

**Wealden District Council**

**Landscape and Visual  
Appraisal – Appendix A.3**  
**Potential Development  
Sites in the High Weald**  
**AONB: LCA 5B -  
Crowborough South**

**Final report**

Prepared by LUC

August 2026



## Wealden District Council

### Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Appendix A.3 Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B - Crowborough South

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OHS627041



# Contents

## Appendix A .3

### Crowborough South Assessment Unit A-1

|                                                                                                         |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Settlement location, evolution and pattern                                                              | A-2  |
| Mapped information for the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB           | A-3  |
| Landscape sensitivity context for the Crowborough South assessment unit                                 | A-6  |
| Orchard Farm (formerly Tubwell Farm), Tubwell Lane (1015/1110) and Oaks Field, Tubwell Lane (300/1110)  | A-8  |
| Baseline Analysis                                                                                       | A-10 |
| Baseline Summary                                                                                        | A-13 |
| Potential effects of developing the sites, including on the core character components of natural beauty | A-14 |
| Summary and recommendations                                                                             | A-18 |
| Owlsbury Depot, Hadlow Down Road (1010/1110)                                                            | A-45 |
| Baseline Analysis                                                                                       | A-47 |
| Baseline Summary                                                                                        | A-49 |
| Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities                       | A-50 |
| Summary and recommendations                                                                             | A-53 |
| Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Crowborough South assessment unit               | A-54 |

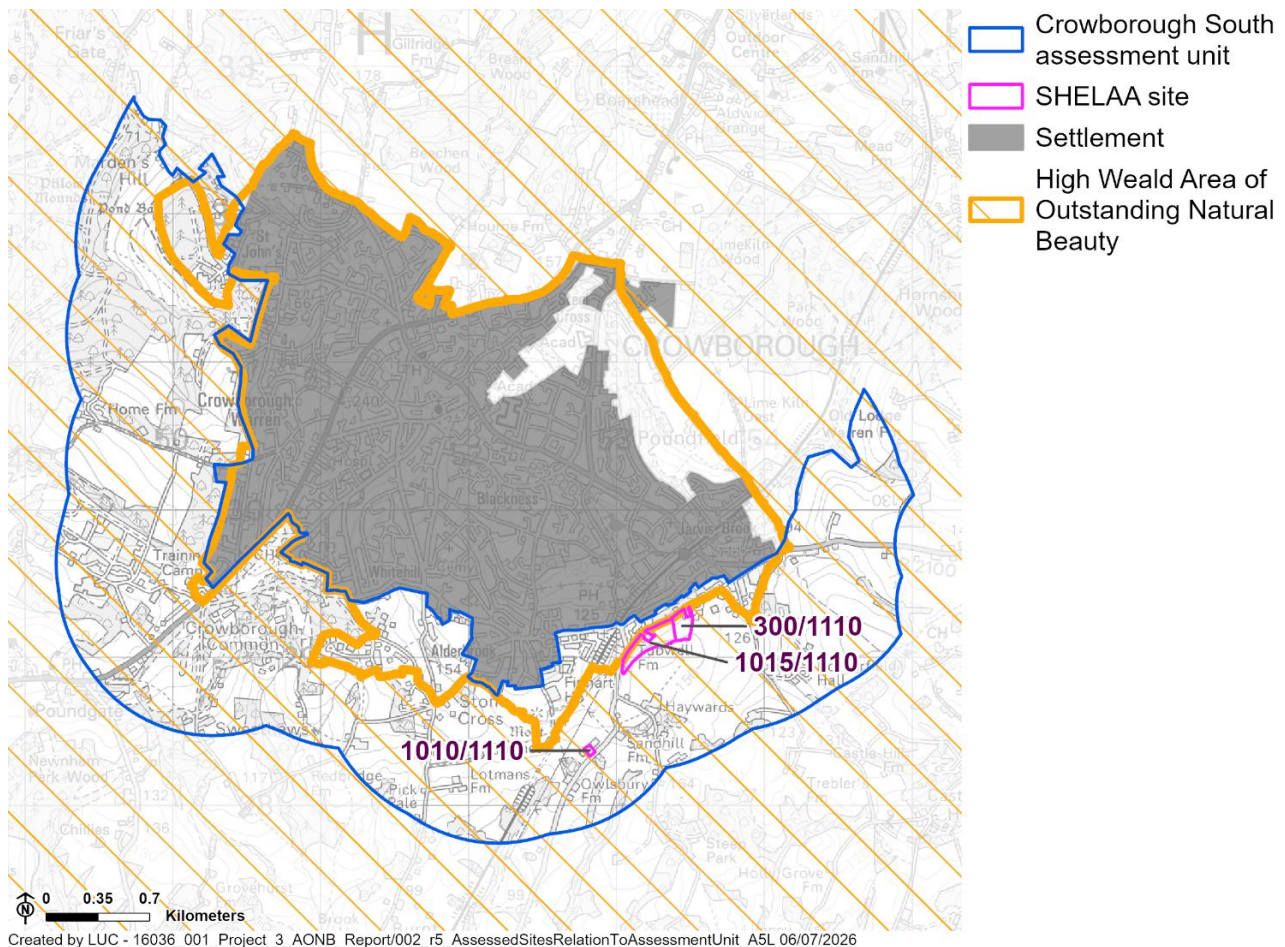
## Appendix A.3

### Crowborough South Assessment Unit

The following potential development sites are considered within the Crowborough South assessment unit:

- Group comprising of **Orchard Farm (formerly Tubwell Farm), Tubwell Lane (1015/1110) and Oaks Field, Tubwell Lane (300/1110)**
- **Owlsbury Depot, Hadlow Down Road (1010/1110)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



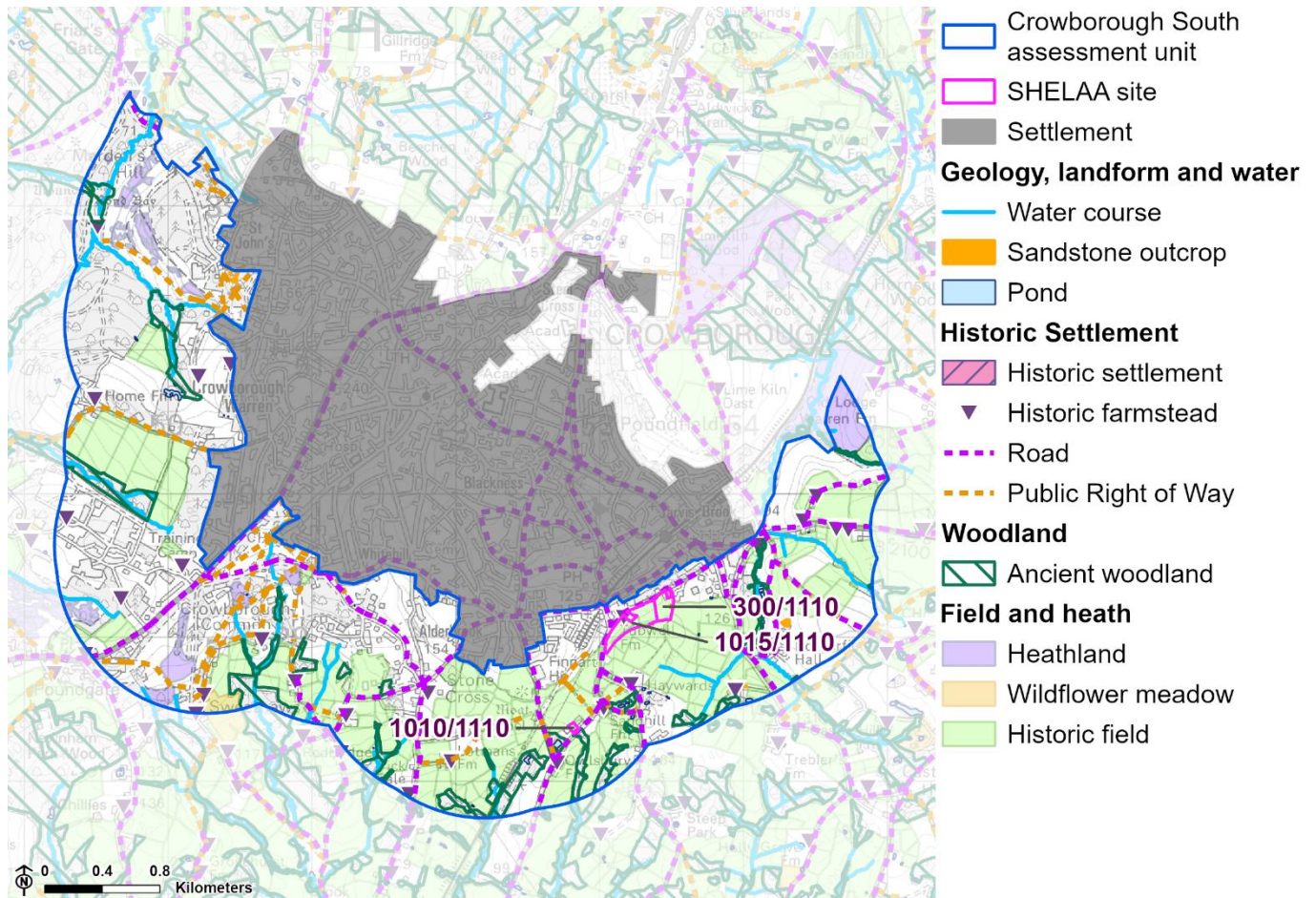
## Settlement location, evolution and pattern

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Settlement location and context       | Crowborough is a nucleated town located in the north of Wealden District. The settlement is excluded from, but surrounded in all directions by, the High Weald AONB, and is located at the highest point of one of the principal east-west ridges of the High Weald.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Settlement evolution                  | The historic core of the town is centred on the crossroads now formed by the A26 and the London Road/B2100. A relatively small Conservation Area extends across this part of the settlement and relates to the late Victorian and early Edwardian development around the crossroads. Settlement in the area was relatively dispersed up until the introduction of the railway in the 19th century. The town was also a popular health resort, aided by railway links to London, in the late 19th century.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Settlement pattern and edge character | <p>The A26 passes through the centre of the town, with a significant amount of 20th and 21st century growth extending to the north and south of the road. The settlement edge is relatively sprawling, however settlement is often fringed by woodland. Ashdown Forest forms a soft boundary to the west of the town, beyond 20th century development at Crowborough Warren.</p> <p>The southern settlement edge of Crowborough consists mostly of one and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, and some urban fringe development and a railway line in the south-east. The Crowborough barracks are located to the south-west of the settlement. Settlement is fringed by woodland, which is denser in the west and east.</p> |

## Mapped information for the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Crowborough South assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2**. Tranquillity (which forms part of the 'aesthetic and perceptual qualities' character component) and dark skies are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

**Figure 2: Core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB**



Created by LUC - 16036\_001\_Project\_3\_AONB\_Report/003\_r5\_CoreCharacterComponentsNatBeautyAONB\_A5L 06/07/2026

Figure 3: Tranquillity

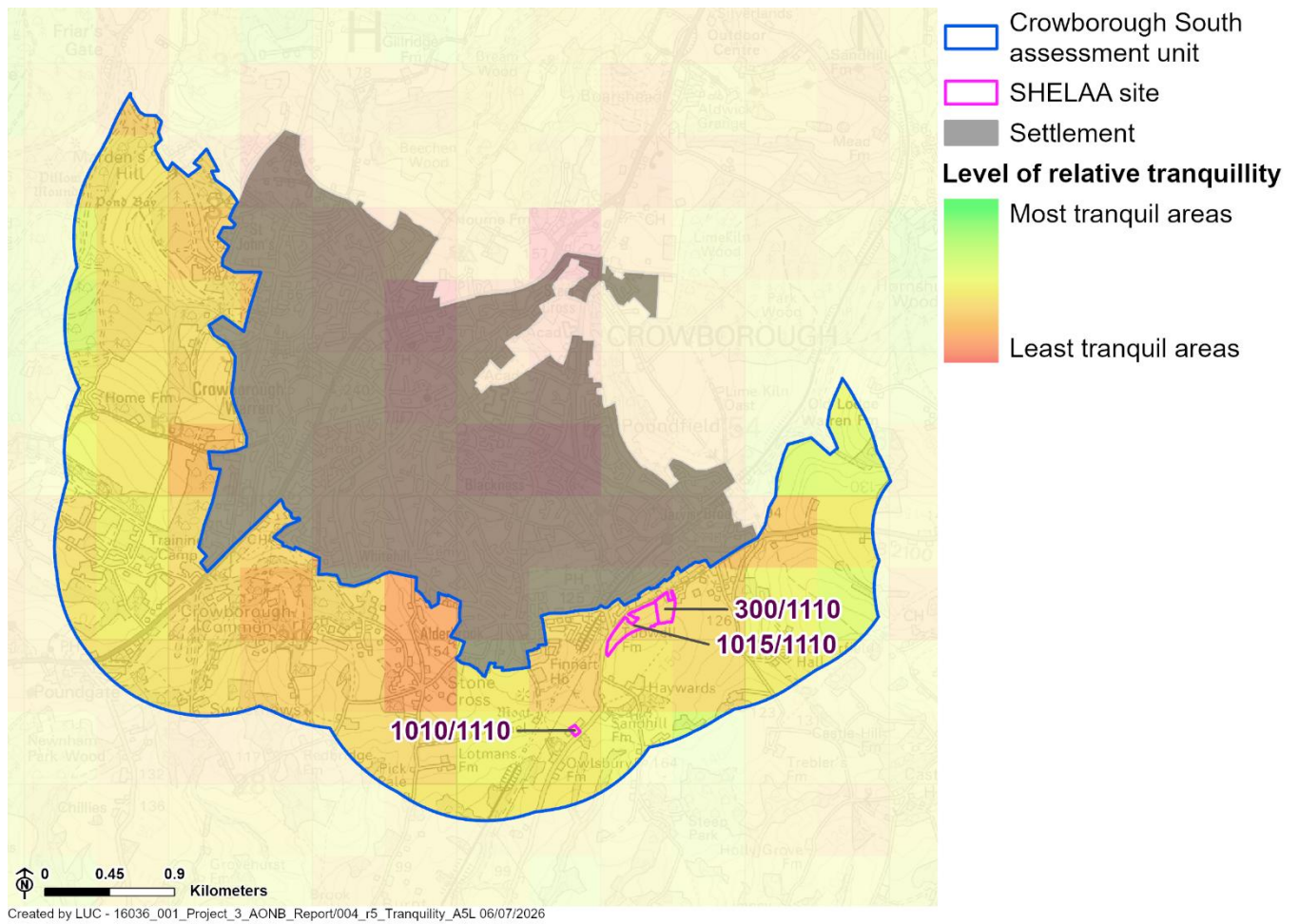
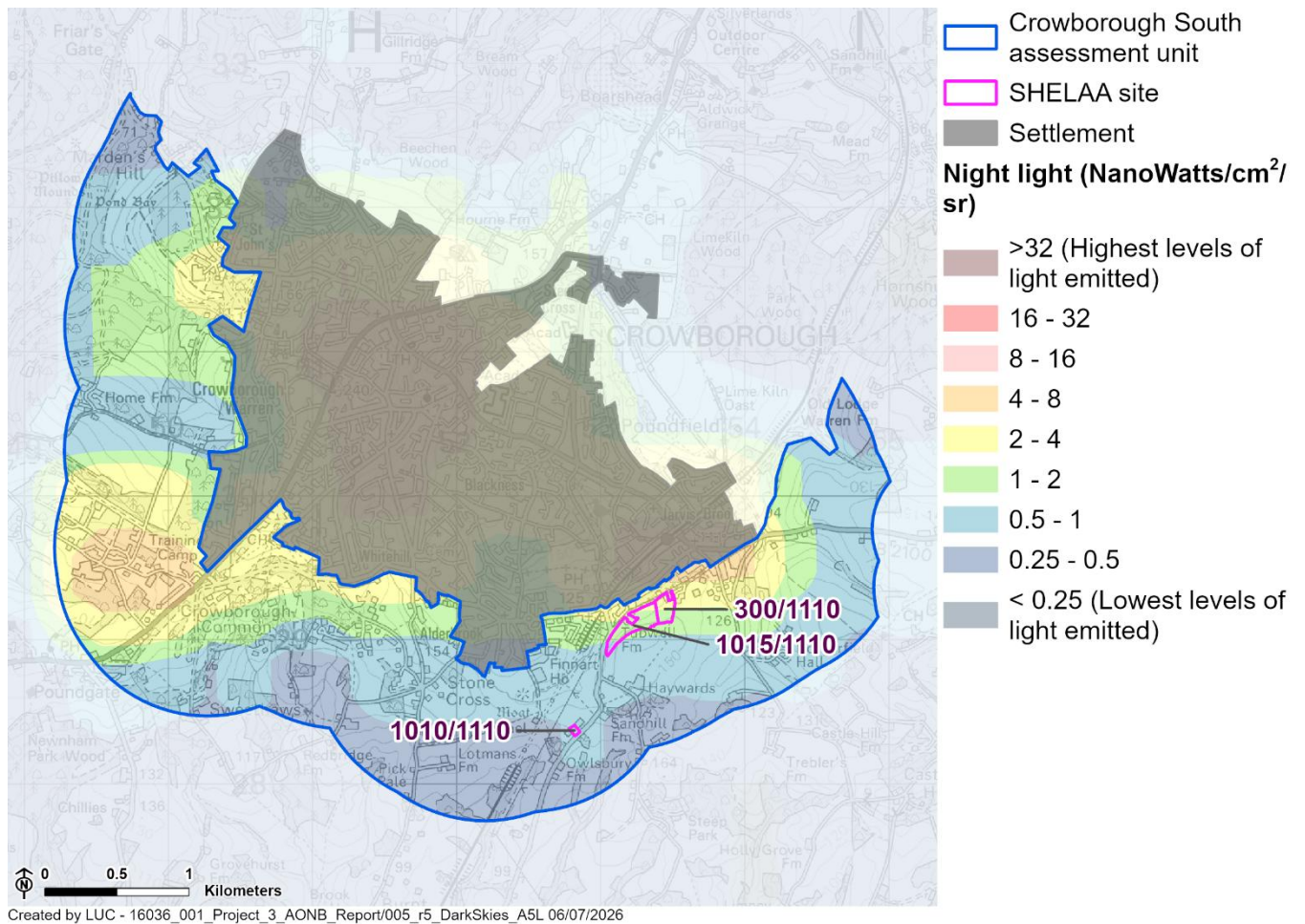


Figure 4: Dark skies



## Landscape sensitivity context for the Crowborough South assessment unit

| The landscape sensitivity of the Crowborough South assessment unit described in the <i>Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development (2023)</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                       |                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Landscape sensitivity<br><br>The rating that applies to the assessment unit                                                                                                          | Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes | Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels |
|                                                                                                                                                                                      | MH                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | H                                                     | H                                                      |
| Key sensitivities<br><br>The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The elevated and undulating ridged landform.</li> <li>■ Mature interconnected deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin).</li> <li>■ Areas of semi-improved grassland and lowland heathland in the south-west and east of the area.</li> <li>■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the south-west and south-east of the assessment unit.</li> <li>■ The wooded and rural backdrop to the settlement edge of Crowborough.</li> <li>■ The network of public rights of way, particularly those providing connectivity with Ashdown Forest.</li> <li>■ The strong rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity.</li> <li>■ Location within and intervisibility with wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                       |                                                        |
| Guidance                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consider views of development from the lower-lying landscapes to the south, siting development where well enclosed by vegetation and where it would relate to the existing ridgeline settlement pattern.</li> <li>■ Avoid development in areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland and lowland heathland.</li> <li>■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest and River Uck and its headwaters BOA, especially woodland and heathland management and restoration, where possible.</li> <li>■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible / suitable, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting.</li> <li>■ Retain roadside trees along the A26, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible / suitable, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting.</li> <li>■ Retain, protect and enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought.</li> <li>■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the south-west and south-east.</li> <li>■ Consider views from public rights of way and the Ashdown Forest, when siting and designing development in the landscape.</li> </ul> |                                                       |                                                        |

- Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced.
- Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using native species that are in character with the wider landscape.
- Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'<sup>1</sup>, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'<sup>2</sup> and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan<sup>3</sup>.
- Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

## Orchard Farm (formerly Tubwell Farm), Tubwell Lane (1015/1110) and Oaks Field, Tubwell Lane (300/1110)

| Site Details          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Potential development | <p>Site 1015/1110 – Residential development proposed on entirety of site mapped below, but site is only considered an Option (ORO1) for 40 dwellings in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026).</p> <p>Site 300/1110 - Residential development of 30 dwellings, proposed on the site as shown below. Site not Allocated or considered an Option.</p> <p>Total: 70 residential dwellings</p> <p>For the purpose of this landscape and visual appraisal the above SHELAA sites have been considered together.</p> |
| Site location         | <p>These sites are located to the south-east of the settlement and situated to the south of Western Road (separated from the road edge by residential properties, gardens, woodland and Tubwell Lane) and east of Hadlow Down Road (and Jarvis Brook Primary School). The boundary of site <b>1015/1110</b> excludes a farmhouse associated with Tubwell Farm.</p>                                                                                                                                             |

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

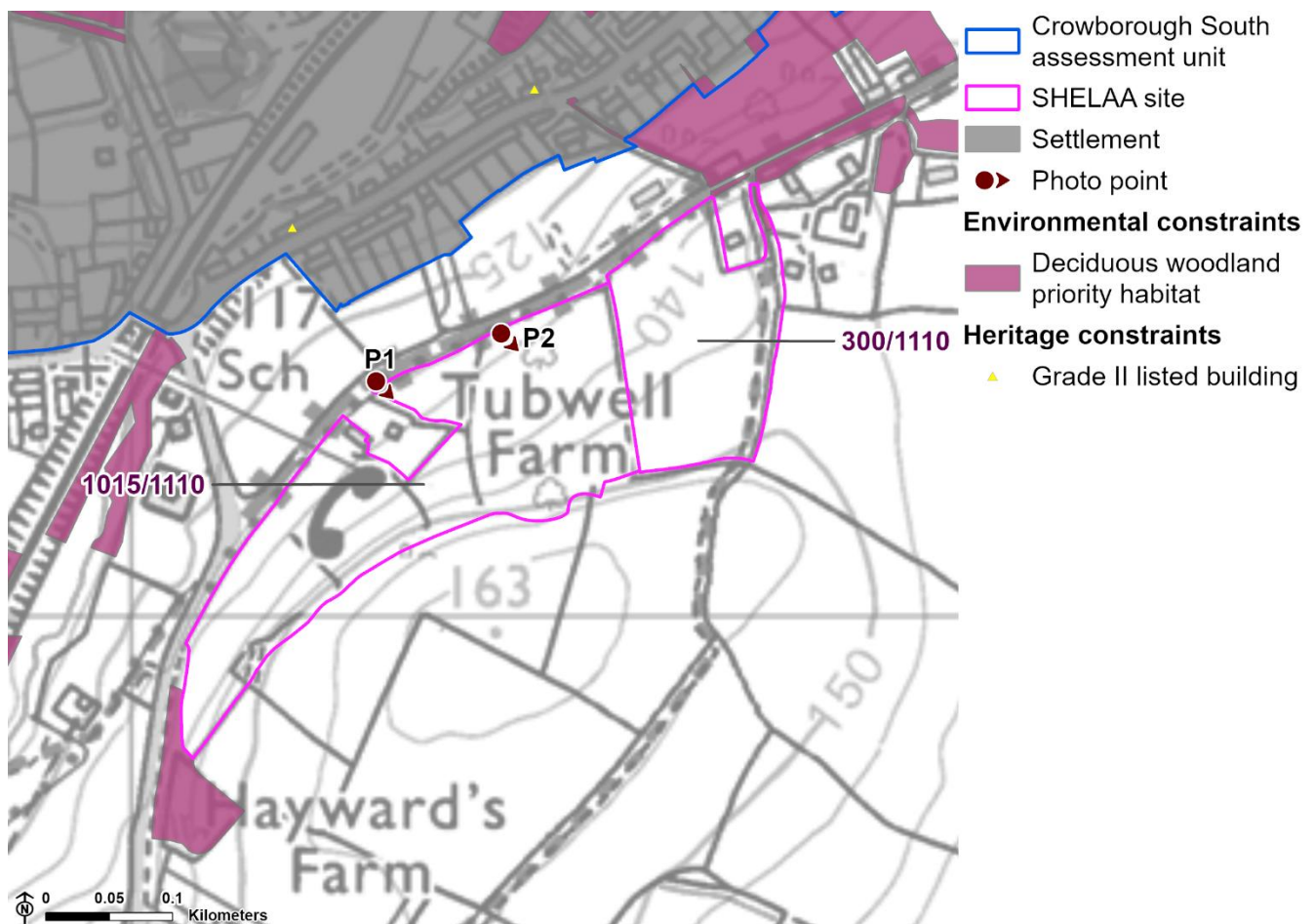
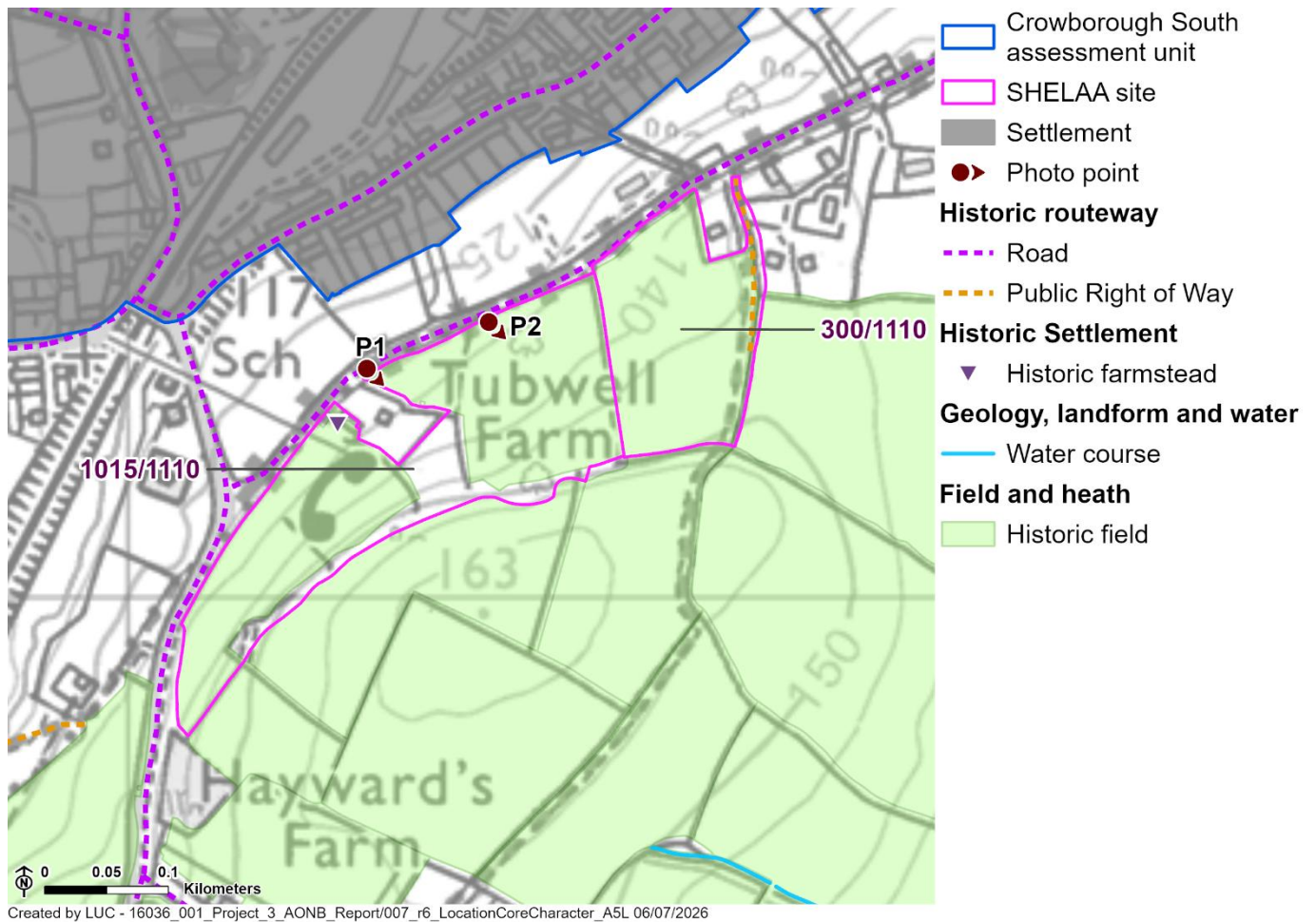


Figure 6: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



#### Representative site photos



Photo 1: View from the byway along Tubwell Lane looking up the sloping landform that is enclosed by a wooded shaw along the southern boundary



Photo 2: View from the byway along Tubwell Lane towards remnant trees of a traditional orchard

## Baseline Analysis

| Baseline landscape character                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit | <p><b>Landform</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA.</li> <li>■ They comprise a series of six small fields on a relatively steep north-facing slope rising from approximately 130m AOD at the settlement edge in the north to 150m AOD in the south. This sloping topography forms part of the 'complex undulating ridged landform' that is typical of the wider assessment unit.</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural character</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The sites are pastoral in character. Wooded belts (shaws) featuring mature trees line all sides of both the sites and define some of the internal field boundaries running north south, contributing to the strong network of mature hedgerows, shaws and hedgerow trees of the wider assessment unit.</li> <li>■ Small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland about the north-eastern corner of site <b>300/1110</b> and south-western corner of site <b>1015/1110</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Landscape pattern and time depth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Most of the fields within the sites form part of a cohesive assart field pattern (as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit).</li> <li>■ Site <b>300/1110</b> and the eastern half of site <b>1015/1110</b> have largely retained historic field boundaries, whilst there have been changes and partial loss to those within the western half of site <b>1015/1110</b>.</li> <li>■ The Sussex HLC also indicates that part of site <b>1015/1110</b> was an orchard and there appears to be remnants in the form of a row of trees through the middle of the most eastern field of site <b>1015/1110</b> which provides time depth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Perceptual aspects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Crowborough and the railway line to the north. Tranquillity is recorded in the lower (relatively least tranquil) bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping (<b>Figure 3</b>), and dark skies are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping (<b>Figure 4</b>).</li> </ul> |
| Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development              | <p>The site is located along the southern edge of the settlement formed by the wooded Tubwell Lane and byway. The existing pattern of development along the settlement edge comprises a mix of bungalows and two-storey semi-detached houses along Western Road which are mostly located along the valley floor and lower north-facing slopes of the valley. However, recently constructed residential development immediately adjacent to the site at Marlowe Close does extend onto the middle slopes but mature vegetation along both sides of Tubwell Lane form a strong boundary to the settlement edge to the north (and form the northern boundaries to the sites). Another mature tree belt forms a strong outer boundary along the southern edge of the site, demarcating the crest of the slope. Together this tree belt and the landform provide containment to the settlement edge. The sites do not play a role in settlement separation with largely open countryside to the south.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Baseline visual character                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Potential visual receptors                                                      | <p>Despite the site's sloping landform, views of and into the site are limited by surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows. Users of the byway, which runs along the northern boundary of the site, and the footpath to the east, experience glimpsed views through gaps in the boundary vegetation. Views into the sites are afforded from</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|                                                 |                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                 | the adjacent farmhouse particularly from its upper storey, although will be partially filtered by vegetation.                        |
| Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB | Long views to and from the site are limited by landform, and mature hedgerow and treed field boundaries in and surrounding the site. |

| Expression of the 'core character components of natural beauty' of the High Weald AONB on the sites                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate)</b> – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate.                                                                                                                                                      | The sites are located on the edge of the <u>principal ridge (Forest Ridge)</u> of the High Weald, with their sloping landform contributing to the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u> of the AONB. There are no distinctive geological or water features within the site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Settlement</b> – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Tubwells Farm (located along the northern edge of site <b>1015/1110</b> ) contributes towards the <u>high density of historic farmsteads<sup>4</sup></u> found within the AONB.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Routeways</b> – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | A historic routeway (public right of way) runs along the eastern edge (on the site side) of the sites. It provides a connection to the narrow Tubwell Lane/ byway, which runs along the northern boundary of both sites and is recorded as a historic lane. Hadlow Down Road, which runs along the western boundary of site <b>1015/1110</b> , is also recorded as a historic lane although its expression is slightly masked by some modern road markings. These routes contribute towards the <u>dense radiating network</u> of historic routeways.                                                                                       |
| <b>Woodland</b> – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | The mature trees, shaws and hedgerows along the boundaries of the sites and along internal field boundaries contribute to the <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods...shaws...and outgrown hedges</u> of the AONB.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Fieldsapes and heath</b> – small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland).                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>The sites comprise a series of small fields used for <u>grazing livestock</u>.</p> <p>The field pattern was created through assarting, contributing to the <u>dominant medieval fieldscape character</u> of the AONB. The sites have a generally <u>irregular field pattern</u>, defined by mature trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>The row of trees within the most eastern field of site <b>1015/1110</b> relates to the <u>traditional orchards ...scattered across the landscape forming part of the visual fieldscape and also providing dead and decaying wood for invertebrates, and a mosaic of other habitats</u>.</p>               |
| <b>Dark night skies</b> – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | The adjacent Tubwell Lane and Hadlow Down Road are <u>unlit roads</u> , but dark skies are limited by the proximity of the settlement edge, including the adjacent primary school to the west and recently constructed residential area to the north.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Aesthetic and perceptual qualities</b> – arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and | The assarting of the fields, the historic farmstead and remnants of an orchard contribute to the <u>sense of history and timelessness</u> . The combination of open fields and surrounding mature shaws, trees and hedgerows provides a <u>pastoral feel</u> and contributes to the <u>recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats</u> . The sense of rurality and tranquillity is slightly affected by the adjacent residential area and the nearby trainline. Long views of the sites are limited by vegetation enclosing the sites which contribute to the <u>sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness....</u> |

<sup>4</sup> As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 6).

|                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| gardeners inspired by the landscape.                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Land-based economy and rural living</b> – with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape. | The current use of the sites relate to the <u><i>predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale farming</i></u> key characteristic. There is also a history of <u><i>other traditional mixed and well-integrated land-uses</i></u> with a former orchard occupying a small part of the site with remnants still evident. |

## Baseline Summary

### How the sites relate to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

#### The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development assesses the Crowborough South assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex landform, areas of woodland and heathland, areas of intact historic field pattern, presence of some historic features, the scenic backdrop the landscape provides to Crowborough, and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of urban fringe land uses and development (such as golf courses, pylons and the railway), enclosure by woodland, and disturbance from human activity close to Crowborough, reduce sensitivity.

#### The Sites

Overall, it is considered that the sites are of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The sites demonstrate a number of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. They comprise pastoral fields on steeply sloping ridged landform and form part of a historic assart field pattern. They are also contained by mature wooded boundary vegetation including shaws, with the northern boundary to the sites forming a robust boundary to the existing settlement edge. However, the sites are visually enclosed and are influenced by the proximity of the settlement edge, which slightly decreases sensitivity.

#### Variations in Sensitivity

Site **300/1110** (particularly its northern half) is considered to be slightly less sensitive than site **1015/1110** where the sloping landform is more gentle and influenced by the adjacent residential properties to the north-east, although not to the extent that there would be a change to the moderate-high sensitivity rating considered above.

### How strongly the core components of character are expressed on the sites

The sites express several core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB. In summary:

- The steeply sloping elevated landform forms part of the principal Forest Ridge;
- The sites form part of an assart field pattern, which contributes to the medieval character of the AONB;
- There are remnants of a traditional orchard, forming part of the visual fieldscape;
- Tubwell Farm contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads with the sites contributing towards its setting;
- The mature shaws, trees and hedgerows contribute to the highly interconnected habitats and sense of enclosure;
- The grazing of livestock and mature hedgerows contribute to the pastoral feel of the landscape, with links to the history of the land-based economy;
- The public right of way along the eastern edge of site **300/1110** contributes to the radiating network of historic routeways and the sense of freedom for walkers; and
- A sense of history and timelessness is provided by the assarting of the fields, the historic farmstead and remnants of a traditional orchard.

Overall, it is considered that there is a **strong expression** of the core components of character.

## Potential effects of developing the sites, including on the core character components of natural beauty

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the sites, particularly on the core character components of natural beauty, and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should these sites be considered suitable for development.

| Potential effects as a result of development on the sites                                                                                                                                             | Core character component of natural beauty potentially affected | Relevant key characteristics of the core character component potentially affected                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Landscape character and features                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Changes to the relatively steeply sloping landform as a result of interventions/ earthworks upon the landform.                                                                                        | Natural systems                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>A principal ridge (Forest Ridge) running east – west from Horsham to Cranbrook...</i></li> <li>■ <i>A pattern of faults and folds that distinguishes the High Weald from the rest of the south and east of England, with a high concentration of springs associated with fault lines...</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Limit the extent of development extending up the slope onto the valley side to minimise alterations to the landform and retain its expression as part of the principal Forest Ridge and contribution to the pattern of faults and folds (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective G2</b>).</li> </ul> |
| Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees, shaws and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. | Woodland                                                        | <i>Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands....shaws...and outgrown hedges...</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially the mature shaws which define the outer boundaries of the sites and visually enclose it (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives W1 and PQ2</b>).</li> </ul>                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Aesthetic and perceptual qualities                              | <i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows within and around the site through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective W2</b>).</li> </ul>                 |
| Loss of the grazed pastures and assart which contributes to the                                                                                                                                       | Fieldsapes and heath                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Fields, mostly permanent pasture, used for grazing livestock...</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Loss of pasture and assart would be unavoidable with development on the sites, as development would remove land from agricultural use with limited</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                           |

|                                                                                                                                                                           |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| medieval character and time depth.                                                                                                                                        |                                     | ■ <i>Medieval fieldscape character dominant, with a high proportion of field systems created by assarting (woodland clearance) with sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges common.</i>    | opportunities to retain areas due to the small scale of the sites. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective FH2</b> ).                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                           | Land-based economy and rural living | <i>Predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale farming.</i>                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Deterioration or loss of the remnant orchard trees within the most eastern field of site <b>1015/1110</b> .                                                               | Fieldsapes and heath                | <i>Traditional orchards and hop gardens scattered across the landscape forming part of the visual fieldscape and also providing dead and decaying wood for invertebrates, and a mosaic of other habitats.</i> | ■ Retain the remnant orchard trees and consider restoring the historic orchard through new tree planting (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective FH4</b> ).                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Loss of the historic routeway and public right of way that runs along the eastern edge of site <b>300/1110</b> , which provides a connection to other historic routeways. | Routeways                           | <i>A dense radiating network with a variety of origins...</i>                                                                                                                                                 | ■ Retain, protect and enhance existing recreational access via this public right of way and the rural character of the historic route (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives R1 and PQ3</b> ).                                                                                                                                                           |
| Modifications to Tubwell Lane and/ or Hadlow Down Road (recorded as historic routeways) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening, creation of junction)              |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reduce the impact of access works required to Hadlow Down Road if used for access, where possible, protecting the hedgerows along it (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives R1 and R2</b>).</li> <li>■ Access is considered unsuitable via Tubwell Lane due to its narrow width and treed character.</li> </ul> |
| Influence of further lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight, including the potential introduction of streetlights along                               | Dark skies                          | <i>Numerous unlit roads...</i>                                                                                                                                                                                | ■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective DS1</b> ).                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                    |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| Hadlow Down Road if used for access.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                    |                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance <sup>5</sup> and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives DS1 and DS2</b>).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Settlement form edge and setting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                    |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>Extension of development beyond the robust boundary provided by the mature wooded shaw between the site and the residential edge of the settlement.</p> <p>Deterioration of the rural character of the sites which contribute to the setting of Crowborough, particularly the elevated eastern extents of the site where the landform provides containment to the settlement edge</p> | N/A                                | N/A                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limit the extent of development extending up the slope onto the valley side, as development close to the ridge would not conform with the existing settlement pattern that currently extends to the middle of the valley slopes (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective S1</b>).</li> <li>Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the existing properties to the north-east of site <b>300/1110</b> and by interspersing new development with new tree planting that over time will form an extension to the existing wooded settlement edge (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives S1 and S2</b>).</li> <li>Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective S2</b>).</li> <li>Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'<sup>6</sup>, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'<sup>7</sup> and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan<sup>8</sup> (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective S2</b>).</li> </ul> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Aesthetic and perceptual qualities | <i>A sense of history and timelessness...</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p>Infilling the gaps between the existing settlement edge and the historic farmstead at Tubwells Farm, resulting in coalescence and impingement on the setting of the farmstead.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Settlement                         | <i>High density of historic farmsteads...</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Tubwells Farm historic farmstead (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective S3</b>). Further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets is advised.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Aesthetic and perceptual qualities | <i>A sense of history and timelessness...</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

<sup>5</sup> See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

| Visual amenity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Visibility of development seen by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ users of the byway along Tubwell Lane;</li> <li>■ residents of Tubwell Farm; and</li> <li>■ walkers on the public footpath along the eastern edge of site <b>300/1110</b>.</li> </ul> | <p>Aesthetic and perceptual qualities</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>A sense of history and timelessness arising from an ancient countryside with a human-scale agricultural tapestry; veteran and ancient trees...historic buildings.</i></li> <li>■ <i>The homely, pastoral feel to the whole landscape arising from its human-scale pattern and productivity.</i></li> <li>■ <i>A recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.</i></li> <li>■ <i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded shaw boundaries that enclose the site (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives W1 and PQ2</b>).</li> <li>■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective PQ2</b>).</li> <li>■ Reduce the density of buildings to encompass more space between/around buildings, interspersed with soft landscaping and tree planting, to soften visual impact and enhance integration of built form within the landscape (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective PQ2</b>).</li> <li>■ Consider views of development from the Tubwell Farm historic farmstead along the southern edge of the site, retaining and enhancing trees/ woodland to screen views into the site (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective PQ2</b>).</li> </ul> |
| Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>High impact</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>The baseline analysis identifies that the sites (and immediate surrounds) express several core character components of natural beauty, with a strong level of expression. This is due to the relatively steep sloping landform; presence of mature woodland, shaws, trees and hedgerows; remnants of a traditional orchard; assart field pattern; grazed pastures; Tubwell Farm historic farmstead (adjacent to the site); and historic routeway along the eastern edge of site <b>300/1110</b>. Development of the site is judged to have a <b>high impact</b> on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.</p> <p><u>Variation to overall impact</u></p> <p>There is no variation to the overall impact considered above.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## Summary and recommendations

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

The site-specific recommendations for these sites are as follows:

- Limit the extent of development extending up the slope onto the valley side to minimise alterations to the landform.
- Retain, protect and enhance the mature shaws which define the outer boundaries of the sites and visually enclose it.
- Retain the remnant orchard trees and consider restoring the historic orchard through new tree planting.
- Retain, protect and enhance existing recreational access via the public right of way along the eastern edge of site **300/1110** and the rural character of the historic route.
- Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the existing properties to the north-east of site **300/1110** and by interspersing new development with new tree planting that over time will form an extension to the existing wooded settlement edge.
- Minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Tubwells Farm historic farmstead and consider views from it.

Figure 7: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Created by LUC - 16036\_001\_Project\_3\_AONB\_Report/008\_r2\_AerialOppsCons\_A5L 15/05/2026

## Owlsbury Depot, Hadlow Down Road (1010/1110)

| Site Details          |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Potential development | Employment development proposed on the site as shown below (no quantum of floorspace identified). Site not Allocated or considered an Option in the draft Focused Wealden Local Plan 2026. |
| Site location         | This site is located to the south-east of Crowborough and situated to the north of Hadlow Down Road and east of Walshes Park.                                                              |

Figure 8: Site location and constraints

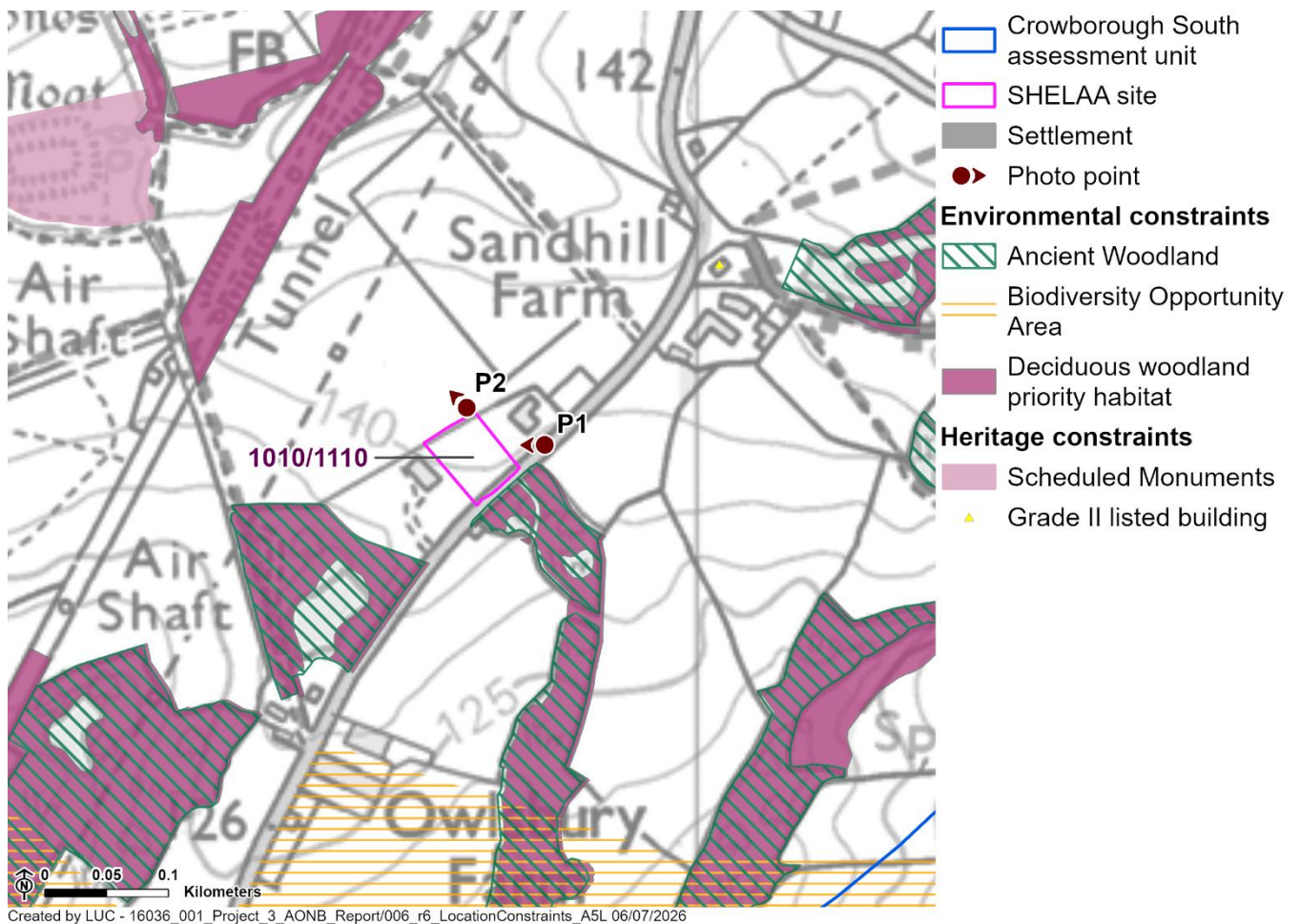
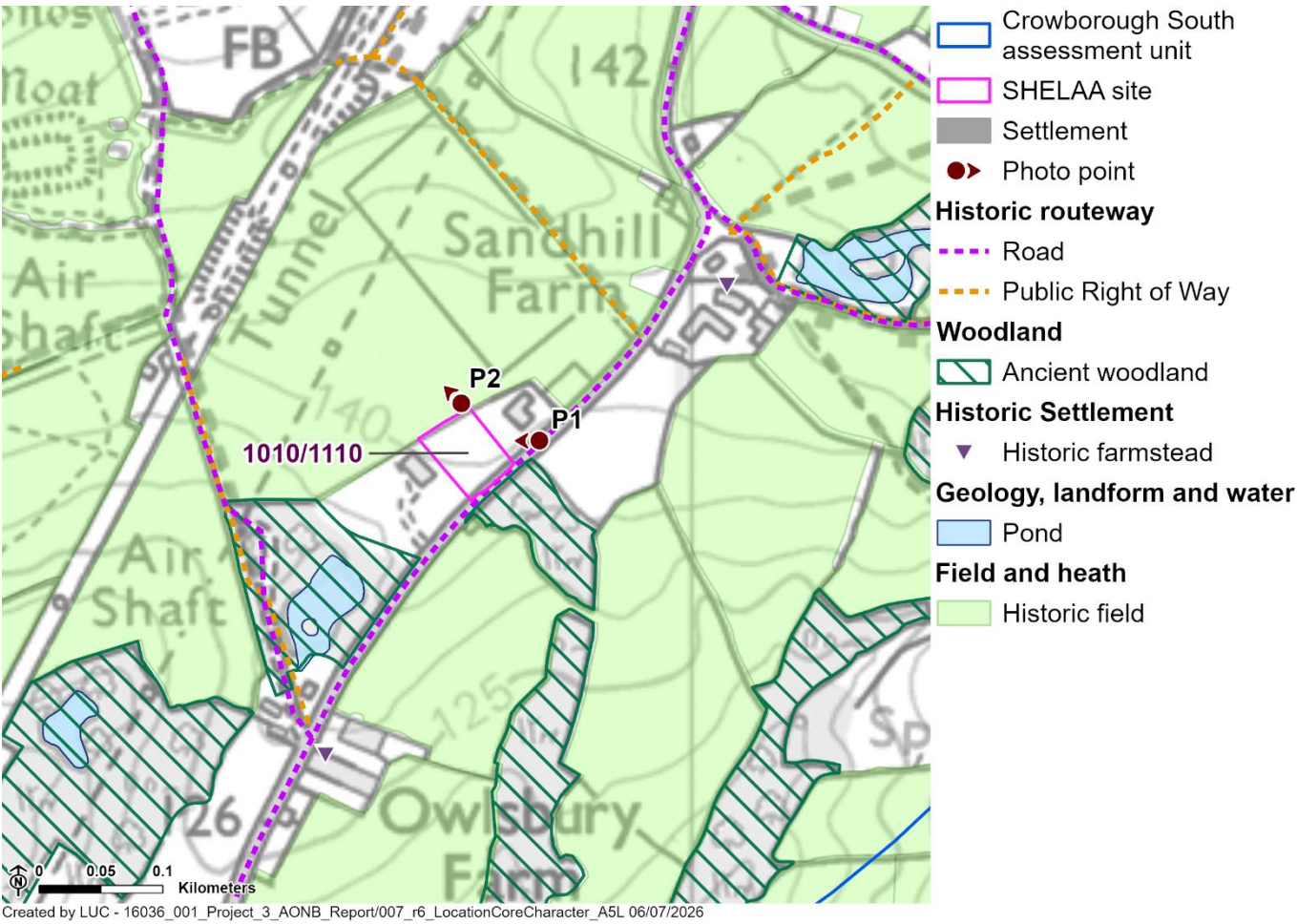


Figure 9: Site location and core components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Photo 1: Close views looking west into the site from Hadlow Down Road



Photo 2: Distant views north away from the site screened by woodland and influenced by electricity infrastructure

## Baseline Analysis

| Baseline landscape character                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Key features and qualities of the sites in relation to the wider assessment unit | <p><b>Landform</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is located on one of the elevated ridgelines of the High Weald – Central LCA, which is part of the ‘complex undulating landform’ of the wider assessment unit. However, the site is relatively flat and lies at approximately 140m AOD, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit.</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural character</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing commercial use of the site and nearby overhead electricity infrastructure has influenced the natural character, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit.</li> <li>Mature trees and woodland extend along the southern and western site boundaries, which are typical of the wider assessment unit.</li> </ul> <p><b>Landscape pattern and time depth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The underlying field pattern of the site is influenced by the existing commercial use, which has eroded the historic field pattern and is atypical of the wider assessment unit.</li> <li>No heritage features have been recorded within the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit.</li> </ul> <p><b>Perceptual aspects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sense of rural tranquillity and scenic value for the site and wider assessment unit is influenced by its current commercial use and nearby overhead electricity infrastructure to the north (levels of tranquillity are recorded in the middle band of CPRE’s Tranquillity Mapping, <b>Figure 3</b>).</li> <li>Dark night skies are experienced from the site (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE’s Night Blight Mapping, <b>Figure 4</b>), which is typical of the wider assessment unit.</li> </ul> |
| Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development               | <p>The site does not play a role in settlement separation. Intervening woodland and mature field boundaries result in a limited visual relationship between the site and the settlement edge of Crowborough. Development near the site, along Hadlow Down Road, comprises dispersed farmsteads, some of which are gentrified and are typically well integrated with the surrounding landscape. The site is already in commercial / employment use and is adjacent to other similar small-scale commercial / employment land uses. Walshes Park and the wooded railway line to the north-west of the site form soft settlement boundary features.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Baseline visual character                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Potential visual receptors                                                       | <p>The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows largely enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the nearby residential properties along Hadlow Down Road. Gaps in roadside vegetation along Hadlow Down Road allow for some close views looking north into the site. Solid panel fencing encloses the northern and western site boundary. There are glimpsed views into the site from the allotments and public right of way located to the north-east of the site. Outward views from the railway line, which passes in a cutting to the north and north-west of the site, are screened by woodland and landform.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB                                  | <p>Long views to and from the site are limited by the largely enclosed nature of the site and surrounding woodland. There are some glimpsed long views north-east from the site, however these are influenced by nearby overhead electricity infrastructure and partially filtered by fencing which encloses the allotments. There are also glimpsed</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | long views from the south-west corner of the site to the south across the wider AONB, although these are partially screened by vegetation along Hadlow Down Road. |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Expression of the core components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB on the site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate)</b> – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate.                                                                                                                                                                                           | The site is located on the <u>principal ridge (Forest Ridge)</u> of the High Weald, although it is relatively flat and its contribution towards the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u> is not strongly expressed. There are no distinctive geological or water features within the site.                                                                                       |
| <b>Settlement</b> – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | The site is in existing commercial use and therefore does not contribute to the dispersed historic settlement pattern of the wider area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Routeways</b> – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No historic routeways cross the site. Hadlow Down Road, which forms the southern site boundary, is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the <u>dense radiating network</u> of historic routeways.                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Woodland</b> – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Claylands Shaw is located to the south-east of the site and contributes towards the <u>high proportion of woodland categorised as ancient</u> in the AONB. Other trees which form part of the field boundaries along the site boundaries contribute towards the <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods ... and outgrown hedges</u> .      |
| <b>Fieldsapes and heath</b> – small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland).                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | The site has been subdivided and altered for the existing commercial use of the site and the adjacent allotments, which has removed evidence of the wider historic field pattern of piecemeal enclosure.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Dark night skies</b> – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | The site is located within an <u>intrinsically dark landscape</u> , although a sense of naturalness is limited by its existing commercial use. The adjacent Hadlow Down Road is an <u>unlit road</u> .                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Aesthetic and perceptual qualities</b> – arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape. | There are some glimpsed <u>long views</u> to the north-east beyond vegetation at the adjacent allotments, and to the south from the south-west corner of the site.<br><br>Site and roadside vegetation provide some <u>sense of...enclosure</u> .<br><br>Tranquillity is influenced by the existing commercial use of the site and nearby overhead electricity infrastructure. |
| <b>Land-based economy and rural living</b> – with roots extending deep                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | There are no distinctive features that relate to the land-based economy and rural living.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape.

## Baseline Summary

### How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

#### The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Crowborough South assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to commercial/industrial development. The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex landform, areas of woodland and heathland, areas of intact historic field pattern, presence of some historic features, the scenic backdrop the landscape provides to Crowborough, and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of urban fringe land uses and development (such as golf courses, pylons and the railway), enclosure by woodland, and disturbance from human activity close to Crowborough, reduce sensitivity.

#### The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **low-moderate** sensitivity to commercial/industrial development. The site demonstrates few of the characteristics which increase sensitivity for the assessment unit as a whole. The site is relatively flat, enclosed by surrounding woodland, and influenced by existing commercial development.

#### *Variations in Sensitivity*

There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.

### How strongly the core components of character are expressed on the site

The site expresses few core character components of the High Weald AONB. In summary:

- It forms part of the principal Forest Ridge, although the site itself is relatively flat and so its contribution the pattern of faults and folds is not strongly expressed;
- Claylands Shaw to the south-east of the site and vegetation on the site boundary contribute to the high proportion of ancient woodland and the highly interconnected woodland habitats, as well as providing a sense of intimacy and enclose;
- The site forms part of a landscape with dark skies, although the sense of naturalness is limited by commercial use of the site; and
- There are glimpsed long views to the north-east and south.

Overall, it is considered that there is a **weak expression** of the core components of character.

## Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

| Potential effects as a result of development on the site                                                                                          | Core character component of natural beauty potentially affected | Relevant key characteristics of the core character component potentially affected                                               | Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Landscape character and features                                                                                                                  |                                                                 |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Removal of mature trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. | Woodland                                                        | <i>Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands....and outgrown hedges, and isolated trees.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially the mature trees along the southern and western boundaries of the site (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives W1 and PQ2</b>).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                   | Aesthetic and perceptual qualities                              | <i>A sense of...enclosure ... owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Claylands Shaw to the south-east of the site.                                     | Woodland                                                        | <i>High proportion of woodland is categorised as ancient woodland...</i>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective W1</b>).</li> <li>The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity – in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective W2</b>).</li> </ul> |
|                                                                                                                                                   | Aesthetic and perceptual qualities                              | <i>A sense of history and timelessness...</i>                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                                                                                                                                                      |                  |                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Modifications to Hadlow Down Road (recorded as a historic lane) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening, creation of junction).                | Routeways        | <i>A dense radiating network with a variety of origins...</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reduce the impact of access works required to the road, where possible, retaining the character of the historic lane and protecting the hedgerows along it (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives R1 and R2</b>).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight, including the potential introduction of streetlights along Hadlow Down Road | Dark night skies | <i>Numerous unlit roads...</i>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective DS1</b>).</li> <li>■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance<sup>9</sup> and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives DS1 and DS2</b>).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Settlement form edge and setting                                                                                                                     |                  |                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| The dispersed and rural character of settlement along Hadlow Down Road.                                                                              | N/A              | N/A                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The height and massing of any development should be carefully considered in relation to the scale of existing commercial / employment development on Hadlow Down Road and underlying topography in the area (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective S2</b>).</li> <li>■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective S2</b>).</li> <li>■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'<sup>10</sup> and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan<sup>11</sup> (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective S2</b>).</li> </ul> |
| Visual amenity                                                                                                                                       |                  |                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

<sup>9</sup> See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Visibility of development seen by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ motorists/cyclists along Hadlow Down Road (which is recorded as a historic lane);</li> <li>■ visitors to the allotments and users of the public right of way through the allotments to the north-east; and</li> <li>■ workers at businesses adjacent to the site.</li> </ul> | <p>Aesthetic and perceptual qualities</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Unexpected...long views...</i></li> <li>■ <i>Sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way...suitable for walking...</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the mature vegetation that encloses the site, particularly roadside vegetation along Hadlow Down Road, including Clayland Shaw ancient woodland (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objectives W1 and PQ2</b>).</li> <li>■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective PQ2</b>).</li> <li>■ Retain glimpsed long views from the site looking south towards the wooded skyline of the wider AONB (in accordance with the AONB's <b>Objective PQ2</b>).</li> </ul> |
| Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>Low impact</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses few core character components of natural beauty, with a weak level of expression. Development of the site is judged to have a <b>low impact</b> on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, and is therefore unlikely to affect / impact the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.</p> <p>If the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities set out above are applied, potential impacts as a result of the development on the site could potentially be reduced further.</p> <p><u>Variation to overall impact</u></p> <p>There is no variation to the overall impact considered above.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## Summary and recommendations

The site-specific recommendations for this site are as follows:

- Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially the mature trees along the southern and western boundaries of the site.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland at Claylands Shaw.
- The height and massing of any development should be carefully considered in relation to the scale of existing commercial / employment development on Hadlow Down Road and underlying topography in the area.
- Retain glimpsed long views from the site looking south towards the wooded skyline of the wider AONB.

## Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Crowborough South assessment unit

Three sites have been assessed within the Crowborough South assessment unit. The preceding site assessments have judged the overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB to be:

| Site                                                                                                                    | Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB | Variations   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Group comprising Orchard Farm (formerly Tubwell Farm), Tubwell Lane (1015/1110) and Oaks Field, Tubwell Lane (300/1110) | High impact                                                                              | No variation |
| Owlsbury Depot, Hadlow Down Road (1010/1110)                                                                            | Low impact                                                                               | No variation |

If all three sites were brought forward for development to the extent as assessed, it would result in a potential of up to 70 dwellings being built (sites **1015/1110** and **300/1110**) and the intensification of a small site with existing commercial use (site **1010/1110**).

In the south-east of Crowborough, sites **1015/1110** and **300/1110** adjoin one another along the settlement edge and have been assessed together above. The assessment considers that potential development would likely have an impact on several components of character of the High Weald AONB, with the expression of being part of the principal Forest Ridge (and contribution to the pattern of faults and folds), woodland/ shaws, assart field pattern, grazing pastures, remnant orchard, historic routeway and historic farmstead all likely to be affected to some degree.

Site **1010/1110** is located over 0.5km to the south-west of sites **1015/1110** and **300/1110** and away from the settlement edge. Given the intervening distance and screening by intervening vegetation between the sites, plus its existing commercial use, cumulative landscape and visual effects are considered unlikely.

Overall, it is considered that the cumulative impact of developing the three potential sites on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB will be no greater than the sum of their individual impacts.

It is understood that site **1015/1110** has been identified as an Option in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026), but the other two sites are not allocated or considered an Option. There would be no cumulative implications if only this site was brought forwards for development.