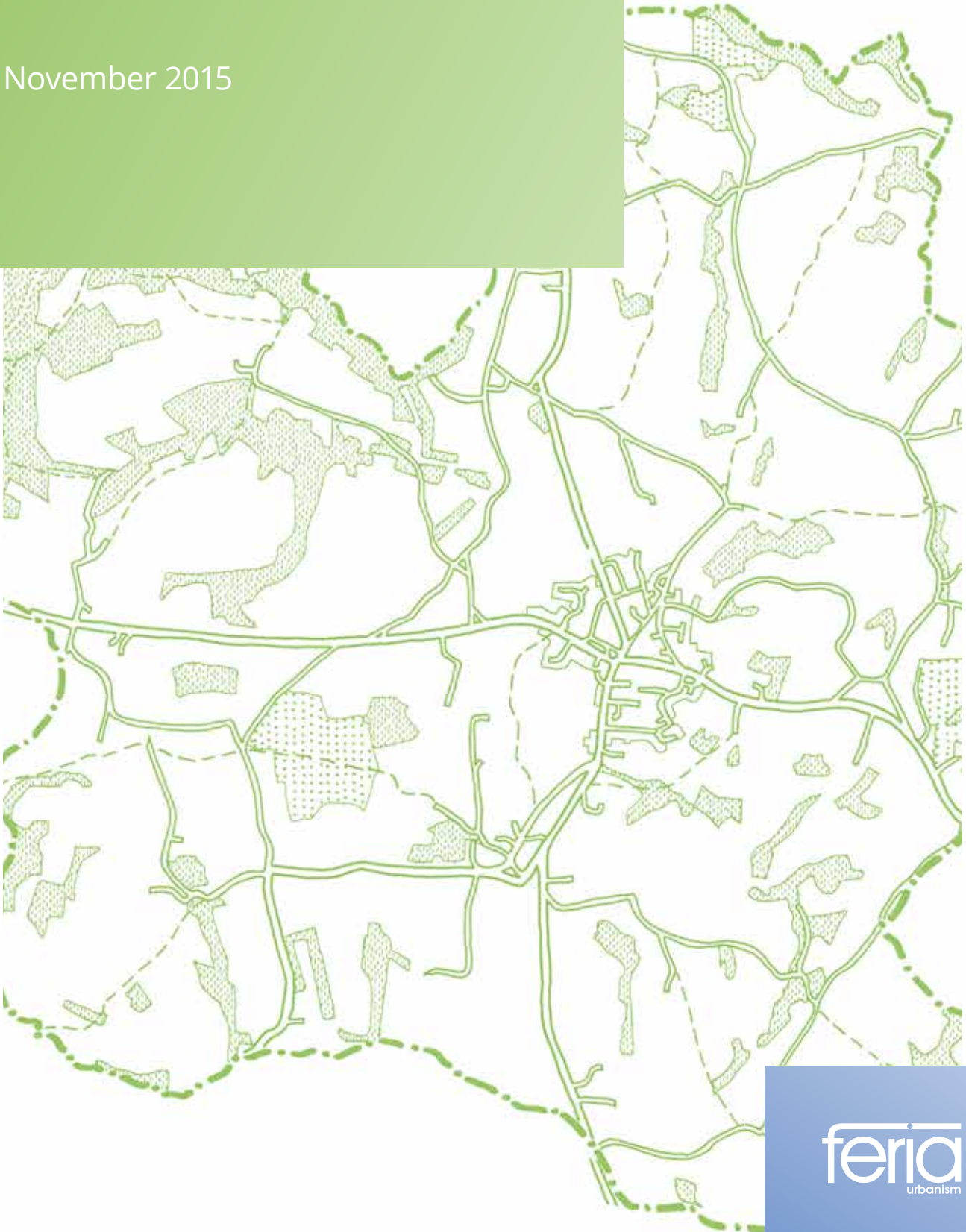


Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan

# Draft Planning Policies Consultation Report

November 2015







This consultation report sets out a series of draft policies for the neighbourhood plan, based on the consultation results to date.

The views of the community are now being sought to ensure that these draft policies are both right and appropriate for Hawkhurst.



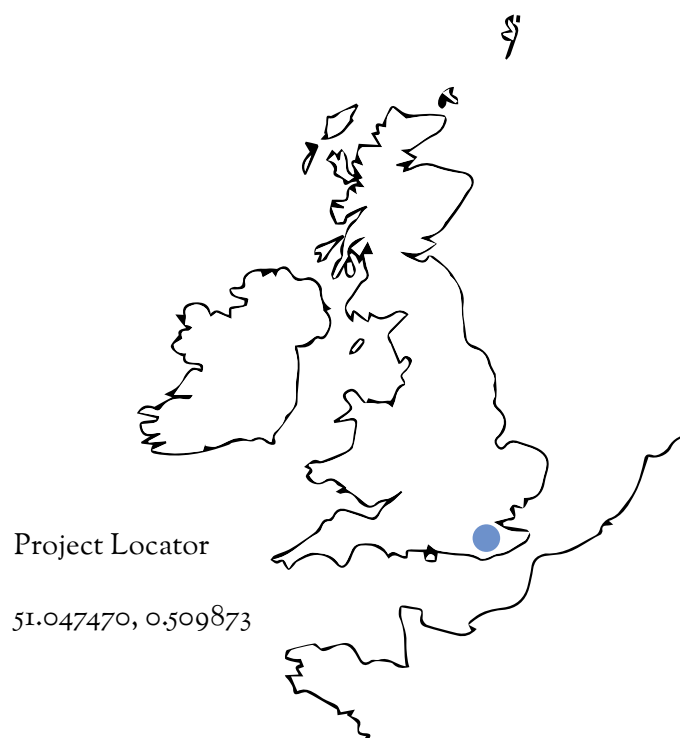
Feria Urbanism is a planning and design studio that specialises in urban design, urban planning, neighbourhood strategies, public participation and community engagement. Established in 2007, we have been involved in a diverse range of planning and design projects across the UK.

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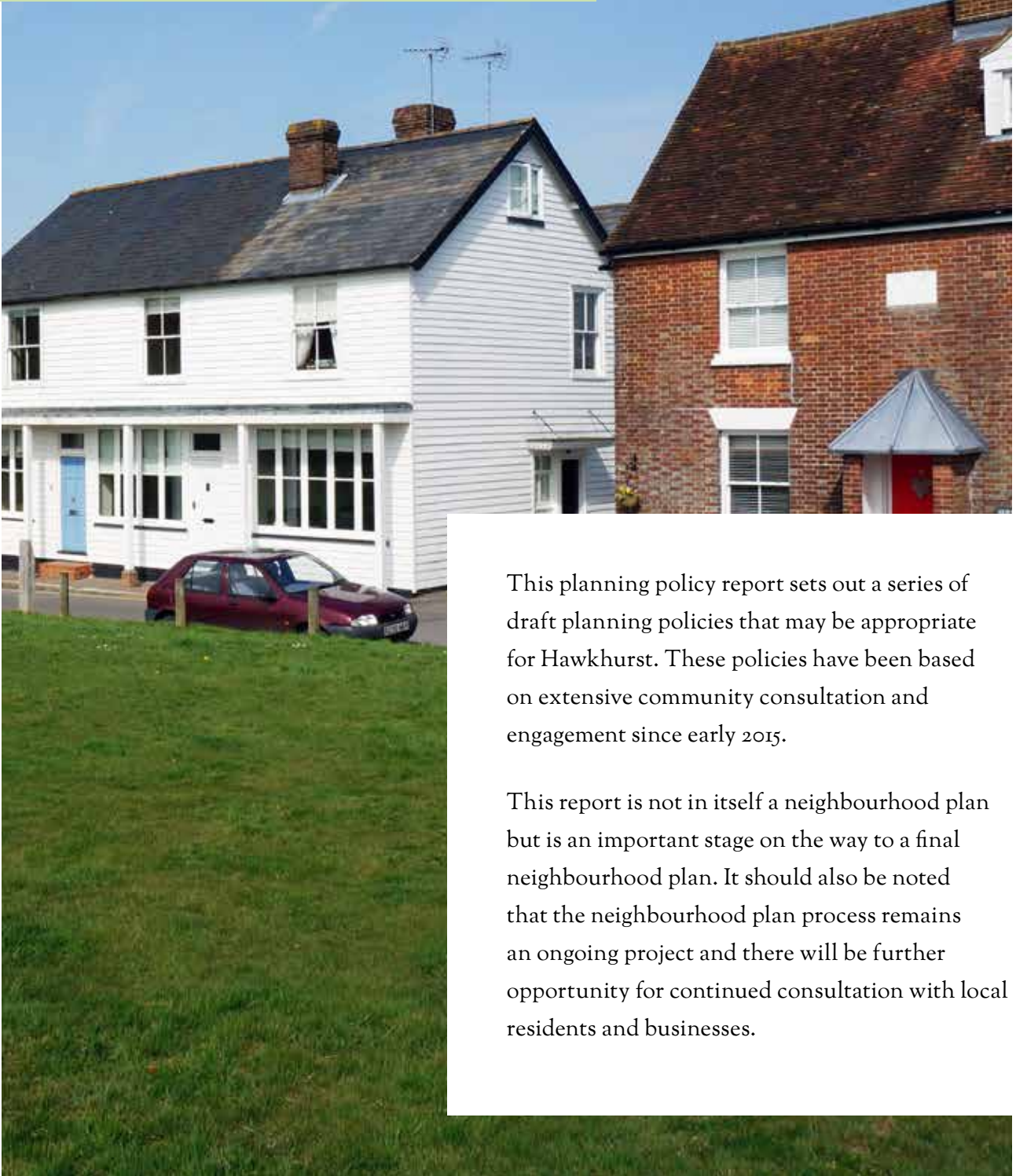
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# Background

How were the draft planning policies developed?



This planning policy report sets out a series of draft planning policies that may be appropriate for Hawkhurst. These policies have been based on extensive community consultation and engagement since early 2015.

This report is not in itself a neighbourhood plan but is an important stage on the way to a final neighbourhood plan. It should also be noted that the neighbourhood plan process remains an ongoing project and there will be further opportunity for continued consultation with local residents and businesses.

## What is a neighbourhood plan?

Neighbourhood planning is a community-led process introduced by Government to encourage local people to shape and influence development within the places where they live and work. They are produced by community forum groups or parish or town councils.

Neighbourhood plans are policy-based community-led plans which correspond to the Local Plan. In this case, the Local Plan is prepared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Neighbourhood plans can influence or allocate new housing; produce design policies for allocated sites or for general design policies; protect or identify new community facilities; and identify green spaces to be protected from any future development proposals and more.

The Government introduced the opportunity for local communities to prepare neighbourhood plans through amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Localism Act 2011 and through new regulations Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which sets out the requirements for Neighbourhood Plans.

In Hawkhurst, the preparation of the neighbourhood plan is being led by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee (NDPC) of Hawkhurst Parish Council.

## Where are we now?

Work on the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan began in April 2014 when the designated boundary for the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan was approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. See page 33.

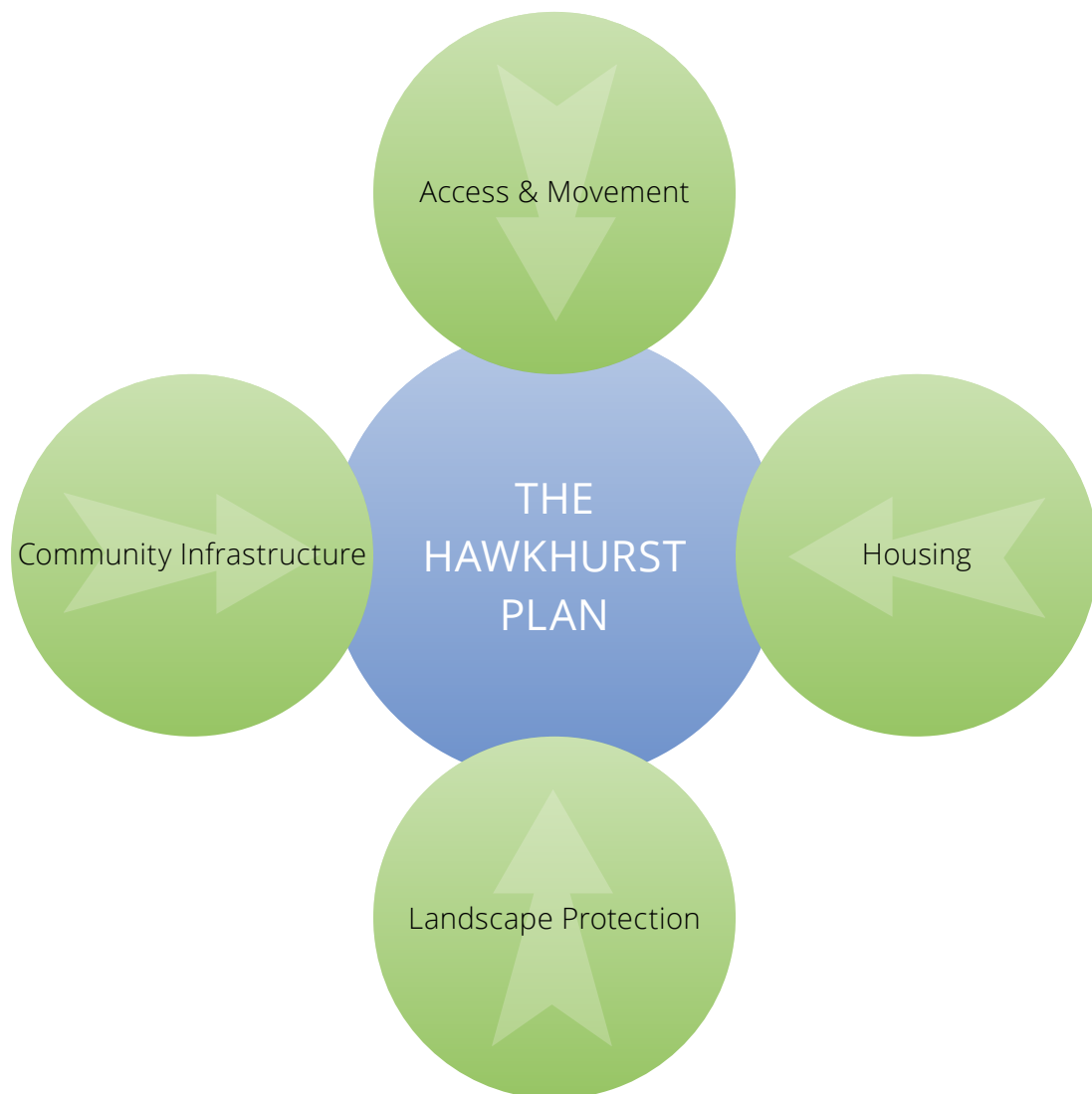
Since early 2015, the NDPC has been supported in its work by Feria Urbanism, a design and planning practice based in Bournemouth. The process in 2015 has comprised site visits by the consultant team in February and April. These site visits were followed by several key events to engage the community:

- Visioning Event held on 30th April event examined the critical issues in some detail;
- Three-Day Design Forum held on 26th, 27th and 28th May. This was a design-led exercise that examined how change can be accommodated, designed and planned;
- Evening Meeting held on 15th July to inform local residents of the work so far, the Interim Report and the emerging policy themes;
- Poster Exhibition held on 17th and 18th September to inform local residents of the responses made to the Interim Report via a questionnaire over the summer months.

There is now a draft set of policies, a vision statement and a set of plan objectives. The the views of the community are now being sought to ensure that these are all right and appropriate for Hawkhurst. There is also an ongoing dialogue between Hawkhurst Parish Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to ensure the policies conform with national and local policy, as required by the neighbourhood plan regulations.

# Planning Policy Structure

How will the four policy themes help guide the development of Hawkhurst into the future?



This diagram shows how the four key themes contribute the overall plan for Hawkhurst. Each policy theme (and the individual policies within them) needs to be tested against both the Vision Statement and the Neighbourhood Plan objectives to ensure that they are complementary and effective at delivering change and protection in the right ways.



## Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood (para. 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

Therefore, each stage of the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan process to date has sought to extend the amount of common ground between local residents and businesses, narrowing down various options through a transparent and open process. At all stages, the neighbourhood planning process will allow room for dissent and minority views but the overall aim of the process is to build a broad-based consensus.

This process has allowed a set of objectives for the neighbourhood plan to be developed with a supporting vision statement. These are still in draft and the views of the community are now being sought to ensure these are right and appropriate for Hawkhurst.

## Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement

*“Hawkhurst is a place where we can celebrate a rich history with a clear view to the future. It will be a place where development integrates the needs of people and nature and where there is a distinct character and identity”*

## Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan will be as follows:

- Maintaining and enhancing the rural character of the Moor, Highgate, Gills Green Sawyers Green and Four Throws, their immediate settings and the wider Hawkhurst parish.
- Coordinating all new development so that it contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and essential services for everybody who lives and works here.
- Creating a robust yet flexible access and movement network appropriate for all modes of travel and for current and future populations.
- Using land and resources efficiently so that new developments have a reduced demand for energy.
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the built environment and the wider countryside.
- Ensuring the quality of new development through the appropriate use of materials, details and inclusive design that responds to the Hawkhurst context.
- Ensuring that land made available for development will be developed in such a way as to improve people’s quality of life, for both new and existing residents.
- Delivering the community infrastructure necessary to support a changing village in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

# Access & Movement

## Draft Policies



A principal concern for residents, as expressed through the consultation work, was the issue of access and movement with particular regard to the negative impact traffic congestion has at the Highgate crossroads. This policy theme has therefore been developed with this specific issue in mind but has been widened to create a balanced mix of initiatives that will make moving around Hawkhurst parish a more pleasant, efficient and sustainable experience.

## Policy AM 01

### HIGHGATE HILL JUNCTION

Improvements to the Highgate Hill A229-A268 crossroads, to ease traffic flow and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists while retaining the village character that is special to Hawkhurst.



This policy is site specific to the A229-A268 junction in the heart of Hawkhurst.

## Policy background

The crossroads marks a historic location within the parish and provides a distinct identity to Hawkhurst. The attractive Colonnade, the Royal Oak pub with its setback location, framing the war memorial and the trees, together with numerous other heritage buildings all combine to provide an attractive village scene.

However, the levels of traffic currently using the crossroads, combined with the relative narrowness of the carriageway can lead to congestion and tailbacks during peak hours. Design interventions are therefore sought at the crossroads area to help ease traffic flows and remove the likelihood of tailbacks and long waiting queues during peak hours.

These interventions could include a shared-space approach to the junction, that could involve the removal of the traffic lights to be replaced by a circulatory system, based around roundabouts, or unmarked crossroads. Such an approach may also allow for the widening and/or realignment of the footpaths and footways, a better setting for the war memorial monument, additional tree-planting and a general removal of street signage and clutter to create a simple but unified space that creates a new civic heart at the centre of the village.

The crossroads is about more than just moving cars across and through the village; it marks an historic place and is part of the rural fabric of Hawkhurst. This special character will need to be maintained and enhanced through the design interventions. A careful and considerate design must help deliver a better village scene, an enhanced sense of place and create more sustainable travel patterns.

## Policy AM 02

### PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Ensure the network of footpaths and footways throughout the village is safe, convenient and comfortable, with wider footways where necessary.



This policy is primarily aimed at the pedestrian environment in and around Highgate but may have wider application to other parts of the parish.

## Policy background

The network of the existing footpaths and footways throughout Hawkhurst does not always allow for safe and convenient access. In many places, they are too narrow to be used comfortably. There is also a need to address the perceived threat to pedestrian safety that results from narrow pavements, the passage of HGVs and the associated issue of air pollution.

To encourage more people to walk, the existing and future footpaths around the village need to be generous, well-surfaced, safe and well-connected. In the centre of the village, particularly around the crossroads, many existing footpaths could be widened to make walking more comfortable. The dominance of vehicle movement is further emphasised by narrow footpaths that do not allow convenient access around the village and these need to be widened to give greater priority to pedestrians.

With space for car parking limited within the historic part of the village, especially around the Colonnade, the Royal Oak and the library, an increase in the numbers of people walking will go some way to ease the pressure on giving over more land to car parking.

## Policy AM 03

### COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

Improve access to the countryside through improved signage and better maintained surfaces on footpaths.



This policy is primarily aimed at links between Highgate and the Moor but has wider application to other parts of the neighbourhood plan area.

[NOTE : As a separate project to the neighbourhood plan, the parish council is currently preparing a comprehensive footpath and rights of way map].

## Policy background

The village edges need to be designed in a way that will provide a sense of enclosure to the village, prevent unchecked sprawl and ensure that any future new areas of housing can positively respond to the landscape beyond. New housing clusters also need to be the right scale and in the right location, not obstruct valued rural views and not be large anonymous housing estates.

Any new village edges must also encourage public access to the countryside beyond the village. A new north south green link may be able to connect to the disused Hop Pickers railway line in the future. A task group is currently exploring the possibility of opening up the Hawkhurst—Cranbrook—Goudhurst—Horsmonden—Paddock Wood disused railway line for walking and cycling.

Many residents value living close to some of the most attractive countryside in England but easy access can be frustrated through blocked footpaths or private ownerships. Opening up more land around the new edges of Hawkhurst to create highly-valued recreational routes will be one way to ensure the new village edges have a sense of permanence and will reassure village residents that growth will not continue ever outwards.

## Policy AM 04

### WALKING & CYCLING STRATEGIES

Create a series of on-street and off-street routes that are safe, convenient and comfortable for cycling and walking and will encourage people to not use the car for short trips in and around the village centre.



This policy is primarily aimed at the environment in and around Highgate and the Moor, and connecting the two, but will have wider application to other parts of the parish.

## Policy background

The creation of streets that are safe for cycling and walking will encourage healthy active lifestyles for all ages. In certain areas, segregated or dedicated cycling infrastructure may be required, for example, at key junctions. These measures will help raise the level of utility cycling (e.g. riding to work, the shops or to school). Good quality cycle infrastructure will give cyclists the space they need to ride safely on the roads and keep the pavement space for pedestrians. Facilities that are to be shared between pedestrians and cyclists must be avoided if at all possible within the built part of the village.

Meanwhile, Hawkhurst is surrounded by attractive open green space and areas. The creation of off-street recreational cycling routes will enhance existing access and connections between the built-up parts of the village and the green spaces beyond. These routes need to be convenient, accessible and enjoyable if they are to help encourage cycling as a recreational activity which in turn, may help raise levels of utility cycling. Such off-road routes through the countryside can often be safely and successfully shared between walkers and cyclists. Regular access to green open space has a significant positive impact upon an individual's mental health and access to the countryside setting of Hawkhurst parish can be promoted by well-connected accessible cycle routes.

Housing development needs to consider the storage and parking of a number of bicycles in a household and consider the growing market for "e-bikes" (i.e. electric motor-assisted bicycles) that may make cycling in a hilly setting more attractive, to more people, more often.



Footpaths and bridleways that link the built areas of the parish with one another need to be protected and enhanced.



Implementing changes to the crossroads is likely to be a key project coming out of the neighbourhood plan.



Walking routes on the edge of open countryside are a key feature that makes life in Hawkhurst a positive experience.



Providing a more convenient and more connected pedestrian network will be an aim of the neighbourhood plan.

# Housing

## Draft Policies



Over the last ten years, Hawkhurst has shown a willingness to accommodate new development. Only 35 additional units are required to be built between 2015 and 2026 in order for the parish to accommodate the target of 240 housing units set for it by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The recent successful appeal to build 62 more properties adjacent to Highgate Hill means that the parish will now “over-deliver” by 11%, or 27 houses.

It is therefore not yet clear at this stage how, or even if, the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan will allocate further specific sites for new housing development over and above those already identified by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Discussions between the parish council and the local authority are continuing with regard to this particular issue. Meanwhile, it is highly likely that the neighbourhood plan will deal with matters of affordability, design and housing mix.

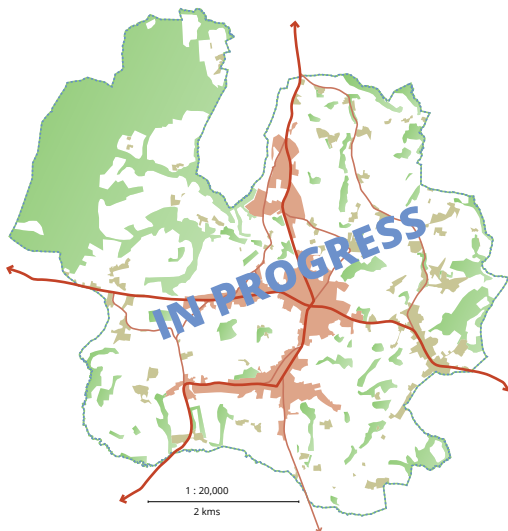




## Policy H 01

### NEW HOUSING & SITE SELECTION

A series of site-specific policies to secure the delivery of new houses, in the right quantities and in the right locations, as defined by a broad range of criteria.



This policy will require site specific selections to be made. Engagement between Hawkhurst Parish Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is ongoing to establish the detail of this particular policy. See also the suggested site selection criteria on page 21.

## Policy background

The intention of this policy is to ensure that the site selection for new housing does not negatively impact upon the village's positive relationship with both the existing built areas and the surrounding countryside.

New housing clusters need to be the right scale and in the right location and not be large anonymous housing estates.

Any development around the village edges needs to be designed in a way that will provide a sense of enclosure to the village, prevent unchecked sprawl and ensure that new areas of homes can positively respond to the landscape.

Development on or near the edge of the built up area must encourage public access to the countryside beyond. Many residents value living close to some of the most attractive countryside in England but easy access can be frustrated through blocked footpaths or private ownerships. Opening up more recreational land around the new edges of Hawkhurst to create new highly-valued recreational routes will be one way to ensure that the village edges have a sense of permanence and will reassure residents that growth will not continue ever outwards.

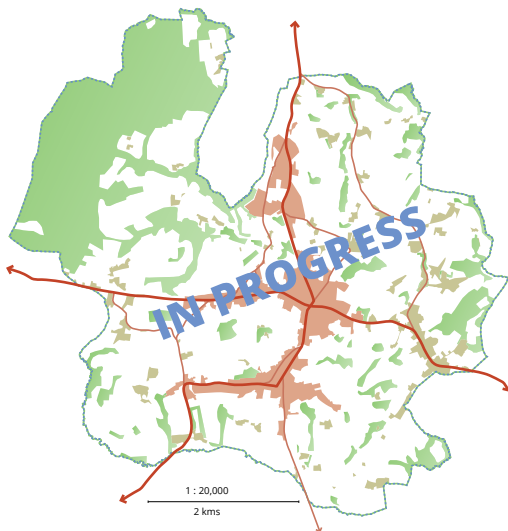
New developments also need to integrate the use of sustainable modes of travel between the site and the heart of the existing built areas.

It should be noted that neighbourhood plans are required by the legislation to “plan positively” by setting out the types of development that will be encouraged or permitted on certain sites rather than saying what will not be permitted.

## Policy H 02

### AFFORDABLE & LOCAL NEEDS HOUSING

A range of tenures and sizes appropriate to Hawkhurst will need to be delivered on any new housing sites meet local needs and demands.



This policy may require site specific selections to be made in order to allow for more precise policy wording about mix and tenure on specific sites.

## Policy background

The type, tenure and size of future housing must reflect the local needs and demands of Hawkhurst parish. New housing development must aim to meet housing need in the area, rather than attract incomers in the first instance.

This policy may require a housing needs survey to help identify the level of local demand for affordable housing. This plan could use this to support some key worker and shared ownership housing to allow children of local families to remain in the area. Developers and local housing associations would be obliged to provide affordable housing that prioritises local residents' needs and ensures a distribution of units across both individual developments and the whole parish.

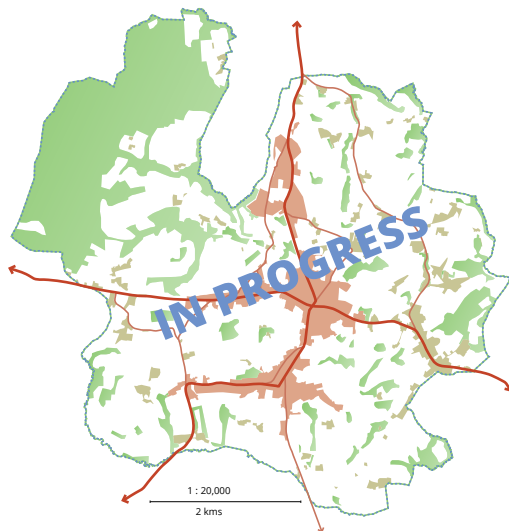
Affordable housing delivery during the plan period will need to be in conformity with adopted policies as prepared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. It is expected that Hawkhurst Parish Council will work with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to identify rural exception sites for affordable housing. The proportion likely to be sought by the plan is for 52% one bed units, 33% two bed units and 15% three bed units. Four bed houses are already well catered for in the village.

Future homes must be designed for a changing population. This may involve starter homes and homes for an aging population to provide a good social mix, supporting social cohesion and independent living. An adequate amount of small-sized houses must be built to allow those wishing to downsize to release larger, family-sized properties back into the market.

## Policy H 03

### HOUSING MIX

All new housing developments will comprise house types, designs and details fit for modern living



This policy may require site specific selections to be made in order to allow for more precise policy wording about designs for modern living on specific sites.

## Policy background

The neighbourhood plan requires all future housing development to support modern lifestyles through innovative design. These will include reducing energy costs through meeting high design standards as well as internal space standards and layouts that will encourage working from home. Design details, such as the ability to receive parcels securely when not at home, storage of several bicycles, flexible use of garage and garden spaces and the effective storage of waste and recycling bins must all be considered.

The use of locally-sourced and recycled materials for use in construction should also be considered.

All housing should seek to meet “Lifetime Homes” standards to ensure properties are sustainable and can be easily adapted to meet the needs of a changing population. The development of one-storey dwellings, appropriate for an elderly population and those with restricted mobility, must be considered across all new development sites.

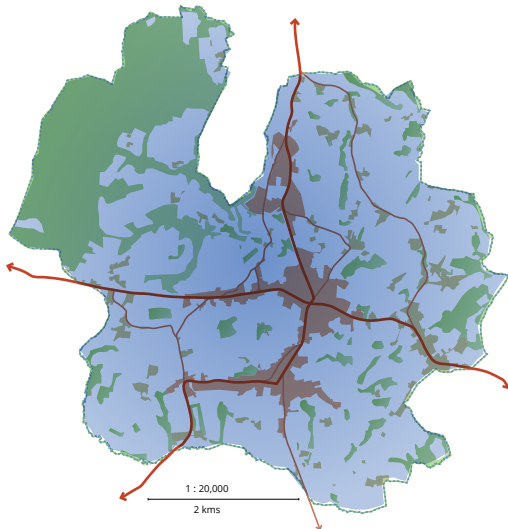
All housing designs must also promote efficient use of water, electricity and energy. The introduction of on-site generation technology, smart meters and other measures to reduce energy consumption should be considered across all housing sites.

Consideration should also be given for “self-finish” and “self-build” homes, as well as innovative hybrid housing that can respond to modern lifestyles.

## Policy H 04

### DESIGN QUALITY

The design, form and detail of new housing developments should be principally informed by the traditional form, layout, character and style of the parish's vernacular architecture. This will be applicable to both new build houses and alterations to existing properties.



This policy will be applied parish wide and be applicable to all new development sites.

## Policy background

The residents of Hawkhurst are generally agreed that they desire any development of their village to be of a high design standard. They are also keen to see new developments improve their environment rather than downgrade it. They are proud of their Wealden village with its history and culture and want to protect and enhance this legacy into the future.

Any new housing development must be shaped and influenced by the traditional character and style of the village. The Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan requires all new developments to reference the local context and demonstrate the use of high quality materials and styles appropriate to the place.

For example, any small-scale in-fill and extensions to existing properties developments that may come forward around the edges of the village must be sensitive to the rural and more historic context, by reflecting the character of housing in proximity to countryside. Larger areas of new housing may be required to develop their own distinctive characters, to add to the overall variety and mix to be found within the parish.

The aim for all new developments must be for them to leave a positive architectural legacy, to be sensitive to their local context and environment and add to the positive character of the Hawkhurst parish.

This policy will not exclude innovation or modern and contemporary architecture. Such designs are encouraged across the parish but on individual sites as exemplar projects. Where appropriate, architects and designers are encouraged to create new designs that reflect both the local context and the current technology and materials of the era within which they will be built.

The size of new homes often falls short of existing space standards. The now defunct “Parker-Morris” space standards created more spacious buildings than those often being built today. All new developments are therefore to have space standards in accordance with the RIBA guidance contained in “The Case for Space, the Size of England’s New Homes” as follows: One bedroom home, minimum 50m<sup>2</sup> gross interior areas (2 people); Two bedroom home, minimum 61m<sup>2</sup> gross interior areas (3 people); Three bedroom home, minimum 86m<sup>2</sup> gross interior areas (5 people). Bungalows are encouraged, giving easier access for the disabled and elderly and releasing family homes.

There follows a set of suggested headings for the neighbourhood plan’s design guide and criteria to inform site selection:

## SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

**INFILL** — Development of small sites within the built area within walking distance of shops and amenities. These infill sites to be developed in groups of no more than 4-5 houses.

**BROWN FIELD** — Previously developed and underdeveloped land is to be used prior to any greenfield development.

## DESIGN GUIDE HEADINGS

**INTEGRATION** — The buildings should be well integrated into the site and become part of a unified interrelated composition.

**LOCALITY** — Housing to be based on local needs, construction materials and reflect local building traditions. Materials to be obtained from local sustainable sources, for example timber cladding. Small-size clay tiles are preferred to concrete.

**TRADITION** — Styles and materials that relate to those found in the village will be preferred.

**AMENITY** — Green spaces of appropriate scale and quality within new developments is encouraged. All new houses to have private amenity space and/or gardens, at the front, back or side of the property, as appropriate.

**EVOLUTION** — The village is to evolve gradually and not to experience rapid large-scale development.

**DOMESTIC** — Scale of new dwelling to be of a small or domestic scale suitable for a village environment.

**DISCRETION** — Car parking to be discreet, with a careful mix of on and off road parking as appropriate.

**EXTENSIONS** — House extensions are to be sympathetic with the house style and use similar materials and fenestration.



On-plot parking can be discreet and approaches such as this are a welcome technique in a rural setting where the parked car can detract from the visual quality of a village.



Rows of linked properties can be an efficient way to create areas of character and identity.



Modern styles need to be treated with caution. There needs to be clear demonstration about merits of the chosen design approach.



Rows of houses need to have a sense of rhythm and variety as they address topographical changes, such as this run of handsome properties on Highgate Hill.

# Community Infrastructure

## Draft Policies



The issues of “community infrastructure” — that is, the supporting services that create the quality of life village residents and businesses require — was another principal theme of the consultation results. Residents expressed concern about a sense of continual erosion of the type, ranges and variety of shops, services and other facilities in the parish. In recent memory many have disappeared so this policy theme was development to protect those that remain and add new services to meet identified demand.

## Policy COM 01

### SPORTS PROVISION

Maintain and enhance the sports facilities at the Moor to ensure this remains the parish's primary centre for sports and recreational activities.



This policy is site specific to the Moor area of Hawkhurst parish.

## Policy background

The process of engagement used to develop the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan has highlighted the need for enhanced sports and recreational facilities in the parish. The current site at the Moor, in the southern part of the parish has access to wide open sports pitches, and is considered to be the best location for further investment. There is currently a lack of quality indoor facilities here, with sub-standard changing rooms that are no longer large enough for the increasing demand placed upon them by the sporting village.

The site at the Moor has the capacity to accommodate new indoor and outdoor sports facilities for the current and future populations of Hawkhurst parish. Through the planning obligations linked to future development in the parish, an appropriate level of funding will be directed towards the sports and recreation facilities to ensure it will meet the needs of a growing parish. These funds may be matched with grants from national agencies, sports federations and national governing bodies and fund-raising from the parish council and other bodies.

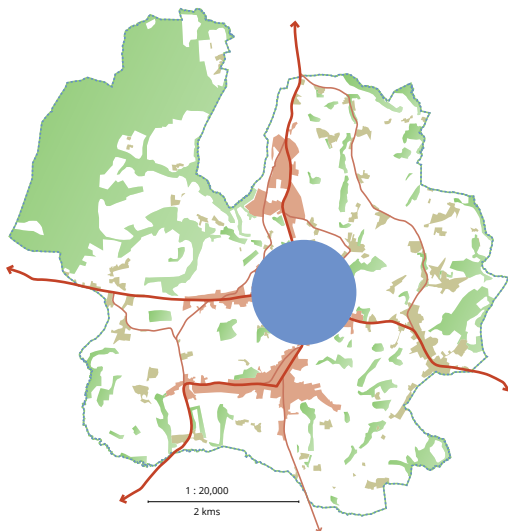
Investment in facilities at the Moor must be complementary to investment in a new community hall, to be located within the village heart.



## Policy COM 02

### NEW COMMUNITY HALL

Policy to set out the planning and design principles for a new community hall and identify the preferred site and/or general location.



This plan shows the area of search for the new community hall, as identified by the consultation work so far. No specific site has yet been identified.

## Policy background

Hawkhurst currently has no community hall suitable for use by the wider population of the parish. The Copt Hall has provided sterling service over recent years but is now considered too small for many events, is hampered by a lack of suitable parking and is not suitable for further investment.

The majority feeling amongst residents through the consultation to date was that a location for a new community hall needed to be found in or around the Highgate Hill area of the parish.

An area of search in this location will ensure that the hall is within walking distance of the existing heart of the village, allowing further linked trips between existing community facilities. A modern community facility will form a key component of the cluster of facilities that comprise the village heart and a site in this location will be central and will allow relatively easy access by the wider community.

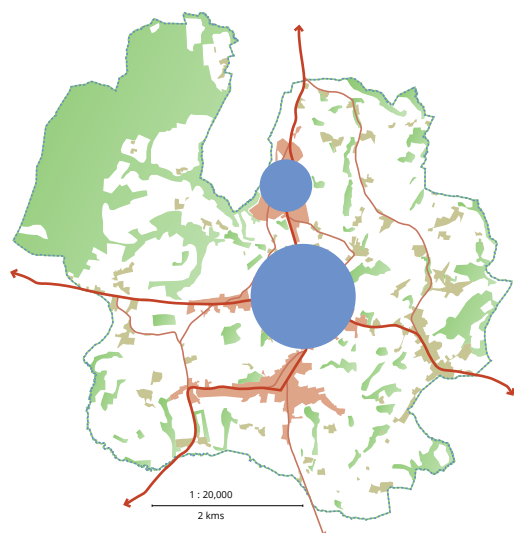
The preferred location should also give the new building an exposure to “passing trade” and therefore the opportunity to become a “shop window” or showcase for the range of parish activities, subject to the right building configuration and design.

Investment in a new centrally-sited community hall must be complementary to sports-led investment at the Moor.

## Policy COM 03

### ENHANCING & PRESERVING COMMUNITY SERVICES

Existing employment, retail and ancillary facilities in the parish to be protected and enhanced during the neighbourhood plan period.



This policy is specific to the Highgate part of the parish with regard to the mix of shops and services. It will also be specific to Gills Green with regard to protection and expansion of employment land.

## Policy background

The existing range of shops and services in and around the Highgate crossroads needs to have a safe, secure and sustainable future. This healthy mix of services is a key part of the charm and appeal of living in Hawkhurst.

This policy will also need to address employment provision to ensure the parish has sufficient space to support local jobs, both in the built village (with particular reference to Gills Green) and in the outlying areas.

The existing range of shops and services in Highgate are to be protected and enhanced. As the historic heart of the village, this area has been identified by residents as an important commercial area both now and into the future. This plan supports continued investment in local retail and associated services in this location. As this site is well-connected to existing residential areas, it must provide high quality and convenient shops and services to a local catchment that can arrive on foot and by bicycle, as well as to a wider catchment from further afield.

Key services to be protected and with potential to be identified as “assets of community value” include the following:

- The Colonnade
- The Library
- The Kino Cinema
- The Royal Oak Pub
- The Queens Pub
- Royal British Legion Club
- Primary School

## Policy COM 04

### NEW MEDICAL CENTRE

Policy to set out the planning and design principles for a new medical centre and identify the preferred site and/or general location.



This plan shows the areas of search for the new medical centre, as identified by the consultation work so far. No specific site has yet been identified.

## Policy background

The medical provision in Hawkhurst parish currently comprises two GP practice sites and a small cottage hospital. All provide an excellent service and are valued and appreciated by the community.

The majority feeling amongst residents through the consultation to date was that an accessible, consolidated location for health care is now required. Access to the GP practice rooms is becoming increasingly difficult for an ageing population due to the heritage nature of the buildings (e.g. steps up to the front doors, small consulting rooms etc)

A location for a consolidated centre in or around the Highgate Hill area of the parish will allow for “linked trips” between the surgeries and shops, cinema and other services helping maintain a vibrant and vital village heart. However, a consolidated centre collocated with the cottage hospital could allow for operational efficiencies with other medical uses. Further work is required to refine the options.



There remains a question over the future of the local architectural landmark that is All Saints but future use of community value is preferred.



Much improved sports provision at the Moor in the form of additional pitches and a bigger, better pavilion is a key aim of the neighbourhood plan.



The KINO digital cinema is a key community asset and is a much-appreciated feature of village life.



The cottage hospital site is a candidate for accommodating a new medical centre, to include GP practice rooms.

# Landscape Protection

## Draft Policies



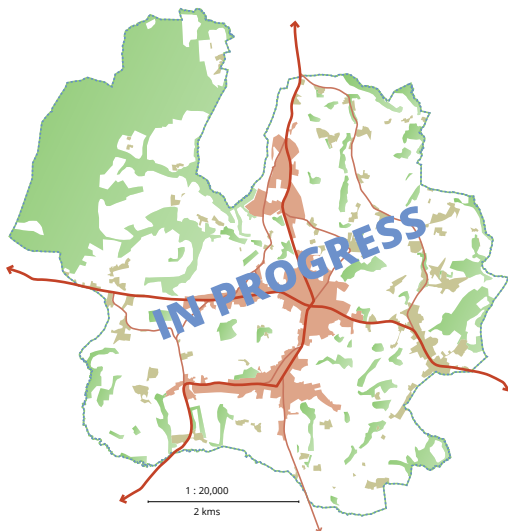
The landscape of Hawkhurst parish is well-loved and is worthy of protection through the neighbourhood plan. Many who have moved to Hawkhurst from other parts of the country have said that one of the motivations was the appeal of living and working in a beautiful landscape setting. The landscape is already nationally protected through its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and so the neighbourhood plan needs to add careful new layers of protection that are specific to the local context.



## Policy LP 01

### VIEWS BETWEEN VILLAGE & COUNTRYSIDE

A series of specific views will be identified between the countryside and the village, both short and long range and will be afforded protection against development.



This policy will require site specific assessments to be made in order to effectively protect key views.

## Policy background

There is a strong relationship between the built elements of Hawkhurst parish and its landscape setting. At various points in and around the village, there are clear lines of sight out to open countryside and back again from open countryside towards the village.

This experience is enhanced through the elevated location of Highgate, sitting on a topographical ridge, running in an east-west direction. This locally distinctive context provides a sense of identity and a particular character to Hawkhurst.

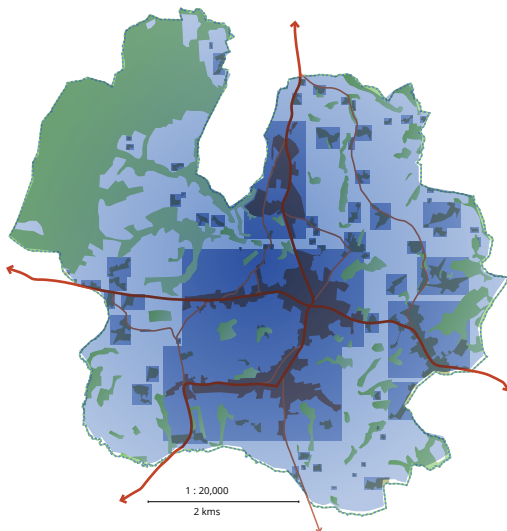
The neighbourhood plan will need to make an assessment of the key views, explain their qualities and record them on a plan. This assessment process will help to ensure that protection is afforded to the open land that allows the viewing experience.

Applications for new development will then need to demonstrate an understanding of this assessment and show how their proposals respond in an appropriate manner.

## Policy LP 02

### AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

To ensure the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan is in accordance with the AONB Management Plan and delivers appropriate local landscape protection at the neighbourhood level.



This policy is likely to be applied parish wide and be applicable to all new and existing development sites.

## Policy background

All of the parish lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is a very special landscape, one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. It is home to ancient woodland, wildlife and villages and is characterised by sweeping views and a series of interconnecting paths and tracks where residents and visitors alike can get close to nature and enjoy peace and tranquillity.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan (3rd Edition) 2014 — 2019 is the single most important document for the AONB. It sets out long term objectives for conserving this nationally important landscape and the local authorities' ambitions for how the High Weald will be looked after for the next five years.

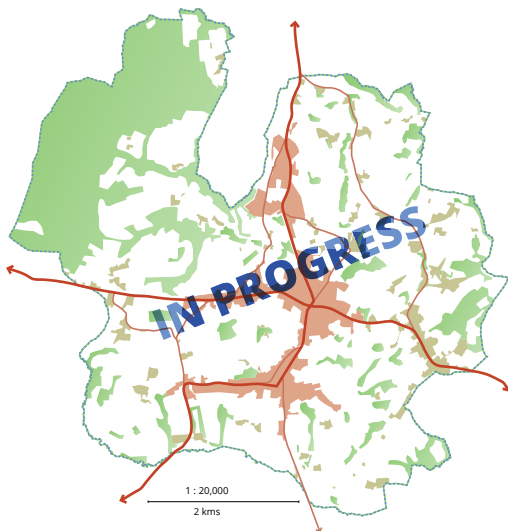
This management plan has been formally adopted by the relevant local authorities as their policy for the management of the AONB and how they carry out their functions in relation to it. It provides a means by which all public bodies can judge, and be judged, on their duty to have regard to conservation of the AONB, and it provides a guide for residents, businesses and visitors on the actions they can take to help safeguard this special area.

The neighbourhood plan will need to relate its own specific landscape policies to the AONB Management Plan without unnecessary duplication. Further work is needed to do this effectively.

## Policy LP 03

### DESIGNATED GREEN SPACES

The identification and protection of new and existing publicly accessible green spaces within the built-up areas of the village.



This policy will require site specific assessments to be made in order to effectively identify green spaces.

## Policy background

Good planning and design requires an integration of the landscape features with the built form. A local green network of landscape infrastructure needs to be identified, protected and enhanced. This will not only continue to provide the village with its rural character and identity but will also provides recreational opportunities for residents and supports biodiversity. Blue infrastructure, in the form of ponds lakes and watercourses will also need to be integrated into this network.

New areas of green space need to be identified that can be added to this network and be designated as “local green space” in the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan. Local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

The neighbourhood plan can identify on a map green areas for special protection. Designating any local green space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular, plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs.

The consultation work to date has shown that the Moor enjoys significant areas of green open space while Highgate appears to lack small, accessible green space for enjoyment by the public. This means that development sites in and around Highgate will need to provide sufficient green space to help redress this balance. Opportunities for pocket parks, street trees and enhanced landscape planting must be explored and offered as part of all development proposals across the village.





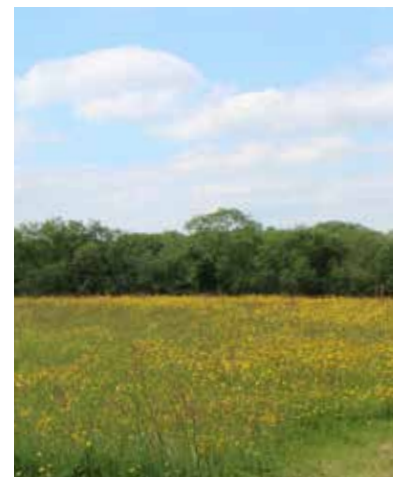
Views out to adjacent countryside is part of the appeal of living and working in Hawkhurst.



Protection of long distance views towards local landmarks will be given through the neighbourhood plan.

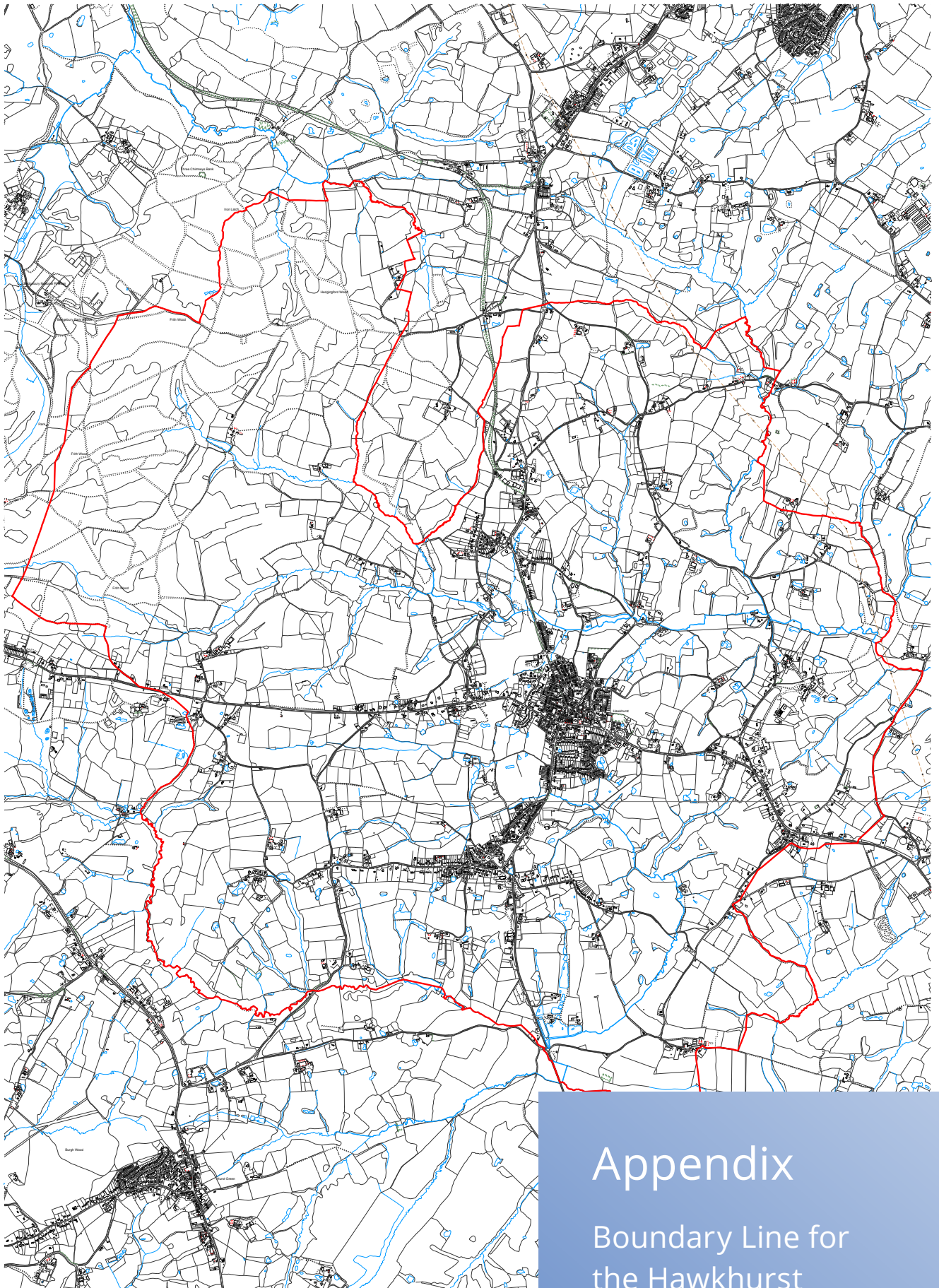


Waterways, rivers and ponds need to be integrated into any future green space protection policy.



The landscape already benefits from nationally protected status so the neighbourhood plan needs to carefully add to this protection only where necessary.





## Appendix

Boundary Line for  
the Hawkhurst  
Neighbourhood Plan



