

Stone Cross

(Inset Map No.52)

Introduction

19.34.1 Stone Cross is an expanding residential settlement situated on a pronounced east-west ridge of high ground at the crossroads of the old A27 Dittons Road/Rattle Road with Hailsham Road and Lion Hill. The new A27 Pevensey Bypass lies to the north and has considerably reduced the amount of traffic passing through Stone Cross.

Strategy

19.34.2 The 1991 County Structure Plan identified Stone Cross as an area for significant growth. The Council allocated land in the South Wealden Local Plan for 1,000 new dwellings together with a primary school and other community facilities in accordance with the Structure Plan policy. Development has advanced on the three major sites and the primary school has been constructed.

19.34.3 When considering the appropriate location for future housing development, the Council felt development to the north of the ridge would be highly intrusive into a large area of open countryside beyond, whilst development to the east or west would conflict with the recognised strategic policy of maintaining existing countryside gaps between Stone Cross, Polegate and Westham.

19.34.4 It was therefore considered that development of land to the south of the ridge was preferred as it would relate well to the existing settlement and to new housing at Langney, whilst being least intrusive to the landscape and agriculture.

19.34.5 Given the topography of the locality, it is inevitable that development on this scale will have a major impact on Stone Cross and the surrounding area. The Council's strategy for Stone Cross aims to accommodate the additional housing and provide sufficient associated community facilities whilst minimising the degree of intrusion on the existing settlement and the surrounding countryside. Its objectives are as follows:-

(1) to make provision for about 1,000 dwellings, together with a new primary school and other facilities in the Stone Cross area in accordance with the 1991 County Structure Plan;

(2) to minimise the impact of the proposed development on the existing settlement and the landscape of the area;

(3) to make adequate provision for community services and facilities;

(4) to maintain the countryside gaps between Stone Cross with Polegate and Westham.

Population and Housing

19.34.6 The planned expansion of Stone Cross by around 1,000 dwellings comprises three large sites. It is estimated that the population of Stone Cross will increase to around 2,800 persons by the end of the Plan period. The three sites, as shown on Figure 14, comprise Site 1 - Red Dyke Farm (650 dwellings), Site 2 - Land south-west of Beggars Lane (175 dwellings) and Site 3 - Land south-west of Peelings Lane (175 dwellings). The actual number of dwellings may vary slightly when detailed layouts are approved and implemented; the situation will be monitored.

19.34.7 The three main sites now have planning permission for residential development and are under construction with a large number of dwellings completed; consequently they do not need to be re-allocated in this Plan. Outside these sites there are other more limited opportunities for housing development within the defined development boundary which may arise through infilling, by redevelopment of existing sites and by the conversion of buildings to residential use.

Site 1 Red Dyke Farm

19.34.8 This approximately 35 hectare parcel of open grassland lies to the south of Dittons Road and slopes down to the existing and disused railway lines. It is bounded to the east by Lion Hill and to the west by the lane leading to Red Dyke House.

19.34.9 Planning permission exists for residential development and ancillary facilities, and housing has been completed on part of the site.

19.34.10 The provision of land within this site for a new primary school (now constructed), local shopping and community facilities, public open space and recreation areas in accordance with the South Wealden Local Plan has been secured through appropriate legal agreements. Land under the 132KV overhead electricity line on the western edge of the site forms a boundary to the proposed housing development and an area for passive recreation.

Site 2 Beggars Lane

19.34.11 This site to the east of Lion Hill slopes upwards towards the tree line at Beggars Lane on the ridge. This forms a natural limit and an effective screen

to the new housing development and has therefore been retained. The disused windmill also stands on this ridge and is a particularly prominent feature open to views from the south-west.

19.34.12 The development is well advanced and comprises of housing and sheltered flats on the majority of the site area. The planning permission provides for the retention of trees and tree belts within the site and appropriate landscaping measures. An open space and children's play area is also to be provided.

19.34.13 In view of the recognised historical importance and visual prominence of Stone Cross Windmill, a Grade II* listed building, it is considered that development in the vicinity should respect its setting.

VB34 Development at Stone Cross should be sympathetic to the Stone Cross windmill and its setting and should be single-storey in the immediate area of the windmill. Particular regard will be paid to the impact of the proposed development at Stone Cross upon wider views of the windmill, particularly from the south and west.

Site 3 Peelings Lane

19.34.14 This roughly triangular-shaped site lies in a fold in the landscape between Peelings Lane to the north-east and Rattle Road to the south and residential development of the site is virtually complete.

19.34.15 The site is served by an access off Rattle Road and it is proposed to close Peelings Lane to vehicular traffic from the junction with Rattle Road. An area of woodland fronting Rattle Road has been retained, and an open space and childrens play area provided within the new development.

Employment

19.34.16 In view of the proximity to Eastbourne as well as Hailsham, Polegate and Westham, which provide main business areas, town centre shops and offices, it is recognised that Stone Cross residents would generally look outside the settlement for employment. Environmental and landscape reasons preclude the allocation of land at Stone Cross for industrial purposes.

Development Boundary

19.34.17 The development boundary proposed for Stone Cross essentially reflects the major land allocations referred to earlier and incorporates the existing settlement of Stone Cross. The boundary seeks to prevent further outward expansion of the proposed

new development in view of the clear environmental and landscape constraints.

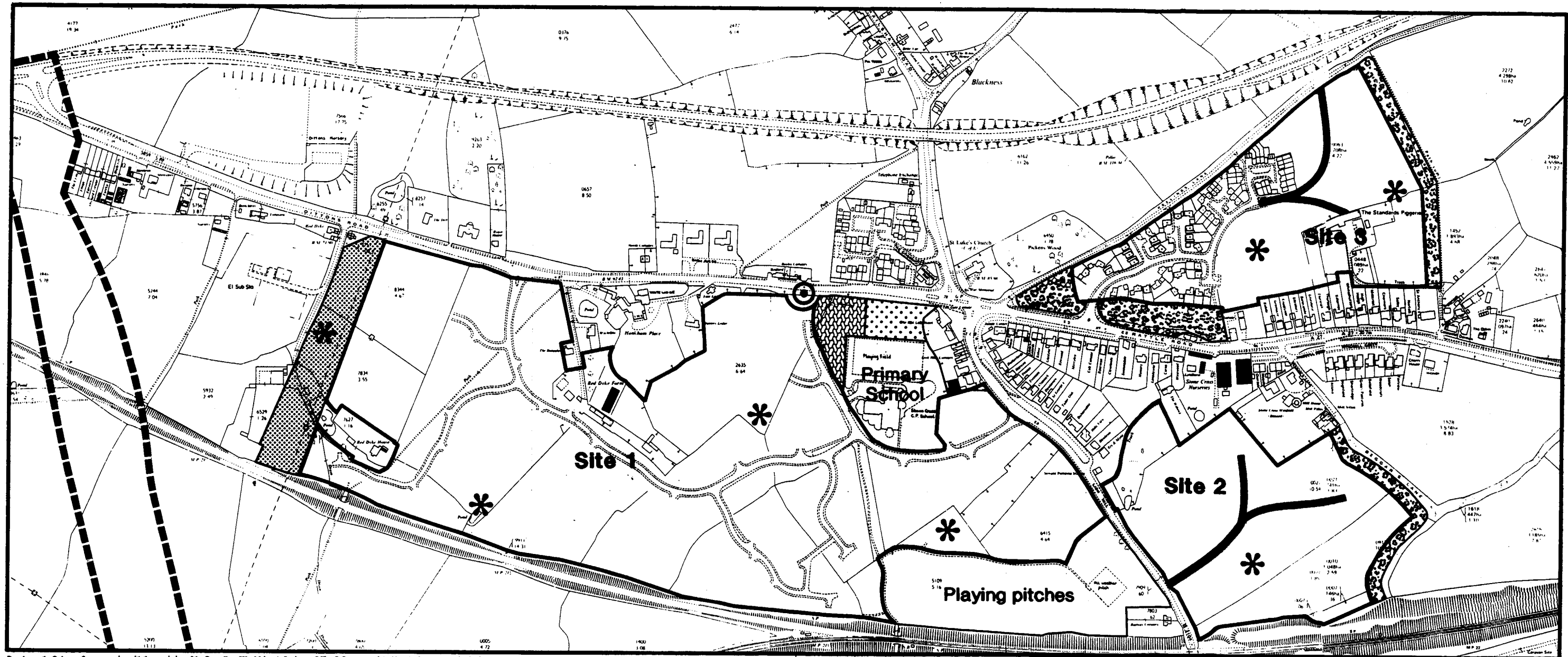
19.34.18 In the west the development boundary incorporates the housing proposed at Site 1 but excludes the substantial strip of land committed for public open space at the western end of the site. It is considered very important to prevent the lateral expansion of Stone Cross along Dittons Road towards Polegate which would lead to the coalescence of the settlements. This would be to the detriment of the identity of the settlements and to their rural settings.

19.34.19 South of Rattle Road and Dittons Road, the development boundary incorporates the allocated sites at Stone Cross Sites 1 and 2 and Hankham Place. The development boundary largely follows the clear physical barrier of the active and disused railway lines. However, the playing fields immediately adjacent to the active railway line provide both a necessary public recreation facility and a valuable break in development between Eastbourne and Stone Cross, and consequently have been excluded from the development boundary.

19.34.20 To the east of Stone Cross the line of trees at Beggars Lane forms a natural limit and an effective screen to proposed development at Site 2. The development boundary closely envelops frontage development along Rattle Road in order to prevent inappropriate outward expansion into the surrounding countryside or further ribbon development eastward along Rattle Road into the recognised strategic gap between Stone Cross and Westham.

19.34.21 The development boundary is drawn tightly around that area committed for residential development at Site 3. The substantial landscaping screen along the eastern edge of the development site creates an important buffer to the open and exposed farmland beyond which forms part of the strategic gap between Stone Cross and Westham, and is therefore excluded from the development boundary. To the north-west of the site the development boundary follows the well defined physical barrier of Peelings Lane.

Stone Cross Development Proposals



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KEY

- Housing areas
- Estate roads (diagrammatic)
- Public open space
- Open space/play area
- Tree screen/buffer areas
- Area for shops
- Car park
- Proposed roundabout
- Area being safeguarded for A22 New Route

This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.

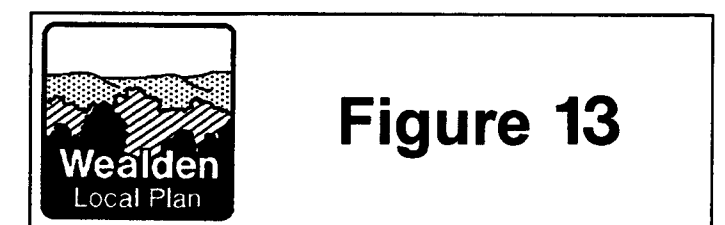


Figure 13

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19.34.22 North of Dittons Road, new development on the exposed ridge would be resisted and consequently the Pevensey Bypass is not an appropriate boundary. The development boundary is therefore drawn tightly around properties in the Barn Close and Crossways developments, incorporating that parcel of land which lies between them. This modest area, between two existing residential developments close to the centre of Stone Cross, lies to the south of the ridge crest and therefore represents a logical inclusion within the development boundary.

19.34.23 To the west of North Cottages the largely undeveloped frontage makes a valuable contribution to the rural setting of Stone Cross and provides extensive views across the open countryside beyond. Development of this area would be conspicuous in the landscape and would consolidate scattered development in this sensitive strategic gap, leading to the inappropriate extension of development westward along Dittons Road.

Services

19.34.24 The provision of community services to accompany the large number of dwellings proposed has been secured through legal agreements and for the most part has been implemented in advance of the housing development. In addition to the new primary school, which also provides associated community facilities, and the existing Memorial Hall, provision has been made for shopping facilities. This includes a centrally located neighbourhood shopping area providing local shops and an associated car park.

Transport

19.34.25 The new A27 Pevensey Bypass which runs to the north of Stone Cross has considerably reduced the amount of through traffic. The route of the new A22 passes to the west of the settlement, between Stone Cross and Polegate, and in conjunction with the A27 Polegate bypass should further reduce traffic flows through Stone Cross itself.

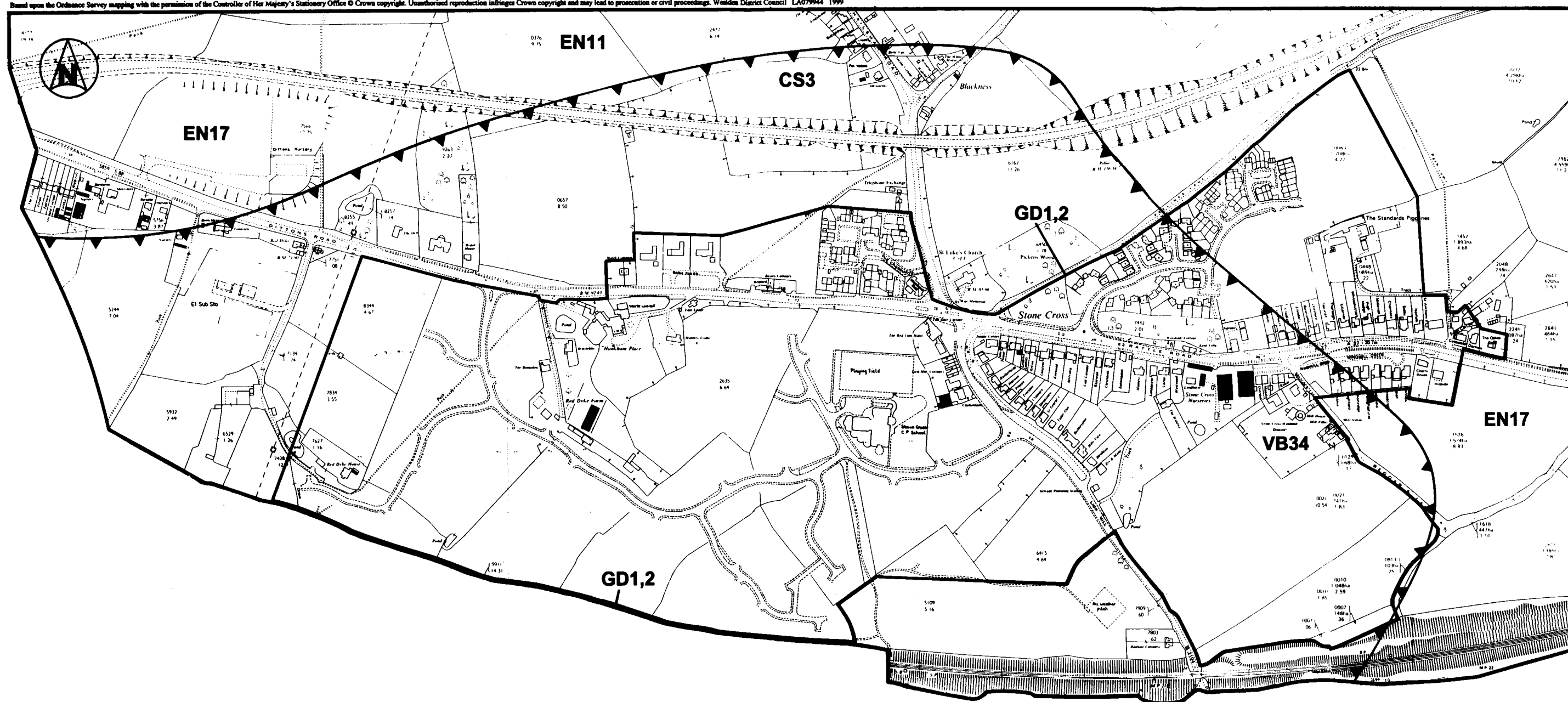
19.34.26 The Eastbourne to Pevensey railway link runs just to the south of Stone Cross. In line with Policy CA/T7 of the County Structure Plan, a study by consultants is currently underway into the feasibility of providing a new railway station to serve Stone Cross, North Langney and Eastbourne Park. At present, however, there are no resources available to implement such a new station and no commitment to any particular site. The matter will be the subject of further discussion between the Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and the County Council following consideration of the consultants' report.

Recreation and Leisure

19.34.27 The scale of new residential development envisaged at Stone Cross has clearly necessitated the provision of improved public recreation facilities. Various facilities have been or will be provided as part of the development proposals, including playing pitches, public open space and children's play spaces.

Inset Map No. 52 Stone Cross

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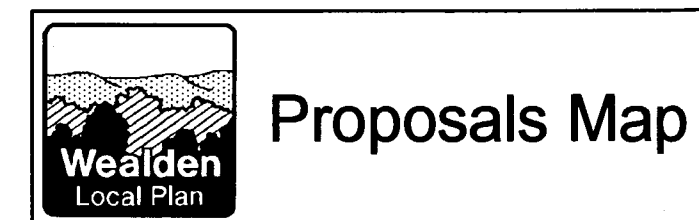


KEY

-  Inset Map boundary
-  Development boundary
-  Willington Levels Drainage Catchment Area

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.

Policy BS2 applies to the Polegate area.



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