



2015-2031

# Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan





# Foreword

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A Neighbourhood Plan is a new type of planning document, introduced in the Localism Act 2011, which allows local people to have a say in the future growth and development of their community.

The Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan sets out a number of policies all of which have the aim of preserving the unique characteristics of Ashurst Wood, whilst welcoming improvements and change that will ensure the vibrancy of the community into the future. Policies cover the protection of the countryside and local amenities, support for local businesses and provision of new sustainable housing development. Although construction of homes is a controversial issue, we need new homes to contribute towards the wider need in the district and to ensure a supply of suitable affordable and market homes for local residents who wish to stay in the village close to family, friends or employment.

The Plan and its supporting background documents were prepared, following significant public consultation, by a Steering Group set up by Ashurst Wood Village Council (formerly Ashurst Wood Parish Council) and consisting of:

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In addition the following have made valuable contributions to the work of the Steering Group:

Robert Lewin	Sue Masey	Dan Chase
Trevor Dawn	Sheila Latham	Sally Beaumont
Susan Wellerd	Don Sinclair	Brian Phillips
David Loveday	Derek Wailes	Karen Lindsay
Caroline Leet	Rebecca Roberts	

as well as a number of residents who assisted with door to door delivery and collection of the Residents' Survey.

On behalf of the parish of Ashurst Wood I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the project. I would also like to thank the following for their assistance and support:

- John Hoad from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England for initial advice and workshop under Supporting Communities and Neighbourhoods in Planning Scheme operating until March 2013;
- Stella Scrivener, Brian Whiteley, Darren Carroll and Rachel Hogger from Planning Aid for their advice and practical support including help with consultations, the Character Appraisal and Sustainability Appraisal;

- Ann Skippers, our Planning Consultant; for giving us the benefit of her vast knowledge and experience in planning and neighbourhood planning, and for extensive help and guidance with drafting documents and policies;
- Mark Fessey and Alex White from URS /AECOM for the Regulation 14 Sustainability Appraisal;
- The Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning programme, funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government and administered by Locality in partnership with the Royal Town Planning Institute (including Planning Aid), the Community Development Foundation, Urban Vision, Eden Project and URS; which funded the assistance from Planning Aid and provided grant funding to help with Consultants' fees;
- Mid Sussex District Council officers and Councillors for guidance and encouragement, in particular Claire Tester, Mark Bristow, Andrew Marsh and Emma Bennett.

Finally, the Village Council and the Steering Group would like to thank all those residents who have participated in the public consultation events, responded to the survey and shown support for the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Jenny Forbes**

Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  
Ashurst Wood Village Council

March 2016

# Contents

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<b>Foreword .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>List of Policies .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 About Neighbourhood Plans .....	5
1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Period .....	5
1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Area .....	5
<b>2. Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 The Plan Process .....	6
2.2 Legal Requirements.....	7
2.3 Sustainability Appraisal .....	8
2.4 Community Engagement.....	9
<b>3. About Ashurst Wood .....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 History.....	10
3.2 Population.....	11
3.3 Environment.....	11
3.4 Housing.....	12
3.5 Local Economy .....	13
3.6 Highways, Transport and Communication.....	13
3.7 Community Facilities.....	14
<b>4. Vision .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5. Policies.....</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	15
5.2 Countryside and Environment.....	16
5.3 Housing.....	21
5.4 Local Economy.....	32
5.5 Highways, Transport and Communication.....	35
5.6 Infrastructure .....	40
<b>6. Monitoring and Review.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Appendix 1: Maps.....	43
Appendix 2: Supporting Documents and Evidence Base .....	46

## List of Policies

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ASW1	Protection of the Countryside
ASW2	Preventing Coalescence
ASW3	Allotments
ASW4	Recreation Space
ASW5	Sites for New Homes
ASW6	Land between 98 and 104 Maypole Road
ASW7	Mount Pleasant Nursery, Cansiron Lane
ASW8	Willow Trees and Spinney Hill, Lewes Road
ASW9	Wealden House, Lewes Road (EDF Site)
ASW10	Wealden House, Lewes Road (Life Improvement Centre)
ASW11	Development within the Built Up Area Boundary
ASW12	Residential Development outside the Built Up Area Boundary
ASW13	Residential Development on Garden Land
ASW14	Design and Character
ASW15	Affordable Housing
ASW16	Ivy Dene Lane Industrial Estate
ASW17	Village Businesses
ASW18	New and Expanding Businesses
ASW19	Brambletye School
ASW20	Impact of New Development on Traffic
ASW21	Parking Provision
ASW22	High Speed Broadband
ASW23	Infrastructure

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 About Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of measures allowing communities to shape the future of their area and to deliver the sustainable development that they need. One of these measures is the Neighbourhood Plan. This is a new type of planning document, which can set policies for the use of land and rules for local development. A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with higher level planning policy at district, national and European level and must be based on evidence. Following community consultation, it will be examined by an independent Examiner and must be approved by residents at a local referendum. The completed Plan will become part of the development plan for the local area and will be used in determining planning applications.

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to stop development. There is a requirement for new homes nationally and every Neighbourhood Plan must plan for new growth.

Ashurst Wood Village Council resolved to prepare a Plan so that the community could work together to shape the future of the village and have a say about where new homes should go and what they should look like, how the local economy should be supported, how the countryside and open spaces of the village should be protected and how local facilities and infrastructure could be improved.

## 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Period

The Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan will be for the period from 2015 to 2031.

## 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Area

The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is the whole of the civil parish of Ashurst Wood, as shown in Map 1, Appendix 1. The local planning authority, Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), formally designated the parish as a Neighbourhood Area on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012.



## 2. Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

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### 2.1 The Plan Process

The diagram below shows an overview of the Plan preparation process.





The Plan process has been led by Ashurst Wood Village Council through a small Steering Group made up of Village Councillors and local residents. Preparatory work included attending meetings, workshops and conferences to learn more about the planning system, calling for possible housing sites, making contact with landowners and finding out residents' views. The Group has had the benefit of free advice and support from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and Planning Aid and was awarded a grant to enable it to employ a Planning Consultant.

## **2.2 Legal Requirements**

A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with a number of conditions, known as the Basic Conditions. These require that the Plan:

- Has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State,
- Contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development,
- Is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area,
- Does not breach, and is compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations, and
- Is compatible with Convention Rights defined in the Human Rights Act 1998.

### ***National Policies and Advice***

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) is the principal document in which national planning policies are contained. Government guidance is provided on the Planning Practice Guidance website.

### ***Sustainable Development***

The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

### ***Development Plan for the area***

The local planning authority for the area is Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) and the relevant Plan is the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004.

MSDC is in the process of preparing a new District Plan. The Pre-Submission Draft District Plan was published for consultation in June 2015 and will be submitted to the Government in the autumn of 2015.

Ashurst Wood lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The High Weald AONB Management Plan was adopted by MSDC in March 2014 and covers

the period 2014 to 2019.

### ***EU obligations***

MSDC has determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan will be required under the EU SEA Directive.

This is incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). More detail is given about the SA in section 2.3.

The EU Habitats and Wild Bird Directives provide protection for important habitats and species.

Ashdown Forest is located to the south of Ashurst Wood within Wealden District. It is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to the important heathland habitats present and is classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the presence of breeding nightjars and dartford warblers. It is a site of European Nature Conservation Importance comprising heathland and woodland habitats of around 3,000Ha.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment carried out by MSDC as part of their work on the emerging District Plan concluded that new housing developments within 7km of the Forest would have a harmful impact on the Forest due to increasing numbers of visitors. Developers will be required to mitigate this impact by providing or paying towards the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace sites (SANGs) and paying financial contributions towards a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy. The entire area covered by this Plan falls within the 7km zone.

MSDC has determined that a full Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan will be required.

### ***Human Rights***

The Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and be compatible with the rights protected by the European Convention of Human Rights, including those dealing with privacy, discrimination and property.

The ***Basic Conditions Statement*** explains in detail how the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan complies with the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements.

## **2.3 Sustainability Appraisal**

A Sustainability Appraisal incorporating SEA has been prepared. It is available to read on the Village Council's website [www.ashurstwood-vc.gov.uk](http://www.ashurstwood-vc.gov.uk) and can be viewed at the Village Council's office during normal working hours.

Although a SA is not a legal requirement, it was felt that a SA would assist with the assessment of the social and economic impacts of the Plan as well as its environmental impacts giving a more complete and rounded assessment. The SA will also help to demonstrate how the Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development; one of the basic conditions that the Plan must comply with. In addition MSDC was keen for a SA to be carried out.

A Scoping Report was published for statutory consultation in December 2013.

During the Plan preparation process, the draft policies were assessed against the sustainability objectives that emerged through the SA process. During the site assessment process, the proposed sites were tested against sustainability objectives. The SA presents the appraisal of this draft Plan and its alternatives and demonstrates how the Plan meets the sustainability objectives of the Parish.

In Ashurst Wood, sustainable development means that which:

- reduces the environmental impact of development through the reuse of previously developed land and buildings wherever possible;
- increases opportunities to walk, cycle, or use public transport;
- contributes towards the creation of a balanced community that meets the needs of its residents with appropriate and accessible infrastructure and facilities;
- supports the local economy and the creation of jobs in order to reduce travel to other areas.

## 2.4 Community Engagement

The Steering Group has informed and consulted the community widely since mid-2012.

Engagement has included Calls for Sites, consultation events, a residents' survey and a business survey.

All consultation information has been placed on the Village Council's website and updates have been included in its quarterly Newsletters, which are hand-delivered to every household. Presentations were given at Annual Village Meetings in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

The ***Consultation Statement*** provides a comprehensive report showing who was consulted and how, along with evidence of how comments were considered and taken into account in the preparation of the Plan.

## 3. About Ashurst Wood

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This section contains a description of Ashurst Wood and outlines the key issues that have influenced the Plan.



### 3.1 History

Ashurst Wood is not recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) but the neighbouring Manors of Shovelstrode (to the north) and Brambletye (to the south) are. Ashurst Wood lies at the junction of a trackway linking these two Manors and an ancient ridgeway track (Hammerwood Road-Cansiron Lane) which is more than 5000 years old.

The name Ashurst Wood (Aesehyrst Wilde) dates back to medieval times (1164) when it referred to an area of common or waste land at the top of Wall Hill.

Residents of the early village were mainly labourers from nearby farms. The village began to grow during the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the Church, School and Post Office were built and the Maypole became the second public house, joining the Three Crowns which appears in records from 1725.

Following the arrival of the railway in East Grinstead in 1855, the village grew further as wealthy people purchased and built large family houses and estates, employing local residents to work for them.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, agricultural work declined. More houses were built and residents started to travel to work outside the village.

Ashurst Wood parish is located at the very north-eastern corner of the district of Mid Sussex and the county of West Sussex. It is surrounded on three sides by the district of Wealden in the county of East Sussex.

The civil parish of Forest Row was established in 1894 and Ashurst Wood was a ward within this parish, in the county of East Sussex. In 1934 Ashurst Wood was transferred to the East Grinstead Urban District Council, still in East Sussex. In 1974, East Grinstead, together with most of Ashurst Wood, became part of the new Mid Sussex district within the county of West Sussex. Ashurst Wood was a ward within East Grinstead Town Council. In 1993 further boundary changes led to the expansion of the village when some 20 houses in Cansiron Lane along with Brambletye School became part of West Sussex.

The Ashurst Wood Community Association was formed in 1977 and was instrumental in the establishment of Ashurst Wood Parish Council, which came into being in April 2000, when the Ashurst Wood ward became a separate civil parish.

The parish is one of the smallest in West Sussex, covering an area of just 251.32 ha, or slightly less than one square mile.

### **3.2 Population**

The 2011 census records a population of 1833 residents; a number which includes 83 students and staff living at Brambletye Boarding School and 36 patients and staff at Truscott Manor Care Home, but does not include 44 schoolchildren and students living away from the village during term time.

The qualifications and skills level of the local population is generally high. Of all residents aged 16 and over, 35.6% are qualified to Level 4 degree level or above (Mid Sussex: 33.6%; England: 27.4%).

Ashurst Wood is not a deprived area when measured against national statistics: all residents were within the lowest decile in the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation. However some residents find it difficult to access the benefits enjoyed by others, and there are some members of the community, particularly the elderly and those who live alone, who do not enjoy the same level of prosperity or access to services.

### **3.3 Environment**

The whole of the parish is situated in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated in 1983. Ashurst Wood is typical of the area, being a ridge-top village immediately surrounded by an attractive small-scale landscape containing a mosaic of small farms and woodlands, and sunken lanes.

The community cherishes the far-reaching views both in and out of the village and wishes to protect them. There is a wish to preserve access to open spaces and green spaces in and surrounding the village, and to ensure that local footpaths and bridleways are maintained.





There is a strong desire to preserve the development gap between Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead and to avoid coalescence between these two settlements and also between Ashurst Wood and Forest Row to the south.

A number of residents have expressed the wish for the provision of allotments, should an appropriate site become available.

### 3.4 Housing

The 2011 Census recorded 723 dwellings in the village with a high proportion of home ownership (77%) and family homes (40% detached and 36% semi-detached).

There are 191 single person households in the parish (more than 25%).

Only 23.4% of households are in the lower council tax bands A to C (compared with 34.7% in Mid Sussex and 66.2% in England as a whole) and 28.2% are in bands F to G (compared with 20.6% in Mid Sussex: 20.6% and 9.1% in England).



Since 2011 the housing stock has increased by 17, including a development of 12 affordable homes for local people on a rural exception site.

There are also three recent planning permissions - for a new bungalow and a pair of semi-detached homes.

During consultations, concerns have been expressed about the shortage of affordable homes for those wishing to remain in the village, particularly young adults wishing to leave home and young families. There is also a need for suitable accommodation for older residents.

Factors such as location, design, character, density, affordability and housing mix are all important with regards to any future development. There is a desire to preserve the distinctive characteristics of the village.

Residents confirm that they would prefer development on infill sites within the built up area and on brownfield sites rather than on greenfield sites wherever this is possible.

### **3.5 Local Economy**

The 2011 Census records show that 912 residents are economically active. This is around 72% of those of working age, the remainder being either full time students, homemakers or retired. 50% of economically active residents were in full-time employment, 22% part-time and 21% self-employed, with 4% being unemployed and 3% students with jobs.

The recent business survey shows that local businesses employ around 221 people, of whom around 92 are Ashurst Wood residents (plus 14 paperboys and girls), confirming that a large majority of working residents are employed outside the parish. The largest employer in the parish is Brambletye School. Other businesses that provide employment include the two village pubs, the village store, Post Office, hairdressers, ironmongers/forge, butchers, Pre- and Primary School, accountant and businesses located in the small Ivy Dene industrial estate and at Wealden House. The nearest employment centres outside the village are at East Grinstead and Forest Row, and many residents commute to Crawley/Gatwick, Croydon or London.

Consultation shows that residents wish to encourage new businesses, within the limitations of availability of business premises, and wish to retain and support existing businesses in the village.

### **3.6 Highways, Transport and Communication**

Like many rural villages, Ashurst Wood has narrow roads and lanes, often with no pavements. Inappropriate parking is often a problem in the village e.g. across private driveways, on pavements, at junctions and in narrow roads. There is a perception that vehicles drive through the village too quickly, and pedestrians feel vulnerable in many places where they have to walk in the road. There are concerns about heavy goods vehicles driving through the village roads. Residents would like to see traffic calming measures, including the possibility of a 20 mph speed limit.

Community engagement has made it clear that the problematic combination of difficult junctions, narrow roads, lack of footpaths, and traffic pressure on existing road infrastructure should be taken into account when considering the siting of any future development.





There are three bus routes serving the village: between East Grinstead and Haywards Heath/Brighton; Tunbridge Wells and Crawley and Uckfield and East Grinstead. There are limited services in the evenings and there are sometimes poor connections with train times. The Village Council organises a weekly shopping bus service for elderly residents.

Car ownership and use is high. The 2011 Census records that only 8.4% of households have no car (compared with Mid Sussex: 13.6% and England: 23.8%), and 49.9% have two or more cars (Mid Sussex: 44.2%; England: 32.0%). The majority of working residents travel to work by car, with only 8 walking or cycling. There are 75 rail commuters, and the Residents' Survey shows that the majority of them travel to the station at East Grinstead by car.

High Speed Broadband became available in the village during the summer of 2015. Upgrading of the service was considered to be essential.

### 3.7 Community Facilities

Ashurst Wood has a number of community facilities and services used and much valued by residents such as: local shops, including a Post Office; Pre- and Primary School; community buildings (Village Centre (village hall), Church and Church hall,



John Pears Pavilion, Recreation Ground Pavilion); two recreation grounds, including tennis courts and playground. A mobile library visits once a month. However the nearest secondary school, doctor's surgery, main shops and railway station are located in either East Grinstead or Forest Row, 2 to 3 miles away.

## 4. Vision

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The following Vision statement is a result of issues raised during community engagement.

**To preserve and protect Ashurst Wood's characteristics as a rural village, while at the same time ensuring that it remains a vibrant, safe, and welcoming community, and an attractive location for people to live.**

## 5. Policies

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### 5.1. Introduction

This part of the Plan contains the Policies that will help to meet the community's vision for Ashurst Wood and address key issues that have been raised during consultation. Policies relate to the use and development of land.

The policies will be taken into account by the local planning authority, Mid Sussex District Council, when determining planning applications. Applications will also be determined with reference to national policy in the NPPF and the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004, which will be replaced in due course by the emerging District Plan.

Each policy category is preceded by an introductory section, which outlines the background and intent of the policy and refers to relevant evidence contained in the supporting documents and other evidence base material, which is listed in Appendix 2. The supporting documents are available to read on the Village Council's website [www.ashurstwood-vc.gov.uk](http://www.ashurstwood-vc.gov.uk) and can be viewed at the Village Council's office during normal working hours.

The website also provides copies of or links to the remaining evidence base documents, or explains where they are available.

### 5.2 Countryside and Environment

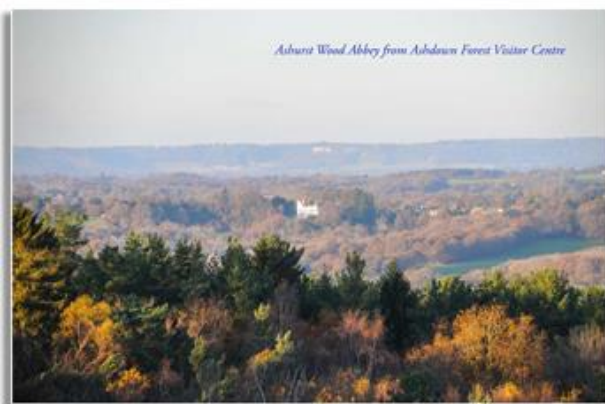
#### Objectives

- To protect and respect the landscape, wildlife and countryside of the Parish, and cherish its natural beauty
- To minimise the impact of any future development on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB
- To ensure Ashurst Wood remains a village and avoid coalescence with East Grinstead
- To recognise the importance of the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC.

## Background and Intent

The distinctive nature of Ashurst Wood village is, in large part, defined by the countryside and environment within which it is located. It is typical of the High Weald AONB area, being a ridge-top village immediately surrounded by an attractive small-scale landscape containing a mosaic of small farms and woodlands, and sunken lanes. The ridge on which it is situated is particularly prominent, at 400 feet (122 m) above sea level. This location provides for many commanding and attractive views looking out from the village, towards the village, and from local rights of way, with extensive views reaching as far as the North Downs to the north, and across the Ashdown Forest over a wide arc to the south, almost from west to east.

There is a rich and varied pattern of habitats, species and biodiversity, recognised by the extensive and varied landscape and nature conservation designations that cover land within the parish. The parish is made up of large areas of open spaces, with farmland and ancient and ghyll woodland, and has one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Mills Rocks, which is also a Local Geological Site (LGS), as well as two Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). A number of protected species have been reported in and around the village, as recorded in the *Desktop Biodiversity Report regarding Land at Ashurst Wood Parish* dated 7 July 2014 and prepared by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre.



The open countryside which surrounds the residential areas is easily accessible to the north, south, east and west, from many points in the village. The local network of bridleways and footpaths facilitates access to the countryside. Footpaths include the Vanguard Way, which passes through the parish, the Sussex Border path which runs along the parish's southern boundary and the High Weald Landscape Trail. The

footpaths also link up with the Sustrans road traffic free cycle path that runs along the old railway line, and links East Grinstead to Groombridge, as well as the Weir Wood Reservoir to the south, which is a Local Nature Reserve.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty, while taking into account the needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interests of rural areas (*Section 82 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and section 37 Countryside Act 1968*).

The NPPF, paragraph 115 states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs which are given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations.



## Coalescence

The majority of the dwellings (some 69%) and population are located in the defined Built Up Area, as shown in Map 2 (Appendix 1). There are low-density residential areas to the west of the parish, along both sides of the A22 Lewes Road, and to the east along part of Hammerwood Road and Cansiron Lane. The arrangement of the parish boundary means that there are a number of residents with an Ashurst Wood address who are in Forest Row parish (and Wealden district), some of whom have to pass through Ashurst Wood when they travel to and from their homes.

There is a defined strategic gap between Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead, as described in MSDC's *Technical Report (no. 8), 2001*, prepared as part of the evidence base for the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004. Although there is residential development along the south west side of the Lewes Road on both sides of the parish boundary, there is a distinct separation to the north west of Hectors Lane and the areas further north and south of the Lewes Road remain undeveloped.

East Grinstead Town Council has confirmed a similar desire to avoid coalescence and to maintain its existing strategic and local gaps, including the gap between East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood, and the Village Council will collaborate with the Town Council in order to achieve this shared policy objective. This is in line with the High Weald AONB Management Plan S2 Objective (to protect the historic pattern of settlement).

There is no defined gap between the parishes of Ashurst Wood and Forest Row. In Maypole Road, Cansiron Lane and Hammerwood Road, residential development extends to the boundary with Forest Row. On the other side of the boundary, in Forest Row parish, residential development is more spread out, comprising a number of farms and small groups of houses. This helps to provide a visual separation between the built up areas of the two parishes.



A **Character Assessment** of the village has been prepared as part of the evidence base for this Plan. This is an analysis of the character of the village with reference to a number of considerations, including landscape setting, layout, topography, roads and routes, green and natural features, important views, buildings and details. While the buildings in the parish are of many differing styles, there are several consistencies, such as the widespread use of boundary hedging, the predominance of red brick walls and red clay tiled roofs, generous frontages to many houses and narrow roads; all of which contribute to the rural feel of the village.

### **Allotments**

After the second World War, an area of land next to the Primary School was turned into allotments for residents as part of the Government's "Dig for Victory" campaign. In 1995 the land was returned to the school for use as a playing field. There are now no allotments in the village, although a number of residents rent allotments in neighbouring parishes.

Responses to the Residents' Survey indicated that over 100 households would be interested in renting an allotment if there were some in the village.

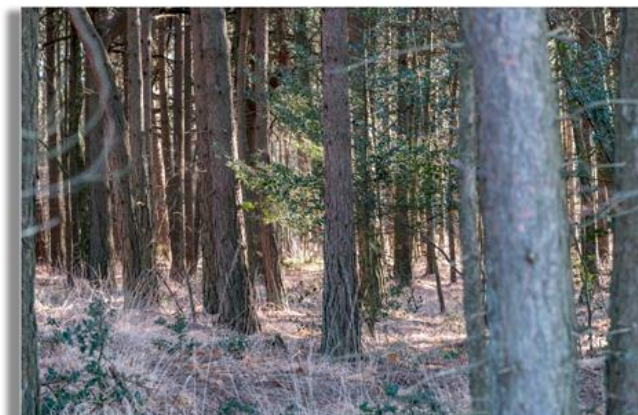
Parish Councils have a legal duty to seek to provide allotments when there is sufficient demand and Ashurst Wood Village Council has been seeking suitable land for some time and will continue to do so. A site of 0.4 ha would be suitable to accommodate 20 'half plots' and associated paths and parking.

Provision of allotments would also support Objective S1 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (to reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside).

### **Ashdown Forest**

The parish benefits from its proximity to the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, both for the views it provides and for the space it provides for residents to walk with families and dogs and to ride horses.

The Residents' Survey shows that the majority of dog owners walk their dogs regularly in the parish, but many will visit the Forest on an occasional basis. MSDC is establishing a strategic SANG site in East Grinstead, that will be funded by contributions from developments within the



Ashdown Forest

7 km zone of influence. Developers have the alternative of providing a local SANG to serve a development and such a site within the parish would be an asset to the community and would reduce the need to travel by car to sites elsewhere.

### **Recreation Facilities**

There are two recreation spaces that are valued by the community: John Pears Field and the Recreation Ground.

John Pears Field (also known as John Pears Recreation Ground) was given by the late Molly Pears to the then East Grinstead Urban District Council in 1974, for the purposes of recreation and physical training. Ownership was later transferred to MSDC and tennis courts, a children's play area and a small car park have been added over the years. A new pavilion was built in 2005 to replace one that had been burned down. The Village Council manages the facilities on behalf of MSDC. The field is popular with dog and recreational walkers. It is also used by the local youth football club and for community events which have included summer fairs, music/beer festivals and Jubilee celebrations. The Pavilion is used by the Village Council and the village's Youth and Tennis Clubs and is available for private hire. The tennis courts are used regularly by local residents including members of the Tennis Club.

The Recreation Ground is owned and managed by MSDC. It is in a central position and easily accessible for walkers. The ground was used by the local cricket club (disbanded in 1999) and has been used for many years by Ashurst Wood Youth and Senior Football clubs. There is a pavilion, which is in need of renovation. There is also a children's play area. There are no parking facilities, so when the ground is in use there can be parking problems along Hammerwood Road and in other nearby roads.

## **POLICIES**

### **Policy ASW 1 - Protection of the Countryside**

Outside of the Built Up Area Boundary, which is defined in Map 1, priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside from inappropriate development. A proposal for development will only be permitted:

- (a) in exceptional circumstances for essential utility infrastructure where no other feasible alternative site is available,  
  
**or** where
- (b) Specific provision has been made in this Plan or the proposal is in accordance with other planning policies applying to the area, **and**
- (c) The proposal would conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty,

having regard to the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan, **and**

- (d) It would maintain the character and appearance of the countryside and its distinction from the Built Up Area, **and**
- (e) It demonstrates good quality design, which respects the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area, and meets the criteria set out in Policy 14 where appropriate.

#### **Policy ASW 2 - Preventing Coalescence**

Development will not generally be permitted outside the Built Up Area Boundary if, individually or cumulatively, it would result in an increase in coalescence between Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead or Ashurst Wood and Forest Row or reducing the separate identity of each of these settlements by:

- (a) Reducing the openness and visual break between Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead or between Ashurst Wood and Forest Row, or
- (b) Increasing the intensification of development within existing curtilages.

#### **Policy ASW 3 - Allotments**

Proposals for new allotments either within, adjoining or in close proximity to the Built Up Area Boundary of Ashurst Wood will be supported, provided suitable access and adequate off-street parking can be satisfactorily provided.

#### **Policy ASW 4 - Recreation Space**

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for buildings or equipment or other development at the Recreation Ground or John Pears Field which would enhance the enjoyment of these areas will be supported provided design is of high quality and respects the setting of these areas.

Proposals for development that would result in the loss of the whole or part of the Recreation Ground or John Pears Field will not generally be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances for essential utility infrastructure where no other feasible alternative site is available or unless equivalent or enhanced replacement facilities are provided in a convenient and accessible



location for residents of Ashurst Wood.

## 5.3 Housing

### Objectives

- To ensure an appropriate mix of housing for local needs, including affordable housing
- To identify specific sites for housing to help meet local needs.

### Background and Intent

Ashurst Wood is an attractive place to live due to the surrounding AONB countryside combined with accessibility to larger towns, travel hubs and employment areas. There are many long-term residents of the village, including families going back several generations.

There is a growing elderly population and house prices are higher than the national average. Older residents do not wish to move from the village, but a number would like to move to smaller homes that are more suitable for their circumstances. As a result, some remain in larger homes that could be more suitable for family accommodation.

There is a long-standing need for affordable housing for local people, particularly for young adults wishing to live independently and for young families.

Consultations have shown that residents want Ashurst Wood to remain a village and that its character should not be harmed by inappropriate new housing development, particularly that which might add to traffic and parking problems around the village.

There is limited space for new development within the built up area boundary as many of the roads are narrow with no pavements and many houses within the area have inadequate parking facilities, leading to on-street parking.

Residents value the countryside and wish to protect it from inappropriate development. 92% of respondents to the Residents' Survey in 2013 said that new homes should be built on previously developed land wherever possible.

Yet the majority of residents accept the need for new homes. The survey showed that 38% felt 16 to be an appropriate target, while 23% favoured a target between 16 and 30. 11% said none should be built, while 12% wanted 30 or more. There is a desire for a mixture of housing types, with highest support for small family homes for sale followed by affordable homes for local people to rent, and lowest support for large family homes for sale.

Residents state that good design is important and new houses should not have a harmful impact on existing homes.

There are currently 740 dwellings in the village with planning permission in place for three more (November 2014). The majority of homes are owner occupied.

There are 77 units of affordable housing, including one shared ownership dwelling and 12 new homes on a rural exception site. 54 units have been sold under the right to buy scheme since 1990.

Our Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure a supply of sufficient homes to meet local needs and contribute to the retention of a sustainable community. An appropriate housing mix must suit elderly residents as well as first time buyers and those needing affordable homes. Valued parts of the landscape will be protected by building as far as possible on brownfield sites or sites where development will not have a harmful impact on the countryside and AONB.

The NPPF, paragraph 14 outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 115 states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, and paragraph 116 states that planning permission should be refused for major developments in an AONB except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

### **Identifying Housing Needs**

As local planning authority, MSDC has determined the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for the district using projected growth figures provided by the Government. In its Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), which was updated in June 2015, MSDC set an OAN figure for the district of 11,152. The emerging District Plan provides for 11,050 new homes in the district by 2031. A target for Ashurst Wood based on a straightforward proportionate share would be 144 new homes.

However, the objective figures do not take account of existing commitments (planning permissions already granted) or the proposed large development at Burgess Hill that

is part of the emerging District Plan or, indeed, a number of other factors that mean that it is not feasible or necessarily the best or most positive way to plan to share homes out equally between different parts of the district.

In considering the housing requirements for the Neighbourhood Plan, a lengthy consideration of all relevant factors has been carried out, including the need to provide local affordable housing; these are explained in more detail in the document, ***Housing for the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan*** which forms part of the evidence base for this Plan.

The conclusion reached was that the Neighbourhood Plan should plan for at least **62** new homes between 2015 and 2031.

**Housing Supply**

A number of sites were assessed for their suitability and availability for housing development during the Plan period. The ***Report on the Assessment of Potential Housing Sites*** explains the methodology used and sets out the individual assessments. The report’s recommendations reflect the importance placed by the community on the reuse of previously developed land and the protection of the surrounding countryside. Sites identified for allocation are:

Site	Approximate Capacity
Land between 98- 104 Maypole Road	5
Mount Pleasant Nursery, Cansiron Lane	3
Willow Trees, Lewes Road	2 - 4
Spinney Hill, Lewes Road	2 - 4
Wealden House (EDF)	50+
Wealden House (LIC)	unknown
<b>Total</b>	<b>62+</b>

**Windfalls and Commitments**

Windfall sites are those not specifically identified or allocated for housing in a local development plan. All new developments within the village in recent years have been on windfall sites.

It is therefore anticipated that windfall sites will continue to provide a steady supply of housing over the Plan period given this historic trend.

As at November 2014, there are planning permissions for 3 dwellings in place. One is for a bungalow in Woods Hill Lane and one for a pair of semi-detached houses close to the Maypole public house.

**The Plan’s Approach**

A number of policies allocate sites. Each of the site allocation policies have a number of criteria designed to ensure that new development reflects and respects the character of Ashurst Wood and to enable it to integrate into the prevailing character of the locality in which it is located as identified in the ***Character Assessment*** which helps to identify the key characteristics of our parish.

Gardens are an important feature of the locality helping to integrate built development into the landscape setting of this AONB village. Therefore any new development should reflect the prevailing pattern and grain of development as described in the ***Character Assessment***.



Ashurst Wood

These measures will help to ensure that a high standard of development and design is achieved in Ashurst Wood and will discourage development that looks out of place and is poorly integrated with its surroundings.

Policies 9 and 10 relate to Wealden House, Lewes Road. These sites are currently in business use,

but are located in a predominantly residential area. Wealden House (EDF site) is occupied by EDF and it is understood that the site is unlikely to be attractive to other potential business uses because of its configuration. Given its location residential use would be acceptable on this site. The Life Improvement Centre subject of Policy 10 is currently occupied by a number of different users. Whilst Policy 10 supports residential use on the site, it does not preclude another business use on the site, but it is felt that residential use would be preferential to the Manor House potentially being vacant at some point in the future.

The site allocation policies, together with other Plan policies, are intended to ensure that a high quality of design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings is achieved in line with this core planning principle in the NPPF.

Policies 11 and 12 seek to encourage growth and residential development both within and outside the Built Up Area Boundary on suitable sites. Policy 13 discourages the subdivision of large gardens. Gardens are an important feature of the area and many existing properties are set in substantial grounds with front, side and rear spaces around the dwelling. Although garden land can provide space for new housing (as in the case of the sites at Willow Trees and Spinney Hill), inappropriate development can

be harmful to the character of the area. Paragraph 53 of the NPPF recognises this and states that policies resisting such development should be considered.

Policy 14 focuses on design and, amongst other criteria, requires suitably sized gardens and adequate car parking to be provided. This policy supports several objectives in the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

Parking has been identified as a particular issue in Ashurst Wood. A lack of an appropriate level of off-street parking in rural areas such as this one can have a serious impact on narrow lanes. Many of the roads in the village do not have pavements and on-street parking can be hazardous for pedestrians and other road users alike. Therefore the policies of the Plan seek to minimise any exacerbation of the existing problems from new development.

**Affordable Housing**

New housing developments can be required to include a percentage of affordable homes. Policy 15 seeks to ensure that all developments make a contribution towards meeting the need for Affordable Housing in the village as long as this does not make the scheme unviable.

MSDC has agreed that where new affordable homes are provided within market developments in parishes located within the AONB that have a Neighbourhood Plan, the homes will all be made available to people with a local connection for the first letting. Fifty percent of the homes will be reserved for local people for future lettings.



Affordable housing could also be provided on a rural exception site containing 100% affordable homes for local people. In March 2014, 12 homes for rental by people with a local connection were completed on a rural exception site in Yewhurst Close. All were oversubscribed with particularly high demand for the one and two bedrooomed units. This

demonstrates the continuing need for affordable homes in Ashurst Wood.

**Planning Applications**

Any development proposals for sites allocated in this Plan will need to obtain planning permission from MSDC, which will consider the application against its own policies and national policies together with the policies of this Plan.

In relation to the development of the Maypole Road site the need or otherwise for site traffic calming or other road safety measures will be expected to be assessed at planning application stage. They should be carried out by a suitably qualified highways engineer and subject to the agreement of the County Council.

## **POLICIES**

### **Policy ASW 5 - Sites for New Homes**

The Neighbourhood Plan provides for the development of a minimum of 62 homes during the Plan period, to be delivered as follows:

- On sites allocated in Policy numbers 6 – 10, and
- On windfall sites

Indicative numbers of dwellings for each site will be reviewed at the application stage and this may result in a higher number of dwellings once detailed design schemes are prepared.

### **Policy ASW 6 - Land between 98 and 104 Maypole Road**

Proposals for residential development on land between 98 and 104 Maypole Road will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- (a) Provide safe access to the site from Maypole Road together with any necessary traffic calming or other road safety measures; and
- (b) Retain the hedge boundary to the west of the site insofar as it is consistent with the need for visibility and highway safety; and
- (c) Agree arrangements during the construction period including hours of work, delivery, parking and storage arrangements in order to minimise the impact on local residents during the construction period and undertake work in accordance with those details.

### **Policy ASW 7 - Mount Pleasant Nursery, Cansiron Lane**

Proposals for residential development on land at Mount Pleasant Nursery, Cansiron Lane will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- (a) The development of the site should respect the low density of existing dwellings in the immediate locality of the site; and
- (b) Provide evidence that any potential contamination of the site has been fully investigated and any remediation found to be necessary has been satisfactorily undertaken before any development begins; and
- (c) Provide details of existing trees and hedgerows together with proposals for their management in order to retain the rural character of Cansiron Lane and the associated woodland habitat; and
- (d) Retain and strengthen tree screening to the eastern boundary of the site; and
- (e) Provide a tree buffer along the western boundary of the site; and
- (f) Provide a clear, safe boundary by means of hedging and fencing between the site and the public footpath to the north-west of the site and improve the footpath where necessary; and
- (g) Provide a single access from Cansiron Lane in a suitable location, which must ensure and respect use of the lane by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders as well as motorists; and
- (h) Provide a layby / passing point along the southern boundary of the site to ensure that there is sufficient space for two cars to pass each other; and
- (i) Agree arrangements during the construction period including hours of work, delivery, parking and storage arrangements in order to minimise the impact on local residents during the construction period and undertake work in accordance with those details.

### **Policy ASW 8 - Willow Trees and Spinney Hill, Lewes Road**

Proposals for residential development on land at Willow Trees and Spinney Hill, Lewes Road will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- (a) Provide details of existing trees and hedgerows together with proposals for their management in order to retain the rural character of the area and the associated woodland habitat; and



- (b) Retain and strengthen tree screening to the site's frontage to Lewes Road and along its boundaries adjacent to the public footpath and Brambletye School driveway; and
- (c) Ensure that all new properties are set back from the front boundary to reflect the pattern of development in the immediate area and have a layout which reflects and respects the spacious character of the locality to help integrate the new development into the vicinity; and
- (d) Use the existing access from Lewes Road with appropriate modifications as required for increased traffic to the site unless it can be shown that a new access can be achieved without causing danger to highway users; and
- (e) Agree arrangements during the construction period including hours of work, delivery, parking and storage arrangements in order to minimise the impact on local residents during the construction period and undertake work in accordance with those details.

#### **Policy ASW 9 - Wealden House, Lewes Road (EDF site)**

Proposals for residential development on land at Wealden House, Lewes Road (EDF site) will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- (a) Schemes must reflect and respect the predominant character of the area with particular regard to unit type, scale and massing; and
- (b) Ensure that all properties are set back from the front boundary to reflect the pattern of development in the immediate area and have a layout which reflects and respects the spacious character of the locality to help integrate the new development into the vicinity; and
- (c) Use the existing access from Lewes Road with appropriate modifications as required for increased traffic to site; and
- (d) Retain and strengthen tree screening to the western and southern boundaries of the site; and
- (e) Provide and safeguard in perpetuity a buffer zone to protect and sustain the Ancient Woodland to the south of the site; and
- (f) Provide for the removal or suitable relocation of the telecommunications mast; and
- (g) Provide evidence that any potential contamination of the site has been fully investigated and any remediation found to be necessary has been

satisfactorily undertaken before any development begins; and

- (h) Provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes, both market and affordable, to include small homes and homes suitable for elderly residents. Appropriate mix to be informed by an up-to-date housing needs survey together with information from MSDC's Common Housing Register; and
- (i) Show what arrangements will be made for future maintenance of communal areas; and
- (j) Ensure future access to the existing sewerage infrastructure within the site for maintenance and upsizing; and
- (k) Agree arrangements during the construction period including hours of work, delivery, parking and storage arrangements in order to minimise the impact on local residents during the construction period and undertake work in accordance with those details.

#### **Policy ASW 10 - Wealden House, Lewes Road (Life Improvement Centre)**

Proposals for residential development on land at Wealden House, Lewes Road (Life Improvement Centre) will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- (a) Use the existing access from Lewes Road with appropriate modifications as required for any increase in traffic to the site unless it can be shown that a new access can be achieved without causing danger to highway users; and
- (b) In respect of any proposed new buildings on the site, demonstrate that development can be achieved without harmful impact on the amenity of the residents of Ashbourne House or Carlton House; and
- (c) Retain and strengthen tree screening around the site and integrate existing and new trees and hedgerows into the scheme wherever possible in order to reflect the rural character of the area; and
- (d) Provide and safeguard in perpetuity a buffer zone to protect and sustain the Ancient Woodland to the south of the site; and
- (e) Show what arrangements will be made for future maintenance of communal areas; and
- (f) Ensure that new residential development is sensitively incorporated into the historic character buildings on the site; and

- (g) Agree arrangements during the construction period including hours of work, delivery, parking and storage arrangements in order to minimise the impact on local residents during the construction period and undertake work in accordance with those details.

#### **Policy ASW 11 – Residential Development within the Built Up Area Boundary**

Within the Built Up Area, as defined in Map 2, housing development, including infill development and change of use or redevelopment to housing, will generally be permitted where it complies with the policies of this Plan.

#### **Policy ASW 12 – Residential Development outside the Built Up Area Boundary**

Proposals for residential development outside the built up area will only be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) The site is a contained or infill site surrounded by existing development and would not generate additional encroachment into the countryside; and
- (b) The proposal would not lead to an increased coalescence between the Plan area and East Grinstead and Forest Row; and
- (c) The proposal is for up to three dwellings.

#### **Policy ASW 13 – Residential Development on Garden Land**

Proposals for new dwellings on private residential gardens will be discouraged and will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- (a) the reduced garden sizes of the existing dwellings in combination with the garden sizes of the new dwellings relate well to each other and to the surrounding neighbourhood; and
- (b) the character of the surrounding neighbourhood (in terms of appearance and the massing of development and landscape value) is respected.

## **Policy ASW 14 – Design and Character**

All new development (including extensions and additions to individual properties) must demonstrate good quality design and respect the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area. All proposals will be expected to identify how they address the local surroundings and landscape context by:

- (a) Using design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings with reference to the Character Assessment; and
- (b) Demonstrating that the design of the particular development has addressed and protected the positive features of the character of the local area; and
- (c) Using materials which are compatible with the materials of the host or surrounding buildings; and
- (d) Respecting established building lines where relevant and using green hedging and / or trees for highway boundaries wherever possible and in keeping with the existing streetscape; and
- (e) Ensuring safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users; and
- (f) Providing adequate refuse and recycling storage incorporated into the scheme to minimise visual impact; and
- (g) Adopting the principles of sustainable drainage where appropriate; and
- (h) Providing private garden amenity space proportionate to the size of the dwelling; and
- (i) Providing off-street parking space in accordance with Policy 21 and ensuring that garages reflect the architectural style of the house they serve and are set back from the street frontage wherever possible to reflect the local character and context. Parking should be positioned between dwellings, rather than in front, so it is not prominent in or does not dominate the street scene to the detriment of local character; and the visual impact of parking areas should be minimised wherever possible by the use of alternative surfaces and screening; and

- (j) Ensuring that the living conditions of adjoining residents (including privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook) are safeguarded; and
- (k) Ensuring that lighting schemes will not cause unacceptable levels of light pollution particularly in intrinsically dark areas

### **Policy ASW 15 - Affordable Housing**

- (a) Housing developments of 4 or more dwellings will be expected to provide a minimum of 30% of affordable housing on the site and it will be well integrated with the market housing. In cases where the 30% calculation results in a part unit then either the number of affordable units will be rounded up to the next whole unit or a financial contribution towards off-site provision equivalent to providing 30% on-site affordable housing provision.
- (b) On housing developments of between 1 and 3 dwellings, and in other circumstances where on-site provision is not practicable, a commuted payment towards off-site provision in Ashurst Wood will be required, equivalent to providing 30% on-site affordable housing provision.

Proposals for housing development that do not provide the required level of affordable housing will be required to provide clear evidence to demonstrate the financial or other reasons why the appropriate levels of affordable housing cannot be provided. Any such proposals will be considered on their individual merits and against other policies in the Plan.

## **5.4 Local Economy**

### **Objectives**

- To support local business and retain local employment
- To encourage new business and employment opportunities into the area

### **Background and intent**

The recent business survey carried out by the Steering Group confirmed that the largest businesses in the village are Brambletye School and Truscott Manor Care Home. The School employs 100 people, 66 of whom live in the village. While the care home employs 50 people, only a small number of employees live in Ashurst Wood.

EDF once had a large workforce at its Wealden House offices but now only employs a small number of people, all from outside the village.

Other businesses in the village are small, typically with fewer than 5 employees, although many provide a useful and valued service to the community as well as employment to a small number of residents.

The businesses include a village shop, Post Office, Butchers, Hairdressers, Blacksmith, Accountants, Primary School and Pre-School. A therapy centre provides access to alternative and complementary therapies including massage and acupuncture. There are several businesses based at the Wealden House Life Improvement Centre, including a Scientology Centre, private doctor and hairdressers.



Around 92 residents are in paid employment in the village (plus 14 paperboys and girls), while another 84 are self-employed.

Most businesses are happy with facilities in Ashurst Wood and have no plans to leave.

### **Ivy Dene Lane Industrial Estate**

This is located at the end of Ivy Dene Lane to the north of the village and outside the Built Up Area Boundary. There was once a commercial laundry at the site and its buildings have been converted into small business units. There is a large animal feed business, garage door business, a joinery business, an MOT Centre, car repair workshop and a Gym.

The Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 saved Policy AW2 allocates the land for business purposes and residents at consultation events have confirmed their support for businesses in the village and for retaining the Industrial Estate. A policy similar to the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 Policy AW2 will therefore be included in this Plan in order to maintain the current position over the Plan period.

Redevelopment of the site for business purposes would benefit visual amenity by improving the appearance and character of the site, which borders the countryside, but there are constraints to development. Access is via a narrow track which leads from Ivy Dene Lane, a residential area, and also serves a small group of houses at The Rocks. Therefore the use of large commercial vehicles is unsuitable and the Estate should remain in use by small businesses. These constraints mean that any increase to the existing gross floorspace on the site would be hard to support and this stance is in line with the current development plan policy.

## **Brambletye School**

There has been an independent boarding and day school at Brambletye since 1933 (apart from the second world war years when the school was requisitioned by the Army). The school buildings are set in over 100 acres of countryside between the A22 road and the Forest Way footpath at the south-west part of Ashurst Wood parish.

The school is the largest employer in the village and makes its facilities available to local groups and organisations. Residents of Ashurst Wood have attended the school as day pupils and joint projects are undertaken with Ashurst Wood Primary School. Entertainment is provided regularly for senior citizens of the village. Improvements have been made to the school over the years to meet the changing requirements of the organisation, including new classrooms and a new staff house.

The school is a valuable asset for the village and its continued presence is strongly supported.

## **POLICIES**

### **Policy ASW 16 - Ivy Dene Lane Industrial Estate**

Land at the Industrial Estate is allocated for business (Class B1) and general industry (Class B2). Proposals for redevelopment of the site will be permitted only if they comply with all of the following requirements:

- (a) There is no increase in the existing gross floorspace on the site; and
- (b) Development takes the form of low rise small business units ranging from 50-300 square metre gross floorspace each; and
- (c) The proposals include a comprehensive scheme for the physical and visual enhancement of the site, including landscaping; and
- (d) The amenities of neighbouring residential properties are safeguarded.

### **Policy ASW 17 - Village businesses**

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals that would result in the loss of existing business premises (shops, offices, public houses, schools, light industrial) through redevelopment or change of use will not be permitted, unless an equivalent replacement facility is provided elsewhere in the village or it is demonstrated that the continued use of the premises for the existing or a similar business is no longer financially viable.



### **Policy ASW 18 - New and expanding businesses**

Proposals that would result in the creation of new businesses or would support the expansion of existing businesses within the Built Up Area Boundary will be permitted, provided that they:

- (a) Do not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity; and
- (b) Do not have an unacceptable impact on the highway and provide an appropriate level of parking provision for those working at or visiting the premises.

### **Policy ASW 19 - Brambletye School**

Proposals for additional educational buildings or other associated uses within the grounds of Brambletye School will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- (a) The proposal does not detract from the architectural character, appearance and integrity of the existing collection of buildings; and
- (b) The proposal does not detrimentally impact on the wider setting of the site within the local landscape

## **5.5 Highways, Transport and Communication**

### **Objectives**

- To improve safety for all highway users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders
- To promote and support public transport, and travel by foot, cycle and horse.
- To continue to support community transport initiatives.

### **Background and Intent**

Ashurst Wood is a rural parish and there are no major roads within the built up area. However the busy A22 London to Eastbourne Road is within the parish boundary, with three turnings off this highway into the village centre. To the north of the village runs the A264 East Grinstead to Tunbridge Wells Road, there is a tendency for traffic to use the village roads as a cut through between the two main roads.



The village centre can become particularly busy during periods of peak travel notably at school drop off and collection times.

HGVs and a lack of dedicated car parking provision contribute to congestion.

Public transport provision in the parish is currently largely adequate, although service cuts have been threatened from time

to time. The Village Council provides supporting infrastructure (bus shelters, seats, etc.) During school terms, buses are also used to convey schoolchildren to and from the local Secondary Schools and 6th form colleges.

For most people living in the parish, however, the car has become the principal mode of transport, even for some of the shortest journeys. Better footpaths and public rights of way connecting the village with adjacent parishes are needed and would help to address this issue and improve pedestrian safety.

Ashurst Wood parish comprises some 740 households, which generate large volumes of daily traffic. Village roads are also used as a “cut through” between the A22 and the A264. Non-existent, or narrow pavements adjacent to these roads with their restricted highway width make walking difficult and often dangerous for pedestrians.

Large vehicles have difficulty negotiating the narrow lanes and although there are weight restrictions in place, these are often ignored and are not applicable if vehicles are making deliveries to village properties.

Visitors to businesses and facilities in the village, such as the Church, schools, recreation grounds and shops and pubs, also generate traffic which contributes towards parking problems.

## **Traffic Speed**

Traffic speed and pedestrian safety have been key issues for residents over many years. Although attempts have been made in the past to try to find ways to reduce the impact of traffic on the village no simple solutions have been identified. Traffic speed surveys carried out on behalf of the Village Council show that the majority of vehicles

comply with current speed limits, but the popular perception is that traffic moves too fast for the size and nature of the village road network.

## **Parking**

Ashurst Wood is a rural location where there is often a need to undertake trips for services and facilities and work by car. In addition, many households include grown-up children, who need to travel by car for work and other reasons.

Car ownership in Ashurst Wood is high. The 2011 Census returns show that fewer than 8.5% of households have no cars, as opposed to 13.59% across Mid Sussex and 25.8% nationally. The majority of households (almost 42%) own one vehicle; with over 36% owning two vehicles, compared to the national figure of 24.66%. The number of households owning three vehicles is almost double the national average, and almost 100 households own either three or four vehicles.

The Residents' Survey indicates that over 20% of households park their cars on the street, which means that over 150 cars are parked in the streets of the village.

Already some parts of Ashurst Wood are beset with on-street parking and congestion, which has a harmful impact on the character of the area. There are many houses with insufficient off-street parking and the resultant on-street parking causes particular problems if the road is narrow as many of the lanes in the village are and where there are no pavements. Parking on pavements, where they exist, is also an issue as it forces pedestrians to walk in the road. Inconsiderate parking also causes access difficulties.

Notable "hot-spots" are around the Church and the Recreation Ground at peak times, and Hammerwood Road between Park Lane and the Three Crowns at most times (buses often have difficulties in passing), and along Maypole Road. Resident parking outside working hours, where no off street parking is available, worsens the issues highlighted above. Narrow village roads are frequently blocked by vans and lorries while deliveries are made.

In other parts of the village, generally where houses are set in large plots that can accommodate vehicle parking, there are little or no problems with on-street parking. This includes the Lewes Road and the houses around the Cansiron Lane / Hammerwood Road triangle.

Therefore Policy 21 lays out the principle that new development, either in the form of a new unit or an extension to an existing property that would result in additional bedroom space should absorb the parking needs it creates unless there is robust evidence that the resultant level of off-street parking will be sufficient to serve the property's needs.

## **Public Transport**

A regular (weekly) minibus service, driven by local volunteers, is provided by the Village Council to take residents to the supermarket in East Grinstead.

The village is served by three bus routes:

- Route 261 (Compass Travel) from East Grinstead to Uckfield, 2-hourly Monday to Saturday;
- Route 270 (Metrobus) from East Grinstead to Brighton, hourly Monday to Saturday;
- Route 291 (Metrobus) from Crawley to Tunbridge Wells, hourly Monday to Saturday with reduced service on Sunday.

## **Cycling**

The well-used National Cycle Route 21 linking Greenwich, London to Eastbourne passes along the village boundary below Brambletye School.

## **Public Footpaths & Bridleways**

There are numerous public rights of way through and around the village linking to National Trails (e.g. Vanguard Way).

## **Community views**

The Residents' Survey confirmed concerns about speeding, with 65% of respondents considering it to be a problem.

74% of responses were in favour of a safe cycle route to East Grinstead.

Residents confirmed a desire for road safety measures. The majority (37%) suggested a 20 mph speed limit but there was also support for other suggestions such as village gateways, traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures.

Some respondents called for enforcement of existing yellow line areas and speed cameras on the A22.

There was also a call for junctions providing access to the village from the A22 to be improved.

## **Broadband**

Broadband internet connections are slow in the parish. This affects the ability of residents to access information and the performance of businesses that rely on broadband as a key means of communication in a rural area. High-speed broadband

will help to address these issues and brings with it a range of new opportunities, such as better remote and home working. The provision of fast broadband is a key asset to attract new businesses into the Parish and improve the wellbeing of its residents. The NPPF, paragraph 42 states that advanced high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

## **POLICIES**

### **Policy ASW 20 - Impact of new development on traffic**

Proposals for new development must meet both of the following criteria:

- (a) Provide safe access for vehicles and pedestrians with adequate visibility; and
- (b) Include an assessment of the additional traffic likely to be generated by the development, its impact on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking and congestion within the parish. This should demonstrate that traffic reduction measures have been considered to avoid negative impacts prior to providing measures to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic.

### **Policy ASW 21 - Parking Provision**

- (a) Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking must provide adequate and suitable off-street parking in order to minimise obstruction of the local road network in the interests of the safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists. In the case of residential development, a minimum of two parking spaces will be required for units with 1 – 3 bedrooms, and a minimum of three parking spaces will be required for units with 4 or more bedrooms; unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative provision would be appropriate on a specific site. Parking spaces can take the form of spaces or garaging/car port facilities, but must be permanently available for parking use.
- (b) Proposals that would reduce the existing level of off-street parking provision will be resisted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount of overall provision is adequate.

## Policy ASW 22 - High Speed Broadband

- (a) Proposals which seek to provide access to a super-fast broadband network to serve the village will be supported provided that the applicant has fully explored opportunities to erect apparatus on existing buildings, masts or other structures and the location and design of any installations will reflect the character of the area and respect the purpose of the AONB.
- (b) All new development must be designed to enable connection to high quality communications infrastructure including super-fast broadband.

## 5.6 Infrastructure

### Background

A sustainable community needs access to a range of local facilities and services and support from adequate infrastructure. New development generates new demands on infrastructure and services.

Policy 23 requires the immediate infrastructure needs of new developments to be identified and provided within the development itself wherever possible in order to avoid increased pressure on existing infrastructure. This includes green infrastructure measures to manage water use and physical measures such as connection to utilities services and facilities for waste collection.

Smaller developments may not individually generate a demand for additional facilities or infrastructure, but the cumulative effect of a number of developments can lead to deficiencies if not addressed.

MSDC's Development and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document 2006 sets out the requirements for contributions towards local infrastructure on developments of 6 or more dwellings. Smaller developments are not required to contribute and in Ashurst Wood there have only been two developments since 2002 that have generated financial contributions.

MSDC is in the process of setting up a Community Infrastructure Levy scheme. Most developments will be subject to the Levy, which will help pay for the infrastructure needed to support new development, although it should not be used to remedy pre-existing deficiencies. MSDC will set the amount of the Levy and will be responsible for deciding how it should be spent, taking into account the requirements listed in their

Infrastructure Development Plan (currently in draft form) and in Neighbourhood Plans.

The Levy will normally be spent on infrastructure schemes in the local area of the scheme that generated it. Once a Neighbourhood Plan is in place, 25% of the Levy will be paid directly to the Village Council for investment in the parish.

The Village Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have identified a list of various infrastructure requirements and improvements to community services that would support new development during general community engagement and consultation for this Plan. The list will help the Village Council to decide how to invest funding received from the Levy, once the scheme is in place.

Background to some of the requirements has been given elsewhere in the Plan. Some of the items will be harder to provide than others and some will require facilitation by or support and /or funding from other organisations or authorities. The list will be reviewed from time to time, but currently includes:

### **Local Facilities and services**

- Improvements at Village Centre (Village Hall) to include provision of disabled access to kitchen, and construction of a new Village Council Office and meeting room. The Village Council currently rents office facilities and needs a dedicated office. It owns the Village Centre and having its offices there would create a central community hub in the village. (Construction of office and meeting room commenced summer 2015)
- Improvements to Recreation Ground Pavilion and field
- Improvements at John Pears Field, including facilities such as an improved play area, adult exercise equipment, dirt jumps for bmx bikes.
- Provision of allotments
- Establishment of a satellite GP surgery within the village

### **Road safety improvements**

- Footpath through John Pears field to top of Wall Hill Road. This would make it safer for pedestrians who currently have to walk along Wall Hill Road where there is no pavement and a dangerous bend.
- Village gateways and traffic calming schemes
- Safety improvements at School Lane/ Maypole Road junction
- 20 mph speed limit introduction on central village roads



- Cycle paths along A22 towards East Grinstead
- Cycle path from centre of village to Forest Way
- Improved car parking provision for users of John Pears Field and the Recreation Ground

### **Policy ASW 23 – Infrastructure**

- (a) Proposals for new development will be expected to demonstrate that the infrastructure requirements of the proposal have been considered and will be provided within the development itself wherever possible.
- (b) The future use of developers’ contributions arising from planning permissions granted in the Plan area will be used to provide local infrastructure within the parish and as set out in Section 5.6 of this Plan.

## **6. Monitoring and Review**

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The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2015 to 2031. Monitoring will show whether the Plan’s objectives and policies are working and whether sustainable development is being achieved.

The Village Council will use the Plan when making its recommendations to MSDC on planning applications and will monitor both the progress of sites coming forward for development and the provision of infrastructure.

The Plan is based on the community’s current needs and aspirations and these may change over the Plan period. If the Plan’s objectives are not being met as expected or there are new challenges and concerns that need to be considered, the Village Council will decide whether action, including a review of the Plan, is necessary

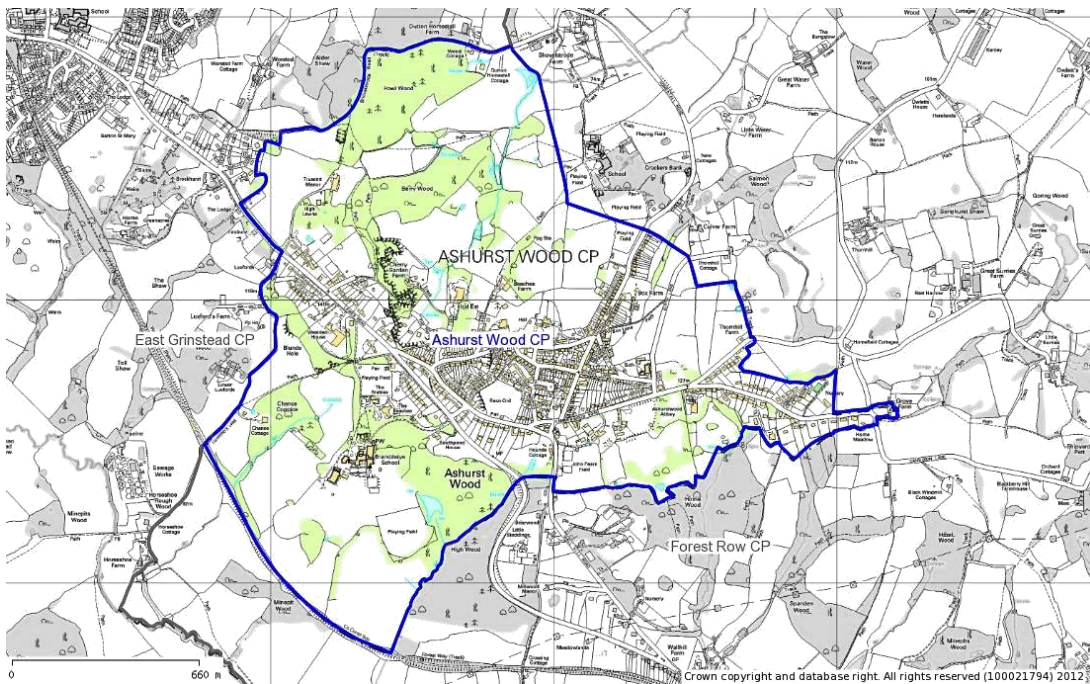
## **Appendices**

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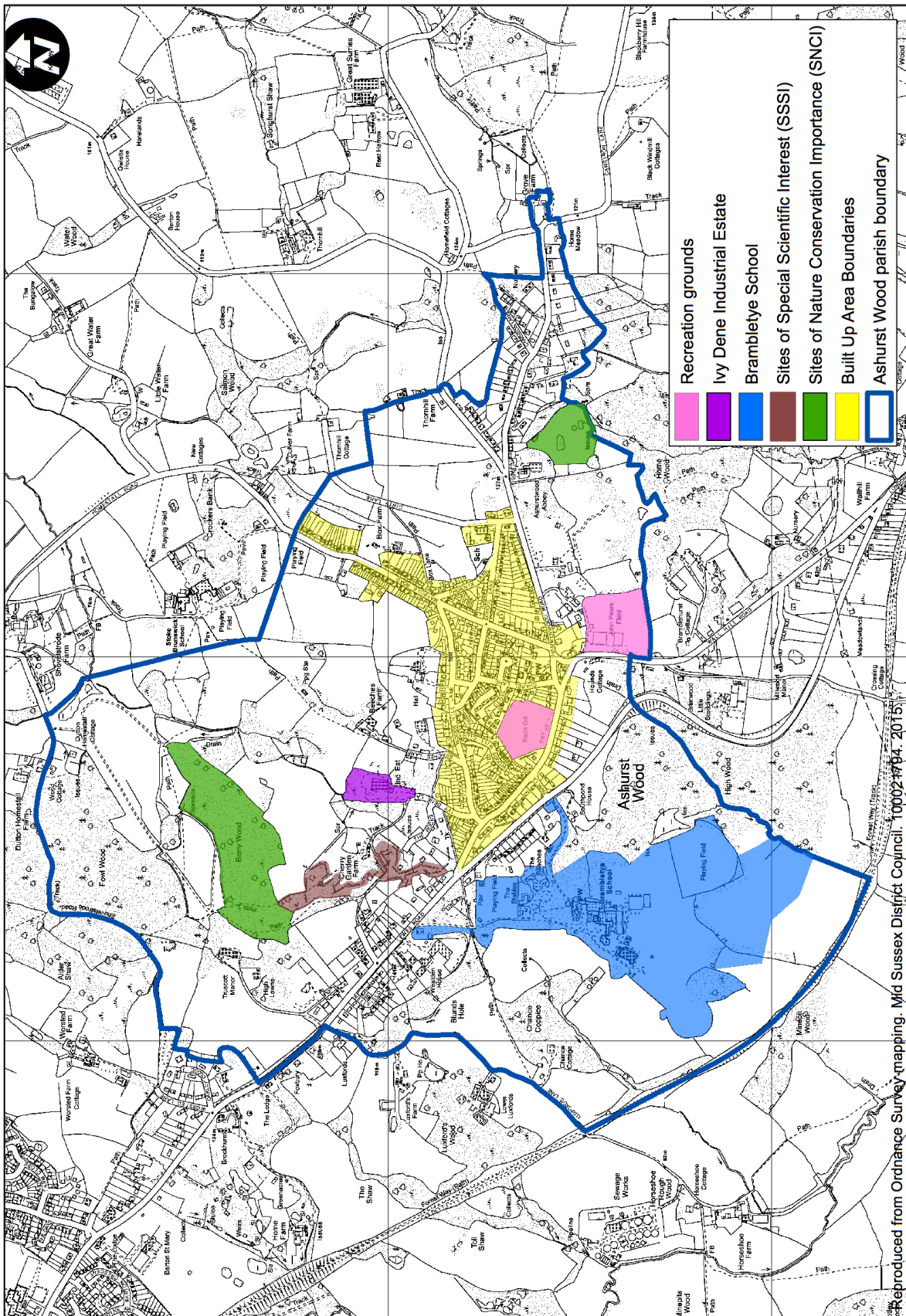
## APPENDIX 1: MAPS

### MAP 1: Neighbourhood Area

The Neighbourhood Plan covers the whole of the civil parish of Ashurst Wood.

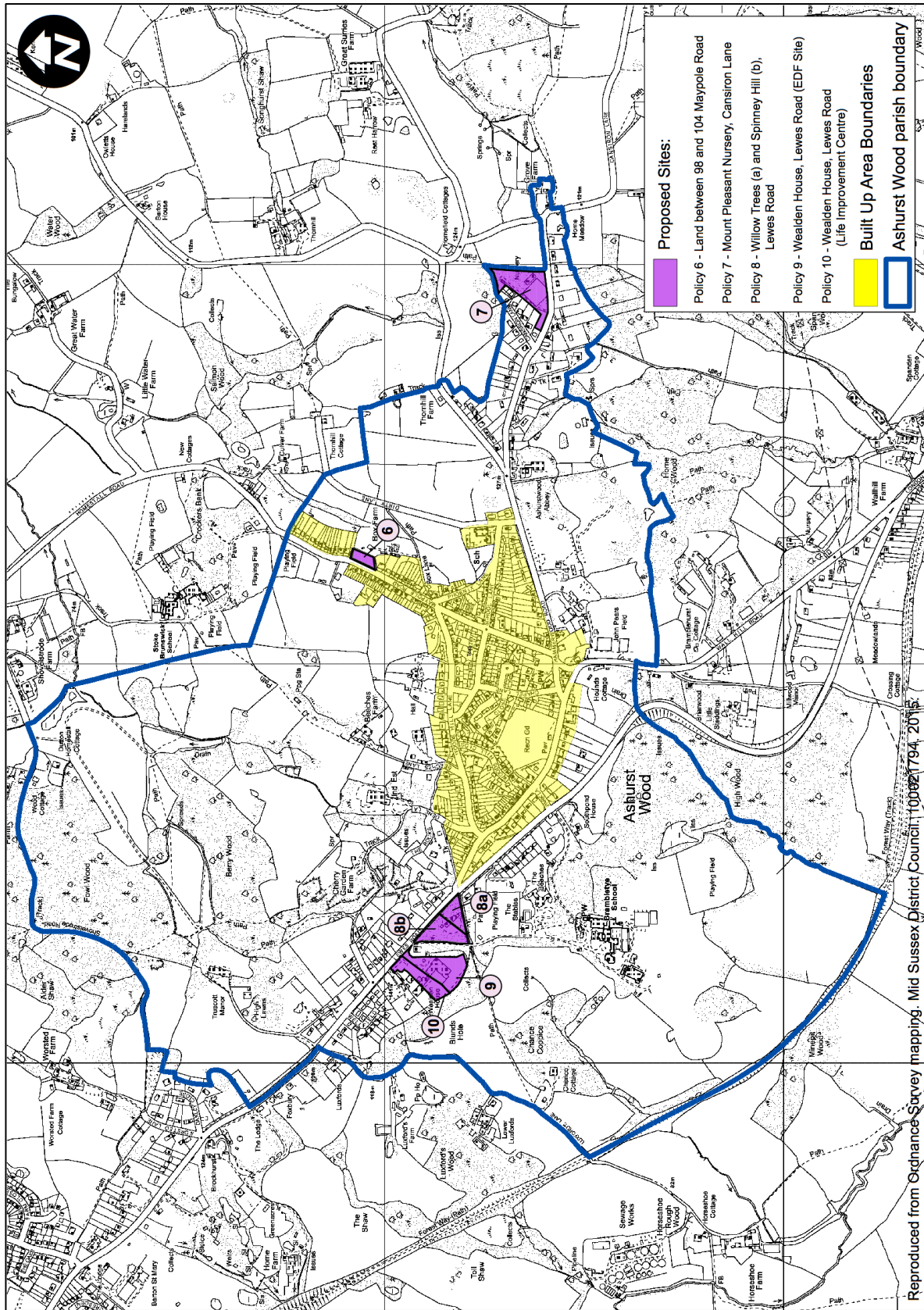


# MAP 2: Built Up Area, SSSI, SCNIs, Brambletye School, Ivy Dene Lane Industrial Estate and recreation grounds





# MAP 3: Proposed Housing Sites



## **APPENDIX 2: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND EVIDENCE BASE**

Links to documents are on

[Ashurst Wood Village Council's website](#)

### **Supporting Documents**

Sustainability Appraisal Update Report July 2015

Sustainability Appraisal Update Report July 2015, Non-Technical Summary

Sustainability Appraisal January 2015 (AECOM Report)

Sustainability Appraisal January 2015 (AECOM Report), Non-Technical Summary

Report on the Assessment of Potential Housing Sites December 2014

Housing for the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan September 2015

Ashurst Wood Character Assessment September 2015

### **Background Information**

Business Survey Report 2014

Scoping Report for Sustainability Appraisal, December 2013

Report following Site Consultation Event February 2014

Residents' Survey Report September 2013

Ashurst Wood Residents' Survey May 2013

Feedback from Consultation Event November 2012

Desktop Biodiversity Report, Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, 2014

Ashurst Wood Community Profile (compiled by Action in Rural Sussex 2013)

Census 2011 results

Map of Ancient Woodland, Natural England

Listed Buildings in Ashurst Wood, English Heritage

Ashurst Wood Village Plan 2007

Ashurst Wood Historians publications:

Ashurst Wood in the Twentieth Century 2000

Ashurst Wood, from the early village to the present day 2011

*Available to purchase from the News Store, Hammerwood Road or from the Ashurst Wood Historians*

### **MSDC documents**

Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004

Pre-Submission Draft District Plan June 2015

District Plan Sustainability Appraisal June 2015

District Plan Sustainability Appraisal, Non-Technical Summary, June 2015

Settlement Sustainability Review May 2015

Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) February 2015

HEDNA Update June 2015  
Housing Provision Paper June 2015

Consultation Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment October 2014  
Capacity of Mid Sussex to Accommodate Development, Land Use Consultants Ltd, June 2014  
Draft Infrastructure Development Plan May 2013  
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015  
Housing Supply Document, Ashurst Wood Assessed Sites 2013

A Revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Mid Sussex District, report by High Weald AONB Unit, February 2007  
Landscape Character Assessment High Weald Area, 2005  
Technical Report no. 8 – Strategic Gap Boundaries, 2001

**AONB document:**

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

**West Sussex County Council documents:**

A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape 2005  
Landscape Character Guidelines 2004  
Land Management Guidelines 2004

**National Planning Documents**

National Planning Practice Guidance 2013  
National Planning Policy Framework 2012