



Crowhurst



Neighbourhood Development Plan



Crowhurst Parish Council

Review version Nov 2023

2018-2028

FOREWORD

The Localism Act 2011 gave parishes and other neighbourhood areas the ability to be able to exercise more control over future development in their community by creating their own Neighbourhood Plan. Crowhurst Parish Council took up this challenge in October 2015 in the hope of achieving the required development whilst ensuring a high level of resident satisfaction. Although the Parish Council is the qualifying body for the Neighbourhood Plan and has oversight over its development, the Neighbourhood Plan Group was formed to ensure the Plan was led by residents.

From the very beginning, it was hoped that it would help bring the community together to ensure Crowhurst would develop in a way that was beneficial to everyone. The terms of reference for the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Group highlighted that the Neighbourhood Plan would:

- a) Identify all the important aspects of life in the parish which are to be considered in planning for the future
- b) Bring forward proposals which will enhance the quality of life in the Parish in the years to come.
- c) Provide a framework for future land usage within the parish

Much of the work in producing the Neighbourhood Plan has been done by the very dedicated members of the Steering Group, who have all put in a lot of time to get us to this point:

Ann Wilson

Chris Davidson

Dave Howley

Diane Stainsby

Gareth Bright

Martin White

Pat Buckle

Sonia Plato

Tracy Hoad

Willy Wilson



However, a lot of assistance has also been given by others too – from inside and outside our wonderful village:

- The task group members who carried out work for the Steering Group
- The residents of Crowhurst for attending workshops, meetings and filling in surveys – this formed the basis of our Plan
- Ashley Wynn of Greenhayes Planning – the Chartered Town Planner who was our professional Planning Consultant
- Huskisson Brown Associates (HBA) for conducting our Landscape Assessment
- AECOM for our Heritage and Character Assessment
- Arborvitae for the Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the proposed car parking area
- Intelligent Plans and Examinations Ltd for our pre-submission Health Check
- Many other residents and non-residents for providing assistance with reports and information

I would like to thank everyone for all their hard work, dedication and involvement in a Plan that should bring benefits to Crowhurst in the years to come.

The Plan has undergone several iterations with amendments based on consultations with residents and statutory bodies. This final Plan now also incorporates the modifications recommended by the Independent Examiner and agreed between the Parish Council and Rother District Council. The Basic Conditions Statement, Consultation Statement and Final Examiners Report are referenced in Appendix 3.

If finally approved at referendum, the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan certainly won't rest on a shelf gathering dust, but will be used as a fundamental reference point and as material consideration in the determination of all future planning decisions for the Parish. Our work on the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan has been to set the principles over the next 10 years or so; it will be for our children and future parishioners to take on the stewardship role for the on-going longer term evolution of our Parish.

Rosalyn Day
Chair Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
May 2019



Fields near Swainham Lane

Photo by Loksan Harley



Your Vision
Our Future

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1066 Country Walk near The Plough. Photo by Slimmeria Retreat



Crowhurst sign by Church

1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 What has changed from the Made Neighbourhood Plan?

1.0.1 The following Policy changes have been made to the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan 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.

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: Two new green spaces (Muriel's Meadow and Cinderbrook) added.

POLICY CB1 - Design: The new Design Guide has been referenced and various criteria modified to be more consistent with the Design Guide. 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, renewable energy and electric vehicle charging points have been added.

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

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

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 This document has been 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 a Neighbourhood Plan at its meeting on 5th October 2015 following the Government's publication of the Localism Act in 2011.

1.1.3 Crowhurst Parish Council has developed this NDP by working with a Steering Group of interested villagers who volunteered to assist in guiding the development process. The Plan has been 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 If passed at a local referendum, the CNDP will be adopted by Rother District Council as the plan which must be used in law to determine planning applications in the Parish; it will become part of the Development Plan alongside the District Council's Local Plan.

1.2 Context

- 1.2.1 RDC's Local Plan¹ 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, over a 17-year time period (2011 - 2028), as well as supporting development and infrastructure.
- 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 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 The housing development target for the District as a whole is for at least 5,700 new homes to be built over the plan period. The majority, some 3,100, are expected to be at Bexhill, with 475-500 extra dwellings at Battle, 355-400 dwellings at Rye, at least 100 dwellings on the fringes of Hastings and 1,670 dwellings across villages, a minimum of 20² of which are designated for our village of Crowhurst.

¹ RDC Local Plan, Adopted Core Strategy 2014 - <http://www.rother.gov.uk/corestrategy>



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

- 1.2.6 The DaSA has been through its public consultation and should be submitted for examination shortly.

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.”³

- 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 Government National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁴, published in March 2012 and taking immediate effect, states:

- *“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*

³ A plain English guide to the Localism Act
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

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 A revised NPPF was published in July 2018 and updated in Feb 2019⁵. The transitional arrangements for local plans and neighbourhood plans are set out in paragraph 214, which provides “The policies in the previous Framework will apply for the purpose of examining plans, where those plans are submitted on or before 24 January 2019”. A footnote clarifies that for neighbourhood plans, “submission” in this context means where a Qualifying Body submits a plan to the local planning authority under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) (the 2012 Regulations).

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.

⁵ View at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>



- 1.4.2 All NDPs are subject to both an independent examination and referendum – needing to receive 50% or more of vote share – as well as being in “general conformity” with the Local Plan (in Crowhurst’s case, Rother District Council’s Core Strategy). If accepted and ratified by a referendum, our Neighbourhood Development Plan would become part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and have legal weight as a statutory document.
- 1.4.3 If accepted and ratified in the referendum there would also be financial benefits for Crowhurst. By producing 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 .

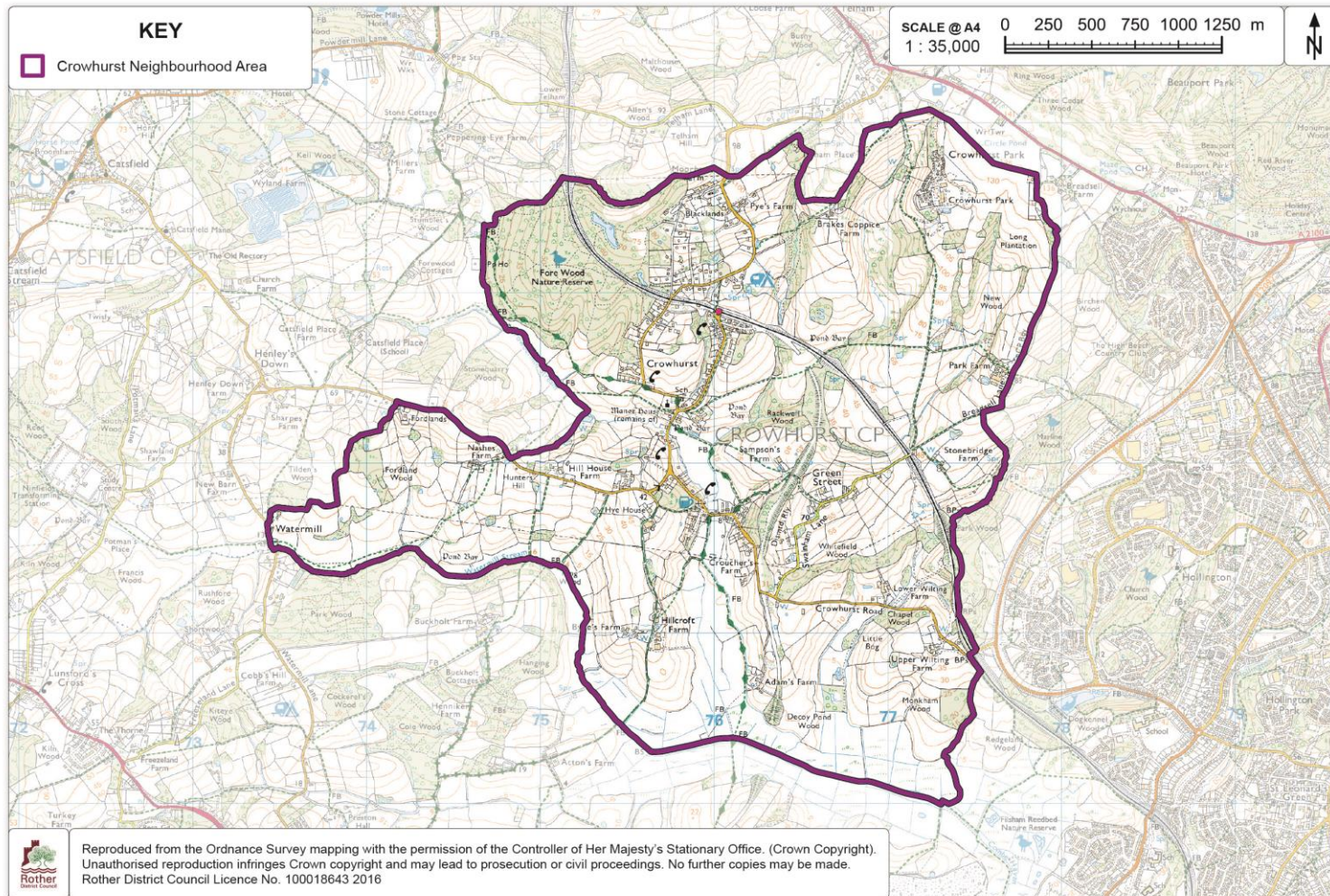
1.5 Plan Period

- 1.5.1 The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared this plan to cover the period 2018 – 2028 in line with Rother District Council’s Local Plan timeframe. It sets out specific policies and proposals for the use and development of land in the Area shown below over this plan period.

1.6 Designated Area

- 1.6.1 Crowhurst Parish Council formally submitted an application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Plan Area in October 2015⁶. 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.

⁶ <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 making⁷.
- 1.7.2 Rother District Council, as the local planning authority, issued a screening opinion in January 2017 for the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan. The opinion states that neighbourhood development plans are subject to a SEA under the European Union (EU) Directive 2001/42 if they intend to make land allocations or are in particularly sensitive areas. One of the basic conditions tested was whether the making of the NDP is compatible with EU obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).⁸
- 1.7.3 Crowhurst's Neighbourhood Development Plan, as part of this screening, was deemed by Rother District Council 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 wholly⁹ within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), 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 CNDP has been 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 has been integral to the preparation process from the very start to ensure any new

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_environmental_assessment

⁸ <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/12701/Neighbourhood-Plan-Strategic-Environmental-Assessments-SEA>

⁹ Crowhurst Parish straddles the boundary of the High Weald AONB but any development near the boundary could affect the setting of the AONB

allocations and policies can preserve and enhance this special environment whilst recognising there is always some impact of development, even in the early stages and thus the plan seeks to ensure any impacts can be mitigated or avoided. It can be seen that the plan will deliver 30 new homes over the plan period, which is in excess of the minimum RDC Core Strategy allocation but this will 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 above assessment shows the preferred strategy is the most appropriate having regard to minimising environmental effects having regard to the reasonable alternatives. 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.

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 AONB
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 was subject to a defined Terms of Reference (ToR)¹⁰ 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 is 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

¹⁰ <http://crowhurstneighbourhoodplan.org/cnp-full-terms-of-reference>

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.

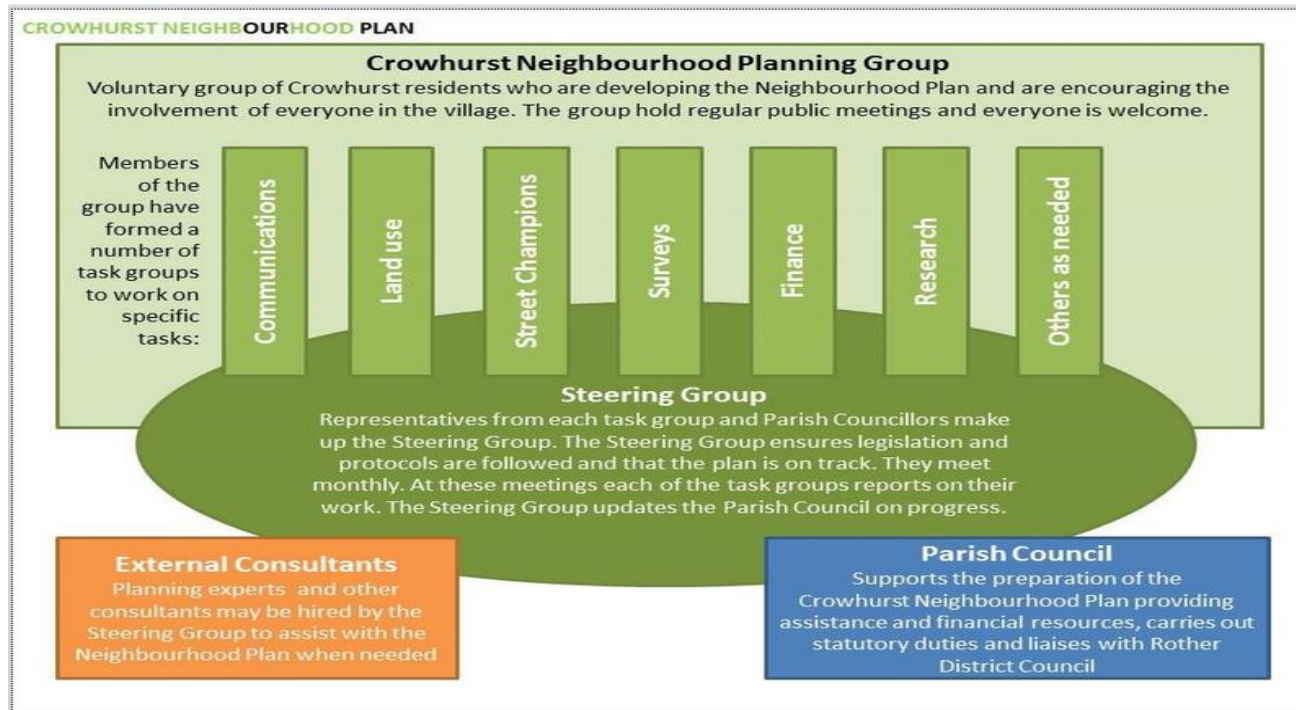


Fig 1.1 – Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Organisation

1.9 Plan Timeline

1.9.1 The following diagram represents the timeline of this plan for Crowhurst and is a summary of key events from a comprehensive project plan.

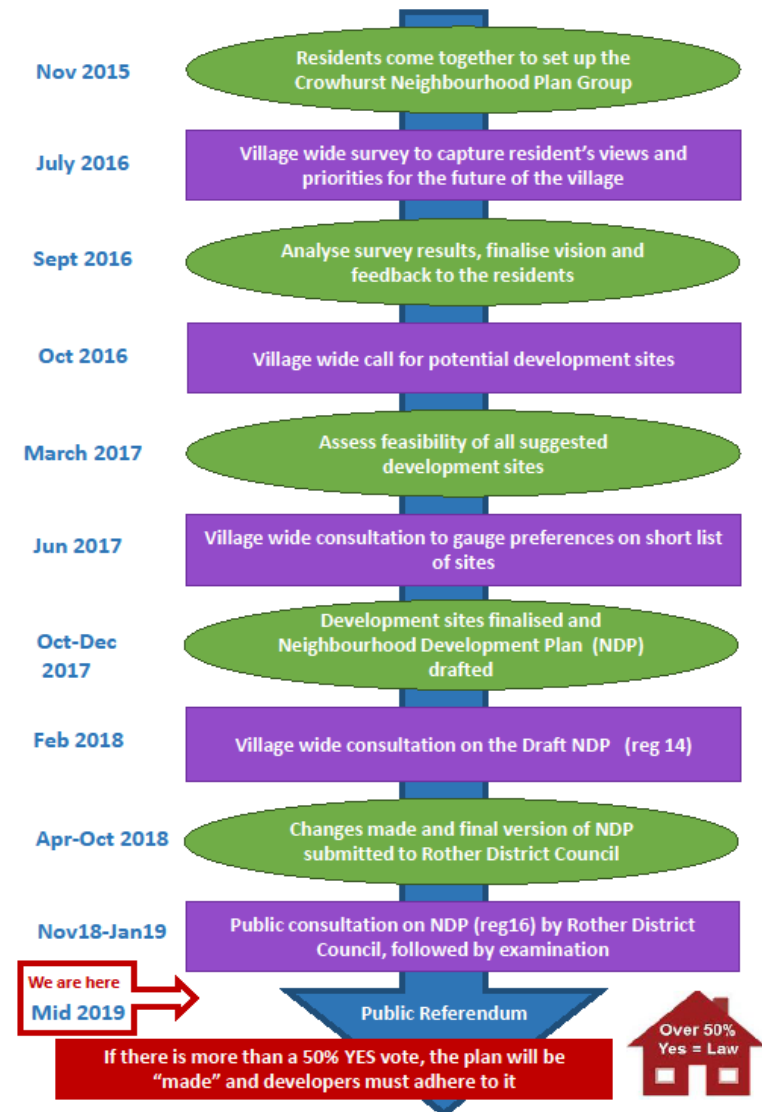


Fig 1.2 – Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Timeline



Looking towards Church from 1066 Country Walk

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 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 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 14th to 17th 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 13th 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 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. Once a week, a bus goes to Tesco and back, and there is 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 (57% compared to the Rother average of 37%). 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 and tennis court.
- 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 2011 census, there were 891 residents in 327 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 (28% versus 42%) but has around 58% of households with only 1 or 2 people (based on 2011 census data).
- 2.5.3 Surveys in the village showed that more 1 or 2 bed properties were needed, both for emerging households and downsizers.

2.6 Local Economy

- 2.6.1 Crowhurst has a higher number than the Rother average of self-employed people covering a wide range of industries. Other than that, there are a number of businesses providing employment in the Parish – farms, equestrian businesses, two care homes, a weight-loss retreat, the village pub,

tourism – campsite and Holiday Village. However, most 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.

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 (36% compared to 25% in Rother).

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.



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)¹¹ 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 community spirit and enhancing infrastructure, facilities and services for residents of all ages’.

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

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.

¹¹ <http://www.crowhurstneighbourhoodplan.org/neighbourhood-plan-meetings>

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 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;

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 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. District Councils used a mechanism known as the Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need to assess numbers of houses to be built. This is to be replaced by the Standardised Methodology for the calculation of Local Housing Need. Rother District Council (RDC) has a current quota to provide nearly 5,700 new homes over its plan period to 2028. Within Rother's plan, Crowhurst is 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). Our own local housing needs assessments have broadly confirmed that these numbers match our future, local requirements.
- 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 has taken 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 has been flagged up from the start of the process. We have also considered other issues such as how amenities could best be improved and what people's housing needs are likely to be over the coming years.
- 4.0.4 The CNDP Team has engaged with the community through street champions, workshops, discussions, surveys¹², exhibitions, and a website - all with continual feedback - to gain as much information as possible. We have 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 can identify practical and compliant, yet sympathetic,

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

development solutions. Advice was also sought from specialist sources covering natural and cultural heritage, and 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 have concluded with a final shortlist of viable development sites.
- 4.0.7 Feedback has helped inform the distribution of houses across these viable sites, preferred house sizes, housing density and types and styles of houses the CNDP should aim to provide. Surveys have indicated a preference for mixed housing sizes, mostly 1 to 3 bedroom, semi-detached type houses. Census data confirms 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 dispersed, low quantity, low density formats, with reasonable size gardens where possible, 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 or coherent style. There are many architectural styles and some interesting individual buildings which provide good reference points for good housing designs. There are also developments which lack distinctive architecture, or in some cases are rather poor. The CNDP Team has taken some 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 have carefully reviewed existing development boundaries and the Strategic Gap which limits the expansion of Hastings into surrounding countryside areas has been 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 the 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 Development and Sites Allocation (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 Outstanding Natural Beauty, 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 have undertaken character and landscape assessment work and identified acceptable baseline schemes for each development site. We have 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) has also identified areas in Crowhurst that help form the rural character of the village. These areas should be protected and developments should not result in the erosion or loss of these important areas or the important views identified on CNDP Map 2. Where possible, 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 bio-diversity and flood mitigation measures and 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. However, in the review a new policy on Renewable Energy has been included.

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 AONB 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, and improve the mental and physical well-being that is associated with this, and protect biodiversity.

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.

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 AONB 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 of the Parish.
4. To protect important landscape features within the Parish such as trees, hedgerows, verges, ponds and watercourses and the wider rural landscape and setting of the village including that of the High Weald AONB 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.

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 AONB

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 (CLSCA).
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 AONB 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 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). 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 AONB 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 AONB 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 AONB 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 AONB 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 AONB 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 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (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 AONB

4.2.4.1 As can be seen on the proposals map, 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 AONB and the special qualities of the landscape as set by the High Weald AONB Management Plan (2019-2024 plan or the emerging 2024-2029 plan or subsequent versions). The southern part of the village falls outside the AONB, but nevertheless forms part of the setting to the AONB and in most cases retains the wider characteristics of the designated AONB.

4.2.4.2 The High Weald Management Plan defines five key features of the High Weald landscape, all of which are present in Crowhurst and remain in good condition, and are largely unaltered. These are;

Geology, Landform, Water Systems and Climate -

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 along with a network of other watercourses which cut through the valley landscape.

Settlement – Crowhurst is a dispersed agricultural settlement, which has evolved according to historic development in agriculture, industry and other historic

events such as the railway. The village retains this dispersed character and this is largely unaltered through more modern development

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

Woodlands - The village has an abundance of woodland that frames the valley landscape, with areas such as Forewood, Quarry Wood and the other many pockets of ancient woodland that remain across the Parish Landscape.

Field and Heath - The Parish follows the wider AONB 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 AONB.

4.2.4.3 The area of the Parish outside the AONB, still shares many of the characteristics of the AONB. Crowhurst village itself presents significant AONB character that is largely intact and unspoilt. Having regard to the great weight placed upon

the landscape and scenic beauty of AONB's, it is considered necessary to emphasise in policy terms the additional considerations required in such areas 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 AONB, and the DaSA goes into more detail about developments within the AONB, 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 AONB as shown on the proposals map, development within the setting of the AONB, will also be expected to take account of the policy criteria in minimising or mitigating impacts on the AONB landscape.

Policy CE2- The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will only be supported where it conserves or enhances the natural beauty of the parish 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 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 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 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 standing advice 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 be accompanied by a minimum 10% gain in biodiversity, calculated using the latest Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) software. The importance of wildlife corridors and wider connectivity is noted and developers should aim to 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 including 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 encourage native planting from local or UK only sources (to limit disease transfer) that is appropriate to the site conditions and also where possible planting that 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, shown using the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) software and adhering to latest government guidelines. Opportunities for the enhancement of the natural environment must be maximised. 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;
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 in line with Rother DC policy 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 and 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 should be retained, buffered, restored and strengthened, and new wildlife corridors should be created as part of the new development. Opportunities to connect with wildlife corridors on adjacent land should be explored and boundaries permeable to wildlife must be used;

(iv) New development should 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, 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) and Bat Conservation Trust guidance and the Dark Skies Policy CE6;

Policy continues on next page ...

(vi) Any new drainage should be wildlife friendly and opportunities should be grasped to combine SuDS and wildlife opportunities;

(vii) Any new planting should incorporate native planting, from local or UK sources only, and those which are defined as good pollinators for native species;

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, aged 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.

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 Aged 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.

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) measures 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'* and the RSPB Publication *Sustainable Drainage Systems; Maximising the Potential for People and Wildlife*. 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.

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 the 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 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 that new development incorporates 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, 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). Any development that is allowed must monitor water quality of nearby watercourses during and after development to ensure no pollution is caused;

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.

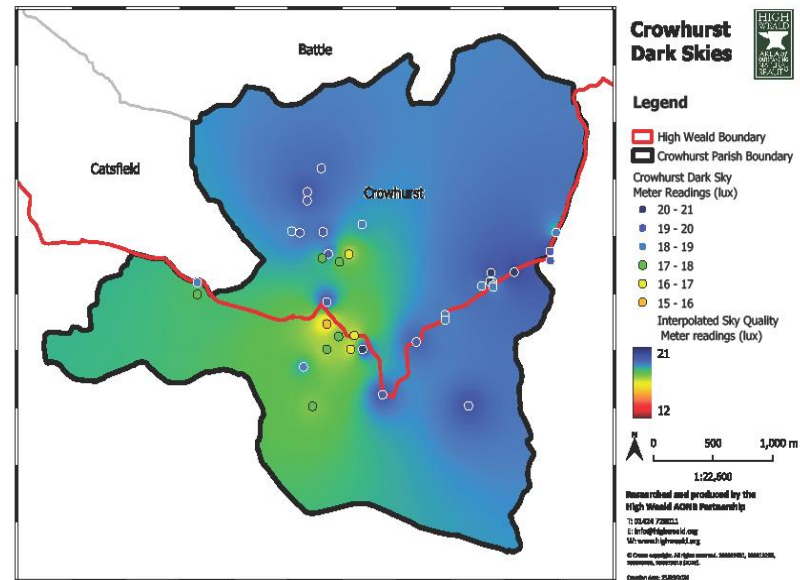
Encouragement will be given to development which secures an improvement in flood risk and biodiversity terms which will reduce pressures on the catchment both upstream and downstream.

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. One of the most noxious aspects of light pollution is external lights, particularly on roadsides, put up by residents. 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. 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. Other Policies: Both Rother District Council and the AONB Unit have emerging Dark Skies policies, so developers and private individuals need also to follow their recommendations. The AONB Management Plan (2019-2024 plan, the emerging 2024-2029 plan or subsequent versions) also needs to be consulted to note their wishes for the community.



4.1 Light meter readings around Crowhurst 2022/23

Fig

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 at even 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.
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 to support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents
6. Improve access to local facilities, where possible, including maximising opportunities for 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. 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.

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 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 route that is accessible all year round. The aim would be to create a safer alternative to Chapel Hill for pedestrians walking 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), for all users including push chairs. An important consideration would be to ensure that

the appearance of the pathway blends in well and is finished with grass. There may also be a need to re-introduce a fence to separate walkers and livestock. 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.

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, 6 areas:

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

are considered important enough to warrant Local Green Space designation in Policy CF3 and these can be seen on CNDP Map 3 and 3a. The Local Green Space Description document, describing these areas is referenced in Appendix 4.

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).

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 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 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), as shown on CNDP Map 6, to an all-weather pedestrian 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.

Policy CF3 – Local Green Space

1. The following areas are designated as Local Green Space and shown on CNDP Map 3 and 3a and the Proposals Map:

Fore Wood

St Georges Churchyard

Crowhurst Recreation Ground

Crowhurst Nature Reserve

Muriel's Meadow

Cinderbrook

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. 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 should allow for climate change and reference Policy CC3 - Renewables and Policy CE6 - Dark Skies. It should be flexible and adaptable for a range of

occupiers. New development should meet the minimum national space standards and Building for a Healthy Life standards (or subsequent) and is encouraged to provide adaptable floor-space by meeting M4(2) of the Building Regulations, as set out in the Rother DaSA policy on Accessible and Adaptable Homes . This approach to housing standards is key due to the ageing population with 22% of the population being over 65 and 31% between 45-64yrs (Census, 2011) 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. Census data from 2021 for the wider area shows an increased percentage of the population being over 65. 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. These spaces are also invaluable from a

landscape and design 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. Developers 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 AONB landscape, settlement pattern and rich biodiversity. The Guide

emphasises the requirement that design development should flow organically from this analysis. 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 of the village environment and to ensure design plays an important role in the sustainable growth of the village. Development 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 with the existing Village community, including through access to local footpaths
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 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
4. There should be no loss of local biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Opportunities to promote wildlife and biodiversity enhancement should be sought and ecological gain should be demonstrated using the Biodiversity Net Gain software if appropriate;
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....

- 6 New housing shall comply with the National Space Standards and Building for a Healthy Life standards. Due to the aging population of the Parish, new housing should also meet the Accessible/Adaptable Dwelling standard M4(2) of the Building Regulations or any future review of these standards;
- 7 Development should not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy or 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 15th 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 17th to 19th 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 20th 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.

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 2011 only two dwellings have been built within the village. Within the Rural Settlement Paper, Rother identified 18 households in housing need (2008) with 9 households on the waiting list and as of 2016, there were 4 households on the waiting list. 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 residents surveys;
- d. National Planning Policy Guidelines and National Planning Policy Framework.

These factors encompassed the need to protect the AONB character, sustainability of new housing developments and the aims of the residents. The criteria used to assess the sites were:

	<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Compatibility with SEA Framework</u>
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 character including whether the site was located in the AONB	Landscape Heritage

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 CNDP 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 AONB 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 AONB. 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-AONB part of the village. In order to meet the housing allocation requirement, development sites within the AONB 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 AONB was considered necessary.

4.3.5.6 The implications of Paragraph 177 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 AONB was not possible. However, as per Policies CE1 to CE6, the CNDP places great weight on the conservation of the AONB 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 - only 28% of the housing stock in Crowhurst is 1 and 2 bedroom whereas 58% of households are 1 or 2 person. There is an identified need for smaller units, with the 4 households on the waiting list requiring 1 bedroom units, and 20 potential new households (who will need to move over the next five years)

also requiring smaller one or two 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.

4.3.6 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 has walking access 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 has the potential to deliver a mix of market and affordable housing

on site and this is a policy requirement. 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 immediately adjacent to the existing village focal point and heritage centre, including the School, Church and Village Hall 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 the plot of land between Station Road and Forewood Lane. In the likely event that biodiversity loss compensation 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;
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, 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 planting buffers to the north and eastern boundaries as set out in the Central Crowhurst Landscape Strategy in the Crowhurst 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;

Policy CH1 continues on next page....

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 sufficient separation from the adjacent farm uses to maintain amenity of properties and the proper farming operations;
10. Development shall comply with the other policies of the plan including Policy CE2 which relates to the AONB landscape.

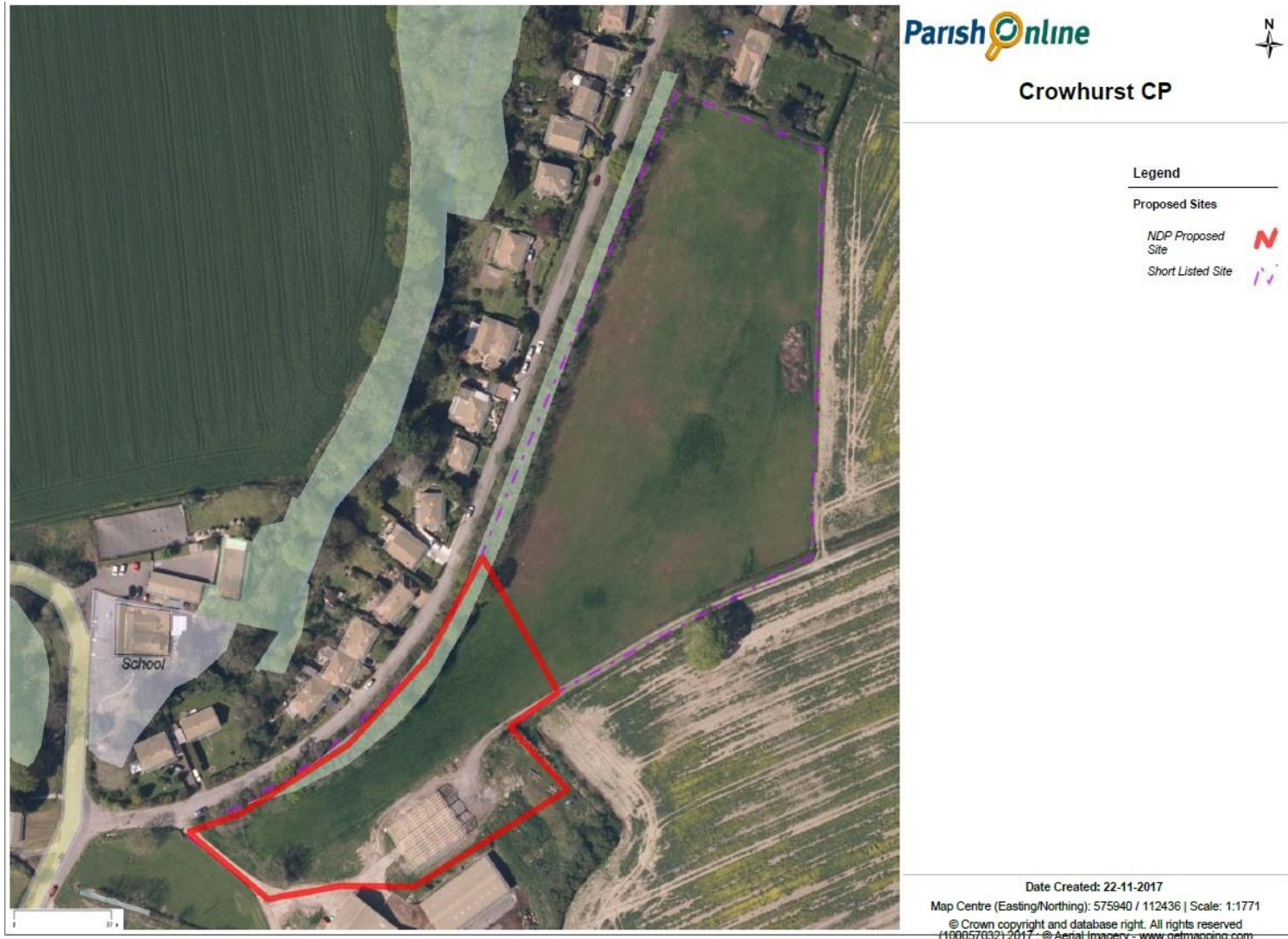


Fig. 4.2 Aerial View of Site CH1

SITE CH1 - CENTRAL CROWHURST LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

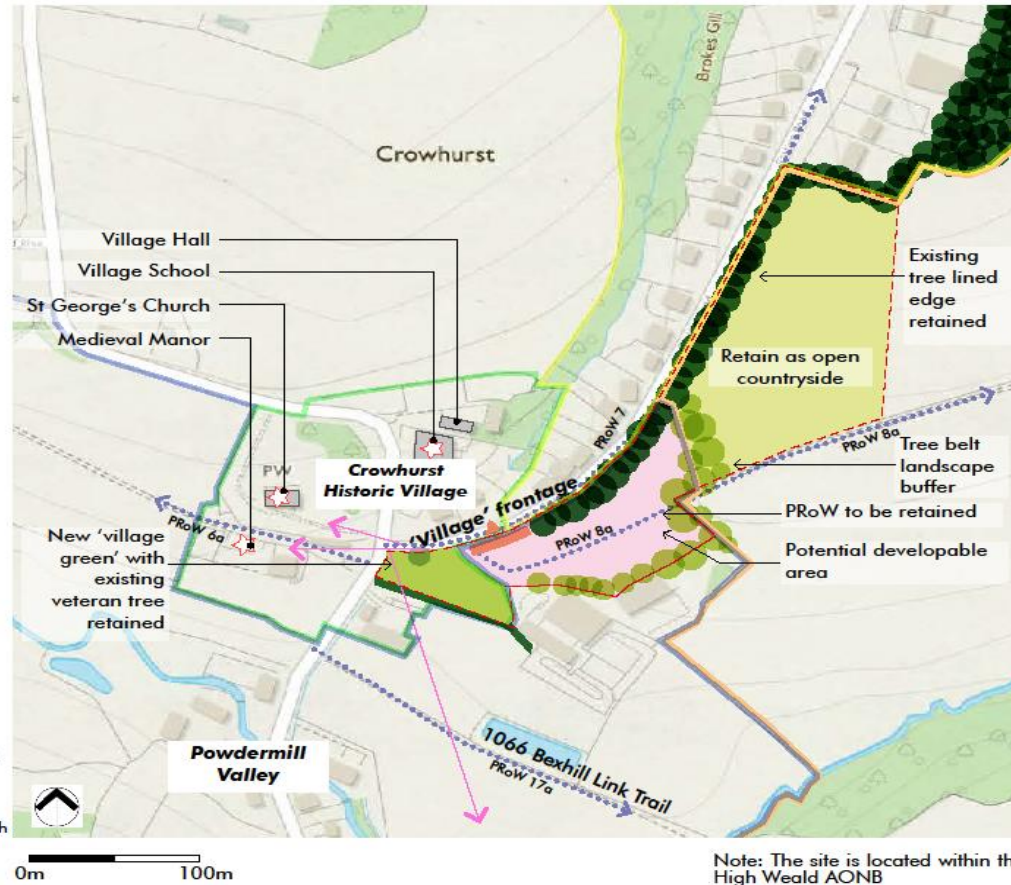
Capacity Assessment Ranking: Low-Moderate
 Positive key characteristics, overall character and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. There may be some limited opportunities to accommodate residential development without detrimental effects.

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



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

Fig. 4.3 Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment by Huskisson 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 AONB, 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, and the general under-provision in the District in respect of playspace, 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 AONB, 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;

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) 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 AONB landscape.



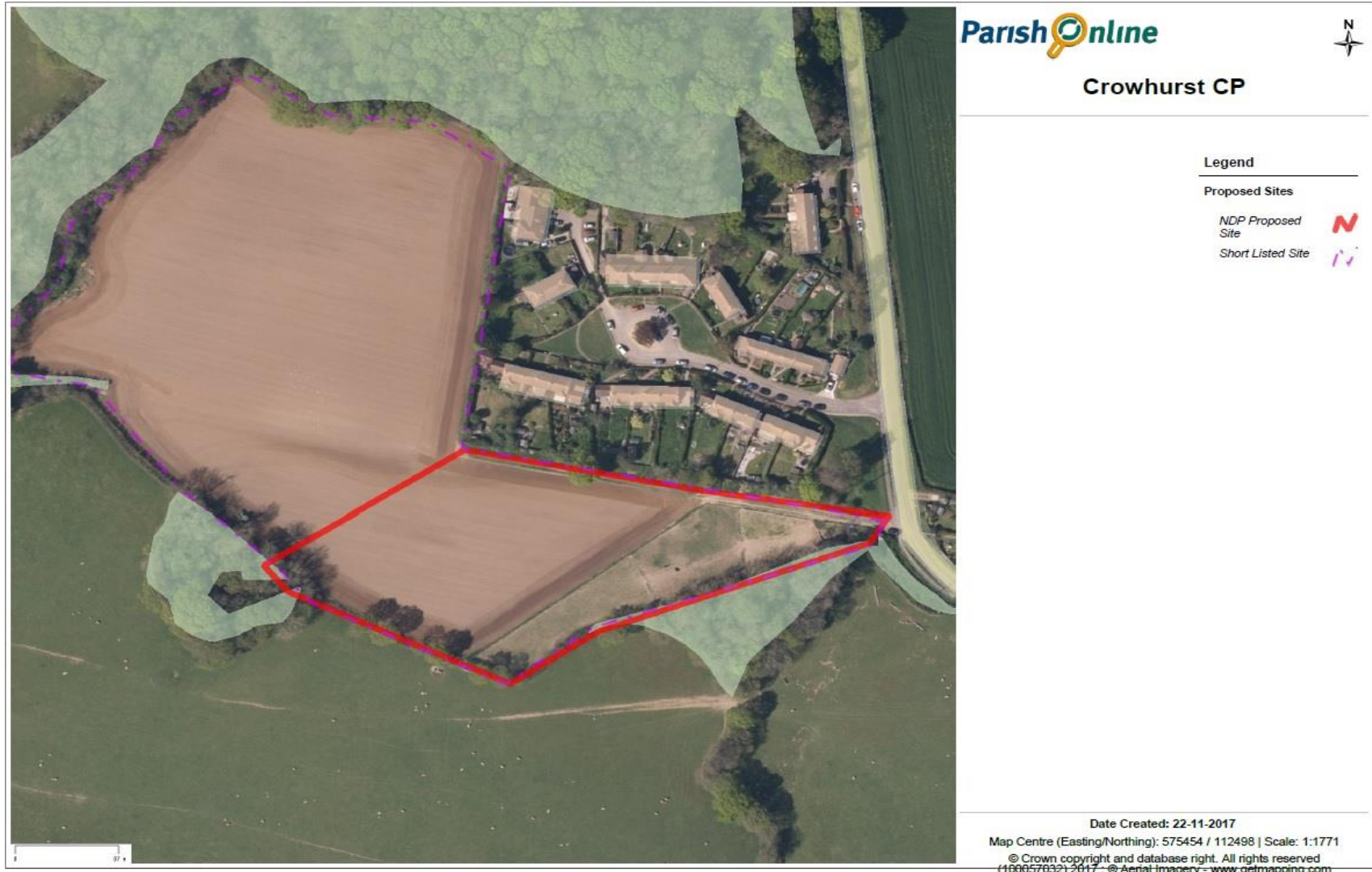


Fig. 4.4 Aerial View of Site CH2

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 landscap 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) | Access |
| Notable buildings | Open countryside |
| Listed buildings | Landscape buffer |
| Ancient woodland/SSSI/SNCI | Amenity Landscape |
| PRoW | |
| LCA 1a Fore Wood Nature Reserve | |
| LCA 1b Fore Wood Lane Settlement | |
| LCA 2a Powdermill Valley Farmland | |
| LCA 2b Crowhurst Historic Village | |

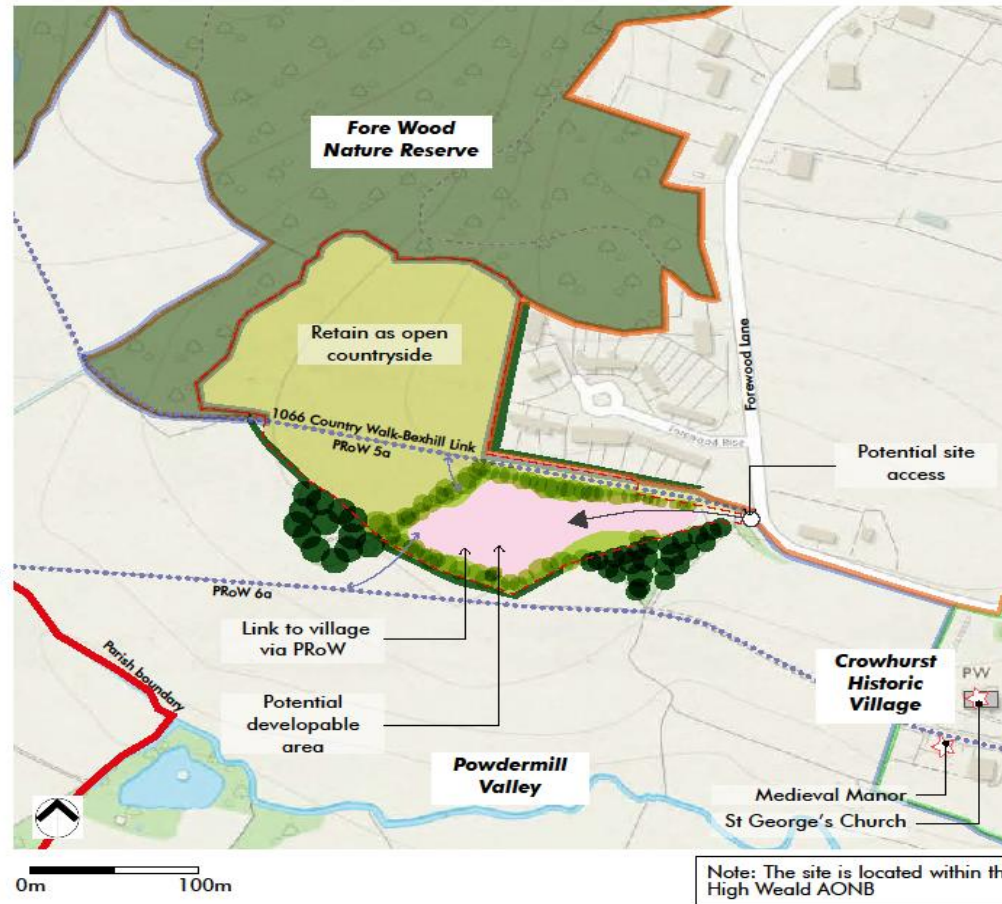


Fig. 4.5 Crowhurst Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment by Huskisson Brown Associates

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 AONB;
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 AONB 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 protect the character of the landscape or any effects can be mitigated, provided it does not reduce the availability of dwellings used as permanent residences;
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.

4.4.3.2 Village surveys showed a lot of concern over parking within the village – primarily around the recreational ground and the Village Hall/School/Church area and in the Forewood Rise development. 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 end at 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 but this will be reviewed throughout the plan period to ensure investment is directed where it is most needed.

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 an inclusive community. The following criteria should be met:

1. Safe pedestrian and vehicular access and, where it is practicable, off-road pedestrian routes provided to the key parts of the village and public transport links;
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 includes but is not limited to measures such as including renewable energy as part of the design and allowing connection to high speed broadband where/when available ;

Policy CC2 Infrastructure continues on next page....

4. All development proposals should provide vehicle and cycle parking (including garages) 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. New developments should provide electric vehicle charging points. There should be at least one charging point per dwelling for houses and for flats which have allocated car parking spaces. For flats which don't have an allocated parking space, provision needs to be made for a shared communal charging point. With regard to public car parking and residents car parking (both on-street and off-street), long term consideration needs to be made, in co-operation with ESCC and Rother DC, for the provision of electric vehicle charging points;

6. 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;
7. 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.

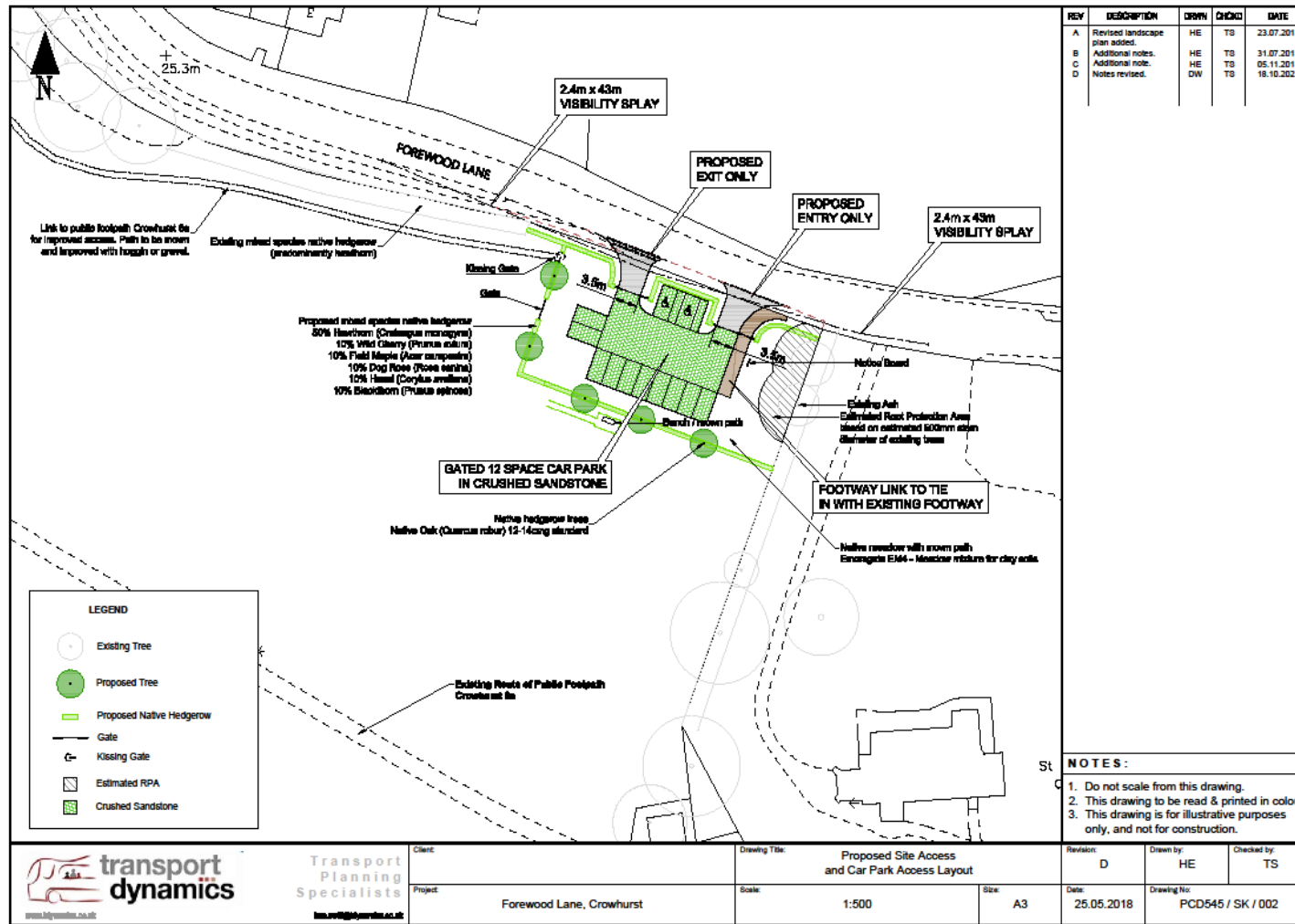


Fig.4.7 Proposed Car Park

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 carbon neutrality by 2030. 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 carbon neutrality efforts, renewable energy solutions that reduce fossil fuel dependency and offset carbon emissions are crucial.

Policy CC3 Renewables

In light of man-made climate change, the Parish welcomes various small-scale and community renewable energy initiatives. These include solar panels and farms, wind turbines, farm-scale anaerobic digesters (ADs), air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps. While the Parish generally supports renewable energy, adherence to certain criteria is necessary:

General Requirements for Renewable Energy Projects:

1. Improve biodiversity through measures such as wildflower meadows, enhanced native planting and provisions for bird/bat boxes and wildlife friendly habitats.
2. 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. Should not negatively affect important areas and views as indicated in CNDP Map 2.

Policy CC3 Renewables continues on next page....

Specific requirements for:

Solar:

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

Wind:

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



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)

CNDP Map3a Proposed new Local Green Space (Policy CF3) (new)

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 Sites Allocations (Policy CH1, CH2, CH3)

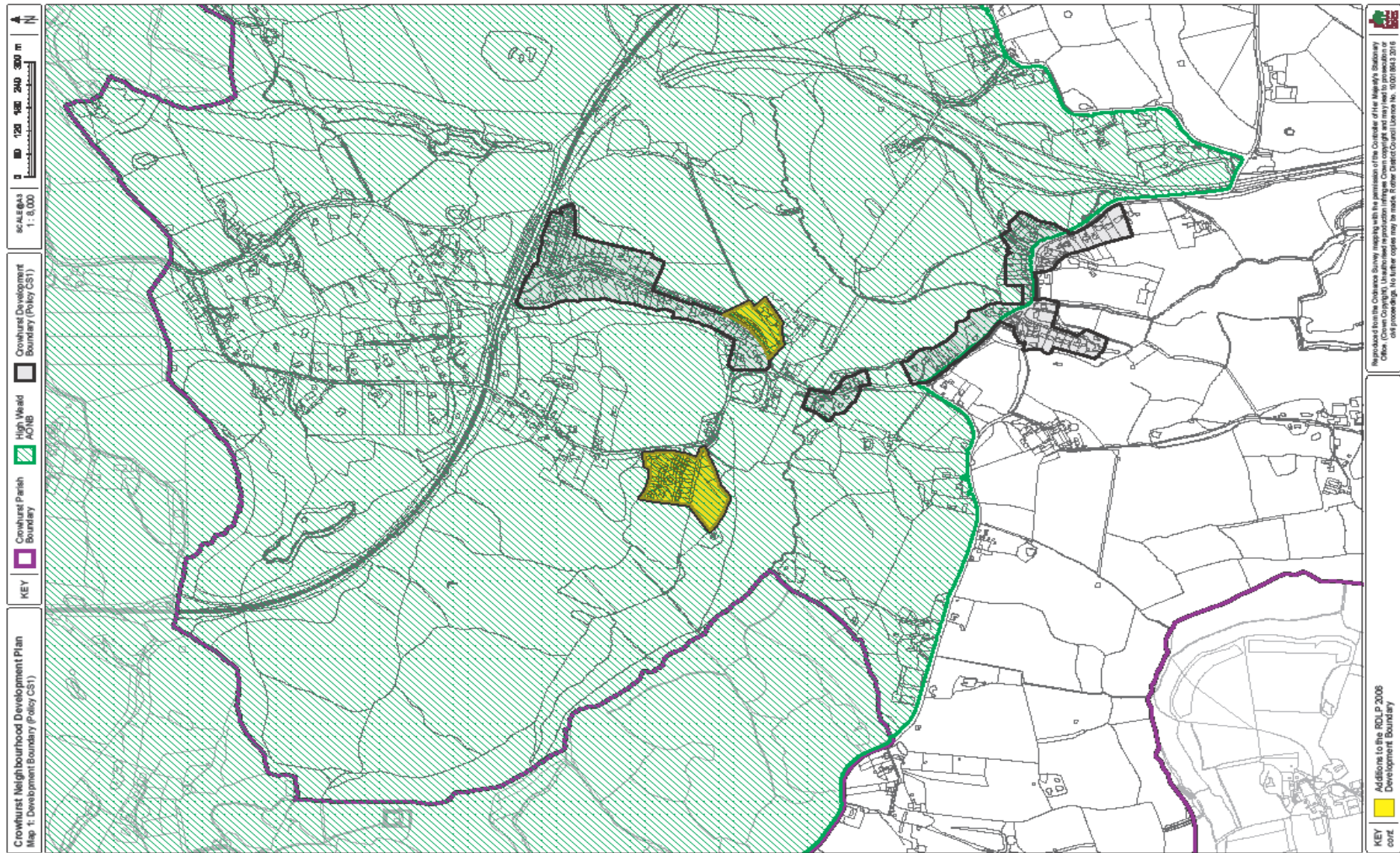
CNDP Map 8 Proposals Map (reviewed)

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

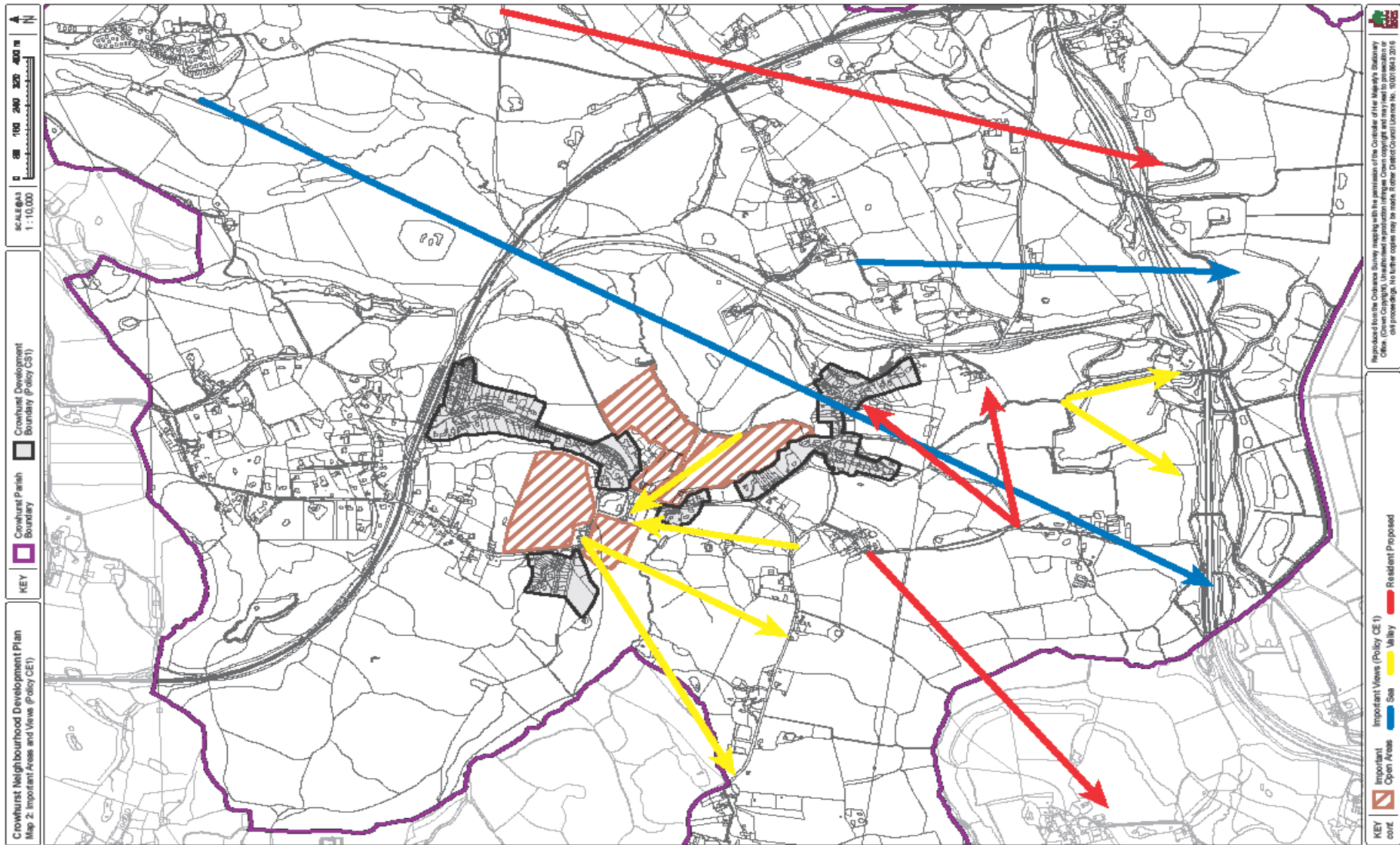
Rother District Council website - <https://www.rother.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/made-neighbourhood-plans/crowhurst-neighbourhood-plan/> or

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

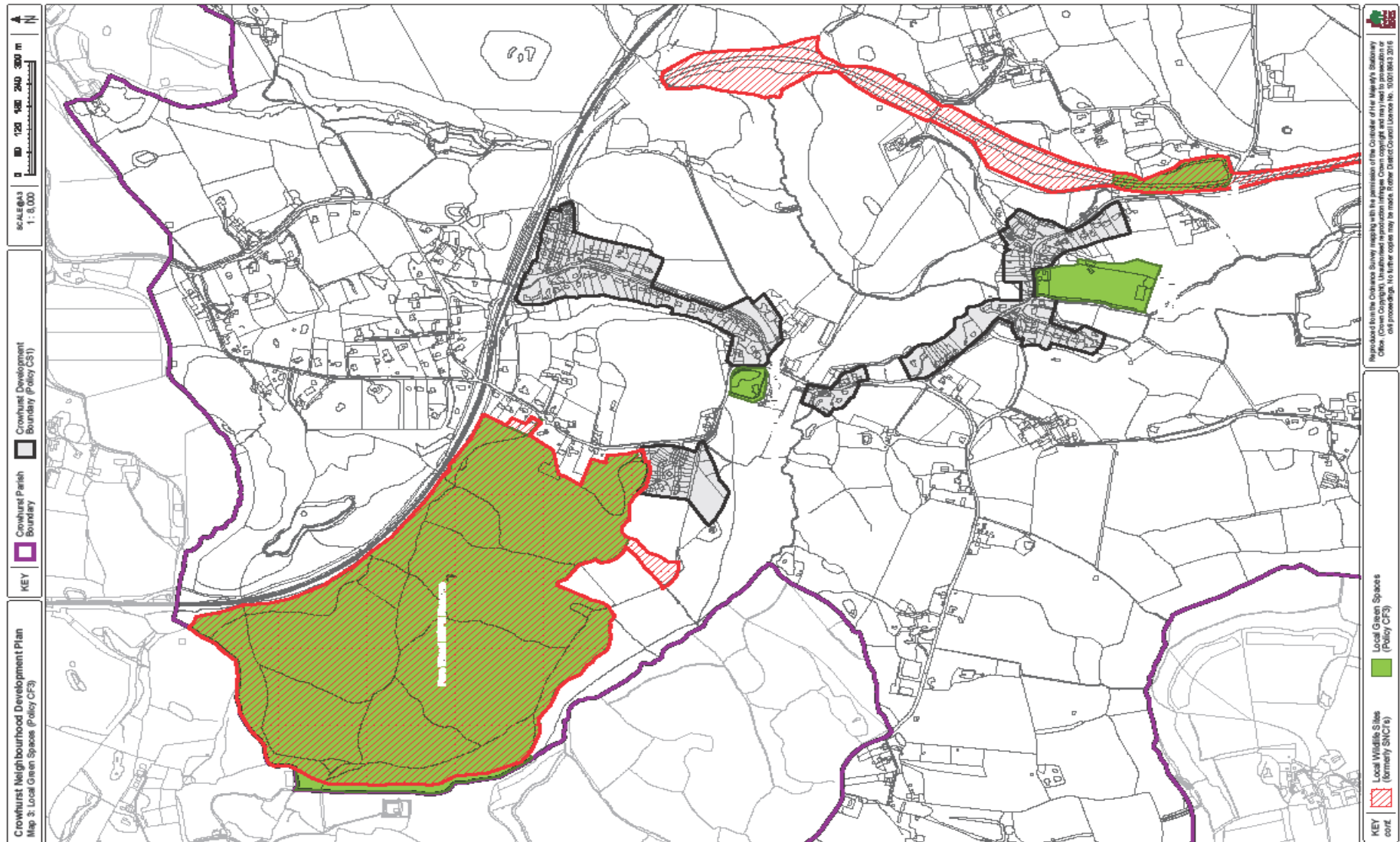
CNDP Map 1 Development Boundary (Policy CS1, CE1)



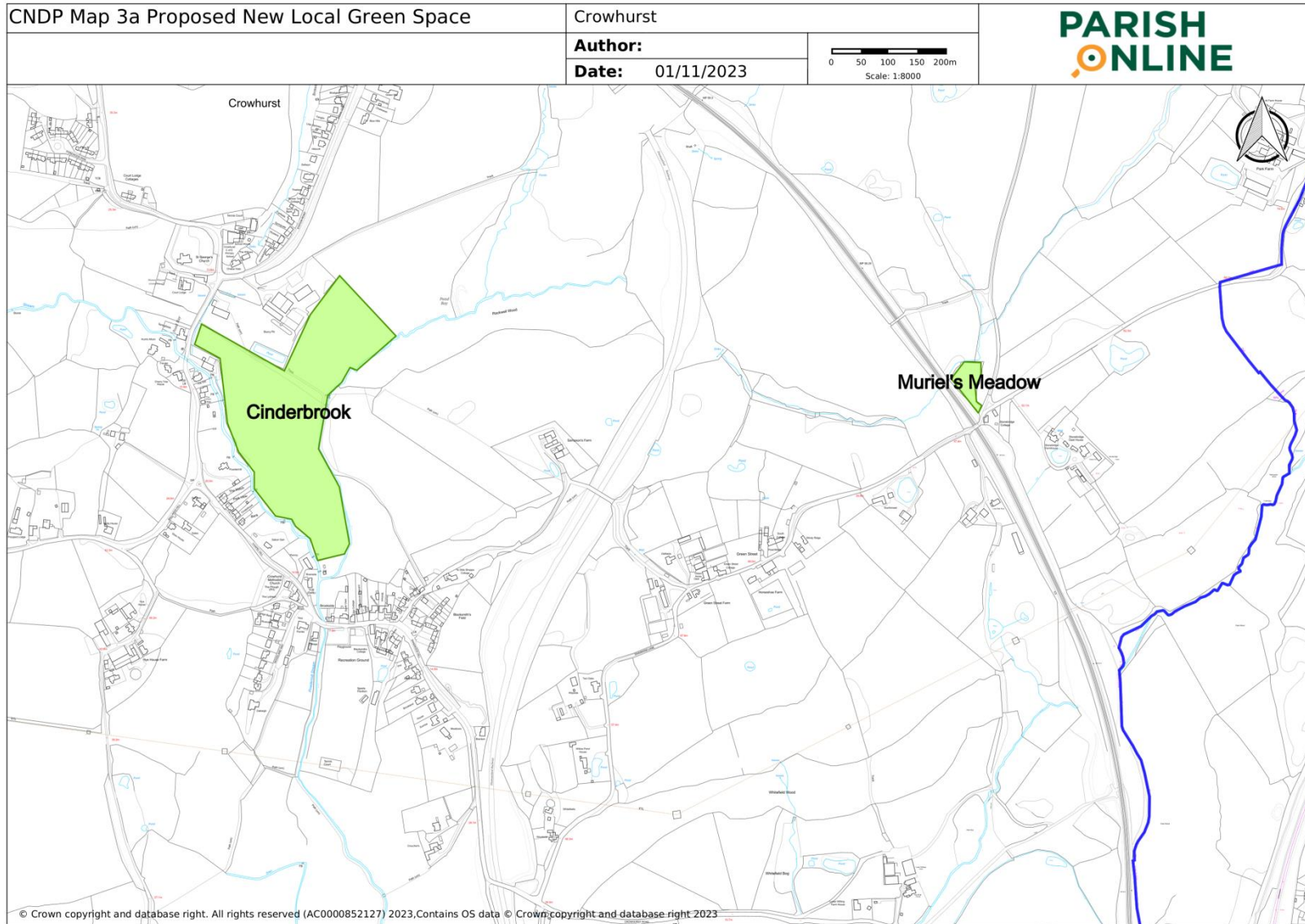
CNDP Map 2 Important Areas and Views (Policy CE1)



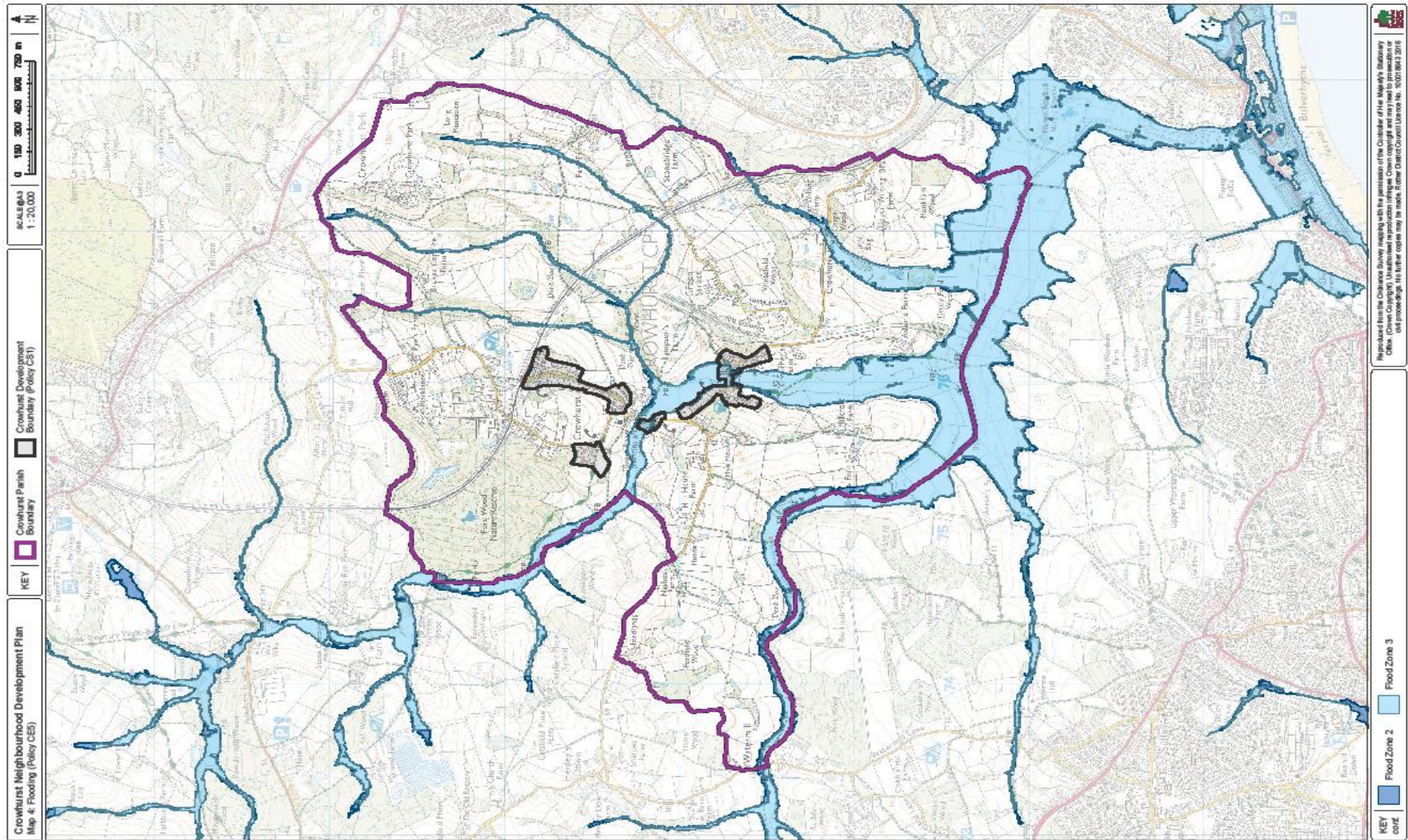
CNDP Map 3 Local Green Space (Policy CF3)



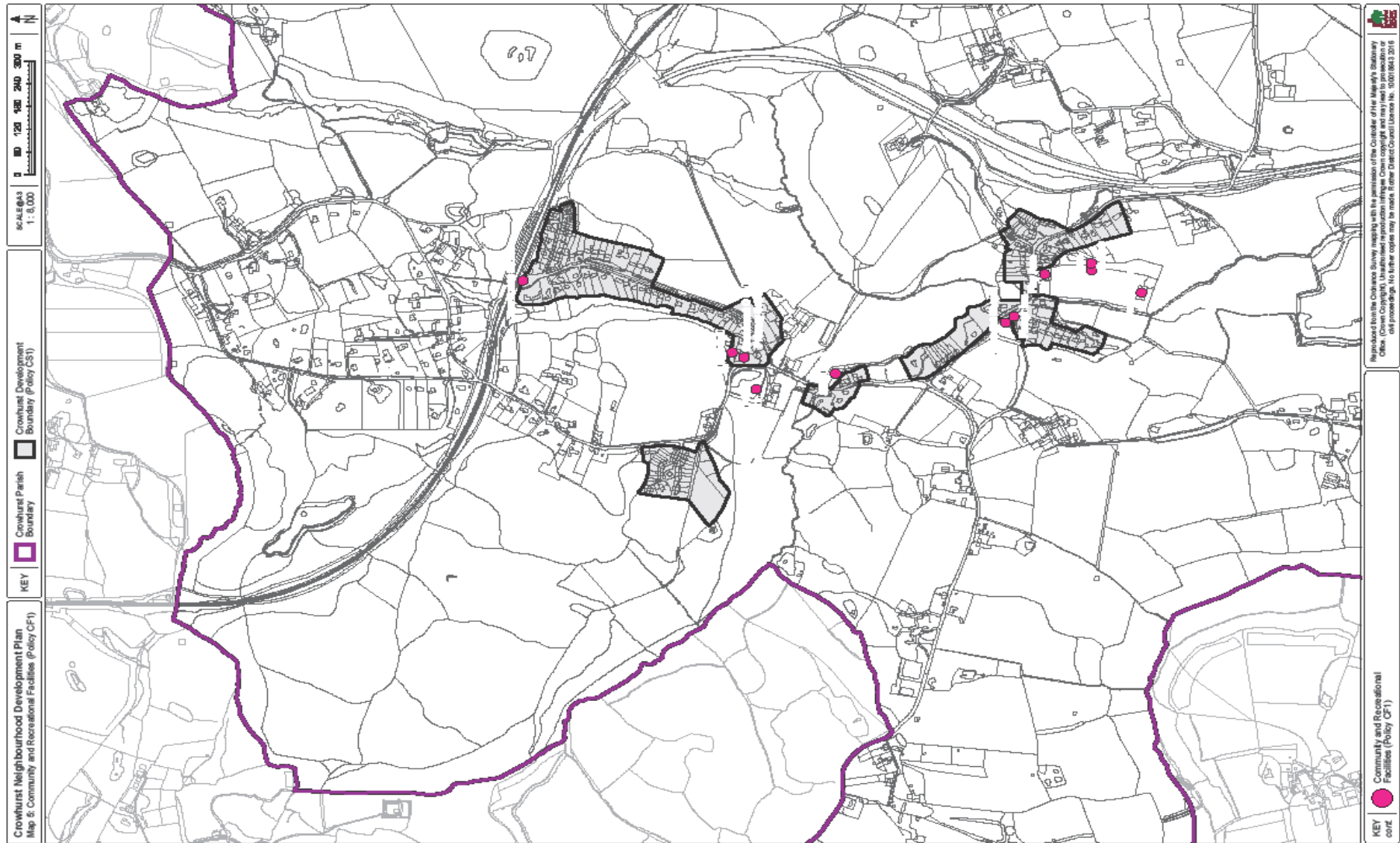
CNDP Map 3a Proposed New Local Green Space (Policy CF3)



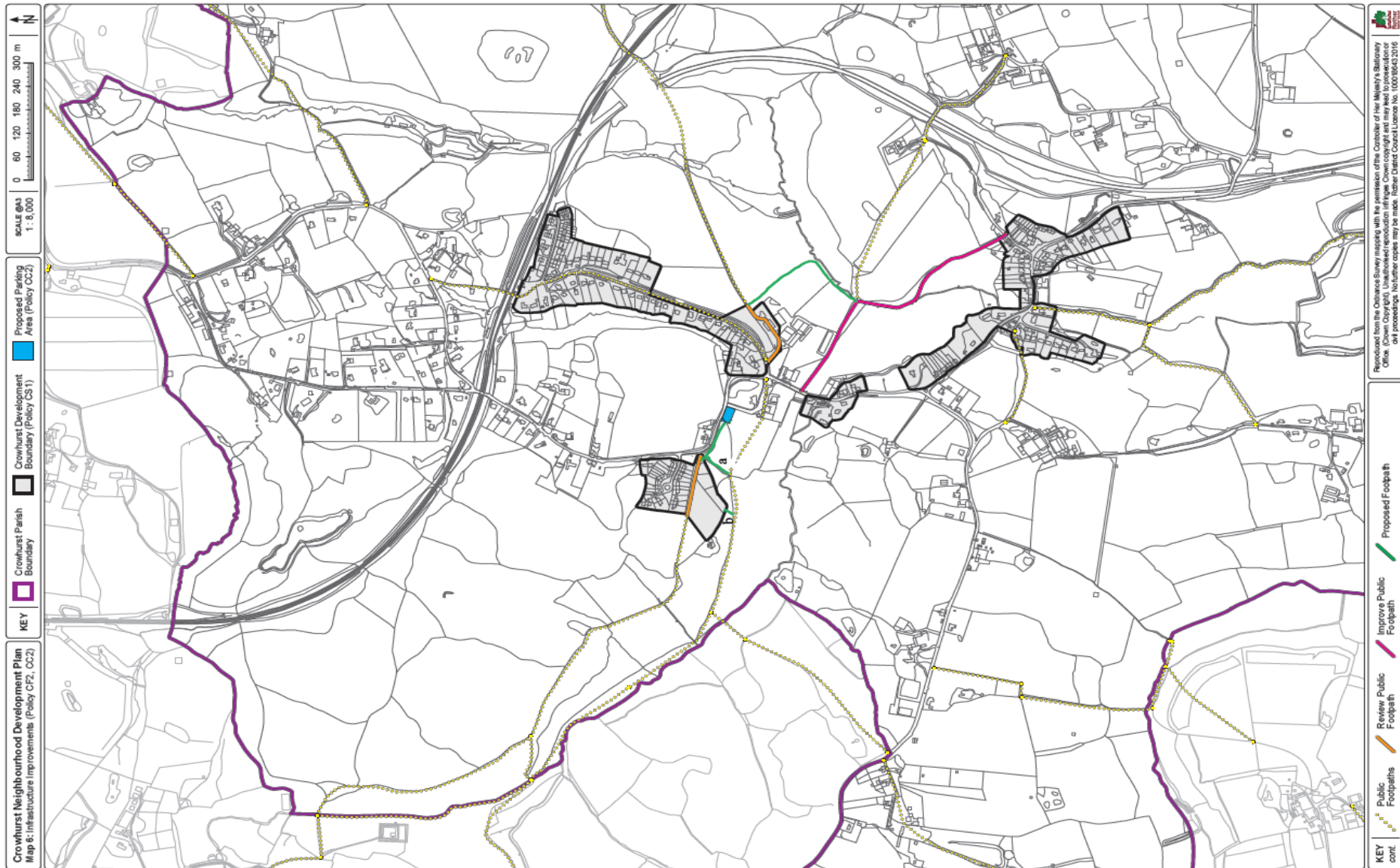
CNDP Map 4 Flooding (Policy CE5)



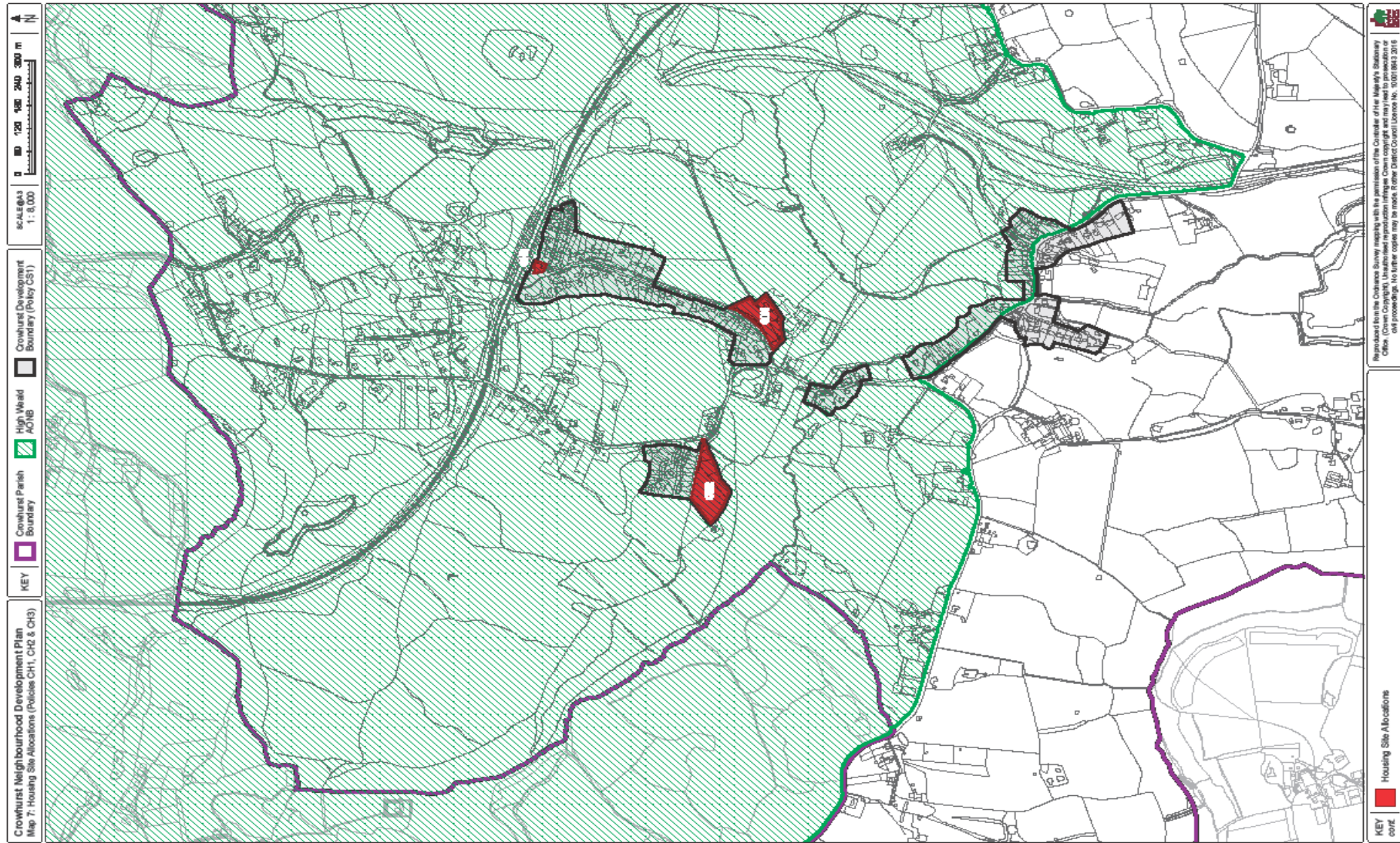
CNDP Map 5 Community Facilities (Policy CF1)



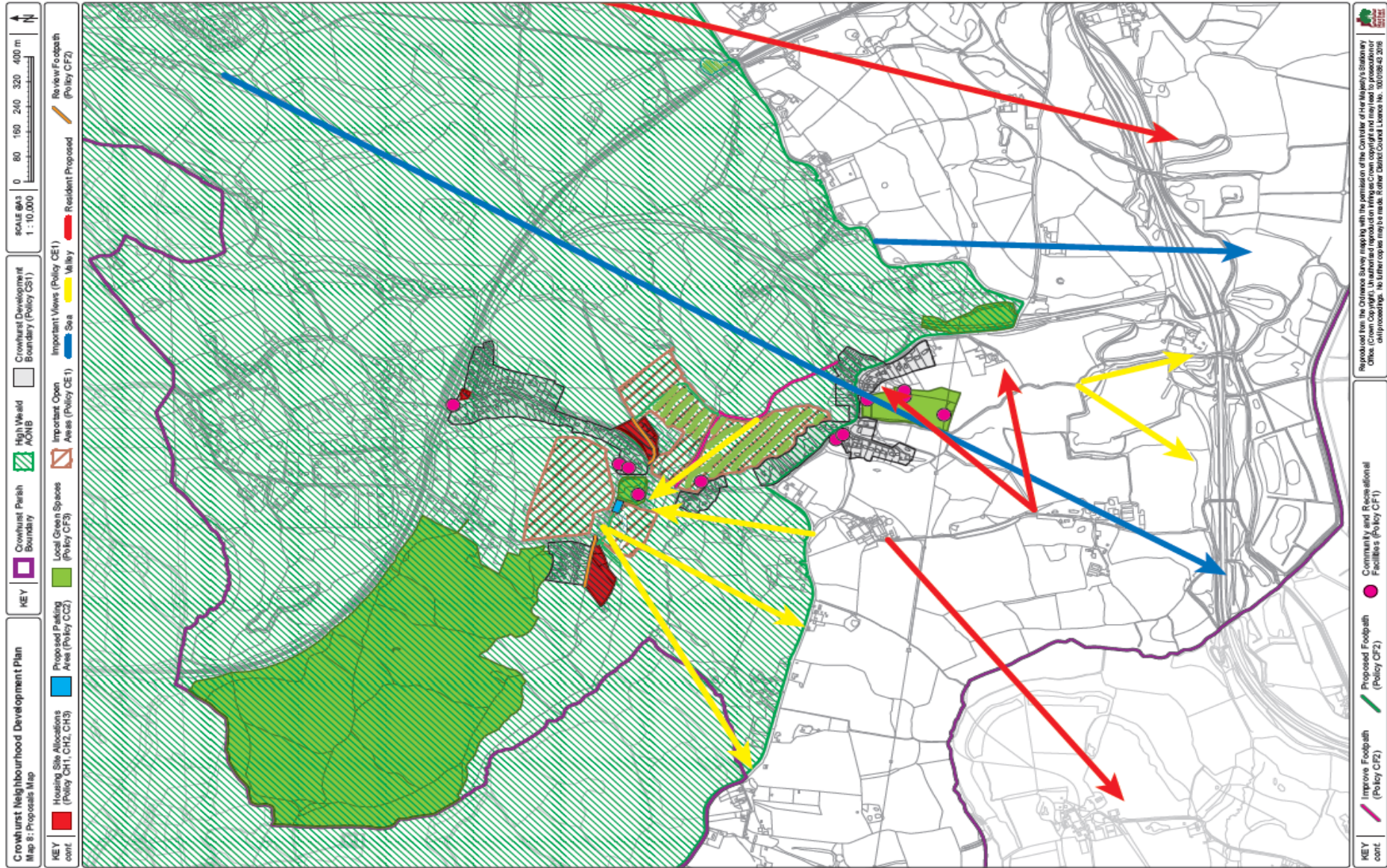
CNDP Map 6 Infrastructure Improvements (Policy CF2, CC2) (reviewed)



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.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk>



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 AONB 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?)			
AONB			
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			
Historical Conservation Areas			
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

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'Crowhurst Non-designated Heritage Assets' Nov 2018	Crowhurst Parish Council website - https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk
'Car Park Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Oct 2018	Crowhurst Parish Council website - https://www.crowhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk