



# **Crowhurst**

## **Neighbourhood Development Plan Review**



**Crowhurst Parish Council**  
**Review Final Version Mar 2025**

# **2018-2028**

## FOREWORD

---

The Localism Act 2011 gave parishes and other neighbourhood areas the ability to exercise more control over future development in their community by creating their own neighbourhood development plan. Crowhurst Parish Council took up this challenge in October 2015 with the aim of achieving required development, with the support of our community. While the Parish Council is the qualifying body for the Neighbourhood Plan, its development was initiated from the Neighbourhood Plan Group, comprising all interested residents, to ensure the Plan was community led.

The terms of reference for the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Group highlighted that the Neighbourhood Plan would:

- Identify all the important aspects of life in the Parish to be considered in planning for the future.
- Bring forward proposals to enhance the quality of life in the Parish.
- Provide a framework for future land use within the Parish, including for development and conservation.

The Village-wide base of the Neighbourhood Plan Group ensured that the Steering Group, which emerged from it to formulate the details of the Plan had widespread support. When the final Plan was put to referendum, this was demonstrated by the 92% vote in favour.

The extensive involvement of our Village community in the development and production of our Plan has given it universal support. It has provided a sound and valuable basis and resource for decision-making by the Parish Council and District Council regarding planning, financial investment and conservation matters.

Five years on, we recognised that to maintain the value and validity of our Plan, it needed reviewing and updating. Specific requirements included:

- Incorporating the Design Guide, which had been produced since the Plan was written
- Incorporating new policies, particularly in light of the Parish Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Resolution of October 2019, including the Renewables and Dark Skies Policies
- Strengthening the Biodiversity Policy and green space protection
- General updating, including in accordance with revised local and national planning requirements



The preparation of the revisions to our Plan has been coordinated by the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Review Group, on behalf of the Parish Council, comprising:

Pat Buckle

Lois Norton

Rosalyn Day

Sonia Plato

John Feltwell

Geoff Thomas

The Group members have contributed a considerable amount of time, skill, knowledge and effort to ensure, on behalf of the Parish Council and all the Village that our Plan remains a valid and valuable resource.

The Group is also grateful to Julia Edwards, Senior Planning Officer at Rother District Council for ongoing advice and support, Catherine Bright for organising the village consultation methodology and all those villagers who responded to the consultation on the proposed Plan revisions with views and suggestions.

While the local planning environment at the time of our review remains the RDC Core Strategy 2014 and the associated Development and Sites Allocation (DASA) document, we have been mindful of the current consultation by RDC of its new Local Plan. We have been careful to check the policies in our NP against the draft policies in the emerging new Local Plan, to ensure as best we can that our Plan will remain in conformity with developing national and local planning frameworks.

Crowhurst Parish Council is keen both to conserve and enhance our natural environment as well as see development progress on those sites, we have deemed suitable. We hope this revised and updated Plan will be helpful both to planners and developers by giving clarity to our requirements and thereby certainty regarding the criteria for acceptable, appropriate and quality development.

Chris Davidson  
Chair Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Review Group  
March 2025







View across fields to church

Photo by Dr John Feltwell



Your Vision  
Our Future

# CONTENTS

---

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Purpose
- 1.2 Context
- 1.3 Neighbourhood Plans – Overview
- 1.4 Relevance for Crowhurst
- 1.5 Plan Period
- 1.6 Designated Area
- 1.7 Strategic Environmental Assessment
- 1.8 Plan Organisation
- 1.9 Plan Timeline

## 2. Crowhurst – A rural village

- 2.1 Environment
- 2.2 Heritage
- 2.3 Infrastructure and Transport
- 2.4 Facilities
- 2.5 Housing and Population
- 2.6 Local Economy
- 2.7 Education

## 3. A Vision for Crowhurst

- 3.1 The Vision
  - Aims
- 3.2 Housing

- 3.3 Infrastructure, Transport and Business
- 3.4 Environment and Heritage
- 3.5 Community Facilities, Services and Activities

## 4. Policies

### 4.0 Introduction

### 4.1 Sustainability

### 4.2 The Natural Environment

- 4.2.1 Environment Objectives
- 4.2.2 Policy CS1 – Development Boundaries
- 4.2.3 Policy CE1 – Landscape Character of Crowhurst
- 4.2.4 Policy CE2 – The High Weald National Landscape (NL)
- 4.2.5 Policy CE3 - Biodiversity
- 4.2.6 Policy CE4 – Natural Features
- 4.2.7 Policy CE5 – Blue Infrastructure
- 4.2.8 Policy CE6 – Dark Skies

### 4.3 The Village Environment

- 4.3.1 Social Objectives
- 4.3.2 Policy CF1 – Community and Recreational Facilities
  - Policy CF2 - Rights of Way and Recreation
  - Policy CF3 – Local Green Space
- 4.3.3 Policy CB1 – Design
- 4.3.4 Policy CB2 – Heritage



4.3.5	Housing	CNDP Map 8 – Proposals Map
4.3.6	Policy CH1 – Land adjoining Station Road and Forewood Lane	Appendix 2 Crowhurst Design Guide
4.3.7	Policy CH2 – Land south of Forewood Rise	Appendix 3: Environment Planning Application Checklist
4.3.8	Policy CH3 – Land adjacent to the Station Car Park	Appendix 4: References
4.4	<u>Economy</u>	‘Crowhurst NP Examination Report’ Apr 2019
4.4.1	Economic Objectives	‘Crowhurst NP Strategic Environmental Assessment’ (SEA) Nov 2018
4.4.2	Policy CC1 – Economic Sustainability	‘Crowhurst NP Basic Conditions Statement’ Nov 2018
4.4.3	Policy CC2 – Infrastructure	Crowhurst NP – ‘Consultation Statement’ Nov 2018
4.4.4	Policy CC3 - Renewables	‘Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment’ Oct 2017
5.	<u>Implementation and Monitoring</u>	‘Crowhurst Biodiversity Audit’
6.	<u>Glossary</u>	‘Crowhurst – A Rural Village’ Nov 2017
7.	<u>List of Appendices</u>	‘Crowhurst Heritage and Character Assessment’ Sept2017
Appendix 1:	Maps	Historical Heritage of Crowhurst Nov 2017
	CNDP Map 1 – Development Boundary	‘CNDP Site Assessment Policies Paper’ Oct 2018
	CNDP Map 2 – Important Areas and Views	‘CNDP Watercourses and Flooding Description’ Nov 2017
	CNDP Map 3 – Local Green Spaces	‘Local Green Space’ Description table
	CNDP Map 4 - Flooding	‘CNDP Environment Description’ Nov 2017
	CNDP Map 5 – Community and Recreational Facilities	‘Crowhurst Non-designated Heritage Assets’ Nov 2018
	CNDP Map 6 – Infrastructure Improvements	‘Car Park Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ Oct 2018
	CNDP Map 7 – Housing Site Allocations	







1066 Country Walk near The Plough. Photo by Slimmeria Retreat



Crowhurst sign by Church

# 1. INTRODUCTION

---

## 1.0 What has changed in the Neighbourhood Plan Review?

- 1.0.1 The following Policy changes have been made to the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (CNDP2019) which was Made by Rother District Council on 8th July 2019:

### **The Natural Environment**

POLICY CE1 - Landscape Character: The new Design Guide has been referenced.

POLICY CE3 - Biodiversity: This has been strengthened due to the Climate and Ecological Emergency declared by the Parish Council. References to the new Biodiversity Net Gain software added along with reference to a new Policy on Dark Skies.

POLICY CE4 - Natural Features: Watercourses added into Natural Features that should not be affected by development.

POLICY CE5 - Blue Infrastructure: Included the need to monitor water quality where appropriate.

POLICY CE6 - Dark Skies: This is a new policy aimed at protecting the Dark Skies of Crowhurst with the resulting healthy environment for both residents and biodiversity and includes a light map of the Parish.

### **The Village Environment**

POLICY CF1 - Community and Recreational Facilities: Added in support to create a community area to enhance the Village Hall/School/Church area.

POLICY CF3 - Local Green Spaces: New Local Green Space (Muriel's Meadow) added.

POLICY CB1 - Design: The new Design Guide has been referenced and various criteria modified to be more consistent with the Design Guide. Also, some criteria moved to Policy CC2 - Infrastructure

POLICY CH1 - Land adjoining Station Rd and Forewood Lane: The new Design Guide is referenced along with changes to the references to the Public Right of Way and access to the proposed community area. The map drawn up by the Landscape Architects has also been amended.

POLICY CH2 - Land South of Forewood Rise: The new Design Guide has been referenced and the map drawn up by the Landscape Architects has been amended.

POLICY CH3 - Land adjacent to the Station Car Park: The new Design Guide has been referenced.

### **Economy**

POLICY CC1 - Economic Sustainability: Added that encouragement would be given to sustainable uses, especially those that mitigate the effects of the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Also, that small scale tourism should not affect the number of permanent residential dwellings.



POLICY CC2 - Infrastructure: Points about energy efficiency standards and renewable energy have been added.

POLICY CC3 - Renewables: New policy added giving guidance for different types of non-domestic renewable energy.

APPENDIX 1: Maps 3, 6 and 8 updated.

APPENDIX 2: This is now the new Design Guide that should be read in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Plan.

APPENDIX 4: Link to Biodiversity Audit has been added.

Local Green Space description has been updated with the new LGS.

Relevant policy justification and associated text have also been amended. There are also various non-material changes, relating to the Update itself and changes in referenced documents and other links.

## 1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 (CNDP2019) was originally drafted in response to Rother District Council's (RDC) Local Plan with the requirement to provision additional homes throughout the district, including Crowhurst. In essence, if as a village we did not have a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) we could be open to development to meet our village's housing quota, as set by Rother, over which we would have very little say. Having a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Crowhurst built upon our views as residents of the village

gives us an opportunity to shape this mandated development.

1.1.2 Crowhurst Parish Council took the decision to produce the CNDP2019 at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 following the Government's publication of the Localism Act in 2011.

1.1.3 Crowhurst Parish Council developed the CNDP2019 by working with a Steering Group of interested villagers who volunteered to assist in guiding the development process. The Plan was developed via an iterative process, initially by the Steering Group followed by a wider community consultative process under part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The goal was to allocate development sites and policies to realise the village vision drafted by the Steering Committee, from comments made at public meetings, and finalised with the village in September 2016.

1.1.4 The CNDP2019 was passed at referendum and Made by RDC in July 2019. It therefore became part of the Development Plan, alongside RDC's Local Plan.

1.1.5 In 2023, Crowhurst Parish Council agreed to fund a review of the CNDP2019 to update policies and incorporate a Design Guide. This document (CNDP Review) is the outcome.

## 1.2 Context

1.2.1 RDC's Local Plan<sup>1</sup> required by Central Government has the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, which should be aspirational, reflecting the vision and aspirations of local communities, but also realistic. It embraces policies to deliver the homes and jobs needed in the area, as well as supporting development and infrastructure. The CNDP Review is examined against the 2011-2028 Local Plan.

1.2.2 The Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in 2014 and lies at the heart of the plan-making system. It is where the strategic direction for development and change across the district is established and has a pivotal role in delivering the objectives and priorities for Rother. The Core Strategy sets out Rother District Council's vision and objectives that will guide the future pattern and form of development over the period up until 2028. It provides broad guidance on the scale and distribution of development and the provision of supporting infrastructure, both for the district as a whole and for its towns and rural areas. It also contains 'core policies' that address the key issues facing the district in relation to sustainable resource management, community development, housing, the economy, the environment, and transport.

1.2.3 This Core Strategy sets targets for the numbers of additional homes and business floor-space over the 17-year period. The targets balance the need for more homes, improving economic opportunities and social well-being with maintaining the special character and particular environmental qualities of the District that make it an attractive place to live.

1.2.4 The Development and Sites Allocation (DaSA) document, adopted in Dec 2019, sets out more detailed 'development policies' for certain topics to assist in determining proposals and to identify specific 'site allocations' for development. The DaSA is expected to help achieve the Core Strategy's 'Vision' and 'Strategic Objectives' and to facilitate delivery of its development targets. Indeed, there is a legal requirement for it to conform generally with the Core Strategy – as there is for Neighbourhood Plans.

1.2.5 In the 2011-2028 Local Plan, the housing development target for the whole District was for at least 5,700 new homes. Of this, a minimum of 20<sup>2</sup> were designated for Crowhurst. As that Plan is now over 5yrs old, RDC must use the Government's Local Housing Need figures, calculated using the standard method set out in national planning

<sup>1</sup> RDC Local Plan, Adopted Core Strategy 2014 - <https://www.rother.gov.uk/.../local-plan/about-the-local-plan-2/>

<sup>2</sup> RDC Local Plan, Development and Site Allocations Part C: Site Allocations Overview <https://www.rother.gov.uk/dasa>



practice guidance, as the starting point for housing development targets and in preparing its new Local Plan.

- 1.2.6 An emerging Local Plan<sup>3</sup> to cover the period 2020-2040 has had its Reg18 consultation. This will replace the adopted Core Strategy and DaSA and has updated policies and housing numbers across the District. In the Reg18 version of the emerging Local Plan, the potential housing numbers for Crowhurst have been increased. Although the CNDP Review is examined against the current Local Plan (2011-2028), policies in the draft Local Plan (2020-2040) as published for the Reg 18 consultation, have been taken into account.

## 1.3 Neighbourhood Plans

### Overview

- 1.3.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans were introduced in the Localism Act November 2011. The overall aim of the act was to devolve more decision-making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. NDPs were introduced with the aim that:

*“Instead of local people being told what to do, the Government thinks that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live. The Act introduces a new right for communities to draw up a neighbourhood plan.”<sup>4</sup>*

- 1.3.2 NDPs allow local communities, via a Parish Council, or Neighbourhood Forum, to set out a vision for an area, including planning policies and the development of land, being focused on local issues. For example, they could cover where new homes should go and what green spaces should be protected. They could also include local design standards such as the type of materials, scale and character that must be used for any new property. A plan does need to be compatible with national policies and policies in the planning authority’s local plan. It should be focused on guiding development rather than stopping it. If adopted, it will become a statutory plan and be used in making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.3.3 The CNDP2019 was examined against the Government National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>5</sup>, published in March 2012, which states:

<sup>3</sup> RDC emerging Local Plan: [Draft Local Plan 2020-2040 – Rother District Council](#)

<sup>4</sup> A plain English guide to the Localism Act  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> (then select 2012 version)



- *“Neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs (and) ... plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area”. (para. 16)*
- *“Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes can use neighbourhood planning to set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications”. (para.183)*
- *“Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan ... Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies”. (para.184)*
- *“Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated*

*its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation”. (para.185)*

- 1.3.4 Since the CNDP2019 was Made, there have been several revisions to the NPPF. Transitional arrangements (given in NPPF2024 Annex 1 para 239) state that the CNDP Review will be examined against the NPPF published in Dec 2023 as it was submitted to RDC before March 2025. In NPPF 2023, paragraph numbers have been amended but the core idea that “Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area” remains.



## 1.4 Relevance for Crowhurst

- 1.4.1 Having a Neighbourhood Development Plan gives us, as the local community of Crowhurst, a genuine opportunity to input to and shape the future of our village, for example by being able to have a say in where development sites are to be located rather than third parties, e.g. prospective developers doing so purely in their interests.
- 1.4.2 CNDP2019 was subject to an examination and referendum. It passed this with a 92% Yes vote and became part of the Local Development Framework in July 2019. It was agreed by all parties that the CNDP Review, whilst containing material changes, did not significantly alter the nature of the CNDP2019 and therefore does not need to go to referendum. The CNDP Review can be made once the examination report is accepted and any modifications proposed are incorporated.
- 1.4.3 There are also financial benefits for Crowhurst. By producing and adopting a Neighbourhood Development Plan, a higher percentage (25%) of the community infrastructure levy (CIL), charged to developers by RDC, comes to our village for projects. Without a NDP, a lower percentage (15%) would revert to the Parish.

## 1.5 Plan Period

- 1.5.1 The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group originally prepared the CNDP2019 to cover the period 2018 – 2028 in line with Rother District Council's Local Plan time frame. It sets out specific policies and proposals for the use and development of land in the Area shown below over this period. The CNDP Review has kept the same dates.

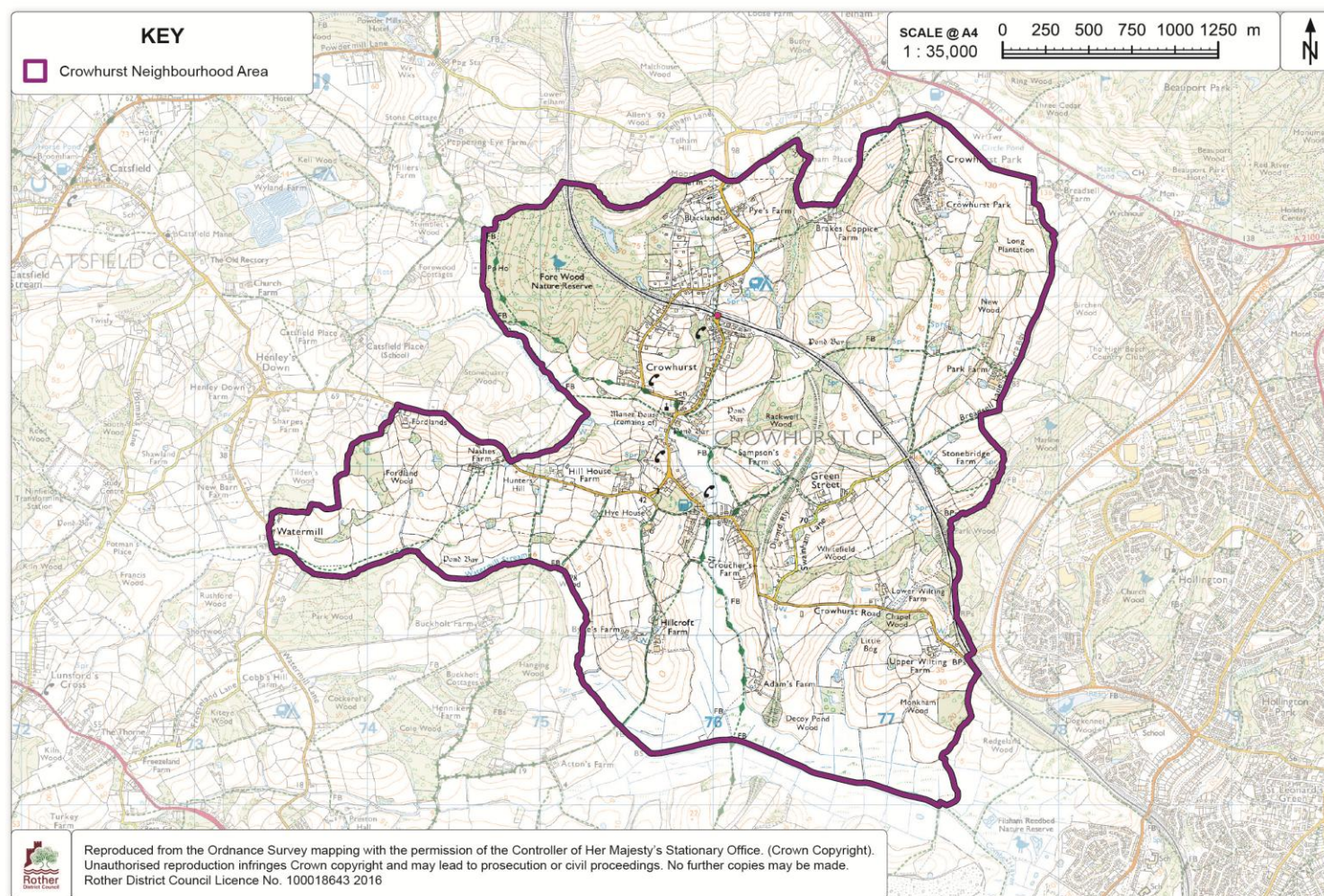
## 1.6 Designated Area

- 1.6.1 Crowhurst Parish Council formally submitted an application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Plan Area in October 2015<sup>6</sup>. In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, Crowhurst Parish Council (as the relevant body) submitted to RDC the following map, D1, identifying the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 1.6.2 In November 2015, it was confirmed by the District Council that, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, the marked area shown on map D1 (being that of the Parish boundary) was formally designated as the Crowhurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area. The CNDP Review has not altered the designated area.

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/11618/Crowhurst-Neighbourhood-Plan>





Map D1 - Crowhurst Parish, designated as Neighbourhood Plan area

## 1.7 Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.7.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic decision support process, aiming to ensure that environmental and possibly other sustainability aspects are considered effectively in policy, plan and programme making<sup>7</sup>.

1.7.2 Rother District Council, as the local planning authority, issued a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment screening opinion<sup>8</sup> for the CNDP Review in January 2025. This stated that the CNDP Review does not alter the SEA or HRA outcomes or incur additional impacts and therefore that a review of the 2018 SEA or HRA Report is not needed.

1.7.3 CNDP2019 was deemed by Rother District Council, in its screening opinion of January 2017, to require a SEA for the following reasons:

*1. The NDP will allocate sites and form part of the 'development plan' and thereby exert a direct and substantial influence over development proposals coming forward in the period.*

*2. The characteristics of the area covered by the NDP (as set out in Schedule 1(2) of the regulations).*

*3. The NDP needs to consider important environmental factors, notably the area is wholly<sup>9</sup> within the High Weald National Landscape (NL), which enjoys the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, as well as the proximity of heritage assets, flood risk areas, a ground water source protection zone, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other environmental assets.*

1.7.4 The screening opinion by RDC enabled a number of SEA objectives to be formed and provided the framework for the assessment of the preferred plan against reasonable alternatives. The CNDP2019 was prepared to provide a positive and sustainable context for new development whilst protecting the special qualities of the Parish area including its invaluable landscape, wildlife and natural and built environment. This objective was integral to the preparation process from the very start to ensure any new allocations and policies preserved and enhanced this special environment whilst recognising there is always some impact of development, and thus sought to ensure any impacts

---

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic\\_environmental\\_assessment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_environmental_assessment)

<sup>8</sup> [Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council](#)

<sup>9</sup> Crowhurst Parish straddles the boundary of the High Weald NL but any development near the boundary could affect the setting of the NL



could be mitigated or avoided. CNDP2019 aimed to deliver 30 new homes over the plan period, which is in excess of the minimum RDC Core Strategy allocation but this would deliver market and affordable homes in a sustainable manner. At a strategic scale this is relatively minor development and will have little impact beyond the immediate site area and their localities. However, the SEA assessment shows the preferred strategy is the most appropriate in order to minimise environmental effects. Thus, the assessment demonstrates there are no significant effects on the environment as a result of the plan and any impacts can be adequately mitigated. A summary of the effects of the plan are shown below. This is valid for both the CNDP2019 and the CNDP Review.

SEA Topic	Effects over time	Can the effect be measured?	Comment
Improve Accessibility	Positive	Yes- Census AMR CIL monitoring	The strategy has maximised opportunities for access as far as constraints will allow
Reduce congestion/increasing travel choice	Minor Positive	Yes-Census data Travel Plan monitoring Air quality data CIL Data	The strategy has maximised opportunities to reduce reliance on car and promote other travel options
Efficiency in land use	Neutral	AMR	The strategy has sought to minimise use of greenfield land and policies encourage reuse of



			buildings and brownfield site
Reduce emissions	Minor Positive	District data	Landscape, design and access policies support reduction in carbon emission albeit difficult to address and monitor at very local level
Minimise impact of flooding	Positive	Flood events and surface water flooding  Planning application and SUDS provision	SUDS/Flood risk policy seek to address issues and implement policies of the catchment management plan and other documents
Maintain/improve water resources	Minor Positive	SUDS provision and environmental agency data  Water consumption data	The use of SUDS and policies protecting blue infrastructure and design to reduce consumption will help meet this objectives

Conserve and enhance biodiversity	Positive	Natural England conditions  Parish Environmental groups	The ecology led nature of the plan will protect existing habitat and seek to deliver positive gains in all parts of development
Conserve and enhance natural environment	Positive	Landscape assessments	The policies will protect landscape value of parish and ensure development protects the identified character of the Parish including the High Weald NL
Conserve and enhance Built Environment	Positive	Heritage at Risk	The policies provide a wider protection for the local built environment and encourage reuse of these assets for sustainable means

1.7.5 The full SEA should be read alongside this plan. See Appendix 4.

## 1.8 Plan Organisation

1.8.1 The village's Neighbourhood Development Plan, whilst owned by the Crowhurst Parish Council as a legal entity, has been created by Crowhurst residents actively interested in the Plan. The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Planning Group, which created the CNDP2019, was subject to a defined Terms of Reference (ToR) with the following roles and responsibilities:

- Promote the process of preparing the CNDP, encouraging interested parties to participate and provide their views and opinions on the specific topics which are covered during preparation of the Plan;
- Arrange meetings and events to gather views and consult on emerging policies for the draft Plan;
- Appoint task groups to undertake identified tasks;
- Assess evidence about the needs and aspirations of the Parish;
- Liaise with relevant organisations and stakeholders;
- Ensure that required surveys, questionnaires, and other consultations are carried out satisfactorily;
- Analyse the results and use them to prepare a robust draft Plan.

1.8.2 The Crowhurst Planning Group was made up of the following sub groups:

**Steering Group** - Meeting monthly since April 2016 and comprising Task Group and Councillor representatives, this group's brief is to move the plan forward; it is accountable to both the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Planning Group and the Parish Council.

**Communications Task Group** - Responsible for letting residents and interested parties know about the CNDP process and progress.

**Land Use (Call for Sites) Group** - Looking at how housing development in Crowhurst can work best for the village. Identifying development sites in keeping with village character and which sit comfortably within the landscape and proposing spaces for environmental protection and community use.

**Street Champions** – Crowhurst volunteers visiting every house in the village to make sure all residents know about this plan and can contribute their ideas, wishes and concerns.

**Research and Heritage Group** – Collating the unique history, culture and heritage of Crowhurst to be recorded, celebrated and protected. Knowing about the past of the village strengthens conservation and provides evidence for where protection of heritage is needed to guide future developments.

**Environment Task Group** - Providing an overview of the plants, wildlife and environments that are special or have particular environmental and scientific value in Crowhurst. Examining areas which might be vulnerable to development and identifying what needs to be protected in those areas as part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Finance Group** - Keeping a budgetary record and liaising with the Parish Council on any financial contributions that are available for the Neighbourhood Planning process to utilise.

**Survey Group** – Creating the surveys that are used to ask all residents for their opinions and ideas.

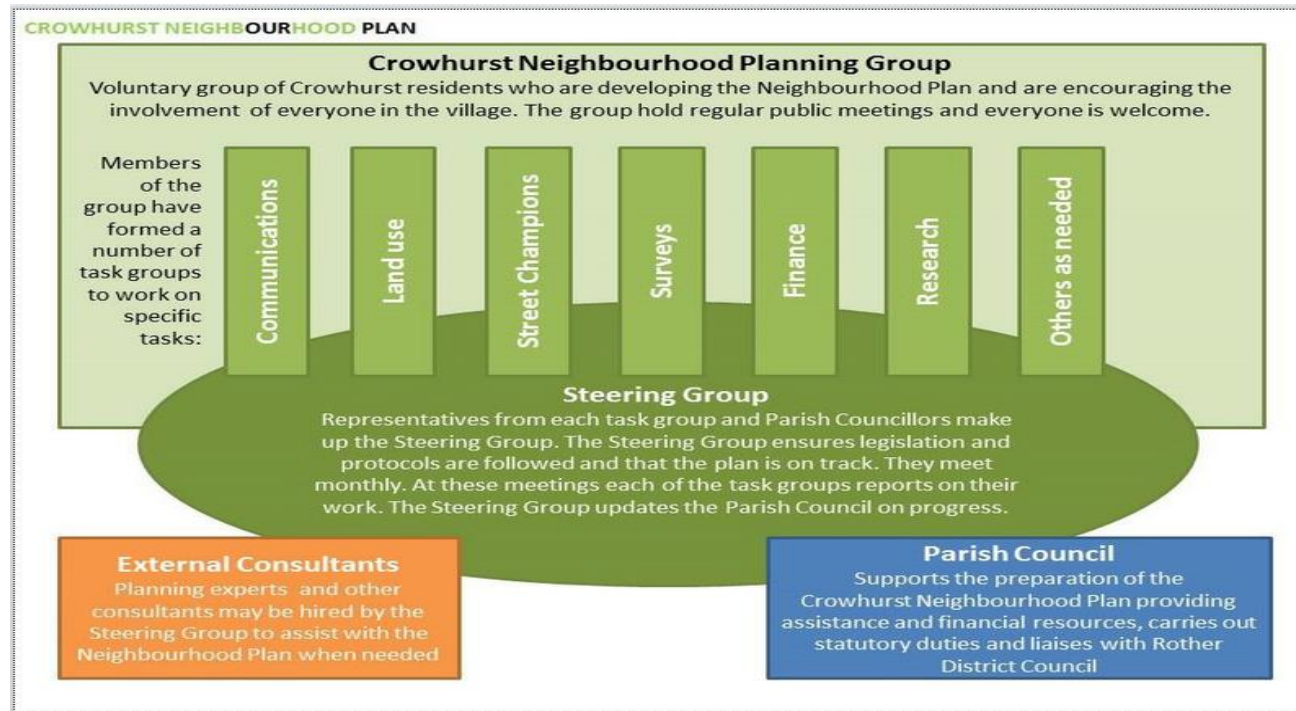


Fig 1.1 – Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan 2019 Organisation

- 1.8.3 The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Advisory and Monitoring Group, set up after the Plan was adopted in 2019, was renamed the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Review Group (CNPMRG) in order to carry out the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. This document, the CNDP Review, was developed by them. The CNPMRG was made up of Parish Councillors and interested residents.

## 1.9 Plan Timeline

- 1.9.1 The following diagram represents the timeline for the CNDP2019 and is a summary of key events from a comprehensive project plan. The CNDP2019 was adopted in July 2019 after a 92% Yes vote at referendum. A Design Guide was then produced and, with agreement from the Parish Council in 2023 to fund a review, this has been incorporated into the CNDP Review, along with updating of policies. The timeline for the CNDP Review can be seen as part of the CNDP Review Reg14 Consultation Statement<sup>10</sup>. The CNDP Review pre-submission for Reg14 was in Nov 2024, with the Submission version going to RDC in Oct 2024, after policies were checked against the Reg18 version of the emerging Local Plan.

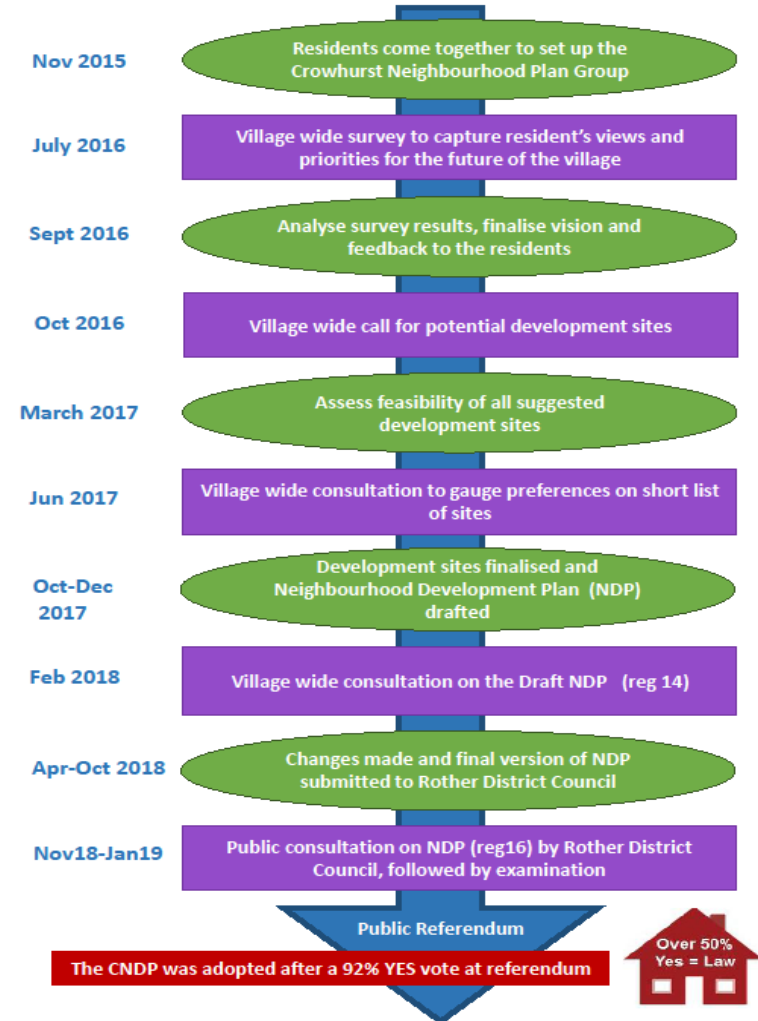


Fig 1.2 – Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan 2019 Timeline

<sup>10</sup> [Crowhurst-CNDP-Review-Reg14-Consultation-responses-submission-oct24.pdf](#)







Looking towards Church from 1066 Country Walk



Your Vision  
Our Future

## 2. CROWHURST – A RURAL VILLAGE

---

- 2.0.1 The following is a short summary of Crowhurst, its surroundings, heritage and facilities. More in-depth information can be found in the *Crowhurst – A Rural Village Nov 2017* document. See Appendix 4.

### 2.1 Environment

- 2.1.1 Crowhurst is located on the southern border of the Rother district, just north-west of St Leonards and Hastings, straddling the edge of the High Weald National Landscape. To the South of the village lies the Combe Valley Countryside Park. There is an RSPB nature reserve which includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a local nature area of woodland (Crowhurst Nature Reserve, also known as Quarry Wood), another SSSI on the Eastern edge of the Parish and several areas of Ancient Woodland.
- 2.1.2 Surveys and public meetings highlighted the importance that residents place on the environment around Crowhurst. Access to the countryside, wildlife corridors and the views/green spaces within the village were all highlighted as important. Protecting the rural nature of the village is part of the overall Vision for the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (CNDP).

- 2.1.3 The *Environment Description*, referenced in Appendix 4, was compiled by the Environment Task Group. It gives much more detail on the environment of Crowhurst Parish and provides recommendations on how best to manage this going forward, based on the aims of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan and in relation to already saved policies in the Rother Local Plan. The Environmental Planning Checklist will guide developers in conforming with all necessary policies.

- 2.1.4 Certain parts of Crowhurst are also prone to flooding – both pluvial and fluvial. More detail on flooding issues within Crowhurst can be found in the *Watercourses and Flooding* document, referenced in Appendix 4.

### 2.2 Heritage

- 2.2.1 Crowhurst has a rich historical heritage. As a village, Crowhurst has definitely been around since 771AD when King Offa of Mercia gave the Bishop of Selsey a piece of land. However, there are indications of activity/settlement in the area from much, much earlier. The Combe Valley Way (A2690), opened in late 2015 and running through the Southern part of the Parish, provided a bountiful source of archaeological finds (flint scatters etc) that are still being investigated. These finds point to settlements in the area dating back to the last Ice Age. See Bexhill to Hastings Link



Road - Field Collection Survey, Crowhurst Parish Archaeology Update 2017 by Caspar Johnson FSA in Background Documentation, on the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan website, for further information.

- 2.2.2 There are 25 listed buildings in the Parish – mostly ranging from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century. The majority are Grade II listed but Hye House is a Grade II\* and the Church is Grade I listed. Next to the church are also the remains of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Manor, which is a scheduled monument. The Historical Environment Record list has many other sites listed in the Parish that are of historical interest, many of which relate to ironworking and gunpowder industries. During the NP process, an historical walk around local gunpowder sites was created with a descriptive booklet.
- 2.2.3 In addition to the statutory listed buildings, the evidence base, which includes the Heritage and Character Assessment (AECOM, 2017), identified 11 buildings within the village core that are considered to represent non-designated heritage assets as a result of their character or architectural quality. These buildings are more vulnerable to change as a result of permitted development and a lack of any conservation area designation in the village.
- 2.2.4 Both ironworking and gunpowder making have been major industries in the past. The *Historical Heritage of Crowhurst Report*, compiled by the Heritage Task Group, gives much

more information on the heritage of the Parish and is referenced in Appendix 4.

## 2.3 Infrastructure and Transport

- 2.3.1 Crowhurst primarily lies along a single road going from the A2690 Queensway bypass of St Leonards to the A2100 at Telham, near Battle. There are a few branching cul-de sacs and one road towards the neighbouring village of Catsfield, through Henley's Down. Until recently, there were no other roads in the Parish. Then, in late 2015, the new Combe Valley Way was opened. This was built to relieve pressure on the A259 coast road running from Hastings to Bexhill and runs between the A2690 Queensway and the A259 in Bexhill. There have been complaints about increased noise levels and litter from the new road.
- 2.3.2 Crowhurst has a train station which is on the main-line from Hastings to London. This station was built when a branch line to Bexhill was opened in 1902. The branch line was closed in the 1960s but the station has remained open, albeit in a smaller capacity. Times to London are around 1 1/2hrs which makes Crowhurst convenient for commuting. However, access to the station for commuters is up a long, narrow hill with no pavements and car parking at the station is charged for, whereas on-street parking nearby is not. Consequently, there are issues with commuter traffic and parking congestion.

2.3.3 There is no public bus route as such in the village. In 2023, a new on-Demand bus service called Flexi-Bus was started by East Sussex County Council (ESCC). Further information on this service can be found on the ESCC website. There is also the school bus that goes to Claverham Community college.

2.3.4 Possibly due to the lack of other public transport, Crowhurst has a higher than average number of households with 2 or more cars (58% compared to the Rother average of 42% in 2021 census data). Parking provision (or current lack in some places) was cited as an important concern to residents in surveys.

2.3.5 Pavements and road safety were also highlighted as important during surveys and public feedback.

## 2.4 Facilities

2.4.1 The Village Hall is the main community facility and well used by the Primary School, located next door, and local groups. There has long been talk about building a new Village Hall and this has been looked at during the Neighbourhood Plan process. St George's Church is located opposite the Village Hall and has a Parish Room with kitchen that can be hired.

2.4.2 In addition to the Village Hall there is the Recreation Ground with a Pavilion and Youth Club Hut. The Recreation Ground also has a children's play area, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and community orchard.

2.4.3 The Plough Inn pub and Methodist Chapel are located near the Recreation Ground. The Christian Healing Centre is located at the Northern end of the village in the Old Rectory.

2.4.4 There are many clubs and activities in the village. Most of these are listed in the monthly village magazine – the Crowhurst News.

## 2.5 Housing and population

2.5.1 In the 2021 census, there were 890 residents in 340 dwellings. The population was split almost equally between men and women.

2.5.2 Crowhurst has a smaller number of 1 or 2 bed properties compared to Rother (25% versus 41%) but has around 63% (an increase since 2011) of households with only 1 or 2 people (based on 2021 census data). Crowhurst has a larger number of 4+ bedroom properties compared to Rother (38% versus 23%)

2.5.3 Surveys in the village showed that more 1 or 2 bed properties were needed, both for emerging households and downsizers.

2.5.4 The median affordability ratio of house prices to earnings in Rother District has worsened from 10.33 in 2019 to 11.60 in 2021 (ESiF data).





## 2.6 Local Economy

- 2.6.1 Crowhurst has a higher number than the Rother average of self-employed<sup>11</sup> people covering a wide range of industries. Other than that, there are a number of businesses providing employment in the Parish – farms, equestrian businesses, a care home, a weight-loss retreat, the village pub, tourism – campsite, various holiday lets and a Holiday Village. However, many people need to commute out of Crowhurst for work.
- 2.6.2 Crowhurst does have a high level of residents working in professional and skilled trade jobs (2021 census data).

## 2.7 Education

- 2.7.1 Possibly tied in with the higher number of people working in skilled jobs is the fact that Crowhurst has a high percentage of residents educated to degree level or higher (39% compared to 30% in Rother, based on 2021 census).
- 2.7.2 Crowhurst has a Church of England Primary School which takes children from the village and surrounding areas. It has been rated by Ofsted as Good since 2009.

---

<sup>11</sup> Based on 2021 census data via ESiF for Rother 006E area on Economic Activity





Community Event at Crowhurst Nature Reserve (Quarry Wood)

## 3. A VISION FOR CROWHURST

---

### 3.1 The Vision

3.1.1 At the start of the Neighbourhood Planning Process, several public consultations took place (Dec 15 –Feb 2016)<sup>12</sup> to find out what Crowhurst residents' thought were important. The information gathered was distilled into 2 options for a Vision for Crowhurst. These were put forward at one of the regular public meetings and the favourite was then voted for in the first village wide survey in July 2016. 98% of respondents agreed with the Vision for Crowhurst as:

**'maintain the village's rural character by protecting the countryside and environment around its boundaries, promoting, maintaining and enabling healthier lifestyles, community spirit and enhancing infrastructure, facilities and services for residents of all ages and abilities'.**

3.1.2 The Vision was agreed by the Parish Council in November 2016.

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/archives>



### AIMS

Using information from the survey and further public meetings, the following Aims were proposed:

### 3.2 HOUSING

H1) To identify viable sites for new homes that could be integrated into the village with good access to the countryside;

H2) To ensure housing is supported by the necessary infrastructure, sewerage, drainage, energy supply, broadband and parking;

H3) To build affordable homes that meet the current and future needs of the village;

H4) To build homes that are of an appropriate type, size and style for the rural character of the village and are sympathetic to existing homes and the surrounding countryside;

H5) To promote principles of high quality and good design that encourages local context and rural character;

H6) To ensure new homes meet or exceed energy efficiency standards and achieve low carbon status and / or renewable energy generation.



### 3.3 INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT AND BUSINESS

ITB1) To improve road safety for all road users and reduce congestion;

ITB2) To reduce the amount and speed of traffic through the village;

ITB3) To enhance opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling around the village;

ITB4) To maintain and enhance access to public transport especially the train service;

ITB5) To seek ways to manage parking issues;

ITB6) To support local businesses;

ITB7) To improve mobile phone coverage and broadband connectivity;

ITB8) To improve sewerage and drainage.

### 3.4 ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

EH1) To protect and enhance the rural and peaceful character of the village;

EH2) To identify areas of green space, woodland and heritage sites to be protected from future development for reasons of their special landscape or heritage character;

EH3) To maintain the distinctive views and connections with the countryside and heritage sites;

EH4) To protect and enhance the biodiversity, nature and wildlife in the village;

EH5) To protect the village boundaries to avoid coalescence with neighbouring villages and towns;

EH6) To alleviate and manage risk of flooding;

EH7) To promote the use of renewable energy and sustainable materials;

EH8) To maintain low levels of air, noise and light pollution and reduce amount of litter/ fly tipping.



### 3.5 COMMUNITY SERVICES, FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

CSF1) To promote and encourage community spirit and engagement in local decisions about the village;

CSF2) To promote and encourage neighbourliness to help reduce feelings of isolation;

CSF3) To support the village primary school as well as social and educational opportunities, facilities and activities for children and young people;

CSF4) To support health services, facilities and activities that help to encourage everyone to lead healthy and active life styles, both physically and mentally;

CSF5) To support and enhance community facilities that will meet current and future demands e.g. village hall, recreation ground, village pub, village shop;

CSF6) To support and enhance community events, leisure and cultural activities for everyone of all ages and abilities in the village.

3.6 These Aims were then refined into a set of objectives under the three themes of Environmental, Social and Economic to align with the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies within the CNDP are based upon these so that the overall vision for Crowhurst can be realised.

3.7 An Action Plan will also be created for those aims/objectives that are not suitable for a Neighbourhood Development Plan.



Photo by Ellen Harley

## 4. POLICIES

---

### 4.0. Introduction

4.0.1. New houses are required throughout the country. On the methodology used, the current Local Plan (2011-2028) gave Rother District Council (RDC) a quota to provide nearly 5700 new homes over the plan period. Within Rother's plan, Crowhurst was expected to contribute a minimum of 20 new homes from planned housing developments (of six homes or more) and a few more through windfall projects (smaller, sporadic developments). The adopted version of the CNDP allocated 30 dwellings. Based on the emerging plan (Reg18 version) housing numbers for the District (including Crowhurst) are increasing.

4.0.2 One of the key aims of Crowhurst's Neighbourhood Development Plan (CNDP) is to ensure that development of these new homes provides a positive benefit; providing people with appropriate, high-quality homes for the future whilst enhancing the character of the village and adding amenity wherever possible.

4.0.3 In order to do this the CNDP Team took some time to try and understand both people's needs and which characteristics of the village are important. The importance of the environment around Crowhurst was flagged up from the start of the process. We also considered other issues such as how amenities could best be improved and what people's housing needs were likely to be over the coming years.

4.0.4 The CNDP Team engaged with the community through street champions, workshops, discussions, surveys<sup>13</sup>, exhibitions, and a website - all with continual feedback - to gain as much information as possible. We liaised with other parishes and local authorities to understand our place in the wider community and to benefit from lessons learned elsewhere. The results of our consultations with residents can be found on the Crowhurst Parish Council website.

4.0.5 Specialist advisors were employed covering: planning technicalities, landscape considerations and architectural and environmental character assessments, to ensure we could identify practical and compliant, yet sympathetic, development solutions. Advice was also sought from specialist sources covering natural and cultural heritage, and

---

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/archives>



wider environmental issues to ensure we protect all that is important. Reports are referenced in Appendix 4.

4.0.6 We took every possible suggestion for housing sites we were able to identify and assessed these using a combination of technical considerations, criteria relevant to the SEA objectives and other factors identified as important to the community. We concluded with a final shortlist of viable development sites which are the same in the CNDP Review.

4.0.7 Feedback helped inform the distribution of houses across these viable sites, preferred sizes, density and types and styles of houses the CNDP should aim to provide. Surveys indicated a preference for mixed housing size, mostly 1 to 3 bedroom, semi-detached type houses. Census data confirmed that Crowhurst has a particular deficit of small (1 or 2 bedroom) properties. Providing these sorts of homes will enable younger families to live in the village or older people to stay in the village but downsize. Development should be small, dispersed, low density formats, with reasonable size gardens, and careful consideration for neighbours, parking and other amenity needs. The CNDP aims to encourage high standards of design and sufficient infrastructure wherever new development is permitted.

4.0.8 The built environment in Crowhurst has no single, coherent style. There are many architectural styles which provide reference points for good housing design. There are also developments which lack distinctive architecture, or in some cases are rather poor. The CNDP team took time to identify preferable characteristics of the built environment and produced the Crowhurst Design Guide to guide future development. Guidance will also aim to ensure good building practice is employed encompassing issues such as energy efficiency and flood mitigation measures.

4.0.9 The CNDP is not simply about enabling housing development. It is as much about providing protection and enhancement of what is important about Crowhurst. Feedback identified considerable concern for landscape and the environment. The Plan includes policies to preclude development which would destroy, unacceptably damage or pollute the landscape or the environment.

4.0.10 We carefully reviewed existing development boundaries and the Strategic Gap, which limits the expansion of Hastings into surrounding countryside areas, was carefully reviewed by Rother DC and can be seen in the DaSA. These reviews reinforce our work on conserving the character and landscape of Crowhurst and aim to strengthen protection against any possible larger-scale developments.



Consequently, the CNDP distinguishes clearly between the countryside and built-up areas and aims to focus most development within or close to existing development boundaries. The CNDP, in line with the RDC Core Strategy and DaSA Plan, will protect and enable us to strongly resist development within the countryside, particularly those areas of special qualities such as the best and most versatile agricultural land, areas of National Landscape, Nature Reserves and Strategic Gaps.

4.0.11 The loss of wildlife habitats and corridors to development is also resisted, together with harm to heritage assets and their setting. To ensure this, we undertook character and landscape assessment work and identified acceptable baseline schemes for each development site. We developed extensive environmental and heritage protection policies. This work is designed to ensure that houses fit well with the overall character of the village and enhance, rather than damage or spoil landscape, environment or heritage assets.

4.0.12 The Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CLCSCA) also identified areas in Crowhurst that help form the rural character of the village. These areas should be protected and development should not result in the erosion or loss of the important areas or

views identified on CNDP Map 2. Enhancement of the countryside through good management is also encouraged.

4.0.13 Against each development site identified in the plan we have included an explanation of the most important policies and considerations. The following policies, including each site-specific policy, provide a more in-depth justification and background explanation. These policies must be considered in conjunction with RDC's Core Strategy and DaSA Plan to get a full picture of the policies applying to new development in Crowhurst.

4.0.14 In relation to climate change, the CNDP seeks to limit its impact by supporting housing that is close to existing amenities so reducing the need for vehicle journeys, promoting access to the local footpath network, supporting biodiversity, flood mitigation measures, energy efficiency and small-scale renewable energy initiatives in new developments. The Parish Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019. It is felt that the policies in the CNDP will help to mitigate climate change and biodiversity (ecological) damage. A new policy on Renewable Energy has been included in the review.

4.0.15 All areas identified in policies can be seen on the Proposals Map – CNDP Map 8.

## 4.1 Sustainability

4.1.1 Achieving sustainable development is a key feature of the NPPF. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy *Securing the Future* set out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly. It goes on to say that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.1.2 The CNDP is positively prepared, reflecting the presumption in the NPPF in favour of sustainable development, but it seeks to manage development pressures to ensure that, in addition to economic considerations, environmental and social considerations are taken into account. The policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan contribute to achieving sustainable development by seeking positive improvements to the quality of the natural, built and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including:

- Economic – Policy CC1 will contribute to building a strong and competitive economy by supporting new and existing small businesses, the retention of appropriate employment sites in the Parish and supporting small scale tourism sites. Policy CC2 supports development that includes infrastructure that will help with home working. Policy CC3 will support appropriate renewable energy infrastructure

within the Parish. This should support climate change mitigation and reduce carbon emissions.

- Social – Policies CH1, CH2 and CH3 plan positively for housing growth to meet the needs of present and future generations in accordance with the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans. They also support the provision of a mix of housing types and sizes that can meet the needs of a wide range of people and promote a healthy and inclusive community. Part of the site criteria was close access to community facilities to enable an inclusive community and reduce in-village car journeys. Policies CF1-3 encourage the protection and retention of community and sports/play facilities, Local Green Space and footpaths. Policy CB1, along with the Crowhurst Design Guide, promotes high quality design and the use of renewable energies within developments. Policy CB2 encourages retention of the rich historical heritage of Crowhurst. Taken together, these policies will support a strong, vibrant and healthy community.
- Environmental – Protection of the environment was a key feedback from initial surveys. Since the initial adoption of the CNDP, the Parish Council has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency. Policies CE1 – 6 promote the

protection and enhancement of locally important landscape features, areas and views, the High Weald NL area and biodiversity, which contribute toward the sense of community and quality of life in the area. These policies and others (such as design and housing) should also help to use natural resources sustainably and reduce pollution and waste. The Dark Skies policy (CE6) is new in the review and aims to promote the rural nature of the village, protect biodiversity and improve the mental and physical well-being that is associated with this.

- 4.1.3 Overall, each policy within the CNDP contributes to the sustainable development of the Parish. It is not therefore considered necessary to have a separate policy on sustainable development or climate change. Policies that promote sustainability and climate change mitigation also include benefits to human and global health.

## 4.2 The Natural Environment

### 4.2.1 Environmental Objectives

1. To mitigate the effects of the Climate and Ecological Emergency as declared by the Parish Council
2. To preserve and enhance the distinct rural landscape character of Crowhurst and the High Weald NL and its setting including its rural lanes, important open spaces and views and the distinct settlement pattern of the village.
3. To conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of the Parish, including the creation or protection of green corridors and wildlife connectivity and notable areas within the Parish including but not limited to the SSSI at the Fore Wood RSPB reserve, Crowhurst Nature Reserve (Quarry Wood), Muriel's Meadow, ESCC Designated Verges and Combe Valley Countryside Park. New development will be required to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) improvements and take into account information in the Biodiversity Audit (Appendix 4) of the Parish.
4. To protect important landscape features within the Parish such as trees, hedgerows, verges, ponds and watercourses, other protected biodiversity assets and the wider rural landscape and setting of the village including that of the High Weald NL and the strategic gap.
5. Ensure that development is safe from flooding and other environmental impacts such as contamination and pollution such as, but not limited to, light, water and air pollution,

and, equally, that development does not impact upon the high environmental quality of the parish. Where possible, development should aim to reduce flood risk elsewhere.

6. To promote sustainable development including the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), sustainable construction techniques and renewable energies.
7. To preserve and where possible enhance the heritage assets of the village including listed buildings and their settings, non-designated heritage assets, below ground archaeology, ancient and historic routes and the form of the village settlement pattern.
8. Ensure development is well designed as per the Crowhurst Design Guide and new development is consistent with the local character in general.
9. Ensure development is landscape and ecologically led so the rural character of the village is maintained.
10. Ensure transparent processes with RDC about changes put forward to alter the protection of any area within the Parish such as TPO's and section 41 habitats.



## 4.2.2 Policy CS1- Development Boundaries

### Policy Justification

- 4.2.2.1 As part of the preparation for the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (CNDP) and as a requirement of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process, the use of development boundaries as a manner of delivering the overall strategy of the plan was assessed and considered. Traditionally, development boundaries have been used to direct development to an area where development is considered to be acceptable in principle and identify areas where there would be a priority towards the protection of the countryside and its wider landscape character. Furthermore, beyond the boundary, development would be restricted to those developments which require a countryside location or there is a genuine need which could justify development in such exceptional circumstances. Such exceptions could include agricultural or tourism development or affordable housing schemes where these accord with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.
- 4.2.2.2 As set out in the evidence base, Crowhurst has a distinct fragmented and dispersed settlement pattern which can be broadly split into north, central and southern parts. This is considered to be unique and special within the NL landscape

and creates a tranquil and rural character which is central to the identity of the village and wider Parish. This fragmentation presents potential pressures for infill development and encroachment within the intervening land which could have negative impacts on the wider Parish landscape. The northern part of the village is characterised by lower density development with larger plots which also could lead to pressure for redevelopment which in time could erode the verdant character of the village.

- 4.2.2.3 In 2006, Rother District Council defined a development boundary around the Station Road (central) area and some of the southern part of the village, leaving the remainder of the village in the countryside in planning policy terms, the justification being the protection of this wider sensitive character. The use of development boundaries is a key tool in the current development plan, as stated in Core Strategy Policy OSS2 and continued across the District in the Development and Site Allocations Plan (DaSA) which seeks to apply a general development boundary policy to settlements.
- 4.2.2.4 The development boundary options have been reviewed as part of the CNDP and it has been determined that the 2006 boundary should be amended to include the allocation sites and Forewood Rise, which was previously excluded. This will

reflect the principal built up parts of the village but at the same time protects the character and setting of the village, the important protected gaps (Policy CE1) and other landscape considerations. It will also protect the lower density parts of the village from development pressures which could individually and cumulatively harm the wider built character of the village.

4.2.2.5 Development within the settlement boundary will be supported subject to the development meeting the other policies within the CNDP. Beyond the development boundaries, these areas will be protected for their landscape character and development will be limited to those types where there is a need for a countryside location or a proven need and will be in accordance with the Rother District Council policy RA3-Development in the Countryside, in relation to agricultural, tourism and affordable housing. Any development meeting those requirements should also comply with the other policies within the plan.

### **Policy CS1 – Development Boundary**

1. Within the village development boundary, as shown on CNDP Map 1, development will be supported subject to compliance with the other policies in the development plan and subject to being compatible with the relevant identified landscape characteristics set out in the ESCC Landscape Character Assessment and the more localised Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CLCSCA).
2. Outside of the defined development boundary as shown on CNDP Map 1, development will not be supported unless it preserves the landscape character of the area including that of the High Weald NL and its setting, and accords with the exception policies of the development plan which normally require either a clear need to be demonstrated or that the development requires a countryside location.

## 4.2.3 Policy CE1- Landscape Character

### Policy justification

4.2.3.1 The majority of the village lies within the High Weald National Landscape (NL). The village has a distinct rural feel which presents a tranquil and remote character and which retains strong characteristics of the High Weald. The village has retained its fragmented pattern, which has arisen from both historical events such as the introduction of the railway and its strong agricultural heritage which remains a dominant part of the village and sits alongside community life. This character is recognised in the Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CLCSCA), The Heritage and Character Assessment (HCA) and the East Sussex County Council Landscape Assessment. The reports highlight a landscape that is a strong reflection of NL Character, but in which the fragmented pattern of the village and its topography makes the village landscape sensitive to change. Being a settlement that is located within a valley formation, and which has a high concentration of public footpaths, there is also a high degree of inter-visibility within the village which also increases the sensitivity of the landscape both within the village itself and on its fringes. Therefore, the openness of the village, its visibility and this agricultural character are integral factors to preserving the tranquillity and rural

character which is so key to the overall character of the village.

4.2.3.2 In a number of surveys held during the preparation of the CNDP, the rural character of the village and its intrinsic beauty were of high priority to local people. The Plan is supported by a SEA Report which requires the Plan to have regard to reasonable alternatives in order to minimise environmental impacts. Furthermore, Paragraph 176 of the NPPF places great weight on the conservation of designated landscapes such as the NL and the Rother Core Strategy policy EN1 Landscape Stewardship reinforces this protective presumption of landscape character and this is a key focus of the CNDP. Thus, the central aims and objectives of the CNDP are to allow sustainable growth, to enable the community to grow and prosper but at the same time protecting this special landscape character for future generations.

4.2.3.3 This policy seeks to identify the parts of the village where development should be restricted in order to protect the key characteristics of the village and will be applied in combination with Policy CS1 in respect of development outside the defined village boundaries. The CLCSCA defined 21 character areas within the Parish, each with a unique set of characteristics and which were key to preserve for

maintaining its identified landscape character. Beyond the village, the Parish is remote, tranquil and reflective of the High Weald NL and open countryside but unusually for a village in the South East of England, the village and its setting retain this tranquillity, remoteness and rural character within its built environs which is subject to greater pressures for change. Having regard to these greater pressures, it is considered appropriate to define the main features of the village environs which contribute to this character and protect these from further development which could undermine the function of these features in the wider landscape character.

4.2.3.4 Development schemes which will achieve an enhancement of the NL or landscape character will be supported, subject to compliance with other policies of the development plan, the NPPF and the High Weald Management Plan. As set out in the NPPF, great weight will be given to the conservation of the NL landscape and the plan will also seek to protect the intrinsic beauty and character of the local countryside.

### **Policy CE1- Landscape Character of Crowhurst**

The land located outside of the defined development boundary as shown on CNDP Map 1 will be protected and conserved for its landscape character and for its contribution towards the wider character of the Parish. Opportunities for the enhancement of the landscape will be encouraged and supported. Development will only be supported if it meets the following criteria:

1. It conserves the landscape character of the village and the Parish area including the Character of the High Weald National Landscape (having regard to Policy CE2) or its setting and having regard to the ESCC Landscape Character Assessment and the more localised Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (CLCSCA) and the Crowhurst Design Guide;
2. It does not result in the erosion or loss of the identified Important Open Areas as shown on the Proposals Map and CNDP Map 2;
3. The development does not impact on important valley and village views as defined on the Proposals Map and CNDP Map 2;
4. Where development is in accordance with other policies in the development plan, development will be expected to be designed to include landscaping which will be consistent with the landscape characteristics of its locality as defined by the CLCSCA and with regard to Policy CE2.



## 4.2.4 The High Weald National Landscape

4.2.4.1 As can be seen on the proposals map, the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) - formerly known as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - includes most of the northern and central part of the Parish, with the village landscape being characteristic of the HWNL and the special qualities of the landscape as set by the High Weald (AONB) Management Plan 2024-2029 (or subsequent versions). The southern part of the village falls outside the HWNL, but nevertheless forms part of the setting to the HWNL and in most cases retains the wider characteristics of the designated HWNL.

4.2.4.2 The High Weald Management Plan defines eight core character components of the High Weald landscape, all of which are present in Crowhurst. These are:

**Natural Systems** - Crowhurst lies within a valley formation and sits within a ridged and faulted landscape with rolling hills with a number of principle streams such as Powdermill Stream, Brokes Gill and a network of other watercourses which cut through the valley landscape.

**Settlement** – Crowhurst retains its dispersed character, which has evolved according to historic development in agriculture, industry and other historic events such as the railway. It is largely unaltered by modern development.

**Routeways** - The village has a number of historic routeways which remain unaltered, including the main vehicular routes through the village, and others that remain in use as public footpaths throughout and around the village.

**Woodland** - The village has an abundance of woodland that frames the valley landscape, with many areas of ancient woodland such as The Fore Wood and Quarry Wood.

**Landscapes and Heath** - The Parish follows the wider HWNL character with irregularly shaped fields, bounded by hedgerows, including those that remain in production around the built areas of the village. The river valley of Powdermill Stream remains tranquil and unaffected by urban form although this part of the valley is outside the HWNL.

**Dark Night Skies** – The Parish retains dark skies although it is impacted by some light pollution and is looking at applying for Dark Skies Certification. The CNDP Review incorporates a new policy on Dark Skies.

**Aesthetic and perceptual qualities** – Residents can enjoy short and long views of the tranquil and rural Parish, much of which is still pastoral.

**Land-based economy and rural living** – Crowhurst has roots extending back into history.

4.2.4.3 The area of the Parish outside the HWNL, still shares many of the characteristics of the HWNL. Crowhurst village itself presents significant HWNL character that is largely intact and unspoilt. Accessibility to this landscape for recreation brings health and well-being benefits. Having regard to the great weight placed upon the landscape and scenic beauty of National Landscapes, it is considered necessary to emphasise the additional considerations required in order that such character is reinforced and enhanced in accordance with national and local policy. While Policy EN1 of the Core Strategy does mention the HWNL (formerly AONB), and the DaSA goes into more detail, it is still considered necessary to include a specific policy within the CNDP in order that this is taken into account at a detailed level when planning applications are prepared. Whilst this policy is directed towards development within the HWNL as shown on the proposals map, development within the setting of the HWNL, will also be expected to take account of the policy criteria in minimising or mitigating impacts on the HWNL landscape.

### **Policy CE2- The High Weald National Landscape (HWNL)**

Development within the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) – formerly known as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - will only be supported where it conserves or enhances the natural beauty of the parish, including promotion of accessibility for health and wellbeing, and has regard to the High Weald (AONB) Management Plan. In particular development must demonstrate that it:

1. Takes opportunities to restore the natural function of watercourses to improve water quality; prevent flooding and enhance wetland habitats;
2. Respects the settlement pattern of the parish and uses local materials that enhance the appearance of development and will help to connect occupiers with the landscape;
3. Relates well to historic routeways and seeks to ensure access is maintained or improved, and their rural character is not degraded by loss of banks, hedgerows, verges or other important features. Landscape enhancements related to these would be supported;
4. Does not result in the loss or degradation of Ancient Woodland or historic features within it and, where appropriate will contribute to its ongoing management;
5. Conserves and enhances the ecology of fields, trees and hedgerows; retains and reinstates historic fields; and, where possible, directs development away from fields that have been in use since the medieval period or earlier, especially where these form coherent field systems with other medieval features.

## 4.2.5 Policy CE3 – Biodiversity

### Policy Justification

4.2.5.1 Crowhurst has significant and varied natural heritage with Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the Fore Wood and Combe Haven and a Nature Reserve at Quarry Wood, as well as having unspoilt open countryside, woodland and wetland habitat. The Fore Wood is also designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and there are other Local Wildlife Sites across the Parish, as shown on CNDP Map 3. These areas and habitats provide a significant natural asset within the context of a relatively small village, which presents a significant asset from which to promote the conservation of the natural environment and also its enhancement. In addition to these more recognised habitats, other assets, including those within the village boundary, include the church yard with its ancient yew tree, Ancient Woodland, established hedgerows, wildlife areas such as Muriel's Meadow and various ESCC Designated verges, residential gardens, the former railway line and the fringes of the recreation ground which present established wildlife corridors and habitats. The Powdermill and Rackwell Streams and other watercourses also provide habitat and a wetland environment that contributes to the biodiversity of the village and its environs. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that planning should aim to conserve and, where

possible, enhance biodiversity. This is of particular importance at present with the Parish having declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and the country experiencing a serious and catastrophic decrease in wildlife due to habitat loss and chemical use. Policy EN5: Biodiversity and Greenspace of the Rother Core Strategy (and Policy ENV5: Habitats and Species of the emerging RDC Local Plan) reinforces these aims.

4.2.5.2 The plan and its policies in respect of Biodiversity have been informed by a substantial evidence base including the Environmental Description, the Crowhurst Biodiversity Audit (Appendix 4) and has also been informed by data from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. This evidence base has enabled the Plan to avoid or mitigate any impacts in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan and the NPPF and seek enhancements where possible.

4.2.5.3 The policy seeks to ensure applicants understand the ecological interests of a site prior to development so that the design can then protect any existing features and incorporate enhancements into the overall scheme. This is key to seeking enhancements within design and to ensure the scheme accords with relevant guidance such as Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework and other standing advice and guidance and enabling a site to

maximise the ecological potential of a site, including wildlife connectivity, and ensuring the proposed enhancements are acceptable to the site context. It is mandatory for proposals to increase biodiversity net gain by at least 10% (or the higher of any subsequent regulations or future Local Plan policy), calculated using the latest Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric to ensure the special rural nature of the village is maintained and improved. However, a minimum of 20% improvement is encouraged to maintain the rural nature of the Parish. The importance of wildlife corridors and wider connectivity is noted and developers must link any new habitats to current areas to allow for the movement and dispersal of flora and fauna. The importance of wildlife corridors is recognised by the Rother Core Strategy, particularly Policy EN5, and *Biodiversity and Planning*, a document produced by Sussex Wildlife Trust and this policy seeks to implement an inclusive approach within any new development in the Parish.

4.2.5.4 The policy will require an integrated approach to all parts of the development, including those traditionally engineered parts of the development, including habitat within buildings such as bird boxes, swift bricks, hedgehog homes, insect hotels and wildlife friendly SuDS to maximise biodiversity opportunities in all parts of the building and site. Regard should be had to the SuDS options as set out in the RSPB

publication *Sustainable Drainage Systems; Maximising the Potential for People and Wildlife*. The policy will also ensure new planting is native and climate resistant - trees such as Crab Apple, Juniper, Osier Willow, Hazel, Blackthorn/Sloe or Silver Birch would be suitable. Any new planting must also be from local or UK only sources (to limit disease transfer) and is appropriate to the site conditions and represents good pollinators for local wildlife. Any wildflower seed must come from local Wealden sources to maintain the veracity of native wildflower species. There should be an agreed upon monitoring program for all new plantings to ensure establishment.

4.2.5.5 This policy seeks to apply to all development within the Parish although it does recognise the need to be proportionate to the scale and type of development and therefore if one can demonstrate the type, location and scale of the development and having regard to the site context, that there would be limited impact then the policy acknowledges the need for ecological surveys would not be required in all instances. However, this would have to be clearly justified and development would be expected to accord with the remaining parts of the policy where these are relevant. It is also expected that applicants have regard to the up-to-date guidance from Natural England and its



standing advice where addressing ecology issues as part of development.

4.2.5.6 The policy is considered to align with that of Policy EN5 in the Core Strategy and proposes greater detail for the local context of Crowhurst. The implementation of this policy will preserve and enhance the biodiversity and habitats of protected species and species of principle importance as listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) and the NPPF. Other relevant information is the National Pollinator Strategy, B-Lines and British Standards: Biodiversity.

### **Policy CE3 - Biodiversity**

Any new development will be required to demonstrate that there will be a net gain in biodiversity of the site of at least 10%, or the higher of this and any subsequent strategic policy or regulations (bar allowed exception sites), shown using the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric. Opportunities for the enhancement of the natural environment must be maximised and biodiversity net gain must be provided on-site wherever possible. Off-site provision will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that, after following the biodiversity gain hierarchy, all reasonable opportunities to achieve measurable and significant net gains on-site have been exhausted. The criteria below and in the Crowhurst Design Guide must be followed:

1. Development will not be supported where it adversely affects the ecological interests of the Fore Wood Reserve SSSI, Quarry Wood Nature Reserve, Combe Haven, Priority Habitats or areas with a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), Muriel's Meadow or other designated wildflower areas, or where development will affect the ecological integrity of the site, including protected species habitats;

Policy CE3 continues on next page

2. Where appropriate, new development is required to meet the following criteria:
- (i) New development is expected to be supported by an initial ecological appraisal and CAVAT assessment and, if required, by further ecology surveys, having regard to the site context or type of development;
  - (ii) The design of the scheme should be informed by current ecological concerns, including the objectives of the emerging East Sussex (including Brighton and Hove) Local Nature Recovery Strategy and information in the Crowhurst Biodiversity Audit, and take opportunities to create enhancements on the site such as, but not limited to, new hedgerow and tree planting, native wildflower planting and habitat creation;
  - (iii) Existing wildlife corridors must be retained, buffered, restored and strengthened, and new wildlife corridors created as part of the new development. Opportunities to connect with wildlife corridors on adjacent land must be explored and boundaries permeable to wildlife must be used;
  - (iv) New development must take opportunities to incorporate new habitat within buildings and across the site. This could include those integral within the structure of the building such

- as bat and bird boxes or bricks, wildlife friendly fencing and hedgehog refugia, wildflower patches, new native planting such as tree and hedgerow planting;
- (v) Any lighting should conform to the principles of the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP), Bat Conservation Trust guidance and the Dark Skies Policy CE6;
- (vi) Any new drainage should be wildlife friendly and opportunities should be grasped to combine SuDS and wildlife opportunities;
- (vii) Any new planting is required to incorporate native, climate resilient planting, from local or UK sources only (to limit disease transfer), and those which are defined as good pollinators for native species and must include a long-term maintenance/management plan;

Where appropriate, applicants for planning permission are encouraged to complete the CNDP Environment Planning Application checklist in Appendix 3. This will help ensure all Environmental Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, the NPPF and the Core Strategy are considered prior to proposed developments.

## 4.2.6 Policy CE4- Natural Features

### Policy Justification

4.2.6.1 The NPPF places significant protection on irreplaceable habitat such as Ancient Woodland, ancient or veteran trees and also that valued landscapes and biodiversity is preserved and enhanced. This is also supported by Policies EN1 Landscape Stewardship and EN5 Biodiversity and Greenspace of the Core Strategy which provide the strategic basis for this policy. Crowhurst has a wealth of such features, including vast areas of Ancient Woodland, veteran trees and other undesignated features such as broadleaf woodland, field and boundary hedgerows and wetland habitats including streams and ponds. The Environment Description Paper and Biodiversity Audit (Appendix 4) sets these out in more detail. The Policy seeks to protect these irreplaceable features defined by the NPPF and also ensure any development will fully comply with the relevant guidance of the Nature Conservation Bodies and that set out in the High Weald Management Plan. This includes the need to comply with the Standing Advice of Natural England and other relevant organisations in relation to the conservation of these ecological and landscape features.

4.2.6.2 Having regard to the latter, the policy seeks to extend this protection to other undesignated habitat and landscape

features in order that their wider and cumulative value for landscape character and biodiversity is taken into account as part of development. It is recognised, that sometimes loss is unavoidable on some development, but the policy requires that the design of development seeks to minimise such impacts through design where possible and, where this is not the case, then suitable compensation be provided within the site. It is also vital that the development provides evidence that the important features can be protected during the development and over the lifetime of the development. For example, tree protective fencing and that there is suitable separation space between trees, hedgerows and buildings to avoid later pressures for removal. The Parish is keen and will be vigilant in ensuring RDC and ESCC abide by all Wildlife Acts, regulations, laws and guidance as well as their own environmental policies.

### **Policy CE4 – Natural Features**

New development will only be supported where it does not adversely affect or result in the loss of natural features which are important from a landscape or ecological perspective. This can include, but not be limited to, Veteran and Ancient Trees, Ancient Woodland, significant trees, hedgerows, watercourses and ponds. New development will be expected to:

1. Retain important features as part of the development scheme and these features to inform the design and layout of the development;
2. Demonstrate that the features can be protected and enhanced over the construction and lifetime stages of the development;

Where the benefits or need for the development are considered to justify the removal of important local features, development will only be supported where appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures are put in place to address their removal. This will not normally be appropriate for nationally protected features and Ancient Woodland.



## 4.2.7 Policy CE5 – Blue Infrastructure

### Policy Justification

4.2.7.1 Crowhurst has two main watercourses that run through the heart of the village – the Powdermill Stream and Rackwell Stream which converge at a point east of Chapel Hill. As a consequence, areas along the route of these watercourses are designated as Flood Zone 3, which is the floodplain to these rivers. Other areas within the village also suffer from risk of Surface Water Flooding including areas west of Station Road, via the route of Brokes Gill, which runs southwards to the Powdermill Stream. There are also a number of secondary springs, ghylls and ponds within the village and the wider Parish. The village has suffered a number of flood events as set out in the supplementary paper in respect of Watercourses and Flooding (Appendix 4) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which noted that flooding occurred in the Combe Haven in 2001. There is also further information on watercourses within the Parish in the Biodiversity Audit. (Appendix 4)

4.2.7.2 Thus, having regard to the risks and impacts of flooding on the village, the policy will seek to direct any new development away from areas at higher risk of flooding - particularly developments with more vulnerable uses. Thus, development will be resisted in these areas unless the

development is able to pass the sequential and exemption tests in accordance with the technical guidance of the NPPF, where it is required, and accords with the requirements of Policy EN7 of the Rother Core Strategy. Furthermore, having regard to the catchment of the Combe Haven, the risks of development causing flooding downstream within the village are real and thus it is essential that development is assessed to ensure the risk is not increased elsewhere. The main solution to this will be the requirement for new development to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) within the scheme which would be proportionate to the scale of the development. For instance, even a smaller extension to a dwelling could incorporate measures such as downpipes leading to rain gardens, water butts and other measures detailed in the East Sussex County Council publication *'Guide to Sustainable Drainage Systems in East Sussex in 2015'*, the RSPB Publication *Sustainable Drainage Systems; Maximising the Potential for People and Wildlife* and South East Local Flood Authorities' *'Water. People. Places'*. These measures would seek to maintain surface water run-off rates as close to the existing run-off rate as practicable and would be required to be integrated into new development. The use of SuDS would also help to ensure that watercourses are not polluted during or after development - monitoring of water quality of potentially affected watercourses would be needed. The local

Environment Group will regularly monitor watercourses and any required Environmental reports needed for development should include water quality of nearby watercourses. Buffer zones around new development would also help ensure there is no adverse impact on water courses.

4.2.7.3 This approach would accord with the NPPF and the strategic policies of the development plan and will assist in reducing surface run-off within the village and reducing potential flood events into the future, making the area more resistant to the effects of climate change.

### **Policy CE5 – Blue Infrastructure**

The existing network of streams, ponds, springs and rivers and their flood plains shall be maintained and protected and there will be a presumption against development within areas at risk of flooding (fluvial, pluvial or groundwater) in order that development is directed to areas of low risk. Any new development will be required to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere within the village and watercourses are protected from adverse impacts by the use of buffer zones. New development must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which shall be subject to long term management and necessary maintenance. Development shall meet the following criteria:

1. No development will be permitted within identified flood zone areas 2 and 3, see CNDP Map 4, unless it can meet the relevant requirements of the other relevant policies of the development plan and the Planning Practice Guidance (or any subsequent guidance thereafter). Where appropriate, development that is allowed within, or immediately adjacent to, flood zones 2 and 3 will be required to monitor water quality of nearby watercourses during development to ensure no pollution is caused;

Policy CE5 continues on next page...

2. Any new development will be expected to incorporate the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as defined by the Guide to Sustainable Drainage Systems in East Sussex 2015 (or subsequent) that are appropriate to the site and its ground conditions, unless it can be demonstrated this is not practicable;
3. The design of the SuDS shall include measures to prevent pollution and shall have an emphasis on landscape in order that it can be integrated within the development and shall grasp opportunities to maximise any biodiversity;
4. New development, including residential extensions and alterations, should minimise its impact on water resources. As such, rainwater and/or grey-water storage and recycling measures, green roofs and walls, and other water efficiency measures are encouraged.

Encouragement will be given to development which secures an improvement in flood risk and biodiversity terms which will reduce pressures on the catchment both upstream and downstream.

## 4.2.8 Policy CE6 - Dark Skies

### Policy Justification

4.2.8.1 Crowhurst is a very rural and wooded community and residents enjoy relatively dark skies, providing them an environment for healthy living. There is an ongoing project to map the light levels in the Parish. The map of data so far can be seen at Figure 4.1. However, the parish is being impacted by light pollution from the Combe Valley Way (from the south), Queensway (west), St Leonards (south) and Crowhurst Park (north east). It is doubtful if any policy for light suppression can be actioned outside the parish, but light suppression of major lights in the parish could be accomplished.

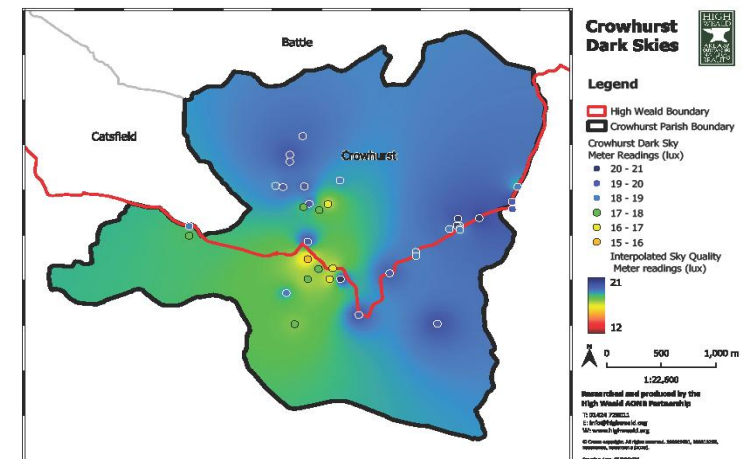


Fig 4.1 Light meter readings around Crowhurst 2022/23

4.2.8.2 One of the most noxious aspects of light pollution is external lights, particularly on roadsides and gardens. All lights must face down. LED lights must be used, particularly ones with the blue element missing, as this is injurious to insects. Light pollution also affects UK protected mammals such as bats, badgers, hedgehogs, and diminishes biodiversity overall in the parish. Light pollution can also affect the health and wellbeing of residents causing sleep disturbances and other health issues. It can also affect heritage assets by negatively altering the perception of important architectural details.

4.2.8.3 Residents can assist with light reduction affecting the environment by:

- i) not having external lights in the garden (except for safety reasons),
- ii) turning lights off when not in use,
- iii) pulling curtains after dark,
- iv) using LED lights.

There is currently no street lighting in the parish, but where safety is an issue, such as the train station or the church there could be negotiation for reducing lights and timings. Both Rother District Council and the High Weald NL (also known as the AONB) Unit have emerging

Dark Skies policies, so developers and private individuals need also to follow their recommendations. The High Weald AONB/NL Management Plan (2024-2029 plan or subsequent versions) also needs to be consulted to note their wishes for the area.

4.2.8.4 The Parish is looking into (with other local parishes) applying for International Dark Skies Certification.





### **Policy CE6 - Dark Skies**

The impact of light pollution is particularly harmful in the open countryside where rural character is eroded. Light pollution can also compromise the architectural and historical character of listed buildings or their settings. Artificial lighting has an impact on biodiversity especially for nocturnal animals and invertebrates can be seriously affected by artificial light even at very low levels, adversely affecting their ability to feed and reproduce.

New developments should not detract from the unlit environment of the Parish. There is no street lighting in the Parish and this should continue in the future.

In order to preserve dark skies over the parish, external lighting in new development should only be used when:

1. The lighting is shown to be necessary for operational, safety or security reasons;
2. Any light spillage beyond the application site is eliminated, or reduced by measures such as timing and proximity controls, orientation, screening, shielding or glazing;

3. There is no adverse impact on nearby residential properties, wildlife, local heritage assets or the wider landscape;
4. It adheres to the guidance on lighting provided by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light and Guidance Note GN08: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (and any subsequent revisions).

They should consider carefully, and provide details of, the light source and intensity being used, the luminaire design, height, and angle, adding baffles and cut-off shields where required, and details of control mechanisms to dim or switch off lighting schemes when not required. Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors so that they only come on when needed.

## 4.3 The Village Environment

### 4.3.1 Social Objectives

1. Promote and reinforce the existing strength of community within the Parish and maximise opportunities for social inclusion by all sectors of the community to promote physical and mental health and well-being.
2. To support and enhance community facilities that will meet current and future demands e.g. Village Hall, Recreation Ground, Village Pub, Youth Club hut, Parish Room and support opportunities for new facilities e.g. shop, where needed.
3. Ensure development is inclusive in terms of accessibility and adaptability having regard to space standards, lifetime homes and other quality standards.
4. Deliver the homes that meet the needs of the community including, but not limited to: first time buyers, people needing/wanting larger or smaller dwellings, the elderly and those who cannot currently access the housing market.
5. Maintain and enhance areas of open space and where possible encourage new open space, sports and play space facilities and ensure access to the countryside is maintained for all, encouraging physical activity and active travel to support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and abilities.
6. Improve access to local facilities, where possible, including maximising opportunities for active travel, utilising public transport and other local services.
7. Support use of existing facilities for community events including potential for dual use of facilities to maximise opportunities for social and community interaction.
8. To support social, health and educational opportunities, facilities and activities for all residents, but particularly children and young people.

## 4.3.2 Community Facilities, Local Green Space, Rights of Way and Recreation

### Policy justification

4.3.2.1 Although in its Rural Settlements Paper, Rother DC did not consider Crowhurst to have sufficient services to be designated as a Local Service Village, the village does contain a range of facilities which are of value to the community and should be protected to enable active and healthy lifestyles. These include a village hall, youth club hut, churches, public house, tennis court and BMX facility and recreational ground with pavilion. These facilities are protected by the NPPF and policies CO1 and CO3 of the Rother Core Strategy but it is considered necessary, on a local level, to protect the important facilities within the village. During the village surveys, the local residents considered the village hall to be the most important facility, together with the pub and recreational ground. Alongside the CNDP process, the Pub has already been designated as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and the Parish Council may also look to extend ACV designation to these other facilities to protect these from market forces should the need arise.

4.3.2.2 The Core Strategy Policy CO1 sets out a presumption for the protection and support of these facilities and Policy CF1

seeks to set a local context to this policy delivery and highlight the community priorities of Crowhurst and how these may be delivered through the Plan.

4.3.2.3 The village surveys did not suggest a demand for a new single community facility and instead there appears to be a local desire to retain and improve the existing facilities around the village. With recent energy issues and to help with climate change mitigation, improving the sustainability and energy efficiency of these buildings is important. There is also need for supporting infrastructure to these assets including parking, as there are parking problems at peak use time. Therefore, the Parish will investigate opportunities in the central part of the village to provide additional parking to serve the church, school and village hall in order to support their future viability. Therefore, development of existing facilities, and indeed new development, where this meets an identified need will be encouraged along with the multi-use of existing facilities. In short, the Parish will support the future vitality of their community facilities, including utilising CIL receipts from new development, to secure suitable upgrades to these assets, which will help increase the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents.

4.3.2.4 In order to support these facilities over the long term, policy CF1 will seek to encourage development which will secure the viability of an existing asset where this does not interfere with or compete with its principal use. Furthermore, it is understood some of the existing facilities are used for a variety of uses and therefore this extended use is important to the vitality and viability of these assets and this will be encouraged by the policy. The provision of new community facilities, including allotments, will be encouraged and supported, including outside the village boundary where a need can be demonstrated and landscape and other considerations are met.

4.3.2.5 The village has a wealth of rural off-road footpaths which provide access from the detached parts of the village as well as to open countryside. Such routes should be protected and where diversion is required or a new route is required, this should be of high environmental quality. Due to the dispersed nature of the village and lack of roadside pavements, walking access to amenities is difficult. There is a local desire to improve part of the 1066 Country Walk Bexhill Link to the southern part of the village to create a safe walking and wheeling route that is accessible all year round. The aim would be to create a safer alternative to Chapel Hill for pedestrians travelling between the recreation ground area and the school or station. The existing or

alternative footpath across the field could possibly be raised slightly and/or hardened to enable all weather use (including during flood or near flood conditions), and made accessible for all walking and wheeling users. An important consideration would be to ensure that the appearance of the pathway blends in well. There may also be a need to introduce a fence if there is livestock around. Options could be the use of CIL to create an all-weather surface or whether new development could facilitate opportunities to deliver improvements.

4.3.2.6 In terms of recreational open space, there is an under provision of play space for residents in the central/northern part of the village. The District Open Space Paper concedes there is an under provision and the village currently fails the access standards. Therefore, policy CF2 will seek to protect the existing recreational spaces and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and encourage new provision of recreational space, particularly in the central/northern parts of the village. This would accord with the NPPF which seeks to protect and enhance Public Rights of Way and recognises the importance of opportunities for sport to creating healthy communities. The policy also recognises the importance of improving access to nature and open spaces/countryside to support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of communities.



4.3.2.7 Local Green Space designation is referenced in the NPPF as:

- The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

4.3.2.8 While the Parish contains many areas of land that are important to the rural character of the village (and the High Weald setting), they do not necessarily conform fully to the NPPF designation of Local Green Space. However, 5 areas:

- Fore Wood
- St Georges Churchyard
- Crowhurst Recreation Ground
- Crowhurst Nature Reserve (Quarry Wood)
- Muriel's Meadow

are considered important enough to warrant Local Green Space designation in Policy CF3 and these can be seen on CNDP Map 3. The Local Green Space Description document, describing these areas is referenced in Appendix 4. Access to Local Green Space for residents of all ages and abilities is recognised as being important to supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing.

### **Policy CF1- Community and Recreational Facilities**

The existing community facilities as shown on CNDP Map 5 will be protected and new opportunities for community and recreational facilities will be supported. Community buildings are the Church and Parish Room, Plough Inn Public House, Crowhurst C of E Primary School, the Village Hall, Methodist Chapel, Crowhurst Station and the Youth Club Hut and Pavilion on the Recreation Ground. Recreational facilities are the Play Area and Tennis Court, also on the Recreation Ground, and the BMX Bowl. This policy will apply to any future community facility provided, and supports the existing and future prosperity of community life through application of the following criteria:

1. To support and enhance, where possible, the existing distributed set of community buildings and spaces to continue to facilitate as wide a range of village activities as possible. Priorities to include:
  - a) Facilitating wider use of the Youth Club Hut;
  - b) Supporting improvements or renewal of the Village Hall and related amenities on its current site if parking issues can be overcome;
  - c) Keeping under regular review all renewal and/or replacement options for the Village Hall, Youth Club Hut, Pavilion and recreation ground storage facilities.

2. Support new development that supports the long-term viability of an existing community facility where this does not undermine its principal use. Dual use of facilities will also be encouraged where appropriate;
3. Support new community facilities within the village development boundary and exceptionally outside the development boundary where there is an identified need, local support can be demonstrated and landscape and other policy requirements are met;
4. Support the establishment of a village green, including pond, to enhance the Heritage Centre community hub (Village Hall/School/Church area).
5. Support the provision of community growing space/allotment if a suitable proposal comes forward and a long-term management plan is established.

The council will support the continued investment in the community assets of the village which will include the use of CIL receipts to upgrade and maintain these where appropriate to meet the identified needs of the community.

## **Policy CF2 – Rights of Way and Recreation**

The existing footpaths and recreational open space will be protected and new opportunities for walking and wheeling routes and recreational space will be supported. The policy will support the existing and future health and social well-being of community life through application of the following criteria:

1. Protect and maintain existing walking routes within the village including the 1066 Country Walk Bexhill Link and create new routes where appropriate, ensuring coherency of the footpath network is maintained. Where possible create enhancements to the footpath network to promote safe walking and wheeling access between all parts of the village which will retain a good quality environment for walkers. As part of this, to specifically look at:
  - a) Supporting improvements to the footpath between Forewood Lane and Sampsons Lane (Crowhurst 17a and 18 or new/moved), as shown on CNDP Map 6, to an all-weather pedestrian (walking and wheeling) use as a practical alternative to Chapel Hill.

2. Review footpaths in the Parish, but particularly near developments or sensitive ecological or heritage areas, as shown on CNDP Map 6. Where a route diversion or alternative footpath route is required, development should ensure the revised/alternative route is provided to a high environmental standard;
3. Protect sports and play space and facilities and encourage more where appropriate. These spaces should be accessible and cater for all ages and abilities to support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents.

### **Policy CF3 – Local Green Space**

1. The following areas are designated as Local Green Space to support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the community and are shown on CNDP Map 3 and the Proposals Map:

Fore Wood

St Georges Churchyard

Crowhurst Recreation Ground

Crowhurst Nature Reserve

Muriel's Meadow

Development on Local Green Spaces will only be permitted in very special circumstances that will include development that enhances the use and attributes of the space for the reasons it was designated.



### 4.3.3 Design

#### Policy justification

4.3.3.1 Section 12 of the NPPF stated that design is key to the concept of Sustainable Development and should contribute to making places better for people and promoting health and wellbeing. Design should ensure new development creates healthy and sustainable placemaking to create opportunities for health equity and prosperity as well as healthy and sustainable places. Whilst the Core Strategy Policy EN3: Design Quality sets out the requirement for high quality design within the District, it is considered necessary to include a general design policy which will apply to both the allocations and general windfall development that comes forward during the plan period. This seeks development to have regard to the general character of the village as set out in the evidence base to the CNDP and incorporate the recommendations of that report in managing change within the village. Furthermore, it is equally important to ensure development places great importance on protecting the current levels of amenity for existing properties and treat this as an important factor when designing new development. A good standard of amenity for future occupiers should be secured, having regard to adjoining land uses and the intended use of the development.

4.3.3.2 New development must seek to mitigate against and adapt to climate change by complying with Policy CC3 - Renewables and Policy CE6 - Dark Skies. Reference should also be made to the RDC Climate Strategy. It should be flexible and adaptable for a range of occupiers. New development (including subdividing of dwellings) should meet the minimum national space standards and Building for a Healthy Life standards (or subsequent) and must provide adaptable floor-space by meeting M4(2) of the Building Regulations, as set out in the DaSA and emerging RDC Local Plan Policy HOU8. This approach to housing standards is key due to the ageing population with 28.5% of the population being over 65 (an increase from 2011) and 32% between 45-64yrs (Census, 2021) and thus it is imperative that the new housing is adaptable for future needs and to ensure any new homes are suitable for a diverse range of people. Reference should also be made to 'Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)' principles and the Royal Town Planning Institute 'Dementia & Town Planning' RTPI 2020 (or subsequent) information. In terms of viability, the evidence base for the DaSA suggests the additional cost of building to M4(2) is £521 (three-bedroom home) and thus having regard to the market values in the area, it is considered this is an appropriate approach to future proofing the housing stock for the Parish.



4.3.3.3 Section 8 of the NPPF also seeks to encourage access to outside space and therefore it is an important part of design that outside space provides opportunity for amenity purposes and that development provides opportunity for recreation, including private gardens, community growing spaces or allotments. These spaces are also invaluable from both a landscape and design perspective and a physical and mental health and wellbeing perspective and thus should be viewed as an integral part of the design approach.

4.3.3.4 The policy will also require design of development to secure good standards of amenity and to protect existing and future occupiers from pollution and amenity impacts. Development should comply with County Council guidance on pollution such as, but not limited to, “Planning Noise Advice Document: Sussex 2021” and “Air Quality and emissions mitigation guidance for Sussex” (2021) or subsequent documents. This will also accord with Rother strategic policies. In order to minimise the effects of future climate change and flooding it also seeks to avoid hard surfacing and promote the use of renewable energy to ensure energy production can be achieved at source in a sustainable manner.

4.3.3.5 In view of the importance of incorporating high quality design in development, it has been deemed necessary to

draw up a Design Guide, detailing more precisely how the principles of good design should be achieved. This will provide developers with more certainty and they are required to adhere to the criteria set out in the Guide. These criteria have been developed from a precise identification of the special qualities and characteristics of the Village, including its distinctive HWNL landscape, settlement pattern and rich biodiversity. The Guide emphasises the requirement that design development should flow organically from this analysis. Buildings and their environment should be interesting and attractive as this improves the physical and mental health and well-being of residents. Standard, off-the-shelf design models will not meet this need. Equally, slavish copying of existing historical designs will be inappropriate. Instead, the existing built environment should be referenced in terms of layout, scale, density and use of local materials, and then interpreted into high quality contemporary design solutions. The overall aim is for development to enhance the architectural quality of our Village. The Design Guide sets out how this should be achieved.

## Policy CB1 Design

Development should be of high-quality design and have regard to its site and village context to reinforce and create a sense of place, to enhance the quality and safety of the village environment and to ensure design plays an important role in the sustainable growth of the village; one that supports the creation of healthy, multi-generational neighbourhoods and improves the physical and mental health and well-being of residents. All development (including subdivision of dwellings) will be expected to comply with the following criteria:

1. Any new development should respect its locality as set out in the Crowhurst Design Guide (Appendix 2). Design Guide criteria must be used to ensure the requirements in the following areas are followed:
  - Appreciation of context
  - Conservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitats
  - Sustainability
  - Siting of developments within the landscape
  - Physical and Social Cohesion
  - Layout, character, scale and density
  - Architectural detail
  - Use of Local Building materials;
  - Applying these design criteria to the Crowhurst NP allocated sites

- 2 Any new housing development should be served by appropriate amenity space and connect well, using for example, Active Travel England's design tools and best practice as appropriate, with the existing Village community, including through access to local footpaths so that active travel is encouraged;
- 3 New developments should be supported by a landscape scheme that is proportionate to the scale of the development having regard to the requirements of Policy CE2 - The High Weald National Landscape;
- 4 There should be no loss of local biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Opportunities to promote wildlife and biodiversity enhancement must be sought and ecological gain demonstrated using the Biodiversity Net Gain metric, (bar exception sites);
- 5 Parking provision should meet the relevant East Sussex County Council standards, be well designed, landscaped and be of porous or permeable construction;

Policy CB1 Design continued on next page....

Policy CB1 Design continued

- 6 New housing shall comply with the National Space Standards and Building for a Healthy Life standards. Due to the ageing population of the Parish new housing must also meet the Accessible/Adaptable Dwelling standard M4(2) of the Building Regulations, or any future review of these standards, and M4(3) – Wheelchair accessible dwellings, in line with RDC policies;
- 7 Development should not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of massing, overlooking, loss of light or privacy or other overbearing impacts including all forms of pollution by following County Council guidance.

## 4.3.4 Heritage

### Policy justification

4.3.4.1 The Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990 sets out a legal duty to protect the special character and setting of statutory Listed Buildings and the NPPF states that the significance of a non-designated heritage asset can be taken into account in decision making. The Scheduled Ancient Monument Act 1979 also provides statutory protection for Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) and their setting. The NPPF also makes clear below ground heritage such as Archaeology can be of equal importance in decision making. The Core Strategy policy EN2: Stewardship of the Historic Built Environment also reinforces the protection, preservation and enhancement of the District's heritage.

4.3.4.2 For a small village, the Parish of Crowhurst contains a wealth of heritage, with a scheduled ancient monument, 25 Statutory Listed Buildings, 29 buildings, and many more locations, which are listed in the HER records as non-designated heritage assets. There are currently 3 Archaeological Notification Areas (ANA) within the village area itself.

4.3.4.3 The Heritage and Character Assessment (AECOM, 2017) also identified 11 more possible non designated heritage assets

within the village core but there are likely to be more throughout the village. Further detail on these non-designated heritage assets can be found in the Crowhurst Non-designated Heritage Assets referenced in Appendix 4. These buildings are more vulnerable to change due to the lack of any conservation area and lack of wider protection. These designations as a non-designated heritage would be a material consideration in any planning application but would have a different policy and legislative test to designated heritage assets. This is reflected in the policy below.

4.3.4.4 The development of the village itself also presents historic associations with the village retaining its historic dispersed pattern in which agriculture remains the prominent land use. The built form throughout the Parish dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with many of the earlier buildings being farmhouses. The Parish Church and the ruins of the Old Manor House, which date from 1250, are thought to contain remains of an earlier building. In the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, development was focussed around the historic core of the village and dispersed across the landscape with a further concentration of housing in the southern element. Other than the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development along Station Road, which grew up following the construction of the station in 1902, this settlement pattern remains today, with the main

centres developed around these two areas with agricultural and rural character remaining dominant within the village and its fringes. As well as having landscape value, this dispersed settlement pattern is also important from a historic perspective as one can still read the original village pattern, a rarity in modern South East England.

4.3.4.5 The CNDP seeks to preserve and protect this heritage and, where possible, enhance this character in order to benefit the village and the local community. This includes protecting these assets and their setting from inappropriate development but also promoting the understanding of such assets so that their value has wider social benefits in promoting local distinctiveness and a sense of place. Whilst the policy has a protective stance, including the non-designated assets, the policy also seeks to be positive in encouraging suitable new uses for redundant buildings and using heritage to support other industries that generate local employment or tourism.



### **Policy CB2 Heritage**

New development will be expected to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and should seek to promote and sustain the heritage value of the Parish and its historic qualities. Any development will be expected to have regard to the following criteria:

1. Development shall seek to conserve and where possible enhance the significance and special character of any listed building and scheduled monument;
2. Any development that results in adverse impacts upon the significance of an identified designated heritage asset will only be supported if the public benefits of the development outweigh the degree of harm, in line with the NPPF;
3. Any planning application within an Archaeological Notification Area will be expected to be supported by an assessment relating to archaeology and any scheme shall be informed by its findings;
4. Development is expected to ensure that new development affecting a non-designated heritage asset incorporates appropriate measures to conserve, and where possible enhance, the significance of the asset and its setting;

5. Development will be expected to preserve the wider historic settlement pattern of the village;
6. Development of any heritage asset should follow Historic England best practice guidance, particularly with regard to energy efficiency improvements.

Encouragement will be given to development which will secure a long-term viable future for redundant or under-used heritage assets providing the use is appropriate to the conservation of the special qualities of the building.

## 4.3.5 Housing

### Policy Justification

4.3.5.1 In its Rural Settlements paper, Rother DC defined the village as an 'other village or hamlet' and did not consider the village to possess the facilities to be a Local Service Village. The District originally sought to investigate the potential for up to 15 dwellings but Core Strategy Policy RA1 effectively set an allocation of a minimum of 20 dwellings within Crowhurst. Rother DC highlighted the need for affordable homes within the village, potential green and amber SHLAA sites and the general facilities, including a railway station, which together justified a small level of growth within the village. As part of the SHLAA exercise, RDC identified an amber and green site – site CH3 and one in a similar location to CH1 but highlighted matters such as flood risk, access and landscape matters that required further investigation.

4.3.5.2 Since 2019 11 dwellings have received planning permission with a further 14 or so self-contained annexes or holiday lets. Within the Rural Settlement Paper, Rother identified 18 households in housing need (2008). Recent data shows 6 applicants on the housing register recorded as living in Crowhurst and 8 applicants having a local connection to Crowhurst. In the village housing needs survey carried out as part of the CNDP preparation, it showed that there is a

potential requirement for 24 homes within the village. This evidence shows the level of housing provision to be delivered by this plan is consistent with the identified need and the relevant constraints facing the village.

4.3.5.3 The CNDP project team assessed a number of sites put forward by residents and landowners during the Call for Sites in 2016. Full details of this process can be seen in the Site Assessment Policies Paper (Appendix 4), having regard to set criteria and other matters such as availability and deliverability. This assessment had regard to the original SHLAA process although further investigations into the original green SHLAA site indicated it was unlikely to be viable for residential development. The criteria which were chosen to identify potential suitable sites encompassed the following factors:

- a. SEA framework which had been created following the scoping/screening opinion provided by Rother;
- b. The strategic policies of the Core Strategy, the parent policy document to the Neighbourhood Plan;
- c. Evidence from the resident surveys;
- d. National Planning Policy Guidelines and National Planning Policy Framework.

These factors encompassed the need to protect the NL character, sustainability of new housing developments and

the aims of the residents. The criteria used to assess the sites for the CNDP2019 were:

	<b><u>Criteria</u></b>	<b><u>Compatibility with SEA Framework</u></b>
1 (D)	Potential to provide affordable housing and a mix of house types	Access and Housing
2 (E)	Adjacent to and within 1000m of the facilities of one part of the village such as the school, village hall, recreation ground and pub via a safe walkable route	Transport Access and Housing Air Quality/emissions
3 (D)	Within 1000m of the railway station	Access/Housing Air Quality/emissions
4 (E)	Development can secure a safe access to the site	Accessibility
5 (E)	Development should have low visual impact from viewpoints within the village	Landscape Heritage
6 (E)	Development should be low key in respect of wider landscape and respect local landscape and settlement	Landscape Heritage

	character including whether the site was located in the NL	
7 (E)	Can retain significant natural features such as trees and hedgerows and no significant loss is caused	Landscape Heritage Biodiversity Flood risk Air quality
8 (E)	Will have a low impact on Biodiversity and has potential to provide an enhancement to wildlife	Biodiversity
9 (E)	Will not impinge upon a flood zone or local water resources and that the site can manage its water resources without impact on other properties	Flood Risk Water consumption
10 (E)	Development will maintain the character and setting of the historic environment of the village or any heritage assets	Landscape Heritage

4.3.5.4 The CNDP2019 site assessment process narrowed the potential sites down to five locations within the village which were subject to further assessment relating to access, deliverability and landscape impacts. Only one site outside the NL boundary met sufficient criteria to proceed to the second stage. Of the five sites, two sites did not proceed on the basis of access, availability and suitability issues. Two sites, outside the current development boundary, have been taken forward for allocation within the plan. A further site, within the existing development boundary, is also allocated for new development to supplement the new greenfield allocations. These can be seen on CNDP Map 7.

4.3.5.5 Part of the village lies outside the HWNL. The CNDP sought to identify whether the housing need could be delivered in this area. However, through the two stages of the Site Assessment process, it became evident that there were no available or suitable sites identified in the non-HWNL part of the village. In order to meet the housing allocation requirement, development sites within the HWNL were deemed necessary. Also due to the desire to deliver affordable housing within the village, as evidenced by village consultations, and having regard to the NPPG thresholds that state onsite provision of affordable housing can only be provided on sites of 10+ dwellings, and with the availability

of only two suitable sites, development of 10+ dwellings in the HWNL was considered necessary.

4.3.5.6 The implications of Paragraph 183 of the NPPF are therefore relevant. Taking point 1, the housing surveys and the Core Strategy housing target demonstrate there is a need for the housing and the site assessment process demonstrated that the scope of developing outside of the HWNL was not possible. However, as per Policies CE1 to CE6, the CNDP places great weight on the conservation of the HWNL character and the environment and the delivery of housing on sites CH1 and CH2 will avoid any detrimental impact on the landscape, subject to a site-specific landscape strategy that will be secured as part of the individual policies.

4.3.5.7 In terms of housing mix and tenure, each site will seek to secure a varied mix of market and affordable housing with an emphasis on the delivery of smaller housing units. The village is dominated by larger housing types - nearly 38% are 4+ bedrooms, compared to the Rother average of 23%. Only 25% of the housing stock in Crowhurst is 1 and 2 bedroom (a reduction since 2011) whereas 63% of households are 1 or 2 person (an increase since 2011). There is an identified need for smaller units to better balance the housing stock. Many of the households on the waiting list will require 1 or

2 bedroom units, and 20 potential new households (who will need to move over the next five years) also require smaller 1 or 2 bedroom units in the coming years.

4.3.5.8 The RDC Strategic Housing Market Assessment recognised the lack of smaller dwellings in rural areas and the likely future needs to be for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings. The particular lack of smaller dwellings in Crowhurst is evidenced both by the village housing survey and in census data. This lack of current stock and future needs is considered to justify a higher proportion of smaller units than required by the Core Strategy policy, within the allocation of housing sites. This will be specified at 40%, which will equate to 5 units (on a 12 dwelling site) and this should be spread proportionately across the market and affordable tenures to provide choice for all sectors of society. This approach is not precluded by the Core Strategy policy as Policy LHN1: Achieving Mixed and Balanced Communities states 'at least 30% 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings' so this is considered to be compliant with the Core Strategy.

4.3.5.9 Through this strategy, a potential 16 smaller units (policy CH3 is entirely 1 or 2 bedroom units) can be delivered which should meet the identified needs and, by providing this

across all tenures, will still enable flexibility for all types of units across the rest of the development.

4.3.5.10 Any other sites put forward would need to allow for community consultation (as were the allocated sites) and follow the policies of the CNDP and those outlined for the allocated sites.



## 4.3.6 Policy CH1 - Land at Station Road/Forewood Lane

### Policy Context

4.3.6.1 This site is part of, and adjacent to, the green site in the RDC's SHLAA exercise which has not come forward due to potential issues relating to flooding. There are currently agricultural buildings next to the site, serving Court Lodge Farm which remains operational in the village and which the Plan seeks to support now, and in the future, and thus this alternative land has been proposed. The site has been chosen due to its central location within the village and its relationship with the established part of the village. The Landscape Assessment has defined the site which can be developed without harm to the wider landscape character, subject to appropriate mitigation and layout being achieved as part of the final development. This site is close to the Railway Station, school and village hall and has footpath access to the 1066 Country Walk Bexhill Link, which can provide off-road access to the southern part of the village. Due to the proximity of the site to a working farm, the layout should ensure a compatible relationship through a landscaped buffer and suitable access.

4.3.6.2 Due to the size of the site, the development must deliver a mix of market and affordable housing on site. Due to the

flooding issues that occur nearby, the development should include the provision of SuDS to reduce surface water run-off and, if possible, integrate this with a landscaped focal point to the village, such as a community space, as shown on the indicative landscape strategy which is shown in Figure 4.3. This open space provision is considered necessary to provide a focal point to the village. Due to the smaller site area, it is not considered necessary to provide additional playspace as this will be provided at site CH2. This strategy should be used to guide development although the policy retains sufficient flexibility for the development at the application stage.

4.3.6.3 Site CH1 is adjacent to the existing village focal point and heritage centre, including the School, Church, Village Hall and Scheduled Ancient Monument, and the opportunity should be taken to develop this Community Hub, as part of or alongside the development. A key component of an expanded Hub could be a new Village Green, with a village pond, located on/near the plot of land between Station Road and Forewood Lane. In the event that biodiversity net gain cannot be achieved on site, this plot could conveniently and appropriately achieve the required biodiversity metric gain. Other components could include a village shop, footpath improvements along Station Road and measures to mitigate existing flooding risks.

### **Policy CH1- Land at Station Road and Forewood Lane**

The land at Station Road/Forewood Lane, shown as CH1 on CNDP Map 7, is allocated for 12 dwellings. New housing development will be permitted subject to the following criteria being met:

1. The development shall be planned and carried out in a comprehensive form to ensure an integrated scheme for the entire site;
2. The scheme shall deliver a proportionate mix of homes with 40% of the development to be either 1 or 2 bedroom homes which would be suitable as starter homes or for those needing smaller homes. These smaller units should be proportionately allocated across the market and affordable tenures;
3. The development shall provide 40% of the properties as affordable homes on site. Where a proposal exceeds the 40% affordable housing policy requirement this will be a factor that is considered favourably, in line with other Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan policies;

4. A safe means of access to the site will be achieved to the relevant standards to the adopted highway which maintains access to both the farm holding and the residential development;
5. The development shall provide a footpath to the south side of the access to connect to the existing footpath on Forewood Lane. The route of the ProW through the site should be reviewed, to retain its rural characteristics;
6. The design principles shall be based on the Crowhurst Design Guide and Policy CB1 and be of contemporary, quality design that conserves and enhances the local context and character, potentially referencing the adjacent farm buildings. Development shall not exceed 2 storeys. The layout and design should also be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;
7. The development shall retain the existing tree line along Station Road and include new native, climate resilient planting buffers to the north-east and southern boundaries as set out in the Central Crowhurst Landscape Strategy in the Crowhurst

Policy CH1 continued on next page

Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment

(CLCSCA). This landscaping and any open spaces should be subject to a management plan to ensure its long term maintenance;

8. The development will either create, or if not viable, set aside land for future use, a village green/community space on land adjacent to Forewood Lane. The site development plan should incorporate ready access into this adjacent green space;
9. The layout of the development will ensure appropriate amenity for future occupiers is provided and to prevent harm from the adjacent farm uses while maintaining proper farming operations;
10. Development shall comply with the other policies of the plan including Policy CE2 which relates to the HWNL landscape.

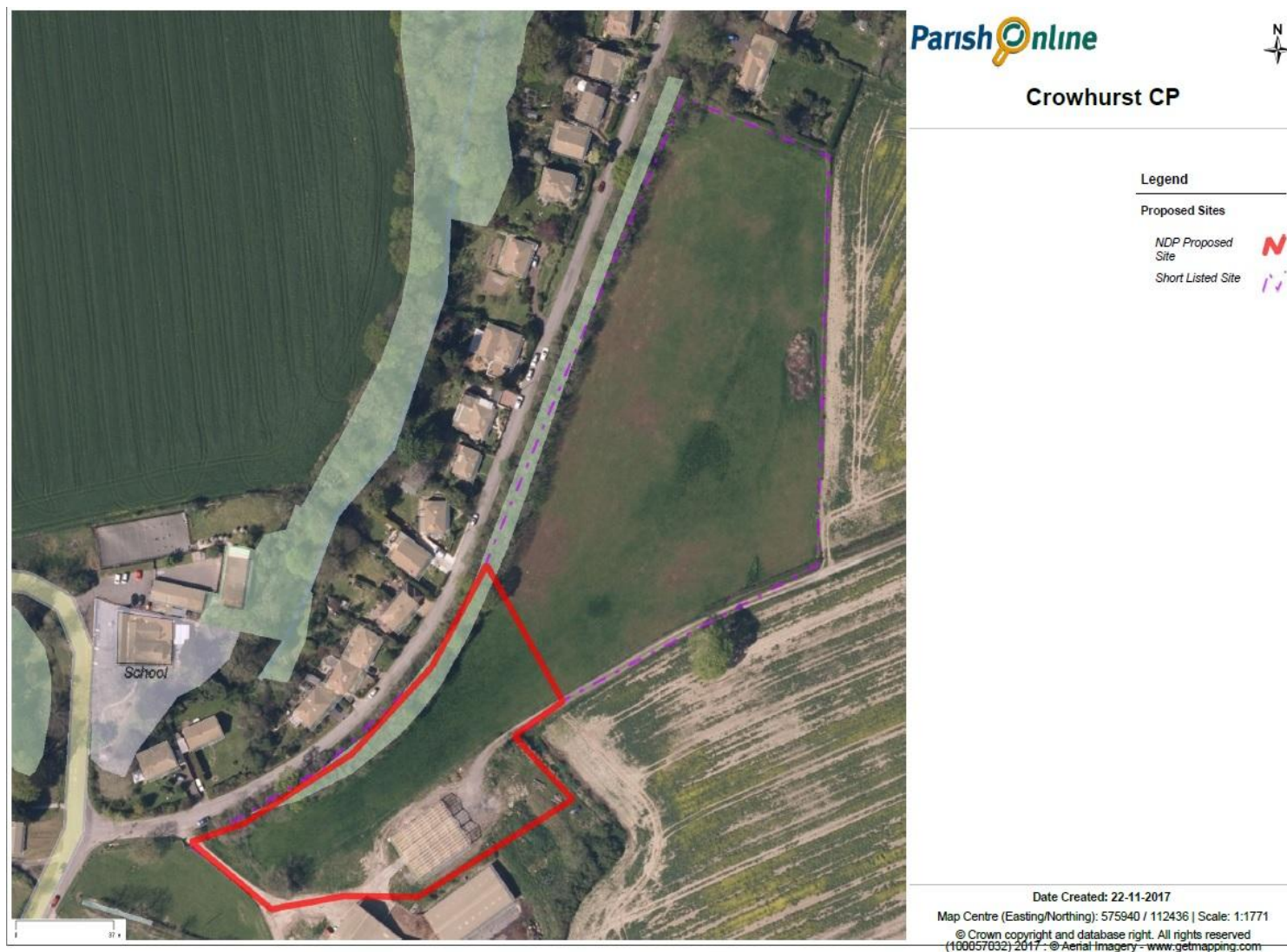


Fig. 4.2 Aerial View of Site CH1



**SITE CH1 - CENTRAL CROWHURST LANDSCAPE STRATEGY****Capacity Assessment Ranking: Low-Moderate**

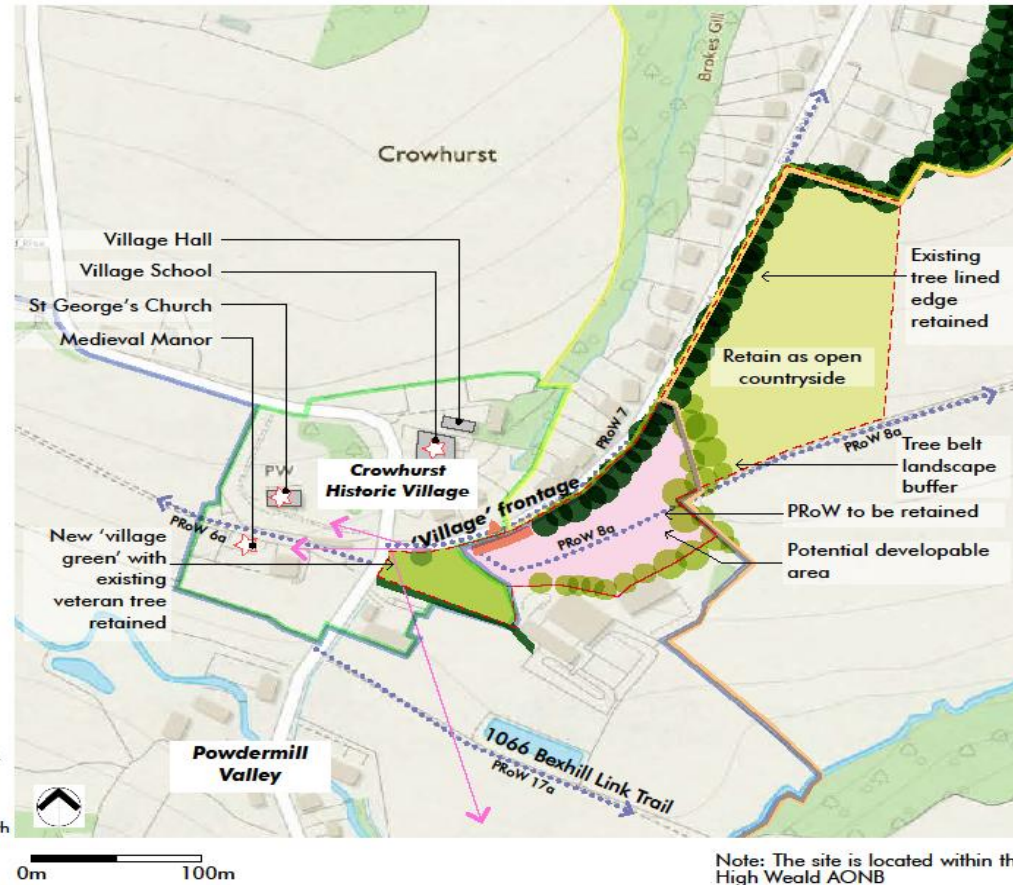
Positive key characteristics, overall character and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. There may be some limited opportunities to accommodate residential development without detrimental effects.

**Landscape Strategy**

- Potential for new village green to be established at western side.
- Northern part of the site to be retained as countryside to protect distinctive rural characteristic of the village and strong distinctive woodland edge between Station Road settlement and the adjacent fields.
- Enhancement of historic landscape setting of village by retaining greenspaces, important views, and removing derelict buildings which are a detractor in the landscape.
- New developments should be socially and physically linked with the existing community, creating a positive relationship between the new settlement edge, historic village and Powdermill Valley to the south.
- Any new development to reflect rural village characteristics through use of contemporary, quality architecture, detailing, layout and scale, avoiding suburbanisation.
- Landscape buffer along countryside boundary to provide soft edge filtering the development into the existing landscape pattern
- Existing PRoW (no. 8a) to be retained and/or diverted to the edge of any development.

**Key**

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| --- Site C                     | LCA 2a Powdermill Valley Farmland                       |
| Existing trees (Indicative)    | LCA 2b Crowhurst Historic Village                       |
| Notable buildings              | Potential developable residential area (approx. 0.74ha) |
| Listed buildings               | Open countryside  |
| PRoW                           | New Village Green with SUDs                             |
| Key Views                      | Landscape buffer provision                              |
| LCA 1c Station Road Settlement |   |
| LCA 1d Court Lodge Farmland    |   |



CROWHURST PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, SENSITIVITY & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT  
Huskinson Brown Associates

44

September 2023  
HSA-749-CH11.indd

Fig. 4.3 Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment by Huskinson Brown Associates



## 4.3.7 Policy CH2- Land south of Forewood Rise

### Policy Context

4.3.7.1 The site lies adjacent to the more modern development, Forewood Rise, and sits between the rear boundaries of the existing properties and an existing copse to the south. While development should be sympathetic to its surroundings, it is envisaged that this development will be distinct from Forewood Rise and not be considered an extension of it.

4.3.7.2 The topography of the land in relation to the wider farmland has resulted in the landscape assessment defining an area of land that could be developed without causing harm to the wider HWNL, subject to appropriate mitigation and layout considerations. Due to the size of the site and the lack of equipped playspace in the northern part of the village, an area of playspace shall be provided as part of the development. Due to the limited size of the development, it is considered the provision of a Local Area for Play (LAP) is proportionate to the size of the proposed allocation. The scheme should provide for a mix of housing types and provide affordable housing on site.

4.3.7.3 The scheme should provide substantial planting buffers to the southern and western boundaries and it is envisaged

this would involve the inclusion of semi mature trees as well as smaller specimens to create quicker establishment of these planting belts. The route of the 1066 Country Walk Bexhill Link should be an integral part of the design approach to the site and it will be necessary to secure an attractive landscaped route. In accordance with Policy CE5, the development should also incorporate SuDS as part of the development and ensure safe access is achieved to Forewood Lane.

4.3.7.4 It is considered the central location, which is on the pedestrian footpath route to the central part of the village, and close access to the railway station establishes this as a good and sustainable location for the development. The defined site area, subject to the proposed strategic landscaping, can deliver a mix of housing which will conserve the wider landscape considerations and would retain some distance from the SSSI to the north-west.

4.3.7.5 The original area of land submitted as part of the Call for Sites extended to the boundary of the SSSI, but through the site and landscape assessment work, the site allocation has been restricted to that shown on the CNDP Map 7. Thus, the area to the north west of the allocation would remain outside the development boundary and be protected under the landscape and strategy policies. On this basis the integrity of the SSSI will be maintained and protected.



- 4.3.7.6 Design should follow Policy CB1 and the Crowhurst Design Guide. The design layout should be in keeping with the HWNL, for example as a straight development, rather than a cul-de sac.

### **Policy CH2- Land south of Forewood Rise**

The land south of Forewood Rise, shown as CH2 on CNDP Map 7, is allocated for 12 dwellings. New housing development will be supported on this site subject to the following criteria being met:

1. The development shall be planned and carried out in a comprehensive form to ensure an integrated scheme for the entire site;
2. The scheme shall deliver a proportionate mix of homes with 40% of the development to be either 1 or 2 bedroom homes which would be suitable as starter homes or for those needing smaller homes. These smaller units should be proportionately allocated across the market and affordable tenures;
3. The development shall provide 40% of the properties as affordable homes on site. Where a proposal exceeds the 40% affordable housing policy requirement this will be a factor that is considered favourably, in line with other Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan policies;

4. A safe means of access to Forewood Lane is provided and development delivers any necessary safety improvements at the access location as part of the scheme;
5. The route of the 1066 Country Walk is retained and an attractive context to this route is achieved;
6. The layout and design should not exceed 2 storeys and should be informed by a landscape assessment and the Crowhurst Design Guide;
7. The existing trees to the south shall be retained and protected with new strategic landscaping which shall be provided along the entirety of the southern boundary and western boundary of the site, in accordance with the Powdermill Valley Landscape Strategy in the CLCSCA. This landscaping and any open spaces should be subject to a management plan to ensure its long-term maintenance;
8. A children's play area (LAP), suitable for all abilities and genders, shall be incorporated into the scheme as part of the development;
9. Development shall accord with other policies of the plan including Policy CE2 which relates to the HWNL.

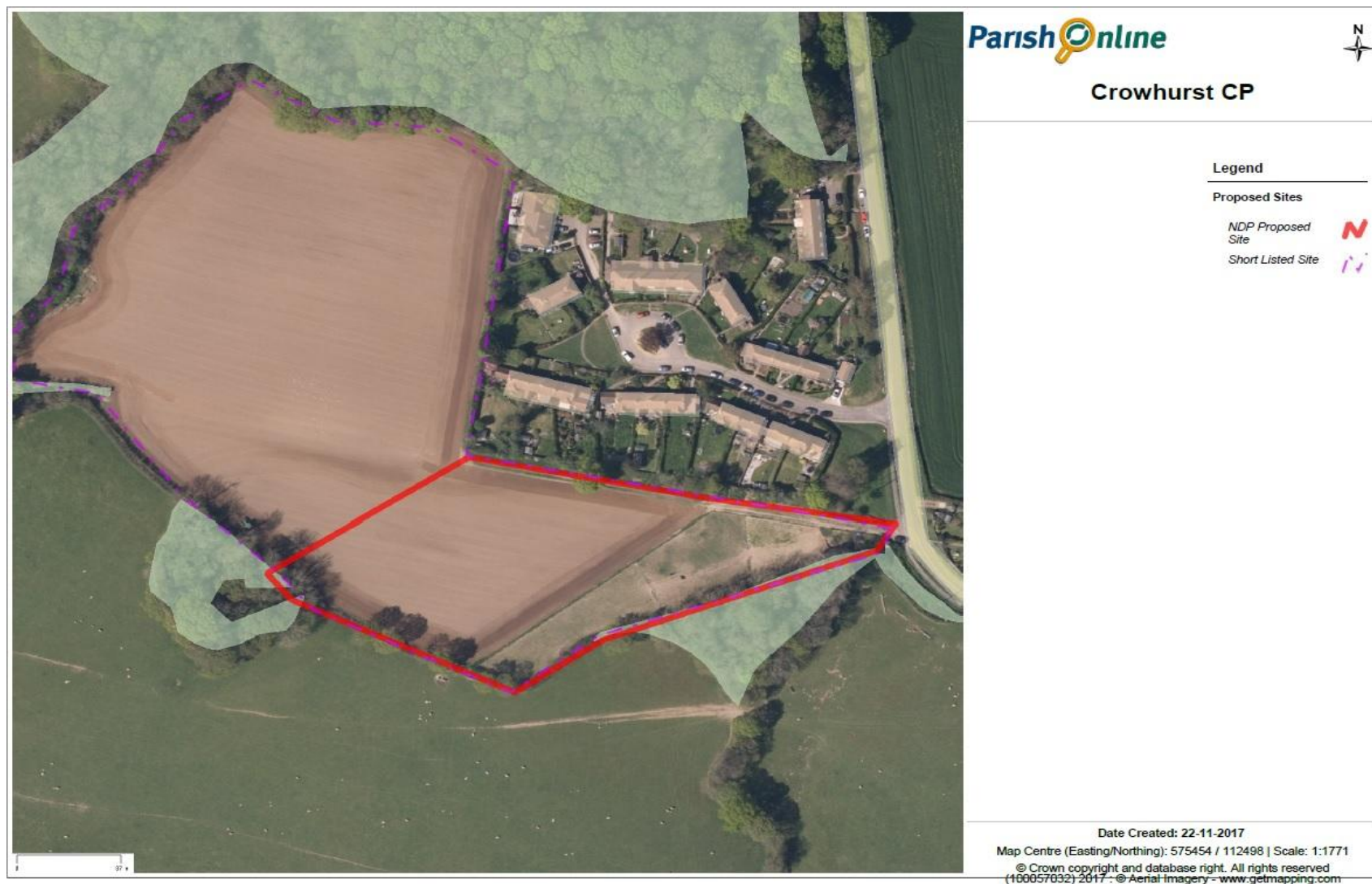


Fig. 4.4 Aerial View of Site CH2

## SITE CH2 - POWDERMILL VALLEY NORTHERN SLOPES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

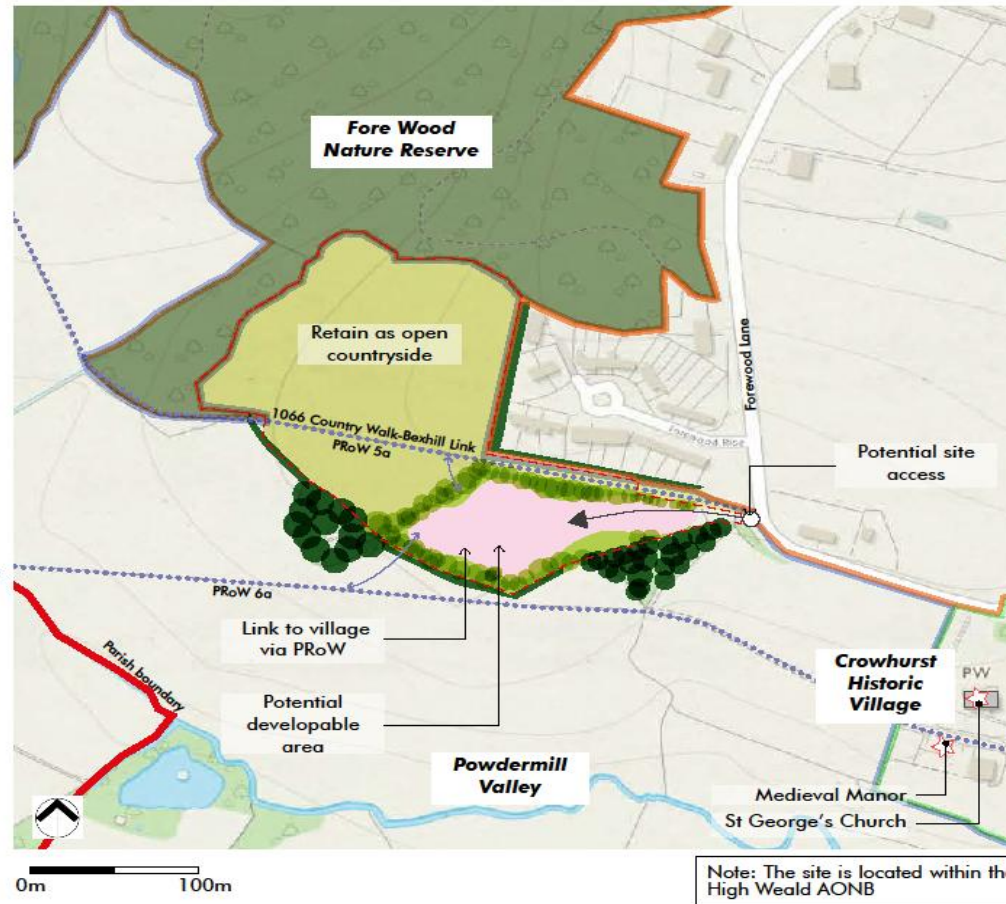
**Capacity Assessment Ranking: Low-Moderate**  
Positive key characteristics, overall character and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. There may be some limited opportunities to accommodate residential development without detrimental effects.

### Landscape Strategy

- Maintain open area of countryside across western slopes to protect rural edge to ancient woodland and maintain tranquil characteristic of the valley and village setting.
- Some capacity for small scale development to be located on the lower south facing slopes south of the existing development.
- Route of 1066 Country Walk-Bexhill Link to be protected and any development would need to be sensitively designed to respect this rural path.
- Any development to provide connections to existing PRoW to increase permeability and create a countryside route to the village.
- Landscape buffer along countryside boundary to provide strong soft edge to help filter development into the existing landscape pattern and create habitat links.
- New development to reflect rural village characteristics through use of contemporary, quality architecture, detailing, layout and scale, avoiding suburbanisation.

### Key

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| --- Site A                        | Potential developable residential area (approx. 0.67ha) |
| Existing trees (Indicative)       | Open countryside  |
| Notable buildings                 | Landscape buffer  |
| Listed buildings                  | Amenity Landscape                                       |
| Ancient woodland/SSSI/SNCI        |   |
| PRoW                              |   |
| LCA 1a Fore Wood Nature Reserve   |   |
| LCA 1b Fore Wood Lane Settlement  |   |
| LCA 2a Powdermill Valley Farmland |   |
| LCA 2b Crowhurst Historic Village |   |
| Access                            |   |
| Link to village via PRoW          |   |
| Potential developable area        |   |



CROWHURST PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, SENSITIVITY & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT  
Huskisson Brown Associates

42

September 2023  
HBA-769-CH2.indd

Fig. 4.5 Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment by Huskisson Brown Associates



### 4.3.8 Policy CH3 - Land adjacent to Station Car Park

#### Policy context

4.3.8.1 This site was previously considered an amber site on account of its accessible location but uncertainty over the access to the site. Despite the tree cover on the site, the District Council were of the view that there were no trees of sufficient value to restrict development and subject to the access and parking issues, the site could be suitable for development. Meetings have been held with Network Rail, the owners of the site, who remain committed to the development. Due to the location adjacent to the Railway Station and the limited size of the site, it is considered the site should be restricted to a low profile flatted development which would deliver 1 or 2 bed units which could attract downsizers or younger people who would commute to London or other larger settlements. The scheme should meet ESCC parking guidelines to ensure surrounding residents are not affected. An acceptable access to the site which does not adversely affect the function of the railway car park or the residents of Craig Close should be created. As the owner/applicant is Network Rail it is considered this is a feasible option.

4.3.8.2 Due to the constrained size of the site and its residential surroundings, it is considered appropriate to limit the development to two storeys and to 6 units to ensure there is sufficient site area to deliver parking in a landscaped context. Whilst the tree cover has been found to be of lesser quality, any scheme should be supported by a tree survey to identify if there any trees that can be retained as part of the scheme. Likewise, due to the loss of this tree cover, any scheme will be expected to deliver a comprehensive landscape scheme that will protect the amenity of adjoining occupiers and provide an attractive setting to the development.



### **Policy CH3- Land adjacent to the Station Car Park**

The land adjacent to the Station car park, shown as CH3 on CNDP Map 7 is allocated for 6 homes. Housing development will be permitted subject to the following criteria being met:

1. The development shall comprise 1 or 2 bedroom units in the form of flats or apartments;
2. The development shall not exceed 2 storeys;
3. The development will be required to contribute the appropriate commuted sum towards Affordable Housing in accordance with policy for developments of 6-10 dwellings within the HWNL;
4. The design should be in accordance with the Crowhurst Design Guide;
5. Safe access to be created that will not adversely affect Craig Close residents;

6. Sufficient space must be retained to provide sufficient parking provision for both the development and the station car park as per the relevant standards;
7. The development shall be supported by a tree survey and good quality tree specimens to be retained as part of a wider appropriate landscaping scheme to create an appropriate setting to the development;
8. The development shall comply with the other policies of the Development plan including Policy CE2 which relates to the HWNL landscape.



Fig. 4.6 Aerial View of Site CH3

## 4.4 Economy

### 4.4.1 Economic Objectives

1. Support and improve links with new and existing rural businesses through sympathetic small-scale development, particularly that which can reduce out-commuting.
2. Support and improve links with new and existing tourism facilities which in turn will support the use of other facilities within the village.
3. Ensure new development is viable in order to ensure prompt delivery in line with the needs of the community.
4. Ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided alongside new development to ensure access, services and quality of life is maintained for both new and existing residents.
5. Ensure new development promotes safe access for pedestrians and vehicles and is able to support opportunities for utilising public transport.
6. Ensure new development is sustainable and would help mitigate the effect of climate change and ecological issues.

### 4.4.2 Economic Sustainability

#### Policy justification

4.4.2.1 The Parish contains a range of businesses which contribute to the local fabric of the village and the wider rural economy. This includes a number of tourism related businesses such as the larger Crowhurst Holiday Park to the north east of the Parish, Brakes Coppice Camping site and holiday cottages through to other businesses such as those in agriculture and land-based industries and the Plough Inn Public House, which is registered as an Asset of Community Value. Due to the rural location of the Parish, it is important the plan recognises the value of this to the local economy including employment and indirect benefits such as spending in the village, especially as most residents are reliant on out-commuting for work. It is also understood that a number of people work from home and so the policy should also support such live work principles to reduce out-commuting and congestion which would accord with Policy EC4 of the Rother Core Strategy.

4.4.2.2 The NPPF supports new development for economic purposes in rural areas through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings and the policy would enable such growth subject to consideration of relevant factors such as landscape, amenity and access. Any such development should also consider energy efficiency

improvements, use of renewables and biodiversity improvements in order to be sustainable and to mitigate the effects of the climate and ecological emergency. The success of tourism facilities which do not reduce the number of residential properties within the Parish, also provides an opportunity to encourage more visitors to Crowhurst and support its community assets and achieve an understanding of the special qualities and history of the village. This support for sustainable growth could also, in time, provide new employment for residents and reduce reliance on out-commuting for work purposes.

### **Policy CC1 Economic Sustainability**

The plan will support existing businesses within the Parish as well as encouraging new economic activities which are compatible with the rural environment of Crowhurst and maintain the special qualities of the Parish. The Plan will seek to protect the existing businesses and economic development within the Parish and encourage new sustainable uses, especially those that mitigate the effects of the Climate and Ecological emergency. The following types of development will be supported subject to compliance with other policies of the plan:

1. Development which will support the viability of an existing business and represents sustainable growth;

2. New Agricultural or Forestry buildings where there is a need for the new building and facilities;
3. New opportunities for business creation through conversion of existing non-residential buildings within the Parish or small-scale new build development within the village development boundary or exceptionally on suitable brownfield land outside development boundaries;
4. New small scale tourism opportunities including temporary uses where these safeguard the intrinsic and distinctive landscape character of the HWNL, provided it does not reduce the availability of dwellings used as permanent residences, detract from the needs of agriculture or unreasonably harm the amenities of residents in nearby dwellings;
5. Development which supports small scale home working that does not impact neighbours, or reduces out commuting such as live work units or ancillary development that supports home working, i.e. home offices;
6. Development should preserve the landscape character of its environs as defined in the Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment and comply with other policies having regard to ecology, dark skies, amenity and access/traffic considerations.

## 4.4.3 Infrastructure

### Policy justification

4.4.3.1 In order to promote the further prosperity of the village and Parish, it is vital that modern infrastructure is provided and it is recognised that new development may require supporting infrastructure to avoid placing additional pressures on existing infrastructure. Therefore, it is essential new development either mitigates its impact through the development itself or through necessary contributions, most likely to be secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charges or through planning obligations (if in excess of the NPPG thresholds), which can then be invested in the local infrastructure. Thus, the development will be required to address necessary infrastructure requirements in order to avoid any adverse impacts of development for the benefit of existing and future occupiers. The RDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan should also be referenced.

4.4.3.2 Village surveys showed a lot of concern over parking within the village – primarily around the recreation ground and the Village Hall/School/Church area and in the Forewood Rise development. While active travel is to be encouraged, census data shows that 20% of households have 3 or more vehicles, compared to 12% in Rother. Therefore, any new development should be entirely self-sufficient with off-

street parking such that residents do not need to park on the surrounding roads. Because public transport is poor and reliance on cars is high in this area, care should be taken not to underestimate the number of parking spaces required per dwelling. There is general support for improving parking where possible and a proposal has been put forward for a small parking area for about twelve cars in the field beside the top entrance to the churchyard. The parking area would need to be designed and landscaped carefully and appropriately for the setting. Amenity benches could be introduced to enable enjoyment of the view across the valley for visitors and walkers. These facilities are to be coordinated so as to enhance and support the use of adjacent amenities including the Village Hall, Parish Room and School. Footpath 6a, which runs through the same field, should connect to the car park to allow ease of access to the footpath network. The landowner will need to contact the East Sussex Rights of Way team about altering footpath 6a or adding another footpath to connect to the car park. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the proposed car park is referenced in Appendix 4.

4.4.3.3 In order to reflect village consultation regarding parking issues within the village, it is necessary that any new development that generates a parking demand includes parking provision in line with the relevant standards. The current standards are 'Guidance for Parking at Non



Residential Development’ and ‘Guidance for Parking at New Residential Development’ produced by East Sussex County Council. If these standards are later updated during the plan period, the policy relates to any subsequent standards.

4.4.3.4 On the adoption of the CNDP, a quarter of all CIL receipts within the Parish will revert to the Parish Council for addressing Local Infrastructure. At the present time, the Parish Council, via village surveys, have identified the village hall (or other community facilities) and improvements to the footpath between parts of the village to be priorities to which any monies would be spent. This will help encourage active travel and improvements in the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents. However, priorities will be reviewed throughout the plan period to ensure investment is directed where it is most needed.

4.4.3.5 There are a number of key transport related challenges and opportunities identified throughout the CNDP. These include policies to improve sustainable and active travel and the health and wellbeing of residents:

Policy CF2 – Rights of Way and Recreation

Policy CB1 - Design

Design Guide (particularly Sections 6 and 7)

Policy CH1 - Land at Station Road and Forewood Lane

Policy CH2 – Land South of Forewood Rise

Policy CC2 - Infrastructure

An ongoing challenge is sustainable transport connectivity to the wider area. Further information about the limited bus and rail options in the village can be found in Section 2.3. Reference can also be made to ESCC Local Transport Strategy documents such as:

Draft Local Transport Plan 4 (or subsequent/adopted)

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

## **Policy CC2 - Infrastructure**

Any development would be expected to be supported by the necessary infrastructure and also provide access for existing and future residents to key facilities and village assets in order to promote safety and contribute to an improved public realm which is inclusive, age friendly and creates places where people can meet. The following criteria should be met:

1. Safe pedestrian and vehicular access and, where practicable, segregated or off-road pedestrian walking and wheeling routes provided to the key parts of the village and public transport links to support active travel;
2. Development should be served by adequate drainage including surface and foul drainage;
3. New development should include on-site infrastructure to support sustainable development. Encouragement will be given to developments that exceed energy efficiency standards. This also includes, but is not limited to, measures such as including renewable energy as part of the design and installing a Fibre to Premises (FTTP) connection or exceptionally the next feasible fastest broadband;

4. All development proposals should provide vehicle parking (including garages) and cycle storage (convenient to dwelling entrance) in accordance with the current and relevant County Council standards. Provision must also be made for visitors and trades-people and that provision laid out to make a positive contribution to the development and its environment;
5. Support an appropriately landscaped parking area in Church Paddock, as shown on CNDP Map 6 and Fig 4.7, beside the top entrance to the churchyard and coordinate/link with adjacent amenities. A connection to Footpath 6a should be included as part of the plan. Measures must be taken to mitigate effects on the heritage and landscape in the area;
6. Development should not cause adverse effects on highway safety or congestion.

Support will be given to measures to improve parking and road safety where there is an identified need.



## 4.4.4 Renewables

### Policy Justification

4.4.4.1 Recognising the global efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5C and combat climate change, it is imperative to take action at all levels. The United Kingdom has committed to becoming net zero by 2050, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 100% from 1990 levels. In line with this, Rother District Council declared a climate emergency and aims to achieve net zero by 2030. The emerging RDC Climate Strategy should also be referenced. Similarly, Crowhurst Parish Council also recognised the climate and ecological emergency in October 2019.

4.4.4.2 Crowhurst faces unique challenges due to its absence from the gas network, with approximately 80% of households relying on oil or LPG for heating. Additionally, a significant percentage of households have energy performance certificates (EPCs) rated D or lower, indicating lower energy efficiency. A study undertaken as part of the Warmer Crowhurst - Clean Energy Project found the baseline average heating demand was 16,270KwH/yr per dwelling. The Parish exhibits a relatively high carbon footprint, with a considerable number of households owning three or more vehicles. To support net zero efforts, renewable energy solutions that reduce fossil fuel dependency and offset carbon emissions are crucial.

### Policy CC3 - Renewables

To help mitigate the causes and effects of climate change, small-scale and community renewable energy initiatives that comply with the following requirements and guidelines are supported. These include solar panels and farms, wind turbines, farm-scale anaerobic digesters (ADs), air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps.

Renewable Energy Projects should:

1. Improve biodiversity through measures such as wildflower meadows, enhanced native planting and provisions for bird/bat boxes and wildlife friendly habitats;
2. Where possible and appropriate, provide ongoing benefits to the community or be community led;
3. Avoid adverse environmental impacts on Ancient Woodland, protected areas and species, including noise, water, air and light pollution;
4. Not negatively affect important areas and views as indicated in CNDP Map 2;
5. Preserve and seek to enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald National Landscape.

Policy CC3 Renewables continues on next page....

#### Guidelines for specific technologies:

##### Solar:

1. Solar farms should not be situated on Agricultural Grade 1,2,3a or 3b land to avoid hindering the potential for crop cultivation;
2. Solar farms should be located in areas that are either screened from public view or incorporate new native, climate resilient planting to screen them;
3. Improvements in biodiversity must be retained at the end of the solar farm life.

##### Wind:

1. Wind turbines must be positioned at least 20meters away from woodland edges and hedgerows to minimize disturbance to bats that utilise these areas as commuting and foraging routes;
2. Turbines must not be located on bird migratory routes;
3. The impact of noise, blade glint and flicker should be addressed to mitigate potential issues.

The use of energy storage batteries for both solar and wind is encouraged, with appropriate screening in place.

##### Anaerobic digesters:

1. ADs should be situated within existing farmsteads and appropriately screened to minimize visual impact;
2. They should be designed at an appropriate scale to cater to onsite energy needs, so reducing the importation of fuel;
3. Construction should prioritise the use of locally sourced materials;
4. Odour management strategies should be implemented;
5. Limitations on fuel transport and related vehicle movements should be considered.

Current best practice from Natural England, and Historic England where relevant, must be followed, as should relevant policies from Rother District Council and the CNDP. These include:

Policy CE1 - Landscape Character of Crowhurst

Policy CE3 - Biodiversity

Policy CE4 - Natural Features.







Parking near Crowhurst Primary School, Village Hall and Church

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

---

### 5.1 Implementation

- 5.1.1 The implementation of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan will require the ongoing engagement and involvement of the residents of the village to ensure that the aspirations of the CNDP are realised. This will be coordinated by a committee or working party, such as the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, supported and overseen by the Parish Council.
- 5.1.2 The quantity of housing development described in the CNDP does not warrant a specific, phased implementation plan by numbers of houses over years. However, the plan has been derived from careful consideration of local housing needs, some of which are pressing. Recognising this, the PC and its nominated committee will work closely with landowners and developers to ensure timely delivery. There will also be a need, as far as possible, to avoid coincident development of all three sites in order to minimise disruption to the village.
- 5.1.3 Several areas of potential Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) expenditure have been identified, such as improving the footpath between Forewood Lane and Sampsons Lane and creating a parking area near St Georges Church. Realistically, CIL dependent projects cannot be finally selected or move forward until housing developments have been scheduled and completions forecast. As CIL receipts are clarified, the PC, nominated committee or working party, will be able to undertake more detailed planning and engagement with the local community and other stakeholders, such as ESCC, on priorities and specifics for CIL expenditure.
- 5.1.4 Those aspirations brought up during the Neighbourhood Plan process, but which do not form a part of the CNDP because they do not relate to land use, will form the basis of a new Village Action Plan. The Parish Council will encourage resident groups formed during the process of the CNDP to continue to explore areas of interest or importance such as environment, heritage and living history and community facilities.

## 5.2 Monitoring

- 5.2.1 The vision and aims of the CNDP will underpin the implementation of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan. Crowhurst Parish Council, nominated committee or working party will monitor this implementation, supported by the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or nominated committee. Development on the sites put forward, and other planning applications, will be monitored against the policies in the CNDP. The Parish Council will prepare annual monitoring reports and these reports will be published on the Council's website and issued to Rother District Council.
- 5.2.2 It is expected the CNDP will be formally reviewed on a five-year cycle.



## 6. GLOSSARY

---

ACV	Asset of Community Value	NL	National Landscape (formerly known as AONB)
ANA	Archaeological Notification Area	NP/NDP	Neighbourhood Plan / Neighbourhood Development Plan
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan	NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
CLCSCA	Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment	PH	Public House
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	RDC	Rother District Council
CNDP	Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
DaSA	Development and Sites Allocation (plan)	SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
ESCC	East Sussex County Council	SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
EU	European Union	SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
FSA	Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries	SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
HBA	Huskisson Brown Associates	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
HCA	Heritage and Character Assessment	SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
LAP	Local Area for Play	ToR	Terms of Reference
LDF	Local Development Framework	Wheeling	Use of a wheeled mobility aid



Lake near 1066 Country Walk and Link Road. Photo by Slimmeria Retreat



## 7. APPENDICES

---

Appendix 1 – Maps

Appendix 2 - Design Guide

Appendix 3 – Environment Planning Application Checklist

Appendix 4 - References

## APPENDIX 1

CNDP Map 1 Development Boundary (Policy CS1, CE1)

CNDP Map 2 Important Areas and Views (Policy CE1)

CNDP Map 3 Local Green Space (Policy CF3) (amended)

CNDP Map 4 Flooding (Policy CE5)

CNDP Map 5 Community Facilities (Policy CF1)

CNDP Map 6 Infrastructure Improvements (Policy CF2, CC2) (amended)

CNDP Map 7 Housing Sites Allocations (Policy CH1, CH2, CH3)

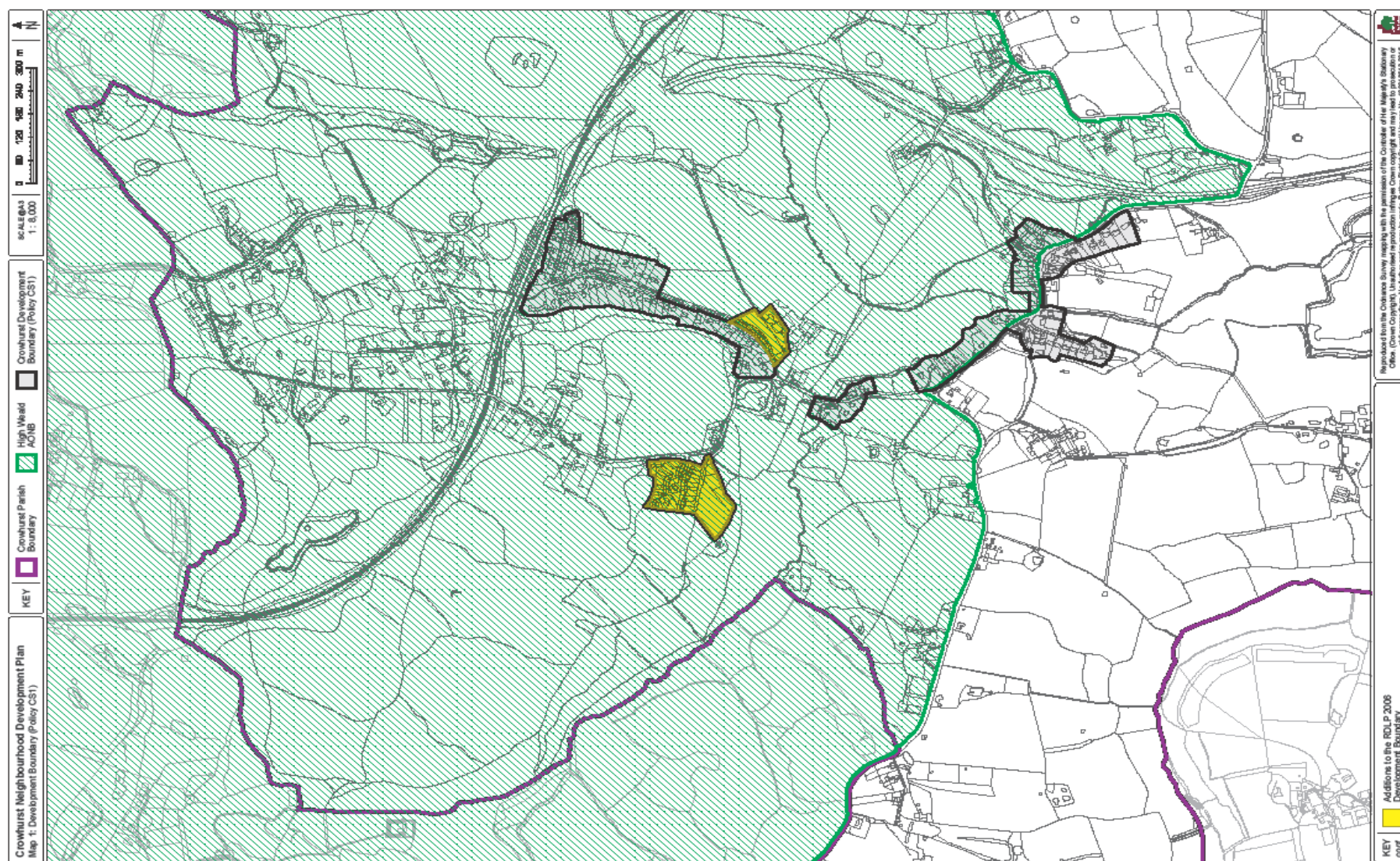
CNDP Map 8 Proposals Map (amended)

These maps are also available in the larger A3 format at:

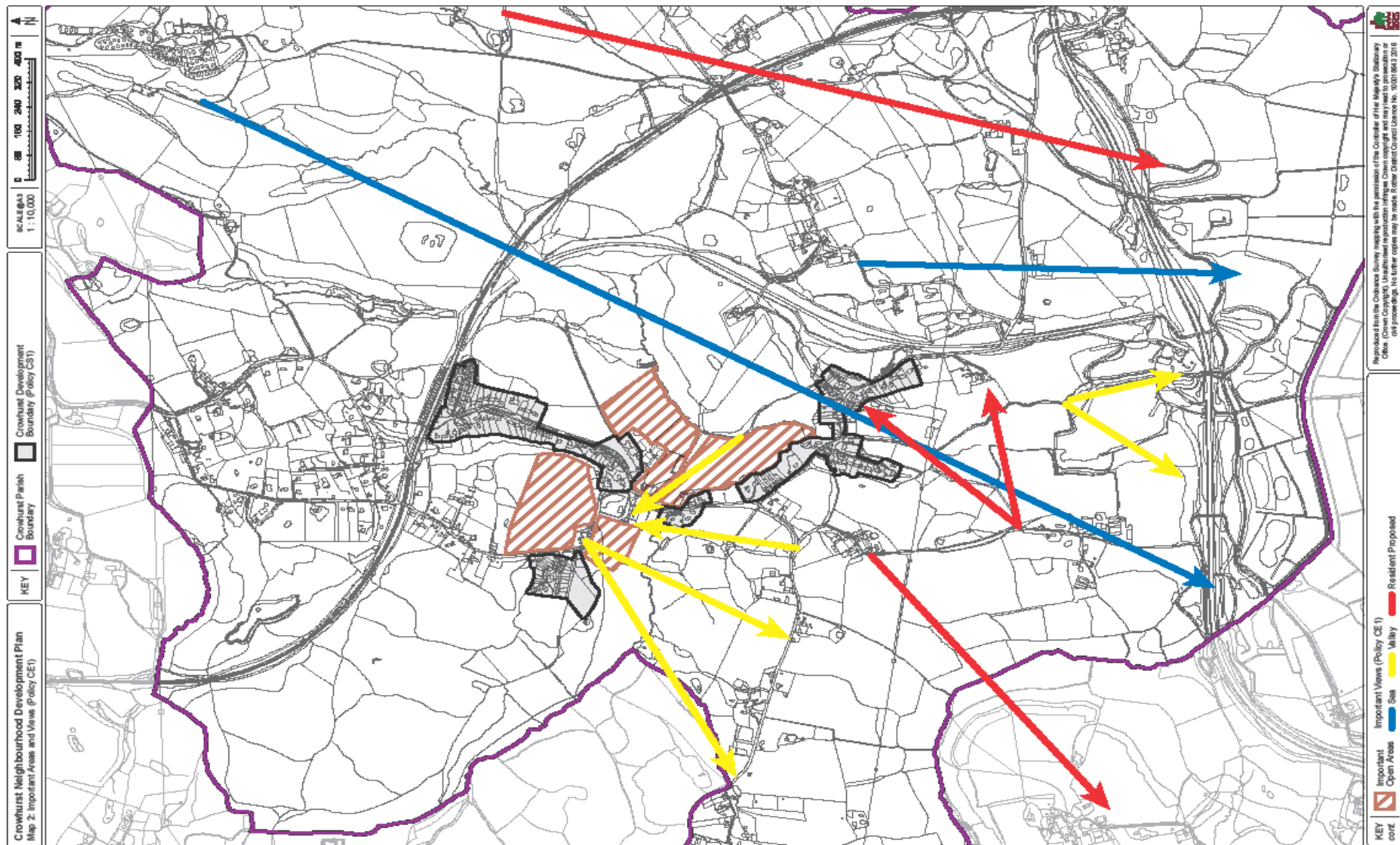
Rother District Council website - <https://www.rother.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/made-neighbourhood-plans/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan/> or

Crowhurst Parish Council website - <https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk>

CNDP Map 1 Development Boundary (Policy CS1, CE1)

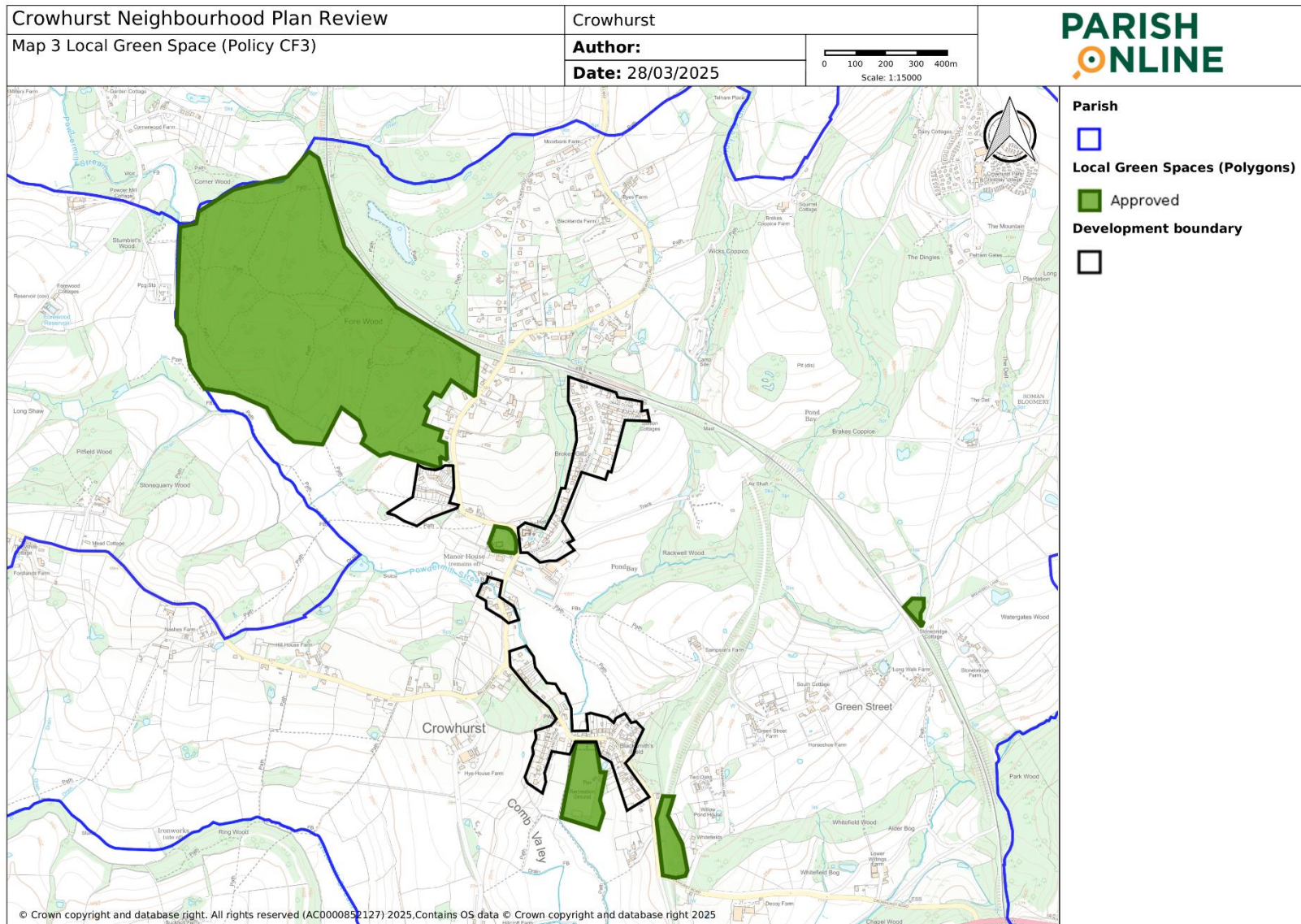


CNDP Map 2 Important Areas and Views (Policy CE1)



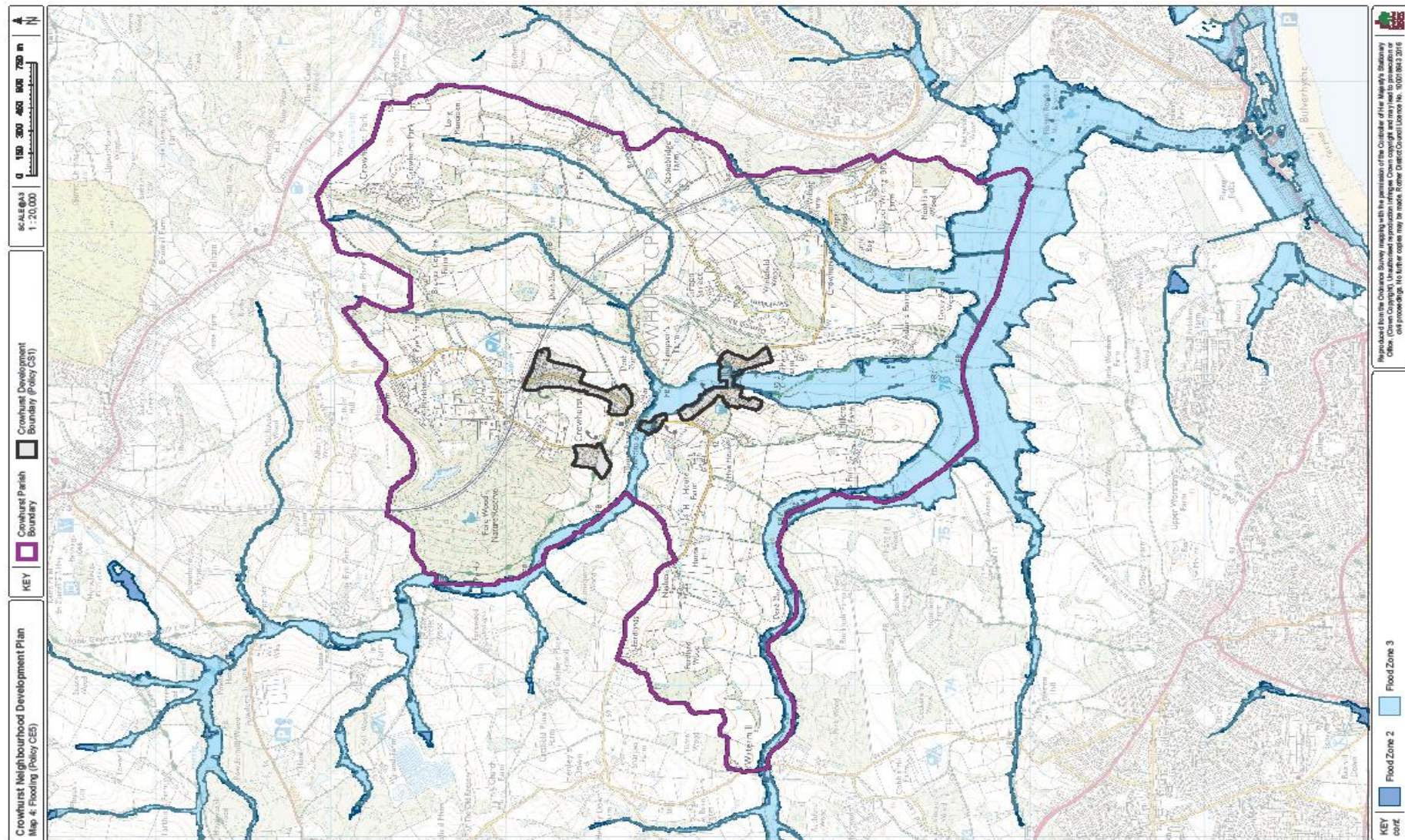


CNDP Map 3 Local Green Space (Policy CF3)



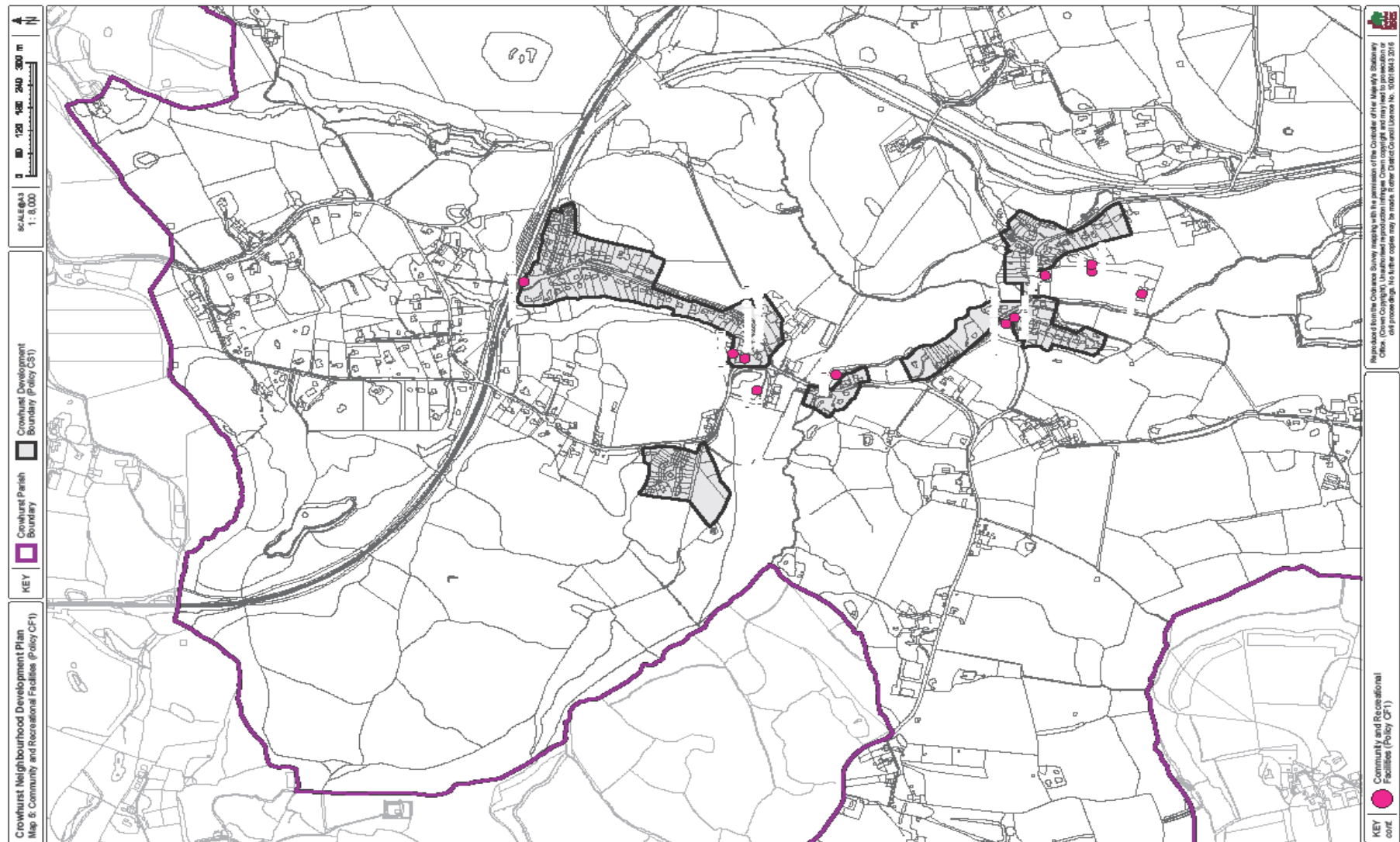


CNDP Map 4 Flooding (Policy CE5)

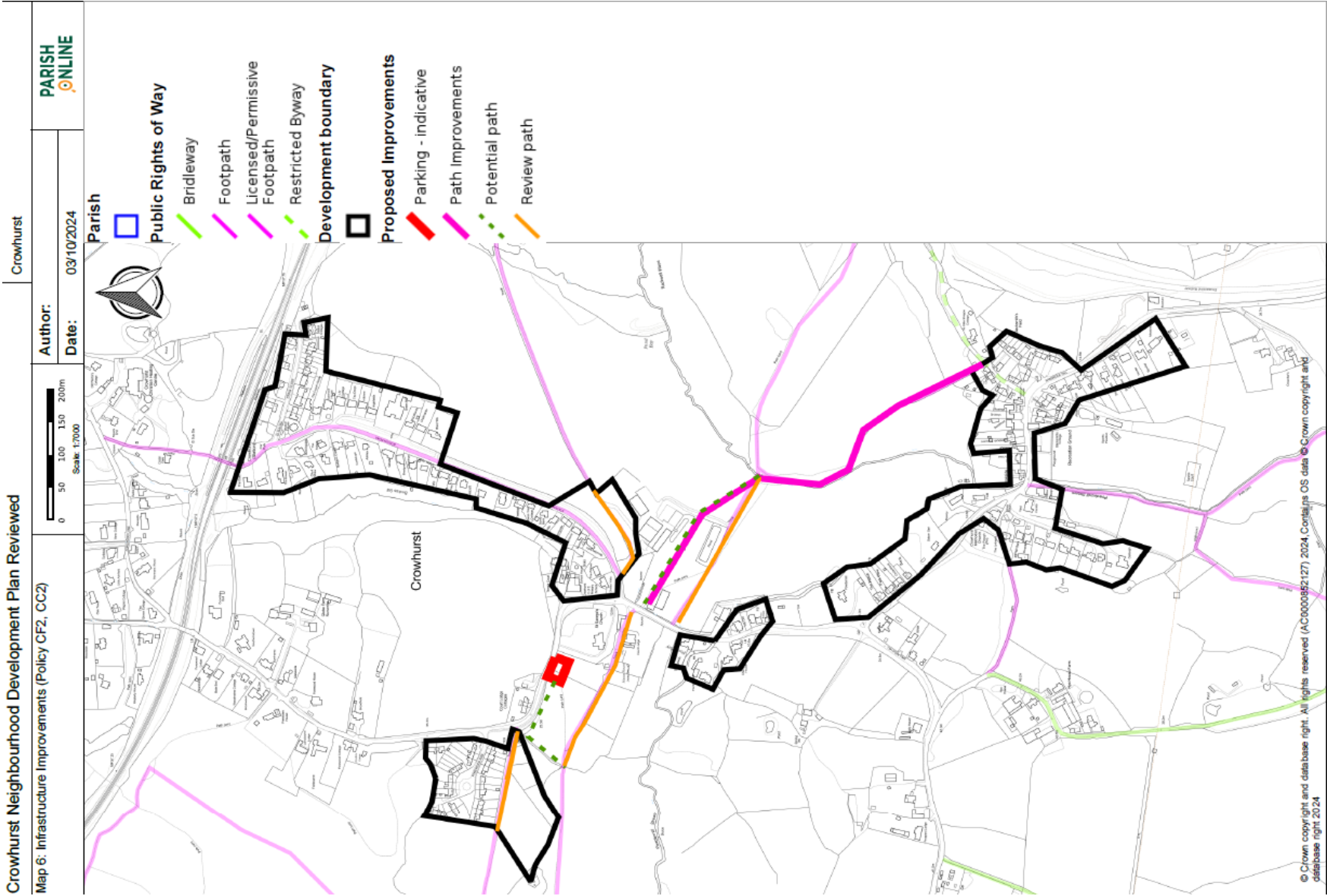




CNDP Map 5 Community Facilities (Policy CF1)

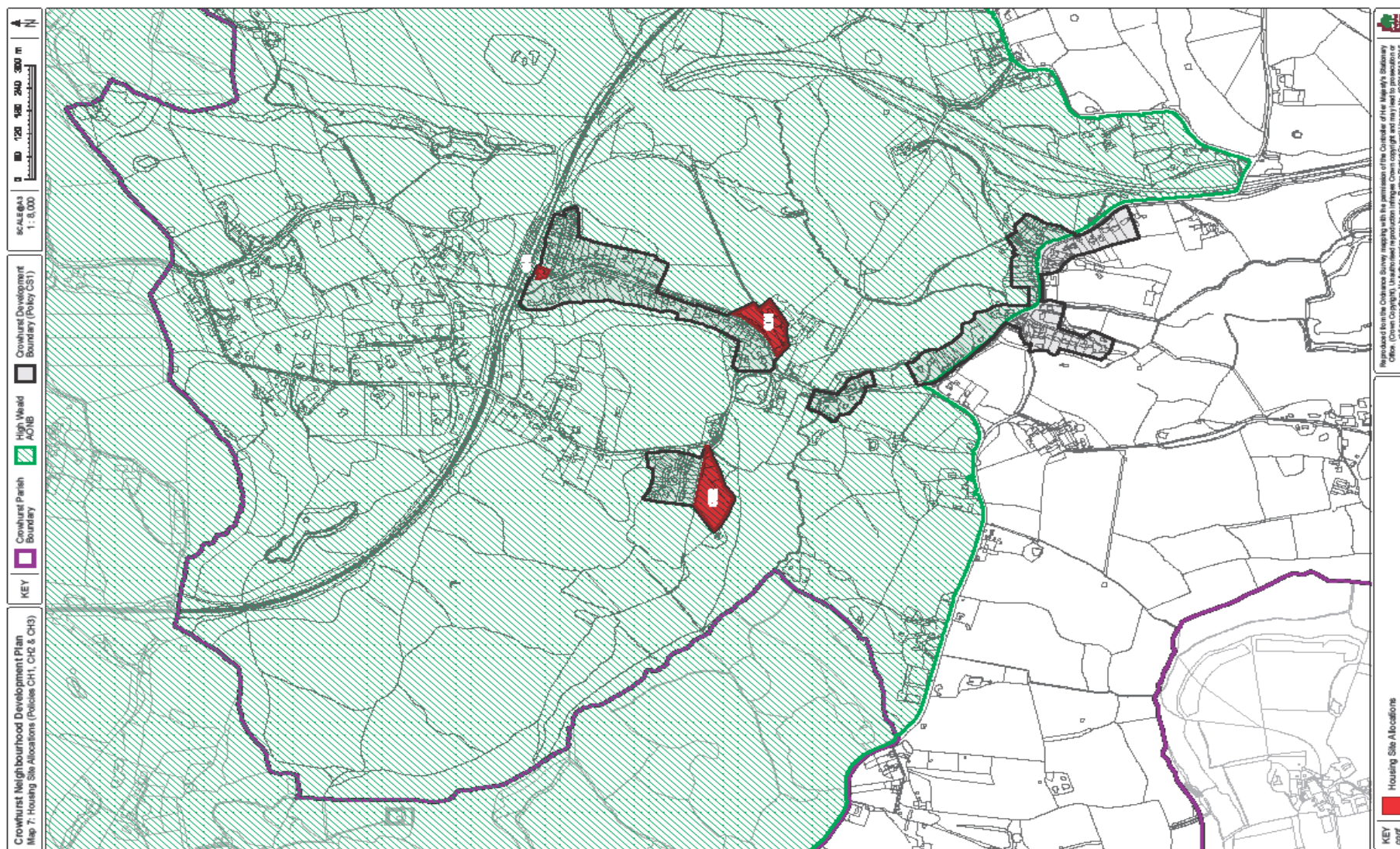


CNDP Map 6 Infrastructure Improvements (Policy CF2, CC2) (reviewed)



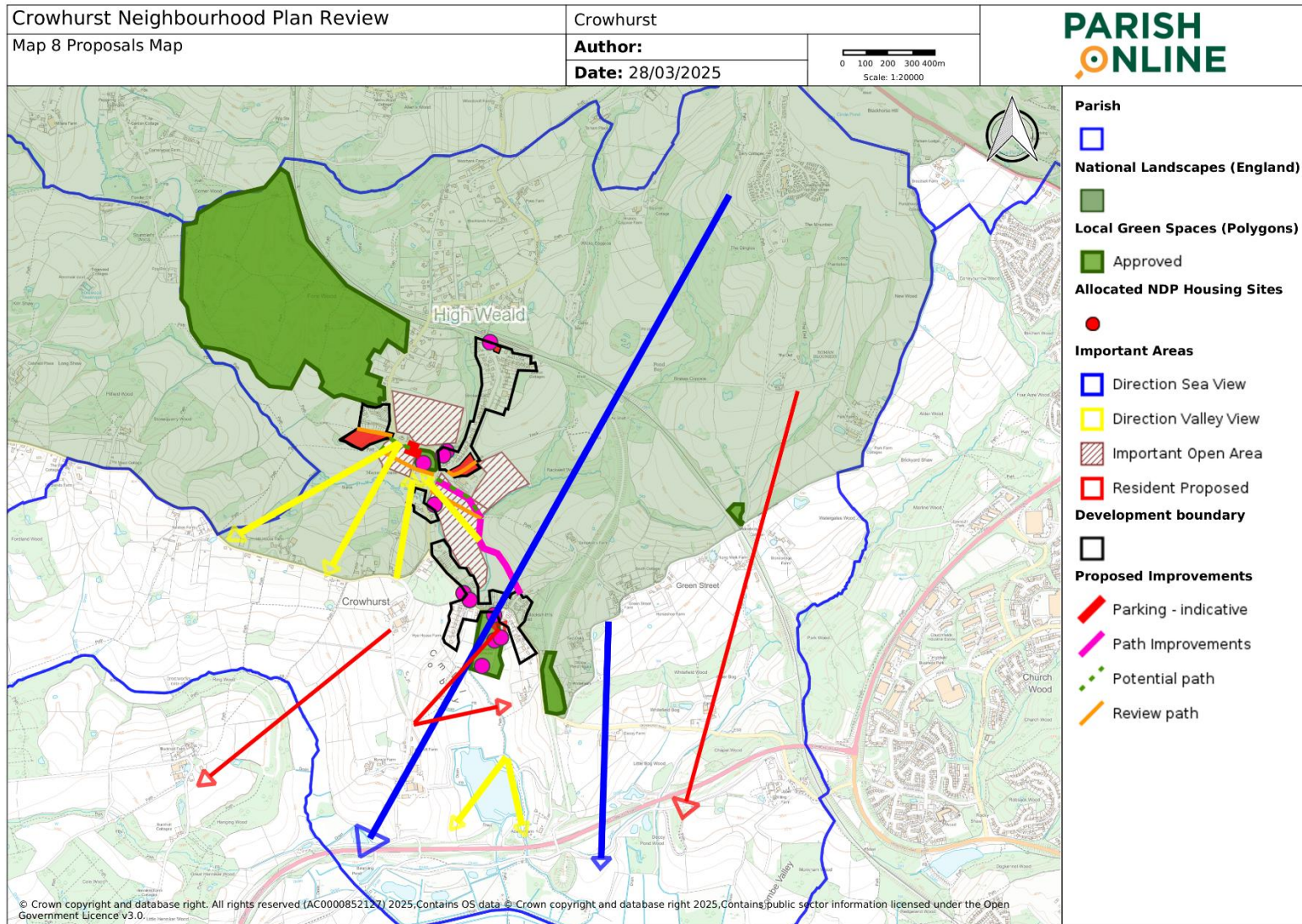


CNDP Map 7 Housing Site Allocations (Policy CH1, CH2, CH3)





CNDP Map 8 Proposals Map (reviewed)





## APPENDIX 2

### Crowhurst Design Guide

The full document can be found at: <https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/current-reviews>



This Design Guide has been compiled to sit alongside the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan and specifies more precisely the criteria which must be followed in development within the Village. It provides a closer focus of consideration to the special qualities and characteristics of the Parish, as distinct to the complementary but broader scale objectives of the High Weald NL Housing Design Guide.

Our design criteria have been drawn up under the following key headings:

- Appreciation of the context
- Conservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- Sustainability
- Siting of developments within the landscape
- Physical and Social cohesion
- Layout, character, scale and density
- Architectural detail
- Use of local building materials
- Applying these design criteria to the Crowhurst NP allocated sites

## APPENDIX 3

### Environment Planning Application Checklist

Checklist to be filled in where appropriate. Comments of how items have been considered would be useful.

Conservation Items to be considered and appropriate actions to be taken	Yes	No	Comment
Boundary intact (re. Ancient hedgerows, boundary markers, ditches)			
Ancient Hedgerows intact (often on boundaries)			
Hedgerow integrity (fill gaps with natives of local provenance)			
Ancient Woodlands intact?			
The Drove Road (no adverse impact?)			
Public Footpaths			
Bridleways			
Green Corridors			
Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) identified and respected?			
Strategic Gap (respected?)			
National Landscape			
SSSI			
Natural England's Natural Areas			
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats			
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species			
European Protected Species (EPS) newts, bats, hazel dormice, otters			
Environmental Priorities			
Local Plan proposals			
ESCC proposals			
Any impact on Heritage assets and their setting?			
British Standard BS42020 on Biodiversity – has it been followed?			
National Pollination Strategy (NPS) – has it been followed?			
Has there been an ecological gain from the development?			

## APPENDIX 4

## References

CNDP Review Examination Report Feb2025	Rother District Council website - <a href="#">Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council</a> Crowhurst Parish Council (CPC) website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
CNDP Review Basic Conditions Statement Oct 2024	Rother District Council website - <a href="#">Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council</a> Crowhurst Parish Council (CPC) website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
CNDP Review Reg14 Consultation Statement Oct 2024	Rother District Council website - <a href="#">Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council</a> Crowhurst Parish Council (CPC) website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
‘Crowhurst NDP 2019 Examination Report’ Apr 2019 (superseded)	Rother District Council website - <a href="#">Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council</a> Crowhurst Parish Council (CPC) website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
‘Crowhurst NP Strategic Environmental Assessment’ (SEA) Nov 2018	Rother District Council website - <a href="#">Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council</a> Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
‘Crowhurst NDP 2019 Basic Conditions Statement’ Nov 2018 (superseded)	Rother District Council website - <a href="#">Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council</a> Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
Crowhurst NDP 2019 – ‘Consultation Statement’ Nov 2018 (superseded)	Rother District Council website - <a href="#">Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council</a> Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>

'Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment' Oct 2017	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
'Crowhurst Biodiversity Audit'	Crowhurst Parish Council Website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Environment - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/biodiversity#audit">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/biodiversity#audit</a>
'Crowhurst – A Rural Village' Nov 2017	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
'Crowhurst Heritage and Character Assessment' Sept 2017	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
Historical Heritage of Crowhurst Nov 2017	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
'CNDP Site Assessment Policies Paper' Oct 2018	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
'CNDP Watercourses and Flooding Description' Nov 2017	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
'Local Green Space' Description table (reviewed)	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
'CNDP Environment Description' Nov 2017	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
'Crowhurst Non-designated Heritage Assets' Nov 2018	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>

	CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>
'Car Park Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Oct 2018	Crowhurst Parish Council website - <a href="https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk">https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> CPC website – Neighbourhood Plan - <a href="https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan">https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan</a>