

Horam Neighbourhood Plan Background Paper

Respecting and retaining the separate identities of settlements in Horam Parish



Horam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, September 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
Settlement Pattern.....	4
Historical development of settlements in the Parish.....	4
Post-War and current settlement pattern	5
AECOM's landscape character assessment.....	7
Community value placed on distinct settlement identities	9
Planning policy context.....	11
National planning policies	11
Local planning policy context	13
Policy Approach.....	14
Assessment of potential settlement gaps.....	16
APPENDICES: Assessments of essentially open countryside gaps between settlements that ensure their separate identities are retained.....	18
Appendix 1 – Horam – Maynard's Green Gap.....	19
Appendix 2 – Horam – Vines Cross Gap	24
Appendix 3 – Horam – Marle Green	28

Introduction

1. This Background Paper has been prepared on behalf of the Horam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan in terms of how it may appropriately ensure that the separate identities of the settlements (i.e. villages and hamlets) in the Parish are respected and retained.
2. The context for this Paper is a widely held local concern that new development, in certain places, is unnecessarily and harmfully eroding the distinctiveness of settlements which is highly valued by the respective communities.
3. An assessment of the identity and character of the Parish is at the heart of the Design Study undertaken by consultants, AECOM. This provides an objective basis for identifying “local countryside gaps” between settlements in the Parish as a policy tool to maintain overall landscape character and settlement pattern.
4. This report is structured as follows:
 - It firstly describes the *settlement pattern*, including its development
 - It presents the relevant parts of the *AECOM landscape character assessment*
 - It highlights *community views* expressed through consultation
 - It sets out how a local policy would be compatible with *national and local planning policy contexts*
 - It proposes an appropriate *policy approach* in the light of the above, including criteria to be used in identifying and defining gaps
 - It provides an overview of the *assessment of each of the potential settlement gaps*, details of which are contained in Appendices 1 - 4
 - Finally, *recommendations* for the identification of local settlement gaps are made

Settlement Pattern

Historical development of settlements in the Parish

6. The Second Edition OS Survey Map (1895) below shows Horam as just a small and loose-knit assemblage of properties, with the manor house and estate of 'Horeham' clearly identified, with the then recently-built station (named Horeham Road) on the south side of what is now the High Street.
7. The railway line (which is not on the earlier First Edition OS Map) is clearly drawn, running northwards under the High Street, and then on the west side of the road to Maynard's Green and Heathfield beyond. Southwards, it can be seen to be in deep cutting until it passes under Horebeech Lane.
8. The settlements of *Maynard's Green*, *Vine's Cross* and *Marle Green* are also identified. In addition, Sharp's Corner and Burlow are also marked, as are scattered farms. Coggers Cross may also be identified, leading to Coggers (Farm) to the east.

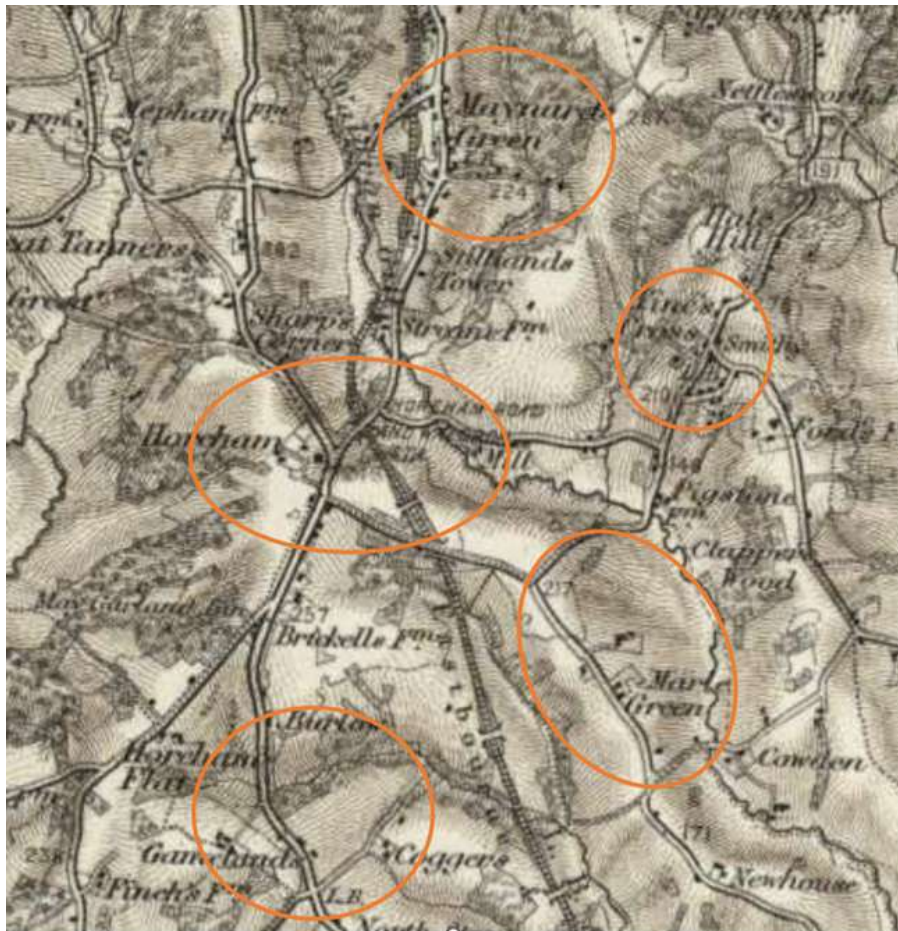


Figure 1 Ordnance Survey Map 1895

9. The OS plan dated 1921 below shows that by the 1920s the basic structure of the settlements, as is recognisable today, had been established. There is now frontage development extending on roads close to Horeham Road station, as well as at Maynard's Green and at Vines Cross.

Horam

11. Horam has consolidated and expanded considerably. This includes the redevelopments of the former railway land (off Hillside Drive) and of the Merrydown Cider and Wine site with “Merrydown Village”, as well as the new “housing estate” developments of Toll Wood Road, Horam Park Close, Grange Close, Paynsbridge Way, Meadow Rise, and most recently Rosemead Place.

Maynard’s Green

12. Maynard’s Green has experienced only limited change in the recent past, with some consolidation around the core and, very recently, southwards towards Horam.

Vines Cross

13. Vines Cross has also seen little post-War change other than the construction of Hurst Shaw on its northern side and some more recent small-scale consolidation. It retains its essentially compact form.

Marle Green

14. Marle Green saw some post-War development to the north around the junction with Laundry Lane. There has been very recent infilling, including at the former wood yard. With the development of Rosemead Place, there is now a minimal separation between Horam and Marle Green.

BurLOW

15. BurLOW is marked on early OS maps along what is now the A267 between the May Garland PH and Horeham Flat. Current OS mapping appears to show it also covering the linear development along Chiddingly Road. The very recent development of the Four Seasons estate on the southern edge of Horam and extending behind properties on Chiddingly Road, together with a smaller development opposite the May Garland PH, effectively joins the Chiddingly Road part of BurLOW to Horam.

AECOM's landscape character assessment

16. Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Horam Parish Council for the purposes of informing the preparation of a neighbourhood plan for the parish. Its report, entitled 'Horam Parish Neighbourhood Plan Report and Recommendations on Design Guidelines and Codes' (abbreviated here to "HDGC") was completed in October 2022. It has since been updated and amended, taking account of comments received, resulting in publication of its 'Design Guidelines', September 2023.
17. At the core of the HDGC is an analysis of the Parish, starting with the overall landscape character and settlement pattern, covering the broad settlement structure and respective nature, followed by a closer look at the main settlements in the Parish highlighting their key attributes and assets.
18. In Section 3.2 'Settlement pattern', there is heading, on page 32, highlighting 'Nature and value of gaps between the settlements'. Under this, it states:

"..., the location of each settlement within the parish, combined with the rich vegetation and woodlands, allows for large nature gaps contributing to the rural character of the parish. The countryside lanes that connect most of the surrounding settlements with Horam village help retain the rurality of the parish."
19. There are also character analyses of Horam village, Maynard's Green and Vines Cross, as well as a brief analysis covering the hamlets and farmsteads found around the parish, with specific reference to Marle Green, Burlow and Coggers Cross - see Figure 17 of the HDGC report, reproduced below.

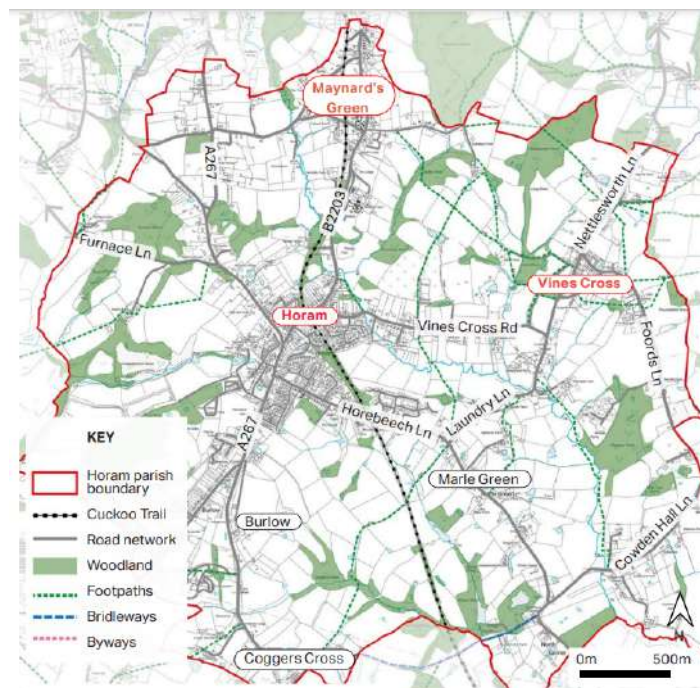


Figure 4 Map extract (Figure 17) from AECOM report,

20. AECOM goes on, in Section 4, to present the design vision and the key design principles, which are informed by the wider context considering the built environment as well as the landscape and local character of the locality. Of note, Part F of its Design Vision, expressed as the future state, (on pages 57/58) is:

F. The distinct identities of individual settlements will not have been further eroded. In particular, it has been noted that the gap between Burlow and Horam has already been eroded by the recent development, while the remaining separation between Horam and Marle Green is now a bare minimum. The countryside gap between Horam and Maynard's Green is also in danger of being undermined;

21. This is followed by a number of 'key design principles', the first of which (on page 58) is:

- *Respect the existing pattern of the parish to preserve the local character;*

22. Section 5 contains a broad range of design guidelines and codes. Code DC01.2 includes, on page 66, the recommendation that:

In general, it is important that each settlement, village or hamlet, is perceived as a separated entity with its own character and identity;

Community value placed on distinct settlement identities

23. During October/November 2022, a four-week public consultation was undertaken on emerging policy ideas had been generated in response to feedback from earlier consultation exercises. This consultation took the form of a questionnaire.

24. Questions 1a and 1b asked, respectively whether:

1a The existing settlement pattern should be maintained

1b The separate identities of settlements should be retained

25. The responses are shown on Figure 10 in the 'Summary of Consultation on Policy Ideas, November 2022':

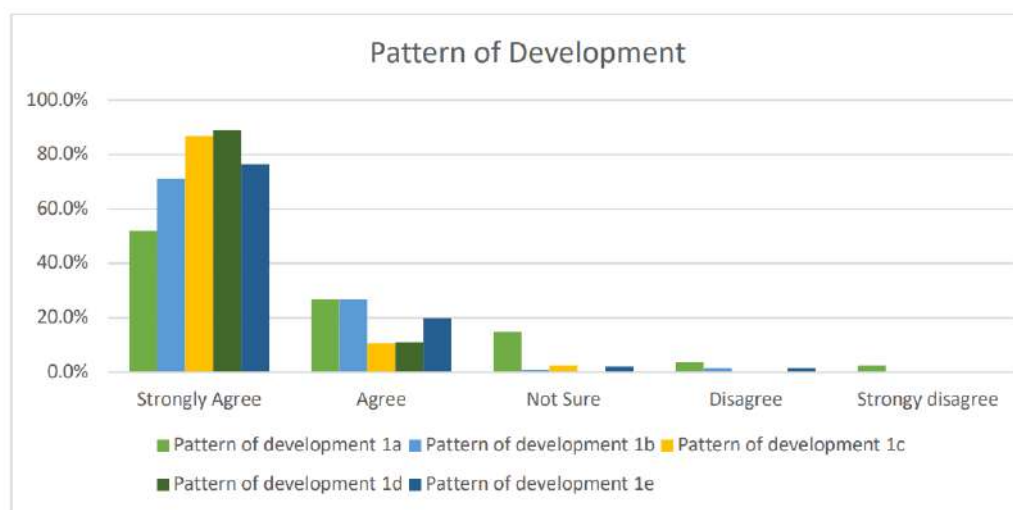


Figure 10. Chart displaying the distribution of responses to the 'pattern of development' ideas

Figure 5 Extract (Figure 10) from 'Summary of Consultation on Policy Ideas', Nov. 2022

26. The actual breakdown is that, in relation to Q1a, some 79% either strongly agree or agree that the existing settlement pattern should be maintained, while only 6% disagree. The balance of respondents are 'not sure'. Anecdotally, the relatively high proportion who are unsure may be attributable to concerns about the extent of recent new development.

27. It is notable that Q1b, which specifically asked whether the separate identities of settlements should be retained, received overwhelming support, with some 98% agreement (strongly agree = 71%; agree = 27%).

28. A draft policy, spatially-defined for each proposed Local Settlement Gap, was included in the Draft Horam Neighbourhood Plan, consulted upon under Regulation 18. In a high level of responses, a question asked about people's level of support, or opposition, to the actual policy.

29. The breakdown of the 204 responses was:

Strongly Agree	87.3%
Agree	9.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	3.4%
Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%

30. This demonstrates unanimous local support, with no disagreements and, if the small number who neither agree nor disagree are removed, it shows **100% support** for the policy.
31. It is clear from the above that there is strong local community support for retaining the distinct identities and “sense of place” of the Parish’s settlements.

Planning policy context

National planning policies

32. National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (“the NPPF”). The current NPPF was published in July 2021.
33. It is noted that the Government has recently consulted on proposed amendments to the NPPF. As a consultation document, the amendments are not national policy at this time. In any event, none of draft amendments relate to the paragraphs referred to below.
34. There is no reference to gaps between settlements in the NPPF. However, there are policy statements in relation to landscape and design that the identification of important gaps may be seen to align with.
35. Paragraph 177 states that:

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

 - a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
 - b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; ...*
36. This highlights the protection of “valued” landscapes. At the local level, value may be assigned both in terms of landscape character and how that landscape is “valued” by local communities, including its role in maintaining the discrete identity of settlements.
37. NPPF paragraphs 28 and 29 may also be taken to support identifying gaps between settlements that effectively maintain the distinct identities:

28. *Non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies.*

29. *Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.*
38. These paragraphs recognise the a particular role of neighbourhood plans in enabling communities to establish a spatial vision, in directing development to sustainable locations and setting out design principles. In fact, the NPPF has a specific section on Design (Section 12). Its early paragraphs state:

127. *Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.*

128. *To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety.*

39. Local policies to maintain gaps between settlement may also be found to be compatible, in appropriate circumstances, with the statements in paragraph 130 of the NPPF, in particular parts (c) and (d):

130. *Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; ...*

40. It is concluded that the identification of green/countryside gaps between settlements, where these are reflective of local history and character, contribute to the special qualities and distinct local identity of settlements, and are part of a local community's vision may be seen as consistent with national planning policy.
41. Of course, the Horam Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has responded positively to the opportunity, if not expectation, that neighbourhood plan groups actively promote design guidance. It appointed AECOM to undertake such an evaluation of defining local characteristics and features, led by a local design vision, and to recommend design guidelines and codes, as discussed above.

Local planning policy context

42. The current development plan for the Parish includes the Wealden Core Strategy, adopted in 2013, and the saved policies of the earlier Wealden Local Plan, 1998.
43. It is worth highlighting that, while these Local Plans are more than five years old, they are still part of the statutory development plan.
44. The Core Strategy does not contain any specific policies relating to countryside gaps, although does set out a principle for the strategic growth of Hailsham in terms of “... *ensuring adequate landscape gaps are maintained between the urban extension of Hailsham and the village of Hellingly, and between Hailsham and development at Hellingly Hospital;*”
45. One point to note from the Core Strategy is that Horam is identified as a ‘local service centre, whilst the previous ‘development boundaries’ for Maynards Green and Vines Cross are removed.
46. Saved 1998 Wealden Local Plan (WLP) policies provide a supportive policy context for identifying local gaps, namely:
 - Policy EN2 states that “*The Council will seek to maintain the existing settlement pattern ...*”
 - WLP Policy EN8, states that, in relation to development within the Low Weald that “... *particular regard will be had to:- (2) the setting of settlements;*”
47. It is concluded that countryside gaps may be identified in the Horam Neighbourhood Plan, as they it would not be incompatible with any Core Strategy policies and, furthermore, may be supportive of other Local Plan policies.
48. Moreover, insofar as such a neighbourhood plan policy can be seen as consistent with national policies and advice, is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area, and contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, it follows that the definition of important gaps between settlements - where these are local in nature - is supportable in principle.
49. Further consideration of appropriate criteria is given below.

Policy Approach

50. The identification of areas of land – “gaps” – between settlements in the Parish that are generally free from development within which development is constrained (but not wholly restricted) meets a proper planning function to prevent the coalescence of settlements and, in so doing, helps maintain the distinct identity and character of its villages and hamlets.
51. Furthermore, an appropriately worded policy would contribute to realising the shared community vision for the Parish and the achievement of sustainable development by protecting local identity and character, while still supporting compatible development.
52. To be clear, the identification of local settlement gaps should not represent a general approach to preventing inappropriate development in the countryside. Such policies are matters for the District Council in the drawing of its limits to built development (locally referred to as ‘development boundaries’) of settlements as part of its development strategy. Rather, it should only be applied where necessary with the specific purpose of maintaining the separate identities and character of settlements.
53. While preventing the coalescence of settlements is not specifically a landscape policy, the identification of gaps should be grounded in an appreciation of “landscape character” in its broad sense. This is because “landscape” embraces regard to settlement pattern and the setting of settlements, as well as the layout and form of buildings and spaces within them.
54. AECOM, in its reports on design guidelines for the Horam Neighbourhood Plan, as reviewed above, provides an independent appraisal of the landscape and design qualities of the Parish. It identifies clear character differences between the respective settlements and the importance of their settings and highlights, as part of Design Guideline DG.01.2 (page 66) that:

“it is important that each settlement, village or hamlet, is perceived as a separated entity with its own character and identity”.
55. The identification of settlement gaps is the planning policy tool to meet this objective, and thereby maintain the “sense of place”, which is clearly important to local residents, as highlighted in the previously in the section on ‘*Community value placed on distinct settlement identities*’.
56. The following considerations set out below are used to define proposed gaps. It is stressed that there is no priority ordering, nor need all criteria be met; rather, an overall, balanced judgement should be taken:

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) <i>Is the land to be included within the gap substantially open in character and, if there is existing development within the gap, how does this impact on the gap?</i>(b) <i>Is the land forming part of the gap between settlements considered vulnerable to development such that development in this location either individually or, in respect of smaller schemes, cumulatively, erode the perception of the gap?</i> |
|--|

- (c) *At settlement edges, where does the feeling of arriving at/leaving a settlement occur, and where does the land sit in relation to this?*
- (d) *Is the gap appropriate having regard to the actual and perceived distance between the settlements, local topography, landscape features, public views (including any inter-visibility), the presence of any existing buildings?*
- (e) *Are there recognisable features (e.g. road, public right of way, woodland, hedgerow, stream, field boundary) that help define the edges of the gap, including the lateral extent?*
- (f) *Does the extent of the gap take account of outstanding Local Plan allocations, definitions of development boundaries and any extant planning consents?*
- (g) *Would the identification of the gap still enable the sustainable growth of settlements to meet local development needs, or as an appropriate and sustainable part of a wider development strategy for the District?*
- (h) *Is all the land regarded as forming the gap local in nature and wholly within the Parish?*

- 57. In both defining the extent of the local settlement gaps and in considering proposals within them, it should be appreciated that coalescence is a process and not an end state. Hence, whilst development of a particular site may not in itself result in the coalescence of settlements, it may still contribute to their coalescence.
- 58. Hence, it is proposed that there is a specific policy, distinct from the wider regard to landscape, that has a single focus to prevent coalescence and maintain the identity and sense of place of individual settlements. For clarity in policy application, the full extent of gaps is defined.
- 59. When defined, the application of the policy should be focussed on the purpose of the gap to preventing coalescence and maintaining the separate identity of settlements.
- 60. It is not a blanket restriction on development. There will be certain developments that would not have an adverse effect on the function of the gap – although they would still need to accord with other planning policies for development in the countryside.

Assessment of potential settlement gaps

61. In the light of the historical development of settlements in the Parish and distinctions between the Parish's villages and hamlets identified by AECOM's landscape character analysis, as well as vulnerabilities as result of recent developments and permitted schemes, assessments are provided in respect of:
 - a) Horam and Maynards Green
 - b) Horam and Vines Cross
 - c) Horam and Marle Green
62. It is acknowledged, as set out in the AECOM Design Study that the Horam – Burlow gap "*has already been eroded by the recent development*". Therefore, it is not considered further in this paper.
63. In respect of the separation between Horam and Marle Green, given that AECOM cites it as being "*a bare minimum*", it is reviewed to determine whether there is still meaningful gap.
64. In relation to the separation between Horam and the other two villages – Maynard's Green and Vines Cross – both are reviewed, noting that AECOM consider that the countryside gap between Horam and Maynard's Green "*is also in danger of being undermined*". While there is greater separation between Horam and Vines Cross, the presence of a number of established properties between them increases potential vulnerability.
65. The particular pressure for the growth of Horam is a further consideration that warrants the identification of gaps relating to it and its adjacent settlements.
66. While it would be possible to also identify areas of countryside between some of the smaller villages and hamlets, such as between Maynards Green and Vines Cross, Vine's Cross and Marle Green, or between Marle Green and Burlow, these are not regarded as warranting specific protection, primarily as none of these settlements are service centres, unlike Horam itself, so any development is assumed to be very localised and not likely to bear on the intervening countryside.
67. A case may be made in relation to the countryside between Vine's Cross and Marle Green, as they have a direct link via Laundry Lane/Nettlesworth Lane, but, on balance, this possibility, which clearly would be inappropriate in wider landscape terms, is essentially addressed by the somewhat shorter and overlapping Vines Cross – Horam gap.
68. Assessments of the essential extent of the respective gaps are contained in Appendices 1 - 3. The area of land needed to retain its function as a 'gap' varies, taking into account the considerations mentioned above, including the nature of the landscape and the extent to which separation is perceived, and vulnerable.

69. In summary, important local countryside gaps are identified between the following settlements:

- **Horam and Maynards Green**

Horam and Maynard's Green have distinct identities and characters, as highlighted in the HDGC. Although in relatively close proximity to each other, there is a very clear separation as seen from both the B2203 and from the Cuckoo Trail. Woodland cover alongside the B2203 and the Trail contributes to the rural character of the area, complementing the fields beyond. Although there is some existing development in the gap, it is limited and largely of a historic nature, and does not detract from the sense of separation.

- **Horam and Vines Cross**

The villages are connected by Vines Cross Road and Laundry Lane/Nettlesworth Lane. There are also public rights of way through fields between the villages, and the visual separation between the two settlements is very apparent to walkers on the local public footpath network, as well as to road users. The intervening area has a strong essentially open, rural character, notwithstanding some farms, older cottages and other buildings.

- **Horam and Marle Green**

Marle Green is an old hamlet, distinct from Horam, and retains its own identity, as set out in the HDGC. Horam has expanded considerably in recent years, eroding the separate identity of Marle Green. However, there remains the strong local desire to retain the remaining gap between the two settlements. While the extent of the Rosemead Place development and the recently approved residential development at Land East of Orchard House substantially erode the gap between them, the distinct identities of Horam and Marle Green still exist. Residents of Marle Green still identify with the hamlet, rather than with neighbouring Horam village.

**APPENDICES: Assessments of essentially open
countryside gaps between settlements that ensure their
separate identities are retained**

Appendix 1 – Horam – Maynard’s Green Gap

Gap:	Horam – Maynard’s Green
Purpose:	Maintenance of a clear separation between Horam and Maynard’s Green to retain their distinct identities
Description:	<p>Horam and Maynard’s Green have distinct identities and characters, as highlighted in the AECOM Design Study.</p> <p>The villages are connected by the B2203, as well as by the Cuckoo Trail.</p> <p>The villages’ centres (for Horam, as defined by the junction of the B2203 and the A267 and, for Maynard’s Green, as defined by the junction of the B2203 with Sicklehatch Lane and Tubwell Lane) are themselves only some 1.3km apart. However, Horam extends some 540m northwards along the B2203, the edge of the main built-up area being well defined, essentially where the B2203 is crossed by the Waldron Ghyll, past the well-consolidated frontage housing on both sides of the road.</p> <p>Maynards Green extends south towards Horam with housing on both sides of the B2203 as far as Beechlands Lodge and South Lodge set back somewhat beyond it on the east side, and Silverwood virtually opposite on the west side. However, development is under construction to the south of Silverwood, which will extend to the currently outlying property, Orchard Leigh.</p> <p>The countryside between the villages, namely beyond the Waldron Ghyll crossing of the B2203 forming the northern edge of Horam, and south of Orchard Leigh, is well-treed. Trees provide a strong frame to both the B2203 and the Cuckoo Trail which runs parallel to it, but at a much higher elevation, to the west. Beyond the trees, there is generally open land. A notable exception to this on the eastern side of the B2203 is the complex of buildings of St Mary’s School, a special school, set back from the road. Also, but on the western side of the B2203 and closer to Horam, are the historic buildings of Stream Farm and Stillyan’s Oast.</p>
Reasoning:	
Openness	The land between the villages is substantially open in character. The presence of some scattered, mostly historic, properties does not detract from the sense of separation.
Vulnerability	The proximity of the villages to each other provides a clear case for retaining their physical separation. There has been a recent planning application (ref. WD/2022/2702/O) for a row of four dwellings on land south of Orchard Leigh that would constitute a ribbon extension of development into the gap. There is some established scattered development between the villages, the intensification of which could also erode the gap.
Sense of arrival	<p>There is a strong sense of arrival/departure at Horam at Stream Cottages and Stream House opposite, essentially contained by the course of the Waldron Ghyll.</p> <p>At Maynard’s Green, as noted above, the ongoing construction of four dwellings on the strip of land between Orchard Leigh and Silverwood effectively extends the built-up area of Maynard’s Green as far as</p>

	<p>Orchard Leigh, such that it becomes the southern extent of Maynard's Green to the west of the B2203, emphasised by its siting and orientation.</p> <p>On the east side of the B2203, the main built-up area of Maynard's Green is generally regarded as being marked by Beechlands Lodge (with South Lodge set back beside it). However, the development currently under construction to the west of the road will visually draw the wide access point to St Mary's School and the adjacent properties of Stillyans Cottage and The Lodge into the village, even though they would still be separated from South Lodge by a field.</p>
Features/views	<p>The impact of the main St Mary's School and adjacent buildings lying in spacious grounds some distance south of the entrance on the integrity of the gap is mitigated by virtue of the topography and setback/screening from the B2203 by trees and vegetation. Nonetheless, it is a large complex, with some presence. Therefore, it is proposed to include the vegetated roadside area and surrounding undeveloped land in the gap, but wrap around the main building complex. This allows for suitable development (subject to relevant local planning policies) within the existing building footprint without raising any conflict with the gap policy, while still ensuring that the distinct identities of the respective settlements are not further eroded.</p> <p>The visual separation between the two settlements is very apparent to pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders on the Cuckoo Trail as well as pedestrians walking along the footway, and from road users. This can be appreciated from the photographs – all taken from public vantage points.</p> <p>The amount of woodland cover alongside the B2203 and the Cuckoo Trail contributes to the rural character of the area, complementing the fields beyond.</p>
Edge definition	<p>A woodland belt beyond fields to the east of the B2203 provides an appropriate and effective eastern edge of the gap. To the west, the elevated Cuckoo Trail affords wide views, but the western limit is taken to be the field boundaries containing the Waldron Ghyll in the locality, excluding the existing business area accessed under the Trail, as development in this area would erode the villages' separate identities.</p>
Commitments	<p>There are no outstanding recent planning permissions for development affecting the definition of the gap, aside from that for the four dwellings currently under construction as mentioned above.</p> <p>There is no Local Plan 'development boundary' for Maynards Green which would carry 'in principle' policy support for development. In fact, the previous one only extended as far south as Silverwood.</p> <p>While there is a current planning application (see 'Vulnerability' above) for land regarded as within the gap, it is noted that an Inspector found, in an appeal decision in 1989 (ref. application WD-1988-2930-O), that the site is part of a "<i>valuable break between settlements</i>", with development <i>most detrimental to its appearance and character</i>.</p>
Meeting development needs	<p>Horam has a number of facilities which make it a candidate for future growth, albeit there are only limited local housing needs. Definition of this gap (even in conjunction with other gaps) would still enable the sustainable growth of Horam – and would help direct it to more appropriate locations.</p>

	Maynards Green has a primary school but no other local facilities, including shops, as recognised by the earlier removal of its development boundary. Were there to be an overriding local need for housing, then other sites that do not impinge on the gap may be considered.
Local nature	All of the land is wholly within the Parish.
Recommended gap	It is proposed that the distinct identities of Horam and Maynard's Green are protected by a policy that identifies the extent of the essentially countryside gap between them, as shown on Plan A below.

Photographs



Approach into Horam from Maynard's Green, giving a clear sense of entry to the built-up area.



Northern edge of Horam, with field beyond on right and road rising to Maynards Green through trees. A stream runs under the road beyond the houses.



View towards Maynards Green with Stillyans Cottage visible in the distance. St Mary's School is largely screened behind trees on right.



Approach to Maynards Green with Orchard Leigh marking urban edge, with Stillyans Cottage and The Lodge diagonally opposite.



Views from the mid-point of the gap, from the same point looking firstly south to Horem and then north to Maynard's Green. The respective urban edges are in view, highlighting their inter-visibility.



View south from Maynard's Green, with houses being built on right and Orchard Leigh beyond.

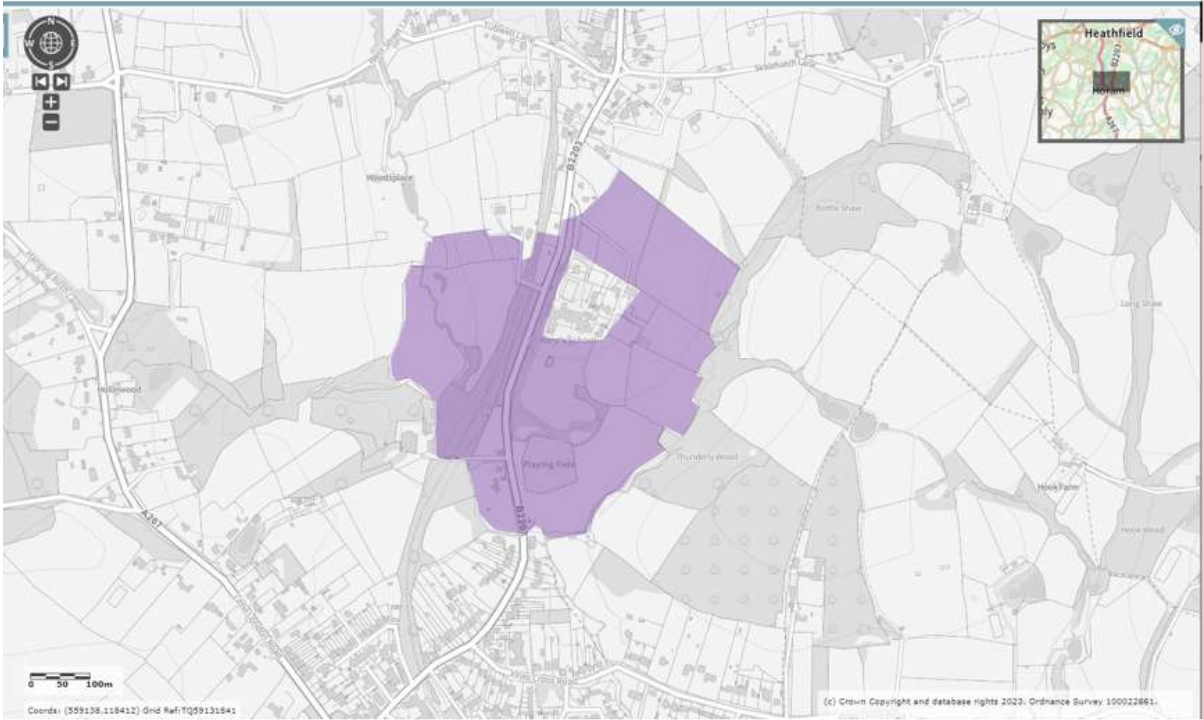


View from Cuckoo Trail looking north, with Orchard Leigh on right and Hendalls Farm on left.



Panorama looking south on the Cuckoo Trail from just south of Orchard Leigh and Hendalls Farm. [Note that land the subject of the recent planning application – see Vulnerability - is on the left.]

Plan A – Proposed settlement gap between Horam and Maynard’s Green



Appendix 2 – Horam – Vines Cross Gap

Gap:	Horam – Vines Cross
Purpose:	Maintenance of a clear separation between Horam and Vines Cross, to retain their distinct identities.
Description:	<p>Horam and Vines Cross have distinct identities and characters, as highlighted in the AECOM “Design Study”.</p> <p>The villages are connected by Vines Cross Road and Laundry Lane/Nettlesworth Lane. There are also Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) across fields between the villages.</p> <p>The distance from the edge of Horam (defined as being where there is well-consolidated frontage development on both sides of Vines Cross Road up to the entrance to Hidden Spring Vineyard, which coincides with the ‘30 mph’ sign) to the edge of Vines Cross (being seen as the junction of Ballsocks Lane and Nettlesworth Lane) is virtually 0.6 mile (955 metres) along the roads (or a 0.5 mile, or 800m, straight-line distance).</p> <p>Beyond the vineyard entrance, there is very little development on the northern side of Vines Cross Road, the only frontage properties being a pair of cottages near a stream bridge some distance from Horam. Otherwise, the (AONB-designated) countryside is open grazing land beyond a virtually continuous roadside hedge, punctuated by the entrance to Redlands, a substantial property set well back beyond drive within large grounds to the east of Vines Cross.</p> <p>There is more, but essentially sporadic, development on the south side. It extends from the edge of Horam, becoming more loose-knit travelling eastward. However, the properties largely comprise older, vernacular buildings, including several farms and associated or converted buildings. As such, they generally blend into their rural context.</p> <p>Similarly, there are a number of properties along Laundry Lane/Nettlesworth Lane at or close to their junction with Vines Cross Road. These clearly sit outside the built-up area of Vines Cross. They are mostly older properties and read as an isolated loose-knit grouping in a strongly rural context.</p>
Reasoning:	
Openness	The countryside beyond the main built-up confines of Horam and Vines Cross has a strong rural character. Grazed fields prevail, framed by treed hedgelines, notwithstanding the scattered roadside development.
Vulnerability	<p>Given the relatively limited length of open countryside on both Vines Cross Road and Nettlesworth Lane, it is regarded as imperative to prevent its erosion.</p> <p>There is the potential for this rural character to be lost if there is further intensification of existing development, as well as from urban</p>

	expansion, with a consequent significant erosion of the separate identities of Horam and Vines Cross. Indeed, the presence of some properties between the villages does not undermine the gap, but give added reason to ensure that there is no further development permitted that would compromise it.
Sense of arrival	<p>Approaching Horam along Vines Cross Road there is a significant change in character at the vineyard entrance, to a much more urban one. From this point, there is well-consolidated frontage development on both sides of the road, and a roadside footway. It is also the start of the 30 mph zone.</p> <p>Approaching Vines Cross from the south along Nettlesworth Lane, there is a sharp transition from agricultural to built-up land, beginning at the corner property at the junction with Ballsocks Lane. The tight built-up form of Vines Cross contained by Nettlesworth Lane and Ballsocks Lane from this point is very evident.</p>
Features/views	<p>The character of the essentially agricultural landscape between the villages is very apparent to walkers on the local public footpath network, as well as to road users. Photographs – all taken from public vantage points - attached below. Of note is the inter-visibility between them in views across the valley of the Waldron Ghyll.</p> <p>The other notable factor is the “dog-leg” nature of the gap along the roads. This has the effect of it having two components: namely between Horam and the Vines Cross Road/Nettlesworth Lane/Laundry Lane junction in the first instance, and from that junction to Vines Cross in the second. The respective lengths of these sections of road, allied to the presence of some development both around the junction and along Vines Cross Road, reduce the perception of distance between the villages.</p>
Edge definition	<p>Vines Cross Road runs west-east along the south-facing slope of the Waldron Ghyll. This gives short/mid-distance views towards the high ground to the north, with longer distance views south across the stream course to the ridge beyond. To the south, the stream course is taken as a well-defined and sufficiently distant extent of the gap, notwithstanding that development spilling over the ridge to the south would be visually intrusive in the valley setting. To the north, the extent of the gap is seen as the extent of the fields that are visible from the road and when looking south over the valley from the public footpath extending westwards from the southern end of Vines Cross.</p> <p>Towards Vines Cross, the gap extends to include the fields either side of Nettlesworth Lane/Laundry Lane.</p>
Commitments	There are no outstanding planning permissions or site allocations in an adopted Local Plan that conflict with the proposed gap definition.
Meeting development needs	<p>Horam has a number of facilities which make it a candidate for future growth, albeit there are only limited local housing needs. Definition of this Gap (even in conjunction with other gaps) would still enable the sustainable growth of Horam – and would help direct it to more appropriate locations.</p> <p>Aside from a public house and the car repair MoT garage, Vines Cross has no services or facilities. The Wealden Core Strategy does not</p>

	regard it as a sustainable location for growth. Were there to be an overriding local need for housing, then other sites that do not impinge on the gap may be considered.
Local nature	All of the land is wholly within the Parish.
Recommended gap	It is recommended that the distinct identities and characters of Horam and Vines Cross are protected by a policy that identifies the extent of the essentially countryside gap between them, as shown below.



View leaving 30mph limit on Vines Cross Road with field on left and loose-knit buildings on right



View leaving Vines Cross, with Ballssocks Lane on left, and slope down to Vines Cross Road junction



View along Vines Cross Road at beginning of main built-up area (entrance to vineyard on right)



View northwards into Vines Cross at junction of Nettlesworth Lane and Ballssocks Lane



View across valley towards Rosemead estate in Horam from footpath to west of Vines Cross



Reciprocal view across valley towards Vines Cross

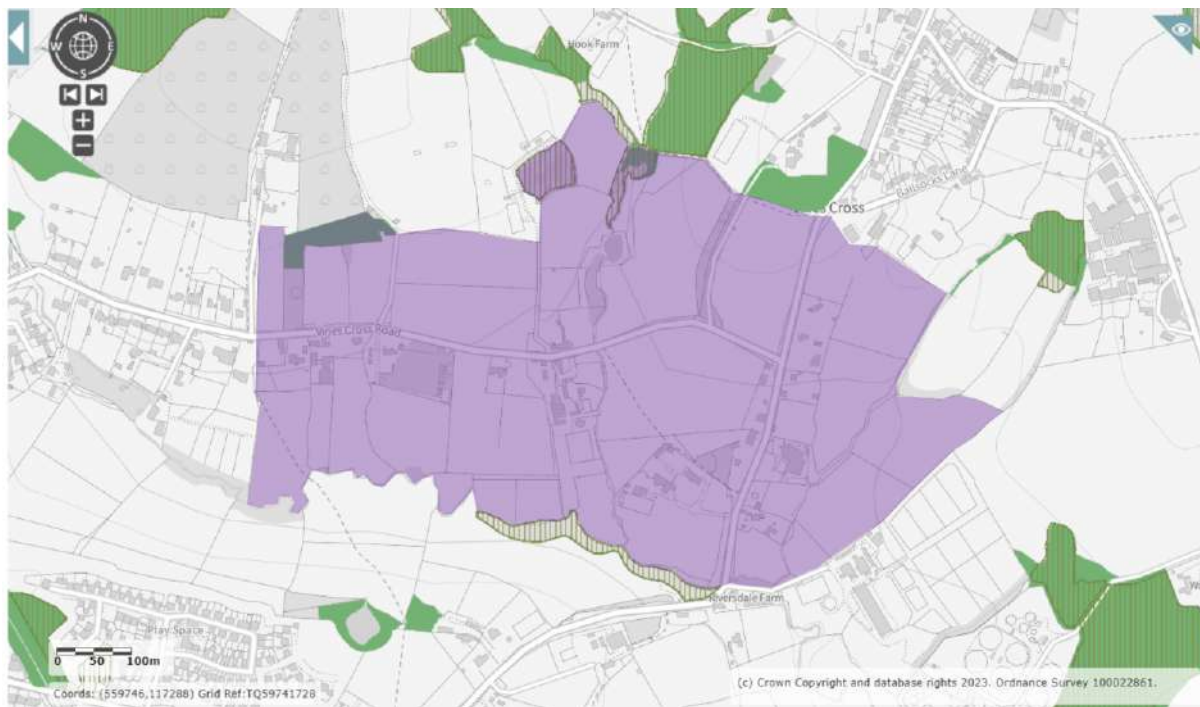


Winter view across valley, with Vines Cross Road running along southern slope



Older properties along Vines Cross Road

Plan B – Proposed settlement gap between Horam and Vines Cross



Appendix 3 – Horam – Marle Green

Gap:	Horam – Marle Green
Purpose:	Maintenance of the separate identities of Horam and Marle Green
Description:	<p>Marle Green is an old hamlet, distinct from Horam, as shown on the early OS series maps from the turn of the last Century.</p> <p>Horam, to its east, has grown substantially in recent times, to the extent that there is now only very limited separation between them. However, as highlighted in the AECOM Design Study, it retains its own identity. Moreover, this is very important to the local community.</p> <p>Marle Green is directly linked to Horam by Horebeech Lane, as well as to both Horam and Vines Cross by Laundry Lane. There is also a well-used footpath that runs from the Cuckoo Trail to Vines Cross Road, crossing Horebeech Lane at the western end of Marle Green.</p> <p>The recent development of the Rosemead Place estate has substantially eroded the gap between Horam and Marle Green, but is contained by a large attenuation pond and surrounding open space, which separates the new housing from the western edge of frontage housing Marle Green, as well as by a landscaped belt along its eastern boundary.</p>
Reasoning:	
Openness	<p>The net effect of the recent and permitted developments on both sides of Horebeech Lane (Rosemead Place and on land next to Old Orchard – see Commitments below) are considerably eroding the separate identity of Marle Green. However, the photographs below confirm local residents' views that there is still some perception of a gap between the edge of Horam and Marle Green.</p> <p>The strong rural character of the area is retained, notwithstanding the small groupings of roadside development. Moreover, given the relatively limited length of open countryside on both Horebeech Lane and Laundry Lane, it is regarded as imperative to prevent its erosion.</p>
Vulnerability	Aside from being eroded to the extent that there is now only a minimal separation between Horam and Marle Green, there is ongoing pressure for further development that would physically link the settlements.
Sense of arrival	<p>Moving east along Horebeech lane out of Horam, the cluster of properties on the three corners of its junction with Laundry Lane appear as the beginning of Marle Green.</p> <p>Conversely, passing these properties travelling westwards, there is a short break before the new properties on Rosemead Place come fully into view, their set-back from the road and intervening open space providing some sense of separation.</p>
Features/views	<p>There is clearly close inter-visibility between Horam and Marle Green.</p> <p>A further feature is the outward views from the intervening land. Most notably, the elevated field east of Rosemead Place provides long-distance public views both north into the High Weald AONB and south to the South Down National Park – which is rare locally. To the south of</p>

	Horebeech Lane, the gap also affords views southward towards the Cuckoo Trail from the public footpath that runs through it.
Edge definition	To the south, the Cuckoo Trail provides a well-defined edge, while to the north, the gap follows the top of the ridge, aligning with the depth of Rosemead Place.
Commitments	<p>Permission has been granted for housing on the opposite (south) side of the lane on 'Land at Old Orchard House (WD/2021/2356/MAO) for up to 38 dwellings. In this and a previous appeal decision, planning inspectors have recognised the “<i>green break between Horam and the adjacent settlement at Marle Green</i>”. While this contributed to the refusal of the earlier application, the second Inspector found that the impact of a smaller scheme would allow for a lower density and more landscape dominated scheme and that the wider extent of landscaping in and around the development would reduce the scheme’s adverse visual impacts to an appreciable degree.</p> <p>The proposed definition of the gap would not comprise implementation of this outline planning permission.</p>
Meeting needs	<p>Horam has a number of facilities which make it a candidate for future growth, albeit there are only limited local housing needs. Definition of this Gap (even in conjunction with other gaps) would still enable the sustainable growth of Horam – and would help direct it to more appropriate locations.</p> <p>Marle Green is a small hamlet. While some infill development has taken place recently, the facilities in Horam are some distance away and hence, it is not regarded as suitable for new development.</p>
Local nature	All of the land is wholly within the Parish.
Recommended gap	Given the strong local desire to retain the separate identity of Marle Green, it is imperative that there is a clear planning policy to retain what remains of the gap between it and Horam, as identified below.



View from Horebeech Lane/Laundry Lane junction towards Horam



View from Laundry Lane, with new Rosemead estate to right. Edge of Marle Green hidden to left



Field to south of Horebeech Lane, between approved development site and Marle Green



View north on Horebeech Lane, with end property in Marle Green on right and Rosemead estate to left



View from Marle Green towards Horam, with Rosemead Place on right



View from Horam towards Marle Green



View southwards, with Rosemead Place on right and properties in Marle Green on left



View north across High Weald AONB from field between Horam and Marle Green

Plan C – Proposed settlement gap between Horam and Marle Green

