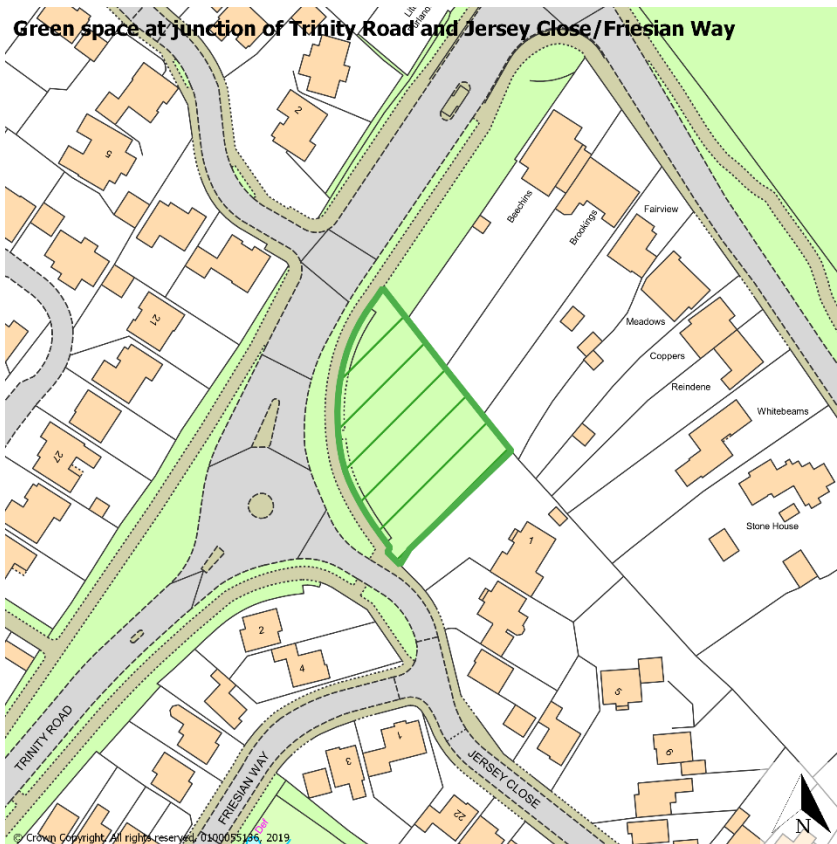
Children's Play Area and Amenity Space, Trinity Road



Map 10 - Children's Play Area and amenity space, Trinity Road, Goat Lees (LGS5)



Map 11 - Green space and informal recreational area, Guernsey Way, Goat Lees (LGS6)



Map 12 - Green space at junction of A251 Trinity Road, Jersey Close and Friesian Way, Goat Lees (LGS7)

Policy BAE NP2 – Protection of Local Green Space

Sites are designated as Local Green Spaces as defined on Maps 6-12.

Proposals for development at the sites identified on Maps 6-12 as designated Local Green Spaces will be considered in line with national planning policy on Green Belts.

The Countryside

Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes lie on land sloping, initially steeply, from the top of the North Downs towards the Great Stour Valley. A long-established tradition of mixed farming has helped create the natural beauty of the Kent Downs and its setting.



Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Local Green Spaces lost.	All Local Green Spaces retained.

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The northern and western parts of the Plan area are situated within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with the boundary encircling the south-western and south western edge of Boughton Lees (see Map 13). The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Assessment, 1995, prepared by the Countryside Commission, defined a number of distinct character areas within the AONB (see also Map 13).

The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan sets out the special characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB and formulates the local policies for its management by the 12 local authorities within the Kent Downs. Although the Management Plan does not form part of the statutory development plan, it is a material consideration that should be taken into account when preparing Neighbourhood Plans as well as determining planning applications.

The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in these areas.

Setting of the Kent Downs AONB

The setting of the Kent Downs AONB is broadly speaking the land outside the designated area which is visible from the AONB and from which the AONB can be seen, but may be wider when affected by intrusive features beyond that. There are extensive views across open arable land of the North Downs, including from Ashford and Boughton Lees. The setting is not formally defined or indicated on a map. Proposals which would affect the setting of the AONB are not subject to the same level of constraint as those which would

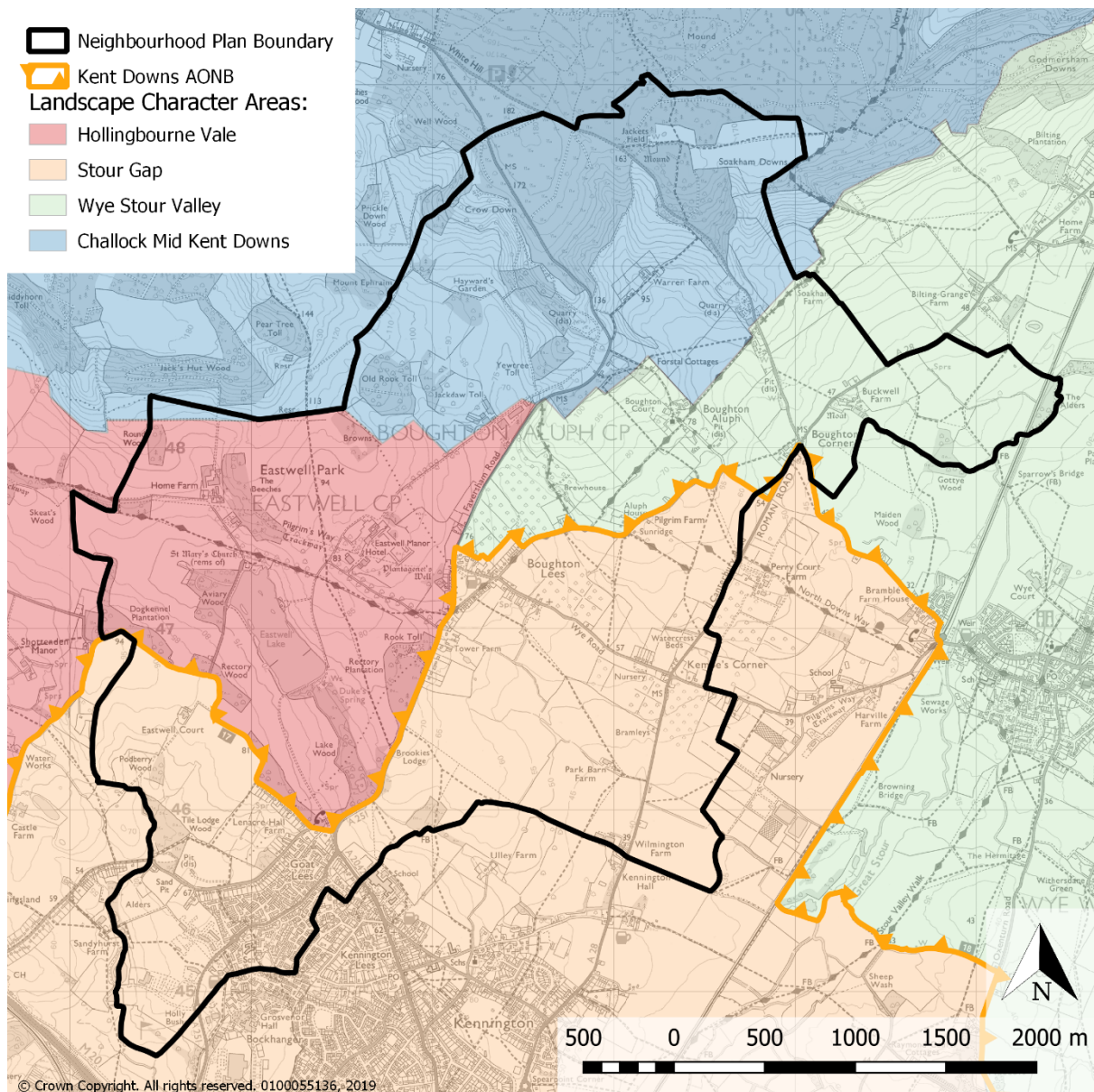
affect the AONB itself. The weight to be afforded to setting issues will depend on the significance of the impact. Where the qualities of the AONB which were instrumental in reasons for its designation are affected, then the impacts should be given considerable weight in decisions. This particularly applies to views to and from the scarp of the North Downs.

The adopted Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document (based on the Studio Engleback study, 2005) sub-divides the landscape character areas between Ashford and the AONB into district landscape types around the edge of Ashford (see also Map 13).

Sandyhurst Lane forms a well-defined edge to the Ashford urban area and provides separation between the built form which forms the edge of the settlement of Ashford on one side and open countryside on the other. Lenacre Hall and nearby buildings are located on the north side of the road, but these buildings are limited in number and the rural area to the north provides an attractive and clearly defined setting to Ashford in this location.



Sandyhurst Lane



Map 13 - Kent Downs AONB and Landscape Character Areas. The Neighbourhood Plan boundary is shown in black.

Landscape Character Areas

Hollingbourne Vale

The area to the west of Boughton Lees comprises the Hollingbourne Vale landscape character area: a rolling landscape of mixed farmland overlooked by yew-dominated scarp with thick hedges along Pilgrims' Way long distance footpath which runs through this area. The area contains Eastwell Park Estate part of which is designated as a Historic Park and Garden in Kent. The extensive and picturesque park contains many grand trees and a large lake. The character area lies within the Kent Downs AONB.



Hollingbourne Vale - Farmland of Eastwell Park Estate



Hollingbourne Vale - Eastwell Lake

Wye Stour Valley

The area to the north-east of Boughton Lees, the Wye Stour Valley landscape character area, comprises small fields with hedgerows and small plantation woodlands with characteristic historic buildings and the hamlet of Boughton Aluph. Pilgrims' Way also passes through this area. The character area lies within the Kent Downs AONB.



Wye Stour Valley - view across Stour Gap



Wye Stour Valley - View towards hamlet of Boughton Aluph

Challock Mid Kent Downs

To the north of the Plan area the Challock Mid Kent Downs landscape character area comprises a unified landscape with a coherent pattern of landform and elements and few detracting features. Woodlands, including Kings Wood, occur in large blocks and there is much single-age plantation. The character area lies within the Kent Downs AONB.



View across Warren Farm



Kings Wood

Stour Gap

This landscape character area forms a sloping landscape towards the Great Stour River and comprises large arable fields and horticultural areas of fruit orchards and small pine plantations, enclosed by continuous and remnant hedges and hedgerow trees with some discrete woodland blocks and tall poplar shelter belts. The area provides extensive, sometimes panoramic, views to the North Downs.

Eastwell Farmlands

The Ashford Landscape Character Study, 2005 identifies a number of landscape character areas. The study sub-divides the landscape character areas into district landscape types. This is in order to provide a more detailed analysis and description of the smaller land units on the edge of the urban area. Within the Stour Gap, the Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document identifies the Eastwell Farmlands as a district landscape type situated between this urban edge and the North Downs. The area comprises rolling arable and pasture land with medium sized fields generally divided by mature thick hedges (which have in places disappeared leaving remnant mature oaks) and the Studio Engleback study recommends conserving the landscape and creating hedgerow and woodland enhancements. Outside the Kent Downs AONB, this is the only part of the landscape within the Plan area for which the Study recommends conserving and creating the landscape (specifically through woodland planting and hedge reinstatement).

The adopted Landscape Character SPD, 2011 states that there is a need to ensure development proposals demonstrate regard for the area of landscape within which a proposal is located. Thus, in the Eastwell Farmlands distinctive character area the emphasis should be on conserving and creating the landscape.

This is supported by Ashford Local Plan Policy SP1 - Strategic Objectives provides the core principles that planning applications are expected to adhere to. Criterion b is:

b) To conserve and enhance the Borough's natural environment including designated and undesignated landscapes.

Local Plan Policy ENV3a - Landscape Character and Design states that all proposals for development in the borough shall demonstrate particular regard to any relevant guidance given in the Landscape Character SPD and any non-designated, locally identified, significant landscape features justified in a Parish Plan or equivalent document.

The Eastwell Farmlands area immediately abuts the Kent Downs AONB to the north. The rolling arable and pasture land with medium sized fields generally divided by mature thick hedges provides the setting for this part of the AONB.

A recent appeal (APP/E2205/W/19/3220880) confirms that this area of open countryside provides an attractive setting to the settlement of Ashford in this location.



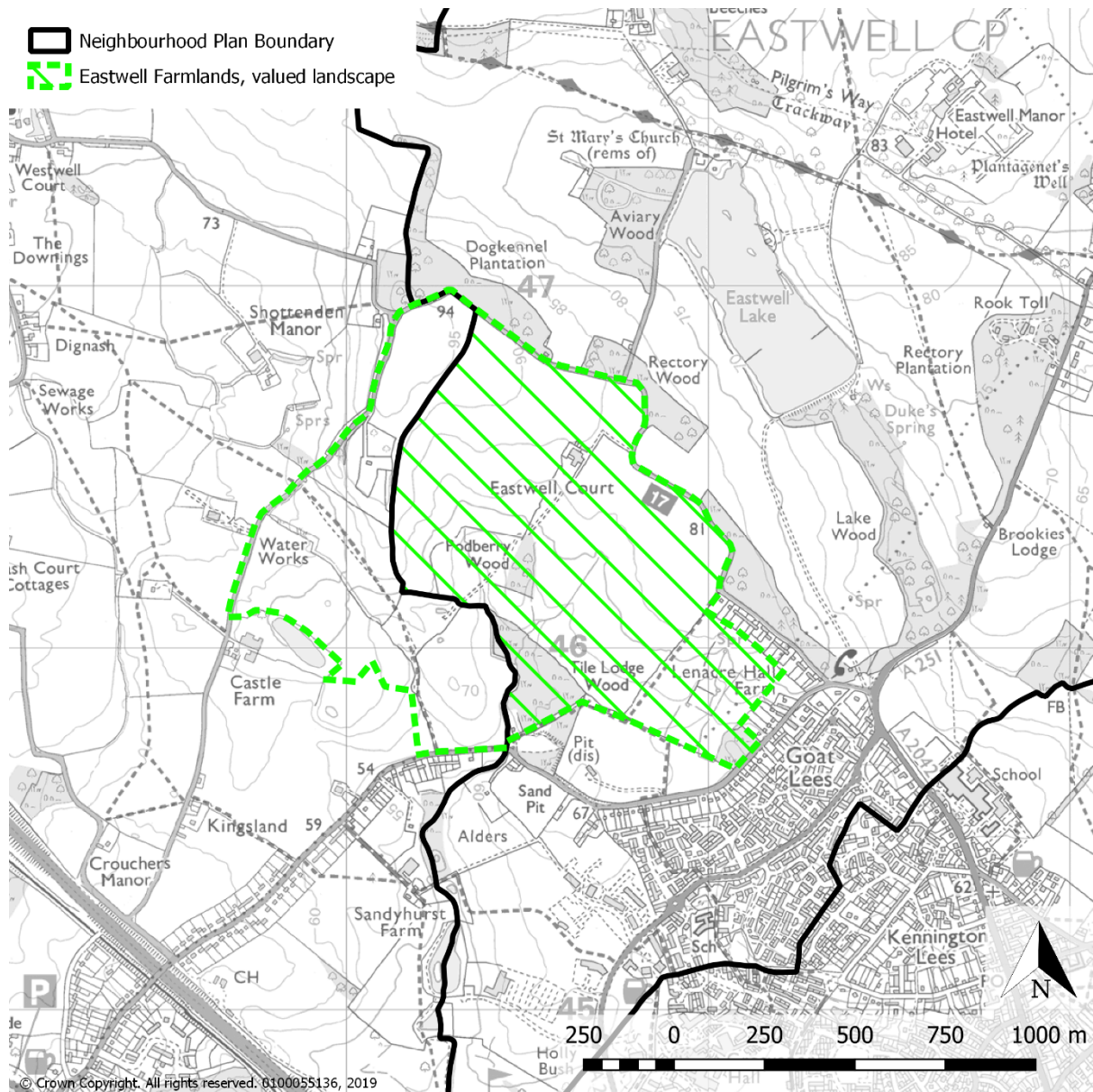
View of the Eastwell Farmlands from Sandyhurst Lane



View of the Eastwell Farmlands towards Sandyhurst Lane from public footpath AE207

For these reasons, it is appropriate that Policy BAE NP3b seeks only to permit development which would retain the landscape character of, and not have a detrimental impact on, the area of Eastwell Farmlands valued landscape defined on Map 14.

In accordance with the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and enhance this valued landscape as defined on Map 14 below.



Map 14 - Eastwell Farmlands valued landscape

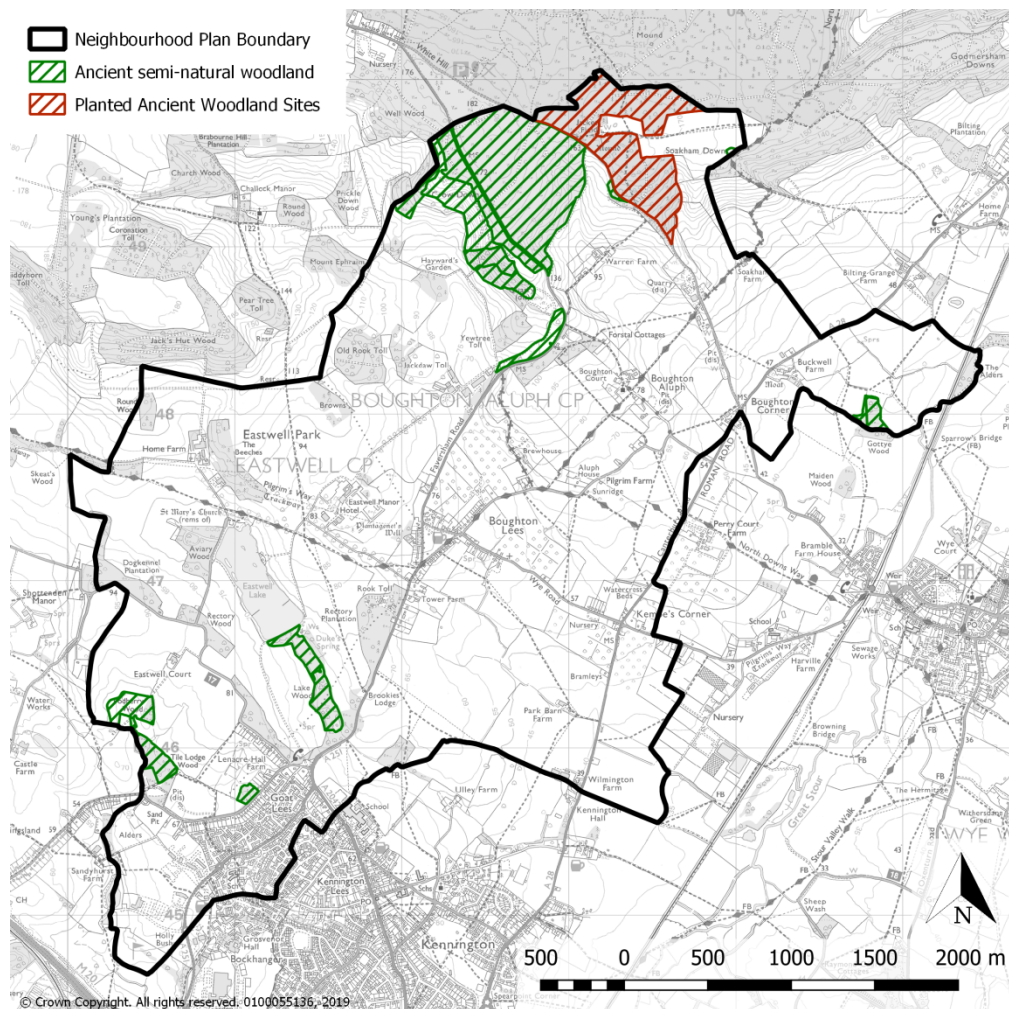
Ancient Woodland

There are significant tracts of ancient woodland within the Parishes including land abutting, and north of Sandyhurst Lane; Kings Wood and parts of the Eastwell Park Estate (see Map 15).

The NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland and that these areas should be protected. Some ancient woodland may represent the only link with the original post glacial 'wildwood' and is more likely to contain vulnerable animal and plant species than any other habitat. The rich ground flora of ancient woodlands – bluebells, wood anemones, ramsons and yellow archangel – and the bird song of warblers, nightingale and nightjar are part of the natural beauty and heritage of the Parishes. Much of the valued woodland wildlife,

invertebrates, lichens and fungi, are associated with old trees, deadwood or open ground and are restricted to ancient woods and wood pasture.

King's Wood is a 1,500-acre coppiced ancient woodland which was once the hunting ground of King Henry VIII. The woodland provides an extensive habitat for wildlife such as deer, badgers, owls and foxes.



Map 15 – Ancient Woodland

Important Public Views

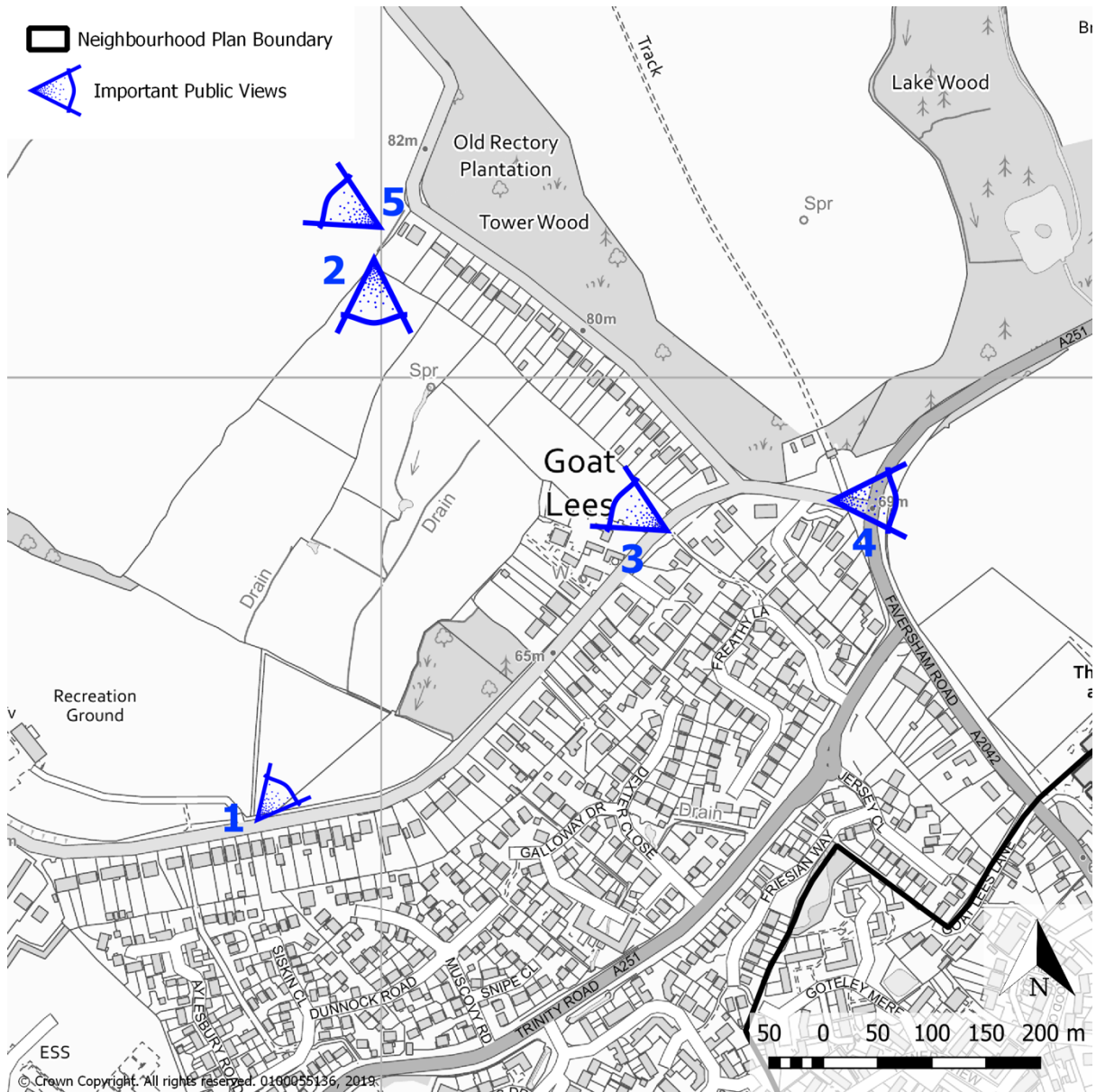
It is recognised that there are a significant number of views across the countryside, including from the numerous public rights of way that cross the area, but it is impossible to list them all. Rather, it is important to protect and enhance valued landscape through Policy BAE NP3 and the footpaths which allow access to it through Policy BAE NP9. Thus, the focus of the Important Public Views is those views from the settlements of Ashford and Boughton Lees which contribute to local character and amenity. This should not be seen as diminishing the importance of views within the wider countryside.

One of the distinctive features of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes is the visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside from the settlements and public footpaths.

Resident surveys undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan and responses to Ashford Borough Council consultation on local planning applications have highlighted that residents

value highly the visual connection between settlements and the surrounding countryside. In particular, this is a key characteristic of the Boughton Lees Conservation Area where the generous spacing between buildings and topography enable key views from the village green to the Kent Downs and beyond. Ashford Local Plan 2030 - Policy ENV14 - Conservation Areas states that development should not prejudice important views into or out of the conservation area. The following Important Public Views have been identified where the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside.

Ref.	Description of view
1	From Sandyhurst Lane adjacent to the entrance to Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space, looking North East across grassland towards Tower Wood, Lenacre Street, with views over Lenacre ancient woodland.
2	From public footpath AE207 where it enters Lenacre Hall Farm looking South, views across farmland and the Sandyacres Sports and Recreation Open Space and over woodland towards The Warren, Hoads Wood and Godinton Park. And south-easterly towards the Ashford Town skyline.
3	From Sandyhurst Lane, adjacent to Lenacre Hall Farm buildings, looking North West over the farm gate, view across farmland and Eastwell Park Estate. The whole view framed by oak trees.
4	From the junction at the end of Sandyhurst Lane with the A251 Faversham Road looking East – a panoramic view of the North/Wye Downs and the Crown above Wye.
5	From the start of footpath AE207, Lenacre Street looking north west to Westwell and the North Downs.
6	From the A251 Faversham Road at the entrance to Eastwell Manor framed by a gate in the Great Wall, views to the North West along the drive leading to Eastwell Manor lined with mature trees and bordered on both sides by open fields with the woodland of Rook Toll/Rectory Plantation to the South West and the roofline of Eastwell Manor to the North East.
7	From the West side of the village green, Boughton Lees ('Gasworks Terrace') looking South East, panoramic views of the farmland of the Stour Gap, the Wye/North Downs, the Crown above Wye and across to parts of Ashford above and between dwellings on The Lees.
8	From the bus stop adjacent to Gardener's House, Faversham Road, looking West, view of Eastwell Manor and Gardens, Eastwell Park and the North Downs.
9	From the North side of the village green, Boughton Lees looking North between Chestnut Lodge and The Flying Horse Inn, Wye Road view across orchards to the North Downs and King's Wood.
10	From the North side of the village green, Boughton Lees looking North between The Flying Horse Inn and Anderida, Wye Road view across orchards of the North Downs and King's Wood.
11	From the entrance to footpath AE202 between Pilgrim Cottage and Bumbles looking East, panoramic views of the farmland of the Stour Gap (including the only oast house in the Parishes), the Wye/North Downs and the Crown above Wye and across to parts of Ashford.
12	From the East side of the village green, Boughton Lees looking South East between Hobday Cottage and 4 Hobday Cottages, view of the farmland of the Stour Gap, the Wye/North Downs and across to parts of Ashford.
13	From the War Memorial on the village green, Boughton Lees looking North, panoramic views of the North Downs and King's Wood above and between the dwellings (including two listed properties) on Wye Road.



Map 16 - Important Public Views - South West of Boughton Aluph Parish



Map 17 - Important Public Views – Boughton Lees

Development in the Countryside

The growth of Ashford will be facilitated by the development of Eureka Park. Sandyhurst Lane forms a well-defined edge to Ashford and specific further development within the countryside is not allocated in the Ashford Local Plan 2030 or the Neighbourhood Plan. The planning strategy is to focus development within the Eureka Park strategic allocation and the defined built-up confines of Boughton Lees. Any development in the countryside should comply with the Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy HOU5 whilst also ensuring it would conserve and enhance the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting; retain the landscape character of, and not have a detrimental impact on, the area of Eastwell Farmlands valued landscape shown on Map 15; protect ancient woodland and maintain important views from public areas. Policy BAE NP2 is also relevant in protecting Local Green Space.

Policy BAE NP3 – Development in the Countryside

A proposal for development within the countryside will only be supported where:

- a) it would conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting as well as the tranquillity of the countryside and would have regard to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan;
- b) it would retain the landscape character of, and not have a detrimental impact on, the area of Eastwell Farmlands valued landscape defined on Map 14;
- c) it would retain and enhance the landscape character of Eastwell Park Historic Park and Garden defined on Map 5;
- d) it would maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built-up confines, in particular those defined on Maps 16 and 17;
- e) it would protect and, where possible, enhance ancient woodland as defined on Map 15; and
- f) it is necessary for the purpose of providing essential utilities infrastructure.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Landscape and scenic beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the tranquillity of the countryside.	No deterioration in the landscape and scenic beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the tranquillity of the countryside through inappropriate development.
Valued landscape shown on Map 14	No deterioration in landscape character of the valued landscape shown on Map 14
Eastwell Park Historic Park and Garden - Kent	No deterioration in landscape character of Eastwell Park Historic Park and Garden
Views	No partial or complete loss of identified views as a result of development.
Ancient woodland	No loss of ancient woodland as a result of development.

Protecting and Enhancing the Countryside outside the built-up confines of Boughton Lees

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the built-up confines for Boughton Lees. The settlement lacks basic day to day facilities and the Ashford Local Plan 2030 does not enable residential development at the edge of the built up area with the exception of Local Needs housing (Policy HOU2) and rural worker accommodation, use of a heritage asset, re-use of

redundant or disused buildings, development that is exceptional quality or innovative design or a replacement dwelling (Policy HOU7) provided a number of criteria are met.

The countryside to the north and west of the built-up area is entirely within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is either within the Boughton Lees Conservation Area or forms part of its setting. It is also important to retain the public views from the built-up area (Map 17).

For these reasons, residential proposals outside the defined built up area of Boughton Lees would not be considered to represent sustainable development and will not generally be permitted.

Policy BAE NP4 – Development beyond the built-up area of Boughton Lees village

Development proposals in the Plan area beyond the built-up confines of Boughton Lees, as defined on Map 2, will not be supported unless they comprise proposals which fall within the following categories of development:

- Local Needs housing
- accommodation for Rural Workers
- re-use of a redundant or disused building for residential use
- a dwelling that is of exceptional quality or innovative design
- a replacement dwelling
- the appropriate use of a heritage asset
- the conversion of a suitable rural building to business use

Development proposals should comply with all other relevant Policies in the Plan.

Housing and Business

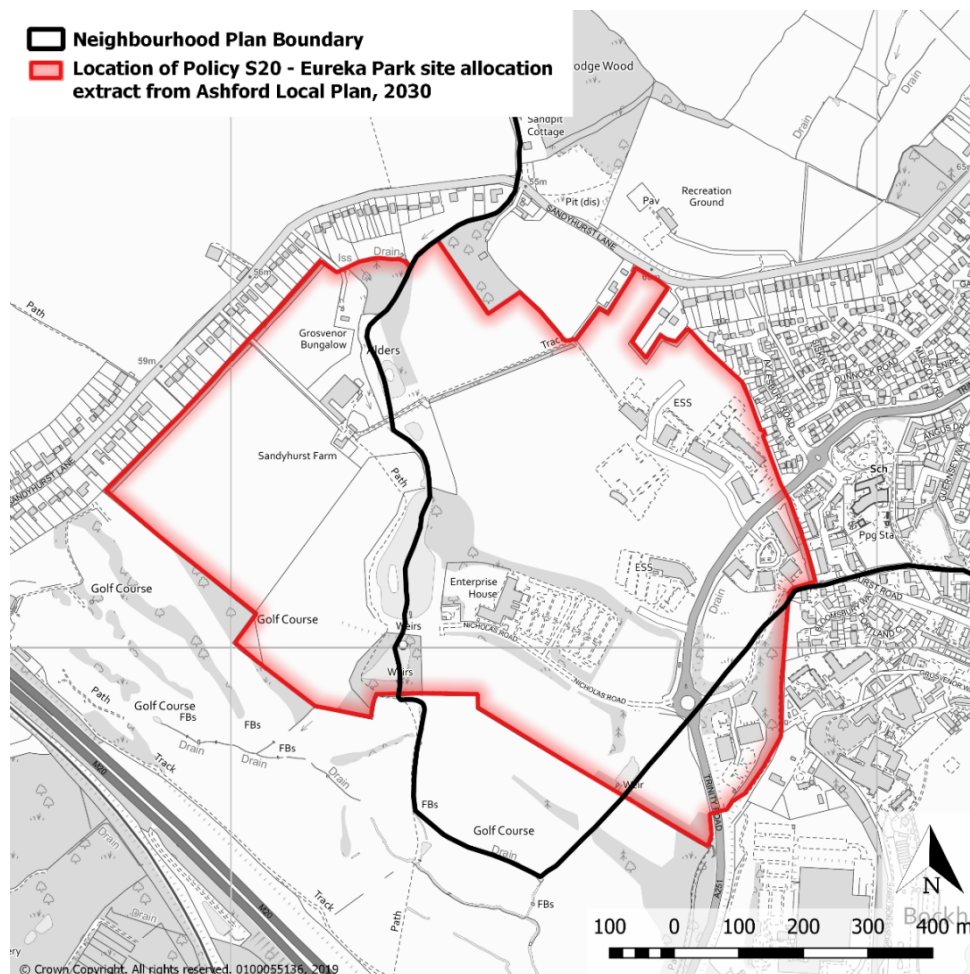
Objectives

- To assimilate development of a scale which protects the character of the landscape; conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting and preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the Boughton Lees Conservation Area and its setting.
- To ensure that future development at Eureka Park maintains the parkland setting and successfully integrates business and residential development within the landscape.
- To maintain and enhance Eureka Place Local Centre and resist the loss of the public houses at Eureka Place and Boughton Lees;
- To ensure sufficient infrastructure and local services are provided to serve the needs of Parish residents, including new provision in association with new development.

Housing/ Business Policies

Eureka Park

The adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030, allocates a large area (see Map 19 below) for a mix of commercial (around 20ha) and residential development (indicative capacity of 375 dwellings).



Map 18 - Policy S20 - Eureka Park site allocation which extends beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area - extract from Ashford Local Plan 2030

The eastern portion of this site is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area (see Map 18). This area is likely to be the focus for business and commercial development.

Ashford Local Plan 2030 (Policy S20) seeks:

- individual commercial buildings which are imaginative in their architectural style and designed to sit 'comfortably' in a parkland setting,
- low plot ratios and building footprints and a high proportion of 'soft' landscaping, and
- a comprehensive network of footpath and cycleway links within the site which link up with routes in the surrounding area

The Local Plan also seeks a comprehensive landscaping and open space strategy, incorporating a linear park based around the existing lake. In accordance with the Local Plan, development proposals for this site should be designed and implemented in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the general layout and delivery of development and related infrastructure on the site.

The Parish Council will be closely involved in the master planning exercise as there are a number of development principles regarding the design and layout of the site which are important to achieving a high quality development on this site in accordance with Policy BAE NP1.

There are currently two principal landscape, ecology and footpath corridors through the site which should provide the framework for interconnected strategic multi-purpose green corridors. The corridors should provide sustainable links within the site and to adjoining facilities such as Eureka Place Local Centre and the Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space. They should be based on existing natural features such as the inter-connected ponds, woodland, tree belts and hedgerows which provide connectivity between habitats through and around the site, and to off-site habitats. The wetlands, woodland, tree belts and hedgerows currently act as habitats for dormice; foraging bats; breeding birds and reptiles. Such strategic corridors should comprise wide swathes of natural/ semi-natural landscape (including the lakes) with sufficient scope for a footpath/ cycleway and natural habitats.

The north-south strategic corridor should form part of a linear park and be based on the lake and adjoining wetland landscape together with the Alders Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland priority habitat to the north of Sandyhurst Farm. Existing defined views of the lakes from the north and the south should be protected within this corridor. Footpath AU3 runs along this corridor to the west of the Plan area. A landscape corridor should be extended eastwards from Alders Wood to connect with a further block of woodland to the east and towards Tile Lodge Wood Local Wildlife Site to the north as well as acting as a buffer between the houses on Sandyhurst Lane and the new development on Eureka Park.

The east-west strategic corridor should be based on Footpath AE210 and associated strong tree line to link the new development (including residential development to the west of the Plan area) and Eureka Place Local Centre.

A further strategic corridor should be provided from Footpath AE210 to Sandyhurst Lane/Sandyacres Sports and Recreation Open Space following the line of the native hedgerow. To complete the footpath link a short length of footway should be provided to

connect to the existing footway south of Sandyhurst Lane, and thence the entrance to the recreation ground.

Policy BAE NP9 seeks to retain the provision, character and biodiversity of public rights of way through new development such as at Eureka Park and it is important to provide attractive sustainable links.

Eureka Place Local Centre and the eastern part of Footpath AE210 currently benefits from views of the North Downs, providing an important visual feature and orientation point for the Local Centre and this site. The siting, design and layout of buildings at Eureka Park should continue to allow the defined views of the North Downs skyline looking north westwards towards Westwell.

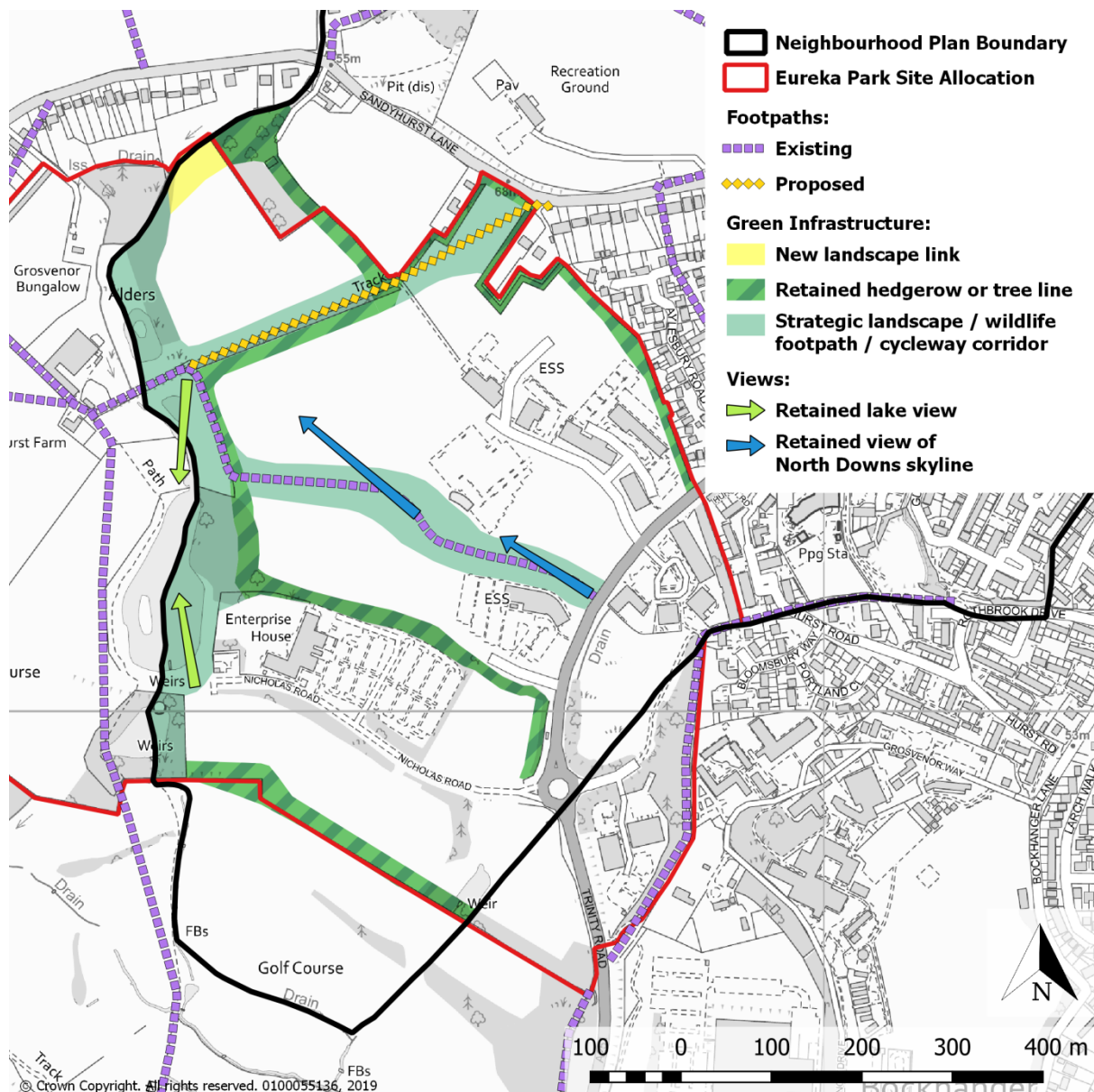


Existing views of the North Downs from Eureka Place Local Centre

Low rise innovative designs with significant glazing allow the buildings to better integrate with the surrounding landscape. It is important that the scale of new buildings does not dominate the sensitive lakeside environment and low-rise development should be situated in this area with extensive landscape edges between development and the lake.

In order to respect the landscape character of the site and defined views within it, car parking should not be prominently located and should be well concealed from the landscape corridors.

Improvements to the strategic road network are expected to serve the development of this area. Nevertheless, there is a need to ensure that traffic movements resulting from development proposals are sustainably managed. Where justified, traffic calming measures should be provided on local roads to ensure the impact of increased volume and size of vehicles is carefully managed. Examples of local measures which may be appropriate can be found in the Highway Feasibility Study, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council, 2014.



Map 19 - Existing and proposed footpaths, hedgerows and treelines to form the basis for green corridors

Policy BAE NP5 - Eureka Park – Site Requirements

Within those parts of the Eureka Park Development area that lie within the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Neighbourhood Area, the proposed masterplan for the overall development and any subsequent planning applications should take account of the following site requirements to ensure that development proposals can be successfully integrated within the landscape:

1. the landscaping and open space strategy should seek to establish two interconnected green corridors through the site along a north-south alignment focused on the existing lake, ponds and woodland and on an east-west alignment focused on Footpath No. AE210 and its associated tree line;

2. a green corridor should link Eureka Park to the Sandyhurst Lane/Sandyacres Sports and Recreation Open Space including a new link to the existing footway south of Sandyhurst Lane;
3. a substantial landscape buffer should be established from Alders Wood towards Tile Lodge Wood to the rear of properties fronting Sandyhurst Lane;
4. existing woodland, tree lines and hedgerows within the site should be retained and enhanced wherever possible within development proposals;
5. the siting, design and layout of buildings should take account of the existing important views of the North Downs skyline from Footpath No. AE210;
6. the siting, design and layout of buildings should take account of the existing important views of the lake from Nicholas Road and from Footpath No. AE210.

The above requirements are illustrated on Map 20.

Additionally, development proposals in the Plan area should ensure that:

7. New and extended access roads are tree-lined;
8. Low rise development should be situated around the lake with extensive landscape buffers between built development and the lake;
9. Car parking should be sited such that it is not prominently located and is screened from the green corridors and from the important views to be protected;
10. Traffic management measures are incorporated on local roads, where necessary.

The Parish Council will participate in the masterplanning work for the Eureka Park development proposals, as set out in Policy S20 of the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Eureka Park Development	Development principles met by new development

Small scale housing development at Boughton Lees

Small scale housing development, such as infilling; redevelopment, conversion or extension, is expected to come forward within the Boughton Lees built-up confines subject to meeting the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The adopted Local Plan (Policy HOU3a) permits such development and the Neighbourhood Plan applies the policy to Boughton Lees.

Much of the built up area of the village is within the Boughton Lees Conservation Area and, in accordance with Policy BAE NP1, any development should be designed to a high quality and respond to the heritage and distinctive characteristics of the individual area of at Boughton Lees in which it is located, as defined in Appendix 1.

Similarly, development should protect and sensitively incorporate landscape features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site.

Development within the Boughton Lees built-up confines should protect the village green Local Green Space in accordance with Policy BAE NP2.

Proposals should maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built-up confines, in particular those defined on Map 18 in accordance with Policy BAE NP3.



Boughton Lees

Residential development should not result in the loss of the public house (Flying Horse Inn) or the Iron Room community building in accordance with Policies BAE NP8 and BAE NP10.

Policy BAE NP6 – Small scale residential development within the built-up confines of Boughton Lees

Proposals for small-scale residential development, such as infill developments, redevelopment proposals and the conversion or extension of existing properties, within the built-up confines of Boughton Lees, as defined on Map 2, will be supported where they comply with other relevant policies in the Plan and with Policy HOU3a of the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030. Development proposals within the designated Boughton Lees Conservation Area must ensure that they contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area by making a positive contribution to the area's character and distinctiveness.

C

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Residential development within the built-up confines of Boughton Lees	<p>No residential development outside the built-up confines of Boughton Lees unless to enable local needs housing.</p> <p>No conflict with Policies BAE NP1, 2, 3, 8 and 10.</p>

Affordable Housing

The Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Local Needs Survey, 2015 revealed a need for up to 13 affordable homes (4 single people, 4 couples without children, 5 families).

The adopted Local Plan 2030 (Policy HOU1 - Affordable Housing) requires affordable housing to be provided within the residential development at Eureka Park. The policy seeks 30% of all dwellings as subsidised affordable housing provision on-site. Subject to the final number of dwellings provided at Eureka Park, this could provide some 115 additional affordable homes within or close to the Parishes.

The Local Plan 2030 (Policy HOU2 - Local needs / specialist housing) enables local needs housing as ‘exceptions’ to policies restraining housing development around Boughton Lees, subject to there being clear evidence of local need and a number of other criteria regarding scale, design and residential amenity being met. It is expected that all local needs/ specialist housing schemes will be delivered without the need for any cross-market subsidy.

The Local Plan policies will be applied in the Neighbourhood Plan area to add to the affordable housing stock over the Plan period.

Eureka Place Local Centre

The Eureka Place Local Centre (see Map 21) comprises a local square surrounded by shops and community services; a primary school and a community hall. All are located close to each other and provide the following services to the Goat Lees/ Eureka Park area:

Shops (E(a) Use Class)ⁱ

- Pharmacy, offers prescription deliveries
- Tesco Express, small supermarket
- Beauty Salon

Financial and Professional Service (Sui Generis Use Class)

- Bookmaker

Cafes and Restaurants (E(b) Use Class)

- Indian restaurant, café and fast food takeaway outlets
- Cinnamon Spice
- Catch, Fish & Chip shop
- Eureka Café

Public House (Sui Generis Use Class)

- The Pheasant Public House

Hot Food Takeaway (Sui Generis Use Class)

- Pizza Hut takeaway

Nursery (E(f) Use Class)

- Busy Bees

Dentist (E(e) Use Class)

- Easy Smile Dental Clinic

Health Services (E(e) Use Class)

- Ashford Community Mental Health Team and Kent Community Health Customer Care Team

Primary School (F1(a) Use Class)

- The Goat Lees Primary School

Community Hall (F2(b) Use Class)

- Goat Lees, Community Hall

Veterinary Surgery (Sui Generis Use Class)

- Eureka Veterinary Centre

Convenient parking is also available, but this becomes congested at times with significant staffing levels at the centre shared by the Mental Health and Dental Service; drop off and collection at the Nursery and overspill parking from the Eureka Business Park causing problems.



Map 20 - Land south of Eureka Place Local Centre

The NPPF states that planning policies should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs and ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.

Local Plan Policy EMP10 - Local Centres and Villages states that in local centres planning permission will be granted for additional shopping and service provision, where proposals are of a scale appropriate to the particular centre.

For uses other than cafes/ restaurants there is no alternative provision of a similar use within reasonable walking distance and such uses should be retained.

The centre provides a local focus for the Goat Lees/ Eureka Park area and the opportunity for sustainable pedestrian and cycle access and linked trips. Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan issues has indicated the importance of the local facilities at the centre and there is support for the retention and enhancement of the range of shops and services

found in the centre.

The ability to use a property for a range of uses without the need for planning permission has increased. Nevertheless, permitted development rights are currently intended to allow the protection of valued and successful retail provision in key shopping areas. Prior approval for such a change of use is required including an assessment of shopping impacts in relation to the effect of the development on the sustainability of such local centres and the provision of services. The distance of the Eureka Place Local Centre from the town centre means that local convenience shops, together with other community services, are important to the sustainability of the Goat Lees/ Eureka Park area which they serve.

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to resist the loss of local shops and services at Eureka Place Local Centre.

The proximity of Eureka Place Local Centre to the Local Plan allocation at Eureka Park means that the new strategic development is not expected to provide similar shop and community facilities on site as part of the new residential development. Rather, footpath links are to be created from the new development to Eureka Place.

Consultation with the range of businesses at Eureka Place revealed support for the proposed additional housing and businesses at Eureka Park with a majority of businesses foreseeing a need to expand their premises to meet the additional demand although currently limited by the availability of space. Generally local businesses would welcome a balance of new shops and services at Eureka Place as new residential development comes forward. There are no GP surgeries or Post Office located in the Parishes and the Household Survey indicates that these are the most sought-after facilities. With further housing in the area there may be justification for a permanent or visiting surgery and the Parish Council will seek to stimulate interest in such provision.

The NPPF states that planning policies should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces and community facilities and ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community. Land to the south of Eureka Place Local Centre offers opportunities to develop new facilities which will contribute to maintaining the vitality and viability of the Local Centre. Most of the site is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The scale of shops and services should relate to serving the local catchment area rather than a larger scale out of town facility. There is the opportunity for residential or business units above retail or service units in order to optimise the use of land and further increase the supply of new housing as well as providing informal surveillance during the day and night. Ground floors should be designed with large flexible spaces to allow a variety of uses over time. If it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for retail and service uses no longer exists and that there is no reasonable prospect of the development of such facilities during the Plan period, there should be flexibility to accommodate other uses on the site.

Policy BAE NP7 –Eureka Place Local Centre

Within those parts of the Eureka Park Development area that lie within the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Neighbourhood Area, development proposals relating to the Eureka Place Local Centre, as defined on Map 20, which will contribute to maintaining and improving the vitality and viability of the local centre and its shops, services and other facilities will be supported.

Adequate and convenient car and cycle parking, in accordance with adopted parking standards, should be provided to serve the development.

The Parish Council will participate in the masterplanning work for the wider Eureka Park development proposals, as set out in Policy BAE NP5, to ensure that the Local Centre continues to fulfil its role in providing local residents with important local services and facilities.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Number of shops and services (Use Class E) in the Eureka Place Neighbourhood Centre in 2018.	No loss of shop units or services (Use Class E) in the Eureka Place Neighbourhood Centre.

Public houses

Public houses are an important community facility within Goat Lees (The Pheasant) and Boughton Lees (The Flying Horse Inn).



The Flying Horse Inn was used as a staging post. The building is a Grade II listed building and its use as a public house contributes to the character of the building and the Boughton Lees Conservation Area. It is part of the tourist offer within the Parishes and provides bed and breakfast accommodation with a camp site to the rear. The Parish Council has registered The Flying Horse Inn as an Asset of Community Value. The NPPF states that planning policies should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as public houses in rural areas.

The Pheasant, Goat Lees, is a family-focussed public house with restaurant situated within the Eureka Place Local Centre. It provides an important facility and contributes to the range of facilities available at the Local Centre, and extends the use of the centre into the evening.

The change of use of a public house is allowed without planning consent to a shop (Ee), financial and professional service (Sui Generis), restaurant or café (Eb) subject to building not being an Asset of Community Value. Temporary permission (for 2 years) is also allowed without planning consent to an office (Eg).

Where planning consent is required, the Neighbourhood Plan will seek to retain both public houses within the Parishes except where it can be demonstrated that the operation of the public house facility is not financially viable.

Policy BAE NP8 - Public Houses

The loss of a public house will be resisted where possible. Exceptions will be made where evidence is provided to the Borough Council to show that the operation of the facility is no longer financially viable and where there are no other realistic proposals for a public house use on the site, including through Community Right to Buy.

Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Two public houses in the Neighbourhood Plan area in 2018	No loss of public houses in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure

Objectives

- To promote well-being and healthy living.
- To protect and enhance recreation open space and community halls.
- To protect and, where possible, to grow the network of footpaths and cycle paths serving the Parishes.
- To ensure sufficient infrastructure and local services are provided to serve the needs of Parish residents, including new provision in association with new development.

Leisure, Wellbeing and Infrastructure Policies

Recreation Open Space

The NPPF states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. The adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030 (Policy COM2) generally seeks to deliver new recreation, sport, play and open space provision to serve new development and protect existing open space, sports and recreational buildings.

The household survey revealed that residents valued the existing recreational and leisure activities highly and would seek to protect and enhance these facilities.

Sports Pitches

Sports pitches are provided on two sites in the Parishes:

1. Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space

Sandyacres Sports and Social Recreation Open Space, Sandyhurst Lane offers sports provision (comprising two full size grass football pitches and one rugby pitch supported by a pavilion comprising four team and one officials changing room, bar and large function room). Sandyacres also has two tennis courts which are currently not in use. The area has a natural character and comprises a significant number of mature trees. It is located within open countryside to the north of Sandyhurst Lane and provides part of the setting to the settlement of Ashford.

In relation to sports pitch provision, the Borough Council's Playing Pitch Strategy, 2017 covers the period up to 2030 and identifies Sandyacres as one of the key hubs to the north of the town and a priority site for football and rugby pitches - although drainage requires improvement.

In relation to the tennis courts, Lawn Tennis Association research shows that most people who access courts in parks only travel a short distance to play, therefore a network of park courts needs to be retained throughout the borough and maintained to a playable quality. The Playing Pitch Strategy states that there is a need to protect all community use tennis courts across Ashford Borough. Although Ashford Borough Council's Playing Pitch Strategy recommends focusing on tennis facilities with 3 or more courts, the disused courts at Sandyacres could be upgraded, potentially as a multi-use surface for a number of sports.

The Playing Pitch Strategy states:

Sandyacres – has been identified in the draft Local Plan 2030 as a Sports Hub that could possibly have new playing pitches in the future. A masterplan to identify the viability of this is required.

The NPPF states that planning policies should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy COM2, states that proposals which undermine the ability of a hub to play a role in delivering additional open space to meet local needs will not be supported.

2. Boughton Lees Village Green

Boughton Lees Village Green hosts a cricket pitch where cricket matches have been played for over 200 years. There remains a demand for cricket in the Borough. In addition, the village green is an area of open space which is central to the character of the Conservation Area and provides a number of Important Public Views.

Whilst both these areas provide formal sports pitches, both may also be used for informal recreation especially when matches are not being played.

Clearly both of these areas have a long-term future as recreation open space.

Both sites are protected as Local Green Spaces where provision of appropriate built facilities in connection with the use of land for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation would be appropriate provided this would not be in conflict with retaining the open green character of the designated space (Policy BAE NP2).

Informal Outdoor Recreation Area

An informal outdoor recreation area is also available between Guernsey Way and Rothbrook Drive, Goat Lees. The informal recreation area is equipped with a football goalpost which sees little use in the winter as it is usually waterlogged.

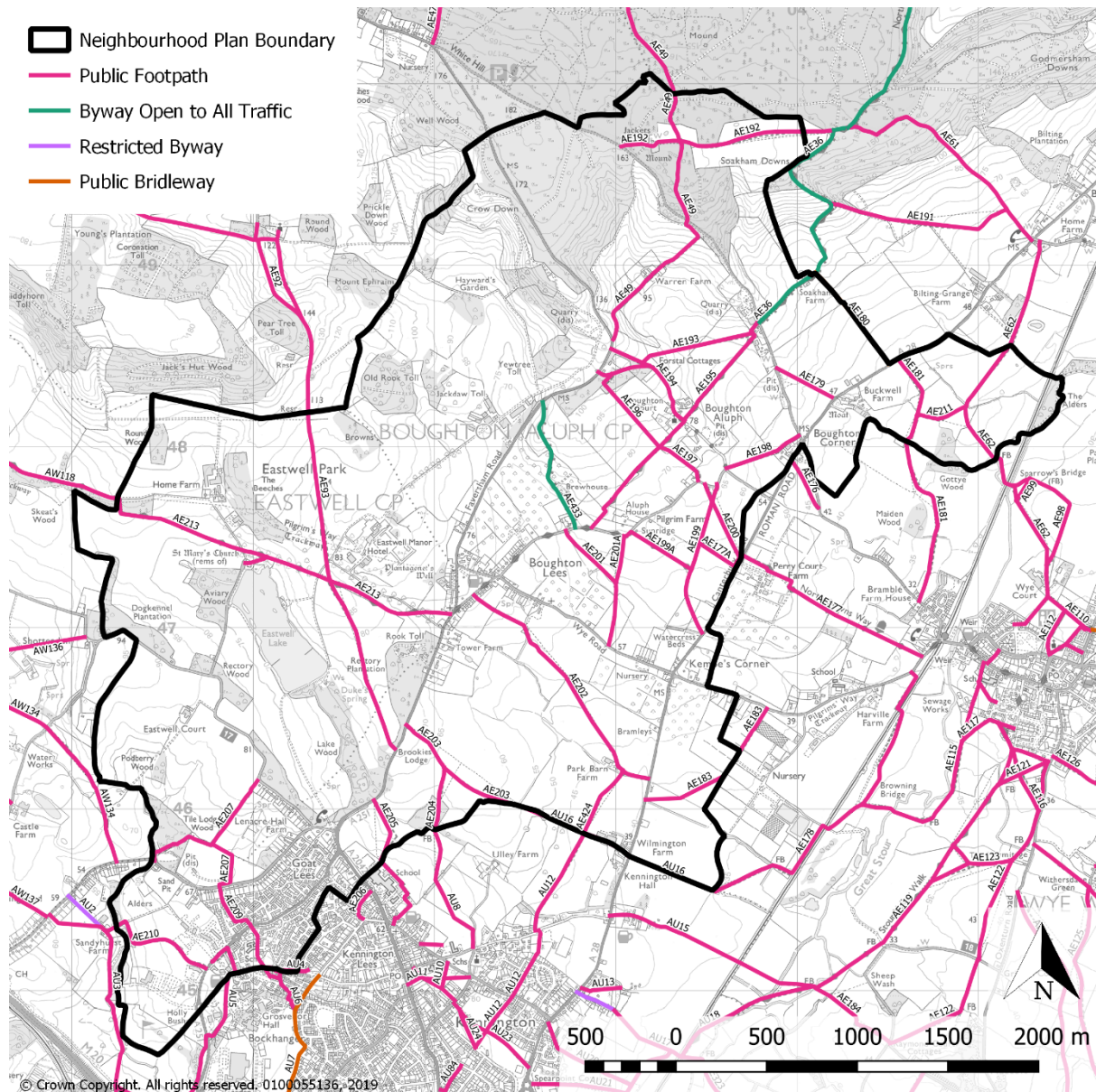
Children's play and youth provision

Children's play and youth provision is located on adjoining sites in Hurst Road, Goat Lees, The Goat Lees Youth Play Space, Trinity Road provides basket swing, ball wall and outdoor fitness equipment.

All the above areas have been designated as Local Green Spaces where provision of appropriate structures such as play equipment would be appropriate provided this would not be in conflict with retaining the open green character of the designated space (Policy BAE NP2).

Public Rights of Way

The Parishes have an extensive footpath network including the national long-distance footpath North Downs Way which divides at Eastwell to follow either the Stour valley to Canterbury (Pilgrims' Way) or along the North Downs to the coast at Dover or Folkestone and beyond. Many footpaths criss-cross the Parishes. There are few bridleways within the Parishes mostly found in the King's Wood in the north of the Plan area.



Map 21 Public Rights of Way and Bridleways including connections to routes beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area

The Neighbourhood Plan Survey, 2016, revealed that 92% of those surveyed felt it was important to be able to walk from their home to the countryside. These facilities are widely used and valued by residents and are enjoyed by ramblers for the variety of vistas and habitats, birdlife and their well-being. There are examples of public footpaths becoming narrow, unsafe, urbanised routes through new development. The National Planning Policy Framework advocates policies which protect and enhance public rights of way and access

and the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to retain the provision, character and biodiversity of public rights of way through new development such as at Eureka Park.

It is important for the health and wellbeing of the local community that these well used public rights of way are protected.

Policy BAE NP9 – Public Rights of Way

The provision, character and biodiversity of the existing Public Rights of Way in the Plan area, as shown on Map 21, will be protected and enhanced

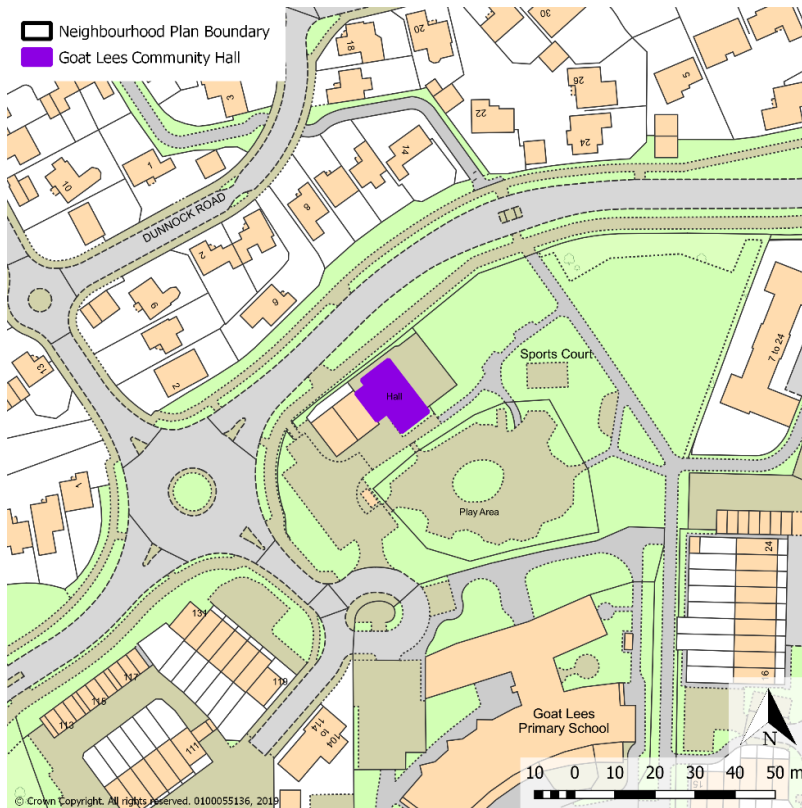
Monitoring Indicators	Targets
Length, character and biodiversity of Public Rights of Way at the start of the Plan period.	No net loss of length, character and biodiversity of Public Rights of Way.

Community Halls

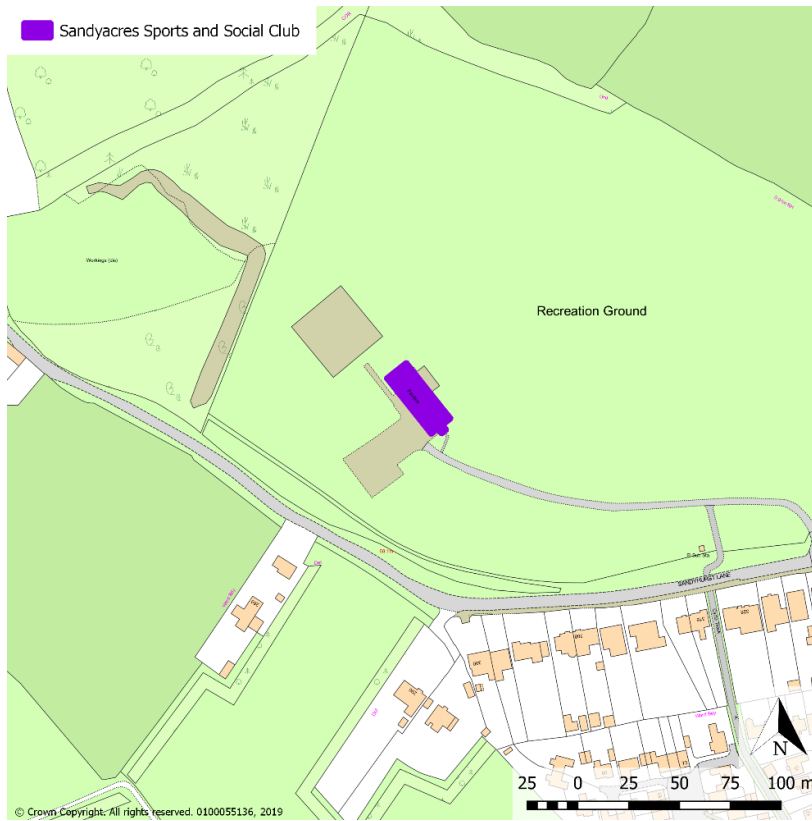
The Parishes have three well-used community halls which are available to hire:

- Goat Lees Community Hall, Trinity Road.
- Sandyacres Sports and Social Club, Sandyhurst Lane
- Iron Room, Boughton Lees, Faversham Road

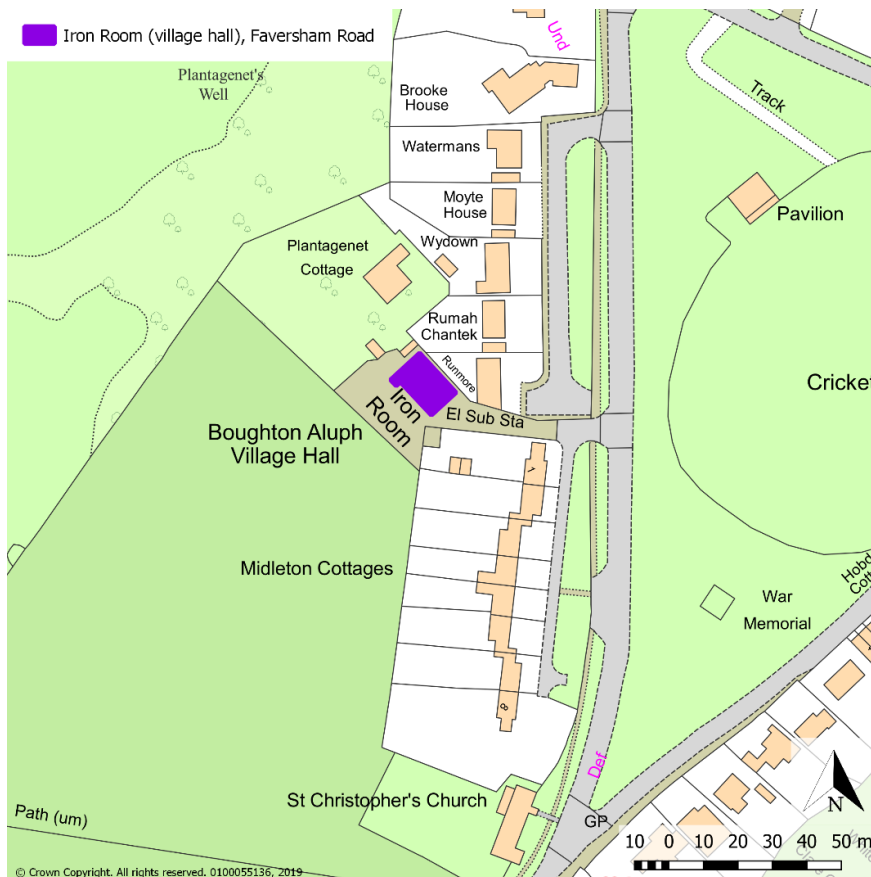
Goat Lees Community Hall is located within the Eureka Place Local Centre and hosts Tiny Tots preschool, after school and holiday provision, and Goat Lees Youth Club. Sandyacres Sports and Social Club is used as a venue for club activities such as Ceroc and football/road runner meetings; stage/music/entertainment and is popular as a venue for wedding receptions. The Iron Room, Boughton Lees hosts a yoga club, carpet bowls club, arts club, gardening club, table tennis club and the WI. The Parish Council uses all these venues to hold its meetings.



Map 22 Community Buildings - Goat Lees Community Hall



Map 23 Community Buildings - Sandyacres Sports and Social Club, Sandyhurst Lane



Map 24 Community Buildings – Iron Room, Boughton Lees

To maintain the social fabric of the Parishes and provide for demand coming from new development, the range of existing well used facilities needs to be maintained and enhanced.

Policy BAE NP10 - Retention of Community Buildings

The loss of existing community buildings, as defined on Maps 22, 23 and 24 will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for the facility no longer exists and that suitable alternative provision is made elsewhere.

Securing Infrastructure

The proposed Eureka Park development will have a profound effect on the facilities, services and transport network within the Parishes. It is important that all new development provides, or contributes towards, off-site infrastructure in relation to transport; primary and secondary education facilities, open space and sports facilities.

Open Space Provision

The strategic Eureka development will generate a need for additional green infrastructure to serve the development. Using Ashford Borough Council's adopted open space standards, an additional population of 1000 residents over the plan period would generate the need for:

- Outdoor Sports Pitches: 1.6 hectares

- Informal/Natural green space: 2.0 hectares
- Children's and young people's play space: 0.5 hectares
- Allotments: 0.2 hectares
- Strategic Parks: 0.3 hectares
- Cemeteries: 0.6 hectares

The NPPF seeks planning policies that promote opportunities to improve the local open space network.

It would be expected that informal/natural green space will be provided on the extensive Eureka Park housing and business park site as part of the linear park and sustainable green corridor network as set out in Local Plan Policy S20 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy BAE NP 5.

In Ashford, the provision of children's play, strategic parks and sports facilities is controlled by Local Plan Policy COM2 which states that provision will normally be targeted towards the sports and recreation hubs such as Sandyacres Recreation Open Space rather than on the Eureka site.

Education Provision

The primary school at Goat Lees is at capacity and Kent County Council as the Education Authority has stated that provision to serve the anticipated need for approximately 105 additional primary school places will be provided outside the Parishes. The lack of primary school places locally will increase the number of vehicle trips at peak time on the local roads.

There is no secondary school located within the Parishes, and provision for additional secondary school pupils will be made at Towers Secondary School which abuts the Neighbourhood Plan boundary and the two grammar schools located in Ashford town centre.

Health Provision

There are no GP surgeries located in the Parishes with the closest found in Wye or Bybrook, Ashford. With further housing in the area there may be justification for a permanent or visiting surgery and the Parish Council will seek to stimulate interest in such provision.

Community Halls

The three community halls at Goat Lees Community Hall (within the Eureka Place Local Centre); Sandyacres Sports and Social Club and the Iron Room, Boughton Lees will continue to provide meeting places for local activities.

Transport Provision

The strategic growth area of Eureka Park will add to traffic pressures on the local road network. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks sustainable transport measures to serve the new development to assist walking and cycling alongside traffic mitigation measures to reduce the traffic impact on local roads including Sandyhurst Lane and access to the A251 and A20;

Policy BAE NP11 - Securing Infrastructure

Any development permitted will be expected to ensure provision of the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure needed to support the proposed development, and where relevant the infrastructure identified in the Neighbourhood Plan below through developer contributions, in a timely manner subject to an appropriate assessment of viability:

- Sustainable transport measures serving new development which assist walking and cycling;
- Traffic mitigation measures including on Sandyhurst Lane and access to the A251 and A20; and
- Enhancement of the Sandyacres Sport and Recreational Open Space, to provide improved sports pitches/courts and children's play area and sufficient additional cycle and car parking.

Monitoring Indicators

Infrastructure delivered through developer contributions, including S106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy.

Targets

Infrastructure identified in the Neighbourhood Plan to be delivered by the end of the Plan period.

Section 6: Monitoring and Review

Effective monitoring is an essential component in achieving sustainable development and sustainable communities. Monitoring provides crucial information to establish what is happening now and whether policies are working.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out the long-term spatial vision for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes with agreed objectives and policies to deliver the vision in the period up to 2030. Where relevant, targets are set in the Plan against which the delivery of the policy will be measured. Monitoring will evaluate the progress being made towards delivering the spatial vision and assess the extent to which the policies are being implemented.

Where monitoring shows that progress towards targets is unsatisfactory the Parish Council will review the situation and, where necessary, take remedial action. This may include proactive measures to bring forward sites for development or action to secure the timely provision of infrastructure.

The Ashford Local Plan 2030 has recently been adopted but may be reviewed during the Neighbourhood Plan period. A decision whether to revise the Local Plan will be taken no later than five years from its adoption in 2019. It is intended that any revised Local Plan will be adopted by the end of 2025 at the latest. This may have consequences for this Neighbourhood Plan which, if necessary, will be formally reviewed.

ⁱ Use classes are set out in accordance with the following guidance:
https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use

Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.
7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the

potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.

8. In terms of timing:

- Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
- Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Case law principles

9. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a

policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.

- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Lead officer:	Harriet Turner
Decision maker:	Council
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	New planning policy - Adoption of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes Neighbourhood Plan
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	30 th September 2021 – Cabinet meeting
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The adopted plan will form part of the Council’s development plan, and need to be taken into account in making decisions on planning applications within Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes.</p> <p>The adoption of the Plan impacts upon planning decisions within the parish of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes. There is a potential impact upon residents, landowners and businesses in Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parishes.</p>
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<p>The production of the Neighbourhood Plan has been through its statutory process, being produced by Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council.</p> <p>Following a successful referendum the Local Planning Authority is required to ‘make’ (adopt) the Plan.</p>
Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	<p>The Parish Council has carried out informal and formal consultation in accordance with the statutory requirements. Consultation has taken place with the local community, businesses, landowners and other statutory stakeholders. The Council has also carried out a consultation on the plan with all of the above.</p> <p>Limited response was received to the consultation, raising specific issues about the Plan’s proposals.</p> <p>The consultation analysis did not reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics.</p>

Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	None	Neutral
Middle age	None	Neutral
Young adult	None	Neutral
Children	None	Neutral
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	None	Neutral
Mental	None	Neutral
Sensory	None	Neutral
<u>GENDER RE- ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RACE</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>		Neutral
<u>SEX</u> Men	None	Neutral
Women	None	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	Neutral

Mitigating negative impact:

Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.

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Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?

Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's [Essential Guide](#), alongside fuller [PSED Technical Guidance](#).

Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No

<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish.• There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above).• Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified.• How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported?	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted by others, but the Council has considered the Equalities Act when providing comments advice to the Parish Council regarding the Plan.</p> <p>The policy is not specifically relevant to any of the protected characteristics. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to bring forward development that will benefit the parish as a whole. It is concluded that the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan do not prejudice any existing groups. The Plan provides a framework for development that will support all sections of the local community.</p> <p>The monitoring of development outcomes will form part of the council's wider development monitoring activities. The Annual Monitoring report will be vehicle by which any specific outcomes can be noted as well as periodic reports on the delivery of infrastructure through Section 106 Agreements.</p>
EIA completion date:	2 nd August 2021