OBSIDIAN STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD

LAND AT MOCKBEGGARS FARM, LONDON ROAD, BUDLETTS COMMON, UCKFIELD, TN22 2EB

Landscape & Visual Appeal Statement Appendices

Chris Jenkinson BA (Hons) DIP LA CMLI

Local Authority Reference:
WD/2022/0648/MAO

Appeal Reference:
APP/C1435/W/23/3330872

January 2024
7397.AS.003.VF_App

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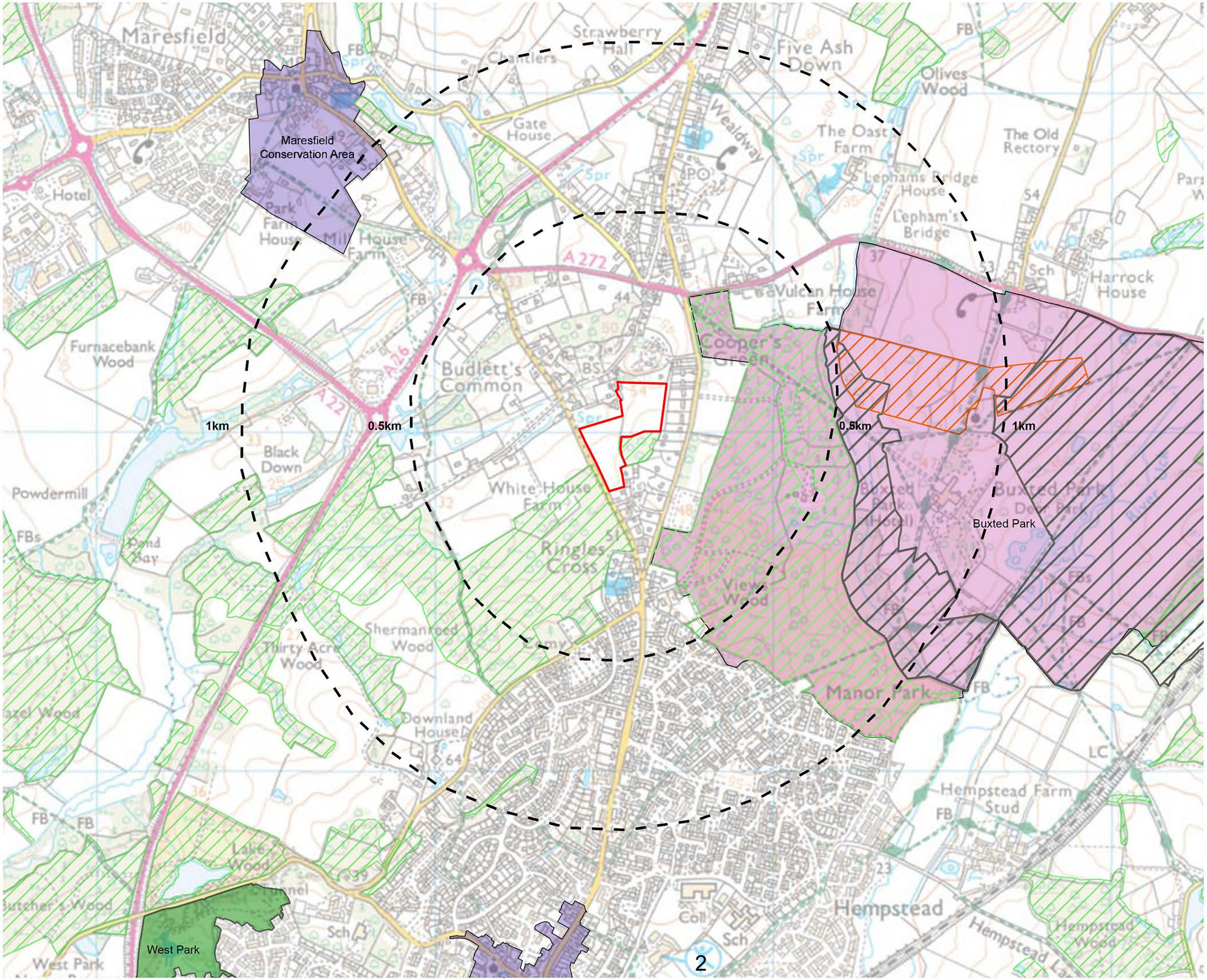
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APPENDIX CJ1

Landscape Base Plans



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0m 100m 200m 400m

Key:

- Appeal Site Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Registered Park & Garden
- Ancient Woodland
- Scheduled Monument
- Local Nature Reserve
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- 0.5km & 1km Radius

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
A	20.12.23	Additional designations added	BS	CJ

REVISIONS

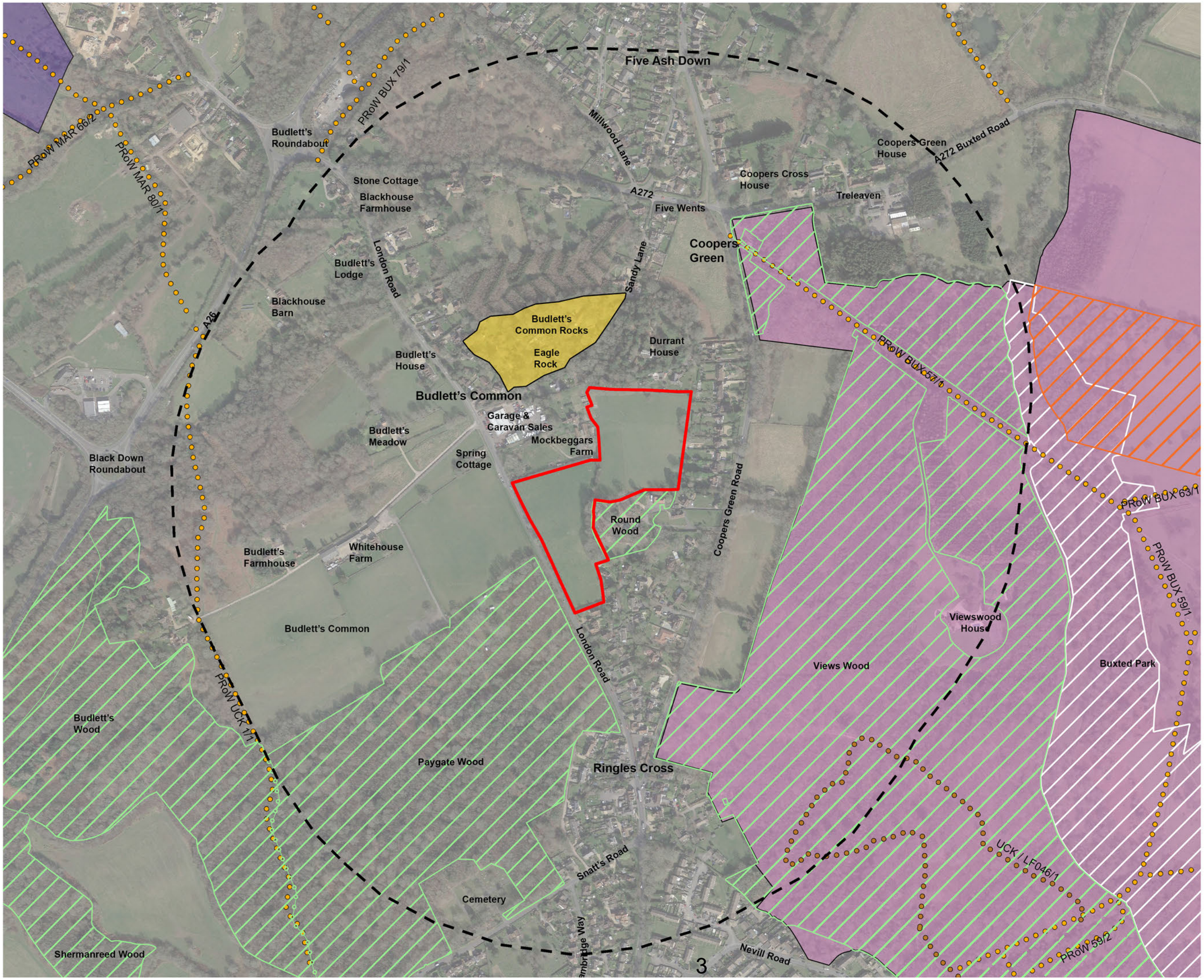
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TITLE
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
Site Location Plan

CLIENT
Obsidian Strategic

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:10,000@ **A3**	MAR 2021	SB	CJ

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
7397 / ASP1 / SLP	A



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0m 50m 100m 200m

Key:

- Appeal Site Boundary
- Public Rights of Way
- Promoted Route Buxted Walk (Licensed Footpath) UCK/LF046/1 PRoW
- Listed Buildings
- Ancient Woodland
- Registered Park & Garden
- Buxted Park Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area
- Site of Special Scientific Interest - SSSI
- Budlett's Common Rocks - Landscape Wildlife Site
- 0.5km Radius

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
B	20.12.23	Update to designation areas	BS	CJ
A	24.05.21	Update to red line boundary	EL	MF

REVISIONS

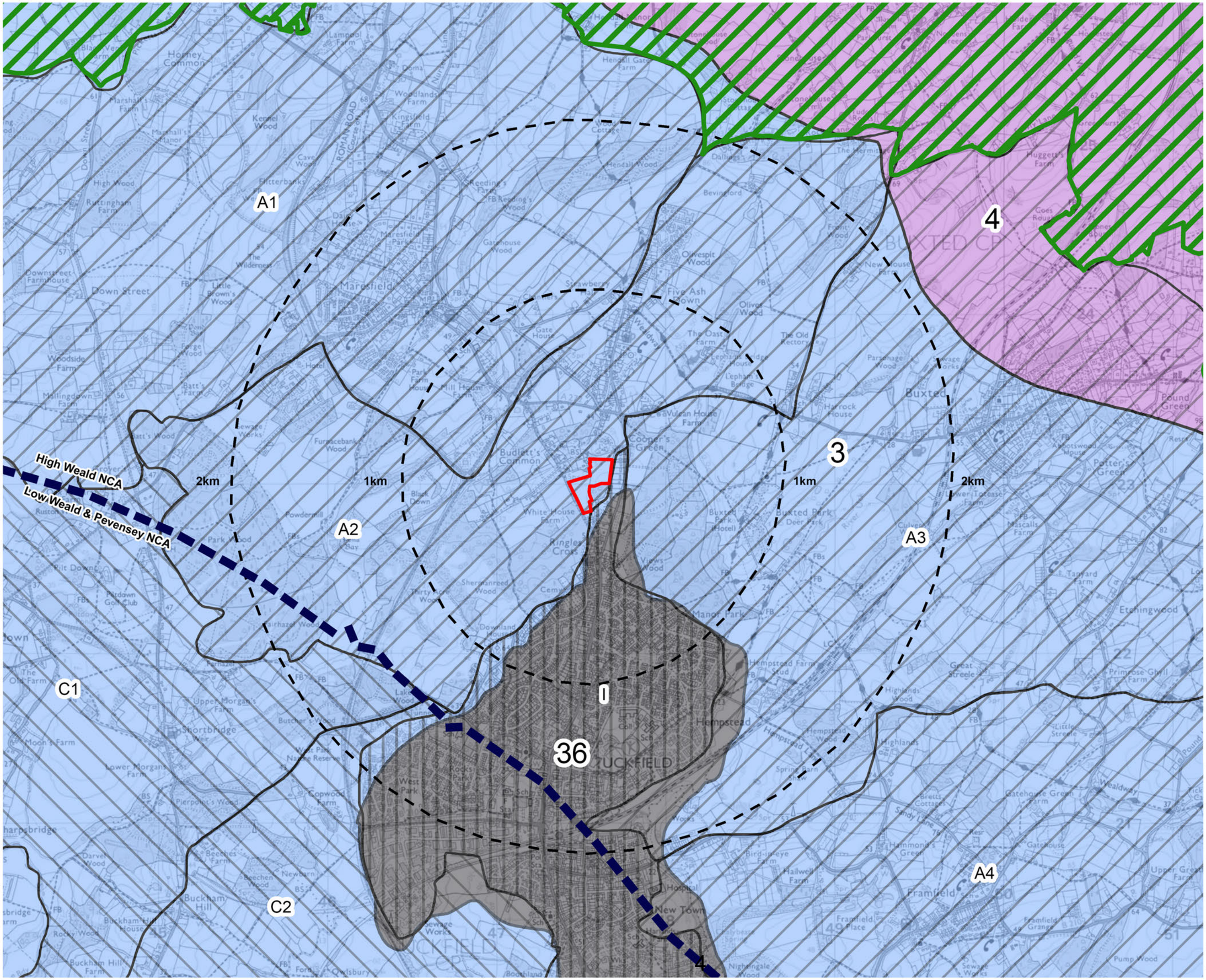
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TITLE
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
Site & Setting Plan

CLIENT
Obsidian Strategic

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DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
7397 / ASP2 / SS	B



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0m 200m 400m 1km

Key:

- Appeal Site Boundary
- National Character Area Boundary
- High Weald National Landscapes (AONB)
- 1km & 2km Radius

East Sussex County Landscape Assessement (2016) Landscape Character Areas

- Upper Ouse Valley - (3)
- Central High Weald - (4)
- Uckfield - (36)

Wealden Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2014)
Local Landscape Character Types (LLCT) and Areas (LLCA)

- A: Ridges & Valleys LLCT
  - A1: Fletching & Meresfield
  - A2: Budlett's Common & Five Ash Down
  - A3: Buxted
  - A4: Blackboys & Franfield
- C: Gently Undulating Wooded Valleys LLCT
  - C1: Fletching & Pitdown
  - C2: Uck Valley
- Urban Dominated Landscapes

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

REVISIONS

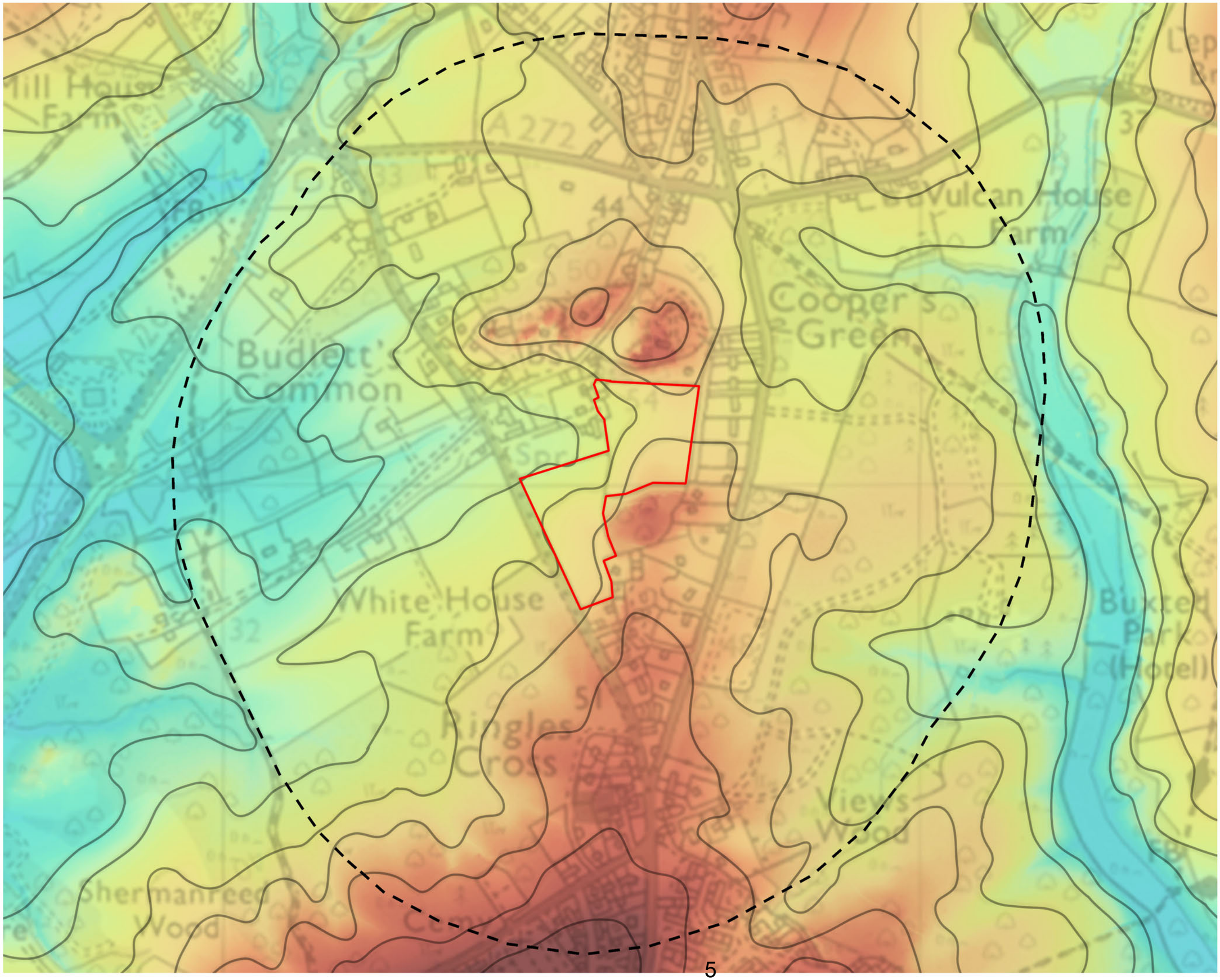
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TITLE
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
Published Landscape Character Areas Plan

CLIENT
Obsidian Strategic

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:20,000@ A3	JAN 2024	BS	CJ

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
7397 / ASP4 / CA	



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0m 50m 100m 200m

Key:

- Appeal Site Boundary
- 0.5km Radius
- Contours

60

10

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

REVISIONS

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TITLE

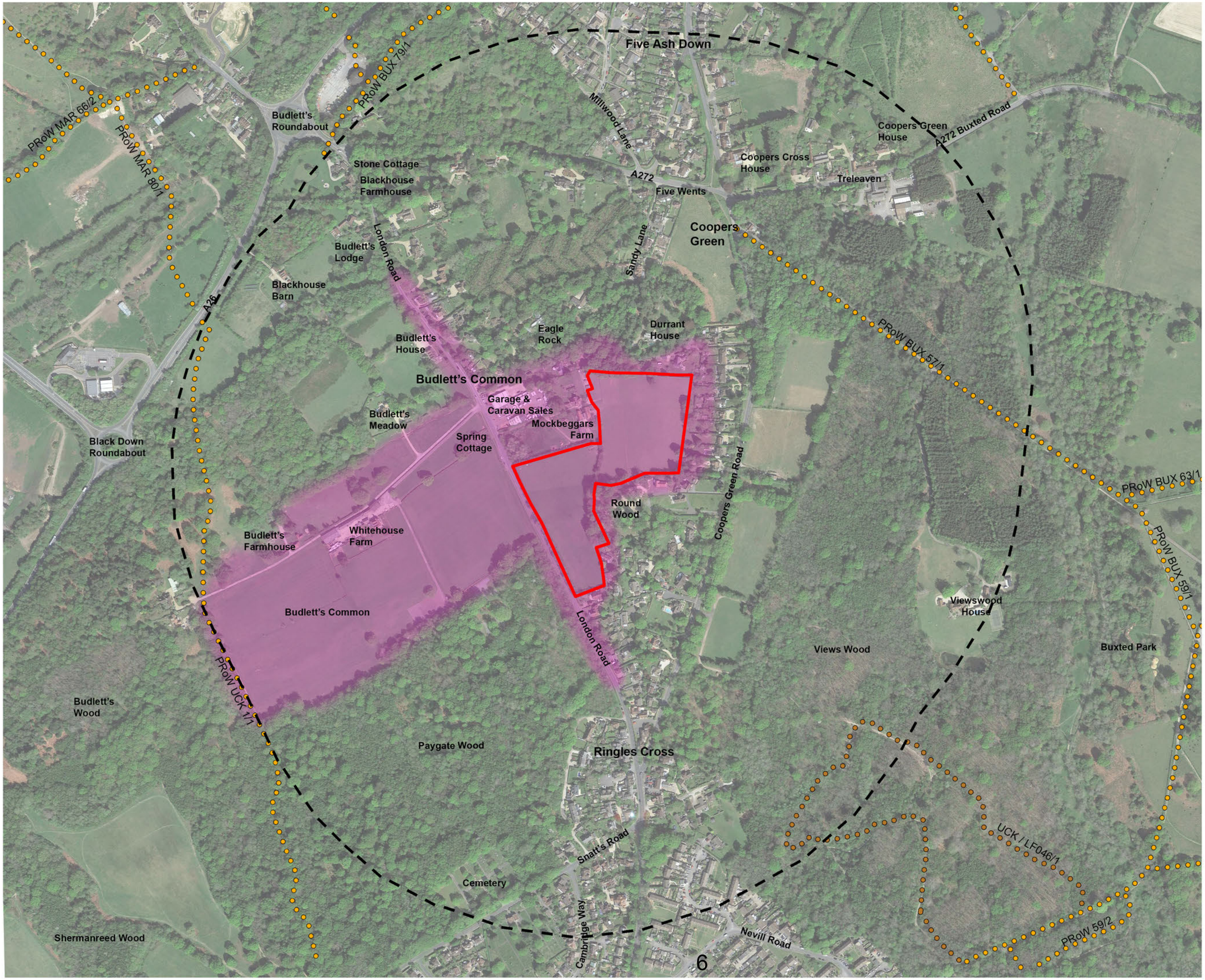
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
Topography Plan

CLIENT

Obsidian Strategic

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:5,000@ A3	DEC 2023	EL	CJ

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
7397 / ASP5 / TP	



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0m 50m 100m 200m

Key:

- Appeal Site Boundary
- Public Rights of Way
- Promoted Route Buxted Walk (Licensed Footpath) UCK/LF046/1 PRoW
- Zone of Visual Influence (Approx)
- 0.5km Radius

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

REVISIONS

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TITLE
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
Verified Zone of Visual Influence

CLIENT
Obsidian Strategic

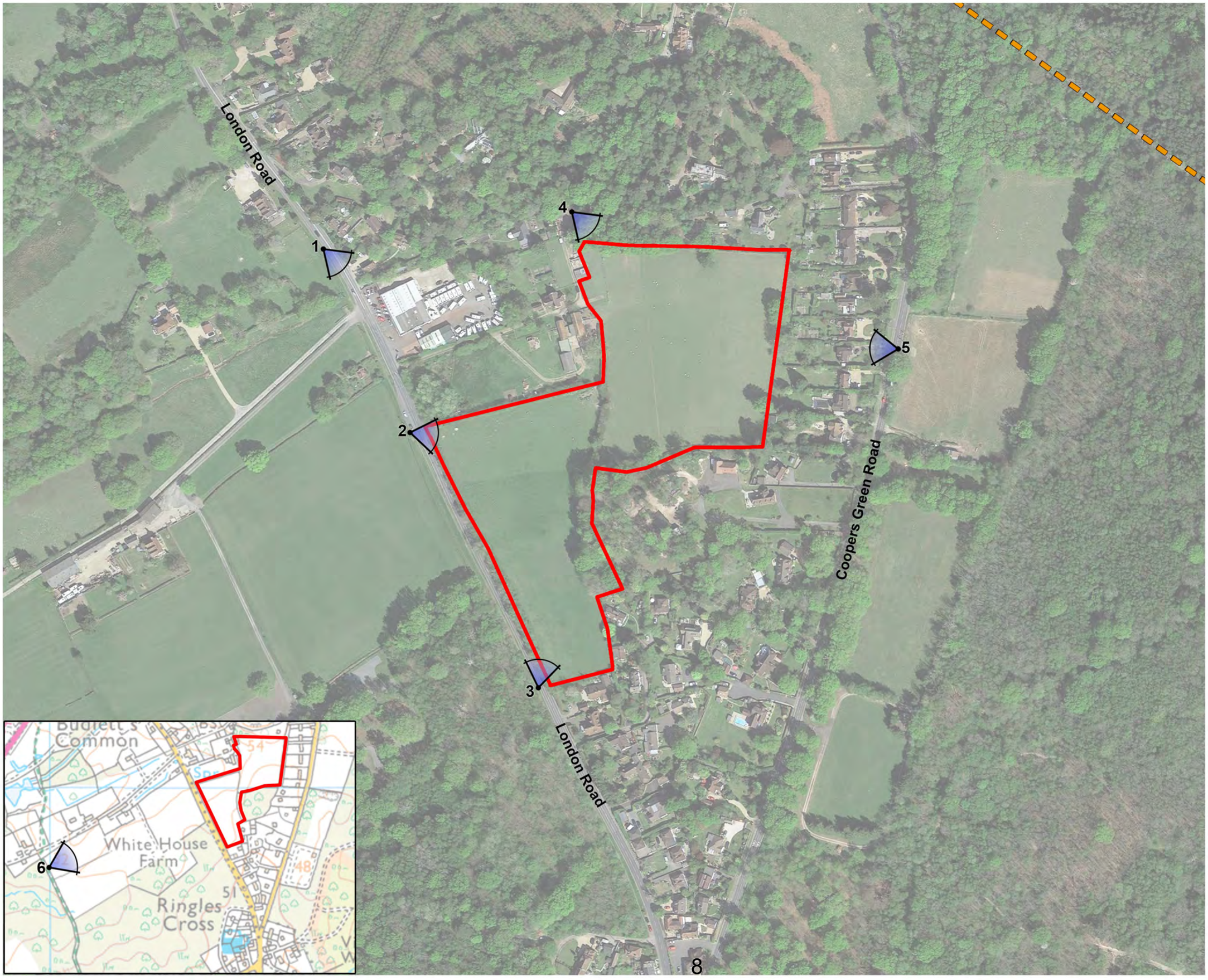
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:5,000@ A3	JAN 2024	BS	CJ

DRAWING NUMBER
7397 / ASP6 / VZVI

REVISION

APPENDIX CJ2

Submitted Photographic Record *(from LVIA CD3.11)*



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0m 20m 40m 100m

Key:

- Application Site Boundary
- Viewpoint Location (2)
- Public Rights of Way

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
A	24.5.21	Update to red line boundary	EL	MF

REVISIONS

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TITLE
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
Viewpoint Location Plan

CLIENT
Obsidian Strategic

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:2,500 @ A3	MAY 2021	EL	CJ

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
7397 / VLP	A



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547340, N 123153 Date & time of photograph: 11/05/2021 11:21 AOD & Viewing height: c. 40m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547410, N 123016 Date & time of photograph: 11/05/2021 11:18 AOD & Viewing height: c. 35m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 2

aspect landscape planning

Equipment & Focal Length: Nikon D3200 DSLR 35mm equivalent camera using a 50mm lens
Viewing Distance at A3: 330mm
Horizontal Field of View: 68°
Vertical Field of View: 23°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547499, N 122831 Date & time of photograph: 11/05/2021 10:50 AOD & Viewing height: c. 50m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547524, N 123172 Date & time of photograph: 11/05/2021 11:30 AOD & Viewing height: c. 46m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 4

aspect landscape planning

Equipment & Focal Length: Nikon D3200 DSLR 35mm equivalent camera using a 50mm lens
Viewing Distance at A3: 330mm
Horizontal Field of View: 68°
Vertical Field of View: 23°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547767, N 123078 Date & time of photograph: 11/05/2021 10:09 AOD & Viewing height: c. 42m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 546985, N 122770 Date & time of photograph: 11/05/2021 11:05 AOD & Viewing height: c. 33m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 6

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Equipment & Focal Length: Nikon D3200 DSLR 35mm equivalent camera using a 50mm lens
Viewing Distance at A3: 330mm
Horizontal Field of View: 68°
Vertical Field of View: 23°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.

APPENDIX CJ3

Submitted Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan Rev B

(7397 / ASP3 / LSP Rev B) *(from LVIA CD3.11)*

Example of natural play equipment:







Children's play area to be incorporated within the public open space and surrounded by new planting that adds to the localised green infrastructure.

Species rich wildflower meadow:

EM2 General Purpose Meadow Mix, EH1 Hedgerow Mix & EM10 Tussock Mix









SUDS basins to incorporate species rich wildflower grassland providing localised biodiversity enhancements.

Proposed site access and associated visibility splays will require a section of the western boundary hedgerow to be removed. Replacement mixed native hedgerow planting is proposed set back behind the visibility splays and the proposed built form set back from London Road to ensure the character of the road corridor is maintained.

Internally ornamental tree, hedge and shrub planting included to create a high quality landscape setting for the new properties and will include fruiting and flowering species offering wildlife interest.

Round Wood Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland

Ornamental Shrub Planting:

Hebe rakaiensis, Potentilla fruticosa 'Tangerine', Lonicera nitida, Genista lydia & Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote'



A buffer to the Ancient Woodland will include the retention and enhancement of the existing grassland and incorporate a mosaic of native planting including species rich wildflower grassland, mixed native scrub and new native trees that will provide localised landscape and biodiversity enhancements.

Area of open space designated for use as a community garden to encourage health and wellbeing of individuals and the community through nature based activities.

Proposed Street Trees:











Street and Ornamental Trees:
Corylus colurna 'Te-Terra Red'
Betula albosinensis
Magnolia x loebneri 'Leonard Messel'
Tilia cordata 'Green Spire'
Acer campestre 'Streetwise'
Malus trilobata

Example Images of Community Gardens:





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0m 10m 20m 50m

Key:

- Proposed Tree Planting
- Proposed Shrub Planting
- Proposed Wildflower Grass Mix
- Proposed Play Area
- Proposed Marginal Planting
- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Native Scrub Planting
- Proposed Hedge Planting
- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- 15m Ancient Woodland Buffer

N.B. Native species of local provenance to be included within Ancient Woodland buffer zone and throughout open spaces to provide landscape and biodiversity enhancements.

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
B	01.02.22	Updated Layout	EL	CJ
A	15.12.21	Updated to ecologists comments	EL	CJ

REVISIONS

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TITLE
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
Landscape Strategy Plan

CLIENT
Obsidian Strategic

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:1,250@ A3	NOV 2021	SB	CJ

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
7397 / ASP3 / LSP	B

APPENDIX CJ4

Amended Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan Rev C (7397 / ASP3 / LSP Rev C) &

Context Landscape Masterplan (7397 / ASP7 / CLM)

Example of natural play equipment:



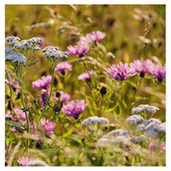




Species rich wildflower meadow:

EM2 General Purpose Meadow Mix, EH1 Hedgerow Mix & EM10 Tussock Mix









SUDS basins to incorporate species rich wildflower grassland providing localised biodiversity enhancements.

Maximise retention of the existing internal hedgerow and reinforcement with spot planting of native species to maintain opportunities for ecological connectivity north-south.

Children's play area to be incorporated within the public open space and surrounded by new planting that adds to the localised green infrastructure.

Proposed site access and associated visibility splays will require a section of the western boundary hedgerow to be removed. Replacement mixed native hedgerow planting is proposed set back behind the visibility splays and the proposed built form set back from London Road to ensure the character of the road corridor is maintained.

Internal ornamental tree, hedge and shrub planting included to create a high quality landscape setting for the new properties and will include fruiting and flowering species offering wildlife interest.

Round Wood Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland

A buffer to the Ancient Woodland will include the retention and enhancement of the existing grassland and incorporate a mosaic of native planting including species rich wildflower grassland, mixed native scrub and new native trees that will provide localised landscape and biodiversity enhancements.

Area of proposed mixed native deciduous woodland planting within the southern portion of the site will link with the existing woodland to the immediate east (Round Wood) and west (Playgate Wood) whilst providing landscape enhancements which reflect the localised landscape character of the area.

Ornamental Shrub Planting:

Hebe rakaiensis, Potentilla fruticosa ‘Tangerine’, Lonicera nitida, Genista lydia & Lavandula angustifolia ‘Hidcote’







Proposed Street Trees:











Street and Ornamental Trees:
Corylus colurna ‘Te-Terra Red’
Betula albosinensis
Magnolia x loebneri ‘Leonard Messel’
Tilia cordata ‘Green Spire’
Acer campestre ‘Streetwise’
Malus trilobata

Woodland Planting:









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0m 10m 20m 50m

Key:

- Proposed Tree Planting
- Proposed Shrub Planting
- Proposed Wildflower Grass Mix
- Proposed Play Area
- Proposed Marginal Planting
- Proposed Native Woodland Planting
- Proposed Native Scrub Planting
- Proposed Hedge Planting
- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- 15m Ancient Woodland Buffer

N.B. Native species of local provenance to be included within Ancient Woodland buffer zone and throughout open spaces to provide landscape and biodiversity enhancements.

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
C	18.07.23	Updated to revised layout & ecological enhancements	EL	CJ
B	01.02.22	Updated Layout	EL	CJ
A	15.12.21	Updated to ecologists comments	EL	CJ

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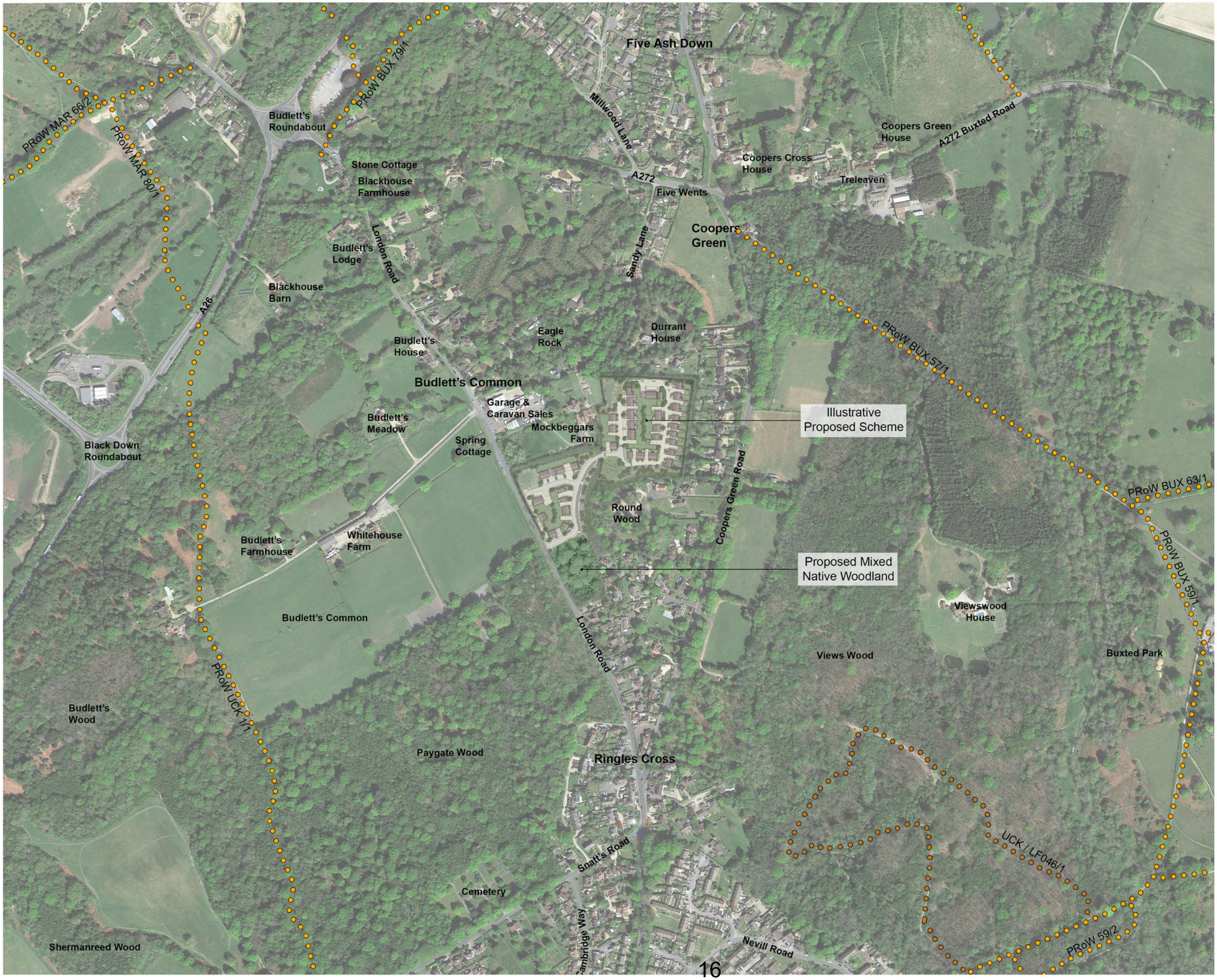
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Landscape Strategy Plan

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7397 / ASP3 / LSP	C



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Key:

- Public Rights of Way
- Promoted Route Buxted Walk (Licensed Footpath) UCK/LF046/1 PRoW

REV | DATE | NOTE | DRAWN | CHK'D

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TITLE
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
Context Landscape Masterplan

CLIENT
Obsidian Strategic

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:5,000@ A3	JAN 2024	BS	CJ

DRAWING NUMBER
7397 / ASP7 / CLMP

REVISION

APPENDIX CJ5

Extract from Wealden District Council Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment

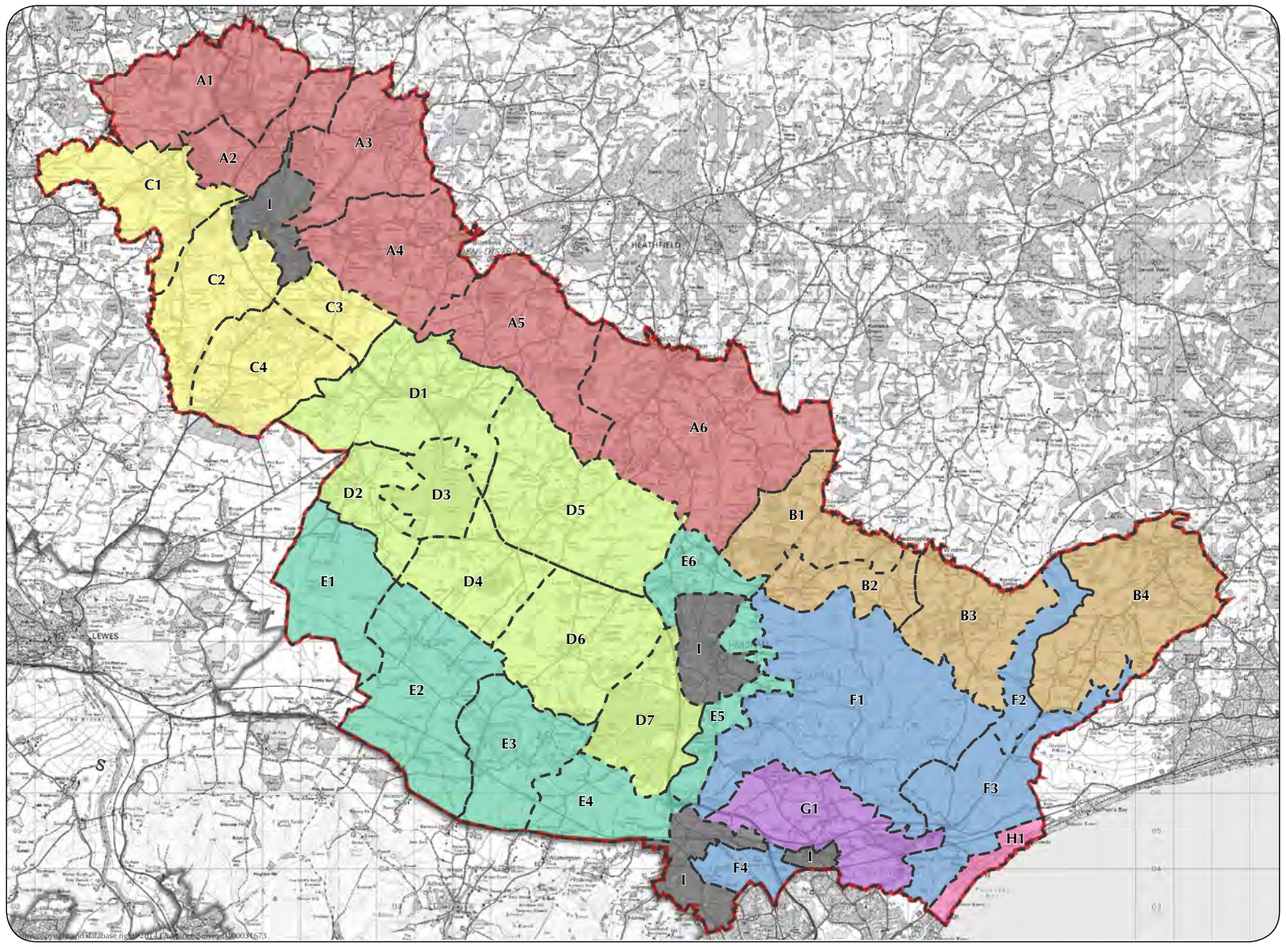
October 2014 (Chris Blandford Associates)

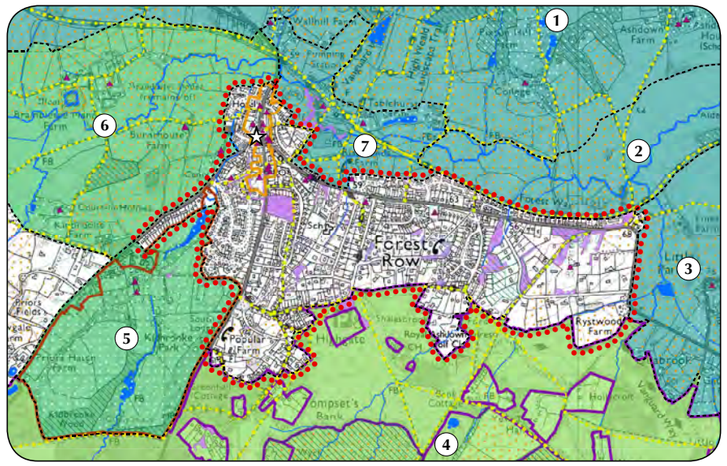
CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES
landscape | environment | heritage

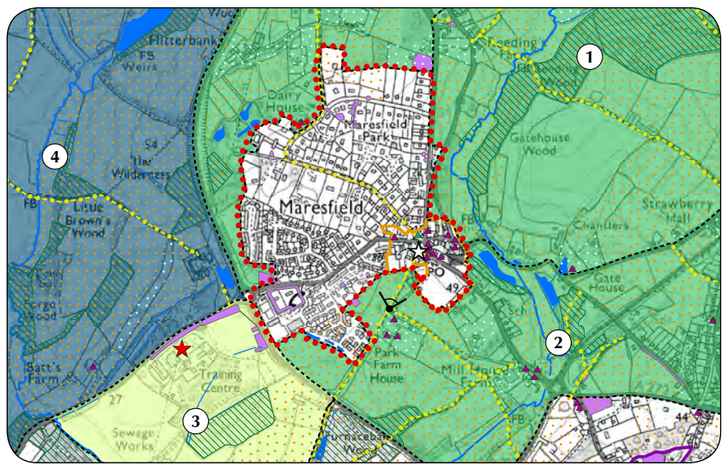
cba

Wealden District Council

Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment







November 2014

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2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Approach

2.1.1 Landscape Character Assessment is a tool that allows landscape character to be understood, explained and described in a transparent and objective way. It does this by identifying the variations in physical, natural and cultural attributes, and experiential characteristics, that makes one area of landscape distinctive from another at a range of spatial scales. Landscape Character Assessment also recognises how landscapes have changed over time, and acknowledges the influence of human activities on the landscapes.

2.1.2 The general approach to the study is in accordance with the established principles of 'Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland'[4]. In respect to making judgments about landscape sensitivity and capacity, the study's approach has been informed by Topic Paper 6[5] taking into account current best practice and CBA's experience from other similar studies.

2.1.3 The Guidance promotes the benefits of involving stakeholders who are representative of communities of interest and communities of place in the preparation of Landscape Character Assessment studies. In line with the requirements of the brief, no stakeholder consultation has been undertaken by CBA as part of the assessment process.

2.1.4 An important principle of good practice in Landscape Character Assessment is that studies should make a clear distinction between:-

- **Landscape Characterisation** – the relatively value-free process of identifying, classifying and describing areas of distinctive character; and

- **Landscape Evaluation** – the more subjective process of making judgements, which may use one or a combination of approaches, depending on the purpose of the exercise.

2.1.5 In line with the objectives of the Brief, the study was undertaken at two different scales of assessment appropriate to the purpose of the exercises:

- The assessment of the District's landscapes outside of the High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park was undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000.

- The settlement setting assessments were undertaken at a scale of 1:10,000 to provide a finer grain of detail for each of the relevant study areas.

2.1.6 The landscape characterisation and evaluation methodologies used for each of the scales of assessment are detailed below.

[4] Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).
[5] Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland: Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity (Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002).

2.2 1:25,000 Landscape Characterisation

Study Area

2.2.1 The study area for the assessment of the District's landscapes outside of the High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park is shown on **Figure 2.1.**

Desk-Based Studies

2.2.2 The initial stage of the Landscape Character Assessment process involved desk-based studies to bring together existing information about the landscape within the study area.

2.2.3 A series of physical, historic and natural landscape attribute map overlays were prepared using available datasets, including:

- Aerial photography (land cover)
- OS 1:25,000 maps (topography, drainage, settlement patterns, woodland, field patterns, etc)
- Historic Landscape Character data
- Designated historic assets (scheduled monuments, conservation areas, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, etc)
- Ancient Woodland data
- Designated wildlife sites and nature reserves

2.2.4 The landscape within the study area was systematically divided into discrete and relatively homogenous tracts of land at a scale of 1:25,000 to identify physical, historic and natural landscape elements that occur in repeating patterns. The boundaries of these landscape units were tested and validated by field survey work, and provided a basis for defining a preliminary landscape classification.

2.2.5 This stage also involved research to identify and review the main physical, historic and natural components of the landscape that have influenced the shape and use of the landscape within the study area. This research drew on a variety of documents, maps and digital data that helped to describe the physical geography and cultural history of the study area.

2.2.6 The landscape character context and classification hierarchy for the District was reviewed, described and mapped, which included consideration of the following:

- National Character Areas information.
- East Sussex County Landscape Character Assessment.
- Landscape Character Assessments within adjacent areas (such as the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment etc).

Field Surveys

2.2.7 Field survey work was undertaken during May, June and July 2014 by a team of experienced surveyors to validate the draft landscape classifications defined by the desk-based analysis, the boundaries of which were refined where appropriate to reflect conditions on the ground.

2.2.8 Structured survey forms were completed from 2/3 viewpoints within each Local Landscape Character Area to record the assessor's observations in relation to landform, landcover/landscape elements and aesthetic (perceptual) factors, and note how these contribute to defining the key characteristics of the landscape.

2.2.9 The field survey forms (which include photographs) were used to inform the character descriptions. The field survey forms are included as **Appendix 3**.

Landscape Classification

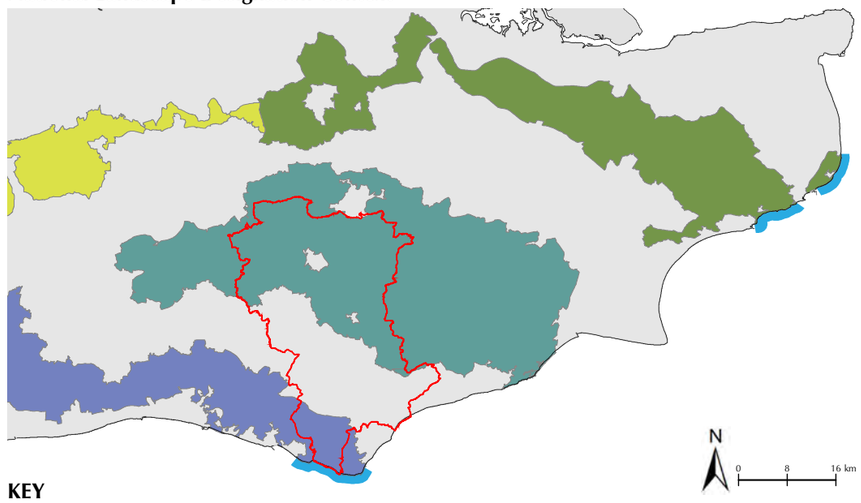
2.2.10 The findings of the desk-based studies and field survey work were used to confirm the landscape classification map for the study area. The map defines 'Local Landscape Character Types' and 'Local Landscape Character Areas', which are defined as follows:

- **Local Landscape Character Types** are distinct types of landscape within the study area that exhibit a relatively homogenous pattern of physical and cultural attributes, including geology, landform, historical evolution and land use. They are *generic* in nature and may reoccur in different parts of the study area, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of landscape characteristics.

- **Local Landscape Character Areas** are discrete geographical areas of distinctive character within a Local Landscape Character Type. They are *unique* areas that comprise a particular pattern of physical and cultural characteristics that combine to create a distinctive sense of place, even though they may share some generic landscape characteristics with other areas encompassing the same Local Landscape Character Type.

2.2.11 The boundaries of the confirmed Local Landscape Character Types and Local Landscape Character Areas were mapped within a GIS over OS mapping, and the polygons digitised to an accuracy of 1:25,000. The Local Landscape Character Areas are 'nested' within the relevant Local Landscape Character Types to give a hierarchical classification that sits within the County Landscape Character Areas and National Character Areas.

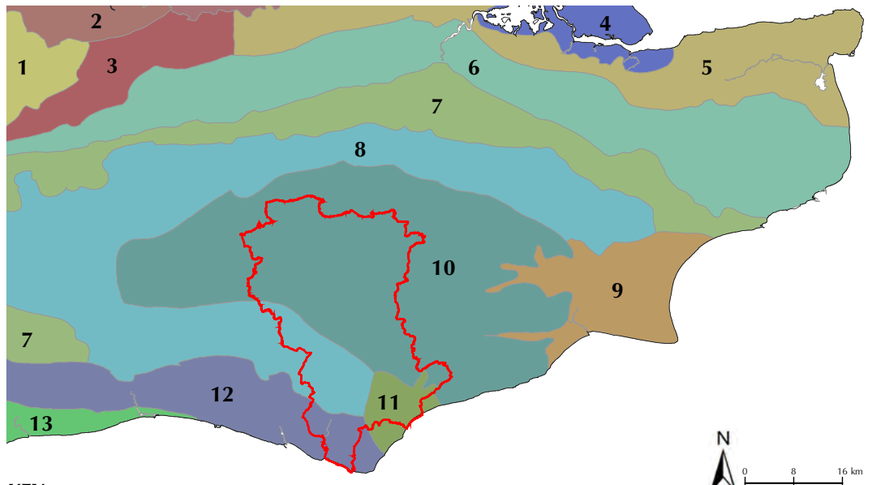
National Landscape Designation Context



KEY

- South Downs National Park
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Heritage Coast
- Wealden District

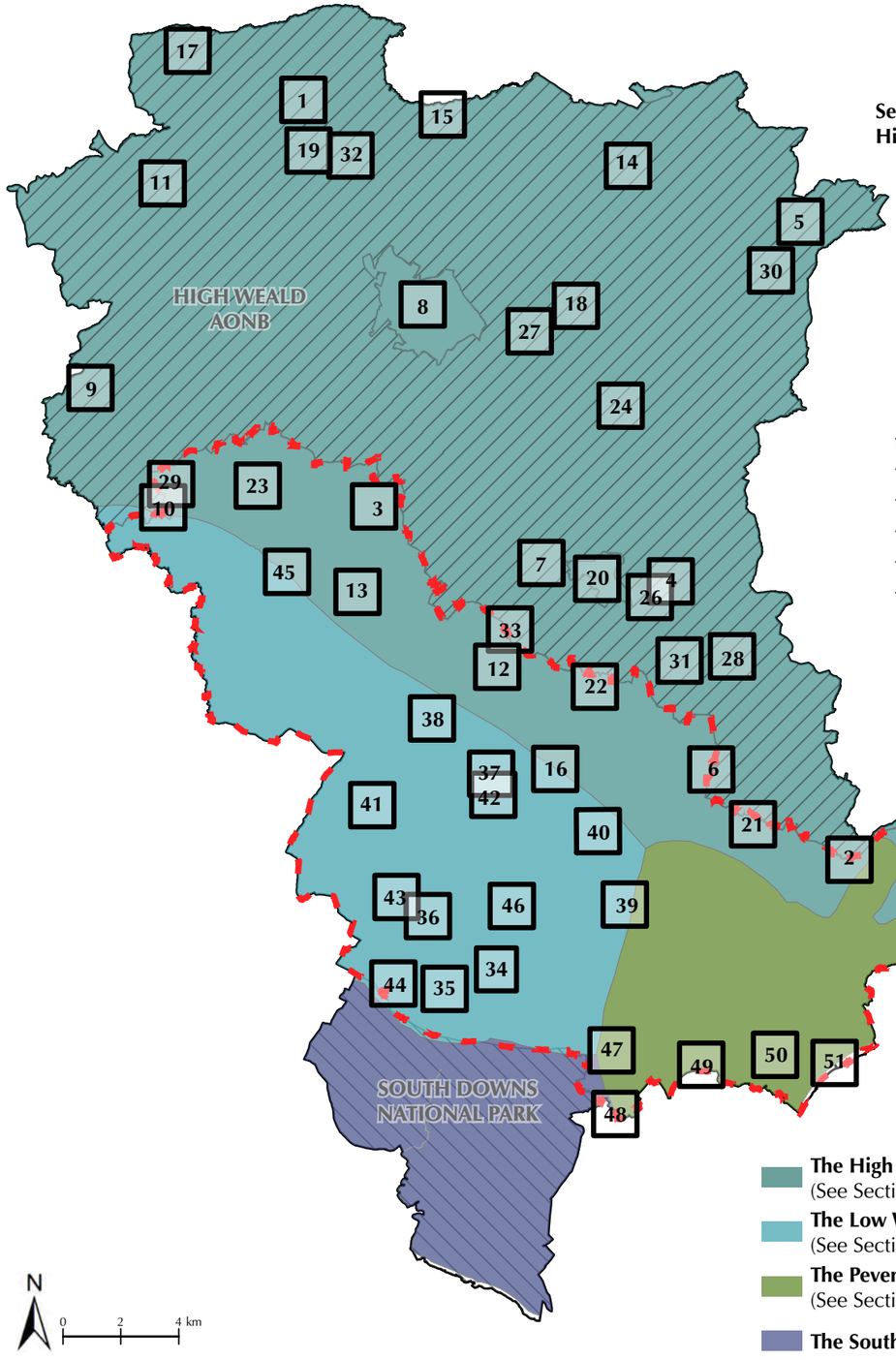
National Character Area Context



KEY

- 1 Thames Basin Heaths
- 2 Thames Valley
- 3 Thames Basin Lowlands
- 4 Greater Thames Estuary
- 5 North Kent Plain
- 6 North Downs
- 7 Wealden Greensand
- 8 Low Weald
- 9 Romney Marshes
- 10 High Weald
- 11 Pevensey Levels
- 12 South Downs
- 13 South Coast Plain
- Wealden District

Study Areas



KEY

- 1:25,000 Landscape Character Assessment Study Area

1:10,000 Settlement Setting Assessments:

Settlements within the High Weald Landscape:

1. Bolebroke
2. Boreham Street
3. Buxted
4. Cade Street
5. Cousley Wood
6. Cowbeech
7. Cross-in-hand
8. Crowborough
9. Danehill
10. Fletching
11. Forest Row
12. Foxhunt Green
13. Framfield
14. Frant
15. Groombridge
16. Gun Hill
17. Hammerwood
18. Catts Hill
19. Hartfield
20. Heathfield
21. Herstmonceux
22. Horam
23. Maresfield
24. Mayfield
25. Ninfield
26. Old Heathfield
27. Rotherfield
28. Rushlake Green
29. Splaynes Green
30. Wadhurst
31. Warbleton
32. Withyham
33. Waldron

Settlements within the Low Weald Landscape:

34. Arlington
35. Berwick Station
36. Chalvington
37. Chiddingly
38. East Hoathly
39. Hailsham
40. Hellingly
41. Laughton
42. Muddles Green
43. Ripe
44. Selmeston
45. Uckfield
46. Upper Dicker

Settlements within the Pevensey Levels Landscape:

47. Polegate
48. Willingdon
49. Stone Cross
50. Pevensey & Westham
51. Pevensey Bay

- **The High Weald Landscape** (See Section 4.0)
- **The Low Weald Landscape** (See Section 5.0)
- **The Pevensey Levels Landscape** (See Section 6.0)
- **The South Downs Landscape**

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Character Descriptions

2.2.12 The findings of the desk-based studies and field survey work were used to inform character descriptions for each defined Local Landscape Character Type. In each case, the character description information is provided under the following headings:

- Location and Boundaries
- Key Characteristics
- Physical Landscape Character
- Historic Landscape Character

2.2.13 A concise description of the character of each constituent Local Landscape Character Area within the Local Landscape Character Type is also provided.

2.3 1:10,000 Settlement Setting Characterisation

Study Area

2.3.1 The settlements included in the settlement setting assessments are as listed in **Appendix 1** and shown on **Figure 2.1.** The study area for the market town assessments are based on an approximately 1km square area with an approximately 0.5km square area used for the villages.

Desk-Based Studies

2.3.2 Before embarking on field survey work, preparatory desk-based studies were undertaken for each settlement to bring together and analyse available information about the landscape within the study areas. For each settlement, the desk-based studies involved the following tasks:

- Where relevant, a review of the character assessment information for settlements covered by the Wealden Landscape Character Assessment & Development Option Evaluation Study[6].
- Where relevant, a review of the Local Landscape Character Types and Local Landscape Character Areas around each settlement from the Landscape Character Assessment at the 1:25,000 contextual scale and review of the inherent landscape and visual sensitivities for each Landscape Character Area.
- Analysis of the historic landscape character data[7] to provide an overview of different types /ages of historic fields, field boundaries and woodland, and other historic uses such as coppicing and the iron industry, which survive and are still visible as remnant historic features within the current landscape.
- Identification of conservation designations.
- Definition of preliminary Landscape Setting Areas, based on analysis of local variations in landscape character around the settlements.

2.3.3 Landscape Setting Areas are discrete geographical areas of distinctive character defined at 1:10,000 scale that provide the landscape setting for a settlement. They are unique areas that comprise a particular pattern of physical and cultural characteristics that combine to create a distinctive sense of place. Where Landscape Setting Areas lie within the 1:25,000 assessment study area, they generally 'nest' within the classification of Local Landscape Character Areas.

[6] Wealden District Local Development Framework: Landscape Character Assessment & Development Option Evaluation Study (February 2009, The Landscape Section of East Sussex County Council for Wealden District Council)
[7] Data provided by East Sussex County Council from the East Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

Field Surveys

2.3.4 For each settlement, observations in the field were undertaken involving the following tasks:

- Refining the boundaries of the preliminary Landscape Setting Areas.
- Identifying and recording positive and negative landscape features and characteristics (including significant views into and out of the settlement).
- Recording and analysis of information to inform the evaluation of the landscape within each Landscape Setting Area.

Character Descriptions

2.3.5 The findings of the desk-based studies and field survey work were used to inform character descriptions for the landscape setting of each settlement. In each case, the character description information is provided under the following headings:

- **Settlement Profile**
- **Landscape Character** – provides (i) signposts to the relevant County Landscape Character Areas (see **Figure 3.1**) and, where applicable, the relevant Local Landscape Character Areas (see **Figures 2.1** and **3.2**) - or a brief overview description of the landscape surrounding the settlement that provides the landscape context for the respective settlement; (ii) a summary overview of the landscape setting's key features and distinctive characteristics; and (iii) identifies the distinctive characteristics of each Landscape Setting Area.

Assessment Plans

2.3.6 For each settlement, the character descriptions are supported by an assessment plan showing the following information:

- Landscape Setting Areas
- Landscape Features and Characteristics
- Conservation Designations

2.3.7 A glossary for the plan's key is provided in **Appendix 2**. It should be noted that a standard key is used on the settlement maps for consistency. Not all landscape features and conservation designations on the key are necessarily found within each study area, and therefore specific items may not be mapped in some cases. Datasets provided have been used in their unaltered state, and therefore mapped data may extend beyond the areas described within the text (for example, the Historic Landscape Characterisation data used to define Remnant Historic Landscapes may extend to within the defined 'urban areas' of the settlements which is outside of the Landscape Setting Areas).

2.4 Landscape Evaluation

2.4.1 In line with the objectives of the Brief, the following landscape evaluation methodology has been developed that applies to both scales of assessment. The landscape evaluation considers the following:

- The inherent **landscape sensitivity** of a Local Landscape Character Type, Local Landscape Character Area or Landscape Setting Area to change.
- The **landscape value** of a Local Landscape Character Type, Local Landscape Character Area or Landscape Setting Area.
- The indicative **landscape capacity** of a Local Landscape Character Type, Local Landscape Character Area or Landscape Setting Area to accommodate a particular type of development
- The contribution of a Landscape Setting Area to a **settlement's landscape setting**

Landscape Sensitivity

2.4.2 Landscape sensitivity is a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape resource (in terms of both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to character); and the visual sensitivity of the landscape, assessed in terms of a combination of factors such as views, visibility, the number and nature of people perceiving the landscape (visual receptors). For the purposes of this study, the term 'overall landscape sensitivity' is used to refer primarily to the inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself, irrespective of the type of change or development that may be under consideration.

2.4.3 Drawing on the information and analysis from the desk-based studies and field surveys, the overall landscape sensitivity of an area is evaluated on the basis of combining judgements about the landscape's strength of place and visibility.

2.4.4 The landscape's **strength of place** is evaluated in terms of its distinctiveness and continuity/time depth in accordance with **Matrix 2.1**.

Matrix 2.1: Strength of Place

Distinctiveness	Recent	Historic	Ancient
Unique/Rare	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
Distinct	Weak	Moderate	Strong
Indistinct	Very Weak	Weak	Moderate
	Continuity/Time Depth		

2.4.5 'Distinctiveness' refers to the presence of positive features of a place which contribute to its special character and strength of place. For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions apply with regards to the distinctiveness criteria for evaluating a landscape's strength of place in **Matrix 2.1**:

- **Indistinct**: Landscapes with limited positive features or characteristics.
- **Distinct**: Landscapes with notable positive features or characteristics that make a moderate contribution to its special character and strength of place.
- **Unique/Rare**: Landscapes with very distinctive positive features or characteristics that make a substantial contribution to its special character and strength of place.

2.4.6 'Continuity/time depth' refers to the historic dimension of the landscape and how old the landscape is in terms of its surviving features. For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions apply with regards to the continuity/time depth criteria for evaluating a landscape's strength of place in **Matrix 2.1**:

- **Recent:** Landscapes predominantly dating from 1800 to present day (Source: Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, August 2010)
- **Historic:** Remnant Historic Landscapes predominantly dating from 1600 to 1800 (Source: Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, August 2010)

- **Ancient:** Remnant Historic Landscapes predominantly pre-dating 1600, as indicated by presence of Ancient Woodland, and Historic Landscape Character 'interpretation of character' listed below (Source: Natural England, May 2014; Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, August 2010) :
  - Aggregate assart[8]
  - Cohesive assart
  - Consolidated strips
  - Co axial fields
  - Brooks innings
  - Strip fields
  - Irregular piecemeal enclosure
  - Regular piecemeal enclosure
  - Assart wood
  - Medieval deer park
  - Medieval enclosure
  - Ancient hill fort
  - Ancient fort
  - Prehistoric Earthworks

2.4.7 Further information and interpretation about the above terms can be found in Volume II of the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (August 2010).

2.4.8 The inherent **visibility** of the landscape (ie. the degree of opportunities for extensive views) is evaluated in terms of the relative dominance of landform/topography and the degree of tree cover in accordance with **Matrix 2.2**.

Matrix 2.2: Visibility

Landform	**Dominant**	Moderate	High	Very High
	Apparent	Low	Moderate	High
	Insignificant	Very Low	Low	Moderate
		Enclosed	**Intermittent**	**Open**
		Tree Cover		

2.4.9 'Landform' refers to the topography or physical shape of the landscape. For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions apply with regards to the landform criteria for evaluating a landscape's visibility in **Matrix 2.2**:

- **Insignificant:** Landscapes with limited topographical variation, predominantly low-lying landforms.
- **Apparent:** Landscapes with a mixture of topographical features, predominantly gently undulating ridges and valleys.
- **Dominant:** Landscapes with dominant topographical features, predominantly strongly undulating ridges and valleys.

2.4.10 'Tree Cover' refers to the patterns of woodland, hedgerow trees and field trees in the landscape. For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions apply with regards to the tree cover criteria for evaluating a landscape's visibility in **Matrix 2.2**:

- **Enclosed:** Landscapes with a high level of tree cover, characterised by limited opportunities for extensive views.
- **Intermittent:** Landscapes with a moderate intermittent level of tree cover, characterised by more opportunities for extensive views.
- **Open:** Landscapes with limited tree cover, characterised by widespread opportunities for extensive views.

[8] Assart - an area of land that has had trees and undergrowth removed and the ground broken up in preparation for cultivation (http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/assart)

2.4.11 The **overall landscape sensitivity** of an area is evaluated on the basis of combining judgments about the landscape's strength of place and its inherent visibility in accordance with **Matrix 2.3**.

Matrix 2.3: Overall Landscape Sensitivity

Strength of Place						
	Very Strong	Moderate	Moderate	High	Very High	Very High
	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Very High
	Moderate	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Weak	Very Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
	Very Weak	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Low
		Very Low	**Low**	**Moderate**	**High**	**Very High**
		Visibility				

2.4.12 For the purposes of this assessment, the overall landscape sensitivity categories are as defined in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Overall Landscape Sensitivity Definitions

Overall Landscape Sensitivity Category	Definition
Very Low	The landscape is assessed as having a lack of distinctiveness and continuity/time depth (the landscape is of recent origin with few features of historic interest), and it may also have very limited visibility due to dominant landforms and a high level of tree cover.
Low	The landscape is assessed as having few distinctive features and characteristics that provide continuity/time depth, and typically has limited visibility due to apparent landforms and intermittent tree cover.
Moderate	The landscape is assessed as having some distinctive features and characteristics that provide continuity/time depth, and typically has moderate visibility due to apparent/insignificant landforms and intermittent/open tree cover.
High	The landscape is assessed as having some unique/rare characteristics that are distinctive and provide continuity/time depth, and typically has high visibility due to limited topographical variation and tree cover.
Very High	The landscape is assessed as having many unique/rare characteristics that are very distinctive and provide considerable continuity/time depth (the landscape is of ancient origin with many features of historic interest), and it may also have very high visibility due to very limited topographical variation and tree cover.

Landscape Value

2.4.13 Landscape value is concerned with the relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. A landscape may also be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally.

2.4.14 For the purposes of this study, landscape value is assessed on the basis of the following criteria recommended by current best practice guidance[9]:

- **Landscape condition**: the physical state of the landscape, and its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.
- **Scenic quality**: the way in which landscapes appeal primarily to the visual senses.
- **Rarity**: the presence or absence of unique/rare features and elements in the landscape.
- **Representativeness**: whether the landscape contains a particular character, and/or features and elements, which are judged to be worthy of representing (such as pockets of ancient remnant woodland or an intricate network of hedgerows for example).
- **Conservation values**: the presence of features of particular wildlife, geological, archaeological, historic/cultural conservation interest and value (as recognised by established designation systems) that add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- **Sense of wildness/tranquillity**: the existence of relatively remote areas in the landscape which provide a sense of wildness or tranquillity. Such areas are typically characterised by low levels of disturbance, an absence of detracting elements (such as built development, industry, traffic, noise, movement, the presence of people and artificial lighting) and the presence of positive landscape features (such as the naturalness of the landscape, presence and visibility of rivers and sea and the visibility of woodland).
- **Associations**: the cultural associations of the landscape with particular people, artists, writers or other media, or events in history.

[9] Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland: Chapter 7 – Making judgements based on landscape character.

2.4.15 Drawing on the information and analysis from the desk-based studies and field surveys, the landscape value of an area is evaluated on the basis of the categories set out in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Landscape Value Categories

Landscape Value Category	Definition/Criteria	Typical Examples/Features
Very High	• Very many and/or extensive important features of conservation value • Very strong landscape condition due to very unified landscape pattern and few visual detractors • Very prominent culturally important landmarks provide orientation/very strong strength of place • Very many rare landscape features/characteristics contribute to a very strong strength of place • Very strong sense of wildness/tranquillity • Very strong cultural associations with prominent people/important events	• World Heritage Site, National Park, AONB or key elements/features within them • Areas of exceptional remoteness • Relatively most tranquil areas • Wildlife areas of international or national value • Providing setting for internationally buildings or cultural features
High	• Many and/or extensive important features of conservation value • Strong landscape condition due to unified landscape pattern and limited visual detractors • Prominent culturally important landmarks provide orientation/strong strength of place • Many rare landscape features/characteristics contribute to a strong strength of place • Strong sense of wildness/tranquillity • Strong cultural associations with prominent people/important events	• National Park, AONB, Areas of Great Landscape Value (or similar designation) or key elements/features within them • Areas of remote countryside • Wildlife areas of national value • Providing setting for Listed Buildings or nationally important cultural features
Moderate	• Some important features of conservation value • Moderate landscape condition due to relatively coherent landscape pattern and some visual detractors • Culturally important landmarks present but not prominent • Some rare landscape features/characteristics contribute to a strength of place • Limited sense of wildness/tranquillity • Limited cultural associations with prominent people/important events	• Generally undesignated but value expressed through local cultural associations or through demonstrable use • Potential areas of remote countryside • Wildlife areas of local value • Providing setting for locally valued buildings or cultural features
Low	• Limited important features of conservation value • Poor landscape condition due to incoherent landscape pattern and many visual detractors • No culturally important landmarks present • Few rare landscape features/characteristics • No sense of wildness/tranquillity • No cultural associations with prominent people/important events	• Certain individual landscape elements or features may be worthy of conservation and landscape would benefit from restoration or enhancement • No areas of remote countryside • Relatively least tranquil areas

Landscape Capacity

2.4.16 Landscape capacity refers to the ability of a landscape to accommodate change or development without significant adverse effects on its character. Landscape capacity reflects the inherent sensitivity of the landscape resource and its visual sensitivity, and the value attached to the landscape or to specific elements. For the purposes of this study, the term 'indicative landscape capacity' is used to refer to the capacity of the landscape to accommodate a specific type and nature of change or development within defined parameters.

2.4.17 Evaluation of a landscape's capacity to accommodate development is a complex issue and is not a scientific absolute. The evaluation of landscape capacity is based on the assessor's professional judgement about the sensitivity and value of the Landscape Setting Area considered as a whole.

2.4.18 The capacity evaluation for each landscape unit does not necessarily assume that this capacity applies consistently across the entire landscape unit. For example, it is possible for a certain amount/scale of development, where carefully sited, well-designed and with suitable landscaping mitigation, to be accommodated in a landscape unit assessed as having an overall low or moderate capacity. Conversely, in a landscape unit assessed as having an overall high capacity to accommodate most scales of development, it is possible for the capacity to be reduced in parts of the landscape unit due to site-specific constraints (for example, as shown on the relevant settlement assessment map in the case of Landscape Setting Areas). This is reflected in the landscape capacity evaluation methodology set out below.

2.4.19 The settlements for which the capacity of their surrounding landscapes to accommodate residential and commercial development has been evaluated are those settlements identified in Policy WCS6 of the Wealden Core Strategy (as listed in **Appendix 1**).

2.4.20 In addition, the capacity of the District's landscapes outside of the High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park to accommodate renewable energy development (solar farms and wind turbines) has also been evaluated (see **Section 7.0**).

2.4.21 The indicative capacity of a landscape to accommodate development (taking into account the scope for mitigation) is evaluated based on combining judgments about its **landscape sensitivity** with judgments about its **landscape value** as set out in **Matrix 2.4**.

Matrix 2.4 : Indicative Landscape Capacity

Landscape Sensitivity					
	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	High	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
	Very High	Very Low	Low	Low	Low
		Very High	**High**	**Moderate**	**Low**
		Landscape Value			

2.4.22 For the purposes of this assessment, the indicative landscape capacity categories are as defined in **Table 2.3**.

Table 2.3: Indicative Landscape Capacity Definitions

Indicative Landscape Capacity Category	Definition
Very Low	The landscape is assessed as having very high landscape sensitivity and very high landscape value. Very limited potential to accommodate any scale of new development as this is highly likely to erode the positive key features and characteristics of the landscape, which are desirable to safeguard in line with relevant national/local planning policy objectives.
Low	The landscape is assessed as having high landscape sensitivity and high landscape value. Large or medium-scale new development is likely to erode the positive key features and characteristics of the landscape which are desirable to safeguard in line with relevant national/local planning policy objectives. Taking into account site-specific constraints, there may be potential to accommodate some small-scale development in specific locations within the landscape with lower landscape sensitivity, subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation.
Moderate	The landscape is assessed as having very low to moderate landscape sensitivity and high landscape value, or moderate to high landscape sensitivity and low to moderate landscape value. Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation, medium and small-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without eroding positive key features and characteristics which are desirable to safeguard. Taking into account site-specific constraints, there may also be potential to accommodate some large-scale new development in specific locations with lower landscape sensitivity, subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation.
High	The landscape is assessed as having low to very low landscape sensitivity and low to moderate landscape value. Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation, large, medium and small-scale new development could potentially be accommodated within the landscape without eroding positive key features and characteristics which are desirable to safeguard.
Very High	The landscape is assessed as having very low landscape sensitivity and very low landscape value. Subject to appropriate siting, design and landscaping mitigation, large, medium and small-scale new development could potentially be accommodated without eroding positive key features and characteristics which are desirable to safeguard.

2.4.23 In order to assess the suitability of a landscape to accommodate development in line with the objectives of the Brief, it has been necessary to make a number of assumptions about the nature of potential development types under consideration. For the purposes of this assessment, the development scenarios defined in **Table 2.4** are assumed, based on the following general considerations:

- The nature/scale of existing and potential development types within the District (and/or County where relevant).
- In respect of renewable energy development specifically, current technology characteristics and likely commercial viability in relation to generation capacity.

Table 2.4: Indicative Development Scales Definitions

Indicative Development Scale	Definition
Large	**Housing development:** over 50 residential dwellings comprising detached, semi-detached or terraced buildings, up to two storeys in height, with plot/street layouts and densities in line with current policy requirements. **Employment development:** large scale commercial buildings with substantial footprints, generally up to 10-12m in height, and including parking/service areas. **Services/community development**: large scale buildings with substantial footprints, up to three storeys in height, including large parking/service areas. **Renewable energy development:** clusters of 3 or more commercial 2.3MW wind turbines, generally up to 100m to blade tip; and large-scale commercial solar farm installations (2-3m high solar panels on sites generally over 30ha).
Medium	**Housing development:** 11 to 50 residential dwellings comprising detached, semi-detached or terraced buildings, up to two storeys in height, with plot/street layouts and densities in line with current policy requirements. **Employment development:** medium-scale commercial buildings, generally up to 10-12m in height, including modest parking/service areas. **Services/community development:** medium scale buildings, up to two storeys in height, including modest parking/service areas. **Renewable energy development:** single commercial 2MW wind turbine, generally up to 100m to blade tip; and medium-scale commercial solar farm installations (2-3m high solar panels on sites generally between 10 to 30ha).
Small	**Housing development**: 10 or less residential dwellings comprising detached, semi-detached or terraced buildings, up to two storeys in height, with plot/street layouts and densities in line with current policy requirements. **Employment development:** small commercial buildings, generally up to 10-12m in height, including small parking/service areas. **Services/community development:** small buildings, of one storey in height, including small parking/service areas. **Renewable energy development:** small-scale 1kW-6kW domestic/off-grid wind turbines, generally 6-12m to blade tip; and small-scale commercial solar farm installations (2-3m high solar panels on sites generally 10ha or less).

2.4.24 The potential to mitigate adverse effects of change in a particular landscape will depend on the factors that determine its landscape and visual sensitivity. For the purposes of this assessment, landscapes evaluated as having some capacity to accommodate a particular type of development are considered to have potential for mitigation based on the following siting, design and landscaping mitigation principles:

- New development siting, design and landscaping responds to the landscape features, characteristics and special qualities that give the landscape its unique sense of place and local distinctiveness.
- New development avoids adverse impacts on the setting of culturally important landmarks, remnant historic landscapes and significant views.
- The use of appropriate building and hard/soft landscaping materials that are complementary to local vernacular design.
- Use of materials with appropriate finishes and colours that help to blend new buildings and structures into the surrounding landscape.
- New planting of woodland and tree belts (using native species to reinforce local distinctiveness) designed to create a strong sense of enclosure (where appropriate), frame views, provide screening and soften impact of built development, that links with existing vegetation to create a cohesive landscape framework to help integrate new development into the landscape.
- Existing structure planting, including shelter belts, woodland and hedgerows, is retained and augmented by new structure planting to provide screening for new development (including reinforcement of landscape buffers along sensitive urban edges and to soften hard urban edges where appropriate), and appropriately managed to provide a strong and enduring backdrop to frame views.
- Multi-functional green networks are created as planting, open space and recreational corridors.
- Where opportunities exist, the improvement and restoration of degraded landscape at a local scale.

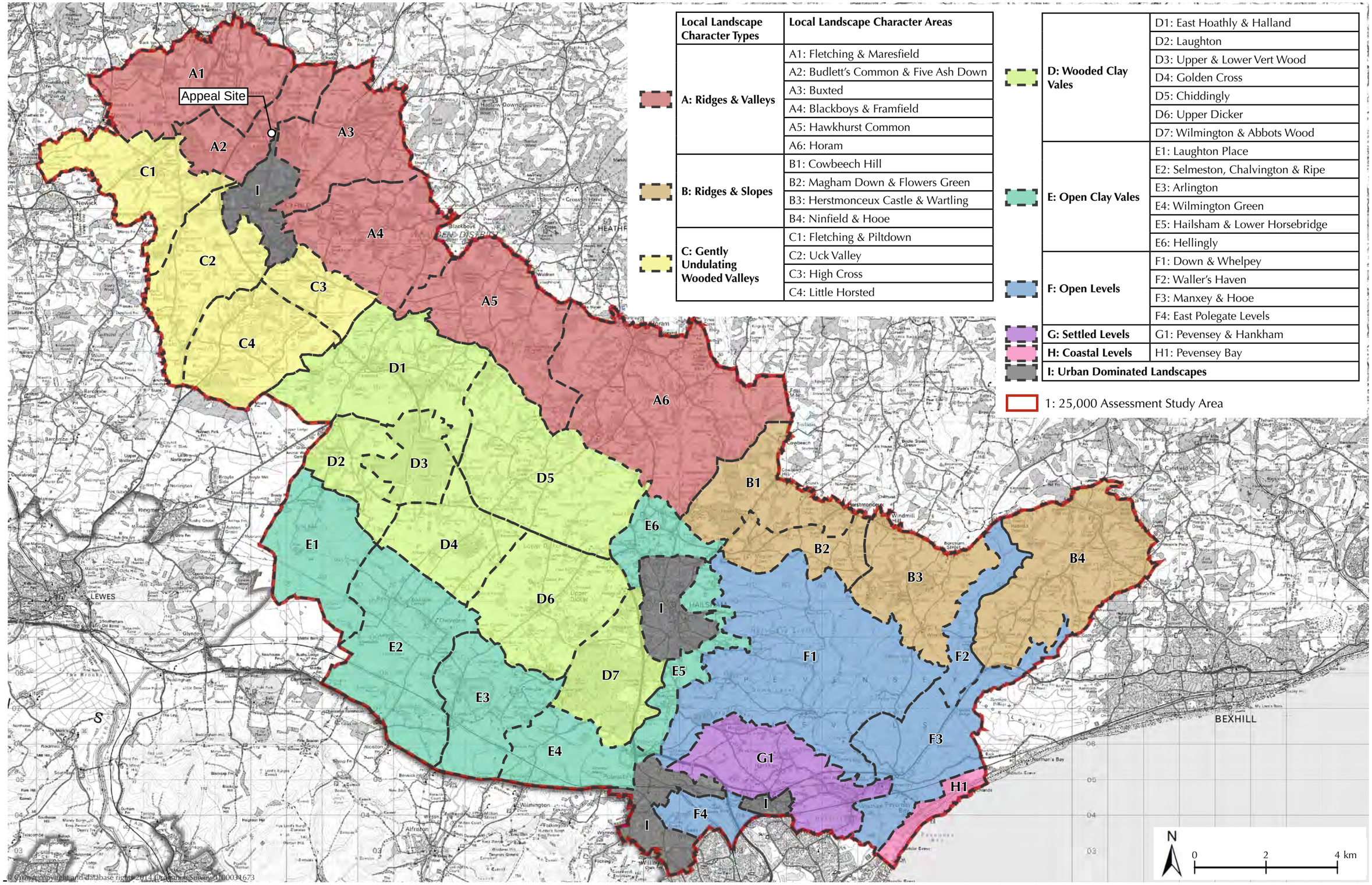
Landscape Contribution to Settlement Setting

2.4.25 'Settlement Setting' refers to the surroundings in which a settlement is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships between the settlement and the adjacent landscape. The settlements for which the contributions of their landscape settings have been evaluated are those settlements with existing or potential Conservation Areas (as listed in **Appendix 1**).

2.4.26 Drawing on the information and analysis from the desk-based studies and field surveys, the contribution that the character of each Landscape Setting Area makes towards the setting of the settlement is evaluated in line with the criteria set out in **Table 2.5**.

Table 2.5: Landscape Contribution to Settlement Setting Criteria

Level of Contribution	Definition
Major Contribution	The Landscape Setting Area has a very strong strength of place due to its distinctiveness and long continuity/time depth (presence of remnant ancient landscapes that are unique/rare features of special historic interest), and very high inter-visibility and strong functional associations with the historic core of the settlement.
Moderate Contribution	The Landscape Setting Area has a moderate strength of place due to its distinctiveness and moderate continuity/time depth (presence of remnant historic landscapes that are distinctive features of some historic interest), and moderate inter-visibility and some functional associations with the historic core of the settlement.
Limited Contribution	The Landscape Setting Area has a limited strength of place due to its lack of distinctiveness and continuity/time depth (landscapes that are of more recent origin with few features of historic interest), and limited inter-visibility and weak functional associations with the historic core of the settlement.



Local Landscape Character Types	Local Landscape Character Areas
A: Ridges & Valleys	A1: Fletching & Maresfield
	A2: Budlett's Common & Five Ash Down
	A3: Buxted
	A4: Blackboys & Framfield
	A5: Hawkhurst Common
	A6: Horam
B: Ridges & Slopes	B1: Cowbeech Hill
	B2: Magham Down & Flowers Green
	B3: Herstmonceux Castle & Wartling
	B4: Ninfield & Hooe
C: Gently Undulating Wooded Valleys	C1: Fletching & Piltdown
	C2: Uck Valley
	C3: High Cross
	C4: Little Horsted
D: Wooded Clay Vales	D1: East Hoathly & Halland
	D2: Laughton
	D3: Upper & Lower Vert Wood
	D4: Golden Cross
	D5: Chiddingly
	D6: Upper Dicker
	D7: Wilmington & Abbots Wood
E: Open Clay Vales	E1: Laughton Place
	E2: Selmeston, Chalvington & Ripe
	E3: Arlington
	E4: Wilmington Green
	E5: Hailsham & Lower Horsebridge
	E6: Hellingly
F: Open Levels	F1: Down & Whelpey
	F2: Waller's Haven
	F3: Manxey & Hooe
	F4: East Polegate Levels
G: Settled Levels	G1: Pevensey & Hankham
H: Coastal Levels	H1: Pevensey Bay
I: Urban Dominated Landscapes	

1: 25,000 Assessment Study Area

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4.4 Local Landscape Character Type A: Ridges and Valleys

Character Description

Location and Boundaries

4.4.1 The Ridges and Valleys LLCT (A) is situated in the central part of Wealden District, to the north of Uckfield and Hailsham. It stretches broadly between Splayne's Green to the west and Cowbeech to the east (the latter being just outside the boundary of this LLCT). To the north, this LLCT abuts the southern boundary of the High Weald AONB. To the south, it meets the northern wooded valleys and clay vales of the Low Weald (LLCT C: Gently Undulating Wooded Valleys and D: Wooded Clay Vales). Sheffield Park lies immediately to the west of this LLCT.

Key Characteristics

- **Topography**: A series of narrow, incised northeast-southwest oriented river valleys which dissect the surrounding landscape of rolling fields and valley side woodlands. Overall, the topography comprises a ridge and valley landscape pattern, with the stream corridors gently meandering through their adjacent valleys.
- **Settlement Pattern:** Small to medium-sized linear villages mainly located on higher ridges of land between the valleys.
- **Views and Visibility:** Views from settlements and higher land into and across the valleys is often limited by abundant small blocks and linear swathes of woodland which line the valley sides. These patches of woodland also provide a strong sense of visual containment from locations along the valley floor.
- **Communications:** The landscape is crossed by an interconnected network of minor rural roads which tend to follow the valley floors or ridges, connecting ridge-top settlements.
- **Tranquillity and Remoteness:** Within much of this LLCT, there is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity; however this is less apparent in close proximity to the large town of Uckfield, which abuts its south-western edge.

Physical Landscape Character

4.4.2 This landscape of ridges and steep sided valleys includes the highest land within the Study Area, divided by watercourses and scattered water bodies. These include the River Uck and the upper waters of the River Cuckmere, which bisect the study area, running north to south. This LLCT is predominantly rural, with small settlements and scattered farms. Settlements, including some larger villages, are primarily found on the ridges and slopes, leaving the valley floors mostly free from settlement. Field pattern is varied, with a mix of small pastoral fields divided by hedges and shaws; and larger, arable fields. The landscape in this part of Wealden District is well treed, including a number of large blocks and belts of woodland, as well as tree lined ghylls.

Historic Landscape Character

4.4.3 The Ridges and Valleys LLCT forms part of the High Weald's ancient countryside, which is one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The dispersed settlement pattern and small-medium sized irregular shaped fields, enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, are predominantly of medieval origin. Blocks of Ancient Woodland, scattered throughout, reinforce the historic character of this LLCT and wider High Weald area. An integrated traditional system of forestry and farming as well as the medieval practice of transhumance[14] helped shape the character of the landscape, playing a key role in the transformation of a largely uninhabited landscape into the settled landscape which can be seen today. Some of the roads and public rights of way which transect the ridges and valleys form part of the network of historic droveways which connect the Downs and the Weald. These are a visible legacy of the past seasonal movement of animals and people into the woodlands. Cohesive and aggregate assarts dominate the bottom two thirds of the LLCT – created from the medieval practice of cultivating small parcels of land, known as 'assarting'. Regular piece meal enclosures and modern field amalgamations are also fairly dominant, distributed across the type.

4.4.4 Charcoal hearths, pits and/or ponds relating to the iron industry can be found in some of the Ancient Woodland blocks reflecting the wider area's once busy industrial past. Buxted Park, a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, was first recorded at Buxted, along with its associated manor house, in 1299. Both the house and grounds have been altered over time, with the current house (home to the Buxted Park Country House Hotel) likely to have been constructed during the 18th century.

[14] Transhumance can be defined as the seasonal movement of people and animals between the settlements of the borders of the Weald and its interior.

Evaluation

Landscape Sensitivity

4.4.5 Overall, the Ridges and Valleys LLCT is assessed as having Very High Landscape Sensitivity. Strength of place is considered to be very strong as a result of the distinctly recognisable pattern of narrow, incised valleys which cut through the surrounding landscape, resulting in a pattern of ridge-top settlements. There is strong historic continuity as a result of the pattern of ancient fields and woodland, dating from the Medieval period. Overall visibility is considered to be high within this LLCT. Whilst the strongly recognisable pattern of ridges and valleys dominate the landscape, the high frequency of woodlands results in an intermittent sense of visual enclosure.

Criteria	Evaluation
Strength of Place	Very Strong
Visibility	High
Landscape Sensitivity	**Very High**

Landscape Value

4.4.6 The Ridges and Valleys LLCT is considered to have Very High Landscape Value. There is very strong visual unity throughout as a result of the recognisable pattern of ridges and valleys, which contribute to a strong local strength of place. There is strong historic continuity, with numerous patches of Ancient Woodland along the valley sides, and a general absence of detracting features. In addition, there is strong sense of wildness and tranquillity overall.

Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA)

A1: Fletching and Maresfield

4.4.7 Situated in the north-western corner of Wealden District, this LLCA encompasses a patchwork of small to medium scale rolling arable and pastoral fields, which are interspersed with medium sized woodlands (including High Wood and Spring Wood), providing a sense of enclosure. There are numerous smaller patches of woodland, amongst the smaller fields. The western edge of this LLCA overlooks the large designed landscape of Sheffield Park, and glimpsed views westwards towards woodland within the Park contribute to recognisable sense of place. The central part of the area is crossed by a narrow north-south orientated stream corridor which runs adjacent to the main A22 road corridor. Busy traffic along this road corridor, detracts from the overall sense of remoteness and tranquillity within this part of the LLCA. The large nucleated village of Maresfield dominates the eastern part of the LLCA, with its historic core centred on the church. Long distance views across the LLCA are limited by the numerous patches of woodland and rolling topography, however views to Maresfield church can be gained from fields in close proximity to the edge of the village.

A2: Budlett's Common and Five Ash Down

4.4.8 The south-western part of this LLCA is dominated by large areas of woodland (including Park Wood and Thirty Acre Wood), which provide a strong sense of enclosure. The strongly undulating topography of the LLCA, as a result of a narrow stream corridor which cuts through the area, dominates landscape pattern. The south-eastern edge of the area abuts the large town of Uckfield. Views to the edge of the town are generally limited by woodland at the settlement edge. However glimpsed views are characteristic in places. The main A26 road corridor runs north-south across the area, introducing a source of noise and movement and reducing overall sense of tranquillity. In the north of the area, the small linear settlement of Five Ash Down is a key feature. The village is situated on a ridge of higher land, which facilitates views across adjacent fields. Woodland is a key feature of this area, however, outside the patches of woodland, fields tend to be lined with mature hedgerows.

A3: Buxted

4.4.9 Situated to the northeast of the large town of Uckfield (and abutting its eastern and north-eastern edges), this LLCA encompasses the narrow valley of the River Uck and the linear village of Buxted. Buxted is situated on a higher ridge of land on the eastern valley side and overlooks the river valley. Views into the valley are limited by blocks of mature woodland and mature hedgerows at field boundaries. The mainline railway from London to Uckfield runs north-south across the area (with a busy station at Buxted) and introduces a source of noise and movement, reducing the overall sense of remoteness and tranquillity. On the eastern valley side, to the south of Buxted, the landscape pattern comprises an intricate patchwork of small scale fields, interspersed with numerous small woodlands which provide an intermittent sense of enclosure. The western half of the LLCA is dominated by the valley of the River Uck, with its gently meandering stream and streamside woodlands. The river runs through the large landscaped historic parkland of Buxted Park. The parkland, with its designed landscape planting and the historic manor house (which is now Buxted Park hotel), impart a formal landscape character within this area. At the western edge of Buxted Park, views to the eastern edge of Uckfield (at Manor Park) are limited by a large area of woodland (Views Wood). Further south, however, open views to the edge of Uckfield can be gained from the rural roads and network of footpaths within the southern part of the valley.

A4: Blackboys and Framfield

4.4.10 The Blackboys and Framfield LLCA encompass an undulating patchwork of small-scale pastoral fields, which are interspersed with frequent patches of woodland. Numerous small stream corridors cross the landscape within the bottom of the valleys. Long distance views across the valleys from the valley sides are

characteristic, with intermittently wooded skylines contributing to recognisable sense of place. This is an intimate, small-scale and predominantly rural landscape which is crossed by a network of interconnecting, often sunken, rural lanes. There is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout much of the area. The small woodlands and tree lined lanes provide an intermittent sense of enclosure. The two, small linear villages of Framfield and Blackboys, situated on ridges of higher land, facilitate long distance views across the adjacent undulating valleys. An interconnected network of footpaths crosses the area, providing access to the ridges and valleys.

A5: Hawkhurst Common

4.4.11 This predominantly rural LLCA encompasses a pattern of small scale, predominantly pastoral fields, which are interspersed with large areas of woodland, providing a strong sense of enclosure in places. A number of rural road corridors traverse the landscape, which are lined with mature trees and hedgerows. There is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout. Numerous narrow stream corridors permeate the fields, with associated small ponds. These streams feed the larger river corridors outside the area. Views are often dominated by treed horizons and the settlement pattern is limited to small farmsteads. This is a small-scale, intimate, predominantly rural landscape.

A6: Horam

4.4.12 This LLCA encompasses an intricate patchwork of woodlands and stream corridors, which are also lined in places by woodland. The undulating landform, coupled with the intermittent woodland patches, results in a strong sense of enclosure within much of the landscape. The network of rural lanes is lined with mature trees and hedgerows and there is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity throughout much of the area. In the north of the area, views to the small nucleated village of Horam contribute to recognisable sense of place. To the south of Horam, the settlement pattern comprises a series of farmsteads, which tend to be located alongside the rural road corridors. The field pattern is small scale, and many of the fields are ancient. The upper course of the Cuckmere River valley runs through the eastern part of this area, with a patchwork of small-scale fields lining the river corridor.

5.19 Landscape Setting of Uckfield

Settlement Profile

5.19.1 Uckfield is situated in the west of Wealden District, approximately eight miles to the southwest of Crowborough and eight miles to the west of Heathfield. It is one of the largest settlements in the District and serves as a local employment and shopping centre. Uckfield is situated in close proximity to the southern edge of the High Weald AONB.

5.19.2 Uckfield is a large linear town which has developed at the crossroads between two B roads running north-south, east-west. The town is bypassed by the A22 main road corridor which runs to the west of the settlement. Uckfield has experienced significant growth over the last decade, resulting in a pattern of several large-scale housing estates at the edges of the town.

5.19.3 The town centre provides the commercial core of the settlement with a variety of shops and offices which have developed in linear form along the High Street (the former A22). The historic core of Uckfield is situated at the northern end of the High Street, with a concentration of Listed Buildings resulting in a historic character. More recently the focus of shopping activity has shifted southwards at the bottom on the High Street, with a small shopping complex at Bell Walk and the large supermarket to the south of Luxford Field.

5.19.4 There are two main business/commercial centres within Uckfield, at Bellbrook and Ridgewood. These areas comprise modern business units and warehouses. There are several key areas of open space within the town, which provide a range of outdoor recreational facilities. There include Victoria Pleasure Ground, the New Road Recreation Ground at Ridgewood, Hempstead Lane, Luxford Field, New Barn Farm and at West Park.

Landscape Character

5.19.5 The landscape surrounding the settlement falls within the following County Landscape Character Area(s):

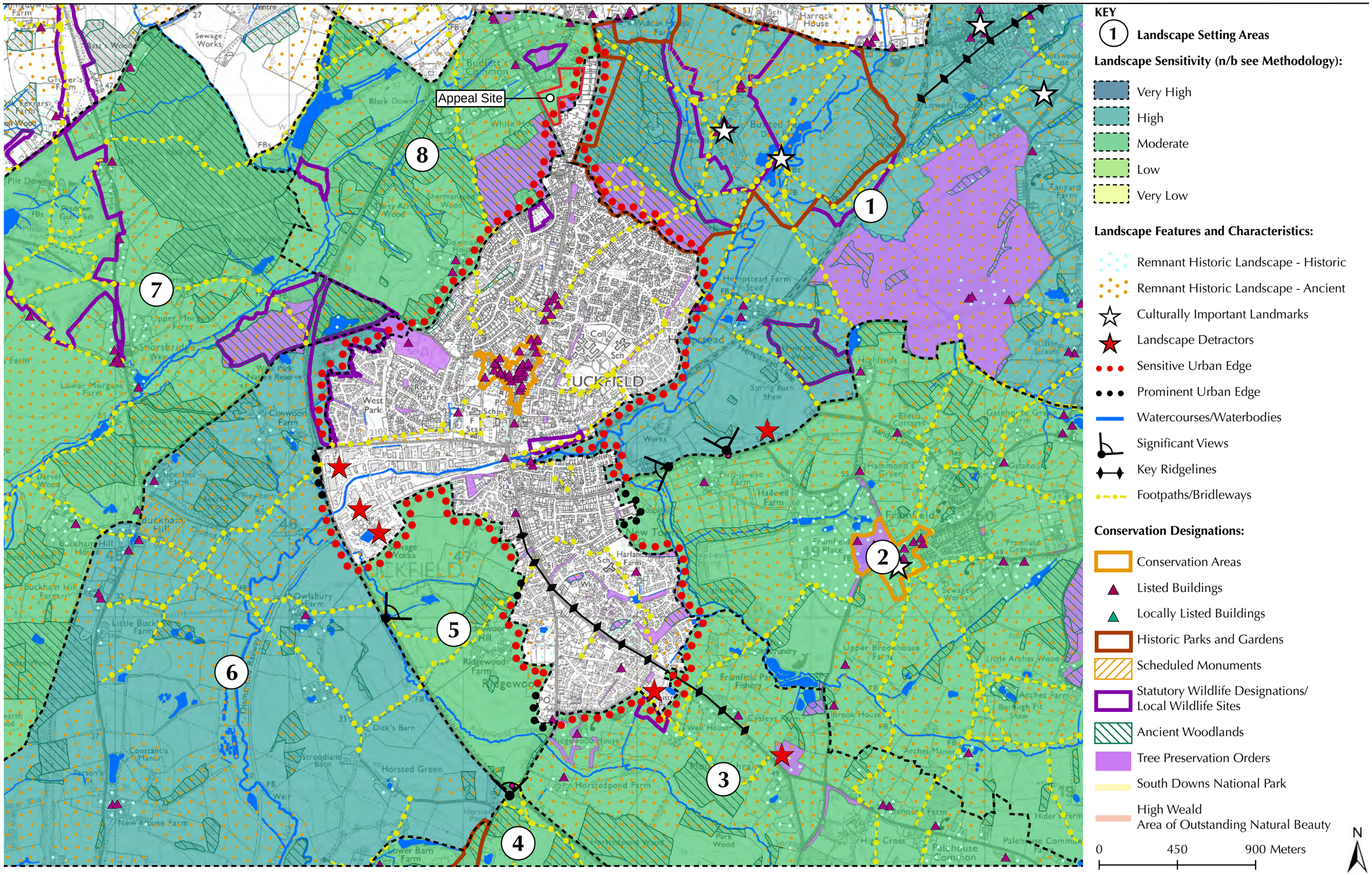
- Upper Ouse Valley (3) – see **Section 5.3** for details
- Western Low Weald (14) - see **Section 5.3** for details

5.19.6 At the more local scale, the landscape surrounding the settlement also lies within the following Local Landscape Character Area(s):

- A1: Fletching and Maresfield – see **Section 4.4** for details
- A2: Budlett's Common and Five Ash Down – see **Section 4.4** for details
- A3: Buxted – see **Section 4.4** for details
- A4: Blackboys and Framfield – see **Section 4.4** for details
- C1: Fletching and Piltdown – see **Section 5.4** for details
- C2: Uck Valley – see **Section 5.4** for details
- C3: High Cross – see **Section 5.4** for details

5.19.7 The key features and characteristics of the landscape around Uckfield are illustrated on **Figure 5.12** and summarised below:

- **Remnant Historic Landscapes:** Pockets of historic landscape within the setting of the town, comprising small-scale fields with intact boundaries, particularly to the northwest, west and southeast of the town. The historic field pattern is a mosaic, predominantly comprised of regular and irregular piecemeal enclosure, and cohesive and aggregate assarts. Historic parkland landscape, associated with Buxted Park to the northeast of the settlement and relatively large areas of Ancient Woodland, further contribute to the historic landscape within the periphery of the town.
- **Culturally Important Landmarks:** Buxted Park Hall(hotel), a culturally important historic landmark is situated to the northeast of the settlement and other important historic landmarks include the church at Framfield and listed buildings within the historic core of the town centre.
- **Landscape Detractors:** Several landscape detractors are present within the setting of the town, including industrial and commercial buildings at Ridgewood and Bellbrook Industrial estates.
- **Urban Edges:** The town is predominantly lined by sensitive soft edges and woodland, with a few pockets of exposed or prominent urban edges within the Bellbrook Industrial Area and at the eastern edge of the town, associated with the Hospital.
- **Watercourses/Waterbodies:** The key watercourse running northeast- southwest through the town, is the River Uck, set within its meandering valley. Several smaller tributary streams feed the main river system, including the Chalybeate Spring. There are also numerous small ponds within the setting of the town.
- **Significant Views/Key Ridgelines:** Key views of the edges of the town can be gained looking north-eastwards from the A22 road corridor and northwards from the Framfield Road.
- **Footpaths/Bridleways:** A network of footpaths and bridleways connects Uckfield to its landscape setting.



KEY

1 **Landscape Setting Areas**

Landscape Sensitivity (n/b see Methodology):

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very Low

Landscape Features and Characteristics:

- Remnant Historic Landscape - Historic
- Remnant Historic Landscape - Ancient
- Culturally Important Landmarks
- Landscape Detractors
- Sensitive Urban Edge
- Prominent Urban Edge
- Watercourses/Waterbodies
- Significant Views
- Key Ridgelines
- Footpaths/Bridleways

Conservation Designations:

- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Scheduled Monuments
- Statutory Wildlife Designations/ Local Wildlife Sites
- Ancient Woodlands
- Tree Preservation Orders
- South Downs National Park
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

0 450 900 Meters

N

Scale: 1:20,500 @ A3

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WEALDEN LANDSCAPE & SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
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FIGURE 5.12
LANDSCAPE SETTING OF UCKFIELD

October 2014
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5.19.8 Areas of distinctive landscape that have been identified around the settlement are shown on **Figure 5.12** as 'Landscape Setting Areas'. The distinctive characteristics that define each Landscape Setting Area are highlighted within the table below:

Landscape Setting Area	Distinctive Characteristics
1	• Gently meandering corridor of the River Uck, which is lined in places by small linear woodlands; • Buxted Park which is a key landscape feature, with its designed landscape elements and mature parkland trees
2	• A patchwork of woodlands, arable and pastoral fields which are often lined with mature hedgerows. • Intermittent sense of enclosure.
3	• Gently meandering Ridgewood Stream corridor, with several adjacent blocks of mature woodland • A strong landscape structure of hedgerows and trees.
4	• A patchwork of Ancient Woodland and pastoral fields, lined with mature hedgerows.
5	• Topography slopes from south to north, forming the northern valley side of the Ridgewood stream. • A patchwork of sloping, modern, arable and pastoral fields • A22 road corridor forms the southern edge of the area and introduces a source of noise and movement.
6	• The southern section of the Uck River corridor which gently meanders through a fieldscape which is interspersed with patches of woodland; • A22 road corridor forms the northern edge of the area and introduces a source of noise and movement.
7	• A strong sense of enclosure within this ancient landscape as a result of large areas of Ancient Woodland.
8	• A gently meandering tributary of the River Ouse which is lined with mature woodland, providing a strong sense of enclosure; • Park Wood, to the west is a key landscape feature, further contributing to the enclosed feel.

Landscape Sensitivity

5.19.9 The inherent Landscape Sensitivity of each Landscape Setting Area, evaluated in line with the methodology set out within **Section 2.4**, is shown in the table below:

Criteria	Landscape Setting Area			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Strength of Place				
Distinctiveness	Distinct	Distinct	Distinct	Distinct
Continuity	Ancient	Ancient	Ancient	Historic
Strength of Place	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Visibility				
Landform	Apparent	Insignificant	Insignificant	Dominant
Tree Cover	Intermittent	Intermittent	Intermittent	Intermittent
Visibility	Moderate	Low	Low	Moderate
Landscape Sensitivity				
Landscape Sensitivity	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Criteria	Landscape Setting Area			
	5	**6**	**7**	**8**
Strength of Place				
Distinctiveness	Distinct	Distinct	Distinct	Distinct
Continuity	Recent	Ancient	Ancient	Ancient
Strength of Place	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong
Visibility				
Landform	Dominant	Apparent	Apparent	Apparent
Tree Cover	Open	Open	Enclosed	Enclosed
Visibility	Very High	High	Low	Low
Landscape Sensitivity				
Landscape Sensitivity	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate

Landscape Value

5.19.10 The Landscape Value of each Landscape Setting Area, evaluated in line with the methodology set out within **Section 2.4**, is shown in the table below:

Criteria	Landscape Setting Area							
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Landscape Value	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High

Landscape Capacity

5.19.11 The indicative Landscape Capacity of each Landscape Setting Area to accommodate development, evaluated in line with the methodology set out within **Section 2.4**, is shown in the table below:

Criteria	Landscape Setting Area							
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
Landscape Sensitivity	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
Landscape Value	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
Landscape Capacity	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

5.19.12 **Landscape Setting Area 1** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value. The area is considered to have High Landscape Sensitivity as a result of the gently meandering corridor of the River Uck, with its pattern of small woodlands and the designed landscape of Buxted Park, which has strong character and identity. Whilst there are large areas of Ancient Woodland associated with Buxted Park, landscape to the south is considered to have less valuable landscape features, resulting in Moderate Landscape Value overall.

5.19.13 **Landscape Setting Area 2** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value. There is recognisable strength of place as a result of the pattern of woodlands and fields, however views are localised, resulting in an intermittent sense of enclosure. Valuable landscape features include pockets of Ancient Woodland and mature hedgerows.

5.19.14 **Landscape Setting Area 3** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value. This area is considered to have a strong landscape structure of hedgerows and trees and the Ridgewood Stream corridor is a key valuable landscape feature.

5.19.15 **Landscape Setting Area 4** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value. This area is considered to have a strong landscape structure of hedgerows and trees, which contribute to Moderate Landscape Sensitivity. It also includes large areas of valued Ancient Woodland, which contribute to Moderate Landscape Value overall.

5.19.16 **Landscape Setting Area 5** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value. Overall sense of remoteness and tranquillity is disturbed by the presence of the A22 road corridor, which also detracts from the value of the landscape. However this area is considered to have a strong landscape structure of trees and hedgerows, which are considered to be sensitive landscape features. Due to the prominent, sloping topography, this area is visible from surrounding Landscape Setting Areas.

5.19.17 **Landscape Setting Area 6** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value. Landscape Sensitivity is considered to be high as a result of the intricate, meandering river corridor and adjacent pastoral fields, which are interspersed with pockets of valued Ancient Woodland. These pockets of ancient woodland are valuable landscape features, however overall landscape value is diminished by the presence of the A22 road corridor.

5.19.18 **Landscape Setting Area 7** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value. The large areas of Ancient Woodland are considered to have High Landscape Value and are sensitive landscape elements. The strong sense of enclosure also contributes to recognisable strength of place and Moderate overall Landscape Sensitivity.

5.19.19 **Landscape Setting Area 8** is considered to have Moderate Landscape Capacity as a result of its Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value. The strong pattern of mature woodland is considered to be a highly valued landscape feature, and the meandering Ouse Tributary contributes to recognisable strength of place and landscape value. Overall Landscape Sensitivity is considered to be Moderate as a result of the presence of the tributary corridor, woodland lining the river and other blocks of woodland, which are considered to be sensitive landscape features.

APPENDIX CJ6

Extract from Wealden District Council Landscape Character Assessment

May 2022 (LUC)

Wealden District Council

Landscape Character Assessment
for Wealden District

Final report
Prepared by LUC
May 2022



Wealden District Council

Landscape Character Assessment
for Wealden District

Project Number
11610

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1.	Draft	R Knight A Knight A Palenske	K Davies	K Davies	21.12.2021
2.	Draft final report	A Knight A Palenske	K Davies	K Davies	05.04.2022
3.	Draft final report (incorporating High Weald AONB Unit consultation comments)	A Knight	K Davies	K Davies	05.05.2022
4.	Final report	A Knight	K Davies	K Davies	25.05.2022

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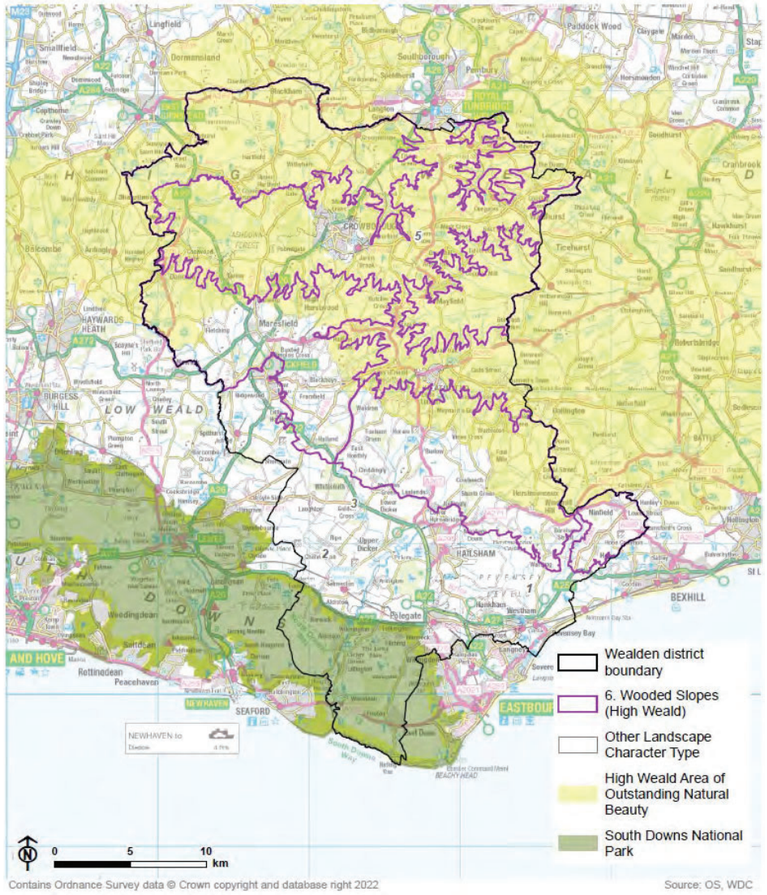
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Landscape Character Type 6: Wooded Slopes (High Weald)



The Wooded Slopes (High Weald) landscape character type is a rolling landscape of ridges and valleys that form the slopes to the most elevated ridgelines of the High Weald, typically between 40m and 100m AOD. Much of the landscape type lies within the High Weald AONB, and is one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in North West Europe, as a result of the historic field patterns, extensive woods and network of historic routeways. The landscape type contains the catchments of the rivers Medway, Teise, Rother, Ouse and Cuckmere that drain the High Weald and flow through the district. The landscape is a mix of arable and pasture fields, interspersed by extensive areas of woodland, much of ancient origin. Scattered villages are linked by generally narrow roads, and there is very good recreational access on public rights of way.

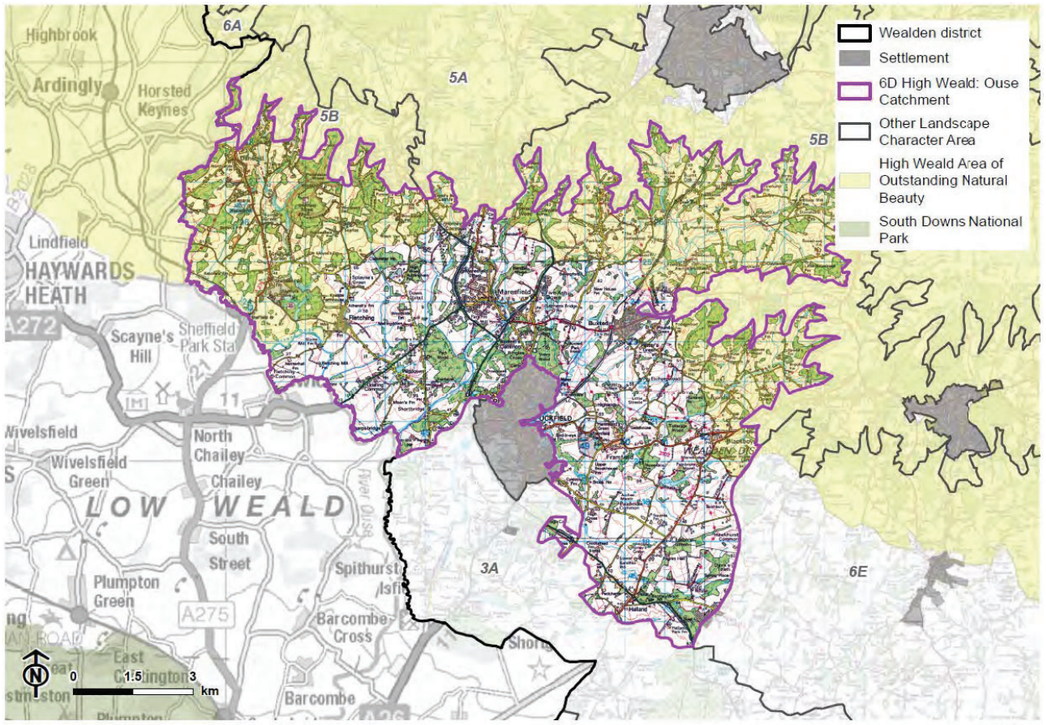
There are five Landscape Character Areas within this LCT:

- 6A: High Weald - Medway Catchment
- 6B: High Weald - Teise Catchment
- 6C: High Weald - Rother Catchment
- 6D: High Weald - Ouse Catchment
- 6E: High Weald - Cuckmere/ Pevensey Catchment

LCA 6D: High Weald - Ouse Catchment

Location and summary

The High Weald: Ouse Catchment is a rolling landscape of ridges and valleys containing the River Ouse and its tributaries that drain south-westwards from Ashdown Forest and the Central High Weald into Lewes District. A wooded landscape with an intricate pattern of small irregular fields, streams and small, historic ridge-top settlements. The High Weald AONB extends into the north of this LCA, west of Fletching and east of Blackboys and Buxted.



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Source: OS, WDC

Landscape Type 6: Wooded Slopes (High Weald)
Wealden Landscape Character Assessment
May 2022

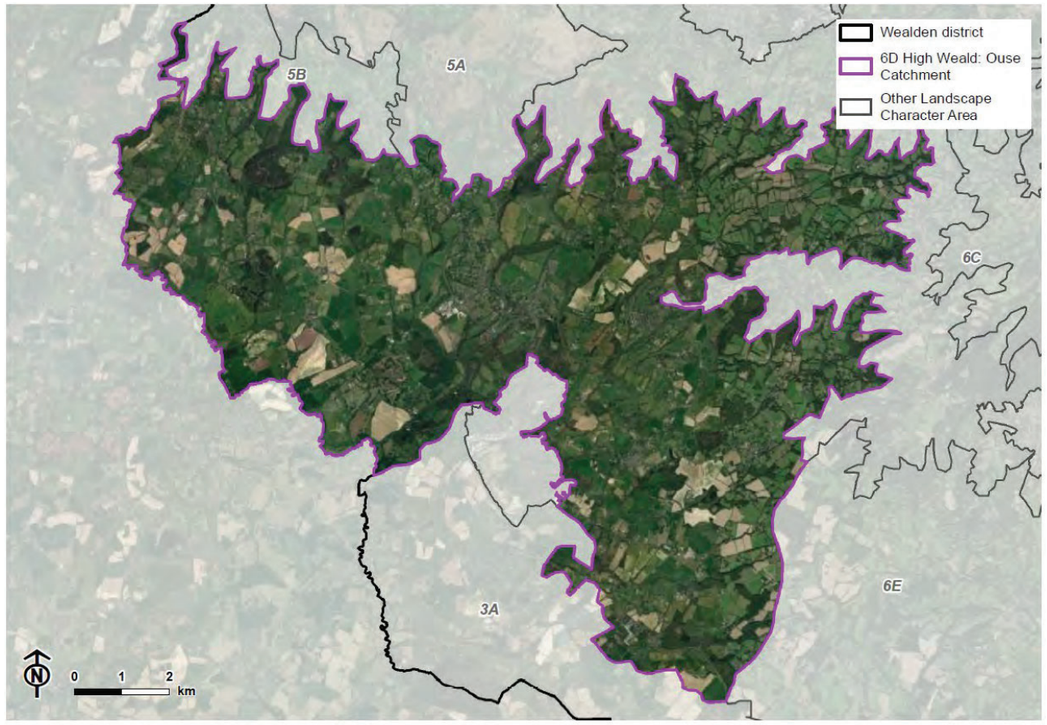


Well wooded ridge and valley landscape

Key Characteristics

- The underlying geology of interbedded sandstones, siltstones and mudstones give rise to a ridge and valley landscape associated with the winding upper courses of the River Ouse, River Uck and their tributaries. The incised and ridged landform is a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB.
- A well wooded landscape, which is a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB. The landscape has a mosaic of deciduous and mixed woodlands, interlinked with shaws, linear gill woodlands and hedgerows. Many woodlands are of ancient origin, with some ancient replanted woodland.
- Fragmented areas of priority habitat lowland heathland at Piltdown Common and in Sheffield Forest, provide evidence of previous woodland cover.
- Priority habitat lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland are scattered throughout the LCA, including the flower-rich fields at Stockland Farm Meadow SSSI. Buxted Park contains priority habitat lowland dry acid grassland, which supports a large invertebrate population, and is designated as a SSSI.
- The silty soils support pasture, grazed by sheep and horses, with larger arable fields near to settlements. Viticulture is becoming more common within the LCA.
- An intricate pattern of small irregular shaped fields, predominantly of medieval origin, which is a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB. These are derived from piecemeal enclosure or assarting (formed from cleared areas of woodland).
- Fields are enclosed by a network of shaws and hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, although these are often reinforced by post and wire fencing.
- The area is rich in relics of the Wealden iron industry, including furnace hearths, hammer ponds (constructed to power forge hammers) and coppiced woodlands managed to produce charcoal. The site of Pounsley iron furnace, a major cannon producer, is designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- The historic settlement pattern of small ridgetop villages, such as Danehill and Framfield (designated as Conservation Areas) is a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB. Distinctive church spires and towers often form landmark features. Farmsteads and hamlets are strung along the rural roads, and many of the buildings are listed.
- The local vernacular architecture comprises red brick laid as Flemish bond with blued brick ends, red tiled roofs and tile hung upper stories. These local materials, including oak timber frames, sandstone and flint reflect the abundance of locally sourced materials.

- Country houses with formal gardens and parkland such as Sheffield Park and Buxted Park (designated as Registered Parks and Gardens) demonstrate the wealth of manored estates in the High Weald.
- Villages are connected by a historic network of winding, sunken rural lanes enclosed by woodland. Busy trunk roads are also enclosed by woodland, limiting their impact on the landscape.
- The strong public rights of way network include promoted routes such as the Vanguard Way, Wealdway and the Sussex Diamond Way, enabling access to the landscape.
- Woodland, hedgerows and mature trees provide an enclosed character, although there are some dramatic long views to the wooded Central High Weald to the north and east and to the distinctive ridge of the South Downs to the south.
- The contrasting landscape pattern of pastoral fields combined with dense areas of mixed woodland and scattered historic villages, results in a varied landscape colour palette.
- A rural landscape, with areas of remoteness, tranquillity and experience of dark skies in the valleys and larger woods of the LCA, particularly away from the main settlements and busy A roads.
- Piltdown was at the centre of an archaeological hoax in 1912 when a skull was discovered that appeared to be the 'missing link' between humans and apes.



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Key Influences

Landform and drainage

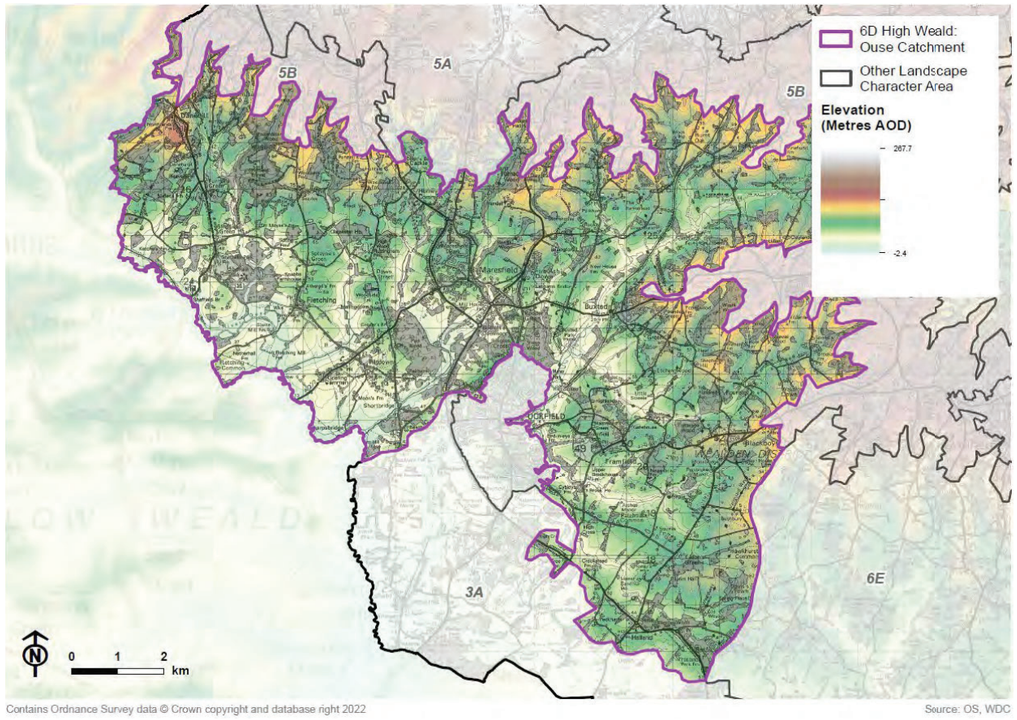
The landform comprises a rolling topography of ridges, spurs and valleys associated with the rivers Ouse and Uck and their tributary streams, which drain south-west into Lewes District and the Low Weald. The watercourses tend to be small and winding in their upper extents, lined by trees and woodland (with alder being a prominent species), widening with larger floodplains in their lower reaches. This landscape lies between 20m AOD along the course of the Ouse and 110m AOD at Danehill.

Bedrock and superficial geology

The High Weald - Ouse Catchment is underlain by a series of sandstones, siltstones and mudstones of the Ashdown Formation, Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand formation, Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand formation, Ardingly Sandstone and Wadhurst Clay formation. These were laid down in the Cretaceous period in fluvial, palustrine (marshy) or shallow marine conditions. Superficial deposits relate to the river corridors, with alluvium, older river terrace deposits and some areas of Head deposits, caused by freeze-thaw activity moving fragmented weathered material downslope. The geology gives rise to medium silty soils, which are generally graded 3 ('good to moderate') in the agricultural land classification, with areas of grade 4 ('poor') along the river corridors and in the north towards the High Weald.

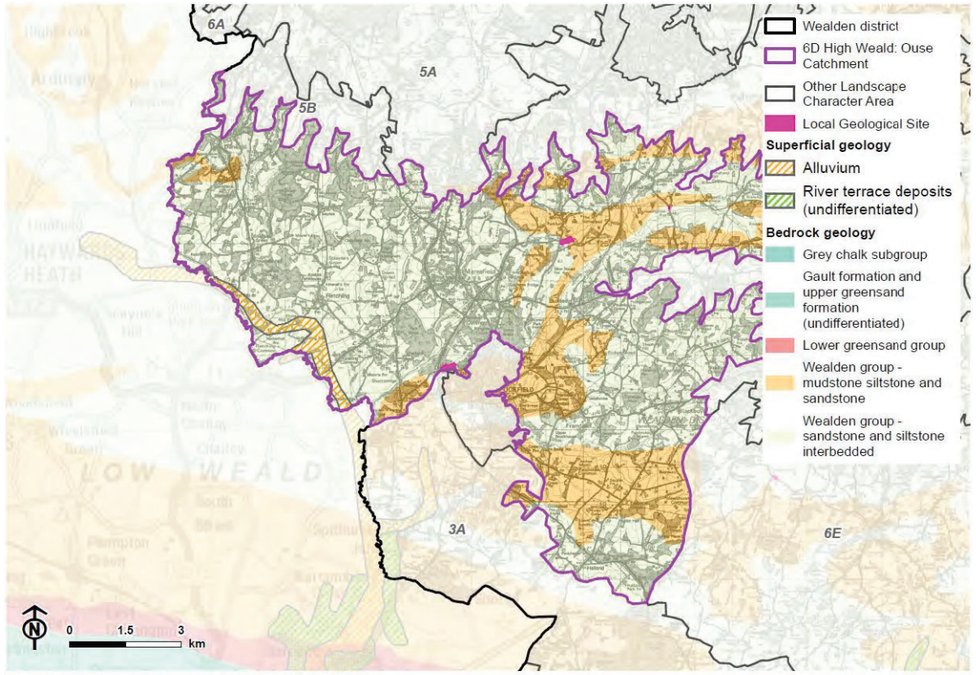


Designed landscape and unimproved grassland at Buxted Park



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Landform and drainage



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Source: OS, WDC, BGS, BRC

Bedrock and superficial geology

Semi-natural habitats

Priority habitat deciduous woodland is found across the LCA, with fragmented areas of lowland meadow and good quality semi-improved grassland, particularly in the north-east, where a small area of meadow is designated as Stockland Farm Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). A large expanse of lowland dry acid grassland is designated as the Buxted Park SSSI. Lowland heathland is found around Piltdown Common, evidence of greater woodland extent, and within clearances in Sheffield Forest. There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) across the landscape, including Hastingford Meadow, Barnet Wood Common and Pound & Furzefield Wood.

The Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest and River Uck and its Headwaters Biodiversity Opportunity Areas cover most of the LCA. These areas are considered to be important for habitat enhancement and restoration, as well as the creation of priority habitats, particularly wetlands, woodlands and heathland.

Landcover

Small-scale pasture landcover dominates the LCA, although there are sizeable areas of larger-scale arable cropping.

Woodland is widespread, with small areas of woodland and the larger woodlands of Sheffield Forest and Park Wood.

Historic landscape

The High Weald - Ouse Catchment is part of the High Weald's ancient countryside, the dispersed settlement pattern and irregular shaped fields with strong hedgerow network are typical of the medieval period and represent one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe.

Ancient woodland is found across the LCA, although some areas have been replanted with conifers in the 20th century, such as parts of Park Wood and Hollybush Wood. Evidence of the transhumance movement, where people and animals moved seasonally between the Downs to the south and woodlands of the High Weald, remain in the routes of the local lanes and public rights of way across the ridge and valley landscape, such as Bell Lane east of Sheffield Forest.

Evidence of Wealden iron working, which was prominent until the 18th century, is seen in the farm ponds and chains of large hammer ponds, constructed to provide a sufficient head of water for forges. Forges at Hendall, Oldlands Furnace, Buxted Wood and Buxted are designated as Scheduled Monuments.

Sheffield Park and Buxted Park are large, designed landscapes, both Registered Parks and Gardens. Sheffield Park is a 16th century deer park, remodelled by Capability Brown and Repton, with large ponds and lakes, and was the location of the first England v Australia cricket match, played in 1884. Buxted Park is an 18th century park with significant 17th century features.

The settlement pattern within the LCA has remained dispersed, with historic villages located on the ridges (including Danehill, Fletching, Maresfield and Framfield which covered by Conservation Areas) and often located at road junctions. The available local materials and sources of timber are reflected in the vernacular architecture of brick, timber, stone, weather boarding and tile hanging.

The Sussex Historic Landscape Character Assessment shows a varied pattern indicative of a typical medieval landscape. Assarts (created by clearance of woodland), are common, indicating a more wooded landscape in the past. Regular or semi-regular piecemeal enclosure is seen in fields in the centre and west of the area, although there have been considerable modern field amalgamations. There are also large, designed parklands at Sheffield Park, Buxted Park and Framfield Place.

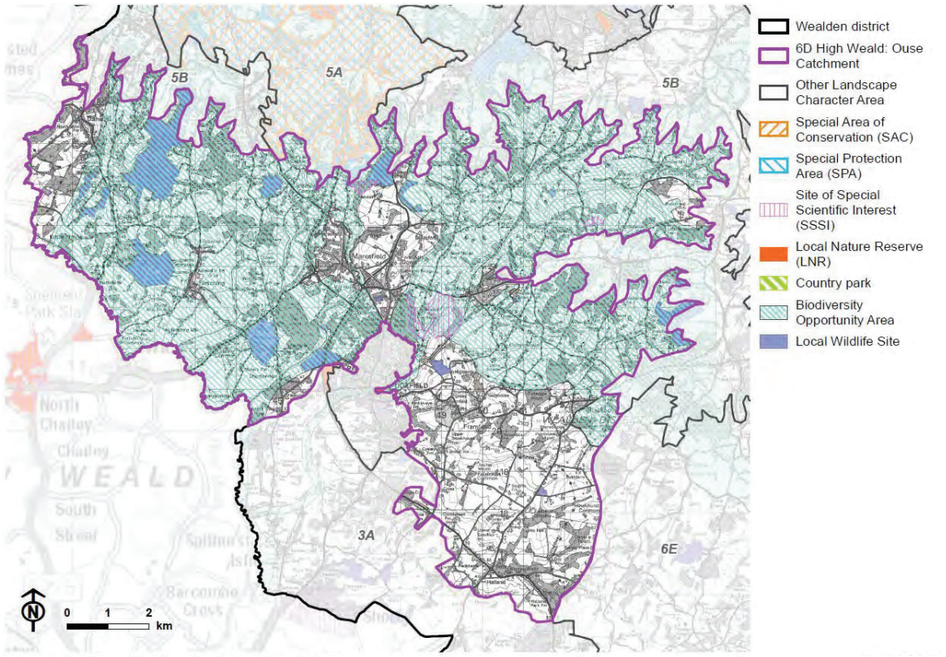
Perceptual character

The LCA is largely rural landscape, with areas of enclosure formed by the woodland, hedgerows and mature trees. There are areas of relative remoteness, tranquillity and an experience of dark skies in the valleys and larger woods, particularly away from Uckfield and Maresfield and the busy trunk roads. There are some dramatic long views to the wooded Central High Weald to the north and east and to the distinctive ridge of the South Downs to the south.

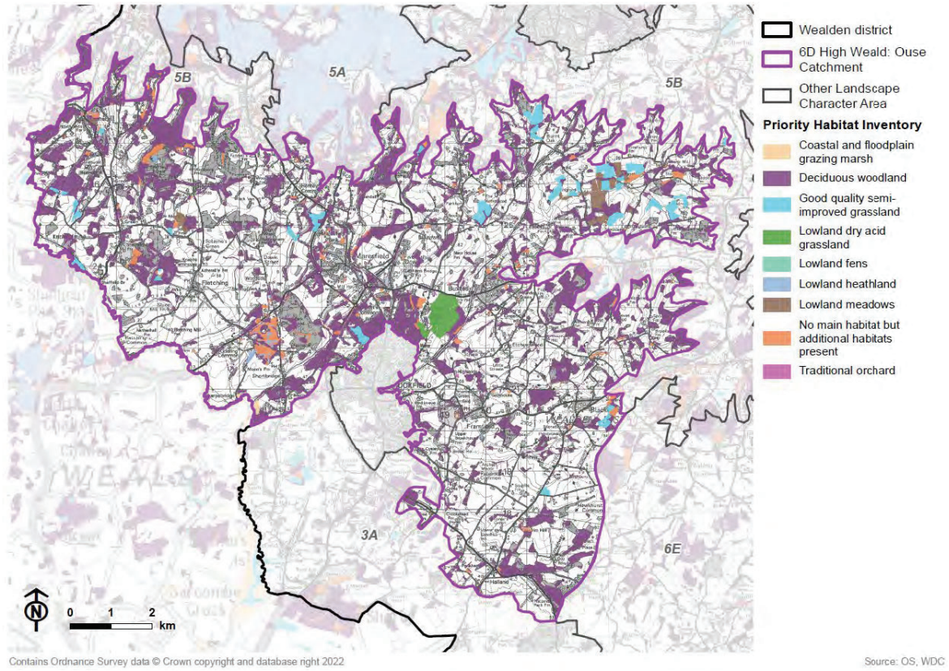
Busy trunk roads, including the A22 and A26, as well as light industrial land uses and urban fringe activities around Uckfield and Maresfield, influence landscape character, particularly outside the High Weald AONB. This includes developments such as the Ashdown Business Park and recycling centre on the A22. Electricity pylons are also a modern element in the landscape which reduce the sense of rurality in the immediate vicinity.



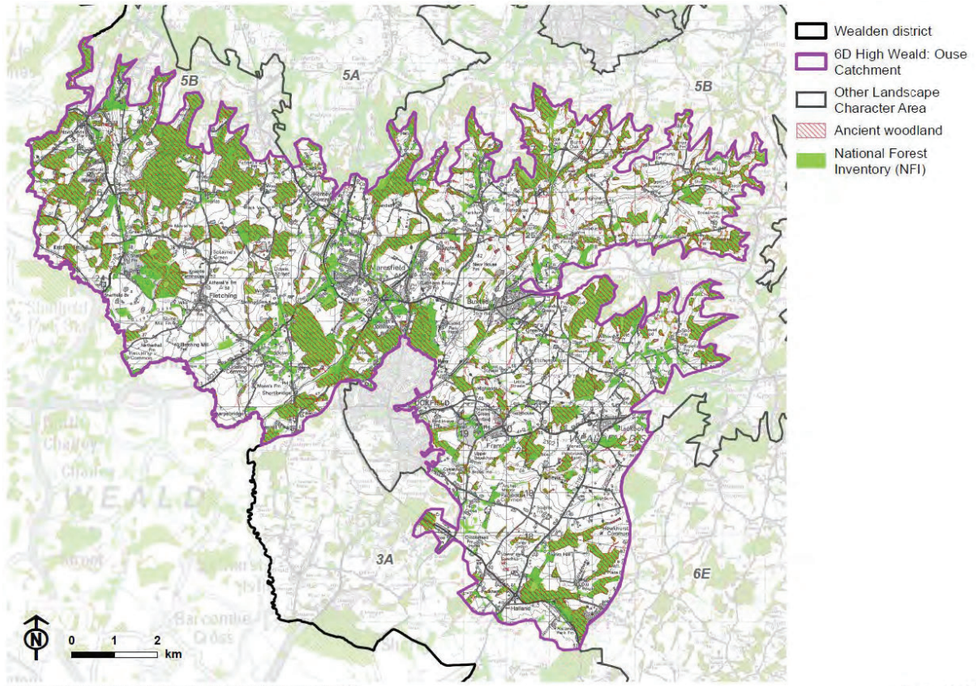
Vernacular architecture in Danehill



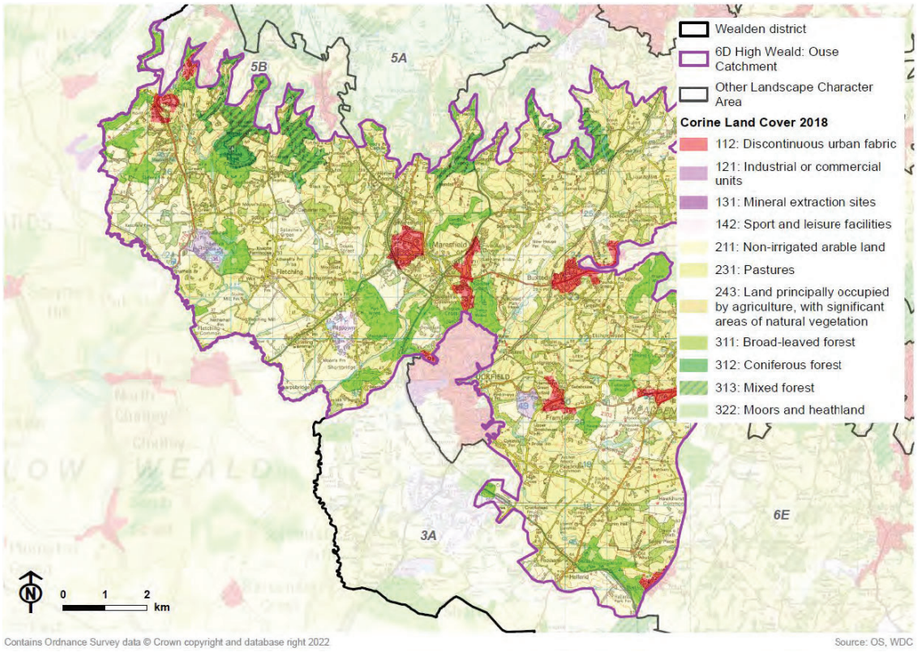
Nature conservation designations



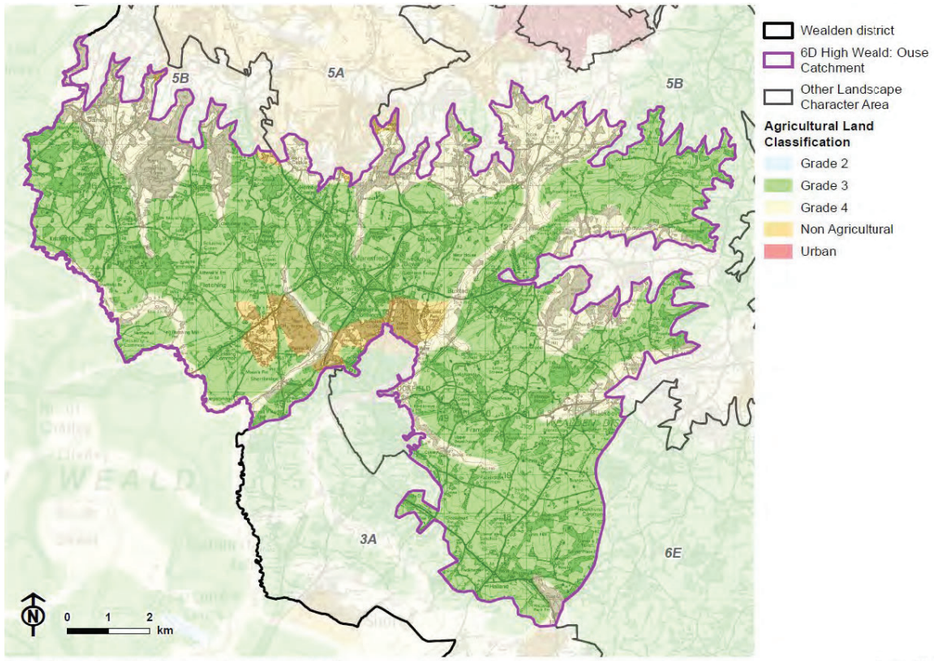
Priority habitat inventory



Woodland coverage

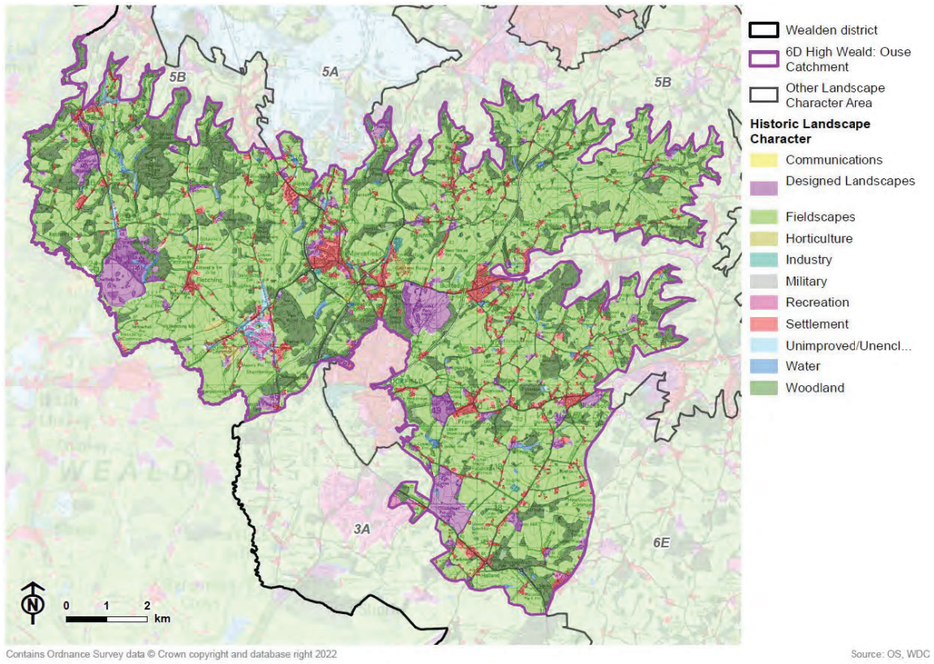


Landcover types (CORINE Land cover inventory 2018)



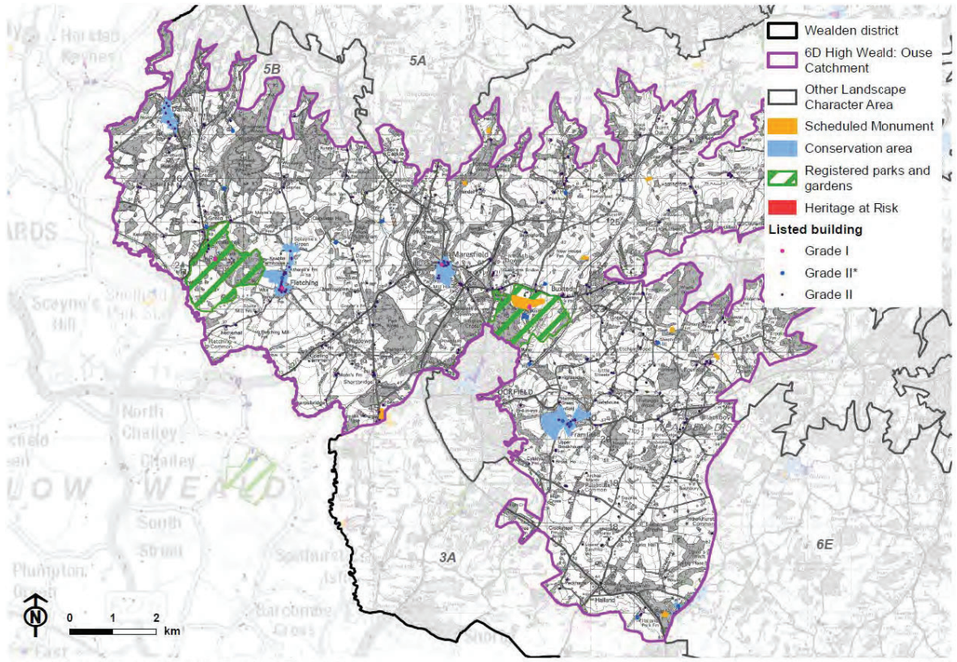
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Agricultural Land Classification



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Historic Landscape Characterisation



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Historic landscape designations

Landscape qualities

The following features and characteristics are particularly valued for their contribution to character and for the ecosystem services they provide:

- The distinctive landform of ridges and valleys associated with the River Ouse provide topographical interest to the landscape, creating a sense of place.
- Hammer ponds and gill streams, support wetland habitats, increasing biodiversity.
- The woodland, riparian vegetation and wetland habitats of the Ouse and Uck catchments provide nutrient and sediment filtration that enhances water quality, help to regulate water flow and assist in reducing flooding downstream during heavy rainfall.
- The numerous woodland (including ancient woodland), shaws, trees and hedgerows provide a sense of place as well as habitat connectivity to support biodiversity, carbon sequestration and the regulation of temperatures.
- The mixed and deciduous plantations and coppiced woodland offer opportunities for timber provision and a potential source of local fuel and building materials.
- The wet meadows, unimproved and acid grassland, heathland and broadleaved woodland (including Buxted Park and Stockland Farm Meadows SSSI), support a range of important flora and fauna. They allow soil stabilisation/retention, have a higher soil carbon content than cultivated habitats, and provide nutrient filtration which enhances water quality.
- The small-scale medieval field patterns, with sinuous hedgerow boundaries which provide a sense of place and history.
- Hammer ponds, coppiced woodlands and remnants of forges provide a link to the Wealden iron industry and a sense of time depth.
- The dispersed pattern of ridge-top villages (whose value is recognised through designation as Conservation Areas), with landmark church spires and towers, and linked by winding rural lanes, provide a connection to history, cultural identity and aesthetic value.

- The vernacular architecture of brick, oak, sandstone and flint which reflects the locally available materials, provides a sense of place and accords with a distinctive architectural colour palette.
- Designed parklands at Sheffield Park, Buxted Park and Framfield Place contribute to the time depth of the landscape. Sheffield Park and Buxted Park are also valued for the opportunities they provide for open air recreation.
- The public rights of way provide recreational opportunities, with contrasting long views to the High Weald, South Downs and enclosed views within the landscape, which contribute to people's physical health and mental well-being.
- Rural roads resulting from transhumance patterns of movement create a sense of time depth and sense of place, and are part of the medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB.
- The harmonious small-scale landscape pattern of mixed farms, dense woodland and open views across the wooded ridges and valleys contribute to the strong scenic quality of the area, reflected in its designation as an AONB.
- The sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies in some areas, particularly away from the larger settlements in the south of the LCA.



Horse grazing with post and wire fencing and a wooded backdrop



Extensive areas of woodland

Forces for change

- Climate change, leading to increasing temperatures and periods of drought resulting in a change in water levels and stream flows altering the species composition of wetland habitats.
- Climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of seasonal flooding in lower-lying valleys. Associated pressures to build flood management works that are unsympathetic to local landscape character and sensitive habitats.
- Decreased water quality resulting from sediment run-off after ploughing and increased use and accumulation of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers associated with industrial arable farming.
- Climate change and changing land management practices leading to potential changes in woodland and tree species composition. Increases in severe gales could result in wind damage to woodland edges. Ancient woodlands may be particularly susceptible to damage from storms and drought.
- Potential changes in flora and increase in pests and diseases as a result of climate change and changing land management practices, such as acute oak decline or sweet chestnut blight.
- The former replacement of broadleaved woodlands with conifer and mixed woodland, and changes in woodland management, including a reduction of traditional coppicing techniques, which has resulted in a change to the species composition, continuity and density of woodland and influenced the landscape pattern and texture.
- A decline in mixed farming leading to the loss of pasture and meadows, with their associated mature and historic hedgerow boundaries and shaws, influencing landscape structure and pattern.
- Increase in hobby farming and conversion of grazing fields to equestrian use, including subdivision of fields with horse tape or post and wire fencing and proliferation of field shelters, which reduces the rural character of the landscape.
- Expansion of adjacent urban areas, such as Uckfield, and an increase in light industrial and urban fringe land uses expanding into the rural landscape has the potential to impact the area's dark skies and sense of remoteness.
- Pressure for housing in the rural villages altering the historic dispersed settlement pattern.

Landscape Type 6: Wooded Slopes (High Weald)
Wealden Landscape Character Assessment
May 2022

- Recreational pressures on the landscape, including pressure for additional recreational infrastructure, including car parks or visitor centres introducing further development into the landscape.
- Pylons are a distinctive modern influence on the landscape, and often highly visible in this undulating landscape.
- Pressure for renewable energy infrastructure (e.g. wind turbines on elevated ridges and solar farms on south facing slopes or open areas, and associated grid connections), which would reduce rural character and impact views.

Landscape Guidelines

These guidelines recommend how the landscape can be managed to ensure future change respects local character and should be read in conjunction with the objectives and proposed actions of the High Weald AONB Management Plan:

- Maintain constant stream levels when/where possible (monitoring water abstraction, especially as periods of drought increase), to retain wetland habitats.
- Address flooding issues with the implementation of natural flood management schemes in the River Ouse catchment (e.g. the creation of flood meadows and wet woodland, planting of woodland on slopes and installation of leaky woody dams to slow flows) working with landowners to consider a holistic approach to catchment management, in line with the Sussex Flow Initiative.
- Monitor water quality in the rivers and streams. Minimise water pollution from agriculture through sensitive land management practices, including regenerative agricultural systems such as no or minimal till, holistic grazing, reduction or removal of chemical inputs, cover crops and restoration of buffer strips along watercourses and field ponds, to minimise run off in order to maintain the biodiversity of wetland habitats.
- Encourage active and appropriate management of woodland to ensure a diverse species and age structure by thinning, coppicing and replanting as necessary in line with the aims of the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest and the River Uck and its Headwaters Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. Avoid damage from large machinery. No management is recommended for gill woodlands as these habitats are too sensitive and insufficiently understood.
- As climatic conditions change, plant suitable species or encourage natural regeneration to create climate resistant woodland.
- Safeguard ancient woodland and protect and enhance vulnerable woodland habitats and soils including gill woodlands and wet woodlands for the benefit of biodiversity.
- Encourage the gradual restructuring of coniferous woodland to woodlands with a high broadleaved content, particularly for plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWs), in line with the aims of the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
- Support a sustainable woodland industry, encouraging small-scale operations using traditional techniques including coppicing, to develop new markets and products for locally sourced timber, and to maintain carbon sequestration.
- Protect and manage the existing hedgerow network, and plan for the restoration of, and linkages between, hedgerows, including establishing hedgerow oaks, to maintain habitat corridors and to retain the medieval field pattern typical of the High Weald. Remove post and wire fencing where appropriate.
- Maintain and restore links between the numerous woodlands in the area, other woodland habitats (such as hedgerows and parkland), and species-rich habitats such as wet meadows, unimproved grassland and heathland to create a robust network of woodland and open semi-natural habitats.
- Maintain the mixed farmed character of the area, while increasing areas of permanent pasture (aiming to convert arable land to permanent pasture or to regenerative forms of agriculture which combine arable, livestock and agro-forestry uses and creating grassland margins to arable fields) and manage he number and grazing regimes of livestock to maintain and increase biodiversity.
- Restore species-rich grasslands through appropriate management and, where necessary, reseeding with Weald Native Origin Seed.
- Monitor potential changes in flora and increase in pests and diseases, including spread of invasive plants and animals in water courses and woodlands.
- Encourage sympathetic integration of horse paddocks through the maintenance of hedgerow field boundaries, conservation of existing scale of field pastures, avoiding overgrazing of pastures and proliferation of field shelters and other hard infrastructure.
- Protect and enhance the historic designed landscapes, at Sheffield Park and Buxted Park, increasing interpretation and access where appropriate to link communities with their local heritage.

- Protect the remaining historic features related to the Wealden iron industry, such as hammer ponds. Increase interpretation and access where appropriate to raise awareness and link communities with their local heritage, including opportunities for heritage trails or walks.
- Limit the amount and scale of development in rural areas, protecting the existing low-density settlement pattern of dispersed rural villages, hamlets, and scattered farms, and the separation between these different settlement types.
- 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 design guidance, High Weald AONB 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development' and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
- Extend woodland around settlements and infrastructure development to filter light pollution and soften the visual impact of further urbanisation.
- Maintain the historic network of routeways, ensuring new roads or 'upgrades' take account of their rural context and avoid over-engineered features and/or the introduction of lighting into dark areas. Maintain the trees and species-rich grasslands on road verges.
- Ensure any renewable energy generation is compatible with the guidance above and is in scale with the landscape where possible. Where larger scale renewable energy development is justified to meet climate change objectives, any harm to the landscape should be compensated for by landscape-scale enhancements of the surrounding landscape. Electricity infrastructure associated with renewable energy generation should be efficiently planned to minimise the number of lines required, routeing in accordance with the Holford Rules[2].
- Restore and plant new hedgerows to create habitat connectivity and reduce the visual impact of the transmission lines which cross this LCA, in line with the Beautiful Boundaries project with the National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative.
- Protect long views to the wooded Central High Weald to the north and east and to the distinctive ridge of the South Downs to the south.
- Maintain the strong scenic qualities of the landscape and its sense of remoteness, tranquillity and experience of dark skies.

[2] https://www.nationalgrid.com/sites/default/files/documents/13795-The%20Holford%20Rules.pdf

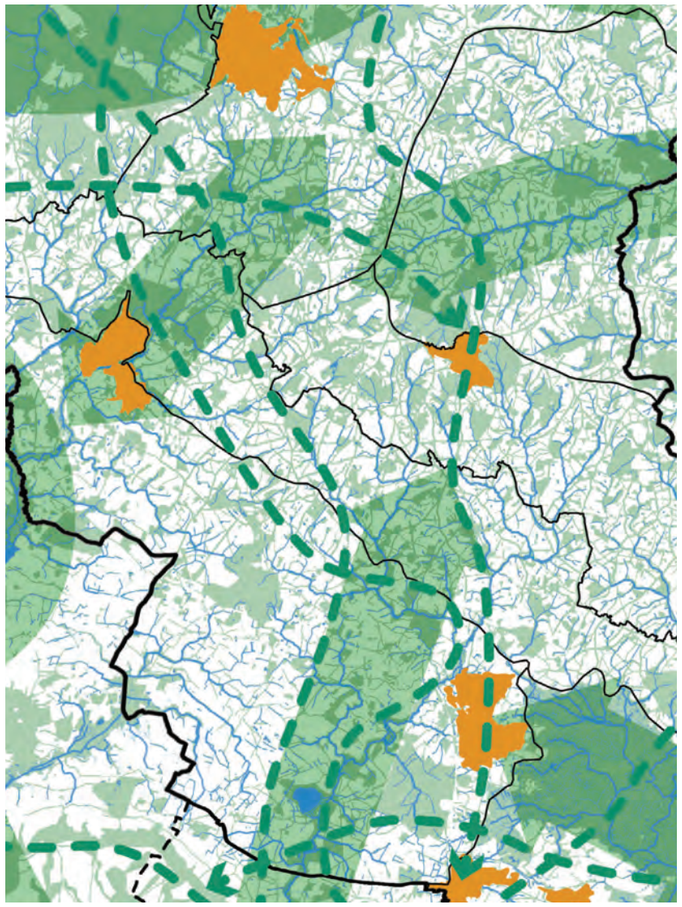
APPENDIX CJ7

Extract from Wealden Green Infrastructure Study May 2017

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES
landscape | environment | heritage

Wealden District Council

Wealden Green Infrastructure Study



May 2017

CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES
landscape | environment | heritage

Wealden District Council

Wealden Green Infrastructure Study

Approved	D. Watkins
	Dominic Watkins
Position	Director
Date	10th May 2017
Revision	FINAL V2

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3.7 Zone 6: High Weald Fringes

Overview

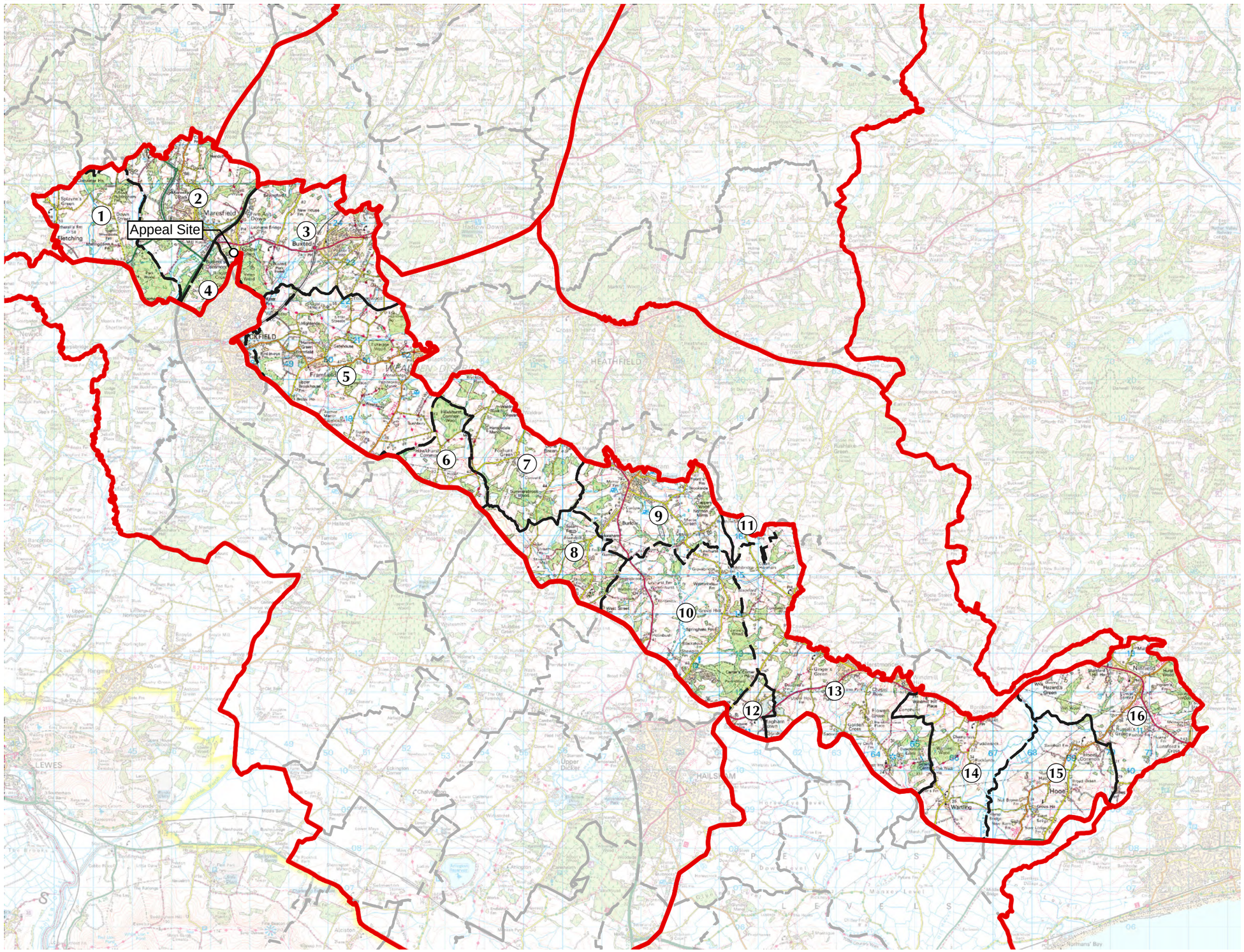
3.7.1 As shown on **Figure 3.7a**, the High Weald Fringes GI Zone covers a large linear strip of the Low Weald stretching almost right across the District. It is a gently undulating landscape of ridges and valleys on the edge of the Low Weald. Lying in the centre of the District, this zone borders Rother District to the east and includes the villages of Maresfield, Buxted, Framfield, Blackboys, Horam, Herstmonceux, Ninfield and Hooe. The zone includes parts of the following Parishes (see **Figure 1.2**):

- Fletching
- Maresfield
- Buxted
- East Hoathly with Halland
- Warbleton
- Heathfield and Waldron
- Hellingly
- Hailsham
- Hooe
- Herstmonceux
- Horam
- Wartling
- Ninfield
- Framfield

Audit

Existing Strategic Green Infrastructure Initiatives

- **Weald Meadows Partnership -** Over the last 20 years the WMP has developed a wide range of knowledge and expertise that has helped stem the decline of traditional grassland and ensure the successful establishment of new species-rich meadows. As a direct result, many meadows have been recognised, protected, enhanced or created within the Weald utilising native wild harvested local provenance seed. Today, the WMP provides practical support to landowners with the management, enhancement and creation of lowland meadow across the Weald.



KEY

Sub-District Scale GI Zones

Parish Boundary

1. Fletching
2. Maresfield
3. Buxted
4. Uckfield
5. Framfield
6. East Hoathly with Halland
7. Heathfield & Waldron
8. Chiddingly
9. Horam
10. Hellingly
11. Warbleton
12. Hailsham
13. Herstmonceux
14. Wartling
15. Hooe
16. Ninfield

N

0 1.5 3 Kilometres

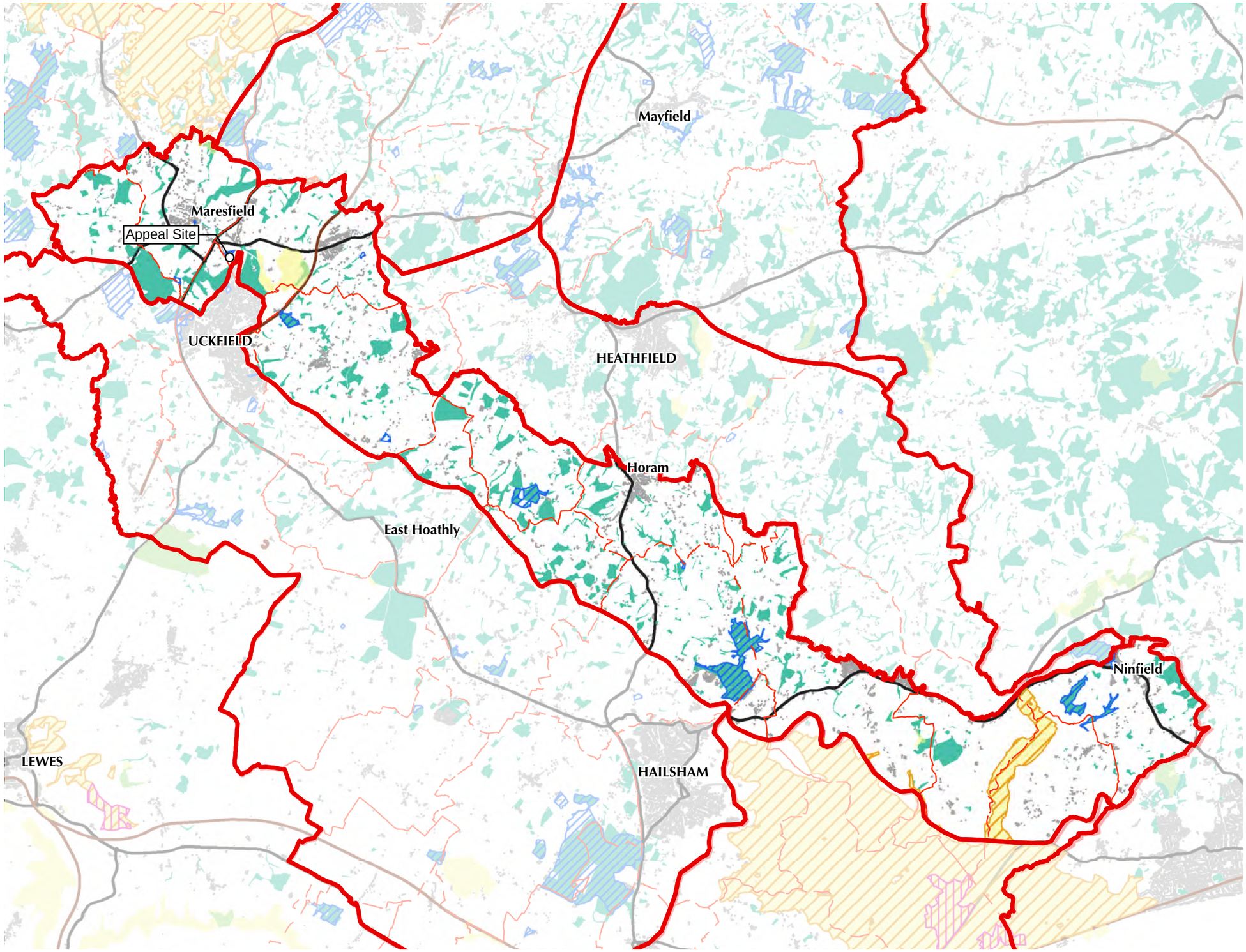
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- **B-Lines and Landscapes for Wild Pollinators and Farm Wildlife Project -** Buglife projects in the south-east concerned with restoring and recreating connected wildflower meadows and pollinator habitats.
- **AONB Land Management Advice -** For owners of land within the High Weald AONB, the AONB Unit offers bespoke advice and site visits to enable individuals, farmers and organisations improve the management of the landscape features within their ownership.
- **Restocking the Weald**
  A project which runs across the Weald it enables the establishment of viable new livestock enterprises on under-utilised pasture across multiple land-holdings.
- **High Weald Welly Walks (Buxted) -** These landscape walks, starting and ending at the school gate, provide opportunities for children to learn more about their unique local landscape.
- **Weald PAWS Restoration –** A Woodland Trust Project providing free advice, guidance and support to woodland owners, managers and forestry professionals in particular to find out how restoring plantations on ancient woodland sites can complement on-going woodland management.

Biodiversity

3.7.2 The High Weald Fringes GI Zone contains the following designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites (see **Figure 3.7b**):

- Waldron Cutting SSSI
- Buxted Park SSSI
- Rock Wood SSSI
- Herstmonceux Park SSSI
- Pevensey Levels SSSI (part)
- Barnet Wood Common LWS
- Long Wood and Wet Wood LWS
- Ninfield Reservoir LWS
- Popeswood Marsh LWS
- Shortbridge Stream Meadow LWS
- Rough Wood and Whites Wood LWS
- Summersbrook Wood LWS
- Lake Wood LWS
- Butcher's Wood, Uckfield LWS
- Hempstead Wood LWS
- Cowden Wood Meadow LWS



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- Budlett's Common Rocks LWS
- Uckfield Cemetery LWS
- Jarvis's Wood, Nobody's Wood & Park Wood Complex LWS
- Maresfield Churchyard LWS
- Waldron Cutting, Tullaghmore RIGS

3.7.3 The condition of the designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within Zone 6 is generally moderate to good. The Local Wildlife Sites designated for their grassland habitats within this zone are also overall in good condition; however the condition of a few remains unknown[136]. SSSIs within this zone are generally in poor condition but improving[137].

3.7.4 As shown on **Figure 3.7c**, the wildlife habitats within Zone 6 are dominated by small to medium woodland, with small areas of semi-improved grassland and a few traditional orchards. Medium to large blocks of mixed or coniferous woodlands are notable, in particular in the far north west of this zone. Further south and east woodlands become smaller, sparser and are more frequently deciduous.

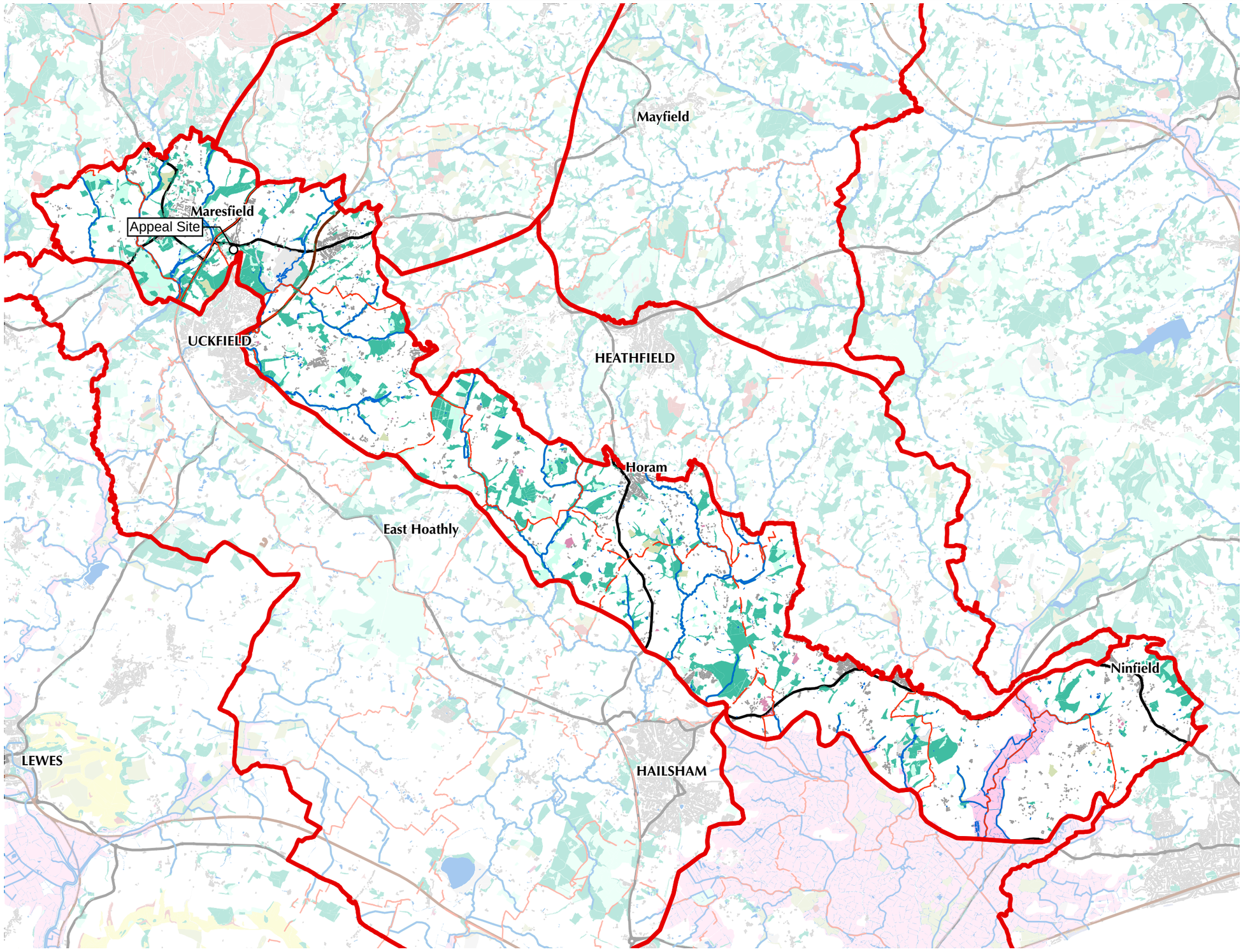
3.7.5 This zone is dominated by numerous small tributaries of Waller's Haven and the River Uck, which run roughly in a north-south orientation. Numerous field ponds within this zone provide wetland habitats. Some small and fragmented semi-improved grassland is found throughout this zone, but in relatively small and fragmented amounts. This zone includes some larger arable fields. Key barriers to the movement of wildlife within the zone are numerous and include a number of main roads which run north-south, including A271, A267, A272, A26 and A22, alongside the mainline railway running from Uckfield northwards.

3.7.6 As shown on **Figure 2.2c**, Zone 6 lies within part of the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest (48), River Uck and its Headwaters (49), the Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link (71) and the Pevensey Levels (53) Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

3.7.7 Numerous BAP species have been recorded within these BOAs, including Nightjar, Common Toad, Fen Raft Spider and Brown Hare. The majority of non-native invasive species recorded within these BOAs are associated with woodland and watercourses, including the following;

- American Mink *Mustela vison*
- New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii*
- Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*

[136] High Weald Grasslands SNCI Landowner Liaison Project, Dolphin Ecological Surveys (2013)
[137] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteSearch.aspx accessed April 2017



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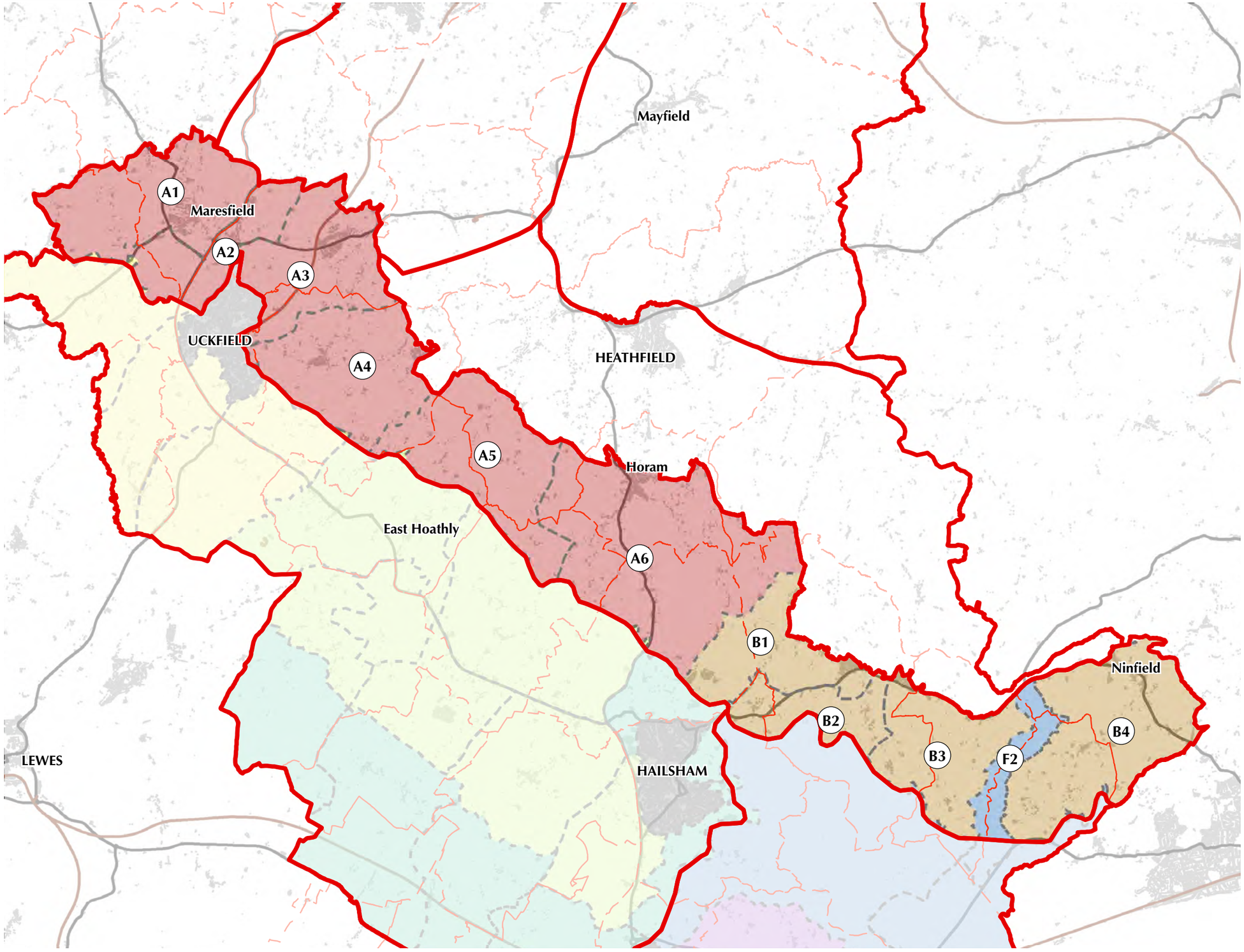
3.7.8 As shown on **Figure 3.7d**, Zone 6 lies mostly within the Ridges and Valleys (in the west of the zone) and Ridges and Slopes (in the east of the zone) Local Landscape Character Types (LLCTs)[138]. The key characteristics of the Ridges and Valleys LLCT are summarised below:

- **Topography**: A series of narrow, incised northeast-southwest oriented river valleys which dissect the surrounding landscape of rolling fields and valley side woodlands. Overall, the topography comprises a ridge and valley landscape pattern, with the stream corridors gently meandering through their adjacent valleys.
- **Settlement Pattern:** Small to medium-sized linear villages mainly located on higher ridges of land between the valleys.
- **Views and Visibility:** Views from settlements and higher land into and across the valleys is often limited by abundant small blocks and linear swathes of woodland which line the valley sides. These patches of woodland also provide a strong sense of visual containment from locations along the valley floor.
- **Communications:** The landscape is crossed by an interconnected network of minor rural roads which tend to follow the valley floors or ridges, connecting ridge-top settlements.
- **Tranquillity and Remoteness:** Within much of this LLCT, there is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity; however this is less apparent in close proximity to the large town of Uckfield, which abuts its south-western edge.

3.7.9 The key characteristics of the Ridge and Slopes LLCT are summarised below:

- **Topography:** A small-scale landscape of predominantly pastoral fields, which forms the southern slopes of the High Weald (which is situated immediately to the north of the area). The topography slopes from north to south, with the landscape falling away towards the lower Open Levels LLCT (F) to the south.
- **Settlement Pattern:** comprises a series of linear villages which are situated on an east-west orientated ridge at the northern edge of the LLCT. In addition, there are a number of small hamlets and farmsteads dotted throughout the landscape.
- **Views and Visibility:** Panoramic, open views southwards across the Levels are characteristic of the southern part of this LLCT, contributing to recognisable sense of place. Views northwards from the landscape and settlements along the ridge, comprise a foreground of small scale fields and woodlands which form part of the High Weald AONB. Patches of small to medium-sized woodlands provide an intermittent sense of enclosure within this predominantly rural landscape.

[138] Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment, CBA (2014)



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WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

FIGURE 3.7d
ZONE 6 - HIGH WEALD FRINGES:
LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES & AREAS

- **Communications:** The landscape is crossed by a network of rural, sometimes sunken lanes, which are lined with mature trees and hedgerows.
- **Tranquillity and Remoteness:** There is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity throughout most of the landscape.

3.7.10 The historic environment assets in the High Weald Fringes GI Zone shown on **Figure 3.7e** also make an important contribution to the special qualities of the High Weald Fringes landscape. These include:

- Buxted Park Registered Historic Park and Garden (Grade II*).
- Herstmonceux Castle and Place Registered Historic Park and Garden (Grade II*).
- 5 No. Scheduled Monuments – such as the medieval settlement site in Buxted Park; and Herstmonceux Castle.
- 7 No. Conservation Areas – Maresfield, Framfield, Fletching and Splaynes Green, Waldron, Wartling, Cowbeech and Boreham Street

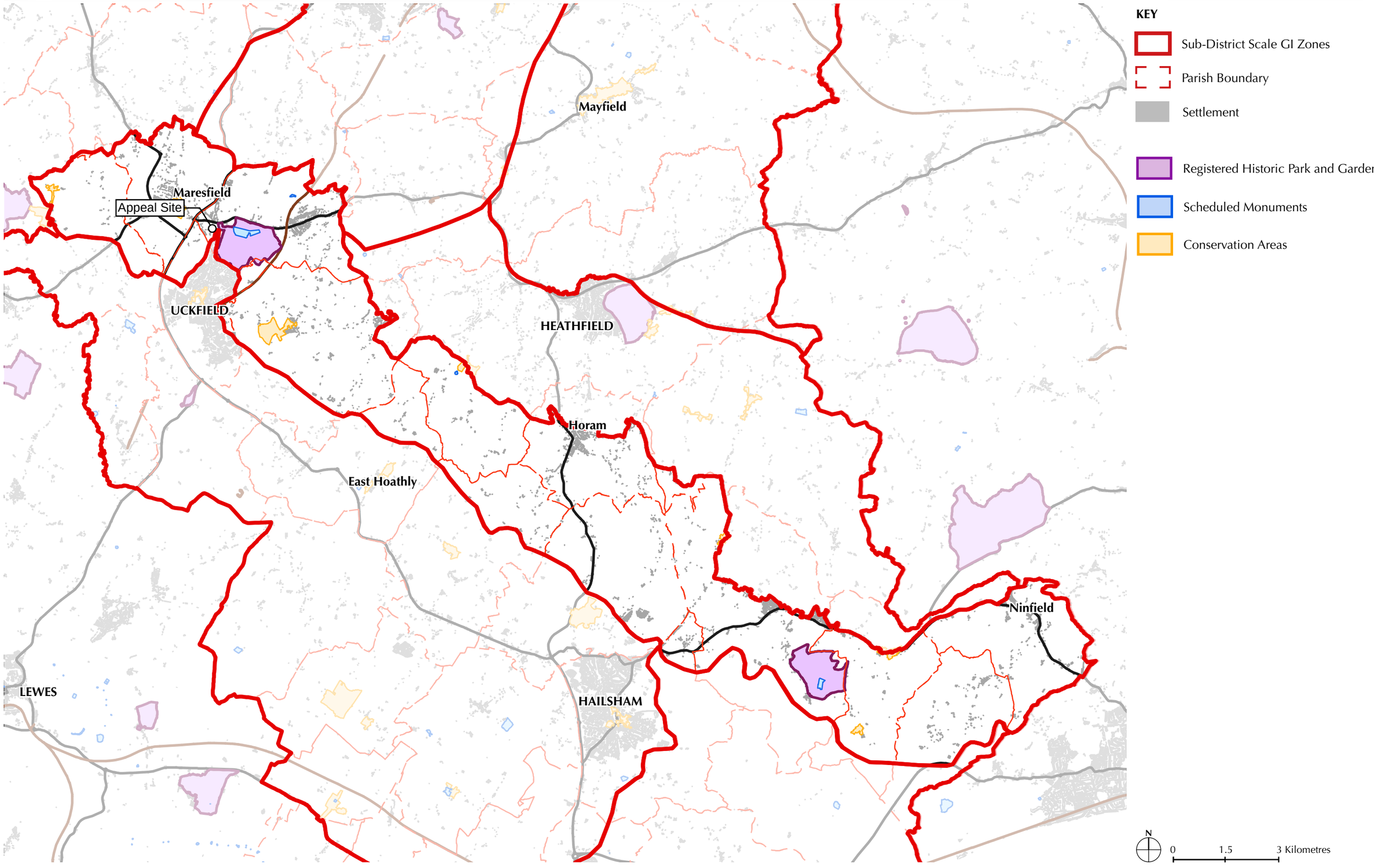
3.7.11 These heritage assets are generally not at risk of loss through neglect, decay or inappropriate change.

Energy & Food

3.7.12 As shown on **Figure 2.4**, there are numerous small to medium-scale woodlands within the High Weald Fringes GI Zone. Many of these woodlands are smaller than in other zones, and their density reduces further south and east towards the Pevensey Levels. Woodlands in the northern part of this zone are likely to have been managed over considerable periods of time as coppice, and therefore represent a potential significant source of local fuel. There are limited opportunities for solar and wind energy generation, because this zone's landscape character is highly sensitive to solar farm development and wind energy development[139].

3.7.13 As shown on **Figure 2.4**, the vast majority of Zone 6 is classified as grade 3 (good to moderate) land and some narrow strips of grade 4 (poor) land exists particularly around Uckfield. Some fields within this landscape have historically and more recently been amalgamated facilitating more intensive arable cultivation.

[139] Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment, CBA (2014)



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Water Resources

3.7.14 As shown on **Figure 2.5**, a number of watercourses run through Zone 6, notably Waller's Haven in the south-east, which includes coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. This is also the area's most significant floodplain, and includes flood zones 2 and 3. Other areas of flood zone 2 and 3 are located along the upper reaches of the river Uck, close to Buxted and Uckfield.

3.7.15 This zone cuts across three catchments; the Upper Ouse, Upper Cuckmere and the Pevensey Levels. Water quality within the High Weald Fringes GI Zone is generally in 'good' chemical status and in 'moderate to poor' ecological status.

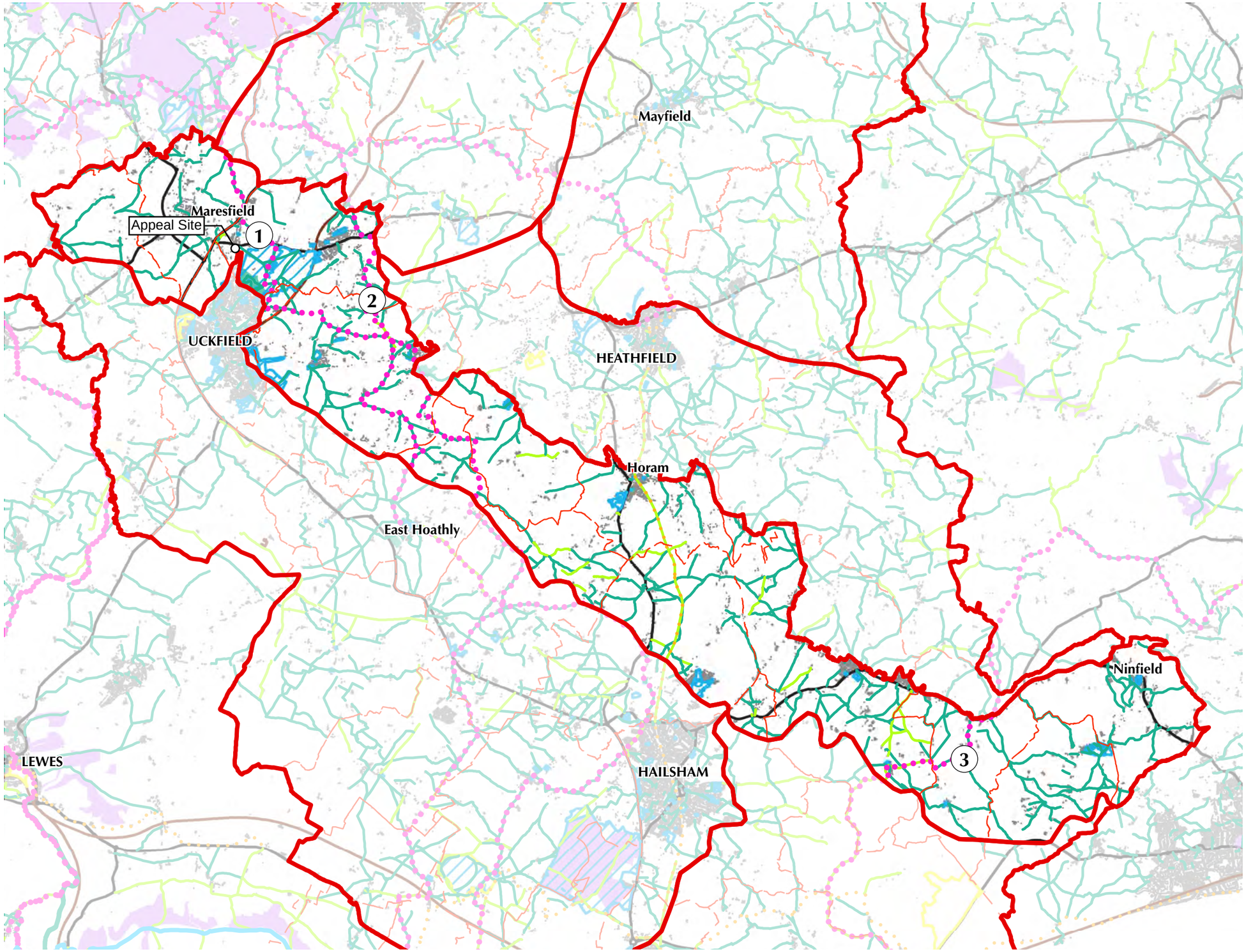
Accessible Natural Greenspace & Access Links

3.7.16 The existing provision of accessible natural greenspace within the High Weald Fringes GI Zone and adjoining areas is shown on **Figure 3.7f**. This shows that the accessible natural greenspace sites are generally concentrated within and to the west of Heathfield. Here the lack of access links between these sites means they are poorly connected.

3.7.17 The key deficiencies in provision of accessible natural greenspace identified within the High Weald Fringes GI Zone are:

- Neighbourhood-scale access is poorly provided for across the whole zone, with the exception of some parts of Uckfield (in Zone 7), Buxted and East Hoathly.
- District scale access is poorly provided for across the eastern half of the zone, with some access provision in the west around Maresfield and Buxted.
- County-scale access is poorly provided for across all but the furthest west and east of this zone, access at this scale is provided for populations within Maresfield and Buxted.
- Sub-Regional scale access is poorly provided for across all but the furthest west of this zone, access at this scale is provided for populations within Maresfield and Buxted.

3.7.18 As shown on **Figure 3.7f**, Zone 6 is a landscape with very limited areas to accessible natural greenspace, restricted to relatively small sites to the west of the zone. Overall, the zone is fairly well connected by public rights of way to the wider countryside. In addition to the multi-user Cuckoo Trail (NCN Route 21), there are three long distance promoted routes within this zone, including the Vanguard Way and Wealdway in the west and the 1066 County Walk passes through to the east of Zone 6.



KEY

Sub-District Scale GI Zones

Parish Boundary

Settlement

Access Links:

Footpath

Bridleway/Byway

Sustrans National Cycle Route

Promoted Route

1. Wealdway
2. Vanguard Way
3. 1066 Country Walk

National Trail

Main Roads

Railways

Accessible Natural Greenspace:

Open Spaces*

CRoW Act 2000 Open Access Land

Country Parks

Local Nature Reserves and Sussex Wildlife Trust Reserves

Accessible Woodland Trust Sites

*Includes: Accessible Natural Greenspace, Allotments, Amentity Greenspace, Churchyards and Cemeteries, Parks and Recreation Grounds

N

0 1.5 3 Kilometres

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3.7.19 The key gaps in the access route network within the High Weald Fringes GI Zone are:

- The few areas of accessible greenspace are poorly connected to the wider countryside by the rights of way network in the west of this zone.
- The A267 is a barrier to people accessing the countryside on foot from the western part of Heathfield.
- Few rights of way offer access from Heathfield into the countryside to the east, north and west.
- The south-east of this zone contains a denser network of rights of way, however these are not always well-connected to the wider countryside and this area contains no accessible natural greenspace.
- The central part of this zone contains numerous short but fragmented stretches of bridleway, to the east and west there are limited/no opportunities for horse-riding.

Needs and Opportunities

3.7.20 The GI assets that make a significant contribution to the GI network within the High Weald Fringes GI Zone include a range of biodiversity, landscape and historic environment features; the farmland, woodland and allotments that provide local sources of energy and food; the 'blue infrastructure' provided by water resources that support a healthy environment; and the accessible natural greenspaces and access links that contribute to health and well-being. In summary, the key needs and opportunities for the provision of GI within this Zone are considered to be:

- Opportunities exist to expand and improve networks of characteristic semi-natural habitats such as floodplain/lowland meadows and wet woodland along the river Uck north of Uckfield to improve flood water storage on the floodplain and biodiversity.
- Seek opportunities through partnerships to improve the function of road and railway verges by introducing sensitive management to promote biodiversity, air quality and minimise infrastructure as visual detractors.
- Enhance and improve connectivity of small isolated woodlands throughout this zone, through sensitive management approaches such as natural regeneration.
- Investigate opportunities to address poor water quality within this zone through improved land management advice and practices and encouraging integrated water management schemes within new developments.
- Seek opportunities to create new accessible natural greenspace at all scales of provision, close to where people live and/or areas of growth to address current deficiencies.
- Seek opportunities to improve multi-user access links within this zone, in particular to address poorly connected routes between existing towns such as Uckfield and existing or new greenspaces, and to tackle barriers such as main roads.
- Explore opportunities to integrate multifunctional community greenspaces/growing spaces into settlements and new developments that provide health and well-being benefits and help reinforce a strong sense of place.
- Promote opportunities to use SuDS and green roofs within new developments, integrated within landscaping schemes and designed to achieve ecological gains.

4.3 Uckfield

Overview

4.3.1 As shown on **Figure 4.3a**, Uckfield is situated in the west of Wealden District, approximately eight miles to the southwest of Crowborough and eight miles to the west of Heathfield. It is one of the largest settlements in the District and serves as a local employment and shopping centre. Uckfield is situated in close proximity to the southern edge of the High Weald AONB.

4.3.2 Uckfield is a large linear town which has developed at the crossroads between two B roads running north-south, east-west. The town is bypassed by the A22 main road corridor which runs to the west of the settlement. Uckfield has experienced significant growth over the last decade, resulting in a pattern of several large-scale housing estates at the edges of the town.

4.3.3 The town centre provides the commercial core of the settlement with a variety of shops and offices which have developed in linear form along the High Street (the former A22). The historic core of Uckfield is situated at the northern end of the High Street, with a concentration of Listed Buildings resulting in a historic character. More recently the focus of shopping activity has shifted southwards at the bottom on the High Street, with a small shopping complex at Bell Walk and the large supermarket to the south of Luxford Field.

4.3.4 There are two main business/commercial centres within Uckfield, at Bellbrook and Ridgewood. These areas comprise modern business units and warehouses. There are several key areas of open space within the town, which provide a range of outdoor recreational facilities. These include Victoria Pleasure Ground, the New Road Recreation Ground at Ridgewood, Hempstead Lane, Luxford Field, New Barn Farm and at West Park.

Audit

Biodiversity

4.3.5 The following designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites are found around Uckfield (see **Figure 4.3b**):

- Piltdown Common LWS
- Shortbridge Stream Meadow LWS
- Butcher's Wood LWS
- Lake Wood LWS
- West Park LWS



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KEY

N

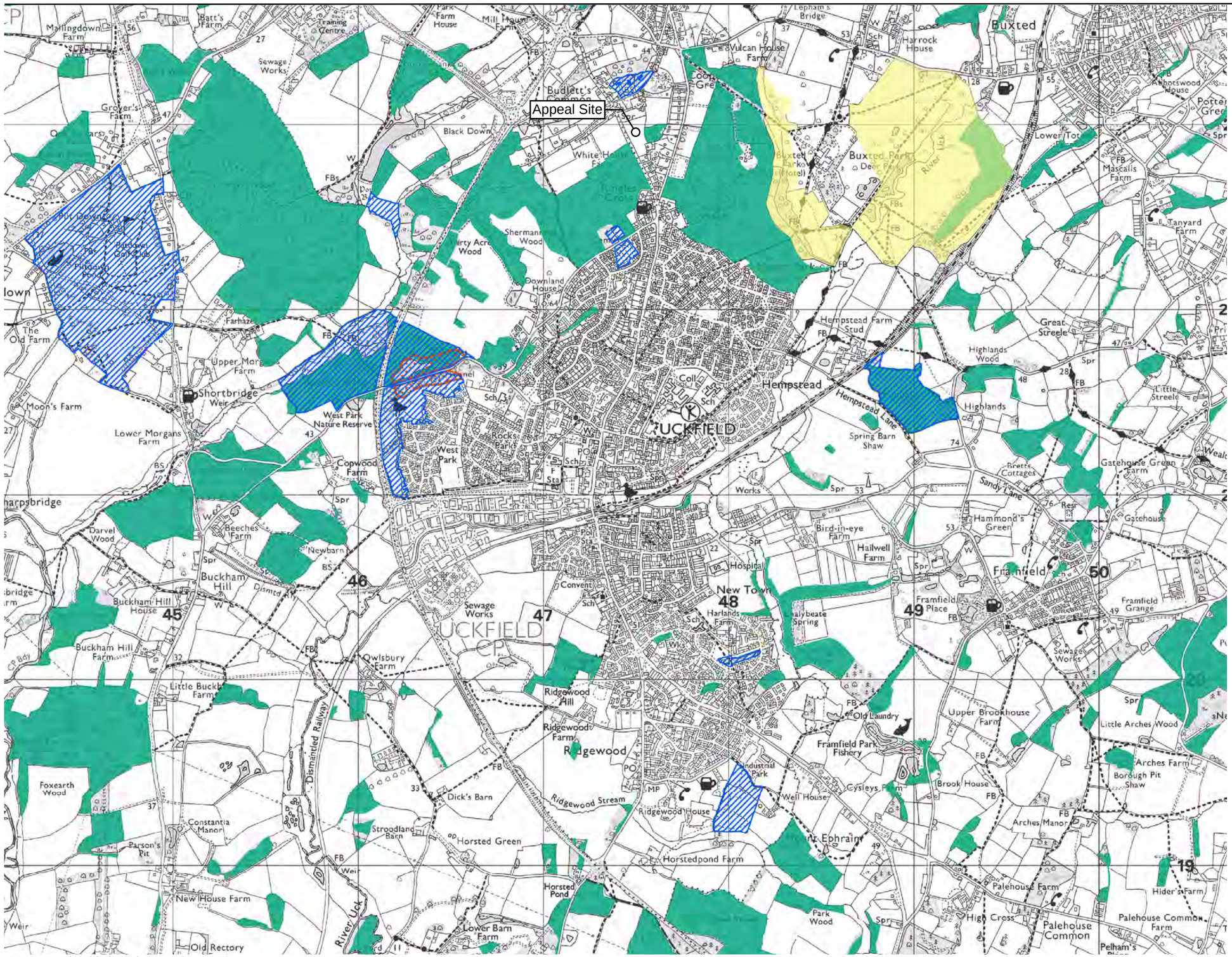
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FIGURE 4.3a
UCKFIELD:
CONTEXT PLAN

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KEY

Designations:

- Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation/Ramsar
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Ancient Woodland
- Regionally Important Geological Sites

- Budlett's Common Rocks LWS
- Uckfield Cemetary LWS
- Ridgewood Clay Pit LWS
- Harlands Farm Pond and Stream LWS
- Hempstead Wood LWS
- Buxted Park SSSI

4.3.6 The condition of the Buxted Park SSSI is unfavourable recovering[151].

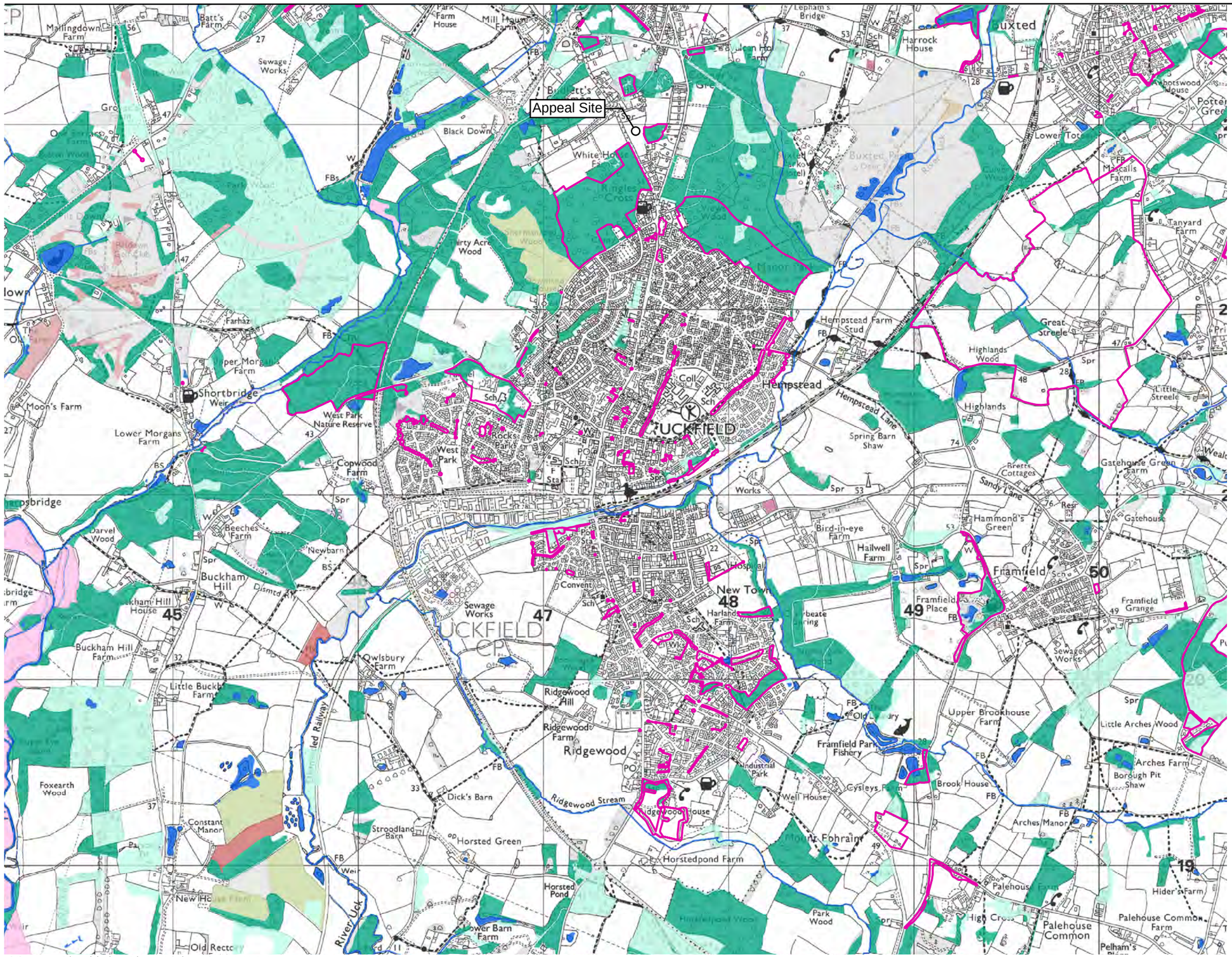
4.3.7 As shown on **Figure 4.3c**, wildlife habitats around Uckfield are dominated by deciduous woodland interspersed with some notable areas of semi-improved grassland. Freshwater habitats around Uckfield are plentiful and include the Ridgewood stream and numerous ponds. As shown on **Figure 4.3d** there are a large number of individual trees and tree groups associated with amenity spaces and streets within the urban area, many of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (see **Figure 4.3c)**

Landscape & Historic Environment

4.3.8 The key landscape setting/townscape features and characteristics that contribute to the character of Uckfield and are sensitive to change are summarised below[152]:

- **Remnant Historic Landscapes:** Pockets of historic landscape within the setting of the town, comprising small-scale fields with intact boundaries, particularly to the northwest, west and southeast of the town. The historic field pattern is a mosaic, predominantly comprised of regular and irregular piecemeal enclosure, and cohesive and aggregate assarts. Historic parkland landscape, associated with Buxted Park to the northeast of the settlement and relatively large areas of Ancient Woodland, further contribute to the historic landscape within the periphery of the town.
- **Culturally Important Landmarks:** Buxted Park Hall(hotel), a culturally important historic landmark is situated to the northeast of the settlement and other important historic landmarks include the church at Framfield and listed buildings within the historic core of the town centre.
- **Landscape Detractors:** Several landscape detractors are present within the setting of the town, including industrial and commercial buildings at Ridgewood and Bellbrook Industrial estates.

[151] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteSearch.aspx accessed April 2017
[152] Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment, CBA (2014)



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KEY

Main BAP Priority Habitats:

- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Coastal Saltmarsh
- Coastal Vegetated Shingle
- Deciduous Woodland
- Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Fens
- Lowland Heathland
- Lowland Meadows
- Maritime Cliff and Slope
- Mudflats
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Reedbeds
- Saline Lagoons
- Traditional Orchard
- No Main Habitat but Additional Habitats Present

Mixed and Coniferous Woodland Habitats (National Forest Inventory)

Freshwater Habitats (Main Watercourses & Waterbodies)

Tree Preservation Orders



KEY

- Urban Trees
- Woodland
- Shaws
- Ancient Woodland

NB. See Figure 4.3a for Tree Preservation Orders

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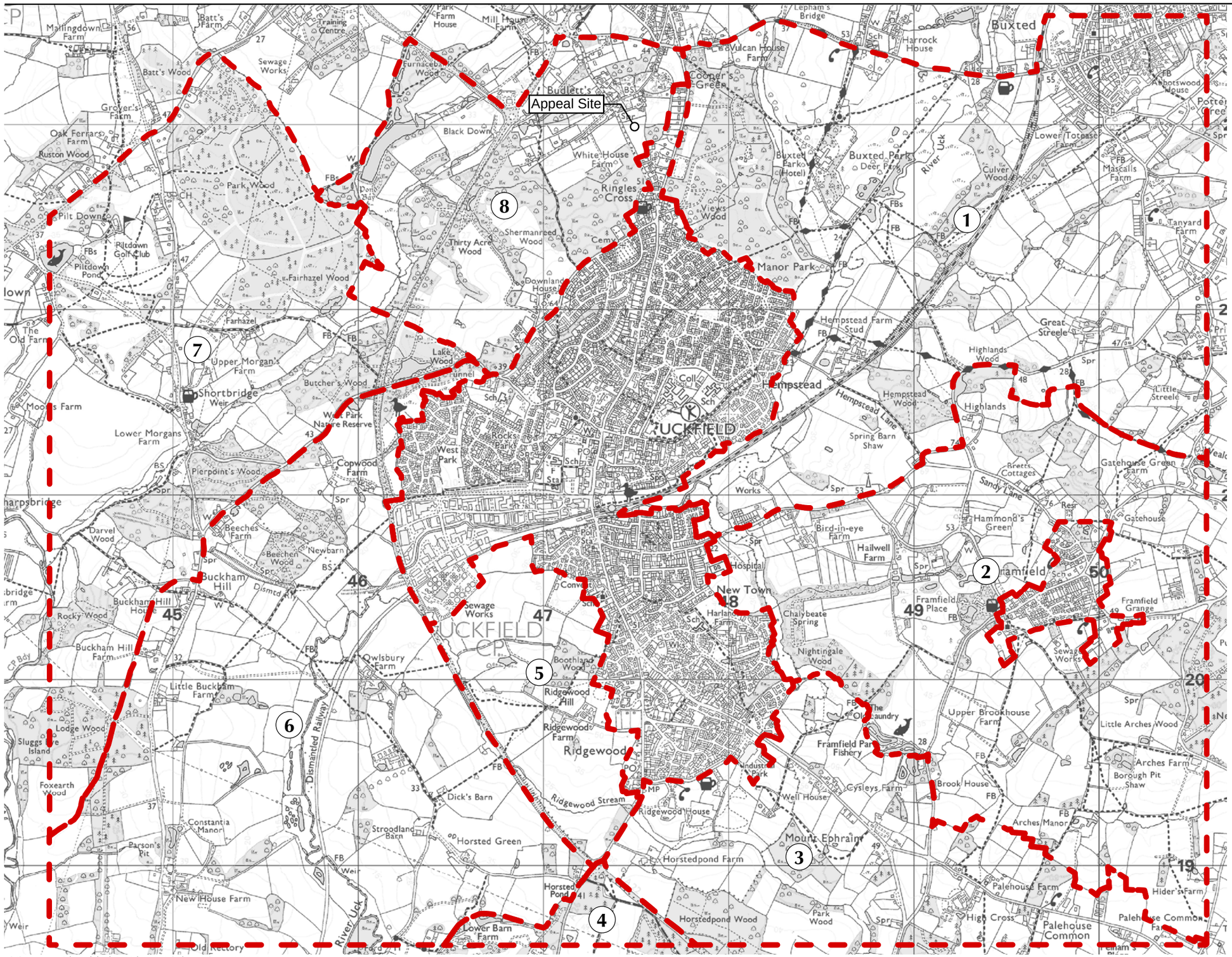
- **Urban Edges:** The town is predominantly lined by sensitive soft edges and woodland, with a few pockets of exposed or prominent urban edges within the Bellbrook Industrial Area and at the eastern edge of the town, associated with the Hospital.
- **Watercourses/Waterbodies:** The key watercourse running northeast- southwest through the town, is the River Uck, set within its meandering valley. Several smaller tributary streams feed the main river system, including the Chalybeate Spring. There are also numerous small ponds within the setting of the town.
- **Significant Views/Key Ridgelines:** Key views of the edges of the town can be gained looking north-eastwards from the A22 road corridor and northwards from the Framfield Road.
- **Footpaths/Bridleways:** A network of footpaths and bridleways connects Uckfield to its landscape setting.

4.3.9 The key characteristics of the Landscape Setting Areas around Uckfield[153] (see **Figure 4.3e**) are:

Landscape Setting Area	Distinctive Characteristics
1	• Gently meandering corridor of the River Uck, which is lined in places by small linear woodlands; • Buxted Park which is a key landscape feature, with its designed landscape elements and mature parkland trees
2	• A patchwork of woodlands, arable and pastoral fields which are often lined with mature hedgerows. • Intermittent sense of enclosure.
3	• Gently meandering Ridgewood Stream corridor, with several adjacent blocks of mature woodland • A strong landscape structure of hedgerows and trees.
4	• A patchwork of Ancient Woodland and pastoral fields, lined with mature hedgerows.
5	• Topography slopes from south to north, forming the northern valley side of the Ridgewood stream. • A patchwork of sloping, modern, arable and pastoral fields • A22 road corridor forms the southern edge of the area and introduces a source of noise and movement.
6	• The southern section of the Uck River corridor which gently meanders through a fieldscape which is interspersed with patches of woodland; • A22 road corridor forms the northern edge of the area and introduces a source of noise and movement.
7	• A strong sense of enclosure within this ancient landscape as a result of large areas of Ancient Woodland.
8	• A gently meandering tributary of the River Ouse which is lined with mature woodland, providing a strong sense of enclosure; • Park Wood, to the west is a key landscape feature, further contributing to the enclosed feel.

4.3.10 In addition, key historic environment assets that also contribute to the character of the town include (see **Figure 4.3f**):

[153] Wealden Landscape & Settlement Character Assessment, CBA (2014)



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KEY

Landscape Setting Areas (Wealden Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, 2014):

1 Uckfield Landscape Setting Areas

N

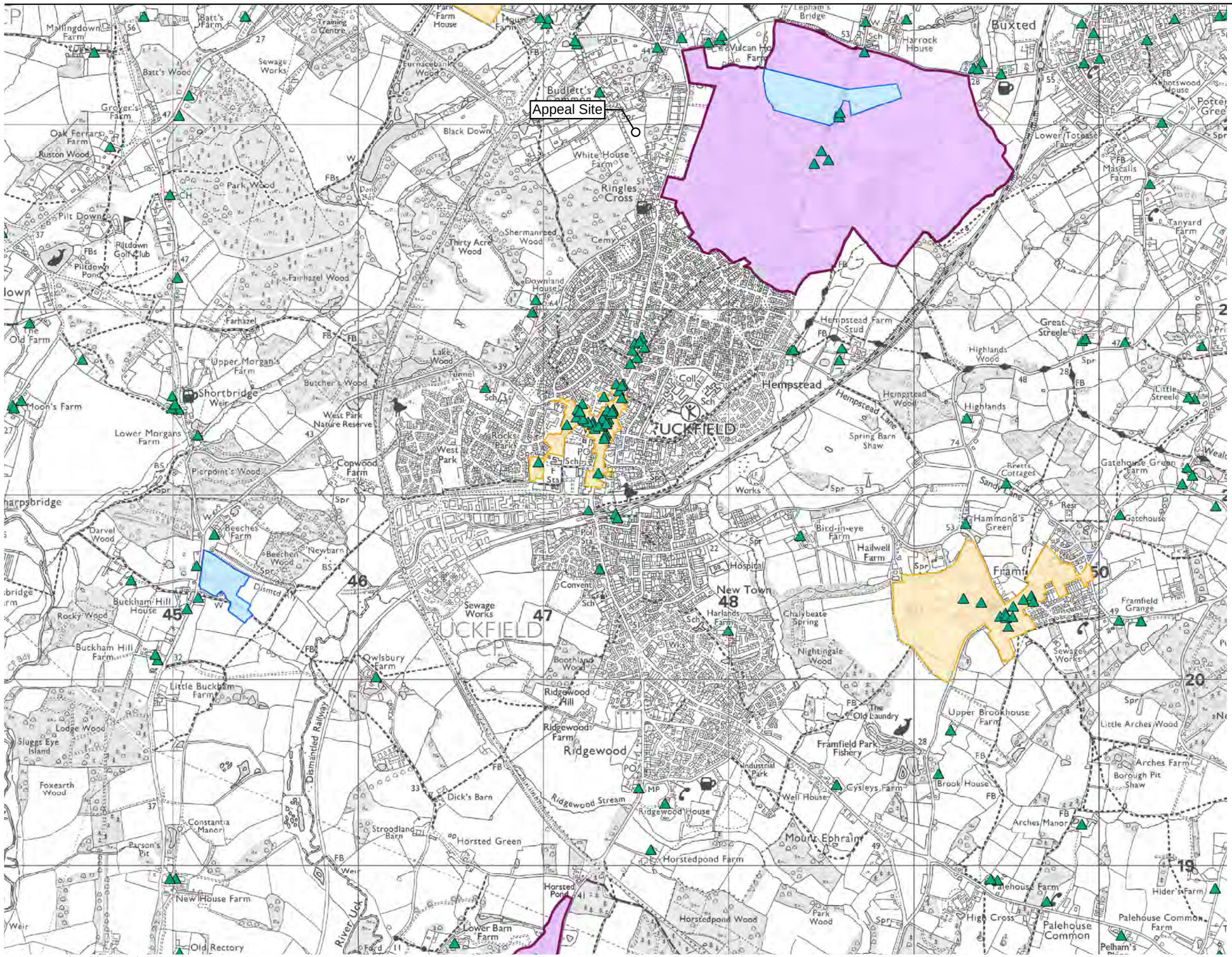
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FIGURE 4.3e
UCKFIELD:
LANDSCAPE SETTING AREAS

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KEY

- Registered Historic Park and Garden
- Scheduled Monuments
- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings

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0 300 600 Metres

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- 2 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens: Buxted Park (Grade II* Listed) and Horsted Place (Grade II Listed)
- 2 Conservation Areas including Framfield Conservation Area and Uckfield Conservation Area

Energy & Food

4.3.11 There are 2.9ha of coppiced woodlands around Uckfield that represent a potential source of local fuel.

4.3.12 As shown on **Figure 2.4**, the quality of agricultural land around the town is mainly poor quality (grade 4).

Water Resources

4.3.13 The River Uck flows through the town. Other smaller waterbodies which run through the town include Framfield Stream, Ridgewood Stream, Tickerage Stream, Shortbridge Stream, and Batt's Bridge Stream. The River Ouse is a major water body near the town.

4.3.14 **Table 4.2** shows the water quality within the upper Ouse catchment area, which includes Uckfield and the upper reaches of the River Uck. Ecologically water quality is much poorer, with most watercourses only reaching moderate quality at best. The chemical status of all watercourses within this catchment is good.

Table 4.2: Water Quality around Uckfield[154]

Catchment	Water Quality						
	Ecological Status or Potential					Chemical Status	
	Bad	Poor	Moderate	Good	High	Fail	Good
Upper Ouse Catchment Area Number of waterbodies: 2	3	8	14	1	0	0	26

Accessible Natural Greenspace & Access Links

4.3.15 Accessible natural greenspace sites in and around Uckfield are shown on **Figure 4.3g**. This shows that there are significant areas of accessible greenspace adjacent to the town's north-eastern edge, much of which is provided by Buxted Park, a SSSI and Historic Park and Garden.

[154] http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/

To the west of Uckfield West Park Nature Reserve and Lake Wood Woodland Trust Reserve provides accessible greenspace. Much of the southern edge of the town is also well catered for in terms of accessible natural greenspace.

4.3.16 Within Uckfield accessible greenspace is fairly evenly distributed throughout the urban area. Many of these sites however are small, and don't contribute to the town's neighbourhood scale accessible greenspace standard, therefore much of the centre of Uckfield is remains deficient at this scale as shown on **Figure 4.3h.** Open spaces in and around the town are shown on **Figure 4.3i** and comprise[155]:

- 8 No. allotments (such as Bell Lane and Ridgewood East Allotments)
- 12 No. amenity greenspaces (such as Harlands Farm Recreation Ground and The Dene)
- 7 No. churchyards and cemeteries (such as Snatt Road Cemetery and Holy Cross Parish Church)
- 6 No. parks and recreation grounds (such as Victoria Pleasure Ground and West Park Recreation Ground)

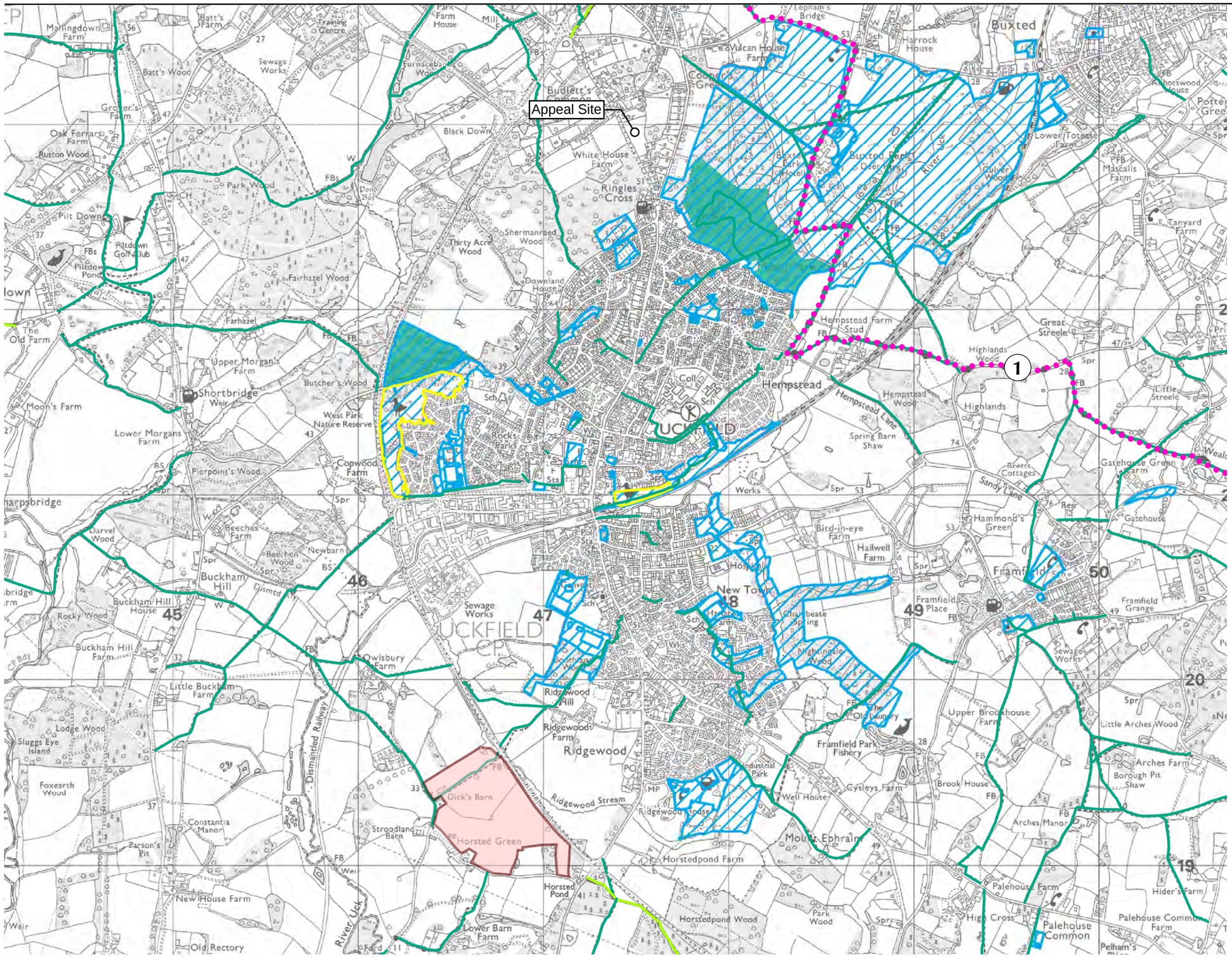
4.3.17 As shown on **Figure 4.3g**, Uckfield is connected to the surrounding landscape by the following access links that need to be maintained and improved where appropriate:

- Public footpaths between Uckfield and Woodland Trust Sites in the north of the town.
- Public footpaths between Uckfield and Buxted Park in the north of the town.
- Public footpaths between Uckfield, open spaces and the countryside in the south of the town.
- Public bridleway between the north and south of Uckfield.
- The Wealdway promoted route which passes through the north-eastern edge of the town.

Needs and Opportunities

4.3.18 The GI assets that make a significant contribution to the GI network in and around Uckfield include a range of biodiversity, landscape and historic environment features; the farmland, woodland and allotments that provide local sources of energy and food; the 'blue infrastructure' provided by water resources that support a healthy environment; and the accessible natural greenspaces and access links that contribute to health and well-being. In summary, the key needs and opportunities for the provision of GI in and round the town are considered to be:

[155] As identified and mapped for the Wealden Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (Ethos for Wealden DC, forthcoming)



KEY

Access Links:

- Footpath
- Bridleway/Byway
- Sustrans National Cycle Route
- Promoted Route
- 1. Wealdway
- National Trail

Accessible Natural Greenspace:

- Wealden Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2016)*
- CRoW Act 2000 Open Access Land
- Country Parks
- Local Nature Reserves and Sussex Wildlife Trust Reserves
- Accessible Woodland Trust Sites

- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Provision

*Includes: Accessible Natural Greenspace, Allotments, Amentity Greenspace, Churchyards and Cemeteries, Parks and Recreation Grounds

N

0 300 600 Metres

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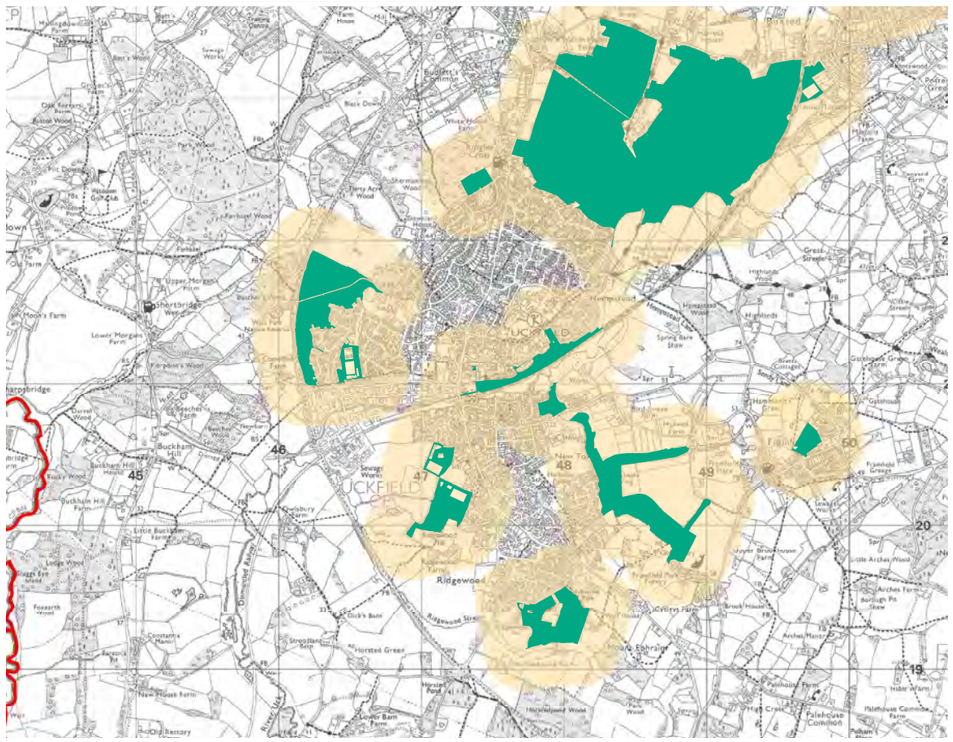
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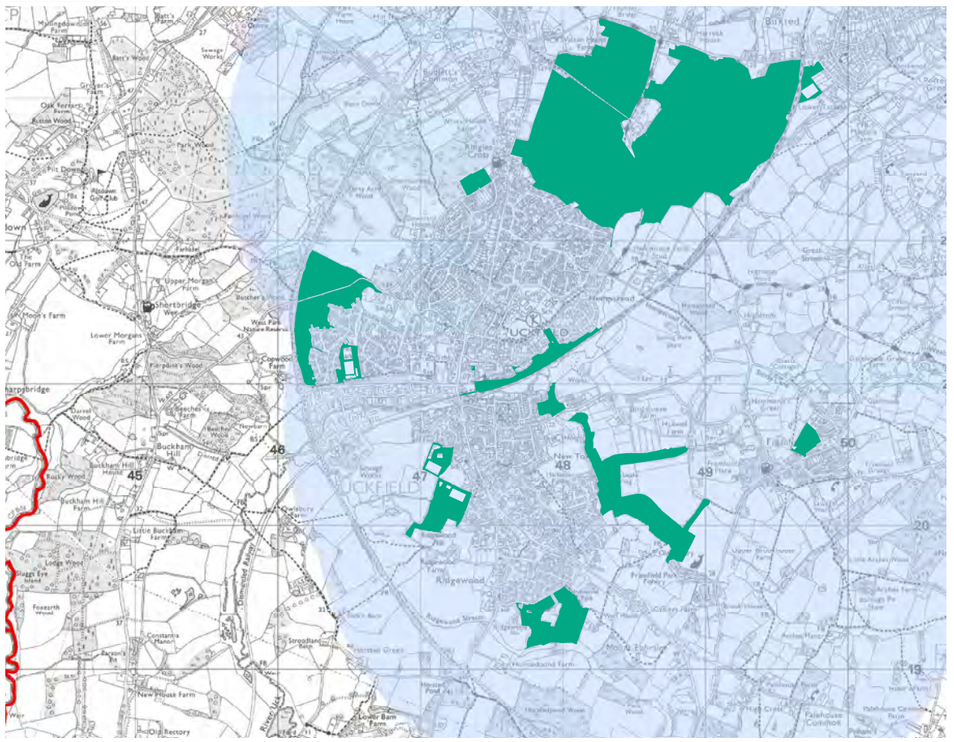
WEALDEN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY
WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

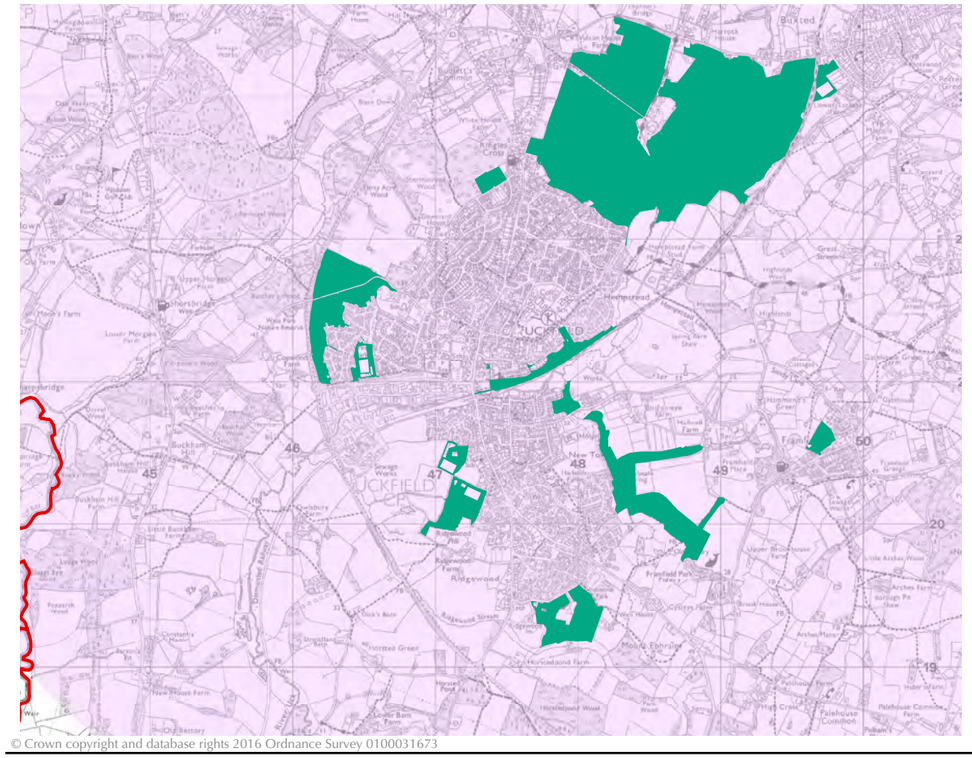
FIGURE 4.3g
UCKFIELD:
ACCESS LINKS & ACCESSIBLE NATURAL GREENSPACE

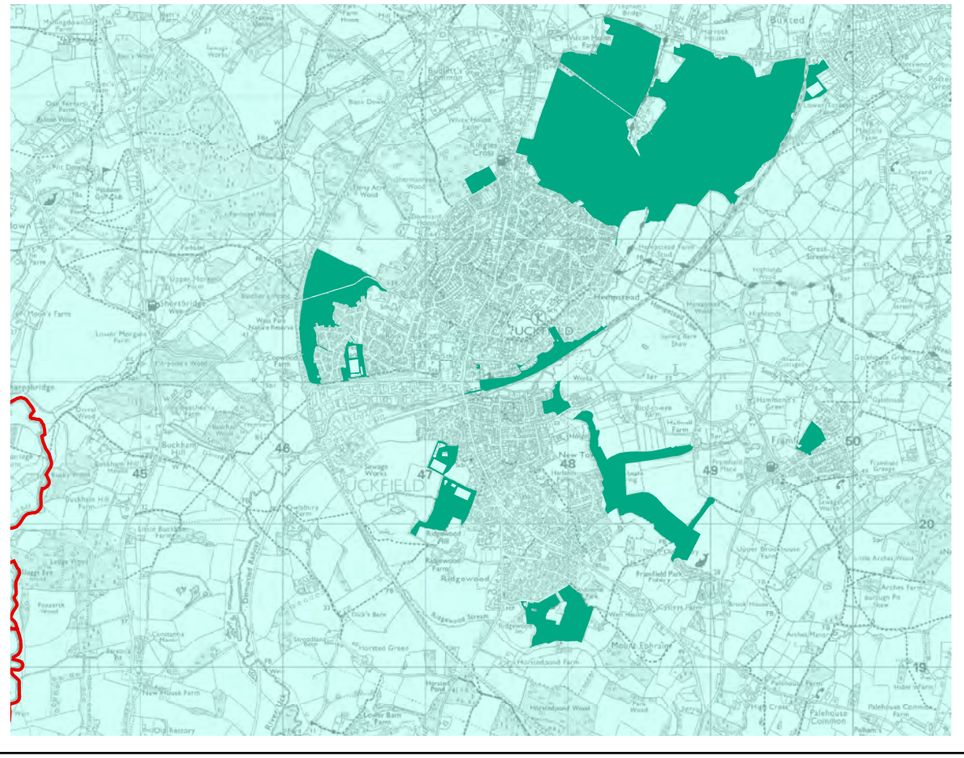
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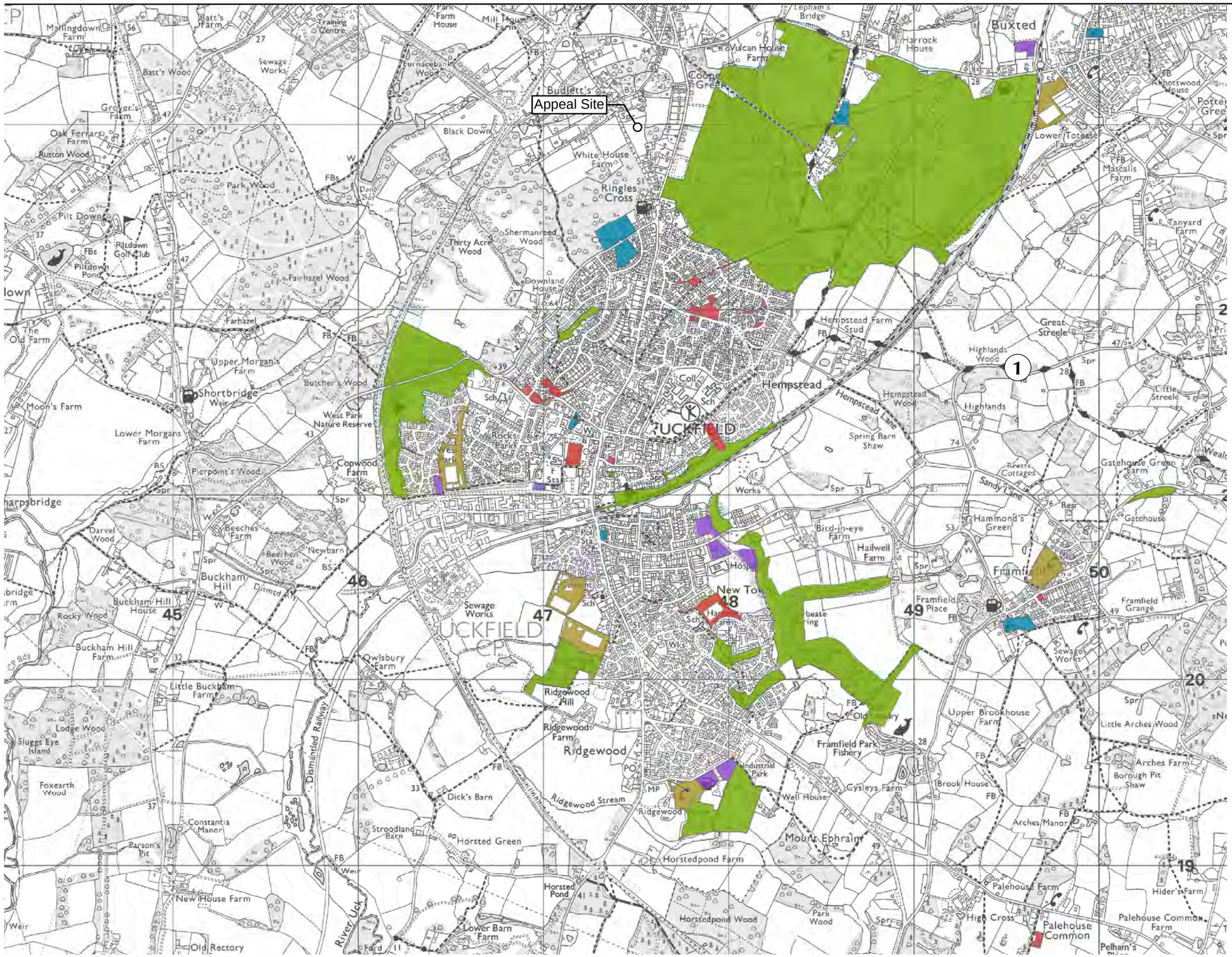
KEY

- Wealden Local Plan Boundary
- Accessible Natural Greenspace >2ha
- 10km catchment - all accessible natural greenspace >500ha
- 5km catchment - all accessible natural greenspace >100ha
- 2km catchment - all accessible natural greenspace >20ha
- 300m catchment - all accessible natural greenspace >2ha

N

0 0.5 1 Kilometre

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KEY

Open Space Typology:

- Accessible Natural Greenspace
- Allotments
- Amenity Greenspace
- Churchyards & Cemeteries
- Parks and Recreation Grounds

N

0 300 600 Metres

- Where appropriate, promote opportunities for retaining and enhancing existing wildlife habitats, and/or creating new habitats, related to residential development sites around Uckfield.
- There are opportunities in Uckfield for urban fringe development to provide and enhance green corridors and reinforce the countryside gap with surrounding villages. In addition, links to the countryside and existing GI could also be strengthened.
- Explore opportunities to retain and enhance the floodplain and improve or create multifunctional greenspaces along the Uck river corridor, to provide space for flood storage and attenuation. These spaces could for example provide connectivity for wildlife and people through Uckfield, ensuring people's connection with and understanding of the river is maintained.
- Explore opportunities to use the dismantled railway as a multifunctional strategic green corridor through the town, and to gain improved access into the countryside west of Uckfield.
- Seek opportunities to remove culverts where appropriate and resist new ones within and around Uckfield. Promote the natural functioning of water courses around the town.
- Where appropriate improve water quality and local flood risk management through the use of SuDS, green roofs and rain gardens for example within new housing developments.
- Explore opportunities to promote gardening for wildlife and growing food within existing and new residential areas.
- Where appropriate to do so, promote and encourage the use of best practice innovative architectural and planning solutions that take inspiration from local distinctiveness and character.
- Where appropriate safeguard and enhance through appropriate management existing formal and informal public open spaces within the town.

5.0 PROPOSED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

5.1 General

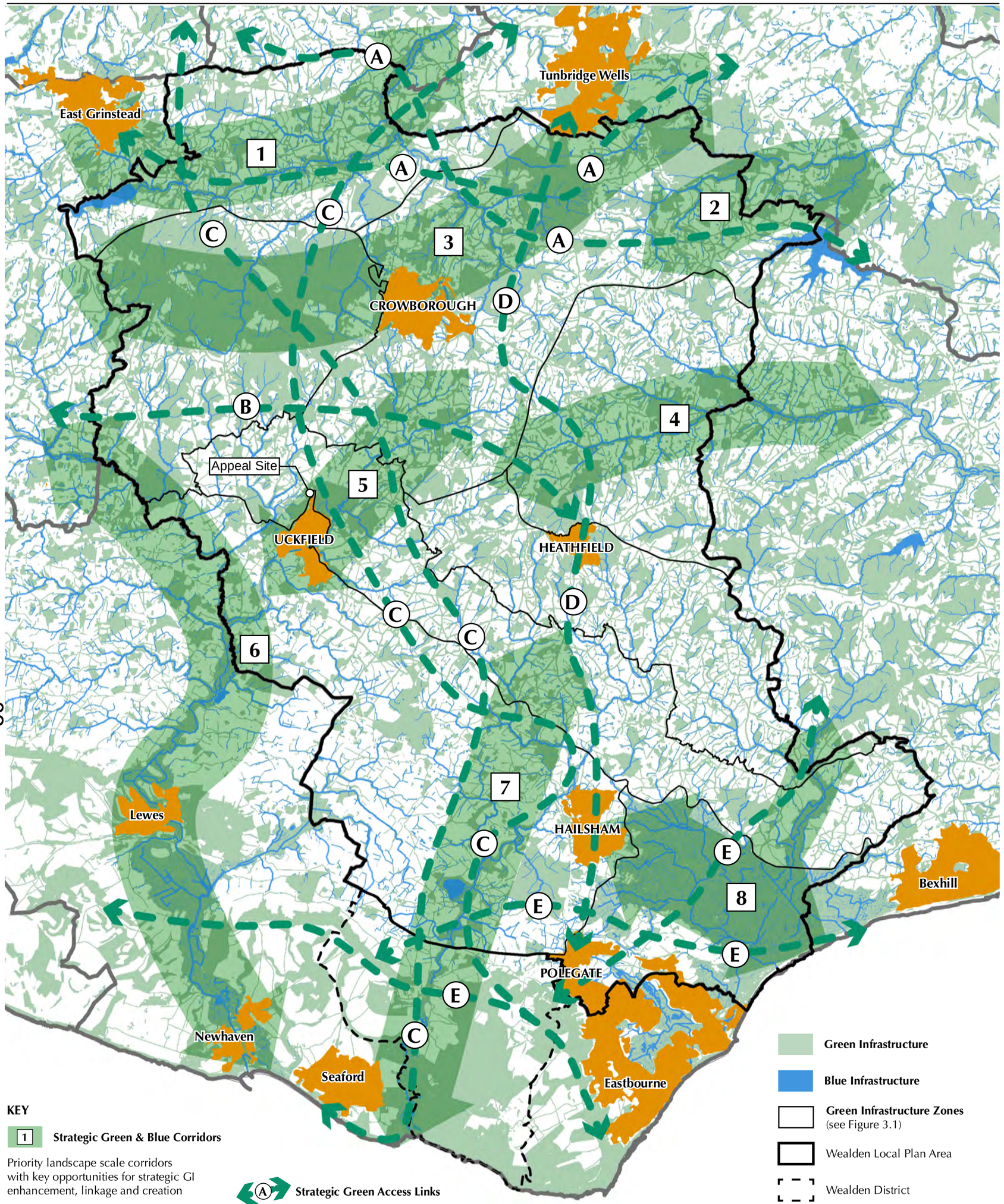
5.1.1 Based on the analysis of existing GI assets, needs and opportunities set out in **Sections 2.0, 3.0** and **4.0**, this section sets out a proposed GI network for Wealden at the district/sub-district and town scales. The proposed GI Network provides a framework for the delivery of GI to support the planning of sustainable development.

5.2 District Green Infrastructure Network

5.2.1 In line with the NPPF, investment in a connected and multi-functional GI network is considered to be necessary in order to support sustainable development within the study area. The proposed GI network for Wealden District (excluding the South Downs National Park) is illustrated on **Figure 5.1**.

5.2.2 The spatial representation of the overall GI Network is illustrated through corridors and linkages, which together provide a 'bigger picture' and strategic framework for the delivery of GI in Wealden. It is intended to help focus attention or priority on land that needs to be safeguarded, managed or secured in positive ways to create a multi-functional network of greenspaces, links and environmental assets for which investment can deliver the greatest range of benefits. It is not a rigid approach. The GI Network is intended to be flexible and responsive to opportunities and constraints - such as land ownership, community aspirations, access to funding, land drainage requirements, development opportunities, nature conservation policy considerations, etc.

5.2.3 The GI concept applies across the whole of Wealden District, and it can operate at any scale. However, the proposed Green Infrastructure Network identifies locations where targeting investment in GI is most likely to deliver multiple benefits across a range of national and local environmental, social and economic policies. Broadly defined strategic corridors are identified, within which investment in enhanced GI provision can be prioritised and delivered over the next 10 years or so. These corridors reflect the identified needs and opportunities for enhancing the connectivity of habitats and greenspaces for biodiversity and public benefit. They provide the context for the delivery of GI initiatives and projects that would provide, in many cases, multiple functions and benefits to meet a range of needs. GI interventions within and adjacent to these corridors would focus on the enhancement of existing GI assets, as well as the creation and restoration of new assets where there is an identified need.



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WEALDEN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY
WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

FIGURE 5.1
WEALDEN DISTRICT
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

April 2017

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5.2.4 It is important to ensure that the integrity of the overall GI Network is not compromised by inappropriate development and/or land management. This means that there needs to be flexibility in how the GI Network is protected and managed. In cases where there is an unavoidable harm to existing GI assets in order to meet social and economic needs, this should be offset by mitigation and compensation measures to enhance the functionality of other environmental assets elsewhere within the GI Network. However, some habitats, such as ancient woodlands, are irreplaceable and need protection. Where development is planned within or in close proximity to a GI assets, it should become an integral feature to the design and 'identity' of the development site to ensure that the connectivity of the network for both public benefit and biodiversity is retained and enhanced.

5.2.5 The proposed GI Network encapsulates a range of GI assets within varied landscape settings. With investment and appropriate management over time, the GI Network will offer more diverse uses, experiences and functions to deliver increased economic, environmental and social benefits within Wealden District (see **Box 5.1**).

Box 5.1 – The Key Benefits of GI for Wealden District

- Contributing to health improvements and well-being through schools, hospitals and health centres promoting opportunities to access greenspaces for exercise.
- Linking housing, schools and bus/train stations to the access network and connecting with accessible greenspaces in the wider countryside.
- Providing an improved image, experience and sense of place through investment in an improved environmental quality for the public realm.
- Opportunities to provide environmental education through parks, nature reserves and farm-based activities.
- Helping address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution, production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.
- Recognising the key role of the agricultural sector in local food production, processing of local produce and provision of farm shops.
- Increasing awareness of, and celebrating, historic environment assets and how they contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- Ensuring that future development around settlements are well integrated into their landscape settings, and address issues such as indistinct boundaries, poor accessibility, fragmented urban fringe landscapes, etc.
- Providing opportunities for local community involvement through volunteering and gaining new skills through GI project delivery, particularly within deprived communities.
- Strengthening management of wildlife habitats for sites experiencing recreational pressures.

5.2.6 The proposed GI network for Wealden District illustrated on **Figure 5.1** encompasses a range of GI types, functions, locations, sizes and levels of accessibility and use, and operates at every spatial scale and in all geographic areas within the area, both rural and urban. However, the

proposed GI Network identifies locations where targeting investment in GI is most likely to deliver multiple benefits. The main areas for investment are highlighted in **Box 5.2**.

Box 5.2 – Priorities for GI Investment

- To focus investment on GI provision and management to address current deficits of provision and meet needs identified by this Study.
- To meet the GI needs of communities in Wealden District who are likely to experience growth-related pressures.
- To protect and conserve existing valuable GI assets that are under pressure from land use changes, inappropriate management and/or climate change, in particular core biodiversity areas/sites; river valleys; watercourses and wetlands; woodlands, trees and hedgerows; heritage assets; and accessible natural greenspaces.

5.2.7 In response to the above, the proposed GI Network defines specific areas within which it is recommended that investment in enhanced GI provision is prioritised. The main areas for investment and action were identified through an interpretation of the interplay between broad patterns and opportunities arising from the analysis of the existing GI assets, particularly in relation to developing access networks for health and well-being objectives and also green corridors for wildlife. These provide the framework for development of strategic GI initiatives and projects that can provide multiple functions and benefits.

5.2.8 The principal components of the proposed GI Network for Wealden District are outlined below. These should be read in conjunction with the analysis of needs and opportunities for provision of GI at the District Scale (**Section 2.0**), Sub-District Scale (**Section 3.0**) and Town Scale (**Section 4.0**).

Strategic Green and Blue Corridors

5.2.9 A network of Strategic Green and Blue Corridors, priority areas with key opportunities for strategic GI enhancement, linkage and creation, provide the backbone of the GI Network for Wealden District (see **Box 5.3**). They are broadly defined, landscape-scale corridors comprising a mosaic of land uses, natural features and habitats, built heritage, archaeological resources and settlements, and are intended to be fully multi-functional zones with the potential to deliver a wide range of economic, environmental and social benefits. The Strategic Green and Blue Corridors include core areas of designated natural and semi-natural wildlife habitats, opportunities for restoring and re-creating habitats outside of core areas, and provide corridors or stepping stones for the dispersal of wildlife between habitats. These Corridors provide key strategic linkages with GI networks in adjoining areas as defined by the following GI studies:

- East Sussex Green Infrastructure Study[172]
- South Downs National Park Green Infrastructure Framework[173]
- Rother Green Infrastructure Background Paper[174]
- Sevenoaks Green Infrastructure Topic Paper[175]
- Tunbridge Wells Green Infrastructure Plan[176]

5.2.10 The Strategic Green and Blue Corridors within the study area are described in **Box 5.3**:

Box 5.3 - Strategic Green and Blue Corridors

- **1: Upper Medway Valley** – this corridor within the High Weald AONB includes the River Medway valley floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Tunbridge Wells Borough and Mid Sussex District. It comprises key GI assets such as Ancient Woodland, Weir Wood Reservoir and other freshwater and grassland habitats. Opportunities include habitat creation and linkages, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Forest Row, Hartfield and Withyham.
- **2: Teise Valley** – this corridor within the High Weald AONB includes the River Teise valley, floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Tunbridge Wells Borough. It comprises key GI assets such as a large Site of Special Scientific Interest, numerous Local Wildlife Sites and grassland habitat, large areas of Ancient Woodlands, part of Bewl Water and two Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements (including grassland restoration), historic environment enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Frant and Rotherfield.
- **3: Weald & Ashdown Forest Ridge** – this corridor within the High Weald AONB comprises an extensive mosaic of wooded heathland along a major ridge, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Mid Sussex District and Tunbridge Wells Borough. It comprises key GI assets such as the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation/Site of Special Scientific Interest, numerous Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodlands and Scheduled Monuments, and a Registered Historic Park and Garden. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, strategic access route improvements and management of the extensive areas of statutory open access land within and around Ashdown Forest that provides accessible natural greenspace for the parishes of Forest Row, Danehill, Hartfield, Maresfield and Withyham; and also opportunities for the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Rotherfield and Frant.
- **4: Upper Rother Valley** – this corridor within the High Weald AONB includes the River Rother valley, floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Rother District. It comprises key GI assets such as numerous Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodlands and grassland habitat. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Mayfield & Five Ashes and Hadlow Down.

[172] East Sussex Green Infrastructure Study, East Sussex County Council (2014)
[173] South Downs National Park Draft Green Infrastructure Framework, SDNPA (2016)
[174] Rother Green Infrastructure Background Paper, Rother District Council (2011)
[175] Sevenoaks Green Infrastructure Topic Paper, Sevenoaks District Council (2013)
[176] Tunbridge Wells Green Infrastructure Plan: SPD Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (2013)

- **5: Uck Valley** – this corridor includes the River Uck valley, floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Lewes District, and strategically links the High Weald AONB to the Ouse Green Corridor (6) within the Western Low Weald, providing a connection between Uckfield and Lewes. It comprises key GI assets such as two Sites of Special Scientific Interest, numerous Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodlands and grassland habitat, and the two Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, historic environment enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Buxted, Uckfield, Isfield and Little Horsted.
- **6: Ouse Valley** – this corridor includes the valley and floodplain of the River Ouse, which runs along the boundary between Wealden District and Lewes District connecting with the coast at Newhaven via Lewes. The Ouse corridor strategically links to the Usk Green Corridor (5), providing a connection with Uckfield and the High Weald AONB. Within Wealden District, it comprises key GI assets such as Ancient Woodland and freshwater/wetland habitats. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Isfield, Little Horsted and Fletching.
- **7: Cuckmere Valley** – this corridor includes the River Cuckmere valley, floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within the South Downs National Park connecting with the coast at Cuckmere Haven. It comprises key GI assets such as two Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and numerous Ancient Woodland, freshwater and grassland habitats. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Horam, Chiddingly, Arlington, Berwick and Long Man.
- **8: Pevensey Levels & Wallers Haven Valley** – this corridor includes extensive low-lying wetlands and floodplains, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Rother District. It comprises key GI assets such as the Pevensey Levels Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation/Ramsar/Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Pevensey Levels National Nature Reserve. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements (including re-establishment of wetland habitats), strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Pevensey, Westham and Hailsham.

5.2.11 The width of the Strategic Green Corridors illustrated schematically on **Figure 5.1** are indicative; they are not intended to be rigid, and should be responsive to local circumstances. For example, wherever possible it will be important for the Strategic Green Corridors to provide adequate space in order to reduce the potential negative "edge effects" on wildlife from surrounding intensive land uses by buffering and extending existing habitats.

Strategic Green Access Links

5.2.12 Within and connecting the Strategic Green Corridors, a network of largely existing Strategic Green Access Links provide multi-user, predominantly off-road, strategic access routes (or "greenways") for pedestrians and cyclists, linking and integrating residential and business communities to key services, leisure destinations and greenspaces across the District. The Strategic Green Access Links are described in **Box 5.4**.

Box 5.4 - Strategic Green Access Links

- **A: Northern Wealden Links** – these east-west Strategic Green Access Links connect communities and facilities in the north of the District to the wider countryside and destinations within the High Weald AONB, including East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells, via the High Weald Landscape Trail and the Sussex Border Path. New access connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.
- **B: Central Wealden Link** – this east-west Strategic Green Access Link connects communities and facilities in the central parts of the District to the wider countryside and destinations within the High Weald AONB, including Heathfield and Ashdown Forest, via the Sussex Diamond Way. New access connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.
- **C: High to Low Weald Links** – these north-south Strategic Green Access Links connect communities and facilities in East Grinstead, Tunbridge Wells, Uckfield, Hailsham, Seaford and Eastbourne with the wider countryside and destinations in the High Weald AONB and the Low Weald (and the South Downs National Park), via the Wealdway and Vanguard Way. New access connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.
- **D: Cuckoo Trail Link** – this north-south Strategic Green Access Link connects communities and facilities in Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Heathfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne with the wider countryside and destinations in the High Weald AONB and the Low Weald. Whilst this Link follows the route of the Cuckoo Trail for much of its length, new access and connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.
- **E: Pevensey Levels to South Downs Link** – this east-west Strategic Green Access Link connects communities and facilities in Polegate within the south of the District to the wider countryside and destinations in the Pevensey Levels and the South Downs National Park, via the 1066 Country Walk, the National Cycle Network Route 2 and the South Downs Way National Trail. New access connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.

5.2.13 With investment, the network of Strategic Green Access Links have the potential to link with public transport services to provide an integrated sustainable movement network for Wealden District that will help reduce reliance on car-use. While the Strategic Green Access Links have the primary function of providing access and recreational route linkages, with appropriate management they can also provide important ecological corridors for the dispersal of wildlife. The route alignments of the Strategic Green Access Links illustrated on **Figure 5.1** are indicative, and their specific configuration should respond to their intended uses and local circumstances.

Urban Green Grids

5.2.14 As illustrated on **Figure 5.1**, Urban Green Grids are priority areas within Wealden District with key opportunities for greening of the built environment. The Urban Green Grids comprise multifunctional networks of green (and blue) infrastructure links and spaces threading through the built environment, weaving together areas where people live and work with public transport networks and the wider countryside. The Urban Green Grids provide urban communities with green areas for recreation and access to nature, a sense of place, education opportunities and help to contribute to sustainable travel by providing safe routes for walking and cycling, and also contribute to improved health and well-being through exercise and access to natural greenspaces. Street trees and greenspace help counter the 'heat island effect' of urban areas by providing shade to regulate the micro-climate, and domestic gardens and green roofs/walls provide linkages for wildlife through the built-up areas. These GI assets also help with managing surface water runoff in urban areas and hence mitigate flooding and conveyance of pollutants to watercourses. With investment and appropriate management, the urban green grids could deliver a range of benefits for the urban communities such as those highlighted in **Box 5.5**.

Box 5.5 – Urban Green Grids GI Benefits

- Reinforcing local identity and enhancing physical character by shaping existing and future development.
- Maintaining visual amenity and increasing the attractiveness of a locality to create a sense of pride.
- Raising property values and aiding urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.
- Boosting the economic potential of tourism, leisure and cultural activities.
- Providing a wide variety of cultural, social and community facilities, including seasonal activities such as fairs, festivals and concerts.
- Protecting historical, cultural and archaeological heritage.
- Contribution to health and well-being agendas – e.g. reducing stress levels by providing spaces for formal and informal recreational facilities.
- Providing popular outdoor educational facilities for schools and academic institutions.
- Improving physical and social inclusion including accessibility, particularly for young, disabled and older people.
- Offering networks for walking and cycling and safer routes to schools.
- Raising air quality and moderating extremes of temperatures.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and ecological habitats.
- Incorporating environmental infrastructure to improve water quality and flood control.

5.2.15 The Urban Green Grids are an integral element of the proposed town scale GI networks for Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield and Hailsham & Polegate set out in **Section 5.3** below.

The Wider Countryside

5.2.16 While the proposed GI Network for Wealden District gives particular emphasis to the spatial priorities discussed above, investment in GI provision within other areas that may also have the potential to deliver benefits should be considered where appropriate. Beyond the strategic

corridors, opportunities for targeted environmental and access improvements in the wider countryside should be considered to strengthen the multi-functionality of the countryside as part of the overall GI Network. These improvements would complement and support the priority areas for investment within the GI Network, by focusing environmental land management schemes on addressing the needs and opportunities identified in the relevant GI Zones set out in **Section 3.0**. For example, these aims could be achieved through:

- Conservation and enhancement of landscape character.
- Enhanced management, protection, accessibility and interpretation of the historic environment and geodiversity resources.
- Habitat enhancement, linkage and creation – including woodlands, wetlands, roadside verges and farmland BAP habitats and species.
- Enhanced connectivity of the local rights of way network to the strategic access route network (including public transport) and to accessible natural greenspaces to promote sustainable modes of travel.
- Increased opportunities for sustainable local food and renewable energy crops production.

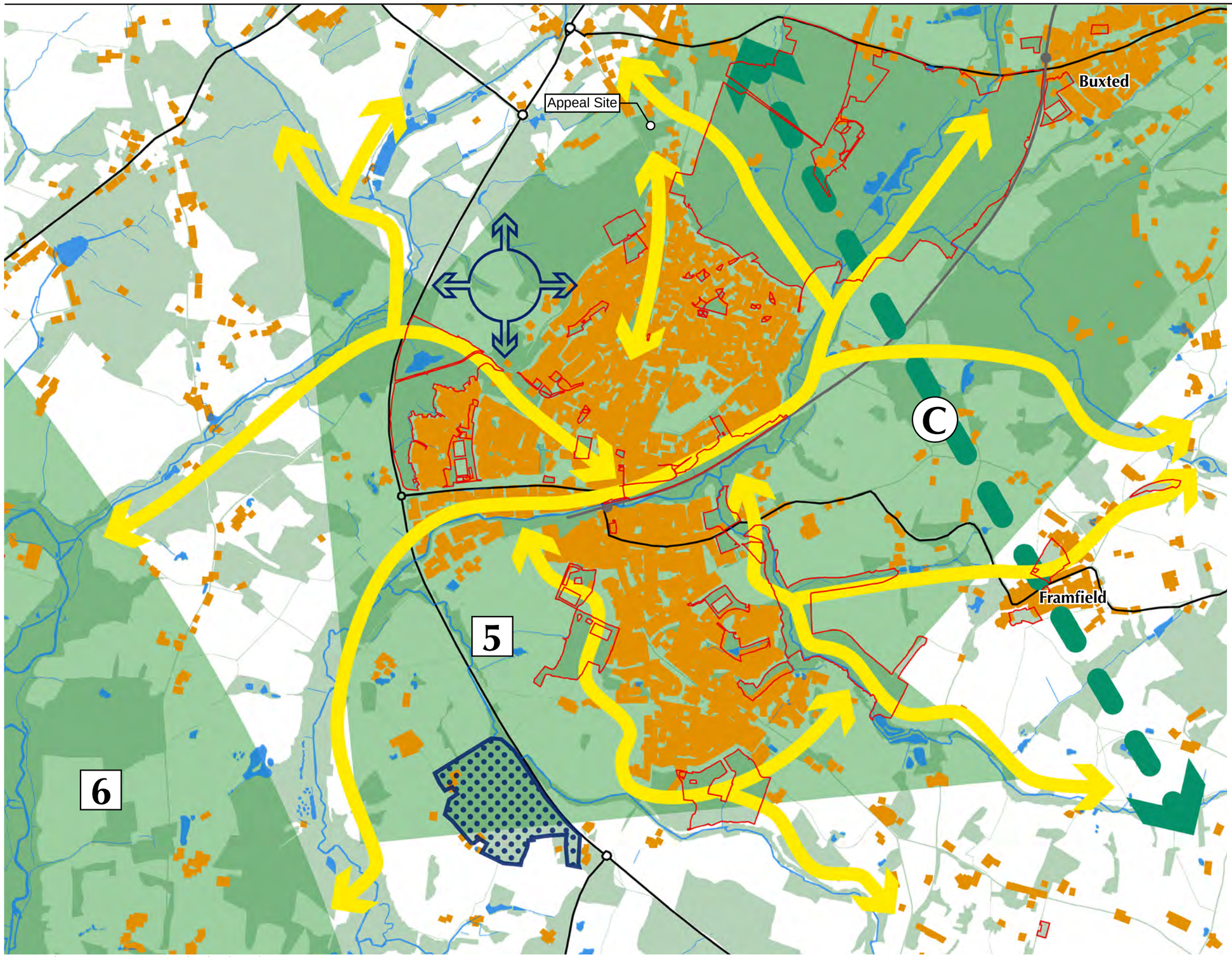
Uckfield Green Infrastructure Network

5.3.5 The proposed GI Network for Uckfield is illustrated on **Figure 5.3**. This should be read in conjunction with the analysis of needs and opportunities for provision of GI in and around the town set out in **Section 4.3**.

5.3.6 The town lies within the Uck Valley Strategic Green Corridor (5), a priority area with key opportunities for strategic GI enhancement, linkage and creation. The Ouse Valley Strategic Green Corridor (6) lies to the south-west. The High to Low Weald Strategic Green Access Links (C) connect communities and businesses within Uckfield, and in the villages around the town, such as Framfield to local leisure opportunities/destinations, greenspaces and public transport services.

5.3.7 A network of Local Green Links connects the Uckfield Urban Green Grid to the Strategic Green Access Links, green infrastructure and blue infrastructure (such as the River Uck and Ridgewood Stream) within the countryside in and around the town. This network includes local GI linkages connecting the town centre with open spaces throughout the built-up area and in the surrounding countryside (such as the West Park Nature Reserve and Buxted Park), including the Uck Valley Strategic Green Corridor (5) in particular. In addition to providing a network of greenspaces and access links, the Uckfield Urban Green Grid concept seeks to promote the provision of green roofs and walls to provide habitats and linkages for wildlife. A proposed area of search for new accessible natural greenspace is also shown to the north-west of the town on **Figure 5.3**. New accessible natural greenspace in this location is required to address existing deficiencies in the provision of neighbourhood scale accessible natural greenspace identified by the ANGSt analysis (see **Section 2.7** for details).

5.3.8 The protection and enhancement of biodiversity sites, landscape/townscape character and historic environment assets, in line with the needs and opportunities identified for GI Zone 6 (High Weald Fringes) set out in **Section 3.7** and GI Zone 7 (Low Weald) set out in **Section 3.8**, are intended to support the GI Network for Uckfield.



KEY

5 Strategic Green & Blue Corridors

Priority landscape scale corridors with key opportunities for strategic GI enhancement, linkage and creation

5. Uck Valley
6. Ouse Valley

C Strategic Green Access Links

Key opportunities for multi-user, predominantly off-road, strategic access routes/greenways

C. High to Low Weald Links

Uckfield Urban Green Grid

Priority areas with key opportunities for greening of the built environment

Local Green Links

Key opportunities for local GI linkages

Green Infrastructure

Blue Infrastructure

Accessible Natural Greenspace

Proposed Areas of Search for New Accessible Natural Greenspace

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Provision

A and B Roads

Railway/Station

This GI Network Plan provides a strategic framework for the delivery of GI. It is only illustrative and does not necessarily indicate a constraint on development

N

0 300 600 Metres

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6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 General

6.1.1 Drawing on the findings of the Study, this section sets out guidance to assist in the development and implementation of GI policies in the Wealden Local Plan. It also provides and advice and recommendations for developing a GI Strategy for Wealden.

6.2 Green Infrastructure Policies

6.2.1 Taking into account the key needs and opportunities identified by this study, guidance for the development of GI policies are set out below for consideration by the Council.

Overarching GI Policy

6.2.2 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, the new Local Plan should require development to contribute to the creation, protection, enhancement and management of GI networks. An overarching policy should be included in the new Local Plan to provide the strategic policy direction for the provision of GI to support the delivery of sustainable development.

6.2.3 In line with National Planning Policy Guidance, this GI Study provides an evidence base and proposed strategic framework for GI planning in Wealden District (excluding the South Downs National Park). The Study identifies GI needs and opportunities for the creation of a multi-functional network of green and blue corridors, having regard to factors such as accessibility, existing open spaces, natural and semi-natural habitats, protection of the water environment, landscape and geodiversity, and contribution to ecological networks. These opportunities are reflected in the proposed GI Network set out in **Section 5.0** at a strategic level for the whole of the District, and at a town scale for Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield and Hailsham & Polegate where the need for GI to support sustainable communities is greatest.

6.2.4 It is recommended that the overarching GI policy should reflect the following elements:

- The overall aim of the policy should be for development to protect, improve and enhance existing GI assets identified in this GI Study, and to contribute towards the provision of additional GI, to support the multi-functional GI network proposed in **Section 5.0**.
- Proposals should be supported where development:
  - ❖ is designed to respond to the location of existing GI and support and improve its function and benefits;
  - ❖ protects and improves the GI network through the provision or enhancement of functional links or corridors between different GI assets; and
  - ❖ provides new GI and/or introduces multi-functional use of existing green spaces or links/corridors where opportunities are identified.
- Development should not be permitted where it will result in the loss of existing GI assets or where it may compromise the integrity of the GI network, unless replacement provision or suitable alternative provision can be made that positively contributes to the GI network.
- Where the scale of development would be too small to accommodate on-site GI provision, the Council should seek developer contributions either towards the improvement of existing green spaces or towards the provision of new GI elsewhere.
- Where compensation is required for the loss of existing GI, then the provision of new or enhanced GI as required by the scale of the development should be in addition to the requirement for compensation.
- Where appropriate, the Council should also seek developer contributions for the future management and maintenance of green infrastructure.

Growth Area GI Policies

6.2.5 Where required, the overarching GI policy for the new Local Plan should be supported by GI policies for the main growth areas to support the delivery of sites allocated for residential development. In line with national Planning Policy Guidance, the Wealden Local Plan Sites Landscape & Ecological Assessment Studies (CBA and TLP, 2017) identify more detailed opportunities for GI provision associated with potential development sites in and around the following areas:

- Edge of Tunbridge Wells
- Wadhurst
- Ninfield
- Herstmonceaux
- Heathfield
- Mayfield
- Stone Cross
- Horam
- Westham
- East Hoathly
- Hailsham
- Polegate

6.2.6 It is recommended that GI policies for the main growth areas should reflect the following elements:

- New residential development should be required to make an appropriate contribution to addressing local needs and opportunities for GI provision in and around the growth area by retaining, enhancing and creating green spaces and corridors as part of the GI Network defined by this Study.
- Development should be required to contribute to:
  - ❖ enhancing biodiversity by protecting, enhancing and creating habitats to provide a network of well-connected ecological corridors for the dispersal of wildlife in and around the growth area.
  - ❖ enhancing the landscape setting of the growth area by improving the character, appearance and condition of key access corridors/gateways, settlement edges and landscape features, including historic environment assets.
  - ❖ the production of local energy (e.g. fuel from coppiced woodlands) and food (e.g. allotments and community gardens) where appropriate.
  - ❖ the sustainable use of water resources by incorporating sustainable drainage systems, green roofs/walls and other 'green design' features into development proposals where appropriate.
  - ❖ enhancing the connectivity of residential areas, the high street, outdoor sports and recreational facilities, public transport services and the countryside around the growth area by retaining, enhancing and creating a well-connected network of accessible natural green spaces and access links.

6.3 Green Infrastructure Planning Guidance

6.3.1 Planning principles for embedding GI into new development schemes are suggested below, including recommended standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space provision. The planning guidance is intended to be of value for planners, developers and local communities in helping inform pre-application discussions and consultations, evaluation of planning applications and implementation of developments in respect of GI provision.

GI Planning Principles

6.3.2 The planning and development management process affords considerable potential to promote and deliver GI. The GI planning principles outlined in **Box 6.1** are intended to inform the provision of GI through the planning process:

Box 6.1 - GI Planning Principles

1. GI should be embedded into the layout of new development alongside the design of the built environment and grey infrastructure from the start of the masterplanning process.
2. Development should retain, enhance and/or create green corridors that contribute to the GI Network and support connectivity with town centres, urban fringe areas and the wider countryside.
3. Development that will cause significant harm to the functioning of the GI Network, particularly in relation to reducing the impacts of and adapting to climate change, should be discouraged.
4. Where an adverse impact on GI is unavoidable, development should provide suitable mitigation measures to ensure the overall multi-functionality and connectivity of the GI Network is maintained.
5. Development should provide or contribute towards the provision of on- or off-site GI as appropriate in locations with identified deficiencies, including arrangements for on-going management and maintenance of green spaces.
6. The amount and quality of GI of different types that is required by a development to ensure residents have the opportunity to interact with nature, and encourage recreation, sports and healthier lifestyles, should reflect Natural England's standards for accessible natural greenspace and the standards for open space provision recommended in the Wealden Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study 2016.
7. Development should deliver a net increase in biodiversity by incorporating opportunities to enhance biodiversity and improve ecological connectivity, including contributing to local Biodiversity Action Plan targets.
8. Development should incorporate measures for adapting to and mitigating against the effects of climate change through innovative GI design solutions, including sustainable water management/drainage systems and urban cooling measures.
9. Development involving the re-use, adaptation or conversion of existing buildings within established built environments should include opportunities for retrofitting GI measures into proposals, such as green roofs and green walls for example.

GI Standards

6.3.3 Provision of a connected and multi-functional network of high quality green spaces that delivers long-term benefits for people and nature should be a key aim for GI provision in Wealden District. This can best be achieved through adoption of the following standards related to the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space provision.

6.3.4 **Accessible natural greenspace standards** are recommended by Natural England to ensure residents have the opportunity to interact with nature and encourage healthier lifestyles. These include the following standards for the quantity, quality and accessibility of greenspace provision:

- **Accessibility and Quantity Standard** – the Access to Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) seeks to improve green space access, naturalness and connectivity by encouraging provision of range of site types and sizes within walking distance and sustainable transport distances of people's homes[177];
- **Service Standards** – national standards for delivery of core services/facilities for specific green space types (e.g. Country Park Accreditation); and
- **Quality Standard** – The Green Flag Award scheme provides a national quality standard for management of existing green spaces.

6.3.5 Full details of the above standards can be found in Natural England's 'Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance (2010).

6.3.6 The **Wealden Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study** (2017) recommends local quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards for different types of open spaces in and around settlements within Wealden District derived from assessments of needs and opportunities. Development schemes in Wealden District should make provision for open space in accordance with the recommended standards for size criteria and distance catchments set out in the Study.

6.3.7 Raising the standard of building and landscape design quality should also be a key aim for GI provision in Wealden District. Good GI design should work with existing features (e.g. retaining hedgerows to define a greenway network or using existing drainage ditches as part of a sustainable urban drainage system), and be appropriate to the desired primary and secondary functions for GI in the locality (e.g. balancing biodiversity and access, landscape character and flood risk management, etc). Green Infrastructure by Design: Adding Value to Developments[178] sets out GI design principles for the masterplanning of new developments based around the seven key functions for GI identified in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance (2009)[179]. The Guide provides a valuable checklist for use by developers to help raise the quality of design and development, and also help local authority planners evaluate planning applications to ensure high standards in GI design are achieved.

6.3.8 CABE's **Building for Life standards** (2015)[180], developed in conjunction with the House Builders Federation, promote the incorporation of GI into housing developments through measures such as sustainable building materials; renewable energy; green design principles (green roofs, grey water recycling, energy efficiency); and sustainable urban drainage systems. Developers should also be encouraged to consider applying to accreditation schemes, such as The Wildlife Trust's **Biodiversity Benchmark**, to gain recognition of the quality of their work.

[177] The Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard is a complementary accessibility standard to ANGSt endorsed by Natural England (see www.woodlandtrust.org.uk for details).
[178] Green Infrastructure by Design: Adding Value to Developments
[179] http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/Product.aspx?ProductID=cda68051-1381-452f-8e5b-8d7297783bbd
[180] http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition

GI Design Guidelines

6.3.9 The provision of GI should be delivered in accordance with the planning principles set out above. Developers should fully consider opportunities for adding value to the developments by incorporating high quality, sustainable and multi-functional GI within their schemes at an early stage in the place making process, including how it will contribute to, and connect with, the wider GI Network beyond the development site. To assist in this, the GI design guidelines reflecting the multi-functional aspects of GI provision set out in **Box 6.2** are recommended for use as a good practice checklist for site masterplanning and design. These should be used in conjunction with the analysis of existing GI assets, needs and opportunities set out in **Sections 2.0, 3.0** and **4.0** of this Study.

Box 6.2 – GI Design Guidelines/Checklist

Biodiversity

- Retain and enhance existing habitat corridors and provide ecological buffers through grassland, scrub, trees and woodland habitat creation.
- Create a network of habitat links throughout a development, for example using an existing hedgerow network, and enhancing and extending links through habitat creation, including grassland, scrub and trees in adjoining areas.
- Retain and enhance existing watercourse corridors through incorporation into a site's open space network, and consider opportunities for naturalisation/diversification of habitats, such as wetland, grassland, scrub and trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and enhance veteran trees and the existing native hedgerow network within and around a site, and enhance and extend existing woodland, to safeguard biodiversity assets and maintain the landscape structure of a site.
- Encourage use of ecological building design measures that enhance biodiversity – e.g. green roofs, green walls, and tree planting/habitat creation within green spaces, and nesting and roosting spaces for birds/bats.

Landscape & the Historic Environment

- Incorporate a structural network of linked natural green spaces into development to contribute to and enhance the site's landscape setting, and help integrate townscape and landscape elements.
- Plan for and implement new structural landscape planting of native tree species appropriate to local character at the earliest possible stage, to ensure that development is visually well integrated into its landscape context and is appropriate to the local sense of place.
- Design of structural landscaping elements around residential development areas should create a soft edge linking landscape and townscape elements, with use of continuous bands of thicker screen planting to integrate new development areas into the landscape as experienced from within the site and from the surrounding townscape/countryside.
- Encourage use of natural forms of architectural building design and materials to provide landscape and visual mitigation benefits and contribute to sense of place – e.g. green roofs, green walls, timber construction for walls and claddings.
- Use existing landscape structural features to enhance local landscape character and provide mitigation for environmental impacts – e.g. retain and extend woodlands as landscape buffers to visually screen roads, mitigate traffic noise and improve air quality, and integrate flood attenuation areas into the design of the structural landscape buffers.

- Conserve and enhance existing structural features such as woodland blocks and hedgerows within the site to contribute to a strong landscape edge and setting for developed areas, retaining and managing these for recreational and biodiversity value as part of new accessible greenspaces.
- Extend structural landscape screening using shelterbelts with appropriate native species in more open parts of a site, to filter views of development from elevated areas.
- Avoid or limit lighting as far as possible to conserve dark night skies and minimise sky glow.
- Create positive approaches to new and existing development areas around settlements through avenue planting of native street trees on key gateway routes, and ensure that existing street trees are managed and enhanced to ensure that they are sustained as enduring features of the landscape and townscape.
- Plan and design new development to respect sensitive horizons/skylines and views that provide key elements of a site's visual context and setting, and tie development visually to the historic centre of settlements by safeguarding key views of and from local landmarks.

Energy & Food

- Incorporate measures for local renewable energy production into management of green spaces – e.g. energy crops, Combined Heat & Power plant based on local woodland coppice management, micro hydro-electric schemes and wind turbines/solar panels.
- Specify locally sourced and sustainably manufactured/produced materials and finishes wherever possible in the design, implementation and future management of green space to assist in reducing the carbon footprint of delivering GI.
- Encourage local food production by using green spaces for allotments and community gardens/orchards.
- Encourage local food production by creating links with adjacent farms providing small-scale local food production, local produce sales and educational opportunities for children.
- Encourage local food production by using green spaces to provide location for open air market selling local produce.

Water Resources

- Incorporate green building design measures that help reduce water consumption and provide natural shading/cooling to counter the heat island effect of urban areas (such as green roofs, green walls, timber construction for walls and claddings, water saving devices/rainwater recycling and retaining/planting trees within landscaping schemes).
- Safeguard water quality from potential risks of negative impacts associated with drainage from development.
- Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into a site's layout to assist in delivering flood storage and water balancing functions.

Accessible Natural Greenspace and Access Links

- Conserve and enhance existing tracks and field boundaries as green links to provide new footpath and cycle links to connect a development site with its different zones/neighbourhoods, and to link into the wider rights of way and green space network.
- Consider opportunities to create new crossings over/under major transport corridors to provide enhanced pedestrian and ecological connectivity between a site and its wider countryside.
- Provide opportunities to use green spaces and other GI assets as an outdoor classroom by providing access to and interpretation of natural and cultural assets.
- Design community parks to provide a balance between formal and passive recreation and access to nature, and offer varied opportunities for natural play.

- Connect housing and employment areas to wider greenways network to contribute to healthy communities and green travel objectives.
- Provide a hierarchy of access routes, segregated as necessary, for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists.
- Engage local communities at all stages of the planning and design process to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for the long-term care of green spaces – e.g. design workshops and involvement in implementation through community planting/open days.
- Design recreational and play spaces to have a distinct sense of place, which provides an enjoyable and visually rewarding environment for all users and responds to and reflects its landscape context.
- Design play spaces to provide opportunities for a wide range of types of play, including active and passive or quieter, creative forms of play.
- Design green spaces and links to be accessible and inclusive to all ages and community groups, and to accommodate a wide variety of specific requirements including users with mobility impairments.

6.4 Developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Wealden

6.4.1 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Green Infrastructure advises that:

'To assist in planning positively for green infrastructure local planning authorities may wish to prepare an authority-wide green infrastructure framework or strategy. This should be evidence-based by, for example, including an assessment of current green infrastructure provision that identifies gaps in the network and the components and opportunities for improvement. The assessment can inform the role of green infrastructure in local and neighbourhood plans, infrastructure delivery plans and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) schedules.

Local Plans should identify the strategic location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks. Where appropriate, supplementary planning documents can set out how the planning, design and management components of the green infrastructure strategy for the area will be delivered.

This strategic approach to green infrastructure may cross administrative boundaries. Therefore neighbouring authorities, working collaboratively with other stakeholders including Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), may wish to consider how wider strategies for their areas can help address cross-boundary issues and help meet the Duty to Cooperate.'

6.4.2 This GI Study provides a baseline for developing a GI Strategy for Wealden District. The analysis of existing GI assets, needs and opportunities set out in **Sections 2.0, 3.0** and **4.0** provide an up-to-date and coherent understanding of existing GI provision within Wealden District.

6.4.3 The focus of the GI Strategy should be to provide a long-term and overarching strategic framework for guiding action in areas of clearly identified need, where investment in a high quality, sustainable and multi-functional GI network can deliver the greatest benefits for people and the natural environment. The proposed GI network for Wealden District set out in **Section 5.0** provides a starting point for developing the GI Strategy in this respect.

6.4.4 The GI strategy should articulate a coherent vision for sustaining and improving GI provision to support sustainable development; encourage effective stakeholder partnerships; advocate the need for innovative GI management and funding; and also facilitate cross boundary working on GI delivery. In addition, the GI strategy should identify priorities for investment based on policies, public benefits and local needs, and outline a clear implementation strategy for delivery of GI. The implementation strategy should identify GI delivery mechanisms and potential funding sources, supported by a costed action plan to guide delivery. A concerted effort over a long period will be necessary to ensure that GI is planned, delivered and managed to fully meet the needs of existing and new communities; protect and enhance the environment; address the challenges of climate change; and underpin the economic stability of the District. Priorities for the successful delivery of GI include:

- Championing the importance, benefits and principles of GI to a wide audience – including the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- Influencing and enabling delivery of GI.
- Marketing and advocacy to promote the GI approach.
- Identification and selection of GI projects for funding.
- Establishing partnerships for the funding, delivery, management and ownership of specific GI projects.
- Identifying and disseminating information on best practice approaches to GI delivery.
- Liaising with neighbouring areas to co-ordinate cross-boundary delivery of strategic GI projects at the regional scale.

6.4.5 Effective strategic governance, leadership and co-ordination through stakeholder partnerships is key to effectively planning, managing and delivering GI. This is particularly important as there is currently no dedicated funding stream for GI. A long-term and strategic approach is also necessary as investment in new and enhanced GI provision is likely to be delivered incrementally, facilitated by, and in step with, development. As mainstream public sector funding for delivery of GI is expected to continue to decline, contributions towards GI provision from new development are increasingly a key delivery mechanism. Funding for delivery of GI related to specific developments may be secured from developer contributions (either through planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy) in line with appropriate Local Plan policies. Investment by the private sector in supporting a high quality environment and moving to a low carbon future through corporate environmental/social responsibility spending also provides a further potential funding source for GI investment.

6.4.6 To ensure that GI is implemented effectively, the relevant findings and recommendations of the GI Strategy should be embedded in spatial planning and development management through inclusion of appropriate GI policies and standards in the Local Plan as suggested in **Sections 6.2** and **6.3** above.

APPENDIX CJ8

Wireframe Visualisation – Viewpoint 6 & Methodology



Existing Viewpoint 6



Predicted Wireframe Viewpoint 6

Equipment & Focal Length: Nikon D3200 DSLR 35mm equivalent camera using a 50mm lens
Viewing Distance at A3: 330mm
Horizontal Field of View: 68°
Vertical Field of View: 23°

Viewpoint Coordinates: E 546985, N 122770
Date & time of photograph: 11/05/2021 11:05
AOD & Viewing height: c. 33m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions: Clear, good visibilty.

Panorama created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.

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LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY, PHOTOMONTAGE & WIREFRAME VISUALISATION METHODOLOGY

1.1. The undertaking of all digital landscape photography, the preparation of visualisations and the presentation methods is in accordance with the current guidance as set out in the following documents;

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition.
- Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment: Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11.
- Visual representation of Windfarms – Good Practice Guidance: Scottish Natural Heritage, March 2006.
- Visual Representations of Development Proposals: Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19

Viewpoints

1.2. Viewpoints are assessed and agreed in order to be representative of the range of views and viewer types that will experience the proposals. This is informed by ordnance survey and other maps, fieldwork observations and other information relevant to the specific setting of the site, such as access, landscape character and popular vantage points.

Photography

1.3. High resolution photographs are taken during representative weather conditions using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens, from a consistent height of 1.6m above ground. A tripod is used and the camera is levelled. The accurate location of the photographer is recorded using OS map data and landscape features.

Equipment Used for Photography

- *Nikon D3200*
- *AF-s Nikkor 18-55mm Lens*
- *Tripod*

Post Production

1.4. Each photo viewpoint photograph was processed from a jpeg data file in 8bit colour space. The individual shots were stitched together using a method of cylindrical projection to form a panorama. Standard (digital) photographic post production techniques were used to create a corrected final 8bit tif file to be used as the basis for each photomontage.

1.5. The multiple single frame photographs are then carefully spliced together using digital software techniques to create a single panoramic image with a horizontal field of view equivalent to that seen in the field. The vertical field of view of both existing and proposed views is set at a minimum width of 130mm at A3 paper (landscape format) in order to allow for two panoramic images to fit onto an A3 page. This determines the horizontal field of view and an interpretation of monocular perspective can therefore be obtained by viewing from a distance of between 300mm and 400mm at A3 or between 400mm and 500mm at A2, curved through the same radius.

1.6. A digital wireframe 3-D model of the proposals is created (in Sketchup) using available ordnance survey map datum, topographical survey, elevational and spot height data and/or digital terrain modelling along with the extent and maximum parameters of the proposed building and/or developable area. Visible existing features are also built within the model forming the surveyed reference points in the photographs.

Aligning the Model and the Photograph

1.7. The surveyed camera location points are then matched within the model and assigned the same height, position and orientation to which the original photograph was taken. The proposed elements and changes to the scene are then rendered onto the wireframe model in line with the proposed materials, colours and finishes. Using a photo editing package, namely Adobe Photoshop, the photography, surveyed reference points and rendered proposed development are aligned. Components within the photograph are then manipulated to realistically illustrate the new proposals within the view (i.e. trees/buildings etc to be removed as part of the development are erased). The photograph is not altered in any other way to ensure the vertical and horizontal field of view remains as existing, and a direct comparison can be made.

Checking

1.8. To ensure the accuracy of this method the following checks were carried out at each stage of the process:
All coordinates located within the terrain model were later checked against open source OS data and aerial imagery.

Additional images at other locations around the site boundary were taken and used as further points of reference when working out which elements in the original photographs would appear in the foreground when incorporating the 3D model into the images.

Occlusion and Perception of the Proposed View

1.9. Within the limits of current technology and available data, techniques and experienced judgement were employed by the visualiser to manipulate the rendered image so that it appears as photorealistic as possible.

Limitations

1.10. The visuals prepared have however been prepared in line with the current guidance and with the information available, and are considered to be an accurate representation of the proposals. They have been based on a replicable, transparent and structured process as detailed above. The visualisations have been produced and presented at a size and level of geometric accuracy to permit impact assessment to be undertaken and provide a tool for assessment by way of an image that can be compared with an actual view in the field. They should however never be considered as a substitute to visiting a viewpoint within the field, and the correct viewing distances as indicated should be used in order to accurately illustrate the proposals.

APPENDIX CJ9

London Road Frontage Inset Landscape Plan

NOTES:
Based upon the Ordnance Survey map with permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.
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0m 5m 10m 20m

Key:

- Proposed Native Tree Planting
- Proposed Mixed Native Hedgerow - 2m Wide
- Existing Hedgerow Retained & Reinforced
- Existing Hedgerow Pruning Works
- Existing Hedgerow Removed
- Proposed Mixed Native Woodland
- Highways Visibility Splays

Notes:

Native species of local provenance to be included within Ancient Woodland buffer zone and throughout open spaces to provide landscape and biodiversity enhancements.

Layout shown is illustrative only based on the OSP Indicative Sketch Layout Plan 20179/C101G and Aspect Landscape Strategy Plan 7397/ASP3/LSP Rev C.

The landscape proposals for the London Road frontage are illustrated to demonstrate a suitable level of mitigation and that replacement hedgerow planting is feasible to maintain the existing function of the boundary planting. Full details of the proposed landscaping for the Appeal scheme will be subject to agreement as part of a reserved matters application / conditions.

The highways visibility splays along London Road beyond the Appeal Site boundary will necessitate some minor hedgerow pruning works contained within Highways owned land.

Proposed instant mixed native hedgerow planting interspersed with native hedgerow trees set behind highways visibility splay. The planting will mitigate for the vegetation removal and maintain the existing green character of the road corridor.

Extent of existing hedgerow removal required to accommodate access and highways visibility splays.

15m gap in hedgerow remaining.

Section of hedgerow pruning works adjacent to London Road to accommodate visibility splays

Extent of existing hedge retained and reinforced

Specification for Instant Hedgerow Mix

Common Name	Latin Name	Specification	Height	Pot	Size	Density
Field Maple	Acre campestre	Bushy: 5/6 brks: C	100 – 125cm	5L	5/m dbl staggered	10%
Common Hazel	Corylus avellana	Bushy: 5/6 brks: C	100 – 125cm	5L	5/m dbl staggered	20%
Common Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	Bushy: 5/6 brks: C	100 – 125cm	5L	5/m dbl staggered	30%
Common Holly	Ilex aquifolium	Bushy: 5/6 brks: C	100 – 125cm	5L	5/m dbl staggered	10%
Crab Apple	Malus sylvestris	Bushy: 5/6 brks: C	100 – 125cm	5L	5/m dbl staggered	5%
Blackthorn	Prunus canina	Bushy: 5/6 brks: C	100 – 125cm	5L	5/m dbl staggered	15%
Dog Rose	Rosa canina	Bushy: 5/6 brks: C	100 – 125cm	5L	5/m dbl staggered	5%
Guelder Rose	Viburnum opulus	Bushy: 5/6 brks: C	100 – 125cm	5L	5/m dbl staggered	5%

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

REVISIONS

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TITLE
Land East of London Rd, Uckfield, Wealden
London Road Frontage Landscape Plan

CLIENT
Obsidian Strategic

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:500 @ A3	JAN 2024	BS	CJ

DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
7397 / ASP8 / FLP	A

landscape planning • ecology • arboriculture

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