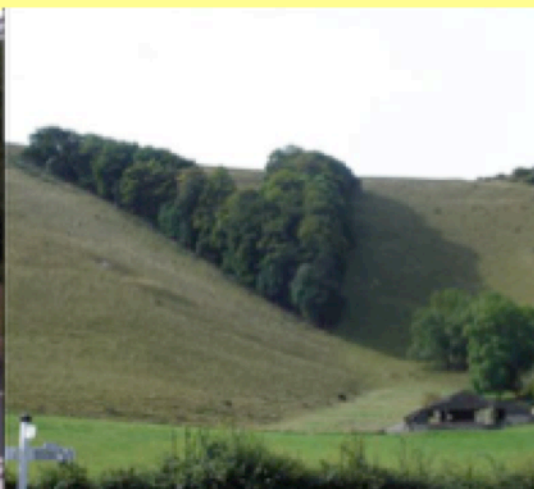


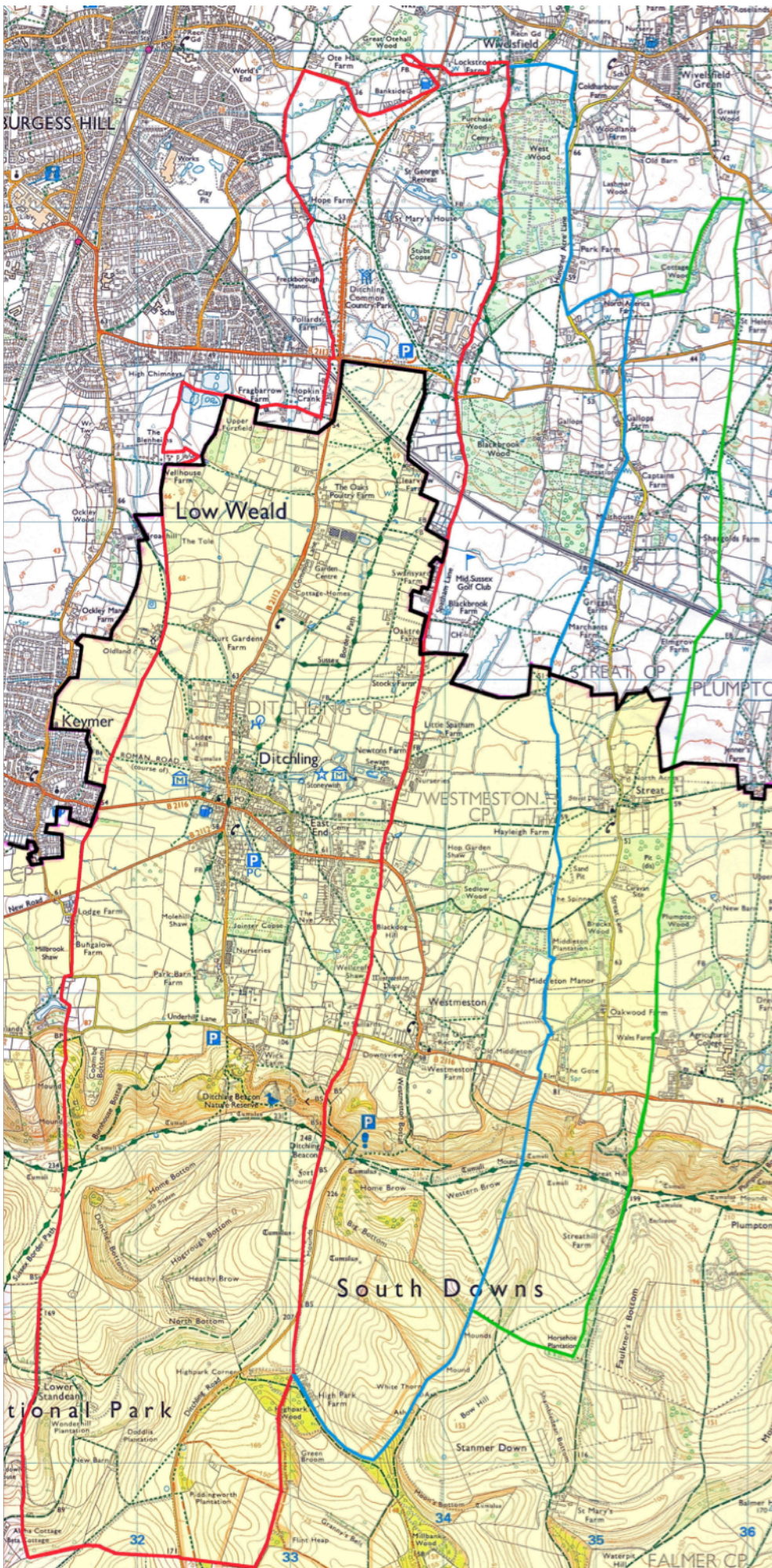


# Ditchling Streat and Westmeston neighbourhood development plan

*Formal submission*

*May 2017*





Key

Ditchling 

Westmeston 

Streat 

South Downs National Park 

The three Beacon parishes of East Sussex

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## **Website topic headings**

[\(www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/\)](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/)

- The plan/ focus group reports/map/useful information
- The draft neighbourhood plan 2017
- Conservation technical document
- Analysis of responses
- Neighbourhood plan survey 2014
- Review & analysis of responses to pre-submission draft plan

## Acronyms and definitions

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BOA	Biodiversity Opportunities Area
BOAT	Bye-way Open to All Traffic
BVPIT	Beacon Villages Plan Implementation Team
CA	Conservation Area
CEP	Community engagement programme
CLT	Community Land Trust
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
COS	Community Open Space
CRoW	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (right of way to access land)
DCA	Ditchling Conservation Area
DPC	Ditchling Parish Council
DSWNDP	Ditchling, Streat & Westmeston Neighbourhood Development Plan
ESCC	East Sussex County Council
ESIF	East Sussex In Figures
HCA	Historic Character Assessment
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
JCS	Joint Core Strategy (of SDNPA and LDC)
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LATS	Local Area Transport Strategy (for Ditchling, prepared by ESCC)
LDC	Lewes District Council
LGS	Local Green Space
LVP	Local Volunteering Plan
MSDC	Mid Sussex District Council
NDO	Neighbourhood Development Order
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
PMG	Project Management Group (of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston)
PRoW	Public Right of Way
RIA	Retail Impact Assessment
SB	Settlement boundary
SDNP(A)	South Downs National Park (Authority)
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SNCI	Site of Nature Conservation Importance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TP3	ESCC Local Transport Plan version 3
The Beacon parishes	The three parishes of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston
The parish councils	The parish councils of Ditchling and Westmeston, and Streat Parish Meeting
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Social & Cultural Organisation
VDS	Village Design Statement
WSCC	West Sussex County Council

## Policy reference tables

Below are listed the plan's policies, referenced by focus group topic area:

HSG:	housing
TRANS:	transport
BIZ:	business and tourism
CONS:	conservation and environment
COM:	community infrastructure

Policies are delineated by **land use** (statutory) topics in Part A of this report while **aspirational** (non statutory) topics are presented in Part B towards the end of the document.

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COM 6	<i>Prepare joint Local Volunteering Plan</i>	93

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# Part A: statutory plan



|  
Vision

## 1.1 The Beacon parishes' neighbourhood development plan

Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston are ancient weald and downland communities located in one of the most beautiful and unspoilt rural parts of East Sussex, set in the backdrop of the South Downs. The three parishes have come together to jointly produce a neighbourhood development plan that will safeguard their heritage, environment and community, and provide the framework for a sustainable vibrant and prosperous future for the parishes.

The plan has been prepared under the 2011 Localism Act<sup>1</sup>, designed to provide people with a valuable opportunity to develop and deliver a shared vision for the future development of their local community. This is expressed principally through policies specifying the type of housing needed locally, with guidance on the location, type and design of development, and by the conservation of the most valued aspects of the natural and built environment. Once approved by a planning inspector and a local referendum of all residents, the neighbourhood development plan becomes part of the statutory development framework for the area. This plan is set within, and is part of, the local statutory land use planning system overseen by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) or Lewes District Council (LDC), with legal status in determining planning applications. It is therefore a powerful tool that enables the local community to guide development. A neighbourhood development plan also gives the opportunity to set out a broader range of aspirational local projects and initiatives that sit outside the statutory framework, but are nonetheless of importance to the local community. This plan includes several such policies.

The Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Development Plan (DSWNDP) covers the period 2017 to 2032 and, as directed by the SDNPA, recommends a review every five years. Consultation and Basic Conditions Statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act and these are held in the supporting documentation<sup>2</sup>. The plan was prepared by a team of residents appointed by the parish councils and advised by SDNPA. All reports are held on the plan website.

## 1.2 The parishes<sup>3</sup>

All three parishes are still recognisably based on the original Saxon strip parishes, with a history dating to before the Norman Conquest. Together they cover an area of about 30 km<sup>2</sup> with Ditchling, the largest, measuring about 10km long by 1.6 km wide with an area of 15.49 km<sup>2</sup>, Westmeston 8.5 km<sup>2</sup> and Streat 5.2 km<sup>2</sup>. At the last census the population totalled just under 2,600<sup>4</sup>. The parishes have a south/north orientation extending from the relatively remote rolling downland landscape in the south that abuts the rural fringe of Brighton via the north facing scarp of the South Downs, to the generally undulating rural landscape of the Sussex Weald in the north. They thus traverse a range of geological formations with chalk downs in the south, gault clay at the Downs-foot, lower greensand in the middle and Weald clay in the north. This underlying geology in turn supports a rich and varied biodiversity from chalk grassland and chalk streams to ancient woodland. The plan area contains two SSSIs, nine local wildlife sites (SNCI) and several nationally

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<sup>1</sup> Localism Act 2011 c20 et seq, HMG (effective from April 2012)

<sup>2</sup> All reports are also held on the plan website: <http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> See map on inside front cover

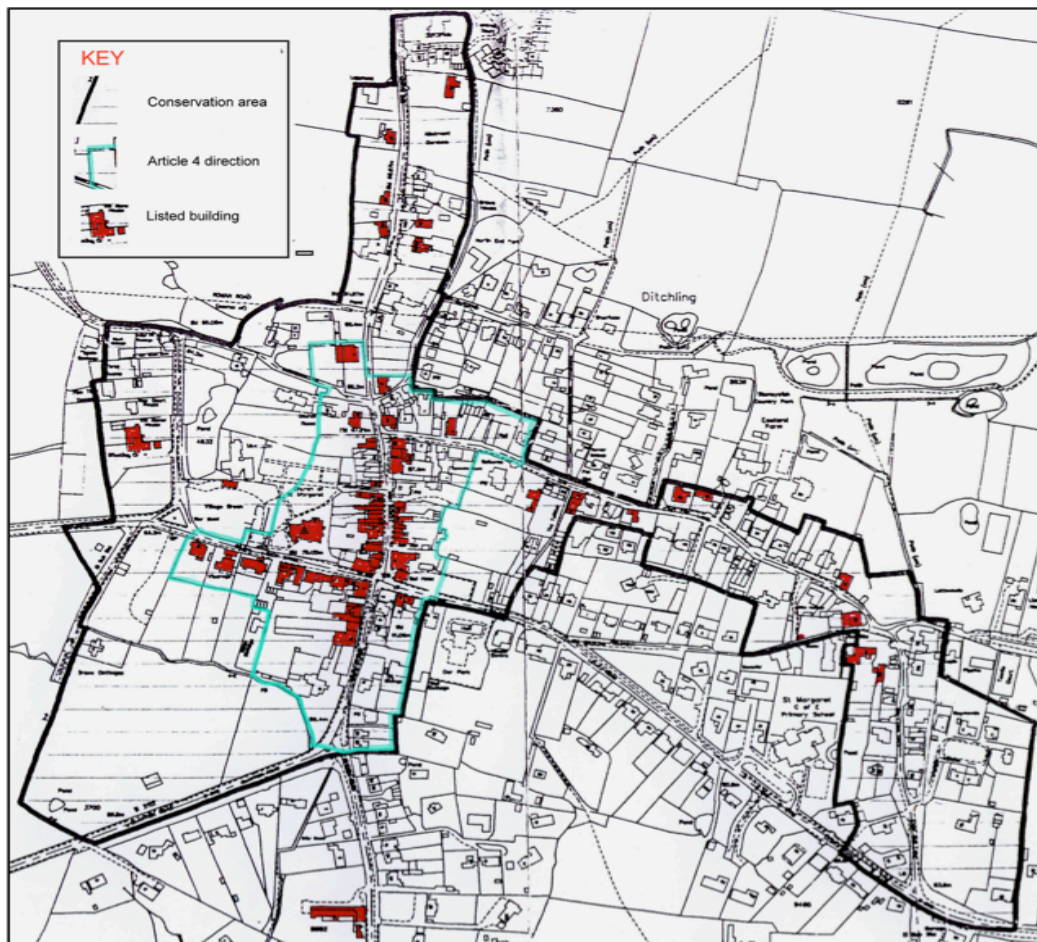
<sup>4</sup> ESIF: [www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk/](http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk/): Ditchling 2,081; Westmeston 343; Streat 158

important habitat sites. The high quality Downs landscapes within the parishes have contributed to inclusion of two thirds of their area being included in the SDNP, the remainder lying within Lewes DC. The highway authority is ESCC.

### 1.3 The settlements

It was because of its former pre-eminence as a rural industrial and agricultural settlement, and the wealth that flowed from this economic activity, that the parishes have some of the finest old buildings in Sussex, with over 90 listed buildings<sup>5</sup>. A number of other fine locally listed buildings<sup>6</sup> also lie within Ditchling's conservation area and towards Ditchling Common. **Figure 1 below** shows the Ditchling village conservation area. The servicing of this agri-industrial community was maintained until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century by local traders and artisans. The parishes were thus not just self-sufficient farming communities: wealth was also generated through exporting the local large-scale manufacture of bricks, tiles and ceramic products. It was the inter-relationship between the Downs and the Weald that made this integrated system viable: and the Downs, the Common and the settlement could not have existed in isolation.

**Figure 1:** Ditchling village conservation area



<sup>5</sup> [www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk)

<sup>6</sup> Historic England Advice Note 7, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016

The rich built and cultural heritage of the parishes is further reflected in the numerous archaeological features found within the area. These span the period from the Mesolithic to the present and include the prehistoric hill fort on Ditchling Beacon dating from the Late Bronze Age, the Roman and medieval/post-medieval farm complex at Standean, a Romano-British site at Park Barn Farm, the major Roman Road that runs along the Greensand Way through the three parishes, and the Bronze Age barrow on Lodge Hill<sup>7</sup>.

Although modern transport and changes in employment patterns have removed the need for self-sufficiency, the identity of the Ditchling community still has its roots in the composite whole of Downs, the settlement and the Common, and is regarded as an important aspect of the local environment by a majority of the population<sup>8</sup>.

## 1.4 Key issues

The key issues addressed by this plan are a distillation of the many views expressed by residents during the early evidence collection process, principally the household survey (with its high response rate) and public meetings. These are backed up by the extensive body of social statistics and census data provided through Action in Rural Sussex. A distillation of these data sets is presented in the separately bound technical appendices provided as back-up material to this plan<sup>9</sup>, and also in the plan website<sup>10</sup> that was actively consulted by residents during the preparation period. The snapshot of the community's issues offered below is based on the evidence collected from those disparate sources.

It is the beauty of the medieval housing and the landscape, rather than local employment opportunities, that now attracts people to live in the Beacon villages. The South Downs provide an exceptional backdrop and recreational facility, even more evident since the villages were included in the newly created national park. This exceptional environment and village setting has engendered a high level of satisfaction and sense of community belonging. This was evident in both the national data sets and the household questionnaire responses.

From a self-sustaining village providing employment and services to most of its residents, as well as those in neighbouring settlements, Ditchling now has a more dependent economy. Agricultural, and latterly vinicultural, uses still dominate outside the settlements, together with the industrial estates of Ditchling Common in the northern portion of Ditchling parish and St Helena Business Park on the northern boundary of Streat.. Locally an increasing number of residents now trade from home with the support of internet-based business models. Shops, banks and other services have closed down or moved to nearby larger villages and towns. Local employment has fallen and the parishes have experienced a significant influx of residents who are much more likely to work in the services sector and professional careers in neighbouring towns, Brighton or London, with income levels sufficient to sustain the local high cost of living, particularly of housing costs, and of transport use, itself reflected in the high level of multiple car-owning households.

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<sup>7</sup> A more detailed account of these features and their locations is contained within the Conservation Technical Document that accompanies this plan

<sup>8</sup> See Q5 of the household survey available on the plan website and in the consultation statement

<sup>9</sup> See *Supporting documentation: Demographic, social and economic statistics*

<sup>10</sup> [www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk)

The population grew by 16% over the 10-year period from 2001 (more than twice the average for the county), inward migration being dominated by an influx of younger professional families attracted by the attractive housing, social ambience and community services in the village. At the same time, there was a net outward migration of younger adults who left because of the lack of local employment opportunities, the high cost of housing and shortage of smaller housing units. It is the high cost of housing and dominance of large and expensive detached houses that mitigates against traditional entry point employment opportunities and deters the young from staying. Strong preferences were expressed<sup>11</sup> by a majority of residents for the neighbourhood plan to redress this imbalance by directing future housing developments towards the provision of low-cost starter and housing trust homes.

The area contains a higher than average proportion of retired, predominately professional, people, with higher than average incomes<sup>12</sup> both in the settlements and at St. George's retirement complex in the north of Ditchling parish. This demographic characteristic places a strain on community services particularly caused by the lack of buses, the limited capacity of the medical centre and the lack of local small shops.

There are increasing urbanising influences associated with the larger settlements of Haywards Heath to the north and Burgess Hill and Hassocks/Keymer adjoining Ditchling parish to the west. The consequent environmental impacts from the encroachment of housing developments are threatening the very important open countryside gaps separating Ditchling from Keymer and Burgess Hill which preserve the distinct character of the village.

The local environment is under further threat from increasing volumes of through traffic using unsuitable routes through Ditchling and via Spatham Lane, adding to the already unacceptably high and intrusive through-commuter traffic volumes between Brighton and Haywards Heath, and commercial vehicle movements between east and west, all centred on Ditchling village crossroads.

Overall, it is the combination of the landscape beauty, the medieval townscape and vibrant local community that the people of the three parishes are determined to preserve and conserve, giving rise to our overwhelming support for a neighbourhood development plan that will ensure the historic parishes will be safeguarded for the future.

The next section sets out the vision and key objectives that have derived from working in close concert with the residents as expressions of their desire to maintain and safeguard this valuable heritage and its community.

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<sup>11</sup> See [www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk): Beacon villages household survey, September 2014; and housing focus group reports

<sup>12</sup> See [www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/statistics.htm](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/statistics.htm) for key statistical and comparative sources

## 1.5 Vision for 2032

The vision statement and objectives are derived from the various planning authority documents referenced throughout the plan, the work of topic focus groups, responses of residents to the 2014 household questionnaire, and from feedback obtained during public open days:

### 2032 Vision for the Beacon parishes

The three parishes will have continued to foster their strong and thriving communities, benefiting from interdependence while maintaining their discrete individual characteristics and identities.

The unique character of the plan area will have been protected both within and outside the SDNP. Opportunities will have been taken to protect the distinct character and identity of Ditchling village and the hamlets of Streat and Westmeston.

High-quality sustainable and diverse new development of appropriate scale will have been provided to meet local housing, commercial and employment needs, confined to the area within the settlement boundary as defined in this plan.

Ditchling's role as a service centre for residents of the plan area and visitors to the SDNP will have been maintained and enhanced.

Residents of the area and visitors to the park will have benefited from a safer environment in which the volume of traffic has been reduced, speed is controlled and congestion is reduced and contributions made to sustaining the viability of the area's shops and services.

The effects of new development, traffic measures and car parking on the local landscape will have been carefully and sensitively managed.

## 1.6 Plan objectives

### 1.6.1 Sustainable development

The parishes will promote sustainable development in a manner that supports the social, environmental and economic characteristics of the parishes and does not compromise the *'ability of future generations to meet their own needs'* (as per national policy).

### 1.6.2 Environment and conservation

The parishes will:

- engender a greater awareness of the priorities involved in balancing development needs against the potential loss of the landscape assets;
- promote development of the area as a 'gateway' attraction for visitors to the national park accessible through the provision of a range of transport choices;
- set design standards leading to sensitive development that has regard to the special characteristics of the area;

- conserve the rural nature of the plan area and the preservation of the rural gaps between the area and the neighbouring urban developments;
- conserve and where possible enhance the distinct rural identity, landscape setting, environmental quality and historic character of the area including:
  - key views and vistas
  - biodiversity and wildlife networks
  - the historic built environment
  - green infrastructure and local green spaces of particular value to the local community
  - key open spaces within the area that will bring lasting benefits for recreation.

### *1.6.3 Housing*

The parishes will support residential development that:

- provides a broad mix of housing, including shared equity and shared ownership housing, for rent or purchase for residents of all generations and economic circumstances and particularly for young people who have grown up or are employed in the area;
- is small scale and sustainably designed and constructed, and blends with the local style and character of the area;
- is contained within the settlement boundary as revised herein;
- has adequate provision for residents' off-street parking;
- provides for traffic calming on the adjacent main highway in conjunction with ESCC.

### *1.6.4 Traffic and transport*

The parishes will:

- Promote schemes<sup>13</sup> that will lead to a significant reduction from 2015 levels in the volume and speed of through traffic and HGVs on all roads, and create conditions that encourage traffic to proceed in a safe, orderly slow pace, respecting the villages' historic setting and pedestrian safety as laid out in 'Roads in the South Downs'<sup>14</sup>;
- Promote more off-street parking spaces for residents and visitors to help maximise use of the community facilities and sustain their year-round commercial viability;
- Make the area known for its cycling, walking and equestrian friendly policies<sup>15</sup> and facilities, building on the national reputation of Ditchling Beacon and the growing promotional influence of the South Downs National Park Authority;
- Promote sustainable and convenient public, or voluntary, transport facilities to enable access by residents to community facilities, to the Downs for recreational purposes; and to access the principal urban centres for facilities not available locally.

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<sup>13</sup> ESCC notes that it currently has no schemes identified that will achieve this objective, while the SDNPA supports it as a valid aspiration. See ESCC submission: [http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/response\\_review\\_complete.pdf](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/response_review_complete.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> SDNPA, June 2015

<sup>15</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy)

## *1.6.5 Local economy*

The parishes will:

- Promote conditions to ensure a thriving local economy, particularly for new agriculture and craft-related businesses, with advanced communication technology and services available throughout the area;
- Encourage employment opportunities for young people in the area, particularly those growing up in the parishes, in occupations that require creativity and skill and fit with the nature of the area;
- Promote opportunities for part-time and voluntary employment for older people in occupations that both benefit the local community and contribute to their welfare;
- Encourage a positive visitor-friendly environment that is accessible by a range of transport choices, attract visitors to use the commercial and cultural facilities in the area in the interests of maintaining their year-round viability for residents and visitors while ensuring an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of visitors and preserving the private lives of residents;
- promote more off-street parking spaces for residents and visitors to help maximise use of the community facilities and sustain their year-round commercial viability in consultation with the planning authority to ensure planning permission is obtained.

## *1.6.6 Community services*

The parishes will:

- Support spiritual, cultural, sport and recreational pursuits for residents of all ages, especially teenagers, and ensure that the recreational benefits of the area's location within the national park have been fully exploited;
- Support local groups and bodies that carry out work to meet this aim such as the Ditchling Grounds Committee, the Footpath Committee, Footpath Preservation Society, Westmeston Jubilee Pathway Trust and the Monday Group<sup>16</sup>;
- Support the provision of suitable shopping, service and community uses for residents which are accessible through the provision of a range of transport choices to improve the area's sustainability.

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<sup>16</sup> Volunteer group that maintains and rebuilds footpath causeways, stiles, bridges and dog gates.





# 2

## National and local planning policy context

## 2.1 Introduction

The neighbourhood development plan area includes the whole of the parishes of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston. However the South Downs National Park boundary cuts across each parish, leaving a small proportion of each parish outside the national park. These areas will remain under Lewes District Council for planning policy matters, while the South Downs National Park Authority is the local planning authority for the rest of the neighbourhood plan area. But the adoption of the Lewes/SDNPA joint core strategy on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016<sup>17</sup> means that locally we effectively follow SDNPA directives for the whole of the three parishes.

The Plan has been drawn up following guidance issued by the Secretary of State and follows a framework established by national policies. Here we identify the applicable national and development plans, and the guidance that has shaped the plan.

## 2.2 Documents used in the guiding policy framework

At the **national** level, relevant guidance is found in:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>18</sup> and its companion National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)<sup>19</sup>
- Circular 2010, English National Parks and The Broads, UK Government Vision<sup>20</sup>

Although it is not a development plan containing planning policies, we have also taken into account the **South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan**<sup>21</sup> which sets out the priorities and aspirations for the future of the national park.

The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. These policies must be taken into account in local and neighbourhood development plans. The NPPG provides more detailed practical guidance on the application and implementation of government policy, and also includes advice on preparing neighbourhood development plans. Circular 2010 is relevant as over two-thirds of our plan area is in the South Downs National Park.

Neighbourhood development plans have to conform with the strategic policies in the adopted development plan for that area. We have taken into account the following documents:

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<sup>17</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/joint-working/lewes-district-joint-core-strategy/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/joint-working/lewes-district-joint-core-strategy/)

<sup>18</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework)

<sup>19</sup> <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

<sup>20</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-national-parks-and-the-broads-uk-government-vision-and-circular-2010](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-national-parks-and-the-broads-uk-government-vision-and-circular-2010)

<sup>21</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan/)

- **Saved policies of the Lewes District Plan (2003)**<sup>22</sup>
- **Lewes District Local Plan Part I, Joint Core Strategy May 2016**<sup>23</sup> – produced by Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.
- **South Downs National Park Local Plan, Preferred Options**<sup>24</sup>, (September 2015) produced by the South Downs National Park Authority.
- **The East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton and Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan**<sup>25</sup> (adopted February 2013)
- **The East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton and Hove Waste and Minerals sites plan** (adopted 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017)<sup>26</sup>

The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is the strategic plan produced for the whole district by Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority working together, and covers the whole of our neighbourhood development plan area (although when the South Downs National Park Local Plan is adopted<sup>27</sup> it will only cover the plan area that is in the national park). The JCS covers the period to 2032 and replaces the Lewes District Local Plan originally adopted in 2003. It was formally adopted, by Lewes District Council on 11 May 2016 and by the South Downs National Park Authority on 23 June 2016, and now forms part of the development plan for the district.

This neighbourhood development plan has been drawn up to conform to the up-to-date policies of the JCS, rather than those of the 2003 Lewes District Local Plan, as adoption is expected following independent public examination.

Although the South Downs National Park Local Plan is still at the consultation stage, it has also been taken into account in preparing our neighbourhood development plan. We continue to work with the national park authority to make sure our neighbourhood plan is consistent with the emerging SDNPA local plan<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> While this plan has now been superseded, SDNPA advises that it still contains relevant material

<sup>23</sup> [www.lewes.gov.uk/corestrategy/](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/corestrategy/)

<sup>24</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/national-park-local-plan](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/national-park-local-plan)

<sup>25</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste/minerals-waste-plans/east-sussex-south-downs-and-brighton-and-hove-waste-and-minerals-plan/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste/minerals-waste-plans/east-sussex-south-downs-and-brighton-and-hove-waste-and-minerals-plan/)

<sup>26</sup> [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/planning/development/mineralsandwaste/wastelocalplan](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/planning/development/mineralsandwaste/wastelocalplan)

<sup>27</sup> expected in July 2018

<sup>28</sup> See for example 'Later development' in Para 2.4 re quashing of SD housing unit figures by the Sec of State

## 2.3 National policy

Neighbourhood development plans give local communities the power to set planning policies which will help determine planning applications. However it is stressed in the NPPF that:

*‘The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan.’*

and

*‘Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the local plan or undermine its strategic policies.’*

Provided they conform as above, a neighbourhood development plan’s policies ‘...take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the local plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict’ (NPPF paras 183/185).

Thus neighbourhood development plans must conform with the relevant local plan but there is scope within this to develop and promote made-to-measure policies for the local area.

The details of the practical implementation guidance on neighbourhood development planning contained in the NPPG are not reviewed here, but have been taken into account in preparing the plan.

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of economic, environmental and social sustainable development. It places a ‘*presumption in favour of sustainable development*’ at the heart of the planning system, to be reflected in all plans and decision-taking (NPPF Paras 6-16). The NPPF contains detailed policies and approaches of particular relevance in preparing the DSWNDP, specifically in:

- supporting a prosperous rural economy
- promoting sustainable transport
- delivering a choice of high quality homes
- promoting good design
- promoting healthy communities
- meeting the challenge of climate change
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

It has two key purposes of primary relevance to our area:

**First**, NPPF guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is important because most of our plan area falls within the South Downs National Park. It says:

*‘Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in national parks, the Broads and areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs), which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all of these areas’ (NPPF para 115).*

Circular 2010<sup>29</sup> describes the special levels of protection to landscape and natural beauty afforded to national parks, in particular their stated key purpose, which is to

*‘...conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the national parks by the public’ (Circular 2010, para 6).*

There is also an additional duty placed on national park authorities to seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities when delivering these two key purposes.

**Second,** the NPPF gives power to local communities to identify areas of local green space of particular importance for special protection, and to apply a level of policy protection ruling out development ‘*other than in very special circumstances*’. This is equivalent to the level of protection in the green belt, and is an important planning policy tool in locations such as ours that has significant areas of local green space integral to the character and identity of the area.

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<sup>29</sup> [gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/221086/pb13387-vision-circular2010.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221086/pb13387-vision-circular2010.pdf)

## 2.4 Guidance provided by local planning authority development plans

The Lewes District Local Plan Part I Joint Core Strategy<sup>30</sup> establishes a vision for the district by 2032, including the rural elements of the low weald and the rural areas of the South Downs National Park. This vision is translated into a series of strategic objectives, a spatial strategy and core delivery policies, approved by SDNPA on 23/6/16. The NDP must take into account the strategic core delivery policies of the JCS, see Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: The key delivery policies of the joint core strategy<sup>31</sup>

**Core Policies 1 and 2** – affordable housing and housing type, mix and density.

**Core Policy 4** – encouraging economic development and regeneration. In addition to wider economic development, the latter deals with two key areas for the neighbourhood development plan area. First, promoting the development of sustainable tourism having particular regard to opportunities provided by the national park and second, providing high speed communications/IT infrastructure and encouraging home working.

**Core Policy 5** – supporting the visitor economy.

**Core Policy 6** – promoting and enhancing the identified role of centres in the retail hierarchy. In this respect, Ditchling is a ‘local centre’ where the provision and retention of local shops and community facilities will be encouraged.

**Core Policy 7** – protecting, retaining and enhancing community infrastructure.

**Core Policy 8** – protecting green infrastructure.

**Core Policy 10** – conserving and enhancing the natural environment and landscape character.

**Core Policy 11** – achieving high quality design, conserving and enhancing the built environment and safeguarding heritage assets.

**Core Policy 13** – promoting sustainable travel.

**Core Policy 14** – supporting renewable and low carbon energy and sustainable use of resources.

*(Note: Policy numbering relates to the draft plan. It may change when formally adopted.)*

The spatial strategy guides the location of development and change and has been a key consideration in preparing the neighbourhood development plan: limited change in terms of new development is envisaged in that part of Lewes DC covered by the three neighbourhood development plan parishes. In the local plan Ditchling is categorised as a ‘service village’ and the parish is required to allocate a minimum of 15 new housing units over the plan period. This figure

<sup>30</sup> The core strategy was adopted by Lewes District Council on 11 May 2016 and by the South Downs National Park Authority on 23 June 2016. See [http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan\\_Adopted\\_JCS\\_with\\_front\\_cover.pdf](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan_Adopted_JCS_with_front_cover.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/joint-working/lewes-district-joint-core-strategy/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/joint-working/lewes-district-joint-core-strategy/)

excludes dwellings that may come forward on unallocated sites. See the housing section for details of proposed sites.

There is no identified housing requirement for Streat and Westmeston, being defined as hamlets.

While the plan also seeks to increase land use for employment ('employment floorspace') there is no specific requirement to be met in our Plan area.

The JCS also retains certain 'saved' 2003 Lewes District Local Plan policies including Policy CT1 which establishes planning boundaries for Ditchling, and for Tidy's Industrial Estate next to Ditchling Common:

*'CT1. Development will be contained within the Planning Boundaries as shown on the Proposals Map. Planning permission will not be granted for development outside the Planning Boundaries, other than for that specifically referred to in other chapters of the Plan'... 'The retention of the open character of the countryside is of heightened importance where it separates settlements and prevents their coalescence. Development referred to above may not be acceptable where its scale would significantly erode the gap between settlements and detract from their separate identities.'*<sup>32</sup>

CT1 is of particular significance for Ditchling, on three counts:

**First**, the settlement boundary is very tightly drawn, giving little scope for development land;

**second**, the strategic gap between Ditchling and Keymer to the west is an area that residents see as being important to retain, but is currently under threat from developers, and

**third**, there are no settlement boundaries for either Streat or Westmeston, which are treated as falling within open countryside for planning purposes.

Policies that directly address these three issues are presented later in this plan.

**The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan**<sup>33</sup>, adopted in 2013, establishes a strategy for the future of the park. This includes setting a vision which is well summarised by the phrase '*thriving communities in inspirational landscapes*', and identifies the seven special qualities of the national park. These seek to encapsulate what has attracted people to the area and what needs to be nurtured and enhanced. In summary the qualities are:

- diverse inspirational landscapes and breathtaking views
- tranquil and unspoilt places
- rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species
- an environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise
- opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences
- well conserved historic features and a rich cultural heritage
- distinctive towns and villages and communities with real pride in their area.

The plan aims to manage development over the next 15 years. It is founded on meeting the statutory purposes of national parks and aims to build on the special qualities of the South Downs as set out above. It provides a strategic policy framework for communities within the national park

<sup>32</sup> [www.lewes.gov.uk/coun/planning/lewes\\_local\\_plan/written/written\\_frame.htm?cpt7.htm&ct1](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/coun/planning/lewes_local_plan/written/written_frame.htm?cpt7.htm&ct1)

<sup>33</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan)

that are preparing neighbourhood development plans, such as Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston. It contains core policies relating to the overall principles of development, together with strategic policies designed to achieve the overall vision for the park linked to its special qualities. For example, core policies promote a positive approach reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development (Core Policy SD1), and establish the general approach to planning and growth in the five broad areas of the park. The parts of our Plan area in the park are categorised as falling within either the Scarp Slope or the Dip Slope (Core Policies SD4/SS and SD4/DS).

The strategic policies deal with the conventional range of topics e.g. landscape, housing, design, historic environment and green infrastructure, though they have clearly been formulated having regard to the requirement 'to consider landscape first' (Para 1.18). We have responded positively to this directive by giving very significant weight in the plan to conservation and the environment.

For development strategy purposes the plan identifies settlements that can accommodate some growth and which have defined settlement boundaries within which the principle of development will be supported. In this plan this includes Ditchling, but not the hamlets of Streat and Westmeston (Policy SD22). Development will not normally be permitted outside settlement boundaries. In the plan, Ditchling has again been allocated a net addition of 15 homes which confirms the allocation in Lewes District Council's JCS.

### **Later development**

Ditchling Parish Council was informed in April 2017 that there had been a successful challenge mounted by Wealden District Council as to the validity of the housing demand forecasts embodied in the SDNPA planning targets<sup>34</sup>. Here is the consequential advice offered to the parish council by the SDNPA:-

*"The Lewes Joint Core Strategy covered that part of the National Park within Lewes District including Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat. It was adopted by the National Park Authority (NPA) on 23/6/16. A legal challenge was subsequently made by Wealden District, which resulted in the quashing of policies SP1 and SP2 of the JCS. Policy SP1 sets the overall development requirements for the district and SP2 sets the housing requirement of individual settlements, with the figure of 15 net additional units in Ditchling. The judicial review centred on the methodology for the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) in regard to measuring traffic movements through Ashdown Forest, which is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).*

*"It has been decided by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the SDNPA not to appeal the decision. It has also been decided by the NPA that the issue should not slow down the preparation of the South Downs Local Plan or any neighbourhood development plans (NDP) being prepared in Lewes District including Ditchling. The NPA will work with our HRA consultants over the next few weeks on further traffic modelling for the HRA. The NPA will do all necessary HRA work for the NDP groups affected by the judgement. It is unlikely that the housing figure for Ditchling will change as result of the further traffic modelling in support of the HRA. The NPA will continue to work in supporting Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat in the progression of their neighbourhood development plan."*<sup>35</sup>

This plan is hence written with an expectation of there being no change in Ditchling's obligations.

<sup>34</sup> [www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2017/351.html](http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2017/351.html)

<sup>35</sup> Amy Tyler Jones, Planning Policy Officer, Neighbourhood Planning, SDNPA 18/04/17, by email





3

# Neighbourhood Development plan land use policies

## 3 Neighbourhood development plan land use policies

### 3.1 Introduction

The plan covers the period up to 2032, and as directed by the SDNPA its policies will be reviewed every five years therein. The plan's policies are the end result of a comprehensive public consultation and study programme, actively assisted by SDNPA officers<sup>36</sup>. Five focus groups took as their starting point the results of a household questionnaire, the LDC/SDNPA Joint Core Strategy provisions<sup>37</sup>, and national policy planning frameworks and guidance<sup>38</sup>. SDNPA continues to issue development guidelines which we will incorporate as they are published: for example 'Roads in the South Downs'<sup>39</sup>, published in conjunction with the constituent highway authorities, has particular relevance for traffic issues in the Beacon villages.

The three parishes have significant differences in development constraints, but of prime importance is the need to conserve, protect and safeguard the unique characteristics of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston. The conservation of this rare and important built and natural environment is rated by residents as the single most important aspect of life in the villages.

The focus groups' full reports, containing first draft policies, were tested at public open day events, where they received an 85%-95% approval rating and were further refined. They were then critically reviewed by SDNPA, LDC and other interested public agencies<sup>40</sup>. All policies were revised in line with the comments as considered appropriate, and they are the ones presented here, rather than the earlier draft proposals contained in the focus group reports.<sup>41</sup> The final results are presented by focus group topic:

- housing
- traffic and transport
- business and tourism
- conservation
- community infrastructure.

Each topic is considered in two parts: land use policies, that are the statutory part of the neighbourhood development plan, and aspirational policies, whose scope falls outside the statutory framework. Land use policies are contained in the main body of the report (Part A), while aspirational and options policies are set out in Part B. They include policies, such as traffic, that are important to the villagers, to be pursued in parallel by an implementation team (BVIT).

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<sup>36</sup> See Consultation Statement for details and timetable

<sup>37</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/joint-working/lewes-district-joint-core-strategy](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/joint-working/lewes-district-joint-core-strategy)

<sup>38</sup> e.g. National Planning Policy Framework, DEFRA National Parks circular and vision

<sup>39</sup> 'Roads in the South Downs. SDNPA, Hampshire, West and East Sussex CCs, Brighton and Hove CC June 2015

<sup>40</sup> See Beacon website for the responses

<sup>41</sup> Focus group reports remain on the website, but for historical reference only

## 3.2 Cross-policy benefits

Each of the land use policies and aspirational policies in this plan directly address issues identified under each of the main policy areas: conservation, housing, traffic and transport, the local economy and business, and community infrastructure. While these stand as valid policies, a number of them are shown to be supportive of other policies in the same subject area or other subject areas. By explaining these connections, the cumulative effect of these policies makes the plan greater than the sum of its parts.

Examples include

- Transport policies which provide additional off street car parking and reduce the volume and speed of through traffic, which in turn also strengthens the ability of the area to deliver a key business policy of attracting more tourists and visitors.
- Traffic calming installed in the vicinity of the new housing developments for the benefit of residents (**TRANS 2**) will be designed as part of the main village traffic calming road plan to be developed in conjunction with ESCC (**TRANS 5**) and hence will also aid our efforts to reduce traffic speed on the main roads.
- Attracting more tourists and visitors will increase demand for more goods and services provided by local retailers, pubs and restaurants thus contributing to another key policy of improving the local economy.

The cumulative impacts of these policies are set out at the end of the policy section and will be material information for the SDNPA and LDC in determining future planning applications and proposals.

### 3.3 Housing

#### *Introduction*

The Housing Focus Group's main task was to identify suitable and acceptable sites for housing in Ditchling, and to draw up policies to guide development in Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston.

The SDNPA is required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>42</sup> to identify 'available, achievable and deliverable sites to deliver housing'. The Government recognises that national parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing, and that new housing will be focused on meeting affordable housing requirements, supporting local employment opportunities and key services.

To meet housing need, the SDNPA has laid down target numbers of dwellings that villages and towns should accommodate over the next 15 years. The area covered by the DSWNDP that is not in the national park is covered by LDC which has made similar allocations<sup>43</sup>. In that report, Ditchling was given a target of a MINIMUM of 15 planned new dwellings, a figure recently confirmed by SDNPA officers. This allocation does not include applications already agreed or what is known as 'windfall' development, i.e. small sites for a small number of homes.

The three parishes have significant differences in development constraints and opportunities. New housing and other development will be largely confined to Ditchling within the settlement boundary or allocated sites, and the two smaller rural parishes will maintain their rural character.

Ditchling's settlement boundary is very tightly drawn around the developed core, leaving little or no room for further development. See [Figure 3.3/1](#). In Streat and Westmeston, only limited building of new homes, including rural exception sites to meet local housing needs; replacement dwellings; building conversions in certain circumstances; and agricultural workers' dwellings, will be allowed. But there should not be an absolute bar on small scale affordable housing for young people and local workers.

In the household questionnaire survey, residents gave clear guidance as to the type of development they wanted. Ditchling has a preponderance of large expensive houses, giving few opportunities for the young, the less affluent, and the elderly, to find homes within their means.

Most residents felt this should be addressed in any developments by instead giving support to starter homes and 1- or 2-bedroom homes for the young and the elderly. One and two-bedroom homes form 75% of the overall affordable housing need for the South Downs National Park and 55.6% of the market housing need (South Downs National Park Strategic Housing Market

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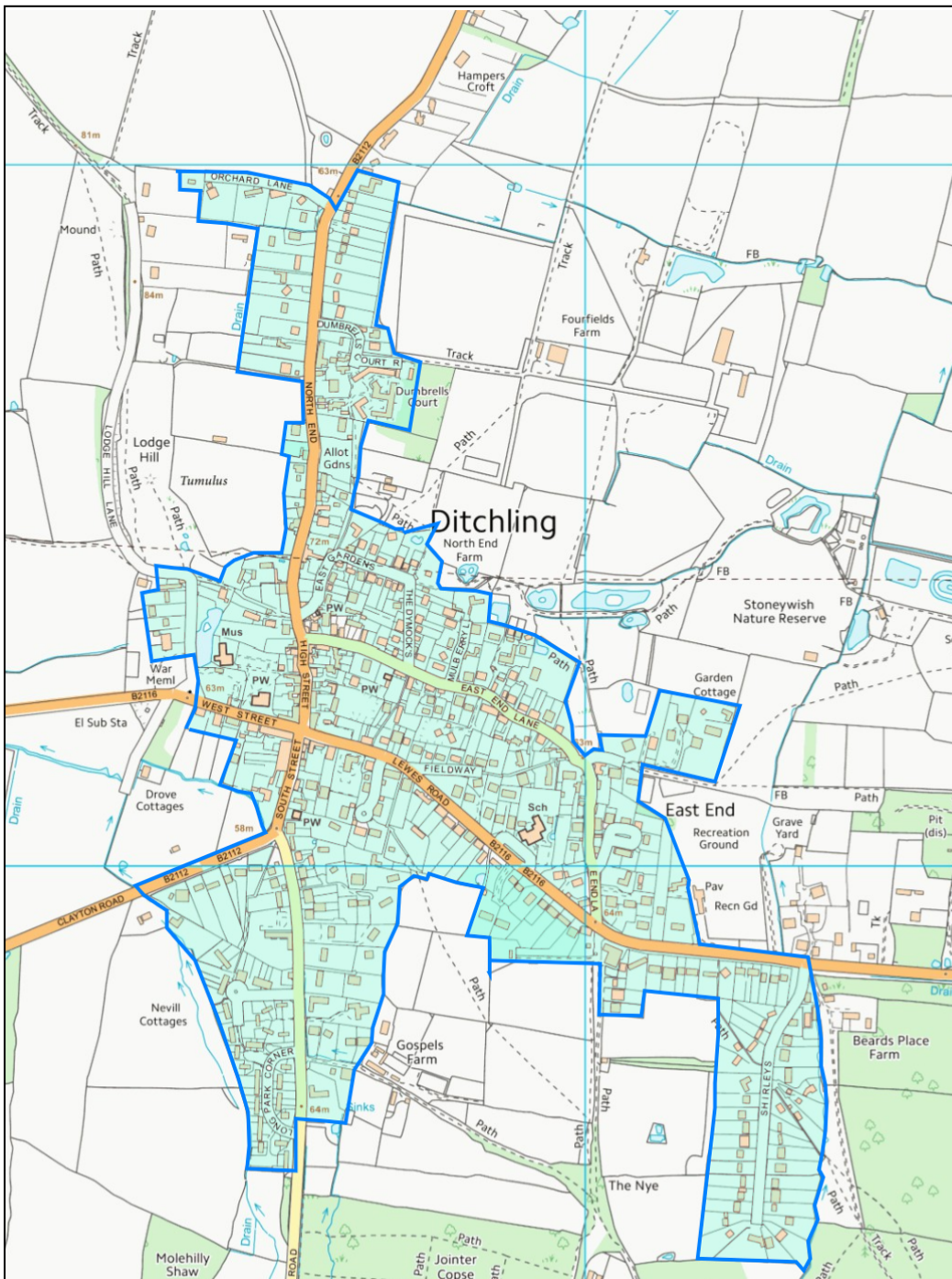
<sup>42</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/60772/116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60772/116950.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/housing\\_choice\\_based\\_lettings\\_allocation\\_policy.pdf](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/housing_choice_based_lettings_allocation_policy.pdf)

Assessment (2015). The two- and three-bedroom family homes that policy HSG 1 seeks to provide as affordable housing form 83.7% of the market housing need. <sup>44</sup>

The focus group also advocated the use where possible of community housing, housing associations and Community Land Trusts (CLTs), with protected trust ownership to prevent houses becoming available on the open market. These principles are reflected in the housing policies set out below.

Figure 3.3/1: Ditchling settlement boundary



<sup>44</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SDNP-SHMA-2015.pdf](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SDNP-SHMA-2015.pdf) (pages 130-132)

### 3.3.1 Housing land use policies

#### **HSG 1: Set out & apply acceptance criteria to housing applications**

Proposals will be supported that provide:

- small one/two bedroom houses and flats for rent/shared ownership or purchase; and/or affordable two/three bed family houses for rent/shared ownership; and/or
- housing units for an ageing population in close proximity to village services and suitable for adapted living.

A proposal that does not meet the criteria set out above will not be considered acceptable. This applies to new build including windfall development, to plot sub-division, and to the conversion of agricultural units.

This is in accordance with relevant studies and evidence of local housing needs.

#### **HSG 2: Site density and layout**

Proposed sites should be built at the maximum density appropriate to the location while retaining the character of the Beacon villages.

Outside gardens and off-street parking should be provided for every unit.

These rules also apply to subdivision of existing buildings and plots, and the conversion of agricultural units.

#### **HSG 3: Limit development in the countryside**

Development in the countryside/outside the settlement boundary (Ditchling) should enhance the distinctive rural landscape and character of the parishes, and be confined to:

- the provision of affordable housing meeting local needs on rural exception sites;
- the replacement or extension of existing dwellings providing the resulting building is not materially larger;
- small-scale development supporting agricultural and rural business;
- facilities for low-key countryside recreation and tourism, particularly those promoting use of the national park;
- re-use of redundant agricultural buildings;
- essential utility infrastructure.

Development will only be permitted in Streat and Westmeston where it preserves their rural setting and historic character or meets the needs of essential utility infrastructure.

Any proposals for further development at the retirement and elderly care complex at St George's Park should be confined to locations within or closely associated with the established developed areas, integrated with its countryside setting and the surrounding managed parkland.

**HSG 4: Critically review proposals to subdivide existing housing stock**

Proposals for subdivision of existing dwellings will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- adequate access, off-street parking and amenity space can be provided;
- the privacy and amenity of adjoining properties is not significantly adversely affected;
- the scheme of conversion proposed is sympathetic in scale and character to the property concerned and its locality; and
- development should avoid adverse impacts to the character, safety or amenity of local road network.

**HSG 5: Minimise loss to housing stock**

There should be no net loss to housing stock due to development. Development through subdivision of land or demolition of existing building(s) (housing/commercial) should only be permitted if it complies with Policies HSG2 and HSG 3.

**HSG 6: Ensure infrastructure capacity**

The capacity of infrastructure services to cope with new developments is limited, whether it be transport (See TRANS 2), telecommunications, and electricity, or water, drainage, flood alleviation and sewerage, or community services such as Ditchling village school. Thus new and improved utility infrastructure will be encouraged and supported in order to meet the identified needs of the community. New residential and commercial infrastructure will be permitted only if sufficient infrastructure capacity is either available or can be provided in time to serve it.

### 3.3.2 Development sites

Possible development sites were identified and considered, broadly following the system used by Lewes District Council and the SDNPA.<sup>45</sup> For details see *Section 3 Selection of development sites* in *Supporting documentation*.

The sites allocated are presented in policies HSG 7A, 7B and 7C. **Table 3.3/2** shows there is a potential of 16 new units, plus 3 that already have planning permission (that the SDNPA has ruled can be added into the total). The target set for Ditchling parish by the SDNPA remains a minimum of 15 units, so there is some leeway if sites do not deliver as anticipated.<sup>46</sup>

**Table 3.3/2:** Proposed development sites

Site	Owner(s)	No of units	Notes
Park Barn Farm/Long Park Corner Policy HSG 7A:	Lewes DC/ Future Community Land Trust/ Simon Sinnatt	9 community housing units plus 3 private units	Outside existing settlement boundary – boundary to be amended. Sinnatt land to be gifted for CLT & community. Flood alleviation works required.
Lewes Road/ Nye Lane Policy HSG 7B:	Paul Bowtell	2 additional units on land with existing permissions	Within existing settlement boundary
	Neville Estates	2 units	Ditto
17 South Street Policy HSG 7C:	Cook Estate Trust	3 units with existing permission	Ditto
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	

Policies HSG 7A, 7B and 7C provide details of the sites (see **Figure 3.3/2**). None of the sites fall within Flood zone 3 as defined by SDNPA (see **Figure 3.3/3** (source: SDNPA)).

<sup>45</sup> [www.lewes.gov.uk/planning/shlaa.asp](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/planning/shlaa.asp)

<sup>46</sup> But see the recent email from SDNPA quashing present allocation calculations due to a High Court ruling in favour of Wealden DC on the impact on the Ashdown Forest (Supporting documentation, Appendix A0)



Figure 3.3/2 Proposed development sites

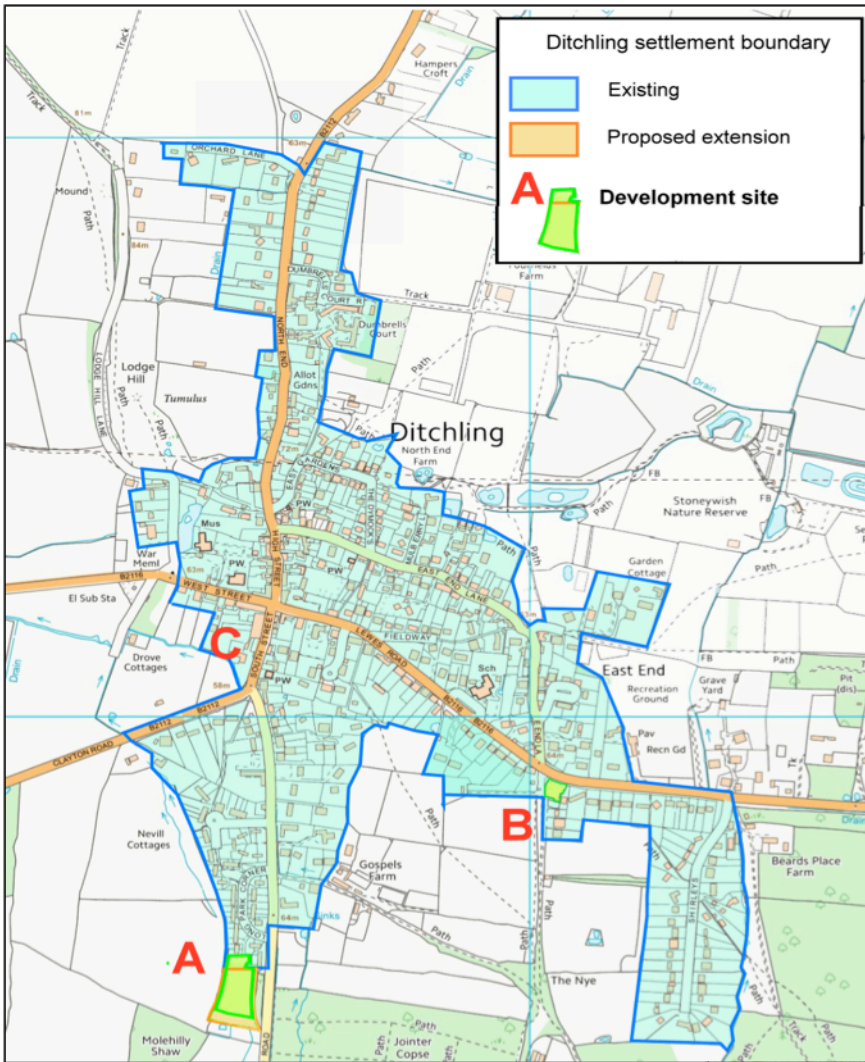
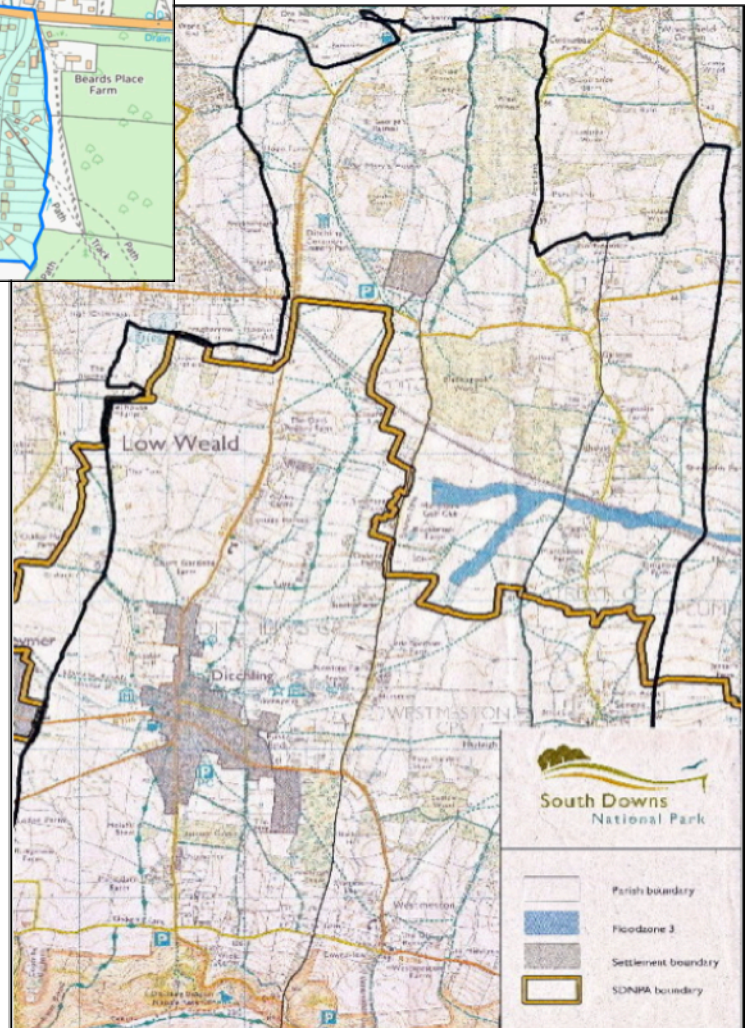


Figure 3.3/3 Flood zone 3



## Park Barn Farm/Long Park Corner

This 12-unit site is on the south edge of the village, outside but abutting the current settlement boundary, and adjoining the south end of Long Park Corner housing estate which contains a mix of housing owned by Lewes DC and privately owned units. The owner of the field that makes up southern part of the site (shown in orange) is prepared to gift the land to the village if he can also build on it three detached houses for his own family. He is also prepared to gift for communal recreational use a further narrow strip that runs behind Long Park Corner that can't be used for building since it is part of the field drainage system and outside the settlement boundary.

The SDNPA was consulted, and it allowed that a considerable effort had been made to find compliant and acceptable sites within the existing boundary, without success, and confirmed that the boundary could be extended to encompass the site.

At the north end of the site is a row of pre-fabricated garages with a tarmac forecourt, owned by Lewes DC and servicing the council's housing on the estate, connected to the estate by a narrow access road. The council's housing officers indicated its intention to demolish the garages, and accepted in principle that the land can be merged with the donated land, subject to the same caveats proposed for the rest of the development. The site block plan is shown in [Figure 3.3/4](#).

### **HSG 7A:**

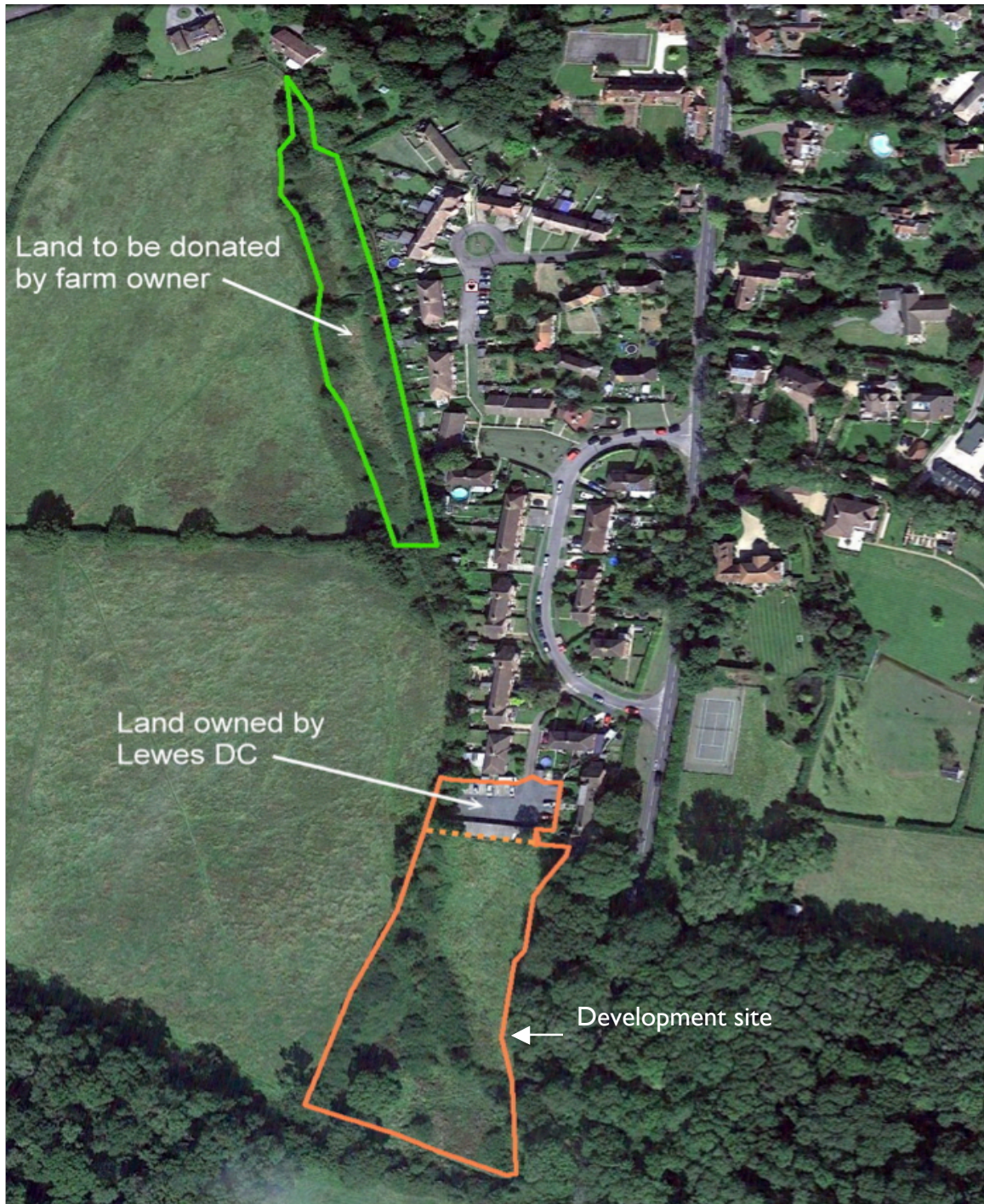
### **Park Barn Farm/Long Park Corner**

*Planning permission will be granted for the land identified in Figure 3.3/3 for 12 residential units provided that the proposals conform to the development framework given below, and meets the requirements set out in other appropriate policies of the development plan.<sup>47</sup>*

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<sup>47</sup> The 'development plan' incorporates the neighbourhood plan and adopted policies of the JCS or SDNPA Local Plan – whichever is relevant at the time of application

**Figure 3.3/4** Park Barn Farm housing site block plan



## PARK BARN FARM DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

### Overall layout and density

A composite indicative layout shown in Appendix A was drawn up on the site plan of 0.9ha to show how a total of 12 units might be accommodated within the site curtilage. This gives a housing density of about 13.4 units/ha. In addition, a further tract of land to the south may need to be allocated to alleviate possible flooding potential (see indicative layout in Supporting Document).

### Community ownership

A Community Land Trust to be established and managed by Ditchling parish council, possibly together with Lewes District Council (LDC), will be established to build and own the 9 units dedicated to village ownership. This will ensure their public ownership in perpetuity.

### Drainage

The land is shown as having a moderate flooding risk, although a survey of the existing drainage ditches showed that they are all clogged with vegetation and not properly maintained. As well as ditch refurbishment maintenance, it is proposed that a balancing pond system is designed to alleviate this. It is expected that this work and the continuing maintenance will be borne by the land owner as part of his current responsibilities.

In the area owned by LDC, the removal of old tarmac surfacing and replacement of hard-standing areas with more modern permeable surfacing will also improve drainage.

One of the existing ditches cuts diagonally across the development site. It is proposed that it is diverted as part of the site preparation and drainage works.

### Conservation

The site is bounded on its eastern edge by 'valuable woodland' as defined by SDNPA. A 10m cordon sanitaire will be required between it and the development, under the segregation rule imposed by the planning authority.

Extensive tree and hedge screening will be required to mitigate the visual intrusion of the site from the scarp ridge. Existing foot paths and tree groups on and around the site will be protected.

### Traffic, access and parking

It is proposed that the existing access road junction be improved with the addition of a traffic island, supplemented by traffic calming road ramps. Surface treatment on the Beacon Road itself will be carried out as part of the village-wide traffic calming scheme (see policy TRANS 2). The cost of this locally will be borne by the development;

LDC officers have accepted the need to widen the existing narrow access road by provisionally allocating a narrow strip of garden from one of their units. Their plans will be fully consulted on.

In the layout, every new house is allocated a dedicated parking space, with a provision for an additional 18 places for present residents.

### Recreation space

It is proposed that the Sinnatt-donated additional land strip outlined in green be allocated for this purpose.

## Lewes Road/Nye Lane

The larger part of this site is the Ditchling garage site. The owner has already been granted planning permission for 3 detached houses, but acceded to a request to consider increasing the number of units by 2, by incorporating smaller terraced houses instead.

Neville Estates owns the whole of Nye Lane to the west of the garage site plus a plot to the west of the lane, an area that also extends into the highway itself. They have proposed a development of 2 small studio style 1 bed live/work units. These have been included on the site plan, but because of the possible advantages to both owners, it has been suggested to them they should work closely together to propose an architecturally similar style of dwellings, thus presenting a higher quality of dwelling, open space and consistency of aspect. The site block plan [Figure 3.3/5](#) shows the general layout.

### **HSG 7B:**

### **Lewes Road/Nye Lane**

*Planning permission will be granted for an additional 4 residential units on the land identified in Figure 3.3/4 provided that the proposals conform to the development framework given below, and meets the requirements set out in other appropriate policies of the development plan.<sup>48</sup>*

**Figure 3.3/5:** Lewes Road/Nye Lane housing site block plan



<sup>48</sup> The 'development plan' incorporates the neighbourhood plan and adopted policies of the JCS or SDNPA Local Plan – whichever is relevant at the time of application

## LEWES ROAD/NYE LANE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

### Overall layout and density

An indicative layout is shown in Appendix A showing how the owners of these two sites could produce a viable composite plan for the complete site, producing 4 houses in addition to the 3 already granted. The total area of the site is 0.21 ha.: this includes the Neville Estates land, Nye Lane, between the two land parcels and the garage site. This gives a housing density of about 32 units/ha.

### Drainage

Nye Lane acts as a run-off stream from the high downs, fed from a balancing pond further up the lane to the south, and in times of extreme weather, from an old marl pit north of Underhill Lane. The lower area is therefore subject to flooding in winter, and close attention must be given to drainage design for the new development.

### Traffic, access and parking

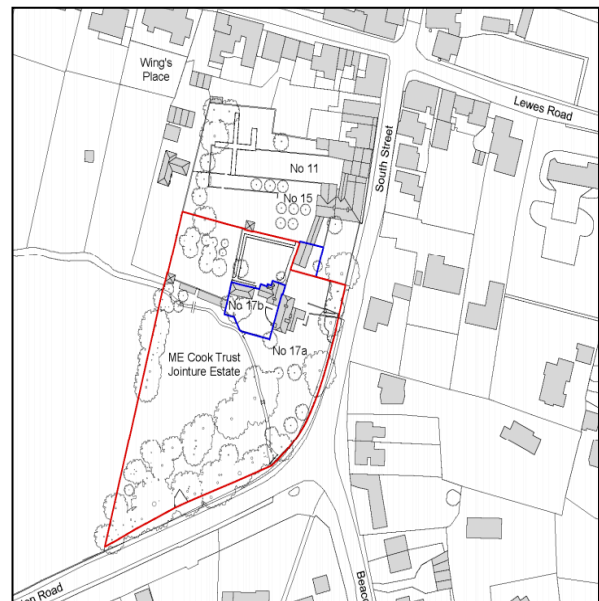
The existing Nye Lane is likely to be re-aligned by its owners with the aim of achieving a more effective layout of the housing units either side. It is also proposed that the existing access road junction be improved with the addition of a traffic island, supplemented by traffic calming road ramps. Surface treatment on the Lewes Road itself will be carried out as part of the village-wide traffic calming scheme (see policy TRANS 2). The cost of this locally will be borne by the development.

Every unit will have a dedicated parking bay.

### Jointure, 17 South Street

This site has already been approved and building/ refurbishment work started. It consists of an existing dwelling with three small units inserted into the site. However, the SDNPA has accepted that its 3 small units may be included in the total allocated in the plan, because of the date on which permission was granted. It is included here to ensure policy support is included in the Neighbourhood Plan in case the extant permission expires or an alternative scheme is proposed. The site block plan, [Figure 3.3/6](#), is extracted from the planning application.

**Figure 3.3/6:** South Street block plan



**HSG 7C:**

**Jointure, 17 South Street**

Planning permission is supported for the land identified in Figure 3.3/5 for 3 residential units provided that the proposals meet the requirements set out in appropriate policies of the development plan.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The 'development plan' incorporates the neighbourhood plan and adopted policies of the JCS or SDNPA Local Plan – whichever is relevant at the time of application

## 3.4 Transport

### *Introduction*

There is a clearly held sense among the local population of the historical importance of the Beacon villages, and residents are vociferous and united in their defence of the quality of the environment and the preservation of the ancient infrastructure<sup>50</sup>.

Because of its houses, fabric, ancient byways and community history, this locale is recognised as one of the most environmentally sensitive and historically important areas of Sussex, if not the south east; virtually unique, and in need of protection. But the community has come under increasing pressure as road traffic has significantly increased along routes that were not designed to take modern vehicles, with through traffic that has no reason to be in the villages, and where speed limits are routinely ignored. Pedestrians and ancient houses alike suffer from this unwanted and unnecessary intrusion. Responses from the residents' questionnaire record that nearly 75% of the population say that traffic has either a huge or significant impact on their quality of life, while 94% support the need for traffic calming<sup>51</sup>.

Conversely, the community actively welcomes visitors and tourists who wish to come here and stop for either short or extended stays to enjoy the villages and our environment, increasingly drawn here because of the added attraction of being in the national park. Visitors also bring much welcome economic benefits for the village businesses and cultural facilities.

It is for all these reasons that the issue of traffic, and its intrusion into the local environment, is of prime importance to the local community. While it is understood that traffic and transport policies *per se* fall outside the remit of our neighbourhood plan, the topic remains the most burning issue, and one that the community sees as a top priority to be addressed.

The focus group report presented an analysis on the nature of the three parishes, followed by an update on the transport policies and evaluation processes of East Sussex CC (ESCC), and the impact of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). Since the publication of that work, ESCC has submitted that Ditchling can no longer rely on its Local Area Transport Strategy (LATS)<sup>52 53</sup> to solve the village's traffic problems, as this has been superseded by ESCC policy document TP3<sup>54</sup>. Unfortunately, that makes no reference to our local traffic issues, which effectively leaves the Beacon villages without a viable set of local transport solutions. However, ESCC is also a contributor to SDNPA's recent publication 'Roads in the South Downs'<sup>55</sup>, that offers a fresh perspective on protecting communities from the effects of traffic:

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<sup>50</sup> For background, see the focus group report at [http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/APP\\_B\\_Traffic\\_group.pdf](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/APP_B_Traffic_group.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Beacon villages household questionnaire, Beacon villages website, August 2014

<sup>52</sup> Ditchling Local Area Transport Strategy, East Sussex County Council, September 2009

<sup>53</sup> ESCC has advised that LATS may be referred to for background information but not as a policy document.

<sup>54</sup> <https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/localtransportplan/ltp3/downloadltp3>

<sup>55</sup> Roads in the South Downs. SDNPA, Hampshire, West and East Sussex CCs, Brighton and Hove CC June 2015



*'The guide aims to help avoid the tendency for highways to suburbanise and standardise the landscape. To this end an approach based on careful analysis of appropriate design speeds for traffic combines with an emphasis on distinctive place-making, village entrances and an integration of roads and treescapes with their surrounding buildings, features and landscape elements. Building on a growing number of case studies the guide is intended to inform and inspire officers, councillors, agencies and residents alike to share a broad vision for the long-term care and conservation of a unique and valuable national asset.'*

*p4 'Roads in the South Downs' SDNPA, June 2015*

Given the sensitive nature of our medieval housing, surrounding environs and rural roads, the Beacon parishes welcome this publication. We thus propose that it be used as a basis for the development of joint working as offered by ESCC in its submission to the draft version of this Plan<sup>56</sup>. ESCC has been at pains to point out that it has no funds available for our proposals, but Ditchling Parish Council is prepared to consider all other financing options in its drive for a solution to the village's traffic problems (see policy **TRANS 3**).

It is important to stress that the different elements of the transport proposals are interdependent. Thus it is essential to coordinate the installation of speed restrictions in the buffer zones and traffic gateways in the outlying parts of the three parishes (**TRANS 5** and **6**) with the improved pedestrian-friendly High Street and protection of Ditchling village centre (**TRANS 7**). Without this coordination, partial implementation risks diverting traffic away from Ditchling village centre onto other roads unsuitable for additional traffic such as Spatham Lane and Streat Lane, or being less effective in protecting both the centre and the periphery. And any environmental improvements proposed to Ditchling High Street will only succeed if traffic has already been slowed on the outskirts.

Other policies in this plan also affect the traffic situation. For example, housing developments are proposed on all four approaches to the centre of Ditchling (see Housing section, policy HSG8). It is proposed that wherever such schemes connect to the highway, associated traffic calming be installed, paid for by the developer, thus also contributing to traffic calming on the main road. This is set out in special housing access layout policy **TRANS 2**.

With the exception of the off street car parking proposal **TRANS 1** and **TRANS 2** above, traffic policies do not come under the category of land use but under the jurisdiction of the strategic highway authority, ESCC. They are hence categorised as aspirational and located in Part B of this submission.

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<sup>56</sup> See ESCC submission: [http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/response\\_review\\_complete.pdf](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/response_review_complete.pdf)

### 3.4.1 Transport land use policies

#### Parking

Ditchling Parish Council has developed a proposal to introduce a car park to the west of the war memorial in Keymer Road on the western fringe of the village, but immediately accessible by foot on existing pathways. See **Figure 3.4/1**. The parish council has now applied for planning permission. This proposal was fully supported by the traffic focus group as it provides extra parking space for a number of establishments on the west side of the village, including the church, the museum and the public house, and it relieves pressure on Lodge Hill Lane, badly affected by fly parking.

**Figure 3.4/1:** Proposed car park, Ditchling village



Proposed car park location

Because of its environmentally sensitive location, the car park design should incorporate hedge/tree screening, 'Grasscrete' or similar surfacing and limited street signing but no lighting, ticketing machinery or warden, as entry will be unrestricted and free to all.

The council's implementation team will continue to monitor parking usage in the village centre and consider the need for further provisions over the period of the plan (see Section 5).

#### **TRANS 1**

#### **Off-street car parking**

*The provision of a new off-street car park on Keymer Road is supported. The design should be location-appropriate, with facilities for all classes of traffic, including foot traffic, horse boxes and provision of secure cycle racks. Detailed design of visibility splays into the site entrance will also take account of local rural character, including gates, fencing, bollards and signage.*

## Traffic calming

Ditchling has to find a minimum of 15 new housing units as its contribution to the local housing need. Section 3.3 sets out how this will be achieved, together with the standards expected. One key issue raised by residents of adjacent dwellings is the impact that new housing has on traffic exiting onto the road network. This supports policy **HSG 6** (ensure infrastructure capacity). The schemes will be thus be designed in concert with, and as part of, the calming proposals on all traffic routes through the parishes. Schemes locally will typically include a mini island at the T-junction on the main road, with speed tables (see **Figure 3.4/2**) paved with brick or cobblestones and positioned on the main carriageway either side of the junction. This policy applies to all three currently proposed sites (see **Figure 3.3/2**) and any other proposals during the life of the plan.

**Figure 3.4/2:** Speed table



### **TRANS 2 Carry out traffic calming on highways adjacent to housing developments**

*Applications for housing development must include traffic calming proposals on the adjacent main road as set out in the aspirational transport policies of this plan and approved by ESCC.*

## 3.5 Business and tourism

### Introduction

The business communities of Ditchling and Westmeaston naturally look to their councils to provide positive leadership in lobbying for better local services that will enable businesses to thrive, and to generate more economic activity, tourism and employment. While LDC and the SDNPA classify Ditchling village as a Local Centre where existing retail units will be safeguarded for retail use, they regard it as being too small to be given any material recognition<sup>57</sup>. At the local level, Ditchling Parish Council (DPC) itself was criticised in the household survey<sup>58</sup> for not providing a positive lead. The local business community has partly taken matters into its own hands by forming the 'Visit Ditchling' consortium<sup>59</sup> (see [Figure 3.5](#)). This is enthusiastically supported by DPC. Specific issues being tackled by the consortium include tourism, the lack of fast broadband, the threat to survival of the remaining shops in the High Street, and the provision of better public transport links. In this respect, the development of Ditchling as a 'gateway' attraction for visitors to the national park, that is accessible through the provision of a range of transport choices, will bring benefits for the year-round economic viability of shops and services for the use of current and future residents and visitors.

The farming sector is under increasing pressure to diversify into more profitable activities to maintain a livelihood, but concern has been expressed about the appropriateness of some developments which may be out of scale with the surrounding environment. See also [CONS 2](#).

### 3.5.1 Business and tourism land use policies

#### **BIZ 1:**

#### **Retention of local shops**

*Local services and businesses that support the local community and contribute to its economy must be retained and supported. Beacon parishes will thus seek support and guidance from the SDNPA to introduce a planning development framework that actively encourages the retention of local shops, and deter them from becoming non-retail or residential units.*

<sup>57</sup> Unless there is robust evidence comprising a marketing campaign of at least 12 months which demonstrates there is no market demand for retail use of the premises (ref: Lewes JCS policy CP6, and the emergent SDNPA local plan policy SD29).

<sup>58</sup> [www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/Questionnaire\\_vision\\_comments.pdf](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/Questionnaire_vision_comments.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> [www.visitditchling.co.uk](http://www.visitditchling.co.uk)

**BIZ 2: Support appropriate rural enterprise diversification**

The farming sector is under increasing pressure to diversify into more profitable activities to maintain a livelihood; thus the parish councils support appropriate and legitimate expansion, development and diversification of local rural enterprises. Farmers’ efforts will be supported by the planning authorities, and development proposals for farm diversification which are in line with national sustainability policies for rural development, and are of an appropriate scale and in an appropriate location, will be supported. Existing farm buildings should be re-used wherever possible and in accordance with SDNPA development management policy SD47, which permits diversification where it is ancillary to farming operations.

Applications that clearly take advantage of rural exception rules to build inappropriate additional dwellings or unconnected industrial activities in rural areas will not be supported. See also policy HSG 3 (Limit development in the countryside) which clearly sets out the intended application of the rural exception rules as laid down by the NPPF.

Figure 3.5: The ‘Visit Ditchling’ website



## 3.6 Conservation and environment

### Introduction

It has already been noted that Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston are important ancient weald and downland communities, set in the backdrop of the South Downs and located in one of the most beautiful and unspoilt rural parts of East Sussex. As judged by the responses to the household survey, and during every phase of the extensive public consultation process<sup>60</sup>, the conservation of this rare and important built and natural environment rated as the single most important aspect of life in the villages. The locality is also rated as being particularly important and in need of conservation both by the SDNPA, LDC and the various other conservation bodies who were contacted during the formal consultation process.

In responding to this pre-eminent community demand to protect our rare environment, the conservation focus group developed the following plan policies designed to:

- protect the setting, character and identity of the Beacon parishes, the historic environment, heritage assets and archaeology;
- conserve and enhance the rural countryside character, the landscape and scenic beauty of the Beacon parishes; maintain distinctive views and vistas, preserve important open countryside gaps and the dark skies found in the area;
- conserve and enhance the area's biodiversity and wildlife networks;
- protect and enhance green infrastructure, valued local green spaces, and related access networks; and
- promote sustainable development and a high quality of design sympathetic to the character of the environment and the locality.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The SDNPA was consulted at an early stage of this project to determine whether an SEA was required for the NDP. They confirmed it was not<sup>61</sup>, and that confirmation has since been re-confirmed at joint project meetings<sup>62</sup>. They did however advise that we must comply with the basic conditions of the provisions of sustainable development as set out in para 72 of the NPPG:-

*“This basic condition is consistent with the planning principle that all plan-making and decision-taking should help to achieve sustainable development. A qualifying body must demonstrate how its plan or Order will contribute to improvements in environmental, economic and social conditions or that consideration has been given to how any potential adverse effects arising from the proposals may be prevented, reduced or offset (referred to as mitigation measures)”.*

Chapter 4 of this plan addresses our response and resultant policies.

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<sup>60</sup> See [www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/household survey and companion volume on community involvement](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/household_survey_and_companion_volume_on_community_involvement)

<sup>61</sup> See SDNPA letter dated 5/08/14 (C&E report).

<sup>62</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf), and in particular, Figure 2 on page 13. Of that paper provides helpful confirmatory guidance in this respect

### **3.6.1 Conservation land use policies**

Conservation policies are presented under six topic areas, as endorsed by SDNPA officers:

- (1) general development and design;
- (2) historic and built environment;
- (3) landscape;
- (4) biodiversity;
- (5) green spaces and green infrastructure; and
- (6) links to the countryside.

#### *(1) General development and design*

While this neighbourhood development plan places prime importance on ensuring protection of the natural environment, scenic beauty, distinct rural character and historic features of the parishes, the plan must also ensure that appropriate development needs are met with a presumption in favour of sustainable development, as required by the NPPG.

The general development and design policies below provide a framework within which any new development proposals for the parishes (including housing policies) can be delivered in a way that also fulfils landscape and conservation objectives that are important to the local community. **CONS 1** and **HSG 3** respond to this by placing sensible limits on the levels of approved development, while **CONS 2** sets development standards:

#### **CONS 1: Permit development within established boundaries**

*New development in accordance with the NDP will be permitted on small-scale and infill sites within the settlement boundary of Ditchling village, particularly where this:*

- *meets identified housing requirements;*
- *supports its role as a service centre for the Plan area; and*
- *provides facilities supporting its role as a gateway to the national park.*

*Development within the established boundaries of the two industrial estates adjoining Ditchling Common will generally be supported provided this does not entail a material increase in the scale of existing development, and can be accommodated without adversely affecting its countryside setting, the adjoining country park and the nearby SSSI.*

*Any proposals for further development at the retirement and elderly care complex at St George's Park should be confined to locations within or closely associated with the established developed areas, and integrated with its countryside setting and the surrounding managed parkland.*

## **CONS 2**

### ***Set standards for design of new development***

*New development, extensions, alterations and replacements should be to a high standard of design in harmony with the distinctive character of the area, where:*

- careful consideration has been given to the height (not normally exceeding two storeys), massing, scale, layout, appearance and landscaping of proposals.*
- natural and local landscape features are protected and sensitively incorporated; planting schemes should incorporate appropriate native species avoiding invasive non-native planting;*
- it incorporates measures to protect and enhance wildlife;*
- it is sympathetic to the character of established conservation areas and heritage assets;*
- it is accessible and links with established rights of way, and enhances access to the countryside;*
- it does not adversely intrude into important views (see **CONS 7**);*
- it incorporates sustainable urban drainage principles and adequate flood protection and mitigation measures;*
- it adopts sustainable construction methods and measures to enhance energy efficiency<sup>63</sup>;*
- it does not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution.*

*Development which reflects local building styles and detailing, and which uses traditional materials such as brick, tile and flint, will be given particular encouragement, especially within and adjoining conservation areas. Proposals involving the removal, replacement or unsympathetic alteration of old flint or brick and flint walls will not be supported.*

*Modern design of high quality and the use of contemporary materials, will also be supported where this complements and enhances the character and context of adjoining development and surrounding areas.*

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<sup>63</sup> See submission from HKD Transitions [www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/response\\_review\\_complete.pdf](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/response_review_complete.pdf)



## *(2) Historic and built environment*

The three parishes have a highly valued historic environment of designated and non-designated heritage areas, buildings, monuments, historic parks and important archaeological remains<sup>64</sup>. These provide an important historic record of the area, and contribute to a highly attractive environment for residents and visitors. The household survey recorded a strong desire for the historic environment and character of the parishes to be conserved, so while national policy provides a foundation for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, policies **CONS 3** to **CONS 8** below provide guidance for local application:

### **CONS 3:**

#### **Protect heritage assets**

*Proposals for development will be required to preserve designated heritage features, including the four conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, and that part of Stanmer Park located within the neighbourhood development plan area. Proposals should also minimise the adverse impact on non-designated heritage assets such as locally listed buildings.<sup>65</sup> Adverse effects will be resisted unless there is a compelling justification.*

### **CONS 4:**

#### **Protect assets of archaeological importance**

*Planning applications on sites which include heritage assets of archaeological importance, particularly those within archaeological notification areas <sup>66</sup>should provide sufficient information to enable the effect on archaeological conditions to be assessed.*

### **CONS 5:**

#### **Protect character of conservation areas**

*Development proposals will be expected to make a positive contribution to the local character of each of the designated conservation areas and have regard to the provisions of any adopted conservation area appraisal. Within Ditchling village CA, proposals should also take into account the Ditchling HCA<sup>67</sup>. Support will be given to proposals that sensitively increase density and do not adversely impact on key features including:*

- *locally listed, and unlisted but important, dwellings and community buildings;*
- *historic shop fronts, street surfaces, lighting, distinctive local street furniture and walls;*
- *important views, open spaces and vegetation.*

### **CONS 6:**

#### **Extend conservation areas**

*The parish councils will work with the SDNPA to:*

- *extend the conservation area proposed in Ditchling's conservation area character appraisal;*
- *complete the conservation area appraisal for Westmeston, including further assessment of extensions proposed in the draft document;*
- *prepare and adopt a conservation area appraisal for Streat.*

<sup>64</sup> The plan's conservation technical document (see website) details the parishes' historic environment. An overview of the Ditchling area is contained within a Sussex HLC study, a partnership between East and West county councils and Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority. ([http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/sussex\\_hlc\\_2014/](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/sussex_hlc_2014/))

<sup>65</sup> A locally listed heritage asset is defined as a non-designated heritage asset under the terms of the NPPF.

<sup>66</sup> Such as the Roman Greensand Way which passes through Ditchling and Streat; a regular source of important finds.

<sup>67</sup> Historic Character Assessment [www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan\\_Ditchling\\_EUS\\_reportpg1to17.pdf](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan_Ditchling_EUS_reportpg1to17.pdf)

### (3) Landscape

This topic covers the following three themes:

- conservation of landscape character and key views;
- protection of the strategic rural gap;
- preservation of dark skies.

#### Conservation of landscape character and key views

The Beacon parishes are characterised by rural, high-quality and dramatic landscapes within SDNP, and more subtle, though still attractive landscapes in the flatter weald area to the north of the park boundary. National government guidance emphasises that when preparing plans, the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognised, and that distinctive landscapes should be protected and enhanced (with the highest status of protection being given to the landscape and scenic beauty in national parks). This approach is also reflected in the adopted and emerging policies within local plans.

The character and significance of the Beacon parishes' landscapes is described in a series of area landscape assessments carried out by ESCC, LDC and the SDNPA, (as already referenced) helping to reveal the essential components of areas of landscape character and scenic beauty. A more localised understanding of the specific features of the landscapes in the parishes and the key views available in the area has also been set out in the statement of local landscape character<sup>68</sup> prepared by the NDP conservation focus group. Key views and local landscape character areas and features taken from that technical report are shown in [Figures 3.6/1](#) and [3.6/2](#).

These documents and figures contribute to a much clearer understanding of local landscape qualities and sensitivities, and it is important that these are fully taken into account as part of the process of determining planning applications. Policy [CONS 7 and 8](#) reflect the need to achieve this.

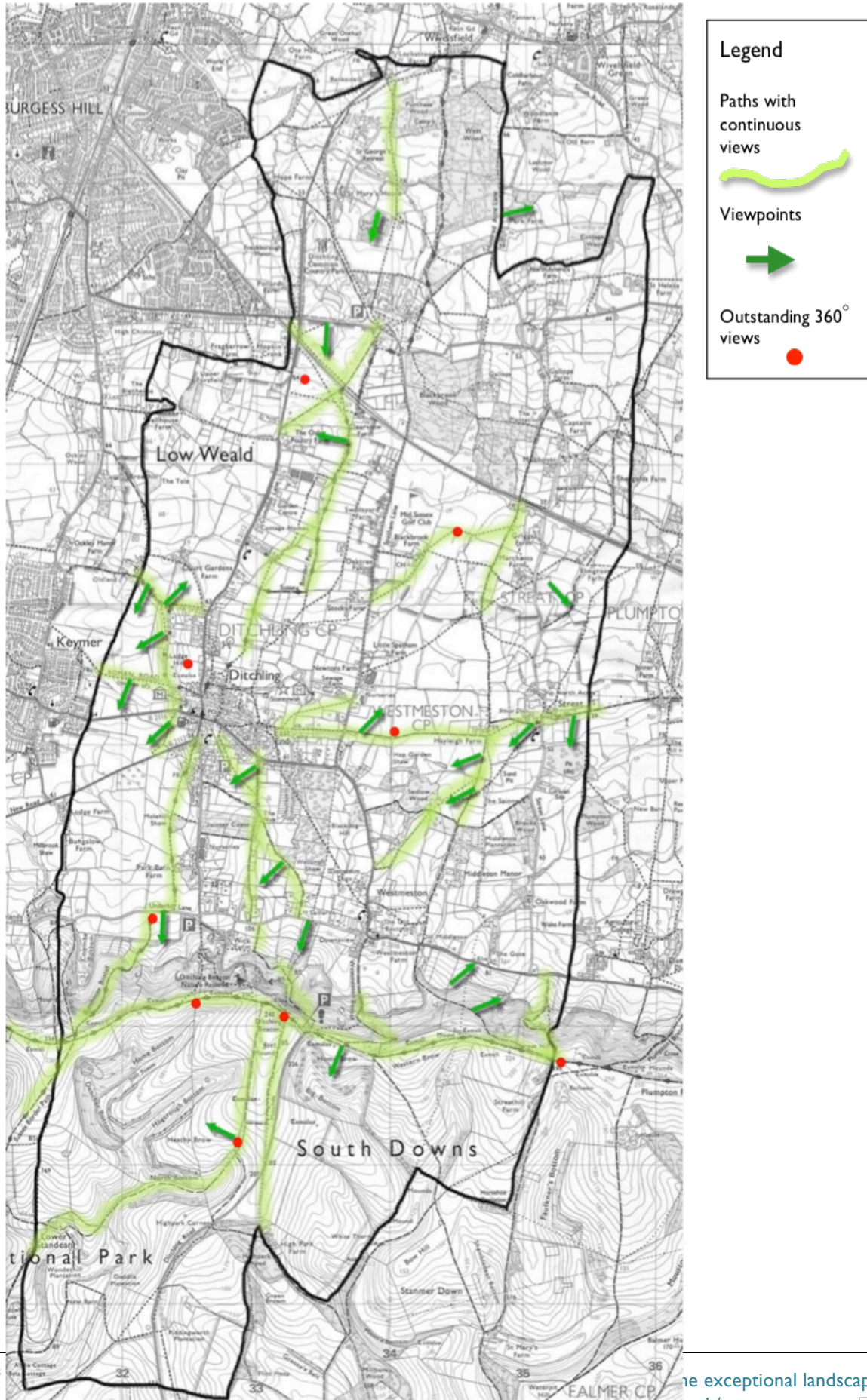
#### **CONS 7:**

#### **Conserve landscape and important views**

*The distinctive landscapes, views and scenic beauty of the neighbourhood development plan area will be conserved and enhanced, with priority given to landscapes within the national park. Proposals for development will only be permitted where they:*

- *respond appropriately to relevant published landscape character assessments, including the statement of local landscape character for the neighbourhood development plan area;*
- *do not intrude adversely into key views from publically accessible locations and particularly those shown on the accompanying map; and*
- *preserve the landscape setting of the settlements of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston.*

Figure 3.6/1: Key views within the three parishes



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the exceptional landscapes and views contained within the three parishes. See again <http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/>

Figure 3.6/2: Local landscape features

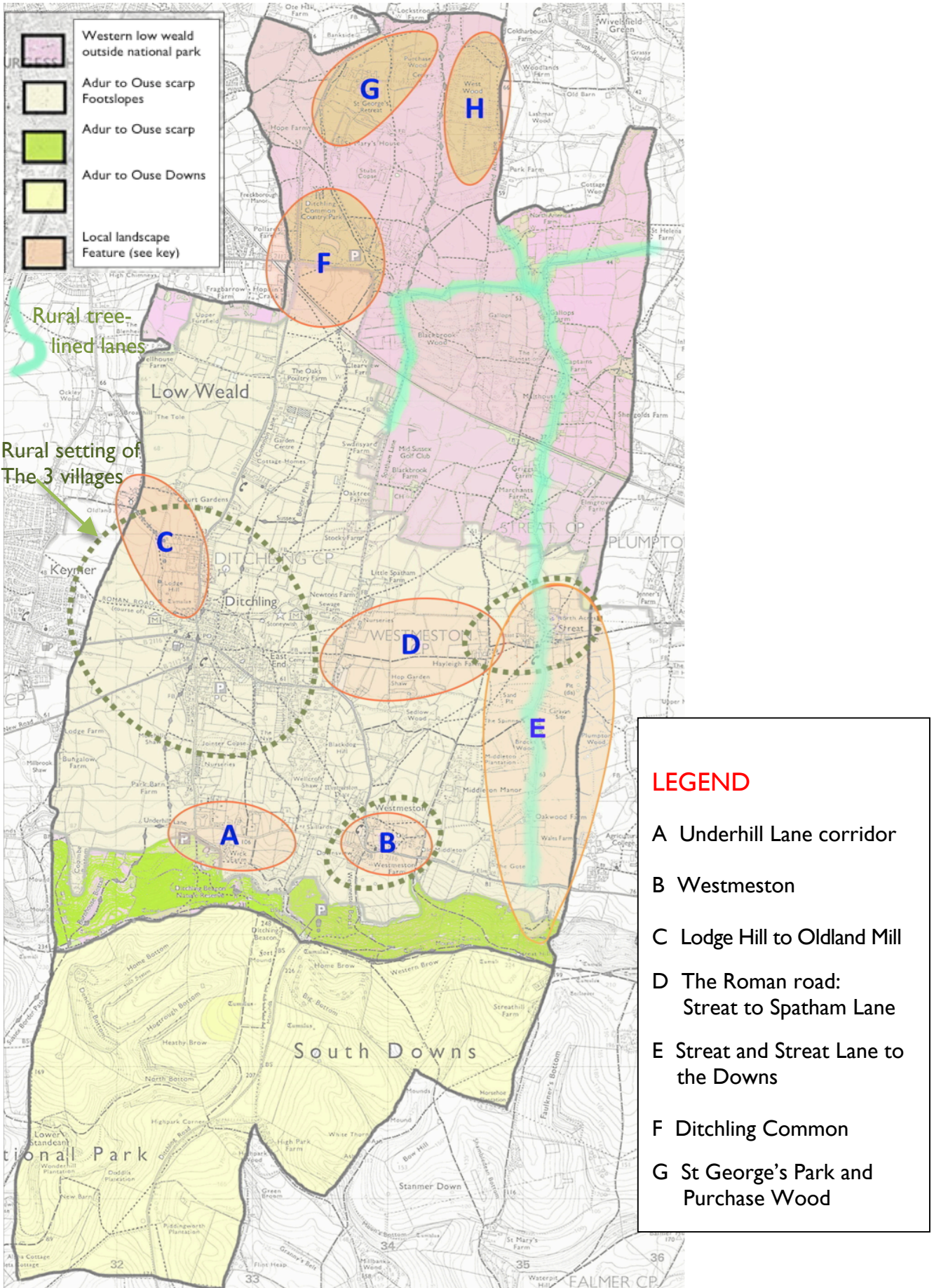
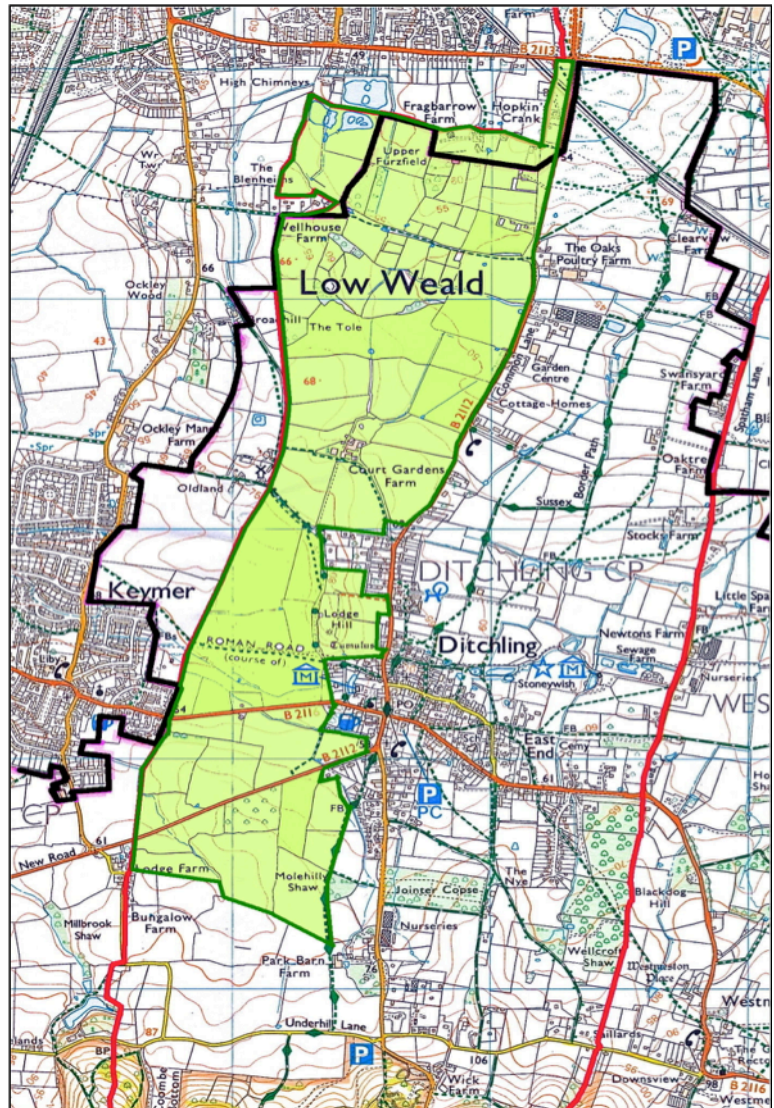


Figure 3.6/3: Strategic gap between Ditchling & Keymer

### Protection of the strategic rural gap

The household survey gave strong support from the local community to protect the character and identity of Ditchling as an historic, traditional village in a countryside setting of high landscape quality within the national park. More particularly, the survey expressed a clear desire to preserve the integrity and open character of the narrow area of land which presently separates Ditchling from the nearby towns of Keymer/Hassocks to the west, and Burgess Hill to the north.

See Figure 3.6/3.



One of the core principles of government planning policy is that the different roles and character of different areas should be taken into account.<sup>69</sup> The area between Ditchling and the adjoining towns performs a variety of roles in support of this principle:-

- it is an attractive rural area of open countryside mostly under agricultural land use, that has local landscape value;
- it plays a critical role in providing visual and physical separation between Ditchling and the adjacent settlements of Keymer/Hassocks and Burgess Hill, and is thus essential in maintaining the distinct physical and visual identity of the village of Ditchling in relation to neighbouring settlements;
- it contributes to the distinct rural setting of Ditchling as described within the Statement of Local Landscape Character, prepared to inform the preparation of the NDP<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>69</sup> NPPF para 17

<sup>70</sup> See the Statement of Local Landscape Character <http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk>

The continued outward growth of Keymer/Hassocks and Burgess Hill and the pressure to locate substantial housing requirements up to the Ditchling Parish boundary, has heightened the concern of local residents that this gap could become eroded or lose its open, rural character which in turn would reduce its role as a physical and visual separation between Ditchling and adjacent settlements. Protecting the rural gap to the west and north of Ditchling is also linked to other important objectives such as protecting the setting, historic character and identity of the village. The draft South Downs National Park Local Plan<sup>71</sup> supports the conservation and enhancement of the open and undeveloped nature of existing gaps between settlements. A locally specific policy is thus included below in order to prevent coalescence between Ditchling and the larger towns of Keymer/Hassocks and Burgess Hill and protect the local gap which separates them<sup>72</sup>.

#### **CONS 8:**

#### ***Protect important gaps between settlements***

*Proposals for new development in the gap separating Ditchling and Hassocks/Keymer and Burgess Hill, either individually or cumulatively, will only be supported where they conserve and where possible enhance the open landscape character of the gap, and do not reduce the physical gap between settlements. This will be informed by the SDNPA landscape character assessment.<sup>73</sup>*

### **Preservation of dark night skies**

The tranquillity of the rural areas of the Beacon parishes is one of their defining characteristics and an important element of this is the absence or relative absence of light pollution. This is particularly the case for the rural downland areas and the more easterly parishes of Westmeston and Streat. The absence of lighting on rural roads and lanes contributes to this, as does the absence of street lighting in Ditchling.

The intention of the policy below is to preserve the dark night skies within the three parishes. To achieve this, it will be particularly important to avoid the introduction of lighting in exposed, highly visible locations within the landscape including floodlighting associated with recreational activities such as sports pitches, tennis courts, swimming pools or golf courses. This would be especially intrusive, particularly in the sensitive landscapes within the South Downs National Park<sup>74</sup> and in those more easterly parishes where dark skies are most notable.

#### **CONS 9**

#### ***Preserve dark night skies***

*To preserve dark night skies, proposals for development entailing the provision of external lighting, including lighting of public thoroughfares, will be required to demonstrate there are no adverse impacts on the night time environment in accordance with JCS policy on dark night skies. Proposals for external lighting in prominent locations likely to be visible from the surrounding landscape and viewpoints will not be supported. Subject to this, support will be given to proposals within Ditchling village for lighting that enhances safety and security on public footways, while proposals in Streat and Westmeston should preserve their presently largely unlit night-time environment.*

<sup>71</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Local\\_Plan\\_Master\\_240815\\_Whole\\_Document.pdf](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Local_Plan_Master_240815_Whole_Document.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> See the supporting Statement of Local Landscape Character [www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk)

<sup>73</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-advice/landscape](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-advice/landscape)

<sup>74</sup> See JCS Dark night skies policy 3: SDNPA Joint Core Strategy 2014,

(4) Biodiversity

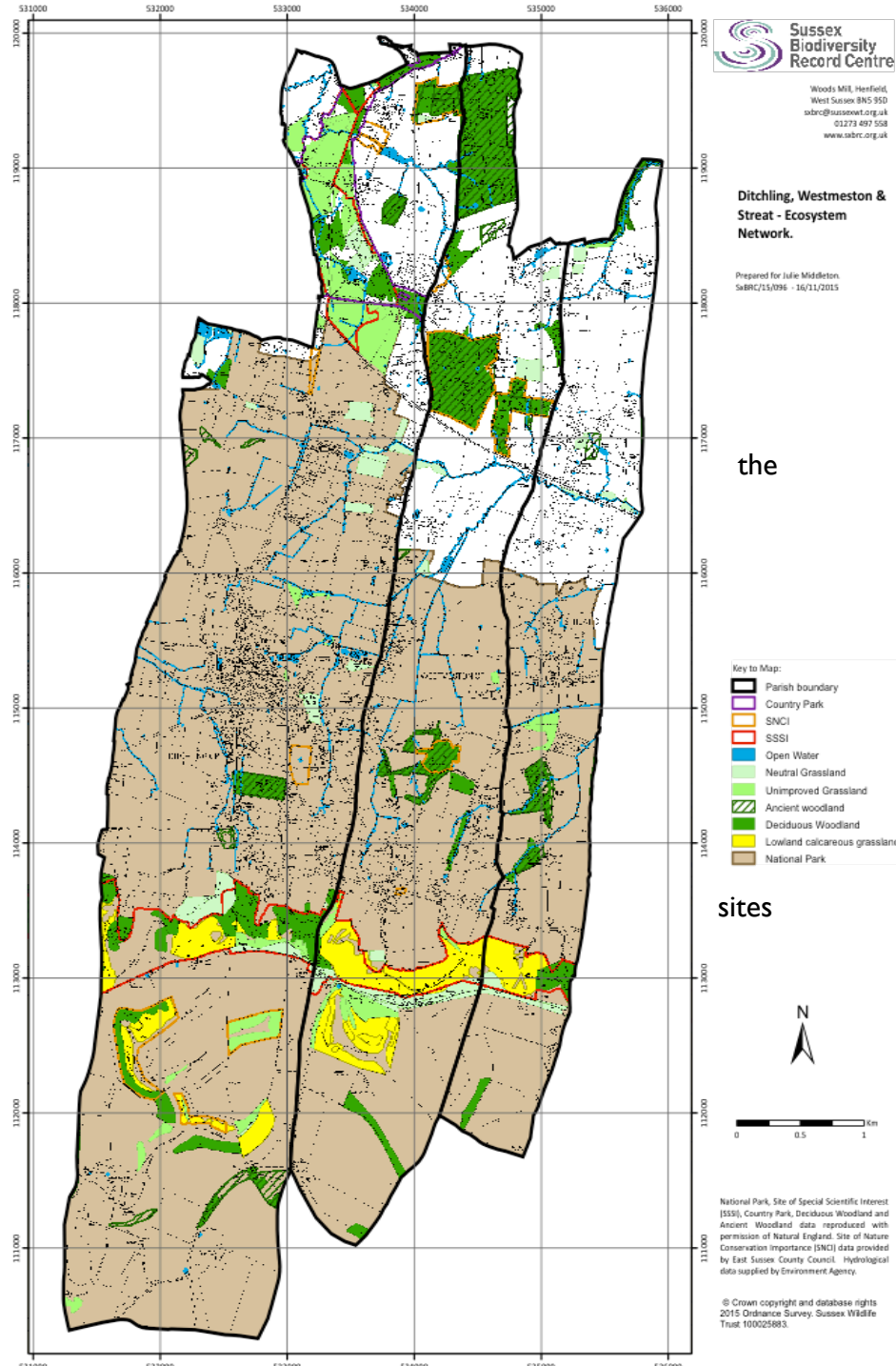
The parishes' predominantly rural landscape contains a diverse mosaic of grassland, woodland, hedgerows and chalk stream habitats supporting a rich biodiversity.

About two-thirds of the parishes' area lies within the SDNP. In addition a number of nationally and locally designated wildlife sites and 'priority habitats' are found within parishes.<sup>75</sup> These are shown in Figure 3.6/4, prepared by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre.

There are the two large SSSIs<sup>76</sup> and nine local wildlife sites dotted throughout the parishes. Hedgerows, tree-lined roads and lanes, streams and small pockets of woodland help to connect these and make an important contribution to the ecological network in the area. Ecological networks provide the areas of wildlife corridors required to support biodiversity. The importance of their recognition in local planning processes is set out in the NPPF.<sup>77</sup>

The National Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust are both involved in managing areas of the SSSI on the escarpment for nature conservation purposes and many of the habitats within the parishes are under the sympathetic conservation management of agri-environment schemes<sup>78</sup>.

Figure 3.6/4: Core elements of local ecological networks



<sup>75</sup> Descriptions and locations of all designated sites and priority habitats are contained in the conservation technical document

<sup>76</sup> Ditchling Common SSSI & a section of the Clayton to Offham Escarpment SSSI along the Downs escarpment

<sup>77</sup> para 117, NPPF, HMG, 2012 [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> See again the conservation technical document for location of agri-environment scheme coverage in the plan area

In addition to existing sympathetic land management, new development will provide opportunities, through careful location and design, to safeguard and where possible enhance the quality of existing habitats in designing corridors and ecological networks.

The land within the parishes immediately to the north of the SDNP boundary contains several important wildlife-rich sites<sup>79</sup>. These are not only important elements of the local ecological network, but provide important wildlife refuges along the boundary of the National Park. This area is therefore considered an important ecological buffer zone for the national park and thus should be covered by the same local policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity as those applied to land within the national park.

Climate change is likely to have a major impact on the biodiversity of the habitats within the plan area over the plan period and beyond. Opportunities to increase the resilience to such change should be taken by ensuring the integrity of existing ecological networks is safeguarded and where possible enhanced, so that species can easily move between habitats as required.

**CONS 10: *Protect and enhance habitats and biodiversity***

*Habitats and biodiversity will be protected and where possible enhanced in accordance with LDC, SDNPA and national policies. New development should be designed to provide a net gain for nature conservation, noted in the NPPF as a key component of sustainable development.*

*In particular proposals should clearly demonstrate that particular regard is given to the core elements of local ecological networks (designated sites, protected species, priority habitats – see [Figure 3.6/4](#)), areas important for ecological connectivity and areas with high potential for priority habitat restoration or creation. They should be designed to retain ancient trees or trees of arboricultural and amenity value, and be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees. Development within the vicinity of trees should accord with BS5837<sup>80</sup> and BS3998<sup>81</sup>. Proposals must thus satisfy three conditions:*

- a) retain, protect and where possible enhance features of biodiversity interest and ensure appropriate management of those features;*
- b) demonstrate how existing biodiversity corridors and networks are retained and enhanced; and*
- c) ensure that if adverse affects are unavoidable, that these are minimised through mitigation.*

*Development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees or trees of good arboricultural and amenity value will not normally be permitted.*<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> including the Ditchling Common SSSI, several SNCI and other sizeable areas of woodland and hedgerow

<sup>80</sup> BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations

<sup>81</sup> BS 3998:2012 Tree work. Recommendations

<sup>82</sup> See [www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#biodiversity-and-ecosystems](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#biodiversity-and-ecosystems)



## *(5) Green spaces and green infrastructure*

The results of the household survey, and subsequent consultation exercises, demonstrate that the local community place a high value on protecting the quality of the local natural environment and landscape, and in particular the natural green spaces found both within the settlements and the wider countryside throughout the parishes. These spaces, corridors and natural ‘assets’ also make a significant contribution to the landscape, local wildlife and recreational opportunities available in the parishes. As such they underpin the significant rural/outdoor recreation based economy in the parishes and more widely within the National Park.

Initially, the approach taken to the protection of valued green spaces focused solely on the identification of candidate Local Green Spaces. However, the large number of sites initially proposed (many of which did not meet the rigorous criteria set out in the NPPF) and the community support for their recognition and protection, suggested that a broader approach was required within this plan to identify valued green spaces and green infrastructure and to set out appropriate policies for their protection and, where possible enhancement.

This plan thus proposes a 3-tiered approach to the protection of green spaces and green infrastructure within the plan area.

**1. Local Green Spaces.** These are the sites of greatest quality and value to the community that meet the strict criteria for designation as Local Green Spaces as set out in the NPPF. These will be accompanied by strong protection against future development as per national planning policy (NPPF para 77).

**2. Community Open Spaces.** These are sites that are of significant value to the local community as green open spaces, but where suitable development intended to enhance their existing use may be desirable in the future. These spaces will be covered by a policy within this plan that will therefore only permit future development that will enhance the existing use and community value of these sites, while safeguarding their landscape and biodiversity value.

**3. Green Infrastructure.** The green infrastructure network<sup>83</sup> of the plan area is made up of the green spaces and sites that together provide the community with important benefits and services including amenity landscape, access, biodiversity and flood alleviation. These sites may be of varying size and quality but are important for their collective role in providing many nature-based benefits to the local area. The identification of green infrastructure and the support for development proposals that will protect, and where possible enhance local green infrastructure networks, is acknowledged best practice<sup>84</sup> in local and neighbourhood plans. The policies for each of these categories and the list of sites to which they apply are outlined below. A detailed description of the sites included in each category is contained in the supporting documentation.

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<sup>83</sup> Green infrastructure is a catch-all term within government policy describing the multi-functional network of natural and semi-natural features within and between villages, towns and cities. Green infrastructure features can range in scale from trees, green roofs and private gardens through to parks, rivers and woodlands (UK Green Building Council 2015)

<sup>84</sup> Protection and enhancement of green infrastructure is a key approach within national environmental policy and its protection within local and neighbourhood plans is recognised best practice (TCPA and Wildlife Trusts 2012. *Planning for a Healthy Environment – good practice guidance for green infrastructure and biodiversity*).

## Local Green Spaces

Local Green Spaces can be designated as part of a Neighbourhood Plan provided they meet criteria set out in paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Once designated, a Local Green Space is subject to the same strong development restrictions as a Green belt, and new development is ruled out other than in special circumstances.

In summary, the key criteria that **must** be met by each proposed site are as follows:

- reasonable proximity to a local community;
- is demonstrably special to a local community;
- holds a particular local significance because of at least one of the following:
  - beauty
  - historic significance
  - recreational value
  - tranquility
  - richness of its wildlife;
- is local in character;
- is not an extensive tract of land.

During the development of this plan a list of over 20 sites of particular importance to the local community was prepared by the Conservation Focus Group, with a view to designating the most suitable as 'Local Green Spaces'. The list was based on local knowledge of the group at the time, supported by additional desk-based research on each of the sites. To improve the rigour of this approach, an evaluation model was developed in conjunction with the SDNPA using the NPPF framework to ensure that only those sites that would meet the strict designation criteria were brought forward as Local Green Spaces. The final list of 9 proposed Local Green Spaces is shown overleaf in **Figures 3.6/5 and /6** and their location and site boundaries are shown on **Table 3.6/5**.

A description of each site is provided in *Supporting documentation* along with an analysis of their characteristics against NPPF criteria.

### **CONS 11:**

### ***Protect local green spaces***

*In areas designated as Local Green Spaces (see **Figures 3.6/5 and 3.6/6** and **Table 3.6/5**) development will only be permitted in very special circumstances. An exception to this would be for the provision of essential utilities infrastructure where this cannot be located elsewhere.*

Figure 3.6/5: Local green spaces (Ditchling)

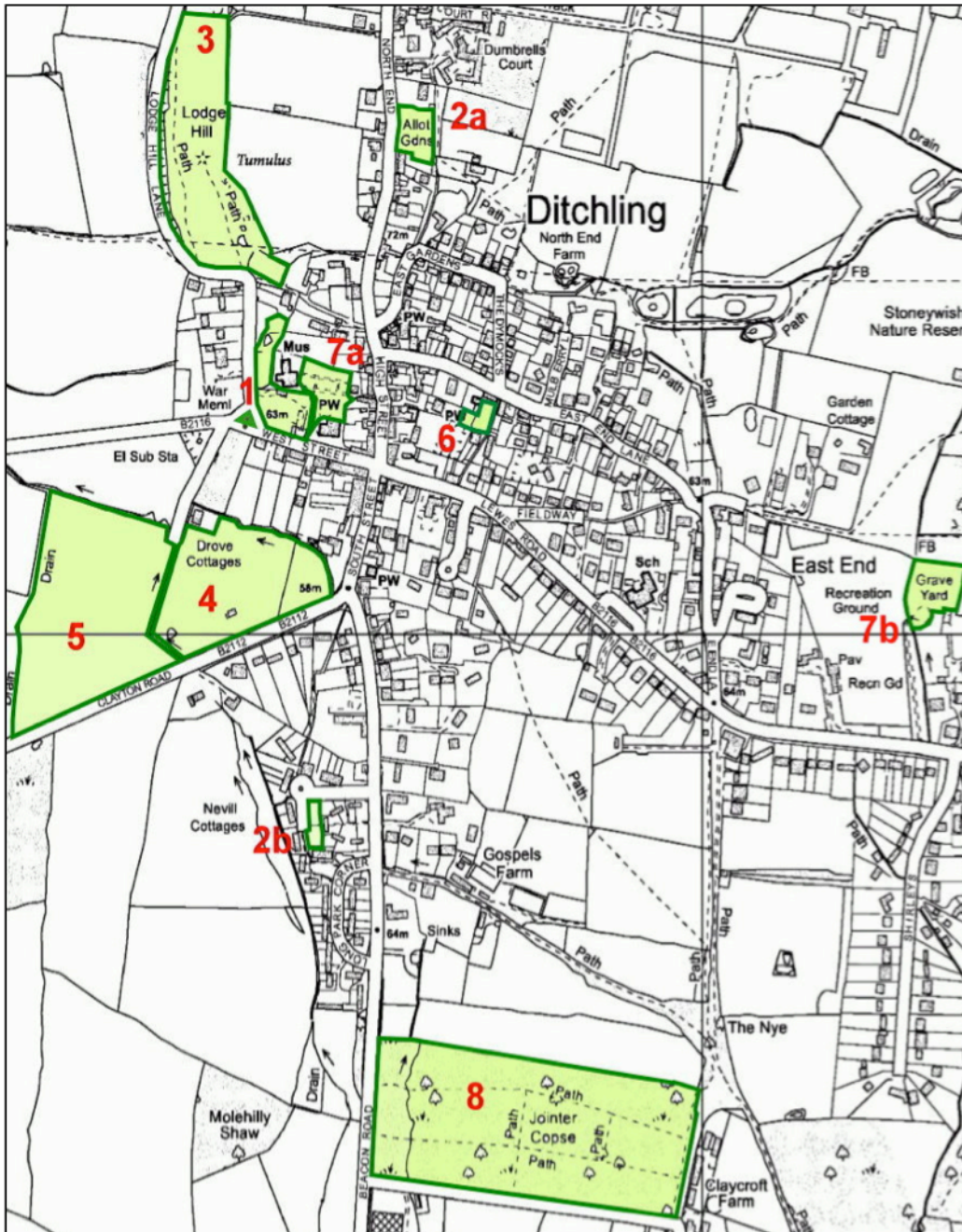


Figure 3.6/6: Local green spaces (Streat and Westmeston graveyards, and Streat Lane green corridor)

**Table 3.6/5** Proposed local green space designations

<b>Figure ref</b>	<b>Site description</b>
1	Village green, war memorial and pond
2	Ditchling allotments a. North End b. Long Park Corner
3	Lodge Hill
4	Land adjacent to Clayton Road, Ditchling village (Conservation Area)
5	West Mead field
6	Grounds and burial Ground, The Old Meeting House, Ditchling
7	Graveyards/burial grounds a. Burial ground, St Margaret's Church, Ditchling b. Burial ground, Lewes Road, Ditchling c. Burial ground, St Martin's Church, Westmeston d. Burial ground, Streat Church, Streat
8	Jointer Copse, Beacon Road, Ditchling
9	Streat Lane green corridor, Streat

## Community open spaces

In addition to the Local Green Spaces identified above, the settlements contain several important open spaces of considerable value to the local community for access and recreation. Many also have significant landscape and wildlife interest. Typically these spaces contain equipment or facilities for formal recreation (e.g. playing fields, pavilions, playgrounds, car parks). It is important to permit and enable suitable development for the enhancement of the existing use and community value of these spaces, provided this also safeguards landscape and biodiversity value.

Figure 3.6/7 shows the location and boundary of each of Community Open Space site listed in Table 3.6/7. See the supporting documentation for a detailed description and justification for the inclusion of these spaces.

Figure 3.6/7 Community open spaces

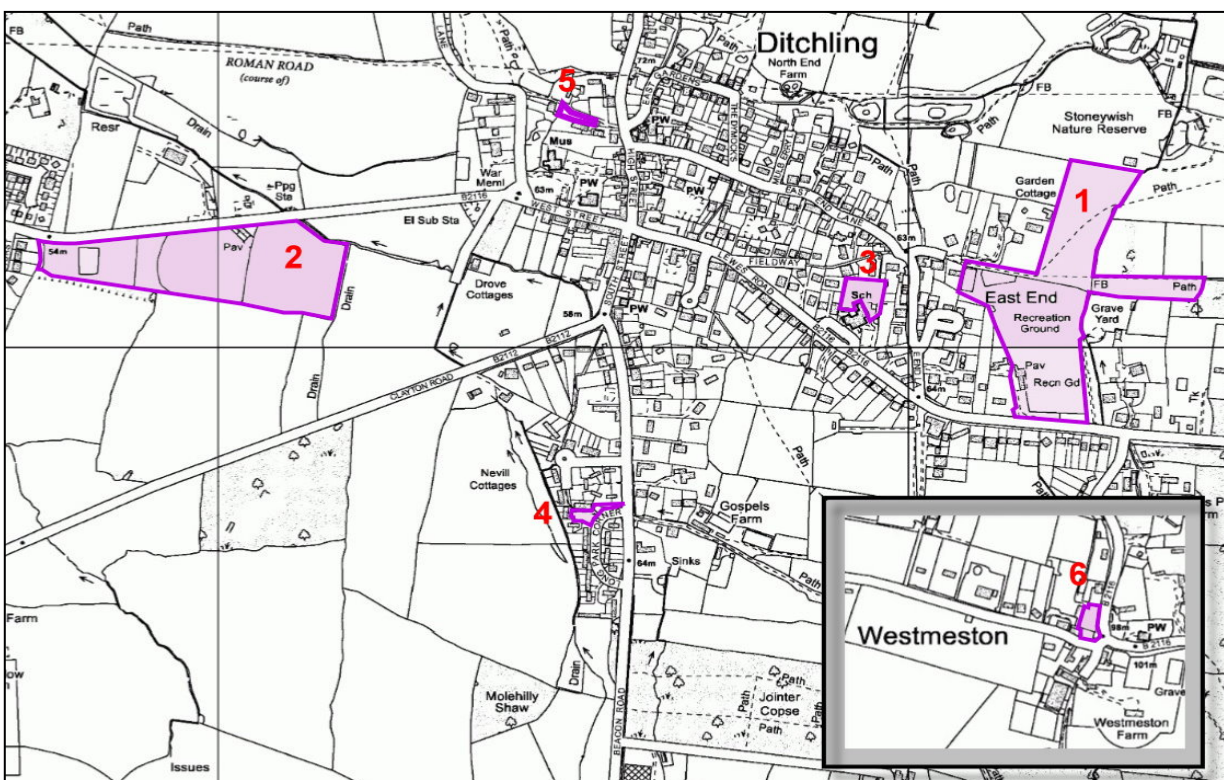


Table 3.6/7 Community open spaces

Figure ref	Site description
1	Ditchling recreation ground
2	Keymer Road recreation ground
3	St Margaret's School playing field
4	Long Park Corner amenity green space and play park
5	Boddington's Lane community orchard
6	Church Corner, Westmeston

**CONS 12:**

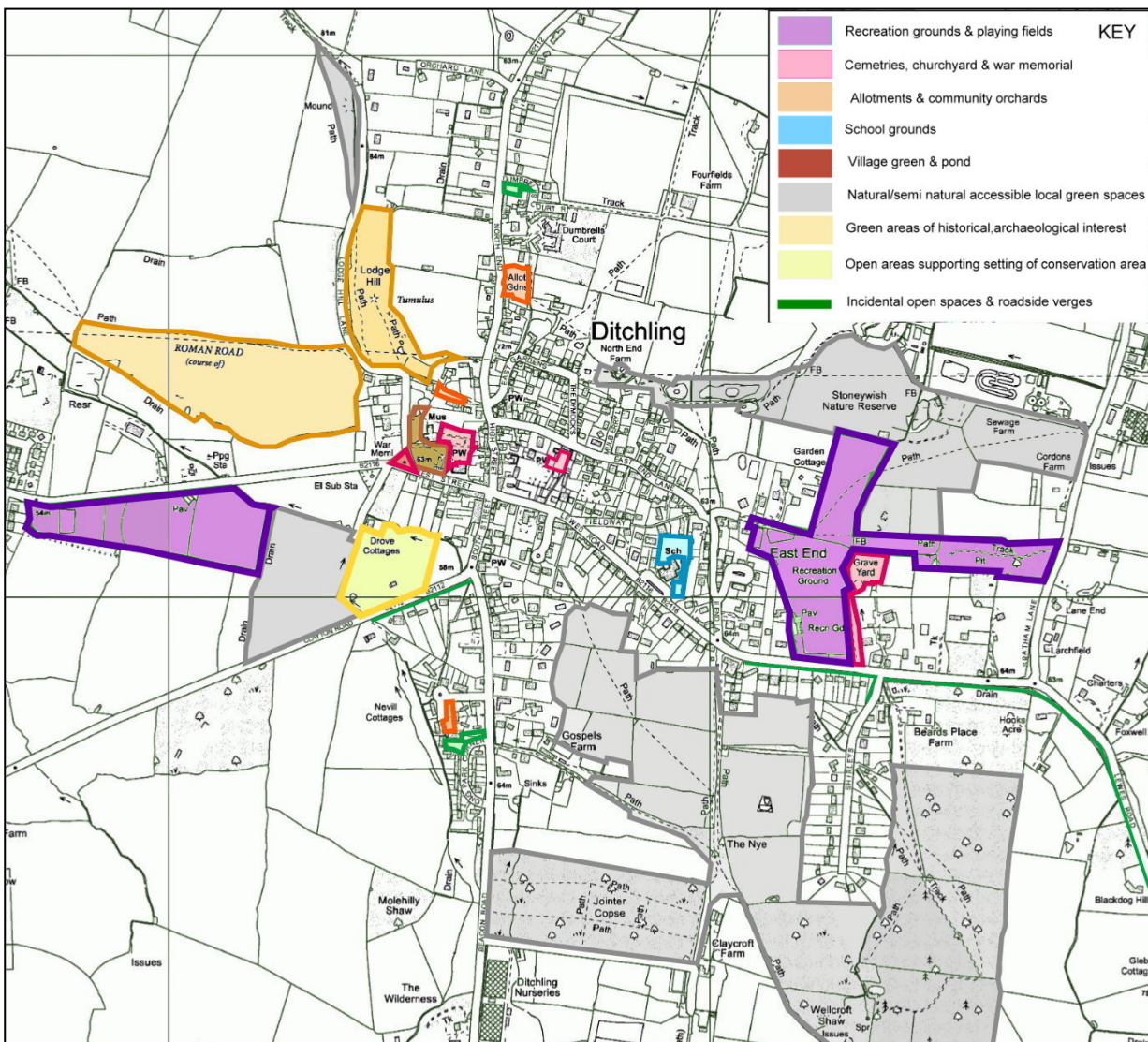
**Protect community open spaces**

In areas designated as Community Open Spaces (see [Figure 3.6/7](#) and [Table 3.6/7](#)), proposals will be expected to enhance the existing use and community value of these sites, while safeguarding and where possible enhancing their landscape and biodiversity value. Development that does not do this will not be permitted. An exception to this policy would be for the provision of essential utilities infrastructure where this cannot be located elsewhere.

**Green infrastructure**

Within our predominantly rural parishes, the green infrastructure network includes habitats and wildlife corridors and many other green spaces and corridors that make up its ecological network, providing multiple benefits such as recreation, access to nature, landscape character, wildlife habitat, flood alleviation. These spaces are found both inside the settlements and across the wider rural areas of the parishes. Some are also designated as Local Green Spaces and Community Open Spaces in recognition of their function, quality and value to the local community. The key elements of the green infrastructure network in Ditchling village and Westmeston verges are shown in [Figure 3.6/8](#).

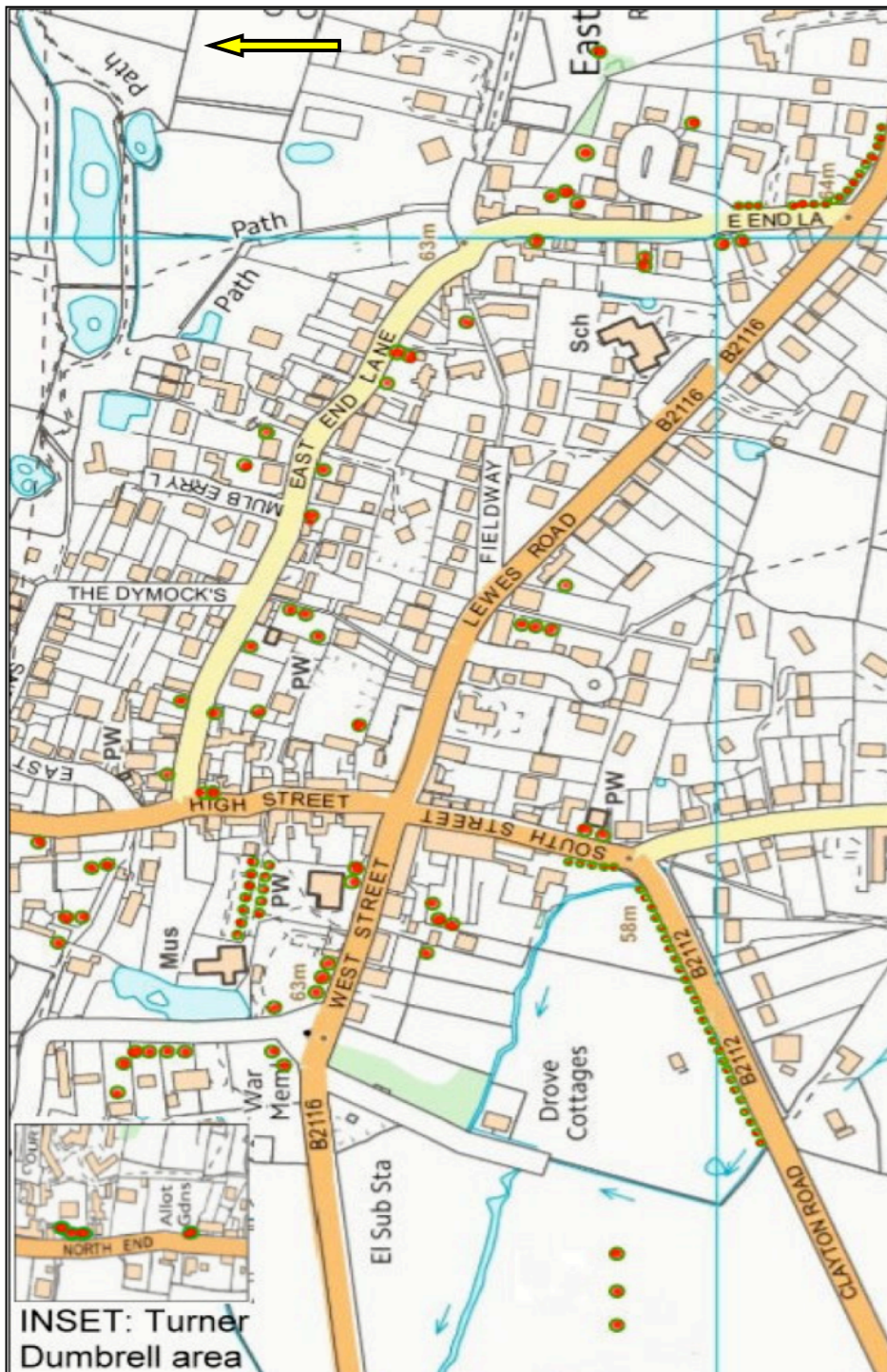
**Figure 3.6/8:** Green infrastructure: Ditchling village and Westmeston verges



These include privately owned and run Stoneywish nature reserve, recreation grounds, allotments, primary school playing fields, village green and pond, cemeteries and burial ground, playgrounds, green areas of historical interest, open areas that support the setting of the historic conservation area, large areas of accessible natural green space adjacent to Ditchling village and several small open spaces and roadside verges.

Notable trees and groups of trees within Ditchling village, providing both landscape and ecological functions, are mapped in [Figure 3.6/9](#).

**Figure 3.6/9:** Notable trees and tree groups:  
Ditchling village



In Westmeston, the churchyard, burial ground and grass verges (see **Figure 3.6.8**) contribute to its biodiversity, landscape and amenity value and can be classified as green infrastructure.

Streat's green infrastructure includes the churchyard, burial ground and the network of wide, species-rich grass verges and pockets of common land along Streat Lane. The linked and linear nature of these spaces creates an important green infrastructure corridor of significance to Streat residents for biodiversity and contribution to the lane's tranquility and landscape qualities (see **Figure 3.6/6**).

There are several notable areas of green infrastructure throughout the parishes. These are shown on **Figure 3.6/10** overleaf, and include the large areas of accessible woodland at West Wood, Purchase Wood, Blackbrook Wood and The Plantation, Sedlow Wood, Brocks Wood, Jointer Copse and younger woodlands east and south of Shirleys (Ditchling). Other large accessible green areas include Mid Sussex golf club, grounds of St Georges Retreat, and the northern edges of Stanmer Park falling in Ditchling Parish.

Ditchling Common Country Park, which covers much of Ditchling Common SSSI, and the designated access land close to the South Downs Way south of the plan area, also provide popular local rural destinations for walking, and informal recreation for local residents and visitors. They are valued important green spaces for the adjacent and expanding urban populations in Mid-Sussex and Brighton respectively.

This plan seeks to safeguard the existing green infrastructure network of the parishes from the adverse impacts of new development, and to enhance this where possible by seeking opportunities within any new development to contribute to the network through the creation of new green infrastructure assets. This is achieved by Policy **CONSI3**.

**CONSI3: *Safeguard and enhance green infrastructure***

*The existing green infrastructure network will be safeguarded from adverse effects of new development, and opportunity will be taken to secure enhancements to the network and connectivity to it. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless they include suitable replacement green infrastructure, so the community gains equivalent benefit.*



Figure 3.6/10 Green infrastructure, the three parishes

**MAP KEY**

**Woodland**

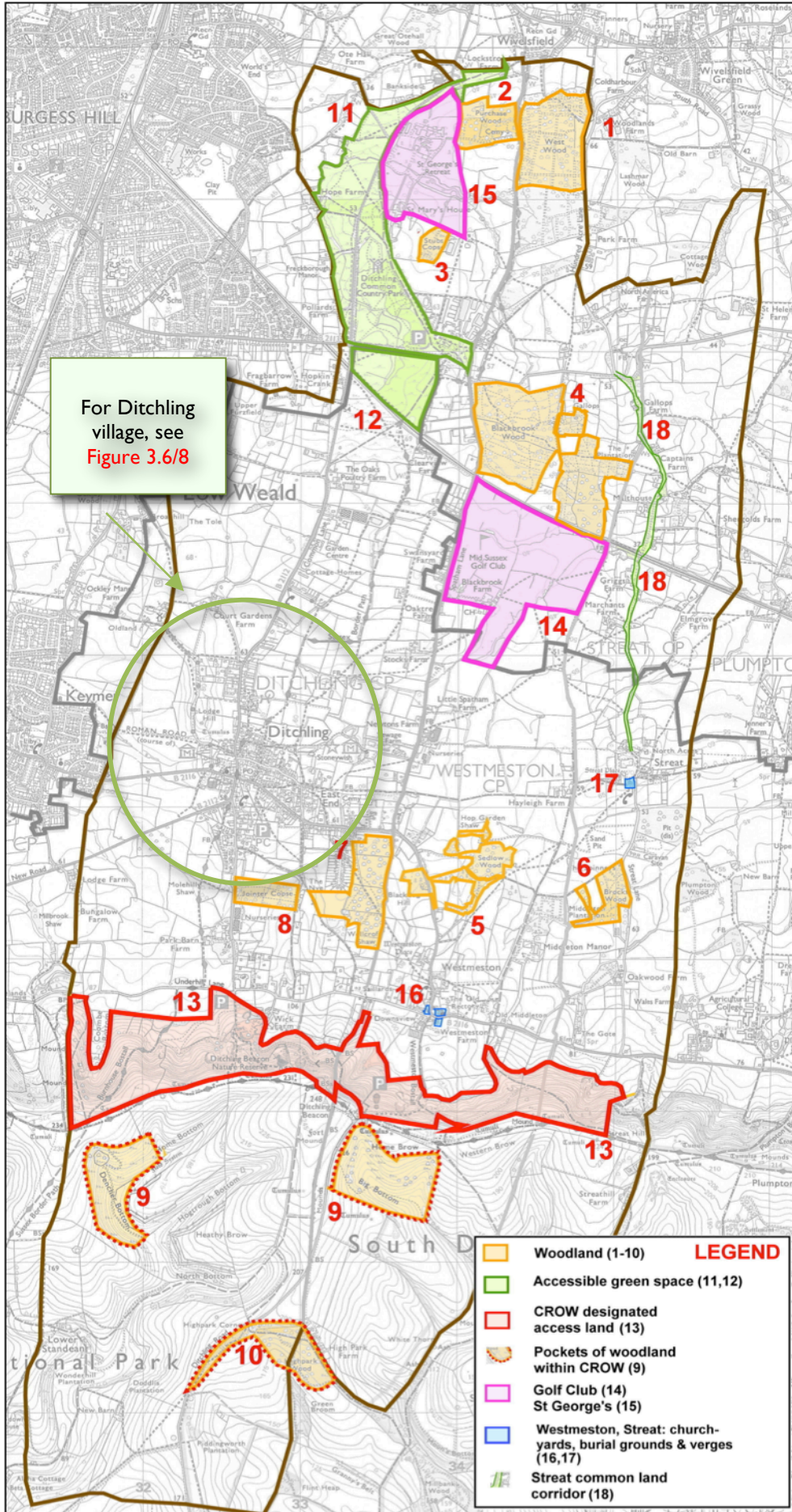
- 1 West Wood
- 2 Purchase Wood
- 3 Stubs Copse
- 4 Blackbrook Wood
- 5 Sedlow Wood
- 6 Brocks Wood and Middleton Plantation
- 7 Nye/Shirleys Wood
- 8 Jointer Copse
- 9 Pockets of woodland on the Downs escarpment (within CROW\* land)
- 10 High Park Wood

**Accessible green space**

- 11 Ditchling Common Country Park
- 12 Ditchling Common
- 13 CROW designated access land, Downs escarpment and plateau

**Other**

- 14 Mid Sussex Golf Club
- 15 Designated landscape, St George's retreat
- 16 St Martin's churchyard and burial ground + Church Corner verges Westmeston
- 17 Streat churchyard and burial ground
- 18 Streat Common Land / green corridor



## *(6) Links to the countryside*

The many footpaths and bridleways found within the parishes help to link green spaces together and make an important contribution to the generally high levels of accessibility and connectivity of the settlements to the countryside, and to each other. To the south and west of Ditchling village, the links to the wider countryside are particularly well-developed thanks to the stretches of accessible natural green space (fields and woodlands) served by an interconnected network of footpaths and bridleways centred around Nye Lane. These areas are essentially ‘green gateways’ to the wider countryside, with those to the south providing important non-vehicle connection to the Downs, while those to the west provide routes and connections to Keymer/Hassocks and the nearby landmark of Oldland Mill. All recorded Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Accessible Land in the parishes are shown in **Figure 3.6/11**.

To the east of Ditchling, the Jubilee Pathway provides important safe access for walkers, cyclists and those on horseback from Ditchling towards Sedlaw Wood and then indirectly to Westmeston and Streat. This trail (which is not a registered Public Right of Way) is much used and valued by local residents. However, its value would be greatly enhanced if extensions to the trail could be developed in order to provide a direct non-vehicle link between Ditchling and Westmeston and from Westmeston east through Streat parish to Plumpton College. Aspirational Policy **TRANS 11** includes reference to this and other key gaps in the network that must be addressed in the future.

To the north of Ditchling village, Ditchling Common Country Park is a particularly important area of accessible natural green space for the two large conurbations that lie beyond the parish boundaries to the north (Burgess Hill) and west (Wivelsfield/Wivelsfield Green). The footpath network in this area is extensive within Ditchling parish and provides important links between the Country Park and the St George’s Park retirement complex. However, links across the parish boundary to Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield are more limited. There is thus potential for new developments in these areas (most of which may lie beyond the boundaries of the parishes) to include new green corridors and linkages to the Country Park. This area has been highlighted as a Green Infrastructure Investment Area in the SDNPA Green Infrastructure Strategy.<sup>85</sup>

The notable green linkages between settlements and the wider countryside are shown in **Figure 3.6/12** overleaf.

This plan seeks to protect and where possible enhance the excellent connectivity between the settlements of Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat and the surrounding countryside, for the benefit of residents and visitors. In particular, it will protect and where possible enhance the ‘green gateways’ between the village of Ditchling and the South Downs escarpment (to the south) and Keymer/Hassocks (to the west). It will also encourage proposals that better connect the pathways and bridleways between Ditchling and Westmeston and on through Streat to Plumpton by an extension to the Jubilee Pathway, thus linking the bostalls of Westmeston, Streat and Plumpton.

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<sup>85</sup> Supported in the draft SDNPA Green Infrastructure Strategy (January 2016). <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Green-Infrastructure-Framework-Main-Evidence-Report-First-Draft.pdf>

Figure 3.6/1 I: Public rights of way and accessible land

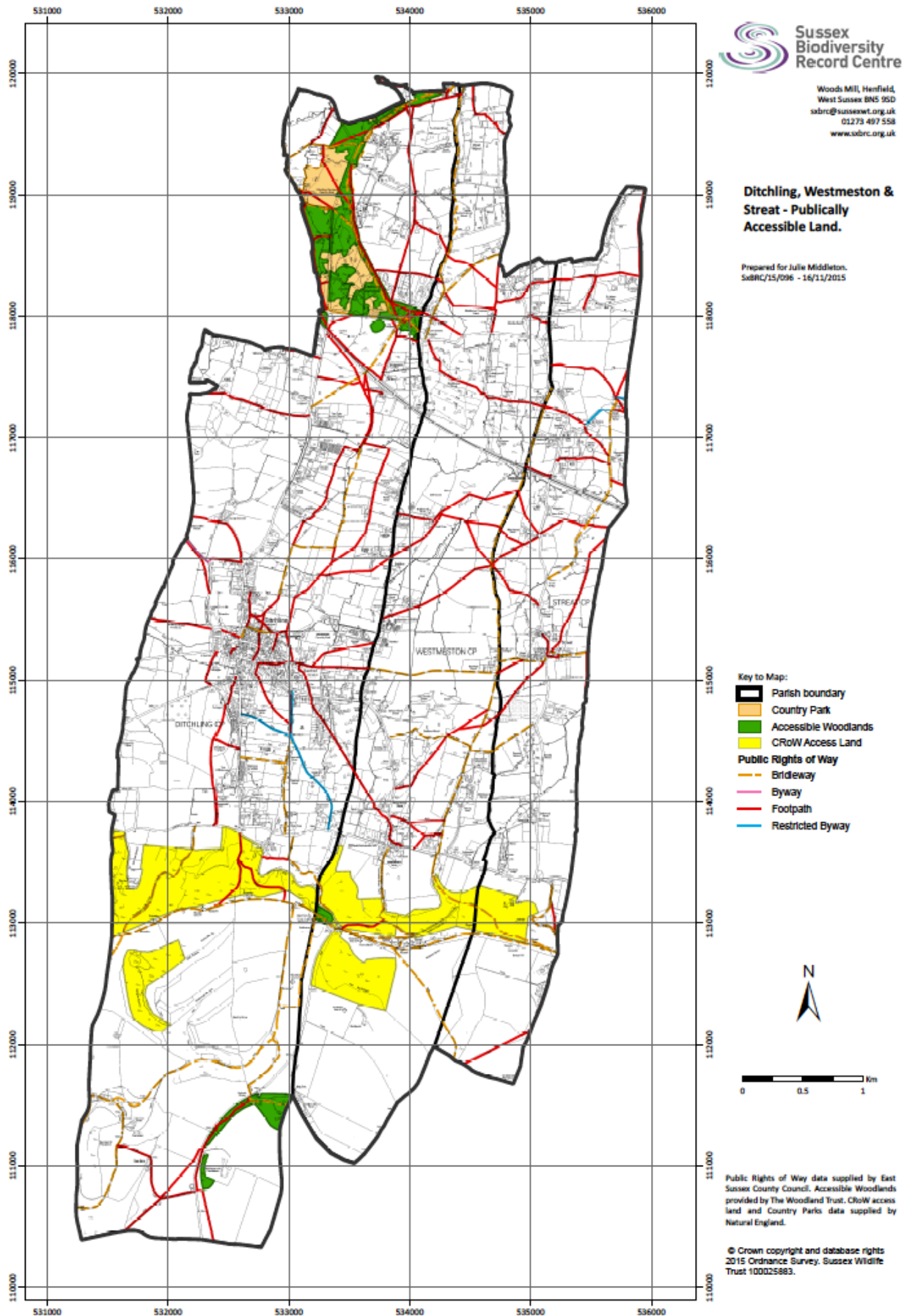
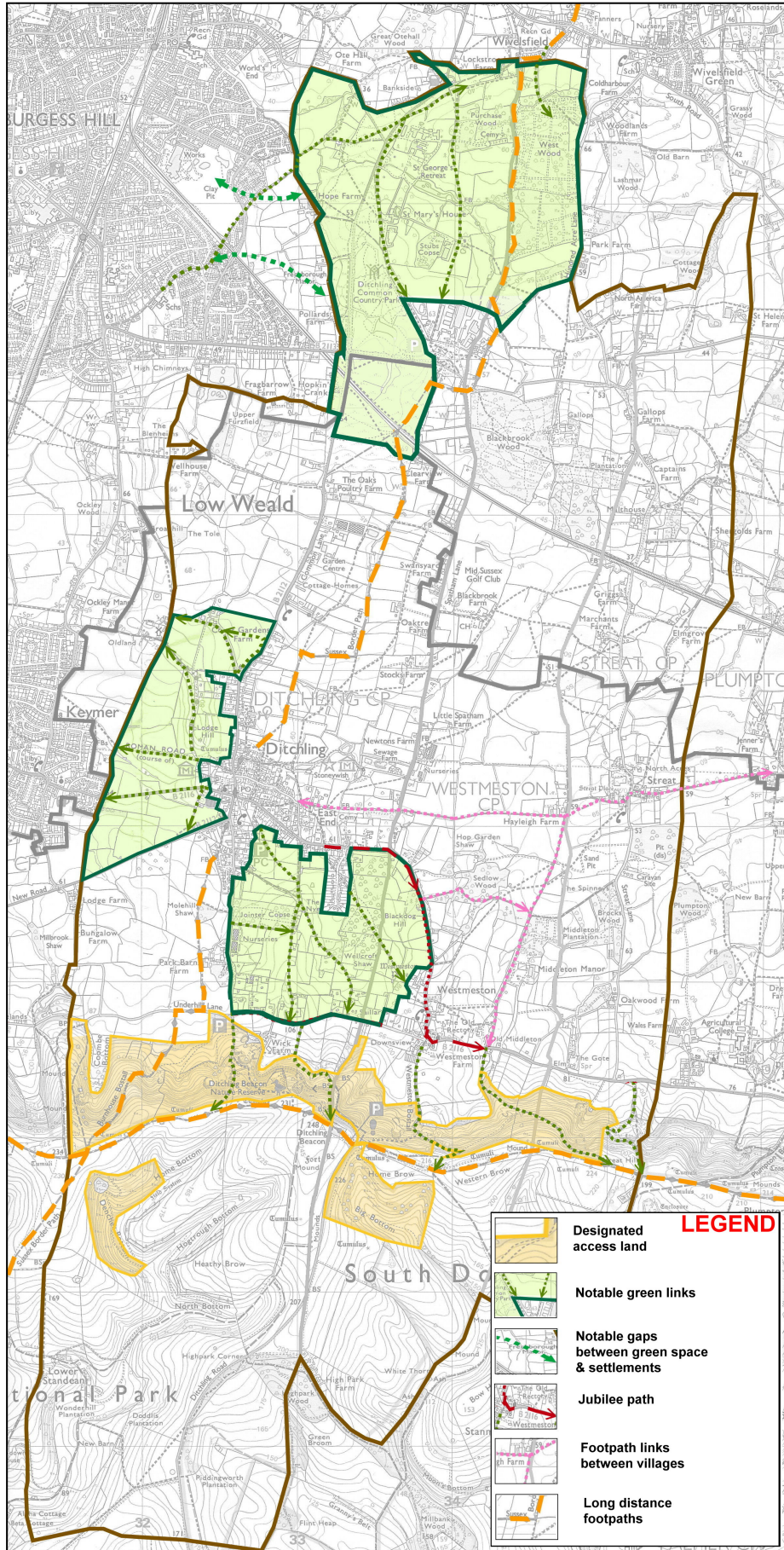


Figure 3.6/12: Notable green linkages between settlements



Throughout the rural areas of the Beacon parishes this plan will protect and where possible enhance the extensive network of pathways and bridleways that run through the parishes and connect beyond its border, as a means of better linking people to the countryside.

Proposals which help to bridge identified gaps in the network or improve connections between Ditchling Common Country Park and surrounding centres of population will be supported. Cross boundary cooperation required to achieve this will be encouraged.

**CONS 14:** **Protect and enhance links to the countryside**

*Proposals for developments which lie on or adjacent to footpath and bridleway links should not prejudice the retention and enhancement of these routes and should contribute to new routes as appropriate.*

*Support will be given to proposals that improve and extend the existing footpath and cycle network allowing better non-vehicle connection between settlements, improved access to green spaces and links between new housing, amenities and adjacent countryside.*

## 3.7 Community infrastructure

### Introduction

The Community Infrastructure Focus Group produced proposals and policies on key issues for a wide range of community facilities within the Beacon villages. They included all those facilities providing opportunities for people to use local services such as community transport, the health centre, or to meet and share common interests either formally or informally, such as the film society and sports and recreation grounds. Their work presents policies on recreation, health, welfare, education and community facilities together with supporting arguments and the evidence base.

Ditchling is identified by SDNPA as having one of the smaller village centres in the National Park. However, it is a particularly significant centre because it provides an unusually wide range of services and attractions for the residents of the whole NPD area as well as for visitors and tourists thereby supporting local businesses and the local economy. These include independent shops and restaurants, a village hall and other meeting places, health, sports and recreation facilities, a primary school, two public houses, a major arts and crafts museum, local craft manufacturers, other cultural assets and St Margaret's Church and other places of worship.

Some of these facilities – particularly shops – are at risk because there are often strong commercial pressures to use the land and buildings they occupy for more profitable uses especially housing. For example, in the last 15 years, Ditchling has seen the loss of a number of facilities including a butcher, florist, bank and a public house to residential uses. If this trend continues over the next 15 years Ditchling's viability as a service centre will be further seriously eroded leading to a significant loss of community assets for residents of the NPD area, a reduction in the number of visitors and tourists and a negative impact on the local economy.

Westmeston and Streat have many fewer community assets than Ditchling and the opportunities for increasing or enhancing these are considerably less. It is therefore likely that Ditchling will continue as a service centre for these communities.

### 3.7.1 Community infrastructure land use policies

Policy **COM I** will be used to encourage developers, owners of land and buildings and businesses to create new community assets and to use existing community assets as productively as possible.

While **I(A)** encourages new retail and community development and **I(B)** will help safeguard existing community assets **I(C)** will help make better use of what we have by using more innovative and sustainable ways of creating or enhancing facilities and improving their financial viability through, for example, cross-subsidisation. These could include the wider sharing of facilities that may currently be limited to only a single use or few uses. Examples could include the pavilion at the Ditchling recreation ground which could accommodate additional sport and non-sporting uses potentially generating additional revenue. There may also be small parcels of land which could be brought into uses such as nature reserves and allotments following the example of

The Orchard in Boddington's Lane. There may be also be older buildings currently under-occupied or parts of some residential or commercial buildings that could be converted such as ground floors which provide retail opportunities and easy access for shoppers.

**COM 1:** *Increase and protect our community assets*

**COM 1A:** *Development proposals providing additional shopping, enhanced public services or improved community facilities in Ditchling should be approved providing they are of a size and scale appropriate to the village and do not conflict with housing and conservation policies of the NDP. Retail developments over 150 sq metres will be subject to Retail Impact Assessments.*

**COM 1B:** *Development proposals that lead to the loss of existing shopping, public services or community facilities should be refused unless it can be reasonably shown that such uses are no longer viable. Evidence of a 12-month minimum robust marketing campaign will be required in clear demonstration there is no demand for retail, public services or community uses in those buildings.*

**COM 1C:** *Development proposals that introduce shopping, public services and community facilities into existing land or buildings or which improve the delivery of existing services will be supported.*

Apart from Mid Sussex Golf Club, The Ditchling recreation ground is the single largest sport and recreation facility in the 3 parishes. It is used by a number of sports clubs and the general public who can walk (with and without dogs), play, enjoy the magnificent views, picnic or watch cricket and other sports. The quality of the landscape with the backdrop of the South Downs is outstanding and the Parish Council is committed to maintaining its natural beauty and informal use for the benefit of local residents and visitors.

However, it is believed that the recreation ground could be used more effectively to improve the general physical health of the population, provide better access for people with special needs, provide more opportunities for young people to take up sport, provide greater opportunities for women to play sport (for example a women's football team) and to provide a focal point where people of all ages can share sport and recreational interests throughout the year.

There is evidence to support this view from the 2014 NDP Survey which indicated through the responses of parents and householders that 40% of under 18s believed the lack of facilities detracted from their enjoyment of living in the area. This group represents a significant proportion of the local population (15% according to the 2011 Census). It should also be noted that many of the children growing up over the plan period will not have been included in the survey figures as they were too young to respond and some would not even have been born.

Specific improvements which have been suggested include providing an all weather playing surface, an additional tennis court, a hard surface footpath for the disabled and parents with push chairs, an area for children to learn to ride bikes and scooters, a multi-use games area (MUGA) for older children (the existing play area is mainly for younger children), outside fitness equipment, upgrading the 5-a-side football area, additional drainage schemes (the football and rugby pitches are waterlogged for much of the winter), installing sprinklers for dry periods making use of

existing ground water supplies, improvements to the pavilion, resurfacing the car park and providing secure bike parking, forging closer links with St Margaret's Primary School and other groups and attracting more volunteers to help with coaching and club activities.

These are suggestions only and any development could only proceed in a way that fully respects the quality of the landscape and the use of the recreation ground in a way which is fully compatible with Policy **CONSI2**.

Ditchling Parish Council will therefore prepare a Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Sport and Recreation Plan (DSWSRP) for the recreation ground in consultation with Westmeston Parish Council and Streat Parish Meeting, SDNPA, Sport England, local sports clubs, other interested groups and residents. The DSWSRP will help guide future development at the grounds.

**COM 2:**

***Improve Ditchling Recreation Ground***

*Development proposals at the Ditchling Recreation Ground will be supported where:*

- *the proposals provide enhanced facilities for the use of the recreation ground by the community; and*
- *it is demonstrated how active community engagement has informed the preparation of the proposal; and*
- *the proposals have regard to the Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat Sport and Recreation Plan (if available at the time of the application).*



### 3.8 Cumulative effect of the neighbourhood plan's policies

The land use and aspirational policies in this plan directly address issues identified under each of the main policy areas. While these are strong policies as they stand, a number are supportive of other policies in the same subject area or other subject areas. By explaining these connections, the combined effect of these policies makes the plan greater than the sum of its parts.

Examples include transport policies which provide additional off street car parking and reduce the volume and speed of through traffic, which in turn also strengthens the ability of the area to deliver a key business policy of attracting more tourists and visitors. And traffic calming installed in the vicinity of the new housing developments for the benefit of residents will also aid our efforts to reduce traffic speed on the main roads. Attracting more tourists and visitors will increase demand for more goods and services provided by local retailers, pubs and restaurants thus contributing to another key policy of improving the local economy.

The cumulative impacts of these policies will be material information for the SDNPA and LDC in determining future planning applications and proposals. In this section we aim to demonstrate by example how many of the policies, while legitimately standing alone, also add value to others, and generate a more effective cumulative outcome. Thus:

#### TRANS 1, 2, 6, 7, and 11

*Provide off-street car parking, calm traffic outside housing developments, restrict through traffic, reduce speeds and provide more for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. These policies also support policies which aim to promote business and economic activity in Ditchling namely:*

**BIZ1** Retain local shops, and increase the tourists and visitors footfall in the village centre.

**BIZ 4** Provide positive support and leadership for business by improving the tourist and visitor offering and experience and contributing to the development of Ditchling as a tourism hub within the South Downs National Park as envisaged by the SDNPA's emerging Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

#### TRANS 7, 8 and 11

*Provide for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. These policies also support traffic and transport policy:*

**TRANS 6** Restriction of through traffic, introducing lower speed reductions, better signage and sat nav technology giving greater priority to pedestrians in the village centre and to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders on country roads and quiet lanes outside Ditchling centre. Improved and additional cycleways and pavements, coupled with improved traffic management, will slow traffic speeds and encourage through traffic to seek alternative routes beyond the Beacon parishes.

#### TRANS 2, 6, 7, 8 and 11

*will also support and be supported by SDNPA policies set out in "Roads in the South Down National Park".*

#### COM 1 and COM 3

*Increase and protect community assets. These policies also support and will be supported by:*

**CONS 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 12 13 and 14**

*Protecting and enhancing the area's heritage, ecology, biodiversity, landscape, conservation areas, green infrastructure, green spaces and the gaps between settlements will support:*

**BIZ 1 and BIZ 3** by retaining and enriching the special character of Ditchling village and the surrounding countryside. This will ensure its status as an important destination for those visitors and tourists attracted to its historic and cultural landmarks, its open spaces and network of footpaths, its outstanding landscape views and its easy access to Ditchling Beacon and the South Downs. This protection will also help position the area as a future tourism hub as envisaged by the SDNPA's emerging Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

**COM 4**

*Developing a wider range of sport and recreation facilities at the Ditchling Recreation Ground will support policies:*

**HSG 1 and 4** by helping to meet the health and fitness needs of younger families moving into the planned affordable housing or moving within the area. The health and recreational needs of older established residents downsizing or moving into special housing will also be catered for in the planned facilities.

**HSG 1, 4 and 5**

*have the potential to support the local economy and business policies:*

**BIZ 1 and BIZ 4** by permitting house owners to help meet the needs of longer-stay visitors and tourists by providing additional bed and breakfast accommodation.

**TRANS 10**

*Improving local bus services, will support:*

**TRANS 6** by encouraging people to use public transport more, use their cars less and reduce traffic and congestion in Ditchling village.

**HSG 1, 2, 3 and 4**

*Provision, design and layout of new housing and alterations to existing housing stock have the potential to support policies:*

which regulate through traffic **TRANS 2, 6, 8 and 11;**

which promote conservation policies **CONS 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16;**

and which protect and enhance community assets **COM 1, 2 and 3.**

These improvements can be achieved through a mix of high-quality design, Section 106 Agreements<sup>86</sup> and CIL funding generated by new housing permissions.

<sup>86</sup> [www.gov.uk/.../Section\\_106\\_affordable\\_housing\\_requirements](http://www.gov.uk/.../Section_106_affordable_housing_requirements)



4

# Achieving sustainable development

## 4 Achieving sustainable development

In developing our policies we have followed the National Planning Policy Framework's guidelines on what is meant by 'sustainable development' as follows:

### *International and national bodies have set out broad principles of sustainable development:*

*Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the Future set out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.*

*There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:*

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;*
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being;*
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.*

*Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to):*

- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;*
- moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;*
- replacing poor design with better design;*
- improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure;*
- widening the choice of high quality homes.*

We believe that within the limits of known and anticipated societal attitudes and technology advances our policies achieve these sustainability criteria. However, developments in technology may result in significant changes in society's attitudes to its needs and present opportunities to progress faster towards economic, social and environmental sustainability. Our policies thus will

be kept under continuous review, but we are clear that they will not compromise ‘*the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*’. Our sustainability policies listed by topic area are:-

### *Housing*

Our housing policies will lead to a much greater mix and diversity of housing stock, particularly through the emphasis on the building of small, affordable, housing for purchase or rent. They will enable and encourage:

- the identification and development of sites that conserve the key landscape qualities and apply design standards that will allow for sustainable living;
- current older residents to downsize, reduce their living costs and free up larger houses for family occupation;
- the children of current residents to remain living in the area, with the lasting benefits this will have for inbuilt 'care in the community';
- employees of local businesses, particularly the young, to live close to their places of work conferring lasting benefits in reducing their travel costs, reducing air pollution and improving their quality of life;
- more young people and young families to live here, conferring lasting benefits in retention of local shops and services and promoting and retaining a vibrant community.

### *Traffic and transport*

Our transport policies will lead to safer and more accessible transport choices from which residents, visitors and businesses stand to gain. They will enable and encourage:

- identification of the social and economic benefits to be gained from improved highway conditions and the need for special case treatment;
- the provision of more off-street parking, in combination with other measures, to facilitate use of village shops and services and help sustain their economic viability;
- affordable and reliable transport choices to enable people to walk, cycle and use public transport for short local journeys or as part of longer journeys.

### *Business and employment*

Our business policies will lead to the enhanced economic viability of businesses and to improved conditions and prospects for employment, particularly for young people. They will enable and encourage:

- the local community to provide leadership, through its elected councils, in the planning decisions affecting the sustainability and growth of local businesses;
- provision of the services needed by businesses to sustain and grow that will have the lasting benefit of providing increased employment opportunities for local people;

- the development of new businesses which are appropriate and compatible with the character of the area and make full use of its natural assets that will have the lasting benefit of ensuring their economic viability;
- diversification of businesses, particularly in the agricultural sector, where necessary to sustain economic viability, without compromising key conservation assets;
- full realisation of the opportunities presented by being in the national park to sustain and grow businesses and employment.

## *Conservation*

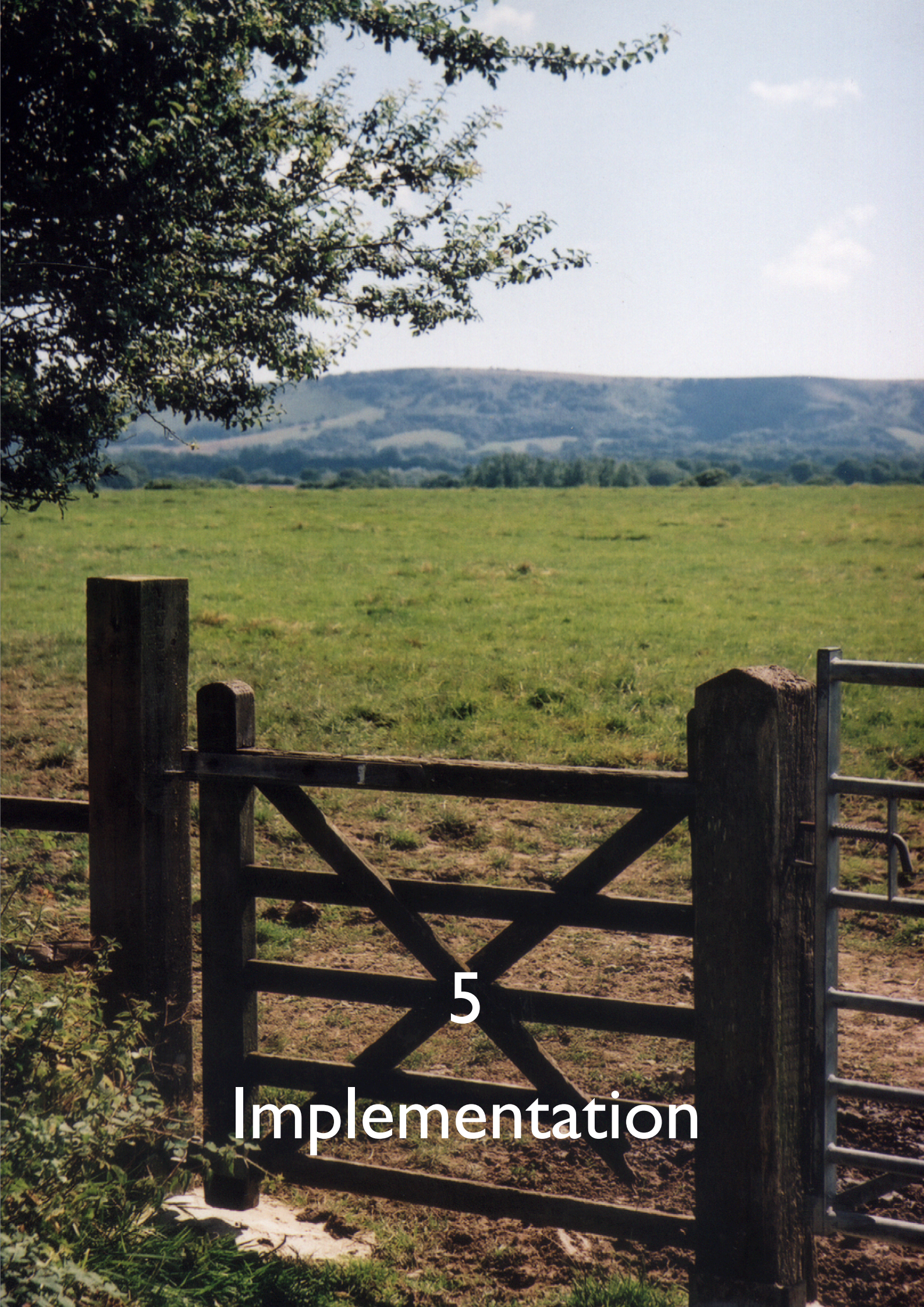
Our policies will lead to the conservation of the very important national assets the area possesses in both its built and natural environment. They will enable and encourage:

- a greater awareness of the priorities involved in balancing the meeting of the development needs of today against the potential, irretrievable, loss of the landscape assets, which characterise the area, for future generations;
- conservation of the rural nature of the plan area and the preservation of the rural gaps between the area and the neighbouring urban developments
- the development of the area as a 'gateway' attraction for visitors to the national park that is accessible through the provision of a range of transport choices, which will bring lasting benefits for the year-round economic viability of shops and services for the use of current and future residents and visitors;
- retention of the discrete historic heritage of the three parishes while maximising the benefits of their interdependence;
- conservation of the area's key open spaces that will bring lasting benefits for recreation;
- sensitive development, that has regard to the special characteristics of the area, through the setting of design standards to be followed by current and future generations.

## *Community infrastructure*

Our community infrastructure policies will lead to the retention of existing shops and services and provide the conditions under which they can develop and grow. They will also lead to enhanced and more diverse recreational opportunities for all age ranges and abilities. They will enable and encourage:

- the retention of Ditchling village centre as a service centre for the residents of all three parishes conferring lasting benefits, particularly for the elderly, including the provision of a range of accessible transport choices to meet their basic living needs;
- residents to take up new recreational opportunities conferring lasting benefits for their mental and physical health;
- increased cohesion of the community and the lasting benefits this will bring in improved community awareness of the needs and welfare of its individual residents;
- innovative uses of community land and buildings to maximise the community benefit.



5

Implementation

## 5 Implementation

The plan has ambitious objectives. To successfully achieve them a number of key actions are necessary.

### *Working together*

Ditchling Parish Council, Westmeston Parish Council and Streat Parish Meeting will set up a **Beacon Villages Plan Implementation Team (BVPIT)** which will meet quarterly. It will have three key roles: advising and locating sources of funds for projects, and on the apportioning of costs between the three parishes; monitoring progress in implementing the plan, and driving implementation of the plan and projects, particularly the aspirational policies. It will ensure the policies are:

- delivered within agreed timescales and budgets;
- applied consistently throughout the plan area;
- reviewed annually to assess whether the vision and objectives of the plan are being achieved;
- still relevant and where not propose changes or additional policies.

The BVPIT will report back regularly to the three parish councils as the 'accountable bodies' for the neighbourhood development plan and communicate directly with residents to inform them of progress.

### *Policies into action*

Policies can only be successfully delivered if they are accompanied by practical actions which give tangible results. An early task will be to prioritise the policies for action, establish timescales and define how success will be measured.

The BVPIT will consider all options to maximise resources including:

- employing person(s) to undertake projects;
- raising funds through Council Tax and/or grant-giving bodies.

Actions the BVPIT will be responsible for include attracting funding towards **physical projects** to design and implement LATS and other traffic projects (TRANS 2 - 10) and to carry out improvements to the Ditchling recreation ground (COM 5). They will also include other **non-physical projects** such as working with local businesses to improve the area's economic performance and tourist offering (BIZ 4). The financial contributions of Streat and Westmeston will be determined before the commencement of any project according to the relevance of such project to those two parishes, within the resources and financial capacity of the two smaller parishes.

Actions already under way to deliver certain policies (for example, lobbying the county councils to improve the traffic situation in Ditchling centre (TRANS 2), provision of more off-street car parking on Keymer Road (TRANS 1), and installation of new drainage to the football pitch at Ditchling recreation ground (COM 5), should not be duplicated, nor does the BVPIT replace the responsibility or efforts of the councils in taking these actions.



## *Land use/planning policies*

Planning policies are delivered by the two local planning authorities - the SDNPA and LDC – determining planning applications in accordance with the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, Lewes District Council Local Plan and the Joint SDNP/LDC Core Strategy. The three parish councils and other statutory consultees are formally consulted on all applications. In responding, the parish councils state whether they ‘support’, have ‘no comment’ or ‘object’ to an application. If they object, then they are required to state one or more of the planning grounds listed in the new guidance for all councillors in the determination of planning applications.

While decisions on planning applications will continue to be taken by SDNPA and LDC, they will have to take account of the planning policies included in the DSWNDP once it has been adopted (as well as taking account of emerging policies before adoption if they are material to a specific application and if they can be seen to have sufficient public support).

A process needs to be agreed between the parish councils and the local authorities (SDNPA and LDC) for considering planning applications in the context of whether they fit with the plan or not. The parish councils will therefore collectively liaise with the SDNPA and LDC to produce new guidance on the determination of planning applications for all councillors.

This guidance will ensure that councils’ views are fully taken into account. It is critical that policies at the neighbourhood level are given proper weight in the determination process. Such guidance will ensure that the three parishes responses to the SDNPA and/or LDC are applied consistently throughout the plan area and that plan policies are not undermined by conflicting responses.

Where an application is considered 'significant' all three parish councils should work together to produce a combined response regardless of the location of the application. For example, Streat and Westmeston have an interest in preserving Ditchling's role as a service centre just as much as Ditchling itself. To achieve this all planning applications should be circulated around all three parish councils with each having the power to call for a combined response.

## *Aspirational policies*

Delivering the plan's aspirational policies is beyond the current budgets and staffing of the three parishes. They will therefore need to consider how to access and devote sufficient financial and human resources to the task.

Ditchling Parish Council has approved an increase in its 2016/17 budget of £12,000 to help fund implementation of the plan. This could continue into future years with Streat and Westmeston contributing as appropriate, particularly taking into account their smaller populations.

While nowhere near sufficient to deliver all the plan's policies, this money is seen as a means of pump-priming and attracting other funding e.g. localities funding, SDNPA, local authority match funding, Sport England, charities, commercial sponsorship (e.g. see Part B, Aspirational policy COM 2: securing funding for community infrastructure).

Initially the money will be used to employ a part-time plan officer whose job will be to:

- work with the BVPIT, local councillors and committee members, parish clerks, local businesses, SDNPA, local authorities and other statutory organisations, voluntary organisations and charities in identifying and prioritising projects;
- attract grants and other funding in order to develop projects to feasibility stage and subsequently to design and contract stage;
- establish working arrangements with key groups and organisations to take forward non-physical projects and where appropriate attract funding;
- make arrangements to consult where necessary with local residents on the above e.g. organising local surveys and public meetings;
- keep in touch with government policies affecting neighbourhood development planning including funding regimes and be aware of progress on neighbourhood development plans in other areas.

# Part B: aspirational policies



## Aspirational policies

Aspirational policies are those that the residents of the Beacon parishes regard as important, but which fall outside the statutory definition, and are therefore not part of the statutory plan. The prime example is traffic issues, the importance of which scored very highly in the household survey, but whose policy resolution is in the hands of East Sussex County Council. Presentation of aspirational policies follow the same format, and follow on sequentially, to that used for land use policies in Part A which should be referred to for each topic's general preamble.

### Housing

#### **HSG 8: Support provision of housing in rural communities**

*The Beacon parishes support the aim of SDNPA policy (see SDNPA Housing Policy 48, 50 and Outcome 9) to provide sustainable, affordable housing in perpetuity. The applicability of community land trusts (CLT) for the Beacon parishes will be explored in accordance with SDNPA Rural Exceptions policy SD25.*

#### **HSG 9: Prepare village design statement (VDS)**

*A formal village design statement (VDS) will be prepared, as supporting guidance for developers on appropriate design criteria, to provide parish councils and developers with a reference guide for evaluating housing and other development proposals. The VDS will include a section on typical boundary treatments and entrance designs within the villages, design advice on new features and a section on 'designing-in traffic calming'. See **CONS 3** for an amplification of the standards to be applied. The implementation of this will draw on the resources as appropriate of the three parishes under the direction of the Beacon Villages Plan Implementation Team (BVPIT) (see 8: Implementation).*

*The VDS will be written to apply in differing degree to all three Beacon parishes. The VDS will also offer developers guidance on the appropriate use of sustainable construction methods and materials, and energy and water conservation<sup>87</sup>.*

<sup>87</sup> See submission from HKD Transitions [www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/response\\_review\\_complete.pdf](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/response_review_complete.pdf)

## Traffic

Policies proposed are parts of an inter-dependant plan, particularly **TRANS 2, 6, 7** and **9** that taken together preserve residents' safety and improve the environment.

### **TRANS 3** **Establish joint working party for design and funding**

The Beacon parishes welcome the offer of ESCC to set up a joint arrangement for improving traffic conditions in the three parishes, and propose that a working party be established with representation to include ESCC, SDNPA, WSCC and the Safer Sussex Roads Partnership<sup>88</sup>. Its principal task will be to find ways in which the policies set out in the neighbourhood plan, and 'Roads in the South Downs' can be delivered locally. It will also investigate alternative sources of finance and match funding. The parishes will be happy to be a pilot for demonstrating the value of the principles set out in that publication, as an example for others to use. **TRANS 4** and **TRANS 5** are two examples of the type of thinking that would be encouraged by this group.

### **TRANS 4:** **Seek special traffic zoning and recognition for parishes**

The unique qualities of the three parishes need special protection from the deleterious effects of excess road traffic. To this end, protected conservation status, funding and treatment will be sought. The national park authority will be lobbied to support this, and asked to agree with East Sussex County Council the terms of a special highways policy. With the support of Lewes District Council and the SDNPA a study will also be mounted to explore the wider interpretation of the Localism Act and its statutory instrument in support of the Plan's implementation.

### **TRANS 5** **Prepare detailed traffic and parking plan**

A detailed design, cost and implementation plan will be prepared incorporating the principles proposed herein, and in 'Roads in the South Downs', to prepare for early substantive discussions with SDNPA and ESCC, and to line up other possible sources of funding. This applies both to the traffic management schemes, and to the current proposal for off-street parking (**TRANS 1**). Funding will be sought for this from ESCC (match funding), SDNPA, nationally (including Department for Transport) and locally.

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<sup>88</sup> The Sussex Safer Roads Partnership is made up of Brighton & Hove City Council, East and West Sussex County Councils, Highways England, East and West Fire and Rescue Services and Sussex Police. See [www.susseksaferroads.gov.uk/about](http://www.susseksaferroads.gov.uk/about).

**TRANS 6:**

**Discourage through traffic**

*Through-traffic movements of all kinds should be discouraged because of the damage to the ancient fabric of the villages, the impact on quality of life and the environment, the danger to pedestrians, and the resultant congestion.*

*Supported by the SDNPA, East and West Sussex County Councils will be asked to review the adequacy of main road signing on the surrounding network so that through traffic is persuaded not to pass through the protected zone and particularly the narrow rural lanes, but instead reverts to the primary road network.*

*West Sussex CC must be convinced of the need to improve key junctions on its part of the network where congestion levels presently force through traffic on the western edge to divert through the villages on the secondary network.*

*Commercial HGV traffic movements through the villages will be prohibited and enforced/penalised using number plate recognition technology. Both highway authorities will be lobbied to put pressure on sat nav companies to re-route their devices away from the villages.*

**TRANS 7:**

**Reduce speed and improve pedestrian safety**

*We propose a progressive lowering of speed limits as peripheral roads reach the sensitive parts of the Beacon parishes. Thus, 30mph traffic speed limits will be sought as buffer zones on all outer boundaries. A blanket 20mph limit will be sought within particularly sensitive areas on approaches to the parishes' narrow lanes. In Ditchling: South Street, Beacon Road from the summit, Underhill Lane, Clayton Road, West Street, Lewes Road, the High Street, North End/Common Lane and East End Lane. In Westmeston and Streat: Spatham Lane, Underhill Lane and Streat Lane. Traffic calming methods as set out in LATS such as build outs, speed tables and surface changes (see [Figure 3.4/2](#)) will be applied to help achieve this, as well as advantage being taken of later developments in speed camera and number plate recognition technology. Associated warning signs and gateways will be placed at the buffer zone boundaries. Co-operation will be sought from Sussex Police in the design of any speed calming measures, and their monitoring and enforcement.*

**TRANS 8: Protect countryside roads from the effects of traffic**

To alleviate the impact of through traffic, the parish councils propose the introduction of:

- **Quiet lanes:** designed to make country lanes more amenable for pedestrians, cyclists and horse traffic. Through traffic and speeding are discouraged by applying special calming techniques suited to the rural environment. Techniques include 20mph limits, speed tables, varying verges, soft landscaping, removal of signs and kerbs, and even planting grass strips in the centre of the lane. ESCC advises that it has no policy to introduced such schemes, but local residents are clear that some form of traffic calming has to be applied to certain of our rural routes to reduce speeding and rat-running, and so it is proposed as a topic for the joint working party to consider (see TRANS 3). Lanes suggested for treatment are: Spatham Lane, Streat Lane, Underhill Lane and Beacon Road.<sup>89</sup>
- **Traffic gateways:** provide both a visual and surfacing treatment impact, again incorporating speed tables, to promote speed calming and announce to motorist that they are entering a specially protected area within the SNDP. For country parks (eg the B2112 through Ditchling Common) they also help to alleviate the impact on grazing, wild life and walkers.

**TRANS 9: Improve pedestrian environment in High Street**

Through consultation with ESCC, Ditchling High Street carriageway and footway could be redesigned as a shared space facility, improving pedestrian and shop access with redesigned road surfacing and street furniture, plantings, etc, reinforcing the pedestrian-friendly aspect.

**TRANS 10: Improve local bus services**

Local bus companies will be lobbied for service improvement, particularly service frequency, and the parish councils will work with other interested parties such as Ditchling Museum and Oldland Mill to plan improvements in shuttle bus services. The parishes also welcome the cooperation of SDNPA in improving bus links between the Beacon and Ditchling village, and will seek to provide dedicated parking spaces for bus parking on the new Keymer Road site.

<sup>89</sup> To run from the Beacon top gateway northwards, where the exit from Park Barn Farm housing development will be positioned with its accompanying calming. (see HSG 7A).

**TRANS 11: Provide for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists**

A linked network of foot, cycle and equestrian paths is proposed throughout the three parishes, including a N-S route from Ditchling Common, through the village and onto the Beacon; a new N-S route through Westmeston; and a second E-W route extending from the existing Westmeston Jubilee pathway, eastwards through Streat, and westwards via Ditchling, on to Keymer and thence into West Sussex, where that authority has proposed it could link up with its own proposed routes <sup>(90)</sup> Other access-ways will also be investigated. Specific proposals for new non-vehicular routes should be safeguarded from future development (see **CONS 3**), and all new routes should be placed on the definitive ESCC rights of way map.

Careful design of the network will build in equal accessibility and usability for all user categories, including provision for:

- safe crossing places of busy roads. One particular example is Underhill Lane where it crosses Beacon Road to the west, and exits on to the B2116 to the east at Westmeston to link up with Jubilee pathway. Here, as in other crossing points, speed tables could be incorporated into the crossing that have the added advantage of slowing main road traffic down, in line with policy **TRANS 7**;
- secure cycle parking racks in all car parks, and at locations from the Beacon top through to the centre of Ditchling village;
- Traffic build-outs in North End adjusted to allow cyclists to pass along the kerbside edge.



## **Business and tourism**

### ***BIZ 3: Lobby for faster more reliable broadband***

*All established businesses, whether they be office based or home workers, express frustration with the slow speed and reliability of broadband, since it has a significant effect on business efficiency. Under SD policy SD54, and exploiting the emergent supporting work of ESCC (‘esussex’<sup>90</sup> the Beacon parishes will lobby for the early introduction of high speed networks throughout the three parishes.<sup>91</sup>*

### ***BIZ 4: Provide positive support and leadership for business***

*Ditchling Parish Council will lead and support initiatives such as a local commerce/small business forum to be set up alongside the Visit Ditching consortium that provides a lead in regenerating economic activity in the commercial business and tourism community. The parish councils will support shops to re-open in Ditchling High Street and the role of business in employment generation.*

## **Conservation**

Aspirational policies are presented under three headings:

- (7) historic built environment;
- (8) enhancing ecological networks;
- (9) promote cross boundary working.

Aspirational policies stem from a desire to protect and enhance aspects of the environment, and range from the villages’ historic cores and most of the buildings within them, to the ecological, flora, fauna and wildlife. They are designed to encourage residents and developers to take note of the need to preserve our valuable and vulnerable natural and built environment.

Paragraph numbering continues sequentially from the land use section of this topic.

### ***(7) Historic built environment***

#### ***CONS 15: Identify non-designated heritage assets***

*As part of the wider range of designation local lists play a role in building and reinforcing a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment. They enable the significance of any building or site on the list (in its own right and as a contributor to the local planning authority’s wider strategic planning objectives), to be better taken into account in planning applications affecting the building or site or its setting.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, in conjunction with SDNPA and Lewes DC, a list of non-designated heritage assets will be prepared, and a review undertaken of local listings with a view to extension.*

<sup>90</sup> [eastsussex.gov.uk/business/broadband](http://eastsussex.gov.uk/business/broadband)

<sup>91</sup> BT advises the parish council that this will be addressed during the period June-July 2017

<sup>92</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7>

## (8) Enhancing ecological networks

Whilst there exists within the plan area a mosaic of habitat types and wildlife corridors, there will always be opportunities to improve the management and quality of these habitats, and to create new patches and corridors of habitat to strengthen the ecological network and enable wildlife species to move more easily across the landscape. For example, a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) has been identified by Sussex Local Nature Partnership<sup>93</sup> on the Stanmer and Ditchling Downs which requires additional and enhanced chalk grassland habitats to improve the overall health of this habitat in the area. The SDNPA is also preparing a *Habitat Connectivity Study*<sup>94</sup> that will identify where additional habitat creation and enhancement is required within the National Park in order to improve ecological functioning.

Ultimately, achievement of improved ecological networks will require voluntary action on the part of landowners but there is also a potential role for any new development to not only prevent damage to existing habitats, but where possible, to make a positive contribution to the enhancement of wider ecological networks (for example, through the creation of new habitats of a suitable type in and around the development as part of its design and construction). This will support the general objective within this plan to see not only the protection, but where possible the enhancement, of the valued natural environment of the parishes. The following policy provides appropriate advice:

### **CONS 16:** *Enhance ecological networks*

*Particular encouragement will be given to schemes that enhance the ecological network of wildlife through the creation and/or enhancement of habitats and the connections between them (particularly where this creation and enhancement is of a type and location identified within the forthcoming SDNPA habitat connectivity study).*

### **CONS 17:** *Enhance ecological network mapping*

*Community led projects to identify and map the location of hedges and other green corridors, in conjunction with the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, will be encouraged as a means of improving the spatial ecological data for the parishes.*

*A fairly good spatial data set of the components of the ecological networks in the parishes is in place and held by the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre. However, a significant gap exists in terms of mapped information on hedgerows and other ecological corridors. Work to identify and map these ecological corridors will be encouraged, and will in turn provide more accurate information with which to inform the design and location of any new development. This information can also be used to enhance the ecological connectivity within the parishes, by informing landowners of where the retention, enhancement or creation of new habitat corridors would be beneficial to local wildlife.*

<sup>93</sup> <http://sussexlnp.org.uk/boas.php>

<sup>94</sup> [www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Appendix-4-Evidence-Base-Studies.pdf](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Appendix-4-Evidence-Base-Studies.pdf) page 428

**(9) Promote cross-boundary working**

**CONS 18**

**Promote cross-boundary working to create better green links**

*Ditchling Country Park and Ditchling Common, Purchase Wood, West Wood and inter-connecting green corridors provide important areas of accessible green areas for the adjacent communities of Burgess Hill, Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green. These communities are in Mid Sussex District and are expanding in size as new housing areas are constructed. Cross-boundary working to encourage the creation of new footpaths and bridleways between these new developments and the green spaces within the Beacon parishes will be supported. This will not only better connect the residents of these expanding urban areas to the surrounding countryside, but will strengthen the future relevance and value of these green areas in the wider locality and should form part of any plan for their future conservation and protection.*

*Cross boundary working with the neighbouring communities beyond the parish boundaries to protect, improve and enhance connections between Ditchling Common, Ditchling Common Country Park, Purchase Wood and West Wood will be encouraged.*

## Community infrastructure

### **COM 3: Secure funding for community infrastructure**

The Parish Councils will where appropriate provide, attract or help facilitate funding which enables community uses and community infrastructure to become viable e.g. through increased funding from statutory bodies such as the SDNPA, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), local charities or local fund raising.

This policy supports statutory Policy COM 1 by providing, attracting or facilitating additional funding which may be essential to support and enhance community infrastructure. This will help prevent land or buildings falling into disrepair or being lost for all time to non-community uses. Such funding could be attracted from a variety of public, private or charitable sources including SDNPA, the local authorities, local health trusts and national and local agencies such as Sport England. Match funding grants from other sources will be sought.

### **COM 4: Identify and register assets of community value**

In consultation with owners and appropriate community groups the Parish Councils will identify buildings and land at risk of being lost to the community. In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the councils may then submit applications to Lewes District Council for inclusion on the LDC register of 'assets of community value'. The Parish Councils will regularly review the register and, following consultation, request LDC to add or remove assets as appropriate. Community assets in this context include shops.

This policy supports statutory Policy COM 1 where planning powers alone may be insufficient in safeguarding the existing use on land or within a building.<sup>95</sup>

### **COM 5: Agree policy delivery between the three parishes**

The three Beacon parishes will agree joint working arrangements in planning and implementing NDP policies. These arrangements will also apply to other organisations involved in the delivery of policies.

This policy is necessary to help ensure consistency of approach across the NDP area. Examples include improving transport links between the 3 parishes, supporting neighbouring parishes in objecting to specific planning applications that do not conform with the NDP and drawing up and reviewing lists of "assets of community value" as in COM 4. This policy is also relevant to Section 5 (Implementation).

<sup>95</sup> Where an owner intends to sell an asset which appears on the register, they have to delay marketing for a period of 6 months to allow a local community organization or a local Council the opportunity to bid for that asset. The owner can appeal against the listing to Lewes DC and they are not obliged to accept such offers if they are of insufficient value

**COM 6:**

**Prepare joint Local Volunteering Plan**

*The three Parish Councils will prepare a Local Volunteering Plan (LVP) that will promote and help deliver the vision and policies contained in the NDP. The LVP will draw on best volunteering practice elsewhere and each element of the LVP will be agreed where necessary in consultation with the appropriate statutory agencies, local clubs, societies and charities.*

This policy is a response to strong and mainly anecdotal evidence that local organisations have been finding it increasingly difficult to retain and attract volunteers. Without these people, it will become impossible to fully deliver NDP policies particularly when local authorities, local health trusts and other public bodies have severely limited resources. An LVP will help local bodies (e.g. by running local campaigns) to recruit volunteers whose time, effort and expertise will be critical in planning and securing successful outcomes. The successful local campaign in 2015 to save the Ditchling Community Post Office clearly showed how important is the role of local volunteers.

All neighbourhood plan documents and supporting material are held on:  
[www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk](http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk)



*View from Ditchling Beacon, looking east along the ridge of the South Downs over Westmeston and Streat*