

February 2021



Land adjoining

Ansty

A Strategic Development Site in
Mid-Sussex District

Fairfax





Land Adjoining Ansty

Planning & Urban Design



Highways & Movement



Landscape & Visual Appraisal



Ecology



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Fairfax

We are pleased to put forward this plan for a strategic development at land adjoining Ansty, which we believe has the opportunity to benefit the whole of Mid-Sussex and its residents. The District enjoys a deserved reputation for being one of the most attractive places to live in the area and we are lucky to have the combination of a rich history, a vibrant village and stunning countryside all on our doorstep.

We are committed to a high quality development which serves the local community and fits in with the county's distinctive character. The plan would create a new community, providing much needed market and affordable housing choice for local people and others who would like to live here.

As this document highlights, the site would also provide amenity space and other assets including the creation of new strategic Country Park, a children's play area or other green infrastructure. More generally the scheme will deliver direct financial benefits to both the Parish and District Councils. This is our initial vision document and as plans progress, we will be keen to hear the views of the Parish Council and local residents as to how to deliver a scheme for the benefit of all.

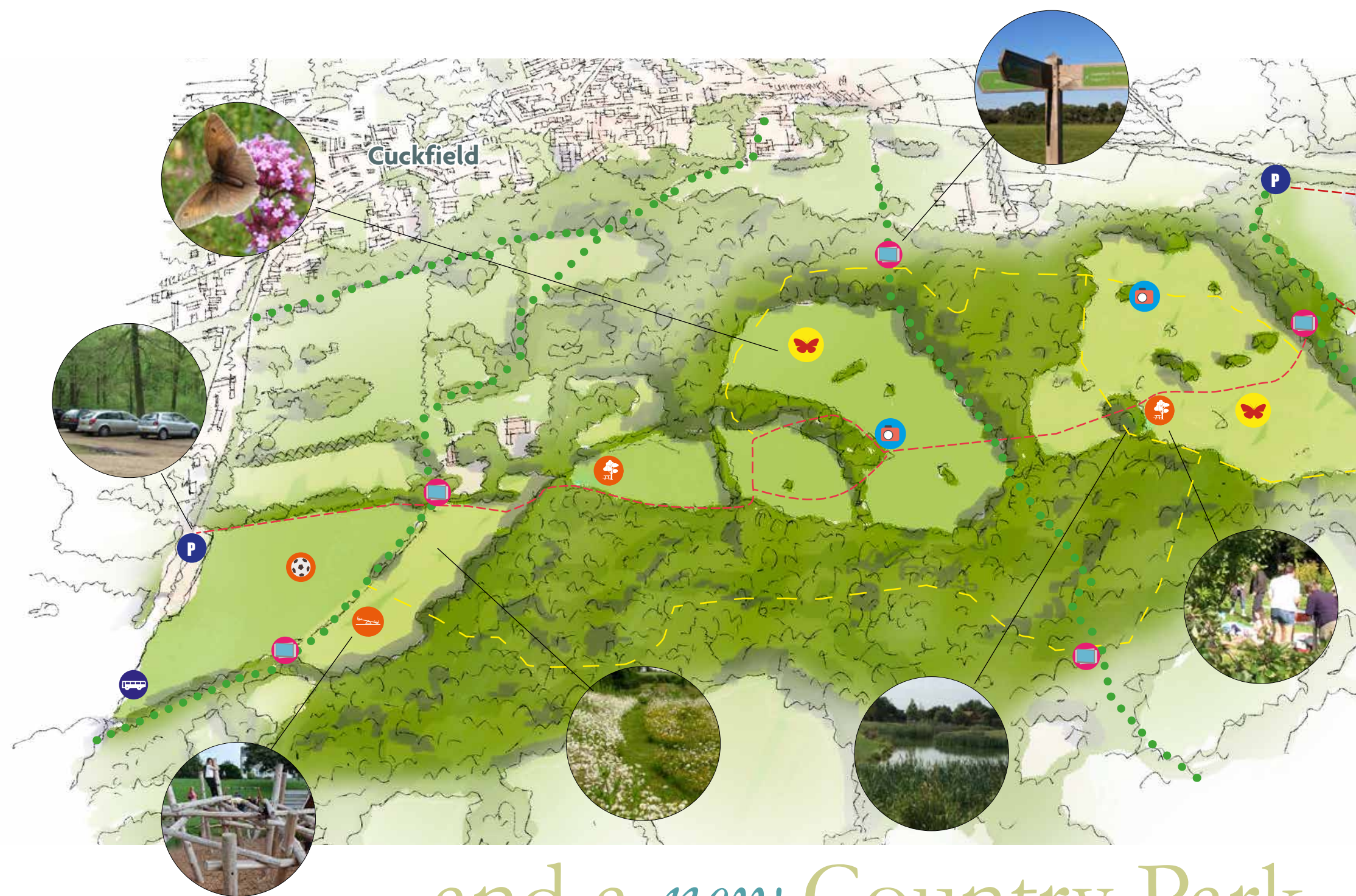
Fairfax



A new Community...



- ① Village Hall is a landmark building which can be used for community meetings.
- ② A variety of shops and services will overlook the main square and park
- ③ The primary street through the scheme will also accommodate a bus route running on a north south axis through the scheme
- ④ Markets and community events accommodated at ground floor level
- ⑤ A new park will lead up to the village square
- ⑥ The square will seamlessly connect with the wider urban form



...and a *new* Country Park



Ansty



Bus stop



Parking



Sports pitches



Interpretation Board



Picnic Spot



Wildflower Meadow



Viewpoint



Allotments



Play Area



Primary Path



Secondary Path



Existing PROW

The *benefits* of development



approx
1600
new
homes

The scheme will offer the opportunity to create up to 1,600 new homes with supporting facilities. A mix of types and tenures of homes suitable for all groups including families, older people and disabled



Relief
Road

A new road will not only provide access to the sites but also act as a relief road for Ansty Village linking Cuckfield with Burgess Hill



Managing the
Drainage
across the
site and
beyond

A network of sustainable drainage corridors will permeate the scheme and lead to new attenuation ponds along the central valley



School
and Centre

The development will create a new village centre with a wide range of local facilities and a new primary school



Walkable
Neighbourhood

The scheme will be designed to promote walking within the site and to neighbouring settlements



up to **480**
affordable
new homes

Up to 480 genuine affordable new homes such as young families



Visual
Enclosure

Much of the scheme and the relief road will be visually enclosed predominantly within the fold of the topography but also screened by existing vegetation



Landscape &
Ecological
Enhancement

Landscape features and open space will be managed in perpetuity under a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan



Playing
Fields

A key part of the scheme will be publicly accessible amenity space to the north of the scheme. This will be located at the flattest part of the site.

01

Introduction

This report has been prepared to assist Mid-Sussex District Council in its preparation of the emerging Local Plan and in the identification of sustainable housing sites in the Haywards Heath area. The document relates to the 197ha of land to the north and east of Ansty.

It has been produced on behalf of Fairfax, who have an option interest in the land. A full range of appropriate technical studies have been undertaken to assess the site's suitability and capacity for residential development.

These studies include:

- Topography
- Landscape
- Ecology
- Drainage and Flood Risk
- Archaeology
- Highways (inc. pedestrian, cycle and public transport accessibility)
- Utilities

This report will be submitted in support of Fairfax's representations to Mid-Sussex District Council's emerging Local Plan. A key aim of this report is to provide the LPA with the information needed to fully assess the sites suitability, availability and achievability for residential development.

This report focuses on the site. It will demonstrate the site is a suitable, available and achievable option to allocate for residential development within the emerging plan period. It will also contend that the site represents a sustainable new community, one that is well located and designed to be a connected yet distinct settlement. The report will demonstrate that there are no known overriding constraints to the development of the site for residential use and respectfully requests the Council allocate this land for residential (east of Ansty) and country park/SANG (north of Ansty) uses.

The development will be based on good practice design and sustainability principles to ensure that there are convenient and attractive links to the adjoining

landscape and movement networks.
This is confirmed in this report through:

- a full contextual assessment of the site and its setting
- confirmation that a residential development of the site will comply with all relevant national and local planning policies
- confirmation that the site can deliver a wide choice of high quality homes that accords with the National Planning Policy Framework
- a clear design rationale and set of development principles for the site
- conceptual masterplan proposals detailing the opportunity



02

Development Concept



Land Adjoining Ansty

The design strategy for a new community at Ansty is underpinned by a responsive masterplanning strategy, which seeks to directly engage with the existing site features, for example:

- **ensuring that 1,600 high quality homes are arranged in a manner which respects existing features such as the older buildings, tree belts and individual mature trees;**
- **by aligning streets to create vistas to existing mature trees or other landscape elements;**
- **by placing parks and open spaces in locations next to existing mature trees or enclosing spaces next to woodland.**

The masterplan places particular emphasis on creating new places such as formal parks, pedestrian only 'walks' and high quality shared streets which would nestle next to mature woodland or hedgerows.

Our key objective is to combine the character of the mature woodland setting, with the sense of community of a village. It will be a village that is clearly reflective of its locality and the distinctive natural and built elements of this part of Sussex will be woven into the fabric of the scheme. Major open spaces, front and rear gardens, green verges and pocket parks will be brought together to create tranquillity and beauty. The design of houses, gardens, open space and community facilities

will encourage social interaction, at the village and neighbourhood level.

The Country Park will provide a closer resource with more opportunities for circular walks and landscape experiences than other more sensitive strategic public open spaces in the County. Our aim is to successfully incorporate all of the relevant (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) requirements within an existing mature landscape setting. The key features of the proposal are:

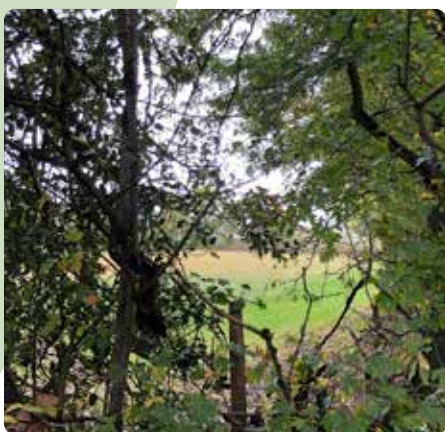
- Provision of a 99ha Country Park which will provide both for the site and a wider strategic level.
- The Country Park lies within 400m of the proposed development and is easily accessible via several proposed links and adjacent public rights of way
- There is sufficient space to allow for parking for visitors. The car park has been positioned to provide direct access to the park, it is also located next to the community facilities that can be used as an information point and provide further surveillance of the car parking area.
- Opportunities for several circular routes utilising existing well defined tracks within the woodland - these include a 2, 2.3 and 2.5km route.

- The footpaths have been located along existing well used and defined forestry tracks and will be managed as part of the future woodland rides and glades.
- Dense areas of Rhododendron will gradually be replaced to create clearer under-storey. The exception will be the boundaries which will be replaced by species to create a thick and 'spiky' deterrent to leaving the site next to busy roads.
- The majority of the Country Park will weave through an existing woodland. Large swathes of public open space have been positioned to provide a further buffer between the SANG and the housing.
- Other opportunities for habitats will be considered such as small areas of clearance to create pockets of grassland and, potentially, heathland, and the links to other public open spaces.



03

The Site



The site is an exceptional and unique opportunity. It occupies an attractive and accessible location to the east and north of Ansty providing access to the characterful town's wealth of activities, facilities and open spaces.

The overall site ownership extends to 197 hectares (486 acres), of which 98 hectares would be utilised for the garden community and 99 hectares would be utilised for the Country Park.

In addition, the Country Park site is adjacent to the existing Cuckfield Park and is bisected by no fewer than five existing public rights of way which connect directly to Cuckfield.

New Community Site

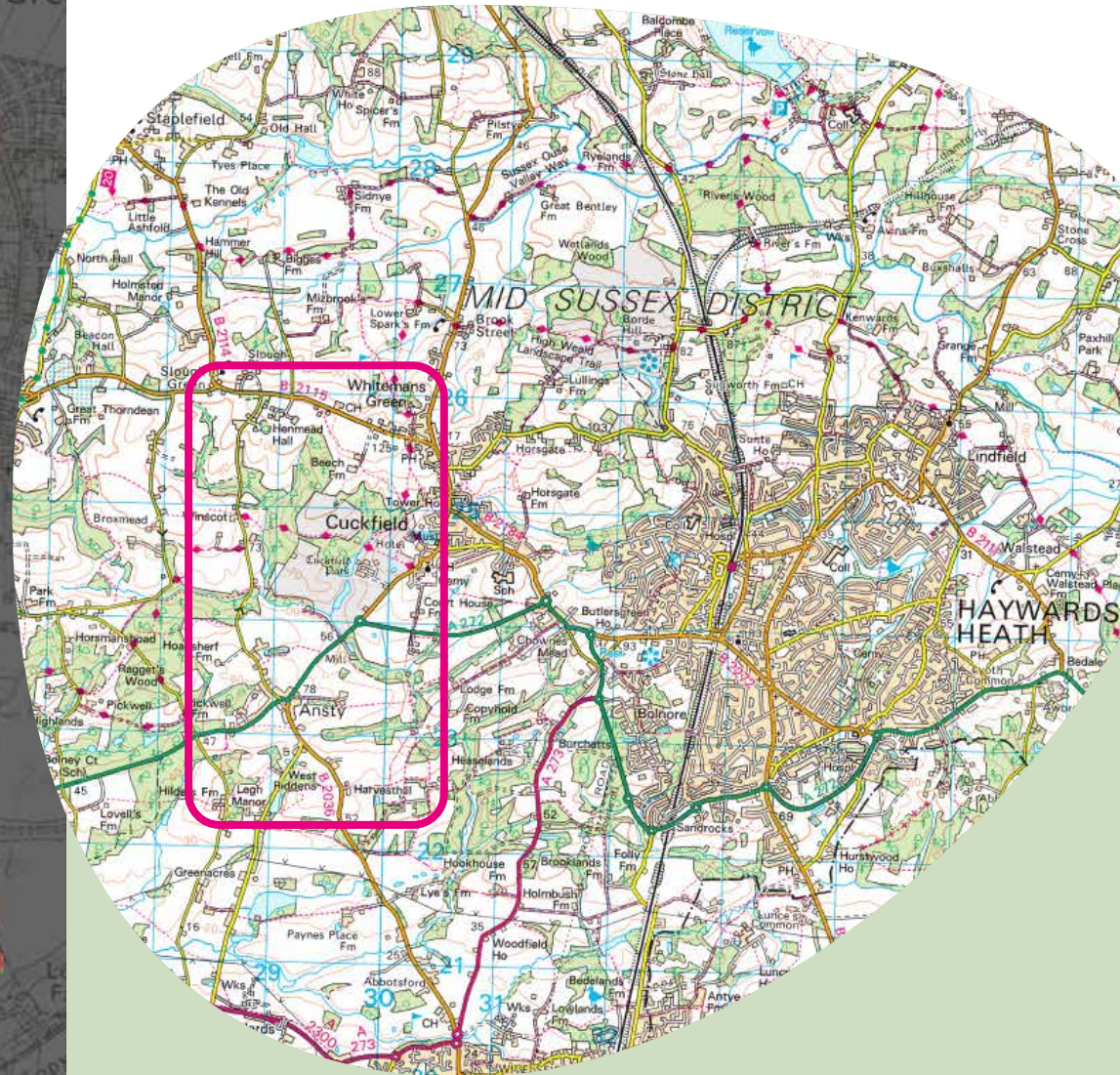
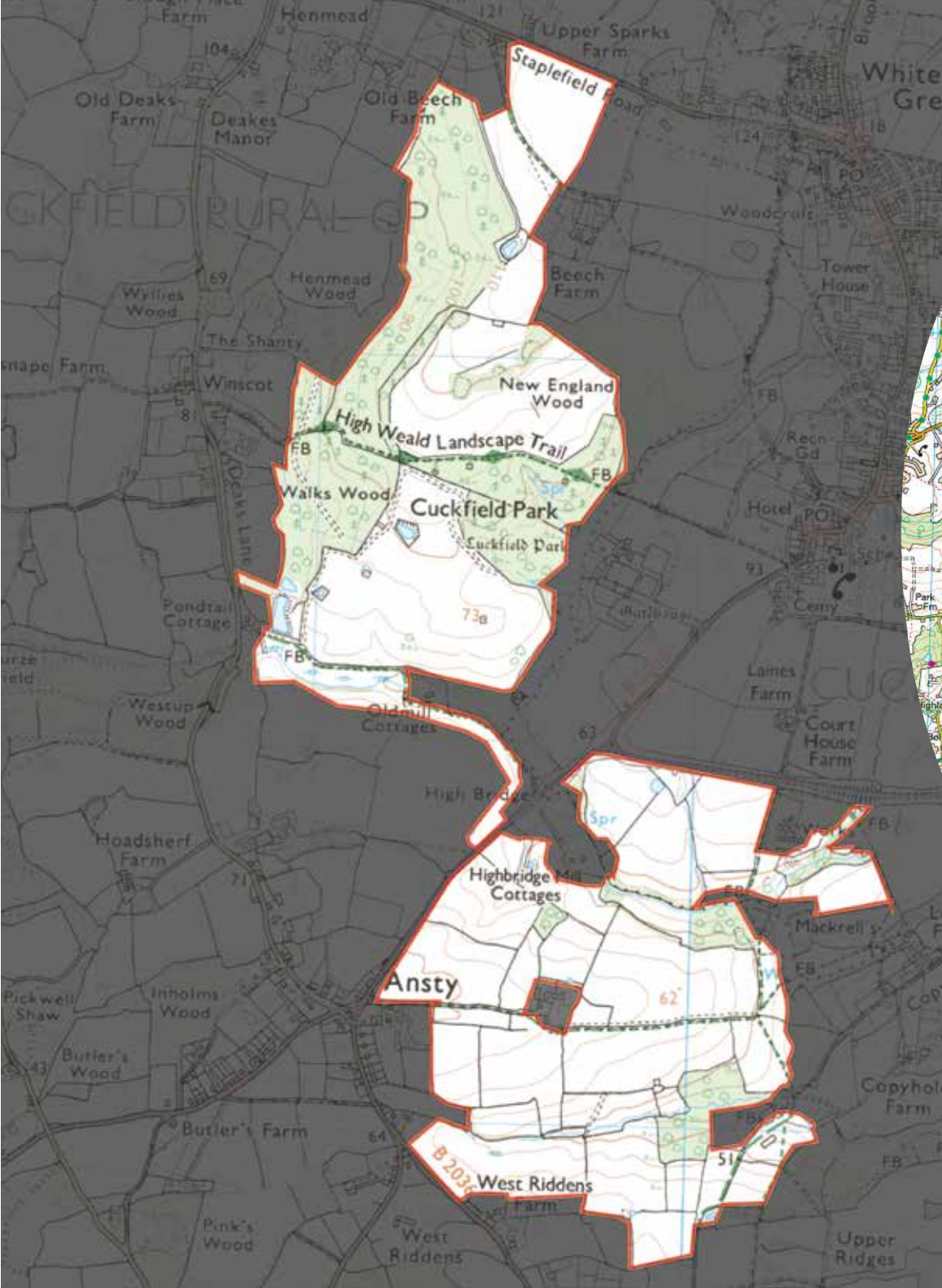
Situated to the east of Ansty, the New Community site is centred on a ridge which runs on an east west axis. Land to the north of the ridge falls towards a brook which runs between Copyhold Farm and High Bridge. It then rises again up to the A272. To the south of the ridge the land falls towards another brook which runs between Ansty and Copyhold Farm. South of that, the land rises again towards West Riddens farm.

A public right of way provides a pedestrian link between Ansty and the Copyhold Farm area to the east.

Country Park Site

The site has a varied topography and consists of a number of higher ground features which are bisected by streams which run in an east west direction thereby creating a series of gentle valleys. There are no significant environment designations within the site although there is an area of replanted ancient woodland in the north west of the site.

Access can safely be achieved from a number of locations by road and from the existing public rights of way.



04

Movement



Introduction

This section summarises transport and accessibility issues associated with the potential residential development at Land at Ansty Farm, Cuckfield Road, Ansty. The site location is shown opposite.

Local Road Network

The site can be accessed from the A272 and B2036. The A272 is a single carriageway road and is subject to the national speed limit, reducing to a 40mph speed limit in the vicinity of the roundabout at the eastern end of the Cuckfield Bypass and to 30mph on the Cuckfield Road approach to the mini-roundabout in Ansty. The B2036 Cuckfield Road forms the southern arm of the mini-roundabout in Ansty. The B2036 is subject to a 30mph speed limit through Ansty village, becoming national speed limit south of the Burgess Hill Road / Cuckfield Road junction as the B2036 continues south past the site towards Burgess Hill.

Walking and Cycling

Walking and cycling isochrones have been produced to show the local area that can be reached in a 5, 10 and 15 minute journey time from the site. Figure 2 shows the walking isochrones and Figure 3 shows the cycling isochrones. Cuckfield can be reached on foot within 15 minutes. Haywards Heath and parts of Burgess Hill can be reached in 15 minutes by cycle.

Public Transport

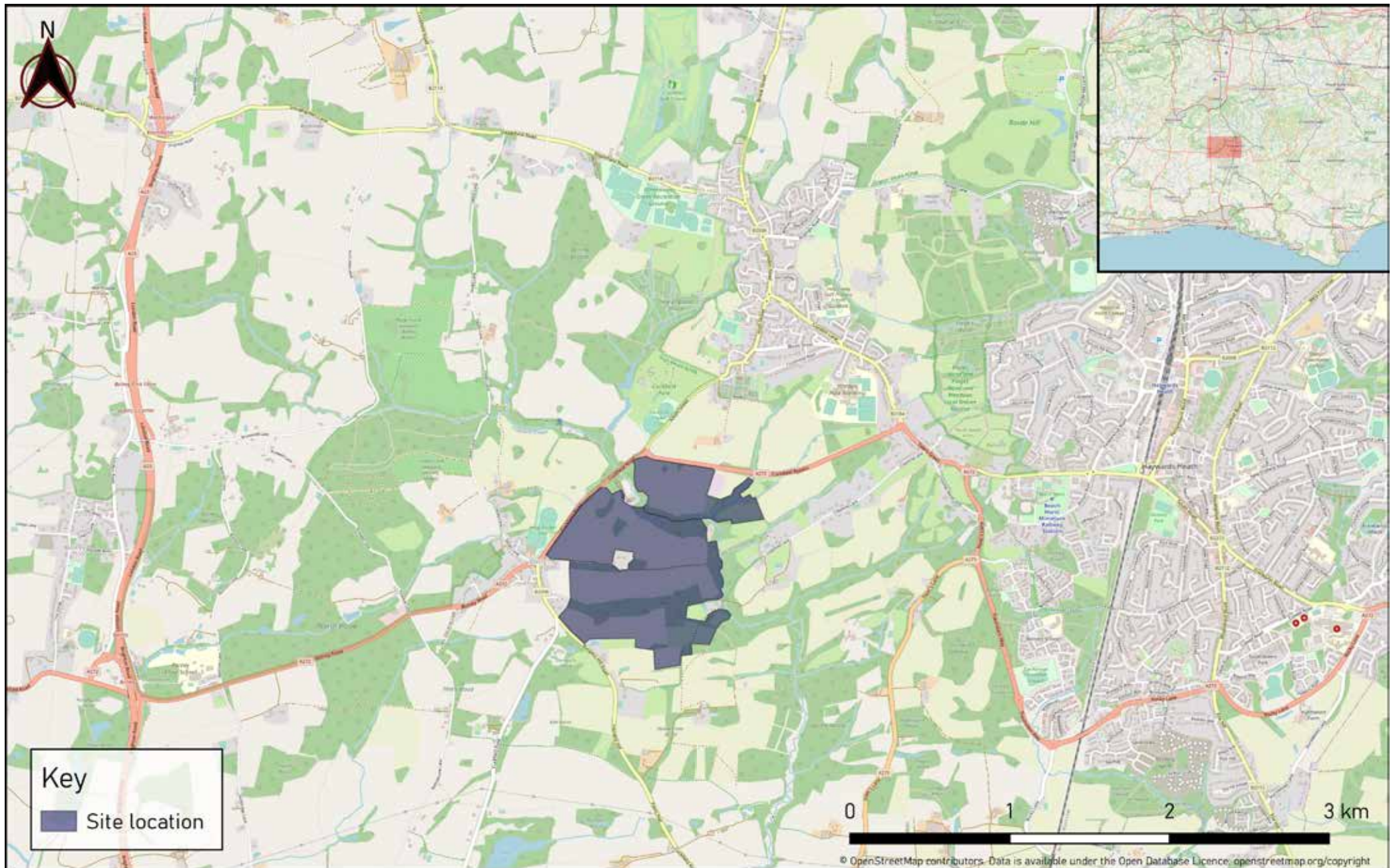
The nearest bus stops to the site are located on Cuckfield Road, at the north-western corner of the site, and on Bolney Road in Ansty. These bus stops are primarily served by bus route 89. There are further bus stops on Tylers Green to the east of the site which have additional bus services 31 and 271. The nearest railway station is Haywards Heath. The station is approximately 3km from the site.

Local Facilities

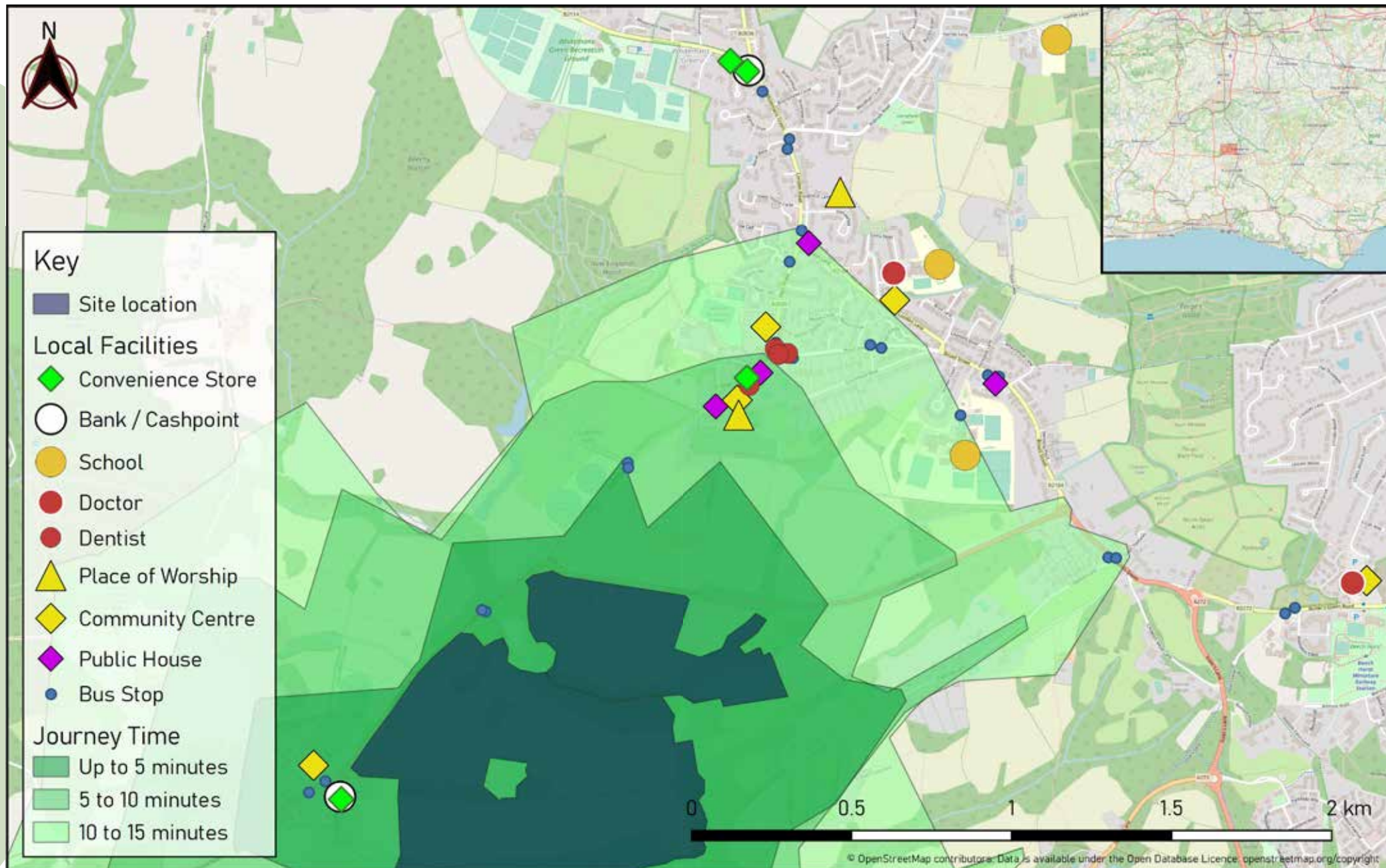
An initial review of existing local facilities has been undertaken to assess the distance from the site.

- Convenience / Food Store – 250m, 3 minutes' walk
- Bank / Cashpoint – 250m, 3 minutes' walk
- Community Centre – 300m, 4 minutes' walk
- Place of Worship – 650m, 9 minutes' walk
- Public House – 750m, 9 minutes' walk
- Dentist – 900m, 13 minutes' walk
- Doctors' Surgery – 1.6km, 21 minutes' walk
- Primary School – 1.6km, 22 minutes' walk

The locations of nearby local facilities are shown overleaf. The potential allocation's scale will also facilitate improved local infrastructure for the



The site in its wider context



benefit of existing and future residents.

Trip Generation and Distribution

The TRICS database has been used to estimate the number of vehicle trips generated by a development of 1,800 dwellings. This is expected to be in the region of 900 two-way trips in each of the peak hours. The 2011 Census data has been used to estimate the distribution of traffic. This suggests that 31% of traffic will head east, 40% of traffic will head west, 19% to the north and 10% to the south.

Accessibility Improvements

The proximity of existing local facilities, and prospective new on-site facilities, gives the potential to reduce the demand for travel by car for short trips. The site is adjacent to Ansty village and has Public Rights of Way running east-west and north-south through the site. The development could provide improved routes for pedestrians and cyclists through the site.

Whilst there are bus stops within walking distance of the site, the existing bus routes do not run a frequent service. Accordingly this development will provide significant enhancements to the local

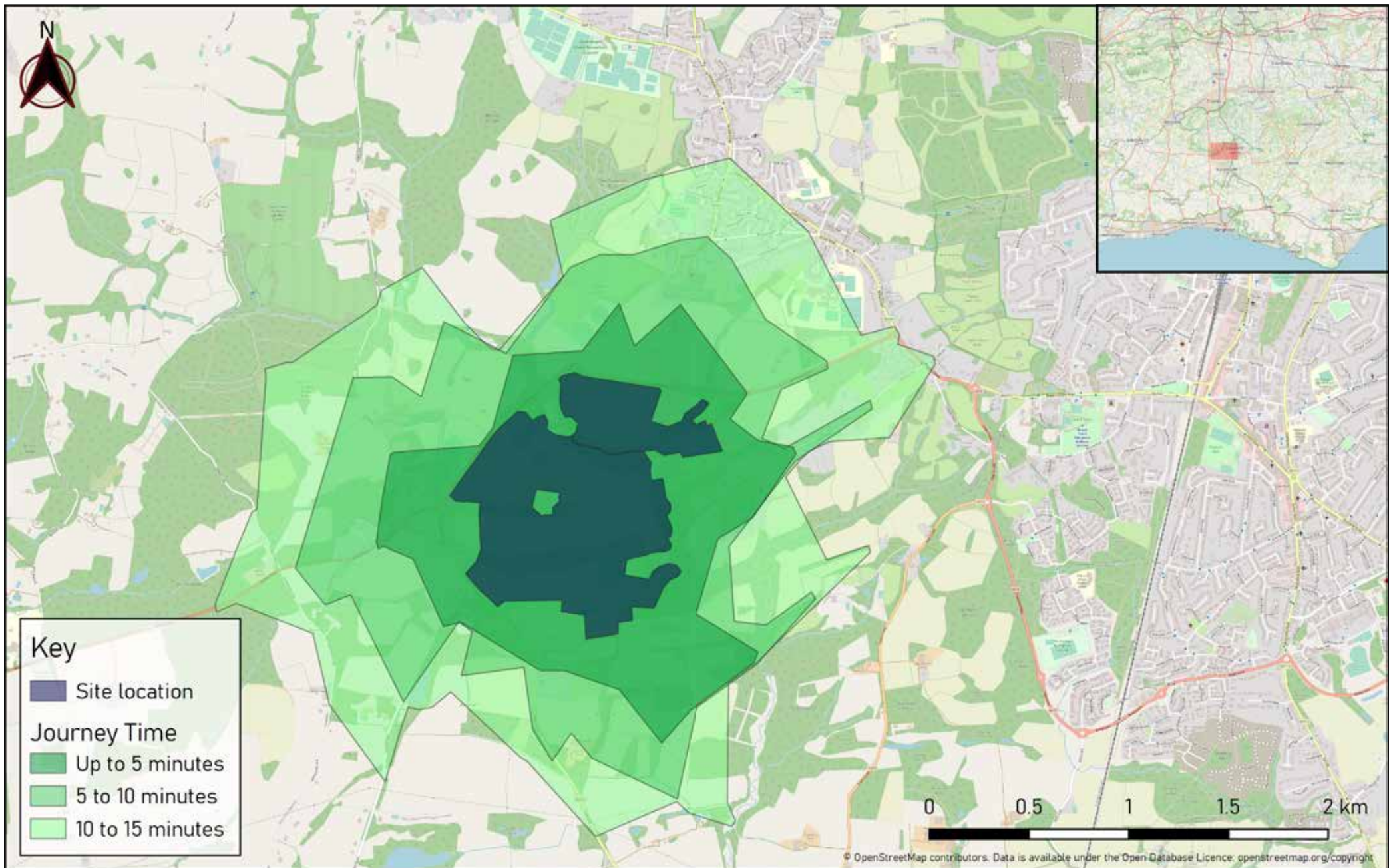
bus services by funding a new frequent service which actually runs through the development site. This would most naturally be a central part of a new loop which runs between Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath via this new settlement. It is envisaged that a new Community Land Trust would be endowed to fund this new route for a period of at least 5 years to enable it to become established as a viable route in its own right.

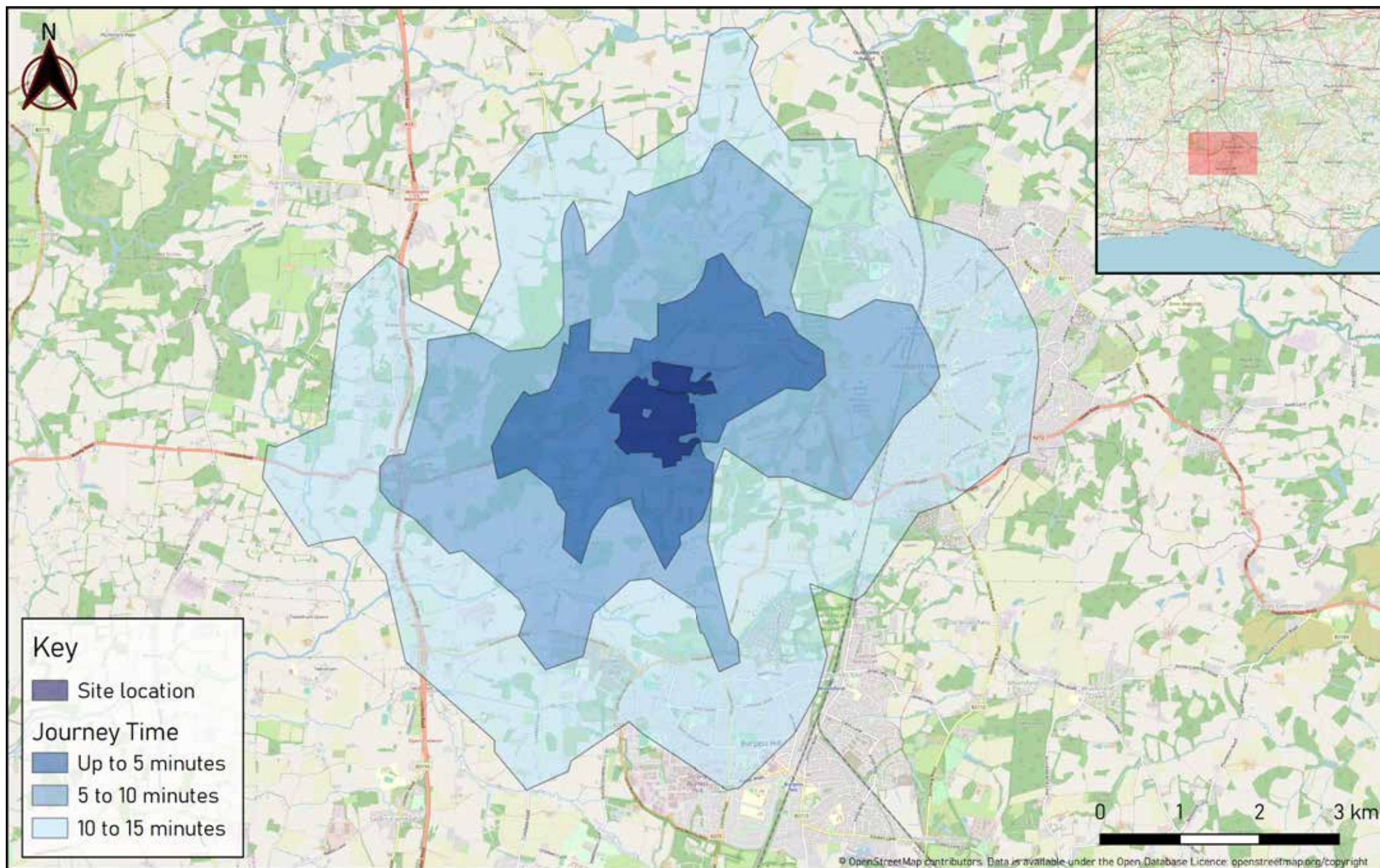
Highway Improvements

The A272 Cuckfield Road / Bolney Road mini-roundabout is expected to be over-capacity in future years. The proximity of this junction to the proposed development site presents the potential for redistribution of some existing traffic.

Initial options for highway access suggest that a new link between the A272 and B2036 through the site could help in reducing the existing traffic movements at the mini-roundabout and allow for further modifications and traffic calming options to be explored that could benefit the local area including the downgrading of the B2036 through Ansty village.







05

Features of the site



New Community Site

Designations

The proposed development site is outside of the High Weald AONB and has no specific planning designations. However there are a number of identified woodland and ancient woodland groups across the site and these would be retained in situ.

Country Park Site

Designations

The Country Park site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Garden Community site just outside. This provides excellent access to this area of 1,500 square kilometres of attractive landscapes, parks and villages.

There is an abundance of woodland and ancient woodland surrounding the site which add to the attractive landscape qualities.

A high number of public rights of way dissect both sites and connect them via foot and cycle to local amenities and open space.

Cuckfield Conservation Area lies to the east of the site and comprises unique features of Sussex villages with Victorian, Regency and medieval architecture. There are numerous listed buildings within the village.

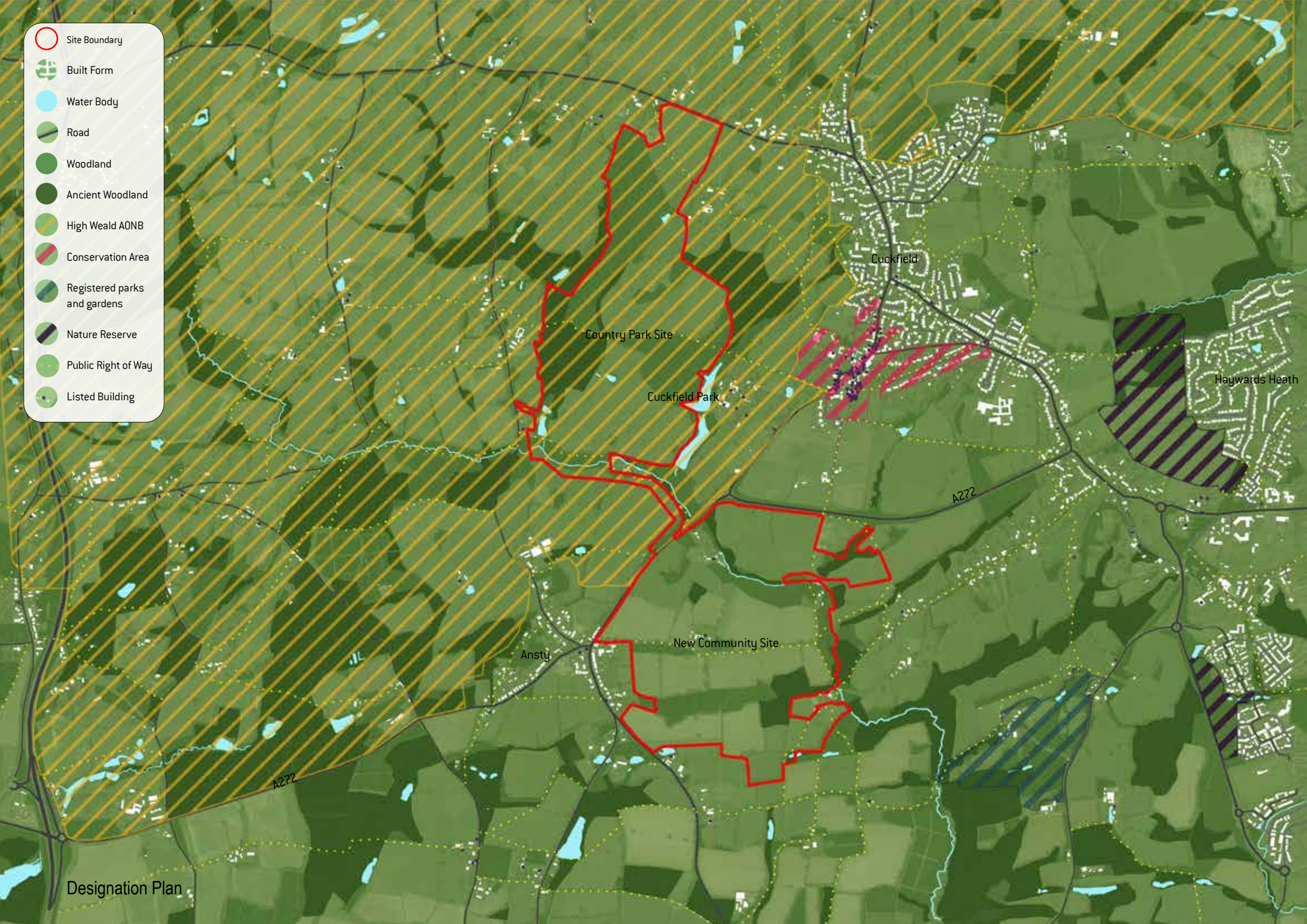
Movement

Bus routes and the A272 connect the site by road to Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, Horsham and Crawley. The nearest railway station at Haywards Heath is 2 miles to the east. It is on the main line between Brighton and London Bridge. (See Movement Plan)

Topography and Drainage

The site is bisected by a stream, topography rises either side of the stream to create a valley. Generally, the Garden Community site is more gently undulating than the Country Park and therefore less exposed.

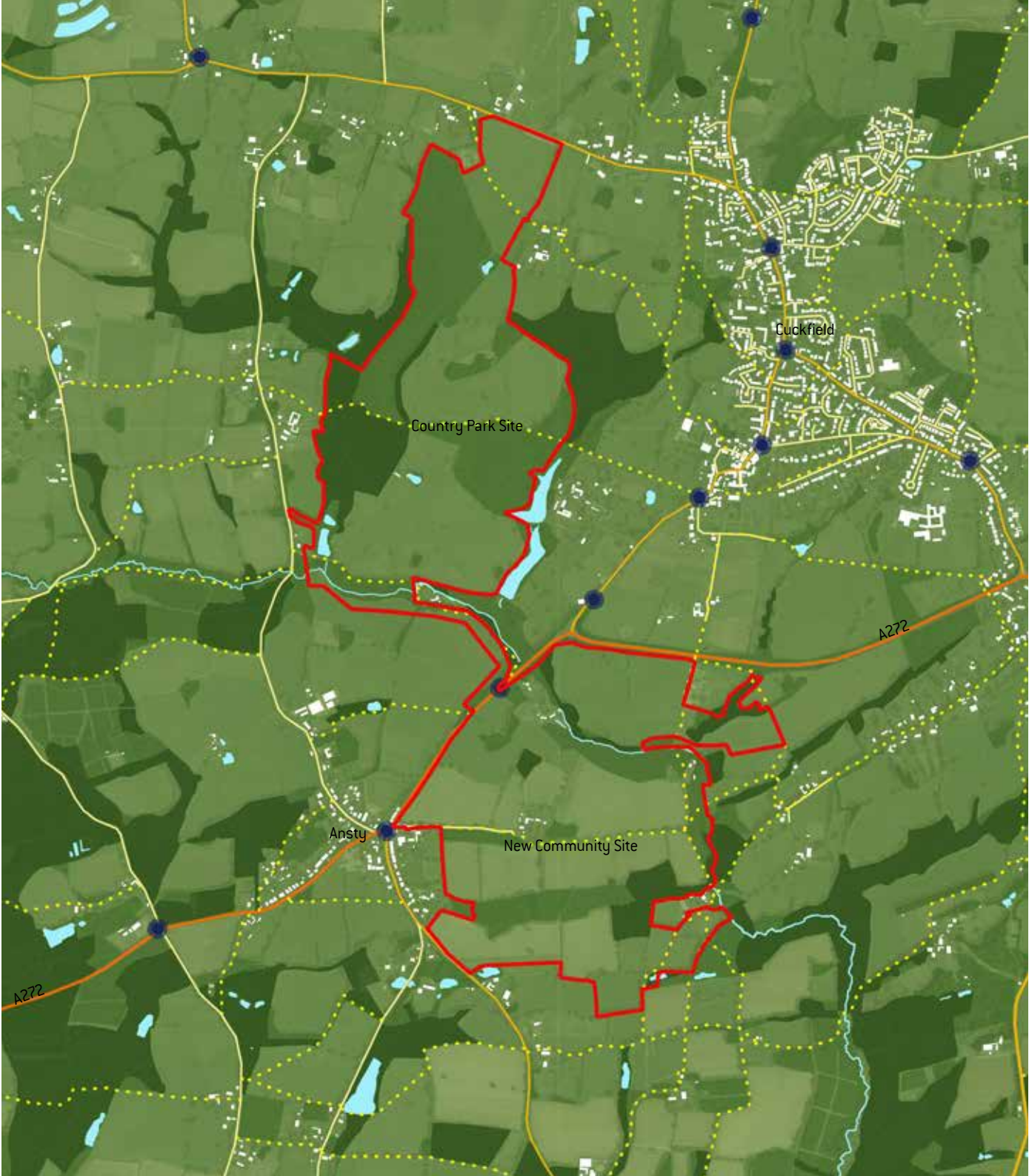
- Site Boundary
- Built Form
- Water Body
- Road
- Woodland
- Ancient Woodland
- High Weald AONB
- Conservation Area
- Registered parks and gardens
- Nature Reserve
- Public Right of Way
- Listed Building



Designation Plan

Movement

- Site Boundary
- Built Form
- Water Body
- Woodland
- Ancient Woodland
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Local Street
- Bus Stop
- Public Right of Way



Topography & Drainage

Site Boundary

Built Form

Water Body

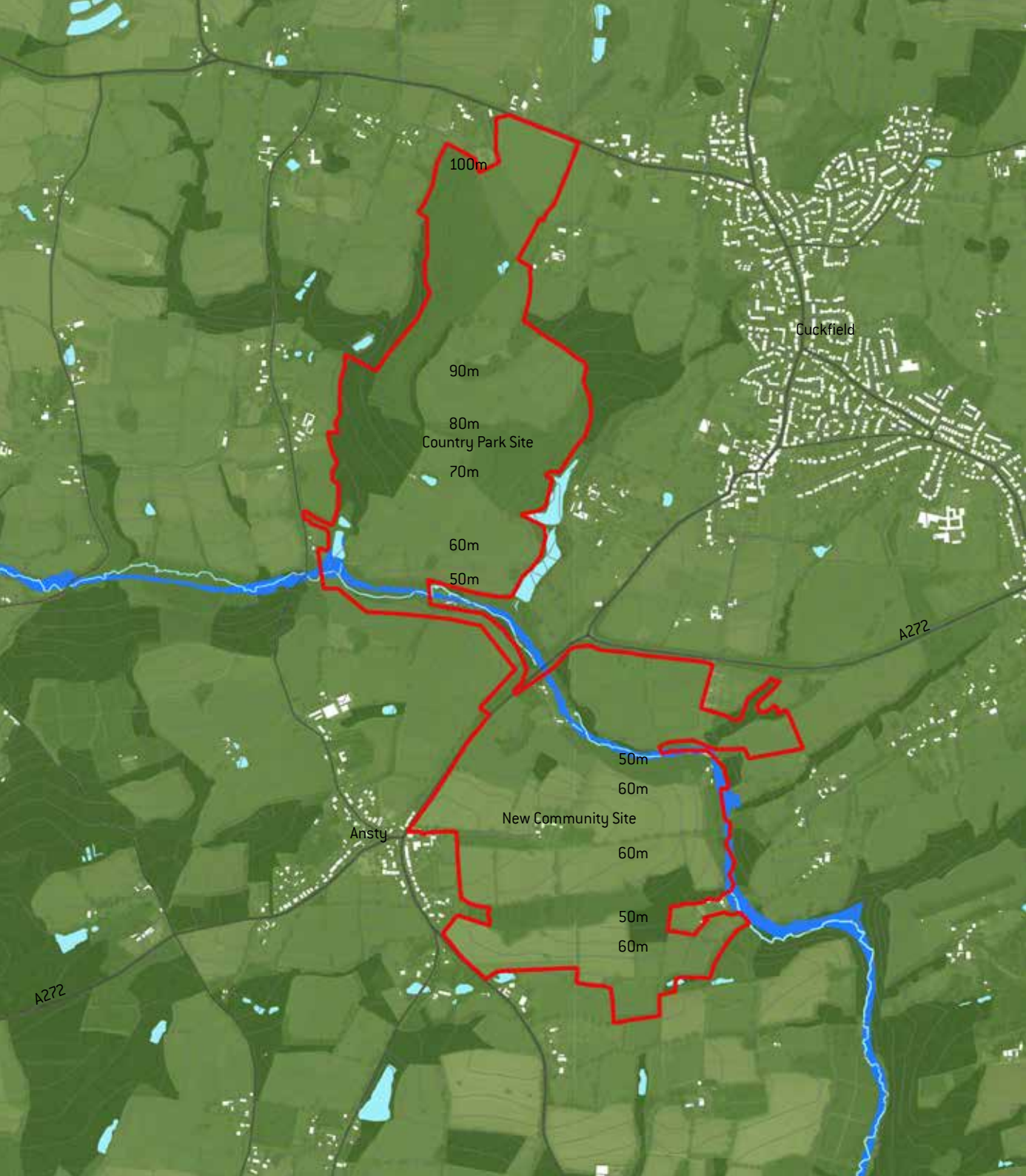
Road

Woodland

Ancient Woodland

Contours 5m

Flood Zone 3





Land Adjoining Ansty

Opportunities

The main development site presents a series of opportunities for creating a responsive development strategy which works with the inherent features of the site. These include the following:

- Between the A272 and the brook, the opportunity to create an attractive northern edge to the development exists. This could be achieved through the retention of existing tree groups and hedgerows as well as new planting along the A272. This part of the site will also need to accommodate one of the two primary gateways into the site. The gently sloping northern fields will provide the opportunity to accommodate sports pitches which could be the focus of the gateway.
- The centre of the site is defined by the east/west ridgeline which is a particularly distinctive feature and is characterised by the mature tree belt which runs along its length. The field to the north and south of this fall away to lower levels. The challenge in this part of the site will be to create a village centre which successfully responds to site features and the elevated position.
- There are also a number of key vistas in this part of the site which afford views to the church spire at Cuckfield and the South Downs ridges along way to the south.

Constraints

















The main development site presents a series of constraints which are essentially related to the existing vegetation groups.

- In particular the ancient woodland groups. Ancient woodland groups will be protected through the provision of minimum 15m buffers and 10m buffers for woodland groups. Other specific ecological constraints exist and these are marked on the plan opposite.

Non-ecological constraints include the following;

- Public right of way running east/west through the site will need to be retained in situ with careful consideration of the proposed interface with development.
- Although located on third party land, there will need to be careful consideration of the listed building in the centre of the site and those around the western periphery.
- Careful consideration will also need to be given to the interface between the proposed development and the setting of Ansty on the western boundary of the site.

Opportunities and Constraints

-  Site Boundary
-  Public Right of Way
-  Woodland blocks to be retained
-  10m Buffer to Woodland
-  Ancient Woodland
-  15m Buffer to Ancient Woodland
-  Flood Zone 2
-  Water Body
-  Listed Building
-  Ecological Constraint
-  Ridgeline
-  Tree Belts/Hedgerows
-  Distance Views
-  Setting of listed building
-  Overhead Power lines
-  Immediate setting of the AONB

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title Constraints and Opportunities

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------|--------|
| client | revision | - |
| project Land adjoining Ansty | date | Feb 21 |
| job no | drawn by | VT |
| drawing no SA001 | checked by | CO |

urban design studio



savills.com/urbandesign



*Drawing to be used for illustrative purposes only. Subject to further detailed and technical studies.

Site & Context Photographs



View 1 - Looking towards the tree belt running along the ridge



View 4 - Stream through the woodland



View 7 - Level changes in the southern part of the site



View 2 - Fields in the middle of the site



View 5 - Existing PROW access on the A272



View 8 - Recently blown over tree in the south east of the site



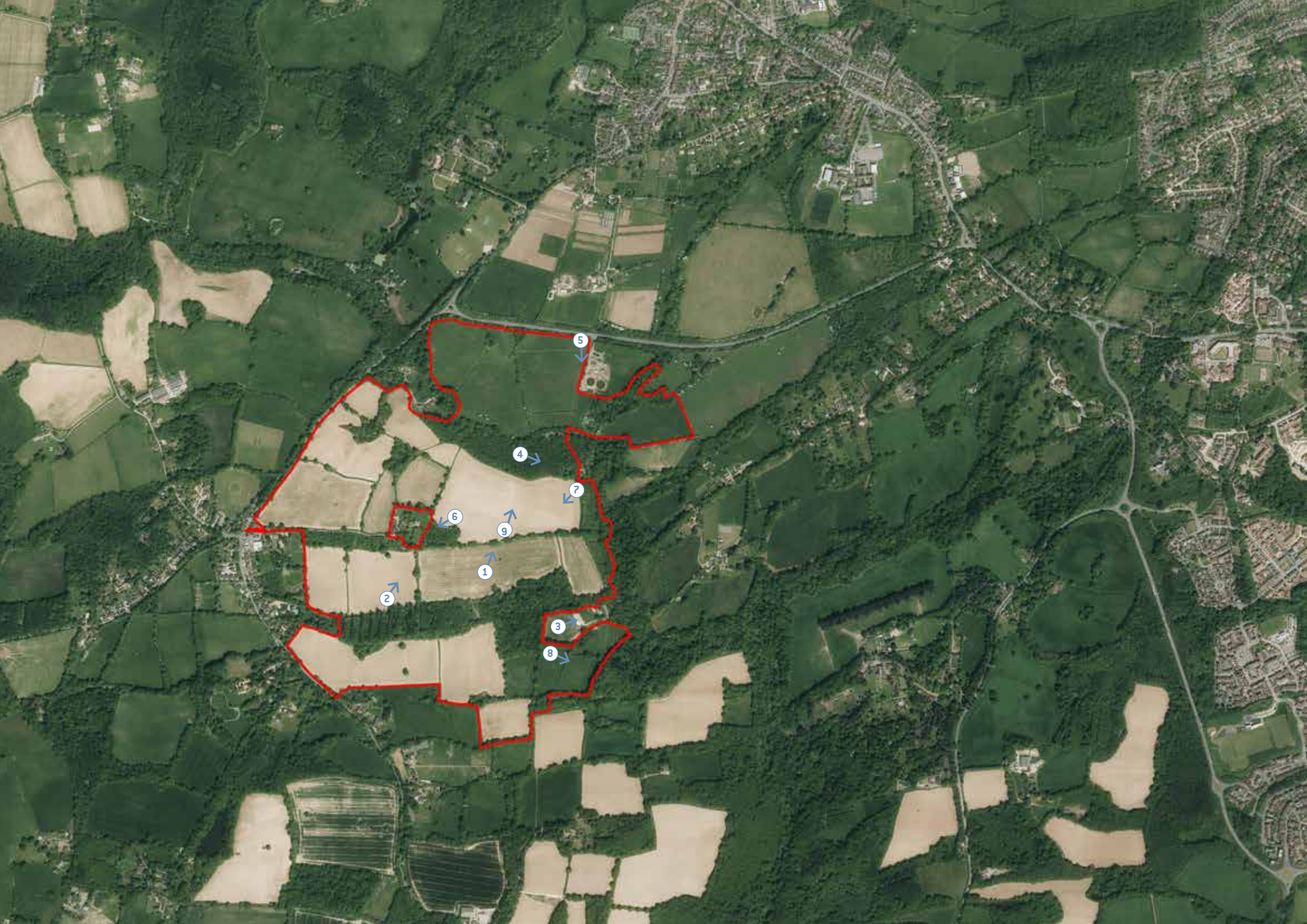
*View 3 - Far south eastern edge looking along PROW to paddocks off site
Land Adjoining Ansty*



View 6 - Distinctive chimneys on the off site listed building



View 9 - Long distance vista to Cuckfield church spire



06

Ecology



Land Adjoining Ansty

Constraints

At Ansty Farm the habitats with greatest intrinsic biodiversity value include the woodland, stream and standing water habitats across the site, which are considered to qualify as Habitats of Principal importance (S41 NERC Act 2006). At least 7.3Ha of woodland across the site is also designated as Ancient and semi-natural woodland and some parcels as Priority Deciduous Woodland Habitat. As such, the habitats listed above, including the hedgerows, tree lines and mature trees across the site will be the focus of efforts to retain and enhance existing habitats of value and ensure existing biodiversity loss is minimised. The following measures will be implemented to help ensure this:

- A buffer will be implemented between any development and all broadleaved ancient and semi-natural woodland on site that is no less than 15m width. A sensitive lighting scheme will also be incorporated to ensure minimal impact from artificial lighting within this buffer zone and across the site. Thorny planting will be included to help protect the woodland from disturbance by pedestrian traffic.
- All hedgerows, mature trees and treelines will be retained where possible. These features will be protected by appropriate buffer zones, with root protection zones also enforced, and physically

fenced off to prevent construction vehicles damaging these habitats. These habitats will also be protected from artificial lighting as described above.

- Where access is to be created through tree lines or hedgerows, these will be located sensitively to avoid the root protection zones of mature trees and find a 'path of least ecological resistance'. The planting of oak trees adjacent to gaps created in hedgerows will be undertaken so that their maturing canopies can bridge these gaps over time.
- Any trees and hedgerow lengths lost will be replaced at a ratio of 3:1, ensuring there will be a habitat gain in the long-term. All new hedgerows proposed will be native and species-rich to maximise their biodiversity value and only native tree species will be planted.
- Consideration of the watercourse passing thorough the site will include a minimum buffer of 8m from any construction work, to prevent compromising the banks of the river and impacting upon protected species that it may support. Any works necessary within this buffer zone or access to the stream will require gaining a permit from the Environment Agency.

The habitats contained by Ansty Farm also have the potential to support a range of protected and notable species. A suite of targeted surveys will be undertaken to establish the presence or likely absence of species including hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*, great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, bats and farmland birds. This information will then be used to inform dedicated mitigation and compensation measures to identify how protected and notable species will be preserved through the development proposal and their conservation status can be preserved.

Opportunities

In addition to Phase 2 surveys and mitigation for site habitats and protected species, there are multiple opportunities to incorporate enhancements into the development and achieve biodiversity net gain, as required by The National Planning Policy Framework and to meet the relevant policies in the Local Plan. These enhancements will include the following which are displayed in the proposed development and landscaping plan on the following page:

- This development will aim to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity value as a minimum and a Landscape and

Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) will be produced to set out how all of the retained green spaces at the site will be managed and enhanced to ensure that this objective is achieved.

- The large areas of open green space across the development can be sown in places with wildflower meadow and managed for biodiversity, to be outlined within a management plan within the LEMP. An opportunity is present here to create neutral species-rich grassland, which is a rare natural asset within the Weald landscape.
- A community orchard is included within the communal space proposed for the development, and appropriate fruit and nut trees, as well as correct management of this habitat can be detailed within the LEMP.
- The proposed attenuation ponds can be seeded around their margins with pond edge and wetland wildflower mixes. Aquatic plug plants can also be added to the waterbody, with specific details to be outlined within the LEMP.
- The development proposals can include an effort to

remove all identified invasive species recorded on the site (which includes rhododendron, snowberry and cherry laurel) and replacement with native trees and shrubs.

- The creation of buffer planting (ecotone) around woodland boundaries planted with native species only and a minimum 50% thorny species such as blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, rose *Rosa* spp. and holly *Illex aquifolium*. This will create additional foraging value for small mammals, birds and bats.
- Creation of deadwood habitat within and adjacent to the woodland parcels to provide suitable habitat for stag beetle and other invertebrates.
- Incorporation of bat roosting features into new properties and boxes to be placed within woodland parcels and mature trees across the site, specially selected for the bat species that are identified.
- Incorporation of nesting bird features into new properties and boxes to be placed within woodland parcels and mature trees across the site.

07

Landscape and Visual



The site is not covered by any national, regional or local landscape designation, nor within a strategic viewing corridor. The edge of the High Weald AONB is located to the immediate northwest of the site, at its junction with the A272 road corridor.

The site is situated immediately adjacent to the eastern edge of the settlement of Ansty, south of the village of Cuckfield. The A272 bounds the site to the west and north. The B2036 bounds the site to the southwest. To the east, the undulating wooded landform is connected by PRow to Copyhold Lane and Lodge Farm.

The site's landscape character accords with the findings of the District and Parish level Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Assessment, which notes that the undulating landform and woodland are key landscape and visual sensitivities. Ancient Woodland is identified on Site and together with the water course and associated flood zone form constraints to development.

An initial landscape and visual appraisal of the Site reveals that

the western section of the site is well related to the eastern edge of Ansty. The site is framed to the north by the A272 road corridor, west by the settlement and the tree belt associated with the A272, to the south by the undulating landform and to the east by the rising landform and associated vegetation at Copyhold Lane.

The central section of the site spans a ridgeline and comprises of arable field parcels framed by an elevated linear tree belt which crosses west to east, connecting to woodland within the valley bottom in the east. The wooded valley bottom envelops the ridgeline to the north and south and connects with the adjacent intricate network of undulating valleys and ridgelines. Ancient woodland is located within the valley bottom in the east and north of the site. The northern section of the Site comprises of a south facing hillside with medium scale fields and hedgerows, adjacent to a sewage water treatment works.

The site is bound by the A272 with arable fields beyond to the north. The southern section of the Site comprises of a north facing hillside with medium and small scale fields framed by hedgerows, the wooded valley to the north and by the associated ridgeline to the south.



The site's undulating landform, woodland, treebelts and hedgerows are landscape features of merit, to be retained and bolstered. This combination of features provide a mature landscape which is intimate and secluded. Furthermore, Grade II Listed residential dwellings are located within the centre of the site and to the immediate south and north, where the existing wooded and rural landscape informs their setting, to varying extents.

The site is apparent from its immediate setting, including the A272, the B2036 and the PRoW adjacent to Copyhold Lane. There are partial views of the highest slopes of the central section of the site from the PRoW adjacent to Cuckfield Cemetery and Warden Park School, on the southern edge of Cuckfield, north of the site. Views of the Site from the PRoW within the AONB to the northwest of the Site are obscured by intervening vegetation and landform.

The treed road corridor of the A272 forms a barrier in views from the immediate landscape to the northwest, truncating views of the site from the PRoW to the north of the A272 and within the AONB.

Views of the site are truncated from within the wider landscape due to the combination of intervening topography and vegetation. Where glimpsed views occur, the Site is set within an intimate, undulating and treed landscape. Therefore, development of the site in the sensitive way proposed, would not significantly alter the setting of the AONB. This however should be the subject of further assessment.

From the Public Rights of Way which cross the site, there are open views across part of the Site. Furthermore, there are views across the site to Holy Trinity Church in Cuckfield to the north. The site's internal vegetation pattern limits wider views across or out of the site. From the PRoW west to east ridgeline in the centre of the site, views of the South Downs to the south are perceived, filtered through the intervening layers of vegetation.

The Landscape Capacity Assessment's carried out for Mid Sussex illustrate that the site is located within a character area identified as having a low to moderate capacity. The proximity to the AONB is identified, as are the existing Listed Buildings. The site is located as being within a 'buffer zone' whereby mitigation proposals are recommended, together with further assessment.





The Landscape Character Assessment carried out for the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan concludes that the northern section of the site has a low capacity for development. Whilst we concur that this section of the Site is detached from any significant settlement (to the north), we note that it is visually and physically interconnected with the central section of the site, where development parcels are proposed, set within an existing bolstered green infrastructure framework. Our findings additionally concur with the description of the character of this section of the site, notably that the tranquillity is reduced by the influence from the A272 and the sewage works. We further concur that this section of the site does not form part of the immediate southern setting to Cuckfield, which is located on higher ground, approximately 1/2km to the north and is not readily perceived.

Overall, development within the southern and central sections, plus the lowest slopes of the northern section of the Site could be supported in landscape and visual terms due to the potential to integrate well designed development into the landscape. Development parcels can be set within the framework of existing infrastructure and vegetation, which can be enhanced with additional structure planting. As such, landscape and visual effects would be mitigated where possible. As with

any greenfield site there would be harm, however, there are opportunities to incorporate recommendations as set out in the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment and opportunities to achieve significant biodiversity improvements as part of the open space proposals.

Whilst the introduction of sensitively designed development parcels within the site would extend the settlement edge of Ansty northeastward, a gap would be maintained between the new settlement edge and Cuckfield to the northeast. The perception of openness would not unacceptably be eroded. Furthermore, the experiential qualities of the journey between Ansty and Cuckfield would be retained, albeit it foreshortened, with a continuation of the sense of leaving one settlement, travelling through a rural landscape and then arriving at another settlement.

Finally, initial proposals suggest that a scheme design could be progressed that is acceptable in terms of the setting to the AONB in that it seeks to:

- conserve and enhance the key characteristic features of the landscape;
- incorporate development parcels within an existing

framework of vegetation, adjacent to existing infrastructure and settlement edge;

- mitigate effects on views of the site where glimpsed views of development set away from the edge of the AONB, may occur from within the AONB.

The concept masterplan has been informed by the advice set out within this appraisal, with the location and layout of development parameters generated by the visual and landscape character assessment.

Overall it is our conclusion that a sensitive and high quality scheme could be supported in landscape and visual terms. Proposals should be responsive to the setting of the AONB and the adjacent Listed Buildings. Furthermore, proposals should incorporate recommendations as set out in the district and local level Landscape Character Assessments. Harm to the greenfield site, which is not covered by any national, regional or local landscape designations, nor within a strategic viewing corridor, could therefore be moderated.



08

Design Approach



Our proposal is to create a sustainable new community in the heart of Sussex. A community which integrates well with its natural surroundings and provides opportunities for local people to access a variety of much needed new homes close to a proposed village centre and a strategic country park.

In order to establish development of the highest quality and to achieve good design, the vision for the site comprises the following key objectives:

- create a strong sense of place, character and identity through ensuring development of the highest quality and ensuring that there is a mix of house types
- enhance accessibility by all modes for all residents and visitors through establishing a clear network of interlinked streets, footways and open spaces
- ensure that there is a clear interface between the landscape character of the adjacent woodland groups.
- preserve existing site features, such as the woodland and important trees and hedgerows, managing and

create a network of habitats and wildlife corridors.

- Provide clear linkages between the main development site and the proposed Country Park to the north.

The diagrams opposite set out the underlying design strategy for the development of the site. They explain the design response to the inherent characteristics of the site.

A critical feature of the masterplan structure is the retention of the major east-west tree belts and the north-south hedgerows to create a 'green grid' which will form the core ecological, movement and public open space framework

The core of the new community will be defined by a new primary school, village centre and park which will sit on either side of the new north south strategic route which will link the A272 to the Cuckfield Road.



Structuring the Concept Plan

ESTABLISHING A 'GREEN GRID'



The site is characterised by a series of wide tree belts which run on an east/west axis through and beyond the site area. There are also a number of hedgerow field boundaries which link the tree belts on a north south axis. These will be retained, and in the case of the edges, strengthened.

A CENTRAL PARK



Although on third party land, The Barn House listed building and its associated tree groups will create a central feature around which a central park could be located at the high point of the central ridge.

WALKABLE NEW COMMUNITY



The site provides the opportunity to ensure that all housing is within 10 minutes (800m) walking distance of new services and facilities. Higher density housing can also be positioned within 5 minutes (400m) walking distance.

PRIMARY SCHOOL, PARK & SHOPS



The provision of a primary school, village centre and park at the heart of the scheme will combine to create a new place which is connected to the rest of the site via walking routes. The village centre will benefit from passing traffic using the new north south strategic route.



Early design studies



Orientation looking from west to east



Orientation looking from east to west



Placemaking: Gateway Green



- ① A272 gateway - potential to generate a green gateway focused on sports pitches with signature frontages
- ② Linear woodland group and brook needs to be crossed at the best location based on ecological assessment
- ③ Listed building and curtilage is retained within a central parkland around the third party land.
- ④ Linear woodland group and brook needs to be crossed at the best location based on ecological assessment
- ⑤ Gateway on the Cuckfield Road to be defined by a signature frontage with a distinctive landmark feature.
- ⑥ Attenuation accommodated at the confluence of the brooks in the south east.

- ① Community building and changing rooms
- ② Formal style terrace defines the edge of this signature space
- ③ Re-levelling of the field to accommodate sports pitches
- ④ This frontage will reflect locally distinctive building styles
- ⑤ This will be a key view from the A272
- ⑥ Woodland groups will frame the backdrop of the gateway space



PARKLAND APPROACH

The gateway to the new settlement from the north will be defined by an open and green character within which would be a cluster of playing fields on one of the flatter parts of the site. The road will be defined by avenue planting and the existing trees will be retained.

NORTHERN QUARTER

This part of the site will be detached from the main part of the site but will be linked via footpaths and cycleways. It will have a lower density and benefit from its setting next to the parkland.

VILLAGE CENTRE

Situated at the heart of the settlement, the Village Centre will be a distinctive centre of the scheme with mixed uses which will support the new settlement. A new village hall will also be a key feature building at the heart of this scheme.

THE RIDGE - LINEAR PARK

Following the line of trees which follow the ridge line a new distinctive space will be created. Here, more valuable town houses will front onto the space and sympathetically climb up the hill.

VILLAGE PARK

This distinctive new space will be a resource for all members of the community and visitors alike. Distinctive built form will overlook the space to create enclosure and define an attractive new place. It will also provide a sympathetic setting to the existing listed building. It will also afford spectacular views to Cuckfield village church spire.

1. Village Centre
2. Village Square and Community Hall
3. Village Park
4. The Ridge - Linear Park
5. Sports Pitches as green gateway
6. The Crescent
7. Attenuation Ponds
8. Public Right of Way and Ped access to village
9. Sports pitches (south)
10. Allotments and community orchard
11. Ecological constraint
12. Woodland walk network
13. Ansty Village
14. NEAP
15. Screening planting along road
16. Existing stream
17. Primary School (2FE)
18. Proposed Country Park

→ Vista to Cuckfield Church spire

--- Bus route/Strategic road

□ Proposed Country Park

● Vehicle access

● Pedestrian/cycle access

■ Internal recreation network

■ High Weald AONB

■ Public Right of Way

0 100 200 300m

High quality new homes



The masterplan focuses on:



Built Form

- Housing units on the site will be designed to reflect the local character of Mid-Sussex
- Units will be strategically positioned to create attractive vistas and front adjacent open spaces to allow for natural surveillance.
- Denser development will be around the village centre, where car free frontages will overlook the focal space.
- Towards the edge of the development, the houses will be less formally arranged and look out onto the surrounding landscape and views.
- Where possible, the development will be screened from the A272 by new planting to minimise its visual impact on the surrounding properties.



Movement

- Access to the site will be from Cuckfield Road and the A272.
- Within the site, the access road will become shared surface streets to better fit the context and slow down traffic.
- The primary access road will have pedestrian footways.
- The entrance road will be tree-lined to create an attractive approach to the new development and screen the development from the A272.
- Pedestrian movement will also be important, with footpaths around the perimeter of the site to allow connection to the various public rights of way which surround the site. These public rights of way will then connect to the Country Park.



Green and Blue Infrastructure

- Rain water run off from the development will be collected in SuDS ponds to the south of the site at its lowest points.
- In terms of tree planting, the site benefits from existing mature trees and hedgerows to its perimeters, which will be protected, and a number of new trees will be planted to the edges of development and to line the primary access road.
- The site will benefit from ample open green space for use by the community.
- New allotments to the north of the site and a play area in the central 'village green' space.



A new Village Centre

- The focal point of the new community will be a new village centre which will accommodate a range of services and facilities.
- The village centre will be a defining feature of the development and be available for everyone in the wider community.
- It will accommodate a range of community events including markets, fetes and outdoor events.



Protecting Key Views

- The site benefits from views towards the historic features in Cuckfield, which should be protected
- New tree planting will also help to screen the development from Ansty and Cuckfield.



Placemaking - Housing Square

09 Country Park



The new Cuckfield Country Park will offer a range of amenities for existing and new residents. A key feature of the park will be two types of footpath which will run on a meandering north/south route through the new parkland.

Primary Footpath Route

The primary footpath will follow a central alignment through the park and be surfaced with hoggins to ensure it is available for both disabled and able body users. This path will avoid steep gradients but provide access to most parts of the country park. Key features such as attractive picnic spots and viewpoints will be located along this route. It will also directly connect to the car parks and connect with the existing public rights of way.

Secondary Footpath Routes

The secondary footpaths will trail away from the central primary route and provide a more adventures set of options which will take visitors through the woodland and open meadows and follow more challenging gradients. This path will be a simple mown path through the meadows and just cleared through the woodland. Where it meets wet ground, boardwalk will be provided.

The northern part of the park will provide facilities such as a new car park, bus stop and children's play area accessed from Staplefield Road. The existing pitches will be retained and access to the Country park will be facilitated by linking the primary footpath to the car park.

The south eastern portion of the scheme will be accessed from a new car park on the A272.

The site presents the opportunity for a diversity of interest and activity for future occupiers, whilst enhancing and managing it for wildlife and landscape purposes. The strategy is to enhance the landscape, diversify the vegetation, add new water bodies and significantly improve the biodiversity - importantly bringing in positive habitat management across the entire site.

The principle routes within the landscape will provide appreciation of the varied landscape and habitat whilst protecting, enhancing and managing its wildlife, botanic and habitat value. Trees, swales and planting will be positioned along the key routes strengthening their character and aiding wayfinding.

New waterbodies will be created to manage surface water run-off and generate habitat as well as visual amenity. Ephemeral ponds and channels will be positioned throughout the lower parts of the site. A considered palette of native species will complement the existing plants and trees. Layers of planting together with the open water and swales will encourage wildlife to flourish and bring residents close to nature. The landscape and habitat areas will be made available to local school children and other groups to visit for educational purposes and to encourage interaction between younger and older generations.

- Bus stop
- Parking
- Sports pitches
- Interpretation Board
- Picnic Spot
- Wildflower Meadow
- Viewpoint
- Allotments
- Play Area
- Primary Path
- Secondary Path
- Existing PROW
- Country Park
- New Settlement



The far northern part of the park will accommodate key infrastructure such as the bus stop on Staplefield Road and the northern car park. Playing fields will be maintained and a new natural children's play area will be built.

The woodland here will be accessed through a new cleared path which will be available for a more strenuous walk for able bodied visitors. This path will not be surfaced.

Located on the main surfaced route through the park, this area will be focused on a picnic spot located next to the existing pond.

This high point affords great views of the surrounding landscape as well as views back to Cuckfield

These central fields will be planted up as wildflower meadows and the focal point will be another picnic spot next to the pond

This high point affords great views of the surrounding landscape as well as views back to Cuckfield

If approval for a junction can be secured, this area will be a key gateway into the scheme with a car park to cater for access to the south east of the park

New Community



Play Area



Wetland Feature



Car Park



Picnic Spot



Wildflowers



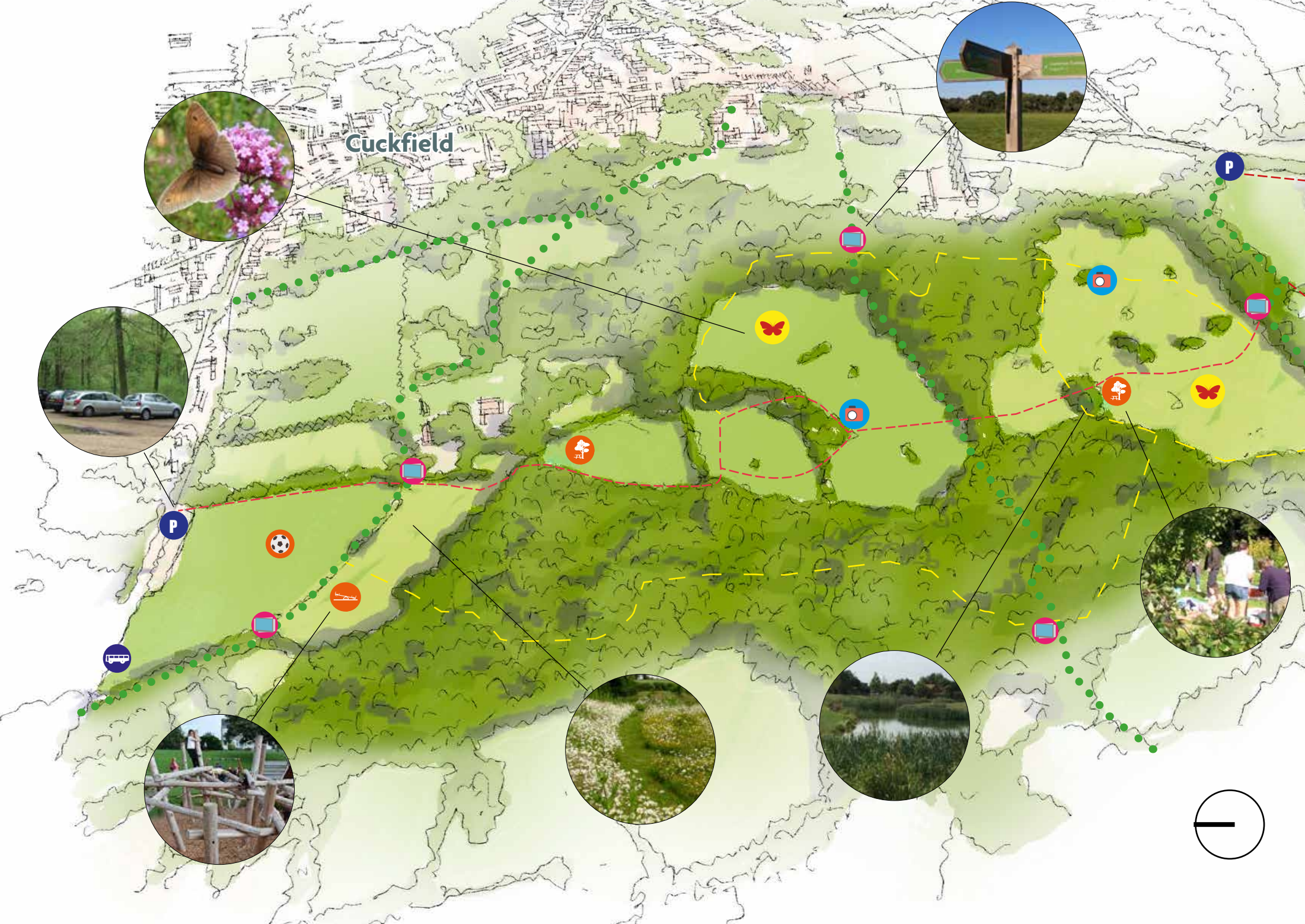
Secondary Path through Meadow



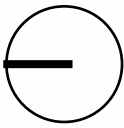
Interpretation Board



Primary Path



Cuckfield



P

P















Ansty



Cuckfield

Country Park

-  Bus stop
-  Parking
-  Sports pitches
-  Interpretation Board
-  Picnic Spot
-  Wildflower Meadow
-  Viewpoint
-  Allotments
-  Play Area
-  Primary Path
-  Secondary Path
-  Existing PROW

Fairfax

10

Low Carbon Future



Both national and local planning policy require new developments to reduce their environmental impact as part of delivering on wider sustainable development goals, and work towards zero carbon.

Paragraph 151 of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF (Feb 2019) states that developments should draw energy from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems.

West Sussex County Council declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and this highlights a need to shift to lower carbon heat and energy. This includes energy efficient / climate resilient new homes and multifunctional green infrastructure.

It is accepted best practice to take a 'fabric first' approach, reducing demand for energy in the first place through improved design and construction of dwellings. In addition wider new settlement will be developed with green infrastructure, which can provide shading and shelter, reducing the energy demand for heating and cooling.

The development will include a sustainable drainage system to ensure that the development does not contribute towards a net increase in surface water run-off, with a capacity that takes into account climate change.

There are a wide range of measures available to reduce energy needs and deliver low-carbon energy generation that are commonly considered in new residential developments:

- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels.
- Solar hot water.
- Air Source Heat Pumps.
- Ground Source Heat Pumps.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.

The gradients of the site / layout of development create the opportunity for the use of PV panels and high levels of solar gain. However, a combination of measures is the often the best way to meet targets, reflecting the differing characteristics of specific sites and the cost and availability of renewable energy technology available at the time of construction.

Fairfax will also be looking at the possibility of incorporating an Energy Centre on site aimed at delivering a district heating system to core parts of the settlement, providing a long term low carbon heating solution.

Fairfax are committed to delivering an energy efficient and sustainable development at Ansty ahead of Government requirements, and a priority for this project is to work with Mid Sussex District Council and other stakeholders to determine the most appropriate standard and type of energy infrastructure for this development.



Higher elevation summer sun reflected by shutters, louvre's and overhangs

Lower elevation winter sun passes through windows and warms rooms

Deciduous planting to the south of buildings blocks summer sun but when leaves are lost winter sun can pass through

Buildings should face within 30 degrees of south to maximise solar gain

Extended eaves help to block high elevation summer sun

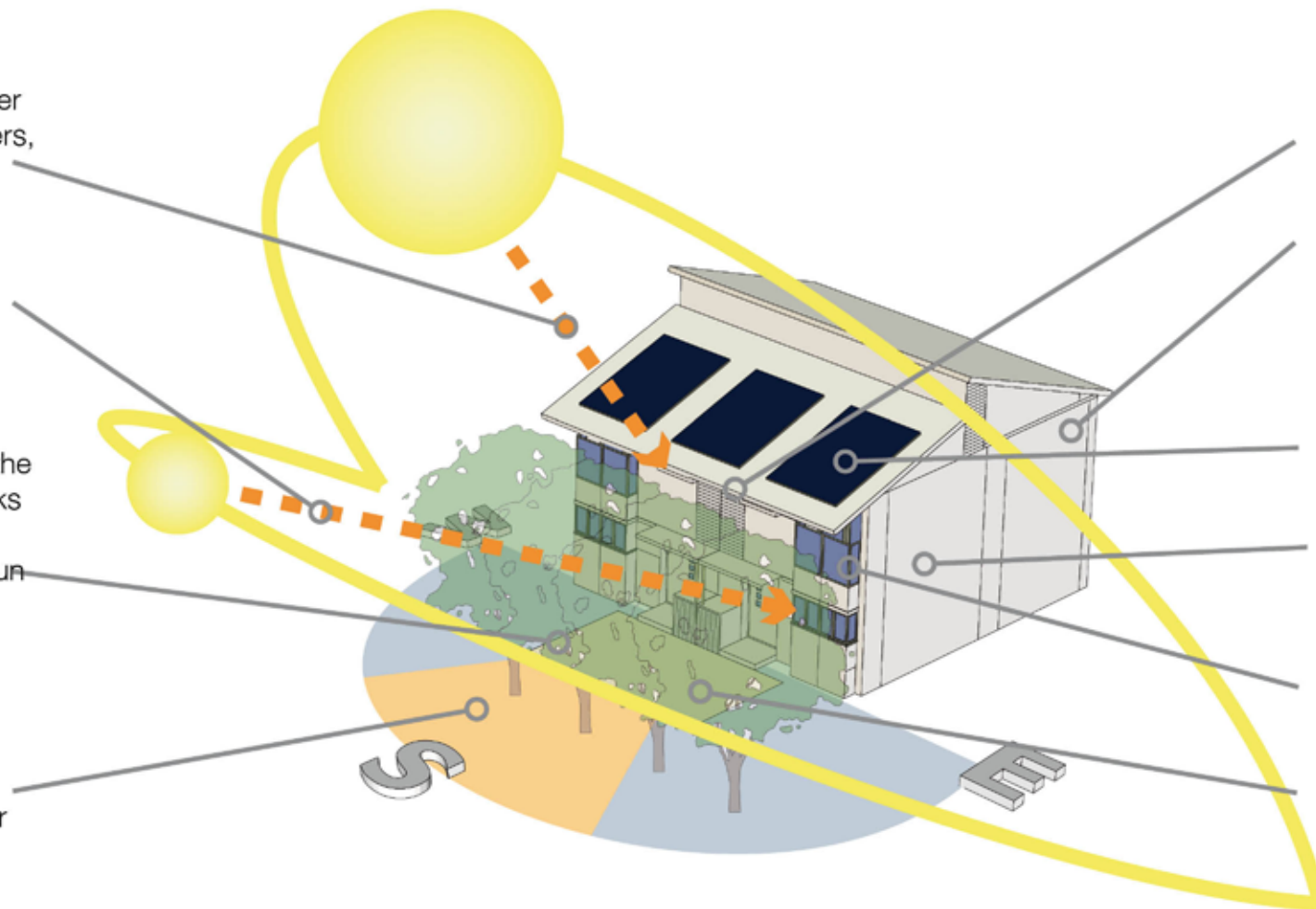
Materials chosen that absorb and retain the sun's energy and then release heat into the building at night

Solar panels on south facing roof space

More frequently used rooms towards the south face of the building

Large south facing windows

Paving helps to reflect winter sun into the building



11

Enhancing Biodiversity



The site presents the opportunity for a diversity of interest and activity for future users, whilst enhancing and managing it for wildlife and landscape purposes.

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The principal routes within the landscape will provide appreciation of the varied landscape and habitat whilst protecting, enhancing and managing its wildlife, botanic and habitat value. Trees, swales and planting will be positioned along the key routes strengthening their character and aiding wayfinding.



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Attenuation Ponds

Some areas of greenspace across the development to be sown with native wildflower mix.

Community Orchard to be planted with native fruit and nut trees

All woodland parcels to be retained and a 15m buffer instated, to be enforced with a thorny species ecotone.

Creation of deadwood habitat within woodland parcels across the site

Many of the hedgerows at the site to be retained and protected.

Attenuation ponds -edges to be seeded with native wildflower mixes and planted with aquatic plug plants



12

Planning Policy



Planning Context

The Development Plan Documents in place that manage development on the site are the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (adopted 2018), and the Ansty and Stapleford Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 (adopted in 2017). A Site Allocations DPD has been prepared to supplement the District Plan, and was submitted for examination to the Secretary of State in December 2020, with an anticipated adoption of late 2021/early 2022. The policies and site allocations contained within it are not yet part of the development plan for Mid Sussex, but they are a consideration of MSDC's when considering future development options and opportunities.

Ansty is identified as a Category 4 settlement in the Mid Sussex District Plan, and identified as one of the "Small villages with limited services often only serving the settlement itself". This positions Ansty as being comparative to Staplefield, Slaugham, Twineham and Warninglid in the Mid Sussex settlement hierarchy.

In planning policy terms, the Site is considered to be outside of the settlement boundary, and is considered to be countryside. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a Local Gap policy to the north east and south of Ansty, in order to prevent coalescence between settlements.

Growth in MSDC

The District Plan sets out the volume of housing that MSDC is required to deliver. It sets out a staggered increase in housing delivery over the plan period, with a current scheduled delivery of 876 dwellings per annum, rising to 1,090 in 2023. However, central Governments calculated housing need for Mid Sussex using the Standard Methodology gives a minimum calculated need for housing delivery in Mid Sussex of 1,114 per annum.

Local Authorities are legally obliged to engage in dialogue with neighbouring authorities when neighbouring authorities have unmet need. Mid Sussex District has a significant proportion of its District designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, restricting development opportunities. However, Lewes, Brighton & Hove, Mole Valley and Tandridge are all heavily constrained Local Authority areas that share a boundary with or are within the housing market area of Mid Sussex, with Green Belt, AONB, and National Park designations all restricting development opportunities.

Accordingly, there is further pressure on MSDC to, as an adjoining authority, assist its neighbours and plan to meet some of the unmet need through the plan making process. Therefore whilst the minimum required housing figure is set at 1,114 dpa, the actual figure that is required for delivery is likely to be higher.

Suitability of the Site

The proposals put forward for land adjoining Ansty are seeking to achieve large-scale strategic development on 197 hectares of land, creating a new community of approximately 1,600 homes and a new country park that would fit in with the existing character of the landscape. Existing settlements have taken on significant expansion in previous Local Plan and Development Plan documents, and the site and proposals put forward here provide an opportunity for a well-located scheme to deliver a new community in an area of the District that is away from areas of landscape constraint.

The proposals will extend development to the east of Ansty and create a new community, delivering housing and new community facilities in the form of a new school, new sports facilities, a new village centre with shops and services, and a new Country Park to the north, providing a firm defensible buffer on the west of Cuckfield.

As identified in Policy DP31 from the District Plan, any new development in Mid Sussex will be expected to provide 30% affordable housing. As the site is relatively unconstrained, the delivery of 30% affordable housing should be readily achievable

Given the planned increase in housing supply from 2023 set out in the District Plan, the need from neighbouring authorities outlined above, and current under delivery of housing at current rates (MSDC scored 91% in the Housing Delivery Test) there is real and pressing need for additional sites to come forward, so that the required level of development of residential dwellings can be achieved.

The existing sustainable settlements within Mid Sussex have been subject to constant growth and expansion over previous plan periods. The opportunity to deliver a new community through

the development of land to the east of Ansty village is a rare opportunity to develop a complete community unimpaired by existing development. It allows the opportunity for full and complete masterplanning and joined up thinking over the delivery of the site, and the chance to deliver a settlement designed to meet the current and future needs of the District.

Land adjoining Ansty is well related to existing sustainable settlements, and the public and private transport network. It is unconstrained, deliverable, and will not result in development occurring in the AONB. The site therefore presents an ideal opportunity for development, and the delivery of a new community that can deliver residential housing and community benefits to Mid Sussex.

Land Adjoining Ansty

Fairfax

