



# Feasibility Study for Development Options at Haywards Heath

Final Report  
(Confidential)

December 2005



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## Part I - Setting The Context

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Background

Atkins consultants were commissioned in November 2005 to undertake a feasibility study to examine the potential for additional strategic development on land around Haywards Heath. The objective of the study is to explore and gain an understanding of the issues and implications for development around Haywards Heath in order to inform the response from Mid District Council to the Lewes District LDF process and to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy for Mid Sussex.

#### 1.2 Approach

The aim of this study is to investigate whether there are any areas within the identified Study Area, i.e. contiguous with the Haywards Heath urban area, which could be developed to provide viable, sustainable new communities of up to 1,000 dwellings.

The consultants approach has involved evaluating land within the study area which is not environmentally constrained and identifying site options with an indication of capacity based on 30 dwellings per hectare.

A more detailed assessment of the capacity of the locations identified will be undertaken in subsequent stages of the study along with indicative layouts and assessment of the impacts of any potential development on the surrounding transport, utilities and social and community infrastructure to assess whether they could be satisfactorily mitigated.

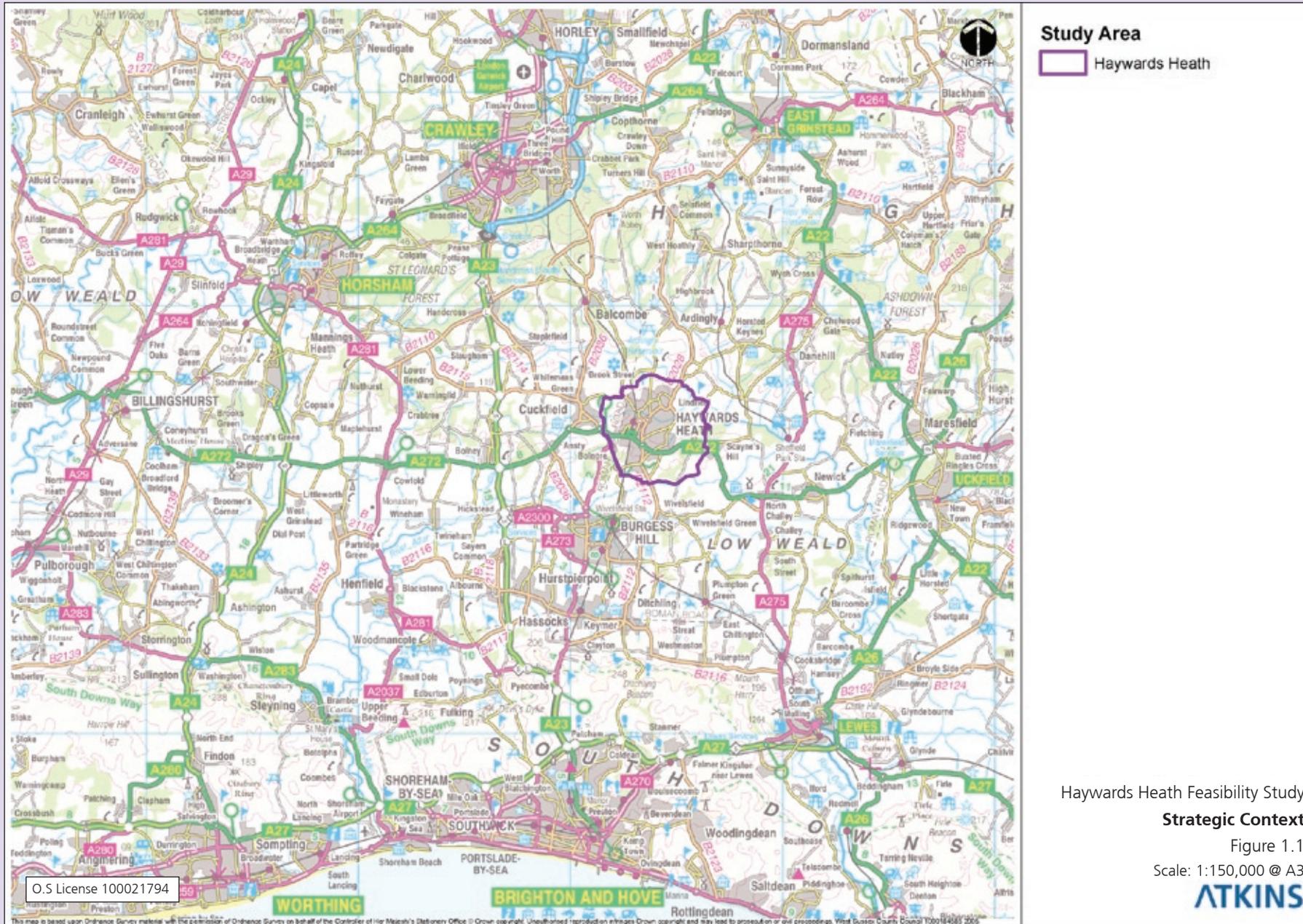
#### 1.3 Content and Structure of Final Report

This document is set out in two parts. Part I discusses the background to the site and provides the context for site development. Part II identifies the potential developable areas and the capacity of these sites.

#### 1.4 Strategic Context

Figure 1.1: Strategic Context, illustrates the strategic location of Haywards Heath in relation to its sub-region. It is located approximately 17 miles from Brighton to the south and 45 miles from London to the north. It is served by a fast rail service between London Victoria and Lewes/Brighton.

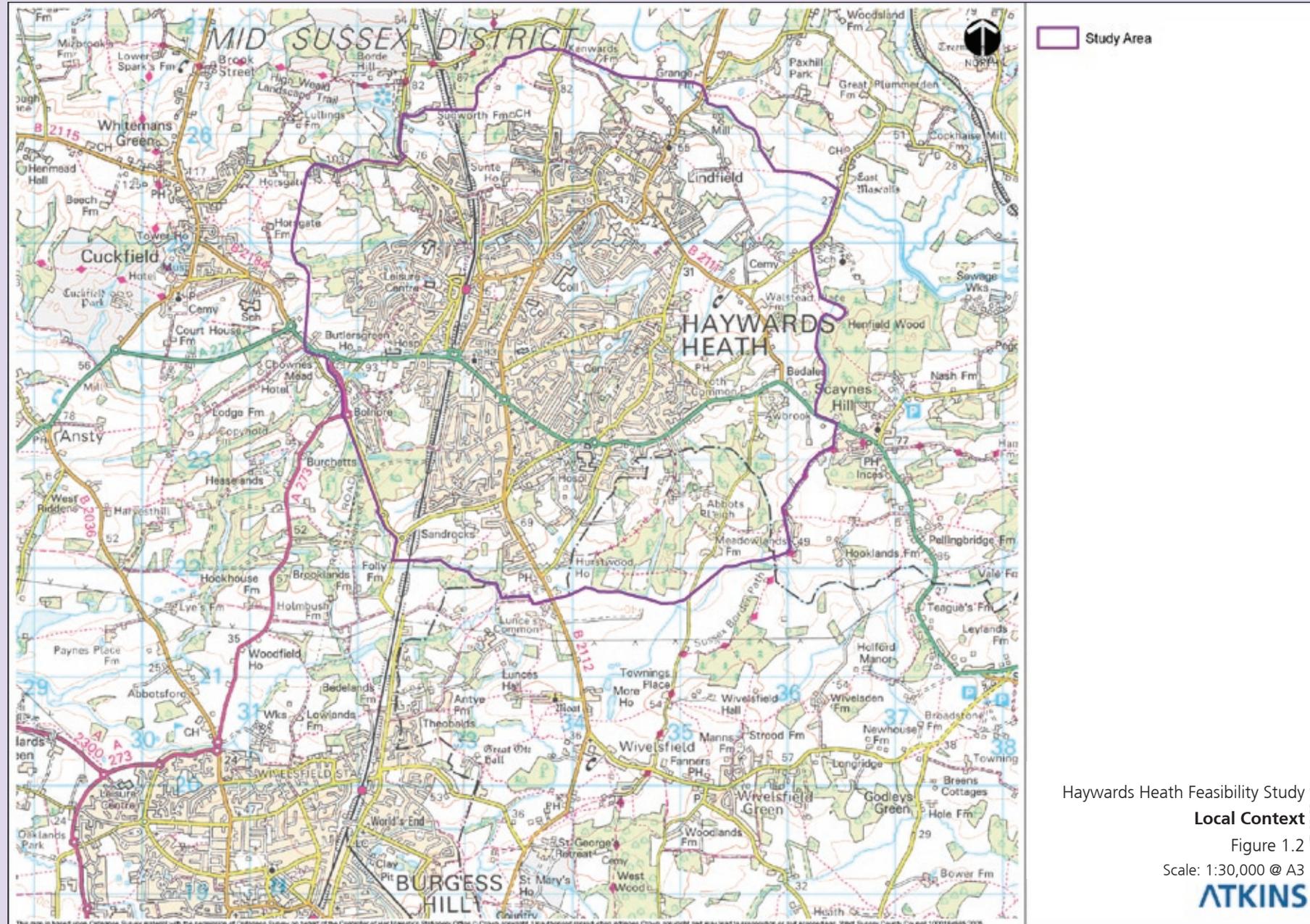
Figure 1.2 illustrates the location of Haywards Heath in relation to the surrounding urban areas of Cuckfield to the west, Scaynes Hill to the east and Burgess Hill to the south.



Study Area  
 Haywards Heath

Haywards Heath Feasibility Study  
 Strategic Context  
 Figure 1.1  
 Scale: 1:150,000 @ A3







## 2. Planning Policy Context

### 2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

Planning policies have had a key influence on the approach taken in this study. The national planning policy framework is provided by a series of Government Circulars, White Papers and Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and the new Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) which are now replacing PPGs, published by the ODPM and the former DTLR. Over the last five years, a number of significant changes have taken place in national planning guidance; notably:

- A new PPS1, Delivering Sustainable Development, which places stronger emphasis on the concept of sustainable development and fresh emphasis on mixed use development and design;
- The White Paper, A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK, which sets out the Government's wider objectives for sustainable development;
- The revised PPG3, Housing, which aims to encourage housing development, which make more efficient use of land and considers planned extensions to existing urban areas as being likely to prove the most sustainable option after building on appropriate sites within urban areas;
- The publication in July 2001 of an entirely new Planning Policy Guidance Note, PPG25, Development and Flood Risk, which sets out the importance the Government attaches to the management and reduction of flood risk in the land use planning process, to acting on a precautionary basis and to taking account of climate change;
- PPS6, Planning for Town Centres, which replaces PPG6 and is regarded by Government as a major step in promoting planning policies that will

produce more sustainable and inclusive patterns of development and confirms a policy commitment to revitalising town centres;

- A new PPS7, Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, which gives advice on the role of the planning system in relation to the countryside;
- A revised PPG13, Transport, which seeks to promote more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel, especially by car;
- A new PPS22 which replaces PPG22 and sets out the Government's planning policies for renewable energy, which planning authorities should have regard to when preparing local development documents and when taking planning decisions;
- An Urban White Paper published in November 2000, which embraces a wide range of issues including the work undertaken by The Prince's Foundation and English Partnerships (supported by DTLR and the CPRE) on sustainable urban extensions.

### 2.2 Development Plan Background

The Development Plan which covers this area comprises Regional Planning Guidance RPG9 (2001), the West Sussex Structure Plan (2005), the East Sussex & Brighton & Hove Structure Plan (1991), Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) and the Lewes District Local Plan (2003). The District boundaries are illustrated on Figure 1.2, the majority of the study area falls within Mid Sussex district. Under new Government legislation the strategic planning responsibilities of the County and Unitary Authorities and its Structure Plan will be replaced by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) and its Regional Spatial Strategy which will cover the period between up to 2026. New legislation will require that the Local Plans

are replaced by Local Development Frameworks by April 2007. Work on these has already started.

Future development will be assessed in line with revised planning policy guidance contained in the revised PPSs, Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks. We have taken account of the sustainable development principles which run through the Development Plan and the existing environmental designations.

The study is also based on best practice guidance. Any development should satisfy the requirements of these principles and policies and be based on:

- High quality design;
- A mix of housing types and sizes, including affordable housing;
- Adequate facilities and services to serve the new community, including local shopping, education, healthcare and community facilities;
- Adequate formal and informal public, private and amenity recreation land/open space;
- Provision of suitable access routes from the development to the adjacent transport network for public, commercial and private transport and walking and cycling;
- Integration with surrounding urban areas;
- Improvements to informal public access to the countryside;
- Retention of the main landscape features;
- Protection of the main nature conservation interests;
- Provision for the phased implementation of the

development in step with employment, social and physical infrastructure;

- Adequate improvements to the sewerage and water supply systems, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems, where feasible.

### 2.3 Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainability means that human needs must be integrated with environmental considerations and forces us to consider the environment in the widest sense. This does not mean preventing economic growth as we need growth to provide a means to live better and healthier lives. However, growth has to respect the environment and must be soundly based so that it can last.

The theme of achieving “sustainable development” is one which runs throughout the Structure Plan and the Local Plan documents. The most common definition of sustainable development comes from the Brundtland Report (1987):

*‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’*

The concept of sustainable development is based on the assumption that there must be environmental gains within the development to offset the losses. There are a number of specific aspects of the proposals for which sustainable design principles have been used. These include:

- Transport;
- Energy;
- Water;
- Building Design;

- Construction Management.

‘Towards Sustainable Housing: Principles and Practice’ describes the following design principles for achieving sustainable development:

- Compact, medium to high density forms (but not high-rise);
- Mix of land uses based upon overlapping zones of living, working, leisure and shopping;
- Public transport orientated urban design;
- Pedestrian friendly streets;
- Integration of development and nature on site;
- Development patterns dictated by walking or cycle distances.

#### Transport

The encouragement of transport sustainability is a key issue to be addressed. This issue related back to the policy context set out in the previous section and the need to achieve a sustainable form of development which will reduce dependency on the private car.

The principal means by which this element of sustainability will be encouraged include:

- The concentration of higher density residential development (at about 40-50dph) within easy walking distance of facilities;
- The provision of public transport facilities within, or in close proximity, to the local centres and the nearby higher density residential development;
- The location of lower density residential development towards the edges of the scheme, enabling land closest to the local centres to be developed at a high density;
- The location of most residential neighbourhoods within 5-10 minutes walking distance (about 400-800m) of facilities in the local centres;

- The provision of pedestrian/cyclist routes connecting the residential neighbourhoods to the local centres and providing a safe route to the primary schools and secondary schools;

The above measures will be designed in accordance with various policy documents and design guidelines, including the final report of the Urban Task Force ‘Towards Urban Renaissance’ and the ‘Urban Design Compendium’ published by English Partnerships. Taken together, the measures outlined above will encourage the use of alternative means of transport to the private car and thereby help in achieving greater levels of sustainability.

#### Energy

Energy saving measures should be taken into account in the design of any new community:

- The proposed development should incorporate a high proportion of linked buildings, apartments and terraced houses;
- The orientation of the development to optimise solar potential;
- The alignment of the internal road network produces a layout which would be unlikely to avoid wind funnelling or of frost traps;
- The role of fenestration, materials and planting in encouraging energy efficiency are matters which would be addressed at the detailed design stage.

#### Water

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) are proposed on-site to enable surface water run-off to be retained as near to source as possible, thereby reducing the amount of drainage infrastructure and its high capital and maintenance costs. The systems that could be used on site include retention ponds and balancing ponds, into which run-off will be held prior

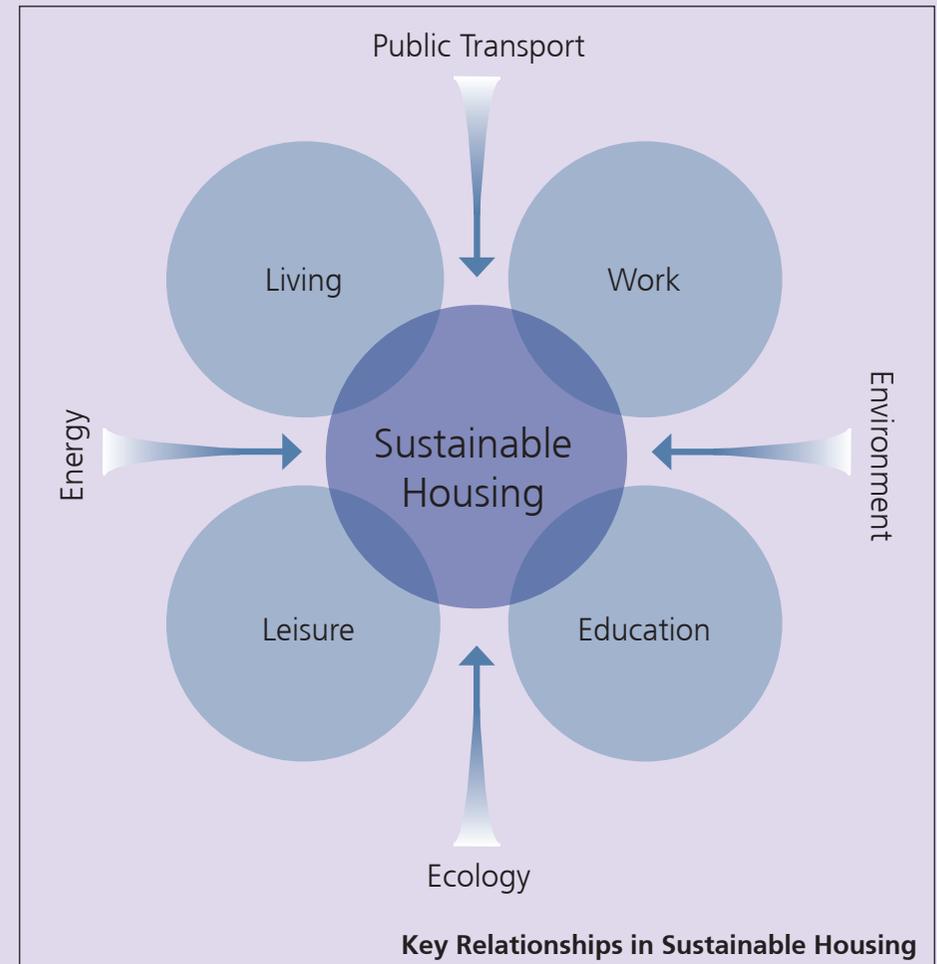
to discharge to receiving watercourses; and which will incorporate biological management measure (such as reed beds) to improve the quality of discharged water. The form of other SUDS techniques, such as infiltration trenches, filter drains and swales, can also be determined at the detailed design stage, in accordance with the current best practice. In addition to site-wide techniques, housebuilders could be encouraged to incorporate water conservation measures during construction.

**Building Design/Construction Management**

A series of other measures, for example, the environmental sustainability of construction materials and the re-use of topsoil on site, can be considered as part of detailed proposals.

Future site layouts should be checked against current best practice in sustainable development as demonstrated in the publication ‘Sustainable Communities’. This assessment is presented in the checklist in Table 2.1.

*Source: Sustainable Housing  
- Architecture, Society and  
Professionalism*



GLOBAL ECOLOGY:	
Energy in transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locations that minimise trip lengths, and are well served by public transport</li> <li>Design that fosters walking and cycling and discourages car reliance</li> </ul>
Energy in buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy-efficient built form and layout</li> <li>Development of community renewable energy</li> </ul>
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wildlife refuges and corridors</li> <li>Conservation and enhancement of woodland</li> <li>Woodland to incorporate controlled access areas to maximise ecological benefits and encourage regeneration of woodland</li> </ul>
NATURAL RESOURCES:	
Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic reduction and air quality management</li> </ul>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local sourcing and demand management</li> <li>Local surface water/sewage treatment</li> <li>Built development outside 1 in 100 year floodplain</li> <li>Use of sustainable drainage systems</li> </ul>
Land and soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher densities to reduce urban land take</li> <li>Local composting/organic recycling schemes</li> <li>Tenant farmer to manage agricultural land with possible wider responsibilities of watercourse management etc</li> </ul>
Minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locally-sourced and recycled building materials</li> </ul>
LOCAL ENVIRONMENT:	
Aesthetic quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attractive pedestrian-scale local environment</li> </ul>
Image and heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legible environment with a sense of place</li> <li>Design reflecting distinctive landscape and cultural heritage</li> </ul>

SOCIAL PROVISION:	
Access to facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible, good quality health, educational, community, retailing and leisure facilities</li> </ul>
Built space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diverse, affordable good quality housing stock</li> <li>Adaptable, good quality commercial/institutional space</li> <li>Flexible multi-use community buildings</li> </ul>
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible, well run parks/playgrounds and community woodland</li> <li>Funding to improve quality of neighbouring playing fields and pitches</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adaptable, easily maintained road and utility networks</li> <li>Establishment of a local community trust to give 'ownership' to the emerging community</li> </ul>
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:	
Job opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diverse and accessible job opportunities with good local training services</li> </ul>
Economic buoyancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouragement for local offices/workshops/live work units, good local training services</li> <li>Provision of employment land</li> </ul>
SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:	
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pollution-free environment facilitating exercise, local food production and mental well-being</li> </ul>
Community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe traffic-calmed streets with good visual</li> <li>Socially balanced neighbourhoods</li> </ul>

Table 2.1 A Sustainability Checklist, Applied to Neighbourhoods

### 3. Appreciating the Context

#### 3.1 Environmental Constraints

Figure 3.1 shows the Local Plan planning and environmental constraints for the area around Haywards Heath along with floodplain areas.

#### 3.2 Ecological Assessment

The areas under consideration for housing development around the outskirts of Haywards Heath have been assessed for their value in terms of nature conservation and biodiversity.

This assessment aims to identify the biodiversity value of the study areas so that development areas can be refined and located to avoid the most sensitive or valuable habitats and species and to identify development areas where there is little or no known nature conservation interest. The aim has been to provide a visual representation of the nature conservation interest of the study area using a colour coded map (Figure 3.2) following the assessment criteria identified.

#### Red - No Development

- Site of international importance (Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Ramsar site)
- Site of national importance (Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserve)
- Site of regional or county importance (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves, ancient woodland, ghyll woodland)

#### Amber - Development with Appropriate Mitigation

- Key features of local importance and features which are characteristic of the local area (can include Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species, significant features such as old hedgerows, ponds and streams)
- Land adjacent to designated sites of importance for nature conservation both of which may be utilised by mobile species as part of their breeding territory or foraging range

#### Green - Preferred Development Areas

- Sites with little or no known biodiversity interest

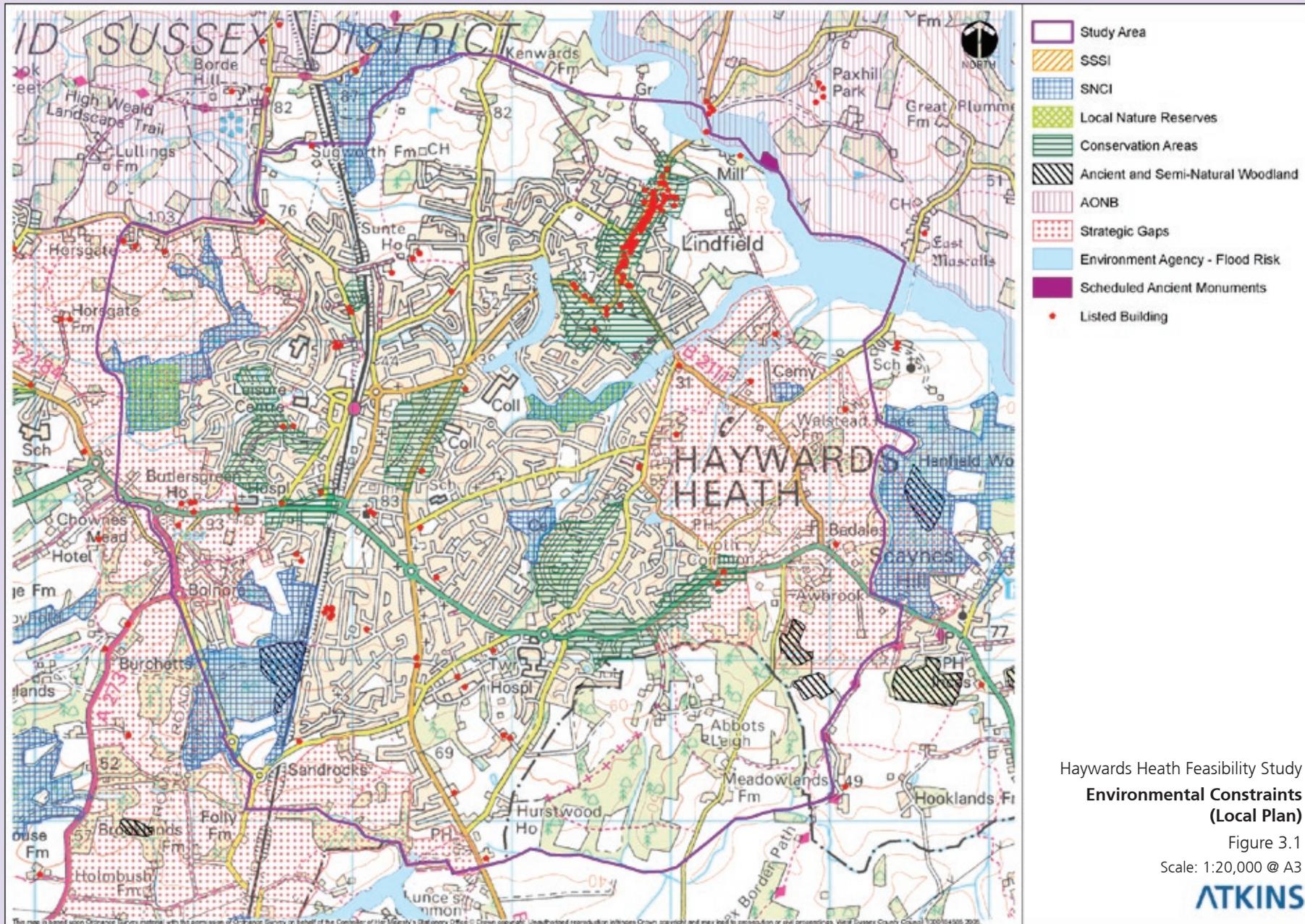
Red classification includes all designated sites, both statutory and non-statutory, including ancient woodland and ghyll woodland. Ghyll woodlands are ancient, steep sided, wooded valleys created by streams cutting gullies into existing slopes. As a result of their steep and rugged nature, they have remained undisturbed and can be regarded as ancient woodland. This classification indicates that no development should be undertaken in these areas.

Amber classification includes all areas of local importance and key features of the local landscape, as well as land adjacent to designated sites that may be utilised by mobile species and which could be zoned as a 'buffer' against adverse impacts on designated sites. An amber classification indicates that development could potentially go ahead if appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place. A precautionary approach should be employed in amber areas such that the areas are assumed to be important until proven otherwise. Where protected, scarce, rare, threatened or notable species or habitats occur outside designated sites, suitable mitigation measures and management strategies will be required to enable development to go ahead.

Areas where rare or legally protected species occur outside designated sites will also be classified as amber e.g. a great crested newt breeding pond and the terrestrial habitat around it which could be used as a resting place or foraging habitat would be considered amber.

Green areas are those where little or no biodiversity interest is known to be present. These areas will be the preferred development areas. However, it should be noted that these green areas may include features of local importance within them which would be classified as amber e.g. hedgerows, ponds.

The assessment is desk based to identify the known biodiversity resource in the area. This resource has been mapped and used to inform potential developable areas. Field visits will be necessary prior to detailed masterplanning in order to identify the presence of suitable habitat for protected species, for example suitable terrestrial habitat around great crested newt breeding ponds, or suitable reptile

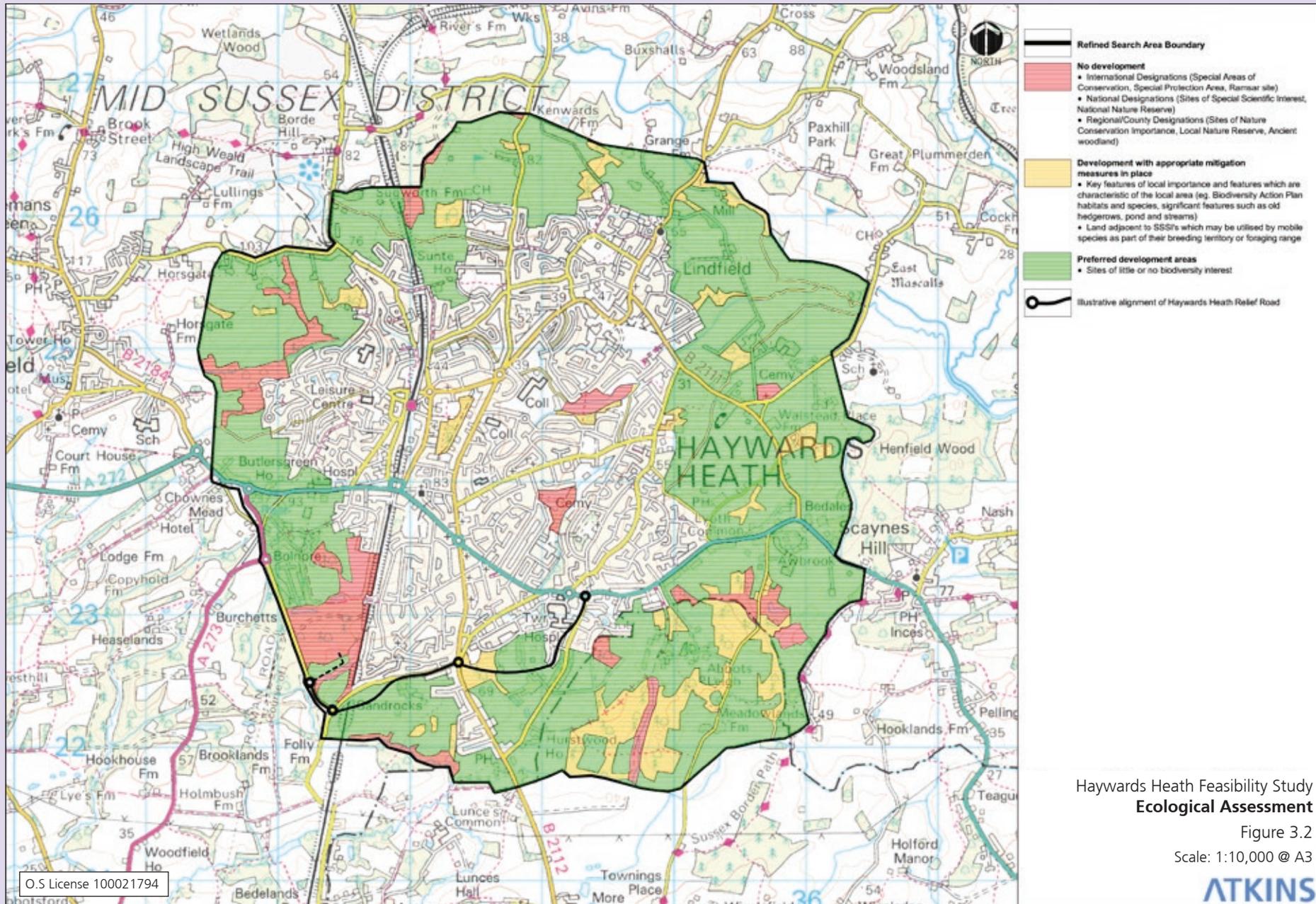


Haywards Heath Feasibility Study  
**Environmental Constraints**  
**(Local Plan)**

Figure 3.1

Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3





habitat. This will also identify any habitats of nature conservation value present in the study areas, which need to be considered as part of the assessment, for example areas of unimproved or semi-improved grassland.

The first part of the desk study involved contacting the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) for information regarding protected and notable (rare or scarce) species and nationally, internationally and locally designated sites occurring within 2km of the study area, in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation).

The desk study has also involved consultation of the Government web site of Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk) to gain information about designated sites and ancient woodland in the study area.

### Designated areas

There are no internationally designated sites or National Nature Reserves in the study areas or within the 2km zones around them.

As indicated by the assessment criteria, the red areas on the evaluation map include the Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), ancient and gyhll woodland sites. SNCI sites within the Haywards Heath study area include the Local Nature Reserves at Blunts Wood (within the urban area) and Scrase Valley to the west.

### Key Features

The amber areas on the nature conservation evaluation map, other than those listed above, include habitats such as non-ancient woodland, recently planted areas of wood, species-rich hedgerows, ponds and streams. Each of these habitat types are important for different reasons, as outlined below.

Species-rich hedgerows are important for biodiversity within the farmland landscape, acting as a corridor providing protection and facilitating movement between different habitat areas in an otherwise unsuitable environment. Hedgerows are also important habitats in their own right. Bats and badgers can also use hedgerows for foraging, travelling through the landscape and for roosting or creating setts respectively.

Streams are an important linear feature in the landscape assisting the movement of species through the farmland environment. The habitats surrounding streams can also be influenced by the watercourse, creating damp grassland and woodland areas and wetland habitats including reedbeds. Streams are important habitats for bats, particularly Daubenton's, and birds including kingfisher. Many invertebrates are dependent on the wetland mosaic that can arise around streams.

There are a number of ponds within the study area. These provide another important habitat for wildlife. The number of ponds in the UK has declined dramatically over the past 100 years due to a number of reasons including neglect, agricultural intensification, land drainage, urban encroachment and pollution. This habitat is important for amphibians including the great crested newt, invertebrates including southern damselfly, reptiles, particularly grass snakes, bats and many bird species.

### Conclusions

Within the study area there are areas of high nature conservation value (classified red) and intermediate nature conservation value (classified amber). High value areas include the designated Local Nature Reserves development should not be undertaken in these areas.

There are no national or international designated sites and no National Nature Reserves (NNR).

It should be noted that this is not a full assessment of the study areas, only an evaluation of the desk study information provided. A full assessment, considering all protected, rare and BAP species and BAP habitats along with a field survey should be undertaken prior to detailed masterplanning work. The results of these further studies may result in additional small areas of the study area being classified as amber.

### 3.3 Landscape and Visual Assessment

The landscape has been assessed in terms of its capacity to accept development following the assessment criteria identified below and on Figure 3.3. No part of the Study Area lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are Strategic Gaps to parts of the west, east and south of Haywards Heath and these have been included in the assessment in order to provide a comprehensive and independent review of the study area. However where land is considered to play an important role in visually separating Haywards Heath from adjacent settlements this has been taken into account, regardless of whether it falls within a Strategic Gap.

The visual setting of conservation areas and listed buildings has been considered as a factor in the assessment. The proposed Haywards Heath Relief Road has also been taken into account as this provides a new boundary to the urban area.

Whilst the brief stated that no development should take place to the north of Haywards Heath, for completeness this land has been included in the landscape assessment.

**Red: Land Unsuitable for Development**

- Ridgelines, hilltops and visually prominent hillsides
- Steep valley sides and river valleys/corridors including floodplains
- Ancient Woodland, woodland blocks, significant tree belts and hedgerows

**Amber: Land Potentially Suitable for Lower Density Housing or Open Space**

- Ridgelines, generally not visible from a distance
- Sloping land partially concealed by landform or woodland
- Paddocks and small fields adjacent to settlements
- Former parkland

**Green: Land Suitable for Medium and Higher Density Housing**

- Flat or shallow sloping land, generally not visible from a distance
- Land visible from only a small number of existing properties
- Land already affected by major infrastructure or disturbed land

The hilltop location of Haywards Heath means that there are often long views towards the settlement and the land immediately abutting the town is often the most visible. In some instances however, the strong structure of hedgerows and woodlands that is typical of the area would help to visually integrate new development with the wider setting.

Figure 3.7 shows the location of the viewpoints, included at the end of this chapter, which illustrate the landscape character of areas around Haywards Heath.

3.4 Flooding and Surface Water

Figures 3.1 and 3.4 show the extent of the Environment Agency’s current Indicative fluvial and tidal Floodplains in the area. It indicates that the sites have been selected to avoid the Environment Agency’s current 1000 year indicative floodplain.

It should be noted that these flood extents do not take into account the possible effects of climate change on sea level and river flood levels and of local flooding of small watercourses such as those within the site.

There are existing flooding issues at Lewes, downstream of Haywards Heath. A flood risk assessment (FRA) may be required and SUDS incorporated into any development to ensure that downstream flooding is not exacerbated. A FRA would also examine the possible effect of climate change on the flood extents.

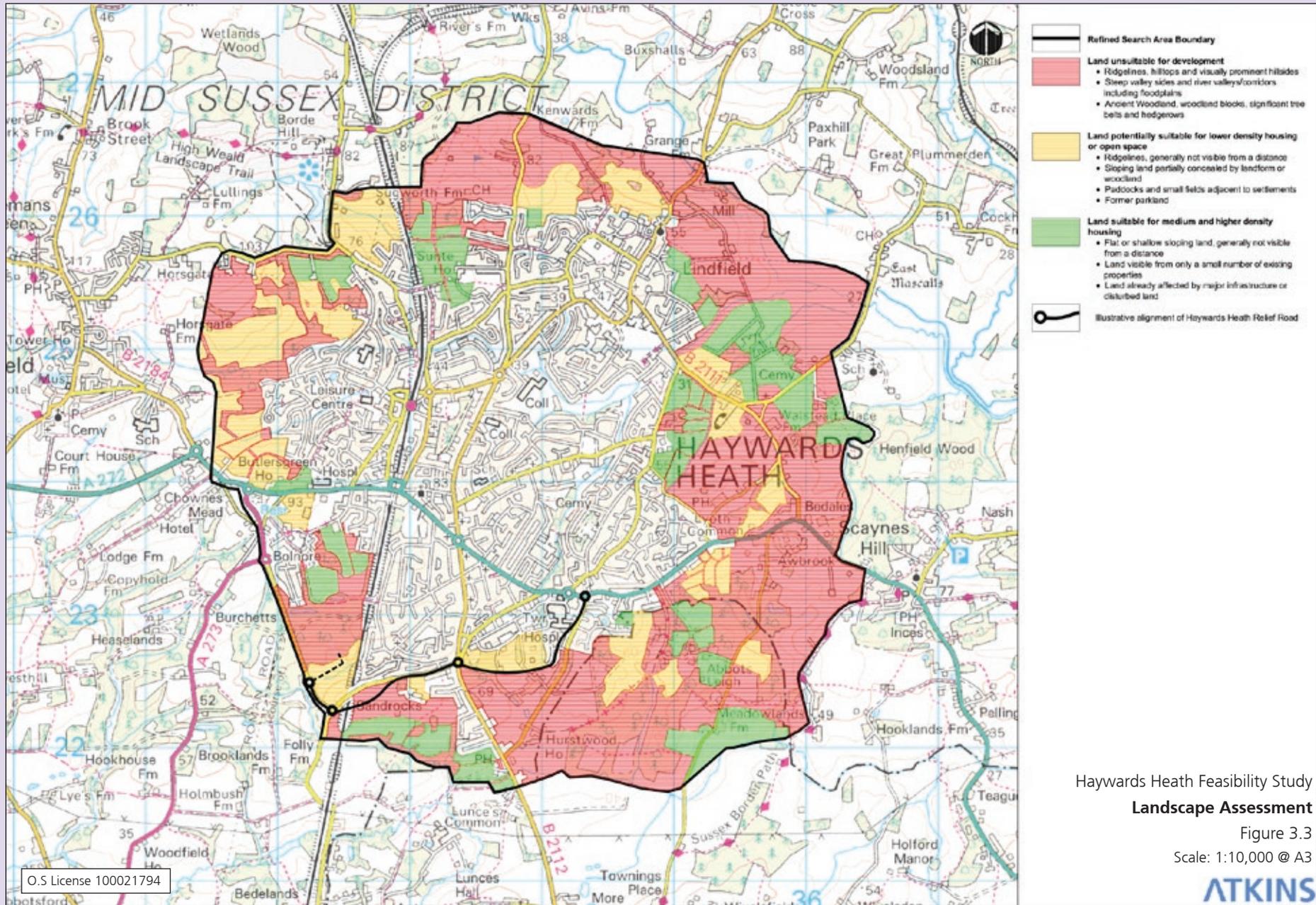
Figure 3.4 illustrates that all of the areas under consideration around Haywards Heath appear to be on slowly permeable silty soils meaning that infiltration of surface water is unlikely to be effective. It is likely that, if SUDS are required, significant attenuation (by ponds, or swales, etc.) will be necessary.

There is a small zone of groundwater vulnerability to the north east of Haywards Heath associated with a borehole near Ludwell. As the overlying geology has low permeability then contamination of this aquifer will not be an issue.

3.5 Potential Developable Areas

Figure 3.5 provides the composite information from the landscape and ecological assessment to provide a clear indication of land which is considered suitable for development, land which has potential

for development subject to appropriate mitigation and land unsuitable for development. Up to date floodplain information has been taken into account.



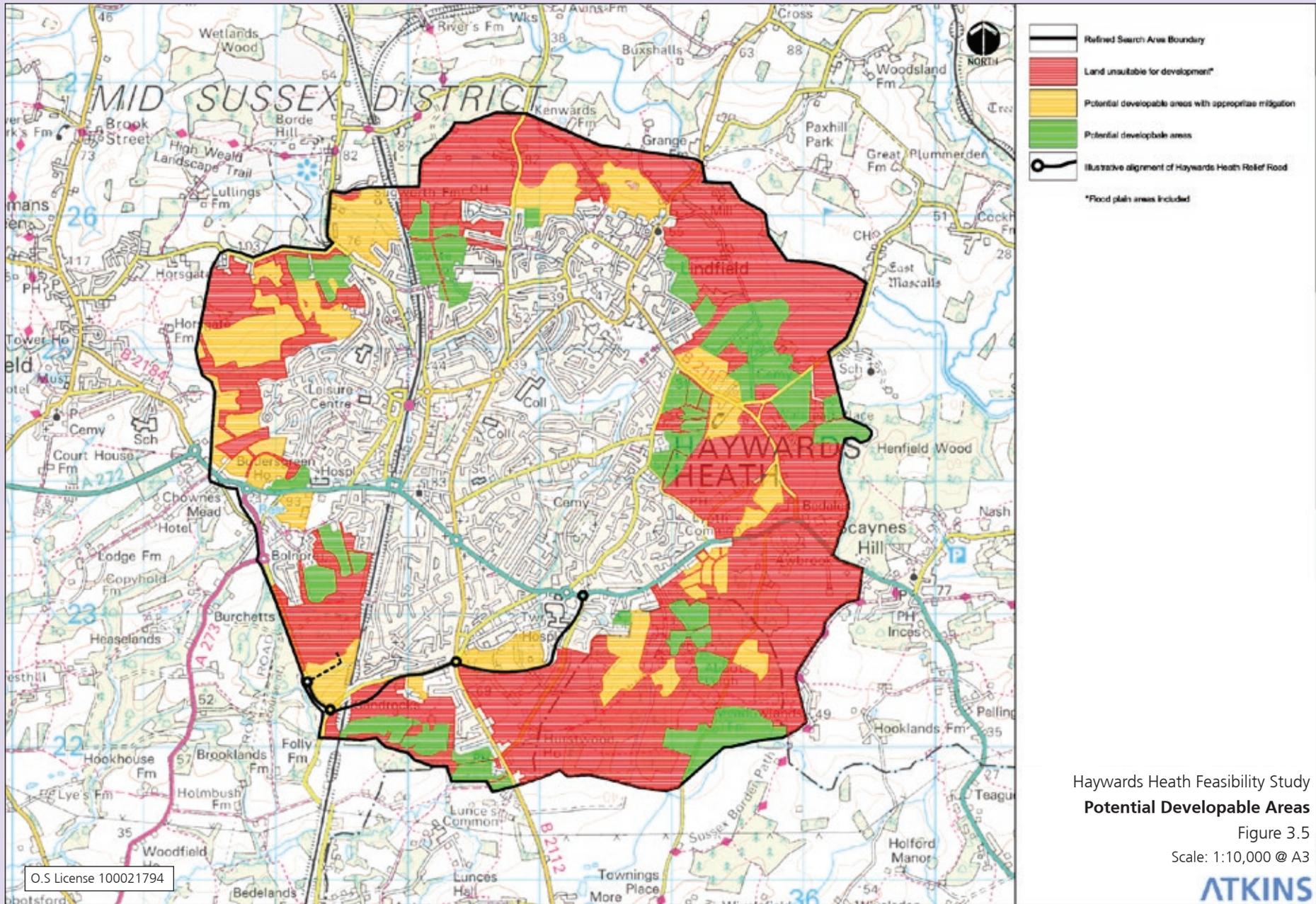
Haywards Heath Feasibility Study  
Landscape Assessment

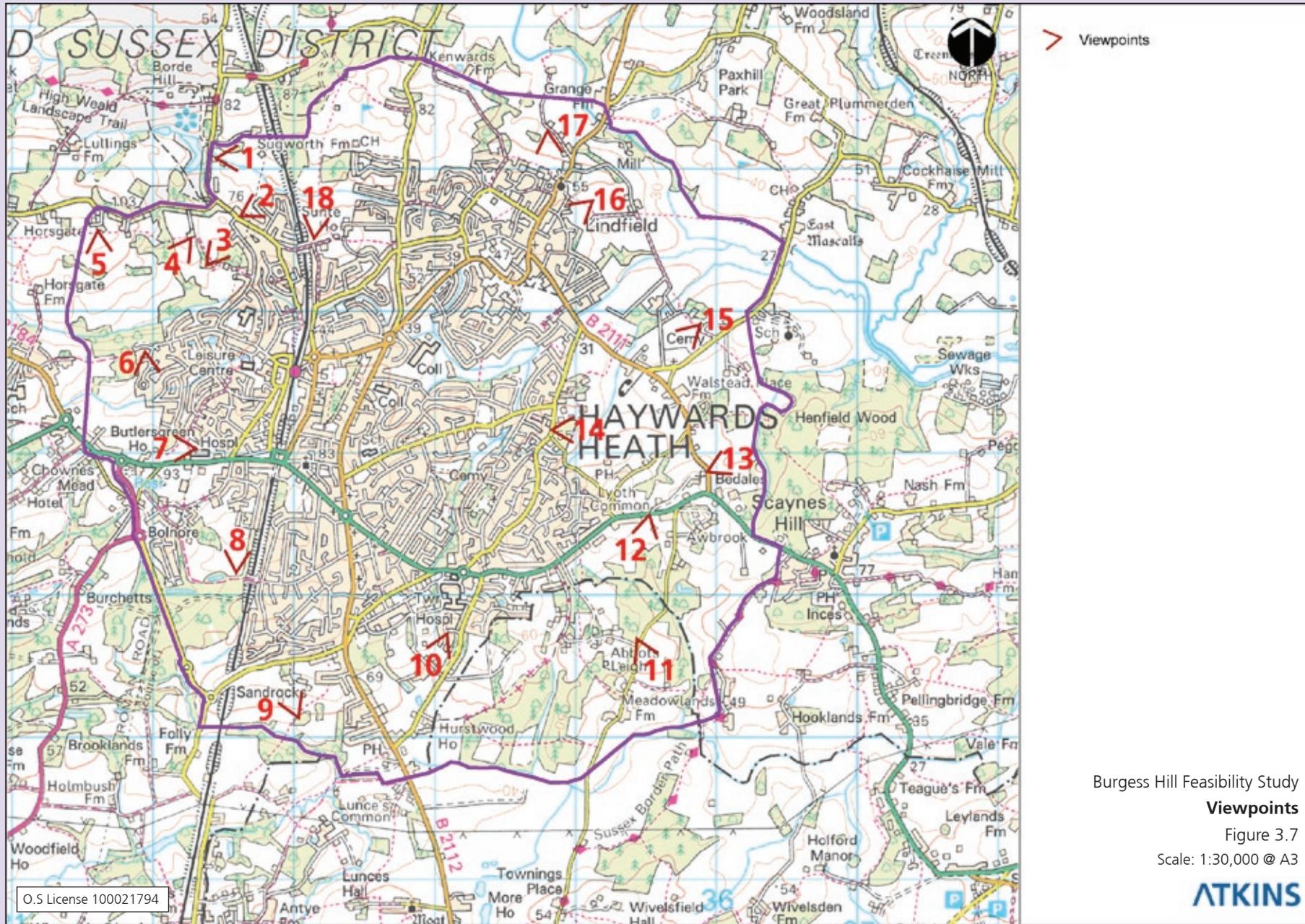
Figure 3.3

Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3









Burgess Hill Feasibility Study

**Viewpoints**

Figure 3.7

Scale: 1:30,000 @ A3





Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2



Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 4



Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint 7



Viewpoint 8



Viewpoint 9



Viewpoint 10



Viewpoint 11



Viewpoint 12



Viewpoint 13



Viewpoint 14



Viewpoint 15



Viewpoint 16



Viewpoint 17



Viewpoint 18

## Part II - Site Capacity

### 4. Site Options and Capacity

Figure 4.1 illustrates the site development options which have been identified from the potential developable areas. The areas already allocated for housing in the Mid Sussex Local Plan were not considered as part of this Study.

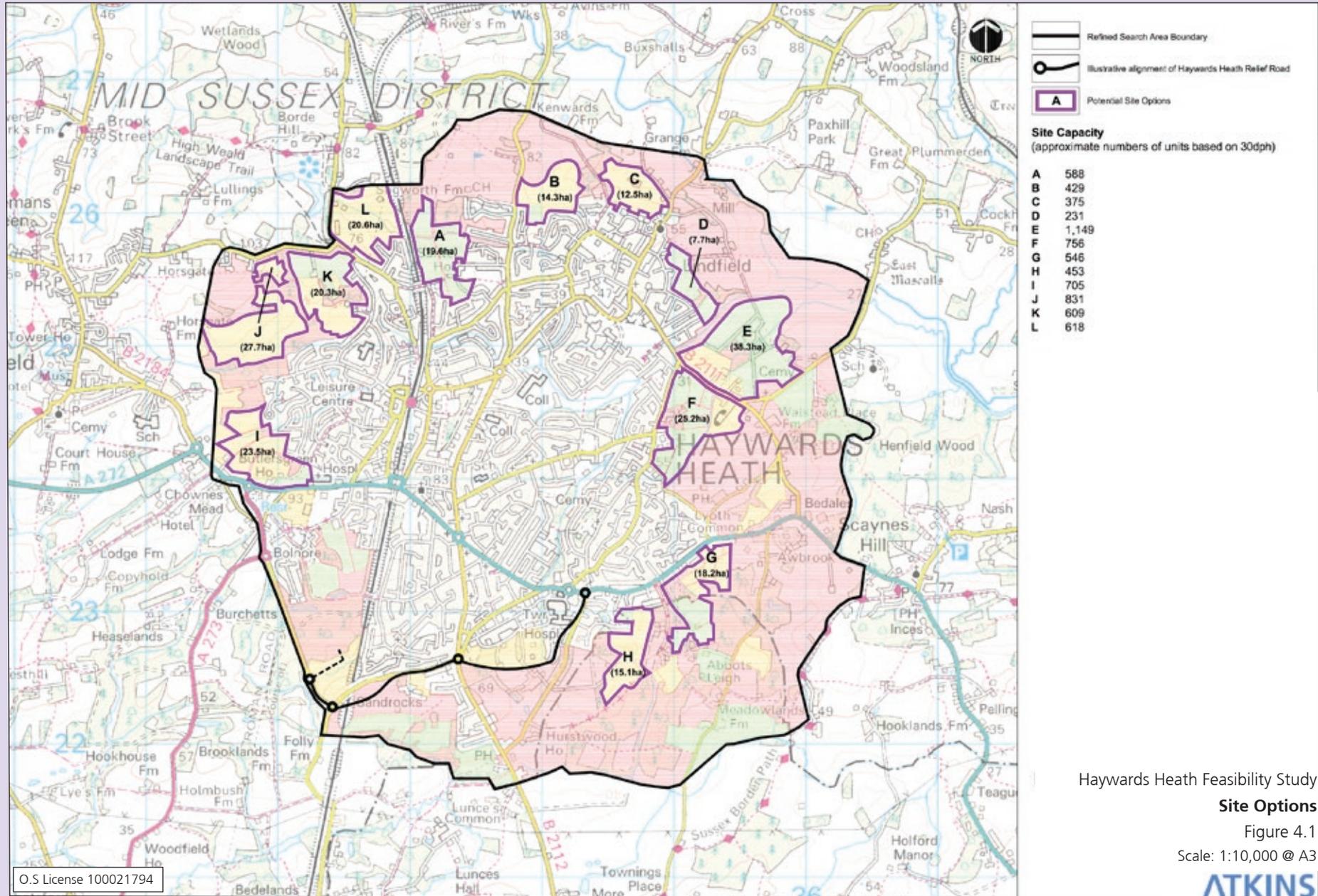
The areas identified have been measured to illustrate land which could accommodate approximately 1,000 dwellings. Large areas of woodland have been excluded from the measurement of the site areas. The calculation of the potential number of dwellings is based on 30 dwellings per hectare. This is an approximate gross density which takes account of a range of a mix of low to high densities, internal roads and community facilities. Calculation of densities and need for transport, social and community infrastructure will be refined in the next stages of the study.

Only Site Option E has the potential to accommodate approximately 1,000 dwellings. Site Option F could form a potential future extension. Both sites are well contained by the floodplain extent and topography which would prevent coalescence with Scaynes Hill and unacceptable visual impacts on views from the east.

Development of a combination of Site Options J and K or K and L would also result in approximately 1,000 dwellings. These sites are closer to the town centre. Site L is designated as Amber due to the high landscape value and potential impact on the adjoining Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden. However, Sites K and L are well contained by existing mature tree belts. Site K includes an Amber area to the south which represents an existing school with associated

large areas of recreational space. This would have to be relocated or integrated within any development. Site J is Amber, development here would need to be sensitive to the topography, valuable areas of woodland and the Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve to the south.

An assessment of the accessibility of sites to existing transport infrastructure (including public transport) or the potential impact of further development on the transport network has not yet been undertaken. This would identify whether development of any of the sites identified would have an unacceptable impact on the transport network or require additional transport infrastructure which might affect the viability of development.



Haywards Heath Feasibility Study  
**Site Options**  
 Figure 4.1  
 Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3



