

**Balcombe Parish**  
**Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2031**



**Made Plan**

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Views to the cricket field and Balcombe Lake



Mill Lane and Haywards Heath Rd junction



St Mary's Church, Balcombe



Balcombe Station

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# Foreword

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The Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. After community consultation in 2012 it was agreed that Balcombe Parish Council would proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan.

This Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan reflects community-wide comments, observations and concerns about its future, bringing them together with census information, strategic and statistical evidence into one document that voices the community's overwhelming desire to protect our countryside, maintain our rural setting and enrich our enviable community spirit both now and for future generations.

The plan has been produced by a Neighbourhood Planning Working Group from the Parish Council and one community volunteer, plus help from Mid Sussex District Council. The Steering Group was supported by Action in Rural Sussex and their planning consultants, rCOH. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their assistance developing this plan.

Following a favourable local referendum the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan will form part of statutory planning guidance and become, with the Mid Sussex District Council's Local Plan, the starting point for deciding where development should take place and the type and quality of that development.

## **The Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**

### **The Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**

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Photographs kindly supplied by Malcolm Thomason.

# List of Land Use Policies

The Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BPNP) contains a series of land use policies, the successful delivery of which during the plan period will help achieve the community's vision for the parish.

It is not the purpose of the BPNP to contain all land use and development planning policy relating to the parish. Rather, it contains a series of policies that will be applied by the District Council alongside the relevant policies of the Mid Sussex development plan and of the National Planning Policy Framework to determine planning applications. The silence of the BPNP on a policy matter does not therefore mean that the matter is not important in the parish but that the local community is satisfied that it will be addressed by other development plan policy.



Mill House



Alley Green

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# Introduction

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## Neighbourhood Development Plans

The National Planning Policy Framework states:

- “Neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans ... (and) ... plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.” (para. 16)
- “Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes ... can use neighbourhood planning to set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications.” (para. 183)
- “Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. 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 ... 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.” (para. 184)
- “Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict.” (para.185)

## 1. Introduction

### Purpose

1.1 Mid Sussex District Council, the local planning authority, has designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Balcombe parish for the purpose of preparing the Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BPNP). The designation was approved by the District Council on 9 July 2012. Balcombe Parish Council is the Qualifying Body that is preparing the BPNP.

1.2 Plan A overleaf shows the parish boundary in relation to the adjoining parishes in Mid Sussex District – Turners Hill to the north, Ardingly to the east, Ansty and Staplefield to the south and Slaugham to the west.

1.3 The Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BPNP) has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, the Localism Act 2011, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the European Directive 2001/42 on Strategic Environmental Assessment and the EU Directive 92/43 on Habitats Regulations Assessment.

1.4 The purpose of the Submission Plan is to set out specific policy proposals for the parish that will be used by MSDC to help determine planning applications in the parish in the coming years.

### Neighbourhood Development Plans

1.5 The BPNP is one of many Neighbourhood Development Plans being prepared following the 2011 Localism Act. For a summary of the aims of Neighbourhood Plans see the panel to the left.

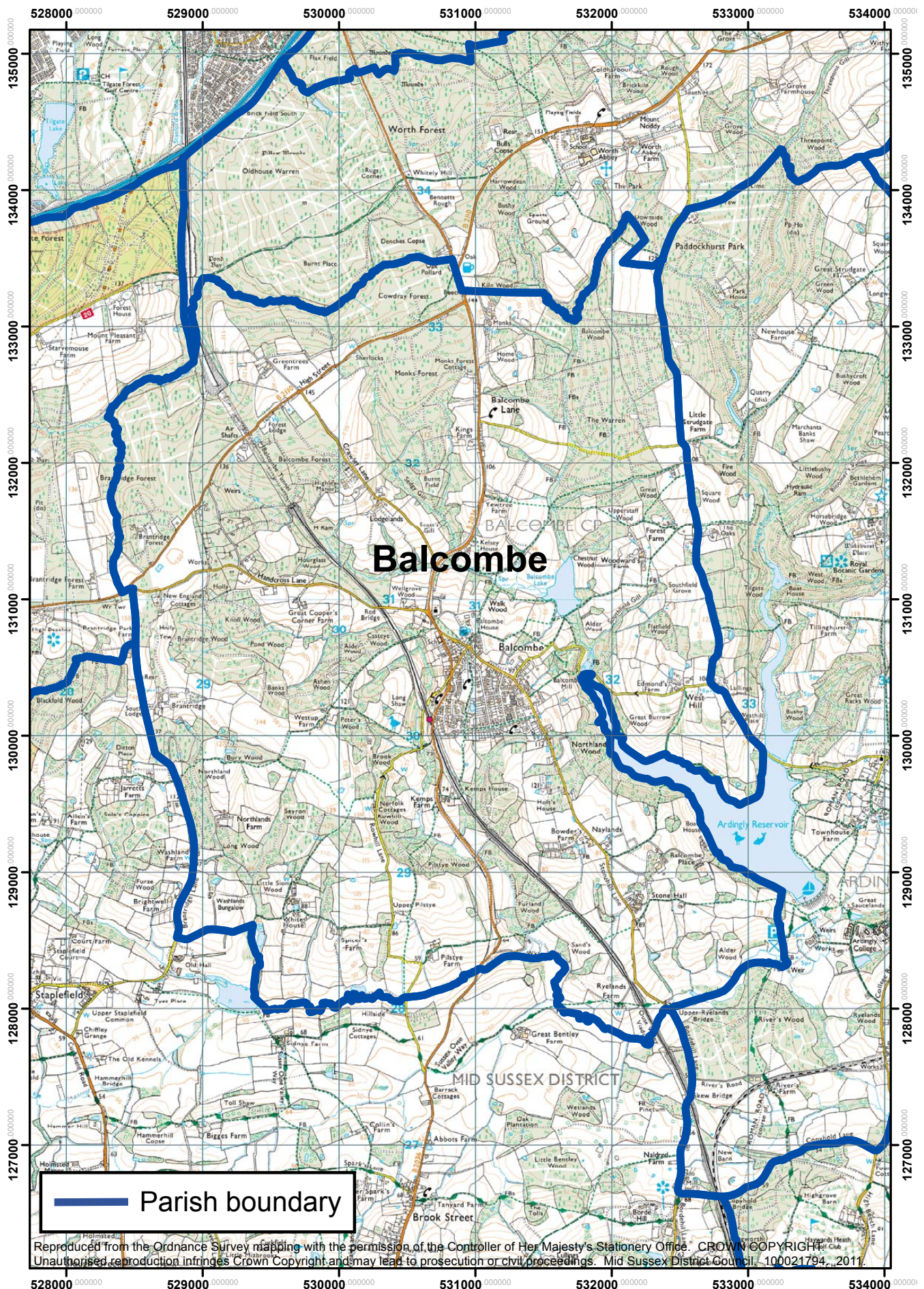
### Sustainability Appraisal & Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.6 The District Council issued a screening opinion for all neighbourhood plans in its area requiring they are subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the EU Directive 2001/42 if they propose to allocate sites for development. As the BPNP make such proposals a SEA has been carried out as part of a wider Sustainability Appraisal. It assesses the environmental, social and economic effects of the BPNP policies during its preparation against a series of sustainability objectives.

1.7 The Scoping Report of the SA/SEA has been consulted upon and a draft SA/SEA report was published alongside the Pre-Submission Plan for consultation. The final SA/SEA is being published alongside the Submission Plan for examination. In addition, showing how the plan “contributes to the achievement of sustainable development” is one of the ‘basic conditions’ of the 1990 Act and therefore a requirement of the BPNP. The plan will also be in conformity with, and refine, the Mid Sussex Development Plan (i.e. the ‘saved’ policies of the adopted 2004 Local Plan and, in due course, the Mid Sussex District Plan). It will be adopted under the framework of the development plan and will comprise part of the planning policy framework for the district.



# Plan A: Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area



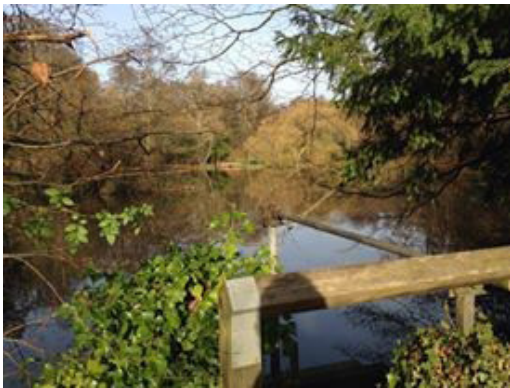


# Introduction

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1.8 As such, the BPNP will help to achieve sustainable development by ensuring that its development policies and proposals will meet the needs of people living and working in the Parish, while at the same time helping to ensure that any adverse environmental impact is minimised. The sustainability objectives of the plan have enabled alternative options for those policies and proposals to be compared and evaluated.



Mill Pond

1.9 A very small part of the parish on its eastern edge lies inside the 7km zone of influence for the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area, an EU designated nature conservation site. The District Council has undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment for the BPNP as noted later in paragraphs 3.14 - 3.17.

## The Submission Plan

1.10 This Submission Plan follows the Regulation 14 period of statutory consultation on the Pre Submission version of the Plan and the Parish Council's consideration of the representations that were made on its proposals. Some minor modifications have been made to improve the clarity of some policies but no significant changes have been necessary.



The Red Road

1.11 The BPNP will be subject to independent examination and, if successfully examined, will be put to a local referendum. A majority vote will lead to the BPNP being 'made' and becoming part of the development plan for the parish to manage future development decisions alongside the Mid Sussex District Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.



Balcombe is still a rural parish

# Parish Profile

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Balcombe Village Centre



Sign to the Village Centre



Commuters form approximately 30% of the working population



Balcombe Lake

## 2. Parish Profile

### An Introduction to the Parish of Balcombe

2.1 Balcombe Parish covers an area of just above eight square miles and lies in the northern part of the district of Mid Sussex and the county of West Sussex. The parish is situated in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated in 1983.

2.2 There were approximately 755 households in the parish with a population of 1,833 in 2011 (2001 Census figures). The village is well provided with 3 halls (Victory Hall with very fine murals), Parish Room (mainly used by Tiggers Pre-School) and Bramble Hall; a large recreation ground with football pitch and playgrounds; beautiful cricket ground with pavilion; village shop with part-time post office, tea rooms, pub and a haberdashers. There is a pre-school for 2 - 5yrs, a daycare nursery for 0 - 5yrs and a C of E primary school. With a lively community, the village has many clubs and societies including a youth club, rifle club and bowls club.

2.3 Balcombe Village has a mainline train station which provides easy access to London and Brighton and also makes it a popular home for commuters. It is also within easy reach of the M23 and Gatwick Airport.

2.4 Balcombe is noted for its beautiful woods including areas of ancient woodland and scenic waters of lake, millpond and reservoir. A network of footpaths enables the visitor to enjoy the parish which is particularly beautiful in spring and autumn. Balcombe Estate owns much of the land in Balcombe, covering 3,500 acres of mixed farmland and woodland and has ensured that the rural nature of the village endures.

### Selected Parish Statistics

2.5 The following statistics are drawn from a variety of sources, most especially work undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Demographics work group, the Housing Needs Survey 2009 and data taken from the 2011 Census.



# Parish Profile - selected statistics

## Demographics - 2011 census

Residents	2011	%	2001	%	Mid Sussex	%
Total	1,833		1765		137,291	
Under 16yrs	373	20%	312	18%		
16yrs+	1,460	80%	1453	78%	110,615	81%
16 - 24yrs	124	7%	141	8%	12,336	9%
25 - 34yrs	159	9%	885*	50%*	15,372	11%
35 - 54yrs	566	31%			40,957	30%
55 - 64yrs	243	13%			17,828	13%
65 - 74yrs	171	9%	180	10%	12,708	9%
75ys+	197	11%	247	14%	11,414	8%

\* Ages shown in different bands in 2001 census

## Households - 2011 census

Households	2011	%	2001	%	Mid Sussex	%
Total	755		686		57,409	
Detached House	346	46%	320	47%	20,041	35%
Semi Detached	233	31%	227	33%	17,226	30%
Terraced	86	11%	84	12%	9,287	16%
Flat	90	12%	84	12%	10,538	18%

## Measures of Deprivation - 2011 census (based on employment, health/disability, education & housing)

Households	Balcombe	%	Mid Sussex	%
Total	755		57,409	
Not deprived	412	55%	31,002	54%
Deprived on 1 dimension	220	29%	17,911	31%
Deprived on 2 dimensions	104	14%	7,136	12%
Deprived on 3 dimensions	19	3%	1,259	2%
Deprived on 4 dimensions	0	0%	101	0%

## Types of Home - Housing Needs Survey Report – Balcombe Parish 2009

Description of Current Home	Number of respondents
House	162
Bungalow	23
Flat/Maisonette	15
Sheltered/retirement housing (social sector)	8
Sheltered/retirement housing (private sector)	2
Other	0
No Response	2
TOTAL	214

# Parish Profile - selected statistics

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## Number of bedrooms - Housing Needs Survey Report – Balcombe Parish 2009

Number of bedrooms	Number of respondents
Bed-sit / one bedroom	24
Two bedrooms	34
3 bedrooms	71
4 or more bedrooms	81
No Response	2
TOTAL	214

## Tenure of Home - Housing Needs Survey Report – Balcombe Parish 2009

- 45% households are owner occupiers
- 29% own their property with a mortgage
- 12% rent their property from a housing association
- 11% rent their property from a private landlord
- 3% live in properties that are tied to their jobs

## Biodiversity

- The parish has Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) mainly to the eastern side of the parish, one site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), many areas of Ancient Woodlands and a very small part of the parish to the east is within the Ashdown Forest 7km zone of influence. These sites are shown in Plan B (SNCI and SSSI sites) and Plan C (Ancient Woodland)

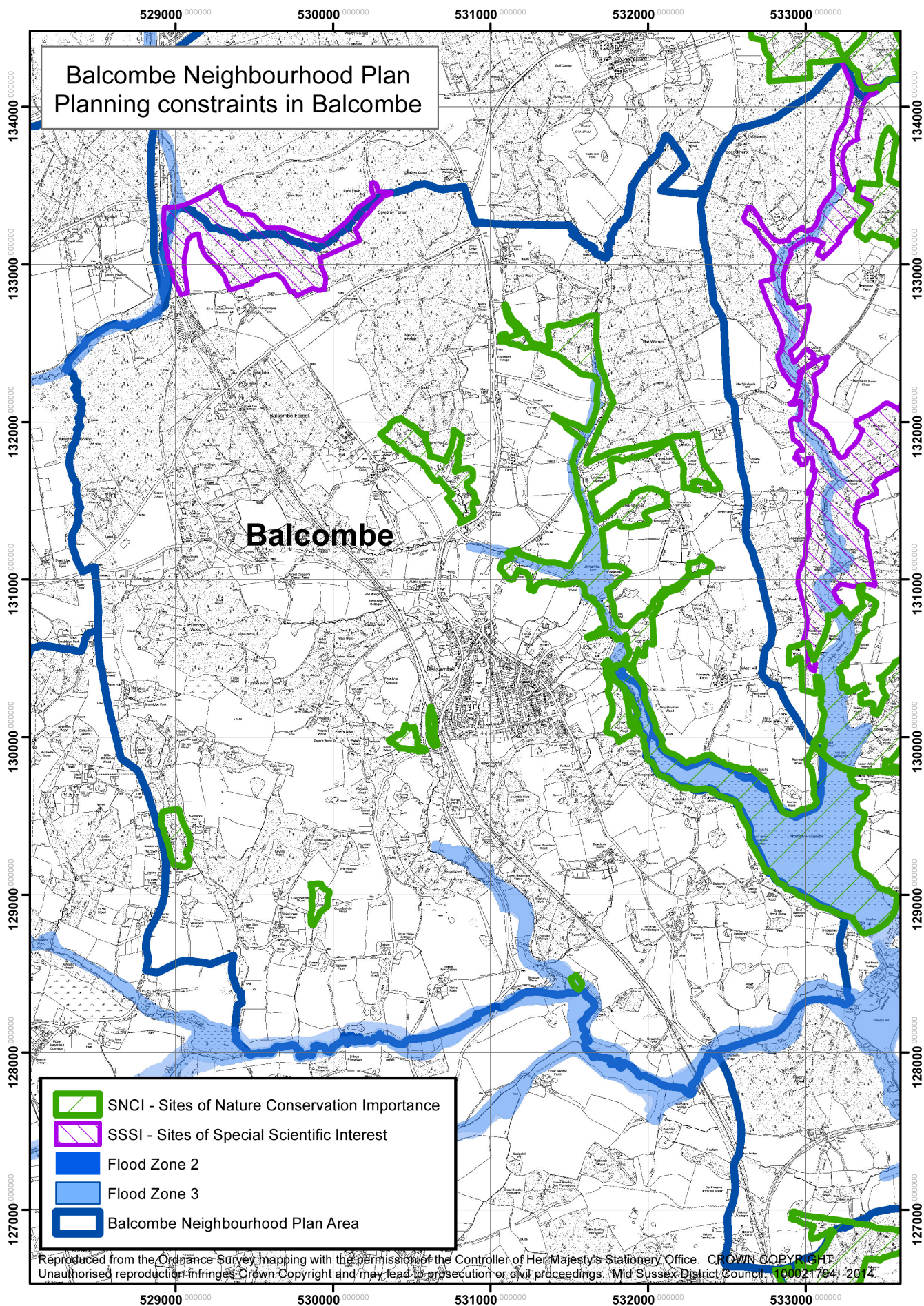
## Heritage

- The majority of Balcombe village is designated a Conservation Area which is shown in Plan C.
- 60 listed buildings, including The Parish Church of St. Mary's and Stone Hall, (both Grade I) and Balcombe Place, Kemp's House, Edmund's Farmhouse and the Ouse Valley Railway Viaduct (all Grade II\*)



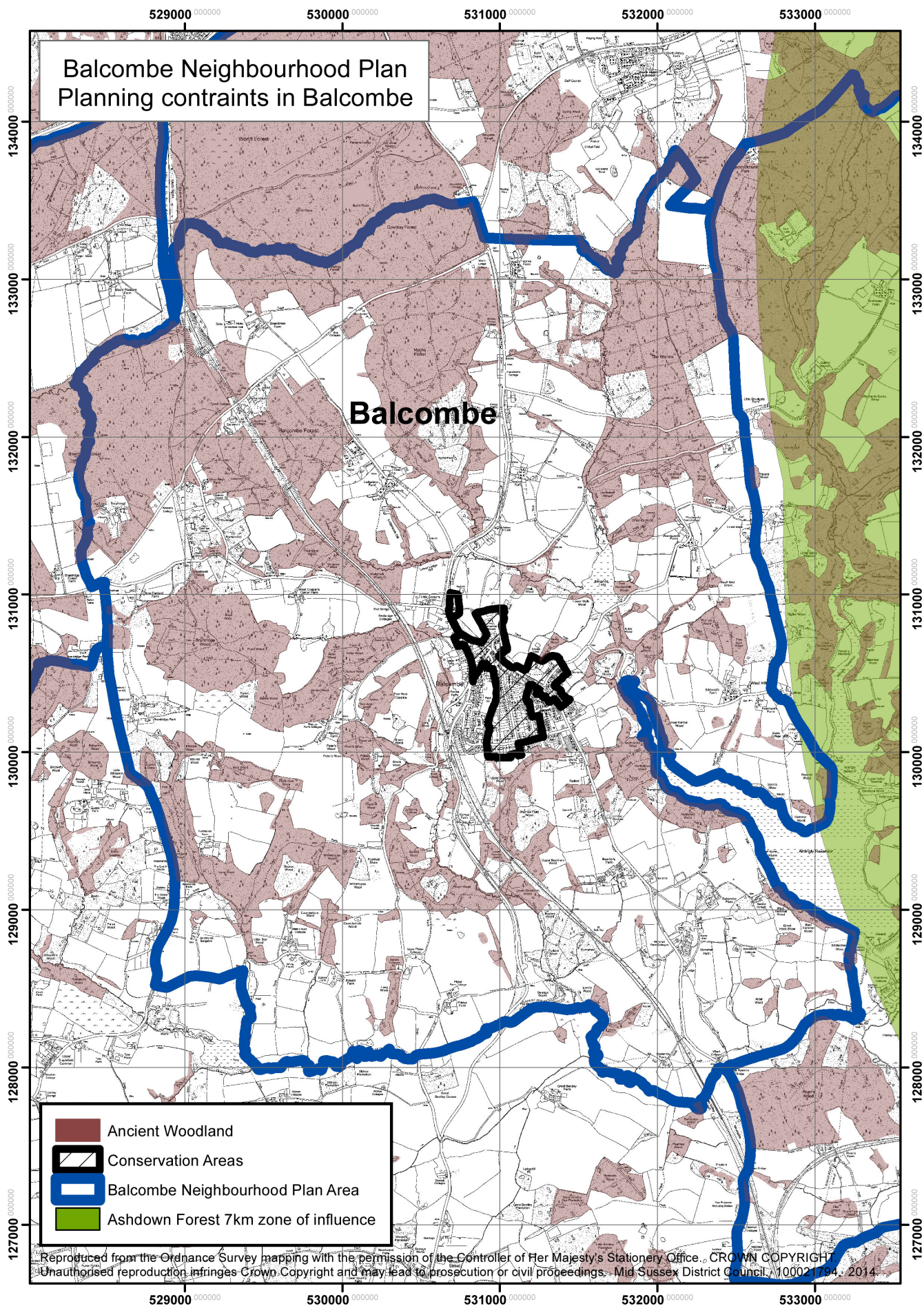


# Plan B - Sites of SSSI and SNCI Interest





# Plan C - Balcombe Conservation Area





# Parish Profile - Community Views



Community Consultation Spring 2012



Community Consultation Spring 2012



Community Consultation Spring 2013



Community Consultation Summer Fete 2013

## Community Views

2.6 The Parish Council established a working group a number of years ago, comprising of parish councillors and residents to compile the baseline evidence for the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan including commissioning of new studies and engagement with the local community in further consultations.

2.7 A drop-in session for the community to talk to councillors about a possible Neighbourhood Plan was arranged in the Parish Room in April 2012. The community were given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire on the aims and issues of the NP.

2.8 Between October and December 2012, a number of open sessions were held in the community and local groups and village organisations were surveyed to gather opinion on what the Neighbourhood Plan should address. The feedback was used to form the Aims & Themes of the BPNP.

2.9 In addition, the Housing Needs Survey produced in 2009 by Action in Rural Sussex (AirS) on behalf of the Parish Council has been used to inform the pre submission plan together with the more recent questionnaire and the data outcomes from the Parish Council's working group consultations with the local community.

2.10 The conclusions of the consultation sessions and survey were detailed in the Results of Balcombe NP Questionnaire Autumn 2012 by the Parish Council in 2013 (<http://balcombeparishcouncil.com/neighbourhood-planning/autumn-2012-consultation/>). A summary of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the parish and of the opportunities and challenges for BPNP is provided below:

### Strengths

- There is a strong community spirit in the village through village societies & events
- There are numerous meeting places, a church, pre-school and primary school and a village shop with part time post office
- There is good access to transport, a train station and good access to the countryside
- Balcombe is a quiet and peaceful parish with most of its community in employment

### Weaknesses

- Although there is good access to transport there is a lack of parking spaces available at the station and limited train services
- Concerns about traffic volumes & speed and inadequate bus services (an excellent bus service has now been introduced)
- The village centre lacks parking provision. There is a need for increased safety for pedestrians
- Activities for teenagers
- Sufficient allocations for school places at the primary school
- A lack of affordable housing
- Broadband speeds (subsequently high speed broadband has been introduced to central Balcombe in January 2015)

# Parish Profile

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Community Consultation Summer 2014



Community Consultation Summer Fete 2013



Community Consultation Summer 2014



Community Consultation Summer 2015

## Opportunities

- To improve parking at station & village centre
- To provide affordable & sustainable housing development for local people
- The plan should support local businesses perhaps through incentive schemes and the like
- To encourage development of local renewable energy sources
- To encourage better public transport

## Challenges

- The issue of fracking
- Housing developments in Haywards Heath
- Unsympathetic development
- A lack of affordable housing
- The loss of local services and their viability e.g. village shop, post office, station, surgery etc. needs to be addressed, along with the lack of youth activities
- Addressing the increased levels of speeding traffic

# Planning Policy Context

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The NPPF contains a number of key principles that will shape the BPNP. Those with particular relevance are itemised below:

- Recognises intrinsic character and beauty of countryside (para.17)
- Support existing businesses (para.21)
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy (para.28)
- Sustainable transport and travel plans (para.35, 36)
- Boosting the supply of housing (para.47)
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (para.50)
- The quality of development (para.58)
- Promoting healthy, inclusive communities (para.69)
- Designation of Local Green Spaces (para.76/77)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (para.109-115)
- Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs (para.115/116)
- Minimise impacts on biodiversity (para.117)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (para.126-141)

## 3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 The parish is part of the Mid Sussex district, the West Sussex county and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is therefore a range of adopted and emerging strategies, policies and proposals that have a significant influence over the BPNP.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published by the Government in March 2012, is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. At its examination, the submitted BPNP must demonstrate that it is consistent with the policies and intent of the NPPF. See the panel to the left.

3.3 These principles are those of most relevance to the BPNP but other principles in the framework will also have some bearing on the preparation of the document.

### The Mid Sussex Development Plan

3.4 The development plan for Mid Sussex currently comprises the saved policies of the adopted 2004 Mid Sussex Local Plan. The BPNP must be deemed to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan. The majority of policies in the 2004 Local Plan have been saved for development management purposes in the district until they are superseded either by a new Mid Sussex District Plan and/or by the BPNP.

3.5 The following policies are considered the most relevant to the BPNP (see Plans B and C):

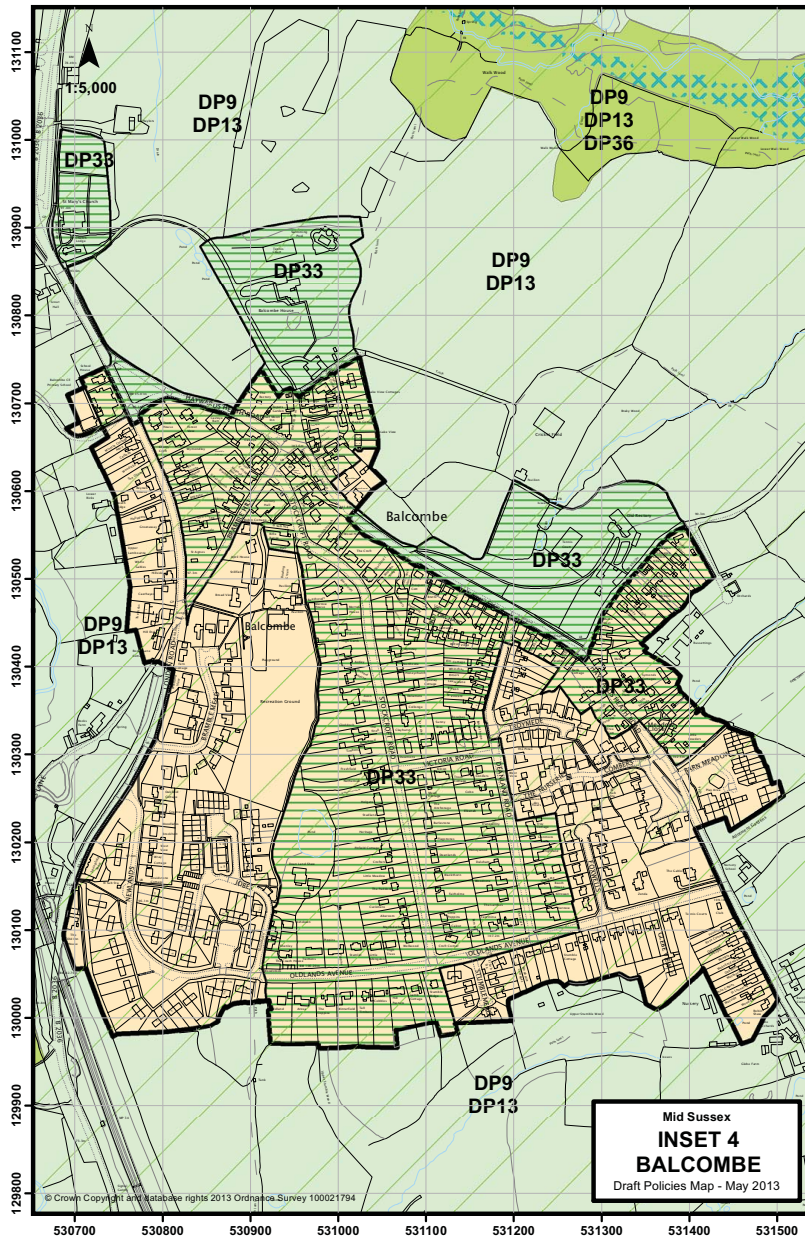
- C1 Protection of the Countryside
- C4 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- C5 Nature Conservation
- B1 Design
- B6 Open Space
- B10 Listed Buildings
- B12 Conservation Areas
- B13 Demolition in Conservation Areas
- B14 Pavements in Conservation Areas
- B15 Setting of Conservation Areas
- B20 Advertisements in Conservation Areas
- H2 Housing Density & Mix
- H3 Infill with Built Up Areas
- H4 Affordable Housing
- S6 Local Shopping Areas
- CS6 Retention of Community Facilities
- CS8 Extension of Community Facilities
- CS17 Telecommunications





# Planning Policy Context - Local Plan Proposals Map

3.6 The Local Plan Proposals Map shows how some of these policies relate to the parish. It shows the Built Up Area Boundary of Policy C1, the extent of the High Weald AONB and the Conservation Area.





# Planning Policies Context - Mid Sussex District Plan

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## The New Mid Sussex District Plan

The main changes to the District Plan contained in the Focused Amendments are:

- an increase in the housing provision figure from 650-800 new homes per year
- the identification of a strategic site for 600 homes at Pease Pottage
- the inclusion of a housing density policy to maximise yield from allocated sites
- the reversion to previous affordable housing and developer contribution policies
- updates to reflect the new government policy on self-build homes, energy efficiency, housing and accessibility standards and gypsies & travellers



**MID SUSSEX**  
**DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## The New Mid Sussex District Plan (2014 – 2031)

3.7 The BPNP has been prepared to reflect the reasoning and evidence of the Mid Sussex District Plan, which will replace the saved policies of the 2004 Local Plan.

3.8 The District Plan is positive about neighbourhood planning in the District and was the stimulus for the BPNP. Where relevant, the BPNP has sought to reflect the policy direction of the new Plan, which itself will need to be in conformity with the NPPF. A Pre Submission consultation on the District Plan took place in June-July 2015 and the District Council is presently consulting on a Focused Amendments version of that document. It hopes the District Plan will be examined and adopted by summer 2016. In which case, it remains likely that the Neighbourhood Plan will be examined and 'made' prior to the adoption of the District Plan.

3.9 In practice, there is little change to the strategic planning framework from the 2004 Local Plan to the new District Plan, as it applies to this parish. The May 2015 Settlement Sustainability Study, prepared to inform the District Plan, reaffirms the role of the village as a 'limited local service centre' that is relatively remote from major centres of population and not as self-contained in respect of employment provision as other similar and larger villages in the District. Although the latest District Plan document seeks to increase the supply of housing from 650 to 800 per annum in the period 2014 – 2031, there is no expectation that this parish will make any significant contribution to that supply.

3.10 The strategic policies that are relevant to the BPNP are as follows:

- DP2 Sustainable Economic Development – to enable the BPNP to support local employment.
- DP4 Village and Neighbourhood Centre development – protecting A1 shop class uses, in order to support the vitality of the village centres.
- DP5 Housing – Sets the required housing number for the district in the plan period from 2014 until 2031, and targets neighbourhood plans and/or the forthcoming District Site Allocations Plan to identify land for 1,730 new homes
- DP6 Settlement Hierarchy – setting out the level of development for the settlements in the district. Balcombe has been identified as a Category 3 Settlement – A Limited Local Service Centre. As such these type of settlements provide services such as schools, shops and community facilities for the immediate surroundings but are however reliant on neighbouring settlements for a good range of services and facilities.
- DP10 Protection and enhancement of the countryside - encourages Neighbourhood Plans to review built-up area boundaries and seeks to protect and enhance the countryside.
- DP12 Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy - the policy enables villages to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the settlements.

# Planning Policies Context



## High Weald Area of Outstanding Beauty

AONBs are defined as areas not in a National Park but considered to be of such outstanding natural beauty that it is desirable to protect them. Government has confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent and current guidance makes it clear that the practical application of the natural beauty criterion is identical for both National Parks and AONBs

- DP14 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – Considering the AONB in terms of landscape features, setting of the AONB, conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage
- DP15 Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – Although just on the border of the 7km buffer zone, the BPNP will need to ensure that its policies do not harm this area of European importance.
- DP19 Transport – ensures development provides adequate access and parking
- DP21 Community Infrastructure – supports improved connectivity such as high- speed broadband
- DP22 Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities – encouraging healthy lifestyles including informal leisure space and routes for cycling and walking
- DP23 Community Facilities and Local Services – the retention and improvement of these facilities are encouraged.
- DP24 Character and Design – ensuring high quality built and natural environment in line with the character of the area.
- DP24A – Housing Density – establishing a minimum density of 30 dwellings per Hectare for housing schemes in places like Balcombe unless there are compelling reasons for lower densities
- DP28 Housing Mix – sets out the housing development principles in terms of types and sizes of new homes
- DP29 Affordable Housing – sets out the affordable housing requirement for development in the district at 30% on site provision for schemes of 4 or more dwellings (and an equivalent financial contribution to off site provision for smaller schemes)
- DP33 Conservation Areas – protects and where possible enhances the special character of the conservation area
- DP40 Renewable Energy Schemes – encourages the development of renewable and low carbon energy projects

## High Weald AONB

3.11 Balcombe Parish lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The High Weald is a historic countryside of rolling hills draped by small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes. It covers 1461 sq km across four counties and 11 districts. The High Weald was designated an AONB in 1983.

3.12 The local authorities have developed their responsibility in regard to the High Weald AONB to include:

- Local Plan formulation and development management that takes account of the purpose of AONB designation;
- Pursuing the purposes of AONB designation through other policy and work areas, such as rural economic strategies; biodiversity action plans; green infrastructure strategies; landscape and building design; grants; land purchase; countryside management services; Rights of Way maintenance and provision of affordable housing;

# Planning Policies Context

## High Weald AONB Management Plan - Statement of Significance

“The essential character of the High Weald was established by the 14th century and has survived major historical events, and social and technological changes. It is considered to be one of the best surviving coherent medieval landscapes in Northern Europe. This fundamental and largely immutable character is the essence of the natural beauty of the AONB and the AONB Management Plan is structured around the five key components of this character:

- Geology, landform, water systems and climate: deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone. The ridges tend east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB. The landform and water systems are subject to, and influence, a local variant of the British sub-oceanic climate.
- Settlement: dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets, and late medieval villages founded on trade and non- agricultural rural industries
- Routeways: ancient routeways (now roads, tracks and paths) in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. These routeways are often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.
- Woodland: the great extent of ancient woods, gills, and shaws in small holdings, the value of which is inextricably linked to long-term management.
- Field and heath: small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by (and forming a mosaic with) hedgerows and small woodlands, and typically used for livestock grazing; small holdings; and a non-dominant agriculture; within which can be found distinctive zones of heaths and inned river valleys.”

- Establishing, and part-funding, a partnership and staff unit to provide advice and focus action on caring for the AONB;
- Production of an AONB management plan.

3.13 The current High Weald AONB Management Plan was adopted in March 2014 to cover the period 2014 – 2019 as a mid-term review of the vision of the area to 2024 that was adopted in March 2009. The Statement of Significance of the Plan is of relevance to the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan and is shown to the left.

## Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA)

3.14 Ashdown Forest is located adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of Mid Sussex within Wealden District. It is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to the important heathland habitats present and classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the presence of breeding Nightjars and Dartford warbler. It is a site of European Nature Conservation Importance comprising heathland and woodland habitats of around 3,000Ha.

3.15 Following consultation with Natural England, Mid Sussex District Council has undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to test whether the Mid Sussex District Plan, in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of Ashdown Forest. The HRA report on the District Plan identifies that proposed new housing close to Ashdown Forest is likely to increase the number of visitors to the Forest. Such visitors could increase disturbance to rare, ground-nesting bird populations (in particular the Dartford Warbler and Nightjar). The ‘Ashdown Forest Visitor Survey Data Analysis’ published in September 2010 found that most visitors to the Forest live within 7 km of its boundaries (straight line distance). The HRA therefore identified a 7 km ‘zone of influence’ within which new housing developments must counter its effect by putting in place measures which reduce visitor pressure.

3.16 Since 1st January 2015 all planning applications for residential development within the 7km zone will need to make a financial contribution towards both Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management & Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation.

3.17 The BPNP area includes a very small area of land within the 7km zone of influence but it is isolated from the village and the residential development proposals of the plan. As such MSDC has, in their HRA screening report of Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan, concluded that a HRA is not required;

“Nearly all of Balcombe Parish is outside the 7km zone of influence apart from a couple of fields and some woodland adjacent to Ardingly Reservoir. It is considered that because no development is proposed here and it is remote from the village of Balcombe, the Parish can be considered as being outside the 7km zone of influence for the Ashdown Forest SPA.” (Para 5.2)

# Vision and Objectives

## Our Vision and Objectives

***“Our countryside will have been protected to maintain our rural setting and we will have enriched our enviable community spirit”***

- to protect and enhance our countryside and rural setting
- to sustain and develop our village as a hub for local services, trades and businesses
- to enhance the centre of our village
- to maintain a balanced community to ensure social cohesion
- to promote accessibility around, and access to and from our village
- to promote our strong community spirit
- to address traffic and parking issues

## 4. Vision and Objectives

### Vision

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan establishes a vision of the parish in 2031 and identifies a series of objectives through which the vision will be achieved by the Plan. The vision has been derived from extensive community consultation by the Parish Council:

***“Our countryside will have been protected to maintain our rural setting and we will have enriched our enviable community spirit”***

### Objectives

4.2 The identification of objectives commenced through assessments of assets and issues during discussions of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee and work groups. This continued through debate at the working group sessions. The BPNP Objectives are based upon the identified issues and set out what the community wants to achieve in order to help realise the vision.

4.3 The following objectives have been identified:

- to protect and enhance our countryside and rural setting
- to sustain and develop our village as a hub for local services, trades and businesses
- to enhance the centre of our village
- to maintain a balanced community to ensure social cohesion
- to promote accessibility around, and access to and from our village
- to promote our strong community spirit
- to address traffic and parking issues

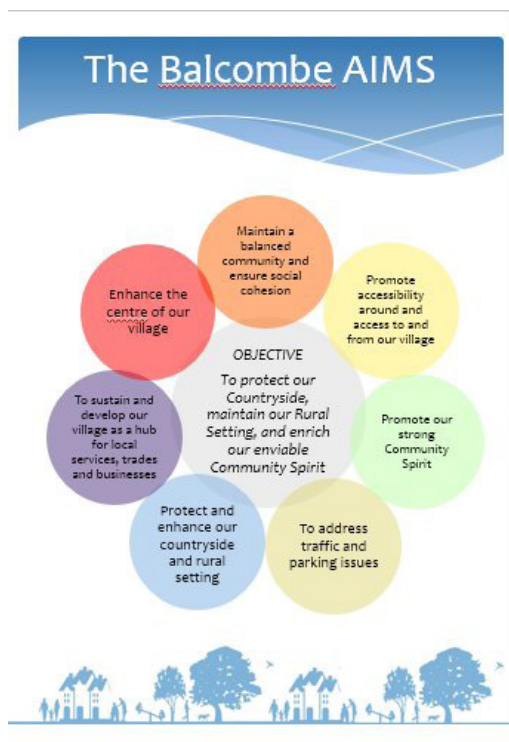
4.4 The objectives cover a range of economic, social and environmental issues that together provide a basis on which the sustainability performance of the BPNP can be judged. They also accord with the strategic objectives of the Mid Sussex District Plan and of the High Weald AONB purposes as they relate to Balcombe.

4.5 They reflect the nature of the parish and the direction the local community wants the BPNP to take, especially in securing the long term future of those community and environmental assets most precious to local people. They also accept and welcome change that will enable the community to grow in a sustainable way.

### Monitoring & Review

4.6 The BPNP will be monitored by the District Council and Balcombe Parish Council. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity but other data collected and reported at a parish level relevant to the plan will also be reviewed.

4.7 It is expected the BPNP will be formally reviewed on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the review of the Mid Sussex District Plan if this cycle is different.





# Land Use Policies



Balcombe Village Centre - a part-time post office is now located in the village stores



Land North of Station House



Balcombe Stores



The Half Moon Pub

## 5. Land Use Policies

5.1 The Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BPNP) contains a series of land use policies, the successful delivery of which during the plan period will help achieve the community's vision for the parish.

5.2 It is not the purpose of the BPNP to contain all land use and development planning policy relating to the parish. Rather, it contains a series of policies that will be applied by the District Council alongside the relevant policies of the Mid Sussex development plan and of the National Planning Policy Framework to determine planning applications. The silence of the BPNP on a policy matter does not therefore mean that the matter is not important in the parish but that it must be addressed by other development plan policies.

5.3 Each policy is numbered and there is a short explanation of the policy intent and its justification, together with an explanation of any assumptions or definition of terms. The evidence documentation is available either directly or via a link on the Parish Council's website.

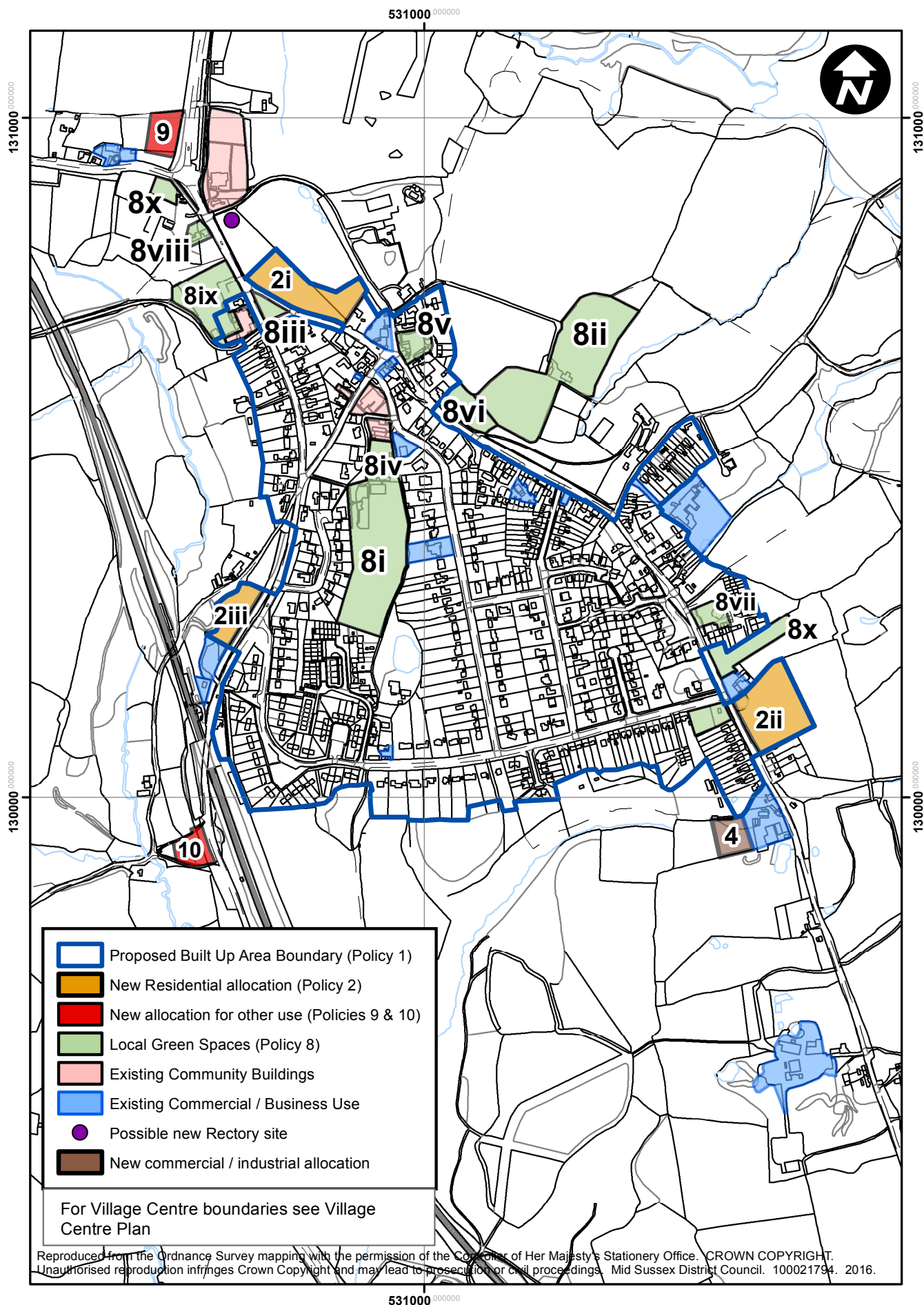
### Policy 1: Built Up Area Boundary

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Balcombe Built Up Area Boundary on the Policies Map shown on page 22. Sustainable development proposals located inside the Built Up Area Boundary will be supported, provided they accord with planning policy, the other provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Mid Sussex development plan. Development proposals outside of the Built Up Area Boundary will be required to conform to development plan policies in respect of the control of development in the countryside.

5.4 This policy establishes the key spatial priority for the BPNP. It sets the strategic direction for all its other policies by steering new development into Balcombe village, which lies at the heart of the parish, and by continuing to exert strong control over development proposals elsewhere in the High Weald AONB.

5.5 The policy continues to use and define the boundary as a longstanding mechanism in Mid Sussex to distinguish between rural settlements and their surrounding countryside. The effect of the policy is to promote sustainable development proposals only within the built up area boundary of Balcombe, unless they are appropriate to a countryside location. The boundary established by Policy C1 of the 2004 Mid Sussex Local Plan has been revised by the BPNP to enable it to allocate land for specific development purposes on the edge of the village, in the absence of any available and developable infill land within the village. This will result in approximately 42 new homes being delivered in the plan period to 2031, which will make a contribution to the new District Plan Policy DP5 housing strategy that is proportionate to the status and environmental constraints of the village (see para 5.9).

# Policies Map





# Housing Site Allocations

## Mid Sussex District Council Focused Amendments to the Pre-Submission Draft seeks the following objectives for Affordable Housing

- the provision of a minimum of 30% affordable housing for all residential developments providing a net increase of 4 dwellings and above
- on residential developments providing a net increase of 1-3 dwellings, and in other circumstances where on-site provision is not practicable, a commuted payment towards off-site provision, equivalent to providing 30% on-site affordable housing. This payment would be commuted until after the completion of the dwellings within the development



Balcombe House



Gilletts Surgery with flats above



Spicers, a Balcombe Estate owned rental property

5.6 The changes made to the boundary are minor and do not allow for 'major development', unless they can demonstrate the exceptional circumstances set out in para 116 of the NPPF. Their location in relation to the village is considered to represent a sustainable means of growing the village without undermining the special landscape character and scenic beauty of the High Weald AONB.

5.7 Within the boundary, the policy allows for sustainable development proposals in the form of small infill schemes and other windfall sites, should they come forward during the plan period.

## Policy 2: Housing Site Allocations

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates the following sites for housing development, as shown on the Policies Map, subject to the development principles outlined:

- i. Approximately 14 dwellings on land at Balcombe House Gardens and Rectory Gardens on Haywards Heath Road adjoining the village centre, comprising a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings, provided the scheme comprises proposals for:
  - a. the provision of a public car park of 10 spaces;
  - b. the retention and improvement of the existing tree-lined frontage to Haywards Heath Road;
  - c. it can be demonstrated that they will sustain or enhance the significance of the setting to both the Grade II listed Balcombe House and the Balcombe Conservation Area heritage assets by using the existing woodland setting;
- ii. Approximately 14 dwellings on land at Barn Field off Haywards Heath Road comprising a mix of 2,3 and 4 bedroom dwellings provided the scheme provides a satisfactory vehicular and pedestrian access into the site;
- iii. Approximately 14 dwellings on land north of Station House on London Road, comprising a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses and flats provided that the scheme includes a satisfactory vehicular and pedestrian access into the site and detailed proposals for the retention of mature trees on the site and for the recreation of any habitat that would be lost in order to create vehicular and pedestrian access into the site.

In all cases, the design of the scheme must demonstrate that it will conserve and enhance the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Development proposals will be expected to conform to the affordable housing policies of the Mid Sussex development plan.

5.8 This policy proposes to allocate for housing development three sites within the built up area boundary defined by Policy 1 of the BPNP and as shown on the Policies Map. Although all of the sites are available for development now, they are expected

# Housing Site Allocations

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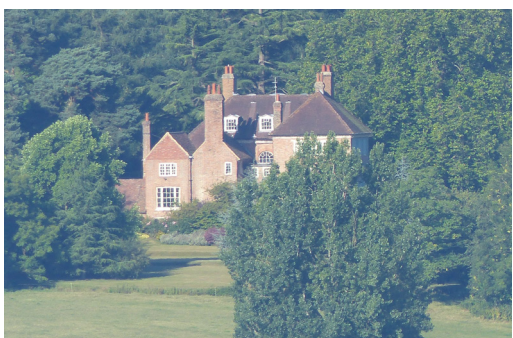
Springfield Shaw, London Road



Barnfield Cottages



Rocks Lane House



Balcombe House

to be delivered across the full plan period. The approximate site capacities are derived from an assessment of the likely net developable areas and the use of a 30 dwellings per Hectare benchmark in line with the new District Plan Policy DP24A.

5.9 In total, the sites will deliver approximately 42 dwellings, which represents an increase of 5% on the housing stock of the parish in 2013. There is a series of indicators that helps provide the reasoning and evidence base on which the BPNP may make housing policy provisions. Firstly, it is estimated that the proportional increase in the number of dwellings in the parish would be between 30 and 60 dwellings relative to the most recent Government population forecasts (see evidence base). The proposed number of dwellings is therefore broadly in line with that proportional increase and takes into account the need for the BPNP to plan positively for future housing growth in line with para 50 of the NPPF. In addition, it is worth noting the following indicators that can be used to support the proposed dwelling figures:

- Community engagement feedback: perception that there are not enough homes for a) new starters, b) the elderly wishing to downsize and c) affordable housing
- Proportion of Balcombe population / Mid Sussex population by the volume of housing proposed by the emerging District Plan 2014: The District Plan proposed building 10,600 homes over the next 20 years; 3,500 – 4,000 to be built in Burgess Hill with another 4,200 committed in other areas, leaving a shortfall of 2,400 homes to be developed elsewhere. As a proportion of the overall population, Balcombe has 1,833 residents which is 1.3% of the overall Mid Sussex population of 139,860 (Census 2011). This would bring our proportion of homes to 31. Although the November 2015 Mid Sussex Pre- Submission Plan Focused Amendments increases the total housing to be built over the period to 13,600, parishes are not being asked to increase their housing numbers.
- Identified housing needs: On 30th January 2014 the Common Housing Register (CHR) showed an affordable rented housing need of 63. (These are households who have a local connection to the parish of Balcombe):
  - 1 bed – 38
  - 2 bed – 21
  - 3 bed – 3
  - 4 bed - 1
- Balcombe's Housing Needs Survey 2009 identified 25 households in need. When planning for rural exception sites, the convention uses HNS data to halve the total need in this way. To deliver 13 affordable dwellings will require a total of 43 dwellings (@ 30% per the current MSDC policy).
- Extrapolating housing development: over the last 40 years on average, Balcombe has developed 20 additional properties per decade, which would mean 40 new homes over the next 20 years.



# Housing Site Allocations

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Jobs



Granary Cottages, Village Centre



Little Bowders, Haywards Heath Road



Newlands

- Government predictions for household size: Government data forecasts that the average England household size will decrease by 7.3% from 2.33 people/dwellings in 2008 to 2.16 in 2033. In 2011 the Balcombe population of 1,833 resided in 755 dwellings, i.e. 2.43/dwelling average, extrapolating this would decrease average household size from 2.43 to 2.25 to 815 dwellings in Balcombe, i.e. an additional 60 dwellings to sustain the current population

5.10 Secondly, the scale of growth reflects the status of Balcombe in the hierarchy of settlements in the District (as evidenced in the Settlement Sustainability Study of May 2015). The Study acknowledges that the village benefits from a reasonably good range of community and other services in the village to encourage commuting, school and leisure trips without the need to use the car. It is therefore a relatively more sustainable location for development than some others. On the other hand, the parish lies entirely within the High Weald AONB and the majority of the village is a designated Conservation Area. Both are significant environmental constraints on housing growth and make the village a less sustainable location for development than others in the District. This is especially so given there are no available sites within the settlement boundary to propose for development and therefore only sites beyond that boundary can be proposed for allocation.

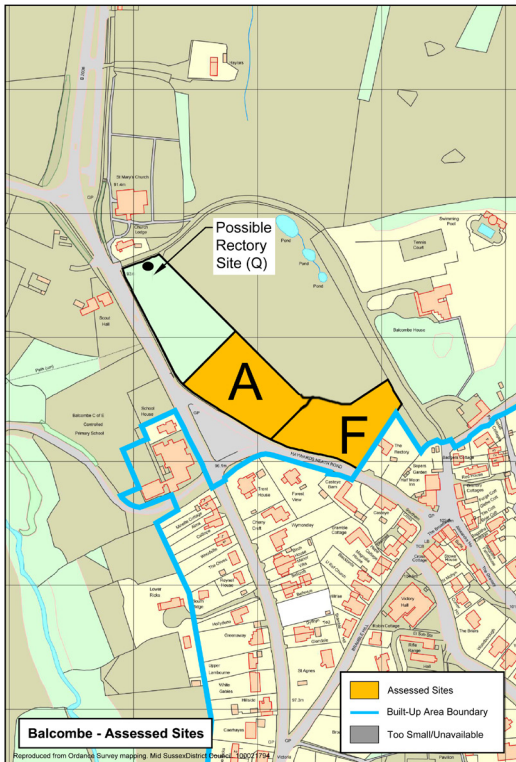
5.11 In the absence of a clear and tested policy framework, the housing provisions of the BPNP are therefore considered to strike an appropriate and sensible balance between a number of national and local housing, environmental and heritage policy objectives in a way that will enable the BPNP to pass a referendum in due course. Although the MSDC Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Update of June 2015 identifies a theoretic apportionment of the District's objectively assessed need to the parish that is higher than the conclusions in para 4.16 on the previous page, the report accepts that such an approach to establishing housing need at the parish level is limited.

5.12 The BPNP will be monitored and reviewed to respond to the adoption of future development plan documents, most notably the Mid Sussex District Plan and Site Allocations Plan, as well as to changes in national planning policy. It will also reflect on its success in encouraging the delivery of its own development proposals. Should one or more of the proposed sites not come forward for development, and/or there is a future requirement in the District Plan to identify additional housing sites in the parish, for example, then the first review of the BPNP will consider this.

## **Balcombe House Gardens and Rectory Gardens**

5.13 The land comprises two parcels of land alongside Haywards Heath Road immediately to the north of the village centre. Together they comprise approximately 0.8 Ha of gross development land (0.5 Ha net) within the grounds of the Grade II listed Balcombe

# Balcombe House Gardens & Rectory Gardens



House, which owns the majority of the land. St. Mary's Church to the north of the site is also listed. The land adjoins the Balcombe Conservation Area and therefore forms part of the setting to both the listed buildings and the Conservation Area.

5.14 The land is currently reasonably well screened by tall, mature trees and vegetation along its boundaries. In the past, the land has been used as gardens and parkland. It is well located very close to the village centre and to the other village amenities. Crucially, the site therefore offers a rare opportunity to create a new public car park for the village centre, where there are currently few existing places. The new car park should be transferred to either Mid Sussex District Council or to the Parish Council for ongoing management and operation.

5.15 A successful scheme will likely comprise a mix of dwellings in distinct groups fronting on to Haywards Heath Road and placed within a woodland setting to enable them to appear subservient to the larger, listed buildings to the north and east. The scheme should have a direct access on to the road but be mindful of the site topography and curve in the road and of the distances between its junction with London Road and with Bramble Hill.

5.16 Part of the site is currently occupied by the rectory. In the event that a new rectory is required in order to facilitate the development of the site, land at Church Woods South would be appropriate for this purpose. Any planning application would be considered on its merits.



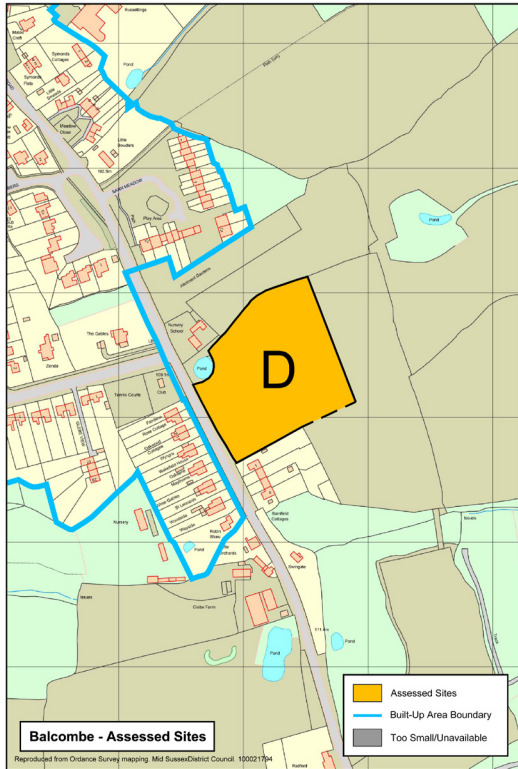
Rectory Gardens



Balcombe House Gardens



# Barn Field



Barn Field

## Barn Field

5.17 This 2.49 Ha gross development land is currently used for pasture and is owned by the Balcombe Estate. It adjoins the eastern village boundary with access onto Haywards Heath Road. It is therefore a sustainable location for housing development with easy vehicular access and within walking distance of transport and village amenities.

5.18 The site has been assessed as having a medium landscape impact leading to the loss of some views of the countryside for the houses opposite the site. A small scheme of approximately 14 dwellings on 0.5 Ha of the site will mitigate this impact. Policy 2 requires any planning application to provide a satisfactory vehicular and pedestrian access into the site. Based on the outcomes of design investigations, consultations and safety audits planning applications on the site may need to contribute to identified traffic calming on Haywards Heath Road.

5.19 A successful scheme will likely comprise houses set back from the road and siding with the road toward the downward slope of the hill, to minimise the impact on the houses opposite. Small but distinct groups of dwellings with a form and height reflecting the immediate context of the group may be suitable. The streetscape should not be disrupted by multiple access points and the highway boundary can be defined by a hedgerow as exists. The building line of houses should be no closer to the road than the current building line of the southern elevation of Barnfield Cottages.



# Land North of Station House

## Land North of Station House

5.20 The site comprises a net developable area of 0.26 Ha of land off London Road that is currently used to park hire cars and woodland/scrubland. Before that, it was used as an allotment and then a storage area. It is bounded by the main road and railway line on two sides and by development on its other sides.

5.21 The land is owned by the Balcombe Estate and is a sustainable location for development, as it is well located close to the village centre and the station, hence the higher housing density of approximately 50 dwellings per Hectare. It has no intrinsic landscape value and does not contribute to the scenic beauty of the High Weald AONB. However, a development scheme must demonstrate that it will result in an improvement to the appearance of the AONB in this location through its design solution. It must also demonstrate that it can address any ground condition problems arising from its previous uses or from the adjoining former quarry site and it must mitigate any noise pollution from the railway.

5.22 In this regard, the site context with houses on London Road could potentially accept a visually robust row of two storey houses or flats. The existing highway verge of over ten metres width provides a generous set back and space for trees to be planted. Houses on the east side of London Road are at significantly higher ground levels and typically over 40 metres away from the edge of the site. While the houses and flats would be arranged with prominent access for pedestrians directly to the edge of the highway verge so as to 'face' the street, the road and cars would be set behind the buildings at a lower level. The garden spaces would be terraced. The difference in level of approximately four metres across the full width of the site would require the access road to be raised above existing levels by a metre or more. Proximity to the existing embankment of the Rocks Lane pit would require retaining structures or localised bridging of voids or weaker ground.

5.23 A scheme would likely require the felling of young trees within the site and the row of tall semi-mature trees on the street boundary. It is anticipated that the existing mature Oak trees along the west embankment, around the Rocks Lane pit and in the triangle of land north of the site would be retained. The scheme will provide a single highway access point located where the existing car depot and Station House have access. This position is potentially favourable in terms of Highway visibility requirements due to the curve in London Road but the access arrangements would need to consider the relationship with the vehicle access to Springfield Shaw opposite.



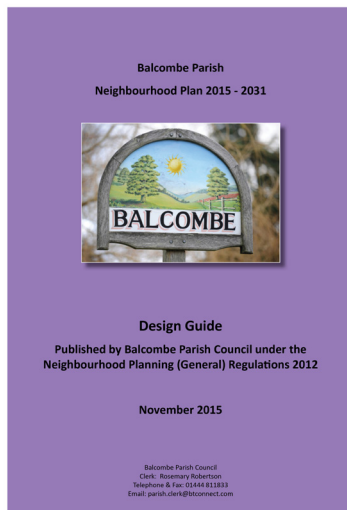
Land north of Station House from south



Land north of Station House from north

## Balcombe Village Design Guide

The Parish Council has prepared a Village Design Guide with the intention of the document being adopted as supplementary planning guidance by the District Council in 2015. The document is prepared and consulted upon in accordance with the published good practice guidance. It will define the specific characteristics applying to distinct areas within the village, including the designated Conservation Area, to inform the design of planning applications and the consideration of those applications by the District Council.



## Policy 3: Design

The scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, will be required to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and to avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald AONB and the significance and character or appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area, where a building will command a view.

Unless otherwise proposed in Policy 2, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate they accord with the provisions of the Balcombe Village Design Guide and with the following principles:

- i. approximately 75% of the total number of dwellings of the scheme, and especially the affordable homes, are no larger than 3 bedroom dwellings with a proportion suited to occupation by households of retirement age;
- ii. approximately 25% of the total number of dwellings of the scheme to comprise dwellings of no more than 4 bedrooms;
- iii. they comply with affordable housing requirements of the Mid Sussex development plan;
- iv. new and improved utility infrastructure will be encouraged and supported in order to meet the identified needs of the community; and
- v. new residential and commercial development will be permitted where there is sufficient infrastructure capacity currently available or where the necessary capacity can be provided to an agreed timetable.

Proposals that involve the change of use of listed buildings within the settlement boundary for housing as 1, 2 or 3 bedroom units, including buildings judged to make a positive contribution to the special historic or architectural interest or character and appearance of the conservation area, will be supported provided it can be demonstrated they will sustain the significance of these heritage assets.

5.24 This policy requires all development proposals to deliver high quality schemes that reflect the distinct character of Balcombe and its location with the High Weald AONB.

5.25 In addition, the local community is keen to ensure that all housing schemes contribute to broadening the existing housing stock, in which smaller dwellings are relatively few. The policy therefore requires schemes to give a clear emphasis to delivering dwellings suited to newly forming households and older households wanting to downsize from larger properties but to remain living in the village. The local housing market need data also indicates a strong need for affordable homes of this smaller type. The BPNP further stresses the need for improved infrastructure capacity prior to or coinciding with the delivery of new residential development as supported by Southern Water.



# Design • Enterprise, Home Working & Broadband



Glebe Farm

5.26 Finally, in considering how development would affect the surrounding landscape and heritage assets, the Council will consider not only how prominent it is in the view but how the choices of design have sought to contribute to the character of the landscape and avoid negative impacts, as well as how development would help to deliver the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The third part of policy 3 sets out to provide a positive context for the conversion of listed and other historic buildings into residential use within the settlement boundary. Proposals will be expected to provide a viable long-term future use for the buildings concerned.

## Policy 4: Enterprise, Home Working & Broadband

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land at Glebe Farm, Haywards Heath Road for B1-B8 uses, as shown on the Policies Map, provided:

- The design of the scheme will avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- The type of business development proposed is suited to a rural location in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and will make a contribution to the local economy.

Elsewhere within the built up area boundary defined by Policy 1, proposals to change part of the primary use of a dwelling to a business use for home working will be supported, provided they will not result in a significant increase in vehicles serving the building nor in a loss of amenity to neighbouring households by way of noise, odour or other general disturbance.

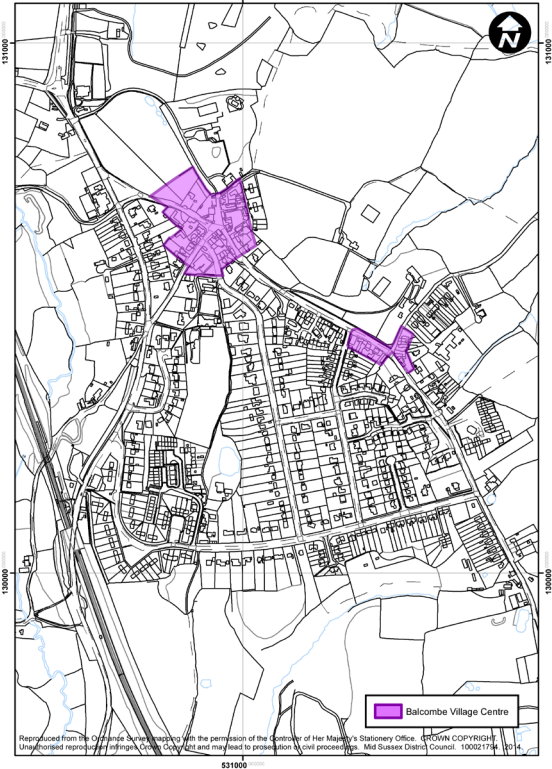
Proposals for new telecommunications infrastructure to provide access to a super-fast broadband network across the whole parish and to improve the speed of existing services, will be supported, provided the location and design of any above-ground network installations reflect the character of the surroundings.

5.28 This policy seeks to promote rural economic development in the village through a variety of means. In doing so, it responds to the analysis of the 2015 Settlement Sustainability Study that indicates the village is less self-contained than many other similar size villages in the District in local employment terms.

5.29 Firstly, it allocates land for a small rural business scheme on the edge of the village but, in doing so, it requires that the nature of the employment provision and the scheme design are suited to the AONB location of the site.

5.30 Secondly, the policy encourages the conversion of a proportion of the total floor space of a dwelling to a business use in appropriate circumstances to encourage home working where planning consent is required for the change of use. This may especially encourage the **partial** reconversion of properties originally built as business premises but since converted to residential use.

# Enterprise • Balcombe Village Centre



5.31 Finally, the policy encourages investment by broadband providers in upgrading local services, mainly in the countryside where there is still no access to superfast broadband.

## Policy 5: Balcombe Village Centre

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the Balcombe Village Centre on the Policies Map. Within the village centre, development proposals that will result in the loss of any village centre uses (as identified in paragraph 5.33 of this Plan) will be resisted unless:

- i. the village centre unit has been vacant for at least two years;
- ii. it can be demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to secure another village centre use; and
- iii. it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the unit becoming commercially viable.

Proposals for a change of use of a building or for the development of land within the village centre for commercial use will be supported, provided they accord with the design policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and Mid Sussex development plan and specifically, they will conserve and enhance the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the character or appearance of the Balcombe Conservation Area and Listed Buildings in the village centre.

A secondary village centre has been identified at the junction of Mill Lane and the Haywards Heath Road. Village Centre policies also apply to this area.



Half Moon Inn and Balcombe Stores

5.32 This policy protects the existing village centre uses from a change of use for another purpose, to ensure the vitality and viability of the village as a small service and tourism centre is maintained. It also encourages the creation of new village centre uses by changing the use of an existing building or by developing land for that purpose.



Traffic blights the village centre

5.33 The village centre is defined on the Policies Map for this purpose and village centre uses are defined as use classes A1, A2, A3, A4 and B1(a) of the Use Classes Order. These shops and services are greatly valued by residents, highlighted in responses to the consultations on the BPNP. This policy will protect and bolster the village centre, helping to build a strong community. It will support local employment and reduce the need to commute. The loss of a village centre unit will therefore only be allowed where it can be clearly shown that there is no realistic prospect of market conditions encouraging a new village centre use of the unit.



# Balcombe CE Primary School • Community Facilities



Balcombe CE Primary School playing fields



The Parish Room



The Victory Hall



St Mary's Church, Balcombe

## Policy 6: Balcombe CE Primary School

Development proposals to extend Balcombe CE Primary School to provide additional education facilities, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported, provided:

- i. the design of the scheme will avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- ii. the scheme will deliver any necessary infrastructure that arises directly from its development.

5.34 This policy supports development proposals to extend this primary school on land within the school grounds. The facility and use already benefit from the protection offered by saved Policy CS1 of the 2004 Local Plan.

5.35 The school is popular in serving the village and surrounding area and the school governors are keen to provide an additional classroom to meet the demand for places and to maintain its high standards. The increase in housing proposed in the BPNP will itself increase the demand for places from within the immediate catchment area and it is important that the local school is able to accommodate a growth in population if the village is to remain sustainable. Some village pupils are already having to go to schools outside the village even though the proportion of school places for village children is now a significant majority.

5.36 The site is capable of being extended without causing any significant harm to the surrounding AONB countryside though proposals should demonstrate that its prominent location in the landscape has been properly responded to.

## Policy 7: Community Facilities

Proposals to improve the viability of an established community use of the following buildings and facilities by way of the extension or partial redevelopment of existing buildings will be supported, provided the design of the scheme will avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty:

- i. Railway Station, London Road
- ii. GP Surgery, Haywards Heath Road
- iii. Balcombe CE Primary School and Playing Field, London Road
- iv. Balcombe Stores & Post Office, Haywards Heath Road
- v. St. Mary's Church, London Road
- vi. Pavilion, off Stockcroft Road
- vii. Victory Hall including Club and Car Park, Bramble Hill
- viii. Parish Room, Stockcroft Road
- ix. Half Moon Inn, Haywards Heath Road

# Community Facilities • Local Green Spaces



The Half Moon Inn, Balcombe



Scout Hut Amenity Space



The Recreation Ground



The Bowling Green

- x. Scout Hut, London Road
- xi. Bramble Hall, Bramble Hill
- xii. Tennis Courts, Haywards Heath Road

5.37 This policy supports development proposals intended to secure the long term benefit of a range of facilities that are important to the local community. In some cases, remaining viable will require investment in updating and/or increasing the size of the facility to support new uses.

5.38 The policy identifies those uses that the local community strongly favours are retained. They comprise a range of buildings and associated land, all of which may be capable of being extended or redeveloped in ways that are suitable in the High Weald AONB.

## Policy 8: Local Green Spaces

The Neighbourhood Plan designates Local Green Spaces in the following locations, as shown on the Policies Map:

- i. Recreation Ground;
- ii. Cricket Field;
- iii. School Green;
- iv. Bowling Green;
- v. Alley Green;
- vi. Bagpiths Field;
- vii. Barn Meadow Play Area;
- viii. Scout Hut Amenity Space;
- ix. School Playing Field; and
- x. Allotment Area.

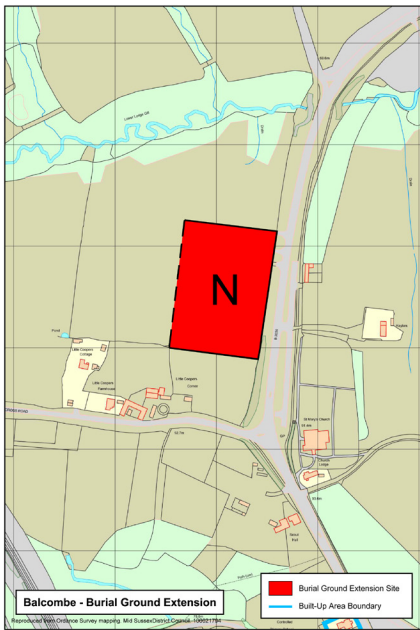
Proposals for development in a Local Green Space will be resisted, unless they are ancillary to the use of the land for a public recreational purpose or are required for a statutory utility infrastructure purpose.

5.39 This policy proposes a number of important green spaces in the parish to be protected from development by the designation as Local Green Spaces in accordance with the NPPF.

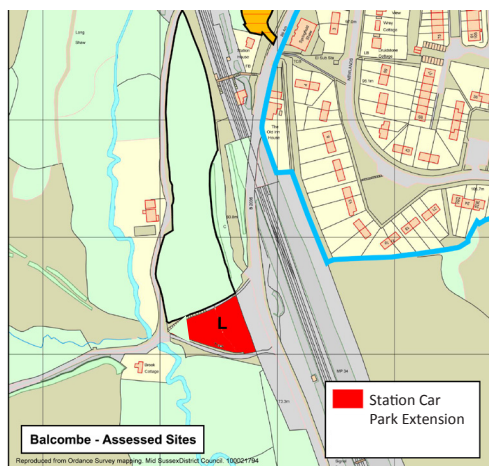
5.40 In each case, the green spaces are an integral part of the parish and are therefore regarded as special to the local community. The BPNP Local Green Spaces study (in the evidence base) sets out the case for each site to be designated. Once designated, the policy will resist all proposals for development unless it can be clearly demonstrated they are minor, they are ancillary to a public recreation use or they are required utilities development.



# Burial Ground Extension • Station Car Parking



The Graveyard extension



The alternative station carpark

## Policy 9: Burial Ground Extension

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land off London Road, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of providing an additional burial ground. Proposals for any new buildings ancillary to this use will be supported provided they propose appropriate access provision, and avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

5.41 This policy allocates vacant land for the provision of a new burial ground to supplement the existing facility adjoining St. Mary's Church. The Balcombe Estate owns the land and has made it available for this purpose. There will be a demand for new burial spaces in the coming years that the existing facility will not have the capacity to meet.

5.42 The site lies off London Road but may be accessed from Handcross Road away from its junction with London Road. Given that it will be a new facility on the opposite side of London Road to the existing facility, there may be a need for some ancillary buildings. If so, then their design must respond to the prominence of the site in views towards the village from the north and to the contribution the site therefore makes to the landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald AONB.

5.43 There may also be the need for some additional traffic calming and a possible reduction in the speed limit.

## Policy 10: Station Car Parking

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land off London Road, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of providing additional car parking spaces for Balcombe Station.

5.43 This policy allocates vacant land in the ownership of the Balcombe Estate for the purpose of providing alternative car parking spaces for the Balcombe Station. The land adjoins the existing car park, which is always used due to its pricing policy. Commuters park in the village and cause problems for residents.

5.44 Whilst the Parish Council is addressing that problem, the better longer term solution may be to provide commuters with an alternative car park with a different pricing policy.

# Renewable Energy

## REPOWER Balcombe

Was set up with a simple mission to generate the equivalent of 100% of Balcombe's electricity demand through community-owned locally-generated renewable energy. Additional aims were to:

- To meet at least part of this target in 2015.
- To use part of any profits from the enterprise to reduce local energy demand through education and by financing energy efficiency improvements to community buildings and local homes through a community benefit fund.
- To ensure that the financial benefits of harnessing local clean energy resources are primarily shared amongst local people.
- To take responsibility for meeting local energy needs in a way that does not contribute to climate change or harm the prospects of future generations.
- To be sensitive to local landscapes and environments; and to develop responsibly by targeting roof space first, and by adhering to the industry best practice.
- To inspire other communities by demonstrating and promoting the benefits of community renewable energy as a positive, viable alternative to the current energy production model.
- To unite the local community in support of these goals.

In September 2015 REPOWER Balcombe achieved planning permission to build a 4.8MW community-owned solar farm. This was a flagship opportunity to demonstrate what local communities can achieve, but just hours away from signing the group has had to abandon the scheme after the Treasury scrapped a tax break that community energy projects rely on to raise funds.



REPOWER Balcombe Supporters

## Policy 11: Renewable Energy

Proposals comprising domestic and community-scale renewable energy development will be supported, provided the design of the scheme will avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and takes account of airport safeguarding in relation to wind turbines.

5.45 This policy provides support for renewable energy proposals that require planning consent (i.e. the proposals do not already benefit from permitted development rights).

5.46 Those proposals may be for domestic scale projects, such as small biomass schemes. They may also be for larger, community-scale projects in the parish, e.g. solar arrays. In each case, the proposal must be able to demonstrate that its scale and appearance and the nature of its operations are appropriate in the High Weald AONB.

5.47 The local Repower Balcombe community enterprise has been established to promote such schemes and this policy will add further weight to the provisions of para 97 of the NPPF. More generally, it is acknowledged that there are many more national planning and climate change policy objectives that promote renewable energy production and energy efficiency measures. They already promote and control how such matters are addressed and there is therefore no need for the policy to restate them.



# Implementation

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Play Equipment is needed for the Recreation Ground



Improved equipment and facilities are needed for the youth club



Our halls require investment for community usage eg the Youth Club



The Handcross Community bus offers scheduled services and days out

## 6. Implementation

### Introduction

6.1 The BPNP will be implemented through a combination of the local planning authority's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish and through steering local community, public sector and private sector investment and actions into a series of non-statutory proposals contained in the plan.

6.2 These proposals have emerged during the preparation of the BPNP and, although they cannot form part of the statutory land use policy provisions of the BPNP, they are included in this section as non-statutory proposals to provide a comprehensive view of local community aspirations for the parish.

### Development Management

6.3 The policies contained in the BPNP will be delivered by landowners and developers through the submission of planning applications and the carrying out of development works if consented. In preparing the BPNP, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that its policies are achievable.

6.4 Whilst the local planning authority will be responsible for development management, the Parish Council will also use the BPNP to frame their representations on submitted planning applications. They will also work with the authority to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development, for example in participating in pre-application meetings with applicants and in reviewing the District Council plan monitoring data.

### Infrastructure Projects

6.5 The Parish Council proposes the following projects for investment of future Community Infrastructure Levy funding allocated by the local planning authority and to the Parish Council:

- i. Improvements to the village centre to address pedestrian safety and smooth access/egress for bus services.
- ii. Rectory Gardens – an off-street car park to be implemented
- iii. Traffic calming measures in the vicinity of Balcombe C E school, especially on the main road in front of the school
- iv. Play facilities at the Recreation Ground
- v. Youth facilities improvements at the Sports Pavilion and Bramble Hall
- vi. Victory Hall/Parish Room improvements, including provision of early years facility
- vii. Community bus service improvements

# Implementation

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Tiggers Pre-School uses the Parish Room and requires updated equipment and facilities

6.6 This series of local infrastructure projects will be prioritised for investment from the forthcoming Mid Sussex Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The list provides an indication of the projects that may need investment but should not be regarded as exhaustive or guaranteed.

6.7 The CIL will replace the pooling of S106 agreement financial contributions during the plan period. It will be charged on qualifying residential and commercial development. At least 25% of the levy collected from development in the Parish will be invested in the Parish. The policy provides the local community with an indication of the priorities for investing the fund to improve local infrastructure as a result of new development in the parish.



The Victory Hall and its WW1 murals would benefit from additional facilities

6.8 In addition, other policies of the BPNP require planning obligations to be entered into as part of planning consents to finance and deliver specific infrastructure projects relating to the development scheme, in order to make the scheme satisfactory in line with paras 173 and 204 of the NPPF.



The village centre is blighted by traffic and requires improved traffic calming



Traffic calming is also needed on the Haywards Heath Rd as part of the Barn Field development



# Appendix A - Evidence Base

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The list below contains all those documents collected and reviewed in the process of preparing this report. All are available to view via Balcombe Parish Councils' website neighbourhood plan pages.

Balcombe Parish Plan (2007)
Balcombe Parish Housing Needs Survey (2009)
Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Planning presentations April 2012
Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan Survey and Community Groups Oct – Dec 2012
Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Planning Aims presentations and Questionnaire Mar 2013
Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Planning presentations and Feedback Form June 2014
Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan Draft Sustainability Appraisal (2014)
Balcombe Rural Community Profile – AiRS November 2013
BPNP - HRA Screening Regulation 14 Report by rCoh September 2015
BPNP – Informal Plan Consultation Responses Report (Dec 2014)
Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004)
Mid Sussex District Plan – Pre Submission Draft (June 2015)
Mid Sussex District Plan – Focused Amendments Pre Submission Draft (November 2015)
Mid Sussex District Plan – Revised Sustainability Appraisal (November 2015)
MSDC Settlement Sustainability Review (May 2015)
Mid Sussex Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013)
Mid Sussex Economic Development Strategy (2010)
Mid Sussex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008)
Mid Sussex Open Space Study (2006)
Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007)
West Sussex Local Transport Plan (2011)
High Weald AONB Management Plan (2014)