Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

Final report
Prepared by LUC
September 2026



Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal
Potential Development Sites for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

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Chapter 1
Introduction

This section introduces the study and presents the generic guidance for accommodating Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (GTTSP) accommodation into the landscape

1.1 LUC was commissioned by Wealden District Council in 2026 to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of potential development sites for GTTSP accommodation. This evidence base study is one of several that LUC have prepared for the Council to inform the Local Plan making process. LUC was originally commissioned by Wealden District Council in 2021 to prepare a Landscape Character Assessment, a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development, a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of potential New Settlements and Large Urban Extensions, and a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of potential development sites located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)[1]. A review and updates to parts of the evidence base were undertaken in 2025/2026, including the consideration of additional sites, to support the development of the emerging Wealden Local Plan, as the planning context for Wealden had changed since the original commission in 2021.

1.2 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal of potential development sites for GTTSP accommodation considered sites that had been submitted for the Council's Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Land Availability Assessment (GTTSP LAA), in addition to scoping existing GTTSP sites for extension or intensification. The aim of the appraisal was to ascertain the potential for the sites to accommodate this specific type of development (in landscape and visual terms), as well as determine any site specific constraints and design considerations.

[1] All AONBs are now known as National Landscapes. The High Weald National Landscape remains designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is referred to as such in policy, legislation, guidance and the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029. For this reason, this report continues to refer to the High Weald National Landscape as the High Weald AONB.

1.3 13 potential development sites for GTTSP accommodation have been appraised, based on their location outside of existing towns/villages. 8 of those sites are located within the High Weald AONB.

1.4 The overall findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal for each of the potential development sites is set out in **Appendices A to G**.

1.5 Specific guidance for each site is set out within the Landscape and Visual Appraisals. This includes measures to avoid/minimise any potential landscape and visual effects that could arise from the introduction of GTTSP accommodation, as well as potential landscape enhancement measures. For sites located within the High Weald AONB, the specific guidance should be read in conjunction with the vision, objectives and proposed actions within the High Weald AONB Management Plan[2].

1.6 The following summarises guidance that is more generic across all potential development sites, including:

- Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to the required minimum buffer zone;
- Retain, protect, and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding a site, including woodlands, trees, and hedgerows.
- Enhance the connectivity of the local habitat network through tree planting and hedgerow corridors, in line with any relevant Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.
- Conserve, protect and enhance priority habitat; development should avoid such areas and retain areas of open space to provide a buffer to development.
- Retain areas of historic field pattern (e.g. assarts) where practicable, particularly where they are a defining component of character.
- Consider the character and setting of any heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings).
- Screen development with additional planting where required, using local native species where possible /suitable, to maintain the rural character of the wider assessment unit and landscape.
- Avoid development in the more open and elevated areas of the site.
- Consider intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB in the siting and design of development;
- Locate development to fit with the existing development pattern;
- Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the landscape.
- Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[3] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[4] for sites located within the nationally designated landscape.
- Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[5] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.

Structure of the report

1.7 This report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a non-technical summary (this chapter).

Chapter 2 presents an introduction and policy context.

Chapter 3 sets out the methodology for the landscape and visual appraisal.

Appendices A to G contain the landscape and visual appraisals.

Appendix H contains an extract from GTTSP LAA, Appendix 1, setting out the type of development that has been considered.

Appendix I contains relevant extracts from the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029, in relation to the core character components of natural beauty.

Appendix J contains the sources of information used in the appraisal.

Appendix K contains a glossary of terms.

[2] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[4] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html
[5] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

Chapter 2
Background and purpose of the study

This section sets out the background and purpose of the study and presents the national planning policy context

Background and purpose

2.1 Wealden's rural landscapes have a distinctive character and are a valuable resource for the district. A large proportion (60%) of the district is located within nationally protected landscapes, including the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the north and the South Downs National Park to the south[6].

2.2 At the same time the district is facing the need to accommodate substantial housing and employment growth and will be required to allocate growth in its Local Plan which will set out a growth strategy for the Plan period to 2040. As part of this growth, the Council also needs to consider meeting specific needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson community, thus must consider sites for GTTSP accommodation within the district. It will be important to deliver future growth in a way that protects and enhances valued landscapes and their defining components of character, as well as contributing to and enhancing the natural local environment.

2.3 To help inform the Local Plan making process, LUC was commissioned by Wealden District Council in 2026 to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of potential development sites for GTTSP accommodation that had been submitted for the Council's GTTSP LAA. The Council also identified a number of existing GTTSP sites in the district that may be suitable for intensification of use (e.g. accommodating more pitches/plots in the red line area identified during the previous planning application process) or extension in proximity of the site, and these were also considered in this appraisal.

2.4 The type of development to be considered on these sites is as set out in the GTTSP LAA Joint Methodology (Appendix

[6] South Downs National Park is the Planning Authority for the area of the National Park that sits within Wealden District.

1), at Stage 1. This has been reproduced and contained in **Appendix H.**

National planning policy context

2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to produce a strategic housing land availability assessment to identify sufficient land to meet their housing need[7]. Local authorities must assess and seek to meet the accommodation needs of all members of their communities, including Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Local authorities are then required to identify a supply of deliverable and developable sites to meet these accommodation needs in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)[8] and the NPPF[9].

National Planning Policy Framework

2.6 The UK Government published an updated and revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in February 2025, which sets out the environmental, social and economic planning policies for England. Central to NPPF policies is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; that development should be planned for positively and individual proposals should be approved wherever possible.

2.7 However, one of the overarching objectives that underpins the NPPF is set out in **Paragraph 8**: *"*an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment…*"*

2.8 **Paragraph 187** states that *"*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes***"* and *"***recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside***"*.

2.9 **Paragraph 20** states 'Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for:

d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation'.

2.10 **Paragraph 188** states 'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries'.

2.11 **Paragraph 189** states 'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas'.

2.12 **Paragraph 190** states **'**When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development[10] other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

(a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

(b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

(c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

2.13 **Paragraph 198** contains one reference to sensitivity as follows:

'Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, **as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development**…'

[7] Paragraph 72, NPPF (December 2024)
[8] Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), December 2024
[9] National Planning Policy Framework 2024. Paragraphs 63 and 72
[10] Whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined, as set out in https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/15-conserving-and-enhancing-the-natural-environment - footnote60

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

2.14 Further guidance is provided in the NPPG. Paragraph 037[11] which notes the following under the heading of 'How can the character of the landscape be assessed?'

"*…Landscape sensitivity can inform policy development and appropriate locations for development and can also be one of the considerations to be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.*

To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed. To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

2.15 The PPTS sets out the government's planning policy for traveller sites, and was last updated in December 2024.

2.16 One of the aims set out in **Paragraph 4** is "for local planning authorities to have due regard to the **protection of local amenity and local environment**". This is repeated further in **Paragraph 10** which states that in producing their Local Plan, local authorities should "protect local amenity and environment".

High Weald AONB

2.17 AONBs exist within a legal framework based on the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, which provided AONBs with protection under planning law against inappropriate development, and gave local authorities permissive powers to take action for 'preserving and enhancing natural beauty'.

2.18 This was subsumed and strengthened under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which provides a firm legislative basis for the protection and management of AONBs. Relevant sections are:

- **Section 82** reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty.
- **Section 84** confirms the powers of local authorities to take 'all such action as appears to them expedient' to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of an AONB.
- **Section 92** makes clear that the conservation of natural beauty includes the conservation of 'flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features.'

The CRoW Act 2000 (as amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023)

2.19 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amended **section 85** of the CRoW Act 2000, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to 'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' when discharging their functions in AONBs. The new duty replaces the previous requirement for relevant authorities to 'have regard' to the purpose of AONBs and is intended as a more proactive and strengthened requirement.

[11] Reference ID: 8-037-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019

Chapter 3
Methodology and summary

This section presents the scope of the study and the approach to landscape and visual appraisal

Approach to landscape and visual appraisal

3.1 The approach to this study was informed by the above planning policy context and current good practice guidance in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)[12] and Natural England's 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management'[13]. The approach also draws on best practice in recent assessments completed by LUC and others.

The 'core character components of natural beauty' of the High Weald AONB

3.2 Eight of the sites are located within the High Weald AONB. For these sites, the appraisal considered the eight 'core character components of natural beauty', as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029. The eight defining components of character are as follows:

1. ***Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate) –*** *a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate.*
2. ***Settlement*** *– dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.*
3. ***Routeways*** *– a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).*
4. ***Woodland*** *– an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.*

[12] Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition

[13] Natural England, An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management, 2019

5. ***Fieldscapes and heath*** *– small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland).*
6. ***Dark night skies*** *– intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.*
7. ***Aesthetic and perceptual qualities*** *– arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape.*
8. ***Land-based economy and rural living*** *– with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape.*

3.3 The High Weald AONB Management Plan provides a list of supporting key characteristics, and associated objectives and actions for each core character component of natural beauty. Relevant extracts are provided in **Appendix I.**

3.4 Spatial data relating to the 'defining components of character' was provided by the High Weald AONB and has informed this appraisal. The dataset includes information relating to:

- Water systems data (watercourses, ponds, reservoirs and openwater);
- Geology data (bedrock geology and sandstone outcrops);
- Settlement data (historic settlement pattern and historic farmsteads);
- Historic routeways data;
- Woodland data (ancient semi-natural woodlands and plantations on ancient woodland site); and
- Field and heath data (historic field boundaries, heathland, and wildflower grassland).

The process of appraisal

3.5 The process for undertaking the study involved the following main stages:

Part 1: Desk based assessment

3.6 The initial stage of the study involved a desk-based assessment drawing on descriptions and evaluations in the Landscape Character Assessment for Wealden[14] and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development[15].

3.7 Information from relevant documents and available GIS data were reviewed to understand the wider landscape context for the potential GTTSP accommodation sites. Key sources of information used to inform the appraisal are listed in **Appendix J**.

Part 2: Field verification

3.8 A structured process of field survey verification was undertaken in summer 2026 by landscape professionals from LUC in order to verify and refine the outputs from the desk study. Each potential development site was visited to record information and take photographs.

Part 3: Analysis

Potential effects of developing the site

3.9 For each potential development site, an analysis of the potential effects of development was undertaken. This included identification of the potential effects of development on:

- Landscape character and features – how potential development could affect key landscape qualities/ sensitivities or conflict with relevant guidance (as identified in the Wealden Landscape Character Assessment or the Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment)
- Existing settlement form and setting – how potential GTTSP accommodation could affect settlement/ development pattern.
- Visual amenity – how potential development could affect sensitive visual receptors

3.10 For sites located within the High Weald AONB, an additional step was undertaken at this point in the process. For each potential effect identified, the relevant core character component(s) of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB and supporting key characteristic(s) likely to be affected were also identified. Based on professional judgement, the appraisal considers how strongly the core components of character are expressed on the site as follows:

[14] LUC, 2022 Wealden Landscape Character Assessment

[15] LUC, 2023 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development

- **Strong expression** – several character components are present and are clearly expressed, i.e. sense of being within the AONB with an absence of human intervention that detracts from natural beauty.
- **Moderate expression** – some character components are present and are evident within the landscape, but could be considered to form part of an ordinary rural landscape (without a strong sense of being within the AONB).
- **Weak expression** – core character components are absent or are present but their expression is masked by human intervention that detracts from natural beauty.

Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities

3.11 For each development site, advice is provided on potential mitigation measures to avoid or minimise adverse effects and opportunities to enhance the landscape.

3.12 For sites located within the High Weald AONB, reference to the relevant objective in the High Weald AONB Management Plan is also provided.

Overall sensitivity of the site

3.13 The analysis is concluded with a judgement on the overall landscape sensitivity of the site for GTTSP accommodation. The five-point scale from 'low' to 'high' landscape sensitivity used for the judgements is set out in **Table 3.1.**

Table 3.1 Landscape sensitivity

Sensitivity judgement	Definition
High	Landscape and visual constraints mean the site is unlikely to be suitable for development.
Moderate-high	Great care is required with design, and substantial mitigation likely to be needed, to avoid landscape and visual constraints and sensitivities.
Moderate	Site (or part of the site) has landscape and visual constraints and sensitivities – care with design and mitigation required.
Low-moderate	Site has some landscape and visual constraints and sensitivities, careful design and awareness needed.
Low	In landscape and visual terms the site has few constraints.

Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB

3.14 For sites located within the High Weald AONB, a judgement of the overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB was provided. A RAG[16] rating system was used for the judgement as follows:

Table 3.2 RAG rating system for overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB

RAG rating	Definition
High impact	Development of the site will have a high impact on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.
Moderate impact	Development of the site will have a moderate impact on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore somewhat affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.
Low impact	Development of the site will have a low impact on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define

[16] (R)ed, (A)mber, and (G)reen, commonly referred to as RAG reporting, is a method of assessment that uses colour categorisation to indicate potential issues and their severity.

RAG rating	Definition
	the AONB, and is therefore unlikely to affect / impact the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

Part 4: Reporting

3.15 The findings of the assessment were updated following field survey, and a draft and final report submitted.

3.16 The assessment profiles for each site are organised by the assessment units considered within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development[17]. These are contained in **Appendixes A to G**. Each of these appendices are structured in a common format as follows:

Assessment unit overview

3.17 For each assessment unit the following is provided:

- **the key sensitivities** of the relevant assessment unit (as described in the 2023 Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment: Residential and Employment Development); and
- **a list of the potential GTTSP accommodation sites** located within the assessment unit (which is also illustrated on a map).

Baseline analysis of potential development site

3.18 For each potential GTTSP accommodation site, the following is provided:

- **Site details and constraints** including the proposed use (e.g. intensification or extension of existing site), whether the site (or part of) is a draft Option in the draft Focused Local Plan 2026, and the site location. A map showing the location of the site in relation to the constraints is provided.
- **Representative site photos;**
- **Baseline landscape character** for each potential development site, including key landscape features and qualities of the site and how these relate to the character of the wider assessment unit; and the relation of the site to the existing settlement/ development form and edge;
- **Baseline visual character** identifying potential visual receptors;
- For sites located within the High Weald AONB, the **expression of the 'core character components of natural beauty' of the High Weald AONB on the site** – identifying if any of the features/qualities of the site are representative of the 'core character components' of the AONB.

  [NB in this section text that is underlined and italicised comes directly from the AONB Management Plan].

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

3.19 An analysis of the potential effects of development in landscape and visual terms, including effects on:

- landscape character and features (and the corresponding 'core character component(s) of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB' for sites located within the AONB);
- settlement/ development form edge and setting (and the corresponding 'core character component(s) of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB' for sites located within the AONB); and
- visual amenity (and the corresponding 'core character component(s) of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB' for sites located within the AONB).

3.20 The potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities are also provided against each potential effect (with reference to the relevant objective in the High Weald AONB Management Plan for sites located within the AONB).

Summary

- **Overall sensitivity of the site** using the levels of landscape sensitivity as set out in **Table 3.1.**
- Indication of **how strongly the core components of character are expressed on the site** for sites located within the High Weald AONB, using the judgements set out in **paragraph 3.10.**
- **Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB** for sites located within the High Weald AONB, using the RAG rating system in **Table 3.2**.
- A summary of the key issues and recommendations is provided.

[17] LUC, 2023 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development

Constraints and opportunities

3.21 For the new site and the proposed extension sites, a constraints and opportunities plan is provided, to illustrate locations within the site where development could best be accommodated in landscape and visual terms.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in each assessment unit

3.22 The cumulative effects of all the potential development sites within each assessment unit are analysed.

The potential development sites

3.23 This study assessed the landscape and visual sensitivity of 13 sites identified by Wealden District Council for potential GTTSP accommodation within Wealden District and the AONB. These potential development sites are mapped on **Figure 3.1.**

3.24 The landscape and visual appraisals are presented as separate appendices based on assessment units, as follows:

Appendix A: Wider LCA 2B assessment unit

- Milton Field, Milton Gate, Wilmington, Polegate

Appendix B: Wider LCA 3A assessment unit

- Land at Randalls Farm, Whitesmith, Chiddingly

Appendix C: LCA 5B - Heathfield assessment unit

- Monkhurst Field, Sandy Cross Lane, Heathfield

Appendix D: Wider LCA 5B assessment unit

- The Plot, Five Ashes Road, Mayfield
- Little Oaks, Argos Hill, Mayfield
- Land at Green Hedges Nursery, Danegate Lane, Mark Cross
- The Stables (Bush House), Bells Yew Green
- Little Rose, Meres Lane, Cross in Hand

Appendix E: Wider LCA 6A assessment unit

- The Chalet, Colestock Corner, Cowden

Appendix F: LCA 6D - Buxted

- Water Treatment Works, Station Road, Buxted

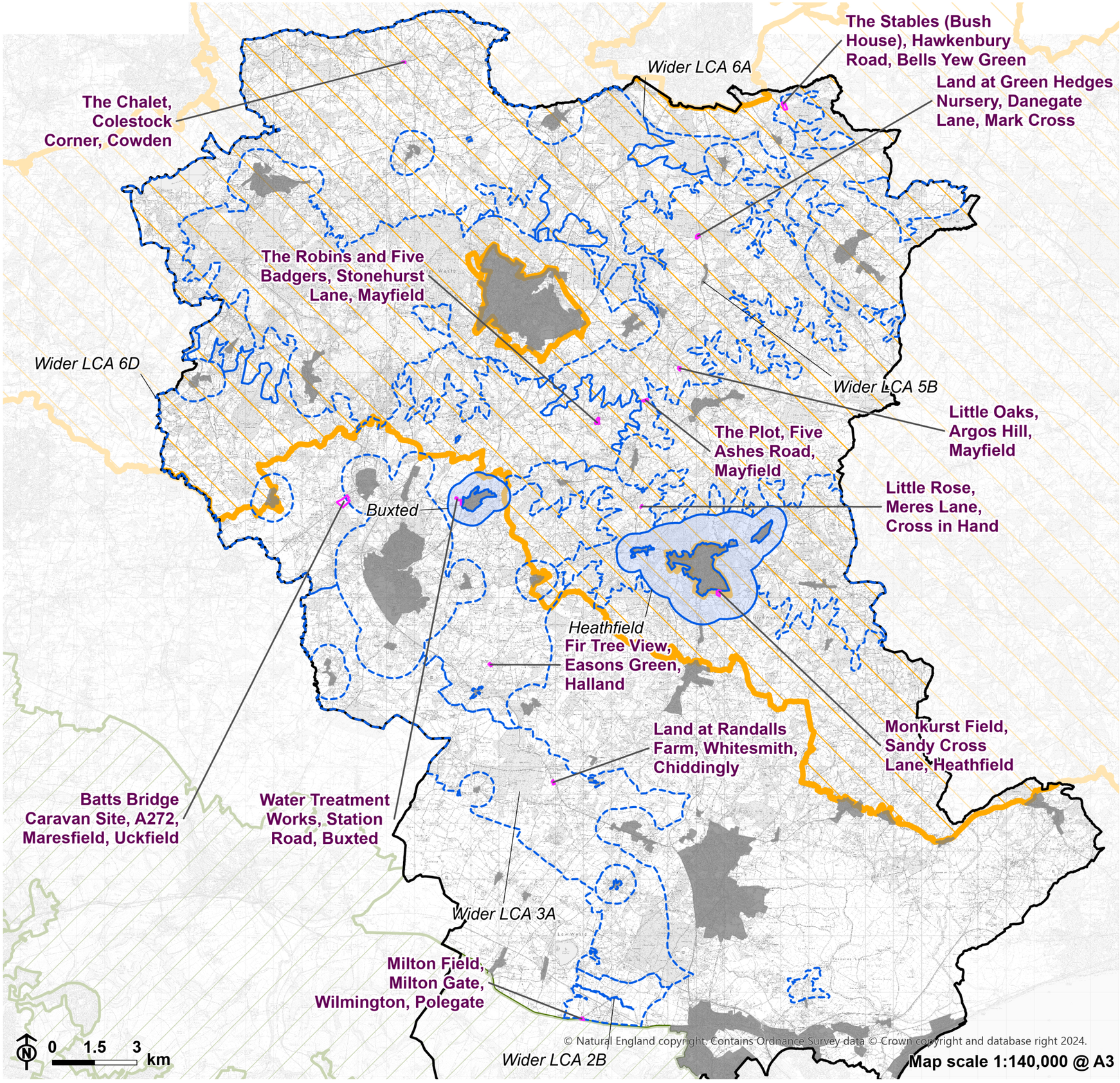
Appendix G: Wider LCA 6D assessment unit

- The Robins and Five Badgers, Stonehurst Lane, Mayfield
- Batts Bridge Caravan Site, A272, Maresfield, Uckfield
- Fir Tree View, Easons Green, Halland

Wealden DC: Landscape Evidence Base Studies
Wealden District Council

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Figure 3.1: Potential Development Sites



- GTTSP LAA site
- Sensitivity assessment unit
- Wider LCA assessment unit
- Wealden district
- South Downs National Park
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Settlement

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Summary

3.25 The full assessment of each site or groups of sites is found in **Appendices A to G.** A summary of the overall sensitivity ratings for each site is shown in **Table 3.3.** This also includes the level of expression of the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB; and overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB, for sites located within the High Weald AONB.

Table 3.3 Summary of assessment ratings of potential GTTSP accommodation sites

Site name	Overall landscape sensitivity	Variations in sensitivity	Level of expression of the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Variation to overall impact
Wider LCA 2B assessment unit – see Appendix A					
Milton Field, Milton Gate, Wilmington, Polegate	Low-Moderate	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wider LCA 3A assessment unit – see Appendix B					
Land at Randalls Farm, Whitesmith, Chiddingly	Low-Moderate	The eastern half of the site is of greater sensitivity to the western half.	N/A	N/A	N/A
LCA 5B - Heathfield assessment unit – see Appendix C					
Monkhurst Field, Sandy Cross Lane, Heathfield	Moderate	The southern part of the site is of greater sensitivity than the northern part due to its sloping landform and being away from the existing development along Sandy Cross Lane.	Moderate	Moderate	There would be greater impact on the southern part of the site than the northern part.
Wider LCA 5B assessment unit – see Appendix D					

Site name	Overall landscape sensitivity	Variations in sensitivity	Level of expression of the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Variation to overall impact
The Plot, Five Ashes Road, Mayfield	Moderate	The western half of the site is of greater sensitivity to the eastern half.	Moderate	Moderate	There would be a greater impact on the western half of the site than the eastern half.
Little Oaks, Argos Hill, Mayfield	Low-Moderate	None	Weak	Low	None
Land at Green Hedges Nursery, Danegate Lane, Mark Cross	Moderate	The western and south-western parts of the site and the wooded boundaries of the site are of greater sensitivity to the eastern half.	Moderate	Moderate	There would be a greater impact on the western and south-western parts of the site than the eastern half.
The Stables (Bush House), Bells Yew Green	Moderate	In comparison to the northern part of the site, the potential extension in the south is of greater sensitivity, reflected by the moderate sensitivity rating above. The northern part of the site is considered to be of **low-moderate sensitivity** to further intensification given its existing residential use.	Moderate	Moderate	There would be a greater impact on the potential extension in the south than the existing residential site in the north which is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB.
Little Rose, Meres Lane, Cross in Hand	Low-Moderate	None	Weak	Low	None
Wider LCA 6A assessment unit – see Appendix E					
The Chalet, Colestock Corner, Cowden	Low-Moderate	None	Weak	Low	None
LCA 6D - Buxted – see Appendix F					

Site name	Overall landscape sensitivity	Variations in sensitivity	Level of expression of the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Variation to overall impact
Water Treatment Works, Station Road, Buxted	Low-Moderate	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wider LCA 6D assessment unit – see Appendix G					
The Robins and Five Badgers, Stonehurst Lane, Mayfield	Moderate	In comparison to the existing site, the potential extension area in the north is of greater sensitivity, reflected by the moderate sensitivity rating above. The existing site in the south is considered to be of **low-moderate sensitivity** to further intensification given its existing Gypsy and Traveller use.	Moderate	Moderate	There would be a greater impact on the potential extension area than the existing site which is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB.
Batts Bridge Caravan Site, A272, Maresfield, Uckfield	Moderate	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fir Tree View, Easons Green, Halland	Low	None	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appendix A

Wider LCA 2B Assessment Unit

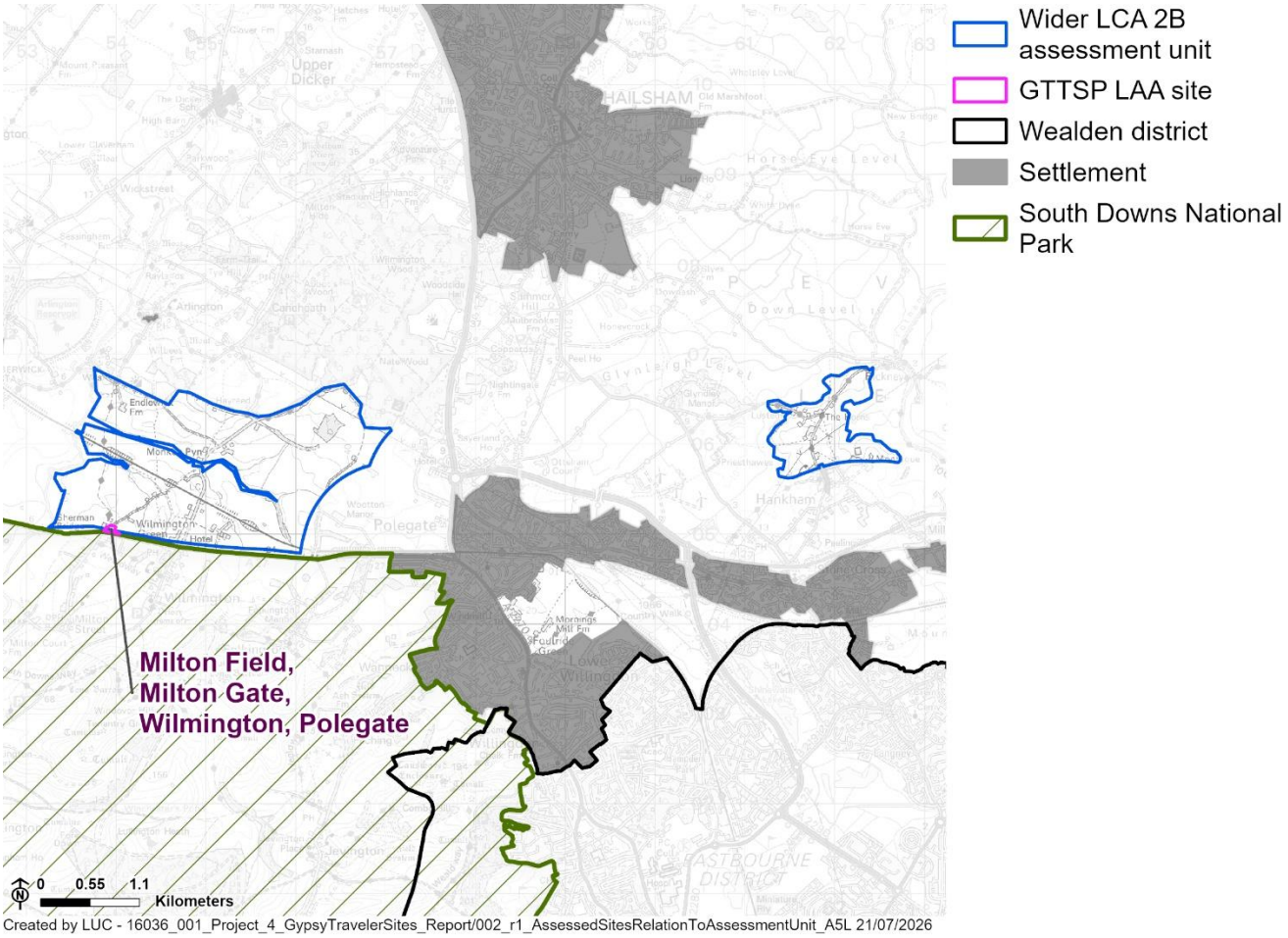
A.1 The key landscape sensitivities of the Wider LCA 2B assessment unit, as described in the *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* (2023) are:

- *Ecologically valued wetland and grassland habitats, including Monkyn Pin LWS.*
- *Pasture and arable fields bound by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.*
- *Historic field pattern including assarts and piecemeal field enclosure.*
- *Historic built features including historic farms and houses.*
- *Limited settlement pattern, with scattered houses along rural roads.*
- *Rural character with good levels of tranquillity and dark night skies.*
- *Good access through public rights of way including promoted routes the Wealdway and 1066 Country Walk.*
- *Open character with long distance views to the South Downs National Park.*

A.2 One potential development site is considered within the Heathfield assessment unit:

- **Milton Field, Milton Gate, Wilmington, Polegate** (located outside of the High Weald AONB)

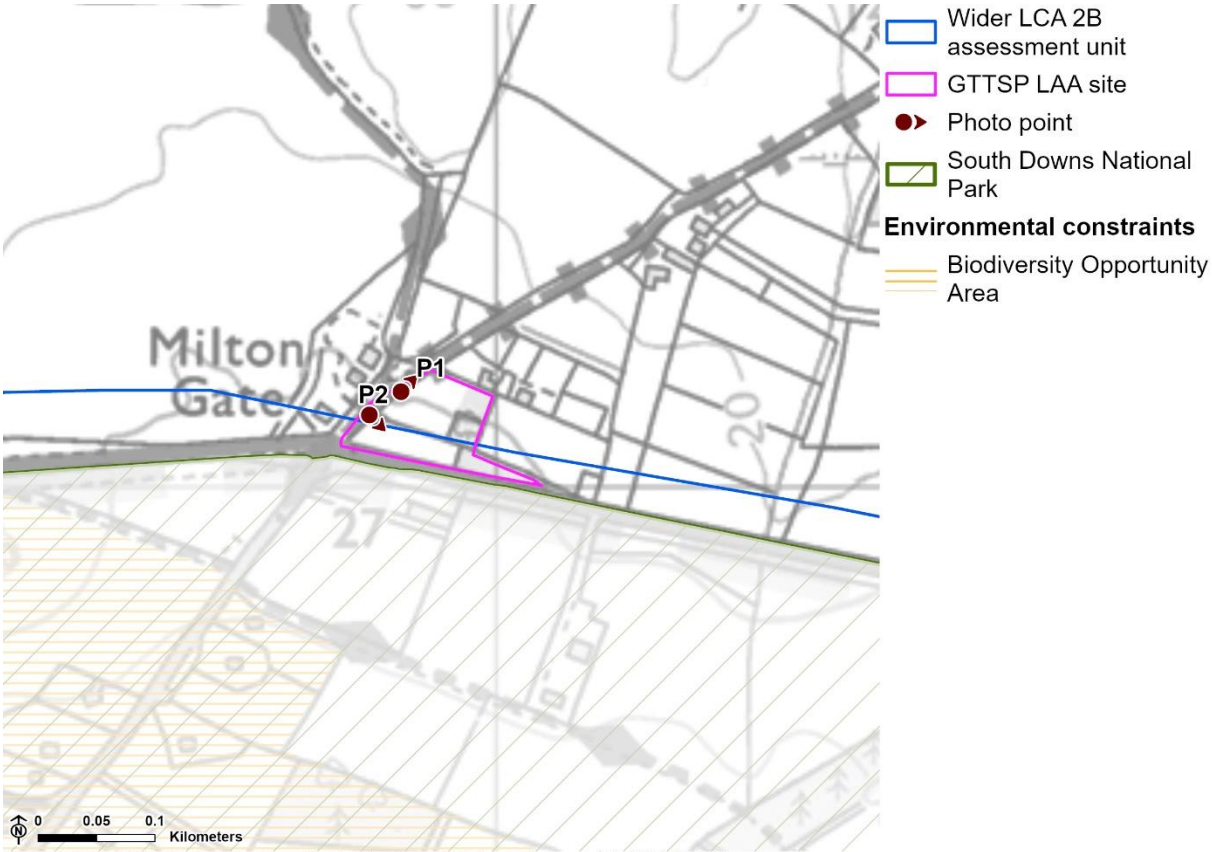
Figure A.1 Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Milton Field, Milton Gate, Wilmington, Polegate

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Authorised, Permanent (WD/2004/3349/F)
Site location	This site is located outside of the High Weald AONB but adjacent to the South Downs National Park. It lies at the junction of the A27 and Milton Street/Lewes Road, at the southern edge of a small cluster of buildings associated with the Milton Gate hamlet.

Figure A.2 Site location and constraints



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/003_r1_LocationConstraints_A5L 21/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: Hedgerows and existing fenced boundaries along the western edge restrict views into the site.



Photo 2: View into the site from the south-western edge along the Wealdway.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features		
Landform ■ The site occupies a gently undulating landform at approximately 25m AOD, rising gently to the south towards the A27 corridor. ■ To the south-west, beyond the A27, the land rises more steeply as the chalk scarp of the South Downs forms a prominent backdrop. The site's position in the vale contributes to the '*open character*' of the Polegate Open Clay Vale assessment unit.	As the site has already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, there is unlikely to be any substantial changes to the landform. Minor changes may relate to the implementation of more hard standing within the north of the site which currently consists of grass.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landform is not considered necessary.
Natural character ■ The site's existing use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation means the site has already been partially developed, with hardstanding and structures present within the southern half of the site and an access road extending off the A27 Lewes Road in the south-west corner of the site. ■ The site is bordered to the north and east by open fields (including for equestrian use) and associated buildings. ■ The outer boundaries of the site mostly comprise close boarded fencing, although the southern boundary (which adjoins the A27), is reinforced with a mature hedgerow (containing a mature tree), providing a degree of screening from the road corridor. A mature wooded belt partly adjoins the south-eastern corner of the site. The western boundary is partly lined by deciduous trees and scrub vegetation.	Loss or deterioration of the hedgerow along the southern site boundary and wooded belt along the south-eastern corner, that contributes to the screening/ softening of views into the site from along the road, as well as trees along the western boundary.	Retain and enhance any existing boundary vegetation, particularly along the southern site boundary and the south-eastern corner (facing the A27), using native species, where possible.

Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC identifies the site as planned formal/private enclosure, which is reflected by the fenced boundaries. The majority of the site to the south has already been developed with hardstanding, and so there is no sense of time depth. ■ Milton Street, which runs along the western boundary of the site and provides the existing access into the site, forms part of the route of the Wealdway, a promoted long-distance walking route, contributing to the '*Good access through public rights of way'* of the wider assessment unit. ■ The surrounding landscape to the south and north of the A27 retains a pattern of open pasture and arable fields, broadly consistent with the open agricultural character of the clay vale. The A27 forms a dominant infrastructural boundary to the south of the site.	Introduction of additional pitches would expand the existing area of hardstanding, resulting in limited alterations to the existing landscape pattern of development and open fields.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landscape pattern and time depth is not considered necessary.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is strongly influenced by the proximity of the A27, which reduces tranquillity in the immediate area (with levels recorded as low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ As the site is located away from the settlement edge and at the foot of the South Downs National Park, it experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping).	Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in further night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [18] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development		
■ The site is located within the Milton Gate hamlet cluster, which comprises a few buildings within small farmsteads, to the north and south of the A27 Lewes Road.	Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the site / area.

[18] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

■ The site contains several static caravans and some shed-type structures within the southern half of the site.		
Potential visual receptors		
■ The site's boundaries are substantially enclosed by fencing and adjacent built structures to the west and north, limiting views from those directions. ■ Views from low-lying areas of the South Downs National Park immediately south of the site are limited by the intervening vegetation, including along the southern boundary of the site. From more elevated areas, the site may be visible but seen at distance ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of the A27 to the south (in glimpsed views); – users of the Wealdway along Milton Street along the western boundary of the site; and – residents of the farmsteads adjacent to the north and west.	The potential increase in buildings and structures will likely be seen from the nearby visual receptors, although given the existing use of the site, may go largely unnoticed and would be barely perceptible in elevated long-distance views from the South Downs National Park.	■ Retain and enhance the existing boundary vegetation along the A27 to maintain screening of the site from the road and views from low-lying areas of the South Downs National Park further south. ■ Retain public access and consider enhancing boundary vegetation along the western boundary facing Milton Street to soften the appearance of the site as experienced by users of the Wealdway, whilst retaining the existing character of the lane.
Low-Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use (and is influenced by adjacent existing buildings), it contains very few characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. The site forms part of a landscape with dark skies and users of the Wealdway are considered to be a key visual receptor, which slightly increases sensitivity. Overall, it is considered the site is of **low-moderate** sensitivity to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use. <u>Variations in Sensitivity</u> There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.	

Summary and recommendations

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

- Retain and enhance the southern site boundary and the south-eastern corner (facing the A27), using native species where possible, to maintain screening of the site from the road and views from low-lying areas of the South Downs National Park further south.
- Retain public access and consider enhancing boundary vegetation along the western boundary facing Milton Street to soften the appearance of the site as experienced by users of the Wealdway, whilst retaining the existing character of the lane.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Wider LCA 2B assessment unit

Only one site has been considered within the Wider LCA 2B assessment unit within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The assessment of cumulative effects is therefore not required.

Appendix B

Wider LCA 3A Assessment Unit

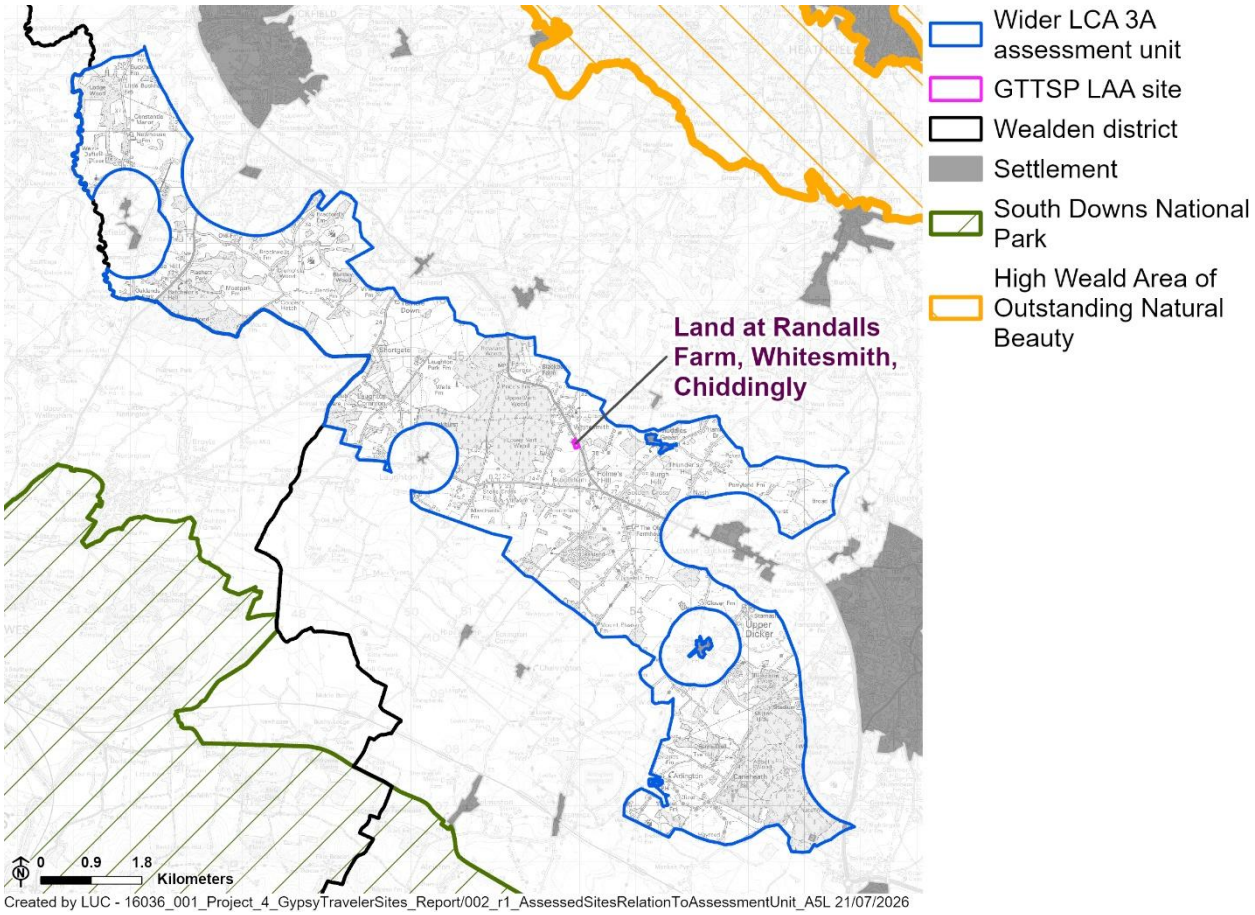
B.1 The key landscape sensitivities of the Wider LCA 3A assessment unit, as described in the *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* (2023) are:

- *Gently rolling landscape, bisected by river and stream corridors.*
- *Ecologically valued woodlands and grassland, including ancient woodland and Plashett Park Wood SSSI.*
- *Intact historic field pattern, including assarts around Halland, Whitesmith and the Dickers and co-axial fields east of Chalvington Road.*
- *Pasture and arable fields bound by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.*
- *Dispersed, rural settlement pattern.*
- *Historic features including with historic farmsteads and houses, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas at Muddles Green and Arlington.*
- *Good access on public rights of way through the landscape.*
- *Rural character with good experience of tranquillity and dark night skies, away from modern development along the A22.*
- *Occasional views to South Downs National Park and High Weald AONB.*

B.2 One potential development site is considered within the Heathfield assessment unit:

- **Land at Randalls Farm, Whitesmith, Chiddingly** (located outside of the High Weald AONB)

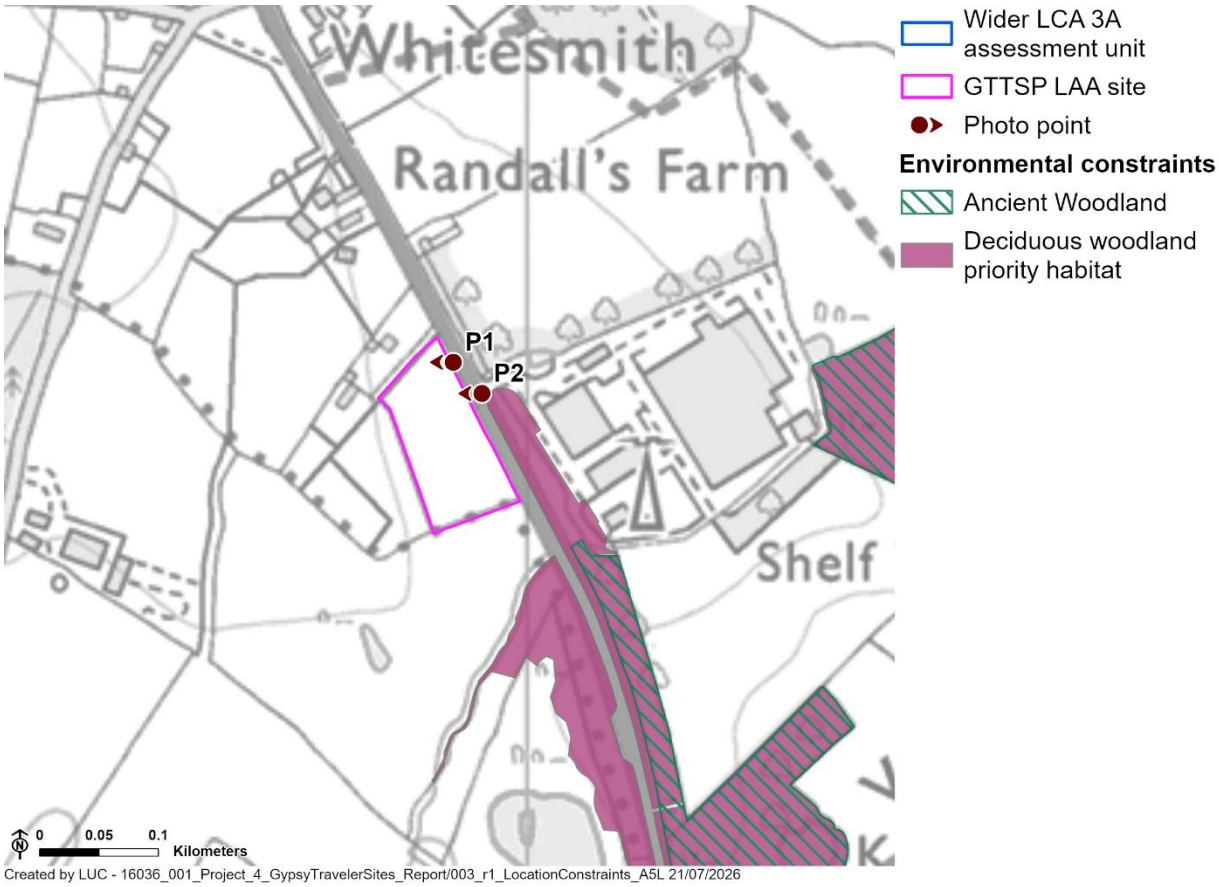
Figure B.1 Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Land at Randalls Farm, Whitesmith, Chiddingly

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Authorised, Permanent (WD/2023/0958/FR)
Site location	This site lies outside of the High Weald AONB. It is located to the south-west of Chiddingly and bounded by the A22 to the north-east.

Figure B.2 Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



Photo 1: View into the site from the A22 and the existing gated access on the north-eastern boundary.



Photo 2: Hedgerows and boundary trees along the A22 provide effective screening and limit views into the site.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features		
Landform ■ The site occupies a relatively flat landform at approximately 30m AOD. ■ The land falls gently to the south and south-east towards the wooded stream corridors that dissect the vale. This landform is characteristic of the *'gently rolling landscape'* sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	As the majority of the site has already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, there is unlikely to be any substantial changes to the landform. Minor changes may relate to the implementation of more hard standing.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landform is not considered necessary.
Natural character ■ The site's existing use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation means that it has already been developed with hard standing within the western half of the site and a gated access road extending off the A22 in the north-eastern corner of the site. The eastern half is undeveloped and comprises small pastoral fields. ■ The eastern boundary of the site along the A22 and the southern boundary, are is defined by mature hedgerows with some mature hedgerow trees. The northern boundary is defined by tall hedgerow vegetation, associated with the adjacent farm. The western boundary adjoins open agricultural fields with weak hedgerow boundaries/minimal screening. ■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland lies on the opposite side of the A22 and also 60m to the south-east of the site. Kiln Wood ancient woodland is located 60m to the south-east on the eastern side of the A22.	■ Loss of pastoral field within the eastern half of the site. ■ Removal of mature deciduous trees and hedgerows around the site, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats.	■ Retain and protect any existing boundary vegetation, particularly along the eastern boundary to provide continued screening of the site from the A22. ■ void, where possible, the creation of new additional access points that would result in the loss of additional mature roadside hedgerow vegetation along the A22.

Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC identifies the site is part of a cohesive assart fieldscape. The strong mature hedgerow and tree boundary to the south reflects the landscape pattern, however, the majority of the site to the west has already been developed with hardstanding, reducing the sense of time depth.	■ Introduction of additional pitches would expand the existing area of hardstanding, resulting in limited alterations to the existing landscape pattern of development and open fields. ■ Loss or alteration of the hedgerow along the southern boundary of the site may weaken the relationship between the site and the surrounding assarts.	■ Retain and protect the existing field boundaries around the site where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure. ■ Avoid boundary treatments such as fencing that would introduce a suburbanising influence into the historic fieldscape.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is partly rural in character as a result of its pastoral land cover in the eastern half, mature boundary vegetation, woodland context and location away from the main settlement edge of Whitesmith. ■ The site is influenced by its existing Gypsy and Traveller use, and proximity to the A22 and the Woodland Centre Business Park (on the opposite side of the A22), reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ As the site is away from a settlement edge, it experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping).	■ Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in localised night blight. ■ Increase in domestic activity, movement and associated structures may reduce the rural and tranquil qualities of the site.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [19] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development		
■ The site is located within a dispersed rural settlement pattern, away from the defined settlement edge of Whitesmith. Buildings within the Woodland Centre Business Park (east of the site) contribute to the pattern of built development.	Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity blocks, and sheds, as well as new fencing and hardstanding within the eastern half.	■ Concentrate any intensification within the western half of the site where possible to minimise the loss of the rural pastoral fields in the east. ■ Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character.

[19] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

■ The site appears to contain several static caravans, pitches and shed-type structures concentrated within the western half of the site.		
Potential visual receptors		
■ The existing hedgerow and mature tree boundaries that surround the site, provide enclosure and prevents views from the Woodland Centre Business Park and from locations that are of long-distance. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of the A22 to the east; and – residents of the properties adjacent to the northern boundary.	The potential increase in buildings and structures will be seen by nearby visual receptors, although given the existing use of the site, may go largely unnoticed.	Retain and protect the hedgerows and mature trees along the site boundaries where possible, to maintain visual containment.
Low-Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use, it contains characteristics that reduce sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the eastern half of the site comprises undeveloped pastoral fields and has mature field boundaries (around the site). The site also forms part of a wider assart field pattern and experiences dark skies. These factors slightly increase sensitivity. Overall, it is considered the site is of **low-moderate sensitivity** to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use. <u>Variations in sensitivity</u> The eastern half of the site is of greater sensitivity to the western half.	

Summary and recommendations

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

- Retain and protect any existing boundary vegetation, particularly along the eastern boundary to provide continued screening of the site from the A22.
- Concentrate any intensification within the western half of the site where possible to minimise the loss of the rural pastoral fields in the east.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Wider LCA 3A assessment unit

Only one site has been considered within the Wider LCA 3A assessment unit within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The assessment of cumulative effects is therefore not required.

Appendix C

LCA 5B - Heathfield Assessment Unit

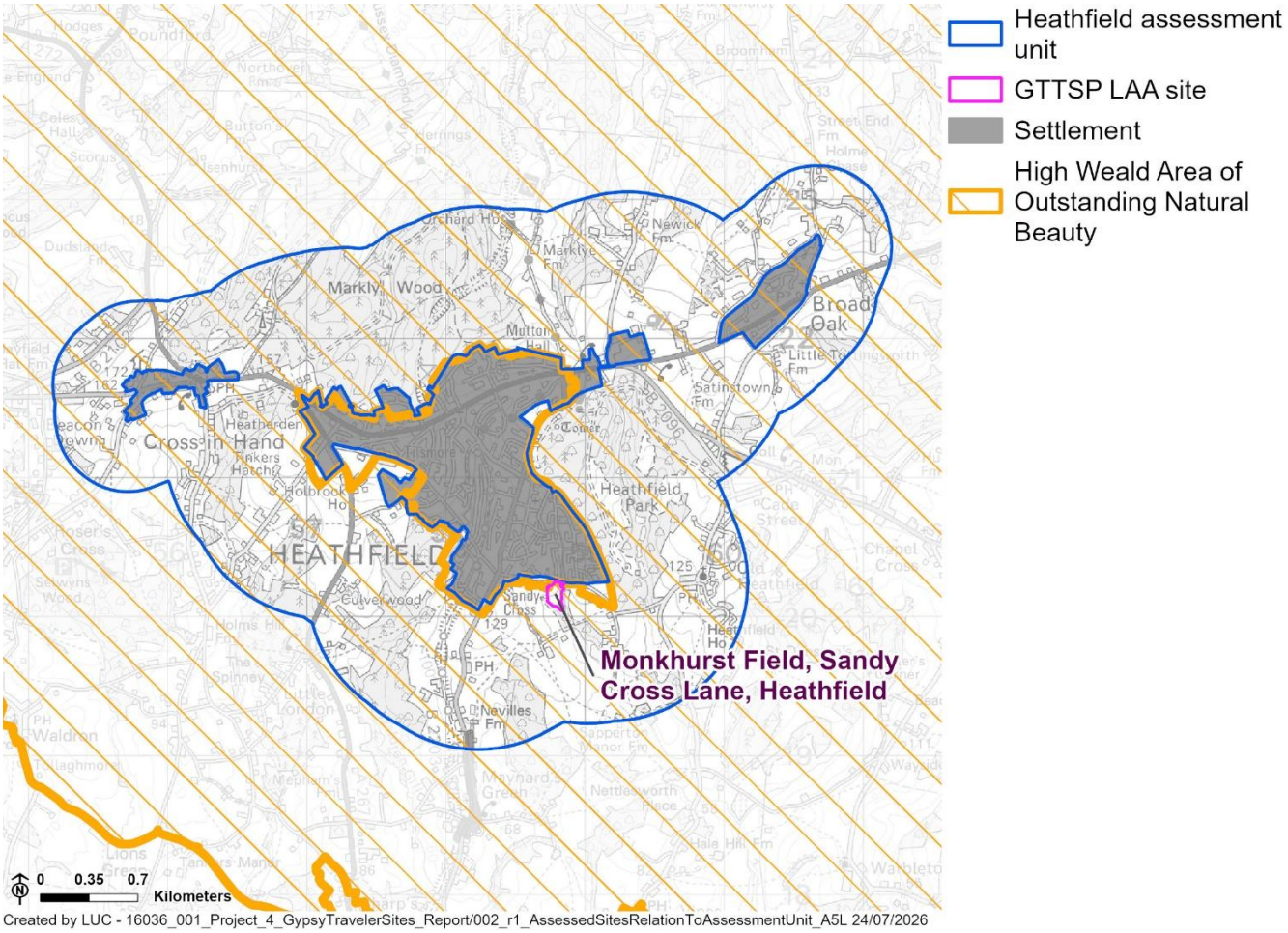
C.1 The key landscape sensitivities of the Heathfield assessment unit, as described in the *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* (2023) are:

- *The complex ridge and valley landform.*
- *Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin), particularly in the north and east of the assessment unit and the Heathfield Park SSSI.*
- *Areas of lowland meadow, semi-improved grassland and heathland in the south and north of the assessment unit.*
- *Intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the north-east and south of the assessment unit with mature hedgerows and wooded field boundaries.*
- *The historic character and value of Heathfield Park and the Old Heathfield Conservation Area.*
- *The wooded backdrop to the northern and eastern settlement edge of Heathfield.*
- *The network of public rights of way including the Cuckoo Trail.*
- *The strong rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity, particularly within larger areas of woodland.*
- *Location within and intervisibility with more distant areas of the High Weald AONB.*

C.2 One potential development site is considered within the Heathfield assessment unit:

- **Monkhurst Field, Sandy Cross Lane, Heathfield** (located within the High Weald AONB)

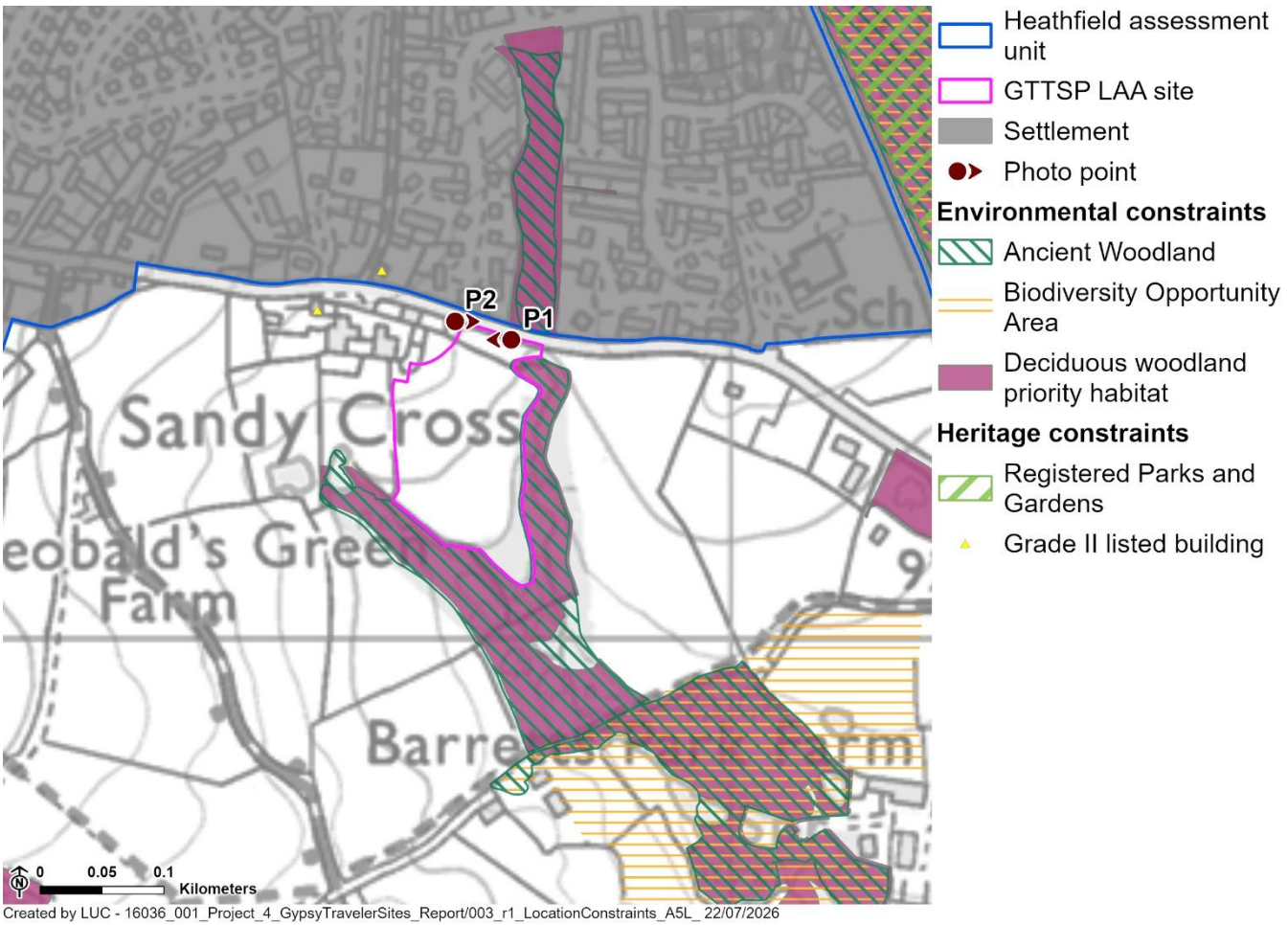
Figure C.1 Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Monkhurst Field, Sandy Cross Lane, Heathfield

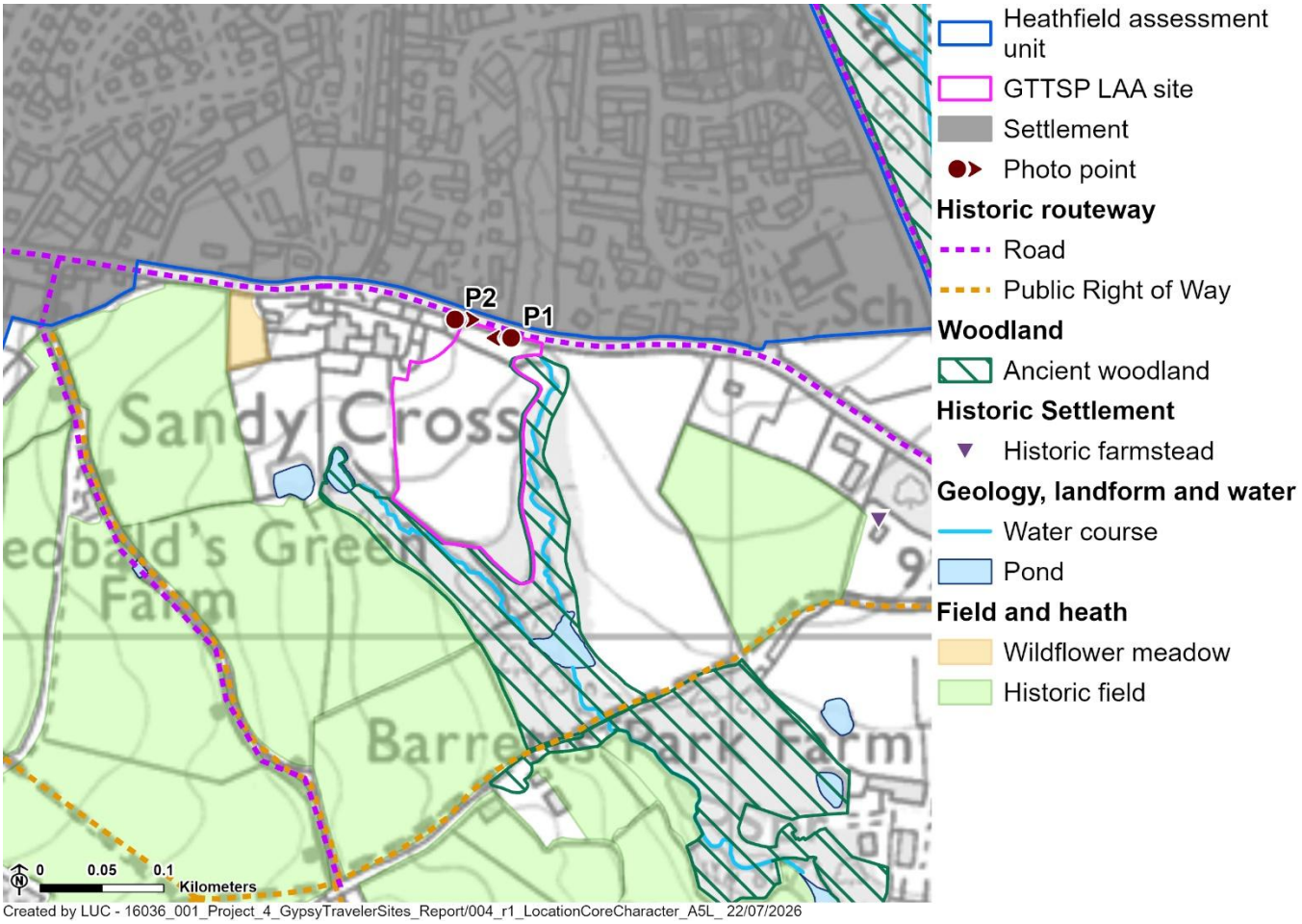
Site Details	
Proposed use	New Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	New site – northern extent shown as Option OGT3 in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026).
Site location	This site lies within the High Weald AONB, along the southern edge of Heathfield. It is bounded by Sandy Cross Lane to the north, with Monkhurst House (serviced office and warehouse accommodation) adjacent to the west of the site.

Figure C.2 Site location and constraints



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/003_r1_LocationConstraints_A5L_ 22/07/2026

Figure C.3 Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/004_r1_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L_ 22/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: Views along the northern edge of the site are largely enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows.



Photo 2: View towards the site from the entrance to Monkhurst House on the north-western edge, where intervening vegetation limits views towards the site.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Relevant core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Landform ■ The site gently slopes from north to south, falling from approximately 105m to 95m AOD, from along Sandy Cross Lane to wooded stream corridors that abut the eastern and southern boundaries of the site. ■ This gentle slope forms part of the *'complex ridge and valley landform'* key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	The site's gentle slope and its relationship with the stream corridor to the south-west contribute to the *pattern of faults and folds* and *numerous small streams* relating to the 'Natural Systems' core character component.	Earthworks and implementation of hard standing could result in changes to the gently rolling profile of the site, as well as the deterioration of and/or encroachment on the small watercourses and streams.	■ Limit the extent of development extending down the slope to minimise alterations to the landform and retain its contribution to the pattern of faults and folds. Consider locating development towards the north of the site, adjacent to Sandy Cross Lane and existing development to the west, where the landform is flatter (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective G2**). ■ Set development back from the streams along the southern and eastern boundaries, allowing an appropriate buffer (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective G1**).
Natural character ■ The site comprises a small single pastoral field. ■ Ham Wood, ancient woodland comprising predominantly deciduous woodland priority habitat, forms the eastern boundary of the site and extends around its southern boundary, terminating at a small pond located approximately 40m to the western site boundary. ■ The western and northern boundary of the site comprises a mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees. ■ The wooded boundaries contribute to *the 'Mature hedgerows, hedgerow trees and shaws'* and *'Mature interconnected deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin)'* of the wider assessment unit.	The surrounding ancient woodland and mature hedgerow boundaries contribute to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges…*and the *high proportion of ancient woodland…* relating to the 'Woodland' core character component.	■ Removal of mature deciduous woodland, hedgerow and hedgerow trees along the boundaries of the site, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Loss or deterioration of the priority deciduous woodland around the	■ Retain and protect the mature woodland, trees and hedgerows along the outer boundaries of the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives W1 and PQ2**). ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W1**).

■ The north-western boundary, adjoining the car park of Monkhurst House, is formed by a more formal/ managed hedgerow.		eastern and southern boundaries. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the adjacent ancient woodland (Ham Wood), which encloses the eastern and southern boundaries of the site.	
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC indicates that the site forms part of a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, with the small-scale and intact field boundaries contributing to the '*Intact historic field patterns'* of the wider assessment unit and providing some sense of time depth. ■ Sandy Cross Lane, forming the northern boundary of the site, is recorded as a historic lane.	The site contributes to the *generally irregular field pattern* and is *used for grazing livestock...* relating to the 'Fieldscape and Heath' core character component. Sandy Cross Lane contributes to the dense, radiating network of historic routeways relating to the *'Routeways'* core character component.	■ Loss of grazed pastures. ■ Loss or alteration of hedged boundaries may weaken the relationship between the site and the surrounding piecemeal enclosure landscape pattern. ■ Modifications to Sandy Cross Lane (recorded as a historic lane) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening, creation of junction).	■ Retain and protect vegetation along the outer boundaries of the site to maintain the historic field pattern (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective FH2**). ■ Reduce the impact of access works required to Sandy Cross Lane, where possible, retaining the character of the historic lane and protecting the hedgerows along it (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives R1 and R2**). ■ Consider utilising the access for Monkhurst House.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the adjacent Monkhurst House and settlement edge reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping).	The site forms part of an intrinsically dark landscape relating to the 'Dark Skies' core character component.	Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective DS1**). ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [20] and use dark sky-friendly lighting

[20] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

■ The site is well enclosed by mature vegetation from the settlement edge and experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping). ■ There is limited intervisibility with the surrounding landscape.			(in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives DS1 and DS2**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development			
■ The site comprises a single, currently undeveloped field located to the south of the Heathfield settlement edge, with the mature vegetation along the northern edge providing a robust settlement boundary. ■ Whilst development would be perceived as an extension of the built-up area, it would be in context of existing development south of Sandy Cross Lane with the adjacent Monkhurst House and other sporadic dwellings existing along the southern road edge.	The site does not contribute or express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Settlement' core character component.	■ Extension of development beyond the robust settlement boundary, resulting in the deterioration of the rural character provided by the pastoral field. ■ Introduction of buildings and structures on the site with the potential for static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	■ Locate development in the north of the site to relate better to the existing development pattern and to retain the rural character in the south of the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1**). ■ Consider enclosing new development with woodland to provide a robust boundary between development and countryside. Maintain an appropriate buffer from the ancient woodland to the south and east. ■ Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the AONB (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1** and **S2)**
Potential visual receptors			
■ Woodland enclosure to the south and east, and mature hedgerow vegetation screening the site from the north substantially limit the potential for long-distance views towards the site. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by:	In relation to the 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' character component, the surrounding woodland provides *a sense of enclosure* limiting the extent to which development would be perceived from the wider landscape. The ancient woodland contributes to *a sense*	The introduction of buildings and structures will likely be visible to the identified nearby visual receptors, particularly from Monkhurst House and short sections of Sandy Cross Lane, although the degree of woodland and hedgerow	Retain the mature hedgerow along Sandy Cross Lane and strengthen boundary vegetation to the north-west to reinforce containment and enclosure and minimise views from adjacent visual receptors (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective PQ2**).

– users of Sandy Cross Lane, although views largely screened by vegetation; and – visitors to the Monkhurst House property immediately to the west of the site.	*of history and timelessness arising from an ancient countryside..*	enclosure will limit wider visibility.	
Summary			
Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** The site demonstrates characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. This includes the gently sloping landform, as well as its sensitive boundaries associated with the streams and woodland that contain the site (including priority habitat and ancient) and which contribute towards the intact historic field pattern. However, the site is visually enclosed, with tranquillity influenced by the settlement edge and adjacent Monkhurst House. Overall, it is considered the site is of **moderate sensitivity** to the development of the site for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Variations in Sensitivity The southern part of the site is of greater sensitivity than the northern part due to its sloping landform and being away from the existing development along Sandy Cross Lane.		
Moderate impact	**Overall impact on core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB** The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses some of the core character components of natural beauty, with a **moderate level of expression**. This is due to the sloping landform; the presence of mature woodland (including ancient), trees and hedgerow; grazed pastures; and being part of a landscape with dark skies. Development of the site is judged to have a **moderate impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore somewhat affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Variation to overall impact There would be greater impact on the southern part of the site than the northern part.		

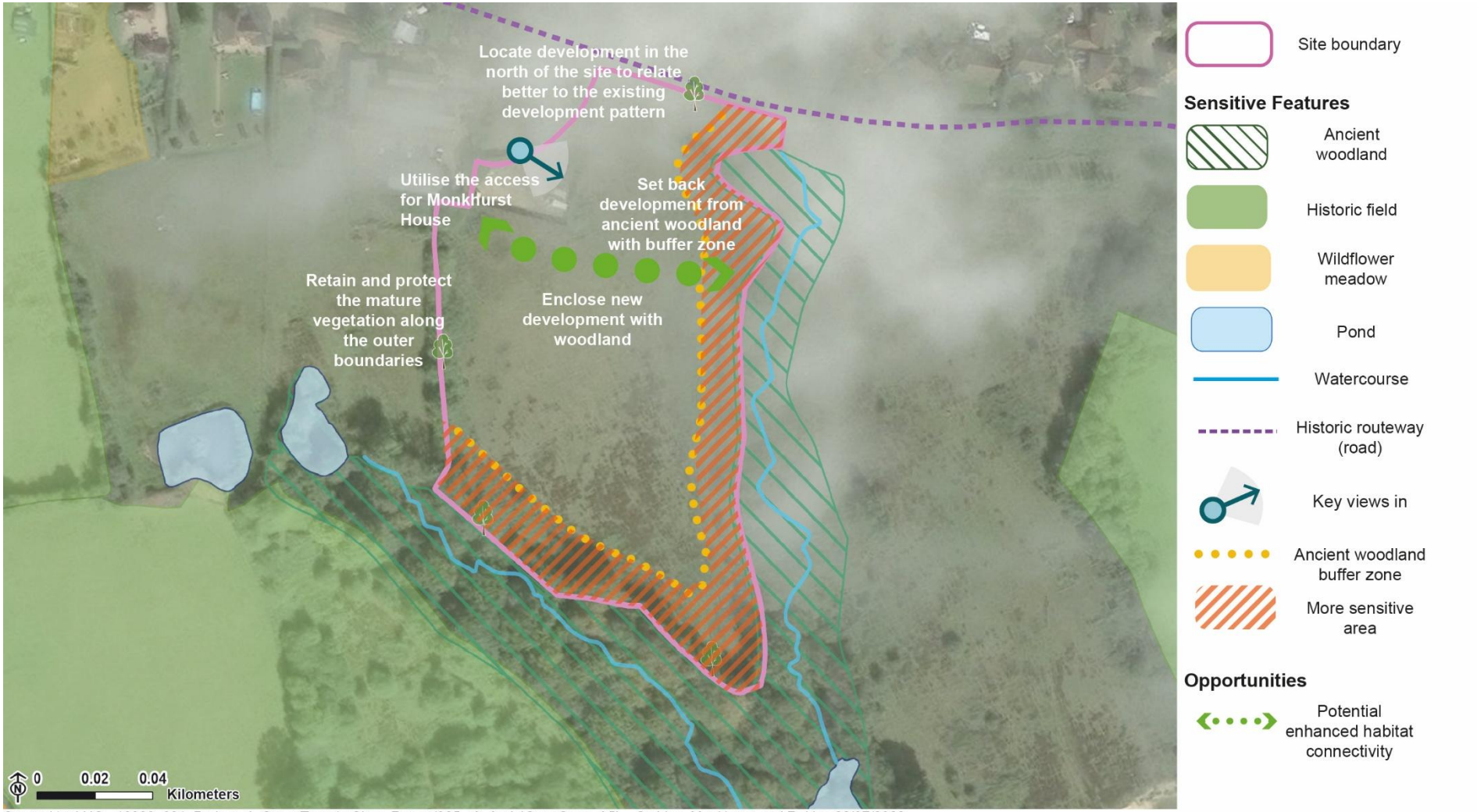
Summary and recommendations

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

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

- Limit the extent of development extending down the slope to minimise alterations to the landform.
- Consider locating development within the north of the site, adjacent to Sandy Cross Lane and existing development to the west, where the landform is flatter, and to relate better to the existing development pattern and to retain the rural character in the south of the site.
- Set development back from the streams along the southern and eastern boundaries, allowing an appropriate buffer.
- Retain and protect the mature woodland, trees and hedgerows along the outer boundaries of the site.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland to the required minimum buffer zone.
- Consider utilising the access for Monkhurst House.
- Consider enclosing new development with woodland to provide a robust boundary between development and countryside.
- Retain the mature hedgerow along Sandy Cross Lane and strengthen boundary vegetation to the north-west to reinforce containment and enclosure and minimise views from adjacent visual receptors.

Figure C.4 Summary map of constraints and opportunities



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Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Heathfield assessment unit

Only one site has been considered within the Heathfield assessment unit within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The assessment of cumulative effects is therefore not required.

Appendix D

Wider LCA 5B Assessment Unit

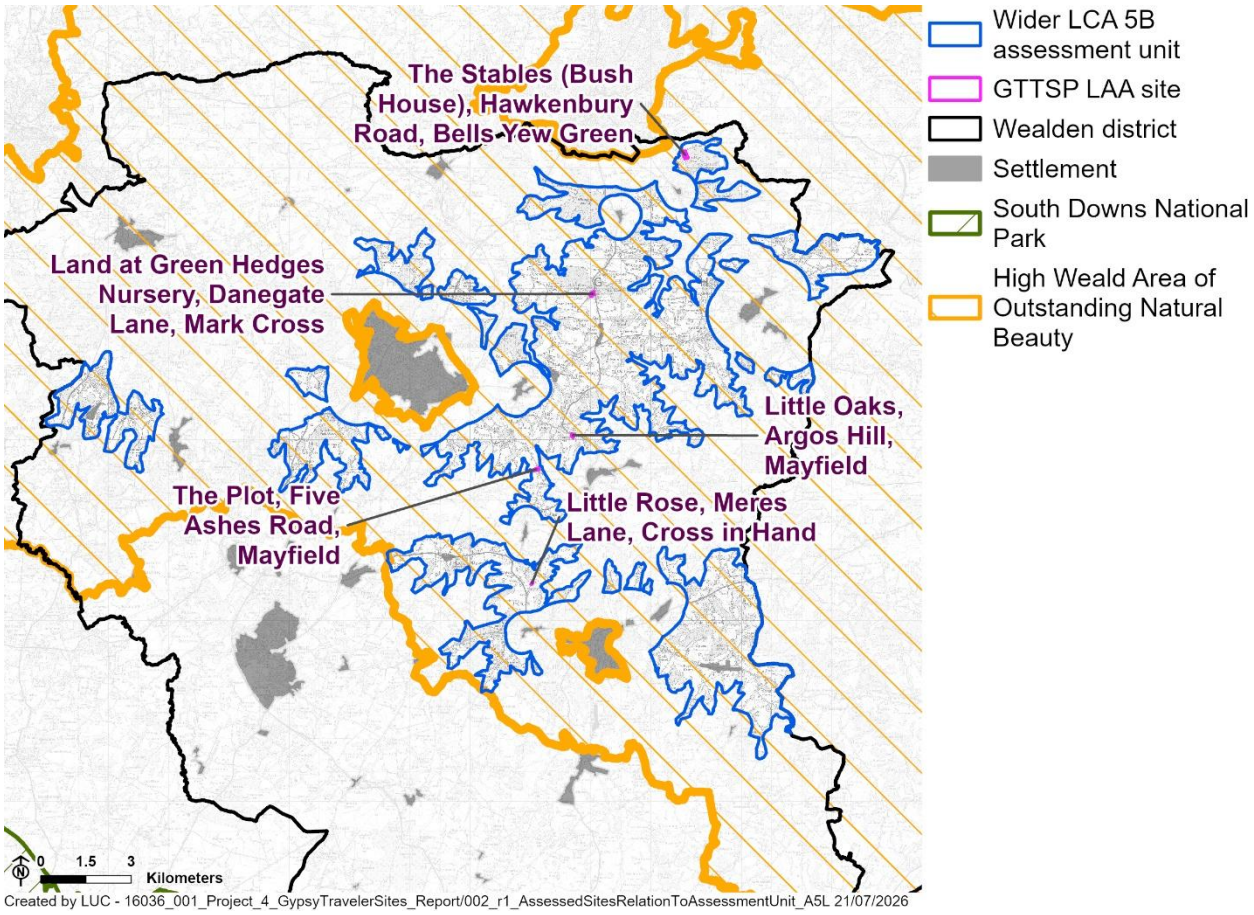
D.1 The key landscape sensitivities of the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit, as described in the *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* (2023) are:

- *The complex ridge and valley landform.*
- *Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin).*
- *Areas of priority habitat heathland, lowland meadows, and good quality semi-improved grassland.*
- *Intact historic field patterns, particularly small to medium scale assarts and piecemeal enclosure.*
- *The historic value of the Cousley Wood and Old Heathfield and Cade Street Conservation Areas, Eridge Park Registered Park and Garden and Saxonbury Hill Scheduled Monument.*
- *The strongly dispersed settlement pattern.*
- *The wooded and rural backdrop formed by the assessment unit to the surrounding settlements.*
- *The strong network of public rights of way including long-distance walking trails.*
- *The strong rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark skies.*
- *Its location within the High Weald AONB and intervisibility with more distant areas of the nationally designated landscape, contrasting with the semi-enclosed character.*

D.2 Five potential development sites are considered within the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit:

- **The Plot, Five Ashes Road, Mayfield** (located within the High Weald AONB)
- **Little Oaks, Argos Hill, Mayfield** (located within the High Weald AONB)
- **Land at Green Hedges Nursery, Danegate Lane, Mark Cross** (located within the High Weald AONB)
- **The Stables (Bush House), Bells Yew Green** (located within the High Weald AONB)
- **Little Rose, Meres Lane, Cross in Hand** (located within the High Weald AONB)

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



The Plot, Five Ashes Road, Mayfield

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Authorised, Permanent (WD/2003/3025/FR)
Site location	This site is located within the central-southern part of the High Weald AONB, approximately 1.6 km to the west of Mayfield and 1.7 km north of Skippers Hill and Five Ashes. Five Ashes Road runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

Figure D.2 Site location and constraints

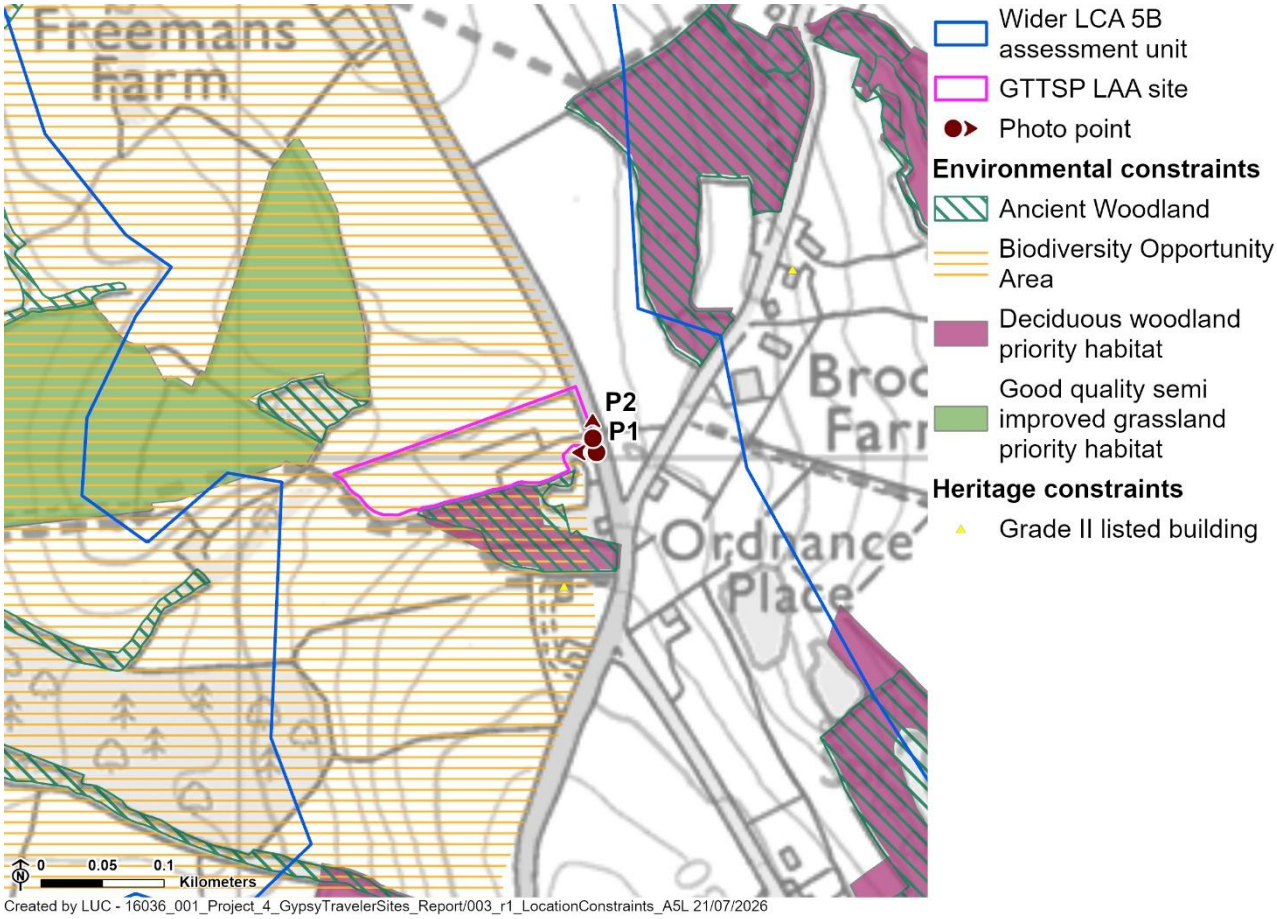
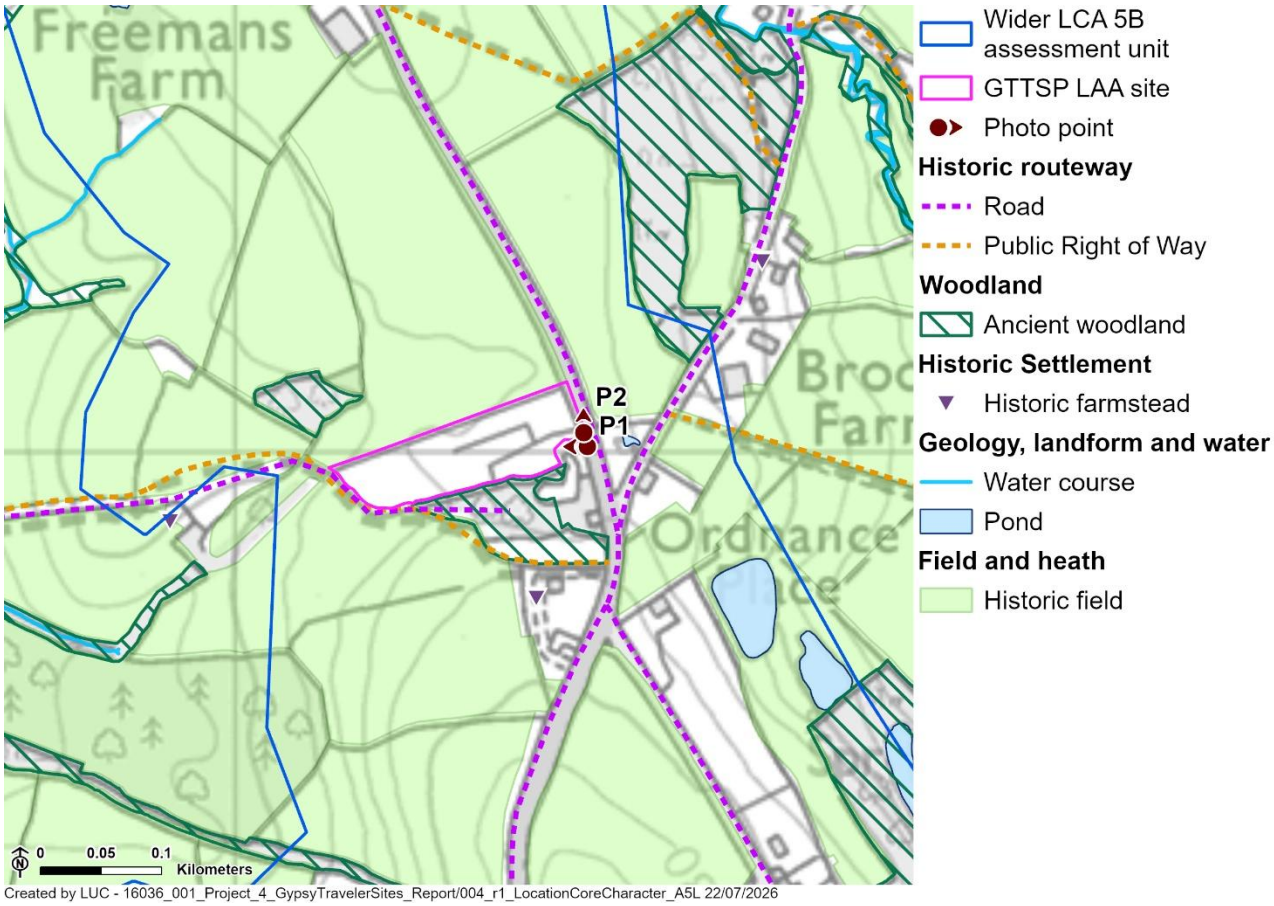


Figure D.3 Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/004_r1_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L 22/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: View west towards the site entrance from Five Ashes Road.



Photo 2: Views along the eastern edge of the site are largely enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Relevant core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Landform ■ The site is relatively flat at approximately 110m AOD. ■ The landform is simple and gently sloping, with no notable variation across the site.	The site does not contribute to or express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Natural Systems' core character component.	As the site has already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, there is unlikely to be any substantial changes to the landform. Minor changes may relate to the implementation of more hard standing.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landform is not considered necessary.
Natural character ■ The site's existing use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation means that it has already been developed with hardstanding within the eastern half of the site and an access road extending off Fives Ashes Road in the east of the site. The western half is undeveloped and comprises a pastoral field. ■ Existing development within the eastern half of the site is interspersed with mature trees and an internal boundary comprising a wooded belt. ■ The site is well enclosed by mature vegetation along all boundaries. The eastern boundary (defined by Five Ashes Road) and western boundary comprise mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees, whilst a mature hedgerow also runs along the northern boundary.	The internal mature trees, wooded belt and the outer boundaries of hedgerow, hedgerow trees and woodland contribute to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods… shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges* and the *high proportion of ancient woodland…* relating to the 'Woodland' core character component.	■ Loss of the pastoral field in the west. ■ Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows within and around the site, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland (Freeman's Farm Shaw 2) and priority habitat deciduous woodland	■ Retain and protect the mature trees, wooded belt, hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and around the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives W1 and W2**). ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland along the southern boundary of the site, to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W1**). ■ Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA, where possible (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2 and FH3**). ■ Avoid, where possible, the creation of new additional access points that

■ 'Freeman's Farm Shaw 2', an area of ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland, lies adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. A further area of ancient woodland at 'Freeman's Farm Shaw' lies approximately 30m to the north-west of the site. ■ The site is located within the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA.		which encloses the southern edge of the site.	would result in the loss of additional mature roadside hedgerow vegetation along Five Ashes Road (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2**).
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC indicates that the site itself comprises a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, and is surrounded by assarted fields that are generally irregular and contained by wooded boundaries. ■ The western half of the site and surrounding field are used for pasture. ■ Five Ashes Road along the eastern boundary is recorded as a historic drove. A PRoW runs along the south-western corner of the site and is recorded as a historic track. ■ Freemans historic farmstead lies approximately 80m to the south of the site which contains a Grade II listed farmhouse.	The site forms part of a wider *generally irregular field pattern* and a *Medieval fieldscape character dominant, with a high proportion of field systems created by assarting (woodland clearance) with sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges common.* The pastoral field in the western half of the site is used for *'grazing livestock'*. These are all key characteristics of the 'Fieldscape and Heath' core character component. Five Ashes Road in the east and the PRoW in the south-west contribute to the dense, radiating network of historic routeways relating to the *'Routeways'* core character component. The nearby historic farmsteads contribute to the time-depth of the landscape and relate to the 'Settlement' core character component, which is characterised by *a high density of historic farmsteads surrounded by their own fields*.	■ Loss of grazed pastures in the west of the site. ■ Further subdivision, domestication or extension of development within the site may erode the historic field pattern. ■ Loss or alteration of hedged boundaries may weaken the relationship between the site and the surrounding assarts. ■ As the site has an existing access road there is unlikely to be any changes to the historic drove of Five Ashes Road. ■ Intensification may affect the rural character and setting of the historic track	■ Retain and protect the existing field boundaries within and around the site to avoid complete loss of field pattern, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective FH2**). ■ Avoid boundary treatments such as fencing that would introduce a suburbanising influence into the historic fieldscape (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective FH2**). ■ Maintain the rural character of the PRoW through appropriate siting, low-key boundary treatment and retention of existing vegetation (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective R1**).

		(PRoW) along the south-western corner of the site. ■ Potential effects on the setting of the nearby historic farmstead at Freemans Farm to the south are unlikely as the ancient woodland separates the site from it.	
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is partly rural in character as a result of its pastoral land cover in the western half, mature boundary vegetation, woodland context and location away from the main settlement edges of Mayfield and Five Ashes. ■ The site is influenced by its existing Gypsy and Traveller use and proximity to roads, reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded in the lower bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ As the site is away from a settlement edge, it experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping).	The site forms part of an ***intrinsically dark landscape*** relating to the 'Dark Skies' core character component, although there is a limited sense of naturalness given the existing Gypsy and Traveller use of the site.	■ Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in localised night blight. ■ Increase in domestic activity, movement and associated structures may reduce the rural and tranquil qualities of the site.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective DS1**). ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [21] and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives **DS1 and DS2**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development			
■ The site is located within a dispersed rural settlement pattern, away from the defined settlement edges of Mayfield and Five Ashes. Freemans Farm and associated buildings	The site reflects the dispersed settlement pattern associated with the 'Settlement' core character component, particularly the	Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity blocks, and sheds, as	■ Concentrate any intensification within the eastern half of the site where possible to minimise the loss of the rural pastoral field in the west (in

[21] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

lie to the south of the site and introduce a localised residential and farmstead influence. ■ The site appears to contain a two-storey permanent dwelling, as well as static caravans and shed-type structures concentrated within the eastern half of the site.	*presence of isolated historic farmsteads surrounded by their own fields*.	well as new fencing and hardstanding within the western half.	accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1**). ■ Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the AONB (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1** and **S2)**.
Potential visual receptors			
■ The existing woodland, mature hedgerows and roadside vegetation surrounding the site provide enclosure and prevent long-distance views towards the site. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of Five Ashes Road (including National Cycle Route 21) to the east, although views are likely to be filtered or screened by dense roadside hedgerows; and – residents of nearby farmsteads, including Freemans Farm to the south.	In relation to the 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' core character component, the surrounding woodland and hedgerows provide *a sense of enclosure* and the PRoW and National Cycle Route 21 contribute to the *sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way and quiet roads suitable for walking, cycling and horse riding*.	The potential increase in buildings and structures will likely be seen from the nearby visual receptors, although given the existing use of the site, may go largely unnoticed.	Retain and protect the hedgerows and mature trees along the site boundaries, particularly along Five Ashes Road and the edge of the PRoW to maintain visual containment (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives **PQ2 and PQ3**).
Summary			
Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use, it contains characteristics that reduce sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the western half of the site comprises an undeveloped pastoral field, is abutted by ancient woodland, and has mature field boundaries (within and around the site). The site also forms part of a landscape with dark skies, and is bordered by historic routeways, with users of the PRoW and Five Ashes Road (National Cycle Route 21) considered to be key visual receptors. These factors increase sensitivity. Overall, it is considered the site is of **moderate sensitivity** to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use. Variations in sensitivity		

	The western half of the site is of greater sensitivity than the eastern half.
Moderate impact	**Overall impact on core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB** The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) express some of the core character components of natural beauty with a **moderate level of expression.** This is due to the presence of mature woodland, trees and hedgerows; the site forming part of a wider assart field pattern (contributing to the medieval character); a historic routeways (including PRoW) running along the edges of the site; and being part of a landscape with dark skies. Development of the site in its entirety is judged to have a **moderate impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore somewhat affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. <u>Variation to overall impact</u> There would be a greater impact on the western half off the site than the eastern half.

Summary and recommendations

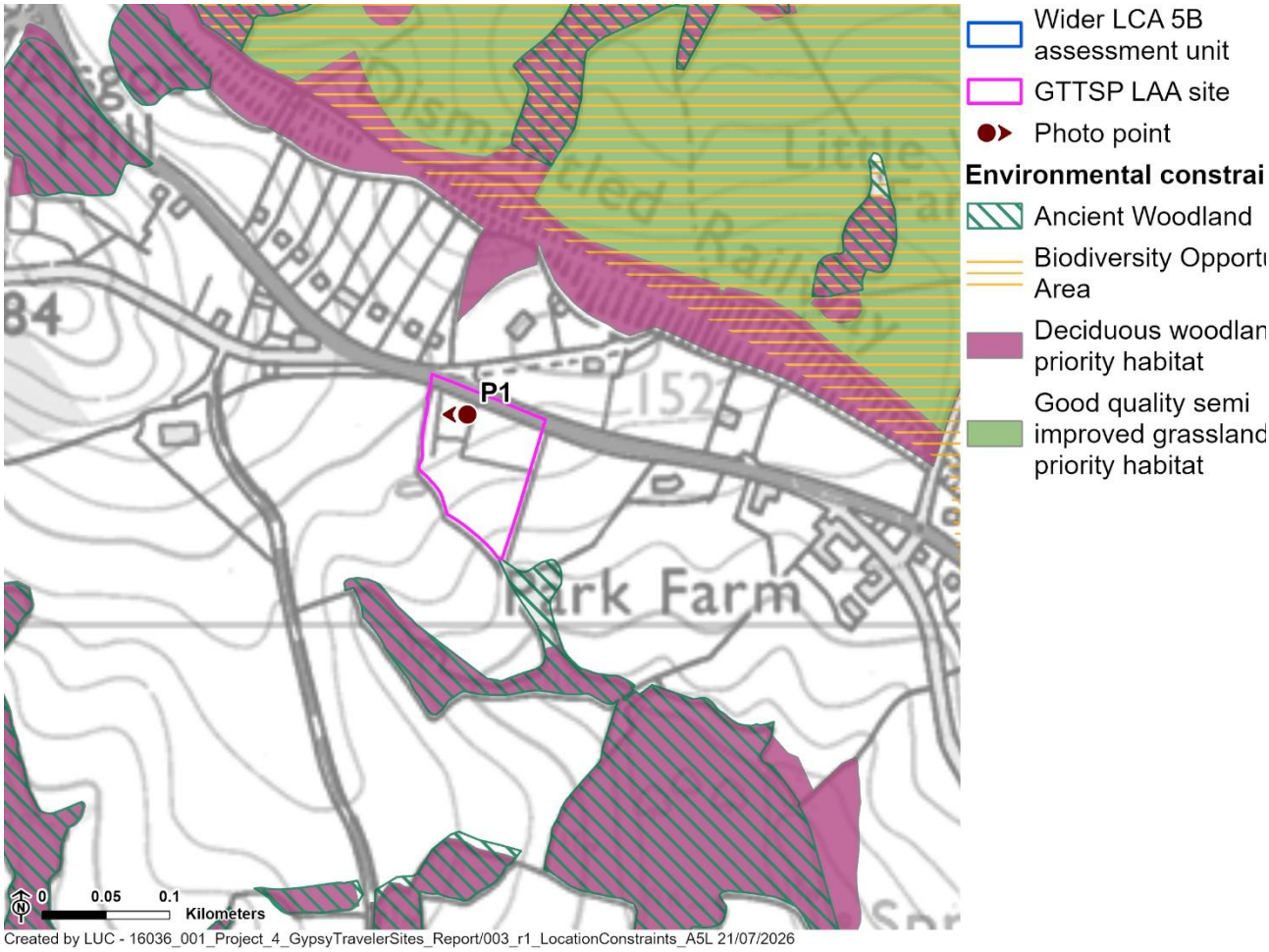
The site-specific recommendations for this site are as follows:

- Retain and protect the mature trees, wooded belt, hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and around the site, particularly along Five Ashes Road and the edge of the PRoW to maintain visual containment.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland along the southern boundary of the site, to the required minimum buffer zone.
- Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA, where possible.
- Maintain the rural character of the PRoW through appropriate siting, low-key boundary treatment and retention of existing vegetation.
- Concentrate any intensification within the eastern half of the site where possible to minimise the loss of the rural pastoral field in the west.

Little Oaks, Argos Hill, Mayfield

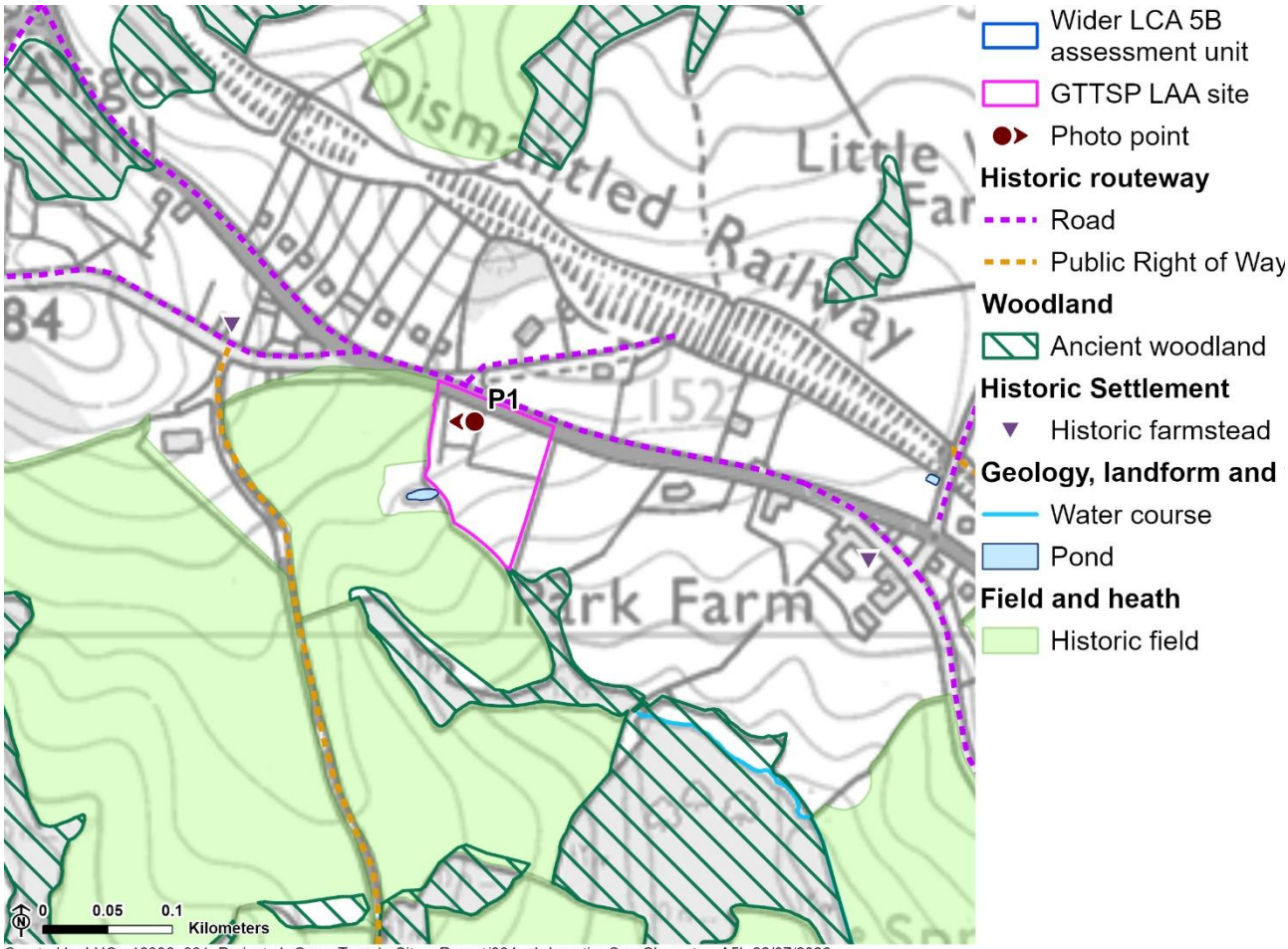
Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Authorised, Permanent (WD/2004/3349/F)
Site location	This site is located within the central part of the High Weald AONB. It is bordered by the A267 to the north and lies between Rotherfield and Mayfield.

Figure D.4 Site location and constraints



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Figure D.5 Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/004_r1_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L 22/07/2026

Representative site photo



Photo 1: View from within the northern part of the site

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Relevant core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Landform ■ The site comprises a gently sloping landform that falls from the north-west to the south-east, towards a tributary of the River Rother, between approximately 150m AOD to 130m AOD. ■ It forms part of the *'The complex ridge and valley landform'* key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	The site's gentle slope contributes to the *pattern of faults and folds* relating to the *'Natural Systems'* core character component.	As the site has already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, there is unlikely to be any substantial changes to the landform. Minor changes may relate to the implementation of more hard standing.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landform is not considered necessary.
Natural character ■ The site's existing use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation means that it has already been developed with hard standing extending up to its boundaries and access extending off the A267 Tunbridge Wells Road in the north-western corner of the site. ■ A small clump of mature trees extend from the northern boundary towards the centre of the site. ■ The site is strongly enclosed by mature woodland on all sides. The eastern boundary is abutted by a block of woodland that extends from Warren Wood - a recorded ancient woodland, that adjoins the southern tip of the site. Wooded belts define the other boundaries.	Features within the site do not strongly express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Woodland' core character component. However, the surrounding woodland contributes to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges…* and the *high proportion of ancient woodland….*	■ Removal of mature deciduous woodland and trees within and around the site, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland (Warren Wood) which encloses the southern tip of the site	■ Retain and protect the mature trees within the site, and the woodland around the edges (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives W1 and W2**). ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland along the southern tip of the site, to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W1**). ■ Avoid, where possible, the creation of new additional access points that would result in the loss of additional mature roadside hedgerow vegetation along A267 Tunbridge Wells Road (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2**).

■ A small pond is located on the south-western edge of the site.			
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC indicates that the site forms part of an assart, but as the site has been developed, there is limited sense of time depth. ■ The A267 along the northern boundary is recorded as a historic lane.	Although part of an assart, the site does not express the *medieval fieldscape character* relating to the 'Fieldscape and Heath' core character component. The historic routeway contributes to the *dense, radiating network with a variety of origins* relating to the 'Routeways' core character component, although its expression has been masked by its use as an A-road with associated modern road markings.	As the site has existing access off the A267, there is unlikely to be any changes to the historic routeway.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landscape pattern and time depth is not considered necessary.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the A267 and ribbon development along the road, reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded in the middle bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ As the site is away from a settlement edge, it experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping.	The site forms part of an *intrinsically dark landscape* relating to the 'Dark Skies' character component, although there is not a sense of naturalness given the existing Gypsy and Traveller use of the site.	Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective DS1**). ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [22] and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives DS1 and DS2**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development			

[22] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

■ The site is located away from a settlement edge between Rotherfield and Mayfield, although forms part of a ribbon development pattern along the A267. ■ The site contains several static caravans and shed-type structures, sparsely scattered across the site and concentrated within the northern half.	The site does not contribute or express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Settlement' core character component.	Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the AONB (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1** and **S2)**.
Potential visual receptors			
■ The existing woodland that surrounds the site, provides enclosure and prevents long-distance views towards the site. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of the A267 to the north; – residents of a houses located along the A267 to the north and north-west of the site (potential limited glimpses in winter); and – residents of nearby farmsteads, including Angle Farm and Park Farm to the east and west of the site.	In relation to the 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' character component, the surrounding woodland provides *a sense of enclosure*.	The potential increase in buildings and structures will likely be seen from the nearby visual receptors, although given the existing use of the site, may go largely unnoticed.	Retain and protect the mature trees and woodland along the site boundaries, particularly along the A267 in the north to maintain visual containment.(in accordance with the AONB's **Objective PQ3**).
Summary			
Low-Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use, it contains some characteristics that reduce sensitivity across the assessment unit. The site comprises sloping landform and forms part of a landscape with dark skies which increases sensitivity. Overall, it is considered the site is of **low-moderate sensitivity** to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use. Variations in Sensitivity There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.		

Low impact	**Overall impact on core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB** The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses few core character components of natural beauty with a **weak level of expression.** Development of the site is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, and is therefore unlikely to impact the statutory duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Variation to overall impact There is no variation to the overall impact considered above.

Summary and recommendations

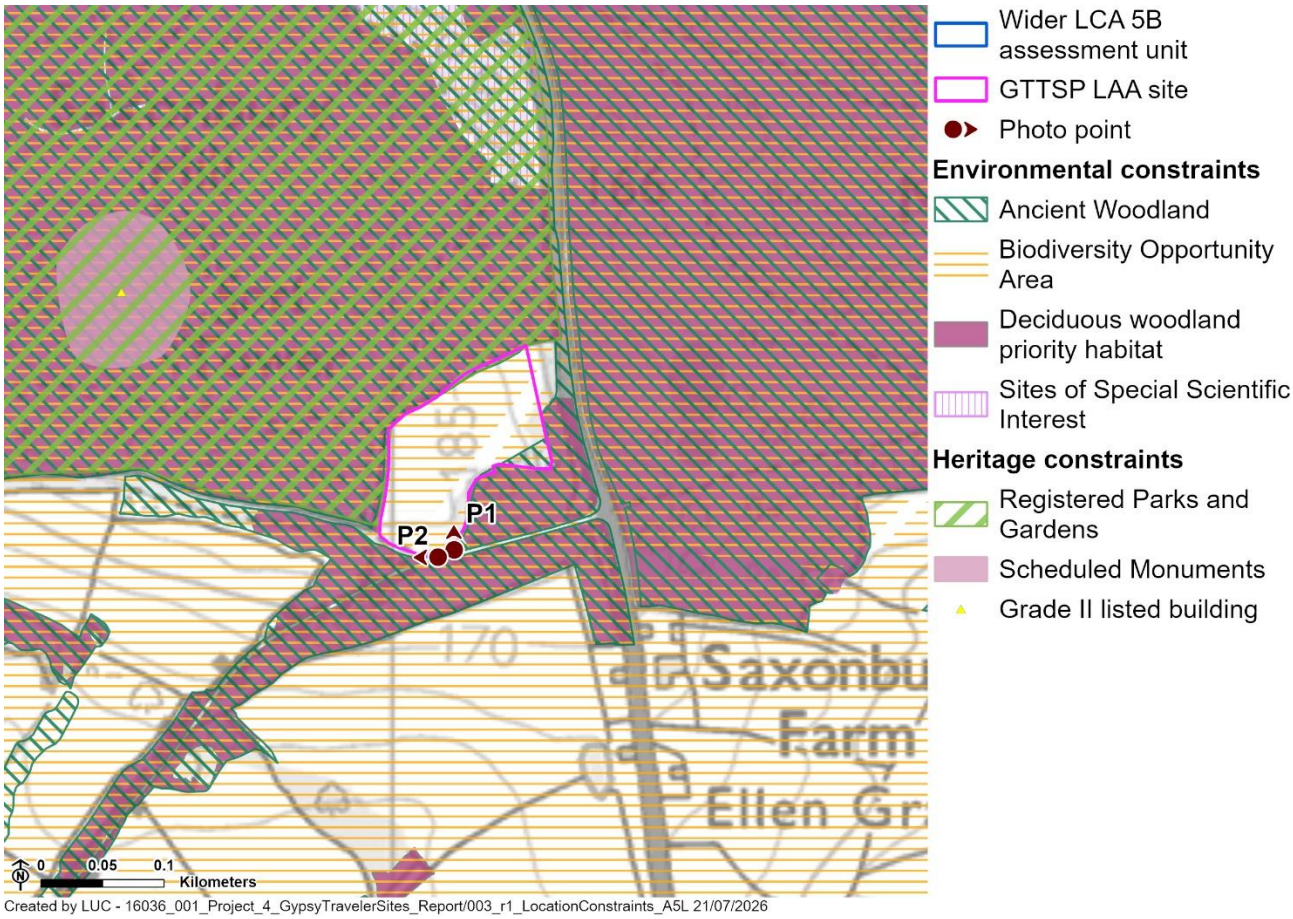
The site-specific recommendations for this site are as follows:

- Retain and protect the mature trees within the site, and the woodland around the edges, particularly along the A267 in the north to maintain visual containment.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland along the southern tip of the site, to the required minimum buffer zone.

Land at Green Hedges Nursery, Danegate Lane, Mark Cross

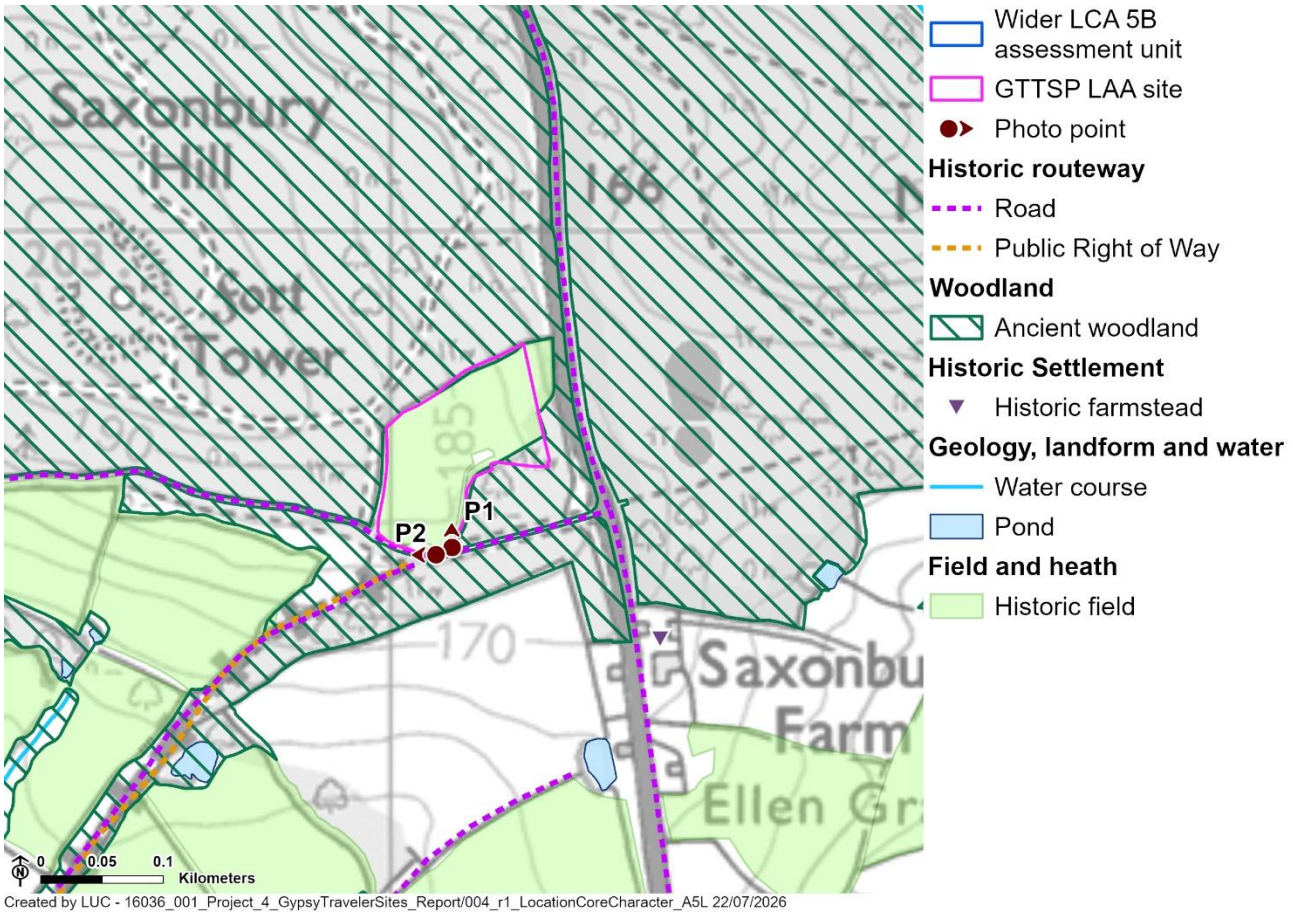
Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Authorised, Permanent (WD/2014/0992/FE)
Site location	This site is located within the central part of the High Weald AONB, to the north of Mark Cross. It is surrounded by woodland associated with Saxonbury Hill in all directions and situated between Danegate Lane and A267 Mayfield Road which run close to the southern and eastern boundaries of the site respectively.

Figure D.6 Site location and constraints



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Figure D.7 Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/004_r1_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L 22/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: View looking north from Danegate Lane, where mature trees and hedgerows provide strong visual containment and restrict views towards the site.



Photo 2: Views along the southern edge of the site are largely contained by mature trees and hedgerows, with glimpses of pastoral fields within the site.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Relevant core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Landform ■ The site lies on the south-east facing slope of Saxonbury Hill, between 180m and 190m AOD. ■ It forms part of the *'The complex ridge and valley landform'* key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	The site forms part of the *principal ridge (Forest Ridge)* with the slope contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds* relating to the 'Natural Systems' core character component.	Earthworks and implementation of hard standing within undeveloped parts of the site in the west and south-west could result in changes to the sloping profile of the site.	Limit the extent of development extending up the slope onto the valley side to minimise alterations to the landform, focusing intensification where the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is located (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective G2**).
Natural character ■ The site's existing use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation means that it has been subjected to woodland clearance, with hardstanding within the centre of the site and access off Danegate Lane in the south of the site. The western and south-western parts of the site are undeveloped and comprise a pastoral field. ■ The site is enclosed on all sides by extensive woodland forming part of Saxonbury Wood which is recorded as ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland. The woodland also forms part of Eridge Park SSSI, adjacent to the northern and western boundaries of the site. ■ The site lies within both the Eridge and Broadwater BOA and the Medway, Ouse, Rother Watershed BOA.	The woodland that surrounds the site contributes to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of …larger forests… shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges* and the *high proportion of ancient woodland…* relating to the 'Woodland' core character component.	■ Removal of mature deciduous woodland around the site, affecting the role it plays in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland (Saxonbury Wood/ Rocks Wood), Eridge Park SSSI and priority habitat deciduous woodland which encloses the site.	■ Retain and protect the mature trees and woodland around the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives W1 and W2**). ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland, to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W1**). ■ Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the Eridge and Broadwater, and the Medway, Ouse, Rother Watershed BOA where possible (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2 and FH3**). ■ Avoid, where possible, the creation of new additional access points that would result in the loss of additional mature roadside hedgerow

			vegetation along Danegate Lane (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2**).
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC indicates that the site forms part of an assart field pattern. ■ Surrounding woodland forms part of Eridge Park Registered Park and Garden (Grade II*) which lies adjacent to the northern and western boundaries of the site. ■ Danegate Lane along the southern boundary is recorded as a historic lane and the A267 Mayfield Road close to the eastern edge is recorded as a historic ridgeway. A byway (PRoW) runs to the south of the site and is recorded as a historic routeway. ■ The above features contribute to the *'historic value'* of the wider assessment unit.	The site forms part of a wider *generally irregular field pattern* and a *Medieval fieldscape character dominant, with a high proportion of field systems created by assarting (woodland clearance) with sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges common.* The pastoral field in the western half of the site is used for *'grazing livestock'*. These are all key characteristics of the 'Fieldscape and Heath' core character component. The roads and PRoW close to the site boundaries contribute to the dense, radiating network of historic routeways relating to the *'Routeways'* core character component. Danegate Lane and the byway (PRoW) partly express this, but less so for Mayfield Road given its use as an A-road with modern road markings.	■ Loss of grazed pastures in the west and south-west of the site. ■ Further subdivision, domestication or extension of development within the site may erode the historic field pattern. ■ As the site has an existing access road there is unlikely to be any changes to the historic lane of Danegate Lane.	■ Retain and protect the existing field boundaries around the site to avoid complete loss of field pattern, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective FH2**). ■ Avoid boundary treatments such as fencing that would introduce a suburbanising influence into the historic fieldscape (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective FH2**).
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is partly rural in character as a result of its pastoral land cover in the western half, mature woodland context and location away from the main settlement edge of Mark Cross.	The site forms part of an *intrinsically dark landscape* relating to the 'Dark Skies' core character component, although there is a limited sense of naturalness given the existing	■ Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in localised night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective DS1**).

■ The site is influenced by its existing Gypsy and Traveller use and proximity to the A267, reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded in the lower bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ As the site is away from a settlement edge and due to its woodland enclosure, it experiences dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping.	Gypsy and Traveller use of the site.	■ Increase in domestic activity, movement and associated structures may reduce the rural and tranquil qualities of the site.	■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [23] and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives DS1 and DS2**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development			
■ The site is located away from a defined settlement edge within a rural woodland setting. ■ The site appears to contain static caravans and shed-type structures concentrated within the eastern half centre of the site.	The site does not contribute or express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Settlement' core character component.	Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity blocks, and sheds, as well as new fencing and hardstanding within the western half.	■ Concentrate any intensification within the eastern half of the site where possible to minimise the loss of the rural pastoral field in the west and south-west (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1**). ■ Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the AONB (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1** and **S2)**.
Potential visual receptors			
■ The existing woodland that surrounds the site, provides enclosure and prevents long-distance views towards the site. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by:	In relation to the 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' core character component, the surrounding woodland provides *a sense of enclosure, intimacy and remoteness.*.	The potential increase in buildings and structures will likely be seen from the nearby visual receptors, although limited to glimpses and given the existing use of the site, may go largely unnoticed.	Retain and protect the mature trees and woodland along the site boundaries, particularly along Danegate Lane and the edge of Saxonbury Hill, to maintain visual containment (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives **PQ2 and PQ3**).

[23] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

– users of the A267 to the east and Danegate Lane to the south (limited to glimpsed views); and – users of the recreational route along the western boundary that climbs up and down Saxonbury Hill (limited to glimpsed views).			
Summary			
Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use, it contains characteristics which reduce sensitivity across the assessment unit, and is visually enclosed. However, the site lies wholly surrounded by ancient woodland and is within a landscape influenced by natural and cultural heritage features. The western and south-western parts of the site comprise an undeveloped pastoral field. These factors increase sensitivity. Overall, it is considered the site is of **moderate sensitivity** to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use. Variations in sensitivity The western and south-western parts of the site and the wooded boundaries of the site are of greater sensitivity than the eastern half.		
Moderate impact	**Overall impact on core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB** The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) express some of the core character components of natural beauty with a **moderate level of expression.** This is due to the sloping landform; the presence of mature woodland (of ancient origin); the site forming part of a wider assart field pattern (contributing to the medieval character); grazed pastures; historic routeways running along the edges of the site; and being part of a landscape with dark skies. Development of the site in its entirety is judged to have a **moderate impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore somewhat affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Variation to overall impact There would be a greater impact on the western and south-western parts of the site than the eastern half.		

Summary and recommendations

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

- Limit the extent of development extending up the slope onto the valley side to minimise alterations to the landform, focusing intensification where the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is located.
- Retain and protect the mature trees and woodland around the site, particularly along Danegate Lane and the edge of Saxonbury Hill, to maintain visual containment
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland, to the required minimum buffer zone.
- Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the Eridge and Broadwater, and the Medway, Ouse, Rother Watershed BOA where possible.
- Concentrate any intensification within the eastern half of the site where possible to minimise the loss of the rural pastoral field in the west and south-west.

The Stables (Bush House), Bells Yew Green

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification and extension of an existing site under residential use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation
Site status	Existing site under residential use - extension shown as Option OGT5 in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026).
Site location	This site lies within the central-northern part of the High Weald AONB, to the south-east of Hawkenbury (part of Tunbridge Wells) and north of Bells Yew Green. It is situated to the south and east of Hawkenbury Road and Dundale Road respectively, and north and west of Rushlye Down woodland.

Figure D.8 Site location and constraints

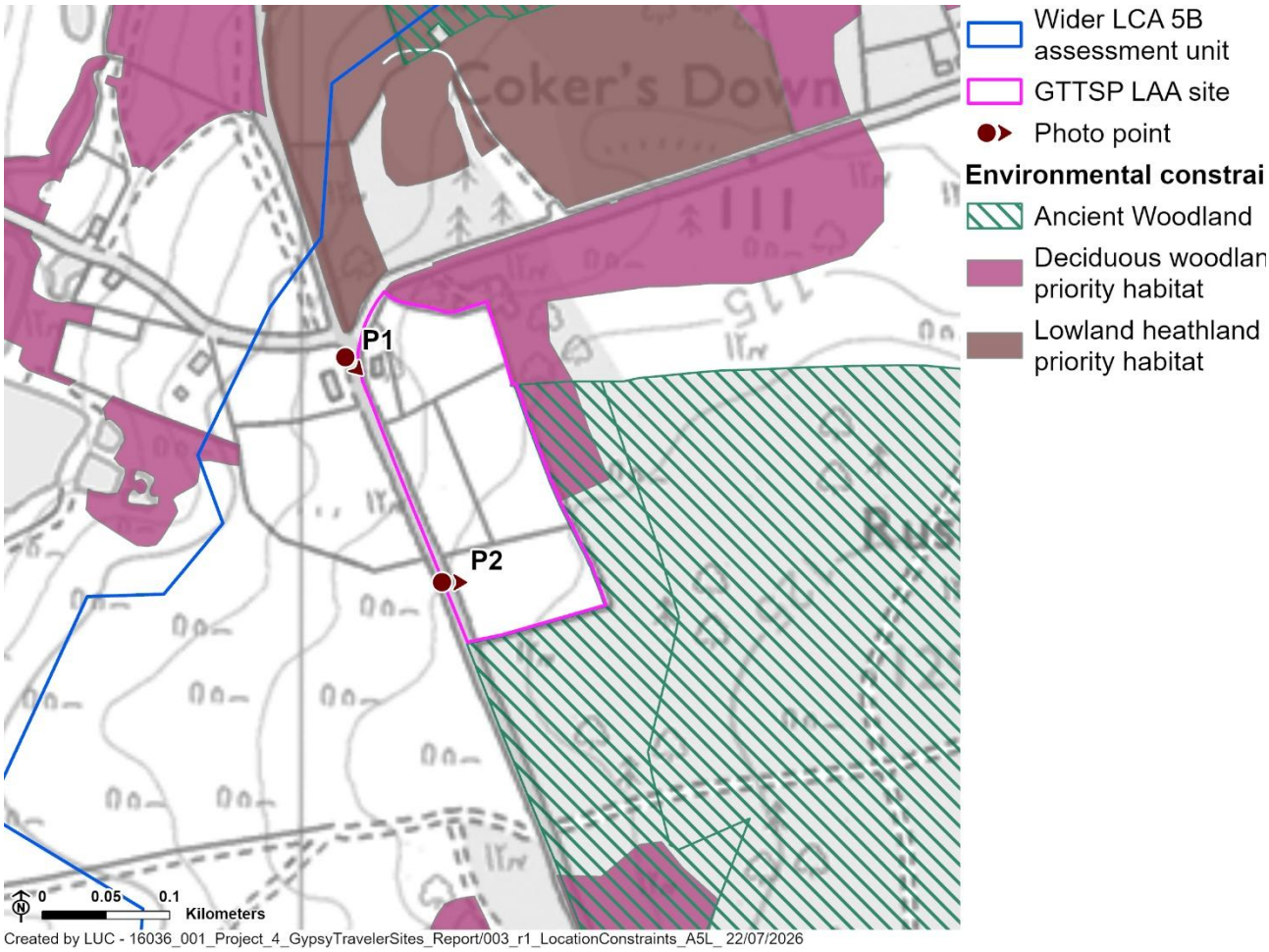
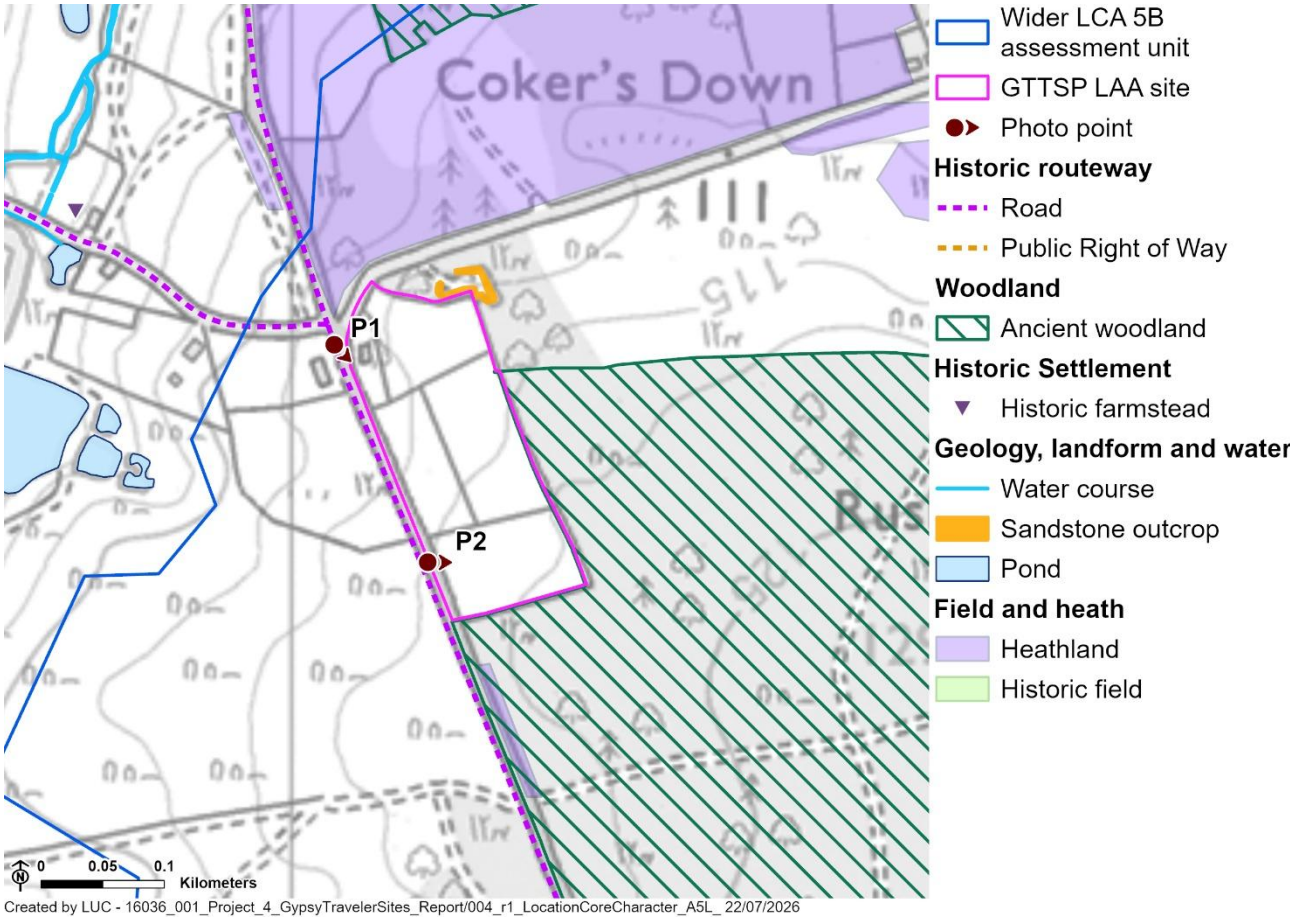


Figure D.9 Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/004_r1_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L_ 22/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: View from the north-western corner of the site towards the access gate, where boundary vegetation restricts views into the site.



Photo 2: View into the **southern part of the** site through a gap in vegetation along Hawkenbury Road.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Relevant core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Landform ■ The site gently slopes from the south-east to the north-west, falling from approximately 120m to 110m AOD, towards the River Teise and Frant Lakes. ■ It forms part of the *'The complex ridge and valley landform'* key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	The site's gentle slope contributes to the *pattern of faults and folds* relating to the 'Natural Systems' core character component.	Earthworks and implementation of hard standing could result in changes to the gently sloping profile of the site.	■ Limit the extent of development extending up the slope onto the valley side to minimise alterations to the landform (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective G2**).
Natural character ■ The north-western part of the site comprises a permanent residential dwelling associated with 'The Stables', outbuildings, stables and an existing access track. The rest of the site consist of pastoral fields used as both paddocks and for pasture grazing. ■ Wooded boundaries with mature trees and hedgerows contain the site to the north and west. ■ Rushlye Down ancient woodland enclosing the eastern and southern of the site. ■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland wraps partly around the northern and eastern boundaries. ■ The wooded boundaries contribute to *the 'Mature hedgerows, hedgerow trees and shaws'* and *'Mature*	The surrounding ancient woodland and mature hedgerow boundaries contribute to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges…*and the *high proportion of ancient woodland…* relating to the 'Woodland' core character component.	■ Removal of mature deciduous woodland, hedgerow and hedgerow trees along the boundaries of the site, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Loss or deterioration of the priority deciduous woodland around the northern and eastern boundaries. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the	■ Retain and protect the mature woodland, trees and hedgerows along the outer boundaries of the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives W1 and PQ2**). ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W1**).

interconnected deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin)' of the wider assessment unit.		adjacent ancient woodland (Rushlye Down), which encloses the eastern boundary of the site.	
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC indicates that the site forms part of a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern. 'The Stables' in the north-west of the site is recorded as a small farmstead /cottage. ■ Subdivision of the field into seven parts by fencing for horse paddocks has influenced the internal pattern of the site. ■ Hawkenbury Road, forming the western boundary of the site, is recorded as a historic lane.	The site is *used for grazing livestock...* relating to the 'Fieldscape and Heath' core character component. Hawkenbury Road contributes to the dense, radiating network of historic routeways relating to the *'Routeways'* core character component.	■ Loss of grazed pastures. ■ Modifications to Hawkenbury Road (recorded as a historic lane) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening, creation of junction).	■ Retain and protect vegetation along the outer boundaries of the site to avoid complete loss of field pattern, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective FH2**). ■ Reduce the impact of access works required to Hawkenbury Road, where possible, retaining the character of the historic lane and protecting the hedgerows along it (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives R1 and R2**). ■ Consider utilising the access for 'The Stables', in order to avoid the creation of a new junction along Hawkenbury Road.
Perceptual aspects ■ Whilst partly limited by the existing residential use within the north-western part of the site and Hawkenbury Road, the site's rural location provides some sense of tranquillity (with tranquillity levels recorded in the middle bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping).	The site forms part of an *intrinsically dark landscape* relating to the 'Dark Skies' character component.	■ Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in localised night blight. ■ Increase in domestic activity, movement and associated structures may	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective DS1**). ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [24] and use dark

[24] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

■ As the site is away from a settlement edge, it experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping). ■ The site is enclosed by woodland, hedgerows and tree cover, limiting intervisibility with the wider landscape.		reduce the rural and tranquil qualities of the site.	sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives DS1 and DS2**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development			
■ The site is located away from a settlement edge. There are scattered individual residential properties along Hawkenbury Road, adjacent to the north-western boundary of the site. ■ The site contains 'The Stables' property, with what appears to be a permanent bungalow, outbuildings and stables within the north-western part of the site.	The site does not contribute or express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Settlement' core character component.	Introduction of buildings and structures on the site with the potential for static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	■ Locate development in the north of the site to relate better to the existing development pattern along Hawkenbury Road and to retain the rural character in the south of the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1**). ■ Consider enclosing new development with woodland to provide a robust boundary between development and countryside. Maintain an appropriate buffer from the ancient woodland to the south and east. ■ Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the AONB (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1** and **S2)**
Potential visual receptors			
■ The surrounding vegetation limits long-distance views towards the site. ■ Limited glimpsed visibility of development will likely be seen by:	In relation to the 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' character component, the surrounding vegetation provides ***a sense of enclosure*** limiting the extent to	The introduction of buildings and structures will likely be visible in glimpsed views to the identified nearby visual receptors, although the degree	Retain and protect boundary vegetation to maintain enclosure and minimise views from adjacent visual receptors (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective PQ2).**

– users of Hawkenbury Road along the western edge and Dundale Road to the north; and – residents of Hunters Lodge and Bush House along Hawkenbury Road to the west opposite the site, particularly from the upper storeys.	which development would be perceived from the wider landscape. The ancient woodland contributes to *a sense of history and timelessness arising from an ancient countryside..*	of woodland and hedgerow enclosure will limit wider visibility.	
Summary			
Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** The site demonstrates characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. This includes the gently sloping landform, as well as its sensitive boundaries associated with the woodland that enclose the site (including priority habitat and ancient). However, the north-western part of the site contains existing residential development, the site is visually enclosed and the internal field pattern comprises subdivision by wooden fencing for horse paddocks, which reduces sensitivity. Overall, it is considered the potential extension in the south is of **moderate sensitivity** to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Variations in Sensitivity In comparison to the northern part of the site, the potential extension in the south is of greater sensitivity, reflected by the moderate sensitivity rating above. The northern part of the site is considered to be of **low-moderate sensitivity** to further intensification given its existing residential use.		
Moderate impact	**Overall impact on core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB** The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses some of the core character components of natural beauty, with a **moderate level of expression**. This is due to the sloping landform; the presence of mature woodland (including ancient), trees and hedgerows; grazed pastures; and being part of a landscape with dark skies. Development of the potential extension in the south is judged to have a **moderate impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore somewhat affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Variation to overall impact There would be a greater impact on the potential extension in the south than the existing residential site in the north which is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB.		

Summary and recommendations

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

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

- Limit the extent of development extending up the slope onto the valley side to minimise alterations to the landform.
- Retain and protect the mature woodland, trees and hedgerows along the outer boundaries of the site, to maintain enclosure and minimise views from adjacent visual receptors.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland to the required minimum buffer zone.
- Reduce the impact of access works required to Hawkenbury Road, where possible, retaining the character of the historic lane and protecting the hedgerows along it.
- Consider utilising the access for 'The Stables', in order to avoid the creation of a new junction along Hawkenbury Road.
- Locate development to the north of the site to relate better to the existing development pattern along Hawkenbury Road and to retain the rural character in the south of the site.
- Consider enclosing new development with woodland to provide a robust boundary between development and countryside.

Figure D.10 Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/005_r0_AerialOppsCons_A5L - Stables, Monkhurst and Robins 22/07/2026

Little Rose, Meres Lane, Cross in Hand

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing site for intensification, shown as Option OGT6 in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026).
Site location	This site lies within the south-central part of the High Weald AONB. It lies to the east of Meres Lane and is bounded to the north by Hornslodge Gill ancient woodland.

Figure D.11 Site location and constraints

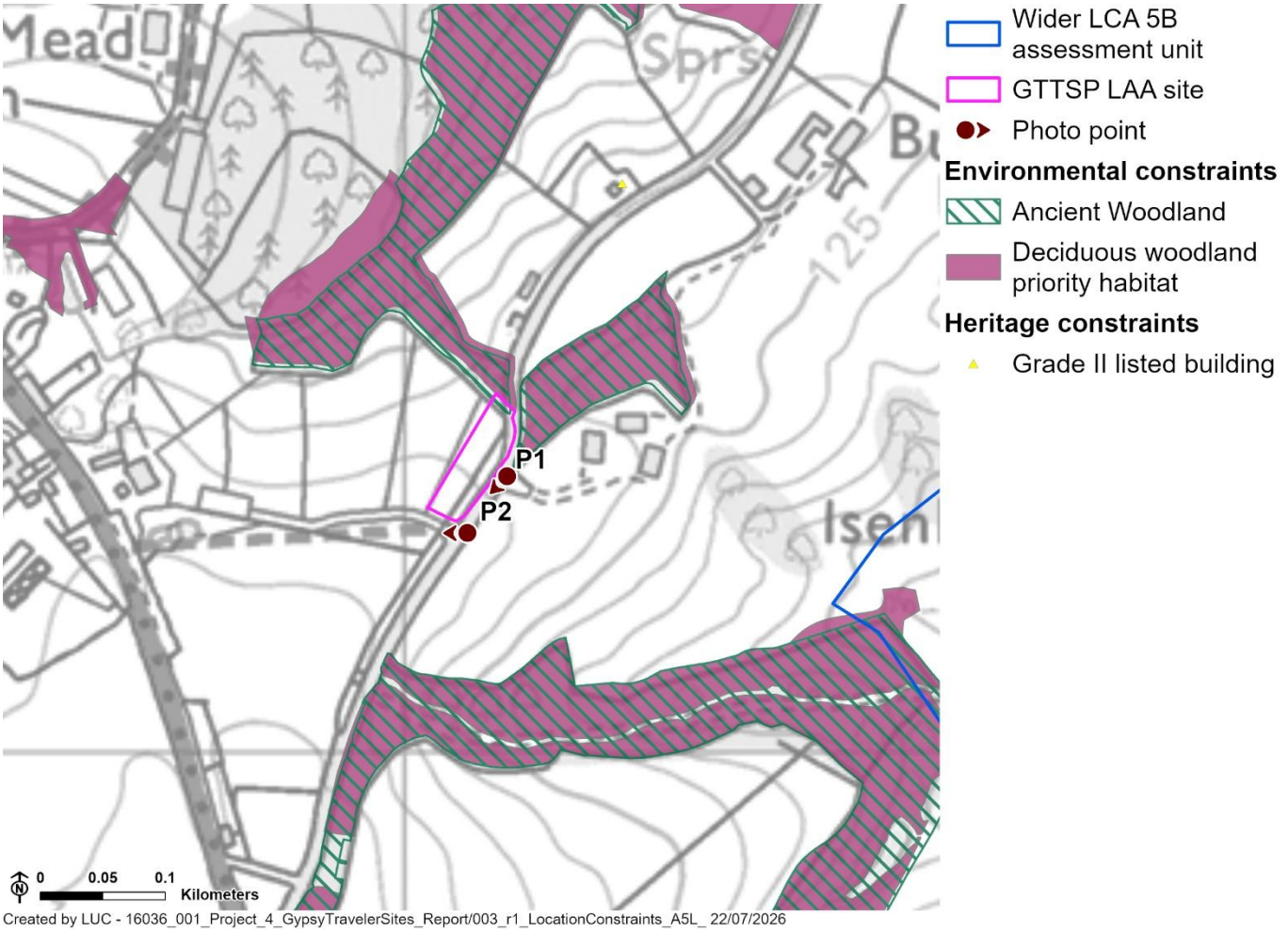
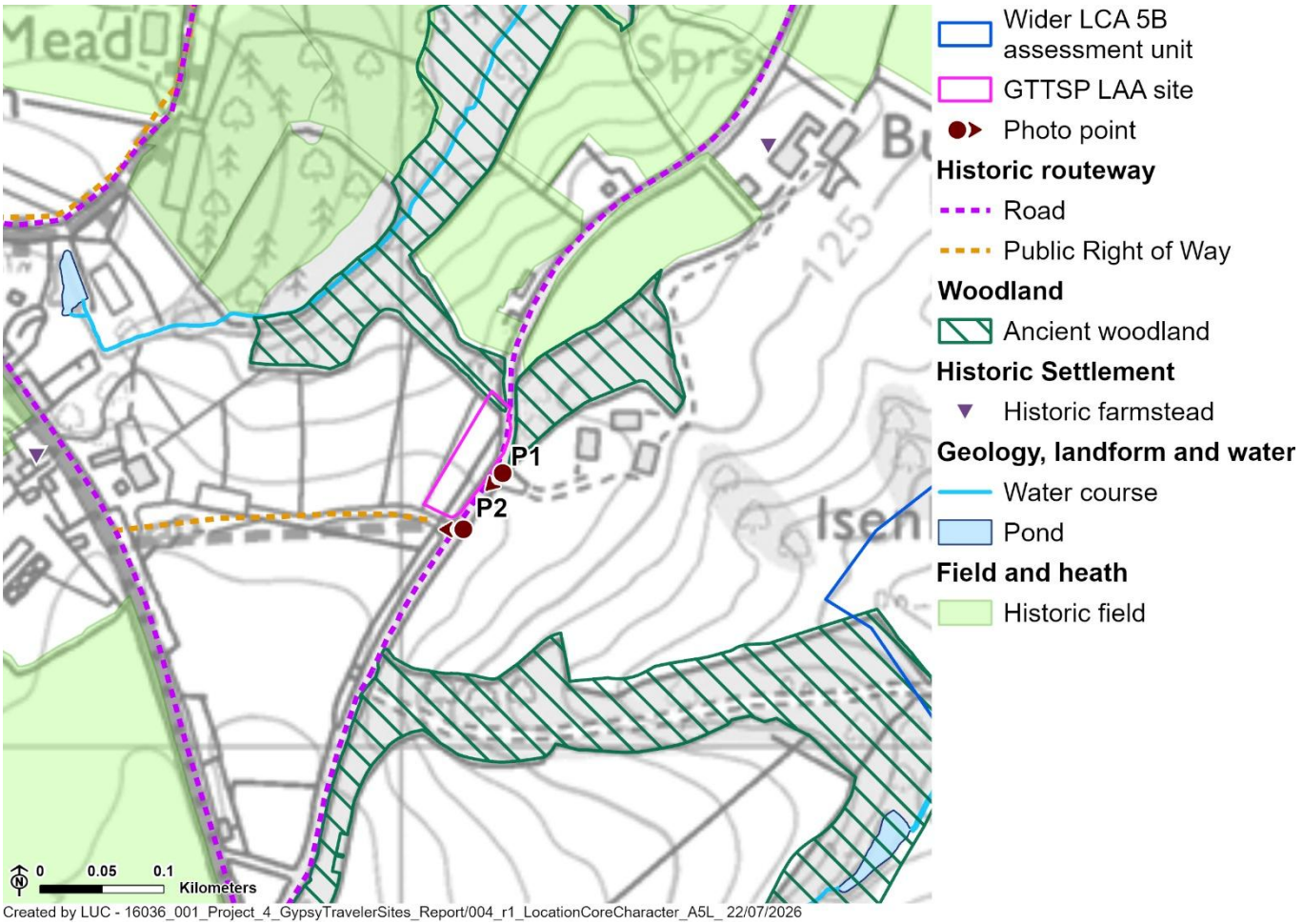


Figure D.12 Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/004_r1_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L_ 22/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: Views along the eastern edge of the site are largely enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows.



Photo 2: View towards the site entrance from the south-eastern edge, where mature vegetation provides visual containment and restricts views into the site.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Relevant core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Landform ■ The site lies at approximately 135m AOD on a gently sloping ridge, with the landform falling gently to the north-west towards an unnamed stream corridor within the River Rother catchment. ■ Beyond the site, this gentle north-facing slope contributes to the wider pattern of the '*complex ridge and valley landform.*' key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	The site's gentle slope and its relationship with the stream corridor to the north-west contribute to the *pattern of faults and folds* and *numerous small streams* relating to the 'Natural Systems' core character component.	As the site is already in Gypsy and Traveller use, substantial changes to the landform are unlikely. Minor changes may result from the implementation of more hardstanding.	Mitigation/enhancement relating to the landform is not considered necessary.
Natural character ■ The site's existing use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation means that it has already been partly developed, with hardstanding and structures concentrated in the southern portion of the site, and an access road extending off Meres Lane in the south. ■ Hornslodge Gill ancient woodland, comprising predominantly deciduous woodland priority habitat, lies immediately to the north of the site and extends around its northern boundary. Marlpit Shaw, a further area of ancient woodland, lies across Meres Lane to the north-east. ■ The northern and eastern boundaries of the site are defined by a mature woodland edge and hedgerow vegetation with hedgerow trees, providing strong enclosure on those sides.	Features within the site do not strongly express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Woodland' core character component. However, the surrounding woodland contributes to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges…*and the *high proportion of ancient woodland…*	■ Removal of mature trees and hedgerows along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the adjoining ancient woodland (Hornslodge Gill) and priority habitat deciduous woodland.	■ Retain and protect the mature trees and hedgerows along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives W1 and W2**). ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland, to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W1**). ■ Consider strengthening the fragmented western boundary hedgerow using native species which will improve habitat connectivity with the wider woodland network (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2**). This will also provide

■ The western boundary, adjoining an open agricultural field, is more exposed, with fragmented and poorly structured hedgerow vegetation providing limited enclosure in places.			more containment and enclosure to the site.
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC identifies the eastern edge of the site, along Meres Lane, as an extension of small farmstead or cottage settlement expansion. The remainder of the site is classified as part of an isolated enclosure field pattern, although the sense of time depth has already been reduced by the existing Gypsy and Traveller use and associated hardstanding. ■ Meres Lane along the eastern boundary of the site is recorded as a historic drove. A PRoW extends from the access road at the entrance of the site, and runs to the west towards the A267, and this is recorded as a historic routeway.	The historic routeways contribute to the *dense, radiating network with a variety of origins* relating to the 'Routeways' character component.	As the site has an existing access road there is unlikely to be any changes to the historic routeways.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landscape pattern and time depth is not considered necessary.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is located away from Cross in Hand settlement and is well screened from the wider landscape by the surrounding ancient woodland and boundary vegetation. As a result, it experiences relatively dark skies, with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping. ■ Tranquillity levels are recorded within the middle bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, with some influence from Meres Lane and the adjacent commercial premises to the east of the lane.	The site forms part of an *intrinsically dark landscape* relating to the 'Dark Skies' character component, although the sense of naturalness is compromised within the site given the existing Gypsy and Traveller use of the site.	Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and install outdoor lighting only where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective DS1**). ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [25] and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives DS1 and DS2**).

[25] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development			
■ The site comprises an existing Gypsy and Traveller site, currently accommodating static caravans, sheds and hardstanding in its southern half. It is located away from the defined settlement edge of Cross in Hand, forming a dispersed rural cluster consistent with the wider, strongly dispersed settlement pattern of the assessment unit. ■ Commercial premises with large sheds lie directly to the east, on the opposite side of Meres Lane, and represent an existing built form in the immediate setting of the site.	The site does not contribute or express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Settlement' core character component.	Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the AONB (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1** and **S2)**.
Potential visual receptors			
■ The ancient woodland that directly abuts the northern boundary, and the mature trees and hedgerows along Meres Lane (eastern boundary) provide enclosure and limit long-distance views into the site from most directions. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of Meres Lane, although views are filtered and largely screened by the roadside vegetation along the site's eastern boundary; and – users of the PRoW that runs from the site entrance to the west.	In relation to the 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' character component, the surrounding ancient woodland and boundary vegetation provide *a sense of enclosure* to the site. The PRoW along the southern boundary contributes to the *sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way and quiet roads suitable for walking*.	The potential increase in built form associated with intensification will likely be visible from the PRoW and, to a lesser degree, through gaps in the boundary vegetation along Meres Lane, although given the existing use of the site and visual enclosure, may go largely unnoticed.	■ Retain and protect the existing boundary vegetation along Meres Lane and southern boundary to maintain screening of the site from road users and PRoW users (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective PQ2**. ■ Retain public access along the PRoW (in accordance with the AONB's Objective **PQ3**).
Summary			
Low-Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use, it contains very few characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. The site is abutted by ancient woodland in the north, forms part of a landscape with dark skies and users of the PRoW (a historic routeway) are considered to be a key visual receptor, which slightly increases sensitivity.		

	Overall, it is considered the site is of **low-moderate sensitivity** to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use. Variations in Sensitivity There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.
Low impact	**Overall impact on core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB** The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses few core character components of natural beauty with a **weak level of expression.** Development of the site is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, and is therefore unlikely to impact the statutory duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Variation to overall impact There is no variation to the overall impact considered above.

Summary and recommendations

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

- Retain and protect the mature trees and hedgerows along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the site, to maintain screening of the site from road users and PRoW users.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland, to the required minimum buffer zone.
- Consider strengthening the fragmented western boundary hedgerow using native species which will improve habitat connectivity with the wider woodland network.
- Retain public access along the PRoW.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit

Five sites have been assessed within the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit. The preceding site assessments have judged the overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB to be:

Site	Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Variations
The Plot, Five Ashes Road, Mayfield	Moderate impact	There would be a greater impact on the western half of the site than the eastern half.
Little Oaks, Argos Hill, Mayfield	Low impact	No variation.
Land at Green Hedges Nursery, Danegate Lane, Mark Cross	Moderate impact	There would be a greater impact on the western and south-western parts of the site than the eastern half.
The Stables (Bush House), Bells Yew Green	Moderate impact	There would be a greater impact on the potential extension in the south than the existing residential site in the north which is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB.
Little Rose, Meres Lane, Cross in Hand	Low impact	No variation.

As all of the sites have already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, with the exception of The Stables (Bush House), which partly contains residential development and a potential extension site) there would be limited cumulative impacts on the components of character, although the potential loss of fields and hedgerow boundaries may affect the pastoral feel of the landscape. Due to the small scale of the sites, the intervening distance between them, and the well-wooded character surrounding them, cumulative visual effects would be limited.

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

Appendix E

Wider LCA 6A Assessment Unit

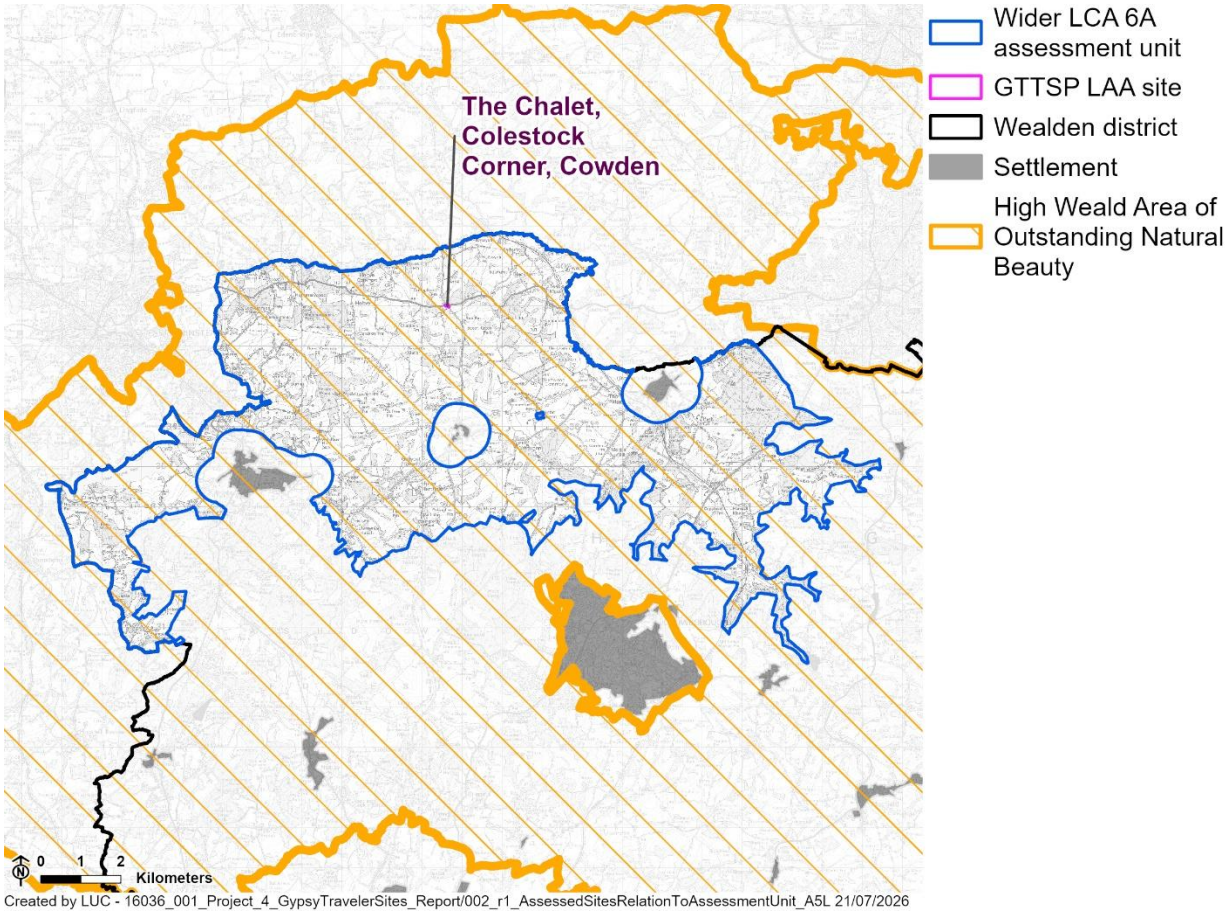
E.1 The key landscape sensitivities of the Wider LCA 6A assessment unit, as described in the *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* (2023) are:

- *The complex ridge and valley landform.*
- *Mature hedgerows, hedgerow trees and shaws.*
- *Mature interconnected deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin).*
- *Areas of priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh, lowland meadows, good quality semi-improved grassland.*
- *Intact historic field pattern of small to medium scale assarts and piecemeal enclosure.*
- *Numerous historic features contribute to the time-depth of the landscape, including Registered Parks and Gardens,*
- *Scheduled Monuments, and the Withyham, Eridge Green and Forstal Conservation Areas.*
- *The strongly dispersed settlement pattern.*
- *The wooded rural backdrop provided by the landscape to nearby settlements.*
- *The strong network of public rights of way and recreational opportunities.*
- *The strong rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity.*
- *Location within and some intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB.*

E.2 One potential development site is considered within the Wider LCA 6A assessment unit:

- **The Chalet, Colestock Corner, Cowden** (located within the High Weald AONB)

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



The Chalet, Colestock Corner, Cowden

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller site with temporary planning permission (Ref WD/2013/1272/FE)
Site location	This site is located within the north-western part of the High Weald AONB. It is bordered by the A264 to the north and the B2026 Edenbridge Road to the east.

Figure E.2 Site location and constraints

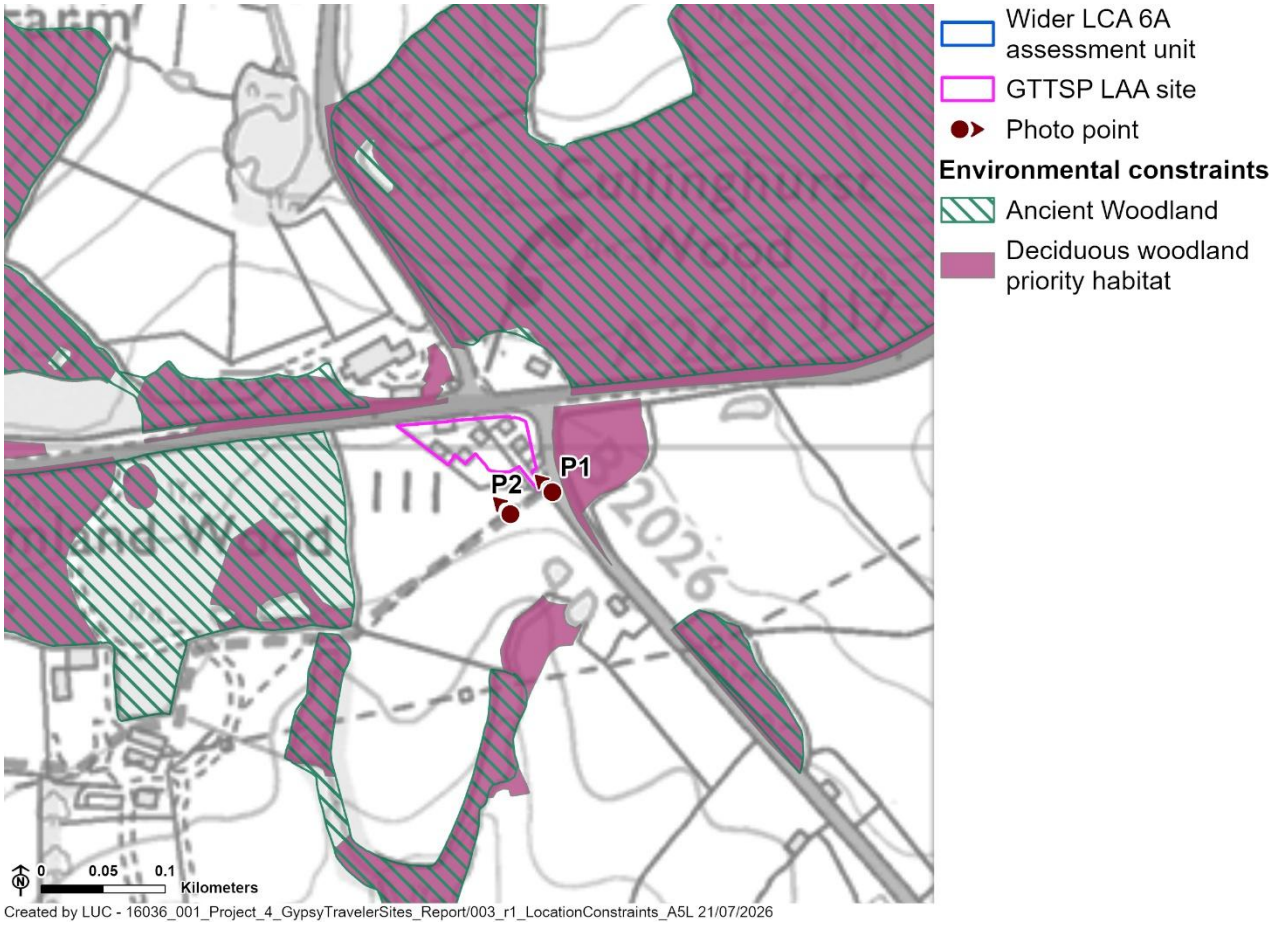
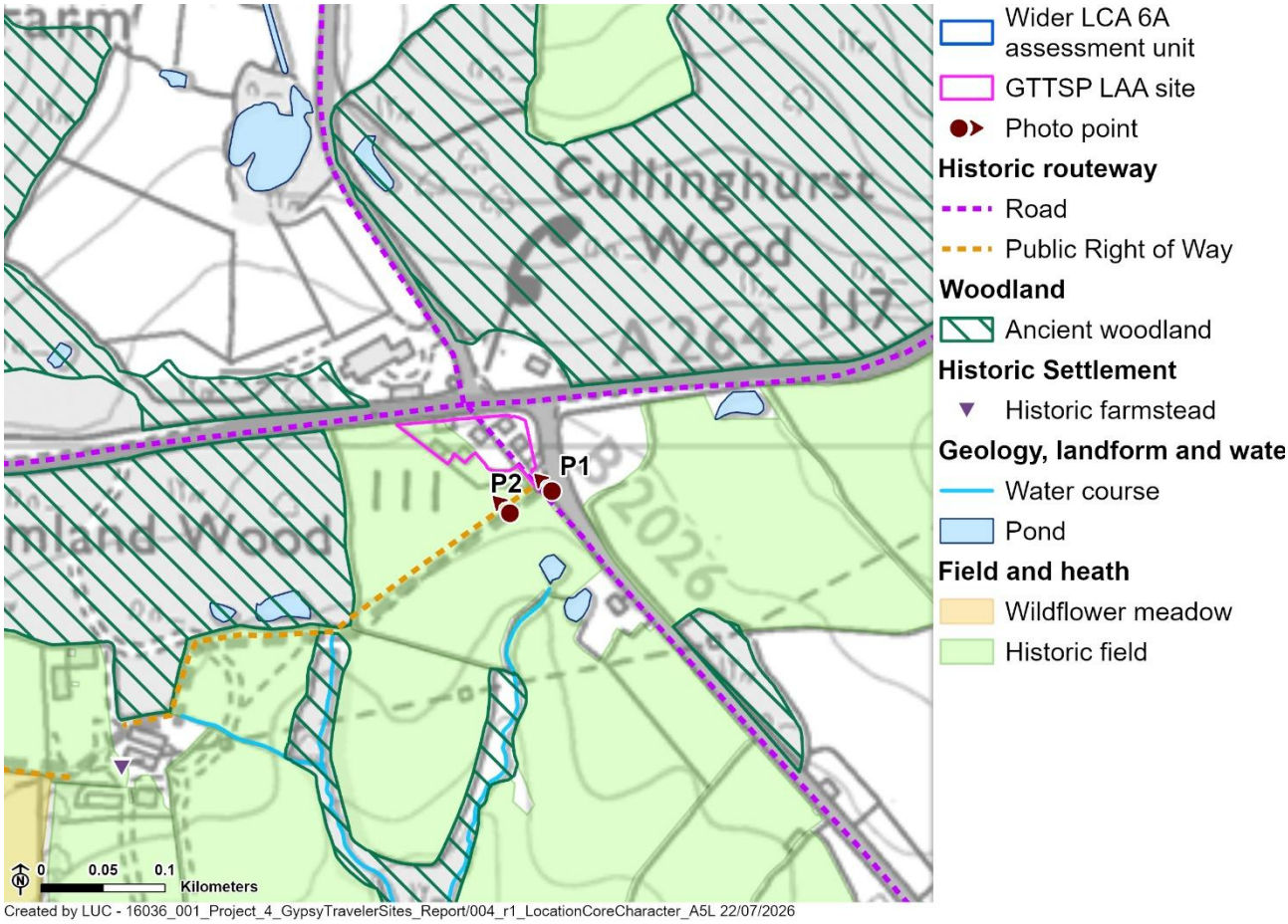


Figure E.3 Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/004_r1_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L 22/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: View at the site access off Edenbridge Road, with notable trees and boarded fence boundaries providing enclosure and screening.



Photo 2: View into the site from the PRoW to the south, with visibility afforded through fragmented hedgerows along the site's south-western edge.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Relevant core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Landform ■ The site is relatively flat at approximately 110m AOD. ■ It comprises a very gentle slope to the south as the landform beyond the site gently falls south towards a tributary valley of the River Medway.	The site does not contribute or express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Natural Systems' core character component.	As the site has already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, there is unlikely to be any substantial changes to the landform. Minor changes may relate to the implementation of more hard standing.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landform is not considered necessary.
Natural character ■ The site's existing use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation means that it has already been developed with hard standing extending up to its boundaries and an access road extending off the B2026 Edenbridge Road in the south-east corner of the site. ■ A small clump of mature trees exists within the site (close to its southern edge). Other notable trees include an internal mature coniferous tree in the north-eastern corner of the site and a semi-mature tree on the junction of the access road. ■ The outer boundaries of the site mostly comprise close boarded fencing, although with occasional fragments of hedges along the south-western boundary and in the north-west.	Features within the site do not strongly express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Woodland' core character component. However, the surrounding woodland contribute to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges…*and the *high proportion of ancient woodland…*	Removal of the mature trees within the site and further loss of hedges along the outer boundaries.	■ Retain and protect the mature trees within the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives W1**). ■ Consider re-establishing the missing section of hedgerow along the A264 and northern boundary of the site which will improve the connectivity between the existing hedgerow in the north-west and woodland to the east, using native species (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2**). This will also provide more containment and enclosure to the site.

■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland surrounds the site to the north and east, although extends up to the opposing roadside edges. ■ Ancient woodland at Cullinghurst Wood, Whitepost Wood and Broomland Wood lie approximately 50m, 30m and 60m to the north-east, north-west and west respectively.			
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC indicates that the south-western extent of the site formed part of an assart, but as this part of the site has been developed, there is no sense of time depth. ■ The existing access road was a historic drove; however, it no longer connects to the A264 (which is record as a historic lane) terminating within the site. A PRoW extends from the access road at the entrance of the site, and runs to the south-west towards Broomland Wood, and this is recorded as a historic routeway.	Although part of an assart, the south-western extent of the site does not express the *medieval fieldscape character* relating to the 'Fieldscape and Heath' character component. The historic routeways contribute to the *dense, radiating network with a variety of origins* relating to the 'Routeways' character component. The PRoW partly expresses this, but less so for the access road and A264 given their current day uses.	As the site has an existing access road there is unlikely to be any changes to the historic routeways.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landscape pattern and time depth is not considered necessary.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to main roads, reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ As the site is away from a settlement edge, it experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping.	The site forms part of an *intrinsically dark landscape* relating to the 'Dark Skies' character component, although there is not a sense of naturalness given the existing Gypsy and Traveller use of the site.	Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective DS1**). ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [26] and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives DS1 and DS2**).

[26] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development			
■ The site is located away from a settlement edge. A caravan and motorhome centre, and a farmstead with large sheds lie to the north of the A264, opposite the site. ■ The site contains a two-storey permanent dwelling in the north-east, and static caravans and shed-type structures sparsely scattered across the site.	The site does not contribute or express any of the key characteristics relating to the 'Settlement' core character component.	Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the AONB (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1** and **S2)**.
Potential visual receptors			
■ The existing woodland that surrounds the site, provides enclosure and prevents long-distance views towards the site. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of the A264 the north and B2026 Edenbridge Road to the east; – users of the PRoW that runs from the site entrance to the south-west; and – residents of a house located within Dingle Farm to the north of the A264 and opposite the site, particularly from the upper storey.	In relation to the 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' character component, the surrounding woodland provides *a sense of enclosure* and the PRoW contributes to the *sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way and quiet roads suitable for walking.*	The potential increase in buildings and structures will likely be seen from the nearby visual receptors, although given the existing use of the site, may go largely unnoticed.	■ Consider re-establishing the missing section of hedgerow along the A264 and northern boundary of the site as this will provide more containment and enclosure to the site, and minimise views from the A264 while softening views experienced from the upper storey of the nearby house within Dingle Farm (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective PQ2**). ■ Retain public access and consider enhancing the hedgerows along the south-western boundary of the site to minimise views experienced from the PRoW (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective PQ2 and PQ3**).
Summary			
Low-Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use, it contains very few characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. The site forms part of a landscape with dark skies and users of the PRoW (a historic routeway) are considered to be a key visual receptor, which slightly increases sensitivity. Overall, it is considered the site is of **low-moderate sensitivity** to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use.		

	Variations in Sensitivity There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.
Low impact	**Overall impact on core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB** The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses few core character components of natural beauty with a **weak level of expression.** Development of the site is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, and is therefore unlikely to impact the statutory duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Variation to overall impact There is no variation to the overall impact considered above.

Summary and recommendations

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

- Retain and protect the mature trees within the site.
- Consider re-establishing the missing section of hedgerow along the A264 and northern boundary of the site, using native species, which will improve the connectivity between the existing hedgerow in the north-west and woodland to the east, will provide more containment and enclosure to the site, and minimise views from the A264 while softening views experienced from the upper storey of the nearby house within Dingle Farm.
- Retain public access and consider enhancing the hedgerows along the south-western boundary of the site to minimise views experienced from the PRoW.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Wider LCA 6A assessment unit

Only one site has been considered within the Wider LCA 6A assessment unit within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The assessment of cumulative effects is therefore not required.

Appendix F

LCA 6D - Buxted Assessment Unit

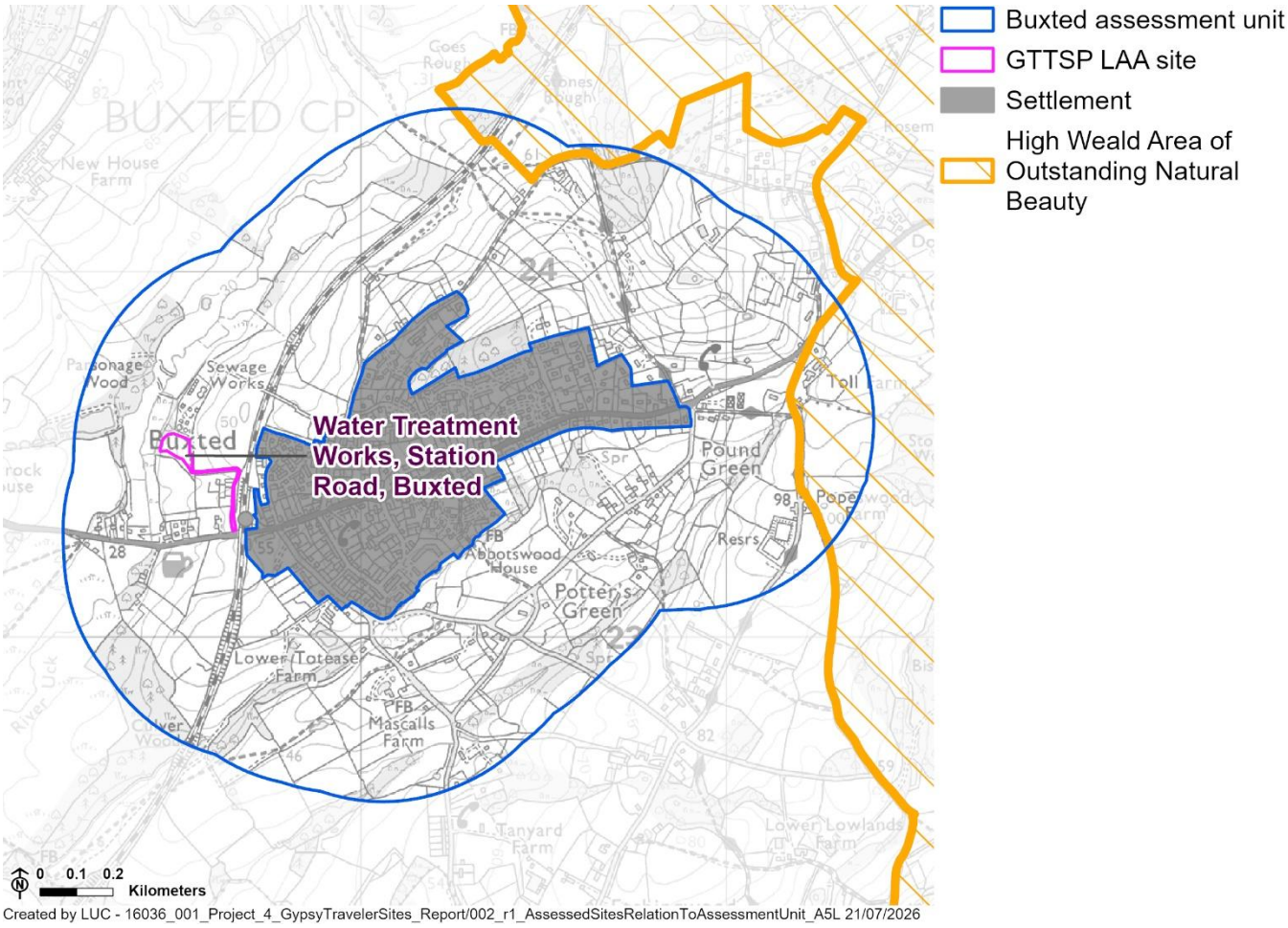
F.1 The key landscape sensitivities of the Buxted assessment unit, as described in the *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* (2023) are:

- *The ridge and valley landform, particularly the distinctive wooded ridges in the east of the assessment unit.*
- *Numerous priority habitat deciduous woodlands, many of ancient origin, and the ecologically valued grasslands at Buxted Park.*
- *The strong network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees.*
- *Intact small-scale historic field patterns.*
- *Contribution to the sense of separation between Buxted and Uckfield.*
- *The rural character with strong recreational opportunities, including the long-distance Vanguard Way.*
- *Areas of tranquillity and dark skies, particularly to the south-east and north-east of the assessment unit.*
- *Views toward and intervisibility with the High Weald AONB in the north and east.*

F.2 One potential development site is considered within the Heathfield assessment unit:

- **Water Treatment Works, Station Road, Buxted** (located outside of the High Weald AONB)

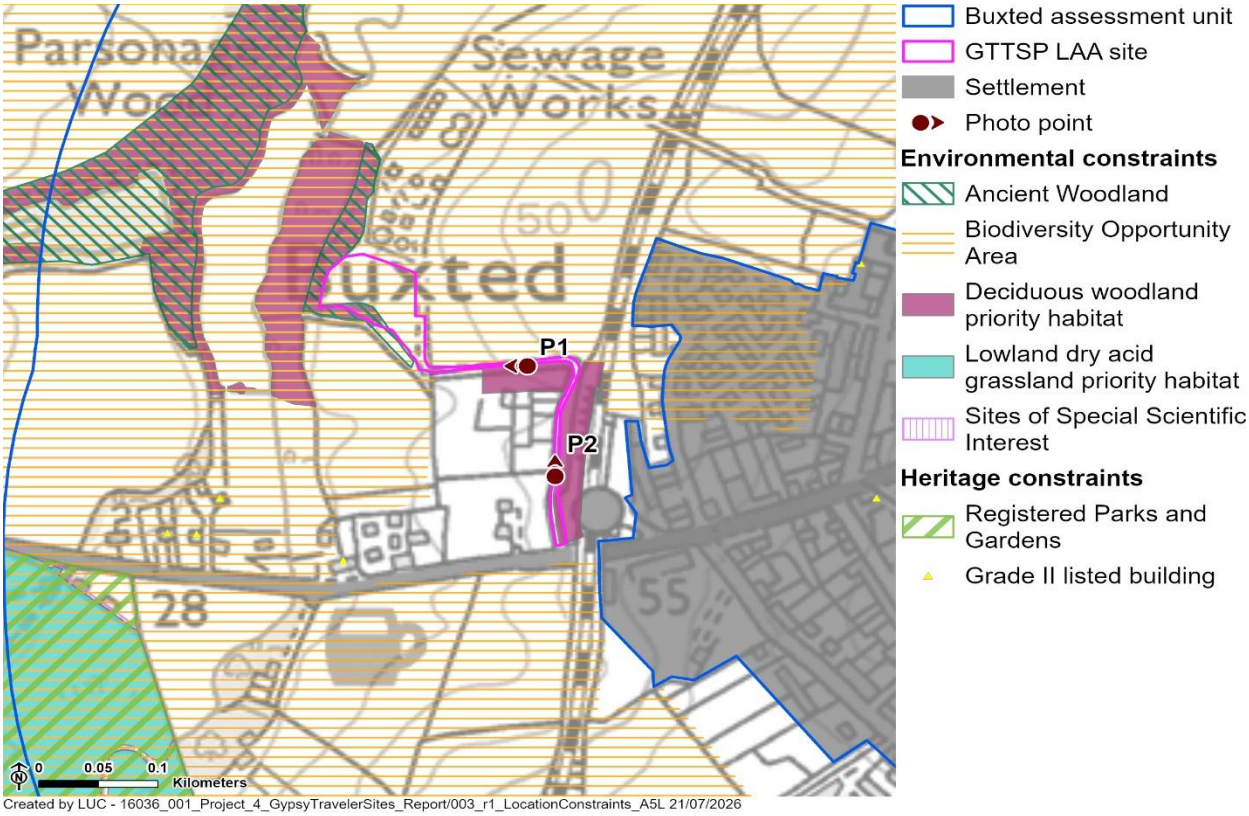
Figure F.1 Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Water Treatment Works, Station Road, Buxted

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Authorised, Permanent (WD/2009/1757/FR)
Site location	This site lies outside of the High Weald AONB, to the west of Buxted. It is bounded to the north by Water Treatment Works.

Figure F.2 Site location and constraints



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/003_r1_LocationConstraints_A5L 21/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: View looking west into the site from the access road, where the sloping landform provides partial visual containment and limits views into the site.



Photo 2: View along the access road, with allotment gardens to the west.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features		
Landform ■ The site is situated within the lower part of a broader landform that slopes gently from east to west, with levels falling from approximately 50m AOD along the railway track to the east to around 30m AOD within the River Uck corridor. The main area of the site lies between 30m and 35m AOD. ■ It forms part of the *'ridge and valley landform'* key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	As the site has already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, there is unlikely to be any substantial changes to the landform. Minor changes may relate to the implementation of more hard standing within the north of the site where there is grass.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landform is not considered necessary.
Natural character ■ The site's existing use for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation means that it has already been developed with hard standing extending up to most of its boundaries (although with some small areas of grass in the north) and a long access road extending off the A272 (that also serves access to the Water Treatment Works). ■ The site is partially separated from the Water Treatment Works to the north by an existing fenced boundary. ■ A small area of priority habitat deciduous woodland, which includes the Parsonage Wood ancient woodland extension, runs along the southern and western boundaries of the site, enclosing the River Uck corridor. This woodland contributes to the 'n*umerous priority habitat deciduous woodlands,*	■ Removal of mature trees along the southern and western boundaries of the site, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the adjoining ancient woodland (Parsonage Wood) and priority habitat deciduous woodland.	■ Retain and protect the mature trees and woodland along the southern and western boundaries of the site. ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland, to the required minimum buffer zone. ■ Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA, where possible.

Baseline character	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
many of ancient origin' key sensitivity of the assessment unit. ■ A further area of priority habitat deciduous woodland lies to the south and east of the access road to the site off the A272. ■ The site falls entirely within the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA.		
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The site comprises an area of irregular piecemeal enclosure as indicated by the Sussex HLC, although the sense of time depth has already been reduced by the existing Gypsy and Traveller use and associated hardstanding.	Introduction of additional pitches would expand the existing area of hardstanding, resulting in limited alterations to the existing landscape pattern of development and a grass field.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landscape pattern and time depth is not considered necessary.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site's proximity to the Water Treatment Work to the north, and to the existing railway to the east and the wider settlement edge of Buxted beyond, reduces the sense of tranquillity, with CPRE Tranquillity Mapping recording low levels across the area. ■ Although the site is set back from the A272 and offset from the settlement edge of Buxted, the settlement influences still affect the experience of dark skies, with light pollution levels falling within the middle bands of CPRE Night Blight Mapping.	Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in further night blight.	■ Minimise the use of external lighting, installing only where strictly necessary for safety and security purposes. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [27] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development		

[27] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

Baseline character	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
■ The existing Gypsy and Traveller site is separated from the main settlement edge of Buxted by the railway line to the east. The site is also separated from the linear development along the A272 by an intervening agricultural field and allotment gardens. ■ The site and the Water Treatment Works together form a discrete area of developed land, well contained by the surrounding deciduous and ancient woodland. Strong boundary vegetation of the surrounding land provides separation with the surrounding countryside. ■ The north and south-east of the site comprises static caravans and shed-type structures associated with the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.	■ Encroachment of development into the robust woodland boundary and the Water Treatment Works reducing the sense of enclosure from the surrounding landscape. This would erode the clear visual and physical separation between this developed area and the surrounding countryside. ■ Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character of the landscape.
Potential visual receptors		
■ The existing woodland surrounding the site and sloping landform to the east provides a high degree of enclosure, limiting the potential for long-distance views towards the site from the wider landscape. ■ Key visual receptors likely to experience views of any new development include: – residents of the properties along the A272 to the south of the site (although limited to glimpsed views); and – users of the railway in glimpsed views through gaps in vegetation.	The potential increase in buildings and structures may be seen from the nearby visual receptors, although given the existing use of the site, may go largely unnoticed.	Retain and protect boundary vegetation to maintain enclosure and minimise views from adjacent visual receptors.
Summary		

Baseline character	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Low-Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use, it contains very few characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. The site is abutted by ancient woodland to the west and south, which slightly increases sensitivity. Overall, it is considered the site is of **low-moderate sensitivity** to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use. Variations in Sensitivity There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.	

Summary and recommendations

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

- Retain and protect the mature trees and woodland along the southern and western boundaries of the site.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland, to the required minimum buffer zone.
- Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA, where possible.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Buxted assessment unit

Only one site has been considered within the Buxted assessment unit within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The assessment of cumulative effects is therefore not required.

Appendix G

Wider LCA 6D Assessment Unit

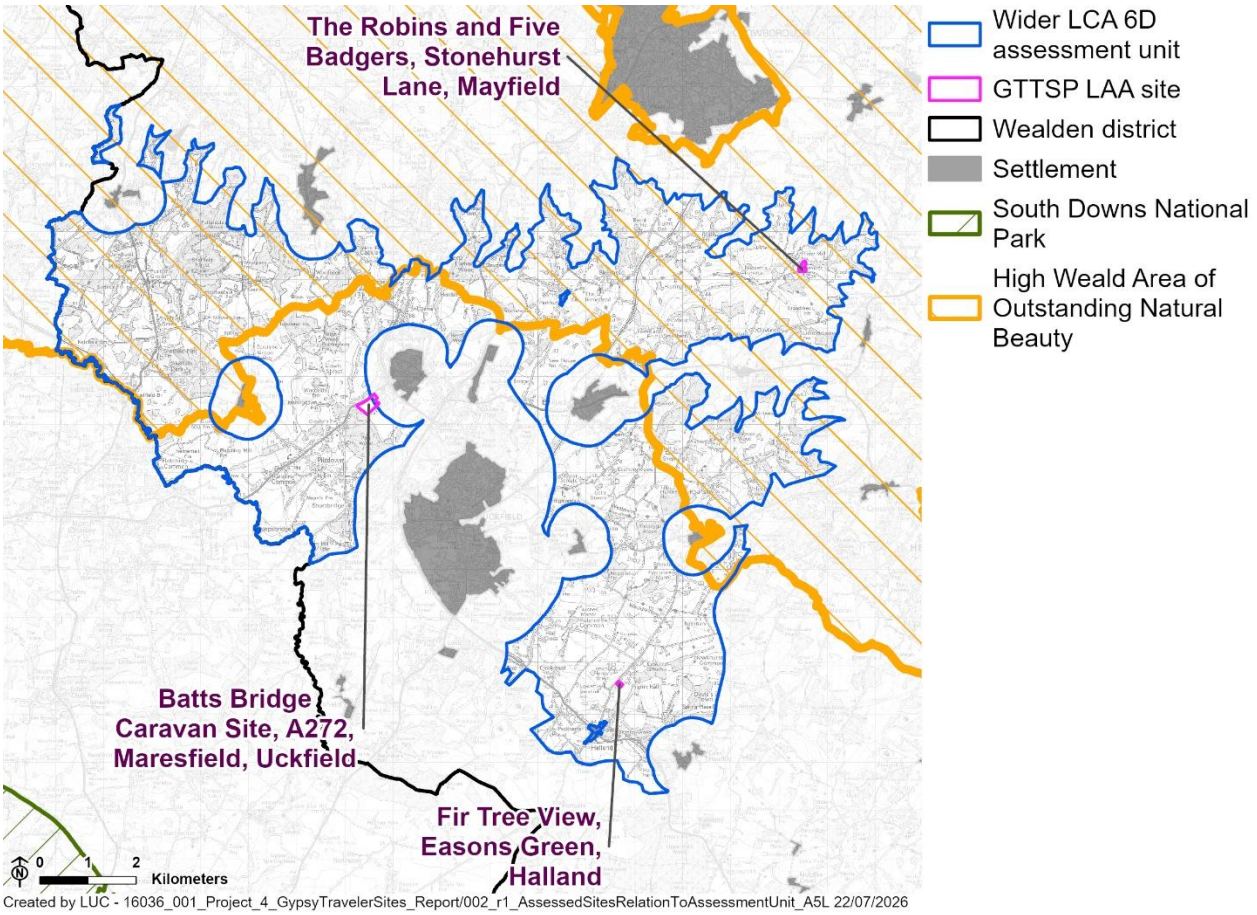
G.1 The key landscape sensitivities of the Wider LCA 6D assessment unit, as described in the *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* (2023) are:

- *Gently rolling landscape, bisected by river and stream corridors, with elevated ridgelines to the north and east.*
- *Ecologically valued woodlands, including ancient woodland throughout the assessment unit.*
- *Intact historic field pattern, including assarts and co-axial fields, mostly concentrated within the High Weald AONB.*
- *Pasture and arable fields bound by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.*
- *Dispersed, rural settlement pattern.*
- *Role the landscape plays in the separation between settlements.*
- *Historic features including the historic farmsteads and houses, Scheduled Monuments and the Grade I listed Sheffield Park.*
- *Good access on public rights of way through the landscape, including the promoted Vanguard Way and Wealdway.*
- *Rural character with limited modern intrusions.*
- *Views to the High Weald AONB in the north and South Downs National Park (in the south-east of the LCA).*

G.2 Three potential development sites are considered within the Wider LCA 6D assessment unit:

- **The Robins and Five Badgers, Stonehurst Lane, Mayfield** (located within the High Weald AONB)
- **Batts Bridge Caravan Site, A272, Maresfield, Uckfield** (located outside of the High Weald AONB)
- **Fir Tree View, Easons Green, Halland** (located outside of the High Weald AONB)

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



The Robins and Five Badgers, Stonehurst Lane, Mayfield

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing site in the south with potential extension area in the north shown as Option OGT4 in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026).
Site location	The site lies within the central-southern part of the High Weald AONB. The field to the south is currently used for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, and a field to the north forms the potential extension area. The site is bounded by Stonehurst Lane to the south with Stonehurst Wood enclosing the potential extension area to the north.

Figure G.2 Site location and constraints

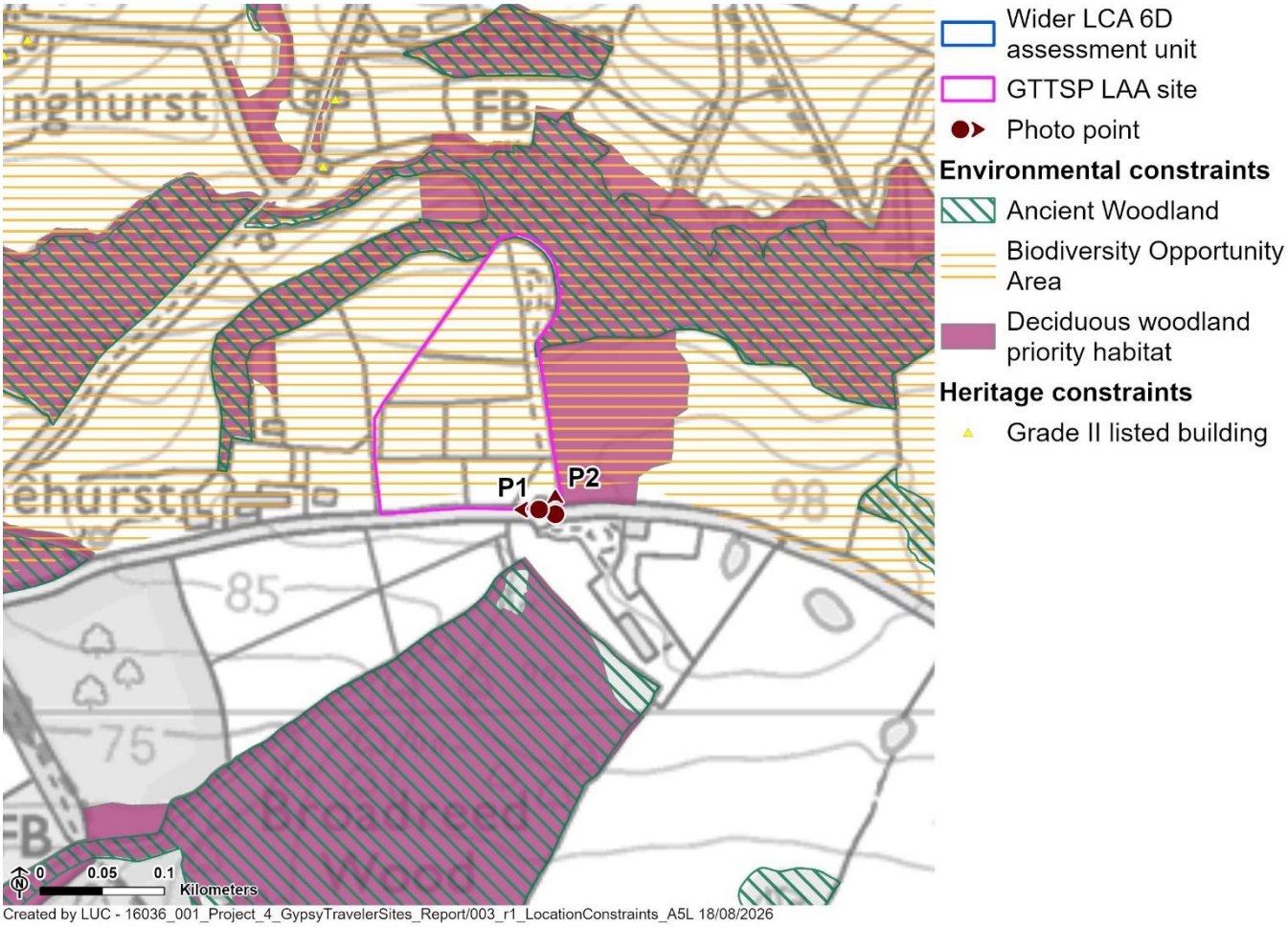
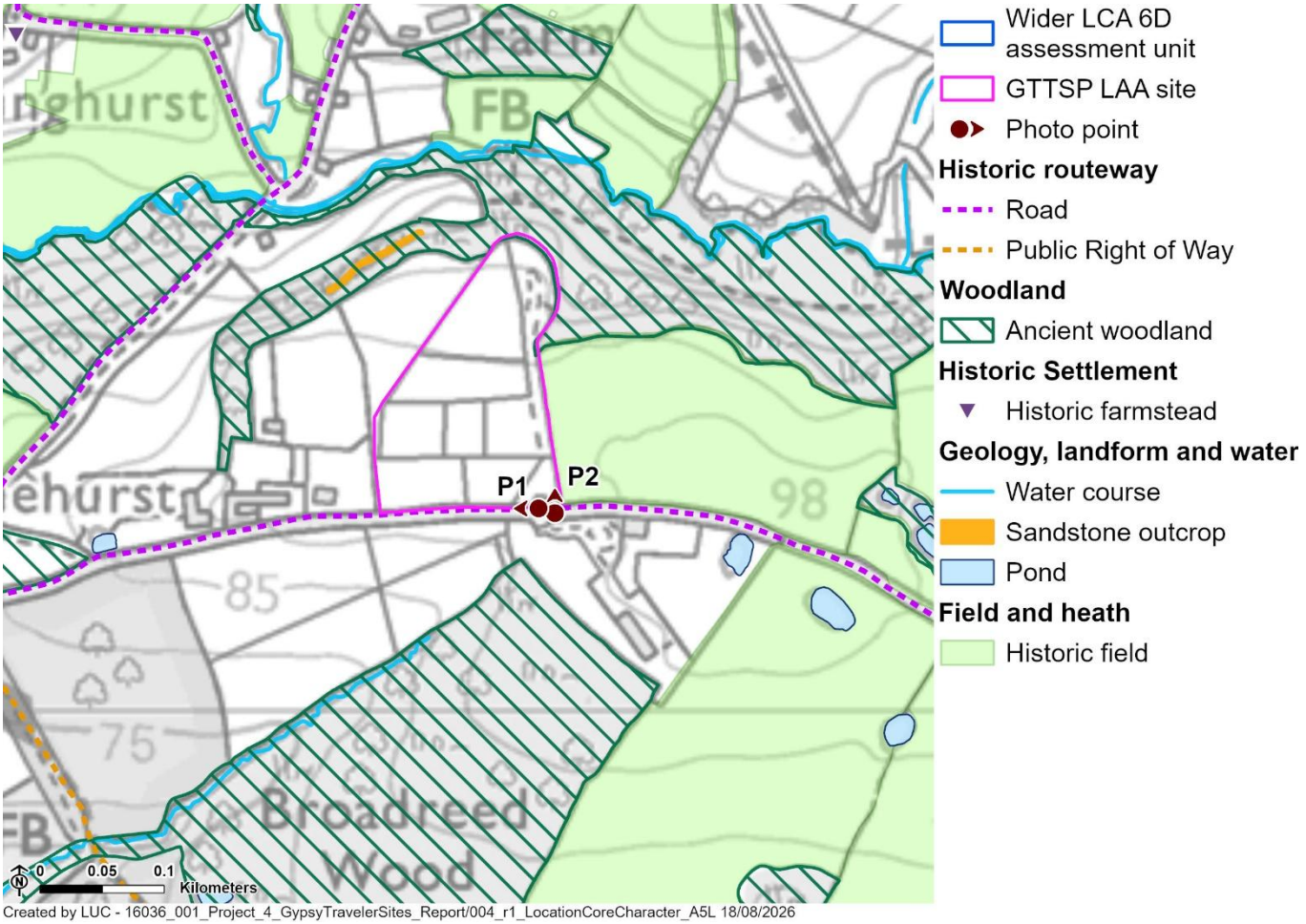


Figure G.3 Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/004_r1_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L 18/08/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: Mature trees and hedgerows along the existing site's southern boundary provide effective screening and restrict views into the site.



Photo 2: View towards the existing site from Stonehurst Lane, where the existing gated entrance and boundary features restrict visibility into the site.

Landscape and Visual

Baseline character	Relevant core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Landform ■ The site in the south is relatively flat at around 90m AOD. The potential extension area gently slopes to the north, falling from approximately 90m to 85m AOD towards a small stream corridor to the north. ■ The gentle north-facing slope and its relationship with the stream corridor to the north contribute to the '*Gently rolling landscape, bisected by river and stream corridors'* key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	The potential extension area's gentle slope in the north contributes to the *pattern of faults and folds* relating to the 'Natural Systems' core character component.	Earthworks and implementation of hard standing could result in changes to the gently sloping profile of the potential extension area where it descends towards the stream corridor in the north.	Limit the extent of development extending down the slope in the north to minimise alterations to the landform and retain its contribution to the pattern of faults and folds. Consider locating development further south, adjacent to the existing site and where the landform is flatter (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective G2**).
Natural character ■ The site has been partly developed with hardstanding along its southern edge and has two access points along Stonehurst Lane in the south-eastern and south-western corners. A large proportion of the existing site consists of paddocks. ■ Development within the south of the site is interspersed with isolated mature trees and a few internal boundaries comprising wooded belts. The western boundary of the site is defined by a mature wooded belt of trees, whilst the southern boundary is defined by a thick mature hedgerow along Stonehurst Lane, effectively screening the site.	The internal mature trees, wooded belts and the outer boundaries of hedgerow, hedgerow trees and woodland contribute to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods… shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges* and the *high proportion of ancient woodland…* relating to the 'Woodland' core character component.	■ Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows within and around the site, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland (Stonehurst Lane) and priority habitat deciduous	■ Retain and protect the mature trees, wooded belts, hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and around the site (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives W1 and W2**). ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland along the northern and north-eastern boundaries of the potential extension area , to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W1**). ■ Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA, where possible (in

■ The potential extension area in the north comprises a single pastoral field that is bounded to the north and north-east by Stonehurst Wood (ancient woodland). This comprises predominantly priority habitat deciduous woodland that also extends further south, abutting the whole of the eastern boundary of the site. ■ The woodland contributes to the' *Ecologically valued woodlands'* of the wider assessment unit. ■ A small unnamed stream corridor runs close to the northern boundary of the potential extension area , broadly east-west at the foot of the slope. ■ The site falls entirely within the River Uck and its Headwaters Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA).		woodland which encloses the northern and eastern edges of the site.	accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2 and FH3**). This could include the enhancement of woodland connectivity within the BOA through additional native planting along the field margins which also provide more containment and enclosure to the site. ■ Avoid, where possible, the creation of new additional access points that would result in the loss of additional mature roadside hedgerow vegetation along Stonehurst Lane (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective W2**).
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC indicates that the site comprises a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern. ■ Subdivision of the site into linear fields by fencing for horse paddocks has influenced the internal pattern, some of which are reinforced by wooded belts. ■ The field immediately to the east of the site is recorded as an assart, and the site's internal wooded field boundaries and isolated trees tree reflect this historic landscape, contributing to time depth. ■ Stonehurst Lane, which runs along the southern boundary of the site, is recorded as a historic lane.	The site forms part of a wider *generally irregular field pattern* and a *Medieval fieldscape character dominant, with a high proportion of field systems created by assarting (woodland clearance) with sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges common.* The potential extension area in the north is used for *'grazing livestock'*. These are all key characteristics of the 'Fieldscape and Heath' core character component. Stonehurst Lane in the south contributes to the dense,	■ Introduction of additional pitches within the site would expand the existing area of hardstanding, resulting in limited alterations to the existing landscape pattern of development and paddocks. ■ Further subdivision and loss of grazed pastures within the potential extension area, altering the current pattern of this single pastoral field.	■ Retain and protect the existing field boundaries within and around the site to avoid complete loss of field pattern, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective FH2).** ■ Utilise the existing access points along Stonehurst Lane to retain its character as a historic routeway (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective R1**).

	radiating network of historic routeways relating to the *'Routeways'* core character component.	As the site has existing access points there is unlikely to be any changes to the historic lane of Stonehurst Lane.	
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is influenced by the existing Gypsy and Traveller use and proximity to roads, reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded in the lower bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ As the site is away from a settlement edge and is well screened from the wider landscape by the surrounding woodland, it experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping).	The site forms part of an *intrinsically dark landscape* relating to the 'Dark Skies' character component, although there is a limited sense of naturalness given the existing Gypsy and Traveller use.	Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in localised night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective DS1**). ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [28] and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's **Objectives DS1 and DS2**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development			
■ The site is located away from a settlement edge, but forms part of an intermittent linear rural settlement pattern consistent with the wider settlement pattern of the assessment unit. ■ The site appears to contain several static caravans and shed-type structures, set around grassed areas and paddocks. ■ The potential extension area to the north lies beyond the currently developed edge of Stonehurst Lane. It is currently open and largely undeveloped in character (apart from small	The 'Settlement' core character component is relevant in terms of the *strongly dispersed settlement pattern* of the High Weald AONB and the relationship between development and its landscape setting.	■ Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity blocks, and sheds, as well as new fencing and hardstanding within the potential extension area . ■ Expansion of development north would not be in	■ Limit the extent of any new development to the south and centre of the potential extension area , to maintain the intermittent linear settlement pattern along Stonehurst Lane, and to minimise the loss of the rural pastoral field (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1).** ■ Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural

[28] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

storage-type structures in its corners), with woodland enclosure on three sides providing a strong visual and physical boundary between the field and the wider landscape.		keeping with the intermittent linear development along Stonehurst Lane.	character of the AONB (in accordance with the AONB's **Objective S1** and **S2)**
Potential visual receptors			
■ The mature woodland and hedgerows surrounding the site substantially limits the potential for long-distance views. ■ Limited visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of Stonehurst Lane, although views are largely screened by vegetation; and – residents of the Little Foxes Farm property immediately to the south of Stonehurst Lane.	In relation to the 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities' character component, the surrounding woodland provides *a sense of enclosure.*	The potential increase in buildings and structures will likely be seen from the nearby visual receptors, although given the existing use of the existing site and the visual enclosure provided by vegetation, may go largely unnoticed.	Retain and protect the hedgerows and mature trees along the boundaries of the site, particularly along Stonehurst Lane to maintain visual containment (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives **PQ2 and PQ3**).
Summary			
Moderate	**Sensitivity of the sites** The potential extension area demonstrates characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. This includes the gently sloping landform (influenced by the adjacent stream corridor) and its pastoral character as well as its sensitive boundaries associated with the woodland that contains it (including priority habitat and ancient). Development within this field would alter the existing linear settlement pattern along Stonehurst Lane. However, it is visually enclosed. Overall, it is considered the potential extension area is of **moderate sensitivity** to the extension of the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Variations in sensitivity In comparison to the existing site, the potential extension area in the north is of greater sensitivity, reflected by the moderate sensitivity rating above. The existing site in the south is considered to be of **low-moderate sensitivity** to further intensification given its existing Gypsy and Traveller use.		
Moderate impact	**Overall impact on core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB**		

	The baseline analysis identifies that the sites (and immediate surrounds) express some of the core character components of natural beauty with a **moderate level of expression**. This is due to the gently sloping landform (of the proposed extension site); the presence of mature woodland (including ancient), trees and hedgerows; the site forming part of a wider assart field pattern (contributing to the medieval character); a historic routeway running along the edge of the existing site; grazed pastures (within the proposed extension site); and being part of a landscape with dark skies. Development of the potential extension area is judged to have a **moderate impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore somewhat affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Variation to overall impact There would be a greater impact on the potential extension area than the existing site which is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB.

Summary and recommendations

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

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

- Limit the extent of development extending down the slope in the north to minimise alterations to the landform. Consider locating development further south, adjacent to the existing site and where the landform is flatter.
- Retain and protect the mature trees, wooded belts, hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and around the site.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland along the northern and north-eastern boundaries of the potential extension area, to the required minimum buffer zone.
- Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA, where possible.
- Limit the extent of any new development to the south and centre of the potential extension area, to maintain the intermittent linear settlement pattern along Stonehurst Lane, and to minimise the loss of the rural pastoral field.

Figure G.4 Summary map of constraints and opportunities

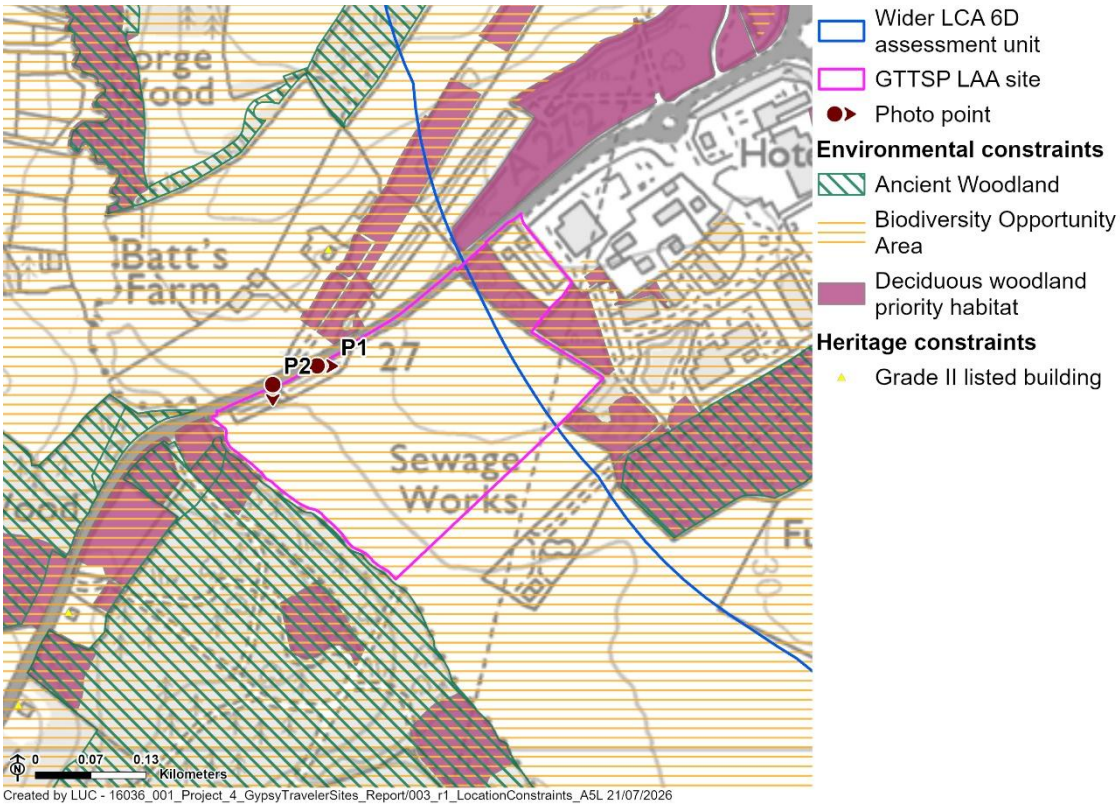


Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/005_r0_AerialOppsCons_A5L 18/08/2026

Batts Bridge Caravan Site, A272, Maresfield, Uckfield

Site Details	
Proposed use	Extension of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Authorised in part, Permanent Public Site
Site location	This site is located outside of the High Weald AONB. It comprises a small area in the north-east that is currently used for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, and a large field to the south-west forming a potential extension area. The site is bordered by the A272 to the north, Ashdown Business Park to the east, a sewage works to the south and the Batt's Bridge Stream to the west.

Figure G.5 Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



Photo 1: Fragmented hedgerows along the A272 allow intermittent views into the site.



Photo 2: View south across the site from the A272, with Park Wood forming a prominent wooded backdrop along the southern boundary

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features		
Landform ■ The site gently slopes from the north-east to the south-west, falling from approximately 35m to 20m AOD towards the Batt's Bridge Stream. ■ It forms part of the '*Gently rolling landscape, bisected by river and stream corridors'* key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit.	Changes to the gently rolling profile of the site as a result of interventions/ earthworks upon the landform.	Limit the extent of development extending down the slope to minimise alterations to the landform by locating development in the north-east, adjacent to the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation site where the landform is slightly flatter.
Natural character ■ The potential extension area comprises a large single arable field with relatively wide verges along the north-western and south-western edges. It is partly separated from the sewage works to the south-east by a row of trees. ■ Blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland wrap around the north-eastern part of the site, enclosing the area used for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. This woodland separates this part of the site with the field of the potential extension area. ■ Other small blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland abut parts of the south-eastern and south-western boundaries.	■ Removal of mature deciduous woodland and trees along the boundaries of the field of the potential extension area, affecting the role they play in enclosing the site, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. ■ Loss or deterioration of the priority deciduous woodland that separates the existing site with the potential extension area as a result of access works. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Park Wood which encloses the south-western edge of the site. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the stream that runs along the south-western boundary of the site.	■ Retain and protect the mature woodland and trees along the outer boundaries of the site. ■ Consider a new access road off the A272 into the potential extension area instead of continuing the existing access as this would result in the removal of priority habitat deciduous woodland which should be avoided. ■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland (and stream) along the south-western boundary of the site, to the required minimum buffer zone. ■ Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA, where possible.

■ The south-western boundary is defined by the Batt's Bridge Stream and enclosed by Park Wood which comprises mostly Ancient Replanted Woodland. ■ The woodland contributes to the' *Ecologically valued woodlands'* of the wider assessment unit. ■ The site is located within the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA.		
Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The field of the potential extension area has been subjected to modern field amalgamation as indicated by the Sussex HLC, with no internal field boundaries and so no sense of time depth.	Introduction of development into the field of the potential extension area would alter the current pattern of a single large arable field.	Ensure that any creation of boundaries around development is in character with the landscape. This could mean implementing blocks of woodland to be in keeping with the surrounding pattern of woodland.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to a main road, business centre and sewage works reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ These factors also influence the experience of dark skies (with light levels recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping.	Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in further night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [29] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development		
■ The existing site forms a small part of the development located to the south of the A272 and west of the A22, which comprises industrial/ commercial development.	■ Extension of Gypsy and Traveller development beyond the robust woodland boundary that contains the existing site and area of industrial/ commercial development,	■ Locate development in the north-east of the field of the potential extension area to relate better to the existing

[29] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

This area of development is well contained to the south and west by woodland which forms a strong boundary and provides separation with the surrounding countryside that includes the field of the potential extension area. ■ Whilst the north-eastern part of the site comprises static caravans and shed-type structures associated with the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, the field of the potential extension area does not contain any buildings.	resulting in a change to the rural character provided by the open arable field. ■ Introduction of buildings and structures on the site with the potential for static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	Gypsy and Traveller accommodation site, and to retain a sense of open countryside in the south-west of the site. ■ Consider enclosing new development with woodland to provide a robust boundary between development and countryside. ■ Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character.
Potential visual receptors		
■ The existing woodland that surrounds the site, provides enclosure, preventing long-distance views towards the site and very few visual rectors as a result. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of the A272 to the north; and – recreational users of Park Wood if located at the edge of the woodland.	The potential introduction of buildings and structures on the field of the potential extension area will likely be seen from the nearby visual receptors.	■ Consider enhancing the northern boundary of the potential extension area (along the A272) with hedgerow planting to provide screening/ filtering of views seen from the road. ■ Consider enclosing new development with woodland to screen it from view in the same way as the existing site is.
Summary		
Moderate	**Sensitivity of the site** The potential extension area demonstrates characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. This includes the gently rolling landform, as well as its sensitive boundaries associated with the stream and woodland that enclose the site (including priority habitat and ancient). It has a sense of rurality provided by the open arable field and is separated from existing development by a robust woodland boundary. However, the site is visually enclosed, does not contain any heritage features, with tranquillity and dark skies influenced by the proximity of the road, industrial/ commercial development and sewage works, therefore decreasing sensitivity (compared to the wider assessment unit). Overall, it is considered the site is of **moderate sensitivity** to the extension of the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation site.	

	Variations in Sensitivity There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.

Summary and recommendations

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

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

- Limit the extent of development by locating development in the north-east, adjacent to the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation site where the landform is slightly flatter, to relate better to the existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation site.
- Retain and protect the mature woodland and trees along the outer boundaries of the site.
- Consider a new access road off the A272 into the potential extension area instead of continuing the existing access from the existing Gypsy and Traveller site as this would result in the removal of priority habitat deciduous woodland which should be avoided.
- Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland (and stream) along the south-western boundary of the site, to the required minimum buffer zone.
- Consider taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA, where possible.
- Ensure that any creation of boundaries around development is in character with the landscape. This could mean implementing blocks of woodland to be in keeping with the surrounding pattern of woodland.
- Consider enclosing new development with woodland to provide a robust boundary between development and countryside, and to screen it from view in the same way as the existing site is.
- Consider enhancing the northern boundary of the extension site (along the A272) with hedgerow planting to provide screening/ filtering of views seen from the road.

Figure G.6 Summary map of constraints and opportunities

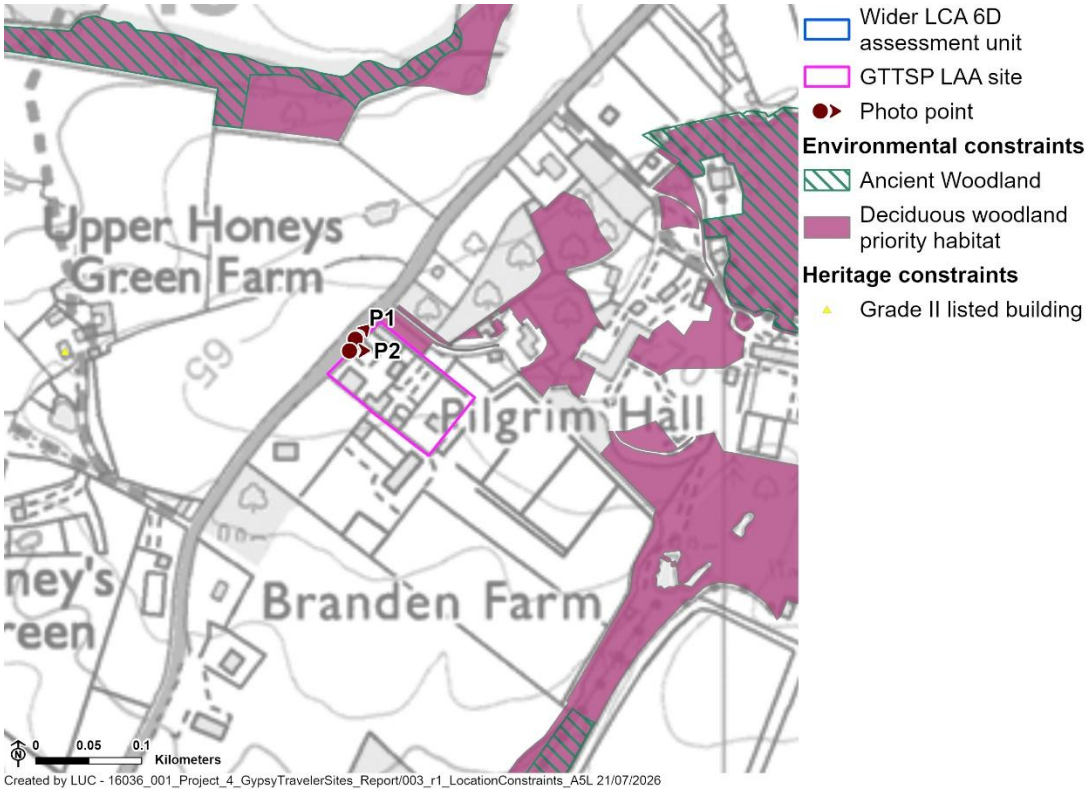


Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/005_r1_AerialOppsCons_A5L_Batts Bridge Caravan Site, A272, Maresfield, Uckfield 28/07/2026

Fir Tree View, Easons Green, Halland

Site Details	
Proposed use	Intensification of existing Gypsy and Traveller site
Site status	Existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Authorised, Permanent (WD/2006/1727/FR)
Site location	This site is located outside of the High Weald AONB. It is bounded by the B2192 to the west, development to the south and woodland around Annan School/ Pilgrim Hall to the north.

Figure G.7 Site location and constraints



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_4_GypsyTravelerSites_Report/003_r1_LocationConstraints_A5L 21/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: View at the site entrance off the B2192, with woodland providing effective screening of the site from the north.



Photo 2: View from the B2192 along the western boundary, where the boundary wall and sloping landform limits visibility into the site.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site

Baseline character	Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features		
Landform ■ The site is relatively flat at approximately 65m AOD, although gently slopes down to the B2192 along the north-western edge of the site	As the site has already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, there is unlikely to be any substantial changes to the landform. Minor changes may relate to the implementation of more hard standing.	Mitigation/ enhancement relating to the landform is not considered necessary.
Natural character ■ The site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, with hardstanding extending across most of the site and access off the B2192 along the north-western boundary. ■ A fragment of mature hedgerow partly bisects the eastern half of the site, and mature hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees are present along the site boundaries, particularly to the south and north. ■ A small area of deciduous woodland priority habitat is present immediately to the north of the site. This woodland connects the site to Slay's Wood and Six Acre Wood approximately 270m to the north-east, which are larger areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland (some of which is of ancient origin). ■ The north-western boundary is formed by a brick wall with decorative wrought-iron, fronted by a sloping grass verge.	■ Removal of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and around the site as a result of intensification, reducing the ecological connectivity between the site and the priority woodland habitat to the north. ■ Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the priority habitat deciduous woodland which partially encloses the northern edge of the site.	■ Retain and protect the mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and along the boundaries of the site, and the priority habitat deciduous woodland along the northern boundary. ■ Consider re-establishing any gaps in the hedgerow along the south-eastern boundary to improve habitat connectivity between the site and the wider woodland network to the north-east.

Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The Sussex HLC indicates that the east of the site comprises a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, although the existing development has removed any sense of time depth within the site itself. ■ The west of the site, adjacent to the B2192, reflects the pattern of ribbon development (and as recorded in the Sussex HLC).	As the site has already been developed for existing Gypsy and Traveller use, there is unlikely to be any substantial changes to the landscape pattern and time depth.	Mitigation/enhancement relating to the landscape pattern and time depth is not considered necessary.
Perceptual aspects ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the main road, reducing levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as moderate in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping). ■ As the site is away from a settlement edge, it experiences relatively dark skies (with light levels recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping).	Influence of additional lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance [30] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development		
■ The site is located away from the nearest settlement edge, in a rural location along the B2192. The site forms part of a cluster of development in this location, which includes Branden Farm and its agricultural buildings to the south and east, and the Pilgrim Hall / Annan School to the north-east. ■ The site contains a permanent bungalow near to the centre, and static caravans and shed-type structures scattered across the site.	Increase in buildings and structures on the site with the potential for additional static caravans, touring caravans, amenity block and sheds.	Ensure that any new structures are of a low-lying, unobtrusive form and materials appropriate to the rural character.

[30] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

Potential visual receptors		
■ The existing woodland and mature hedgerow to the north and south of the site provides a degree of enclosure, limiting long-distance views towards the site from the wider landscape. ■ Visibility of development will likely be seen by: – users of the B2192 to the west; and – residents of a house located within Branden Farm to the south-west of the site, particularly from the upper storey (although limited to glimpsed views).	The potential increase in buildings and structures will likely be seen from the nearby visual receptors, although given the existing use of the site, and containment with boundary vegetation, may go largely unnoticed.	Retain and protect the hedgerows and mature trees along the boundaries of the site to maintain visual containment.
Summary		
Low	**Sensitivity of the site** As the site is already developed for Gypsy and Traveller use, it contains very few characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. Overall, it is considered the site is of **low sensitivity** to the intensification of the existing Gypsy and Traveller use. <u>Variations in Sensitivity</u> There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.	

Summary and recommendations

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

- Retain and protect the mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and along the boundaries of the site, and the priority habitat deciduous woodland along the northern boundary.
- Consider re-establishing any gaps in the hedgerow along the south-eastern boundary to improve habitat connectivity between the site and the wider woodland network to the north-east.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Wider LCA 6D assessment unit

Three sites have been assessed within the Wider LCA 6D assessment unit. One of these sites is located within the High Weald AONB and the relevant assessment has judged the overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB to be:

Site	Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Variations
The Robins and Five Badgers, Stonehurst Lane, Mayfield	Moderate impact	There would be a greater impact on the potential extension area than the existing site which is judged to have a **low impact** on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB.

The assessment considers that potential development could have an impact on a few components of character of the High Weald AONB, with gently sloping landform (contributing to the pattern of faults and folds), ancient woodland and other mature trees and wooded belts potentially affected to some degree.

Due to the small scale of all three sites located within the Wider LCA 6D assessment unit, the intervening distance between them, and the well-wooded character surrounding them, cumulative visual effects would be limited.

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

Appendix H

Extract from GTTSP LAA (Appendix 1)

Proposed Site Size Gypsy and Traveller Sites

Gypsy and Traveller pitches need to be able to accommodate more than just a residential caravan. The GTAA advises that a pitch size of at least 325 square metres is necessary and that a pitch size of 500 square metres (0.05ha) would comfortably accommodate the following:

- *Hard standing for a touring caravan of up to 8m length with adequate space for manoeuvres*
- *Hard standing for a static caravan*
- *A minimum of 2 car parking spaces meeting the East Sussex required size of 5x2.5m*
- *1 amenity block*
- *Hard standing for storage shed and drying*
- *Garden/amenity area*
- *Minimum 3m firebreak from pitch boundary and between amenity block, touring caravan standing and static standing.*

Where more than one pitch is anticipated on a site, there may be opportunities for shared facilities between households which could allow larger sites to accommodate more pitches than a multiplier would indicate. The now withdrawn 2008 ODPM Good Practice Guidance[31] notes that a maximum of fifteen pitches should be considered appropriate unless there is clear evidence to suggest that a larger site is preferred by members of the local Gypsy and Traveller Community. Within East Sussex a maximum of ten pitches is usually considered appropriate, while the GTAA advises that sites able to accommodate 5 pitches with potential for expansion to 10 pitches should be sought.

In order to ensure the greatest range of sites are assessed, it is proposed that sites of a minimum of 0.05 hectares are accepted for assessment for the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Where a site exceeds 0.75 Ha the assessment will focus on the potential of an appropriately sized area within the land parcel to accommodate 10 pitches, rather than excluding the site from consideration.

Proposed Site Size Travelling Showpeople Sites

Travelling Showpeople sites need to accommodate a range of vehicles including cars, vans, lorries, trailers, mobile homes, and caravans. Access is required both into the site as a whole and into individual plots. In 2010, the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain prepared "Travelling Showpeople's sites: a planning focus – model standard package". The document was intended to provide guidelines to Travelling Showpeople and local planning authorities when considering the needs of Travelling Showpeople. The document recommended that a minimum plot size of 0.5 ha is sought and that space for both residential accommodation and equipment storage is needed. All sites should be able to accommodate the following:

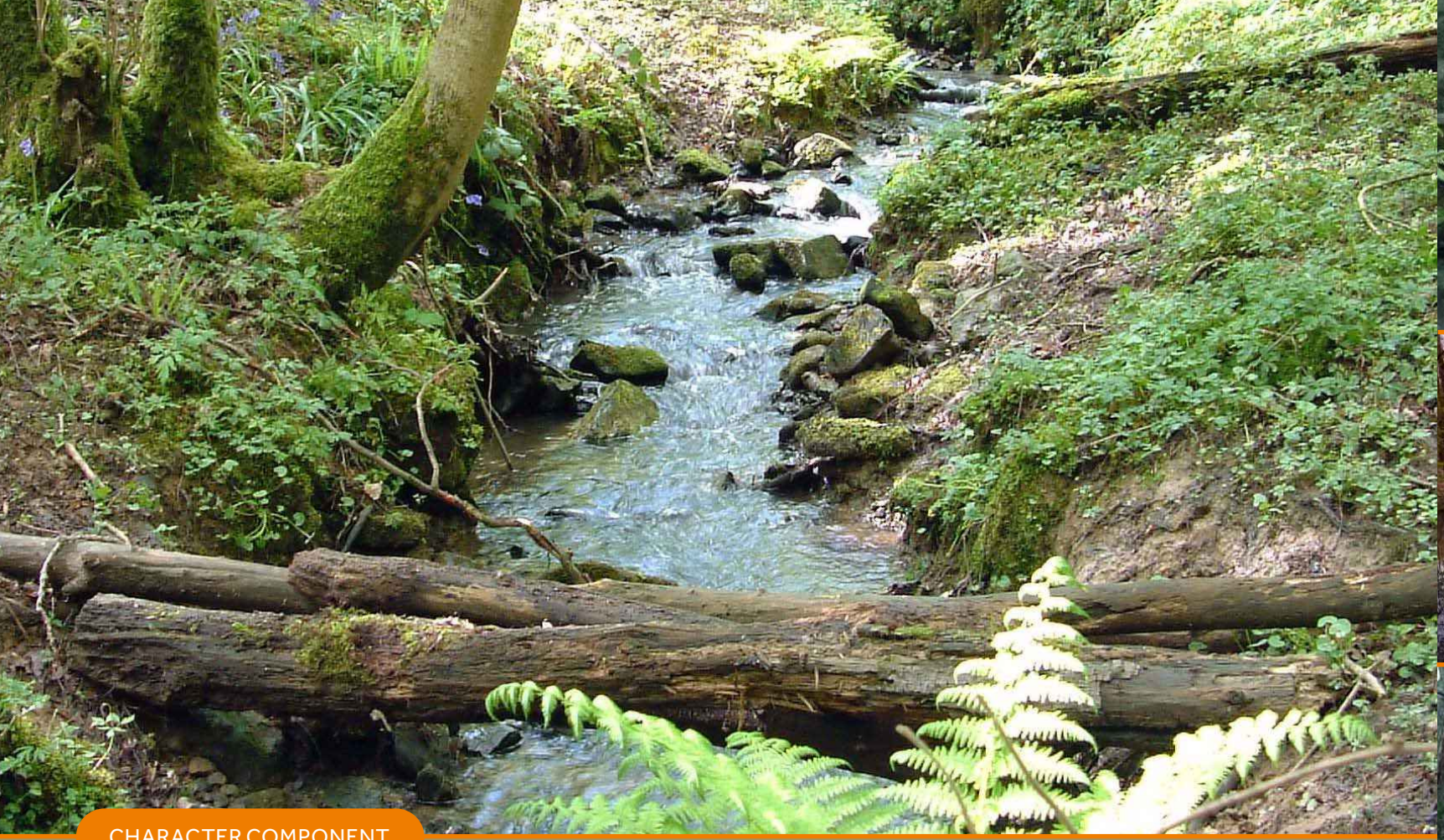
- *Hard standing for a touring caravan of up to 8m length with adequate space for manoeuvres*
- *Hard standing for a static caravan*
- *A minimum of 2 car parking spaces meeting the East Sussex required size of 5x2.5m*
- *4 bays to accommodate lorries and/or trailers.*
- *Hard standing for storage shed and drying*
- *Garden/amenity area*
- *Minimum 3m firebreak from pitch boundary and between touring caravan standing and static standing*

However, a plot size of a minimum of 0.2 Hectares has been considered to be sufficient to accommodate the needs of Travelling Showpeople in other areas[32]. In view of the need for sites, sites between 0.2 and 0.5 hectares will be scoped to ensure that they can adequately accommodate the necessary onsite accommodation as set out above.

[31] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a79e68040f0b670a8026416/designinggypsysites.pdf
[32] Meeting-the-needs-of-our-Gypsy-Traveller-and-Travelling-Showpeople-communities.pdf

Appendix I

Core Character Components of Natural Beauty – Extract from the High Weald AONB Management Plan (Pages 20-51)











CHARACTER COMPONENT

Natural Systems
(Geology, Soils, Water and Climate)

The High Weald AONB is characterised by a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone creating soils which are highly variable over short distances. The ridges tend east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB. The landform and water systems are subject to, and influence, a local variant of the British sub oceanic climate.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Impressive coastal cliffs of interbedded sandstones and clays (Hastings Cliffs to Pett Beach SSSI and Hastings Cliffs Special Area of Conservation); natural, dynamic, evolving and rich in Lower Cretaceous fossils.
- A principal ridge (Forest Ridge) running east – west from Horsham to Cranbrook with an attached ridge (Battle Ridge) extending to the sea at Fairlight.
- A pattern of faults and folds that distinguishes the High Weald from the rest of the south and east of England, with a high concentration of springs associated with fault lines.
- Numerous small streams descending the main ridges in narrow steep-sided valleys (gills), historically often dammed to power industry with many 'pond bays' and 'hammer ponds' surviving.
- Distinctive outcrops of sandstone in the form of crags (popular with climbers) and inland sea cliffs, gill stream bed and banks, old quarries, and along road edges associated with the survival of rare cryptogam communities (ferns, lichens, liverworts and mosses).
- A high density of pits, quarries and ponds resulting from a long history of stone quarrying, surface mining and marl extraction.
- Locally-distinctive geological materials – sandstone, clay bricks and tiles, and Horsham stone – contributing to high-quality vernacular architecture.
- Carbon-rich soils, often undisturbed, that are distinguished by their variability over short distances – characterised as slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acidic clayey soils, with pockets of sandy acidic soils.
- Heavily channelised and intensively managed river valleys in the eastern High Weald (Rother, Brede and Tillingham) originating in the medieval period, with natural floodplain wetlands rare.
- A high density of ponds, five times higher than the national average, with a wide range of pond types supporting significant species such as great crested newts and emerald dragonflies.
- An oceanic climate featuring cool temperatures relative to the latitude, a narrow annual temperature range with few extremes, and rain throughout the year.



Natural and cultural capital – fact and figures

● 7.6km of eroding sea cliffs designated an SSSI in recognition of the considerable biological, palaeontological and geological interest. ● A unique Lower Cretaceous mammal fauna at Fairlight, one of a handful of localities in the world to have yielded early Cretaceous mammal remains. ● 671 inland sandstone outcrops. ● >315sq km of undisturbed soils. ● 18.6 million tonnes of carbon stored in High Weald soils (to 150cm depth). ● Crowborough Beacon, the highest point at 242m above sea level. ● Headwaters of seven river catchments – Medway (Beult, Eden and Teise), Rother (Brede and Tillingham), Thames (Mole), Arun, Adur, Ouse and Cuckmere. ● 253km of main river channel supporting nationally rare species such as otter and water vole; and coarse and salmonid fisheries. ● A European hotspot for gills. ● 4,613km of water courses in total, including tributaries and streams. ● 13,401 ponds (9/sq. km compared with a national average of 1.8/sq. km) with an estimated 1600 supporting great crested newts. ● 769 springs. ● Five reservoirs including Bewl Water, the largest body of inland water in the South East. ● 20 sq. km of wetlands including reedbeds, lowland fens, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, purple moor grass and rush pastures. Home to a rich array of birds, including reed warbler and marsh harrier.

TOP 5 ISSUES

1. Climate crisis – the impact of rising temperatures and extreme weather events such as flooding, drought, inundation, tidal surges and storms.
2. Pressure on sensitive geological features from invasive species and recreation.
3. Soil health, the need to improve soil conservation and prevent detrimental soil erosion.
4. Pollution (and diffuse pollution) affecting biodiversity – including from public and private sewage treatment facilities; artificial fertilisers, pesticide and fine sediment run-off into ponds, streams and rivers.
5. Invasive species in rivers, water bodies, wetlands and bankside vegetation.

OBJECTIVE **G1**

To restore the natural function of rivers, water courses and water bodies.

Rationale

To improve water quality, water resource and structural habitats associated with water; to enhance the role of rivers, water courses and water bodies in supporting and increasing biodiversity, cooling the environment, protecting people and communities from flooding, and promoting enjoyment of wetlands.

OBJECTIVE **G2**

To protect landform and geological features including sandstone outcrops.

Rationale

To conserve landform and topography on which the High Weald's character depends, and maintain nationally important geological exposures, allowing for erosion where appropriate, conserving the fern, moss and liverwort communities they support, and protecting their value as significant sites of prehistoric archaeology in the AONB.

OBJECTIVE **G3**

To pursue net zero across the High Weald without compromising its characteristic landscape beauty.

Rationale

To ensure that transformative mitigation and adaption policies are tailored to the High Weald's defining landscape character.

OBJECTIVE **G4**

To restore soil health across the High Weald.

Rationale

To increase carbon sequestration and storage potential of soils, as well as water holding capacity to reduce flooding following high rainfall. Improve the soil ecosystem which supports above-ground and below-ground biodiversity and habitats across the High Weald. Healthy soil has higher nutrients for plants, which reduces the need for artificial fertilizer use in the long-term.

Ambitions for 2029

Harnessing the regenerative power of natural systems and restoring their health will need to be the focus of land-use policy to prevent climate and ecological collapse. Monitoring of pollutants and operations damaging to water, air and soil will need to be improved, enforcement strengthened, and government support targeted at best practice. Climate mitigation and adaption policies at a local level will need to be guided by the Management Plan in order that solutions are tailored to protect natural beauty.

Further information on maintaining the natural systems of the High Weald landscape, including best practice guidance and practical advice, can be found at **www.highweald.org**.

ACTIONS

The Partnership will ...

a. Produce a climate cooling and net-zero plan for their own operations utilising near-term science-based targets, with the intention of achieving net zero for its own operations by spring 2029.

b. Work with partners to develop a climate cooling and net-zero vision for the High Weald landscape, taking into account the particular character components of the natural beauty of the High Weald, to inform and guide partner decision-making (refer to Cross-cutting theme: Climate Crisis Priorities for detail).

c. Promote regenerative land management (including maintaining woodland cover) focusing on soil health.

Public bodies should ...

d. Ensure developments seek to avoid substantive alterations to landform.

e. Ensure new developments and land use changes protect undisturbed soils, minimise use of permanent impermeable surfaces, and ensure best practice is complied with to protect soils during construction from compaction, pollution and erosion.

f. Design for new development to maintain and improve natural geomorphological processes (i.e. natural bank erosion) and natural flood capacity.

g. Ensure water is retained / slowed e.g., by sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), being aware of possible impacts on vulnerable heritage assets, and supporting grey water recycling schemes.

h. Seek solutions (such as clear-span bridges) for crossing water courses that minimise adverse impacts on river and stream habitats; avoiding new culverts and remove existing culverts where possible.

i. Work with landowners and other organisations to agree an invasive species control plan for water systems and geological sites.

j. Resist the use of carbon credit offsetting where the technologies exist to reduce carbon emissions on-site.

k. Promote ambitious climate cooling scenarios that lead to the earliest reductions in emissions and urban temperatures (refer to Cross-cutting theme: Climate Crisis Priorities for detail).

l. Support the recovery of High Weald watercourses, including headwaters, by restoring natural processes in order to benefit a range of aquatic and riparian habitats and associated wildlife.

m. Support fossil fuel-free and public transport initiatives, encouraging walking, cycling and other travel alternatives where possible.

Others can assist conservation and enhancement of natural systems by...

n. Leaving buffer zones of minimum 5m (10m on slopes) along streams, rivers and ponds.

o. Encouraging rivers, streams and ponds to develop naturally, with targeted support for vulnerable species such as water vole and rare habitats such as floodplain woodland.

p. Allowing natural processes and adopt approaches that allow nature to express its capacity to sequester carbon e.g., natural regeneration.

q. Producing protection plans for ferns, mosses and liverworts at vulnerable sandrock sites.

r. Adopting soil regeneration approaches to the management of farmland, public spaces and gardens, to prioritise soil health, including minimal soil disturbance practices e.g., no ploughing.

s. Avoiding run-off of sediment, inorganic fertilizers, pesticides and pollutants into streams, rivers and ponds.

t. Pursuing appropriate management of ditches and ponds for wildlife and farming.

u. Allowing targeted riparian woodland creation in appropriate locations primarily through natural regeneration.











CHARACTER COMPONENT

Settlement

The High Weald AONB is characterised by dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads, hamlets, and late medieval villages and market towns founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries. The landscape setting of these settlements underpins the distinct and picturesque small-scale landscape character, with rolling pastures and small ancient woodlands of the countryside interspersed with the rich clay-tiled roofscapes of historic buildings.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- High density of historic farmsteads surrounded by their own fields, with a long continuity of settlement in the same place; their position strongly influenced by topography and routeways.
- Villages and towns mostly of medieval origin located at historic focal points or along ridge top roads, typically centred around open areas used for meeting places and trade, with markets' charters granted in the 13th and 14th centuries.
- Hamlets occurring around the junction of routeways or small commons (which became greens or forstals), or as clusters of cottages serving a particular industry.
- No significant nucleation prior to the 13th century (apart from Battle).
- Large-scale settlement extensions after AONB designation in 1983 are uncharacteristic.
- Pockets of small wayside cottages (peasant settlement enclosing roadside commons or later worker cottages) interspaced with fields.
- Distinctive settlement types and pattern in the eastern High Weald relating to history of the Rother Estuary and river trade.
- Separation between settlements formed by fields associated with individual historic farmsteads, and historic field systems abutting and containing historic settlement.
- Frequent interconnected green spaces within villages linking to the countryside and offering glimpse views to countryside beyond.
- Verdant character of settlements, with substantial soft landscaping; grass verges, lush hedgerows edging front curtilages, and full tree canopies breaking up the built form.
- Frequent –den and –fold place names echoing the area's history of pasturing cattle and pigs.
- Farmsteads typically arranged around routeways, with loose courtyard plan-types common and dispersed plan-types particularly characteristic. Tend to be relatively modest, typically comprising a farmhouse and a barn, often aisled to at least one side with small-scale ancillary structures, mostly for cattle, which face into their own, generally small, yards.
- High numbers of pre-1750 timber-framed farm buildings with typologies representing locally-distinctive historic agricultural practices, including oast houses and other structures associated with the hop industry (hop-pickers' huts); where a complete range exists, these are rare and particularly significant.
- High concentrations of historic buildings in all settlement types, many listed, whose form and appearance reflects historic and socio-cultural functions (such as the prevalence of craft industries), with locally distinctive typologies, including medieval Wealden Hall Houses (found either as rural farmhouses, or incorporated into the fabric of villages and towns, and often much disguised through later alterations), and features such as catslide roofs.
- Villages and hamlets typically unlit contributing to intrinsically dark skies landscapes.
- A limited palette of local materials intrinsically linked to geology and landscape character, reinforcing local distinctiveness: clay as tiles and brick, timber as weatherboard and framing, and some localised instances of stone.



Natural and cultural capital – fact and figures

● 17 market towns and villages with populations >2,000, the largest being Battle with a population >6,000. ● 11% households classified as isolated farms (compared with an average of 8% across all protected landscapes). ● 98.3% households in areas classified as rural. ● >3,500 historic farmsteads. ● 5,274 listed buildings. ● 57 medieval parish churches. ● 50 registered parks and gardens on Historic England register. ● 64 village conservation areas. ● 91 scheduled ancient monuments.

TOP 5 ISSUES

1. Increase in greenfield development pressure for housing, threatening the character of the AONB.
2. Generic layout and design of new housing developments failing to reinforce AONB character.
3. Erosion of AONB character through the cumulative effects of suburbanisation, including the residential fragmentation of farmsteads; the extension of residential curtilage boundaries, additional annexes and outbuildings, inappropriate boundary treatments, hard surfacing and kerbing, and large intrusive replacement buildings.
4. Declining housing affordability, including lack of social housing and key worker housing suitable for land-based workers.
5. Infill development eroding the greenness and open space of villages, threatening the character of settlement and reducing green connectivity and opportunities for community enjoyment.

OBJECTIVE **S1**

To protect the historic pattern and character of settlements.

Rationale

To protect the distinctive character and landscape settings of towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads, remove despoiling influences, and maintain the hinterlands and other relationships (including separation and green infrastructure) between settlements that contribute to local identity.

OBJECTIVE **S3**

To conserve the distinct built heritage of the High Weald.

Rationale

To protect and preserve the character and setting of heritage assets (designated and non-designated); historic traditional buildings and built features distinct to the High Weald area, including the historic public realm (e.g., traditional signs, railings, milestones and paving treatments).

OBJECTIVE **S2**

To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure new development reflects the character of the High Weald in its siting, scale, layout and design.

Rationale

To enhance the beauty and quality of buildings in the High Weald, and ensure new development reflects intrinsic High Weald character and place-making, embedded with a true sense of place, along with re-establishing the use of local materials and rich colour palette as a means of protecting the environment and adding to local distinctiveness.

> *'[development should be] fully sympathetic to, and in scale with, the land use and local building style'.*
>
> **Lord Strang, Chairman of the National Parks Commission, speaking about designated landscapes in 1959.**

> *'Places and buildings... tend to be enriching elements in the sum of scenic beauty'.*
>
> **Report on National Parks 1945**

Ambitions for 2029

Conserving the dispersed historic settlement pattern, which arose before the advent of the private car, will require positive planning and innovative sustainable transport strategies. New housing development will be small-scale and in keeping with the character of the area. Its location and design will be based on meeting local needs (including affordability and housing mix) through high quality and landscape-led place-making and design principles that reflect intrinsic High Weald character, embedded with a true sense of place, without stifling innovation and creativity in the use of local materials and net zero technologies. The energy performance of existing housing stock will be upgraded, whilst still preserving the special character and local distinctiveness of the historic built environment and heritage assets.

Further information on maintaining the settlement pattern of the High Weald landscape, including best practice guidance and practical advice, can be found at **www.highweald.org**

ACTIONS

The Partnership will ...

a. Develop technical appendices to support the High Weald Housing Design Guide, on topics such as sustainable and net zero design, soft landscaping, and the public realm.

b. Develop and deliver training and capacity-building programmes for LPAs and other partners regarding the Housing Design Guide, to improve design scrutiny in planning decision-making.

c. Seek to support LPAs in developing landscape-led planning policies that contribute to net zero regarding settlement in the AONB, including location of development and sustainable transport strategies (refer to Cross-cutting theme: Climate Crisis Priorities for detail).

d. Support neighbourhood planning groups to utilise the AONB Management Plan, data and guidance.

e. Promote the desirability of the reduction of housing pressure and pressure for greenfield development in the AONB.

Public bodies should ...

f. Promote use of the High Weald Housing Design Guide and historic landscape characterisation to guide settlement planning and to help avoid generic approaches to layout and design of new development.

g. Ensure there is reference to the AONB Management Plan and to the AONB Housing Design Guide in local plans, neighbourhood plans and other public documents, and ensure its use as material consideration in planning decisions; planning policy, site allocations and development management.

h. Pursue landscape-led positive planning approaches to settlement planning and housing delivery in the AONB, seeking to prioritise the delivery of new housing primarily through small-scale development consistent with AONB character, recognising the potential for harm through the cumulative effects of separate developments on the designated landscape.

i. Seek to deliver a mix of housing sizes and types that respond to local needs, including the specific requirements of land-based workers and affordable housing.

j. Identify and protect areas of separation between settlements and green/blue infrastructure connections across settlements, for both landscape setting and ecological values.

k. Seek to minimise erosion of AONB character through suburbanisation in rural areas, including landscape-intrusive replacement dwellings, extensions to residential curtilages, annexes, and smaller interventions such as new accesses and solid fences, which have a cumulative effect.

l. Ensure the design and maintenance of highways and the public realm, including street furniture, has regard to local distinctive character and avoids suburbanisation or generic approaches.

m. Protect and preserve the character and setting of historic traditional buildings and features distinct to the High Weald area, including medieval hall houses, catslide roofs, oast houses and other traditional agricultural buildings, structures such as cattle sheds and hoppers' huts, and the compositional qualities of farmsteads.

n. Pursue a listed building review to tackle the under-listing of historic farm buildings, along with seeking to increase local listing.

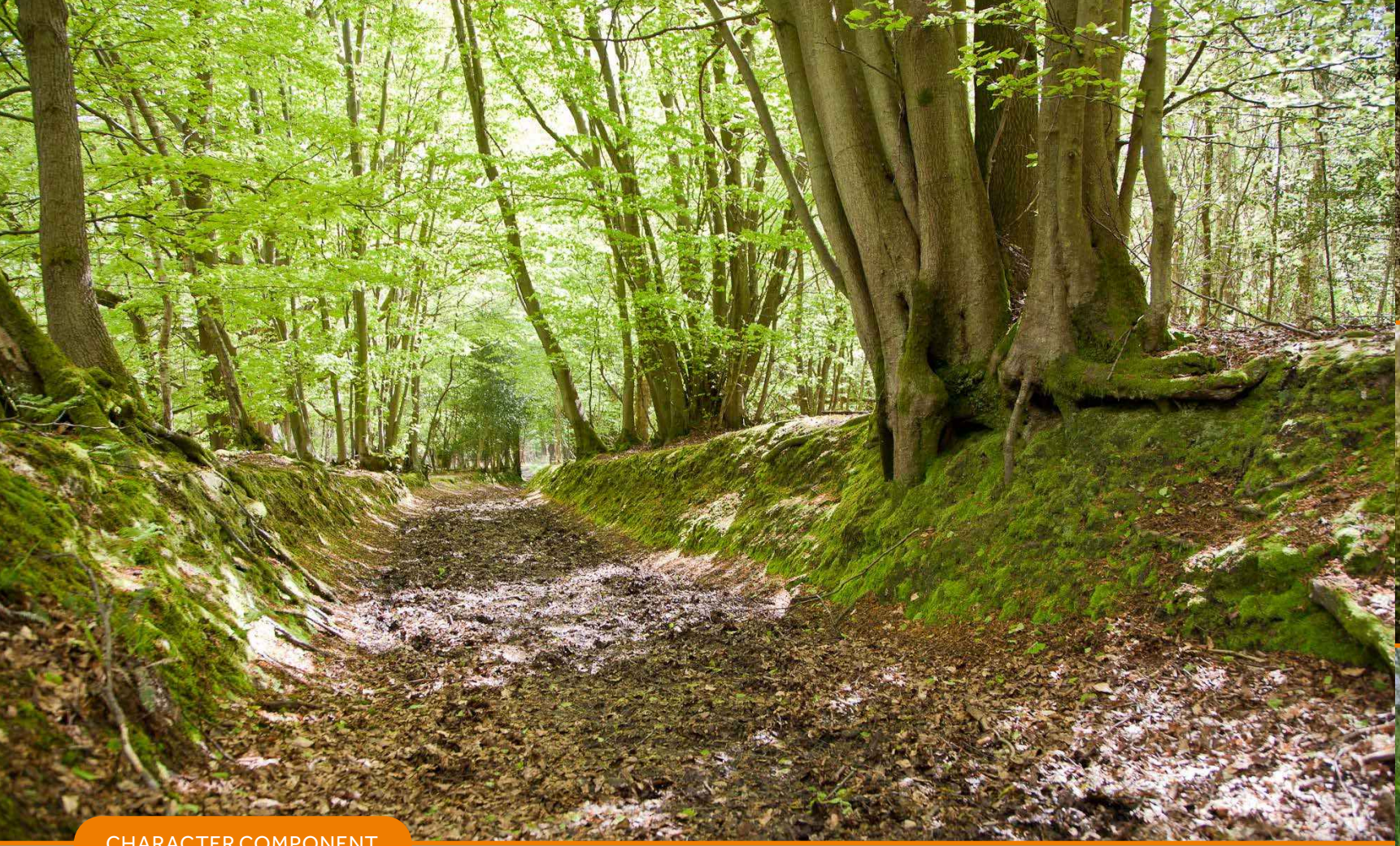
Others can assist conservation and enhancement of High Weald settlement by ...

o. Using the High Weald Housing Design Guide in the earliest stages of the process of developing proposals to inform High Weald specific, landscape-led approaches to layout.

p. Adopting a local and renewable materials first procurement policy, and supporting activities which celebrate and promote local products and services.

q. Making space for wildlife to thrive around buildings, gardens and urban spaces and the public realm, and encouraging planting for nature with native species of local provenance and pollinator-friendly plants.

r. Avoiding operations which sterilise soil or cover it with impermeable materials or plastic grass.











CHARACTER COMPONENT

Routeways

The High Weald AONB is characterised by historic routeways (now roads, tracks, bridleways and paths), the oldest being in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. These are often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks. These locally distinctive lanes and rights of way often display quietness and rurality in their visual and perceptual character, and they are valuable green infrastructure, creating high public accessibility within the AONB and good connections between settlements.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- A dense, radiating network with a variety of origins including:
  - Droveways, used for moving livestock, radiating out to pre-historic sites on the edge of the Weald.
  - Ridgeways on high ground and often running east-west, closely associated with pre-historic sites and medieval trading settlements.
  - Roman roads cutting across these patterns and strongly associated with iron-working sites.
- Typically present by the 14th century, with many extending back into pre-history and pre-dating settlements.
- Sunken routeways ('holloways') found on sloping land as a result of long use and erosion combined with water run-off.
- 'Braiding' common resulting from people, animals and vehicles finding alternative routes through impassable areas.
- Earth banks, lynchets and ditches typically indicating the former width of the routeway or to separate users from farmland or woodland.
- Wide grass verges common, indicating the historic width of routeways and their function as linear common grazing.
- Species-rich verges as well-preserved relics of their woodland or grassland habitat.
- Small-scale variations in habitat associated with a complex mixture of substrates, aspects and moisture levels supporting a rich biodiversity, especially invertebrates.
- Frequent sandstone exposures, adding diverse assemblages of specialist plants and animals.
- Linear nature facilitating foraging and dispersal and contributing significantly to the ecological interconnectedness of the High Weald.
- Veteran trees and ancient roadside coppice (often showing evidence of laying) frequent, providing niches for lichens and deadwood-dependent beetles.
- Many lost, stopped or diverted routeways evidenced by holloways, earth banks and depressions in the ground.
- Associated heritage public realm features – pre-1964 fingerposts, 'black and white' road signs, roadside milestones.
- Archaeology and cultural associations in the eastern High Weald from trade and the practice of exporting heavy goods (e.g., timber and iron) by floating them at high tide on waterways navigable until the late 13th century.



Natural and cultural capital – fact and figures

● 2,570km of public rights of way. ● More than 75% of public rights of way are historic (i.e., present on Ordnance Survey maps from at least 1860). ● 1,873km roads. ● More than 80% of roads are historic (i.e., in existence since at least 1800). ● The High Weald is crossed by one the most famous routeways in English history – the one that took King Harold's army from victory at Stamford Bridge to defeat at Hastings in 1066. ● Two main Roman roads (London-Lewes and London-Hassocks/Brighton). ● Droveways dating to the Anglo-Saxon period and earlier for moving livestock (pigs and cattle). ● More than 4,400km of highly interconnected green infrastructure bounded by flower-rich verges, hedges and woods.

TOP 5 ISSUES

1. Extinguishments of public rights of way (PRoWs) and diversions away from the historic route.
2. Loss of historic roadside character through development and erosion from motor vehicles and wide agricultural machinery, particularly in wet conditions
3. Damage to paths, tracks and Byways Open to All Traffic from the erection of fences; erosion from off-road vehicles, inappropriate surfacing and planting, fly-tipping, and ploughing up of lost routeways.
4. Insensitive management of veteran trees/roadside coppice and poorly planned verge cutting regimes and ditch clearance, resulting in the smothering of woodland flora on shady banks with wood chip, and of wildflowers on relic grassland verges with grass cuttings/spoil.
5. Insensitive highway engineering including passing bays, deep visibility splays to entrances, and urbanising features such as roundabouts, signage and lighting.

OBJECTIVE **R1**

To maintain the historic pattern, morphology and features of routeways.

Rationale

To maintain and restore a routeway network that has a symbiotic relationship with settlement location, hinterlands and identity, and is a rare UK survival of an essentially medieval landscape; to protect the individual archaeological features of historic routeways such as sunken lanes; and to avoid harming character of routeways with urbanising features.

OBJECTIVE **R2**

To protect and enhance the ecological function of routeways.

Rationale

To protect, and improve the condition of, the complex mix of small-scale habitats along routeways, including verges, for wildlife and nature recovery, and maintain routeway boundaries as part of a highly interconnected habitat mosaic.



Ambitions for 2029

Routeways walked for hundreds of years will need protection from unnecessary diversions, alterations, or suburbanisation, while the historic and ecological importance of associated routeway features such as verges, hedges, ditch and bank systems, and roadside coppice, to connect and restore nature will need to be recognised, protected and appropriately managed. A re-prioritised hierarchy of routes, with functional routes for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, and other active travel, connecting homes, schools, services and businesses may be needed to meet the net zero challenge, along with improved public access to the countryside for leisure.

ACTIONS

The Partnership will ...

a. Provide training for highway management engineers and contractors to ensure all roadside verges are managed sensitively for landscape character, including biodiversity and archaeology.

b. Provide guidance to PRoW teams in local highway authorities for considering historic routeways in the High Weald in diversion/ extinguishment applications.

Public bodies should ...

c. Identify historic routeways in highway improvement plans (including Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs)) and consider management tailored to enhance their historic character, including early intervention to protect banks.

d. Ensure there is reference to the AONB Management Plan in Local Transport Plans (LTPs), and ensure its use to inform highways works and to support funding bids

e. Avoid diversion of historic routeways and have regard in decision-making and in the planning process, to the historic alignment of roads, tracks and paths, .

f. Assess, and where appropriate recognise, historic routeways as non-designated heritage assets in the planning process.

g. Resist new access points that would damage the character of sunken routeways.

h. Discourage lane widening, the introduction of lay-bys, or casual parking that erodes or dilutes the pattern of routeways.

i. Identify ecologically rich historic routeways in biodiversity and green infrastructure planning.

j. Prioritise the specialist management of ecologically rich road verges in highway management, including following best practice advice[12]; implementing appropriate cutting regimes, avoiding smothering with chip piles or grass cuttings and ditch dredging, and refraining from planting non-native species.

k. Support the identification, retention and restoration of traditional fingerposts, railings, boundary stones and turnpike features (e.g., milestone and toll houses), adding to the relevant Historic Environment Record where appropriate.

l. Adopt careful approaches to any upgrading proposals to historic routeways as part of access enhancement, and seek to take enforcement action against unauthorised works, to ensure proposals do not adversely affect the natural beauty of the High Weald (refer to Cross-cutting theme: People & Access Principles for detail).

Others can assist conservation and enhancement of High Weald routeways by

m. Avoiding fencing and other activity such as the use of machinery which damages routeway archaeology (including ditches and banks) or that alters its historic alignment.

n. Encouraging the identification and protection of ecologically rich roadside verges and alerting the relevant Highways Authority to their presence or damage.

12. Managing-grassland-road-verges-2020.pdf (plantlife.org.uk)

Further information on maintaining the historic routeways of the High Weald landscape, including best practice guidance and practical advice, can be found at **www.highweald.org**.











CHARACTER COMPONENT

Woodland

The High Weald AONB is characterised by the great extent of woodland including ancient woods, gills and shaws, the product of traditional long-term management. The nationally important assemblage of ancient woodland in the High Weald has immense wildlife, landscape and historical value, while the wider cumulative visual character of trees and hedgerows dividing small irregular fields is fundamental to the verdant nature and appearance of the landscape.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods, larger forests and numerous linear gill woodlands, shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges, and isolated trees.
- High proportion of woodland is categorised as ancient woodland (46%), typically broadleaved coppice with a rich ground flora, with many more woodlands equivalent in conservation interest. A further fifth of woodland is protected 'plantations on ancient woodlands' (PAWS), much of which is under restoration.
- Many irregularly shaped small woodlands interlinked with shaws, isolated trees, thick hedges and wooded sunken lanes, forming an intimate part of the farmed landscape.
- A number of very large woods lying mostly along the high sandy ridges, such as Dallington and Bedgebury; and remnants of the area's medieval hunting forests, including at Worth Forest and Ashdown Forest.
- Visible evidence of historic use and exploitation (including coppice stools, stubs, pollards, boundary bank and ditch systems, routes and tracks; remains of Roman and medieval iron-working such as slag heaps and ponds, and large earthworks relating to the harnessing of waterpower to fuel furnaces, forges and mills).
- High density of gill woodlands (deeply incised ravines with particularly humid and relatively stable microclimates) – the oldest and least disturbed woodland in the south east supporting a community of plants, vascular and non-vascular, not found together anywhere else in Europe, and important for rare plant species such as small-leaved lime, hay-scented buckler fern, Tunbridge filmy-fern, and rare invertebrates including beetles and molluscs.
- Frequent patches of wet woodland associated with surface water in the form of steep sided streams, springs, wet flushes and water-filled extraction pits, important for regionally distinctive species such as smooth-stalked sedge.
- Large numbers of isolated trees (often remnants from lost woodlands or hedges), such as in-field trees that provide additional connectivity to the wider landscape, as well as shelter and food source to a wide range of species.
- A stronghold for characteristic species such as dormice, and remnant populations of rare species such as pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly.
- Open woodland mosaics of wooded heath, which support both heath plants such as heathers and trees, and act as a transitional habitat.
- Considerable variability in woodland types and tree forms over short distances reflecting the variety of soils, micro-climates and drainage conditions (Principle National Vegetation Classification communities are W10 and W8 with some W15 and W16 on sandier ridges).
- Wood-pasture and parkland, mostly originating from once extensive historic deer parks; an archaeological and cultural feature, open habitats or open heath supporting veteran/ancient trees and their associated wildlife.
- Nationally significant resource of epiphytic (plants that grow on other plants rather than the soil) and dead-wood dependent species supported by a wealth of veteran trees.
- A traditionally strong commercial woodland industry focused on coppice and locally grown hardwoods.
- A culture of small-scale management by people using hand tools to produce a wide variety of products mostly for local use.
- Trees used for boundary markers (including outgrown old laid hedges, stubs and pollards), many of which are accessible on public rights of way.



Natural and cultural capital – fact and figures

● 28% woodland cover (nearly 3x English average). ● 83% broadleaved woodland, the majority as coppice. ● Highest coverage of ancient woodland in any protected landscape (3/4 all woodland or 19% land cover) covering 273sq km of undisturbed woodland soil. ● >2,800 parcels of ancient woodland under 2ha. ● Nationally significant: 8% of England's ancient woodland resource. ● <22% ancient woodland classified as Plantations on Ancient Woodlands (PAWS). ● 191sq km gill woodland in > 1,800 sites supporting internationally rare cryptogams. ● 56sq km UK BAP priority habitat: wood pasture and parkland. ● More than 7.5m tonnes of carbon stored in woodlands and their soils with an additional > 0.75m tonnes sequestered every year. ● 3sq km traditional orchards containing 34 apple varieties.

TOP 5 ISSUES

1. Predicted increase in tree diseases such as ash dieback and spruce bark beetle, partly through imported stock or soil, and continued damage from invasive species including rhododendron, grey squirrel and deer damage from over-population of deer across the High Weald.

2. Procurement practices and lack of investment restricting market growth for higher value locally sourced wood products.

3. Lack of management where needed, particularly cessation of traditional coppicing affecting ground flora, and fauna species such as fritillaries.

4. Impact of increasing mechanisation and machinery size on soils, the variation and structural complexity of woodlands, and archaeology.

5. Impact of development close to ancient woodland resulting in increased noise and disturbance, and pressure to fell trees and hedgerows as part of development, (including post-development) with a cumulative impact on ecology and reduction in tree cover.

OBJECTIVE **W1**

To maintain and restore the existing extent and pattern of woodland cover and particularly ancient woodland.

Rationale

To ensure irreplaceable habitats and biodiversity loss are repaired for the benefit of nature and future generations. To maintain a key component of the cultural landscape, and to preserve the high levels of carbon storage in woodland soils and biomass.

OBJECTIVE **W3**

To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands.

Rationale

To protect the historic environment of the AONB woodlands.

OBJECTIVE **W2**

To protect and restore the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale.

Rationale

To increase the viability of the woodland habitat for wildlife, by identifying and extending the area of appropriately managed woodland (including restoring plantations on ancient woodland) to link and enhance isolated habitats and species populations, providing greater connectivity between woodlands and other important wildlife areas, and helping to facilitate species' response to climate change.

OBJECTIVE **W4**

To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.

Rationale

To achieve the most effective management that will deliver the other objectives for woodland, to contribute to sustainable domestic timber production, and to support a working countryside.

Ambitions for 2029

With the beauty and biodiversity of woodlands in the High Weald already under threat from a combination of pests and diseases, disturbance, a warming climate and invasive species, protection will need to focus on fostering healthy and resilient woodlands and buffering through natural regeneration to allow nature to thrive. Tackling invasive species and deer will be a priority. Non-intervention approaches will become more common unless traditional coppice regimes are being maintained or woodlands are being managed for high-quality timber. In these cases, management will be predominantly small-scale with industrialised mechanical harvesting avoided to protect archaeology and soils. Local timber and underwood will once again be essential materials for buildings, fencing and other uses.

ACTIONS

The Partnership will ...

a. Support landscape scale initiatives and nature recovery projects to reverse the decline in key woodland species and protect and enhance vulnerable habitats such as gill woodlands and wet woodland.

b. Seek to ensure agri-environmental schemes and similar grant schemes are tailored to the specific needs of the High Weald woodland.

Public bodies should...

c. Resist development that risks the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland or veteran trees, including ASNW and PAWS, through direct and indirect impacts as set out in the Natural England and Forestry Commission 'standing advice' **Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions**

d. Ensure appropriate buffer zones to woodland, (minimum 15m zones, when justified by survey, otherwise 25m) to protect from the detrimental direct and indirect impacts of nearby developments, including activity and light spill.

e. Recognise the ecological and landscape value of non-designated woodland and trees, and ensure design of new housing development retains existing woodlands, shaws and other trees in and adjacent to schemes, for ecological and landscape character benefits.

f. Require woodland archaeology assessments for woodland which would be affected by development, and provide data to county Historic Environment Records, ensuring this is used in the planning process.

g. Protect ancient woodland soil and ground flora from inappropriate management practices such as heavy machinery damage and chipping-to-mulch, and to consider such practices as part of assessments of felling licence applications and in highways management / statutory undertakers' protocols.

h. Enhance and restore shaws and gill woodlands.

i. Support appropriate commercial woodland management, in particular tailored support for a vibrant timber economy in the High Weald woodland landscape.

j. Promote the use of small dimension roundwood timber in construction and use of untreated local timber for traditional purposes such as fencing, public realm seating, signs and weatherboard.

k. Adopt UK tree and plant health biosecurity policies and support local provenance tree nurseries.

l. Tailor environmental land management support to control invasive species, including landscape-scale deer management; grey squirrel eradication; and removal of rhododendron and other damaging invasive plants from ancient woodland, particularly gill woodland.

Others can assist conservation and enhancement of woodlands by:

m. Controlling invasive species such as rhododendron, grey squirrels and deer.

n. Avoiding activities, such as fencing or use of heavy machinery, which damage archaeological features (e.g., ditch and bank systems, holloways and saw pits).

o. Maintaining stock-proof fences and hedgerows around ancient woodland to avoid livestock damage.

p. Avoiding use of large-scale machinery and instead using traditional techniques such as hand cutting, horses or small-scale machinery for woodland management to avoid damage to High Weald woodland.

q. Allowing natural regeneration in and around woodland where appropriate.

r. Keeping woodlands, including buffer zones, free of litter, garden waste and ornamental plants.

s. Demonstrate responsible woodland access; avoiding disturbance to breeding birds or trampling damage to ground flora.

Further information on maintaining woodland in the High Weald landscape, including best practice guidance and practical advice, can be found at **www.highweald.org**.











CHARACTER COMPONENT

Fieldscape and Heath

The High Weald AONB is characterised by an intricate and scenic mosaic of small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands and in-field trees, and typically used for livestock grazing and small-scale horticulture; within which can be found distinctive zones of lowland heath and inned / reclaimed river valleys. Predominantly undisturbed and highly productive Grade 3 good agricultural grazing land, reflecting the typical and historic agricultural practices of the area, and as such is intrinsically valuable to the landscape character.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- A generally irregular field pattern with individual fields relatively small (less than three hectares).
- Fieldscape characterised by historic farmsteads surrounded by their own fields resulting from medieval farming in severalty i.e., land held by individuals rather than in common.
- Strong influence exerted by topography with many field systems aligned to or 'hanging' from (at right angles to) linear features such as watercourses or ridge-top roads.
- Predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale livestock farming, and undisturbed soils contributing to carbon sequestration.
- Fields, mostly permanent pasture, used for grazing livestock with some small-scale horticulture and cropping.
- Medieval fieldscape character dominant, with a high proportion of field systems created by assarting (woodland clearance) with sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges common.
- Boundary ditch and bank features typical, along woodland edges or topped with hedges and veteran trees.
- A rich, extensive network of ancient mixed species hedgerows of high ecological and landscape character value.
- Wide, verdant historic hedgerows traditionally managed by laying.
- Unmanaged fields quickly succeed back towards woodland because of abundant tree seeds from the pattern of small woodlands bounding many fields.
- Nationally important fragments of species-rich grassland (such as NVC MG5), supporting an incredibly rich variety of plants, animals, and grassland fungi.
- High proportion of fragmented species-rich grassland scattered within a landscape containing a high proportion of good quality semi-improved grasslands.
- Traditional orchards and hop gardens scattered across the landscape forming part of the visual fieldscape and also providing dead and decaying wood for invertebrates, and a mosaic of other habitats.
- A frequency of deer parks and later 18th-century estates.
- Ashdown Forest (an extensive area of common land and one of the largest continuous blocks of lowland heath, semi-natural woodland and valley bog in the south east) supporting internationally important populations of nightjar and Dartford warbler.
- Distinctive areas of wooded heath and lowland heath scattered along the sandy ridges supporting a complex mosaic of plant communities, rare species such as marsh clubmoss, and more than half of UK's dragonfly species.
- Fragmented grass and ericaceous heath is found particularly on old forest ride systems and along woodland ridges and old hedge banks throughout the High Weald.

> *'The existence of a flourishing and progressive agriculture is fundamental to...the preservation and enhancement of the characteristic landscape.'*
>
> **Report of the National Parks Committee, Sir Arthur Hobhouse, 1947**



Natural and cultural capital – fact and figures

● >1,500 farm holdings (2nd highest number of holdings in an AONB) with >750 livestock holdings. ● 17,000 RPA registered parcels of land <1.5ha. ● Average farm size is less than half the national average. ● 70% of fields remain unaffected by reorganisation in the late 20th century. ● >12,500km of hedgerows and field boundaries providing homes for pollinating insects and a source of wild food. ● 220sq km land owned by conservation organisations or designated under international or UK law to protect wildlife, including 64sq km internationally important sites and 51 SSSI's covering 55sq km. ● <3% land cover known wildflower meadows with estimated <40% fields semi-improved grassland with potential for enhancement. ● Nearly 50% of AONB supported by government-funded schemes to encourage environmentally sensitive land management . ● 85% of land is Grade 3 and 4 under the Agricultural Land Classification. ● <5% agricultural holders under 35 years old. ● Steep decline in livestock numbers, with sheep and cattle numbers down by one-third since 2000.

TOP 5 ISSUES

1. Fragmentation of farm holdings due to an increase in non-farming land ownership and loss of farm infrastructure e.g., barns at a holding level
2. Declining agricultural workforce and consequential reduction in sustainable food production
3. Increasing costs of maintaining grazing infrastructure (including reducing supporting agricultural infrastructure such as livestock markets and abattoirs) and costs of managing significant levels of associated habitats such as hedgerows.
4. Loss of green fields to development and infrastructure, or conversion to other land uses such as woodland.
5. Loss of high value grasslands (unimproved and semi-improved) and hedgerows through land use change, inappropriate management and lack of management, leading to fragmentation of habitats, affecting biodiversity and species resilience.

OBJECTIVE **FH1**

To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management.

Rationale

To contribute to sustainable domestic food and non-food agricultural production, to support a working countryside, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to reduce the dependency of the UK on non-sustainably managed agricultural land and the need for long-distance transport that produces air pollutants, causing harm to health and the environment.

OBJECTIVE **FH3**

To protect and enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats.

Rationale

To improve the condition, landscape permeability and connectivity of fields and heaths and their associated and interrelated habitats (such as hedges, trees, woodlands, ditches, ponds and water systems) for wildlife.

OBJECTIVE **FH2**

To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands.

Rationale

To maintain fields and field boundaries that form a part of the habitat mosaic of the High Weald; and to maintain this key component of what is a rare UK survival of an essentially medieval landscape.

OBJECTIVE **FH4**

To protect individual archaeological features as well as historic assets and pattern of fields and heath.

Rationale

To protect the historic environment of the AONB that includes the pattern of fields, and individual archaeological features.

Ambitions for 2029

The management of fieldscapes will need to change substantially over the next five years, with regenerative approaches to food production and nature recovery becoming the norm. The comprehensive decline in biodiversity will not be reversed by focusing on nature reserves only. Fieldscapes will need to be restored so wildlife can thrive there. The small-scale nature of the High Weald's fields are ideally suited for productive farming using regenerative agricultural practices.

The smaller, permanent grass fields suiting holistic planned livestock grazing with the grass and surrounding trees and hedges providing nutrient-rich forage for cows, sheep and other livestock. These will need to be interspersed with wilder areas providing reservoirs for pollinators and other wildlife. New and innovative approaches, such as agroforestry, will need to be trialled with layered production of nuts, soft and top fruit becoming more common, taking advantage of the High Weald's ability to grow trees and grass well. Small-scale vegetable production using regenerative agriculture practices to supply local markets will need to increase, drawing on the High Weald's mixed farming history. Chemical input from pesticides and artificial fertilizers will need to be drastically cut. There may be a small increase in tree cover and scrub, but most of the fieldscape and heathy areas will remain as open habitats.

ACTIONS

The Partnership will ...

a. Seek to ensure agri-environment schemes and other farming support schemes are tailored to the specific needs of the High Weald landscape.

b. Prepare best practice guidance for sustainable land management of the High Weald.

c. Facilitate landscape scale initiatives aimed at reversing biodiversity loss associated with field and heath management.

d. Continue to provide a High Weald specific land management advisory service (specialising in regenerative approaches) to landowners and managers, including providing support to farmers entering agri-environment schemes.

e. Support and facilitate scientific research in collaboration with academic institutions to further knowledge and understanding of the semi-improved grassland spectrum, and support dissemination of best practice management to advisors and site managers.

f. Provide specialist advice to support the management of boundary features including hedgerows, coppice and veteran trees.

Public bodies should...

g. Require development to protect and enhance existing field patterns, including hedges, ditches or other boundary features, and where possible to restore them when lost, and in particular avoid harm to medieval field systems in planning and decision-making, especially where there is a high degree of intactness or relationship with other notable landscape and heritage features.

h. Develop and deliver tailored support for pasture-fed livestock farming utilising regenerative grazing and soil conservation management techniques.

i. Recognise in decision-making the food productivity value and quality of grade 3a and 3b soils as being of greater importance to the High Weald's pastoral agriculture economy and landscape character than simply the ALC grade.

j. Promote and enforce the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, in recognition of the importance of hedgerows in the High Weald.

k. Foster small-scale horticulture (soft and top fruit, nuts and vegetables) and associated necessary infrastructure.

l. Support development of an audit of unimproved and semi-improved meadows.

Others can assist conservation and enhancement of fieldscape and heath by...

m. Developing veteran tree replacement plans for hedges and shaws.

n. Utilising local provenance wildflower seeds and plant plugs to create or enhance grassland.

o. Restoring, protecting and managing hedgerows as part of a diverse hedgerow mosaic, reinstating lost hedgerows, and ensuring hedges are cut only between September and March to avoid damage to wildlife

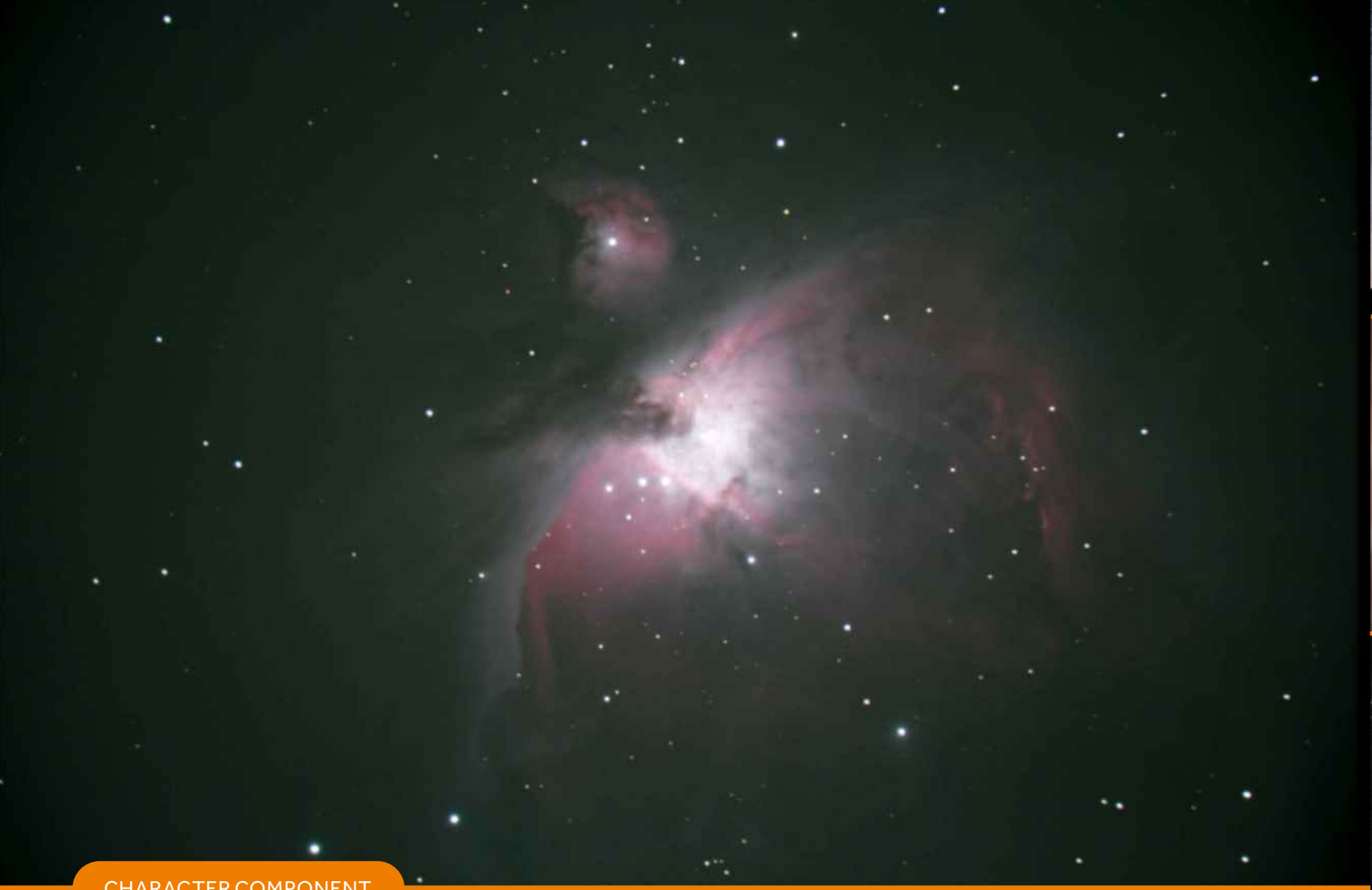
p. Avoiding new woodland planting on medieval fieldscapes and heath, and on species-rich grassland, to protect grassland and heathland biodiversity.

q. Protecting local and heritage breeds and crop varieties to preserve genetic diversity.

r. Proactively encourage management and monitoring of local wildlife sites and review the designation of new sites.

s. Sensitively managing and restoring lowland heathland as a key habitat.

Further information on maintaining the fieldscapes of the High Weald landscape, including best practice guidance and practical advice, can be found at **www.highweald.org**.











CHARACTER COMPONENT

Dark Skies

The High Weald AONB is characterised by having some of the darkest skies in the south-east of England. This gives the AONB a sense of remoteness and peacefulness and connects the natural environment to the cultural and historic landscape.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of naturalness.
- Some of the intrinsically darkest skies in Southern England, with the least skyglow.
- Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, is observable, as well as the planetary bodies.
- Key constellations such as Orion, Ursa Major and Cassiopeia are visible to the naked eye.
- Deep sky objects are visible to the naked eye, such as the Andromeda Galaxy and Orion Nebula.
- Many rural villages with few street lamps or no street lighting.
- Numerous unlit roads, including A-roads, throughout the High Weald.
- A range of nocturnal species which are dependent on dark skies for feeding, including Natterer's bat, serotine bat, brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle, noctule bat, Bechstein's bat, dormice, hedgehog, the heart and marsh mallow moths, and glow-worms.



CLICK FOR MAPS

Natural and cultural capital – fact and figures

● 41 of the 99 parishes within the AONB have wholly dark or intrinsically dark skies. ● A further 15 having 95% coverage of intrinsically dark skies. ● 20 parishes in the AONB have collected light meter readings. ● 15 of the 17 UK bat species are found in the High Weald, all of which are protected.

TOP 5 ISSUES

1. Lack of minimum standards for external lighting that can be enforced. Standards are needed to set out basic principles of dark skies lighting and signpost to guidance and advice where needed.

2. Increased light pollution in rural areas from a variety of buildings and structures including new developments (street lighting and domestic light spill); housing designed with extensive glazing, such as wrap-around or floor-to-ceiling windows; external security lighting; rural out-buildings; public buildings and spaces such as railway stations; camping and glamping sites, and domestic lighting used to light-up homes and gardens at night.

3. Sky glow from adjacent built-up areas (including areas adjacent to the AONB), which reduces views of celestial bodies such as the Milky Way and Orion, leading to a loss of public connection and enjoyment of night skies.

4. Impacts on local wildlife, with light pollution disrupting circadian rhythms, migration, feeding and breeding across all animal groups including invertebrates, mammals, birds and amphibians.

5. Lack of education on the importance of dark skies to human health and wellbeing, as well as their significance to the natural environment.

OBJECTIVE **DS1**

To preserve the dark skies of the High Weald AONB by minimising light pollution, obtrusive external lighting and internal light spill from domestic, commercial and public premises in both existing and new developments within the High Weald, and from highways lighting.

Rationale

To protect and maintain the existing dark skies within the High Weald for the benefit of all, including future generations, for our health, wellbeing and enjoyment, to increase our understanding and sense of place in the universe; and for the benefit of wildlife and to reduce energy consumption.

OBJECTIVE **DS2**

To protect wildlife and habitats from light pollution across the High Weald.

Rationale

Light pollution affects a wide range of nocturnal species and those out during the day, from feeding to finding a mate and the ability to safely migrate. Light pollution is an additional stress to habitat loss for already declining populations of many species across the High Weald.

> *'Artificial light at night has revolutionized the way we live and work outdoors, but it has come at a price. When used thoughtlessly, lighting disrupts wildlife, damages human health, wastes money and energy, contributing to climate change, and it blocks our view of the starry sky'.*
>
> **International Dark-Sky Association**

Ambitions for 2029

Protection of the night-time environment of the High Weald, for nature, and to ensure astronomical dark sky objects such as the Milky Way remain visible to the naked eye, will require the level of artificial light at night to stay at its present low level, with everyone (individuals, communities, businesses including developers and public bodies such as Highways Authorities) committed to environmentally responsible approaches to outdoor lighting, and adopting new technologies.

ACTIONS

The Partnership will ...

a. Promote dark skies awareness and education, including walks and talks aimed at a diverse range of people and organisations, across different geographical areas of the High Weald, and the promotion of International Dark Skies Week.

Public bodies should ...

b. Include 'Dark Skies' policies in Local Plans and support their inclusion in neighbourhood plans, which seek to maintain dark skies in rural areas and reduce dark skies light pollution in urban areas in the AONB, and ensure the use of such policies in the decision-making process.

c. Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance on reducing obtrusive lighting, and other relevant guidance to aid protecting dark skies, including ensuring that lighting designers use exterior light control environmental zone E1 to inform any proposed lighting in, or affecting the setting of, the AONB.

d. Protect wildlife-rich habitats such as ancient semi-natural woodland from external lighting, and where lighting is needed, require minimised and ecologically informed lighting schemes regarding location, direction, lux levels, colour temperature and light fitting design.

e. Seek to reduce light pollution by ensuring that flood-lit facilities such as sports pitches and car parks are turned off when not in use, through agreements and planning conditions.

f. Work with organisers of light festivals to reduce impacts, including avoiding light and illumination shows in or near to wildlife sensitive areas.

g. Avoid new street lighting where possible and ensure any street lighting required for junctions on adopted roads is kept to the minimum necessary and adheres to best practice in terms of location, illuminance and equipment design and light temperature, to avoid unnecessary skyglow and light spill.

h. Resist large areas of glazing in new building designs, especially wrap-around glazing and floor-to-ceiling windows, to minimise light spill, especially in rural areas with intrinsically dark skies.

Others can assist conservation and enhancement of dark skies by ...

i. Following best practice for external lighting on domestic premises including gardens and garages, to minimise light pollution.

j. Ensuring new external lighting is installed at the lowest height possible to achieve lighting levels, and is angled downwards (including roof lighting), and using dark sky friendly fixtures.

k. By using sensors to switch off lighting when not needed, to reduce light pollution and save energy.

l. Collecting local light meter readings and using satellite data to inform policies at a parish level and highlight light pollution hot spots.

Further information on maintaining the dark skies of the High Weald landscape, including best practice guidance and practical advice, can be found at **www.highweald.org**.











CHARACTER COMPONENT

Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities

Aesthetic and perceptual qualities are sense based, and are experienced as a result of people's interaction with natural beauty and their immersion in it, within the High Weald's landscape.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS[13]

History-related qualities such as ...

a. a sense of history and timelessness arising from an ancient countryside with a human-scale agricultural tapestry; veteran and ancient trees; medieval forests, heaths and commons; churches, historic buildings

b. tangible legacies from the iron and wood industries (such as hammer ponds and place names) and major historic events such as the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

Qualities associated with emotion and imagination such as ...

c. a sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.

d. a sense of wonder, renewal and connection with the natural world arising from the proximity of wildlife and opportunities for immersion in nature.

e. a sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way and quiet roads suitable for walking, cycling and horse riding, and opportunities to discover many accessible green spaces (including sandrock areas and rivers, reservoirs and coast) and unexpected features such as the 'mini-landscapes' of gill streams.

f. a deep sense of rurality unusual in South East England.

Character and gestalt qualities such as ...

g. the homely, pastoral feel to the whole landscape arising from its human-scale pattern and productivity.

h. colour palette of greens (vegetation) and browns (clay, timber and iron) representing the materials from which the landscape is constructed.

i. a rich and varied biodiversity.

j. a recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.

Sensory qualities such as ...

k. unexpected panoramic and long views, often uninterrupted, extending out along the valleys beyond the High Weald with natural skylines and forested ridges occasionally punctuated by church spires, and often framed by field gates and wooded holloways.

l. quietude and tranquillity, with large areas of natural rural soundscape and perceived distance from urban noise.

m. natural soundscapes including the ability to enjoy varied birdsong.

n. exposure to seasonal sensations such as wind and warmth, and diurnal fluctuations in light and dark.

o. Vivid seasonal changes including the whites and blues of ancient woodland ground flora in the spring and the oranges and browns of autumnal trees and woodlands.

Symbolic and inspiration qualities such as ...

p. the idea of the High Weald as a 'quintessential English pastoral landscape'

q. the association of dark autumnal nights and local tradition of High Weald village bonfire societies.

r. the legacy of physical features and ideas left by writers, artists, poets, gardeners and craftspeople inspired by the landscape such as Kipling's house at Batemans, Christopher Lloyd's house and garden at Great Dixter, the Cranbrook Colony of artists, and A.A. Milne.

s. traditions illustrating the close relationship between nature and place including skills and crafts, agricultural shows, traditional breeds, and locally produced food and drink.

t. distinctive public realm features such as fingerposts and milestones.

13. Quality categories based on Brady 2003



Natural and cultural capital – fact and figures

● >120,000 residents in the AONB and >700,000 people living within 5km of the National Landscape boundary. ● 2,126km footpaths, 383km bridleway, 61km byway (density 1.8km per sq.km). ● 83% population within 5km of a ≤100ha natural greenspace site. ● 4 disused railway lines – Cuckoo Trail, Forest Way, Worth Way and The Hop Pickers Line. ● 87.3km of mainline railway and 41km of heritage railway line. ● 30 manor houses, castles and gardens open to the public, including Battle Abbey (the most visited English Heritage site after Stonehenge). ● 2km of climbable sandrock.

TOP 5 ISSUES

1. Declining knowledge, connection and involvement with the countryside and its role in producing food and materials.

2. Increasing visitor numbers leading to urbanising infrastructure around villages and popular sites, and lack of awareness of the countryside code by new users, creating tension between different user groups.

3. Difficult accessibility for many, particularly those from urban areas, with declining or expensive public transport services and lack of travel routes for pedestrians, cyclists and riders, declining rights of way maintenance, and lack of signage.

4. Erosion of rurality and tranquillity through 'urbanising' development including new housing, camping/ glamping accommodation and activity, telecoms equipment, traffic and noise (including aircraft), including cumulative impacts.

5. Degradation of nature, including biodiversity decline, erosion of habitats and damage to natural systems reducing people's rich experience of nature.

OBJECTIVE **PQ1**

To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the High Weald's character and aesthetic qualities, and to promote and facilitate contributions by communities and individuals to the conservation and enhancement of the High Weald.

Rationale

To help develop emotional connection to the landscape, encouraging and enabling people to care for the High Weald and support its conservation.

OBJECTIVE **PQ2**

To protect the unspoilt rural landscape with its intrinsic sense of naturalness, valued views, and the extent of green space which foster experiences of rurality and tranquillity.

Rationale

To prevent the loss of contained green space, glimpsed and long views, and tree-canopied skylines, especially regarding developments that fringe existing settlements in the High Weald, which would impinge on people's perception of greenness and rurality.

OBJECTIVE **PQ3**

To foster and promote equitable access and informal enjoyment of the High Weald landscape and the integrated management of its resources for the enjoyment of natural beauty by all.

Rationale

To meet the demand for informal recreation from residents and those living close to the AONB, whilst ensuring infrastructure, services and activities are consistent with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and its quiet enjoyment for this and future generations.

N.B. For clarity, the pursuance of the above objectives or actions set out in this section should not harm the other character components or be at the expense of their contribution to the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB.

Ambitions for 2029

Policy and actions will need to protect the physical features that experiencing natural beauty relies on, as well as enabling fair access to it. Conserving and enhancing the High Weald will increase its contribution to a 'Natural Health Service' for people now and in the future, drawing on the area's aesthetic qualities to foster enjoyment and wellbeing, and encourage access for everyone to so that everyone feels welcome and included, while ensuring that nature and beauty are not harmed. Improved and fair access will not just relate to opportunities for recreation but to everything that a naturally functioning healthy countryside can provide including clean air, clean water, healthy food, and the opportunity to learn new skills and interact with nature.

ACTIONS

The Partnership will ...

a. Convene relevant stakeholders to develop best practice and collaborative approaches to managing High Weald greenspaces, including an access strategy that sets out areas for strategic investment to meet increasing population needs and increase access for all users in the High Weald AONB

b. Coordinate and deliver the primary school education programme to encourage children to enjoy and understand the landscape, including its history and wildlife.

c. Promote health walks, celebratory landscape-inspired outdoor events, self-guided trails and other outdoor activities encouraging the wider community into the landscape (refer to Cross-cutting theme: People & Access Principles for detail).

d. Develop and manage the High Weald website and produce information and interpretation promoting the High Weald and its special qualities.

Public bodies should...

e. Include information about the High Weald AONB on websites and help to promote the purpose and objectives of the AONB Management Plan and the High Weald Charter for Residents and Visitors, encouraging care for the countryside and community engagement.

f. Recognise and seek to address the potential harm to landscape character, including tranquillity and wildlife, from intensified recreational and tourism related activity (refer to Cross-cutting theme: People & Access Principles for detail).

g. Ensure that planning decisions (site allocations and development management decisions) consider the impact of development on the intrinsic rural character of the landscape and seek to avoid intrusive development.

h. Use the High Weald Housing Design Guide for best practice on incorporating green-ness into new developments, by including grass verges, trees and shrubs, and greenspaces, to ensure a strong sense of place and help minimise noise intrusion.

i. Ensure that installations of infrastructure and equipment for telecoms and utilities services are located and designed so as to avoid introducing urbanising features (such as security fencing, lighting etc) into the rural landscape.

Others can assist conservation and enhancement of aesthetic and perceptual qualities by...

j. Promoting, sustaining and expanding volunteer heritage and conservation groups.

k. Sharing best practice in visitor management, and producing visitor management plans for sensitive sites and areas.

l. Promoting the rich cultural, artistic and historical associations with the landscape, and highlighting local distinctiveness in the visitor 'offer', including those associated with farming and forestry.

m. Maintaining rights of way, particularly promoted routes, and enable responsible and fair access for all to the landscape.

n. Seeking to retain and enhance panoramic long-distance public viewpoints to enable people to connect with the High Weald and its natural beauty.

o. Choosing native hedges, shrubs and trees for boundaries for domestic curtilages.

p. Supporting conservation measures that protect a wide variety of bird species.

Further information on maintaining the aesthetic and perceptual qualities of the High Weald landscape, including best practice guidance and practical advice, can be found at **www.highweald.org**.











CHARACTER COMPONENT

Land-based Economy and Rural Living

The High Weald AONB is characterised by a broad-based economy but with a significant land-based sector and related community life focused on mixed farming (particularly family farms and smaller holdings), woodland management and rural crafts.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Land-based workers at a proportion higher than the rural average.
- Strong historic relationship with London and other employment areas on social character and commuting patterns.
- Tendency for greater self-sufficiency in smaller communities to the east of the area, away from major population centres.
- Retention of woodland workers and their families who have a multi-generational relationship with, and whose livelihoods rely on, the area's coppice woodlands.
- A landscape that suits traditional management owing to its small-scale nature and hedged bank and ditch boundaries.
- Strong rural community life based around small towns and villages supported by a network of valued and accessible local services and amenities, such as village halls, shops and post offices, clubs and societies, and infrastructure including bus services.
- Predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale farming.
- Other traditional mixed and well-integrated land-uses including orchards, hops, vineyards and soft fruit, and land-based crafts and processing.



Lord Strang, Chairman of the National Parks Commission in 1959 called on the government to

'Secure modern standards of living in the countryside with improved rural housing and new small rural industries to provide employment' but observed that these must be 'fully sympathetic to, and in scale with, the landscape and local style of building'.

CLICK FOR MAPS

Natural and cultural capital – fact and figures

● Agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 13% of businesses (employing 8% of the workforce) compared with 3% in the south east (employing 1% of the workforce). ● 38% of employment is in micro businesses compared with 17% in the south east. ● 29% of the working age population are retired compared with 21% in the south east. ● Rural incomes are slightly lower than those in the south east but average house prices are 42% higher. ● Self-sufficient in cereals, fruit and lamb but an under-supply of potatoes, beef, fresh vegetables and salads.

TOP 5 ISSUES

1. Low wages and lack of affordable housing and well-designed workspace affecting recruitment and retention of workers and constraining ability of land-based businesses to thrive.

2. Holdings which are typically small (by national standards) struggling to remain economic in the current market under traditional livestock management regimes and uncertainty over future agri-environmental schemes; compounded by reducing agricultural infrastructure, such as livestock markets and abattoirs, while high cost of land and decline in affordable farm tenancies are a barrier to new entrants to agriculture.

3. Changing land use away from traditional agricultural enterprises, which cumulatively threatens long-term food production.

4. Loss of traditional skills owing to ageing workforce and contracting farm and woodland economies, and lack of economic value in land-based products constraining innovation.

5. Closures and cuts to rural services and amenities, including bus services, Post Offices, village shops, pubs and banks.

OBJECTIVE **LBE1**

To improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and retention in, farming, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty.

Rationale

To sustain an economically viable land management sector, with a particular emphasis on sustainable and small-scale farming and forestry.

OBJECTIVE **LBE2**

To reconnect settlements and residents with the surrounding countryside, and maintain and improve rural amenities and services that support communities within the context of the rural settlement pattern.

Rationale

To foster community life, and enhance the synergy of the local economy, society and environment, and the relationship with the surrounding countryside and wild species that defines sustainable rural settlement.

OBJECTIVE **LBE3**

To improve agricultural and forestry infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing and workspaces for land-based workers), along with skills development for rural communities and related sectors that contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

Rationale

To foster land-based economic activities – including heritage conservation, sustainable tourism and outdoor education – that support conservation of the AONB. To provide opportunities for economic activity that supports appropriate land management objectives and AONB designation.

N.B. For clarity, the pursuance of the above objectives or actions set out in this section should not harm the other character components or be at the expense of their contribution to the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB.

Ambitions for 2029

A renaissance in land-based activity and rural living will be needed to meet the net-zero challenge. Support should be focused on reconnecting people with the land and driving innovation in carbon-neutral agricultural and timber infrastructure, small-scale food production, and forestry and rural skills development. Investment in land-based education, skills, and businesses will need to be significantly enhanced to ensure sufficient land management capacity is created alongside the resilient and flexible skills required to adapt to a warming, more unpredictable climate. Innovative mechanisms to deliver affordable housing for local people, including land-based workers, will need to be explored, such as developing local criteria for key workers, exploring local thresholds for First Homes, and supporting local community land trust ambitions (whilst still having regard to the other Management Plan objective, particularly those relating to Settlement). Increased working from home will continue to stimulate community activities, rural services, and demand for access to countryside resources creating opportunities for new relationships with nature.

ACTIONS

The Partnership will ...

a. Work collaboratively with local authorities to ensure rural business strategies and investments meet the requirements of the AONB management plan.

b. Work collaboratively with partners to support and promote apprenticeships and training in rural skills.

c. Promote the need for national policy and support to be tailored to maintain viable farming and forestry in the High Weald.

Public bodies should...

d. Plan for appropriate development to ensure continuing vitality of local communities and viability of community services, including seeking to deliver a mix of housing sizes that responds to local needs and key worker housing, including for land-based workers.

e. Engage positively with mechanisms capable of delivering affordable housing and housing tailored to the specific needs of land-based workers for rural housing needs.

f. Seek to retain and support rural services and amenities including bus services, village shops, pubs and Post Offices, and support investment in rural services such as improved rural broadband and digital connectivity across rural areas and community transport initiatives.

g. Ensure that proposals for farm diversification projects, (including camping /glamping sites), conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the High Weald, and would support, and not adversely impact on, the agricultural viability of a holding in terms of retention of sufficient productive land and compatible uses.

h. Support maintenance and development of agricultural infrastructure and food processing facilities e.g., abattoirs and livestock markets.

i. Promote, use, and resist removal of, agricultural occupancy conditions and seek to retain capacity for land management within farmsteads.

j. Ensure support for farming and associated rural development is tailored to the particular needs of the High Weald.

k. Support organisations offering career introductions to the land-based sector, and explore opportunities to work collaboratively with others to offer viable longer-term tenancies to young farmers and new entrants.

l. Collate and maintain AONB level data on farming and forestry.

Others can assist conservation and enhancement of the land-based economy by...

m. Supporting and investing in improved working conditions and manufacturing technology for land-based businesses.

n. Retaining affordable farm tenancies and seeking creating new affordable tenancies, jobs and accommodation for new entrants to land-based businesses.

o. Facilitating and encouraging collaborative farming, food processing, and marketing enterprises.

p. Supporting initiatives that develop skills in land management and rural crafts, and promoting and celebrating local crafts.

q. Establishing buy-local procurement policies and choosing locally produced food, fencing and furniture.

Further information on supporting the land-based economy in the High Weald landscape, including best practice guidance and practical advice, can be found at **www.highweald.org**.

Appendix J

Sources of information

Data	Data source
Background mapping	
■ Aerial Imagery	ESRI
■ OS MasterMap ■ OS 25k ■ OS 50k	Wealden District Council
Boundary	
■ Local Authority boundary	Ordnance Survey
Landscape Character Assessments	
■ Wealden Landscape Character Assessment (2022)	Wealden District Council / LUC
Cultural heritage	
■ Listed Buildings ■ Scheduled Monuments ■ Registered Parks and Gardens ■ Heritage at risk ■ WHS	Historic England
■ Conservation Areas ■ Conservation Area Appraisals (including draft Appraisals) ■ Locally listed buildings (including any interim date being prepared for the new Local Plan) ■ Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)	Wealden District Council
Natural Heritage	
■ Local Nature Reserves (LNR) ■ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ■ National Nature Reserves (NNR) ■ Ancient Woodland Index (AWI) ■ Priority habitats ■ Special Protection Areas (SPA)	Natural England

Data	Data source
■ Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) ■ Ramsar / Proposed Ramsar	
■ National Forestry Index (NFI)	Forestry Commission
■ Important Bird Areas (IBA)	RSPB
■ Regional Important Geological Sites (RIGS) / Local Geological Sites ■ Broad Habitat Types ■ Wildlife Verges ■ Green Infrastructure areas ■ Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) ■ Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA)	Wealden District Council
Landscape	
■ Light pollution ■ Tranquillity	CPRE
■ National Character Areas ■ High Weald AONB ■ South Downs National Park ■ Heritage Coasts	Natural England
■ Topography	Ordnance Survey
■ Flood zone 2/3 ■ Areas that benefit from flood defences ■ Flood storage areas (FSA) ■ Spatial flood defence (SFD) ■ Source protection zone (SPZ)	Environment Agency
■ Lakes	Ordnance Survey (meridian)
■ Flood Zones 3a and 3b ■ Land at risk from groundwater flooding ■ High Weald AONB components of character	Wealden District Council
■ High Weald AONB character component data, including: – Water systems data (watercourses, ponds, reservoirs and openwater) – Geology data (bedrock geology and sandstone outcrops)	High Weald AONB

Data	Data source
– Settlement data (historic settlement pattern and historic farmsteads) – Historic routeways data – Woodland data (ancient semi-natural woodlands and plantations on ancient woodland site) – Field and heath data (historic field boundaries, heathland, and wildflower grassland)	
Access and recreation	
■ National Cycle Network	Sustrans
■ National Trails ■ Common Land ■ Country Parks	Natural England
■ National Trails	National Trust
■ Green Space	Ordnance Survey
■ Accessible Natural Greenspace ■ Public rights of way/Promoted Routes ■ Brownfield land	Wealden District Council
Planning	
■ Settlement boundaries ■ Consented sites / committed sites / allocations ■ Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Land Availability Assessment (GTTSP LAA) sites	Wealden District Council
Agriculture	
■ Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)	Natural England
■ CORINE landcover 2018	EEA

Appendix K
Glossary

Table K.1 Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
Aesthetic	Concerning the visual appeal of a feature or landscape.
Agricultural Land Classification	The classification of agricultural land in England in Wales
Alluvium	Loose soil or sediments, which have been eroded, reshaped by water in some form, and redeposited.
Analysis	The process of breaking the landscape down, usually in descriptive terms, into its component parts in order to understand how it is made up.
Ancient trees and veteran trees	Individual trees or groups of trees with wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, park, and other areas. They are often found outside ancient woodlands. irreplaceable habitats with some or all of the following characteristics: *Ancient trees* An ancient tree is exceptionably valuable. Attributes can include its great age, size, condition, biodiversity value (as a result of significant wood decay and the habitat created from the ageing process), cultural and heritage value. *Veteran trees* A veteran tree may or may not be very old, but it has decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its biodiversity, cultural and heritage value.
Ancient Woodland	Woodland which the evidence shows has had had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD and has only been cleared for underwood or timber production. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, with an exceptionally high diversity of flora and fauna.
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation.
Approach	The stepwise process by which a landscape assessment is undertaken.

Term	Definition
Arable	Land used for growing crops.
Assessment	An umbrella term used to encompass all the many different ways of looking at, describing, analysing, and evaluating landscape.
Assart	A piece of land converted from forest to agricultural use. Most such piecemeal enclosures date to the medieval or early post-medieval period and are bounded by species rich hedgerows, an indicator of land assarted from woodland.
Assarting	The act of clearing forested lands for use in agriculture or other purposes (in English land law, it was illegal to assart any part of a Royal Forest).
BAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK BAP. The original lists of UK BAP priority habitats were created between 1995 and 1999 and were subsequently updated in 2007. See http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155 for further information.
Biodiversity	The measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems.
Brownfield site	A development site which is re-using previously developed land.
Built form	The characteristic nature of built development.
Characteristic	An element that contributes to local distinctiveness (e.g. narrow winding lanes, vernacular building style).
Classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types, each with a distinct, consistent, and recognisable character.
Combe	A small dry valley, without a permanent watercourse.
Condition	A judgement on the intactness and condition of the elements of the landscape.
Coppicing	The traditional method of woodland management in which trees are cut down to near the ground to encourage the production of long, straight shoots, which can subsequently be harvested.
Description	Verbal description of what a landscape looks like. This is usually carried out in a systematic manner, but it may also include personal reactions to the landscape.

Term	Definition
Designated landscape	Areas of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local levels, either defined by statute or identified in development plans or other documents.
Dispersed settlement	A settlement where individual dwellings are scattered, in comparison to a linear or nucleated settlement.
Drift	The name for all material of glacial origin found anywhere on land or at sea, including sediment and large rocks.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
Element	A component part of the landscape (e.g. hedges, roads, woods).
Enclosure (field pattern)	The placing in private hands of land to which there were previously common rights; the merging of commonly held strip fields to form a block surrounded by hedges.
Equine development	A term used to describe areas on the fringes of settlements which are dominated by horse paddocks, stable buildings, and associated paraphernalia.
Feature	A prominent, eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop, church spire).
Floodplain	The area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks, or if high tides and stormy seas cause flooding in coastal areas.
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
Grassland	Land used for grazing. Grassland can be improved (by management practices) semi-improved (modified by management practices and have a range of species less diverse than unimproved grasslands), or unimproved (not treated with fertiliser, herbicide or intensively grazed and consequently species diversity is high).
Greenfield site	A development site, usually on the fringes of a settlement, which has not previously been used for built development.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation; a method of identification and interpretation of the varying historic character within an area that looks beyond individual heritage assets to help understand the whole landscape and townscape into repeating HLC Types.

Term	Definition
Hydrology	The science dealing with the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the earth and its atmosphere.
Innings	From verb 'to inn' meaning to reclaim (often from wetlands or floodplains).
Intact	Not changed or diminished.
Land cover	Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landmark	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location.
Landscape	The term refers primarily to the visual appearance of the land, including its shape, form, and colours. However, the landscape is not a purely visual phenomenon; its character relies on a whole range of other dimensions, including geology, topography, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture, and cultural associations.
Landscape character	A distinct pattern or combination of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape.
Landscape character area (LCA)	A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, which forms part of a landscape character type.
Landscape character type (LCT)	A generic term for landscape with a consistent, homogeneous character. Landscape character types may occur in different parts of the county, but wherever they occur, they will share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation, or human influences.
Landscape condition	Based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It reflects the state of repair or intactness of individual features or elements (relating to that feature's primary condition or ultimate *desire*).
Landscape strategy	Principles to manage and direct landscape change for a particular landscape type or character area including identification of any particular management needs for specific elements.
Landscape value	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. Yet a landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for

Term	Definition
	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.
Landscape and Visual Appraisal	An appraisal of the suitability of a site in landscape and visual terms to accommodate development, as well as to determine any site specific constraints and design considerations.
Linear settlement	A settlement that is built along a road, in comparison to a nuclear or dispersed settlement.
Listed Building	A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest.
Local Plan	A development plan prepared by local planning authorities.
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
Martello towers	Small defensive forts that were built across the British Empire during the 19th century.
Natural character	Character as a result of natural or semi-natural features such as woodland, grassland, hedgerows etc.
National Character Areas (NCAs)	National Character Areas are defined within the *National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013).* NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNR	National Nature Reserve
Nucleated settlement	A settlement that is clustered around a centre, in comparison to a linear or dispersed settlement.
Open-field system	An area of arable land with common rights after harvest or while fallow. The fields date from the Medieval period and are usually without internal divisions (hedges, walls, or fences).
OS	Ordnance Survey
Parliamentary fields / enclosure	Fields formed by a legal process of enclosure (or inclosure), typically during the 18th and 19th centuries – by passing laws causing or forcing enclosure to produce fields for use by the owner (in place of common land for communal use).

Term	Definition
Pastoral	Land used for keeping or grazing sheep or cattle.
Pollarding	A traditional woodland management practice in which the branches of a tree are cut back every few years to encourage new long, straight shoots for harvesting. Differs from *coppicing* because the cuts are made at sufficient distance from the ground to prevent them from being eaten by animals.
Potential development sites	Potential growth areas that have been submitted for assessment in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
PRoW	Public right of way
Ramsar	Wetlands of international importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
RPG	Registered Park and Garden; included in Historic England's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England'.
Remediation	Process by which a contaminated or damaged site is repaired and brought back intomore general use, or for a specific purpose (e.g. wildlife conservation).
Remnant	A part or quantity left after the greater part has been used, removed, or destroyed.
Riparian habitat	Riverbank habitat.
RNR	Roadside Nature Reserve
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (EC Directive 92/43/EEC Habitats Directive)
SANGS	Suitable Alternative Green Space
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change.
Semi-natural vegetation	Any type of natural vegetation which has been influenced by human activities, either directly or indirectly.
Sense of place	A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that makes a place memorable.
Sensitive	The response to change or influence.
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.

Term	Definition
SPA	Special Protection Area (EC Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Time depth	The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
Topography	Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land surface.
Transhumance	The seasonal movement of people and animals between grazing grounds, typically lowlands in the winter and highlands in the summer.
Valued landscape attributes	Positive features and characteristics that are important to landscape character and that, if lost, would result in adverse change to the landscape.
Vernacular	Buildings constructed in the local style, from local materials. Concerned with ordinary rather than monumental buildings.
Visual amenity	The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.